

How do the 3
composers Faulcher,
Leunig and Dawe use
the idea of 'the
journey' es...



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In describing life's journey, a somewhat cynical perspective is to focus on the isolation and detachment that one inevitably will experience. The three composers, John Faulcher, Michael Leunig and Bruce Dawe all take this stance and use many different stylistic techniques, especially metaphors, to convey this idea of the impersonal nature of life's journey.

The seclusion of one from the rest of the world is a common element in all three texts. This is shown in the cartoon by having every character drawn separately looking through his own window of the car. Although some of these characters are in the same car as each other, there is this feeling of isolation as they are the only one in their space. So as the many cars head towards the 'grave' they are all seen alone.

Furthermore, Faulcher presents the idea of one's separation from others in life's journey in his use of simile.

"...cars clutter on the highway like abacus beads"

Firstly, the cars can be interpreted as a symbol for transporting oneself from one place to a next. By having the cars cluttered, it creates the feeling of indistinctiveness and how common life's journey is. In referring to the abacus, the image of one bead stuck behind the other, without being able to move in front, behind or next to the beads around it.

This also conveys the idea of a set path that one is stuck on and cannot diverge from. Overall, this metaphor is implying that life is stagnant and very, very ordinary, and one has no control over the direction it takes as everyone is travelling in the same direction. This image corresponds with the

main theme in Leunig's cartoon as the cartoon's centralised theme is fact that everyone is travelling in the same direction, with no disparity in their purpose and method.

By using repetition, Dawe is able to relate the beginning of one's life to the end of one's life. By using the word silence in both sentences, the idea of isolation during one's journey of life is presented to the reader, that there was no one there at the beginning, and no one there at the end. By having this theme of isolation reoccur at the end, it caps off the isolation experienced, and suggests that the isolation was constant between the beginning and end of his life.

One of the major corresponding themes in the three texts is this idea of the congestion that is suffered in one's journey through life. This idea presents to the reader that life is in fact, impersonal as there are so many people in existence doing exactly the same thing they are. In Leunig's cartoon, this is portrayed in the picture by the many cars all in the one picture. This suggests that life is banal and almost clichéd.

The fact that there are so many people who look the same and are heading in the same direction, in such a confined space is very much suggesting to the audience that life is menial and nothing special when looked at in perspective. As the picture is drawn from a slightly elevated perspective, it could be interpreted that this scene is being looked at through the eyes of 'God'. 'God' is the only one who has the full picture of all the cars and so to the people in the cars, their life and purpose is important, but in the greater perspective, the life of the individual doesn't matter.

In Faulcher's work, he conveys the idea of the impersonal nature of life's journey by using a metaphor of the sound of crickets.

“ The cricket sound of voices and cutlery”

This metaphor refers to the noise of people and their lives. The sound of crickets is notoriously loud and synchronised, and one cannot distinguish one cricket to the next. In using this metaphor, Faulcher expresses the indistinguishable nature of one's existence. Like in Leunig's cartoon, the idea of many people, all in one space doing the same thing is used to express to the audience how insignificant and impersonal life is in perspective.

Dawe makes his point of how impersonal life is by referring to his family as if they were commercial goods.

“ one economy-sized Mum, one Anthony Squires- Coolstream-summerweight Dad, along with two other kids Straight off the Junior Department rack”

This gives his work a satirical tone as he is referring to his family as if they were material goods. In the way that there are dozens of economy seats on an aeroplane, there are dozens of economy-sized Mum's in the world. He is making his family sound mundane and ordinary, when one's family is supposed to be one of the most important things in one's life. This method of referring to his family as commercial goods gives the impression that average families are being mass-produced. So by using the technique, Dawe has conveyed the idea of the impersonal nature of life, but making it sound like everyone is the same and ordinary rather than being individual and distinctly different from every other family.

Each composer has used a variety of methods in conveying their own ideas of the isolation and impersonal nature of one's journey through life. Although with different tones and stylistic techniques, the audience can still see the corresponding themes when juxtaposing the texts. In all, the texts present the ideas of isolation and indistinctiveness experienced in life's journey in an entertaining and skilful manner.