

Austalian poets essay

Profession, Poet



The most effective poems convey the poet's idea and influence the Reader's Response. This is certainly true when considering the poetry of John Foulcher is a contemporary Australian poet who writes about his observation of everyday life, people and places, as well as religious history. The poet's voice is distinctive and he writes in a condensed style where each word and image is very important and has layers of meaning. He also often uses very harsh and violent imagery in his poems, which can be very shocking to the reader.

Foulcher uses a range of techniques in his poems to communicate meaning, including similes, metaphors, personification and onomatopoeia. The poems that will be discussed in this essay are Martin and the Hand Grenade and Summer Rain The poem " Martin and the Hand Grenade" is set in a classroom. The action of the poem centres on a student, Martin, who has brought in his father's grenade to class for show and tell. Foulcher uses the subject to comment critically about the damaging physical and psychological effects of war.

The poem opens with Martin displaying the hand grenade as the class pauses for history", showing respect for the historical object, Martin demonstrates how the hand grenade is used with " his father's bleak skills". Foulcher uses the adjective " bleak" to emphasize that this skill is miserable and depressing. This shows the reader that Foulcher has a negative view of the destructive power of war. When Martin responds to questions Foulcher uses euphemism to describe the deadly effects of the grenade. After ten yards the spread of shrapnel becomes " too loose to catch a man's morality".

This shows that often when war is discussed the negative effects are often minimised while the positive aspects of heroism and loyalty to your country are emphasized. When the grenade is passed around the class it is called a “small war”. Foulcher uses this metaphor to show the reader that the grenade is symbolic of war and destruction. This reinforces his negative view of war. The reader can visualize the effect that handling the deadly weapon has on the students as they imagine themselves battling among the “desk trenches” and across “mind fields”. The class room has become a war zone in the boys’ imagination.

They are fantasizing about taking part in a war and are only focusing on it as an act out these games in the future in a real war they could be killed or be killed responsible for killing other people. These horrific possibilities are shown through the image of the last line. Foulcher says the grenade “tears the heart ahead”. This has more than one meaning. Grenades can literally tear or rip through soldier’s hearts, killing or severely injuring them. But it can also refer to the emotional heartbreak of the families and friends of the soldiers who are killed in battle.

It can also refer to the tears shed by these heartbroken ones. The reader can understand the tragic consequence that can result from the show and tell. The poem “Summer Rain” is about a driver stuck in traffic who, to pass the time, actually looks at the environment around him. In the end the accident is cleared and he moves on. Foulcher employs various language methodologies in Summer Rain to divulge the theme’s raised in this poem in an increasingly perceptible and sufficient manner that prompts the audience

to be immersed in concentration and consider the principles behind these themes.

The de-humanizing of modern society is one of the central themes that are conveyed in “ Summer Rain”. The idea that as modern society advances and becomes more commercialized value of human individuality and emotion is steadily declining. This idea of society distancing itself from emotion is reflected through Foulcher who speaks very objectively and appears unemotional in hisr description regarding incidents that occur throughout the poem. Foulcher uses objective and unemotional language to describe certain incidents to create the effect in the audience’s mind that he doesn’t particular care about any of the events outlaid in the poem.

The theme of our society depriving children of their innocence is evident throughout the 3rd stanza which has a description of the children playing outside from the poet’s perspective. When he says “ the children stay outside, bruised with dirt” he uses the dirt in a metaphorical manner to translate the message to the audience that children in our society are exposed to material that mentally scars them and reprieves them of their innocence. Another metaphor that is used to convey the extent of the affect that modern society has on children is “ pound out grudges as tight as steel”.

The metaphor “ as tight as steel” is used to show the strength of their grudges and how their hatred of society will never leave them and continue to haunt them for eternity. John Foulcher writes poems that allow the reader to visualise the scenes and people he is describing. Through the use of

poetic techniques such as similes, metaphors, personification and onomatopoeia, Foulcher influences the reader's response. The reader can appreciate the ideas and emotions he is communicating through his poetry.