

Homecoming by bruce dawe

Literature, Russian Literature



Homecoming by Bruce Dawe The Vietnam War was the “unpopular” war and was intensely criticized by the Australian people for the reasons stated in the poem, Homecoming, by Bruce Dawe. In the poem “Homecoming” by Bruce Dawe, Dawe identifies his personal concerns of the Vietnam War and then presents them through the use of poetic techniques. It is clear to us that Dawe’s foremost concerns are that of the number of dead, the lack of respect and the dehumanisation of the dead, and the careless attitude of the Government towards the War.

Foremost, the core of Dawe’s concerns is transcribed from the large number of bodies and the large numbers of wasted young lives. Dawe gives the basis for his concerns in the first stanza, the lines “All day, day after day” and “Piled on the hulls of grants, in trucks, in convoys” there is evidence of alliteration and of pacing to commune the message. Also the line in the second stanza “over the land, the steaming Chow Mein” gives the audience the gruesome impression of a land covered in bloody, disfigured bodies of different nationalities, the American, the Australian and the Viet Cong.

Dawe through this gives the responder a gruesome and disturbing insight into the death in Vietnam. Furthermore, to be proposed in conjunction to the large number of dead, Dawe Expresses his concern on the dehumanization and the lack of respect that the dead bodies of soldiers endure. Dawe does this primarily through the use of metaphor, personification, simile and onomatopoeia. Dawe’s intention for this is to create imagery of a factory like setting where the bodies have no identity and are “zipped”, “Tagging” and deep frozen, like meat in butchery.

The line “ whining like hounds” encourages us to perceive that there is a cannibalistic side to the war, and to the treatment of the men who fought. The reader can respond to this with various emotions, there is sympathy for the bodies and how they were treated, there is also sympathy for the men who have to process the bodies. Conversely to the theme of death and dehumanization, there is the theme of the government’s role. Dawe’s concerns also lie in the government’s attitude to the Vietnam War and he uses irony to demonstrate this concern.

Dawe expresses that the government is bringing home bodies of young men by the truckload, but yet sending more over to replace them. This is in Dawe’s opinion a waste of young lives; this is reinforced by the quote “ They’re bringing them home, now, too late, too early”. This simply means that there is no escape from the grief of death, and the dead are young men who died too young. The effect of this gives a powerful message about the War and gives an insight to how people of the time may have felt.

In conclusion, in the poem “ Homecoming” by Bruce Dawe, the composer effectively communicates his concerns of the Vietnam War, the amount of young deaths, and the little respect for the bodies and the way the government dealt with the situation treating young lives as a disposable item. After reading the poem the reader has a new insight into the Vietnam War through the eyes of Dawe therefore the composer has successfully communicated his concerns.