

How are the effects of conflict presented in 'Remains' and 'Exposure'?

The effects of conflict are presented as harrowing and having great impacts on both the mind and the body of the soldiers fighting in 'Remains' and 'Exposure'.

'Remains' starts in media res which throws the reader right into the story which leaves them confused and disoriented, just like the soldiers would feel in war. It also makes the reader feel as if they're part of a conversation with the soldier, who is based on an Iraq war veteran, which gives them a sense that they are the target of his, and Armitage's, message about how veterans are treated poorly after leaving the armed forces. The whole poem is a 1st person monologue which demonstrates the loneliness of war despite being surrounded by others. The use of this format also makes the reader feel as if they're in the persona's head and as he keeps going over the events again and again in his mind, they are seeing them over and over too. This could also be a critique of human nature and how we never learn from our mistakes and that despite the massive loss of life in the First World War, which Owen portrays in 'Exposure', we as a race have continued to fight in many wars, such as Iraq, with a needless loss of life and resources.

Like 'Remains', 'Exposure' is also in 1st person and they both use 1st person plural pronouns like "we" to convey the sense of brotherhood that there is in the army however, they use the present tense for different reasons. In 'Exposure', the present tense is used because the persona is actually at war which is much like the poet himself as Owen fought in WW1 and like many soldiers, was traumatised which is one of the biggest effects of war and the reason many soldiers have PTSD when they come back from fighting. The soldier in 'Remains' is not physically at war because he is recounting his experience but Armitage's use of present tense is to reinforce the idea that he is constantly there in his mind and reliving it every second of the day.

In 'Exposure', the men are constantly on guard, waiting for the Germans to attack, "but nothing happens." The repetition of this line throughout the whole poem emphasises the waiting that the soldiers have to do which is reinforced by the assonance throughout the poem with words such as "grow", "soaks" and "know". These all help to slow down the poem which recreates the sense of constantly being alert and with "nothing happen[ing]"; it makes it seem very anticlimactic which adds to the strain being put on the soldiers and makes the reader understand the difficulty that the soldiers experienced mentally as well as physically. This was the aim of Owen's poetry, to show the reality and brutality of war which is why he chose the title 'Exposure', it is both the soldiers 'Exposure' to the elements but also, the 'Exposure' of what war is really like, which pre-world war 1 poetry and literature had failed to do; Before WW1 and

Be a bit more specific in your intro re: contrast (e.g. PTSD)

Excellent discussion of structure and form (difficult to evidence) but include a quote or 2 to show you're engaging with the text.

Superb comp!

Effect of tense on reader?

even during the early years of the war, it made war look heroic and like an adventure rather than exposing the true horrors.

Much like Owen, Armitage doesn't hide the brutality of war but shows it to be as it is: horrific. Armitage uses uniform stanza lengths for most of the poem which could reflect the routine of military life but also the normality of the killing and violence in war. This normality of killing demonstrates that it is expected to be done without hesitation or questioning which can have a huge impact on the mental wellbeing of the soldiers and these mental scars are often overlooked by the armed forces. This could be Armitage's aim of the poem, to criticise the way that ex-servicemen and women are not properly cared for when they come back, especially as the poem is based on a real life Iraq war veteran. However, Armitage doesn't keep his stanzas uniform in length throughout all the poem as the last stanza is half the length of the others. This suggests that when these soldiers come home, they're not fully there; they still think about what happened like the persona in the poem who saw it "in [his] head" all the time. Again, this highlights the poor care that is given to these veterans which links back to the aim of the poem: to criticize the way we treat soldiers when they return home.

Effect on reader?

In 'Exposure', the stanza lengths are fairly similar, always 5 or 6 lines long however some line lengths are very different to each other. This makes the poem look like it's falling apart which could reflect the soldiers morale and mental welfare. This is due to the fact that the commanders of that war were chosen because of status and class rather than a tactical mind-set which was the cause of thousands of unnecessary deaths in the First World War which would've heavily impacted the soldiers' mind frames. This idea of bad leadership is evident in the poem with the persona asking "what are [they] doing here?" This gives the impression that the soldiers are starting to become distrusting of their commanding officers as well as the orders that they are being given. Owen himself would've seen this poor leadership first hand throughout the war which gives him another motive behind this poem, not only is it a criticism of the care given to the soldiers for mental disorders, like 'Remains', but it is a criticism of the leadership throughout the war and maybe even the social class system that got the officers into the positions of power despite having a lack of military experience.

In conclusion, the effects of conflict are presented in 'Exposure' and 'Remains' as not only leaving physical scars, but mental ones too, which are often worse than the physical effects of war.

Which is more effective at presenting the effects of conflict + why do you think this?

* Context and analysis are consistently excellent. 7/8

① Include a few more quotes/see notes throughout.
Have you timed yourself handwriting this in 45 minutes?