Conflict Poetry – Exemplars

GRADE 5

In 'Bayonet Charge' the solider's experience makes him scared and worried as he panics to get out of that "blue crackling air/this terror's touchy dynamite." The metaphor emphasizes his fear as the adjective 'crackling' suggests loud, constant and sudden noises. The hard 't' sound suggests his urgency as there is a fast 't' sound. Also in 'Remains', the real soldier from the Undead documentaries is scared, he is trying to escape from the memories of killing a man as he had, "his bloody life, in my bloody hands". The repetition of 'bloody' shows his frustration and regret towards killing the guy and how he can't escape the memories like he can't escape the blood. Both poems show fear.

GRADE 7

In the middle of the poem, Hughes almost slows down the poem's pace to allow time to question the point of war and emphasize the solider's wavering patriotism and determination. The line "cold clockwork of stars" employs ticking alliteration to mimic the clock, it also implies the almost mechanical nature of the conflict and suggest that it lacks any kind of emotion. It is relentless. Alternatively, Armitage represents the irreversible changes that conflict creates in the soldier. Armitage's use of guilty caesura in the phrase, "End of story, except not really" emphasises to the reader that there is a distinct change when the solider returns from war. The reader is unfamiliar with the realities of war and would find this biographical poetry, based on the Undead documentary, a challenge to their preconceptions; they are expecting the line to end on 'End of story.' Hughes portrays a immovable conflict, whilst Armitage sees it to be irreversibly changing.

Inference

Writer

Reader/Audience

Language techniques

Awareness of question

Context linked to quote

Comparison