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| **Literature Paper 2 Section B: Anthology Poetry**  **Learning compendium**  **‘Remains’ Armitage** |
| Key ideas  \*A modern war themed poem from the point of view of a soldier with PTSD.  \*Written as an anecdotal account of a past event and also explores how the speaker is still haunted by the incident in his present day life.  \*The speaker of the poem is a serviceman who has returned from Iraq.  \*Armitage interviewed soldiers from the Iraq War in order to research and write the poem. It was written to coincide with a TV documentary about those returning home from war with PTSD. It is based on Guardsman Tromans, who fought in Iraq in 2003.  \*Armitage said ‘These are poems of survivors- the damaged exhausted men who return from war in body but never, wholly, in mind.’ |
| Form and structure  8 stanzas: 4 lines per stanza (quatrains) for stanzas 1-6.  Stanza 7 and 8 break the pattern with 5 lines and 2 lines respectively.  Stanzas 1- 4 describe the shooting.  Stanzas 5-8 describes the after-effects of the incident on the speaker.  Enjambment and caesura used to emphasise the natural speech patterns of the speaker.  Short clauses in lines 8 and 15 mimic the pattern of natural speech.  First person narrative. Written as a monologue.  No regular rhyme or rhyme scheme- makes the poem sound like a monologue/account/confession.  Enjambment also echoes natural speech and creates a confessional tone.  The speaker shifts from past tense in the first two lines, to present tense for the rest of the poem which adds immediacy to the narrative. Shift in tense/time: Although the incident is over, the memory of it still ‘lives’ with the soldier and the memories occur in his mind as if they are happening at the **present** time:  “Then I’m home on leave. But I blink  and he bursts again through the doors of the bank.”  The speaker must continually ‘live’ the memory of the event again and again.  “On another occasion…” Discourse marker gives the sense of an on-going narrative. This is just one of many memories which haunts the speaker/narrator. |
| Language  Presentation of the speaker: imagery   1. ‘My bloody hands’---use of allusion   Represents the narrator’s feelings of guilt.  Although the narrator/speaker, never physically touched the looter’s blood, he still has the image of bloody hands in his mind.  It shows the violence of conflict and its after effects.  The soldier’s conscience is ‘stained’ by the memory of what happened and the decision he made.  Post-traumatic stress disorder---Just like Macbeth and Lady Macbeth, he can’t escape the memory of what he has done: “drink and drugs won’t flush him out.”  The use of doubtful language which is repeated in the poem also portrays the speaker’s sense of guilt.  ‘probably armed, possibly not’ (Repetition stanza one and six)  ‘His blood-shadow stays on the street’ This is a visual reminder of the death- it foreshadows the memories which are going to haunt him.   1. ‘Rips through his life’ & ‘…tosses his guts back into his body’--- Use of graphic imagery   The speaker uses brutal language to describe the death of the solider. There is no use of euphemism or poetic description instead we are given the precise details of the shooting. This could convey the disturbance and trauma that the speaker carries with him long after he has returned home.  Presentation of the speaker: the speaker’s voice  The speaker uses colloquial language and slang.  Examples such as ‘looters’, ‘legs it’ , ‘letting fly’ , ‘carted off’  Specific analysis:  ‘One of my mates goes by and tosses his guts back into his body’ ---connotations: desensitised to violence/ horror of violence and portrays the everyday reality of violence in modern conflict.  ‘…rips through his life’ Verb emphasises the speed in which life is taken in conflict situations.  ‘my mates’ to represent the soldier as a typical, normal average man  ‘carted off’ connotations of farm animals--- the disposal of dead bodies is part of their job.  Contrast between conflict and routine emphasised through the use of slang (e.g. ‘carted’)  General colloquial language starkly contrasts to the horrific violence described: the tone of the poem seems in conflict with the seriousness and horror of violence.  Presentation of place  ‘…not left for dead in some distant, sun-stunned, sand-smothered land/ or six-feet-under in desert sand’  Adjectives ‘stunned’ and ‘smothered’ suggest the violence of war and its impact upon the place. The speaker also draws a contrast between the Middle East (‘distant’ and ‘desert sand’) and his home. Despite the fact that conditions in these two countries are completely different, he still carries the memory of the man killed in his mind. |
| Feelings and attitudes  Guilt- the speaker is weighed down by feelings of guilt.  Attitude to conflict- the speaker’s attitude to conflict in ambiguous. At the start of the poem the colloquial language describes the incident as an everyday occurrence and there is a sense of ‘shared’ responsibility (‘so all three of us open fire’ & ‘So we’ve hit this looter a dozen times’) but later in the poem, the speaker has taken full responsibility for the death of the looter. (‘his bloody life in my bloody hands.’) |
| Themes  War  The reality of conflict: explores conflict in a direct way and the longer term effects of conflict.  Power: the soldier has power over life and death. Later though he feels powerless to stop his memories and guilt haunting him.  Guilt: Shown through PTSD and his inability to put to rest the idea that the looter wasn’t armed “possibly”  Political: The poem coincided with increased awareness of PTSD amongst the military, and aroused sympathy amongst the public- many of whom were opposed to the war. |
| Compare with…  ‘Charge of the Light Brigade’ (representation of a group of soldiers/ representation of war/battles)  ‘Kamikaze’ (exploration of ‘duty’ in war)  ‘Poppies’ (two different viewpoints of war)  Poems which represent people (such as ‘The Emigree’, ‘London’ etc) |
| Key quotations  ‘Probably armed, possibly not’  ‘His bloody life in **my** bloody hands’  ‘His blood-shadow stays on the street’ |
| Glossary  Looters- People who take goods without right or by force.  Legs it- sprints/ runs away quickly  Open fire- begin to shoot  Letting fly- attack something with great force |