



## Poetry Cluster: Conflict

**Compare how the consequences of conflict are presented in 'Mametz Wood' and one other poem from 'Conflict'.**

**(36 marks)**

The results of war are long lasting and varied. In the poems 'Futility' and 'Mametz Wood' we see how the poets use a variety of different techniques to show the impact that war has had on both man and the land. 'Futility' is written from the perspective of a man who has seen too much of the destruction of war and has had first hand experience of its damage; however, 'Mametz Wood' is written more than 80 years after the end of World War 1, from the perspective of someone who is able to see the long lasting results of what occurred.

Although both poets are writing from different perspectives, we see that they have similar ideas about the connection between the actions of man and the land that he lives on. Personification is used by both Owen and Sheers to show the results of war on the land when battle takes place. We see this in 'Mametz Wood' when the poet refers to the way that the land is trying to heal itself by, "working a foreign body to the surface of the skin." This is suggesting to the reader the long lasting consequences of the battle that took place upon the ground. The word "wound" is important as the poet is using it to emphasise the way that man's war is hurting the land.

This is similar in a way to the message that Owen has about the 'Futility' of war and the way that the results of war seem to be counter productive. His poem begins by emphasising the relationship between man and the sun. He personifies the sun with, "gently its touch awoke him once." This is suggesting the gentle relationship between the land and man, a relationship that is reinforced later with, "the kind old son will know." This acknowledgement shifts in the second half of the poem however as the poet seems to recognise how war is impacting on this relationship: the violence destroying the nurturing relationship that exists between the man and the land...

Other techniques are used throughout these two poems to show the results of war and to create a sense of horror at the destruction that has taken place. We see this emphasised at the very start of 'Mametz Wood' as the poet makes use of an oxymoron to refer to the "wasted young." This shows the way that the lives of these young men have been lost. The word "wasted" seems significant here as it is suggesting the pointlessness of the battle - just as Owen does in Futility.



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Towards the end of the poem, Owens returns to the idea of the results of war on the land by saying, "notes...with this unearthing, slipped from their absent tongues." Here we see how the land continues to show the results of war and is "unearthing" the dead so many years later. Perhaps with "absent tongues" Owens is showing how there is still so much to discover about what took place and that we are still finding out about the effects of war, even so many years later. The end of this poem has a gentleness that is in contrast to the brutal description of the remains of the men, such as with the metaphor, "broken mosaic of bone."

The gentleness achieved at the end of 'Mametz Wood' is in contrast to the challenge that Owen ends his poem on. Whilst his poem begins with a respectful description of the death of a soldier, the second stanza becomes more philosophical and challenging about whether the results of war are worth the cost. He ends by returning to the idea of waste. For example, "O what made fatuous sunbeams toil to break earth's sleep at all?" This shows how Owen is questioning the point of life if man is just going to destroy it. The word "Fatuous" is echoing the idea of futility in this poem, whilst the use of the rhetorical question suggests that this is a question that the poet is unable to answer. Perhaps this is because he has not had the benefit of time to see how the earth can recover (unlike Sheers).

In conclusion, both of these poems suggest that the results of war are long lasting; however I would say neither seems to come to a clear conclusion as to whether it is worthwhile.

