


Wilfred Owen: Investigating *At a Calvary near the Ancre*

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Investigating *At a Calvary near the Ancre*

- ❖ A famous teaching of Jesus is that: 'Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lays down his life for his friends' (KJB John 15:13). Compare what Owen is saying about these words of Christ in *At a Calvary near the Ancre* to what he says in his poem *Greater Love*.
- ❖ Read the following three poems which came out of the action Owen experienced near The Ancre: *The Sentry*, an account of Owen's experiences and feelings in the dug-out where the sentry is blinded; *Futility*, which relates to the way frost and snow affected Owen and his men; *At a Calvary near the Ancre*, which is a poem about the religious tensions surrounding war.
 - Examine Owen's presentation of himself and his role in each poem.
 - Look for similarities in the way Owen writes about war in each poem.
 - How does Owen represent the fighting men in each poem?

Investigating language and tone in *At a Calvary near the Ancre*

- ❖ Owen uses biblical language in this poem, as he does in *The Parable of the Old Man and the Young*. Compare the language in both poems.
- ❖ How does Owen use biblical or religious detail to underline the horrors of the war?

Investigating structure and versification in *At a Calvary near the Ancre*

- ❖ Look at Owen's use of rhyme, identifying where rhymed words emphasise or contrast with each other.
- ❖ Compare the way in which Owen uses simple rhymes in this poem and in the poem *1914*.

Investigating imagery and symbolism in *At a Calvary near the Ancre*

- ❖ The imagery of the image of Christ is also used by Owen in *Le Christianisme*. Look at the way in which Owen uses the images of Christ, the saints and the Virgin in that poem
 - Compare his use of symbolism in *At a Calvary* and *Le Christianisme*

Investigating themes in *At a Calvary near the Ancre*

- ❖ Owen's belief in the love which motivated the men at the front, their camaraderie and sacrifice is an important theme in this poem. How does it compare with his treatment of this theme in *Le Christianisme*?
- ❖ Compare the themes of *At a Calvary* with the themes of *Greater Love*