

Compare how poets
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other p...

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Compare how poets use language to present feelings in “ The Manhunt” and one other poem (Nettles) In ‘ Manhunt’, Simon Armitage uses rhyme to reflect the togetherness of a relationship. He says “ After the first phase, after passionate nights and intimate days.” As the poem goes on, the reader can start to recognise that the un-rhymed couplets show how fragmented their relationship has become. In ‘ Nettles’ Vernon Scannell uses elements of nature, the nettles, to portray his keen anger towards the pain his son is going through. At the beginning of the poem, Scannell uses soft ‘ s’ sounds to emphasise the soothing of his injured son who has fallen in a nettle bed. The child is presented using emotive language. “ It was no place for rest. With sobs and tears the boy came seeking comfort and I saw white blisters beaded on his tender skin. We soothed him till his pain was not so raw.” These soothing sounds emphasises the love his father has for him and how he wants him to recover quickly.

The ‘ watery grin’ is another emotive description also serving as an opposing image. The way in which Scannell merges the child’s laughter of comfort and relief with the tears of pain from the sting of the nettles shows that the child is being helped by his father to get over the pain. In ‘ Manhunt’, there is imagery indicating how carefully she treats her husband. “ And handle and hold the damaged, porcelain collar bone, and mind and attend the fractured rudder of shoulder blade.” The point she makes about her husband being injured and she wants to treat him. Use of alliteration with ‘ handle’ and ‘ hold’ puts a strain on how delicate his body must be at this time. In ‘ Nettles’ the poet gives us an image that even though he feels well and truly sorry for his dear son he wants him to learn from his mistakes. “ We soothed him till

his pain was not so raw.” The way he says, ‘ not so raw’ indicates how the father wants most of the sting from the nettles to leave the body but for a little bit of hurt to remain, so that his son will learn. “ Only then could I bind the struts.” In Manhunt, it is shown clear here that the wife wants to start the healing process of her and her husband’s relationship. “ And climb the rungs of his broken ribs” This is an ambiguous phrase as some may take it negatively, the way she is climbing his broken ribs adds a sense of pain. However, climbing from the bottom of the ribs upwards is the way to the heart, indicating how she wants to mend their broken relationship. War imagery and language dominate these two poems.

Throughout each poem there are numerous martial phrases indicating the poems themes and attitudes. In ‘ Nettles’ the nettles are described as a “ regiment of spite”, “ green spears” and “ no place for rest.” Within the first three lines, the nettles are portrayed negatively and it is clearly shown that they are somehow connected to the war, perhaps an aggressive army of soldiers. This idea reflects the fathers need to protect his child. In ‘ The Manhunt’ the poem explores the costs of war on those who serve in it. Throughout this poem it is clear to the reader that the husband is unable to connect with his wife, therefore their relationship is affected. Simon Armitage allows the wife to speak of how hard it is to connect with her husband. “ Every nerve in his body had tightened and closed.” This reflects how emotionally traumatised he has become due to the war. To conclude my comparison between these two poems, ‘ The Manhunt’ is mainly about the impact of war on a relationship whereas in Nettles, even though this poem reflects ideas and past experiences of war, the poem explores the

importance of protecting a child. No matter how much a parent tries to protect their child, there are always some dangers in life they will go through, the nettles will grow back and continue to sting and his son may be hurt again, just as wars are endless. In the way the nettles in the poem represent soldiers, when the nettles are cut down just like when a soldier dies, they are replaced and the nettles grow back.