

# Anthology One: Identity

- (b) Looking again at *I am very bothered* by Simon Armitage which deals with the theme of regret about a relationship, and at one other poem from the **RELATIONSHIPS** anthology which also deals with the theme of **regret about a relationship**.

With close reference to the ways each poet uses language, compare and contrast what the speakers in the poems say about **regret about a relationship**. You should include relevant contextual material.

## Candidate Answer: Band 5 (Other Poem - To His Coy Mistress)

Response	Examiner's Comments
<p>The idea of regret is common in many love poems such as 'I am very bothered' by Simon Armitage, a modern poem based on the poet's school days and in the metaphysical poem by Andrew Marvell, 'To His Coy Mistress'. Whilst Armitage's poem is modern, based in a science lab in a secondary school from his school days, <u>the other</u> by Marvell is from the seventeenth century in a society with enormous restrictions forced on the people by the Puritans. He uses as its base, a series of elaborate metaphors, called conceits where two different objects are likened to discuss <u>regret</u> in a novel way.</p>	<p>appropriate selection of second poem</p> <p>selective context</p> <p>engages with question</p>
<p>In his unconventional poem, Armitage reveals how a <u>bungled attempt</u> to show his attraction for a classmate, mistakenly scars her for life. The title is interesting as it tends to suggest that Armitage is not 'bothered' by what has happened, but nothing could be further from the truth as Armitage deeply <u>regrets the incident</u> that caused his classmate such pain and this is shown <u>in the tone of the poem</u> which is <u>regretful and remorseful</u> shown in the line; 'when I think of the bad things I have done in my life'. Although the poem is fourteen lines long and is in the form of a <u>sonnet</u>, it is split into three uneven stanzas; the <u>memory</u>, the <u>outcome</u> and the <u>final message</u> to the girl who ironically became his wife later in life.</p>	<p>clear personal engagement</p> <p>insight into speaker's attitude</p> <p>astute comment on form</p>
<p><u>Unlike</u> Marvell's poem which uses <u>highly elevated language</u>, Armitage's poem uses plain English and is <u>highly conversational</u> in such lines as; 'Don't believe me please' as Armitage deliberately breaks from the elevated style of writing often linked to sonnets and uses enjambment to bring about the effect of a <u>dialogue</u> between the poet and the reader. Throughout the poem Armitage uses a series of personal pronouns and imperatives such as 'if I say' to build a relationship with the reader as if he is almost asking for sympathy for his actions and understanding of his <u>regret</u>.</p>	<p>takes opportunity to connect</p> <p>effect of style and form</p> <p>systematically links</p>
<p><u>On the other hand</u>, 'To His Coy Mistress' is a <u>dramatic monologue</u> written in iambic tetrameter using rhyming couplets. Marvell urges his mistress in this poem to give in to pleasure and seize the day and they should not hold back from expressing their feelings for one another or they could regret it forever. The idea of 'seizing the day' is common in classical Roman poetry and is called 'Carpe Diem' poetry and here Marvell uses this form. The message contradicts with the Puritan religious message of the seventeenth century and challenges the idea of restraint and the sin of sex before marriage and</p>	<p>highly selective context</p>

	Examiner's Comments
<p>suggests making the most of life because; 'yonder all before us lie/Deserts of vast eternity as there is nothing after life'; so waiting is pointless and could lead to regret.</p>	<p>ties to the question with confidence</p>
<p>Marvell's opening paragraph uses the idea of a conceit where the speaker shows his affection for the object of his desire; 'I would Love you ten years before the flood'. Throughout, time is personified as being the enemy of lovers; 'Had we but world enough, and time'. Unlike Armitage's sonnet, the structure of Marvell's poem is three verse paragraphs each marking a stage in the speaker's argument. In the first, the ideal courtship is presented with extravagant references such as the 'Indian Ganges' in the second the speaker refers to the lack of time with: 'Time's winged chariot hurrying near' and in the third the speaker advocates seeking pleasure while they are able with the simile, 'like amorous birds of prey'.</p>	<p>cogent analysis</p> <p>quotation is seamlessly integrated</p> <p>developed discussion of form</p> <p>highly selective</p>
<p>Armitage also uses language that is both sensual and graphic such as 'naked lilac flame' and here Armitage is stressing the dangers of loving someone as he regrets having hurt someone in his attempt to seek affection. The dangers of his prank are shown in the imagery, the use of senses and harshness of the language when he talks about 'the unrivalled stench of broken skin' to once again emphasise his regret at such a teenage prank. Like Marvell, Armitage clearly takes responsibility, which is shown in the active verbs such as 'held/played/handed' and his involvement is shown in this long sentence over five lines added to by the alliteration of the harsh 'b' sound around the 'Bunsen burner'. Symbolism is evident in 'the two burning rings' representing wedding rings and these are for 'eternity' suggesting their never-ending love. The use of internal and half rhyme in the poem adds to the effect of this being the speaker's anecdotal memory and a sense of openness and honesty about his regrets. The juxtaposition between 'slipped the thumb and finger in' and her inability to 'shake off the burning rings' and the caesura pause between these two images, adds to these moments of agony and to Armitage's regret.</p>	<p>analysis is systematic and mature</p> <p>synthesised approach</p> <p>perceptive and linked to the question with precision</p>
<p>Whereas Armitage uses colloquial language in his poem, Marvell throughout uses grandiose language linked to traditional romantic ideas to idolise love and to try and persuade the mistress to follow his path. In the first stanza Marvell uses a series of exaggerations of traditional romantic imagery such as 'two hundred (years) to adore each breast' strengthening his desire. He uses unpleasant images of death and decay in the second stanza to persuade the mistress to give up her virginity, 'then worms will try/that long preserved virginity' and that it would be foolish to die regretting the fact that she has not been able to enjoy herself and has left herself to the worms. This is added to by the juxtaposition of 'dust' and 'lust' in the next couplet. The image of death 'in my marble vault' and 'into ashes' is used effectively to suggest that death is inevitable and we must all take our pleasures when we can.</p>	<p>connections are sustained</p> <p>well-developed discussion of language</p>
<p>Like Armitage in the final stanza who is seeking closure Marvell seeks a favourable outcome with his mistress. Speed is a theme showing the speaker's growing impatience and increased passion. The simile: 'the</p>	<p>astute observation</p>

## Examiner's Comments

youthful glue sits on the skin like morning dew' suggests that youthful beauty quickly disappears like dew and the animalistic imagery of 'like amorous birds of prey' and 'at once our time devour' suggests the growing impatience of the speaker. The sibilance at the end of the poem with the alliteration of the 's' sound in 'roll all our strength and all/ our sweetness' suggests it will be a pleasurable experience and one the mistress would not regret. The final rhyming couplet is positive with the word 'will' suggesting the couple will make the most of their time together.

Ultimately both of these poems are about regret but different sorts: Armitage regrets his 'branding' of his classmate whereas Marvell is trying to persuade his mistress into sex, something she will regret if she fails to take the opportunity before she dies. Both poems have moments that are playful but serious messages emerge from each although I would say Armitage is more realistic in his vision of events than Marvell. I enjoyed the classical connections to Marvell's work and his high- brow language but Armitage's realist and modern-day portrayal of a simple classroom incident echoed with me as did his dialogue, as Armitage links to the reader in his attempt to secure sympathy for his actions.

This response points to a clear enjoyment of the study of the anthology. Interpretations of language, form and structure are assured and, in many areas, highly perceptive. A synthesised and convincing argument is underpinned by highly reflective contextual material.

Band 5

analysis is rigorously sustained

reference to the question

summative comment indicates enjoyment of the poems and shrewd observations