

20th century poetry assignment – welsh poetry comparison

[Literature](#), [Poetry](#)



This essay will examine ideas of Welshness presented by Kelly Jones the lead singer of the Stereophonics and Welsh Poet R S Thomas and explore how they put them across.

Both convey similar ideas in their work but in very different contexts

Kelly Jones was born in June 1974, in the same hospital as Richard Jones.

They grew up in a small village called Cwmaman. It is describes as a dull and lifeless area where nothing much goes on. With a population of only 1000, it's a very closed in community, with old women twitching their curtains and everybody knows each other's business.

The small village of Cwmaman was a mining village, though the pit has long since shut the houses that Kelly Jones grew up in were originally built for colliery bosses with the loftier ones being occupied by colliery bosses. Kelly Credits Cwmaman as having a good pubculture by which he means kids is allowed to go into licensed premises with their parents.

There are four main key ideas/themes in this poem, time, boredom, routine, and escaping. The time of the song is important, because in the video to this song we see people walking back, and the Stereophonics are the only people walking forward this suggesting that Cwmaman is a place where there is no opportunities, and only the Stereophonics are making something out of a bad situation. The theme routine, suggests that there is nothing new going on in Cwmaman, and that everything is the same, people do the same thing day in day out so nothing ever changes, and the last theme escaping could be talking about the local character " Mac the knife" and " the ladies wearing

lipstick on their teeth" and how they escape by drinking and having fun, forgetting all the problems in this village

The song " More Life In A Tramp's Vest" was written by Kelly Hones on the back of a paper bag one day while he was working in the fruit and veg stall in the market. The title " More Life In A Tramp's Vest" has a special meaning to it, this being that a tramp's vest which hasn't been washed for months on end could have lots of fleas in it, therefore the fleas are happily bouncing around, so what Kelly Jones is trying to say is the fleas are having more fun by being on the tramp than Cwmaman has year in year out.

Kelly Jones opens the poem by saying

" I get camping eyes in the final hour"

If you are said to have camping eyes then generally you are very tired, because if you go camping then you hardly get any sleep, so what he is saying is he's tired. In the final hour could mean his final hour of work. He is trying to say he's tired in the last hour of work

" Last minute shoppers picking cauliflower"

Here Kelly Jones is saying how the last minute shoppers are being so fussy on the vegetables they are picking, and they are holding him up from closing the stall down.

" The fuss you make, you swear

They were buying a car"

The people who are choosing cauliflower are being so fussy that they are talking lots of time picking through them trying to find the one that has the least marks, and this is making Kelly Jones very angry because he is waiting to go home.

" Always moan, moan its not so cheap,

Cheaper still, cheaper still down the street"

This could mean that the people who are holding him up from going home are being picky and trying to get the price even cheaper, by saying the person on the stall down the road have the same goods for cheaper.

" I loose my rag and tell them

Take your back and shop down there"

Kelly Jones is now very frustrated because these people are being so fussy, stopping him from closing his stall, coning about the price of goods, so he yells at them and says go down there to shop. We can sympathise because he has been working all day and is probably tired of boredom.

" Closing down, closing down another road

One-way system steals the show"

Closing down, closing down another road could mean that they are closing down another road of their life, they are running out of alternatives just like if you were in a car going down a one way street you have no where to go but

if you have a normal road you can go up and down it, one way system steals the show, this could be the equivalent to their lives, meaning that there is no future what so ever in Cwmaman, and they that the people are doing nothing about it.

" Mac the knife swings a can

And sings the day away"

These sentences could mean that this local character Mac the Knife is trying to escape from boredom by drinking and trying to drown his sorrows, and singing the day away could seem like good entertainment for him because he doesn't know what he is doing.

The chorus of this song has a persuasive technique, because instead of just saying there is more life in a tramps vest they say more life three times before continuing with in a tramps vest, then they repeat the whole line again. This is a repetitive technique used to make something stand out more and get a point across that there is more life in a tramps vest.

" Flower man sits down in the street

Surrounded by stock that he brought back last week"

The flower man who had bought stock last week cannot sell it, so he is in the middle of it probably trying to sell it, which could be a hard task because people normally buy flowers to celebrate something but because in Cwmaman there is nothing to celebrate no body is buying any flowers.

In this next line there is a very clever word association, there is no real effect for this, its just better than having a normal sentence, it says

" Bring back the ladies wearing lipstick on their teeth

Make up, we make up a crappy joke"

The word association is with " lipstick" and " make up," but why do they want the ladies to come back, is it because they were the only source of fun and life in that town? And why are they making up a crappy joke? Why not make a good one? The answer is that since these ladies have left Cwmaman for whatever reason the life of the village has gone down and become boring. The jokes that were considered as rubbish now seem like good jokes that people will laugh at.

" Sit back, relax and have a smoke"

If you read this sentence, it says sit back which could mean take a step back and look at our life, then you have a comma which is like a little pause, then you have relax, and have a smoke. This could mean that Kelly Jones wants us the reader to sit back, pause, relax which is like another pause, and take a look at his life, and the stressfulness of work, and how he smokes to relax.

On the last 2 lines of the song it says

" Mac the knife swings a can

And sings the day away"

This is a repeat of what is said on the end of the 3rd verse of this song, which could be to try and say this is what we all should be doing because Mac the Knife is enjoying himself.

The last part of the song is the chorus, which is said again. This brings a negative end to the poem because not only has it ended where it begun, it proves that there has been no progress in the development of Cwmaman.

Kelly Jones' aim was not to show the readers/listeners that Wales is a boring place to live, but to say that there is nothing to do in Cwmaman. The tone of this poem was mainly sad " I get camping eyes in the final hour" he's getting tired of work and stressed over what he is doing, the song is very negative " there's more life more life more life in a tramps vest" if you are saying that there is more life in a tramp that goes around smelling all day long then things must be very bad! This song shows some signs of Kelly Jones getting frustrated " I loose my rag and tell them take your bag and shop down there" if he is saying this to a customer, he must be very angry because he is telling somebody to go and shop somewhere else instead of coming to his stall to shop. The pace of this poem seems to speed up as they get closer to the main chorus, probably because they are trying to let off some steam and have some fun.

Over all Kelly Jones makes welsh life in Cwmaman look dull, lifeless and boring, he is continually negative about Cwmaman in the song and it seems that this mining village is going nowhere fast!