

Comparitive analysis - poetry

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POEM ANALYSIS The great romantic poet, William Wordsworth described poetry as “ the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings” (bartleby. com). A poem is the expression of one’s emotions. Poets artistically render words to evoke emotions into contemporary themes. The present study deals with comparison of three poems relating to their poetic techniques and themes. The poems are- Factory Jungle, 5000 apply for 100 job and Old man Pike. The first two poems are by Jim Daniels and the third poem is by David Budbill. The poets, Jim Daniels and David Budbill grew up in a working class family of America. Their poems are about Blue collar America at work. The people employed at coalmines, factories, refineries; people packing eggs, ice creams; the people employed at trucks and tyre factories. These poems are about people engaged at all kind of menial jobs to earn their daily bread and butter. The poetic genius of these two poets lies in the fact that their works bring ‘ live’ the life of people living in that era. Set up during Industrial Revolution. these poems capture the life of people who live life for today. If they lose one job then they must find the other, the very next day to run the household. The great American Dream of affluent life and easy money for these workers shatters when they are faced with the reality. They were forced to work in very poor conditions with industrialist exploitation at its peak. “...any literature which omits this governing experience of daily life is a literature with an enormous hole in the middle of it.” (Wayman, 12) In the poem Factory Jungle, the poet describes the daily ordeal of a factory worker who by the end of the day would like to break the ennui of his strenuous life at the factory. “ Right after the seven O’clock break... I get that itchy feeling I don’t belong here”. (Daniels, 1-6). Jim Daniels is very realistic in his expression when he says, “ I’d like to climb one of those ropes of light....

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pound my chest and roar over the machine” (Daniels, 25-26). The factory worker has this feeling of breaking free the shackles and breathing the air of liberty. Almost similar idea is found in the next poem of Jim Daniels. With industrial revolution promising surplus jobs, these gullible labours are taken in. Most of them are the immigrants shattered by the great American Dream. The poet finds himself in a queue for a job . The workers throng in numbers for a few vacancies. They are disappointed when refused. The poet is happy that he is still employed even though it is cleaning job. Daniels has very artistically brought the frustration of these people in such a short poem. The third poem, The Old Man Pike by David Budbill, is described as working class poem. It relates to the life of a lowly waged sawyer. He travels a distance of six miles daily to earn meagre wages. He could have stayed home and enjoyed the ripened years of his life but he is happy in his daily drudgery. Might be, he has no other way to take care of his bread and butter. Thus, we find these poems capturing the drama of work and working class life in Industrial America. A natural rhythm of language is found in all three poems as they are realistic in nature. They are colloquial in expression. Daniels has used metaphors at few places in both the poems. In the poem Jungle Factory, he employs phrases like, “ My veins filled with welding flux” (Daniels, 5) means that by the end of the day when the time of grind is almost over, he finds a new energy infused in him. The expression “ mad elephant” (Daniels, 9) is a metaphor, and is used for machines which are huge and behave ‘ madly’ in the sense that they have cost most labourers their lives. In the other metaphor “ yelling louder than Tarzan” (Daniels, 26) the poet expresses a feeling of liberation. In the next poem, 5000 apply for 100 job, the poet brings out the frustration of workers by using these

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metaphors, “ drunk with the cold shuffling” (Daniels, 1-2). It refers to the cold or the indifferent attitude of the industrialists or rudeness towards the fellow being who is also interested in the same job. The next phrase “ hundreds danced” (Daniels, 3) refers to the horde of labourers looking for a job opportunity; in another line “ pink skin sticking out” (Daniels, 5), the poet refers to the torn clothes and thereby, the deplorable state they are in. There is simile in the expression, “ like happy hour at a good will store” (Daniels 14), and it refers to a moment to enjoy for the gift one already has or gets. In the poem, *The Old Man Pike*, Budbill uses metaphor in the following phrase, “ In the dark and solitary amblings of his pleasure...” (Budbill, 24) which describes the only reason for which this old man works away from home. He seems to enjoy his solitude. Thus, it is seen that all the three poems represent the darker side of life. These poems give voice to those who are never heard. There is testimony of human emotions in these poems. Just by their simple acts, the emotions of the people come to life. " These poems are refreshment. They hiss and steam with the street's vibrant hardness, the effort to look around the corner, pain in the eyes after a long day's work."(Forche). References: bartleby. com. Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*: William Wordsworth (1800). 5 Feb 2011. <http://www.bartleby.com/39/36.html> Budbill, David. *Old Man Pike*. In *Working classics: poems on industrial life* by Peter Oresick and Nicholas Coles. University of Illinois Press, 1990 Daniels, Jim. *Places/Everyone: Factory Jungle*. Univ of Wisconsin Press, 1985. Daniels, Jim. *Places/Everyone: 5000 apply for 100 job*. Univ of Wisconsin Press, 1985. Forche, C. *Poetry*. In *Show and tell: new and selected poems* by Jim Daniels. Univ of Wisconsin Press, 2003. Wayman, Tom. *Inside Job: essay on the New Work Writing*. Harbor, 1983.