

WILLIAM Plomer – Johannesburg

Title of poem: Johannesburg	Well the title first tells you that he is talking about a place called Johannesburg in South Africa.
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Stanz a Line	Poem	Analysis
1/1	Along the Rand in eighty-five	Tell us the time-frame 'eighty-five'. Ok I get most of the poem, I've tried to narrow down each sentence. So first sentence "along the rand in 85". The SG tells us that line one says that the writer feels like the place came out of nowhere. The eighty -five also tells us the time frame he is referring too.
2	Fortunes were founded overnight,	second sentence "Fortunes were founded overnight" is still mid apartheid era. Yes! And the place came about quickly. The fortunes would be gold. Eight -five is during the boom of the gold rush
3	And mansions rose among the rocks	Started with land/rocks and wealthy homes were built. Hence the mansions rose among the rocks. There was money being thrown around. Mansions are not cheap. When the British colony arrived it is often said that industrial and housing was built "over night" meaning in a hurry and it must have seemed like that to william, being an explorer
4	To blaze with girls and light;	What i perceive is the author watching these rich British men, having too much money, having women as they please and johannesburg being the city of the pioneers
2/5	In champagne baths men sluices their	They have loads of money. They are "bathing" in champagne

	skins	(expensive) to wash their bodies "sluices" is a stream of water/liquid form which implies A LOT of champagne/money to do so
6	Grimy with auriferous dust,	Grimy= covered in . and auriferous (gold) dust. Implying gold/money is all around them, it is just being thrown around like dirt. They have too much of it. I'm picking up a contradiction between the 1st and 3rd line in stanza 2. First they bathing and then they grimy. Am I missing something? Could be a sarcastic tone to it, grimy means covered in and in stanza 6 he says of Christian state yet their action are of nothing Christian
7	Then oiled and scented, fought to enjoy	Treated as royalty almost, everything was luxurious. And they I'm not sure about the fought to enjoy. Are they fighting to enjoy?
8	What young men must;	Almost as if they felt bad for fighting. But in the next line it's made to look as this was a way of life when it says "as all men must. Sarcastic tone again. As if it is their "way" of living and the norm
3/9	Took opportunities to cheat,	I think they implying with women and cheating life in general. I think cheat on their partners too. If you cheating. Why mention the whores. If you sleeping with a whore you already cheating. I think this was an insinuation of men. Because Orgies are multiple people of different sexes. "Took opportunities" as if to say these men have many opportunities to sleep around and "free time" whereas the people they were treating as slaves didn't have these types of opportunities or even the time like in the second poem wally states that he works all day and leaves his wife and his home and gets back late. I'm just contrasting between the two now but even if wally wanted to cheat or sleep with whores there would be no time to or opportunities.
10	Or meet the most expensive whore,	Showing money again. Have money to spend on pleasures and the

		most expensive pleasures. The "whore" part shows the disregard or disrespectful way of thinking of women. Like how they felt about women.
11	And conjured up with cards and dice,	Meaning that this was their life? Fun and games? Conjured is something appearing unexpectedly. I'm just picking up a picture of debauchery. "Cards. Dice. Orgies. (Debauchery definition: Excessive indulgence in sensual pleasures). Maybe young men that don't know much but think this is right? True. In a way selling themselves. This could be the capitalism they refer too? Following their desires?
12	New orgies from new veins of ore;	With regards to mine workers and they would be pleased with women at night, so those were the opportunities that were taken. At night when wives were home the miners would be given whores to sleep with as a gift and play poker/gamble and drink and turn into orgies.
4/13	Greybeards who now look back	implying when they are old they are looking back on their lives and they are happy and proud of what they have done and "accomplished".
14	To the old days	Reminiscing about the past. Like a sense of nostalgia. It's their way of living again. So like now they retired
15	Find little, in their past to blame	They don't see shame in what they've done
16	And much to praise-	They were happy with the outcome of their lives
5/17	Riding bareback under stars	They get to do what they want when they want. Talking about "riding

		bareback under the stars" These men were allowed out after dark which implies their freedom. During this era certain races had curfews before the sun went down.
18	As lordly anarchs of the veld,	Suggesting free wealthy people. The anarchs refers to the revolutionary causing a dramatic change.
19	Venison feasts and tribal wars	Definitely the government. Too much wealth and too much freedom. They had control. The venison feasts contrast the tribal wars. Like on one side there is a victory party and on the other war. Like as if the war was nothing to them and they came home to feast whilst men died. And others were starved. Feasts is a luxury and a pleasure
20	Free cruelty and a cartridge belt;	He contradicts himself when he says "free cruelty and a cartridge belt" freeing cruelty is the complete opposite to wearing a belt full of ammunition yet this is what they preached. Propaganda. The free cruelty could be the reference to the apartheid police. They were a law unto themselves.
6/21	Pioneers, O pioneers	This is where he explains the men as explorers/settlers. This sounds like a call to them [His call sort of sounds sarcastic too. Like you know how the English say my oh my. In a condescending tone. His tone could also be pleading?
22	Grey pillars of a Christian State,	Here he says grey pillars of a Christian state. Grey pillars reference to me as a strong building "built up over night". Implying a city. A Christian state means a country/city that refers to themselves as God believers and religious. They follow the Lord's order. These men seem to think they are the Lord's men yet do unchristian things. Their actions are the opposite. Grey for me represents the murky place between right and

		wrong. His saying it there and then saying the Christian state could be his way of questioning the view of the country
23	Respectability has turned	Many people walk around preaching the bible yet have completely different ways of doing things behind closed doors. That they have lost their moral compass?
24	Swashbuckler prim and scamp sedate;	Swashbuckler is an explorer. Prim means respectable and formal. Scamp means childish and mischievousness. It could also mean that now that the explorer or workers from the mines have now retired after doing all their debauchery have turned into these prim and proper gentleman. Referring to men as boys almost. Fun and games. Sedate is once again calm and dignified.
7/25	Protecting in the brain's recesses	Could be a reference to seeking to influence the next generation? Recesses is like a gap/hollow space "Protecting" their hollowness? Or trying to fill the void?.
26	Seek now the nuggets of your prime,	Seek now the nuggets of your prime. Seek mean look. To me this sound very like weird. Like when you admonish a child to go look for their toy. Like go look and see if you find it. Nuggets is a valuable piece of something materialistic like gold. So seems to me like he is using his sarcastic tone again like you said above almost like little children. Go and play, have your fun while you can.
27	And sift the gold dust of your dreams	True. As well like an hour glass. It measures time with sand. The gold could mean nothing when they get older it just fades into sand through time
28	From drifted sands of time.	His first says nuggets. And then gild dust and then sands. Like the picture gets smaller and smaller until it's reduced to nothing.

General Comments

Poetry:

For a compare and contrast essay, you must always start in your introduction by explaining the two things that you are comparing. In this case, these are the two poems. State their names, who wrote them and when they were published. REMEMBER: The introduction is the paragraph in which you tell readers about your topic and give them all the relevant background information they need to understand the rest of your essay. You must imagine that the people looking at your essay haven't read the poems and that all the information they are getting is coming from you. You must tell them about the poems and why you are comparing them. The introduction paragraph in a compare and contrast essay establishes your reason for examining the two topics together.

I posted the lead for the introduction further to that I think we should also include as a focus for the essay the literary devices of language, rhythm and imagery.

I think throughout the poem he has a sort of snark towards the pioneers even though he is one himself. He sees them as selfish and foolish. He almost thinks they think they are better than anyone else and it irritates him and he's toning it in a sarcastic way

True too. But remember that we talking about south africa and the government had a huge role to play in everything that happened.

I'm also picking up something in his rhyme scheme.

Line 2 Overnight and 4 light. Opposites

Stanza 2. Dust . Must. I'm not sure

Whore and ore. Opposites.

Stanza 4. Days. Praise. Not sure again

Stanza 5. Stars. Wars? And Veld. Belt ?

Stanza 6. State. Sedate.?

Stanza 7. Prime. Time?

There is no personal pronouns so this is not something he is experiencing. More like an outsider watching in. I thought this from the beginning. He is a pioneer or an explorer himself yet he watches these men (government) and almost degrades their actions and almost sarcastically belittles their way of living

Stanza 7. Could be a reference to the old men and that now that they old, they have been reduced to nothing. After all that high flying life.

The collusion could be where he mentions all the wrongful doings yet they depict themselves as a Christian state
I think we need to mention the type of language he used as well. Very big words and also look at his punctuation
I think between the two poems, the things they had in common was that they were both based on Jhb and its urban development with its economic order (that's taken from SG) and also both poems were postcolonial poems and spoke about mining.
I actually noticed Johannesburg has a lot to do with the riches of the city and men working there with gold such as in the poem nuggets in line 26 Like the men's riches are the woman or "girls line 4 then gambled with there riches. yeah that's where the poem differ. for plomer he talks about the men that worked ther and for serote he talks as a personal experience
But both the poems is about people getting used by someone ND about jhb? That's true. for Plomer and it it was both the SA government
lets keep in mind that both these poems have been written during apartheid and that between black and white there were huge social and racial over flows.
For stanza 1 I felt like life was being born in the area.