

How does Caradoc Evan's short story *Be This Her Memorial* reflect the lives of the poor in rural 20th-century Wales?

Caradoc Evans was an Anglo-Welsh author who published short stories that critiqued Wales's Non-conformist religion and culture. *Be This Her Memorial*¹ is found in Caradoc Evans' first publication *My People: Stories of the Peasantry of West Wales* in 1915.² The focus of *My People* was a commentary on the exposure of corruption within the Non-conformist religion and its culture, which is highlighted in *Be This Her Memorial*.³ The short story is set in a fictional place called Manteg in rural West Wales. The story is narrated in the third person with a focus on Nanni, an elderly pauper woman, who sacrifices her life to give a farewell gift to the Minister of Manteg, Josiah Bryn-Bevan. Caradoc Evans writes in a realistic style of themes that are demonstrated within the story such as the hypocrisy of the community, the poverty that Nanni experiences, and a critique of authority in rural Wales.

Unsurprisingly, the Caradoc Evans stories were not well received by the Welsh. Yet it was celebrated in England. The depictions of Welsh society were very

¹ Caradoc, Evans, *My People: Stories of the Peasantry of West Wales*, 6th edn.(London: Andrew Melrose, LTD, 1915), p.161.

² Caradoc, Evans, *My People: Stories of the Peasantry of West Wales*, 6th edn.(London: Andrew Melrose, LTD, 1915).

³ Caradoc, Evans, *My People: Stories of the Peasantry of West Wales*, 6th edn.(London: Andrew Melrose, LTD, 1915), p. 161.

Harri Garrod Roberts, *Embodying Identity: Representations of the Body in Welsh Literature* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2009), p.48.

critical and unflattering. Caradoc Evans primarily focused on the peasantry in rural West Wales in the fictional setting of Manteg with, according to Garrod Roberts, a realistic depiction of the Non-conformist religion.⁴ Due to his social commentary on Wales, many Welsh people were unhappy with Evans on his depiction of Welsh life and society.⁵ Before the publication of *My People* in 1915, The Reports of the Commissioners of Inquiry into the State of Education in Wales were published in 1847. These were commonly known in Wales as The Treachery of the Blue Books. The Treachery of the Blue Books described Wales as filled with barbaric uneducated people compared to their English counterparts.⁶ Caradoc Evan's publication in 1915 appeared to continue the stereotype depicted. The satire of the religion, the use of rural Welsh idioms, and culture can be seen in *My People* and was an unflattering portrayal of Wales, particularly the working class.⁷ As such the narration of *My People* continues the idea of Wales as an underdeveloped country. Garrod Roberts points out that Caradoc Evans' Publication was celebrated within England partly as it affirms the English understanding of Wales as an uneducated country.⁸

Caradoc Evans describes Welsh rural communities and life through the character Nanni. The earlier depictions of rural Wales during the late 1800s were

⁴ Harri Garrod Roberts, *Embodying Identity: Representations of the Body in Welsh Literature* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2009), p.48-49.

⁵ Harri Garrod Roberts, *Embodying Identity: Representations of the Body in Welsh Literature* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2009), p.48-49.

⁶ Harri Garrod Roberts, *Embodying Identity: Representations of the Body in Welsh Literature* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2009), p.20-46.

Stephen May (2000) Accommodating and Resisting Minority Language Policy: The Case of Wales, *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 3:2, 101-128, DOI: 10.1080/13670050008667702

⁷ Harri Garrod Roberts, *Embodying Identity: Representations of the Body in Welsh Literature* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2009), p.20-46.

My people

⁸ Harri Garrod Roberts, *Embodying Identity: Representations of the Body in Welsh Literature* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2009), p.58.

picturesque with healthy and fertile land.⁹ The Victorian ideas of health and well-being were attributed to green fields and fresh air away from urban cities. However, after the Treachery of the Blue books, there was a negative light on Wales' rural countryside and people. Waddington suggests that to counter the negative picture of Wales, romanticism within literature, art, and poetry was a way to demonstrate the full beauty of Wales and its culture.¹⁰ A report by the Medical Officers of Health and Sanitary Inspectors reported the rural poverty that lies in Wales.¹¹ The report commented on outmigration, under-investment, and poverty in rural communities, many illnesses such as tuberculosis came from dirty water and overcrowding. The 1870 Commission on Employment of Children, Young Persons, and Women found that cottages in Wales tended to be in a disarray of poor conditions.¹² By the 1890s, in Wales many cottages were built without foundations and many Welsh people used mud as a material to form walls for their cottages.¹³ The character Nanni's, house is described as a typical working-class dwelling in rural West Wales at the time. Caradoc Evans describes her home, 'She lived in the mud-walled, straw-thatched cottage....travelling that way you may still see the roofless walls.'¹⁴ The quotes demonstrate the rural poverty of Wales at the time. Nanni was described as living in a one-room house along with another description of its foundation being made out of mud and straw. Caradoc Evans wrote about real

⁹ Keir Waddington, 'It might not be a nuisance in a country cottage': Sanitary Conditions and Images of Health in Victorian Rural Wales', *Rural History Economy, Society and culture*, 23.2 (2012), 185-204 (p.189) <DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0956793312000064>>.

¹⁰ Keir Waddington, 'It might not be a nuisance in a country cottage': Sanitary Conditions and Images of Health in Victorian Rural Wales', *Rural History Economy, Society and culture*, 23.2 (2012), p.189 <DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0956793312000064>>.

¹¹ Keir Waddington, 'It might not be a nuisance in a country cottage': Sanitary Conditions and Images of Health in Victorian Rural Wales', *Rural History Economy, Society and culture*, 23.2 (2012), 185-204 (p.192) <DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0956793312000064>>.

¹² Keir Waddington, 'It might not be a nuisance in a country cottage': Sanitary Conditions and Images of Health in Victorian Rural Wales', *Rural History Economy, Society and culture*, 23.2 (2012), 185-204 (p.192) <DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0956793312000064>>.

¹³ Keir Waddington, 'It might not be a nuisance in a country cottage': Sanitary Conditions and Images of Health in Victorian Rural Wales', *Rural History Economy, Society and culture*, 23.2 (2012), 185-204 (p.192) <DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0956793312000064>>.

¹⁴ Caradoc, Evans, *My People: Stories of the Peasantry of West Wales*, 6th edn. (London: Andrew Melrose, LTD, 1915), p. 162.

poverty in its realistic form and used Nanni as a character to show the poverty in these rural communities. The 1848 Public Health Act Rural Health created a board of Guardians along with Poor Law District Medical Officers to have the responsibility of taking care of sanitation within smaller communities. However, the responsibility was handed to the parishes to care for those in towns or rural communities.¹⁵ Caradoc Evans' description of Nanni's house illustrates a realistic look at homes in rural West Wales.

Evans describes how poor people were supported before the welfare state. The portrayal of Nanni, a pauper within the community authority, reflects the life of poor relief in rural Wales. Evans' writes the relationship realistically from the description of Abel Shone and the conditions that are given by the parishes in exchange for poor relief, particularly in West Wales. Wales had a different outlook on the welfare state, the Welsh people fought against the construction of workhouses, and before the 1870s Wales was one of the countries to be generous in its poor relief.¹⁶ This may reflect the similar sentiment towards foodbanks in the modern day. The poor relief system was created to help paupers such as the character Nanni. The system was organised by local parishes in local communities, The reference of 'she owed to him and God',¹⁷ is a comment on the obligation of the poor towards their communities should they receive poor relief organised by the local parishes or local unions.¹⁸ The parishes would employ overseers such as the character Abel Shone to offer poor relief. Supervisors of poor relief had the power

¹⁵ Keir Waddington, 'It might not be a nuisance in a country cottage': Sanitary Conditions and Images of Health in Victorian Rural Wales', *Rural History Economy, Society and culture*, 23.2 (2012), 185-204 (p.186) <DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0956793312000064>>.

¹⁶ Croll, Andy, "'Reconciled Gradually to the System of Indoor Relief': The Poor Law in Wales during the "Crusade against out-Relief", c. 1870 - c. 1890', *Family & Community History*, 20.2 (2017), 121-144 (p.121-124) <<https://doi.org/10.1080/14631180.2017.1369255>>

¹⁷ Caradoc, Evans, *My People: Stories of the Peasantry of West Wales*, 6th edn.(London: Andrew Melrose, LTD, 1915), p. 162.

¹⁸ Croll, Andy, "'Reconciled Gradually to the System of Indoor Relief': The Poor Law in Wales during the "Crusade against out-Relief", c. 1870 - c. 1890', *Family & Community History*, 20.2 (2017), 121-144 (p.121-124) <<https://doi.org/10.1080/14631180.2017.1369255>>

to refer those to workhouses or refuse to offer poor relief.¹⁹ This is displayed by Abel Shone who oversaw the poor relief for Nanni. This is demonstrated in the story,

Nanni's income was three shillings and ninepence a week. That sum was allowed her by Abel Shones, the officer for Poor Relief, who each pay day never forgot to remind the crooked, wrinkled, toothless old woman how much she owed to him and God.²⁰

The issue of paupers, particularly in Non-Conformity Wales, had the view of being the main cause of social and economic problems.²¹ The local parishes would ask for volunteer paupers to work in the fields for example to compensate for the poor relief that was being offered.²² The power dynamic of the parishes and local unions is exemplified through the work of Nanni, 'Her labour was wanted in the fields'. 'the community which paid her three shillings and nine pence a week'.²³

Evans demonstrates a true outlook of Wales's treatment of the poor before the welfare state.

¹⁹ Samantha A.Shave, 'who cares?: mismanagement neglect and suffering in the final decades of the old poor laws', in *providing for the poor: the old poor Law, 1750-1834*, ed. By peter collinge and Louise Falcini (London: university of london press, 2022), pp167-196 (pp. 167-117)

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²⁰Caradoc, Evans, *My People: Stories of the Peasantry of West Wales*, 6th edn.(London: Andrew Melrose, LTD, 1915), p. 162.

²¹ Croll, Andy, "'Reconciled Gradually to the System of Indoor Relief': The Poor Law in Wales during the 'Crusade against out-Relief', c. 1870 - c. 1890", *Family & Community History*, 20.2 (2017), 121-144 (p.133-134) <<https://doi.org/10.1080/14631180.2017.1369255>>

²² Croll, Andy, "'Reconciled Gradually to the System of Indoor Relief': The Poor Law in Wales during the 'Crusade against out-Relief', c. 1870 - c. 1890", *Family & Community History*, 20.2 (2017), 121-144 <<https://doi.org/10.1080/14631180.2017.1369255>>

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²³ Caradoc, Evans, *My People: Stories of the Peasantry of West Wales*, 6th edn.(London: Andrew Melrose, LTD, 1915), p. 168.

Hypocrisy is a theme throughout the story. The community all refer to the main character as Nanni. This implies a family relationship between Nanni and the community. However, the relationship is not honored by the actions of the community, and what is depicted shows hypocrisy. Leaning into the later plot of the story it is clear that Nanni was not taking care of herself. The first instance the reader became aware was the perspective of the farmer, Sadrach Danyrefail,

‘He was glad that the old women did not invite him inside, for from within there issued abominable smell such as might have come from the boiler of the witch who one time lived on the moor.’²⁴

Later in the story, the whole community becomes aware of the fact Nanni is not taking care of herself, “Old Nanni”, folk remarked while discussing her over their dinner tables, ‘is getting as dirty as an old sow’.²⁵ However, this did not prompt them to offer assistance or intervene in any way. As such Evans depicts Wales as a selfish nation that disregards their neighbors.

The story also gives an insight into chapel culture and practices in rural Wales in the 20th century. From the 19th century to the early 20th century, the religion of Non-conformity was closely attributed to ‘Welshness’ by the Welsh people.²⁶ Nonconformity was part of Welsh culture which ensured chapel culture became the hub of communities in Wales.²⁷ As such, Chapels would hold or

²⁴ Caradoc, Evans, *My People: Stories of the Peasantry of West Wales*, 6th edn.(London: Andrew Melrose, LTD, 1915), p. 169.

²⁵ Caradoc, Evans, *My People: Stories of the Peasantry of West Wales*, 6th edn.(London: Andrew Melrose, LTD, 1915), p. 168.

²⁶ Gaynor Cohen, ‘A sense of people and place: The chapel and language in sustaining Welsh identity’ in *Identity and Networks: Fashioning Gender and Ethnicity Across Cultures*, ed. By Deborah Fahy Bryceson, Judith Okley, Jonathan Webber (New York: Berghanhn Books, 2007), pp.91-102.(p.92).

Russell Davis, *Secret sins: Sex, Violence and Society in Carmarthenshire 1870 -1920*, 2nd edn.(Univercity of Wales Press, 1996), p.186.

²⁷ Gaynor Cohen, ‘A sense of people and place: The chapel and language in sustaining Welsh identity’ in *Identity and Networks: Fashioning Gender and Ethnicity Across Cultures*, ed. By Deborah Fahy Bryceson, Judith Okley, Jonathan Webber (New York: Berghanhn Books, 2007), pp.91-102. (p.95).

organize events for their community and conduct services and Sunday school in the Welsh language.²⁸ However, the Nonconformist religion began to decline causing the Welsh to have anxiety over their identity as a nation.²⁹ Nonconformity was part of the Welsh identity with its culture, values, and morals.³⁰ Until the revival in 1904 which saw many missionaries preach in small communities.³¹ Evans demonstrates this when the character, the Seller of Bibles, is introduced into the story.

“No,no; indeed now,” he said ; “I cannot tarry long, women. Do you not know that I am the Big Man’s messenger? Am I not honoured to take His word into the highways and byways, and has He not sent me here?”³²

The revival happened during a time when Wales, particularly rural Wales, was undergoing social and economic change.³³ The effects of this led the majority of Wales into a religious fever and they began to follow the bible and believe in God.³⁴ Nevertheless, the revival saw upheaval in some churches and chapels in the Carmarthenshire area.³⁵ For example, Pastor Howton in November 1905 believed himself to be the voice of God during his time in the Priory Chapel in

²⁸ Gaynor Cohen, ‘A sense of people and place: The chapel and language in sustaining Welsh identity’ in *Identity and Networks: Fashioning Gender and Ethnicity Across Cultures*, ed. By Deborah Fahy Bryceson, Judith Okley, Jonathan Webber (New York: Berghahn Books, 2007), pp.91-102.(p.97).

²⁹ Russell Davis, *Secret sins: Sex, Violence and Society in Carmarthenshire 1870 -1920*, 2nd edn.(University of Wales Press, 1996), p.207.

³⁰ Russell Davis, *Secret sins: Sex, Violence and Society in Carmarthenshire 1870 -1920*, 2nd edn.(University of Wales Press, 1996), p.207.

³¹ Russell Davis, *Secret sins: Sex, Violence and Society in Carmarthenshire 1870 -1920*, 2nd edn.(University of Wales Press, 1996), p.194-195.

³² Caradoc, Evans, *My People: Stories of the Peasantry of West Wales*, 6th edn.(London: Andrew Melrose, LTD, 1915), p. 165.

³³ Russell Davis, *Secret sins: Sex, Violence and Society in Carmarthenshire 1870 -1920*, 2nd edn.(University of Wales Press, 1996), p.203.

³⁴ Russell Davis, *Secret sins: Sex, Violence and Society in Carmarthenshire 1870 -1920*, 2nd edn.(University of Wales Press, 1996), p.196.

³⁵ Russell Davis, *Secret sins: Sex, Violence and Society in Carmarthenshire 1870 -1920*, 2nd edn.(University of Wales Press, 1996), p.197-199.

Carmarthen.³⁶ He wasn't the only one during this time, many others began to believe themselves having supernatural powers from god.³⁷ Nonconformity involved the Welsh into believing in the supernatural.³⁸ The mixture of religion and the belief in the supernatural is demonstrated in Caradoc Evans's short stories of life in rural Wales.³⁹ The opening description of *Be This Her Memorial* contains mentions of the devil, spirit hounds, and phantom sounds,

The story I have to tell you about Nanni the Nanni who was hustled on her way to prayer-meeting by the Bad Man, who saw the phantom mourners bearing away Twm Tybach's coffin, who saw the Spirits Hounds and heard their meanings two days before Isaac Penparc took wing the story I have to tell you contradicts that theory.⁴⁰

Drawing upon the Welsh belief in the supernatural, Cardoc Evans incorporates this element throughout the story, giving it a supernatural feel and intertwining it with the religious theme in *Be This Her Memorial*.⁴¹ The persistence of Nanni with chapel life confirms the idea of nonconformity being part of Welsh national identity.

Nanni's character is undervalued and disregarded by her community. As Caradoc Evans uses her name as Nanni, with no inclination to her real name. Evans depicts her selflessness and resourcefulness. The reader becomes aware of

³⁶ Russell Davis, *Secret sins: Sex, Violence and Society in Carmarthenshire 1870 -1920*, 2nd edn.(Univercity of Wales Press, 1996), p.197-199.

³⁷ Russell Davis, *Secret sins: Sex, Violence and Society in Carmarthenshire 1870 -1920*, 2nd edn.(Univercity of Wales Press, 1996), p.197-199.

³⁸ Russell Davis, *Secret sins: Sex, Violence and Society in Carmarthenshire 1870 -1920*, 2nd edn.(Univercity of Wales Press, 1996), p.212.

³⁹ Russell Davis, *Secret sins: Sex, Violence and Society in Carmarthenshire 1870 -1920*, 2nd edn.(Univercity of Wales Press, 1996), p.212.

Russell Davis, *Secret sins: Sex, Violence and Society in Carmarthenshire 1870 -1920*, 2nd edn.(Univercity of Wales Press, 1996), p.218.

⁴⁰ Caradoc, Evans, *My People: Stories of the Peasantry of West Wales*, 6th edn.(London: Andrew Melrose, LTD, 1915), p. 161.

⁴¹ Caradoc, Evans, *My People: Stories of the Peasantry of West Wales*, 6th edn.(London: Andrew Melrose, LTD, 1915), p. 161.

the role Nanni she is placed in, 'she helped bring Josiah into the world. She swaddled him in her own flannel petticoat'.⁴² This gives us an insight into her treatment of the community mainly from the birth of Josiah Bryn-Bevan and the actions she took to take care of him. Also, the name of Nanni is unknown, she is a person who has always been there. By giving the name Nanni, Caradoc Evens implies to the reader that Nanni is loved and valued as a member of the family but throughout the story the actions of the community show otherwise. The only idea of her name is given when she tells the Seller of Bibles what to write in the dedication. She gives her initials as *D.D.* "Written inside it an inscription to the effect that it was a gift from the least worthy of his flock to the Respected Josiah Bryn-Bevan, *D.D.*"⁴³

She has always looked after others but was never looked after in return. Her selflessness is then demonstrated to be her undoing. Nanni starves herself to save money for a gift to Josiah Bryn-Bevan. But in return her sacrifice is wasteful as Josiah Bryn-Bevan gives away her gift,

At the end of his sermon the Respected Josiah Bryn-Bevan made reference to the giver of the Bible, and grieved that she was not in the Capel. He dwelt on her sacrifice. Here was a Book to be treasured, and he could think of no one who would treasure it better than Sadrach Danyrefail, to whom he would hand it in recognition of his work in the School of the Sabbath.⁴⁴

⁴² Caradoc, Evans, *My People: Stories of the Peasantry of West Wales*, 6th edn.(London: Andrew Melrose, LTD, 1915), p. 163.

⁴³ Caradoc, Evans, *My People: Stories of the Peasantry of West Wales*, 6th edn.(London: Andrew Melrose, LTD, 1915), p. 167-168.

⁴⁴ Caradoc, Evans, *My People: Stories of the Peasantry of West Wales*, 6th edn.(London: Andrew Melrose, LTD, 1915), p. 170.

Another theme is Nanni being taken advantage of economically by the chapel community.⁴⁵ 'Hence Nanni struggled on less than three shillings and ninepence a week, for did she not give a tenth of her income to the treasury of the Capel?'⁴⁶ While Nannis' character is undervalued by the community, her character illustrates a resourcefulness. It is shown that her ability to survive until Josiah Bryn-Bevan leaves by surviving on rats to eat to gift him a bible. While also ensuring she can watch Josiah Bryn-Bevan preach in different chapels before he leaves.

She hammered hobnails into the soles of her boots, so as to render them more durable for tramping to such capels as Bryn-Bevan happened to be preaching in.⁴⁷

Caradoc Evans demonstrates how Nannis' character is undervalued by everyone. He also displays her reliability, is selfless, and is resourceful in herself.

Evans depicts authority in a fairly satirical way. The interactions between Nanni and the religious authority depict corruption and neglect of those in need. The character Nanni is seen to attend church throughout the story and her well-being is discarded not just by the community but also by the parish.

Two Sabbaths before the farewell sermon was to be preached Nanni came to the Capel Sion with an ugly sore at the side of her mouth ; repulsive matter oozed slowly from it, forming in a head, and then coursing thickly down her chin onto the shoulder of her black cape, where it glistened among the beads.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Harri Garrod Roberts, *Embodying Identity: Representations of the Body in Welsh Literature* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2009), p.63.

Harri Garrod Roberts, *Embodying Identity: Representations of the Body in Welsh Literature* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2009), p.65.

⁴⁶ Caradoc, Evans, *My People: Stories of the Peasantry of West Wales*, 6th edn.(London: Andrew Melrose, LTD, 1915), p. 164.

⁴⁷ Caradoc, Evans, *My People: Stories of the Peasantry of West Wales*, 6th edn.(London: Andrew Melrose, LTD, 1915), p. 168.

⁴⁸ Caradoc, Evans, *My People: Stories of the Peasantry of West Wales*, 6th edn.(London: Andrew Melrose, LTD, 1915), p. 169.

As well as, Caradoc Evans's description of the bible is quite humorous although in some ways tragic.

He unstrapped his pack, and showed Nanni a gaudy volume with a clasp of brass, and containing many coloured prints ; the pictures he explained at hazard : here was a tall hatted John baptising, here a Roman-featured Christ praying in the Garden of Gethsemane, here a frock-coated Moses and the Tablets.⁴⁹

Here Caradoc Evans displays a children's Bible that a missinors is selling. It informs the reader of the corrupt nature of Wales' religion of nonconformity.

Caradoc Evans writes *Be This Her Memorial* in a realistic view of Wales as a nation. The theme he displays is the corrupt nature and a critique of chapel culture, which is attributed to Wales as an identity.⁵⁰ Another theme is a representation of paupers before the welfare state. The Character Nanni is used as an example of how paupers were treated by the community and how poor relief was used within Wales. Lastly, another theme is hypocrisy in the community, Caradoc Evans shows how communities in rural areas are selfish to each other and their treatment of the poor. *Be This Her Memorial* is a commentary of rural West Wales in the late 19th and early 20th century. The historical background that is used in the short story by Caradoc Evans gives a realistic look into the life of a rural community. As a historian researching the background history of *Be This Her Memorial* that Evans uses, it allows a real look into life in rural Wales.

⁴⁹ Caradoc, Evans, *My People: Stories of the Peasantry of West Wales*, 6th edn.(London: Andrew Melrose, LTD, 1915), p. 166.

⁵⁰ Gaynor Cohen, 'A sense of people and place: The chapel and language in sustaining Welsh identity' in *Identity and Networks: Fashioning Gender and Ethnicity Across Cultures*, ed. By Deborah Fahy Bryceson, Judith Okley, Jonathan Webber (New York: Berghanhn Books, 2007), pp.91-102. (p.92).

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Black and White

Standing in the breeze gazing onto the bite-sized town.
My woolly jacket fiercely protects me from the cold.
Hands in my pockets, my senses arise.
Here in front of Saint Peter's Church with the stone cold dead.
The wind whispers of a time long ago.
Through a black-and-white lens, I saw
the Welsh farmers, lively children with fed-up mothers dressed in their Sunday
best.
A strain of a whisper draws me to the right.
as if I was pulled by a string I arrive by the small lumps of footstones.
Some bearing the initials A.D No 123.
My eyes begin to glaze and the world turns black and white.
A woman stood before me in a calico shift wearing a hard-worn face.
A gust of wind clashed with the graveyard and chased the women away in a puff of
grey smoke.
A gathering breeze caught my attention as I
walked the high street, following the footsteps of the townspeople as they walked
home in the evening light.
I paused to the side as a haze began to creep
and the world turned black and white.
A town bustling with people with top hats, working gowns, and muddy boots.
A group of boys who were not yet men talking bellowly down the street, popping in
and out of the gentlemen's club.
Wearing suits and blazers bearing the arms of the old college.
A breeze cuts the picture in two and the town with Granny's kitchen becomes one
again.
A wisp of the wind guides me to the golden-plated gate.
Opened and welcoming I come to a stand facing an old building, with a flying flag
of 200 years.
The walkway that led to the broad brown gates takes a turn.
Black and white become whole, shaping the time and place.

A group of men circle each other with black and green robes, cheering for joy.

In the corner of my eye in the center of my right.

A man in black and white stripes holds an oval-shaped ball with a cheeky smile.

The cheers in the background begin to fade and a cheeky smile starts to fade.

A clash of wind blows my face and with a blink, the smile turns to a statue of
commemoration.

A blow of leaves guides me to a willow tree with running water beneath.

A bridge that stretches to the other side a young boy stands in black and white.

We meet in the middle with dangling feet, me in a woolly jacket and him with a
tweed field coat.

Sat in silence we contemplate

Me of the future and him of the past.

In 50 years apart we synchronised with no name
but of the picture of black and white.

Reflection:

Creative pieces are a way to tell a story. It is also another way to tell history. In the works of literature such as poetry, it can have a historical meaning. Poetry is a way to express feelings, opinions, and storytelling but it can also inform the reader of the author's beliefs and the time they lived in. For example, the *Odyssey* by Homer is an example of poetry that historians can use to inform the reader of the Greek myths during that time.⁵¹ while also using Emily Bronte works to comment on the social life in her time. As a student of History, there is an attempt to combine both creative writing and history to tell a historical story. The poem aims to combine the knowledge of the history of Lampeter into a creative piece and demonstrate how literature is another way to engage with the past.

Intending to combine history with creative writing, the poem follows a walkthrough of Lampeter using a historical lens. The inspiration was found by reading an extract in *Shifts* by Meredith Christopher.⁵² The character, Keith, investigates his town's history. He would take his glasses off and see a whole new world of his

⁵¹ Homer., G. S. (Geoffrey Stephen) Kirk, and Walter Shewring, *The Odyssey* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

⁵² Christopher, Meredith, *Shifts*, 2nd edn.(Worcester: Billing and Sons Ltd, 1990).

imagination.⁵³ As well as, volunteering in the archives and coming across black and white photographs of previous students. It inspired a sense of time travel, how new students and old students previously walked the same grounds and viewed the same scenery. The poem follows a tour of Lampeter, using black and white photographs to see the past with the breeze turning the pages. It is a story about the town and the university. It comments on the little change Lampeter has experienced and what is still the same. The poems reflect on history but also express feelings and a fascination with history. The start of the poem is situated at St Peter's Church with its rich history and its cemetery. It made sense to start the poem where the town is visible with acknowledgment of past residents who have been buried, where also the old meets the new.

'Here in front of Saint Peter's Church with the stone cold dead. The wind whispers of a time long ago.' The poem continues on a path to the university and acknowledges the high street. The old building on the Lampeter campus has stood for more than 200 years and it came with an awareness that it is a spot where previous students have graduated and also symbolises graduation for the future. 'A group of men circle each other with black and green robes, cheering for joy.' The ending is an attempt to bring a creative response to history. How in one moment in time two people can be in the same place in the same situation 100 or 50 years apart. 'In 50 years apart we synchronised with no name but of the picture of black and white.'

Writing a poem as a student of history was an interesting way to engage with creative writing as a disciple. As a historian the disciple deals with facts and using creative writing, it has helped to acknowledge a different way to re-tell a story that has a more personal feeling. It can help historians travel into the past to see the creativity and ideas of authors, such as Emily Bronte, and see how her stories comment on the time she lived in. There is a new appreciation of literature as a way to participate in writing history and engage with it to see into the past.

⁵³ Christopher, Meredith, *Shifts*, 2nd edn.(Worcester: Billing and Sons Ltd, 1990), p.16-17.

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