

Dubliners by james joyce essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

James Augustine Alrysius Joyce, an Irish writer, was born in Dublin 2nd February 1882 and died in Zurich, Switzerland 13th January 1941.

He was born into a well-off Catholic family and was the eldest surviving child; two of his siblings died of typhoid. Joyce was originally educated at Clongowes Wood College, a boarding school in County Kildare, which he left at the age of 6 because his father could no longer pay the fees. James Joyce studied at home for a brief period of time before being offered a place in the Jesuits' Dublin School. At the age of 16 he rejected Catholicism which changed his life completely. At the age of 20, after graduating from the UDC (University College Dublin) he left for Paris and tried studying different occupations like teaching, journalism and even a doctor. At the age of 21 he returned to Ireland after receiving news that his mother was diagnosed with cancer.

After she had died James Joyce became a heavy drinker but gradually stopped as he got over her death. He then stayed in Dublin for a period of time from 1904-1907 writing the "Dubliners" and also started many other books. The book "Dubliners" is a collection of short stories and "Araby", like all of them, have "paralysis" meaning that they can't leave Dublin. For example in the short story "Clay" Maria has the chance to make a new life and leave Dublin but turns it down because she is too scared. This also occurs in "A Painful Case" and "Eveline", as they don't have the courage to leave Dublin. In the short story "The Boarding House", Bob Doran wishes to leave Dublin but can't because he is trapped inside marriage.

Most of the short stories, unlike “Araby”, go in circles, for instance, “Two Gallants” when Lenehan just wanders around Dublin. This also occurs in “The Dead” because a horse just goes around and around in circles, and also in “An Encounter” when a pervert tries to stop but end back in the same perverted world. At the end of the short stories James Joyce always write an epiphany, which is a revelation, but in all but one story the revelation is only noticed by the reader but in “Araby” both the reader and the protagonist – the protagonist is the main character – have an epiphany – an epiphany is a moment of revelation, usually at the end of the story. In the streets of Dublin James Joyce writes them as being “blind”, meaning that it’s a dead end and there is nothingness, it also means that you can’t escape and there is nowhere to go (there is no way of getting out of Dublin). The main reason is that there is no vision, meaning that you can’t see how terrible and run down Ireland really is.

He describes all things by the colours “brown” and “yellow” that symbolises human excrements. He writes “the lamps of the street lifted their feeble lanterns”, the word “feeble” shows that the light is not even strong enough to even penetrate the darkness. Read the analysis of “Jostled by drunken men and bargaining women”, the word bargaining in this case can mean two things.

The first meaning of it is that they are just selling items and changing the prices of them, and the second meaning is that the women are bargaining for their bodies, they are prostitutes. There are “street singers” who sing about the problems in Ireland. Also that weather is always extremely violent, and this is shown by the words “cold air stung us”, “rain impinge upon the

earth” and “ the air was pitilessly raw”. Religion in Dublin is exceedingly poor. In the second paragraph it says “ a priest, had died” showing that the faith in Dublin has disappeared off the face of the earth. Inside the house of the dead priest there were books that were “ curled and damp” meaning that the interest in them was lost.

The books were “ The Abbot” which is a religious story, “ The Devout Communicant” which is a book on how to receive Holy Communion well and the last one “ The Memoirs of Vidocq” which is about a thief. The books are muddled up indicating that religion in Ireland is a sham. When it talks about the priest again it first says “ very charitable priest” making you think that the priest was a good man, and suddenly says “ in his will he had left all his money to institutions and the furniture of his house to his sister” presenting the complete opposite. This means that the priest was only charitable went he knew he was dieing and he wasn’t a nice man. In the dead priest’s “ wild garden” there is an apple tree in the centre signifying the Garden of Eden which is a source of evil.

In a bush in the garden, there is a “ rusty bicycle-pump”, this can denote three things. The first description of the bicycle-pump is that there is no escape because, if you can’t pump up your tires, then you can’t go anywhere. The second explanation represents the snake, or Satan, in the Garden of Eden because the pump is approximately the same size a snake. The last reason, symbolizes a heart, meaning that, because the heart is not pumping, there is no love or life in Dublin, symbolizing that everything is hopeless. A good part in the story when you know that religion is just a phoney in Dublin is when the boy’s Aunt says “ I’m afraid you may have to

put off your bazaar for this night of Our Lord” actually saying that he should just forget about it in a nasty way. Although she is using religious word she is using them without kindness, meaning that she is not caring about him.

The family life in Dublin isn't very pleasant either. In the beginning of the book, the boy says “ if my Uncle was seen turning the corner, we hid in the shadow” indicating that he doesn't live with his parents, and also that he's scared of him. On the night of the bazaar his Uncle came home late, “ I heard him talking to himself” meaning he was obviously drunk and had forgotten all about Araby. The love in Dublin is bland. For the boy he loves and stalks “ Mangan's sister”.

She is called this because he doesn't actually know her name so he names her “ Mangan's sister”. He defines her as “ light” because he thinks of Dublin as the dark and Mangan's sister as a light to brighten up Dublin. When he looks at her “ her dress swung as she moved her body, and the soft rope of her hair tossed from side to side”, she is described as lively and everyone else is not. “ Followed her”, or stalking her is the meaning, “ I kept her ‘ brown’ figure always in my eye”, “ brown” indicating that she is actually just an ordinary person with nothing special about her. Within one paragraph there are five words “ chalice”, “ prayers”, “ praises”, “ tears” and “ adoration”, he describes her with religious word, and because he left Catholicism she is now his secular religion (one without God). She is also like music to his ears because it says “ my body was like a harp and her words and gestures were like fingers running upon the wires”.

Also showing that he uses her in a secular religion is a sentence saying “ I pressed the palms of my hands together until they trembled, murmuring: ‘ O love! O love! many times” showing that he worships her a lot. “ At last she spoke to me”, this is the moment he was waiting for the whole time. She then talks about “ Araby” and says she can’t go. While she was talking to him “ she turned a sliver bracelet”, silver indicating bright. In two sentences he uses six words to describe how radiant and bright she is and how drawn he is to her, they are “ light”, “ lamp”, “ white”, “ lit”, “ lit” and “” white”, repeating “ white” and “ lit”.

“ Waking and sleep thoughts” and “ chafed against the work of school” imply that he can’t do anything besides thinking about Araby and Mangan’s sister, and it also says “ I strove to read” hinting the same thing. “ Lie at the window” signals that he stalks and spies on Mangan’s sister, and he is “ singing” because he is happy about getting Mangan’s sister a present. Lastly he has a sexual desire for Mangan’s sister because it says “ border below the dress” suggesting that he is growing quite fast and is into the puberty stage of life. “ Araby” is a fair or, a “ bazaar” – which is a foreign word from the east.

In the boy’s eyes, “ Araby” is an exotic place that gets away from all the darkness of Dublin. Also Araby is close to the word Arabia which is in the east signifying that it’s exotic, rich. And because it is in the east it signifies that the sunrise comes from the east, representing a new day, a new hope, a new light. Also Jesus resurrected in the east, epitomizing a new beginning or day. When he eventually arrives to Araby, he goes around the stalls and finds that most of them are closed. There is one that is open but when he sees the

people at the stall he discovers they all speak in English accents indicating that the bazaar is not exotic at all.

A “ young lady”, who is probably a prostitute, because she is seen flirting with two men at the same time, asks the boy if he wants to buy anything but he says “ no, thank you”. And from this, all of his dreams end because, the items are too expensive and mundane. At the end of the story there is an epiphany, which is the moment of revelation, to both the reader and the protagonist, because usually the epiphany is only recognisable to the reader. On the second from last paragraph at the end it says “ complete darkness” signifying that all hope is gone.

The whole of the last paragraph says “ gazing up into the darkness I saw myself as a creature driven and derided by vanity; and my eyes burned with anguish and anger”, this is the exact moment when he realises that all Dublin was in vain and all he did was in vain. He figures out from this that there actually is no love, no romance and no chivalry.