

# "seduction" by eileen mcauley essay sample

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## **“ Seduction” by Eileen McAuley Essay Sample**

The first part of the poem “ Seduction” is a story about a young girl who is seduced by a boy after the party, and consequently becomes pregnant. The second section describes how the girl then regrets her decision. In general the poet does intends her reader to feel sympathy for the girl. She does this by using many different poetic techniques.

But while the majority of the poem instills a sense of compassion for the girl it can also be read critically of her. For example, as the poet writes that she drank vodka through the phrase “ she knocked it back like water”, using imagery to imply that she drinks alcohol regularly or that at the very least she should have been more responsible for her own wellbeing.

In another stanza the poet again implies that the girl is not as innocent as she seems as she went to “ day trips to Blackpool, jumping all the rides”. This indicates that she was a bad girl, not paying for the attractions she is enjoying.

We can see that the girl is quite intelligent, as she is seen “ chattering” about her O-levels. Therefore the girl should have been much more responsible in her handling of the incident, and ought to have known the risks involved in having sex instead of blindly following enjoyable pieces of fiction in her magazines.

However, the general sense of the poem entails a sense of sympathy for the girl- much like a television show in which the audience can already guess

what will happen, but still cannot help but to feel sadness for the events that happened.

The reader gets this perception from the very beginning, starting with how the boy is shown- his purpose in the story is simply to seduce the girl, as we can see from the first stanza: " He led her to the quiet bricks of Birkenhead docks," which also implies that the boy is charge of the girl. The poet uses narration to set up the location of the poem and to show the general story.

The reader also gets many hints from the poem about the boy's personality through extensive use of imagery. The girl " fell in love with his eyes as blue as iodine". Through this use of imagery, the boy seems to be pictured as poisonous, since iodine is a poison. The girl therefore seems to have been defiled by the boy.

In another section the boy's character is once again described indirectly, but this time using personification. As the boy brings the girl to the Mersey River, it is conveyed as " green as a septic wound," as well as " the frightening scum on the water". The environment personifies the boy's character- sickly, frightening and dangerous. Here the reader can sympathize with the girl as she seems innocent and has been violated by the boy.

The innocence of the girl is shown through " all high white shoes". White usually represents all that has been untainted- the shoes are symbolic of the girl's purity. Later, after she found out that she became pregnant " she broke the heels of her high white shoes". This symbolizes the loss of the girl's

virginity, and once again allows the reader to feel sorry for the way she lost it.

It could be said that the pregnancy was partly the fault of the media. Halfway through the poem the girl is said to have "ripped up all her My Guy and her Jackie photo-comics, until they were just bright paper, confetti strewn". The reader sees that she obviously blames the magazines she has read for not warning her of the risks- and therefore took a large part in her becoming pregnant. This is emphasized by the use of confetti- as confetti is usually used in happiness, when people get married. Ironically though the poet uses it instead to show a similar event, but in no way at all happy. The reader empathizes with the girl as the poet leads us to believe that in some way the media "betrayed" her.

The attitude that the society shows towards the girl is very important. The poet states that "where, now, were the pink smiling faces in the picture?" This shows that society rejects her after she became pregnant- all her friends had left her. This is strengthened by the fact that it is a rhetorical question.

This rejection by society is further shown that it is "better to be smoking scented drugs, or festering invisibly, unemployed. Better to destroy your life in modern, man-made ways than to fall into this despicable feminine void." In here, the poet states that she would be looked more favorable by society if she was to take drugs or be unemployed. Later, it also states that it would be better to be anorexic rather than accidentally become pregnant. The last line, "than to have the neighbors whisper that " you always looked the

type". This is extremely strong, both because it is the last line in the poem, as well as the fact that this is personal- even the neighbors, who originally may have liked her suddenly reject her because she became pregnant.

Lastly the poet herself uses narrative voice. During the last two stanzas, she claims that it is " better" to do these things rather than to become pregnant. However, through this the reader can also identified that she is being sarcastic, using " better" in a scornful way. In fact, she does not reject the girl, as she states " with a softly rounded belly". Rather, she sees it as a beautiful thing and criticizes the way society acts against the girl. Thus, the reader sympathizes with the girl because the poet herself does so.