

Consider the concept
of paralysis in
dubliners essay
sample



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James Joyce was born on February 2nd 1882. He was a novelist, poet and short story writer. He is remembered as one of Ireland's best known and innovative writers. He grew up in a middle class family, which he may have used to inspire his book of short stories, entitled *Dubliners*. He wrote the book out of his own frustrations on the limitation to Dublin life. *Dubliners* was written in 1906 and later published in June 1914. It's a diverse collection of scenes drawn from middle class, catholic life in the city of Dublin. Joyce wrote *Dubliners* as a collection, to be read in relation to the other.

The frustrations of childhood, disappointments of adolescence and awakening of adulthood can all be seen and related to in the descriptive short stories. But clearer still is the book's underlying theme of paralysis. This theme is given in several forms, physical, emotional, sexual and social to name but a few. It is this 'base' theme that I shall be exploring in my essay. " There was no hope for him this time, it was his third stroke. " This is the opening sentence of ' the sisters,' and gives the idea of a priest being physically paralysed after a stroke.

This gives a sense of despair, no hope for a man who has been decapitated by paralysis. Stuck in a world where it's hard, maybe impossible to move, no sense of freedom but the overwhelming sense of imprisonment. The characters in this story are stuck in the past, emotionally paralysed through the sands of time. It seems as if they have no future to look ahead to, instead they reminisce about past times and the departed priest's life. In the story *Araby*, Joyce gives the streets and houses of Dublin human attributes, in order to construct the impression that the buildings and objects in Dublin are paralysed.

He describes North Richmond Street as being blind, physically impaired and trapped in the blanket of darkness. “ North Richmond Street, being blind, was a quiet street except at the hour when the Christian Brothers’ school set the boys free. ” This act of setting the boys ‘ free’ gives the impression that they were trapped, imprisoned, unable to escape, paralysed within the school’s gates. All through this story, Joyce uses dark words to refer to the streets of Dublin. “ House’s had grown sombre”, “ dark muddy lanes”, “ dark dripping gardens” and “ dark odorous stables”, all creating a sombre effect within the story.

This gives the idea that the streets of Dublin are enclosed in darkness, unable to break free, frozen, paralysed in time. A living landscape conspiring to entrap inhabitants of Dublin. “ She sat at the window watching the evening invade the avenue. ” This is the opening sentence of ‘ Eveline’ and straight away we can see she is paralysed. Sitting behind her window we can see she is mindless, empty, there is nothing moving, she has to escape. Eveline tells the story of a woman who has fallen in love with a sailor named Frank.

He is leaving on a boat for Buenos Ayres and she decides to go with him. “ Escape! She must escape! Frank would save her. He would give her life, perhaps love, too. ” Eveline feels she has no life in Dublin; she is suffocating within the crushing walls that keep her trapped within the city. She must escape. She sees Frank as a way out, even if he doesn’t love her, yet. When it comes to leaving she can’t, Dublin’s dead grip has hold of her, dragging her back. “ No! No! No! It was impossible. ” Dichotomy reveals itself in this emotional story as we see Eveline being pulled in two.

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On one side she has Dublin, a place she knows, a place she can't get out of. In the other is Buenos Ayres, a possible paradise, and a welcome alternative from the restrictions on life in Dublin. Through the realism and symbolic imagery in *Dubliners*, Joyce gives the idea the people of Dublin are paralysed, trapped in time within the city, unable to break free. The stories depict true middle-class catholic life in Dublin. In all the stories, the underlying tension of paralysis seeps through in many different ways.

Joyce controls this and uses it to capture the reader's attention with vivid images. The characters want to leave their restricted lives behind but find it hard because the city has hold of them, dragging them back in, stubborn Dublin. In this sense Joyce gives the City a human attribute, adding to the sense of imagery and symbolism. The theme gives the book a different aspect of reading and gives readers something to think about. Each episode of the *Dubliners* is as detailed as the previous, creating an exciting and impressive book.