

# Dubliners – eveline and her parents essay



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

In Eveline Joyce portrays two generations, namely Eveline and her parents. Unlike the narrators in the previous stories, Eveline is an adult but the entrapment of the narrators remains constant with her. The main treatment of the young is of Eveline by her father. Her father, an alcoholic, abuses his daughter, “ Even now, though she was nineteen, she sometimes felt herself in danger of her father’s violence. She knew it was that that had given her palpitations. ” He makes her work but takes away her wages to throw away on drink, saying that she would “ squander” the money, having “ no head”. He is ungrateful for the hard work she does and ridicules her. Like Dublin, her father is stifling and oppressive and while she is with him she can never be happy or prosper. Also her work colleagues treat her unfairly, another example of the mistreatment of the young by their elders. On wondering what they will think to her moving away, she says they would “ say she was a fool, perhaps; and her place would be filled up by advertisement. Mrs Gavan would be glad.

” She says “ She would not cry many tears at leaving the Stores. But in her new home, in a distant unknown country, it would not be like that. ”

Although she hates the lack of respect her colleagues have for her, her work is familiar, like her home life, and though it is dismal, it is assured. Eveline is in keeping with the stages-of-life structure of the novel whereby the narrator of each successive story is older than the last. Eveline is an adult, a young women of marrying age, but like the narrators of the first three stories preceding her own, she is controlled by the older generations.

Eveline has more responsibilities than the previous narrators and her financial situation is worse but Joyce blurs the distinction between her adulthood and the children of the previous stories with her recollection of childhood memories. She recalls when “ they seemed to have been rather happy then. Her father was not so bad then; and besides, her mother was alive. ” The subject matter is more adolescent and the ideas of love and romance are introduced, having only previously being presented in the form of the boy’s unrequited crush in Araby. However, Eveline seems to distance herself from everyone around her and does not appear to feel very much love. Although she seems very attached to the familiarity of home, she “ knows” her family rather than “ loves” them – “ In her home anyway she had shelter and food; she had those whom she had known all her life.

” Equally, she does not appear to love Frank, but merely likes him – he was “ very kind, manly, open hearted. ” Although this story marks a shift to a third person narrative, Joyce uses the technique of streams of consciousness to convey the narrators’ thoughts. Read The Boarding House Essay When Eveline has her epiphany, her sudden realisation of how terrible her life really is, this technique is used: “ Escape! She must escape! Frank would save her. He would give her life, perhaps love, too.

But she wanted to live. Why should she be unhappy? She had a right to happiness. Frank would take her in his arms, fold her in his arms. He would save her. ” The ellipse follows this, taking the action to the dock where she is to leave. This acts to build tension as the reader is sure Eveline will leave.

By saying that “ She prayed to God, to direct her, to show her what was her duty” Joyce is commenting on religion as if God has instructed Eveline to make the wrong decision and stay in Dublin. Likewise, in the previous stories, he has presented priests very negatively and has hinted at the repressive nature of the Irish church, religion being another of the omnipresent themes in Dubliners. The recurrent themes of entrapment and paralysis play an important part in Eveline with the title character being trapped in the stagnant Dublin by her abusive, domineering father. Joyce makes clear her desire for something more as “ She sat at the window watching the evening invade the avenue” but duty bound she wastes her opportunity to escape.

It is she that looks after the house and the children, her brothers – “ It was hard work – a hard life – but now that she was about to leave it she did not find it a wholly undesirable life. ” This shows the extent of her feelings of duty and her entrapment as she will suffer with the familiar rather than escape to the uncertain. Although she is terrified of ending up like her mother, whose “ life of commonplace sacrifice closed in final craziness”, she feels obliged to stay to face the same inevitable future of misery. There is also a strong element of fear, of her father and of her lover but predominantly of the unknown – life outside the safe misery of Dublin. The treatment of Eveline by her father, and to a lesser extent her work colleagues, is typical of the treatment of the young in Dubliners.

In The Sisters, Araby, and An Encounter children are repressed and controlled by adults including parents, teachers and churchmen. Throughout the novel Joyce depicts trans-generational relationships in a negative light,

with most of them being very unbalanced and unfair. In Eveline the father is controlling and ungrateful and uses his power to keep Eveline from escaping Dublin, in the hope of a happy future. The main theme of entrapment dominates this story with Eveline trapped by fear and duty in the stagnant Dublin, trapped in the claustrophobic confines of her home.