

Essay on the short story: dubliners by james joyce

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In his book *Dubliners*, James Joyce included fifteen short stories, which were originally aimed to depict the reality and naturalism of the Irish middle class life in Dublin and its suburbs in the beginning of the 20th century. Not only did James manage to depict the actual life of its protagonists, but he also managed to show the variety of colours of that life, catching reader's attention, at the same time shocking him. The stories were actually written when Irish nationalism was in full swing. These were the days when people were searching for national identity and purpose, as Ireland has been always shocked by a number of converging ideas and influences. The main idea of all the short stories is 'enlightenment' - Joyce wanted to push his characters to self-understanding. Also, another trace of James Joyce's short stories is a clear interpretation of all the periods of life of a human being - childhood, adolescence and maturity, as mostly all the stories are narrated by children and with the continuation of the story, James interweaves elder people.

Actually, Joyce is writing rather neutrally, he does not use hyperbole or emotive language, as he is first and foremost aimed at simplicity and reality of the story - he pays much attention to details to create a realistic setting. Due to such approach, a reader becomes closely connected to the narrator and the story itself, literally being soaked through with the setting, feelings and emotions. Despite the fact that the majority of the stories lack traditional dramatic resolution, they do not leave the reader unemotional or indifferent, vice versa - such style helps the reader come to his own conclusion and consider the story without the author's intrusion. Undoubtedly, the stores do not leave the reader indifferent; they do make the reader ponder, at the same time leaving a trace of tragedy.

Indeed, if we take a precise look at almost all the stories from *Dubliners*, we may arrive at conclusion that they depict a rather negative life. Almost all the protagonists seem to be victims in one way or another. No doubt, all the stories depicted by James are usually taken from middle-class society, which is experiencing daily problems. Their life is similar to a circle, which is moving them around. For example, in a story *Eveline* we see a young woman who, being complete desperate about her life in Ireland and having lost her mother, is about to leave Ireland with a sailor. She has nothing what would make her stay in Ireland - she has lost her mother and brother, she may be beaten by her father, and her sales job seems to bring more pain rather than happiness. The whole story is soaked through with sorrow, despair; everything seems to have an imprint of 'organic grinder', which reminds Eveline of the funerals of her mother. She made a promise to her mother to take after the house, but the feeling that she is about to break the promise is killing Eveline inside. The reader can see that Eveline is stuck in a tight corner, being frustrated with her present life, at the same time having no enthusiasm about her future life in a new country. Even though Eveline has nothing left in Ireland, she fails to leave her motherland anyway. Eveline is a true example of a circular journey, where a protagonist decides to come back to its routes, to the origins of his life, being completely disappointment with his possible future journey. At the same time we see Eveline suffer throughout the story - she is tortured by her thoughts and her future plans, which are tightly interweaved with the reality she does not want to abandon.

It is common knowledge that the life of the middle-class people in Ireland, especially in the beginning of the 1900s was far from ideal one. The whole

nation was trying to find its real roots, to fight for its culture. In his stories James wants his characters to understand by trials and errors what kind of life they actually have. In Araby James is telling a story of a failed dream, of a ruined miracle and bitter maturing. The story arises in a rather poor neighbourhood, which at first sight is very gloomy and depressive. However, we came to understand that actually the gloomy and boring North Richmond Street is illuminated by the imagination of children. The narrator, a boy, is leaving with a dream to visit Araby bazaar, all his thoughts of Araby come to be like of some magic place, a place where dreams come true, and a place, which illuminates boring life. Nonetheless, we can see the boy's disappointment, when he visits Araby - it is far from what he had been dreaming of, and such disappointment makes him furious. This boy becomes another victim of the Dubliners stories - another disappointment in love and dreams, another fail.

Undoubtedly, it is rather hard to interpret the life, which leaves much to be desired, in a favourable way. James did not want to create a fairy tale, he wanted to show the very reality, to let the reader not remain indifferent, he wanted the reader to understand the main character and get some knowledge he may need in future. Another story, the Sisters, is also a bright example of James's intentions. A nameless boy loses his friend and mentor Father Flynn; we see all the feelings, which are overwhelming the boy, come throughout the story. The boy is haunted by the images of Father Flynn, the only dream he has is to escape to some mysterious world. Frankly speaking, the whole story is soaked through with very gloomy and dark colours, from the very first moments when we see Father Flynn sick, we realize that the

story is not going to tell anything cheerful. Nevertheless, with such a start James Joyce is preparing the reader to a harsh reality, which we face later. We feel sorry for a boy who, despite having a family, seems to be left alone. Again, with no obvious ending, James lets the reader ponder over what could happen next.

The whole book *Dubliners* is nothing but a long story of people who, willing to escape to another life, having bright dreams and being ready to some huge changes, come to where they actually started their life from. All the characters are returned to reality from their dreams or ideas of a better life. James Joyce shows its characters that Ireland is their home, and it cannot change itself, though people may change it if they want. He does not want his characters to live in an imaginary world; he wants them to become elder and stronger. James is convinced that only difficulties may make a person stronger. Each and every character faces disappointment in one way or another, we may consider it cruel, however, may be due to these trials James's characters do change and become stronger?

Reference

Joyce, James. *Dubliners*. Delaware: Prestwick House, 2006.