

Our day out, willy russell analysis



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Our day out was written by Willy Russell, he uses many ways to give the impression of escape such as language, historical content, dramatic devices and most of all, his characters. As well as creating this theme, around it, he makes a very good intriguing play. The main view of escape is through the children, especially Carol, a young girl in the 'Progress Class', living poorly and with no future ahead of her at all. Russell uses this background to show that Carol is indeed looking to escape from her life, she says things such as 'I don't want to go home miss' and 'Do you reckon I could live in one of them big houses?' Sayings such as these prove that Carol is indeed searching for a way out of her deadbeat life.

Russell creates sympathy towards Carol too, she runs away from the rest of her friends and teachers and wants to run away from home and live in the countryside, the viewer can see that Carol is in a desperate situation and wants to get out of it. Mrs Kay holds a leading role in Our Day Out; she is one of the teachers, head of the 'Progress Class'. She too is escaping, escaping from reality, she knows that the children she is trying to teach have no future at all and their opportunities aren't good at all. For example, she says things like 'There is nothing for them to do, any of them; most of them were born for factory fodding, but the factories have closed down,' and 'I'm not going to let you prevent these kids from having fun.' She says these things to Mr Briggs; she wouldn't say them to the children because she is escaping from the harsh reality that is inevitable. Mr Briggs on the other hand isn't like Mrs Kay at all, where as Mrs Kay is very lenient and understands the children's situation as she herself is from Liverpool, Mr Briggs is from

Yorkshire, he is very strict and wants things to be done by the book, 'It needs to be planned and executed to be enjoyable.

'Although he is one of the least characters you'd expect to be 'escaping', he does throughout the trip. When the children go to the zoo, Mr Briggs decides that he can trust the children to behave, even when not being watched over; at the start of the play you wouldn't have expected him to do this. Also, when Carol wants to be left behind Mr Briggs comes out to be his real self I think, he is escaping from his harsh side to his good side, and another good point, at the end of the play he takes the children to the fair as 'You can't go to the beach without going to the fair,' he says. Inevitably though, at the end of the play he turns back into his cruel, usual self, like the children go back to their cruel, usual lives. On the trip, all of the children escape from their god forbidden lives, Digga and Reilly are the stereotypical deadbeat Liverpool children, always joking around and having a laugh, for example Reilly tries it on with one of the woman teachers, typical 'factory fodder's'.

As well as this, Linda, a girl in the play, likes one of the teachers, Colin, she thinks that if she marries him she will be able to escape from her life and be able to start a new one, in a big house as he is of a higher living standard. In a fantasy, if you like, Linda and Reilly realise that they can't have older people, 'better people' and end up going out with each other. Russell uses dramatic devices throughout the play, creating emotions for the reader or viewer. For example, the fact that at the end of the play, everything is back to normal and is a disappointing end, the children's 'escape' was only temporary, sayings like 'I haven't seen my dad for two years,' from one of the children, Andrew, shows the type of lifestyle the children have.

Throughout the play songs are sung, these songs show the children's feelings at any one time, anger, happiness etc. I think that this shows the 'togetherness' of the children and shows that they have forgotten about their harsh background which, at the end of the day, they are going to have to come back to, like it or not.

Another dramatic device used is dark humour, the kids joke about their situation. This shows the humour of things and lightens the depressing fact about their reality, like the viewer is escaping from the children's reality possibly. Willy Russell uses a very obvious use of meaning in language. He uses a metaphor, were a bear is in a cage at the zoo, one of the children says 'If it has lived all its life in a cage, how will he know anything different?' Giving the idea that the children have always lived like they have done and don't know anything better. The fact that the children have a scouse accent puts them down from the word go. Any single-minded person puts scousers into a category of thieves and scallys.

It doesn't sound appealing to people living outside of Liverpool and they often get the stereotypical image. People are prejudiced towards the children and think that they are low lives. There is no hope for these children, members of the ironically named 'Progress Class'. The final technique Willy Russell uses is historical and social background.

The setting for the play is Liverpool in the 1970's, a city that was poor and run down, the factories had closed and the less fortunate children left with no future, Mrs Kay says 'They were born for the factories, and now they're all gone.' The children aren't cared for by the council, ironically the lollipop

man is blind; surely you need someone who can see the traffic to be a lollipop man? The council obviously didn't care. I think this shows that the council/government didn't care for the less fortunate people at the time.