

# Eleanor rigby: a deep thought balad on psychedelic lyrics from the beatles

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The style of the Beatles evolved throughout their career, from their early love songs, i. e. Love Me Do, to their solo endeavors, i. e. Paul McCartney & Wings, and John Lennon's Rubber Ono Band. What I will be discussing is the song/ballad Eleanor Rigby, which originally appeared on the 'Revolver' album. The song, actually the entire album's style, is the predecessor of the style heard on 'Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Heart's Club Band.' The style I speak of is that 'psychedelic/deep thought' that the Beatles, evolved into. As Mellers says,

...The song proper is narrative ballad, and the words are poetry, evoking with precise economy Eleanor Rigby, the middle-aged spinster who picks up the rice at somebody else's wedding, lives in a dream, keeps her face 'in a jar by the door' ; and Father Mackenzie, the priest who lives alone, darns his socks in the empty night, writes the sermon that no one wants to listen to, wipes off his hands the dirt from the grave where he's buried Eleanor Rigby after administering the last rites by which 'no one was saved'. The words reverberate through their very plainness (70-71)

That basically sums up the entire gist of the song, but this is more of an analysis, of the style, so here we go. The Beatles evolved from 'cute' to 'artistic.' It took them a while to evolve, but it was all the better, in my opinion, because they were much better after 'Revolver' than they were before it. The evolution to the artistic style, is best summed up by Hertzgaard,

' Revolver' was the first album of the Beatles' psychedelic period, but the reason it qualifies as art is the indisputable quality and sophistication of song after song like Eleanor Rigby, ...None of this was cute music.(176)

Furthermore he speaks about the actual power behind the imagery, ...starkly revealed his heroine's character and thus suggested the rest of the story. She was a lonely spinster, so utterly cut off from the lifeblood of human contact that she " lives in a dream," a phrase that evoked her isolation and power.(182)

Eleanor is clearly a victim of society, who is not really liked by anyone, and shunned by the whole world, except for Father Mackenzie, who is also an outcast of society. " Eleanor Rigby and Father Mackenzie are chaste strangers cast off from the world by age and neglect, brought together only by the empty ritual of Eleanor's burial."(Riley, 181) Truthfully the absolute best way to describe the poem is through the sheer simplicity with which it is woven. In six verses, they successfully summed up the lives of two people, and the death of one of them. Eleanor, can be seen as any homeless person in the world, who is ' thrown out' by society , and dies alone, and the only person that knows of her death, is the preacher who finds her dead, and gives her last rites. It's actually much more of a sad song if you think of it that way.

I guess what I'm getting at, is the fact that the Beatles not only were creators of some of the most influential music in history, but they also spoke of very real things, i. e. Taxman, and Eleanor Rigby which are the first two

songs on 'Revolver.' These two songs are complete opposites, as seen in Mellers, ...the song [Taxman] doesn't end but fades away; it leads nowhere, because Mr. Taxman (yesterday called Mr. Wilson, today Mr. Heath) is there always. The second song, Eleanor Rigby, ...complements the first by being its polar opposite. Taxman is an anti-love song; Eleanor Rigby is pro-love, though it's not a love song in the sense that the majority of early Beatles songs were. It's about compassion, loneliness, and implicitly about the generation gap—three basic themes of second period Beatles music... (70) He then goes on to talk about the rest of the album, in a long and drawn out fashion. As a matter of fact, his whole book was rather displeasing, but I'm not a critic.

Finally I would like to say: The day John Lennon died, was a sad day in the history of music. Although the other Beatles are still around, it's not the same. When 'Anthology' was released, I was so glad to hear a new Beatles song, that I forgot that John Lennon has been dead for almost twenty years. The Beatles' lyrics have reinforced things that my parents taught me, like everybody deserves a chance, and I think that if Eleanor had that chance, she wouldn't have died alone.