

Looking at "the virgin and the gipsy" essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

In this novel, the rector clearly represents a strict, religious moral code, by which he lives his life.

In his eyes, there is a clear line between what is right and what is wrong. And although his ideas/views are not accepted by everyone, he refuses to accept that anyone else's differing view could be anywhere near the truth. An example of this can be identified during the episode concerning Yvette's conversation with her father over the Eastwoods; the rector is so obsessed by his concept of what is right that he threatens his daughter with 'the lunatic asylum' (p66) for befriending the modern Eastwoods. This is 'the threat he always seemed to have up his sleeve' (p66). In the rector's - somewhat twisted - mentality, the Eastwoods are people who are 'unclean in their minds and their bodies' (p64).

However, he sees Granny's age as a blameless one: the people of Granny's age are apparently 'clean, blameless people'. This is so clear in his mind that he forces his daughter, Yvette, to choose between her family and the Eastwoods. Due to the rector's strict, moral and just views, he was very hurt - suicidal, even (p3: 'Sympathetic ladies had stayed him from suicide') - when she-who-was-Cynthia left him and his family. This partially explains why he is so cautious when he senses even the smallest traces of she-who-was-Cynthia in Yvette. After he married Cynthia, they had 2 children (Yvette and Lucille).

His concept of right and wrong led to the shock which affected him so severely when she no longer wanted to take part in being a member of the rector's restrictive household. The rector saw her leaving him as evil, and

recognises traces of she-who-was-Cynthia in his daughters. She-who was Cynthia obviously could not cope with the restrictive atmosphere in the rectory. It was too dull for her in the long run, and so she left the rectory and moved on with her life. She was the same kind of modern freethinker as the Eastwoods; she craved freedom, and abhorred restraint.

She was the one who reinforced the rector's views, and made him paranoid of his children turning 'evil'. Or what he saw as evil; lack of restraint, and too much 'unnecessary freedom' (p27). On the other end of the metaphorical spectrum, however, the gypsy represents a sort of freedom to Yvette. Although he lives in a simple outdoor gypsy encampment, he seems more clean and pure than anyone and anything in the rectory.

The quarry itself was 'kept perfectly clean', while the 'sordid, unclean' rectory in comparison 'struck a chill into Yvette's heart' (p9); clearly Yvette finds that the rectory is the wrong place for her, while the outdoor gypsy encampment is very 'right'. She feels more at home, more free, and much less restrained with the more genuine gypsy: there is nothing false about him. While the rectory haunts her like some form of evil, the gypsy is her God.