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Foreword

In this special issue of *Pegasus*, we have chosen to focus on only one short story. *Araby* is perhaps the best known of all stories of James Joyce by dint of its frequent appearances in anthologies. Honours students have been struggling with its meaning and import for quite some time.

We have all, at some time or the other, asked students if they like or dislike a particular text in the syllabus. Most students would reply they like it, but when asked the reason why, they duck behind a wall of nonplussed silence. At that moment, it becomes imperative for us to provide them with a key that might open the door to understanding. But then, we ourselves often flounder having been conditioned to look for rapid answers to stock questions. Our system of examining them in literary non-appreciation firmly in place, we smugly remember that Awesome Anthology called the 'Ten-Year Question Papers' and devise answers of various levels of inanity. To apportion blame for this sad state of things would be futile. We have all been brought up in this tradition and have learned to look at literary greatness in terms of reduction to question-answer formats. We need to encourage independent thinking, but perforce we have to give credit to speed in handwriting, mugging skills and expertise in trend analysis. Through *Pegasus*, we wish to contribute our mite towards addressing the issue.

It is very heartening to find teachers in different colleges looking at a particular text from angles unrelated to examinations. Constraints of space prevent us from printing more specimens of such thinking. We will publish them at a future date. Apart from the articles by colleagues and a small note from a student, we print a detailed annotation of the story by Late Prof. Wallace Gray. We thank Prof. Roger Blumberg for granting us permission to do so. We also print excerpts from an annotated bibliography originally published on the Net. The full text of the bibliography can be found at the web address mentioned at the end of the piece.

Outright lies coupled with deliberate misrepresentation in syllabi and elsewhere thrive, receiving juridical approval. Genocide is being lionized. Darkness looms ahead. Dissent – academic and political – faces suppression. Independent, intelligent thinking is becoming anathema. We will encourage such thinking. Even when we disagree.

Socrates felt that his function in life was to be a gadfly, an irritant to the conformity of his fellow citizens. I urge that we all be gadflies to one another, that we act as stingers to those who come to Columbia College for a typical college experience, that we sting ourselves out of the contemporary tendency to play it safe. – Wallace Gray, *I'll Take My Stand* (December 1985, *Acta Columbiana*)

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Notes for 'Araby' Wallace Gray

Araby: The title holds the key to the meaning of Joyce's story. Araby is a romantic term for the Middle East, but there is no such country. The word was popular throughout the nineteenth century – used to express the romantic view of the east that had been popular since Napoleon's triumph over Egypt. And, of course, the story is about Romantic Irony, for the unnamed boy has a romantic view of the world.

Joyce finished 'Araby' in October of 1905: the eleventh in composition of the stories that would become *Dubliners*.

The story is about Orientation: notice how we derive that word from the Orient, from the East, originally meaning that, to orient yourself means to know in which direction the sun rises. The boy in 'Araby' is disoriented, but will know the true compass of the world at the end of his journey – a traditional form in literature (the German term *Bildungsroman* [early development or spiritual education of the main character] – is so commonly used that it often appears in English dictionaries).

North Richmond Street: Although there is no explicit mention of it in the story, we know that it takes place on May 19, 1894 and the boy is 12 years old. In 1894 little Jimmy Joyce was 12, and lived at 17 North Richmond Street; the Joyce family lived there from 1854 to 1896. Furthermore, there was a 'Grand Oriental Fete' in Dublin that ran from May 14-19, 1894. The theme song of the actual fair illustrates the romantic view of the Orient held by many Europeans at the time:

I'll sing thee songs of Araby,
And takes of fair Cashmere,
Wild tales to cheat thee of a sign,
Or charm thee to a tear.
And dreams of delight shall on thee break,
And rainbow visions rise,
And my soul shall strive to wake
Sweet wonder in thine eyes

Through those twin lakes, when wonder
wages,
My raptured song shall sink,
And as the diver dives for pearls,
Bring tears, bright tears to their brink,
And rainbow visions rise,
And all my soul shall strive to wake,
Sweet wonder in thine eyes
To cheat thee of a sign,
Or charm thee to a tear! (words by W.G.
Wills; music by Frederick Clay)

being blind : Actually, this describes the condition of the boy's relation to reality. Note that the story ends with an image of eyes seeing.

The American English term for this sense of "blind" – "dead end" – would work as well for Joyce's purposes, although blind works better for the story's closure. T.S. Eliot once said: 'The world was made for Joyce's convenience,' meaning that Joyce didn't have to invent or manufacture symbols; they were lying around in the streets of Dublin waiting for him to pick them up.

set the boys free: Joyce uses this neat phrase to suggest that religion has imprisoned the boys.

uninhabited ... detached: The street becomes Joyce's presentation of the Irish soul, uninhabited and detached, with the houses personified, [*Personification is the rhetorical representation of an inanimate object or abstract idea as a personality or as endowed with personal attributes. (Webster)*] and arguably more alive than the residents. Certainly the most frequently used color in *Dubliners*, we note how quickly Joyce has been able to set a nearly hopeless and discouraged mood. In *Stephen Hero*, part of the first draft of the book that became *A Portrait of the Artists as a Young Man*, Joyce writes: "... one of those brown brick houses which seem the very incarnation of Irish paralysis."

a priest, had died

As the opening paragraph has prepared us both for a story of particulars as well as for an allegory, the priest carries several messages. Joyce, who hated Roman Catholicism, implies that the Church (represented by the priest) is dead – the Church as the former tenant of the House that is Ireland.

musty .. waste .. littered .. useless.: If you make a list of just the adjectives in 'Araby' you will be struck by the overwhelming drabness and dullness of the setting Joyce has created. Here in the opening paragraphs, Joyce's technique is not subtle, and he forces even the most optimistic (or oblivious) reader to take note of the lifelessness that surrounds the boy.

The Abbot, by Walter Scott, The Devout Communicant, and The Memoirs of Vidocq: Joyce always has a purpose in *Dubliners*, and the selection of these books is not casual and is used to best advantage.

The Abbot, written in 1820, was about Mary Queen of Scots (1542-1587). The novel presented her life in a sincerely religious and romantic fashion, in contrast to the usual picture of her as a "harlot queen" in history. The presence of this romantic/religious/sexual complex is central to Joyce's story, as the boy confuses and conflates Romantic Love, Religious Love and Materialist Love.

The Devout Communicant could refer to any one of three works with this title. The one by the English Franciscan Friar Pacificus Baker (1695-1774) is noted for its lush, pious language and could have

influenced the boy's couching his sexual feelings for the girl in pious images. William York Tindall, one of the pioneers of Joyce studies in the United States, held that the work Joyce had in mind was one by Abednego Sellar, as the author's name reinforces the materialistic themes of "Araby." Joyce's anti-clerical views also support this choice, as Abednego was a Protestant clergyman – as was James Ford, the author of a third book by this title in print at the time. More important than specifically identifying which work Joyce had in mind here is the fact of the influence of the devoutly pious language of any of these works on the young boy's vocabulary and outlook.

The Memoirs of Vidocq, written by Francois-Jules Vidocq and published in 1829, was a popular 19th century novel about a Parisian Police Commissioner who was also a thief, and was thus able to hide his crimes (at one point in the novel, he escapes capture by dressing as a nun). Joyce's use of the book here supports the theme of deception and dishonesty in the story. But just as the reader is simultaneously aware of the meaning of the mention of these novels, *and* that the boy does not understand these meanings, so the theme of deception merely strengthens the sense that the boy is deceived about himself.

liked the last because its leaves were yellow: In this paragraph we get the first glimpses of the boy's romantic, and naive view of life. Joyce plays on our attention to allegorical and symbolic details, for after the first paragraph we quickly realize that the narrator is a young boy who isn't using figurative language self-consciously. And yet the figurative meaning is where we find Joyce's telling of the story.

wild garden ... central apple tree: An obvious reference to the Garden of Eden, and 'Araby' is certainly about a young man's fall from grace. Later, we'll note just how many times the word 'fall' actually occurs in the story, particularly toward the end. Joyce's adding the rusty bicycle pump here shows that the reference to Eden is clearly. After the Fall; Joyce sets the confused and unhealthy mixture of religion and sex with the priest's (thoroughly Freudian) rusty bicycle pump. This phallic pump is one of the treasures in Joyce's work.

a very charitable priest: The frequent hypocrisy of religion is a familiar theme in Joyce's work. Here the sweet, almost admiring, description hides the disconcerting question: if the priest was so charitable, why did he have such a lot of money when he died? – 'all' suggests a lot of money, as does the idea of amounts that might be left to institutions). And what, after all, is so charitable about leaving furniture to your sister; the only thing less charitable would be to have had it thrown away. Of course, as mentioned earlier, this is the sort of recognition reserved for the reader, rather than the narrator, at least at this point in the story.

The 'unreliable' or 'unknowing' narrator is a common literary device, invented perhaps by Edgar Allan Poe, and exploited so well by Dostoyevsky in

the 19th century; it is extremely common in 20th century fiction. Ford Maddox Ford's *The Good Soldier* is a brilliant example of a technique like that used by Joyce in 'Araby': as readers we quickly realize we know more about what is going on than does the narrator.

sombre: The third paragraph presents a picture of the dreariness of Dublin; note the increasingly gruesome sequence of descriptions: sombre houses, feeble lanterns, silent street, dark muddy lanes, dark dripping gardens, odours from the ashpits, etc.

shadow: Note the repetition of 'shadow' (three times) in this paragraph (*chiasmus*, or the repetition of a single image, is a Joycean technique we will see often in *Dubliners*). [*The inversion of the order of syntactical elements in the second of two juxtaposed and syntactically parallel phrases or clauses. For example: as a superman in physique but in intellects a fool. (Webster)*] The people of Dublin are not living, but ghosts; the boys, who are very much alive, are surrounded by shades of people. When we read that the boys, who are prominent in the first three stories of *Dubliners*, 'played till our bodies glowed,' we know that they are still alive, and their youth and glow tell us that their souls have not yet been smothered by Dublin (although, of course, by the end of each story efforts have been made to tame and even break them).

ran the gantlet: This is an archaic spelling of 'gauntlet'. Joyce obviously wanted the association with a medieval world of jousts and holy quests, an association reenforced and developed in later points in the story and foreshadowed in this paragraph as well by the use of 'stables.... horses ...harness'

The word 'gantlet' is one of the many Scandinavian words that came into English during the Viking conquests: the practice of 'running the gauntlet' involved running between two rows of men who struck the malefactor with sticks.

the areas: A reference to the areas below the sidewalk level, in front of many Dublin houses (and New York City brownstones as well). Today it is perhaps most familiar to Joyceans because of its role in *Ulysses*, in the 'Ithaca' episode, in which Leopold Bloom has left home without his key and must climb over the railing and drop down into the area in order to gain access to his house.

Mangan's sister: Joyce could count on readers making the connection with the popular, but sentimental and romantic 19th century Irish poet, James Clarence Mangan (1803-1849). Mangan was himself fond of writing about 'Araby' and even though he knew no Arabic he claimed that some of his poems were translations from Arabic. Joyce's use of 'Mangan' is one of the strongest supports for the theme of romanticism in the story, while at the same time it serves to strengthen previous instances of hypocrisy and false sentiment.

by the railings: Here too, Joyce could count on Irish readers making a conscious or unconscious connection with the railings in front of the Catholic Church. Since the boy stands by the railing, the

image of Mangan's sister becomes one of the Virgin Mary (an image that will be played on and expanded a few pages later). The girl is, in his mind, the object of religious veneration; the boy does not recognize, and perhaps has repressed under religious influence, that he is sexually attracted to her. That recognition will come at the end of the story, and is the cause of the boy's anguished tears.

soft rope of her hair: Appropriately, the young girl's last name (her first name is never given) is Mangan, which comes from the Gaelic word meaning abundant hair.

watching: The young boy is, in effect, a peeping tom. At the same time the color brown appears again, a color associated with the drabness of Dublin that is already affecting the girl.

accompanied me: The major themes of Romantic Love, Religious Love, and Materialist Love are combined wonderfully in this paragraph (as they will be again and again in the development of the story). The boy goes on a routine shopping trip with his aunt, but in his mind he turns it into a sacred adventure in the manner of a medieval quest for the Holy Grail.

come-all-you: These were street songs that were sung not only on the streets but in pubs; they dealt with current popular events and heroes. Jeremiah O'Donovan (1831-1915) was a revolutionary who advocated the use of violence in the struggle against British rule (his nickname was 'Dynamite').

Her name sprang to my lips at moments in strange prayers and praises which I myself did not understand: When the boy thinks of the girl he does so in religious terms; note how the religious undertone is established by words associated with religion, like 'image', 'litanies', 'chalice', 'adoration', etc. As readers we again feel we know more than the narrator himself, for in this paragraph, even as the boy repeatedly confesses to things he doesn't understand, we have a deeper sense of all that the he doesn't understand about himself and his situation.

wires: The boy's confusion about love and sexuality is conveyed brilliantly here. His choice of language is maudlin and even ridiculous, as when he here destroys the mood of the fingers on the harp by calling the strings "wires". Joyce's control of language is particularly clear in sentences like these, in which we recognize the young, confused voice of the boy.

One evening: Note how Joyce moves from one significant scene to

another without providing transitional paragraphs; the narrative does not try to represent continuous time. A 19th century (i.e. pre-Modernist) would likely have spelled out specific passages of time, but Joyce moves from point to point without doing this — note how the beginnings of the previous paragraphs, and the next, fail to indicate the passage of time.

We don't know how many days or weeks have transpired during "Araby"; it is not important, as it would be to a 19th century writer. The pre-modernist

sought verisimilitude by providing specific details about weather, clothing, food, views, houses, etc.; the modernist is not particularly interested in this. The modernist moves from one intense emotional moment to another, and of course this is one of the features that makes a modernist work more difficult than, for example, a Victorian novel.

into the back drawing-room: This paragraph presents the classic masturbatory situation for a young boy: he is left alone in the house on a rainy evening. But his religious training has so suppressed his sexual feelings that his "senses seemed to desire to veil themselves (note the religious term — veil — associated with nuns taking orders) and, "feeling that I was about to slip from them" (slip, obviously, into sexual activity) "I pressed the palms of my hands together until they trembled" (this apparently is a substitute for pressing his palms around his penis) and, "murmuring (again, an association with murmuring prayers in church) "O love! O love!" many times." The ejaculation here is a confused mixture of the religious and the sexual, with the religious totally hiding the sexual in the mind/body of this Dublin Irish Catholic boy.

she spoke to me: Here is a good example of an important modernist technique: "Show, don't tell". The boy is stunned and confounded because she speaks to him; instead of stating that the boy is stunned, the prose itself becomes stunned, i.e., fragmented. This technique is used extensively in Joyce's *Ulysses* to indicate Leopold Bloom's states of feeling.

there would be a retreat: Joyce continues the religious strand of the story here, as the retreat triumphs over the girl's desire; the twirling of the bracelets nicely hints at the nervous sexual energy that is also suppressed by the religious obligation.

fighting for their caps: What is being suggested here is the biblical scene of the Roman soldiers deciding a fight over the possession of Christ's clothes by throwing dice. The crucifixion image is furthered by the image of spikes (in Christ's hands and feet) and the recollection of the picture of Mary bowing at the foot of the cross.

light from the lamp: Here Joyce continues the religiosity of the passage of suggesting both a halo and a light streaming from heaven.

falling, lit up the hand upon the railing: This sentence strikingly melds the boy's confused feelings of religiosity and sensuality. Note particularly the use once more of 'railing' to suggest a church, surrounded by the words 'falling' and 'fell' — a suggestion of the fall in the Garden of Eden that we have seen earlier and that will be used numerous times throughout the story to suggest the boy's fall from innocence. Note also the mixture of religious and sexual imagery ('white border of a petticoat'); a combination that will reappear with the girl from now on.

'It's well for you,': The expression carries overtones of envy and bitterness which the boy seems not to notice, so wrapped up in his own

fantasy is he.

I will bring you something: This is the foundation of the climax of the story; the boy has made a sacred vow which he will be unable to fulfill. Again, the quest of a medieval knight is suggested, even as the language demonstrates again the boy's maudlin view of the situation.

laid waste my waking and sleeping thoughts: The romantic quest has taken precedence over everyday reality for the boy, and is destroying his ability to function. There is a hint of a new understanding here, as the boy seems critical of his past; at the same time he seems to condemn his own feelings, which he still juxtaposes with the serious work of life. He will be pulled down to earth at the end of the story. Joyce again makes use of words suggesting the romantic enchantment of the Orient.

Freemason affair: Freemasonry, primarily a Protestant organization, is feared and mistrusted by the Roman Catholics of this time and place. The Aunt, by the way, is mistaken: the bazaar is a benefit for a Roman Catholic Hospital. (Her error may be caused by the fact that a few years earlier there was a bazaar sponsored by the Masons.)

I left the house in bad humour: Joyce communicates beautifully the confused turbulence of the boy's feelings; we know he is upset, and that he knows he is upset, yet until now he has externalized all his anguish, speaking of the mood of the house, the unpleasantness of the air and the deceitfulness of his heart (as if it were an object outside himself). Here he first speaks of an 'I' in anguish, and we sense from the repetition of 'I' in the next paragraph that a realization is coming.

brown-clad figure: This is the third time in the story the word 'brown' appears, and we have an echo of the earlier image of the girl as a religious figure (bathed in lamplight, but note that the familiar railing has disappeared!) as well as a sexual one ('the border below the dress').

Mrs Mercer: Joyce selects this name to continue the imagery and theme of the mercantile and the mercenary, in the story. This effect is further supported by making her the widow of a pawnbroker, as well as the fact that she collects used stamps to sell for money to be given to the church. Again, money is being associated with religion, as it was in the paragraph in which the boy's shopping trip with his aunt is presented as a religious quest. The ultimate irony at the conclusion of the story is that what the boy thought of as a holy quest, to get a gift for the girl, was actually a sordid mercantile affair based on the sexual rather than the spiritual.

this night of Our Lord: The time is Saturday evening, and the Saturday evening church service is dedicated to veneration of the Virgin Mary (in this story, the girl).

I could interpret these signs: As mentioned before, the modernist works by suggestion: by showing rather than telling. Instead of saying that the uncle has had too much to drink, the reader is left to

deduce this along with the boy as he interprets 'these signs' (i.e. the uncle talking to himself and clumsy handling of the hall coat stand). But Joyce also uses this technique to show how the boy has begun to interpret signs *correctly*, and this foreshadows his final interpretation of his trip to Araby.

The Arab's Farewell to his Steed: 'The Arab's Farewell to his Steed', by Caroline Norton (1808-77), was so popular that Joyce could count on the association that the reader of Araby would (consciously or unconsciously) make with the story he is reading: the Arab boy sells for gold coins the thing that he loves the most in the world, his horse. However, as the horse is being led away the boy changes his mind and rushes after the man to return to money and reclaim his love. The final stanza reads:

Who said that I had given thee up? Who said
that thou wast sold?
'T is false! 't is false! my Arab steed! I fling
them back their gold!
Thus – thus, I leap upon thy back, and scatter
the distant plains!
Away! who overtakes us now shall claim thee
for his pains.

(A further irony here, that contributes to the theme of dishonesty and deception, concerns the author of the poem. Caroline Norton had an affair with the British Home Secretary to Ireland, Lord Melbourne, and her husband in a sense 'sold her' to that diplomat by his silent complicity in the arrangement for his own professional gain.)

a florin: A florin (at the time equal to two shillings, or twenty-four old pence) was a considerable amount of money for this boy; he is going to spend it foolishly. The florin originated in Florence during the Renaissance and had a likeness of the Virgin Mary on one side and that of St. John the Baptist on the other. Not only does this historical fact subtly support the spiritual/financial theme of the story, but the late nineteenth-century florin the boy carries has the image of the British Queen Victoria on one side and the legend on the other: 'by the grace of God, defender of the faith.' The odor of colonialism is pervasive here, as the Irish Catholic must carry around a coin proclaiming the Queen as defender of the British (Protestant) Church of England and as ruler over Ireland.

onward among ruinous houses: In many medieval tales, the knight errant journeys through a wasteland in his search for the Holy Grail. T. S. Eliot makes distinctive use of this and other aspects of the Grail legend in his poem *The Waste Land*.

a special train: The boy is on quite a long journey for one his age: the fair is on the other side of Dublin, a distance of about two miles. The paragraph is full of indications that this is a special journey for him; that it ends with his seeing the lighted dial supports our expectation of the boy's coming realization (enlightenment?).

a shilling: The boy's determination and urgency

causes him to be extremely rash in spending a shilling when he could certainly have found a sixpenny entrance.

like that which pervades a church: Here it seems that Joyce doesn't quite trust his reader to make the connection that the interior of the bazaar is being compared to a church (e.g. 'stalls', 'darkness') and goes on to make the comparison explicit. But it is a church 'after the service,' and so we're not sure what to expect; the mention of a curtain confirms the mystery.

Café Chantant: A French coffee house where entertainment is provided – not exactly a high-class sort of establishment.

counting money: The men counting money, in what is effectively a church, certainly recalls Christ throwing the money changers out of the temple in Matthew 21:12-13. Note also the reappearance of the familiar term in 'fall of the coins,' which continues to suggest that the story is about the boy's fall.

a salver: The plate on which sits the chalice that holds the wine for the mass; the term comes from the fact that the plate served as a savior for spilled wine. Here, it provides a particularly stark image of the mixing of money and religion.

Remembering with difficulty: The brief scene is the turning point of the story, as everything goes downhill for the boy from here. First, this special place he has come to turns out to be enemy territory for the young Irishman, as the British are running this bazaar. Note further that this brief snippet of conversation is commonplace, ordinary, even vulgar in tone: the British are vulgar, Ireland is vulgar (we have seen this in the character of the boy's uncle and Mrs. Mercer), and the boy is vulgar in the sense that his quest was not the spiritual journey he thought it was. Joyce further stresses the theme of deception (including self-deception) in the story, by having the woman deny the accusers three times, thus recalling Peter's denial of his association with Christ. (see Matthew 26:69-75, as well as Mark 14:66-72; Luke 22:54-62, and John 18:16-27).

Given the significance of accent in Joyce's story, the account in *Matthew* is particularly relevant in that one of the accusers says to Peter, at verse 73, 'Surely thou art also one of them, for thy speech betrayeth thee.'

I knew my stay was useless: This scene is of the type that Joyce termed an *epiphany* (The term comes from the Biblical scene in which the Christ Child is revealed to the Magi, traditionally celebrated on January 6th.). By that, he meant a showing forth of mystical meaning or revelation in a seemingly ordinary event or scrap of conversation. The Joycean epiphany, no matter how seemingly insignificant the actual details, results in an alogical, intuitive grasp of reality: a fragment of conversation or narrative description reveals – illuminates – the soul or essence of a person or event.

I saw myself: The boy is totally defeated: his quest has failed and he has not achieved his aim, which

was to buy a present for the girl. But society has defeated him too, in the form of British condescension toward the Irish. His own rashness has left him with too little money for the purchase of a gift, even if one were available, but most of all his own ego and self-deception have defeated him in allowing him to think that his quest was a spiritual one.

A final accounting of the boy's financial standing proves ironic: he began with a florin (two shillings, i.e., 24 pence). The round trip ticket to the fair cost four pence to enter the fair, he thus has eight pence left (the two and six in his pocket), which is all he would have had to spend for a present in any case.

Perhaps the mundane sexual overtones of the woman's flirtation with her accusers allows him to realize that the bazaar is a place of sexuality and materialism rather than spirituality. He realizes his own vanity, i.e., the futility of life in Dublin, his own worthlessness, his own foolishness, his unprofitable use of time, and the ridiculous high opinion he has of himself. He sees himself as the reader has seen him for some time, and he realizes that there is no Araby in Ireland.

[Originally published online at *World Wide Dubliners*, conceived and constructed by Roger B. Blumberg and Wallace Gray.]

Obituary

Wallace Gray (b. July 13, 1927), professor emeritus of English and comparative literature and a favourite teacher for generations of College students, died on December 21, 2001 in Manhattan. Graduating from Louisiana College in 1946, he received a master's degree from Louisiana State University in 1951 and a doctorate in English and comparative literature from Columbia in 1958 after studying under Columbia greats Lionel Trilling and Mark van Doren. Gray joined the Columbia faculty in 1953 as an instructor and rose to full professor in 1974. In spite of his emeritus status since mid-1990s, he continued to teach courses at the College. He also served as director of freshman composition and assistant dean of students. Unlike many who focus their academic life to publishing, Wallace Gray dedicated himself to his students, making his teaching the focal point of four decades of tenure. The Society of Columbia Graduates honoured him with its *Great Teacher Award*, and the student body gave him its *Mark Van Doren Award* for teaching excellence. In 1997, he was a co-recipient of the *Award for Distinguished Service to the Core Curriculum*. Active in campus theatre productions, he wrote more than a dozen plays, including *Helen*, which envisioned a 40-year-old Helen of Troy back in Sparta; it opened off-Broadway in 1964. His *Cowboy and the Tiger* was at one time the longest-running musical for children in New York City's history.

Technique in *Araby*

Arpa Ghosh

The third short story in James Joyce's 1914 collection of fifteen short stories *Dubliners* is renowned for its incisive delineation of the futility of modern human existence. Early critics of *Dubliners* recognized its unity of theme and narrative currents. The same critics however, were also impressed by the complete and autonomous structure of each short story. *Araby* can safely be discussed as a single unit framing within its boundaries the poignant picture of an adolescent's ineffectual pursuit of the unattainable.

What strikes even the untrained eye is Joyce's meticulous yet restrained eye for detail. The meanness and monotony of back street Dublin are outlined with a few masterstrokes. The 'brown imperturbable faces' of the houses, the ash-pits and the rusty bicycle pump abandoned by the last tenant deftly underscore the lack of mystery and romance in the adolescent boy's world. Evening with its gray, murky, frosty half-light casts a shadow over the boy's world until he notices Mangan's sister. The bangle she twists in her hand and the light that irradiates from her like an aureole pose a sharp contrast to the boy's dreary world. Mangan's sister is etched out against the dark gloom like a wood-cut Madonna. The author's reference to her brown dress (The Irish Madonna happens to be brown-clad) and the narrative detail of her departure to the retreat enhances this impression further.

Unlike the traditional short story, *Araby* is not plot-oriented. No cataclysmic events take place in the story. Yet, we are left with the distinct sense of loss at the end. Something has irrevocably gone wrong in the boy's life, and things will never be the same again. Joyce relies heavily on symbols and images to put across his message. His method is definitely that of showing and not of telling. In keeping with the Joycean technique of symbolism, incidentally a modernist one, all the short stories in *Dubliners* convey the single definitive message of Dublin being the seat of moral paralysis. Banal conversations and depressing minutiae of workaday existence are adroitly juxtaposed against passionately rendered spiritual and romantic imagery. In this manner, the hiatus between realism and idealism is laid bare.

The boy's growing idealism is indicated emblematically by contrasting the vulgar market place with its faceless crowds and cacophonous disharmony with the intensely romantic image of the acolyte advancing fearlessly with his 'chalice safely through a throng of foes.' The contrast between the horizontal plane of mundane reality consisting of drunken boozers and bargaining women of the Dublin market, and the vertical, interiorized plane of imagination where the boy is transformed into an Arthurian knight bearing the holy Eucharist bespeaks a basic dissimilarity between the outer and inner

realms of being. The congestion of the marketplace moves beyond the merely physical. The boy appears to be defending his tender romanticism against the incursion of the banal and the commonplace. Little Chandler, a character in another of Joyce's stories, *A Little Cloud*, appears to be fighting a similar battle.

As he crossed Grattan Bridge, he (Little Chandler) looked down the river towards the lower quays and pitied the poor stunted houses. They seemed to him a band of tramps, huddled together along the river-banks, their old-coats covered with dust and soot, stupefied by the panorama of sunset and waiting for the first chill of night to bid them arise, shake themselves and begone. He wondered whether he could write a poem to express his idea... He was not sure what idea he wished to express, but the thought that a poetic moment had touched him took life in him like an infant hope. He stepped onward bravely.

Like the boy, Chandler too, hemmed in by his environment, (in his case his wife and baby), is destined to lose his battle.

Notably, both the boy and the man seek flight and not outlet. No ventilation of one's spiritual hopes is possible within the claustrophobic confines of Dublin. Therefore, it is either absolute freedom, impossible under the circumstances, or a gradual attrition and desiccation of a sensitive spirit. There is absolutely no scope for compromise. The very nature of Dublin life discourages that. Here, one cannot help but look upon Dublin as the ubiquitous 'unreal city' apostrophized a few years later in Eliot's celebrated poem.

To Little Chandler, Byronic poetry, London life and Parisian bohemianism are all escape routes. The boy, more innocent and idealistic, seeks and finds for a short period of time, a spiritual vacation in the fabulous, oriental associations of the word 'Araby'. The spiritual ecstasy experienced by the boy in the interim period between his promise to Mangan's sister and his abortive trip to the Dublin fair, is more forced than natural. It is as if the boy with the strength and ardour of his adolescent will works himself up to a froth of spiritual elation. There is no visible external support to justify his emotional bliss, since Mangan's sister soon recedes to the background. The high-pitched quality of the boy's rapture faintly perturbing, acts as a forewarning of the eventual disenchantment that will follow.

The boy's egging on of his will in his desire to attain the rapturous climactic moment betrays his longing for romance in the absence of which his soul runs the danger of withering away in the parched, arid soil of Dublin. The chasm between desire and reality, a modern malaise, is presented with poignant restraint.

In this context, attention needs to be drawn to the use of detachment as a *motif* running through the

entire narrative. Joyce himself says that the author should be an aloof entity, indifferently paring his nails at a distance like a god. In this story, we get the distinct sense of a splitting up of the boy's consciousness, the boy as participant in the quest-drama and the boy as detached bystander. The image of the idle onlooker is scattered all over the text. The boy watches the object of his infatuation, at times unobtrusively following her. He also silently looks on as the shop-girl flirts with her men-friends. This kind of *flanerie* is a characteristic of the disintegrated modern psyche as Baudelaire and later Eliot pointed out. Circumstances do play a vital role in thwarting his purpose, but it is clear from the thrust of the narrative that finally the boy himself is

unable to hold on to the strength of his will which peters out somewhat. The repeated allusions to the Dantean symbols of *Inferno* – the turnstile, the lights going off in the upper part and so on – reveal that the boy suffers from serious misgivings even before entering the fair.

Movement and growth are finally arrested by a deficiency of impulse and power. The tragedy of modern existence lies not so much in catastrophic occurrences as in the petty scheme of things and an accompanying paucity of will power, drive and determination. The very ambience is bereft of and hostile to romance. Moral paralysis rather than tragic dejection therefore defines the quality of modern existence.

Darkness Visible: *The Sisters*, *Araby* and *The Dead* Sukanti Dutta

All the dark was cold and strange. There were pale strange faces there, great eyes like carriagelamps.

They would be alone, surrounded by darkness and silence; and in that moment of supreme tenderness he would be transfigured.

He felt some dark presence moving irresistibly upon him from the darkness, a presence subtle and murmurous and a flood filling him wholly with itself.

Darkness is a presence in Joyce's *Dubliners*, It sketches an atmosphere, a setting, a mood - apparently of the seamy side of life. In *The Sisters*, it is a priest's hopelessness; in *Araby*, it denotes frustration; in *A Painful Case*, it is abysmal loneliness. But at a deeper level, it transcends the immediately palpable to suggest something of a deeper import.

In a letter to Grant Richards (5th May, 1906), Joyce describes Dublin as 'the centre of paralysis', and darkness may well be a metaphor for that. To Joyce, Dublin was undeniably a veritable epitome of collective ennui, futility and spiritual bankruptcy. It is a darkness which links the 'paralysis' of the *Dubliners* to that of the entire Irish community. In such a brutal world, the church was looked upon by Joyce as an inhibitor – an institution wedded to rank material interests. At the end of *Grace*, Father Purdon completes his enunciation by calling himself the 'spiritual accountant' of the business community. The suggestion is tale-tell, but it is not limited to that. Joyce's work demand a proper decoding of what Derrida calls their 'Logocentric' impulses. Logocentrism presupposes a 'presence', a truth, to be manifested through linguistic designs marked by *differance*. Nothing in Joyce pertains to a single

layer of meaning. Thus despite all its spiritual vacuum, the Dublin city is the *integritas* of an aesthetic image corresponding 'to something still at a minimum level of organisation vitally present in the object of contemplation'. Therefore, darkness acts as a signifier that does not stick to any specific meaning and is again split into a host of signifiers which together help undo the logocentrism involved. The 'signified', largely a mental concept, consists in an artistic revelation of the 'whole', a Joycean 'epiphany'.

In *Stephen Hero*, an epiphany is described as a 'sudden spiritual manifestation, whether in the vulgarity of speech or of gesture or in a memorable phase of the mind itself ...', denoting thereby *claritas*, the 'whatness' of the object concerned. An ironic exposure of the social malaise, it is also a structuring vision, a deepening of awareness and a resolution of inner conflicts. It involves a process of transmutation which is not severed from the immediately real. It projects, as Theodore Spencer observes, a 'theatrical rather than a dramatic view of life.'

In the stories under focus, Joyce has employed darkness as a kaleidoscopic image that envelops multiple levels of understanding. Both the stories have as their reaching point a shattering of illusions. But both yield a sense of a sudden awareness, of an artistic growth into a totality of existence akin to what Stephen Dedalus recognises as 'an aesthetic stasis, an idle pity or an idle terror'. *The Dead*, the concluding story, suggests a semblance of such an impression ushered in by *The Sisters*. *The Sisters* is about the death of a priest and its repercussions on a little boy. He had opened a world for the boy replete with inscrutable and unrealised truths. The boy appears fascinated by words like 'paralysis', 'gnomon' and 'simony'. The geometrical 'gnomon' suggests any object marked by its shadow, and

'simony' signifies a pervasive moral decadence. These signifiers together suggest a darkness symptomatic of a decrepit religious faith. Remarkably enough, the boy's attitude towards Flynn is a curious welding of awed fascination and repugnance. When he dreams of the 'heavy grey face of the paralytic', he feels shocked and tries to 'think of Christmas'.

When the boy accompanies his aunt to see the dead, it is 'after sunset'. The inside of the house is sombre, but the hitherto dark room is 'suffused with dusky golden light'. The ensuing conversation carried on in half-lights and in subdued tone reveals two facts: first, the priest's death was linked to 'that chalice he broke' and secondly, he laughed hysterically to himself 'in the *dark* (my italics) in his confession-box'. Together they stand for Father Flynn's hopelessness and spiritual collapse and expose the religious rituals as 'a symptom of neurosis and haunting fear'. For the priest's laughter unmasks the hollowness of the entire ecclesiastical order. It reflects Flynn's failure in his mission as a priest. There is therefore little wonder that he could wax over 'catacombs', something associated with the dead.

But the darkness of Flynn's room indirectly helps the boy gain a budding awareness of his identity as one not meant for the priest's world. Earlier, walking 'along the sun', he remembered how he had longed for Persia, for the East, the land of exotic allurements. This seething desire had then lit up the desire for autonomy - freedom from darkness. Now, his secret isolation is basically a kind of freedom. His is an existentialist growing up the end of which still eludes him.

David Lodge has commented that the title of any of the stories in *Dubliners* is a 'synecdoche'. Thus, 'the Sisters' keeps the focus away from the sisters who are static, smug and loyal to the hermeneutic codes associated with the family. They are denizens of the same darkness from which the boy is freed. Outside, the boy watches out for a new insight - he is called a 'Rosicrucian' - and passes onto the dark world of *Araby*. Therefore, he has finally emerged out of the blind alley of Flynn, but *Araby* starts at North Richmond Street, which is 'blind'. The boy's house is intriguingly of a priest who is dead. A host of signifiers charges the atmosphere with insinuations not very assuring. There is a network of 'musty' air, a 'waste-room' filled with 'old useless papers', books with 'curled and damp' pages, and a 'wild' garden with a 'central apple-tree' and 'straggling bushes' with the priest's 'rusty' bicycle-pump lying near. These signifiers despite their disparate nature collectively contribute to a sense of decay and dissipation with the apple-tree redolent of a saga of temptation and fall.

When 'dusk' falls, the houses grow 'sombre'. The street-lamps wink through their 'feeble lanterns'. The boys play in the 'dark muddy' lanes, and often venture into the 'dark dripping gardens' or into the 'dark odorous stables'. Darkness here is a

palimpsest, tonally proleptic of a frustrating end. In such an environment, the girl is the only speck of light that makes the boy feel like bearing his 'chalice safely through a throng of foes'. Emotions surge up and are intensified on a 'dark rainy evening' when the boy listens to the rain through a 'broken' pane with a single light gleaming across the street. However, the rinsing notes change into silence and the chiaroscuro into darkness when the boy reaches Araby. It is already semi-dark and the eerie silence is that of 'a church after service'. Darkness has by now become part of the individual psyche. Thus the flirtatious conversations between the shopgirl and the young men act as an ironic set-off against the hallowed image of the girl in the mind of the boy. And when the story closes, the 'chalice' has been broken and the boy is left with anguish and anger as also with a newfound realization. The gathering darkness of the evening, paradoxically a passage to self-discovery, culminates in the darkness of full realization. It consists, on the one hand, in lifting the veil over a sordid materialistic world (symbolized by the clink of coins and inane chatter), and on the other hand, in the collapsing ideals of the boy who yet emerges strengthened by a greater visionary insight. His 'epiphany' lies in his recognition of a structure without any palpable centre. We have a specimen of what Louis Althusser described as a decentering of the human subject, which is 'constituted by a structure which has no 'centre'.... except in the imaginary misrecognition of the 'ego'....' The boy is at least made conscious of this structure and this is done under the cover of darkness. The signifiers lead up to the other side of darkness that is both stark and revealing. The finale of the story very much echoes Derrida's idea that the centre of any structure points beyond the apparent structure - 'the centre is at the centre of the totality, and yet, since the centre does not belong to the totality..., the totality has its centre elsewhere'. The boy cannot evade the adult world, but is better placed to search for the centre. Thus darkness itself becomes a 'signifier', the corresponding 'signified' of which is to be comprehended in a different level of awareness. It is ambivalent, but is real.

These two stories open into a larger world of adults, one of greater darkness, culminating in the concluding *The Dead*. It initially focuses on a night-party taking place indoors with snow falling outside, and then travels to a dark hotel room where the central figure Gabriel Conroy, seized by a passion, approaches his wife Gretta. However, he is thwarted by her passionate memories of her erstwhile lover Michael Furey who is dead. Yet as he stands in the semi-dark room watching out at the dropping snowflakes covering all parts of Ireland, he is chastened by a new feeling. He feels the futility of all the 'tangled involvements of life'. He is rather fascinated by the triumph of the dead over the living: 'His identity was fading out into a grey impalpable world: the solid world itself, which these dead had one time reared and lived in, was dissolving and

dwindling'. The visionary aspect of snow conveys a sense of equilibrium involving proximity and distance, passion and decay, love and detachment, life and death. Gabriel's soul 'swooned slowly' as he felt a sense of totality whose centre lies elsewhere. There is a sense of purgation, of a 'riot of emotions giving way to a real *stasis* of spirit'.

The Dead, unlike *Araby*, does not end on a note of anguish and frustration. As we pass from the fast story to the next, darkness thickens. The second story, *An Encounter*, shows the ugly face of 'experience' through an elderly pervert whose company is nauseating to the boy there. *Araby* shows the dual face of darkness, and as the book closes, darkness has thinned as the world awaits a fresh awakening. Gabriel has achieved that 'esthetic stasis' Stephen Dedalus will mention in the later *Portrait*. The chalice may have broken, but it has ushered in a mature vision which is beyond the sense of paralysis. *Dubliners*, especially *The Dead*, opens a window upon that 'fantastic, dim, uncertain' world where Stephen's soul will swoon. Darkness in *Dubliners* opens into the world:

Glimmering and trembling. Trembling and unfolding, a breaking light, an opening flower, it spread in endless succession to itself..

It is indeed a long journey from the dark chamber of

the priest, obsessed with 'catacombs'.

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Araby: As They See It **Sudeshna Kar Barua**

Joyce's *Araby* demands much more than a mere lukewarm response from its young readers, the new-adults, who have just stepped, unprotected, into a world quite ready to spring unpleasant surprises on them and tread on their dreams. This powerfully moving short story deserves attention and gets it. 'You either love *Araby* or you hate it. You cannot be indifferent, you cannot pretend to be neutral', said a nineteen-year-old with the conviction and honesty of youth.

Why some young students, especially of English Literature, will always like *Araby* is easy to understand. *Araby* is a story that challenges, tantalizes. Apparently, it speaks of a young boy's fascination and infatuation and can also boast of some beautiful descriptions of the object of his adoration, Mangan's sister. Her 'brown figure' cannot go unnoticed. The boy stared mesmerised as her 'dress swung' and the 'soft rope of her hair tossed from side to side' or as she stood with the light catching 'the white curve of her neck' and lighting up her hair, her hand. Matching these are striking expressions such as, 'I imagined that I bore my chalice safely through a throng of foes' or '...my body was like a harp and her words and gestures were like fingers running upon the wire'. Or, '...my

eyes burned with anguish and anger.' Young students understand the ecstasy and the agony of the boy, can feel for him more intensely than their teachers, older in years, and perhaps a little hardened by time and experience.

Even though burdened with the task of reading *Araby* (both as a 'romantic story' and a quest) for taking an examination and scoring marks, many students are able to interact, as it were, quite comfortably with the young narrator who failed in his effort to 'bring something' for the girl of his dreams. For many, like him, have loved from a distance, many have felt the heart throb and the blood race at the sound of a voice. In addition, at a particular age, the desire and determination to 'pluck stars and move mountains' to impress or please a special individual is not unnatural. Some young readers find the end quite enriching. They read the boy's final realisation that yawning gaps do remain between dreams and reality, as a *necessary experience* that accelerates mental growth, as a *lesson* that helps them to come to terms with life itself. *Araby*, borrowed directly from life, has its own clientele and admirers.

However, this is just half the story because, as mentioned, *some* young readers do enjoy their session with Joyce. Not all though. And I now turn

to that section of our 'English Honours Students' who fight shy of tackling *Araby* and would rather concentrate on *The Lotus Eater*, *The Ox* or *The Fly*. They are the ones who do not like *Araby*. To them, as they have explained, Joyce's *Araby* is one or more or all of these:

1. Much Ado about Nothing; 2. Lots of Labour Lost; 3. Marketing and No Marketing

Instead of feeling for the boy, who considers himself to be in love and still is unable to give his emotions a proper name, many student-readers make no attempt at concealing their resentment on being 'coerced' into reading *Araby* and preparing long answers on the 'inner meaning' and 'symbolism'. The tendency to jump to conclusions based on unfounded information is not uncommon in young students. Hence, *Araby* often finds itself *blacklisted* even before a fresh batch picks it up. The seniors pass on their comments, which often seem to the 'freshers' more acceptable than what teachers or other readers may say. Observations (available on the Net) such as: 'The story pulsates with life.... how vividly the reader can feel the feelings of the young man (boy)'. or 'this is what our sons will go through sooner or later, and ...I should remember *Araby* then' – leave them unmoved. Instead, some feel cheated after reading the story and hold the title responsible.

The name *Araby* is attractive, attractive for its unspoken promise of transporting the readers to an exotic surrounding, to Arabia with its warm sun, golden sands, handsome Arabs in flowing robes and burkha-clad Arabian beauties looking at the world through kohl-lined lustrous eyes. But James Joyce's *Araby* takes them into a 'blind' street, into 'dark muddy lanes', perhaps like *Kinlu Gowalar Gali*, and to 'dark dripping gardens where odours arose from the ashpits'. One smells death and decay in the dead priest's room, hardly a place where one could cry, 'O love! O love!'. Young students would rather go to a sun-drenched and moon-kissed Capri to meet Wilson or enter a newly done up 'snug' office along with Woodfield. Any place but North Richmond Street.

'The name *Araby* does cast "an Eastern enchantment" over the reader. But it is just a bazaar! What an anti-climax.', sneered a few. Joyce's bazaar can hardly lift their spirits. The train to the bazaar was deserted and so was the hall, an after-service-silence prevailing. *Araby* turned out to be

cold and dark, a commercial set up where money exchanged hands and the only music that *Café Chantant* produced was the jingle of coins. Sour-looking people eager to get rid of the customer too barred the path leading to simple things like a porcelain vase. And before disappointment could sink in properly, the lights went out leaving the hall, the boy and his dream was enveloped in thick darkness. *Araby*, in spite of its name, turned out to be no better than the market which was 'most hostile to romance', a place where one was jostled and elbowed.

The word 'quest' too seals *Araby*'s fate. Where one expects (as they say) something to equal Jason's search for the Golden Fleece, one finds 'someone going marketing' and not succeeding in buying a single thing. Joyce's *Araby* tells of a failure, heartbreak, disenchantment, and the young would want to keep away from all three. Some have stated quite firmly that they do not want to be reminded of the possibility of their dreams getting shattered so easily, either by adults (the uncle comes home late) or by circumstance (the train creeps along after an 'intolerable delay').

In *Araby*, unable to contain his emotion, the boy 'pressed' the palms of his hands together and murmured, 'O love!' many times. This the youth of today, the anti-*Araby* band will not 'swallow'. 'Love is not waiting to be summoned; if you love, do something, talk to him/her. Why wait and cry like a moron?'. Love, *Araby*-style, is outdated and many have little sympathy for the boy journeying from innocence to experience.

Apart from these, but above all these, there is a practical difficulty. It can and perhaps does keep many away from *Araby*. James Joyce's *Araby* is not a simple love story; students need a teacher to show them how to separate certain strands and to explain how something that looks like calf love can have deeper meanings. The garden, the central apple tree, the chalice, all demand a closer look. Therefore, *Araby* continues to baffle. Many would rather turn to Maugham or Bates and try to convince the pro-*Araby* readers that they are sentimental and soft.

Arguments and counter-arguments can go on and prove the nineteen-year old right. 'You either love *Araby* or you hate it. You cannot be indifferent, you cannot pretend to be neutral'.

1882 Joyce is born in Rathgar, Dublin on February 2nd • 1888 Begins school at Conglows Wood College • 1893 Goes to Belvedere College • 1899 Begins college at University College, Dublin • 1900 Publishes *Ibsen's New Drama* • 1901 *The Day of the Rabblement* is published • 1902 Joyce makes his first trip to Paris • 1903 Joyce's mother, Mary Jane Joyce, dies • 1904 Elopes with Nora; begins sketching *A Portrait* • 1905 Giorgio, James and Nora's son, is born; they move to Trieste • 1906 Live briefly in Rome; Most likely date of writing of *Stephen Hero* • 1907 Lucia, James and Nora's daughter, is born; they move back to Trieste; *Chamber Music* is published • 1911 Gives lectures on Shakespeare in Trieste • 1914 *Dubliners* published; *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* is serialized in *The Egoist* • 1915 The Joyces move to Zürich; work on *Ulysses* resumes; *Exiles* is written • 1916 *A Portrait* is published in the United States • 1917 *A Portrait* is published in Britain • 1918 The serialization of *Ulysses* in *The Little Review* begins • 1920 The Joyce's move to Paris and the serialization of *Ulysses* stops • 1922 *Ulysses* is published in Paris • 1924 The first section of *Work in Progress* is published in *Transatlantic Review* • 1927 *Poems Pennyeach* is published • 1939 *Finnegans Wake* is published • 1941 Joyce dies in Zürich at the age of 59.

An Annotated Bibliography of James Joyce's *Araby*

(Excerpts from the Net)

Atherton, James S. *Araby*. In James Joyce's *Dubliners*. Clive Hart (ed.) London: Faber, 1969. 39-47. Deals with the 'Story's autobiographical elements and precise, symbolic style.'

Baechler, Leah. 'Voices of Unexpected Lyricism in Two *Dubliners* Stories.' *James Joyce Quarterly* 28:2 (Winter 1991): 361-276. Focuses on the 'non-narrative figurations' in *Araby* and *A Little Cloud*. Examining the text's (*Araby*) heteroglossia, one sees parallels between characters (priest/uncle; aunt/Mangan's sister). Some of the story's scenes represent different perspectives of similar events recorded by different voices (e.g., the parallel between the boy's meeting with Mangan's sister on the steps and the girl at the bazaar.)

Barisonzi, Judith. "Who Eats Pig Cheeks?: Food and Class in *Araby*." *James Joyce Quarterly* 28:2 (Winter 1991): 518-19. Barisonzi finds evidence that pigs' cheeks were a dietary staple of poor Irishmen. When the narrator spots the delicacy at the market, it reifies his 'snobbish, petit-bourgeois perception' of the place as coarse and squalid.

Beck, Warren. *Joyce's Dubliners: Substance, Vision, and Art*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1969. A basic exegesis of *Araby* as a story of romantic disillusionment, with some emphasis on possible autobiographical elements.

Booth, Wayne C. 'Pluralism and Its Rivals.' In *Now Don't Try to Reason with Me*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970. 131-49. Concerned with the growing number of 'pseudocritics' in the academy, Booth advocates an intellectual pluralism that can absorb different fields of critical study without entirely dismantling the text. Using *Araby* as a model, he discerns a 'commonsensical core of fact' – the events that occur in the story.

Brugaletta, John J. and Mary H. Hayden. "The Motivation for Anguish in Joyce's '*Araby*.'" *Studies in Short Fiction* 15 (1978): 11-17. Argues that Mangan's Sister exists only as a created figment of the boy's imagination. Mangan's Sister should be older than the boy, yet her words to him seem oddly, unrealistically nervous, suggesting that the boy has created the scene. The time scheme of the story does not coincide with details. Other youthful Joycean narrators visualize non-existent persons, setting a precedent for *Araby*.

Collins, Ben L. "Joyce's '*Araby*' and the 'Extended Simile.'" *James Joyce Quarterly* 4 (1967): 84-90. An "extended simile" – Collins's coinage – is a figure that links one item to another without equating them, and drawing numerous comparisons from them. Two such similes govern "*Araby*": the "wild garden," which, with its apple tree and bicycle pump, is likened to the Garden of Eden, but ultimately illustrates themes of love, religion, and paralysis. Mangan's Sister is the focal simile; her name comes from the poet James

Clarence Mangan, but she is alternately, momentarily compared to Dante's Beatrice and Helen of Troy.

Cronin, Edward J. "James Joyce's *Trilogy* and Epilogue: 'The Sisters,' 'An Encounter,' '*Araby*,' and 'The Dead.'" *Renascence: Essays on Value in Literature* 31 (1979): 229-48. The first three "tales of childhood" that constitute *Dubliners* involve youthful protagonists who learn something. In *Araby*, the boy is characterized similarly to the characters of the earlier tales. As in the earlier tales, the boy is fascinated by abstractions. When faced with a very real feeling for Mangan's Sister, his "foolish blood" and inability to separate reality from illusion lead to his downfall. Fictional images of himself and others are gradually undone in the story. There is no evidence that his disillusionment is the catalyst for a loss of religious faith. However, the boy posits himself as God by creating his fictions, and he also becomes the worshipper of his own creation. As this paradigm leaves him with nothing at the end, it is this mock-religious faith that is shattered.

Dilworth, Thomas. "Yeats's Argument with Joyce in 'Ego Dominus Tuus.'" *Review of English Studies: A Quarterly Journal of English Literature and the English Language* 42:166 (1991 May): 232-34. Yeats' poem "Ego Dominus Tuus" disagrees with the Romantic disillusionment of "*Araby*." Verbal allusions and the Arabesque setting of the poem refer to the story. However, Yeats's poem suggests that idealism need not be self-deception, which is an idea that contrasts the boy's epiphany in *Araby*.

Doloff, Stephen. "Aspects of Milton's *Paradise Lost* in James Joyce's '*Araby*.'" *James Joyce Quarterly* 33:1 (1995 Fall): 113-15. The word "Arabie" appears in a Edenic allusion in *Paradise Lost*. The story's final sentence alludes to *Paradise Lost*'s Belial, and contrasts the vanity of the fallen angels with the narrator's own vain defeat. The bazaar's hall refers to the hall of Satan's council, and the self-deceptive acceptance of defeat in Belial's final speech.

Doloff, Steven. "On the Road with Loyola: St. Ignatius' Pilgrimage as Model for James Joyce's '*Araby*.'" *James Joyce Quarterly* 28:2 (1991 Winter): 515-17. The narrative of *Araby* alludes to the religious conversion and Pilgrimage of St. Ignatius Loyola. The narrator discusses his romantic pursuit of Mangan's Sister in religious terms, while Loyola in his Testament discusses his religious pilgrimage in chivalric language. Both experiences end in failure, with the bazaar's eminent closing paralleling Loyola's expulsion from Jerusalem. However, unlike Loyola the boy has no subsequent triumph.

Doloff, Steven. "Rousseau and the Confessions of '*Araby*.'" *James Joyce Quarterly* 33:2 (1996 Winter): 255-58. As "*Araby*" parallels St. Ignatius

Loyola's biography, it also echoes Rousseau's *Confessions*. Both Rousseau and Joyce's narrators live with their aunt and uncle, and each speak of an early elder love in chivalric terms.

Freimarck, John. "Araby: A Quest for Meaning." *James Joyce Quarterly* 7 (1970): 366-68. There are echoes of the "Grail Quest story pattern" in *Araby*. The story's title, the quest and marriage theme, and the bazaar setting all allude to the Grail. However, unlike the Medieval Knight, the boy is unprepared for his journey and doomed to failure.

Friedman, Stanley. "Joyce's 'Araby.'" *Explicator* 24 (1966): Item 43. The allusion to "The Arab's Farewell to his Steed" is meant to contrast the poem's sentimentality with the disillusionment of *Araby*. The Arab's willingness to accept seeing his departed horse only in his dreams mirrors the boy's farewell to his romantic illusions.

Garrison, Joseph M., Jr. "The Adult Consciousness of the Narrator in Joyce's *Araby*." *Studies in Short Fiction* 10 (1973): 416-17. Commentators have often failed to note that Joyce's narrator is an adult who brings a mature perspective to the story's events. Contrasting the indiscriminate observations of the young boy with the objectivity of the adult writer, the narrator discovers the distinction between fantasy and imagination.

Going, William T. "Joyce's 'Araby.'" *Explicator* 26 (1968): Item 39. Building upon Friedman's note on "The Arab's Farewell to his Steed," Going suggests that the poem illustrates the middlebrow, tacky reading tastes of the uncle. Joyce uses literary allusions to build characterizations throughout his work. The uncle's sentimental taste, then, reveals his intellectual paralysis.

Harty, John. "Joyce's 'The Dead.'" *Explicator* 47:3 (1989 Spring): 35-37. The word 'fib' occurs in *Araby* and *The Dead*, and is it essential to epiphanies in each tale. D'Arcy's fib in *The Dead* conceals (and reveals) his lack of self-confidence about his singing. The 'fib' the boy hears at the fair is the catalyst for his disillusionment.

Higham, Anne S. "An Aspect of Style in 'Araby.'" *Language and Style: An International Journal* 15:1 (1982 Winter): 15-22. Noting the varying interpretations of *Araby*, Higham suggests that the key to interpreting the story lies in its grammar and style. The narrator, when speaking in the first person with himself as subject, rarely uses a direct object, resulting in the impression of "objectless, disengaged activity." Secondary characters, however, often use a grammatical object. The narrator, then, is often the object of others' actions. The narrator is controlled by naming abstractions and his own body as well. Personification intrudes the story, again representing forces that act upon the boy. The story's final sentence breaks the narrator into an "I as character" and the more experienced "I as narrator."

Ingersoll, Earl G. *Engendered Trope in Joyce's Dubliners*. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois

University Press, 1996. A Lacanian approach to the first three *Dubliners* stories. Relationship of the boy to the Priest is evidenced only in the Priest's books – a mixture of religion and adventure, as is the story. The Priest, then, is a lack which anticipates the boy's own "immersion in textuality." Joycean epiphany is a triumph via creating metaphor. When the Real of the darkened bazaar destroys the Imaginary Ideal of Mangan's sister, the boy enters into the Symbolic realm of creating his own story. This triumph is illustrated by the narrator's use of metaphor throughout *Araby*.

Leonard, Garry M. "The Question and the Quest: The Story of Mangan's Sister." *Modern Fiction Studies* 35:3 (1989 Autumn): 459-477. A Lacanian analysis in which Leonard argues that Mangan's Sister's frustrated desire to go to *Araby* propels the story. This desire is *Araby*'s subject, as it is the lack into which the narrator creates a Romantic myth of himself. Central is the boy's gazing upon Mangan's Sister, after which she approaches him to speak – the object thus redirects the subject's gaze. By story's end, the boy has turned this gaze upon himself, replacing his Romantic myth with a less flattering picture. He reinterprets the Other's gaze, then, as her disappointment with the failure of the "hero."

Morrisey, L. J. "Joyce's Narrative Strategies in *Araby*." *Modern Fiction Studies* 28:1 (1982 Spring): 45-52. *Araby*'s strength lies in the narrator. Combining first and third person narratives illustrates the boy's maturity; he gradually steps forward to tell his own tale. Joyce utilizes three 'moods' of the narrator: the simple naïf, the romantic, and the harsh, judging adult. The first two moods are very distinguishable, but never quite separated. The third voice acts as critical commentary on the first two.

Peters, Margot. "The Phonological Structure of James Joyce's 'Araby.'" *Language and Style: An International Journal* 6 (1973): 135-44. "Thematic and structural significance of 'sound patterns' in the story."

Robinson, David W. "The Narration of Reading in Joyce's 'The Sisters,' 'An Encounter,' and 'Araby.'" *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 29:4 (1987 Winter): 377-396. The failures of Joyce's protagonists in *Dubliners* is related to the failure of the readers to fully control the text. "Blindness" is a core concept in *Araby*, and the narrator fails to interpret tangible events in light of his idealistic imagination. Such misinterpretation can be seen in critics' attempts to decipher the Garden of Eden reference in the "wild garden."

San Juan, Epifanio. *James Joyce and the Craft of Fiction: An Interpretation of Dubliners*. Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Presses, Inc., 1972. The story's organizational principles influence meaning. *Araby* begins with external detail and description, slowly moving into the interiority of the boy. Ultimately, the story is told on two levels: one of the events happening to the boy, another of the more experienced narrator.

Skau, Michael; Cassidy, Donald L. "Joyce's 'Araby.'" *Explicator* 35:2 (1976): 5-6. Notes that the narrator's comment, "I bore my chalice safely through a throng of foes," is an allusion to St. Tarsicius, a boy martyr entrusted with the sacrament and killed for refusing to give it to heathens.

Sosnoski, James J. (director); Barney, Rick; Flavin, James; Hinrichs, Lois; Kelly, Rachel; McMaken, Ruth; Olubas, Paul; Russell, Tim; Uhlman, Diana. "Analyzing 'Araby' as Story and Discourse: A Summary of the MURGE Project." *James Joyce Quarterly* 18:3 (1981 Spring): 237-254. A group project in which *Araby* is read through Seymour Chatman's *Story & Discourse*. A linguo-scientific reading, it begins by listing 27 core "kernel" sequences in the story, and proceeds into the story's temporal frame. There are only two characters – the boy and the narrator – who are distinctly characterized while the remaining characters function as part of the setting. Identifies 12 character traits of the boy, three of the narrator. Overview of the project is followed by four related articles by Jonathan Culler ("The Application of Theory"), Gerald Prince ("What's the Story in Narratology?"), and James J. Sosnoski ("STORY AND DISCOURSE and the Practice of Literary Criticism: *Araby*, A Test Case" and "On the Anvil of Theoretical Debate: STORY AND DISCOURSE as Literary Theory"), and a final commentary by Chatman ("Analgorithm").

Stone, Harry. "'Araby' and the Writings of James Joyce." *The Antioch Review* 25 (1965): 375-410. *Araby* is largely autobiography, as many of the story's details come from Joyce's life. Joyce works

other literary works into his tale, notably Yeats's *The Celtic Twilight*, DeQuincey's "Levana and Our Ladies of Sorrow," and James Clarence Mangan's "Dark Rosaleen." The boy's language of "anguish and anger" is too strong compared to the trivial events that cause them. Blindness and commercialism are dominating themes. The boy's longing for Mangan's Sister anticipates *Portrait's* Birdgirl episode and Ulysses' "Nausicaa." Mangan's Sister – who is, at the core, an Eve-like temptress – is supposed to be "Dark Rosaleen." The boy sees in her both spirituality and commercialism, fatally confusing him. The fact that the bazaar is held in a church further conflates spirit and money.

Torchiana, Donald T. *Backgrounds for Joyce's Dubliners*. Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1986. The article focuses more on historical details. Notably, it gives a comprehensive history of the May 1894 *Araby* festival, and background on Francois Eugene Vidocq. Suggests that the girl at the story's end was Irish, and her contrast with the British boys suggests a English/Irish conflict.

Turaj, Frank. "Araby and Portrait: Stages of Pagan Conversion." *English Language Notes* 7 (1970): 209-13. Stephen Dedalus's birdgirl epiphany in *Portrait* and *Araby* both illustrates a character's conversion from orthodox religion. Both stories use similar religious language and dark imagery, and each episode contains an epiphany inspired by a woman. However, *Araby's* narrator lacks Stephen's intellectual awareness, the narrator cannot yet realize Stephen's refusal to serve organized religion.

(mason.gmu.edu/~lhil12/araby_annotated.htm)

Modernity in *Araby*

Arindam Das Gupta

A short story is a brief work of prose fiction, and most of the terms for analysing the component elements, the types, and the various narrative techniques of the novel are applicable to the short story as well. It, however, differs from the novel in the dimension that Aristotle called 'magnitude', and this limitation of length imposes differences both in the effects that can be achieved and in the choice, elaboration, and management of the elements to achieve these effects. Edgar Allan Poe defined what he called 'the prose tale' as a narrative which can be read at one sitting of from half an hour to two hours, and is limited to 'a certain unique or single effect' to which every detail is subordinate (Review of Nathaniel Hawthorn's *Twice Told Tales*, 1842, quoted in *A Glossary of Literary Terms*). Poe's comment applies to many short stories, and points to the economy of management, which the tightness of form always imposes in some degree. The central incident is often selected to manifest as much as

possible of the protagonist's life and character and the details are devised to carry maximum import for the development of the plot.

In *Araby* every detail contributes to the psychological and emotional profile of the boy. We even feel the presence of the narrator, now an adult, reflecting upon his childhood. Such expressions as 'places most hostile to romance' or 'what innumerable follies laid waste my waking and sleeping thoughts after that evening!' could hardly belong to a boy, possibly when he has only just reached adolescence. Every detail is subordinate to achieving the single effect of describing one very important moment in the narrator's life. Almost everything in the story reflects the boy's desire to rise out of the sordid surroundings that confine him: 'towards it the lamps of the street lifted their feeble lanterns' or 'I bore my chalice safely through a throng of foes' are both highly symbolic expressions in this respect. There simply must be something

special in his life, something that can help him to transcend the decay that surrounds him, something that his sensitive mind can relate to and feel deeply.

'Modernism' is a term used to describe certain developments in literature, art and music that peaked in the first half of the twentieth century. In one sense, the term is relative: what is modern to people of one period is outdated to those of the next. However, the terms 'modernism', 'modernist' and 'Modern movement' has been applied, for decades now, to certain tendencies in the arts, and thus have acquired a certain degree of descriptive validity. The specific features signified by 'modernism' vary with the user, but many critics agree that it involves a deliberate and radical break with some of the traditional bases not only of Western art, but also of Western culture in general. Some literary historians locate the beginning of the modernist revolt as far back as the 1890s, but most agree that 'high modernism', marked by an unexampled range and rapidity of change, came after the First World War. The catastrophe of the war had shaken faith in the continuity of Western civilisation and raised doubts about the inadequacy of traditional literary modes to represent the harsh and dissonant realities of the post-war world. T. S. Eliot wrote in a review of Joyce's *Ulysses* in 1923 that the inherited mode of ordering a literary work, which assumed a relatively coherent and stable social order, could not accord with 'the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history'. *Dubliners*, long delayed from publication as a volume because of censorship, consists of fifteen short stories in which Joyce intended 'to betray the soul of that hemistagia or paralysis which many consider a city'; the paralysis is intellectual, moral, and spiritual. This study in environment, notably in *Araby*, *The Dead*, and *Counterparts*, is militantly opposed to the contemporary Celtic Renaissance. Joyce did not have to wait for the First World War to see 'harsh and dissonant realities'. To the dreamy or patriotic effusions of his fellow Irishmen, Joyce countered with uncompromising depictions of Irish decay, banality, and tawdriness. *Dubliners* was published nine years after its completion in 1905. The reasons for its frequent rejection can be imagined from words Joyce wrote to a publisher: 'It is not my fault that the odours of ashpits and old weeds and offal hangs round my stories. I seriously believe that you will retard the course of civilisation in Ireland by preventing the Irish people from having one good look at themselves in my nicely polished looking glass'. This attitude is entirely consistent with the modernist focus on the inner life which led to a self-consciousness at odds with society, a sense of alienation or estrangement from what Modernists regarded as the materialistic, banal, and hypocritical behaviour of the middle-class. The houses in *Araby*, 'conscious of decent lives within them, gazed at one another with brown imperturbable faces', and the priest 'had been a very charitable priest' who had earned so much money while serving God that he could leave all of it to institutions. The boy's uncle

keeps him waiting until nine in the evening. He is sorry, he says, that he had forgotten, and states that 'All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy'. He has to be told a second time where the boy is going, and as the boy leaves, he is about to recite the opening lines of *The Arab's Farewell to his Steed*. The awareness of the importance of keeping a promise, if at all felt, is promptly replaced by the satisfaction of believing that education and culture are acquired by memorising and reciting the opening lines of a poem.

The modernist alienation led to a kind of art that was so highly personal as to be, in some cases, incomprehensible. What really mattered was not what the public could see with the physical eye but what the artist felt, and how he or she perceived this emotional inner world. The artistic attempt to give form to this inner world is especially evident in Expressionistic painting and the 'stream of consciousness' novel, which, as the name suggests, was an attempt to trace the uneven flow of consciousness in a fictional character. 'Point of view' signifies the way a story gets told – the mode (or modes) established by an author by means of which the reader is presented with the characters, dialogue, actions, setting and events which constitute the narrative in a work of fiction. In the 'limited point of view', the narrator stays inside the confines of what is experienced, thought, and felt by a single character (or, at most by very few characters) within the story. Henry James, who refined this narrative mode, described such a selected character as his 'focus', or 'mirror', or 'centre of consciousness'. Later writers developed this technique into 'stream of consciousness' narration, in which we are presented with outer observations only as they impinge on the continuous current of thought, memory, feelings, and associations that constitute an observer's total awareness. This mode, in which the point of view is limited to the consciousness of a character within the story itself, gives readers the illusion of experiencing events that evolve before their own eyes. While *Araby* is not, strictly speaking, in the 'stream of consciousness' mode, it does contain distinct traces of it. This as well as the radical questioning of the value of the society, of morality, of reason, of religion – indeed, of life itself, are characters that may be found in a modern short story. Everything that the narrative voice in *Araby* tells us is constructed around the consciousness of the boy. The adult narrator's point of view shows us only what the boy sees, and feels. We are given the boy's memories, his feelings, and we are left to interpret and understand them for ourselves. Christian Brothers' School 'set the boys free' is what we are told. This implied sense of imprisonment is obviously a contribution of the adult narrator, but the very process of implication rather than assertion and explanation enables us to view the situation as the boy saw it. While he could not possibly have thought of the expression 'set the boys free', yet he must have felt their relief at the thought of school being over, as if it were an ordeal. 'I liked

the last best because its leaves were yellow' is what the boy must have actually felt, and this simple, naïve statement allows us to understand his innate aesthetic sensibility from a proximity that hardly could have been made accessible through an elaborate narrative explaining the statement. The wild garden, the rusty bicycle pump, the musty air and the useless papers are all presented from the boy's perspective. We are able to see them as he saw them, and we are able to understand them as symbols of decay and degeneration. Having understood that, we are able to feel what it must be like to be put in the midst of such waste.

The real experience at Araby is narrated in an almost completely objective and somewhat passive manner. This makes the contrast with the dreams and expectations all the more striking. 'I lingered before her stall, though I knew my stay was useless, to make my interest in her wares seem the more real.' The hypocrisy that the sentence reveals resides not in the boy, but in the society itself, which forces him to pretend in order to avoid embarrassment by not revealing his disappointment and hurt. The 'anguish and anger' with which the story ends does not attempt to provide a solution to

any problem. The story is simply that: a story. It takes us into the life of a boy where we see a crucial event of his life happening to him. What happens after that is not a part of the story. There is no happy or sad ending. The story ends because there is nothing more to be told. We are given a glimpse of society, religion, and middle-class mentality: a glimpse of life itself as seen by a sensitive little boy. He is all alone because he is the only person around who can feel deeply about anything. He is the representative of the modern artist in a society to which he can never truly belong. This, more than anything else, is perhaps what makes *Araby* a modern short story.

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Araby: An Escape Subhasree Adhikari

James Joyce with his unique style has set the background of the story Araby in a dreary, shabby atmosphere. This he has done purposely to reveal a contrast between the ideal and the real. In *Araby* the anonymous boy gets frustrated with his uneventful dull life. The atmosphere in which the boy lives is colourless. The houses in his locality 'had grown sombre'. In his house there 'hung in all the rooms' musty air 'and the waste-room behind the kitchen was littered with old useless papers'; the old tenant's rusty bicycle-pump adds to the monotony of the boy's world. There are 'dark, muddy lanes behind the houses'. The children's shouts 'echoed in the silent street'. The dark dripping gardens are dipped in odours from the ashpits. The dark odorous stables are no less responsible in enhancing the dullness of the surroundings. Only the music from the 'buckled harness' gives rise to a sense of life amidst the

unhealthy environment.

Now, into this background, Joyce makes the boy throw a challenge. *Araby* deals with the theme of man's universal quest for beauty. The boy, amidst drudgery, cherishes a desire to strive for an ideal. A visit to Araby – 'a Grand Oriental Fete held in Dublin' where goods are sold for the benefit of charities and sideshows are provided for amusement – is set up as his ideal. He wishes to buy some special gift for his dream-girl, his friend Mangan's sister. This is a pilgrimage to the world of beauty. In his effort, he does not succeed. Still, his frustration is also the other side of life. Man pines for what he does not achieve. He longs for a world that is beyond his reach. Nevertheless, that world inspires him to live. *Araby* in that sense depicts the story of man's attempted emancipation to the ideal world of beauty, detaching himself from the monotony of real life.

Corrigendum

There was a terrible mistake in the March 2002 issue of *Pegasus*. In the article 'Reading *The Guide*' by Dr. Sanjukta Das, the name *Rosie* was printed several times as *Daisy*. It was the printer's devil – must have been Mephistopheles himself – at his most mischievous. The responsibility lies squarely on the shoulders of the Editor. We humbly apologise and thank the readers who pointed out the error.