

Vol. 8, Issue-III (June 2017)

ISSN: 0976-8165

The Criterion

An International Journal in English

Bi-monthly, Refereed & Indexed Open Access eJournal



The Criterion

UGC Approved Journal [Arts and Humanities, Jr. No. 768]

Editor-In-Chief - Dr. Vishwanath Bite

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Galaxy: International Multidisciplinary Research Journal

Bi-Monthly Refereed and Indexed Open Access eJournal

www.galaxyimrj.com

ISSN 2278-9529

A Semiotic and Interpretative Analysis of Joyce's "Araby"

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Article History: Submitted-27/04/2017, Revised-03/06/2017, Accepted-15/06/2017, Published-05/07/2017.

Abstract:

The present paper carries out a semiotic and interpretive analysis of James Joyce's short story, "Araby". One of the objectives of the paper is to describe the major action in Joyce's short story from a canonical narrative perspective. A narrative of Dublinisue paralysis, this story narrates the failure in the narrator's performance. However, more important than performance, lapses in competence and manipulation culminate in the character's loss. The canonical narrative schema of the story proves that "Araby" is a parody of romance. The parodic nature of the story leads to an investigation of the way the story's idiolect transforms a socially normative discourse in an Irish context. The paper thus relies on the semiotic theories of Riffattere to detect the story's matrix and see how this matrix is transformed. Such detection not only justifies the titular significance assigned to Araby, the bazaar, but also gives glimpses into the symbolic interpretation of the story.

Keywords: "Araby", Joyce, canonical narrative schema, parody.

1. Introduction

James Joyce, canonized as a high modernist or an experimentalist, has excelled the borders of modernism and is mostly regarded as a postmodern writer. As Joyce criticism evinces, there has been a distinction between the late and the early Joyce. The early Joyce is the writer of *Dubliners* (1914) and *A portrait of the artist as a young man* (1916), whereas *Ulysses* (1922) and *Finnegans wake* (1939) belong to the late Joyce. Technically speaking, the latter works display Joyce's experimentalism at its peak. This, however, does not imply the lower significance of the early works. Of the four works mentioned above, his collection of short stories, *Dubliners*, has rarely received its due attention in the light of recent critical approaches. Many critics have explicated on *Dubliners*. These critics can be generally divided into two groups: those who universalize the key theme of the book and take it as a narrative of modern man's paralysis. Such critics' universalizing interpretation ignores Joyce's Irish context. The second group of critics has approached the book in the light of its context. While both readings have proved to be quite illuminating, they are reductive since the narrative structure of each story of the collection has not been attended to. After all, *Dubliners* is a work of fiction and it needs to be scrutinized as a work of artistic narrative.

The present paper applies a semiotic analysis to the third story of the collection entitled "Araby" in order to achieve three objectives concurrently. First, there is an attempt to determine the narrative schema of the story. For this objective, the paper draws on Rastier's semiotic theories to chart out the story's canonical narrative structure. Second, the generic feature of the story is investigated; the narrative schema is deployed to prove the story being a parody of romance. Rifatterre, a poststructuralist semiotician, provides a detailed investigation of parody in his theory of hypertextuality. His methodologies to arrive at the matrix of the story and see how the story's idiolect destabilizes a sociolect of the Irish context help us recontextualize the story and pinpoint its significance; this comprises the third objective of the paper.

2. Review literature

About *Dubliners*, Joyce has explicitly stated:

My intention was to write a chapter of the moral history of my country and I chose Dublin for the scene because that city seemed to me the centre of paralysis . . . I have written it for the most part in a style of scrupulous meanness. (qtd. in Fargnoli and Gillespie 46).

Elsewhere, Joyce writes, "I call the series *Dubliners* to betray the soul of that hemiplegia or paralysis which many consider a city" (qtd. in Fargnoli and Gillespie 46). Therefore, most of Joyce critics have based their interpretations on different concepts of paralysis reflected in the stories. Concepts such as spiritual, moral, religious, psychological, political, and emotional paralysis stretch throughout the collection which are picked up by different critics. As mentioned before, there are generally two types of approaches to *Dubliners* adopted so far by Joyce critics: the universalizing approach and the provincializing one. The politicizing urge lurking behind both approaches is quite revealing. The first perspective, which is mostly adopted by Joyce's contemporaneous critics, reads his collection of short stories as narratives of the male West paralyzed by nets of modernity. The second perspective accentuates the same theme in the line of Irishness with all its postcolonial cognates. The limited space of the present article allows only a selective review of Joyce criticism to touch on the major lines of thought.

Early commentators like Magalaner and Tindall provide an exclusively symbolic interpretation of the stories in Joyce's collection and thus focus on its theme of paralysis. They read the everyday events and commonplace things in the stories as having symbolic significance, and thus they look for symbolic patterns. (Attridge 101). John Nash (2006) posits the collection "registers a modern ennui as the symptom and cause of the conditions it describes: poverty, subservience, confusion" (qtd. in Deane 30). Nash concerns himself with the issue of Joyce readership and his reception. He argues Joyce's relationship with theatre audiences has been influential in his initial understanding of reception (qtd. in Deane 39); yet in Joyce the audience is part of the performance. Envisaged as such, Nash believes, "the ordinary people of *Dubliners* appear as a

bored audience to life" and this gives the stories "a self-consciously staged symbolic value" (41). For Nash, this collection displays a mixture of symbolism and realism (41).

Maud Ellmann (2010) is among the few critics who pay attention to the narrative structure of short story, in general, and *Dubliners*, in particular. Ellmann draws on Elizabeth Bowen's notions on short story. For her, the short story is well adapted to depict the "Simple Soul" which includes the young child, the arrested character, the defective idiot, the simpleton, and the abnormally submissive (98-99). Ellmann's analysis of the narrative structure of *Dubliners* is thematic as he picks up the theme of blindness (a concept of paralysis) and detects how it is manifested in Joyce's collection. The critic's concern with the origins and definition of short story as a genre notifies that it "harks back" to the ballad or the old epic (98); yet he suffices to pinpoint a general difference between short story and the other two genres and does not go on to analyze the narrative structures of Joyce's stories in the light of this intertextuality.

Eugene O'Brien (Accessed 2016) focuses his reading of Joyce's works, including *Dubliners*, on the ethical definition of Irishness and is thus to be grouped among the critics who contextualize the collection. O'Brien logically enough pays the least attention to the narrative schema of the stories included in the collection.

Joseph Valente (2009) refers to the "gendered division of authority" that comprises the narrative structure of *Dubliners* (48) and accordingly takes up the task of investigating the issue of gender-oriented justice as an interpretative key in his reading.

Eric Bulson (2006) localizes the theme of modernism in Joyce's oeuvre, stating "If Joyce became modern writing about Ireland in Trieste, he became a modernist writing about Ireland in English" (31). With reference to Joyce's explicitly stated intention of having composed his collection, Bulson concentrates his analysis on detecting the motifs of paralysis throughout the stories; the critic's involvement with the structure of the stories revolves around the ambiguous point of view of each story, including "Araby" (37).

Focusing on Joyce's style throughout his literary career, Seamus Deane argues for Joyce's taking provincialism as "a disease, a paralysis of the will" and believes Joyce's style of "scrupulous meanness" is in perfect compatibility "to betray the soul of that hemiplagia or paralysis which many consider a city" (qtd. in Attridge 37). Deane then interprets the stories of the collection paratextually, and in line with Joyce's own expressed intentions and views. Garry Leonard's chapter on *Dubliners* deals solely with the significance of epiphanic moments in the stories of the collection and investigates how the fantasies of the characters are disillusioned by the end of the stories. When Leonard comes to the issue of style, he draws paratextually on Joyce's deliberation of presenting things as they really are (qtd. in Attridge 95); he argues Joyce's objectivity and "compassionate irony" (qtd. in Attridge 96) are targeted to nullify the world depicted and favored by *The Irish Homestead* – a text to which the critic believes *Dubliners* stands as a counterargument (qtd. in Attridge 97).

Umberto Eco, one of the founders of semiotics, has approached Joyce's works from a semiotic perspective. Referring to Joycean texts which lack the requisite cohesiveness for semiotic scholars, Eco focuses his analysis on Joycean puns and metaphors in *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*. Eco contends Joyce's world is "a living example of a cultural universe ruled by the laws of Unlimited Semiosis" (as qtd. in Bosinelli et al. 25). He then dedicates part of his paper to represent the relation between Joyce and the unlimited semiosis. Eco's analysis, however, does not concern itself with the early Joyce.

Detecting silences in Joyce's language, Marylin French reads the stories of *Dubliners* as satires about whose "true" morality the writer remains silent (44). She further on concludes Joyce has anticipated the deconstructionists who offer no authoritative line to be subverted; this justifies his having deconstructed his own voice through silence (45).

Richard Ellmann (1969) takes *Dubliners* as the impersonal façade through which Joyce's preoccupations emerge; thus he concerns himself with the thematic aspect of "Araby", stating it "plays on the theme of the loss of warmth in the past" (295). Similarly, Lee Spinks interprets "Araby" thematically and reads the story paratextually as the manifestation of *Dubliners'* paralysis (55).

The selective review displays few critics have ever worked on the narrative schema of Joyce's short stories. The present paper is an attempt to fill in this gap, working on "Araby" as a sample. What is aimed here is to draw a link between the narrative structure of the story, its theme, and significance within the Irish context. For showing this, a review of semeiotics is needed to background the methodology of the paper.

Taking roots in modern linguistics initiated by Ferdinand de Saussure, semiotics deals with signs and the way they are assigned significance within a society. Signs could be images, artworks, gestures, and sounds. From its rise till now, many semioticians have emerged and accorded the field different dimensions. However, here we review only the figures who landmark semiotics, namely, Saussure, Peirce, and Hjelmslev. Having fathered modern linguistics, Saussure is the first linguist who approaches language as a rule-bound structure. He divides the sign into the signifier (the written or spoken form) and the concept it strikes to the mind called signified. Contradistinction to traditional views of language, Saussurean perspective sees a non-referential relation between the sign and the world. Instead, he votes for a conventional, arbitrary, and differential link between the two components of the sign (Allen 8-9). Clarifying Saussure's idea of *la langue*, Barthes regards it the "social part of language" which the individual can neither create nor modify; "it is essentially a collective constraint which one must accept in its entirety if one wishes to communicate" (Allen 9). The meanings which we produce and find in language are relational and this relation is differential; in Saussure's own words, "Whether we take the signified or the signifier, language has neither ideas nor sounds that existed before the language system, but only conceptual and phonic differences that have issued from the system" (Allen 10).

Charles Sanders Peirce changes Saussure's dyadic view of sign and offers a triadic model consisting of the representamen, interpretant, and object. The representamen is the form which the sign takes and could be the same as Saussure's signifier; interpretant is the sense made of the sign; this sense is a composite of representation and interpretation, hence it is roughly analogous to Saussure's signified. The object is something beyond the sign to which it refers (Chandler 29). The sign comprises three facets: what is represented (the object), how it is represented (the representamen), and how it is interpreted (the interpretant). Peirce calls the logic-bound relation between these three parts as semeiosis (Chandler 30). While Saussurean semiology lacks the object or the referent, Peircean semeiosis allocates a place for materiality, albeit it may encompass abstract concepts and fictional entities (Chandler 33). Peirce's concept of the interpretant, in which meaning and content are not equated but meaning is represented as that which arises in its interpretation, leads to the notion of dialogical thought (Chandler 32-33). The Conclusion of the present study detects the dialogical line in its narrative analysis and interpretation of "Araby".

Chandler provides a good explanation of how Peirce's model works in a quotation from his student, Rodrick Munday. This explanation is quite conducive to our semiotic reading of "Araby"; thus it is worthy of being quoted at length. Munday likens the three elements of sign to a label on an opaque box that contains an object. The object cannot be known directly, hence the need for a sign to represent it:

The first thing that is noticed (the representamen) is the box and the label; this prompts the realization that something is inside the box (the object). This realization, as well as the knowledge of what the box contains, is provided by the interpretant. 'Reading the label' is just a metaphor for the process of decoding the sign. The important point to be aware of here is that the object is always hidden. . . . We only know about the object from noticing the label and the box and then 'reading the label' and forming a mental picture of the object in our mind. Therefore the hidden object of a sign is only brought to our realization through the interaction of the representamen, the object and the interpretant" (Chandler 31).

This explanation justifies the three modes the representamen and the interpretant can have with each other. Peirce recognizes these modes as symbolic, iconic, and indexical. The symbolic comprises the relation between the signifier and the signified as fundamentally arbitrary or purely conventional. The iconic is a mode in which the signifier imitates or resembles the signified like a photo. The indexical mode directly connects the signifier to the signified; this link can be observed or inferred like phone ringing (Chandler 36-37). These modes can help us provide a new interpretation of "Araby" which will be discussed in due part.

The other notable semiotician is Louis Hjelmslev who insists on the interdependence of content and expression (Chandler 56). Distinguishing planes of expression from planes of content, Hjelmslev suggests both expression and content have form and substance; he thus avoids the

dualistic reduction of the sign to form and content. His framework includes four categories: substance of expression, form of expression, substance of content, and form of content. While this framework materializes the sign, it provides a systematic analysis of texts (Chandler 56-57).

The founder of the Paris School of semiotics, Algirdas Greimas, has proposed a grammar of narrative. He identifies three types of narrative syntagms: performance (tasks and struggles), contracts (the establishment and breaking of contracts), and disjunctions (departures and arrivals) (Chandler 118). Deploying Greimas's narrative grammar, Louis Hebert with the collaboration of Nicole Everaert-Desmedt (2011) has come up with the canonical narrative schema to describe an action. According to them, a narrative as a structure comprises five components: the action, component, performance, manipulation, and sanction. The action has two components: competence (the necessary prerequisites of the action: wanting-to-do, having-to-do, knowing-how-to-do, and being-able-to-do) and performance (the actual realization of the action); the other components are manipulation (the component concerned with wanting-to-do and having-to-do) and sanction (evaluating the action and assigning the retribution it entails, that is, reward or punishment) (Hebert 91). This tool helps us scrutinize the narrative structure of Joyce's short story and chart out the relations the characters set up with each other. This will be carried out in the next section.

The interpretative aspect of our analysis relies on Michael Riffaterre's anti-mimetic approach to literary texts. This poststructural semiotician regards the text's "ungrammaticalities" as the force which renders semiotic interpretation of the text unavoidable (Allen 116). As Allen aptly explains, for Riffaterre, the significance of texts arises out of "transformations of socially normative discourse, which he calls, 'sociolect'" (119). Riffaterre then distinguishes a text's "idiolect" as the transformation the text brings about to a recognizable element of the sociolect by means of inversion, conversion, expansion, or juxtaposition (Allen 119). Riffaterre argues recognizing the text's idiolect and its transformation of the sociolect results in deciphering the text's semiotic unity. In order to realize this, one needs to discover the text's matrix, which is a "word, phrase or sentence unit which does not necessarily exist in the text itself but which represents the kernel upon which the text's semiotic system is based" (Allen 119). The transformation of this matrix, that is, the idiolect, accords the text a structural unity.

3. Methodology

The methodology of the paper consists of narrative as well as interpretative analyses. The narrative analysis of the schema of "Araby" is based on the canonical narrative schema which is the most proper, as it leaves almost no part of the story unattended.

4. Discussion and analysis

The text of "Araby" is the sign which is to be analyzed. Speaking in a Hjelt's key tone, this story comprises substance of expression, which is the printed words on paper. Form of expression is best reflected in Joyce's own words on his technique of "scrupulous meanness".

Joyce’s opted point of view is first person which is suitable for a love-story like this, as it gives direct access to the emotional tumults of a lover. On the plane of content, there is the substance of content. The content substance is textual world cast in a parody of romance (the parodic nature of the story will be discussed soon). The form of content is narrative with a thematic structure. The more detailed analysis can be found in Table 1 which has been modeled after Hjelmslev’s framework provided by Chandler (57):

“Araby”	Substance	Form
Plane of expression (Signifier)	Substance of expression: Printed words on page	Form of expression: Scrupulous meanness; first-person point of view; childish view marked with sincerity and innocence; subjective, reliable narrator; detailed; descriptive; epiphany
Plane of content (Signified)	Substance of content: Textual world; a parody of the genre of romance; paralysis	Form of content: Narrative; thematic structure is love; the semantic structure: the opposition between success and failure (gain or loss of the beloved) uses the two contrary terms: one or the other, that is, success and gain or failure and loss

Read in the light of Greimasian narrative structure, “Araby” comprises five actions: the first action is the boy falling in love with his friend’s sister (the boy desires the girl). The second action is the beloved’s “manipulating” and sending the boy to Araby to get her something. In the third action, the uncle manipulates the boy and keeps him waiting for him to give him money till late in the evening. The fourth action consists of the delay the train has in moving and its slow speed. The last action is the boy’s reaching the bazaar which is almost closed. Each of these actions itself comprises minor sub-actions; yet the paper’s focus is on these main actions. In

canonical narrative schema, the purpose of negative manipulation is causing-not-to-do; the lover's failure in "Araby" is due to its negative manipulation.

In the first actional phase, the boy sees Morgan's sister and desires her. The act of desiring itself is a manipulation which makes the boy both want and do something. This manipulative force is best reflected in the things the boy does. "I ran to the hall, seized my books and followed her" (Joyce 21). The beloved's image haunts her "even in places the most hostile to romance" (Joyce 21). Her love takes the place of his religious ethos, "Her name sprang to my lips at moments in strange prayers and praises which I myself did not understand" (Joyce 21-22). Alone in the late priest's drawing room, he prays to love (Joyce 22).

In the second main action, upon speaking to him, the beloved plays the role of a sender-manipulator and wants the boy to go to Araby, the bazaar (Joyce 22). Since it is for the girl that he decides to go there, she is the positive manipulator. She expresses her love to go to the bazaar but cannot because of the retreat in her convent. The girl's only sentence heard in the story are, "It's well for you", meaning that he has no problem in going to Araby; this statement is provocative and brings the boy into a contract.

The contract between the sender-manipulator and the boy as the receiver-subject is explicit. This explicit contract causes the boy to render the action possible. Up to this point, the boy's wanting-to-do virtualizes the action. The rest of the story narrates how the boy tries to realize this possibility, that is, his performance. The coveted realization is, however, hindered first by the uncle who, forgetting to give him money, reaches home quite late and thereby gives the boy's departure a long delay. Second, on the way to the bazaar, the train takes almost a long time to move. Therefore, the girl as the sender-manipulator stands in opposition to the uncle and the train as anti-sender-manipulators; both manipulators are directed toward the boy. The boy's failure to realize his promise to the beloved makes his performance negative.

In the final part of the action, the boy reaches Araby when it is almost closed and fails to buy the love token. This part involves the sanction component. As Hebert elaborates, "sanction includes the episodic judgment (evaluation) of performance and the accompanying retribution that the performing subject has incurred" (Hebert 96). Epistemically, the boy's performance does not conform to the explicit contract made between him and his beloved. As he has promised to her, he manages to go to Araby but fails to buy her something for being late. The retribution in this story is both pragmatic and cognitive. The pragmatic retribution lies in the love token which is not bought. The cognition lies in the frustration the boy undergoes having found Araby not as splendid and enchanting as he expected. Also, the boy's identity and his desire to unite with the beloved are also nullified here.

The abstract narrative program can be either conjunctive when the subject has the object or disjunctive when the subject lacks the object. (Hebert 92). Failing to bring his beloved the love token renders the narrative program of "Araby" disjunctive, since he lacks the beloved thereby.

The analysis of the failure is important since it reveals the roots of the disjunction. The final sentence of the story is significant here, “Gazing up into the darkness I saw myself as a creature driven and derided by vanity; and my eyes burned with anguish and anger” (Joyce 26). Identified with “a creature driven and derided by vanity” pinpoints the lover’s frustration and his loss of identity. The sense of vanity and loss comprises the true contract’s cognitive retribution. The pertinence of this loss enhances in stories that parodically take after romance since the identity of the lover is at issue here. In such stories, the loss of the beloved signifies the lover’s loss of identity and this is what happens to the boy in Joyce’s story, hence the character sees himself “driven and derided by vanity” (Joyce 26). Failing to fulfill his promise to the beloved deprives the boy of the identity he has formed in love-relation with her; not getting the love token equals to losing her. Thus the boy at the end of the story is the subject whose performance has failed leading to the loss of his beloved. This bases the semantic structure of the story on the contrary terms of “one or the other” (Table 1).

4.1. Parody and hypertextuality

Based on the canonical narrative schema carried out, we can claim “Araby” is a parody of romance. As a work of parody, this story is inevitably marked with hypertextuality. Genette, the structural semiotician, regards intertextuality as a kind of transtextuality and defines it as “a relationship of copresence between two texts or among several texts” and “as the actual presence of one text within another” as in cases with quotation, allusion, plagiarism, etc. (Allen 101). What other critics call the inter-text Genette terms the hypotext, that is, “a text which can be definitely located as a major source of signification for a text” (Allen 108). Genette further on distinguishes between hypotextuality, in which specific hypotexts are imitated, and hypertextuality where generic models are imitated (Allen 109). Viewed in this light, we can argue “Araby” sets up a hypertextual relationship with the genre of romance. It deploys the features of conventional romance but gives it a new turn. While “Araby” imitates the generic mold of romance in competence, manipulation, and sanction, it transforms it into an anti-romance in its performance which is the core of emphasis in a work of romance. Even in the contract between the beloved and the boy, there lies some anti-romance hint. In response to the girl’s heard words, the boy’s reaction does not resemble a romance hero’s. Unlike works of romance in which the hero immediately expresses his devotion to the beloved by promising her that whatever the obstacles, he will do what she desires, the boy here only says, “If I go . . . I will bring you something” (Joyce 22). As a parodic strategy which undermines the totality of romance, the conditional sentence lacks the needed sense of determination and devotion expected from a lover. Besides, a contract is an agreement between the two involved parties; each one agrees to do or not to do something. By convention, conditional cases are mentioned when one of the two sides fails to conform to the main points of the contract. In a love relation like this, such a conditional sentence looks odd.

The aforementioned analysis of the narrative schema of “Araby” and its parodic relation with works of romance fails to address the relationship the title “Araby” sets up with the body of the

text. Conventionally, in dyadic relation of lover-beloved, the bazaar Araby as the place from which token of love is to be obtained bears the least significance. This runs in contrast to its titular position which is to cognate different strands of the story. A scrutiny into this matter opens up the room for an interpretive analysis of the story, hence Riffaterre's semiotic methodology. The fact that the canonical narrative schema can explain only the way the story is represented hints at two important points. First, theoretically, it displays the shortcoming of Saussurean dyadic signifier-signified relation. This lapse makes bold Peirce's contribution to semiotics with his distinction between Saussure's signified and his notion of interpretant which comprises both representation and interpretation. Second, thematically, the urge for interpretation highlights the object to which the title of the story, "Araby", indexically refers and thereby gives the whole narrative a symbolic significance.

Riffaterre contends the significance of a text lies in the way its matrix is transformed. Matrix of the story links the textual world with the real world. Thus he nullifies the mimetic relation between text and world and vouches for a semiotic relation based on the way the text transforms the sociolect. As mentioned in methodology, a sociolect is a socially normative discourse. An investigation of the dominant discourses of Ireland in the first two decades of Ireland makes us take a brief glance over the literary and cultural scene of the time.

4.2. Sociolect

Joyce comes from and writes for a country which has long suffered colonization under the Great Britain's reign. The end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century witnesses the rise of the colonies. Ireland has been scene to such protests; there occurred "an explosion of cultural activity" (Gibson 28). The protest has been crystallized in the form of Irish Literary Revival led by W. B. Yeats, Lady Augusta Gregory, Edward Martyn, and some other figures. The Revivalists sought the rebirth of their suppressed Celtic traditions and language. This urge has culminated in the formation of Gaelic League in 1893 under the leadership of the writer, scholar, and statesman, Douglas Hyde (Fargnoli and Gillespie 280). In Gibson's apt words, "What matters is the possible 'resurgence' of Ireland as a self-assertively modern nation. The self-assertion in question is spiritual, economic, cultural, material and practical together" (Gibson 87).

The Irish nationalists accentuated imagination and spirituality of the Gaelic in the face of the materialism and consumerism of the British. This spiritual inclination is actualized in the fascination and turn to the Orient. Thus one of the socially normative discourses of Ireland is the reliance of the nation on the East and Eastern culture as a source of inspiration. According to Herbert Howarth, the Oriental trend in Ireland was initiated by Thomas Davis' preaching that "England served Mammon, and . . . Ireland would finally succumb to England if she too became interested in successful commerce and industry" (41). The West then has already been swept by waves of modernization and modernist lifestyle. The only resort the Irish could find to model themselves after is the East which is home to spiritual treasure. Accordingly, the title "Araby"

bears a sociolectual significance. Joyce highlights this significance by giving the name “Araby” a titular status. As the narrative schema has shown, this story is an anti-romance which is woven out of a love-relation between the narrator and the beloved. However, neither the boy nor the beloved is given a titular position. Rather, it is the bazaar Araby which sits at the title.

This point brings about a change in the analysis of the narrative schema of the story. In this story, the girl is fascinated by the bazaar, Araby. Having fallen in love with the girl, the boy is set on an adventurous but failed trip to the bazaar. The failure of the boy to get anything from the bazaar implies the beloved’s frustration as well. Based on this, the matrix of the story can be stated in a sentence: Araby is a source of inspiration. What accords the story its significance is the idiolect which inverts the matrix. As the name shows, what the boy and the girl both expect to get from the bazaar is the Eastern culture with its spiritual ethos. Upon reaching the almost closed bazaar, however, what comes as a shock to the boy is not only the dominant materialistic atmosphere symbolized in “two men . . . counting money on a salver” and the sound of “the fall of the coins” (Joyce 25), but also its having been invaded by the British culture. Catching sight of a curtain over which the words *Café Chantant* are written and overhearing the void and nonsensical conversation between two men and a young lady in English accents, the boy feels frustrated. The only Eastern things he finds there are two jars, the position of one of which is, significantly enough, changed by the conversing young lady (Joyce 25). The idiolect of the story thus inverts the matrix to: Araby is not a source of inspiration.

5. Conclusion

The present paper attempts a somewhat different reading of “Araby”. It decides the canonical narrative schema of the story and simultaneously shows the limitations of this approach. The titular significance of the bazaar Araby remains unexplained in the scheme. In addition, the priority accorded to the bazaar is accentuated in not only the titular position of its name but also by its name itself. Fact is that in contrast to the bazaar, both the lover and the beloved are nameless. This point can be explained from two perspectives: description theory and causal theory (Saeed 28). Setting “Araby” at the head of the text, Joyce can be argued to have associated Araby with his own description which comprises the whole narrative. The other theory, causal theory, explains that names “are socially inherited, or borrowed” (Saeed 28). Envisaged as such, the name “Araby” links the fictional text to its social context, hence the need for an interpretive approach. The interpretation helps us assign a new meaning to the story and this implies what Peirce calls “dialogical thought” (see Section 2).

The interpretative analysis, based on Riffaterre’s semiotic framework, addresses the sociolect of the Irish context and shows how “Araby” draws its significance by transforming the matrix. Yet the objective has been far from reducing the story to a mere idiolect. One can argue the failure of the boy at the end of the story which results in the loss of the beloved represents the failure of the Revivalists and Irish nativists to revive their lost traditions by resorting to Arab culture. The namelessness of the lover and the beloved, the fact that the beloved is described only by shadow-

light play all hint at the symbolic overtone they are loaded with. Here, the boy full of imagination and eager to take adventures himself does not take interest in the bazaar, if it were not for the girl. Within that context of feverish Revivalism, the girl may symbolize the colonized country restricted and confined in the convent of Catholicism, but fascinated by the enchanting world of the Orient. The delicate point which may not strike the reader is that the Orient presented and desired by the characters here is infantilizingly stereotyped as the world of mystery and wonder. Within an Orientalist perspective, Arab spiritualism comes as an eerie component of their culture which countersigns western man's reason and rationality and therefore stands as their barbarism. This alterity renders them needful of civilization. The bazaar the boy reaches quite late is the distorted visage of an Arab "so-called" civilized culture which proves to be quite impotent. Thus "Araby" may be regarded as Joyce's disapproval of the activities of the Revivalists.

Narratologically, the story has a transgeneric nature, being a parody. If one reads the story in the light of Elizabeth Bowen's view who takes the genre of short story as a version of ballads or epic narratives, the hypertextual relation with the epic form casts a critical light on the short story, "Araby". Far from being an epic with its emphasis on chivalry and heroic deeds, the so-called epic hero, the lover, proves an anti-hero not only in his failure but also in the insignificant adventure he takes. Hence in the transgeneric relation between short story and epic, "Araby" stands as a grotesque gesture to epic, mocking the impotence of the anti-hero lover.

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