

Quot;araby" by james joyce essay

[Life](#), [Love](#)



Analysis of James Joyce's "Araby"

James Joyce's "Araby" is a part of a collection of stories called the "Dubliners". These stories looked into the hearts, homes, and minds of the people who are connected by the spirit of Dublin, the home of the writer. "Araby" is one of the sort stories in the collection Dubliners, published in 1914. Although Joyce wrote the stories many years before, the stories included events and characters that were quite similar to the actual people and places in Dublin at the time. This led to the issue of libel arising from the strong similarities that existed between the fictitious people in the stories and the actual people in the society. Joyce admitted to basing his characters on the real people in the society, and such historical and geographical examination of relationships, led to many publishers becoming anxious about the publication of the stories. The short stories are interconnected in many ways and critics realized that this suggests a sense of shared familiarity, and brings to mind a clear picture of life in Dublin that Joyce refers to repeatedly in his works.

In the short story "Araby", the narrator is not named. It is through his eyes that Joyce presents the streets of North Dublin. He is perceptive as he spends his time reflecting on the games he plays with his friends on the streets and on the priest who passed on in the house before his family moved into the house. The narrator reflects on the time he spends playing with his friends even as he avoids the people in the neighborhood, and in particular his uncle and the girl he likes. He enjoys watching her from a distance and savors the moments she comes to call her brother. It is the only time he gets to actually enjoy a closer look at her.

The narrator starts each day by positioning himself in the front room of his house, so that he gets a glimpse of Mangan's sister as she leaves her house. His obsession with her at the start of the story forces him to rush out and walk behind her quietly, until he passes her. Both Mangan's sister and the narrator talks rarely, but he thinks about her constantly. His infatuation becomes clearer as he thinks about her all the time when he goes shopping in the busy marketplace on Saturdays, or at home, in the back room of his house. The reader sees that the narrator's is infatuated so much so, that he fears that he will never build up the courage to talk to her about his feelings. Even towards the end, Joyce keeps the character at a level where he keeps his love to himself. One may question then, the purpose of writing a love story where the love falls through at the end of the story. The answer is quite simple; Joyce's lesson is that people do not always get their heart's desire. In addition, it is also clear that no one knows the future, and giving up without trying always results in failing.

When Mangan's sister finally speaks to him, it is about the upcoming bazaar, and the fact that she is unable to able to attend. She has a prior engagement at her school, and the narrator promises to bring something back for her. The brief encounter sets the narrator into frenzy. He cannot concentrate in school, as he waits eagerly for the bazaar. However, the morning of the bazaar brings some amount of disappointment for the narrator as his uncle returns home late. He becomes impatient as he waits. His uncle comes home late in the night and he goes to the bazaar alone. He reaches just as it is about to close. The narrator approaches one stall to uphold his promise to Mangan's sister, but is approached by an unpleasant woman, who makes

him feel unwanted.

In "Araby," the allure of new love and distant places mingles with the familiarity of everyday chores. It adds to the narrator's frustration with the consequences of his infatuation with Mangan's sister. She is a part of the narrator's confusion as she represents the familiar physical environment of the narrator, along with the striking promise of the fair. Her complexion is synonymous with the brown façade of the physical structures that line the street. The brown complexion adds to a romantic picture of Arabia that submerges in the narrator's head, yet he feels dejected in the end as he judges the outcome of his life. The theme of reality versus appearance is clear here, as the narrator faces reality at the fair. His anticipation of exotic excitement was unreal as he looks around and realizes that he had the most expectations of the world and love. The title of the story implies an escape to the exotic land of North Africa. At the same time the 19th century Middle East suggests decadence and luxurious sensuality, which complements the boy's erotic feelings for the girl. The role of fantasy is even more pronounced as he wonders about the type of romantic gift that he wants to buy her at the Oriental fair.

The main theme in the story is that of frustration. The boy deals with his financial limits that are not his fault. Secondly, he is frustrated by the events that lead up to him going to the bazaar late. He becomes frustrated as the romantic ideas he has of the Arabia and the Orient are not met when he goes to the fair and realizes that women spoke ordinary English. He becomes frustrated that he is still in Dublin. Joyce presents the narrator, as one who is intoxicated by Mangan's sister and likens his emotions for her to the feelings

he for the upcoming fair. Both experiences are different for the narrator and his everyday life. Nevertheless, both feelings evoke the same type of elation in the narrator. He anticipates both encounters with anticipation. He is a bit disappointed as his expectations of the fair are not met. He had anticipated English accents and teacups with flowers to represent the typical English society and not the freedom of the captivating East. One could say that the narrator's disappointment at the fair influenced his thoughts that Mangan's sister will fail his expectations of her. He becomes angry as he realizes that his yearning for her is only a wish for change.

At the end of the story, the narrator does not make any attempt to understand the moment of epiphany. Instead, he gives up on his feelings. He believes that just as the fair had ended so to would his love for her. This shows the reader that the narrator weak at his belief in love. One can understand the narrator's doubts in his feelings for Mangan's sister as the story shows the lack of love that the narrator experiences at home with his uncle. The feeling there appears to be one of indifference, as there is a lack of warmth in the greetings between the uncle and the narrator, and again when the narrator expresses that he did not go through his daily ritual of watching Mangan's sister as his uncle was already in the room.