Kelsey Berry

Professor Holguin

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Response Paper 1

James Joyce, the author of Araby, begins with describing his home, North Richmond Street, as “a quiet street”. This opening sentence sets the tone for the remainder of the story as dreary and ordinary. The author then immediately follows with a description of a back drawing room in which a priest had died, continuing the lack of lively imagery present in the life of the narrator. “Air, musty from having been long enclosed hung in all the rooms, and waste room behind the kitchen was littered with old useless papers,” (Joyce 21). Overall, the start of Araby constitutes a dull and depressing feel for the setting with the mention of the dead priest and two different occasions of describing the street “silent” or “quiet”. The first sign of bright imagery occurs when the narrator introduces Mangan’s sister, whom is quite similar to the Bazaar in the eyes of the narrator in the sense of being out of the ordinary and “casting an Eastern enchantment” in his life.

The encounter with Mangan’s sister, the narrator’s crush, is introduced with specific details recalled by the narrator. “She was waiting for us, her figure defined by the light from the half opened door,” (Joyce 22). He also comments on the way her dress and hair swung when she moved and how his “heart leaped” when she came onto the doorstep, alluding to the strong feelings the narrator has. He also says: “Her image accompanied me even in places the most hostile to romance,” (Joyce 22). This reference to romance in hostile places suggests the happiness Mangan’s sister adds to the life of the narrator, despite his ordinary and at times unpleasant life. Taking the narrator’s feelings into consideration, Mangan’s sister represents the narrator’s only expression of excitement and delight in the story thus far.

When the narrator finally speaks to Mangan’s sister, she immediately brings up *Araby*, a bazaar named after a poetic title for Arabia. Although Mangan’s sister cannot attend the bazaar, the narrator quickly resolves to bring her something if he decides to go, which indeed he does. “What innumerable follies laid waste my waking and sleeping thoughts after that evening!” I wished to annihilate the tedious intervening days,” (Joyce24). The narrator expresses great anticipation for the bazaar, despite the fact that Mangan’s sister will not be in attendance. Typically, one would think more excitement would be revealed instead for the next encounter with Mangan’s sister to give her what he brought from the bazaar. At this point in time, the narrator’s focus seems to have switched to the bazaar, rather than his feelings for Mangan’s sister. “The high cold empty gloomy rooms liberated me and I went from room to room singing,” (Joyce25). His escape from ordinary life lies within Mangan’s sister and the bazaar; instances speaking of them instigate the most positive emotions in the story.

The narrator’s feelings about his current situation, the bazaar, and Mangan’s sister are quite evident in the story because of the imagery used in relation to each. Joyce uses words such as “quiet”and “empty” when referring to his home or neighborhood. In contrast, words such as “Eastern enchantment” and “O love” when referring to Mangan’s sister or *Araby*. “My eyes were often full of tears (I could not tell why) and at times flood from my heart seemed to pour itself out into my bosom,” (Joyce 23). The narrator’s expression of extreme unhappiness is quite evident aside from alluding to *Araby* and Mangan’s sister. The phrase “casting an Eastern enchantment” shows the exoticness and pleasure that Mangan’s sister and the bazaar bring to his life, thus showing the similarity between the two.

The fact that the bazaar is titled *Araby* and clearly indicated so in collaboration with the anticipation represents this connection to mystery and happiness, just like the land of Arabia and Mangan’s sister. The two show strong similarities throughout the entire story, even in the ending lines. “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 28). The narrator’s unpleasant experience at the bazaar combined with his nonexistent relationship with Mangan’s sister brings him to the realization he is a “creature”. Without Mangan’s sister, this occurrence at the bazaar may have been nonexistent, reinforcing the strong connection between Mangan’s sister and *Araby*.

Works Cited

Joyce, James. *Araby*. Dubliners. 1914. New York: Norton, 2003. Print.