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RESEARCH PAPER

An Iconic and Actantial Analysis of James Joyce's *Araby* through Greimas' *Actantial and Semiotic Model*

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this study is to examine the applicability of Algirdas Julien Greimas's actantial model by identifying and analysing the actants within the narrative structure of James Joyce's *Araby*. The actantial model, developed by Greimas, abstracts and simplifies the complex structure of a narrative text into six core functions or actants: subject, object, sender, receiver, helper, and opponent. These actants represent functional roles rather than specific characters, offering a theoretical framework for narrative analysis. Employing a structured inquiry alongside both quantitative and qualitative methods, this research identifies and interprets the actants and their respective functions within the story. The study finds that Greimas's model can be effectively applied to *Araby*, and potentially to various forms or even sections of narrative texts. This approach may be further developed through comparative studies and interdisciplinary applications to enrich actantial analysis across diverse narrative forms.

Keywords: Actants, Subject, Object, Helper, Opponent, Sender, Receiver, Axis of Desires, Junction, Conjunction, Disjunction, Axis of Power, Axis of Description, Axis of Knowledge

Introduction

The renowned linguist, semiotician, and narratologist Algirdas Julien Greimas developed the actantial model in 1960, which he continued to elaborate in his later work. This model addresses the deep structure of narrative, emphasising functional roles—referred to as actants—rather than focusing on individual characters. His most significant contribution lies in distilling narrative analysis to six actants that define both the structure and the function of a story.

Greimas' actantial model (1966, pp. 174–185 and 192–212) analyzes the functions and roles of the various actants they demonstrate in narrative fiction: "[This] model schematically shows functions and roles characters perform in a narrative" (Susumu, 2010, p. 17). Actually, the model is based on the reductionist theory of Propp (1970) that reduces the structure of narrative just to six minimal numbers of functions that constitute the role in a story instead of the specific character. As Greimas (1987) highlights that the actantial model seeks to distill the intricate structure of narrative into a few minimal functions or actants, focusing on the roles fulfilled within the story rather than on the specific characters who occupy them. It is not necessary for the actants to be human, as their functional position can be represented by any entity or force: "Each actant represents a functional position, which can be filled by different characters or forces, not necessarily human" (Greimas, 1983, p. 207).

Hebert (2006) points out that it can be used to investigate and examine real or thematised action depicted in a literary text or image, (p. 49). According to Hebert, in Greimas' model an action of a story is broken down into six actants or aspects: object, sender, receiver, helper and opponent. The target of the actant, the subject, is the object since the subject either yearns for joining (junction) or does not yearn to join the object (disjunction). The actant sender sets off, prompts and instigates the action, whereas the receiver is benefited from it. The helper lends a hand, supports and assists the subject to accomplish the action (junction or disjunction) whilst the opponent is to hinder (p. 49). According to Hebert (2006), helper as well as opponent may be human and non-human entity:

> Helper may be human and non-human entity; for example, the courage of the subject, his friends, human and non-human (Jams & goddess Hera) and different entities like the magic sword, horse, wind, sun, storm and other forms of nature. The opponent hinders the junction between subject and object, for example, witch, dragon, the hurdle of natural forces and the fatigue of the subject etc. (cited in Shah & Shakoor, 2022, p. 801)

In the Actantial Model, Greimas classifies the six actants into three axes of opposition, each forming an axis of description. The first is the axis of desires, consisting of the subject and the object. The subject is directed towards the object; for example, a young man may wish to marry a girl (called junction) or may not wish to marry her (called disjunction). Thus, the young man is the actant subject, and the young girl is the object pursued by the subject, either to marry or not. In this connection, Hebert (2006) states that the relationship formed between the subject and the object within the actantial model is referred to as a *junction*, which may be further categorised as either a *conjunction*—as in the case where, for example, a prince desires a princess—or a *disjunction*, as illustrated by a scenario in which a murderer successfully disposes of the victim's body (p. 49).

The second description of opposition is the axis of power, which consists of the helper and the opponent. The helper assists the subject in achieving its goal concerning the object, which may involve either conjunction or disjunction between the subject and object, while the opponent hinders the junction: "For example, in the novel *The Old Man and the Sea*, the old man wants to hook the fish. The helper actants—his courage, skill, and tools—support him, whereas the opponent actants—the shark, the darkness of the night, and his loneliness—oppose him" (cited in Shah & Shakoor, 2022, p. 802). The third relationship in the axis of description, according to Hebert (2006), is the axis of knowledge, which contains two types of actants: (1) sender and (2) receiver. The sender is an element requesting the establishment of the junction between the subject and the object. For example, a king asks another king to help rescue or free the princess (subject), while the receiver actant benefits from the junction between the subject and object, or the element for which the mission is undertaken, and is termed the "recipient of the object" (Prince, 1982). In the actantial model, sometimes the same actant performs multiple functions, such as sender, subject, and receiver. Likewise, a helper may also act as an opponent as Greimas points out a single actant may be embodied by multiple actors, just as a single actor may simultaneously fulfil the roles of several actants (p. 111).

Thus, according to Greimas (1983–1987), the actantial model may be schematically represented as a semiotic square, illustrating the dynamic relationships among six fundamental actants:

Sender ---------- Object ----------> Receiver

Helper ----------> Subject ---------- Opponent

This configuration highlights the roles and functions each actant performs within the narrative structure, emphasising the subject's pursuit of the object, influenced by supportive and opposing forces.

Literature Review

In exploring the thematic and narrative complexity of James Joyce's *Araby*, scholars have employed a variety of critical lenses to unravel its underlying socio-cultural and psychological dimensions. Among the many interpretations, semiotic, interpretive, and narrative analyses provide significant insight into the protagonist's journey of disillusionment and the broader implications of Irish identity. A notable contribution to this discourse is Roghayeh Farsi's (2017) investigation into the central narrative dynamics of the story. He engages in a semiotic and interpretive analysis of James Joyce's *Araby*, with the primary objective of explicating its core narrative mechanisms through the theoretical framework of canonical narrative theory. Situated within the paradigm of Dublinesque paralysis, the narrative portrays the protagonist's experiential failure, not merely as a collapse in performative agency, but more significantly as a manifestation of profound ruptures in narrative competence and discursive manipulation. These narrative deficiencies ultimately culminate in the protagonist's symbolic disenchantment and existential disillusionment, offering a critical commentary on the limitations of both individual agency and narrative structure.

Maniee and Mansouri (2017) read the short story *Araby* from a postcolonial perspective and highlight traces of colonial hegemony stemming from British imperialism, which had colonised Ireland. They point out that the sharp contrast between the East and the West — a key concern of postcolonial studies — is not clearly evident in the story, due to the cultural affinity between the two countries. However, Joyce depicts the political, cultural, economic, and social supremacy of Britain over Ireland, particularly in the context of Dublin. Thus, hegemonic control and dominance emerge as significant aspects of the colonial condition. The research examines how Joyce, as a Dubliner, employs postcolonial methods, such as the use of dominant language, the binary oppositions of superior/inferior and Self/Other, cultural polyvalency, and the postcolonial tenets of Homi Bhabha — including mimicry, hybridity, and critical resistance — and identifies these features within the short story. The study also explores how Joyce uses symbolism as a means of resisting British domination.

Qiu-yue (2023), in his article "Analysis of the Symbolic Meaning of James Joyce's Araby", explores the symbolic imagery in Joyce's *Araby* and emphasizes the various symbols used, such as the disillusioned bazaar, the apple tree, the three books of the priest, his quaint room, the abandoned bicycle tube, and North Richmond Street. These symbols collectively depict the spiritual barrenness and nihilism of society at the time. The story critiques the Dubliners for their insensitivity to spiritual quests, their loss of innocent spiritual fervour under British dominance, and their eventual suffering, much like the boy in the narrative.

Rokeya and Ahammed (2016), in their research article "Joyce's Araby: Love and Disillusionment", argue that *Araby* portrays the disillusionment of the boy regarding love and reality. The boy, living with his uncle in bleak surroundings within a restrictive

Catholic culture, feels lonely and repressed, yearning for love and romance. To channel his emotions, he fixates on a pretty girl, Mangan's sister, believing she will lift him from his misery and isolation. To him, she represents both a saint and an object of desire. Consequently, the boy strives to win her affection by fulfilling his promise to bring her a gift from Araby, a mission in which he ultimately fails. The researchers note that the bazaar symbolizes youthful longing for ideal beauty, but as the boy matures, he realizes that the bazaar becomes an emblem of the complexities and challenges of the adult world, which he is unable to navigate. Thus, his dream of winning the girl's love is shattered, and he comes to understand that his previous beliefs were merely youthful disillusionment.

Samanta (2023), in her research article "*Spatio-Temporality and Subjectivity in James Joyce's 'Araby'*", investigates the configuration of spatio-temporality and subjectivity in *Araby*. In her examination of spatio-temporal configuration, she primarily focuses on the thematic perspective of courtly love and chivalric romance, employing a variety of theoretical frameworks, including Bakhtin's concept of the chronotope, Heideggerian phenomenology, and Lacanian psychoanalysis. The research aims to uncover the same underlying structure and concepts through the lens of these diverse theories.

Gasmallah (2020), in his work "*The Psychological Transformation of Araby*"**,** delves into the intricate psychological metamorphosis of the protagonist as he grapples with the transition from the innocence of childhood to the disillusioning realities of adulthood within the socio-cultural framework of the narrative. The study contends that Joyce's story portrays the inherent purity of childhood, juxtaposed against the inevitable confrontation with the adult world, a confrontation that is accentuated within the context of a traditionally constrained society. The protagonist, a young boy, endeavours to resist the pervasive darkness, conservatism, and societal impositions through the agency of illusion and a fervent yearning for love. However, he swiftly comprehends the futility of escaping the rigid, tradition-bound society of North Richmond Street in which he is enmeshed. In a moment of profound epiphany, the boy abandons his illusions, thus signifying a pivotal psychological reawakening as he confronts the harsh reality of his environment. This transformation is meticulously examined through the prisms of three salient themes: unreciprocated love, loneliness, and disillusionment in the short story.

While the existing literature on *Araby* offers rich and diverse perspectives, ranging from semiotic analyses to psychological and postcolonial interpretations, one notable gap emerges in the application of Greimas' actantial model. Despite the extensive exploration of narrative structures and symbolic meanings, the framework of actantial analysis has yet to be fully applied to Joyce's *Araby*. This absence presents an opportunity for further inquiry, and it is within this context that the present research aims to contribute by employing Greimas' actantial model to offer a novel interpretation of the story's narrative dynamics and character interactions formed by the actants.

Material and Methods

This research is an applied research aims at testing Greimas's model by applying it to the narrative structure of the short story *Araby*. To achieve this, the study adopts a systematic mode of investigation through a mixed-methods approach, integrating both quantitative and qualitative methodologies to identify the actants and their specific functions in the story. The narrative structure is analysed based on the six actants and their predetermined functions, which demonstrates the quantitative aspect of the research. However, to analyse these functions, the study adopts an interpretivist

paradigm, making the inquiry a combination of both quantitative and qualitative methods.

Results and Discussion

Before using Greimas' actantial model as a tool to analyse the various functions and roles of the actants, it is essential to provide a brief summary of the short story *Araby*. *Araby* is a well-known story from James Joyce's collection *Dubliners*, first published in 1914. The story is narrated by an autodiegetic narrator, a young boy who lives on a rather mysterious street in North Richmond with his aunt and uncle. He falls deeply in love with his friend Mangan's sister. He often plays with Mangan and other neighbourhood children until late at night, when she appears at the window to call her brother in for tea—giving the boy a brief opportunity to catch a glimpse of her.

One day, he encounters her in the street. She expresses a wish to visit the exotic bazaar, *Araby*, but says she cannot go. The boy eagerly promises that he will go and bring her back a gift. He plans to visit the bazaar on the following Saturday.

On that day, he waits anxiously for his uncle's return, anticipating the money needed to undertake the trip. However, his uncle arrives home very late. Despite the delay, the boy remains determined to visit the bazaar. He takes a special train, but by the time he reaches *Araby*, most of the stalls have closed. The few that remain open fail to offer anything suitable for the girl he adores.

The bazaar is nothing like the magical place he had imagined—it is just an ordinary, mundane commercial venue. As the lights go out and the bazaar closes entirely, the boy experiences a profound sense of disillusionment. He realizes that his romantic hopes were built on illusions. The story ends with the narrator feeling deeply disappointed and heartbroken, having failed to find a gift for his beloved.

In the short story *Araby*, the subject is the boy, who is the main character and chief actant in the narrative: "He, the subject, is the chief actor in a narrative or a discourse… The subject and object [ ] are Propp's hero and sought-for person, respectively" (Susumu, 2010, p. 19). The subject, as Greimas (1983) explained, is always directed towards the object. In this story, the boy's desire is explicitly to buy a gift for his beloved Mangan's sister, who is his object

The very beginning shows that the subject is a human actant, the boy, who is the main character of the story. He is autodiegetic narrator who starts his story first from describing the mysterious background of the north Richmond Street. As the subject according to Greimas is always directed to the object, in the story the subject, the boy desires for the object that is his beloved who is described Mangan's sister. Everyday, the subject, the boy, plays in the street along with her brother till the night (Joyce, 2014, p. 34), so that she might manifest at the window to summon her brother to tea, allowing the subject an opportunity to behold her. As the autodiegetic narrator articulates:

> When we returned to the street light from the kitchen windows had filled the areas. If my uncle was seen turning the corner we hid in the shadow until we had seen him safely housed. Or if Mangan's sister came out on the doorstep to call her brother in to his tea we watched her from our shadow peer up and down the street. (p. 3)

Thus, the subject, the boy, engages in play with Mangan and the other street boys until nightfall, at which point he directs his attention to his beloved, Mangan's sister, who appears at the window each night to summon her brother for tea. The relationship between the boy, as the subject, and his beloved, Mangan's sister, can be understood as a form of junction. This is exemplified when the boy establishes eye contact with Mangan's sister late at night, which reflects his desire for connection with the object, Mangan's sister. As Herbert (2006) points that the interaction between the subject and the object is referred to as a *junction*, which may be further classified as either a *conjunction* (for instance, the prince desires the princess) or a *disjunction* (for example, a murderer successfully disposes of his victim's body) (p. 49).

As the boy, the subject, seeks to establish a conjunction, his desire to observe Mangan's sister late at night, when she appears at the window, is facilitated by various actants, both living and non-living. For instance, it would be impossible for him to catch sight of her if her brother were absent from the play, as he would not be called in for tea. Likewise, the arrival of night and the presence of the window are also instrumental in enabling his observation. The boy, pretending to play with the street children alongside Mangan's brother, ensures that he can see her as night falls. Thus, the street children and Mangan's brother act as human actants, assisting in the establishment of the connection—referred to as the conjunction—between the subject (the boy) and the object (Mangan's sister).

However, Mangan's sister does not appear during daylight, and when the boy's uncle is present, he hides to avoid his uncle's disapproval of his street play. To protect himself from his uncle, the boy hides "in the shadows" (Joyce, 1914, p. 3). Therefore, daylight and the boy's uncle function as actants that present obstacles to his meeting with Mangan's sister. In other words, they act as opponents to the conjunction between the boy (the subject) and Mangan's sister (the object). On the other hand, the dark shadow serves as a helper actant, allowing the boy to avoid his uncle, the opponent.

Similarly, Mangan's sister appears at the window to call her brother for tea, as the weather becomes cold, and the subject seizes the opportunity to cast his eye upon her. Thus, the cold weather and the cup of tea also function as helper actants in facilitating the junction between the subject and the object, contributing to their conjunction.

In Greimas' model, the sender actant initiates the action, while the receiver benefits from it: "The actant, sender, sets off, prompts, and instigates the action, whereas the receiver is benefited from it" (Hebert, 2006, p. 49). In this case, it is the boy's desire and feelings of love that prompt him to continue playing until nightfall, so he may catch a glimpse of her. Therefore, the receiver actant in this scenario is also the boy. Similarly, the subject waits each morning, lying on the floor, in anticipation of her departure from her doorstep, rushing with his book to pass her by without speaking a word. In this instance, the doorstep, the floor, and the morning serve as helper actants, facilitating the subject's desire to pass by her. Similarly, the house where she lives and the late night, when she returns after calling her brother to tea, act as hurdles or opponents in the subject's efforts to establish a connection with the object.

However, in the very early part of the story, the boy—despite his longing—merely casts a glance at Mangan's sister. The story reveals that he does not physically interact with her, as he is too shy and unexpressive to engage in conversation, even though she is his neighbor. As he reflects:

> When she came out on the doorstep my -heart leaped. I ran to the hall, seized my books and followed her…I had never spoken to her, except for a few casual words, and yet her name was like a summons to all my foolish blood. (Joyce, 1914, p. 3)

Thus, this reflects the phenomenon of non-conjunction, as Greimas (1987) explains that dissatisfaction or discontent, which includes feelings of frustration, discontent, and aggressiveness, is conveyed through specific signs, particularly noun phrases (NPs) that "are the result of the non-conjunction of the subject with the object of value" (p. 155). The initial part of the story reveals the dissatisfaction of the subject, who is less expressive in his love. This dissatisfaction contributes to his feelings of frustration and discontent, which are symbolized through the depiction of non-human actants, such as the downbeat and negative connotations in descriptions of nature. These are expressed through certain noun phrases, including:

- The cold air
- The silent street
- The dark, muddy lanes
- The dark, dripping gardens
- Dark, odorous stables
- The waste room
- Old, useless papers
- A few days of winter
- Feeble lanterns
- The straggling bushes
- The half-opened door
- The blind
- Foolish blood
- An uninhabited house
- A throng of foes (Joyce, 1914, pp. 2–4).

Similarly, the phrases *the dead priest* and the description, "An uninhabited house... detached from its neighbours in a square ground" (p. 2), are psychological in nature and reflect the subject's detachment and dissatisfaction with his love, symbolizing a form of non-conjunction. Thus, in the initial part of the story, the actants are as follows: the boy is the subject, and Mangan's sister is the object. Helper actants include nightfall, the window, the street children, Mangan's brother, the dark shadow, the cup of tea, cold weather, the doorstep, the floor, and morning, as well as Mangan's teasing of his sister. Opponent actants are daylight, the boy's uncle, the late night, Mangan's sister's home, the boy's cowardice, and his lack of expressiveness. The sender actant is the boy's feelings of love/desire, which prompt him to wait for Mangan's sister's appearance in order to catch a glimpse of her; therefore, the boy also serves as the receiver actant.

The summary of the actants in the initial part of the story is given below:

Actants and Their Roles:

1. **Subject**: The boy
2. **Object**: Mangan's sister
3. **Helpers**: Nightfall, the window, street children, Mangan's brother, the dark shadow, the cup of tea, cold weather, the doorstep, the floor, the morning, and Mangan teasing his sister.

4. **Opponents**: Daylight, the boy's uncle, the late night, Mangan's sister's home, the boy's cowardice, and his lack of expressiveness.
5. **Sender**: The boy's feelings of love and desire
6. **Receiver**: The boy

However, in the second part of the story, beginning on page 4, the situation shifts subtly, marked by a tinge of hope and a slight improvement. This change is evident when the boy encounters Mangan's sister and finally speaks to her, as described in the narrative:

> One evening, I entered the back drawing-room, where the priest had died…. Through one of the broken panes, I heard the rain striking the earth, the fine, incessant needles of water falling on the sodden flowerbeds. A distant lamp or a lighted window gleamed below me. I was thankful…. I pressed the palms of my hands together until they trembled, murmuring repeatedly: 'O love! O love!' At last, she spoke to me. (Joyce, 1914, p. 4)

Thus, the tinge of happiness is conveyed through both living and non-living actants. For instance, the death of the priest and the broken panes are noun phrases that reflect the subject's unfulfilled desire. However, the rain entering through the broken pane symbolizes the emergence of hope, as it coincides with the moment when the girl meets and speaks to him. Similarly, the reference to non-living actants, such as the distant lamp or lighted window gleaming below him, signifies a flicker of happiness in the subject, the boy.

Similarly, the subject, the boy's meeting with his beloved, or the partial conjunction in Greimas' terms, brings a shift in the narrative. She asks him whether he is going to Araby. Furthermore, she praises the bazaar, saying that will be a splendid bazaar which she "love to go" (p. 4). This prompts the boy to consider going to Araby. When the boy invites her to join him at the bazaar, her refusal is conveyed through both her actions and words: as she speaks, she absentmindedly twists a silver bracelet around her wrist, expressing that she is unable to go and, with a hint of resignation, adds that his situation is fortunate (p. 4). The turning of the silver bracelet on her wrist is significant, as it motivates the boy to bring her a gift, similar to the bracelet, from the bazaar. Consequently, the boy tells her that if he goes, he will bring her something. So, the silver bracelet on her wrist functions as an implicit sender, influencing the boy's decision.

Thus, the subject, the boy, now aims to go to Araby and bring a gift for Mangan's sister, who becomes the receiver of the boy's actions. The sender, in this case, is Mangan's sister, who simultaneously functions as the object of the boy's desire, as he seeks her love. This sequence becomes more complex, as the object also transforms into the subject. This dynamic aligns with Greimas' assertion that "one actant can be manifested by several actors and conversely, one actor can at the same time represent several actants" (Greimas, 1987, p. 111). Additionally, the boy's desire to bring a gift from the bazaar to his beloved also acts as a sender element. The receiver, ultimately, is his beloved, while the boy himself serves as the receiver of Mangan's sister as an object of his desire.

In te second part of the narrative, the subject, the boy, undertakes the task of obtaining something from Araby, which serves as his object. However, the journey to the bazaar is fraught with obstacles, as several elements function as opponents. The first challenge is the distance, as the bazaar is situated far from North Richmond. The second

challenge arises from a lack of resources and finances, as the boy possesses neither the means of transport nor the money required for the journey. Additionally, the boy is occupied with his studies. To overcome these barriers, the boy requires the assistance of helper actants. He resolves to go to the bazaar on Saturday. His initial action is to write a leave application, which becomes a helper element facilitating his journey. As the narrative recounts: "I asked for leave to go to the bazaar on Saturday night…. I answered a few questions in class. I watched my master's face pass from amiability to sternness" (Joyce, 2014, p. 4).

Thus, the act of requesting leave can be viewed as a micro-sequence, in which the subject (the boy) seeks permission (his object), with the leave application acting as a helper element. The master, initially reluctant, represents the opponent actant. Nevertheless, the master eventually grants the leave following a brief interrogation, thus transforming the master's questioning and approval into additional helper elements. Consequently, the boy's successful acquisition of leave represents a conjunction with his object. This example illustrates the complexity of Greimas' model, wherein macro-sequences encompass micro-sequences that display the same six actants.

Furthermore, the boy requires money for his trip to the bazaar. On the Saturday before his departure, he implicitly requests his uncle—who serves as a potential helper actant—for the necessary funds. However, the uncle, preoccupied with searching for a hat-brush in the hallstand, fails to provide the money, instead remarking that he is already aware of the boy's intentions: 'Yes, boy, I know.... I left the house in bad humour and walked slowly towards the school. (p. 5).

In this micro-sequence, the uncle's preoccupation with the hat-brush and his subsequent business obligations serve as opponent elements, preventing the subject (the boy) from achieving his object, which is to receive money from his uncle. Consequently, the actant, the boy, is unable to conjoin with his intended object, leading to his frustration. He becomes upset as his uncle has to leave for his occupation, and the boy must wait until his uncle's return in the evening to receive the money. As a result, the boy proceeds to school, which becomes his routine object, yet he is deeply troubled because, for the time being, he cannot achieve his desired object: receiving the money. This sense of frustration is reflected in the non-living actants or forces, as described: "The air was pitilessly raw, and already my heart misgave me" (p. 5). Here, the raw air and his misgiving heart function as icons, symbolizing the boy's emotional state of sadness and disappointment.

When the boy returned home for dinner, his uncle had not yet arrived. As a result, the boy sat gazing at the clock for a while, until the steady ticking gradually caught his attention (p. 5). The uncle's late return and the passing of time serve as opponent elements, hindering the boy's ability to go to the bazaar. Consequently, the boy leaves the room and ascends to the upper part of the house. The situation is then described as empty and gloomy:

> The high cold empty gloomy rooms liberated me and I went from room to room singing. From the front window I saw my companions playing below in the street. Their cries reached me weakened and indistinct and, leaning my forehead against the cool glass, I looked over at the dark house where she lived.... the brown-clad figure cast by my imagination. (p. 4)

Thus, the iconic analysis of phrases such as "the cold, empty, gloomy rooms," "a weakened and indistinct cry," "the cool glass," "the dark house," and "the brown-clad figure" reveals that these actants carry negative connotations. They symbolize the unfulfilled desires and the state of sadness experienced by the subject, the boy, as he is unable to obtain the money in time to go to Araby.

The evening meal has already been prolonged, and it is now approaching eight o'clock, yet the boy's uncle is still absent (p. 5). As the boy walks down, clenching his fists, his aunt tells him that she fears he may have to postpone his trip to the bazaar (p. 5). However, he soon hears the sound of his uncle's latchkey "at nine o'clock" (p. 5).

By now, it is too late, but the boy, still determined to go to Araby, finds that his uncle has once again failed to fulfill his promise of giving him money. Despite this, he has now been served dinner. Thus, both the dinner and his uncle's failure to remember the promise serve as opponent elements. However, the boy's strong determination, along with his aunt's support, act as helper elements. The boy finally requests the money from his uncle, with his aunt backing him up, even though it is quite late:

> I asked him to give me the money to go to the bazaar. He had forgotten…. My aunt said to him energetically: "Can't you give him the money and let him go? You've kept him late enough as it is." (p. 5)

Thus, the boy's uncle ultimately becomes his helper. The boy is given the money and proceeds towards the station. In other words, the actant—the boy as the subject—is granted assistance and moves toward the station to reach his destination, the bazaar, to buy a gift, which is his object. However, due to the lateness of the hour, there are almost no passengers, trains, or carts available. As a result, he boards a third-class carriage of a special train and heads towards Araby.

> In a third-class carriage of a deserted train. After an intolerable delay the train moved out of the station slowly. It crept onward among ruinous houses and over the twinkling river… saying that it was a special train for the bazaar. (p. 5)

Upon crossing the makeshift wooden platform, the boy reaches the bazaar at approximately 10:10 p.m. He encounters a grand building adorned with "the magical name" (p. 6), a term which, while evoking a sense of wonder, he is likely unable to fully comprehend due to his limited grasp of written English. Several factors contributed to his late arrival. Nonetheless, the subject reaches Araby, his destination, and thus conjoins with the object. However, the primary object—the gift he was meant to buy for his beloved, which is the fundamental purpose of his journey—remains unattained. Now, as he attempts to purchase the gift, he gropes through the bazaar, concerned that it may be closing due to the late hour. He passes quickly through a turnstile, handing a shilling to a weary-looking man. He enters a spacious hall, encircled halfway up by a gallery. Nearly all the stalls are closed, and most of the hall lies in darkness. He becomes aware of a silence, reminiscent of the hush that fills a church after a service (p. 6).

Thus keeping in mind his objective—the reason he had come to the bazaar—he wanders through the nearly deserted hall, which is mostly closed. He comes across one of the stalls, where he examines "porcelain vases and flowered tea-sets" (p. 6). At the door, he sees a young lady with two men. Being from an Irish background, he can hardly comprehend their English accent fully. The young lady asks the boy if he wishes to buy anything. However, the boy dislikes her tone and simply replies, "No.": "The tone of her

voice was not encouraging….I looked humbly at the great jars that stood like eastern guards at either side of the dark entrance to the stall and murmured: "No, thank you" (p. 6).

Thus, on one hand, there is no suitable object available due to the closure of most of the stalls; on the other hand, the aggressive tone of the English lady, who looks down upon the Irish boy, prevents him from purchasing anything from her stall, even though he gazes at the large jar. The tone of the young English lady, therefore, functions as an opponent, hindering the subject from acquiring the object.

Afterward, the boy lingers briefly in front of the stall, contemplating that it is futile to buy anything from her. He then walks down the middle of the bazaar, determined to pursue his goal. However, he suddenly realizes that the lights have gone out and the bazaar is completely closed: "The upper part of the hall was now completely dark. Gazing up into the darkness I saw myself as a creature driven and derided by vanity; and my eyes burned with anguish and anger" (p. 6).

Due to the passage of time and the closure of the bazaar, the boy, the subject, misses his object—the goal of buying a gift for his beloved. On one hand, she serves as the object of his love; on the other hand, she is the recipient of the gift. Thus, the boy, as the subject, is unable to conjoin with the object, which is to purchase the gift. Similarly, Mangan's sister, as the receiver, is also deprived of the gift. The boy's failure and disappointment are conveyed through descriptions of his emotional state, such as being a "creature driven and derided by vanity" and the actants, "[his] eyes burned with anguish and anger" (p. 6). In this way, in Greimas' semiotic analysis, nothing is superfluous; even the description of the boy's physical state, the nature of his surroundings, and the non-living forces all serve as actants.

The actants in the latter segment, part-2, of the narrative may be delineated in the following manner:

Actants and Their Roles:

1. **Subject**: The boy
2. **Object**:
    - ***Explicit Object***: Going to and bringing from *Araby* a gift for Mangan's sister.
    - ***Implicit Object***: Mangan's sister, who is desired by the boy as a lover.
3. **Helpers**:
    - The boy's uncle
    - Leave application
    - Granting of leave
    - Aunt
    - The boy's strong determination
    - Special train
4. **Opponents**:
    - Distance
    - Lack of resources and money
    - Attending school
    - Master's strictness
    - The boy's uncle (his business, searching for the hat-brush, his late arrival and forgetfulness)

- Fleeting of time (including the fall of night and the end of the day)
- Slow movement of the third-class train
- Closing of the stalls
- The young English lady
- The outing of light and complete darkness

5. **Sender**:
   - ***Explicit Senders***: Mangan's sister and the boy's love for her
   - ***Implicit Sender***: Turning a silver bracelet by Mangan's sister
6. **Receiver** (if the gift is purchased):
   - ***Primary Receiver***: Mangan's sister (the actual recipient of the gift)
   - ***Secondary Receiver***: The boy

Conclusion

Upon a thorough analysis of the narrative structure of *Araby* through the lens of Greimas' actantial and semiotic model, it becomes evident that the model is both effective and versatile in its application to literary narratives. Greimas, in contrast to Propp's syntagmatic approach, replaces the linearity of structural functions with a paradigmatic framework that enables a more nuanced reading of character roles and narrative progression.

The actantial model reveals that functions and roles within the narrative are not confined to human agents; rather, they encompass both animate and inanimate entities that contribute to the movement and direction of the story. In *Araby*, actants serve as the source of all narrative action, and every narrative element—including characters and descriptions of the environment—may be subsumed under one of the six fundamental actantial roles. Notably, these roles are not rigid; a single actant may embody multiple functions simultaneously.

For instance, Mangan's sister operates not only as the object of the boy's desire but also as the sender and receiver—both as the intended recipient of the gift and as the emotional impetus behind the boy's quest. Similarly, the boy himself functions dually as the subject and the receiver: he is the agent of the quest and also its emotional beneficiary. His desire for Mangan's sister acts as an internal sender, motivating his journey to Araby, while external stimuli, such as the symbolic turning of the silver bracelet by Mangan's sister, further reinforce this motivation. Similarly, Mangan's sister's curious description of and suggestion to visit Araby also prompt the boy, functioning as a sender elements. These complex and overlapping functions of the key actants reflect both the axis of desire and the axis of knowledge at play in the narrative.

Conversely, numerous elements serve as opponent actants, impeding the subject's ability to attain the object called conjunction. These include lack of resources, time constraints, the demands of school, the master's strictness, the forgetfulness and lateness of the boy's uncle, the slow movement of the third-class train, the encroaching darkness, the closure of the stalls, and the discouraging tone of the English saleswoman. All of these forces work collectively to sever the potential junction between the subject (the boy) and the object (the gift, and symbolically, the love of Mangan's sister).

Nonetheless, helper actants also play a crucial role: the boy's determination, his aunt's permission, the leave from school, and even the special train function as supportive and helper actants in his pursuit. Interestingly, certain elements—such as the third-class train and the uncle works both helper and opponent actants—oscillate

between opposing and assisting roles, highlighting the model's allowance for contextual and shifting functions within the axis of power.

In addition to the actantial analysis, the story's iconic dimension—particularly the strategic use of noun phrases—interacts deeply with the actants and contributes meaningfully to their narrative functions. Under Greimas' model, no narrative element is superfluous; each detail is structurally significant.

Despite its theoretical density and reductionist tendencies, Greimas' actantial model offers an elegant and comprehensive tool for dissecting narrative structures. It not only replaces traditional notions of character and plot but condenses the narrative into six functional roles that reveal both macro- and micro-level sequences of meaning. In applying this model to *Araby*, we see clearly how it illuminates the intricacies of character motivation, structural design, and thematic resonance. One may thus conclude that Greimas' framework allows for a clear, concise, yet profoundly layered analysis of narrative form.

Recommendations

Future research could expand on the application of Greimas' actantial model to other works in *Dubliners* and beyond, exploring how non-human elements function as actants. Scholars could also integrate interdisciplinary, to deepen the understanding of actants' functions that replace character's roles. Further analysis of the iconic and linguistic dimensions, especially noun phrases, could offer additional insights into narrative structure. Additionally, examining the shifting roles of opponents and helpers could reveal the complexity of character interactions, providing a richer interpretation of Joyce's narrative techniques.

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