

## **Joyce's "Araby," Alwan's "Love and Rain" and the Initiation Story**

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**Abstract.** Initiation is part of the social process that man undergoes in different stages of his life. Most literary works that present such experience have a young adolescent as subject. The different changes and problems facing this adolescent constitute the subject matter of these works.

This paper takes James Joyce's "Araby" and Mohammed Alwan's "Love and Rain" and compares them to ascertain the different elements of the initiation story and to achieve a better understanding of both stories. By examining both similarities and differences, this paper points out three stages through which the initiate goes through: separation, difficulty, and new awareness of reality. The writers of the initiation story also give their protagonists active imagination and linguistic problems. Furthermore, the writers give the experience a mythical/religious dimension.

Initiation, an integral part of the process of assuming new roles, is of general interest since it is part of an activity that is repeated at different stages of life. This process is part of a social passage that interests creative writers as well as anthropologists. Literary works that treat such transitions often deal with young adolescents trying to work towards independence and maturity. Two examples of such works are Mohammed Alwan's "Love and Rain" and James Joyce's "Araby." Both present young protagonists telling their love stories. This paper proposes to compare these two tales, to gain a better understanding of the initiation story as well as the two works, by examining the similarities and differences that exist between them.

Joyce's "Araby," which is often anthologized, has received an ample share of analysis by many scholars. San Juan Epifanio, Jr. mentions many of the critical

appraisals of the story in his book on Joyce's *Dubliners* (in which "Araby" appears).<sup>(1)</sup> Epifanio himself concentrates his analysis on the structure of the story and the nature of its different parts that produce certain effects.<sup>(2)</sup> Alwan's work also has generated much interest in Saudi Arabia and is known in some other Arab countries. His story, "Love and Rain," has been translated into English twice and is included in an anthology.<sup>(3)</sup> However, the story itself does not receive critical attention although the collection, *The Tale Begins Thus* in which "Love and Rain" appears is discussed by several scholars.

'Adil Adeeb Agha suggests, for instance, that Alwan's stories often deal with the subjects of defeated dreams of childhood and the contrast of dreams, wishes, and reality.<sup>(4)</sup> Another scholar, Rashida Mahran, suggests that Alwan has mastered the secrets of symbolism. She thinks that he "formulates his ideas as symbols" and that he weaves them through his phrases as well as his artistic structures.<sup>(5)</sup> She further adds that Alwan sometimes overindulges in using symbols and so his stories become suitable only to the specialist reader.<sup>(6)</sup> Ali Mahmood suggests that Alwan's work has a philosophical bent to explain issues and actions and to exhort people to look into themselves so that they would know what is around them.<sup>(7)</sup> In a book about the short story in Saudi Arabia, Mosid bin Eid Al-Atawi points out that Alwan does not restrict himself to any specific artistic methodology but rather allows his tales to dictate the method. He praises Alwan as someone who does not place himself as a social reformer despite the fact that he makes his ideas and hopes appear through dialogue and symbol.<sup>(8)</sup>

A longer treatment of Alwan's stories appears in the work of Shakir Al-Nabelsi who devotes a chapter in his book about the short story in Saudi Arabia to Alwan's *The Tale Begins Thus*. Al-Nabelsi's general estimate is that the collection belongs to what he terms difficult art, or art that is not easily understood by the general public.<sup>(9)</sup> Al-Nabelsi

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(1) San Juan Epifanio, Jr., *James Joyce and the Craft of Fiction: An Interpretation of Dubliners* (Rutherford: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1972), p. 54.

(2) Epifanio, p. 55.

(3) Salma Khadra Jayyusi, ed., *The Literature of Modern Arabia* (Austin, Tex.: University of Texas Press, 1990), pp. 302-306; also, *Riyadh Daily*, no. 7:335 (April 17, 1993), p. 11.

(4) 'Adil Adeeb Agha, "Al-hiwar al-seri fi hikaya a'laniya," *Al-riyadh*, no. 5385 (March 14, 1983), p. 14.

(5) Rashida Mahran, "Al-sarkha al-Maktoma fi Al-khebz walsamt," *Al-majala Al-arabiya*, 60 (November 1982), 26.

(6) Mahran, p. 26.

(7) Ali Mahmood, "Nafha min adab al-sahara: Muhammed Alwan: al-sidq min ajl al-sidq," *Al-riyadh*, no. 6296 (June 10, 1987), p. 7.

(8) Mosid bin Eid Al-'atawi, *Al-'itijahat al-faniya lilqisa fi al-mamlaka al-arabiya al-saudia* (Buraida: Nadi Al-qasim Al-adabi, A.H. 1415), p. 214.

(9) Shakir Al-nabelsi, *Al-masafa bayn al-saif wal'unuq* (Beirut: Al-mo'asasa Al-arabiya lildirasat walnasher, 1985), p. 63.

discusses several of the stories of the collection pointing out their surrealistic features. He suggests that Alwan is like other Arab writers, writers like Ensi Al Haj, Shawki Abi Shakra, Adonis, and Yousef Al-Khal, in his use of surrealism and concludes that the collection is a mixture of "love and dream, a vision full of electricity and chemistry... an overt expression of inner un-ease."<sup>(10)</sup> He adds that Alwan uses the stories as vehicles to "sprinkle" his abstract ideas directly at the reader.<sup>(11)</sup> He suggests that these ideas appear and reappear in the stories.<sup>(12)</sup> Al-Nabelsi points out that most of the stories lack plots since most of them are poetic visions treated in prose and that the stories lack action, names, places and times.<sup>(13)</sup>

Muhammed Saleh Al-Shanti discusses Alwan's work in his book about the short story in Saudi Arabia. He finds that Alwan weaves his vision and tales from "the strands of the folk tale." Sometimes, he does that by presenting the story through a number of tellers to give the tale a sense of authenticity. Alwan's village belongs to a world that is both primitive and mythical, he says, and his people are extraordinary. The events take place without showing a need for causation.<sup>(14)</sup> Al-Shanti also finds a historical sense in Alwan's stories that reflects the cultural progress of society and the social impact of that progress on people.<sup>(15)</sup>

When critics do talk about *The Tale Begins Thus*, it is to talk about other stories such as "The Star and the Shoe" or "Rajab Told Us about Zahia" or "Leaves Fall in All Seasons" but not about "Love and Rain." Alwan himself talks about the story but only to say that it returns to the village and depicts traditions there. In a recent article in *Qawafel*, he connects his collection of short stories with tradition and the village. When he talks of "Love and Rain," he points out the description of what he calls the big village of Abha. He quotes the opening passage of the story that describes the rain and its effects on the roads, the houses, and the people.<sup>(16)</sup> It is this return to the village, its local color and particular ways that attracts the reader. These elements however, serve, through Alwan's interest in a specific universal human situation, to make the story transcend its locality to address readers at large.

As suggested earlier, Alwan's story can be understood better when contrasted with Joyce's "Araby." Both deal with the process of discovery and transition from one age

<sup>(10)</sup> Al-nabelsi, p.66.

<sup>(11)</sup> Ibid., p. 70.

<sup>(12)</sup> Ibid., p. 71.

<sup>(13)</sup> Ibid.

<sup>(14)</sup> Muhammed Saleh Al-shanti, *Al-qissa alqasira al-mu'asira fi al-mamlaka al-arabiya al-saudia: dirasa naqdiyya* (Riyadh: Dar al-mareekh, 1987), p. 144.

<sup>(15)</sup> Al-shanti, p. 165.

<sup>(16)</sup> Muhammed Alwan, "Al-hikaya walqariya," *Qawafel*, 3, no. 5 (A.H. 1416/1995), 146.

group to another. Joyce's story is about a young teenager in Dublin around the turn of the century. Alwan's is about a youth of a similar age in Abha about half a century later. The location, time, and cultures are obviously different but the two youths go through very similar experiences from which they come out bruised and defeated.

Joyce's youth is strongly attracted to a girl who has been the focus of his attention for a long period. When he finally acts on his infatuation, he promises to bring her something from an exotic bazaar. He arrives at the bazaar later when it's almost closed. There, he realizes his true status and is filled with anger and anguish.

Alwan's story revolves around Misfer, a youth who is strongly attracted to Hadba, a girl a year or so older than him. Misfer dresses as well as he can to pass in front of her house in the hope of impressing her if she sees him. When Hadba's mother requests Misfer's help, he goes to Hadba's house with a love letter that he fails to deliver because Hadba thinks it is a letter from some other youth. Misfer's defeated reaction resembles that of the Dublin youth.

In such short outlines, the stories seem to be a simple narratives of youth loving and failing. However, the similarities between them point out some of the elements of the initiation experience. The following paragraphs will show that both writers include elements that represent their protagonists' separation from a group. The youths are endowed with active imaginations and burdened with language problems. The use of religious elements appears to be a feature of their experience. After they undergo an ordeal they finally reach a moment of epiphany, a realization of the truth of their condition and their past illusions.

This fits well with the way anthropologists, like A. Van Gennep, see the initiation experience. In *The Rites of Passage* Van Gennep says that "For groups, as well as individuals, life means to separate and to be reunited, to change form and condition... to act and cease, to wait and rest...there are always new thresholds to cross: the threshold of summer and winter, of a season or a year, of a month or a night: the thresholds of adolescence, maturity, and old age."<sup>(17)</sup>

In many respects Joyce's and Alwan's protagonists go through such changes. The initiation experience presents the protagonists with problems. They start with a certain understanding of their situation and through the initiation experience their concepts and ideas are challenged and replaced. The initiates go through a process of separation from friends. They try to be innovative as they go through an ordeal. Since it is important for the initiates to be admitted to the new group for their experience to be successful, we can

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<sup>(17)</sup> A. Van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, trans. M.B. Vizedom et al. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), p. 190.

see that both fail in this respect. Their concepts of the world, themselves, and their beliefs are modified and shaken when they realize their assumptions to be incorrect.<sup>(18)</sup>

Alwan and Joyce present us with characters, who, feeling love for the first time, are trying to move beyond their adolescence into early manhood. Such transition is not easy for them because there exists no ceremony marking their participation and signaling their passage to an older and empowered stage as is the case in some cultures where "there are rites that correspond to all recognized stages of life, which largely correspond to the pattern of rites of passage" (Vizedom 10).<sup>(19)</sup> Nor do the two protagonists have persons who act as role models to be emulated or who can interfere on their behalf to help make the experience successful or prevent it from turning into a disaster. Such a helpful person existed in Saudi Arabia, to give an example from another process of change and initiation, in the person of "al-raba'iya," an experienced woman, who accompanied a bride to her husband's home and stayed with the bride a period of up to forty days to help her overcome fear and feelings of being out of place in the new surroundings.<sup>(20)</sup> However, the transition to adulthood is usually undertaken without guidance and comfort given by anyone, nor is there a ceremony to announce the transition.

Alwan and Joyce provide in their stories no man-woman relationship that the youths can copy. There is no love in the worlds of the two stories except that of the protagonists. Misfer's mother has some pride in her departed husband but her image of marriage is full fledged domestication. The only other interest in the opposite sex that Misfer is exposed to is that of his school mates' interest in his Hadba. In Joyce's story the closest feeling to love that the protagonist encounters is charity that exists in the action of the priest, no lover of women. The priest bequeathed his money to charity and his old furniture to his sister. It also exists in the form of Mrs. Mercer who is a pawn broker's widow collecting stamps for charity. The aunt and uncle express no feelings towards each other.

The initiation experience has certain features that give the stories their distinctiveness. These appear in both stories in the protagonists' backgrounds, attitudes, and actions. Both initiates go through a process of separation from their groups of classmates. Joyce makes his protagonist play vigorously with his mates until their bodies glow. After the youth mentions his beloved and his intense adoration of her, a chance meeting allows him to talk to her while the other boys and her brother are far.

<sup>(18)</sup> Monika Vizedom, *Rites and Relationships: Rites of Passage and Contemporary Anthropology* (London: Sage Publications, 1976), p. 8.

<sup>(19)</sup> Vizedom, p. 10.

<sup>(20)</sup> "Malameh min al-hayat al-'ijtema'iyah fi madinat al-riyadh qabla nisf qarn," *Tattweer*, 17, no. 1 (A.H. 1416), 9.

Immediately after that he begins to look at his interaction with them as “child’s play, ugly monotonous child’s play” and so stops playing with them. When the night of his intended visit to the bazaar comes, he goes to the upper part of the house where he watches his companions play in the street. Their shouts and movements seem to him far removed. He is removed from his playmates physically and emotionally. He has become an outsider observing them with complete detachment.

Misfer comes out from his school with all the students when the school closes as a result of the rain. He joins the others in singing a traditional chant welcoming the rain. After he leaves them he sees them only as a group that has no connection with his experience. Some of the other children are mentioned as his rivals vying for Hadba’s love and who also pass by her house. “I heard Saad say yesterday that he passes tens of times,” he tells himself. Misfer looks at his school mates in a detached way, although this is obviously, and at least partially, made necessary by his economic situation.

Both writers keep their protagonists on the move. Since the journey motif is a natural feature of the initiation story, the changes the initiates go through socially and emotionally are shadowed by physical motion. After long preparation and deliberation, Misfer moves towards Hadba’s house first just to walk by. On his next trip, he walks through the dark narrow covered alley reputed to be inhabited by jinn to bring cardamom from the neighbor’s house for the coffee to be served to Hadba and her family. On his third trip he walks triumphantly into her house only to face his defeat.

Joyce’s youth describes his trip through the market as a quest: “I imagined that I bore my chalice safely through a throng of foes.” His foes are not dragons or dark knights but shop-boys, street-singers, bargaining women, laborers, and drunken men. His trip to the bazaar is another such journey. Joyce keeps the youth on a solitary ride on the train. Even when other passengers try to come on board, the conductor keeps them off the special train.

Joyce and Alwan make the experience difficult for their protagonists. They make them come from imperfect families. Misfer lives alone with his mother. His deceased father is briefly mentioned to explain both Misfer’s poverty and his pride in not accepting hand-outs from others. The Dublin youth lives with his aunt and uncle and his parents are never mentioned.

Both live in homes dominated by unsympathetic figures. Misfer’s mother is always ready with the stick for his infractions no matter what they are. Misfer is afraid of his mother on his going back home with rain-wet clothes and again when he drops the cardamom on the ground on his way from the neighbors’ house. He is spared the rod the first time because his mother was not home and on the second time because the mother’s guests are present. But his luck does not hold on another occasion. The Dubliner’s aunt is dubious of her nephew’s actions and suspects his motives, though she is somewhat sympathetic. However, the enterprise he wants to venture on depends not on her but on

money from his uncle. The uncle is oblivious of the youth's wishes and needs. When the uncle does give him money, it is under the aunt's prodding. The delay in giving the money makes it too late to be of any use to the youth.

The adults in both stories have their circle of friends and their concerns that do not include the protagonists. Misfer's mother has her work cleaning for others and she has friends who come and visit. The Dubliner's aunt has her charitable work that occupies her time while the uncle is at work most hours of the day. The youths remain outsiders on the periphery of the adults' concerns.

During the ordeal stage of the initiation experience, each of the youths tries to find ways to overcome the obstacles that stand between him and his girl. However, neither knows what constitutes success in this process. The goal is not known beyond the intense feelings that drive the protagonists to act. Each begins a series of actions that he thinks will bring him closer to his girl or opens a way to communicate with her. These actions are directly related to what they can imagine since they do not have a role model to emulate. To compensate, at least partially, the two writers endow their protagonists with vivid imaginations. However, this seems to be a necessary, and not optional, part of the initiation experience. It seems that the initiates must range with their imagination to cover the future they are seeking. This imagination they have is by necessity self indulgent. It must allow them to roam over their past and future existence. It must be rich enough to allow for dreams and nightmares. Both protagonists experience intense moments of pleasure and strong emotions as a direct result of their imagination.

Having escaped his mother's anger, Misfer comes back home from school and dries his thobe and starts dreaming, "My thought floated from place to place, from the present to the past and then to the future. I met many and passed them... the power to join the place and time and concentrate them in few mental moments but without concentration or clarity." His imagination controls his action and causes him trouble. He sees Hadba's mother and sister and decides to walk by their house one more time since he knows now that Hadba will be there alone. His daydreaming causes him to slip and fall in the mud and water, and his fall makes both mother and sister burst out laughing. His imagination causes him trouble again when he is coming back from the neighbor's house at night. He has to cross the dark narrow and covered part of the alley. His active imagination makes jinn very real. He tries to compose himself but when he hears a dog bark he drops the cardamom on the ground. He imagines a jinni in the shape of a dog.

His imagination gives him intense pleasure when he thinks that he is passing close by Hadba. "When I turn back I see her... My limbs are invaded by a strange coolness...My heartbeats increase...I am close to her...my heart flutters...I feel my back freeze...a delicious feeling is profusely filling me...I and Hadba are close to each other." He further tells us that the mere mention of her name gives him warmth.

Joyce's youth also feels similar pleasure. He uses his beloved's name to bring

himself to utter "strange prayers and praises." He carries the image of his beloved in his mind even in places where romance seems to be out of place. When he goes with his aunt to market, his mind changes all the noises he hears to a sense of life. He imagines that he was bearing a "chalice" through the crowd. When his mind wanders, the image of Mangan's sister comes between him and everything he does. On the night of his trip to the bazaar, he spends an hour in the gloomy and empty rooms seeing nothing but the image of "the brown clad figure" of his beloved. He tells us that thinking of her makes his body "like a harp and her words and gestures like fingers running upon the wires."

In addition to the vivid imagination that helps and impedes their movement at the same time, both writers give their protagonists language problems that must be seen as a natural part of the initiation experience. The adult groups the protagonists are trying to join require them to have group-specific and suitable language that is different from the youthful language they know. Both writers show their protagonists as having trouble communicating with others. Their language control does not rise up to a level that meets the challenge of their new circumstances.

Joyce's youth manages to have a very short conversation with his girl: a question followed by a promise. He tells us that when she talked to him, he felt confused and unable to figure out what to say. He is unable to remember what his answer was when she wondered if he was going to the bazaar. He remembers to ask her why she can't go and then he promises, "If I go ... I will bring you something." He has difficulty communicating with others besides his girl. He leaves the aunt the task of talking her husband into giving him money for the bazaar. Then, when he gets to the exotic and almost closed Araby he can only manage to murmur, "No, thank you" to the young lady who asks him if he wants to buy anything. The only other words we are allowed to hear him utter are his furtive murmuring, "O love! O love!" in response to the overwhelming feelings that he reports as beyond his ability to express or describe. In addition to the powerlessness of the protagonist to handle language well, a scholar pointed out the "deliberate impoverishment of expression ... an impoverishment which precisely matches the perspective and perceptions of the character."<sup>(21)</sup>

Misfer's words are just as few. He musters the courage to greet his mother's guests using traditional stock phrases. However, when Hadba's mother asks him about his schooling, he lets his mother answer for him that he is in the fifth grade and that he will be working for a company of Christians. Hadba interjects with a question, "Does that mean you know English?" To this he is able to utter only one quick word, "Yes," while lowering his eyes at the same time. These are the only words that he reports to us. On other occasions, Misfer tells us that he is unable to use language to save himself from his mother's big stick. His mother, he informs us, does not believe him even when he tells

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<sup>(21)</sup> Katie Wales, *The Language of James Joyce* (London: MacMillanEducation Ltd., 1992), p. 38.

the truth. He is incapable of explaining to Hadba that the letter he holds for her is from him. Interestingly, he does tell us rather emphatically after he utters his one word to Hadba that "language was over." Misfer's problem with language is epitomized at the end of the story by his copying the symbols of the foreign language he does not understand to communicate his feelings to Hadba. He is fully aware of the power of language to achieve goals. His adventures begin with a word, a Turkish one: "Faydos." The teacher utters it and suddenly work is over, and vacation begins. He knows this word and takes full advantage of its power to set him free. But the power of language—the ability to communicate his feelings, wishes, and dreams—remains beyond his reach for the rest of the story.

This use of English orthography by Misfer, in the undelivered love letter, serves another purpose. The language he copies from the two sides of the milk carton is exotic and foreign. The symbols are riddles to those who do not know how to decipher them. Those who know them are people with power, people who can give jobs and give admittance to a magical and unknown world. They are incantations that can unlock the door of exciting possibilities. Symbols function as spells do: to control jinn and invisible powers. Misfer had faced his fear of jinn while bringing the cardamom from the neighbor's house. He goes through the narrow covered alley and at first uses the words of a song to scare the jinn. In addition he recites verses from the Quran to help him overcome his troubles in his hour of need.

Joyce also introduces one magical word in his protagonist's career. The word "Araby," the narrator tells us, brings to his mind the magic and "enchantment" of the East that he lets his soul "luxuriate" in. The name is magical and extraordinary especially for a neighborhood of brown houses. The bazaar of Araby seems to offer the youth the key to reach the girl's heart. Through Araby he is to prove his ability to reach something she desires but is unable to reach. Thus the exotic world of Araby offers the youth the chance to achieve what seems to be beyond reach through the ordinary ways available to him.

Both Alwan and Joyce utilize a mythical/religious dimension in their stories. This is again a feature of the initiation story. The undertaking of a momentous, life-altering experience brings the initiate to thoughts of faith. Joyce, who had turned strongly against the Catholicism he was brought up in, indicates his attitude in the story in a subtle but unmistakable way. The first sentence in the story tells us that the street comes to life only when the boys are *set free* from the Christian School. The house the narrator lives in has one tree in its unkept yard and Joyce makes it, of all kinds of trees, an apple-tree. The allusion to the Garden is fairly clear. The previous tenant of the house, a priest who died there, left only a rusty bicycle-pump in the yard, a close facsimile to a snake in an island without snakes. The priest is described as good when alive. The priest leaves to his closest relative, his sister, his used furniture while he leaves his money to charity. The youth inherits by default three books that the late priest abandoned in the waste

room but he has interest only in the book with the interesting colors and not with the religious sounding books.

It has been pointed out by critics that Joyce shows the young man's beloved to be seen always with a light coming from behind her as if a halo surrounds her in clear reference to pictures of the Madonna. However, the youth keeps pointing out sensual details about the girl: her neck, her hair, and her visible undergarment. Furthermore, Joyce brings in religion again when he mentions the "chalice" with its Christian and Arthurian legend allusions only to mock both by the kinds of enemies he has the protagonist face. Finally, at the bazaar, the lights are out, significantly in the higher level of the place as they are in his house, suggesting the way Joyce looks at the church of his time. To make the negative attitude even clearer, Joyce makes the aunt insinuate to his protagonist that he should put off his trip to the bazaar this "night of Our Lord" to imply that religion comes between him and fulfilling his pledge. He just ignores her. His girl at the time is sequestered in a convent in a retreat.

Alwan uses religion to suggest regret for the absence of a more conscious presence of religion. The story starts with the students singing a religious chant of thanks to the Almighty for his bountiful rain. Furthermore, the name of God is on Misfer's tongue whenever he faces a problem. However, it is always used in stock responses common to the situations he uses the phrases in. "The Lord did not create the world in one day. May God protect me from being hurried." However, Misfer has neglected to learn as much Quran as he discovers he needs. Had he mastered more Quran, he says, some of his problems would have been less acute, and he would have been able to overcome some of his fears.

The next stage in the initiation process is that of the initiate's realization of a new truth about himself and/or his world. Joyce's protagonist is defeated and, according to one scholar, he is "defeated by commonplace realities and his own inexperience."<sup>(22)</sup> This is at least partially true. He imagines that he is on a knightly adventure to secure the chalice to give his beloved. However, at his moment of realization at the close of the story, he becomes aware of his vanity. Joyce prepares us for this end in his description of the protagonist's delusions about his foes: the laborers and the drunkards of the market place. The splendid luxurious bazaar of his imagination turns out to be, in reality, a dark place where some people count money and others flirt coarsely. His great disappointment lies in his realization of his true identity: someone who is dependent on others, someone who has illusions about what is possible for him to accomplish. His world is darker at the end. The only hope that he could possibly have is one generated by the negative feeling of anger at his realizations, a feeling that could bring positive action. However, no indication of this is given in the story.

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<sup>(22)</sup> Robert Gorham Davis, *The Modern Masters* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1972), p. 181.

Misfer's moment of realization also reveals to him the delusions he has about himself and the nature of love. He resignedly accepts his fate and considers it permanent. He is still not strong enough to have a female accept him as a worthy person to love. The incidents that revealed his fear of the dark alley and of jinn, in addition to his fear of his mother's big stick, are good indications of the inevitable end that Alwan prepared the reader to accept. Misfer's final concept of the universe is one where luck predominates: some are lucky and others are not. Misfer is not one of the lucky ones. The incidents of the dark alley and of falling in the mud prepare the reader to find the end realistic. Luck in fact was not with Misfer throughout the story; he had problems with his shoes, the buttons of his thobe, the mud, the rain, and the dog.

The frustrations of both youths stem from their realization that they have failed in becoming something they have been dreaming of, something different from what they are, i.e., young adolescents. Misfer, with tears in his eyes, states, "I wanted to be something big in her eyes...successful...it was not a white lie...but a bitter lie on me." Joyce's youth ends his narrative with "Gazing up into the darkness I saw myself as a creature driven and decided by vanity; and my eyes burned with anguish and anger."

The youths' ability to navigate new uncharted experience without the help of others suggests their growing strength and impending separation from their previous states but neither feels successful in his quest. On the other hand, the actual separation and the journey have been taken and they have both lost their illusions. Both end up, however, with a strong sense that they have not achieved acceptance into a new group. They have not achieved access to a new group although they both know the truth about themselves and their limitations and, in a sense, their unworthiness to be members of the adult group.

Alwan and Joyce do not want their initiates to succeed. They increase the odds against their success by putting obstacles in their way. These obstacles are not necessary elements of the initiation experience. The financial circumstance of the youths is an example of such obstacles. Lack of sufficient funds, at least on the surface, seems to hamper their emerging desires to be what they imagine their beloved girls want them to be. Both want to be worthy of the girls they love. Misfer thinks of his black thobe and hopes she may like him in it. "My black thobe will indicate my decorum. I'll wear my white head cover... but the shoes...I own only sneakers. They are more attractive in her view than shiny black shoes...she'll say to herself...this is a sporty youth and she may like that. She'll glance at me repeatedly."

Joyce makes his character think that he could connect with Mangan's sister through a purchase from the bazaar. But the youth has to wait to get a florin from his uncle in order to go to the bazaar. To save money he travels third class on the train. He tries to find a cheap gate to enter the bazaar from, instead he has to spend more of his money than his pocket can tolerate, a full shilling, or half the money his uncle gives him. The

first people he sees in the bazaar: two men counting silver by making the coins fall on a salver, exasperate his feeling of shortness of funds. When he realizes that his mission has been a failure, he lets the two pennies he was holding in his hand drop against the sixpence in his pocket: a paltry sum that can't buy anything from the one shop that is still open.

Both writers build the atmosphere in their stories to help make the end seem natural. The darkness of the setting of Joyce's story permeates all its scenes. In the beginning, the youth plays in the dark with his mates. The rooms of his house are dark; the second floor of the house is unlit; he ventures to his destination in the dark and when he reaches the bazaar the lights are almost all out; the lights of the bazaar are turned off before the tale ends. In fact the adjective "dark" recurs several times in quick succession.<sup>(23)</sup> The youth returns to the back drawing-room more than once and each time he identifies the place as the room in which the priest had died. He, however, does not think of the metaphysical world as a source of help, although he knows the emptiness of a world without faith. After entering the mostly closed bazaar, he comments that he "recognized a silence like that which pervades a church after service."

Joyce creates a sense of foreboding from the beginning. The first paragraph describes the dead-end street in a way to suggest its reclusiveness, lack of cheerful colors and an uncaring wintry atmosphere. The scene is somber, the sky violet, and the world cold. Throughout, the sense that things are not going to be all right pervades the story: the air is stale and the window panes are broken; death stalks the back rooms; the uncle is someone to hide from and eventually to be weary of as someone holding power over him; the falling rain does not comfort but hides things and "impinge upon the earth, the fine incessant needles of water playing in the sodden beds." In addition, the rooms of the house are gloomy and cold; the market is full of drunken men and cursing laborers. Furthermore, the third class empty carriage ride slowly crosses ruined areas and stops at an impoverished platform.

Similar foreboding punctuates Alwan's story. Visibility is impossible because of the heavy rain at the beginning. The animals are lost. The rain invades the classroom. There is joy for the unexpected vacation. But immediately a note of apprehension is injected when the narrator tells of his fear that the mud homes are not safe in these rainy conditions. So even the blessings of rain are tempered with worries about homes and fears of the torrents of floods. Misfer's fear of his mother's punishment is paramount in his mind. He expresses hopes about Hadba only to mention his mother's poverty. He finds one good thobe only to discover that it lacks buttons. He sees Hadba's mother and her daughter and is happy only to remember that his mother washes clothes for them. He falls in the mud as they watch and laugh. Then his mother's punishment falls on him.

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<sup>(23)</sup> Wales, p. 39.

While doing an errand for his mother, he has to suffer through the dark. Finally there is one final moment of hope that in a second is totally shattered.

Joyce and Alwan use different approaches in several aspects of their stories. The nature of their protagonists' love is different. Joyce presents the love of his youth as having more physical features than Alwan does with Misfer. Misfer refers to Hadba as having a good physique and beauty but quickly adds that she is very proper in home affairs and she knows how to read and write. He quotes his mother's approving comments on Hadba's domestic competence. Of course her name, Hadba, or girl with eye-lashes, is mentioned first with Misfer's "Oh, my eye on Hadba," a traditional idiom indicating admiration in general and not of eyes alone, yet still places emphasis on Hadba's name. This highlights the traditional Arab passion for women's eyes.

Misfer's knowledge of the appearance of Hadba is limited and is partially based on his mother's description. When he sees Hadba's mother and sister, he fails to recognize that it is not Hadba until they are close face to face and the mother starts talking to him. His reaction to the thought that he was near her makes his "limbs feel strangely cold and his heart start beating more than before." He greets them with his heart trembling. He adds, "I felt my back freeze. I felt myself oozing with a delicious sensation since I and Hadba were close to each other."

Joyce's youth gives a detailed picture of the girl against a background of light coming from behind her. First he tells us about her shape from side to side. The next time, he describes the way the light "caught the curve of her neck, lit up her hair that rested there and, falling, lit up the hand upon the railing. It fell over the side of her dress and caught the white border of a petticoat, just visible as she stood at ease." The image of her in his mind continues to be that of a brown-clad figure, "traced discreetly by the lamplight at the curved neck, at the hand upon the railings and at the border below the dress." He mentions nothing about her face. He keeps remembering a white neck and a white undergarment. Then he admits to "innumerable follies laid waste" his thoughts. "His body was like a harp and her words and gesture, were like fingers running upon the wires." His feelings are also strong, as Misfer's, when her image occupies his mind. When she talks to him he becomes so confused he doesn't know what to say. Mangan's sister remains a brown figure with no reality beyond those touches that describe her. Misfer is in love with a figure for he could not distinguish Hadba from her sister. Both protagonists also experience strong sensations when the name of their beloved is mentioned.

Both Joyce and Alwan seem to be fond of the scene of their stories. Their descriptions attach the tales to specific places, Dublin and the Southern province, Abha, of Saudi Arabia. But this strong attachment is focused differently. Joyce highlights specific places and hints at poverty, inequality, and injustice in the place. His attachment to the place is evident. Alwan on the other hand describes a scene that is full of warmth

and sense of a kind of cooperation that exists in the village. Instead of describing a specific place, Alwan presents a composite and mythical scene. Yet it remains true to the ideal village of his imagination.

The details both writers provide help localize their stories and give them an air of authenticity, which, coupled with the prototypical experience they relate, make the stories transcend their locality. They recount the pain and hardship of the initiation experience encountered by their young protagonists and the heartbreaking failure of their experience.

Both stories lend themselves to a variety of interpretations that go beyond the incidents of their narratives. Joyce's story has had its share of interpretations. One can point out that James does not give the youth or his girl names. Telling the story through the first person removes the need to give the narrator a name. However, giving the girl the tag, Mangan's sister, reduces her from being an individual character to an entity to be desired. She is the love object of the youth, and represents the love of any youth in love from afar, since the absence of names allows the experience to be generalized.

On the other hand, Alwan gives his characters meaningful names that allow for a symbolic interpretation. In a collection where most of the stories have nameless characters engaged in symbolic action as one of the reviewers of Alwan's collection of short stories has said, this story has characters with meaningful and appropriate names. Misfer, "he who will reveal all, clear, open," is the narrator of the tale who tells us what he thinks. Hadba, "one with eyelashes, with pretty eyes," is the ideal woman as far as many Arabs are concerned. Saad, "happiness, or good luck" is the lucky person loved by the girl. Obviously, Alwan did not abandon his symbolism in this story. It does not read like the other stories of the collection, since it follows a conventional narrative style and plot. Yet that does not mean that Alwan has dropped his ways of commenting on his world.

Though disadvantaged and orphaned, Misfer pursues his dream. However, he knows his dream only slightly since it is hidden from him by forces that are beyond his control. He has unrealistic fears and unrealistic estimates of his abilities and worth. He is proud of a dead past, his father, to whom his mother sees a resemblance of attitude. Hopeful yet unrealistic, he sets his aim high but does not have the means to get what he wants. He deceives himself and is encumbered by fears. He mechanically seeks the help of religion and expresses his desire to know religion better. When he acts, he is imitative and does not know what he is doing, since he uses strange tools to accomplish a task he is not well equipped for. Then he accepts his defeat as final. Is this description symbolic? Judging by the other stories in Alwan's collection, the answer must be affirmative. It may seem that assigning Misfer a symbolic role may be carrying the symbolic interest of Alwan a bit far. However, one must remember that in addition to the names and incidents, the title of the story is also significant since it turns out to represent

Misfer's greatest obstacles and defeats rather than his blessings and victory. He fails in love while rain gives him constant trouble.

«عربي» لجيمس جويس و «الحب والمطر» محمد علوان :

### قصة الدخول الي التجربة الجديدة

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ملخص البحث. الدخول في تجربة جديدة initiation جزء من عملية الحركة الاجتماعية التي يمر بها الانسان في أطوار مختلفة من حياته. في أكثر الأعمال الأدبية التي تعالج مثل هذه التجربة نجد أن الكاتب يأخذ تجربة المراهق كموضوع لعمله ويعالج التحولات والمشكلات التي يواجهها هذا المراهق في عملية تجاوزه عبثة التجربة.

والبحث يأخذ قصة جيمس جويس «عربي» وقصة محمد علوان «الحب والمطر»، فيقارن بينهما للحصول علي فهم أكبر للمقصدين وقصة الدخول في التجربة الجديدة عن طريق فحص المشاهات والمفارقات التي توجد بينهما. ويجد البحث أن هناك ثلاث مراحل يمر بها الداخل في التجربة، وهي مرحلة الانفصال مرحلة المحنة ومرحلة تجلّي الحقيقة. كما يتبين أن كاتب قصة التجربة الجديدة يعطي بطله خيالا خصا بالاضافة إلى متاعب لغوية. كما يعطي الكاتب التجربة بعدا اسطوريا/دينيا.