

Piercing the Veil: *Der reine Tor*, the Grail Quest, and the Language Question in 'Araby'

Thy mouth hadst thou thought to open,
 Of these wonders hadst asked thine host,
 Great fame had been thine. But I tell thee,
 Thou hadst thou this fair chance lost!¹

That 'Araby' is influenced by the *topoi* of medieval romance is a well-established commonplace in itself, but there has been little attempt to address the precise nature of Joyce's engagement with Arthurian literature, specifically the motif of the Holy Grail, from his formative years as a writer to his concept of the Grail legend in *Finnegans Wake*.² Since the mid-nineteenth century, numerous critical studies have attempted to determine the ultimate source and meaning of the Holy Grail as a symbol, which are generally classed into five theories of origin: the ritual or anthropological interpretation; the Celtic or folkloristic interpretation; the Christian interpretation; the Oriental interpretation, and the psychological interpretation. Although Joyce was resolutely chary of the 'Cultic twalette' (*FW* 344.12), particularly the theosophical inklings of Dublin mystagogues as we shall see, it would appear that in writing *Finnegans Wake*, he accepted the ritual theory endorsed by his steadfast advocate and advisor, the great medievalist, Ernst Robert Curtius, albeit from a sceptically humorous perspective. Throughout the many, risk-ridden years he worked on *Europäische Literatur und Lateinisches Mittelalter*, finally published in 1948, Curtius continued to equate

¹*Parzifal: A Knightly Epic*, trans. Jessie L. Weston (London: Nutt, 1894), p. 141. Cf. Jessie L. Weston, *The Legends of the Wagner Drama: Studies in Mythology and Romance* (London: Nutt, 1896), p. 201.

²Cf., for instance, John Freimarck, "'Araby': A Quest for Meaning", *James Joyce Quarterly* 7 (1970), 366-8; Jerome Mandel, 'Medieval Romance and the Structure of "Araby"', *James Joyce Quarterly* 13 (1976), 234-7.

the grail quest with the rite of spring, in common with such ritualists as Jessie Weston and William A. Nitze. For Curtius, the Grail quest is a *Geschlechtsmysterium* ‘in which religion and sexuality mingle’, and through which, ‘as through an open sluice, the fertility cult of the earliest ages flows once again into the speculation of the Christian West’.³ Curtius summarizes the key points of this interpretation:

The youthful hero of the Grail legend comes to a waste land where water and vegetation have failed. Its ruler is the sick fisher king, who is sustained only by the miraculous vessel of the Grail. What is his sickness? Many versions disguise it euphemistically, others speak it out: loss of virility ... The healing of the priest-king will save the dying land, for the king’s sickness is the cause of the parching of the land. Ancient vegetation cults seem to have coalesced with the symbolism of the Eucharist in late Antiquity and to have survived esoterically into the Middle Ages. This complex then passed over into the legend of Arthur and the courtly romance.⁴

During the earliest stages of critical exploration, particularly outside the strict confines of academia, the ritual or anthropological theory, which sometimes flowed into the Celtic or folkloristic theory, proved to be the most influential.⁵ Much ink has been spilled in critical libation concerning Eliot’s use of the ritual theory in *The Wasteland*, which drew heavily on J.G. Frazer’s *Golden Bough*, a work which, as Eliot acknowledged, ‘has influenced our

³Ernst Robert Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, trans. W.R. Trask (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1953), pp. 112, 123.

⁴*European Literature*, p. 112.

⁵For a full discussion of these theories see Anne Marie D’Arcy, *Wisdom and the Grail: The Image of the Vessel in the Queste del Saint Graal and Thomas Malory’s Tale of the Sankgreal* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000), pp. 165-223.

generation profoundly'.⁶ In the wake of Frazer, the ritual theory was developed by Weston and Nitze in his earlier works, and although these two critics worked out their versions of the ritual theory independently, their results agree in the most essential respects. Nitze's compares the Eleusinian Mysteries with what we know of the Grail Ceremony from Chrétien de Troyes, the twelfth-century writer who first mentions the Grail in his unfinished romance, *Perceval*, or *Le conte du graal* (c. 1181-90).⁷ Nitze's pivotal article on the topic was not published until 1909,⁸ but the idea that the Grail's ultimate origin lay in the Eleusinian Mysteries was a speculative commonplace, particularly in Masonic, Hermetic and Wagnerian circles, by the time Joyce completed 'Araby' in mid-October 1905.⁹ We may note in particular the English translations of Hans von Wolzogen's study of the *motifs* of Wagner's *Parsifal*, published from the late 1880s onward:

The *Gral* corresponds to the sacred vessel wherein, according to the oldest traditions of the Aryan peoples, was contained the divine draught which was the ecstasy-working inheritance of ancient culture, the spiritualised product of Nature. In the *Soma*, *Haoma*, Wine, or Mead, the worshippers believed that they tasted of the divine essence itself, and partook in it of the very substance of the God. Inward elevation, purification, and renewal of strength in the service of their God united the participators in a mysterious bond of holy Brotherhood; and we find this most markedly in the

⁶T.S. Eliot, 'The Wasteland', in *Collected Poems 1909-1962* (London: Faber and Faber, 1974), p. 50.

⁷Chrétien de Troyes, *Le Roman de Perceval ou le conte du graal*, ed. Keith Busby (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1993).

⁸Cf. W.A. Nitze, 'The Fisher King in the Grail Romances', *PMLA* 24 (1909), 365-418.

⁹Cf. Hans Walter Gabler, 'Introduction', *Dubliners*, ed. Margot Norris (New York: W.W. Norton, 2006), p. xix.

Eleusynian mysteries, where Demeter and Dionysos were partaken of in the Bread (*Sesam*) and the Wine (*Kykeon*). This is the archetype of the Christian Sacrament.¹⁰

The Eleusinian Mysteries originally consisted of a Demeter and Persephone cult, and several *fin-de-siècle* critics, culminating in Nitze, suggested that the Grail ceremony described by Chrétien de Troyes in *Perceval*, and the significant variations introduced by Wolfram von Eschenbach in *Parzifal* (c. 1200-10), represents the vestigial remains of an agrarian rite celebrated in the Temple of Demeter at Eleusis, performed to ensure the coming of spring.¹¹ Since it seems unlikely there would be a direct link between the Mycenaean period, when this rite of spring emerged, and twelfth-century France, Nitze suggested that the Grail ceremony may have been derived from a similar cult among the Celts, featuring ‘*Mananaan, Mananaan MacLir*’ (U 9.191-2).¹² Moreover, the Grail itself, so ‘often conceived in terms of a quest’ in medieval romance, ‘is *au fond* an initiation, the purpose of which is to ensure the life of the vegetation spirit, always in danger of extinction and to admit the “qualified” mortal into its mystery’.¹³

That Joyce was well versed in this syncretistic approach to religious initiation rites is borne out by his device of talking through Lynch’s hat in the ‘Circe’ episode of *Ulysses*. Here, Joyce employs the rhetorical device of prosopopoeia in a manner reminiscent of the

¹⁰Hans von Wolozogen, *Thematischer Leitfaden, durch die Musik zu Richard Wagner’s Parsifal nebst einem Vorworte über den Sagenstoff des Wagner’schen Dramas* (Leipzig: Gebrüder Senf, 1882), p. 5; trans. *A Key to Parsifal* (London: Chappell, 1889), pp. 4-5.

¹¹Cf. Timothy McFarland, ‘The Emergence of the German Grail Romance: Wolfram von Eschenbach, *Parzival*’, in *The Arthur of the Germans*, ed. W.H. Jackson and S.A. Ranawake (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2000), pp. 54-68.

¹²Nitze, ‘Fisher King’, pp. 396-8.

¹³Nitze, ‘Fisher King’, p. 394.

talking tablecloth described by the thirteenth-century grammarian, Geoffrey of Vinsauf.¹⁴ However, in contrast to Geoffrey's tablecloth, this peaked cap does not describe his past glories, which would be typical of prosopopoetic figures, but interrogates Stephen's theological speculations on the themes and modes of Benedetto Marcello's *Estro poetico-armonico*, 'As a matter of fact it is of no importance whether Benedetto Marcello found it or made it. The rite is the poet's rest. It may be an old hymn to Demeter or also illustrate *Coela enarrant gloriam Domini*' (U 15.2087-9). Here, Stephen's disquisition is informed by the profoundly influential, cultic approach to the *Gattungen* ('literary genres') of the psalms crystallized by Hermann Gunkel, which in turn influenced Curtius's development of the concept of literary *topoi*, and the *Sitz im Leben* ('life setting') of the individual psalms themselves, most notably *sukkôt* and other putative autumnal festivals.¹⁵ Stephen follows contemporary theological trends by conflating the cultic context of Vg Psalm 18 (19):2, which Gunkel had discussed in an article published in 1903, with that of the Homeric hymn to Demeter, with its first, shadowy invocation of the Eleusinian Mysteries, 'priests haihooping round David's that is Circe's or what am I saying Ceres' altar' (U 15.2091-2).¹⁶

Gunkel was the principal exponent in Old Testament studies of the *religionsgeschichtliche Schule* ('History of Religion School'), which emerged from the

¹⁴Cf. *Poetria Nova of Geoffrey of Vinsauf*, trans. Margaret F. Nims (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1967), p. 34, ll. 509-13: 'I was once the pride of the table, while my youth was in its first flower and my face knew no blemish. But since I am old, and my visage is marred, I do not wish to appear. I withdraw from you, table; farewell!'

¹⁵Cf. Hermann Gunkel, *Ausgewählte Psalmen* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1904); *Die Psalmen* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1911), and his chapter on the psalms in *Reden und Aufsätze* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1913).

¹⁶Cf. Ernst Troeltsch, 'The Dogmatics of the "Religionsgeschichtliche Schule"', *American Journal of Theology* 17 (1913), 1-21.

theology faculties of Göttingen, as well as those at Tübingen, Marburg, Heidelberg and Leipzig. However, there is also evidence throughout *Ulysses* of Joyce's familiarity with the equally cultic approach to the New Testament adopted by the *religionsgeschichtliche Schule*, which 'saw in early Christianity predominantly a syncretistic Hellenistic religion', that was 'strongly influenced by mystery religions and a pre-Christian Gnosis'.¹⁷ In addition to Stephen's Old Testament musings, we may note MacHugh's reference to Lord Shaftesbury's famous motto, ἔρχου κύριε Ἰησοῦ ('Even so, come, Lord Jesus'), which he erroneously attributes to 'Lord Salisbury' (*U* 7.511), ironically alluding to it in its Latin form.¹⁸ As a 'bombastic philhellene', what MacHugh seems to forget is the culture that produced the Christological title 'Kyrios! Shining Word!' (*U* 7.562) is not Greek in the Homeric or Classical Attic sense: it is Hebraic rather than Hellenic.¹⁹ Here Joyce reminds us that Greek is not the exclusive preserve of 'the empire of the spirit' which 'went under with the Athenian fleets at Aegospotami' (*U* 7.566-8). Rather, it is the mother tongue of Paul the Apostle and that 'first martyr who is very powerful with God' (*P* 159), notable for the 'Woman's reason', as one eminent nineteenth-century grammarian put it, of its syntax. Lynch's cap reminds us that in Hellenistic or 'Jew Greek', as Koine was known in the nineteenth century, 'It is because it is.'²⁰ Just as 'Jewgreek is greekjew' in the chiasmic structure of Pauline rhetoric,

¹⁷Martin Hengel, 'Judaism and Hellenism Revisited', in *Hellenism in the Land of Israel*, ed. John J. Collins and Gregory E. Sterling (Notre Dame, IA: Notre Dame Press, 2001), pp. 6-37 (8).

¹⁸Revelation 22:20. In addition to *Novum Testamentum Graece*, ed. Eberhard Nestle, Erwin Nestle and Kurt Aland, 28th ed. (Stuttgart, 2012), cf. 'The Book of Revelations copied from the King James version of the New Testament by James Joyce', c. 1899, in *The Cornell Joyce Collection: A Catalogue*, comp. Robert E. Scholes (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1961), p. 6.

¹⁹R.J. Schork, *Greek and Hellenic Culture in Joyce* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 1998), p. 11.

²⁰Cf. Basil L. Gildersleeve, 'Stahl's Syntax of the Greek Verb: Third Article', *American Journal of Philology* 29 (1908), 257-79 (p. 268): 'The personification we call language being feminine picks and chooses. Being a

Stephen Protomartyr embraces an idea central to both the Jewish tradition of heroism and Oriental-Hellenistic cults, ‘Death is the highest form of life’ (U 15.2097-8). When he is stoned, he commends his spirit to κύριε Ἰησοῦ (Acts 7:59) or ‘Lord Jesus’ (U 7.555), employing a title previously ascribed to the Roman emperor. In the decades preceding the publication of *Ulysses*, the use of the title *kyrios* in emperor worship, thought to be derived ultimately from Oriental-Hellenistic cults, and its possible influence on the cultic worship of Jesus as *Kyrios Christos* among the early Christians, was the topic of much debate.²¹

New Testament studies have moved on from the idea that early Christian theology in the Stephanic, but especially the Pauline tradition, was a syncretism of Jewish and Hellenistic

woman she has often no other than a woman’s reason and thinks it so because she thinks it so’, paraphrasing *The Two Gentleman of Verona*, I, ii, 23-4.

²¹This debate culminated in the publication of Wilhelm Bousset’s seminal study in 1913; cf. *Kyrios Christos: Geschichte des Christusglaubens von den Anfängen des Christentums bis Irenaeus*, 5th ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1921); *Kyrios Christos: A History of the Belief in Christ from the Beginnings of Christianity to Irenaeus*, trans. John E. Steely (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1970), and *Die Religion des Judentums im späthellenistischen Zeitalter*, ed. Hugo Gressmann, 4th ed. (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1966), first published under the title *Die Religion des Judentums im neutestamentlichen Zeitalter* in 1903. See also Wilhelm Heitmüller, ‘Zum Problem Paulus und Jesus’, *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 13 (1912), 320-7; Rudolph Bultmann, ‘Die Schriften des Neuen Testaments und der Hellenismus’, *Christliche Welt* 25 (1911), 589-93, and ‘Ethische und mystische Religion im Urchristentum’, *Christliche Welt* 34 (1920), 725-31, 738-43; ‘Ethical and Mystical Religion in Primitive Christianity’, in *The Beginnings of Dialectic Theology*, ed. James B. Robinson, trans. Keith R. Krim (Richmond, VA: John Knox Press, 1968), pp. 221-35. Paul was thought by such early twentieth-century Christologists as Gustav Adolf Deissmann to have deployed *Kyrios Christos* (for instance in 1 Corinthians 8:6) in specific juxtaposition to *Kyrios Kaisar*; cf. *Licht vom Osten. Das neue Testament und die neuentdeckten Texte der hellenistisch-römischen Welt* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1908), pp. 349-51; *Light from the Ancient East: The New Testament Illustrated by Recently Discovered Texts of the Graeco-Roman World*, trans. Lionel R.M. Strachan, 2nd ed. (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1911), pp. 349-53.

concepts in which ‘extremes meet’ (*U* 15.2098).²² However, in the early twentieth century, syncretism had a profound effect not only on those engaged in the study of Hellenistic Judaism with their ‘Clergymen’s discussions of the historicity of Jesus’ (*U* 9.48), but also those theosophists who ‘whom in a previous existence Egyptian priests initiated into the mysteries of karmic law’ (*U* 14.1168-9). Or, as the anonymous author of one of the ‘World’s Twelve Worst Books’ puts it: ‘Was Jesus a sun myth? (historic)’ (*U* 15.1579-80).²³ In ‘Circe’, Lipoti Virag also questions the existence of the historical Jesus by equating him with ‘Judas Iacchia’ (*U* 15.2573): a type of Iacchus. Iacchus is the divine child associated with Demeter, and usually identified with the mystic Bacchus in the context of the Eleusinian Mysteries, ‘We could ate you, par Buccas, and imbabe through you’ (*FW* 378.2-3).²⁴ The equation of Jesus and Iacchus may have been known to Joyce through the writings of the

²²Cf. Martin Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism: Studies in their Encounter in Palestine during the Early Hellenistic Period*, trans. John Bowden, 2 vols (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974), and John M.G. Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora from Alexander to Trajan (323 BCE–117 CE)* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996). Cf. also Lee I. Levine, *Judaism and Hellenism in Antiquity: Conflict or Confluence?* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1998); John J. Collins, *Between Athens and Jerusalem: Jewish Identity in the Hellenistic Diaspora*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000); Tessa Rajak, *The Jewish Dialogue with Greece and Rome: Studies in Cultural and Social Interaction* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), and *Jewish Cult and Hellenistic Culture: Essays on the Jewish Encounter with Hellenism and Roman Rule* (Leiden: Brill, 2005).

²³This refers to the putative influence of such diverse solar deities as Horus, Helios, Serapis, Mithras, or Sol Invictus, cf. VI.B.1.68; VI.C.3.103: ‘X = Oun – Ouphr / Serapis’. Here, Joyce draws on Léon Metchnikoff, *La Civilisation et les grands fleuves historiques* (Paris: Hachette, 1889), p. 151n: ‘Chreiste, traduction grecque d’Oounouphr, surnom de Sérapis; Krystos des Alexandrins et le Christ des Evangiles, se confondent à tel point qu’il serait impossible de démêler le part légitime de chacun dans la grande fermentation des origenes chrétiennes’.

²⁴Cf. T.G. Tucker and Jane E. Harrison, ‘The Mysteries in the *Frogs* of Aristophanes’, *Classical Review* 18 (1904), 416-18; Keith Clinton, *Myth and Cult: The Iconography of the Eleusinian Mysteries* (Stockholm: Svenska Institutet i Athen, 1992), pp. 64-71.

first, pseudonymous Cadet Roussel, Gérard de Nerval.²⁵ However, it is also found in George Moore's account of Æ's discussion of the Elusinian Mysteries in *Hail and Farewell*, "'You need not be", he said, "too disdainful of the essential worshippers of Iacchus-Iesus, better known in Dublin under the name of Christ".'²⁶ Moreover, that 'I.N.R.I.' stood for *Ingenio Numen Resplendet Iacchi* ('The divinity of Iacchus is resplendent with genius') was almost as common in Hermetic circles as the mnemonic 'Iron nails ran in' (*U* 5.374) was in pious Catholic ones. Indeed, although Bloom is no theosophist, he aspires toward the 'comparative study of religions' (*U* 17.1589) in Bloomville, close to Dun Emer and the 'folk and fishgods of Dundrum' (*U* 1.366), allied to the eminently Victorian study of 'folklore relative to various amatory and superstitious practices' (*U* 17.1590), which again recalls the typical interpretation of the Grail quest as a *Geschlechtmysterium*.

Although Jessie Weston's ritual theory of the Grail is essentially identical to that of Nitze, in contrast to his recourse to the cult of Demeter and the Eleusinian Mysteries, she turns her back on Eleusis, and ultimately, on Nitze himself.²⁷ She locates the origin of the Grail in the rites celebrating the death and return to life each spring of such vegetation gods as Attis and particularly Adonis, observed each year at Byblos and Alexandria in Egypt, and Athens in Greece. Although this theory is not given full expression until the publication of *From Ritual to Romance* in 1920, Weston points to the syncretic origin and cultic significance of medieval

²⁵Cf. Gérard de Nerval, *Œuvres complètes*, ed. Jean Guillaume and Claude Pichois, 3 vols (Paris: Gallimard, 1984-93), II, 1158: 'les croyants spéciaux d'Iacchus-Iésus, plus connu en France sous le nom de Christ'. The identification of Iacchus with Jesus also informs his sonnet sequence *Les Chimères*, especially the diptych poems 'Delfica' and 'Myrtho'; cf. *Œuvres complètes*, III, pp. 645-7. Cf. Suzanne Martin, 'Rêve initiatique à Pompéi: Nerval et le mythe du "dieu qui meurt"', *Études françaises* 33 (1997), 111-26 (120-1).

²⁶*Hail and Farewell: Vale* (London: Heinemann, 1914), p. 246.

²⁷Cf. *Ritual to Romance*, pp. 116-18; 140.

romance as early as her study of Wagner's mythography, published in 1896.²⁸ Weston maintains this ancient cultic worship persisted down to the twelfth century through the agency of occult sects, such as those which still exist, and thence to have passed into the twelfth and thirteenth-century Grail romances. She assumes the hypothetical ceremonies from which she derives the Grail legend not only had a general, but also an esoteric meaning revealed only to the chosen few. This assumption draws on her knowledge of the beliefs and occult practices of such contemporary esoteric organizations as the Societas Rosicruciana in Anglia, the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, the Temples of Isis-Urania and Amen-Ra, and Stella Matutina. Moreover, many members of these organizations were involved in the London lodge of the Theosophical Society. With respect to this hidden, esoteric apprehension of the Grail, Weston found proof of her theory in the testimony of such hermetically minded friends as G.R.S. Mead, and such other members of Mead's Quest society as W.B. Yeats, who attended meetings in Kensington Town Hall, along with Ezra Pound and Harriet Shaw Weaver.²⁹ Although it is hardly correct to describe Weston as an 'occultist and a theosophist',³⁰ she was assured by those occultists known to her personally of

²⁸Cf. Jessie L. Weston, *The Legend of Sir Perceval: Studies upon its Origin, Development and Position in the Arthurian Cycle*, 2 vols (London: Nutt, 1906); 'The Grail and the Rites of Adonis', *Folklore* 18 (1907), 283-305; *The Quest of the Holy Grail* (London: Bell, 1913), and *From Ritual to Romance* (Cambridge, 1920). Cf. also S.E. Hyman, 'Jessie Weston and the Forest of Broceliande', *Centennial Review* 9 (1966), 509-21; Janet Grayson, 'In Quest of Jessie Weston', *Arthurian Literature* 11 (1992), 1-80, esp. 28-34; Norris J. Lacy, 'Jessie Laidlay Weston (1850-1928)', in *On Arthurian Women: Essays in Memory of Maureen Fries*, ed. Bonnie Wheeler and Fiona Tollhurst (Dallas: Scriptorium Press, 2001), pp. 335-42; Angela Jane Weisl, 'By Her Works Shall Ye Know Her: The Quest for Jessie L. Weston (1850-1928)', in *Women Medievalists and the Academy*, ed. Jane Chance (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2005), pp. 37-54.

²⁹*Ritual to Romance*, pp. 79, 98.

³⁰Leon Surette, *The Birth of Modernism: Ezra Pound, T.S. Eliot, W.B. Yeats, and the Occult* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), p. 234; cf. pp. 39, 106, 209, 231-42, 259-78. Surette also describes Mead

the similarity of the rites of contemporary ‘students of the Mysteries’ to medieval descriptions of the Grail ceremony, which are merely ostensibly Christian.³¹

As the question posed to Stephen by O’Molloy in the ‘Aeolus’ episode of *Ulysses* suggests, Joyce is rather windy of the occult speculations of such intertwined organizations as the Dublin Hermetic Society and the Dublin lodge of the Theosophical Society:

What do you think really of that hermetic crowd, the opal hush poets: A.E. the master mystic? That Blavatsky woman started it. She was a nice old bag of tricks. A.E. has been telling some yankee interviewer that you came to him in the small hours of the morning to ask him about planes of consciousness. Magennis thinks you must have been pulling A.E.’s leg. (*U* 7.783-7)

In addition to Yeats (1881-3), several members of both organizations were educated at the High School, including John Eglinton or W.K. Magee (1882-4), Charles Johnston (1881-6) and his brother Lewis (1881-3), who probably founded the first ‘Vegetarian’ (*U* 8.534) in Dublin, or even taught there like James Henry Cousins (1905-13).³² Although several of these men, particularly ‘Cousins’ (*U* 2.257), were supportive of Joyce, his scepticism can be discerned in Stephen’s thoughts on these ‘Seekers on the great quest. What town, good masters? Mummied in names: A. E., eon: Magee, John Eglinton. East of the sun, west of the moon: *Tir na n-og*. Booted the twain and staved’ (*U* 9.411-14). Yeats and Æ were greatly influenced by Weston’s concept of the Grail, with Yeats favouring a ritual esoteric theory of and Weston as ‘adepts’ (p. 59), which is a misrepresentation of Weston’s scholarly interest in ‘Comparative Religion’, as she puts it; cf. *Ritual to Romance*, pp. viii, 29.

³¹*Ritual to Romance*, p. 171.

³²Cf. W.J.R. Wallace, *Faithful to our Trust: A History of the Erasmus Smith Trust and the High School, Dublin* (Dublin: Columba Press, 2004), pp. 141-7.

origin, which also owes a great deal to Alfred Nutt, who collaborated with Weston from 1892. Nutt was the founder of the journal, *Folk-Lore* (1890), and one of the founders of the Irish Texts Society, who died tragically young, leaving Weston as ‘the leading figure in Arthurian Grail studies in England’.³³ Yeats follows Nutt in identifying the Grail ceremony with the four jewels or treasures of Tuatha dé Danann: the sword of Nuada, the cauldron of Dagda, the spear of Lug, and the Lia Fáil, which Joyce parodies in *Finnegans Wake* as ‘Clive Sollis, Galorius Kettle, Pobiedo Lancey and Pierre Dusort’ (*FW* 219.11-12). He also refers to ‘Yates and Weston Inc’, transmogrified into partners in a ‘staunch’ Protestant legal firm (*FW* 534.15-16).³⁴

Certainly, Joyce was rather dismissive of what Roy Foster has termed ‘Protestant Magic’, or rather, the lapsed Protestant perspective of many of the ‘literary etherial people’ (*U* 8.543), as Bloom calls them, rewriting early Ireland as a gloriously pagan nation, orgiastically dancing at Lughnasa in praise of the Eternal Feminine, before the coming of Patrick and patristics blighted the landscape.³⁵ Following in the footsteps of Samuel Ferguson, such figures as Standish O’Grady, Æ and Yeats were keen to return to a pre-existent, pagan *Urgeschichte* of Celtic Ireland, devoid of what even Yeats describes as ‘priestcraft’, and this

³³Grayson, ‘Jessie Weston’, p. 28; cf. Juliette Wood, ‘Folklore Studies at the Celtic Dawn: The Role of Alfred Nutt as Publisher and Scholar’, *Folklore* 110 (1999), 3-12. Cf. also Alfred Nutt, *Studies on the Legends of the Holy Grail* (London: Nutt, 1888), pp. 84-5, 189-92, 223, 230.

³⁴Cf. W.B. Yeats, *The Speckled Bird: An Autobiographical Novel with Variant Versions*, ed. William H. O’Donnell (London: Palgrave, 2003), pp. 201-7; ‘Appendix 3: Notes (w. 1914) to *Visions and Beliefs in the West of Ireland*, by Lady Gregory (1920)’, in W.B. Yeats, *The Collected Works. Volume V. Later Essays*, ed. William H. O’Donnell (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994), p. 279.

³⁵Cf. Roy F. Foster, ‘Protestant Magic: W. B. Yeats and the Spell of Irish History’, *Proceedings of the British Academy* 75 (1989), 243-66.

attitude is exemplified in his poetic interpretation of 'Oisín with Patrick' (*U* 9.578).³⁶ They sought to recover Ireland's Celtic heritage, albeit stripped of the accretive layers of medieval Christianity, so that 'no trace of hell' remained 'in ancient Irish myth' (*U* 10.1083). Just as imperialist historiographers chose to write the Irish cultural contribution to medieval Britain out of their island's history, some Celtic Revivalists chose to ignore that their Celtic Gods and Fighting Men were mediated in the first instance through Insular monastic culture in a process which Joyce describes in *Finnegans Wake* as the 'neuhumourisation of our kristianiasation' (*FW* 331.31-2).³⁷ In his valedictory satire of 1904, 'The Holy Office', he reminds us that, unlike 'the shamblings of that motley crew', some decked in 'gold-embroidered Celtic fringes', he is 'steeled in the school of the old Aquinas' (*CW* 150-2). As Umberto Eco points out, in spite of his sacralized apostasy, concretized in a rigorous, inverted aesthetic of *non serviam*, Joyce is possessed of 'a mentality which rejects dogmatic substance and moral rules yet conserves the exterior forms of a rational edifice and retains its instinctive fascination for rites and liturgical figurations'.³⁸

This fascination is clearly discernible in 'Araby': the story of a boy on the verge of adolescence who, partly in order to transcend the relative squalor of his existence, casts himself in the role of the pure, refined lover, or *fin amant*, in the manner of Chrétien de

³⁶Cf. *Stories from Carleton with an Introduction by W.B. Yeats* (London: Scott, 1889), p. x. Here, Yeats uses 'priestcraft' in a derogatory sense as did Ferguson before him; cf. 'Dialogue between the Head and Heart of an Irish Protestant', *Dublin University Magazine* 2 (1833), 586-93 (590).

³⁷However, just as Joyce challenges this deliberate excision of 'monkish learning' (*P* 180), he is equally wary of the narrow vision of Insular monasticism propounded by such nationalists as D.P. Moran and Pádraig Pearse, who also chose to write the Irish contribution to early medieval Britain out of history in a conscious attempt to ignore the hybridity of Insular culture.

³⁸Umberto Eco, *The Aesthetics of Chaosmos: The Middle Ages of James Joyce*, trans. Ellen Esrock (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), p. 3.

Troyes' other great Arthurian hero, Lancelot, who appears initially in *Le Chevalier de la Charrette* (c. 1177-81). Like Lancelot in Chrétien and his thirteenth-century emulators, the boy spends hours daily in quasi-religious contemplation of his beloved:

Every morning I lay on the floor in the front parlour watching her door. The blind was pulled down to within an inch of the sash so that I could not be seen ... This happened morning after morning. 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. (*D* 21)

As so often in the *fin'amors* tradition, the beloved is given a *senhal* or soubriquet, in this case 'Mangan's sister', which hides her name from the *losengiers* (*lauzengiers* in Old Provençal), or mischief makers, and indeed, the reader.³⁹ Moreover, the rhythmic effect of 'the soft rope of her hair' (*D* 21), swishing like a thurible, induces a state of altered consciousness in the boy, which recalls the famous description of Lancelot's quasi-religious ecstasy at the sight of strands of Guenevere's hair, caught on a gilded ivory comb, which he proceeds to venerate

³⁹During the late nineteenth century *fin'amors*: the concept of pure, refined love which develops in twelfth-century Provence and northern France, became erroneously identified with an anachronistic codification of courtly behaviour by Gaston Paris, which he termed *amour courtois*; cf. 'Lancelot du Lac: Il conte de la charrette', *Romania* 12 (1883), 459-534. This concept of 'courtly love' was popularized throughout the English speaking world by C.S. Lewis, *The Allegory of Love* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1936), pp. 1-54, but questioned by E.T. Donaldson, 'The Myth of Courtly Love' *Ventures* 5 (1965), 16-23, and *The Meaning of Courtly Love*, ed. Francis X. Newman (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1968). Cf. A.R. Nykl, *Hispano-Arabic Poetry and its Relations with the Old Provençal Troubadours* (Baltimore: Furst, 1946); A.J. Denomy, *The Heresy of Courtly Love* (New York: McMullen, 1947); Peter Dronke, *Medieval Latin and the Rise of the European Love Lyric*, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965-6); Henry Ansgar Kelly, *Love and Marriage in the Age of Chaucer* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1975); Roger Boase, *The Origin and Meaning of Courtly Love: A Critical Study of European Scholarship* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1977).

like a saint's relic.⁴⁰ True to the conventions of *fin'amors*, the boy sees his virtue and distinction magnified in loving Mangan's sister. These quasi-religious sentiments do not simply describe the lover's love for the beloved, but also his love for himself, or rather for what he may become in loving her. When she at last speaks to him he makes every effort to increase his worthiness in her eyes.⁴¹

The girl asks him if he is going to *Araby*, ostensibly the 'Grand Oriental Fête' in aid of Jervis Street Hospital, which took place in the showgrounds of the Royal Dublin Society, Ballsbridge, from 14 to 19 May 1894, when Joyce was twelve and living in reduced circumstances at 17 North Richmond Street.⁴² The boy tells her if he succeeds in getting to *Araby*, he will bring her 'something' (*D* 21). However, on finally reaching *Araby* after a frustrating and demeaning process, his inability to choose that 'something', or rather, that one thing, from an array of ceramics points to the essential sterility of his quest:

Observing me the young lady came over and asked me did I wish to buy anything. The tone of her voice was not encouraging; she seemed to have spoken to me out of a sense of duty. 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. (*D* 26)

⁴⁰Cf. *Le Chevalier de la charrette ou le roman de Lancelot*, ed. and trans. Charles Méla (Paris: Le livre de poche, 1992), p. 000, ll. 1293-1511.

⁴¹According to Denomy, *Heresy of Courtly Love*, p. 20, the essence of *fin'amors* 'lies in three basic elements: first, in the ennobling force of human love; second, in the elevation of the beloved to a place of superiority above the lover; third, in the conception of love as ever unsatiated, ever increasing desire'.

⁴²The Royal Dublin Society moved to a fifteen acre site in the affluent south-east suburb of Ballsbridge in 1879. For a detailed account of the actual bazaar, cf. Stephanie Rains, 'Joyce's "Araby" and the Historical Araby Bazaar, 1894', *Dublin James Joyce Journal* 1 (2008), 17-29. Cf. also Katherine Mullin, "'Something in the Name of Araby': James Joyce and the Irish Bazaars", *Dublin James Joyce Journal* 4 (2011), 31-50.

The boy's inability to give the proper answer to this desultory guardian, who seems to change 'the position of one of the vases' in order to highlight his loss, coincides with the sudden dimming of the great hall and presumably the incandescence of first love. He returns from *Araby* without 'anything' (*D* 26) to show for his visit, but with a troubling new awareness of his own identity, and the apparently insurmountable realities of his existence.

Several critics have highlighted the psychological aspect of the Grail quest in the tale, whereby the boy as knight sets forth, as Eric Auerbach puts it, but fails to attain what his heart most desires.⁴³ He seems to lose faith, hope, and ultimately love in the process like Lancelot, as depicted in the early thirteenth-century *Lancelot-Graal* or Vulgate Cycle: the principal source of Malory's *Morte Darthur*, which Joyce knew from childhood.⁴⁴ But if 'Araby' is as much a tale of Boy loses Grail as it is Boy loses Girl, the Grail hero which Joyce seems to have in mind is Perceval, rather than Lancelot. Perceval is initially introduced by Chrétien in *Le Conte du Graal*, but Joyce seems specifically interested in the character described in Wolfram's *Parzifal*, further modified by Wagner's *Parsifal*. As Timothy Martin points out, Joyce was preoccupied with Wagner from a young age, and his 'knowledge of *Parsifal* and its libretto dates from his University College days'.⁴⁵ Joyce was born in the year of the first performance of *Parsifal* at Bayreuth, and as early as 1900, he describes the 'work' of the 'author of *Parsifal*' as 'solid as a rock' (*OPCW* 26) in his essay on

⁴³Cf. Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*, trans. Willard A. Trask (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953), pp. 123-42.

⁴⁴Cf. *The Vulgate Version of Arthurian Romances*, ed. H. Oskar Sommer, 7 vols (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Institution, 1908-1916); *Lancelot-Grail: The Old French Arthurian Vulgate and post-Vulgate in Translation*, ed. N.J. Lacy et al, 5 vols (New York: Garland, 1993-).

⁴⁵Timothy Peter Martin, *Joyce and Wagner: A Study of Influence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 106.

Ibsen, 'Drama and Life'. However, he most likely did not see any Wagner on stage until 1903 in Paris, having to wait until 1914 to see *Parsifal* in Trieste.⁴⁶ It is possible that Joyce's evocation of a young, untried Grail knight is more indebted to Wagner than Wolfram directly, but the very title of the story suggests otherwise. For the boy, 'The syllables of the word Araby were called to me through the silence in which my soul luxuriated and cast an Eastern enchantment over me' (*D* 23). Although Wagner takes the name 'Arâbî' from Wolfram's *Parzival*, its repeated use in the original text highlights the numinous otherness of Munsalvæsche, the name of which suggests Jerusalem as a location, as well as its grail keepers.⁴⁷ In Wolfram's *Parzival*, the hero at first fails to achieve what is enigmatically referred to as the 'wunsch von pardîs', then 'ein dinc, daz hiez der Grâl', and this indefinable 'perfection of paradise': this thing, which is called the Grail, remains veiled in the silk of 'Arâbî'.⁴⁸ Similarly, the boy's quasi-liturgical sense of orientation, his eminently medieval pilgrimage toward that light from the east, distinguishes his vision of the *Araby* bazaar from that of his more prosaic aunt and uncle.

Here, it is telling that his aunt 'hoped it was not some Freemason affair', which immediately recalls the pastoral letter issued on 29 May 1892 by Archbishop William J. Walsh, or 'Billy with the lip' (*P* 33) as Simon Dedalus puts it. The letter reminded any Catholic who intended visiting the Masonic Centenary Exhibition and Bazaar, to be held in the showgrounds of the Royal Dublin Society, Ballsbridge, on 17 May 1892, that they must 'respect the stringent obligation under which they are placed':

⁴⁶The Italian premiere of *Parsifal* opened in Trieste on 20 January 1914, and Joyce attended three or four performances; cf. Martin, *Joyce and Wagner*, pp. 106-11.

⁴⁷Wolfram von Eschenbach, *Parzival*, 816, 15; cf. *Parzival*, ed. Albert Leitzmann, rev. Wilhelm Deinert, 3 vols (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1961-), I, 000. On Munsalvæsche as Mount of Salvation, cf. 000. 468, 12-16; 470, 21-30.

⁴⁸ *Parzival*, I, p. 392, ll. 235, 15-24.

an obligation binding them under penalty of incurring the severest censures of the Church, to abstain not merely from membership in the Freemason Society, but from everything that could in any way tend to the advancement of the interests of that society, or to the promotion of any of its objects.⁴⁹

We may also note the letter dated 6 May 1892, which Walsh sent in reply to an unnamed lady who requested a signed portrait of the archbishop himself to be exhibited alongside one of Leo XIII at the Bazaar:

I should wish to assume that you are not aware of its being most strictly forbidden to Catholics, by his Holiness the Pope, to take part in any Masonic proceeding such as the coming fête. No one aware of this fact could fail to see the impropriety of exhibiting at the fête a signed portrait of his Holiness. You mention in your letter to me that the portrait has been “lent by a Catholic gentleman”. By mentioning this you seem to me to indicate a wish to bring out the fact that some Catholics are taking part in the fête ... Any Catholic who may act in disregard of the law of the Church in this particular matter of encouraging in any way a Masonic proceeding, is, by the very fact, excommunicated from the Catholic Church. This is so, under a universal law of the Church, a law which has received the direct personal sanction of the venerated

⁴⁹This pastoral letter was published in full in ‘Freemasonry in Ireland’, *The Tablet*, 14 May 1892.

Pontiff whose portrait you announce your intention of exhibiting at the Masonic fête.

I say nothing of your request to me. I must assume that it is not seriously made.⁵⁰

Walsh had already warned Catholics about attending the Masonic Bazaar and Fancy Fair, which opened in the Exhibition Palace, Earlsfort Terrace on 15 April 1882, and the controversy over Masonic involvement in charity bazaars continued as late as 5 May 1900, when the *United Irishman* declared:

The St Vincent de Paul Bazaar will be opened by Sir Thomas D. Pile, Baronet and Freemason. Every decent Catholic will keep away from it. Some years ago Archbishop Walsh threatened excommunication against any Catholic who attended the Masonic Bazaar in Ballsbridge. Now in his absence a Catholic body requests the most prominent Freemason at present in Dublin to open its bazaar.

This particular bazaar was indeed organized under the auspices of a Catholic charity, but it would be incorrect to state that the *Araby* bazaar was established for the benefit of a ‘Catholic’ hospital.⁵¹ From its foundation in 1718, the Charitable Infirmary in Jervis Street was never a specifically Catholic institution; the new hospital building, although opened by Archbishop Walsh on 29 October 1885, had the motto ‘Succours the Sick-Poor without

⁵⁰This letter was published in *The Freeman’s Journal*, 7 May 1892, at Walsh’s request. Cf. also Official Report, House of Commons (4th ser.), 6 June 1893, vol. 13, c 339: ‘Government of Ireland Bill (No. 209)’, and 22 June 1893, vol. 13, c 1739.

⁵¹Cf. Margot Norris, *Suspicious Readings of Joyce’s Dubliners* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), p. 240, n.6, citing Donald Torchiana, *Backgrounds for Joyce’s ‘Dubliners’* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1986), pp. 56-60.

Religious Distinction' emblazoned across its façade.⁵² Moreover, Walsh was at pains to state in his pastoral letter that it did not target the denominational status of any charitable institution; rather, it served to reiterate the Catholic Church's anathema on Freemasonry.⁵³

The title and theme of the *Araby* bazaar were derived from 'I'll sing thee songs of Araby' from the 1877 cantata 'Lalla Rookh' by Frederic Clay, but may also owe something to the widely reported description of the first fundraising ball held in the new Jervis Street Hospital on 27 January 1886, during which the corridors were strewn with 'chairs and sofas decorated with mirrors and tropical plants, and perfumed with all the scents of Araby'.⁵⁴ Moreover, the title would have conjured up the commodified Orientalism of such contemporary Dublin parlour classics as '*The Arab's Farewell to his Steed*' (D 24), '*Turko the Terrible*' (U 1.258; cf. 4.89; 15.4612), and '*Abdul Abulbul Amir*' (FW 355.8-9) for a general audience.⁵⁵

⁵²Cf. *The Charitable Infirmary, Jervis Street 1718-1987: A Farewell Tribute*, ed. Eoin O'Brien (Dublin: Anniversary Press, 1987), p. 22.

⁵³Cf. *The Tablet*, 14 May 1892: 'There is, then, I feel confident, no danger of its being supposed by our Protestant fellow-citizens or fellow-countrymen that it is in any spirit of censoriousness towards any of the Protestant supporters of the institution that Catholics will hold aloof from all share in the work now in progress on behalf of the interests of the Freemason Orphanage.' Paradoxically, albeit characteristic of Dublin society, Walsh formed friendships with a number of prominent Freemasons, most notably, the City Analyst and Chief Medical Officer of Dublin, 'sir Charles Cameron' (U 10.538); cf. *Reminiscences of Sir Charles A. Cameron*, C.B. (Dublin: Hodges, Figgis, 1913), p. 155.

⁵⁴O'Brien, *Charitable Infirmary*, p. 22.

⁵⁵'The Arab's Farewell to his Horse', later entitled 'The Arab's Farewell to his Steed', by Caroline Sheridan Norton (1808-77) was first published in *The Undying One and Other Poems* (London: Colburn and Bentley, 1830), pp. 269-71. 'Turko the Terrible; or, The Fairy Roses', was an extravaganza with ballet, first staged at the Theatre Royal, Holborn, on 26 December 1868, with a libretto by William Brough (1826-70). It was adapted to the Dublin stage by Edwin Hamilton (1849-1919) as a pantomime which ran during the Christmas season at the Gaiety Theatre Dublin, 1873. 'Abdul Abulbul Amir' was written in 1877 by William Percy French (1854-1920) while a student at Trinity College Dublin.

However, the oriental theme would also tap into contemporary Catholic fears concerning the masonic Grand Orient de France, which were ultimately seen to bear fruit in the scandal known as the *affaire des fiches* of 1904-05.⁵⁶ Such popular Jesuit publications as the *Irish Monthly* and the *Sacred Heart Messenger* (U 15.1125), which had a hebdomadal circulation of 73,000 copies by 1904, regularly carried articles warning against the atheistic evils of the Grand Orient from the late 1880s onward, as did the more intellectually minded *New Ireland Review*, and the *Irish Ecclesiastical Record*, from its foundation in 1864 by ‘little old Paul Cullen’ (P 38).⁵⁷

However, the boy clearly associates the word ‘Araby’, and the journey eastward, with transcendence, as opposed to ‘excitement, exoticism, and sexual success’, or indeed, any suspicion of masonic intrigue.⁵⁸ As in the case of the dream in ‘The Sisters’, where the boy is transported to an alternative source of the Grail according to contemporary exponents of the Oriental theory of origin, ‘Persia’ (D 7), the boy’s journey in ‘Araby’ is informed by the liturgical concept of orientation, as are the principal Grail romances of the twelfth and

⁵⁶Cf. Gary R. Dyer, ‘The “Vanity Fair” of Nineteenth-Century England: Commerce, Women, and the East in the Ladies’ Bazaar’, *Nineteenth-Century Literature* 46 (1991), 196-222 (220), who notes that the ‘boy’s knowing elders assume that the East threatens the Catholic Church’, as opposed to its ultimate source and anagogical completion, exemplified in his aunt’s concern over the name of the bazaar, which suggests, ‘like Freemasonry’, something ‘anti-Catholic, conspiratorial, and Oriental’.

⁵⁷See also the highly influential book by Msgr George F. Dillon, *The War of Antichrist with the Church and Christian Civilization* (Dublin: Gill, 1885); repr. by Fr Denis Fahey as *Grand Orient Freemasonry Unmasked as the Secret Power Behind Communism* (London: Britons, 1950). On the association of Freemasonry with Orientalism in Joyce’s work, cf. Anne Marie D’Arcy, ‘Joyce and the Twoheaded Octopus of *judéo-maçonnerie*’, *Review of English Studies* ns 64 (2013), 857-77.

⁵⁸Mullin, “‘Something in the Name of Araby’”, p. 33.

thirteenth centuries.⁵⁹ To be orientated in the strict liturgical sense is to be aligned with the geographical east in facing the rising sun: the *lumen orientale* which symbolizes Christ as Divine Wisdom, who will come, *ex oriente*, from the New Jerusalem of Revelation 21:10, when he returns in glory at the Parousia.⁶⁰ In *Finnegans Wake*, Joyce recalls Weston's crucial question, 'where in the waste is the wisdom?', which may lead 'west-east in search' (*FW* 114.5). It is the 'unquiring one' who traditionally finds himself 'well to the west in quest' (*FW* 3-20-1) in the twelfth and thirteenth-century grail romances. Just as Perceval, Bors and Galahad journey eastward toward the Grail's final resting place in the early thirteenth-century *La Queste del Saint Graal* (c. 1225), as does Parzival in Wolfram's text, so does the boy in 'Araby'. He is transported from the platform at Amiens Street Junction across the Liffey via the Loop Line bridge, moving due east toward the fulfilment of his quest in that simulacrum of the New Jerusalem: Ballsbridge. Here, the process of individuation which defines his quest, from the assertion of his foundling status, to his gradual withdrawal

⁵⁹For a representative approach to orientation during the medieval period, cf. William Durandus, *Rationale divinatorum officiorum*, ed. Anselme Davril and Timothy M. Thibodeau, Corpus Christianorum, Continuatio mediaevalis 140A (Turnhout: Brepols, 2000), 5, 2, 57, pp. 42-3. For a negative reading of Joyce's use of orientation, cf. Frederick K. Lang, 'Rite East of Joyce's "Araby"', *Journal of Ritual Studies* 1 (1987), 111-20.

⁶⁰Scriptural authority was derived from Vg Psalm 67 (68):33-4; Wisdom 16:28; Isaiah 60:1; Zechariah 3:8; 6:12; 14:14; Malachi 4:2; Matthew 24:27; Luke 1:78; Acts 1:9-12. The liturgical concept of orientation can be traced back at least as far as Hippolytus, *De Antichristo* 59. Cf. Tertullian, *Ad nationes*, 1, 13; *Apologeticum*, 16, 9-11; Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis* 7, 7, 43; Origen, *De oratione* 32; Cyril of Jerusalem, *De catechesis* 1, 9; Basil of Caesarea, *De spiritu sancto* 27, 64; Gregory of Nyssa, *De oratione dominica*, 5; Augustine, *De sermone Domini in morte*, 2, 5, 18. See also F.J. Dölger, *Sol Salutis. Gebet und Gesang im christlichen Altertum mit besonderer Rücksicht auf die Ostung in Gebet und Liturgie* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1920); M.J. Moreton, 'Εἰς ἀνατολὰς βλέψατε: Orientation as a Liturgical Principle', *Studia Patristica* 18 (1982), 575-90; Uwe Michael Lang, *Turning Toward the Lord: Orientation in Liturgical Prayer* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2004).

from his companions, to the improbably solitary journey ‘in a deserted train’, is made manifest:

After an intolerable delay the train moved out of the station slowly. It crept onward among ruinous houses and over the twinkling river. At Westland Row Station a crowd of people pressed to the carriage doors; but the porters moved them back, saying it was a special train for the bazaar. I remained alone in the bare carriage. (*D* 25)

Prior to this, the boy’s worthiness to fulfil his quest is tested in ‘places the most hostile to romance’, which involves running the gauntlet through the cul de sacs and ‘flaring streets’ of the north inner city:

jostled by drunken men and bargaining women, amid the curses of labourers, the shrill litanies of shop boys who stood on guard by the barrels of pigs’ cheeks, the nasal chanting of street singers, who sang a *come-all-you* about O’Donovan Rossa, or a ballad about the troubles in our native land. These noises converged in a single sensation of life for me: I imagined that I bore my chalice safely through a throng of foes. (*D* 21-2)

Here, it would appear that Joyce’s adheres to the essentially Christian concept of the grail in ‘Araby’: it is a chalice of unattainable knowledge and unfulfilled desire. It has been suggested this passage contains conscious echoes of Chaucer’s ‘litel clergeon’ in the *Prioress’s Tale*, but no chalice appears in this hagiographic *martyrium*.⁶¹ The boy has also

⁶¹Cf. John O. Lyons, ‘James Joyce and Chaucer’s Prioress’, *English Language Notes* 2 (1964), 127-32.

been likened to the Roman martyr Tarcisius: the patron saint of altar boys who was popularly thought to have been a twelve-year old acolyte attacked by a mob on the Appian way while carrying the blessed sacrament, albeit not in a chalice.⁶² However, the most obvious context is the Douai-Rheims translation of Psalm 22 (23):5 in the Latin Vulgate: the *Dominus regit me*, in which David praises the Lord for his protection ‘against them that afflict me. Though hast anointed my head with oil, and my chalice which inebriateth me, how goodly is it!’ The *calix inebrians* in this strophe is the *locus classicus* of the Jewish-Hellenistic concept of *sobria ebrietas* or mystic ebriety, which became an important concept in patristic spirituality.⁶³ It informs the orthodox, Christian iconography of *La Queste del Saint Graal* and Malory’s *Morte D’Arthur*, where the three ‘companions of the chalice’ (FW 44.3) bear the Grail eastward to the city of Sarras, the anagogical type of the New Jerusalem. Here,

⁶²Cf. Michael Skau and Donald L. Cassidy, ‘Joyce’s “Araby”’, *Explicator* 35 (1977), 5-6; H. George Hahn, ‘Tarsicius: A Hagiographical Allusion in Joyce’s “Araby”’, *Papers on Language and Literature* 27 (1991), 381-85. A poem commemorating Tarcisius’s death by Pope Damasus, inscribed on his tomb in the Catacomb of St Callixtus, compares him to Stephen Protomartyr, might seem to suggest Joyce sees Tarcisius as a younger type of the protomartyr, and therefore of himself. However, there is no actual indication of Tarcisius’s age in this poem; cf. Damasus, *Epigramma 14, Anthologiae Latinae Supplementa: Damasi epigrammata*, ed. Maximilian Ihm (Leipzig: Teubner, 1895), no. 14, nor does it state he was an acolyte, but cf. *Acta S. Stephani Papae II Augusti, 22, Acta sanctorum Augusti I*, ed. Joanne Carnandet *et al*, 2nd ed. (Paris and Rome: Palme, 1867), pp. 139-45 (143).

⁶³Cf. Hans Lewy, *Sobria ebrietas: Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der antiken Mystik* (Giessen: Töpelmann, 1929), pp. 10-12. Cf. also *Legum Allegoria*, 3, 82, *Philo*, ed. and trans. F.H. Colson, G.H. Whitaker and Ralph Marcus, index, J.W. Earp, Loeb, 12 vols (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press: 1929-62), I, 354-5: ‘But let Melchizedek instead of water offer wine, and give to souls strong drink, that they may be seized by a divine intoxication, more sober than sobriety itself’, cited by Lewy, *Sobria ebrietas*, pp. 21-2.

Galahad, and to a lesser extent Perceval, experience the fullness of wisdom through drinking in the sight of the chalice.⁶⁴

Yet it remains difficult to determine what the unattainable knowledge and unfulfilled desire of this chalice, which stands in marked contrast to the arid, 'idle chalice' (*D* 11) of 'The Sisters', actually signifies for the boy in 'Araby'. Is it a symbol of his love for Mangan's sister, a singular yet secular vessel brimming with misplaced, 'confused adoration', whereby 'Her name sprang to my lips at moments in strange prayers and phrases which I myself did not understand' (*D* 22)? Or does the chalice represent, more particularly, his intellectual and spiritual elevation from the midden of Dublin's mean streets in loving her? In relation to this interpretation, we may note the influence of Dante's transcendent sublation of the *topoi* of *fin'amors* in the *Vita nuova* (c. 1292-1300). Like the unnamed Dante of the poem, the boy's life in 'Araby' is renewed by the ennobling power of love, and several details of his reaction to Mangan's sister are strikingly reminiscent of the unnamed Dante's description of his encounters with Beatrice.⁶⁵ When the unnamed Dante sees Beatrice for the first time, on May Day at the end of his ninth year in chapter II, he begins to tremble violently, and becomes subject to the power of 'Amore': the masculine god of love personified, who continues to lord it over him through this most gentle lady's virtue until the *mirabile visione* which concludes the *libello* of chapter LXII.⁶⁶ Similarly, in 'Araby' the boy's body vibrates 'like a harp and her words and gestures were like fingers running upon

⁶⁴Cf. D'Arcy, *Wisdom and the Grail*, pp. 224-316.

⁶⁵Mary T. Reynolds, *Joyce and Dante: The Shaping Imagination* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), pp. 164-5, 238-40.

⁶⁶Cf. *Vita nuova*, IX: 'E però lo dolcissimo segnore, lo quale mi segnoreggiava per la virtù de la gentilissima donna.' All references to the *Vita Nuova* follow *La 'Vita Nuova' di Dante Alighieri*, ed. Michele Barbi (Florence: Bemporad, 1932); cf. also Mark Musa, *Dante's 'Vita Nuova': A Translation and an Essay* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1973).

the wires'. Like the unnamed Dante, who begins to sob when Beatrice refuses to greet him in chapter XII, and continues to cry thereafter alone in his room, the boy's 'eyes were often full of tears' (*D* 22). He recollects that the 'flood from my heart seemed to pour itself out into my bosom', which echoes the unnamed Dante's description of 'the birth of love in the human heart'.⁶⁷ At this stage, the boy does 'not know whether I would ever speak to her or not' (*D* 22), which recalls the unnamed Dante's tremulous uncertainty at the end of their first meeting, as his entire being submits to the lordship of 'Amore'. This in turn requires him to guard his true feelings and the object of his outpouring of love from mischief makers. Just as the unnamed Dante retreats alone to his chamber, the boy retreats alone to the 'back-drawing room in which the priest had died'. He feels that 'All my senses seemed to desire to veil themselves and, feeling that I was about to slip from them, I pressed the palms of my hands together until they trembled, murmuring: *O love! O love!* many times' (*D* 22). Here, it is important to remember 'Who does Dante actually claim to be serving?':

not 'Beatrice', as one might expect, but 'Amore'. This figure may be actually nothing more than 'an accident in a substance', as Dante himself defined him in chapter XXV, but his metaphoric seigniory is nevertheless the basis for the whole first part of the work. Beatrice is only the cause of Dante's vital spirit ('lo spirito della vita'), saying 'Ecce deus fortior me, qui veniens dominabitur michi' ('Here is a god stronger than I who is coming to rule over me' ... and it is not she who says 'Ego dominus tuus' ('I am your lord') in the famous vision of chapter III.⁶⁸

⁶⁷Mark Musa, 'Ego and Cosmos: The Lover of the "New Life" and the Pilgrim of the "Divine Comedy"', *Bulletin of the Midwest Modern Language Association* 7 (1974), 1-13 (3).

⁶⁸Joy Hambuechen Potter, 'Beatrice, Dead or Alive: Love in the *Vita Nuova*', *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 32 (1990), 60-84 (60-1). Cf. *Vita nuova* XV: 'ché Amore non è per sé sì come sustanzia, ma è uno accidente in sustanzia'.

When Mangan's sister finally speaks to the boy, the luminous brightness of her figure recalls the unnamed Dante's second meeting with Beatrice along one of the streets in Florence at the opening of chapter III. Here, exactly nine years to the day of their first encounter, she favours him with her *dolcissimo salutare*, or sweetest, most courteous salutation, and she is clothed *de colore bianchissimo*: that is, in the purest white. Similarly, in 'Araby', the boy recalls that 'The light from the lamp opposite our door caught the white curve of her neck, lit up her hair that rested there and, falling, lit up the hand upon the railing. It fell over one side of her dress and caught the white border of a petticoat, just visible as she stood at ease' (*D* 23). We are also reminded of Joyce's evocation of the unnamed Dante's reaction to Beatrice's incandescence in *Finnegans Wake*, 'he, wan and pale in his unmixed admiration, seemed blindly, mutely, tastelessly, tactlessly, innamorate with her upon him in shining aminglement' (*FW* 92.21). In 'Araby', the girl appears to signify, like Beatrice, the 'light between the truth and the intellect'.⁶⁹ Indeed, the light projected onto the figure of the girl is symbolic of a nexus of unexpressed longings on the part of the boy: partly erotic, but overwhelmingly intellectual and spiritual, which, in their imprecision, remind us of the 'vague signifiers' Wolfram uses to describe the Grail: '*dinc*, "thing", and *wunsch*, "ideal, perfection, all that one can wish for"'.⁷⁰

So, what lies at the heart of this quest for 'some thing' never actually elucidated in 'Araby'? Is it the chalice of enlightenment, prised from its liturgical context in a secular evocation of the grail's voyage east? Or is it another elusive vessel in the great hall, guarded by a vaguely bored female keeper? Or, does Joyce, in common with the ritualists of the

⁶⁹*Purgatorio*, VI, 45; cf. *The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri II: Purgatorio*, trans. J.D. Sinclair, rev. ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961), pp. 82-3: 'che lume fia tra 'l vero e lo 'ntelletto'.

⁷⁰William C. McDonald, 'Wolfram's Grail', *Arthuriana* 8 (1998), 22-34 (25).

‘cultic twalette’ (*FW* 344.12) hold that wisdom comes though recognizing it is the quest itself which is the *ding an sich*? At the end of his quest, the boy does find a degree of enlightenment, but it is not the ennobling experience of *fin’ amors*, transmuted by the irradiative *l’amor che move il Sole e l’altre stele*, which he had hoped for.⁷¹ The refulgence of superessential light which heralds the unveiled Grail in Wolfram’s *Parzival*, as in *La Queste del Saint Graal*, and Malory’s *Morte Darthur*, finds tawdry reflection in some cheap coloured lamps, which spell out *Café chantant* over an apparently impenetrable curtain, guarded by two attendants, ‘counting money on a salver’ (*D* 25).⁷² Although the great hall is suffused with ‘a silence like that which pervades a church after a service’, the boy is conscious of ‘the fall of the coins’ (*D* 7) onto a salver; a detail reminiscent of the money changers in the temple (Matthew 21:12), which also serves to distance this almost ecclesiastical space from the transcendental experience he seeks there.⁷³ Nevertheless, the lamps and curtain once again recall the boy’s dream in ‘The Sisters’, where the Oriental vision is imbued with a distinctly liturgical air, ‘I remembered that I had noticed long velvet curtains and a swinging lamp of antique fashion’. Their purpose and meaning also remain impenetrable to ‘that rosicrucian’, fascinated though he is by the liturgy and patrology of the Church, ‘But I could not remember the end of the dream’ (*D* 4). Similarly, the tabernacular stall, which may contain the ‘some thing’ the boy in ‘Araby’ seeks, is equally impenetrable,

⁷¹*Paradiso* XXXIII, 145; cf. *The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri III: Paradiso*, trans. J.D. Sinclair, rev. ed. (Oxford, 1961), pp. 484-5: ‘The Love that moves the sun and the other stars.’

⁷²In Chrétien, the light emanating attending the grail is described in terms of brilliant, prismatic colours; cf. Jeff Rider, ‘The Perpetual Enigma of Chrétien’s Grail Episode’, *Arthuriana* 8 (1998), 6-21.

⁷³In reality, *Araby* was bustling at this time; cf. Mullin, “‘Something in the Name of Araby’”, p. 34, ‘At 10 pm, the fête was by no means winding down, but in full swing, with concerts at the *Café Chantant* still to come, and 18,000 people frequenting the various restaurants and bars, shopping at the stalls, and awaiting the midnight fireworks finale.’

flanked by ‘great jars that stood like eastern guards at either side of the dark entrance to the stall’ (*D* 26), which reminds us of the eastern brotherhood of knights who guard the grail chamber in *Parzival*.⁷⁴

Here, the etymology latterly ascribed to Chrétien’s construction of the name Perceval, rendered Parzival in Middle High German by Wolfram, comes into play: someone who is capable of piercing the veil which obscures the Grail.⁷⁵ Although the prevailing tendency at the turn of the twentieth century was to interpret Perceval as an imperative name meaning ‘press on through the valley’, or ‘pierce the valley’, composed of ‘*perce* and *vaus* (oblique plural of *val*), giving a singular nominative ‘Percevaus, from which a singular oblique Perceval was formed’, the alternative derivation from *perce* and *voile* was also posited by proponents of the Christian theory of origin.⁷⁶ Certainly, there are echoes of this in Tennyson’s *Idylls of the King*, where Perceval is capable of seeing that ‘the veil had been withdrawn’ from the Grail, and Joyce would have been aware of this association.⁷⁷ Joyce was also undoubtedly aware of Wagner’s knowledge of the scholarly opinion that Perceval means one who ‘pierces through’, but that he had modified the name of his hero to Parsifal,

⁷⁴On the *templeise*, the *rîterliche bruoderschaft* modelled on the Knights Templars, cf. *Parzival*, I, pp. 444, 23, and 468, 28; 470, 19; 702, 24.

⁷⁵Cf. Urban T. Holmes and Amelia Klenke, *Chrétien de Troyes and the Grail* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1959), pp. 82, 84, 119. On the emerald-green *achmardi*, the Arabic silk veil surrounding the Grail, cf. *Parzival*, I, p. 235, 20-3.

⁷⁶Armel Diverres, ‘The Grail and the Third Crusade: Thoughts on *Le conte del graal* by Chrétien de Troyes’, *Arthurian Literature* 10 (1990), 13-109 (16). Cf. J.D. Bruce, *The Evolution of Arthurian Romance: From the Beginnings Down to the Year 1300*, 2 vols, 2nd ed. (Baltimore, 1928), repr. Gloucester, MA, 1958, I, 253: ‘The French poets, probably, as a rule, interpreted “Perceval” as made up of “perce + val”.’ Cf. also *Le Haut Livre du Graal: Perlesvaus*, ed. William A Nitze and T. Atkinson Jenkins, 2 vols (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1932-7), II, 217-19.

⁷⁷Cf. *The Poems of Tennyson*, ed. Christopher Ricks, 3 vols, 2nd ed. (London: Longman, 1987), III, 000.

or ‘pure fool’, based on the contention that *fal parsi* ultimately meant ‘foolish pure one’ in Arabic, and he plays with both etymologies in ‘Araby’.⁷⁸ This is typical of nineteenth-century etymological conjectures regarding the name, which, according to Friedrich Wilhelm Bergmann ‘is derived from *fârisi-fâl*’:

a compound Persian word signifying *ignorant knight*, and alludes to the ignorance of young Parzival, who, in consequence of the extreme solicitude of his mother to shelter him from every danger, had been deprived of all knightly education. Chrétien de Troyes, unacquainted with the foreign origin of this word, explains it as one who *pierces* or wanders through *vales* to seek adventures.⁷⁹

In the narrative woven by Chrétien and embroidered by Wolfram, Perceval is cast as *le pur simple* or *der reine Tor*, who is, in spite his elevated lineage, brought up as an innocent in a backwater, if not quite the blind end of a back street, in humble circumstances, knowing nothing of the ways of the world. Indeed, he is defined by his innocence, as Joyce pointed out as early as his paper on James Clarence Mangan, delivered to the Literary and Historical

⁷⁸Cf. *Parsifal*, Act II, Scene II (Kundry): ‘Dich nannt ich, tör’ger Reiner, / “Fal parsi” / – Dich, reinen Toren “Parsifal”’ (Richard Wagner, *Sämtliche Schriften und Dichtungen: Volks-Ausgabe*, 16 in 8 vols (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel and C.F.W. Siegel, 1911-14), X, 355). Cf. also Richard Wagner, *Das braune Buch: Tagebuchaufzeichnungen 1865 bis 1882*, ed. Joachim Bergfeld (Zürich: Atlantis Verlag, 1975), p. 22. This putative Arabic etymology is derived from Johann Joseph von Görres, *Lohengrin, ein altdeutsches Gedicht, nach der Abschrift des Vaticanischen Manuscriptes von Ferdinand Glöckle* (Heidelberg: Mohr & Zimmer, 1813), p. vi: ‘Parsi oder Parseh Fal’.

⁷⁹Frédéric Guillaume Bergmann, *Sur l’origine et la signification des Romans du Saint Graal* (Strasbourg: Silbermann, 1842), p. 13; *The San Gréal: An Inquiry Into the Origin and Signification of the Romances of the San Gréal* (Edinburgh: Edmonston & Douglas, 1870), p. 30.

Society of University College, Dublin on 1 February 1902, ‘That was a strange question which the innocent Parsifal asked – who is good?’ (*OPCW* 52).

However, when Perceval arrives at Arthur’s court he is viewed as a savage, as well as innocently foolish, because he comes from ‘the fringes of human activity’, as Jacques le Goff put it, as characterized by his rough speech.⁸⁰ Although Perceval is not ‘a savage in the true sense of the word’, he fails to ask the question which would reveal the fullness of wisdom found in the Grail because of his sudden consciousness of his rough speech.⁸¹ Similarly, what precipitates the boy’s failure and disillusionment in ‘Araby’ is the failure of language. In order to achieve his quest, he must overcome a series of *épreuves*, or tests, ‘in accordance with the Mortadarethella tradition’ (*FW* 151.19-20) of medieval romance, which begin with the frustrations leading up to his delayed departure for the bazaar. The potentially insuperable test lies in the fact he is unlikely to have enough money left upon entry to ‘Araby’ to buy Mangan’s sister that ‘something’ (*D* 21) which will prove himself to her, and the question in this instance must surely relate to the price of such an object. However, when he finally reaches the great hall, his sense of purpose wavers even before he puts himself in the position of asking this question, ‘Remembering with difficulty why I had come I went over to one of the stalls.’ The boy hesitates in front of a stall, replete with ‘porcelain vases’ (*D* 25), which may point to yet another evocation of the Grail motif, as one of the most popular etymologies in both scholarly and esoteric circles alike suggested ‘the word *graal* signified a vase’.⁸² But in the manner of *der reine Tor*, who should have been able to achieve

⁸⁰*The Medieval Imagination*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), p. 115.

⁸¹Le Goff, *Medieval Imagination*, p. 57.

⁸²Bergmann, *San Gréal*, pp. 10-11; 43: ‘the idea must naturally have presented itself, particularly to an ecclesiastic, of designating by this name the vase or vessel in which Christ had partaken of the Supper with his apostles on the eve of his death’. Cf. Émile-Louis Burnouf, *Le Vase sacré et ce qu’il contient dans l’Inde, la Perse, la Grèce et dans l’église chrétienne. Avec un appendice sur le Saint-Graal* (Paris: Bibliothèque de la

his quest without difficulty due to his innocence and purity, the boy in 'Araby' does not encounter the numinous otherness he had envisaged, but rather an alienated otherness entirely removed from any pilgrimage *ad Orientem*. He finds himself unable to chose the proper vase, or ask the proper question relating to that vessel, because he suddenly feels intimidated, surrounded by people whose language is 'so familiar and so foreign', yet will always be for him 'an acquired speech' (*P* 189):

At the door of the stall a young lady was talking and laughing with two young gentlemen. I remarked their English accents and listened vaguely to their conversation.

– O, I never said such a thing!

– O, but you did!

– O, but I didn't!

– Didn't she say that?

– She did. I heard her.

– O, there's a ... fib! (*D* 25-6)

haute science, 1896), which proposes a syncretic view of the grail as a sacred vessel. In terms of English esoteric circles, cf. Hargrave Jennings, *The Rosicrucians: Their Rites and Mysteries*, 2nd ed. (London: Chatto & Windus, 1879), pp. 369-71, who quotes Bergmann. Cf. also Vicki Mahaffey, *States of Desire : Wilde, Yeats, Joyce, and the Irish Experiment* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 110-12; 237, n.58: 'Jennings argues that the grail is a vase that is green, because it is made of emerald ... This would support Yeats's sense that the grail legends are rooted in Ireland.' Rather, in Beckmann's original argument (p. 52), paraphrased by Jennings (p. 369) he discusses the previously held belief that the Islamic glass vessel known as *il Sacro Catino* (Genoa: Treasury of St Lawrence Museum, c. 9th century) was in fact an emerald, often identified as *il Santo Graal* from at least the 13th century onward; cf. Johannes Zahlten, 'Der "Sacro Catino" in Genua: Aufklärung über eine mittelalterliche Gralsreliquie', in *Der Gral. Artusromantik in der Kunst des 19. Jahrhunderts*, ed. Reinhold Baumstark and Michael Koch (Cologne: Dumont, 1995), pp. 121-32.

The language in which they are speaking is theirs before it is the boy's, and like Parzival, or indeed, Stephen Dedalus contemplating the etymology of 'tundish': that 'double-thudding' (*LI* 139) compound of 'good old blunt English' (*P* 251) in the almost deserted physics theatre of University College, Dublin, the boy cannot speak the necessary words 'without unrest of spirit'.⁸³ His 'voice holds them at bay'; his 'soul frets in the shadow' of their language (*P* 189). Like, Parzival during his initial *épreuve* at the Grail castle, the boy admits defeat, as if in an illusory *dorveille*, 'I lingered before her stall, though I knew my stay was useless, to make my interest in her wares seem the more real.'⁸⁴ The fullness of his chalice drains away in the midst of the empty, fragile vessels that surround him, and once again, we are reminded of the liturgical symbolism of 'The Sisters', where the priest's drained chalice clatters to the altar steps as an apt symbol of his loss of faith through that most paralyzing sin of scrupulosity. As in the catena of Grail romances, from Chrétien's *Conte du Graal*, Wolfram's *Parzival*, and *La Queste del Saint Graal* to Malory's *Morte Darthur*, failure coincides with the lights going out all over the great hall:

I heard a voice call from one end of the gallery that the light was out. 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.
(*D* 26)

⁸³Cf. Tony Crowley, 'Joyce and Lexicography: "I must look that word up. Upon my word I must"', *Dictionaries* 31 (2010), 87-96 (95), points to the possible Old Irish origin of 'tun', borrowed into Old English.

⁸⁴On the origin of the term *dorveille* and its implications for romance narrative cf. Michael Zink, 'The Allegorical Poem as Interior Memoir', *Yale French Studies* 70 (1986), 100-26, esp. pp. 109-15.

At the close of ‘Araby’, the boy is indeed a ‘young reine’ (*FW* 64.16), and like Parzival he fails in his quest, ‘purely simply’ (*FW* 241.25) because of his inability to ask the right question before darkness falls on the hall, and the opportunity is lost forever. Moreover, the boy’s eminently medieval anagnoresis involves the sudden recognition of the alien nature of the words he fails to utter as a ‘purr esimple’ (*FW* 561.9). As in the case of Parzival, this inability to pierce the veil, to fulfil the onomastic potential of the grail hero’s name by asking the question, is rooted in the question of language, or in this instance, the language question.

Certainly, Joyce had ambivalent feelings toward the English language on the one hand; an ambivalence discernible in the bravura display of ventriloquism in the ‘Oxen of the Sun’ episode of *Ulysses*, and the ability to speak Irish as a prerequisite for being *echt* Irish on the other, which he questions as early as ‘Ireland, Island of Saints and Sages’.⁸⁵ Yet it is important to remember that ‘The Irish lessons James Joyce submitted to, for instance, lasted sporadically for about two years rather than the single session Stephen Dedalus undertook: with Joyce’s linguistic flair even a desultory attention for so long would have given him at least a modest competence in Irish.’⁸⁶ The 1901 census return for the family of John Stanislaus Joyce, 8 Royal Terrace, District Electoral Division of Clontarf West, Co. Dublin

⁸⁵In addition to *OCPW* 125, cf. Andrew Gibson, “‘An Irish Bull in an English Chinashop’: “Oxen” and the Cultural Politics of the Anthology’, in *Joyce on the Threshold*, ed. Anne Fogarty and Timothy Martin (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2005), pp. 91-109.

⁸⁶Brendan O’Hehir, *A Gaelic Lexicon for Finnegans Wake, and Glossary for Joyce’s Other Works* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), p. vii. Stephen’s lesson condenses the Irish classes given by Pádraic Pearse in University College Dublin in 1899, which Joyce attended. However, just as he later questioned the validity of ‘war exploits and pearse orations’ (*FW* 620.24), he also questioned Pearse’s overcompensatory denigration of the potentialities of English, drawing on his monologic fervor in forging the character of Mr Hughes in *Stephen Hero*; cf. Gregory Castle, *Modernism and the Celtic Revival* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 172-207.

(National Archives of Ireland C1901/Dublin/28/16), James Joyce ('student') is listed as speaking English and Irish, which is a political statement in itself. Notwithstanding the post-colonial status accorded to what Heaney ironically calls 'the Holy Tundish', what it means to fret in the shadow of an acquired speech is first adumbrated through *der reine Tor* topos here in 'Araby', and it continued to haunt him as a writer right to the tidal ebb of Anna Livia.⁸⁷

In his pastiche of the infamous trial of Myles Joyce in that of another 'child of Maam, Festy King' (*FW* 85.22-3), Joyce gives us a portrait of another pure fool, undone by the failure of language. Festy King's *mansch* of Hiberno-Latin and *Béarlaige*: the Irish-English hybrid that Douglas Hyde remembers in the Connacht of his youth, recalls the tragic consequences of Myles Joyce's inability to defend himself in English.⁸⁸ This led to his unconscionably botched hanging in Galway Jail so vividly captured in the forensic rhetoric of Timothy Harrington.⁸⁹ The death of Myles Joyce became the topic of heated debate in

⁸⁷Seamus Heaney, *Station Island* (London: Faber, 1984), p. 93; cf. 'The Interesting Case of John Alphonsus Mulrennan', *Planet* 41 (1978), 34-7, and 'Among Schoolchildren': *A John Malone Memorial Lecture* (Belfast: John Malone Memorial Committee, 1983), pp. 11-12.

⁸⁸Cf. Janet Egleson Dunleavy and Gareth W. Dunleavy, *Douglas Hyde: A Maker of Modern Ireland* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), pp. 70-1, for Hyde's own gentle parody of *Béarlaige*: 'I shot a brace in the bog but after a little time an old cailleach who said she was bean na keeper came up and put triobloid mor on me, blaidaircacht & barging, refusing to take airegeod no uiscebeatha, so that in spite of my most soothing sentences in the teanga blasda milis, I had, air dheiradh, to leave the bog & let a fine gearrfiadh escape.'

⁸⁹Cf. *The Maamtrasna Massacre: Impeachment of the Trials* (Dublin: Nation Office, 1884), p. vi: 'The scene on the scaffold itself was shocking beyond description. Even with the cap drawn over his eyes, and the executioner standing, rope in hand, to hurl the three wretched men together into eternity, Myles Joyce still declared his innocence; and, as if eager that his very last breath on earth should be a protestation to that God whom he was soon to meet, he turned again in the direction of the few bystanders, and 'called God to witness that he knew no more of the murder than the child unborn'; and with that solemn declaration on his lips he sunk from view. His last effort had somewhat displaced the arrangements of the executioner. The rope caught in the wretched man's

parliament, and reported throughout the English-speaking world.⁹⁰ As the drop fell at 8.25 on the morning of 15 December 1882, he continued to address the assembled reporters in Irish, 'I am going before God. I was not there at all and had not hand or part in it. Lord, forgive them that swore against me.'⁹¹ Like Harrington, Joyce sees this prematurely aged 'patriarch' of a 'miserable tribe' (*OPCW* 145) as a victim of the role of language and power in the legal process.⁹² His protestations are recalled in Festy's 'methyated' (*FW* 85.31-2) recognition of the court, 'through his Brythonic interpreter on his oath, mhuith peisth mhuise

arm, and for some seconds it was seen being jerked and tugged in the writhing of his last agony. The grim hangman cast an angry glance into the pit, and then, hissing an obscene oath at the struggling victim, sat on the beam, and kicked him into eternity.'

⁹⁰Cf. *The Official Report, House of Commons* (3rd ser.), 24 October 1884, vol. 293, cc168-235: 'Amendment (Mr Harrington): The Maamtrasna Murders: Conviction of Miles Joyce and Others', at 170: 'Myles Joyce had been as deliberately done to death as had Lord Frederick Cavendish, and it was absurd to profess horror at one crime and to hide another as heinous.' Cf. also 28 October 1884, vol. 293 cc357-43; 31 October 1884, vol. 293 cc660-2. Joyce would have been aware of Timothy Harrington's efforts to clear the name of Myles Joyce from an early age; cf. 'Innocent Miles Joyce; Evidence from Maamtrasna that Mr Harrington has Methods Employed to Secure Conviction', *New York Times*, 12 October 1884.

⁹¹These words are not only recorded in 'Irish Assassins Hanged', *New York Times*, 16 December 1882, but also 'Irish Affairs', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 15 January 1883; 'The Joyce Murder: The Final Scene', *The Manawatu Standard*, 17 January 1883; 'Execution of the Joyce Murderers', *The Otago Witness*, 20 January 1883; 'Ireland', *The Brisbane Courier*, 23 January 1883; 'The Execution of the Maamtrasna Murders', *The South Australian Advertiser*, 6 February 1883; 'Ireland', *South Australian Register*, 9 February 1883.

⁹²Cf. Harrington, *Maamtrasna Massacre*, p. v: Two men walked calmly to their fate, but the third, Myles Joyce, turned to every official of the jail he met, as he passed to the scaffold, and, with all the fiery vehemence of the Celt, declared, in a language which nearly all those who surrounded him were strangers to, that he was innocent.' Cf. also Jeanne A. Flood, 'Joyce and the Maamtrasna Murders', *James Joyce Quarterly* 28 (1991), 879-88; James Fairhall, *James Joyce and the Question of History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 217-20.

as fearra bheura muirre hriosmas' (*FW* 91.3-5).⁹³ As Joyce puts it in 'Ireland at the Bar', 'The figure of this bewildered old man, left over from a culture which is not ours, a deaf-mute before his judge, is a symbol of the Irish nation at the bar of public opinion.' This strangulation of the Irish tongue embodied in the broken *corpus* of Myles Joyce, from that 'remote place called Maamtrasna' (*OPCW* 145-6), is the ultimate failure of a poor fool: an apparent savage from a remote place. Indeed, the boy's failure to connect over a common language in 'Araby', the same failure so eloquently played out over the fireplace in the physics theatre in *Portrait of the Artist*, may seem minor by comparison.

In the final moments of 'Araby' the boy's anagnoresis, so typical of the romance genre, centres on the dissociative self-image, and is accompanied by the painful intellectual accommodation of the fact that the signifier does not always lead to that signified. These are eminently modernist preoccupations, but hardly alien to the sensibilities of Chrétien de Troyes or Wolfram von Eschenbach. As William McDonald points out:

Absent an explicit reference to the Grail in Wolfram's Prologue, the reader and Parzival are in the dark about his quest, as the narrator deliberately conceals the very topic of the tale. This fundamental ellipsis makes Parzival's search for the Grail a mystery for both the audience of the poem and the protagonist himself: both are not even dimly aware of the thematic connection to the Grail. It can therefore be said that the ruling theme of the story is gnosis, the search for wisdom.⁹⁴

⁹³Cf. Vivian Mercier, 'James Joyce and an Irish Tradition', *Studies* 45 (1956), 194-218, at p. 214: 'when given an Irish pronunciation the words sound very like "with best wishes for a very merry Christmas"'.

⁹⁴'Wolfram's Grail', p. 30.

However, this boy, like Parzival, is in a position to learn from his failures, because as Joyce reminds us in 'Saints and Sages', 'One thing alone seems clear to me. It is high time Ireland finished once and for all with failures' (*OPCW* 125).⁹⁵

⁹⁵I am particularly grateful to Helen Conrad O'Briain, Catherine Morley, and Greg Walker for their insightful suggestions regarding various drafts. I appreciate the helpful comments of Luca Crispi, Anne Fogarty, and other participants in the Seventh Annual UCD James Joyce Research Colloquium, 10-12 April 2014. I acknowledge the support of the University of Leicester in granting me Academic Study Leave, and the School of English, Trinity College Dublin in granting me a Visiting Research Fellowship, which facilitated the completion of this article.