Abstract

The Arabian Nights has been present in the literature of the West since the beginning of the eighteenth century and the translation of Antoine Galland in 1704. Critics have identified its stories in the work of a wide variety of Western writers, most notably, William Beckford, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, William Wordsworth, Alfred Tennyson, W. M. Thackeray, Charles Dickens, Elizabeth Gaskell, Edgar Allan Poe, Gustave Flaubert, Stendhal, Goethe, Alexandre Dumas, Marcel Proust, Leo Tolstoy, Jorge Luis Borges, A. S. Byatt, and Marina Warner. However, relatively little has been said about the implications of *The Arabian Nights* for modern and modernist writers from James Joyce to Jean Rhys. Even less has been written on the relationship between the ancient epic and the emergence of the modern short story *form*. Focusing on the work of three short fiction writers who published on the cusp of modernism: Robert Louis Stevenson, Oscar Wilde, and Joseph Conrad, this thesis explores the place of *The Arabian Nights* in the emergence of modern short fiction in Britain.

My study is not an attempt to trace the origins of *The Arabian Nights* as it features in modern short fiction. The project is more centrally concerned with how *The Arabian Nights* allows us to re-read the modern short story rather than the other way round. This thesis is less concerned with *The Arabian Nights* per se, than it is with how *The Arabian Nights* has been borrowed, taken up, appropriated, translated, adopted and adapted within a specific strand of modern short fiction published between 1877 and 1899. The borrowings I consider are both conscious and unconscious, casual and sustained, and it is not the aim of the thesis to trace back 'Arabian Nights' allusions to a precise origin, assuming such a thing were possible. Rather this thesis is more interested in *The Arabian Nights* as a recurring intertext of the short story.

If, as I will argue, both *The Arabian Nights* and the modern short story have their origins in the oral tale, their intimacy also needs to be explained within the context of modern print culture. The turn of the century periodical incorporated and propagated tastes for exotic tales of the East for metropolitan audiences, a fact which undoubtedly informed the short fiction of Stevenson, Wilde and Conrad. Those same periodicals were looking to the past as much as the present, outwards as much as inwards. This is perhaps also true of the modern short story itself, which does not merely embrace the modern and embody it in short print forms, but also looks to the elongated oral tales associated with the likes of *The Arabian Nights*.

Stevenson, Wilde, and Conrad represent a particularly concentrated response to *The Arabian Nights* at the turn of the century, when the modern short story in Britain was in its infancy. Through these writers, my study works to relocate the modern British short story (which I argue has been too readily restricted to the confines of England and Europe), within a broader transnational frame.

Acknowledgements

This work would not have been possible without the generous help of the Syrian Ministry of Higher Education, and Damascus University for funding and sponsoring this study.

With high appreciation and deep gratitude, I thank my supervisor, Dr James Procter, to whom I am indebted for his non-flagging enthusiasm and insightful efforts in supervising this thesis. I would like to thank him for his continuous help, and patience. Without his guidance, this thesis would not have been achievable. I would also like to thank my internal supervisor at Damascus University, Dr Nayef Al-Yasin, for his constant support.

I am heartily thankful to Professor John Batchelor for giving me the first spark of this thesis, and for always being there to listen and advise. I would like to thank him and his wife, Mrs Henrietta Batchelor, for giving me and my young family confidence throughout our stay in the United Kingdom, and for making us overcome our homesickness.

I am deeply grateful to Professor Leonee Ormond and Professor Claire Lamont for examining this thesis and for their precious feedback. I highly appreciate their amiability. I thank the entire staff of the School of English Literature, Language, and Linguistics at Newcastle University, particularly Dr Katie Harland, for her spontaneous help, precious advice, and friendly encouragement. I also thank Ms Melanie Birch for her support. Thanks to the HASS Graduate School for their constant response to all my queries, and for their useful direction.

It is an honour for me to thank, poet Adonis, my uncle, for opening up the horizons in front of me. I would also like to thank, heartily, my aunt Dr Khalida Sa'id, for her suggestive ideas, and of course, for her tender, caring, and warm attention.

Thanks from my heart I present to my father, Mohammad, for always encouraging me to pursue the highest degrees, and for always believing in me. Words cannot be enough to express my thanks to my mother, Fatima; this is why I thank her for being my mother. I would like to give a motherly 'thank you' to my son, Adam, for offering me, despite his young age, great love. His understanding, patience, and faith in me offered me enormous strength to complete this thesis. To my husband, Oussama, I give a loving 'thank you', for holding my hand in times of frustration, cheering me up in times of stress, wiping my tears in times of desperation, joying at my happiness, encouraging each step forward I make, celebrating my success, and always being there for me. Without his love, care, and smile this dream would not have come true.

Contents

Dedication

To my mother, my father,
Adam, and Oussama.

My serenity

Introduction

> *You have not to represent the world. You have to represent only what you can represent with pleasure and effect.*
>
> Robert Louis Stevenson

The Arabian Nights has long been present in the literature of the West, and numerous studies have focused upon the response to the appearance of *The Arabian Nights* in Europe since the eighteenth century.[1]

However, across these studies, only passing reference to the writers examined below are made. Moreover, none identify a wider connection between the modern short story and the ancient epic that is *The One Thousand and One Nights*.[2] Focusing on selected stories by Robert Louis Stevenson, Oscar Wilde, and Joseph Conrad, my study works to relocate the modern British short story, which I argue has been too readily restricted to the sclerotic confines of England and Europe, within a broader transnational ambit.

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[1] The main works on which I have drawn are Suheir Al-Qalamawi's *Alf Layla wa Layla* (1966); Muhsin Jassim Ali's *Scheherazade in England: A Study of Nineteenth Century English Criticism of the Arabian Nights* (1981); *The Arabian Nights in English Literature: Studies in the Reception of the Thousand and One Nights into British Culture* (1988) edited by Peter Caracciolo; Robert Irwin's *The Arabian Nights: A Companion* (2004); *The Arabian Nights and Orientalism: Perspectives from East and West* (2006), edited by Yuriko Yamanaka and Nishio Tetsuo; and *The Arabian Nights in Historical Context: Between East and West* (2008) edited by Saree Makdisi and Felicity Nussbaum. In addition to the works that consider the position of *The Arabian Nights* between East and West, I have also resorted to two major works on the narrative techniques of *The Arabian Nights*, which are Mia Gerhardt's *The Art of Story-Telling: A Literary Study of the Thousand and One Nights* (1963), and David Pinault's *Story-Telling Techniques in the Arabian Nights* (1992) on which I draw to examine the short stories of Robert Louis Stevenson, Oscar Wilde, and Joseph Conrad.

[2] *Alf Layla wa Layla* as a title has had different translations into European languages, and especially into English. For example, it is translated as, *One Thousand Nights and a Night*, which is the literal translation from Arabic. It has also been translated into *One Thousand and One Nights*; *The Thousand and One Nights*; *The Arabian Nights' Entertainments*; or *The Arabian Nights*. In this dissertation, however, I will be using the title *The Arabian Nights*; on the one hand it is streamlined, and on the other hand, it is the most common in the West.

The texts by Stevenson I am going to examine are to be found in *New Arabian Nights* (1882), *More New Arabian Nights: The Dynamiter* (1885), and *The Island Nights*' *Entertainments* (1893). The texts by Wilde are to be found in *The Happy Prince and Other Tales* (1888), *The House of Pomegranates* (1891), and *Lord Arthur Savile's Crime and Other Stories* (1891). The texts by Conrad I will be studying are 'Karain' (1897), 'Youth' (1898), and 'Heart of Darkness'[3] (1899).

In this introductory chapter, I am going to give a brief introduction on *The Arabian Nights*, its reception in the *fin de siècle*, and its relation to the short story. I will then move on to examine Stevenson, Wilde, and Conrad as on one level products of the *fin de siècle*, and as major figures in the rise of the short story in Britain. First though I shall begin by clarifying my use of the term 'short story' in discussing the works of Stevenson, Wilde, and Conrad.

There has been significant divergence in terms of twentieth century definitions of the short story.[4] It is tempting in this context to agree with Norman

[3] 'Heart of Darkness' has been considered as a novel, a novella, and a short story.
As this thesis is about shorter fiction (e.g. tales and short stories) I am going to consider 'Heart of Darkness' as a short story, or a tale, as I compare it with the tales of *The Arabian Nights*.
In a letter to *Blackwood Magazine's* publishers of 31 December 1898, Conrad describes 'Heart of Darkness' as 'a narrative after the manner of 'Youth''. He also describes it 'as much as [his] 'Outpost of Progress''. Thus, 'Heart of Darkness' may be considered as a narrative, a tale, a story, or a conte. For further reference, see *Collected Letters of Joseph Conrad*, ed. by Frederick Karl and Laurence Davies (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), II, 139-40.
Some of the famous critics who consider this work as a shorter fiction than the novel are Richard Ambrosini in 'The Mirror Effect in "Heart of Darkness"', in *Conrad's Fiction as Critical Discourse* (1991), and John Marx in *The Modernist Novel and the Decline of Empire* (2005), because they include its title in converted commas just like Conrad's short stories such as 'Youth' and 'Karain', for example; while they write the titles of his novels in italics, such as *Lord Jim*, *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'*, and others. Austin M. Wright, in 'On Defending the Short Story' in *The Short Story Theory at A Crossroads* (1989), states that: ''Heart of Darkness' has been responsibly called a short story', (p. 49). Jakob Lothe, in *Conrad's Narrative Method* (1989), refers to 'Heart of Darkness' as a novella, (p. 157); so does Cedric Watts in *The Cambridge Companion to Joseph Conrad* (1996), pp. 45-62. Quoted by Bruce Henricksen in *Nomadic Voices: Conrad and the Subject of Narrative* (1992), Dennis Brown refers to 'Heart of Darkness' as a 'tale', (p. 52).

[4] See Frank Myszor, *The Modern Short Story* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); *The New Short Story Theories*, ed. by Charles E. May (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press,

Friedman when he argues that short stories are, 'all those works of "narrative prose fiction" that are considered short by writers, the reading public, publishers, critics, and scholars.'[5] For example, the stories of Oscar Wilde which are strictly called 'fairy tales' can be productively thought of as short stories based on Walter Allen's suggestion that 'the tale was an oral form, composed to hold an audience, listeners not readers. Today, the words are interchangeable, and to attempt to make a formal distinction between stories and tales gets us nowhere.'[6] Even more problematic is *The Arabian Nights* as a quite distinctive set of 'short stories' and 'fairy tales' as Mia Gerhardt's account of fairy tales in *The Arabian Nights* suggests:

> The term *fairy-tale* ("Märchen") has to be accepted, for want of a better one, as a set of expression, and must not be analysed into its component parts; a fairy-tale is by no means always (in the '1001 Nights', hardly ever) about fairies, and never a tale in the sense in which I use the word.[7]

The fairy tales in *The Arabian Nights* revolve around the supernatural, the magical, and the marvellous, brought about by supernatural creatures, such as genies and demons, for instance.[8]

1994); *The Tales We Tell: Perspectives on the Short Story*, ed. by Barbara Lounsberry and others (Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1998); *Short Story Theory at a Crossroads*, ed. by Susan Lohafer and Jo Ellyn Clarey (Louisiana: Louisiana State University Press, 1989); Susan Lohafer, *Coming to Terms with the Short Story* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1983); Valerie Shaw, *The Short Story: A Critical Introduction* (London: Longman, 1983); and all the books on short story introductions.

[5] Norman Friedman, 'Recent Short Story Theories: Problems in Definition', in *The Short Story Theory at a Crossroads*, ed. by Susan Lohafer and Jo Ellyn Clarey (Louisiana: Louisiana State University Press, 1989), p. 16.

[6] Walter Allen, *The Short Story in English* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), p. 3.

[7] Mia Gerhardt, 'notes', *The Art of Story-Telling: A Literary Study of the Thousand and One Nights* (Leiden: Brill, 1963), p. 41.

[8] The fairy tales of *The Arabian Nights* are many; a selected bunch of the most famous fairy-tales, or supernatural stories, of *The Arabian Nights* include the following: 'The Merchant and the Genie', 'The Fisherman and the Genie', 'Qamar Azzaman', 'Alaa Addin and the Magic Lamp', 'Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves', 'The Seventh Voyage of Sindbad', 'Abdallah of the Sea' ('Abdallah the Merman'), 'The City of Brass', the stories of the First, Second, and Third Sheiks, and many more. See also Gerhardt, pp. 275-85.

If the fairy tale label poses questions, what might be at stake in regarding *The Arabian Nights* as short stories? *The Arabian Nights* has been variously considered and categorised by critics as an epic, a collection of stories, a collection of tales, a story-cycle, and as folk literature in general. Robert L. Mack, in his introduction to *Arabian Nights' Entertainment*s (1995), describes the stories of *The Arabian Nights* as 'ancient' and compares them to the Homeric epics, which are regarded as 'the foundations of [the West's] literary traditions.'[9] Some critics, such as Mia Gerhardt, David Pinault, Robert G. Hampson, and Austin M. Wright, consider the work as a collection of stories or tales.[10] Gerhardt, for example, also suggests that *The Arabian Nights* stories can be 'conveniently called short stories'.[11] Other critics, like Suzanne Garland Mann, consider *The Arabian Nights* as a story-cycle.[12] Moreover, Kathrin Müller and Husain Haddawy, in addition to Pinault, consider the work as folk literature.[13] However, there are certain critics, such as H. Wehr and Gerhardt, who disagree on categorising *The Arabian Nights* as merely 'popular'[14] literature or 'folk

[9] Robert L. Mack, 'Introduction', in *Arabian Nights' Entertainment*s, ed. by Robert L. Mack (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. x.
[10] See David Pinault, *Story-Telling Techniques in the Arabian Nights* (Leiden: Brill, 1992), p. 5; Mia Gerhardt, *The Art of Story-Telling: A Literary Study of the Thousand and One Nights* (Leiden: Brill, 1963), pp. 1, 41; and Robert Hampson, 'The Genie Out of the Bottle: Conrad, Wells and Joyce', in *The Arabian Nights in English Literature: Studies in the Reception of the Thousand and One Nights into British Culture*, ed. by Peter Caracciolo (London: The Macmillan Press, 1988), p. 235. See also, Austin M. Wright, 'On Defending the Short Story', in *The Short Story Theory at a Crossroads*, ed. by Susan Lohafer and Jo Ellyn Clarey (Louisiana: Louisiana State University Press, 1989), pp. 46, 48, in which he considers *The Arabian Nights* as short stories.
[11] Gerhardt, p. 41.
[12] See Susan Garland Mann, *The Short Story Cycle: A Genre Comparison and Reference Guide* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1989), p. 2.
[13] See Pinault, p. 15; and Kathrin Müller, 'Formulas and Formulaic Pictures: Elements of Oral Literature in the *Thousand and One Nights*', in *The Arabian Nights and Orientalism*: *Perspectives from East and West*, ed. by Yuriko Yamanaka and Tetsuo Nishio (London: Tauris, 2006), p. 48.
[14] Quoted in Gerhardt, p. 43.

narrative'.[15] Mack, moreover, goes on to suggest that Shahrazad's[16] 'proleptic or prophetic imagination would alert us to the fact that we are closer here to the world of magic realism than to that of literary naturalism.'[17] Tzvetan Todorov, in *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre* (1975), classifies the stories of *The Arabian Nights* as marvellous tales.[18] He suggests that *The Arabian Nights* fits the category of the marvellous tales more than the category of the fairy tales. He goes on to argue that the fairy tale is 'only one of the varieties of the marvellous'.[19] Todorov divides the marvellous of *The Arabian Nights* into four types, three of which apply to *The Arabian Nights*. The first is the hyperbolic marvellous, which includes hyperbole and exaggeration in description or narrative such as this found in the stories narrated by Sindbad about his voyages and the supernatural creatures he encounters. Second is the exotic marvellous, when a supernatural event or creature is told about but without having knowledge about the background of this event or that creature, such as the *roc* which Sindbad describes in his second voyage. This type of marvellous is characterised by combining the natural with the supernatural. The instrumental marvellous is the third type of marvellous that Todorov discusses. In this type the reader finds 'the gadgets, technological developments' which are 'unrealised in the period described but, after all, quite possible.'[20] The examples of this type include the 'flying carpet', the 'flying horse', the 'revolving stone',

[15] See Gerhardt, p. 43.
[16] Here I would like to say that critics have used different spellings for the main characters of *The Arabian Nights*, such as Scheherazade, Dinarzade, Dinazad, Shahriar, or Shahryar, but I am going to use the spelling of the words as they are used in Husain Haddawy's translation, for, on the one hand, this is how they are pronounced in Arabic; and on the other hand, they are simplified. Therefore, the names are going to be Shahrazad, Dunyazad, and Shahrayar.
[17] Mack, p. xii.
[18] Tzvetan Todorov, *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre*, trans. by Richard Howard (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1975), p. 54.
[19] Todorov, *The Fantastic*, p. 54.
[20] Todorov, *The Fantastic*, p. 56.

or the 'apple that cures diseases'. The fourth type Todorov discusses is the scientific marvellous and which has come to be known today as the science fiction. However, this type does not have a clear link with *The Arabian Nights*, so far.[21]

Mia Gerhardt, in *The Art of Story-Telling* (1963), categorises the stories of *The Arabian Nights* according to their substance. For example, she suggests that the stories may be regarded as love stories, fairy tales, travel stories, crime stories, or wisdom stories.[22] Husain Haddawy, in *The Arabian Nights* (1992), also divides the work into 'four categories of folk tales – fables, fairy tales, romances, and comic as well as historical anecdotes, the last two often merging into one category'.[23] Nonetheless, and despite (or more likely because of) all the studies that have been made on *The Arabian Nights*, there is no stable categorisation of this work. Gerhardt explains this as follows:

> [T]he flowers culled from erudite works, and the stories proper, represent two different literary categories. In the practice of '1001 Nights'-studies, though, the line of demarcation between them tends to become somewhat blurred. Scholarly elements, written sources, written transmission may intervene in the shaping of the popular story; on the other hand, the anecdotes and tales often bear traces of having been remodelled to suit the character of the collection.[24]

She goes on,

> all the items included in it, also the anecdotes and tales, and even the most arid of the long pieces that were arbitrarily added, were considered as stories. They may be long or brief, historical or fictitious, different in tone, outlook and subject-matter, adorned or crude, relatively modern or

[21] For more on Tzvetan Todorov's discussion of *The Arabian Nights* as marvellous tales, see Todorov, *The Fantastic*, pp. 54-57.
[22] See Gerhardt, pp. 41, 115.
[23] Husain Haddawy, *The Arabian Nights: Based on the Text of the Fourteenth Century Syrian Manuscript* (New York: Norton, 1990; repr. New York: Everyman's Library, 1992), pp. xiv-xv.
[24] Gerhardt, pp. 43-44.

> quite old, but stories they are all of them, and that is why they are there. In studying the '1001 Nights' we certainly must adopt this viewpoint and take every one of them, just as it stands, on its own merits, simply as a story.[25]

Elsewhere, Robert Irwin suggests that the tales of *The Arabian Nights* include 'long heroic epics, wisdom literature, fables, cosmological fantasy, pornography, scatological jokes, mystical devotional tales, chronicles of low life, rhetorical debates and masses of poetry. A few tales are hundreds of pages long; others amount to no more than a short paragraph.'[26] *The Arabian Nights* is a combination of all these categories, which gives it the flexibility that has allowed it to move into the modern short story.

The origins of *The Arabian Nights* date back to the Abbasid Caliphate which took place between (132 hegira-750) and (640 hegira-1242),[27] that is, between the reigns of Abou Al-Abbas Al-Saffah and Al-Mousta'asem. Although the stories of *The Arabian Nights* take place in Damascus, Cairo, and Baghdad, it is claimed that they have three different origins which are, Persian, Indian, and Arabic. The Persian origin is probably the earliest; its title is *Hazar Afsaneh* which means *The Thousand Stories* (or *The Thousand Tales*), and which is about the story of two kings, Shahrayar and Shahzaman, and the Vizier's two daughters Shahrazad and Dunyazad. According to T. S. Hattar, '[t]he book is

[25] Gerhardt, p. 44.
[26] Irwin, p. 2.
[27] In the Arab and Muslim Worlds, two types of dates are used: the common, which is the Nativity calendar; and the Lunar, or the Muslim calendar. Some Arab countries, such as Syria, use the lunar calendar starting from Prophet Muhammad's immigration from Mecca to Medina, and they call it 'Hegira', which is the literal translation of the word 'immigration' in Arabic. Other countries, such as Libya, use the Muslim calendar as a start from the death of Prophet Muhammad, and call it Wafat Rasool, which means 'death of Prophet'. Here I am using the Lunar, or Muslim dates using the Hegira calendar with its equivalent in the Nativity calendar.

first referred to by al Mas'udi (896-956 AD). This is confirmed by Ibn Al-Nadim (990 AD).'[28]

Having said this, what follows is not an attempt to trace the origins of *The Arabian Nights* as it features in modern short fiction. My project is forward rather than backward-looking in this sense, and is more concerned with how *The Arabian Nights* allows us to reread these stories rather than the other way round. This thesis is not a study of *The Arabian Nights* per se, but rather it is about how *The Arabian Nights* have been used, taken up, appropriated, translated, adopted and adapted within modern short fiction. These borrowings are both conscious and unconscious, casual and specific, and it is not the aim of the thesis to trace back 'Arabian Nights' allusions to a precise origin, assuming such a thing were possible. I have not used early manuscripts or editions to 'root' the references in any sense. Because it is often not possible to verify which edition of *The Arabian Nights* the 'borrowings' relate to, indeed because it may be the borrowing has several different locations, I have preferred to work with a variety of editions of the tales, including one Arabic version published in Bulaq, in 1831. The main translation, however, that I depended on is Edward William Lane's which was published in 1865, and which I used in most of the comparisons I made in this thesis. I also resorted to Husain Haddawy's two-volume translation *The Arabian Nights* (1992), and *The Arabian Nights II: Sindbad and Other Popular Stories* (1998); [29] and the Oxford Classics' *Arabian Nights'*

[28] T. S. Hattar, 'Arabian Nights Briefing', <http://jsis.artsci.washington.edu>, [accessed 12 February 2005] (para. 2 of 13). For the origins of *The Arabian Nights*, see Husain Haddawy, *The Arabian Nights: Based on the Text of the Fourteenth Century Syrian Manuscript* (1992); Robert Irwin, *The Arabian Nights: A Companion* (2004); and *Arabian Nights' Entertainment*s, ed. by Robert L. Mack, (1995).

[29] Robert Irwin describes Haddawy's version as 'a very readable translation' that targets the reader who wants 'to taste the authentic flavour of [*The Arabian Nights*'] tales.' (p. 7). This

*Entertainment*s (1995), edited by Robert L. Mack. Occasionally, I referred to Burton's translation, *The Book of the Thousand Nights and a Night* (1897), because it is the only version I could get hold of in which the animal stories that I discuss in this dissertation are exclusively found.[30]

The Reception of *The Arabian Nights* in Britain

The Arabian Nights was not valued at the time of its appearance in the Arab world as it is nowadays;[31] nor was it appreciated there in the nineteenth century as it was in the West.

The admiration for *The Arabian Nights* is as varied as the attempts to classify it. In other words, the stories of *The Arabian Nights* have been admired for various reasons throughout the ages. A reason behind this appreciation may be linked to Husain Haddawy's words in describing the stories of *The Arabian Nights*:

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translation is edited by Muhsin Mahdi, who published an important edition of an Arabian Manuscript of *The Arabian Nights* from the Bibliotèque nationale; a manuscript that is considered as the oldest surviving version of the introductory pages of *The Arabian Nights*. See Irwin, p. 7.

[30] Stevenson, Wilde, and Conrad may have been influenced by more than one translation of the original *Arabian Nights*, because, in the nineteenth century alone, there were five different English translations; some of which were translated directly from Arabic. The first to start the line of translation was Edward Forster, who produced his work in 1802, followed by Jonathan Scott in 1811, then appeared the translation of Henry Torrens in 1838, Edward Lane's between 1839 and 1841, John Payne's between 1882 and 1884, and finally, the richest and most popular of all, Sir Richard Burton's which appeared between 1885 and 1888. Jonathan Scott's translation *Arabian Nights Entertainments* (1811) is the literary translation into English from Galland's French translation. Lane presented the first direct translation of *The Arabian Nights* from Arabic into English (1839-1841) using the Bulaq edition. John Payne started to translate the Calcutta II edition in 1876 or 1877.
Stevenson might have read all the previous translations. What is most unlikely is that Stevenson might have had a look at Burton's translation, at least not until he had written both his *New Arabian Nights* books, since this translation started in the year 1885, which was the publication year of his second book, *More New Arabian Nights: The Dynamiter*. He might have also read Galland's translation, due to his fluency in French. Wilde and Conrad, however, might have used Burton's translation.

[31] See Gerhardt, p. 43.

> In the *Nights* themselves, tales divert, cure, redeem, and save lives. Shahrazad cures Shahrayar of his hatred of women, teaches him to love, and by doing so saves her own life and wins a good man; the Caliph Haroun al-Rashid finds more fulfilment in satisfying his sense of wonder by listening to a story than in his sense of justice or his thirst for vengeance; and the king of China spares four lives when he finally hears a story that is stranger than a strange episode from his own life. Even angry demons are humanised and pacified by a good story. And everyone is always ready to oblige, for everyone has a strange story to tell.[32]

Robert L. Mack also refers to this merit of the stories by saying,

> The diversion or entertainment provided by a well-told story can mitigate a sentence or even prevent an execution; narrative itself often serves as a placating salve to the impatient or to the wicked as well as a healing, consolatory balm for the wounded.[33]

The two quotations above explain the seemingly 'unique' merits of *The Arabian Nights* which stand behind its admiration. Following this logic, the value of *The Arabian Nights* is related to the fact that in the stories, the ordinary is intermingled with the extraordinary, the supernatural with the mundane, humans with genies. Yet the enthusiastic reception of these tales in Europe also has a quite specific connection with orientalist fantasies surrounding the East as exotic.[34] The stories we are told are full of 'pleasure of a marvellous adventure and a sense of wonder,' which, as Haddawy expresses, 'makes life possible […][the] pleasure is vicarious and aesthetic, derived from the escape into an exotic world of wish fulfilment and from the underlying act of transformation

[32] Haddawy, *The Arabian Nights*, p. xiv.
[33] Mack, p. ix.
[34] Exoticism as a concept is hard to discuss in a limited space. It is not even in this sense that I am using the word 'exotic'; thus, I will explain my use of exoticism in the context of this dissertation. I am using the term 'exotic' here relying on the definition given to exotic literature by the Italian writer and film director Pier Paolo Pasolini in *Tempo* magazine (March 1969): 'the sense of an *elsewhere*'; see Chris Bongie, 'An Idea Without A Future: Exoticism in the Age of Colonial Reproduction', in *Exotic Memories: Literature, Colonialism, and the Fin de Siècle* (California: Stanford University Press, 1991), p. 3. Chris Bongie, moreover, defines exoticism as 'a nineteenth-century literary and existential practice that posited another space, the space of an Other', (pp. 4-5).

and the consequent pleasure, which may be best defined in Freudian terms as the sudden overcoming of obstacle.'[35] If the blending of the 'Islamic narrative function' with the 'emerging popular tradition' is what partly gives the work its popularity, as Muhsin J. Al-Musawi proposes,[36] he further suggests that *The Arabian Nights* was a source for 'the unlimited, the boundless, and the exotic.'[37] This 'escape into the exotic' from the pressuring life of the *fin de siècle* has a deep connection with the reception of *The Arabian Nights* in the period in which Stevenson, Wilde, and Conrad produced their masterworks in short stories.

From the beginning of the nineteenth century the tales of *The Arabian Nights* 'were read and enjoyed mainly for their exotic and fabulous enchantments, enchantments which continued to colour and shape various literary and aesthetic attitudes and to inspire and evoke the intimate whisperings of many a poetic soul throughout the century.'[38]

In 1812, Henry Weber wrote in his introduction to *Tales of the East* that few are those,

> who do not recollect with pleasure the emotions they felt when the Thousand and One Nights were first put out into their hands; the anxiety which accompanied the perusal; the interest with which their minds were impressed in the fate of the imaginary heroes and heroines; the golden dreams of happiness and splendour which the fairy palaces and exhaustless treasures of the east presented to their imagination.[39]

[35] Haddawy, *The Arabian Nights*, pp. xiv-xv.
[36] Muhsin J. Al-Musawi, *The Islamic Context of the Thousand and One Nights* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), p. 67.
[37] Al-Musawi, p. 68.
[38] Muhsin Jassim Ali, *Scheherazade in England: A Study of Nineteenth Century English Criticism of the Arabian Nights* (Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers; in association with Baghdad University Press, 1981), p. 38.
[39] Quoted in Ali, p. 39.

The nineteenth-century reader identified with the fictional life of *The Arabian Nights* with all its charm and fascination. A while later, in 1834, Leigh Hunt wrote:

> To us, the Arabian Nights are one of the most beautiful books in the world: not because there is nothing but pleasure in it, but because the pain has infinite chances of vicissitude, and because the pleasure is within the reach of all who have body and soul, and imagination. The poor man there sleeps in a door-way with his love, and is richer than a king. The Sultan is dethroned tomorrow, and has a finer throne the next day. The pauper touches a ring, and spirits wait upon him. You ride in the air; you are rich in solitude; you long for somebody to return your love, and an Eden encloses you in its arms. You have this world, and you have another. Fairies are in your moon-light. Hope and imagination have their fair play, as well as the rest of us. There is action heroical, and passion too: people can suffer, as well as enjoy, for love; you have bravery, luxury, fortitude, self-devotion, comedy as good as Moliere's, tragedy, Eastern manners, the wonderful that is in a commonplace, and the verisimilitude that is in the wonderful calendars, cadis, robbers, enchanted palaces, paintings full of colour and drapery, warmth for the senses, desert in arms and exercises to keep it manly, cautions to the rich, humanity for the more happy, and hope for the miserable.[40]

The high appreciation clearly present in Hunt's words evokes a work that satisfies all tastes due to its variety, but which is also inevitably accented by the Oriental lifestyle and the Eastern atmosphere which captivatingly makes available an 'escape into the exotic'.

The popular demand for the tales united with the romantics, from Coleridge to Leigh Hunt, whose words about the tales continued to be very passionate and appreciative:

> New Arabian Nights! – What! New Arabian Nights' Entertainments of the old stock! genuine! more Scheherazade and Dinarzade! More Zobeide and camaralzaman, and commanders of the Faithful, and ladies

[40] Quoted in Ali, p. 47.

> in veils, and enraptured linen-drapers, and genii, and magicians, and 'light of my soul,' and heads made no more of than turnip-tops.[41]

In 1838, an *Athenaeum* reviewer considered *The Arabian Nights* as becoming popular and inspiring, and that they 'must form no uninteresting chapter in any comprehensive history of modern literature.'[42] The admiration of *The Arabian Nights* in the nineteenth century increased due to the recognition of the work's literary value.[43]

However, not only was this admiration present among the highly educated people, but also, on the popular level, the tales of *The Arabian Nights* enjoyed substantial interest: *The Arabian Nights* was considered at this time as 'the most popular book in the world.'[44] This was Leigh Hunt's opinion after reviewing six new editions for the *London* and *Westminster* in 1839.[45] The demand on new editions continued throughout the century so that in 1875, James Mew wrote: 'Every rolling year seems to request a larger number of editions'.[46] In 1896 the *Athenaeum* wrote: 'It is a striking testimony to the lasting popularity of the "Arabian Nights" that publisher after publisher brings out one edition after another (of uncopyright versions).'[47]

Elsewhere in Europe, the reception of *The Arabian Nights* started to increase rapidly since Antoine Galland first introduced his translation, *Les Mille et Une Nuits* (1704-17). The admiration of this work grew in the romantic period, and continued to do so in the Victorian era. *The Arabian Nights* was either

[41] Quoted in Ali, p. 41.
[42] Quoted in Ali, p. 37.
[43] Ali, p. 38.
[44] Quoted in Ali, p. 42.
[45] Ali, p. 42.
[46] Quoted in Ali, p. 42.
[47] Quoted in Ali, pp. 42-43.

written about by many romantic poets, or it was present in their poetry. Major romantic poets like Samuel Taylor Coleridge, William Wordsworth, and Walter Scott, included it in their poetry, and wrote about their experiences in reading it.[48] Victorian writers, such as Charles Dickens, Elizabeth Gaskell, and George Meredith incorporated clear references in their works to *The Arabian Nights*.[49] It also continued to be appreciated by twentieth-century writers and poets, such as James Joyce, W. B. Yeats, Jean Rhys, Angela Carter, and Jorge Louis Borges, and more recently by A. S. Byatt, and Marina Warner. As Robert Irwin puts it in his companion to the tales: 'Indeed, it might have been an easier, shorter chapter if I had discussed those writers who were not influenced by the *Nights*.'[50] Robert L. Mack summarises the situation neatly when he says, 'With the exception of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and – obviously – the Bible, few works have had such a profound and lasting influence on the English literary tradition as the *Thousand and One Nights*.'[51]

One of the indications of the burgeoning of *The Arabian Nights* in the late nineteenth century is that magazines and periodicals wrote about it

[48] See *The Arabian Nights in English Literature: Studies in the Reception of the Thousand and One Nights into British Culture* (1988), edited by Peter Caracciolo; Robert Irwin's *The Arabian Nights: A Companion* (2004); and *The Arabian Nights in Historical Context between East and West*, ed. by Saree Makdisi and Felicity Nussbaum (2008).
[49] See notes (48) and (50).
[50] Irwin, pp. 290-91. In Robert Irwin's *The Arabian Nights: A Companion* (2004) and *The Arabian Nights in English Literature: Studies in the Reception of the Thousand and One Nights into British Culture* (1988), edited by Peter Caracciolo, there are rich accounts of the writers who were 'influenced' by The Arabian Nights. Their enriching studies have covered a variety of writers over long and different periods of time. Their studies include: Joseph Addison, Samuel Johnson, John Hawkesworth, James Ridley, William Beckford, Jean Potock, Johann von Goethe, Thomas Moore, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, William Wordsworth, Walter Scott, Alfred Lord Tennyson, W. M. Thackeray, Wilkie Collins, James Thomson, Christina Rossetti, Elizabeth Gaskell, George Meredith, Charles Dickens, Edgar Allan Poe, Charles Nodier, Gustave Flaubert, Stendhal, Alexandre Dumas père, Gérard de Nerval, Joseph de Gobineau, Marcel Proust, Aleksandr Pushkin, Leo Tolstoy, Arther Conan Doyle, W. B. Yeats, H. G. Wells, James Joyce, Italo Calvino, George Perec, H. P. Lovecraft, Angela Carter, Jorge Luis Borges, John Barth, A. S. Byatt, and more.
[51] Mack, p. ix.

continuously. For example, in 13 December 1890, the *Saturday Review* states, in discussing Galland's version, that 'This is the form in which the youth of many generations have been set dreaming of wonders of the gorgeous East'.[52] In the *Atlantic Monthly* of June 1889, C. H. Toy wrote: '[*The Arabian Nights*'] beauties and treasures lie partly on the surface, partly deeper down. The adventure, magic, drollery, wit, and passion are easily recognisable; the profounder social and religious sentiments must sometimes be searched for.'[53] In 23 September 1899, *The Athenaeum* states that 'it is [Galland's] glory to have been the first to bring the "Arabian Nights" to Europe'.[54] Meanwhile, in *The Short Story: A Critical Introduction* (1983), Valerie Shaw states that in the flourishing period of magazines and periodicals 'the original *Arabian Nights* enjoyed a vogue in England,' and that 'the Oriental tale play[ed] a prominent part in early periodical fiction.'[55]

The general high admiration of *The Arabian Nights* continued, and in the second half of the nineteenth century it was included in Sir John Lubbock's list of 'Best Hundred Books'.[56] John Ruskin, moreover, highly regarded *The Arabian Nights*, and it has been said that '[i]t was one of the favourite books for [his] family fireside reading.'[57] Such was the case in Lady Burne-Jones's house, and Emma Roberts once wrote: 'I had commenced reading the "Arabian Nights Entertainments" at the age of five […] since which period I had read them over and over again at every opportunity finishing with the last published number of

[52] Quoted in Ali, p. 76.
[53] Quoted in Ali, p. 75.
[54] Quoted in Ali, p. 76.
[55] Valerie Shaw, *The Short Story: A Critical Introduction* (London: Longman, 1983), p. 32.
[56] See Ali, p. 41.
[57] Ali, p. 41.

the translation by Mr. Lane. This study has given me a strong taste for everything relating to the East, and Arabia especially.'[58]

Clearly, from the discussion above, *The Arabian Nights* peaked in late nineteenth-century Europe, and Britain in particular, which coincided with the *fin de siècle* fears and desires, the emergence of modernism, and the rise of the short story. It was one of the 'exotic' Oriental resorts to withdraw to from the varied pressure that surrounded life at the end of the nineteenth century. John Gross, in *The Rise and Fall of the Man of Letters* (1969), writes:

> Whatever one puts it down to – economic difficulties, foreign competition – it is undoubtedly possible to detect by the 1880s a widespread faltering of Victorian self-confidence, a new edginess and uncertainty about the future. Among writers, such a climate might have been supposed to favour a mood of determined realism, and so, in some cases, it did. But the commonest reaction was withdrawal, a retreat into nostalgia, exoticism, fine writing, *belles-lettres*.[59]

Clare Hanson links the sorts of pleasurable fantasies we have already seen associated with *The Arabian Nights* even more explicitly to turn of the century discourses of empire when she states:

> At a time when the sun of empire was beginning to set in political terms, the 'native' or exotic found its way into English literature as a new arena for fantasy, replacing the romantic medieval *topos* of Morris and Rossetti. The remote settings of India, Africa and the Far East offered a distance in place which allowed for the release of certain areas of the imaginative and the fantastic which could not be received into the literature of everyday life, especially in the form of the realist novel.[60]

The Arabian Nights undeniably embraced 'the remote settings of India […] and the Far East', and 'the imaginative and the fantastic' which real life was not able

[58] Quoted in Ali, p. 41.
[59] Quoted in Bernard Bergonzi, 'Late Victorian to Modernist: 1880-1930', in *An Outline of English Literature*, ed. by Pat Rogers (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 347.
[60] Clare Hanson, *Short Stories and Short Fictions, 1880-1980* (London: Macmillan, 1985), p. 34.

to offer. Therefore, at the end of the nineteenth century, numerous were those who identified with William Henley's 'charming tribute' to Shahrazad; and 'their own admiration and love for the tales' were mirrored in this essay.[61]

In the late nineteenth century, the reader was attracted to the tale-within-tale technique;[62] and as such *The Arabian Nights* was considered as a gem in 'the art of storytelling'.[63] The framing device became very successful for many reasons. Muhsin Al-Musawi describes some of the distinguishing features of the frame narrative:

> The frame tale also works as a navigational trope among cultures and lands, not only because of its Indo-Persian origin but also because of its cluster of tales that speak of religions, communities, languages, and cultures that undergo expansion, contraction, or extinction. The frame story for the collection attracts readers for more than one reason. It can be taken as evidence of wit, challenge, intelligence, and resourcefulness on the part of the female storyteller Scheherazade.'[64]

From the late nineteenth century onwards, *The Arabian Nights* started to be considered as children literature, especially some very famous stories, such as 'Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves', 'Alaa Addin and the Magic Lamp',[65] 'The

[61] For Henley's essay, see William Ernest Henley, 'Arabian Nights' Entertainments', in *The Works of W. E. Henley: Views and Reviews*, 7 vols (London: D. Nutt, 1908), V, 249-256. Henley also wrote a long poem on *The Arabian Nights*; see, William Ernest Henley, 'Arabian Nights' Entertainments', in *The Works of W. E. Henley: Poems*, 7 vols (London: D. Nutt, 1908), I, 59-78.
[62] See Cedric Watts, 'Heart of Darkness', in *The Cambridge Companion to Joseph Conrad*, ed. by J. H. Stape (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 47. See also, Robert G. Hampson, 'The Genie out of the Bottle: Conrad, Wells and Joyce', in *The Arabian Nights in English Literature: Studies in the Reception of the Thousand and One Nights into British Culture*, ed. by Peter Caracciolo (London: The Macmillan Press, 1988), p. 218.
[63] Alan Sandison, 'Arabesque', in *Robert Louis Stevenson and the Appearance of Modernism: A Future Feeling* (Houndsmill: Macmillan, 1996) p. 87.
[64] Al-Musawi, p. 30.
[65] Although these two stories are claimed to have been added later, because they were not present in the early versions of *The Arabian Nights*, I have included them in this dissertation based on the critics' opinions that these stories are considered as *Arabian Nights*' stories because they were found in various versions of the work. Husain Haddawy has translated the stories of 'Sindbad the Sailor' and 'Alaa Addin and the Magic Lamp' depending on Galland's version. He remarks that Galland wrote in his diaries that he heard the story of 'Alaa Addin and the Magic Lamp' from Hanna Diab, who was a Maronite Christian of Aleppo in 1709. This story first

Ebony Horse', and more supernatural stories which form a considerable part of the written work. The children's stories of *The Arabian Nights,* 'compete', as Robert Irwin suggests, with the books that are specifically written for children by Dean Farrar, Frederick Marryat, E. Nesbit, George MacDonald, and other children's-story writers.[66]

In general, *The Arabian Nights* 'has not only shaped the West's perception of the 'Orient' as the quintessential 'Other' but has also contributed decisively to developing and channelling creative imagination in virtually all areas of human activity.'[67] Peter Caracciolo usefully summarises:

> What the *Nights* uniquely provides is a largely secular model of capacious, protean fictions employing an expressive amalgam of prose and verse, realism and fantasy, comedy and tragedy; tales within tales that are responsive to the needs of society, and lend themselves to semi-dramatic reading.[68]

I would stress here the phrase 'responsive to the needs of society', because, as I argue below, the short story, when it was born, reflected, as well as responded to, the demands of the society.[69]

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appeared in Arabic in 1787 in a manuscript that was written by a Syrian Christian priest who lived in Paris. The priest's real name is Dionysius Shawish, but his anonym was Dom Denis Chavis. The manuscript was written in order to 'complete the missing portions of the fourteenth-century Syrian manuscript.' Later on, between 1805 and 1808, the story appeared in Paris in a manuscript written by a Syrian collaborator of Silvestre de Sacy named Mikhail Sabbagh. See Husain Haddawy, *The Arabian Nights II: Sindbad and Other Popular Stories* (New York: Husain Haddawy, 1995; repr. New York: Everyman's Library, 1998), p. xvi.

[66] Irwin, p. 274.

[67] Ulrich Marzolph, *The Arabian Nights Reader,* ed. by Ulrich Marzolph (Michigan: Wayne State University Press, 2006), p. vii.

[68] Caracciolo, p. 16.

[69] See Adrian Hunter, *The Cambridge Introduction to the Short Story in English* (Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 3

The Modern Short Story

The story is as old as man. It is transferred each passing day through generations. Although the earliest stories have not survived, 'we can guess what they were like from those that have come down to us from a much more recent past, from the *Arabian Nights*' *Entertainments*, the *Gesta Romanorum*, the *Decameron* of Boccaccio and so on.'[70]

It is not unmerited to consider *The Arabian Nights* as a precursor of the short story, and subsequently, of what has become known as the modern short story in Britain. To be more precise, *The Arabian Nights*, and Shahrazad in particular, have been regarded by many critics as a 'parent' to the short story. For example, Walter Allen, in *The Short Story in English* (1981), writes:

> the short story, before the modern short story came into being, was a manifestation of the romance. Its province was the extraordinary; its aim, if not to astonish, was at least to surprise; its purpose, to entertain. Think of Scheherazade, who entertained the sultan so well, astonished him so successfully that literally she kept her head […] No doubt the story-teller's wit, his elegance in the presentation of his material, his choice of words, his style generally, were all factors making for the appreciation of his art; but fundamental to everything was the listener's desire to be astonished.[71]

Thus, there is a teller to 'astonish'; there is a listener longing to be 'astonished'; and there is the oral amusing and entertaining tale. These are the main characteristics of *The Arabian Nights* which have descended to the new born form of the short story. This idea is also expressed by Nicole Ward Jouve, in *Re-reading the Short Story* (1989); Jouve tells of her experience reading *The Arabian Nights*:

[70] Allen, p. 3.
[71] Allen, p. 5.

> I began *The Thousand and One Nights* this summer. One of the delights they give is that they are too bulky to make a single volume, unless it be printed like the Bible, so you have to say 'them'. They play with multiplicity and refuse to totalise anyway. If you regard the Bible as *The Book,* you would have to say that *The Thousand and One Nights* are *The Stories,* plural, earlier and better than *The Decameron* or *The Canterbury Tales* or Perrault or Grimms' fairy tales or any other Western collection of stories. […] Their plurality expresses for me what is one of the prime pleasures of the story, that it plays or should play with abundance, with contrasts and contradictions of life, with high and low, not trying to make a *whole* out of them but letting each man and woman tell their story in their own words and with their own degree of wit, flamboyance, eloquence or rumbustiousness. They are a 'vivier', a trout-farm, of stories. […] *The Thousand and One Nights* not only show how multiple stories can co-exist, inter-relate and spawn others inside a vast and infinitely mobile form, one that demands as much or more time in the reading than *La Recherche du Temps Perdu, but* the stories ceaselessly rupture the unit. And so, there is no risk of totalisation, by which I mean the drive to homogenise experience by making what is diverse and specific into a unified whole, which is the overwhelming temptation of the Book.[72]

Jouve suggestively shows the features that *The Arabian Nights* have. On the one hand she places the narrative alongside grand works such as *The Decameron*, *The Canterbury Tales*, and Charles Perrault's or the Brothers Grimm's fairy tales; and on the other hand, she positions its narratives in relation to the birth of a much 'younger' form: the short story. She goes on to suggest:

> I see in *The Thousand and One Nights* an archetypal model standing behind all stories, collections of stories, story-telling, even when people are least aware of them. It is the power of great texts that they are of relevance even to those who do not know of them. For any writing that is real puts things at play that are deeper and bigger than consciousness, and that continue to exist beneath what historical moments make visible. Of course, I must not underestimate the influence they have had over the West […] traces of their impact can be found everywhere […].[73]

[72] Nicole Ward Jouve, 'Too Short for a Book?', in *Re-reading the Short Story*, ed. by Clare Hanson (Hampshire: The Macmillan Press, 1989), p. 37.
[73] Jouve, p. 39.

We have already seen the dangers of regarding *The Arabian Nights* in originary or universal terms; nevertheless, the logic of this passage suggests it is not unfeasible to say that *The Arabian Nights* is a sort of parent to the modern short story, even if that parenthood has gone largely unacknowledged. Joyce Carol Oates suggests in *Tales We Tell: Perspectives on the Short Story* (1998), that 'Like a river fed by countless small streams, the modern short story derives from a multiplicity of sources;'[74] and she considers *The Arabian Nights* as one of these resources.[75]

Despite the long and short histories that have been offered regarding the beginnings of the short story,[76] it is clear that the story in its modern form began to flourish in the second half of the nineteenth century. Preceding the emergence of the short story, the 'three-decker' Victorian novel was the dominating genre in fiction.[77] Gradually, towards the end of the nineteenth century, the multi-volume thick novel was replaced by the one-volume novel. By the end of the

[74] Joyce Carol Oates, 'Beginnings: "The Origins and Art of the Short Story"', in *The Tales We Tell: Perspectives on the Short Story*, ed. by Barbara Lounsberry and others (Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1998), p. 49.
[75] See Oates, p. 49.
[76] Frank Myszor, in *The Modern Short Story* (2001), discusses the beginnings of the short story, and he puts forward four claims. Some critics regard that the short story is as early as the Gothic literature, which started with Horace Walpole and developed in the writing's of Edgar Allan Poe and Nathaniel Hawthorne, and became known as 'horror'. Others claim that the short story is strongly related to Romanticism, because the romantics 'speak for the isolated individual, the outcast, the little man cast against the wildness and lawlessness of society'. A third claim is that the short story did not start until Realism appeared. A final opinion revolves around the idea that the origins of the short story lie in the sketches and tales: the sketches started with Joseph Addison (1672-1719) and Richard Steele (1672-1729), and developed to reach Charles Dickens in *Sketches by Boz* (1835-36) and W. M. Thackeray in *The Book of Snobs* (1846); the tales started with Washington Irving's *Sketch Book* (1820) and Nathaniel Hawthorne's *Twice Told Tales* (1842). See Frank Myszor, *The Modern Short Story* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 10-11. Anecdotes and jokes may also be considered as possible origins of the short story due to their 'end-loaded' endings. See Myszor, p. 8.
[77] Shaw, p. 5.

century, the popularity of the even smaller, shorter novel lessened after the flourishing market of serialising fiction.[78]

In the Victorian era, the short story was largely a 'condensed novel', or a mini novel, where the writer's skill was to be seen in the ability of 'squeez[ing] the machinery of plot and character into the reduced frame of a few thousand words.'[79] But, from around mid nineteenth century onwards, this started to change. The short story became less merely a matter of 'shrinking' the novel into a shorter frame of writing; rather, this shortness was seen as in itself rich with meaning, significance, complexity, and, in Henry James's words, 'multiplicity': this fullness took place '*as a result of*, rather than in spite of, its brevity.'[80]

This combination between brevity and density, or what Henry James describes as 'pregnant brevity',[81] started to impress the early modernists around the beginning of the twentieth century: 'the art of saying less but meaning more […] became the basis of modernist experimentation in the short story form.'[82] The late nineteenth-century reader was starting to incline to the short fiction due to the effects of the 'age of haste' that was accompanying the emergence of modernism, along with the rise of industry and scientific experimentation, and the rapid growth of 'modern' life demands, all of which led to a growing market for shorter, less time-consuming fiction. This was the period of 'the emergence of a new reading public with no great time to spare'.[83] For these reasons the short story has been described by Adrian Hunter as being ''up to speed' with the

[78] Shaw, p. 5.
[79] Hunter, p. 1.
[80] Hunter, pp. 1-2.
[81] Quoted in Shaw, p. 64.
[82] Hunter, p. 2.
[83] Alfred C. Ward, *Aspects of the Modern Short Story: English and American* (London: University of London Press, 1924), p. 103.

realities of modern life.'[84] This also is what drove Elizabeth Bowen to describe the short story as the 'child of the century'.[85] H. E. Bates stresses the importance of the short story in an age where people are 'talking faster, moving faster, and apparently thinking faster.'[86] William Rathbone Greg, in *Literary and Social Judgements* (1877), suggests that the pace of life increased shockingly in the second half of the nineteenth century: 'the most salient characteristic of life in this latter portion of the 19th century is its SPEED.'[87] Greg continues to describe this period of life as 'a life of *haste* […] a life filled so full'.[88] The brevity of the short story, in general, responded to, as much as it depicted, the age in which it thrived; 'it is the literary form readily adaptable to the experiences of modernity and the accelerated pace of life 'that travels so fast'.[89] In other words, the short story became successful at conveying condensed actions and intense signification in a relatively short frame.[90]

The density and concentration of the short story as a genre allows a short story to be read in a relatively short time. L. P. Hartley describes this idea best when he says that readers would ''devour [the short stories] singly on a news [s]heet',[91] but would be disinclined to read them in collection.'[92] Hartley's explanation for this is that ''starting and stopping' exhausts the reader's attention just as starting and stopping uses up the petrol in a car.'[93] This calls to mind

[84] Hunter, p. 3.
[85] Quoted in Hunter, p. 3.
[86] Quoted in Hunter, p. 3.
[87] Quoted in Walter E. Houghton, *The Victorian Frame of Mind* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957), p. 7.
[88] Quoted in Houghton, p. 7.
[89] Hunter, p. 3.
[90] See Dominic Head, *The Modernist Short Story: A Study in Theory and Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 4. See also Houghton, p. 7.
[91] Quoted in Head, p. 1.
[92] Head, p. 1.
[93] Quoted in Head, p. 1.

Edgar Allan Poe's idea about the short story being read in one sitting and thus saving the reader the exhaustion that Hartley describes.[94] A short story must be read 'without interruption', Poe suggested. It is interesting to note here that Shahrazad made use of what Poe called 'unity of impression' long before Poe even thought of it. Shahrazad tries to tame Shahrayar by interrupting, every night, his arousing line of emotions, and detaching him abruptly from the atmosphere of the intensity of the short story. Shahrazad disrupts Shahrayar's level of concentration which results from her storytelling: Shahrayar is put in a mood in which he goes through a route where he must face a high stage of emotions, suspense, and impression, or, in short, all that comes under the term 'totality' that a short story provides. Here, Shahrazad suspends this 'totality', every night, when Shahrayar reaches it; she, then, restarts over again.

Anthony Burgess, in a comment on Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes stories, describes an advantage of the short story, and what the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century reader wanted, when he considers 'the story doing a kind of novelistic job and doing it briefly.'[95] Therefore, the short story fits into the turn-of-century pressures and inflexibility of time, especially if the first sparks of modernism are taken into consideration.

Magazines and periodicals contributed to a great extent to the rise of the short story, which did not burgeon in England until the 1880s. Regardless of opposing opinions to the rise of such magazines, for instance, Q. D. Leavis's and Malcolm Elwin's, who view that the 'mass reading' press affected the relationship between authors and publishers and that it functioned in opposition

[94] Shaw, p. 9.
[95] Quoted in Head, p. 4.

to the high literature,[96] some of these magazines and periodicals, both high and popular, gave a considerable opportunity to the eminence and spread of the short fiction. More optimistic opinions, such as Cynthia White's, consider the bright side of this 'mass reading' press, simply because it boosted the 'national education' and it opened up opportunities for everyone to read.[97] Yet, an even more buoyant and supportive opinion to the periodical magazines was that of H. G. Wells's who acknowledges W. E. Henley's credit in reinforcing the short story as 'a prestigious literary form':[98]

> The Nineties was a good and stimulating period for a short story writer […] *The National Observer* was at the climax of its career of heroic insistence upon lyrical brevity and a vivid finish […] Then came the generous opportunities of *The Yellow Book,* and *The National Observer* died only to give birth to *The New Review* [...] No short story of the slightest distinction went for long unrecognised.[99]

As Clare Hanson argues, the 'literary' magazines and periodicals profited from the 1880s expansions, since they became more specialised, and thus, focused subjects started to be published in them. Therefore, some critics may find that there is 'association between literary innovation and specialised coterie magazines which persisted to this day'.[100] At their beginnings, these specialised magazines took two different directions. There were, on the one hand, *The Yellow Book* and *The Savoy*, which adopted topics of Symbolism and Decadence, and were edited by Henry Harland succeeded by Arthur Symons. In the other direction, there was *The National Observer* and *The New Review* edited by W. E. Henley; these magazines dealt with nationalist and imperialist issues. Harold

[96] Hanson, *Short Stories and Short Fictions*, pp. 10-11.
[97] Quoted in Hanson, *Short Stories and Short Fictions*, p. 11.
[98] Hanson, *Short Stories and Short Fictions*, p. 19.
[99] Quoted in Hanson, *Short Stories and Short Fictions*, p. 19.
[100] Hanson, *Short Stories and Short Fictions*, p. 11.

Orel, in *The Victorian Short Story: Development and Triumph of a Literary Genre* (1986), draws attention to one of the reasons behind the favouring of the short story at the end of century: 'there was a rise in the reception of the short story, where it became more appreciated [than in the Victorian era],[101] and highly paid in case of 'well-written short stories''.[102] Financial concerns contributed to the preference for short stories, since they were more frequently published than novels and paid more.

Robert Louis Stevenson made a positive contribution to, and received an equivalent benefit from, the world of serialised publication.[103] Serialising his fiction helped it circulate more easily, and the financial advantage was not little. Stevenson's *New Arabian Nights* first appeared as parts in the renowned *London* and *Cornhill Magazine* between 1877 and 1880. Oscar Wilde, also, wrote frequently in important nineteenth-century magazines and periodicals, such as the *Fortnightly Review*, *Blackwood's*, and *Nineteenth Century* magazine.[104] Joseph Conrad did not prefer publishing in magazines and periodicals in the first place,[105] and he had no preferences with regards to publication. However, he quite fitted into this publication climate. He wrote in *The Cornhill*, for example, for the financial benefit; and he published in the *New Review* for its prestige. He also had no disinclination to writing in the *Savoy*.[106]

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[101] See Harold Orel, *The Victorian Short Story: Development and Triumph of a Literary Genre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 2.
[102] Orel, p. 3.
[103] See Barry Menikoff, 'New Arabian Nights: Stevenson's Experiment in Fiction', in *Nineteenth-Century Literature*, no. 3, vol. 45, (December, 1990), 339-362, (342), *JSTOR* <http://links.jstor.org> [accessed 02 March2008].
[104] See Richard Ellmann, *Oscar Wilde* (London: Penguin, 1988), p. 282.
[105] Gail Fraser, 'The Short Fiction', in *The Cambridge Companion to Joseph Conrad*, ed. by J. H. Stape (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 29.
[106] See Fraser, pp. 29-30, 32.

The remarkable rise of this market was, in turn, due to the marks that accompanied the modern age, such as the technologically advanced printers and invention of machine-made paper, all which paved the way for the short story to thrive. By 1891 some magazines stopped publishing serialised novels, but they started to publish a short story in each issue.[107] It might be said that the burgeoning of both the short story on the one hand, and magazines, journals, and periodicals on the other hand was reciprocal, because although the rise of this market is what sustained the short story, the short story, in turn, provided with material for these magazines and journals, because '[p]eriodical literature is a huge open mouth which has to be fed – a vessel of immense capacity which has to be filled',[108] to use Henry James's words.

Serialising stories, moreover, contributed to strengthening the connection between the author and the reader, and helped authors to understand the readers' taste and take it into consideration more easily.[109] It also encouraged the publication of works by less known writers and gave similar opportunity to the famous authors.[110] In the *fin-de-siècle* period of time, the popular short story rose and exceeded the artistic story.[111] However, 'the meticulously constructed short story', as Joyce Carol Oates describes, 'descends to us by way of the phenomenon of magazine publication, beginning in the nineteenth century, but has its ancestor the oral tale'.[112] This, again, brings closer *The Arabian Nights* and the short story with regards to its reception both as high as well as popular

[107] See Hunter, pp. 6-7, 46.
[108] Quoted in Hunter, p. 7.
[109] See Myszor, pp. 22-23.
[110] See Myszor, p. 23.
[111] See Myszor, pp. 26-27.
[112] Oates, p. 48.

literature. This point will be more clarified in the main chapters as I study each writer separately.

The short story, argues Valerie Shaw in *The Short Story: A Critical Introduction* (1983),

> like any other literary form, varies according to the period in which it is being written, but it has a unique ability to preserve and at any time recall its mixed origins in fable, anecdote, fairy-story and numerous other forms. Because individual short stories keep revealing affinities with their forerunners, it is almost impossible to stabilise a definition of the genre; no summary phrase can encapsulate the diversity of possible story types, lengths, and approaches.[113]

As I have mentioned, *The Arabian Nights*, like the modern short story, does not belong to a precise 'genre'. As a 'forerunner' of the short story, it is possible to relate the 'fable, anecdote,' and 'fairy-story', which Shaw mentions, to the same genres found in *The Arabian Nights*. This relation or comparison can be understood in terms of the oral form. Most of the short story forms have their origins in oral stories, which constitute 'the earliest form of story – and continue to find their way into the modern written form.'[114] This can be considered as one of the points that bring together *The Arabian Nights* and the short story of the late nineteenth century, and very early twentieth century. That is, the presence of a storyteller, who conveys the story with more excitement and 'marvels'.[115]

David Pinault, in *Story-Telling Techniques in the Arabian Nights* (1992), states that '*Alf Laylah* were originally oral evening-entertainments and were meant to be recited and listened to.'[116] However, as Pinault continues, *The*

[113] Shaw, p. 20.
[114] Myszor, p. 8.
[115] See Frank O'Connor, *The Lonely Voice: A Study of the Short Story* (New Jersey: Melville House Publishing, 2004), p. 28.
[116] Pinault, p. 13.

Arabian Nights 'cannot be described only as a collection of transcribed oral folktales; for it survives as the crafted composition of authors who used various forms of written literary Arabic to capture an oral narrative tradition.'[117] The art of telling is what gives the short story its importance when the interaction between the teller and the listener is taken into consideration. Storytelling provides sincerity and credibility; '[i]t is by telling stories and by hearing stories told', Robert L. Mack proposes, that 'the *Nights* seems to say, that we come to know our world, each other, and – ultimately – our own selves.'[118] Storytelling should be considered as important as an art in itself: 'the art of storytelling'.[119] This art of storytelling has been translated in the short story into the 'frame narrative'. The use of the framing narrative is more associated with the short story than it is with other forms of fiction, the novel for instance.[120] In addition to the fact that many short stories employed a framing device, most of them, like *The Arabian Nights*, keep the reader captivated and eager to know what happens next. Readers/listeners await the ending of *The Arabian Nights* in the same way the short-story reader/listener does.[121] Hence, there is also a sense of mystery that bonds *The Arabian Nights* and the short story. In almost each story of *The Arabian Nights* there is a mystery; and it is this notion of mystery linked by a more mystifying narrative about puzzling events that gives those tales their differentiating characteristics. In general, many short story writers in the late nineteenth century, such as Guy de Maupassant, Robert Louis Stevenson, Joseph Conrad, and Rudyard Kipling, resorted to the frame narrative of the original oral

[117] Pinault, p. 15.
[118] Mack, p. ix.
[119] Here I am using the title of Mia Gerhardt's book *The Art of Story-Telling* (1963).
[120] Myszor, p. 63.
[121] See Head, p. 13.

tale to attract their readers, as they believed in the effect of this style of narration on 'captivating' the reader.[122] In other words, the framing device was one of the most important techniques of the oral tale, especially folk tales which were transmitted through generations by telling. This device was performed as introducing a narrator who tells a story to a group of listeners, or simply, a storyteller and a listener. It, too, provided the story with more credibility.[123] However, the writers examined in this thesis seem to use *The Arabian Nights* not only by applying the frame narrative, but also by a variety of other techniques and devices which I shall consider in depth in the following chapters.

It requires more than a thesis to include all the writers in the West who have employed *The Arabian Nights* in their writings, but it is worth looking at the marks this work has left on those writers. Although the examples are numerous, I would like to select some by referring to the writers who have signalled a change in British literature and the emergent short story form, from the Victorian era until our present day.

In addition to his major novels, such as *A Christmas Carol* (1843), *David Copperfield* (1850), *Hard Times* (1854), *Great Expectations* (1861), and *Our Mutual Friend* (1865),[124] the relationship between Charles Dickens's short fiction and *The Arabian Nights* is manifest. In 'A Christmas Tree' (1850), the spirit of *The Arabian Nights* dominates a considerable part of the narrative:

[122] See Myszor, p. 62.
[123] See Myszor, p. 62.
[124] See *The Arabian Nights in English Literature: Studies in the Reception of the Thousand and One Nights into British Culture* (1988) in which the introductory chapter gives an account of Dickens in relation to *The Arabian Nights*; and the chapter called 'Dickens in Wonderland' is a whole chapter by Michael Slater, which is devoted to examine Dickens's fiction in relation to *The Arabian Nights*. See also Robert Irwin's *The Arabian Nights: A Companion* (2004).

> Hush! Again in a forest, and somebody up in a tree – not Robin Hood, not Valentine, not the yellow Dwarf […] but an Eastern King with a glittering scimitar and turban. By Allah! two Eastern Kings, for I see another, looking over his shoulder! Down upon the grass, at the tree's foot, lies the full length of a coal-black Giant, stretched asleep, with his head in a lady's lap; and near them is a glass box, fastened with four locks of shining steel, in which he keeps the lady prisoner when he is awake. I see the four keys at his girdle now. The lady makes signs to the two kings in the tree, who softly descend. It is the setting-in of the bright Arabian Nights.[125]

Dickens continues, in the following few paragraphs of the essay, to mention the major characteristics of *The Arabian Nights*, such as the wonderful lamp, the magic rings and talismans, Ali Baba, the treasure, the Valley of Diamonds, the genies. He also mentions places like Damascus and Bussorah, and goes on to speak about the ghouls, the Ebony Horse and the flying horse. He finishes his paragraphs in which he speaks about *The Arabian Nights* by referring to Shahrazad, her sister Dunyazad, and 'the gracious Sultan' who 'goes out, giving no order for the execution' where everybody 'breathe[s] again.'[126] Dickens seems to have captured in detail *The Arabian Nights* and this shows how deep a touch this work left on Dickens's imagination.

In 'Dickens in Wonderland', Michael Slater suggests that 'A Child's Dream of a Star' (1850), exemplifies how *The Arabian Nights* had a positive effect on Dickens because it 'was strongly associated in his mind with the happiness and innocence (of the moral complexities of life) of that period'.[127] This effect, Slater argues, had a strong connection with Dickens's religious beliefs.

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[125] Charles Dickens, 'A Christmas Tree', <http://www.classicreader.com/book/876/1/>, [accessed 03 November 2009] (para 10 of 29).
[126] Dickens, 'A Christmas Tree', (para. 13 of 29).
[127] Michael Slater, 'Dickens in Wonderland', in *The Arabian Nights in English Literature: Studies in the Reception of the Thousand and One Nights into British Culture*, ed. by Peter Caracciolo (London: The Macmillan Press, 1988), p. 133.

From religion to science, *The Arabian Nights* was once technologically inspiring. Although the wonders of *The Arabian Nights* are 'technologically naïve', to use Irwin's terms, they might have paved the way for the early beginnings of the science fiction of today.[128] Some of the best examples can be found in the flying horse, the magic carpet, or the huge bird who carries Sindbad to the Valley of Diamonds, which Irwin describes as 'fantasies about the possibility of human flight' and which must have had 'a role in the imaginative prehistory of aviation.'[129] H. G. Wells's *The Time Machine* (1895) has been linked to the type of marvellous depiction discussed in Tzvetan Todorov's *The Fantastic* (1975), and which he calls 'the instrumental marvellous'.[130] In other words, H. G. Wells's *The Time Machine* is one of the stories in which the fantastic is not presented in what Todorov refers to as the 'trappings' of the fantastic fiction which signifies the literal elements of fantastic fiction, such as, ghosts, witches, jinn, deserted or haunted castles, or magic objects. But, the fantastic is presented through its 'deep structure'.[131] Todorov views that ambiguity is an essential element in fantastic stories and should not be resolved, because in the case of being resolved it will lead to two directions: the fantastic tale, as a result, will either be 'uncanny' or 'marvellous'. The laws of nature in the fantastic tale should be broken. If they do not become broken at the end, then the tale is uncanny, but, if they do get broken, then it is marvellous.[132] What Todorov means by the laws of nature not being broken is that the reader

[128] Irwin, p. 207.
[129] Irwin, p. 207.
[130] See Robert G. Hampson, 'The Genie out of the Bottle: Conrad, Wells and Joyce', in *The Arabian Nights in English Literature: Studies in the Reception of the Thousand and One Nights into British Culture*, ed. by Peter Caracciolo (London: The Macmillan Press, 1988), p. 221. See also, Todorov, *The Fantastic*, p. 56.
[131] Irwin, p. 227.
[132] Irwin, p. 227.

discovers at the end of the story that there has not been actual magic or supernatural elements: there may only be human tricks in it. Whereas, if the laws of nature are being broken, then it means that the tale contains the magic element. He views that most of *The Arabian Nights*' fantastic stories end up as marvellous,[133] because there is actual magic or supernatural actions, such as bewitched animals turning to human beings, human beings travelling underwater, and horses flying, such as the Ebony Horse, for example.[134]

The marvellous of *The Arabian Nights*, as Todorov sees it, is divided into three categories: the hyperbole, the exotic, and the instrumental. The 'instrumental marvellous' is exemplified by the magic 'flying' carpet, which is most famous in Alaa Addin's story. Robert G. Hampson interprets Wells's *The Time Machine* as a story that includes the elements of Todorov's 'instrumental marvellous'.[135] Thus, the time machine moves us from a time to another, introducing us to radically different atmospheres, cultures, and creatures, just as the flying carpet or the flying horse transfers us from a place to another, and similarly showing us whole different worlds.

Moreover, comparisons can be made between *The Time Machine* and *The Arabian Nights* in employing the idea of King Solomon's imprisonment of the genies in the bottles. Wells mentions:

> it lived all day in this big airy shed, with him and Holroyd to wait upon it; not prisoned up and slaving to drive a ship as the other engines he knew – mere captive devils of the British Solomon – had been.[136]

[133] Irwin, p. 227.
[134] Irwin, p. 227.
[135] Hampson, p. 221.
[136] Quoted in Hampson, p. 221.

Many stories have been told about King Solomon's sealed bottles in which he imprisons genies; and one of the most famous stories in *The Arabian Nights* is 'The Fisherman and the Genie'.[137] In Wells's *The Sleeper Awakes* (1898), furthermore, not only are there obvious similarities with the title of *The Arabian Nights*' story 'The Sleeper Awakened', or in some translations, 'The Awakened Sleeper', but also we see many similarities in content.[138] 'Aepyornis Island' (1895) has been linked to 'The Story of Sindbad's Second Voyage'.[139] *The History of Mr Polly* (1910) also includes mentions of *The Arabian Nights*,[140] as does *The Research Magnificent* (1915), which refers to 'the nature of an Open Sesame […] which would suddenly roll open for mankind the magic cave of the universe, that precious cave at the heart of all things in which one must believe.'[141]

This cave that becomes universal is echoed in James Joyce's writing across cultures: 'Joyce's references to *The Arabian Nights* are transnational topoi, from the carnival in *Dubliners*, to *Ulysses* as the European book of the day, to the suggestion that *Finnegans Wake*, modelled on the Egyptian Book of the Dead, is the global book of the night.'[142] Joyce is said to have owned a copy of Burton's translation of *The Arabian Nights*.[143] Robert Irwin suggests that behind the obvious similarity in structure and certain details between *Ulysses* (1922) and Homer's *Odyssey*, there lies another basis of comparison with *The Arabian*

[137] This story is discussed in detail in Chapter Two 'Shahrazad in Fairyland: Oscar Wilde and *The Arabian Nights*' and Chapter Three ''The Old Man of the Sea': Joseph Conrad and *The Arabian Nights*.
[138] See Hampson, p. 224.
[139] Hampson, p. 222.
[140] Hampson, p. 223.
[141] Quoted in Hampson, p. 225.
[142] Srinivas Aravamudan, 'Adventure Chronotope and Oriental Xenotrope', in *The Arabian Nights in Historical Context between East and West*, ed. by Saree Makdisi and Felicity Nussbaum (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 260.
[143] See Irwin, p. 278.

Nights. Irwin goes on to suggest that *Ulysses* contains references to the adventures of Sindbad.[144] The work also alludes to the wanderings of Haroun Al-Rashid. In short, Stephen Dedalus is twinned with Sindbad, and Leopold Bloom with Haroun Al-Rashid.[145] In fact, Joyce explicitly alludes to *The Arabian Nights* in *Ulysses* when one of his characters says: 'Open hallway. Street of harlots. Remember. Haroun al-Raschid'.[146] Later, Joyce refers to Sindbad the Sailor after the journey of one of his characters is done:

> He rests. He has travelled.
> With?
> Sinbad the Sailor and Tinbad the Tailor and Jinbad the Jailer and Whinbad the Whaler and Ninbad the Nailer […].[147]

The Arabian Nights here playfully signifies adventure, travel experiences, and discoveries of new worlds.[148] In his later work we see Shahrazad, as well as her sister Dunyazad in *Finnegans Wake* (1922).[149]

Joyce successfully incorporates two extremes: 'the national and imperial with its obverse, the Oriental and exotic, from a transcolonial vantage point that repeats the format of the national English novel with an indication of the outside that it elicits but also suspends and withholds.'[150] Through his short story 'Araby' in *Dubliners*, Joyce portrays the romantic Orient, the Orient that cannot be reached because it is other to the colonial background. The boy leaves his

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[144] Irwin, p. 278.
[145] Irwin, p. 279.
[146] Quoted in Hampson, p. 231.
[147] James Joyce, *Ulysses* ([n.p.]: The Floating Press, 1922), p. 622. E-book, retrieved at <http://reader.eblib.com> through <http://sparky.ncl.ac.uk> [accessed 10 April 2010].
[148] See Aravamudan, pp. 260-61.
[149] For a detailed study of the presence of *The Arabian Nights* in Joyce's works, see Robert G. Hampson, 'The Genie out of the Bottle: Conrad, Wells and Joyce', in *The Arabian Nights in English Literature: Studies in the Reception of the Thousand and One Nights into British Culture*, ed. by Peter Caracciolo (London: The Macmillan Press, 1988), p. 221.
[150] Aravamudan, pp. 258-59.

house to see the bazaar where he will eagerly meet his beloved, but he arrives late when the bazaar is closing, and nothing of the expected joy and thrill is fulfilled. This has been interpreted with reference to Joyce's perspective on colonialism; in other words, this incomplete fulfilment of delight is due to 'the Irish colonial context, one that is neither assimilable to pure Englishness or an alternative Oriental sensibility that is also wholly other to it.'[151] This brings to mind the fact that Stevenson, Wilde, and Conrad might similarly be said to occupy a peripheral, 'postcolonial' relationship to England and Englishness.[152]

The Arabian Nights continues to be present in the twentieth-century and contemporary British literature, as well as in World literature in general. For example, in 'The Day They Burned the Books' (1968), Jean Rhys mentions *The Arabian Nights* as one of the books collected by Mr Sawyer, and it is this particular book that the narrator wants to borrow.[153]

It would be incomplete not to mention the contribution of Angela Carter, A. S. Byatt, and Marina Warner to today's literature by producing a feminist recreation of *The Arabian Nights* tales. Their structures vary between fairy tale elements, fantasy, magic realism, and folk narratives; and they tackle subject matters related to culture, modernism, and civilisation.[154]

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[151] Aravamudan, p. 260.
[152] See Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back*, 2nd edn (London: Routledge, 2002), pp. 9, 23, 31-32.
[153] Jean Rhys, 'The Day They Burned the Books', in *The Collected Short Stories* (New York: Norton, 1987), p. 152. See also, Elaine Savory, *The Cambridge Companion to Jean Rhys* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 12-13.
[154] On Angela Carter see Irwin, p. 190. On A. S. Byatt, see Kathleen Williams Renk, 'Myopic feminist individualism in A. S. Byatt's 'The Djinn in the Nightingale's Eye'' (1995). On Marina Warner see 'Present Enchantments: Magic after the Arabian Nights', in her lecture at BIRTHA, Bristol, October 2009; source, <http://www.marinawarner.com>, [accessed 30 January 2010].

Stevenson, Wilde, and Conrad

How do Robert Louis Stevenson, Oscar Wilde, and Joseph Conrad contribute to this much longer literary response to *The Arabian Nights* and how does it contribute to their literary reception? I have chosen to write about Stevenson, Wilde, and Conrad in particular, because together they represent a particularly concentrated response to *The Arabian Nights* at the turn of the century, when the modern short story in Britain was in its infancy. These three writers peaked in the *fin de siècle*, especially in terms of their production of short fiction. Despite the fact that two of them died before witnessing the birth of the twentieth century, they did contribute to the early sparks of modernism. The writing experience of the three of them stretched beyond their local geography. In other words, Stevenson, Wilde, and Conrad, spent most of their life away from their birth places and homelands; they moved to different places and integrated with different cultures.

Due to ill health at an early age, Stevenson, born in Edinburgh, had to move to France; then he spent his time moving between Scotland, England, France, and America before he settled in the Pacific islands.[155] Wilde, was born in Ireland where he spent his childhood, but he moved to Oxford at a relatively early age; a move which he considered as a great landmark in his life. After Oxford he went to London and then to America. He also moved between Paris, London, and New York before his death in Paris.[156] Conrad was born in Polish Ukraine. He went with his exiled parents to Russia, and then moved to Austrian Poland. He travelled, during his school years, to Switzerland and Italy. He then

[155] See Robert Louis Stevenson, *South Sea Tales* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. xli-xlii.
[156] For the life of Oscar Wilde, see Sheridan Morley, *Oscar Wilde* (1976).

moved to Marseilles where his 'sea-life' started. After that he moved to England, where he produced 'Heart of Darkness' and the best of his other 'short stories'.[157]

At the same time, Stevenson, Wilde, and Conrad, have been typically framed in a European context.[158] Their fiction has been traced back to clear and exact European origins, an insertion that leaves *The Arabian Nights* out of the frame. In general, as I will discuss in detail in the following chapters, it has been argued that these three writers followed the line of certain European writers as diverse as Guy de Maupassant, James Fenimore Cooper, Gustave Flaubert, Honoré de Balzac, Victor Hugo, Hans Christian Andersen, Charles Dickens, Ivan Turgenev, Rudyard Kipling, Henry James, Robert Cunninghame Graham, and H. G. Wells. None of them was considered in a non-Western frame of writing. Stevenson's modernism, for example, was considered as merely European, with total disregard to the possibility of this modernism being a result of the encounter with the 'Other'.[159]

Barry Menikoff is one of the few critics to consider Stevenson as a precursor of modernism. He rereads Stevenson as a 'forerunner of the moderns' if not a modernist himself;[160] however, he describes Stevenson's writing as

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[157] See 'A Chronology of Joseph Conrad's Life', in *Heart of Darkness and Other Tales* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. xxxviii-xli.

[158] See Barry Menikoff, 'New Arabian Nights: Stevenson's Experiment in Fiction', in *Nineteenth-Century Literature*, no. 3, vol. 45, (December, 1990), 339-362, *JSTOR* <http://links.jstor.org> [accessed 02 March 2008]; Arthur Ransome, *Oscar Wilde: A Critical Study* (London: Methuen, 1913), pp. 91-95; Jerusha McCormack, 'Wilde's fiction(s)', in *The Cambridge Companion to Oscar Wilde*, ed. by Peter Raby (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 103-07; Cedric Watts, 'Heart of Darkness', in *The Cambridge Companion to Joseph Conrad*, ed. by J. H. Stape, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 46; and *The Cambridge Companion to Joseph Conrad*, ed. by J. H. Stape (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 10, 17, 27, 34, 36, 40.

[159] Simon Gikandi, *Writing in Limbo: Modernism and Caribbean Literature* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1992), p. 2.

[160] Menikoff, p. 340.

'shifting between historical and contemporary subjects,' as well as 'incorporat[ing] in both elements of fantasy, folklore, and the supernatural.'[161] He claims that Stevenson, along with Maupassant and James, form the first line of modernism, especially in their geographical conjunction of Edinburgh, London, Paris, and New York. Moreover, he views that '[t]hey held in common for conveying truth and/or expressing their vision of reality.' He also adds that 'all three were unanimous in the belief that through intense discipline and practice they could teach themselves to develop both a style and a form that would convey their visions.'[162] Menikoff, as some other critics, such as Simon During, George Lamming, and Edouard Glissant, propose that Modernism is Western-oriented and Euro-centred. Nevertheless, there are certain points that these critics seem to have missed, and which I will be highlighting in Chapter One.

In Wilde's case, his short stories, especially the fairy tales, are traced back by many critics, such as Christopher S. Nassaar, Peter Raby, Arthur Ransome, and Jerusha McCormack, to clear and specific origins. Ransome, for instance, states, in *Oscar Wilde: A Critical Study* (1913), that Wilde's fairy tales remind him of those of Hans Andersen's and he makes several links between the works of the two writers.[163] Similar is the opinion of Nassaar in 'Andersen's "The Shadow" and Wilde's "The Fisherman and His Soul": A Case of Influence' (1995). However, it is worth taking into consideration the intertextual connection between Wilde's stories and the exotic and Eastern atmosphere of *The Arabian Nights*.

[161] Menikoff, p. 341.
[162] Menikoff, p. 340.
[163] See Arthur Ransome, *Oscar Wilde: A Critical Study* (London: Methuen, 1913), pp. 91-95.

A similar case is made for Conrad, as he was, it has been argued, inspired by the European frame of writing: again, any possibility of a relationship between Conrad's texts and *The Arabian Nights* has been disregarded. Cedric Watts views the tale-within-the-tale technique that is associated with Conrad as becoming more known and more popular at around the turn of the century. He goes on to suggest that this technique was used by European writers, such as Maupassant, Turgenev, Kipling, James, Cunninghame Graham, and Wells.[164] By using the multi-layered narrative technique, Conrad was considered as drawing on the above mentioned European writers, in addition to Fenimore Cooper, Balzac, Hugo, and Dickens. More generally, critics have noted the stylistic influence of Turgenev, Maupassant, and Flaubert on the works of Conrad. *The Cambridge Companion to Joseph Conrad* (1996), for example, includes essays by Gail Fraser, Jakob Lothe, and Kenneth Graham in which this view is discussed. Fraser, for example, states that Conrad followed some techniques of Maupassant, Flaubert, and Turgenev,[165] and continues to argue that stories like 'Amy Foster' (1901), 'Typhoon' (1902), and 'The Secret Sharer' (1909), are a continuation of Maupassant, Flaubert, and other European writers' work, especially in challenging the 'consistently reliable story-teller',[166] by employing the unreliable narrator. Cedric Watts, in *Conrad's 'Heart of Darkness': A Critical and Contextual Discussion* (1977), considers the multi-layered narrative as originating in a European frame of writing, such as, *The Canterbury Tales*, *The Decameron*, *The Odyssey*, and *The Iliad*, ignoring any reference to *The*

[164] Cedric Watts, 'Heart of Darkness', in *The Cambridge Companion to Joseph Conrad*, ed. by J. H. Stape (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 46.
[165] Fraser, p. 27, p. 34.
[166] Fraser, p. 36.

Arabian Nights as a possible departure.[167] He relates the increased use of the tale-within-a-tale technique in the last decades of the nineteenth century to the rise of the short story and its success as appearing in the periodicals and magazines, as well as to the growing number of travellers and traders, during the turn of the century, who had many 'tales to tell'.[168] Watts, moreover, suggests that Charlie Marlow is indebted to Christopher Marlowe, as Kurtz, in 'Heart of Darkness', may appear like the modern Faust, because he sells his soul for 'power and gratification'.[169] In line with Watts, and the critics above, Jakob Lothe declares: 'formally as well as thematically [Conrad] received significant impulses from writers such as Flaubert, Maupassant, and Dickens.' [170] Concurrent with Lothe's observation is Kenneth Graham's viewpoint. Graham generally refers to all the above mentioned writers as a source of influence to Conrad, adding to them Balzac and Fenimore Cooper. I will be arguing, however, that in addition to the opinions of these critics, it is not misguided to study Conrad in the light of *The Arabian Nights*, as there are certain areas in his short stories that still seem dark in this regards, and a light should be shed on them.

The European frame of writing was not the only aspect that has joined these three writers. All three lived in the *fin de siècle*, and this period was reflected in their work. Interestingly, this reflection seems, in itself, to be bringing *The Arabian Nights* into the spotlight again. Bernard Bergonzi, in an article called 'Late Victorian to Modernist: 1880-1930', in *An Outline of English Literature* (1998), writes:

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[167] See Cedric Watts, in *Conrad's 'Heart of Darkness': A Critical and Contextual Discussion* (Milano: Mursia International, 1977), p. 22. See also Hampson, p. 218.
[168] Hampson, p. 218.
[169] Watts, 'Heart of Darkness', pp. 47-48.
[170] Jakob Lothe, 'Conradian Narrative', in *The Cambridge Companion to Joseph Conrad*, ed. by J. H. Stape (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 163.

> In fiction the *fin de siècle* mood of withdrawal from everyday reality and the pursuit of a higher world of myth and art and imagination led to a taste for fictional romances, evident, for instance, in the short stories of Wilde and Yeats. Robert Louis Stevenson (1850-94) made a cogent defence of fictional romance as a superior mode to the realistic novel that tried to capture 'life' itself: 'Life is monstrous, infinite, illogical, abrupt and poignant; a work of art, in comparison, is neat, finite, self-contained, rational, flowing and emasculate'.[171]

This brings us back to the point I discussed earlier on in this chapter, that at the end of the nineteenth century, there was a tendency towards fiction which was anything but real. In other words, there was an escape to the fantastic, the imaginative, and, in turn, the non-Western.

Stevenson in many ways embodies this tendency. *The Arabian Nights* to him was 'more generally loved than Shakespeare,'[172] and he expresses how it 'captivates in childhood, and still delights in age.'[173] To Stevenson and to his defending critics, *The Arabian Nights* supplies the reader, even the modern reader, with the temptation of romance that cannot be found in modern fiction; because the world 'will soon be quite weary of "analysis," however scientific; but of good stories it will never be tired, and the treasure of good stories is the *Arabian Nights*.'[174] Stevenson supports this opinion in terms of the value he placed on *The Arabian Nights*' purity, simplicity, and particularly romance which cannot be provided by modern fiction.[175] It seems that to Stevenson, *The Arabian Nights* is a work that liberates from the increasing burdens of the growing complications of modern life. He wrote:

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[171] Quoted in Bergonzi, p. 356.
[172] Quoted in Ali, p. 85.
[173] Robert Louis Stevenson, 'A Gossip on Romance', in *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde and Other Tales* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 144.
[174] See Ali, p. 85.
[175] See Ali, p. 85.

> When I suffer in mind, stories are my refuge; I take them like opium; and I consider one who writes them as a sort of doctor of the mind. And frankly […] it is not Shakespeare we take to, when we are in a hot corner; nor, certainly, George Eliot – no, nor even Balzac. It is Charles Reade, or old Dumas, or the Arabian Nights, or the best of Walter Scott; it is stories we want, not the high poetic function which represents the world […] We want incident, interest, action: to the devil with your philosophy. When we are well again, and have an easy mind, we shall pursue your important work; but what we want now is a drug.[176]

Stevenson refers here to *The Arabian Nights*, alongside various works of European literature as offering a refuge and relaxant, like a drug.

Stevenson, Wilde, and Conrad were among 'the key writers of the turn of century',[177] as Andrew Sanders describes them in *The Short Oxford History of English Literature* (1994). They wrote their most memorable short stories in the closing years of the nineteenth century, when both the short story, as well as *The Arabian Nights*, were growing in influence. However, despite the numerous short stories Stevenson, Wilde, and Conrad wrote, they were least considered as short story writers.[178] They were most famous for their novels, or in the case of Wilde, for his plays. As I mentioned earlier, they all wrote for different magazines that played a major role in the flourishing of the short story, for example, *London*, *Cornhill Magazine*, the *Savoy*, *Blackwood's*, *Fortnightly Review*, and *Nineteenth Century*. I will discuss the relationship between fiction serialisation and my three writers in detail in the main chapters.

Together these three writers reflected the *fin de siècle* and the dawning of modernism, each in his own way. Stevenson excelled in compacting and

[176] Robert Louis Stevenson, *Letters*, 4 vols, ed. by Sidney Colvin (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1911), I, 322.
[177] Andrew Sanders, *The Short Oxford History of English Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 468.
[178] Myszor, p. 19. See also, Peter Widdowson, *English Literature and its Contexts: 1500-2000* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p. 109.

condensing his short stories in order to fit the modern age and satisfy its readers. This 'compression' is what Frank Swinnerton thought of as what makes a short story, good.[179] Wilde shone in fairy tales: the fantasy that portrayed what Clare Hanson described earlier as the 'imaginative and the fantastic which could not be received into the literature of everyday life'.[180] The same may be argued with regards to Conrad's short stories, as he wrote about the East and focused on the exotic in his works. It is the contention of this thesis that the flourishing of these three writers in the same period in which the short story and *The Arabian Nights* also flourished demands further comparative exploration.

Stevenson's response to *The Arabian Nights* was rather formal. He tackled the modern issues of his age using the major techniques of form found in *The Arabian Nights*. Most apparently, he used the multi-layered narrative technique, and the very interesting 'Arabian author', who is the inner narrator, and who stands as a link between the stories, representing the role of Shahrazad in introducing and concluding each story of the work. However, instead of handing the narration over to the frame narrator at the end of the work, as is the case conventionally, the frame narrator snatches the narrative from the inner narrator. In *New Arabian Nights* and its sequel, his main characters are Prince Florizel, who is clearly the modern Haroun Al-Rashid, as I will be arguing in detail in Chapter One, and Colonel Geraldine, who represents Haroun Al-Rashid's vizier, Ja'afar Al-Barmaki. In 'The Bottle Imp', however, the substance of *The Arabian Nights* is more present than the form due to the employment of a

[179] Frank Swinnerton, *R. L. Stevenson: A Critical Study* (London: Martin Secker, 1924), pp. 105-06.
[180] Hanson, *Short Stories and Short Fictions*, p. 34.

magic bottle which contains a supernatural creature. Nevertheless, this bottle is transferred from a character to another in the form of story within a story.

Wilde's reception of *The Arabian Nights*, as I will examine in Chapter Two, differs from that of Stevenson's and Conrad's. He is more responsive to the fairy tale element of the stories. Although he uses a number of *The Arabian Nights*' formal techniques, the fairy tale and supernatural atmosphere of the work is more dominant in Wilde's short stories. In addition to studying the content of Wilde's fairy tales, I will lay special focus on *The Arabian Nights*' techniques he seems to be employing, such as the frame narrative, the repetition method, the instructive insertion, stock description, and the speaking animals or inanimate objects.

I will also be discussing the themes and methods of *The Arabian Nights* which Conrad seems to apply in the short stories that I am including in this study. These techniques include dramatic visualisation, chronological distortion, delayed decoding, the 'tick-tock' stoppages, the *leitsatz*, the hypnotic mode of narration, and language. Viewed collectively, I will argue, *The Arabian Nights* invites a reconsideration of both a particular and otherwise isolated set of short stories by specific writers, and more generally the emergence of the modern short story in Britain at the turn of the century.

Chapter One, ''Modern in his Traditionalism': Robert Louis Stevenson and *The Arabian Nights*', explores the neglected side of Stevenson's modernity. In this chapter there is an attempt to remove the borders enclosing Stevenson in a European frame of writing, and shed the light on the potential connotations that position him within an atmosphere that results from his encounter with the 'Other' non-European, or non-Western, generally speaking. Here I argue that

Stevenson's conventionality is modern: he resorts to traditional forms, and at the same time, to the non-Western in order to produce a particular response to modernity. I argue Stevenson uses *The Arabian Nights* to portray his modern traditionalism, and I discuss his use of modernist themes such as the metropolis, time, the detective figure, dynamite, and, interestingly, some sparks of modernist techniques in writing, in a traditional Arabian-Night frame narrative.

In Chapter Two, 'Shahrazad in Fairyland: Oscar Wilde and *The Arabian Nights*', the discussion will revolve around reframing Wilde's short stories, contrary to all criticism, in an Eastern context. However, this chapter does not attempt to dispute the criticism that locates Wilde's work in definite European sources; it endeavours, rather, to shed light on the critical neglect that eliminates any possibility of *The Arabian Nights* as a source of origin. I focus here on Wilde's fairy tales and a number of other short stories that are studied in terms of the fantastic and supernatural subject matters, as well as *The Arabian Nights*' techniques employed to introduce these themes.

Chapter Three, ''The Old Man of the Sea': Joseph Conrad and *The Arabian Nights*', similarly attempts to locate Conrad within an Arabian-Night background. I examine in detail his reception of *The Arabian Nights* and his use of a variety of its themes and methods in his short stories, which spotlight how his short stories are both fascinating as well as fascinated. Thus, I will be discussing the frame narrative which Conrad famously employs, but I will also move beyond the framing devices to shed light on the other methods that seem to be critically neglected, but which may form a link with *The Arabian Nights* that deserves to be noted.

‘Modern in his Traditionalism’: Stevenson and *The Arabian Nights*

> *There is one book … that captivates in childhood, and still delights in age – I mean the ‘Arabian Nights.’*
>
> Robert Louis Stevenson

> *The perpetual task of poetry is to make all things new. Not necessarily to make new things.*
>
> T. S. Eliot

Robert Louis Stevenson’s two-volumed *New Arabian Nights* (1882-1885) is manifestly a modern recreation of *The Arabian Nights*. However, *The Arabian Nights* is also a latent presence in Stevenson’s other works. In this chapter, I am going to discuss Stevenson’s employment of *The Arabian Nights* between 1877 and 1893. My primary focus will be upon *New Arabian Nights* (1882), *More New Arabian Nights: The Dynamiter* (1885), and ‘The Bottle Imp’ in *The Island Nights’ Entertainments* (1893). Many studies have been made on Stevenson’s fiction, but few have focused on his short fiction, especially on *New Arabian Nights* and *The Dynamiter*.[1] Moreover, all the studies that have appeared on his two *New Arabian Nights* books either try to show the similarities between these works and the original[2] *Arabian Nights*, or to identify traces of similarity

[1] Critical discussion of Stevenson’s *New Arabian Nights* and *More New Arabian Nights: The Dynamiter*, along with ‘The Bottle Imp’ is patchy, receiving significantly less serious attention by critics than Stevenson’s other fiction, especially his short fiction. An October 2008 search in *Literature Online* <http://lion.chadwyk.co.uk> showed that the results for criticism on *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* were 85, while the search for *New Arabian Nights* and *More New Arabian Nights* gave only 5 results.

[2] In listing the nineteenth- and early twentieth-century writers ‘whose works would be influenced by Galland’s *Nights*’, to use the author’s words, Robert L. Mack includes Robert Louis

between these works and other European writings, overlooking the reference to *The Arabian Nights*. This chapter offers a different vision. My study relates *New Arabian Nights* and *More New Arabian Nights* to the oriental *Arabian Nights*. However, this is not meant to merely highlight this relationship, but to show how these works introduce Stevenson as a forerunner of modernity and modernism.

I start my argument by describing Stevenson's reception of *The Arabian Nights*. I will then move on to introduce *New Arabian Nights*, *More New Arabian Nights*, and 'The Bottle Imp', and show how these works were considered and received at the time they were published and afterwards. I will discuss Stevenson's works in the light of the appearance of the short story and periodical fiction, which paralleled the increasing popularity of *The Arabian Nights* in Europe.[3] I will then discuss Stevenson's combination of modern content in a traditional form. In other words, I will examine his writing about new technology, urban transport, the hybrid city, the detective, time, and the encounter with difference, all in a conventionally framed and plotted story.

First though I want to offer a more general overview of the connections between *The Arabian Nights* and Stevenson's short fiction. The stories of *The Arabian Nights* left a noticeable effect on Stevenson who mentioned them in many of his works. For example, in 'Child's Play', he mentions 'The Story of Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves' when he imagines with his cousin that their treasures are buried inside their 'calves' feet jelly'; and this imagination

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Stevenson and suggests his reading of – and a possible use of – Galland's translation. See Robert L. Mack, in his introduction to *Arabian Nights*' *Entertainments* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. xviii. For the possible version Stevenson might have read, see note (30), in 'Introduction', p. 9.

[3] Valerie Shaw, *The Short Story: A Critical Introduction* (London: Longman, 1983), p. 32.

represented 'the most exciting moment [he] ever had over a meal'.[4] He also mentions the word 'enchantment' when he remembers the little boy who used to tell the story of a 'conflict between two Arabian nations.'[5] He commemorates *The Arabian Nights* as the prime example of romance:

> There is one book […] that captivates in childhood, and still delights in age – I mean the 'Arabian Nights' – where you shall look in vain for moral or intellectual interest. No human face or voice greets us among that wooden crowd of kings and genies, sorcerers and beggarmen. Adventure, on the most naked terms, furnishes forth the entertainment and is found enough.[6]

In this extract, the non-presence of 'moral or intellectual interest' is not a cause of embarrassment to Stevenson; he is rather concerned with the influence these stories have not only on children, but also on adults. By those words he is defying critics like Grant Allen who did not acknowledge the importance of 'Eastern tales' and 'Children's stories'. Allen writes in *Physiological Aesthetics* (1877): 'Depth, earnestness, tenderness, all our higher feelings, must be gratified by art, unless it wishes to sink to the level of Eastern tales or Children's stories.'[7] Stevenson brings to light the aspects of 'Eastern tales' and 'Children's stories' which some critics have failed to see, and which have had noticeable effects up until the literature of today.

To Stevenson, *The Arabian Nights* is 'more generally loved than Shakespeare;'[8] he expresses how it 'captivates in childhood, and still delights in

[4] Robert Louis Stevenson, 'Child's Play', in *Virginibus Puerisque and Other Papers*, 16th edn (London: Chatto & Windus, 1897), p. 238.
[5] Stevenson, 'Child's Play', p. 239.
[6] Stevenson, 'A Gossip on Romance', in *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde and Other Tales* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 144.
[7] Grant Allen, *Physiological Aesthetics* (London: H. S. King, 1877), pp. 276-77.
[8] Quoted in Muhsin Jassim Ali, *Scheherazade in England: A Study of Nineteenth-Century English Criticism of the Arabian Nights* (Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers; in association with Baghdad University Press, 1981), p. 85.

age.'[9] Stevenson views that *The Arabian Nights* represents purity, simplicity, and particularly romance which cannot be provided by modern fiction.[10] In other words, what Stevenson appreciated in old forms and did not seem to find in modern ones is what he describes as 'the primitive sort of fable', as well as 'a humanity, a tenderness of rough truths; so that at the end of the same story, in which vice or folly had met with its destined punishment, the fabulist might be able to assure his auditors, as we have often to assure tearful children on like occasions, that they may dry their eyes, for none of it was true.'[11]

Stevenson's *The Island Nights' Entertainment* (1893) is a collection of three stories in which he employs further elements of *The Arabian Nights*. These stories contain a combination of supernatural, moral, and intellectual allegories on the one hand, and a presentation of real problems of society of his age, on the other hand. In these stories, the plot is as important as the depiction of the manners of a variety of social groups under the shadow of empire at the end of the nineteenth century. For example, 'The Isle of Voices', 'The Beach of Falesa' and 'The Bottle Imp' are fables with supernatural elements, but they are full of facts and real problems that affected society at that time.

One of the key works that contributed to Stevenson's fame in Samoa is 'The Bottle Imp', mainly because it was the first literary work to be translated and published in Samoan language. It was published in the *London Missionary Society Magazine*.[12] Despite some critically conflicting opinions regarding the

[9] Robert Louis Stevenson, 'A Gossip on Romance', in *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde and Other Tales*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 144.
[10] See Ali, p. 85. See also, 'Introduction', p. 42.
[11] Quoted in Shaw, p. 33.
[12] See Julia Reid, *Robert Louis Stevenson, Science, and the Fin de Siècle* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), p. 150-51.

origins of 'The Bottle Imp', the traces of *The Arabian Nights* on this work cannot be ignored.

'The Bottle Imp' has been traced back to different European origins. The first assumed source is a play called *The Bottle Imp* performed in London in 1828 by the actor and stage manager Richard John Smith, who was described as the immediate inspiration of Stevenson's work.[13] It has also been claimed that Stevenson was inspired by a tale called *The Bottle Imp* which is included in a collection called *Popular Tales and Romances of the Northern Nations* (1823).[14] Moreover, it has been suggested that this story is a translation of a German tale called *Das Galgenmännlein*.[15]

According to Leonee Ormond, 'The Bottle Imp' is 'a darker version of the story of "Aladdin and the Wonderful Lamp", fused with "The Fisherman and the Jinni".'[16] The similarities between 'The Bottle Imp' and *The Arabian Nights* in general could be detected from the beginning of the story. A poor man, Keawe, wanders in the city and is amazed at all the wealth and luxury around him wondering about how happy and worry-free the inhabitants of the luxurious houses must be. Then he comes across a house that is 'all furnished and beautified like a toy; the steps of that house shone like silver, and the borders of the garden bloomed like garlands, and the windows were like diamonds'.[17] Suddenly, in a typical *Arabian Nights*' approach, an old man appears to him from the house, invites him to come in, and shows him the 'beautiful' house

[13] Joseph Warren Beach, 'The Sources of Stevenson's Bottle Imp', in *Modern Language Notes*, no. 1, vol. 25, (January 1910), 12-18 (12-13), *JSTOR* <http://www.jstor.org> [accessed 02 March 2008].
[14] Beach, p. 13.
[15] Beach, p. 13.
[16] Leonee Ormond, 'Cayenne and Cream Tarts: W. M. Thackeray and R. L. Stevenson', in *The Arabian Nights in English Literature: Studies in the Reception of The Thousand and One Nights into British Culture*, ed. by Peter Caracciolo (London: Macmillan Press, 1988), p. 193.
[17] Robert Louis Stevenson, *South Sea Tales* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 73.

from the inside. He also tells him that the secret behind this richness is an imp that lives in a bottle. The old man offers to sell the bottle, an offer at which Keawe rejoices. The old man tells him also the destructive side of buying it: the one who buys it must sell it, after their wish fulfilment, but if somebody dies before selling it they become ill-fated by burning in hell. The bottle must be sold or it will follow the person who last bought it until it is sold to another. Here a 'darker version' of Alaa Addin is clear: the genie in the magic lamp only obeys his current master who has possession of the lamp; however, in Stevenson's story, the demon is destructive. Keawe, tricked by the old man, buys the bottle, and surprisingly to him, is sent out of the house.

Like Leonee Ormond, David Pinault, in *Story-Telling Techniques in the Arabian Nights* (1992), regards Stevenson's 'The Bottle Imp' as similar to *The Arabian Nights* story, 'The Fisherman and the Genie'. In this story, a fisherman wants to make his everyday living; he goes daily to the sea and casts his net into the water several times with no success and plenty of frustration, but in the final attempt, the fisherman draws the net with something in it. He catches in his net a sealed bottle with the stamp of King Solomon on its lid. He rejoices because he considers this bottle as a treasure that will make him rich:

> He then shook it, and found it to be heavy, and said, I must open it, and see what is in it, and store it in my bag; and then I will sell the bottle in the copper-market.[18]

When the fisherman removes the lid a frightening demon comes out of it:

[18] Edward William Lane, *The Thousand and One Nights: Commonly called in England 'The Arabian Nights' Entertainment*, ed. by Edward Stanley Poole, 3 vols (London: Routledge, Warne, and Routledge, 1865) I, 70.

> So he took out a knife, and picked at the lead until he extracted it from the bottle. He then laid the bottle on the ground, and shook it, that its contents might pour out; but their[19] came forth from it nothing but smoke, which ascended towards the sky, and spread over the face of the earth; at which he wondered excessively. And after a little while, the smoke collected together, and was condensed, and then became agitated, and was converted into an 'Efreet, whose head was in the clouds, while his feet rested upon the ground: his head was like a dome: his hands were like winnowing forks; and his legs, like masts: his mouth resembled a cavern: his teeth were like stones; his nostrils, like trumpets; and his eyes, like lamps; and he had dishevelled and dust-coloured hair.[20]

And when the fisherman sees the demon, 'the muscles of his sides quivered, his teeth were locked together, his spittle dried up, and he saw not his way.'[21]

Similarly, the imp that is sealed in the bottle, in Stevenson's story, is of ugly and terrifying appearance. Keawe refers to this when he tells Lopaka that '[t]he imp may be very ugly to view; and if you once set eyes upon him you might be very undesirous of the bottle.'[22] Keawe also thinks to himself, 'A dreadful thing is in the bottle […] and dreadful is the imp'.[23] In both *The Arabian Nights* and 'The Bottle Imp' we find two frightening non-human creatures in two different bottles; both demons fulfil wishes for life-threatening returns. This makes the reader link between *The Arabian Nights* and 'The Bottle Imp', and consider the similarities between them.

In 'The Bottle Imp', Stevenson applies the style of *The Arabian Nights* in form, but contradicts it in content in a very interesting way. 'The Bottle Imp' is a story that combines fantasy and reality at the same time; the wish-fulfilling bottle on the one hand, and the intermixture between cultures on the other. Stevenson's supernatural element in this story is combined with a narrative

[19] This is how the word appears in Lane's translation.
[20] Lane, I, 70-71.
[21] Lane, I, 72.
[22] Stevenson, *South Sea Tales*, p. 81.
[23] Stevenson, *South Sea Tales*, p. 86.

about ordinary people who live in a real place in the world. 'The Bottle Imp' blends 'conceptual integrity' and clear simplicity, with the characteristics of both a fairy tale and a folk tale.[24] What adds to its distinction is that it is full of pleasant sentiments and artistic sincerity.[25]

According to Robert Irwin, serious usage of magic in modern European fiction is rare, and when magic is treated, it often indicates 'a transparent metaphor'.[26] He gives Robert Louis Stevenson's 'The Bottle Imp' as an example. Irwin further argues that this story is about a magical object that bestows the power of wish-fulfilment, but, in the quintessence, it is about 'the price paid for success and the diminishing options in life as one grows older.'[27]

In the three stories of the *Island Nights' Entertainments* – 'The Isle of Voices', 'The Beach of Falesá', and 'The Bottle Imp' – women, who are wives, all rescue their husbands from an inevitable danger using their courage and power of wit. In 'The Isle of Voices', Lehua steals the magical powers of her father to rescue her husband, Keola, from the cannibals' island. In 'The Beach of Falesá', Uma bravely follows her husband, Wiltshire, to the dangerous bush in the very dark middle of the night to save him, defying Case's rifle and the devils that are said to haunt the place. In 'The Bottle Imp', Kokua braves hell's fire to rescue her husband, Keawe, who sells himself to the devil in order to have her. These women are not far from Shahrazad who endangers her life in order to save her society and herself from the brutality of Shahrayar. She also puts herself in

[24] Here I mean that 'The Bottle Imp' can be considered as a fairy tale due to its supernatural element, and as a folk tale for being told to and about natives of a certain culture.
[25] Frank Swinnerton, 'Short Stories', in *R. L. Stevenson: A Critical Study* (London: Martin Secker, 1924), pp. 120-23.
[26] See Robert Irwin, *The Arabian Nights: A Companion* (London: Tauris Parke, 1994; repr., 2004), p. 178.
[27] See Irwin, p. 178.

extreme danger in order to rescue her husband, King Shahrayar, from no other danger than himself.

Further similarities with *The Arabian Nights* extend to *New Arabian Nights* and *More New Arabian Nights: The Dynamiter*. Most of the stories in these collections are based on the adventures of a number of people, mostly three, meeting together by chance. For example, in the first book, the adventures start when Prince Florizel, Colonel Geraldine, and the young man of tarts meet. In the second book, *The Dynamiter*, Edward Challoner, Paul Somerset, and Harry Desborough all meet in the Cigar Divan of 'former' Prince Florizel, who is now known as Mr Theophilus Godall, or simply, Mr Godall the tobacconist. This calls to mind the setup of adventures in *The Arabian Nights*. Another *Arabian Nights* feature which is strongly present in Stevenson's *New Arabian Nights* is the detailed description of the 'palace-like' houses, ways, paths, doors, and halls in order to reach the target place or the destination. Moreover, the following image is one of the repeated images in *The Arabian Nights*: 'In dead silence the three passed the door, which was immediately locked behind them;'[28] as if swallowed into the unknown, and it is then when most adventures start. The best example to depict this image is in story of 'Aziz and Aziza' when Aziz follows the demands of a woman and enters a house of which he has no previous knowledge. The door closes behind him as he enters, and he is locked inside for a whole year. Furthermore, the presence of the 'male-servant' who likes to be under the private service of ladies, mainly queens and ladies of title, is another aspect of *The Arabian Nights* which Stevenson uses in one of his stories, 'The

[28] Robert Louis Stevenson, *New Arabian Nights* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1921), p. 102.

Rajah's Diamond – Story of the Bandbox.' For example, Lady Vandeleur hires Harry Hartley as a 'male lady-maid and man milliner' after he is transferred to the 'feminine department' of General Vandeleur's luxurious place.[29] Not only does this recall the ladies' male-servants of *The Arabian Nights*, but also, by using the 'feminine department', it has a prominent reference to the 'Haremlik' which is the 'Harem' or women's area in the palaces of the ancient Orient where women's privacy was practised and respected, and where it was usual to be served by males, mostly emasculate, out of protection for women. Mrs Vandeleur brings Harry to work with her, and although there are no direct references to Harry's sexuality, or to emasculation in particular, the description of how he dresses shows a softer and more feminine side of him since he has been moved to the 'feminine department':

> He was always dressed with uncommon nicety, wore delicate flowers in his buttonhole, and could entertain a visitor with tact and pleasantry. He took pride in servility to a beautiful woman […] and was pleased to exhibit himself before other men, who derided and despised him, in his character of male lady's maid and man milliner.[30]

The whole scene brings to mind the atmosphere of *The Arabian Nights* and shows how Stevenson employed small details and certain references which remind the reader of the Oriental work.

Leonee Ormond, in her article 'Cayenne and Cream Tarts: W. M. Thackeray and R. L. Stevenson', suggests that in *The Arabian Nights* there are always hard tasks, with certain rules and bans, for the heroes to complete after which they get what they want.[31] The case is similar in Stevenson's *New*

[29] Stevenson, *New Arabian Nights*, p. 96.
[30] Stevenson, *New Arabian Nights*, p. 96.
[31] Ormond, p. 190.

Arabian Nights. For example, in 'The Rajah's Diamond', Francis Scrymgeour has to go to Paris and get married in order to receive an amount of five hundred pounds from a nameless man who is of a high rank and who sets certain conditions to be fulfilled. The lawyer of the company tells Francis Scrymgeour that,

> The conditions […] are, as I have twice remarked, neither dishonourable nor excessive. At the same time I cannot conceal from you that they are most unusual […] [The conditions] are two […] only two; and the sum as you will remember, is five hundred a year – and […] unburdened […] You must be in Paris by the afternoon of Sunday, the 15th; there you will find, at the box-office of the Comedie Francaise, a ticket for admission taken in your name and waiting you. You are requested to sit out the whole performance in the seat provided, and that is all […] The other is of more importance […] It regards your marriage. My client, taking a deep interest in your welfare, desires to advise you absolutely in the choice of a wife.[32]

This is similar to a repeated scene in *The Arabian Nights* where the hero is asked to fulfil firm conditions and missions to achieve certain goals, such as to rescue a beloved, attain a treasure, or to gain a magical object which has tremendous effects on its holders. There are, nevertheless, more similarities between both works, one of which is the resemblance between Prince Florizel and Haroun Al-Rachid.

My comparison would not be complete without paying special attention to Prince Florizel, or, the modern Haroun Al-Rashid. The time when Haroun Al-Rashid ruled 'was economically prosperous and culturally brilliant; and his reign was the last reign of peace for Baghdad.'[33] Mia Gerhardt identifies two types of Haroun Al-Rashid stories. The first one is, as she calls it, 'the simplest type of

[32] Stevenson, *New Arabian Nights*, pp. 141-42.
[33] Mia Gerhardt, *The Art of Story-Telling* (Leiden: Brill, 1963), p. 421.

frame-story'[34] with one simple frame, where the Caliph asks someone to tell him stories for entertainment. This type of story deals with details, and the Caliph makes only 'incidental' appearances within the stories.[35] The second type of Haroun Al-Rashid story is more complicated than the first one, but it forms a continuation of it, for the frame multiplies and the stories become more captivating. In this set of stories, the Caliph appears in all the awkward situations and the '[intriguing] events are explained to him by the participants themselves'. However, here he 'acts only as a spectator and listener, but his particular function in this type of story is to arrange matters in the end: to redress wrongs, help out the needy, mend lovers' quarrels and make everybody happy generally.'[36] Stevenson seems to combine the two types of story in *New Arabian Nights*, because on the one hand, the Prince appears occasionally and suddenly, and on the other hand, he is always there in most complicated situations trying to solve the dilemmas and help those who are in trouble. Prince Florizel of Bohemia is a main character that appears significantly in all the stories of *New Arabian Nights*, and is a Haroun Al-Rashid-like character. G. K. Chesterton describes the Prince as 'a light and elusive figure' and says that he has 'a perfect mental athleticism, which enabled him to leap from crag to crag.'[37] This may appear as the best description of a character to fit the modern age, where simplicity and naivety of personality is inappropriate.

[34] Gerhardt, p. 422.
[35] Gerhardt, p. 422.
[36] Gerhardt, p. 426.
[37] Quoted in Alan Sandison, '"Two-fold and Multiple Natures" Modernism and Dandyism in R. L. Stevenson's *New Arabian Nights*', in *AUMLA*, 86, (November 1996), pp. 17-31, (p. 21).

The prince's character is double-sided; his personality combines prestige, respect, and power on the one hand, and absurdity – which leads to his dethronement by his people – on the other hand:

> Although of a placid temper in ordinary circumstances, and accustomed to take the world with as much philosophy as any ploughman, the Prince of Bohemia was not without a taste for ways of life more adventurous and eccentric than that to which he was destined by his birth.[38]

This is very similar to Haroun Al-Rashid's personality:

> [H]is curiosity leads him to all sorts of amusing situations, his good nature and munificence make him the ideal furnisher of happy endings. His changing moods, which vary between the extremes of nervous depression and ungovernable laughing-fits, lend colour to his personality. All in all, the hero of the Harun cycle is an extremely winning figure. Thoughtless sometimes, he is never cruel or mean; his sense of humour hardly ever fails him; and he has straightforward simplicity that makes people love and trust him. Yet the pomp and splendour that surround him, his incredible wealth and absolute power make him somehow mysterious, awe-inspiring and remote; even the stately merchants of Baghdad tremble when they enter his palace.[39]

But, in spite of the negative side in the Prince's character, it should not be denied that he is the problem solver after each climax. For example, in 'The Suicide Club', he brings Silas out of his ordeal by revealing his innocence and taking care of the corpse in the box. He, then, finds the actual murderer, who happens to be the President of the Suicide Club; they fight according to the President's desire and Prince Florizel triumphs, while the President is killed. At the end of 'The Rajah's Diamond', it is the Prince who saves the world from the corruption of the diamond by throwing it into the river where it is lost forever. The Arabian author concludes 'The Suicide Club' in an 'Arabic' way: heroism and high

[38] Stevenson, *New Arabian Nights*, p. 3.
[39] Gerhardt, pp. 449-50.

morality triumph at the end, and Prince Florizel is, like Haroun Al-Rachid, loved and remembered by everyone who has known or encountered him:

> *The Prince, it is superfluous to mention, forgot no one of those who served him in this great exploit; and to this day his authority and influence help them forward in their public career, while his condescending friendship adds a charm to their private life.*[40]

The Prince is the only character in 'The Rajah's Diamond' chain stories who opposes materialism; he is the only one who views the sparkles and shine as blinding to the truth and leading to rot and corruption, contrary to all the other characters, who are bedazzled by its light. The Prince strongly resists the diamond:

> To me this nugget of bright crystal is as loathsome as though it were crawling with the worms of death; it is as shocking as though it were compacted out of innocent blood. I see it here in my hand, and I know it is shining with hell-fire. I have told you but a hundredth part of its story; what passed in former ages, to what crimes and treacheries it incited men of yore, the imagination trembles to conceive; for years and years it has faithfully served the powers of hell; enough, I say, of blood, enough of disgrace, enough of broken lives and friendships; all things come to an end, the evil like the good; pestilence as well as beautiful music; and as for this diamond, God forgive me if I do wrong, but its empire ends to-night.[41]

The Prince, then, throws the diamond into the river and frees the forthcoming generations from its evil.

[40] Stevenson, *New Arabian Nights*, pp. 91-92.
[41] Stevenson, *New Arabian Nights*, p. 182.

New Arabian Nights (1882) and *More New Arabian Nights: The Dynamiter* (1885)

So far I have traced some of the more obvious parallels between *The Arabian Nights* and Stevenson's fiction. However, as I suggested in the introduction, my aim is not merely to trace connections but to argue that Stevenson's sense of modernity and modernism comes from contact with a non-European literature. Contrary to those who suggest that Stevenson's modernity, as well as modernism, are an outcome of his response to European literature, I am going to show how the writer adopted the style and form of the original *Arabian Nights* in order to produce his own modern and proto-modernist version of *The Arabian Nights*.

Stevenson's employment of *The Arabian Nights* enables him to revive the traditional epic narrative by inserting some of the modernist marks of the short story. In other words, Stevenson's traditionalism lies in his use of conventional writing methods, such as the framing narrative, the plotted story, closure, and conventional characterisation. On the other hand, the early modernist sparks in his works can be found in his use of the metropolis, and the Arabian Author, who is the inner narrator of *New Arabian Nights* and who gives us a hint of the modernist free indirect style at the end of the work. Stevenson also relies on symbolism, and tries to articulate the skepticism and truth-seeking that dominated the turn of the century. Time is also central to *New Arabian Nights* and *The Dynamiter*, and punctuality seems to be one of the 'modern' heroes of the stories. Meanwhile the discourses of detective fiction are brought together with modern inventions and advanced technologies of the time, such as trains, lifts, and above all, dynamite. His work of compression also involves the

insertion of the *fin de siècle* with all its well known worries and concerns into the mythical narrative structure of *The Arabian Nights*.

Stevenson did more than simply imitate *The Arabian Nights*' style or ideas; on the contrary, in T. S. Eliot's words, he made it into a new thing. This often involves an oblique process of adaptation: *New Arabian Nights* foregrounds an intertextual relationship with *The Arabian Nights*, but the expectations are deflated, because although there is a similarity in form, the works are different in essence. He does not blindly imitate *The Arabian Nights*, but he adopts its techniques, mainly the narrative technique of the story-within-story, and the Arabian Author who, like Shahrazad, functions as a link between stories: he closes up a story and introduces a new one. In general, Stevenson employs the form of *The Arabian Nights* to serve his own purposes of presenting the age in which he lived.

Stevenson is considered as a writer on the brink of modernism and modernity, but at the same time he upholds the traditional techniques of story writing. I am going to elaborate on how Stevenson was described by Clare Hanson as a writer modern in his traditionalism.[42] When it comes to the 'modern', Stevenson is, contrary to some opinions (such as Barry Menikoff's, that consider Stevenson's position on the threshold of modernism merely Western based), influenced by the exotic and the interaction with the 'Other'.[43] Where Menikoff suggests that *New Arabian Nights* is mainly linked to European literature, I will argue that this work has a closer connection with *The Arabian Nights* than with any other Western work.

[42] Clare Hanson, *Short Stories and Short Fictions, 1880-1980* (London: Macmillan, 1985), p. 19.
[43] I am referring by the word 'exotic' to any culture that different from the writer's. See note (34), in 'Introduction', p. 10.

The closing years of the nineteenth century were a period of experiments and innovation. Due to scientific and technological changes in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, and the resultant rapid tempo of life, there was an increase in the pressure, complexities, and weariness of life. As a result, critics like Hanson note a mood of withdrawal from everyday reality and a search for a world of imagination;[44] there was a retreat to the fiction of older ages where alternative values could be identified. It seems that to Stevenson, *The Arabian Nights* is a work that liberates from the increasing burdens of the growing complications of life. As I discussed earlier, non-European literature, in general, was a means of escape for many writers of the *fin de siècle* who witnessed the fading of the empire.[45] Stevenson found in *The Arabian Nights* a resort from his own concerns that were reflected by the worries of his age. [46]

The concerns of the *fin de siècle* were many, because although modern technology facilitated certain aspects of life, it was harmful at the same time. The deliberate misuse of this new technology cost lives of innocent people, and this is one of the ideas that Stevenson presents in *The Dynamiter*. Furthermore, chaos, anarchy, tension, havoc, pessimism, lack of faith, fear of the future, as well as the fear of the present were dominant at the turn of the century. To Stevenson, 'Man's one method, whether he reasons or creates, is to half-shut his eyes against the dazzle and confusion of reality.'[47] *The Arabian Nights* is one of those books which transfer the reader from the real world into a fictional world

[44] See Hanson, *Short Stories and Short Fictions*, p. 34.
[45] See 'Introduction', pp. 16, 42-43. In 'Kim, the Pleasures of Imperialism' (1987), Edward Said describes the nineteenth-century attraction towards the exotic literature as a way out of the 'world's corruption and degradation'. Quoted in Chris Bongie, 'An Idea Without A Future: Exoticism in the Age of Colonial Reproduction', in *Exotic Memories: Literature, Colonialism, and the Fin de Siècle* (California: Stanford University Press, 1991), p. 21.
[46] See Robert Louis Stevenson, *Letters*, ed. by Sidney Colvin, 4 vols (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1911), I, 322.
[47] Quoted in Hanson, *Short Stories and Short Fictions*, p. 20.

where worries and concerns can be eliminated, and where a better world, or even an ideal world, is imagined. Stevenson was one of those writers who pursued this world of imagination that took him away from the everyday reality of the period. He thought that fictional romance was higher than the works which copy 'life itself' because he views that 'Life is monstrous, infinite, illogical, abrupt and poignant; a work of art, in comparison, is neat finite, self-contained, rational, flowing and emasculate.'[48] *The Arabian Nights* is one of those works that brings Stevenson relief from a 'monstrous' modernity.

John Gross, in *The Rise and Fall of the Man of Letters* (1969), alludes to the hesitant Victorian self-confidence in the 1880s and their concern about the future.[49] There were religious fears due to the decline of Christianity and the increase of scepticism. The Victorians feared the loss of morality due to the deterioration of faith, which would lead to society's breakdown,[50] especially when this society, and the working class in particular, was economically insecure regarding the individual's living.[51] The closing years of the nineteenth century were also a period of fears of failure in general,[52] of isolation and of loneliness due to decrease in self-confidence and nostalgia for the high Victorian period.[53]

There was another common motive behind Stevenson's turn back to *The Arabian Nights*: the late nineteenth-century reader was attracted to the tale-

[48] Quoted in Bernard Bergonzi, 'Late Victorian to Modernist: 1880-1930', in *An Outline of English Literature*, ed. by Pat Rogers (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 356.
[49] See Bergonzi, p. 347.
[50] Walter E. Houghton, *The Victorian Frame of Mind* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957), pp. 58-59.
[51] Houghton, p. 60.
[52] Houghton, p. 61.
[53] Houghton, p. 77. For the late Victorian unrest, see Peter Widdowson, *English Literature and its Contexts: 1500-2000* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p. 107.

within-tale technique,[54] and *The Arabian Nights* was considered as a masterwork in 'the art of storytelling'.[55] Stevenson was witty enough to parlay his employment of *The Arabian Nights*, not only in the matter of style, but also in narrative techniques.[56] Not only does Stevenson implement the style of *The Arabian Nights* in his own recreation of the stories, but also, he uses this technique in his other stories, as I showed earlier, that do not carry in their titles a direct indication of *The Arabian Nights*, such as, 'The Isle of Voices', 'The Beach of Falesá', and *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*. However, *New Arabian Nights* and *The Dynamiter* remain the most obvious examples of this implementation.

G. K. Chesterton, in *Robert Louis Stevenson* (1927), rates the stories of *The Arabian Nights* very highly, and he praises Stevenson's first collection of *New Arabian Nights* by saying that *New Arabian Nights* 'is probably the most unique; there was nothing like it before, and, I think, nothing equal to it since.'[57] Of the second book, *More New Arabian Nights: The Dynamiter*, he describes the 'nightmare of *The Dynamiter*' as 'amiable;'[58] and claims that Stevenson has produced an ambience 'in which many incongruous things find a comic congruity.'[59] *More New Arabian Nights: The Dynamiter* is seen by Frank Swinnerton as a 'very efficient [piece] of craftsmanship, strong enough in invention to delight that typical person called by Mr. H. G. Wells the "weary

[54] See Cedric Watts, 'Heart of Darkness', in *The Cambridge Companion to Joseph Conrad*, ed. by J. H. Stape (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 47. See also, Robert G. Hampson, ''The Genie out of the Bottle': Conrad, Wells, and Joyce', in *The Arabian Nights in English Literature: Studies in the Reception of The Thousand and One Nights into British Culture*, ed. by Peter Caracciolo (Houndsmill: Macmillan, 1988), p. 218.
[55] Alan Sandison, 'Arabesque', in *Robert Louis Stevenson and the Appearance of Modernism: A Future Feeling* (Houndsmill: Macmillan, 1996), p. 87.
[56] Sandison, 'Arabesque', pp. 85-87.
[57] G. K. Chesterton, 'On R.L.S.', in *Generally Speaking: A Book of Essays* (London: Methuen, 1937), p. 171.
[58] Chesterton, pp. 166-77.
[59] Chesterton, p. 169.

giant".'[60] This Weary Giant 'wants to dream of the bright, thin, gay excitements of a phantom world – in which he can be hero – of horses ridden and lace worn and princesses rescued and won.'[61] Readers need a relief from the everyday and surrounding problems; they need to forget about their worries and to dive in an ocean of dreams and imagination where they throw away all the burdens they are carrying on their shoulders and start to free themselves from all the concerns they are having. This 'Weary Giant' needs the work of Stevenson as a resort to refresh and boost him just as Stevenson resorted to *The Arabian Nights* for the same reason.

George Saintsbury, furthermore, thinks that Stevenson's Arabian tales are 'exceedingly good and original things in fiction;'[62] and G. K. Chesterton describes Stevenson's *New Arabian Nights* as 'a new form of art.'[63] What may contribute to the newness of Stevenson's *New Arabian Nights* is his use of the traditional and the modern at the same time. It is neither an old form, nor a modernist form; rather it revives the old and paves the way for the new.

In addition to the above critics, there has been outstanding consensus by a number of critics in describing *New Arabian Nights* as 'original', 'extravagant', and 'fantastic.'[64] To them, what contributed to this work's distinctiveness is that '[n]othing in [Stevenson's] previous work [could] lead us to expect fiction of such out-of-the-way originality.'[65] Although they did not have any association

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[60] Swinnerton, p. 111.
[61] H. G. Wells, 'The Contemporary Novel', <http://www.online-literature.com/wellshg/englishman-looks-at-the-world/11/>, [accessed 08 June 2008] (para. 2 of 19).
[62] Quoted Sandison, 'Arabesque', p. 86.
[63] Chesterton, p. 168.
[64] Barry Menikoff, 'New Arabian Nights: Stevenson's Experiment in Fiction', in *Nineteenth-Century Literature*, no. 3, vol. 45, (December, 1990), 339-362, (357), *JSTOR* <http://links.jstor.org> [accessed 02 March2008]
[65] Quoted in Menikoff, p. 359.

with each other, almost all of the critics, reviewers, and readers, agreed that *New Arabian Nights* is 'fertile of invention', 'audacious', and 'bold'.[66] H. C. Bunner, furthermore, states that Stevenson's

> [*New Arabian Nights*] is a book on the face of it. But then, in fact, you cannot speak of the book on the face of it, for under the face is a fascinating depth of subtleties, of ingenuities, of satiric deviltries, of weird and elusive forms of humour in which the analytic mind loses itself.[67]

I would suggest that these expressions of approval describe the brave employment of the style of *The Arabian Nights* as well as the tackling of daring subject matters, which were almost untouched in the nineteenth century, such as writing a whole work on dynamite, that is, *More New Arabian Nights: The Dynamiter*, in a period when outrage prevailed against the use of dynamite, bombs, explosives, and assassinations in general.

Alan Sandison thinks that *The Arabian Nights* is suitable for Stevenson's devices of writing, especially his own *Arabian Nights*, because it is an endless well of creativity and a source of 'novelistic discourse'.[68] This is one reason why *The Arabian Nights* befits Stevenson when Gabriel Josipovici describes the artist as a gymnast who '[develops] his potential with each new exercise successfully mastered'.[69] Stevenson, in writing his *Arabian Nights*, plays a game with no rules, for art 'is a game which turns out to be without rules',[70] because 'the rules are his to make and break at will […] [He makes] a mockery of the rules and the

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[66] Menikoff, pp. 357-59, (359).
[67] Quoted in *Robert Louis Stevenson: The Critical Heritage*, ed. by Paul Maixner (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981), p. 120.
[68] Alan Sandison, '"Two-fold and Multiple Natures" Modernism and Dandyism in R. L. Stevenson's *New Arabian Nights*', in *Journal of the Australasian Universities Language and Literature Association, AUMLA*, 86 (November 1996), p. 23.
[69] Gabriel Josipovici, *The Lessons of Modernism* (London: Macmillan, 1987), p. x.
[70] Sandison, "Two-fold and Multiple Natures", p. 24.

"creatures" who are subject to them,'[71] and this is what Sandison describes as 'a *destabilising* arbitrariness.'[72] Sandison adds that Stevenson is 'a master of illusion, he is also, and very deliberately, a master illusion-destroyer.'[73] This may be one of the most important reasons behind deflating the expectations of the readers, reviewers, and critics of Stevenson's time. The late nineteenth-century readership may have wanted to read a work of fiction without being told that it is fiction and that it is only ink on paper. Readers may have preferred to enter a field of illusions and believe, or live the feeling, that this is reality. It is an important part of human nature not to accept change easily, nor to break conventions, and this contradicts Stevenson's design: 'my theory is that Literature must always be most at home in treating movement and change; hence I look for them.'[74]

Thus, Stevenson's *New Arabian Nights* and *More New Arabian Nights* provided him with the best atmosphere to apply his 'own rules', because they form 'a superabundance of creative activity which is forever opening up new prospects by challenging a range of intellectual and cultural assumptions and practices.'[75] For example, it is known that the traditional hero leaves his luxury life to experience the poor life and the 'humility' that would enhance his practice as a person in charge and help him be 'a better ruler'. In other words, the traditional hero usually returns with successes after a hard and long life experience. A prince or a king may return to his throne in a higher and more confident position than he used to have; but the unconventional step that

[71] Sandison, "Two-fold and Multiple Natures", p. 24.
[72] Sandison, "Two-fold and Multiple Natures", p. 24.
[73] Sandison, "Two-fold and Multiple Natures", p. 24.
[74] Quoted in Maixner, p. 171.
[75] Sandison, 'Arabesque', p. 82.

Stevenson makes is that he imposes his own rules by dethroning the Prince and turning him into a tobacconist; he never returns to his royal position, nor does he regain his royal title.[76]

Contrary to the admiring opinions discussed above, there have been some opposing reviews regarding Stevenson's use of *The Arabian Nights*. Stevenson was censured in the *Westminster Review* of January 1883. The reviewer described Stevenson's *New Arabian Nights* as being 'Arabian only in name,' and that 'the suicides, robberies, murders, which form their subject matter are perpetrated in our own day, not further off than London or Paris, and the treatment and colouring are essentially modern and realistic'.[77] I would like to argue otherwise. Stevenson, contrary to this opinion, has brilliantly used the style of the original *Arabian Nights* in order to project the image of the *fin de siècle*; he did not copy artlessly, since mere imitation is not creation. Why would Stevenson write an Arabian tale if there is already a popular and famous original one? Where would his creativity be? What Stevenson did was adapt *The Arabian Nights* combining them with modern/modernist views. Here the big wide world is shrunk into one metropolis, a city which at the same time alienates the individual, and makes him feel strange in the big 'terrifying'[78] modern city.

In the 'Suicide Club' Stevenson discusses the new technologies of the city when the young man of cream tarts says:

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[76] Lisa Honaker, 'The Revisionary Role of Gender in R. L. Stevenson's *New Arabian Nights* and *Prince Otto*: Revolution in a "Poison Bad World"', in *English Literature in Transition (1880-1920)*, (Greensboro: University of Carolina, 2001), pp. 297-319 (p. 305) *Literature Online* <http://lion.chadwyk.co.uk> [accessed 28 February 2008]

[77] Quoted in Ali, p. 61.

[78] See Linda Dryden, *The Modern Gothic and Literary Doubles: Stevenson, Wilde and Wells* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), p. 82.

> We have affairs in different places; and hence railways were invented. Railways separated us infallibly from our friends; and so telegraphs were made that we might communicate speedily at great distances. Even in hotels we have lifts to spare us a climb of some hundred steps. Now, we know that life is only a stage to play the fool upon as long as the part amuses us. There was one more convenience lacking to modern comfort: a decent, easy way to quit that stage; the back stairs to the liberty, or, as I said this moment, Death's private door.[79]

In this passage, Stevenson alludes to the features of modern urban life; he points out their merits as well as their disadvantages. For instance, he clearly states how telegraphs shorten the distance between people as they help them 'communicate speedily at great distances'. He also alludes to how lifts constitute a 'modern convenience' by saving people the effort of climbing long stairs, but at the same time, he has a reservation regarding the invention of trains, because despite the fact that they draw together the spaces between people, they also separate them from their loved ones. This paragraph also touches upon the suffocating pressure of modern life that might lead the depressed, helpless, and hopeless individuals to think about putting an end to their lives, as those in the 'Suicide Club'.

Later on, in the 'Prologue' to *The Dynamiter*, Stevenson alludes to the invention of the telephone, when Somerset says, 'I now hold it in my hand, the voice of the world, a telephone repeating all men's wants.'[80] Stevenson also mentions the 'ocean steamer' in *The Dynamiter*: 'Whether on the train, at the hotels, or on board the ocean steamer, I never exchanged a friendly word with any fellow-traveller'.[81] This is another example of the detachment of the relationships and lack of communication between 'modern' people; there is not even a single 'friendly word'.

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[79] Robert Louis Stevenson, *New Arabian Nights*, pp. 12-13.
[80] Robert Louis Stevenson, *The Dynamiter* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1921), p. 6.
[81] Stevenson, *The Dynamiter*, p. 54.

Stevenson did not have 'a sense of an entire cultural heritage being ploughed up and turned over;'[82] on the contrary, he maintains the traditions of his culture; however, he renews them. Alan Sandison, says in 'Arabesque', in *Robert Louis Stevenson and the Appearance of Modernism: A Future Feeling* (1996):

> That Stevenson should turn back to *The Thousand and One Nights* to supply him with a form for a particularly iconoclastic literary enterprise is […] proof of something other than irresponsible Celtic whimsy. Parody itself entails a recognition of the past and, in its mixture of renovation and innovation […] is quintessentially accessible as a Modernist device.[83]

Valerie Shaw, makes a similar point in *The Short Story: A Critical Introduction* (1983):

> Stevenson looks backwards more than forwards; he looks back to the early eighteenth-century taste for moral reflections in the cast of simple narrative and typical characterisation. The drift of his chosen title *New Arabian Nights* (1882) is obvious [… however,] [u]nlike his eighteenth-century predecessors in so many other ways, Stevenson makes comparable use of strange and exotic settings, mingling the manner of moral essayist and storyteller, even though his morality is far more ambiguous and elusive than anything to be found in the didactic tales of Addison or Dr Johnson.[84]

Not only do these two paragraphs show Stevenson's return to the traditional, but also they explain how he 'renovates' and not just 'innovates'. I would like to stress the word 'renovates', because by 'renovation' he is preserving the past, that is tradition, and at the same time, he is responding to the modernity of his age. This takes us back to Eliot's '*make all things new*'.

[82] Quoted in Sandison, 'Arabesque', p. 83.
[83] Sandison, 'Arabesque', p. 83.
[84] Shaw, p. 32.

Barry Menikoff is one of the few critics who consider Stevenson as a precursor of modernism. He rereads Stevenson as a 'forerunner of the moderns' if not a modernist himself.[85] Menikoff, however, points out that Stevenson's writing 'shift[s] between historical and contemporary subjects'. Menikoff adds that Stevenson combines 'fantasy, folklore, and the supernatural' elements.[86]

Menikoff's account of modernism is Western-oriented and Eurocentric. He suggests that Stevenson's modernity was merely European, and singularly rooted in Europe. For example, while Prince Florizel and Colonel Geraldine arguably represent Caliph Haroun Al-Rashid and his loyal minister or 'vizier' Ja'afar, Menikoff sees them merely as 'homage' to Émile Gaboriau's detective Monsieur Lecoq. Menikoff emphasises his idea by referring to Christopher Morley's words: 'Conan Doyle owed more than Doyle ever realised to the New Arabian Nights and The Dynamiter.'[87] Furthermore, Menikoff refers to the impact of Dumas's *The Count of Monte Cristo* (1844-45), and Eugene Sue's *The Mysteries of Paris* (1842-43) in that they both revolve around the 'metropolitan underworld.'[88]

In line with Barry Menikoff, Simon During thinks that modernity 'derives its force from its Eurocentrism';[89] and he states that 'the West is modern, the modern is the West. By this logic, other societies can enter history, grasp the future, only at the price of their destruction.'[90] To him, expansions are a source of 'modernising' the others regardless of the price paid in order to achieve this

[85] Menikoff, p. 340.
[86] Menikoff, p. 341.
[87] Quoted in Menikoff, p. 352.
[88] Menikoff, pp. 360-61.
[89] Simon Gikandi, *Writing in Limbo: Modernism and Caribbean Literature* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1992), p. 2.
[90] Quoted in Gikandi, p. 2.

modernity. George Lamming considers that although expansion modernises the other cultures, it 'destroys the aboriginal cultural forms'.[91] Edouard Glissant emphasises this assumption by describing 'the region's irruption into modernity as a violent departure from the colonial tradition.'[92]

Menikoff, along with the above discussed critics, contradicts the recent theories of modernity/modernism in that these latter have arisen from the European encounter with the non-European other. For example, J. Michael Dash believes that:

> the writer who operates in the space between cultural traditions draws inventive energies from 'creative schizophrenia' […] this writer does not have to choose between self and community, between a private discourse and a national language, or even between the subjective experience and historical traditions. On the contrary, this kind of writer is able to move from one value to the other and to break the binary oppositions that sustain such values as mutually exclusive entities.[93]

Tzvetan Todorov, similarly, contradicts Simon During in his counter-suggestion that expansions are a means of 'being modernised' and not to 'modernise' the others; to him, obtaining modernity is accomplished by 'break[ing] through the limits of tradition'.[94]

As Simon Gikandi argues [95] 'the central categories of European modernity – history, national language, subjectivity – have value only when they are fertilised by figures of the 'other' imagination'.[96] The point that I am trying to argue here is that Stevenson's modernity and modernism come from his

[91] Gikandi, p. 3.
[92] Gikandi, p. 5.
[93] Gikandi, p. 13.
[94] Gikandi, p. 2.
[95] See Gikandi, p. 4.
[96] Gikandi, p. 3.

encounter with the non-European; however, he maintains a firm grasp on tradition.

New Arabian Nights, More New Arabian Nights, and the *fin de Siècle*

Stevenson's *New Arabian Nights* first appeared as parts in periodicals, such as the short-lived *London* magazine, which was edited by W. E. Henley, and in Leslie Stephen's *Cornhill Magazine* between 1877 and 1880. The stories first appeared under the title *Latter-Day Arabian Nights: The Suicide Club, The Rajah's Diamond* in *London* magazine, between 8 June and 26 October 1878.[97] After their appearance in the magazines, the stories were published in England in July 1882 by Chatto and Windus as *New Arabian Nights*. The second book, *More New Arabian Nights: The Dynamiter*, was published in 1885. 'The Bottle Imp' was first published in 1891 and appeared in *The Island Nights' Entertainments* in 1893.

Stevenson took advantage of the rise of the short story, as the late nineteenth-century reader was starting to incline towards short fiction. The rapidity of life increased sharply in the second half of the nineteenth century.[98] The characteristics of the age were reflected in the short story as a concentrated, fleeting form, that can be read in a relatively short time.[99] This calls to mind Edgar Allan Poe's idea about the short story being read in one sitting and 'without interruption'. This can be further explained according to what Clare Hanson describes as 'the writer can involve the reader in [the short story] to an

[97] See Roger G. Swearingen, *The Prose Writings of Robert Louis Stevenson: A Guide* (London: Macmillan, 1980).
[98] See Houghton, p. 7.
[99] See 'Introduction', pp. 21-23. See also Dominic Head, *The Modernist Short Story: A Study in Theory and Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 1.

unusual degree.'[100] By involving full concentration, as well as full employment of feeling and emotion, the reader would find it 'exhausting' to stop in the middle of aroused feeling, and limit those intensified emotions, let them calm down, and start building them up again from the beginning. Thus, 'each detail', as Norman Friedman puts forward, 'will therefore carry more weight in the short story'.[101] The endings of the short story are not far from the beginnings, as in the novel; therefore, intensity of concentration should be elevated in reading each sentence, or even each word in the short story.[102]

Stevenson saw the importance of making use of every detail, condensing the narrative in order to fit it into a story that can be read at a single sitting and without stopping.[103] The short story has been associated with the image.[104] Reading a short story is like looking at a painting or picture: the image should be complete in front of the viewer, just as the image formed by a short story should be whole and uninterrupted, or else it would be incomplete. Valerie Shaw elaborates on this idea when she discusses Poe's explanation: 'Poe shows acute understanding of the special type of pleasure contained in the experience of that completeness; no matter how hair-raising the plot, there is a particular enjoyment, often rather calm and reflective, in store for the reader who sees the image whole'.[105] Poe says:

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[100] Hanson, *Short Stories and Short Fictions*, p. 3.
[101] Norman Friedman, 'Recent Short Story Theories', in *Short Story Theory at a Crossroads*, ed. by Susan Lohafer and Jo Ellyn Clarey (Louisiana: Louisiana State University Press, 1989), p. 25.
[102] Friedman, pp. 26-27.
[103] Shaw, p. 36.
[104] See Clare Hanson, ''Things out of Words': Towards a Poetics of Short Fiction', in *Re-reading the Short Story*, ed. by Clare Hanson (Hampshire: The Macmillan Press, 1989), p. 25. See also Clare Hanson, *Short Stories and Short Fictions, 1880-1980* (London: Macmillan, 1985), pp. 5-9. See also, Dominic Head, *The Modernist Short Story: A Study in Theory and Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 7.
[105] Shaw, p. 10.

> And by such means, with such care and skill, a picture is at length painted which leaves the mind of him who contemplates it with kindred art, a sense of the fullest satisfaction. The idea of the tale has been presented unblemished, because undisturbed; and this is an end unattainable in the novel.[106]

Shaw continues to suggest that this image created by reading a short story brings the reader and the writer closer to each other by enabling them to have the same insight. [107]

Stevenson mastered compacting and concentrating his short fiction so as to meet the requirements of the modern reader, as Frank Swinnerton notes, in Stevenson's short stories: 'compression, where it takes the form of heightening and intensification of effect, is the mark of good short story. It is the mark of Stevenson's best stories.'[108]

Speed, short spaces of time, rapid pace of life, and time-pressed people made time consecrated. In other words, time and punctuality have become one of the key issues to be discussed in modern and modernist works, because time was one of the modernist marks in Europe. Punctuality and definiteness of time accompanied, to a large extent, the rise of European modernism.[109] Stevenson was among the leading generation to focus upon time in their work, in the late nineteenth century, despite the fact that his works are not fully modernist.

Peter Childs, for example, notes Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest*'s (1895) preoccupation with the clock – 'Oh! it was nearly seven […] we might trot round to the Empire at ten […] I hate waiting even five minutes

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[106] Quoted in Shaw, p. 10.
[107] Shaw, p. 10.
[108] Swinnerton, pp. 105-06.
[109] See Peter Childs, *Modernism and the Post-Colonial: Literature and Empire 1885-1930* (London: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2007), pp. 101-05.

for anybody'[110] – in order to illustrate 'modernism's unusual fascination with time'.[111] A similar preoccupation is to be found in H. Rider Haggard's *She* (1887), H. G. Wells's *The Time Machine* (1895), Joseph Conrad's 'Youth' (1898) and 'Heart of Darkness' (1899), and E. M. Forster's *A Passage to India* (1924). Somewhat earlier Stevenson was similarly fascinated by the clock in *New Arabian Nights* (1882) and *More New Arabian Nights: The Dynamiter* (1885). Stevenson refers to the punctuality of time in different places. For example, in the 'Story of the Physician and the Saratoga Trunk', a mysterious lady tells Silas that she wants to meet him, and when she gives him the directions of how to meet her she is very punctual: 'At quarter past eleven […] leave the house.'[112] Not long afterwards she says: 'Heavens! […] is it so late? I have not an instant to lose.'[113] Silas, who guards the trunk in which the corpse is hidden, wants to deliver it to a specific place as agreed on by the Doctor, the Colonel, and Silas himself. In a sealed envelope he receives a letter in which is written: 'Twelve o'clock', and Silas 'was punctual to the hour.'[114]

In *More New Arabian Nights: The Dynamiter*, we also encounter many examples of 'clock-work' and its fundamental relationship to dynamite in terms of punctuality. For example, in 'The Superfluous Mansion' Zero shockingly informs Somerset that he has timed the bomb for half an hour to which Somerset horrifyingly replies: 'Half an hour!' […] Merciful heavens, in half an hour!'[115] A bit later, and after some time passes, Somerset 'glancing with horror at the

[110] Quoted in Childs, p. 102.
[111] Childs, p. 103.
[112] Stevenson, *New Arabian Nights*, p. 47.
[113] Stevenson, *New Arabian Nights*, p. 48.
[114] Stevenson, *New Arabian Nights*, p. 65.
[115] Stevenson, *The Dynamiter*, p. 247.

timepiece' says: 'Five minutes!'[116] When one of the dynamite experiments fails, the reason is explained as 'clockwork thirty hours too soon'.[117] Although Stevenson arguably shares modernist preoccupations in these examples, he retains a certain traditionalism as a writer by not eliminating the other ways in which time can be portrayed, such as the use of units of time without exactness: day and night in general; 'On the afternoon of a warm day';[118] 'It was then the height of the season and the summer'.[119] Along with many other examples, these remind of the same use of time in *The Arabian Nights* where chronology is calculated by days: for example, three days and nights, seven days, and sometimes it is a whole year.

Time was not the only modern/modernist issue that Stevenson tackled in *New Arabian Nights* and *More New Arabian Nights*. He exemplifies the unrest, insecurity, and the decline of morality in the *fin de siècle*. For example, in a *New Arabian Nights*' story, 'The Rajah's Diamond', he depicts how materialistic beginnings of the twentieth century were marked, as Richard Lehan describes, by the increase of materialism which acted as an enemy to the literary imagination.[120] Although some inventions had a positive and unifying effect on people, materialism, along with the crowdedness of the metropolitan life, and the development of new technology, such as the invention of machines and engines that operate trains, cars and planes, led in certain cases to lack of unity and relationships between people. As Walter E. Houghton suggests in *The Victorian Frame of Mind* (1957), people 'travelled less often' and 'did not hurry to catch

[116] Stevenson, *The Dynamiter*, p. 248.
[117] Stevenson, *The Dynamiter*, p. 77.
[118] Stevenson, *The Dynamiter*, p. 179.
[119] Stevenson, *The Dynamiter*, p. 11.
[120] See Dryden, p. 70.

trains' [121] in the Victorian era. However, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the need to travel and 'catch trains' increased drastically as a response to the rapid growth and advance of the world. Although modern technologies of the time, such as telegraphs, telephones, and means of transportation facilitated the communication between people in different parts of the world, they also participated in separating them. People who lived in small communities had to move out and travel for long distances away from their society. Towns have transformed into immense cities, where people needed hours to travel within the same city, creating a feeling of isolation, separation, and distance.

These experiences can all be found in the supposedly pre-modernist Stevenson. [122] For example, in *More New Arabian Nights*, Clara Luxmore describes the emptiness of the city at night as terrifying, because there is no one in the streets. She says, 'the very houses seem asleep, and all that mighty heart is lying still.'[123] The streets which look like a beehive in the morning resemble graves at night. Edward Challoner states when describing the metropolis that 'the grave is not more silent than this city of sleep.'[124] Once again, Clara Luxmore, when disguised as Asenath, in *The Dynamiter*, expresses her fears of the metropolis: 'But at this hour, in this appalling silence, and among all these staring windows, I am lost in terrors – oh, lost in them!'[125] Stevenson, thus,

[121] Houghton, p. 7.
[122] I use the term 'non-modernist' as opposed to 'modernist' which is used to describe writers like James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, and Katherine Mansfield, for example. Stevenson here is not a modernist, but he is only introducing the sparks of modernism as a forerunner of the movement.
[123] Stevenson, *The Dynamiter*, p. 14. Stevenson is quoting William Wordsworth in his 'Composed Upon Westminster Bridge' which ends 'Dear God! the very houses seem asleep; And all that mighty heart is lying still!' See *William Wordsworth: The Major Works*, ed. by Stephen Gill (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 285.
[124] Stevenson, *The Dynamiter*, p. 12.
[125] Stevenson, *The Dynamiter*, p. 15.

employs *The Arabian Nights* to express modernity as Marshall Bermann defines it:

> The maelstrom of modern life has been fed from many sources; great discoveries in physical sciences, changing our images of the universe and our place in it; the industrialisation of production, which transforms scientific knowledge into technology, creates new human environments and destroys old ones, speeds up the whole tempo of life […] mass social movements of people and peoples, challenging their political and economic rulers, striving to gain some control over their lives.[126]

Thus, modern life has become a challenge to its people in spite of the fact that it is supposed to bring comfort and leisure. Science and advanced technology have had their positive effects on the world, but they have also put it under more pressure.

However, the modernism of Stevenson's metropolis is not as straightforward as my account so far suggests. This is because the cities of Stevenson's fiction form a composite space that combines the traditional and the modern within it.

Stevenson might have drawn on Damascus and Baghdad due to the similarities they have with London and Paris. Damascus is the oldest inhabited city in the world, and it was the political capital of the Arab world for hundreds of years:

> *Damascus the fragrant, the oldest continually inhabited town known to history, beauty queen among Moslem cities and one of three paradises on earth, capital of the Umayyad dynasty, was for a time mistress of an empire greater than that of Rome at its height.*[127]

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[126] Quoted in *Modernism: An Anthology*, ed. by Lawrence Rainey (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005), p. xxii.

[127] Philip K. Hitti, *Capital Cities of Arab Islam* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1973), p. 84. E-book, retrieved at <http://reader.eblib.com> through <http://sparky.ncl.ac.uk> [accessed 06 March 2010].

Britain in the Victorian era 'became the world's first urbanised society',[128] and thus, London grew to be the first metropolis in the world. It became the capital of the greatest empire on earth.

Baghdad, on the other hand, was the 'intellectual Capital', as Phillip K. Hitti describes it, even after the government was transferred to it from Damascus.[129] Baghdad, despite the wealth and power it contained, was famous for its 'intellect and creativity'.[130] The Abbasid Baghdad was also known as the era where pleasure was privileged. Stevenson may have had Baghdad in mind when he wrote about Paris, because Paris was considered as ''the capital of the nineteenth century', the capital in terms of pleasure, excitement and consumption […] It was Paris that became the byword for everything that was enchanting and intoxicating about the urban scene.'[131] Like Baghdad that housed the contradictories, pleasure and intellect, Paris 'the capital of pleasure was also Paris the city of revolutions and uprisings.'[132]

Damascus 'had a window open on the west; Baghdad's window opened to the east.'[133] Both cities were main gates between East and West, and were open to cultures of both sides of the World. Similarly, the nineteenth-century London and Paris were the gates through which the cultural, intellectual, and literary exchange passed from the East and the West. Besides, Paris of the nineteenth century 'was still a medieval city. Each neighbourhood was a maze of

[128] Elizabeth Wilson, *The Sphinx in the City: Urban Life, the Control of Disorder, and Women* (London: Virago Press, 1991), p. 26.
[129] See Hitti, 'Baghdad: The Intellectual Capital', in *Capital Cities of Arab Islam*, pp. 85-109.
[130] Hitti, p. 94. There was a movement of exploring the ancient sciences such as philosophy, astronomy, mathematics, and medicine. The translation movement, also, burgeoned in the reigns of Al-Mansur and Al-Ma'mun. See Hitti, p. 94.
[131] Wilson, p. 47.
[132] Wilson, p. 48.
[133] Hitti, p. 89.

winding streets and hidden courtyards.'[134] This can be compared to 'Baghdad the Winding City on the Tigris'. In short, London and Paris of Stevenson's *New Arabian Nights* can be compared to Damascus 'the Imperial Capital', and Baghdad 'the Intellectual Capital':[135]

> *Baghdad the Winding City on the Tigris, metropolis of the world of Islam, capital of its most celebrated and longest-lived caliphate, scene of many Arabian Nights, home of Moslem theology and jurisprudence, Arab science and philosophy, was for centuries the intellectual centre of Islam and for a time of the world.*[136]

Thus, scenery and setting in *New Arabian Nights* and *More New Arabian Nights*, are in many ways strikingly similar to *The Arabian Nights*'. However, there are some interesting differences. On the one hand, Stevenson uses the traditional and early Gothic in his urban settings; for example, most of the stories of *New Arabian Nights* and *The Dynamiter* take place at night. The streets are empty and sombre; the houses are either isolated or easily distinguished by their bleakness; many maze-like paths and corridors are inside the houses behind numerous doors; mysterious rooms are locked behind heavily secured doors. This is very similar to *The Arabian Nights*' scenery, where the streets are labyrinthine, and the houses and palaces are full of numerous rooms, many of which are mysterious and must not be open, because fatal consequences will take place. Vaults, secret paths, and mysterious doors are everywhere. On the other hand, and in the larger setting of his stories, Stevenson uses the modernist metropolitan cities and surroundings, such as London and Paris. *The Arabian Nights* stories take place in the main and largest cities of the Arab world, the

[134] Wilson, p. 51.
[135] These descriptions of Damascus and Baghdad are worded by Philip K. Hitti in *Capital Cities of Arab Islam* (1973).
[136] Hitti, p. 109.

modern cities of their time, as I have mentioned, Damascus and Baghdad. London and Paris are the cities in which the stories of *New Arabian Nights* take place. At the time when Stevenson was writing this work, these two cities were the capitals of the most advanced European, if not worldwide, countries. They accompanied the transformations of the age from late-Victorian to the early seeds of modernism; and alongside their old civilisations, they are always contemporary. They represent a link between tradition and modernity, exactly as Stevenson does in his writing, and especially in *New Arabian Nights*.

Perhaps what enhanced Stevenson's fascination with the city is its duality. Just as he stands in mid-point between tradition and modernity, the London he describes embraces interesting dualities. London is old and new, traditional and modern, lively and silent, light and dark. When Challoner says, 'the grave is not more silent than this city of sleep'[137] what may come immediately to the reader's mind is how the same city which is extremely vivacious and 'colourful' in the morning, is that cold, dark, empty, and perilous in the night.[138] This duality is noticeably vivid in Stevenson's works, especially both *New Arabian Nights* books, and of course, *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*. This could be viewed in terms of what Linda Dryden describes as the 'multiple personality' that is associated with early modernism.[139] It could also be linked to the atmosphere of *The Arabian Nights* itself, where mornings are busy and crowded because the everyday work must be done; however, when night approaches, it carries with it feelings of anticipation, fear, desertedness, and perilous adventures.

[137] Stevenson, *The Dynamiter*, p. 12.
[138] Dryden, p. 109.
[139] Dryden, p. 88.

Only two stories of *New Arabian Nights* take place in Paris. In the 'Story of the Physician and the Saratoga Trunk' and the 'Story of The House with the Green Blinds' a series of unpleasant incidents take place, such as committing murders, disposing of dead bodies, the portrayal of infidelity, and voracity.[140] As Barry Menikoff puts it, Stevenson portrays London as 'a wilderness with an immense population'[141] and Paris 'is the capital of the world, where the innocent are baptised into the complexities of moral and sensual experience.'[142]

Stevenson's 'modern' London and Paris add to what Malcolm Bradbury describes in *The Atlas of Literature* (1996) as Franz Kafka's Prague, William Faulkner's new South, and James Joyce's Dublin.[143] They are also well known as the 'familiar London-Paris-New York axis of one version of modernism'.[144] They are those metropolitan cities that produce 'cultural experiments and upheavals'.[145] These particular metropolises were introducing the sparks of modernisation in a traditional world; they formed a theatre in which conventions and modernity, in other words, 'old and new', were clashing and conflicting until they produced what later on was called 'modernism.'[146]

Stevenson's choice of London and Paris seems to be felicitous, because they are the ever old/new cities. They were the first cities to embrace the spirit of the *fin de siècle*. In Dryden's words:

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[140] Menikoff, p. 346.
[141] Menikoff, p. 345.
[142] Menikoff, p. 346.
[143] See Peter Brooker and Andrew Thacker, *Geographies of Modernism: Literatures, Cultures, Spaces*, ed. by Peter Brooker and Andrew Thacker (London: Routledge, 2005), p. 1.
[144] Brooker and Thacker, p. 3.
[145] Andreas Huyssen, 'Geographies of modernism in a globalising world', in *Geographies of Modernism: Literatures, Cultures, Spaces*, ed. by Peter Brooker and Andrew Thacker (London: Routledge, 2005), p. 6.
[146] Huyssen, p. 7.

> The relationship between the physical spaces in late nineteenth-century fictional [metropolis] and the characters that inhabit that space is thus crucial because the character of the city has a critical part to play, not just as a setting for the [story], but for its inner logic.[147]

It can be argued that Stevenson is orientalising London and Paris externally, but not in the essence. What I mean is that Stevenson is using the structure of an Oriental city, as in the discussion above on Damascus and Baghdad, but he is making his characters play their 'critical' role, as Dryden says, because in essence, he is dealing with Western cities and Western issues that concerned the Western man of the period. In the 'Prologue of the Cigar Divan' in *The Dynamiter*, for instance, and in the very first line, Stevenson's narrator says, 'In the city of encounters, the Baghdad of the West, and to be more precise, on the broad northern pavement of Leicester Square […]'.[148] Dryden also describes London as 'a modern day Babylon'.[149] It seems that Stevenson is writing about the metropolis of the modern world but by enclosing it in a framework of an Oriental city, for 'to the young Stevenson, Baghdad must have transposed itself into Edinburgh.'[150] Leonee Ormond argues, in *The Arabian Nights in English Literature* (1988), that most of Stevenson's descriptions about the twisting, convoluted, and maze-like streets of the Western cities he writes about bring to mind the similar streets and paths of Baghdad. In addition to that, the luxurious house to which Stevenson's Prince Florizel is invited, and which has its entire

[147] Dryden, pp. 67-68. I have changed the words in brackets because, first, I am referring to more than one city, namely London and Paris. Second, I am studying Stevenson's short fiction, not his novels; therefore, I have changed the original words 'London' for 'metropolis' and 'novel' for 'story'.
[148] Stevenson, *The Dynamiter*, p. 1.
[149] Dryden, p. 86.
[150] Ormond, p. 190.

interior changed for the occasion, is compared to Alaa Addin's place,[151] where everything in it changes in a blink of an eye:

> When 'Ala al-Din's mother returned from the market and entered the house, she was greatly surprised to see so many people and such great riches.[152]

Because Alaa Addin has ordered the genie of the lamp to bring forty basins 'of twenty marks' gold',

> full of pearls, diamonds, rubies, and emeralds, all better chosen and larger and more beautiful than those presented to the king before, and each basin was covered with a silver cloth, embroidered with flowers of gold. All these […] gold basins virtually filled the entire house, which was very small, as well as the little court in front and the little garden in the back.[153]

All this happens during the short visit of Alaa Addin's mother to the market. The magic cave in which the magic lamp is situated is another example:

> At that very moment, the earth trembled a little and opened before the magician and 'Ala al-Din, revealing a rectangular stone about one and a half feet wide and one foot high, laid horizontally, with a brass ring fixed into the middle, to raise it with.[154]

A bit later on,

> When the stone was removed, there appeared a cavity three or four feet deep, with a little door and steps for descending further. The African magician said to 'Ala al-Din, 'Son, follow exactly what I am going to tell you. Go down into this cavity, and when you are at the bottom of these steps, you will find an open door that will lead you into a large vaulted place, divided into three large halls, adjacent to each other. […] When you are in [the first hall], go into the second and third, without stopping. […] Walk directly across the garden by a path that will lead you to a

[151] Ormond, p. 190.
[152] Haddawy, *The Arabian Nights II*, p. 121.
[153] Haddawy, *The Arabian Nights II*, p. 121.
[154] Haddawy, *The Arabian Nights II*, p. 88.

> staircase with fifty steps that will bring you to a terrace, where you will find before you a niche in which there is a lighted lamp.[155]

In these two paragraphs we find how out of nowhere there emerges a great cave full of all kinds of wonder; and similarly, it disappears and becomes traceless in only seconds. This can be compared to what happens to the house into which Prince Florizel is invited. The last paragraph gives a clear example of the complexity and variety of the winding and twisted routes, both externally and internally, that are frequently described in *The Arabian Nights* and which can be viewed in comparison with the numerous, large, complex, labyrinthine streets of the metropolis, especially Stevenson's London and Paris.

The similarity between Stevenson's Western metropolis and Baghdad extends beyond architecture. Muhsin J. Al-Musawi describes the Baghdad of *The Arabian Nights* as a melting pot into which the peripheral[156] pour:

> Everyone has come from ruined kingdoms, deserted places, islands, or distant land to a city that is well demarcated, whose police uphold law and order, and whose sovereign makes his nocturnal visits incognito to ensure safety and security.[157]

Baghdad, just like London and Paris, is a 'metropolitan centre' which many travellers sought.[158] It is interesting to link here the idea of the frame tale as a mirror image of the 'urban centre'.[159] The frame narrative has become an attraction for storytellers just as Baghdad, as a metropolis, fascinated travellers, strangers, and even fugitives, luring them in. The multilayered narrative with the

[155] Haddawy, *The Arabian Nights II*, p. 89.
[156] Here I mean the geographically peripheral if we consider the metropolis as the centre.
[157] Muhsin J. Al-Musawi, *The Islamic Context of the Thousand and One Nights* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), p. 161.
[158] Al-Musawi, p. 162.
[159] Al-Musawi, p. 279.

density and changeability it carries in its folds portrays the fluctuation and instability of the metropolis.[160] Shahrazad, for instance, narrates the captivating, the fearful, the happy, the sad, the amusing, the witty, and more. She narrates what continuously changes the mood and she does not follow a monotonous line of narration. The metropolis, in comparison, is always changing; there is novelty everyday, the pace of life is fast, and the events are dense, like the multilayered narrative. Thus, the metropolis, as Elizabeth Wilson suggests, has an 'enclosing embrace, in its indeterminacy and labyrinthine uncentredness.'[161] It 'is an Aladdin's cave of riches.'[162] This is a continuation of Stevenson's method in employing the structure of *The Arabian Nights* to speak about his 'Western' *New Arabian Nights*, as he uses a structure of an Oriental city to speak about a Western city.

Not only are Stevenson's cities hybrid, but so are his characters. In discussing Stevenson's modernist touches, especially his use of the metropolis, I would like to draw attention to his use of the 'detective' character. Stevenson uses the detective figure in *New Arabian Nights* despite the fact that his work is not considered a detective work.[163]

The idea of the 'detective' in general was new in the period of Stevenson, and he was among the first writers to include it in his writing.[164] However, Stevenson's employment of the detective figure differs from its use in later

[160] Al-Musawi, p. 279.
[161] Elizabeth Wilson, *The Sphinx in the City: Urban Life, the Control of Disorder, and Women* (London: Virago Press, 1991), p. 6.
[162] Wilson, p. 8.
[163] This is in comparison with what is known as detective fiction such as Conan Doyle's *Sherlock Holmes* (1892), and Agatha Christie's mystery stories.
[164] Sandison, 'Arabesque', p. 103.

detective fiction. In other words, Stevenson alludes to the detective, and he includes its character in one of *New Arabian Nights* stories.

Detective fiction, generally speaking, symbolises 'that which is hidden and suppressed'.[165] Stevenson seems to use the detective as a symbol. He seems to be using the detective as a modernist device, and not in intention of writing detective fiction, but to show 'the meaninglessness of modern life.'[166] Detective fiction 'testif[ies] to the fragmentation and meaninglessness of the modern condition, and its concomitant disintegration of the self, at the same time [it] make[s] sense of that world and the resultant self through the literary text.'[167] It might be argued that in his employment of the detective figure Stevenson may be referring, on the one hand, to the modern life that accompanied the end of the nineteenth century, as if he were anticipating the beginnings of the twentieth century. On the other hand, he may be alluding to 'the myth of original sin',[168] as Scott McCracken suggests in *Reading Popular Fiction* (1998), and by which he means the 'loss of innocence in the Garden of Eden' and the myth of Oedipus where 'discovery of his origins is also a discovery of his crimes.'[169] Stevenson does show the corruption of societies of the *fin de siècle*, and he throws the light on the loss of values and the degeneration of society: increase of crime, loss of security, lack of faith, and the increase of the disadvantages of 'modern' life.

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[165] Adrian Hunter, *The Cambridge Introduction to the Short Story in English* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 42.
[166] Scott R. Christianson, 'A Heap of Broken Images: Hardboiled Detective Fiction and Discourse(s) of Modernity', in *The Cunning Craft: original essays on detective fiction and contemporary literary theory*, ed. by Walker, Ronald G. and June M. Frazer (Illinois: Western Illinois University, 1990), p. 145.
[167] Christianson, pp. 144-45.
[168] Scott McCracken, 'Detective Fiction', in *PULP: Reading Popular Fiction* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998), p. 51.
[169] McCracken, p. 51.

The actual detective does not appear throughout *New Arabian Nights* stories; he only appears in the last story of the book, 'Adventure of Prince Florizel and the Detective', which takes only eight pages out of the one hundred and eighty three page-long book. However, Prince Florizel seems to carry out the role of the detective indirectly, which links him to the character of Haroun Al-Rashid. Although I have not come across a work in which Haroun Al-Rashid is described as 'detective', it is possible to consider him as one. Haroun Al-Rashid always sought for truth; he disguised and observed, and then, solved. Despite that most of the time he is 'a spectator and a listener only', he manages to 'redress wrongs, help out the needy, mend lovers' quarrels and make everybody happy generally. This he hardly ever fails to do'.[170] Thus, his position and personality can situate him under the term 'detective' even if he were not meant to be an actual one.

Prince Florizel, or Stevenson's Haroun Al-Rashid, in *New Arabian Nights*, is the leading character in solving not only crimes, but also any problem that seems to arise in any of the stories, or any impediment any character faces; and the detective which appears in the last story of the book only follows the Prince and is amazed at what he says: ''I had always heard that you were brave,' replied the officer, 'but I was not aware that you were wise and pious. You speak the truth, and you speak it with an accent that moves me to the heart.''[171] Thus, the Prince himself acts as a detective:

> 'To remember faces,' returned Florizel, 'is as much a part of my profession as it is of yours. Indeed, rightly looked upon, a Prince and a detective serve in the same corps. We are both combatants against crime;

[170] Gerhardt, p. 426.
[171] Stevenson, *New Arabian Nights*, p. 180.

> only mine is the more lucrative and yours the more dangerous rank, and there is a sense in which both may be made equally honourable to a good man. I had rather, strange as you may think it, be a detective of character and parts than a weak and ignoble sovereign.'[172]

The Prince, like Haroun Al-Rashid, plays the role of the detective and solves the crises and dilemmas of his people, he admires being a true and honourable detective. *More New Arabian Nights: The Dynamiter,* begins by praising the detective 'profession':

> Here all our merits tell; our manners, habit of the world, powers of conversation, vast stores of unconnected knowledge, all that we are and have builds up the character of the complete detective. It is, in short, the only profession for a gentleman.[173]

Raymond Williams is one of the critics who view the increased use of the 'detective' in literary writings as a reaction against the amplified 'dark' and mysterious sides of the growing 'metropolitan' cities and the global melange.[174] Alan Sandison sums up the employment of the 'detective' in Stevenson's *New Arabian Nights* by saying that: 'the detective may attempt to insert himself into the *Arabian Nights*' world but his rational intelligence is completely routed by the storytelling genius of this Scheherazade, the anarchist and devoted follower of Zero.'[175] Sandison argues that the detective story wins over realism in fiction, due to the situation in the turn of the century, where chaos, lawlessness, lack of faith, and the development of science and experimentations over religion and social morals were prevailing. The detective came as a salvation from all that, because not only did he expose the truth, but his presence ensured a feeling of

[172] Stevenson, *New Arabian Nights*, pp. 179-80.
[173] Stevenson, *The Dynamiter*, p. 7.
[174] Sandison, 'Arabesque', p. 104.
[175] Sandison, 'Arabesque', p. 108.

security. [176] Even the Arabian author encourages the 'English people to remember the services of the police'.[177]

Despite the fact that terrorism, and assassinations by 'dynamite' were taking place in the early 1880s, and regardless of the extreme public horror and disapproval of the 'Dynamite War', Stevenson wrote his *More New Arabian Nights: The Dynamiter*. In the 1880s, a series of dynamite bombing, explosions, and assassinations took place in many parts in Europe. In general,

> Dynamite […] has put a tremendous power in the hands of individuals, and has reinforced all revolutionary and seditious tendencies enormously, making mere folly and fanaticism seriously dangerous, and increasing the natural bent of all lawless movements to gather strength as they go on [….] [T]he new problem forced upon the world by the fertility of modern invention will give it serious trouble in the future.[178]

Thus, here we see the double effect of modern inventions and advanced technology, by turns positive and destructive. Dynamite here is an example of the dangerous excesses of 'modernity'.

Royalty and figures of authority suffered most from 'Dynamite'. In 1878, Italian anarchists threw a bomb on a procession held in memory of Victor Emmanuel II; in this explosion no one was killed, but many were wounded. Later in the same year, another pageant took place to celebrate the escape of the new king, Umberto I, from an assassination attempt, and again a bomb was thrown and four people were killed. A few days later, there was another attempt to kill the Queen in her birthday celebration, but she prudently stayed at home that day. In Spain, and around the same time, there was an attempt to kill the

[176] Sandison, 'Arabesque', p. 113.
[177] Stevenson, *The Dynamiter*, p. 7.
[178] K. R. M. Short, *The Dynamite War: Irish American Bombers in Victorian Britain* (Dublin, 1979), pp. 241-42.

King of Spain, who was providential enough to be saved; unlike the Russian Emperor, Tsar Alexander II, who escaped a first assassination attempt, but died some years later.[179]

There were several bombing acts in London in the same year *The Dynamiter* was published, that is, 1885. The explosions were in the Tower of London, Westminster Hall, and the House of Commons.[180] A few years earlier, on 14 January 1881, the Fenians committed their first dynamite attack at Salford Barracks by placing a bomb inside an airing net. This explosion tragically killed a seven-year-old boy, and damaged a butcher's awning.[181]

The London of *The Dynamiter* is arguably more complicated than the 'fairy London'[182] of the first book. The more modern London is dangerous and chancy, because it presents a variety of prospects and options; it also merges positive sides of modernity, such as liveliness and dynamism, with negative sides such as the disregard of people's individuality.

In *The Dynamiter*, London both consumes and conceals people. The three idle young men who set out at the beginning of the book to seize every opportunity of adventure (and perhaps get reward for tracking down a wanted man) are lured into company where class and motives have been rendered indecipherable, into buildings which are abandoned, or some prisons; or are exposed to the danger of being blown up.[183]

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[179] For more details on anarchist bombings, see Alan Sandison, 'A World Made for Liars: Stevenson's *Dynamiter* and the Death of the Real', in *Robert Louis Stevenson Reconsidered: New Critical Perspectives*, ed. by William B. Jones, JR. (North Carolina: McFarland, 2003), pp. 141-42.
[180] Sandison, 'A World Made for Liars', p. 142.
[181] Sandison, 'A World Made for Liars', p. 143.
[182] Claire Harman, *Robert Louis Stevenson: A Biography* (London: Harper Collins, 2005), p. 272.
[183] Harman, p. 272.

Stevenson is 'his own dynamiter' and he pours out his outrage on paper. In doing so he converts the conventional expectations and reception of nineteenth-century storytelling; he, moreover, 'deconstructs the reader's traditional moral universe.' [184] Linda Hutcheon comments that 'he might be freed from enslavement not only to the empirical, but also to his own set patterns of thought and imagination.'[185]

To Stevenson, dynamite may have been one of the 'symptoms' of the modern world, where there is a ready ground for insecurity, disintegration, anxious moral identity, explosions, and death. All these features of the modern world appear in Stevenson's work, where his own fears and 'skepticism' are reflected in the society he wrote about.[186] In the 'Prologue of the Cigar Divan', Stevenson writes,

> 'This is a very pathetic sight, Mr. Godall,' said Somerset: 'three futiles.'
> 'A character of this crowded age,' returned the salesman.
> 'Sir,' said Somerset, 'I deny that the age is crowded; I will admit one fact, and one fact only: that I am futile, that he is futile, and that we are all three as futile as the devil. What am I? I have smattered law, smattered letters, smattered geography, smattered mathematics; I have even a working knowledge of judicial astrology; and here I stand, all London roaring by the street's end, as impotent as any baby […] I should simply resolve into my elements like an unstable mixture.[187]

Stevenson unreservedly mocks the bombers, especially when, in *The Dynamiter*, M'Guire tries to give a bomb to a little girl who is playing in the street, or when he panics regarding the little time he has before the bomb explodes. He runs to

[184] Sandison, 'A World Made for Liars', p. 149.
[185] Linda Hutcheon, *Narcissistic Narrative: The Metafictional Paradox* (Waterloo, Ont.: Wilfred Laurie University Press, 1980; repr. New York: Methuen, 1984), p. 139.
[186] Sandison, 'A World Made for Liars', pp. 144-45.
[187] Stevenson, *The Dynamiter*, p. 5.

the Embankment and then throws the bomb into the river, but he falls immediately after it, due to his strong throw, and dies.

The Dynamiter is all about explosions, but it is not only about exploding bombs, because it is also about exploding situations, moral conflicts, and skepticism. The literal explosions in the story are three and they develop the story's main events. For example, the first bomb in the story is the one that takes place in 'The Squire of Dames'. Edward Challoner, the first of the three characters whose adventures form the story line of *The Dynamiter*, passes near a laboratory and suddenly hears a huge explosion. This happens to introduce Challoner to Miss Fonblanque with whom he experiences his own adventure and endeavour to seek truth; however, at the end, he finds this truth to be shocking because he is being deceived throughout the adventure. He receives his blow when, after his hard endeavour to help Miss Fonblanque, he accidentally reads the letter she sends with him to deliver it to someone, and in which she writes,

> 'Dear M'Guire, – it is certain your retreat is known. We have just had another failure, clockwork thirty hours too soon, with the usual humiliating result. Zero is quite disheartened. We are all scattered, and I could find no one but the *solemn ass* who brings you this and the money. I would love to see your meeting. – Ever yours,
>
> SHINING EYE.'[188]

Challoner discovers that everything he has been told is a lie, and that even the name on the letter is not Miss Fonblanque's, if ever this were her real name. He was shocked by knowing the truth despite the fact that he doubted her

[188] Stevenson, *The Dynamiter*, p. 77.

story from the beginning: 'It was an excellent story; and it might be true, but he believed it was not.'[189]

The second main explosion is the one that demolishes the Superfluous Mansion, and which obliges Paul Somerset, the character who carries out the second adventure, to take Zero to the train station where he wants to send him away without the least respect or sympathy for his inhuman deeds. Zero's way to the train station is his passage towards his fate; his life ends in the final and most significant blast of the book. This explosion is not expected, unlike the other planned bombings. It also costs the life of the person who has started the whole thing. Zero is the one who starts inventing the bombs out of dynamite and tries them in every reachable place he could find.

There is an Islamic belief which emphasises the idea that killers will be killed and mostly in the same way they commit their murder. Here, Zero, the dynamiter, dies in a dynamite explosion; he experiences death in the same way he wants for others and he is terminated by the terminating method he invents. This, moreover, leads us to the crime and punishment concept, where he is punished by his own deeds and no one kills him but himself.

One of the 'moral explosions' in the story is when Somerset decides to inform the police about Zero after he is full of doubts, but he hesitates, because, on the one hand he feels, and believes, the guilt Zero expresses, and on the other hand, he has given his word to him. The other one is, of course, when the superfluous mansion is destroyed; Somerset intends to inform the authorities about Zero, but then he decides to let him go, take the train and never come back:

[189] Stevenson, *The Dynamiter*, p. 63.

> ‘I will either see you safe on board a train or safe in gaol’
> ‘Somerset, this is unlike you!’ said the chymist. ‘You surprise me, Somerset.’
> ‘I shall considerably more surprise you at the next police office,’ returned Somerset, with something bordering on rage. ‘For on one point my mind is settled: either I see you packed off to America, brick and all, or else you dine in prison.’[190]

Stevenson continues to question the issues of modernity; he focuses in the following passage on the growing fields of knowledge in the budding age with the mysteries, fears, and yet, promising expectations that it carries. Mr Godall asks,

> ‘Do you know nothing, Mr. Somerset?’
> ‘Not even law,’ was the reply.
> ‘The answer is worthy of a sage,’ returned Mr. Godall.[191]

Mr Godall goes on that, ‘[b]y the defects of your education, you are more disqualified to be a working man than to be the ruler of an empire.’[192] Somerset says,

> [T]he man of the world is a great feature of this age; he is possessed of an extraordinary mass and variety of knowledge; he is everywhere at home; he has seen life in all its phases; and it is impossible but that this great habit of existence should bear fruit.[193]

Amidst all the fear and vigilance of the end of century and the invading modern world with its disadvantages, there is a gleam of hope. In Challoner’s words: ‘you have no plan, no knowledge; you know not where to seek for a beginning’,[194] one can feel the longing for new beginnings. Knowledge and

[190] Stevenson, *The Dynamiter*, p. 251.
[191] Stevenson, *The Dynamiter*, p. 3.
[192] Stevenson, *The Dynamiter*, p. 4.
[193] Stevenson, *The Dynamiter*, pp. 5-6.
[194] Stevenson, *The Dynamiter*, p. 8.

education have become everyone's; it is no more possessed by groups of people of high literary or social ranks, but it has become available for all the people from all the social classes and educational, as well as, cultural backgrounds. Additionally, the modern age facilities have shortened the distance between people who are way apart from each other and made life more convenient to everyone. People, moreover, started to have the chance of travelling and viewing different parts of the world; they started to encounter the 'outer' world, the 'global' world, after they were restricted to their 'local' world.

Form and Narrative

The areas under discussion above are presented in an interesting mould and a captivating frame. In the first book, *New Arabian Nights*, Stevenson clearly embraces the frame narrative technique of *The Arabian Nights*. Stevenson's story-within-a-story narrative frames seven main stories: three of which are in 'The Suicide Club', and four are in 'The Rajah's Diamond'. All the stories are connected by the Arabian narrator, or the 'Arabian author', as Stevenson calls him, who plays the role of the frame narrator, or the omniscient narrator.[195] This Arabian author could be seen as Stevenson's Shahrazad who links the stories, and at the end of each story he brings the reader back to reality, just as Shahrazad brings Shahrayar back to reality from the long night's story, but she reminds him – especially at the beginning of each story – that she is in fact telling him a story. When Shahrazad comes to end each of her stories, she always reminds Shahrayar that the morning has come and that she has to cease narrating until the next night. She always brings him back from the fictional

[195] See Menikoff, p. 343.

world she creates for him into their real world, where he is the ruler who has to wait for the next night to come in order for him to travel in an ocean of new fictional adventures, to be woken again by Shahrazad's cliffhanger every night.

Stevenson includes a story-within-a-story up to three or four times. For instance, in 'The Story of the Physician and the Saratoga Trunk', the physician tells his story within the frame story, then the reader engages in the story of the dead body and almost forgets about the mystery lady with whom Silas has an appointment. Then, at the end of the story, and after a long narrative of different stories, we know that the dead person is Colonel Geraldine's younger brother, and the murderer is the President of the Suicide Club of the very first story. Not only is the narrative shift exciting in this story, but also the suspense element and the 'cliffhanger' in, and between, stories attracts the reader right from the beginning till the end.[196] The stories are full of enigmas; even the conclusions are full of surprises and unexpected endings. In the suicide club, for example, it is very unexpected to see a young man entering the bar and distributing the tarts in such a way; the reader is caught by the narrative and wants to go on reading in order to know why this young man acts in such a manner; why he distributes the tarts in mockery, and why he eats all the rejected tarts no matter how numerous they are. I am giving this example here because the 'Story of the Young Man and the Cream Tarts' is a beginning and an ending at the same time, as Alan Sandison argues, for although it is the opening story of the first book, it 'disappears without trace into the rest of the fretwork.'[197]

[196] I am referring here to 'excitement' and 'suspense' because they form a major aspect of Shahrazad's narratives, and which give her stories her special imprint. This is the case in the narrative of 'The Suicide Club': the narrative shift is very *Arabian Nights*-like.
[197] Sandison, 'Arabesque', p. 92.

By using the frame narrator, Stevenson maintains traditional narrative techniques. His omniscient narrator is quite controlling; yet his originality comes from his handling of the Arabian author and the way he gets rid of him at the end. His adoption of the story-within-story technique is one of the ways he balances the traditional with the modern. In other words, this technique is as old as *The Arabian Nights*, yet, it always gives regeneration and revitalisation, that is, a touch of modernity to the text. It makes the text, and sometimes the writer him/herself, very much of his/her time, because this contradicts the traditional idea of the narrator who has to be a first person or a frame narrator only. The multiple narrators are clearest in *New Arabian Nights* and *The Dynamiter*. Stevenson stands midpoint between the writers who adopted the traditional first person narrator, and the modernist who started to use the multiple narrations until, gradually, the voice of the narrator reached a point of unity with characters and finally renounced the narrator's major role.[198] Thus, what also contributes to Stevenson's 'modern traditionalism' is his combination of some traditional techniques with modern issues. In other words, Stevenson tackles modernist subject matters by using a traditional plot-based story line. Although he uses multiple narrators, his main focus remains on the event rather than on the character; unlike the modernist short story which is interested in the psychological and the subjective study of characters and their psychology. In the heavily-plotted stories of *New Arabian Nights*, such as 'The Suicide Club', 'The Rajah's Diamond', as well as *The Dynamiter*, a point of complexity is reached where the reader thinks that there is no way out, until a solution surprises the

[198] See Hanson, *Short Stories and Short Fictions*, p. 1.

reader.[199] Thus, his short fiction follows the line of the 'plotted story' which was 'set against the less well structured, often psychological story; the "slice-of-life" [to which] the stories of the modernists (those of Joyce, Woolf and Mansfield in particular) are usually said to belong.'[200]

In *New Arabian Nights*, *The Dynamiter*, and *The Island Nights' Entertainments*, for example, the reader is captivated by the story itself, the plot, the subject, the exotic backgrounds, and the supernatural element. The reader awaits what the action is going to be without being concerned with the character's inner feelings, mood, or psychology.[201]

The modernist short story is said to focus on characterisation from an internal, psychological point of view that leads to what is called a 'sudden spiritual manifestation',[202] or what Clare Hanson calls a 'blazing moment',[203] and which is seen by modernists as 'the key to characterisation.' [204] In Stevenson's short stories there is no deep psychological study of characters, neither is there a 'sudden spiritual manifestation'; rather, there is a certain line of characterisation following the plot, and having ordinary, appropriate, and reasonable reactions to the events that take place. Yet there are moments of moral revelation. An example is when Somerset discovers the truth behind Zero after he spends some time with him and is committed 'morally' to him as acquaintance. Somerset feels that to let Zero persist with his explosions would be immoral, because to hide a crime is a crime in itself. Alternatively, he cannot

[199] A. L. Bader 'claims that the modern short story, despite its apparent lack of structure, actually derives its form from a more conventional, plot-bound story type'. See Head, p. 13.
[200] Head, p. 16.
[201] For more information about the difference between the traditional and modernist stories, see Clare Hanson, *Short Stories and Short Fictions, 1880-1980* (1985). See also Dominic Head, *The Modernist Short Story: A Study in Theory and Practice* (1992).
[202] Quoted in Head, p. 18.
[203] Quoted in Head, p. 19.
[204] Head, p. 18.

betray the person who confides in him. This is a moral crisis for Somerset, who chooses a compromise solution by sending Zero away.

Not only does Stevenson adopt the narrative form of *The Arabian Nights*, but also he relies on other devices in his recreation of the work. Mystery is present from the very beginning of the stories. For example, when Prince Florizel and Colonel Geraldine, out of curiosity and love of adventure, ask the young man of the cream tarts what he aims at by his behaviour, almost all of his answers are mysterious: 'There is every reason why I should not tell you my story. Perhaps that is just the reason why I am going to do so.' He then goes on, 'My name […] I shall keep to myself. My age is not essential to the narrative.'[205] In 'The Story of the Physician and the Saratoga Trunk', as another example, the reader is eager to know the identity of the mysterious 'supposed' lady who sends Silas a strange and unexpected letter in order to meet him. Again, the same mysterious lady, after she and Silas meet (and when the reader is assured that the letter indeed comes from a lady, and that the whole story is not a trap), she gives him directions to meet her in secret and in a very discreet way; she says, 'I am not my own mistress. I dare not ask you to visit me at my own house, for I am watched by jealous eyes.' She adds, 'I am older than you, although so much weaker; and while I trust in your courage and determination, I must employ my own knowledge of the world for our mutual benefit.'[206] After the reader knows who the lady is, he wants to know why she is acting in this way and what is behind her. So, whenever an enigma is solved, another one appears, and the

[205] Stevenson, *New Arabian Nights*, p. 8.
[206] Stevenson, *New Arabian Nights*, p. 58.

reader is captivated until the end of the story, and sometimes, to the end of the entire group of stories.

Stevenson, as a conventional writer, does not leave the ends of his stories open as in the closure-less modernist short story; he closes his stories, regardless of the reader's expectations. In the two collections of *New Arabian Nights* as well as in *The Island Nights' Entertainments,* along with other stories, such as *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, Stevenson maintains the traditional line by putting an end to his own stories rather than leaving them open; however, the endings he chooses are mostly unexpected by, and surprising to, the reader.

In Stevenson's short fiction, especially in *New Arabian Nights* and *The Island Nights' Entertainment*, a handful of events could happen in a day or overnight, but they carry the significance of a year or more: 'It is sometimes claimed that the unit of time in modernist fiction is the day, whereas in nineteenth-century fiction it is the year.'[207] For example, *New Arabian Nights* consists of two chain stories, 'The Suicide Club' on the one hand, which includes three stories; and on the other hand, 'The Rajah's Diamond', which includes four stories. Although the stories are all linked by the Arabian author and have a closed ending to each chain, each story takes place either overnight, or during one day or two and then it has its resolution. The problems presented in the stories are mostly solved by Prince Florizel. This brings Stevenson's work closer towards the modernist short story in which significant events happen over a short unit of time, such as a day, or simply a few hours.

In *New Arabian Nights*, the Arabian author appears to remind the readers that they are reading a story and living in a 'fictional' world. After each story,

[207] Head, p. 5.

the words of the Arabian author are seen in italics. For example, after the first story, Stevenson's Arabian author says,

> *Here* (says my Arabian author) *ends* THE STORY OF THE YOUNG MAN WITH THE CREAM TARTS, *who is now a comfortable householder in Wigmore Street* […] *Those who care to pursue the adventures of Prince Florizel and the President of the Suicide Club, may read the* HISTORY OF THE PHYSICIAN AND THE SARATOGA TRUNK.[208]

This is the first time the Arabian author appears in *New Arabian Nights*. The comments of the Arabian author are maintained throughout the stories. They always appear between the end of each story and the beginning of another until the last story. The very last time the Arabian author appears is when he ends the story before the last:

> (*Here,* says my Arabian, *the thread of events is finally diverted from* THE HOUSE WITH THE GREEN BLINDS. *One more adventure,* he adds, *and we have done with* THE RAJAH'S DIAMOND. *That last link in the chain is known among the inhabitants of Baghdad by the name of* THE ADVENTURE OF PRINCE FLORIZEL AND A DETECTIVE.)[209]

However, the Arabian author never ends the last story. At the end of the very last story of the sequence Stevenson and the Arabian author seem to integrate in one voice as they conclude the story. In the second part of the same paragraph, it is clear that the actual author discards the Arabian author 'topsy-turvy into space'[210] and he completes the story himself with no reliance on the Arabian author, nor on the italics. In other words, it seems that Stevenson becomes the frame and omniscient narrator who completes the story according to the rules he

[208] Stevenson, *New Arabian Nights*, p. 38.
[209] Stevenson, *New Arabian Nights*, p. 175.
[210] Stevenson, *New Arabian Nights*, p. 183.

sets himself as a writer, reminding the readers that they are reading a story.[211] This, I argue, could be considered as one of the points at which Stevenson's stories combine modernism and traditionalism. On the one hand, they may seem to be contradicting the modernist narrator who merges with the characters until his voice may not be distinguished sometimes,[212] as the story appears to be continued in one voice. On the other hand, however, this one voice may be considered as a merger between the voices of both the narrator and the author; suggesting the free indirect discourse of modernism as '[i]t reflects in a unique way *both* the narrator's voice and the voice of the person speaking':[213]

> [The free indirect style helps the reader to] see things through the character's eyes and language but also through the author's eyes and language, too. We inhabit omniscience and partiality at once. A gap opens between author and character, and the bridge – which is free indirect style itself – between them simultaneously closes that gap and draws attention to its distance.[214]

Two different voices become one; the reader knows that they are different, but only one voice develops to direct the story throughout. The free indirect discourse also enables the reader, sometimes, to see and know more than the character does.[215] The reader here, although seeing through the character's eyes, has a fuller view of what is happening inside the character's mind as well as in its surroundings. This is what James Wood describes as the 'dramatic irony' in modernism which is equal to the 'unreliable first person narrator'.[216]

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[211] See Menikoff, p. 343.
[212] Head, p. 19.
[213] Jakob Lothe, *Narrative in Fiction and Film: An Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 46-47.
[214] James Wood, *How Fiction Works* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2008), p. 11.
[215] Wood, p. 11.
[216] Wood, p. 11.

Stevenson uses the Arabian author for the last time when he introduces the last story, but this last story of *New Arabian Nights* is concluded by the author. However, the reader does not get a clear idea if this is the author alone speaking, or both the Arabian author along with the actual author. The last paragraph of the book goes as follows:

> Not long after, the marriage of Francis Scrymgeour and Miss Vandeleur was celebrated in great privacy; and the Prince acted on that occasion as groom's man […] As for the Prince, that sublime person, having now served his turn, may go, along with the *Arabian Author*, topsy-turvy into space. But if the reader insists on more specific information, I am happy to say that a recent revolution hurled him from the throne of Bohemia, in consequence of his continued absence and edifying neglect of public business; and that his Highness now keeps a cigar store in Rupert Street […] I go there from time to time to smoke and have a chat, and find him as great a creature as in the days of his prosperity.[217]

The author continues the telling of what happened until he concludes the story; however, it is not clear that the actual author, Stevenson, is the one who knows those characters personally and visits the Prince. It could also be the voice of the frame narrator to whom Stevenson returns at the end of the story. Although the Arabian author is disposed of, there is still a sense of a merger between the author's voice and a narrator's one, which takes us back to the 'omniscience and partiality at once' of the modernist free indirect discourse.

According to Barry Menikoff, Stevenson is 'a magician who, like the fabled Arabian, could make genies appear from lamps, and figures fly through the air on carpets.'[218] In using the 'Arabian author', as Menikoff argues, lies Stevenson's simplicity and originality. In other words, linking the seven stories in a string by using a 'simple narrative device', returning to the frame narrator or

[217] Stevenson, *New Arabian Nights*, p. 183.
[218] Menikoff, p. 344.

the actual author at the end, and '[turning] the Arabian author into an invention and the narrator into a reality, or as much a reality as the reader cares to attribute to him,'[219] is a mark of inventiveness and modernity. The way of 'play[ing] with narrative/linguistic technique is of course unsurprising to the reader of late twentieth-century fiction […] for whom Stevenson's method would appear wonderfully post-modern.'[220] Menikoff's reading suggests that Stevenson was quite ahead of his age, modern in his traditionalism.

Stevenson's disposal of the Arabian author and the Prince at the end of the stories, by diminishing the Arabian author and turning the Prince into a tobacconist, is a good example of Stevenson's play with the reader's expectation. The main point is that their story must end, just as 'all things come to an end,' and that nothing earthly is eternal. The Prince gets rid of the diamond, just as Stevenson gets rid of him and the Arabian author; this, in turn, leads the reader to think that this might be one of the ways God, or Providence, ends the lives of the living.[221] Stevenson's disposal of the Arabian author at the end of *New Arabian Nights* not only indicates the 'fictionality' of the author and his ability to manipulate his characters, narrators, as well as readers, but also it strengthens the reader's mistrust in all authors or narrators. This leads us to think of Stevenson's method of deflating the readers' expectations and jolting them at the end of his stories. Menikoff expresses this idea best as he suggests that 'art is not much different from life, and nothing lasts forever.[222] To Menikoff, although the reader, especially the nineteenth-century reader, 'insists on a conclusion', it never comes in the way we expect. According to Menikoff, Stevenson views that

[219] Menikoff, p. 343.
[220] Menikoff, p. 343.
[221] Menikoff, p. 356.
[222] Menikoff, p. 356.

imagination is always born out of imagination; thus, fiction cannot be but fiction, and it is not to be confused with real life.[223]

Valerie Shaw considers that the endings Stevenson applies to his short fiction are unsatisfactory:

> Stevenson's practice does not always bear out his insight into formal matters; even in short pieces, he tends to be better at beginnings than endings, and relatively few of his stories have the kind of thematic and narrative drive that make the conclusion a satisfying inevitable consequence of the opening.[224]

W. H. Pollock, the editor of *The Saturday Review* from 1883 to 1894, describes the way Stevenson handles the character of Prince Florizel: Stevenson suddenly turns 'the dazzling figure from hero […] into the common type of refugee'.[225] H. C. Bunner notes something similar when he suggests that:

> The new author […] juggles with his readers and with his characters. He dresses up a puppet and tells you it is a man, and you believe it, and hold your breath when the sword is at the puppet's breast. Then he holds up the stripped manikin and smiles maliciously.[226]

So, not only is Stevenson playing with his characters, but also with his readers. Another opinion that serves this idea is Robert Kiely's:

> [Stevenson] insists upon presenting an illusion, often a very compelling one, and then turning to the reader and saying 'This is fraud. No one word of it is true.' He is the magician who stops in the middle of his most convincing act to show his audience where the trap-door is.[227]

Linda Hutcheon has a contributing viewpoint:

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[223] Menikoff, p. 356.
[224] Shaw, p. 30.
[225] Quoted in Sandison, "Two-fold and Multiple Natures", p. 22.
[226] Quoted in Sandison, "Two-fold and Multiple Natures", p. 22.
[227] Robert Kiely, *Robert Louis Stevenson and the Fiction of Adventure* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1967), p. 123.

> By reminding the reader of the book's [*New Arabian Nights*] identity as artifice, the text parodies his expectations, his desire for verisimilitude, and forces him to an awareness of his role in creating a universe of fiction.[228]

Not only does Stevenson surprise his readers by disappointing their expectations, but also he bewilders them by his own stance in both his *New Arabian Nights*, since, as a 'gymnast', he keeps re-locating himself, because he wants to 'produce the unexpected, that which could not logically be anticipated by those accustomed to the yoke of rules.'[229]

In the above quotations there is apparent dissatisfaction with the endings of Stevenson's works. There is a feeling of disappointment because the endings do not match the expectations. Critics might have expected a happy closure copying *The Arabian Nights* exactly as they have expected to read a work that imitates *The Arabian Nights* as soon as they have read the title.

Despite the positive opinions, such as Frank Swinnerton's, who views the surprise element that Stevenson uses as delightful; readers expect more. Swinnerton describes the stories of *New Arabian Nights* as having 'the quality of surprise with extreme gusto.'[230] Stevenson knew how to entertain the late nineteenth-century reader and to keep the suspense rising by always presenting the unexpected and the unfamiliar to the reader. For example, it is known that the traditional hero leaves his luxury life to experience the poor before returning to his original state. However, the unconventional step that Stevenson makes is in dethroning the Prince and turning him into a tobacconist who never returns to

[228] Hutcheon, p. 39.
[229] J. A. Barbey D'Aurevilly, *Of Dandyism and of George Brummell*, trans. by Douglas Ainslie (London: Dent, 1897), p. 102. See also, Sandison, 'Two-fold and Multiple Natures', p. 28.
[230] Swinnerton, pp. 114-15.

his royal position.[231] In other words, the reader expects that the last night of Shahrazad's storytelling would be one of reconciliation between her and Shahrayar on the one hand, and between Shahrayar and himself on the other hand. In short, readers may expect the 'happily ever after' end of the *One Thousand and One Nights*. Prince Florizel's transformation into a tobacconist is deflating by comparison. Stevenson's apparent abandonment of the Arabian author marks a departure from Shahrazad's omniscience in the 'original'. This is one of the ways in which Stevenson applies the style of *The Arabian Nights* but to produce 'new' work, and to emphasise the novelty of *NEW Arabian Nights* and *MORE NEW Arabian Nights*.

This chapter has worked to extend current readings of Stevenson in terms of modernism and modernity by revealing their basis in a putatively 'traditional' narrative: *The Arabian Nights*. The work he produced, especially in *New Arabian Nights*, *More New Arabian Nights: The Dynamiter*, and *The Island Nights' Entertainments*, invites an intertextual reading of non-European culture and literature, which challenges a narrowly European conception of the modern. As Peter Childs says, 'many modernist writers were in their different ways hybrids, mongrel selves moved by both the voyage out and the voyage in.'[232] Stevenson captures what Edward Said called the 'Voyage In'[233] of *The Arabian Nights* as he renders the modern Western metropolis in terms of its tales.[234] Many critics, including Said, suggest that modernism represents a turning point in which 'other' cultures were starting to affect 'Western art forms'. The novelty

[231] Honaker, p. 305.
[232] Childs, p. 63.
[233] See Virginia Woolf's *The Voyage Out* (1915).
[234] Childs, p. 38.

and 'newness' of Stevenson's short fiction is the outcome of a blend between and combination of different and various cultures.[235]

What Stevenson created and named *New Arabian Nights* is a '*genre* which does not really exist outside his work [… because] [i]t is partly like the atmosphere of a dream; in which so many incongruous things cause no surprise. It is partly the real atmosphere of London at night; it is partly the unreal atmosphere of Baghdad.'[236] Stevenson's short stories were on one level a renovation of *The Arabian Nights*, adopting its style and structure, but at the same time renewing its content and moulding it according to what served the time in which he lived.

Harry Desborough, in the 'Epilogue of the Cigar Divan', in *More New Arabian Nights*, praises his wife's captivating ability to narrate: 'She tells wonderful stories, too; better than a book.'[237] The narrator of *The Arabian Nights* says, '*But morning overtook Shahrazad, and she lapsed into silence.*'[238] Shahrazad herself says, 'I see day […] and must leave off; but the best of the story is yet to come.'[239] I would like to sum up by saying that Stevenson's integration of the form and content of *The Arabian Nights* captures the dual desires of a reading public on the cusp of modernism. It articulates the modernity of the period, while appealing to, *and renewing*, traditional ideas about storytelling that were one response to this modernity. Paradoxically then,

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[235] Childs, p. 40.
[236] Chesterton, pp. 168-69.
[237] Stevenson, *The Dynamiter*, p. 261.
[238] Husain Haddawy, *The Arabian Nights: Based on the Text of the Fourteenth-Century Syrian Manuscript*, ed. by Muhsin Mahdi (New York: Norton, 1990; repr. New York: Everyman's Library, 1992), p. 18; subsequent refrains occur after each story in *The Arabian Nights*.
[239] *Arabian Nights' Entertainments*, ed. by Robert L. Mack (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 21.

looking back to an earlier narrative becomes in Stevenson not merely an escape from the past, but a means of envisioning the future.

Shahrazad in Fairyland:
Oscar Wilde and *The Arabian Nights*

Fairies are in your moon-light.

Leigh Hunt

Oscar Wilde's short stories, and his fairy tales in particular, have been critically neglected. Even less critical attention has been given to their repeated connections with the stories of *The Arabian Nights*. This chapter hopes to highlight some of these connections in an attempt to contribute to the large field of comparative studies on the relationship between *The Arabian Nights* and the Western literature. Wilde, to my knowledge, is one of the authors who have not been included in such studies, despite the intimate links that I foreground and forge in this chapter.

Wilde is perhaps best known today as a playwright; he is also well known for *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890), and *De Profundis* (1896-7).[1] His short stories, or what are known as his fairy tales, have been relatively neglected. In this chapter, I propose a study of Wilde's short stories/fairy tales in relation to *The Arabian Nights* in terms of the general atmosphere, style, and the fairy-tale elements they contain. I am going to work mainly on what has been known as Wilde's two fairy-tale collections: *The Happy Prince and Other Stories* (1888)[2]

[1] R. S. Pathak, *Oscar Wilde: A Critical Study* (Allahabad: Lokbharti Publications, 1976), p. 91.
[2] *The Happy Prince and other Tales* had different definitions in Wilde's letters: 'It is only a collection of short stories, and is really meant for children'; 'They are studies in prose, put for Romance's sake into a fanciful form: meant partly for children, and partly for those who have

which contain 'The Happy Prince', 'The Nightingale and the Rose', 'The Selfish Giant', 'The Devoted Friend', and 'The Remarkable Rocket'; and *A House of Pomegranates* (1891) which contains 'The Young King', 'The Birthday of the Infanta', 'The Fisherman and his Soul', and 'The Star-Child'. I will also be studying 'The Canterville Ghost' (1887), 'The Sphinx without a Secret' and 'The Model Millionaire' in the collection *Lord Arthur Savile's Crime and Other Stories* (1891). Central to this discussion will be Wilde's 'The Fisherman and his Soul' which I am going to examine in the light of *The Arabian Nights*' 'The Fisherman and the Genie', 'The Story of the Enchanted King', 'The Story of Abdallah the Fisherman and Abdallah the Merman', and 'The Story of Sindbad the Sailor'. In what follows, I will try to draw attention to the largely ignored points of resemblance between Wilde's short fiction and *The Arabian Nights*, resemblances that have been written out when tracing the origins of Wilde's short stories, or when comparing them with other 'influential' stories. As with Robert Louis Stevenson and Joseph Conrad, Oscar Wilde's stories have been enframed in a European circle and circuit. I will attempt to move beyond this circle by extending the study of Wilde's short fiction to the tales of *The Arabian Nights*.

Both John Stokes and Philippe Jullian have linked Wilde with William Beckford's *Vathek* (1786). Stokes offers an 'intertextual reading' of the two;[3] and Jullian refers to Wilde's tracking a line of aristocratic tradition used by various authors among whom Beckford is central.[4] What is less well attended to

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kept childlike faculties of wonder and joy'; 'my little book of fairy stories'. Quoted in Peter Raby, *Oscar Wilde* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 50.

[3] See John Stokes, *Oscar Wilde: Myths, Miracles, and Imitations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 33.

[4] See Philippe Jullian, *Oscar Wilde* (London: Constable, 1969), p. 247.

is the fact that Beckford is famously known for his references to *The Arabian Nights*.[5] In a comment on Wilde's famous poem *The Sphinx*, Jullian remarks: 'How near the poet comes to Scheherazade in the exoticism of the names he chooses'.[6] The speaker in this poem cries out: 'away to Egypt' […] the land of miracles and mysteries – the neo-platonists and the *Thousand and One Nights*.'[7] In *Salomé,* 'Oscar mixes all the treasures of the antique Orient';[8] he says: 'I have jewels hidden in this place – […] jewels that are marvellous.'[9] This evidence of Wilde's admiration of the 'antique' Orient, provides a productive context for thinking about *The Arabian Nights* stories as those jewels that are full of marvels and wonder. In comparison with Stevenson, these references are relatively indirect and underground, yet they offer just as fruitful a background for considering Wilde's short fiction.

Wilde was regarded a gifted storyteller. Wilde's son, Vyvyan, never forgot how his father used to tell him and his brother fairy stories when they were children: their father 'would keep us quiet by telling us fairy stories, or tales of adventure, of which he had a never-ending supply […] He told us all his own written fairy stories suitably adapted for our young minds, and a great many others as well.'[10] Wilde's children were not the only ones who recognised his mastery in storytelling. W. B. Yeats highly values *The Happy Prince and Other Tales* in terms of its storytelling, and he prefers it to the 'written' *A House of*

[5] See *The Arabian Nights in English Literature: Studies in the Reception of the Thousand and One Nights into British Culture*, ed. by Peter Caracciolo (London: The Macmillan Press, 1988), and *The Arabian Nights in Historical Context: Between East and West*, ed. by Saree Makdisi and Felicity Nussbaum (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).
[6] Jullian, p. 251.
[7] Jullian, p. 251.
[8] Jullian, p. 248.
[9] Quoted in Jullian, p. 248.
[10] Quoted in Raby, p. 49.

Pomegranates.[11] George Bernard Shaw describes Wilde as an 'incomparably great as a *raconteur,* conversationalist and a personality.'[12] R. S. Pathak, also, suggests that 'Wilde's talk […] reflected the chief merits of his thought and work. Its core consisted of stories'.[13] This was expressed in the words of Wilde himself: 'I cannot think otherwise than in stories'.[14] Wilde was also described by Harold Child as 'an admirable story-teller, with the pen no less than with the tongue.'[15] Peter Raby, in *Oscar Wilde* (1988), stresses the importance of Wilde's storytelling and suggests:

> The stories, whether satirical or mystical, are marvellously shaped for transmission by the spoken voice, and it is easy to understand how they evolved through numerous performed versions and variations before being constricted to print. Their intrinsic value, however, is far greater than merely that of traces or deposits of Wilde's conversational brilliance and charm. With their qualities of economy, clarity, and a capacity both to surprise and delight, they constitute a substantial achievement.[16]

Wilde, somewhat like Shahrazad, is an entrancing storyteller conveying narratives decorated with the 'mystical' and the 'marvellous'. Both share the key elements for successful storytelling: 'surprise' and 'delight'. Both Wilde's stories and the book of *One Thousand and One Nights* were first 'transmi[tted] by the spoken voice', and both 'evolved through numerous performed versions and variations before being constricted to print.' Speech, in Wilde's stories, like Shahrazad's, is the most powerful, and 'the spoken is primary'.[17] In 'The

[11] Raby, p. 49.
[12] Quoted in Pathak, p. 37.
[13] Pathak, p. 37.
[14] Quoted in Pathak, p. 37.
[15] These words of Child's were said in the *Times Literary Supplement*, 18 June 1908, on Wilde's *Collected Works*; quoted in *Oscar Wilde: The Critical Heritage*, ed. by Karl Beckson (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1970), p. 305.
[16] Raby, pp. 50-51.
[17] Jerusha McCormack, 'Wilde's fiction(s)', in *The Cambridge Companion to Oscar Wilde*, ed. by Peter Raby (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 103.

Fisherman and his Soul', the supremacy of words is strongly present. The Soul leads the Fisherman to his fatal destiny merely by words.[18] In 'The Remarkable Rocket', 'speech itself is granted the power to counter, if not, transform, reality.'[19] The oral tale here plays a significant role in comparing Wilde's tales with *The Arabian Nights*' narratives.

Before I develop my argument, I would like to briefly sketch some background information about the fairy tales in *The Arabian Nights* in general: their categorisation, their divisions, and the topics they handle; and clarify how I will use them to read Wilde.

Oestrup provided the first account of the fairy-tale characteristics of *The Arabian Nights*. In fairy tales of both Persian and Egyptian origin, the supernatural is clearly present, but it is more independent in the Persian tales, where it moves the plot more freely, as it takes charge of it. Meanwhile, in the Egyptian tales, the supernatural element is more controlled by magical objects that do the work for the character that possesses them. The third type of fairy tales in *The Arabian Nights* includes the tales of Baghdadian origin, but which do not contain a supernatural element.[20] Mia Gerhardt argues that the fairy tales in *The Arabian Nights* are classified as belonging to three blocks: the demon stories; the voyage-/quest-stories; and the luck-/charm-stories.[21] The demon stories are considered as old fairy tales. They consist of different kinds of demons which play a major role in the plot, but which remain inferior to the human power in general. Some of the famous examples of this block of stories

[18] McCormack, p. 103.
[19] McCormack, p. 103.
[20] Mia Gerhardt, *The Art of Story-Telling: A Literary Study of the Thousand and One Nights* (Leiden: Brill, 1963), p. 279.
[21] Gerhardt, p. 280.

are, ‘The Merchant and the Genie’, ‘The Fisherman and the Genie’, and ‘The Seventh Voyage of Sindbad the Sailor’.

The Second block consists of the voyage-stories or the quest-stories, such as ‘The Last Voyage of Sindbad the Sailor’, ‘Abdallah the Fisherman and Abdallah the Merman’, and parts of ‘The City of Brass’, in which the major role is that of the protagonist who travels and wanders, and meets the supernatural creatures in their own lands and founds good relations with them. In some stories, the protagonist marries a supernatural creature and continues his[22] adventures.

The last group of fairy tales consists of the stories that deal with luck or charm. During the adventures of the hero, he comes across certain objects that bring luck, such as a certain talisman, the wonderful lamp, or the flying carpet; or he becomes lucky in his journey in general. Such stories are ‘Alaa Addin and the Magic Lamp’, ‘Ali Baba’, and ‘The Ebony Horse’.

Wilde’s fairy tales share resemblances with all three blocks of *The Arabian Nights* tales as described by Gerhardt. According to Gerhardt, one of the distinguishing features of *The Arabian Nights* fairy tales compared to the genre in general, is the absence of a supernatural aspect in the animal stories; an aspect shared by Wilde’s animal stories. Although the animals in the stories can think and talk like humans, and have their own independent world, there are no supernatural or magical incidents that take place in these stories. The only supernatural bird in *The Arabian Nights* stories is the Rukh, but it ‘pertains to travellers’ lore and not to the fairy-tale.’[23]

[22] Most adventures in *The Arabian Nights* are carried out by a male protagonist.
[23] Gerhardt, p. 283.

In the fairy tales of *The Arabian Nights* there is no contact or communication between the animal world and the human world: there are no hints of co-existence among them, and no reciprocal communication is noticed. Wilde's fairy tales seem to be similar in terms of having two separate worlds with no communication between them, despite their clear co-existence. Although there might be slight and incidental communication between human and non-human entities, each entity has its own separate society in which it lives an independent life. For example, in Wilde's 'The Nightingale and the Rose', both the Nightingale and the Rose try to help the little boy who wants to show his love to his schoolmate. Neither the boy nor the girl pays any attention to the non-human creatures, although the bird and the rose sacrifice their lives for the human's sake. Similarly, in his 'The Happy Prince', the Statue and the Swallow provide their lives in order to help humans who notice them at a certain point in the story, but do not communicate with them. In 'The Remarkable Rocket', the same situation is repeated, where, instead of animals, we have speaking objects – the rockets – which try to please the king and celebrate him on his wedding day. They are used by human beings, but there is no contact between the two worlds as in traditional European fairy tales, such as 'Little Red Ridinghood' and 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears', where there is intermingling with, and total mixture of, the human world and the animal world. Thus, although Wilde's fairy tales seem to be more like the standard fairy tale, they have some similarities with those of *The Arabian Nights* in terms of having two separate worlds in which there is no communication.

Although Wilde's short stories, especially the fairy tales, are traced back by many critics (for example Christopher S. Nassaar, Peter Raby, Arthur

Ransome, and Jerusha McCormack) to clear and specific origins, these tend to overlook the intertextual connection between Wilde's stories and the exotic and Eastern atmosphere of *The Arabian Nights*. Arthur Ransome, in *Oscar Wilde: A Critical Study* (1913), shows that Wilde's fairy tales remind him of those of Hans Christian Andersen and he makes several links between the works of the two writers.[24] He makes a particular reference to 'The Star-Child' as having a 'touch' of Flaubert along with Andersen.[25] Ransome refers to Wilde's fairy tales as being obviously moral and didactic. Jerusha McCormack, moreover, relates Wilde's fairy tales, especially the collection of *The Happy Prince and Other Tales* (1888), to Wilde's cultural experiences and influences as an Anglo-Irish writer.[26] However, she describes 'The Fisherman and his Soul' as a story that is 'heavily allusive to the exotic allure of the East. By its means, Wilde defines the "other" of the fairy tale in a mode which might be called Celtic Orientalism.'[27] Nevertheless, she does not refer to any connection with *The Arabian Nights* nor with the Orient, but to the east of Ireland: England. She proposes that England signifies to Wilde the spoiled luxurious life;[28] even W. B. Yeats portrayed the image of the English upper classes in Wilde's eyes as 'the nobles of Baghdad'.[29] McCormack, furthermore, considers 'The Happy Prince' and 'The Young King' as a reflection of the paradox between the wealthy upper classes and the unprivileged and deprived poor classes, and which mirror, to Wilde, the difference between 'the extreme poverty Wilde has seen in post-Famine Ireland',

[24] See Arthur Ransome, *Oscar Wilde: A Critical Study* (London: Methuen, 1913), pp. 91-95.
[25] Ransome, p. 95.
[26] See McCormack, pp. 103-07.
[27] McCormack, pp. 103-04.
[28] McCormack, p. 104.
[29] Quoted in McCormack, p. 104.

and ‘London’s obscene luxury’ during Empire.[30] All the critics abovementioned, however, disregard *The Arabian Nights* as a point of departure.

In an article called ‘Andersen’s “The Shadow” and Wilde’s “The Fisherman and his Soul”: A Case of Influence’, Christopher S. Nassaar not only examines the relationship between Andersen’s ‘The Shadow’ and Wilde’s ‘The Fisherman and his Soul’, but also he emphasises the fact that Wilde is highly influenced by Andersen in almost all his other fairy stories.[31] Nassaar’s viewpoint supports Peter Raby’s view that Wilde’s *The Happy Prince and Other Tales* (1888) is ‘technically and thematically based on Andersen’s works.’[32] Both critics take the view that the characters, such as a prince, a giant, a rocket, and a ‘talking’ rose and nightingale, are ‘stock’ characters presented by Andersen in his fairy tales,[33] neglecting at the same time any other possible connections with *The Arabian Nights*.

Before I develop my argument, I would like to offer a general perception of the connections between *The Arabian Nights* and Wilde’s short fiction. The spirit of *The Arabian Nights* is not limited to Wilde’s fairy tales, it can also be found in Wilde’s other short stories, such as ‘The Canterville Ghost’ (1887) and ‘The Sphinx Without a Secret’ (1891). ‘The Canterville Ghost’ is Wilde’s first short story. It is a social satire which ends in a ‘romantic sentiment’.[34] This story recalls the atmosphere of *The Arabian Nights* in terms of the friendly relationship between a human being and a supernatural creature, like a genie or

[30] McCormack, p. 104.
[31] See Christopher S. Nassaar, ‘Andersen’s “The Shadow” and Wilde’s “The Fisherman and his Soul”: A Case of Influence’, in *Nineteenth-Century Literature*, vol. 50, no. 2 (September, 1995), *JSTOR* <http://www.jstor.com>, 217-224, [accessed 01 April 2009].
[32] Nassaar, p. 217.
[33] Nassaar, p. 217.
[34] Pathak, p. 38.

an Ifrit (demon), for example. It is usually fairies who have an intimate relationship with humans, and not ghosts. The Canterville Ghost is very friendly, although at the beginning of the story he appears to be unwelcoming, but after listening to his story and becoming familiar with him, the reader feels that he is a '[p]oor, poor Ghost,'[35] who is 'so lonely and so unhappy'.[36] Throughout the story, the Ghost becomes very close to Virginia, the young lady of the family, who is a 'little girl of fifteen, lithe and lovely as a fawn, and with a fine freedom in her large blue eyes',[37] and who helps him through his ordeal. In *The Arabian Nights*' 'The Story of the Two Viziers, Nur Al-Din Ali Al-Masri and Badr Al-Din Hasan Al-Basri', for instance, there is a nice relationship between Prince Hasan Badr al-Din and the genies who are good in nature and try to help him in his suffering until his dilemma is solved and he returns safely to his country.[38]

Sometimes, however, secrets are not resolved, such as in the story of 'The Sphinx Without a Secret'. This is a story of a woman who seems to have a secret that she keeps throughout the story. Not only does she appear to have a secret, but also, the nature of her secret is unknown,

> It seemed to me the face of some one who had a secret, but whether that secret was good or evil I could not say. Its beauty was a beauty moulded out of many mysteries – the beauty, in fact, which is psychological, not plastic – and the faint smile that just played across the lips was far too subtle to be really sweet.[39]

[35] Oscar Wilde, *Complete Works*, 3 vols (London: Heron Books & William Collins, 1948; repr., 1963; new edn, 1966), I, 206.
[36] Wilde, 'The Canterville Ghost', p. 206.
[37] Wilde, 'The Canterville Ghost', p. 194.
[38] See Husain Haddawy, *The Arabian Nights: Based on the Text of the Fourteenth Century Syrian Manuscript*, ed. by Muhsin Mahdi (New York: Norton, 1990; repr. New York: Everyman's Library, 1992), pp. 157-205.
[39] Wilde, 'The Sphinx Without A Secret', pp. 215-16.

In ‘The Sphinx Without a Secret’, the heroine, Lady Alroy, is a woman who meets the narrator at a party. A relationship starts to grow between them. Lady Alroy is suspicious, continuously scared, and terribly cautious. After accumulating suspicions from her actions, the narrator follows Lady Alroy to unveil her secret. In the narrator’s adventure of following his beloved, there lies a very common mark of the stories of *The Arabian Nights*. It is the portrayal of a woman who drops her handkerchief, and a lover who picks it up and keeps it; then, and after some adventures that separate the lover from his beloved, she is recognized by her handkerchief. An example from *The Arabian Nights* is the handkerchief scene in the tale of ‘Aziz and Aziza’. The handkerchief is considered as a sign, and a way of communication: ‘nonverbal in human action’.[40] The handkerchief, with its embroidery, symbolises ‘charming women in search of release.’[41] Aziz meets the secret woman with whom he immediately falls in love:

> I seated myself at the upper end of the street to take rest upon a mastabah, and spread beneath me an embroidered handkerchief that I had with me. The heat became oppressive to me, and my forehead perspired, and the drops ran down my face, and I could not wipe the moisture from it with my handkerchief because it was spread beneath me: I was therefore about to take the skirt of my farajeeyeh to wipe with it my cheek, when suddenly a white handkerchief fell upon me from above. This handkerchief was more delicate to the feel than the zephyr; and the sight of it was more pleasant than restoration to the diseased; and I took it in my hand, and, raising my head to see whence it had fallen, my eye met the eye of the female who owned these gazelles; and lo, she was looking out from a lattice in a window of brass. My eye never beheld a person more lovely, and altogether her charms were such as the tongue cannot describe.[42]

[40] Muhsin J. Al-Musawi, *The Islamic Context of the Thousand and One Nights* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), p. 262.
[41] Al-Musawi, p. 269.
[42] Edward William Lane, *The Thousand and One Nights: Commonly called in England 'The Arabian Nights' Entertainment*, ed. by Edward Stanley Poole, 3 vols (London: Routledge, Warne, and Routledge, 1865), I, 482.

He goes on,

> I looked again towards the window; but found it closed: and I waited until sunset; but heard no sound, nor saw any person; so, despairing of seeing her again, I rose from my place, and took the handkerchief with me. I opened it, and the odour of musk was diffused from it, and I was so exhilarated by the scent that I seemed as if I were in paradise.[43]

Aziz's adventure, which takes over a year, starts from this point. The case is similar in Wilde's 'The Sphinx without a Secret'. The narrator says,

> I wanted to get to Piccadilly, and took a short cut through a lot of shabby little streets. Suddenly I saw in front of me Lady Alroy, deeply veiled and walking very fast. On coming to the last house in the street, she went up the steps, took out a latch-key, and let herself in. 'Here is the mystery,' I said to myself; and I hurried on and examined the house […] On the doorstep lay her handkerchief, which she had dropped. I picked it up and put it in my pocket. Then I began to consider what I should do.[44]

After that the narrator continues following his beloved and starts questioning her secret.

Despite the differences in the topics, the technique is quite similar in both stories. The narrative is attractive and engaging right to the end, especially that there is a mystery throughout the stories, and there is a story-within-a story: in 'Aziz and Aziza' the narrator tells his cousin the story of the mysterious woman he sees and falls in love with the moment his eyes catch a sight of her; and in 'The Sphinx Without a Secret', the narrator tells his friend the story of his relationship with the mysterious lady. In many places in the story there are sentences to indicate suspense in the narrative, such as, 'She hesitated for a moment, glanced round to see if any one was near us, and then said, "Yes"'.[45]

[43] Lane, I, 483.
[44] Wilde, 'The Sphinx Without A Secret', p. 217.
[45] Wilde, 'The Sphinx Without A Secret', p. 216.

She adds: '"Please do not write to me here again; I will explain when I see you" […] "There are reasons," she said, "why I cannot receive letters in my own house."'[46] Suspense is performed throughout the story and does not stop even at the ending which is open and successfully engages the reader. The reader thinks that the secret is revealed, but, surprisingly, it appears not:

> 'Then why did Lady Alroy go there?'
> 'My dear Gerald,' I answered, 'Lady Alroy was simply a woman with a mania for mystery. She took these rooms for the pleasure of going there with her veil down, and imagining she was a heroine. She had a passion for secrecy, but she herself was merely a Sphinx without a secret.'
> 'Do you really think so?'
> 'I am sure of it,' I replied.
> He took out the morocco case, opened it, and looked at the photograph. 'I wonder?' he said at last.[47]

The similarities with *The Arabian Nights* are obvious in this story; however, what cannot be overlooked here is that the ending of Wilde's story differs from that of *The Arabian Nights*. As a traditional text, *The Arabian Nights* ends with a resolved closure, and as a late nineteenth-century text, Wilde's story seems to be one of the stories that pave the way for the modernist open-ended texts.

The Arabian Nights in Oscar Wilde's Fairy Gardens

The Happy Prince and Other Tales is the collection that introduced Wilde as a fairy-tale writer.[48] Although the tales of this collection were 'meant partly for children', they were enjoyed by a large number of adults, and by all 'who have kept the child-like faculties of wonder and joy, and who find in simplicity a

[46] Wilde, 'The Sphinx Without A Secret', p. 217.
[47] Wilde, 'The Sphinx Without A Secret', p. 218.
[48] Pathak, p. 40.

subtle strangeness.'[49] Wilde states that in this story he handles 'a tragic modern problem in a form that aims at delicacy and imaginative treatment'.[50] 'The Happy Prince' has been read as a story that discusses 'the price paid in human suffering for beauty, art, power and wealth, and of the corresponding salvation offered by sacrificial love. The theme of selfless sacrifice is prominent in the first four stories; Wilde's major target is egotism, culminating in the supreme vanity of the Rocket.'[51] But, no links have been made between this story and *The Arabian Nights*.

'The Happy Prince' has plenty in common with *The Arabian Nights*' story 'The Enchanted King'. The Happy Prince is a statue of a Prince who used to be very happy when he was alive, but after his death, his people, out of love, make a statue for him and place it in a high position where he happens to see the details of the city he used to rule. An immigrating swallow lands at the statue for some rest and both the Happy Prince and the Swallow become good friends. From his high place, the Happy Prince starts to notice the people in need and becomes very emotional: his eyes become 'full of tears, and tears were running down his golden cheeks. His face was so beautiful in the moonlight that the little Swallow was filled with pity.'[52] Half of the Enchanted King and the statue of the Happy Prince are solid bodies and they both need the help of others because they are incapable of fulfilling their needs on their own. The Happy Prince tries to fulfil his needs with the help of his little friend, the Swallow; and the Enchanted King needs the help of the Sultan to defeat his witch wife and to break the spell

[49] Quoted in Pathak, p. 41.
[50] Quoted in Pathak, p. 41.
[51] Peter Raby, *Oscar Wilde* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 57.
[52] Wilde, 'The Happy Prince', p. 286.

she puts on him.[53] Also, both the King and the Prince arouse pity and they both weep and cry because of their ordeals. On the other hand, they both are beautiful. In 'The Tale of the Enchanted King', the king is described as follows: 'He was a handsome youth, well-shaped, and of eloquent speech, with shining forehead, and rosy cheek, marked with a mole resembling ambergris.'[54]

Also,

> He was a handsome young man, with a full figure, clear voice, radiant brow, bright face, downy beard, and ruddy cheeks, graced with a mole like a speck of amber, just as the poet describes it:
>
> > Here is a slender youth whose hair and face
> > All mortals envelope with light or gloom.
> > Mark on his cheek the mark of charm and grace,
> > A dark spot on a red anemone.[55]

The statue of the Happy Prince is described as:

> He was gilded all over with thin leaves of fine gold, for eyes he had two bright sapphires, and a large red ruby glowed on his sword-hilt […] "He looks just like an angel".[56]

David Pinault, in *Story-Telling Techniques in the Arabian Nights* (1992), argues that the stress on the description of the King's 'beauty' is an aspect enhancing the horrific revelation of the truth behind the seated King, because it gives a 'sharp contrast' between the King's beautiful upper half and the shocking nature of his lower half, which is stone.[57] Kathrin Müller, in *The Arabian Nights and Orientalism* (2006), argues that *The Arabian Nights* consists of a number of

[53] For more on 'The Story of the Enchanted King', see Chapter Three ''The Old Man of the Sea': Joseph Conrad and *The Arabian Nights*', pp. 203-04.
[54] Lane, I, 93.
[55] Haddawy, *The Arabian Nights*, pp. 54-55.
[56] Wilde, 'The Happy Prince', p. 285.
[57] David Pinault, *Story-Telling Techniques in the Arabian Nights* (Leiden: Brill, 1992), pp. 67-68.

formulas of narrative techniques, such as, formulas enclosing the nights, formulas enclosing the stories, decorative formulas, and formulaic descriptions.[58] The latter are used to describe beautiful women, handsome men, wealthy houses, and battles. Thus, to this category belongs the formulaic description of the 'Young Man', as Müller puts it; a feature that characterises *The Arabian Nights* and is repeated in many of its stories.[59] These types of description can be found in Wilde's stories.

In line with this argument, Mia Gerhardt, in *The Art of Story-Telling* (1963), describes the portrayal of beautiful boys and girls, and the description of places and gardens, as 'stock descriptions', which is a technique frequently used in *The Arabian Nights*.[60] Thus, it is possible to argue that the description of the Happy Prince's beauty may be meant to show the contradiction of how he looks at the beginning and how he becomes at the end; it signifies the dramatic transformation in the events of the story and how everything becomes extremely tragic at the end. This may be considered as the 'horrific revelation of the truth behind the seated King' and the 'sharp contrast' between the King's upper and lower body; however, in this case, the contrast is between how the Happy Prince begins and how he ends.

This point is also found in Wilde's 'The Model Millionaire', where there is a description of the 'beauty' of a male figure, who is 'wonderfully good-looking,'[61] which is very similar to 'كالبدر في تمامه', which means '*he* looks like a

[58] See Kathrin Müller, 'Formulas and Formulaic Pictures: Elements of Oral Literature in the *Thousand and One Nights*', in *The Arabian Nights and Orientalism: Perspectives from East and West*, ed. by Yuriko Yamanaka and Tetsuo Nishio (London: Tauris, 2006), pp. 48-60.
[59] See Müller, pp. 58-59.
[60] Gerhardt, pp. 45-46.
[61] Wilde, 'The Model Millionaire', p. 219.

full moon'.[62] This is a phrase frequently used in *The Arabian Nights* to describe a 'beautiful' man, and it is a metaphor that means he is as beautiful as the full moon. For example, in 'The Story of the First Sheykh and the Gazelle' which is a framed tale in the tale of 'The Merchant and the Genie', the first Sheikh recounts the beauty of his son: 'I was blessed with a male child, like the rising full moon, with beautiful eyes, and delicately shaped eyebrows, and perfectly-formed limbs'.[63] In another version he describes his son as 'look[ing] like a slice of the moon'.[64] Many different phrases for describing handsome men continue to occur throughout the stories of *The Arabian Nights*.

'The Happy Prince' is said to pave the way for a more intense story that represents class struggle: 'The Young King' in *A House of Pomegranates* (1891). Some critics claim that this story is partially a developed version of 'The Happy Prince',[65] in which Wilde exposes the corruption of the upper classes and their ill treatment of the working classes and their disrespect for the humanity of the poor and the deprived. Wilde, in this story, uses dreams to convey a message and a morality. Melinda M. Rosenthal, in 'Burton's Literary Uroburos: "The Arabian Nights" as Self-Reflexive Narrative', discusses the use of imagination in the stories of *The Arabian Nights*:

> why include works of pure imagination? How can we profit from that which has never occurred? This requires but a brief answer, which is, of course, that life is the potential sum of all that has been experienced or can be imagined, and that one can profit and take warning as well from dreams as from chronicles of actual events, for they can reveal a kind of

[62] Italicisation is intended.
[63] Lane, I, 43.
[64] Haddawy, *The Arabian Nights*, p. 22.
[65] Raby, p. 61.

> truth that goes beyond (and sometimes becomes buried underneath) the facts and details of daily life.[66]

In other words, dreams and imagination are as important as the lessons learnt from daily life. It is Shahrazad's imagination, and not actuality, that tames Shahrayar. In Wilde's 'The Young King', for example, the moral lesson is conveyed through inserted stories that occur in a form of dreams seen by the Young King whenever he falls asleep. The story is about a very young prince who is shortly to be a king; he travels all around the world and has many curious and marvellous adventures. He has no worries and no commitments; however, the only preoccupation he has is 'the robe he was to wear at his coronation, the robe of tissued gold, and the ruby-studded crown, and the sceptre with its rows and rings of pearls.'[67] Little stories strike him while he is asleep, waiting for the moment of his coronation, in order to wake him up from the world of fancy and untrue happiness he is living:

> And as he slept he dreamed a dream, and this was his dream.
> He thought that he was standing in a long, low attic, amidst the whir and clatter of many looms. The meagre daylight peered in through the grated windows, and showed him the gaunt figures of the weavers bending over their cases. Pale, sickly-looking children were crouched on the huge crossbeams […] Their faces were pinched with famine, and their thin hands shook and trembled. Some haggard women were seated at a table sewing. A horrible odour filled the place. The air was foul and heavy, and the walls dripped and streamed with damp.[68]

This is to show the Young King that the world surrounding him is not the happy, clean, fanciful, exciting, and worry-free world in which he lives. The world he

[66] Melinda M. Rosenthal, 'Burton's Literary Uroburos: "The Arabian Nights" as Self-Reflexive Narrative', in *Pacific Coast Philology*, Pacific Ancient and Modern Language Association, vol. 25, no. 1 / 2, (November 1990), 116-125, (123), *JSTOR* http://www.jstor.org [accessed 01 April 2009]
[67] Wilde, 'The Young King', p. 226.
[68] Wilde, 'The Young King', pp. 226-27.

sees in his sleep is full of misery, hunger, and despair. The Young King approaches one of the weavers and starts to watch him, then the weaver, furious enough, says to him,

> 'Why art thou watching me? Art thou a spy set on us by our master?
> 'Who is thy master?' asked the young King.
> 'Our master!' Cried the weaver, bitterly. 'He is a man like myself. Indeed, there is but this difference between us – that he wears fine clothes while I go in rags, and that while I am weak from hunger he suffers not a little from overfeeding.'[69]

After experiencing the dream, the Young King wakes up horrified, but he finds himself in his room with its beautiful view. Then, he falls asleep again and sees another dream; and another. All these dreams portray the injustice surrounding the Young King, but of which he is immensely ignorant.

All the dreams the Young King sees occur in his sleep the night preceding his coronation. In the morning, it is the coronation day. Everyone is getting prepared. The Chamberlain and the officers of State bring the King-to-be the robe he is to wear with the crown and the sceptre, which are even more beautiful than he imagines, but the Young King refuses to wear them:

> he remembered his dreams, and he said to his lords: 'Take these things away, for I will not wear them… Though it be the day of my coronation, I will not wear them. For on the loom of sorrow, and by the white hands of Pain, has this my robe been woven. There is Blood in the heart of the ruby, and Death in the heart of the pearl.'[70]

The Young King tries to correct all the mistakes caused by the distance between a king and his people; he also tries to avoid any injustice that he is aware of. His people do not believe him at the beginning for this is too good to be true, but

[69] Wilde, 'The Young King', p. 227.
[70] Wilde, 'The Young King', p. 230.

they finally do believe, and they all 'fell upon their knees' out of respect and honour:

> And the young King came down from the high altar, and passed home through the midst of the people. But no man dared look upon his face, for it was like the face of an angel.[71]

The young King learns from his dreams which act as instructive insertions and he totally changes the line of his life due to these stories. This is not far from the inserted stories Shahrazad keeps expanding, and sometimes repeating, as a wake-up call to Shahrayar.

The birth and early life of the Young King are very similar to the story of 'Al Malek Al No'man', in *The Arabian Nights*. King No'man rapes Queen Ibreeza, and she bears his child. She gives birth to a boy who becomes a prince whose story is very similar to the prince of 'The Young King', in being taken away from his mother and raised by strangers who do not know his identity, and in leading a difficult life. After long years, the injustice done by his father, the King, is regretted and the right person occupies the right place. Similarly in 'The Young King', an old king, on his death-bed, sends for his heir whom he wants to be the king after himself. This young king-to-be is the old King's grandson. He is the son of the king's only daughter who is married secretly to a man who is 'beneath her in station – a stranger.'[72] As a result, the king gives orders to take the child away from his mother and get rid of him. He is brought up by a poor goatherd. After years, the Young King is brought back to the palace, and is prepared to be a king upon the request of his grandfather, the old King, who

[71] Wilde, 'The Young King', p. 233.
[72] Wilde, 'The Young King', p. 224.

'whether moved by remorse for his great sin, or merely desiring that the kingdom should not pass away from his line, had had the lad sent for, and, in the presence of the Council, had acknowledged him as his heir.'[73]

Thus, the story of 'The Young King' shows the importance of dreams and their relationship with reality. Dreaming, waking up, falling asleep, and then dreaming again is a significant way of relating dreams to reality and conveying, gradually, the moral message to the reader. Shahrazad's narratives have a similar effect to the dreams in 'The Young King' on Shahrayar; she makes the Sultan dream and wake up, then dream again and wake up again until she reaches her aim.

Dreaming is not the only way used by Shahrazad to tame the ferocious Sultan. She leaks her taming methods to Shahrayar by putting words in animals' mouths. In *The Arabian Nights*,

> [a]nimals become functional emissaries of edification and instruction. The more complicated the political system and ruling apparatus, the more difficult it was to offer honest advice to a ruler. Bureaucracy built its own defences, and one way of getting the message through was have an oblique narrative. Beast narratives are also very efficient in reaching common people. Discourse in politics and social or religious issues often evades outspokenness.[74]

At the time when *The Arabian Nights* appeared, there was no direct way of criticising political and social issues that were unpleasant and did not satisfy the individuals at that time; therefore, literature used to play this role, and characters used to perform the indirect criticism. In *The Arabian Nights*, this is the case in various stories, and especially the animal stories, where an animal passes

[73] Wilde, 'The Young King', p. 224.
[74] Al-Musawi, p. 225.

judgment on different issues in the animal world surrounding it, but the issues in the real world are those that are addressed. This technique is strongly present in Wilde's use of non-human entities, such as animals, plants, birds, and inanimate objects, to convey a message, whether moral, social, or political.

This technique is found in almost all Wilde's fairy tales, and it is presented through a relationship between different entities. In 'The Happy Prince', for instance, there is a relationship between an inanimate object and a living creature: the friendship between a statue and a swallow. Similarly, in *The Arabian Nights*, there is always a relationship between two entirely different entities: a human and a non-human. At the beginning of 'The Happy Prince', there is a relationship between a Swallow and a Reed. The little Swallow loves the Reed, but unfortunately, it can neither converse, nor fly; all she can do is make 'the most graceful curtseys'[75] when the wind blows. When the Swallow understands that the Reed cannot go with him he bids her good-bye and goes away. After that, the remarkable relationship between the Swallow and the statue of the Happy Prince begins and develops throughout.

In 'The Birthday of the Infanta', for instance, it is the flowers who portray this relationship. The flowers start a conversation criticising the dwarf; they have their say and their opinion:

> [The flowers] could not restrain their feelings any longer.
> "He is really far too ugly to be allowed to play in any place where we are," cried the Tulips.
> "He should drink poppy-juice, and go to sleep for a thousand years," said the great scarlet Lilies, and they grew quite hot and angry.
> "He is a perfect horror!" screamed the Cactus [….]

[75] Wilde, 'The Happy Prince', p. 285.

> "And he has actually got one of my best blooms," exclaimed the White-Rose tree.[76]

The employment of animals and the relationship between different entities are also portrayed in Wilde's 'The Nightingale and the Rose'. This story depicts the beauty of love and sacrifice. It is about an exceptional relationship between the nightingale and the tree on the one hand, and the nightingale and the rose on the other hand. A nightingale and a rose tree try to produce a red rose in winter in order to help and please a little boy who is in love and wants to fulfil the demand of his beloved by giving her a rose in a time of year where no roses can live.

In addition to criticism, the technique discussed above conveys a moral message or teaches a lesson. Thus, Wilde's fairy tales can be compared to the fables of *The Arabian Nights*.[77] Fables appear considerably in *The Arabian Nights* and they aim at conveying a moral lesson or wisdom. They are educational because they teach how to behave wisely and peacefully in life in order to achieve the desired, but harmless, goals.[78] In *The Arabian Nights*, fables start to appear as early as in the frame story, when Shahrazad's father tells her a story in order to deter her from marrying Shahrayar and he narrates to her the story of 'The Ox and the Donkey'. More examples of animal stories are found in *The Arabian Nights* in many stories, some of which are 'The Story of the Hermit and the Doves', 'The Story of the Hedgehog and the Wood-Pigeons', and 'The

[76] Wilde, 'The Birthday of the Infanta', p. 240.
[77] The most famous collection of fables in Arabic literature is the stories of *Kalila wa Dimna* which were translated into Arabic by Ibn Al-Mouqaffa'. However, *The Arabian Nights* has been more widely known and circulated in Europe. For information about 'Kalilah wa Dimna', see Ferial Ghazoul, *The Arabian Nights: A Structural Analysis* (Cairo: Cairo Associated Institution for the Study and Presentation of Arab Cultural Values, 1980), p. 92
[78] Ghazoul, p. 92.

Tale of the Birds and Beasts and the Carpenter' which can be viewed in close connection with Wilde's 'The Devoted Friend'.

'The Devoted Friend', like all Wilde's other fairy tales, has been considered as 'reminiscent of Andersen in its use of an animal framework for the central story, and is a cautionary tale about friendship.'[79] Nevertheless, I propose a link between this story and a story of friendship in *The Arabian Nights*: 'The Tale of the Birds and Beasts and the Carpenter'. The main characters of 'The Devoted Friend' are animals that speak and communicate with each other. At the beginning of Wilde's story, the Linnet begins to tell her friends the story of the Devoted Friend, who is a human being. In *The Arabian Nights*' story, a duck seeks refuge at a peacock's and a peahen's and starts to narrate her story about her fear of man and how she and her friends meet in the first place and decide to escape man's injustice. Shahrazad starts her story: 'It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that in times of yore and in ages long gone before a peacock abode with his wife on the sea-shore. Now the place was infested with lions and all manner wild beasts, withal it abounded in trees and streams.'[80] Then she starts her usual story-within-a-story technique:

> up came a duck to them in a state of extreme terror, and stayed not, faring forwards till she reached the tree whereon were perched the two peafowl, when she seemed re-assured in mind. The peacock doubted not but that she had some rare story; so he asked her of her case and the cause of her concern, whereto she answered, "I am sick for sorrow, and my horror of the son of Adam: so beware, and again I say beware of the sons of Adam!" rejoined the peacock, "Fear not now that thou hast won our protection." Cried the duck, "Alhamdolillah! glory to God, who hath done away my cark and care by means of your being near! For indeed I come of friendship fain with you twain." And when she had ended her

[79] Raby, p. 59.
[80] Richard Francis Burton, *The Book of the Thousand Nights and a Night*, 12 vols (London: H. S. Nichols, 1897), p. 337.

> speech the peacock's wife came down to her and said, "Well come and welcome and fair cheer!"[81]

The duck tells her story: how she meets the lion, how they both meet the runaway ass; then how they all come across the horse, and finally, the camel. Each of them narrates how man is cruel to them, and they all agree on the cruelty of man towards nature, and towards animals in particular. Then, suddenly, comes the man, 'an old man scanty of stature and lean of limb; and he bore on his shoulder a basket of carpenter's tools, and on his head a branch of a tree and eight planks.'[82] Man, indeed, tricks the lion to death, and the animals see in front of their eyes the cruelty of man, this is when the duck runs away to the peacock and the peahen. Back to the duck's frame story, another animal appears to the peacock, the peahen, and the duck, which is the antelope seeking shelter. They become good friends until man interferes and captures the duck, and leaves the rest of the friends in great sorrow, where they console themselves by becoming thankful to God, and by glorifying and praising Him. As in the stories of *The Arabian Nights*, the reader forgets about the first story, and indulges in the stories that follow, until he/she is reminded of the first story.

The frame narrative in Wilde's 'The Devoted Friend' is the Linnet's story to her friends, and the inner narrative is the story of the Devoted Friend. When the story of the Devoted Friend ends, the reader is brought back to the frame story, which is the gathering of the animals.

In 'The Remarkable Rocket', it is fireworks, rather than animals, that carry out the mission of criticism. 'The Remarkable Rocket' 'is another study in

[81] Burton, I, 337-38.
[82] Burton, I, 343.

vanity', says Peter Raby in *Oscar Wilde* (1988).[83] The 'context of the wedding celebrations', suggests Raby, 'of a fairy-tale prince and princess is exploited brilliantly by Wilde as he lightly satirises a range of social attitudes'.[84] What I would like to draw attention to, here, is the interesting, yet neglected, similarity between the Royal wedding portrayed in this story and the Royal wedding celebrations that are frequent in *The Arabian Nights*. In 'The Remarkable Rocket', the Prince is getting married to a Russian Princess:

> The King's son was going to be married, so there were general rejoicings. He had waited a whole year for his bride, and at last she had arrived. She was a Russian Princess, and had driven all the way from Finland in a sledge drawn by six reindeer. The sledge was shaped like a great golden swan, and between the swan's wings lay the little Princess herself. Her long ermine cloak reached right down to her feet, on her head was a tiny cap of silver tissue, and she was as pale as the Snow Palace in which she had always lived. So pale was she that as she drove through the streets all the people wondered. 'She is like a white rose!' they cried, and they threw down flowers on her from the balconies. At the gate of the Castle the Prince was waiting to receive her […] the whole Court was delighted.[85]

The celebrations, as well as the description, go on,

> It was a magnificent ceremony, and the bride and bridegroom walked hand in hand under a canopy of purple velvet embroidered with little pearls. Then there was a State Banquet, which lasted for five hours […] After the banquet there was to be a Ball […] The last item on the programme was a grand display of fireworks, to be let off exactly at midnight.[86]

In *The Arabian Nights*, a bride is brought from a far place or a distant country. She is widely and enormously celebrated by the people whose queen she is to be. There is a portrayal of the royal wedding celebrations that may continue for

[83] Raby, p. 59.
[84] Raby, p. 59.
[85] Wilde, 'The Remarkable Rocket', p. 310.
[86] Wilde, 'The Remarkable Rocket', p. 310.

several days and nights, giving the chance for the people of the country to take part in the celebrations in their own way, and to express their happiness. In *The Arabian Nights* this issue is repeated in many stories. An example of this is in the story of 'Taj Al Muluk', where a princess is to marry a king of a faraway kingdom, and her bridal celebrations are highly considered:

> Now when all things needful for the bride were ready, the King caused the tents to be carried out, and they pitched the camp within sight of the city, where they packed the bride's stuffs in chests and got ready the Greek handmaids and Turkish slave-girls, and provided the Princess with great store of precious treasures and costly jewels. Then he had made for her a litter of red gold, inlaid with pearls and stones of price, and set apart two mules to carry it; a litter which was like one of the chambers of a palace, and within which she seemed as she were of the loveliest Houris, and it became as one of the pavilions of Paradise. And after they had made bales of the treasures and moneys, and had loaded them upon the mules and camels, King Zahr Shah went forth with her for a distance of three parasangs; after which he bade farewell to her and to the Wazir and those with him, and returned to his home in gladness and safety.[87]

The wedding celebrations are portrayed similarly in both works: long, detailed, and emotional, descriptions. Similarly in both stories, the story of 'Taj Al-Muluk' and 'The Remarkable Rocket', the reader thinks that the story is about the Prince and the Princess who get married, but the story, as usual, twists into another direction.

'The Fisherman and his Soul'

Thus far, I have marked out some of the more obvious similarities between *The Arabian Nights* and Wilde's short fiction. However, 'The Fisherman and his Soul' carries even more parallels with *The Arabian Nights*.

[87] Burton, I, 184.

I would like to propose that although most critics, as mentioned earlier, consider Wilde's fairy tales in connection with merely Western literature; and despite Christopher Nassaar's judgement that 'Wilde deliberately responds to and counterpoints at […] Andersen's, "The Shadow"', [88] and 'The Little Mermaid';[89] there is still the possibility of looking at Wilde's short stories, and his fairy tales in particular, from an Arabian-Nights point of view.

Nassaar compares Wilde's 'The Fisherman and his Soul' to Hans Andersen's 'The Shadow' in various points. He finds that both stories share the idea of the triumph of evil over purity. He also compares both stories in that Wilde's Fisherman casts away his Soul and Andersen's learned man casts away his Shadow. Both young men are motivated by love: the Fisherman loves a mermaid and the learned man loves Poetry which dwells in a beautiful female body. Both the Soul and the Shadow go through experiences that show them how much brutality, evil, immorality, and sinfulness this big world contains. Survival is what makes both the Soul and the Shadow pay any price required to subsist, even if the price is the death of their bodies, that is, the death of the Fisherman and the learned man. On the other hand, Nassaar examines the differences between the texts and he claims that, contrary to Andersen, Wilde does not leave space for the reader's imagination because of his full descriptions and explanation. He also shows the difference between the character of Andersen's learned man, and Wilde's ordinary Fisherman, who has 'real knowledge: he knows the value of love'.[90] Finally, he compares the endings of both stories where both protagonists die. However, the Fisherman and his Soul

[88] Nassaar, p. 217.
[89] Nassaar, p. 218.
[90] Nassaar, p. 222.

find salvation, because, as Nassaar argues, the story is presented in a Christian framework, so the body and the soul reunite and re-obtain their innocence in their life after death;[91] whereas the ending of the learned man and his Shadow is 'nihilistic', where there the Shadow survives triumphantly only after the death of its body.

Nassaar also links the Fisherman's love for the Mermaid, in Wilde's 'The Fisherman and his Soul', to that of Coleridge's ancient mariner. This is because at the beginning 'the fisherman's love is incomplete, for it is limited to the beautiful mermaid.'[92] But what of Coleridge's own use of *The Arabian Nights*' techniques or ideas in his poetry?[93] Coleridge was strongly attached to *The Arabian Nights* tales of wonder.[94] In the 'Ancient Mariner' in particular, Coleridge compares the doom of the ancient mariner and his comrades after killing the Albatross to that of the merchant who kills a jinn by throwing, unintentionally, a date stone after which the genie's father begins to take revenge.[95]

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[91] Nassaar, p. 223.
[92] Nassaar, p. 222.
[93] See Chapter Three ''The Old Man of the Sea': Joseph Conrad and *The Arabian Nights*', pp. 170-71. For more on Coleridge's influence by *The Arabian Nights*, see Allan Grant, 'The Genie and the Albatross', in *The Arabian Nights in English Literature: Studies in the Reception of the Thousand and One Nights into British Culture*, ed. by Peter Caracciolo (Houndsmill: Macmillan, 1988), pp. 111-29; Robert Irwin, *The Arabian Nights: A Companion* (London: Tauris Parke, 2004), pp. 266-67; Muhsin Jassim Ali, *Scheherazade in England: A Study of Nineteenth Century English Criticism of the Arabian Nights* (Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers; in association with Baghdad University Press, 1981), pp. 40-79.
[94] Ali, pp. 41, 75. See 'Introduction', pp. 12-14. See also, Chapter Three ''The Old Man of the Sea': Joseph Conrad and *The Arabian Nights*', pp. 170-71.
[95] See Irwin, p. 266. The comparison can be understood from the general atmosphere of the poem where spirits seek revenge on the ancient mariner and the crew after the mariner kills the albatross. The 'Night-mare Life-in-Death' threatens the mariner of facing punishment, which is worse than death, for his killing the bird. Later on, when the mariner starts seeing the beauty of the sea creatures he previously scorns, his curse starts to disappear until he finally prays and fully understands his guilt, he becomes freed from the curse and the threat that befall him. For the angered spirits that follow the mariner and the crew in revenge, see 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner', Part II, line 134, and Part V, line 403.

In addition to Coleridge, Wilde is said to have an admiration for Sir Walter Scott, W. M. Thackeray, and Robert Louis Stevenson;[96] and it has been strongly argued that these writers have, either hidden or clear, connections with *The Arabian Nights*.[97] Thus, and by extension, I propose an emphasis on the link between Wilde and *The Arabian Nights* as the basis of my study.

I would like to propose here a series of correspondences between 'The Fisherman and his Soul' and *The Arabian Nights*' story, 'The Fisherman and the Genie'. In the former, a Fisherman throws his net only to bring the supernatural to the surface:

> Every evening he went out upon the sea, and one evening the net was so heavy that hardly could he draw it into the boat. And he laughed, and said to himself, "Surely I have caught all the fish that swim, or snared some dull monster that will be a marvel to men, or something of horror that the great Queen will desire," and putting forth all his strength, he tugged at the coarse ropes till, like lines of blue enamel round a vase of bronze, the long veins rose up on his arms. He tugged at the thin ropes, and nearer and nearer came the circle of flat corks, and the net rose at last to the top of the water. But no fish at all was in it, nor any monster or thing of horror, but only a little Mermaid lying fast asleep.[98]

In 'The Fisherman and the Genie', a very similar scene is portrayed. At the beginning of this story, the fisherman drops his net into the water several times with no success and plenty of frustration, but, finally, he too captures a magical object: a genie trapped in a bottle by King Solomon:[99]

> he cast the net again into the sea, and waited till it was still; when he attempted to draw it up, but could not, for it clung to the bottom. And he exclaimed, There is no strength nor power but in God! – and stripped himself again, and dived round the net, and pulled it until he raised it

[96] Pathak, pp. 119, 120.
[97] See *The Arabian Nights in English Literature* (1988), and Irwin's, *The Arabian Nights: A Companion* (2004).
[98] Wilde, 'The Fisherman and his Soul', p. 248.
[99] Pinault, p. 36.

> upon the shore; when he opened it, he found in it a bottle of brass, filled with something and having its mouth closed with a stopper of lead, bearing the impression of the seal of our lord Suleyman. At the sight of this, the fisherman was rejoiced, and said, This I will sell in the copper-market; for it is worth ten pieces of gold. He then shook it, and found it to be heavy, and said, I must open it, and see what is in it, and store it in my bag; and then I will sell the bottle in the copper-market. So he took out a knife, and picked at the lead until he extracted it from the bottle. He then laid the bottle on the ground, and shook it, that its contents might pour out; but their[100] came forth from it nothing but smoke, which ascended towards the sky, and spread over the face of the earth; at which he wondered excessively. And after a little while, the smoke collected together, and was condensed, and then became agitated, and was converted into an 'Efreet, whose head was in the clouds, while his feet rested upon the ground.[101]

Both these paragraphs show the similarity between the two stories: both fishermen cast their nets to the sea hoping for a good source of living, but contrary to their expectations, their nets catch supernatural creatures that change their lives forever. In *The Arabian Nights* tale, after the fisherman spares the genie, the genie decides to help the fisherman become rich by leading him to the pond in which the coloured magical fish, who can speak, are found: [102]

> The fisherman followed the Marid until they had quitted and neighboured of the city, and ascended a mountain, and descended into a wide desert tract, in the midst of which was a lake of water. Here the 'Efreet stopped, and ordered the fisherman to cast his net and take some fish; and the fisherman, looking into the lake, saw in it fish of different colours, white and red and blue and yellow; at which he was astonished; and he cast his net, and drew it in, and found in it four fish, each fish of a different colour from the others, at the sight of which he rejoiced.[103]

In discussing Tzvetan Todorov's study of the supernatural element in *The Arabian Nights*, Muhsin Jassim Ali writes: 'It [the supernatural] is mainly introduced to transgress class distinctions and, thereby, to fulfil the protagonist's

[100] This is how the word appears in Lane's translation.
[101] Lane, I, 70-71.
[102] For the first time the fish speak, see Lane, I, 89.
[103] Lane, I, 87-88.

wish to marry the princess.'[104] For example, in the story of 'Alaa Addin and the Magic Lamp,' Alaa Addin's love for Princess Badr Al-Budur 'would have remained a dream forever without the intervention of the supernatural forces'.[105] Thus, in order to achieve his goal, the Fisherman seeks the help of the supernatural.

When the Fisherman applies the witchcraft, 'the earth seemed to spin beneath his feet, and his brain grew troubled, and a great terror fell on him, as of some evil thing that was watching him, and at last he became aware that under the shadow of a rock there was a figure that had not been there before.'[106] A mysterious man appears 'dressed in a suit of black velvet'; there is a description of how he looks which increases the impression of his mysteriousness. This is quite a familiar scene in *The Arabian Nights*, in the stories where magic is employed. This is clear in the example discussed above, when the Genie appears from the sealed bottle. It can also be seen in 'Alaa Addin and the Magic Lamp' when Alaa Addin rubs the magic ring given to him by the African magician, producing a 'demon of enormous size and dreadful look';[107] and, of course, when Alaa Addin rubs the magic lamp and the massive Genie appears from it.

Wilde's young Fisherman is rebellious, just like Shahrayar, and his Soul can be compared to Shahrazad in that it tells him fantastic and captivating stories and tries to drag his attention from his own world to its world. This, like *The Arabian Nights*, is also presented in a story-within-a-story technique. In Wilde's story, the Soul tells the body of the Fisherman different stories within the main

[104] Muhsin Jassim Ali, 'The Growth of Scholarly Interest in the *Arabian Nights*', in *The Arabian Nights Reader*, ed. by Ulrich Marzolph (Michigan: Wayne State University Press, 2006), p. 11.
[105] Quoted in Ali, 'The Growth of Scholarly Interest in the *Arabian Nights*', p. 11.
[106] Wilde, 'The Fisherman and his Soul', p. 254.
[107] Husain Haddawy, *The Arabian Nights II: Sindbad and Other Popular Stories* (New York: Husain Haddawy, 1995; repr. New York: Everyman's Library, 1998), p. 92.

story. The first story told by the Soul is about the morality of Wisdom,[108] while the second story is about the Riches of the world.[109] The third and last story by the Soul is about the dancer; it is this story that tricks the Fisherman and weakens his will, enabling the Soul to return to the body.[110] Almost all the stories told by the Soul have an Eastern mood. There are specific Eastern names that either describe people or places, such as 'Mecca', 'Syria', 'the Indian sea', 'Schiraz', 'Nubian', 'Dervish', 'bazaar', and more, of which most are associated with *The Arabian Nights*.

In this story, as in *The Arabian Nights*, religion is present; Judaism, Christianity and Islam are all referred to. The witch says to the Fisherman, 'It is a Sabbath, and He will be there.'[111] The Fisherman, elsewhere, 'made on his breast the sign of the Cross and called upon the holy name.'[112] When the Fisherman goes to the priest in order to consult him about how he can send his soul away, the priest is shocked,

> And the Priest beat his breast, and answered, "Alack, alack, thou art mad, or hast eaten of some poisonous herb, for the Soul is the noblest part of man, and was given to us by God that we should nobly use it. There is no thing more precious than a human soul, nor any earthly thing that can be weighed with it. It is worth all the gold that is in the world, and is more precious than the rubies of the kings. Therefore, my son, think not any more of this matter, for it is a sin that may not be forgiven […] for [the Sea-folk] there is no heaven nor hell, and in neither shall they praise God's name.[113]

The teaching of Christianity is obvious in the previous paragraph, and its presence is emphasised throughout the story.

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[108] See Wilde, 'The Fisherman and his Soul', pp. 257-60.
[109] See Wilde, 'The Fisherman and his Soul', pp. 260-65.
[110] For the story, see Wilde, 'The Fisherman and his Soul', p. 265.
[111] Wilde, 'The Fisherman and his Soul', p. 253.
[112] Wilde, 'The Fisherman and his Soul', p. 255.
[113] Wilde, 'The Fisherman and his Soul', pp. 250-51.

The name of Prophet Muhammad is mentioned when the Soul narrates to the body the adventure it makes during the first year of separation between them. The Soul says, 'Then he asked me who was the prophet of God, and I answered him Mohammed.'[114] The Qur'an, also, is mentioned: 'there was a green veil on which the Koran was embroidered in silver letters by the hands of the angels.'[115] Thus, as it is clear from the quotations above, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam are alluded to, and are combined in one story. This calls to mind the stories of the Hunchback cycle, where a Jew, a Christian, and a Muslim all play a fundamental role in the story; in fact, the story is based on their roles. Generally speaking, the fraternal association between the three religions is strongly present in *The Arabian Nights*, mirroring, in a wider context, the culture as a whole.

Slave markets, which are portrayed in 'The Fisherman and his Soul', can be compared to the ones in *The Arabian Nights*; even the Fisherman is asked by the merchants to sell them his body.[116] But what seems to be more similar to *The Arabian Nights* is the description of caravan journeys, where '[t]here were forty camels in the caravan, and the mules were twice forty in number.'[117] Caravans are also used in *The Arabian Nights* to travel with royal brides who are brought to a certain kingdom from far, far away. The bride is usually accompanied by numerous maids and slave girls to be at her service.[118] There is a portrayal of the slaves who prepare food for the passengers or the guests during the famous caravan journeys; 'A negro brought me some mare's milk in a wooden dish, and

[114] Wilde, 'The Fisherman and his Soul', p. 257.
[115] Wilde, 'The Fisherman and his Soul', p. 261.
[116] See Wilde, 'The Fisherman and his Soul', p. 251.
[117] Wilde, 'The Fisherman and his Soul', p. 257.
[118] See the discussion of Wilde's 'The Remarkable Rocket', earlier in this chapter.

a piece of lamb's flesh roasted.'[119] This, in turn, is described in this story with all that happens throughout the journeys, including wars, adventures, supernatural incidents, and others, including the stories of slaves who serve food for their masters and their guests. This is exactly what is found in numerous stories of *The Arabian Nights*, where the adventures of the central characters are portrayed, either in the deserts, or in the city. In Wilde's story, there are also depictions of Arab hospitality, feet painted with henna, women and the way they dance, veiled women, and merchants of soft goods. This, all, is worth considering as a possible connection between Wilde's 'The Fisherman and his Soul' and *The Arabian Nights*.

The Mermaid in Wilde's story is beautiful, and different:

> Her hair was as a wet fleece of gold, and each separate hair as a thread of fine gold in a cup of glass. Her body was as white ivory, and her tail was of silver and pearl. Silver and pearl was her tail, and the green weeds of the sea coiled round it; and like sea-shells were her ears, and her lips were like sea-coral. The cold waves dashed over her cold breasts, and the salt glistened upon her eye lids […] She is fairer than the morning star, and whiter than the moon.[120]

In *The Arabian Nights*' story of 'The Fisherman and the Genie':

> [T]he wall of the kitchen clove asunder, and there came forth from it a damsel of tall stature, smooth-cheeked, of perfect form, with eyes adorned with kohl, beautiful in countenance, and with heavy, swelling hips; wearing a koofeeyeh interwoven with blue silk; with rings in her ears, and bracelets on her wrists, and rings set with precious jewels on her fingers; and in her hand was a rod of Indian cane.[121]

And in Haddawy's version:

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[119] Wilde, 'The Fisherman and his Soul', p. 257.
[120] Wilde, 'The Fisherman and his Soul', pp. 248-51.
[121] Lane, I, 89.

> [T]he kitchen wall split open and there emerged a maiden with a beautiful figure, smooth cheeks, perfect features, and dark eyes. She wore a short-sleeved silk shirt in the Egyptian style, embroidered all around with lace and gold spangles. In her ears she wore dangling earrings; on her wrists she wore bracelets [….][122]

The above passages give clear examples of further similarities between Wilde's story and *The Arabian Nights*. In an unsigned review in the *Saturday Review* of 6 February 1892, it was stated that: 'It is particularly satisfactory to learn that the mermaid's tail was of pearl-and-silver. There has been an impression in many circles that mermaids' tails are green, and we have always thought that it would be unpleasant to embrace a person with a green tail. But pearl-and-silver is *quite* different.'[123] I would like to refer here to the coloured magic fish in *The Arabian Nights*' 'The Fisherman and the Genie', and to propose a link between the two stories. The Arabian story would not have had the charm it has if the fish had not been coloured in this magical way: 'the King was excessively astonished at them, for he had never seen any like them in the course of his life'.[124] Giving the fish colours not usually found in nature has added to the fascination of the story. Similar seems to be Wilde's attempt to portray the Mermaid's fish tail attractively.

The fish tail brings to mind a comparison between this story of Wilde's and a famous story in *The Arabian Nights*, which has been neglected by critics for no obvious reasons. The story is called 'Abdallah the Fisherman and Abdallah the Merman'.[125] This story has plenty in common with Wilde's story despite the fact that the protagonists are males. It is about a poor fisherman who

[122] Haddawy, *The Arabian Nights*, p. 50.
[123] Quoted in Beckson, p. 116.
[124] Lane, I, 88.
[125] The title of this story in Lane's translation is 'The Story of 'Abd-Allah of the Land and 'Abd-Allah of the Sea'. See Lane, III, 565.

goes fishing everyday in order to feed his family of ten children and their mother. The tenth child is newly born, and the fisherman becomes weary of providing even the least in the way of sustenance. He goes to the sea but for long times his net never catches any fish. This goes on for days. Without the help of the kind baker who offers him money and bread, he and his family would no longer survive. One day, he goes fishing with insistence, and with the prayers and encouragement of his wife. After many unsuccessful throws, he casts his net and pulls a very heavy thing which turns out to be a man with a tail. At first, the fisherman is terrified and thinks of this creature as a genie who has escaped King Solomon's sealed bottle.[126] But after the fear fades, the man with a tail reassures the fisherman: 'Come hither, O fisherman! Flee not from me; for I am a human being like thee [...] I am of the children of the sea. I was going about, and thou threwest upon me the net.'[127] Then, he introduces himself as Abdallah the Merman.

The fisherman happens to have the same name, and the Merman decides to call him Abdallah of the Land after he calls himself Abdallah of the Sea. They become good friends and each gives the other what he lacks. Abdallah the Merman provides Abdallah the Fisherman with various and numerous jewels from the deep sea to sell and overcome his hardship; and Abdallah the Fisherman gives the Merman, upon his request, fruits of the land of all kinds. This recalls Wilde's jewels that are 'hidden in this place – […] jewels that are marvellous.'[128]

[126] See Lane, III, 569.
[127] Lane, III, 569.
[128] Quoted in Jullian, p. 248.

The endings of the two stories differ, because in *The Arabian Nights* story, Abdallah the Merman rigidly ends his friendship with Abdallah the Fisherman upon a major difference in religious beliefs. However, the similarities between 'The Fisherman and his Soul' and 'Abdallah the Fisherman and Abdallah the Merman' are clear in the general atmosphere: two characters, one on land and one in sea, meet and develop the central theme of the story. The stories they tell each other are about the incredible journeys they make. In *The Arabian Nights*' story, Abdallah the Fisherman narrates stories about the marvellous journeys he makes into the deep sea with Abdallah the Merman, and in Wilde's story, the Soul travels and wanders and tells the Fisherman about its experiences. Wilde's Fisherman, thus, can be compared to Abdallah the Merman: both are men of the sea; and the Soul can be compared to Abdallah the Fisherman: both are dwellers of the land. This leads us to think of the similarities between the story of 'The Fisherman and his Soul' and 'The Story of Sindbad the Sailor'.

Similar to the story of 'Abdallah the Fisherman and Abdallah the Merman', it is possible to shed light on the connections between 'The Fisherman and his Soul' and 'The Story of Sindbad the Sailor'. Duality is strongly present in both stories: the Soul and the Body of the Fisherman on the one hand, and Sindbad the Sailor and Sindbad the Porter on the other hand. In Wilde's story, the Soul narrates to the Fisherman:

> And after a year was over the Soul came down to the shore of the sea and called to the young Fisherman, and he rose out of the deep, and said, 'Why dost thou call to me?'
> And the Soul answered, 'Come nearer, that I may speak with thee, for I have seen marvellous things.'

> So he came nearer, and couched in the shallow water, and leaned his head upon his hand and listened.
> And the Soul said to him, 'When I left thee I turned my face to the East and journeyed. From the East cometh everything that is wise. Six days I journeyed, and on the morning of the seventh day I came to a hill that is in the country of the Tartars [….][129]

In *The Arabian Nights*' 'Story of Es-Sindibad of the Sea and Es-Sindibad of the Land',[130] Sindbad the Sailor tells Sindbad the Porter:

> O porter, know that my story is wonderful, and I will inform thee of all that happened to me and befell me before I obtained this prosperity and sat in this place wherein thou seest me. For I attained not this prosperity and this place save after severe fatigue and great trouble and many terrors. How often have I endured fatigue and toil in my early years! I have performed seven voyages, and connected with each voyage is a wonderful tale, that would confound the mind. All that which I endured happened by fate and destiny, and from that which is written there is no escape nor flight.[131]

In these passages, both the Soul of the Fisherman, in Wilde's story, and Sindbad the Sailor go on journeys that take a long time. Upon their return they tell stories about the marvels and wonders they encounter. The Soul comes back to the Fisherman every year to narrate his adventures. Likewise, Sindbad the Sailor narrates to Sindbad the Porter the adventures he carries out in each of his voyages.

The Fisherman and his Soul used to be one. In *The Arabian Nights*, it is chance that brings together Sindbad the Sailor and Sindbad the Porter; however, after their acquaintance, Sindbad the Sailor starts to consider Sindbad the Porter as his equivalent, and neither eminence nor wealth comes between them.[132]

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[129] Wilde, 'The Fisherman and his Soul', p. 257.
[130] This title appears in Lane's translation.
[131] Lane, III, 4.
[132] See Ghazoul, p. 125.

Moreover, not only do the Fisherman and his Soul remind one of Sindbad the Sailor and Sindbad the Porter, but also their division can also be compared to 'the split oneness of Sindbad.'[133] That is, Sindbad 'alternates between two impulses: one is the desire for the distant and the dangerous that borders on the deathly, and another, the homesickness and the desire to settle and establish roots, and impulse for life.'[134]

Although the motives are different, both the Fisherman's Soul and Sindbad the Sailor experience various adventures and narrate them back to their 'dual'. Moreover, what makes the two stories similar is that in both stories one of the duals experiences his adventures in the sea, and the other does so on land. Both the Soul as well as Sinbad the Sailor start their adventures on their own, but then they meet with groups of people with whom they mix and go through many experiences and explorations. In every voyage Sindbad makes, he encounters a group of people to continue his adventures with. For example, in his first voyage he encounters the men of King Mihrajan who wait for the seahorse at the beginning of every month to breed their mares;[135] and in his second voyage he meets the group of merchants who collect diamonds by using slaughtered sheep.[136] In the first voyage, one of King Mihrajan's men approaches Sindbad and asks him who he is, and then Sindbad introduces himself and reassures the people that he does not cause any threat or danger to them:

> Who art thou, and whence hast thou come, and what is the cause of thine arrival in this place? So I answered him, O my master, know that I am a stranger, and I was in a ship, and was submerged in the sea with certain others of the passengers; but God supplied me with a wooden bowl, and I

[133] Ghazoul, p. 114.
[134] Ghazoul, p. 114.
[135] Haddawy, *The Arabian Nights II*, p. 7.
[136] Haddawy, *The Arabian Nights II*, p. 15.

> got into it, and it bore me along until the waves cast me upon this island. And when he heard my words, he laid hold of my hand and said to me, Come with me.[137]

In the second voyage, for instance, and after escaping the valley of serpents and the huge snake in the cave, Sindbad is approached by one of the merchants and is asked about himself and how he got to where he is:

> he said to me, Who art thou, and what is the reason of thy coming to this place? I answered him, Fear not, nor be alarmed; for I am a human being, of the best of mankind; and I was a merchant, and my tale is marvellous, and my story extraordinary, and the cause of my coming to this mountain and this valley is wonderous to relate. Fear not; for thou shalt receive of me what will rejoice thee: I have met with me abundance of diamonds, of which I will give thee as much as will suffice thee by other means: therefore be not timorous nor afraid.[138]

Sindbad performs part of his adventures on his own, and in the other part he is joined by others. They ask him who he is and he introduces himself, repeatedly in every voyage. Similarly, in 'The Fisherman and his Soul', the Soul travels in all directions and meets with different people and various adventures. For example, in the first journey, the Soul travels east and starts the adventure. After a while, it meets a group of merchants:

> When the moon rose I saw a camp-fire burning on the plain, and went towards it. A company of merchants were seated round it on carpets […] As I came near them, the chief of the merchants rose up and drew his sword and asked me my business. I answered I was a Prince in my own land, and that I had escaped from the Tartars, who had sought to make me their slave. The chief smiled […] and took me by the hand, and placed me by his side.[139]

[137] Lane, III, 8.
[138] Lane, I, 20.
[139] Wilde, 'The Fisherman and his Soul', p. 257.

The Soul, as well as Sindbad, narrate their fearful stories to the people they meet and they tell them how they escaped a certain danger, and then they get help from the others.

Like Sindbad the Sailor who returns home after each of his adventures, the Soul always returns to the Fisherman after each journey and narrates its stories of marvels. Sindbad the Sailor re-addresses Sindbad the Porter after each narration: 'Then Sindbad the Sailor had Sindbad the Porter dine with him and gave him a hundred pieces of gold saying to him, "You have cheered us today."'[140] Similarly, the Soul returns to the Fisherman after each journey and talks to him in attempts to convince him to reunite with it again:

> And after a year was over the Soul came down to the shore of the sea and called to the young Fisherman, and he rose out of the deep, and said, "Why dost thou call to me?" And the Soul answered, "Come nearer, that I may speak with thee, for I have seen marvellous things."[141]

In both stories, the fascinating narrations take place for a reason: the Soul wants to return to the body of the Fisherman, and Sindbad the Sailor wants to convey some wisdom to Sindbad the Porter who complains about his poverty and tiring life, because, at the end of both stories, the aim is reached. The Soul returns to the Fisherman, and Sindbad the Porter is taught the lesson that there are many hardships in life but one should know how to live the happy moments of this life.[142] At the end of both stories, the duals remain together until the moment of death. The story of Sindbad concludes as follows: 'And upon this, Es-Sindibad of the Sea bestowed favours upon him, and made him his boon-companion; and

[140] Haddawy, *The Arabian Nights II*, p. 11.
[141] Wilde, 'The Fisherman and his Soul', p. 257.
[142] See Haddawy, *The Arabian Nights II*, p. 51.

he quitted him not by night nor by day as long as they both lived.'[143] In Haddawy's version the end is as thus: 'Sindbad the Porter said to Sindbad the Sailor, "For God's sake, pardon me the wrong I did you," and they continued to enjoy their fellowship and friendship, in all cheer and joy, until there came to them death'.[144] Likewise, when the Soul enters the body of the Fisherman at last, after various effortful trials, death comes:

> And his Soul besought him to depart, but he would not, so great was his love. And the sea came nearer, and sought to cover him with its waves […] And as through the fullness of his love his heart did break, the Soul found an entrance and entered in, and was one with him even as before. And the sea covered the young Fisherman with its waves.[145]

The Fisherman desires death with his beloved Mermaid who dies during, and because of, his absence. When his heart breaks, the Soul finds an entrance to the body, because when the Fisherman dismisses the Soul at the beginning of the story he refuses to give it his heart upon its demand; this is why the Soul does not find a way to enter the body for long years until the heart of the young Fisherman breaks. Although there are major differences in both stories, their ends seem to be similar in the concept of death after reunion.

I would like to draw attention to the similar line of journey of both Sindbad and the Fisherman's Soul. Sindbad always departs from a certain place, which is Baghdad, and returns to the same place after each voyage.[146] Similarly, the Soul travels from where the Fisherman is, that is from the shore of the part of the sea where the Fisherman and the Mermaid live, and it returns after each journey to the same place to narrate the stories to the Fisherman. Both Sindbad

[143] Lane, III, 76.
[144] Haddawy, *The Arabian Nights II*, p. 51.
[145] Wilde, 'The Fisherman and his Soul', p. 271.
[146] Ghazoul, p. 111.

and the Soul have no specified destination before they depart.[147] They travel to where destiny takes them. However, Sindbad and the Soul differ in the motives of their travelling. Sindbad travels in search for the unknown, for adventure, and for experience;[148] while the Soul travels because of 'a lack', which is similar to that of Ulysses as argued by Ferial Ghazoul in *The Arabian Nights: A Structural Analysis* (1980).[149] Sindbad has everything, unless he wants danger and perilous discoveries,[150] whereas the Soul needs the body and the heart of the Fisherman; it needs to return to the Fisherman, so its travels are part of its attempts to achieve its goal.

It is interesting to compare the uses of repetition in both *The Arabian Nights* and 'The Fisherman and his Soul'. Etsuko Aoyagi, in *The Arabian Nights and Orientalism* (2006), examines the different types of repetition that occur in *The Arabian Nights*, such as repetitions in expressions, repetitions in characters, and repetitions in content. I would like to propose a comparison between *The Arabian Nights* and 'The Fisherman and his Soul' in terms of repetitions in expressions. Aoyagi argues that the expressions repeated in *The Arabian Nights* are divided into two basic categories; the first is about repetitions at 'Night Breaks', which are the exact repeated sentences at the beginning and end of each night. The second category is called 'Stock Descriptions', which is about giving general but common descriptions of characters. For example, describing

[147] Ghazoul, p. 111.
[148] Ghazoul, p. 111.
[149] Ghazoul, p. 111. Ferial Ghazoul argues that Ulysses is unlike Sindbad, because Sindbad has everything, but he travels for search of the unknown; while Ulysses travels due to 'a lack'.
[150] See Ghazoul, p. 112.

handsome men as moon-like, beautiful women as having teeth like pearls, or giving horrifying descriptions of monsters.[151]

In *The Arabian Nights*, before each story the following phrases are repeated: 'It has been related to me, O happy King';[152] 'I heard, O happy King, that'; [153] 'It is said, O wise and happy King, that';[154] and 'It is related, O wise and happy King, that'. [155] After the end of every night's storytelling, the following passage is repeated throughout the stories:[156]

> Here Shahrazad perceived the light of morning, and discontinued the recitation with which she had been allowed thus far to proceed. Her sister said to her, How excellent is thy story! and how sweet!– but she answered, What is this in comparison with that which I will relate to thee the next night, if I live, and the king spare me! And the King said, By Allah, I will not kill her until I hear the remainder of her story.[157]

Or,

> But morning overtook Shahrazad, and she lapsed into silence. Then Dinarzad said, 'What a strange and entertaining story!' Shahrazad replied, 'What is this compared with what I shall tell you tomorrow night if the king spares me and lets me live!'[158]

In 'The Fisherman and his Soul' there is a repeated dialogue which is similar to Shahrazad's refrain. This dialogue is between the Fisherman and the Soul, and takes place every year at the same time, when the Soul visits the Fisherman and tries to persuade him to reunite with it. The dialogue is as follows: 'Why dost

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[151] See Etsuko Aoyagi, 'Repetitiveness in *The Arabian Nights*: Openness as Self-Foundation in the *Thousand and One Nights*', in *The Arabian Nights and Orientalism: Perspectives from East and West*, ed. by Yuriko Yamanaka and Tetsuo Nishio (London: Tauris, 2006), pp. 70-71.
[152] Lane, I, 38.
[153] Haddawy, *The Arabian Nights*, p. 25.
[154] Haddawy, *The Arabian Nights*, p. 17.
[155] Haddawy, *The Arabian Nights*, p. 19.
[156] The phrases may vary in different translations, but they are usually consistent in each translation.
[157] Lane, I, 43.
[158] Haddawy, *The Arabian Nights*, p. 216.

thou call to me? [...] Come nearer, that I may speak with thee, for I have seen marvellous things.' This catchphrase is repeated after each journey the Soul makes and after each return to visit the Fisherman. Here, it is the same repetition that is intended by Shahrazad as a form of hypnosis.[159] There is a reference to entering the mind when the Soul says, teasing: 'Naked were her feet, and they moved over the carpet like little white pigeons. Never have I seen anything so marvellous'.[160] The soul tries to impress the fisherman and tempts him to go back to his old self, get out of the supernatural and paranormal life he is living with the Mermaid, and return to the real life where he is supposed to be and live. The Soul touches upon the Fisherman's weakness. It tries to control him psychologically, just like Shahrazad does to Shahrayar. The Fisherman is easily teased, for when he 'heard the words of his Soul, he remembered that the little Mermaid had no feet and could not dance. And a great desire came over him, and he said to himself, "It is but a day's journey, and I can return to my love"'.[161]

The Soul succeeds in using this technique of repetition and temptation. The Fisherman goes with his soul to where it wants, yet, there is always this suspense and repetition, which calls to mind Shahrazad's thousands of repetitions, day and night, over one thousand and one nights. The Soul wittily drags the Fisherman by distancing him gradually from the sea and the whole city. The Soul takes him, alluring, from a city to another. The Fisherman seems to be in a sleep-walking state, following the Soul in order to reach his aim. The Soul

[159] See Robert L. Mack, *Arabian Nights' Entertainment*, ed. by Robert L. Mack (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. xxiii. Shahrazad's hypnotic mode is also discussed in Chapter Three ''The Old Man of the Sea': Joseph Conrad and *The Arabian Nights*' in relation to Marlow's hypnotic narrative.
[160] Wilde, 'The Fisherman and his Soul', p. 265.
[161] Wilde, 'The Fisherman and his Soul', p. 265.

keeps telling the Fisherman: 'It is not this city, but another. Nevertheless let us enter in.'[162] This is an answer to the repeated question by the fisherman, 'Is this the city in which she dances of whom thou didst speak to me?'[163] Furthermore, there is a repetition of, 'Be at peace, be at peace':[164] The Soul is delaying the Fisherman in a similar way to how Shahrazad delays Shahrayar's imprudence one thousand and one nights by her various techniques, such as suspense, captivation, and hypnosis, for she succeeds in entering his deep psychology and balancing it.

The techniques are very similar to those used by the Soul as discussed above; however, the results are different. Shahrazad corrects what she and everybody else consider as wrong. At the end, she becomes the one to construct a happy and successful life because she achieves a sort of justice and brings balance to society. On the contrary, the Soul, according to the Fisherman's understanding, is a destroyer of a happy life. This is why at the end there is tragedy; it is not a 'happily ever after' ending. In *The Arabian Nights*, there is an emphasis on the idea that

> while the longing of love justifies many otherwise socially unacceptable actions, there eventually comes a moment when one must return from the intense subjectivity of love to face the objective reality of the world around. And if one's love has resulted in one's falling into socially untenable circumstances, unpleasant consequences are the natural result.[165]

The Fisherman's love for the Mermaid is socially unacceptable; it is wrong and thus its results will definitely be wrong. The Fisherman and his beloved both die,

[162] Wilde, 'The Fisherman and his Soul', p. 266.
[163] Wilde, 'The Fisherman and his Soul', p. 266.
[164] Wilde, 'The Fisherman and his Soul', p. 266.
[165] Peter Heath, 'Romance as Genre in *The Thousand and One Nights*', in *The Arabian Nights Reader*, ed. by Ulrich Marzolph (Michigan: Wayne State University Press, 2006), p. 188.

and the Soul dies with them. The Mermaid dies of her love for the Fisherman, just as Aziza 'dies of lovesickness' for Aziz who deserts her at a certain point and for a certain reason.[166] The Soul tries throughout the story to prevent the Fisherman from casting it away; and after he does, it tries to return to its body. The Soul, despite its wickedness and the corruption it acquires from the world, tries to do what is granted as right: a body and a soul should be one entity, not two. Disappointingly, one never knows what is right and what is wrong. Is it right to sacrifice the soul for the sake of love? Or is it right to live a 'normal' life and sacrifice love? Although the Soul returns to the body, they both die tragically. The Mermaid dies following the Fisherman's departure after his Soul. Everyone dies.

In Islam number seven is highly significant. Allah completed the creation in seven days. He also created seven skies, or seven heavens and seven earths, ' □□□ □□□ □□ □ □□□□□□ □□□ □□□□□□□ □□□□□□ □□ □□□□□□ □□ □□□□□ □□□□ □□ □□ □□□ □□□ □□□□ □□ □□□□',[167] which means, 'It is He Who hath created for you all things that are on earth; moreover His design comprehended the heavens, for He gave order and perfection to the seven firmaments; and of all things He hath perfect knowledge';[168] ' □□ □□□□□ □□□□□ □□□□□ □□ □□□□□□□ □□□ □□ □□□ □□ □□□□□ □□□□□□□ □□□□ □□□ □□□□ □□□□ □□ □□□□',[169] which means, 'He Who created the seven heavens one above another: No want of proportion wilt thou see in the Creation of Allah Most

[166] Heath, p. 193.
[167] (29) سورة البقرة
[168] 002. 029.
[169] (3) سورة الملك

Gracious. So turn thy vision against: seest thou any flaw?'[170] Number seven is also important because it is present in some major points in life. For example, when a baby is born, there is a special celebration when he or she completes a week, or day seven, of life, and this is a way of expressing or celebrating Allah's blessing. Moreover, when a person dies, in addition to the death and burial ceremony, there is a special ceremony to be done at day seven of a person's death in order for the dead to be at rest, mercy, and peace. Although it has become rare in modern Arab and Muslim societies, some countries and some societies still celebrate their weddings over seven days and nights. This is why number seven in general is thought to be a symbol of completion or perfection.[171] In 'Surat Luqmán', the seven seas are mentioned, ' □□□□ □□ □□□□ □□ □ □□□□ □□□□ □□ □□ □□ □□□□□ □□□□ □□ □□□□ □□□□ □□□□ □□ □□□□ □□□□ □ □□□□ □□□□ □□', [172] meaning, 'And if all the trees in the earth were pens, and the sea, with seven more seas to help it, the words of Allah could not be exhausted. Lo! Allah is Mighty, Wise.'[173] Last but not least, in 'Surat Al-Háqqa' there is a verse which alludes to the notion of the number of days and nights: ' □□□□□□ □ □□□□ □□□ □□□□□ □□□□□ □□□□□ □□□ □□□□□ □□□□□ □□□□ □□□□□ □□□□ □□□□□ □□□□ □□□□□ □□□□ □□□□□ □□□□', [174] that means, 'Which He imposed on them for seven long nights and eight long days so that thou mightest have seen men lying overthrown, as they were hollow trunks of palm trees.'[175]

[170] 067. 003.
[171] There are many more examples of the verses of the Holy Qur'an in which number 'seven' is emphasised.
[172] سورة لقمان (27)
[173] 031. 027.
[174] سورة الحاقة (7)
[175] 069. 007.

Although the use of numbers is a familiar method in folk literature,[176] number seven is closely associated with the Qur'an in the first place, followed by *The Arabian Nights*. In *The Arabian Nights*, the phrase 'سبعة أيام بلياليها' means 'seven days and nights' and is frequently repeated throughout the stories. Seven is a fundamental number because it 'is an emblematic number that stands for the eternal return.'[177] Sindbad stops his voyages after the seventh voyage, and it has been argued that he ends his narrative after he completes the seventh voyage and not at another point, because according to Medieval Muslim geographers the world is divided into seven 'regions', and with the seventh voyage, Sindbad would have completed travelling the whole world.[178] In short, number seven, along with '1001', exemplifies infinity.[179] Therefore, it is worth considering Wilde's use of number seven as an indication of possible intertextuality of 'The Fisherman and his Soul' and *The Arabian Nights*.

What I am arguing here is that Wilde seems to be using number 'seven' in a comparable way to how it is used in the Muslim culture presented by the Qur'an and *The Arabian Nights*. In 'The Fisherman and his Soul', there is a repeated phrase which the Soul utters when narrating its journeys: 'Six days I journeyed, and on the morning of the seventh day […]';[180] and in another place, 'Six days I journeyed along the highways […] and on the morning of the seventh day I lifted up my eyes, and lo!'[181] Wilde's use of number seven corresponds in interesting ways with its use in the Qur'an, as discussed above, especially given that Wilde mentions the Qur'an in this particular story. In one of its journeys, the

[176] See Ghazoul, p. 62. For the use of numbers in *The Arabian Nights*, see Ghazoul, pp. 62-68.
[177] Ghazoul, p. 114.
[178] Ghazoul, p. 114.
[179] See Ghazoul, p. 131. For more on the numeric formulae, see Ghazoul, pp. 62-68.
[180] Wilde, 'The Fisherman and his Soul', p. 257.
[181] Wilde, 'The Fisherman and his Soul', p. 261.

Soul enters a city that calls to mind *The Arabian Nights*' 'City of Brass': 'The walls [of the city] are cased with copper, and the watch-towers on the wall are roofed with brass.'[182] The Soul then, in attempting to enter the city, narrates: 'When I sought to enter, the guards stopped me asked of me who I was. I made an answer that I was a Dervish and on my way to the city of Meccca, where there was a green veil on which the Koran was embroidered in silver letters by the hands of the angels.'[183] It is possible, therefore, to compare the atmosphere in Wilde's descriptions to that of *The Arabian Nights*.

Considering Oscar Wilde's short stories in relation to *The Arabian Nights* unlocks new possibilities and suggests new ways of reading his works. Most critics have interpreted Wilde's short stories and fairy tales in the light of social criticism, and have explicitly linked them to Andersen's fairy tales. But what about the possible sources of Andersen's works? Jack Zipes, in *Hans Christian Andersen: The Misunderstood Storyteller* (2005), argues that in 'The Shadow', 'Andersen ingenuously reworks the folk motif of Chamisso's *Peter Schlemihls wundersame Geschichte* (1814), in which a young man sells his shadow to the devil to become rich; and he also explores the Hegelian notion of master-servant in a fascinating way.'[184] Zipes goes on to argue that Andersen was inspired by the Danish Romantic Movement, in which Adam Oehlenschläger played a remarkable role, especially in his drama *Aladdin*; or, *The Wonderful Lamp* (1805). [185] Andersen, moreover, and according to Niels Kofoed, in *Hans*

[182] Wilde, 'The Fisherman and his Soul', p. 261.
[183] Wilde, 'The Fisherman and his Soul', p. 261.
[184] Jack Zipes, *Hans Christian Andersen: The Misunderstood Storyteller* (New York: Routledge, 2005), p. 41.
[185] Zipes, p. 17.

Christian Andersen: Danish Writer and Citizen of the World (1996), states that 'Andersen, identifying with Aladdin, made his tale a leitmotif in the drama of his own life.'[186] Thus, *The Arabian Nights* seems to have left a noticeable touch on Andersen's work; however, this touch appears to be critically ignored, and therefore, Wilde's work has been restrictedly linked to Andersen's, disregarding any possible connection between Wilde and *The Arabian Nights*, a point this chapter attempts to underline.

The similar threads between *The Arabian Nights* and Wilde's stories vary from one story to another. Most of the stories have similarities with *The Arabian Nights* based on the fairy-tale facet. In some stories, however, the narrative technique is the dominant aspect of resemblance between both works. In the overall suggestion, the Oriental element is strongly present in Wilde's fairy tales and short stories, contrary to the opinions that have excluded *The Arabian Nights* from the Wildean circle of comparisons.

Wilde, to some extent like Shahrazad, is a captivating storyteller who decorates his narratives with the magical and the wonderful. The power of the word is major in the storytelling of Wilde and Shahrazad, both of whose narratives 'evolved through numerous performed versions and variations before being constricted to print.'[187] On the whole, it is possible to have an intertextual reading of Wilde's fairy tales in the light of *The Arabian Nights*. It can be fruitful to suggest that although Wilde did not blindly imitate the style and techniques of *The Arabian Nights*, the touches of the Oriental work are clearly

[186] Quoted in Zipes, p. 47.
[187] Raby, pp. 50-51.

present in his stories, but in a Wildean treatment. Thus, it can be said that Shahrazad's stories are told in Wilde's fairylands.

‘The Old Man of the Sea’:
Joseph Conrad and *The Arabian Nights*

> *But for me all the East is contained in that vision of my youth. It is all in that moment when I opened my young eyes on it.*
>
> Joseph Conrad

> *Literary influence travels by many routes, all of them indirect.*
>
> Gene M. Moore

Despite the fact that Joseph Conrad’s admiration of the East has long been acknowledged, his connection with *The Arabian Nights* in particular has not been recognised. This chapter is an attempt to draw attention to the intertextual connections between *The Arabian Nights* and some of Joseph Conrad’s short fiction. My focus will be upon Conrad’s use of the multi-layered narrative and some other devices that can be linked to those used in *The Arabian Nights*, such as the use of delayed decoding, the *leitsatz*, and dramatic visualisation. I am also going to draw a comparison between Marlow and Shahrazad’s function in the frame story: being narrators and characters at the same time, both link the narrative and the audience. The hypnotic mode of Marlow/Shahrazad will also be explored.

Language plays a major role in *The Arabian Nights* and in ‘Heart of Darkness’. I am going to compare both works in terms of the employment of discourse and silence, and the use of the language of lying: lying as a means of reaching an end, whether traditional or open, to the work. Interesting similarities and differences between the works lie in their endings. Interestingly, for example,

the deferral of closure, which is one of the most famous techniques of *The Arabian Nights,* is present in 'Heart of Darkness', with which there are various similarities. However, they differ in the matter of the actual closure, because *The Arabian Nights* is a traditional text with a traditional ending, while 'Heart of Darkness' is a modernist work with a less decisive close. In pinpointing these similarities and differences I will situate Conrad's classic turn of the century tale within the broader context of his short stories.

As with Robert Louis Stevenson and Oscar Wilde, Conrad's 'inspiration' has largely been limited to a European frame of writing. Cedric Watts, in *Conrad's 'Heart of Darkness': A Critical and Contextual Discussion* (1977), considers the multi-layered narrative as originating from a European frame of writing, such as, *The Canterbury Tales, The Decameron, The Odyssey,* and *The Iliad,* ignoring any reference to *The Arabian Nights* as a possible origin.[1] Watts views the tale-within-the-tale technique associated with Conrad as becoming popular at around the turn of the century, when it was used by European writers, such as Guy de Maupassant, Ivan Turgenev, Rudyard Kipling, Henry James, Robert Cunninghame Graham, and H. G. Wells.[2] By using the multi-layered narrative technique, then, Conrad was joining a host of other European writers, which also included Honoré de Balzac, Victor Hugo, and Charles Dickens. *The Cambridge Companion to Joseph Conrad* (1996), for example, includes essays

[1] Robert G. Hampson, ''The Genie out of the Bottle': Conrad, Wells, and Joyce', in *The Arabian Nights in English Literature: Studies in the Reception of the Thousand and One Nights into British Culture,* ed. by Peter Caracciolo (Houndsmill: The Macmillan Press, 1988), p. 218.
Cedric Watts relates the increased use of the tale-within-a-tale technique in the last decades of the nineteenth century to the rise of the short story and its success as appearing in the periodicals and magazines, as well as to the growing number of travellers and traders during the turn of the century who had many 'tales to tell'. Cedric Watts, 'Heart of Darkness', in *The Cambridge Companion to Joseph Conrad*, ed. by J. H. Stape (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 47-48.
[2] Watts, 'Heart of Darkness', p. 46.

by Gail Fraser, Jakob Lothe, and Kenneth Graham in which these connections are discussed. Fraser states that Conrad followed the techniques of Maupassant, Flaubert, and Turgenev,[3] and continues to argue that stories like, 'Amy Foster' (1901), 'Typhoon' (1902), and 'The Secret Sharer' (1909), are essentially European in employing the unreliable narrator instead of the 'consistently reliable story-teller'.[4]

Kenneth Graham claims that not only did Conrad admire Flaubert and Maupassant, but also that he was indebted to them and to their literary realism. Meanwhile, Owen Knowles states that Conrad was a friend of Wells's and regarded him as a literary champion: his 'Far Eastern settings […] fitted the taste for exotic fiction created by Robert Louis Stevenson and Rudyard Kipling'.[5] As we have seen, Stevenson's use of *The Arabian Nights* is clear. However, we might speculate as to the latent, unconscious and intangible impact of *The Arabian Nights* on the various European writers listed above, particularly given what I suggested in the general introduction was the centrality of the tales within the European imagination of the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Of course, in this chapter I want to move beyond the confined and confining intertextuality of European literature, to pursue the generally overlooked relationship between Conrad's short fiction and *The Arabian Nights*. Here I will pick up upon and pursue in more detail the suggestive comments made by

[3] Gail Fraser, 'The Short Fiction', in *The Cambridge Companion to Joseph Conrad,* ed. by J. H. Stape (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 27, 34.
[4] Fraser, p. 36.
[5] Owen Knowles, 'Conrad's Life', in *The Cambridge Companion to Joseph Conrad,* ed. by J. H. Stape (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 10. For more details on the critics' opinion in this regards, see *The Cambridge Companion to Joseph Conrad,* ed. by J. H. Stape (1996).

Robert G. Hampson in his essay 'The Genie out of the Bottle: Conrad, Wells and Joyce' in *The Arabian Nights in English Literature* (1988).

The Arabian Nights' narrative style became very popular in the second half of the nineteenth century, and as Hampson puts it, '[f]or writers, the *Nights* provided a pool of images and allusions and a compendium of narrative techniques'.[6] Hampson even touches upon some of the techniques of *The Arabian Nights* that are used by Conrad. For example, he examines the oblique presentation of *The Arabian Nights* which Mia Gerhardt discusses in *The Art of Story-Telling* (1963), and in which the narrative shifts from one character to another until it becomes a means of seeing through a character's eye the story of the other characters, as if the character is a 'witness'. Hampson relates this technique to 'Heart of Darkness' (1899), *Lord Jim* (1900), and *Chance* (1914).[7] He also discusses the 'Chinese-box' narrative structure and its employment by Conrad in Marlow's narratives. He gives an account of how Conrad develops the use of this technique from 'Youth' (1898) to 'Heart of Darkness' (1899) where it becomes more profound and more complicated due to the 'complex interaction between inner and outer narratives'.[8]

Hampson continues to argue that the relationship between *The Arabian Nights* and Conrad is not only restricted to the novels but it also extends to Conrad's shorter fiction, such as 'Karain' (1897).[9] He goes on to suggest that there are other writers in different periods who drew on *The Arabian Nights* in some of their masterworks, such as James Joyce in *Ulysses* (1922) and *Finnegans Wake* (1939), and H. G. Wells in *The Time Machine* (1895), *The*

[6] Hampson, p. 218.
[7] Hampson, pp. 218-19.
[8] Hampson, p. 220.
[9] Hampson, p. 222.

Sleeper Awakes (1898), and *The Research Magnificent* (1915). Hampson suggests the link between Conrad and *The Arabian Nights* might be thought of as subliminal as well as conscious, or involving 'direct contact'.[10] It is a connection, he suggests, that does not just illuminate Conrad's work, but which deepens our understanding of *The Arabian Nights* as, in Tzvetan Todorov's words, a 'narrative machine'.[11]

Although Watts acknowledges the popularity of the story-within-a-story narrative technique at the turn of the century, he attributes this to 'the poetic convention of the dramatic monologue, exploited by Browning and Tennyson, and to the sophisticated employment of multiple narrators in Bronte's *Wuthering Heights*'.[12] Watts also adds that this technique could be found in Coleridge's poetry, and he specifies 'The Rime of the Ancyent Marinere'.[13] Although Watts disregards it, we have already seen in Chapter Two that Coleridge, like Tennyson, re-used some of *The Arabian Nights*' techniques or ideas in his poetry.[14] Coleridge emphasises the fact that he was 'impressed' by *The Arabian Nights*; in his own words he comments:

> One tale […] (the tale of a man who was compelled to seek for a pure virgin) made so deep an impression on me […] that I was haunted by spectres, whenever I was in the dark – and I distinctly remember the anxious and fearful eagerness, with which I used to watch the window in

[10] Hampson, p. 226.
[11] Hampson, p. 237.
[12] Watts, 'Heart of Darkness', pp. 47-48.
[13] Watts, 'Heart of Darkness', pp. 47-48.
[14] For more on Coleridge's influence by *The Arabian Nights*, see Allan Grant, 'The Genie and the Albatross', in *The Arabian Nights in English Literature: Studies in the Reception of the Thousand and One Nights into British Culture*, ed. by Peter Caracciolo (Houndsmill: The Macmillan Press, 1988), pp. 111-29; Robert Irwin, *The Arabian Nights: A Companion* (London: Tauris Parke Paperbacks, 2004), pp. 266-67; Muhsin Jassim Ali, *Scheherazade in England: A Study of Nineteenth Century English Criticism of the Arabian Nights* (Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers; in association with Baghdad University Press, 1981), pp. 40-79. See also Chapter Two ''Shahrazad in Fairyland': Oscar Wilde and *The Arabian Nights*', p. 141.

> which the books lay - & whenever the sun lay upon them, I would seize it, carry it by the wall & bask & read […].[15]

Coleridge, moreover, compared the doom of the Ancient Mariner and his comrades after killing the Albatross to that of the merchant in *The Arabian Nights* who kills a genie by throwing, unintentionally, a stone of a date.[16] Coleridge was strongly attached to *The Arabian Nights* tales of wonder which inflame the imagination.[17] Unlike Coleridge's dark influence by *The Arabian Nights*, and Oriental tales in general, Tennyson's reading of *The Arabian Nights* was brighter and more optimistic.[18] In 'Recollections of the *Arabian Nights*' Tennyson recalls pleasant childhood memories:

> When the breeze of a joyful dawn blew free
> In the silken sail of infancy,
> The tide of time flow'd back with me,
> The forward-flowing tide of time;
> And many a sheeny summer-morn,
> Adown the Tigris I was borne,
> By Bagdat's shrines of fretted gold,
> High-walked gardens green and old;
> True Mussulman was I and sworn,
> For it was in the golden prime
> Of good Haroun Alraschid.[19]

Watts ignores *The Arabian Nights* as a 'familiar' source of this narrative technique and its relationship to a considerable variety of literary works, including, I will argue, the works of Conrad.

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[15] Quoted in Robert Irwin, *The Arabian Nights: A Companion* (London: Tauris Parke, 2004), p. 266.
[16] See Irwin, p. 266.
[17] Muhsin Jassim Ali, *Scheherazade in England: A Study of Nineteenth Century English Criticism of the Arabian Nights* (Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers; in association with Baghdad University Press, 1981), pp. 41, 75.
[18] See Irwin, pp. 267, 269.
[19] Alfred Tennyson, 'Recollections of the *Arabian Nights*', in *Poetical Works* (Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1868), p. 5.

In addition to Conrad's being famous for using the frame and inner narrative, especially in 'Heart of Darkness' (1899), Hampson argues that some of his texts exemplify what Mia Gerhardt calls the 'oblique narrative', 'which enhances the charm of several short stories in the "1001 Nights"'.[20] 'Heart of Darkness' could be considered as one of these texts,

> where a secondary character […] assists the occurrence, plays a small part in it, and afterwards reports it […] [The secondary character's] technique, however, is essentially a witnessing technique. The facts of the narration are not presented straight, but obliquely, through one of the characters, who tells them in the first person, while playing but a subordinate part in the story.[21]

This is one way Hampson classifies Marlow in 'Heart of Darkness'. Marlow is a narratee; he is one of the characters until the frame narrator introduces him to carry on the role of the narrator where he tells the story using the first-person style. The other way Marlow is presented in 'Heart of Darkness' and 'Youth' is by using the Chinese-box technique. This technique, according to Hampson, is what characterises the narrative of *The Arabian Nights*, especially because there is 'an interaction between the framed story and its frame';[22] and 'Conrad's handling of Marlow involves a variety of such interactions.'[23]

Hampson suggests that there may be a possibility of Conrad's 'indebtedness' to Wells's *The Time Machine*; and that in this case, Conrad 'seems to have had direct contact with the *Nights*.'[24] He argues that Conrad left Poland in 1874, a year after a Polish translation of *The Arabian Nights* appeared

[20] Hampson, p. 219. See also, Mia Gerhardt, *The Art of Story-Telling* (Leiden: Brill, 1963), pp. 384-85.
[21] Gerhardt, pp. 384-85.
[22] Hampson, p. 219. Hampson gives 'Sindbad the Sailor' as an example, in his footnotes (p. 237).
[23] Hampson, p. 219.
[24] Hampson, p. 226.

in 1873; besides, through his knowledge of French, he might have read a French translation of the Oriental work. Another suggestion is that Conrad might have read Richard Burton's version because he was interested in Islam in general, as well as in Burton in particular.[25] However, my aim here is not to establish beyond doubt the origins of Conrad's fiction; I am trying to bring to light what have been critically in the dark in terms of Conrad's arguably unconscious relationship with *The Arabian Nights*.

In several letters Conrad mentions 'the old man of the sea' referring to the story of 'Sindbad the Sailor'.[26] However, a better example is when, in a letter to Ford Madox Ford in 1899, Conrad portrays 'Heart of Darkness' as a 'geni out of the bottle';[27] a phrase which is clearly connected to *The Arabian Nights*. Extending Hampson's suggestive, but relatively fleeting reading, this chapter is not an empirical attempt to establish evidence of the influence of *The Arabian Nights* on Conrad through direct and conscious allusion. Rather, it works more speculatively to think about the indirect and perhaps unconscious connections between these texts. For example, it might be productive to think about how 'Heart of Darkness' seems to uncannily echo *The Arabian Nights* in terms of its deployment of the mesmerising figure of the narrator (Marlow/Shahrazad), the use of the oral tale for the ends of diversion or entertainment, the significant use

[25] Hampson, p. 226.
[26] Hampson, p. 226. See also *Joseph Conrad's Letters to R. B. Cunninghame-Graham*, ed. by Cedric Watts (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), p. 71. See also *The Collected Letters of Joseph Conrad*, ed. by F. R. Karl and L. Davies, 9 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), I, 380. See also, Peter D. Molan, 'Sindbad the Sailor: A Commentary on the Ethics of Violence', in *The Arabian Nights Reader*, ed. by Ulrich Marzolph (Michigan: Wayne State University Press, 2006), p. 339.
[27] Quoted in Hampson, p. 226.

of deferral and postponement of narrative closure, and the use of different narrative styles and techniques that may be linked to *The Arabian Nights*.[28]

Paul Wake, in *Conrad's Marlow* (2007), alludes to Conrad's frame narrative as being traced back to *The Arabian Nights* among other masterpieces that use the frame work narrative, such as Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*, Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*, and William Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*.[29] Conrad is said to be 'influenced'[30] by Antoine Galland's translation of *The Arabian Nights* in the first place, and by the translations of Edward Lane, John Payne, and Richard Burton. Ferial Gahzoul also suggests that the voyages of Sindbad are similar to the works of Conrad, because they 'offer a special case of embedding', which is 'not the usual enframed story, but a case of perspectivism'[31] in which, as she specifies, the narration shifts between the third person and the first person, whereas in the usual framed story, the narrative is based on the 'objective' third person, and not the 'subjective' first person.[32] In 'Heart of Darkness', as well as in 'Youth', the frame narrative is presented by the third person narrator; then the enframed story is presented by the first person narrative mode. This makes an interesting link between the works, because although they are framed narratives, they have this special aspect that differentiates them from other framing stories, as Ghazoul suggests.

I mentioned earlier in this chapter that Conrad was said to be an admirer of Stevenson's who was clearly influenced by *The Arabian Nights* in *New*

[28] See Hampson, p. 228.
[29] Paul Wake, *Conrad's Marlow: Narrative and death in 'Youth', Heart of Darkness, Lord Jim and Chance* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), p. 4.
[30] Robert L. Mack, *Arabian Nights' Entertainment*, ed. by Robert L. Mack (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. xviii. I am using Mack's word only to support my argument that there is a strong possibility of a link between Conrad and *The Arabian Nights*.
[31] Ferial Ghazoul, *The Arabian Nights: A Structural Analysis* (Cairo: Cairo Associated Institution for the Study and Presentation of Arab Cultural Values, 1980), p. 110.
[32] See Ghazoul, p. 110.

Arabian Nights (1882) and *More New Arabian Nights: The Dynamiter* (1885). In 'Heart of Darkness', Conrad describes the solitude and the daunting atmosphere of the 'modern' city:

> A narrow and deserted street in deep shadow, high houses, innumerable windows with venetian blinds, a dead silence, grass sprouting between the stones, imposing carriage archways right and left, immense double doors standing ponderously ajar.[33]

In another place Marlow says: '[t]here must have been clerks in the business, though the house was as still as a house in a city of the dead'.[34] He goes on, 'He alluded constantly to Europe, to the people I was supposed to know there – putting leading questions as to my acquaintances in the sepulchral city';[35]

> I found myself back in the sepulchral city resenting the sight of people hurrying through the streets to filch a little money from each other, to devour their infamous cookery, to gulp their unwholesome beer, to dream their insignificant and silly dreams. They trespassed upon my thoughts. They were intruders whose knowledge of life was to me an irritating pretence, because I felt so sure they could not possibly know the things I knew.[36]

'Deserted street[s]', 'dead silence', 'city of the dead', and 'the sepulchral city', all calls to mind what Stevenson refers to in *More New Arabian Nights* when Clara Luxmore, the main female character and one of the pivots that link the stories in *The Dynamiter*, describes the terrifying emptiness of the city and its streets. She says: 'the very houses seem asleep, and all that mighty heart is lying

[33] Conrad, *Heart of Darkness and Other Tales* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 110.
[34] Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, p. 111.
[35] Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, p. 127.
[36] Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, p. 179.

still.'[37] In another place she expresses her fears of the metropolis: 'But at this hour, in this appalling silence, and among all these staring windows, I am lost in terrors – oh, lost in them!'[38] Those streets of the 'modern' city which are full of livelihood in the mornings look like graves at night. Edward Challoner, the first of the three characters whose adventures form the story line of *The Dynamiter*, portrays the metropolis as 'the grave is not more silent than this city of sleep.'[39] When Marlow describes the double doors that are hardly open, he continues, 'I slipped through one of these cracks, went up a swept and ungarnished staircase, as arid as a desert, and opened the first door I came to.'[40] A similar passage is found in Stevenson's *New Arabian Nights*, and which presents one of the repeated images in *The Arabian Nights* where he describes three people entering a house and a metropolis, or to be more precise, a 'modern' city: 'In dead silence the three passed the door, which was immediately locked behind them';[41] The streets are empty and sombre; the houses are either isolated or easily distinguished by their bleakness; many maze-like paths and corridors are inside the houses behind numerous doors; mysterious rooms are locked behind heavily secured rooms; and the sense of desertedness prevails. Here I am not comparing the two descriptions in terms of being an outcome of a modernist discourse, nor in reference to the general perception of the metropolis in the *fin de siècle*. Rather, I am trying to show the similarity in language, mood, and style of writing between the two authors. Conrad, like Stevenson, seems to portray the

[37] Robert Louis Stevenson, *More New Arabian Nights: The Dynamiter* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1915), p. 14. Stevenson is quoting William Wordsworth in 'Composed Upon Westminster Bridge', see note (123), p. 79.
[38] Stevenson, *The Dynamiter*, p. 15.
[39] Stevenson, *The Dynamiter*, p. 12.
[40] Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, p. 110.
[41] Robert Louis Stevenson, *New Arabian Nights*, in *The Works of Robert Louis Stevenson*, Edinburgh edn, print. by T. A. Constable, 32 vols (London: Chatto & Windus, 1894-1901) IV, (1895), p. 102.

modern metropolis, and the mood of the *fin de siècle* in general, in an 'Arabian Nights'-like style, as I discuss in Chapter One to show the connection between Stevenson's metropolis and *The Arabian Nights*.[42]

Before I further develop my argument, it is necessary to give a brief account of how Conrad considered writing short fiction and the way he dealt with its publication. Most of the time, Conrad had no particular magazine or periodical to publish in. Even when he started certain works that were suitable for periodicals, and which he called 'sketches', he often developed these works into longer fiction, that is, 'either a long short story, or one of his novels.'[43] He defended the short form and thought of it as in many ways superior to the novel: writing should not depend on the length of a work of fiction according to Conrad, because this does not affect its importance.[44] He emphasises this idea by describing the value of short fiction thus: 'It takes a small-scale narrative to show the master's hand'.[45] To be more precise, in his introduction to *The Cambridge Companion to the Short Story in English* (2007), Adrian Hunter refers to the 'shortness' of the short story as a 'positive' aspect.[46] It was not until the last decades of the nineteenth century that the conception of the short story changed from being a compressed novel, or in Hunter's words, 'a fully realised world in miniature'[47] to an independent type of fiction that presents, due to its brevity, 'richness and complexity – or "multiplicity" to use James's own

[42] See Chapter One ''Modern in his Traditionalism': Robert Louis Stevenson and *The Arabian Nights*, pp. 79-88.
[43] Fraser, p. 26.
[44] Fraser, p. 28.
[45] Quoted in Fraser, p. 28.
[46] Adrian Hunter, *The Cambridge Companion to the Short Story in English* (Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 1.
[47] Hunter, p. 1.

word.'[48] The short story has become a separate, strong, and fruitful[49] kind of fiction, and it was favoured by many because it became 'the art of saying less but meaning more'.[50] In a short story, ideas can be presented implicitly without referring to them directly and without having to prolong those ideas for giving further explanation and providing more details as in the case of the novel.[51] The short story as a form seems to have articulated well the doubts and instabilities that accompanied the turn of the century and the shift into modernity. For these reasons the short story has been described by Hunter as being ''up to speed' with the realities of modern life.'[52] This also is what drove Elizabeth Bowen to describe the short story as the 'child of the century',[53] and H. E. Bates to illuminate the importance of the short story in an age where people are 'talking faster, moving faster, and apparently thinking faster.'[54]

At the level of print culture, what supported the rise of, and market for, the short story was the rapid emergence of new magazines and periodicals from around the second half of the nineteenth century and particularly between the 1880s and 1890s. The remarkable rise of this market twinned with the modern age. The technological development, for example the advanced printing techniques and the invention of machine-made paper, led to the blossoming of the short story. By 1891 some magazines stopped publishing serialised novels, and started to publish a short story in each issue.[55] It might be said that the

[48] Hunter, p. 2.
[49] By 'fruitful' I mean that the short story has no longer been considered as a smaller form of the novel, and it conveys the meaning in its short but meaningful form, as well as content, without depending on the novel to gain popularity and success.
[50] Hunter, p. 2.
[51] For more on the short story brevity, see Hunter, p. 2.
[52] Hunter, p. 3.
[53] Quoted in Hunter, p. 3.
[54] Quoted in Hunter, p. 3.
[55] See Hunter, pp. 6-7.

burgeoning of both the short story on the one hand, and the serialised fiction on the other hand was reciprocal, since although the rise of this market is what sustained the short story, the short story, in turn, provided these magazines and journals with material, because '[p]eriodical literature is a huge open mouth which has to be fed – a vessel of immense capacity which has to be filled',[56] as Henry James explains. There is something intriguingly Shahrazad-like about this situation, in which the magazine industry grows to depend, rather like King Shahrayar, on an endless stream of stories.

Conrad differed from the writers of his age, and in Gail Fraser's words, from 'almost all Victorian and late-Victorian fiction writers',[57] in that he did not start with publishing in magazines and periodicals. For instance, his first two works, *Almayer's Folly* (1895) and *An Outcast of the Islands* (1896), were novels and were not published as series. His first serialised works were 'An Outpost of Progress', 'The Idiots', and 'The Lagoon' in 1896.[58] He did not have any preferences with regards to publication; he was not famous for publishing in one magazine rather than another; on the contrary, he knew how to consider the benefits of each opportunity. For example, he wrote in *The Cornhill* magazine because it was 'not a bad mag.'[59] and their payments were considerable. Meanwhile he wrote for the *New Review* because of its prestige. As for the *Savoy*, regardless of its political viewpoints, he did not have any reservation about writing in it.[60]

[56] Quoted in Hunter, p. 7.
[57] Fraser, p. 29.
[58] Fraser, p. 29.
[59] Quoted in Fraser, p. 29.
[60] See Fraser, pp. 29-30.

Although Conrad wanted to appear in certain magazines for prestige, financial incentives drove him to contribute to others, especially during the boom of the serialising market, because, towards the end of the century, this was an important source of living for writers.[61] The only thing Conrad objected to in respect of publishing in magazines and periodicals was the division of stories into parts: to him this was to damage the story and its impact on the reader. He expressed this objection in his letters: 'I told the unspeakable idiots that the thing halved would be as inefective [*sic*] as a dead scorpion. There will be a part without the sting – and the part with the sting – and being separated they will be both harmless and disgusting.'[62] He thinks that the short story should not be interrupted, because, unlike reading a novel, the short story should be considered as intact because of its shortness and density, and this, as most recent critics agree, has a stronger effect on the reader.[63] In this respect, Conrad comments: 'as to me I depend upon the reader *looking back* upon my story as a whole'.[64] Again, like the King of *The Arabian Nights*, Conrad preferred the sorts of unity which would allow the effective manipulation of suspense.

However, serialising short fiction was more successful than sequencing novels, because, as Fraser argues, the short story writer could publish different short pieces in several magazines that would reach a larger number and various types of audience at the same time. For example, Conrad published 'Youth' and 'Karain' in *Blackwood's*, therefore he decided to publish 'Typhoon', 'Falk', and 'Amy Foster' in different magazines. Nevertheless, Conrad faced what most

[61] Fraser, p. 30.
[62] Quoted in Fraser, p. 30.
[63] This brings to mind Edgar Allan Poe's theory about the short story being read in one sitting.
[64] Quoted in Fraser, p. 31.

turn-of-the-century writers went through, which was the clash between reaching the public and maintaining the artistic value of the work at the same time.[65]

Although Conrad would compromise his writing sometimes to please the reader, he would never make fundamental changes to his work, especially if those changes were against his will. He remained loyal to his conviction and literary beliefs.[66] He wrote to Edward Garnett, 'I've tried to do a magazine'ish thing', but, 'with some decency'.[67]

Conrad preferred to call his long works 'tales' and 'stories' rather than 'novels'.[68] It seems to be that he used to prefer the writing of shorter fiction, because, according to Gail Fraser, the two 'failures' in his longer works, completing 'The Sisters' (1928)[69] and *The Rescue* (1920), contributed to the success of his short stories because he knew exactly how to focus his ideas rather than prolong them, and this was one of the main points of strength and distinction in his fiction.[70] This may be one of the reasons why Conrad succeeded in constructing a variety of ideas and themes based on a single episode;[71] a fact which also brought his short stories closer to the form of *The Arabian Nights* stories which are also based on a single episode but then develop further. Almost all Shahrazad's narratives start with a simple event and then expand to a more complicated and developed structure.

The Arabian Nights started from the beginning of the nineteenth century to be 'read and enjoyed mainly for their exotic and fabulous enchantments,

[65] See Fraser, p. 32.
[66] See Fraser, p. 35.
[67] Quoted in Fraser, p. 35.
[68] Fraser, p. 25.
[69] 'The Sisters' was written in 1896, but was unfinished.
[70] See Fraser, p. 27.
[71] See Fraser, p. 27.

enchantments which continued to colour and shape various literary and aesthetic attitudes and to inspire and evoke the intimate whisperings of many a poetic soul throughout the century.'[72] The tales continued to burgeon, especially in the late nineteenth century so that magazines and periodicals wrote about them continuously. In the *Saturday Review* of 13 December 1890, a commentator noted of Galland's version of *The Arabian Nights* that 'This is the form in which the youth of many generations have been set dreaming of wonders of the gorgeous East'.[73] In the *Atlantic Monthly* of June 1889, C. H. Toy wrote: '[*The Arabian Nights*'] beauties and treasures lie partly on the surface, partly deeper down. The adventure, magic, drollery, wit, and passion are easily recognisable; the profounder social and religious sentiments must sometimes be searched for.'[74] And in 23 September 1899, *The Athenaeum* states that 'it is [Galland's] glory to have been the first to bring the "Arabian Nights" to Europe'.[75] These diverse comments, typical of a much wider ongoing commentary at the time, are revealing in terms of illustrating the wider popular hold of *The Arabian Nights* in the late nineteenth century in Britain and Europe: when 'the original *Arabian Nights* enjoyed a vogue in England'.[76] More importantly perhaps, it reveals the extent to which the modern short story shared the same intimate print space as *The Arabian Nights*: 'the Oriental tale play[ed] a prominent part in early periodical fiction.'[77] The kinds of cross-fertilisation between Conrad, as a short story defender in the flourishing period of the serialised fiction, and *The Arabian Nights* become clearer in this context.

[72] Ali, p. 38.
[73] Quoted in Ali, p. 76.
[74] Quoted in Ali, p. 75.
[75] Quoted in Ali, p. 76.
[76] Valerie Shaw, *The Short Story: A Critical Introduction* (London: Longman, 1983), p. 32.
[77] Shaw, p. 32.

What may also bring together Conrad's short stories and *The Arabian Nights* is what might also have connected the short story of the late nineteenth century in general with *The Arabian Nights*; that is, the clear connection of the two with the oral form. Most of the short story forms have their origins in the oral stories, which constitute 'the earliest form of story – and continue to find their way into the modern written form.'[78] The presence of a storyteller, who conveys the story with more immediate excitement and 'marvels',[79] resonates strongly with the plot device of *The Arabian Nights*.

'*Alf Laylah*' as David Pinault states in *Story-Telling Techniques in the Arabian Nights* (1992), 'were originally oral evening-entertainments and were meant to be recited and listened to.'[80] However, as Pinault continues, *The Arabian Nights* 'cannot be described only as a collection of transcribed oral folktales; for it survives as the crafted composition of authors who used various forms of written literary Arabic to capture an oral narrative tradition.'[81] When the interaction between the teller and the listener is taken into consideration in the short story, it is the art of telling that gives the short story its importance. Sincerity and credibility are conveyed in storytelling; storytelling is what makes 'the *Nights* seem […] to say, that we come to know our world, each other, and – ultimately – our own selves.'[82] The modern short story adopted this traditional art of storytelling in the style of the frame narrative, which is more coupled with the short story than it is with other forms of fiction, the novel for example.[83]

[78] Frank Myszor, *The Modern Short Story* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 8.
[79] See Frank O'Connor, *The Lonely Voice: A Study of the Short Story* (New Jersey: Melville House Publishing, 2004), p. 28.
[80] David Pinault, *Story-Telling Techniques in the Arabian Nights* (Leiden: Brill, 1992), p. 13.
[81] Pinault, p. 15.
[82] Mack, p. ix.
[83] Myszor, p. 63.

Many of Conrad's short stories employed the framing device, and most of them, like *The Arabian Nights*, keep the reader captivated and keen to know what comes next. Conrad was one of the writers who resorted to the frame narrative of the original oral tale to attract their readers, for they believed in the effect of this style of narration on 'captivating' the reader.[84] In other words, the framing device was one of the most important techniques of the oral tale, especially folk tales which were transmitted through generations by telling.

'Karain', 'Youth', and 'Heart of Darkness' are among the best examples of the application of a frame narrative in a very 'captivating' 'Arabian Nights'-like way. I will move now to discuss these short stories by Conrad focusing especially on their use of the framing devices.

'Karain' (1897) is a story with an Oriental atmosphere. It follows the same narrative traits as Marlow's other stories, in being a framed story. In 'Karain' there is 'a taste of the exoticism and romance of the Orient, far removed from the vexed problems of the late nineteenth-century city life.'[85] The mythical or magic element is clearly present when the narrator describes the legendary East, and especially the land of Karain:

> It appeared to us a land without memories, regrets, and hopes; a land where nothing could survive the coming of the night, and where each sunrise, like a dazzling act of special creation, was disconnected from the eve and the morrow.[86]

The atmosphere depicted in this paragraph evokes the 'diurnal' qualities of *The Arabian Nights*. The land, here, on which 'nothing could survive the coming of

[84] See Myszor, p. 62.
[85] Linda Dryden, *The Modern Gothic and Literary Doubles: Stevenson, Wilde and Wells* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), pp. 112-13.
[86] Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, p. 30.

the night', is like the land of *The Arabian Nights* where there is no escape from the coming of each night which carries with it the bitter inevitability of a new inescapable murder. Everyone appears to be 'without memories, regrets, and hopes', all is fixed upon the present. When Shahrazad starts her narrative journey, night ceases to be that frightening monster which no one survives. However, to Shahrazad, it is not until the end of the thousand nights that this fear fades away. She faces the fear of every approaching night and tries to battle for her life. Every night she meets Shahrayar she is unsure whether this will be the last day of her life; she is 'disconnected from the eve and the morrow' for she acts in each day as if it were her first, and last. On the other hand, with 'each sunrise' there is 'special creation'. Shahrazad wins a day's battle for her life; she gets a new life with the first light of every dawn and the rise of every morning's sun.

To Lawrence Graver, 'Karain' represents a 'charming contrast between past and present. The feeling of nostalgia for a better time is firmly established. Today's air is murky, yesterday's is exotic and perfumed.'[87] This takes us back to the late nineteenth-century view of exotic literature in general, and *The Arabian Nights* in particular, as they present the better, more comfortable and peaceful past.

When Hollis hands Karain a Jubilee sixpence in 'Karain', he says:

> This is the image of the Great Queen, and the most powerful thing the white men know […] She is more powerful than Suleiman the Wise, who commanded the genii, as you know […] She commands a spirit, too – the spirit of her nation: a masterful, conscientious, unscrupulous, unconquerable devil [….][88]

[87] Lawrence Graver, 'The Major Stories', in *Conrad's Short Fiction* (California: University of California Press, 1969), p. 30.
[88] Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, pp. 62-63.

According to Robert Hampson, this passage establishes a connection between the East and the West through what Tzvetan Todorov calls 'the instrumental marvellous'.[89] The instrumental marvellous is also an important feature of *The Arabian Nights*, as I discuss in the 'Introduction', and which gives it the characteristic of a basis to science fiction.[90] In the instrumental marvellous of *The Arabian Nights* we find 'the gadgets, technological developments' which are 'unrealised in the period described but, after all, quite possible.'[91] As Todorov has noted, these include the 'flying carpet', the 'flying horse', the 'revolving stone', or the 'apple that cures diseases'.

In the previous passage, the presence of one of the main Arabian-Nights distinguishing features: the 'genii', should be highlighted. Genies are referred to in the Qur'an several times. There is a whole Sura about the genies which is Surat Al-Jinn; and in Surat Saba' it is recounted how Suleiman Al-Hakim (Solomon the Wise) was served by the genies:

> [illegible] **(**12**)** [illegible] **(**13**)** [illegible][92]

> And to Solomon (We made) the Wind (obedient): its early morning (stride) stride was a month's (journey), and its evening (stride) was a month's (journey); and We made a Font of molten brass to flow for him; and there were Jinns that worked in front of him, by the leave of his Lord, and if any of them turned aside from Our command, We made him taste of the Penalty of the Blazing Fire (12) They worked for him as he

[89] Quoted in Hampson, p. 221. Hampson explains the phrase, 'the instrumental marvellous' as the 'species of the marvellous which resides in technological feats which were not possible at the time of writing', (p. 221).
[90] See 'Introduction', pp. 31-32.
[91] Tzvetan Todorov, *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre*, trans. by Richard Howard (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1975), p. 56.
[92] *Al Qur'an*, 'Surat Saba'', verses (12) and (13).

> desired, (making) arches, images, Basins as large as Reservoirs, and (cooking) Cauldrons fixed (in their places): 'Work ye, sons of David, with thanks! But few of My servants are grateful!'(13)[93]

It has become common knowledge that the jinn, or genies are part and parcel of *The Arabian Nights* stories. Moreover, by 'commanding a spirit', the vision of 'Alaa Addin and the Magic Lamp' is recalled: the genie of the lamp is commanded by his master. Conrad, in 'Karain', uses these images that are associated with the Qur'an in general, and *The Arabian Nights* in particular:[94] 'Suleiman the Wise' (using the Arabic pronunciation of 'Suleiman'), the 'genii', and the 'commanded spirit'. Hence, a link here can be made possible between 'Karain' and *The Arabian Nights*.

This connection can also extend to 'Heart of Darkness'. Marlow narrates:

> He squinted at the steam-gauge and at the water-gauge […] a thrall to strange witchcraft […] what he knew was this – that should the water in that transparent thing disappear, the evil spirit inside the boiler would get angry […] and take a terrible vengeance.[95]

This quotation powerfully echoes one of the most famous images in *The Arabian Nights* where an evil spirit emerges from a confined space. More specifically, it resonates with the tale 'The Merchant and the Genie', which was narrated by Shahrazad on the first night. In this story, a merchant kills a genie's son by throwing, unintentionally, a stone of a date at him, as he was resting after days of travelling in the deserts:

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[93] *The Holy Qur'an*, 'Surah 34 Saba' (*Sheba*) verses (12) and (13), trans. by Abdullah Yusuf Ali (Hertfordshire: Wordsworth, 2000), p. 358.
[94] A wide variety, in fact the majority, of the tales of *The Arabian Nights* draw on stories, images, and instructions from the Qur'an.
[95] Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, p. 140.

> There he found at the root of a great walnut tree, a fountain of very clear running water; and alighting, tied his horse to a branch of the tree, and sitting down by the fountain, took some biscuits and dates out of his portmanteau, and as he eat[96] his dates, threw the shells about on both sides of him. When he had done eating […] he washed his hands, his face, and his feet, and said his prayers. He had not made an end, but was still on his knees, when he saw a Genie appear.[97]

It is here when the 'terrible vengeance' of the 'angry spirits' would take place:

> I will […] kill thee, as thou hast killed my son […] when you threw your nut-shells about, my son was passing by, and you threw one of them into his eye, which killed him; therefore, I must kill thee.[98]

Both, Conrad's Marlow, and *The Arabian Nights*' Merchant, miraculously escape at the end of their frightful experience.

The connections between *The Arabian Nights* and Conrad, however, widen in 'Youth' and 'Heart of Darkness'. 'Youth' (1898), like 'Amy Foster', and 'The Secret Sharer', is a story which uses the frame narrative where the frame narrator introduces the inner narrator. Conrad started using this technique in 'Youth', and then he developed it in 'Heart of Darkness', where it becomes more complex and thorough. As discussed previously in this chapter, both in 'Youth' and in 'Heart of Darkness' the narration comes from an outer as well as an inner narrator, the inner narrator being one of the characters of the story. Furthermore, the story is narrated in both 'Youth' and 'Heart of Darkness' by the narrator/character Marlow, who tells the story to the other people present. The outer narrator begins the story by an enchanting opening, as if he were saying, 'Once upon a time':

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[96] Verb as it appears in the translation.
[97] *Arabian Nights' Entertainment*s, ed. by Robert L. Mack (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 17.
[98] *Arabian Nights' Entertainments*, p. 18.

> This could have occurred nowhere but in England, where men and sea interpenetrate, so to speak – the sea entering into the life of most men, and the men knowing something or everything about the sea, in the way of amusement, of travel, or of bread-winning.[99]

A few sentences later, the outer narrator introduces Marlow, the inner narrator, in order to complete the story. In 'Youth', Marlow's first appearance as a narrator takes place when the frame narrator says, 'Marlow […] told the story, or rather the chronicle, of a voyage:-';[100] then Marlow starts, 'Yes, I have seen a little of the Eastern seas; but what I remember best is my first voyage there.'[101]

In 'Youth', the older Marlow tells the story of younger Marlow and his adventure. Young Marlow symbolizes youth, energy, adventure, and enthusiasm; old Marlow stands for experience and wisdom; and the captain signifies age. By having a gap of twenty years between young Marlow and old Marlow, Conrad is able to express the main theme of the story, which is egoism and the energy of youth. Marlow now is in his forties, and he is telling the story of an adventure that happened to him when he was in his twenties. The difference between the two Marlows is obvious, because 'young Marlow undergoes a rite of passage from which he emerges a more self-possessed and fully formed person than he was at the narrative's beginning.'[102] As Robert Hampson suggests, Conrad's use of the framed narrative captures a duality.[103] Conrad presents youth, optimism, enthusiasm, and buoyancy in opposition to middle-age, pessimism, negativity, and disappointment. Duality is a structuring device in *The Arabian Nights*. There is duality of man and woman: Shahrazad and Shahrayar; and then there is barely

[99] Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, p. 71.
[100] Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, p. 71.
[101] Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, p. 71.
[102] Batchelor, p. 77.
[103] Hampson, p. 219.

a story that excludes the presence of man/woman duality. There is still one interesting use of doubleness in *The Arabian Nights* which is not a duality of the opposite, but of the similar. For example, the reader is introduced from the very beginning to Shahrayar and his brother Shahzaman who experience the same painful shock of adultery. There is also Shahrazad and her helping sister Dunyazad. Many further examples are to be found in the enframed stories, such as Sindbad of the Sea and Sindbad of the Land, and Abdallah the Fisherman and Abdallah the Merman, as selected examples. Interestingly, young Marlow and old Marlow can be compared to the duality of *The Arabian Nights*. Not only is this duality present in 'Youth', but it also forms a considerable part in 'Heart of Darkness' as well. The main plot revolves around black and white, but then it expands to specify more details such as dark and light, 'Light came out of this river since […] But darkness was here yesterday';[104] the uncivilised and the civilised; the urban and the rural; and most interestingly, the ironic paradoxes, such as 'the blinding sunlight',[105] and the 'blindfolded' woman 'carrying a lighted torch.'[106]

Peter Brooks explains that 'Heart of Darkness' 'engages the very motive of narrative in its tale of a complexly motivated attempt to recover the story of another within one's own, and to retell both in a context that further complicates relations of actors, tellers, and listeners.'[107] Marlow is the inner but main narrator. He has a firm grip of the narrative in the story, because he is introduced by the frame narrator who knows less than him. Marlow is supposed to present

[104] Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, pp. 105-06.
[105] Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, p. 116, 117.
[106] Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, p. 127.
[107] Peter Brooks, *Reading for the Plot: Design and Intention* (New York: Alfred A. Knoff, 1984), p. 238.

another enframed narrator to tell his story, who is Kurtz, but when Kurtz is introduced, he never tells his story. He dies. But Marlow becomes the one to tell Kurtz's story, although, as Brooks suggests, Kurtz may have wanted his story to be told in a different way.[108] By being a narrator and a character, Marlow can be compared to Shahrazad who plays the vital roles as a character as well as a narrator. Both Marlow and Shahrazad may be regarded as story-tellers as well as interpreters if we apply Paul Ricoeur's suggestion, in *The Symbolism of Evil* (1969), that 'wherever a man dreams or raves, another man arises to give interpretation; what was already discourse, even if it was incoherent, is brought into coherent discourse by hermeneutics.'[109] Narrative, in this case, becomes a dialogue that takes place between speech and interpretation, and Marlow is one of the best examples to translate this formula because, as Paul Wake suggests, he stands in a position where he conveys the story and interprets it.[110]

This brings us to consider the complex narrative of 'Heart of Darkness' and compare it to *The Arabian Nights*' narrative complexity. Marlow, too, like Shahrazad, is a complex narrator. Jakob Lothe notes that at the beginning of 'Heart of Darkness' the outer narrator is simple, but as he develops throughout the story, his narrative matures. At the very beginning of the story, the frame narrator starts:

> The *Nellie*, a cruising yawl, swung to her anchor without a flutter of the sails, and was at rest. The flood had made, the wind was nearly calm, and being bound down the river, the only thing for it was to come and wait for the turn of the tide.[111]

[108] Brooks, p. 239.
[109] Paul Ricoeur, *Symbolism of Evil*, trans. by Emerson Buchanan (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969), p. 350.
[110] See Wake, p. 7.
[111] Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, p. 103.

He goes on,

> The sea-reach of the Thames stretched before us like the beginning of an interminable waterway.[112]

He, then, moves progressively from simplicity towards complexity,

> In the immutability of their surroundings the foreign shores, the foreign faces, the changing immensity of life, glide past, veiled not by a sense of mystery but by a slightly disdainful ignorance; for there is nothing mysterious to a seaman unless it be the sea itself, which is the mistress of his existence and inscrutable as Destiny.[113]

In introducing Marlow, the inner narrator, however, the frame narrator is most complex:

> The yarns of seamen have a direct simplicity, the whole meaning of which lies within the shell of a cracked nut. But Marlow was not typical (if his propensity to spin yarns be excepted), and to him the meaning of an episode was not inside like a kernel, but outside, enveloping the tale which brought it out only as a glow brings out a haze, in the likeness of one of these misty halos that sometimes are made visible by a spectral illumination of moonshine.[114]

As in *The Arabian Nights*, stories might not be as conventional as they appear, like the kernel of a nut, but they seem to be out of the ordinary, with no defining limits or boundaries, just like the glow or the haze. In 'Heart of Darkness', '[f]or Marlow […] the meaning conditions and envelops the story rather than the other way round.'[115] In *The Arabian Nights*, similarly, it is the narrative, or to be more precise, the way of conveying a story, that matters. Although the content of *The Arabian Nights* stories are crucial for Shahrazad's aim of taming Shahrayar, it is

[112] Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, p. 105.
[113] Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, p. 105.
[114] Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, p. 105.
[115] Jakob Lothe, *Conrad's Narrative Method* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), p. 27. See also Wake, p. 29.

the *way* she tells the stories and her control of the narrative that helps her more than the stories themselves do. The suspense Shahrazad includes in her narratives, her stoppages, the details she wittily gives inside her stories, and her use of language, add to the success of narrative that 'envelopes' the story itself. Moreover, if the stories of *The Arabian Nights* were to be considered as the kernel, then Shahrazad would be the shell, or the haze which provides meaning to the story. Although *The Arabian Nights* is a conventional narrative, its stories would not have had their meaning and their value without the presence of Shahrazad and her narratives, the 'spectral illumination of moonshine'. In other words, despite the fact that *The Arabian Nights* is a relatively conventional text, it shares this point with Marlow.

Ian Watt, in *Conrad in the Nineteenth Century* (1989), discusses Conrad's use of difficult and complex narrators, especially when he refers to the 'duplication of narrators.'[116] To Marlow, the significant is what is outside, and not what is inside. Thus, unlike the other narrators, what Marlow cares about is the 'shell' of the 'nut', or the 'haze' around the 'glow', and not the other way round: '[the frame narrator] warns us that Marlow's tale will not be centred on, but surrounded by, its meaning.'[117] Bruce Henricksen, in *Nomadic Voices* (1992), explains this metaphor as: 'the sun as source or origin is like an absent author, but also and more profoundly it suggests whatever absent origin or power legitimates our narratives; the moon, like a narrator, is only a reflector of this absent source'.[118] It is interesting here to draw attention to *The Arabian Nights* in

[116] Ian Watt, 'Symbolism', in *Conrad in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1989), p. 196.
[117] Watt, p. 196.
[118] Bruce Henricksen, *Nomadic Voices: Conrad and the Subject of Narrative* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992), p. 49.

terms of origin and narrative. To look at it from a general perspective, *The Arabian Nights* does not have a single or definite origin; although its origins may not be absent, they certainly are not unambiguous. Shahrazad, and her subsequent narrators, are those 'reflectors' who convey the meaning to the listener/reader. Didier Coste suggests that 'the message is […] the meaningfulness that is turned by the participants and witnesses of the act of communication into evidence that this act has taken place. The narrative message, the tale told, is not therefore a "content"; it is not contained within a text.'[119] Listeners and readers have to search for the meaning which lies beyond the text itself, depending on their own 'angle of vision', understanding, and analysis. The narrative, sometimes, is more important than the text itself, because it helps the process of analysing and interpreting more than the text itself does. Narrative links past, present and future; it, thus, provides a wider angle to the listener to explore the 'meaning', which is not merely inside like a 'kernel' but it is 'enveloping the tale' as a whole.[120]

Narrative in *The Arabian Nights* is meant to help Shahrazad gain time and save lives.[121] It is also meant to entertain. However, the narrative of *The Arabian Nights* has a vital role, which is to teach.[122] It is possible to argue that the narrative in 'Heart of Darkness' and 'Youth', for example, starts with the aim of entertaining a group of listeners in order to pass time, but as the narrative advances, it becomes heavy with what is considered as teaching in *The Arabian Nights*' narrative method. In other words, Marlow, like Shahrazad, tries to

[119] Didier Coste, *Narrative as Communication* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), p. 5.
[120] Henricksen, p. 50.
[121] For time-gaining frame of narrative, see Gerhardt, p. 397.
[122] Peter Heath, 'Romance as Genre in *The Thousand and One Nights*', in *The Arabian Nights Reader*, ed. by Ulrich Marzolph (Michigan: Wayne State University Press, 2006), p. 203.

convey lessons not through direct teaching, but by revealing certain truths. He attracts the reader's attention by unveiling the hidden, or probably not the hidden, but the ignored.

As I mentioned earlier, in 'Heart of Darkness', Marlow is both a narratee and a narrator. At the beginning he is a narratee until the outer narrator introduces him to become the inner narrator. Conrad reverses the formula of the 'authority' and 'knowledge' of the frame narrator, because in 'Heart of Darkness', Marlow is the narrator who seems to be more knowledgeable than the outer narrator, contrary to the general narrative methods where the frame narrator is the one who obtains authority.[123] Marlow completes the brief information given by the frame narrator: 'And this also […] has been one of the dark places of the earth.'[124] This gives Marlow the power as well as the credibility as a narrator. In *The Arabian Nights*, the oblique narrative is clearly present in order to give more captivation and fascination to the stories as it does in the stories of *The Arabian Nights*.[125]

In the oblique narrative, a character, who plays a minor role, tells the story of other characters. Mia Gerhardt, in *The Art of Story-Telling* (1963), gives the story of 'The Lovers from the Tribe of Udhra' as an example. In this story, Haroun Alrashid asks the poet Jamil Ibn Ma'amar to tell him a story with an interesting event. Jamil tells him the story of his cousin who is camping in the desert where he meets a lady who is married to another man by compulsion of her parents. The cousin and the lady meet in secret every night, until one day, the lady is attacked by a lion and dies; the cousin dies of sorrow as a consequence.

[123] See Lothe, 'Conradian Narrative', pp. 167-68.
[124] Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, p. 105.
[125] Gerhardt, p. 385.

As Gerhardt suggests, this adventurous story 'becomes more interesting by being seen through the eyes of Jamil and coloured by his reactions: curiosity, emotion, pity and sorrow. The fate of the lovers becomes something else as well: a personal experience of the poet.'[126] In a similar way Marlow in 'Youth', and more particularly in 'Heart of Darkness', becomes the eyes, ears, and mouth, to see other characters' stories, tell them, and 'colour them' with his own 'reactions'.

Marlow, like Shahrazad, and *The Arabian Nights* in general, places an 'emphasis on the oral, spoken, mode.' Although Conrad's fiction is not considered as oral narrative,[127] the narrative of 'Heart of Darkness' and 'Youth' is 'a written account of the reception of an earlier oral narrative', and Marlow is 'a narrator in the oral tradition'.[128] What relates this to the oral tradition is that 'Youth' as well as 'Heart of Darkness' have the form of the oral tale as they contain processes of 'retelling';[129] and that in 'Youth', writing down the oral narrative plays an important role in considering this story in relation to oral forms. As Wake suggests, when the frame narrator in 'Youth' says: 'Marlow (at least I think that is how he spelt his name)'[130] he emphasises the presence of the 'told' story, which is being written, just like *The Arabian Nights* which was compiled and written after being told and retold many times.[131] He may be referring to the original oral tale.

Shahrazad and Marlow as characters differ, however, in certain points. Shahrazad does not play as active a role as Marlow the character in his own

[126] Gerhardt, p. 385.
[127] See 'notes' in Wake, p. 46.
[128] Wake, p. 26.
[129] Wake, p. 27.
[130] Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, p. 71.
[131] See Wake, p. 27.

narratives. Paul Wake suggests that it 'make[s] sense to figure Marlow as two entities: he is at once the generator and subject of story.'[132] Although Shahrazad is a central character in *The Arabian Nights*, and is introduced by the frame narrator, she does not play any role in the stories she narrates. By contrast, although Marlow is introduced by the frame narrator, he continues to play a role in his narratives.[133] Both Shahrazad and Marlow are complex, but their complexity differs in function. Shahrazad is complex in exercising her wit in order to transform a beast-like personality into a normal human being. She overpasses all the others who try to put an end to the catastrophe that Shahrayar causes. She is complex in using her narratives and handling them either in form, such as the stoppages or cliffhangers she uses, or in content, such as in directing the narrative and using implications in order to reach her aim. She is a mistress of storytelling. Marlow's complexity, on the other hand, lies in his 'complexity as character and productive sophistication as narrator'.[134] He is complex in being 'personally' and 'existentially' present in his narrative.[135] Nevertheless, although Shahrazad achieves her goal, she does not mature as a character nor as a narrator after she completes her narratives. Marlow, on the other hand, becomes more mature and sophisticated as he learns from his narratives and from his personal presence and experience.

The similarities between Shahrazad and Marlow continue in the endings of their stories. Time is important to Shahrazad as well as to Marlow, because time, as Robert L. Mack suggests, acts 'as a devourer on the one hand and as a

[132] Wake, p. 21.
[133] See Lothe, *Conrad's Narrative Method*, p. 41.
[134] Lothe, *Conrad's Narrative Method*, p. 41.
[135] Lothe, *Conrad's Narrative Method*, p. 41.

near-apocalyptic revealer of "truth" on the other'.[136] To Shahrazad, it is clear that she wants to gain time in order to achieve her goal and succeed in her almost impossible mission, which becomes possible with her use of wit and with the help of time. Shahrazad 'fights time with time.'[137] Marlow also prolongs his narrative and defers the closures of his narration, in 'Heart of Darkness', because he has a goal to achieve. He wants to reveal a certain 'truth'. He wants to show the truth behind certain mysteries and hidden facts in order to clarify what he may consider as false impression about his 'blank space of delightful mystery'. He may be trying to attain 'a profound and far-reaching vision of the transformative powers of narrative, and the constructive, conciliatory power of art.'[138]

As they move between past and present, fiction and reality, *The Arabian Nights*, 'Youth', and 'Heart of Darkness' ultimately convey a hypnotic effect. Robert L. Mack, in his introduction to the *Arabian Nights*' *Entertainments* (1995), refers to Shahrazad's hypnotising method of narrative. Not only does she hypnotise Shahrayar, but she also puts the reader under the spell of her narrative. The whole atmosphere of her storytelling seems to be mesmerising at certain points, because even the characters of her stories are 'motivated by the prospect of an enigma or a mystery – by the force of curiosity'.[139] Throughout the stories of *The Arabian Nights* the sense of curiosity is strongly present. Shahrayar, the characters, and the reader, want to know what comes next; there is always

[136] Mack, p. xxiii.
[137] Ghazoul, p. 37. For time-gaining frame of narrative, see Gerhardt, p. 397.
[138] Mack, p. xxiii.
[139] Mack, p.xxiii. For Shahrazad's hypnotic 'art', see Muhsin Jassim Ali, 'The Growth of Scholarly Interest in the *Arabian Nights*, in *The Arabian Nights Reader* ed. by Ulrich Marzolph (Michigan: Wayne State University Press, 2006), p. 14.

inscrutability to decipher and a mystery to solve.[140] Similarly, not only does Marlow's narrative in 'Heart of Darkness' appear to mesmerise his narratees and readers through a 'dream-like' narrative, but also he seems to be mesmerised by his own memories. His narrative puts his listeners, as well as the reader, in an ambience of curiosity and suspense. He always defers the main point towards which he is leading the narrative. He proposes to speak of Africa, but he keeps postponing his arrival in the Congo. He claims to be telling the story of Kurtz but constantly defers any actual encounter with him. Similarly, Shahrazad delays the end of her stories in order to gain time, entertain the Sultan, and of course find a remedy to his appalling condition.

In fact, Marlow himself is nearly mesmerised when he is 'fascinated' by the snake-like Congo River:

> [Africa] had got filled since my boyhood with rivers and lakes and names. It had ceased to be a blank space of delightful mystery – a white patch for a boy to dream gloriously over. It had become a place of darkness. But there was in it one river especially, a mighty big river, that you could see on the map, resembling an immense snake uncoiled, with its head in the sea, its body at rest curving afar over a vast country, and its tail lost in the depths of the land […] it fascinated me as a snake would a bird […] The snake had charmed me.[141]

What is fascinating for Marlow represents tedium for others. Many critics have considered Marlow's stoppages as annoying and drifting from the direct route of the narrative.[142] Cedric Watts, for example, found them as 'infuriating', and Edward Garnett depicted Marlow as 'a tiresome, garrulous, philosophising bore'.[143] W. L. Courtney said of Marlow's narrative 'the constant

[140] See Mack, p. xxiii.
[141] Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, p. 108.
[142] Wake, p. 8.
[143] Quoted in Wake, p. 8.

wandering from the point, [and] the recurrent introductions of incidents which do not affect the main issue, are distinctly weakening to the general end and aim of the book'.[144] Despite these views, others, such as Paul Wake and Frank Kermode, consider this manipulation of narrative as a point of strength that makes the narrative meaningful.[145] Marlow's stoppages and Shahrazad's suspension of her narratives each night bring more anticipation, stimulation, and eagerness to their listeners as well as to the readers.

Frank Kermode, in *The Sense of An Ending* (2000), proposes an interesting argument that the 'stoppages' of Marlow's narrative resemble the clock's 'tick-tock', because the 'tick' must give 'a lively expectation of *tock*'.[146] Shahrazad's carefully timed stories are also governed by 'tick-tock'. At the end of each night, she stops her narrative as a way of suspense, and she does not continue until the next night. Thus, Marlow's 'stoppages' may be considered as Shahrazad's 'cliffhanger': both of the narrators leave a gap of expectation or apprehension before putting an end to their narrative. As Marlow's 'stoppages' are frequently encountered in his narrative, Shahrazad's 'cliffhanger' or captivating stops are repeated every night; the endings Shahrazad brings to her stories are, mostly, beginnings of other stories. Marlow could be compared to Shahrazad if we take into consideration Wake's description of Marlow as being 'tied up with the relation to the texts that he delivers – he exists neither wholly 'inside' nor 'outside' them but rather, occupies both positions simultaneously, is himself delivered by the texts.'[147]

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[144] Quoted in Wake, p. 8.
[145] See Wake, p. 9. See also Frank Kermode, *The Sense of an Ending* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 46.
[146] Kermode, p. 46.
[147] Wake, p. 11. See also, Kermode, pp. 44-46.

Deferral, diversion, deviation, and suspense are central to the narratives of both Marlow and Shahrazad. Conrad, through Marlow, distracts the attention by using a narrative technique called by Ian Watt 'delayed decoding'.[148] He gives details of things and events that take place around the actual event which is supposed to be the centre of attention, then and suddenly, he surprises the readers by going back to the main event, and unveiling abruptly the point of focus. The reader is urged to reflect, feel, and tease out meanings. 'Delayed decoding' is clearly exemplified when the *Judea* starts burning in 'Youth':

> The carpenter's bench stood abaft the mainmast: I leaned against it sucking my pipe, and the carpenter, a young chap, came to talk to me. He remarked, 'I think we have done very well, haven't we?' and then I perceived with annoyance the fool was trying to tilt the bench. I said curtly, 'Don't, Chips,' and immediately became aware of a queer sensation, of an absurd delusion, - I seemed somehow to be in the air. I heard all round me like a pent-up breath released – as if a thousand giants simultaneously had said Phoo! – and felt a dull concussion which made my ribs ache suddenly. No doubt about it – it was in the air, and my body was describing a short parabola. But short as it was, I had the time to think several thoughts in, as far as I can remember, the following order: 'This can't be the carpenter – what is it? – Some accident – Submarine volcano? – Coals, gas! – By Jove! we are being blown up – Everybody's dead – I am falling into the after-hatch – I see fire in it.'[149]

There is a sense that something is happening; the reader tries to imagine, to figure out, or simply to continue reading and try to link the events. Suddenly, the main cause is revealed and the reader knows that the ship is burning. Thus, John Batchelor, in *The Life of Joseph Conrad* (1994), writes: 'Conrad is one of the first to use what would in Modernist literature become a sophisticated technique, the deceleration of time to characterise physical crisis.'[150] Another important

[148] See Lothe, 'Conradian Narrative', p. 169.
[149] Conrad, 'Youth', *Heart of Darkness*, p. 85.
[150] Batchelor, p. 78.

example of ‘delayed decoding’ is when, in ‘Heart of Darkness’, Marlow’s boat is attacked:

> Above the bush the trees stood in serried ranks. The twigs overhung the current thickly, and from distance to distance a large limb of some tree projected rigidly over the stream […] An athletic black belonging to some coast tribe, and educated by my poor predecessor, was the helmsman. He sported a pair of brass earrings, wore a blue cloth wrapper […] I was looking down at the sounding-pole, and feeling much annoyed to see at each try a little more of it stick out of that river, when I saw my poleman give up the business suddenly, and stretch himself flat on the deck, without even taking the trouble to haul his pole in. He kept hold on it though, and it trailed in the water. At the same time the fireman, whom I could also see below me, sat down abruptly before his furnace and ducked his head. I was amazed. Then I had to look at the river mighty quick, because there was a snag in the fairway. Sticks, little sticks, were flying about – thick: they were whizzing before my nose, dropping below me, striking behind me against my pilot house. All this time the river, the shore, the woods, were very quiet – perfectly quiet. I could only hear the heavy splashing thump of the stern-wheel and the patter of these things. We cleared the snag clumsily. Arrows by Jove! We were being shot at![151]

Marlow, here, starts very calmly and generally. A feeling that something is going wrong starts to heighten. Some hints are given to the reader. Swiftly, however, an explanation is given: the sticks are in fact arrows, and the boat is being attacked. Marlow moves from the broad to the narrow, from the shell to the kernel, and from the haze to the glow. He tries to mystify and obscure his narratives, adding more diversion and stimulation, and thus more anticipation and thrill.

Here I would like to suggest a comparison between the ‘delayed decoding’ in the previous example and one of the narrative techniques in *The Arabian Nights* which, although it is not called ‘delayed decoding’, functions, to a great extent, in a similar way. In *The Arabian Nights*, certain narrative

[151] Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, pp. 148-49.

descriptions take place in the story and attract the reader's attention to the fact that something is happening; but, at the end of the narrative everything is explained.

In some stories of *The Arabian Nights*, there occur repeated pointers to certain characters, objects, or incidents that the reader finds insignificant or irrelevant to the story, but these repetitions turn out to be major: they are essential to the plot, to the 'decoding' of the story, and to solving its enigma. The frame story of *The Arabian Nights* provides an example of this technique, when Shahrayar's brother, Shahzaman, comes to his brother's palace. A description of the place in which he stays is fully given with an emphasis on the window and the view from it. The reader may find this unimportant extra information, but later this information proves to be essential because it is from this particular room and from its view that Shahzaman spots his brother's wife in a scene of adultery, causing the picture of the betrayal of his own wife to haunt him.

'The story of The Enchanted King' provides a more precise example. This story is framed in 'The Fisherman and the Genie'. After the fisherman brings to the sultan the enchanted coloured fish, the sultan, as well as the entire kingdom, becomes curious to know the truth behind those enchanted fish which are coloured and which obey the beautiful woman who comes out of the kitchen's wall. To unveil the truth, the sultan goes with the fisherman in order to discover the pond where the magical coloured fish come from; they come across a deserted castle and enter it. They enter a room where they are saluted by a seated young man who is all sorrow and grief, and who welcomes them but apologises for not being able to stand up as a means of courtesy:

> The king was rejoiced at seeing him, and saluted him; and the young man (who remained sitting, and was clad with a vest of silk, embroidered with gold, but who exhibited traces of grief) returned the salutation, and said to him, O my master, excuse my not rising.[152]

And in another version:

> The sultan drew near, and saluted him: The young man returned him his salute by a low bow with his head; but not being able to rise up […].[153]

After a long narrative, the reader knows that what prevented the Enchanted King from standing up at the beginning of his encounter with the sultan is the fact that he is under a wicked spell from his witch wife, who turns half of his body into stone in revenge. She takes vengeance on her lover who is killed by her husband, the Enchanted King.

Gerard Genette explains further Conrad's use of deviation in his texts. In *Narrative Discourse* (1980), Genette suggests that by the famous phrase 'Pass the bottle' he uses in 'Youth', Marlow 'is present as a source, guarantor, and organiser of the narrative, as analyst and commentator, as stylist and particularly – as we well know – as producer of "metaphors"'.[154] Marlow's refrain, 'Pass the bottle', allows him to 'interrupt' and 'disrupt' the framed narrative in order to make a link between the story, the narrator of the story, and the narratees.[155] Genette explains that Marlow positions himself as a means of relating the story to the audience and constantly reminds his listeners of this position.[156] He also reminds his audience, by his reuse of the refrain 'Pass the bottle', of the temporal

[152] Edward William Lane, *The Thousand and One Nights: Commonly called in England 'The Arabian Nights' Entertainment*, ed. by Edward Stanley Poole, 3 vols (London: Routledge, Warne, and Routledge, 1865), I, 94.
[153] *Arabian Nights' Entertainments*, p. 53.
[154] Gérard Genette, *Narrative Discourse* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1980), p. 167.
[155] See Wake, p. 23.
[156] Wake, p. 23.

distance between the actual story and the time of narration. He does this in order to enhance the theme of the story which is the concentration on bygone youth, and to constantly remind the listeners of the passage of time.[157] Paul Wake suggests that this refrain is a 'temporal gap between the narrating act and the events of the story.' [158] This, all, can be linked to Shahrazad's nightly 'cliffhanger': she, too, is a 'source', a 'guarantor', and an 'organiser of the narrative' who 'interrupts', 'disrupts', and 'stylises' her storytelling, and, of course, 'produces metaphors'. Shahrazad's position as a link between the story and the audience is, thus, pivotal. For Marlow and his audience this refrain is a reminder of time, but in a way to show the passage of time. For them, it reminds of the past, and of the comparison between past and present. For Shahrazad, her refrain also reminds of time; however, by looking to the future. She stops to save time and not to lament it. She stops each time because she is looking towards the better future in which no more tyranny and inhumanity of Shahrayar's are to be found. She delays time in order to save it until she reaches the wanted aim. Marlow, on the other hand, delays time to remind of the past and lament the fading youth, and to convey a morality or wisdom.

'Pass the bottle', however, may call to mind David Pinault's argument about the *Leitsatz*. Pinault, in *Story-Telling Techniques in the Arabian Nights* (1992), discusses the term *Leitsatz,* which means 'the key sentence', in *The Arabian Nights*. Pinault analyses the term *Leitwortstil* and relates it to one of the techniques of *The Arabian Nights*. He says the *Leitwortstil* means 'Leading-word style' and the *Leitwort* or the 'leading word' is a word that is repeated in

[157] Wake, p. 30.
[158] Wake, p. 30.

the text to lead the reader throughout the story towards the denouement. Pinault, also, refers to Martin Buber's translation of the German Bible in which Buber defines the word *Leitwort* as 'a word or a word-root that recurs significantly in a text, in a continuum of texts, or in a configuration of texts: by following these repetitions, one is able to decipher or grasp a meaning of the text'.[159] An example from *The Arabian Nights* can be found in 'The Fisherman-Duban' cycle, where the words 'envy', 'regret', or the fisherman's crucial sentence 'Spare me and God will spare you' all guide the reader throughout the stories in order to orient or give hints to the reader about what to anticipate.

I would like, here, to suggest a comparison between this meaning of the *Leitsatz* and what Conrad uses in 'Youth' when he repetitively emphasises the phrase 'Pass the bottle'. This phrase is used many times throughout the story, and, as I discussed earlier in this chapter; it reminds the reader of Shahrazad's cliffhanger after each night/narration in order to return to reality, and then continue the next night another piece of fiction. It can also be possible to think of this phrase as a *Leitsatz* in terms of guiding the readers throughout the text and reminding them that what is being narrated is past and that it is similar to fiction compared to the present time of narration. It can also provide the reader with some intervals of rest after each long, dense, and rich block of narrative. It is interesting to mention here that Conrad's 'Pass the bottle' and Stevenson's 'Arabian author' may both have similar effects on the reader. They both warn the reader that what is being listened to is only fiction and that it is not a description of the present reality. The 'Arabian author', 'Pass the bottle', and

[159] Quoted in Pinault, p. 18.

above all Shahrazad's stops are all there to break the narrative abruptly, and to remind the carried away readers/listeners/narratees that they are back to reality.

Paul Wake, however, states that '[f]alsehood is not offered as salvation but as the only option',[160] and 'through Conrad's use of the framed narrative the lie to the Intended is not encountered in its immediacy as a lie, but as the recognition of a lie. Having already mistold Kurtz's story Marlow attempts to tell it truthfully, now with the additional scene of its original mistelling.'[161] Wake describes lying as 'the point at which language betrays its obligation to truth'.[162] Although Marlow tries all through the story to reach the 'truth', at the end he lies. He may, or may not, have reached his aim. Both Marlow and Shahrazad try to tear the silence surrounding them and lighten the darkness in which they are enclosed. They both narrate to achieve their goal. They both 'lie'[163] to save somebody. Shahrazad invents stories to save her life and the lives of all the girls in her society. But first and foremost, she saves Shahrayar from himself. Marlow lies to save the Intended from the hurting truth; or may be, he succeeds in giving the Intended 'something – something – to – to live with.'[164] He succeeds in saving a person from agony, and in providing her with some hope to overcome her sorrow. Marlow may be trying to save himself from the 'truth': he either lies to cover the shocking truth; or he lies to put a limit to his suffering of the search for an unreachable truth; in both cases, he lies to save himself.

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[160] Wake, p. 59.
[161] Wake, p. 59.
[162] Wake, p. 60.
[163] I do not use the word 'lie' as the opposite of truth, in describing Shahrazad's narratives, because although she tells 'stories', she, sometimes, hints at her actual story with Shahrayar, throughout her own narratives. However, by 'lie', here, I mean that Shahrazad's stories are invented and fabricated to reach an aim.
[164] Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, p. 186.

The deployment of discourse and silence is an interesting paradoxical similarity between *The Arabian Nights* and 'Heart of Darkness'. In other words, the use of discourse and silence is central in both *The Arabian Nights* and 'Heart of Darkness'; however, this discourse and silence function in opposite directions in these two works. In *The Arabian Nights*, discourse means life and silence means death. If Shahrazad remains silent, she is to die, but when she speaks, she lives: 'Survival becomes an unrelenting struggle against silence. Life is based on the suppression of the death instinct just as discourse is the suppression of silence.'[165] Silence and discourse, however, seem to have an opposite role in 'Heart of Darkness'. Throughout the story, Marlow is in search for answers to his questions: for the truth. When he reaches the point where discourse with Kurtz should solve his dilemma, language fails.[166] Marlow never reaches, through language, what he is searching for.[167] On the contrary, both Shahrazad and Shahrayar achieve what, to them, is 'wisdom', 'truth', and 'sincerity', all with the help of discourse: the power of language that emerges at Shahrazad's moment of death before it turns to be a moment of rebirth; a life.

Peter Brooks suggests that,

> Kurtz's final words answer so poorly to all of Marlow's insistence on summing-up as a moment of final articulation of wisdom, truth, and sincerity, as affirmation and as moral victory […] To present 'the horror!' as articulation of that wisdom lying in wait at the end of the tale,

[165] Ghazoul, p. 60.

[166] Kurtz's words 'The horror! The horror!' might sum the whole world: the horror of life, the horror of death, and all that lies in between. However, in the context of this study, what I mean by failure of language is the language's inability to give definite answers. 'The horror!' might be read as a success of language, because the moment of death might be the ultimate truth. Marlow may have reached the truth by hearing those words. However, in comparison with *The Arabian Nights*, I explain the failure of language relying on the opinions of those critics, discussed above, who take into consideration definiteness and clarity.

[167] Again, Marlow's arrival at the 'truth' has had, and will have, numerous interpretations, but in the particular context of my comparison, I consult the opinions of Paul Wake and Peter Brooks, as discussed in the few preceding and following paragraphs.

> the journey's end and life's end, is to make a mockery of storytelling and ethics.[168]

Wake explains that Kurtz, at the moment of his death, was only capable of conveying a 'cry' which portrays, regardless of the significant meanings that may lie behind this 'cry', 'the failure of meaning' for Marlow: 'the failure of language at the moment of death'.[169] ''The horror!' means no more than silence.'[170] Perhaps silence here is the means to reach the truth as discourse in this story seems to fail. Language fails Kurtz who in turn fails Marlow and puts a barrier between him and the truth.[171] Marlow lies to the Intended, regardless of his long and life-threatening journey to uncover a truth. Silence, thus, is what should be considered as a truth revealer.

Wake puts forward that 'Kurtz's words are not a fitting conclusion to either a life or a story.'[172] Shahrazad's language or discourse helps put an ending to the book of *The Arabian Nights*, and here I mean the frame story as a complete whole; whereas, Marlow's narrative, disillusioned by Kurtz's language, leaves the ending open. However, this may lead us to think about Ferial Ghazoul's description of *The Arabian Nights*' ending as 'virtual', if we take into consideration Shahrazad's enframed story. In *The Arabian Nights: A Structural Analysis* (1980), Ghazoul explains:

> There is a virtual ending to *The Arabian Nights* where the narrative comes to a stop. In fact, it is only the illusion of an end or rather a closing

[168] Peter Brooks, *Reading for the Plot: Design and Intention* (New York: Alfred A. Knoff, 1984), p. 249.
[169] Wake, p. 51.
[170] Wake, p. 60.
[171] See Henricksen, p. 73.
[172] Wake, p. 59.

> without locking, and that is why the story can be unlocked and re-opened. We have an example of a tentative ending.[173]

This brings to mind the modernist open-ended stories,[174] and Marlow's endings that are not clearly resolved. Ghazoul adds:

> The function of the narrative is less of purging than of possessing. It is clear that a number of repressed feelings are aired in *The Arabian Nights*, mostly those dealing with aggressive instincts and taboos, yet there is no final cleansing effect.[175]

Ghazoul stresses the importance of the multi-layered narrative of *The Arabian Nights* as a means of providing an 'ever-continuing present.'[176] She argues that time in *The Arabian Nights* does not progress steadily in a single direction, rather it is circular.[177] The narrative in *The Arabian Nights* does not have an actual ending; rather it has an ending that can be renarrated and modified over and over again because it is flexible and very similar to the open-ending in modernist short fictions. 'Heart of Darkness' is a story that 'does not 'end'; it is a potentially interminable analysis that simply breaks off.'[178] Although Marlow stops narrating, the echo of his narrative continues to reach 'future listeners' by Marlow's listeners who have to retell his story to others who, in turn, retell it infinitely.[179] The reader gets the feeling that the ending of 'Heart of Darkness' is not a final ending. The story ends because Marlow stops telling; however, there is no closure. It is similar to what happens in the story of Sindbad the Sailor, for instance, where the story 'stops more than ends […] In a sense, the story can

[173] Ghazoul, p. 147.
[174] See Hunter, p. 44.
[175] Ghazoul, 151.
[176] Ghazoul, p. 153.
[177] See Ghazoul, pp. 153-54.
[178] Brooks, p. 260.
[179] Brooks, p. 260.

stop only when the hero is liquidated either physically by death or mentally by conversion. Sindbad, suddenly gives up travelling at the end of seventh voyage.'[180]

The unnamed frame narrator listens to Marlow throughout his narrative, but, he 'refuses to fulfil the traditional role of storyteller';[181] he does not conclude the story in a traditional way. He leaves the story open, with no closure:[182]

> Marlow ceased, and sat apart, indistinct and silent, in the pose of a meditating Buddha. Nobody moved for a time. "We have lost the first of the ebb," said the Director, suddenly. I raised my head. The offing was barred by a black bank of cloud, and the tranquil waterway leading to the uttermost ends of the earth flowed sombre under and overcast sky – seemed to lead into the heart of an immense darkness.[183]

This is the last paragraph in 'Heart of Darkness' in which the narrative switches to the frame narrator after Marlow's last sentence: 'I could not tell her. It would have been too dark – too dark altogether'.[184] Marlow says this sentence after his prominent lie to Kurtz's Intended and stops narrating. The frame narrator concludes the story by the passage above, but he does not close it. He seems to be ending the story by suggesting a beginning for a new story, rather than putting an end to the one he has been listening to. It may be, as Jakob Lothe suggests, that 'Heart of Darkness' 'ends in nothingness or disillusionment'.[185] It may also be that the five of them, that is, the Director of Companies, the Lawyer, the Accountant, Marlow, and the frame narrator, are sailing by their boat 'into

[180] Ghazoul, p. 114.
[181] Wake, p. 59.
[182] See Wake, p. 59.
[183] Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, pp. 186-87.
[184] Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, p. 186.
[185] Lothe, *Conrad's Narrative Method*, p. 22.

the heart of an immense darkness' to face the unknown, whether in new adventures, or in peacefully reaching their destination. But, it appears as if they were going to make new stories leaving the story of Marlow and Kurtz hanging in the air. It might still be kept in the memory of the listeners, but it might be left behind just as their sailing boat leaving the surges behind. In a general consideration, the ending of 'Heart of Darkness' is one of the endings where there is 'not so much resolutions as questions for which no easy answers will suffice.'[186]

So far I have discussed the ending of Shahrazad's narratives, which are enclosed in the huge frame of *The Arabian Nights*. The ending put by the frame story of the book differs from the ends of Shahrazad's stories. In contrast to the open 'modernist' ending of 'Heart of Darkness',[187] *The Arabian Nights*, as a frame story, ends in a clear, straightforward traditional closure. After Shahrazad finishes her narratives in the night one thousand and one, the narrative switches to the frame narrator who closes the story with a traditional happy ending. The reader knows that Shahrazad's wake-up calls for Shahrayar work and the ferocious king returns to being human after being a beast-like murderer. She succeeds in taming him and saving her community. He frees her and saves her from beheading. The frame narrative concludes with Shahrazad and Shahrayar becoming a happy family; together they have three boys, and they live happily ever after until death does them part.[188]

[186] Harold Orel, *The Victorian Short Story: Development and Triumph of a Literary Genre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 168.
[187] Lothe, *Conrad's Narrative Method*, p. 23.
[188] *Alf Layla w Layla* (Beriut: Dar Al-Awda, 1999), p. 1399.

Gene M. Moore said that '[i]ntertextuality has no end or beginning, and Conrad's works can be read as products or signs of the various influences that contributed to the shaping of his own life and literary career.'[189] However, intertextuality is not in its strictest sense merely a matter of 'influences'. This chapter has considered some of the productive affinities with *The Arabian Nights* that are necessarily speculative, possibly unconscious, and by no means concrete 'products or signs'. One of the things that make these affinities both productive, and plausible, is the rise of the British modern short story, a form that was in turn *formed by* the confined print spaces of journals, periodicals and magazines. It was in these carefully delimited venues that *The Arabian Nights* and Conrad's short fiction came, quite literally, together.

[189] Gene M. Moore, 'Conrad's Influence', in *The Cambridge Companion to Joseph Conrad*, ed. by J. H. Stape (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 223-24.

Conclusion

Viewed together, Stevenson, Wilde, and Conrad represent some of the earliest, most imaginative, and influential, exponents of the modern short story in Britain. However, this thesis has suggested that their key historical role in the local emergence of this form cannot be entirely explained within a British or European frame of reference. If, for writers such as Stevenson, one of the appeals of *The Arabian Nights* was the appeal of its traditionalism in the face of modernity, the four chapters of my study have suggested its tales also played a part in making the short story modern. While, for all of these writers, *The Arabian Nights* was a manifestation of the East, the other, and the exotic, I have suggested its trace can be detected internally, in the Paris and London of Stevenson, the 'European' fairy tale motifs and patterns of Wilde, and the enclosed narrative forms of Conrad. Within all these contexts *The Arabian Nights* is not just 'out there', or the opposite of modernity, it might be read as constitutive of it.

This thesis has shown how *The Arabian Nights* can be considered as a 'parent' to the short story and subsequently, to what has become to be known as the modern short story in Britain. The short story, like Shahrazad's stories, aim to amuse, amaze, and surprise.[1] The short story has its origins, as this thesis has aimed to show, in the original oral tale: the main characteristics of the newborn short story form have descended from *The Arabian Nights*; hence, *The Arabian*

[1] See Walter Allen, *The Short Story in English* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), p. 5; and Nicole Ward Jouve, 'Too Short for a Book?', in *Re-reading the Short Story*, ed. by Clare Hanson (Hampshire: The Macmillan Press, 1989), p. 37. See also, 'Introduction', pp. 19-20.

Nights' narratives can be related to the birth of the short story, and to the later modern short story form in Britain. As a precursor of the short story, *The Arabian Nights*, like the modern short story, does not belong to an exact 'genre'. This comparison can be comprehended in terms of the oral form, for most of the short story forms originate from oral stories, which are considered as 'the earliest form of story – and continue to find their way into the modern written form.'[2]

The flourishing of the modern short story twinned with the growth of print culture which was manifested in the publication of magazines and periodicals, which, in turn, were a response to the accelerating modern life. The modern age of haste demanded the 'shortness' of the short story.

It is at the same time when the short story, and *The Arabian Nights*, flourished in Britain that the three writers studied in this thesis produced their masterpieces in short fiction. Viewed collectively, Stevenson, Wilde, and Conrad represent a particular response to *The Arabian Nights* at the turn of the century. These three writers wrote beyond their local geography; they escaped into the exotic, and resorted to the frame narrative of the original oral tale. All three, whether consciously or subliminally, seem to embrace *The Arabian Nights*; or perhaps, to be embraced by it, as this thesis has aimed to show.

By considering works typically overlooked by critics in connection with *The Arabian Nights*, this dissertation has made possible bringing to light this hidden trace in Stevenson, Wilde, and Conrad. I have tried to show that it can be possible to demarcate *The Arabian Nights*' unacknowledged traits in the works of Stevenson, Wilde, and Conrad. This work has also underlined the possible

[2] Frank Myszor, *The Modern Short Story* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 8.

intertextuality of Wilde and *The Arabian Nights*; an author who has not been researched in this regards up to the completion of this dissertation.

The selected stories by Stevenson, Wilde, and Conrad examined in this thesis make possible a close reading of *The Arabian Nights*, whether explicitly, or implicitly, despite the opinions that try to localise those works to a merely European context.

Reading through Stevenson's combination of traditional writing methods, such as the framing narrative, the plotted story, closure, and conventional characterisation, on the one hand; and his early modernist mode of writing, such as his use of the metropolis, the Arabian Author, and modernist topics, on the other hand, a fascinating revival of the traditional epic narrative in a modernist way manifests. In other words, his incorporation of a traditional form and modern/modernist content is, as this thesis has demonstrated, the main reason behind the originality of his two books of *New Arabian Nights*.

It has also been possible to read Wilde's fairy tales and short stories in the light of *The Arabian Nights*. Wilde's fairy-tale and short-story collections offer, as this thesis aims to show, implicit, and sometimes explicit, similarities with *The Arabian Nights*, notwithstanding the unanimous opinions that his fairy tales seem to an extent as a reproduction of Hans Andersen's fairy tales. Without wishing to dispute any opinion, this thesis observes Wilde from a wider viewpoint that includes the Eastern perspective. It offers a reading of Wilde's short fiction in connection with *The Arabian Nights*; and, reading through this thesis, this matter has been possible.

Adjoining Stevenson and Wilde, this thesis has shed light on Conrad's ill-acknowledged connection with *The Arabian Nights*. In tracing their similitude

with *The Arabian Nights*, Conrad's works extend beyond the frame narrative; they reach the core of narrative: language. Like *The Arabian Nights*, language in Conrad's works, especially 'Heart of Darkness', plays a foremost role. Speech and silence are major. Despite the key subject matters that are meant to be in the focus of observation in both works, language seems to be the main engine that directs the narrative all through. This language is conveyed by Shahrazad and Marlow: the hypnotising narrators who take us through a long, mesmerising journey.

The wider context of *The Arabian Nights*, however, invites the explanation of further possibilities in connection, not only with the particular writers studied in this thesis and their literary era, but also with succeeding periods and movements. Could Marlow's hypnotising effect, and Shahrazad's mesmerising dream-like methods, lead us to read the possible presence of *The Arabian Nights* in literature from a psychoanalytical angle? Could it be possible to link *The Arabian Nights* to Surrealism and Surrealist literature in particular?

What are the consequences of this conclusion for the modern short story more generally? Prevailing accounts currently link the shortness of the short story to such things as the rise of the periodical, and the accelerated pace of modern life. These are convincing explanations to be sure, ones that this thesis has tried to work with rather than against. However, they tend to restrict the provenance of the modern short story to the experiences and cultures of the West. The various chapters of this study have shown that, while the British periodical may have been central to the metropolitan print contexts in which the short fiction of Stevenson, Wilde and Conrad first appeared, those same periodicals were also sites of intersection that incorporated and propagated tastes for exotic

tales of the East. While we are now rightly suspicious of modernity as a marker of progress, in terms of the logic of their time these periodicals were looking to the past as much as the present, outwards as much as inwards. This is perhaps also true of the modern short story itself, which does not merely embrace the modern and embody it in short print forms, but also looks to the elongated oral tales associated with the likes of *The Arabian Nights*.

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