

published in 1838-41, 3Vols (London: East-West publication, 1859) Vol.1, P.439.

19. Stevenson, Prince Otto: A Romance, Tusitala Edition, Vol.4,P.10.

20. Ibid.

21. Ibid.

روبرت لويس ستيفنسن ومغامرات الف ليلة وليلة المثيرة

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المستخلص

الهدف الرئيسي لهذا البحث هو تسليط الضوء على المتعة التي وجدها الروائي روبرت لويس ستيفنسن في المغامرات المثيرة لليالي العربية. مثل معظم معاصريه من روائي القرن التاسع عشر، فقد تعرف روبرت لويس ستيفنسن على الليالي العربية منذ صغره. لقد زودت مغامرات الف ليلة وليلة المثيرة روبرت لويس ستيفنسن بالحافز والشعور بالإثارة وعملت كعاملاً مضاداً للحزن والضغط المتسبب من المرض والملل. ولقد انعكس ولع روبرت لويس ستيفنسن بمغامرات الف ليلة وليلة المثيرة برواياته:

اليالي العربية الجديدة و الأمير اوتو : قصة رومانسية.

3. Sidney Colvin, ed., *The letters of Robert Louis Stevenson*, 4 Vols. (London: Methuen, 1911), Vol.1, P.278.
4. Stevenson, *New Arabian Nights*, first published in 1882; Tusitala edition, Vol.1.
5. Donald David Stone, *Novelist in a Changing World* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972), P.52.
6. Stevenson, *New Arabian Nights*; Tusitala Edition, Vol.1 ,p.102.
7. Ibid., P.118.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid., P.30.
10. Ibid., P.xxviii.
11. Ibid., P.2.
12. Ibid., P.26
13. Ibid., P.155.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid.
16. Stevenson, *Prince Otto; A Romance*, first published in 1883; Tusitala Edition, Vol.4.
17. Ibid.,P.8.
18. For the Story see Edward William Lane, *TheThousand and one Nights*, Commonly called in England *The Arabian Night's Entertainment* first

against Edward, Prince of Wales. But in *Prince Otto: A Romance*, the cautionary fate that befalls Florizel is fully acted out. Although Otto behaves with magnanimity towards the farmer and other members of the family who make him first aware of how widely he is 'despised', his personal benevolence cannot avert the downfall of his kingdom. At the end of the novel, revolution breaks out, Otto is deposed, and a republic declared. He finishes up living in exile at the court of his wife's father, and publishes a slim volume of feeble poems in French: a nice satiric touch, remembering Edward's Francophile reputation.

Notes

1. Robert Louis Stevenson, *Memories and Portraits and other Fragments*, first published in 1887; *The Tusitala Edition of the works of Robert Louis Stevenson*, 35vols. (London: William Heinemann, 1924-30), Vol.29, P.105; hereafter cited as *Tusitala Edition*. For Stevenson's early acquaintance with *The Arabians Nights*, see also Sir Graham Balfour, *The Life Robert Louis Stevenson* (London: Methuen, 1931), P.48.
2. Stevenson, *Memories and Portraits and other Fragments*; *Tusitala edition*, Vol.26, P.126. It is worth stressing that whilst in Samoa, Stevenson retained *The Arabian Nights* as one of his favorites. He 'Had chosen *The Arabian Nights*' Entertainment for his lesson book, and became...deeply interested in the *Forty Thieves...*'; Henry J.Cowell, *Robert Louis Stevenson* (London: The Epworth Press, 1945), P.28.

when his true identity has been discovered by the daughter. In a true Arabian Nights gesture, the prince immediately overlooks the abusive gossip of his hosts, and keeps his true identity as a secret between himself and the daughter. He makes it possible for the old man to remain in charge of his house and also gives comfort to all the other members of the household. The whole episode and the reward scenario wonderfully catch the flavour of the Arabian tale of 'Nour-el-Deen and Ennes el-Jelees.' Here, the caliph Haroun Al-Raschid is first disguised as a merchant, and then as a fisherman. In the attire of the latter he encounters the old Shekh Ibraheem dispensing questionable wisdom to a girl and a youth. Later the Caliph rewards these characters, generously giving them 'one of the palaces of Baghdad and assigned to them regular allowances, and made Noor-el-deen one of his companions...'¹⁸.

Since Stevenson satirized Edward Prince of Wales under the disguise of Haroun Al-Raschid in *New Arabian Nights*, it seems very likely that something of the same intention underlies the presentation of Prince Otto. In *Prince Otto: A Romance*, however, the Prince is travelling incognito through his own state rather living abroad, as does Florizel. Listening to his own subjects, Otto discovers that he is 'despised',¹⁹ thought of as a man who abuses his position and wastes his abilities. This is stressed by the unsuspecting host's remark to his guest: 'if that Prince was to labour on his throne, as I have laboured and wrought in my farm, he would find both an increase and a blessing.'²⁰ All that the old man can see in Prince Otto is a dilettante and a wastrel: 'he hunts, and dresses very prettily - which is a thing to be ashamed of in a man - and he acts plays; and if he does ought else, the news of it has not come here.'²¹ It is the same set of accusations that are implicit in the presentation of Florizel, and that could be levelled

remember my rank. Dispose of your day as you think fit, but be here before eleven in the same disguise.¹²

Such criticisms are gentle enough, and one must not forget Stevenson's own sympathy for bohemianism. But the fate he reserves for Florizel is more clearly monitory, even though it is cast in comic guise. Whereas Haroun Al-Raschid, a real ruler, extends his power and influence through his adventures in *The Arabian Nights*, Florizel, an ineffectual and irresponsible Prince, provokes revolutionary overthrow. He is 'hurled...from the throne of Bohemia, in consequence of the continued absence and...Neglect of public business...'.¹³ The Prince, in the end, is negligible and may be dismissed 'along with the Arabian Author, topsy-turvey into space'.¹⁴ With a nice sense of ironic justice, he ultimately becomes the owner of a highly fashionable 'cigar store in Rupert Street' with the reputation of being 'the handsomest tobacconist in London'.¹⁵

The motif of the disguised Caliph / Prince appears for a second time in *Prince Otto: A Romance*,¹⁶ explicitly so in the title of the second chapter, 'In which the Prince plays Haroun Al-Raschid.' Accordingly, the plot of this chapter follows a pattern which is common to *The Arabian Nights*. Prince Otto travels incognito through his realm. Late one evening he stops at a house and, without revealing his true identity, asks for hospitality. This is granted with words reminiscent of the tales' format: 'It is God who sends the quest'.¹⁷ The Prince, like the Arabian Caliph, encourages his hosts, an old man, his daughter and a youth, to talk about Prince Otto. In the course of the conversation the Prince learns that he is considered as irresponsible, selfishly devoted to frivolous amusement, and indifferent to the welfare of his subjects. The following morning sees the opportunity for the Prince to show his generosity,

he wields with absolute authority. Florizal, by contrast, seems to have little real power: ultimately he can only seek to influence people by moral lectures. The discrepancy is deliberate, and part of the hidden purpose of *New Arabian Nights*, for Florizel, in part at least, is a satiric portrait of Edward, Prince of Wales. This identification was made explicit by Mrs. Stevenson in her preface to the novel, published after her husband's death: 'the Prince of Wales was taken as the model for Prince Florizel.'¹⁰ In such a context there is something comic, certainly undignified, in Florizal's disguises:

Colonel Geraldine was dressed and painted to represent a person connected with the press in reduced circumstances; while the Prince had, as usual, travestied his appearance by the addition of false whiskers and a pair of large adhesive eyebrows. These lent him a shaggy and weather-beaten air, which, for one of his urbanity, formed the most impenetrable disguise. Thus equipped, the commander and his satellite sipped their brandy and soda in security.¹¹

Parallels between Florizel and the Prince of Wales exist in the latter's reputed liking for low-life entertainment – hence the card-playing that is central to the near fatal adventure of 'The Suicide Club' And Florizel is, after all, the Prince of Bohemia. Mannerisms are also paralleled, most obviously in Florizel's exaggerated liking for cheroots and the Prince of Wales well-known fondness for large cigars. More serious, however, is the implicit criticism that underlines the depiction of Florizel as ineffective and as unwilling to accept the duties that go with being heir to the throne. Whilst enjoying the privileges of wealth and royal rank, the Prince really wishes to forget the responsibilities of his role. He says to Geraldine: 'I always regret when you oblige me to

STORY OF THE YOUNG MAN IN HOLY ORDERS.⁷
The author complains about this but reinforces the idea that he really has no option: 'I regret and condemn such practices; but I must follow my original, and refer the reader for the conclusion...to the next number of the cycle.'⁸

The episodes surrounding the Prince's adventures in disguise reveal the manner in which Stevenson absorbed the Arabian Caliph's nocturnal adventures. Like Haroun Al-Raschid who roams incognito, accompanied by his Grand Vizier Giafar, Prince Florizel dons disguise in the company of his faithful friend, Colonel Geraldine. As an English Haroun Al-Raschid in a London setting, Prince Florizel roams the streets of London in search of excitement. In the first collection of tales, 'The Suicide Club', the Prince finds adventures by joining the club. However, he is condemned to death after risking his life on the turn of a card, and is only saved from this fate by the intervention of Geraldine. Unabashed by his near escape, Florizel resumes his role as Haroun Al-Raschid once he has the members of the club in his power. He addresses them in the manner of the Caliph, demanding that they tell him their stories and promising rewards and punishments:

"Foolish and wicked men," "as many of you as have been driven into this strait by the lack of fortune shall receive employment and remuneration from my officers. Those who suffer under a sense of guilt must have recourse to a higher and more generous Potentate than I. I feel pity for all of you, deeper than you can imagine; to-morrow you shall tell me your stories; and as you answer more frankly, I shall be the more able to remedy your misfortunes."⁹ At this point, a fundamental and ironic difference between Haroun Al-Raschid and his Victorian counterpart emerges. The Caliph has genuine power which

Al-Raschid's nocturnal adventures to a nineteenth-century context rather than simply using *The Arabian Nights* as a quarry for allusions and parallels. Thus, the experiences of the Caliph Haroun Al-Raschid served as an idea on which he based escapades of Prince Florizel. In fact, through the adventures of the *New Arabian Nights* Stevenson experienced a psychological release from personal tensions and sickness, into a highly colourful realm of intrigue and incident. Donald Davidson observes the relevance of Stevenson's choice of the title for his novel: In Stevenson's case - an invalid with romantic dreams of freedom - it is especially appropriate that he should have used such a title, since the original tales of Scheherazade are related by the narrator as a means of postponing the continuing threat of death.⁵

Stevenson attempted to legitimise the title in the mind of the reader by introducing an Arabian author. Like Scheherazade, this persona provides a continuity between the tales by concluding one, and commenting slightly upon the preceding one. Stevenson also followed Scheherazade's example by framing one story within another and then breaking off at crucial or interesting points. Thus, it is that the mystery of 'the Rajah's Diamond' is broken into four distinct tales, the 'Story of the Bandbox', the 'Story of the Young Man in Holy Orders', the 'Story of the House with Green Blinds', and the 'Adventure of Prince Florizal and a Detective.' At the end of each tale Stevenson reasserts the fictional authenticity of the whole work by referring to the Arabian author. For instance, after the first tale he relates that: 'Here (says my Arabian author) ended this deplorable business of the bandbox.'⁶ The idea that Stevenson is merely a channel through which the new Arabian tales are related is reinforced after the second tale. Stevenson notes that: 'At this point, contrary to all the canons of his heart, our Arabian author breaks off the

The spell-binding adventures of Schchercrazade's stories provided this imaginative child with a stimulus and a sense of excitement. The tales supplied a sort of companionship for Stevenson, who, due to frequent bouts of ill health, could not seek the company of others or venture outside his home. In his maturity, Stevenson continued to be charmed by the adventure and romance contained within the tales. He remarked that:

There is one book...more generally loved than Shakespeare, that captivates in childhood, and still delights in age – I mean The Arabian Night - where...Adventures, on the most naked terms, furnish forth the entertainments and is found enough.² It is easy to detect and appreciate Stevenson's total fascination with the Arabian tales. They had an irresistible attraction for him, acting as an antidote to the depression and stress induced by ill health and boredom. In a letter to professor Meiklejohn, Stevenson stressed this opiate power of the stories, which lay not in theories or ideas, but in their intrigue and plot.

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, Meiklejohn, 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 the Walter Scott; it is stories we want, no the high poetic function which represents the world; we are then like the asiatic with his improvisatore or the middle-age with his trouvere. We want incident, interest, action: to the devil with your philosophy.³ Stevenson's infatuation with the thrilling adventures of The Arabian Nights is clearly demonstrated in his first novel, New Arabian Nights.⁴ In this work, Stevenson adapted Haroun

Robert Louis Stevenson And The Thrilling Adventures Of The Arabian Nights

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In common with the nineteenth-century writers, Robert Louis Stevenson was well-acquainted with *The Arabian Nights* when he was a child. It was an attachment that endured throughout his life. He later recalled his initial encounter with the collection, which, at the tender age of eight, seemed an event in itself.

Out of all the years of my life, I can recall but one home-coming to compare with these, and that was on the night when I brought back with me *The Arabian Entertainments* in the fat, old, doubled-columned volume with the prints. I was just well into the story of the Hunchback, I remember, when my clergyman-grandfather (a man we counted pretty stiff) came in behind me. I grew blind with terror. But instead of ordering the book away, he said he envied me. Ah, well he might!¹

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