

## NOTES AND REFERENCES

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- 1 - Eliot Warburton, *The Crescent and the Cross: Romance and Realities of Eastern Travel*. H. Colburn, London 1845.  
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- 4 - W.D. Paden, *Tennyson in Egypt*, Octagon Books New York 1971. p. 31.
- 5 - *Memoir*, p. 396
- 6 - *Ibid.*, pp 399-400
- 7 - Quoted in *Memoir*, p 400
- 8 - E.K. Brown and J.O. Baily, *Victorian Poetry* 2nd ed., The Ronald Press, New York 1962. p 87. Note:  
All further references to *Maud* will be indicated by numbers of pages.
- 9 - Read: R.F. Burton, *Arabian Nights* Vol.I, Khayat, Beirut 1969. pp 195-196.

social and political problems of the age, using fairy-tale elements borrowed from the *Arabian Nights*. The imagery and setting of *Maud* was inspired by Arabic and Persian poetry. The use of Oriental imagery in this poem indicated Tennyson's maturity and Control over his material. In *Maud*, for the first time he used Oriental imagery to convey emotional conflicts .

As we have seen, *Maud* showed a great indebtedness to Nizami's poem *The Loves of Laila and Majnun* in dramatic situation, plot, setting, imagery and characterization.

After *Maud*. Tennysons' attitude towards the East changed. He no longer turned to the Orient for exotic and luxurious imagery or for inspiration in expressing passionate love. To the end of Tennyson's life, however, a link with the East still remained, but it was essentially a spiritual link.

Yet do not die.  
(P 117)

Dead, long dead  
Long dead!  
And my heart is a handful of  
dust,  
And the wheels go over my  
head,  
And my bones are shaken with  
pain,  
For into a shallow grave they  
are thrust.  
(P 98)

Tennyson's indebtedness to Nizami's *Laila and Majnun* is clearly demonstrated in the parallel passages quoted. Tennyson retains most of the important elements in Nizami's poem and uses everything he borrows to serve his poetic purposes. The influence of *Laila and Majnun* can be seen in Tennyson's use of images, in verbal echoes, in elaborate and rich description, and in the fascinating Oriental atmosphere that permeates *Maud* as a whole.

Moreover Tennyson was influenced by the *Arabian Nights* which included all the Oriental material that had always appealed to him.

*Majnun Laila*, which exerted a great influence on *Maud*, as I have attempted to prove in this study, is frequently referred to in the *Arabian Nights*. Above all, the luxurious style of Tennyson's description, the use he made of Artificial and exaggerated imagery, was undoubtedly influenced by the *Arabian Nights*.

*Maud* showed Tennyson's belief in the important role of women in society and it also treated some of the economic,

...Well I know

Flying along the land and the  
main——

That hopeless wanderer, and  
his crueless woe,

Why should it look like Maud?

Laila still on his tongue, the  
Arab maid

Am I to be overawed

He ceaseless seeks through  
every bower and glade,  
Unconscious of the world, its  
bloom or bright,

By what I cannot but know  
Is a juggle born of the brain?

(P 96)

Laila alone forever in his  
sight.

A shadow flits before me,

Not thou, but like to thee...

(PP 88–89)

(P 79)

The two heroines die, causing an overwhelming grief  
to their lovers, who both consider themselves as good as  
dead:

*Laila and Majnun*

*Maud*

But vain his efforts,  
Mountain, wood and plain  
Soon heard the maniac's  
piercing woes again;  
Escaped from listening ear, and  
watchful eye,  
Lonely again in desert wild to lie

Always I long to creep  
Into some stil cavern deep,  
There to weep, and weep,  
and weep  
My whole soul out to thee.

(P 49)

(P 98)

Dead—but her spirit's now in  
heaven,  
Whilst I  
Live, and am dead with grief—

She is but dead, and the time  
is at hand  
When thou shalt more than die

(P 97)

*Laila and Majnun .*

And now for a disordered  
mind,  
What medicine can affection  
find?

What magic power, what human  
skill

To rectify the erring will? (p17)

My heart is desolate—my joys are  
fled,

I once was laili need I more reveal? To save from some slight  
shame one simple girl?

Worse than a thousand maniacs now  
I feel:

More dark than that dark star which  
rules my fate,  
More mad than Majnun's my distracted  
state ...

(p 67)

Both heroes seek relief or comfort in vain, both roam in  
the wilderness away from people with nothing but the vision  
of their loves:

*Laila and Majnun*

In fancy soon her image he  
beheld;  
No shadowy cloud her  
Lucid beauty veiled...

(P 12)

*Maud*

And most of all would I  
flee—from the cruel  
madness of love

The honey of poison –  
flowers and all the  
measureless ill.

(p 85)

And do accept my

madness, and would die

To save from some slight  
shame one simple girl?

(p 91)

*Maud*

Plagued with a flitting to and  
fro,  
A disease, a hard mechanic  
ghost...

Both lovers are prevented from marrying their beloved ones. Maud's family like Laila's objected to the marriage. Both heroines were engaged. The two heroes express the same jealousy, but later they are assured of their lovers' faithfulness:

*Laila and Majnun*

*Maud*

In blooming spring a withered leaf,  
And Maud is as true as Maud is sweet...

She droops in agony of grief;  
...And fair without, faithful within.

Loving her own—— her only (P 89)

one—— But she, she would love me  
Loving Majnun, and him alone; still;  
(P 56) And as long, O God, as she

...For Laila still is true! Have a grain of love for me  
What though in nuptial band So long, no doubt, no doubt  
united,

Her faith, to thee, so often , Shall I nurse in my dark heart  
plighted,

Spotless remains still firm, However weary, a spark of  
unbroken, will

As proved by many a mournful Not to be trampled out.  
token .

(P 63)

(P 96)

Separation from their loves excites the same passionate agony and madness in the hearts of the two lovers:

And, nestling in her glossy  
hair,

My tenderest thoughts, my  
love, declare?...

(P 10)

On a blushing mission to me,

Saying in Odour and Color,  
Ah, be

Among the roses to-night

And gently Whisper in her ear  
This message, with an accent  
clear:-

(P 94)

"Thy form is ever in my sight,  
In thought by day, in dreams  
by night..."

(P 11)

The image of renascent dust which occurs in *Maud* has  
more than one parallel in *Laila and Majnun*:

*Laila and Majnun*

*Maud*

I am the dust beneath thy feet, She is coming, my own, my  
sweet

Though destined never more Were it ever so airy a tread,  
to meet.

(P 80)

My heart would hear her and

Round her pure dust  
assembled old and young.

beat,

And on the sod their fragrant  
offerings flung;

Were it earth in an earthy

bed;

My dust would hear her and  
beat,

(P 112)

She was the rose I cherished-  
but a gust

Had I lain for a century dead..

Of blighting wind has laid her  
in the dust.

(P 95)

(P 114)

But still her name was ever on Make answer, Maud my bliss  
his tongue, Maud made my Maud by that  
And Laili ! Laili ! still through long loving kiss.  
grove and forest rung. ( P 91)  
( PP 18-19)

An image which is used more than once by Tennyson is that of the trace or print of Maud's feet . The same image occurs in Nizami's *Laila and Majnun* to express a different mood:

<p><i>Laila and Majnun</i></p> <p>The path o'er which thy feet  are doomed to pass  Shows blades of swords, not  harmless blades of  grass....  ( P 66)</p>	<p><i>Maud</i></p> <p>For her feet have touched the  meadows  And left the dais es rosy.  (P 89)</p> <p>From the meadow your walks  have left so sweet  That whe never a Marchwind  sighs  He sets the jewel-print of  your feet  In violets blue as your eyes....  ( P 94)</p>
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Aconvention very popular in Oriental literature, used both in *Maud* and *Laila and Majunu*, is The love message conveyed through natural elements:

<p><i>Laila and Majnun</i></p> <p>'Breeze of the morn! so fresh  and sweet,  Wilt thou my blooming  mistress great</p>	<p><i>Maud</i></p> <p>Orivulet, born at theHall,  My Maud has sent it by thee  If I read her sweet will right</p>
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And soft recline beneath the  
 Shade,  
 By a delicious rose- bower  
 made:

In that romantic neighbour-  
 hood  
 Agrove of palms majestic  
 stood;  
 Never in Arab desert wild  
 A more enchanting prospect  
 Smiled . . . .  
 She strolls amid its varied  
 scenes,  
 Its pleasant copses evergr-  
 eens,

In which her wakened heart  
 delights.  
 Where're the genial zephyr  
 sighs,  
 Lilies and roses near her rise:

( P 35)

Dark Cedar, tho' thy limbs  
 have here increased.  
 Upon a pastoral slope as  
 fair

And looking to the South,  
 and fed  
 With honey'd rain and delic-  
 ate air . . . .

( P 91)

Come into the garden, Maud,  
 I am here at the gate alone;  
 And the woodbine spices  
 are wafted abroad,  
 And the musk of the rose is  
 blown.

( P 94)

But the rose was awake all  
 night for your sake, knowing  
 your promise to me;  
 The lil ies and roses were all  
 awake,  
 They sigh'd for the dawn and  
 thee. ( P 95)

The repetition of Maud's name echos the repetition of  
 Laila's name:

*Lalla and Majnun*

His eyes all tears, his soul all  
 flame,

Repeating still his Laili's name, Maud, Maud, Maud, Maud,  
 And Laili: Laili echoed round

*Maud*

Birds in the high Hall garden  
 When twilight was falling

They were cryiny and call ng.

( P 89)

She was a fresh and odorous  
 flower  
 Plucked by a fairy from her  
 bower,

Queen rose of the rosebud  
 garden of dirls ....

With heart-delighting rose-  
 buds blooming  
 The welcome breeze of spring  
 perfuming.

In gloss of satin and  
 of pearls,  
 Queen lily and rose in one..

( P 30)

( P 95)

Whose balmy lips like rubies  
 glow;  
 Sugar and milk their sweetness  
 show....

Maud with her exquisite  
 face,  
 And wild voice pealing up to  
 the sunny sky,

And feet like sunny gems on

Her robes around rich odours  
 Fling;

English green,  
 Maud in the light of her

Sparkling with gold and gems

youth and her grace....

(P 18)

(P 89)

The groves or gardens of the beloved ones are described  
 by means of luxurious images to create an atmosphere of  
 beauty and pleasant fragrance:

*Laila and Majnun*

*Maud*

Lalla has a "Fragrant bower"

Maud has a garden of roses

And lilies fair on a lawn;

And now they reach an emer-  
 ald spot,

There She walks in her state

And tends upon bed and

Besides a cool sequestered

bower,

grot,

(P 89)

Maud's hero like Majnun describes the early beauty of Maud comparing it to precious jewels and lovely flowers:

*Laila and Majnun*

*Maud*

A lovely maid of tender years I have heard, I know not  
was seen: whence, of the singular beauty  
of Maud;

Her mental power an early  
bloom displayed...

I played with the girl when  
a child;

And when her cheeks this  
Arab moon revealed,

She promised then to be fair.

A thousand hearts were won...

Maud, the beloved of my  
mother, the moon-faced of  
all,—

(PP 5-6)

(P 83)

As matured young women the two heroines are elaborately described: Laila is described as a "blooming mistress" as a 'blushing rose' and Maud is described as a "jewel", a pearl," having a "clear cut face:

*Laila and Majnun*

*Maud*

A treasure thou, which, Poets  
say,

And dream of her beauty with  
tender dread,

The heavens would gladly  
steal away

From the delicate Arab arch  
of her feet

Too good, too pure, on earth  
to stay!

To the grace that, bright and  
light as the crest

( P 12)

Of a peacock, sits on her

He saw her fresh as morning  
scented air ....

shining head ....

He saw her blooming as the  
blushing rose ....

Roses are her cheeks, And  
a rose her mouth.

( P 13)

( P 90 )

g And the budded peaks of the  
wood are bow'd,

(P 32)

(PP 85,86)

## *Laila and Majinun*

A million emeralds break  
from the ruby-budded lime

In the little grove where  
I sit-ah, where-fore cannot  
I be

g Like things of the season  
gay, like the bountiful season  
bland ...

(P 34)

(P 84)

In both poems birds share the feelings of the heroes, and heroines are associated with beautiful flowers :

**Maud**

Birds in our wood sang

**dove    raise**

**In among the lilies.**

( P. 84 )

## Where're the genial zephyr sighs

**Lilies and roses near her rise...**

(Pp 34, 35)

The two heroes are young and early distracted by love:

*Laila and Majnun*

*Maud*

Majnun's father speaks of his  
son:

*Maud's hero speaks of himself:*

And what had drawn the  
sparkling moon  
Of intellect from him so soon.

Ah, what shall I be at fifty  
should Nature keep me alive,  
If I find the world so bitter  
When I am but twenty-five?

(P 14)

(P 86)

Each of the heroes is a poet having the gift of delicate and sensitive perception. He sees and hears the wonderful and beautiful things only a poet can see and hear. The two poems are rich in observations of nature, images which are used to convey passion and changes of mood and motive.

In *Maud* the subtle influence of sight and sound, of dawn and twilight,... "the voice of the long sea wave as it swelled/

Now and then in the dim grey dawn", (P 90) the call of the birds in the "high Hall garden" the spreading cedar, the breeze of the morning the "woody hollows" and valleys of Paradise mingle with and heighten the romantic love of the hero and heroine. In *Laila and Majnun* all these things are present, and Majnun's passion and changing moods are likewise reflected through nature imagery:

*Laila and Majnun*

*Maud*

The Sky, with gloomy clouds  
o'erspread,  
At length soft showers began  
to shed;

Morning arises stormy and  
pale,

No sun, but a wannish glare

And what, before, destruction  
seemed,

In fold upon fold of hueless  
cloud,

the destiny of the hero, and the elaborate background against which the action takes place.

The two poems open with a tone of dissatisfaction with the world:

*Laila and Majnun*

*Maud*

No ancestors have I to boast; ... I am nameless and poor  
The trace of my decent is lost ... I have neither hope nor  
trust;

From Adam what do I inherit? May make my heart as a milly  
stone, set my face as a flint  
What but a sad and troubled Cheat, and be cheated and  
spirit? die—who knows? we are ashes  
and dust.

For human life, from oldest  
time,

Is ever marked with guilt and  
crime

(P 84, 82)

And man, betrayer and  
betrayed,

Lurks like a spider in the  
shade, (P2)

Both poems welcome the idea of escape

*Laila and Majnun*

*Maud*

But, though attractive, it is  
known

Were it not wise if I fled  
from the place and the pit  
and the fear ?

That safety dwells in flight  
alone (P.3)

(P 83)

I will discuss the imagery of the poem, relating it to the influence of *The Loves of Laila and Majnun* – an influence, I doubt that any of the critics who have dealt with the poet's indebtedness to Oriental literature, mentioned.

*Laila and Majnun* is a Persian poem based on the Arabic love story of *Majnun Laila*. This Persian poem was translated into English by James Atkinson and was published by the Oriental Translation Fund in 1836. The similarities between this poem and *Maud* are very striking and suggest Tennyson's indebtedness to it. At the time he was writing *Maud*, Tennyson was very interested in the literature of the Orient, as I have mentioned before. Furthermore, there is no doubt that he was aware of the love story of *Majnun Laila*, which is frequently referred to in the *Arabian Nights*, Moor's "Lalla Rookh" and the writings of William Jones and W. Beckford.

Beckford wrote that the personage of Majnun and Laila were "esteemed among the Arabians as the most beautiful, chaste, and impassioned lovers", and their amours were 'celebrated with all the charms of verse in every Oriental language,'<sup>12</sup> William Jones says of Nizami's poem: The beautiful poem on the loves of Laila and Majnun by the immortal Nizami is indisputably built on true history, yet avowedly allegorical and mysterious.<sup>13</sup>

By comparing *Maud* to *Laila and Majnun* we realize how much the former is indebted to the latter in imagery, mood and nature of the love described. Both poems have for heroes two lovers driven to madness through the passion of unrequited love. As a matter of fact the first title proposed for *Maud* was 'Maud and Madness'<sup>14</sup> which echoes *Laila and Majnun*—Majnun means mad in Arabic. The main issues in both poems are the same : love and madness, the power of love on

Queen rose of rosebud garden of girls,  
Come hither, the dances are done.  
In glass of satin and glimmer of pearls,  
Queen lily and rose in one ... "

(M.P 95)

What links the heroine even more to the Orient is the Oriental setting which surrounds her ; Maud has a forbidden garden that suggests a hareem garden :

" Maud has a garden of roses  
And lilies fair on a lawn ;  
there she walks in her state  
And tends upon bed and bower,  
And thither I climbed at dawn  
And stood by her garden-gate  
A lion ramps at the top,  
He is claspt by a passion-flower.

(M.P 89).

The character of Maud's brother is reminiscent of the tyrannical rulers of the *Arabian Nights*. As matter of fact he is referred to as the "sultan" and as an "Oil'd and curl'd Assyrian bull. (M pp 93, 86)

Throughout the poem the imagery is very luxurious, suggesting an Oriental rather than an English landscape. Like Arabic and Persian Poetry *Maud* depends on the mingling of colours, scents and nature imagery for expressing its theme . Through these associations, psychological insights and aesthetic effects are conveyed. The Indebtedness of *Maud* to Oriental poetry has been fully treated by Killham and others.<sup>11</sup>



The opening stanza of *Maud* introduced the hero in a very similar situation: he is lonely and almost insane, bewailing the death of his father and expressing his distrust in the world and the people. Though these incidents may be borrowed, they are stamped with Tennyson's poetic genius and made to serve his thematic purpose.

The main interest in *Maud* is really the character of the heroine who is influenced by the type of passionate, energetic and heroic women presented in the *Arabian Nights* and other Oriental literature. The exotic description of Maud's beauty with its imagery influenced by Arabic material, links *Maud* to the Orient. She is compared to Cleopatra, a character that has long appealed to Tennyson:

“What if with her sunny hair,  
And smile as sunny as cold,  
She meant to weave me a snare,  
Of some coquettish decelt,  
Cleopatra – like as of the old  
To entangle me when we met ...”  
(M.p. 86)

The image is used here to express the emotional conflicts in the hero's heart, in other words, it serves a psychological purpose .

In his description of Maud, Tennyson uses expressions that echo expressions used in *Arabian Nights* and Arabic *ghazal* poetry. Maud is described as having “Fed on the roses and lain on the lilies of life”, as a “milkwhite fawn” (p 85). “Roses are her cheeks, / And a rose her mouth.” (p 90) “My own heart's heart, my ownest own” (p 92). “Her feet have a delicate Arab arch.”(p 90). She is always compared to precious stones and associated with colours and breeze of flowers:

Did I hear it half in a doze  
         Long since ,    know not where?  
 Did I dream it an hour ago,  
         When sleep in this arm-chair?  
 Men were drinking together,  
 "Well, if it prove a girl, the boy  
         Will have plenty : So let it be "  
 Is it an echo of something  
         Read with a boy's delight,  
 Viziers nodding together,,  
 In some Arabian night ?<sup>8</sup>

Tennyson's allusion to 'viziers nodding together /in *Some Arabian night*' seems to link this part of the poem to the Tale of Nur Aldin Ali, where the two unmarried brothers resolve to get married and should their children prove to be of opposite sex, to marry them to each other. However, the two viziers disagree over the dowry, and Nur Al-Din leaves Cairo for Basra where he gets married and has a son. The second vizier gets a daughter and by ,magical intervention they meet and get married<sup>9</sup>.

The character of Maud's father and that of the hero's father could have been inspired by those of Shams Al-Din and Nur Al-Din. In both the tale and the poem the fathers were partners in business that broke off because of financial problems. Moreover, Badr Al-Din Hassan, Son of Nur Al-Din has many things in common with the hero of *Maud*. The death of Nur Al-Din drives his son to loneliness, poverty, misery and later to madness:

"Badr Al-Din ceased not lamenting his loss,  
 he never mounted horse, nor attended the Divan, nor  
 presented himself befor the Sultan. "<sup>10</sup> Later he escaped  
 from the country.

through an unfortunate speculation, into which he had been persuaded by his wealthy neighbour, and his mother having died in poverty and wretchedness. He lives on in the old house, brooding over his misery and his father's death with which the social and economic wrongs of contemporary England become linked in his mind. The rich neighbour and his beautiful sister, Maud, to whom the hero was betrothed in childhood and who was once his playmate, came back to live in their old house. He falls in love with Maud, but is not welcomed by the brother who wants for his sister a richer and nobler husband. A duel results in which the brother is killed. The hero has to escape from the country. Maud dies and he loses his reason. In a dream he sees Maud and is encouraged and persuaded by her to act for and serve his country. After this dream he emerges from madness and finds salvation and reintegration of spirit by volunteering in the Crimean War.

The fairy-tale situation appears in an indirect manner in *Maud*. The childhood betrothal, Maud's forbidden garden, her brother's autocratic character which resembles that of a sultan, the risky attempts of the hero to meet Maud, and her appearance to him in a dream after her death; all these situations create a fairy-tale atmosphere through which the emotional conflicts of the hero are unfolded.

The fairy-tale elements are mostly inspired by Tennyson's readings in Oriental literature. The childhood betrothal between Maud and the hero and the accompanying allusion in the poem to the *Arabian Nights* is influenced by the Tale of Nur Al-Din Ali and his son Badr Al-Din Hassan. The hero of *Maud* in keeping with the fairy-tale atmosphere, vaguely remembers how his father and Maud's father betrothed them when she was born:

W.M Thackeray and A.W. Kinglake travelled through the Middle East and subsequently, published records of their impressions.<sup>2</sup> Annotated and more accurately translated editions of Arabic and Persian literature were being published and were greatly appreciated by the Victorian readers<sup>3</sup>. All these facts prove the interest of the age in the Orient and help explain Tennyson's employment of Oriental elements in expressing his theme. Moreover, "young Tennyson has been attracted to Sir William's Works and read his translations from the Sanskrit and Arabic."<sup>4</sup>

When *Maud* was published, it received hostile criticism and was attacked for the novelty of its form. Tennyson states that "the peculiarity of this poem is that different phases of passion in one person takes the place of different characters."<sup>5</sup>

Nevertheless, Henry Taylor, Jowett and the Brownings spoke of the poem's merit<sup>6</sup>. Jowett wrote, "No poem since Shakespeare seems to show equal power of the same kind, or equal knowledge of human nature. No modern poem contains more lines that ring in the ears of man. I do not know any verse out of Shakespeare in which the ecstasy of love soars to such a height.

Like "Locksley Hall" and the *Princess*, *Maud* reflects the problems of the age. It expresses a denunciation of contemporary social and economic wrongs discussed with friends like Charles Kingsley and F.D. Maurice. Furthermore, Tennyson continues the theme with which he dealt in the *Princess*, showing the importance of women's influence in society.

All this is reflected through the character of a single hero, through the description of his moods and his reactions to the tragic events of the story. The hero has been left an orphan, his father having committed suicide after running himself

# ARABIC INFLUENCE IN TENNYSON'S

## MAUD

Siba Al-Fahoom

At the time Tennyson was writing *Maud*, he was interested in the literature of the orient ; he was actually " studying Persian language and discussed Oriental literature with Orientalists such as: Fitzgerald and Edward B. Cowel."<sup>1</sup>

*Maud*, is written in a simple, Condensed style, in which the unfolding of the plot is controlled by the development of the hero's character. This poem marks a further stage in Tennyson's treatment of Oriental material; it reflects his skill in employing Oriental plots, imagery and narrative details for expressing political, social and psychological problems. The passionate and energetic character of the heroine illustrates two points : the Oriental influence and the contemporary problem of women's position in society.

The borrowed Oriental elements in the poem, which will be discussed below , appear well digested and assimilated and successfully serve Tennyson's artistic and thematic purposes. His control over these elements allows him to fulfill his duty as a Victorian prophet and instructor and his interests as an imaginative and romantic artist. Furthermore, expressing such serious contemporary problems against an Oriental background ensures the poem's success and acceptance by a public greatly fascinated and interested in Eastern literature but unable to contemplate these issues in terms of their own society and culture.

*Maud* was published in 1855, when the *Arabian Nights* was most popular. Many Victorian writers as Eliot Warburton,