慶應義塾大学経済学部研究プロジェクト
最終成果論文（2014 年度）

Europe and *A Thousand and One Nights*

A Twisted Reception?

学部学年：経済学部 3 年
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Introduction

STORIES FROM ANOTHER WORLD

A magnificent piece of world literature, *A Thousand and One Nights* (*Nights*), was first introduced in Europe by Antoine Galland some 300 years ago.[1] It is also known as *The Arabian Nights,* which derives from the title of the first English language edition, *The Arabian Nights' Entertainment*.[2] In this report I will refer to this masterpiece as *A Thousand and One Nights*, for it is this title that had caused early Orientalists to assume that there really existed a thousand and one stories.[3] This assumption utterly altered the fate of the work.[4]

Since their appearance in Europe, the tales of the *Nights* have fascinated readers around the world with visions of the exotic and mysterious Middle East. Today, it is considered to be a treasure among the world literature, and its tremendous influence on the world can be seen in many artistic endeavors, ranging from theater, to music and to movies. As Robert Irwin put it in his *The Arabian Nights: A Companion,* "instead of listing European writers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries that were in some way or other influenced by the *Nights*, it would be easier to list those that were not."[5]

From its first publication in Europe in eighteenth century, *A Thousand and One Nights* has come a long way. This obscure work that drew no attention departed the Middle East and returned 150 years later as the foundational text on which the Western

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[1] Antoine Galland, *Les mille et une nuit, contes arabes traduits en François, par M. Galland* (Paris: la Veuve Claude Barbin, 1704-1717), In-12 vols.

[2] On English translation of the *Nights,* see Margaret Sironval, "The Image of Scheherazade in French and English Editions of the *Thousand and One Nights*" in Yuriko Yamanaka and Tetsuo Nishio, eds., *The Arabian Nights and Orientalism: Perspectives from East and West* (London: I.B.Tauris, 2006), 223.

[3] See Enno Littmann, "Alf layla wa-layla" in *The Encyclopedia of Islam* (Leiden: Brill, 1960), vol.1, 361.

[4] See below p.8.

[5] Robert Irwin, *The Arabian Nights: A Companion* (London: Allen Lane, 1994), 290.

world had chosen to base its understandings of the Middle East.[6] Today's reputation of the *Nights* clearly indicates its significance in the Western culture as well as in the East. Not only has the *Nights* become an international text representative of Eastern culture but also an interesting field of study.

Academic discussions of the *Nights* have been thoroughly broadened for there may exist many interpretations and analyses on it. Examining the female characters in the tales, for example, will reveal the underlying sexual repression not just of the societies portrayed, but also as understood by readers in other countries. The captivating female characters within the tales often use magic and sorcery to reach their lovers, or as Saadawi suggests in *The Hidden Face of Eve*; "in *A Thousand and One Nights,* a woman who fights is not portrayed as a Muslim, but rather as an evil old witch or sorceress."[7] Although none of the tales offered anything that was even close to the portrayal of the daily lives of the Middle Easterners, the idea that the *Nights* as the window on the Arab world lived on for well over two centuries. As Reynolds states in his essay "*A Thousand and One Nights:* A History of the Text and Its Reception," the *Nights* became the template against which Westerners came to gauge their own personal experiences of the Middle East.[8]

In addition to the variety of the *Nights*' analyses, the Middle East has become one of the most concerned current issues. After 9.11, broadcast worldwide has been attentive to the Middle East. Therefore, it is timely and crucial to establish and adopt a

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[6] For further discussion on the reception of the *Nights* in the Arab-speaking world see p.12.
[7] Nawal El Saadawi, *The Hidden Face of Eve: Women in the Arab World,* trans. Sherif Hatata (London: Zed, 2007), 239.
[8] Dwight F. Reynolds, "*A Thousand and One Nights*: A History of the Text and Its Reception" in Roger Allen and D. S. Richards, eds., *Arabic Literature in the Post-Classical Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2006), 290.

new point of view on *A Thousand and One Nights*. Especially as a Japanese citizen, it is important to interpret the Middle East through our naked eye, not through the European filter. I chose this classic Arabian literature so to establish a vibrant point of view as a Japanese reader. I strongly believe that by exploring the history and many adoptions of the *Nights,* including one of the latest commentaries on of the *Nights, Stronger Magic: Charmed States and the Arabian Nights* by Marina Warner, will offer a good picture of how *A Thousand and One Nights* and the Middle East are regarded today.[9]

[9] Refer to Chapter 4 for Marin Warner's *A Thousand and One Nights.*

CHAPTER 1
THE EMERGENCE OF *A THOUSAND AND ONE NIGHTS*

The opening section of this report discusses exactly how *A Thousand and One Nights* has become a key text and why it is open to reevaluation now. I will focus on the course of the *Nights*' circulation around the world and the work's radiating influence over all areas of creative arts. In introducing the subject, I will lay out some commonly acknowledged facts relating to the work itself in the following section.

1-1. The Tradition and Transmission of *A Thousand and One Nights*

A Thousand and One Nights is a collection of fairy tales and folktales set in a fictional Arab mileu, and it was presumably complied during the Islamic Golden Age, which started in the Abbasid historical period – beginning in the mid-eighth century and lasting until the Mongol conquest of Baghdad in 1258.[10] In *The History of World Literature (Sekai bungaku no rekishi),* Abe mentions about other world literatures produced during the same period as the *Nights*: "In China, tales such as *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* and *Journey to the West* in the Ming Period […] and the completed version of *The Tale of the Genji* [in Japan] was out in the early eleventh century."[11]

The oldest evidence for the *Nights'* existence was found by Nabia Abbott the first female faculty member of the Oriental Institute in Chicago in 1948.[12] Abe comments on the origin of the *Nights* in his book;

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[10] Tahir Abbas, *Islamic Radicalism and Multicultural Politics: The British Experience* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 9.

[11] Tomoji Abe, *The History of World Literature* [Sekai bungaku no rekishi] (Tokyo:Kawade shoboh, 1989), 117. My translation.「中国では、『三国志演義』『西遊記』などの明の小説[…]１１世紀の早々に『源氏物語』が完成された形で出ている。」

[12] See Nabia Abbott, "A Ninth-Century Fragment of the 'Thousand Nights,'" *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 8, no.3 (1949), http://www.ghazali.org/articles/na-jnes-49.pdf. The Oriental Institute is a research organization and museum devoted to the study of the ancient Near East. Founded in 1919 by James Henry Breasted, the Institute, a part of the University of Chicago, is an internationally recognized pioneer in the archaeology, philology, and history of early Near Eastern civilizations.

> It may have influences from Persia or even India, but it is certain that the stories are mainly from the Arab world. This lively eulogy full of richness in humanity and burning imaginative power are not originated in the period when the tale was completed – the period when Turkey was conquering the spirits of the Arab world – but the period before that – the golden age of the Saracen Empire, stretching from the Middle and Near East to India in the east and Africa on the Mediterranean coast to Spain in the west. The tale symbolizes the vitality of the people during the golden age of the Saracen Empire in the ninth and tenth centuries.[13]

As similar to the works produced during this period, the *Nights* belong to written literature, but its making precedes print and its form took shape in relation to audiences. Florence Dupont, a French Latinist and Hellenist, author of many books on theater and ancient literature, states in *The Invention of Literature* that some of the greatest works of human imagination were created as texts to be performed and heard.[14] The history of the *Nights* is rather complicated; the tales developed and amplified as they traveled the continents over the centuries, and this is where the *Nights* stands out from other world literature.

While the tales vary widely, the initial frame tale concerning a Persian king (Shahrayar) and his new Bride (Scheherazade) is shared in all the editions. Shahrayar, shocked to discover his own wife's infidelity, takes a new, virgin wife each day and

[13] Abe, 115-116.「ペルシア、あるいはさらにインドからの影響もあろうが、大部分はもちろんアラビアのものである。この生気あふれる人間性の讃歌と想像力の燃焼とは、これが大成された時期、つまりトルコに征服されていたときのアラビア人の精神ではなくして、その前の、中近東から東はインドまで、西はアフリカ地中海岸からスペインにまでのびた大サラセン帝国の黄金期（９、１０世紀）に人々の活力を表象するものであろう。」

[14] Florence Dupont, *The Invention of Literature: From Greek Intoxications, 400-1500,* (Rome: Edizioni di storia e leteratura, 1997).

kills her each night to prevent infidelity. When Scheherazade offers herself as the new bride, she staves off death by telling a story that does not end, thus leading the king to postpone her execution. Each night she begins a new story and enthralls the king, inducing him to postpone her execution, and this keeps on for 1,001 nights. In the end, Shahrayar repents his heartless deeds and Scheherazade is spared.

Little is known about how the tales in the *Nights* were passed down within the Arab world and how they were introduced in Europe. The few extant manuscripts cast doubt on the *Nights'* principal assumption; did it really have a thousand and one nights? Reynolds offers an analysis;

> The extant manuscripts from before the eighteen century for the most part fall into two basic groups: Syrian versions that contain 282 nights and the medieval Egyptian versions containing only 200. No references later than that of Ibn al-Nadim indicate that the Arabic text ever included a full complement of one thousand and one nights.[15]

The number of stories varies according to what one counts as story. The *Nights'* antiquity has caused confusion and debate about its origin. How and where the current collection of the *Nights* came out is a rolling, topical subject to study today. Since the *Nights* was an oral literature, the literary style of it was considered to be unsophisticated and naïve among the Arab world; it was neither highly regarded nor popular during the early centuries.

In fact, there are many parallels between the *Nights* and Homer's works - the

[15] Reynolds, 272.

Iliad and the *Odyssey*.[16] Similar to the *Nights,* the period when these epics were created is still a mystery. According to Vidal-Naquet, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* date back around the eighth century BC, the *Iliad* being composed before the *Odyssey* perhaps by some decades.[17] Generally, Homer's works are seen as many generations of oral storytelling in a well-developed formulaic system of poetic composition. Kirk notes the significance of oral literature in his book *Homer and the Oral Tradition*:

> Orality is no mere incidental detail, an accident to be emphasized just for the sake of the unusual. It is of crucial importance for the understanding of the poems as poetry, as works of literature in the broader sense, and as vast and erratic forces in the cultural history of the ancient world.[18]

For modern scholars oral literatures are essential information that connect and reflect the past. The question is how did the *Nights*, the dull and unsophisticated literature become so popular, even worldly-famed, today. We will move on to Antoine Galland and his contribution to the *Nights*' popularization. The following section aspires to show how *A Thousand and One Nights* made a journey around the world.

1-2. A Flourishing Reception

The earliest release of *A Thousand and One Nights* in Europe was by Antoine

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[16] There are various commentaries and research on Homer's works, for example see Geoffrey Stephen Kirk, *Language and Background of Homer: Some Recent Studies and Controversies* (London: W. Heffer & Sons, 1964); Samuel Butler, *The Authoress of the Odyssey: Where and When She Wrote, Who She Was, the Use She Made of the Iliad, and How the Poem Grew Under her Hands* (London: Forgotten Books, 2008); Denton Jaques Snider, *Homer's Odyssey: A Commentary* (Charleston: Nabu, 2011).

[17] Pierre Vidal-Naquet, *Le Monde d'Homere* (Paris: Perrin 2002), 19. This suggests that the *Iliad* is the oldest work of Western Literature.

[18] Geoffrey S. Kirk, *Homer and the Oral Tradition* (London: Cambridge University, 1976), 3.

Galland the French orientalist who translated and titled the work *Les mille et une nuit*[19]. He had come across a manuscript of *The Tale of Sinbad the Sailor* in Constantinople during the 1690s, and in 1701 he published his translation of it into French.[20] Nearly three hundred years later scholars are still in disagreement about the relationship between Galland's translation and his Arabic text of the *Nights*. Some argue that Galland added details as he saw fit, while others argue that Galland's 'addition' makes no sense, so it must have derived from other sources.[21] But it was Galland's recreation or appropriation that made the *Nights* fit into the French structure and style. What is more, Galland's *Nights* contributed to construct a new genre of European literature called the 'Oriental Tale.'[22]

Les mille et une nuit saw immediate success mostly because of the development of new French fiction genre called *contes des fees* – or fairy tales – which had been in vogue during the decade just prior to its publication.[23] Galland was very shrewd; he knew it was just the right time to translate the *Nights* into French. *Contes des fees,* as Reynold suggests, roughly paralleled the structure of the *Nights*:

> Tales within tales, told by a female narrator, filed with magic and marvelous events, involving a variety of social characters often in quotidian settings, replete with sumptuously detailed descriptions of banquets palaces and treasures.[24]

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[19] Galland, *Les mille et une nuit*.
[20] Robert Lawrence Mack, ed., "Introduction" in *Arabian Nights Entertainments* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2009), ix–xxiii.
[21] For discussion about Galland's 'appropriation' of the *Nights*, see Reynolds, 277.
[22] On Oriental Tales, see Martha Pike Conant, PhD., *The Oriental Tale in England in the Eighteenth Century*, vol7., (New York: Columbia University, 1908). There are numerous studies on Galland internationally; see for example, Mohamed Abdel-Halim, *Antoine Galland, savie et son oeuvre,* (Paris: Nizet, 1964); Lethuy Hoang, *Les Mille et Une Nuits a travers l'infini des espaces et des temps: Le counteur Galland, le conte et son public* (New York: Perter Lang, 2001); Ernst-Peter Wieckenberg, *Johann Heinrich VoB und 'Tausend und eine Nacht'* (Wurzburg, Konigshausen & Neumann, 2002).
[23] For *contes des fees*, see Lewis Seifert, *Fairy Tales, Sexuality, and Gender in France 1690-1715* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1996).
[24] Reynolds, 280.

It received high reputation among the Frenchmen, including the masses.[25] *Les mille et une nuit* was soon translated into many other European languages such as English, German, Italian and even Yiddish.

Historically speaking, seventeenth century saw the change in relationship between Middle East and Europe; many European travels led to the Middle East because the Ottoman Empire was relatively stable. Therefore, Europe had great interest in the Middle East.[26] Moreover, the *Nights*' rapid spread was encouraged by the Industrial Revolution, which led to the development of the middle class. The middle class enjoyed many literary works including the *Nights.* Nishio the Japanese scholar who specializes in Arab languages and culture states, "Galland played a historically important role as the discoverer and introducer of *A Thousand and One Nights*."[27]

Galland's 'Arabian' tales inspired and evoked other artistic endeavors such as novel, drama, pantomime, opera, ballet, puppet show, shadow play, music and painting.[28] Its magical and exotic nature is well-received from its introduction into world literature to now. Furthermore, stories from the *Nights* have been popular subjects for films since the rise of film industry. Indeed, some of the earliest Hollywood films were inspired by the *Nights,* including *The Thief of Bagdad* (1924) and *The Three Musketeers* (1933). In *Arabian Night: A Story Born Between Civilizations (Arabian naito – Bunmei no hazama ni umareta monogatari)*, Nishio mentions:

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[25] The masses had access to the tales by reading or hearing *bibliothèque bleue.* On *bibliothèque bleue,* Robert Mandrou, *De la culture populaire aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles: la Bibliothèque bleue*, (Paris: Imago, 1985).

[26] Tetsuo Nishio, *Arabian Night: A Story Born Between Civilizations* [Arabian naito – Bunmei no hazama ni umareta monogatari] (Tokyo: Iwanami, 2007), 9.「ガランはアラビアンナイトの発見者、紹介者として大きな文化史上の役割を果たした。」

[27] Ibid., 48.

[28] Ulrich Marzolph, "The *Arabian Nights* in Comparative Folk Narrative Research" in *The Arabian Nights and Orientalism*, 4.

> Shortly after the invention of film, *A Thousand and One Nights* was made into films. Claude-Antoine Lumière (1840 - 1911), the father of the Lumière brothers – known as the fathers of film – had his first screening of the *Nights* in Paris in 1897. Five years after this (1902), Thomas Edison produced *Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves*.[29]

What is notable about the Hollywood films inspired by the *Nights* is that they pursue the image of "unchanging historically and culturally decontextualized Arablands."[30] Jack Shaheen in his *Reel Bad Arabs* defines 'Arablands' as a place that includes the desert, the oasis and the palace with a torture chamber.[31] Those Hollywood films are either adventure stories set in the Oriental world for children like *Aladdin* or for adults with a high aspect on entertainment emphasizing exotic female characters. Shaheen notices that even the Disney's 1992 production of *Aladdin* represents the 'Arabland':

LIST OF FILMS INSPIRED BY *A THOUSAND AND ONE NIGHTS*

- ✧ *The Thief of Bagdad* (1924 and 1940)
- ✧ *The Adventures of Prince Achmed* (1926)
- ✧ *Arabian Nights* (1942)
- ✧ *Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves* (1944)
- ✧ *Sinbad the Sailor* (1947)
- ✧ *Song of Sinbad* (1955)
- ✧ *The Seventh Voyage of Sinbad* (1958)
- ✧ *Sinbad no Boken* (1962)
- ✧ *Senya Ichiya Monogatari* (1969)
- ✧ *Il Foire delle Mille e Una Notte* (1974)
- ✧ *The Golden Voyage of Sinbad* (1974)
- ✧ *Sinbad and the Eye of the Tiger* (1977)
- ✧ *Allauddinum Albhutha Vilakkum* (1979)
- ✧ *Aladdin* (1992)
- ✧ *Sinbad: Legend of the Seven Seas* (2003)

[29] Nishio, 117.「映画の誕生後まもなく、アラビアンナイト映画が作られている。１８９７年にアントワーヌ・リュミエール（１８４０−１９１１、映画の父と呼ばれるリュミエール兄弟の父）が最初の映画をパリで公開すると、早くもその５年後（１９０２）にはトーマス・エジソン制作による『アリババと４０人の盗賊』が発表された。」

[30] Somaya Sami Sabry, *Arab-American Women's Writing and Performance* (New York: I. B. Tauris, 2011), 10.

[31] Jack Sheehan, *Reel Bad Arabs: How Hollywood Vilifies a People* (New York: Olive Branch, 2009).

> 'Arabland' is described in the opening lines of the theme song to the Disney movie as a faraway place where they cut off your ear if they don't like your face. Its barbaric, but hey it's home[32]

These Orientalist discourses are often incorporated in films. These films encouraged, along with paintings and other visual arts, the development of Orientalism and/or Oriental eroticism.

1-3. The Application of *A Thousand and One Nights* to Current Concerns

Since the publication of Edward Said's *Orientalism* in 1978, much academic discourse had begun to use the term 'Orientalism' to refer to a general patronizing Western attitude towards Asian, North African, and Middle Eastern societies. In Said's analysis; "Orientalism is fundamentally a political doctrine willed over the Orient, because the Orient was weaker than the West, which elided the Orient's difference with its weakness."[33] Said does not discuss *A Thousand and One Nights* in *Orientalism,* but he does turn his scorn on the translators, notably to the English Arabist Edward W. Lane, and indicts them for fostering prejudice.[34] The term 'Orientalism' facilitated the cultural misrepresentation of the Orient – the Middle East in particular. The Western knowledge about the East is not generated from facts or reality; preconceived archetypes that envision Eastern countries are dissimilar to Western countries. Knowledge about the East is constructed with literary texts such as the *Nights*, which is

[32] Ibid., 57.
[33] Edward Wadie Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Penguin, 1995), 204.
[34] Marina Warner, *Stranger Magic: Charmed States and the* Arabian Nights (Cambridge MA: Harvard University, 2012), 24.

told from Galland – the Western perspective, thus facts of the life in the Middle East remains limited. As Sironval points out:

> The emerging image of the East remained for long hesitant and even contradictory, balancing uneasily between Oriental scholarship on the one hand, and the sensuality of the harems on the other.[35]

The *Nights* strived for this matter; it reunited reality and fiction for the early orientalists. In fact, Galland himself writes in the preface of his translation:

> Thus without suffering the fatigue of going to look for these people in their countries, the reader will have the pleasure here, of seeing them act and hearing them speak. We have taken care in keeping their characters, and not wandering from their expressions and their feelings.[36]

The discussion on Orientalism and the *Nights* is in chapter 3 of this report**.** By introducing various Orientalist illustrations, we will discover how the artists regarded the *Nights* and how the art affect the reception of the text.

Along with the lens of Orientalism, this report will analyze *A Thousand and One Nights* through the lens of feminism. As stated earlier, the interpretation for the *Nights* has expanded and feminists' view is undeniably one of them. Applying feminism to the *Nights* will bring in new argument and assessment since it is a fairly new

[35] Sironval, 239.
[36] Galland, Preface.

ideology.[37] In *Reading the World from Gender (Gender kara sekai wo yomu)*, Kimoto mentions the origin of feminism:

> The perspective of 'gender' - understanding the differences in behavior and roles between male and female by social and cultural context - was 'discovered' to separate it from 'sex,' which denotes for the biological differences between the sexes. [38]

There are many ongoing debates about feminism, and one of them is the relationship between Islam and feminism. This cannot be neglected since it refers directly to the *Nights*. Principally, sexual repression is not based on religious ideology, thus there should not exist a difference between the West and the East. Kimoto mentions; "Both Islam and Christianity implemented a similar principle, that is, the female subordination to male."[39] Placing stress only on the distinct Islamic values and culture are inappropriate when discussing about Islam and feminism. As Kimoto suggests, before going over the feministic ideas, "Isn't the European-centered idea implicitly on the assumption?" seems to be an important question to ask.[40]

Formerly, the tales dealing with love and sexual intrigues were considered as an insight into the "Arab mind and heart," however it is quite clear that it is not an accurate image of the real Arabian lives.[41] Marina Warner comments on the eroticism

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[37] On the history of feminism see for example, Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, trans. Constance Borde (London: Vintage, 2011), Estelle Freedman, *No Turning Back: The History of Feminism and the Future of Women* (New York: Ballantine, 2003).

[38] Kimiko Kimoto, "Global Gender Approach (Global na gender approach)" in Tetsuko Seki and Kimiko Kimoto, eds., *Reading the World from Gender* [Gender kara sekai wo yomu] (Tokyo: Akaishi, 1996), 16.「男性と女性とのあいだの行動のしかたや役割規範のちがいを、社会的・文化的コンテキストから把握しようとするジェンダーという視角は、生物学的性差を意味するセックスとは相対的に区別されるべきものとして「発見」された。」

[39] Kimoto, 28.「イスラームもキリスト教も女性の男性への服従という点では同じような原則を採用してきた。」

[40] Ibid., 25.「西欧中心主義的発想が暗黙のうちに前提されていなかったかどうか」

[41] Saadawi, 198.

in the *Nights* and how it influenced many creative arts in her *From the Beast to the Blonde: On Fairy Tales and Their Tellers*:

> Such a divine erotic beast as the hero of the popular fairy tale has offered writers and other artists – painters and film-makers – a figure of masculine desire, and the plot in which he moves presents a blueprint for the channeling of erotic energy – both male and female – in society at any one time.[42]

The *Nights'* image of eroticism partly derives from those creative arts. After the illustration of the frame tale in the French edition printed in *The Hague* by Pierre Husson, Scheherazade's illustrative life begins in France and in England in 1840.[43] Then, the Western way of viewing the Middle East took a firm root internationally. Therefore, reevaluating *A Thousand and One Nights* from perspectives of feminism and Orientalism will allow one to find new aspect on the Middle East. The latest commentaries on *A Thousand and One Nights* are interestingly by a feminist mythographer called Marina Warner. She is known for her many non-fiction books relating to feminism and myth.[44] I will evaluate her version of the *Nights* to uncover its adaptation for the modern world and the difference from the old translations.

Marina Warner's two latest books, *Stranger Magic: Charmed States & the Arabian Nights* published in 2011 and *Scheherazade's Children: Global Encounters with the Arabian Nights* published in 2013 are both about *A Thousand and One Nights.* Out of all literary works, why did she choose the *Nights*? In *Stranger Magic,* Warner

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[42] Marina Warner, *From the Beast to the Blonde: On Fairy Tales and Their Tellers* (London: Vintage, 1995), 274.
[43] Sironval, 232.
[44] For a list of publication by Marina Warner, visit her website, Marina Warner, "Publications", http://www.marinawarner.com/publications/nonfiction.html, (Decemeber 4, 2014).

presents the history of magical thinking and explores the power of the *Nights* and its impact in the West. While she retells some of its tales, she mainly focuses on how magic helped to create the modern world, and how profoundly it is still inscribed in the way we think today. Surprisingly, she drops her feminist perception in *Stranger Magic*. *Scheherazade's Children* explores the reverberations of the *Nights'* tales across a wide range of cultural endeavors. The contributors of *Scheherazade's Children* approach the *Nights'* influence on world literature, performance, and culture. By writing a critical analysis on her two books, I will attempt to demonstrate how feminism is inseparable when examining the *Nights*.

1-4. The 'Arabia' Fantasy

The sea of stories and its richly layered narrative structure are the result of many emendations. The popularization of the *Nights* was backed by cultural and economic factors of the time; fairy tales were in vogue and industrialization triggered middle class to develop. The Oriental imagination the *Nights* aroused was on demand for those Europeans; the *Nights* was considered to be an important key to the Arab world and lives. Today, many scholars look at the *Nights* and artistic endeavors inspired by it. The image of 'Arabia' in Japan is created by comic books, films and also Takarazuka, the Japanese all-female musical theater troupe. Applying this 'Arabia' fantasy to the modern Middle East is inadequate. It is important for Japanese people to review and restructure their perception towards the Middle East. Globalization has

contributed to the better global access, both of goods and information. Today, the Middle East is a country not so faraway nor it is a fantasyland. Japan's westernization prevented Japanese people from having their individual views on the Middle East, but it is about time we started observing the Middle East with our own eyes.

CHAPTER 2
WOMEN IN *A THOUSAND AND ONE NIGHTS*

This chapter focuses on Scheherazade and other female characters that appear in *A Thousand and One Night.* This chapter aims to discuss two points: Scheherazade's narrative and different roles female characters play within the tales. I have categorized the female characters into three fundamental types based on their actions and purpose - a helper, a schemer, and a prize/object. The readers should note that none of the other literature as old as the *Nights* contains such diverse female character roles. Looking closely at how women are portrayed within the tales of *A Thousand and One Nights* will offer a new perception.

As it turns out, the *Nights* is not merely eroticizing women. When focusing on the female perspectives, the *Nights* presents a new idea; the tales, in fact, support the active roles of women. Therefore, this chapter poses a question: Is *A Thousand and One Nights* a story merely eroticizing and fantasizing women, or could it be a story that supports women's ability?

2-1. The Power of Storytelling

When approaching the long history of the compilation of *A Thousand and One Nights,* readers should note that its history of reception and circulation is one of the extraordinary voyages between continents, languages, cultures, and historical periods. Of the many Arabic versions of the *Nights* that have traveled into other languages and literary traditions, the structures of the embedded-tale form are transported most

intact.[45] However, it is important to understand that the variation in texts is not an accident due to inadequate transmission but is rather a fundamental aspect of the narrative performance of the *Nights.* It seems that it was constructed in such a way as to allow and even invite radical changes in its content, yet at the same time preserve its own internal logic.[46]

The *Nights*' complex montage effects within the tales inspired many novels during the eighteenth century; writers gained new architectural complexity and the will toward narrative experiment. The *Nights*, moreover, supported the development of "a new kind of novel guided and dominated by a single, seductive narrative voice."[47] Apart from its unique narrative structure, the *Nights* deals with the abstract time.

Ghazoul, a professor in the Department of English and Comparative Literature at the American University in Cairo, also supports this idea. In *Nocturnal Poetics* she claims that there is an element of poetic justice in Scheherazade's struggle against deadline (and it is literally a dead line) armed with narrative: she fights time with time.[48]

The concept of time also exists in the *Odyssey,* mentioned briefly in chapter 1, where Penelope unravels at night what she weaves in the daytime to delay temporal events.[49] Unlike Penelope, Scheherazade's art lies in annulling the very limits of time

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[45] By this I mean there are a few works that experimented with the frame tale, see for example, Mir Amman, *A Tale of Four Dervishes* (New York: Penguin, 2006); Karen Blixen (Isak Dinesen), *Out of Africa* (New York: Penguin, 2001); *Arabian Nights,* DVD, directed by Pier Paolo Pasolini. (1974; London: British Film Institute, 2009).

[46] Ferial Jabouri Ghazoul, *Nocturnal Poetics;* The Arabian Nights *in Comparative Context* (Cairo: American University in Cairo, 1996), 4.

[47] Katie Trumpener, "The Politics of Conversation" in Phillip F. Kennedy and Marina Warner, eds., *Scheherazade's Children* (New York: New York University, 2013), 220. For fist-person narrative novels, see Daniel Defoe, *Roxana: The Fortunate Mistress* (London: Oxford University, 2008); Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver's Travels* (Hollywood FL: Simon & Brown, 2012).

[48] Ghazoul, 18.

[49] See p. 9.

itself. [50] Scheherazade's storytelling is calculated and witty; however, many readers only notice the erotic element of the *Nights*.

2-2. Scheherazade's Intelligence

Scheherazade, as Darraj remarks in *Scheherazade's Legacy: Arab and Arab American Women on Writing*, had suffered terribly at the hands of translators; Scheherazade became nothing more than "a harem sex kitten" when Antoine Galland, and later Richard Burton, introduced the *Nights* to Europeans.[51] These translators disempowered Scheherazade into the exotic/oppressed stereotype, but Scheherazade's intelligence is even visible in their distorted translations.

By obtaining the privilege of a narrator or a 'dictator', she is potentially powerful but is – to borrow the paradox of Kierkegaard – put to death but kept alive.[52] While Scheherazade embodies the principal of female vulnerability, she is quite fearless when facing the monstrous king. It has been overlooked that Scheherazade rejects the idea that men pose a threat to her; this proves the ability of words rather than sexual appeals, or as Ghazoul suggests:

> She tries to appease his appetite, to tame him, as it were, and replaces his steady diet of women with tales of women. [Scheherazade's] genius lies in turning women from objects of sex to objects of sexual fantasy.[53]

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[50] For further discussion on Penelope and Scheherazade, see Matthew Garrett, *Episodic Poetics: Politics and Literary Form after the Constitution* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2014), 8.
[51] Susan Muaddi Darraj, *Scheherazade's Legacy: Arab and Arab-American Women on Writing* (Westport: Praeger, 2004), 2.
[52] Soren Kierkegaard, *Repetition: An Essay in Experimental Psychology,* trans. Walter Lowrie (Princeton: Princeton University, 1946), 152.
[53] Ghazoul, 23.

Initially, her stories offer tales of female infidelity as a character flaw. Yet over time, the stories starts to reveal the complex background of women's – and men's – evident moments of immorality: how women come to be imprisoned, how men come to be sexually maimed. What is notable in general about the roles of women in the *Nights* is that they were not helpless victims of their circumstances, but were rather "active participants in the unfolding of events around them."[54] Katie Trumpener offers an analysis on Scheherazade's tales in her essay *The Politics of Conversation*:

> In the world of Scheherazade's stories, women are kidnapped and subjected, men are unmanned both physically and symbolically. Yet insofar as they retain their voices, they are able to narrate the story of their captivity […] a parallel to or substitute for the personal and sexual freedom they no longer enjoy[55]

On the other hand, Kalamawi highlights the mistreatment of female characters in the *Nights* and points out; "in most of the stories she is brought and sold, and those the characteristics and behavior of the slave become her milieu and of her appeal."[56]

The *Nights* consists with hundreds of tales about captivating female characters who use magic and sorcery to reach their lovers. Saadawi mentions, "deceit, cunning and conspiracy in *A Thousand and One Nights* are invariably associated with women, love and sex."[57] She even carries on and proposes that in the *Nights,* a woman who fights is not portrayed as a Muslim, but rather as an evil old witch or sorceress.[58] There

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[54] Sabry, 10.
[55] Katie Trumpener, "The Politics of Conversation" in *Scheherazade's Children*, 219.
[56] Soheir El Kaalamawi, *A Thousand and One Nights* (Dar El Maaref, Egypt, 1976), 303.
[57] Saadawi, 239.
[58] Ibid.

are, however, female characters in the *Nights,* who in fact, reflect the strong and positive Arab woman's personality.

2-3. *A Thousand and One Nights*: Typology

In this section, I have chosen several tales from *A Thousand and One Nights* to be analyzed, in order to reveal feminism in the tales. First one to study about this matter was probably Marie Lahy-Hollebecque the French feminist. Mme. Lahy-Hollebecque wrote *The Feminism of Scheherazade (Le Féminisme de Schéhérazade)* in 1927.[59] This work is one of the earliest academic studies of *A Thousand and One Nights*. It also contains an educator's point of view on the role of women in the text.[60] Her basic stance is that Scheherazade is a feminist. This is a significant idea because feminism reading, particularly vis-a-vis myths, legends, and fairy tales, were very thin in the 1920's. As a matter of fact, Virginia Woolf, an English writer and one of the foremost modernists of the twentieth century, wrote about feminism later than Lahy-Hollebecque.[61] The following section examines the excerpts from *The Feminism of Scheherazade* and uncovers Lahy-Hollebecque's ideas on the *Nights.*[62]

2-3.1. Marie Lahy-Hollebecque's *The Feminism of Scheherazade*

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[59] Marie Lahy-Hollebecque, *Le Féminisme de Schéhérazade* (Éditions Radot, Paris, 1927).
[60] Lahy-Hollebecque (1881 – 1957) was an essayist, a playwright, and a university professor. She wrote numerous works on education.
[61] In her *A Room of One's Own* (1929) and *Three Guineas* (1938), Woolf examines the difficulties that female writers and intellectuals face because men hold disproportionate legal and economic power and the future of women in education and society.
[62] Surprisingly, Ghazoul nor Warner consulted the text by Lahy-Hollebecque.

Lahy-Hollebecque starts off by introducing *A Thousand and One Nights* as the review of knowledge at the time. She also states that it is the guide of civilization and shows how women were involved in the society. Her main message is that women have active roles in the *Nights.* This is an excellent point since women do not even appear in many of the other European classical literature. The key arguments in the book appear in chapter 7, "In Defense of Women (Apologétique de la Femme)," Lahy-Hollebecque states that Scheherazade is basically one voice of defense;

> How will she make him give up his position - as simplistic as it is absolute? Well, as always, by instructing him. She will reveal to him the women of whose existence he is completely ignorant; she will show him their nature, their life, their occupations, and their world so rich in feelings. She'll bath him in an atmosphere of femininity where he will soon feel relaxed and at ease with his mind relaxed.[63]

Lahy-Hollebecque remarks the art of Scheherazade's approach to the king. The intelligent Scheherazade approaches the king discreetly and wisely. In order to defend women, Scheherazade does not deflect the king at first; she starts by agreeing with him. Gradually, however, Scheherazade shows the good in women. She also offers examples of bad women, however, she does not fail to add context to the evilness. She implies that women are not naturally bad; women could be vulgar, but it is not necessarily their fault.

[63] Lahy-Hollebecque, 128. Translation by Prof. Batty. "Comment Schéhérazade le fera-t-elle revemir sur ce jugement, aussi simpliste qu'absolu ? Eh bien, comme toujours, en l'instruisant. Ces femmes, dont il ignore tout : la nature, la vie, les occupations, et le monde si riche des sentiments, elle va les lui révéler. Elle le baignera dans une atmosphère de féminité, où il se sentira bientôt comme détendu et apraisé."

According to Lahy-Hollebecque, "the conclusion follows automatically from [Scheherazade] herself. For Scheherazade, her virginity only has value if it is accompanied by a need of the soul."[64] Lahy-Hollebecque states that purity is a defense of one's personality. That is to say that purity is not doing good nor bad. Lahy-Hollebecque also seeks to describe the particular specialty of women. She points out that in western media, women are depicted as mysteries, however, in the *Nights,* women do not just pose questions but offer solutions.[65]

After she thoroughly discusses about *A Thousand and One Nights*, Lahy-Hollebecque makes a remark in her conclusion:

> Heads of State, leaders of people, warriors – such proves by a series of clear examples that women can claim to exercise these functions with as much and even more mastery than men.[66]

Lahy-Hollebecque clearly indicates that women are not least bit inferior than men. Considering its publishing date, in 1927, this is remarkable. Her text shows the depth in which *A Thousand and One Nights* could be discussed. Lahy-Hollebecque's feminism critique supports that *A Thousand and One Nights* could indeed interpreted as a story which defends feminism.

It has been almost 90 years since *The Feminism of Scheherazade* was first published, thus, Lahy-Hollebecque's feminist critique of the *Nights* may no longer address current concerns. Therefore, in Chapter 2-3.2, analyses on several tales from the

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[64] Lahy-Hollebecque, 143.
[65] Ibid., 157-159.
[66] Ibid., 160. "Chefs d'Etat, conducteurs de peuples, guerriers, les femmes, prouve-t-elle par une série d'exemples démonstratifs, peuvent prétendre à exercer ces fonctions avec autant et peut-être plus de maitrise que l'homme."

Nights are provided, and they offer a modern feminist approach and perspective of the *Nights.*

2-3.2 In-Text Analyses

In what follows, I have specifically chosen five tales from *A Thousand and One Nights* to be studied. I will explain the different roles female characters play so to discover the underlying feminism. The five tales are: 'The First Old Man's Tale,' 'The Steward's Tale: The Young Man from Baghdad and Lady Zubaida's Maid,' 'The Tale of the Husband and the Parrot,' 'The Tale of the Enchanted King,' and 'The Story of the Two Viziers, Nur al-Din Ali al-Misri and Badr al-Din Hasan al-Basri'. The sources of these tales are from *The Arabian Nights* translated by Husain Haddawy, which is based on the fourteenth century manuscript edited by Muhsin Mahdi.[67] I have previously noted the existence of many translations; but this chapter strictly focuses on female characters and their roles, so the selection of the translation is not critically important.

I. 'The First Old Man's Tale' – Schemer/Helper

'The First Old Man's Tale' is told within the 'Story of the Merchant and the Demon'. The voice of the 'First Old Man's Tale' is by 'the Old Man' not Scheherazade; this overlapping narration is repeatedly employed in the *Nights.* The Old Man narrates a story of his jealous wife who has turned into a deer.

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[67] Husain Haddawy, trans., *The Arabian Nights* (New York: Norton, 1990).

> My wife grew jealous of my mistress and my son. […] In my absence my wife, this cousin of mine, learned soothsaying and magic and cast a spell on my son and turned him into a young bull. Then she summoned my shepherd, gave my son to him, and said, "Tend this bull with the rest of the cattle." The shepherd took him and tended him for a while. Then she cast a spell on the mother, turning her into a cow, and gave her also to the shepherd.[68]

In this tale, the wife learns soothsaying and magic in order to eliminate the mistress and her son. The text simply notes, "learned soothsaying," but in order to learn soothsaying, it requires brain. Thus, this tale actually supports women's intelligence. The wife shouts, "Go on. Butcher her, for he has none better or fatter. Let us enjoy her meat at feast time."[69] She is depicted as a determined and malicious woman. Although the story portrays the stereotypical evil woman, the second half of the story supports women's gentleness and compassion; the shepherd's daughter saves the son by soothsaying and magic.

Figure 1: 'The Genius and the Merchant' by Henry Justice Ford (1898)

> She smiled and replied, 'Master, I have no desire for your wealth, cattle, or possessions. I will deliver him, but on two conditions:

[68] Haddawy, 27.
[69] Ibid, 28.

> first, that you let me marry him; second, that you let me cast a spell on her who had cast a spell on him, in order to control her and guard against her evil power.'[70]

Soothsaying and magic stress the contrast between the wife and the shepherd's daughter since they both use them but for opposite reasons. In many of the stories, women are portrayed as exotic creatures who knows how to use magic. This magic use often leads to either good or evil. In the world of the *Nights*, women are either good or evil; they cannot be neutral.

Enderwitz finds Scheherazade's storytelling "tactless" for a woman in such a dangerous situation.[71] However, telling the story of the kind shepherd's daughter after the evil wife is indeed Scheherazade's intelligence. As a matter of fact, Scheherazade's successful survival night after night strongly supports that there exists a subtle but thoughtful message about the good in women.

II. 'The Steward's Tale: The Young Man from Baghdad and Lady Zubaida's Maid' – Schemer/Helper

This tale is told by a man who lost his thumbs and toes. He tells how it happened at a party. The tale is mainly about the young man falling love with the beautiful young lad, he describes, "the like of which [he] had never seen before, richly dressed and bedecked with jewelry."[72] The readers should know by now that the tales

[70] Haddawy, 30.
[71] Susanne Enderwitz, "Practical Narrative, Theoretical Discussion and Feminism Discourse" in Ulrich Marzolph, ed., *The Arabian Nights in Transnational Perspective* (Detroit: Wayne State University, 2007), 269.
[72] Haddawy, 277.

in *A Thousand and One Nights* are generally not pure love stories but rather twisted. In this tale, the young lady saves the young man when they were secretly meeting:

> The caliph said to the eunuchs, "Open this chest, so that I may see what is in it." But the young lady said, "O my lord, open it in the presence of the Lady Zubaida, for that which is in it is her secret, and she is more particular about this one than all the other chests." When the caliph heard her explanation, he ordered the eunuchs to carry the chest inside, and […] carried the chest in which I was hiding, while I could hardly believe that I was still alive.[73]

The young lady gracefully deceives the caliph and saves the young man from getting killed. The setting of this tale is quite fascinating to look at; the young lady is free and independent – literary outside – whereas the young man is voiceless and suppressed. This tale does not only reveal women's intelligence but also suggest women's freedom and independence.

III. 'The Tale of the Husband and the Parrot' - Schemer

Figure 2: 'The Husband Presents the Parrot to His Wife' by Thomas Dalziel (1865)

[73] Ibid., 282.

This is a relatively short tale about the husband who got tricked by his beautiful wife. The wife always refuses to let her husband travel and leave her behind, but one day he really had to go on a journey. Thus, he buys her a parrot. When he comes back he asks the parrot about his wife during his absence. The wife finds the parrot very bothersome, so she plots to kill the parrot. What is significant about this story is that the wife chooses to kill the parrot indirectly by ordering the maids to fabricate a rainstorm:

> When the wife heard that it was the parrot who had informed the husband, she ordered one of her maids to take the grinding stone and grind under the cage, ordered a second maid to sprinkle water over the cage, and ordered a third to carry a steel mirror and walk back and forth all night long […] The husband, concluding that the parrot had lied about his wife and had accused her falsely, got angry and he grabbed the parrot and, taking it out of the cage smote it on the ground and killed it.[74]

The husband is easily fooled and trusts the wife. In the 'Tale of Husband and the Parrot', the role of the wife acts as a warning for the readers not to completely trust women because women could be cunning and scheming. What is more, this tale highlights the stupidity of the husband; why did he choose a parrot to ask about his wife? The great contrast in intelligence between the wife and the husband makes this tale very fascinating.

IV. 'The Tale of the Enchanted King' – Schemer

[74] Ibid., 50.

In this tale, the king's son marries his beautiful cousin, but one day, he finds out about her adultery by overhearing the two maids:

> Does she leave our master with his wits about him? No. She places a sleeping potion in the last drink he takes, offers him the cup, and when he drinks it, he sleeps like a dead man. Then she leaves him and stays out till dawn. When she returns, she burns incense under his nose, and when he inhales it, he wakes up. What a pity!"[75]

The husband is very upset and decides to kill both of them but fails to kill the wife. When he tries to attack his wife, the wife curses him in order to defend herself. He narrates:

> She stood up, uttered words I could not understand, and cried, "With my magic and cunning, be half man, half stone." […] My wife tuned the inhabitants of my city, who belonged to four sects, Muslims, Magians, Christians, and Jews, into fish, the Muslims white, the Magians red […] As if what she has done to me and the city is not enough, she strips me naked every day and gives me a hundred lashes with the whip until my back is lacerated and begins to bleed.[76]

[75] Ibid., 69.
[76] Ibid., 74.

Figure 3: 'I Became Half Man and Half Marble' by Henry Justice Ford (1898)

From this passage the readers could infer the wife's brutality as well as her intelligence. However, the emphasis on the wife's brutality by describing what she did in detail prevents the readers from identifying the wife's ability.[77] This tale could actually be the forerunner of literature that explores sadism and masochism. Trumpener offers an interesting view on the shift in the female roles in the *Nights.* She observes, "the *Nights* moves from tales of male revenge for female infidelity to tales justifying female infidelity as revenge."[78] Her view indicates that the *Nights* assumes women are unfaithful, and moreover, it imprints the negative images of women on the readers' minds.

V. 'The Story of the Two Viziers, Nur al-Din Ali al-Misri and Badr al-Din Hasan al-Basri' – Prize

In this tale, the vizier tortures his nephew, Badr al-Din, to make sure that he is suitable for the vizier's daughter.

> "In fact, aren't you the one who gave the orders to beat, tie, shackle, and crucify me […]?" The vizier replied, "Son, the truth is out, for what was hidden has been revealed. You are my true nephew, and I did all this only to be sure that you were indeed the

[77] For example the passage from footnote 63.
[78] Trumpener, 225.

> one who had consummated the marriage with my daughter that night."[79]

The difference between this tale and the other two is that this one ends with happy-ending. After Badr al-Din overcomes the suffering, he is well-received by the king:

> The following day the vizier went to the king and acquainted him with the situation, and the king was exceedingly amazed and ordered that the story be recorded. Thereafter, the vizier and his nephew and daughter lived the best of lives in prosperity and ease, eating and drinking and enjoying themselves to the end of their days.[80]

The 'Story of the Two Viziers, Nur al-Din Ali al-Misri and Badr al-Din Hasan al-Basri' focuses on how the young and brave Badr al-Din overcomes a hardship. The tone of the ending of this tale is warm and joyful. However, the female characters are weak; the daughter is merely a prize or an object rather than a human character. This can be inferred from the text, since she does not talk much.

2-4. Comparisons with Greek Mythology

From the five tales examined in the previous section, the female characters could be sorted into three categories: the schemer, the helper, and the prize. Note that sometimes the female characters may be both the schemer and the helper – evil and good. As mentioned by Mme. Lahy-Hollebecque, Scheherazade effortlessly

[79] Haddawy, 247.
[80] Ibid. 248.

demonstrate human nature by utilizing those female characters.[81] This is a great contrast with the Greek myths, which were created much earlier. In many of the Greek myths, women are barely depicted. Even when they are depicted, they usually do not have dialogues. In "Writing the History of Women" edited in *A History of Women From Ancient Goddesses to Christian Saints* it refers to women's absence in the classic literature and examines female roles:

> The roles for which women were destined were silent ones: motherhood and homemaking, […] Remote from the stage of history, upon which the men who controlled their destinies crushed, women were poorly placed to serve as witnesses. At times they might play minor roles, but they rarely took the leading parts [...] Generally they were subjects.[82]

At times, female characters are "subjects" in *A Thousand and One Nights,* but many of them end up taking the initiative in their lives; the *Nights* is patently different from the classics written in the same period.

One thing *A Thousand and One Nights* and Greek myths have in common is that they both are not "mediums of historical record for times beyond our grasp."[83] As Ken Dowden comments in *Women in Antiquity: New Assessments,* "[myth] is predominantly fictional and ideological, not documentary."[84] However, myth illustrates common attitudes through narrations and "tells what it wishes without such

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[81] For Lahy-Hollebecque's comment on Scheherazade's skillful storytelling, refer to p. 20.
[82] Georges Duby and Michelle Perrot, "Writing the History of Women" in Georges Duby and Michelle Perrot, eds., *A History of Women in the West* (Cambridge MA: Harvard, 1994), ix.
[83] Ken Dowden, "Approaching women through myth: Vital tool or self-delusion?" in Richard Hawley and Barbara Levick, eds., *Women in Antiquity: New Assessments* (London: Routledge, 1995), 44.
[84] Ibid., 44.

inhibitions."[85] It is therefore possible to see in myths how society treated and thought of women, just like *A Thousand and One Nights* does.

Women in Greek myths are categorized into three groups: goddesses, wives and whores. Dowden discusses about the types of women characters in the myths:

> The categories of women visible in myth undergo a certain ideological distortion: females may be *parthenoi* [maidens] or *gynaikes* [matrons], but not unmarried women.[86]

It is common for Greek myths to highlight the distinction, plainly that made by Greek men, between good and bad women. This compartmentalization of women into good and bad reflects a very limited view of their place. Dowden notes the women characters are powerless in Greek mythology:

> [Women] are there to make an *oikos* [household, house, or family] work and the failure to do so may even be to lose the claim to womanhood, to live in some sort of androgynous no-woman's land.[87]

The early tales in *A Thousand and One Nights* also follow this idea, however as a whole, it is an outstanding work that presents Scheherazade's, in other words, women's intelligence. However, most of the artists did not perceive it this way; they used their creative flair to produce the image of houris, the idealized Arabic women. Thus, the

[85] Ibid., 45.
[86] Ibid., 46.
[87] Ibid., 51.

next chapter focuses on visual arts of *A Thousand and One Nights,* and how visual works have contributed in constructing the twisted reception of the *Nights.*

CHAPTER 3
REPRESENTING THE EXOTIC: EUROPEAN ART AND *A THOUSAND AND ONE NIGHTS*

A Thousand and One Nights has had the power to arouse the artist's imagination over 300 years since its first European translation by Antoine Galland. Unfortunately, or perhaps fortunately, very few illustrated manuscripts of the *Nights* were made before Galland's translation. Consequently, many of the extant illustrations from the early period are unfiltered version of *A Thousand and One Nights* by the west. The so-called Orientalists in the nineteenth century never depicted the *Nights* nor incorporated aesthetics of Islamic art. This chapter discusses those works of visual art produced after Galland's translation. Art and the artists relating to the *Nights* have played a special role in the birth of the Orientalism and its associated erotic imagery. The aim of this chapter is to determine how the art has influenced in the formation of the exotic image of women in *A Thousand and One Nights*.

3-1. The Beginning

The first edition of Galland in 1704 had no illustrations.[88] In the vacant space of each chapter, monotype fleuron or the ornamental pattern were added just like other books made in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The distinctive feature of such ornaments is that they have nothing to do with the subjects of the story.[89]

The first illustration related to the *Nights* was published in 1706 in England

[88] Antoine Galland, *Les mille et une nuits* (Paris: la Veuve Claude Barbin, 1704).
[89] David Bland, *The Illustration of Books* (London: Faber & Faber, 1951), 47-48.

(Figure 4). It is the cover for the translation of Galland's edition. Here we see an image of Scheherazade and King Shahrayar relaxing in the canopy bed and a lady standing nearby; although King Shahrayar wears a turban-like headdress, the characters are depicted entirely in Western style. The vaulted niche in the background indicates the western-ness. According to Kazue Kobayashi, the writer of the essay "The Evolution of the *Arabian Nights* Illustrations: An Art Historical Review" in *The Arabian Nights and Orientalism: Perspectives from East and West*, the vaulted niche was "a common background motif for portraits or historical persons in traditional Western paintings."[90] She, however, did not point out the balustrade in the front; this is also a European architectural structure. The construction is wholly European.

Soon, *A Thousand and One Nights* appeared as chapbooks, mostly paper-covered booklets illustrated with crude woodcuts.[91] As mentioned earlier in Chapter 1, the chapbooks significantly contributed to the popularization of *A Thousand and One Nights* because they were inexpensive. In France, *Le Cabinet des fees* published in 41 volumes between 1785 and 1789, included stories from the *Nights*; the French artist Pierre-Clement Marillier illustrated all 110 plates for this collection.[92] As it can be seen in Figure 5, French illustrations were also depicted in the traditional Western style. The settings of most illustrations of the *Nights* were thus not based on reality.

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[90] Kazue Kobayashi, "The Evolution of the *Arabian Nights* Illustrations: An Art Historical Review" in *The Arabian Nights and Orientalism*, 172.
[91] On chapbooks, see Harry Bischoff Weiss, *A Book About Chapbooks* (Hatboro, PA: Folklore Associates, 1969).
[92] Gordon Norton Ray, *The Art of the French Illustrated Books 1700 to 1914* (New York; Pierpont Morgan Library, 1982).

Figure 4: Frontpiece illustration for Gallnd's *Les mille et une nuit* (1706).

Figure 5: The illustration by Pierre-Clement Marillier (1785).

3-2. Orientalism in Art

It was Napoleon's Expedition in Egypt in 1798 and 1801 that gave rise to "a taste" for the Orient.[93] Because this was the first European mission to the Arab world since antiquity, Napoleon invited scholars and artists to accompany the expedition, and those scholars and artists returned to France with various documentations on geography, culture, and antiquities. For these artists, the Oriental paintings were expressed "thematically rather than stylistically."[94] Thornton further explains in *The Orientalist; Painter-Travellers*:

> The Orient meant first of all the Levant. It then included Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Palestine and the North African coast, Spain,

[93] John Macdonald MacKenzie, *Orientalism: History, Theory, and the Arts* (Manchester: Manchester University, 1995).
[94] Lynne Thornton, *The Orientalists: Painter-Travellers* (Paris: ACR Edition, 1994), 4.

> because of its Arab past, and Venice, because of its historical connections with Constantinople, were viewed by many as the gateway to the Orient.[95]

It can be indicated from this quote that what we consider 'the Orient' to be – referring to the depiction of the Near East - was actually not depicted in the early Oriental paintings because these countries were perceived as 'Far East' for Westerners at the time. The rise of interest on the Middle East in the West led to the reappraisal of the *Nights* in the Middle Eastern world itself. This led to the publication of the *Nights* in the Arabic text; which, in turn, stimulated new translations in the Western languages causing a much broader influence on the art of the *Nights*.

Figure 6: 'Aladdin, or the Wonderful Lamp' by Adolphe Lalauze (1881).

This change can be seen immediately by examining the painting by Adolphe Lalauze, who was known as the illustrator of Richard Francis Burton's private edition (Figure 6).[96] Figure 6 is from one of the etchings for an edition of Galland's translation in 1881; it is an illustration of the tale 'Aladdin, or the Wonderful Lamp.' Subsequently, his illustrations were repeatedly adopted for other editions, for example in J.Scott's 1883 edition and in John Payne's 1889.[97] In the background of this

[95] Ibid., 4.

[96] Captain Sir Richard Francis Burton was an English geographer, writer, soldier, Orientalist, and diplomat. His translation of *A Thousand and One Nights* was a subscribers-only edition. The stories collected were often sexual in content and were considered pornography at the time of publication.

[97] Kobayashi, 178.

painting, as is the case with Orientalist oil paintings, Spanish and Moorish architecture is depicted.[98] To illustrate the past, Lalauze put European and Greek artifacts such as the Corinthian columns in the background. What is more, the whole setting in the back is gothic. There is also a taste of chinoiserie in the dress of the woman. This significant piece is an essentially huge mash up of medieval European, Greek, and Islamic.

The door is also fascinating. It is decorated with faux 'Moorish' writing, but viewers should notice about its shape. It could be seen as either a keyhole or a phallus. Viewing it as a keyhole, the shape implies the Arabic mystery or adventure is enclosed and the viewers are to discover the secret of the Arab world. Seeing it as a phallus, however, it could be expressing a sexual scene where the man is sexual aroused by the woman.

[98] For further information on Orientalist oil paintings, refer to Jennifer Meagher, "Orientalism in Nineteenth-Century Art" in Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000), http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/euor/hd_euor.htm/.

Figure 7: 'Aladdin, or the Wonderful Lamp' by Walter Crane (1875).

Figure 7 is also an illustration from the same tale in the *Nights* as Lalauze's. However, this is a colored lithograph. In 1875, Walter Crane made a picture book on 'Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves' and 'Aladdin, or the Wonderful Lamp.' According to the text, Aladdin was a Chinese boy and the story was set in China, but Crane's colored paintings with bold outlines were considerably influenced by Japanese wood cut prints especially by Hiroshige and the composition and technique was influenced by Japanese *Ukiyo-e* prints (Figure 8).[99] At the time, such confusion between Chinese and Japanese was found frequently in book illustrations, not only in the *Nights* but also in other texts. For example, if we look at Thomas Morten's illustrations for Jonathan Swift's

[99] Greg Smith and Sarah Hyde, eds., *Walter Crane 1845-1915: Artist, Designer and Socialist* (London: Lund Humphries, 1989), 78.

Gulliver's Travels, published in 1865, in the chapter 'A Voyage to Laputa' show a mixture of japanaiserie and chinoiserie (Figure 9).[100]

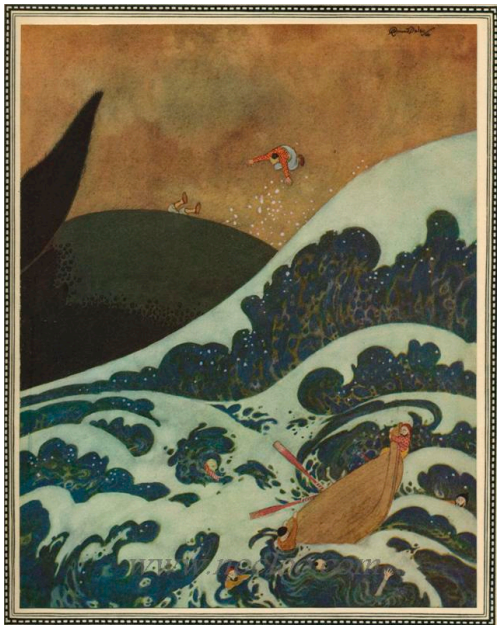

Figure 8: 'Man Overboard' by Edmund Dulac.

Figure 9: 'The Laputians' by Thomas Morten (1865).

With the emergence of the three-colored process and the full-colored offset printing, the early twentieth century saw the 'Golden Age of Fantastic Illustrations.'[101] Edmund Dulac, one of the representative illustrators of that period, contributed largely to the popularity of *A Thousand and One Nights* and had a strong influence on other illustrators.[102] Edmund Dulac and his followers referred to book paintings and skillfully turned them into their own illustrations. In many of Dulac's illustrations, traits of sixteenth century Iranian art could be seen. It is possible that Dulac had employed the works from the Safavid and Mughal dynasties to demonstrate Orientalism.

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[100] Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver's Travels into Several Remote Regions of the World,* with explanatory notes and a life of the author, by John Francis Waller, illus. Thomas Morten (Londn: Cassel, Petter and Galpin, 1865).

[101] Kobayashi 183.

[102] Edmund Dulac was a French-born, British illustrator. His *The Stories from the Arabian Nights* published by Hodder & Stoughton was a huge success; see Laurence Hausman, *The Stories from the Arabian Nights* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1907).

One of the illustrators influenced by Edmund Dulac was Léon Carré, a French illustrator. Kobayashi suggests in her essay that Carré's style, including composition, flat coloring, perspective, and modeling look conspicuously similar to Dulac's work (Figure 10).[103]

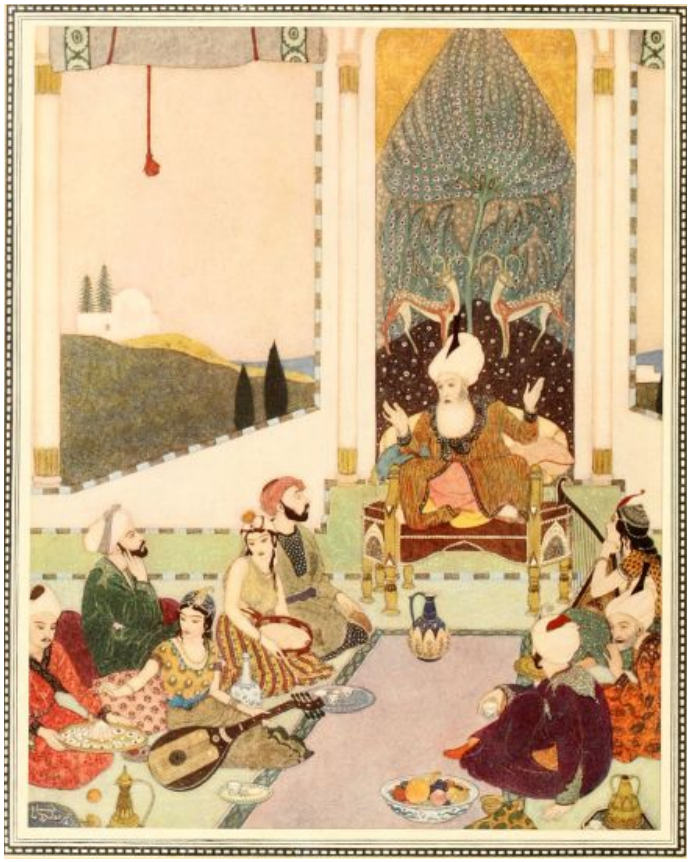

Figure 10: 'Sindbad the Sailor", by Edmund Dulac (1914).

[103] Kobayashi, 184.

Now, we will turn to Carré's illustration (Figure 11). It is true about the perspective, but Carré is more deliberate about the composition. In Figure 11, it depicts a section in the king's room. It is seen from a perspective slightly above the scene, "that of someone who is excluded from the diegetic space."[104] The whole scene has a sensuous enjoyment and consumption to it. Sumi makes detailed observation about Carré's illustration:

Figure 11: 'Scheherazade and King Shahrayar' by Léon Carré (1926-32).

> 'Night' is indicated by the dark starry sky and the shadowy luxurious plants seen through the wide columned opening in the wall, and by the lamp hanging from the unseen ceiling as well as two huge candles in large ornamented candlesticks placed on the floor […] The king, whose rather effeminate bearing suggests a

[104] Akiko Motoyoshi Sumi, "Body, Voice and Gaze: Text and Illustration in the Frame Story of the *Thousand and One Nights*" in *The Arabian Nights and Orientalism,* 199.

> lifestyle of pleasure and dissipation, casually holds a glass in one hand and a rose in the other.[105]

What is significant about Figure 11 is that there is a distance between Scheherazade and the king; it shows no intimacy between these two. To enter Scheherazade's space, the king has to cross the line of the phalluses and get past the bowl of fruit. As Fedwa Malti-Douglas has argued, the king's desire for sexual satisfaction begins to be transformed into the desire for story listening. If the sexual motive is considered masculine, the substitution of storytelling introduces a motive suggesting a more feminine approach.[106] Therefore, Figure 11 seems to symbolize the king's strong sexual desire, but instead, it could actually interpreted as the desire of hearing stories told. With the support of many decorated dress and colors, the encounter of Scheherazade and the king is dominated by the king, but the highly calculated composition directs all attention to the young woman on the right. Her posture, her lowered and inward-looking eyes express an 'effortless power.' This power, moreover, is independent of erotic appeal because the women are covered fully. This illustration shows Scheherazade's domination by storytelling.

What I have offered in this section is a review – interpretation – of the visual arts associated with *A Thousand and One Nights.* It is obvious that the interpretation of these illustrations may vary with each reader. After the World War II, artists of all fields, such as cinema, theater, comic books, and animations have had influence from the *Nights.* Many book illustrations still continue to create their own world of *A Thousand*

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[105] Ibid.
[106] Fedwa Malti-Douglas, *Woman's Body, Woman's Word: Gender and Discourse in Arabo-Islamic Writing* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University, 1991), 21.

and One Nights, for example, Ludmila Zeman and Margaret Early.[107] Their works have a close relationship with traditional Islamic paintings. For example, the image 'Sindbad Saved a Life by Foreign Men' shows that this work was inspired from a traditional Persian illustration in a manuscript made in the fourteenth century.[108][109] As for Early's *Ali Baba,* she adopted typical Persian paintings in which we could recognize flat coloring, usage of patterns and compositions common in Islamic art.[110]

Going beyond the text, modern artists have freely created their own visual world, inspired by the *Nights* and Islamic culture in brand-new media, including a set of artistic playing cards and 3D computer animated films.[111]

Figure 12: 'Magic: The Gathering' cards (1993).
Left: "Bird Maiden" by Kaja Foglio Center: "Bazaar of Baghdad" by Jeff A. Menges Right: "Shahrazad" by Kaja Foglio

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[107] For Ludmila Zeman's *A Thousand and One Nights,* see Ludmila Zeman, *Sindbad's Secret* (Reno, NV: Tundra, 2003). For Margaret Early's *Nights,* see Margaret Early, *Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves* (Port Melbourne : Lothian, 1998).

[108] Zeman, 22.

[109] For traditional Persian art, see Oleg Grabar and Sheila Canby, eds., *Epic Images and Contemporary History: The Illustrations f the Great Mongol Shahmnama* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1980), 20-21.

[110] Kobayashi, 187.

[111] In 1993, playing cards called 'Magic: The Gathering' was released. In 1999, the Japanese artist Yoshitaka Amano supervised the first 3D/2D animated short film, *1001 Nights.*

3-3. Relation of the Illustrations to the Text

In the previous chapter, I focused on female characters in the tales of *A Thousand and One Nights.* It revealed a feministic approach to the text and showed how women were, in fact, active and intelligent in these tales. Therefore the next question is; did artist view these women in the same way as they appear in the text? The chief reason why *A Thousand and One Nights* is viewed as erotic and mysterious originates from all the illustrations. In this section, we will go through each illustrations discussed in Chapter 3-2, strictly looking at the depiction of women.

I. Frontpiece Illustration for Galland's Translation (1709) – Figure 4

As it is discussed earlier, Figure 4 is one of the first illustrations for the *Nights.* Here, Scheherazade and the woman beside her, probably a maid, have their hair in a bun. They are fully dressed, have similar faces, the bodies are covered. From these observations, it seems like the artist did not care too much about the depiction of women. This makes sense because the earliest version of the *Nights* did not emphasize eroticism in the tales. The tales were rather considered as fairy tales from afar off world.

II. Illustration by Pierre-Clement Marillier – Figure 5

The idea is similar with the previous illustration (Figure 4) however, in Figure 5, the distance between the young man with an instrument and the young lady is close. They appear to be in an intimate relationship. The placement of the young man is

slightly higher than the young lady, so this provides an impression of the lady's obedience. There are two women, whose faces are covered with veils, behind the man, and they are placed at the corner of the illustration. In the text, female characters, even the maids, are active contributors, but in illustrations they are often in subordinate positions.

III. 'Aladdin, or the Wonderful Lamp' by Adolphe Lalauze – Figure 6

Richard Francis Burton is the one that spread the image of the erotic *Nights.* When he translated the text, he highlighted the sexual context, turning the *Nights* into a more pornographic literature. In Figure 6, the viewers' eyes draw to the two figures in the center first. The hidden face and the posture of the woman suggest secrecy and seduction. After this, turn the eyes to the dark shadow of the door in the background. As discussed earlier, this could be seen both as a keyhole and as a phallus. The shadow contributes to the entire image as the symbol for eroticism and exclusion. In the tale 'Aladdin, or the Wonderful Lamp,' there is no such reference of 'a door'. Figure 6 is produced entirely from the artist's imagination. Perhaps Lalauze attempted to eroticize the image to match the pornographic version of *A Thousand and One Nights.*

IV. 'Aladdin, or the Wonderful Lamp' by Walter Crane – Figure 7

Even though the setting of the tale 'Alladin, or the Wonderful Lamp' is in China, in Figure 7, the girl, probably Badroulbadour the princess, wears a Japanese

kimono-like robe and a Japanese hairdo. She is completely leaning against and holding on to Aladdin. Her posture suggests her dependence and fragility. Furthermore, if looking closely at her robe, the viewer would notice that her robe is low-necked. This is not honest to the text because the text does not comment on Badroulbadour's dresses at all. Therefore, her robe, again like the others, is created by the artist's imagination.

V. 'Sindbad the Sailor' by Edmund Dulac – Figure 10

In Figure 10, women are all sitting beside men. The center of attention no doubt goes to the king – placed in the middle of the frame and above everyone else. It is interesting that the women are all looking at men. It possibly denotes for women's obedience. Looking closely, one woman has an instrument in her hands. What is suggested here is that women are simply subordinates and are sources of entertainment. Figure 10, therefore, does not express the actual tales. As mentioned earlier, female characters in *A Thousand and One Nights* rarely have minor roles; they are rather active participants in the tales. Dulac is one of the famous illustrators for *A Thousand and One Nights*, but he, like many others, neglected the hint of women power within the beautiful story.

VI. 'Scheherazade and King Shahrayar' by Léon Carré – Figure 11

Figure 11, unlike the other illustrations discussed in this section, displays the actual context of the 'First Night' of the *Nights.* The distance between the king and

Scheherazade, the composition of the illustration, and Scheherazade's posture all support Scheherazade's power. She is fully covered in a robe and has modest accessories. The color blue of her robe highlights her intelligence, and there is no hint of eroticism.[112]

The visual representations of *A Thousand and One Nights* are highly influenced by the artists' taste. These artists associated the Middle East as erotic and mysterious, thus, the image of the *Nights* was constructed through these artists. Insofar, I have not discussed the reception of the *Nights* in the recent period. Next chapter will focus on the reception in the modern world. The *Nights* is such an ancient piece of literature, however, it is still a popular research subject today. Marina Warner, as mentioned earlier, chose to study the *Nights*. Next chapter will examine the modern reception, including Warner's publication and Japanese adaptation of the *Nights.*

[112] To learn more about color symbolisms, see "Color Symbolism," J.L. Morton, http://www.colormatters.com/color-symbolism (December, 14, 2014).

CHAPTER 4
IN THEATER

It is striking that *A Thousand and One Nights* is still studied after 300 years. The extraordinary and vigorous surge of renewed interest in the *Nights* began in 1980s and early 90s with the work of scholars such as Feial Ghazoul (*Nocturnal Poetics*), Sandra Naddaf (*Arabesque*), Peter Caracciolo (*The Arabian Nights in English Literature*), a collection of essays by Abdelfattah Kilito and Robert Irwin's indispensable *The Arabian Nights: A Companion.*[113] What allured these modern scholars to study *A Thousand and One Nights*? These scholars have contributed so much to deepen the world of the *Nights* and "stimulated appetite for more inquiry."[114]

The latest study of the *Nights* was produced by Marina Warner. She is a professor of Literature, Film and Theatre Studies at the University of Essex and a distinguished writer of fiction, criticism, and history. She has published books referring to the *Nights* in quick succession: *Scheherazade's Children – Global Encounters with the* Arabian Nights in 2012 and *Stranger Magic: Charmed States and the* Arabian Nights in 2013.[115] She makes a comment on the art of the *Nights* structure in *Stranger Magic:*

> The stories do not obey internal rules about character, motive, verisimilitude or plot structure; they do not easily fit existing theories about fiction, history or psychology. Their excesses of emotion, desultory and extreme violence, twists of fate and

[113] Warner, *Scheherazade's Children,* 6.
[114] Ibid.
[115] *From the Beast to the Blonde – On Fairy Tales and Their Tellers* also makes a few references to *A Thousand and One Nights.* See, Warner, *From the Beast to the Blonde.*

> improbable outcomes, seem to flout the generally accepted order of things. This makes them exciting, alarming and compelling.[116]

From here it is obvious that the *Nights'* unexpected narrative and context fascinate not only the readers but also scholars. The following section will look closely at Warner's publications on *A Thousand and One Nights* to discover what she, the modern scholar, has to say about the *Nights.*

The Latter half of this chapter will examine the adaptations of the *Nights* and discover how it is treated among the world today. It is surprising that the *Nights* has continuous influences on such diverse art forms. However, as it is the same with the illustrations, the theatrical adaptations of the *Nights* are highly stereotypical. In addition to the discussion of theatrical performances in Europe, we will turn our eyes onto Japan and reveal how Japan treated *A Thousand and One Nights* and how it adopted the different kinds of preforming arts in Japan. Although its relation to the Middle East seems weak, Japan has contributed largely to broaden the *Nights*-inspired art.

4-1. Marina Warner's Works

In her quick succession of publications on *A Thousand and One Nights,* Marina Warner has surprisingly left out her feminist perception.[117] In *Scheherazade's Children,* she edited a collection of essays on the *Nights.* It appears to be that she has referred to this antique literature as pure 'cultural artifact':

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[116] Warner, *Stranger Magic,* 10.
[117] On her two publications, refer to p.16.

> Literature is one of the most speaking of cultural artifacts since, unlike coffee, glass, brass, or velvet, it has a voice – or rather many voices. The book called *Alf layla wa-layla* in Arabic, and known in the Anglophone world as the *Arabian Nights,* is the prime example of such a polyphonic, traveling text, which leaped over borders of creed, nation, allegiance, its stories spreading irrepressibly, immediately after they were first translated into French and English at the beginning of the eighteenth century.[118]

It is patent that the *Nights* is significant both historically and culturally. This is why the application of many values and perceptions becomes interesting. Warner mentions about the aim of *Scheherazade's Children*:

> To illuminate the dense growth in which political and ideology attitudes are entangled … [the *Nights]* seemed a place to start to look at this long entanglement from a different perspective.[119]

This 'different perspective' mentioned in the quote is achieved by her subsequent book, *Stranger Magic.* She focuses on the use of 'magic' within the tales of the *Nights. Stranger Magic* examines the profound impact on the West, and the progressive eroticization of magic. Marina Warner suggests that all the influences on art lie in the tales' magic – that the magic stimulates the creative activity of imagination. In the introduction, she declares:

> Overlooked and yet pervasive, magical thinking is structural to naming and language, ideas of self and property, and to visual

[118] Warner, *Scheherazade's Children,* 3.
[119] Ibid.

> representation, as the literature of the imagination has long grasped and conveyed.[120]

What Warner has offered in *Stranger Magic* is selective tales from the *Nights* followed with her views. She proposes the magical tradition, so long denied by the West, underlines modernity's most characteristic developments, including the charmed states of brand-name luxury goods, paper money, and psychoanalytic dram interpretation.[121]

Marina Warner's approach to *A Thousand and One Nights* is unique. With Harry Potter and such influences of magic on the modern world, concentrating on the magical thinking could be appropriate and timely. However, it is a pity she did not choose to analyze the tales with feminist point of view. She only makes a few references to feminism. It would have been a great insight for the researches on *A Thousand and One Nights* if she has observed the tales from a modern feminist point of view.

In both *Scheherazade's Children* and *Stranger Magic,* the *Nights'* influence on the staging and play performances are emphasized. Warner argues that their popularity during the Enlightenment was no accident: dreams, projections, and fantasies are essential to making the leap beyond the frontiers of accepted knowledge into new scientific and literary spheres.[122] The following section will uncover the extensive contributions the *Nights* have made to performing arts in Europe.

4-2. Influence to the Theatrical Performances

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[120] Warner, *Stranger Magic,* 27.
[121] On modern paper money, see Warner, *Stranger Magic,* 252-261.
[122] Warner, *Stranger Magic,* 20.

The wave of Orientalism popularity after Galland's translation of *A Thousand and One Nights* surely did not miss the performing arts. As early as 1788 there was a production in London of *Aladdin* intertwined with the Harlequinade.[123][124] The British pantomime adopted the *Nights* since the earliest days, and now it is considered to be one of the classic pantomime stories. One of the reasons for the *Nights* to become a popular pantomime story is, as Karl Sabbagh the Palestinian-British writer suggest in "The *Arabian Nights* in British Pantomime" in *Scheherazade's Children*, because the tales shared many elements of European fairy tales – magic, villains and heroes, switches of fortune and so on.[125] In his essay, Karl Sabbagh also states two interesting points in the way the *Nights* stories became part of the convent popular drama repertoire:

> One is that only three stories seem to have become incorporate in [the convent popular drama repertoire]; the other is that once they were part of the repertoire they were both Anglicized and popularized in the same way as every other fairy story or folk tale, grist to the mill whose end product was broad humor, outrageous costumes, magical sets, and typically English wordplay.[126]

The three stories that Sabbagh mentions in the quote are 'Aladdin,' 'Ali Baba' and 'Sinbad.' Looking closely, these three provide good examples of how British culture responds to the East. In these plays, the stage sets and costumes are very stereotypical and overly Oriental: Eastern arches and towers, or desert landscapes and camel; evil-looking moustaches and beards; beautiful dancing girls performing belly dances. In

[123] John O'Keefffe, *Aladdin,* Theatre Royal, Convent Garden; see Marina Warner, *Fantastic metamorphoses, Other Worlds: Ways of Telling the Self* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2002), 144-50.
[124] Harlequinade is a British comic theatrical genre. It is part of a pantomime in which the harlequin and clown play the principal parts.
[125] Karl Sabbagh, "The *Arabian Nights* in British Pantomime" in *Scheherazade's Children,* 268.
[126] Ibid., 269.

Orientalism Edward Said famously proposed "the idea of representation is a theatrical one […] The Orient is the Stage on which the whole East is confined."[127] Similar to Said's idea, the Syrian cultural historian Rana Kabbani makes a comment in her *Europe's Myth of Orient:* "The Orient is the malleable theatrical space in which can be played out the egocentric fantasies of Romanticism."[128]

Both Said and Kabbani emphasize the fakeness in those theatrical performances of *A Thousand and One Nights*. What is surprising is that this trend remains somewhat the same today. Sabbagh remarks on the character names in a recent pantomime:

> In a recent pantomime of 'Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves,' a more restrained approach to naming the characters still produced the following; Heelam, a cobbler; Mustapha Dubbul, a fishmonger; and Mustapha Nutha, a greengrocer (English popular culture never tires of the variation that can be wrought on the Arab name Mustafa). 'Ali' is another rich source, leading, for example to Ali Whey and Back Ali, in a production of 'Sinbad.'[129]

It is arguable that the character names are named this way to clarify they are undoubtedly Arabian names. However, this indicates that those play writers simply have no interests in making the *Nights'* plays into performances true to the text. If they concerned the original tales in the *Nights*, they would have employed different names, not just names beginning with 'Ali.'

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[127] Said, 63.
[128] Rana Kabbani, *Europe's Myths of Orient: Devise and Rule* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1886), 11.
[129] Sabbagh, 271.

All this time, this report focused on the relationship between *A Thousand and One Nights* and Europe. However, in discussing the theatrical performances of the *Nights,* Japan cannot be forgotten. From the early Kabuki to modern Takarazuka performances, Japan has adopted the tales ever since they appeared in the Meiji period (1868 – 1912). The last section of this report will turn to Japan and its relation to *A Thousand and One Nights,* or moreover, the Middle East. As it turns out, the introduction of the *Nights* to Japan caused a great impact in Japanese performing arts.

4-3. *A Thousand and One Nights* in Japanese Culture

Ever since *A Thousand and One Nights* appeared in Japan, it has continued to be the source of inspiration for writers, poets, playwrights, artists, and so on. The tales were first translated into Japanese in 1875, under the title *Strange and Marvelous Stories from Arabia* (*Kaikan kyoki Arabia monogatari*), by Hideki Nagamine, who was a teacher at the Naval Academy.[130] His intention in translating the *Nights* was not to introduce Middle Eastern cluture to Japanese readers but to spread information about other countries of the world so that Japan would not be colonized by European powers.[131] His version of the *Nights* was mainly based on Antoine Galland's edition through an abridged English translation. He considered the *Nights* as a part of Western culture. Additionally, Nishio offers interesting information; "Nagamine was much concerned with the education of women."[132] It is curious to see how Nagamine

[130] Hideki Nagamine, *Kaikan kyoki Arabia monogatari* [Stranger and Marvelous Stories from Arabia], 2 vols. (Tokyo: Keishokaku, 1875).
[131] Nagamine's other translations include Lord Chesterfield's *Letters to His Son* and E. F. Haskell's *The Housekeeper's Encyclopedia.*
[132] Tetsuo Nishio, "The Takarazuka Revue and "Arabia" in Japan" in *Scheherazade's Children,* 348.

considered the introduction of Western novels, including *A Thousand and One Nights,* would form part of women's education into the new era.

After Nagamine, the *Nights* was translated repeatedly. Adaptations of the *Nights* can be found even in traditional Japanese performing arts, such as kyogen, kabuki, rakugo, and kodan.[133] Yamanaka, Associate Professor of Department of Cultural Research in National Museum of Ethology, proposes the reason why the *Nights* became popular adaptations in Japan:

> Adaptations of [*A Thousand and One Nights*] on the stage go hand in hand with the modernization of theater and importation of Western themes into traditional forms of Japanese theater.[134]

'The Improvement of Theater Movement (Engeki kairyo undo)' was initiated in 1886 to make traditional theater into something suitable for both upper and middle class audience of a 'civilized nation' Japan was striving to be.[135] Therefore, the *Nights* arrived in a perfect timing; what is remarkable about these Arabian playwrights in Japan is that they were considered to be part of the Western intellectual repertoire, not Middle Eastern or Oriental, alongside Shakespeare.

When speaking of theater performances in Japan, the Takarazuka Revue Company cannot be ignored. In fact, it was one of the first troupes to introduce a repertoire of *Nights*-inspired performances to Japan and the only troupe to still perform them today. The distinguishing feature of Takarazuka is that it is an all-female troupe.

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[133] Yuriko Yamanaka, "The *Arabian Nights* in Traditional Japanese Performing Arts," in *Scheherazade's Children,* 274.
[134] Ibid., 276.
[135] Ibid.

The *Nights*-inspired productions by Tkarazuka perfectly represent the two-sided interpretations of the *Nights.* One side is that the *Nights* is too erotic, so it has to be performed by all-female actresses; another side is that it is a theme conservative enough for all-female actresses to perform. Nishio notes in his essay "The Takarazuka Revue and the Fantasy of "Arabia" in Japan":

> Throughout the history of the Takarazuka Revue Company, it has produced many performances whose story lines were composed around themes found in the *Arabian Nights* or historical events relating to Middle Eastern affairs in one way or another […] Most of the *Arabian Nights* revues became commercial successes.[136]

The good example that shows the popularity of *Nights*-inspired productions is the "Arabian Night (Arabian naito)," which was first presented in 1950. Kobayashi, the founder of Takarazuka wrote in his diary about this long-run production,

> The revue of ["Arabian Night (Arabian naito),"] is very amusing […] Most middle-aged or elderly people remarked that this was a masterpiece more wonderful than could be found anywhere recently.[137]

In Takarazuka's *Nights,* the cultural background of the Middle East that is necessary to understand the literature itself tends to be omitted in order to concentrate on entertainment. Similar to the European theatrical performances, the theatrical performances in Japan represented the land of Arabia in dreamlike fantasy. Nishio

[136] Nishio, *Scheherazade's Children,* 355.
[137] Kobayashi, Ichizo. *Kobayashi Ichizo Nikki* [Diary of Ichizo Kobayashi] 3vols. (Osaka: Hankyu dentetsu, 1991), 3:21 (entry for 12 August 1950).

observes the Japanese view of the Middle East as a world far beyond Europe in terms of a modernized or westernized worldview.

4-4. A Window on the Middle East

The historical relationship between Japan and the Middle East was severely limited due to the great distance between the two. Japan only gained information about the Middle East form Europe. Looking back on history, such thin relation with the Middle East are understandable; First, China had a national border with the Abbasid dynasty; second, both the Portuguese and Spanish were hostile towards the Islam after the Reconquista.

Because the early translations of *A Thousand and One Nights* were abridged or English translated versions, Japan had no choice but to view the world of the *Nights* from a western point of view. As a consequence, it had come to be seen as a world of fantasy without any sense of reality. Nishio remarks, "the *Nights,* which was widely read after the Meiji Era, reinforced the imaginary Middle East as a Fantastic world."[138] It should be noted here that although the Japanese people viewed the *Nights* from a western perspective, it has never played a role as a literary work containing ethnographic references to real life in the Middle East – the *Nights* has been treated as pure literature or entertainment for so long.

[138] Nishio, *Scheherazade's Children,* 351.

Conclusion

LEAVING THE EUROPEAN RECEPTION

In 2004, commemorating the tercentenary of the translation of *A Thousand and One Nights* by Galland, the National Museum of Ethnology in Osaka held a special exhibition on the *Nights*.[139] The museum commissioned professional storytellers to perform the tales from the *Nights.* Until today, the *Nights* is appreciated and influential. Interaction and events associated with the *Nights* are still held in Japan today. After all these years, Japan has finally started to look at the Middle East. Recently, in Takarazuka when performing a revue concerning the Middle East, the company has started to ask the advice of specialists in Middle Eastern culture.[140] This is a good trend for Japan – finally taking effort to understand the Middle East.

Because it stimulates appetite for more inquiry, researches on the *Nights* are becoming popular and popular. In fact, the earliest known collection of Arabic stories, *Tales of the Marvelous and News of the Strange* has just been published in November 2014. Malcolm C. Lyons, the author of this book, has made an interesting point about the description of women.[141] "Medieval Arab fiction had no kind of monopoly on misogyny. There are at least as many examples in medieval European poetry and stories."[142] According to *Valerius's Dissuasion Against Marriage* by Walter Map,

> No matter what they intend, with a woman the result is always the same. When she wants to do him harm – and that is nearly always

[139] The pamphlet of this exhibition is available in Japanese only; Tetsuo, Nichio, ed., *Arabian Night Museum* [Arabian naito hakubutsukan] (Osaka: Toho shuppan, 2004).
[140] On details about the recent adaptation of *A Thousand and One Nights in Takarazuka, see* Nishio, *Scheherazade's Children,* 358.
[141] Malcolm C. Lyons is also the translator of the Penguin Classics edition of the complete *Arabian Nights.* He was Sir Thomas Adams's Professor of Arabic at Cambridge University and is a life fellow of Pembroke College.
[142] Malcolm C. Lyons, *Tales of the Marvellous and News of the Strange* (London: Penguin Classics, 2014), xxiv.

> the case – she never fails. If by change she should want to do good, she still succeeds in doing harm.[143]

This is very similar with the description and reception of women in the *Nights.* Perhaps Galland and other European translators had their view on women from these existing stories and implicitly applied it when they were translating. These translators with their European point of view affected so much of the way one perceive the *Nights* today.

The exotic and mysterious aspect of the *Nights* is an achievement by the translators and artists. This report has attempted to uncover a different aspect of the *Nights* by examining the types of female characters that appear in the tales. The female characters in the tales are often deceitful; nonetheless, they are vigorous and intelligent.

The existing studies, including the works consulted in this report, come from all over the world with many interesting perspectives such as Orientalism, magic, fairy tales, and myths. However, it should be noted that most of those studies highlight the discussion of the eroticized fantasy of the Middle East; only a few scholars – almost none – closely examine the feminism in *A Thousand and One Nights*. As mentioned earlier, even Marina Warner the feminist writer chose to focus on magic instead of feminism.[144] In fact, this is the most obvious in Japanese researches on the *Nights*. In Japan, the research on the *Nights* and Orientalism is lively discussed instead.[145]

The idea of feminism has been made familiar to the Japanese public just recently. Thus, it is understandable that researches on the *Nights* from a feminist

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[143] Walter Map, quoted in Carolly Erickson, *The Medieval Vision: Essays in History and Perception* (New York: Oxford University, 1976), 198-9.
[144] Those scholars who criticize the *Nights* with feminist thinking are, unsurprisingly, the Arabian women.
[145] Refer to Nishio and Yamanaka's works.

perspective are thin in Japan. When examining animation/comic books or theatrical performances, Japanese scholars should look more closely at the depictions of female characters and feminism since the *Nights* is possibly one of the earliest feminist literatures.

There were terror attacks in Paris in January 7-9, 2015 as this report is being written.[146] Today the broadcast cannot ignore the events in the Middle East. It still seems like an issue far away among the Japanese public, but this stance has got to change. Japan, with its lack of resources, depends heavily on the oil from the Middle East. Thus it is important for Japanese people to start building a better understanding and relationship with the Middle East. *A Thousand and One Nights* shall be a great starter for this for it can have many interpretations.

A Thousand and One Nights is a literary work that should be reviewed from time to time, applying new values and idea to discover and appreciate its unobserved significances.

[146] On the Paris terror attacks, "Paris attacks: Millions rally for unity in France." *BBC*. http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-30765824 (January 14, 2015).

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