

- (21) Padriac Colum, p. 308 .
- (22) The Arabian Nights, Vol. I, p. 24 .
- (23) Davidson pp. 127- 28 .
- (24) Padriac Colum, p. 309 .
- (25) The Arabian Nights, Vol. VI, p. 69 .
- (26) Padriac Colum, p. 310 .
- (27) The Arabian Nights, Vol. VI. pp, 16- 17 .
- (28) Ibid., pp. 74- 75 .
- (29) Padriac Colum, p. 320 .
- (30) Ibid., 318 .
- (31) Ibid., p. 319 .
- (32) Ibid., p. 320 :
- (33) Edward Wagenknecht, p. 88 .
- (34) Stanley M. Vogel, Ella M. Murphy, American Literature, Vol. I.,  
(Boston, Mass, Students Outlines Company, 1961), pp. 76- 77 .
- (35) Padriac Colum, p. 312 .

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- ٩- رساى ، جان ، ادكار الن بو ، نصوص مختارة ، ترجمة كميل قيصير داغر ، بغداد ، ١٩٨٥ .
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- ١١- سنكلر ، ديفد ، ادكار الن بو ، ترجمة سلامة حجاوي ، دار الرشيد ، بغداد ، ١٩ .
12. Wagenknecht, Edward, Edgar Allan Poe : The Man Behind the Legend, New York, 1963 .

## Notes

- (1) Edward H. Davidson, *Poe: A Critical Study*, (Cambridge, 1964) pp. 4-10 and pp. 13-27 .
- See also : Edward Wagenknecht, *Edgar Allan Poe : The Man Behind the Legend*, (New York, 1963), p. 142 .
- (2) Among the Ameican writers who fell under the spell of the East and were influenced by its culture were : Washington Irving (1783- 1859) who wrote some good oriental works such as *The Alhambra*, *Mohamet and his Successors*, and *Rip Van Winkle* . These tales contain many oriental borrowings especially from *The Arabian Nights* . Mark Twain also fell under the spell of the East. The Eastern influence is best reflected in his tales *Huckleberry Finn* in which he describes Henry VIII as king Shahrayar and his cruelty towards women. See :
- داود سلوم ، دراسات في الادب المقارن ، دار الحرية ، بغداد ، ١٩٨٤ ، ص ٥٧-٥٨ .
- (٣) جان رساو ، ادكار الز بو : نصوص مختارة ، ترجمة كامل قيصير داغر ، بغداد ، ١٩٨٥ ، ص ١٥ .
- (٤) ديفيد سنكلز ، ادكار الز بو : ترجمة سلامة حجابوي ، دار الرشيد ، بغداد ، ١٩٧٤ ، ص ٢٥٤ .
- (5) Philip Van Doren Stern, ed. *Edgar Alan Poe*, (Penguins Books, Kingsport Press, Inc. Kingsport, Tennessee, 1979), p. XIX .
- (6) Richard Beal Davis, ed. *Chiver's Life of Poe*, (New York, 1952), pp. 44-45 .
- (7) For more dtails see : Padriac Colum, introd. *Poe's Tales of Mystery and Imagination*, (London,1968), pp.25- 26 .
- (8) *Ibid*, p. 364 .
- (9) *Ibid*, pp. 243- 258 .
- (10) Edward Wagenkmech, p. 127 .
- (11) *Ibid*.
- (12) *Ibid* .
- (13) See Davidson, pp. 4- 10 .
- (14) *The Arabian Nights*, Vol. I,p. 4 .
- Since the first English translation of *The Arabian Nights* is not available to me , therefore , my quotations of *The Arabian Nights* are taken from Burton's translation,
- (15) Padriac Colum, p. 307 .
- (16) Mia I, Gerhardt, *The Art of Story - Telling*, (Leiden: H.J.Brill, 1963), p. 397 .
- (17) *The Arabian Nights*, Vol. I, p. 15 .
- (18) padriac Colum, p. 308 .
- (19) *Ibid.*, pp. 307- 308 .
- (20) *The Arabian Nights*, Vol. I, p. 15 :

also, as Edward Wagenkecht maintains, shuddered before the potentiality of gadgets of destruction, and he saw them destroying the beauty and raising human beings into things. (33) Therefore, he employs oriental themes and characters taken from *The Arabian Nights* to criticize some evils of his time. So Sinbad and Scheherazad of Poe's tale, who stand for Poe himself, (34) report, for example, the disadvantages of one of the horrible discoveries of Poe's time, namely a warship. Thus when Sinbad asks his companion what kind of a monster this invention is, the porter answers:

It was a cruel demon, with bowles of sulphur and blood of fire, created by evil genii as the means of inflicting misery upon mankind. (35)

Moreover, Poe, through these oriental elements, wants to tell us that the realistic side of this age is even more fantastic and stronger than the imaginary one of an earlier one. And killing Scheherazad suggests his own dissatisfaction with his own day. Therefore, these elements are used for purposeful aims namely to convey his own ideas but in a general frame which is really exotic to the European.

To sum up, Poe responded to the orient and was fascinated by its exoticism and more by its literature. His interest in the Orient stems partly from financial considerations since the publication of oriental tales provided him with money he needed, and partly from his desire to exploit the strange exoticism and remoteness of the Orient to create effect. Poe's knowledge of the Orient did not come from personal experience but from verbal means, through reading some oriental tales such as *The Arabian Nights*, *The Kuran*, and some pseudo-oriental tales such as Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, Thomas Moore's *LaLa Rokh* and Johnson's *Rasselas*.

His interest in the Orient is clearly expressed in many of his poems and tales such as "Tamerlane", "Al-Aaraf", "The Thousandand Second Tale of Scheherazad", "Ms Found in a Bottle" and other poems and tales. Together these poems and tales present a comprehensive image of the Orient as seen by Poe. In "The Thousandand - Second Tale of Scheherazad" appear Poe's borrowings from one of the major sources, *The Arabian Nights*. In comparing Poe's tale and some tales of *The Arabian Nights*, we will find that Poe's indebtedness extends to more than the names of his characters. In "The Thousand -and- the Second Tale of Scheherazad", Poe borrows the theme, names of his characters and setting from *The Arabian Nights*. Meanwhile Poe makes many modifications, he omits some details and adds others which seem to serve his purposes.

Finally, the similarities between Poe's tale and *The Arabian Nights* prove that Poe succeeded in creating by his tale an effect similar to that produced by *The Arabian Nights* tales. Strange exoticism is perhaps the most vivid impression his story leaves upon the mind of his reader.

I resumed my former life in all possible joyance and enjoyment ... I turned sometimes into the solace and satisfaction till my soul began once to long to sail and see foreign countries ... and hear new things. (25)

Similarly, Sinbad, the adventurous hero of Poe's tale, gives reasons entirely akin to those given by the hero of *The Arabian Nights* :

After enjoying many years of tranquility at home I became possessed with a desire of visiting foreign countries . I packed some bundles of such merchandise ... went to the shore, to await the arrival of any chance vessel that might convey me ... into some region which I had not as yet explored . (26)

One more common point between Poe's tale and *The Arabian Nights* tales is that Sinbad of Arabian tales, in every voyage, sees different kinds of people, visits many foreign countries and meets strange and supernatural creatures. On these remote places, Sinbad reports the outlook of his own time . In "The Second Voyage", for instance, he sees a huge bird, Rukh whose wings hide the sun and darken the sky .(27) While in "The Seventh Voyage" he meets strange inhabitants of a city who had wings and fly, and make a trip on one of them .(28) In a similar manner, Poe's Sinbad aboard a modern steamer tells his adventures in the nineteenth century . Like *The Arabian Nights* Sinbad, he reports the incredible discoveries and inventions of Poe's time . He, for instance, visits an island where the forests were made of solid stones ."(29) He, also, sees "a fowl ... which ... was higher than the biggest of the domes upon the Caliph Seraglio . This terrible bird had no head . "(30) In another region he sees a huge horse whose bones were iron and whose blood was boiling water ... He had black stones for his usual food" . (31) This description is a symbol of the modern train at Poe's time . In another country, he describes one of the wonderful inventions of Poe's world :

Another of these magic constructed a creature that put to shame even the genius of him who made it; for so great were its reasoning powers that , in a second, it performed calculations of so vast and extend that they would have required the united labour of fifty thousand fleshy men for a year .(32)

It is obvious that Poe is referring to one of the wonderful machine of his time, the calculating machine .

Although Poe was greatly fascinated by modern sciences and technology, he

and a black cat, I think) When the day broke, it so happened that this history was not altogether finished .... The next night there happened a similar accident with a similar result, and then the next, .. and again the next. (24)

Doing so does not mean that Poe was not aware of *The Arabian Nights* method of narration or that he is incapable of creating stories. However, Poe demonstrates his creativity and genius as a short story writer when he writes "The Eighth Voyage of Sinbad" into the modern world of Poe.

All these similarities prove Poe's borrowing from *The Arabian Nights*. But his story does not exactly correspond to the original story, for he alters some of its details. Yet, these changes are of less significance because what is more important to him is criticism of some evils of his time which are reflected by Scheherazad in "The Eighth Voyage of Sinbad".

Pleased with her success of the tales, Scheherazad foolishly decides to tell another story on the account of the eighth and most wonderful voyage of Sinbad. This story, it is possible to say, is based on *The Arabian Nights*, the seven voyages of Sinbad the sailor. The literary value of the tale lies in its theme and setting. Here is a summary of it :

After enjoying many years of tranquility at home Sinbad became strongly possessed by the idea of travelling by sea. Aboard a modern steamer, he visits many parts of the world and has many adventures. He reports the incredible discoveries and inventions of Poe's time.

This summary may help us to some extent to mark out the possible sources of the tale. It is probable to say, as the title of the tale indicates, that the major source is *The Arabian Nights*, particularly the seven voyages of Sinbad. In comparing "The Eighth Voyage of Sinbad" with any of these seven voyages of Sinbad of *The Arabian Nights*, we will find many points of similarities, and at the same time many differences .

One of the obvious similarities is that the name of the adventurous character of Poe's tale is of oriental origin. The name Sinbad is a conventional hero of many sea adventures namely, the seven adventures of Sinbad the sailor. In relation to this, both heroes of the tales tell their adventure directly to a person or group of persons. Sinbad of *The Arabian Nights* narrates his adventures to a group of listeners; while Poe's Sinbad tells his adventures to the Caliph, who listens attentively .

Apart from the similarity of their names, they have similar motives for their sea adventures. Sinbad of *The Arabian Nights* each time gives the following reasons for his sea adventures :

courageous and well educated. (18) In relation to this, they use their wit and deep insight to defend their womenfolk and redeem them. Thus Poe's Scheherazad, despite her father's objection and warning, makes a firm offer by declaring that :

She would either redeem the land from the depopularity tax upon its beauty, or perish in the attempt. She deposes her father, the Vazir, to make an offer to the king of her hand. It seems, little plot in her mind. (19)

This offer is originally made by Scheherazad of *The Arabian Nights* who had a similar cunning plan in her mind. She entreatingly says to her father :

I wish thou would give me in marriage to king Shahryar either I shall live or ransom for the virgin daughters of Moslems and the cause of their deliverance from his hand and time .(20)

One more close similarity is that Scheherazad in Poe's tale accepts to marry the king with the proviso that her sister should "occupy a couch near that of the royal pair to admit of easy conversation from bed to bed, and to awaken the good king." (21) Such details are originally found in "The Story of king Shahryar and his Brother" when Scheherazad agrees to marry king Shahryar on condition that her sister should take "her seat near the foot of the couch." (22)

On the whole, these points of affinities may be enough examples to prove that *The Arabian Nights* is the major source of Poe's tale. However, we should bear in mind that Poe did not take the source literally, but he elaborated the material to suit his purpose and mental condition. First, in *The Arabian Nights* tale Schehrazad succeeds in turning the king from his blood - thirsty custom, and save her womenfolk. But Poe changes this end of the original story and brings it to a tragic conclusion as Schehrazad is killed at the end of eighth voyage of Sinbad. "Poe's motive for doing this is still unknown, yet we may accept Edward H. Davidson's justification. Davidson states that it is Poe's habit to bring all his women characters to such conclusion, they die or get killed. (23)

Another essential modification made by Poe is that the narrator of his tale, Scheherazad does not tell in detail any one of the thousand and the second tales. This is exactly opposite to what the narrator of *The Arabian Nights* does, who tells stories for one thousand and one nights Poe who is writing a short story uses his creative genius and employs authorial intrusion to give the impression that Scheherazad has narrated one thousand and two tales, he says :

On the night of the wedding she... managed to awaken him, I say...by the profound interest of a story (about a rat

A certain monarch who is a jealous husband makes a vow to marry each night a virgin and execute her next morning. He is interrupted by a vazir's daughter whose name is Scheherazad. To save her womenfolks, she marries the king. She provides that her sister, Dunyazad should occupy a bed near that of the royal pair. She begins to tell stories for one thousand and one night. Finally, she manages to make the king forget his vow and tame him .

A comparison between the frame tale of *The Arabian Nights* tale, "The Story of King Shahrayar and his Brother" and Poe's tale "The Thousand - and - Second Tale of Scheherazad" confirms Poe's indebtedness to *The Arabian Nights*, and at the same time shows many aspects of similarities and differences. One of the obvious similarities is that the general outline and the theme of Poe's tale resemble beyond any doubt, the general outline and the theme of "The Story of King Shahrayar and his Brother". Both tales hinge upon a narrative of a king whose prejudice against women leads him to make a vow to have revenge upon them by wedding a virgin each night and have her killed next morning. It is worth mentioning that Poe does not imitate the whole original story, but he makes some purposeful modifications of some details. He, for instance, alters the reason of the king's hostile attitude towards women. In the original story of *The Arabian Nights* the king's hatred and vow are justified by the shameful conduct of his fair wife when he surprises her sleeping on his bed embracing with both arms a black cook of a loathsome aspect and foul with kitchen grease and grim. (14) Poe, who is writing a short story, omits much of these details and gives a concise account of the king's hostility towards women saying that "He was jealous of his queen" (15).

Another essential analogy between the two tales is that both are frame tales. "The Story of Schahrayar and his Brother" is a frame tale for a longer collection of tales. It is a time gaining frame which serves notably to string together a longer collection of stories whose function is to help evade of an execution. (16) Scheherazad temporizes the execution by making one story follow another until, at last, she has tamed the king. Poe, who was fascinated by *The Arabian Nights* narrative technique, used the same technique in writing his tale to serve a similar purpose that is to put off an end to the king's arrogance. Scheherazad, the narrator of Poe's tale narrates a collection of stories for one thousand and two nights during which she succeeds in making the king forget his vow .

One major affinity between the two tales is that their heroines bear the same names, Scheherazad, daughters of two Vazirs who play roles of the narrators of the tales. The similarity extends to more than the names since they have similar characters and qualifications. Scheherazad of *The Arabian Nights* is presented as clever, highly educated, courageous and had deep insight. (17) Poe's Scheherazad, on the other hand, is depicted in a similar manner as politic, clever,

However, Poe's acquaintance with The Koran had furnished him with many themes and symbols and images which enriched his poetry. From Sale's translation of The Koran Poe borrowed the name and the idea of one of his famous poems, "Al-Aaraf" (1829). (12) "Israfael" (1931) is another important example which document Poe's knowledge of The Koran. Other poems written during his early carrer contain many references to Allah, Eblis and Aidenn which testify to Poe's indebtedness to The Koran .

Beside these oriental books reviewed above, there is the possibility that Poe found in historical books written about the East material of information which he used in his works. Though we lack external evidence to support this claim, the oriental colouring and historical names used by Poe confirm that he had read some historical books about the orient. The influence of these books appears in his early poems especially "Tamerlane", (1827) in which he tackles the historical character of the Mongol emperor. (13)

Poe's tale "The Thousand - and - Second Tale of Scheherazaz" was published in 1845 Godley's Lady's Book . Up to date no serious attempts have been made to answer the questions of the possible sources of the tale. It is possible to say, as the title and the subject indicate, that Poe's major source is The Arabian Nights. For convenience sake here is a summary of Poe's tale :

A certain monarch who is a jealous husband makes a vow to marry each night a virgin and execute her next morning. He is interrupted by a vazir's daughter whose name is Scheherazad. To save her womenfolk, she marries the king with the proviso that her sister should occupy a couch near that of the royal couple. She begins successfully to tell one story after another during which the king forgets his vow and keeps her alive. Pleased with her success, Scheherazad narrated the eighth and the most wonderful voyage of Sinbad .. At the end of this tale Scheherazad is bowstrung .

It is apparent that Poe is following certain oriental conventions which appear in The Arabian Nights. He also borrows certain names and themes of the same source. Names like Scheherazad and Sinbad are conventional heroes of love and adventure stories of The Arabian Nights tales. In The Arabian Nights we can find similarities between Poe's tale and the frame tale of The Arabian Nights, "The Story of King Shahrayar and his Brother." Poe's indebtedness extends to more than the names of his characters since it seems to include more than names. A brief account of the frame tale of The Arabian Nights is helpful to reveal these similarities :



come to him from practical experience and personal observations for he had not been in the East, but were mainly derived from verbal means such as travellers and merchants' accounts who returned from the East. Also there is the possibility that Poe obtained his material from the translations of some oriental books which undoubtedly provided him with various oriental themes and scenes. He might have obtained further information from reading some books and tales written in an imitation of some oriental tales.

Among the numerous translated books Poe read about the East *The Arabian Nights* may be one of them. In fact, there are some strong evidences that Poe had read *The Arabian Nights*. The first one is that we may find many oriental references taken from this book which confirm that Poe's interest in this book is undeniable and that he had read it. The second evidence is clearly expressed in the following incident which Thomas Holley Chivers, one of Poe's friends, reported. In a conversation with Poe in 1845, Chivers asked him in what form the supposed *Stylus* should be published Poe answered :

Just hand me that book yonder on the bureau and I will show you. "The beautifully printed illustrated volume was" part of a fine London Edition of *The Arabian Nights* by Lane.(6)

But it is uncertain whether Poe had read the French version of Galland or the English one. Both cases are possible because he knew French very well. Whichever translation he read, it is evident that he was influenced by *The Arabian Nights*. Numerous echoes and traces could be found in his tales : references to oriental setting, themes and other oriental colouring.

The influence of *The Arabian Nights* on Poe appears in "A Tale of the Ragged Mountain" (1844) in which he describes "an Eastern looking- city, such as we read in *The Arabian Nights* tales, but of a character even more singular than any there described. (7) In "The Imp of Perverse" he describes a cloud which assumes a shape as did vapor from the bottle of which arose a genie in *The Arabian Nights*. (8) "Ms Found in a Bottle" (1833), and "The Descent into the Maelstrom" (1841) are a sinbad story. (9) The best example of *The Arabian Nights* influence on Poe is to be seen in "The Thousand - and - Second Tale of Scheherazad" (1845) which is a parody of the frame tale of *The Arabian Nights*, "The Story of King Shahrayar and his Brother."

More importantly, it was *The Koran* which exerted influence upon Poe. The version which he might have read was the remarkable translation of George Sale (1734). (10) The most important part of the work is its lengthy "Preliminary Discourse" and the elaborate notes throughout. His well informed notes became the source of many European writers who borrowed from *The Koran*. It seems, as Edward Wagenknecht says, that Poe must have been influenced more directly by them than the text of the *Koran* itself. (11)

## ORIENTAL ELEMENTS IN SOME OF POE'S WORKS

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Much has been written on Poe's merits as a man of letters, a poet and as a literary critic. Since the beginning of Poe's literary career, there has been a steady flow of books, articles and studies on his life, poetry and prose. However, biographers and critics have paid little attention to the oriental aspects of his works. The problem whether Poe was, in a way or another, influenced by the East and indebted to its culture, has given rise to much controversy. The available literature does not say much on the extent to which Poe was influenced by the East. Some critics, to mention only two, Edward Wagenknecht and Edward H. Davidson have given passing remarks affirming that Poe fell under the spell of the East and that this aspect is considerably of little significance. (1) This study, therefore, aims at investigating Poe's interest in the East and Eastern literature. It is an attempt to detect the possible sources which Poe had exploited and from which he derived his material. Special attention will be paid to one of the major sources, *The Arabian Nights*. This paper also tries to give a rapid review of Poe's oriental tales. More attention will be devoted to one of the most important tales of Poe, namely "The Thousand- and- Second Tale of Scheherazad", (1845). In order to show fairly the kinship which exists between *The Arabian Nights* tales and Poe's tale, we shall deal with direct allusions to and borrowings from *The Arabian Nights* which testify to the oriental influence on Poe.

Like many American writers, Poe was fascinated by the East and its literature. (2) His interest began when he was a child as he used to go to the ports and listen carefully to the fantastic and marvellous stories told by the mariners and merchants coming from the exotic East. (3) This type of stories that children like to hear, stimulated his imagination and nourished his desire for the remote and the strange. In later life, Poe's interest in the East grew stronger which was expressed in his writings. However, the available studies and criticism do not say anything about Poe's interest in the East during his later life. Yet, we can infer from his oriental stories and poems that his interest was deep and craving.

In effect, Poe's interest in the East and its literature stemmed from many motives: First Poe aims at entertaining his readers by presenting the exotic and the remote. Secondly, his interest stemmed from financial considerations since the publication of the oriental tales in periodical literature provided him with the money he needed. (4) Thirdly, Poe was dissatisfied with his realworld which he found intolerable, and sought escape from it to the exotic, remote and imaginary orient. (5) Fourthly, Poe uses oriental names and settings to criticize some evils of his world created by modern inventions and discoveries.

The sources of Poe's knowledge about the East were: First, they did not