A STUDY OF ORIENTALISM IN ENGLIH LITERATURE 1707-1824

RONALD G. ROMPKEY

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by

© Ronald G. Rompkey, B.A., B.Ed.

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ABSTRACT

The earliest travel literature about the Orient provided English readers with distorted and fanciful descriptions of far-Eastern countries, and one of the popular notions which evolved from this body of literature was that the Oriental person was grotesque and savage - quite unaccustomed to the level of civilization enjoyed in Europe. Such exaggerated ideas were reflected in literature until the eighteenth century when communication with the Orient improved and the picture of Oriental life became more accurate. More Englishmen now visited the Orient than ever before, trade with the East increased considerably, and numerous Eastern commodities became available on the English market. Even Augustan writers like Alexander Pope and John Gay, who are not noted for their interest in the exotic and the remote, show an awareness of Oriental culture and manners in their poetry. Throughout the eighteenth century English interest in the Orient increased and Orientalism became a cultural phenomenon of some significance, affecting architecture, gardening, and interior decoration as well as literature. In literature it appears in most of the various genres which English writers were using during this period.

This Oriental vogue was really a manifestation of the general change in taste from neo-classicism to romanticism. In the first half of the century the tendency of writers of Oriental fiction and poetry was to use the Oriental material as a means of moralizing or of satirizing the follies of their own culture. On the stage Oriental plays demonstrated the iniquities of mankind and drew attention to obnoxious practices in contemporary society. But in the second half of the century prose writers

were more interested in the exoticism and strangeness of the Orient. Likewise, in poetry the Orient provided a new mythology, with fresh images and illustrations to supplement those already being used by poets. And on the stage, with the great interest in pantomime and melodrama, Oriental plays provided spectacles with ornate costumes and splendid scenery.

The overall contribution of the Orient to English literature has been to provide a means of escape, a fresh point of view. Late in the eighteenth century when the scholarly study of the Orient began with Sir William Jones, writers began to view the East more realistically, and consequently some of the romance and wonder which had been associated with it disappeared. Romantic sultans and genii were replaced by characters that were more earthly and real. Romantic poets like Byron and Moore still wrote about the East in narrative poems, but the public was now becoming interested as well in such realistic stories as Thomas Hope's Anastatius (1819) and Morier's Hajji Baba (1824).

This thesis has been examined and approved by:

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PREFACE

In 1720, when Alexander Pope sent Bishop Atterbury a translation of Les Mille et un Jours, the Bishop promptly sent them back because, he said:

> . . . they do not please my Tast: they are writ with so Romantick an Air, and allowing for the Difference of Eastern manners, are yet, upon any Supposition that can be made, of so wild and absurd a Contrivance at least to my Northern understanding, that I have not only no pleasure, but no patience in perusing them.[1]

One hundred and seventy years later Sherlock Holmes remarked to Dr. Watson:

> You may remember the old Persian saying, "There is danger for him who taketh the tiger cub, and danger also for whoso snatches a delusion from a woman." There is as much sense in Hafiz as in Horace, and as much knowledge of the world.[2]

In the intervening years a radical change had taken place in the English attitude towards the Orient; the English reader had become more familiar than Atterbury with Eastern manners and more tolerant of Eastern literature. Atterbury would have thought it insane to compare Horace, the Augustan ideal of reason and good sense, with an Oriental. But we can see in Atterbury's letter that an interest in things Oriental was stirring even in the early eighteenth century. The Arabian Nights had been published; other collections

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[1] Letter to Pope, 28 September 1720, in Pope, Correspondence (1956), ed. Sherburn, II, p. 56.

[2] Arthur Conan Doyle, The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes (1892), p. 75.

of Eastern tales were appearing; Pope was interested. The vogue of Orientalism had begun, a vogue which, before the century was over, would invade every aspect of English art and culture.

Oriental literature proliferated in England during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and very thorough studies have been done on various aspects of it. For example, Martha Pike Conant published in 1908 The Oriental Tale in England in the Eighteenth Century, which deals exclusively with prose fiction. And Edna Osborne produced a monograph in 1916 entitled Oriental Diction and Theme in English Verse, 1740-1840. I am indebted to both of these works and to others, but I should point out that I have attempted something different from what has been done in previous studies of this subject. The aim of this thesis is to indicate the influence of Orientalism upon the various literary genres in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries; I have tried to present a total picture of the vogue of Orientalism, and to show how the change in attitude towards the Orient which took place in eighteenth-century England was reflected in the literature. This thesis is thus broader in scope than Conant's and Osborne's rather specialized studies.

I have received a great deal of help from many people. To the staff of the Memorial University Library, who frequently inconvenienced themselves on my behalf, I owe an enormous debt. I wish to thank Professor A.C. Baugh of the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia and Professor Michael Booth of the Royal Military College, Kingston, Ontario, for answering my enquiries. I have had useful conversations with Dr. D.G. Pitt and Dr. A.A. Macdonald of Memorial University's English Department,

both of whom have generously lent me books. I am thankful also for funds granted to me by the University authorities. I am grateful to Miss Marian Atkinson of the Library staff for agreeing to undertake the typing of this thesis. The whole curious subject of Orientalism was brought to my attention in a course on eighteenth-century literature given by Dr. Patrick O'Flaherty in 1965-66. He has supervised my labours from the beginning and made numerous suggestions for improvement. He has generously lent me books and made himself available to me at all times. I thank him.

R.G.R.
Memorial University of Newfoundland
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Chapter One

The Impact of a Culture

> Southern Asia, in general, is the seat of awful images and associations. As the cradle of the human race, if on no other ground, it would have a dim, reverential feeling connected with it. . . . The mere antiquity of Asiatic things, of their institutions, histories, above all, of their mythologies, &c., is so impressive, that to me the vast age of the race and name overpowers the sense of youth in the individual.
>
> - Thomas de Quincey, Confessions of an English Opium-Eater (1821)

To assess the nature and degree of "influence" exerted by one literature or culture upon another is indeed a delicate undertaking. A prolonged and close historical contact is clearly not necessary; nor does it seem to matter whether, historically, relations have been friendly or hostile. The most important single condition appears to be a receptivity on one or both sides - an implied recognition of the other's superiority or desirability in one or another field. European receptivity to Oriental literary and cultural modes has been fitful in comparison with, say, the steady permeation of Western life by Latin and Greek influences. Instead, the literary taste of Europe was attracted to those elements of Eastern literature of which the germ

already existed, or had begun to develop in a tentative way, in European thought and letters.[1] In such cases, the Oriental elements helped to determine the way in which the European movement, already begun, should proceed. The fondness which English people began to show for the Orient was merely one manifestation of the movement towards the cultural and literary phenomenon we call Romanticism. A fondness for the Orient was clearly shown during the course of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries and we are concerned here with its manifestations in literature between 1707, when the first English translation of the Arabian Nights' Entertainments appeared, and 1824, the publication date of James Morier's picaresque story The Adventures of Hajji Baba of Ispahan.

But first it will be profitable to consider the position of the Orient and the Oriental in the English mind prior to the eighteenth century. To paraphrase Chaucer, merchants are the fathers of tidings and tales[2] and the wallets of shipmen and pilgrims are full of lies.[3] England made contact with the East while seeking to establish trade routes to the Mongol empire in the sixteenth century and therefore the first written accounts of the East available to the English reader were composed by the early merchant-travellers and by missionaries seeking to convert the newly-discovered peoples. Of course, Englishmen had been conscious of the East ever since the discoveries of Marco Polo were made public in the early fourteenth century. Polo established a tradition of

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[1]See H.A.R. Gibb, "Literature", in The Legacy of Islam (1931), edd. Sir Thomas Arnold and Alfred Guillaume, p. 181.

[2]The Prologe of the Mannes Tale of Lawe, ll. 127-130.

[3]The House of Fame, ll. 2121-2125.

exaggeration, usually in the form of fabulous numbers, so that subsequent writers felt justified in describing the Orient in round figures of enormous proportions. Polo had given such details as twelve thousand bridges in a city and twelve thousand, seven hundred islands in an area, and his successors kept the tradition of exaggeration very much alive. Among the other travel accounts read in England were the voyage of John of Plano Carpini, an Italian, to the Great Khan's court (1246) and that of Friar Odoric of Porpenone (a native of Friuli at the head of the Adriatic Sea), who set out to convert the Mongols in 1323. Perhaps the writers of these numerous travel narratives seriously intended to be factual, but too often they drifted away into exoticism and fancy. By far the most popular of the travellers' accounts was the Voyages and Travels of Sir John Mandeville, a synthesis of fables and wonders published in England in 1499. The book purports to be a description of the author's journeys in the East, but it amounts to nothing more than a compilation of earlier accounts, especially those of Friar Odoric. Voyages and Travels must be one of the most successful literary frauds of all time. But it was also the most popular travel book for generations after Mandeville's time. By the end of the seventeenth century it had gone through nine English editions.

With the fall of the Mongol dynasty in 1368, China's relations with the West were severed, but Europe did not forget the wealth to be found in the East. In England, interest in the rich silk and spice trade continued to be keen and English voyagers made a succession of attempts to reach the Orient by a sea route. As early as 1497 the Italian mariner

John Cabot, attracted by the value of the Oriental trade, sailed from Bristol in search of a Northwest Passage to the Orient. The sixteenth century produced an abundance of adventurers willing to do the same - among them Cabot's son Sebastian (1553), Sir Hugh Willoughby (1553), Frobisher (1560), and Anthony Jenkinson (1565). By 1600 the British East India Company had been organized and British merchant-travellers were attempting to expand the lucrative Eastern trade. The chronicles of these men, more realistic and dependable than those of Mandeville and his predecessors, were assembled in Hakluyt's Principall Navigations, Voiages, and Discoveries of the English Nation (1589) and were therefore brought before a wide audience. Generally speaking, in this literature China was no more than a small piece in the mosaic of a rapidly expanding world. Beyond an enthusiasm for its commercial prospects and stable form of government, China enjoyed no perceptible vogue in Elizabethan and early Stuart England,[4] and neither did Arabia, Persia, Turkey or any other Oriental nationality.

This does not mean that the Oriental was completely ignored. On the Elizabethan stage, at least, Orientals could be found addressing the theatre-goers.[5] Mandeville had called the Tartars "foul folk and evil kind". Hakluyt had drawn attention to the narrow eyes and flat nose of the Oriental. Now, in the Elizabethan and Stuart periods, these people

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[4]See William W. Appleton, A Cycle of Cathay (1951), p. 19.

[5]In "The Oriental in Elizabethan Drama", Modern Philology, XII (1915), p. 423 ff., Louis Wann states that of the forty-seven plays examined by him, Moors appeared in eighteen and Turks in thirty-one. India and China are not mentioned.

became symbols of ugliness. With the popular idea of the trickery and treachery of the Turks went the notion of their sensuality and lasciviousness.[6] Some of the epithets used of Turks and Tartars, the favoured targets, were: "barbarous", "cruel", "pitiless", "deceitful", "treacherous", "inhuman", "impious", "tyrannous", "brutish", and "bestial".[7] According to their rôles in Elizabethan dramas, torture and cannibalism seem to have been their chief diversions. Perhaps no other hero in Elizabethan drama epitomizes this kind of Oriental more than Marlowe's Tamburlaine. In Part One of Tamburlaine the Great (1590), Tamburlaine, the Scythian shepherd-robber, conquers the Turkish emperor, Bajazet, and leads him about imprisoned in a cage, goading him and his empress, Zabina, with cruel taunts until they dash out their brains against the bars of the cage. Meander makes the following commentary on Tartars:

> Then having passed Armenian deserts now,
> And pitched our tents under the Georgian hills,
> Whose tops are covered with Tartarian thieves,
> That lie in ambush, waiting for a prey,
> What should we do but bid them battle straight,
> And rid the world of those detested troops?[8]

In Webster's White Devil (1612), Vittoria contrasts the uncivilized Tartar with the Christian:

> You shame your wit and Judgement
> To call it so; What, is my just defence
> By him that is my Judge cal'd impudence?
> Let mee appeale then from this Christian Court
> To the uncivill Tartar.[9]

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[6]See Samuel C. Chew, The Crescent and the Rose (1965), p. 144 ff. for manifestations of these notions in English language and society at this time.

[7]See Robert R. Cawley, The Voyagers and Elizabethan Drama (1938), p. 191.

[8]Marlowe, Tamburlaine the Great, Part One, II, ii, ll. 14-19.

[9]Webster, The White Devil, III, II, ll. 129-133.

Massinger, in The Great Duke of Florence (1636) used the words "Tartar" and "cannibal" synonymously. Lidia asks:

> What rugged Tartar
> Or cannibal, though bathed in human gore,
> But, looking on your sweetness, would forget
> His cruel nature, and let fall his weapon,
> Though then aimed at your throat?[10]

Besides this, the Tartar or Turk was a convenient example of the ugly and grotesque for the Elizabethan playwright. In the following passage from Dekker's Honest Whore (1604) are references to the ugliness of the Tartar as well as to the cruelty of the Turk. Hippolito says:

> For gold and sparkling iewels, (if he can)
> Youle let a Iewe get you with christian:
> Be he a Moore, a Tartar, tho his face
> Look vglier than a dead mans scull,
> Could the diuel put on a humane shape,
> If his purse shake out crownes, vp then he gets,
> Whores will be rid to hell with golden bits:
> So that y'are crueller then Turkes, for they
> Sell Christians onely, you sell your selues away.[11]

There are many indications that Shakespeare was subject to the same mass prejudices and popular notions. In The Merchant of Venice (1598), the Duke of Venice likens Shylock's unrelenting attitude towards Antonio to the "rough hearts" of Turks and Tartars:

> Forgive a moiety of the principal;
> Glancing an eye of pity on his losses,
> That have of late so huddled on his back,
> Enow to press a royal merchant down
> And pluck commiseration of his state
> From brassy bosoms and rough hearts of flint,
> From stubborn Turks and Tartars, never train'd
> To offices of tender courtesy.[12]

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[10]Massinger, The Great Duke of Florence, V, iii, ll. 60-64.

[11]Dekker, The Honest Whore, Part One, II, i, ll. 337-345.

[12]The Merchant of Venice, IV, i, ll. 26-33. All quotations from Shakespeare's plays in this chapter are taken from The Complete Works of Shakespeare (1961), ed. Hardin Craig.

The epithet "flinty" occurs again in All's Well That Ends Well (1623), where Helena says of the Duke of Florence:

> Time was, I did him a desired office,
> Dear almost as his life; which gratitude
> Through flinty Tartar's bosom would peep forth,
> And answer, thanks . . .[13]

In The Merry Wives of Windsor (1602), a host in the Gate Inn uses a convenient pejorative term in speaking to Falstaff about Simple: "Here's a Bohemian-Tartar tarries the coming down of thy fat woman. Let her descend, bully, let her descend; my chambers are honourable. Fie!"[14] The ugliness of the Turk and Tartar, as described by Hakluyt, is mentioned by the Third Witch in Macbeth (1623) in a litany of horror:

> Scale of dragon, tooth of wolf
> Witch's mummy, maw and gulf
> Of the ravin'd salt-sea shark,
> Root of hemlock, digg'd i' the dark;
> Liver of blaspheming Jew,
> Gall of goat, and slips of yew
> Sliver'd in the moon's eclipse;
> Nose of Turk and Tartar's lips;
> Finger of birth-strangled babe
> Ditch-deliver'd by a drab . . .[15]

These prejudiced notions about certain Oriental types have provided the English language with terms of abuse or mild disapprobation. The phrase "to turn Turk", meaning to degenerate in one of various ways, recurs throughout seventeenth-century drama.[16] For example, in Massinger's

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[13] All's Well That Ends Well, IV, iv, ll. 5-8.

[14] The Merry Wives of Windsor, IV, v, ll. 21-23.

[15] Macbeth, IV, i, ll. 22-31.

[16] See W.G. Rice, "To Turn Turk", Modern Language Notes, XLVI (1931),

Renegado (1630) the following exchange takes place:

> Paulina: . . . I will turn Turk.
>
> Gazet: Most of your tribe do so,
> When they begin to whore.[17]

As mentioned above, the Chinese did not figure prominently in Elizabethan and Jacobean drama; however, certain prejudices about the Chinese were current. An indication of this is the word "Cataian", which the New English Dictionary glosses as a variant of "Cathaian", meaning a man of Cathay or China. But its secondary meaning is given as "a thief, scoundrel, blackguard", and this meaning made the word a convenient term of abuse for Elizabethan dramatists. In a speech by Sir Toby Belch in Twelfth Night (1623) it is included with other objects of scorn: "My lady's a Cataian, we are politicians, Malvolio's a Peg-a-Ramsey, and 'Three merry men be we.' Am I not consanguineous? am I not of her blood? Tillyvally. Lady!"[18] And in The Merry Wives of Windsor, as Page and Ford discuss Falstaff, the words "rogue" and "Cataian" may be taken to be synonymous:

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pp. 153,154. Many people will be familiar with other phrases which include references to Turks and Tartars; these ignorant notions seem to have been transmitted to us. In some areas, "an old Tartar" is an elderly, tiresome person and a "young Tartar (Turk)" is a mischievous child. The Oxford Dictionary of English Proverbs explains that the phrase "to catch a Tartar" means "to get hold of one who can neither be controlled nor got rid of, or who proves to be too formidable". There are numerous other references to Tartars in A Dictionary of American Proverbs and Proverbial Phrases.

[17]Massinger, Renegado, V, iii.

[18]Twelfth Night, II, iii, ll. 80-83.

Ford. I will seek out Falstaff.

Page. I never heard such a drawling, affecting rogue.

Ford. If I do find it: well.

Page. I will not believe such a Cataian, though the priest o' the town commended him for a true man.[19]

These are strong words, and probably the prejudices from which they arose were caused by lack of knowledge. Information about China was derived from the coloured narratives of voyagers, chiefly those printed in Hakluyt's Principall Navigations and Samuel Purchas's Pilgrimage (1613), and these were far from precise.

Such factual errors are compounded in literary works. In John Fletcher's Spanish Curate (1624), the following exchange occurs:

Lopez. From Nova Hispania, or some part remote, sir;
You look like travelled men. May be, some old friends,
That happily I have forgot; some signiors
In China or Cataya; some companions -

Diego. In the Mogul's court, or elsewhere.[20]

Lopez does not realize that China and Cathay are the same place. These are simply convenient terms which he grasps in search of a nebulous, faraway place. Another interested reader of Eastern voyages was Milton, who, in Paradise Lost (1667), presents a gorgeous passage of magnificent names probably gleaned from Purchas and Hakluyt. The passage describes the vision granted Adam "To shew him all Earths Kingdomes and thir Glory":

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[19] The Merry Wives of Windsor, II, i, ll. 144-150.

[20] Fletcher, The Spanish Curate, III, ii, ll. 202-207.

> His Eye might there command wherever stood
> City of old or modern Fame, the Seat
> Of mightiest Empire, from the destind Walls
> of Cambalu, seat of Cathaian Can
> And Samarchand by Oxus, Temirs Throne,
> To Paquin, of Sinaean Kings, and thence
> To Agra and Lahor of great Mogul
> Down to the golden Chersonese, or where
> The Persian in Ecbatan sate, or since
> In Hispahan, or where the Russian Ksar
> In Mosco, or the Sultan in Bizance . . .[21]

The influence of travel narratives on Milton is further exhibited in his little known Brief History of Moscovia (1682). In the preface to this work he admits that "What was scatter'd in many Volumes, and observ'd at several times by Eye-witnesses, with no cursory pains I laid together, to save the Reader a far longer travaile of wandering through so many desert Authours; who yet with some delight drew me after them, from the eastern bounds of RUSSIA, to the Walls of CATHAY. . ." Milton used Hakluyt and Purchas as sources but was also indebted to the writings of such adventurers as Chancellor, Jenkinson, Willoughby, and Randolf. And also:

> In addition to his contemporaries, Heylyn and Richard Knolles and George Sandys, one in his Cosmographie, especially, the second in his history of the Turks, and the third in an interesting record of Oriental travel, were not without influence. In them Milton found the old knowledge of the ancients supplemented by newly acquired facts and seasoned with interesting gossip and conjecture.[22]

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[21] Paradise Lost, Book XI, ll. 385-395. These place names and the names of the rulers are more or less correct. However, Milton has trouble with "the destind Walls of Cambalu, seat of Cathaian Can" and "Paquin, of Sinaean Kings". "Paquin" is Peiping and "Sinaean" means "Chinese". He incorrectly distinguishes Paquin from Cambalu and separates "Cathay" from "China", which are Mongol and Chinese names for the same country.

[22] Elbert N.S. Thompson, "Milton's Knowledge of Geography", Studies in Philology, XVI (1919), p. 155.

The use of "interesting gossip and conjecture" forces us to deny these sources our complete faith. However, other indications in literature show that Englishmen were beginning to form accurate ideas about Eastern culture in the seventeenth century. One of these was a familiarity with chinaware dishes and pottery, which were to become prized artifacts in the eighteenth century. One of the first references to this is in Measure for Measure (1623), where Pompey says: "Sir, she came in great with child; and longing, saving you honour's reverence, for stew'd prunes; sir, we had but two in the house, which at that very distant time stood, as it were, in a fruit dish, a dish of some threepence; your honours have seen such dishes; they are not China dishes, but very good dishes".[23] John Donne says that "men of China, 'after an ages stay,/ Do take up Porcelane, where they buried Clay".[24] And following Duncan's murder, Lady Macbeth demonstrates an awareness of the luxuriant perfumes of the East in the phrase "all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand".[25] One of the first occasions on which we find the highly commercial Eastern product, tea, mentioned is in Pepys's diary. In his entry for 25 September 1660 he makes only a passing remark about it - almost absentmindedly. To him, it is still an expensive curiosity: "I did send for a cup of tee, (a China drink) of which I never had drank before, and went away (the King and the Princess coming up the river this afternoon as we were at our pay)".[26]

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[23] Measure for Measure, II, i, ll. 91-97.

[24] Elegie on the Lady Marckham (1669), ll. 21,22.

[25] Macbeth, V, i, ll. 43,44.

[26] Pepys, Diary and Correspondence [N.D.], ed. the Rev. J. Smith, I, pp. 109, 110.

And in The Merchant of Venice, Bassanio, in speaking about the unreliability of outward appearances, makes a comparison with an Indian custom:

> Thus ornament is but the guiled shore
> To a most dangerous sea; the beauteous scarf
> Veiling an Indian beauty . . .[27]

One of the ideas widespread in England during the seventeenth century was that Chinese government was distinguished for its stability and reasonableness. Samuel Daniel, in A Defence of Rhyme (1603), had allowed that the Chinese were civilized, even though they lacked the benefits of Greek and Roman learning.[28] And Robert Burton lauded the Chinese method of choosing statesmen in The Anatomy of Melancholy (1623):

> . . . out of their philosophers and doctors they choose magistrates: their political nobles are taken from such as be moraliter nobiles, virtuous noble; nobilitas ut olim ab officio, non a natura, as in Israel of old, and their office was to defend and govern their country in war and peace, not to hawk, hunt, eat, drink, game alone, as too many do. Their Loysii, Mandarini, literati, licentiati, and such as have raised themselves by their worth, are their noblemen only, thought fit to govern a state . . .[29]

However, all these disparate ideas about chinaware, perfume, Indian veils, tea, and Chinese systems of government (to mention but a few), promoted nothing more than an awareness of Oriental culture. There was no connection between them that would lead to an acceptance of Oriental culture in toto. For that we must wait until the advent of the eighteenth century, when influences from Europe, coupled with certain patterns of

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[27] The Merchant of Venice, III, ii, ll. 99-101.

[28] Daniel, Complete Works in Verse and Prose (1963), ed. the Rev. A.B. Grosart, IV, pp. 47,48.

[29] Burton, The Anatomy of Melancholy (1932), ed. Jackson, II, p. 140.

thought in England, created a receptivity for it. Four contributions to this receptivity will be discussed in this chapter: (1) the spread to England of an Oriental vogue which had taken root in France; (2) an English translation of Les Mille et une Nuits in 1707; (3) the expansion of British trade with the East and the consequent proliferation in England of authentic travel narratives and Eastern products; (4) a general change in taste from formalism to assymetry.

(1) The Oriental Vogue in France

During the sixteenth century the merchants and adventurers of Europe began in earnest to trade the products of Europe for the spices of India, the silks of China, and the lacquer of Japan. In the beginning the Spanish and Portuguese monopolized the Eastern trade; but by the middle of the seventeenth century, the merchants of the Iberian Peninsula were succeeded in the Far East by the Dutch. The Dutch were forced to relinquish their hold to a great degree by the eastward surge of traders and voyagers from England and France. Missionaries (especially Jesuits) followed the merchants in an endeavour to win souls. Tales of the struggles and achievements of these pioneers and the Jesuit accounts of Eastern peculiarities and customs fired the imagination of Englishmen and Frenchmen back home in Europe. England began to turn her eyes from the Continent and to see her future in terms of the wealth of opportunity overseas. The British Empire began to grow. In the field of letters, however, England ironically owed to her arch-enemy France the discovery of the imaginary Orient and the popularizing of pseudo-Oriental literature.

Antoine Galland's translation of Les Mille et une Nuits gradually appeared in French between 1704 and 1711. It was widely applauded, not only in England, but throughout Europe:

> When Scheherazade began to recount her stories of the night, to unfold the infinite wealth of an imagination enriched with all the dreams of Araby, of Syria and the great Levant; when she began to tell of the manners and customs of the peoples of the East, their religious ceremonies, their domestic habits, the details of their dazzling and colourful existence; when she showed how mankind could be held and enthralled, not by abstruse intellectual ideas, nor by recondite reasoning, but by the charm of colours and the lure of fairy tales, all Europe was fain to stop and listen.[30]

The charm of the Arabian Nights was a powerful source of inspiration to French writers and England was the only country where the Orient "ait bénéficié au XVIIIe siècle d'une vogue analogue à celle que nous avons décrite en France, c'est-à-dire ait manifesté une cycle de croissance".[31] The English vogue, however, was comparatively late in gaining force. "A la première moitié du cycle de l'Orient Romanesque en France, qui s'éntend de 1704 jusque vers 1750, correspond en Angleterre un mouvement homologue s'étendant de 1719 jusqu'à 1760; la vogue s'est donc propagée en Angleterre avec un retard de plus de dix ans par rapport à la France."[32] And also, translations from French pseudo-Oriental fiction accounted for a large proportion of what was available to the English reader. At any given time

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[30]Paul Hazard, The European Mind (1953), p. 363. The consequent English translation was known variously as The Thousand and One Nights, The Thousand Nights and a Night, The Arabian Nights' Entertainments, or, simply, The Arabian Nights. The last version will be used here unless reference is made to a version used by an author.

[31]Marie-Louise Dufrenoy, l'Orient Romanesque en France 1704-1789 (1946), II, p. 29.

[32]Ibid., p. 31.

in the eighteenth century these translations represented roughly half the English production.

The French not only planted the Oriental vogue in England; they defined the frontiers of the imaginary Orient. These did not necessarily correspond to the actual borders of Oriental nations, but grew out of vague references in travel literature and the imprecise Arabian Nights. As the French Orientalist Pierre Martino says, the "literary Orient" was not "Asia", but a large amorphous country which excluded the Holy Lands. This is one indication that the "literary Orient" was not authentic. Although the Holy Lands were technically Oriental, the European reader could not accept the exoticism of the literary Orient in company with the religious feelings he associated with the Holy Lands. Furthermore, his ancestors had battled in this region the same "infidels" whose way of life he now found exciting.[33] The "literary Orient" eventually grew to include Eastern European nations and certain countries around the Mediterranean - even Greece and the northernmost countries of Africa. Martino claims that in the eighteenth-century mind the profound differences of civilization which separated these peoples, scattered in their various cultural groupings throughout the immense continent of Asia and elsewhere, were not recognized. "De nos jours," he asks, "le peuple, ou même le grand publique distingue-t-il bien dans son esprit la conception d'un Turc de celle d'un Indien, celle d'un Persan de celle d'un Chinois?"[34]

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[33] Martino, l'Orient dans la Littérature Française au XVII^e et au XVIII^e Siècle (1906), p. 19 ff.

[34] Ibid., p. 22.

The appeal of pseudo-Oriental literature in France was largely due to its excitement and colour which provided a form of escape or diversion. Against a vague, exotic setting, there always took place amorous intrigues, revolts, murders and conquests, with fatal sultanas and sensuous female slaves - all a part of a convention:

> The pseudo-oriental romance which flourished at the end of the seventeenth century, constituted a subdivision of that playful "genre gallant" of which Hamilton was to write sharp-witted parodies - Fleur d'Epine or Les Quatre Facardins. It fathered the powdered and perfumed, the ironic-sensual, oriental tales of Voisenon and Crébillon fils. As far as Montesquieu's glimpses of a harem in revolt is concerned, its location in "Persia" had, of course, no meaning. Harems were an unavoidable part of the conventional Orient of the romancer, - and whether localized in a vague Turkey, or in Africa, or in Morocco, or in Persia, they always presented a similar picture.[35]

It was this artificiality which prompted satires ridiculing Oriental fiction and those who immersed themselves in it. Count Anthony Hamilton, in Les Quatres Facardins (1731), ridiculed the exaggerations of these tales:

> Volumes de contes sans fin,
> Où l'on avoit mis à dessein
> L'orientale allégorie,
> Les énigmes et le génie
> Du talmudiste et du rabbin,
> Et ce bon goût de leur patrie,
> Qui, loin de se perdre en chemin,
> Parut, sortant de chez Barbin,
> Plus arabe qu'en Arabie.[36]

Hamilton's ridicule seems to have been directed primarily against the Arabian Nights, which was enjoying the highest possible favour at the

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[35] G.L. Van Roosbroeck, Persian Letters Before Montesquieu (1932), p. 20, n. 4.

[36] Hamilton, Oeuvres (1731), III, p. 4.

French court. The extravagant and, as Hamilton thought, undeserved praise being showered upon Galland's translation, caused him to level his wit especially at the coteries at Versailles and Saint Germain for their enthusiastic admiration of such impossible adventures. Enthusiasm for the Orient in the French theatre was also satirized. Le XVIII^{e} Siècle (1775), by Nicolas-Joseph-Laurent Gilbert, is a commentary on the ebbing of reason and formality. In the French theater

> . . . des Turcs amoureux, soupirant des maximes,
> Débitent galamment Sénèque mis en rimes;
> Alzire au désespoir, mais pleine de raison,
> En invoquant la mort commente le Phédon;
> Pour expirer en forme, un roi, par bienséance,
> Doit exhaler son âme avec une sentence,
> Et chaque personnage au théâtre produit,
> Héros toujours soufflé par l'auteur qui le suit,
> Fût-il Scythe ou Chinois, dans un traité sans titre,
> Par signe interrogé, vous répond par chapitre.[37]

William Beckford wrote from Paris in 1781: "This is the land of oriental literature and I am once more running over my favourite poems - The expedition of Alexander in search of the fountain of Immortality and the affecting tale of Megnoun and Leilah."[38] This taste for exotic and exciting tales the English inherited from the Oriental vogue in France. They also inherited the "literary Orient", that vast land exisiting in the imaginations of readers of Oriental fiction. But most important of all, they inherited the Arabian Nights.

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[37]Gilbert, Oeuvres [N.D.], p. 42.

[38]Letter to Lady Hamilton, 20 February 1781, in The Life and Letters of William Beckford of Fonthill (1910), by Lewis Melville, p. 103.

(2) The Arabian Nights

More than any other single work, Galland's translation Les Mille et une Nuits contributed to transplanting the Oriental vogue in literature from France to England. The contents of Galland's translation, which came to be considered as authoritative, determined the form which the original Arabic sources were to take in subsequent translations. Galland's first volume appeared in French in 1704 and volumes eleven and twelve were published from his papers in 1717, two years after his death. The translation was an immediate success in Europe:

> . . . Pirated editions at once appeared in the Netherlands; there were many European versions made from it. . . . Galland was a born storyteller and he was able to adapt these Oriental tales not only to the taste of the France of his time but to the universal story-reading public of all countries and times. Some of his versions have been rendered back into Oriental languages and received with favour in the east. It cannot be claimed that he was a faithful translator - no one in his time was - and his recasting belongs more to French than to Arabic literature.[39]

Besides this, not all of Galland's stories were contained in the original manuscripts: some were translated by him from other sources, and some were included in pirated editions against his wishes. Thus Les Mille et une Nuits was something quite different from the originals, and its immense success (there were numerous translations and adaptations) made the newer stories an inseparable part of the collection. Two of them, Alâ Ed-Dîn and the Marvellous Lamp and Ali Baba, are universally known to this day. There is still no such thing as a definitive canon to determine

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[39]D.B. Macdonald, in The Encyclopedia Brittanica (1959), XXII, p. 157.

what properly belongs in the work and what does not.[40] The Arabian Nights took hold of the common reader all over Europe; perhaps part of its appeal was that it depicted man in a state of existence free from the conventional bonds of nature and society:

> Traversée par des génies, bouleversée par des catastrophes faciles et inoffensives, encombrée de gnomes, de magiciens et de sorciers, pleine de talismans et d'animaux extraordinaires, la terre n'était plus la contrée de plate misère, où s'allongent côte à côte des existences monotones; c'était un champ ouvert aux plus audacieuses énergies et crée pour les plus déconcertantes aventures; le ciel et l'enfer, la surface du globe, tout voisinait indistinctement. Rien n'etait moins difficile aux héros que de cheminer par les airs ou de courir sous les eaux; de faire pleuvoir l'or dans leurs mains, en une minute de besoin; de se bâtir instantanément des palais inouis, qu'ils détruisaient d'un geste capricieux; de commander en un mot á toutes les forces déchaînées de l'univers. Il n'y avait que des surhommes parmi ces héros orientaux, et les imagination les moins riches, les âmes les plus pratiques ce genre de visions; ainsi elles sont tirées hors de la vie commune, et donnent un déploiement sans fin à leur besoin presque toujours inexprimé d'idéal.[41]

The English reader was charmed as well, and the popularity of the Arabian Nights in England rivalled that in France. The exact date of the first English translation and the name of the translator are not known. However, at least as early as 1707 six of Galland's volumes were translated into English by an unknown translator (often called "the Grub Street Translator") under a long, descriptive title:

> Volume I. Arabian Nights/ Entertainments:/ Consisting of/ One Thousand and One/ Stories/ Told by/ The Sultaness of the Indies, to divert/ the Sultan from the Execution of a/ Bloody Vow he had made to marry a/ Lady every Day, and have her head cut off/ next Morning, to avenge himself for the/

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[40] Mia Gerhardt, The Art of Story-telling (1963), p. 12.

[41] Martino, op. cit., p. 256.

> Disloyalty of his first Sultaness, &c./ Containing/ A better Account of the Customs, Manners/ and Religion of the Eastern Nations, viz./ Tartars, Persians and Indians, than is to/ be met with in any author hitherto pub-/ lish'd. /--/ Translated into French from the Arabian/ MSS. by M. Galland, of the Royal Aca-/ demy: And now done into English.[42]

The "Grub Street translator" also invented the title, The Arabian Nights' Entertainments, which has been associated with the English translation ever since. This title was even translated back into Arabic for the Calcutta edition of 1839-42.[43] In 1713, only nine years after Galland's translation had appeared, the English translation had already reached a fourth edition, and it remained essentially unchanged throughout the eighteenth century. A reviewer of a new translation published in 1799 observed: "The merit of these pleasing and innocent stories, which have so frequently amused our childhood, nor have yet lost their affect upon us, had induced the publisher to attempt a reformation of the wretched translation into which they have been done now near a century."[44]

The Arabian Nights had a special effect upon English men of letters, either in their childhood, when the tales overpowered the young imagination, or in later life, when they provided ideas for their works. To discover the full impact of the work on these men, we need only examine a few

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[42] D.B. Macdonald, "A Bibliographical and Literary Study of the First Appearance of the Arabian Nights in Europe", Library Quarterly, II (1932), pp. 406,407.

[43] Ibid., p. 406.

[44] The Gentleman's Magazine, LXIX (1799), p. 55.

representative comments. Edward Gibbon recalls in his autobiography, which he began in 1789: "Before I left Kingston school I was well acquainted with Pope's Homer and the Arabian Nights' Entertainments, two books which will always please by the moving picture of human manners and specious miracles . . ."[45] Gibbon also describes a lengthy conversation with Charles Fox in which they discussed books "from my own on which he flattered me very pleasantly, to Homer and the Arabian Nights . . ."[46] William Beckford (1760-1844), author of the celebrated Oriental tale Vathek (1786), also read the Arabian Nights at an early age; and it is said by his biographer that the chance finding of these tales had more effect upon his life and character than any other incident:

> He read and re-read these stories with avidity, and the impression they made on him was so strong that Lord Chatham instructed Lettice that the book must be kept from him. The precaution came too late . . . the Oriental tales had taken possession of the impressionable reader . . . They had fired his youthful mind and held his imagination captive; their influence over him never waned all the days of his life. . . .[47]

A contemporary of Beckford, William Wordsworth, was similarly enthralled by the work at a tender age. Wordsworth tells in The Prelude (1799-1805) how he possessed one volume of the edition and was frustrated in attempting to purchase the others:

> A precious treasure had I long possessed,
> A little yellow, canvas-covered book,
> A slender abstract of the Arabian tales;
> And, from companions in a new abode,

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[45]Gibbon, Autobiography (1961), ed. Saunders, p. 61.

[46]Letter to Lord Sheffield, 4 October 1788, in Letters (1956), ed. Norton, III, p. 132.

[47]Melville, op. cit., p. 20, 21.

> When first I learnt, that this dear prize of mine
> Was but a block hewn from a mighty quarry -
> That there were four large volumes, laden all
> With kindred matter, 'twas to me, in truth,
> A promise scarcely earthly. Instantly,
> With one not richer than myself, I made
> A covenant that each should lay aside
> The moneys he possessed, and hoard up the more,
> Till our joint savings had amassed enough
> To make this book our own. Through several months,
> In spite of all temptation, we preserved
> Religiously that vow; but firmness failed,
> Nor were we ever masters of our wish.[48]

We know from Dr. Samuel Johnson's diary that he read the Arabian Nights at least once, namely on 4 November 1782.[49] Clara Reeve, in The Progress of Romance (1785), compared these tales with the works of Homer.[50] Coleridge, in The Friend, a periodical which appeared sporadically during 1809 and 1810, described how he was affected by them at a very early age:

> As I had read one volume of these tales over and over again before my fifth birthday, it may be readily conjectured of what sort these fancies and feelings must have been. The book, I well remember, used to lie in a corner of the parlour-window at my dear father's vicarage-house: I can never forget with what a strange mixture of obscure dread and intense desire I used to look at the volume and watch it, till the morning sunshine had reached and nearly covered it, when, and not before, I felt the courage given me to seize the precious treasure and hurry off with it to some sunny corner in our playground.[51]

One of Coleridge's letters to Thomas Poole demonstrates how these tales were capable of affecting the juvenile mind:

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[48] Wordsworth, The Prelude, Book V, ll. 459-476.

[49] Johnson, Diaries, Prayers, and Annals, in the Yale Edition of the Works of Samuel Johnson (1958), ed. McAdam, I, p. 348.

[50] Reeve, The Progress of Romance (1930), ed. McGill, pp. 22-25.

[51] Coleridge, The Friend (1390), p. 91, n.

> At six years old I remember to have read Belisarius, Robinson Crusoe, & Philip Quarle [Quarll] - and then I found the Arabian Nights' entertainments - one tale of which (the tale of a man who was compelled to seek for a pure virgin) made so deep an impression on me (I had read it in the evening while my mother was mending stockings) that I was haunted by spectres, whenever I was in the dark - and I distinctly remember the anxious and fearful eagerness, with which I used to watch the window, in which the books lay - & whenever the Sun lay upon them, I would seize it, carry it by the wall, & bask, & read -. My father found out the effect, which these books had produced - and burnt them.[52]

Byron was also introduced to the Arabian Nights at an early age. Isaac Disraeli noted in The Literary Character (1818) Byron's reading of Sir Paul Rycaut (1628-1700), a writer of historical works on the East. Byron wrote in the margin of his copy of The Literary Character: "Knolles - Cantemir - De Tott - Lady M.W. Montague - Hawkins's translation from Mignot's History of the Turks - the Arabian Nights - All travels or histories or books upon the East I could meet with, I had read, as well as Rycaut, before I was ten years old. I think the Arabian Nights first."[53] Leigh Hunt wrote in his autobiography that his books were "a never-ceasing consolation . . . and such they have ever continued. My favourites, out of school hours, were Spenser, Collins, Gray, and the Arabian Nights".[54] Apparently, he never lost interest in these stories, for in 1823 he wrote

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[52]Coleridge, letter to Thomas Poole, 9 October 1797, in Collected Letters (1956), ed. Griggs, I, p. 347.

[53]H.S.L. Wiener, "Byron and the East: Literary Sources of the 'Turkish Tales'", in Nineteenth-Century Studies (1940), ed. Davis et al., p. 91.

[54]Hunt, Autobiography (1928), ed. Blunden, p. 104.

in the Literary Examiner about the books he liked to have about him most: ". . . Spenser, Chaucer, the minor poems of Milton, the Arabian Nights, Theocritus, Ariosto, and such old good-natured speculations as Plutarch's Morals."[55] In the introduction to The Talisman (1825) Sir Walter Scott regretted not having any first hand knowledge of the Orient: "I felt the difficulty of giving a vivid picture of a part of the world with which I was almost totally unacquainted, unless by early recollections of the Arabian Nights' Entertainments".[56] Tennyson remembered his reading of the tales in a poem entitled Recollection of the Arabian Nights:

> When the breeze of joyful dawn blew free
> In the silken sail of infancy,
> The tide of time flow'd back with me,
> The forward-flowing tide of time;
> And many a sheeny summer-morn,
> Adown the Tigris I was borne,
> By Bagdat's shrines of fretted gold,
> High-walled gardens green and old;
> True Mussulman was I and sworn,
> For it was in the golden prime
> Of good Haroun Alraschid.[57]

In Silford Hall; or, The Happy Day (1819) George Crabbe wrote of

> fictions wild that please the boy,
> Which men, too, read, condemn, reject, enjoy -
> Arabian Nights, and Persian Tales were there,
> One volume each, and both the worse for wear.[58]

And even Cardinal Newman, in his Apologia Pro Vita Sua (1864), recalled from his schooldays: "I used to wish the Arabian Nights were true: my imagination ran on unknown influences, on magical powers, and talismans . . . I thought life might be a dream, or I an Angel, and all this world

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[55]Hunt, Essays and Sketches (1928), ed. Johnson, p. 83.

[56]Scott, The Talisman (1901), p. v.

[57]Tennyson, Poetical Works (1954), p. 9.

[58]Crabbe, Poems (1907), ed. Ward, III, p. 197.

a deception, my fellow-angels by a playful device concealing themselves from me, and deceiving me with the semblance of a material world."[59]

There were other collections of tales translated from French, which, though not nearly as famous as the Arabian Nights, helped to bring the East before the English reader. One such was the Persian Tales (1714), also known as the Thousand and One Days, which was translated into English by Ambrose Philips. It appears that it was the Persian Tales which Alexander Pope sent to Bishop Atterbury in 1720. We gather that he was somewhat less enthusiastic about them than Pope:

> Indeed, they do not please my Tast: they are writ with so Romantick an Air, and allowing for the Difference of Eastern manners, are yet, upon any Supposition than can be made, of so wild and absurd a Contrivance at least to my Northern understanding, that I have not only no pleasure, but no patience in perusing them. . . . I will never believe, that you have any keen relish of them, till I find you write worse than you do, which I dare say, I never shall. Who that Petis de la Croix is the pretended Author of them, I cannot tell, but observing how full they are in the Descriptions of Dress, Furniture &c I cannot help thinking them the product of some Womans Imagination, and believe me I would do any thing but break with you, rather than be bound to read them over with attention.[60]

Although these two volumes are not identified, Petis de la Croix had published in French Les Mille et un Jours (1710-12), from which Philips's translation was made. Philips was afterwards satirized by Pope and Dr. Johnson for translating the work.[61] Another popular translation was the Turkish Tales (1708), translated by William King. In 1714 a combined

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[59] Newman, Apologia Pro Vita Sua (1950), p. 33.

[60] Letter to Pope, 28 September 1720, in Pope, Correspondence (1956), ed. Sherburn, II, p. 56.

[61] In his Epistle to Arbuthnot (1735), ll. 178-192, Pope calls Philips "The Bard whom pilfer'd Pastorals renown,/ Who turns a Persian tale for half a Crown . . ." "Half a crown" was the customary payment made to a "lady of the town". Dr. Johnson, in his Lives of the English Poets (1779-81),

edition of the two collections just mentioned was published under the title The Persian and Turkish Tales Compleat. Finally there was a group of translations attributed to Thomas Simon Gueulette (1683-1766): the Chinese Tales (1725), Mogul Tales (1736), Tartarian Tales (1759), and Peruvian Tales (1764). There is some dispute over the identity of the English translator of the Chinese Tales,[62] and likewise the translator of the Mogul Tales is not known. The Tartarian Tales were translated by Thomas Flloyd and the Peruvian Tales by Samuel Humphreys and by J. Kelly.[63] Taken together, these translations rivalled the Arabian Nights for popularity and provided ideas for writers of Oriental fiction in England.

(3) Travel Books and Trade

If the Arabian Nights and the other translations made the English reader conscious of the literary Orient, he was aware of the real Orient by the proliferation of authentic travel narratives and the increase of Eastern

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regards Philips as "a zealous Whig and therefore easily found access to Addison and Steele; but his ardour seems not to have procured him anything more than kind words, since he was reduced to translate The Persian Tales for Tonson, for which he was afterwards reproached, with this addition of contempt, that he worked for half-a-crown. The book is divided into many sections, for each of which if he received half-a-crown his reward, as writers then were paid, was very liberal; but half-a-crown had a mean sound." See Lives (1905), ed. Hill, III, p. 313.

[62]The following note appears in The Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature, II, p. 542: "Chinese Tales made English by Mr. Macky. 1725 . . . A. Esdaile names the Rev. Mr. Thomas Stackhouse as translator [so does Conant, The Oriental Tale in England in the Eighteenth Century (1908), p. 275]. Clapp notes that 1781 trn. by Stackhouse is distinct from this. Stackhouse was born in 1706." The source of confusion here is that the translator of the 1781 version was Thomas Stackhouse, son of the Rev. Thomas Stackhouse.

[63]The Dictionary of National Biography calls him "Samuel Kelly".

products on the English market during the eighteenth century. These books of travel constitute a large corpus of prose writings which were read for enjoyment as well as for information. One typical work was the Voyage Historique d'Abissinie du R.P. Jerome Lobo, which was translated by Dr. Johnson and published anonymously in 1735. The publication of this work, which Johnson had encountered seven years earlier at Pembroke College, Oxford, marked the beginning of his career in letters.[64] The first volume of Cox's Reference Guide to English Travel (1935) lists ninety-nine major entries of travel literature dealing with the Near East between 1701 and 1807, forty about Central Asia between 1715 and 1814, and one hundred and seventy-two on the East Indies from 1700 to 1817. The overall effect of these travel accounts was to impress the Orient further upon the imaginations of the general public.

Before 1750 not many English travellers interested in anything other than trade or religion had gone to the East, and therefore their reports tended to have either a commercial or religious bias. The interest shown by the English reading public in the first half of the eighteenth century resulted almost completely from reading French travel literature or the Arabian Nights. It was not until the latter half of the century that new developments were to bring "the Orient much nearer to England than ever before . . . In letters, this modern spirit was first expressed by the increased number of travelers' accounts, and by the accompanying activity of orientalists under the guidance of Sir William Jones".[65] This interest was intensified in other ways: it is well known

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[64]Lobo, A Voyage to Abyssinia (1887), ed. Morley, p. 8.

[65]Conant, op. cit., pp. 255,256.

that this century witnessed the emergence of the tourist,[66] it was a period of British colonial expansion, the heyday of the Grand Tour, and a time when members of the newly-enriched middle class began to venture abroad - often with their families.[67] Englishmen were no longer content to be armchair adventurers.

Another indication of the increasing importance of the Orient in England was the change in the volume of trade with Eastern countries. The Eastern products which after 1700 flooded the market made certain changes in social customs. The most obvious of these was the introduction of that traditional English staple, tea, which had been imported from China in 1658 at the prohibitive price of four guineas a pound.[68] Tea was not readily adopted in England. In 1660, as we have seen, it was still a novelty to Pepys; and in 1700, in Congreve's Way of the World, Sir Wilful voices the contempt of the robust, drinking Englishman for this imported concoction:

> To drink is a Christian Diversion,
> Unknown to the Turk or the Persian:
> Let Mahometan Fools
> Live by Heathenish Rules,
> And be damn'd over Tea-cups and Coffee.
> But let British Lads sing,
> Crown a Health to the King,
> And a Fig for your Sultan and Sophy.[69]

Here, too, is an example of new terminology in the English language.

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[66] See B. Sprague Allen, Tides in English Taste (1958), II, ch. 21.

[67] W.C. Brown, "The Popularity of English Travel Books About the Near East, 1775-1825", Philological Quarterly, XV (1936), p. 71.

[68] Appleton, op. cit., p. 93.

[69] Congreve, The Way of the World, IV, i, ll. 363-370.

"Tea-cups" is a new word and so is "tea-table", which appears in the same play.[70] Silversmiths began to make tea-spoons, and carpenters made tea-stands and tea-tables. Thus the importing of tea began a whole new cultural institution that went beyond the actual drinking of tea. It grew to such proportions that tea became the bonanza of the smuggling trade. "Bohea", a black tea of low quality, became a fashionable variety. In Pope's Rape of the Lock (1714) Belinda wishes she had gone where "none e'er taste Bohea",[71] and in his Epistle to Miss Blount On her leaving the Town, after the Coronation (1714) the lady has time "'twixt reading and Bohea,/ To muse, and spill her solitary Tea".[72] There is evidence throughout Walpole's correspondence with Madame du Deffand that he often sent her supplies of tea. After not having received her usual stock, she writes: "Ne vous occupez point du thé, j'en ai trouvé ici de beaucoup moins bon que celui d'Angleterre, mais qui est passable".[73]

In 1609 the first porcelain shop opened in London to sell imported chinaware. Soon English potters began experimenting with their own brand of china to compete with the foreign products. As early as 1698 the Eller brothers are supposed to have produced a fine red china and to have sold tea-pots of this material in their London shop at twelve to twenty-five shillings apiece. From 1720 to 1740 the manufacture of fine china

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[70] Ibid., IV, v.

[71] The Rape of the Lock, Canto IV, l. 156.

[72] Epistle to Miss Blount, ll. 15, 16.

[73] Letter to Walpole, 12 November 1777, in Walpole, Correspondence (1961), edd. Lewis and Smith, VI, p. 492.

made considerable progress, and in 1744 Heylyn took out a patent for making porcelain and china from a material discovered in Virginia. By 1748 he was turning out a ware "not inferior in beauty and fineness and superior in strength to the ware from the East".[74] Enthusiasm for china was widespread. John Gay pokes fun at china collectors in To a Lady on Her Passion for Old China (1725):

> What ecstacies her bosom fire!
> How her eyes languish with desire!
> How blest, how happy should I be,
> Were that fond glance bestowed on me!
> New doubts and fears within me war:
> What rival's near? a China Jar.
> China's the passion of her soul;
> A cup, a plate, a dish, a bowl
> Can kindle wishes in her breast,
> Inflame with joy, or break her rest.[75]

Defoe, in the section of Robinson Crusoe (1719) entitled "Further Adventures", is not at all complimentary in his description of Chinese culture. At one point he describes a chinaware house, no doubt as a kind of rebuke to the numerous chinaware lovers about him:

> . . . when I came to it, it was nothing but this: it was a timber house, or a house built, as we call in England, with lath and plaster; but all this plastering was really China-ware, that is to say, it was plastered with the earth that makes china-ware. The outside, which the sun shone hot upon, was glazed, and looked very well, perfectly white, and painted with blue figures, as the large China-ware in England is painted, and hard as if it had been burned.[76]

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[74] J.B. Botsford, English Society in the Eighteenth Century as Influenced From Oversea (1924), p. 103.

[75] To a Lady on Her Passion for Old China, ll. 1-10.

[76] The British Novelists (1820), ed. Chalmers, XVII, p. 253 ff.

Defoe describes the inside of the house in detail; it is "all made of the finest China, and the figures exceeding fine, indeed, with extraordinary variety of colours, mixed with gold".

Other commodities on the English market were adopted directly from Oriental culture. Indian screens were to be found in numerous households and in theatre became a handy stage prop for hiding eavesdroppers. The umbrella, which had been used for protection against the Eastern sun, became a fashionable shield against an English downpour. The fan became a useful device to ladies overwrought by the heat and as part of feminine attire on formal occasions. Gay writes in The Fan (1713):

> I sing that graceful toy, whose waving play
> With gentle gales relieves the sultry day,
> Not the wide fan by Persian dames display'd
> Which o'er their beauty casts a grateful shade;
> Nor that long known in China's artful land,
> Which, while it cools the face, fatigues the hand:
> Nor shall the muse in Asian climes rove,
> To seek in Indostan some spicy grove,
> Where stretch'd at ease the panting lady lies,
> To shun the fervor of meridian skies . . .[77]

The fan also became a weapon for the coquette, and therefore a source of amusement for the male. Addison published in The Spectator a letter announcing the erection of an academy for "the training up of young women in the exercise of the fan, according to the most fashionable airs and motions that are now practised at court", and describing the daily drills through which they exercise their fans.[78] Oriental dress was also considered

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[77] The Fan, Book I, ll. 1-10.

[78] Spectator No. 102, 27 June 1711.

an amusing costume for masquerades. Colman and Thornton wrote in The Connoisseur: "we can never enough admire the wit and humour of these meetings; which greatly consists in exhibiting the most fantastic appearances, that the most whimsical imagination can possibly devise. A common person may be content with appearing as a Chinese, a Turk, or a Friar".[79] It was inevitable that enthusiasm for the Orient would be reflected in education. Warren Hastings and Dr. Johnson, at least, had definite ideas about this. Lord Macaulay wrote of Hastings:

> He conceived that the cultivation of Persian literature might with advantage be made part of the liberal education of an English gentleman; and he drew up a plan with that view. . . . Hastings called on Johnson, with the hope, as it should seem, of interesting in this project a man who enjoyed the highest literary reputation, and who was particularly connected with Oxford.[80]

The volume of English trade with Eastern countries increased steadily throughout the eighteenth century, and by the end of the century trade with the East constituted the base of English foreign interests. This was partly due to the loss of the lucrative American colonies. It owed a great deal also to the English entrepreneurs who left England to devote themselves to the Indian trade. Many of these men, called "nabobs",[81] returned home extremely wealthy. However, they were looked upon with a measure of distaste by their countrymen, partly because the manner in which they accumulated their fortunes so quickly was regarded with suspicion,

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[79] Connoisseur No. 66, 1 May 1755.

[80] Macaulay, Critical and Historical Essays (1924), I, p. 557.

[81] The term "nabob" was originally applied to a Mohammedan official or governor under the mogul empire.

and partly because these men often spent their money ostentatiously. The nabob became a stock literary character. And because part of the Eastern environment had rubbed off on him, he helped foster a taste for Oriental things when he resettled in England.[82]

An index of the growth of English trade with the East is the growth of trade with the East Indies. In 1700 the English imported 167,382 pounds sterling worth of goods and exported 149,644 pounds, for a total of 317,026 pounds in trade. By 1785 this had increased to 2,703,940 pounds in imports and 1,153,532 pounds in exports - a total of 3,856,572 pounds for the year, and an appreciably greater proportion of imports. At the close of the eighteenth century goods carried to and from Asia were valued at more than ten million pounds. These commodities came in an extremely varied assortment:

> . . . books, canes, drugs, gums, oils, indigo in large quantities; cochineal, China-ink, galls, turmeric, seed-lack, shell-lack, stick-lack, ivory, fans, cane-mats, cinnamon, cloves, mace, nutmeg, pepper, cayenne pepper, ginger, sago, sugar, tea, a little rice, coffee, preserved fruits, mother-of-pearl shell, and spoons made of it, saltpetre, arrack, cotton, cotton yarn, raw silk of Bengal and China, calicoes and muslins, cassia, ebony, sandal, satin and sapan woods.[83]

It may be readily seen that many of these products were items of fashion and taste, as well as objets d'art and articles of Chinese interior decoration (known collectively as chinoiserie). English trade and taste reinforced each other: the public learned of the Orient through travellers

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[82]See, especially, Henry Mackenzie's humourous essay in Lounger No. 17, 28 May 1785, about a neighbourhood boy who had been sent out to India a dozen years before and returned home with a fortune.

[83]Botsford, op. cit., p. 34.

and traders and the traders found a ready market for their goods among the interested public. This phenomenon was aided by a fundamental change in the canons of taste and aesthetics during the eighteenth century - a change as fundamental and far-reaching as a shift from classicism to romanticism.

(4) A Change in Taste

The pandemic influence of classicism precluded the study of aesthetics as a separate and autonomous study up to the end of the seventeenth century. It was not until then that literary criticism became a self-conscious study, examining the assumptions on which it was itself founded. The main reason for this can be traced in the breakdown of the prescriptive authority of the Ancients. Once this authority had been questioned, criticism was forced to find presuppositions on which it could base its enquiries. Consequently, feeling, sentiment, or instinct became increasingly invoked as a basis for taste.[84] Devotees of this mode of thought drew courage from Longinus's On the Sublime (tr. 1652), which urged that art should transport as well as persuade.[85]

Thus in the eighteenth century art came to be judged on radically different grounds. Regularity, uniformity, balance and parallelism came to be regarded as defects, whereas irregularity, assymetry, variety, surprise, and the avoidance of simplicity and unity, which render a design

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[84]Walter J. Bate, Classic to Romantic (1961), p. 44.

[85]Samuel H. Monk, The Sublime (1960), p. 19 ff.

comprehensible, took rank as virtues. But this change did not take place first in literature:

> . . . the change first appeared in the other arts and only generally spread to the aesthetics of literature. In these other arts this incipient Romanticism manifested itself in, and was promoted by, four new phenomena in eighteenth-century taste and artistic practice: (a) the enthusiasm for the landscape-painting of Claude Lorrain, Poussin and Salvator Rosa; (b) the introduction and wide diffusion of the English or so-called "natural" style in gardening, which was perhaps the eighteenth-century art par excellence; (c) the Gothic revival which began in England with the not very happy efforts of Batty Langley and Sanderson Miller in the 1740s; (d) the admiration for the Chinese garden and, in a less degree, for the architecture and other artistic achievements of the Chinese.[86]

Of these four phenomena the last three overlapped in the eighteenth-century mind, and their common associations are expressed in the phrase le goût anglo-chinois. They were associated because they exemplified the same set of fundamental aesthetic principles. They were differing applications of the same doctrine of irregularity, of imitating nature not as geometrical, orderly, and uniform, but by freedom from formal patterns, wildness, and inexhaustible diversity. Of course these changes in taste were not readily accepted by all. The flurry of satire that appeared in the periodicals illustrates the disgust of some Englishmen when they saw their neat, geometric gardens replaced by the so-called "natural" style. In 1753, Francis Coventrye wrote in The World: "In serious truth, the vast multitude of grotesque little villas, which grow up every summer within a certain distance of London, and swarm more especially on the banks of the Thames, are fatal proofs of the degeneracy

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[86] Arthur O. Lovejoy, "The Chinese Origin of a Romanticism", Journal of English and Germanic Philology, XXXII (1933), pp. 2,3.

of our national taste".[87] Another writer in The World suggests the formation of an anti-Chinese society, which would "discourage the encroachment of this pretended elegance". He says this style is so popular because "A manner confined to no rules cannot fail of having the crowd of imitators in its party, where novelty is the sole criterion of elegance."[88] The general idea of beauty without order was presented as a Chinese idea, actually realized in Chinese gardens. However, its adoption in Europe was considered to be strictly an English innovation. R.O. Cambridge wrote in The World: "Whatever may have been reported, whether truly or falsely, of the Chinese gardens, it is certain that we are the first of the Europeans who have founded this taste . . ."[89] And Thomas Gray called it "the only Taste we can call our own, the only proof of our original talent in matter of pleasure; I mean, our skill in gardening, & laying out grounds".[90] This taste for Chinese market products and gardening and the good reputation of Chinese political and religious practices were called le goût chinois.

One of the first in England to advocate irregularity in gardening was Sir William Temple (1628-1699) in his essay "Upon the Gardens of Epicurus" (1690). Temple argued for formality, but it is what he adds to this that is important; and these additional remarks were seized upon by

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[87] World No. 15, 12 April 1753.

[88] World No. 117, 27 March 1755.

[89] World No. 118, 3 April 1755.

[90] Letter to William Taylor How, 10 September 1763, in Correspondence (1935), edd. Toynbee and Whibley, II, p. 814.

Horace Walpole in his essay "On Modern Gardening", written in 1771:

> To do further justice to Sir William Temple, I must not omit what he adds: "What I have said of the best forms of gardens, is meant only of such as are in some sort regular; for there may be other forms wholly irregular, that may, for aught I know, have more beauty than any of the others: but they must owe it to some extraordinary dispositions of nature in the feat, or some great race of fancy or judgement in the contrivance, which may reduce many disagreeing parts into some figure, which shall yet, upon the whole, be very agreeable. Something of this, I have seen in some places, but heard more of it from others, who have lived much among the Chinese, a people whose way of thinking seems to lie as wide of ours in Europe as their country does. Their greatest reach of imagination is employed in contriving figures, where the beauty shall be great and strike the eye, but without any order of disposition of parts that shall be commonly or easily observed. And though we have hardly any notion of this sort of beauty, they have a particular word to express it; and where they find it hit their eye at first sight, they say the sharawadgi is fine or is admirable, or any such expression of esteem - but I should hardly advise any of these attempts in the figure of gardens among us; common hands: and though there be more honour if they succeed well, yet there is more dishonour if they fail, and it is twenty to one they will; whereas in regular figures it is hard to make any great and remarkable faults.[91]

Temple, then, was not convinced that he should embrace the new style. However the word "sharawadgi", which he seems to have been the first to use, was applied to this new style in the eighteenth century.[92] Walpole

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[91] Walpole, Works (1798), II, p. 532.

[92] The authenticity of this word is in some doubt. The NED describes it as follows: "Of unknown origin; Chinese scholars agree that it cannot belong to that language. Temple speaks as if he had himself heard it from travellers". A possible solution to this problem is given by Y.Z. Chang in "A Note on Sharawadgi", Modern Language Notes, XLV (1930), pp. 221-224. He says, in part: "Doubtless when Temple said that 'sharawadgi' was a Chinese word, he meant a Chinese term, which may consist of more than one word or character . . . If we consider the four syllables of 'sharawadgi' separately, the last two immediately reveal their identity and family connections. 'Kwai-chi', also widely mis-pronounced 'wai-dgi', is equivalent to 'impressive and surprising.' 'Shara' presents some difficulty. The best suggestion would be 'sa-lo' or 'sa-ro', signifying 'careless grace, or unorderly grace.' . . . For the original of the term, 'sa-ro-wai-dgi' seems to be the strongest candidate."

commented on the above passage: "Fortunately Kent and a few others were not quite so timid, or we might still be going up and down stairs in the open air". But Temple's account of Chinese gardening principles, however non-committal it may be, must be seen as the first presentation of these new ideas in England. Temple's pseudo-Chinese word approximates the notion of the "picturesque", for which no English term (except the vague "romantic") was yet available.

It was not Temple but Addison in his periodical essays who initiated the movement of landscape gardening in the early eighteenth century.[93] In the fourth paper of his series entitled "On the Pleasures of the Imagination" he wrote about the gardens of China: "They have a Word it seems in their Language, by which they express the particular Beauty of a Plantation that thus strikes the Imagination at First Sight, without discovering what it is that has so agreeable an Effect."[94] Temple's essay is clearly the source of Addison's statement here. His thesis is similar to that of Alexander Pope, who wrote to Lord Bathurst: "many leading Critics are for rooting up more than they plant, and would leave the Lord's Vineyard either very thinly furnish'd, or very oddly trimm'd."[95] And he shows clearly that he is in sympathy with the spirit of "sharawadgi" in his "Epistle to Burlington" (1731):

> To build, to plant, whatever you intend,
> To rear the Column, or the Arch to bend,
> To swell the Terras, or to sink the Grot;
> In all, let Nature never be forgot.

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[93] See Sirén Osvald, China and Gardens of Europe of the Eighteenth Century (1950), especially ch. 1, "The Literary Background", and chs. 3-10, "England". See also Edward Malins, English Landscaping and Literature 1660-1840 (1966).

[94] Spectator No. 414, 25 June 1712.

[95] Letter to Lord Bathhurst, 13 September 1719, in Pope, Correspondence, ed. cit., II, p. 14.

> But treat the Goddess like a modest fair,
> Nor over-dress, nor leave her wholly bare;
> Let not each beauty ev'ry where be spy'd,
> Where half the skill is decently to hide.
> He gains all points, who pleasingly confounds,
> Surprizes, varies, and conceals the Bounds.[96]

Another important early document on this subject is Pope's essay (Guardian No. 173) which ridicules the topiary excesses of clipping shrubs into ornamental shapes. Walpole wrote to Horace Mann: " I am almost as fond of the Sharawaggi, or Chinese want of symmetry, in buildings, as in grounds or gardens. I am sure whenever you come to England, you will be pleased with the liberty of taste into which we are struck, and of which you can have no idea".[97] By the time he wrote "On Modern Gardening" in 1771, Walpole was still in violent reaction against the architectural and formal tradition of English gardening. He allows no merit to any practitioner of the art until he comes to Kent. Le Nôtre, the designer of the gardens of Versailles, is dismissed with scorn. However, he also believes the informal style has been extreme in some ways: "An artificial perpendicular rock starting out of a flat plain, and connected with nothing, often pierced through in various places with oval hollows, has no more pretension to be deemed natural than a lineal terrass or parterre".[98] Walpole took a balanced view of the whole matter. The aspirations of his contemporaries towards a style of gardening which they believed to be practised by the Chinese was as contemptible as the masterpieces of the French and Dutch: "I think this is a blunder, and that the

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[96]Epistles to Several Persons (Moral Essays), Epistle IV, ll. 47-56.

[97]Letter to Horace Mann, 25 February 1750 [OS], in Correspondence, ed. cit., XX, p. 127.

[98]Walpole, Works, ed. cit., II, p. 532.

Chinese have passed to one extremity of absurdity to another, both being equally remote from nature: regular formality is the opposite point to fantastic sharawadgis".[99]

The Chinese influence was not restricted to gardening. There were also Chinese designs in architecture, interior decoration, furniture, and other household articles. The influence of Chinese art and design swiftly rose and ebbed away again; but it was sufficient to bring the Rococo style to the forefront. But the intricate Chinese traits of the Rococo are not to be taken as representative of Chinese art as a whole. The Rococo designers of the eighteenth century took from China only what appealed to them. They were indifferent to the grandeur and stateliness of which Chinese genius was capable. They sought only to pluck the more whimsical and gracious constituents, and in so doing created a China of their own fancy - a fairyland conjured up from silk and porcelain and lacquer, exquisite and unsubstantial.[100] William Whitehead wrote in The World: "not one in a thousand of all the stiles, gates, rails, pales, chairs, temples, chimney-pieces, &c. &c. &c. which are called Chinese, has the least resemblance to any thing that China ever saw."[101] Chippendale published a number of designs for a variety of types of furniture in both the Gothic and Chinese tastes, but many of them were fantastic compositions which were never in fact realized. Some of his contemporaries went further and specialized in either the Chinese or Gothic style or mixed them both

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[99] Ibid., pp. 533, 534, n.

[100] See G.F. Hudson, Europe and China, A Survey of their Relations from the Earliest Times to 1800 (1961), p. 274.

[101] World No. 12, 22 March 1753.

together. They found a market for their work among the devotees. Joseph Warton wrote in The World: "I saw a sensible foreigner astonished at a late auction, with the exorbitant prices given for these SPLENDID DEFORMITIES, as he called them, while an exquisite painting of Guido passed unnoticed, and was set aside, as unfashionable lumber".[102] And Colman and Thornton wrote of these exaggerations in The Connoisseur: "whoever makes a pagod of his parlour, throws a plank or two with an irregular cross-barred paling over a dirty ditch, or places battlements on a root-house or a stable, fits up his house and garden entirely in taste".[103]

Neither the Gothic nor the Chinese style achieved the success that was anticipated. A number of enthusiastic or eccentric amateurs gave them their blessing, but the bulk of the public was not inclined to be taken in.[104] Journalists, however, eagerly attacked them in the daily press. In The World in 1753 a letter was published from a "Samuel Simple", who has married "a lady of quality" and of "exceeding fine taste". She promptly redecorates his house, and sends for her Chinese upholsterer. When the renovations have been completed, he is "continually driven from room to room, to give opportunity to strangers to admire it". Since some of the valuables have been stolen, he says "we have entertained thoughts of confining the show to one day in a week, and of admitting no persons whatsoever without tickets."[105] Cambridge told in The World of a gentleman

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[102] World No. 26, 28 June 1753.

[103] Connoisseur No. 120, 13 May 1756.

[104] See Oliver Bracket, "The Interior of the House", in Turberville, ed., Johnson's England (1933), II, p. 146.

[105] World No. 38, 20 September 1753.

who found a design for a pyramid of heads and contracted with the sexton of the parish for a supply of human skulls, but was "prevented by the over-scrupulous conscience of the sexton's wife".[106] Another writer in The World wrote in 1754: "From Hyde-park to Shoreditch scarce a chandler's shop or an oyster-stall but has embellishments of this kind; and I have heard that there is a design against the meeting of the new parliament to fit up St. Stephen's chapel with Chinese benches and a throne from the model of that on which the eastern monarch distributes justice to his extensive empires".[107] And finally, another contributor to The World wrote at the outbreak of the Seven Years' War that China should succeed France as the "empire of taste".[108]

But what of the literature of the time? The main tenet of le goût chinois had been the implementation of the principle of irregularity - a newly-discovered application of the rule of "imitating nature". Though this vogue had its beginning in gardening, architecture, and other graphic and solid arts, it speedily extended to literature:

> . . . and its later and purely literary manifestations were at least greatly facilitated and accelerated by the introduction, in Temple's essay, of a new canon of aesthetic excellence and by its repetition and elaboration by a succession of influential writers in the following decades.[109]

Our aim from here will be to discuss the effects of the Oriental vogue

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[106] World No. 65, 28 March 1754.

[107] World No. 59, 14 February 1754.

[108] World No. 205, 2 December 1756.

[109] Lovejoy, op. cit., p. 20.

on English literature in the eighteenth century. English men of letters, who were members of a society in which the Orient had made commercial, aesthetic, and cultural inroads, made use of current ideas about the Orient in their works. The Orient stimulated their imaginations and provided fresh material and characters with which the creative mind was free to play. These writers did not know enough about the Orient to write about its customs and manners in a knowledgeable way. Instead, they turned to it as a source of fresh points of view, for novelty and background material, for excitement and horror, and for new human situations and personality types. The next three chapters will attempt to show how English writers in the eighteenth century made use of Oriental material in: (1) prose fiction; (2) the drama; and (3) poetry.

Chapter Two

The Orient in Prose Fiction

> It is a strange thing that the Bible is so little read. I am reading it regularly through at present. I dare say there are many people in London who know nothing about it. Were the history of Joseph published by some genteel bookseller as an Eastern fragment and circulated amongst the gay world, I am persuaded that those who have any genuine taste might be taken in to admire it exceedingly and so by degrees have a due value for the oracles of God. I have a great mind to make the experiment.
>
> - James Boswell. London Journal. Sunday, 20 February 1763.

We are all interested in stories that appear to be "true" and in fictional characters who appear to be "real", eating and drinking and sleeping as we do. For the more realistic such characters appear to be, the more easily we are able to become involved in their lives. In the eighteenth century the first examples of the modern novel as we know it (Moll Flanders and Pamela, for example) attempted to achieve such realism by creating plots and characters reflecting the life that was going on in the real world. But there is also something within us that is attracted to fiction that is fantastic and irrational. As one writer says:

> . . . I apprehend there are few persons fond of reading who have not exaggerated ideas of the magnificence and beauty of that part of the world lurking in the recesses of their imagination. Nor is this illusion (as those who have lost it well know) to be deplored. Many are the dark and cloudy days of life; and most happy is he for whom they are most frequently gilded by the rays of fancy.[1]

This kind of reading was also in demand in the eighteenth century, and fresh material to meet the demand was not always forthcoming. One

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[1] Thomas Keightly, Tales and Popular Fictions (1834), p. 33.

convenient way in which publishers satisfied the need for such escapist fiction was to bring out translations from other languages, especially from French. Perhaps the most successful of these ventures was the translation of the Arabian Nights and other similar collections of tales with an Eastern background. Thus began a long period of interest in the genius of the Orient, especially as it was manifested in Persian, Arabian, and Indian fiction and myth. By their very nature, these stories took a different direction from the main stream of English fiction. Instead of being realistic, these tales were often fanciful and exotic; the characters often possessed supernatural powers by means of which they destroyed ordinary mortals.

Imitations of these translations which were written in England in the early years of the eighteenth century did not exhibit a genuine interest in Oriental culture. East and West were never less likely to meet than they were in these stories. For the writers were concerned with externals only - setting and charm, not spirit and ideas. To the Western mind the charm of the Orient was its strangeness and uncouthness, not the affairs of everyday life. The English tales, then, were different from genuine Oriental tales. Writers were merely availing themselves of a popular and arresting medium to serve their own purposes. Boswell's proposal for "the history of Joseph" is far-fetched, but there were others with more serious intentions. Pope told Judith Cowper:

> I have long had an inclination to tell a Fairy tale;
> the more wild &exotic the better, therefore a Vision,
> which is confined to no rules of probability, will
> take in all the Variety & luxuriancy of Description

> you will. Provided there be an apparent moral to it. I think one or 2 of the Persian Tales would give one Hints for such an Invention . . .[2]

Some Augustans, then, were interested in "wild and exotic tales" as long as these tales contained a moral. In the case of Pope, there is no evidence that he ever wrote such a tale, and he said in later years:

> After reading the Persian Tales, (and I had been reading Dryden's Fables just before them) I had some thought of writing a Persian fable; in which I should give a full loose to description and imagination. It would have been a very wild thing, if I had executed it; but might not have been entertaining.[3]

But many other writers who must have been confident that they could be entertaining did produce these tales.

The interest of eighteenth-century English readers in Oriental fiction was first stirred by translations from the French. The most popular of these appeared in the form of the "frame tale", an ancient device for exciting and sustaining interest in a narrative by means of a number of tales within a broader tale.[4]

> Indeed nothing could be more ingenious than the invention by which any number of fables and tales, dispersed over the country, and produced in different ages, and by different authors, might be collected into a work which might extend to any given length, and thus preserve many tales from the danger of perishing, which might so easily happen while they were isolated and unconnected. Those whose profession it was to amuse the

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[2]Pope, Correspondence, II, p. 202.

[3]Joseph Spence, Anecdotes, Observations and Characters of Books and Men (1820), Section IV (1734-36), p. 102.

[4]See Henry B. Hinckley, "The Framing-Tale", Modern Language Notes, XLIX (1934), p. 69 ff.

> public with reciting stories, were thus at once furnished with a large assortment, from which they could select or produce new novels, by varying the incident, and mingling the adventure of different tales, so as to produce novelty.[5]

This rather dramatic method of relating tales had been practised in several Oriental nations and had been adopted in the literature of some European nations, notably by Chaucer and Boccaccio. In eighteenth-century Europe the first collection of tales to appear from the East was the Arabian Nights. The main story is about a beautiful sultaness, Scheherezade, who tells a different tale each night to forestall her own execution by a curious, but cruel, sultan. Within this setting is a pot-pourri of minor stories in no apparent sequence. They include apologues, romances, anecdotes, fables, travel stories and other forms of narrative. It is important to remember that these stories were composed in an oral-aural culture and do not possess some of the characteristics of literature that has been written down to be read at a later time. Therefore, plot is the most important element. The objective was to make the hearer curious enough to want to come back again to see what would happen on each succeeding night. This emphasis on incident gives the characters secondary importance, and they usually appear wooden. In fact, the same characters appear in unrelated stories merely because their characteristics happen to fit the action. The other translations from French, of which the best known were The Persian Tales, The Turkish Tales, and the group of translations from Gueulette, were also presented in the form of frame tales.

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[5]Henry Weber, Tales of the East (1812), p. viii.

The individual tales in these collections often gave ideas to English writers. In the Advertisement to The Monk, M.G. Lewis says: "The first idea of this Romance was suggested by the story of the Santon Barsisa, related in The Guardian".[6] This story first appeared in the Turkish Tales. In Spectator No. 94 there was "a very pretty story in the Turkish Tales" about the notion of lengthening or shortening of time.[7] Gray referred to the same story in a letter to Bonstetten: "I am grown old in the compass of less than three weeks, like the Sultan in the Turkish Tales, that did but plunge his head into a vessel of water and take it out again (as the standers-by affirm'd) at the command of a Dervish, and found he had pass'd many years in captivity and begot a large family of children."[8] A great many Oriental stories were written in England, using the translations as models in many instances. At first they were almost all didactic and characters seem to have an Old Testament quality. Later on, when more knowledge about the Orient was available, there was a great effort to make them seem authentic. Of these English stories, we must limit ourselves here to three types: (1) tales involving a foreign observer; (2) the apologue or conte philosophique; and (3) the story based on knowledge of the Orient.

(1) The Foreign Observer

The satiric stories employing a foreign observer involved quite simply an Oriental visiting England who commented upon the cultural peculiarities of England. The only Oriental flavour in these stories was

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[6]See Guardian No. 148, 31 August 1713.

[7]See Spectator No. 94, 18 June 1711.

[8]Letter to Bonstetten, 12 April 1770, in Gray, Correspondence, III, pp. 1117, 1118.

provided by the elevated speech of the visitor interspersed with Oriental aphorisms and a few well chosen facts about Eastern countries for the purpose of contrasting the Eastern and Western ways of life. By using an Oriental as a medium for his satire, the writer was able to separate himself from his comments and thus gave them greater piquancy as well as a semblance of objectivity. Other satirists achieved as much by marooning their spokesmen on desert islands or by placing them in fantastic utopias.

The idea of an Oriental observer was a relatively new one. It had had its humble beginnings in Paris when a Genoese exile, Giovanni Paolo Marana (1642-93) wrote L'Espion Turc in 1686. Marana did little more than narrate the history of the period in a rather impersonal way and the few comments which may be considered critical are lost while he relates his observations. The French chef-d'oeuvre in this mode was Montesquieu's Lettres Persanes (1721), a work which became a model for English productions of the same type. The objectives of the Lettres Persanes were entirely different from those of Marana thirty-five years before. Marana was concerned with narrating historical events, Montesquieu with criticism of contemporary Western ideas and prejudices. Montesquieu's handling of character makes the observer more realistic and credible:

> . . . it is an imitation which shews what the originals should have been. The success their works met with was, for the most part, owing to the foreign air of their performances; the success of the Persian Letters arose from the delicacy of their satire. That satire which in the mouth of an Asiatic is poignant, would lose all its force when coming from a European.[9]

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[9]This extract from Voltaire's Histoire Universelle (1753) was quoted by Goldsmith in the Monthly Review, XVII (1757), p. 164.

The author of Lettres Persanes pretends to be merely the translator of genuine letters received by a group of Persians while they were his guests. This fiction about the origin of the letters became a convention of the genre. In both the French and English stories the introductory remarks are invariably a type of lying preface, made popular by Marana. The foreign observer is said to have left copies of his letters behind (L'Espion Turc) or to have allowed them to be copied (Lettres Persanes). The letters are then translated and edited with a justification of the Oriental style or an excuse for not having reproduced the original Oriental expression more exactly. (An unusual approach was taken by Charles Gildon in The Post-Boy Rob'd of His Mail, 1692-93: a party of gentlemen rob a postboy, retire to read the letters at leisure, and comment on each letter or series of letters. In Letters 1-13, a mysterious Asiatic traveler comments on his adventures in Spain.) Another recurring feature of this genre which originated with Montesquieu is the local resident who acts as guide and informant. The guide's function is to explain various aspects of European civilization which puzzle the Oriental. A variant of this feature is the presence of other Orientals with whom the main character can discuss his experiences. These other Orientals frequently supply the narrative interest. They appear sometimes in the frame story, sometimes in the intervening episodes. For example, in Lettres Persanes and Lord Lyttleton's Letters from a Persian in England to his Friend at Ispahan (1735) the frame story contains love interest which has to be sustained throughout the whole work.

In 1689 Marana's work was published in English under the lengthy

title Letters Writ by a Turkish Spy who lived five and forty years, undiscovered at Paris: Giving an Impartial Account to the Divan at Constantinople, of the most Remarkable Transactions of Europe; and Discovering several Intrigues and Secrets of the Christian Courts (especially of France) from the year 1637, to the year 1682.[10] By 1770 it had gone through twenty-six editions.[11] Thus began in England a long series of stories using an Oriental observer. Near the end of the eighteenth century, Isaac Disraeli remarked:

> Whatever may be the defects of the "Turkish Spy," the author has shown one uncommon merit, by having opened a new species of composition, which has been pursued by other writers with inferior success, of which we except the charming "Persian Letters" of Montesquieu. The "Turkish Spy" is a book which has delighted us in our childhood, and to which we can still recur with pleasure. But its ingenious author is unknown to three parts of his admirers.[12]

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[10] "This work was begun in 1685-88, when four volumes were published (Paris and Amsterdam) in French; the substance of these formed Vol. I in English, of the Letters by a Turkish spy; possibly Marana may have written the remainder; but Mrs. Manley has affirmed that her father, Roger Manly [1626?-1688], wrote the first two (the best) volumes, while John Dunton [1659-1733, a bookseller] stated that most of the Letters were composed by a hack writer named South, under Dr. Robert Midgeley, who held the copyright, and thus must be regarded as the editor." Halket and Laing, Dictionary of Anonymous and Pseudonymous English Literature (1926-56), III, p. 342. See also William H. McBurney, "The Authorship of The Turkish Spy", Publications of the Modern Language Association, LXXII (1957), especially pp. 922-924 and pp. 934, 935.

[11] Most of the Oriental names and imagery used by Gray in his letter to Walpole, 6 January 1735, have been traced to The Turkish Spy by Professor Edward Bensly. It is likely that Charles Lamb found the idea for his "Dissertation Upon Roast Pig" in The Essays of Elia (1823) in Vol. IV (Bk. i, Letter 5) of the English translation. See Arthur Bateman, "'The Turkish Spy' and Elia", Notes and Queries, 4th Ser., VIII (1871), pp. 414,415.

[12] Disraeli, Curiosities of Literature (1866), p. 141.

Not all the English adaptations of this genre are alike. Some, like Ned Ward's London Spy (1698), are descriptive and factual. Others, like Goldsmith's Citizen of the World (1762), are more explicitly bent on satire. Some, like The Citizen of the World, are organized in the form of letters. Others, like The London Spy, simply recite facts.

One of the first works of this nature written in the eighteenth century was Thomas Brown's Amusements Serious and Comical Calculated for the Meridian of London (1700) which was partly a translation of Dufresny's Amusements Sérieux et Comiques (1699).[13] But Brown developed the genre a bit further than Dufresny, adding satire of the lower side of London life. He imagined "what an Indian would think of such a motley herd of people" and thus surpassed the achievement of Ned Ward.[14] A few years later Jonathan Swift evidently thought of making a contribution to this type of literature. In 1704, opposite the title page of A Tale of a Tub, appeared an advertisement listing "Treatises writ by the same Author . . . which will be speedily published". Included in the list was the following title: A Voyage to England, by a Person of Quality in Terra Australia incognita, translated from the Original. This supposed translation was never published. As Swift explained to Esther Johnson:

> The Spectator is written by Steele with Addison's help: 'tis often very pretty. Yesterday it was made of noble hint I gave him long ago for his Tatlers, about an Indian supposed to write his travels into England. I repent he ever had it. I intended to have

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[13]The author is Tom Brown (1663-1704), hack writer and translator.

[14]Ironically, the inscription on his tombstone in Westminster Abbey attributes the authorship of The London Spy to him instead of to Ned Ward.

> written a book on that subject. I believe he has spent it all on one paper, and all the under hints there are mine too; but I never see him or Addison.[15]

In one short paper, Spectator No. 50, Addison did what Swift had planned to do on a more elaborate scale.[16] In a few pages, he related the satirical observations of four "Indian Kings"[17] as they were contained in "a Little Bundle of Papers" which they had left behind. In the tradition of the genre, Addison says: "These papers are now translated, and contain abundance of very odd Observations . . . made during their Stay in the Isle of Great Britain". It is difficult to say why Swift never completed these plans, but perhaps he felt that such works had become too commonplace. In A Proposal for Correcting . . . the English Tongue (1712) he mentions "those monstrous Productions, which under the Names of Trips, Spies, Amusements, and other conceited Appellations, have over-run us for some Years past. To this we owe that strange Race of Wits, who tell us they write to the Humour of the Age".[18]

Daniel Defoe used this genre from time to time for the purpose of satire. In 1705 he wrote The Consolidator: or Memoirs of Sundry Transactions from the World in the Moon, Translated from the Lunar Language,

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[15]Letter of 28 April 1711, in Swift, The Journal to Stella A.D. 1710-1713 (1923), p. 166.

[16]See Spectator No. 50, 27 April 1711.

[17]In April 1710, four Iroquois sachems or "kings" had visited London with Col. Peter Schuyler and other colonial leaders in order to solicit aid from the home government for military operations against the French in Canada. They had an audience with Queen Anne on 19 April and were taken to see the principal sights of London.

[18]Swift, Prose Works (1957), edd. Davis and Landa, IV, p. 12.

another pretended translation. The main figure is a Chinese, the supposed author, who is imagined to be travelling from China to the Moon in a feathered flying machine called "the Consolidator". By means of letters, the Chinese satirizes European society and politics by comparing them with lunar conditions.[19] A letter supposed to have been written by "Kora Selym Oglan" was produced by Defoe in 1717.[20] The "spy" device is used to relate topical satire, and the Orientals make sport of the conduct of Christians. Defoe was certainly familiar with Marana's Turkish Spy,[21] and some scholars think he contributed to The Continuation of Letters Written by a Turkish Spy at Paris.[22]

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[19]William Beckford may have had this in mind when he wrote to Lady Hamilton, 2 April 1781: "I fear I shall never be half so sapient nor good for anything in this world, but composing airs, building towers, forming gardens, collecting old Japan, and writing a journey to China or the moon". See Melville, op. cit., p. 105.

[20]See John R. Moore, A Checklist of the Writings of Daniel Defoe (1960), Item No. 381.

[21]See letter to Robert Harley [July-August, 1704?] in Letters (1955), ed. Healey, p. 38.

[22]See J.R. Moore, op. cit., Item No. 406. A note in Letters, p. 38 states: "In 1718 Defoe entitled one of his own works A Continuation of Letters Written by a Turkish Spy at Paris". E.A. Baker, in The History of the English Novel (1929), III, p. 143, says: "In all probability he was responsible, at least in part, for The Continuation of the Letters Written by a Turkish Spy at Paris (1718), his portion treating of the period 1687-1693". And W.P. Trent, in The Cambridge History of English Literature (1932), IX, p. 19, is equally tentative: "In 1717 he skilfully assumed the character of a Turk who was shocked by the intolerance displayed by English Christians in the Bangorian controversy, and it seems almost certain that, in 1718, he wrote for Taylor, the publisher of Robinson Crusoe, a continuation of the Letters of the famous Turkish Spy".

A Brief and Merry History of Great Britain, Containing an account of the religious customs, etc. . . . of the people, written originally in Arabick (1710?) was supposedly translated into English by A. Hillier. An Occidental poses as an Oriental and gives an account of English manners and customs. Sometimes he compares England with the Orient, and, as is usual in these stories, the Orient is made to seem more attractive. In the same year Steele wrote about a foreigner of unidentified nationality in Tatler No. 56. The foreigner makes no observations, but his questions about "persons of figure" met in public places provide Steele with an opportunity for satirical comments on "sharpers".

One contribution of Addison to this genre is a letter in Spectator No. 557, alleged to have been written by the ambassador of Bantam shortly after his arrival in England.[23] The point of this essay is that some polite expressions are insincere enough to be meaningless. Addison illustrates the absurdity of begging "ten thousand pardons", of offering to do "any service that lies in one's power", and of being "eternally obliged". The Ambassador says he lodged at a home where the owner "desired me to think myself at home, and to consider his House my own". Taking him at his word, on the following morning, the Ambassador "began to knock down one of the Walls of it, in order to let in the fresh Air, and had packed up some of the Household-Goods, of which I intended to have made thee [his ruler] a Present: But the false Varlet no sooner saw me falling to work, but he sent Word to desire me to give over, for that he would have no such Doings in his House".

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[23] An ambassador from Bantam did visit London in May 1682.

One of the most popular works of this kind was Lord Lyttelton's Letters from a Persian in England to his Friend at Ispahan (1735), the first English imitation of Montesquieu's *masterpiece*.[24] While acknowledging that it is customary to disclaim authorship in these stories, he does the same thing himself in a letter to the bookseller: "I am aware that some people may suspect that the character of a Persian is fictitious, as many such counterfeits have appeared both in France and England: but whoever reads them with attention will be convinced that they are certainly the work of a perfect stranger".[25] All but a few of the letters in the book are written by Selim to his friend Mirza. Lyttelton linked his letters with Montesquieu's by imagining that Selim and Mirza knew Montesquieu's correspondent Usbek.[26] Selim promises: "Whatever in the manners of this people appear to me to be singular and fantastical, I will also give thee some account of: and, if I may judge by what I have seen already, this is a subject which will not easily be exhausted".[27] And so Selim describes his experiences with an opera audience, as a spectator at a circus, and in a debtor's prison, and comments upon gambling and intoxication. In Letters X to XX he recounts the "History of the Troglodytes", a continuation of that "related by our countryman Usbec". His purpose is

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[24]It went through four editions in the first year of publication, a fifth in 1744, and others appear as late as 1796.

[25]Lyttelton, Works (1776), I, p. 131.

[26]"The relations we received from our friend Usbec, of those parts of Europe which he had seen, raised in us an ardent desire to know the rest, and particularly this famous island, of which, not having been there himself, he could give us but imperfect accounts." Ibid., p. 133.

[27]Ibid., p. 134.

to show that "mankind has become wickeder and more miserable in a state of government, than they were left in a state of nature". He satirizes the growth of corruption in English church and government. This is the first full-sized book in which the point of view of a foreigner is maintained consistently throughout.

The Persian Letters; or, the second volume of Letters from Selim at London, to Mirza at Ispahan appeared in 1736. This was the first of a series of works which followed closely upon Letters from a Persian; however, it was not written by Lyttelton.[28] The author states that it is his intention to give a modest check to some unnecessary reflections in the first volume, namely, Lyttelton's. In 1736 also the Gentleman's Magazine listed the publication of Remarks of a Persian Traveller[29] and Letters from a Moor at London to his Friend at Tunis.[30] The latter is more like a text book than a collection of essays on manners. In twenty-four letters the city of London, the public buildings, and the government of England are all described at great length, but there is no attempt at satire. The "Moor" is a mere device to attract readers. Hardly anything characterizes him as an Oriental, much less as a Moor. A better example

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[28]Halkett and Laing, op. cit., IV, p. 326, state that the identity of the writer has not yet been ascertained.

[29]"Remarks of a Persian Traveller on the principal Courts of Europe with a Dissertation upon that of England, the Nation in General and the Prime Minister. Written in the Persian Language Originally, and translated into English and French." Gentleman's Magazine, VI (1736), p. 44.

[30]"Letters from a Moor at London to his Friend at Tunis; containing an Account of his Journey thro' England, with his Observations of the Laws, Customs, Religion, and Manners of the English Nation." Gentleman's Magazine, VI (1736), p. 427. L.J. Davidson, in "Forerunners of Goldsmith's The Citizen of the World", Modern Language Notes, XXXVI (1921), p. 219 attributes the authorship to a "William Lloyd".

of the genre is Letters from an Armenian in Ireland to his Friends at Trebisond, &c. Translated in the Year 1756. Its authorship has been attributed to Robert Hellen, Viscount Edmund Sexton Pery, and others.[31] The author uses Lyttelton's work as a point of departure and the principal correspondent of his Oriental traveller, Aza the Armenian, is Selim's friend, Abdallah, whom we first hear about in Lyttelton's Letters from a Persian. Aza's guide is an Irish friend whose comments and explanations help him to understand his experiences. But the writer does not sustain the Oriental guise for very long. Goldsmith, reviewing this work in the Monthly Review, wrote:

> Whether the country our Author describes was deficient in materials, and had not national follies enough for general satire, we are not to determine; but certain it is, he has by no means been cautious in his endeavours to preserve the fictitious character he has assumed. This pretended Armenian espouses party, enters into the minutiae of the politics of Ireland, explains Poynings Act, and pays not a little attention to my Lady Mayoress, the Chandler's daughter. While these, and topics more trifling than these, make up the correspondence, in vain is every period stiffned with a thee and thou; in vain does he swear, or pray, like a zealous Mussulman. He personates a native of the East, just as the frigid ****** acts the glowing Othello, or the fiery Bajazet.[32]

In the middle of the eighteenth century, Horace Walpole wrote an essay for The World in which he commented upon the unnecessary proliferation of books. To make his point clear, he imagines a Chinese or Indian who in a short letter to his correspondent at home acquaints him with the vast waste of labour contained in the libraries of Europe. The letter is written

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[31]See Halkett and Laing, op. cit., III, p. 321.

[32]Monthly Review, XVII (1757), p. 150.

in what Walpole calls the "hyperbolic style of the East". The sage is amazed at the wilderness of books and the futility of the pedants who continue to increase their number. This essay was never published in the World [33] and it is possible that Walpole's skill in handling this genre would not have been well known had he not written A Letter from Xo Ho, a Chinese Philosopher at London, to his Friend Lien Chi, at Peking. We are told by Walpole's editor that it was written on 12 May 1757, sent to the press the next day, and went through five editions in a fortnight.[34] Its chief purpose was to expose the irrationality of the Englishman's political psychology: "the people demand to be told something, no matter what: if a politician, a minister, a member of their assembly, was mysterious, and refused to impart something to an inquirer, he would make an enemy: if he tells a lie, it is no offence; he is communicative; that is sufficient to a free people: all they ask is news; a falsehood is as much news as truth".[35] Walpole's wit is best exhibited in his discussion of the ill-fated Admiral Byng: "Last year the English lost a valuable island . . . The imprisoned admiral was tried, acquitted, condemned and put to death. The trials of the others were delayed. At last they were tried - not as I expected, whether they were guilty, but whether they should be ministers or not. If the executed admiral had lived, he too might be a minister."[36]

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[33] But see Walpole, Works (1798), I, pp. 198, 199.

[34] Ibid., p. 205.

[35] Ibid., p. 206.

[36] Ibid., p. 207.

The Oriental guise of Xo Ho is not elaborate and wears thin. Walpole's perceptive wit keeps the reader interested.

It was in 1757 also that Richard Graves began to write The Spiritual Quixote, a work which was not published until 1773. Graves made a passing thrust at the literary habit of setting up foreigners as critics of England. In the course of his wanderings, Wildgoose, the hero, meets a man called Graham, a grotesque philosopher who claims to be the author of an unpublished manuscript: Literae Hottentoticae; or Letters from a beautiful young Hottentot to her friends at the Cape. Graham explains that it is "an account of the many barbarous customs and preposterous opinions which she had observed in our metropolis during her three years abode amongst us".[37] But Graves's thrust was harmless and the foreign observer genre continued to flourish.

By far the best example of the foreign observer device in English is Oliver Goldsmith's Citizen of the World, a collection of letters first printed in the Public Ledger twice a week between January 1760 and August 1761. Originally there were 116 of these letters but the number was increased to 119 in the collected edition of May 1762 entitled The Citizen of the World; or Letters from a Chinese Philosopher, Residing in London, to his Friends in the East.[38] The work was instantly popular, and continued to be published in England, Ireland, and America until 1824. It is important to remember that the letters were written originally for periodical publication, for Goldsmith's journalistic sense had led him to write on topics

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[37]Graves, The Spiritual Quixote (1773), ed. Clarence Tracy (1967), p. 128.

[38]Letters referred to here follow the numbering pattern of The Collected Works of Oliver Goldsmith (1966), ed. Arthur Friedman.

that were timely, personal, and directly related to the life that was going on about him.[39] When the letters were collected in two volumes in 1762, their appeal was somewhat diminished because this more polished version lacked the immediacy and relevance that they had had when they appeared day by day.

There is ample evidence that Goldsmith drew on the works of his predecessors in this type of fiction, but it is to his credit that he adapted the borrowed material to suit his own purpose, and, in most cases, improved on it. This is especially true of his borrowings from Marana, Montesquieu, and Lyttelton. Marana's purpose was to record facts; nearly all of Goldsmith's letters were essays devoted to a single idea. Marana tried to instruct with the aid of history; Goldsmith was concerned with the minor quirks and foibles of current English culture and treats them with a gentle kind of ridicule that is amusing as well as mildly instructive. The Turkish Spy was written against a background of war and political activity; the more ephemeral activities in The Citizen of the World take place in private life - especially in the life of middle and lower class Englishmen - and are largely fictional. Marana's design was useful to Goldsmith, but the intentions of the two authors were so different that nothing else was of use. It is probable that Montesquieu's Persian Letters influenced Goldsmith's handling of certain topics, but he does not follow Montesquieu slavishly. Moreover, Montesquieu used fifty-six out of one hundred and sixty-one letters to develop the romantic story of Usbek and

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[39] See H.J. Smith, "Mr. Tattler of Pekin, China: a Venture in Journalism", in Essays in Criticism by Members of the Department of English, University of California (1929), p. 169 ff.

his wives back in Ispahan. The Citizen of the World represents the letters of only one correspondent, Lien Chi Altangi,[40] and thus preserves its unity with much less effort. It is remarkably free from Oriental trappings, whereas Montesquieu and many other writers make great play with Oriental customs and stilted language in an effort to hide the real origin of their works. Goldsmith must have known also Lyttelton's Letters from a Persian in England, but Lyttelton's eighty letters are not as topical, varied in subject matter, unified in design, or as realistic as Goldsmith's.[41]

No matter what he may have borrowed from other writers, The Citizen of the World is distinctively Goldsmith's. His portrayal of the Man in Black and Beau Tibbs is an example of characterization unprecedented in this kind of fiction. It must also be remembered that Goldsmith had not yet published The Vicar of Wakefield (1766), a novel which was to make him famous, and therefore these are perhaps the first signs of his hitherto undisclosed gift for portraying humorous character. "The little sketches of Jack Spindle and 'my cousin Hannah,' in 'The Bee,', go no farther than the corresponding personifications of particular qualities in the 'Spectator' and 'Tatler'."[42] Such well drawn characters are unusual in periodical literature. Addison had done something the same in The Spectator. Mrs. Hodson, Goldsmith's sister, suggested that the reluctant philanthropist whom he christened "the Man in Black" possessed

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[40]This name may have been suggested by Walpole's Letter from Xo Ho . . . to his Friend Lien Chi (1757).

[41]Specific references of Goldsmith's borrowings are given by R.S. Crane and H.J. Smith, "A French Influence on Goldsmith's Citizen of the World", Modern Philology, XIX (1921), especially pages 86-91, and by J.E. Brown, "Goldsmith's Indebtedness to Voltaire and Justus Van Effen", Modern Philology, XXIII (1926), pp. 273-284.

[42]Austin Dobson, "The Citizen of the World", in Eighteenth Century Vignettes (1892), p. 113.

certain idiosyncrasies which suggest Goldsmith's father and Goldsmith himself.[43] The naïvety of his charity contrasts with his expressed distrust of human nature; his simulated harshness belies his genuine amiability. By now he has become a type in English literature. He is surpassed in The Citizen of the World only by the more complete portrait of Beau Tibbs, the tarnished little name-dropper and pretender to fashion:

> His hat was pinch'd up with peculiar smartness; his looks were pale, thin, and sharp; round his neck he wore a broad black ribbon, and in his bosom a buckle studded with glass; his coat was trimmed with tarnish'd twist; he wore by his side a sword with a black hilt, and his stockings of silk, though newly wash'd, were grown yellow by long service.[44]

Especially humorous is the Dickensian scene in which the Chinese visitor accompanies the Man in Black and the pawn-broker's widow, along with Beau Tibbs and his wife ("in flimsy silk, dirty gauze instead of linen, and an hat as big as an umbrello"), to the Vauxhall Gardens. A continual sparring ensues, pitting the borrowed gentility of Mrs. Tibbs against the moneyed vulgarity of the tradesman's widow. Mrs. Tibbs emerges as the unquestioned authority on taste: "[the widow] perceived now that she had no pretensions in the world to taste, her very senses were vulgar, since she had praised detestable custard, and smacked at wretched wine; she was therefore content to yield the victory, and for the rest of the night to listen and improve".

As for Lien Chi, he sometimes forgets his Chinese point of view and his formal language. Sometimes he appears not to be a Chinese at all, but

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[43] See Goldsmith, Collected Works, II, p. 112.

[44] Letter LIV.

rather an Englishman with a keen eye. In letter XXXIII he is accused of having "nothing of the true eastern manner" in his delivery, but explains:

> . . . what is palm'd upon you daily for an imitation of eastern writing, no way resembles their manner, either in sentiment or diction. In the east, similies are seldom used, and metaphors almost wholly unknown; but in China particularly, the very reverse of what you allude to, takes place; a cool phlegmatic method of writing prevails there.

This is primarily an allusion to the fake language of the Oriental tales that were being produced in England. Lien Chi is by far the most credible of the foreign observers in English fiction. Goldsmith endowed him with a wide knowledge of various nations, a philosophical turn of mind, and many friends who introduced him to the various scenes of English life. Consequently The Citizen of the World is an extremely thorough analysis of society. Each letter takes us to a fresh area of interest which we are invited to explore through the eyes of the foreigner. The image of the Oriental as candid, intellectually honest, and viewing all things with the cool eye of reason, still prevails today. With these characteristics, he was akin to the "man of nature", who in the second half of the eighteenth century exposed the shams and inconsistencies of civilized society with equal clarity of judgement and frankness. This became the preoccupation of the followers of Rousseau.

(2) The Apologue or Conte Philosophique

The apologue, also known as the "fable" or "parable", has been used from earliest times as a favourite means of illustrating a moral lesson.

Although this kind of story is more commonly found in the oral tradition of folklore, it has been used widely in various kinds of literature. The Greek slave Aesop, who lived early in the sixth century B.C., has been regarded from antiquity to the present day as the exponent par excellence of the fable, even though there is no evidence that he ever prepared his stories for publication. This kind of story is most often concerned with animals or inanimate objects. The parable, which is concerned with people, is used for illustration in the teachings of Jesus Christ and in the letters of Saint Paul. And in the Arabian Nights, stories resembling the parable were used to impart wisdom and spiritual benefit. In the eighteenth century a popular form of Oriental tale, usually called an "apologue", drew on all three of these types in attempting to teach the reading public to be virtuous.

Some of the earliest examples of this type are found in essays in periodical literature. As observers and critics of the daily activities of contemporary society, the English essayists were concerned primarily with public morality. To illustrate morals and expound philosophy, they show a fondness for "allegories", "fables", and "tales", and these are often Oriental in setting. Addison said that one of his objectives in the Spectator was to "enliven Morality with Wit, and to temper Wit with Morality".[45] He was especially partial to using fables, for in the process of reading them

> We peruse the Author for the sake of the Story, and consider the Precepts rather as our own Conclusions,

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[45] Spectator No. 10, 12 March 1711.

> than his Instructions. The Moral insinuates it self imperceptibly, we are taught by Surprise, and become wiser and better unawares. In short, by this Method a Man is so far over-reached as to think he is directing himself, while he is following the Dictates of another, and consequently is not sensible of that which is the most unpleasing Circumstance in Advice.[46]

But this brand of morality and philosophy was not distinctly Oriental in character. It embraced such English virtues as industry, health, economy, justice, and prudence. The Oriental element was often but a mask to give variety and attract readers.

Perhaps the best of these apologues is one of the earliest, Addison's Vision of Mirza.[47] Certainly it is the best known of the English apologues.[48] Typically, Addison begins by explaining how he "picked up several Oriental Manuscripts" while on a visit to Cairo. He calls one of them The Vision of Mirza and says he is beginning with "the first Vision, which I have translated Word for Word". We may infer from this that a series of apologues was planned; only one, however, was ever published. While contemplating "the Vanity of humane Life" on a mountain top, Mirza is approached by a genius "in the Habit of a Shepherd" who leads him to the highest mountain peak. A supernatural being such as this is common in this kind of tale. There follows a commentary on the transitoriness of human life. Mirza is shown a huge valley with a prodigious river running through it.

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[46] Spectator No. 512, 17 October 1712.

[47] Spectator No. 159, 1 September 1711.

[48] Robert Burns, in an autobiographical letter to Dr. John Moore, 2 August 1787, wrote: "The earliest thing of Composition that I recollect taking pleasure in was, The vision of Mirza and a hymn of Addison's beginning - 'How are Thy servants blest, O Lord!'" See Burns, Selected Letters (1953), ed. Ferguson, p. 55.

Across the valley stands a bridge consisting of three score and ten arches. As the multitudes of people pass over it, they fall through trap-doors into the river below. This is a depressing spectacle to Mirza:

> I passed some Time in the Contemplation of this wonderful Structure, and the great Variety of Objects which it presented. My Heart was filled with a deep Melancholy to see several dropping unexpectedly in the Midst of Mirth and Jollity, and catching at every thing that stood by them to save themselves. Some were looking up towards the Heavens in a thoughtful Posture, and in the Midst of a Speculation stumbled and fell out of Sight. Multitudes were very busy in the Pursuit of Bubbles that glittered in their Eyes and danced before them, but often when they thought themselves within the Reach of them their Footing failed and down they sunk. In this Confusion of Objects, I observed some with Scymetars in their Hands, and others with Urinals, who ran to and fro upon the Bridge, thrusting several Persons on Trap-doors which did not seem to lie in their Way, and which they might have escaped had they not been thus forced upon them.

Eventually they all fall through and are borne away, the virtuous to the islands of "Pleasure of Different Kinds and Degrees", and the rest to a region covered with cloud.

The story uses a minimum of Oriental ornament and relies for its impact on the meaning contained in the simple metaphor of the bridge of life and the folly of those who build upon it. The solemn mood is partly achieved by the Biblical terms. The "vale of misery" is reminiscent of the "valley of death" in Psalm XXIII; the "prodigious tide of water" suggests the Biblical symbol for life;[49] and the threescore and ten arches of the

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[49]Psalm CX, vv. 4 and 5: "For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night./ Thou carriest them away as with a flood, and they are even as a sleep; in the morning they are like grass that groweth up."

bridge correspond to the Biblical measure of a man's life.[50] The tale appears to be an amplification of Psalm XC, especially verse twelve: "So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom".

Much shorter than The Vision of Mirza is the story which Addison says bears out this moral: "There is no virtue so truly great and godlike as justice".[51] When a sultan's army camps on the plains of Avila, "a certain great man of the army" forces his way into a peasant's house, turns out the man, and spends the night in bed with his wife. The husband complains to the sultan but is unable to identify the man. The second time this occurs the sultan goes to the peasant's house, orders every light extinguished, and puts the criminal to death in the dark. On looking at the corpse of the criminal, the sultan falls on his knees in prayer, orders food, and appears to be in a good humour. Curious, the peasant asks why he does this. The sultan replies:

> . . . I had reason to think it might have been one of my own sons, for who else would have been so audacious and presuming? I gave orders therefore for the lights to be extinguished, that I might not be led astray, by partiality or compassion, from doing justice on the criminal.

He had been so joyful that his son had not been involved that he got down on his knees to thank God. Except for the presence of a sultan and the location of the story in Avila, there is no Oriental atmosphere attempted.

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[50] Psalm CX, v. 10: "The days of our age are threescore years and ten, or, if men be so strong, they may come to fourscore years;/ Yet is their pride but labour and sorrow: so soon passeth it away, and we are gone."

[51] Guardian No. 99, 4 July 1713.

However the sultan's procedure in dealing with criminals is certainly far removed from Western practices.

One of Addison's political essays is concerned with the arbitrary powers of rulers: "They are made to believe, that Passive Obedience and non-Resistance, Unlimited Power and Indefeasible Right, have something of a venerable and religious Meaning in them; whereas in Reality, they only imply that a King of Great-Britain has a Right to be a Tyrant, and that his Subjects are obliged in Conscience to be Slaves".[52] To support this charge, he recounts the life of "Muley Ishmael, Emperor of Morocco", who possessed such unquestionable power that he would demonstrate his horsemanship to foreign visitors by slaughtering two or three of his subjects "whom he dexterously put to Death with the Tilt of his Lance". If he did not approve the architectural design of a building, he would "shew the Delicacy of his Taste by demolishing the Building, and putting to death all that had a Hand in it". He once killed one of his queens with a kick "when she was big with Child, for having gather'd a Flower as she was walking with him in his Pleasure Garden". This same Emperor of Morocco had been compared with the King of France (probably Louis XIV) in a book by a French ambassador. Addison says:

> This was that Emperor of France to whom the Person who has a great Mind to be King of these Realms owed his Education, and from whom he learned his Notions of Government. What should hinder One, whose Mind is so well seasoned with such Prepossessions, from attempting to copy after his Patron, in the Exercise of such a Power; especially considering that the Party who

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[52] *Freeholder* No. 10, 23 January 1716.

> espouse his Interest, never fail to compliment a Prince that distributes all his Places among them, with unlimited Power on his Part, and unconditional Obedience on that of his Subjects.

Addison exaggerates, but his illustration is apt. There is something outré about the tyrannical actions of Muley Ishmael that could not perhaps have been associated with actions of any Western ruler.

Alexander Pope illustrates an argument about the inhumanity of man in his dealings with the lower animals by citing what he calls "one of the Persian fables of Pilpay".[53] A traveller rescues an adder from a burning bush by drawing him out in a bag tied to the end of his staff. He tells the adder to go where he pleases and never again do injury to men. As the adder prepares to sting the traveller, the latter preaches to him about the injustice of rewarding good with evil. They refer the matter to a tree and a cow, each of which describes man's ingratitude for the benefits which they provide him. Finally, they tell the whole story to a fox who says he cannot be persuaded that it is possible for the adder to enter into so small a bag. "The adder, to convince him, went in again; when the fox told the man he had now his enemy in his power, and with that he fastened the bag, and crushed him to pieces." This apologue closely resembles Aesop's fables, in which talking animals illustrate truths about human life. There is nothing to make it distinctively Oriental. It would be interesting to know whether Pope received as much as half-a-crown for his efforts.

Sir Richard Steele published The History of Santon Barsisa (on which

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[53] Guardian No. 61, 21 May 1713.

M.G. Lewis was to base The Monk (1796) with the justification that "there are few, if any books, out of which a man of learning may not extract something for his use".[54] The daughter of a king suffers from a incurable illness and is sent, as a last resort, to the santon (Mohammedan monk or hermit), Barsisa. The old man is stirred by the beauty of the girl and the devil tempts him to keep her for a night: "You may do anything unpunished, when armed by the great reputation for wisdom which you have acquired". The santon then approaches the princess "and in a moment cancels a virtue of an hundred years duration". A thousand horrors haunt him day and night. Acting on the advice of the devil, he kills the princess and tells the king that she has gone away early in the morning. The devil tells the king what has really happened and the santon is sentenced to be hanged. As he is about to die, the devil promises to save him if he will first give him a sign of adoration.

> Whereupon the santon bowed and said, 'I give myself to you.' The devil then raising his voice, said, 'O Barsisa, I am satisfied; I have obtained what I desired;' and with these words, spitting in his face, he disappeared; and the deluded santon was hanged.

There is nothing in this variation of the Faust legend that is particularly Oriental. If anything, it is characteristically Christian.

The apologues of Samuel Johnson in the Rambler and the Idler are expressions of his sober philosophy of the vanity of planning the happiness of one's life.[55] More ponderous in style than others of their

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[54] Guardian No. 148, 31 August 1713.

[55] He was not, however, ignorant of their entertainment value. He told Boswell that Goldsmith "has the art of compiling, and of saying every thing he has to say in a pleasing manner. He is now writing a Natural History and will make it as entertaining as a Persian Tale". See Boswell, Life of Johnson (1934), ed. Hill, II, p. 237.

kind, Dr. Johnson's essays are more intent upon presenting philosophical and moral truths in a clear fashion than with adorning them in Oriental dress. Of particular interest is the story of Seged, Lord of Ethiopia, who in the twenty-seventh year of his reign decided to retire for ten days to an island where a house of pleasure has been built containing everything that can gratify the senses.[56] The first day is lost while he decides which pleasure to indulge in first. The other nine are marred by various infelicities, ending on the tenth day with the death of his daughter the princess. The story of Ortogrul of Basra exemplifies the maxim "Let no man . . . wish to be rich, who is already too wise to be flattered".[57] Ortogrul, a wise man, contrasts the luxuriousness of the vizier's palace with his own humble state. After twenty years of perseverance, he is a rich man, but grows weary of himself and desires to be persuaded that he is great and happy. His wisdom prevents him from being persuaded. "His own heart told him his frailities, his own understanding reproached him with his faults."

In The Proceedings of Providence Vindicated, an Eastern Tale, a story by Oliver Goldsmith which appeared in the Royal Magazine in 1759, Asem the Manhater discovers that he receives nothing but ingratitude for loving his fellow men. A genie takes him to a subterranean world where the inhabitants live absolutely without vice. One by one, Asem's notions of an ideal world are shown to be impractical. He rejoins society where

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[56] Rambler No. 204 and 205, 29 February and 3 March 1752.

[57] Idler No. 99, 8 March 1760.

he "diligently applies himself to commerce, and puts in practice that wisdom he had learned in solitude". There is considerably more Oriental content here than in most of the apologues, a hint of what was to come three years later in The Citizen of the World.

An imitator of Johnson, Sir John Hawkesworth, contributed moralistic tales to the Adventurer from 1752 to 1754. Hawkesworth differs from his predecessors in style. These tales are encrusted with more Oriental imagery, and while the other tales are somewhat pompous, these are absurdly elevated. In the story of Amurath, Sultan of the East, the hero is given a ring by a genie and whenever Amurath is inclined to do evil the ring pinches his finger.[58] Not content to be restrained, he throws the ring away and is successively turned into "a monster of the desert", a dog, and a dove. He thus learns that "the wants of nature cannot be supplied with safety, where the inordinate appetites of vice are not restrained". Hawkesworth's best known work was Almoran and Hamet (1761), an Oriental tale which enjoyed great popularity mainly because of its melodramatic plot. Two brothers are left to rule jointly when their father dies. Hamet is "thoughtful, patient, and forbearing"; Almoran is "haughty, vain, and voluptuous". They both fall in love with Almeida. The tension of this story is maintained by the disparities of personality between the two brothers. Maintaining the tradition of the tales in the periodicals, the Oriental mask is thin, the diction is sonorous, and a genie appears who aids Almoran's treachery:

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[58]Adventurer No. 20, 21, and 22; 13, 16, and 20 January 1753.

> As he uttered this expression, he felt the palace shake; he heard a rushing, like a blast in the desert; and a being of more than human appearance stood before him. Almoran, though he was terrified, was not humbled; and he stood expecting the event, whether good or evil, rather with obduracy than courage.[59]

Almoran's wish to satiate every desire is aided by a magic talisman, but each wish is frustrated by the virtue of Hamet and Almeida. In the end he is metamorphosed into a rock, leaving the lovers to reign in peace.

Among the lengthier tales are John Langhorne's tedious and heavily moralistic Solyman and Almena (1762) and Mrs. Frances Sheridan's History of Nourjahad (1767), the latter of which employs a kind of Rip van Winkle device in order to enforce the trite moral of the vanity of riches. A genie promises Nourjahad endless youth and an infinite amount of gold but warns him that he may expect to fall into trances lasting weeks or years. Thus the houris whom he had left young and beautiful are wrinkled hags when he awakes. Nourjahad is duly chastened, but he and the reader are surprised to find that the gold, the houris, and the trances are all part of a practical joke executed by the Sultan who has been attempting to see whether Nourjahad is worthy to accede to the throne.

Samuel Johnson's History of Rasselas, Prince of Abissinia is the most outstanding example of the longer moral and philosophic tales. At

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[59] British Novelists (1820), ed. Barbauld, XXVI, p. 179. Once again, the Biblical influence comes through. The appearance of the genius suggests the appearance of the Holy Spirit in The Acts of the Apostles, 2: 2: "And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting". The words of the genius, "Take no thought for to-morrow; to-morrow, my power shall be employed in thy behalf, are reminiscent of the Sermon on the Mount in The Gospel According to St. Matthew, 6: 34: "Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself."

first it may appear incongruous that a man as sober as Johnson should be interested in such fanciful happenings. But he was not a neophyte in this kind of literature, having already translated Lobo's Voyage to Abyssinia and contributed Oriental tales to the Rambler and the Idler. Boswell tells us that when Johnson was granted his pension he said: "Had this happened twenty years ago, I should have gone to Constantinople to learn Arabick, as Pococke did".[60] It has also been shown that he was a reader of the Persian Tales, from which he gained some of his ideas for Rasselas.[61] Voltaire's Candide, which appeared almost at the same time, was conceived on a similar plan. However, as Boswell points out, the objects of the two works were not the same:

> Voltaire, I am afraid, meant only by wanton profaneness to obtain a sportive victory over religion, and to discredit the belief of a superintending Providence: Johnson meant, by shewing the unsatisfactory nature of things temporal, to direct the hopes of man to things eternal. Rasselas, as was observed to me by a very accomplished lady, may be considered as a more enlarged and more deeply philosophical discourse in prose, upon the interesting truth, which in his 'Vanity of Human Wishes' he had so successfully enforced in verse.[62]

This last point is obvious from the beginning of the work where Johnson addresses himself to "Ye who would listen with credulity to the whispers of fancy, and pursue with eagerness the phantoms of hope; who expect that age will perform the promises of youth, and that the deficiencies of the present day will be supplied by the morrow".

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[60] Boswell, Life, IV, p. 27.

[61] See Geoffrey Tillotson, "Rasselas and The Persian Tales," in Essays in Criticism and Research (1942), p. 114.

[62] Boswell, op. cit., I, p. 342.

According to custom in Abyssinia, Rasselas at the beginning of the story is secluded from the world with his brothers and sisters "till the order of succession should call him to the throne". They are enclosed in a beautiful valley where they are liberally provided with everything that can gratify or amuse them. Once a year the emperor visits, entering through a cavern sealed up by gates of iron - the only means of escape. Rasselas, a young prince of intelligence and curiosity, wearies of the monotony and escapes from the valley, taking with him his sister, Nekayah, her attendant, and the philosopher Imlac who has helped them escape. They agree to range the world in order to make their "choice of life".

The story itself is unexciting - even the kidnapping of Nekayah's attendant Pekuah by Arab horsemen is dull. But it does provide a sufficiently broad canvas on which Johnson can exhibit and criticize various modes of human existence. Rasselas is episodic in form. Its unity lies in the allegory of the journey: the pilgrims see the varying points of view on matters such as public and private life, marriage and celibacy, religious retirement, and so on, and are unable to decide upon a "choice of life" amidst such various appearances of good and evil. Having seen enough of the world to be disenchanted with it, they end their search by resolving to return to the valley. "Of the wishes that they had formed, they well knew that none could be obtained.". In the words of the title of the last chapter, this is "the conclusion in which nothing is concluded".

Such a conclusion is perhaps appropriate for such insular characters as these. After having lived in total isolation, separated from the intri-

cacies of social intercourse, they could have reached no other conclusion from sifting the advantages and disadvantages of various modes of life. Credulity ("easiness of belief"), fancy ("an opinion bred rather by the imagination than the reason"), hope ("an expectation indulged with pleasure"), and youthful illusions about the future, are all singled out and destroyed. But this serves to highlight the fact that no man is isolated. Every man is woven into society in such a way that his "choice of life" is seldom in question and his happiness is seldom perfect. The implication is, therefore, that no pure happiness is to be found and a reasoning man will continually be making choices.[63]

Rasselas stands at the highest point of development of the moral or philosophic tale. Scattered along the way are a few with literary value, but in general the majority of these tales were illustrations used in an age when writers saw moralizing as their prime function. Few of these tales are read today, not because writers no longer moralize, but because they have since found other ways to do it.

(3) Stories Based on the Genuine Orient

Around the 1770's a great European movement of thought began which was to emancipate Western countries from the well-established belief that the only sources of light and learning emanated from Graeco-Roman culture.

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[63] A sequel to the story by Ellis Cornelia Knight, Dinarbas, a Tale, being a Continuation of Rasselas, Prince of Abissinia (1790), attempts to show that love and altruistic conduct bring happiness. Rasselas quels a rebellion against his father, succeeds to the throne, and sets free the inhabitants of the Happy Valley.

Many English writers thought that the mythology of classicism and its associated themes, which had been in use in art since the Renaissance, needed to be supplemented by fresh types of imagery, subject matter and models. Mediaevalism was in the air, sponsored chiefly by the Wartons, Bishop Percy, and Chatterton; so were Norse mythology, Gaelic bards, and Oriental studies. The Orient was studied in two ways: philological investigations of Eastern languages and literature by scholars, and accurate accounts of the East written eagerly by travellers and diplomats upon returning from tours of Eastern countries.

From 1775 to 1825 an almost uninterrupted stream of travel books flooded the English market.[64] One of the most popular was the collection of letters written by Lady Mary Wortley Montagu at Constantinople in 1716, while her husband was British ambassador. These were virtuoso letters describing Turkey and other countries of the Mediterranean, and they contributed greatly to the exchange of ideas between Turkey and Europe. However, the published letters are not the ones she actually sent. Instead they are a compilation of fictitious letters addressed to people either named or nameless and are clearly an accurate record of her observations and experiences during two years abroad. Among the other scholars and diplomats of the late eighteenth century who had an interest in the Orient were: Sir William Ouseley, Sir Gore Ouseley, James Justinian Morier, Sir John Malcolm, Edward Backhouse Eastwick, Charles Augustus Murray, Henry Creswicke Rawlinson, Eyles Irwin, Stephen Weston, Richard Hole, and Francis

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[64]See Wallace C. Brown, "The Popularity of English Travel Books about the Near East, 1775-1825", Philological Quarterly, XV (1936), pp. 70-80.

Douce. But these are unimportant in comparison with the acknowledged founder of Oriental scholarship in England, Sir William Jones (1746-94). In 1768 he was the only person in England who knew enough Persian to translate the Life of Nadir Shah for the King of Denmark. His scholarly work was of inestimable value to the writers of the time, and evidence of his influence may be discovered among their footnotes:

> . . . among his contemporaries he stimulated Gibbon, Burke, Dugald Stewart, Beckford, Thomas Campbell, and John Scott of Amwell. He helped incite the Oriental vogue among the Romantics Byron, Shelley, Coleridge, Southey, Moore, and Landor, and probably influenced Tennyson, Emily Brontë, Fitzgerald, Disraeli, Swinburne, and possibly Arnold and Browning. He incited much of the Concord Hinduism of Emerson, Thoreau, and Bronson Alcott, and he provided a source of Oriental information for Irving and Melville. Herder and Goethe were influenced through Jones's translations. The fact that poets like Bryant, Campbell, Emerson, Gosse, Markham, and Southey included Jones in their collections of favourite poems poses possibly more influences. There may be still others.[65]

A milieu was thus created for writers of Oriental fiction. Before this time the French translations had served as models; now the findings of scholars and the travel accounts could not be ignored, and English writers began to garnish their tales with impressive sets of notes demonstrating their familiarity with the authentic East.

John Pinkerton, writing under the pseudonym "Robert Heron", published a series of twenty-four apologues in Letters of Literature (1785).[66]

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[65]Garland Cannon, "The Literary Place of Sir William Jones (1746-94)", Journal of the Asiatic Society, II (1960), p. 61.

[66]See Pinkerton, Letters of Literature (1785), pp. 432-457.

He claims to have translated them from "the two great works of Musladin Sadi". These are much shorter than the apologues of the periodicals. Some are no more than proverbs, others are short quotations from Oriental monarchs. They all have a strongly moral quality. In the same year, The History of Charoba, Queen of Aegypt appeared in the same volume as Clara Reeve's Progress of Romance. Strictly speaking, The History of Charoba is not a romance. The authoress saw elements of romance in the original narrative and dressed it up to suit the tenets of "good taste".[67] The original was an episode in the history of Egypt by Murtadhā ibn al-Khafīf which had been published in 1672 as The Egyptian History, treating of the Pyramids, the inundation of the Nile and other prodigies, according to the opinions and traditions of the Arabians: written . . . in the Arabian tongue by Murtadi . . . rendered into French by Mons. Vattier . . . and thence faithfully done into English by J. Davies. Mrs. Reeve not only modernized the language of the tale as it had appeared in Davies' translation, but also altered the story itself. Exaggerations were toned down, unnecessary characters or episodes were eliminated, contradictory evidence was explained away, and the result was a short tale which preserved its Arabian spirit while remaining well suited as reading material for English ladies. For, she had written in The Progress of Romance, the tales "create and encourage the wildest excursions of the imagination, which it is, or ought to be, the care of parents and preceptors to restrain, and to give them a just and true representation of human nature, and of the duties and practice

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[67] An account of her adaptations is given by Stanley T. Williams, "The Story of Gebir", Publications of the Modern Language Association, XXXVI (1921), pp. 615-631.

of common life".[68] The tale assumes added interest as the immediate source of Landor's poem Gebir (1798).

By far the most outstanding Oriental tale written by an Englishman in the eighteenth century was The History of the Caliph Vathek; An Arabian Tale from an Unpublished Manuscript with Notes Critical and Explanatory, published anonymously in 1786 and written by William Beckford, the enigmatic virtuoso of Fonthill. Though recommended by the reviewer for "the morality of the design",[69] Vathek incorporates most of the characteristics of the Oriental tale which had sprung from the East and had then been copied and modified in Europe.[70] But Beckford did improve on his originals, and the tale sounds a note of wonder and terror never before experienced in Oriental fiction. In a way, it is the last of the fantastic prose tales in the Galland tradition, delighting in comic monstrosities of cruelty, gluttony, and lust. Like his kinsman, Count Anthony Hamilton, Beckford satirizes the genre he employs, particularly the highly moral tales.[71]

Vathek contains the stock themes of the earlier Oriental tales: love, adventure, magic, the appearance of an evil genius, and the quest for hidden treasure. Dominated by an unquenchable desire for knowledge forbidden to man, the Caliph Vathek[72] builds five new wings onto his palace "which he destined for the particular gratification of each of the

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[68] Reeve, The Progress of Romance (1930), p. 59.

[69] Gentleman's Magazine, LVI (1786), p. 594.

[70] See M.P. Conant, op. cit., pp. 61-71 and also H.T. Tuckerman, "Beckford and the Literature of Travel", Southern Literary Messenger, XVI (1850), p. 7.

[71] See James K. Folsom, "Beckford's 'Vathek' and the Tradition of Oriental Satire", Criticism, VI (1964), pp. 53-69.

[72] "Vathek" is al-Wāthiq, caliph from 842 A.D. to 847 A.D.

senses", and a tower where he and his fiendish mother practise magic, observe the stars, and lead a most impious life. Vathek is visited by a strange creature from far off lands, a Giaour, who seduces the Caliph with the promise of strange treasures. The horrible creature demonstrates such mysterious powers that Vathek signs a Faustian pact with him. Abjuring his Mohammedan faith, he lures fifty innocent children to their deaths for the sake of the Giaour, kills many of his faithful subjects, insults holy dervishes, and seduces Nouronihar, the daughter of the Emir Fakreddin. The ambition of Vathek and Nouronihar propels them to their inevitable fate. Beckford executes the account of their damnation so well that it makes the sustained whimsy of the first part of the story almost worthwhile. What begins facetiously ends on a note of awful tragedy. The awe-inspiring nobility of Eblis as he is described seated on the globe of fire that is his throne recalls Milton's Satan rather than, say, the mischievous tempter of the Santon Barsisa:

> His person was that of a young man, whose noble and regular features seemed to have been tarnished by malignant vapours. In his large eyes appeared both pride and despair. His flowing hair retained some resemblance of that of an angel of light. In his hand, which thunder had blasted, he swayed the iron sceptre that causes the monster Ouranbad, the afrits, and all the powers of the abyss to tremble.[73]

(The figure of Eblis continues to appear in English fiction between Beckford and Scott. He is prominent as the anti-hero in the works of Mrs. Radcliffe, "Monk" Lewis, and William Godwin, and his outline is

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[73] Three Eighteenth Century Romances (1931), ed. Steeves, p. 234.

apparent in Byron's enigmatic heroes.[74]) Once the lovers are within the ebony portals of the infernal regions, a steadily deepening sense of horror accompanies them, and the realization of their impending doom slowly closes in upon them until:

> . . . the same voice announced to the caliph, Nouronihar, the four princes, and the princess, the awful and irrevocable decree. Their hearts immediately took fire, and they at once lost the most precious gift of heaven, - HOPE.[75]

Vathek and Nouronihar meet other victims of sin and pride in the Hall of Eblis and are told their stories. These tales ("The Story of Prince Alasi and the Princess Firouzkah", "The Story of Prince Barkiarokh", "The Story of the Princess Zulkais and the Prince Kalilah", and a fourth which is incomplete) were composed in French like Vathek and long remained in manuscript form until they were published in English in 1912.[76] Though interesting as spoofs of the Oriental tale, The Episodes of Vathek are decidedly inferior to Vathek and tend to repeat the same themes. Beckford had intended to include them in the text of Vathek, near the end. Happily, the English version of Vathek was sent to the publisher without his knowledge before they were finished. They would have seriously disrupted the powerful conclusion by deferring the final catastrophe.

Fearful that his industry would be wasted, the Rev. Samuel Henley,

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[74]Cf. The Corsair, VIII, l. 171 ff.

[75]Three Eighteenth Century Romances, p. 242.

[76]See Beckford, The Episodes of Vathek (1912), translated from the original French by Sir Frank T. Marzials.

the translator of Vathek, had seen to it that the work was published, and at the time it appeared the work was highly valued for Henley's copious array of notes on the Orient. He had told Beckford: "The notes I have selected are curious and to the purpose, taken from Eastern writers, or writers and travellers who have described eastern manners, countries &c. Though they be not so numerous as to overwhelm the text, they have nevertheless cost me a good deal of reading to pick up".[77] The notes were so numerous that Stephen Weston, the Oriental scholar, wrote jestingly in the Gentleman's Magazine that Vathek had been "composed as a text, for the purpose of giving to the publick the information contained in the notes".[78] This cumbersome scheme of substantiating the incidental features of an imaginative work by learned notes was imitated in Oriental works to follow. Byron wrote in a note to The Giaour (1813):

> I do not know from what source the author of that singular volume may have drawn his materials; some of his incidents are to be found in the 'Bibliothèque Orientale;' but for correctness of costume, beauty of description, and power of imagination, it far surpasses all European imitations, and bears such marks of originality that those who have visited the East will find some difficulty in believeing it to be more than a translation. As an Eastern tale, even Rasselas must bow before it; his 'Happy Valley' will not bear a comparison with the 'Hall of Eblis.'[79]

Since Vathek was not immediately popular, the Oriental prose tale went on its way undisturbed for the most part. Subsequent Oriental fiction

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[77]Melville, op. cit., p. 133.

[78]Gentleman's Magazine, LVII (1787), p. 55.

[79]Byron, Works (1900), ed. Coleridge, III, p. 145.

includes stories adapted from or influenced by the Arabian Nights and works from Islamic sources. Nejnoun and Leila (1797), a romance by Isaac Disraeli, is about a lover who becomes mad because of thwarted love and wanders in the desert among wild animals. It derives its plot from a Persian poem. More significant, however, is that Disraeli appends to his tale a thorough set of notes to verify the details, no matter how insignificant the details may be. He quotes from the important Oriental scholars of the time and refers to the text and notes of Vathek. Thomas Moore's Epicurean, written around 1820, describes the spiritual conversion of a Greek philosopher from Epicureanism to Christianity. The events take place in the temples and caverns underneath the pyramids of Egypt. Moore's footnotes are far more extensive than Disraeli's, reflecting his wide reading. Sir Walter Scott, in writing his novel The Talisman (1825), apologized for not being able to provide a detailed background:

> . . . and not only did I labour under the incapacity of ignorance - in which, as far as regards Eastern manners, I was as thickly wrapped as an Egyptian fog - but my contemporaries were, many of them, as much enlightened upon the subject as if they had been inhabitants of the favoured land of Goshen. The love of travelling had pervaded all ranks, and carried the subjects of Britain into all quarters of the world . . . Had I, therefore, attempted the difficult task of substituting manners of my own invention, instead of the genuine costume of the East, almost every traveller I met who had extended his route beyond what was anciently called "The Grand Tour," had acquired a right, by ocular inspection, to chastise me for my presumption.[80]

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[80]Scott, The Talisman (1901), pp. v-vi.

This short summary of English Oriental fiction in the first quarter of the nineteenth century demonstrates the importance of first hand experience which resulted in an increased realism. It remains to mention two of the best examples of realism: Anastatius or Memoirs of a Greek (1819), by Thomas Hope (1770?-1831), traveller and virtuoso, and The Adventures of Hajji Baba of Ispahan (1824), by James Justinian Morier (1780?-1849), writer of travel books and attaché to the British embassy in Persia.

Thomas Hope possessed a talent for turning recollections of his travels into realistic fiction. Anastatius is written in the picaresque tradition and has often been referred to as an Oriental Gil Blas. The anti-hero Anastatius, the son of a Greek drogueman, engages in a multitude of nefarious activities which take him all over the Near East, thus allowing the author to demonstrate a wealth of historical and topographical detail. Anastatius becomes involved in a series of treacheries, seductions, debaucheries, and murders - often improbable and highly melodramatic - which are interesting for little more than their realistic detail. "So important are these descriptive and expository elements in Anastatius that often the narrative itself seems mainly an excuse for introducing discussions of the appearance, customs, and manners of the people."[81]

In this book we are introduced to a kind of Oriental villain different from the Giaours and Corsairs of the eighteenth-century tales. He is

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[81] W.C. Brown, "Prose Fiction and English Interest in the Near East, 1775-1825", Publications of the Modern Language Association, LIII (1938), p. 832.

a conscious villain who knows the difference between right and wrong. He chooses to do wrong and has no saving virtue by which to recommend himself to English readers. Yet the book was accepted. In the words of one reviewer:

> If it is the picture of vice, so is Clarissa Harlowe, and so is Tom Jones. There are no sensual or glowing descriptions in Anastatius, - nothing which corrupts the morals by inflaming the imagination of youth; and we are quite certain that every reader ends this novel with a greater disgust at vice, and a more thorough conviction of the necessity of subjugating passion, than he feels from reading either of the celebrated works we have just mentioned.[82]

But the main interest is still the local information, and for this reason Anastatius has lost its appeal. The numerous Russo-Turkish wars, the strange system of government in Egypt, and the peculiar manners and customs of the Turks (in whose affairs Europeans took as much interest as they do in, say, the Vietnamese now) have lost their attraction. There is nothing of interest in Anastatius now. It is remembered, perhaps, by scholars who recollect the great fuss made over its authorship in the contemporary reviews.

Morier's Hajji Baba, a meticulous picture of Persian life and manners based on the author's years in the British embassy in Persia, has stood up better over the years. Though modelled after Anastatius, Morier's work is thoroughly Eastern in every way but authorship. Local details and customs are well portrayed, Eastern modes of expression are accurately presented, and the character of the Oriental is so thoroughly sustained throughout

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[82]Edinburgh Review, XXXV (1821), p. 102.

that when the book was translated into Persian it was accepted by the unsuspecting Persians as the work of one of their own authors. "To this day many Persians do not know that the book . . . was written by a foreigner."[83] As a satire of Persian life it is so incisive that Persians were outraged to discover that the author was British, and it is said that the Persian minister at St. James, on hearing the rumor that the author was English, protested on behalf of his government.[84]

In a long line of Oriental prose tales stretching from those of Tom Brown and Addison, Hajji Baba is the first attempt to portray a genuine Oriental in his true Oriental milieu. And so when Hajji Baba, the son of an Ispahan barber, was revealed to the English reader, the eighteenth-century prose tale had run its course. The romantic East exemplified in Vathek and exploited by Byron and other romantic poets in their longer works, was now destroyed by the more prosaic accounts of the travellers speaking from first hand knowledge. Morier can be given credit for bringing the hero of the Oriental tale down from his tower where he observed the stars and communicated with the powers of darkness. From the awful Hall of Eblis, he walked the narrow, dirty streets of Ispahan, listened to the sounds of the marketplace, and sat in his father's barbershop amid conversations about the more mundane matters of life. And his successors would draw even nearer to the spirit of realism evident in other strains of the developing English novel.

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[83]Marzieh Gail, Persia and the Victorians (1951), p. 72.

[84]See The Dictionary of National Biography, XIII, p. 948.

Chapter Three

The Orient in Drama

Enough of Greece and Rome: Th' exhausted store
Of neither nation now can harm no more:
Ev'n adventitious helps in vain we try,
Our triumphs languish in the public eye.
And grave processions, musically slow,
Here pass unheed'd - as a Lord Mayor's show.
On Eagle wings the Poet of tonight
Soars for fresh adventure to the source of light,
To China's Eastern realms; and boldly bears
Confucius' morals to Britannia's ears.
Accept th' imported boon; as echoing Greece
Received from wandering chiefs her Golden Fleece;
Nor only richer by the spoils become;
But praise th' advent'rous youth, who brings them home.

- William Whitehead. Prologue
to The Orphan of China (1759),
by Arthur Murphy.

One of the startling facts of English literary history is that no tragedy of any consequence was written between Dryden and the English translations of Ibsen - a period that spans two centuries. Perhaps one reason for this was that the Aristotelian ideal that tragedy should be concerned with the fall of great kings, princes, and military leaders was becoming irrelevant because of a fundamental change taking place in English society. As the first glints of the liberal movement began to show, the absolute authority of the English monarchy and the supremacy of the aristocracy gradually began to decline. The merchant class was on the rise and around the corner was the Industrial Revolution which was to provide a background for the "tragedy of the common man". Meanwhile, the dramatists of the eighteenth century seem to have been caught in the middle and they have recorded their confusion in some of the worst tragedies

ever written. They were affected and forced, following faithfully the "rules" of classical drama and therefore denying the common man the dignity of tragic feelings.

With the power of the monarchy being eroded by parliament, and ignoring the thousands of private tragedies in their midst, the playwrights of the eighteenth century found a convenient substitute for the hero-king in the emperors, czars, caliphs, sultans, and khans of the East. Their rule was absolute and unquestionable. Upon the stage, writers of such dramas created a world far removed from that of the spectator. It was a world of treacherous and lustful rulers, magnanimous heroes, ranting language, violent love, scenes of horror, prisons, and supernatural phenomena. Names of places and characters were shouted which had never been heard on stage before. Lavish and exotic scenes and costumes presented audiences with spectacles that were romantic and different. And very often the spectacle became the end of drama rather than a background for action and character.

If the eighteenth century lacked great plays, it will be remembered as a time of great actors and for its contribution to the development of play production. The colour and excitement of Eastern plays constituted some of the greatest spectacles ever seen on the English stage up to that time. The story often took second place; portrayal of the actual East was unimportant. Plots were borrowed from the Arabian Nights, translated French plays, Oriental tales, and Eastern history. But these plots were usually tepid, interesting only for the way in which they lent themselves

to staging. And thus we read in bibliographies that many of the Oriental farces, operas, pantomimes, comedies, and melodramas were "never printed" or "never played."

When English enterprises in the East - especially in India - gained popular attention, plays were also written about the exploits of Englishmen travelling in the East. Of particular interest is the frequency with which the "nabob" appeared in English drama, providing situations and characters never before available to dramatists. Though the nabob was often criticized outright in plays, he also appeared as a minor character in plays that had nothing to do with the Orient at all. These plays contributed to forming an image of nabobs as vulgar, nouveau-riche exhibitionists who were a by-product of the East India Company.

The present chapter on Oriental drama is concerned with three things: (1) the heroic drama; (2) the stage spectacle; and (3) the nabob.

(1) The Heroic Drama

The eighteenth-century plays set in the Orient were a continuation of the body of plays of the same type written during the Restoration.[1] The plays of the eighteenth century were notable for the greater range of scene and the greater variety of nationality that they presented. The whole continent of Asia was drawn upon for setting and character, and in

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[1]Forty-five of these plays, written between 1656 and 1708, are documented by Louis Wann in "The Oriental in Restoration Drama", University of Wisconsin Studies (1918).

the portrayal of local customs these plays demonstrated more knowledge of the East than had ever been seen in drama before.

The first of the eighteenth-century Oriental plays incorporates the Koran doctrine that women have no souls and is based on the frame story of the Arabian Nights. Almyna; or, The Arabian Vow, by Mrs. Mary de la Rivière Manley, was first acted in 1706. Its principal figure is a sultan whose holy word is so much the law that he is able to pass an edict stating that any woman he married in the future would be killed the morning after the wedding. Since he holds on earth the place of the great Prophet, the edict is accepted, and when the play opens several of his wives have already been put to death. The heroine, Almyna, is able to prove that she does have a soul, thus forcing the sultan to revise his interpretation of the Koran and cease killing off his wives. The play has the elevated tone of the heroic drama.

Charles Johnson's Sultaness (1717) is an adaptation of Racine's Bajazet (1672). In his prologue Johnson describes his search for an appropriate hero:

> The Tragic Muse has with unweary'd Toil,
> Thro' ev'ry Age, and every distant Soil,
> Search'd after Heroes; ransack'd Greece and Rome
> And rais'd our British Monarchs from the Tomb . . .
> This Night, two Lovers of our Age we show,
> A sad, true Tale, a Modern Scene of Woe;
> Yet, that our Heroe may affect you more,
> We bring him from the distant Turkish Shore:
> Then, think not that the Theme too fresh appears;
> A thousand Leagues, are like a thousand Years.

He had intended to write a domestic tragedy, but classic rule required a foreign scene or a distant place and so he therefore chose Turkey. The

action concerns a sultaness, Roxana, who has been given authority to govern by an absent sultan. Roxana is in love with the sultan's brother, Bajazet, who in turn loves Atilda, a Turkish princess. It is unusual that the heroine is not a Christian captive or a slave, which is the customary pattern in these plays. In the final act a series of violent deaths brings the play to a close. More than anything else, it is remembered for the anger it aroused in Alexander Pope.[2]

Edward Young's Busiris, King of Egypt (1719) is more intent upon reflecting contemporary idealism that with depicting the Orient. Busiris, the hero, is a ruthless, repressive tyrant and a revolution is developing against his rule. The prince, Myron, is in love with Mandane, the daughter of his tutor, who does not return his love. When the two of them are thrown together by circumstance, he forces her to submit to him. Like Macbeth, he is fully aware of the horror of his deed. It is typical of an Augustan that he should relate this personal action to the social issues of the play: it seems that Mandane is taking part in the rebellion. Myron faces and accepts defeat with dignity. Once again the action is set in a remote place. But there is nothing particularly Oriental about the issues.

John Hughes's Siege of Damascus (1720) is an intelligent treatment of Moslem themes. There are also numerous references to incidents in the

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[2]"Charles Johnson, though he was a man of very inoffensive behaviour in general, yet he imprudently, by a few lines in the prologue to The Sultaness, drew on himself the resentment of Mr. Pope, who has immortalized him in The Dunciad [Book I, ll. 235-240]." Biographia Dramatica (1812), ed. Baker et al., I, p. 401.

life of Mohammed, such as his travels with caravans in his youth, the Hegira, and his subsequent battles with the Meccans. This play is about the conquest of Syria by the Arabs in 634 A.D. The siege of Damascus involved the fates of two lovers on whom Hughes focuses his tragedy. After the city had been taken, those who wished to seek refuge elsewhere were permitted to depart. Among the refugees was a woman whose lover had been captured by the Arabs and forced under threat of death to become a Moslem. In the play, after the expiration of three days' grace, the lover guides the Arabs to the Christian exiles. But when the young woman falls into the hands of her apostate lover, she commits suicide. The matter of apostasy was a sensitive one and in plays in which Orientals and Christians were involved playwrights usually stayed well clear of it. Therefore in Hughes's tragedy, the lover, whom he names Phocays, is made an ally of the Arab but is made to appear the defender of the exiles and therefore guiltless of arranging the pursuit. In the end he dies of his wounds after killing the Arab leader and his lieutenant. Hughes also changed the fate of Eudocia, the heroine. She survives to enter a convent. In the original draft of the play Hughes made Phocays a convert, but the managers of Drury Lane rejected it, fearing that the notion of a Christian turning Moslem would offend the sensibilities of the audience. Anxious to profit from the play, Hughes changed the plot, producing finally what Gibbon called "a frigid catastrophe".[3]

More orthodox, in that the Christians and Moslems in it are not allies, is The Fair Captive (1721), a play originally by Captain Robert Hurst but

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[3]Gibbon, The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire (1776-88), ed. Bury, V, p. 426, n. 75.

rewritten by Mrs. Eliza Haywood. The plot is a common one in this kind of drama: Alphonso attempts to ransom a fair English girl, Isabella, who is held captive in the harem of the vizier Mustapha. Alphonso is captured but manages to save the girl after a series of thrilling events. Irene, the wife of Mustapha, loses her life when she comes to Alphonso's aid. Mrs. Haywood takes full advantage of the novelty of the Orient to indulge in a kind of crude eroticism to seize the attention of the audience and convey her trite moral. Before the curtain rose, a frightened English girl dressed in Oriental costume would run forward pretending she had just escaped from a harem. She would then relate in full detail how she despised the boredom of a system under which only one man was available to undo the virtue of five hundred women: "O England! England! Did thy Damsels travel,/ And these dark Mysteries of the East unravel,/ How blest were Husbands in a changed Condition!" Such erotic devices were a way of taking advantage of the curiosity of the spectator. Having aroused his interest, these attractions often interested him more than the heroic elements. Scenery and costume were most important to the Oriental play. As early as 1709 Addison listed in the Tatler some of the stage properties of a local playhouse:

> The Whiskers of a Turkish Bassa
> Aurengzebe's scymitar, made by Will. Brown in Picadilly
> There are also swords, halbards sheep-hooks, cardinals
> hats, turbans, drums . . .[4]

In 1721 also, Edward Young wrote The Revenge, a tragedy deriving much from Mrs. Aphra Behn's Abdelazar; or, The Moor's Revenge (1671) and

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[4]Tatler No. 42, 16 July 1709.

Shakespeare's Othello. Garrick called this play "the best modern play we have, and written with great tragic force".[5] The villain is a captive Moor who revenges himself on his captor, a noble Spaniard, by tricking him into jealousy and crime. The Moor dies by torture and the other principals by murder and suicide. In the end, "an abject slave" has triumphed over a European Christian and revenged the death of his father. Orientals like Zanga, the Moor, were often seen to be reflective and highly moral in contrast with Europeans. In moments of distress, Zanga addresses his prayers to Mohammed.

The Captives (1723) was a tragedy attempted by John Gay. A white European slave girl is held captive by a swarthy sultan and finally effects an escape from the seraglio wearing the long veil customarily worn by Turkish and Persian women. Such a plot was enough to make the play a popular and financial success. However, there is not much more to be said about it than that. The characters are implausible and the action ill-contrived. It is obvious that Gay was taking advantage of an ephemeral public fad. Other plays dealing with the seraglio, like Aaron Hill's Tragedy of Zara (1736), an adaptation of Voltaire's Zaïre (1732), were not concerned with the "captive" stereotype. But Hill's play was concerned with another frequent situation in these plays - the love triangle. Norestan, the brother of Zara, is stabbed by the jealous Osman who thinks him a rival. When Osman learns the truth from Lusignan, the father of Zara and Norestan, he commits suicide. Garrick was optimistic about this play's success:

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[5]Letter to Somerset Draper, 17 August 1751, in Letters (1963), ed. Little et al., I, p. 172.

> . . . On the Saturday at Zara, I was assur'd by Every body, for I was at home during the Farce, that had not Mr Roper & two or three more come into the Boxes drunk in ye 3d Scene of ye 2d Act, the piece would have gone off wth gre[at] applause . . .[6]

Samuel Johnson's blank-verse tragedy Irene (1749) was based upon a story in Richard Knolles's Generall Historie of the Turkes (1603). According to the story, Irene, a beautiful Greek woman, is made captive at the sack of Constantinople in 1453. She is handed over to Sultan Mohammed II who takes such great delight in her that she becomes his mistress. He neglects his government and his subjects threaten the security of the throne. The Sultan is warned of the danger. Torn by contrary passions, he comes to a sudden decision and Irene is put to death. In Johnson's play Irene is asked to become the Sultan's queen and wavers between agreement and maintaining her former creed. When she relents, she is afterwards betrayed and sentenced to death. Johnson presents her death as punishment for her weakness rather than her inevitable fate.

The characters are meant to be Turks and Greeks, but they would lose nothing if transformed suddenly into other nationalities. "They are members, or attendants, of the great family of tragic heroes at Drury Lane, and what they say has no local or racial limits in its application."[7] The form of the play is strictly classical: the scene remains unchanged, the time is confined to a single day, and the action is a definite unity. The language is stately and dignified. Technically the play is well

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[6]Letter to William Woodfall, 13 February 1776, in Letters, III, p. 1071.

[7]David Nichol Smith, "Johnson's Irene", in Essays and Studies by Members of the English Association, 1st ser., XIV (1929), p. 39.

conceived, yet it has no dramatic force. Arthur Murphy suggests why:

> Some years afterwards, when the present writer was intimate with Garrick, and knew Johnson to be in distress, he asked the manager why he did not produce another tragedy for his Lichfield friend? Garrick's answer was remarkable: "When Johnson writes tragedy, declamation roars, and passion sleeps: when Shakespeare wrote, he dipped his pen in his own heart."[8]

The play had failed on the first attempt and Garrick was afraid to take another chance. When it was first produced, he had renamed it Mahomet and Irene to give it an unmistakable Oriental identity, played the lead rôle himself, spared nothing in the way of sumptuous costumes and Eastern scenery, and stretched the run to nine nights so that Johnson would not take a loss.

Another play based on history was Dr. John Brown's Barbarossa (1754), a tragedy about the notorious sixteenth-century pirate Khayr-al-Dīn, or Barbarossa. Barbarossa kills the king of Algeria and usurps his throne. The king's son, Selim, returns from exile to avenge his father's death and to prevent the forced marriage of his mother to Barbarossa. Like Johnson's Irene, this play tends to tire the audience with declamation. However, in staging the play, Garrick enlivened the action by suggesting to the author that he introduce various stage devices. It enjoyed great success, both in the theater and in the contemporary magazines. Garrick wrote years later: "If I had not receiv'd Barbarossa, I should have Suffer'd as a Manager, for no Tragedy had more Success".[9]

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[8]Arthur Murphy, "An Essay on the Life and Genius of Samuel Johnson", in The Works of Samuel Johnson, LL.D. (1796), I, p. 53.

[9]Letter to John Cleland, 24 May 1772, in Letters, II, p. 803.

The first Oriental play written by Isaac Bickerstaff, who is known primarily for his comic operas, was Leucothoe (1756). This play fits easily into an Eastern setting because of the predominant features of magic and unusual custom. Leucothoe, a daughter of Orchamus, King of Persia, is beloved by the sun. Clytie, a former mistress of the King, discovers this, and in a fit of jealousy relates it to him. As a punishment, the king orders his daughter to be buried alive. This is done in her lover's absence. Coming too late to prevent the horrible act, he first changes her body into a tree of frankincense and Clytie into a statue. To have set such a play in England would have been outrageously funny. In the distant and hazy East, the spectator could imagine all such things to be normal.

These plays, which showed either seriously or half-seriously vicious, omnipotent sultans, white slaves rescued by lovers with Batman-like resourcefulness, and charming English girls converting rulers with three or four hundred wives in reserve to monogamous Christianity, were entertaining for the audience. In a few cases, attempts were made to present translations from authentic Eastern plays. The most celebrated of these was Chao-shih-kû-êrh, translated as The Little Orphan of the House of Chao: A Chinese Tragedy - a minor operetta of the Yuan dynasty, written by Chi Chün-hsiang around 1330. The play was available to English readers in the 1741 translation of Du Halde's Description de l'Empire de la Chine (1735) and in Thomas Percy's Miscellaneous Pieces Relating to the Chinese.

The original Chinese play is concerned with an event which occurred about a hundred years before the birth of Confucius (the middle of the

seventh century B.C.). A military leader usurps the lands of the ruling house of Chao and attempts to exterminate the whole family. A faithful dependent saves the orphaned male heir and passes him off as his own child. When the child reaches maturity the whole matter is revealed to him. He seeks revenge for his family and recovers his rights.

Four different English authors wrote versions of the play. William Hatchett based his version of 1741 on Du Halde's translation. He directed his attention to the system of law and government in China which he claimed was superior to that at home. Dr. Thomas Francklin's version of 1756 and Arthur Murphy's of 1759 used Voltaire's Orpheline de la Chine (1755) as a model. These two plays were more concerned with customs and manners and were thus more suitable for stage presentation. Thomas Percy attempted to make his version of 1762, also based on Du Halde, a careful reproduction of the Chinese technique of dramatic presentation which deviated from the accepted theories of dramatic art then prevalent in Europe. His play was never produced.

The English versions of the Chinese play were heavily criticized for the great lengths of time involved and the excessive violence on stage. Arthur Murphy's version was more successful than any of the others. This was his first theatrical success and was due not a little to the presence of Garrick in the rôle of Zamti, the benevolent servant who brings up the boy. Murphy carefully observed the classical rules. He focused his attention on the second half of the orphan's life, beginning at the moment when he learns that he is the heir to the throne and must seek vengeance. In due course the usurper is killed off-stage. Goldsmith,

writing in the Critical Review, regarded the play as another manifestation of the growing popularity of chinoiserie:

> We have been led into these reflections, from observing the effect the ingenious performance before us had upon the audience the first night of its presentation; the whole house seemed pleased, but it was not with the luxury of woe they seemed affected: the nervous sentiment, the glowing imagery, the well-conducted scenery, seemed the sources of their pleasure: their judgement could not avoid approving the conduct of the drama, yet few of the situations were capable of getting within the foul, or exciting a single tear: in short, it was quickly seen, that all the faults of the performance proceeded from vicious imitation, and all its beauties were the poet's own.[10]

It was because of this appeal that the play was revived frequently during the next forty years.

In a play such as The Orphan of China it was difficult to know what had greater effect on the audience, the heroic quality or the mise en scène. For as the art of stage production developed in the eighteenth century, it was found that stage production alone could make a play a success. Stage directions proliferated in the texts where authors had never bothered to put them before, and around the middle of the century the adaptability of plays to the stage became the primary consideration of dramatists.

(2) The Stage Spectacle

The middle of the eighteenth century was a period in which there was a strong liking for masques, operas, farces, pantimimes, spectacles,

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[10] Critical Review, VII (1759), p. 435 f.

and other forms of afterpieces and light entertainment. These theatrical productions and the increasing colour used in the longer plays were attempts to meet the requirements of the increasingly plebeian taste of London audiences. And so to make the playhouse a paying enterprise, the public was given what it wanted. Garrick, the manager of Drury Lane Theatre, said:

> But if an empty house, the actor's curse,
> Shews us our Lears, and Hamlets, lose their force;
> Unwilling, we must change the nobler scene,
> And, in our turn, present you Harlequin;
> Quit poets, and set carpenters to work,
> Shew gaudy scenes, or mount the vaulting Turk.
> For, tho' we actors, one and all, agree
> Boldly to struggle for our - vanity;
> If want comes on, importance must retreat;
> Our first, great, ruling passion, is - to eat.[11]

The most popular piece for spectacle was the pantomime, and a definite competition existed between Garrick and John Rich, the manager of Covent Garden Theatre, to see who could produce the biggest displays. No expense or effort was spared, and if successful, the productions were guaranteed long runs. In the words of a player in Goldsmith's Vicar of Wakefield:

> "The public think nothing about dialect, or humour, or character; for that is none of their business, they only go to be amused, and find themselves happy when they can enjoy a pantomime, under the sanction of Johnson's or Shakespear's name . . . It is not the composition of the piece, but the number of starts and attitudes that may be introduced into it that elicits applause. I have known a piece, with not one jest in the whole, shrugged into popularity, and another saved by the poet's throwing in a fit of gripes."[12]

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[11] From an occasional prologue spoken by Garrick at the opening of Drury Lane Theater, 5 September 1750, as printed in the Gentleman's Magazine, XX (1750), p. 422.

[12] Goldsmith, Collected Works (1966), ed. Friedman, IV, p. 96.

The colour, violence, and mystery of the East were entirely suited to such a climate of taste.

The production on which Garrick spent the most energy, money, and ingenuity, was The Chinese Festival (1755) - a cause célèbre of the English stage. A year before he had engaged Jean Noverre to organize the elaborate dancing for the piece, dresses were ordered from an eminent costumier, and four magnificent "set scenes" were prepared. A great many French dancers were imported to take part in the ballet. Unfortunately, shortly before opening night France and England came to the brink of war, and the prejudices of the mob were inflamed. On opening night Noverre was ready with splendid devices exhibiting all the popular notions of Chinese dress, music, dancing, and habits. As the curtain rose, a storm of fury broke out among the spectators who would neither watch nor listen. This continued for several nights more until the sixth and final night when lords leaped onstage with drawn swords, accompanied by their ladies. The decorations were torn down and the costly stage machinery demolished.

Whenever a seraglio scene was called for in these plays, there was an extra effort to have elaborate scenery. In the two-act farce The Sultan; or, A Peep into the Seraglio (1775), by Isaac Bickerstaff, the stage directions called for "An apartment in the Seraglio, a Throne in manner of a Couch, with a Canopy; on the front of which is an Escutcheon fixed, with the Ottoman Arms crowned with Feathers; in the Back scene, the Sultan's Door covered with a Curtain". In this play we see the beginnings of burlesque in Oriental drama. Roxalana, an English slave, is pictured

as an irrepressible minx who attracts the attention of Solyman, the invincible Emperor of the Turks, by her pranks in the royal harem. This is really all the interest that the play contains. To quote a contemporary, "but for the splendour of its scenery, and the sprightliness of a female performer, [it] would have met with early condemnation".[13] The author should not be credited with the success it did have, for it is but a paraphrase - in several scenes almost a literal translation - of Les Trois Sultanes (1761), a play by Charles-Simon Favart.[14] Bickerstaff's only addition of importance consists in transforming a freewheeling and happy French girl into a freewheeling and happy English girl who changes the ancient customs of the Turkish Empire. There were other plays dealing with the institution of marriage. Inevitably, an English (or at least Christian) girl was so clever, or her independence of spirit was so convincing to the sultan, that he either freed her or became converted to monogamy, taking the heroine as his queen. The principles of monogamy and polygamy are often discussed in the prologues and epilogues and in the dialogue of the plays. In Charles Dibdin's Seraglio (1776) the heroine, Lydia, is wooed by the sultan, but objects that she long ago promised to love no one but her husband. The sultan describes this trite attempt at virtue as a prejudice of her country and suggests instead that love should be "free, unlimited, unrestrained". In Bickerstaff's Sultan, Roxalana appeals to the sentimental feelings of the audience by righteously declaring

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[13] Biographia Dramatica, III, p. 306.

[14] See René Guiet, "An English Imitator of Favart: Isaac Bickerstaffe", Modern Language Notes, XXXVIII (1923), p. 54.

herself "a free-born woman, prouder of that than all the pomp and splendour eastern monarchs can bestow". When the sultan honours her by giving her his handkerchief, a sign that he has chosen her from among the multitude to be his companion for the night, she pretends not to know its significance and gives it to Ismena. ("Ismena, 'tis yours; the Sultan gives it as a reward for the pleasure you have given him with your charming song".)

Another sentimental drama was S.J. Pratt's Fair Circassian (1781), a dramatization of Hawkesworth's tale Almoran and Hamet. We are told:

> Dr. Hawkesworth originally wrote it in 1756, as a drama in three acts; which Mr. Garrick would have brought on the stage, had he not been afraid of the expense of decorations, transformations, &c. having just lost 4000l. by The Chinese Festival.[15]

Pratt's adaptation is steeped in sentimentality and shows little feeling for or knowledge of the customs of the East. Hamet, the hero, is sentimentally noble to the highest degree. His false brother tries to seduce Almeida, whom he loves. Finally, evil loses out and virtue is rewarded. Here is an example of Pratt's attempt at stage effect: "A view of the tombs of the kings of Persia, cut out of the rocks, and a prospect of a venerable mosque. The whole awfully magnificent".

Mrs. Elizabeth Inchbald was a social reformer, and two of her plays set in the Far East have a topical interest which few of the other plays mentioned can share. Yet the morality is facile and perhaps would not have sustained interest without the Oriental flavour. In The Mogul Tale (1784) an English doctor and a cobbler and his wife are transported from

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[15] Biographia Dramatica, I, p. 316.

England in a balloon as far as India and are dropped into the garden of the Great Mogul. The rest of the play is nothing more than farce. Mrs. Inchbald's interest in this part of the world stemmed from her knowledge of the activities of East India Company personnel. The action sputters out in the end when the Mogul tells his captives that the English Christians have shown him foul tyranny by their cruelty to the Gentoos. He thus resolves to be merciful evermore and sets them free. Such Things Are (1787), as the title suggests, is another play of reform. A great deal of publicity had been given at this time to the prison reforms of John Howard, and his ideals are embodied in the character of Mr. Haswell. India is once again the location and Haswell, a sentimental philanthropist, visits the sultan's prison to relieve the distress of victims of the sultan's cruelty. He intercedes on behalf of the sufferers and it comes as no surprise that the sultan eventually realizes the wrongs he has committed and promises to adopt Haswell's suggestions for improving the prisons.

The enchantresses and magical figures which abound in these plays presented unprecedented staging problems. In Sir George Collier's Selima and Azor (1776) Azor performs feats of magic with a wave of his hand. He presents Selima with a ring which makes her independent of his powers. When she throws it away, she vanishes. In Lodoiska (1794), by John Philip Kemble, the names of the set designers are given. They probably deserved to be recognized, for some of the scenes were elaborately planned. Here are the stage directions for Act II: "The Tartars having stormed the Castle, which they fire in various places, the battlements and towers fall

in the midst of loud explosions." "Lupauski and Lodoiska are discover'd in a blazing tower; Floreski rushes through the flames and rescues them." There were over fifty players to be outfitted. Allardyce Nicoll notes: "This play also gives the first record of which I am aware of the names of costume designers; 'The Dresses and Decorations,' we are informed, 'are designed and executed by Mr. JOHNSTONE, and Miss RHEIN.' A melodrama such as this, of course, must have depended to a great extent on the effects secured by these costume designers and scene painters... ."[16]

A favourite hero of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century dramatists was Alexander the Great. In general, plays about Alexander tended to rely upon the traditional qualities of the heroic drama for effect. In contrast to these, Alexander the Great; or, The Conquest of Persia, a pantomime of D'Egville produced in 1795, shows the increasing attention to stage accessories at the end of the century. This was a gaudy display of pageantry and expensive costume, with the added attraction of actual horses on the stage. The general incidents of Alexander's progress in Persia and his difficulty in surmounting the apprehensions and reluctance of his army were exhibited. "The scenery of this performance surpassed every thing before exhibited on the English stage."[17]

Another play based on an Oriental tale was Kais; or, Love in the Deserts (1808), an opera by Isaac Brandon taken from Isaac Disraeli's Mejnoun and Leila. Kais is in love with Leila, the daughter of an emir. When Leila's hand is denied him, he flees to the desert and when Leila

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[16] Allardyce Nicoll, A History of English Drama (1952), III, p. 27.

[17] Biographia Dramatica, II, p. 20.

pursues him she falls into the hands of robbers. She is finally rescued and united with him. This opera also contained the story of Rozella, a Greek slave of Leila, and her lover Almoran, a Circassian. The stage presentation must have been striking. Charles Lamb praised in particular the music in a letter to Thomas Manning: "O, that you could go to the new opera of 'Kais' to-night! 'T is all about Eastern manners; it would just suit you. It describes the wild Arabs, wandering Egyptians, lying dervishes, and all that sort of people, to a hair. You need n't ha' gone so far to see what you see, if you saw it as I do every night at Drury-lane Theatre".[18]

In the folklore of Europe, Africa, and the Eastern countries we find the villain Bluebeard, a rich seigneur who derives pleasure from murdering his wives. In eighteenth-century drama his story is told in a variety of ways, but the sequence of events is basically the same. Bluebeard departs soon after his marriage, leaving his latest bride with all the keys to his castle and forbidding her to open one of the doors. But the girl's curiosity is more than she can bear. She opens the mysterious door and discovers the bodies of Bluebeard's former wives. On his return, Bluebeard discovers that she has been in the room and threatens to cut off her head as punishment. She persuades him to delay the execution and is rescued in the nick of time. Blue Beard; or, Female Curiosity (1798), by George Colman the Younger, contains the familiar Gothic elements. "Blue Beard was adapted by George Colman, from the 'programme' of a French piece.

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[18]Letter to Thomas Manning, 26 February 1808, in E.V. Lucas, The Life of Charles Lamb (1905), I, p. 393 f.

Kelly wrote the music, and orders were given that the machinists, painters, and decorators, should bring it forward with all possible magnificence and splendour."[19] It differed from its predecessors mainly in its Turkish setting, the costly scenery, and the magnificent effects, making it a challenge to the stage manager. When the heroine is shown the secret room, for example:

> The Door instantly sinks, with a tremendous crash, and the Blue Chamber appears streaked with vivid streams of Blood. The figures in the Picture over the door (a picture of Abomelique, kneeling in amourous supplication to a beautiful woman) change their position, and Abomelique is represented in the action of beheading the Beauty he was, before, supplicating. The Pictures, and Devices of love, change to subjects of Horror and Death. The interior apartment (which the sinking of the door discovers) exhibits various Tombs, in a sepulchral building; - in the midst of which ghastly and supernatural forms are seen; - some in motion, some fixed - In the centre, is a large Skeleton, seated on a Tomb, (with a Dart in his hand) and, over his head, in characters of Blood, is written "The Punishment of Curiosity."

This play is not, however, morbid in tone; it possesses the lightheartedness of comic opera. The sadistic Turkish tyrant is a comic figure and Colman's skill in light verse is given free play, as in this scene where he is about to decapitate another wife:

> How many there are, when a wife plays the fool,
> Will argue the point with her, calmly and cool;
> The bashaw, who don't relish debates of this sort,
> Cuts the woman, as well as the argument, short.[20]

Such a view of graver matters points forward to the comic operas of Gilbert and Sullivan. In this play we can see that the Oriental tyrant has lost some of his noble and terrible qualities and has become a figure of fun.

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[19] R.C. Rhodes, Harlequin Sheridan, the Man and the Legends (1933), p. 173 f.

[20] Colman, Blue Beard, I, ii.

Like his counterpart in the prose tales of the same period, the heroic figure of the Oriental drama had been brought down to a level where he could mingle with the lower classes without their feeling terrified. In Il Bondocani; or, The Caliph Robber (1801), a comic opera by Thomas Dibdin, the Caliph Haroun al Raschid disguises himself as he goes among his people in order to win the poor but virtuous Darina as his queen. He also restores Selima to Abdallah, Darina's brother. As Haroun takes his rambles among the people incognito, there arise ludicrous mistakes and whimsical situations. Likewise, The Middle Dish; or, The Irishman in Turkey (1804), a farce by W.C. Oulton, is about an Irish footman and his wife who are treated with great distinction by a Grand Signior who has them waited upon by their former master and mistress. They are forbidden to uncover a turreen set in the middle of the table - an order which they disobey because they are curious to eat Turkish potatoes.

Timour the Tartar (1811), another spectacle featuring the novelty of horses on the English stage, was written by "Monk" Lewis. Timour murders the king and takes the king's infant son prisoner. He then attempts a marriage with the royal blood of Georgia. The ex-queen, posing as the Princess of Georgia, endeavours to rescue her child, and the play's interest is based on her adventures and narrow escapes in the fortress. At one point she throws herself into the sea and is rescued by her son, Agib, who has escaped from prison. Timour is defeated in the end, but his life is spared. The horses "displayed much ability, and fought, died, climbed up walls perpendicular, or scampered longitudinally, and leaped through

breaches with the greatest ingenuity".[21] A contemporary reviewer called it "a Grand Romantic Melo-Drama: an interesting vehicle for a display of splendid scenery and horsemanship".[22]

No one was expected to take these plays seriously. The audiences, accustomed to the terror of the supernatural figures and the tyrannical rulers of the Arabian Nights and Oriental tales, were amused by the saucy English girl transforming the life of her captor. The spectacular scenery which conjured up the splendour of the East provided a brief escape from the perfunctory rhythm of daily affairs. Here the matters of the harem were openly discussed and demonstrated. Here maidens were rescued by their beleaguered lovers while every man in the audience identified with the hero. In all, a vogue for such plays had been established which would allow them to flourish on into the nineteenth century.

(3) The Nabob

A small body of plays about British commercial enterprise in the Far East are interesting for their treatment of the nabob, the Englishman, usually from a humble background, who travelled to India and returned almost overnight with a fortune. The dramatic possibilities of this phenomenon in British history are great. The psychological and sociological problems of a person returning home after a prolonged sojourn in another culture present promising situations to the fertile dramatic mind. Will his wider experience prevent his readjustment to the confined culture in which he grew up? What will be his attitude to his former ethical and

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[21] Biographia Dramatica, III, p. 469.

[22] Gentleman's Magazine, LXXXI (1811), p. 489.

social standards? How will his new outlook affect his relationships with family and friends? That these questions were never probed by eighteenth-century dramatists is additional evidence of their lack of skill. Instead, they portrayed the nabob in a rather stereotyped way.

Sometimes these plays represent the nabob as good and kind; but more often he is seen as a vulgar, nouveau-riche exhibitionist who has cheated better men than himself in order to become wealthy and has spent his money wastefully after returning to England. One of the earliest plays dealing with the nabob, The Biter (1704) by Nicholas Rowe, ridicules the great preference of Sir Timothy Tallapoy for the East and things Eastern. Sir Timothy is not totally repugnant though. He rather appears to be a likable old gentleman - more eccentric than anything else. A very rich East Indian merchant, he is addicted to Chinese customs. The worst that can be said of him is that he is harsh to servants and refers constantly to how much better things are done in the Orient in language laced with Oriental phrases. Richard Steele, in The Conscious Lovers (1722), was not unfavourably disposed toward the nabob either. Sealand is depicted as an enterprising young man who had journeyed to India seeking self-improvement. Having made good, he challenges the social usefulness of Sir John Bevil, a representative of the landed gentry. In doing so he questions the authority of the landed gentry and advocates recognition of commerce as an honourable pursuit. Sealand represents the emerging moneyed middle class, and his actions represent their attempt to change the deep-seated prejudices of class distinction.

As the century advanced, more nabobs returned home in a considerably

higher economic position. Whether or not they consciously tried to be offensive is open to question, but it seemed to their neighbours that they were flaunting their wealth in a manner that lacked the sophistication and grace of the titled families. The dramatist was inclined to depict them as rich, vulgar upstarts, and thus the term nabob gradually acquired pejorative connotations. The best known satiric play about the nabob was called quite simply The Nabob. Written in 1772 by Samuel Foote, it presents the idea that the wealth of the East has brought with it the worst of its vices:

> At the time this play was produced, a general odium had been excited against the members of the East India company, which was kept alive by every art that virulence and party could suggest. Mr. Foote, ever attentive to avail himself of popular subjects, seized the present occasion to entertain the town at the expense of some individuals. The character of Sir Matthew Mite was intended for a gentleman who had risen from the low situation of a cheesemonger.[23]

Sir Matthew has too many servants, buys his way into high places, presents useless trash to the Antiquarian Society in the guise of "rare" gifts, and refuses to recognize his old friends. In The Belle's Stratagem (1780) by Mrs. Hannah Cowley, the author ridicules the taste of the nabob Mr. Ingot, who paid a thousand pounds at an auction for a picture of "the divinest Plague of Athens" to adorn his children's nursery. As Flutter tells the story:

> Sir, I would oblige you, but I buy this picture to place in the nursery: the children have already gotten Whittington and his cat! 'tis

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23"The Life of Samuel Foote, Esq.", in Foote, Dramatic Works [1799?], I, p. 17.

just this size, and they'll make good companions.

Mrs. Racker. Ha, ha, ha! Well, I protest that's just the way now - the nabobs and their wives outbid one at every sale, and the creatures have no more taste - [24]

The corruption of a character called "young Rupee" is documented in Liberty Hall; or, A Test of Good Fellowship (1785), by Charles Dibdin. After inheriting a considerable sum of money gained in the East Indies, he throws it away recklessly with the aid of a crowd of parasites. The boy's father, who was supposedly dead, comes back in disguise and successfully reforms the boy with the aid of English, the boy's friend. The same kind of satire is contained in The Israelites; or, The Pamper'd Nabob (1785), a farce "reported as a posthumous work of Dr. Smollett".[25] This nabob has been so pampered that he would rather forfeit half his estate than take the trouble to calculate his expenses for the day. His sister spends her time in auctions and shops, and the nabob, Sir Limon Lollop, seldom leaves his chair. He eats privately with his black servant girl. These satires exaggerated what was partially true: the nabobs were upsetting the status quo in which the accepted values of wealth and position were deeply rooted.

Lillo's Fatal Curiosity (1736) is unique in these plays. This is the pitiful tragedy of young Wilmot, who left "the rude, unpolished people . . . in Cornwall" for the Indies so that he could alleviate their poverty. Returning home heavily tanned and dressed in "Indian habits", he

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[24]Cowley, The Belle's Stratagem, I, iii.

[25]Biographia Dramatica, II, p. 336.

is much improved "by care and honest commerce". There is no hint of rancour in Lillo's words. Seeking to surprise his parents, he does not make himself known to them. He entrusts his casket of jewels to his mother, sleeps in his former home, and is savagely stabbed to death by his father, whose craving for the jewels in his possession is overpowering. The play's pervasive didacticism is a statement about the corrupting influence of easy wealth - particularly wealth which has been accumulated in the Indian trade. Wilmot has none of the ostentation of the nabobs in most eighteenth-century plays. His wealth has brought on his death in spite of his good intentions.

Eighteenth-century dramatists were happy to make use of the nabob in another way. As an absentee, he was perfectly suited for the rôle of deus ex machina, and he sometimes functioned as a means of extricating other characters from their difficulties. "In a series of comedies, when unscrupulous persons are attempting to perpetrate some fraud or bring about some unsuitable marriage, and when the rogues are on the very eve of success, the absentee returns, discloses his identity, outwits the schemers, rescues the innocent, rewards the virtuous, and, according to recipe, brings the action to a most happy conclusion."[26]

In Sheridan's School for Scandal (1777) the character of Sir Oliver Surface is a fusion of two conventional types: the absentee and the disguised observer. Sir Oliver arrives secretly from the East and gains first-hand knowledge of his two nephews, Charles and Joseph Surface, as

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[26]B. Sprague Allen, Tides in English Taste (1958), II, p. 9.

he masquerades as Mr. Stanley. Thus Sheridan's humour is often ironic:

> Charles Surface. Then you must know that I have a devilish rich uncle in the East Indies, Sir Oliver Surface, from whom I have the greatest expectations?
>
> Sir Oliver. That you have a wealthy uncle, I have heard; but how your expectations will turn out is more, I believe, than you can tell.
>
> Charles Surface. Oh, no! - there can be no doubt. They tell me I'm a prodigious favourite, and that he talks of leaving me everything.
>
> Sir Oliver. Indeed! this is the first I've heard of it.[27]

Having thus acquired the necessary information, he is able to bring matters to a satisfactory conclusion at the end of the play. Colonel Talbot, in Pilon's He Would be a Soldier (1786), and Mr. Cleveland, in Holman's Votary of Wealth (1799), both arrive in England on cue to expose fraud and reward the deserving. These characters, along with Sir Oliver Surface, Wilmot in Fatal Curiosity, and Mrs. Sealand in The Conscious Lovers showed the nabob in a different light. They performed certain stereotyped dramatic functions, but they were essentially honourable men. There was no suggestion that they were using their newly-acquired wealth in an obnoxious way, and thus they offset to some extent the disparaging notions of the satiric plays.

English interest in the Orient thus provided a variety of ideas for dramatists in the eighteenth century. Plays about the Orient were produced at a time when classical ideas were becoming either tiresome or irrelevant. Plots and characters that had not been seen before were made

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[27]Sheridan, The School for Scandal, III, iii, ll. 157-165.

available to the English theatergoer, and by their attendant trappings the scenes on the English stage were more spectacular than any that had ever been seen before. A great many dramatists attempted an Oriental play at least once, but none of them devoted his whole career to this particular branch of drama. When the Oriental vogue was over, these quickly lost their appeal.

Chapter Four

The Orient in Poetry

Ere with cold beads of midnight dew
  Had mingled tears of thine,
I grieved, fond Youth! that thou shouldst sue
  To haughty Geraldine.

Immoveable by generous sighs,
  She glories in a train
Who drag, beneath our native skies,
  An Oriental chain.

- William Wordsworth, from
"Poems Founded on the
Affections", 1826.

The reader of poetry will search in vain to find an exclusively "Oriental" eighteenth-century poet. For with the exception of Sir William Jones, no English poet of consequence has dedicated himself thoroughly to the Orient as some poets have dedicated themselves to, say, pastoral or religious poetry. Poets of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries who were concerned with the Orient were usually eclectic, and Orientalism was simply one experiment among many that they attempted during their careers. Byron, Southey, and Moore wrote Oriental poetry which was eagerly read by the public, but their reputations do not rest solely on these poems. Frequently in poetry before the Romantic period Oriental material appears unexpectedly in a scattered phrase, an adjective listed among half a dozen others, a brief passage providing an interlude in a poem that has nothing to do with the Orient, or in a complete poem or group of poems among the various works of a poet not especially known for his interest in the Orient.

The versification of the poems in this period which deal with the Orient is not unusual. The varying verse forms of English poetry are used with the same regularity as in non-Oriental poems: heroic couplets, octosyllabics, blank verse, Spenserian stanza, and various lyric forms. As for rhythm, the galloping movement of Byron's Destruction of Sennacherib is rather the exception than the rule. The miscellaneous verse forms suggest the range of use to which writers put the Oriental content. The list includes the epic, the love lyric, eclogue, ode, metrical tale, and others. Even though they were using characteristically Oriental subject matter, English poets were still writing characteristically English poetry with poetical devices which were familiar to them. They were not prepared to adopt the Oriental spirit and modes of expression in the same way that they had embraced those of the classical tradition to which even the most fanciful and exotic poems of the Romantics are indebted. An early study of the reasons for the lingering influence of the classics was perhaps lost at the death of the Rev. John Husbands, who, we are told, "was preparing for the Press a Comparison of the Eastern and Western Poetry".[1] However there is a hint of what he might have said in the preface to his Miscellany of Poems (1731):

> Their phrases are certainly more ardent and intense than Those in any European Language, and the Figures more bold and vehement. Tho' Their Poetry was less artificial, 'twas more nervous, lively, and expressive than ours. They have nothing of the Finesse, Nothing that is over-wrought. This renders them so vivid, beautiful, and affecting.[2]

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[1] Gentleman's Magazine, II (1732), p. 1083.

[2] Quoted by Ronald S. Crane in "An Early Eighteenth-Century Enthusiast for Primitive Poetry: John Husbands", Modern Language Notes, XXXVII (1922), p. 32.

The chief contribution of Orientalism to English verse was to provide fresh vocabulary and new subject matter. Recognizing the inadequacies of Eastern poetry in comparison with the classical tradition, but noting as well the strong attraction of Oriental subjects, Charles Churchill wrote this in The Farewell (1764):

> Farewell to Europe, and at once farewell
> To all the follies which in Europe dwell,
> To Eastern India now, a richer clime,
> Richer alas in ev'ry thing but Rime,
> The Muses steer their course, and, fond of change,
> At large, in other Worlds, desire to range,
> Resolv'd at least, since They the fool must play,
> To do it in a diff'rent place, and way.[3]

The Muses were fond of change, but Orientalism could not dislodge the old classical standards. As Edward Gibbon put it:

> Our education in the Greek and Latin schools may have fixed in our minds a standard of exclusive taste; and I am not forward to condemn the literature and judgement of nations of whose language I am ignorant. Yet I know that the classics have much to teach, and I believe that the Orientals have much to learn; the temperate dignity of style, the graceful proportions of art, the forms of visible and intellectual beauty, the just delineation of character and passion, the rhetoric of narrative and argument, the regular fabric of epic and dramatic poetry. The influence of truth and reason is of less ambiguous complexion.[4]

Prior to Sir William Jones there was no conscious attempt in English poetry to depict authentic Eastern life or to imitate the techniques of Eastern verse. The East was chiefly represented by a telling phrase, an image, a colourful place name, or in short parables illustrating the poet's

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[3]Charles Churchill, Poetical Works (1956), ed. Grant, p. 375.

[4]Gibbon, The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire (1776-88), ed. Bury, VI, p. 33.

moral intentions. Even as taste changed from classicism to romanticism the contribution of Orientalism to English poetry continued to be largely stylistic. Yet there were a few Romantic poets who possessed a more genuine knowledge of the East which they had gained from their own travels and from reports in the proliferating travel books. They took great pains to authenticate their statements in ponderous footnotes - a tendency which paralleled the writing of Oriental prose stories that were realistic when compared with the fanciful tales inspired by the Arabian Nights. This chapter is concerned with two fundamental aspects of Orientalism in poetry: (1) the influence of the Orient on style; (2) the real Orient as a subject in itself.

(1) The Influence of the Orient on Style.

Words are fundamental to every poet, no matter what subject he chooses to deal with in poetry; and during the eighteenth century the English language became enriched by a considerable number of loan words from the Eastern languages. When these words were first used, poets provided extensive footnotes and glosses to explain their meaning. They became slowly integrated into the English language and today the knowledge that these words were once borrowed from Eastern languages would surprise many of those who use them. Here are some of the common ones:

admiral (A)
alcohol (A)
alcove (A)
amber (A)
argosy (Dalmatian)
arsenal (A)
assassin (A)
elixir (A)
fustian (E)
garble (A)
genie (A)
ghoul (A)
giaour (T)
ginger (O)
nadir (A)
orange (P-A)
peacock (O)
punch (S)
racket (A)
saccharine (S)
saffron (A-P)

azure (P)	gong (M)	sash (A)
bamboo (M)	horde (T)	scarlet (A-P-Lat.)
bazaar (P)	jasmine (P)	shawl (P-H)
beg (T)	jungle (S)	silk (O)
brilliant (S)	lemon (P)	sofa (A)
caravan (P)	lilac (P)	tulip (T)
check (P)	lime (A)	vampire (Servian)
cipher (A)	lute (A)	van (P)
crimson (S)	magazine (A)	zenith (A)
dervish (P)	mammoth (Russian)	zero (A)[5]
divan (P)	musk (P)	

This is a short list and omits the numerous geographical and personal names supplied by the Orient. But it does show how such words, which appear throughout eighteenth-century poetry, broadened the vocabulary of the poets.

The poetry of Alexander Pope illustrates some of the ways in which Orientalism came to pervade the works and enrich the vocabulary of English poets. In his mock-heroic poem The Rape of the Lock (1714) Pope demonstrates how the mere mention of Oriental place-names can evoke powerful connotations in the minds of his readers. Here are some of the items on Belinda's dressing-table:

> This casket India's glowing gems unlocks,
> And all Arabia breathes from yonder box.
> The Tortoise here and Elephant unite,
> Transform'd to Combs, the speckled, and the white.[6]

He refers to the East later in the poem:

> For lo! the board with cups and spoons is crown'd,
> The berries crackle, and the mill turns round;

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[5]Most of the words in this list are taken from the appendix of Edna Osborne's monograph "Oriental Diction and Theme in English Verse, 1740-1840", Kansas University Bulletin, II (1916), p. 136 f. The following abbreviations are used: A - Arabic, E - Egyptian, H - Hindustani, M - Malay, O - Oriental, P - Persian, S - Sanscrit, T - Turkish.

[6]Pope, The Rape of the Lock, Canto I, ll. 133-136.

On shining Altars of Japan they raise
The silver lamp; the fiery spirits blaze:
From silver spouts the grateful liquors glide,
While China's earth receives the smoaking tyde. . .[7]

Objects of porcelain china, because of their fragility and delicate beauty, are often associated with women and especially with virgins. Thus the breaking of china in eighteenth-century poetry symbolizes loss of virginity or virtue. When Belinda, therefore, discovers that her sacred hair has been cut, she screams in horror and Pope comments:

Not louder shrieks to pitying heav'n are cast,
When husbands, or when lapdogs breathe their last,
Or when rich China vessels, fall'n from high,
In glitt'ring dust, and painted fragments lie![8]

Pope also demonstrates considerable knowledge of Oriental manners in his poetry. His description of Addison in the Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot (1735) contains an allusion to the fratricidal tendencies of Turkish sultans: "Should such a man, too fond to rule alone,/ Bear, like the Turk, no brother near the throne".[9] And in the same poem he refers to the same sultans' practice of secluding themselves in their palaces and harems:

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[7]Op. cit., Canto III, ll. 105-110.

[8]Op. cit., Canto III, ll. 157-160. The best example of the association of porcelain with female virginity is John Gay's To a Lady on her passion for old China (1725), ll. 31-39:

When I some antique Jar behold,
Or white, or blue, or speck'd with gold,
Vessels so pure, and so refin'd
Appear the types of woman-kind:
Are they not valu'd for their beauty,
Too fair, too fine for household duty?
With flowers and gold and azure dy'd,
Of ev'ry house and grace and pride?
How white, how polish'd is their skin,
And valu'd most when only seen!

See Gay, Poetical Works (1926), ed. Faber, p. 180.

[9]Epistle to Arbuthnot, ll. 197, 198.

" I sought no homage from the Race that write;/ I kept, like Asian Monarchs, from their sight".[10] In The Dunciad (1742) Pope dwells upon the commonly held belief that Islamic rulers and priests deliberately suppressed all learning in order to prevent close enquiry into the grounds of the Islamic religion, thus leaving the Koran as the sole work of literary importance. Cibber, the newly-anointed king of Dulness, is taken to the Mount of Vision and shown "the past triumphs of the Empire of Dulness, then the present, and lastly the future: how small a part of the world was ever conquered by Science, how soon those conquests were stopped, and those very nations again reduced to her dominion". The ghost of Settle bids him first look Eastward:

> . . . from whence the Sun
> And orient Science their bright course begun:
> One god-like Monarch all that pride confounds,
> He, whose long wall the wand'ring Tartar bounds;
> Heav'ns! what a pile! whole ages perish there,
> And one bright blaze turns Learning into air.[11]

The Orient also intrudes into the didactic, idyllic poetry of the pastoral eclogue. In the eclogue, herds of sheep and their attendants usually inhabit an idealized and often unspecified setting. William Collins, however, saw fit to give an Oriental setting to his Persian Eclogues (1742). In his Preface he explained why he did this: "There is an Elegancy and Wildness of Thought which recommends all their Compositions; and our Genius's are as much too cold for the Entertainment of such Sentiments, as

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[10] Op. cit., ll. 219,220.

[11] The Dunciad, Book III, ll. 73-78. This alludes to the well-known legend that the great library of Alexandria was destroyed by the command of a caliph.

our Climate is for their Fruits and Spices". On the basis of that statement alone it is odd that he ever gave these poems an Oriental milieu at all, unless, perhaps, he was "merely following one of the various fashions beyond which it was reckoned improper if not positively unlawful to stray".[12] Dr. Johnson tells us, however, that later in life Collins recognized that his "Persian" poems were "not sufficiently expressive of Asiatick manners".[13] And it is well that he did, for without being told that the scene is in Bagdad, and without the mention of proper names, the reader might just as easily imagine that the action takes place in an English pasture.

The Persian Eclogues are interesting as an early example of the tension between the Augustan belief that "the proper study of mankind is man" and the growing interest of poets in the far-away and the unusual. The Augustan in Collins wins out easily, for there is no Oriental atmosphere or accurate local description in the four poems. The scene of Selim; or the Shepherd's Moral is Bagdad where Selim expounds on the virtues of Truth and Wisdom, which he personifies. He urges his listeners to be moral in order to gain happiness. The heroic couplets, the diction, and the didacticism are typically Augustan. Hassan, the hero of Hassan: or The Camel Driver, is alone in the desert complaining that he has left his fair Zara in order to pursue wealth as a camel driver. At the end of the poem he returns to her. The style and obtrusive moral of this eclogue

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[12]George Saintsbury, "Young, Collins and Lesser Poets of the Age of Johnson", in The Cambridge History of English Literature, X, p. 143.

[13]Johnson, Lives of the English Poets, ed. Hill, III, p. 340.

make it Augustan as well. The other two eclogues are similar in spirit. In Abra, Abbas, Sultan of Persia, falls in love with a Georgian shepherdess and elevates her to the throne. She often longs for her humble origins and eventually returns home. Agib and Secander presents two Circassian youths imprisoned by the Tartars and attempting to escape. These poems do not come close to giving a convincing picture of Eastern life. And, strictly speaking, they do not meet the requirements of the eclogue. Instead they seem to parallel the Oriental tales of the periodicals, using the Orient as a conventional background against which to moralize.

The four Eastern Eclogues (1780) of Eyles Irwin were written while the author was touring Arabia, Egypt, and other parts of Asia and Africa in 1777. The action of all four poems takes place in a single day. In the morning we discover Alexis in Alexandria wandering about the ruins of the city in a reminiscent mood. In this first eclogue, entitled The Traveller, we are given a pedantic account of Egyptian and Roman history, of Antony and Cleopatra, and of the wonderful land now held by the Turks and Arabs. A seraglio in Arabia at noon is the setting for The Fair Greek, in which Selima has been stolen from her Greek home and is forced to obey her lord in the harem. The story is mainly concerned with her sad separation from her lover, Cleon. The action in the third eclogue, The Bramin, takes place in the evening at the Pagoda of Conjeveran in India. The fanatical Ramoh prophesies against the British and leaps from a window to the pavement far below, thus ending his life. The Escape is set in Tunis at midnight. Two slaves, Sebastian and Pereg, are put in command of a galley manned by fellow slaves. Their objective is to get

away, but first each one sings to his sweetheart. It is obvious in these poems that the author is learned and well travelled, but he is unable to set down his ideas vividly and accurately. In their style, metre, and overt didacticism, these poems are Augustan.

The Oriental eclogues of John Scott, which appeared in his Poetical Works (1782), were no more successful as faithful depictions of the Orient than Collins's or Irwin's. In Scott's works we have one Arabian, one Indian, and one Chinese eclogue. In the first one Zerad, a young Arabian, falls in love with a beautiful maiden of another tribe and decides to follow her when her tribe wanders away. There is even less of the pastoral convention here than in Collins's poems. It is evident that Scott knows little about the real East, for his descriptions of the Orient are very general. In Serim, the English in East India have created an artificial famine by storing the rice harvest and selling it at exorbitant prices. The poem describes the murder of a starving Brahmin by a British ruffian.[14] Lipo, the Chinese eclogue, tells of a malevolent governor who becomes virtuous after a dream in which Confucius admonishes him. The Oriental setting in these poems is simply a background for Scott's didacticism which is, however, less explicit than that of Collins's poems.

A satiric poem of marginal importance to the subject of Orientalism is Edward Moore's Trial of Selim the Persian, for Divers High Crimes and Misdemeanors (1748). This poem was written to defend Lord Lyttleton who was often known as "Selim" after the hero of Letters from a Persian in England to his Friend at Ispahan (1735). Apart from this name there is

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[14]This poem was probably suggested by the Indian famine of 1770.

nothing in the poem even remotely connected with the Orient. Why Moore introduced the name in the title at all is a matter for speculation. In 1747 Lyttleton had made an excursion into the field of theology in a book called Observations on the Conversion of St. Paul. The Trial of Selim was a clever defence against the attacks that were made against it. Moore continues the satiric tradition of Pope. Only the character of Selim is real; the others are allegorical. Dr. Johnson informs us that Moore was courting the favour of Lyttleton in this poem in hopes of receiving his patronage.

Geographical names from the Orient were often used in eighteenth-century poetry to convey a sense of immense space. Sometimes writers would use the names of two parts of the Orient remote from each other and other times an Oriental name in conjunction with a name from somewhere else. Thus in current usage the term "Timbuktu", the name of a small town in the Sudan, is frequently uttered by those who may not know where it is but who need a term which sounds remote and unusual. Such instances in English poetry are, of course, innumerable,[15] and only one or two examples need be given here. One of the best-known phrases of this nature is found at the opening of Dr. Johnson's Vanity of Human Wishes (1749) which takes within its compass an unknown, yet admittedly great proportion of mankind: "Let observation with extensive view,/ Survey mankind; from China to Peru".[16] Reginald Heber, Bishop of Calcutta, used

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[15] A partial list is given by Osborne, op. cit., p. 32.

[16] Literary parallels of this phrase are given by Harold Williams in "China to Peru", Notes and Queries, CXCVI (1951), p. 479.

such phrases in an evangelistic hymn which appeared in 1811:

> From Greenland's icy mountains,
> From India's coral strand,
> Where Afric's sunny fountains
> Roll down their golden sand;
> From many an ancient river,
> From many a palmy plain,
> They call us to deliver
> Their land from error's chain.[17]

In Wordsworth's Solitary Reaper (1805) the poet condemns the arid, tiresome quality of contemporary verse and compares it with the exciting offerings of the Romantic Muse. There is as much difference between these two kinds of poetry as between Arabia and the Hebrides. The word Arabia alone connotes strangeness and mysterious inner power:

> No Nightingale did ever chaunt
> More welcome notes to weary bands
> Of travellers in some shady haunt,
> Among Arabian sands:
> A voice so thrilling ne'er was heard
> In spring-time from the Cuckoo-bird,
> Breaking the silence of the seas
> Among the farthest Hebrides.

Again, Arabia and the Hebrides represent two remote geographical points.

Moral poems employing an Oriental setting were sometimes inspired by the prose tales. Among those which were inspired by Beckford's Vathek was Bryan Proctor's Hall of Eblis (1822), a blank verse poem which falls far short of the impact of Beckford's prose. Proctor misses entirely the terror and grandeur of Beckford's description of the Hall of Eblis, the fallen angel. This is how he imagines him:

> He was young
> Still; and, but that some pride burn'd in his eye,
> You might have pitied him. His flowing hair,

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[17]Heber, Poetical Works (1850), p. 86 f.

Streaming like sunbeams, told he must have been
An angel once, and fair, and beautiful;
Nay, in his fallen station, he retain'd
A relic of his old nobility:
And though he fell, you would have said he fell
For aiming at - a world.[18]

There is nothing in this man to make us shudder with fear. He is only a pale shadow of Beckford's Eblis and more suitable to a fairy tale. In Liberal No. 4, 1823, appeared Leigh Hunt's Mahmoud, a poem obviously inspired by Addison's tale in Guardian No. 99. As in the prose tale, the sultan brings his attendants to the house of a man who has been attacked and extinguishes the lights before putting the villain to death. He explains this strange behaviour this way:

"Since first I saw thee come, and heard thy cry,
I could not rid myself of a dread, that one
By whom such daring villainies were done,
Must be some lord of mine, perhaps a lawless son.
Whoe'er he was, I knew my task, but feared
A father's heart, in case the worst appeared.
For this I had the light put out. But when
I saw the face, and found a stranger slain,
I knelt and thanked the sovereign arbiter,
Whose work I had performed through pain and fear;
And then I rose, and was refreshed with food,
The first time since thou cam'st, and marredst my solitude.[19]

The "Caliph Harun", in George Crabbe's Confidant (1811), is a name from the Arabian Nights. The hero of the poem is Harun al Raschid, a ninth-century ruler who is sometimes the hero, sometimes the listener, in Galland's translation. In The Confidant a wife who had gone astray in her

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[18] The Poetical Works of Milman, Bowles, Wilson, and Barry Cornwall (1829), p. 167.

[19] Leigh Hunt as Poet and Essayist, [N.D.], ed. Kent, p. 30.

early youth is blackmailed in later years by her confidant. The husband overhears a conversation between the two women and decides to forgive her sin which he considers she has atoned for by years of virtuous living. He subtly communicates his knowledge and forgiveness by reciting the apologue of Harun:

> "The Caliph Harun, as historians tell,
> Ruled, for a tyrant, admirably well;
> Where his own pleasures were not touch'd, to men
> He was humane, and sometimes even then."[20]

Overhearing a conversation between two of his pages, Harun learns that one of them is blackmailing the other who has stolen fruit from the caliph's garden. Harun, who is expected to be cruel in punishing the offender, pardons the repentent thief and exiles the blackmailer. William Cowper's apologue in The Love of the World Reproved; or, Hypocrisy Detected (1782) is based on the Moslem prohibition against eating pork. The law states that "there is a part in every swine which no follower may taste", but this is so ambiguous that each man decides for himself which part he prefers not to eat. Cowper compares this with the pious Christian practice of renouncing the delights of the world. But every man is strongly attached to his own preferred pleasures:

> Reviled and loved, renounced and follow'd,
> Thus bit by bit the world is swallow'd;
> Each thinks his neighbour makes too free,
> Yet likes a slice as well as he,
> With sophistry their sauce they sweeten,
> Till quite from tail to snout 'tis eaten.[21]

But of all the English poets of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Sir William Jones, by virtue of his many translations, essays,

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[20] Crabbe, Poems (1906), ed. Ward, II, p. 224.

[21] Cowper, Life and Works (1836), ed. Southey, VIII, p. 324.

poems, and scholarly investigations, did more than any other man to foster Orientalism. During his lifetime his reputation as an Orientalist was extremely great and he was much more widely read then than he was in the nineteenth century. Alexander Chalmers, one of the few who considered his works important enough to publish, said that "he has presented to the English reader a new set of images, and opened new sources of the sublime and the pathetic by familiarizing the scenery and manners of the eastern regions".[22] Jones had investigated fields of knowledge into which no man had ventured before, and therefore his pioneer work and his reputation have been superseded by the efforts of subsequent scholars. But his great contribution was to encourage the widespread feeling that the Olympian mythology was becoming tiresome and repetitive, and that a possible field for poetic imagery existed in the East.

Jones's efforts should be seen as part of a movement in the last twenty-five years of the eighteenth century which expressed dissatisfaction with the limitations of classical mythology and its associated themes. This was part of a European trend which attempted to supplement what had been received from the Graeco-Roman civilization with new types of imagery and subject matter. Poets who led the reader into new realms of imaginative experience were most admired. One of these new realms was "the short and simple annals of the poor", the poetry of landscape and village life. Another was the adoption of non-classical legend and mythology such as Norse and Celtic myths. Other poets attempted to imitate the popular ballad,

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[22] The Works of the English Poets (1810), ed. Chalmers, XVIII, p. 440.

and still others became interested in the novelty of the Orient and incorporated it into the traditional poetic forms. In so doing, they were unsuccessful, as Collins and Scott had been unsuccessful with the Oriental eclogue. Jones's ambitious attempt to adapt Oriental mythology to English poetry failed, possibly because the legends he brought to light were too intricate and remote and the proper names too difficult for the uninitiated reader. Some poets, however, devoted part of their work to the authentic Orient. In particular, Byron, Coleridge, Moore, Southey, and Landor exploited this phase of romanticism to which Jones had introduced them and derived local colour from such realistic tales as Vathek and the published accounts of travellers. Their poems were highly successful for a time, causing Jones's own reputation to decline.

(2) The Real Orient

Towards the end of the eighteenth century and continuing into the early decades of the nineteenth century, the cult of Orientalism in English literature was at its height. Authors of prose fiction were writing stories which attempted to give a true picture of Eastern countries, and on the stage producers of Oriental plays spared no expense or artifice to present authentic costumes and scenes to the audience. In poetry those writers who were interested in the Orient thought it necessary to verify their themes and sources by adding lengthy explanations and footnotes, thus making their poems seem more authentic. In some cases poets would share source material or make suggestions to other poets, and for a time

these romantic narrative poems about the East held the attention of the reading public. Foremost among these poets were: Walter Savage Landor (1775-1864), Robert Southey (1774-1843), Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834), Lord Byron (1788-1824), and Thomas Moore (1779-1852). We are concerned here not so much with the comparative merits of the poems themselves as with the strivings of these poets for authenticity and their resultant popularity.

In 1798 Landor published Gebir, a long narrative poem in seven sections. This poem sets out to rebuke the ambition of conquest and to look favourably upon those who strive for peace. Gebir, an Iberian prince, sets out to conquer Egypt, but the conquest is suspended when he falls in love with Egypt's young queen, Charoba. Through the treachery of her nurse, the sorceress Dalica, he is slain amid the rejoicings of the marriage feast. Tamar, the younger brother of Gebir, tends his brother's flocks and vainly contends with a sea-nymph. She has been made susceptible to human feelings by the superior power of Gebir and carries off Tamar to dwell with her forever beyond the reach of human ambitions. In spite of the tinge of didacticism, the poem is as wild and fanciful as the Arabian tale on which it is based. To heighten the tragedy, Landor alters his source, making Gebir an epic hero and changing Charoba from a proud Oriental queen to a love-sick girl who is fearful of mentioning her passion for Gebir. Dalica, therefore, infers that she does not love the conqueror and plans his death without her knowledge.

By his own admission Landor wrote for a select few, and Gebir

attracted only a handful of readers when it was first published. This was doubtless due in part to Landor's esoteric mannerisms as a poet. Landor was an extremely learned man, and often the sources of his narrative poetry are works of minor writers. His poem has not made the legend of Gebir immortal. Even though he elevated the hero to epic proportions, the poem is not a great epic. But he did accomplish one objective, namely to earn the respect of at least ten thoughtful readers, among whom were Coleridge, De Quincey, Southey, Lamb, Scott, and Shelley. Foremost in his praise of Gebir was Southey, whose criticism of the poem in The Critical Review in 1799 enhanced its popularity. He pointed to the ill-chosen story and the obscurity of the language, but said of its beauties that they were of the first order, and that every circumstance was displayed with a force and accuracy which painting could not exceed. Southey also felt indebted to Gebir in the composition of his own Oriental poems: "Soon after I had begun the Arabian romance . . . . Gebir fell into my hands, and my verse was greatly improved by it, both in vividness and strength".[23] In 1802 Landor produced a new edition of Gebir with the help of his brother Robert. To make the poem more popular, they had it reprinted with arguments and notes in order to clear up difficulties and modify points about which the author had changed his mind. At the same time a Latin translation was published which included a scholarly and vigourous introduction to help it achieve popularity. Yet it never was widely read. Gebir was regarded rather as the fanciful creation of a youthful pedant.

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[23]Southey, Poems (1909), ed. Fitzgerald, p. 2.

Southey's poems are remarkable for their copious documentation of Oriental detail. Southey took a long time and extraordinary pains to write Thalaba the Destroyer (1801) and The Curse of Kehama (1810). How much he read on his subject is evident from the innumerable notes which accompany these poems. Among the sources he used are numerous books of travel, most of Sir William Jones's original and translated works, many translations from the Oriental languages, the Koran, and the Arabian Nights. But Southey was not entirely sympathetic with the spirit of the Orient in which he had immersed himself so deeply. The fact that he felt impelled to write Oriental poems in spite of this lack of sympathy is a clear indication of the strength of English interest in this region at the time. The great parade of learning in his footnotes and prefaces indicates that such external information was not only necessary for an understanding of the poems, but was also expected by the public.

The preparation of such poems could not be rushed. Southey writes in the preface to Thalaba: "I had fixed upon the ground, four years before, for a Mahommedan tale; and in the course of that time the plan had been formed and the materials collected".[24] The story of Thalaba is taken from "The History of Maugraby the Magician", which, as the preface states, was contained in The Arabian Tales, or, a Continuation of the Arabian Nights (1792), translated from the French by Robert Heron. In Thalaba an Arabian youth is destined to destroy "a seminary of evil magicians" who inhabit the Domdaniel Caverns "under the roots of the sea", and to perish, like Samson, among his foes. At the beginning of the story

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[24] Ibid., p. 8.

the members of Thalaba's family are massacred by Okba, a Domdaniel magician. But Thalaba survives and when he grows to manhood attempts to avenge their deaths. The magicians try to destroy Thalaba before he can destroy them, but they are always cheated by the courage and piety inspired by his sense of mission, or by the direct intervention of providence. Like Arthur in The Faerie Queene, he always emerges unscathed. In the Twelfth Book, he finally stabs the idol of Eblis down in the caverns. The caverns collapse, killing the magicians and Thalaba himself, but Thalaba's soul is immediately translated to Paradise.

Thalaba is thoroughly Oriental in tone, and the author has incorporated many conventional features of the Oriental tale. Yet the poem lacks passion and the language is more stately and classical than Oriental, for Southey was influenced by Milton, Spenser, and Landor's Gebir. Nevertheless, Francis Jeffrey considered the style to be "feeble, low, and disjointed; without elegance, and without dignity".[25] There is no sense of an impending catastrophe in the poem, for the perils of Thalaba's adventures are so readily overcome that it is difficult to feel any concern about them. Jeffrey writes:

> Tales of this sort may amuse children, and interest, for a moment, by the prodigies they exhibit, and the multitude of events they bring together: but the interest expires with the novelty; and attention is frequently exhausted, even before curiosity has been gratified. The pleasure afforded by performances of this sort, is very much akin to that which may be derived from the exhibition of a harlequin farce; where, instead of just imitations of nature and human character, we are entertained with the transformation of cauliflowers and beer-barrels, the apparition of ghosts and devils, and all the other magic of the wooden sword.[26]

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[25] The Edinburgh Review, I (1802), p. 69.

[26] Ibid., pp. 75, 76.

From 1801 to 1809 Southey amassed considerable information about Hindu myth and legend for his next Oriental poem, The Curse of Kehama, which appeared in 1810. This poem was based on the notion that in the Hindu religion prayers, penances, and sacrifices are supposed to possess inherent value which does not depend on the motive of the person who performs them. Consequently, men with evil intentions are said to have obtained power in this manner, power which has made them formidable. However extravagant this theme may appear, Southey has worked it out with skill and explained the obscurities in his subject chiefly by means of more elaborate footnotes. He annotates and explains everything from Indian social customs to flora and fauna, and the whole system of Hindu mythology. "That mythology which Sir William Jones had been the first to introduce into English poetry" is gradually explained and illustrated by quotations from the best authorities. Anticipating the criticism that such material is too obscure for English poetry, he says:

> . . . if every allusion to it throughout the work is not sufficiently self-explained to render the passage intelligible, there is a want of skill in the poet. Even those readers who should be wholly unacquainted with the writings of our learned Orientalists, will find all the preliminary knowledge that can be needful, in the brief explanation of mythological names prefixed to the Poem.[27]

Here Southey uses the same system as in Thalaba; his sources are principally travellers' descriptions of Syria, Arabia, and Persia, the Arabian Nights, translations of Arabian and Persian poetry, the Koran, and the Old Testament.

The central figure of the poem is the powerful and wicked Kehama,

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[27]Southey, op. cit., p. 117.

who, by the performance of prescribed sacrifices, has attained semi-divine status and now attempts to consolidate his conquest of the lower regions of the universe. Kehama's son is killed by the peasant Ladurlad to prevent him from raping his daughter. Kehama pronounces a curse on Ladurlad which makes him invulnerable to disease, weapons or age. But though he preserves his life, he denies him food, water, sleep, and all the pleasures of the earth. He is also condemned to an everlasting torture strongly reminiscent of the fate of Vathek:

> Thou shalt live in thy pain
> While Kehama shall reign,
> With a fire in thy heart,
> And a fire in thy brain;
> And Sleep shall obey me,
> And visit thee never,
> And the Curse shall be on thee
> For ever and ever.[28]

Then follows a succession of incidents in which Ladurlad and his daughter are subjected to the influence of the various powers, good and evil, in the complicated Hindu mythology, while the vengeful spirit of Arvalan, Kehama's son, seeks to get possession of Kailyal, the peasant girl. The curse of Kehama turns into a blessing, for by his immunity from death Ladurlad is able to save his daughter from the dangers which threaten her. Finally, Kehama, who has obtained dominion over heaven, aspires to the throne of hell. He drinks the "amreeta", or cup of immortality, only to find he has drunk eternal punishment. Ladurlad and Kailyal enjoy everlasting felicity.

Kehama is meant to represent the presumptuous will and intellect that seek to threaten old pieties and release the energies that will

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[28]Ibid., p. 124.

devastate the world. The poem was not without its relevance for the time, and Southey often compared Kehama to Napoleon. However symbolic he may be, readers of Oriental tales will recognize that Kehama is really another Vathek with "protruded brow, the gathered front, the steady eye of wrath". But, as in Thalaba, Southey's classical style does not match the fancy of the poem. He attempts to explain why this is so:

> It appeared to me, that here neither the tone of the morals, nor the strain of the poetry, could be pitched too high; that nothing but moral sublimity could compensate for the extravagance of the fictions, and that all the skill I might possess in the art of poetry was required to counterbalance the disadvantage of a mythology with which few readers were likely to be well acquainted, and which would appear monstrous if its deformities were not kept out of sight. I endeavoured, therefore, to combine the utmost richness of versification with the greatest freedom. The spirit of the poem was Indian, but there was nothing Oriental in the style. I had learnt the language of poetry from our own great masters and the great poets of antiquity.[29]

Yet these two poems were immensely popular and Southey was the foremost Oriental poet up to this time.

Though Coleridge is not known for his interest in the Orient, his Kubla Khan, first published in 1816, is a product of the general interest in Orientalism in England. Coleridge says in his introduction to the 1816 edition that the poem was written as early as 1797 (though scholars now think it may have been written in 1798 or 1799). But more important to the subject at hand, he claims that the poem was published "rather as a psychological curiosity, than on the ground of any supposed poetic merits".[30] The story of its composition is as well known as the poem

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[29] Ibid., p. 16.

[30] S.T. Coleridge, Poems (1927), ed. E.H. Coleridge, p. 295.

itself: Coleridge fell asleep under the influence of "an anodyne" while reading in Purchas's Pilgrimes about Cublai Can. He composed two or three hundred lines in his sleep and awoke to write most of them down before he was interrupted. This idea of Kubla Khan's unconscious composition has been widely accepted until recent times when convincing evidence has been put forward to show that Coleridge had, in fact, read many Oriental publications - chiefly through the influence of his friend Southey, who, at the time, was assiduously preparing Thalaba the Destroyer.[31] Coleridge's relationship with Southey thus assumes added importance, for Southey seems to have provided, through his poetry, his notes, and his reading, many of the scattered elements which Coleridge gathered together into Kubla Khan.

This implies that Coleridge's "vision" is a hoax, though this is not serious since there is plenty of precedent for disguising the origin of Oriental tales. It is clear now that Southey's Common-Place Book,[32] Landor's Gebir,[33] Southey's Thalaba,[34] and Sir William Jones's poem A Hymn to Ganga[35] agree in so many respects with Kubla Khan that a conscious

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[31]See Elisabeth Schneider, Coleridge, Opium and "Kubla Khan" (1953); Garland H. Cannon, "A New Probable Source for 'Kubla Khan'", College English, XVII (1955), pp. 136-142; Warren U. Ober, "Southey, Coleridge, and 'Kubla Khan'", Journal of English and Germanic Philology, LVIII (1959), pp. 414-422.

[32]Ober, op. cit., pp. 415-421.

[33]Schneider, op. cit., pp.117-133.

[34]Ibid., pp. 133-149.

[35]Cannon, op. cit., pp.136-142.

borrowing from these works instead of an unconscious creation is indicated. Above all, Coleridge must have been influenced by his relationship with Southey, with whom he spent a great deal of time in August and September of 1799 while Southey was preparing Thalaba. Thalaba contains many parallels to Kubla Khan. At this time Southey proposed to Coleridge that they collaborate on a poem to be entitled Mohammed, which was to cover the prophet's life from the beginning of his ministry to the storming of Mecca. A plan of the work was drawn up,[36] and each of them selected a part which he would develop. During this period they were very probably sharing notes and ideas, and Southey's notebooks were full of information gleaned from the travel literature about Africa and Asia. It is apparent also that at this time they were reading many of the same books.[37] Coleridge must have had access to Southey's Common-Place Book, which eventually swelled to four volumes and 2,878 pages. In his review, Jeffrey views the Common-Place Book as the main source of Thalaba:

> Every incident, therefore, and description, - every superstitious usage, or singular tradition, that appeared to him susceptible of poetical embellishment, or capable of picturesque representation, he has set down for this purpose, and adopted such a fable and plan of composition, as might enable him to work up all his materials, and interweave every one of his quotations, without any extraordinary violation of unity or order. When he had filled his commonplace book, he began to write; and his poem is little else than his commonplace book versified.[38]

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[36]See Warren U. Ober, "'Mohammed': the Outline of a Proposed Poem by Coleridge and Southey", Notes and Queries, CCIII (1958), p. 448.

[37]See James Baker, "Books Read by Coleridge and Southey", in Literary and Biographical Studies (1908), pp. 211-218, and Paul Kaufman, "The Reading of Southey and Coleridge: The Record of Their Borrowings from the Bristol Library 1793-98", Modern Philology, XXI (1923/24), pp. 317-320.

[38]Op. Cit., pp. 77,78.

Unfortunately the collaboration on Mohammed did not progress beyond the outline stage (however, Southey's Mohammed; A Fragment, written in 1799 and Coleridge's short poem Mahomet survive as memorials). In spite of that, Southey's influence on Coleridge has left its mark in Kubla Khan and stamped Coleridge as a devotee of Orientalism.

The most successful writer of Oriental verse was Lord Byron. In the brief period between 5 June 1813 and 6 August 1814 he quickly produced The Giaour, The Bride of Abydos, The Corsair, and Lara. In six months The Giaour went through seven editions; The Bride sold six thousand copies in a month; ten thousand copies of The Corsair were sold on the day it was published (an unprecedented achievement); and six thousand copies of Lara were sold in five days. Such facts demonstrate not only Byron's popularity, but the popularity of Oriental romances. Byron had not gone about writing these as conscientiously as some of his contemporaries. His work is not as scholarly as, say, Southey's, and Byron denied even that he was a professional writer at all. None of his contemporaries, however, had the benefit of Byron's first-hand experience in Eastern travel or his genius for extracting the most romantic and sensational, and therefore the most marketable features, from the Eastern literature that he had read. He realized that he was not producing works of high quality and considered them to have been strangely overrated. He was merely introducing his favourite hero-type into the Eastern setting that he knew so well. We know that he admired the Arabian Nights and Vathek, but this kind of fanciful Orientalism had no place in his poetry. In his view the East

was not a land of peris and enchanters engaged in feats of unbelievable magic, but a land of pashas, pirates, and banditti. He held in common with contemporary writers of the Oriental prose tale an interest in real life, and his plots are founded, in varying degrees, upon fact. In his poems he drew upon his own experiences and observations in Albania, Greece, and Asia Minor.

The most memorable feature of these poems is the way in which Byron portrays the heroes. They are all, in varying degrees, Noble Outlaws, and as such are "men of action", not of contemplation. They subscribe to the ideal of anarchic and individualistic liberty. There is something of the rebel and the renegade in each of them: the Giaour, Selim of The Bride, and Conrad and Lara of The Corsair and Lara. We are not asked to view them with a critical eye, for there are no standards presented for our judging. Instead, we are invited to identify ourselves with them. For Byron brings no didactic purpose to these poems and invokes moral principles only to heighten the glory of the heroes who flout them. It is impossible to take them seriously as representatives of human nature. They were attractive in the way that adolescent heroes are attractive, and also because they lived in the Orient. In the Preface to these poems, Byron's editor, E.H. Coleridge, writes:

> Byron's metrical "Tales" come before us in the guise of light reading, and may be "easily criticized" as melodramatic - the heroines conventional puppets, the heroes reduplicated reflections of the author's personality, the Oriental "properties" loosely arranged, and somewhat stage-worn. A thorough and sympathetic study of these once extravagantly lauded and now belittled poems will not, perhaps, reverse the deliberate judgement of later generations, but it will display them for what they are,

> bold and rapid and yet exact presentations of the "gorgeous East," vivid and fresh from the hand of the great artist who conceived them out of the abundance of memory and observation, and wrought them into shape with the "pen of a ready writer." They will be once more recognized as works of genius, an integral portion of our literary inheritance, which has its proper value, and will repay a more assiduous and a finer husbandry.[39]

Part of Byron's fame is due to the ingenious way in which he capitalized on English interest in the Orient. According to convention, he added realism by writing introductions and footnotes appropriate to his material. However, he did not drown the text as Southey had done, and was able to rely upon what he had seen of the Orient. Byron's genius was such that had he written about the North American Indian or the Knights of the Round Table he would have been famous. But it is doubtful whether he would have won the fame which resulted from his "Turkish Tales." He was perceptive enough to catch the exact spirit of English interest in Orientalism at a time when such entertainments were in great demand.

At least one poet suffered from Byron's achievements - his close friend and confidant Thomas Moore. Because they exchanged ideas, their literary efforts sometimes run parallel. Certainly, by September, 1811, Moore had begun work on an Oriental verse tale, but the nature of it he kept secret from everyone until it was published. Byron knew that Moore was at work on a long poem connected with the East, and he kept writing hearty words of encouragement. No doubt the East, as a subject for poetry, had been discussed by the two men, but Moore was surprised when Byron followed him. He was discouraged by Byron's phenomenal success, especially by

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[39]Byron, Works (1922), ed. E.H. Coleridge, III, pp. viii, ix.

the success of The Bride of Abydos. This upset him because he had intended to publish a poem with a similar theme. He wrote to Mary Dalby: "Lord Byron's last poem did give me (I am sorry to tell you) a deep wound in a very vital part - my story; and it is singular enough, for he could not know anything about it".[40] Being aware of public interest in the East, Moore was vexed that the novelty and force of his poem would be diminished and that he would be crowded by other writers anxious to exploit the taste for Oriental poetry. He wrote:

> . . . I feel rather downhearted about it. Never was anything more unlucky for me than Byron's invasion of this region, which when I entered it, was as yet untrodden, and whose chief charm consisted in the gloss and novelty of its features; but it will now be over-run with clumsy adventurers, and when I make my appearance, instead of being a leader as I looked to be, I must dwindle into an humble follower - a Byronian. This is disheartening, and I sometimes doubt whether I shall publish it at all; though at the same time, If I may trust in my own judgement, I think I never wrote so well before.[41]

Happily Byron's romances whetted the public appetite, and when Moore's Lalla Rookh came out in 1817 it too was a success.

Moore organized Lalla Rookh as a frame-tale. Aurungzeb sends his daughter, Lalla Rookh, from Delhi to Cashmere to meet her prospective husband, the son of the king of Bokhara. On the way she is entertained by the tales of a young poet, Feramorz, who has been sent along by her father to keep her company. Lalla Rookh falls in love with the poet, and is therefore reluctant to approach her destiny. But when she is ushered into the presence of the prince, she faints with joy, for the prince is none

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[40] Letter to Mary Dalby, December 1813, in Letters, ed. Dowden, I, p. 289.

[41] Letter to Mary Godfrey, July or August 1813, ibid., p. 275.

other than Feramorz himself who had chosen to meet his bride in this romantic way. Woven into the story are the four tales related by the royal singer: "The Veiled Prophet of Khorassan", "Paradise and the Peri", "The Fire Worshippers", and "The Light of the Haram". The best of these is "Paradise and the Peri", based on the Persian legend of the Peris, a breed of half-fallen angels who are permitted all the delights of the earth, but not those of Paradise. However, "the glorious Angel, who was keeping/The gates of Light" says:

> 'One hope is thine,
> 'Tis written in the Book of Fate,
> The Peri yet may be forgiven
> Who brings to this Eternal Gate
> The gift that is most dear to Heaven![42]

The Peri first brings the last drop of blood of a patriot hero, shed in vain, followed by the last sigh of a maiden who chose to share the death of her true love; but both are rejected. Finally, she attains everlasting happiness by bringing the tear of a repentant sinner.

Lalla Rookh was written in the scholarly tradition of Southey's Oriental poems and lacked the immediacy of Byron's. Moore was relying upon the charm of unfamiliar scenes and highly-coloured descriptive passages. He laid his stories in a country known to him only through books and derived his plots from literature unknown to a great proportion of his readers. Byron, on the other hand, was a part of every scene that he created and his Oriental poems savour of actual experience. Any vagueness which chances to exist is cleared up by the constant addition of footnotes to explain fragments of Eastern custom and natural history

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[42] Moore, Poetical Works [N.D.], p. 414.

that Moore laboriously brings in, thus giving the poem a ring of artificiality. It was said of his characters: "All the personages are so very beautiful, and brave, and agonizing - so totally wrapt up in the exaltation of their vehement emotions, and withal so lofty in rank, and so sumptuous and magnificent in all that relates to their external condition, that the herd of ordinary mortals can scarcely venture to conceive of their proceedings, or to sympathize freely with their fortunes".[43] This is a reading of a romantic poem through Augustan eyes. These poems do not permit every bosom to return an echo, but ask simply that the reader should accept an implausible world long enough to escape briefly from the real one. Moore's way of escape seemed unacceptable after Byron's.

Contemporary poets considered Lalla Rookh to be too florid, and it is sometimes apparent that Moore is uncomfortable writing the way he does. He attempted narrative poetry because that was the fashion; he was more at home in lyric poetry. The Eastern theme was new to him and he tried to make himself at home in it, emphasizing the qualities of elaborate finish, profusion of ornament, and variety of incident. These qualities made the poem a success and gained Moore a European reputation. For no reader could ever mistake his meaning - the amount of thought in the poem is light in comparison with the way in which it is expressed. Every harshness is smoothed away. Nowadays, because the Oriental taste has subsided, it seems an unnecessarily verbose aberration of that taste.

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[43] The Edinburgh Review, XXIX (1817), p. 4.

Though by no means the last of the Oriental poems, Lalla Rookh indicates that the taste for them had begun to run out, and few of the successors of Lalla Rookh are worth our consideration until the appearance of Edward Fitzgerald's "translation", The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam (1859).

Chapter Five

Conclusion

> Ye dreamers, then,
> Forgers of daring tales! we bless you then,
> Impostors, drivellers, dotards, as the ape
> Philosophy will call you: then we feel
> With what, and how great might ye are in league,
> Who make our wish our power, our thought a deed,
> An empire, a possession, - ye whom time
> And seasons serve; all Faculties; - to whom
> Earth crouches, the elements are potter's clay,
> Space like a heaven filled up with northern lights,
> Here, nowhere, there, and everywhere at once.
>
> Wordsworth, The Prelude (1805),
> Book V, ll. 523-533.

How many Oriental works immediately spring to mind? The Citizen of the World, Rasselas, Vathek, Byron's "Turkish Tales", and perhaps The Orphan of China. The rest are forgotten. Furthermore, of the major works produced in the period we are dealing with only a few have even a remote connection with the Orient. It is therefore obvious that Orientalism in English literature did not cause any major modifications in its major genres. Writers used Oriental subject matter but continued to work in the forms of literature that were already in existence. While it is possible to overrate this contribution, Orientalism cannot be overlooked as one of the trends enriching literature at this time. The contrast that existed, or seemed to exist, between Eastern and Western cultures provided the writer with both a vantage point from which he could observe (and attack) his countrymen more objectively, and a kind of nether world into which both reader and writer could retreat from the mundane affairs of everyday life.

It is not surprising that we find a certain ambivalence towards Orientalism in the minds of many eighteenth-century writers. Augustan literature was primarily concerned with the real world - with man in the context of social and political reality. Writers like Pope and Johnson looked with disfavour upon literature which encouraged escapism and had nothing valuable or relevant to say to mankind. And so Orientalism in literature began as one way of approaching "the proper study of mankind" - man. But as the century progressed, the exotic East became cultivated for its own sake and writers indulged themselves fully in its wonder and beauty. In the first half of the eighteenth century didacticism became a dominant feature of the prose tale, and amusing essays extolling the virtue of Oriental life, political satires, fables, and the ubiquitous "spy" who was capable of exposing the follies of contemporary England, resulted. In the drama the same moralistic bias was present. Oriental plays such as Johnson's Irene propagated Occidental Christian doctrines. And although Orientalism did not greatly affect poetry in the first half of the eighteenth century, it was used for moralistic purposes when it was present. Beckford's Vathek was a turning point in Oriental literature, for after its publication morality was no longer the raison d'être of the prose tale. The colourful East which flowed from Beckford's imagination and which was later fully exploited by Byron remained the stock background for Oriental literature until it was shattered by the realism of Hope's and Morier's picaresque novels. On the stage the melodrama, representing the new romantic spirit, discarded its moralistic content and began to depend for its effect upon spectacle, exoticism, and eroticism.

The Arabian Nights and the Oriental tales provided ideas for farces, pantomimes, and comic operas, and for these the spectacular Oriental costumes and settings were well suited. These pantomimes continued to be a strong feature of the nineteenth-century stage, especially in the works of James Robinson Planché, Edward Blanchard, William Brough, Mark Lemon, Henry Byron, Wilton Jones, and John Francis McArdle. In romantic poetry Orientalism represents a craving for free range of the imagination and an appetite for the unknown and the limitless. Romantic poetry about the Orient is also characterized by an attempt to achieve authenticity through extensive introductions, arguments, and notes.

Critical judgements of Oriental literature in the eighteenth century tended to be harsh. Critics trained in the classics found it difficult to accept the lack of restraint, carelessness of form, absence of propriety, and shallow characterization usually encountered in these works. Francis Jeffrey, for example, vehemently protests against such literature in reviewing Southey's Thalaba: "The peculiar doctrines of this sect, it would not, perhaps, be very easy to explain; but, that they are dissenters from the established systems in poetry and criticism, is admitted, and proved indeed, by the whole tenor of their compositions".[1] There were protests also against the irrelevance of going so far afield to find subject matter, especially in the relatively unknown world of Oriental mythology. But the Augustan standards of criticism (as expressed by Jeffrey) were becoming irrelevant and new standards were replacing them.

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[1] Edinburgh Review, I (1802/03), p. 63.

As the taste for romantic literature grew, tolerance for Oriental literature increased. Beckford's Vathek, a perfect confluence of the Gothic and the Oriental, was so well suited to the new taste that it contributed more to the acceptance of Orientalism than any other single work.

Escape, then, appears to be the most outstanding contribution of Oriental literature, for whether it was didactic or romantic, the action of these stories, poems, and plays was far removed from the life of the reader. As early as 1755 Joseph Spence wrote:

> The reading of novels and eastern tales, &c. like drinking of drams. - Wine tastes like water after the latter; and the daily occurrences of life seem quite tasteless and insipid after being deeply engaged in the former.[2]

Part of this escape was brought about by the erotic appeal of the East to the Western mind. The sexual conventions in Eastern literature are quite different from those of the West. The dubious virtue of Oriental characters and the well-known phenomenon of the harem were sure to feed the fantasies of the English reader. The spirit of the Orient possessed all the attraction and potentiality of half-knowledge, allowing the Englishman to fill in for himself the things that were not clear to him. It provided a complete escape from the real environment into a totally strange world with an ethos of its own - an atmosphere evoked by the imaginations of both the writer and the reader. J.L. Lowes observes:

> Not only on the fascinating fringes of early maps, but universally, the advancing territory of the known is rimmed and bounded by a dubious borderland in which

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[2]Joseph Spence, Anecdotes (1820), "Supplemental Anecdotes from First Memorandum Book for 1755", p. 209.

> the unfamiliar and the strange hold momentary sway. And that zone of the marvellous (which is merely the unknown in its transition to the wonted) draws like a loadstone the incorporating energy of the imagination, which penetrates to the core of the familiar behind the outward semblance of the strange, and completes the conquest which discovery began.[3]

In the early nineteenth century the influence of the Arabian Nights had been markedly reduced and writers became preoccupied with what they called "local colour". The early Biblical quality of the moral tales had disappeared, and on stage scenes of pomp and splendour very often burlesqued the old heroic Oriental plays. But yet the East continued to serve as a decorative background, and writers preoccupied with its romantic possibilities were distracted from the reality of Eastern culture. Sir William Jones had called for a greater understanding of Eastern culture and insisted that the West could learn much from the study of Oriental languages, religions, and social customs. However his voice was not sufficiently strong, and the true heritage of the East was set aside. Looking back, then, it appears at first glance that the influence of the East resulted in a very small and undistinguished portion of the literature of the period. But such an impression is misleading, for the influence of the East only gains importance when we see that it has acted as a fertilizer, liberating the imagination from narrow discipline and calling into action creative impulses which had lain dormant or confined.

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[3] Lowes, The Road to Xanadu (1927), p. 115.

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