The Arabian Nights: Encounters and Translations In Literature and the Arts Conference

December 15-17, 2009

This sequel to a conference sponsored generously by the British Academy in March 2008 will explore the impact of Oriental story-telling, in particular of The Tales of 1001 Nights, on western fiction and entertainment. This influence takes many rich and exciting forms, and the talks and readings aim to develop a deep understanding of the long, imaginative interactions between the Middle Eastern, Asian and Western worlds.

The conference will examine in particular the influence of The Arabian Nights on music and film, as well as on narrative literature. Among the subjects of discussion will be: Orientalism in the Far East; an Indian film genre of the 1930s known to film historians as “The Arabian Nights Fantasy”; perspectives on teaching The Arabian Nights; and adapting The Arabian Nights into music and onto the stage.

DAY 1
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2009

9:00 am - 12:45 pm
Panel A: Fountainheads and Watersheds
Chair: Peter Heath
Srinivas Aravamudan
Talking Animals from Remote Nations: the Influence of the Oriental Beast-Fable
Samer Ali
Shahrazad’s Daughters, Marjana’s Sisters: Role Models and Women’s Participation in the Medieval Islamic Public Sphere
Wendy Doniger
Ring Recognition, Stories and Sexual Masquerade
Peter Cheikowsky
The Sources of Turandot
11:00 - 11:15 am
Break & Refreshments
Muhsin Al-Musawi
The Islamic Background of The Arabian Nights
Amira El Zein
Spiritual Quests in The Arabian Nights
Abdulla Al Dabbagh
Shakespeare and The Arabian Nights
12:45 - 2:00 pm
Lunch
2:00 - 4:45 pm
Panel B: Translations and Variations
Chair: Nezar Andary
Jeanne Miller
Generational Struggle or The Wiles of Women? The Book of Sindbad, Boccaccio, and The Dolopatous
Laurent Châtel
William Beckford (1760-1844)’s Arabian Nights: “Correctness of Costume” or “Power of Imagination”?
Paula Horta
The Collector of Worlds: Richard Burton as Collaborator and Informant
3:30 - 3:45 pm
Break & Refreshments
Clémence Boulouque
Mardrus’s Translation of The Arabian Nights and the French Fin de Siècle
Wen-Chin Ouyang
The Semiotics of Cultural Difference: On Chinese Translation of Sex in The 1001 Nights
4:45 - 5:00 pm
Break & Refreshments
5:00 - 6:15 pm
Round Table 1: Reading and Teaching the 1001 Nights
Chair: Abdulla Al Dabbagh
Maher Jarrar
Gerald Maclean
Muhsin Al-Musawi
7:30 pm
Evening Reading: Writers in Conversation with The 1001 Nights
At the Abu Dhabi Intercontinental Hotel
Chairs: Philip Kennedy & Marina Warner
Githa Harinath
Elias Khoury
Gamal El-Shihani
Amira El Zein
Alia Yunis
DAY 2  
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2009

1:00–4:00 pm
PANEL C: ENLIGHTENING WONDERS
Chair Saree Makdisi
Roger Pearson
White Magic: Voltaire and Galland’s *Mille et Une Nuits*
Ros Ballaster
Extremities: Candide, Rasselas, Tristram Shandy and *The Arabian Nights*
Bernard Franco
*Aladin Romantique*: On Certain Variations in the European Tradition

4:40–4:30 pm
Break & Refreshments

2:30–3:00 pm
Break & Refreshments

Katie Trumpener
Conversation as Conversion: Storytelling and Dialogue in Diderot, Vittorini and Puig

2:00–2:30 pm
PANEL E: MACHINES OF ENCHANTMENT
Chair Ros Ballaster
Rebecca Johnson
*Flying Machines and other Spectacular Objects: The Oriental Tale and Epistemologies of Scale*
Marina Warner
*Charmed States: The Power of the Talisman*
Elliot Colla
*Magical Ethic: Wonder and Advice in Alf Layla wa Layla*

7:30 pm
EVENING FILM SCREENING OF NACER KHEMIR’S *BAB’AZIZ*
At the Abu Dhabi Intercontinental Hotel
Preceded by a conversation between Nacer Khemir and Aboubaker Chraibi

DAY 3  
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 17, 2009

9:00 am–12:00 pm
PANEL D: MUSIC & PERFORMANCE
Chair Philip Kennedy
Yuriko Yamanaka
*The Arabian Nights* in Traditional Japanese Performing Arts
Tetsuo Nishio
The Takarazuka Revue and the Fantasy of “Arabia” in Japan
Robert Irwin
*A Little Arabian Nights* Music (followed by musical selections)

10:30–10:45 am
Break & Refreshments

Nasser Al-Taei
Under the Spell of Magic: The Oriental Tale in Rimsky-Korsakov’s *Scheherazade*

11:30–1:00 pm
Lunch & Screening of *The Adventures of Prince Achmed* (1926), introduced by Marina Warner

2:30–2:45 pm
Break & Refreshments

2:45–4:15 pm
PANEL F: ON THE SILVER SCREEN
Chair Tim Supple
Karl Sabbagh
Story versus Movie
Ulrich Marzolph
The Thief of Baghdad: From Douglas Fairbanks to Walt Disney
Rosie Thomas
Thieves of the Orient: *The Arabian Nights* in Early Indian Cinema

4:15–4:30 pm
Break & Refreshments

4:30–6:30 pm
PANEL G: MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE AND INTERPRETATIONS
Chair Maher Jarrar
Sinan Antoon
*Alf Layla wa Layla* in the Novels of Mu’nis al-Razzaz
Shareah Taleghani
Shahrzad as Time-Traveler: Satirical Nostalgia in Hani al-Rahib’s *I Drew a Line in the Sands*
Ferial Ghazoul
Textual, Visual, and Performative Renderings of Sindbad
Philip Kennedy
Borges’s Missing Pages and The 1001 Nights