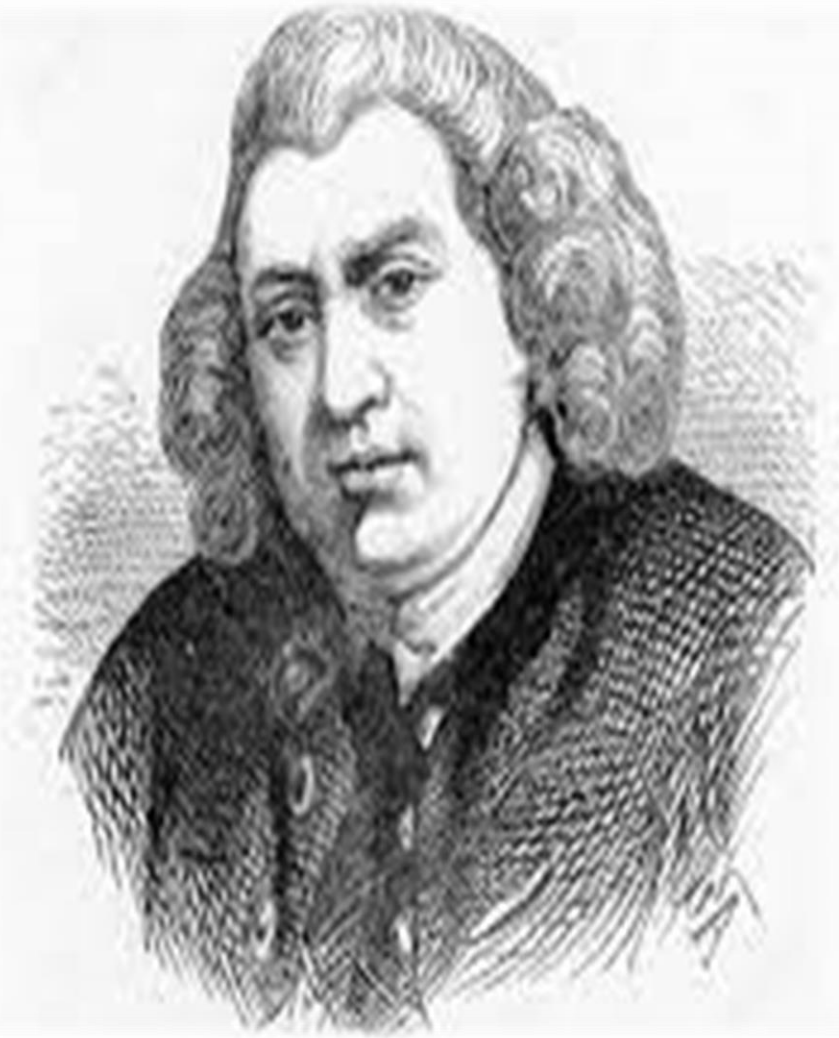
Samuel Johnson and the Orient



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2022

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge that the original title of this book is: **Orientalism In Johnson's Rasselas, Irene and Other Short Stories.** It is an M.A. thesis submitted to the Council of the College of Arts, University of Mosul, April, 1985.

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the late Dr. Issam Mahmood Al-Khatib for his invaluable instructions, guidance and encouragement I received throughout the preparation and writing of this thesis.

I am greatly indebted to my friend Dr. study. Khalid Abdulla for his help in making photocopies of the early editions of **The Arabian Nights** and the **Persian Tales** available to me. Without them the thesis would have lost much of its worth. I should like to express my thanks to Dr. Asim Ismail, Chairman of the Department of European Languages for his help and encouragement. I would also like to express my thanks to Dr. Y. Y. Aziz for his encouragement. Finally, I am indebted to Mrs. Patricia A. Aziz for her carefulness in typing the thesis.

ABSTRACT

In the eighteenth century England witnessed a growing interest in the orient, its manners, religions, customs, histories and literature. This interest was stimulated by various means such as oriental studies, travellers accounts and the translation of some literary works which provided the eighteenth-century writers with ample wealth of information about the fanciful and exotic areas.

Johnson, like many of his contemporaries, was fascinated by the magnificence and grandeur of the orient. In effect, Johnson's knowledge of the orient was basically derived from his wide reading of oriental books available in his father's bookshop. These books must have helped him to get and formulate enough material concerning Eastern religions, history, customs and literature which appear in his prose writings especially in Rasselas, some periodical short stories and in his tragedy, Irene.

Since critics have paid only a little attention to this aspect of Johnson's writing, it is the aim of this thesis to examine the impact of the orient on Johnson and explore Johnson's concept of it. It also aims at investigating the influence of oriental literature and history on his moral vision, setting, style and artistic form of his oriental works.

This study is divided into four chapters and a conclusion. Chapter I is an introductory one. It presents the hypothesis, the aim of the thesis, data used in this study, previous works and method used in this study.

Chapter II is divided into two sections. The first section attempts to present a brief historical background pointing out the English interest in the orient from the Middle Ages till the end of the eighteenth century, whereas the second part is devoted to review Johnson's concern with the orient which was intensified by reading in travel books to the East and possibly books of literature such as The Arabian Nights and the Persian Tales.

Chapter III is dedicated to review the major possible sources which furnished Johnson with information about the orient. Special attention is paid to the books of history and literature. The chapter consists of three sections. Each attempts to prove Johnson's borrowing from oriental books depending on oriental evidence based mainly upon an analysis of Johnson's Rasselas, Irene and the short stories in the direction of comparison with certain travel and literary books particularly The Arabian Nights and the Persian Tales.

Chapter IV tries to explore the Eastern elements in Johnson's oriental works. It is divided into four sections. The first section deals with the oriental setting of Rasselas, Irene and some short stories. Section two includes a brief discussion of the possible oriental elements in Johnson's moral, religious, and other purposes and how he sometimes employs oriental dress to express universal ideas. Section three is about oriental troubles in Johnson's style of Rasselas, Irene and the other short stories. Section four sheds light on the oriental elements in the structure of Rasselas the short stories.

The thesis ends with a conclusion which summarizes Johnson's interest in the east as it appears in his prose oriental writings and drama.

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CHAPTER FOUR

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The Hypotheses

Samuel Johnson is one of the most prominent literary figures of the eighteenth century. This prominence is mainly due to his merits as a critic, a novelist, a poet, a lexicographer and a playwright. He is a classicist and the spokesman of the Augustan Age, yet he has directed his attention to the East as well. Only a few scholars, however, know the extent of his interest in the East, its culture and literature.

The Aims of the Study

Little critical attention has been paid to Johnson's orientalism. This study, therefore, aims at investigating Johnson's interest in the orient and oriental literature, and how he uses them as literary material to convey his moral, religious, and philosophical ideas. In relation to this aim, this study also tries to identify the analogies and point out the differences between Johnson's pseudo-oriental tales and the religious tales of the Orient, especially those of The Arabian Nights and the Persian Tales. One more aim of this study is to point out the oriental elements in Johnson's themes, style and in the structure of his tales.

Data Used in this Study

The data used in this study consist of three major groups: the main material is Rasselas, which was written in two volumes in 1759. Next we have an oriental tragedy, Irene, 1737. The final group consists of the following short stories:

1. "Nouradin, the Merchant and his Son Almamoulin," The Rambler, No. 120, May, 11, 1751.

2. "Morad, the Son of Hanuth and his Son Abouzaid," The Rambler, No.190, January 11, 1752.
3. "Seged, Lord of Ethiopia," The Rambler, Nos. 204 and 205, Feb. 29 and March 3, 1752.
4. "Ortogrual of Basra," The Idler, No.99, March 8, 1760.
5. "Omar, the Son of Hassan," The Idler, No.101, March 22, 1760.

Previous Works

Much has been written on Johnson's merits as a man of letters, a poet and a literary critic. Since the eighteenth century, there has a steady flow of books, research articles and studies on Johnson's poetry and critical works. However, there has been little research concerning Johnson as an orientalist.

The available literature does not say much on the extent to which Johnson was influenced by the orient. Apart from a few brief studies and comments which appeared in a number of literary journals, this important aspect of Johnson's writings has been regretfully passed over.

The most remarkable of the studies on Johnson's Rasselas, (1795) are: J. Kolb Gwin, "The Structure of Rasselas", PMLA, IXVI, (1951), pp.698-717. This article interprets the tale as oriental by using a brief comparison with the Persian Tales, especially "The History of King Bedreddin Lolo". The next periodical essay is written by Alvin Whitley, "The Comedy of Rasselas", which is published in ELH, Vol.XXIII, (1956). The writer of this essay emphasizes the moral, religious and philosophical purposes of the tale. The other most important critical work is by William Kenney, "Rasselas and the Theme of Diversification", PQ, XXXVIII, (1959), pp.84-89. Kenny concentrates more on the moral aspects of the tale. To these studies, another one by Emrys Jones may be added. "The Artistic Form of Rasselas", RES, XVIII, (1967),

whose main emphasis on the textual composition of Rasselas. Besides, there has been another critical work of great significance, an introduction to the History of Rasselas, Prince of Abyssinia by J. P. Hardy (London, 1968). In addition to the above mentioned studies, there are Boswell and other writers who wrote numerous, but of secondary significance. Most of these authors focus on the moral aspects of Rasselas and ignore the oriental elements in it.(١)

As for Irene, it has attracted little attention from literary critics and scholars, probably because "it is a dull play".(٢) Accordingly, it is natural that only a few articles have been written on it. To begin with, the most popular article is "A Newly Recovered Criticism of Johnson's Irene", Harvard Library Bulletin, IV (Spring, 1950) by Robert F. Metzdorf. This article throws light on Irene's background and its performance on "Drury Lane Stage" in 1747. Another essay was published in the Fortnightly Review, CV (April, 1919, pp.578-87). In addition to these, there are a few other comments.(٣) But we should bear in mind that none of the above cited works says or analyses the tragedy as a work of an oriental character.

To conclude, what is still utterly neglected and undealt with by critics is Johnson's short stories. Apart from the brief comments made by Martha Pike Conant, there are no studies of them.

Method Used in this Study

The method used in this study is a comparative one. Johnson's oriental works, Rasselas, Irene and the short stories are compared to the most popular oriental tales in the eighteenth century, especially The Arabian Nights, the Persian Tales and certain books of history and travel. The comparison aims at locating sources and finding out the differences and analogies between them and Dr. Johnson's oriental writings.

NOTES

(١) See for example:
   i. R. W. Chapman, ed. Boswel's Life of Johnson (London, 1965), pp.240-243.
   ii. Earnest Baker, The History of the English Novel, Vol.5 (New York, 1967), pp.61-64.
   iii. Joseph Wood Krutch, Samuel Johnson (New York, 1963), pp.161-183.

(٢) Berna Moran "The Irene Story and Dr. Johnson's Sources" MLN, LXXI (February 1956), p.87.

(٣) See for example:
   i. David Nichol Smith, The Poems of Samuel Johnson, (Oxford, 1974), pp.267-277.
   ii. William Archer, "About the Theatre: Dr. Johnson as a Playwright", Tribune (London, Sep.22, 1906), p.2.

CHAPTER TWO

ENGLISH INTEREST IN THE EAST

English and the Oriental Tales in the Eighteenth Century

The Orient has always had a unique fascination for western imaginative minds including literary figures. This fact has been confirmed by many literary critics. In a remarkable article, Louis Wann maintains that "every outside influence of importance has, necessarily and literally, come from the East".(١) On the same subject, George Eliot comments on the establishment impact of the Orient on English Literature. She says:

> **No act of religious symbolism has a deeper root in nature than that of turning with reverence to the East. For almost all our good things… our arts, our religious and philosophical ideas, our very nursery-tales and romances have travelled to us from the east. In an historical as well as in a physical sense, the East is the land of morning.(٢)**

These opinions and others are undeniable testimonies from native English literary figures to the impact of the Orient on English Literature.

To study the oriental tales in the eighteenth century, it is essential to be acquainted with the accurate meaning of the Orient. Up to now, there is no agreement on a specific definition to the Orient, and there is still much divergence in the opinions of geographers who have tried their best to demarcate the countries that could be

possibly included within the frontier of the Orient. To some writers the Orient means "those countries, collectively, that begin with Islam on the Eastern Mediterranean and stretch through Asia."[٣] Others tried to define it depending on certain criteria. To them the Orient means:

> **The regions East of the Mediterranean sea including India, China, Japan, Russia and the Arab Homeland. But many researchers oppose this definition since certain countries in Europe are considered Oriental such as some parts of Turkey, and in the Orient there are areas which have occidental character like Australia.**[٤]

In addition, some geographers go further and attempt to fix the frontier of the Orient by applying educational and cultural criteria. To them the West is always characterized by "mechanical and technical development as well as the industrial revolution, whereas the East is always coupled with the predominance of superstitious beliefs, illiteracy and submission."[٥]

It is apparent, however, that the above cited definitions, apart from the last one, do not include Ethiopia, among oriental countries. Among the books I have examined, the one which refers to Ethiopia as an oriental country is Britannica World Dictionary. On page 397 the word 'East' is defined as follows: East is divided into three parts: "Far East ... Middle East ... Near East. The Middle East ... [includes] India, Pakistan, Burma, Tibet, Libya, Ethiopia and Somaliland.[٦] Moreover, there are still many supportable evidence to prove that Ethiopia is purely an oriental country. First of all, the names of

“Abyssinia and Abyssinian” are two names of Arabic origin as they “are derived from the Habastat, one of the two south Arabian tribal groups forming the Aksumite Kingdom”.(٧) In relation to this the other name of the country, Ethiopia, is of oriental origin, it is “a general Greek name for the country of the dark-coloured peoples living south of Egypt”.(٨) Even most of "the inhabitants of Ethiopia are immigrants from South Arabia,”(٩) and they consist of “two main groups: Hamitic Ethiopian (sometimes called Cushitic) and Semitic, known collectively as Amhara. Both are intrusive, and entered the country from Arabia”.(١٠)

Another obvious evidence of the oriental character of Ethiopia is that, religiously, the country is Christian, its church firmly connected with the existed one in Alexandria as it “shares the general characteristics of the Eastern churches”.(١١) Accordingly, Ethiopia is an oriental country which possesses similar characteristics to that of other oriental countries.

As for the diffusion of the Oriental tales in England in the eighteenth century, it is possible to say that since the Middle Ages, the Orient, its history, religions, customs, culture and literature remained for a long time a source of curiosity and interest to the occidental people in general and scholars in particular. During the Middle Ages, the first means of direct contact between the West and East were “pilgrimages and travels ... made by the Europeans to the Holy Land.”(١٢) Those early people who travelled to the East provided an oral medium through which many Eastern tales and legends penetrated into western literature.(١٣)

During the eleventh century, it was possible to find fictitious descriptions of the marvels of the orient in Anglo-Saxson translations of legends concerning Alexander the Great. The other means of communication between the East and the West through which the oriental tale found its way to the West was trade, one effect of commercial contact between the East and the West is that it placed the Western peoples in direct contact with the East and enabled them to learn and appreciate its culture and literature. English and other European merchants helped the oral transmission of some oriental tales and legends.

The other means of communication between the East and the West was supplied through a series of religious wars between the Christian West and the Islamic East at the beginning of the twelfth century, namely the Crusades. But it is the possible to say that the "military nature of the contact between the West and the East must necessarily have limited the impact of the former upon the latter in 'scope' as well as in 'effect'",[١٤] because those who made investigations in the Western institutions proved that there are "fewer borrowings from Muslim past and loss social intermingling than in the Christian States of Sicily and Spain".[١٥]

In addition to these inconstant means of communication, the most constant channel of contact between the East and the West was Spain and Sicily during the tenth and eleventh centuries. It was a period during which the culture of the Arabs was at its zenith. The influence of the Arabs in Spain remained effective even after they were pushed out of the country in 1492. The main source of this influence was the libraries packed

with manuscripts which the Arabs left behind, and some of which were translated into Latin, and later into the European vernaculars including English. These translations inspired not only the English, but the whole of Europe so much that they became the main sources of knowledge and learning for the Europeans for centuries.

During the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries the East-West communication continued and it was possible to find many fables and apologues both in prose and poetry in many European countries most probably of oriental origin. Examples of this are many translations of some oriental tales such as "Kalila and Dimna and The Book of Sindbad".(١٦)

In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the Western interest in the East became rather wider in scope as a great number of oriental tales were translated into English, and others written in imitation of the oriental mode of writing. The English understanding of the East was reflected in works like Shakespeares' Othello (1602), and Marlowe's Tambarlaine (1587).

In the seventeenth century, the scope of the Western interest in the East grew stronger, and it was revealed in histories, novels, dramas, biographies, travel books and poetry of the period. The opening of this era was mainly associated with the appearance of Richard Knolles' book, The General History of the Turks (1603) which was widely read by some major literary figures. As the century moved on, the Western appreciation of the East became comprehensive in scope. Men like William Bedwell (1562-1632) and Edward Pococke (1604-1691) were the most eminent Arabists of the seventeenth century. William Bedwell, for instance, who was

considered the father of Arabic scholarship, stressed the importance of Arabic, when he once declared that it was "the only language of religion and the chief language of diplomacy and business from the fortunate island to the China Seas".(١٧)

One of the most diligent scholars of the seventeenth century was Edward Pococke who studied many Oriental languages such as Arabic, Persian, and Turkish. He travelled to the orient and visited some of its famous cities such as Constantinople. In 1649, he published his remarkable book Specimen Historiane Arabum, a book which is highly appreciated by most English scholars as it deals with ancient Arabic history, religion and literature.(١٨)

In addition to these books, there were many books of travel translated from French and other languages into English such as Thevenots' Suite du Voyage au Levant (l674), and Bernier's Voyages (in India) (1699). These books and others remained popular throughout the eighteenth century as the main sources of knowledge about the Orient, its life, manners, religions, history and customs.

The eighteenth century marked a new phase in the English interest in the Orient. Between 1704-1712, appeared the first translation of The Arabian Nights in French by Antoine Galland, thus inaugurating a new era of interest in the literature of the Orient and more particularly in Arabic, Persian and Turkish fiction and myth. However, Galland did not translate all the stories of The Arabian Nights, but in the beginning he translated seven stories of this bulky collection. Later, he translated

a great number of them. This fact is evident in the epistle dedicatory to the Duchess of Burgundy in which he states:

> **I was informed that those seven stories were taken out of a prodigious collection of stories of like sort, entitled, ONE THOUSAND AND ONE NIGHTS. This discovery obliged me … to send for it from Syria and have translated into French.**(١٩)

In the same letter, Galland describes the merits of The Arabian Nights, he says:

> **These stories will certainly divert you, Madam, much more than those you have already seen. They are new to you, and more in number; you will also perceive, with pleasure, the ingenious design of this anonymous Arabian.**(٢٠)

With those tales Galland incorporated the translation of a number of other oriental tales; Arabic, Persian and Turkish that were known to him at that time such as the stories of "Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves" and "Aladdin and the Wonderful Lamp". All these tales were added because they resembled the same tales of The Arabian Nights as they have the same sort of wonder, mystery and imagination. It is also worth mentioning that "Galland was adopting his translation of The Arabian Nights to the taste of the readers, and thus omitting what seemed to be offensive to the eighteenth-century public taste, and adding many details which were necessary to convey his moral purposes".(٢١)

The Arabian Nights' first appearance in English was at the opening of the eighteenth century. The first English version was known as the "Grub Street Version", circulated in 1706, was translated from Galland's version by an anonymous translator. The anonymous translator wrote a preface of compliment to The Arabian Nights where he stated the reasons for his translation. He says:

> **What can be more ingenious, than to compose such a prodigious quantity of pleasant stories, whose variety is surprizing … If stories of this sort be pleasant and diverting, because of the wonders they usually contain … they are full of surprizing events, which engage our attention, and show how much the Arabians surpass other nations in composures of the sort ... They must also be pleasing, because of the account they give of the customs and manners of the eastern nations, and of the ceremonies of their religion.(٢٢)**

The above mentioned collection of the oriental tales enjoyed wide popularity and attained great fame in the eighteenth-century England, and Europe. In addition to the reasons which have already been cited by the anonymous translator of the first English version, we might mention another cause for the diffusion of The Arabian Nights in Europe. They greatly intensified the picturesque and exotic qualities of the East which already existed in the minds of Europeans for many years, and which they were anxious to hear.

It was not The Arabian Nights only that seized the imagination of both readers and writers of the eighteenth

century, but there was another collection of oriental tales next in order to The Arabian Nights, namely the Persian Tales (1714), the companion piece of The Arabian Nights. These tales were translated into English from the French version of Potis de la Croix (1710-1712) by Philips Ambrose. The other oriental tales which were popular in the eighteenth century were The Turkish Tales, which were translated into English in 1708. Both collections share similar artistic features of The Arabian Nights as "they are also a combination of magic and reality, of strange customs and enchantment of picturesque incidents and exotic setting".(٢٣)

All these oriental tales gave the writers of the eighteenth century an account of the manners, government and religions of the orientals and a convenient medium for their literary expressions.(٢٤) They also stimulated their imagination and provided them with matters and themes, which caused some of them to move away from the traditional way of writing stories. They offered new themes, material and especially "the element of plot".(٢٥) Hence, Martha Conant was right when she declared that:

> **the oriental tales must have supplied the clue for which popular writers were searching, and if The Arabian Nights had not been translated into English, there would have been no Robinson Crusoe and Gulliver's Travels.(٢٦)**

Thus in a similar convention, a number of English poets, dramatists and especially the novelists of the eighteenth century began to compose their works imitating or borrowing from The Arabian Nights or the Persian Tales. A large number of such works especially the short story,

appeared in the periodicals of the period, in 1717, Addison wrote his remarkable oriental tale The Vision of Mirza in which he exploited an oriental setting. Later, in 1759, Samuel Johnson wrote one of the best oriental tales in the eighteenth century; Rasselas, Prince of Abyssinia, and some other periodical short stories, chief among then are: "Seged, Lord of Ethiopia" (1752), "Nouradin the Merchant and his son Almamoulin" (1751), and The Fountains (1766). Yet the most famous oriental tale is Vathek of William Beckford, (1786). The Western borrowing from oriental tales and tradition is also reflected in the drama of Samuel Johnson Irene (1737), "William Hodson's Zoraida (1780), and John Hugher's Siege of Damascus (1719)".(*) All these tales were called pseudo-oriental tales written for numerous purposes such as satire, entertainment of children, didactic and moral lessons meant for the Middle classes.

Johnson's Interest in the Orient

In the eighteenth century, England witnessed a great wave of interest in oriental literature, stimulated by various means such as oriental tales, histories and studies. The accounts of travellers, which catered for the demand of the readers, supported what these tales said of the manners, customs, beliefs, literatures, histories and wisdom of the East. The English writers managed successfully to employ such material in their writings, in novel, drama and poetry for different purposes.

Johnson, like many of his contemporaries was interested in the Eastern mode of life. However, Johnson's knowledge of the East was not obtained from practical experiences or direct observation and communication, for

he had not travelled to the East. His knowledge was derived from his wide readings, some of which were in oriental books, in addition to what he had heard about this remote area.

Johnson's knowledge of the East began when he was still a child. His mother was the main source of his knowledge about exotic and remote places, since she used to tell him legends and superstitious tales. In addition, Johnson learned from the maid servant the heroic tales of St. George and the Dragon. This type of stories that children like to hear, stimulated his imagination and nourished his desire for the remote and the strange.

In later life, Johnson's interest in the Orient grew stronger and was expressed on several occasions. Once he revealed his desire to visit the Orient to Mrs. Thrale.[٢٧] In a letter to her dated July 11, 1775, he says:

> **If I had money enough, what would I do? perhaps, if you and master did not hold me, I might go to Cairo, and down the Red Sea to Bengal, and take a ramble in India. Would this be better than building and painting? It would surely give more variety to the eye, and more amplitude to the mind.[٢٨]**

It seems that Johnson was in favour of broadening the Western mind and knowledge through visiting the East. This idea and Johnson's desire for the East are eloquently expressed in a letter to Mr. Warren Hastings.[٢٩]

> **But my knowledge of them is too scanty to furnish me with proper topicks of inquiry; I can only wish for information; and hope, that a mind comprehensive**

> **like yours will find leisure, amidst the care of your important station, to enquire into many subjects of which the European world either thinks not at all, or thinks with deficient intelligence and uncertain conjecture. I shall hope, that he who once intended to increase the learning of his country ... will examine nicely the traditions and histories of the East; that he will survey the wonders of its ancient edifices, and trace the vestiges of its ruined cities; and that, at his return, we shall know the arts and opinions of a race of men, from whom very little has been hitherto derived. There are arts of manufacture practised in the countries in which you preside, which are yet very imperfectly known here, either to artificers or philosophers ... Many of those things my first wish is to see.**(٣٠)

In another letter to Boswell dated 21st August, 1780, Johnson expresses his passionate desire to travel to the East. In this letter he declares:

> **I know not whether I shall get a ramble this autumn; it is now about the time when we were traveling. I have, however, better health than I had then, and hope you and I may yet show ourselves on some part of Europe, Asia, or Africa.**(٣١)

Johnson's interest in the East continued even when he became old. Of his inclination for the East, Boswell tells Johnson's opinion about the act of travelling. According to Johnson:

> **The grand object of travelling is to see the shores of the Mediterranean. On those shores were the four great Empires of the world; the Assyrian, the Persian, the Grecian, and the Roman. – All our religion, almost all our law, almost all our arts, almost all that sets us above savages, has come to us from the shores of the Mediterranean.**(٣٢)

On another occasion, Johnson urged his friend Boswell to go to Spain to see the wonders and beauty but when Boswell expressed his wish to see the Wall of China, Johnson immediately welcomed the idea and commented:

> **Sir … by doing so, you would do what would be of importance in raising your children to eminence. There would be a lustre reflected upon them ... They would at all times be regarded as the children of a man who had gone to visit the Wall of China.**(٣٣)

And when his pension was granted to him, he regretted that he had not been to the East and revealed his desire to visit the city of Constantinople to learn Arabic. "Had this happened twenty years ago, I should have gone to Constantinople to learn Arabick, as Pococke did".(٣٤) Unable to travel to the East himself, Johnson often complains of finding himself disappointed by the books of travel. One day he told Mrs. Thrale that "those whose lot is to ramble can seldom write and those who know how to write very seldom ramble".(٣٥)

Among numerous books Johnson read about the East The Arabian Nights might be one of them. Though we have no clear-cut evidence that Johnson read it, the

analogy between Johnson's short stories and some stories of The Arabian Nights may prove this. Also, Johnson's close friend, Boswell had a copy of The Arabian Nights Entertainments which he had read".(٣٦) This may lead us to the possibility that Johnson might have borrowed it, or heard some stories from Boswell. In addition, this claim is supported by Nedd Willard in an article concerning the main sources of Rasselas, when he says: "The two most important sources (The Arabian Nights and the Persian Tales) of Zadig were used by Johnson in writing Rasselas".(٣٧) But it is uncertain whether Johnson had read the French Version of Galland or the English one. Both cases are probable because Johnson mastered English and French.

The next book of literature which Johnson might have read was the Persian Tales. In effect, European knowledge of this oriental collection was mainly due to the translation of some tales by Potis de la Croix. His Mills et Un Tour appeared in five volumes 1710-1712. The first date of Philips' translation into English was 1714. Another translation was made in 1714 by Dr. King and several hands. As for Philips' translation, Geoffrey Tillotson informs us that it "was reprinted for the second time in 1722, for the sixth in 1750, again in 1783".(٣٨) All these dates, except the last, suggest that the Persian Tales were at the reader's disposal before Johnson's Rasselas. In the meantime, this can be a clue that Johnson might have read the tales. Another evidence is that Johnson mentioned these tales when writing the "Life of Philips":

> **Philips was a Zealous Whig … 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. This book is divided into many sections, for each of which he received half-a crown his reward.(٣٩)**

These two oriental collections which contain imaginative and exotic tales had their spell on Johnson and his contemporaries who wrote oriental tales imitating the mode of The Arabian Nights and the Persian Tales. As for Johnson, the effect of these oriental collections is undeniable as it is revealed in some images, plots, details, themes and names he used in his oriental short stories such as "Omar the Son of Hassan" (1760), "Ortogrual of Basra" (1760), "Seged, Lord of Ethiopia" (1752) and others, all of which were published in his periodicals The Rambler and The Idler. He also wrote Rasselas (1759), and in 1766, he published a fairy tale, The Fountains. When he finished this tale, Johnson justified this new tendency in literature when he said: "Babies do not want to hear about babies; they like to be told of giants and castles, and of somewhat which can stretch and stimulate their little minds".(٤٠) This obviously shows that Johnson was really interested in the East and its literature.

Johnson's concern with the orient and its tradition was clearly maintained through his interest in foreign lands like Ethiopia, an exotic Christian country, and Egypt, a country of enchantment, beauty and ancient religions. This interest appears in Rasselas (1759), in the tale of The Rambler numbers 204 and 205 (1752), namely "Seged, Lord a of Ethiopia", and a little earlier in his translation of Lobo's Voyage to Abyssinia (1735). Johnson's knowledge of Ethiopia was derived from some

books of European travellers to the country. One such book is Job Ludof, Historia Athiopica which was turned into English by J. P. Gent and published in 1682, and again in 1684. The author of this book was a pioneer scholar in the study of the Ethiopian languages, Go'ez and Amharic. It seems that Johnson might have read the English translation, because as Donald Lockhart asserts: "Johnson owned not the original Latin work, but rather the English translation."(٤١)

Another book which provided Johnson with ample information about Ethiopia was Jeronymo Lobo, Relation historique d'Abissinie (1728), which contains an extensive account of Ethiopia.(٤٢) In addition to these books, Johnson's possibly read some other books on Ethiopia.(٤٣) Johnson's reading and borrowing from these books on Ethiopia, as Lockhart maintains, are evident by the close similarity between some details of Rasselas and these books.

Besides, Johnson's reading extended to more than Ethiopia, as he was fascinated by another oriental country, Egypt. Johnson's material about Egypt did not stem out of personal experience, but from his reading of some rare books on Egypt. One such book is Aaron Hill's A Full and Just Account of the Present State of the Ottoman Empire (1706). Johnson's acquaintance with Hill's book is suggested by the striking similarities between the Egyptian details of Rasselas and Hill's book. It is also confirmed by Johnson himself when he shows enough familiarity with Hill's writings and expresses a few words of compliment on his style and language of which he says:

> **Mr. Hill whose humanity and politeness are generally known, readily complied with his request; but he is remarkable for singularity of sentiment, and bold experiment in language.**[٤٤]

In addition, Arthur Weitzman maintains that "it is certainly possible that Johnson knew Hill and enjoyed a second edition in 1710".[٤٥]

Beside the above mentioned oriental books, Johnson was also interested in the history of the Ottoman Empire. Richard Knolles' General History of the Turks (1603) must have fascinated not only Johnson, but also his contemporaries since it is possible to trace its marks in their works. Knolles' book, however, which first appeared in 1603 was the best known book about the Turks in Johnson's time. Captive with the excellence of the book, Johnson in his periodical The Rambler, No.122, commends "the author's logical and wonderful arrangement of the numerable events, pure and elevated style and clarity of both the description and characterization".[٤٦] Although the book was not available in Johnson's library, Johnson's reading of this book is verified by Boswell who said that he remembered Johnson's borrowing the Turkish History from Peter Garrick.[٤٧] Later Johnson exploited some events of the book to write his only stage play Irene, 1737.

To sum up, all these histories and tale collections read by Johnson must have provided him with ample material and useful information about the East, its tradition, people, religions, histories and certain modes of life, which he made use of in writing his oriental works.

NOTES

(١) Louis Wann, "The Oriental In Restoration Drama". Studies in Language and Literature, Vol.11 (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1918), p.163.

(٢) George Elliot, quoted in Marie E. De Meester, Oriental Influence in the English literature of the Nineteenth Century. Introduction (Heidelberg, 1915), p.2

(٣) This definition is given by the Standard Dictionary of English, Vol.II (New York, 1895) and adopted by Martha Conant: The Oriental Tale in England in the Eighteenth Century (New York, 1966), p.XV.

(٤) Ahmed Ameen, The East and the West (Cairo, 1955), p.8.

(٥) Ibid. p. 8.

(٦) Britannica World Language Dictionary, Vol. I (Chicago, 1959), p.397.

(٧) Encyclopedia Britannica, Vo.8 (U.S.A., 1966), p.782.

(٨) Ibid., p.790

(٩) Edward Ullondorff, The Ethiopians: An Introduction to the Country and People (London, 1967), p.23.

(١٠) Encyclopedia Britannica, Vol.8, p.782.

(١١) Ibid., p.790.

(١٢) Samuel C. Chew, The Cresent and the Rose (New York, 1965), p.5.

(١٣) Ibid., p.5.

(١٤) Nawal Muhammad Hassan, Hayy Bin Yaqzan and Robinson Crusoe (Baghdad, 1980), p.1-2.

(١٥) B. Lewis, et al., The Encyclopedia of Islam, Vol.II (Leiden, E. J. Brill, 1965), p.66.

(١٦) M. Tarik, "Byron's Interest in the Islamic East as Reflected in His Poetry" Unpublished M.A. Thesis (Baghdad University, 1978), p.5.

(١٧) A. J. Arberry, Oriental Essays: Portraits of Seven Scholars (London, I960), p.12.

(١٨) Husain Fareed Ali Haddawy, "The Oriental Mode in Eighteenth Century English Literature". Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation (Cornell Univ., 1962), p.24.

(١٩) Arabian Nights Entertainments: Trans. from the French of M. Galland. The Epistle Dedicatory (London, 1706), p.3.

(٢٠) Ibid., The Epistle, p.4.

(٢١) Suhair Al-Qalamawi, Alf Layla Wa Layla (Cairo, 1959), p.6.

(٢٢) The Arabian Nights, p.5.

(٢٣) Tarik, p.15.

(٢٤) Issam Al-Khatib. "The Orientalism of Alfred, Lord Tennyson". Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation (Western Reserve Univ., 1967), p.9.

(٢٥) Martha Conant, p.242.

(٢٦) Ibid. p. 242.

(*) See Haddawy, pp.127-131.

(٢٧) Her full name is Hester Lynch Piozzi (1741-1821). She was an intimate friend of Dr. Johnson with whom she established both personal and familial relationship. She wrote a remarkable book on Johnson's life, Anecdotes of Johnson, Life of Johnson (London, 1786).

(٢٨) David Little John, ed. Dr. Johnson: His Life in Letters (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc. Englewood Cliffs, 1965), p.132.

(٢٩) Warren Hastings (1732-1818). He was the first and the most famous of the governors of general India. As an English judge he dominated Indian affairs and played an active part in the history of India. He was assigned to Bengal in 1750. He was able to speak many oriental languages especially the Indian.

(٣٠) Boswell, pp.1117-1118.
(٣١) Ibid., p.1059.
(٣٢) Ibid., p.742.
(٣٣) Christopher Hibbert, The Personal History of Samuel Johnson (London, 1971), p.244.
(٣٤) Boswell, p.1085.
(٣٥) John Butt: The Mid-Eighteenth Century Literature, ed. By Geoffry Garnall (Oxford, 1979), p.38.
(٣٦) Joseph W. Reed and Frederick A. Pottle, Boswell: Laird of Auchinleck (London, 1977), p.343.
(٣٧) "English Literature: A Current Biography", PQ, XXXIX, III (July, I960), p.333-39.
(٣٨) Geoffry Tillotson, "Rasselas and the Persian Tales", T.L.S (August 29, 1935), p.534.
(٣٩) Bertrand H. Bronson, ed. Samuel Johnson: Rasselas, Poems and Selected Prose, 4th ed. (New York, I960), p.407.
(٤٠) Quoted by Muhsin Jasim Ali, in "Nineteenth Century Criticism of The Arabian Nights" … Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation (Dalhousie Univ., 1978), p.47.
(٤١) Donald Lockhart, "The Fourth Son of the Mighty Emperor, the Ethiopian Background of Johnson's Rasselas", PMLA LXXVIII (December, 1963), p.518.
(٤٢) Ibid., p.516.
(٤٣) For more details see Ibid., The Appendix, p.527.
(٤٤) Lives of the English Poets, by Samuel Johnson. With an Introduction by Arthur Waugh Vol.II (London, 1964), p.106.
(٤٥) Arthur J. Weitzman, "More Light on Rasselas: The Background of the Egyptian Episode", PQ, Vol.XLVIII, No.1 (January, 1969), p.44.
(٤٦) Mona Wilson, ed. Johnson: Poetry and Prose (London: Ruport Hart-Davis, 1950), p.237.
(٤٧) Boswell, p.73.

CHAPTER THREE

THE SOURCES OF JOHNSON'S ORIENTAL WORKS

The Sources of Rasselas

Critics agree that the sources of Rasselas are numerous, and they focus mainly on the European travel and geography books in addition to books of literature of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries which deal with the orient. An examination of the setting of Rasselas points out that it falls into two distinctive parts: In the first part, Johnson depicts an earthly paradise of pleasure, a world free from all sorts of sordid pains and miseries of life. This world in Rasselas is called the happy valley, located in Ethiopia or Abyssinia where prince Rasselas and his brothers of royal blood were imprisoned, whereas in the second part, Johnson describes Egypt which is known by its pyramids, whose nation is composed of different races dedicated to trade and with different conditions of life. As far as these two oriental settings are concerned, there is an endless controversy among critics in determining the possible sources that Johnson might have consulted before writing Rasselas.

To begin with, in the first part which is the Abyssinian background in general, and the happy valley in particular, there are numerous possible sources which Johnson might have read before setting his pen to write his tale. Recently, Donald Lockhart made an exhaustive survey of the most probable books on Ethiopia which Johnson might have conceivably consulted in order to describe the happy valley where prince Rasselas was

caged up. The attempt of Lockhart brought him to the conclusion that before writing Rasselas, Johnson might have glimpsed at many pre-1759 oriental books about Ethiopia.

The first possible source of the happy valley, as Lockhart maintains, is job Ludolf, Like book. Historia Aethiopica.[١] A general survey of the two books shows us that many details of Rasselas' happy valley were borrowed from Ludolf's book, Most principal characters of the tale were taken from Rasselas and Imlac. Johnson's Rasselas as it is noted down in the tale "was the fourth son of the mighty emperour",[٢] and the whole plot of the tale is based on his ability to escape from a mountain prison in the dominion of his father. These details, perhaps, are taken from Ludolf. Donald Lockhart, who surveyed a genealogical table of the Abyssinian kings, discovered that in the "third generation recorded in this table are listed four children, of whom, not the second or third, but the fourth (listed as "N.N."), "Escap'd from the Rock of Amhara".[٣] In the same table, Lockhart continues that in the "fourth generation recorded in the same table is listed an Emperor Basilides, whose wife, the viceroy of Amhara's widow, had three sons, of whom one was named Rasselach".[٤] Hence it is apparent that the source of Rasselas and the idea of his escape are taken from Ludolf and of an oriental origin.

Another oriental name Johnson made use of in his tale is the name Imlac. Although this name is present in Ludolf's book as the emperor icon Imlac,[٥] it seems to me that originally the name is of Arabic source. In Lisan Al-Arab Dictionary, the word Imlac is given the following definition: "A man who is eloquent and expert in the art of

speech".[٦] This designation is applicable to Johnson's Imlac who is eloquent and wise. It is just an assumption, because there is no clear-cut evidence available for us which indicates Johnson's indebtedness to the Arabic language.

Present in Ludolf's book is a description of the Nile, its sources, its inundation, and its course. Ludolf commences his description, of the Nile as follows:

> **… the Habessines, in their vulgar language, have no other name for the Nile than that of Abawi: And that, as some think, from the word Ab, which signifies a parent, as if Nilus were the parent of all other Rivers... Abawi simply signify a Parent, neither, if you rightly consider it, is agreeable to sense; for Nilus does not send forth from its own Bowels, but receives the Tribute of all other Rivers: So that he may be rather said to be their captain and prince, than the father of them.**[٧]

This may have had its impact on Johnson since he calls the Nile "the father of waters" on two occasions: first in chapter one when he says that "Rasselas was the fourth son of the mighty emperour, in whose dominions the Father of waters begins his course; whose bounty pours down the streams of plenty, and scatters over half the world the harvests of Egypt".[٨] Secondly, in chapter XXV when the princess invokes the Nile to listen to her complaints, she also calls the Nile the "father of waters".

> **As they were sitting together, the princess cast her eyes upon the river that flowed before her. "Answer, said**

> **she, great father of waters, thou that rollest thy floods through eighty nations, to the invocations of the daughter of thy native king. Toll me if thou waterest, through all thy course, a single habitation from which thou dost not hear the murmurs of complaint?**[٩]

Another possible source of the Ethiopian background of Rasselas is Francisco Alvares': The Voyage of Sir Francis Alvarez, a Portugal Priest, made unto the Court of Preie Ianni, the great Christian Emperour of Ethiopia (1625). What makes us believe that Johnson had borrowed from the book is the striking similarities between Johnson's descriptions of the happy valley, and Alvares' details. Alvares describes the valley where the prince was confined and the custom of the prince's exile as follows:

> **Upon this Mountains are other Mountains which make certaine valles, wherein are very many Rivers and Fountaines, and Fields which are manured by the inhabitants. There is also a valley between two Mountaines, which is very strong, so that by no mean a man can goe out of the same, because the passage is closed up with exceeding strong gates ... and hath many Townes and Dwelings in it, they keepe those which are of the Bloud-Royall.**[١٠]

These descriptive details and the virtual impossibility of escape from the happy valley echo what Johnson mentions in Rasselas:

> **The place ... was a spacious valley in the kingdom of Ankara, surrounded on every side by mountains, of which the summits overhang the middle part. The only passage, by which it could be entered, was a cavern that passed under a rock ... The outlet of the cavern was concealed by a thick wood, and the mouth which opened into the valley was closed with gates of iron, forged by the artificers of ancient days, so massy that no man could, without the help of engines, open or shut them.**(١١)

Another critic, Ellen Douglas Legburn, maintains that the idea of the prince's imprisonment and the means of escape from the valley have been borrowed from Jeronymo Lobo's Voyage to Abyssinia, a book which Johnson translated in 1735.(١٢) Naturally, the act of translation should have its influence on the translator. In other words, Johnson's translation of Lobo's book must have provided him with some information about Ethiopia. One important borrowing, as Ellen Douglas asserts, is not only the idea of the imprisonment of the Abyssinian prince, but the notion of the means of egress from the valley.(١٣) But it seems that the book has only partial impact on Johnson who was not fully content with this translation of which he says:

> **In this translation if it may be so called great liberties have been taken, which, whether justifiable or not ... In the first part the greatest freedom has been used, in reducing the narration ... but an epitome, in which, whether every thing either useful or entertaining be**

comprised, the compiler is least qualified to determine.(١٤)

Moreover, because of Johnson's indifference to the translated book, some writers such as J. P. Hardy and Ellen Douglas tend to believe that the translated book contributes few details to Johnson's tale.(١٥)

Another author, whose book could be regarded as a possible source of Johnson's knowledge about the Abyssinian background is Luis de Urreta, Historia ecclesiastica, politica natural y moral de les grandes y remotes, Reynos de la Etiopia (1610). This is apparent through the natural features with which Johnson endows the happy valley which are entirely found in Urreta's book who describes the valley as follows:

The ground at the summit of this mountain is very level and even; that whole area is embellished by a hill which gently rises toward the north ... From that hill flows a perpetual spring, very; abundant and clear, with so much water that it runs through the whole area in various canals, watering the gardens arid fertilizing the ground ... many large and small ponds, most abundant in a thousand varieties of fish... and finally flinging itself clown a precipice from the top of the mountain, it forms a small lake and lagoon at the foot of it, which is the source of a river that empties into the Nile ... On this mountain there are many beautiful gardens, very pleasant and interesting orchards of luxuriant foliage, filled with every variety of fruit-trees, both native to the Land and

brought from Europe... finally one sees in these gardens a mixture and riot of all kinds of flowers ... all year long, in December, in March, in June, in September, there is fruit on the trees … many beasts of chase of every variety ... There are no venomous animals or wild, savage, uncouth beasts of prey, but only beasts of chase, for sport and recreation. There are also many grazing grounds, woodlands and fields, medows, pastures, and herbages, where much livestock of every variety ... because of its fertility ... we could give the name of Paradise.[١٦]

And Johnson says:

The sides of the mountains were covered with trees, the banks of the brooks were diversified, with flowers; every blast shook spices from the rocks, and every month dropped fruits upon the ground. All animals that bite the grass, or brouse the shrub, whether wild or tame, wandered in this extensive circuit, secured from beasts of prey by the mountains which confined them. On one part were flocks and herds feeding in the pastures, on another all the beasts of chase frisking in the lawns .... All the diversities of the world were brought together, the blessings of nature were collected, and its evils extracted and excluded. … On the banks of rivulets sheltered with trees, where he [Rasselas] sometimes listened to the birds in the branches, sometimes observed the fish playing in the stream, and anon cast his eyes upon the pastures and mountains

> **filled with animals, of which some were biting the herbage, and some sleeping among the bushes.**(١٧)

A comparison, of Johnson's natural descriptive details of the happy valley with those of Urreta's will provide us with evidence that there are some similarities between the latter and the former. In addition to these sources, other Ethiopian details similar to the above mentioned ones are possibly taken from other books on Ethiopia which according to Donald Lockhart, Johnson had presumably read.(١٨) However, one should not forget that Rasselas is a piece of creative writing, and Johnson could have taken liberty with his sources and added details of his own.

As for the Egyptian background, it is also derived from his vast reading in some oriental books about Egypt. One of the most important sources is Aaron Hill, A Full and Just Account of the Present State of the Ottoman Empire (1706). The evidence that Johnson borrowed from Rill lies in the close similarities between some major events and certain details in Rasselas and the information given in Hill. To start with, the abduction of Pekuah by an Arab band, as Arthur J. Weitzman maintains, echoes Hill's adventure with one of his servants into the catacombs. Weitzman, in a remarkable article, presents us with a brief summary of Hill's adventure. He says:

> **Hill narrates vividly his descent with a servant into the catacombs of Saccara, visited by Rasselas and his travelling group. Once inside he discovered the bodies of two Europeans, who had died from lack of water and food, imprisoned**

> **by Arabs who blocked the entrance...looking for another entrance, six Arab assailants hiding in the caverns attacked him. He drew his pistol and fired upon them ... they fled through a secret narrow passage to the open daylight ... and so the Arab gang of horsemen plundering what they could of his goods ... They were interrupted, however, by an approaching squad of Janissaries, who immediately gave chase to the now-fleeing Arabs … the Arabs released the mules ... In a few minutes the Janissaries returned to the catacomb disappointed.**(١٩)

This summary of Hills' adventure echoes Pekuah's adventure in Rasselas which Johnson narrates:

> **... "You had scarcely entered into the pyramid, said one of the attendants, when a troop of arabs rushed upon us: ... They were about to search the tents, set us on our camels, and drive as along before them, when the approach of some Turkish horsemen pat them to flight; but they seized the lady Pekuah with her two maids, and carried them away: The Turks are now pursuing them by our instigation, ... In a short time the Turks returned, having not been able to reach the enemy.**(٢٠)

It is apparent that the similarity of Pekuah's adventure with Hill's accidental experience is very striking. In both accounts we notice that a band of Arabs attacks Hill and Pekuah with rather slight difference: Pekuah is kidnapped near the pyramids, whereas Hill is attacked in the

catacomb. In both narratives the assailants endeavour to carry off anything of value, when a squad of Janissaries appeared and chased unsuccessfully the assailants. In Hill's the Arabs attempt successfully to steal Hill's mules, but they set them free to escape their pursuers, while in Pekuah's adventure the Arabs managed to carry off Pekuah and her maids but nothing else. Finally, in both adventures, the Janissaries returned disappointed in stopping the Arabs who managed to disappear in the vast Egyptian desert.

As we have mentioned above, Pekuah's abduction takes place at the pyramids. The question that may be asked is: What are the sources from which Johnson borrowed his information of the pyramids? The question is answered by Weitzman who states that:

> **Johnson must have also read contemporary European descriptions of the pyramids ... Among travel books describing the pyramids both inside and outside, the most readily available accounts were those of Hill (already cited), Richard Pococke's, A Description of the East, 2 Vols. (London, 1743-45), John Greaves's Pyramidographia in The Miscellaneous Works of John Greaves, 2 Vols. (London, 1737).**(٢١)

John Graves, the first European who entered the pyramids, noted down some information about the Egyptian pyramids: "This gallery or corridor, or whatsoever else I may call it, is built of white and polished marble, the which is very evenly cut in spacious squares or tables".(٢٢) Some of these elements were

mentioned by Johnson who described the interior parts of the pyramids as follows:

> **Pekuah descended to the tents, arid the rest entered the pyramid; they passed through the galleries, surveyed the vaults of marble; and examined the chest in which the body of the founder is supposed to have been reposited. They then sat down in one of the most spacious chambers to rest a while before they attempted to return.**(٢٣)

On the whole, what have been mentioned are only a few samples of Johnson's indebtedness to the accounts of certain travellers which he exploited, with great liberty. Above all, there are other details of oriental setting of Rasselas not attributed to these such as the volumes of poems which are suspended in the Mosque of Mecca(+) and the city of Suez which Johnson makes only slight allusion to.

What has been mentioned in the previous pages presents us only with the possible sources that Johnson might have consulted to describe the background of his tale. What remain are the themes, outline and methods of narration of which recent studies confirm that they are not typical Johnsonian invention, but attribute them to the Persian Tales.(٢٤) Johnson's debt to the Persian Tales is best expressed in the general theme which is search for happiness. In the Persian Tales of Philips Ambrose, we come across certain sections of a story which relate the search for a happy man made by Bedreddin Lolo, King of Damascus and his Vizier, Atalmulck. A general outline of Rasselas and the story of Bedreddin Lolo, is essential to

show whether the Persian Tales has an impact on Johnson or not.

A summary of the story of "Bedreddin Lolo" is as follows:

> **Bedreddin Lolo, the king of Damascus, has a vizier whoso name is Atalmulck who lives in profound melancholy. Bedreddin, therefore, makes some inquiries for the reasons of Atalmulck's unhappiness. The answer is that all men in the world are miserable. The king cannot credit this, but he insists on saying that it is easy to find a happy man. He, then, suggests that his favourites inquire about the problem inside his kingdom. First, Bedreddin listens to the history of Atalmulck who is miserable because of love (pp.131-151). Then, they pay attention to the story of prince Sayfel Mulouk, which is like that of Atalmulck's who is also miserable because of love. As a result of their failure to fetch a happy man, Bedreddin, Atalmulck and their favourites decide to pursue the problem by travelling outside the border of their kingdom, where they accidentally meet people of different conditions and states. First they meet and attend to the story of Malek and Princess Schirine (pp.164-173), and of other people who alternately tell their stories which are all of misery and unhappiness. Unable to find a happy man, Bedreddin and the travelling group decide to return to Damascus.(٢٥)**

Similarly, the general outline of Rasselas moves in a line parallel to that of the Persian Tales:

Rasselas, the prince of Abyssinia, is confined in a private place called the happy valley. He, at last realizes that happiness is not easily gratified. His first attempt to find it inside the happy valley is when he attends carefully to the history of Imlac. Unable to fetch happiness to the valley, he with a travelling group escape the valley in pursue of happiness. In their way to the world beyond the valley, they meet with people of various status and occupations. Among those they meet are: an old man; a hermit, an astronomer and other people who tell the stories of their lives which are a mixture of disappointment and misery. When, at last, the travelling group discovers that unhappiness dominates every story they hear, they resolve to return to the point from where they set out.

In comparing the two works we come to the inference that the general idea of travel and travellers in search of happiness in both tales are similar.

Another essential analogy between Rasselas and "The History of King Bedreddin Lolo" is that the principal characters of both tales are persons of high status. They also undertake searches for happiness, first in their own countries, and then outside. When they are unable to find what they are looking for, they return to the place from which they set out. Besides, the two unhappy royal members travel accompanied by wise men, Bedreddin by Atalmulck, and Rasselas by Imlac. In addition to these, one of the striking similarities is that

both Rasselas and Bedreddin suffer from a similar personal dilemma. Of his dilemma Rasselas relates:

> **What ... makes the difference between man and all the rest of the animal creation? Every beast that strays beside me … is satisfied … I am not at rest; I am, like him, pained with want, but am not, like him, satisfied with fullness. The intermediate hours are tedious and gloomy.**(٢٦)

Whereas Bedreddin, king of Damascus complains that he is not happy and content because of "A thousand cares [which] distract [him], and disturb the quiet of [his] life".(٢٧)

In addition, Imlac's history in many aspects resembles that of Atalmulck's. One such resemblance is that both Imlac and Atalmulck are sons of two wealthy men. Imlac's father is "a wealthy merchant, who traded between the inland countries of Africk and the ports of the red sea".(٢٨) Atalmulck's father is "a rich jeweler of Baghdad".(٢٩) Both Imlac and Atalmulck travel as merchants and encounter many marvellous adventures. Atalmulck, for instance, is exposed to the theft of his friends who "threw [him] into the sea".(٣٠) Similarly, Imlac is "exposed to the theft of his servants".(٣١) Moreover, Atalmulck meets kings of the countries he visits who ask him some questions concerning his name and his country. This actually what happens to Imlac when he meets the Mongolian emperor who asks him rather similar questions "concerning [his] country and travels".(٣٢) Even the final episode of Imlac's history corresponds to that of Atalmulck. Atalmulck, after a long

journey, decides to retire, leaves Mousel, and comes to Damascus where he meets Bedreddin,[٣٣] whereas Imlac determines to abandon the world and retires in the happy valley where he accidentally faces prince Rasselas.

Even the conclusion of Rasselas resembles that of "The History of King Bedreddin Lolo". When Bedreddin discovers the futility of his attempts to fetch a happy man, he makes up his mind to return to his kingdom accompanied by his followers. On reaching Damascus, he announces:

> **I am now of your sentiments … I am convinced there is not a man in the world but has something or other to trouble him. Those are the happy persons, whose troubles are most supportable. Let us for the future remain here in quiet. If we three are not entirely contented, let us consider that there are others more unhappy.[٣٤]**

In Rasselas, it is possible to point out a similar end. As Rasselas and his travelling band realize the impossibility of attaining happiness, they all "deliberated a while what was to be done, and resolved, when the inundation should cease, to return to Abissinia".[٣٥]

It is also possible to trace rather similar ideas of travel and search for happy people in The Arabian Nights. This tendency is most apparent in the opening section of The Arabian Nights. When King Schahriar and his brother King Schahzenan discover the infidelity of their wives, King Schahriar announces to his brother:

> **After this, let no prince boast of his being perfectly happy! – Alas ... let us both renounce the world: honesty is banished out of it; if it flatters us one day, it**

> **betrays us the next! Let us abandon our dominions and grandeur; let us go into foreign countries, where we may lead obscure lives, and conceal our misfortunes!**(٣٦)

To which Schahzenan replies:

> **Dear brother, ... I am ready to follow you whither you please; but promise me that you will return if we can meet with any one that is more unhappy than ourselves.**(٣٧)

So they travel as far as they could, till they meet a young lady who betrays her husband five hundred and seventy times. Finding that their calamity is less in effect than the husband's, they decide to return to their own country.

To sum up, what we have mentioned represents first the possible sources of the natural features of Rasselas which shows that Johnson was greatly indebted to some oriental historical and geographical books and to the personal experience of the orientalists who travelled to the East. Secondly, it also points out that Johnson may also be indebted to the Persian Tales and The Arabian Nights. It is possible that Johnson made use of both of them, as far as the theme is concerned. However, this leads us to ask a specific question: Did Johnson, while writing Rasselas have all these books open before him, and how did he manipulate such material to form a tale? In effect, Johnson's Rasselas, as Donald M. Lockhart suggests is composed "without previous preparation… [and] Johnson's incredible memory contained a carefully catalogued file on Ethiopia replete with accurate details and even spellings",(٣٨) and perhaps reinforced by

materials from The Arabian Nights or the Persian Tales. This may help us to assume that Johnson manipulated details borrowed from these books, fashioned them with great liberty and with much art gave them a fictional envelope (see chapter four, pp.139-145).

The Sources of Irene

Irene was an early work of Johnson's more important and oriental writings, and the only stage play Johnson wrote during his literary career. He started to write this tragedy in the early days of his marriage, and while he was running his school at Edial near Lichfield. The play was finished soon after Johnson's arrival at London with David Garrick (1717-79).[٣٩] For some years Johnson's efforts to have it either published or acted were fruitless. He even failed to get his tragedy read by the managers of theatres, in spite of efforts by David Garrick and his brother Peter. Thus, he completely abandoned the idea and hope of seeing his play on stage. Finally, with the help of David Garrick, Irene was produced in 1747. The play ran for nine evenings and Johnson received almost £200 in addition to another £100 for the copyrights with rights of one edition from Robert Dodsley.[٤٠]

However, the play was not a popular one, was never reviewed again and was soon known as a closet drama. But of nine performance, as Robert Metzdort maintains, "was rather unusual for a play of that period",[٤١] and it is safe to assume that Johnson's good fortune to get his play produced on the stage was due not to the merits and excellence of the play, but to the efforts of David Garrick and his troupe. Even Boswell confessed that the play "did not please the public".[٤٢] Moreover, "Johnson, himself had no inflated ideas regarding the worth of his drama; he denounced a man named Pot who had termed it the best play of the age".[٤٣]

As for the sources of the tragedy, there are many unrefutable evidence that Irene is mainly based on Richard Knolles, The General History of the Turks, 1603

a book which Johnson applauded with excitement, and held in the highest regard, Johnson's indebtedness to Knolles' book, as far as the story is concerned, was stressed by various people, first by Johnson's friends, especially Boswell who related this anecdote:

> **Peter Garrick told me, that Mr. Johnson went first to London to see what could be made of his Tragedy of Irene that he remembers his borrowing the Turkish History (I think Peter said of him) in order to take the story of his play out of it. That he and Mr. Johnson went to the Fountain tavern by themselves and Mr. Johnson read it to him – This Mr. Peter Garrick told me at Lichfield, Sunday 24 March 1776.**[٤٤]

Therefore, it has been taken for granted that the major source of Irene is Knolles' The General History of the Turks, and as Moran Berna maintains, "all other plays on the same subject previous to Johnson's have been too hastily brushed aside".[٤٥]

In effect, Johnson was not the first who wrote a play out of Knolles' The General History of the Turks. His was, as Smith and McAdam say "the fourth extant play on Irene in English".[٤٦] The other three plays were common during the time of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, but later "they were forgotten, and at least one of them is now not easily found".[٤٧] " These plays are: The Tragedy of Fair Irene, by Gilbert Swinhoe, 1658, Irene, A Tragedy, 1664, the author is anonymous, and Irene, or the Fair Greek, A Tragedy, 1703, by Charles Goring,

As the titles of the plays indicate, it seems that the interest of these plays is mainly focused on the central character, the fair Irene, and her tragic end. This number of similar plays leads us to the question whether Johnson had read them, and if he had, to what extent did they influence him? One critic, Nichol Smith, as far as these plays are concerned, thinks that:

> **There is no question of borrowing. None of them owes anything to another, nor did they provide anything to their greater successor. The two earlier plays Johnson may be assumed not to have known if he happened to know the third, he certainly took nothing from it.**(٤٨)

But it seems rather unreasonable to assume that a man like Johnson whose prime concern was literature and criticism, and who was writing a play for the first time had not consulted at least one of them.

There is an acceptable assumption in a recent study by Moran Berna who stressed that Johnson might have read the anonymous Irene (1664). Berna, who made a careful comparison between the two plays, maintained that despite the differences of approach to theme "Johnson made use of the 1664 play in constructing and elaborating his plot."(٤٩) In Johnson's play, the original story is elaborated, when a new character is brought in and an intrigue is invented. There are two Greeks, Demetrius and Leontius who together with the assistance of a Turk, Cali bassa, plan an intrigue. At the end, the plan is discovered and Aspasia manages to escape with the two Greeks and Irene is killed. This may echo the anonymous Irene as its original story is elaborated on almost the same line. About

the similarity of the anonymous Irene with Johnson's Irene Berna tells us that:

> **… apart from the Irene of the original story there is another captive Greek girl, Perinthia … and there are two Greek noblemen, Honorius and Justinianus ... While Mahomet is wooing and urging Irena to become his queen, the two Greek nobles plan to kidnap the girls and escape by ship. Finally the secret plan is discovered by the Sultan, who by this time finds himself faced with the muting of his soldiers, and "bassas". But thanks to the help of Justinianus, Honorius, and their friends, the rebellion is put down and the two Greek girls are magnanimously given back to their lovers by the grateful sultan.**(٥٠)

It is evident that there are partial similarities between the outline of the two plays, but this is not confined to the plot only, it can also be traced in some other details. In Irene of Johnson, Act II, i, for instance, Aspasia and Irene are walking in the garden, Aspasia mourns for Demetrius whom she loves and believes killed and hopes that his soul is aware of her faithfulness.

> **Aspasia**
> **Each generous sentiment is thine, Demetrius, whose soul, perhaps, yet mindful of Aspasia. Now hovers O'er this melancholy shade, Well pleas'd to find thy precepts not forgotten.**(٥١)

A similar scene occurs in the anonymous play when both Irena and Perinthia are also walking in the

garden lamenting the death of Justinianus and Honorius, whom they believe to have been killed during the capture of Constantinople. Speaking of their love, they wish that their constancy could be known to their departed souls:

Irena. **I see Perinthia that Love, and Gratitude Equally balances our thoughts;**
And that we have an equal sence, of what
We owe their memories.
What would I give that, that now their generous souls,
Had knowledge o'th constant affection
We still bear'em?
……
Ah, that Heaven would but permit that their Souls might now from their blest abodes
But come, and visit us; methinks't would be Some aitigation to our Misfortunes.[٥٢]

The similarity of these two scenes is striking for two reasons: first, the two scenes occur in a similar place, the palace garden, and secondly, no such incidents are mentioned in the original story as told by Richard Knolles.

Moreover, in Johnson's play Leontius and Demetrius meet, Demetrius discloses a plan to Leontius and requests him to take command:

Deep in a winding Greek a Galley lies,

Mann'd with the bravest of our fellow captive's, Selected by my care, a hardy Band,
That long to hail thee chief.[٥٣]

In the 1664 play the two friends, Justinianus and Honorius meet and discuss the plan that Honorius prepared to kidnap the girls and escape to another country by a ship previously prepared, and asks him to be his command:

Jus. But pray, What number may our Friends amount To?
Hon. Why, about some five hundred, All stout, and Valiant persons, having bin formerly Most officers under you. And if you Please but to command us, and lead us on,
I doubt not the success. [٥٤]

But we should bear in mind that Johnson's indebtedness to Knolles' book remains the greatest which is best expressed in several images, events, characters, and the general idea of the story. In order to throw light on the impact of Knolles' The General History of the Turks on Johnson, it is appropriate to give a summary of Irene's story as told by Knolles:

Irene was a beautiful Greek girl captured at the fall of Constantinople. When she was presented to Turkish Sultan, Mahomet II, he fell deeply in love with her. His love was so passionate that he cared no more for the political state of his empire and neglected his army. Thus provoking the anger and dissatisfaction of his bassas and soldiers. One of his bassas whose name was Mustafa spoke with Mahomet reminding him of his duties and requested him to control his passion for

Irene. Consequently, Mahomet was torn between love and duty, but finally he made his choice. He assembled his bassas, called in Irene, and to prove that Irene's love cannot blind his senses and prevent him from his highest duties as an emperor of Turkey, he cut off Irene's head in their presence.

A comparison of Johnson's Irene and Knolles' story of Irene, will present us with many aspects of similarities and differences. To begin with, the subject of Irene resembles, beyond any doubt, the original story as presented by Knolles, especially the story of Irene and Mahomet II and their love affair. In addition, most of Johnson's principal characters are not invented, but are derived from Knolles' book. The most dominant character, Mahomet II, the Turkish Sultan, is introduced in rather a similar manner as Knolls does in his book. In the original story, Knolles presents us with the following image of the Turkish Sultan:

HE report of thy death of old Amurath the late king, was in short time blowne thorow most parts of Christendome, to the great joy of many; but especially of the Greekes and other poore Christians which bordered upon the tyrants Kingdome. (°°)

Johnson who seems to have much admired the excellence of the eventful book of Knolles, depicts Mahomet II in somewhat a similar manner. The following lines stated by Cali bassa show the analogy in subject matter with Knolles' above mentioned statement:

Cali.

When unsuccessful wars, and civil factions,
Embroil'd the Turkish state – our sultan's father Great Amurath, at my request, forsook
The cloister's ease, resum'd the tott'ring throne,
And snatch'd the reins of abdicated pow'r
From giddy Mahomet's unskilful hand. (٥٦)

What attracted the attention of critics is the mutual love story between Irene and the Turkish sultan, a story which Johnson well adopted and elaborated and upon which the plot of Irene is constructed. In Knolles' The General History of the Turks, it is only a short paragraph that is completely devoted to Irene's beauty and Mahomet's passion for her:

Now among many fair virgins taken prisoners by the Turks at the winning of Constantinople, was one Irene a Greek born, of such incomparable beauty and rare perfection both, of body & mind, as if nature had in her, to the admiration of the world, labored to show her greatest skill; so prodigally had she bestowed upon her all the graces that might beautifie & commend that her so curious a work. This paragon was by him that by chance had taken her, presented unto the great Sultan Mahomet himself, as a jewell so fit for no mans wearing as his own: by the beauty and secret vertues wherof, he found himself even upon the first view not a little mooved… he then began forthwith to think of the fair Irene; and for his pleasure sending for her, took in her perfections such delight and contentment. (٥٧)

In Johnson's hand, this interesting story became a drama, as he exploited and elaborated it. He at first devoted many statements to describe Irene, the subject of which is similar to that of Knolles. The following lines of Mahomet II show us, in comparison with Knolles', that Johnson at least made use of one word from Knolles':

> **Mahomet.**
> **Wilt thou descend, fair daughter of perfection,**
> **……**
> **How will the matchless beauties of Irene,**
> **Thus bright in tears, thus amiable in ruin,**
> **With all the graceful pride of greatness heighten'd,**
> **Amidst the blaze of jewels and of gold,**
> **Adorn a throne, and dignify dominion.**(٥٨)

Johnson then, as Knolles did, denounced Mahomet II and presented him as a man whose ultimate aim was only Irene with whom he spent in pleasure all his time. Thus he neglected the affairs of his Kingdom, provoked discontent, and caused murmur among his bassas and soldiers.

Another close similarity between the two works which confirms Johnson's great indebtedness to Knolles is suggested by the presentation of Cali bassa. The idea of struggle between Cali bassa and Sultan Mahomet II in Johnson's Irene is borrowed from Knolles' History where the causes of mutual hatred between the sultan and his bassa are lightly mentioned. Knolles narrates:

> **Whereupon Mahomet entered into consultation with the three great Bassa's his counsellors, Whether it were best for**

him to continue the siege or not ... Caly bassa, sometime his tutor, a man of greatest authority among the Turks, both for his long experience and high place ... declared the difficulty or rather impossibility of the wished successe in that present war. (٥٩)

And Johnson relates the original cause of Mahomet's hatred of Cali bassa thus:

Cali.

Forgive an old man's weakness,
And share the deepest secrets of my soul,
My wrongs, my fears, my motives, my designs:— When unsuccessful wars, and civil factions,
Embroil'd the Turkish state - our sultan's father
Great Amurath, at my request, forsook
……..
This fir'd the youthful King's ambitious breast,
He murmurs vengeance at the name of Cali,
And dooms my rash fidelity to ruin.(٦٠)

In addition, one more impact of The General History of the Turks is apparent in the striking analogy between Cali's endeavour to escape the sultan's vengeance as told by Knolles to that presented by Johnson. In the original story, Knolles mentions that:

... to get himself out of the way for a season, more than for any devotion, he took upon him to go in pilgrimage to visit the Temple of their great prophet ... at Mecca ... hoping that the young kings

displeasure might in time bee mitigated
and his malice assuaged.(٦١)

Similarly, Johnson's character, Cali bassa, speaks of his intention to visit Mecca as a means to escape the Sultan's revenge:

Cali.
These years, unconquer'd Mahomet, demand Desires more pure, and other cares than love. Long have I wish id, before our Prophet's tomb, To pour my prayers for thy successful reign,
To quit the tumults of the noisy camp,
And sink into the silent grave in peace.(٦٢)

On the whole, these examples may prove that Knolle's The General History of the Turks is the major source of Irene. However, we should bear in mind that Johnson did not take it literally, but he elaborated and adapted the borrowed materials by adding sometimes what he felt might serve his purpose, omitting what he thought to be unsuitable for both public taste and theatrical performance.

First of all, Johnson neglected many details concerning Mahomet's characteristics as they were referred to by Knolles such as Mahomet's crime of killing his young brother. He also passed over the events that happened during the Siege of Constantinople.

One essential elaboration Johnson made to the original story is, as we have mentioned before, that he altered the original story by the invention of a new character. Apart from Irene of the original story, there is another captive Greek girl, Aspasia, who does not exist in the original story as narrated by Knolles. In addition, there are two Greek characters whom Johnson calls by their

actual names, Demetrius and Leontius. In Knolles' story, Leontaras was "lamentable executed"[٦٣] by the Turks, but in Irene, he managed to escape. Whereas Demetrius is presented thus:

> **Thomas & Demetrius ... governed a great part of Peloponsus, one of the most famous provinces of Grecia ... having lost their liberty, lived a few years as the Turks vassals, paying such tribute as they had before promised ... Demetrius hearing what was happened to Arsanes, fled to Sparta.**[٦٤]

In Irene, these two characters function in a different way. Their role was cleverly designed to serve as a subplot to strengthen the main plot. Both Demetrius and Leontius with the help of a Turkish vizier, Cali bassa, planned a secret plot to assassinate The Turkish Sultan, but when the plot was discovered they managed to fly accompanied by Aspasia.

Apart from the previous modifications, the essential change made by Johnson is the tragic conclusion of the principal character and its motive. Knolles ends Irene's story tragically, but in a different way from the one concluded by Johnson:

> **Now in the meane time Mustapha ... had as he was commanded, caused all the nobilitie and commanders of the men of war, to be assembled into the great hall ... the Sultan entered into the palace, holding the fair Greek by the hand … Thus coming together into the midst of the hall ... and so furiously looking**

round about him, said unto them; "I understand of your great discontentment, and that you all murmur and grudge, for that I overcome with myne affection toward this so fair a paragon, cannot withdraw myself from her presence
… Well, but now I will make you to understand how far you have bin deceived in me, and that there is no earthly thing that can so much blind my senses, or bereave me of reason, as not to see and understand what beseemeth my high calling: Yea I would you should all know, that the honor and coquest of the Othoman kings my noble Progenitors is so fixed in my breast, with such a desire in myself to exceed the same, as that nothing but death is able to put it out of my remembrance." And having so said, presently with one of his hands catching the fair Greek by the hair of the head, & drawing his falchion with other, at one blow strook off her head, to the great terror of them all; and having so done, said unto them "Now by this judge whether your emperor is able to bridle his affections or not".(١٥)

It is apparent in Knolles book that Mahomet II himself murdered Irene in the presence of an assembly of his bassas. His motive in doing so was that he felt that he was injured in his dignity as a result of the dissatisfaction of his bassas, and his control over his empire had been slackened. But in Johnson's Irene, it was not Mahomet II who killed Irene, but two of his followers, Hassan and Garaza. As for the motives of killing Irene in Johnson's

play, in addition to the above mentioned motive, Johnson added another one which is his suspicion that Irene has a part in the plot designed to dethrone him.

Besides, Johnson added an unhappy conclusion for the Turkish sultan as a punishment for his hasty decision, such end is not found in the original story. However, when Mahomet II was later informed of Irene's innocence and fidelity by Merza, the servant whom Irene sent to alarm the Sultan of the intrigue planned against him by Cali bassa and Demetrius, his reaction was immediate and its impact was great that he soon lost his mind, started behaving in a crazy way and began to shout:

Mahomet.

seize me, Madness! - Did she call on me!
I feel, I see the ruffian's barb'rous rage.
He seiz'd her melting in the fond appeal,
And stopp'd the heav'nly voice that call'd on me.
My spirits fail, awhile support me, vengeance –
Be just ye slaves, and, to be just, be cruel,
Contrive new racks, imbitter every pang,
Inflict whatever treason can deserve,
Which murder'd innocence that call'd on me.(٦٦)

It seems that Johnson's conclusion is more effective as a tragedy than Knolles' as narrative prose.

To sum up, it is hoped that Johnson's indebtedness to Knolles' book is now obvious. But it is noteworthy that Johnson's concern is mainly focused on some essential elements of the original story which attract the attention of the eighteenth-century readers. Meanwhile, Johnson attempts to neglect what seems to be superflous to his purpose and unsuitable for drama. Thus he eliminates

most historical details such as the mutual relationship between Mahomet and other kings of Europe, and all battles which have only a historical value, better to be read in books. And once more it is possible, as far as plot construction is concerned that the anonymous Irene of 1664 has its impact on Johnson is Irene.

The Sources of the Short Stories

The Sources of "Seged, Lord of Ethiopia" (1752)

Johnson's short story "Seged, Lord of Ethiopia" which was published in two numbers of The Rambler, 204 and 205, is regarded as an earlier draft of Rasselas. It is however, very interesting to find Johnson meditating on the same question of happiness seven years before Rasselas. A summary of the story may throw light on the possible sources and reveal the similarities between the two.

> **Seged is the King of Ethiopia, having finished his duties as a king, decided to retire only for ten days from the affairs of his kingdom, in order to be happy, at least, for one day. He, therefore, ordered his men to build a "house of pleasure" in an island of the Lake Dambea, and endeavoured to gratify every desire. The first day there were many pleasures, but the day passed away without a choice. The other days were all spent, but with accidents, a bad dream, tyranny, envy among those who provide pleasure, a memory of a defeat and finally the death of his daughter. Accordingly, Seged said:**
> **"Let no man ever, presume to say, 'This day shall be a day of happiness'.**[٧٧]

It is apparent that the story resembles Rasselas in many respects. First of all, the protagonists of the two works are members of royal families. Rasselas is a prince and Seged is an emperor. The two figures are discontented and have the inclination to pursue happiness, but through different means: Rasselas attempts, as we have seen, to

discover the sources of happiness through examining various conditions of life. Whereas Seged leaves for a newly built palace which somewhat resembles the happy valley in Rasselas. Also it can be said that, in Seged's story, Johnson uses an oriental setting, namely the Abyssinian background in much the same way as in Rasselas.

As for the question of the sources of the story, it is possible to say that Johnson's knowledge of Abyssinia is based mainly on his reading in a variety of travel books on Ethiopia of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Chief among them may be: Luis de Urreta, Historia occlesiastica, politica, natural y moral de les grandes, y remotos Reynos de la Ethiopia (1610); Balthazar Telles, Historia geral da Ethiopia a glta (1660); Ludolf Job, Historia Aethiopieca (1681); and Charles Jacques Poncet, A Succint Account of the Travels of Charles-James Poncet, a French physician, into Ethiopia in 1698, 1699 and 1700 (1743).

The house of pleasure, built in the island of Dambea; may have been borrowed from Urreta's book where he mentions a similar place. A comparison between the two descriptions may point out Johnson's indebtedness to Urreta. In the story of Seged, Johnson beautifully provides us with the following natural details:

> **The palace of Dambea, which stood in an island cultivated only for pleasure, planted with every flower that spreads its colour to the sun, ... In one part of this extensive garden, were open walks for excursions in the morning; in another, thick groves, and silent**

arbours, and bubbling fountains, for repose at noon.(٦٨)

These descriptions of the house of pleasure can be an imitation of Urreta's happy valley:

On this mountain there are many beautiful gardens, very pleasant and interesting orchards of luxuriant foliage, filled with every variety of fruit-trees ... finally one sees in these gardens a mixture and riot of all kinds of flowers ... There are also many grazing grounds, woodlands and fields, meadows, pastures, …(٦٩)

What remains is the general idea of happiness which might have been suggested to Johnson by reading in some oriental literary books, probably the translated version of the Persian Tales. Seged's efforts to create a happy day resembles Bedreddin's Lolo's attempt to find a happy man, but through different means. Seged orders a house of pleasure to be built, while Bedreddin determines to gratify his desire through travel. Seged attempts to find happiness by means of communication with those whose art is to provide pleasure, but none of them proves to be ultimately able to provide it. Bedreddin's method is rather similar as he tries to look for happiness through direct contacts with people, first of his court, then, outside his country, but no one proves to be happy.

The Sources of "Nouradin the Merchant and his Son Almamoulin"

Johnson's short oriental story "Nouradin the Merchant and his Son Almamoulin" was published in his periodical, The Rambler, No.120, 1751. Up to date, no serious attempts have been made to answer the question of the possible sources of the tale. It is possible, as the title and the subject indicate that Johnson's major source is the anonymous translated version of The Arabian Nights.(٧٠)

For convenience's sake, here is a summary of Johnson's story:

> **Nouradin is a wealthy merchant who lives in the city of Samarcand. He is popular and enjoys perfect happiness. Feeling that he is seized with a slow malady and his end is approaching, he calls for his son Almamoulin and offers him a series of moral advices; mainly on how to enjoy wisely the wealth he leaves him. As soon as the father expires, the son gives loose to his desire, he attempts to enjoy all varieties of pleasures, but he is disappointed. He, therefore, consults a sage who tells his that riches is useless, if it is not coupled with wisdom.**

It is apparent that Johnson is following a certain oriental convention of story telling which appears in The Arabian Nights. He also borrows many details from the same source. To start with, names like Nouradin and Almamoulin are conventional names of heores of love and adventure of some stories of The Arabian Nights. In The Arabian Nights, for instance, we can easily trace similarities between Johnson's story and "The story of Noureddin, and the Fair Persian."(٧١) Johnson's

indebtedness to this story extends to more than the names of his characters, since it seems to include similar theme and morals. A brief account of the story of The Arabian Nights is helpful to reveal these affinities:

> **Khacan the grand vizier of Balsora, is a rich man, who enjoys public popularity and wide reputation. He has a son named Noureddin, feeling that he is caught by a slow malignant malady and his death is inevitable, he calls for his son, Noureddin, and offers him some moral advices concerning the cares of life and the best means of avoiding extravagance. When Khacan expires, Noureddin and his friends arrange a magnificent funeral process to the place of burial.**
>
> **At first Noureddin admits none of his friends, but later, he rapidly neglects his father's advices as he starts inviting his opportunist friends to his house, and spending foolishly his wealth on idle purposes. Thus ruin gradually approaches, and as an obstinate man, he refuses to listen to the warnings of his steward who informs him of his financial ruin. Consequently, the first who forsakes him are his friends on whom he has squandered his wealth. To know the reasons of his sudden ruin, he consults a wise woman, the fair Persian, who teaches him a moral on the advantages of riches.**(٧٢)

In comparing the two stories, we come to the conclusion that there are many close similarities: First, both Noureddin of The Arabian Nights and Almamoulin

are sons of rich men, who enjoy prosperity and fame. Another likeness between the two stories is that both fathers die and bequeath their sons great wealth. In The Arabian Nights, the death of Khacan is introduced thus:

> **... being one day in the bath, and some important business obliging him to leave it all in a sweat, the air, which was then a little moist, struck a damp to his breast, which caused a defluxion of rheum to fall upon his lungs … His illness growing every day worse and perceiving he had but a few moments to live, he thus addressed himself to his son Noureddin.** (٧٣)

An idea akin to this is given in Johnson's story:

> **At length Nouradin felt himself seized with a slow malady, which he first endeavoured to divert by application, and afterwards to relieve by luxury and indulgence; but finding that his strength every day less, he was at last terrified, and called for help upon the sages of physick ... but the disease preyed upon his vitals ... At length, having passed the night in tedious languor, he called to him Almamoulin, his only son.**(٧٤)

In addition, in each story there are rather similar moral instructions on how to use and spend riches. In The Arabian Nights, Khacan teaches his son the following advice:

> **'My son', said he, 'I know not whether I have made a good use of the riches**

> **Heaven has blessed me with, but you see they are not able to save me from the hands of death. The last thing I desire of you, with my dying breath, is, that you would be mindful of the promise you made concerning the Fair Persian; and with a certainity of that I shall die pleased, and well contented.** (٧٥)

This moral advice appears in Johnson in this way:

> **"My son", says he, "behold here the weakness and fragility of man; look backward a few days, thy father was great and happy, fresh as the vernal rose, and strong as the cedar of the mountain ... Now, Almamoulin, look upon me withering and prostrate ... the hand of death is upon me … I am now leaving the produce of my toil, which it must be thy business to enjoy with wisdom."** (٧٦)

One more close affinity is that in Johnson's story, ruin afflicts the protagonist because he squanders his money in luxury and sensual pleasure and lets loose his desires in a similar manner of the traditional heroes of The Arabian Nights, who are the sons of dying rich men.

Finally, Johnson's indebtedness is best revealed in the close analogy between the two conclusions. The author of The Arabian Nights ends his tale thus:

> **'Here are my books; if you please, examine them; and, if you think fit to continue me in the place I am now in, order me some other funds, or else give**

me leave to quit your service ... The friend who had been listening all this ... immediately came in ... For my part, I declare it openly to you, this is the last visit I design ever to make Noureddin – 'Nay', replied they, if matters go thus, we have as little business hero as you! ... 'I am sorry I cannot have the honour of your company any longer…'[٧٧]

In Johnson's short story, Nouradin's friends forsake him soon when an "officer of justice entered the house, and ... summoned Almamoulin to appear before the emperor. The guests stood a while aghast, then stole imperceptibly away, and he was led off without a single voice to witness his integrity".[٧٨]

All these similarities prove Johnson's borrowing from The Arabian Nights' tale. But his story does not exactly correspond to the original story, for Johnson alters some of its details. He, for instance, uses the philosopher in place of the Fair Persian whose presence in the story seems to be immodest for the eighteenth century. Besides, he employs another background different from the original story. He places his story in the city of Samarcand, while the tale of The Arabian Nights mentions Balsora. However, these changes are of less importance, because what are of great significance to Johnson are the moral lessons rather than the background.

The Sources of: "Morad, the Son of Hanuth and his Son Abouzaid"

"Morad, the Son of Hanuth and his Son Abouzaid" was published in The Rambler, No.190, 1751. A general outline of the story may be helpful to determine its possible sources.

> **Morad is a man who after he has singled himself in many battles, begins to live in prosperity and enjoys riches and wisdom. But as human greatness is transitory, the clouds of sorrow and ruin gather round him. The first who forsake him are his poets whom he has rewarded. He, for this reason, feels that a slow disease seizes him. In this state he commands to recall his son Abouzaid to give him some moral lessons. When Morad expires, his son, after months of mourning, determines to regulate his life according to his father's precepts. He, therefore, associates with companions of different ranks and occupations, and distributes his wealth and love, but no one proves that he deserves his love and benevolence. Finally, he discovers a moral lesson by himself.**

This summary may help us to point out the major literary sources that Johnson possibly could have consulted before writing his short story. It is probable that the major sources are The Arabian Nights and the Persian Tales. This is evident throughout the story when Johnson creates an atmosphere which resembles that which dominates the volumes of The Arabian Nights and the Persian Tales.

The conventional beginning of many oriental tales of The Arabian Nights and the Persian Tales is also found in this story of Johnson where the principal characters are usually merchants and viziers who are father and son. The father can be rich and famous, and as soon as he feels his death is approaching, he recalls his son to him and gives him some moral advice. Hence, the beginning of Johnson's story resembles, for instance, the early section of "The Story of Noureddin, and the Fair Persian", of The Arabian Nights in many aspects. First, the characters of the story correspond to those of the story of Noureddin. Thus, Morad is a grand vizier who was

> **rewarded with the government of a province ... the fame of his wisdom and moderation was wafted to the pinnacles of Agra … The emperor ... gave into his hand the keys of riches, and sabre of command … every tongue faltered in his presence, and every eye was cast down before him.** (٧٩)

These personal qualities often appear in the descriptions of many characters of The Arabian Nights, namely Khacan, the grand vizier in "The Story of Noureddin, and the Fair Persian", whose personal traits echo those of Morad:

> **Khacan was of a sweet, generous, and affable temper, ... so that he was universally respected, both at court, in the city, and throughout the whole kingdom; and every body's mouth was full of the praises he so highly deserved.**(٨٠)

This traditional beginning also appears in the Persian Tales, particularly in "The History of Atalmulck, Surnamed The Sorrowful Vizier, and of the princess Zolica Beyume", where Atalmulck's father is "a rich jeweller of Baghdad".(٨١)

Again, as we have already noticed in his story, "Nouradin the Merchant and his son Almamoulin", Johnson imitates a pattern of oriental origin repeatedly used in The Arabian Nights, or in the Persian Tales. In these two oriental collections, the father dies because he is inflicted by unconquerable disease. Before his death, the father, who is equipped with much experience, attempts to relate his final precepts to his inexperienced son on the goings of life, and more specifically on the safe way to spend the money his son will inherit and be at his disposal, similarly, Morad is seized also by a malady, he, therefore, prior to his death, summons Abouzaid, his son, to recount the essence of his experiences:

> **"Abouzaid", says he, "thy father has no more to hope or fear from the inhabitants of the earth, the cold hand of the angel of death is now upon him, and the voracious grave is howling for his prey. Hear, therefore, the precepts of ancient experience, let not my last instructions issue forth in vain ... not to … difuse thy riches among thy friends.** (٨٢)

This comparatively resembles what Atalmulck's father recommends his son before his death:

> **The angel of death is not far off me. I am now going to launch into eternity, and to leave you possessed of great wealth; have a care how you make an ill use of it; at least, if you are so unhappy as to squander it away idly.**(٨٣)

Compare this with “The Story of Noureddin, and the Fair Persian". (Chapter Three, pp.41-43).

In addition, another affinity between Johnson’s story and “The Story of Noureddin, and the Fair Persian", and “The History of Atalmulck”, is that Morad of Johnson’s story, though, a father, increases the gifts of his friends who as soon as “feel that his ruin is hastily approaching, forsake him, “The first that forsook him were his poets; their example was followed by all those whom he had rewarded".(٨٤) These details may echo what are mentioned in “The Story of Noureddin, and the Fair Persian". Noureddin is like Morad when he distributes his riches among his friends who immediately leave him when they hear the news of his financial ruin:

> **‘Sir’, said he , ‘I am sorry I cannot have the honour of your company any longer ... I hope you will excuse my rudeness in leaving you so soon’ ... he went away ... and so one after another; till at last not one of those ten friends who had hitherto kept Noureddin company, was left in the room.**(٨٥)

Again similar details appear in the story of the Persian Tales when Atalmulck recounts his experience:

> **I increased the number of my domesticks. I got all the young fellows of the city about me. I kept open house ... so that I insensibly lavished away all that was left me. My friends soon abandoned me; and all my domesticks, one after another, quitted my service.**(٨٦)

It is worth mentioning that Johnson did not imitate the whole stories, but he altered what he thought indecent or improper to the public taste or in order to make the story suitable for his moral instructive tendency. One purposeful change is that in Johnson's story there is a series of moral instructions and the hero discovers a moral lesson by himself, whereas in the stories of The Arabian Nights and of the Persian Tales, there is just one moral advice of the dangers of being extravagant, and there is another person who offers the moral advice. But it seems that Johnson has in mind more than one instruction such as the advantages of riches, human greatness and love of human beings which reflect the moral and didactic tendency of Johnson.

One of these moral issues which deserves more attention since it may throw light on Johnson's indebtedness to The Arabian Nights is that man's greatness is transitory and what is gained through means other than hard work soon proves to be fragile and collapses the moment the source of its living dies.

This theme is expressed in rather a similar manner in "The Story of Barber's Sixth Brother", of The Arabian Nights. A summary of the story may suggest likenesses and differences between the themes of the two stories.

> **Once there was a poor man whose name was Schacabac. One day he entered a palace of a rich man called Barmecide. In a short time, Schacabac and Barmecide established a firm relationship, so the latter trusted the former, in his house and all his affair for twenty years. Barmecide augumented his gifts that in a short time he lived in prosperity and luxury. But as soon as the Barmecide died and his estates were confiscated, Schacabac was reduced to his first condition, poor and miserable.(٨٧)**

This actually may echo the story of Morad in many aspects. First, apart from the similarities between the general outline, another analogy is that both Schacabac and Morad are two ordinary people who serve either a Calif or a Vizier who gives them riches and power. Morad, for instance, has been in the Calif's service for seventy years through which he lives in affluence and happiness. Similarly, Schacabac lives with a rich man for twenty years. A final similarity is that when the sources of their riches and power die out, they are reduced to their first conditions, poor and wretched.

The Sources of "Omar the Son of Hussan"

The story "Omar the Son of Hussan" was written in 1760, and occupied number 101 of The Idler. A summary of the story is helpful to suggest the possible sources that Johnson had consulted before writing it.

> **Omar, the principal character, is the pious, good and wise servant of the Calif of Baghdad. He tells the scheme he made in his youth for his life. Ten years of study; ten years of travel; marriage and retirement from court. But each part of his scheme was fruitless and his attempts to attain perfect happy life were also impractical and consequently failed.**

Here, it is obvious that Johnson's interest is centered more on the theme, which springs from action, than from an oriental setting. In this story, more than in any other of Johnson's stories, the oriental setting is slight – there is only thin descriptions of the place and time. It is for this reason that it is difficult to assign a specific source for the story. Yet the theme, names, and setting can also be attributed to The Arabian Nights or the Persian Tales. A name like "Bagdat" is an actual name, it was one of the famous oriental cities of its time distinguished for being the centre where a huge confluence of people are found; it is also the place where many eventful and wonderful stories of The Arabian Nights take place. However, in spite of the thinness of the oriental setting, Johnson has his purpose for using the name of Baghdad as a background for his story. Baghdad, in The Arabian Nights' stories, is an image magnificent culture, full of beauty, pleasure, riches and void of the sordid pains of

human life. Hence, happiness in Johnson's opinion is a dominant feature of Baghdad. In effect, the image of perfect happiness of the citizens of Baghdad is what Johnson wants to refute in this story. In other words, Johnson's ultimate purpose is that unhappiness is a dominant characteristic of the world, even in a city like Baghdad, an example of a remote and exotic place of the orient, whose citizens are supposed to live in luxury, lead a carefree life and enjoy all varieties of earthly pleasure out of which happiness undoubtedly stems.

In relation to this, Johnson's choice of Arabic names, of persons who possess power, authority and richers are cleverly presented. Omar is a name that occurs in more than one tale of The Arabian Nights such as the stories of "Omar Ibn Ennuman" and "Omar Ibn Khatab". Another oriental name mentioned by Johnson is "Zobeide", which also occurs in The Arabian Nights' stories. In The Arabian Nights, Zobeide plays a prominent role in some stories which deal with Harun Al-Rashid and his circle. Originally, Zobeide's image, as presented in The Arabian Nights is drawn as a revengeful, envious and jealous woman. But Johnson's presentation of Zobeide corresponds with the image of the real historical figure which is that of a wise, religious and a beautiful woman.

As for the source of the idea of search for happiness, though it may reflect a typical Johnsonian theme, there are still some possible sources found, in the Persian Tales and The Arabian Nights. It is possible to mark out similarities between Omar's futile attempts to design a plan to live a happy day, and Bedreddin's efforts to find a happy man or Schahzenan's and Schabriar's attempt to meet a happy person. All efforts of the

principal characters of the three stories prove to be fruitless. In effect, it is possible to say that there is more inventiveness in this story than in the others.

The Sources of "Ortogrul of Basra"

Johnson's "Ortogrul of Basra" was written in 1760, and published in The Idler number 99. The literary value of the story lies equally on the oriental setting and theme. Here is a summary of it.

> **The story is about a man of a low status called Ortogrul of Basra. Wandering in the streets of Baghdad and feasting his eyes on the varieties of merchandize which the shops offer, he catches a glimpse of the chief vizier entering his palace. Ortogrul, who is led by curiosity, enters the palace of the vizier. He is fascinated by the magnificence of the place, the spacious apartments and luxurious furniture. Consequently, he begins to contemplate his present miserable state, and compares his poverty with the riches of the vizier. He erroneously thinks that happiness can only be found in this palace. He, therefore, decides to be rich in hope of finding happiness. One day while he is sleeping in his chair, he beholds a vision from a hilltop. His father appears before him and directs his attention to an ineffectual torrent of a slow but sure rivulet and points a moral. When he becomes rich as a result of engaging in merchandize, he attempts all varieties of pleasure hoping that they may offer him happiness. But none proves to be able to bring on happiness. Finally, Ortogrul discovers a moral by himself that unless riches are coupled with wisdom, they are useless.**

This summary may help us to some extent to mark out the possible sources of the story. It is apparent that the scene is laid in Baghdadian and more specifically in its streets, markets and a certain palace. Such scene is often found in the stories of The Arabian Nights, especially, the parts which include an atmosphere of everyday Baghdad life. In the Baghdadian stories the events always happen in a street market, the wealthy merchants' leisurely way of conducting their business and all the citizens go happily about their various affairs.

In Johnson's story there is also a description of the luxurious life of an oriental vizier of which he says:

> **... this palace is the place of happiness, where pleasure succeeds to pleasure. ... The dishes of luxury cover his table, the voice of Harmony lulls him in his bowers ... he wishes, and his wish is gratified.(٨٨)**

This description rather echoes what is mentioned in "The Story of Noureddin, and the Fair Persian":

> **Down went Scheich Ibrahim, and in a short time spread a table for their, with porcelain dishes full of all sorts of delicious fruits, besides a great number of gold and silver cups to drink out of ... they pressed him earnestly to stay.(٨٩)**

Such details are not restricted to the above mentioned story, but they can be found in other stories of The Arabian Nights such as "The History of Aboul Hassan Ali Ebn Becar, and Schemselnihar; Favourite of Caliph

Haroun Al-Raschid", in which there is a similar description of the palace of Schemselnihar:

> **The prince ... thought himself in one of those magnificent palaces ... he had never seen any thing that equalled the shining splendour of the place he was in: the carpets, cushions, and other furniture ... a table covered with several very fine dishes, the delicious smell of which made thou judge of the delicacy of the sauce.**(٩٠)

What remains is the source of the idea of riches and the question whether it leads to perfect happiness or absolute misery. Although, as we have mentioned above, similar issues appear in The Arabian Nights, it is safe to assume that some of these ideas are typical Johnsonian. Johnson, who was always sensible in dealing with riches formed a special concept of its advantages and disadvantages. Once, he confessed to his friend, Boswell, "riches, if properly used (and it is a man's own fault if they are not), must be productive of the highest advantages".(٩١) The same issue is discussed in "Ortogrul of Basra". Ortogrul manages to accumulate riches, but his attempts to attain perfect happiness are fruitless, simply because he never estimates the proper values of money as he squanders it foolishly.

Apparently, it is easy, as far as the place and time of the story are concerned, to attribute them to some sources. But as for the moral it mostly reflects Johnson's personal view.

To conclude, it seems to me that the plot and certain names and details of both characters and setting of

Johnson's short stories are possibly taken from certain identifiable tales of The Arabian Nights or the Persian Tales. But the rest perhaps stem out from the large bulk of tales in addition to what Johnson himself added. In other words, Johnson's short stories are amalgamation and simplification of certain tales which appear in The Arabian Nights and the Persian Tales.

NOTES

(١) Donald Lockhart, "The Fourth Son of the Mighty Emperor, the Ethiopian Background of Samuel Johnson's Rasselas". PMLA. LXXVIII (December, 1963), p.518.
(٢) Rasselas, p.607.
(٣) Lockhart, p.518.
(٤) Ibid.
(٥) Ibid.
(٦) Ibn Manzur, Lisan Al-Arab. Vol.X.(Beyrouth: Dar Sader-Dar Beyrouth, 1968), p.271.
(٧) Lockhart, p.519.
Since the original source is not available to me, therefore, my quotations of Ludolf's book are taken from Lockhart's article in PMLA. LXXVIII (December, 1963).
(٨) Rasselas, p.607.
(٩) Ibid., p.656.
(١٠) Lockhart, p.520.
(١١) Rasselas, p.608.
(١٢) Ellen Douglas, "No Romantic Absurdities or Incredible Fiction: The Relation of Johnson's Rasselas to Lobo's Voyage to Abyssinia". PMLA, LXX, No.5 (December, 1955), p.1062.
(١٣) Ibid. 1062
(١٤) "Preface to the Translation of Father Lobo's Voyage to Abyssinia" in Arthur Murphy, ed. The Works of Samuel Johnson, 12 Vols. (London, 1792), Vol.II, p.325.
(١٥) See for instance: J. P. Hardy. Samuel Johnson: A Critical Study (London: Routledge and Kegan, 1979), p.123, and Ellen Douglas, p.1059.
(١٦) Lockhart, p.522.
(١٧) Rasselas, pp.608, 610-11.
(١٨) For more information see Lockhart, Appendix, pp.527-28.
(١٩) Arthur J. Weitzman, "More Light on Rasselas: The Background of Egyptian Episodes", PQ, Vol.XLVIII, I (January, 1969) pp.44 - 45.
(٢٠) Rasselas, pp.672-73.
(٢١) Weitzman, p.46.

(٣٢) Ibid., p.47.
Since the original source is not available to me, my quotations of Greaves's book are taken from Weitzman, p.47.
(٣٣) Rasselas, p.671.
(+) See p. 26 of this thesis.
(٣٤) Gwin J. Kolb, "The Structure of Rasselas," PMLA, LXVI (September, 1951), pp.714-715.

(٣٥) This summary is adapted from Philips Ambrose, the Persian Tales, 2nd ed. (London, 1722) which is published in The Novelists' Magazine, Vol.13, 1783, pp.130-257. All my quotations are taken from this magazine.
(٣٦) Rasselas, p.611.
(٣٧) The Novelists' Magazine, p.131.
(٣٨) Rasselas, p.622.
(٣٩) The Novelists' Magazine, p.131.
(٣٠) Ibid., p.133.
(٣١) Rasselas, p.625.
(٣٢) Ibid., p.626.
(٣٣) The Novelists' Magazine, p.151.
(٣٤) bid., p.257.
(٣٥) Rasselas, p.709.
(٣٦) The Arabian Nights, Vol.I, p.11.
(٣٧) Ibid.
(٣٨) Lockhart, p.527.
(٣٩) One of Johnson's old friends in Lichfield. They were in the same school, and together suffered the most financial distress. They left to try their fortune in London. Roughly, in 1747, fortune smiled at Garrick as he leapt to fame when he became the new manager of Drury Lane Theatre. Garrick took in hand Irene and produced it on the stage in 1747.
(٤٠) Robert Dodsley was known in the eighteenth-century literary society as a poet, dramatist and bookseller. He published "London", one of the famous poems of Johnson in 1733. He also published Irene, "The Vanity of Human Wishes" and the Dictionary.

(٤١) Robert Metzdort "A Newly Recovered Criticism of Johnson's Irene", Harvard Library Bulletin, Vol.IV, (Spring, 1950), p.266.
(٤٢) Boswell, p.14.
(٤٣) Robert Metzdort, p.266.
(٤٤) David Nichol Smith and Edward L. McAdam, ed. The Poems of Samuel Johnson, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 1974), pp.272-73.
(٤٥) Moran Berna, "The Irene Story and Dr. Johnson's Sources", Modern Languages Notes, LXXI (1956), p.88.
(٤٦) Smith and McAdam, p.270.
(٤٧) Ibid.
(٤٨) Ibid.
(٤٩) Moran Berna, p.89.
(٥٠) Ibid., P.89.
(٥١) Irene, II, i, p.134.
All my quotations of Johnson's Irene are taken from E. L. McAdam and George Milne, The Yale Edition of The Works of Samuel Johnson, Vol. VI. (Yale Univ. Press, 1964) .

(٥٢) Irene, III, ii.
All may quotations of the anonymous Irena (1664) are taken from Berna's article in:. ML, LXXI (February, 1956), pp.87-91.
(٥٣) Irene, I, i, p.118.
(٥٤) Irene, II, i.
(٥٥) Knolles, p.337.
(٥٦) Irene, I, ii, p.121.
(٥٧) Knolles, p.350.
(٥٨) Irene, II, vii, pp.145-46.
(٥٩) Knolles, p.344.
(٦٠) Irene, I, ii, pp.120-21.
(٦١) Knolles, p.349.
(٦٢) Irene, I, v, pp.129-130.
(٦٣) Knolles, p.348.
(٦٤) Ibid., pp.353-55.
(٦٥) Ibid., p.253.
(٦٦) Irene, V, xii, pp.215-16.

(٦٧) The Works, Vol. VI, The Rambler, No.205, (1752), p.378.
(٦٨) The works, Vol.VI, The Rambler, No.204, (1752), pp.369-370.
(٦٩) Lockhart, p.522.
(٧٠) Its full title is:
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 cruel Vow.
Translated From
The French Version of M. Galland
In Four Volumes.
(London, 1706).
(٧١) In Richard Burton's translation, the title of this tale is translated as "Nouraddin Ali and the Damsel Anis Al-Jalis".
(٧٢) The summary of the story is adapted from The Arabian Nights, Vol.III, pp.339-349.
(٧٣) The Arabian Nights, Vol.III, p.345.
(٧٤) The Works, Vol.V, The Rambler, No.120 (1751), pp.313-314.
(٧٥) The Arabian Nights, Vol.III, p.345.
(٧٦) The Works, Vol.V, The Rambler, No.120 (1751), pp.314-315.
(٧٧) The Arabian Nights, Vol.III, p.347.
(٧٨) The Works, Vol.V, The Rambler, No.120 (1751), p.318.
(٧٩) The Works, Vol.VI, The Rambler, No.190 (1752), p.387.
(٨٠) The Arabian Nights, Vol.III, p.339.
(٨١) The Novelists' Magazine, p.131.
(٨٢) The Works, Vol.VI, The Rambler, No.190 (1752), p.289.
(٨٣) The Novelists' Magazine, p.132.
(٨٤) The Works, Vol.VI, The Rambler, No.190 (1752), p.288
(٨٥) The Arabian Nights, Vol.III, pp.347-48.
(٨٦) The Novelists' Magazine, p.132.
(٨٧) This summary is adapted from "The Story of the Bader's Sixth Brother", The Arabian Nights, Vol.II, pp.235-39.
(٨٨) The Works, Vol.VII, The Idler, No.99 (1760), pp.393-94.

(٨٩) The Arabian Nights, Vol.III, p.357.
(٩٠) The Arabian Nights, Vol.II, p.243.
(٩١) Boswell, p.311.

CHAPTER FOUR

ORIENTAL ELEMENTS IN RASSELAS, IRENE AND SOME SHORT STORIES

Johnson's reading in the oriental books at his disposal was a vital means of knowledge about the Orient which later had an influence on his literary career. (See Chapter two, pp.5-15). Between 1737 and 1766 he wrote and published several works in which the orient, its inhabitants, customs and tradition were the material through which he expressed his ideas and beliefs.

The oriental works of Johnson could be considered an extensive survey of oriental life and literature which were known in his time, and which he either had read, was informed of, or heard about. Since he had no direct personal experience of the Orient (he did not travel to the East) as Lord Byron did for example, Johnson's interest was aroused through verbal communication, and his attitude towards the Orient was that of his age, an attitude of curiosity and excitement.

To understand the oriental elements in Johnson's oriental works, it is rewarding to consider them in relation to the background against which they were composed which is not always the same and varies from work to another. (See Chapter three on the sources). It is also valuable to find out Johnson's purpose in writing these works, their style, and structure. For example, Rasselas, is to be studied separately since it has a different background from those of the short stories and Irene. Likewise, the short stories are dealt with collectively for although their

setting is slightly different, they have much in common. Irene, the only dramatic work written by Johnson will be a studied separately as well, for it has a still different oriental background and moral purposes.

Oriental Setting in Rasselas, Irene and the Short Stories

Oriental Setting in Rasselas

Johnson's concern with the Orient, its spiritual, social and political values is best expressed in narrating the practices, manners and customs of the oriental nations. In Rasselas, Johnson, provides his readers with an account of Ethiopian royal customs. As a specimen we might cite the following:

> **According to the custom which has descended from age to age among the monarchs of the torrid zone, Rasselas was confined in a private palace, with the other sons and daughters of Abissinian royalty, till the order of succession should call him to the throne.**(1)

It is apparent that Johnson's interest in Ethiopia is reinforced by mentioning an old Ethiopian custom practised mainly by the Abyssinian royal families. The custom of princes' imprisonment in a private palace is confirmed by most travellers who visited Ethiopia. Donald Lockhart, who examined and verified Job Ludolf's book, Historia Aethiopica (1681), tells us that this custom had

> **continu'd as a Fundamental Law in Ethiopia, for above two hundred and thirty years, ... Formerly those miserable Ethiopia princes were here cag'd up in wild places, in low cottages, among Shrubs and Wild Cedars, starv'd from all things else but Air and Earth.**[٢]

The Abyssinians had a motive in locking their princes away in such a place. This was to shut them away from the dangers of civil wars until the order of succession call them back to the Abyssinian throne.[٣]

In relation to this custom, Johnson highlights the descriptions of the place where this Abyssinian tradition was practised. What he says corresponds to what the old orientalists cited about Ethiopia especially the place where the princes used to live. What attracted his attention more than anything else is the royal palace of which he says:

> **It was divided into many squares or courts, built with greater or less magnificence according to the rank of those for whom they were designed ... This house, which was so large as to be fully known to none but some ancient officers ... To every room there was an open and secret passage, every square had a communication with the rest, either from the upper stories by private galleries, or by subterranean passages from the lower apartments.**[٤]

In these descriptive details one can feel that they sound like English country castles, because, even if Johnson had

read the traveller's accounts of this palace, he might have been incapable of remembering such minute details of the inside palace. However, if these descriptions recall what the travellers to Ethiopia witnessed, much light can be shed on the Abyssinians' merit in architecture. Their style of building is both exotic and spectacular which indicates a sense of a higher taste and individualistic mentality which almost all oriental nations have.

After all these descriptions, it is appropriate to ask why Johnson chose an Abyssinian background. The answer can be two-sided: First the Abyssinian background functions as a means to provide the eighteenth-century readers with the aura of a strange and distant land where human happiness is usually thought of as complete and everlasting. Secondly, the setting plays an important role in the story, for Johnson deliberately sets his tale in a remote country, so that he can deal with man at a purely naturalistic level and feel free to discuss the issues he has in mind.

The setting of Rasselas falls into two parts. In the first part, Johnson depicts an Ethiopian setting of which a few examples have been given, whereas in the second part, he sets his narrative against an Egyptian background which constitutes a dominant feature of the tale. (See Chapter three, pp.20-29).

Johnson's Interest in Egypt was so comprehensive that it included all aspects of Egyptian traditions, ancient and contemporary. This concern was best expressed in descriptions and accounts of Egyptian history, specially the sciences, arts and social and political life of that time.

To begin with, Johnson devotes a few pages to depict the Egyptian role in both ancient and modern human civilization of which he says:

> **It seems to me', said Imlac ... 'that you are in a country, famous among the earliest monarchies for the power and wisdom of its inhabitants; a country where the sciences first dawned that illuminate the world, and beyond which the arts cannot be traced of civil society or domestick life.' (The old Egyptians have left behind them monuments of industry and power before which all European magnificence is confessed to fade away. The ruins of their architecture are the schools of modern builders, and from the wonders which time has spared we may conjecture, though uncertainly, what it has destroyed.(*)**

It is all-too-evident that Johnson's knowledge of Egypt is a commonplace one even for the eighteenth-century readers, what he presents does not stem out of personal experience, it is common knowledge among the learned and could be easily found in various books of history of which Johnson could have read. (See Chapter two pp.23-29). Johnson, however, provides his readers with the spectacular aspects of the old Egyptian civilization. One such aspect is the pyramids. The figures of the pyramids are, of course, oriental monuments so popularized by people that they become an emblem of old Egyptian

greatness and grandeur of which Imlac, Johnson is spokesman, says:

> **'The most pompous monument of Egyptian greatness, and one of the most bulky works of manual industry', said Imlac, 'are the pyramids; fabricks raised before the time of history, and of which the earliest narratives afford us only uncertain traditions. Of these the greatest is still standing, very little injured by time'.**(٦)

At Johnson's time archaeologists and historians had just discovered the purpose of these giant Egyptian antiquities. Yet Johnson does not express it immediately. He speculates first about the purpose:

> **But for the pyramids no reason has ever been given adequate to the cost and labour of the work. The narrowness of the chambers proves that it could afford no retreat from enemies, and treasures might have been reposited at far less expence with equal security, it seems to have been erected only in compliance with that hunger of imagination which preys incessantly upon life, and must be always appeased by some employment ... He that has built for use, till use is supplied, must begin to build for vanity ... and tasteles(s)ness of pleasures, and to amuse the tediousness of declining life, by seeing thousands labouring without end, and one stone, for no purpose, laid upon another.**(٧)

Johnson here is expressing an inaccurate personal opinion according to which the pyramids obviously stand for enjoyment and they are the product of oriental imagination. But later he recasts his thoughts and emends his knowledge when he points out the real reasons for the erection of the pyramids:

> **'What reason', said the prince, 'can be given, why the Egyptians should thus expensively preserve those carcasses which some nations consume with fire, others lay to mingle with the earth, and all agree to remove from their sight, as soon as decent rites can be performed?'**
> **'The original of ancient customs', said Imlac, 'is commonly unknown ... But it is commonly supposed that the Egyptians believed the soul to live as long as the body continued undissolved, and therefore tried this method of eluding death.**(٨)

The available oriental books at Johnson's time and recent archaeological excavations, especially those about Egypt inform us about the genuine motives that prompted the ancient Egyptians to devote their energy and resources to the construction of these gigantic structures. It was the attainment of immortality. It was a belief which was derived from an ancient Egyptian superstition that "the attainment of the after-life – was dependent on two primary conditions: his body must be preserved from disturbance or destruction and the material needs for him and his Ka must be supplied".(٩) This motive remained

constant during many periods and still holds ground in modern times.

The most detailed manner in which Johnson deals with the Egyptian oriental setting is apparent through his depiction of Cairo. Johnson's remarks on Cairo are also based on contemporary knowledge and available books rather than direct personal observations. Recounting his experiences before retiring to the happy valley, Imlac, the mouthpiece of Johnson describes the city:

> **'I found in Cairo a mixture of all nations; some brought thither by the love of knowledge, some by the hope of gain, and many by the desire of living after their own manner without observation, and of lying hid in the obscurity of multitudes: for, in a city, populous as Cairo, it is possible to obtain at the same time the gratifications of society, and the secrecy of solitude'.**(١٠)

As the tale moves on, Johnson furnishes his readers with extra knowledge about Cairo:

> **As they approached the city, which filled the strangers with astonishment, 'This', said Imlac … 'is the place where travellers and merchants assemble from all the corners of the earth. You will here find men of every character, and every occupation, commerce is here honourable…**(١١)

It is palpable that Johnson does not go beyond the picture of Cairo as known in his time.

In Rasselas, Johnson is concerned with another aspect of Egyptian life, in Chapter XXIV, he throws light on the it political atmosphere dominant in Egypt while it was under the control of the Turks, of whom he holds the following opinion:

> **Next day the prince presented to the Bassa ... The Bassa threatened to punish the robbers, but did not attempt to catch them, nor, indeed, could any account or description be given by which he might direct the pursuit.**
> **It soon appeared that nothing would be done by authority. Governors, being accustomed to hear of more crimes than they can punish ... set themselves at ease by indiscriminate negligence…**(١٢)

Here Johnson is asserting the weakness of the Egyptian Bassa who was under the Turkish domination. Moreover, Johnson pictures the unstable nature of Ottoman politics, a situation swarming with plots, malice and bloody massacres:

> **At last the letters of revocation arrived, the Bassa was carried in chains to Constantinople, and his name was mentioned no more ...**
> **In a short time the second Bassa was deposed. The sultan, that had advanced him, was murdered by the Janisaries and his successor had other vieuls and different favourites.**(١٣)

In effect, what Johnson mentions of politics is by no means outlandish, but he reflects his abhorrence of the Turks which actually is a general eighteenth-century attitude.

Another aspect of Johnson's involvement in the Orient is the description of Arab life in the desert by which the European readers of the eighteenth-century were frequently shocked, titillated and amused. Johnson from the very outset, and through Pekuah's depiction of Arab life, devotes a paragraph to the nature of the Arabs and their weakness for wealth.

> **'Whoever, or whencesoever, you are', returned the Arab, 'your dress, and that of your servants, show your rank to be high, and your wealth to be great. Why should you, who can so easily procure your ransome, think yourselfe in danger of perpetual captivity? The purpose of my incursions is to increase [sic] my riches, or more properly to gather tribute'...**(١٤)

Later, this gloomy picture of the Arabs is changed, when Johnson recaptures his thoughts and corrects the above mentioned knowledge. The Arabs, according to Johnson, are struggling to liberate their own country from the Turkish tyranny:

> **'The sons of Ishmael are the natural and hereditary lords of this part of the continent, which is usurped by late invaders, and low-born tyrants, from**

whom we are compelled to take by the sword what is denied to justice…[١٥]

At the same time, it seems that Johnson was aware of the Arab ability to travel by stars or compass. A little earlier, he confirms what most European travellers refer to, that is the Arabs' skill to mount on horses and battle and retreat.

The Eastern tradition of keeping harem is also handled by Johnson. According to the Islamic tradition, harem is "a name applied to the part of the house in Muslem countries set apart for women".[١٦] The Harem system is a custom of the wealthy in Muslem history, and at the time of Harun Al-Rashid it is frequently mentioned in The Arabian Nights. This was common in Turkey and the empiric seraglio in Constantinople was almost an institution standing by itself.

The idea of harem, however, must have appealed to Johnson not only from a romantic point of view, but also from its social implications. When Johnson describes odalesques in the Arab harem he presents them as follows:

'The diversions of the women', answered Pekuah, 'were only childish play, by which the mind accustomed to stronger operations could not be kept busy ... They ran from room to room as a bird hops from wire to wire in his cage. They danced for the sake of motion, as lambs frisk in a meadow, one sometimes pretended to be hurt that the rest might be alarmed, or hid herself that another might seek her. Part of their time passed in watching the progress of light bodies that floated on the river, and part in

marking the various forms into which clouds broke in the sky … Their business was only needlework…[١٧]

Here, it is all-too-evident that Johnson's image of the Arab woman runs counter to what we are accustomed to hear about her merits in literature, arts and the sciences.

In addition to this distorted picture of the woman which he might have got from oriental history books or travellers' accounts of his time, Johnson also believes that the Arab woman is not beautiful, and always looks on her with inattentive superiority as a creature who has no choice to decide the destiny of her life. Since Johnson had no direct personal contacts with the Islamic world, his presentation in general is rather unreliable. Once again, Johnson's picture of the Arab woman stands in opposition to what many orientalists inform us. Byron who visited the East was strongly impressed by the Arab woman's beauty whom he describes as: "dark and tall with slender figure. Her eyes are black and large, they are full of brilliancy ... her face is like a full moon".[١٨]

Even the kind of Seraglio Johnson presents in the middle of the remote Egyptian desert as a place where the Bedouin chieftain lives resembles, more or less, the household of a rich Turk, namely the Ottoman Sultan.

Johnson's interest in the Arabs and Muslems is also expressed in his reference to Mecca. In effect, Johnson is aware of the Muslem's veneration to the holy city to which all the able Muslems must make their pilgrimage at least once in their life-time. Thus he refers to Mecca in two of his oriental works; Rasselas and Irene.

In Rasselas, we are told about the volumes which are suspended in the mosque of Mecca. Here I assume that Johnson had in mind the "Mua'llaqat". The Mua'llaqat, according to the Arab tradition are the best samples of pre-Islamic Arabic poetry hung upon the Ka'ba's wall and engraved in letters of gold. Johnson made only slight allusion to them and to the holy city as well. This insufficient knowledge of Mecca is mainly attributed to one specific reason "that the nonbelievers are forbidden to enter the holy city".(١٩)

In addition to these Arabic elements, Johnson once again formulates his own opinion about the Arabs whom he applauds:

> **I passed into Arabia, where I saw a nation at once pastoral and warlike; who live without any settled habitation; whose only wealth is their flocks and herds; and who have yet carried on, through all ages, an hereditary war with all mankind, though they neither covet nor envy their possessions.(٢٠)**

It seems that Johnson presents the common knowledge of his time about the Arabs.

In addition Johnson uses other oriental elements, but he refers to them casually such as the Nile, Syria, Agra, the capital of Indostan, Persia, Palestine and other places.

Oriental Settings in the Short Stories[٢١]

In his oriental stories published in The Rambler, and The Idler, Johnson invites his reactors to accompany him in his imaginative tour to some oriental countries. In each story, Johnson makes only vague allusion to the natural and social characteristics of these countries.

In "Ortogrual of Basra", the details of oriental colouring and background are slight. This story is particularly distinguished for its purely Baghdadian setting, at a time when the Arab civilization was at its zenith. Johnson's purpose of using the oriental colouring as one of his devices is to convey instruction under the guise of amusement. He does so, because he believes that the eighteenth-century readers are easily attracted by the magnificence of distant cities and their grandeur. The palaces of Baghdad and their household of harem and al-divan provided an exotic setting which allowed him to attract the attention of his readers to his moral lessons.

The scene of the tale as was said is laid in Baghdad. Johnson commences his narration with the description of the city streets about which he says:

> **As Ortogrul of Basra was one day wandering along the streets of Bagdat, musing on the varieties of merchandise which, the shops offered to his view, and observing the different occupations which busied the multitudes on every side...**[٢٢]

It is evident that Johnson is reflecting one of the characteristics of Baghdad as a city of trade and the place

where merchants assemble. As his narrative continues we are supplied with more details of Baghdad, mainly the luxurious life of the vizier in his palace which Johnson briefly describes:

> **... this palace is the place of happiness, where pleasure succeeds to pleasure, and discontent and sorrow can have no admission. Whatever Nature has provided for the delight of sense, is here spread forth to be enjoyed, what can mortals hope or imagine, which the master of this palace has not obtained? The dishes of luxury cover his table, the voice of Harmony lulls him in his bowers; he breathes the fragrance of the groves of Java, and sleeps upon the down of the cygnets.**(٢٣)

It is clear that such descriptions are to be found in The Arabian Nights, which Johnson presumably had read. (See Chapter three, pp.39-50). It seems, however, that Johnson's selection of the city of Baghdad is intended, for he chooses an oriental area which is regarded as a place where everlasting happiness is to be found, and a place where people enjoy prosperity and all sorts of pleasure.

In "Omar the Son of Hussan", Johnson once again handles Baghdad as a setting for his story. In comparing Johnson's remarks on Baghdad with those of "Ortogrul of Basra", where Johnson alludes to its people, streets and markets, Baghdad here is vaguely mentioned without any specific details.

Aside from the exoticism and remoteness of the names of the story, the oriental setting, and other oriental elements are rather of less significance particularly in this story. Actually, Johnson is following a method of choosing the setting of his oriental stories which resembles that adopted by the narrator of the translated Arabian Nights' tales, whose main concern is often centered neither on the place, nor on the time, but chiefly on the impact caused by his story on his readers, and the moral lessons one can get out of it.

Again, in "Nouradin the Merchant and his Son Almamoulin" Johnson sets the events of his story in an oriental country. As usual, Johnson indistinctively introduces the oriental setting of his story, for the moral purpose has priority over the setting. Johnson in this story mentions again one of the exotic and remote oriental places, 'Samarcand' and the 'Indian Ocean', which are often related to the world of magic, mystery, trade, and beauty which are sufficient reasons to stimulate the eighteenth-century readers' imagination and prepare them to accept with avidity the moral lessons which lurk behind the story.

> **In the reign of Jenghiz Can, conqueror of the east, in the city of Samarcand, lived Nouradin the Merchant, renowned throughout all the regions of India, for the extent of his commerce and the integrity of his dealings.(٢٤)**

These oriental places are firmly connected with the dominant theme and characters. India and Samarcand are well known for their commercial and spiritual positions.

Such names fit the movement of the characters whose main occupation is trade.

Similarly, the oriental elements for the setting of "Morad the Son of Hanuth" are slightly drawn, and apart from the proper names like Timur, Hanuth and Morad, Johnson's remarks are vague and scanty. This might be attributed to the reason that Johnson is writing a short story in which the main emphasis is centered on the moral lessons, plot and the theme. It is, therefore, taken for granted that the popularity of the story largely depends on the universality of its theme rather than on its setting.

Once more the sequence of events of the story are laid in India, and Johnson opens his narrative with vague allusions to it:

> **Among the emirs and visiers, the sons of valour and of wisdom, that stand at the corners of the Indian throne, to assist the counsellor conduct the wars of the posterity of Timur, the first place was long hold by Morad the son of Hanuth ... [and] the fame of his wisdom and moderation was wafted to the pinnacles of Agra.**(٢٥)

It is also manifest that Johnson is fairly impressed by special oriental names such as "emir" and "visier". "Emir" or "Amir" is "a title of honour borne by the descendants of Mohamad, given to an Arab prince or a military commander".(٢٦) Johnson exploits the names of "Emir" and "Visier" in his stories because such names seemingly suggest what the readers always look for, as they provide a sense of adventure and stimulate the imagination about

an emir's or a visier's palace, their riches and immersion into pleasure.

In "Seged, Lord of Ethiopia", Johnson employs an Ethiopian background in much the same way as in Rasselas.

The first Ethiopian setting is the palace of pleasure that is built for Seged's entertainment. What Johnson presents does not differ so much from what the travellers to Ethiopia had noted down in their travel books. (See Chapter three, pp. 20-24).

Apart from the palace of pleasure, Johnson vaguely alludes to the lake of Dambea and the Nile. In fact, the slight depiction of the Ethiopian setting is due mainly to the fact that Johnson's emphasis is almost always shifted to the moral lessons, plot and theme.

To sum up, in all his short stories, Johnson's presentation of oriental setting is rather obscure and slight, when compared with Rasselas or Irene. Despite the vagueness of the setting of these stories, they succeed in conveying a sense of the East in addition to Johnson's moral issues.

Oriental Setting in Irene[٢٧]

In Irene, Johnson uses Turkey as a setting for the action of his play. The setting is an eighteenth-century reflection and an extensive image of the city of Constantinople just before and during its conquest combined with the political life, manners and customs of the Turks. Moreover, the play presents the Christian Greeks who struggle to liberate themselves from the Turkish occupation,

To begin with, Johnson's prime concern with the setting is centered mainly on the city of Constantinople, a sacred Christian city besieged by the Turks for a long time till it was conquered by Mahomet's[٢٨] troops who committed massacres of a large number of defenceless innocent people. About the ruins of the city one of the characters tells us:

Demetrius.

-How chang'd alas! - Now ghastly Desolation
In triumph sits upon our shatter td spires,
Now superstition, Ignorance and Error,
Usurp our temples, and profane our altars.[٢٩]

As we read farther in the play, Johnson gives a specific example of temples looted by the Turks. He mentions the temple of St. Sophia which is regarded as a symbol for Christianity that had been sacrileged by the Turks. But in his presentation of this famous church, Johnson makes no indication neither to the magnificence of its architecture, nor to its important role in the religious life of the Eastern Christians, instead, Johnson states that

the misery of Christians in the city of Constantinople is attributed mainly to the Muslems of Turkey. Another character relates what he has seen and heard of the Christians' great and painful suffering.

> **From every palace burst a mingled clamour,**
> **The dreadful dissonance of barb'rous triumph,**
> **Shrieks of affright, and wailings of distress.**
> **Oft when the cries of violated beauty**
> **Arose to heav'n and pierc'd my bleeding breast,**
> **I felt thy pains, and trembled for Aspasia.**(٣٠)

Johnson's interest throughout the play is centered upon the Turks' human nature, customs and political life. This interest is vividly illustrated by introducing several living pictures of the ruthless and inhuman character of the Turkish nation and its army, as well as their insatiable thirst for power, wealth and blood.

The political life of Turkey is also handled by Johnson. According to Johnson's view, which is a reflection of the eighteenth-century understanding of Turkey, it is characterized by confusion, plots and intrigues.

Again as in Rasselas, Johnson refers to the Holy City of Mecca, a city which Muslems all over the world regard with veneration, to which they must go on pilgrimage and visit the tomb of their prophet Mohamed. As he does in Rasselas, Johnson once again slightly alludes to the honourable city without mentioning any

minute details for the reasons which had already been cited in Rasselas. (See Chapter four, p.63).

In addition to these oriental elements, Johnson describes the Muslems in general and the Arabs in particular and refers to their prophet Mohamed. Moreover, he introduces them as people whose religion encourages active faith and virtue as well as wars, not to dominate other nations but to enlighten their souls on virtues maxims.

Mahomet.
For those who could not please by nobler service.
Our warlike prophet loves an active faith,
The holy flame of enterprizing virtue,
Mocks the dull vows of solitude and penance,
And scorns the lazy hermit's cheap devotion;
Shine thou distinguish'd by superior merit,
With wonted zeal pursue the task of war,
Till every nation reverence the Koran,
And every suppliant lift his eyes to Mecca.(٣١)

It is also apparent that Johnson refers especially to the Koran, and generally to Islam as the eighteenth-century thought of them. In spite of the insufficiency of Johnson's knowledge of the Koran and the religion of Islam, the play suggests that he is aware of the Koran as a venerable manuscript of fusions and that Muslems are war wagers not only to defend themselves, but to spread among other nations their religion and principles of the Koran. This knowledge about Muslems and the Koran leads us to wonder whether he had read the Koran. I doubt that Johnson had read it, though it was translated first into Latin in 1143 by Robert as Retenensis, and the first

English, version, which is far from being a fair and faithful translation, was published in 1649 by Alexander Ross.[٣٢]

It seems, however, that what Johnson presents of Turkish elements reflects the major activities of the Turks during the second half of the fifteenth century. As we have already mentioned that the story of Irene was suggested chiefly by a story told by Knolles which falls between Irene's capture in 1453 and her death roughly in 1456 during the siege of Constantinople. Naturally, the events of Johnson's play, though he did not make any documentation of the above mentioned dates, indicate that he handled the same period of Turkish history.

Moral, Religious and Other Elements

Johnson's oriental works, Rasselas, Irene and the short stories are thronged with heterogeneous moral, religious and didactic elements. Some of them are partly oriental, but the majority are universal ideas often expressed in oriental dress, i.e. through oriental characters and setting. This method, as Haddawy asserts, was employed by the writers of the eighteenth century who tended to use universal dress for oriental colouring or oriental dress to express universal or classical ideas.(٣٣)

Rasselas

From the beginning, Rasselas was problematic, since critics disagreed on whether it was a moral tale or not, and to what degree it contains religious, didactic and other elements. Any attempt to settle this argument should take into consideration the fact that Johnson, in, whatever he wrote, was primarily a moralist, in a letter to Boswell, Sir David Dalrymple maintains "the author of the Dictionary [Johnson] is one of the best moral writers which England has produced."(٣٤) Similarly, Robert Voitle supports Dalrymple's claims by referring to Johnson as "a practical moralist ... [who] is always aware of the occasion, of his purposes, and of the nature of his audience".(٣٥) In addition to these, Johnson himself was aware of the moral aspect of fiction. In The Rambler No.4 (March 31, 1750), Johnson elaborates on the moral aspect of modern fiction. He asserts that the nearer fiction comes to life, the better it conveys its purposes of moral instruction. The novelists who neglect the moral purposes

will end up with meaningless harmful and dangerous novels.(٣٦)

As far as Rasselas is concerned, some critics such as Boswell and Alvin Whitley believe that the tale, like all eighteenth-century moral tales, contains moral ideas. Moreover, George Sherburn states that "the best piece of moral writing by Johnson is found in his History of Rasselas, Prince of Abyssinia."(٣٧)

Thus, Rasselas, like all of Johnson's short stories deals with several moral lessons. However, in order to convey his moral lessons to the eighteenth-century readers, Johnson utilizes the popularity of the idea that the oriental tales are concerned with edification and education.(٣٨)

In order that his moral views might be easily grasped, he follows several practical means. First, in order to attract the attention of his readers to his morals, he places his tale in an oriental setting of which we have already given some details, (see Chapter four, pp. 61-68). Secondly, he employs his characters, Rasselas, Imlac and their companion as incarnations of the false way of looking at life, both intellectually and morally. Thirdly, the most important means is that Johnson makes use of many cross-reference comparisons such as the story of Rasselas with those of Imlac, of the hermit and others. Collectively, these methods helped Johnson to present his moral views effectively.

As a moral tale, Rasselas is thronged with rather homogenous moral elements. The whole tale is seen as an enlarged expedition in every man's desire and soul to find happiness, a state which , according to Johnson is hardly

to be attained. He conveys his moral lessons to his readers directly. This idea is reflected at the beginning of the tale:

> **Ye who listen with credulity to the Whispers of fancy, and persue 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; attend to the history of Rasselas prince of Abissinia.**(٣٩)

In these few lines stated by Johnson, there is a serious warning given to his readers that neither the present nor the future will bring happiness. It is also a reflection of Johnson's melancholic mind which is always occupied with pessimistic attitude towards life. The quest of happiness troubled Johnson's mind ever since he was a child. When he was still young, he confessed of his parent's wrangling as he once noted that his "father and mother had not much happiness from each other".(٤٠) On another occasion Johnson, in a beautiful image, defines happiness like "the mirage in the desert, she tantalizes us with a delusion that distance and contiguity destroy".(٤١) Though the quest of happiness is a reflection of Johnson's troubled mind and one of his major themes in other works, it is rather possible to assume that it is of oriental origin and constitutes the major theme of some oriental tales. (See Chapter three, pp.26-29).

However, in order that Johnson might impress upon his readers the vanity of believing in permanent earthly happiness, he allows his oriental characters to

conduct comprehensive surveys of some oriental modes of life in both Abyssinia and Egypt. Thus Imlac, the prince's guide and tutor, conducts the prince and his companion to Egypt, an oriental country in which Rasselas, as Imlac asserts, will be able to examine different types of people.

After vain researches to find, happiness among the rural people, whose life is supposed to be happy, Johnson projects his characters into Cairo to survey some social aspects of Egyptian urban life. Thus, the prince and his sister divide the task between them, the princess enters the houses of ordinary people, and her brother confines himself to the courts of the great. Johnson's aim in exploring some Egyptian social classes is to teach his readers, in addition to the impossibility of attaining perfect happiness, what his protagonist learns that the favour of the great is uncertain. The depressing fact we have to learn is that hatred, envy and treachery surround people of high station which is an inevitable consequence of accumulation of wealth spent foolishly. This Johnsonian attitude is referred to not only in Rasselas, but it is alluded to on several occasions:

> **Riches are good because the spending of them benefits the economic structure and because, from a social point of view, they enable their possesser to relieve want and distress.(٤٢)**

Not only squander of wealth may be the source of unhappiness, but also the impossibility of bringing happiness to the poor, where poverty is the cause of evils, is another moral theme of Johnson.

> **"I did not seek ease among the poor, because I concluded that there it could not be found ... poverty has, in large cities, very different appearances; it is often concealed in splendour, and often in extravagance. It is the care of a very great part of mankind ... In families, where there is ... poverty, there is commonly discord ... parents and children seldom act in concert: and betray each other.(٤٣)**

Despite the universality of the theme, some stories of The Arabian Nights present rather similar comments. In "The Story of The Sleeper Awakened", the hero, Abou Hassan points out some disadvantages of poverty.

> **Ah, mother! I see at last, by sad experience, how insupportable poverty is ... it deprives us of joy, as much as the setting sun does of light. In poverty we endeavour to conceal our actions, and spend our nights in tears and sorrow.(٤٤)**

Johnson, who once bitterly suffered from poverty, was aware of its impact on people that he formulated a personal concept that is "poverty's chief evil is that it deprives its victims of the power of directly doing good".(٤٥)

In addition to the moral lessons, Rasselas contains a religious bent, but it does not have the intensity which some of his periodical essays or poems have, like "The Vanity of Human Wishes", or tales like "The Vision of

Theodore". Rasselas, however, refers to some religious subjects. One such religious subject which is discussed, by Johnson is that life is only temporal phase of an eternal process. This is evident in chapter XLVIII when Rasselas who visits the catacombs, a place where wise and powerful ancient Egyptians were buried, declares:

> **Those that lie here streched before us, the wise and the powerful of antient times, warn us to remember the shortness of our present state: they were, perhaps, snatched away while they were busy, like us, in the choice of life.**(٤٦)

It is apparent that the oriental setting is carefully chosen that it fits the subject he is discussing, i.e. the theme of man's mortality resembles similar themes handled by some oriental religious books such as the Koran and the Bible.

A hint on pilgrimage is another religious topic briefly discussed by Johnson. What he says represents his personal attitude, which is conveyed to his readers throughout the employment of oriental setting. Johnson first mentions Palestine, an oriental country to which Christians make their pilgrimage every year, then he sets his religious idea:

> **"Pilgrimage, said Imlac, like many other acts of piety, may be reasonable or superstitious, according to the principles upon which it is performed. Long journies in search of truth are not**

commanded. Truth, such as is necessary to the regulation of life, is always found where it is honestly sought..."[٤٧]

It is easy to trace a religious trend in such arguments, and it is possible to find such a tendency in the Bible, the Koran and other religious books.

However, pilgrimage, like any act of piety according to Johnson's maxims should be performed in regard to certain principles. Johnson who lived in the age of reason maintained that guidelines like "law, duty and principles",[٤٨] are forcibly necessary to human life. These universal elements, Johnson believes, are essentially related to God. In order to be faithful, man should obey God, should worship him sincerely, should show his gratitude, and should prove his love, otherwise, man will suffer.

In Rasselas, Johnson displays his theory of criticism of literature for didactic purposes. What he presents is by no means new, for this theory is not only to be found in Rasselas, but later in The Lives of the Poets (1779-81), "Preface to Shakespeare" (1765), and in many periodical essays written earlier in his literary career. In Rasselas there is Imlac's famous "dissertation upon poetry" to be found in the tenth chapter. A little earlier, in the third chapter, Johnson introduces Imlac reciting poems upon the various conditions of humanity, then in the tenth chapter, he expresses his theory of criticism. Despite its brevity, Imlac's remarks on poetry are comprehensive in scope.

Johnson's involvement with poetry is shown when Imlac expresses with irony his admiration of ancient poets, he says:

> **'Wherever I went, I found that Poetry was considered as the highest learning, and regarded with a veneration ... And it yet fills me with wonder, that, in almost all countries, the most ancient poets are considered the best ..."**[٤٩]

In order to stress this fact, Imlac, the mouthpiece of Johnson, is presented as having read ancient oriental poetry:

> **'I was desirous to add my name to this illustrious fraternity, I read all the poets of ... Arabia, and was able to repeat by memory the volumes that are suspended in the Mosque of Mecca...'**[٥٠]

But after some experience, Imlac discovers that no man is ever great by imitation of these respectable ancient poets, even of those great examples of oriental poetry. Hence Imlac resolves instead to practice a broader type of imitation which will transfer his attention to nature and life.

Johnson concludes his discussion of nature with the special use which the poets must make of it:

> **To a poet nothing can be useless., Whatever is beautiful, and whatever is dreadful, must be familiar to his imagination: he must be conversant with all that is awfully vast or elegantly little.**

> **The plants of the garden, the animals of the wood, the minerals of the earth, and meteors of the sky, must all concur to store his mind with inexhaustible variety; for every idea is useful for the inforcement or decoration of moral or religious truth ...'**[٥١]

But Johnson does not limit his definition of nature with which a poet should be acquainted, but he has a broader definition that includes not only natural things, but men and their manner, i.e. society:

> **''The business of a poet', said Imlac, 'is to examine, not the individual, but the species ... But the knowledge of nature is only half the task of a poet; he must be acquainted likewise with all the modes of life'.'**[٥٢]

However, Johnson concludes that with the possession of all these qualities, the poet must consider himself a being superior to those who do not have such qualities. What is oriental about Johnson's view on poetry is that it is expressed through an oriental character only, in addition, to the allusion to the "Mua'llaqat".

The Short Stories:

As in Rasselas, Johnson in his short stories attempts to provide his readers with several moral lessons concerning human life. In "Seged, Lord of Ethiopia", for instance, Johnson concentrates on an important lesson, the futility of man's decision to be happy. This actually is stated at the end of the story when Seged announces that "no man hereafter may presume to say, 'This day shall be a day of happiness'."(٥٣) Man's failure to obtain a happy day, as Johnson maintains, is due not only to the reason that happiness is too much overshadowed by miseries and accidental events, but the small amount of happiness he actually obtains is the result of these circumstances over which he has practically no control. Hence, Johnson believes that the human mind is by no means pure from present or past accidents and the purity of mind is necessary to live a calm life.

Though the idea of happiness is a universal theme, and may reflect Johnson's mind as an individual, it is possible to assume that it is of oriental origin. In some oriental tales such as The Arabian Nights and the Persian Tales, it is easy to trace similar topics which constitute the major themes of some of their tales. In The Arabian Nights, we might cite the story of "'Schahzenan and his brother Schahriar" as a typical example. While in the Persian Tales, the similarity is very striking, especially in the story of "The History of Bedreddin Lolo". (See Chapter three, pp. 20-29).

Johnson's method of presenting his moral is achieved through employment of oriental setting, characters and plot.

In the story “Omar the Son of Hussan”, the moral tendency is obvious from the beginning:

> **Terrestrial happiness is of short continuance. The brightness of the flame is wasting its fuel; the fragrant flower is passing away in its own odours.(٥٤)**

The moral lesson, which is often the case with the other short stories, is related to youth, a time during which man is enjoying health, strength and beauty. But as soon as man advances in age, he becomes a flower without fragrance.

In addition, Johnson asserts another moral lesson which is the vanity to plan life according to man’s desire. Johnson’s proposal, instead, is that man should live according to nature, i.e. to live in the present and accept it as it is, and not to try to achieve fanciful ideas. Once again, Johnson uses oriental setting, plot and characters to introduce a universal moral lesson. Johnson’s moral is universal because its significance is not limited to particular individuals, but to all human beings at all times.

“Morad the Son of Hanuth”, obviously, expresses Johnson’s personal belief that man’s greatness is transitory, and what is established on fragile sources soon proves to be false and immediately collapses the moment the sources of its living die out. This moral lesson, though it has universality, could be found in some oriental tales. (See Chapter three, pp.39-50), Johnson’s method of presenting his moral is done by an accurate selection of

oriental characters such as Morad who lived in great prosperity, happiness and levity and established fame and popularity. But he was neglected and miserably forgotten by his friends and visitors as soon as he was deprived of his power and riches. Moreover, Johnson teaches his readers what he believes in, that happiness could be attained by means of mutual relationship, benevolence, love, fraternity, helping needy people who deserve to be the helped and behaving conscientiously. Here one can feel the implicit religious flavour which is only to be felt in some oriental tales and religious books.

In the "Ortogrul of Basra", Johnson aims at discussing the theme of having an object in life as a way of escape from wretchedness of mere empty leisure that made man weary of himself. Two modes of oriental life are introduced by Johnson: the life of a rich vizier whose "dishes of luxury cover his table, the voice of Harmony lulls him in his bowers ..."(°°) This mode of life is compared with that of Ortogrul who is doomed to perpetual torments of unfulfilled desire because of poverty.

It is however, Johnson's method of speculation which is always centered upon the vital interests of humankind, and hence the deepest sense of his moral thinking. Accordingly, Johnson speculates upon Ortogrul's dream and conveys to the eighteenth-century readers the importance of slow and constant industry. The moral is reflected in the speech of Ortogrul's father;

> **Tell me now ... dost thou wish for sudden affluence that may pour upon thee like the mountain torrent, or for a**

slow and gradual increase, resembling the rill gliding from the well?[٥٦]

At the same time there is still another important moral lesson which implies a serious warning against a certain human condition. Johnson who tlived in the age of reason, strongly stressed the importance of using one's mind, which was the way of determining a better condition for him. Though Ortogrul successfully chooses the safest means of gathering riches, his life becomes tasteless and meaningless, neither accumulation of wealth, nor the immersion in pleasure are able to bring happiness to Ortogrul. In other words, the moral could be interpreted as the following: Money is not the only means of happiness and welfare, but it could be a destructive power which directs man to perfect misery, if it is not properly used. Yet, elsewhere, the idea of the advantages of money is reinforced when Johnson says:

Perhaps he who has a large fortune may not be so happy as he who has a small one ... he who is rich in a civilized society, must be happier than he who is poor; as riches, if properly used, (and it is a man's fault if they are not) must be productive of the highest advantages.[٥٧]

Actually, this is the personal dilemma of Ortogrul who accumulated riches, but he squandered them over personal pleasure rather than on the advantages of society.

Although, Johnson is presenting a universal theme, yet it is rather possible to trace it in some oriental tales of The Arabian Nights (See Chapter three, pp.39-50). He

also orientalizes his moral as he uses oriental dress such as setting and characters for this aim.

"Nouradin the Merchant and his Son Almamoulin." is prefaced by quotation on virtue;

> **True virtue can the crowd unteach**
> **Their false mistaken, forms of speech;**
> **Virtue, to crowds a foe profest,**
> **Disdains to number with the blest**
> **Phraatos, by his slaves ador'd,**
> **And to the Parthian crown restor'd."**[٥٨]

Johnson is stressing a universal theme, that what happens to Nouradin may be an inevitable fate of every man even Johnson himself.

Through two oriental characters, Nouradin and his son Almamoulin, Johnson who sordidly experienced life, stressed an essential moral lesson, that is, riches may bring happiness and power. But the philosopher, the mouthpiece of Johnson, points out the maxims which bring happiness close to man:

> **There are purposes to which a wise man may be delighted to apply them; they [i.e. riches] may, by a rational distribution to those who want them, ease the pains of helpless disease, still the throbs of restless anxiety, relieve innocence from oppression, and raise imbecility to cheerfulness and vigour.**[٥٩]

These maxims enable rich people to conduct a happy life. Otherwise, if riches are wasted on sensual pleasure, they will be unavoidable sources of human misery. Such moral

lessons are recurrent in the stories of The Arabian Nights and the Persian Tales, (See Chapter three, pp.39-50).

To conclude, in each eastern story written by Johnson and published in The Rambler or The Idler, there is a man with power in his hand and wealth in his command who learns by personal experience how happiness cannot be easily procured. In each story Johnson carries his readers to the remote East and draws an example to show that there is a vanity in each of us which should be learned not only by the English people of the eighteenth century, but by every man who can understand its drift.

Irene

Johnson's Irene is regarded as an important event in his literary career for two reasons: first it was the only stage play he wrote; secondly, it is through the story of Irene that he presents some serious, moral and religious lessons. But it is difficult to assign any oriental values since what he presents is universal and could happen anywhere whether in the Occident or in the Orient. One such moral issue is apostasy, a universal theme which Johnson orientalizes through setting and characters. This is apparent when Johnson presents and condemns Irene, a Christian character who embraces Islam for personal lustful benefits and to gratify her desire for fame and power.

This idea is clearly seen in the speech of Irene's friend, the virtuous Aspasia who always comments on Irene's apostasy:

> **The soul once tainted with so foul a crime,**
> **No more shall glow with friendship's hallow'd ardour:**
> **Those holy Beings, whose superiour care**
> **Guides erring mortals to the paths of virtue,**
> **Affrighted at impiety like thine,**
> **Resign their charge to baseness and to ruin.**(٦٠)

Later Johnson makes even Mahomet II condemn Irene's apostasy:

> **Ambition only gave her to my arms,**
> **By reason not convinc'd, nor won by love.**
> **Ambition was her crime, but meaner folly**
> **Dooms me to loath at once, and doat on falshood,**

And idolize th' apostate I contemn.(٦١)

Johnson seems to despise those who change their religion in return for certain benefits or for fear, and respects those who attach to their religion. Thus Irene is punished for her apostasy, while Aspasia is satisfactorily rewarded for her fidelity and fortitude.

In addition, Irene as David Nichol Smith and Edward L. McAdam maintain, contains a few political truths.(٦٢) This tendency is most apparent in the earlier scenes of the play, when Johnson expresses some political truth concerning the downfall of nations. Johnson believes that the downfall of nations is attributed not so much to the miseries or the strength of the conqueror as to the weakness and corruption of the conquered. This actually is a universal truth which could happen anywhere and at any time.

In relation to this, Johnson hints at the major causes of empires' and nations' flaw:

> **Demetrius,**
> **'Twas vice that shook our nerves, it was vice, Leontius,**
> **That froze our veins, and wither'd all our powers.**(٦٣)

For the conditions of liberating a country, Johnson believes not in miracles or other abstract aims, but he assumes that all efforts and compassions are required for the benefits of the whole.

Oriental Touches in Johnson's Style as Appear in Rasselas, Irene and The Short Stories

Oriental Touches in the Style of Rasselas

Since most criticism of Rasselas is concerned with the sources, moral values and themes and only some of it pays attention to style, the aim of this section is to throw light on Johnson's style as it appears in the tales. It is agreed that the style of Rasselas is typically Johnsonian which deviates from the common style of the eighteenth century, a style characterized by obscurity of diction, artificial literary devices and colloquial norms. That the style of Rasselas' Johnsonian is confirmed by many critics. William Kenney, who examined an article on the style of Rasselas written by the reviewer of The Monthly Review (XX, 248), states that the reviewer finds out that there is "disparity between the romantic subject matter and Johnson's 'tumid and pompus' style".(٦٤) On the same subject Walter Scott maintains that the style of Rasselas is an example of "Johnson's best manner; enriched and rendered sonorous by the traids and quaternions which he has so much loved, and balanced with an art which perhaps he derived from the learned Sir Thomas Browne."(٦٥)

As far as Johnson's style is concerned, there is a general agreement among critics concerning the characteristics of his style of Rasselas that differentiate it from other writers of the eighteenth century. These critics say that:

> **Johnson uses many polysyllables that are Latin in origin. His diction is abstract, but he is very careful in his**

> **choice of words, many of which have a scientific flavor. His sentences are complex; he piles clauses upon clauses but does not sacrifice clarity. He likes parallelism and antithesis, and the triplet is one of his favorite devices. There is homely quality about some of his idioms. Above all, his style is correct dramatically and rhetorically.**(٦٦)

Beyond these stylistic characteristics critics do not go. But Johnson, as other orientalists did, tinged his style with some stylistic touches which may be attributed to oriental sources. It is, however, natural that the popularity of the oriental tale in England during the eighteenth century stimulated many writers to include oriental elements in their literary works such as setting, manner, customs and various details. (See Chapter four, pp.61-73). It is also natural, as Husain Haddawy maintains that "these imitators tended to tinge with oriental touches any style they adopted".(٦٧) Of these oriental touches Haddawy says:

> **Those oriental stylistic touches consisted mainly of exotic, bold or far-fetched comparisons, metaphors and personifications, drawn both from the primitive and the luxurious aspects of oriental life.**(٦٨)

It is worth mentioning that even the classical style of the eighteenth-century writers, especially Johnson's, contains figurative language, which is common to the western mind, because it is drawn from the western medium. Hence, one distinction between the two styles is that the

oriental figurative language is mainly drawn from the exotic, primitive and luxurious life of the orient which appears more bold or farfetched to the western imagination. All these elements appear in the elevated and mannered style of Johnson's Rasselas, a style appropriate to the solemn moral purposes of the tale.

As his contemporaries did, Johnson used his own elevated and mannered style which is tinged with oriental colour, one among many oriental elements is diction. Despite the majority of classical words, Johnson's diction contains a limited number of oriental words most of which are Arabic in their origin. Names like Imlac, Rasselas, are personal names, whereas names like the pyramids, Cairo, Mecca and Suez are actual Arabic names of popular oriental places. Such names are recurrent not only in the oriental stories of The Arabian Nights, or the Persian Tales, but also in the travellers' accounts and books of history. One should recall that Johnson was very precise and accurate in his choice of those oriental words, for as Krutch Jr. Wimsatt maintains, Johnson "seldom … uttered a word to which his intellect had not assigned a purpose."(٦٩) Therefore, the purposes of using these words are: first to give an oriental colour to his tales and secondly, most of these words are related to the plot. In a limited way these words are also related to themes like the pyramid and catacombs, for instance, which are firmly used in connection with the theme of man's mortality.

In addition, his diction is abstract, F. R. Leavis maintains that the abstract diction is typically Johnsonian,(٧٠) and likewise it is possible to find a large

number of abstract words in The Arabian Nights or the Persian Tales and in the
Bible. The Bible whose language is partly oriental has an authoritative influence on Johnson's style, contains a "few abstract words".(٧١) In the following lines the abstract diction is obvious in the Bible, Psalm 107.

> **They mount up to the heaven, they go down again to the depths; their soul is melted because of trouble.**
> **They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wits' end.(٧٢)**

In the following passage, Johnson demonstrates his ability of using a similar abstract diction:

> **Ye who listen with credulity to the whispers of fancy, and persue 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; attend to the history of Rasselas, Prince of Abyssinia.(٧٣)**

It is apparent that words like "fancy", "hope", "youth" and "age" are abstract. Elsewhere, there are so many abstract words such as "life", "eternity", "soul" and others. A similar type of abstract diction may be found in the moral and religious or wisdom tales and anecdotes of generosity of The Arabian Nights. As a specimen we might cite an example from "The Story of Cogia Hassan Al-Habbal";

> **Saad was of another opinion; he agreed that riches were necessary in life, but ... happiness of a man life consisted in virtue ... [while] Saadi affirmed that poverty proceeded from men's being born poor, or their spending their fortunes in luxury and debaucheries.**(٧٤)

Beside these oriental touches, it is easy to feel, as Haddawy believes, a biblical cadence in Johnson's style,(٧٥) not only in Rasselas, but in the short stories. The biblical cadence is originally passed on a pattern of rhythm employed in Hebrew poetry called parallelism.(٧٦) And since the Authorized Version of the Bible (1611) is partly oriental, it is possible to say that this biblical element in Johnson's style is oriental. In the following passage Johnson comes near the elevation of the Bible:

> **'What', said he, 'makes the difference between man and all the rest of the animal creation? Every beast that strays beside me has the same corporal necessities with myself; he is hungry and crops the grass, he is thirsty and drinks the stream, his thirst and hunger are appeased, he is satisfied and sleeps; he rises again and is hungry, he is again fed and is at rest. I am hungry and thirsty like him, but when thirst and hunger cease I am not at rest; I am, like him, pained with want, but am not, like him, satisfied with fullness. The intermediate hours are tedious and gloomy; I long again to be hungry that I may again quicken my attention. The birds peck**

the berries or the corn, and fly away to the groves where they sit in seeming happiness on the branches, and waste their lives in tuning one unvaried series of sounds. I likewise can call the lutanist and the singer, but the sounds that pleased me yesterday weary me today, and will grow yet more wearisome tomorrow. I can discover with me no power of perception which is not glutted with its proper pleasure, yet I do not feel myself delighted. Man has surely some latent sense for which this place affords no gratification, or some desires distinct from sense which must be satisfied before he can be happy.(٧٧)

Other oriental touches of Johnson's style are that it contains metaphors, similes and personifications mainly drawn from oriental customs, setting and nature. In the following lines, Johnson tends to adorn his style with oriental similes when he describes Arab women:

'The diversions of the women, answered Pekuah, were only childish play ... They ran from room to room as a bird hops from wire to wire in his cage. They danced for the sake of action, as lambs frisk in a meadow.(٧٨)

In other places, Johnson employs some personifications which are drawn from oriental nature, in the following quotation, Johnson personifies the Nile when he attributes human quality to one of the longest oriental rivers:

As they were sitting together, the princess cast her eyes upon the river

that flowed before her. 'Answer, said she great father of waters, thou that rollest thy floods through eighty nations, to the invocations of the daughter of thy native king. Tell me if thou waterest, through all thy course, a single habitation from which thou dost not hear the murmurs of complaints.(٧٩)

On the whole, it is possible to say that Johnson's style of Rasselas is classical tinged with some oriental touches such as oriental words and biblical manner and cadence. The figurative language used is sometimes drawn from the primitive, exotic and remote orient.

Oriental Touches in the Style of the Short Stories

We have mentioned in 4.3.1 that Johnson uses his own style coloured with some oriental touches. This inclination also appears in almost all his short stories published in The Rambler and The Idler. Johnson writes in a highly elevated style which contains, as Haddawy says "an inordinate number of farfetched metaphors and personifications".(٨٠) In the following statement Johnson demonstrates his ability of presenting some bold personifications to describe Morad's situation and tinge it with a simile drawn from oriental nature:

> **Morad lived many years in prosperity; every day increased his wealth, and extended his influence. The sages repeated his maxims, the captains of thousands waited his command. Competition withdrew into the cavern of envy, and discontent trembled at his own murmurs … But human greatness is short and transitory, as the odour of incense in the fire. The sun grew weary of gilding the palaces of Morad ... and the tempest of hatred roared about his dwelling.(٨١)**

In other places he colours his style with similes and images which are drawn from oriental nature. Terms like 'fresh as the vernal rose" and "strong as the cedar of the mountains"(٨٢) are similes related to youth and power. Such figures of speech are also to be found in the tales of The Arabian Nights like "The Caliph, then deguised like a citizen",(٨٣) or in the Persian Tales:

> **We entered the Gulph of Bengal … we espied a man quite naked ... He ... was of a monstrous shape ... His eyes ... were like those of a tyger ... he stood as immoveable as a rock in the middle of the waves.**(٨٤)

or in the Bible. The following statement quoted from the Bible, Psalm 22 indicates that its language is figurative:

> **I am poured out like water, and all may bones are out of joint, my heart is like wax; it is molted in the raids t of my bowels.**(٨٥)

It is apparent that both Johnson and the Bible use imagery from earth or trees. This method originally is employed in the Bible so that its ideas and instructions might be easily grasped.(٨٦)

The oriental touches in Johnson's style are most apparent in his deliberate choice of oriental diction which is similar to that recurrent in the oriental tales of The Arabian Nights or the Persian Tales. In each story, Johnson makes frequent use of oriental words, especially the names of characters and places. For instance, Morad, Nouradin, Omar, Baghdad, Basra, India and other names are oriental. In his short stories more than in any other writings, one feels that his diction consists mainly of abstract and religious words which have biblical flavour and tone, and which indicate the influence of the Bible. In the following passage Johnson approximates the elevation of the Bible.

‘My son’, says he ‘behold hero the weakness and fragility of man; look backward a few days, thy father was great and happy, fresh as the vernal rose, and strong as the cedar of the mountain ... now, Almamoulin, look upon me withering and prostrate; look upon me, and attend. I have trafficked, I have prospered, I have rioted in gain; my house is splendid, my servants are numerous; yet I displayed only a small part of my riches ... now the hand of death is upon me ... I am now leaving the produce of my toil, which it must be thy business to enjoy with wisdom.[٨٧]

Oriental Touches in the Style of Irene:

The style of Johnson in Irene is rather a mixture of both classical and oriental. Being a composition in poetic form, namely in rhymeless verse, it should be assigned to classical rules. But in order to give the impression that he is writing an oriental play, Johnson adds oriental touches to his style in a similar manner to what he does in both Rasselas and the short stories. This tendency is most apparent in the employment of the decorative language which often consists of farfetched figures of speech.

> **Wilt thou descend, fair daughter of perfection,**
> **To hear my vows, and give mankind a queen?**
> **Ah! cease, Irene, cease those flowing sorrows,**
> **That melt a heart, impregnable till now,**
> **And turn thy thoughts henceforth to love and empire.**
> **How will the matchless beauties of Irene,**
> **Thus bright in tears, thus amible in ruin,**
> **With all the graceful pride of greatness heighten'd,**
> **Amidst the blaze of jewels and of gold.**
> **Adorn at throne, and dignify dominion.**(^^)

It is apparent that the words are simple on the surface, but in Johnson's hand, who skillfully arranges them become more expressive.

In addition, Johnson adds to this metaphorical language oriental diction which mainly consists of personal and place names to preserve the oriental character. He does not use them just for the sake of local colour, but he deliberately uses them in order that he might create an oriental atmosphere similar to that of other real oriental stories, an exotic world characterized

by luxury and splendour which makes the sense attractive.

The Structure of Rasselas, Irene and the Short Stories

The Structure of Rasselas

The structure of Rasselas is still a moot-point among critics. Some of them acknowledge the existence of a theme only and pass over its structure. Boswell and Nichol Smith, for instance, do not only fail to give much attention to Rasselas' structure, but they believe that the tale has no structure if one looks for it. Thus Rasselas in Boswell's opinion is just a philosophical discourse in prose on the same subject as "The Vanity of Human Wishes".(٨٩) Other critics pay full attention to the structure. Gwin J. Kolb, for example, thinks that the tale "consists in part, of so called stories within a story".(٩٠) Yet there is another group of critics who "links Rasselas with certain periodical essays in The Rambler, in style, length and method of presentation as well as substance and ignores structure".(٩١) A clear example is that Johnson in Rasselas discusses the subject of happiness which is briefly handled in The Rambler. No. 6 and "Seged, Lord of Ethiopia". But we should bear in mind that it is unrewarding to think Rasselas as a number of periodical essays stitched together and given fictional envelope. It is more than this, it has a uniform structure, its parts are merged together to form a larger and more interesting tale than the parts themselves.

If we examine the plot of Rasselas, we can easily feel that it possesses rather a uniform structure similar to that of some oriental tales of The Arabian Nights and the Persian Tales. Perhaps the most striking likeness appears

between the structure of Rasselas and "The History of King Bedreddin Lolo" which occupies a long section of the Persian Tales. One principal similarity between them is that both tales fall into two main parts: the first part of Rasselas sets the scene in the happy valley, and the second in the world beyond the valley. Likewise the first part of "The History of King Bedreddin Lolo" takes place inside Bedreddin's kingdom, whereas the second one occurs outside Bedreddin's dominions.

In comparing the two parts of Rasselas with those of "The History of King Beddredin Lolo", we will come to the conclusion that there is much in common. To begin with, the first part of Rasselas, as we have already mentioned sets the scene in an oriental country, Abyssinia in which prince Rasselas is born and reared and later is caged up in a compulsory imprisonment in the happy valley. In this part Johnson designs the tale's frame which contains the main theme: Rasselas' desire to make the choice of life. The first part is devoted to reveal Rasselas' illusioned outlook on life, and his attempts to escape his imprisonment in the happy valley. It begins with

> **"Ye who listen with credulity to the whispers of fancy and persue with eagerness to the phantoms of hope; who expect that age will perform the promises of youth…"(٩٧)**

And concludes with the sixteenth chapter when the travelling group arrives at Cairo, and with Rasselas' declaration:

> **"I have here the World before me; I will review it at leisure; surely happiness is somewhere to be found".(٩٣)**

Similarly, the first part of "The History of King Bedreddin Lolo" takes place inside Bedreddin's kingdom. It opens with

> **"Bedreddin, King of Damascus ... had a vizier, an honest man, as the history of his time tells us".(٩٤)**

In this part the narrator states the tale's frame which is Bedreddin's inquiries to look for a happy man. This part is devoted to some explorations made by Bedreddin and his vizier among his native people. It concludes;

> **"He took the road to Bagdad; where, being safely arrived, they took their lodging in a caravanserail…"(٩٥).**

Furthermore, in Rasselas, Johnson, makes some linked digressions in the main structure of the tale by inserting some stories or episodes within the tale frame. Insertion of stories within the tale's frame is originally an oriental literary technique and appears in the stories of The Arabian Nights and the Persian Tales which "brings about a sudden shifting of the interest that is refreshing, and it may achieve all sorts of pleasant effects, by providing a foil to the main story, a surprise, a transition, or just an ornament."(٩٦) However, in the eighth chapter we are given the impression that Johnson shifts from the main frame temporarily when he inserts the episode of the

artist. This episode is linked with the main subject as it shows us that unhappiness is a dominant feature not only in Rasselas' life, but even in the life of those whose main occupation is only to provide all sorts of pleasure and enjoyment. Also it helps to change the gloomy atmosphere by creating a comic scene at the end of the episode. Later another digression occurs when Johnson deliberately inserts the story of Imlac. It is also connected with the main subject since it is presented in a way that parallels the past and present of Rasselas' story. Both Rasselas and Imlac have the same illusion, curiosity, and concern for happiness. Even Imlac's "Dissertation upon Poetry" which seems to be isolated from the main topic, yet it is related to the main part since it provides another means to attain happiness by becoming a poet. Johnson's insertion is done on purpose, Imlac's narrative of his adventures, for example, is meant, in addition to its moral purpose, to entertain since it furnishes the readers with a sense of strange adventures, whereas Imlac's "Dissertation upon Poetry" is inserted for didactic purpose as well as for the reinforcement of the main theme. Such insertion is a popular literary device in The Arabian Nights and the Persian Tales, which is called, as Mia I. Gerhardt maintains, "instructive insertion, [which] consists in making one of the characters in the main story tell a tale or a little story to convey a moral lesson".(٩٧)

In the first part of "The History of King Bedreddin Lolo", one can feel that there is a similar insertion within the tale's frame. The first insertion is announced by the title "The History of Atalaulck, Surnamed the sorrowful vizier, And of the princess Zelica Beyume".(٩٨) The other

inserted story is that of "The History of Prince Sayfel Mulouk",[٩٩] and finally "The History of Malek and the Princess Shirin".[١٠٠] All these inserted stories help the reinforcement of the main theme and provide pleasure. Together, the combination of all these tales constitutes the first part of the tale.

The second part of Rasselas opens when

> **"Rasselas rose next day, and resolved to begin his experiments upon life".**[١٠١]

Here Johnson gives us the sensation that something new will happen and the story enters a new phase, for what Rasselas does in Egypt points to this. Like the first part, the second, part contains several subordinate stories, such as the story of a "Wise and a Happy Man", the story of "The Hermit and the Adventure of Pekuah in the Arab Household", and finally "The story of the Mad Astronomer". Each of these inserted stories is linked to the main frame. The hermit's story is just an image of Rasselas' and Imlac's stories. His story provides us with an extra example of human unhappiness and discontent. Similarly, Pekuah's narrative is also related to the main frame and the other stories since it offers another example of human unhappiness in an unexplored area in the Egyptian desert. It is also meant to create a sense of adventure to avoid the dull movement of the tale by enlivening it with action through series of pursuits.

Likewise, the second part of "The History of King Bedreddin Lolos" contains several inserted stories as the story of "Calender", the story of "King Hormoz", the story of "The Fair Arovya" and the story of

"Aboulfaouris". All these stories are linked together to constitute the second part which is firmly connected to the first part.

If Rasselas is looked upon as possessing such arrangement, it will be seen that it is too far from formless. On the contrary, it can be said that it has a regular and significant design. Here a question may be asked: how did Johnson attain a structural unity? In effect, Johnson achieves such logical and physical structure in several ways: first of all the tale is regarded, as Alvin Whitely maintains, as "a voyage of deliberate exploration in which all conditions of life are to be sought, thus no adventure of investigation can be alien or unnatural, but each state of life is firmly connected with another".[١٠٢] Secondly each story relates to the central theme in teaching the readers some examples of the illusion of happiness. Furthermore, there are many "deliberate cross-references and comparisons".[١٠٣] Such as the contrasts of Rasselas, Imlac, and the hermit, and the contrast of such opposing views of Hedonists and the stoic which makes it difficult to regard any part in isolation. By means of anticipatory cross-references, too, the groundwork is carefully laid in advance for every major subject. The discussion of madness, for instance, has been foreshadowed several times before a full discussion of it. When Johnson, for instance, provides the dissertation on flying and poetry, and the narrative of Pekuah they naturally fall into place since the ultimate aim of each is to sustain the central theme.

The Structure of Irene

In Irene, it is rather impossible to trace any oriental element in its structure. But instead, as the structure of the play indicates, Johnson follows the classical and Elizabethan traditions. Perhaps he models his play's structure after these plays or after the less known plays written about the same subject and story by less famous dramatists.

This tradition is attributed to one of the most famous ancient Roman tragedians, namely Seneca, whose plays usually consists of five acts; and each act has a certain number of scenes. Later, during the Elizabethan period, Shakespeare was the first among those who adopted this form in his major trageddies. It seems, however, that Johnson is also interested in the classical tradition that he modelled the structure of Irene after it. Thus if we read Irene, we undoubtedly feel the impact of both Elizabethan and classical traditions on its structure. Accordingly, Irene's structure is composed of five act construction. Each acts consists of unequal number of scenes. Therefore, the structure of Irene, since there were no oriental drama known at Johnson's time, is typically occidental.

The Short Stories

As for the structures of the short stories, an attentive reading of them may lead us to the conclusion that Johnson is using a simplified oriental structure of the oriental tales. Almost in all his short stories, Johnson models their structure on a narrative episodic nature which is that of oriental origin. Except the story of "Seged, Lord of Ethiopia" where there are many episodes, the structure of Johnson's short stories consists of two episodes: One is that of a father and the second is of a son. They are framed as to complete each other. Hence the combination of the two episodes constitutes the plot of the short story.

The story of ''Nouradin the Merchant and his Son Almamoulin", for instance, falls into two linked episodes: The first episode is shorter than the second which is devoted to the introduction of the theme of the story, the vanity of gathering riches. It begins with "In the reign of Jenghis Can, conqueror of the east, in the city of Samarcand, lived Nouradin…"(١٠٤) and concludes when Johnson says: "The thought of leaving his wealth filled Nouradin with such grief, that he fell into convulsions, became delirious and expired."(١٠٥) The theme is implied here since it reflects the destiny of those who spend their lives gathering riches. The second episode, which is longer than the first functions as a subordinate episode as it completes the narrative and theme of the first episode. This episode opens with "Almamoulin, who loved his father, was touched a while with honest sorrow",(١٠٦) and concludes when Almamoulin with the help of a philosopher discovers a moral lesson. These two episodes

are linked together; since the type of continuation of the first episode into the second is that the second is a result of the first. Hence Johnson attains structural unity.

This simple structure, as Mia I. Gerhardt confirms, is often used in some oriental tales scattered all through The Arabian Nights, especially those devoted to the Caliph Harun Al-Rashid in addition to the moral and wisdom tales. "The History of Codadad, and his Brothers" consists of two episodes. The first episode, is that of a father, is shorter than the second, and begins with: "Those who have written the History of the Kingdom of Diarbakir…",[١٠٧] and concludes with "In this equipage, which added much to his good mien, he arrived at the city of Harran".[١٠٨] The second episode is longer and devoted to Codadads' adventures, it opens with: "... soon [he] found means to offer his service to the king; who, being charmed with his beauty..."[١٠٩] and concludes with: "After thanks returned for their fresh protestations of readiness to serve her, she could not refuse satisfying their curiosity, and began the recital of her adventures in the following manner."[١١٠] One difference between the structure of this tale and that of Johnson is that the second episode is interrupted by an anecdot cited almost at its beginning and is told by a young lady.

"Seged, Lord of Ethiopia" has a structure similar to that of Rasselas, but rather simplified. If we examine the tale we will see that it falls into two parts: the first part takes place in Seged's old palace which is similar to the happy valley. In this part Johnson states the main theme which is Seged's attempts to obtain a happy day which could be regarded as a tale frame which is employed as a

device to tell a series of episodes. This part opens with "Seged, Lord of Ethiopia, to the inhabitants of the world: To the sons of presumption, humility and fear; and to the daughters of sorrow, content and acquiescence". And concludes with: "Their passage was cheered with musick, and their hearts dilated with expectation".[١١١] The second part which consists of many linked episodes opens with "Seged, landing here with his band of pleasure…"[١١٢]. The first episode begins with: "He immediately entered his chamber, to consider where he should begin his circle of happiness".[١١٣] And concludes when Seged announces that "Such ... is the longest of human existence: Before we have learned to use it; we find it at an end".[١١٤] The second episode follows smoothly the first. It opens as soon as Seged "rose early the second morning, and resolved now to be happy".[١١٥] And ends in "The third day was now passing and Seged again resolved to be happy on the morrow".[١١٦] The third episode also shows us the futile attempts to gain a happy day. It begins with "On the fourth morning Seged rose early, refreshed with sleep, vigorous with health and eager with expectation".[١١٧] And ends in "he had, however, the consolation of thinking ... of the day might easily be prevented by future caution".[١١٨] The fourth episode which is linked with the previous episode begins with "That he might provide for the pleasure of the next day",[١١٩] and concludes with "At last he shook off the weight of sorrow".[١٢٠] The sixth episode opens in "On the eighth morning Seged was awakened early by an unusual hurry in the appartments ..."[١٢١] and ends in "This day shall be a day of happiness".[١٢٢] Despite this number of episodes, Johnson achieves structural unity

in several ways: First each episode, which relates Seged's efforts to obtain a happy day, is related to the central theme in teaching us an example of the illusion of happiness. Therefore, none of the episodes seems to be irrelevant. Secondly, coherence is achieved by the logical process of time. The first episode, for instance, occurs in the first day while the second takes place in the next day and so on. Thirdly, it is rather difficult to find any sort of digression in the tale since all the episodes are part and parcel of the main frame.

CONCLUSION

Ever since the Middle Ages, Europe in general, and England in particular kept a lively and continuous interest not only in the literature of the East, but also in its modes of life, religions, customs and tradition. This interest was materialized through various means such as trade between East and West, pilgrimages and travels to the Holy Land made by Europeans, and some great historical events such as the Crusades. One of the most direct and constant means of communication was the Arab conquest of Spain and Sicily. The eventual result of these means of contact was that it placed the Western people in direct contact with the Eastern nations and enabled them to learn and appreciate the Eastern culture, and facilitated the transmission and penetration of some oriental tales into Western literature.

However, the impact of the East on the West appeared in various fields, among which was literature. The West-East communication helped the diffusion of some Eastern tales, and thus contributing to the appearance of many Western literary productions especially in fiction. In effect, it was in the eighteenth century that the Western interest in the orient became more important and comprehensive in scope and appeared in the works of the most famous eighteenth-century writers like Addison, Swift, Hawkins, Defoe and Johnson.

Like many of his contemporaries, Johnson responded to the orient and was fascinated by its exoticism, but more in its history, customs, and culture. Johnson’s representation of the East was not always

conventional. It partly stemmed out from a personal desire to see it, and partly from financial considerations since the popularity and publication of the oriental tales in periodical literature provided him with money he needed. However, Johnson's concern with the East was expressed several occasions on to his friends like Boswell and Mrs. Thrale, to whom he revealed his longing to visit the East. Being unable to travel to the East, Johnson's knowledge of it did not stem out of direct personal observation, but he obtained it through verbal means: through reading in books of history and in books such as The Arabian Nights and the Persian Tales. His probable reading of these books or hearing of them intensified his imagination and left marks on his prose writings as well as his drama.

Johnson's interest in the East is expressed in many of his prose writings such as Rasselas (1759), some periodical short stories and a play, Irene (1737). Together these works present a comprehensive image of the East as seen by the eighteenth century. In Rasselas, the short stories, and Irene appears his borrowing of oriental setting, customs, beliefs and political life which belong to Egypt, Iraq, Abyssinia, Turkey and India. Apart from the short stories where the setting is vague, the oriental setting in Rasselas and Irene is more inclusive as it includes in addition to the natural descriptions, oriental customs and beliefs.

Moreover, it is also possible to trace oriental elements in the themes of his works. The major theme of Rasselas is actually moralistic and concerns happiness. Although the idea of attaining perfect happiness could be seen as a reflection of Johnson's troubled mind, a similar

topic is discussed as a major theme of some oriental stories of The Arabian Nights and the Persian Tales which Johnson presumably had read. Other topics such as poverty, riches and power which were talked about by Johnson are universal themes presented in oriental dress such as oriental setting and characters. However, such themes are also dealt with in some stories of The Arabian Nights and the Persian Tales.

It is also possible to point out some oriental touches in Johnson's style. These oriental touches include oriental words, metaphors, images and personifications mainly drawn from the primitive oriental nature.

Even the structure of his oriental tales has been influenced by the oriental stories of The Arabian Nights and the Persian Tales. The structure of Rasselas, for instance, is parallel to the structure of some oriental stories of the Persian Tales and The Arabian Nights as it consists, in part, of so-called stories within a story. The structure of Irene is modelled after classical structure of similar plays. In the short stories, it seems that Johnson is employing a simplified oriental structure of some oriental stories of The Arabian Nights and the Persian Tales.

Finally, it is hoped that the present study has succeeded in pointing out Johnson's involvement in the East, and its impact on his prose writings and drama.

NOTES

(١) Rasselas, p.607.
(٢) Donald Lockhart, p.519.
(٣) Ibid., p.521.
(٤) Rasselas, p.609.
(٥) Ibid., p.667.
(٦) Ibid., p.669.
(٧) Ibid., pp.671-72.
(٨) Ibid., p.705.
(٩) J. E. S. Edwards, The Pyramids of Egypt (Hazal Watson & Viney Ltd, Aglesborg, Buck., 1970), p.37.
(١٠) Rasselas, p.633.
(١١) Ibid., p.640.
(١٢) Ibid., pp.673-74.
(١٣) Ibid., p.655.
(١٤) Ibid., p.682.
(١٥) Ibid., p.682.
(١٦) Encyclopedia Britannica, Vol.II (U.S.A., 1966), p.101.
(١٧) Rasselas, pp.685-86.
(١٨) Tarik, p.118.
(١٩) Arthur J. Weitzman, p.56.
(٢٠) Rasselas, p.627.
(٢١) My quotations of the Short Stories which are published in The Rambler and The Idler are taken from Arthur Murphy's the Works of Samuel Johnson, Vol.V, VI and VII, (London, 1972).
(٢٢) The Works, Vol.VII, The Rambler, No.99 (1760), p.393.
(٢٣) Ibid.
(٢٤) The Works, Vol.V, The Rambler, No.120, (1751), p.313.
(٢٥) The Works, Vol.VI, The Rambler, No.90, (1752), p.287.
(٢٦) Oxford English Dictionary, Vol.III (Oxford, 1961), p.122.

(٢٧) My quotation of Irene are taken from: E. L. Mc Adam, Jr., and George Milne, The Yale Edition of the Works of Samuel Johnson, Vol.VII (Yale University Press, 1964).
(٢٨) This version of the name "Mahomet" is adopted by Johnson.
(٢٩) Irene, I, i, pp.115-116.
(٣٠) Irene, I, i, p.116.
(٣١) Irene, I, v, p.131.
(٣٢) Haddawy, p.71.
(٣٣) Haddawy, pp.113-116.
(٣٤) Boswell, p.307.
(٣٥) Robert Voitle, Samuel Johnson the Moralist (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961), p.ix.
(٣٦) Bertrand H. Bronson, pp.67-72.
(٣٧) George Sherburn and Donald F. Bond, The Restoration and the Eighteenth Century (1660-1789), Vol.III (Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1967), p.994.
(٣٨) Martha Conant, p.119.
(٣٩) Rasselas, p.607.
(٤٠) Hardy, p.27.
(٤١) Leslie Stephan, ed. Samuel Johnson: The History of Rasselas, Prince of Abyssinia, p.46. A. L. Burt Company, Publisher, Introdcution.
(٤٢) Robert Voitle, p.97.
(٤٣) Rasselas, pp.657-58.
(٤٤) The Arabian Nights, Vol.III, p.453.
(٤٥) Robert Voitle, p.102.
(٤٦) Rasselas, p.708.
(٤٧) Ibid., p.631.
(٤٨) Robert Voitle, p.151.
(٤٩) Rasselas, p.627.
(٥٠) Ibid., p.627.
(٥١) Ibid., p.628.
(٥٢) Ibid., pp.628-29.

(٥٣) The Works, Vol.VI, The Rambler, No.205, (1752), p.378.
(٥٤) The Works, Vol.VII, The Idler, No.101, (1760), p.401.
(٥٥) The Works, Vol.VII, The Rambler, No.99, (1760), p.393.
(٥٦) Ibid., p.395.
(٥٧) Boswell, p.311.
(٥٨) The Works, Vol.V, The Rambler, No.120, (1751), p.313.
(٥٩) Ibid., p.319.
(٦٠) Irene, III, viii, p.161.
(٦١) Ibid., IV, viii, p.186.
(٦٢) David Nichol Smith, p.269.
(٦٣) Irene, I, i, p.115.
(٦٤) William Kenney: "Johnson's Rasselas After Two Centuries". Boston University Studies in English, Vol.III. (Summer, 1957), p.89.
(٦٥) Ibid., p.91.
(٦٦) Ibid., p.89.
(٦٧) Haddawy, p.118.
(٦٨) Ibid.
(٦٩) Quoted by F. R. Leavis in The Common Pursuit, (Edinburgh, Penguin Books of Chatto and Windus, 1962), p.109.
(٧٠) Ibid., p.102.
(٧١) Alan Warner, A Short Guide to English Style (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), p.92.
(٧٢) Ibid., p.93.
Since the original source of the Bible is not available to me, my quotations are taken from Alan Warner's book.
(٧٣) Rasselas, p.607.
(٧٤) The Arabian Nights, Vol.Iv, p.549.
(٧٥) Haddawy, p.120.
(٧٦) Alan Warner, p.94.
(٧٧) Rasselas, p.611.
(٧٨) Ibid., pp.685-86

(٧٩) Ibid., p.656.
(٨٠) Haddawy, p.121.
(٨١) The Works, Vol.VI, The Rambler, No.90, (1752), pp.287-88.
(٨٢) The Works, Vol.V, The Rambler, No.120, (1751), p.314.
(٨٣) The Arabian Nights, Vol.III, p.360.
(٨٤) The Novelists' Magazine, Vol.???, pp.228-29.
(٨٥) Alan Warner, p.92.
(٨٦) Ibid.
(٨٧) The Works, Vol.V, The Rambler, No.120, (1752), p.314-15.
(٨٨) Irene, II, vii, pp.145-146.
(٨٩) Boswell, p.242.
(٩٠) Gwin J. Kolb, p.717.
(٩١) Emrys Johnes, "The Artistic Form of Rasselas", R.E.S., n.s. XVIII (November 1967), p.391.
(٩٢) Rasselas, p.607.
(٩٣) Ibid., p.643.
(٩٤) Novelists' Magazine, p.131.
(٩٥) Ibid., p.174.
(٩٦) Mia I. Gerhardt, p.395.
(٩٧) Ibid., p.389.
(٩٨) The Novelists' Magazine, pp.131-152.
(٩٩) Ibid., pp.152-164.
(١٠٠) Ibid., pp.164-173.
(١٠١) Ibid., pp.643-709.
(١٠٢) Alvin Whitley, "The Comedy of Rasselas", ELH, XXIII, (March 1956), p.52.
(١٠٣) Ibid., p.52.
(١٠٤) The Works, Vol.V, The Rambler, No.120, (1751), p.312.
(١٠٥) Ibid., p.315.
(١٠٦) Ibid.
(١٠٧) The Arabian Nights, Vol.III, p.437.
(١٠٨) Ibid., p.438.

(١٠٩) Ibid.
(١١٠) Ibid., p.441.
(١١١) The Works, Vol.VI, The Rambler, No.204, (1752), p.368.
(١١٢) Ibid., p.370.
(١١٣) Ibid.
(١١٤) Ibid., p.371.
(١١٥) Ibid.
(١١٦) Ibid., p.373.
(١١٧) Ibid.
(١١٨) Ibid., p.375.
(١١٩) Ibid.
(١٢٠) Ibid., p.378.
(١٢١) Ibid.
(١٢٢) Ibid.

ملخص

الملامح الشرقية في أعمال جونسون راسيلاس، آيرين، وبعض القصص القصيرة

في القرن الثامن عشر شهدت انكلترا اهتماماً متزايداً بالشرق، بعاداته، بديانته وتقاليده وعبر قنوات عديدة أهمها: الدراسات الشرقية، كتب الرحلات والزيارات التي كان يقوم بها الحجاج الأوربيون إلى الأرض المقدسة، إضافة إلى الوجود العربي الإسلامي في أسبانيا وصقلية. وقد لعبت هذه الوسائل دوراً مهماً في نقل العديد من الأساطير والحكايات الشرقية إلى انكلترا.

والدكتور صموئيل جونسون، كغيره من معاصريه، سحره الشرق بجماله وغموضه وأعجبته أنماط الحياة التي اعتاد أن يعيشها أبناؤه. ان معلومات جونسون عن الشرق لم تكتسب عن طريق معاينة حقيقية للمنطقة، وإنما حصل عليها بصورة غير مباشرة من قراءاته الواسعة في كتب التاريخ، الرحلات وبعض الكتب الأدبية الشرقية وربما من ما سمعه من أصدقائه من حكايات وأحاديث عن الشرق ومن أشهر الكتب التي قرأها جونسون هي "ألف ليلة وليلة" و"القصص الفارسية"، إضافة إلى كتب التاريخ الخاصة ببلاد الحبشة وبلاد مصر والأقطار الشرقية الأخرى. وطبيعي أن يكون لهذه القراءات أثرها في أغنائه ببعض المعلومات عن الشرق والتي حفزته إلى كتابة بعض الأعمال الأدبية التي استوحى أحداثها وأسماءها من الكتب التاريخية و "ألف ليلة وليلة" و "القصص الفارسية".

ففي عام 1752 كتب قصة قصيرة أسماها "سجود لورد أثيوبيا" وفي عام 1760 نشر قصة عنوانها "عمر بن حسن". وقصصاً قصيرة أخرى. ومن أشهر القصص الشرقية التي كتبها جونسون هي "راسيلاس" عام 1759 وقد عدها النقاد واحدة من أشهر القصص الشرقية في القرن الثامن عشر. وتعتبر "آيرين" المسرحية الوحيدة التي ألفها عام 1737 والتي استوحى أحداثها من كتاب "التاريخ العام للأتراك".

ولما كانت هذه الظاهرة في أعمال جونسون لم تلق الاهتمام الذي ينبغي أن تحظى به من قبل النقاد ودارسي الأدب المقارن، فإن الهدف من هذا البحث هو إلقاء الضوء على هذه الظاهرة مبيناً أثر الشرق على شخصية

جونسون الأدبية والذي برز بوضوح في استخدامه للبيئة الشرقية لأحداث قصصه ووسيلة لإيصال الدروس الأخلاقية والدينية وأفكاره النقدية. كذلك برز هذا التأثير في الأسلوب الأدبي لجونسون وفي طريقة اختياره وعرضه لشخصياته وعلى شكل ومضمون هذه الأعمال.

يقع البحث في أربعة فصول وخاتمة. **الفصل الأول** عبارة عن مقدمة حيث تستعرض فيها الفرضية، الهدف من البحث، المواد المستخدمة في البحث، أية أعمال أخرى عن هذا الموضوع وأخيراً الطريقة المتبعة في البحث.

أما **الفصل الثاني** فينقسم إلى مبحثين: المبحث الأول يلقي نظرة سريعة على الخلفية التاريخية للحكايات الشرقية مركزاً على اهتمام الانكليز بالشرق بدءً من القرون الوسطى وانتهاءً بالقرن الثامن عشر. أما المبحث الثاني فقد كرس لاستعرض اهتمام جونسون بالشرق معتمداً على الأدلة الخارجية مع ذكر مختصر لأهم الكتب التاريخية والأدبية التي قرأها جونسون.

أما **الفصل الثالث** فقد كرس للبحث بالتفصيل عن أهم المصادر التي اعتمد عليها جونسون في كتابة قصصه معتمداً على الأدلة الداخلية وأسلوب المقارنة والتحليل مع بيان نقاط التشابه والاختلاف بين المصادر التي اعتمد عليها جونسون وأعماله الأدبية. المبحث الأول خصص للبحث عن أهم المصادر التي استوحى منها جونسون فكرة "قصته راسيلاس"". ويتناول القسم الثاني المصادر التي اعتمد عليها جونسون في كتابة مسرحية "آيرين". أما المبحث الثالث فيستعرض أهم المراجع التي اعتمدت في اقتباس مضامين القصص القصيرة.

أما **الفصل الرابع** فقد خصص لإلقاء الضوء على أهم الملامح الشرقية في هذه الأعمال. قسم هذا الفصل إلى أربعة مباحث. المبحث الأول يستعرض نماذج من البيئة الشرقية بما فيها من عادات وتقاليد وديانات في فترة زمنية معينة. في حين يظهر المبحث الثاني كيفية استخدام جونسون للبيئة الشرقية في إيصال الدروس الخلقية والتعليمية إلى مواطنيه في القرن الثامن عشر. ويستعرض المبحث الثالث اللمسات الشرقية في الأسلوب الأدبي لجونسون. فيما خصص المبحث الرابع لإلقاء الضوء على أثر بناء القصة الشرقية على شكل وبناء أعمال جونسون الشرقية.

الخاتمة هي ملخص لأهم النقاط التي وردت في الفصول الأربعة.

أما الاستنتاج فهو أن اهتمام جونسون بالشرق ليس مجرد تقليد سار عليه كغيره من معاصريه، أو ناتج من مصلحة مادية حيث كانت القصص الشرقية المنشورة في المجلات تدر عليه مالاً كان بحاجة إليه، بل نابع أيضاً من رغبة قوية في زيارة الشرق والاطلاع على معالمه وحضارته وتاريخه. وقد برز هذا التأثير في اقتباسه لمضمون قصصه وأسلوبه الأدبي وشكل أعماله الأدبية.

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