

The Importance of Pornography in Sir Richard Burton's "One Thousand and One Nights"

It's not uncommon that when the subject of important works within a specific canon is raised, a foreign work is discussed along with domestic canonical works. In the English literary canon, as well as the eastern literary canon as a whole, the "One Thousand and One Nights" (Also known as the "Tales of the Arabian Nights") has earned its place as an important text not only because of the controversy it created, but the impact it had on how western Europe perceived Arabian and Islamic culture. These tales were originally brought through various European Orientalist scholars who were not only well versed in the Arabic language, but thought that the western audience could benefit from learning about the Arabian culture via their version of 'fairy tales' and imaginative allegories. But not all of these translations and editions were created equal and, consequently, they were not all met with the same reception from the audience. Upon first finding out that *OTaON* was subject to preemptive censorship, the modern reader might immediately assume this is due to the intense religious reforms in the middle east. *OTaON* is a work that hails from the middle east and arguably, has a right to be perceived by all other audiences as their domestic readers/scholars sees fit. But given all the Pre-Islamic timing of the book's original authorship, it begs the question whether the original text should exist within itself as its own primary authority (As the real author(s) were never named or discovered) and therefore, should remain and be read as it was written. Obviously, this only came to be the case after thousands of years of study, debate, analysis and contextualization of the original text and its consequent cultural and audience impact, the 'uncensored' *OTaON* can be read without reprimand.

"One Thousand and One Nights" (Hereafter referred to as *OTaON*) was originally told orally by individual story over the course of hundreds of years across the middle east, northern

Africa and southern Asia. To truly understand not only the importance of maintaining the authenticity, but cultural integrity would require immense study and immersion in the Arabian culture. Sir Richard Burton's edition of *OTaON* is the most important of any edition because of his merit as an Orientalist and commitment to creating the most genuine editions of the stories within the book. Burton's edition was by no means the first, or even the most commercially successful edition of *OTaON* but its value of literary and scholarly merit more than compensate for any faults it may have.

Perhaps the most important thing to keep in mind when it comes to *OTaON* is that it was an aural tradition before it became a single, bound text. For all intents and purposes, *OTaON* can be thought of as the Islamic equivalent to "The Brother's Grimm's Fairy Tales". All of the stories bound within *OTaON* were told by mouth, from generation to generation (Sleeping Beauty is to *TBGFT* as Scheherezade is to *OTaON*). It's not entirely clear why or even who decided to first record and bind all of the tales together, but they were speculated to be first noted as printed literature around 800 CE. This could be due to the fact that these tales were not considered to be immensely important in the development of the Arabic literary canon and structure. Felicity Nussbaum details in great length over the course of her work "The Arabian Nights in Historical Context : Between East and West" about how various components of *OTaON* affected the discourse of Arabic literature as well as how it was contextualized in its first editions, how it continues to be contextualized across the world and how it altered modern Arabic literary criticism. Despite its longevity as an aural tradition and importance as a piece of folk culture, *OTaON*'s influence in the early Arabic novel was not as impactful as one might assume,

"The earliest versions of the tales had hardly been regarded by Arabs themselves as particularly prominent features of a rich cultural landscape in

which... poetry was considered the pre-eminent literary form... the stories that would be transcribed into various edition of the *Nights* had long been considered part of the common or folk tradition rather than a distinguishing feature of a more refined Arabic literary culture. The *Nights* is still often seen that way... as a collection of stories to be told and cherished, but not really serious literature...”
(Nussbaum, 2)

Despite this, it did create innovations for the modern Arabic novel as well as Arabic literary criticism. Interestingly enough, the impact that *OTaON* had in its land of origin was mostly due to how it ‘returned’ via the western reception and perception, “... the text’s [*OTaON*] reception must really be understood to have taken place not as a single event, but rather as a continuous process running through the eighteenth century... the *Nights* retuned to the Arab world having been absorbed and repackaged in a new European form: the novel ” (Nussbaum, 299). While all of this does not sound inherently wrong or even detrimental to the spread of Arabic literature, it’s without a doubt that the Western impact on Arabic literature was great. The English in particular, became infatuated with the exoticism of eastern culture, arguably to the point of becoming a fetish. It’s also worth noting that the introduction of *OTaON* helped give way to Western Romanticism, partially because it first came to the west via a French Orientalist, Antoine Galland.

Antoine Galland was credited for initially bringing a print version of *OTaON* to the west by way of translation and then short publications of various tales in magazines. Galland discovered the story of *Sinbad* during his time in then, Constantinople. The success of his work inspired him to search or and translate the original *OTaON* in French, “*Les Mille et Une Nuits*”. He translated and published it first in four volumes via a single Syrian manuscript as well as

hearing stories from one of his primary living sources, Hanna Diab, and followed with additional volumes the more he found in his continued research. According to the notes within his manuscript, it can be inferred that Galland freely added details and adapted the more fragmented aural stories to be more cohesive in print (Arata). Galland's edition was obviously first read by the literate French audience who were already accustomed to a certain style of 'fairy tales' that were popular at the time. Galland published *OTaON* with the intention of pleasing the tastes of his intended audience (In addition to translating and formatting, much of the overly erotic content was removed as well as the entirety of the poetry). These were extremely well received and translated again into multiple languages (Sometimes retranslated back into Arabic). Galland's translation was kept as the standard for the quality of translation as well as literary merit, "... The most famous and eloquent encomiums of The Thousand and One Nights... are from readers of Galland's translation... the man in Europe or the Americas who thinks of the Thousand and One Nights thinks, invariably, of this first translation." (Borges) It was not long before English translations of the stories in *OTaON* were published. One of the most well thought out and researched for the time, was the edition by Edward William Lane.

Edward Lane's first published monthly 'episodes' of the tales in *OTaON* as well as a three volume edition from 1838 to 1841, but the final revised edition was published in 1859. Lane was a well learned and respected British Orientalist who essentially wanted to give a fully realized transcription of *OTaON* both in a literary and scholarly sense (Unlike Galland who could have also had the motive of achieving some literary fame). Lane's authority on the Orient and Arabic language was practically unrivalled (Until the later work of Sir Richard Burton). He spent a few years of his career in the Ottoman middle east and not unlike Galland, Lane thought of his work with *OTaON* to be more of a 'side project' with his time in Egypt. (Arata) While

Galland's version was indeed well researched and the European standard Lane likely first encountered, Lane's edition contained contextual and anthropological notes throughout the course of the text (These were published post humorously by his nephew, Stanley Lane-Poole). During the writing itself, Lane cross referenced his own translation with that of Galland's as well as the Breslau, Burlaq and Calcutta publications of the text. Lane's intentions with *OTaON* may have been ultimately of an altruistic nature in that he wanted to not only create a completely cohesive and thoroughly researched single text, but because of his preemptive editing of the more graphic and erotic passages of the text, his ultimate loyalty to his work can be questioned. Lane stated his authority and intentions of his translation *OTaON* in the preface of the text.

"... for to him [Galland] alone its chief faults are to be attributed... several persons, and among them some of high and deserved reputation as Arabic scholars, have pronounced an opinion that his version is an *improvement* upon the original... but as confidently do I assert that Galland has excessively *perverted* the work. His acquaintance with Arab manners and customs was insufficient to preserve him always from errors of the grossest description, and by the *style* of his version he has given to the whole a false character, thus sacrificing, in a great measure, what is most valuable in the original work,—I mean its minute accuracy with respect to those peculiarities which distinguish the Arabs from every other nation, not only of the West, but also of the East... I consider myself possessed of the chief qualifications for the proper accomplishment of my present undertaking, from my having lived several years in Cairo, associating almost exclusively with Arabs, speaking their language, conforming to their general habits with the most scrupulous exactitude, and received into their society on terms of perfect

equality... Cairo is the city in which Arabian manners now exist in the most refined state; and such I believe to have been the case when the present work was composed.” (Lane, x)

Despite his auspicious claim to the accuracy of his work as well as the ‘perversion’ committed by Galland (In this case, perversion could nod to both the removal of poetry, the abbreviation of otherwise, lengthy stories and the overall romanticized nature of Galland’s writing), Lane wrote his edition of *OTaON* with the values of Victorian Morality in mind. Perhaps he assumed that if the Victorian audience was to give the Arabian literature, and by extension a brief brush with the culture via the text, they needed to have a version that was more easy to digest. “The original work being designed solely for the entertainment of Arabs, I add copious notes to the translation, to render it more intelligible and agreeable to the English reader,” (Lane, xiv) This might have created more space to facilitate the British understanding of the Arabian culture. Regardless of Lane’s intentions, his edition of *OTaON* would not remain the center of the British audience’s attention for long due to the work of Richard Burton.

Sir Richard Francis Burton was one of, if not the undisputed authority of Orientalism in his time, and for a great time thereafter. While both he and Lane were extremely well read and versed in the Arabic language as well as the culture, Burton dedicated a considerably larger portion of his life (Nearly all of his scholarly work and even some of his own personal life) to the study of and immersion within the Islamic culture (Compare Lane’s two years in Egypt vs Burton’s decades all across the middle east, Africa and Asia). He displayed an aptitude for language early in life and managed to learn nearly forty languages and dialects before his death. Despite being expelled from Oxford, he still managed to create an illustrious career for himself

in the Bombay Native Infantry (His deployment in India was likely the consequence of his expulsion) as well as his aforementioned study of the Orient.

Burton never quite felt at home in England so he was likely excited to be sent to a new and exciting land to explore. He was a favored intelligence operative due to his incredible ability to blend seamlessly into his surroundings and walk amongst the foreign people with ease. His experience in the military as well as with the East India Trading company helped springboard his work as an Orientalist as well as keeping his lust for adventure alive. Despite a failed attempt by another officer to see Burton discharged from the service, Burton eventually returned to England feeling personally ostracized and bearing more feelings of resentment towards his native country (He spent more time away from England with his mother in France). Perhaps these experiences that pushed Burton's nationalist loyalty further away as they pushed his personal loyalty to the Orient closer. Even away from the Orient, he wrote and published "Sindh, and the Races That inhabit the Valley of the Indus" in 1851 which contributed a considerable amount of research to the relatively new study of ethnography. But this doesn't even compare to the later work he would conduct later in his life. One of his most important accomplishments Burton's Hajj to Mecca (Lane could not boast this claim himself). He was one of the first Europeans to make the journey, but his was easily one of the most well documented in his work "Pilgrimage to El-Medinah and Mecca" (1856). This was Burton's first real claim to fame as an Orientalist. He also managed to enter the forbidden Muslim city of Harar without being discovered and/or executed. He detailed this journey in his book, "First Footsteps in East Africa" which he published in 1856. It's beyond doubt that Burton was more than qualified to give any Arabian text a respectable, critical reading and analysis, the *OTaON* being no exception. Granted, his initial scholarly interaction with the text (Beyond hearing the tales by mouth, which he more than likely did in all

his time in the Orient) may have happened with no great ceremony, Burton's work with *OTaON* would forever change the western perception of the text. While *OTaON* may not be the most impressive or auspicious book in his bibliography, it was easily one of the most controversial.

Burton's interest in the eastern erotica was almost as noteworthy as his authority on the subject itself. His most famous work of course, being the translated "Kama Sutra of Vatsyayana" which he published along with other sexually explicit works at his own personal risk of prosecution. It seemed as though he wanted to single-handedly pioneer a western sexual revolution in the face of the hypocritical behaviors towards purity in Victorian England. Collette Colligan describes the life and reception of Burton's *OTaON* in her article, "Esoteric Pornography: Sir Richard Burton's Arabian Nights and the Origins of Pornography". Burton's, at the time 'in progress', edition of *OTaON* was not the only literal translation in circulation. John Payne had published a complete, scholarly edition for a private readership of about five hundred subscribers. While his version was the most well translated in terms of authenticity and completeness, it still lacked the crudity of the sexual acts and images described in the text. This is where Burton steps in and effectively 'un-censors' *OTaON*. Granted, he does not do this just for the intrinsic value of pornography.

"Like Payne's translation, Burton's was a "plain and literal one,"... The language was lurid and coarse and the style estranging with its Spenserian archaism and awkward literalism... It was in his footnotes, however, that Burton's translation especially set itself apart from other translations. These footnotes, accompanied by a full scholarly apparatus (Foreword, Terminal Essay, Appendix, and Index), offered a "panorama of Eastern Life" (Ali 115) that incorporated strange anthropological observations on Arab sexual practices such as bestiality,

sodomy, eunuchism, clitoridectomy, and miscegenation... Although the Arabian Nights already possessed exotic and sexual appeal in England before Burton's translation, his translation emphasized its Arab origin and sexual content,”
(Cooligan)

Despite the ‘estranging’ nature of Burton’s un-censored *OTaON* it was still successful in terms of readership appreciation as well as commercial success. Burton spent a great length of the forward of his edition preemptively defending himself against an anticipated public protest to his work, yet it was not initially ill received, “One of the first reviews by *The Standard* on September 12, 1885 was positive: it concluded that the work contained "nothing intentionally demoralizing” (Cooligan). While Burton’s work was met with plenty of the criticism he anticipated (Some even coming from Stanley Lane-Pool), it was not left completely defenseless as those who saw what Burton meant with the publication of *OTaON*. One response by *The Bat* spoke against *The Pall Mall Gazette* for its sudden interest in the crudeness of *OTaON* while also claiming a readership who could not have possibly read the text itself on the cost of the text alone, “Journalists, who had no objection to pandering to the worst tastes of humanity at a penny a copy are suddenly inspired by much righteous indignation at a privately printed work which costs a guinea a volume...”. This brings up further discussion about the lengths that Burton went through to not only ensure that he was as free from persecution as possible, but that the readership of *OTaON* was as limited as possible.

Between Burton and Lane, there was a lot of ‘disclaiming’ when it came to their work. Both men clearly stated their intentions in regards to why they were publishing the work they did and the way in which the works were to be read. Lane’s edition of *OTaON* had a head start on Burton’s edition not only by time (Lane’s initial volumes were published about forty years

before Burton's) but by audience reception. Lane's *OTaON* was a classic so much so that the text was as well incorporated into the British literary culture as works with purely British origin and authorship. Lane spelled out in almost overwhelming detail during the course of his editor's preface, his dedications to the British reader, his mission to bring a complete and culturally authentic version of *OTaON* (By way of his time spent amongst 'the Arabs') to the English reading audience and his authority as an editor in regards to why certain omissions were made.

"I have thought it right to omit such tales, anecdotes, &c., as are comparatively uninteresting or on any account objectionable... I insert nothing that I deem greatly inferior in interest to the tales in the old version. Certain passages which, in the original work, are of an objectionable nature, I have slightly varied; but in doing this, I have been particularly careful to render them so as to be perfectly agreeable with Arab manners and customs. I therefore determined to preserve a considerable number of select pieces, chosen either for their relative merits or because required by the context... I add copious notes to the translation, to render it more intelligible and agreeable to the English reader... and my general object in them has been to give such illustrations as may satisfy the general reader... In many of them I endeavour to shew, by extracts from esteemed Arabic histories and scientific and other writings... in my possession, as well as by assertions and anecdotes that I have heard, and conduct that I have witnessed, during my intercourse with Arabs..." (Lane)

Lane wanted his work to be seen as a scholarly and literary improvement on Galland's version but he also felt a great responsibility to the reader. Where Galland may have wanted to simply

entertain, Lane was the first to see *OTaON* as a good example of life in the middle east. This can be inferred not only by Lane's own editorial assertions, but the way the text was first published.

Lane noted in the preface that he chose to omit most of the poetry (Save for whatever he found completely necessary for the understanding of the text) for the sake of the reader's own experience of the overall work as well as to avoid confusion in the transition from reading the English format of poetry to the ill-defined Arabic form of poetry. Lane's *OTaON* was also published in monthly episodes (Not unlike Galland) to create a greater readership (Those who could only afford the one pound sterling monthly installments could read the same content that those who could afford the full bound volumes) (Arata). Lane's edition was well received by the scholarly and working class audience alike, but he still felt the desire to add more supplementary material to his own work. He went on to publish "Account of the Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians" and "Arabian Society in the Middle Ages: Studies From The Thousand and One Nights", the latter of which being openly more purposed with explaining his experience and intention with his publication of *OTaON*. His own nephew acted as the editor for the latter of the two books who, not unlike his uncle, opens the book with a preface that asserts Lane's authority as an Orientalist and why this particular book was not only asked for, but needed by the audience of *OTaON*. "It has often been suggested that a reprint of the principal notes... would be a welcome addition to the scholar's as well as to the general library... the result is the present volume," (Lane-Poole, viii). Lane's dedication to the reader is without question, unlike his dedication to preserving the authenticity of the text. Granted, he was working within the cultural restraints of Victorian Morality, it still begs the question that between himself and Burton, whom the more dedicated scholar was. It can be argued that Burton's edition was the more culturally authentic of the two.

Burton was already working on his own translation of *OTaON* when he found out about John Payne's bid to do the same. Burton notes in his translator's preface of *OTaON* that he took up Payne's work due to Payne being obligated to something else which would hinder his work on *OTaON*, "I wrote to... Mr. Payne, who was wholly unconscious that we were engaged on the same work, and freely offered him precedence and possession of the field till no longer wanted. He accepted my offer as frankly, and his priority entailed another delay lasting till the spring of 1885," (Burton). Burton's endeavor to publish his edition of *OTaON* was with more risk to his personal freedom than Lane's was to his. The Obscene Publications Act of 1857 was well in effect and had already succeeded in preemptively stopping Burton's bid to publish his translation of the Kama Sutra (Then, *Kama Shastra*). Despite this, Burton still felt the need to shock the public with his work as well as showing off his greater authority over the previously published editions of *OTaON* (Lane's included). He went on to form The Kama Shastra Society. The 'mission statement' was to publish and privately circulate works that were deemed illegal by English literary standards. These works were meant to be read by those who sought to educate themselves on the 'forbidden knowledge' of foreign cultural practices (Typically of a sexual nature). (Sastri) For all intents and purposes, there was no way to suspect that the general reader (Those not subscribed to the work of the Kama Shastra Society) would seek these garish details when reading *OTaON*, but Burton was not openly publishing for the general audience.

Burton's preface, like Lane's details his experience and authority with the Arabian culture as well as his desire to translate *OTaON* for the English audience. He, unlike Lane however, has to spend a bit of the preface readying the audience for the frankness of his translations and why the guise of western decency should be forgotten when reading *OTaON* because of the immense and intricate cultural differences between the West and East (As well as

the inherent hypocrisy of the ideas of Western propriety). He also makes notes on how the original format and literary mechanics are preserved because of their integral function in the text.

“My work claims to be a faithful copy of the great Eastern Saga book, by preserving intact, not only the spirit, but even the *mécanique*, the manner and the matter... This rhymed prose may be "un-English" and unpleasant, even irritating to the British ear; still I look upon it as a *sine qua non* for a complete reproduction of the original... In accordance with my purpose of reproducing the Nights... I have carefully sought out the English equivalent of every Arabic word, however low it may be or "shocking" to ears polite; preserving, on the other hand, all possible delicacy where the indecency is not intentional; and... not exaggerating the vulgarities and the indecencies which, indeed, can hardly be exaggerated. For the coarseness and crassness are but the shades of a picture which would otherwise be all lights... The pathos is sweet, deep and genuine; tender, simple and true, utterly unlike much of our modern tinsel... Here we have nothing of that most immodest modern modesty which sees covert implication where nothing is implied, and "improper" allusion when propriety is not outraged; nor do we meet with the Nineteenth Century refinement; innocence of the word not of the thought; morality of the tongue not of the heart, and the sincere homage paid to virtue in guise of perfect hypocrisy.” (Burton)

Burton's strategy was very deliberate, not only via his self-defense in the preface and his move to adopt Payne's already established and educated audience, but in how he intended to minimize the readership of *OTaON*. Unlike Lane who did not have to worry about the 'decency' of his work, Burton wanted to keep his editions of the text expensive and private. His intended

audience was of a more scholarly inclination in that they would only want to read the whole, uncensored version of the text for the sake of knowledge (Though this implication is inherently specious, it was enough to quell those who sought to keep vulgarity out of public print). “One of my principal objects in making the work so expensive[. . .] is to keep it from the general public... I have no publisher. The translation is printed by myself for the use of select personal friends; and nothing could be more repugnant to my feelings than the idea of a book of the kind being placed in a publisher's hands, and sold over the counter.” (Burton) Burton’s editions went for about a guinea a volume (Sixteen guineas or sixteen pounds eighty total for the collection) which further helped to keep the text in the hands of the rich and learned. Cooligan noted in her article that Burton’s deliberate ploy and exclusivity in the audience of the text created more of a mysterious lure to the text itself. There is something to be said about the human potential for curiosity and desire for all things they are told they cannot or should not have/know about. Burton’s edition had an exclusive audience, contained graphic sexual images, could be construed as illegal for the general audience and was expensive. Though Burton made sure his edition was all of these for the sake of the text’s privacy and to keep it and himself from the law, he also managed to, in a way, create an ad campaign that further enticed anyone to read his edition over the familiar and family-friendly editions England knew and loved. Despite all of this, the audience that Burton wrote for thoroughly enjoyed his labors in giving *OTaON* context as well removing the veil between English prudery and Eastern openness.

Though many arguments about the differences between Lane and Burton’s edition can be spoken about at length in regards to the publishing and circulation, another real point of note to be had are the actual textual differences between the two. The introduction story of the two princes (Sometimes referred to as the ‘Frame Story’ as it sets up Scheherazade’s narration of the

rest of the tales) will be used as the example for comparing the two versions. The two prince brothers, Shahrayar and Shahzaman, are fond of each other despite ruling over two separate kingdoms. Shahrayar decides to summon Shahzaman for a visit and within a night of his arrival, he discovers his wife in bed with the negro cook. He murders the pair of them before seeing his brother. Meanwhile, Shahrayar discovers his own wife in bed with a slave. The two brothers then search for a man with a more wretched fate. Before long, they encounter a genie who has a woman imprisoned in a glass chest. The woman then sleeps with both brothers and steals their rings as prizes before returning to the sleeping genie. Upon the discovery of this, the brothers decide to return to their respective kingdoms.

The difference between the two editions begins immediately with the invocation of God in Lane's edition and Allah in Burton's. This may otherwise be considered a stylistic choice, but considering each editor's intention with their respective translation, it's worth noting that they were both keenly aware of the implications of choosing God or Allah. Next is the description of the cuckooing and murder of the Queen. Burton's description is more descriptive than Lane's.

“... he [Shahzaman] found the Queen, his wife, asleep on his own carpet bed, embracing with both arms a black cook of loathsome aspect and foul with kitchen grease and grime... he drew his scymitar and, cutting the two in four pieces with a single blow, left them on the carpet and returned presently to his camp without letting anyone know of what had happened.” (Burton)

Lane's description is shorter but cleaner than Burton's. “... he there beheld his wife sleeping in his bed, and attended by a male negro slave, who had fallen asleep by her side... He then drew his sword, and slew them both in bed...” (Lane). The next great difference in the two editions is

the depiction of a scene wherein Shahrayar's wife partakes in an orgy. Shahzaman comes across a private pastern of Shahrayar's palace and watches the events.

“... out of it came twenty slave girls surrounding his bother's wife... They walked under the very lattice and advanced a little way into the garden till they came to a jetting fountain amiddlemost a great basin of water; then they stripped off their clothes and behold, ten of them were women, concubines of the King, and the other ten were white slaves. Then they all paired off, each with each: but the Queen, who was left alone, presently cried out in a loud voice, "Here to me, O my lord Saeed!" and then sprang with a drop leap from one of the trees a big slobbering blackamoor with rolling eyes which showed the whites, a truly hideous sight. He walked boldly up to her and threw his arms round her neck while she embraced him as warmly; then he bussed her and winding his legs round hers, as a button loop clasps a button, he threw her and enjoyed her. On like wise did the other slaves with the girls till all had satisfied their passions, and they ceased not from kissing and clipping, coupling and carousing till day began to wane; when the Mamelukes rose from the damsels' bosoms and the blackamoor slave dismounted from the Queen's breast; the men resumed their disguises and all, except the negro who swarmed up the tree, entered the palace and closed the postern door as before.” (Burton)

Lane's version leaving much more to the imagination than Burton's boasted fewer lines and descriptions of the orgy.

“... and while his brother was looking out from one of these, a door of the palace was opened and there came forth from it twenty females and twenty male

black slaves, and the King's wife... accompanied them to a fountain where the all disrobed themselves and sat down together. The King's wife then called out, O Massoud! and immediately a black slave came to her, and embraced her; she doing the life. So also did the other slaves and the women; and all of them continued reveling together until the close of the day.” (Lane 4)

One of the little differences between the two is the race of the slaves that partook in the orgy. Burton's were white whereas Lane's were black. Burton's Saeed was referred to as a 'blackamoor' and Lane's Massoud was simply referred to as black. These subtle changes could denote a little more about Lane's editing. Perhaps he made the slaves black because that would make them more inclined to do the salacious things they engaged in (This claim is absurd to the modern reader, but it makes sense given the 'sensitive' English audience as well as proving Burton's accusation of the English sexual hypocrisy (They would have liked the implied fetishization of the exotic black male)). This scene was important in not only giving motive for both brothers to start their quest for a worse lot, it openly portrayed a display of the sexual power and desire of women regardless of stature (A Queen is privy to bouts of lust just as any common woman is, and thus all women are capable of malice via infidelity and betrayal of their husbands).

The continuation of this tale is written in the two brothers discovering the genie and his beautiful, female prisoner. Immediately Burton's edition describes the girl with poetry (Both in form and language), “She rose like the morn as she shone through the night * And she gilded the grove with her gracious sight...” whereas Lane simply described her as ‘fair and beautiful like the shining sun’. Both editions show the woman inviting the brothers to sit with her, their fear of the genie and the woman's threat to wake the genie should they decline her. Neither Burton nor

Lane detail the congress of the brothers and the woman (Though Lane had simply wrote that the two men ‘remained with her as long as she required’) but there’s a small difference in the woman’s prizes. In Burton’s edition, she has five hundred and seventy rings and an equal number of sexual encounters. In Lane’s edition, she only has ninety-eight rings that she collected from men who’ve ‘had the same conversation’ with her as the two brothers. While this difference may seem innocuous, Burton’s could easily be thought of as a ploy at shock value which would fit his desire to inspire awe in his audience. Lane’s version, while the implication of sex is present, can still be read as literal and given the subtext that women simply crave decent company or that women are capable of trickery if it suits their needs. Its wholly likely that in addition to the scholarly work that Burton included in his edition, the literary worth and arousing details of the more erotic scenes in *OTaON* was appreciated by his audience. Burton and Lane both celebrated some commercial success. While both editions hold merit regardless of their edits, the modern reader might be more inclined to favor Burton’s work over Lane’s.

Burton went through a lot to see that his *OTaON* was published in the way that it was. He published it himself in spite of the active laws to keep pornographic literature illegal. Burton’s edition of *OTaON* was the first text to be thought of as ‘pornographic’ because the word ‘pornographic’ was not really used until 1850 to describe art and literature previously called ‘erotic’. The Kama Shastra Society was first created to circumvent the law to publish Burton’s translation of the Kama Sutra, but was later employed for the publishing of *OTaON*. The Obscene Publications Act of 1857 had a kind of ‘good faith’ clause which claimed that the only kind of text subject to punishment via the act was text created with the explicit intent of corrupting the youth and otherwise compromising the common code of morality and decency. Burton clearly stated his intentions more than once on his commitment to keeping *OTaON* nights

for private circulation as well as asserting that the readership was of a scholarly nature and therefore, would be 'less likely to be corrupted if at all'. He created an edition that defamiliarized the English reader with the already exotic and romantically arousing tales of *OTaON*. His version sought to be scholarly, but was only looked at for its sexual content, so much so that it was deemed pornographic before anything else (Cooligan) One particularly scathing review came from *The Pall Mall Gazette* (featured in Cooligan's article) which quickly ignored all of Burton's scholarly work and dedication to the cultural and literary integrity of the text and condemn the text to commercial failure.

“Students! Students of what? Does any one need to be told that the vast majority of them are simply students of what I shall call [. . .] pornography?”
(2)... According to Morley, "The book would never secure 1 ,000 subscribers at the large price put upon it, were it not for its actual reputation and its prospective value as one of the grossest [. . .] books in the English language" (2). He also casts doubt on whether the student will ever see the so-called tome as it has already appeared "in the window of a second-hand bookseller in a questionable backstreet" (3). On September 24, the paper continues to attack Burton's pretence of scholarship by claiming that it could not print a section of it for fear of police seizure. It also equates the translation with street pornography, dismissing its scholarly pretensions..." (Cooligan)

Burton pushed the boundaries of what the English audience knew and loved for the sake of cultural authenticity. Burton had spent a much greater amount of time (And perhaps a more meaningful use of his time) immersed in the Arabian culture and was on that principle alone, more qualified to translate the text than Lane. That's not to say that Lane's scholarship was not

voided, but Burton wasn't deterred by the 'crude' reality of Arabian culture. Burton also made a reference to how English literature was not beyond using 'low brow' humor or being overtly sexual (He references Shakespeare and Swift in his preface likely for their status in the British canon and recognizability). On the note of literature, Lane made an open attempt to omit the poetry in the same manner Galland had (Lane negated this with included the bare minimum of necessary poetry) whereas Burton kept it in full. While the functionality of the poetry can be left to the interpretation of the reader, Lane cannot claim a fully translated version of *OTaON* while simultaneously omitting part of the Arabian aural and literary tradition. Granted Arabic poetry was not valued as highly as say, English poetry in its native land, Burton's inclusion of the poetry and literary devices (Regardless of the attentiveness of the reader) further cements his claim of creating a literal translation of the text.

All of the work that Galland, Lane and Burton did was certainly not for nothing and it's always worth commemorating. Without their work and dedication, *OTaON* might have not only reached the west at a much later date, but it could have been presented with the more modern Islamic bias. This could arguably be construed as a good thing because such an important literary tradition should only be perceived as the original recipients of the text see fit (As in, 'It's their book. They should get to choose how everyone else gets to read it, if at all). But then the west would have been deprived of not only an important work of literature, but an extremely captivating one as well. The numerous tales contained within the "One Thousand and One Nights" are romantic, fantastical and incredibly entertaining. It's no wonder they were met with an eager reception when brought to western Europe. The exotic and debauched settings and quick-witted characters captured the imaginations of western readers with ease.

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