

# **Levels of Expression in Arabian Nights**

## **A dissertation**

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## **Abstract**

The book of "Arabian nights" is regarded as one of the most important narratives in the Arabic popular literature. It turned from mass-culture as narrated orally into a modifiable literary achievement where it transformed instability and liberty of expressions to a state of stability as imposed by codification. Therefore, the book has been preserved for a long time.

Unquestionably, "Arabian Nights" has enjoyed importance in reflecting the achievement of the Arab-Islamic civilization as far as literary heritage is concerned. Paying little attention behind the reasons of its importance, one can easily recognize the literary weight that the book has if compared to other types of Arabic literature. This is clear where it has become of much concern to non-Arab nations.

Orientalists were prior to Arab researchers in studying the book after it was translated into many living languages. Later, Arab scholars paid attention to it and much was written about it. It was tackled in literary criticism from the perspective of narrative works where the elements of narration were investigated.

In addition, some studies were devoted to studying the effect of the antiquity on the book and its influence upon modern Arabic and the world literature. Some studies, moreover, dealt with the book from a non-literary angle such as the social, historical, geographical and ecumenical researches. As for the psychological studies, some analyzed the Arab-self as conveyed in it and the impact it has on the Arab and non-Arab receiver.

All the studies surveyed so far have not investigated the levels of expression in Arabian Nights from the view of communicative theories where three components are involved: the sender, the message and the

receiver. On the ground of the basic levels of expression, it has been found out that expressionism attained maturity. Accordingly, the present work was divided into three chapters to go in conformity to the three levels of expression as follows: the rhetorical level studied in the first chapter which involves three headings: the first deals with the idiom and concept, the second treats the distinctive features of the rhetorical level, and the third was devoted to dealing with some narratives whose expressions are dominated by the rhetorical level.

The same holds true of the second level but the difference lies in investigating the emotional dimension. The third chapter concerns itself with the poetic level of expressionism. This has been done after studying the idiom and concept, and the distinctive features of the poetic level. Then, this theoretical framework has been applied to poetic samples in terms of two criteria: the separable level and the communicative level.

The main conclusions drawn from the present study can be stated as follows: expressionism in Arabian Nights is of maturity where the widest use is to the rhetorical level which copes with the narrative nature of the stories. The emotional level occupies the second position which is concerned with highlighting the characters, passions. In addition, the narrator is influenced by the stories and he attempts to influence the receiver. Finally, the poetic level enjoyed the least use. This is due to aesthetic reasons when the level is involved in expressing the stories and in the means of reflecting ideas especially in the stories of the animal found in Arabian Nights.