

## **The Dominant Male's Discourse VS. The Female Subordinate in Utterances from *The Arabian Nights*, *Othello*, *Donne's Song*, and *Webster's Duchess of Malfi***

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### **Abstract**

There is a number of powerful men who think they are right, simply because they have the privilege to be men. Their post as Kings or Dukes encourages them to disregard their wives, sweethearts, and sisters. These men condemn and punish women for their alleged infidelity. But, they themselves have the same weaknesses veritably, rather than fancifully. The paper selects utterances with common features from THE ARABIAN NIGHTS, OTHELLO, "Song: Go and Catch a Falling Star" and THE DUCHESS OF MALFI. Their utterances demonstrate that they are part and parcel of a recycled discourse.

**Keywords:** Marital infidelity, Universal theme, Human Nature, Male Dominantty

### **Introduction**

This paper highlights and discusses the presence of the dominant discourse among male characters in their attitudes to the women around them, be they their wives, sweethearts, sisters, or dependents. These men are King Shahriyar in THE ARABIAN NIGHTS (956AD), Iago and Othello in Shakespeare's OTHELLO (1604), John Donne's persona in "Song: Go and Catch a Falling Star", and Duke Ferdinand in John Webster's THE DUCHESS OF MALFI (1613). The way they convey their utterances to women has similar features, even though the men and women in these works have their individuality. Still, they share some features when it comes to matters related to the oppressed gender. The discourse of the men in these selections shows that they mistrust women, discredit women's integrity, and cast doubts on women's chastity. Consequently, dominantty, violence and punishment penalize the women's supposed rebelliousness. Among the

writers discussed in this paper, only John Donne chooses to look at the amusing side of the alleged feminine fickleness and infidelity.

The selections are chosen to prove that the males' dominant discourse against women exists in a recurrent manner, as if it were reincarnating or recycling itself conceptually and practically. Although THE ARABIAN NIGHTS existed earlier than 956 according to the Arab scholar Al-Masoodi's MEADOWS OF GOLD (MUROOJ AL-DAHAB) as N. J. Dawood tells us, it is doubtful that Shakespeare, Donne, or Webster had any direct or indirect knowledge of the contents of the Arab narrative. However, human nature in all the four works are much the same despite the cultural differences, in other matters.

In the case of Iago, Othello, Donne's persona, Ferdinand and Shahryar, the similarity indicates that males share a similar discourse towards women, because the ARABIAN NIGHTS were yet unknown to the reading public, for Antoine Galland and his posthumous trustees (1646-1715) published The Arabian Nights between 1704-1717 (Dawood:8). THE ARABIAN NIGHTS is a work with a universal appeal. The research will, accordingly, focus on the matter expressed in the utterances implicitly and explicitly. Besides, it will take into account the context of the speech and the mood of the speakers in these selections.

The crucial Research Question here is: what common denominator is it that brings all these texts together other than the dominant misogynist discourse? Indeed, Shahryar's gendered discourse paves the way for a kind of misconduct that goes beyond the verbal behavior. Shahryar and most men in these selections are the culprits who get away scot-free. Their discourse is deeply rooted in male domination. While some men give themselves the right to have extra-marital relationships, or romantic affairs outside marriage, they accuse their wives and sisters of marital infidelity. This is reflected in their discourse which, eventually, borders on murderous consequences.

The sections of this research will, regrettably, be of unequal length, owing to the genres where the utterances come from. Nevertheless, all sections will receive equal measures of focus on the main issue which is the subject matter of this attempt.

### **Shahryar the Archetype of the Dominant Husband**

Shahryar is probably the first to have this discourse of the dominant husband as the trademark of his speech. His character, conduct, and discourse justify what Antoine Galland (1646-1715) once wrote about THE ARABIAN NIGHTS as quoted by Muhsin Mahdi: "The Arabs surpass other nations in this sort of composition." (Mahdi Page 20).

Mahdi carries on to state: "Galland had no difficulty in appreciating what is perhaps the main virtue of THE NIGHTS...moral and political lessons." (Mahdi Page 21)

Being an emperor of a vast stretch of land, Shahryar is a domineering character. It is impossible for anything (like marital infidelity) to happen without reason. His dominantty and violence must have a reason. The Prologue to the Arabian Nights tries to justify King Shahryar even before the tales of Shahrazad get started. The King and his brother King Shahzaman both have traitorous wives. Both queens fall in love with the King's slaves. Shahzaman is the first to see his wife betray him. He kills her and her lover. Then, he and his brother King Shahryar see Shahryar's wife commit adultery with a black slave called Massood in the royal gardens. The penalty of the sin is maximum punishment:

"King Shahryar put his wife to death together with her women and the black slaves. Thenceforth he made it his custom to take a virgin in marriage to his bed each night, and kill her the next morning. This he continued to do for three years, until a clamour rose among the people, some of whom fled the country with their daughters. "

The Prologue to the Nights produces an utterance that speaks Shahryar's mind, even though it is spoken by Shahzaman:

"At this [i. e, the sight of this adultery],the world darkened in his eyes; and he thought: 'If this can happen when I am scarcely out of the city, how will this foul woman act when I am far away?' He then drew his sword and killed them both as they lay on the couch [the unfaithful queen and her lover the black slave]." (Dawood Page 16)

The Kings may be exaggerating the scene they claim to have witnessed. Perhaps, the misdeed exists only in the mind of the viewers. Perhaps, the real sin is only the Queen's mixing with the poor slaves who want to entertain her. It must be presumed that the King has little faith in people at large, let alone his wife. It will be noticed that in the utterances articulated by the characters in the additional works in the present paper, there is scarcely any hard evidence to support the unfair accusations against the victimized women. The accusations are made by powerful men rather than by wise men. Consider the predominance of capricious whims and fancies in Shahryar's above-quoted "Thenceforth he made it his custom to take a virgin....and kill her the next morning." It is significant here, in exactly this context, to quote some lines uttered by *Emilia*, *Iago*'s wife, in Act IV, Scene iii, because they throw light on the dominant husband's mentality. *Emilia*, here, is much like *Shahrazad* the self- sacrificing princess:

*Let husbands know*

*Their wives have sense like them: they see, and smell,*

*And have their palates both for sweet and sour*

*As husbands have. What is it that they do*

*When they change us for others? Is it sport?*

*I think it is, and both affection breed it?*

*I think it doth. Is't frailty that thus errs?*

*It is so too. And have we not affections,*

*Desires for sport, and frailty as men have?*

*Act IV, Scene iii, Lines 89- 97*

Most important in the universal theme above, is *Emilia's* admission that men and women are equally vulnerable, suffering from the same weak spots. Like *Shahrazad*, she insists on "I think" instead of : I obey blindly". Pragmatically the implication is that women cannot judge men, while men can sentence women to death.

The criminality of Shahryar's utterance can hardly escape notice, especially when seen in juxtaposition to Shahrazad's expressions related to the same context of virgin slaughter. The male speaker, the male narrator presents his [the King's] story, rather than her [the virgin's] story. The story-teller neglects to mention who gave the king the authority to murder a virgin every day. Shahrazad, in comparison to the King, is truly noble: her nobility contrasts sharply with the King's taste for blood. Speaking with her father, the Grand Vizier of the King, she says: "Give me in marriage to this king. Either I shall die and be a ransom for the daughters of the Moslems, or live and be the cause of their deliverance." (Dawood 190)

Hence ,instead of 'death' in vain, 'kill', and the deadly rites and rituals of the king, Shahrazad has in mind 'ransom', 'deliverance', and the public good for the women in her country. She is successful eventually. The King abandons his barbaric plan. The Epilogue to the Arabian Nights is unequivocal about that. But, the King fails to express any remorse: "Shahryar proclaimed his decision to spare the life of his bride .....and in the streets and market-squares drums rattled , trumpets blared ,and clarions sounded." (PP, 406-7)

The Epilogue conveys Shahryar's discourse as reported speech. Nevertheless, it is sufficient to reveal that the king hardly changes his mind. He pardons Shahrazad, spares

her life, and fails to state exactly what she and her gender are guilty of. What is implicit in this abnormal amnesty, this curious sparing of unguilty life, is that being a woman may be in itself a culpability, a shame, a guilt, a charge that is punishable. Thus, the king's wanton treatment of the countless virgins fails to give him a guilty conscience after all. The next sections bring forward characters that parallel, echo, or reincarnate a corresponding attitude.

### **Othello the Moor of Venice (1604)**

Women at large are openly accused of infidelity in **OTHELLO** (1604). The accuser and the truly jealous husband, according to Murray Roston, is Iago. He has a good reason to destroy the Moor: "His reason for destroying the Moor is...the suspicion that Othello has been sleeping with his [Iago's] wife. (Roston 209)

Roston notices that Iago as a brilliant and eloquent tactician, working within the Machiavellian context, causes Othello to ruin himself rather than being ruined by the Machiavellian villain himself (Roston 210). Thus, Othello is transformed from an unsuspecting husband into an anguished man who curses marriage and womankind. All that Iago has to do is simply to make half-muttered hints which suggest Desdemona's marital unchastity. However, it is Iago's own mind that is the suspicious and treason-obsessed mind. Iago murders Emilia, his wife, in the final scene of the play. But, before that, he calls his wife "villainous whore" (Act V, ii, line 237). In line 240, he shouts at her:

"Filth, thou liest!"

The man who regards his wife as villainous, as a whore, as filth, and as a liar, must be a misogynist. He slanders Venetian women in Othello's presence:

I know our country disposition well;

In Venice they do let God see the pranks

They dare not show their husbands: their best conscience

Is not to leave 't undone, but keep 't unknown.

Act III, iii, lines 201-204

According to Pamela Mason, "Iago was subconsciously in love with Othello" (p. 107). That is why, probably, he hates his wife. No human being (men or women) can be as great as *Othello*, in his eyes. *Iago*, deep inside, feels he and *Othello* are one. Thus, he thinks that *Othello* and *Cassio*, who is also *Othello's* companion, regularly sleep with *Emilia*.

Iago has a disgraceful opinion of his wife. He is certain she has regularly slept with both Othello and Cassio:

I stand accountant for as great a sin-

But partly led to diet my revenge

For that I do suspect the lusty Moor

Hath leaped into my seat, the thought whereof

Doth like a poisonous mineral, gnaw my innards;

And nothing can or shall content my soul

Till I am evened with him, wife for wife,

.....  
.....

I'll have our Michael Cassio on the hip,

Abuse him to the Moor in the rank garb-

For I fear Cassio with my nightcap too-

Act II, ii, lines 278-292.

Iago's unjustified and misplaced doubt in his wife Emilia, whom he imagines to betray him with two men together may ring a bell from "The Tale of King Shahryar and his Brother Shahzaman". In this tale, the character referred to as the Chaste and Honorable Lady is protected by the Jinnee. She causes the Jinnee to fall fast asleep. Then, she orders Shahryar and Shahzaman to relish with her in the unspeakable carnal pleasures. She shows them her collection of male rings:

"The owners of these rings...have all enjoyed me under the very horn of this foolish Jinnee. Therefore, give me your rings also. The two brothers gave her their rings."  
(Dawood 19)

The Chaste and Honorable Lady adds:

"This Jinnee...knew little how cunning we women are." Ibid

Likewise, Iago takes it for granted that Othello and Cassio committed indecencies with Emilia his wife:

...I hate the Moor,  
 And it is thought abroad ,that 'twixt my sheets  
 He's done my office:I know not if't be true...  
 Yet I,for mere suspicion in that kind,  
 Will do ,as for surety....

Act I, iii, lines 384-388

Obviously, Iago is making a verbal maneuver. In her discussion of Shakespeare's language in SHAKESPEARE: OTHELLO, Juliet McLauchen expresses this viewpoint:

"In OTHELLO, the force of the language is such that it must (if understood) impose upon actors certain types of behavior...that the language must define a permissible range, as it were." (McLauchen 11-12)

Iago's language resorts to the binary poles of Honor vs. Shame to outrage Othello. By infuriating Othello against Cassio and Desdemona, Iago will avenge his lost honor to get rid of his presumably adulterous wife, the Moor, the Moor's wife, and Cassio. All these, in Iago's pathological mind, hurt him in his honor. Besides, in this way, Iago can remove his opponents to become the primary political figure in Venice. MacLauchen's words bring to mind John Austin's HOW TO DO THINGS WITH WORDS (1962), augmented by the contributions of John Searle and and H. P. Grice. Any given utterance makes reference to a state of affairs that may be true or false, makes an assertion, implies an attitude ,and indirectly encourages the recipient to take a course of action(See M.H. Abrams pp 372-375 ).To avenge the lost honor will be Iago's bid for political power and personal glory.

In the light of the above, the real jealous husband is Iago, in the first place, rather than Othello. Iago needs to get rid of his wife but desires to avoid getting involved in the criminal act. So, he instigates Othello to do it for him indirectly:

Iago: ....I lay with Cassio lately,  
 And being troubled with a raging tooth

I could not sleep. There are a kind of men  
So loose of soul that in their sleeps will mutter  
Their affairs. One of this kind is Cassio  
In sleep I heard him say ' Sweet Desdemona,  
Let us be wary, let us hide our loves!'  
And then, Sir, would he grip and wring my hand,  
Cry 'O sweet creature!' then kiss me hard,  
As if he plucked up kisses by the roots  
That grew upon my lips; then laid his leg  
Over my thigh, and sighed, and kissed, and then  
Cried , ' Cursed fate that gave thee the Moor!'

**Othello:** Monstrous! Monstrous!

Act III, iii, lines 429-445

Accordingly, Othello prepares for 'revenge' (line458), and openly calls Desdemona ' Devil', strikes her in front of Lodovico's eyes (Act IV, I, line 3230).He ,then, calls her 'Whore' in Act IV, ii, line 74.He goes on to use a synonym for that repulsive word:

Othello: Are you not a strumpet?

Desdemona: No, as I am a Christian.

Act IV, ii, lines 84-85

Emilia's comments are the voice of a helpless woman supporting another helpless woman, both of whom are unjustly accused of being immoral:

Emilia: Hath she [Desdemona] forsook so many noble matches,  
Her father and her country, and her friends,

To be called whore? Would it not make one weep?

Desdemona: It is my wretched fortune.

Act IV, ii, lines 132-135

In the above, the women's purity contrasts the men's impurity. The innocence of the women is beyond doubt, particularly Desdemona's, because she surrenders to her destiny because of her having faith in God. She is obviously the meek, obedient, non-rebellious wife. However, these honest and decent wives pay for someone else's faults and ignoble ambitions. The women's purity, hence the men's guilt, is made clear by the lexical items which Iago uses. In his *SHAKESPEARE'S LANGUAGE*, Frank Kermode proves that Iago's words are profane, immoral, and indecent:

"The profanities occur ... more significantly in the context of sexual disgust to which Iago's thoughts repeatedly refer themselves." (Kermode 166)

Indeed, Othello himself says

Othello: ...By Heaven, thou echo'st me,

As if there were some monster in thy thought

Too hideous to be shown...

Act III, iii, lines 106-108

This monster is created by Iago and incubated in Othello's mind to punish the wife's/wives' supposed infidelity. In this respect, M. C. Bradbrook observes that "The characters of Iago and Othello are so opposed, yet so inextricably bound together by action, that they have been seen as the two halves of a single being" (p. 177). These two men remind us of how *Shahryar* and *Shahzaman* are two halves of the same dominantty against women. In the process, Desdemona, Emilia, and Othello are ruined. Consequently, the husband's continuous dwelling upon the likelihood of the wife's marital infidelity replaces" the sanctities, or the absence, of incriminating evidence' against women (Kermode 177), which in itself proves "the effect " and the "magical force of ...this rhetoric" (Ibid), the untrue rhetoric of women's disloyalty and falseness.

### **John Donne's "Song: Go and Catch a Falling Star"**

In his Introduction to *JOHN DONNE: A SELECTION OF HIS POETRY*, John Hayward writes:

“Donne’s poems, indeed, are largely the uninhibited and curiously annotated record-passionate or ironical, tender or teasing, as the case may be- of many love affairs before marriage and many life-long friendships.” (Page 8)

He carries on to remind the audience that:

“Tradition has it that ...he was a great Visitor of Ladies...” (P.9)

Donne, he goes on, had a number of “profane mistresses.” (P.9)

Simultaneously, he had political ambitions when he became the secretary to Sir Thomas Egerton from 1598-1602. Later on, Donne eloped with Anne Moore, Sir Egerton’s niece.

This poem by John Donne (1572-1631) is a lyric which belongs to his pre-marriage life, the phase of the Songs and Sonnets. It is the phase when he was courting Anne Moore in secret while he served her uncle and lived in the same Mansion with them according to Hayward. This lyric is a lengthy apostrophe in which the poet’s persona addresses an implicit pilgrim in search of the virtuous lady who embodies beauty, truth, honor, and chastity altogether in one person. The attitude of the speaking voice in the song is basically close to that of the male characters of the earlier sections. However, despite the delightful tone and amusing stand, there is much male bitterness in the heart of the poem.

THE ARABIAN NIGHTS and OTHELLO make it clear that the men in the inner worlds of these works have very little faith in women’s decency and fidelity. But in this Song, even this little faith is gone. There is scarcely any honor left in women. It is impossible for them to have beauty and chastity together. Feminine virtuousness is listed among the impossibilities of the universe of this metaphysical poet. The focal point of Donne’s argument against the virtue of beautiful women is the apparently humorous oath:

And swear

No where

Lives a woman, true and fair (Song. Lines 16-18)

Feminine sincerity is gone altogether. The impossibilities are listed in due order, in accordance with their grades of unlikelihood. It is impossible to catch a meteor. It is impossible to impregnate the plant called mandrake root. It is impossible to regain the past. Nor is it possible to identify who cleft Satan’s foot. It is impossible to hear the

mermaid's song, or get acquainted with how the decent mind operates. It is the ultimate impossibility to come across an honest, decent, faithful woman who combines beauty and fidelity together. She never exists. One wonders why Donne, or any of the males addressed in this paper, had such a hostile attitude to women. But, this can be explained in the light of Surat Al- Rum, Aya 21: "He [God] placed between you [spouses] affection and mercy". The absence of real affection is filled with hostility, doubts, suspicious, and jealousy.

In the third stanza of the Song, Donne gives the reader a glimpse of hope that in this vast world, there may be after all a woman who is both an icon of beauty and truth together. However, this glimpse of hope soon disappears. The pilgrim in search of the virtuous lady already spent ten thousand days and nights looking for the perfect woman. The pilgrim is affectionately addressed thus:

If thou findest one, let me know,

Such a Pilgrimage were sweet;

.....

.....

Though she were true when you met her,

And last, till you write your letter,

Yet she

Will be

False, ere I come, to two, or three.

The speaking voice, like the previous male specimens, gives himself the right to generalize about women's human nature. The implications of the last lines can hardly be missed. To make the claim of infidelity more offensive than it already is, the speaker utters a hyperbolic statement: this woman commits adultery with two or three males altogether. This scene is imaginary, like the whole poem, but it manages to implant a negative image in the recipient's mind. In this context, Judith Butler's views are relevant. None of the discourse that talks about women (let alone her virtue) is articulated by a woman. It is hardly a representational discourse. It functions to distort, not support, women. The anti-woman discourse is based on the wrong assumption that all women are

alike, "...the assumption that the term WOMEN denotes a common identity...a stable signifier that commands the asset of those whom it purports to describe and represent..."Butler 3.Obviously, this poem deals with some human being whose gender is feminine. However,

"If one is a woman that is surely not all one is; the term fails to be exhaustive..." (Butler, p. 3). The term's "'presumed universality and unity of the subject...generates...exclusion'" (Butler4). Women are excluded and discriminated against as a result of the "identity politics" (Butler 4) which seeks to see the representation of women through the matrix of prohibition, repressive, and regulatory structures. (Butler 35)"The ...reactionary theories...universalize the subordination of women."(Butler 36)

The virtuous lady in this song is a woman. But, this is her gender, rather than her entire identity. John Donne, despite all his Metaphysical philosophy, relished to see women as creatures of the feminine gender, hardly having any other attribute or characteristic features. To him, she is only a sex object. Thus, as long as any woman could be all women or vice versa, Donne cares very little to give his readers a character sketch of the cheap woman he describes .He can pass a verdict that even the most virtuous lady will have illicit relationships with three men simultaneously. This verdict replaces the character description, because it obviously functions as a character analysis to him, which is, in the light of the analysis above, what matters for him most to make his song amusing and entertaining at the expense of the truth. His poetic achievement comes from the distortion of the women's image.

### **Duke Ferdinand of Calabria in *The Duchess of Malfi***

Just as John Donne thinks that his virtuous mistress will be false to two or three before he goes home, Duke Ferdinand of Calabria can imagine in his mind's eye that his sister is indulging in an illicit relationship with a bargeman, a wood-yard laborer, and a squire (Act II, scene v, lines 57-60) at one go. In a related context, Frederick Allen calls the readers' attention that Donne and Webster share similarities:

"Webster is like Donne in his meditative energy and his skepticism, in his perception of the irony and pathos of life. With Webster the meditative energy is as marked a characteristic as is his dramatic genius." (Webster: 312)

Thus, the mind's eye of the Duke, like the imaginative energy of Donne's persona in his "Song" is at its best in utterances expressing self-induced fantasies of lust and fornication. Duke Ferdinand is the twin brother of the Duchess of Malfi, the tragic heroine of the play by John Webster (1570- 1624). THE DUCHESS OF MALFI (performed in

1613, published in 1624) makes it clear that this duke and his brother the Cardinal allow themselves what they deny their sister. They are led into sinful and carnal temptations. Yet, they dare judge the Duchess whose sin is marriage to her steward Signor Antonio, who is a commoner rather than a royal figure.

The Duchess and Antonio are lawfully and legally married but the sinful Cardinal is in sinful relationship with Julia, who is Signor Castruccio's wife, as revealed in Act II, scene iv. But, it is in Act II, scene v, that Ferdinand reveals how the Italian men of the Renaissance look down upon women even from the highest class, even from the same family. Women are regarded as sex objects. Ferdinand believes that the family honor may easily be defiled. He imagines the Duchess with her husband in their private chambers:

Ferdinand: Methinks I see her laughing,-

Excellent hyena! Talk to me somewhat quickly,

Or my imagination will carry me

To see her in the shameful act of sin.

Act II, scene v, lines 52-55

The duke, just as the men in the previous sections, has morbid imagination. He goes on to imagine that the Duchess is sinning with a sailor, a laborer, a carpenter, or a squire. Finally, he decides to kill her. He carries on his sick fancies and sexual fantasies to  
say:

Till I know who mates my sister, I will not stir;

That known, I'll find scorpions to string my whips,

And fix her in general eclipse.

Act II scene v, lines 93-95

In the above, it is evident that the powerful male may pass a moral verdict on any woman regardless of her rank. The Duke chooses the lowest lexical items to incriminate his sister, using the word "mate" to describe marriage. Virtue and vice are reflexes of a hypothetical form of sexual conduct that exists only in the accuser's pathological brains.

There may be criticism against Othello for mistreating his wife on cultural basis of East vs. West, or Black vs. White. But, Ferdinand's condemnation of his own sister's conduct proves that the Renaissance men, regardless of their cultural background and ethnicity, are ready to accuse their wives, sisters, dependent women, and to punish them with death on grounds of suspicions only. Naturally, it must be logical to assume that these men want to silence any potential criticism against the conduct of their families and households. Being a Duke, Ferdinand must combat the source of trouble, even if it were his own sister.

Eventually, the Duke uses Bosola to get the Duchess killed. She was a loving sister to her brothers, but she ends up underestimated, abused, and murdered by her own family members. According to Emile Legouis, the Duchess shares some qualities with Desdemona:

"The Duchess recalls Desdemona ...Bosola, the monster, the tool of the two brothers, is modeled on Iago." (Webster: 321)

The dominantest part is scarcely murdering a helpless virtuous woman, but the readiness to charge her with the allegation that she is cheap and fallen. The dominantty of such men against women must be motivated by the men's sensitive positions as political leaders of their communities.

## **Conclusions**

The anonymous author of THE ARABIAN NIGHTS (956AD) used a number of utterances and expressions that articulated a universal theme to communicate the dominant men's outlook to women .This theme is marital fidelity, loyalty, and faithfulness vs. adultery, disloyalty, and marital infidelity. The anonymous Arab author set up the archetype of the jealous male in the personality of King Shahryar. He is much more than jealous. He is a jealous monarch. The Arab narrator, however, managed to balance the dominant monarch's discourse with a feminine counter discourse, i. e, Shahrazad's antidote to outwit the King.

The discourse of marital infidelity is connected with a universal theme, the male tendency to incriminate women. Human nature is similar despite the cultural background, the time, and the place. Male dominantty starts with insults and hate speech, ending up with dominantty and murder, because the male happens to be a powerful monarch, general, duke, or cardinal. This discourse is founded in deceptions that lead to tragic death and destruction.

The English writers of the Renaissance produced a similar discourse to Shahryar's in OTHELLO," Song: Go and Catch a Falling Star, and THE DUCHESS OF MALFI.

But, they failed to produce a counter discourse like that of Shahrazad in the said works. They abstained from depicting a western version of Shahrazad. Women to them, even if they were faithful Empresses, Queens, and Duchesses, are liable to face the disparaging discourse of the dominant husband, the cynic lover, or the ruthless brother. Adultery is the implicit word in all the conversations among the characters in the works discussed above. There is very little change of heart or mind among the men, or the discourse of men, found in THE ARABIAN NIGHTS till THE DUCHESS OF MALFI. The injustice against the women is a matter taken for granted, never seriously challenged by men, even though it is abhorred by the victimized men. This is an important indicator that women in the West lacked the courage of a Muslim woman, a noble character like Shahrazad motivated by the willingness to go as far as self- sacrifice. Thus, it is the Woman in THE ARABIAN NIGHTS who has the traditional final say;

“Then, at the break of dawn, Shahrazad went silent.”

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