THE PLACE OF PERSIAN ART WITHIN THE VISUAL ASCENDANCIES OF KAY NIELSEN

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INTRODUCTION

The golden age of illustration spanned the years between the development of photomechanical reproduction in the 1870s and the depression which followed World War One. It was an era of innovation in illustration, especially in England which attracted many foreign illustrators to its flourishing book industry. In 1912 a young Danish artist, Kay Nielsen, arrived in London. He was to become the third great gift book illustrator, along with Arthur Rackham and Edmund Dulac, although he eventually drifted into obscurity. It is Kay Nielsen and his work which are the subject of this dissertation.

Nielsen's work demonstrates his synthesis of many artistic influences. However in most assessments of his illustrations the presence of a Persian ascendancy receives only scant attention. Analysis of its effect on Nielsen is confined to a few lines, while the secondary influences of Beardsley and Japan attract greater attention. In my dissertation I will attempt to redress this balance. Through a thorough examination of his work I shall reveal its position as the major visual ascendancy in his illustration.

My dissertation is divided into four chapters. The first two chapters provide the background material necessary for the main topics of discussion, which occupy the latter two, more important sections. Chapter one consists of a brief outline of Nielsen's life and the European book production and illustration of that period. Also considered are the contemporary social conditions which affected the aesthetics of artists, illustrators and the general public. In this way I hope to give a clearer picture of Nielsen and his work by placing them within their social and artistic context.

Chapter two contains a concise description of the origins and characteristics of Persian art. Here I point out the Persian artist's treatment of perspective, interior and exterior scenes, figures and animals and describe his use of colour, pattern and motif. This will avoid confusion in the next chapter when I discuss the presence of these characteristics in Nielsen's work.

Chapter three forms the central part of the dissertation. Here I examine the emergence of Persian influence on various elements in Nielsen's illustration. I assess its effects on Nielsen's use of borders, his treatment of perspective and his line work. Then I discuss its influence on his pattern and motif and his depiction of exterior and interior scenes and their characters. Finally I consider its modification of Nielsen's use of colour. I evaluate these effects by analysing each of Nielsen's books in turn, rather than by discussing their presence in his work as a whole. By taking this chronological approach I feel it is possible to give a more accurate picture of the stylistic development of Nielsen's work. While most of Nielsen's books contain both black and white, and colour illustrations, I am purely concerned with his colour work which is the most successful and also the most relevant to my discussion.

After establishing the extent of Persian influence in Kay Nielsen's work, I examine the reasons for its presence in chapter four. Here I consider the effects of exoticism on the Europe of Nielsen's time and hence on the artist himself. Then I outline the increase in public and academic interest in Persian art in the early 20th century which brought it to the attention of many artists and illustrators including Nielsen. Another route via which

Persian art reached Nielsen was that of the Ballet Russes, which caused a sensation when it performed in Paris in 1909 and 1910. I examine how its Persian based sets and costumes, designed by Baskt affected Nielsen, who was living in Paris at the time.

Finally I trace the similarities between Nielsen's clients and those of the Persian miniaturist which produced similar demands on both artists. This resulted in their shared aims and interests which was ultimately another major factor in Nielsen's adoption of Persian art as his major visual influence. Thus through a logical and thorough analysis of his illustrations, I hope to establish Persian art as the main artistic ascendancy in Nielsen's work, and to examine how and why this occurred.

CHAPTER 1

A Brief Biography
Contemporary Book Production

A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY

Kay Nielsen was born in 1886 in Copenhagen, where his parents were well known figures in Danish theatre. His prosperous background allowed him to persue his artistic studies in Paris, where he lived between 1904 and 1912. He then moved to London, which was a main centre for the book industry at the time. His first exhibition at the Dowdeswell and Dowdeswell gallery comprised of various black and white illustrations done in Paris and a series of illustrations for The Book of Death, based on the story of Pierrot. He then received a commission from Hodder and Stoughton, major gift book publishers and subsequently illustrated four collections of fairytales for them. These were In Power and Crinoline, East of the Sun and West of the Moon, Hans Andersen's Tales and Hansel and Gretel. During this period between 1912 and 1936 he also collaborated with the Danish theatre director Johannes Poulsen on sets and costumes for productions at the Royal Theatre, Copenhagen. Between 1918 and 1922 Nielsen worked on a set of illustrations for A Thousand and One Nights but they were never published during his lifetime. In 1930 he illustrated Red Magic which was published by Jonathan Cape, and was his last book. In 1936 Nielsen travelled to America with Poulsen for a production of 'Jedermann' but Poulsen died there and Nielsen stayed on in America. He briefly worked for Walt Disney but was unhappy both with the medium of animation and his relationship with Disney who was a difficult employer. Eventually he left in 1941 and moved to Los Angeles where he executed a number of murals. However he drifted into obscurity and died impoverished, in 1957.

Circumstances seem to have robbed Nielsen of the fame that he deserved. Certainly at his best his line was as fluid as Rackham and his colour as invigorating as Dulac's. However a change in the bookmarket resulting from the social disruption of two world wars conspired against him. He did not have time to fully establish his reputation as an illustrator and his work was soon forgotten. However in the last 10 years (since David Larkins' Fantastic Kingdom) Nielsen's work is being remembered and reassessed. In 1977 his illustrations for A Thousand and One Nights were published for the first time. Kay Nielsen's place among he great illustrators of the "golden age" of book production is being posthumously established as his work reaches a wider audience than ever before. As Susan Meyer says "He has returned to an adoring public, home at last" (14, p209).

CONTEMPORARY BOOK PRODUCTION

Nielsen's work cannot be properly assessed without first placing it within its correct context, both socially and in terms of book production and illustration. In part four I will examine the specific social and aesthetic reasons for the presence of Persian art in Nielsen's visual ascendancies. However at this point it is necessary to place his work within the more general context of book production and the book market of the time.

Kay Nielsen belonged to the end of what is known as 'the golden age of illustration'. It was called this because it was a time of unprecedented interest in illustrated books especially 'gift books'. These were lavishly

illustrated and bound books for which illustrators such as Arthur Rackham (1867-1939) and Edmund Dulac (1882-1953) were famous. The development of gift books was one result of the major growth in book production at the end of the 19th and early 20th century. There were three main areas which influenced book production and they were all at least party to the effect of the industrial revolution, which altered Europe so profoundly towards the end of the 19th century. The industrial revolution produced developments in printing, as in all areas of technology and resulted in great social change. It also affected the aesthetic sensibilities of the time inspiring a number of movements which were a reaction against it. It is these three changes which I will deal with now.

The industrial revolution saw extraordinary changes in the methods of printing, especially in the area of printing illustrations. Photochemical reproduction developed in the 1870's allowed the artist's drawings to be transferred photographically onto the printing block - leaving the original intact and producing an exact replica of it. This eliminated the middle man who was usually an engraver. Then by the 1890s full colour work could be reproduced by 'process' using colour half-tones. The new methods allowed very accurate reproductions of the originals. Artists who benefited from this first were those who worked mainly in black and white, such as Aubrey Beardsley, Charles Ricketts and E.J. Sullivan. These new methods of colour reproduction were not exploited fully until the early 20th century and gift book illustrators were among the first who really used them successfully.

The whole nature of illustration changed as a result of these new processes. Previously illustration had been

indistinct from caricature but now it began to be respected for its own qualities. Illustration rose in public appreciation and publishers soon realised its potential. They saw that books would sell more with better illustrations and that people would even buy books for their illustrations rather than the text. More money was directed towards illustration and illustrators became important with their influence often extending beyond the book world to fine art, theatre and ballet [as in Beardsley's case]. England became a centre of book production and as well as indigenous illustrators such as Rackham, Hugh Thomson, the Robinson brothers and the Brock brothers, many foreign illustrators came to work there. These included Edmund Dulac (from France), Jean de Bosschere (from Belgium), Frank Cheyne (from U.S.A.) and in 1911 Kay Nielsen.

The Industrial Revolution not only produced processes allowing the development of full colour illustration but it also provided a market for them as well. The rise of the middle class was one of the major social changes resulting from industrial growth. This new social group could afford minor luxuries such as illustrated books and subsequently became the principal market for the new "gift book". These books with expensive bindings and tipped in illustrations were intended more for adults than children, and were perhaps the precursors of the 'coffee table' books of today. The best known gift book illustrators were Arthur Rackham and Edmund Dulac, as already mentioned and later Kay Nielsen who was the last great gift book illustrator. Other artists such as Willy Pogany, Alastair and John Austen did have some work published in gift book form but were not its chief exponents.

As with all social change, the Industrial Revolution provoked a corresponding change in the art and aesthetics of the period. The major artistic movements of this time were united in their criticism and rejection of Industrialisation and its effects. The philosophy of exoticism provided one means of escape from industrialisation - it urged people to turn to non-industrialised countries and cultures.

Interest in India, China, Japan and later Persia soared by new accessibility and exploration. Exoticism manifested itself in many movements, but most significantly in the principles of the Aesthetics, the pre-Raphaelites and the Arts and Crafts movement. While the Aesthetics with their theory of 'art for art's sake' and interest in Japanese art and the pre-Raphaelites [who embraced a romantic medieralism] were major movements which affected design and consequently book production. Many artists and writers of the latter 19th century such as Ruskin, Carlyle, Walt Whitman and William Morris wished to return to a simpler, more natural lifestyle. It was Morris who became the founder of the Arts and Crafts Movement. He wished to produce hand made objects in a machine age, based on an admiration for folk art and the system and works of medieval craftsmanship. In 1891 he founded his own press, the Kelmscott Press (1891-98) which he himself used as did Burne-Jones and Spenser. Many other private presses were soon founded in England (such as Ricketts' Vale Press), America, Germany and Holland. The books which were produced were rather exclusive but popular bookmakers did not remain unaffected by changing aesthetics either. Here, as in the new areas I have already mentioned there was a distinct turn towards escapism both in the textual material and illustrations. Books such as The Ryubiat of Omar Kayhyahm were typical of

the period. The text was pleasant, undemanding with elements of fantasy and exoticism. They provided an alternative to the ugliness of the reality of industrial Europe. Their precursors where the decorative, nostalgic books of Walter Crane (1845-1915), Caldecott (1846-86) and Greenaway (1846-1901). However these books were intended for children, many illustrated books of the early 20th century were not. It is here that "gift books" occupy their special place, fulfilling their function of entertainment and escapism. They permitted the adult population a welcome retreat from reality into the realms of fantasy and the exotic. It is within this context that great illustrators such as Rackham, Dulac and Nielsen practiced their art.

CHAPTER 2

A Synopsis of Persian Painting
Characteristics of Persian Painting

A SYNOPSIS OF THE HISTORY OF PERSIAN PAINTING

Before discussing the presence of Persian artistic characteristics in Nielsen's work it is essential to examine what these characteristic are. To compliment this, I will give a brief history of Persian art and its origins. The latter is particularly important as will be revealed later in the analysis on non-Persian influences in Nielsen's work.

The term 'Persian Art' with reference to painting on a flat surface really only concerns large paintings on walls (murals) or small paintings in books (illustrations). In fact painting with canvas and oilswas unknown in Persia until the late 16th century. After this Persian painting went into rapid decline, only producing pastiches of previous masterpieces so when the phrase 'Persian painting' appears it usually means painting on either walls or in books executed before the late 16th century. Paintings appearing in illuminated books are called minatures. [This comes from the latin word "minium" which was a red colour used in medieval European illustrations, the "miniator" was the artist who used the colour minium, today he/she is a minaturist.] The minature in Islamic art is the equivalent of the European codices of the medieval period. The books in which Persian minatures appear vary from pocket size to large volumes 50cms in height with the minatures in sizes from a few centimetres wide to 30 cm high. As in Europe, Persian minatures were painted in workshops or ateliers financed by a patron, usually royalty. However the book as an object occupies a place in Islamic society which it never has or had in Europe. It is sacred both as an object and for its text and even pictorial books had a much greater

status in Persia than they had in Europe. Thus while in Europe a building or a painting was the usual way a ruler proclaimed his authority, in Persia the production of a book was often the way a king chose to mark his power. Unsurprisingly book production became one of Islam's highest art forms.

Islamic art itself contains elements of the art of many cultures. This is a reflection of its turbulent history and many conquests. By the 8th century Islam ruled over a vast empire from Iran in the east to Spain in the west and from Egyptian the north to Syria in the south. The caliph had his seat in Damascus but later moved to Baghdad. The Islamic world was ruled from here and it was the centre of trade with China, the Far East and Asia. It was during this time that elements of Sassafid and Byzantine art became assimilated into the Persian culture. Wars and conflicts splintered the empire into regions with their own rulers. This increased the number of educated, wealthy patrons producing added cultural activity including painting. In the 13th century there was renewed trade with China as a result of the Seljuk and Mongol conquests and this had a significant effect on Persian culture, especially their painting. Elements of Chinese art such as their draughtsmanship, knobbly trees and hills and characteristic clouds called "tai" were synthesised by the Persian decorative sense into pictures of great vigour. Then in 1220 the Mongol invasion under Jenghis Khan began and by 1258 they had united Mesopotamia and Persia under their conquests until 1336. At this point Persian minature painting began to form characteristic traits and by the late 19th century Persian minatures had developed their own individual style. This was based on their own indigenous workshops, the Chinese influence and the Mesopotamian

influence with its bright colours and solid figures assimilated during the classical era in Persian painting, under the Timurid rulers in Shiraz and Herat. Shiraz minatures had brilliant colours, lavish landscapes and freehand birds and flowers in the borders and by the end of the 15th century it became the centre for export of paintings. Herat produced less quantities of minatures but they were of superior quality, with softer colours, greater detail and smaller figures. From 1453 two Turkoman tribes ruled Persia and the Timurid tradition continued at Shiraz but with greater simplification of style. The Safawid rule of Persia reunited the country (1502-1577) and renewed confidence at the court saw the peak of Persian minature painting. The main centres for painting were the old mongol capital of Tabriz and the former Timurid capital of Herat, where one of the greatest minaturists worked. "Bihzad" produced refined, elegant minatures and generally the development of Safarid painting throughout Persia mirrored their success in war and rule. However in the late 16th century Persia's contact with Europe increased significantly and under the Safavids trade and communication achieved what successive invasions and wars had not. Throughout the history of Persia, battles and conquests had failed to adversely affect minature painting but exposure to Western art effectively halted the evolution of classical Persian minatures. Persian painting became inhibited by awareness of the art of totally alien cultures. Ironically the beauty and refinement of Persian minatures was generally unappreciated in Europe until their rediscovery in the late 19th and early 20th century. It is the discovery of Persian minature painting by a particular 20th century illustrator that is the basis for this dissertation.

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF PERSIAN PAINTING

At this point I will give a basic description of the characteristics of Persian minature painting relevant to my discussion. This will avoid confusion in the subsequent examination of the influence of Persian art of Kay Nielsen. To be considered are the Persian approach to form, perspective, morphology of figures and scenes (exterior and interior); colour; and pattern and motif.

The Persian approach to the depiction of three dimensional space on the two dimensional surface of a page was radically unlike the European method. They were unconstrained by the limitations of converging or fixed view-point perspective. Instead they adopted a variety of view points and unconsciously, several perspective systems. This multiple perspective was useful to the artist for two important reasons. It granted him greater freedom of narration by allowing important objects or elements to be viewed directly and with clearly visible surfaces. This is in contrast to the oblique view of most surfaces produced by fixed view point perspective, used in western art. This direct view of many surfaces also allowed the pattern which covered them to remain undisturbed while fixed viewpoint perspective distorts most surfaces and their pattern. The idea that pattern should be sacrificed in favour of the illusion of three dimensional space was alien to Persian artists. This simultaneity of vision was produced using different perspective systems as already mentioned. These include 'birds eye' (divergent) perspective which was used for depiction of floors, carpets and brooks, convergent perspective was used for figures and animals, while rectangular and square objects were usually depicted

according to parallel perspective which rendered their sides as parallel (which they are in reality) as opposed to convergent which fixed view point perspective would do. Vertical perspective is widely used in Persian art and is based on a continuously rising view point. This results in objects and figures being placed further up the page in relation to their distance from the viewer.

The morphology of Persian minatures is also very schematic with treatment of characters and scenes varying little from traditional formulae. As well as figures, whole compositions were copied from one manuscript to another. The artists preferred a strongly unified composition rather than innovation. Indeed innovation in general did not interest Persian artists as it did their Western contemporaries.

Figure 1 provides an example of the typical Persian treatment of an interior scene. The room is presented with no side walls. The back wall is viewed obversely, from one viewpoint while one floor is also seen obversely from a bird's-eye view point. The bird's-eye view of the floor allows the painter to depict clearly its decoratively patterned furnishings. Sometimes doors or other elements of scenery appear attached to the edges of the interior like the movable wings of a theatre set, and a cupola is often added.

Classical Persian landscapes for exterior scenes were painted in the styles of either the shiraz or Tabriz ateliers until 1960 when elements of both styles were combined. Shiraz landscapes have high horizons and 'fungal' rocks while those from Tabriz have straighter,

lower horizons with large areas of blue or gold sky and a row of trees or stumps along the horizon. Ariel perspective is generally used for depiction of the landscape in all minatures, while the figures which are placed against this background are rendered frontally from another view point. Hills often have a river or a stream, and to separate them they are painted in various colours such as green, yellow or blue. The Chinese influenced 'fungal' rocks are usually tilted and appear in the same stylised way irrespective of their situation. However not all of the Persian landscape is composed of rocks. There are also large ares of flat land with delicate plants and flowers at regular intervals. Natural forms such as plants, trees and rocks are presented a idealised and are very beautifully depicted. Trees are usually laden with flowers and other plants are often enlarged in disproportion to the figures. The treatment of the sky in Persian art is also quite unique and adheres to a rigid formula. The sky is rendered in flat gold or lapis lazuli blue and a flight of birds and stars is often set against it. Clouds appear in blue or gold and their characteristic persian style is derived from the Chinese cloud scroll or 'tai'.

The physiognomical treatment of Persian figures correlates with the treatment of the exterior and interior settings in their conformance to a series of stereotypes. There is a repetition of physiognomy and pose throughout Persian minatures. Figures were often copied from previous books or traced by a method called poucing.

Persian men appear as tall and slender with sloping shoulders and small waists. Women are similar except smaller and wear long, loose clothing. Their faces lack

expression and are based on the traditional Islamic-Persian models of beauty which were strongly influenced by Mesopotamian art in the 13th century. They are depicted with oval faces small noses and mouths, gently arching eyebrows and have almond shaped eyes which gaze sideways. Certain techniques such as foreshortening are never employed for Persian figures and full frontal or full profile are rare. Three-quarter profiles are the most popular and movements are stiff and stylised, following models dating from the 14th century. Communication between characters is also conveyed through a series of stereotypes. Figures are turned towards one another in three-quarter profile, with minor characters looking at main ones. A figure with arms out, pointing at someone is speaking to the character at whom they are pointing, an outstretched hand without extended fingers signals appeal, especially if the head is downturned while two raised hands signify horror, dismay or gratitude and a finger on the mouth means surprise. This series of sterotyped gestures is necessary as the figures lack any facial expression to indicate what is going on.

The treatment of animals in Persian art can be divided into two categories with separate approaches. Deer an horses are the most common animals in Persian art and the artist treats them in a method similar to the figures. They conform to a stereotyped image of beauty with small faces, fleshy bodies and thin legs with long tails. Less common animals receive a different, much more realistic treatment without limitations of stereotypes. Neither the animals nor the figures break through the surface of the picture. No attempt is made to achieve a three dimensional effect with them either through specific poses (which demand foreshortening) or through chiaroscuro to create volume. The figures and animals are arranged

simply as part of the pattern and while they do fulfil their narrative function this is not of supreme importance to the Persian artist.

The use of colour is one of the most distinguishing features of Persian art. Both medieval Europe and Persia acquired their knowledge of pigments from Byzantine art but Persian knowledge and interest developed to a much greater extent. Persian colours are very brilliant and this is partly because they are opaque like enamel and can thus reflect light. This gives them a gem like quality. Blue and green were made from the ground mineral pigments of Lapis Lazuli and Malachite, respectively. The only vegetable dye used was indigo, and all pigments including gold and silver were bound with albumen or gum. Indeed there was much use of blue, gold and silver as these were the most expensive colours to make and thus their amount of use indicated the wealth of the patron. The treatment of the sky in Persian minatures is especially lavish and it is usually painted in lapis-lazuli blue or in flat gold. Red was also a popular colour and crimson, carmine and vermilion highlights are frequently used. Earth colours of brown and reddish hues are also favoured by Persian artists.

Another factor in the brilliance of Persian colours is their application. The artist painted well defined areas of pure colour, flatly applied. As there is little use of tone, forms are distinguished by different, contrasting colours. These are applied to indicate the forms and then details were added using similar areas of flat colour. Shading was used in fixed areas such as on tiles, but its function was purely decorative and not to create volume. Highlights were also used and these tiny areas of

bright colour enhanced the jewel like effect of the minature, but again they were only ornamental. As with the treatment of perspective and the morphology of scenes and figures, the Persian artist was unconstrained by attention to realism and his use of colour is also as liberated. In the minatures colour is rarely indicative of the or time of day, as the artist concentrates on achieving beautiful polychrome effects.

The Persian approach to form is not like that of the illusionism of European art. Form is represented through colour and line rather than aped by chiaroscuro and fixed viewpoint perspective. There is a lightness and lyricism in Persian line and it is decorative yet disciplined. While Persian art inherited its sense of colour and pattern from Mesopotamia its linear nature comes from China and it has a delicacy rarely equalled in European art.

Perhaps the single most integral characteristic of Persian art is its use of pattern and motif. Sometimes it is difficult to decide whether pattern and motifs function as decoration for the painting or if the painting functions as vehicle pattern and motif. The truth probably lies between the two. Certainly Persian paintings are suffused with decoration which is created by two methods. One is the depiction of objects which are normally embellished (such as carpets, drapery, clothing, buildings and plants). The other is more complicated and involves the use of simple elements to create more pattern. This can be seen in the way in which the artist paints plants of equal size at regular intervals across the landscape. Thus in Persian art the landscape looks like a beautiful piece of fabric, with its regular pattern. Common motifs

found in Persian art often have a geometric basis such as the arabesque, interlacing and the polygonal star as well as other elaborate mathematical shapes. These originated during the Mongol period while lotus, chrysanthemum and cloudscroll or "tai" motifs are evidence of Chinese influence. Persian minatures are successful because while they are profusely decorated there is an underlying order in this pattern, especially in the geometrically based motifs. This allows a use of pattern which although lavish is tightly controlled and which is a major feature of all Islamic art.

CHAPTER 3

THE BOOK OF DEATH

Having placed Nielsen's work in its proper context, socially, artistically and regarding contemporary book production it is now possible to trace the emergence of the Persian artistic characteristics which I have just identified. I will assess each book in chronological order to examine the emergence of Persian influence on Nielsen's work. The influence of Japan and Aubrey Beardsley on Kay Nielsen must be included in this as not alone were they initially important elements in his work but they are cohesively linked with his change of interest to the visual ascendancies of Persian art.

Aubrey Beardsley, born in 1822 died nineteen years before Kay Nielsen produced his first complete set of illustrations, in 1911. These were done for The Book of Death, a melancholy tale on the life of Pierrot. By this time the controversy over Beardsley's subject matter and iconography had dwindled. A new generation of European admirers appeared and Marion Hepworth Dixon notes that 'the widespread influence of the Aubrey Beardsley school on the continent' saw the emergence of 'Leon Baskt, Alastair and one of the latest new recruits, Kay Nielsen, all bearing witness to the master in their several special manners' (7, p119). Beardsley was a master of black and white ink drawing and it was actually Nielsen's favourite medium too [in an interview in Sondag he says "I think ... its the most beautiful, but in England books only sold if illustrations were in colour"]. Thus it is almost certain that Nielsen studied the work of Beardsley, captivated not only by his drawing and daring compositional devices but also by the whole mood of the illustrations. 'It was the fastidiousness, the ostentation... the unwholesome excess

of... Beardsley which most captured the imagination of the impulsive and pessimistic young Nielsen' (33, p22).

Beardsley's influence on Nielsen was initially very strong. It permeates many elements of The Book of Death from the tragic aspect, to the use of line which creates pattern and texture. This is evident in his illustration of figure 87 where tiny dot-like stipples are used to create a pattern of checks and flowers on the tablecloth. He also uses his line very effectively to produce the luxurious pattern of Pierrot's ruff and costume. He then offsets this against a flat black background, another favourite Beardsley device. Again in Figure 88 he contrasts the flat black mass of the hill with the delicate pattern of the falling white roses. But as Marion Hepworth Dixon notes 'if he assimilated and made his own Beardsley's method of spatter and stipple as he did much of his sense of line, it is clear the new-comer knows the uses of a jumping board' (7, p 125). As with all his artistic sources, Nielsen manipulates Beardsley's devices for his own uses.

The Japanese influence on Nielsen is quite difficult to assess as it is unclear whether it came directly through oriental prints or via its presence in Beardsley's work. It is probably a combination of both and can be seen in the austere landscape; very high or very low composition; the equal emphasis on positive and negative space and the contrast between plain and decorated areas. All these elements are clearly evident in The Book of Death. Other Japanese influences present are the flattened composition and disinterest in chiaroscuro, and the depiction of three dimensional space. These latter elements and the linear nature of the work are common to both Persian and

Japanese art. Thus while The Book of Death shows no specific influences of Persian art it is notable for the evidence of the non-European artistic ascendancy of Japan. Japanese and Persian art share many similar approaches and thus while The Book of Death does not predict the strong Persian influence to come, it does prepare for it.

IN POWDER AND CRINOLINE

In Power and Crinoline appeared in 1913. By any criteria Nielsen's illustrations are very successful but considering that it is his first published work and first real experiment with colour, he achieves an extraordinary level of sophistication and confidence. He still draws on the influence of Beardsley and Japanese art but independently of this there is strong emphasis on line, pattern and colour.

Kay Nielsen's attitude to perspective is similar to his approach to pictorial realism in a freedom from constraint by either. Very few of the 26 colour illustrations have a clear vanishing point. Those that do such as Figure 2 and Figure 3 do not have a large part of their composition affected by it. Figure 3 is unusual in that a large proportion of the illustration (i.e. the ornamental hedges) is drawn according to fixed point perspective and thus has a three dimensional effect with a clear vanishing point. In most of the illustrations the elements do show limited diminution with distance from the viewer, but there is no clear vanishing point, as in figures 5 and 6. Some illustrations however contain only a flat foreground, and are so simplified that perspective is not even required. This is evident in Figures 7, 8 and 9.

In general Nielsen's work in In Power and Crinoline clearly shows that while he does not yet actively reject European perspective he is not interested in it or its resulting three dimensional effect.

The illustrations for In Power and Crinoline show Nielsen's wonderfully clean and descriptive line very clearly before it becomes overshadowed by other aspects of his style. A thin black line describes the elements and his use of line rather than chiaroscuro to create form is a non-European technique.Also alien to European art is the absence of shadow and single light source which is found in these illustrations, and indeed all his subsequent work.

Although the mood has changed from The Book of Death Nielsen's line is still strongly influenced by Beardsley's work. This is evident in his use of line to create texture in everything from frills to foliage and through particular techniques such as stipples, dots and thin parallel lines. His treatment of frills in the womens costumes of Figures 10,2 and 9 is very similar to Beardsley's delicately extravagant costumes, with their many frills and pleats. Again Nielsen's use of line to create the texture of the hedge in figure 4 and his use of stipple for grass of Figures 7 and 9, for example are definitely influenced by Beardsley. The thin, parallel lines of the girl's dress in Figure 4 and those of the drapes at the top of Figure 3 are very reminiscent of Beardsley's decoration The Rape of the Lock in particular. The strong line of Beardsley's and Japanese art were to remain after other influences from these sources disappeared. It must be noted that the decorative and strongly linear nature of Persian art, was to have a

compatable approach to Nielsen's use of line and flatness of composition.

While Nielsen's line and compositional flatness undergoes little change as a Persian influence emerges, due to their similarity in approach, the treatment of pattern alters significantly. This is due to the divergent natures of the Persian and oriental approach to pattern. Susan Meyer says of the illustrations for In Powder and Crinoline that 'The influence of Japanese art is reflected in the overall composition and in the manner in which pattern is used' (14,p79). This is true in that Nielsen uses the Japanese technique of contrasting pattern against negative space and undecorated areas. However the pattern itself, its intensity, variety and its composition exhibits the influence of Persian art.

Nielsen shares a love of patterned fabrics such as drapery and clothing with the Persian artist. This is evident in the extravagant costumes of In Powder and Crinoline such as those in Figures 11 and 12 and Prince Souci's floral jacket in Figure 13. Nielsen's illustrations also contain a wide variety of pattern such as those in Figure 2. Here there are the various floral patterns of the girls' dresses and rose bush, a geometric check pattern is produced by the black and white floor tiles while the curtains exhibit a different pattern. Figure 14 shows a similar combination of various floral and geometric patterns against a Japanese influenced Prussian blue sky. In Figure 3 we can see the very intense patterning of the floral curtains, the pattern of the linework on the grey drapes at the top and the wooden floorboards, while outside the green highlights on the hills all combine to produce a picture suffused with pattern.This is an

indication of the vigorous use of pattern, associated with Persian art, which was to steadily to increase in Nielsen's work.

Another similarity to the Persian treatment of pattern is the way in which Nielsen uses pre-existing elements (such as flowers) to create new pattern in an artificial manner. He places blue flowers of equal size at regular intervals across the hills in both Figures 7 and 9. This produces a fabric-like pattern on the ground which is very similar to that in Persian minatures. In both of these previous illustrations the pattern is intensified by tiny, evenly spaced stipples to evoke the texture of the grass.In Figure 12 Nielsen also uses the tiny leaves of the hedge to again create pattern as well as giving the Princess highly decorative costume.

The previous examples of the creation of a fabric-like pattern in the landscape also illustrates another Persian technique used by Nielsen. This is the highly detailed rendering of plants resulting in the depiction of their individual leaves and petals. This creates even more ornament simply because by drawing plants in detail Nielsen emphasises their natural pattern. Other examples include the white flowers and tree leaves of figure 5, the carefully drawn blue flowered plants of Figure 8 and the wonderful cabbages in Figure 15.

Another Persian technique of highlighting pattern used by Nielsen is that of placing it on a flat area of contrasting colour. This becomes particularly evident in his later work but its emergence can been seen in the use

of black against the delicate floral pattern of the curtains in Figure 3.

Nielsen's approach to pattern is Japanese in its contrast with the negative space of the sky. However the methods of its creation, its variety and use, look to the art of Persia, rather than to Nielsen's initial oriental and Beardsley influences.

Despite the similarity to Persian art in his use of pattern, Nielsen's cultural motifs In Powder and Crinoline are predominantly European or Japanese. The architectural setting of In Powder and Crinoline is certainly European. The style of the curtains in Figures 2,16 and 14 are quite Victorian and the wallpaper of the latter is the typical exoticism-influenced wallpaper which was popular at that time. The formal garden with its sculpted hedge in Figure 4 is also very English while the more natural garden of Figure 6, with its hump-backed bridge is certainly more Japanese. The hump-backed bridge motif appears again in Figure 10 as does another oriental motif - the Peacock. The presence of weeping trees in most of the garden scenes mentioned is another oriental motif.

The morphology of Japanese landscape is fundamentally different to the Persian approach and in In Powder and Crimoline it is the former that Nielsen uses. There is a very low composition in almost all the illustrations and their horizon line rarely rises more than one third up the page. This produces large expanses of sky and uses much negative space, which Nielsen washes with pale colours, hence creating austere landscapes similar to those in

oriental art. The very Japanese quality of Figure 7, 8 and 9 is due to this.

Nielsen's interior scenes also have a low composition, allowing only a limited view of the floor. this is the antithesis of the Persian approach to interiors. However, like the Persian artist he does use the floor space available as an opportunity for pattern of Figure 2 and the Beardsleyesque lines of the wooden floor in Figure 3.

In both of these illustrations the convergence of the floor lines indicate where the vanishing point of each picture lies. However, else where in his interiors there is little interest in the perspective or the creation of a three dimensional image. The rooms are viewed directly and have no side walls, which is the same approach as in Persian interiors. It has the effect of flattening the composition but evidently this does not concern Nielsen greatly. It is clear that the morphology of Nielsen's exteriors and interiors are effected by his Japanese approach to composition. However this method produces large areas of negative space, thus limiting his opportunities for pattern and decoration. Ultimately Nielsen will turn to the composition and morphology of Persian art which allows a much greater use of ornamentation.

Nielsen's figures conform to his sterotype of beauty in the same way as both Japanese and Persian figures do. Most have elongated bodies with long, thin , oval faces, they have red lips, small noses and large, long lashed eyes. Both men and women conform to this stereotype and really only their clothes and coiffures distinguish the feminine

men from the women. This differs with the Japanese approach to figures but is very similar to the physiognomical approach of the Persian artist. It can be clearly seen in Figure 2 for example, where close inspection of the girls and boys faces reveals how alike they are. Indeed the rigidity of Nielsen's adherence to his stereotype of beauty results in the almost identical appearance of all the faces of his characters. Only four times in twenty six illustrations does he deviate from his ideal. This occurs in his depiction of the fairy of Figure 17, the old woman in Figure 8, the elf in Figure 5 and the servant in Figure 16. In the first three examples the very nature of the characters: an old woman, and two fantastic creatures demand that they look different from the norm. So in effect the latter illustration is the only example of Nielsen voluntarily creating a different character.

Kay Nielsen's approach to his figures is similar to that of the Persian artist not only in his adherence to an ideal of beauty, resulting in their uniformity , male and female, but also in his lack of interest in expressing the emotions of these characters. Only the miserable face in the mirror of Figure 3 displays any overt emotion. Most of the characters have a muted air of melancholy or contentment, but little else. Even in Nielsen's first published work he clearly demonstrates his disinterest in either of the personalities or emotions of his characters. Colin White notes that ' the intention is decorative rather than narrative... Nielsen's figures are puppets, units in his pattern'...(26,p94). However it is clear that Persian figures are also arranged simply as part of the overall pattern and that they do not break the picture surface. Colin Whites observation is especially interesting when considering he is discussing a book (In

Powder and Crinoline) which does not even represent the apex of Persian influence on Nielsen.

Finally Nielsen's first book of colour illustrations certainly owes more to the Japanese and Chinese colourists than to Persian art. He uses delicate, muted, pastel colours and light washes for the sky. However there are some indications of the vibrant palette to come the vivid oranges and reds of Figures 14 and 2. Red highlights were often used in Persian paintings and early on Nielsen shows his love of them in the cockrels of Figures 14 and 5 and also in the servents costumes in Figure 10.

In Powder and Crinoline represents both Nielsen's published book and his first colour work. It reveals him as an artist carefully manipulating many influences yet remaining autotomous. Although it's among his earliest work Omar Austin notes the ' mature researches ' of Nielsen in In Powder and Crimoline. These researches are primarily from Japan and Beardsley but there are indications of emerging Persian influence. Nielsen's use of line, his disinterest in three dimensional representation, his use of colour and creation of negative space through a low composition all correlate to Japanese and Beardsley's techniques. Only the latter two techniques are incompatible with Persian art. However there are indications that Nielsen is interested in a brighter palette and this combines with the change in the composition in his later work marking the full emergence of Persian influence in his illustrations.

EAST OF THE SUN AND WEST OF THE MOON

East of The Sun and West of The Moon Nielsen's most highly regarded book, was published in 1914. Here he illustrates the Norwegian tales he must have heard as a child and Omar Austin observes ' the return of the very cultivated and modern artist to the archetypal world of the northern fairy tales ' (3, p8).

In In Powder and Crinoline the illustrations have no borders. However East of The Sun and West of The Moon sees the appearance of borders for the first time in Nielsen's work. Although they are very simple with flat colour and no decoration they have been painted with the illustrations and thus integral parts of them. Apart from their decorative function they emphasise the picture and unify the whole illustration. This is achieved painting them in a colour already in the illustration. It can be seen in Figure 18 where the red of the mans cloak is repeated in the border, or in Figure 28 where the blue of the waves also reappears in the border. In Figures 18 and 19 the brilliant red and burnt umber borders respectively clearly stand out against their pictures. This is a conscious decision by Nielsen and indicates his willingness to allow his borders focal importance. It prefigures the lavish borders which emerge in his later work.

Nielsen's approach to perspective in East of The Sun and West of The Moon is similar to that in In Powder and Crinoline, especially in his treatment of exterior scenes. Many of these scenes just depict the foreground and their simplification renders perspective superfluous. This can

be seen in Figures 20 and 21 for example. Elsewhere there is a nominal use of perspective in the decrease in size with distance from the viewer, as in the receding hills of Figure 18 and the forest of Figure 22.

In his treatment of the interior scenes however, Nielsen shows two separate uses of perspective. In Figure 23 although the whole image is very flat, the picture does have a known vanishing point which is indicated by the convergence of the floor boards. However 24 has a direct view of the back wall and also of the floor. The check pattern of the floor is viewed from a bird's-eye viewpoint while the back wall is seen from a different point. This is the first clear use of multiple perspective in Nielsen's work and like the Persian artist he uses it to create more pattern.

Nielsen's very flat illustrations, and his reluctance to use fixed view point perspective combined with the emergence of multiple perspective in his work indicates his disinterest in the representation of a three dimensional world. He is also unconcerned with creating three dimensional figures and, as in his two previous books, he uses line and colour to created flat images. Again he rejects the modelling of form through chiaroscuro and there is no single light source or cast shadow.

While Nielsen's line work is already suited to the emergence of Persian influence in his work his approach to pattern changes significantly. Although the low composition still present in East of the Sun and West of the Moon limits the amount of space available for pattern, there is a much greater variety of decoration.

There is a change from the romantic costumes of In Powder and Crinoline to more credible ones based on ethnic Scandinavian clothing. the mainly floral fabrics of In Powder and Crinoline give way to much more varied patterns. In figure 18 for example, there is a combination of floral material, Urnes style interlacing on the armour and also geometric ornamentation. This combination of floral and geometric pattern is one of the most distinctive elements of Persian art. Again Figure 23 shows the floral pattern of the bed canopy, the geometrical pattern of the man's trousers and the old woman's scarf and shirt, and the organic pattern of the wooden floor boards (rendered in Beardsleyesque pen and ink), which are similar to those in figure 3.

As mentioned already, the Persian artist introduces decoration into his composition by methods other than the straightforward depiction of patterned objects. He takes simple elements, such as flowers, and uses them in an abstract way to produce pattern. Nielsen adopts this technique in In Powder and Crinoline but it appears even more extensively in East of the Sun and West of the Moon. This can be seen in figures 18 and 25 where the detailed snowflakes are of equal size and are placed equidistant from each other, forming a delicate pattern. The Persian artist of fig. 26 uses the same technique with his stars creating "the heavens embroidered cloths". A similar treatment of flowers to form a pattern over the landscape is also widely used, and appears in figures 27, 25 and 21. In the latter two illustrations Nielsen places the flowers on flat areas of contrasting black, to highlight their patterned effect. It can be seen in the black band at the bottom of figure 27 and the dark band at the bottom of figure 25. In general while the low composition still limits the use of pattern in East of the Sun and West of

the Moon Nielsen has clearly devoted greater attention to it than in his previous work. This results in an increase in the variety of pattern which he uses and also the sophisticated way in which it is used. The increase in importance of pattern in his work briefly co-exists with his use of Japanese composition. This unusual combination gives East of the Sun and West of the Moon its unique qualities. It is also the last time that the Persian influence in Nielsen's work is subordinated by the Japanese aspect.

The illustrations in East of the Sun and West of the Moon certainly have a Scandinavian mood and Nielsen uses few Japanese motifs in them, apart from the foaming waves of figure 20 and 28 and the tree perched on a rock also in figure 20. However the Persian influence begins to assert itself on his motifs. The use of the curvilinear motif for the breeze of figures 28 and 21 is quite similar to the treatment of fire in figure 29. Both Nielsen and the Persian artist visualise the wind as an opportunity to create more pattern. Nielsen uses two different motifs for the sun in East of the Sun and West of the Moon. One appears in figure 20 and comes from European art-Nouveau origins, with its curvy rays. The other comes from figure 28 and its long, straight rays are the same as those in the Persian minature of figure 30. It is a sign of Nielsen's talent that he can use motifs from such diverse sources and integrate them so well within his illustrations.

The morphology of Nielsen's landscapes in East of the Sun and West of the Moon effectively echos the Scandinavian theme of the text. There are icy landscapes as in figures 18 and 21, dark forest which appear in figures 22

and 31 and images of the sea in figures 20 and 28. His interior scenes again display a lack of interest in evoking a three dimensional feeling, but this has already been discussed under the heading of perspective.

There is little change in Nielsen's approach to figures in East of the Sun and West of the Moon. Again they conform to the ideals of beauty established in In Powder and Crinoline and convey little emotion. The male faces are slightly more masculine than before, and indeed are rather reminiscent of Harry Clarke. They include the face of the north wind and the character in figure 18. However most of the men and women have very similar physiogonomies as seen in figures 27 and 23. Some of the figures in East of the Sun and West of the Moon are engaged in strenuous activity, such as in figure 28 and the prince marching across the snow in figure 18. Although propelled by strong diagonals they still seem stiff and exhibit no great effort. Like the Persian artist, Nielsen is as unconcerned with portraying the corporeality of his characters, as he is their emotions or separate identities.

In East of the Sun and West of the Moon the Persian influence on Nielsen's colour scheme is more apparent than it is in his composition or morphology. The pastel shades of the oriental colourists are still present, as in figures 21, 24, and 27. However Nielsen also uses a new, more brilliant palette strongly modified by Persian art.

Persian art is characterised by its vivid and intensely pure colours. Nielsen's interest in this palette has developed rapidly from its tentative use in In Powder and

Crinoline. Thus when Nielsen chooses to echo the Nordic character of the tales through an extensive use of blue he uses bright, strong hues. This can be seen in the dark blue of the sky in figure 25 and the rich blend of pure blue into purple in figure 19.

Other than gold, the most frequently used colour in Persian art is a deep, flat ultramarine. It appears in Nielsen's illustrations for figures 23, 20 and 22 and clearly shows his admiration for the palette of the Persian artist. Nielsen also employs the Persian use of highlights which produces the characteristic "jewelled" effect of Persian art. This is evident in the red decoration of the girl's dress in figure 22. Red highlights are also very popular with Persian artists and can be seen in figure 30. Other highlights appear in the orange dots decorating the black clouds of figure 20, the white leaves of the tree against the blue sky in figure 22 and the white stars of figure 25. White highlights also occur in sky of both figures 18 and 19.

Accompanying this greater use of highlights and the strengthening of the Persian palette in his work, Nielsen's use of colour has also become more sophisticated. The ultramarine of figure 22 is accentuated by the areas of green also present in the illustration. There is a much richer and yet more subtle use of colour in the treatment of the sky in figure 18 than in the skys of In Powder and Crinoline with their pastel washes.

Nielsen has obviously studied the treatment of colour in Persian minatures. This is reflected in his ability to

utilise these techniques with great control. This results in an increased use of vivid, flat colour especially blue, a greater use of highlights particularly red ones with an overall greater variety of colour. The 'absolute mastery of colour and decoration' which Omar Austin notes in East of the Sun and West of the Moon manifests the influence of Persian art on Nielsen's work.

The success of the illustrations for East of the Sun and West of the Moon is founded on Nielsen's total control over these Persian elements, and also over the Nordic and Japanese elements which he utilises.

A THOUSAND AND ONE NIGHTS

A Thousand and One Nights presents the pinnacle of Persian influence on Kay Nielsen. He worked on the illustrations between 1918 and 1922 but the results were so lavish that it would have been too costly to print at the time. [Even in their publication by Pan books in 1977, in The Unknown Paintings of Kay Nielsen these illustrations are poorly reproduced. The gold used in the originals is lost in the four colour process. The true qualities of the illustrations can only be accurately conveyed if gold ink is used in the printing. Also the quality of the reproduction is very poor in The Unknown Paintings of Kay Nielsen while those in The Treasury of the Great Children's Book Illustrators are much better although no gold is used here either]. As well as the Persian influence on his style, the Persian-Arabic nature of the text also allows Nielsen to use Persian settings and

motifs more freely. However despite this the illustrations remain essentially European. Nielsen utilises the work of the Persian artist, he never plagiarizes it. This is partly why the results are so unique. Undoubtedly if they had been published in 1922 Nielsen's reputation would have been assured, and he would never have drifted into obscurity.

One of the most striking elements of the illustrations for A Thousand and One Nights are their borders. The use of large decorative borders comes from Eastern art and appeals to the Persian artist and Nielsen for the same reasons, as it further ornaments and unifies the composition within.

Borders provide yet another opportunity for the decoration of the page, which is their only function as they have no relation to the text, and hence no narrative purpose. Nielsen's love of pattern and colour drew him to the borders of Persian minatures, and there are many similarities with those of his own work. In Persian art the borders receive as much attention by the artist as the images they enclose. In Nielsen's work there is an even greater emphasis on them and in some cases the borders surpass the picture within, as in those of figure 32. Certainly the borders of Persian minatures are much more subtle than Nielsen's with their vivid colour and more agressive pattern but they still owe their origins to Persian art, and serve the same purpose.

The other principal function of borders in Persian minatures is to unify the composition. This is done through the repitition of colours and motifs found in the

picture, in the borders outside. This can be seen in figure 33 where the plants and animals depicted in the picture reappear in the border of the minature. Nielsen uses the same device in almost all of his illustration, as in figure 34 where the delicate red decoration of the border appears in the architectural forms in the picture. Again in figure 35 the gold curvilinear pattern of the lightning is re-used in the border while the pattern and colour of the red cloak in figure 36 is also repeated in its border.

While the motifs which appear in Nielsen's borders are not like the delicate folage and animals of Persian minatures their use, as already discussed, is similar. Nielsen also uses a double border, like that of the miniatures. The miniatures have an inner, formal, border of straight lines and bands of colour and an outer one which is much wider and uses freehand decoration. It is the outer one which uses motifs found within the picture. Nielsen's borders are similar and there is always a formal border (of various bands of colour) separating the picture from the more ornate, larger one. In figure 29 for example, the formal border of gold and red separates the decorative areas of the interior picture and the outer border, which re-uses the gold curvilinear motif. The highly patterned picture surface is successfully unified in this way. Although Nielsen uses much bolder colours and forms in his borders these achieve the same decorative and compositional result as those of the Persian miniatures. Again Nielsen integrates techniques of the Persian artist with his own style.

In A Thousand and One Nights Nielsen's approach to perspective is diverse. He totally rejects fixed point

perspective as a basis for his illustrations. Hence none of the illustrations have a clear vanishing point. As in his two previous books some illustrations require no perspective, due to their simplicity. This can be seen in figures 36 and 34. Others have elements which are viewed directly and therefore also dispense with the need for perspective, as shown in figure 37. Those illustrations that do require perspective show the use of multiple perspective also employed in Persian art. In figure 38 there are a variety of view points. The sea is observed from a low view point while the court area is depicted using bird's eye perspective and the figures are viewed from a point slightly above them. The exterior and interior of the room in figure 39 are seen from different viewpoints and the bed and floor of figure 40 are also viewed from separate positions. Parallel perspective is also commonly used by Persian artists and can be seen in the treatment of the blue structure in figure 41. Nielsen uses it very effectively in figure 42 where it allows the pattern in the boxes to remain undisturbed, unlike convergant (fixed point) perspective which would distort it. Nielsen pays homage to the Persian artist in figure 43 where his use of continuously rising perspective suits perfectly the high, Persian influenced composition.

However, Nielsen's approach to perspective sometimes goes beyond the conceptual space of the Persian artist. While using multiple perspective, the Persian artist always maintains a totally logical approach to space. In A Thousand and One Nights Nielsen occasionally uses multiple perspective even where it is not required, and thus he manipulates the Persian treatment of space, rather than simply complying with it. This can be seen in figure 44 for example, where the bird's pool converges according to a vanishing point while the rugs which the men sit on do

not, although they are both on the same plane. In figure 45 the window from which the girl appears in viewed directly while the window below is seen from the left. Again both windows are on the same plane and a Persian artist would treat them similarly, while Nielsen's approach is more characteristic of 20th century Cubism. As in figures 44 and 45, Nielsen's use of multiple perspective is often purely decorative rather than its strictly logical use by the Persian artist. However irrespective of how Nielsen manipulates it, his adoption of multiple perspective is in total harmony with the other Persian elements in A Thousand and One Nights.

There is little necessity for me to comment on Nielsen's use of line in A Thousand and One Nights as Susan Meyer already assessed it perceptively and concisely when she notes 'The jewel-like colours and patterns were more pronounced in Nielsen's later work, a feature that combined naturally with his strong sense of line so evident in his earlier illustrations' (14, p207).

Nielsen's interest in pattern could be said to have its fulfilment in A Thousand and One Nights. The lavish illustrations are filled with pattern, from the borders to tiny details in the composition. Ornamentation to delight the eye abounds, again using both naturally decorative objects such as fabrics, and simple elements arranged to form new patterns.

Here Nielsen uses a greater variety of patterned fabrics than in any of his previous books. Even in the simplest illustrations, such as figure 45, the girls headdress has a floral pattern (which is cleverly repeated in the border). His love of patterned fabrics is clearly shown again in figure 46 where all of the members of the court, (shown in the top left have differently patterned cloaks although they are tiny. This use of costume as a vehicle for more decoration is a familiar Persian one which Nielsen uses extensively.

The depiction of the highly decorated architecture of the Islamic world allows the Persian artist further opportunity for the ornamentation of the page. In A Thousand and One Nights Nielsen also uses this technique for the same purpose. The floor provides Nielsen with the opportunity to use a lovely, delicate pattern of

flowers and lines on a green background, in figure 40. In figure 43 the pillars of the house are executed in a geometrical blue and red pattern while in figures 47 and 37 the columns are also decorated. The direct view of these columns emphasises their flatness and pattern, especially in figure 37 where they have a rythimic twist.

In figure 48 the intensity of pattern in the architectural details such as the floor, columns, minarets and smaller buildings is outstanding, even among Nielsen's work. This degree of decoration approaches that of Persian miniatures. It is achieved through the quantity of pattern used and its intricacy and variety (even the patterns of the minarets are not the same, although they may appear so at a glance). It also corresponds to the pattern of Persian miniatures in the strong geometrical elements present. The delightful pattern of Persian paintings is underscored with a rigorous geometrical basis, and it also is employed by Nielsen in many of his illustrations for A Thousand and One Nights. It can be seen for example, in the rectangular tile pattern with its intricate floral decoration of figure 48. Most Persian minatures depicting architecture use a variation on this, although rectangular tiles are often used in conjunction with more elaborate ones. For example in figure 49 both rectangular and hexagonal tiles are used. The light green rectangular tiles at the bottom of figure 49 also show the Persian use of localised shading as a method of accentuating pattern. Here the Persian artist has shaded the end of each tile for purely decorative purposes just as Nielsen does in the grey, crazy paving of figure 50.

Nielsen also creates pattern by taking elements of a picture and arranging them to form new pattern. He

already uses this to a lesser extent in East of the Sun and West of the Moon but it appears extensively in A Thousand and One Nights. In figure 43 Nielsen takes plants and flowers and places them equidistantly to cover the entire landscape. This produces a very decorative result, as it also does when used by the Persian artist in figure 51, for example.

Nielsen also creates pattern using other natural forms. This is evident in figure 43 where the rocks surrounding the building are composed of curvilinear bands of colour. The decoration, although they have a distinctive "fungal" pattern rather than the art deco rocks of Nielsens work. Both the Persian artist and Nielsen also use highly patterned clouds. While the Persian artist uses the Chinese cloud or "tai" Nielsen uses "wooly" clouds again formed using curvilinear bands of colour, as in figure 48. However although the styles are dissimilar the result in both cases is the rather abstract treatment of natural forms to create a decorative effect.

As in his two previous colour books, Nielsen uses the Persian technique of rendering plants in great detail to produce an ornamental effect. This can be seen in his treatment of foliage in figures 50, 37, 42 and 43. Another method which enhances the decorative effect of the Persian miniature is the use of flat areas of contrasting colour against delicate pattern. Nielsen also uses this technique very effectively and he usually chooses black as his contrasting colour. It can be observed in figure 43 where the delicate gold pattern of the building interior is emphasised by the black background and also in figure 39 where the red decoration of the architecture is again accentuated by black.

The nature of the text allows Nielsen to blatantly use Eastern motifs and morphology in A Thousand and One Nights. This he does with enthusiasm and figures wearing turbans abound in his illustrations. However he also goes beyond this cliched image to use more intrinsically Eastern motifs. In figure 50 he uses one of the most fundamental elements of Islamic ornament, the arabesque, in the building's interior. The arabesque reappears in figure 52 and in the minarets of figures 48 and 53. In A Thousand and One Nights Nielsen adopts the decorative techniques of the Persian artist to an extent unparalled in his work. It is therefore fitting that he also then uses the arabesque which is a major decorative motif of Persian art.

The composition in Nielsen's illustrations for A Thousand and One Nights also rejects the earlier Japanese influence. The landscapes have a much higher horizon. This, combined with his use of multiple perspective and a lack of tonal variation, tilts the composition towards the viewer. The result is an increase in the area available for ornamentation. This is exactly the same technique used by Persian artists to achieve the same results. Figure 43 shows how Nielsen uses the high horizon to decorate the large area of land revealed and he achieves a similar effect in figures 37, 38 and 50.

Commenting on Nielsen's treatment of his characters in In Powder and Crinoline Colin White notes that 'the intention is decorative rather than narrative.. Nielsen's figures are puppets, units in his pattern', (26, p92). As I have already said he is quite correct in his observation, but it could be even more accurately applied to his treatment of figures in A Thousand and One Nights. Never is he so

unconcerned with evoking the emotions or personalities of his characters. They also have very similar physiogonomies and uniformly adhere to an ideal of beauty, in the same way as Persian figures do. Nielsen's rejection of the European approach to figures and their primacy in the composition is clearest in A Thousand and One Nights. This is evident in figures 37, 40, 48 and 36. Here, while the physiology of Nielsen's characters is not identical to those of the Persian artist, their treatment and function are certainly corresponding.

However there is one exception to the previous rule, a case where Nielsen uses a character which has a definite Persian physiognomy. This can be seen in the blue character of figure 35. Here Nielsen takes the figure of the div from Persian art and translates into his own 20th century genie. In this process the body of the div has acquired a cartoon quality similar to the muscular figure of superman. However its origins are unmistakably Persian. Nielsen must have used a div like that of figure 48 for reference as the similarities between the two figures could hardly be coincidental.

The most striking thing about Nielsen's genie is his extraordinary blue colour which is unprecedented in the fantasy art of Europe. Not alone is the Persian div also blue but both creatures are painted in a very similar shade. Also Nielsen's figure is dressed almost identically to the Persian div. Both have bracelets on their hands and each foot and both wear earrings. Also they both wear loincloths tied in front. Even their facial expressions are similar and each has their mouths open, displaying sharp white teeth against their red tongues. The hair of Nielsen's figure is more

extravagantly rendered, and is not blue, but it appears to consist of thick strands just as that of the Persian div. The only dissimilarity is the absence of a tail on Nielsen's genie and this is probably because it would not suit its slightly more human aspect. The remarkable similarities between the two figures confirms that Nielsen must have been very familiar with Persian art at the time he painted A Thousand and One Nights.

In East of the Sun and West of the Moon Nielsen's use of colour is strongly motivated by Persian art. However A Thousand and One Nights is definitely the apex of Persian influence on his palette. There is a great variety of colours, 'jewel-like' in their intensity and purity. The flatness of their application emphasises the prolific pattern, as in Persian miniatures, but the brilliance of the colours does not mean they are unsophisticated.There are many subtle combinations as in figure 36 where there is a lovely play of blue and brown. The most common colours are red, gold and blue, as in Persian painting. Indeed the distinctive ultramarine blue appears in all but one of Nielsen's illustrations and produces startling results when combined with gold, especially in figure 42. Gold is as essential in a Persian minature as Ultramarine and it is also used by Nielsen in every illustration for A Thousand and One Nights. Thus Nielsen's use of colour is concurrent with the other strong Persian influences in the illustrations. These are evident in his treatment of perspective, pattern, morphology and his use of decorative borders and motifs of Persian origin. However the success of these illustrations is not due to the subliminal influence of Persian art on Nielsen's work. It is as a result of Nielsen's conscious decision to utilise elements of Persian art in his work. This is only achieved through a mastery of his own technique and an

understanding of that of the Persian artist. Thus it is possible for him to create the unique illustrations of A Thousand and One Nights.

Nielsen could not find a publisher for his illustrations of A Thousand and One Nights as the production costs were too high at the time. Omar Austin argues that 'this influenced in various ways the books which Nielsen published later' and he maintains that the influence was harmful rather than beneficial (3, p12). He also blames the depression and the dullness of fashions both in society and in the editorial marketplace for the decline in Nielsen's work. Certainly there is an inherent change in it after A Thousand and One Nights and it is most dramatic in Hans Andersen's Tales.

HANS ANDERSEN'S TALES

In an interview in Sondah Nielsen says that Hans Andersen's Tales was the book which interested him most. Yet his illustrations convey little of this proported enthusiasm. He must have been very disappointed with his failure to publish his illustrations for A Thousand and One Nights and his subsequent lack of confidence is clear in his work for Hans Andersen's Tales.

Despite the change in Nielsen's style his use of borders in Hans Andersen's Tales is very effective. Indeed the borders improve the rather poor illustrations. They are

very delicate and subdued, both in colour and decoration. Thus while unlike the much bolder borders of A Thousand and One Nights they actually resemble those of Persian miniatures more closely. As in Persian miniatures there is a large outer border with freehand decoration, and a smaller one which separates it from the picture. Nielsen's outer border is composed of delicate floral motifs varying in formality from the rather rigid pattern in figure 38 to the freer one in figures 43 and 32. The same approach is used in Persian miniatures and figure 54 shows a formally patterned floral border while figure 41 has a more irregular one.

Nielsen's use of colour for these borders is also similar to that of the persian artist. In Persian books the linen fibre paper is ivory coloured and the artist uses a complementary olive colour for the pattern of the outer border. This ensures a decorative effect which does not overwhelm the illustration. Nielsen uses the same technique to support his rather weak illustrations for Hans Andersen's Tales. His colours are quite dull so he uses a light grey border with darker 'Paynes grey' for the decoration. This is very successful and Nielsen's illustrations benefit immensely from these borders. Although they are very different from those of A Thousand and One Nights, the borders are equally appropriate for the pictures they decorate.

In Hans Andersen's Tales there is a significant change in Nielsen's use of perspective. As in his other books, many of the illustrations are too simple to require perspective. However in the rest he no longer uses the Persian approach of multiple perspective, which appears in East of the Sun and West of the Moon and more extensively

in A Thousand and One Nights. In four out of the twelve illustrations there is a clear vanishing point, although there is no strong three dimensional effect on their composition. However it is obvious that Nielsen chooses the fixed viewpoint perspective of the European tradition in favour of the more adventurous multiple perspective of Persian art.

Nielsen's style in Hans Andersen's Tales still shows its essentially linear nature but here it is weaker than in his previous works. As in all his illustrations there is no clear light source and little use of shadows. This applies to all his illustrations, even that of figure 55 and although the moon appears in this night scene it does not illuminate the other elements in the picture. Nielsen's approach to chiaroscuro and modeling in Hans Andersen's Tales is also demonstrated by figure 55. In most of the illustration images are defined through flatly applied colour. However the girl's dress shows a rather feeble use of chiaroscuro in an attempt at modelling through tone. As elsewhere in this book, it is clear that any departure from his naturally linear style by Nielsen, is unsuccessful.

Omar Austin writes about the 'relative decorative poverty, diminished attention to details and simplification in measurement of colour' in Grimm's tales, Nielsen's next book (3, p38). While this is a reasonable appraisal it is more relevant to Nielsen's illustrations for Hans Andersen's Tales. Here there is much less decoration and pattern than in any of his previous books, even the Japanese-influenced In Powder and Crinoline results in much negative space, it is skilfully balanced with areas of varied and vigorous decoration. However in Hans

Andersen's Tales there is a decorative poverty both in its quantity and quality. This can be seen in figure 56 for example. The only use of pattern here is that created by the leaves of the trees and other plants, of which there are few and also a vaguely curvilinear pattern in the tree trunk and the folds of the girl's dress. Thus there is little decoration, only two types of pattern, and the illustration is certainly 'impoverished' in comparison to those of A Thousand and One Nights.

There is scant use of highly patterned elements and the drapery and costumes of Hans Andersen's Tales are very plain. Only rather weak frills and pleats decorate these costumes, as in the princess's dress of figure 57. Even here the pattern of the frills is repetitively similar to that of the dog's fur.

Nielsen's use of plants and flowers to create a pattern over the landscape appears in his first colour work for In Powder and Crinoline. It is among the earliest Persian influence evident in his illustrations, but it appears only once in Hans Andersen's Tales in figure 58. Here its rather weak use is combined with the clumsy curvilinear pattern of the white hills. This curvilinear pattern is reminiscent of that in A Thousand and One Nights, but it is much more primitive. It also appears in figures 59 and 60 but again lacks the sophistication and vigour of its earlier use.

Another common Persian technique, Nielsen's use of delicate pattern against areas of flat contrasting colour, also appears only once in Hans Andersen's Tales. It may be observed in the black and white curtains at the top of

the illustration shown in figure 61. It is characteristic of the dullness and insipidness of Nielsen's limited use of pattern in Hans Andersen's Tales.

There are no Persian motifs used in these illustrations and the only Japanese motif appears in the tree of figure 56. While there are no other specific cultural motifs in Hans Andersen's Tales the furnishings of the room in figure 61 and the architecture (as seen in figures 57 and 62) are European in nature. This gives the illustrations a European atmosphere but nothing tangible.

The morphology of Nielsen's illustrations in Hans Andersen's Tales has changed significantly from his previous work, and is particularly different from that of A Thousand and One Nights with its strong Persian influence. Here Nielsen no longer uses the high horizon of Persian landscapes but returns to a lower, more oriental composition. The only interior scene of figure 61 also uses this low view point and this with the room's curved structure is alien to Persian miniatures.

Nielsen's approach to his figures has always been similar to that of the Persian artist, in his disinterest in either their emotions or individual characteristics. There is also a growing use of them merely as other elements of the composition rather than of specific pictorial importance. However in Hans Andersen's Tales Nielsen is unconcerned with either their individual characteristics and feelings, or their compositional possibilities. This is unlike the approach of either the Japanese or Persian artist, and indicates his general

disinterest in his illustrations despite his comment to the contrary.

The dullness of Nielsen's colour in Hans Andersen's Tales is also unlike that in Oriental or Persian art and departs from that in his previous work too. The palette of the Persian artist is opaque and intense, while that of the oriental artist is translucent and pale but both use colours of great purity. This has also been a characteristic of Nielsen's earlier work but here his colours are often adulterated with grey or black giving them a very dull quality. This combines with a very limited variety of hues to produce an uninspiring palette. Here there is a considerable contrast with his earlier work which testifies to his ability as a colourist.

The decrease in Persian influence on Nielsen's work for Hans Andersen's Tales is not a rejection of Persian art as a visual ascendancy because it is not replaced by another influence. Instead it seems to be merely a symptom of the overall loss of Nielsen's confidence both in himself and in his ability as an illustrator, hence his subsequent loss of artistic enthusiasm. This is probably due to his failure to publish the magnificent illustrations for A Thousand and One Nights which undoubtedly affected this sensitive and quiet man. His resulting loss in enthusiasm is evident in the lack of detail in Hans Andersen's Tales, both in the pattern and morphology, and his confused approach to colour and line. I think this may be combined with what appears to be an attempt to evoke the melancholy and austere quality of Andersen's stories, by creating enigmatic illustrations. However the result is bland rather than enigmatic, and only emphasises the disharmony of Nielsen's style.

HANSEL AND GRETEL

Hansel and Gretel, stories from the Brothers Grimm is Nielsen's last 'gift book' and also his last work for the firm of Hodder and Stoughton, who had published all his previous books. It was printed in 1925 and in it Nielsen seems to have recovered from the disappointment of not publishing his illustrations for A Thousand and One Nights. Although his work never again reaches the standard of the aforementioned book, his illustrations for Hansel and Gretel are of a higher quality than those for Hans Andersen's Tales. They also display a strong re-emergence of Persian influence.

The borders of the illustrations for Grimm's Tales are similar in size to those of East of the Sun and West of the Moon but are decorated, unlike the plain borders in the earlier book. Their small size in relation to the pictures is closer to the European tradition than the large Persian influenced borders in the two previous books.

Some illustrations for Hansel and Gretel are too simple to require the use of perspective, but in many of the others Nielsen returns to a Persian approach to perspective. In a number of illustrations there is a vague use of fixed point perspective, and the elements diminish with distance form the viewer, but only one illustration has a definite vanishing point. In figure 63 this vanishing point is indicated by the converging tiles at the bottom of the picture. The other illustrations show an active rejection of fixed point perspective and again adopt the Persian technique of multiple perspective. This can be

noted in figures 64 and 65 where a bird's eye view of the tiled floors is used in both. This approach preserves the tiles, especially in figure 64, where their black and white pattern produces intense decoration of the picture surface. The garden of figure 64, with its crazy paving and flower beds is also shown from above, again giving an undistorted view of its pattern.

While the horizontal areas of figures 64 and 65 are shown from above, the architecture of both illustrations is viewed directly from the front. This emphasises the architectural pattern in the same way as the bird's eye view emphasises the floor pattern and a similar approach by a Persian artist may be noted in figure 73. Multiple perspective is used by both Nielsen and the Persian painter to allow both to maximise the decorative effects of various pictorial elements.

The unsuccessful introduction of chiaroscuro which Nielsen attempts in Hans Andersen's Tales is rejected in most of his illustrations for Hansel and Gretel have no single light source and hence, no shadows.

However while Nielsen's colour is flatly applied in all his work, in Hansel and Gretel he does achieve a limited chiaroscuro in some illustrations. This may be observed in figure 68 where although Nielsen uses definite areas of flat colour to evoke the bark of the trees, their variation in tone also gives these trees dark and light sides. This is repeated in figure 67 in his treatment of the rocks and trees, where again there is a weak chiaroscuro in their tonal variations. However this use of chiaroscuro is restricted to only a few illustrations

in Hansel and Gretel. Most of Nielsen's illustrations are in the Persian tradition, and are extremely flat, as evident in figures 66, 63, 70 and 69. In all his work he returns to a use of areas of uniform colour, also a favourite of Persian art, although in some cases he uses their tonal variations for chiaroscuro effects.

Omar Austin observes a 'relative decorative poverty', and 'diminished attention to details' (3, p38) in Hansel and Gretel. While I think this comment could be more appropriately applied to his work for Hans Andersen's Tales it is not inaccurate. Certainly there is less variety of pattern in Hansel and Gretel than in his illustrations prior to and including A Thousand and One Nights. There is also a scarcity of decoration in some illustrations such as 'The Frog Bride' or "Snowdrop", and it is not replaced by the Japanese austerity of his earlier work. Indeed these two illustrations are probably the weakest in the book. However there is considerable decoration in his other illustrations, and while if not of the quality or quantity of his earlier work it definitely surpasses that of Hans Andersen's Tales. As in his other works, Nielsen ornaments the picture surface using methods similar to those of the Persian artist. Nielsen's use of patterned fabrics is widespread in Hansel and Gretel and appears in the costumes of figures 65 and 67 and those of figures 63 and 64, which also depict highly patterned curtains. The Persian technique of manipulating natural forms to create more pattern is evident in Figure 76 where the clouds, trees and sea are all highly decorative. Nielsen also uses this approach and in his depiction of nature he seizes the decorative opportunities. This can be seen in all his illustrations for Hansel and Gretel, but it is especially clear in some, such as Figures 67, 69 and 70. Figure 68 is suffused with pattern created by the

trees which occupy most of the composition. The trees of Figure 67 are also very decorative and while its rocky landscape is unlike Persian miniature it is also highly patterned. The similarity in approach if not technique, between Nielsen and the Persian artist may also be seen in figures 69 and 76. Here although the clouds and waves of both illustrations are rendered differently, their use as decorative elements reveals similar aims. While there is an art deco treatment of many of the elements in Figure 69 Nielsen's intention to decorate the picture surface remains the same as that of the Persian artist.

Another decorative approach used by the Persian artist is the emphasis on the ornamental qualities of plants and flowers by individually rendering their leaves and petals. Nielsen also uses this technique in much of his work and it appears extensively in Hansel and Gretel. It may be noted in Nielsen's treatment of the trees and foliage in figure 64 and figure 69 and in the jewel like plants and flowers contrasting with black in figure 64. The white plants and flowers of figures 64 and 66 are again rendered in considerable detail. Figures 64, 66 and 72 also display another Persian technique adopted by Nielsen in the contrast of their delicate foliage against flat areas of colour. The use of a flat black background to highlight floral pattern is most frequent in Nielsen's work and appears as early as East of the Sun and West of the Moon. However the flat ultramarine background of figure 66 is even more overtly Persian than the black of figures 64 and 72.

It is clear that in Hansel and Gretel Nielsen returns to a Persian approach to pattern. However it is not used to the same extent in all his illustrations. In many works Persian influenced pattern covers the whole page, as in figures 64, 66 and 69, while in others such as 65 and 72 its use is more localised. These are the weaker illustrations and are directly related to those for Hans Andersen's Tales while those with more pattern have their antecedents in A Thousand and One Nights. Curiously those illustrations with less decoration show an insufficiently vigorous use of negative space to contrast with it. This may be observed in figure 72, where, as in Hans Andersen's Tales, Nielsen's interferes with the negative space, in this case the sky, by using the clumsy decoration of the clouds. This weakens the contrast between the sky and the highly patterned floral area. Illustrations such as

Figure 65 demonstrate neither the combination of Persian-influenced pattern and Japanese austerity of East of the Sun and West of the Moon nor the splendid decoration of A Thousand and One Nights.

The overall decline in quality of Nielsen's illustrations is reflected in the lack of variety of pattern in Hansel and Gretel. However, irrespective of this, or the variable extent of its usage, Nielsen's approach to pattern remains strongly influenced by Persian art, particularly in Figures 64, 66, 69 and 70. Some of the illustrations for Hansel and Gretel use a vaguely European iconography also found in Hans Andersen's Tales. In Figure 70 European architectural details such as turrets may be noted. This is in contrast to the minarets which appear in A Thousand and One Nights. Figure 65 also depicts the figures wearing clothing obviously modelled on European court costume of the Elizabethan period. However, as in Hans Andersen's Tales there are few specific cultural motifs used, unlike the Islamic costumes and arabesques of A Thousand and One Nights. Despite this Nielsen uses a very interesting motif in the gold clouds of Figure 70. They bear a striking similarity to those clouds in the Persian minature of Figure 76, although Nielsen does not use the actual "tai" motif. Both sets of clouds have strong, unbroken curves at the front and metamorphosise into thin whisps at the ends. This is used by both artists to indicate the movement and direction of the clouds, as well as performing a decorative function. This curvilinear motif re-appears as the surf on the largest wave in Figure 69, and its progenitor may be seen in Figure 28, again used as the surf of a wave. While the use of this motif for the waves of Figures 69 and 28 is not overtly Persian, in Figure 70 Nielsen returns the curvilinear motif to its

original place in Persian art. This is why it may be more recognizably Persian in Figure 70 than elsewhere in the book.

The influence of Persian art on the visual syntax of Nielsen's illustrations correlates to its effect elsewhere in Hansel and Gretel. As with the other elements of his work, the morphology shows a greater modification by Persian painting than in Hans Andersen's Tales but this influence does not reach the strength of that in A Thousand and One Nights. Consequently it may be noted that although the composition of the illustrations is higher an that in his previous book it is lower than in A Thousand and One Nights. This also significantly limits the area available for decoration and affects the tilting of the composition towards the viewer, which is a major characteristic of Persian minatures.

While Nielsen views the architecture of the illustrations obversely to emphasise their pattern, as mentioned already, the actual details of the buildings are vaguely European. The architecture of Figures 89 and 65 is unlike that elsewhere in the book, in its spacial ambiguity. These buildings appear physically impossible and are constructed using neither the single view point perspective European art nor the multiple perspective of Persian art. They can exist only on the picture surface. While lacking the rigorously logical approach of Persian art, Nielsen's manipulation of space to create a decorative effect is used to achieve analogous aims to that of the Persian artist.

Nielsen's treatment of figures in Hansel and Gretel remains unchanged and again he exhibits disinterest in their physical and emotional characteristics. As in Persian minatures there is little difference in the physiognomy and physique of the various individuals. Figure 63 demonstrates the similarity of male and female faces which also occurs in Persian art. The faces of the tailor in Figure 67 and Rumplestilskin in Figure 65 are anomalities to this rule, with their expressions of surprise and anger respectively. They have a rather caricatured quality which is not entirely effective and which artists like Rackham accomplished much more successfully. However they are the exceptions rather than the norm, and elsewhere in Hansel and Gretel Nielsen's approach to his Figures is like that of the Persian artist. Thus, excluding those of Figures 67 and 65, Nielsen's Figures are treated merely as other elements of the composition and not assigned any special importance.

Nielsen's use of colour in Hansel and Gretel is inherently connected with his use of pattern. Thus accompanying the dichotomous approach to pattern which emerges is a dual approach to colour. The illustrations which are closer to Hans Andersen's Tales in their localised pattern use a different palette from those with a completely patterned picture surfaces, more reminiscent of A Thousand and One Nights.

Figures 67, 65 and 72 show illustrations which emanate from those in Hans Andersen's Tales and they reveal an oriental treatment of colour as well as pattern. This can be observed in the light, pastel colours which are used. However Persian influence is present in these illustrations although it is confined to the areas of

intense pattern. Thus it may be observed in the brilliant oranges, reds and blues of the costumes in Figures 65 and 72.

The other illustrations which are more closely related to those of A Thousand and One Nights use the vivid, opaque colours of Persian art in conjunction with their highly decorated surfaces. Figures 64, 66 and 69 show the blues, reds and gold used by the Persian artist. Figure 66 uses an especially Persian palette in its striking contrast of lapis lazuli blue and gold. Indeed gold appears in most of the illustrations for Hansel and Gretel irrespective of the extent of other Persian colours.

While many of the illustrations demonstrate Nielsen's continued use of the Persian palette there is a notable decline in the variety of colour used. There is an absence of the sophisticated combination of hues, characteristic of Persian art, which was evident in A Thousand and One Nights. While the Persian influence on Nielsen's colour has certainly returned, after the anomaly of Hans Andersen's Tales, his palette lacks the vitality present in his earlier work. It is this vitality and variety of colour which are among the most significant contributions to Nielsen's work by Persian art.

Nielsen's style in Hansel and Gretel may appear a more natural progression from A Thousand and One Nights than Hans Andersen's Tales. In Andersen's Tales his style reflects his disappointment with his failure to publish A Thousand and One Nights. In Hansel and Gretel Nielsen recovers and he returns to a more decorative style which is strongly influenced by Persian art. However he never

regains the enthusiasm of his earlier books and Hansel and Gretel sees a decline in Nielsen's interest in his work. This is apparent in the decrease in the quality and quantity of his pattern and colour, although they clearly remain affected by Persian art. Nielsen's lack of total commitment to the use of Persian artistic techniques in Hansel and Gretel is certainly not due to an inability to understand and utilise them effectively. Rather it is a symptom of his growing disinterest and disillusion with illustration, which is clearest in his final book, Red Magic.

RED MAGIC

Red Magic was published in 1930 by Jonathan Cape, and represents the most impoverished of Nielsen's work, both in the actual illustrations and the format of the book. At this time the gift book industry was all but extinguished and Red Magic is the only one of Nielsen's published books not to appear in both limited and trade editions. It also uses the smaller 'octavo' format rather than the more lavish 'small folio' format of his other publications, and contains only eight full colour works.

As Red Magic is not a true gift book, Nielsen's illustrations receive a very modest treatment. Unlike those elsewhere they are not tipped-in and to add to their unimposing quality they have no borders. In Hans Andersen's Tales the otherwise poor illustrations are greatly improved by the use of borders but in Red Magic this is not the case. These illustrations have much white

space but Nielsen does not wish them to blend onto the margins of the page. Instead he attempts to define their edges, without using borders, by placing colour at the top and bottom of the illustrations. This may be observed in Figures 77, 78, 79 and 80 where the bands of blue at the top of each picture only weaken further the illustrations, and appear to be added merely as an afterthought. Their lack of success is mainly due to the fact that these bands of colour are not properly integrated with the rest of the illustration. Clearly the use of borders could effectively solve this problem but Nielsen unwisely rejects this Persian technique.

In Red Magic most of the illustrations depict elements which diminish with distance from the viewer, as in figures 77, 78 and 82. However these illustrations are so simplified that this effect is only nominal, and there is only a vague feeling of perspective. Only two illustrations, figures 83 and 84 show any clear use of perspective and here Nielsen uses his two opposing approaches. In figure 83 the converging black and white tiles establish a vanishing point, based on the fixed view point perspective of European art. The different treatment of the tiles in figure 84 is based on the Persian approach of multiple perspective and is used to emphasise their checked pattern. However Nielsen uses only a thin band of this pattern in figure 84 unlike the similar tile pattern of figure 64 from Hansel and Gretel which appears much more extensively. While there is a considerably more limited use of multiple and fixed point perspective in Red Magic Nielsen still shows his willingness to use the perspective systems of both European and Persian art.

The limited use of chiaroscuro found in Hansel and Gretel returns in Nielsen's last book. It may be seen in the depiction of the folds in the costumes of figures 77 and 80 for example. However, as in Persian minatures, its use is localised and its function is decorative rather than descriptive. As in Nielsen's other work, forms are described through line and colour not through light and shade. Again, as in Persian minatures, there is no single light source and hence no shadows cast. The sun in NIelsen's illustrations of figure 81 and 82 is as ineffectual as that in the Persian minature of figure 30. While the quality of Nielsen's work decreases after A Thousand and One Nights, his style in Red Magic remains in the linear tradition of Persian painting.

The general decline in Nielsen's interest in illustration is most evident in his use of pattern and colour, those aspects of his work with the strongest Persian influence. Although this applies to all his illustrators after A Thousand and One Nights it is particularly relevant to his last work: Red Magic. Here while there is still evidence of the Persian influence in Nielsen's use of decoration it is considerably weakened.

His use of patterned elements is less profuse than before, and in some illustrations such as figures 77 and 80 the costumes have no pattern at all. Figure 84 also uses unpatterned fabric in the brown drapery at the top of the picture. This failure to use fabric as an opportunity for decoration would have been unthinkable to the Persian artist, as it was to Nielsen in his earlier work. Most costumes are patterned however, such as those in figures 79, 82 and 84 although each demonstrates little variety in the pattern itself.

There is still some use of natural form to create a decorative effect, as shown by Nielsen's treatment of the sea in figure 79. The rendering of each leaf and petal of plants and flowers individually is also another decorative technique used by Persian artists which Nielsen's employs. However it appears only once in Red Magic in figure 77, where it is used by Nielsen in his depiction of the weeping tree. It is clear that the strong Persian influence on Nielsen's pattern which is evident in much of his other work, especially A Thousand and One Nights, is absent from Red Magic. Another of Nielsen's favourite Persian devices, the use of evenly spaced plants and flowers to decorate the ground, which appears as early as In Powder and Crinoline is also absent from Red Magic. There is a limited use of delicate pattern placed against contrasting colour in Red Magic but it is not as profuse as in his other work. It may be observed in the blue and white pattern of the umbrella in figure 79 and the white decoration on the black clothing of the man in figure 84. Despite Nielsen's attempts to emphasise these patterns their decorative effect is very muted. This is because these illustrations contain so much white space that any white pattern, even set against a contrasting colour, is immediately muted.

Indeed this extensive use of negative space is diametrically opposed to the approach of the persian artist, with his emphasis on positive space. The composition of all the illustrations in Red Magic is extremely low, and is not tilted towards the viewer by use of multiple perspective (with one exception: figure 84). This provides only a limited area for decoration. Combined with this is a lack of the variety of pattern present in Nielsen's other work. The result is 'the absence of decoration and his usual obsessive detail'

which Nicholson notes 'suggests a decline in inspiration' (15 p24).

The illustrations for Red Magic show few specific cultural motifs. This is unlike the rest of his work where Nielsen enthusiastically borrows oriental birds and trees, Nordic costumes and Persian divs, minarets and arabesques. The costumes of Figures 78, 80 and 84 have European origins while those of Figure 83 are vaguely Oriental but they are all quite unspecific. 'Second-hand' Persian motifs are also used and the clouds of Figures 81 and 82 seem to be degenerate "tai" motifs originating from Persian art. Nielsen's red flames of Figure 81 are certainly derived from the gold clouds of Figure 70 which are in turn, based on the clouds of Persian minatures. There is little Persian influence on either the exterior or interior scenes for Red Magic. In Nielsen's other work he, like the Persian artist, manipulates elements of the illustration, to create the maximum opportunity for the decoration of the page. However, as already mentioned, Nielsen is no longer as enthusiastic about decoration as before. This is evident in his depiction of the various scenes and subjects.

There are no buildings or architectural details used in Red Magic to ornament the illustrations and Nielsen's exterior scenes are equally sparse. The landscapes of figures 77, 80 and 82 have no carpet of flowers and plants to decorate them, a device which Nielsen particularly favoured in his other work. These illustrations are not crammed with detail and ornament so important in A Thousand and One Nights for example. Unlike much of his

other work it is the figures which provide most of the interest in each illustration.

Nielsen's treatment of his figures in Red Magic has changed significantly from that in his previous books. No longer are they merely other elements in the pattern of the composition, as they are in Persian minatures. There is so little decoration that instead the figures have become the focal point of illustrations which lack any other details or items of interest. However as in his previous work Nielsen maintains his unconcern with evoking the emotions of his characters although his approach to the physiognomy has become rather confused. Some of his characters have his usual, long simplified faces such as those of figures 83 and 84. Nielsen attempts to give others more detailed, realistic faces as in the male faces of figures 77 and 82 while the gentleman in figure 79 is treated in the semi-caricatured manner of Rumplestilskin or the Valiant Little Tailor of Hansel and Gretel. This is quite unsuccessful, especially in the case of figure 80 where the Prince's head is out of proportion to the rest of his body as well as being badly drawn. It is clear that Nielsen's departure from his usual treatment of figures, which is very similar to that of the Persian artist, is an unwise decision, which further weakens his illustrations for Red Magic.

In conjunction with the decline in the variety of pattern in Red Magic is a parallel drop in the variety and intensity of colour. Blue and gold are still used throughout the book but not as profusely as before, in keeping with the modest format of the book itself. There is very little diversity in Nielsen's palette in Red Magic and it is bland in comparison with the magnificent Persian

inspired colours of A Thousand and One Nights. This may be observed in figure 78 where only blue, gold, red and black, are used, with small areas of olive and brown. This combines with a dearth of pattern to produce an uninteresting illustration, which is a definite indication of Nielsen's apathy towards his work. Throughout his other illustrations, irrespective of Persian or Oriental influences, Nielsen's use of colour has always been varied and exciting but this has changed in Red Magic. As well as a limited range of hues, there is a decline in the intensity and purity of Nielsen's colour, and a variation in its flatness. Many of the colours used vary in tone through their combination with black or white. This can be seen in figure 80 where the green of the landscape is not flatly applied, but changes in tone with the addition of white or black. This also adversely affects its intensity producing colour which has none of the purity or brilliance of his earlier work, in comparison with the vivid green of figure 40 from A Thousand and One Nights. However there is a nominal use of intense flat colour which may be observed in the ultramarine used in figures 77 and 82 the red of figures 78 and 79. The overall poor quality of Nielsen's colour in Red Magic is emphasised by the large expanses of negative space which remain white. This is unlike his treatment of colour in any of his other work and even in In Powder and Crinoline with its extensive areas of negative space, Nielsen uses pale washes of colour rather than leaving these areas white. As with his use of pattern in Red Magic, Nielsen's colour has declined both in quality and quantity and also variety. Again his interest in these illustrations is not sufficient to sustain the meticulous and skilled approach characteristic of his earlier work.

It seems almost ironic that the illustrations for Nielsen's final book are quite crudely executed when those of his first published book In Powder and Crinoline are so sophisticated and mature. It is almost as if the dates of his books should be reversed, placing Red Magic as his first work rather than his last. In this final of Nielsen's books he does not totally abandon his previous Persian-influenced style, indications of its use in his colour and pattern are still present. However it is greatly weakened both by Nielsen's apparent apathy and by his unsuccessful attempts to introduce European figures and landscape.As Poltarnes observes, Nielsen's illustrations for Red Magic are not radically unlike his others, but 'they do not go as far in the directions he usually takes us' (25, p37). The "directions" he refers to are those seen in Nielsen's most successful works such as A Thousand and One Nights or East of the Sun and West of the Moon. Thus when Nielsen strays from these directions in Red Magic he looses his (artistic) way and the result is ultimately disappointing.

SUMMARY

It is very difficult to give a generalised conclusion about Nielsen's work through his seven books. This is because his approach changes considerably with each book unlike the more moderate progression in Rackham and Dulac's style. However it is clear that even in his first work The Book of Death that Nielsen's style is essentially linear. Here it is strongly influenced by one of the European masters of black and white art, Aubrey Beardsley, although Nielsen is drawn to him as much for the 'unwholesome excess' (15, p23) as his linework. Beardsley's influence on Nielsen's style is still evident in In Powder and Crinoline in the flamboyant costumes and coiffs but by East of the Sun and West of the Moon he is wholly emancipated from it. Irrespective of the influences, Nielsen maintains an 'aristocratic mastery of line' (3, p21) which may borrow from various sources but is autonomous and always his own. The line of Nielsen's early work combines naturally with the influence of Persian art, also very linear in nature. This is evident in A Thousand and One Nights and Hansel and Gretel for example with the flatness of their illustrations. However there is a limited use of chiaroscuro in some of Nielsen's work, notably in the less successful Hans Andersen's Tales and Red Magic although even here there are no strong tonal contrasts.

Another element of Nielsen's style which remains almost unchanged throughout his work is his disinterest in the Western approach to perspective using a fixed view point. In conjunction with his linear style is a flatness of composition and many of his illustrations are sufficiently simplified not to require any use of perspective. Many

others do have elements which diminish with distance from the viewer but have only a vague use of perspective. The rest of Nielsen's work shows two definite but opposing systems of perspective. Fixed point or convergent perspective appears earliest in his work, possibly through the influence of Beardsley, and is used in some illustrations for In Powder and Crinoline. The other system, multiple view point perspective, or divergent perspective is a hallmark of Persian art. It appears later in East of the Sun and West of the Moon where convergant perspective is also used. This dichotomous approach continues in Nielsen's work and these two systems appear in all his subsequent work. However in A Thousand and One Nights, the apex of Persian influence on Nielsen's work, the multiple perspective system is more frequently used. Nielsen's treatment of perspective typifies his general attitude to his various visual ascendancies in his ability to assimilate and utilise them rather than slavishly follow their original dictates. Thus he is able to employ contradicting approaches to perspective in the same book.

Nielsen's treatment of the figures in his illustrations is different from the traditional European approach even in his first colour work for In Powder and Crinoline. Here there is a uniformity of expression and physiognomy based on Nielsen's reluctance to give them the importance which they are ascribed in European art. They conform to his stereotype of beauty, just as those in Persian art do to Islamic ideals. Nielsen's disinterest in the personalities of his characters is reflected in their lack of emotion and the facial similarity of all the characters, male and female. These characters perform a minimal narrative function. They are depicted because the text requires it, but apart from the fact that they appear

they perform no other narrative function. The viewer receives no impression of their personalities or feelings described in the text. In fact Nielsen's approach to his characters was the same as that of the Persian artist before the influence of Persian art becomes apparent in his work. While Karin Adhal notes that in persian art 'the often simplified and stylised picture provides a contrast to the sometimes quite lengthy descriptions of the text' (1, p12) this may be equally applied to Nielsen's treatment of his figures which are similarly removed from their textual basis. Again Adhal observes that 'it was alien to the Persian artist... to express a special state of mind or any emotion related to a special character' (1, p40) and Omar Austin notes Nielsen's 'cold detachment' and the absence of 'any explicit reference to feelings or emotions'. Nielsen's approach to his characters remains the same in almost all his work except for a few rather crude attempts at caricature and his unsuccessful introduction of European physiognomy to the figures in Red Magic.

Unquestionably the elements of Nielsen's style most affected by the influence of Persian art are his use of pattern within the composition and his use of colour. This may be because other aspects of his style were already quite similar to those in Persian art, such as his treatment of figures and flat space, as mentioned already. It may also be due to the fact that the use of pattern and colour are among the most distinctive elements of Persian art and thus their effect on Nielsen's work is clearly discernible. As I have already described in considerable detail the characteristics of Persian pattern and colour, and their modification by Nielsen in his own work, I shall not do so again. However in general it may be observed that there are indications of their influence in In Powder

and Crinoline although it may not be deliberately used by Nielsen. By his next work East of the Sun and West of the Moon Persian characteristics are more overt in Nielsen's colour and pattern, and must have been consciously used by him. Indeed the remarkable quality of the illustrations in East of the Sun and West of the Moon is partly due to unusual combination of Persian and Japanese elements. Here the Persian influence is more dominant in Nielsen's colour and pattern while the Japanese influence creates a low composition also evedint in his previous book In Powder and Crinoline. This results in large areas of negative space thus limiting the decoration. This is why the Persian artist, with his love of ornamentation uses a high composition to create the maximum area for embellishment. It is for the same reason that Nielsen rejects the Japanese use of composition in many of the illustrations for A Thousand and One Nights. It is in this book that the Persian influence on Nielsen's work reaches its zenith, and this is reflected in his approach to composition especially in figures 43 and 39. The quantity and quality of Nielsen's pattern and colour in A Thousand and One Nights testifies to the strength of Persian influence in this work. The Eastern theme of the text seems to inspire him even further and he consciously acknowledges the Persian influence in his use of costume, architectural details such as minarets and even a Persian 'div'. He also employs the quintessential Islamic pattern, the arabesque.

Nielsen failed to publish his magnificent illustrations for A Thousand and One Nights and this had a traumatic effect on all his subsequent work. His next book Hans Andersen's Tales is almost a reaction against his previous work and shows a rejection of many of his Persian influences. This is especially clear in Nielsen's limited

range of pattern and colour. However he recovers somewhat in Hansel and Gretel and although the Persian influence never reaches its extent in A Thousand and One Nights it is certainly stronger than in Hans Andersen's Tales. It may be observed that the decline in quality of Nielsen's work after A Thousand and One Nights is intrinsically linked to a weakening of the Persian influence present. His work for Hans Andersen's Tales reveals this very clearly in its dull colours (uncharacteristic of either Oriental or Persian art), impoverished use of pattern and the confusing introduction of chiaroscuro. Indeed the strongest Persian element in these illustrations are the borders which significantly improve the pictures they adorn. A stronger Persian influence returns in Hansel and Gretel, with a brighter palette and Nielsen's use of Persian patterning techniques. These Persian approaches combine with emerging art deco elements in Nielsen's work. Although many of these illustrations are quite successful Omar Austin notes their 'relative decorative poverty' and 'diminished attention to details and simplification in the treatment of colour'. Although this comment may be applied to all Nielsen's work after A Thousand and One Nights it refers specifically to Hansel and Gretel, and to certain illustrations in particular. It is especially relevant to the weaker illustrations of figures 71 and 72 which prefigure those for Red Magic. The more sophisticated and successful illustrations for Hansel and Gretel are undoubtedly those with stronger Persian elements and are closer to A Thousand and One Nights than to his last book. Unfortunately his illustration for Red Magic follow the less Persian-influenced work from Hansel and Gretel, into even greater mediocrity. The poor quality of Nielsen's line, colour and use of pattern all demonstrate the 'diminished attention' which Austin first observes in Hansel and Gretel (3, p36). Perhaps the

inauspicious format of the book itself discouraged Nielsen's enthusiasm.

Throughout Nielsen's life he was affected by what the advertising men call 'market forces'. His first published book, In Powder and Crinoline has its main illustrations in colour, although Nielsen preferred to work in black and white. This is because, as he explains in an interview in Squdag, (31, p3) books with colour illustrations were the best sellers, in England. Thus (fortunately) Nielsen was compelled to use colour. Then, as he was establishing his reputation in England following the success of his first two publications In Powder and Crinoline and East of the Sun and West of the Moon, the market changed dramatically. The depression which followed World War 1 affected all areas of life including the business of the book world. Demand for the luxury of the gift-book slumped, and a new conservatism emerged. Unsurprisingly publishers were very unreceptive to Nielsen's new and lavish illustrations for A Thousand and One Nights and they were never published in his lifetime. Omar Austin notes the 'this influenced in various ways the books which Nielsen published later' (3, p29) and there is an unquestionable decline in Nielsen's interest in his work after 1922. In conjunction with this decline in the standard of Nielsen's illustrations is a drop in the quality of the books themselves. Both Hans Andersen's Tales and Hansel and Gretel have half the number of colour illustrations of his previous two books, while Red Magic only has eight colour illustrations. There also seems to have been a change in taste after the war, with the publishers demanding much more traditional and orthodox illustrations rather than the innovation and exoticism of Nielsen's early work. Omar Austin compares the quality of the accepted and rejected frontpieces for Hans Andersen's Tales to support

this theory. Undoubtedly accepted version in figure 85 is inferior to the original frontpiece of figure 86. Nielsens failure to achieve commercial success in his later work meant that he soon faded from public memory. It is only in the last twenty years, following the rediscovery of his work, that he has received the recognition he deserves. Certainly it is a pity to conclude my assessment of his work on a negative note. While Red Magic represents the least of his abilities as an illustrator, his earlier work reveals a sophisticated and gifted artist. Here his skill is shown in his subtle and complex synthesis of many visual ascendancies. As my analysis of his illustration has established, Persian art is the most important of these ascendancies in Nielsen's work.

CHAPTER 4

Exoticism
Research on Persian Art
Ballet Russes
Similar Clients
Similar Demands on Both Artists
Similar Aims

SUMMARY OF CHAPTER OBJECTIVES

Persian art is the major visual ascendancy in Kay Nielsen's work and I have examined its influence on each of his seven books. The question waiting to be asked is why is there this Persian influence in Nielsen's work? The answers to this question form the two separate sections to this chapter. The first half deals with those answers that lie beyond the artist, in the social and artistic climate of the time. Late 19th and early 20th century Europe and its aesthetics were strongly affected by the development of exoticism. This philosophy of exoticism was based on an appreciation and understanding on non-European art and cultures. I shall briefly discuss these effects on Europe in general and then on Kay Nielsen. Also to be considered is the rise in public awareness of Persian art partly due to exoticism, but also as a result of the increased research into Islamic art at the beginning of this century. Finally I shall deal with the further public exposure of Persian art through its effect on the Ballet Russes. This is particularly important as how could Diaghilev's ballet, with its combination of dance, drama and design, have failed to have interested and influenced the young Kay Nielsen?

The other half of this chapter deals with the internal relationship between Nielsen and Persian art. I will trace the parallels between the Persian artist and Nielsen which led him to turn to work which demonstrates similar interests and aims. First I will discuss the similarities between the purchaser of Nielsen's books and the patron of the Persian manuscript, which produces corresponding demands on both artists. Then I shall examine how the common interests and aims of the Persian

artist and Nielsen result in their common stylistic approaches, identified in the previous chapter.

EXOTICISM

The work of Eastern artists and craftsmen was known in Europe before 1500 but it was not until the end of the 16th century that the general public had access to it. After 1600 direct trade between Britain and India commenced, and by the 1660's Islamic arts and crafts appeared in increasing quantities in Europe. Imports included porcelain, chintz and silks from India, and carpets and rugs from Persia. By the late 17th century the exotic influence of Islamic and Indian goods appeared in the decorative arts of Europe. The 18th century saw the strengthening of trade and artistic links between Europe and the East. Many artists and writers travelled abroad and the foreign influences on their work educated those at home. During the Rococo period Eastern and Chinese art was very popular, second only to that of the Italian classical tradition. The burgeoning Islamic influence manifested itself in the applied arts and painting, while the Regency period saw particular Eastern influence on interior design. The spontaneous yet ordered ornament of Islam and India delighted the Victorians and by the 1860s most homes were furnished with imports from shops like Liberty (opened in 1885). The interest in non-European art was extended by the rediscovery of Japanese culture following the reopening of trade links between Japan and the West, in the 1850s. Demand for Japanese art and goods was almost immediate and soon after came Western imitations known as Japonisme. Indeed this was the case with all Eastern and Oriental art, and initial exposure to the arts of Islam, India and China resulted in

early attempts to copy them. These imitations often demonstrated a taste for the more frivolous and fantastic elements of foreign art rather than a true understanding of their qualities.

However increased contact with foreign countries resulted in the growth of the appreciation and comprehension of their art and cultures. Thus by the end of the 19th century European artists were able to judge the art of countries such as Persia or Japan on their own terms.

Exoticism was not the popularity of foreign arts and crafts, nor was it a specific movement in the manner of Art Nouveau or Romanticism. These were merely manifestations of its philosophy which extended to most areas of Victorian life. Exoticism was the appreciation and comprehension of non-European cultures mentioned earlier and a resulting affinity for them. It was into a Victorian society pervaded by the influence of exoticism that Kay Nielsen was born in 1886.

Prompted by exoticism and the perceived decline in their own cultures due to industrialisation, many artists turned to non-industrial civilizations for their inspiration. This is evident in many artistic movements at the time such as The Arts and Crafts Movement, Art Nouveau and the Pre-Raphaelite Movement. Illustrators also looked to the art of the East for new stimulus. This can be seen in the Japanese influence on the works of Beardsley, W. Heath Robinson and Walter Crane or the Persian influence which appears in the illustrations of Edmund Dulac, Leon Bakst and Kay Nielsen. However Nielsen did not turn to Persian art merely as a method of escapism. The influence of

exoticism on Nielsen allowed him to appreciate the integral qualities of Persian art which ultimately led to his sophisticated use of its techniques.

RESEARCH ON PERSIAN ART

While there were trade links between Persia and Europe since the middle of the 17th century it was only towards the end of the 19th century that the major collections of Persian manuscripts began to be seriously studied. Previously public attention had been focused mainly on Persian goods which were more easily available to the consumer, such as pottery, carpets and other furnishings. However the late 19th century saw the emergence of many surveys on Persian art and the European collections of manuscripts and minatures, in the Bibliotheque Nationale and the British Museum, were particularly closely examined. Countless essays and printed catalogues on them appeared. Then in 1901 the first major exhibition of Islamic art was held in Munich. Two years later the first major publication on Islamic art arrived, F.R. Martin's The Minature Painting and Painters of Persia, Turkey and India. The years between the Munich exhibition and the great Persian minature exhibition at Burlington House (London) in 1931 marked a period of intense study and research of Persian art. Thus Persian painting was brought to the notice of many artists and illustrators, including Kay Nielsen, who could appreciate it due to the effects of exoticism.

THE BALLET RUSSES

Nielsen's familiarity with Persian art, evident most clearly in A Thousand and One Nights indicates that he must have carefully studied Persian painting. However it is probable that he also received second hand impressions of Persian art through the work of other artists, in the same way as he was indirectly influenced by Japanese art through the work of Beardsley. I think that the major source of indirect Persian influence on Nielsen was almost certainly the Ballet Russes.

In 1909 Sergi Diaghilev brought the Ballet Russes to Paris for its first performance in the West. Its synthesis of dance, art and music astounded the public and the stage and costume design were particularly successful. These were executed by Leon Bakst, a friend of Diaghilev's and co-founder of the Mir iskusstva group, an important artistic association in Russia. Bakst was to become the company's principle designer and a highly influential figure in European and Russian art.

Bakst's illustrations for the Mir iskusstva journal show a graceful linear style and a use of decorative techniques pointing to the influence of Aubrey Beardsley and Felix Vallotton. His paintings also show a flat decorative nature and unsurprisingly he was especially interested in Greek art (which influenced Persian art in the 13th century).

While the Ballet Russes first performance was highly acclaimed, its second production Scheherazade caused a sensation. It is this ballet which is important as here, while Bakst uses Turkish and Chinese motifs, he 'drew mainly upon Persian minatures' (21, p24). This is evident in the intensity of the colour scheme and its blending and contrasting colours, and in his decor and costumes. The Ballet design had an extraordinary effect on Paris society and exotic Eastern fashions became very popular. Alexander Schouraloff notes the 'the top Paris couturiers - Worth, Paquin and Poiret- based their dresses on Bakst's costumes' (21, p25).

The young Kay Nielsen, with his background in the theatre and stage must have been affected by the Ballet Russes at least as much as the Parisenne couturiers. It is almost certain that he would have gone to their performance in 1910 if not also in 1909. Even if he did not he could hardly have failed to avoid the influence of Bakst's designs on Paris. Until recently this relationship between Nielsen and Bakst has been lost due to a common misconception. Most biographies of Nielsen indicate that he left Paris in 1910 although they do not specify when. Thus there was no point in considering a possible connection. However Omar Austin reveals that Nielsen only visited London in 1910, where he received an offer of an exhibition at the Dowdeswell and Dowdeswell Galleries. He returned to Paris and did not actually leave until 1911. Therefore he was probably there for the performance of Scheherazade, and if he missed it, as I have said already, he saw its effect on Paris. Surely the splendours of Scheherazade and its repercussions on French society must have made a lasting impression on Kay Nielsen, and perhaps prompted his first researches into Persian art.

SIMILAR CLIENTS

There are strong analogies between the classical Persian artist and Kay Nielsen although they are separated by a period of over four hundred years. Thus when Persian art was brought to Nielsen's attention through exhibitions and publications, and also via the work of Leon Bakst, he assimilated it with an appreciation based on exoticism. I shall now identify these similarities, which extend from their equivalent patrons and the demands of those patrons through to the correlative aims and interests affecting their styles.

The shahs for whom most Persian minatures were painted were highly educated men. Unlike the general populace they were both literate and cultured as a result of tutelage from an early age. Thus they were very familiar with the tales of war and romance which comprised much of non-religious literature in Persia. Therefore the miniaturist painted illustrations of stories which were already well known to their reader.

Although Nielsen illustrated the texts of children's stories the format of his work was clearly aimed at an adult market. While progress in printing technology reduced costs the high quality of Nielsen's illustrations and the luxurious nature of the gift book itself appealed to relatively wealthy, bourgeois adults. It would be facile to imagine that gift books were bought purely for children. Thus Nielsen also illustrated stories for adult patrons who were already well acquainted with the text.

Taken in isolation this parallel between the patrons of Persian manuscripts and the purchaser of Nielsen's books is of little significance. However these similar clients thus produced similar demands on both artists, which ultimately led to their shared aims and interests.

SIMILAR DEMANDS ON BOTH ARTISTS

The familiarity of each set of clients with the text of their books reduced the narrative requirements on both illustrators and their work. Thus they were freer to persue the other demands of their patrons. The sophisticated adults who were these patrons wanted art which was beautiful, elegant and exquisite. Their prosperity allowed them to choose work which was decorative rather than functional, and which rejected the ugliness and imperfections of reality. The Persian shah who commissioned the miniaturist wished to see an ideal world of lyrical perfection in the same way as the purchaser of Nielsen's work did. This similarity in the expectations of their clientele naturally resulted in many corresponding approaches by Nielsen and the Persian artist.

SIMILAR AIMS

The freedom from a detailed narration of the story in Persian minatures, is noted by Karin Adhal, and he observes that 'the often simplified and stylised picture provides a contrast to the sometimes quite lengthy descriptions in the text' (1, p40). Indeed the working method of the miniaturist was governed more by the

tradition and iconography of his atelier than adherence to the text. Nielsen takes a similar approach in his work and 'the utility, the internal coherence and autonomy' of his illustrations also demonstrates their independence from the text (3, p32). Indeed his illustrations for In Powder and Crinoline were so self-contained that in 1923 Henry Jacques could use most of them to illustrate a completely different story, called Sous le Singe du Rossignol.

Liberated from the text, the Persian artist wished to 'reflect a symbolic or ideal world where fantasy and beauty are more important than reality' (1, p46). There is little attempt to convey the feelings described in the text as it was alien to Islamic art to express the emotions of either particular characters in the text, or the mood of whole scenes. Nielsen's treatment of his figures and scenes shows a corresponding detachment where 'the passion has frozen in a beautiful quietness' (3, p26). None of his characters express any emotion greater than a slightly melancholy air, which pervades most of Nielsen's work. As in Persian art there is also considerable similarity between all his figures, male and female, and their physiogonomies are based on a stereotypical ideal just as Persian figures are.

The aim of the Persian artist was 'to delight the eye of his patron' with 'an unsurpassed view for colour, dream like in its beauty, meticulous in technique' (24, p7). Nielsen has almost identical objectives in his work, and clearly shows a disregard for European realism in his treatment of perspective, his flattened images and his depiction of figures. Nielsen's imagination creates 'a world of beauty, a kind of fairyland, all his own.. with

a peculiar charm' (32, p142), in the same way as the Persian artist also creates a vision of Utopia for his patron. Both artists, working within minimal narrative restrictions, aim to decorate the flat surface of the page in the most beautiful way possible.

Thus it is clear that the corresponding aims of Nielsen and the Persian artist are principally as a result of similar demands on both, from their patrons. Therefore when exposed to Persian art, Nielsen was naturally receptive to the work of artists who shared many of his aims and interests. He was able to fully appreciate these aims and interests, enlightened by exoticism, which was reaching its peak in Europe when he was growing up. Nielsen and his contemporaries were particularly subject to the influence of Persian art due to the many new publications and exhibitions on Islamic art at that time. Perhaps intrigued by the Persian-influenced Ballet Russes, he first turned to this new information. Anyway, considering the factors discussed in this chapter, it was almost inevitable that Nielsen looked to Persian minatures as his major source of inspiration.

CONCLUSION

CONCLUSION

Kay Nielsen's best illustrations demonstrate a complex synthesis of many visual influences. This is evident in all his work from In Powder and Crinoline, with its oriental elements to the apex of Persian influence, shown in A Thousand and One Nights. However my analysis of Nielsen's work has revealed that the Beardsleyesque features of The Book of Death quickly disappear from his subsequent illustrations. The Japanese and Chinese influences so clear in In Powder and Crinoline also rapidly diminish and only the Japanese use of low composition remains in his later work. Yet as I have established in chapter three, the contribution of Persian art to Nielsen's illustration is manifest in most of his work. It can be seen in Nielsen's possibly unconscious use of Persian techniques in In Powder and Crinoline, through its extraordinary combinations with Japanese and Scandinavian elements in East of the Sun and West of the Moon to its zenith in A Thousand and One Nights. Here Nielsen not only uses Persian techniques but through his overt use of Persian motifs and iconography he openly acknowledges his debt to Persian art. Even in his later work, which shows a fall in his high standards, he still uses Persian approaches to painting, although to varying degrees. As I have pointed out, his most successful later work is that which has the greatest Persian influence. My examination of Nielsen's illustration in chapter three has revealed that although he quotes from various artistic traditions, none make a more significant contribution to his work than Persian art.

Nielsen's receptiveness to the work of the Persian artist is partially as a result of their shared aims and

interests. This is due to the analogous demands made on both artists by similar clients, which I have discussed in chapter four. These factors together with artistic circumstances combined to turn Nielsen to an art he could easily appreciate and thus easily assimilate. This is revealed in his illustrations which show Nielsen skilfully utilising Persian techniques and approaches, yet retaining his autonomy. Even in A Thousand and One Nights where Persian influence is strongest Nielsen's work never descends to plagiarism, his illustrations remain distinctively his own. It is thus co-existence of originality with strong visual ascendancies which mark Nielsen's skill as an illustrator. As I have shown in this dissertation, while there are many influences on Nielsen, it is Persian art which is the major visual ascendancy in his illustration.

APPENDIX

BIOGRAPHY OF KAY NIELSEN

Kay Nielsen was born into a famous Danish familly in Copenhagen on the 12th of March, 1886. Both his parents worked with the theatre. His father Martinius Nielsen, was the director of the Dagmar Theatre while his mother, Oda Larssen was well known both as an actress in The Royal Danish Theatre and as a singer and raconteur of the Scandinavian sagas. This familly which was so involved with stort telling through the various media had a great influence on Nielsen and perhaps unsurprisingly his life also became caught up with story telling through various media. Much later in life Nielsen remembers that 'when the sagas were read to him he tried to draw scenes from them. Clearly his interest in illustration began at an early age.

After deciding to persue an artistic career, he left Denmark in 1904 to study art at the Academy Julian in Paris (where Edmund also studied) under Jean-Paul Laurens. In 1907 he moved to the Academy Colarossi where he remained until 1911 when he left Paris for London. At this time London was a major center for book publication, design and illustration due mainly to the development of photomechanical reproduction and the full colour process.The increasingly prosperous middle classes provided a growing market for new lavishly illustrated books called 'gift books' and it was in this area that Nielsen was to specialise. In 1912 he had his first exhibition in the Dowdeswell and Dowdeswell Gallery. It contained various black and white illustrations done in Paris including an unpublished set for the stort of Pierrot called The Book of Death. The firm of Hodder and Stoughton, leading gift book publishers who had employed Arthur Rackham and Edmund Dulac, saw Nielsen's promise. He was comissioned to produce 26 colour illustrations for Sir Arthur Quiller Couche's In powder and Crinoline.It was published to critical acclaim in 1913. This association with Hodder and Stoughton continued and they

commissioned all but one of his printed works. In conjunction with this the Leicester Galleries held exhibition of his original work each time he illustrated a book. Thus while In Powder and Crinoline was published in 1913 the Leicester Galleries held an exhibition of the original illustrations in the same year. Nielsen's work was very popular and as was often the case with Rackham and Dulac, his earnings from the 1913 exhibition surpassed his original comission fee from the publishers. In 1914 his best known book East of the Sun and West of the Moon was published and the original illustrations were exhibited by the Leicester Galleries in 1915. 1917 saw his first American show at the Scott and Fowles Gallery in New York, which he travelled to returning as the war ended.

In 1917 he returned to Copenhagen and from then until1936 he alternated bases between there and London. He became close friends with the actor and director Johannes Poulsen and was later to collaborate on many theatre productions with him for the Royal Theatre in Copenhagen.In 1918 he started work on illustrations for A Thousand and One Nights which he finished in 1922. The following year saw his first collaboration with Poulsen, also on an eastern theme, that of Aladdin. Using the poetic text of Oehlenschlaeger with music by Carl Nielsen and directed by Poulsen, Kay Nielsen was responsible for the set and costume design. The performance stretched over two nights and was of a splendour rarely surpassed in Danish theatre. 1921 saw another American exhibition, in the New York Architectural League. Nielsen had his third exhibition at the Leicester Galleries in 1922, this time of his illustrations for Hans Andersen's Tales,although book was not actually published until 1924. Also in 1922 Nielsen designed the set and programme for Scaramouche, again under the direction of Poulsen. The 1924 production of the ballet Tycho Brahe's Dream by Viggio Cavling had costumes designed by Nielsen. The publication of Hans Andersen's Tales in 1924 was marked by another exhibition of his illustrations in the Leicester Galleries which also included his illustrations for A Thousand and One Nights. In 1925 Hansel and Gretel, his final book for Hodder and Stoughton was published. Nielsen married Ulla Pless Schmidt the following year. Also in 1926 he designed the sets for The Tempest. The 1930 production of the ballet Scheherzade saw scenes again designed by Nielsen but this time in collaboration with

George Balanchine. In the same year Nielsen's last book Red Magic was published by Jonathan Cape and the Leicester Galleries had an exhibition of the original illustrations. In 1932 Nielsen again designed the sets for a production of A Midsummer's Night's Dream (music by Mendleson). In 1936 Nielsen travelled to Hollywood with Poulsen and cast for a production of Jedermann by Hugo Von Hofmannsthal. Poulsen died there but Nielsen remained in America and the final of his wife was completed there with his wife.

Walt Disney spotted Nielsen and offered him work, so between 1939 and 1941 Nielsen worked in the Disney studios in Hollywood. His job was the design and visualisation of scenes for various films. He worked on The Night on Bald Mountain scene and the Ave Maria scene for Fantasia .He was also involved with an animated version of Hans Andersen's life story which was never realised. However Nielsen had many difficulties working with Disney including his inability to work to definite deadlines and what seems a lack of understanding of the medium of animation. This resulted in his attempt to achieve technically impossible effects in the Ave Maria scene. Eventually he left and moved to Altadema, Los Angeles, in 1941.

Ironically America was never less interested in artistic diversions such as gift books or theatre, than in 1941. On the 7th of December 1941, after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, America was plunged into the second World War. Despite the fact that Nielsen's work had become well known in America (between 1938 and 1939 his paintings travelled as an exhibition to museums in Los Angeles, San Francisco, San Diego, Santa Barbra, Seattle and Honolulu) there was now little demand for it. His life after leaving Disney was beset by financial difficulties. From 1941 until his death in1957 Nielsen's income came from just four mural commissions which he executed during that period. His first mural was based on an episode from Genisis and was entitled The First Spring. It was commissioned for the new library of Central Junior High School, Los Angeles but was later transferred to Sutter Junior High School in the San Fernando Valley. He worked on it from 1942 to 1945 and it is considered to one of the best murals in America. Also in 1945 he had another exhibition in New York, this time in the Public Library and in 1946 he

exhibited in the Los Angeles Public Library. Also in 1946 he painted The Canticle of the Sun for Emerson Junior High School at Westwood, Los Angeles. The year after he completed another mural, this time based on the 23rd psalm, for the altar of the Wong Chapel of the First Congregationalist Church (Los Angeles). After completing this mural he did not receive a commission for another six years and naturally his financial situation worsened. He and Ulla made two attempts to return to Denmark, in 1950 and 1953. However his work with Poulsen had been forgotten and he could not find work there. They finally returned to America in 1953 and soon after Nielsen recieved his last commission. He was asked to paint a mural for the Whitman College of Walla Walla, Washington. Due to ill health he did not paint it on site, but worked on it at a friend's house. The mural was then transferred to its proper place. Kay Nielsen's health had become a worsening problem since 1953 and finally on the 23rd of June 1957 he died at his home in Altadema, Los Angeles.

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ILLUSTRATIONS

* While this figure shows the illustration without a border this is because it is not taken from the original illustration, and its border has been removed from the reproduction from which this photograph is taken.

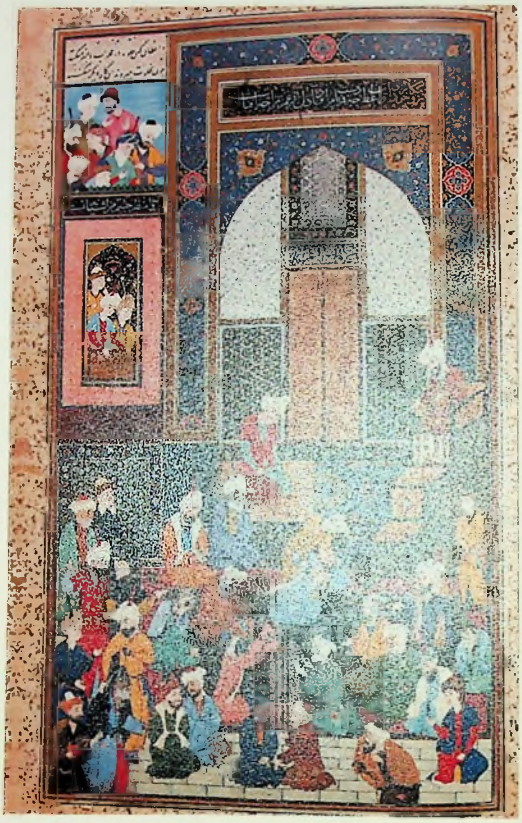
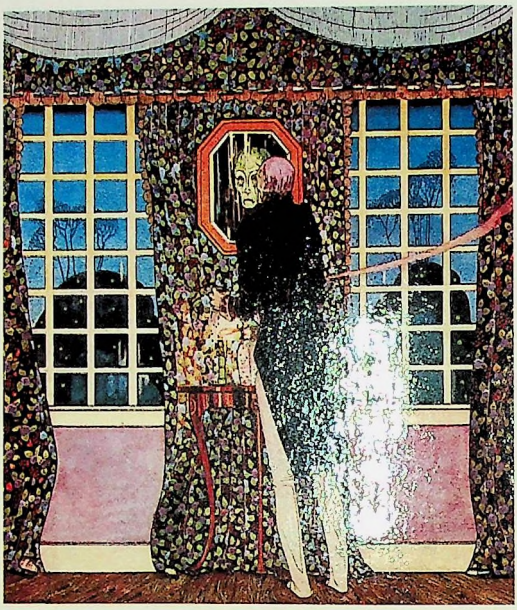


Figure 1 PERSIAN MANUSCRIPTS

Figure 2 IN POWDER AND CRINOLINE

KAY NIELSEN



Nello specchio vide il proprio volto

Figure 4 IN POWDER AND CRINOLINE

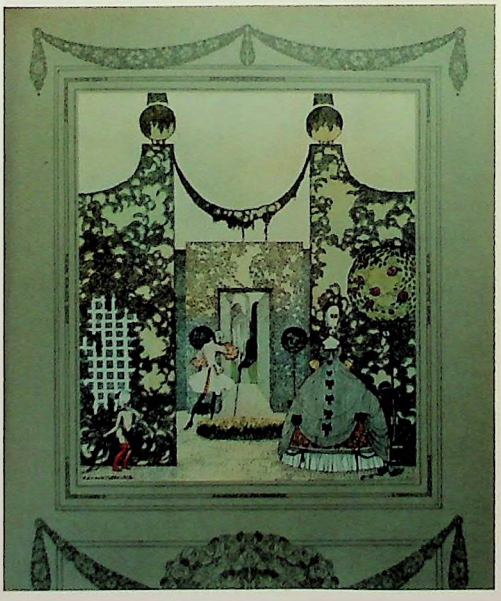


Figure 3 IN POWDER AND CRINOLINE

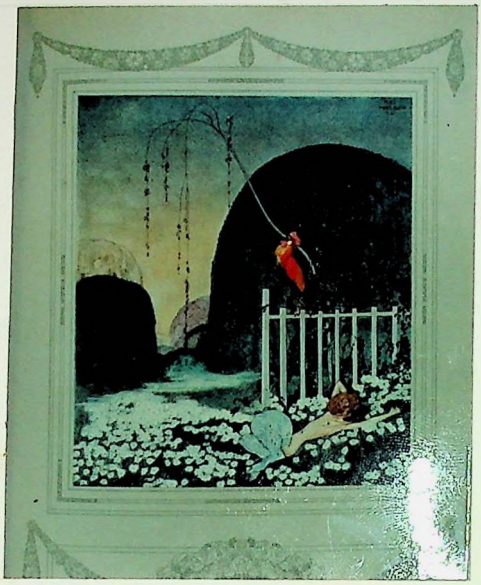


Figure 5

IN POWDER AND CRINOLINE

Figure 6

IN POWDER AND CRINOLINE

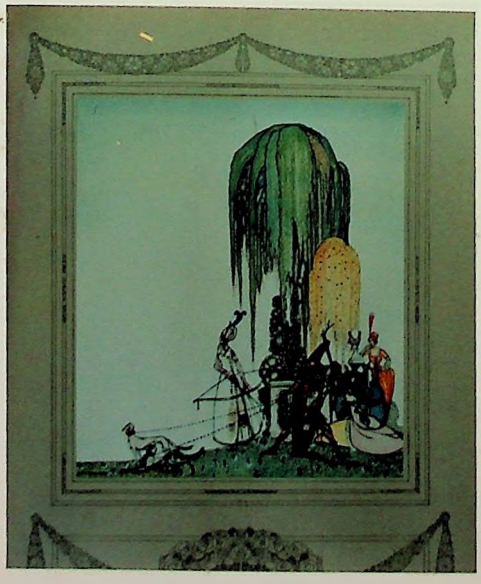


Figure 7

IN POWDER AND CRINOLINE

IN POWDER AND CRINOLINE

Figure 8

IN POWDER AND CRINOLINE

Figure 9

IN POWDER AND CRINOLINE

Figure 10

Figure 11 IN POWDER AND CRINOLINE

KAY NIELSEN

Roseliane sul cavallo magico

✱ **Figure 12** IN POWDER AND CRINOLINE

Figure 13

IN POWDER AND CRINOLINE

Figure 14

IN POWDER AND CRINOLINE

Figure 15

IN POWDER AND CRINOLINE

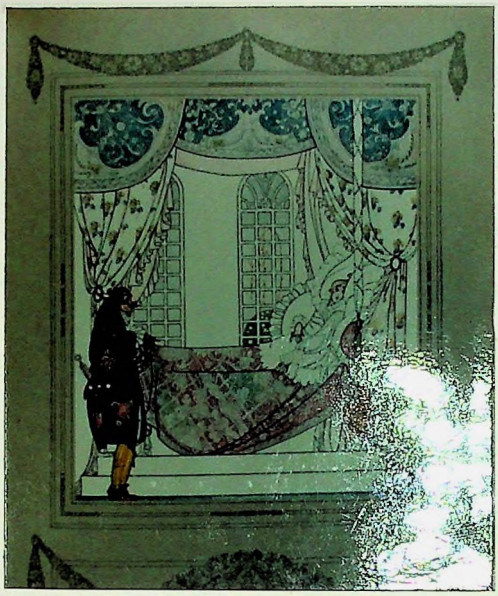


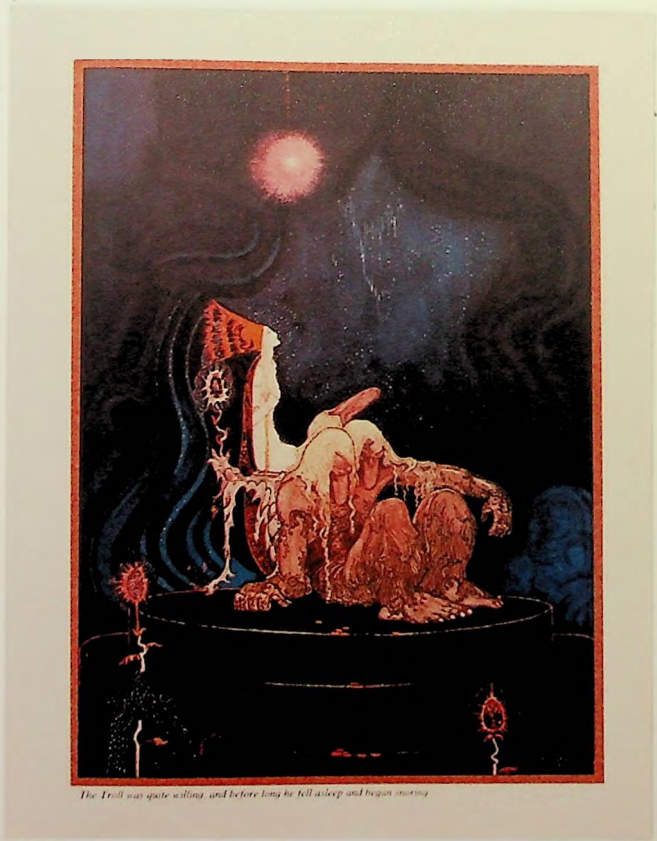
Figure 16 IN POWDER AND CRINOLINE

KAY NIELSEN

Lo spirito con gli occhi verdi

Figure 17 IN POWDER AND CRINOLINE

Figure 18 EAST OF THE SUN ...



The Troll was quite willing, and before long he fell asleep and began snoring

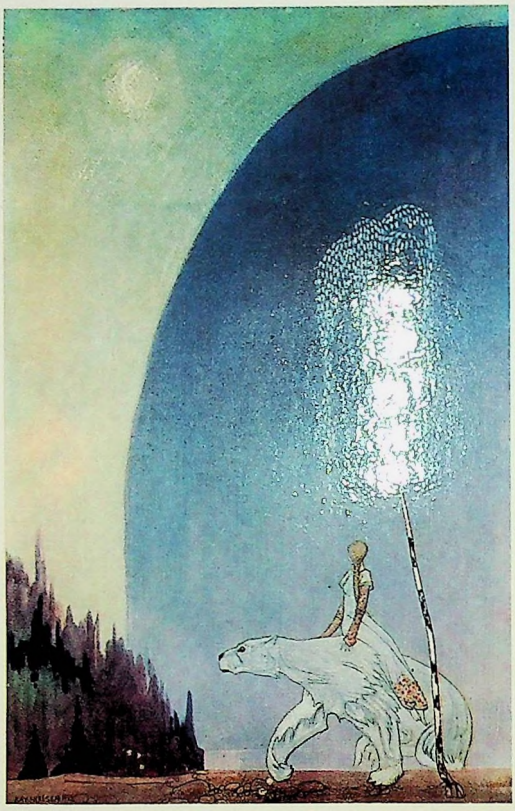
Figure 19 EAST OF THE SUN ...

Figure 20 ✱
EAST OF THE SUN ...

Figure 21

EAST OF THE SUN ...

KAY NIELSEN



"Bene, stai attenta e tienti stretta alla mia irsuta pelliccia

Figure 22 ✱

EAST OF THE SUN ...

Figure 23

EAST OF THE SUN ...

Figure 24

EAST OF THE SUN ...

KAY NIELSEN

Non appena ebbe fischiato,
egli sentì sibili e fruscii venire da ogni parte

Figure 25 ✳

EAST OF THE SUN ...

Figure 26
PERSIAN MANUSCRIPTS

KAY NIELSEN

Allora la persuase e la condusse a casa

Figure 27
EAST OF THE SUN ...

Figure 28

EAST OF THE SUN ...

Figure 29

PERSIAN MANUSCRIPTS

Figure 30
PERSIAN MANUSCRIPTS

Figure 31 EAST OF THE SUN ...

Figure 32 A THOUSAND AND ONE NIGHTS

Figure 33 PERSIAN MANUSCRIPTS

Figure 34 A THOUSAND AND ONE NIGHTS

Figure 35 A THOUSAND AND ONE NIGHTS

Figure 36 A THOUSAND AND ONE NIGHTS

Figure 37 A THOUSAND AND ONE NIGHTS

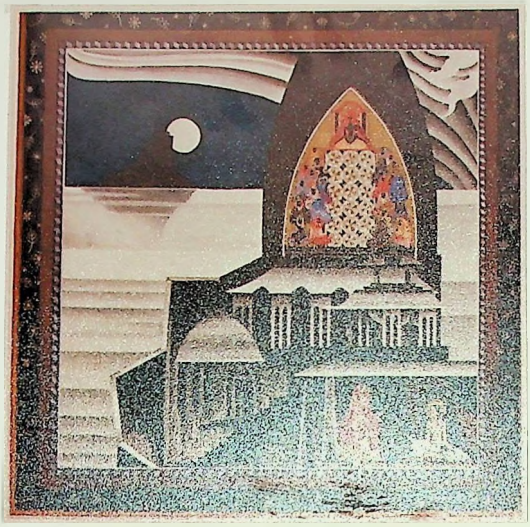


Figure 38

A THOUSAND AND ONE NIGHTS

Figure 39

A THOUSAND AND ONE NIGHTS

Figure 40

A THOUSAND AND ONE NIGHTS

Figure 41 PERSIAN MANUSCRIPTS

Figure 42 A THOUSAND AND ONE NIGHTS

Figure 43 A THOUSAND AND ONE NIGHTS

Figure 44 A THOUSAND AND ONE NIGHTS

Figure 45 A THOUSAND AND ONE NIGHTS

Figure 46 A THOUSAND AND ONE NIGHTS

Figure 47 A THOUSAND AND ONE NIGHTS

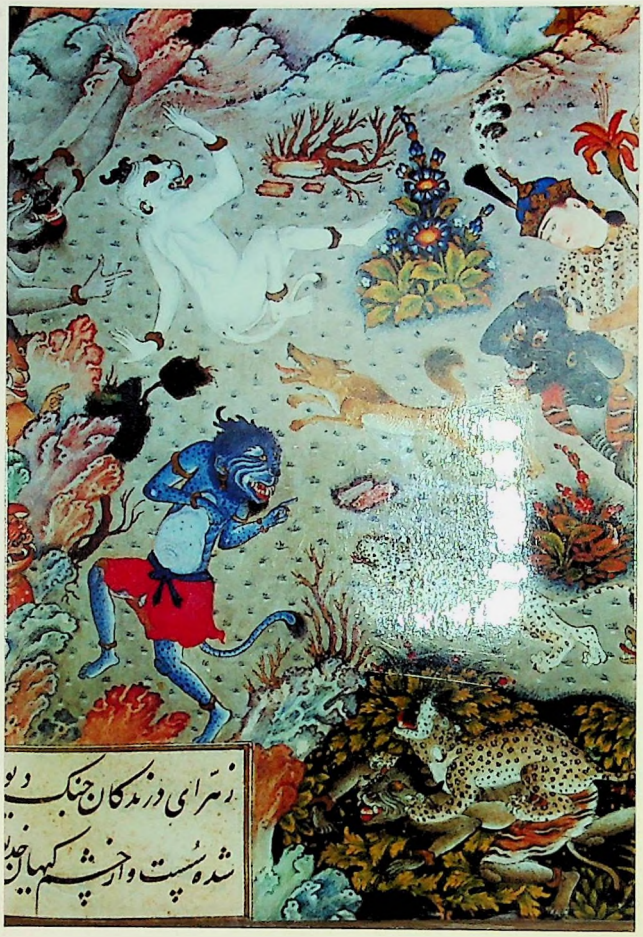


Figure 48
PERSIAN MANUSCRIPTS

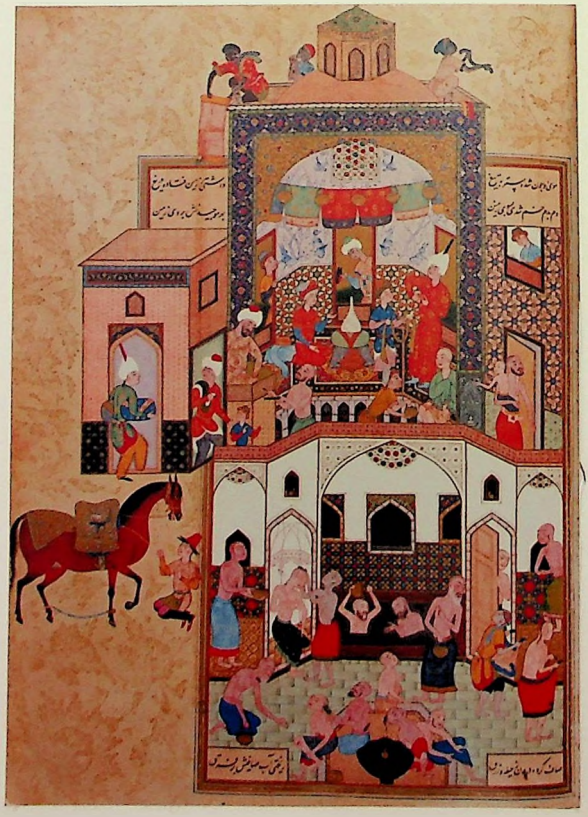


Figure 49
PERSIAN MANUSCRIPTS

Figure 50 A THOUSAND AND ONE NIGHTS

Figure 51

PERSIAN MANUSCRIPTS

Figure 52 A THOUSAND AND ONE NIGHTS

Figure 53 A THOUSAND AND ONE NIGHTS

Figure 54 PERSIAN MANUSCRIPTS

Figure 55 HANS ANDERSEN'S TALES

Figure 56 HANS ANDERSEN'S TALES

Figure 57 HANS ANDERSEN'S TALES

Figure 60 HANS ANDERSEN'S TALES

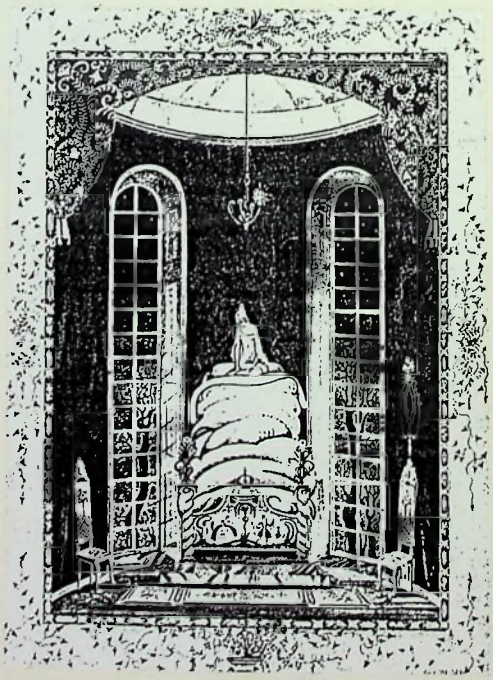


Figure 61 HANS ANDERSEN'S TALES

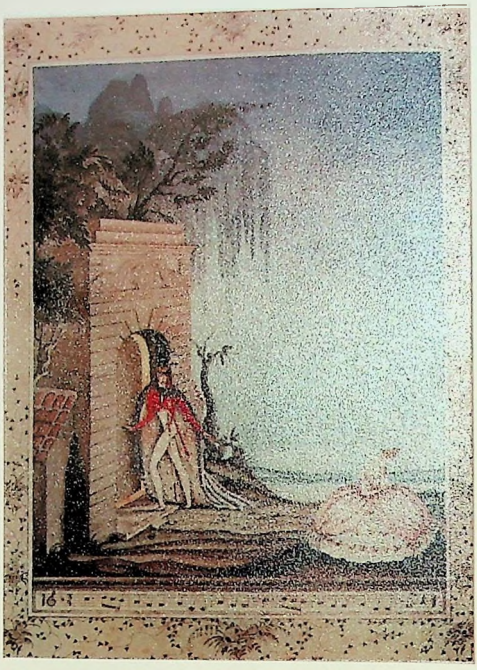


Figure 62 HANS ANDERSEN'S TALES

Figure 63 HANSEL AND GRETEL

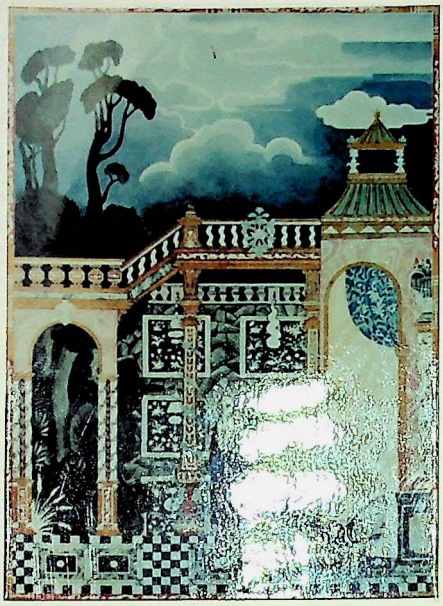


Figure 64 HANSEL AND GRETEL

Figure 65 HANSEL AND GRETEL

Figure 66 HANSEL AND GRETEL

Figure 67 HANSEL AND GRETEL

KAY NIELSEN

Essi videro che la capanna era fatta di pane e dolci

Figure 68 HANSEL AND GRETEL

Figure 69 HANSEL AND GRETEL

Figure 70 HANSEL AND GRETEL

Figure 71 PERSIAN MANUSCRIPTS

Figure 72 PERSIAN MANUSCRIPTS

Figure 73 PERSIAN MANUSCRIPTS

Figure 74

PERSIAN MANUSCRIPTS

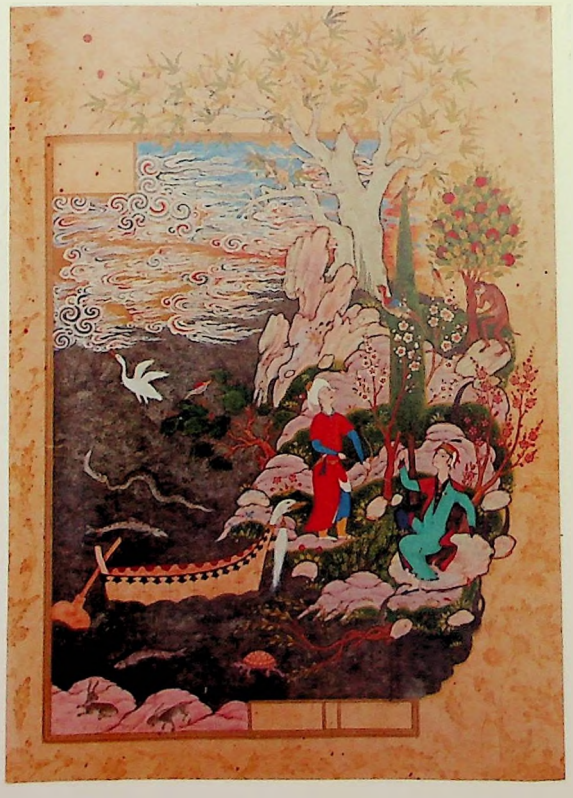


Figure 75

PERSIAN MANUSCRIPTS

Figure 76 PERSIAN MANUSCRIPTS

Figure 77 RED MAGIC

Figure 78 RED MAGIC

Figure 79 RED MAGIC

Figure 80 RED MAGIC

Figure 81 RED MAGIC

Figure 82 RED MAGIC

Figure 83 RED MAGIC

Figure 84 RED MAGIC

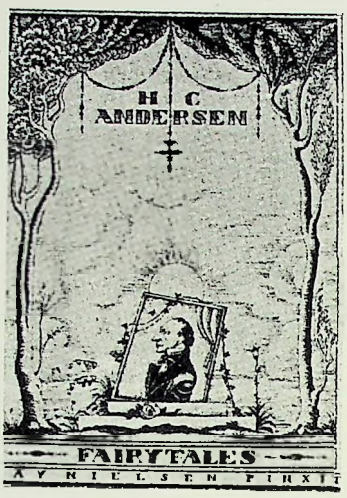


Figure 85
HANS ANDERSEN'S TALES

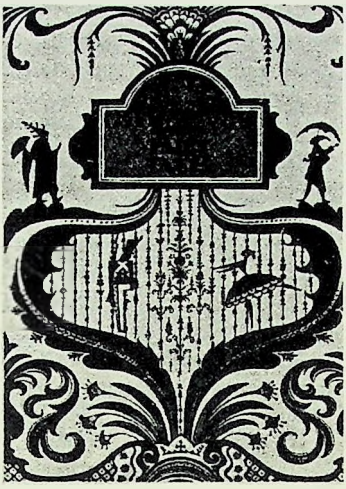


Figure 86
HANS ANDERSEN'S TALES

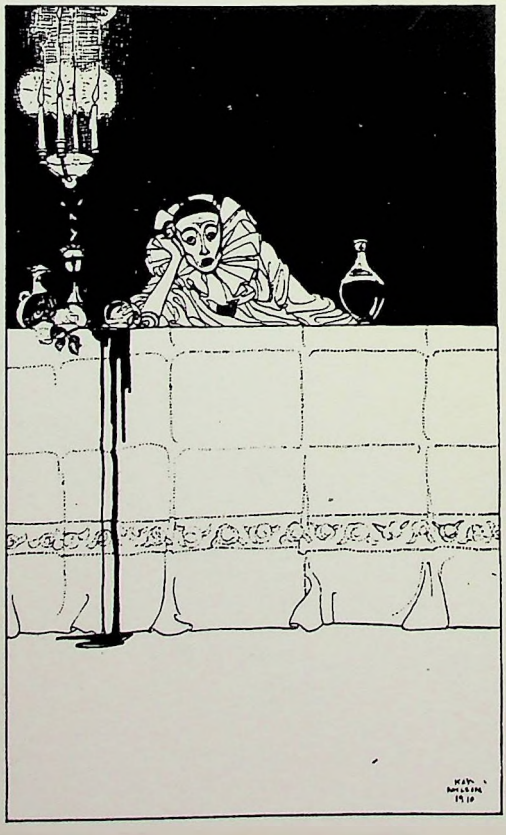


Figure 87 THE BOOK OF DEATH

Figure 88 THE BOOK OF DEATH