

ROOTS OF ORAL TRADITION IN THE ARABIAN NIGHTS

ZAID NUMAN MAHIR

PROFESSOR JOHN FOLEY, THESIS ADVISOR

ABSTRACT

The aim of this thesis is to argue for *The Arabian Nights* as a work of verbal art whose roots are in the oral tradition of the Arab world. After a short premise meant to throw light on the status of oral storytelling in the Arab world, the thesis is divided into three chapters. The first is devoted to laying out a theoretical background for the application of an oral tradition approach. Chapters Two and Three are given to the application of this approach: Richard Bauman's Oral Performance framework. The text chosen for this application is the "Story of the King of China's Hunchback." The conclusions I draw afterwards are based on the illuminating results of the theory put to practice.