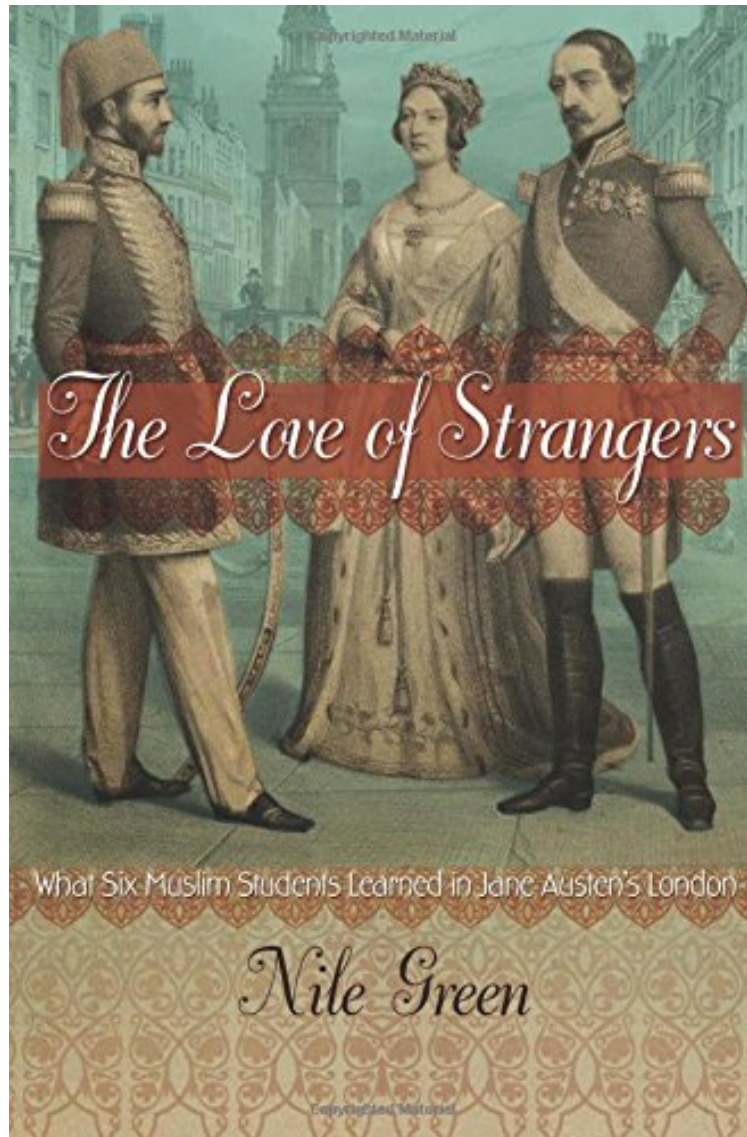


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The Love of Strangers: What Six Muslim Students Learned in Jane Austens London

Nile Green

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#951427 in Books Green Nile 2015-11-24Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 9.30 x 1.20 x 6.30l, .0 #File Name: 0691168326416 pagesThe Love of Strangers What Six Muslim Students Learned in Jane Austen S London | File size: 72.Mb

Nile Green : The Love of Strangers: What Six Muslim Students Learned in Jane Austens London before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Love of Strangers: What Six Muslim Students Learned in Jane Austens London:

11 of 11 people found the following review helpful. Full of fascinating tidbits, but the errors undermine credibilityBy

SCMHave you ever been seated at a family dinner next to a distant uncle or cousin and you're delighted to discover that he has similar interests--only to have that relative dominate the conversation with information you already know? And worse, he keeps drinking, he screws up facts, he keeps repeating himself, and you never get a word in edgewise? If not, you must have had a much more pleasant family than I. Also, you probably haven't read this yet. Whenever a book is marketed with the words "Jane Austen's England" or "Jane Austen's London," I have a rule to run fast and far. I'm not strong enough to OBEY my rule, though. Here, a book about six (but mostly one or two) Persian students in Regency England is contorted into a book about Persian students in "Jane Austen's England/London." In fact, Jane Austen was busy dying of Addison's Disease (or whatever the current theory is) at the time, and the only real connections to Austen are so tenuous that it's insulting to Janeites as well as students of the Regency. The England/London these students moved through was that of the Regency. Jane Austen was hardly part of the beau monde (and neither were the students, despite the author's statement they were). This is what I expected: a view of Regency England from the point of view of Persian bureaucrats, with heavy quoting from the newly discovered diary of Mirza Salih. There is some of that, but it's so interspersed with redundancies and random facts that have nothing to do with the experiences of the students (while I found the distinctions about Dissenters fascinating, I already knew my dissenting sects pretty well). I could not, for the life of me, figure out how a book to repeat itself so often from chapter to chapter, page to page, paragraph to paragraph, and even LINE TO LINE until I read that this is an amalgamation of several journal articles. Even so, that's not an excuse. An editor should have caught the repetitions, and the author should never have made them (or should have at least proofed the galleys). Also related to editing: anyone who uses the word "synecdoche" and insists on using "varsity" instead of "university" does not get a pass on sentence fragments or run-on sentences, not even for style. Nor does the author get a pass on using exclamation points (e.g., "More on this later!" p. 162). [And whoever came up with the academic press equivalent of comic-sans as a chapter subheading font? What is that?] In any case, there is always the frustration of the book you thought you were going to read and the book you actually read. I read a book that was so full of duplications that I started jotting phrases down on an index card to turn into a drinking game (for example, "Bible Society" or mention of Jane Austen's father attending Oxford=1 drink, "varsity" instead of "university"=2 drinks, "men of the pen"=3 drinks, plus giggling allowed, "Jane Austen's England/London"=4 drinks). The worst part, though, were the anachronisms. The cover art is ridiculous (Queen Victoria and Napoleon III--really?). Again, an editor should have spotted these. The author should have known better. I'm rarely tempted to toss a book across a room, but the word "tarmac" nearly did it to me. Specifically, the author describes James MacAdam (spelled McAdam on the previous line on page 145--really, the name is spelled differently directly above itself in the same paragraph. In fairness, either spelling could be correct, but it's sloppy). The author also describes men driving on "tarmac," a great improvement on previous roads. If they *were* driving on tarmac, it really would have been one hell of an improvement. M[a]cAdam was responsible for "Macadamized" roads, which were made up of crushed stone, and which made carriage travel faster and safer. (The first known use of the word "macadamized" was 1824, but don't tell Regency romance novelists this.) Tarmac is something else. It's based on macadamization, but it has a layer of tar or asphalt on top of it (hence "tarmac," which was patented in 1901 and is short for "tar macadam"). I'm out of time--real life means I'm about to drive on tar-covered raised roads to take my daughter to gymnastics--but essentially, this is a book that is worth reading if you have an interest in Anglo-Persian relations in the early 19th century, and you should, because they're fascinating. And yet...it is very repetitive. Given its recent publication (2016), I hope future editions (or electronic editions) address the errors and redundancies. 2 of 4 people found the following review helpful. It reads like a poorly written By Customer Don't be fooled! The title mentions Jane Austen as a way to get Jane Austen fans to read it. It reads like a poorly written, repetitive dissertation. The author keeps throwing Jane Austen's name and novels into the text, but makes no real connection to her life and works. 3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. fascinating story of the first Iranian students in Regency England By hmf22 The story is an enthralling one: six Iranian students studying in London and its environs for four years in the 1810s, learning English and Latin, trying out British dress and British cuisine, strolling in Vauxhall Gardens and cavorting in high society, learning to make guns and operate printing presses, enduring mud and rain and carriage accidents and evangelical proselytizing and the shocked stares of new neighbors when one strolls the streets hand-in-hand with an English girl. Nile Green did a phenomenal amount of research, including the first translation of one student's diary, to assemble this panoramic work, and it is indeed an odyssey. But Green is so fulsomely admiring of the students' "xenophilia," and so stuck on questions like whether they drank ale or patronized prostitutes, that I felt like the work occasionally strayed into an unpleasant (albeit mostly very positive) Orientalism. Green also harps on and on about Jane Austen, in a manner that is neither perfectly well-informed nor very relevant to his analysis. Overall, I wasn't thrilled by the presentation of the information, but I do think the story itself, and Green's reconstruction of the students' lives in England, is impressive.

In July 1815, six Iranian students arrived in London under the escort of their chaperone, Captain Joseph D'Arcy. Their mission was to master the modern sciences behind the rapid rise of Europe. Over the next four years, they lived both the low life and high life of Regency London, from being down and out after their abandonment by D'Arcy to

charming their way into society and landing on the gossip pages. *The Love of Strangers* tells the story of their search for love and learning in Jane Austen's England. Drawing on the Persian diary of the student Mirza Salih and the letters of his companions, Nile Green vividly describes how these adaptable Muslim migrants learned to enjoy the opera and take the waters at Bath. But there was more than frivolity to their student years in London. Burdened with acquiring the technology to defend Iran against Russia, they talked their way into the observatories, hospitals, and steam-powered factories that placed England at the forefront of the scientific revolution. All the while, Salih dreamed of becoming the first Muslim to study at Oxford. *The Love of Strangers* chronicles the frustration and fellowship of six young men abroad to open a unique window onto the transformative encounter between an Evangelical England and an Islamic Iran at the dawn of the modern age. This is that rarest of books about the Middle East and the West: a story of friendships.

"[A] microhistory of a Persian journey through Regency England . . . [with] attention to the pluralization of religious practices in a period of intensified global connection. Within this context, Salih's account offers a valuable perspective on the familiar outlines of Regency England."--Paulo Lemos Horta, *Times Literary Supplement*"This story of four years of discovery by Muslims visiting Europe for the first time makes for entertaining and instructive reading."--Leslie Mitchell, *Literary*"Nile Green . . . has followed the Iranian students through Regency England with the determination and skill of a forensic detective. Using the diary of Mirza Salih as his primary guide, he has managed to trace his subjects through disparate archives, scattered letters, newspaper articles and even paintings. Such a feat is not to be underestimated."--*The New York Times*"A mesmerizing and winsome work."--*The Star Tribune*"In Salih's diary, Green unearths a genuinely valuable outsider's portrait of Regency England, its culture, manners and burgeoning industry. . . . This is a fascinating record of a profound, strange and charming encounter of East and West."--Shahidha Bari, *Times Higher Education*"[D]iligently researched and elegantly written."--Aram Bakshian Jr., *The Washington Times*"This fascinating study of six Iranian students in Regency London provides a positive counterpoint to two scholarly frameworks for interpreting encounters between East and West. . . . This book is a valuable contribution to the study of East-West encounters generally, and one that complicates the narratives that usually frame them."--Choice"A marvelous book by one of the finest historians of the region. It is a major contribution to our understanding of early relations between the Muslim East and the West,' as well as an enchanting tale of tolerance, diversity, and freedom of exchange. Green's prose is engaging and elegant, and he wears his erudition lightly. This is a must-read for anyone interested in the humanity of encounters among cultures."--Daniel Newman, *Los Angeles of Books*From the Back Cover"Nile Green is one of our finest global historians. In this wonderfully insightful and entertaining book, his remarkable narrative skills are on full display as he illuminates the cross-cultural encounters of a group of Iranian students abroad in early-nineteenth-century London."--Pankaj Mishra, author of *From the Ruins of Empire: The Revolt against the West and the Remaking of Asia*"Nile Green is among our foremost scholars of the East-West encounter in the nineteenth century, able to get us deeply inside Persian and Muslim culture of the era and to contextualize it in the age of European colonialism."--Juan Cole, author of *The New Arabs: How the Millennial Generation Is Changing the Middle East*"*The Love of Strangers* is a pleasure to read. Green enables us to reconceptualize England during the late Georgian period of Jane Austen."--Michael H. Fisher, author of *Migration: A World History*"Erudite and highly readable. By taking the interactions between these Iranian students and their British contacts as they were experienced--as opposed to as we understand them today in our postcolonial frameworks--Green has managed to give life to nineteenth-century England in a new and exciting way."--Naghmeh Sohrabi, author of *Taken for Wonder: Nineteenth-Century Travel Accounts from Iran to Europe*About the AuthorNile Green is professor of history at UCLA. His many books include *Sufism: A Global History*. He lives in Los Angeles.