

Dunyazadiad: The Parody of The Arabian Nights

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Abstract

This article explores the influence of The Arabian Nights on John Barth's novella Dunyazadiad. This influence lies in The Arabian Nights labyrinth construction of the narrative events. By its experimental literary artifice, Dunyazadiad initiates the early phase of postmodern reactions to modernism's fictional modes and their apocalyptic vision regarding the death of fictional genres. Barth's conscious recapitulation of the twentieth century fictional genre manifests itself properly in the novella's frame-narrative, offering the solution that previous canonical works, especially The Arabian Nights, are the "treasure house" for avoiding the literary exhaustion prevalent in modern fiction. This study aims to scrutinize Barth's experimental parody of The Arabian Nights' frame-tale, narrator, characterizations, and dénouement to critique the spirit of exhaustion dominating contemporary modern fictional genre. The theoretical analysis of Dunyazadiad focuses on two main narrative theories, namely Mikhail Bakhtin's dialogic mode and Patricia Waugh's formulation of metafiction., This article argues for Barth's reliance on The Arabian Nights frame-narrative to critique modernism fictional exhaustion.

Keywords: Barth, Dialogism, Exhaustion, Frame-tale, Metafiction, Parody, Replenishment.

I. Introduction

The American novelist John Barth has always been associated with postmodernism. His experimentation with the fictional genre aims at exalting literary fictional forms within postmodern literature. For this reason, Barth believes that contemporary modern literature represents the "exhausted possibilities" of traditional fictional forms which should be "replenished" in a new permanent type of fiction to elevate those conventional forms.

Barth's novella Dunyazadiad is written in three parts. In the first part, Dunyazade tells Shah Zaman the story of her sister's, Scheherazade, dilemma to stop Shahryar's misogyny. During Scheherazade's research to do that, a Genie appears from the future to express his admiration of her. When the Genie asks about her program, he helps her to tell stories from the book he admires, i.e., The Arabian Nights. In the second part, Shah Zaman tells Dunyazade, his wife, a story in reciprocation to hers. He tells her a story about his life in Samarkand with a woman who resembles Scheherazade. Having discovered her infidelity, he kills her and comes to his brother's, Shahryar's kingdom. The purpose of Shah Zaman's story is to thwart Dunyazade's insistence to kill him. Finally, the third part is told by Shah Zaman about his way to end his story.
The central perspective of this article polarizes a narrative study of *Dunyazadiad*. It will use Mikail Bakhtin's narrative conceptualization of dialogism where competing voices in the text circulate along with the author's abstract monologic voice. Particia Waugh's metafictional narrative theory, moreover, will be utilized for textual analysis. In this regard, the labyrinth narrative structure of *Dunyazadiad* undergoes perennial experimentation with *The Arabian Nights*’ frame-tale, narrator, characterizations, and dénouement to expose modernism inherent "used-up" literary modes in order to find "experimental" remedy for them.

II. The Literature of Exhaustion and The Literature of Replenishment

In his essays, "The Literature of Exhaustion" and "The Literature of Replenishment," Barth theorizes his intellectual notion regarding the past and future of literary forms. In addition, he justifies his use of postmodern styles as opposed to those "used-up ones," claiming that the twentieth-century literature draws from the previous literary sources, which indicates the "exhausted" forms of modern fictional narratives. Further, Barth says that postmodern literature can save literary forms by experimenting with the fictional genre. In John Barth's "Chimera: A Creative Response to the Literature of Exhaustion," Jerry Powell describes the "theoretical considerations" of Barth's essays in reference to Barth's collection of stories *Chimera*.

Barth composed *Dunyazadiad*, which is the first part of *Chimera*, after he had written about the "used-up" modern literary forms. As such, Barth emphasizes the necessity of innovating new narrative forms inspired by previous canonical ones; Powell argues: "As he learned from Dunyazade, a new perspective is all that is needed to create new stories out of old ones with a new awareness or consciousness" (61). This idea is accomplished through Barth's experimental literary styles. Thus, in *Dunyazadiad*, Scheherazade says that: "Artists have their tricks" (4).

In so doing, Barth critiques the modern literary forms against which he writes his fiction. In "The Literature of Exhaustion," Barth argues that modern fictional authors followed their precursors, like Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, and Balzac for literary purposes without experimental contribution. Furthermore, he urges contemporary writers to "succeed" even the experimental modern authors, like James Joyce and Franz Kafka; Barth writes:

…it is dismaying to see so many of our writers following Dostoevsky or Tolstoy or Balzac when the question seems to me to be how to succeed not even Joyce and Kafka, but those who succeeded Joyce and Kafka and are now in the evenings of their own careers. (67; interpolation in origin)

Additionally, Barth's main interest lies in the "intellectual" imitative perception of the previous literary works, such as *The Arabian Nights*. Barth continues: "to rediscover validly the artifices of language and literature… if one goes about it the right way, aware of what one's predecessors have been up to" (68). By resorting to *The Arabian Nights*, Barth tries to find an "intellectual victory" over the spirit of modern literary exhaustion which he emphasizes in *Dunyazadiad*. This is true of Dunyazade's
description of the Genie's dependence on previous works, like *The Arabian Nights*: "his own fictions mere mimics, pallid counterfeits of the authentic treasure of her *Thousand and One Nights*" (12).

It is clear that Barth is concerned with retelling previous literary forms to provide new experimental ones. In this sense, Barth justifies his deconstructive strategy to come up with new literary forms because he believes modern authors lack the creative artistic forms in their fictional works. In "The Literature of Exhaustion," Barth talks about the idea of creative "imitation." This style brings about a novelty in fictional forms, and, thus, it becomes an independent literary style; Barth writes: "The imitation, like the Dadaist echoes in the work of the 'intermedia' types, is something new and may be quite serious and passionate despite its farcical aspect; “interpolation in origin” (72).

Furthermore, in "The Literature of Exhaustion," Barth describes modern literary forms as "used-up," i.e. They which need a different artistic representation. This is embodied in his feeling of the exploited literary forms over time. This literary exploitation results in literary decline; Barth continues: "By 'exhaustion' I don't mean anything as tired as the subject of physical, moral, or intellectual decadence, only the used-upness of certain forms or the felt exhaustion of certain possibilities-by no means necessarily a cause for despair" (64). In *Dunyazadiad*, Barth exemplifies this idea in Dunyazade's reference to the Genie's writing problem: "the more so since he [the Genie] couldn't say how much of his difficulty might be owing to his own limitations, his age and stage and personal vicissitudes; how much to the general decline of letters in his time and place" (10).

In the main, Barth argues that contemporary literary forms need to be innovative. He, therefore, proposes that authors overcome this problem in their works to maintain the fictional genre. In this respect, he quotes Borges as one of those writers who experiment with fiction to avoid employing "exhausted" forms in their works. If writers follow the same path, they will write permanent fictional forms. In "The Literature of Exhaustion." Barth maintains:

Moreover, like all Borges' works, it illustrates in other of its aspects my subject: how an artist may paradoxically turn the felt ultimacies of our time into material and means for his work – paradoxically, because by doing so he transcends what had appeared to be his refutation, in the same way that the mystic who transcends finitude is said to be enabled to live, spiritually and physically, in the finite world. (71)

Barth's fictional writing aims at writing literary works in an avant-garde literary form. Consequently, Barth supports his aim by what he calls "rich paradox," where writing techniques of literary works interact with their precursors. This obsession with literary artistic imitation is described in *Dunyazadiad*: "he [the Genie] wished neither to repudiate nor to repeat his past performances; he aspired to go beyond them toward a future they were not attuned to and, by some magic, at the same time go back to the original springs of narrative" (10). This corresponds to Barth's description of fictional genre in "The Literature of Exhaustion," when he talks about the "novels which imitate the form of the Novel, by an author who imitates the role of Author" (72).
In "The Literature of Replenishment," Barth is apparently more concerned with scrutinizing the nature of "replenishing" fiction. He acknowledges the new literary spirit to which he belongs as postmodern. This time, the "felt exhaustion" can be avoided by self-transcendent parody" (205).

Additionally, Barth expresses his inclination to postmodern literature because it fulfills his notion of reacting against the previous exhausted literary trends. He maintains that he is so convinced with the notion of literary experimental novelty: "I must say that all this sounds persuasive to me—until I examine more closely what I'm so inclined to nod my head yes to" (200). In the same vein, Barth, in Dunyazadiad, implicitly expresses this idea. In his writing "career," for example, the Genie decides to "turn" to a new writing style in order to avoid the degeneration of literary forms: "His [the Genie's] career, too, had reached a hiatus which he would have been pleased to call a turning-point if he could have espied any way to turn" (9-10).

This is close to Barth’s arguments that postmodernism is not a discontinuity with modern literature. It, however, depends on modern literary forms but in a different literary representation. In "The Literature of Replenishment," Barth comments:

In my view, the proper program for postmodernism is neither a mere extension of the modernist program...nor a mere intensification of certain aspects of modernism, nor on the contrary a wholesale subversion or repudiation of either modernism or what I'm calling premodernism: "traditional" bourgeois realism. (201)

In evoking the idea that authors ran out of fictional forms, Barth claims that postmodern fiction is the ideal solution to the contemporary "exhausted" artistic literary forms. In this sense, this "apocalyptic" perspective foreshadowing the "replenishment" of contemporary literature is appreciated for providing an answer to such a problem. This is true in Dunyazadiad where the Genie's "discovery" of the treasure house of literature assists his literary position: "he [the Genie] meant the treasury of art, which if it could not redeem the barbarities of history or spare us the horrors of living and dying, at least sustained, refreshed, expanded, ennobled, and enriched our spirits along the painful way" (17). Barth, in "The Literature of Replenishment," expresses the same idea: "A dozen years ago, I published in these pages a much-misread essay called 'The Literature of Exhaustion,' occasioned by my admiration for the stories of senior Borges and by my concern, in that somewhat apocalyptic place and time for the ongoing health of narrative fiction" (205).

At the end of "The Literature of Replenishment," Barth acclaims a number of contemporary writers who were writing in the same path of his own to depart from modern literature towards innovative experimentation in artistic forms which respond to the ability of writing a creative fictional narrative; Barth writes:

A number of us, in quite different ways and with varying combinations of intuitive response and conscious deliberation, were already well into the working out, not of the next-best thing after modernism, but of the best next thing: what is gropingly now called postmodernist fiction; what I hope might also be thought of one day as a literature of replenishment. (206; interpolation in origin)
III. Dunyazadiad: The Parody of The Arabian Nights' Frame-Tale

The plain style of Barth's Dunyazadiad presents a parodic text to achieve and justify his literary devices. By employing parody, Barth accentuates the essence of his narrative form which forms a reciprocal relationship between his authorial presence and the readers. Barth, in Dunyazadiad, comments on this textual nature through Dunyazade's words: "currently, however, the only readers of artful fiction were critics, other writers, and unwilling students who, left to themselves, preferred music and pictures to words" (9). Here, the reader grasps Barth's parodic way of writing.

In A Theory of Parody: The Techniques of Twentieth Century Art Forms, Linda Hutcheon talks about twentieth-century writers, such as Barth, who wrote in parodic styles because they utilize parody as a mode of "self-reflexivity" to avoid the monotonous use of fictional forms. In this respect, Hutcheon discusses Victor Sklovskij's treatment of parody in the works of these writers:

Consciousness about form, as achieved by writers like Sterne (and Barth, Fowles, and others today) by its deformation...through parody, is one possible mode of denuding contrast, of defamiliarizing 'trans-textualization,' or of deviation from aesthetic norms established by usage. (35)

In Dunyazadiad, as mentioned above, Barth employs the technique of parody. There are different implications about the self-presence of the author in his work. Not only does the Genie, for example, embody Barth's critique of modern literary forms, but he also represents Barth's postmodern literary perspective as a novelist. Similarly, Hutcheon describes parody as a "subversive" technique utilized for the purpose of producing authorial self-awareness of the text. The "semantic" features of the text can refer to the genuine philosophy of its author; Hutcheon continues: "Parody is one of the techniques of self-referentiality by which art reveals its awareness of the context-dependent nature of meaning, of the importance to signification of the circumstances surrounding any utterance" (85).

Simultaneously, the text presents a mutual relationship between the author and the reader. In this sense, the text carries the authorial purpose to inform the reader of the stylistic nature of parody. The Genie, in Dunyazadiad, says: "My project,'...is to learn where to go by discovering where I am by reviewing where I've been" (10). In the same manner, Hutcheon talks about parodic self-consciousness in literary works: "Parody, rather, invokes a self-conscious critical distancing of the Other which can be used as one of the rhetorical mechanisms to signal the reader to seek immanent, if indirect, ideal standards whose deviation is to be satirically condemned in the work" (78).

Hutcheon also talks about the variable functions of parody according to the author's style. The author's "emancipation" of new modes of parody refers to his/her distinctive utilization of parody; Hutcheon writes: 'Parody was seen as a dialectic substitution of formal elements whose functions have become mechanized or automatic. At this point, the elements are 'refunctionalized,' to use their [formal elements] term' (35). In addition, an author utilizes parodic representations to "renew" the established literary modes: "Yet parody can also challenge norms in order to renovate, to renew" (76).
Similarly, in Dunyazadiad, Barth offers a stylistic parody of The Arabian Nights' frame-tale to critique contemporary literature. When Barth questions the possibility of "replenishing" the forms of modern fiction, he incarnates his position in Dunyazade's reporting of the Genie's words to Shah Zaman. The Genie's problem lies in his ignorance to find the "magic key" to the fictional "treasure-house." The key to this problem is exemplified in his innovative writing style: "he [the Genie] declared that his researches, like hers [Scheherazade's], had led him to an impasse, he felt that a treasure-house of new fiction lay vaguely under his hand, if he could find the key to it" (11).

This is the primary notion which Barth emphasizes in the aforementioned essays when he stresses the importance of departing from modern artistic forms towards more experimental ones, as well as taking the past conventional forms into consideration. This has a close relation to Hutcheon's argument that: "Nevertheless, parody's transgressions ultimately remain authorized–authorized by the very norm it seeks to subvert" (75).

In Dunyazadiad, when Dunyazade beseeches the Genie to provide her sister with stories from The Arabian Nights to spare the life of Scheherazade and her children is an example that illustrates Barth's concept of writing literary works through relying on their predecessors. In the same pattern, "borrowing" stories from their "mothers" will regale the "exhaustion" of literary forms: "'Borrow something from that treasury!' I implored him. 'What will the children do without their mother?'" (29). This corresponds to Julie Rivkin's and Michael Ryan's discussion of parody in Literary Theory: An Anthology. According to Rivkin and Ryan, parody is an objective style where "the author distances himself from this common language, he steps back and objectifies it, forcing his own intentions to refract and diffuse themselves through the medium of this common view that has become embodied in language" (678).

IV. Dunyazadiad As a Metafictional Novella

In Dunyazadiad, Barth's use of the first person narrator reflects the authorial self-awareness. This self-consciousness is assessed under the metafictional literary representation. It is critically argued that this literary genre enables authors to "comment" on the aims of their works. The "used up" literary forms, for example, are the thematic issues which Barth tackles in Dunyazadiad. This problem is brought by the artist's lack of creative techniques. He/she imitates his/her precursor's stories by relying on the same literary conventional styles. Dunyazade, for example, refers to the Genie as a "former" fictional author. This reference indicates Barth's departure from the contemporary literary forms: "He was a writer of tales, he said–anyhow a former writer of tales" (9; interpolation in origin).

In general, metafiction is considered a postmodern literary genre. Relating Dunyazadiad to metafiction reveals the implicit purpose of the fictional works. In addition, metafiction involves literary styles, such as parody to represent the literary nature of its text.

According to Patricia Waugh, who explains the attributes of metafictional writings, metafiction can describe the artistic nature of literary texts to provide a different "outlook" on the real world. In Metafiction: The Theory and Practice of Self-Conscious Fiction, Waugh defines metafiction as:
A term given to fictional writing which self-consciously and systematically draws attention to its status as an artefact in order to pose questions about the relationship between fiction and reality. In providing a critique of their own methods of construction, such writings not only examine the fundamental structures of narrative fiction, they also explore the possible fictionality of the world outside the literary fictional text. (2)

For this reason, metafictional novelists look for literary styles which utilize representative writing "construction" to explain the nature of the real world. Waugh further argues that metafiction:

… re-examined the conventions of realism in order to discover [through its own self-reflection] a fictional form that is culturally relevant for contemporary readers. In showing us how literary fiction creates its imaginary worlds, metafiction helps us to understand how the reality we live day by day is similarly constructed, similarly 'written.'(18)

Barth's subversive style exemplifies his critique of the reality of contemporary literature. The referential presentation of the characters, narrators, and dénouement of Dunyazadiad indicates the proliferous use of metafiction as an authorial self-reference as well as the subversive mockery of other artistic forms which Barth critiques. Similarly, Barth experiments in the fundamental structures of his narrative fiction. This literary construction is achieved through the authorial self-referentiality.

This is clear in Barth's allusion to his authorial presence from outside the text in Dunyazadiad. He reinforces this presence by putting it implicitly in Dunyazade's reference to the author "in a land on the other side of the world" (9). Here, the Genie comes from another land which allows the author to comment on his intrusion in the text through the Genie's appearance.

Barth's Dunyazadiad illustrates the discontinuity between fiction and reality. In his book entitled Metafiction, Mark Currie talks about such kind of shift, yet he maintains that realism is vital for shaping metafiction; Currie writes:

Metafiction explicitly lays bare the conventions of realism; it does not ignore or abandon them. Very often realistic conventions supply the 'control' in metafictional texts, the norm of background against which the conventional strategies can foreground themselves. (53)

Thus, metafictional works fortify the relationship between reality and fiction. In so doing, Currie agrees with Waugh's idea that contemporary metafictional writing is both a response and a contribution to a sense that fiction goes concomitantly with reality. To bring that into light, the following example from Dunyazadiad illustrates Barth's perception of the reality of his text: "In all the years I've been writing stories, your book has never been off my worktable. I've made use of it a thousand times, if only by just seeing it there" (13). Here, Barth refers to the parodic nature of his novella. By using a metafictional style, Barth uncovers his appreciation of the "intermedia arts" like The Arabian Nights to go against modern literature.
As such, in *Dunyazadiad*, this metafictional style is represented in the authorial intrusion into the novella. The Genie, for example, asserts Barth's suggestion which embodies the shift from traditional literary forms into new experimental ones. In his definitions of metafiction, in *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of literary Terms*, Chris Baldick talks about the self-referential nature of metafictional texts. According to Baldick, the "self-conscious" fictional text focuses on the relationship between the text and the reader: "the term is normally used for works that involve a significant degree of self-consciousness about themselves as fictions, in ways that go beyond occasional apologetic addresses to the reader" (151). In *Dunyazadiad*, Barth's comment on the "felt ultimacies" of narrative forms is exemplified in the Genie's proposal that continuous narrative may result in permanent fictional art: "to demonstrate a kind of narrative inexhaustibility or profligacy" (20). Furthermore, this appears in Shahryar's insistence that Scheherazade keep telling stories: "'On with the story,' Shahryar commanded when they were done" (22).

In metafictional terms, this literary technique is considered a relative relation between the author and his text. Bakhtin describes this process as the "dialogic relations." These relations require the "monologic mode" which represents the author's own voice. In "Mikhail Bakhtin and the Dialogical Dimensions of the Novel," David Patterson discusses the "dimensions" of the dialogic novel. Patterson maintains that dialogism refers to the relationship between the text and the reader: "The dialogical dimensions of the novel draw its readers into a dialogical interaction with the novel" (131). Dialogism, furthermore, depends on the authorial monologic mode.

The multiplicity of discourses uttered by the characters in *Dunyazadiad* embodies the author's critical notions. In the following excerpt, Dunyazade's speech illustrates the dialogic relationship between Scheherazade and the Genie that carries out the author's "monologic" voice:

> Whether this was in fact the case, neither he [the Genie] nor Sherry cared at all; yet they liked to speak as if it were (their favorite words), and accounted thereby for the similarity between conventional dramatic structure–its exposition, rising action, climax, and dénouement. (24-25; interpolation in origin)

Bakhtin also introduces the term "heteroglossia" which means the "coexistence" of a number of discourses in one "linguistic code." In this sense, heteroglossia is similar to dialogism. In "Discourse in the Novel," Bakhtin's discusses the importance of language to heteroglossia; Bakhtin contends:

> From this point of view, literary language itself is only one of these heterolog languages-and in its turn is also stratified into languages (generic, period-bound and others). And this stratification and heteroglossia, once realized, is not only a static invariant of linguistic life, but also what insures its dynamics: stratification and heteroglossia widen and deepen as long as language is alive and developing. (1199)

Accordingly, the authorial voice is represented in the author's commitment to the text. This is obvious through the author's utilization of textual devices that pertain to his/her monologic mode. In *Dunyazadiad*, the authorial intrusion reflects the function of such textual devices. Incarnated in the Genie's character, Barth's interaction with other characters reveals his "dialogic" mode characterized by
the author's "speech" which foregrounds the authorial relationship with other characters. The Genie, for example, achieves Barth's authorial presence in the text.

As Barth is concerned with critiquing contemporary literary conventions, he presents an elaborative consideration on how to "regenerate" them. The repeated phrase uttered by the Genie, "the key to the treasure is the treasure," demonstrates Barth's obsession with proposing a way for keeping storytelling to overcome the "exhausted possibilities" of modern literary forms. In their treatment of the same topic, Julian Wolfreys et al, in *Key Concepts in Literary Theory*, approach the stylistic nature of heteroglossia. Wolfreys et al describe heteroglossia as:

Term refers to the many discourses that occur within a given language on a microlinguistic scale …. Heterologssia literally signifies as 'different-speech-ness.' Bakhtin employed the term as a means of explaining the hybrid nature of the modern novel and its many competing utterances. (50)

Furthermore, the dialogic relationship between the Genie and Scheherazade foregrounds this assumption. This dialogic relationship will, in turn, lead to Barth's monologic notion that literary forms should be maintained through creative writings. In *Dunyazadiad*, the authorial monologic voice is revealed in the Genie's advice-provoking opinion that "single-mindedness is needed to compose great works of art" (10).

At this point, Barth's self-consciousness directs him to move to a dialogic relationship with Scheherazade in another situation. As the discourse proceeds, the Genie tells Scheherazade of the salvation "key" to her life. In *Dunyazadaid*, Scheherazade asks the Genie to support her to tell stories from the past, specifically *The Arabian Nights*, to postpone her death: "All you need to do is supply me from the future with these stories from the past" (15). In addition, she should follow a new innovative way of telling stories: "But what you want is passionate virtuosity" (24). Similarly, in "The Literature of Exhaustion," Barth expresses this idea when he emphasizes "that virtuosity is a virtue, and that what artists feel about the state of the world and the state of their art is less important than what they do with that feeling" (64).

V. Reversing of *The Arabian Nights'* Frame-Tale, Characterization, Narrator, and Dénouement

In *Dunyazadiad*, Barth distinctively reverses *The Arabian Nights'* frame-tale. The whole discourse of *The Arabian Nights'* frame-tale involves Shahryar and Shah Zaman, on the one hand, and Scheherazade, Dunyazad, and their father (the Wazir), on the other. The dialogic discourse is exemplified in Shahryar's and his brother's decision to kill their infidel wives. Their discourse reveals the entertaining perspective of *The Arabian Nights* in the Middle Ages. In *Dunyazadiad*, however, Shahryar and the Wazir do not play any dynamic role. In addition, Dunyazade, who remains static in *The Arabian Nights'* frame-tale, is the most dynamic character in Barth's *Dunyazadiad*. The literary nature of these fictional characters is assessed through the traits of their characterization. M.H. Abrams, in *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, lists the textual attributes of characterization; he points out:
A broad distinction is frequently made between alternative methods for characterizing...the persons in a narrative: showing and telling. In showing,... the author simply presents the characters talking and acting and leaves the reader to infer the motives and dispositions that lie behind what they say and do. The author may show not only external speech and actions, but also a character's inner thoughts, feelings, and responsiveness to events; for a highly developed mode of such inner showing.... In telling, the author intervenes authoritatively in order to describe, and often to evaluate, the motives and dispositional qualities of the characters. (33-4)

In *The Arabian Nights*, the reader can obtain the tales' entertainment. This appears in Shahryar's enthusiasm to hear the rest of Scheherazade's tales: "By Allah, I will not slay her until I hear the rest of her tale, for truly it is wondrous" (50). Here, *The Arabian Nights* anonymous author does not appear "authoritatively" in the text. Instead, he reveals the internal motives of the characters to explain his "external" entertaining purpose through "showing." On the contrary, Barth, hidden in the Genie's characterization, appears in the text to comment on the purpose of *Dunyazadiad*.

The Genie, for example, ran out of telling stories in a way similar to contemporary fiction: "His own pen (that magic wand, in fact a magic quill with a fountain of ink inside) had just about run dry" (9). Through "telling," Barth interacts with his characters to "describe" their textual positions:

All apologies, he assured us that what he [the Genie] was describing was not *The Thousand and One Nights* frame-story (which ended happily without mention of these terrors), but his own novella, a pure fiction--to which also he would endeavor with all his heart to find some conclusion in keeping with his affection for me [Dunyazade]. Sherry further eased my anxiety by adding that she too had given long thought to my position as the Genie described it. (33)

Barth also reverses *The Arabian Nights* narrator. Barth's reversal of *The Arabian Nights* frame-tale's narrative technique occurs at two levels: the character/ narrator where Dunyazade narrates Scheherazade's story, and where Shah Zaman narrates his story to Dunyazade. Scheherazade, for example, is a homodiegetic narrator in *The Arabian Nights* frame-tale because she is a primary character. In the tales she tells Shahryar, she is considered an extradiegetic narrator as she does not appear as a character in these tales.

In *Dunyazadiad*, however, she is heterodiegetic because she does not narrate. Dunyazad and Shah Zaman, on the other hand, are heterodiegetic characters since they do not narrate in the primary plot of *The Arabian Nights* frame-tale. In contrast, they are homodiegetic narrators in *Dunyazadiad* because they are character/narrators within Barth's novella. In this sense, they represent the intradiegetic narration from "inside" the narrative. On the other hand, the Genie embodies the extra-diegetic narration since he carries out the author's extradiegetic self-reflexive "monologic" narration.

In *Fictions of Discourse: Reading Narrative Theory*, Patrick O'Neill discusses Gerard Genette's classification of the kinds of narrators who interact in the text:

In terms of narrative level, since every narrator either produces or is part of a particular narrative reality-or, as Genette calls it, a diegesis -- every narrative first of all has an
extradiegetic narrator who produces it; any character within that primary narrative who also produces a narrative is an intradiegetic narrator; and any character within that (second-degree) narrative is a hypodiegetic narrator…. In terms of participation in the narrative reality presented, any one of these three kinds of narrator may either play a greater or lesser role as a character in his or her own narrative, in which case Genette speaks of a homodiegetic narrator, or may be entirely absent from it, in which case the narrator is said to be heterodiegetic. (60-61)

In the first part of *Dunyazadiad*, Dunyazade tells her story to Shah Zaman: "From the day I was born, when Sherry was about nine, she treasured me as if I were hers… I'll bet we weren't apart for an hour in the first dozen years of my life" (7). The second part, however, is told by Shah Zaman to Dunyazade about his story with the girl who parallels Scheherazade. Shah Zaman begins his story with: "Six years ago I thought myself the happiest man alive…" (42).

The second narrative level is revealed in the author's intrusion in his *Dunyazadiad*. The Genie, the authorial figurative voice, provides Scheherazade with stories from *The Arabian Nights*: "It pleased our Genie, for example, that the tale of the Ensorcelled Prince had been framed by that of the Fisherman and the Genie…This metaphorical construction he judged more artful than the 'mere-plot-function'" (23).

Additionally, narrative communication involves both intratextual communication between the characters, narrator and narratee, and extratextual communication between the author and the reader. In this case, it is obvious that the structural implication of *Dunyazadiad*'s text offers references to this analysis.

The discourse between Scheherazade and the Genie, for example, illustrates the intratextual communication between the characters. At the same time, it refers implicitly to the extratextual relation between the author and the reader. Barth, in *Dunyazadiad*, alludes to this communication: "And, of course, that book about Sherry herself which he claimed to be reading from, is in his opinion the best illustration of all that the very relation between teller and told" (25).

In addition, the extratextual communication appears "paradoxically" in the fictional narrative. O'Neill discusses such paradoxical nature of the textual communication relationships. He claims that the "reading process" participates in the authorial subversive strategy in the extratextual communication; O'Neill writes: "The process of 'reading' a text, once conceived of as purely a practical matter of sticking in a thumb and pulling out a plum, deconstructs theoretically into a logical impossibility, a self-sustaining paradox" (130).

Furthermore, in the course of *Dunyazadiad*, the author/reader extratextual narrative relation is exemplified in Dunyazade's description of the Genie's and Scheherazade's key to storytelling. However, such communicative relation indicates Barth's "paradoxical" comment on how to create new literary forms which "replenish" those traditional ones. In *Dunyazadiad*, Barth appropriates this argument to his text through critiquing previous literary forms in order to regale the conventional narrative's "decadence"; Barth's narrator comments:
They speculated endlessly on such questions as whether a story might imaginably be framed from inside, as it were, so that the usual relation between container and contained would be reversed and paradoxically reversible—and (for my benefit, I suppose) what human state of affairs such an odd construction might usefully figure. (24)

Moreover, the reader may figure out the author's implicit voice and his/her style of writing. Consequently, the text's construction compels the reader to infer the relationship between him and the author. This "dialogic" discourse facilitates the appreciation of the text's nature. In her communicative relation with Shah Zaman, Dunyazade tells him of the Genie's suggestion of the reversed way of telling stories. The Genie proposes that he would invent a different story based on The Arabian Nights' frame-tale:

All apologies, he assured us that what he was describing was not The Thousand and One Nights frame-story (which ended happily without mention of these terrors), but his own novella, a pure fiction-to which also he would endeavor with all his heart to find some conclusion in keeping with his affection for me. (33)

Additionally, the "dialogic" relationship between Scheherazade and the Genie counters the nature of the author's monologic voice. For example, when the Genie proposes that Scheherazade tell stories from the past, he exemplifies Barth's intention to come up with "replenished" literary narrative conventions. Barth's earlier proposition was not to "repudiate" the past literary conventions, but to continue that past in light of more lasting future narrative forms. In the following quotation, for example, Dunyazade's talks about Scheherazade's questioning of the Genie's writing which implicitly refers to Barth's own "intellectual" purpose in his text:

Sherry asked with a smile whether by 'his version' the Genie meant that copy of the Nights from which he'd been assisting us or the story he himself was in midst of inventing; for she liked to imagine, and profoundly hoped it so, that our connection had not been to her advantage only: that one way or another, she and I and our situation were among those 'ancient narrative materials' which he had found useful for his present purpose. (32)

Here, Barth introduces the metafictional comments in his text. These comments help the reader grasp the kind of fiction that Barth writes. This kind of fiction should rely on the precursor's narratives. Through telling the Genie of her narratives, Scheherazade seems to be more obsessed with creating new stories for her salvation: "'Twice you've called me a storyteller,' she said; 'yet I've never told a story in my life except to Dunyazade, and her bedtime stories were the ones that everybody tells" (12). By assigning his characters different representations, Barth's message aims at writing in "replenished" literary forms. Through revealing the authorial "comment" in his narrative, for example, Barth expresses the possibility of the future of these literary forms. This is obvious in Dunyazade's words: "You have a way with words, Scheherazade" (3).
As for the intratextual relationship, there are different communicative relations among the characters. In this sense, it is vital to show how the characters embody the author's voice. The "dialogic" voices in *Dunyazadiad* share independent characteristics. The textual discourses of the novella interact with each other differently. The following quotation demonstrates the intratextual relationship between the Genie and Scheherazade: "the only tale I ever invented myself was this key-to-the-treasure one just now, which I scarcely understand…." (12). Being so, the story's "levels" of *Dunyazadiad* clarify the dual relationship between the reader and the author to comment on writer's "avant-garde" fiction.

O'Neill describes such narrative aspects as: "The fundamental discrimination upon which all modern narratological theory is founded, however… is precisely that between the two 'levels' of story and discourse" (20; interpolation in origin).

Furthermore, Barth reverses *The Arabian Nights* end. This can be traced in Dunyazade's description of the Genie's purpose to end his story: "That one way or another, she and I and our situation were among those 'ancient narrative materials' which he had found useful for his present purpose. How did his version end?" (32; interpolation origin). In *Literature, Criticism, and Theory*, Bennet and Royale discuss the different types of literary works' ending. They argue that various manners of the end shape the reader's "judgment" of text. In addition, the end may make literary texts be reread in different ways: "To provide a typology or systematic account of different kinds of endings, in poems, plays, short stories, and novels, would be an endless task, since every ending is different from every other and each calls on the reader to respond to this singularity" (281).

Moreover, Bennet and Royale emphasize the various "presentations" of the text's dénouement. Such presentations clarify the "deconstructive" strategy of a writer: "every literary work is open to rereading, and the way in which its ending is appreciated or understood will vary, however imperceptibly, not only from one reader to another but from one reading to another" (32). In the same way, the end of *Dunyazadiad* reveals the parallel relation between the reader and the authorial monologic voice. Shah Zaman's comment on the end of *Dunyazadiad* in part three reflects Barth's parodic departure from *The Arabian Nights* conventional end: "Dunyazade's story begins in the middle; in the middle of my own, I can't conclude it-- but it must end in the night that all good mornings come to" (55).

Furthermore, *The Arabian Nights* ends with "until at last there came to them the Destroyer of delights and the Sunderer of societies and the Depopulator of palaces and the Garnerer of graveyards and the Reaper for Resurrection-day, and they came as though they never had been" (871). This end indicates a complete end of *The Arabian Nights* frame-tale. However, *Dunyazadiad*'s dénouement exemplifies Barth's idea that all stories imitate each other. By employing parody, Barth reveals his awareness of the significance of keeping telling stories which represent "the key to the treasure is the treasure!" (8; interpolation in origin). Scheherazade's last words to Dunyazade reflect this notion: "To be joyous in the full acceptance of this dénouement is surely to possess a treasure, the key to which is the understanding that Key and Treasure are the same" (5).
VI. Conclusion

Barth's parodic reversal of *The Arabian Nights'* frame-tale "replenishes" some of the literary "exhaustion" prevailing in modern literary forms. Through metafiction, his characters embody certain critical ideas that *The Arabian Nights*' characters do not. Being so, Barth's *Dunyazadiad* appropriates *The Arabian Nights* into the subversive discourse of postmodernism. *Dunyazadiad*'s mutinous experimentation delineates the traditional contour of fiction writing and avant-gardism, whereby implicating cutting-edge narrative texts.

Barth addresses the retrievable potential of postmodern poetics in an experimental style. He is concerned with the postmodern proclamation of literary texts which "illuminate the transition to a new type of postmodern society, and provide perspectives that might be of use for critical social theory and for projects" (Kellner 84). Over the course of *Dunyazadiad*, Barth provides a revolutionary conceptualization of the fictional genre on the verge of fictional retaliation. His authorial remarks vindicate the smoldering literary postmodernism frankness and collectivity.

The distinctive goal of Barth is the subversive experimentation with the frame-tale, characterization, narrator, and the dénouement of *The Arabian Nights*. Barth's reversal of these literary elements forces the reader to infer the undertone of his novella and to grasp the latent relationship between him and the author. Thus, *Dunyazadiads* discrete narrative construction recurs in a metafiction text to depict the extensive vision of nostalgic fiction lurking behind the persistent pace of contemporary literary typology.
دنيازاد: محاكاة الأطار الروائي للف ليلة وليلة

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المملوكة

تكشف هذه المقالة تأثير ألف ليلة وليلة على قصة دنيازاد لجون بارت. يتمثل هذا التأثير بإسلوب البناء السردي المتداخل للف ليلة وليلة. وفي هذا الأطار، تتعرض قصة دنيازاد لقضية استنفاد العناصر الأدبية للجنس الروائي في عصر الحداثة واستبدالها بعناصر تجريبية خلاقة في باكورة حقبة ما بعد الحداثة. تكمن فكرة نفاد العناصر الأدبية في أسلوب بارت الواقعي المتمثل في تكريس رؤيته لأدب القرن العشرين المتمثلة بإسلوبه المستوحى من البناء القصصي للف ليلة وليلة. وعلى هذا الأساس، يتحور في فكرة بارت التي تدعو إلى تجنب استنفاد العناصر الأدبية للف ليلة وليلة. وتهجوم ظاهرة استنفاد العناصر الأدبية في عصر الحداثة، ينزع بارت إلى التجديد الادبي في قضته ألف ليلة وليلة، وتهجوم ظاهرة استنفاد العناصر الأدبية في غالبية الأدب في قلبه تجربة انتقالي لاستخدام البناء الروائي المستقل في أدب العصر الحديث. تقوم هذه الدراسة على تحقيق هذه العناصر عن طريق استعجار نظرية سردي وعالية المتمثلة بمفهوم نسق الخطاب التحفيز الثاني لمارتن باختين ونقطة المواجهة ليتريشا وو. وبالتالي فإن ركوب بارت إلى ألف ليلة وليلة يجسد نقده للعناصر الأدبية النافذة في أدب عصر الحداثة.
References


