

John Barth's "Dunyazadiad": A Postmodern Reading of an Eastern Frame

Prof. Dr

Qassim Salman Sarhan

Marwa Ali Al-Shara

University of al – qadissiya - college of education

Abstract

The frame-tale technique is one of the most ancient narrative techniques, its roots go back to the oral tradition. It refers to a set of embedded stories which are encircled by a larger framework, hence creating a hierarchical pattern of stories within stories, and highlighting the relation between the storyteller and the audience. The most famous example of the frame-tale is *The Thousand Nights and One Night* in which Scheherazade, who represents the ideal storyteller narrates stories for the king Shahryar to save her life.

Most of postmodernist writers admired such stories and one of them is John Barth (1930-), an American novelist whose fascination with the frame-tale tradition such as *Decameron*, *The Canterbury Tales*, and *The Arabian Nights* appears clearly in his novels. Barth recycles stories by using the idea of 'arranging literature', the stories that are recycled are taken from the Bible, *The Arabian Nights* (Barth's favorite frame-tale), and the heroic myths of the ancient Greek. He fully exploits the cultural relevance and perseverance when he chooses a text for his work. So, he presents the frame-tale in a way that helps to develop the manner of narration, i.e. to lead narrative from exhaustion to replenishment. According to him, one can revive literature by returning to the past and the origin of fiction. This paper is an attempt to explore the structure of the frame-tale in Barth's novella "Dunyazadiad", the first story in his collection, *Chimera*.

Key Words: Frame-tale, spiral, *The Arabian Nights*, Writer's block, key and treasure.

Dunyazadiad

Barth's sixth book, *Chimera*, won the National Book Award in 1972.¹ Though, this book is a collection of three novellas, Barth calls it a novel because generally novels sell better than collections whether of short stories or novellas.² The novel is regarded as a "triptych" since it

contains three novellas about the creative process.³ The three novellas are: "Dunyazadiad" which is entitled after the sister of Scheherazade in The Arabian Nights; Dunyazade, "Perseid" owing to Perseus; the slayer of Medusa in Greek mythology, and "Bellerophoniad" which alludes to Bellerophon; the killer of Chimera in Greek mythology.⁴

In many of the works of modern times, the authors went to derive from The Arabian Nights stories to their works to function as an intertext. Their aims become the searching for the ideal reader, listener, and storytelling. "Dunyazadiad", the first novella in this trilogy foregrounds the role of Dunyazade, Barth's narrator who represents Barth himself and who arouses questions about "narrative creation and reception" and the ability of moving among the narrative as "he engages in meta-fictional and sexual play."⁵

Dunyazade narrates to Shah Zaman her story. The latter and his brother king Shahryar have sworn to ravish a virgin every night and slaughter her in the morning due to the unfaithfulness of their women. So Scheherazade who is a keen and genius woman wants to save her sisters from disaster but she is in need for a good plan. Then by certain words (their power similar to the magic), the Genie (Barth himself) comes and provides her with the original stories of The Arabian Nights to narrate them to Shahryar.⁶ After the success of the plan that is put by the Genie and Scheherazade, Shahryar changes and decides to marry her and at the same time his brother marries Dunyazade. The stories of the Genie end at this wedding night (since the original story of The Arabian Nights ends at this point), and this means no stories are left to Dunyazade to narrate for Shah Zaman to pass this night. For this, Dunyazade takes the role of invention and decides to narrate for Shah Zaman her life story and then kills him. Thus, while she holds the razor upon him, she narrates to him her story with her sister from the beginning of Scheherazade's plan to deceit the king till their current moment. Then Shah Zaman asks her to allow him to narrate his own story. He declares that though he swears to slaughter a lady every night but a beautiful lady similar to Scheherazade changed his mind and later on he decides to exile the lady to the Amazon instead of killing her and this happened with all the women who came to him.⁷ Then he adds that Shahryar knows from the beginning Scheherazade's plan but he out of his love leaves her to complete.⁸

This story ends in frame-tale in which the author praises The Arabian Nights and states if he has the ability to create a story which is beautiful as the story of Scheherazade, it will be about⁹ little Dunyazade and

herbridegroom, who pass a thousand nights in one dark night and in the morning embrace each other; they make love side by side, their faces close, and go out to greet sister and brother in the forenoon of a new life."10 Thus, it is concluded that Barth reverses the original story of One Thousand Nights and One Night, instead of Scheherazade/Shahryar there are Dunyazade/Shah Zaman.

Rationally, Barth the Genie is outside the stories of Scheherazade but must have already read them and out of his interest in and fascination with Scheherazade and her frame narrative, he decides to create a new version of The Arabian Nights by following the typical relation between contained and container. So Barth transforms himself to Scheherazade's time and by this, he reverses the situation and frames the story from the inside. The Genie and Scheherazade speculate about this specific idea of framing11:

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. Or whether one might go beyond the usual tale-within-a-tale, beyond even the tales-within-tales-within-tales which our Genie had found a few instances of in that literary treasure-house he hoped one day to add to, and conceive a series of, say, seven concentric stories-within-stories, so arranged that the climax of the innermost would precipitate that of the next tale out, and that of the next, et cetera, (Ch. 24)

Ulla Musarra argues that Barth reverses the traditional frame story which is already moved from the frame toward the center, his story moves from the center of the story toward its frame.12

Thus, the climax of the story of Scheherazade occurs rashly before the climax of the frame story of the novella itself, and at the same time, this frame itself makes the climax possible. The result will be the reciprocal relationship between framer and framed, which reoccurs again when the Genie declares his intention to Make Dunyazade not only his central character but also his image for the modern storyteller when he revises the traditional story of The Arabian Nights. This type of reciprocal relation leads to three visions of "Dunyazadiad": the first one is the story of Dunyazade, the second one is represented by the original story of Scheherazade which is familiar to the people, and the third one which is narrated by Barth, the Genie, is a combination of the two

previous visions.¹³ These three visions are taken from Barth's explanation about Chimera in his essay "Aspiration, Inspiration, Respiration, Expiration: Introduction to the Reading From Chimera":

"Dunyazadiad," is in three parts, like the Chimera: the first is told by Dunyazade to Shah Zaman, in circumstances not revealed until the end of her narrative; the second part, shorter, is a dialogue between Dunyazade and Shah Zaman, narrated by the author; the very short conclusion is an address by the author to the reader, or listener.¹⁴

The structure of the embedding stories of this novella is similar to a puzzle. Barth complicates his structure by using different narrative levels and moving among them.¹⁵ The novella has three central voices: Dunyazade who narrates her own story, then an "impersonal voice" narrating what happens at the wedding night, and the last one is the Genie's voice.¹⁶ According to Genette's distinction of narrative levels, Dunyazade is a heterodiegetic character since she is both narrator and character in the novella. Shah Zaman is also a heterodiegetic one. In this way, they exemplify the intradiegetic narration, i.e. from the inside.¹⁷ Barth who appear as both the Genie and the narrator of the third part is considered an extradiegetic narrator. Thus, the Genie states that the story of The Arabian Nights is no more than the story of Scheherazade's stories¹⁸

Alf Laylah Wa Laylah, The Book of the Thousand Nights and a Night, is not the story of Scheherazade, but the story of the story of her stories, which in effect begins: "There is a book called The Thousand and One Nights, in which it is said that once upon a time a king had two sons, Shahryar and Shah Zaman, et cetera; it ends when a king long after Shahryar discovers in his treasury the thirty volumes of The Stories of the Thousand Nights and a Night, at the end of the last of which the royal couples --Shahryar and Scheherazade, Shah Zaman and Dunyazade -- emerge from their bridal chambers after the wedding night, greet one another with warm good mornings (eight in all), bestow Samarkand on the brides' long-suffering father, and set down for all posterity The Thousand Nights and a Night. (Ch.55)

Cynthia Davis shows that there are seven frames, "concentric" or 'spiral' in Barth's word in this novella. The first and main spiral is the stories of Scheherazade that are told every night to Shahryar. Davis states that the climax of Scheherazade's stories "precipitates the crisis of their frame" and establishes the samples for the rest of the frames. The solution of every narrative doubles as the crisis of its frame. When the

Genie appears to the two sisters at the last night to narrate to Scheherazade the last story, the crisis of frame story has come, i.e. the two sisters need something new¹⁹ "' If she doesn't want to risk Shahryar's killing her and turning on you,' he said calmly, 'I guess she'll have to invent something that's not in the book.'" (Ch.29) The second spiral is found in part one which is about the story of Scheherazade and Dunyazade and is narrated by Dunyazade. The weddings of Scheherazade to Shahryar and Dunyazade to Shah Zaman appear to be the best solution for their stories. The third one begins in part two and the authorial voice narrates in details what happened at this wedding night.²⁰

Part three which is the last part of the novella contains fourth spirals though it is the shortest part. The fourth spiral is found in the discovery of a new king who might come after Shahryar to the volumes of *The Thousand Nights and One Night* (this new king might not be necessarily a king but any reader just like Barth when he discovers the volumes while he was working in a library.) The fifth spiral is the story of *The Arabian Nights* which is already familiar to the readers. The sixth one is the story of "Dunyazadiad" itself and the last spiral is Chimera itself. The whole novel is a spiral and "Dunyazadiad" is part of it.²¹ Davis says that the "seven concentric stories that climax in a series"(Ch.24) are similar to "a string of firecrackers"(Ch.24)

Barth differentiates between the image of the logarithmic spiral and the image of the circle in that there are two opportunities "of confronting existence and imaginative creatively."²² This is an important distinction for Chimera since the circle is almost always a symbol of sterile repetition without development or change.²³ This confronting enables Barth not only to explain but also to dramatize "the unexplainable and uncontrollable" in life and imagination. It associates the character with both art and life in a manner which is typical of Barth. The Genie talking to Scheherazade and Dunyazade about the structure of his project, he says that:²⁴

" 'My project,' he told us, 'is to learn where to go by discovering where I am by reviewing where I've been -- where we've all been. There's a kind of snail in the Maryland marshes -- perhaps I invented him -- that makes his shell as he goes along out of whatever he comes across, cementing it with his own juices, and at the same time makes his path instinctively toward the best available material for his shell; he carries his history on his back, living in it, adding new and larger spirals to it from the present as he grows. That snail's pace has become my pace -- but I'm

going in circles, following my own trail! I've quit reading and writing; I've lost track of who I am; my name's just a jumble of letters; so's the whole body of literature: strings of letters and empty spaces, like a code that I've lost the key to.' He pushed those odd lenses up on the bridge of his nose with his thumb -- a habit that made me giggle -- and grinned. 'Well, almost the whole body. Speaking of keys, I suspect that's how I got here.' (Ch. p.10-11)

At the end of the story, when the Genie should go back to his age (the twentieth century), Scheherazade gives him a gift, her earring in the shape of a gold ring,²⁵

"She made him promise then to embrace his mistress for her, whom she vowed to love thenceforth as she loved me, and by way of a gift to her -- which she prayed might translate as the precious book had not -- she took from her earlobe a gold ring worked in the form of a spiral shell, of which his earlier image had reminded her. He accepted it joyfully, vowing to spin from it, if he could, as from a catherine-wheel or whirling galaxy, a golden shower of fiction. (Ch. 18-19)

According to Jerry Powell in his essay "John Barth's Chimera: A Creative Response to the Literature of Exhaustion" in (1980), Barth makes from the idea of writer's block as a metaphor to explain his thoughts about "Literature of Exhaustion".²⁶ Since the Genie does not know in what way his writing should go or end, so he has a writer's block. He is similar to Dunyazade who does not have a story to narrate to Shah Zaman because of Scheherazade who narrates all the stories and for this Dunyazade must invent a new story. The problem of the Genie is his relation with tradition should be similar to his relation with Scheherazade, but he is afraid that he is by the time might be far from his tradition and this prevents him from adding to this tradition. This is one of the problems of the Genie, but he still has another one which is related to the ending of the novella. Though the Genie succeeds to create a structure that is complicated enough to create themes and effects and find a solution for both his problem and Scheherazade's problem, "Dunyazadiad" is supposed to end with "a note of triumphant completion; but it does not."²⁷ The story ends in a "tentative" manner, the narrator/artist who talks with his own story "if I could invent" (Ch. 55), and this gives the story of Dunyazade an independency from the Genie's story. So, the Genie concludes that "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 goodmornings come to." (Ch. 55) This problem raises

doubt about the ability of literature to capture and interpret reality in the form of story, and it is even less resolved than the first problem.²⁸

The result of solving the problem of the writer's block seems to be the ability of the reader to take part in a dialogue in which the work is realized. So in "Dunyazadiad" Barth explains the relationship between teller and told²⁹:

Narrative, in short -- and herethey were again in full agreement -- was a love-relation, not a rape; its success depended upon the reader's consent and cooperation, which she could withhold or at any moment withdraw; also upon her own combination of experience and talent for enterprise, and the author's ability to arouse, sustain, and satisfy her interest-an ability on which her figurative life hung as surely as Scheherazade's literal.(Ch.26)

Through this novella, Barth conveys his view about the characteristics of the ideal audience who should possess "goodwill, attention, and a moderately cultivated sensibility"(Ch.17) He sees that the reader must have some knowledge particularly about The Arabian Nights, Don Quixote, Tristram Shandy, or Greek mythology to understand what is written in the fiction, and this is considered part of Barth's function to help readers to be aware of their tradition. Barth shows that the existence of his novel depends on the reader's consenting to the fiction, for this he gives the book Chimera's name, since Chimera's existence continues only as long as Bellerophon believes in her. Barth uses "as if" a lot in this novella to enable his audience to see the story as true, "not necessary being fooled by the fiction, but trying to acquire the "experience and talent for enterprise""which required from his reader.³⁰

In addition to the spiral of the novella there is another motif which adds more to the novella. This motif, Charles Harris states, is the magic utterances "The key to the treasure is the treasure!"(Ch.11) When Scheherazade utters this sentence at the first time, the Genie is appeared, i.e. comes from the future to the age of Scheherazade by the effects of this sentence.³¹Heide Ziegler argues that Scheherazade and the Genie might be thinking of the same thing though there are centuries between them, because they meet through the act of imagination, as author and reader.³²By this magic meeting, Barth reveals the real value of "what he calls heartfelt possibilities". So Barth in Chimera tries to show the importance of storytelling in the face of final extinction, i.e. "Dunyazadiad" represents the end of the story while "Perseid" shows the end of man, and "Bellerophoniad" shows the end of life. He wants to say

through this sentence that one might find the truth in possibilities more than in reality. In *Chimera* the life-story of the artist "frames the truth which his artistic inspiration has conjured up as if by magic".³³

Barth states that the stories of Scheherazade are true: ""They're too important to be lies. Fictions, maybe -- but truer than fact."" (Ch.53) He shows that the importance of Scheherazade's fiction becomes obvious by their "longevity". After all the centuries between Barth and Scheherazade, these stories still had an effect on Barth, not only Scheherazade's own story with the king but also her narrated stories alongside with the possibility that her life and death are proved to be true.³⁴ Shah Zaman asks Dunyazade to treasure him at the dawn and this refers to a new life and a new denouement. Dunyazade shall live because the story lives.³⁵

E.P. Walkiewicz states that if "we can accept the 'as if' he offers, then this 'denouement' may indeed become a moment of 'untying' in which the tangled loops of story are opened up, a joyous climax that occurs concurrently in all the frames of the tale"³⁶ Then Barth presents to his readers the way to be joyous: "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." (Ch.56) That means the true treasure is the storytelling. Harris comments about this: the acceptance of life's vicissitudes is the best key that leads for enjoyment and by this life becomes a treasure, "thus key and treasure are the same."³⁷

Conclusion

Barth exemplifies in this novella the principles that are mentioned in his two essays: "Literature of Exhaustion" and "Literature of Replenishment" such as the idea of writer's block, the relation between the narrator and his audience, and reusing the old stories by foregrounding them. Barth goes to the seven level in using frame. By the idea of framing from the inside, Barth presents a new way for writing frame narrative by presenting first the embedded stories then their frames. "Dunyazadiad" frames the story which Dunyazade tells to Shah Zaman, which in turn frames the story of Scheherazade, which frames the story of the Genie, which frames the story of The Arabian Nights told to the two sisters by the genie, which implicitly frames Scheherazade's telling of the actual stories from The Arabian Nights and the story Shah Zaman tells Dunyazade as well. By this chain, Barth highlights the idea

that man is no more than a narrative and by the continuity of narration he can revive and continue his life.

ملخص البحث

أن أسلوب الحكاية ذات الاطار تعتبر واحدة من أكثر تقنيات السرد القديمة، حيث ان جذورها تعود الى التقليد الشفهي. وهو يشير الى مجموعة من القصص المضمنة المحاطة باطار قصصي اوسع، وبالتالي تخلق نمط هرمي الشكل من القصص داخل القصص. هذا الاسلوب يسلط الضوء على العلاقة بين الراوي و الجمهور. أن المثال الاكثر شهرة لهذا الاسلوب هو حكايا الف ليلة وليلة حيث نجد شهرزاد، التي تمثل الراوية المثالية تروي للملك شهريار القصص لانقاذ حياتها.

لقد أعجب معظم كتاب ما بعد الحداثة بقصص كهذه و جون بارث واحداً منهم. بارث (١٩٣٠-) و هو روائي امريكي، حيث ان افتتاحته بهذا الاسلوب وبالقصص مثل ديكاميون، حكايات كانتربري، و قصص الف ليلة وليلة يظهر بوضوح في رواياته. يقوم بارث باعادة استخدام مثل هكذا قصص بطريقة "ترتيب الادب" حيث تؤخذ القصص التي تم اعادة استخدامها من الانجيل، قصص الف ليلة وليلة (وهي المفضلة عند بارث)، والاساطير البطولية اليونانية القديمة. كما أنه يستغل اهمية الثقافة و المثابرة عندما يختار نصا لعمله. لذلك، هو يقدم طريقة الحكاية ذات الاطار بشكل يساعد على تطوير طريقة السرد، أي أنه يهيئ السرد من الاستنزاف إلى التجديد. وفقا لبارث يمكن للانسان ان يحيي الادب من خلال العودة الى الماضي و اصول الادب. و هذا الدراسة هي محاولة لاستكشاف اسلوب الحكاية ذات الاطار في قصة "Dunyazadiad" وهي القصة الاولى في روايته Chimera.

Notes

- 1 Charlie Reilly, "An Interview with John Barth," Contemporary Literature 41, no. 4 (Winter, 2000): 591.
- 2 John Barth, Friday Book, (New York: John Hopkins University Press, 1984), 75.
- 3 Charlie Reilly, "An Interview with John Barth," Contemporary Literature 22, no. 1 (Winter, 1981): 21.
- 4 Christopher MacGowan, The Twentieth-Century American Fiction Handbook (UK: Wiley Blackwell, 2011), 145. The title of the novel is derived from

Chimera, the female monster in Greek mythology, "a female fire-breathing hybrid monster typically composed of a lion, a goat, and a snake." That means a lion's head, a goat's body, and a snake tail. Chimera's parents Typhoeus and Echidna were also hybrid monsters. Chimera's mother is half woman and half snake. Chimera's siblings were Cerberus and the Hydra. Chimera was killed by Bellerophon who came from Corinth on the winged Pegasus to kill her, Jeffrey Andrew Weinstock, *The Ashgate Encyclopedia of Literary and Cinematic Monsters* (Dorchester: Henry Ling Limited at the Dorset Press, 2014), 92.

5 Theo D'haen, David Damrosch, and Djelal Kadir, eds., *The Routledge Companion to World Literature* (London: Routledge, 2012), 492.

6 Ursula Mackenzie, "John Barth's Chimera and the Strictures of Reality," *Journal of American Studies* 10, no.1 (Apr. 1976): 93.

7 Ibid. 94.

8 Acvan Bercovitch, *The Cambridge History of American Literature*, vol.7 (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2008), 464.

9 Ibid.

10 John Barth, *Chimera* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1972), 55. All subsequent references are to this edition and are cited parenthetically in the text, following the abbreviation (Ch.).

11 Cynthia Davis, " "The Key to the Treasure is the Treasure": Narrative Movements and Effects in Chimera," *The Journal of Narrative Technique* 5, no.2 (May 1975): 105. <http://www.jstore.org/stable/30225555> (accessed at 25-2-2016)

12 Ulla Musarra, "Narrative Discourse in Postmodernist Text: the Conventions of the Novel and the Multiplication of Narrative Instances" in *Exploring Postmodernism*, eds. Matei Calinescu and Douwe Fokkema, vol.23 (Amsterdam: John Benjamins B.V. Publishing Company, 1990), 228.

13 Davis, 105-106.

14 Barth, 1984, 78-79.

15 Musarra, 228.

16 Davis, 106.

17 Abdulhadi Nimer and Ghada Sasa, "Dunyazadiad: The Parody of the Arabian Nights," *JJMLL* 6, no.2 (Dec. 2014): 171. 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, Patrick O'Neill, *Fictions of Discourse: Reading Narrative Theory* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 60-61.

18 Musarra, 228.

19 Davis, 106.

20 Ibid.

21 Ibid. 106-107.

22 Gerhard Hoffman, *From Modernism to Postmodernism: Concepts and Strategies of Postmodern American Fiction* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2005), 155.

23 Charles B. Harris, *Passionate Virtuosity: The Fiction of John Barth* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1983), 132.

24 Hoffman, 155.

25 David Morrell, *John Barth: an Introduction* (Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1976), 149.

26 Cited in Shannon Rigney, "Maps and Metaphors: Going Back to the Source in Italo Calvino's *Lezioni invisibili* and John Barth's *Dunvazadiad*" (master's thesis: Haverford College, 1999), 7.

27 Davis, 107.

28 Ibid.

29 Linda A. Westervelt, "Teller, Tale, Told: Relationships in John Barth's Latest Fiction," *The Journal of Narrative Technique* 8, no. 1 (Winter 1978): 52.

30 Ibid.

31 Harris, 133.

32 Heide Ziegler, *John Barth* (London: Methuen, 1987), 61.

33 Ibid.

34 Ibid. 63.

35 Katarina P. Držajić, "The Key to the Treasure is the Treasure: Barth's Metafiction in *Chimera*," *LOGOS ET LITTERA* Journal of Interdisciplinary Approaches to Text, no.1 (September 2014): 35.

36 Cited in Držajić, 35.

37 Harris, 135

Bibliography

- Barth, John. *Chimera*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1972.
- *Friday Book*. New York: John Hopkins University Press, 1984.
- Bercovitch, Acvan. *The Cambridge History of American Literature*. Vol.7. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2008.
- Davis, Cynthia. "'The Key to the Treasure is the Treasure': Narrative Movements and Effects in *Chimera*." *The Journal of Narrative Technique* 5, no.2 (May 1975): 105-115. <http://www.jstore.org/stable/30225555> (accessed at 25-2-2016)

John Barth's "Dunyazadiad"(36)

- D'haen, Theo David Damrosch, and Djelal Kadir, eds. *The Routledge Companion to World Literature*. London: Routledge, 2012.
- Držajić, Katarina P. "The Key to the Treasure is the Treasure: Barth's Metafiction in Chimera." *LOGOS ET LITTERA* Journal of Interdisciplinary Approaches to Text, no.1(September 2014): 30-42.
- Harris, Charles B. *Passionate Virtuosity: The Fiction of John Barth*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1983.
- Hoffman, Gerhard. *From Modernism to Postmodernism: Concepts and Strategies of Postmodern American Fiction*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2005.
- MacGowan, Christopher. *The Twentieth-Century American Fiction Handbook*. UK: Wiley Blackwell, 2011.
- Mackenzie, Ursula. "John Barth's Chimera and the Strictures of Reality." *Journal of American Studies* 10, no.1 (April 1976): 90-101.
- Morrell, David. *John Barth: an Introduction*. Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1976.
- Musarra, Ulla. "Narrative Discourse in Postmodernist Text: the Conventions of the Novel and the Multiplication of Narrative Instances" in *Exploring Postmodernism*, eds. Matei Calinescu and Douwe Fokkema, vol.23. Amsterdam: John Benjamins B.V. Publishing Company, 1990.
- Nimer, Abdulhadi and Ghada Sasa. "Dunyazadiad: The Parody of the Arabian Nights." *JJMLL* 6, no.2 (December 2014): 163-178.
- O'Neill, Patrick. *Fictions of Discourse: Reading Narrative Theory*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994.
- Reilly, Charlie. "An Interview with John Barth." *Contemporary Literature* 22, no. 1 (Winter, 1981): 1-23.
- "An Interview with John Barth." *Contemporary Literature* 41, no. 4 (Winter, 2000): 589-617.
- Rigney, Shannon. *Maps and Metaphors: Going Back to the Source in Italo Calvino's *Le cilia invisibili* and John Barth's *Dunvazadiad**. Master's thesis: Haverford College, 1999.
- Weinstock, Jeffrey Andrew. *The Ashgate Encyclopedia of Literary and Cinematic Monsters*. Dorchester: Henry Ling Limited at the Dorset Press, 2014.
- Westervelt, Linda A. "Teller, Tale, Told: Relationships in John Barth's Latest Fiction." *The Journal of Narrative Technique* 8, no. 1 (Winter, 1978): 42-55.
- Ziegler, Heide, *John Barth*. London: Methuen, 1987.