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A Victorian Arabian Nights Adventure: A Study in Intertextuality

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A VICTORIAN ARABIAN NIGHTS ADVENTURE:
A STUDY IN INTERTEXTUALITY

by

Nancy Victoria Workman

A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School
of Loyola University of Chicago in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

August

1988

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PREFACE

Throughout this dissertation I shall refer to Edward William Lane's translation (1838-1840) of the Arabian Nights unless otherwise noted. First, it is the version that was read by most of the Victorians whom I shall discuss. See the discussions on Christina Rossetti, William Morris and George Meredith. (It is very probable that Charles Dickens and Charlotte Brontë relied on "Grub Street" versions of the tales based on Antoine Galland's eighteenth-century French translation, but these are impossible to locate.) Second, it is generally regarded as a "scholarly translation" although it is incomplete and somewhat censorious in the treatment of sexual matters (Gerhardt 74-76; Ali Scheherazade 93-94). Third, Lane's elaborate notes to the collection influenced the Victorian perception of the East because he changed the romantic image to one that was more "realistic" in its portrayal of medieval Arabic society.

Lane's translation is also difficult to obtain, and it is generally regarded as a rare book. However, microfilm copies of the original edited by his nephew are available and are noted in the bibliography. For convenience, I shall indicate the pagination from the 1927 reprint of Lane's translation which is generally available.

VITA

The author, Nancy Victoria Workman, is the daughter of Stanley Steve Wojcik and Helen (Siwek) Wojcik. She was born on April 18, 1947, in Chicago, Illinois.

Her elementary education was obtained at St. Joseph's Grammar School, Summit, Illinois. Her secondary education was completed at Lourdes High School, Chicago, Illinois.

She entered the University of Illinois at Chicago in September, 1965, and graduated with a Bachelor's Degree in English in December, 1968. After completing teaching certification requirements, she began part-time graduate work at the University of Illinois at Chicago and graduated with a Masters Degree in English in 1974.

Between 1971 and 1975, she taught secondary school English at Holy Family Academy, Chicago, Illinois. In addition to her teaching duties, she served as department chair. In 1971, she married Gaylord Edward Workman. Between 1975 and 1978, she taught at Queen of Peace High School, Burbank, Illinois. There she served as department co-chair, yearbook co-moderator, and elected delegate to the

curriculum council. In December, 1978, her daughter, Cassandra Lin, was born.

In 1981 and 1982, she worked as a Financial Aid Counselor at the Illinois Institute of Technology. There she administered the College Work Study Program. Between 1982-1986, she was awarded teaching assistantships at Loyola University of Chicago. In 1985-1986, she was awarded a grant from the Kosciuszko Foundation, a fraternal organization for persons of Polish ancestry. In 1985, she also won first prize in the Stanley Claves literary criticism competition for her essay on Roland Barthes' S/Z. In 1986-1987, she was awarded the Arthur J. Schmitt Fellowship, enabling her to complete her dissertation.

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CHAPTER ONE

THE VICTORIAN ARABIAN NIGHTS

O my sister, relate to us a story to beguile the waking hour of our night. Most willingly, answered Shahrazád, if this virtuous King permit me. And the King, hearing these words, and being restless, was pleased with the idea of listening to the story; and thus, on the first night of the thousand and one, Shahrazád commenced her recitations.

The Arabian Nights
(Edward William Lane 10)

In 1839, Leigh Hunt said that the Arabian Nights was "the most popular book in the world." A few years later, George Henry Lewes said of it, "for the last fifty years few persons, making any pretensions to a taste for reading, have left unread these interesting volumes," and he referred to it as the "Iliad of romance" (Ali Scheherazade 42). In her study The Victorians and Their Reading, Amy Cruse maintained that the Arabian Nights, along with Robinson Crusoe and Pilgrim's Progress, was one of the most frequently mentioned books in "a long list of biography and autobiography" (291).

Even fictional characters read the Arabian Nights. Jane Eyre, David Copperfield, Evan Harrington, and Henry Richmond among others were familiar with the Eastern collection. Becky Sharp was only one of many characters who dreamed herself into the middle of an Arabian Nights bazaar.

The Victorians, however, did more than simply regard the Arabian Nights as a popular book. Instead of merely remembering it as a childhood favorite, they referred to it frequently in their own writing. Allusions to the tales abounded, and characters from them such as Scheherazade, Sindbad, Haroun Alraschid, and Camaralzaman were frequently mentioned by prose writers such as Thomas Carlyle, John Ruskin, and John Henry Newman in their works. Expressions from the tales such as "Open Sesame" and the "Barmecide feast" became part of the vernacular and evoked instant recognition (Annan 159).

While critics and biographers have noted the popularity of the Arabian Nights in the lives of many Victorians, they have failed to examine the ways in which the Victorians made use of this text in their own writing. Since many contemporary readers are unfamiliar with the Nights, they have failed to recognize how influential the book was to the literary development of the Victorian era. They have simply satisfied themselves with identifying the incidental allusions which exist in Victorian works.

However, in addition to alluding to it, the Victorians also recontextualized figurative expressions, characters, even narrative patterns, from it. It is the purpose of this study to examine a selection of Victorian texts in terms of their use of elements taken from the Arabian Nights. In this examination, I shall demonstrate that the Victorian authors typically referred to the Arabian Nights as a book which had gratified their imaginative desires. I shall argue that, in an era of didactic literature for children and realism as the dominant mode of writing for adults, the Victorians were impressed by the sheer extravagance of the Nights, its lavish descriptive passages of baths and perfumes, lush flowers and fruits, gold and gems. I shall prove that they turned to it for its eroticism, for its celebration and endorsement of sensual pleasure, especially, although not exclusively, as it pertained to sexual matters. The Victorians recontextualized the freedom of fancy which the Arabian Nights provided since it was not bound by the limitations of "consensus reality" which most Victorian writing favored. The Victorians saw that the fantasy of the Nights operated according to a different grammar, therefore generating unique stories. The writers correctly understood that they could use this different grammar to their own advantage.

In addition to borrowing images and themes, however, I shall prove that the Victorians borrowed narrative

structures from the Nights, structures which were used to develop and emphasize its themes. As I shall discuss more fully in the section on the text of the Arabian Nights, the book's primary subject is the act of storytelling and its power--to save lives, to gratify wishes, to extend, perhaps infinitely, a storyteller's existence. The Victorians instinctively recognized the power of the narrative act, and they not only borrowed this idea from the Arabian Nights, but they borrowed the manner in which the Eastern text had told its own tale. Thus, the Victorians frequently borrowed organizational patterns, especially that of the embedded tale, which characterize the Arabian Nights. In this study, I shall identify these traces of the Arabian Nights which can be seen in works of the Victorian era. In my discussion, I shall emphasize the indebtedness of Victorian writing to the text of the Arabian Nights.

However, before I can fully explain my thesis in regard to the specific texts and authors I wish to study, I need to introduce two other subjects. The first is the concept of intertextuality and how I shall use the expression in this study. Critics discussing intertextuality have recently begun to examine the ways in which texts "weave" with one another, to use one of their favorite metaphors (Gresset 5). I would like to incorporate some of their findings into my own discussion since they will be helpful in providing a vocabulary to explain my own thesis. I do this cautiously,

however. The scope of this study is not to explain the complicated theories they have advanced; rather, it is to use their theoretical understandings as the basis for some of my own discussion regarding the Victorian use of the Arabian Nights. Thus, I will draw upon their models and examples to establish my own thesis. In the Premises and Methodology section, I shall establish the manner in which I use of the concept of intertextuality in subsequent discussions.

The second topic I shall need to introduce fully is the text of the Arabian Nights to which the Victorian authors referred. Since it is not a fixed text, but rather a free one, with a complicated literary history, in The Text and Its Themes I present those aspects which I develop in later chapters.

Premises and Methodology

In this study, I am concerned with the manner in which Victorian authors referred back to the text of the Arabian Nights in their own work. In my discussions, I employ terms such as allusion, subtext, imitation and the like to distinguish these different forms of borrowing. While these terms have been current in literary scholarship for quite some time, it is only recently that critics have turned their attention away from defining them to explaining exactly how these relationships operate. Among other

developments, they have called these referential relationships "intertextual" ones. Following the discussions of Julia Kristeva and Roland Barthes, recent critics have challenged the notions of the text as a self-contained entity which is autonomous. They have insisted on seeing meaning and signification in terms of culture, discourse, and sign systems. Indeed, they have created a whole new lexicon of critical terms.

There are two main problems in these theories: one, the vagueness of intertextuality as a critical term makes it difficult to apply in practical criticism; two, many theories of intertextuality refuse to acknowledge a particular author as the producer of a text, preferring to see textual production as the result of complex cultural forces over which an author's individual contribution is incidental.

To begin, while many critics use the term "intertextuality," there is very little agreement on what the term actually denotes. For some, the term refers to the "silences" in a text, the unarticulated utterances that nonetheless give it shape and meaning; for others, the term means the "exchange" that takes place between the text and "cultural facts and artifacts"; while for others, it is a "discursive and rational dialogue between literary texts" (Intertextuality vii). Even a standard reference work, the Encyclopedic Dictionary of Semiotics (1986) concludes that

intertextuality "can be seen...[to be] capable of a variety of different developments and applications" (389). In its own brief discussion, the encyclopedia distinguishes between the "broadest" uses of the term by Julia Kristeva to a "more generalized notion" of intertextuality advanced by Jonathan Culler. Similarly, Owen Miller argues that the term is "in the process of becoming identified" and that it implies a plurality of meaning (19). Reviewing the wide-ranging uses of the term, Miller concedes that some of the theoretical meanings contradict one another, so that

one notion of intertextuality may share with another certain common features, but there are few which are to be found in all notions of the word. In short, there is no constituent feature, satisfactory to all, which would allow us to define the term. (19)

Consequently, it is not surprising that even a recent anthology entitled Intertextuality in Faulkner contains very diverse approaches to his work, yet all of them are called "intertextual."

The problem of definition is not likely to be easily overcome, however, for it involves considerably more than a consensus on the term's meaning. As Culler convincingly demonstrates, the definition a critic employs has serious implications in terms of the practical criticism it promotes. He argues, "To restrict the concept of intertextuality for practical purposes--to mark out a manageable area of investigation--is not an innocent strategy. It poses questions about the claims made for the

larger concept" (105). To prove his point, he systematically examines the various theoretical positions on intertextuality by Kristeva, Barthes and Harold Bloom. Culler demonstrates that each of them ultimately undermines his or her own theoretical position when they apply their theory of intertextuality to actual texts.¹ Nonetheless, Culler argues against abandoning the concept of intertextuality; he suggests that there must be "multiple strategies, for different focuses and restrictions" (111).

Despite its critical vagueness, the term intertextuality has been promoted by its advocates as an alternative way of viewing a literary work, in direct opposition to previous approaches, especially those of New Criticism. The term "intertextuality" was first used by Kristeva in 1966 to argue that no text is a self-contained entity. Rather, she maintained that all texts share in "general literary codes and conventions" (Encyclopedic Dictionary 387). She challenged the assumptions of New Criticism which had insisted on regarding a text as strictly self-referential. Kristeva conceived of a text as a "mosaic

¹For example, he shows that Kristeva, despite arguing for a broad definition for the term which includes anonymous contributors, inevitably restricts her discussions of previous texts to ones she can identify (106); he argues that Roland Barthes' position which insists upon a "mirage of citations" which cannot ever be identified owing to "lost origins," ends in a tautology: once having made that assertion, there is nowhere for the critic to take it (108); finally, he demonstrates that Harold Bloom's insistence that all works owe their origins to one precursor text is simply too limiting (110).

of citations," that is, a work that is neither "original nor particular to a given author." For her, any text is a compilation of previous texts from which it has borrowed. Furthermore, the term implies that no text can escape the "cultural web" of meaning that is related to its language and form. Thus, each text always partakes of what has come before it, whether consciously or not. As Culler notes, intertextuality "calls our attention to the importance of prior texts, insisting that the autonomy of texts is a misleading notion and that a work has the meaning it does only because certain things have previously been written" (103). In effect, all previous works serve as a rich depository of language, ideas, and narrative patterns which later authors incorporate into their own. It sees texts as "generative" of one another, that is, contributing to the shape and meaning of future texts.

Furthermore, for many advocates, the theory also implies that not all of the previous textual instances are recoverable; it argues that many previous citations are irretrievable. It insists, as Culler explains, that many attempts to locate the actual texts to which another refers will prove fruitless. In fact, the previous texts compose a "mirage of citations" that are "likely to prove evasive and insubstantial as soon as one attempts to grasp them" (102).

For example, it would be foolhardy to trace all of the uses of an image such as the jail prior to Dickens's use of

it in his novels, since that image has appeared in innumerable texts. Nonetheless, the use of the image of jail by other previous authors, including Shakespeare and Donne, contributes to the meaning that the term has in Dickens's Victorian novels. This is because the borrowed material, which may take the form of a single word or quotation or the use of lengthy narrative parallels, acts as an "informing structure" in the new work. It acts as an influence on the manner in which the new text may be understood. The borrowed material contributes meaning that is more than the referential meaning of the borrowed words alone. For example, as E. R. Harty points out in "Text, Context, Intertext," all readers who approach a new work implicitly understand that the language before them is to be understood on several levels. Generally, the reader desires considerably more from a fictional or poetic text than its grammatical meaning. The reader knows that any textual utterance shares features with the syntactical language system of which it is a part, but it also participates in a conventional literary system, one that is an accumulation of all previous literary texts (7).

Since the given "meaning" of a series of words can only be determined in relation to what he calls the "situational context," this means that even if the same sequence of words appears in two separate texts, one having borrowed them from another, they do not "mean" the same thing at all.

Intertextuality relies on the presupposition that another set of words stands in the background to the ones before the reader. It insists that the earlier words help influence the way we understand the new ones. For example, the editors of an early anthology, Intertextuality: New Perspectives in Criticism, demonstrate that in a Borges' short story, Pierre Ménard, a French symbolist writer, rewrites part of the text of Cervantes's Don Quixote word for word. Although identical in language, Ménard's text means something else. They explain,

...[Ménard's] Quixote ... is much more allusive, infinitely richer, subtler, and more complex. The two books are completely the same and yet completely different. The prose of Cervantes is simple, straightforward, seventeenth-century prose; that of Ménard, a symbolist playing with a baroque instrument, is circumlocuted, precious, and pedantic. (xix)

The notion that textual borrowings serve as informing structures of later texts is a central one in theories of intertextuality. Even the language of criticism has as its basis this assumption, although not previously recognized. For example, to say that Dickens alludes to the text of the Arabian Nights frequently implies that he wants the reader to acknowledge the previous text in some manner. However, while the concept of intertextuality encourages us to seek out and understand relationships between various texts, it seems to simultaneously argue against anyone examining actual ones. If a critic strenuously follows Barthes, the

critic can do no more than acknowledge the existence of previous texts, but he is forbidden to try and seek out the individual texts in question since they are only a "mirage." Paradoxically, it would seem, Barthes insists that all texts influence one another, but in ways that are not verifiable.

I have explained that while the concept of intertextuality addresses precisely the issues I wish to raise in this dissertation regarding the Victorian use of the Arabian Nights, it appears to offer unsatisfactory means of doing so. The only practical solution, following the example of Culler, Miller, Harty and others, is to use the term as an "operational definition" so that it can become a usable critical tool. Resisting the attempt to abandon the term owing to its vagueness and difficulty of application, I shall employ the term intertextuality, for it actually does illuminate more than it obscures. The concept has invigorated recent literary study and it is provocative in its insistence on seeing a text as the product of complex interactions. Nonetheless, in using this idea, I shall employ it deliberately "for this time and this place." I shall use it as a "propositional truth," that is, an idea on which I shall base further discussions rather than as a thesis I wish to prove or dispute.

Thus, as an assumption on which all my discussions will be based, I accept that textual borrowings do influence the manner in which we read what is before us. As Culler

explains, knowledge of prior texts brings certain expectations which the reader wants satisfied. For, as he points out, logical and semantic "presuppositions" exist behind the lines in a text. For example, he takes the lines "Once upon a time there lived a king who had a daughter," and demonstrates how it is a "powerful intertextual operator" since it necessarily relates to other stories and to generic conventions (115). As he notes, a reader of this sentence regards it with "certain attitudes" based on its prior use in other stories. He will expect that this new story will have certain details, even a certain organization, as a result of "literary presuppositions."

This notion of presupposition is especially true in the case of Victorian texts since they purposefully draw our attention to other texts. As Michael Wheeler has demonstrated in The Art of Allusion in Victorian Fiction, the writers of the period were profoundly conscious of being a part of a literary tradition. They often announced their reliance on previous texts by using headnotes, and they expected a familiarity with other writings, especially classical and Biblical, that demanded a close attention to their references.

As a corollary to accepting the existence of intertextual relationships, I accept that identifying them helps us to better understand the text before us. Unlike Barthes, who is content to simply acknowledge anonymous

influences, I see great benefit in examining the manner in which authors make use of particular texts which they draw upon. In taking this position, I align myself with those critics who insist that discussing the relationships between particular texts is a worthwhile critical endeavor. As Miller argues, "It is not clear to me exactly what theoretical objection could be raised by relating actual texts. It is one thing to maintain that an intertext may be unknown and quite another thing to assert that it is unknowable" (25). He continues:

Attempting to broaden the concept of intertextual relationships beyond the consideration of specific intertexts is laudable as a theoretical goal but should not preclude consideration of a specific intertext where to a reader's satisfaction one is in fact identifiable. (26)

It is clear to me that one intertext of the Victorian age is the Arabian Nights. As I shall demonstrate in this study, Victorian writers regarded it as a rich repository from which they could repeatedly borrow for their own work. Examining these borrowings helps us to better understand the Victorian texts in question, especially since much of the significance of the material has been lost owing to contemporary unfamiliarity with the Arabian Nights. As a result, one of my primary purposes will be to reestablish the connections between certain Victorian texts and the Eastern text from which they borrow.

The second major problem with the theory of intertextuality as advanced by some critics concerns its refusal to acknowledge an individual author as the creator of a text. Following the lead of Barthes, who argues that "the author is dead," these critics prefer to discuss intertextual relationships in terms of cultural forces or codes rather than authorial agency. They insist that meaning in a text is related, not to authorial influence, but to the words themselves, regardless of the historical person who conceived them. Frequently these critics deny the "subjectivity" of an author; they discuss authorship in terms of function, not person.

Again, however, I regard this aspect of some theories of intertextuality as problematic, and would insist that it falls victim to what Valdés has called the "authorless fallacy," the notion that a text was not conceived by a particular human being. In his concluding remarks in Identity of the Literary Text, he explains this notion:

Also let us be quick to point out that just as there is an intentional fallacy which posits author's meaning as an absolute given, there is also the fallacy of an absolute text which raised its head with New Criticism in North America. This is the fallacy of attempting to consider the text as an authorless entity. If the intentional fallacy is blind to the semantic autonomy of the text, the isolated-text fallacy is also blind, blind to the essential historicity of the text. The text was written by someone, about something, for someone to read. It is impossible to cancel out the historicity of a text without reducing it to a physical phenomenon such as waves in the ocean, for even rocks have a geologic history.
(300)

In agreement with him, E. R. Harty likewise challenges Barthes' refusal to discuss the circumstances of textual production. Harty maintains that one of the significant "contexts" in a work is the "genetic context," which he defines as the circumstances relating to the composition history. Concerning the "death of the author," he writes:

...I must admit that I find Barthes' position an alarming one. This is because much of the context is frequently recoverable, with corroboration, from a variety of textual sources: letters, diaries, recorded conversations, memoirs....This being the case, the question, to my mind, is not whether we should use this material (of course we should) but how it should be used. (8)

Harty argues that critics who use this information never pretend that it constitutes the only meaning to a text. They acknowledge that the information contributes to some signification, but not all. Therefore, he says that it is wrong to assume that approaches like this are reductive. Quite the contrary, they open the text to a plurality of meaning (8).²

²As his example, he analyzes Browning's "Caliban Upon Setebos." He shows how it can be read first as statement about theology (Caliban defying the injunction not to speak the name of God), but also as an autobiographical statement (Browning challenging his hostile critics). He concludes, "for Caliban is to Setebos as Browning is to his critics: Caliban, blend of human and beast; the poet branded a barbarous, grotesque versifier;This relationship does not close, limit, or determine the text in any way whatsoever. On the contrary, by contributing to the plurality of its structure, it enhances the free play of meaning and extends the variety of readings. In short, contextual reconstruction extends the possibilities of textual deconstruction" (9).

Similarly, Miller objects to the exclusion of the author from discussions of intertextuality. According to him, those discussions which limit the focus to "citational views" of intertextuality in which the emphasis is on the relationship between the new text and old, obliterate any notion of an author controlling the material. Labelling that limitation a "serious potential weakness," he insists that intentionality implies some process of "assimilation and accommodation" which is achieved through the manipulation of earlier material. This may be achieved through generic conventions, but it may also be achieved through authorial agency. He thereby extends the traditional notion of intentionality to include other aspects, which may even include what he calls "authorial intentionality." He argues that "recent theorists of imitation, parody" and "plagiarism" advocate accepting the notion of authorial intentionality as a solution to the problems inherent in applying the theories advocated by Barthes (28).

I agree with these critics in their stand against the notion that discussions of intertextuality cannot refer to authors as agents controlling the borrowed material. As a methodological consequence of this position, I shall sometimes support my arguments with biographical evidence, evidence which may illuminate the author's control over the borrowed material in his work, or which may examine the production history of a given text. I will present this

material, not to establish a "meaning" that is extraneous to the text, but to demonstrate that the author's contribution in the process of establishing intertextuality is significant.

The Text and Its Themes

Before we can examine the intertextuality that exists between the Arabian Nights and Victorian writing, we need to become familiar with the text of the Nights. As we shall see, there is nothing equivalent to a fair copy which all the Victorian writers would have read. Rather, just as children today first learn of "Aladdin and His Magic Lamp" in many possible ways, the Victorians would most certainly have read certain stories in many sources. Ever since the eighteenth century, inexpensive chapbooks containing individual stories had been available. Luckily, however, many writers also read the more famous translations, and their biographies frequently refer to specific volumes which they had in their libraries. I shall note these in the subsequent chapters.

However, although these writers may have known the Nights from different sources, the Victorian editions they read shared features which are recognizable, and which are different from the editions most readers of the twentieth century use. Today, many of the narrative elements which so captivated the Victorians are absent, consigned to oblivion

by editors who regard them as too complicated or unfamiliar.³ Therefore, I shall now introduce the Arabian Nights as the Victorians would have found it.

The Text. The history of the collection of stories commonly referred to as the Arabian Nights is long and complicated, twisting through the Mid-Eastern sands of many countries and many centuries. It is based as much upon accident as deliberate selection. This history has been described in several other studies, most notably Mia Gerhardt's work, The Art of Story-Telling: A Literary Study of the Thousand and One Nights. The external history, concerned with manuscripts, editions, dating and other features, has interested scholars for the last two centuries although, as Roger Allen points out as recently as 1984, very little work has been done on the "fictionality" of the tales themselves (51).

³For example, a 1985 version of the Arabian Nights by Weathervane Books (New York) edits the tales quite openly. In the preface, the editors note that they have treated the original material "with considerable freedom in the direction of brevity," and "In the case also of conflicting versions, there has been no reluctance to choose and combine in order to secure a livelier result..." (viii). They justify their license by noting, "for no one can read the majority of the tales in their accepted versions without perceiving that, as regards construction and the piecing of event with event, they are incredibly careless or discredibly perfunctory. We have to reckon with them as the product of a race keenly alive to the value of colour and pictorial description, but a race whose constructive imagination was feeble and diffuse, lacking almost entirely that great essential for the development of art in its finer forms--the economy of means toward ends" (viii-ix).

According to Gerhardt, the collection began as oral tradition in three countries before being compiled into manuscript several centuries later. She maintains that the original tales appear to have come from Persia, Baghdad, and Egypt during the ninth through the fourteenth centuries, but they were first brought together during the fifteenth. However, E.L. Ranelagh asserts that the stories date from much earlier. He identifies certain "narrative elements" that can be traced to "third century AD, to Iran, Iraq, Egypt, Turkey and Greece as well as Jewish and pre-Islamic Arab sources" (197). Nonetheless, he agrees with Gerhardt's conclusion that as the stories came to be collected, they were periodically modified, updated, and "augmented" throughout the lifetime of the collection (196). It is still fair, however, to characterize the collection as essentially medieval⁴ since the majority of the stories date from that period. Individual stories reflect the points of origin in both detail and style, although, as in the case with much literature compiled in this fashion, later translators and redactors changed them to suit their own purposes. Although scholars disagree about the authenticity of certain stories in the collection, they acknowledge that

⁴The term "medieval" is a Western one, since Arabic countries record time differently. In his translation, Edward William Lane frequently notes the corresponding times in terms familiar to the Arab, often by referring to the monarchs in power. Just as we speak of the Victorian Age, the Arabians speak of the era of Haroun Alraschid (AD 786-809).

no single canon of the collection exists. Instead, the Arabic manuscripts contain different stories, and different editions place stories in various sequences.

To further complicate the changing nature of the canon, various translators have transcribed the proper names and objects from the tales in keeping with their expert, or inexpert, knowledge of the rules governing Arabic spellings and pronunciation. Thus, as Gerhardt demonstrates, a word like "caliph" may be "calife, chalife, khallefeh, or khalifat" in different versions of the same story (17). While perhaps only momentarily annoying to a lay reader, such confusion makes it quite difficult to use the few indexes that exist to the collection, since a now-standardized name like Aladdin may appear in an early collection as Ala êd-Din or some other variant and go unrecognized.⁵ In addition, another difficulty in using the indexes is the definition of a "story" or "tale." What one translator may regard as the complete version may represent two or more tales in another collection. Since the collection contains anywhere from two hundred to four hundred stories, few translators have ever attempted to

⁵For convenience, I shall use spellings that are generally accepted today, spellings that eliminate diacritical marks and unusual consonant combinations. In direct quotes I shall copy the translations and editions faithfully. In most cases, readers can recognize names by sounding them aloud. There are cases, however, where some confusion may exist, so I shall include the more common or familiar name in brackets.

complete the entire collection. For example, Edward William Lane's Victorian translation (1838-1840), while numbering over 1500 pages in three volumes, represents only two-fifths of the manuscripts available to him (Gerhardt 76).

Included in the collection are several individual stories thought to be "orphans" since they are stories with separate literary histories. According to Gerhardt, they came to be included in the collection at a very late date, perhaps even at the time of Antoine Galland's translation (1704). Gerhardt argues, however, that the inclusion of these tales need not be regarded as arbitrary, for they may well have existed in earlier Arabian Nights manuscripts that have been lost. Apparently Galland introduced some of the more famous stories such as "Sindbad the Sailor," "Aladdin and the Magic Lamp," "Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves," and "Ahmed and the Fairy Peri-Banou" into his collection. Later translators did not. Consequently, the tracings of a given story can sometimes be related to particular editions that an author read.

The Themes. Despite the complex composition history of the Arabian Nights and the lack of a fixed canon, it is possible to examine the themes and narrative structures of the collection in terms of their employment in the frame tale of Scheherazade and Sultan Shahriyar. As Ferial Ghazoul establishes in his study, all the stories, no matter how

they are arranged, are related to this matrix frame story, one of the stablest elements in the various collections. Using the image of a chess game, he demonstrates that only certain types of narrative "moves" are possible in the collection, regardless of the edition: "the text preserves its identity although it is performed, as it were, in more than one way" (16).

The frame narrative in the Arabian Nights differs in minor details from one edition to another.⁶ Nonetheless, regardless of how abridged the version might be, the main point of the story is that a disillusioned Sultan, Shahriyar, seeks revenge against all women for the infidelity of his wife. To achieve his revenge, he takes a new bride each day and slays her the next morning after a night of lovemaking. He does this for over three hundred nights before Scheherazade, the daughter of the king's vizeer, finally circumvents the edict of execution by telling him an interrupted tale.

From the very beginning, critics have assumed that this frame narrative is mythical in implication, and that the names of the characters indicate their significance. For example, Lane translates Sultan Shahriyar as "Friend of the City" while his brother's name, Shah Zeman, signifies "King

⁶The greatest difference involves the degree of explicitly sexual material. Many versions, Galland's included, favored expurgation. For a full discussion of the differences, see C. Knipp, "The Arabian Nights in England: Galland's Translation and Its Successors."

of the Age." This suggests that they represent kingdoms, not just individual men. Similarly, Scheherazade is his antagonist who achieves the liberation, not only of herself, but of all women by her actions. Richard Burton explained that the name Scheherazade means "city freer" or "lion born"; it connotes "courage and achievement" (Grossman 120).

Even if readers are unfamiliar with the "meaning" contained in the names, the text clearly establishes Scheherazade's role in announcing the principal theme in the collection: the power of storytelling to ransom lives. Scheherazade tells her father, who wishes her to abandon her rash decision to marry the sultan, "either I shall die, and be a ransom for one of the daughters of the Muslims, or I shall live, and be the cause of their deliverance from him" (7-8). As this statement indicates, Scheherazade conceives of herself as the heroine. She knows that her actions will affect more than herself, and from the start readers have taken her at her word. As a result, her character has a certain meaning attached to it that has accrued over the years. By all accounts, Scheherazade is meant to be the prototypical narrative heroine.

Through her character and words, Scheherazade embodies the theme of the power of storytelling to ransom lives. She is the foremost example of the many narrators who will defeat antagonists, not through actions of bravery, but

through words of imagination and fancy. Thus, both Ghazoul and Gerhardt conclude that the Arabian Nights is foremost a narrative about narrative or a story about story-telling (60; 377). Similarly, Tzvetan Todorov has called it a "predicative literature," that is, one which emphasizes the act of telling, not what is being told (Poetics 67).

In conspiring with her sister to tell the sultan an interrupted tale each night, Scheherazade hints at what will be more fully developed by the end of the collection: that storytelling is an empowering action, literally a weapon against death. Ghazoul refers to the power that Scheherazade realizes as her "Nocturnal Cogito." It represents the equivalent of "I narrate, therefore, I am" (60). Furthermore, through her narrative power, she achieves heroic stature. He writes:

In The Arabian Nights, the feminine heroine takes the place of the masculine hero or the sira. Instead of a traditional battlefield in which the hero proves himself, the heroine of The Arabian Nights carries out her struggle in a boudoir, while sitting in bed. She is not armed with an army and arsenal, but with narratives and discourses. (76)

Using her arsenal of words, Scheherazade fights her antagonists. On one level, her most immediate enemy is the sultan who will execute her if she fails to amuse him. Yet she can be seen to fight other foes as well. Ghazoul establishes that Scheherazade's fight is not only against a dictatorial sultan, but also against a far greater

antagonist, that of Time (37). He compares the Eastern heroine to a Greek counterpart, Penelope, and suggests that whereas Penelope's unravelling of what she had woven during the day was an attempt to "delay" time, Scheherazade's art "lies in annulling time." Wendy Faris concurs, and in "Fiction Against Death" suggests that Scheherazade's ransom stories do more than prolong her physical being; they prolong her fictional self and all the other selves she creates.

Scheherazade demonstrates the power of narrative to save lives in many of the stories she tells. The first cycle, entitled "The Merchant and the Jinnee," is a prime example. In this cycle, a merchant angers a genie when he throws away the pit of a date which accidentally kills the genie's son. When the genie threatens to kill the man, three other merchants liberate him by telling a tale in turn, each of them ransoming one third of the man's life. By the end of the cycle, the first merchant is free, just as will be Scheherazade, the teller of the tale in the original frame.

Not only are the stories which can save lives valued in the Nights, but the storytellers themselves are also glorified. Frequently they are given jewelled ceremonial gowns, or gold coins to fill their mouths, and a particularly fine story is "recorded in gold" for posterity. This coupling of story with material reward clearly

establishes value. Stories are "golden." They are as powerful and as desirable as the base metal. Thus, Scheherazade is powerful, but so are her tools.⁷

To ransom herself and to tell her stories, Scheherazade resorts to three basic "survival strategies," all of which guarantee that she will live to see another day.⁸ These strategies are each revealed in the narrative structures she employs to tell her tales. Taken collectively, they introduce the second theme of the collection, that of the perpetual narrative. In addition to presenting the subject

⁷For the fullest presentation of the importance of storytelling, see Lane's discussion on "Literature" in Arabian Society in the Middle Ages, a compilation of all his textual notes to the Arabian Nights. He relates the importance of eloquence to the religious beliefs regarding Mohammed and public recitations of the Koran. For the Arab, language is magical; to speak beautifully is important. Conversely, to speak poorly is objectionable. As proof, Lane refers to a historical monarch who was denied his throne owing to a speech impediment (113). Lane also presents historical examples of the glorification given to storytellers. He writes, "We have already seen how a Khaleefeh ordered the mouth of a learned man to be filled with jewels. To cram the mouth with sweetmeats for a polite or eloquent speech, or a piece of poetry, has been more commonly done; but the usual presents to learned men were, and are, dresses of honour and sums of money" (118).

⁸I am indebted to Judith Grossman for the term "survival strategy," although I use it differently. In her discussion, she uses it to refer to Scheherazade's recitation of tales which depict women's heroism, in contrast to the sultan's beliefs regarding the depravity of women.

While using different terminology, Todorov discusses similar concerns in "Narrative Men," a chapter from The Poetics of Prose. Todorov also discusses the Arabian Nights by way of example in The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre. Although I have organized my discussion in a very different form than his, I have greatly benefitted from his work.

of storytelling as a powerful tool which can ransom lives, the Arabian Nights demonstrates various narrative techniques by which stories can be extended, postponing a conclusion. The first two themes are related: since storytelling is powerful, continuing the act of storytelling by avoiding endings is the means by which that power is sustained.

The first of these strategies is Scheherazade's use of the interrupted tale, the tale which is left incomplete. As dawn arrives, Scheherazade leaves her tale unfinished, no matter how near its resolution. E.M. Forster highly praises this art of interruption in his classical study Aspects of the Novel:

Scheherazade avoided her fate because she knew how to wield the weapon of suspense--the only literary tool that has any effect upon tyrants and savages. Great novelist though she was--exquisite in her descriptions, tolerant in her judgments, ... it was yet on none of these gifts that she relied when trying to save her life from her intolerable husband. They were but incidental. She only survived because she managed to keep the king wondering what would happen next.... (26-7)

To remind readers that Scheherazade is interrupting her stories, the Victorian texts of the Arabian Nights usually include a refrain that announces the arrival of dawn.⁹ In addition, the texts enumerate the nights as they progress to

⁹Ironically, Lane omits this refrain after the second night, arguing "and as this [refrain] is expressed in the original work in nearly the same words at the close of every night, such repetitions will in the present translation be omitted" (16). Nonetheless, although he artificially divides the tales into "chapters," he mentions the nights as they pass so that the reader still senses the interrupted structure.

signal that the stories have not been told sequentially, but rather that they have been broken apart. All of these structures reinforce the strategy of interruption, and they signal more victories for the heroine who has lived to see another day.

Scheherazade's second survival strategy, which delays both her own narrative end and life's end, is to tell tales that do not end themselves, tales that defer a conclusion by introducing another narrative instead. Recently this technique has been called "mise en abyme," a term that is generally not translated. The term implies the entry into a narrative abyss in which ongoing stories reflect in some manner on an earlier narrative either structurally or thematically. In effect, the embedded narratives mirror the outer "frame/s." Perhaps Max Lüthi's expression, the "narcissism of narrative," provides the most fruitful way to regard this retardation of ending. He suggests that the stories reflect on themselves and their own narrative structure, just as the Greek god saw himself reflected in the pool he gazed on (93). The Arabian Nights is certainly one of the earliest examples of narrative art that is consciously self-reflective.

In the Arabian Nights, tales spin into other tales, often suggested by parallels in theme or plot, sometimes even by small details. For example, in the original frame, the image of "blackness" begins and unifies a series of

incidents (Ghazoul 36). The plot moves from a black night (on which Shahriyar senses his wife's infidelity) to a black slave (her lover) to the blackness of despair (the sultan's anger). Ghazoul argues that this "blackness" represents a "principle proposition introducing others." By this, he means that a simple textual image initiates other images that are like it, and thereby begins a whole new story or incident (47).

As a result, the stories in Arabian Nights are not unified in the classical sense. Instead of the traditional "beginning" in Aristotelian terms, they exhibit many entrances into a story (Gerhardt 382). Stories do not end before others start. Instead, one merges into another narrative, and it, in turn, will be incomplete as another story begins. Similarly, the tales lack a sustained development of plot. They come before us and depart just as quickly. Therefore, there are no "middles" or "ends" either.¹⁰ In many modern versions of the Nights, individual stories are presented separately, thereby omitting this

¹⁰Strictly speaking, the elaborate embedded narrative style of the Arabian Nights is abandoned as the tales progress, although frame stories are used throughout the collection (Gerhardt 388). Only the first group of tales really include the complicated "tales within tales" feature. However, the first group is sufficiently large, suggesting that this feature is characteristic. Furthermore, as we shall see in later discussions, it is a feature that many Victorian authors associate with the collection.

For another discussion of the linear stories, see Naddaff, 190.

interlocking feature which the Victorians would have recognized.

Furthermore, as a means of reinforcing the embedded nature of the narrative structure, Scheherazade also includes imagery which contains frequent embedding. For example, the stories occur in subterranean caves or caverns, and many objects are placed inside of one another. In the "Ali Baba" story, not only is the wealth hidden in a cave that requires a certain password to be opened, but, at the story's conclusion, Morgiana discovers the thieves hiding in casks where she eventually kills them. Therefore, the genie in a bottle represents the most striking metaphor for the collection. It also suggests the second survival strategy, that of embedding.

As her third survival strategy, Scheherazade employs elaborate, amplified detail. This is another feature usually absent from modern versions which tend to be quite bare in the presentation of imagery as they follow the contemporary taste for simple language. Todorov analyzes the earlier technique in the following manner: since Scheherazade must extend her tales to guarantee her survival, she adds "more" to the stories. She fills them with detail that provides "more" information, "more" narrative, "more delay." This results in a verbal style that

is ornate and highly recognizable.¹¹ In fact, the detail in the Arabian Nights is so predominant and so individual that it has the effect of obscuring the plot (Lüthi 20). A reader frequently encounters passages describing individual artifacts in great detail. Here, for instance, is a passage taken from "The Third Mendicant's Story," one of the tales in the cycle "The Porter and the Ladies of Baghdad":

...I wandered among the trees, scenting the fragrance of the flowers, and listening to the warbling of the birds as they sang the praises of One, the Almighty. After admiring the mingled colours of the apple resembling the hue upon the cheek of a beloved mistress and the sallow

¹¹Stories in the Arabian Nights are often classified as fairy tales. However, as Max Lüthi concludes, in their verbal style they are quite distinct from European types. For example, in the traditional Western fairy tale, most expressions of value are generalized ones, and the "absolutem" of the tales is rarely made concrete. In the case of "beauty," for example, the way a heroine looks is never really specified, although readers often imagine her to represent their own cultural standards for beauty. When they think about "Beauty and the Beast," they imagine the heroine represents the highest attainment of beauty--she is "beautiful." Nuances are not important; the extremes are. The heroine is beautiful in very conventional ways, and her beauty is both spiritual and physical. As Lüthi puts it, "An individualization of the beauty would not be suitable for the fairy tale, which aims for universal validity and the essence, not the particulars of phenomena" (3-4).

Since Western fairy tales generalize descriptive passages, Lüthi refers to this as their "economy." By this he means that the detail surrounding the action is always sparse and subordinate because the action is paramount. Consequently, the "artifacts" surrounding the action are general ones. A heroine eats an apple, lives in a castle, and dresses in a beautiful gown, but the reader is not given individual portraits of these items. By comparison, in the Arabian Nights the heroines are clearly Arabic: they inevitably have black hair, eyes rimmed with kohl, and hands and feet dyed with henna. They wear appropriate clothing such as veils and loosely fitting garments, as well as jewelry which suggests their culture.

countenance of the perplexed and timid lover, the sweet-smelling quince diffusing an odour like musk and ambergris, and the plum shining as the ruby, I retired from this place, and, having locked the door, opened that of the next closet, within which I beheld a spacious tract planted with numerous palm-trees, and watered by a river flowing among rose-trees, and jasmine, and marjoram, and eglantine, and narcissus and gilliflower, the odours of which diffused in every direction by the wind, inspired me with the most delight. (75-6)

Following this, the speaker opens several other doors, behind which are rooms filled with gems, all of which he enumerates. As this passage indicates, the detail is precise.¹²

In addition to providing elaborate detail in the tales, Scheherazade adds "more" narration by using repetitious structures. For example, there are seven voyages of Sindbad, not one. There are six Barber's stories, not two. In each case, another story is substituted for an earlier one on the same theme. More is given. Sandra Naddaff refers to this pattern as a "narrative ritual" (81), and she attributes the textual redundancy to the Arabic language itself, which she characterizes as patterned and formulaic.

¹²In fact, Henry George Farmer was actually able to date several of the tales based on the musical instrumentation. Since the tales do not speak in generalities, they describe specific fifes, psalteries, tambourines, drums, cymbals, bells, jingles and duffs, with such detail that readers can count the number of strings. In examining detail of another sort, John Payne dated the stories based on the weaponry while Tim Severin recently sailed the same voyages as did Sindbad, indicating the authenticity of geographic detail.

The title also signals the second theme, that of the perpetual narrative, and critics have interpreted it as symbolic. For example, Katherine Gittes compares the Arabic frame tradition with that of the Canterbury Tales, and concludes that while most Europeans read "1001" as a limited number, the Arabs understand it to represent a concept of "boundlessness and infinity" (240). The title implies that the collection of stories is innumerable. Gittes maintains that, unlike the Greek mathematical system which is based on the value of "unity" and "wholeness," the Arabic idea stresses open-endedness and the unfinished. Using an architectural image to make her point, she compares Arabic literature to a mosque, which is organized according to a principle of expansion and reduction as needed by the community. It is unlike its European equivalent, the medieval cathedral. Instead, the mosque "should have the potential to be made larger or smaller" (243). Pointing to the Alhambra as her example, she demonstrates that mosques present "structural elasticity" instead of "a tightly controlled plan of organization." The Nights, by analogy, are also elastic. Taken collectively, then, all of these survival strategies extend the narrative act. On a symbolic level, the strategies strain to ensure that the tales are never-ending, thus underscoring the second theme of the Arabian Nights.

As we have seen, Scheherazade tells never-ending stories in exchange for her life. They are the payment she makes to see another dawn, to have another conversation with her sister. Yet while Scheherazade's stories are clearly narcissistic about the act of story-telling, they also introduce the third important theme of the Arabian Nights, that of desire which is gratified through the intervention of supernatural agency. If any single theme can represent a collection so large as the Nights, it is this one. From the frame to the conclusion, the gratification of desire by unrealistic means predominates as the subject of the tales. For example, the frame begins with Shahriyar who "desires" a faithful wife. It moves to his "desire" for the truth, and ultimately his "desire" for revenge. Alongside him stands Scheherazade who "desires" survival. The collection ends with the gratification of all these desires: when Shahriyar marries Scheherazade, he has his faithful wife who has proven to him the true nature of women; he has extinguished his revenge; and he has peace. Scheherazade has her life.

In its broadest meaning, "desire" suggests a longing or craving, as well as something wished for or sought after. In the Nights, characters embody virtually every desire imaginable. They use the word "desire" quite conventionally to express their immediate needs and wishes, as well as their innermost longings. The objects of their desire are stated openly. Unlike more psychological literature, the

Nights rarely explores unconscious longing. For example, in four pages of "How Hasan Captured the Bird Maiden," the word "desire" appears at least five times, referring to several different objects. Magian announces "This mountain is the object of my desire" (762) while another character says, "He used, when he desired to ride, to beat the drum...And when our father desireth that we should visit him, he ordereth the enchanter..." (765). Later, another openly states "I desire to slay him, that I may heal my soul by taking vengeance upon him, that I may also release this young man from his torture..." (766). Since the word "desire" appears so frequently, it acts as a refrain signalling its thematic importance. Along with characters who desire specific objects are many characters who desire unlimited wealth, such as Aladdin and Ali Baba. They desire gold and precious gems to satisfy their need for security and pleasure.

But perhaps the most significant group of seekers eager to satisfy their desire are the innumerable lovers who inhabit the pages of the Arabian Nights, the "heroes of sentiment" who seek their beloved across oceans and even beyond earth. Inspired by what Gerhardt calls "love madness," they rip their clothing, wail out loud, and gnash their teeth as they give vent to the intensity of their feelings. They openly express their desires, and their appearance identifies their longings. The more intensely

they behave, the more they love, a fact which other characters notice. For example, this passage typifies Hasan's attitude as he spies the bird maidens, especially the one he has come to love:

Hasan stood looking at them, sighing....He wept with desire by reason of her beauty and loveliness, fires were shot into his heart on her account, a flame of which the sparks could not be extinguished increased in him, and a desire of which the signs could not be hidden. (769-770)

There is no masking of Hasan's feelings toward this young beauty; he desires her sexually.

Naddaff sees the association of the sexual with the textual as a metaphoric coupling. She writes, "Desire for narrative; desire in narrative; desire and narrative: they are the two basic elements which combine and re-combine to structure that portion of the cycle [of the 'Three Ladies of Baghdad,' but also the frame narrative] which generates the subsequent tales" (63). Just as we have seen the narrative act as an important aspect of Scheherazade's role, the tales themselves reveal the sexual act as an important theme as well. When sexual desire is gratified, so is narrative desire.

Unlike Western fairy tales in which the sexual component is unstated (although implied),¹³ the Arabian

¹³Lüthi demonstrates that while sexual passion is often understood to be the driving force in European fairy tales, most actual traces of the erotic are missing (5). Consider "Sleeping Beauty" as an example. We assume that one reason the Prince wants to awaken the Princess is that he desires her sexually, yet we are never told that in the tale.

Nights is frank in the presentation of sexual desire. Since the Arabian Nights delineates all types of sexual passion and neglects no variety of sexuality or sexual expression, Michel Matarasso calls the permissive attitude towards sex "sexual polymorphism." By this he means the sexuality can be non-monogamous, non-heterosexual, interracial and cross-cultural. For example, in "Geste of Boudour," he identifies examples of bisexuality, transvestism, and ménage à trois. He says that the "amorous frenzy" in the tales indicates that the "gods" are sexual beings. Unlike the Christian tradition, but like that of the Greek, the Nights imply that supernatural beings are carnal.

Andras Hamori agrees with Matarasso; he puts sexual behavior into the social context of the age. For one, he maintains that the "total concentration" of many lovers in the tales, who seem to pursue nothing but their beloved, is a typical medieval value. Whether the object was religious or secular, the exclusive interest which the characters maintain symbolizes their "devotion" to absolutes, here to love. Furthermore, he insists that the attitude towards sex in the tales is not prurient, but that it reflects the Islamic belief expressed by one of its poets that human passion is not displeasing to God: "lawful earthly love should be enjoyed in the mindfulness of God and cherished because it is in accordance with God's good pleasure" ("Two Love Stories" 73). Furthermore, by examining the texts,

Hamori differentiates between chaste love and that which is meant to be perceived as self-indulgent and bestial. He believes that a sexual ethic exists within the tales.

Although the sexuality presented in the tales is not licentious, it exists in a universe unfamiliar to most Europeans. For example, a sultan fondling his concubine is thought to be a man enjoying one of his possessions in the way that was intended; he is simply indulging in a pleasure to which he is entitled owing to his rank, wealth, and gender. Similarly, as the Islamic faith allows up to four wives, a man who takes them is not a creature of remark unless he cannot adequately provide for them. Nor would anyone think it unusual for a man to own concubines.

Nonetheless, the sexual "permissiveness" of the Arabian Nights is not like the sexuality found in two other genres which frequently contain explicit sex scenes. The Nights is unlike pornography, which delights in lengthy descriptions of sexual acts and which concentrates on describing genital appearance and the throes of sexual satisfaction. Sexuality is also unlike that found in the Gothic, since there is no feeling of transgression or "sin" connected with true lovers. In contrast, the Arabian Nights celebrates sexual passion as an appropriate human experience that is to be savored and enjoyed, not punished. The lovers do not feel guilt or any sense of wrongdoing and there is never a sense of violation or prohibition towards lovemaking in the

context of established social restraints. For example, while a sexual relationship between a commoner and royalty is frowned on, the violation is clearly that of class. The lovers have challenged the social order, which is a transgression, but their passion for one another is not the element that is at issue.

The actual descriptive passages of eroticism in the Arabian Nights differ according to translators, and most Victorian versions are tame in comparison to modern erotica with its emphasis on the machinery of love making. In fact, translators expurgated all the early versions to which the Victorians would have had access so that the most notorious stories were not even in the collection. Naddaff addresses this issue. She recently completed her dissertation using the original Arabic manuscripts, including even those stories which most Victorian editions omitted. Nonetheless, she writes, but "more rare still [in comparison to statements of 'physical aspects'] are the literally explicit statements referring to sexual matters" (39).

For example, here is a passage taken from "Jullanar, Princess of the Sea." In this instance, a King admires his new slave:

And looking at the damsel, he saw her to be a person surpassing in beauty and loveliness, and in stature and justness of form; her face was like the disk of the moon at the full, or the shining sun in the clear sky;...then the King advanced to the damsel, and seated himself by her side, pressed her to his bosom, and seated her upon his thigh; and he kissed her lips, which he found to

be sweeter than honey. After this, he gave orders to bring tables of the richest viands, comprising dishes of every kind; and the King ate, and put morsels into her mouth until she was satisfied; but she spoke not a single word. (679)

As this example indicates, the sexual dimension is apparent although there is no extended description of lovemaking. Yet, the more important difference from Western literature is that desire is gratified as well.

Scheherazade does not merely narrate scenes of sexual desire, but she tells tales in which desire is almost always satisfied, in which the lover ultimately achieves his goal, in this case a carnal one. Unlike the chivalric tradition in which obtaining the chaste love of the fair woman is sufficient, the lovers in the Nights do spend nights together. In contrast to Keats's lovers on the urn, the Arabian lovers meet and embrace forever, not in desire, but in its fulfillment.

Furthermore, in most cases the gratification of their desire is not achieved through the industriousness of the protagonist, but through supernatural intervention. In fact, in some instances, the heroes are undeserving of their good fortune; they are simply the recipients of a benevolent fate. Todorov maintains that the supernatural assistance of the lovers is a structural endorsement of the "favoring" they are receiving by the forces of destiny. Thus, the supernatural intervention must be seen as approval of the carnality in the stories (Fantastic 138).

The supernatural agents who gratify desires are the genii, perhaps the most impressive fantasy creatures imaginable for the time in which they were created. They can transform themselves at will into serpents, scorpions, lions, wolves, or other animals, but they can also take on the appearance of men. In their numerous transformations, they assist lovers and other characters of desire. They literally fly them across continents, grant them wishes, and destroy impediments in their way. Moreover, because they exist, to be introduced at various points in the narrative, they eliminate the need for logical relationships between narrative elements.

The world of the Arabian Nights is one of fantasy. As such, it operates according to different sets of rules, all of which have narrative consequences. Things happen by magic, spontaneously, not because someone has carefully planned for them to occur. In fact, incredible events occur on such a regular basis that Shaheen concluded, "The unexpected always happens" (38). Attributing the illogic in the stories to the belief that "God only knows the truth of things unseen," he sees the lack of traditional causality as a statement of the metaphysical universe behind the tales (39). Since the genre of fantasy collapses limitations between mind and matter, the structure allows for incredible circumstances that would be unrealistic or rejected if presented in the "real world." The fantasist can make

anything happen at will, and Scheherazade does. In many ways, she acts as spokesperson for all the readers who desire wish fulfillment.

Scheherazade gratifies most desire through supernatural agency. Just as she fulfills the lovers' need to be together, she answers narrative desire by the same means. She gratifies all the longings for incident and its resolution through the supernatural. She creates the magic that explains everything that needs explaining in a way that resists explanation. Unlike the realist who must strain to relate events in logical cause and effect sequences, Scheherazade introduces the mysterious instead. In so doing, she never resorts to the familiar solutions which other storytellers use, who announce "It was just a dream" or "This never really happened." For her, all things are possible, including the genie imprisoned in a pillar for two thousand years ("The City of Brass"); the severed head which can still talk ("King Yoonan and the Sage Dooban"); the huge rukh bird which is so large it feeds elephants to its young ("Sindbad the Sailor"); or the women who are able to transform themselves into birds ("How Hasan Captured the Bird Maiden"). Scheherazade, then, is the consummate storyteller.

As we have seen in this brief introduction to the Arabian Nights, it is not a fixed text. Rather, it is a

collection of stories which all relate to the frame story of Shahriyar and Scheherazade. In addition, Victorian editions of the Arabian Nights are substantially different from modern ones. The principal themes of the Victorian editions are the power of storytelling to ransom lives, the perpetual narrative, and the gratification of desire by the supernatural. The themes are revealed in the narrative structures of the interrupted tale, the embedded stories and imagery, and the amplified detail.

The Selection Process and Overview

The Selection Process. Given the enormous popularity of the Arabian Nights, it would be impossible to record every instance in which a Victorian writer used or referred to the collection in some way. Therefore, I have tried to keep several principles of selection in mind. First, I have selected authors who illustrate my thesis, that works of the Victorian period reflect the thematic and narrative structures of the Arabian Nights. To determine this, I have selected authors for whom there was strong biographical evidence to support my assertion that the Arabian Nights was not simply a childhood favorite, but an influential book. As I shall demonstrate in the biographical sketches which appear in the Appendix, each of the authors I have chosen admitted the importance of the Arabian Nights in his or her own life. Second, I have elected to discuss primarily

imaginative works of poetry and fiction, not the prose of the Victorian period. Margaret Annan's dissertation (Northwestern 1945) presents a thorough treatment of writers like Carlyle, Ruskin and Newman.¹⁴ Third, I have selected authors whose works were written between the years 1829 to 1865. I purposely restricted the Victorian use of the Arabian Nights to the expurgated editions, those of Antoine Galland and Edward William Lane, prior to the fuller translation of Richard Burton later in the period. As I have shown, the "text" of the Arabian Nights is a complicated one since nothing equivalent to a fair copy text exists. For both practical and theoretical reasons, I restricted the period under discussion. Richard Burton's translation is so unlike its predecessors that using it would have necessitated an entirely different approach. Finally, since my purpose is to explore the referential relationships between the Arabian Nights and Victorian writing, I selected authors whose work reflected different uses of the Arabian Nights. As I shall explain in "Overview," my primary emphasis is on the intertextuality, the manner in which the authors used the Nights as an intertext for their own work.

¹⁴Annan briefly discusses some others whom I use, but her basic approach is to identify allusions, sources, and themes, not to analyze the narrative structures or the relationships between the texts. As a result, her approach is no longer comprehensive; it fails to incorporate theoretical advances which I use. Nonetheless, I am indebted to Annan for her preliminary and thorough scholarship.

I selected authors who represented a variety of uses, rather than examples of the same type of use.

Overview. In Chapter Two, "Scrooge Alludes to Ali Baba," I shall examine the use of allusions to the Arabian Nights by Charles Dickens. In virtually every form of writing he undertook, from prose essays to fiction, from letters to speeches, he fondly recollected the Arabian Nights. I shall argue that his allusions are not simply casual, isolated instances of textual reference. Rather, as in most cases of textual borrowing, the preexistent material is transformed into the new text in recognizable patterns, which I shall identify. In the first pattern, the cited part typically functions for the non-cited whole. Dickens's allusions act as a synecdoche that recollects the first theme of the Arabian Nights, the power of storytelling to save lives. However, in alluding to this power, Dickens suppressed those aspects of the Nights which were not in agreement with his own notions of sex and propriety. Thus, he celebrated the empowering vision of Scheherazade while he restricted her freedom of speech. In the second pattern, Dickens inverts the values of the Arabian Nights when he refers to it in his short satires. Finally, I shall also examine Dickens's structural allusions to the Nights, his use of "patterns of form" which characterize the collection. In borrowing the narrative structures such as the interrupted tale and the

amplified detail, he likewise borrowed the second theme of the Arabian Nights, that of the perpetual narrative. I shall show how Dickens systematically attempts to extend the narrative act.

In Chapter Three, "Imaging the Word: The Use of Sources," I shall examine two narrative poems which were based directly on Arabian Nights sources. The first is "The Dead City" by Christina Rossetti, and the second is "The Man Who Never Laughed Again" by William Morris. These authors both transformed and subsumed the underlying Arabian Nights text which they use as source material. In the language of intertextuality, their texts are both contiguous to and discontiguous with the earlier work, since these Victorian authors molded and shaped thematic and narrative aspects of the original material so that it reveals their own interests and values. I have chosen these authors in combination since they offer contrasting uses of source material. Rossetti pared details from long complicated sources into a short poem which retains the same "meaning" as the originals, whereas Morris augmented a rather short story into a narrative poem of considerable length. In these two discussions, I shall pay particular attention to the experience of dreaming which the authors borrowed from the original Nights. I shall show that through its use they introduced spiritual and psychological depth not in the original stories which they borrowed. Furthermore, I shall

show how both their poems challenge the materialism of the Nights, its gratification of the desire for wealth.

In Chapter Four, "Charlotte Brontë: The Use of a Subtext," I shall show how she took characters and incidents from the Arabian Nights and transplanted them into her work. In her juvenilia she borrowed the supernatural creatures, the genii, and used their powers to transgress the limitations of realism. By allowing them to control her imagined universe in fantastic ways, she experimented with agency not restricted by conventions of the real world. In her mature work, she literally bid the genii farewell, but she turned again to another empowered personage of the Nights, Scheherazade. In associating Jane Eyre with the mythical storyteller, Brontë gave her the same ability to control fate which she had earlier given to the genii. Instead of using magic, Jane directs and controls her universe through language. In both cases, the author borrows directly from precedents established in the Nights.

In Chapter Five, "The Shaving of Shagpat: The Art of Imitation," I shall examine George Meredith's first novel, which was patterned after the Arabian Nights. Using thematic and narrative structures which he borrowed, Meredith introduces erotic imagery into his novel. He also includes a brave active heroine, quite unlike her Victorian sisters. In addition, by using the embedded story, he self-reflexively comments on his own act of authorship. In this

discussion, I shall refute those critics who have argued that Shagpat is not based on the Arabian Nights. My emphasis will be on Shagpat's imitative form, how it directly refers back to the original on which it is based. I shall establish that the Arabian Nights is, indeed, the source text which the author claimed it to be, and that knowing the original text to which Meredith referred will assist readers in determining the meaning of the novel.

In Chapter Six, "Concluding Remarks," I shall briefly discuss how the Victorian response to the Arabian Nights by the authors I have chosen is representative of the period as a whole. I shall show how these authors, taken collectively, "rewrote" the text of the Arabian Nights in keeping with their own interests and values. Thus, our contemporary experience of the Arabian Nights differs from theirs because they created another intertext for us to use.

CHAPTER TWO

SCROOGE ALLUDES TO ALI BABA

Ali Baba did not immediately come down from the tree, because he thought that the robbers might have forgotten something, and be obliged to come back, and that he should thus thrust himself into danger....As he recollected the words the captain of the robbers had used to open and shut the door, he had the curiosity to try if the same effect would be produced by his pronouncing them. He therefore made his way through the bushes till he came to the door, which they concealed. He went up to it, and called out, 'Open Sesame!' and the door instantly flew wide open.

"Ali Baba and The Forty Robbers Who Were Killed By One Slave" (692)¹

In the first chapter, I introduced the concept of intertextuality and the manner in which I shall employ that term in discussing referential relationships between Victorian writing and the Arabian Nights. In this chapter,

¹Lane omits "Ali Baba" from his translation. This quote is taken from a modern reprint of another Victorian edition, that illustrated by the Brothers Dalziel: Tales of the Arabian Nights (Ed. H. W. Dulcken; Secaucus, NJ: Castle, 1984). The original engravings were done by major illustrators of the period including Tenniel and Millais. While the editor does not indicate the translator, the version is probably based on Galland.

I shall be concerned with the manner in which Charles Dickens alludes to that text in his own works. As George Gissing concluded, Dickens makes more allusions to the Arabian Nights than to any other book (29). Since concordances to the novels do not exist, there is no way to test the accuracy of his assertion. Nonetheless, even a cursory familiarity with Dickens's works establishes that there are many allusions to the Nights in every form of writing he undertook.

In analyzing these allusions, I shall use the term "allusion" in its conventional sense of a textual reference to another text. It can be either explicit or implicit: however, unlike plagiarism, allusions deliberately acknowledge indebtedness. They evoke the prior text or "pretext" for the express purpose of extending the meaning of the words beyond the limits of the "focused text." Allusions necessarily establish intertextual relationships between works. An allusion calls forth the previous text, either in a fragmentary way or in its entirety.

However, the forms that an allusion takes may vary considerably, and, as a result, the nature of the intertextuality which is established will likewise be affected. In some instances, a text will refer to an earlier one by the use of a single word, perhaps even less. For example, Laurent Jenny demonstrates that Ferdinand de Saussure identified anagrams to other works which existed in

Latin texts. By carefully analyzing these cryptograms, some of which were mere phonemes, Saussure discovered that even parts of words were actually references to earlier books (Jenny 46). Sometimes these anagrams represented an entire text hidden inside another, a fact overlooked by a cursory reading.

In other instances, a "focused text" may refer to another without ever repeating any of the language of the original. Instead of referring to content, the allusion may parallel a dramatic situation or narrative pattern. For example, Jenny analyzes a work by Lautréamont, Chants de Maldoror, which reuses an "entire fictional staging" from Hamlet, without ever once directly announcing that in language (40-41). The allusion in Chants consists of a scene which is like that in Shakespeare's play: a gravedigger speaks to a man about the possession of a grave, echoing the conversation which Hamlet had with the gravedigger upon his return home to Denmark. Jenny argues that the scene and dialogue from Shakespeare hover in the background of the French text, without being specifically mentioned, thus affecting the manner in which it is read. He writes: "A network of correlations is established between the nature of the protagonists, their respective speeches, and their situation in relation to the open grave" (41). As a result, Jenny accepts that a textual structure can function as an allusion. He notes, "Yuri Lotman has rightly stressed the

interchangeability of code and message. All languages, and a fortiori artistic languages, are 'modelling systems', that is, they structure the meaning, and are thus bearers of content" (42). Therefore, allusions are not limited to the direct textual mention of a pretext by another. They may take the form of a structure which evokes the recollection of its earlier use by another author.

For Jenny, what is significant is not the "level of organization" which the allusion demonstrates but its role within the focused text. No matter what form an allusion may take, the allusion functions in bringing two texts together. The allusion extends the boundaries of the textual utterance before the reader beyond the text before him, thereby forcing him to make decisions in the act of reading. As Jenny demonstrates, the reader must choose between continuing the "linear" reading by simply absorbing the allusion into the text and regarding it as any other sequence of words that needs to be understood, or he may stop, returning to the source text of which the allusion is a part. In this case, his reading of the focused text is interrupted, since he moves back to the original pretext. In most cases of reading, Jenny admits that these processes are simultaneous and that they coexist with one another. The reader acknowledges both the contextual meaning of the words and meaning as it exists in the earlier material. However, the mere presence of the allusion is significant:

The allusion suffices to introduce into the centralizing text a meaning, a representation, a story, a set of ideas, without there being any need to state them. The source text is there, potentially present, bearing all of its meaning without there being any need to utter it. (45)

According to Jenny, an allusion functions as literary shorthand; its meaning is capable of expansion by the knowledgeable reader. At another point, Jenny speaks of "borrowed textual fragments" which "enrich" a new text "with the play of remembered associations" (53).

The manner in which the focused text integrates the borrowed material can differ considerably from one instance to another. While some texts quickly absorb another without any change in structure or meaning, thus assimilating the earlier material, at other times, the new texts modify the earlier material to suit both the generic conventions and needs of a particular work. Thus, Jenny regards allusions as a "malleable substance" (41). He stresses that theorists of intertextuality do not posit the "invasion by one text of another," but instead, they see allusions in transformational terms. They borrow language to describe these processes from theories of generative grammar (50). Attempting to formulate the patterns that govern the transformations, they search for underlying rules.²

²For example, Kristeva identifies patterns such as negation, contrastive comparison, segmentation and the like (Jenny 50). Jenny himself contributes others including paronomasia, ellipses, amplification, etc, adopting rhetorical terms to describe these processes. He admits that his own list is not exhaustive, but a preliminary attempt at

Thus, I shall follow transformational models in analyzing the allusions which Dickens makes to the Arabian Nights by demonstrating that his references to the Nights follow recognizable patterns. I shall divide my discussion to reflect the various patterns which underlie Dickens's manipulation of the borrowed material. In part one, I shall discuss Dickens's more conventional allusions, the explicit textual mention of the Arabian Nights or the reference to specific stories in the collection. I shall prove that while Dickens appears to evoke specific stories in the collection, his references really allude to the collection as a whole. They function as a synecdoche, that is, a figure of speech in which a less inclusive term stands for the more inclusive one.³ As I shall show, he refers to specific tales only by way of example. Their importance is not related to their narrative content, but to their power to free the imagination from the bounds that surround it. Thus, Dickens's allusions disregard the actual meaning and significance of the borrowed material. His allusions suppress those aspects of the original, particularly any

classification (55). Nonetheless, his discussion shows that these transformations are not haphazard, but that they do follow a "grammar" in the same way that language does.

³I am indebted to André Bleikasten for the formulation of this pattern. He observes a similar process at work in "Cet affreux goût d'encre: Emma Bovary's Ghost in Sanctuary," Intertextuality in Faulkner (Jackson: U of Southern Mississippi, 1985), pp. 36-56.

sexual or violent undertones, which were not in keeping with his values or his own narrative demands.

In part two, I shall prove that Dickens's more extended allusions to the Arabian Nights in his short satires, "Old Lamps for New Ones" and "The Thousand and One Humbugs," employ the transformation of "inversion" (Jenny 58). In this pattern, some aspect of the original pretext, such as the dramatic situation or symbolic value, is replaced with an opposite structure in the new text.⁴ Thus, Dickens appears to ridicule those structures and figures borrowed from the Nights which he praises elsewhere. However, his intent is not parodic, but to criticize social and political institutions.

Finally, in part three, I shall discuss Dickens's allusions to the Arabian Nights which take the form of narrative structures and rhetorical borrowings. In this case, I shall demonstrate how these structural allusions recollect the second theme of the Arabian Nights, the perpetual narrative. I shall show how throughout his lifetime, Dickens systematically extended the narrative act. By using interruption, embedding, and amplified detail, he postponed endings, and for the same purpose as did

⁴Technically speaking, Jenny identifies several sub-categories of inversion, distinguishing among "inversion of utterance" and "inversion of modifiers," etc. However, for my purposes, these sub-groupings are not needed. What is significant is that the focused text systematically alters the borrowed material in an opposite way.

scheherazade--to forestall the conclusion, thus allowing the power of the imagination to endure. In these cases, Dickens assimilates his allusions into his own writing without alteration of their value.

Part One: Synecdoche

As I established in the first chapter, the frame narrative to the Arabian Nights introduces the theme of storytelling as ransom. Scheherazade is only the first of many narrators who will escape their punishments by using words of fancy and imagination. In his allusions to the Arabian Nights, Dickens repeatedly evokes this theme when he borrows the meaning inherent in the source material, incorporating it into his own. He emphasizes the saving power of the Arabian Nights. Although his allusions appear to refer to specific tales in the collection, they typically ignore and suppress the narrative content of the reference. Instead, the allusions function as synecdoches which evoke the first theme of the collection.

This is seen most dramatically in one of Dickens's allusions in "A Christmas Tree." In this story, the narrator thinks back to a Christmas tree from his past. He enumerates the toys that appear in front of him and the associations they evoke. Among the toys are "books" which jar his memory even more. But he rejects the recollection of simple nursery books in favor of a lengthy allusion to the

Arabian Nights. He tells us that he is remembering "not Robin Hood, not Valentine, not the Yellow Dwarf (I have passed him and all Mother Bunch's wonders, without mention), but an Eastern King with a glittering scimitar and turban" (8), a reference to Sultan Shahriyar. The narrator then mentions many tales from the Nights, in an allusion which is several paragraphs in length. In his litany of references, he describes the magical properties which the Nights possesses. The book extends its magic to ordinary items so that "all common things become uncommon and enchanted to me. All lamps are wonderful; all rings are talismans." Like Aladdin's lamp and the ring of Solomon which can conjure up the genii, the ordinary becomes extraordinary. The narrator contrasts this entire reference with nightmare images, especially of the Mask, which occupy the succeeding paragraphs.⁵ He tells us that the voices of Scheherazade and her sister were a comfort to him against the cold outside, a symbol that is both literal and metaphoric. It indicates the cold weather as well as the emotional coldness of adulthood.

Despite the many references to individual stories in this example, they each function in the same way. This is

⁵For the fullest discussion of the nightmare quality of the story, see Mirando Haz, Un Albero di Natale. The anthology includes a collection of etchings based on "A Christmas Tree," which convey the sinister recollections of the narrator. A comparison with other references in the story confirms how positive the references to the Arabian Nights are.

evidenced by the conclusion which the speaker makes regarding them: after reading any one of them, "all" becomes enchanted. Each of the tales can confer that magical property, not because of its own unique narrative content, but because it possesses the magic inherent in the collection as a whole. Each tale is simply one of the stories in the magic book, the Arabian Nights. The allusion evokes the whole, with its theme. Individual stories are mentioned to simply enumerate stories having magic power.

However, in emphasizing the positive effects which the stories have in their ability to enchant, Dickens suppresses anything which is sinister within the individual tales. He systematically eliminates the sexuality and violence. For example, in this lengthy allusion, Dickens innocently introduces the two Sultans hiding in the tree:

By Allah! two Eastern Kings, for I see another,
looking over his shoulder! Down upon the grass, at
the tree's foot, lies the full length of a coal-
black Giant, stretched asleep, with his head in a
lady's lap; and near them is a glass box,
fashioned with four locks of shining steel, in
which he keeps the lady prisoner when he is awake.

(8)

What Dickens fails to say is that the brothers are being summoned to a seduction by this captive lady. She entices the brothers to sleep with her and afterwards takes their signet rings as evidence of her conquest. She shows them ninety-eight rings in her collection that indicate how frequently she has cuckolded her unsuspecting captor.

This scene has importance to the entire structure of the Arabian Nights, for it confirms in the brothers' minds the duplicity of women. After witnessing the infidelity of their respective wives, the brothers had gone in search of evidence regarding the true nature of women. When they return from their encounter with this woman, Shahriyar begins his ritual beheading of women, believing that women are not trustworthy owing to their passionate nature. However, Dickens does not suggest any such importance in his allusion. For him, the reference to the two brothers acts simply as the starting point to his own list of stories.

Again, in the same allusion to the Arabian Nights, Dickens ignores another powerful image that one of his references evokes. In alluding to the "Tale of Three Apples," he neglects to mention the circumstances of the story. According to Roger Allen, it is one of the most sinister in the Arabian Nights, since it seems to endorse brutal injustice (55). In the story, the caliph, Haroun Alraschid, has been summoned to assist in a murder trial involving the discovery of a dismembered woman's body. Alraschid angrily confronts his subjects for having allowed a murder to take place in his kingdom. He tells his aide, Jaffar, "I must retaliate for this damsel upon him who killed her, and put him to death!" (90) He turns to Jaffar and tells him that if Jaffar cannot find the murderer, Jaffar himself will be crucified at the gate of the palace

along with forty of his kinsmen. As the story progresses, it becomes apparent that the woman's husband had accused her of infidelity, of which she was innocent, and had murdered her in rage. However, the gift apples which her husband assumed she had given to her lover were, in fact, stolen from her. Nonetheless, the husband is excused for his rash action and is not forced to atone for her death. Similarly, Alraschid's "justice," as seen in his remarks to Jaffar, prevails, despite its potential cruelty. Jaffar is in no way responsible for the woman's death, and Alraschid's threat of execution seems particularly harsh.

Yet Dickens suppresses all this. Since he is only concerned with the enchanting artifacts in the tales, he neglects their potential danger. His allusion obscures that the apple in this story signifies death and injustice, not happiness or wish fulfillment. In keeping with his original metaphor that "now all common things become uncommon and enchanted to me" (8), he omits the details of the original. Instead, he equates all the apples of his childhood with those "akin to the apple purchased (with two others) from the Sultan's gardener for three sequins, and which the tall black slave stole from the child."

This suppression of the violence inherent in this allusion is remarkable, given Dickens's own fascination with horror and the macabre. As John Carey convincingly argues in The Violent Effigy: A Study of Dickens' Imagination, Dickens

"never seems to have quite reconciled himself to the fact that violence and destruction were the most powerful stimulants to his imagination" (16). Carey enumerates Dickens's fascination with murderers, thieves and criminals, and his depiction of modern cities as sordid dens of corruption. Carey's analysis confirms how much Dickens altered this reference to the Arabian Nights. Since its world was meant as a contrast to that of London, a much too real world for Dickens, he could not emphasize the sordidness of Baghdad. In this allusion, he forgets that just as many murderers lived in the East as in the West.

In addition, Dickens's inability to confront the violence inherent in the Arabian Nights marks him as unique in comparison to most writers and artists of his era. As readers who are familiar with the text know, it contains frequent beatings, decapitations and dismemberments for what most Westerners would regard as minor infractions in behavior. Rana Kabbani argues that many nineteenth-century Europeans believed this behavior to be typical of the East, and that they based their art on the acceptance of unrestrained brutality as a national characteristic of Orientals. Using as her example Henri Regnault's Execution sans Jugement (1870), she describes this stereotype. In this painting, an Oriental ruler wipes the blood off his sword after having beheaded the man whose bloodied head and severed body lie before him. Thus, for most viewers, the

East was envisioned as a continent of rash violence where justice was swift, but sadistic and absolute.

Writers as well as painters shared this view. For example, even Lane himself, in his notes to his translation of the Arabian Nights, authenticates the violence in the tales by suggesting the cultural reasons for behavior seen in the stories. He identifies some infractions of laws and the attendant punishments. He notes in Arabian Society that murder is punishable by death, theft "by cutting off the right hand, except in certain circumstances," and adultery by stoning (17). Although Lane was sensitive to portraying the East without bias, he nonetheless acknowledges that most Europeans would find many punishments mentioned in the Nights as unusual. Thus, he justifies their severity by references to religious beliefs and principles, especially those in the Koran.⁶ Lane understood his audience. He

⁶More modern critics regard this sort of violence as indicative of the genre of fairy tales, not as a true representation of Eastern justice. They point out that similar sorts of extreme behavior can be found in all forms of European fairy tales, and yet no one assumes that Europeans are unnecessarily cruel. The acts are seen as exaggerated, not literal. For example, James Thurber challenged the argument by a psychologist who maintained that fairy tales were bad for children. In "Tempest in a Looking Glass," Thurber argues that fairy tale violence is universal. Pointing to Snow White, he shows how the queen's command to the hunter to bring back the heart and tongue of her rival is standard fare, and that children understand its exaggeration. H. P. Lovecraft, a writer of horror fiction, agrees. He maintains that the "literature of fear" is a feature of the folktale from time immemorial and is man's way of dealing with both the unconscious that he fears and the "cosmic unknown" that he dreads. Hence, when some of

realized that differing cultural norms would make it hard for them to understand a system of justice so unlike their own. However, Dickens appears not to have understood how problematic the violence in the Arabian Nights was for many Victorians. He ignored it in this allusion, preferring to remember the saving power that the collection had.

This same transformational pattern will appear elsewhere in Dickens. He will mention a specific story to evoke the whole and then suppress the narrative elements of the individual tale which do not conform to his own standards. For example, in the allusion to the Arabian Nights in "A Christmas Carol," the Ghost of Christmas Past shows Scrooge his own childhood. Taken back to the schoolhouse which he had attended, Scrooge sees the image of "a lonely boy...reading near a feeble fire" (27). Weeping at the remembrance of his own youth, Scrooge next sees the vision of a man outside the window near where the boy is sitting. He exclaims:

Why, it's Ali Baba!...It's dear old honest Ali Baba! Yes, yes, I know! One Christmas time, when yonder solitary child was left here alone, he did come, for the first time, just like that. Poor boy! And Valentine...and his wild brother, Orson; there they go! And what's his name, who was put down in his drawers, asleep, at the Gate of Damascus; don't you see him! And the Sultan's Groom turned upside down by the Genii; there he is

Sindbad's sailors become supper for an incredible monster, the reader intuitively understands that the monster represents the unknown of life that can be brutal and threatening.

on his head! Serve him right. I'm glad of it.
 What business had he to be married to the
 Princess! (28)⁷

The reference to the Arabian Nights is significant, for it demonstrates the power the book has to shelter the boy from isolation. Like the earlier example, it also establishes the positive power of storytelling. Yet, if we are familiar with the actual Arabian Nights tales to which Scrooge alludes, we see how he actually comes to reject their thematic message. For example, Ali Baba, the cunning thief to whom Scrooge refers, steals enormous wealth, which gives him great satisfaction both materially and emotionally since he achieves it by outsmarting his antagonists. Furthermore, Ali Baba refuses to share his wealth, even going so far as to hide it from his neighbors and brother. Yet by the end of his evening rambles, Scrooge comes to see the emptiness of wealth, preferring the greater satisfactions of love and family. He rejects materialism and even donates to a charity to atone for his previous neglect of others less fortunate than himself.

Similarly, in his second allusion to the Nights, Scrooge seems to accept that a "princess" must be pursued by a man of wealth, not just anyone. He endorses the punishment suffered by the Sultan's Groom; he's "glad of it." However,

⁷For further discussion of the other stories mentioned in Scrooge's past, see Edith M. Davies, "In Christmas Story-Book Land."

Here Dickens refers to the Arabian Nights tale of "Noureddin Ali of Cairo and his Son Bedreddin Hassan."

later recollections will show him the error of that point of view. When the Ghost shows Scrooge his former beloved, the Ghost reveals a woman who ultimately came to reject Scrooge since he spent so much of his time acquiring wealth, fearing to live in poverty. In the scene Scrooge witnesses between them, she is breaking their engagement because he had changed: "I have seen your nobler aspirations fall off one by one, until the master-passion, Gain, engrosses you" (34). She explains to him that he has replaced his love for her with the love of gold, all so that he does not suffer the "sordid reproach" of the world for being poor. Eventually he sees Belle amidst her family, enjoying their love and affection, and while he admits that he would never have changed her history to rob her of that joy, Scrooge feels empty at having missed the experience of being a part of it. He sees the error of having forfeited their love for wealth. Yet, in his allusion to the Arabian Nights tale which suggests a very different point of view, Scrooge is not critical. Because the old man remembers the book as having helped him against loneliness, he values it. He cannot bring himself to reevaluate its morality or content. It must always be seen from a child's point of view, appreciated for its power, even though he will eventually repudiate the values inherent in the tales he mentions.

Even in the novels, the associations are the same. Dickens refers to the text as a collection which has saving

power, but he neglects any reference to the themes contained in individual stories. Thus, in David Copperfield, David recalls his isolation at the hands of his new stepfather, Murdstone. Locked in his room for what his stepfather feels is bad behavior, David explains how he was able to fight his fear and loneliness by impersonating the characters from the books that he was reading. Prominent among them is the Arabian Nights, as well as one of its imitations, Tales of the Genii.⁸ David says, "This was my only and my constant comfort. When I think of it, the picture always rises in my mind, of a summer evening, the boys at play in the churchyard, and I sitting on my bed, reading as if for life" (44). In fact, David is being more than metaphoric in his statement here, for, as the novel progresses, his bookish learning will sustain him against his antagonists. Michael Kotzin feels the same was true for Dickens. He reads David as the alter-ego to the actual author (34).

The same narrative pattern exists in a later Dickens novel, Hard Times (1854). Dickens is even more explicit here

⁸Tales of the Genii: or, The Delightful Lessons of Horam, the Son of Asmar, was anonymously published in 1764. See Jane W. Stedman's "Good Spirits: Dickens's Childhood Reading" for further discussion. Also see the fourth chapter on Charlotte Brontë.

While using many of the conventions of the Arabian Nights, Tales of the Genii is very didactic. The original frame, praising the lessons which can be learned from an Eastern culture, entirely collapses at the conclusion, becoming a highly critical Christian homily. Nonetheless, the book served as the source for one of Dickens's first writing efforts, his play Misamar, the Sultan of India.

than he had been earlier about the importance of imaginative literature to a child's development (Kotzin 42). Through the mouthpiece of Sissy Jupe, he is able to articulate exactly what a book represents to him. Although the allusions to the Arabian Nights are infrequent in this novel (all of them occurring in the first chapters), their importance reverberates throughout the book. The allusions remain as informing structures to the novel even in the last chapters since they establish the values by which an education is to be judged. By the conclusion, Sissy's education, one that is considered quite unorthodox by her teachers, Mr. Gradgrind and Mr. M'Choakumchild, ultimately defeats their utilitarian concerns.

Early in this novel, in a chapter entitled "Murdering the Innocents," Sissy's teachers chastise a "corpulent poor boy" who suggests that it is appropriate to use wallpaper which depicts horses. They tell him it would be entirely wrong to do so since horses do not walk on walls in real life. Similarly, they insist that carpeting should not contain representations of flowers since people could walk over them with heavy boots. When Sissy disagrees with her teachers' command "never to fancy," she also incurs their wrath.

Eventually Sissy becomes the ward of one of the teachers, and he assures her that he will educate her in the proper manner so that she will be "reclaimed and formed"

from what he regards as her permissive upbringing. He questions her about her former life, and asks Sissy what she has learned at home. She mentions long evenings alone with her father when she would read to him for amusement: "They were the happiest--O, of all the happy times we had together, Sir!" (37). Asked to identify the specific things she read, she says, "About the Fairies, Sir, and the Dwarf, and the Hunchback, and the Genies," all specific references to characters from the Arabian Nights. She is then angrily told, "Never breathe a word of such destructive nonsense any more." (37). She does not, but by the conclusion of the novel, her education defeats the system proposed by Mr. Gradgrind since his proves to be sterile and overly rigid. Only too late does he realize how he has hurt his own family by restricting their imaginative development.

Here we see that the references to the Arabian Nights suggest saving power. The stories to which Sissy refers are not mentioned for their specific importance. For example, the story of the Hunchback might be regarded as an example of black humor since it involves a series of narratives centering on a dead corpse (which ultimately revives), and all the people who mysteriously claim to have accidentally killed it. All the people who discover the corpse think that they are responsible for its condition. They come before the chief law officer and ask to be executed, on the condition that the previously accused person be set free. While an

adult would probably regard this complicated cycle as farce, there are more sinister aspects. Embedded in the Hunchback's story are other tales which depict mutilation such as "The Christian Broker's Story of the Young Man Whose Hands Were Cut Off," and "The Stewart's Story of the Man Whose Thumbs Were Cut Off," certainly stories that might terrorize a young listener. Yet, for Sissy, they provide a better education than the "facts" of her step-father.

As these allusions all suggest, Dickens sees the Arabian Nights as a collection of ransom stories. It ransoms the imaginative lives of individuals from tyrants of various sorts, be they parents or scolding school masters. In using this pattern, Dickens is stating what we have seen to be one of the three principal themes in the Arabian Nights, the power of storytelling. His allusions all evoke the belief that storytelling can be used against oppression. In addition, neither listening to stories nor telling them is a pastime of relaxation or leisure. Rather, these activities are essential to a person's imaginative growth. Yet, in his allusions, he ignores the values represented in the stories to which he refers. He alludes to individual tales as part of the Arabian Nights, not as stories with individual themes. He refers to the stories as they are recited by Scheherazade to save herself. He does not think of them as separate narratives. Instead, the mention of an individual

tale calls forth the whole of the collection, thus functioning as a synecdoche.

Dickens's belief that stories had magical properties to ransom the intellect from strangulation appears to have been a result of his own childhood experiences. Critics have always assumed that much of his work is autobiographical; they have therefore seen tracings of his personal history in the plots and themes of his work. For example, Harry Stone argues that "perhaps" the "most shaping emotion" of Dickens's life was his belief that his own parents had abandoned him, and his feeling that he was emotionally orphaned (Invisible 10). According to Stone, Dickens had been scarred by the experience of working in a blacking factory during his youth. So painful was this experience that Dickens could not even talk about it; he had to give it expression in fictional form. Because of this experience, Dickens would always feel that he had been a victim of a cruel fate which had denied him a formal education, and which robbed him of the experience of childhood innocence and goodness. No matter how wealthy and popular he became, he conceived of the world as his antagonist, and thought of the adulthood of his parents as corrupting.

Looking back at what he perceived to be parental neglect, Dickens was convinced that his only salvation during his youth had been the imaginative books which had kept his soul and mind alive while his body was being

subjected to literal imprisonment. Uppermost among the imaginative works which he remembered was the Arabian Nights. Even as a mature man, he would mention the importance of the Arabian Nights to his childhood fancy in his public speeches. For example, in both his address to the Royal Society of Musicians and to the Printers' Pension Society, Dickens refers back to his childhood reading of the Arabian Nights. He describes how it, along with Robinson Crusoe, worked against his dislike of reading tracts and morality literature (Speeches 296; 324).

As Stone points out, this autobiographical pattern would be translated into a fictional one. A Dickensian staple would become the innocent child "bereft of parents" cast into the "dangerous forest" of reality (Invisible 103). According to Stone, Dickens always felt that reading had saved him in his own past. Therefore, he continued to save himself and others through his fairy tale allusions (Uncollected 59). Stone argues that Dickens would refer to imaginative literature, especially fairy tales, as an antidote against the poisons of "fact" and conventionality. In an age in which children's stories were filled with homiletic intrusions, Dickens would celebrate the story told simply for its extravagance of fancy.⁹

⁹Because of his association of the Arabian Nights and other fairy tales with childhood, Dickens strenuously objected to any adulteration in the form the stories took. Both Stone and Michael Kotzin discuss at length his objections to the stories written by Cruikshank that were

In addition to seeing Dickens's celebration of the Arabian Nights as autobiographical, his pattern of suppression may be seen to result from the same causes. Owing to his own temperament and values, he was simply unable to acknowledge the problematic nature of some of his favorite books. Perhaps David Copperfield, Dickens's alter-ego, says it best:

They [other books] kept alive my fancy, and my hope of something beyond that place and time,-- they, and the Arabian Nights, and the Tales of the Genii -- and did me no harm; for whatever harm was in some of them was not there for me; I knew nothing of it (44).

For David, like the other Dickensian narrators, never associates the Arabian Nights with anything but imagination and childhood innocence.

This depiction of innocent sexuality conforms to a general tendency in Dickens's work. As Carey argues, one of Dickens's greatest failures as an artist was his inability to deal with adult sexual desire. In "Dickens and Sex," he maintains that Dickens especially could not accept adult passion in women. Hence, his heroines are angel/sisters instead who never express sexual longings. Consistent with his fictional depictions, Dickens whitewashes his allusions to a very erotic text, the Arabian Nights.

actually temperance tracts poorly disguised. Dickens hated the addition of morality to a form he valued for imagination and entertainment. See his "Mr. Barlow" section of The Uncommercial Traveller for his views on this subject.

For each of Dickens's characters, the remembrance of the Arabian Nights is a chaste one. Despite the highly erotic nature of the tales to which he refers, even in the expurgated editions, Dickens consistently neutralizes the passionate elements in the stories. In stark contrast to the typical Victorian inclination to refer to the tales expressly for their sexual suggestiveness, Dickens ignores this aspect. As we shall see in the discussions of Christina Rossetti, William Morris and George Meredith, most Victorians acknowledged the sexuality in the tales. But, since Dickens's characters see the tales from the vantage point of childhood recollections, they virtually reject adult sensibility and experience. To borrow an expression from Lady Macbeth, he "unsexes" the original.

Part Two: Inversion

Since Dickens accepted that stories had power, he recognized that they could be used as weapons against antagonists. In the form of satire, they could ridicule his targets. In extending the boundaries of his allusions from simple textual mention to more extensive references, Dickens resembles his fictional counterpart David Copperfield, who had said of himself,

I set down this remembrance here, because it is an instance to myself of the manner in which I fitted my old books to my altered life, and made stories for myself, out of the streets, and out of men and

women; and how some points in the character I shall unconsciously develop, I suppose, in writing my life, were gradually forming all this while.
(133)

In his satires, Dickens would "fit" his old books to his "altered" life, that of a respected editor and journalist who would take on both the art establishment and Parliament with his barbs. As David draws on London for his stories, Dickens draws on current events. Similarly, in this "fitting" of the old into the new, Dickens, perhaps unknowingly, demonstrates that he would alter the old to conform to his narrative demands. In his satires, the alteration consisted of inverting the meaning inherent in his allusions to the Arabian Nights. Where he had previously accepted the thematic meaning and importance of his allusions, here he deliberately reverses their value. To borrow Jenny's terminology, Dickens "doctors" the original to make it work within the framework of his satiric intent.

In these satires, Dickens plays against the original meanings and structures of the borrowed material. The title of "Old Lamps for New Ones," is, as Dickens points out, taken from the Arabian Nights story of Aladdin. In the original, the evil magician is able to obtain the old and ugly lamp of Aladdin from his wife, who does not realize its magical properties. He gives her a new one in its place and thereby obtains enormous power. In his allusion to this tale, Dickens deliberately inverts the magician's cry. He introduces his biting attack on PreRaphaelite art by

projecting the magician into the nineteenth century. Here, argues Dickens, the magician would substitute the Old for the New, in direct contrast to the original. Drawing on his audience's familiarity with the original, Dickens is able to satirize the art movement he is discussing. He writes of the evil magician,

If, when he fraudulently sought to obtain possession of the wonderful Lamp, and went up and down, disguised, before the flying-palace, crying New Lamps for Old ones, he had reversed his cry, and made it Old Lamps for New ones, he would have been so far before his time as to have projected himself into the nineteenth century of our Christian era. (180)

By analogy, Dickens suggests that the current vogue in art among the PreRaphaelites, the substitution of "Old Lamps" for "New Ones," is a modern case of the bad magician. According to him, the PreRaphaelites, in their enthusiasm for works of art before Raphael, have substituted old (and false) values for the better ones of modern criticism.

Dickens is unmerciful in his description of PreRaphaelite art in this essay. He sarcastically denounces the "great retrogressive principle" on which PreRaphaelite art was founded. For example, speaking of the artist on whom the nineteenth-century artists based their name, Dickens writes, "a certain feeble lamp of art arose ... This poor light, Raphael Sanzio by name, better known to a few miserably mistaken wretches in these later days " (180). He attacks those Victorians who hold to old values without benefitting from new knowledge or information. Dickens

suggests that people who prefer the old lamps to the new form a "Pre-Newtonian Brotherhood," which ignores the law of gravitation, or a "Pre-Galileo" Brotherhood which pretends the earth does not revolve around the sun. Finally, he asks that these false believers hold an annual convention to reflect on PreRaphaelite art. The meeting would be held "once, every year, to wit, upon the first of April," resulting in "a high festival, to be called the Convocation of Eternal Boobies" (185).

In this essay, Dickens skillfully sustains a satire based on a simple but rich allusion to an Arabian Nights tale. He deliberately inverts elements from the original pretext so as to satirize the PreRaphaelites, whom he regards as fraudulent artists. Whereas he had previously evoked the power of storytelling defensively to save lives, he now uses an Arabian Nights structure to attack his enemies, using the power of storytelling offensively.

Five years after his essay on the PreRaphaelites, Dickens returned to the Arabian Nights for another satire. This time he directs his anger towards Parliament and other institutions. In "The Thousand and One Humbugs," he borrows not only the narrative structure, but themes and characters, which he modifies to suit his purpose. Hoping not to ridicule the beloved book of his childhood, he substitutes names that allude to the original but which are obviously used to target his enemies. Scheherazade becomes

Hansardadade, while Parliament is called Howsa Kummauns. Similarly, the Good Public becomes Guld Publeek.

In this satire, Dickens uses the Arabian Nights structure thoroughly, even introducing the various sections by title, as does the original. In each case he imitates the structure of the original, but inverts its original meaning and importance to satirize a particular institution. Thus, he effectively ridicules government, the peerage, and corrupt politics. For example, in his frame narrative, the Sultan is distressed at his wives' infidelities. Each of them had proven to be "brazen, talkative, idle, extravagant, inefficient, and boastful" (30). Named Howsa Kummauns, the wives are clearly meant to be the Lower House of Parliament. Although he ridicules the Lower House, Dickens is certainly much more critical of the aristocracy. For example, in his version of the "Ali Baba" story, the robbers gain admission to the cave of riches by saying their version of the "Open Sesame" codeword; they say "Debrett's Peerage" and are granted enormous wealth. In contrast to the original narrative in which Ali Baba, assisted by Morgiana, outwits the robbers, Dickens has the robbers form a "coalition" with Scarli Tapa so they may "shut out the rest of mankind" since "There is plunder enough in the cave" (40). To underscore his meaning, Dickens concludes: "This, Commander of the Faithful, is the reason why, in that distant part of the dominions of the Sultan of the Indies, all true believers

kiss the ground seven hundred and seventy-seven times on hearing the magic words, Debrett's Peerage..." (41).

Perhaps Dickens's greatest inversion of the borrowed material occurs in his frame since he treats the stories of Hansardadade as though they are boring. In the original, it is Scheherazade's ability to interest the Sultan that prevents her death. In Dickens's version, the Sultan is indifferent to her narratives, even though she assures him they are "worthy to be written in letters of gold," which we have seen to be a conventional expression underscoring the value of storytelling. For example, when she begins to sing, she uses a "one-stringed lute" and sings in prose. In the original, her voice and songs are beautifully poetic. Here, however, "At the conclusion of this delightful strain, the Sultan and the whole divan were so faint with rapture that they remained in a comatose state for seven hours" (34). Eventually the Sultana is told to "Get to bed and be quiet" (48).

Despite silencing his narrator in his satire, it is evident that Dickens never wished to silence the real Scheherazade. The ultimate target of "The Thousand and One Humbugs" is not the Arabian Nights, but the individuals and institutions which Dickens satirizes. He wants bombastic politicians to keep quiet, and he wants the aristocratic money-grabbers recognized for what they are. Nowhere does he ridicule the fictional characters of the Nights since they

are too dear to his heart. Since Dickens conceived of stories as powerful agents against antagonists, he was quite reluctant to parody them in any way. This was particularly true of the Arabian Nights, which he regarded as a sacred text. He states that directly in his essay "Where We Stopped Growing": "and when all the dazzling wonders of those many nights held far too high a place in the imagination to be burlesqued and parodied" (312). Consequently, in order to avoid indirectly ridiculing this beloved book, Dickens inverts elements from the Arabian Nights in his satires. He manipulates the allusions skillfully so that he does not tarnish their original luster.

Part Three: Assimilation

In associating his allusions with ransom, Dickens also evokes the principal storyteller of the Arabian Nights, Scheherazade. As we have seen, she is mythological herself. She is able to postpone her own death by using her three survival strategies against her tyrannical husband. Believing stories to have great power, Dickens would employ her survival strategies himself in his own writing. He would imitate her narrative abilities and for the same end: to postpone the conclusion. Like her stories, his writings engage in narrative rituals that extend the storytelling act. In these instances, Dickens's allusions evoke the

narrative structures which Scheherazade employs. He assimilates them into his own writing, accepting their importance as a means of achieving the perpetual narrative.

As the first chapter establishes, Scheherazade employs several survival strategies to postpone conclusions and to guarantee the perpetual narrative. Her first strategy is the art of interruption, and Dickens himself tried to employ this strategy during his editorship of the periodical Master Humphrey's Clock. As editor, he deliberately planned the format of the magazine to parallel that of the Arabian Nights.

As Deborah Thomas summarizes in Dickens and the Short Story, one of his first editing jobs involved a conscious attempt at imitation. In 1839, Dickens was asked to create a periodical that would include several narrative modes. In planning its format, he drew on his familiarity with eighteenth-century essayists and the Arabian Nights (11-12). Writing to his biographer Forster about this undertaking, Dickens said:

I would give some such title as The Relaxations of Gog and Magog, dividing them into portions like the Arabian Nights, and supposing Gog and Magog to entertain each other with such narrations in Guildhall all night long, and to break off every morning at daylight. An almost inexhaustible field of fun, raillery, and interest, would be laid upon by pursuing this idea. (11)

As this quote indicates, Dickens intended to exploit the structure of the Arabian Nights in its diversity and pattern

of interrupted narrative. Regretably, however, his intention was shortlived, for he was forced to abandon the structure of Master Humphrey's Clock. The public objected to the content, which they perceived to be too whimsical.¹⁰ They did not, however, object to the form which Dickens had intended to use, the interrupted tale. In fact, as writers of serialized novels during the Victorian period understood, the public was quite content to wait for the next installment of a story. So Dickens transferred his concept of interruption to a larger canvas, one at which he excelled. In writing serialized novels, he paralleled the narrative actions of Scheherazade in a much broader way. He took advantage of a narrative structure that ensured his beliefs regarding the power of storytelling. In addition, he

¹⁰Thomas argues that the periodical failed for two reasons. First, the original design was not popular with an audience that "demanded novels" (29). As she indicates, the reading tastes of the period simply did not include short works. She documents how after his own failure, Dickens even advised Edgar Allen Poe that he would have great difficulty publishing short works in England: "the only consolation I can give you is that I do not believe any collection of detached pieces by an unknown writer, even though he were an Englishman, would be at all likely to find a publisher in this metropolis right now" (29). Second, the idea of the companions who would tell tales to one another was "inherently flawed" from the start. It was too escapist since it emphasized a "hazy unreality" of dreams and nostalgia (30). It was perceived as being too remote from everyday concerns, and years later, Dickens himself admitted that his original idea had been poorly conceived.

Another point of view is provided by K. A. Chittick in "The Idea of a Miscellany: Master Humphrey's Clock." Chittick attributes the demise, not to public tastes, but to Dickens's inability to sustain a point of view through his central first person narrator.

infused more social commentary in his works to satisfy public tastes for realism.

Although he did not openly identify future periodicals explicitly with the Arabian Nights, the concept of a narrative structure borrowed from it remained with him. As Ruth Glancy points out, in his role of editor of the "Christmas Numbers," Dickens again impersonated Scheherazade. As Glancy summarizes, the "Christmas Numbers" were collaborative efforts, but ones that united stories around a common theme. Acting as editor, Dickens supplied the themes for the various authors whose works he included along with his own. In some cases, stories were jointly authored. Glancy maintains that the concept of the "Christmas Numbers" is that of the framed narrative, that is, a "linking narrative surrounding the tales" (54). She argues that this is the essential organizing feature of the Arabian Nights in that the framed tale of Scheherazade introduces all of the stories. She points out that the "cement" which holds the Christmas Stories together is Dickens's concept of nostalgia and the positive effects of memory. Glancy demonstrates how Dickens, using this thematic structure, establishes a cohesive relationship between "narrator, tale and audience." So, although Dickens failed in his Clock periodical, he returned to the structure of the Arabian Nights later in his lifetime. He adopted the persona of Scheherazade, even giving that identity to his fictional

alter-ego. In David Copperfield, for example, he compares David to the Sultana. As Sylvia Manning argues, David tells many stories to Steerforth and through narrative empowers himself against the latter's overwhelming influence.

In addition to employing Scheherazade's first survival strategy of interruption, Dickens also employs the second, that of embedding. As we have seen, the embedded narratives in the Arabian Nights are usually related thematically to either the frame tale in which they appear or to the story of Scheherazade and Shahriyar. Even before using this technique in his Christmas Stories, Dickens had introduced the interpolated tale into his novels. In fact, the nine embedded narratives in Pickwick Papers (1837) led some critics to accuse Dickens of padding or artificially extending the novel by inserting smaller narratives into it (Thomas 19). For example, Kathleen Tillotson concluded that Dickens inserted interpolated tales to fill out the number; she insisted that the stories had been written much earlier than the novel itself. Disagreeing with her, Thomas shows that, contrary to the belief that the stories are inserted arbitrarily, they all are thematically related to the main narrative. For her, all the inset stories involve an exploration of "imaginative deviation" from "everyday thinking." Thomas remarks, "Each of the tales in Pickwick is ostensibly introduced as a means of whiling away time--a purpose that suggests the traditionally oral nature of the

tales like those of Scheherazade, which eventually becomes a characteristic feature of Dickens' short stories" (24). I agree with her, but I would also suggest that by emphasizing the oral nature, she overlooks the fact that substitution and repetition are the essential features of the organization of the Arabian Nights. They are not superficial time-fillers, as she seems to suggest. They are the means by which Scheherazade achieves her liberation and by which she introduces the theme of the perpetual narrative into the collection. Also, Thomas fails to see that it is not coincidental that the embedded stories in Pickwick are thematically related. They must be in order to allude to what appears to be Dickens's pretext, the Arabian Nights.

In addition to alluding to both interruption and embedding, Dickens's narrative style also alludes to Scheherazade's third survival strategy, that of amplification. This is the technique by which she continually adds "more" to her stories. Again, Dickens uses that narrative pattern, a style which prompted George Orwell to remark that the "outstanding, unmistakable mark" of Dickens's writing is "the unnecessary detail" (qtd. in Thomas 2). Another critic, a little more merciful, identified this Dickensian pattern as the "enumerative mode" of writing in which there is abundant particularization. Jerome Thale writes, "In Dickens, enumeration becomes a deliberate and literary matter, reminiscent of the incantory

practices of poets--the calculated heaping of detail, and the effects of range, variety, implausible juxtaposition" (130).

While Thale recommends the opening of Bleak House as an example, here is a shorter descriptive passage from the opening paragraph to "A Christmas Tree," which demonstrates the same principle:

tee-totums, humming-tops, needle-cases, pen-wipers, smelling-bottles, conversation-cards, bouquet-holders; real fruit, made artificially dazzling with gold leaf; imitation apples, pears, and walnuts, crammed with surprises... (3)

Or here is another, this one from "The Schoolboy's Story":

After that, there was a spread in the dining-room of the most magnificent kind. Fowls, tongues, preserves, fruits, confectionaries, jellies, neguses, barley-sugar temples, trifles, crackers--eat all you can and pocket what you like--all at Old Cheeseman's expense. (56)

It would appear that Dickens's verbal style corresponds to that of the Arabian Nights. In addition to employing embedded narratives, he alludes to the manner in which Scheherazade speaks, especially her elaborate attention to detail. For Dickens, this principle was stated in "A Christmas Tree" in a remark made by a child whispering to her friend: "There was everything and more" (3).

For similar reasons, Thomas concludes that Dickens's concept of the short story is quite different from that of Poe, who demands an economy of form in which every detail has to contribute to the story's overall effect. Dickens feels the short story to be discursive. He follows a random

thought or a detour, even if that means the plot becomes confusing or repetitious. In so doing, Dickens imitates Scheherazade. While he had failed in the Clock, and only partially succeeded with his editorship of the periodicals, he achieves mastery in this fashion. Like his model, he strives to achieve the perpetual narrative, suggesting his adoption of the second major theme of the Arabian Nights.

In this section, I have demonstrated how Dickens assimilates narrative structures and expressions from the Arabian Nights into his own writing. In these allusions, he adopts the meaning and value of the borrowed material, although he inserts it into different contexts so that it "means" something else. Nonetheless, these structures function in the same way as did the more conventional allusions--they bring to the focused text some of the earlier significance of the pretext. The structural allusions enrich the Dickensian text.

In this examination of Dickens's allusions to the Arabian Nights, I have shown that they follow recognizable transformational patterns. Dickens inserts the borrowed material into his own work in various ways. In the case of conventional allusions, he suppresses the narrative content of individual references in favor of evoking one of the themes in the collection, the power of storytelling to ransom lives. His allusions therefore function as a

synecdoche: a minor detail evokes the whole. In the second examples, those allusions found in his satires, he inverts elements from the original to avoid any unconscious parodying of his beloved book. Finally, in his allusions to the narrative structures, he assimilates them into his own work, and to the same end: to extend the act of storytelling.

This examination demonstrates that Dickens was enormously indebted to the Arabian Nights. It provided him with a belief that storytelling was an empowering activity, one to be sustained through various narrative strategies. Thus, Dickens's repeated allusions to the Nights act as a refrain: they remind us, as readers, that the activity in which we are engaged is freeing us from the shackles of conformity and orthodoxy.

CHAPTER THREE

IMAGING THE WORD: THE USE OF SOURCES

There was, in olden time, and in an ancient age and period, in Damascus of Syria, a King, one of the Khaleefehs, named 'Abd-El-Melik the son of Marwán; and he was sitting, one day, having with him the great men of his empire, consisting of Kings and Sultáns, when a discussion took place among them, respecting the traditions of former nations.

"The City of Brass" (624)

In the previous chapter I demonstrated the transformational patterns which govern Charles Dickens's allusions to the Arabian Nights. Through his references, he celebrates the enormous power of story telling. Particularly entranced by Scheherazade, Dickens evokes the collection for its imaginative grandeur and ability to extend the narrative act. In this chapter, I shall examine another approach to the Eastern text, one in which authors use a story as the foundation for their own adaptation, as the actual source for their own work. In these instances, the Victorian writers turned to the Arabian Nights as the inspiration for

the poems which they wrote "based upon" the original material. While the poems they created are perfectly intelligible on their own without knowledge of their sources, their meaning is expanded if we examine the ways in which the authors modified and used the preexisting materials. As I established in the previous discussions, intertextuality allows for the borrowing of remembered associations; it establishes textures of meaning that extend beyond the words in the focused text.

In this chapter I shall examine "The Dead City" by Christina Rossetti, and "The Man Who Never Laughed Again" by William Morris. In both cases, early editors of their work identified the sources of their poems. In his collection of her poetry, William Michael Rossetti (WMR) mentions the Arabian Nights as the basis for his sister's poem (406).¹ In May Morris's elaborate notes to her father's complete works, she lists both the story and the specific translation which

¹His collection of poems is still regarded as an important one although recent critics challenge his dating of some of the later verse. They maintain that WMR wanted to suppress the identity of the lovers mentioned so he changed the dates, guaranteeing that readers could not associate the poems with anyone whom Christina knew.

More recently, R. W. Crump has compiled a Variorum edition of the Complete Poems of Christina Rossetti. However, only two volumes of the series have been published, the first in 1979, the second in 1986; regrettably, the juvenile poems are not included. They will appear in Volume Three. According to Crump, Rossetti actively wrote verse for fifty-three years; she published over nine hundred poems, while the total number which she wrote appears to have exceeded eleven hundred. As some were published pseudonymously, it will be years before the canon is established (I xii).

her father used. She says that Morris's poem is based on "The Fifth Wezeer's Tale" in Edward Lane's Arabian Nights, (xxi). In addition to editorial remarks, there is ample corroborative evidence in the texts themselves to confirm the fact that the poems were directly based on material from the Nights.

I have chosen to study Rossetti and Morris in combination for two reasons. First, both authors were drawn to the same ideas inherent in the sources they borrowed. Both reacted to the gratification of desire in the Night and its endorsement of materialism. Rossetti presents a conventional and orthodox Christian reaction to the materialism, whereas Morris examines it in terms of an individual psyche who finds that the gratification of desire is not always satisfying. In addition, both used dreams as a means of exploring uncharted aspects of experience. Rossetti uses dream imagery to explore a spiritual condition, while Morris uses dreams to examine psychological truth. Similarly, their interest in dream experiences was consistent with the enthusiasm of the PreRaphaelites, who as poets and painters depicted surrealistic experience, including that of dreaming. The association which both Rossetti and Morris had with the PreRaphaelite Brotherhood was significant for it shaped their interests and attitudes toward art, particularly as it pertained to the use of preexisting themes and images. Similarly, they shared their

interests with the other PRB members so that their individual responses to the Arabian Nights may be seen to reflect a more general reaction, one that was shared by their closest associates.

Second, while using source material from the Arabian Nights, the approaches by Rossetti and Morris were quite different and resulted in different types of intertextual correspondences. As we have seen, it is quite usual for authors to shape and mold pretextual material to the narrative demands and generic expectations of their own writing. Nonetheless, their manipulation of this material is also directly related to their own impulses as creative artists. Consequently, identifying the manner of transformation can enlighten not only our understanding of the intertextual process, but of individual genius. Rossetti pared down the complicated details from two lengthy stories in the Nights to fashion her simple narrative, whereas Morris took a brief story and enlarged it considerably. To return to the terminology suggested by Jenny, Rossetti uses "ellipses," that is, she presents a "truncated repetition of a text," while Morris does the opposite: he "amplifies" the textual possibilities of his source material (55).²

Nonetheless, both authors engage in intertextual

²I have borrowed Jenny's terminology to apply to the reworking of material by Rossetti and Morris because their works both demonstrate these types of alterations. Jenny's own examples refer to much more limited textual citations. However, the principles are similar in both cases.

transformations so that their shapings influence both their own writing and our understanding of the truth of the Arabian Nights.

Critics who examine the sort of intertextuality that is employed by Rossetti and Morris, in which a work is essentially a restructuring of an earlier text, typically analyze this transformation in terms of "displacement." In its simplest form, "displacement" refers to a process by which the field of interest shifts from one thing to another. In literature, an author may begin a work of art directly based on a source text which is borrowed, but eventually the focus becomes the new work, not the old. In discussing literary "displacement," the emphasis becomes the presences and the absences, that is, what is borrowed and what is not.

For example, Hanna Charney, in "Variations by James on a Theme of Balzac," shows how James uses preexisting material from Balzac, but with a different emphasis. She demonstrates how what is of central importance in one text becomes secondary in another. She also suggests how an original theme may be absent in a later work: "in other words, now you see it now you don't." (70). In another metaphor, she refers to a work which is absorbed into another as a "disappearing opus" (71). As Charney argues, two works of art have autonomy, even if one borrows from the other. They must be understood as distinct. Nonetheless,

certain "interplays" come into existence when readers understand the relation of one text to another. Examining how an author has shaped the previous material brings those interplays into focus.

Similarly, André Bleikasten examines the intertextual relationship between William Faulkner's Sanctuary and Gustave Flaubert's Madame Bovary by showing how certain images borrowed by Faulkner are different from those in the source text, while retaining a clear association between them. He argues, "In Faulkner's text Flaubert ceases to be Flaubert's, and to determine to what extent it has been displaced [my emphasis] and altered, one would perhaps do well to start with a close scrutiny of the place where the intertextual operation occurs" (41). Consequently, he compares how certain images and narrative situations are used within both novels. Although Faulkner is indebted to Flaubert, Faulkner creates new meaning out of the old. He does not merely restate the familiar.

Following their examples, I shall also emphasize the presences and absences in the works which I examine. I shall compare the Victorian poems with the Arabian Nights sources on which they were based. I shall emphasize the "meaning" that results when we, as readers, recognize the changes that the authors made to the original material, and when we see how the different texts establish an "interplay" between them.

Christina Rossetti and "The Dead City"

History. "The Dead City" was originally published in 1847 in a collection of Christina Rossetti's childhood verse privately printed by her grandfather, Gaetano Polidori. It opens the volume Verses, a collection written when Rossetti was a teenager. "The Dead City" is dated April 9, 1847, and like the majority of the poems in Verses, it is imitative of the literary forms which Rossetti was reading at the time. Nonetheless, as we shall see, this poem is already representative of her mature verse in both imagery and theme.

In reprinting the poem in his collection of his sister's verse in 1904, William Michael Rossetti added the following note:

This was originally called The City of Statues.... The reader will, no doubt, perceive that it bears a certain relation to a story in The Arabian Nights, which was one of the comparatively few books that my sister, from a very early age, read frequently and with delight. Beyond this, taken with what is obviously indicated in the poem itself, I cannot say whether any particular intention was present to her mind. (466)

However, since his emendation, another critic has attributed the source of "The Dead City" to not one, but two stories in the Arabian Nights. Margaret Annan maintains that Rossetti's poem was partially based on "The Story of

zobeide" as well as on "The City of Brass" (248).³ It is certainly easy to see why she drew her conclusion, for both stories are remarkably similar in plot and theme, and only incidental details distinguish them from one another. As we recall from the first chapter, one of the characteristics of the Arabian Nights is its repetitious structure, and here we see a prime example of this in two remarkably similar stories in the collection.

Source texts. Both "The Story of the First of the Three Ladies of Baghdad"⁴ and "The City of Brass" are stories

³Annan's analysis is puzzling. While she attributes the source of the poem to two stories in the Nights, she mentions that Rossetti used two different translations as sources. Annan says that Rossetti took "The Story of Zobeide" from Galland, and "The City of Brass" from Edward Lane. I am unsure as to why Annan assumes that Rossetti used both translations. "The Story of Zobeide" is included in the Lane translation, although under a different name. It appears as "The Story of the First of the Three Ladies of Baghdad" (77-83). My own comparison of the Lane version with one based on a Galland translation confirms that the story is the same.

An equally puzzling attribution is made by Lona Packer, Christina Rossetti's principal biographer. Packer maintains that since Rossetti's childhood was sheltered, she might have taken the petrified images in "The Dead City" from a visit she made to Madam Tussaud's waxworks; Packer also suggests that the images of lush fruit might be the result of Rossetti's visits to her grandfather's cottage (15-16). She fails to consider a literary work as the source of "The Dead City."

⁴"The Story of the First of the Three Ladies of Baghdad" is part of one of the most complex cycles in the Nights, that of "The Porter and the Ladies of Baghdad." This cycle contains many embedded narratives, of which this is just one example. The narrator tells her story to the caliph, Haroun Alraschid, to explain what appears to be irrational behavior on her part. He had seen her severely

about spiritual famine amidst material wealth. In each, travelers enter a city of enormous prosperity, only to discover that all the inhabitants there have been punished for some transgression of God's laws. The inhabitants who remain are dead and frozen in lifelike poses. Each city remains a testimony to infidelity and spiritual malaise; it is a memorial on how NOT to live.

What distinguishes the two stories are the differences in detail between them, and these differences show that Rossetti used them both as sources for her poem. In "The First Lady," the narrator and her sisters, who have been lost at sea for several days, finally reach a safe harbor. When she asks for permission to visit, she is told: "Arise, and go up into the city, and wonder at that which God hath done unto his creatures, and pray to be preserved from his anger" (79). Despite that ominous warning, she journeys to a city of enormous wealth, but one in which all the inhabitants are petrified black stone, still wearing their robes of "astonishing richness." After viewing the statues, the narrator explores the hidden rooms in the palace until

beat two dogs in her possession, and he desires to know why. She tells him that both she and her sisters are under the wicked spell of the genii. The dogs are her sisters and she must beat them nightly or else she will suffer the same punishment and be transformed herself.

For a full discussion of this cycle, especially its relationship to the frame narrative, see Sandra Naddaff and Andras Hamori.

For convenience, I shall reduce this title to "The First Lady."

she hears a voice reciting the Koran. She discovers the speaker, the sole survivor of the city, who tells her the story of the stone statues: they are the infidels who had worshipped a fire God instead of Allah. Ignoring the warnings of a crier who had told them of their misconduct, they had persisted in their foolish ways until they had been punished, all except the speaker, who had remained steadfast.

On the surface, "The City of Brass" resembles "The First Lady" since it also involves a journey which eventually arrives at a petrified city. But "The City of Brass" is much more elaborate, and it offers another explanation for the misfortune in the city, one that Rossetti uses instead of the first. "The City of Brass" opens with a mission: a king who has heard that some of Solomon's genii are still imprisoned in brass bottles sends some explorers to find them. In their travels, they enter an empty palace which contains numerous inscriptions in ancient Greek telling them to learn a lesson from what they see: that death destroys everything, and that wealth is powerless against it. Wealth cannot purchase immortality since death is the "separator of companions, the desolator of abodes and the ravager of inhabited mansions, the destroyer of the great and the small..." (629).

Leaving this palace, the explorers finally reach "The City of Brass," celebrated because of its brass towers which

appear firelike in the desert sun. Once inside, they discover that the city is uninhabited despite enormous untouched wealth. The dead lay in the midst of this luxury. With dried skin and "carious bones," the dead "had become examples of him who would be admonished." Chamber after chamber contains yet more petrified bodies, including a corpse with eyes of mercury, retaining a gaze even in death. Again the explorers discover tablets explaining the bodies:

Child of Adam, let not hope make game of thee.
 From all that thy hands have/
 treasured thou shalt be removed.
 I see thee desirous of the world and its
 embellishments; and the past generations have/
 pursued the same course.
 They acquired wealth, both lawful and forbidden;
 but it repelled not fate when the/
 term expired; (642)

The inhabitants in this city had been punished for their greed and their overwhelming desire to store material riches, not spiritual ones. Their great wealth had been useless against death. The story ends with a symbol which embodies that theme: a dead damsel, who is dressed in a gown of enormous beauty, warns visitors not to touch the wealth she possesses:

Whoso arriveth at our city, and entereth it,
 God facilitating his entrance into it, let him
 take the wealth what he can, but not touch any
 thing that is on my body; for it is the covering
 of my person, and the attire with which I am
 fitted forth from the world. Therefore let him
 fear God, and not seize aught of it; for he would
 destroy himself. (643)

Nonetheless, despite the warning, one of the explorers insists on gathering the costly dress; he is instantaneously decapitated by two mechanical statues which guard the damsel. Looking back at them both, a fellow traveller says: "May God not regard with mercy thy resting-place! There was, in these riches, a sufficiency; and covetousness doth doubtlessly dishonor the person in whom it existed!" (643). As they leave the city, the explorers carefully claim only some of the wealth, leaving behind the rest as a warning to future travellers. They journey onward, eventually discovering the brass bottles with the imprisoned genii.

As these brief summaries suggest, the plots of both of these stories are similar. "The City of Brass" is far more developed, including many incidents involving supernatural creatures. The story is rich in imaginative detail, and it has numerous repetitious structures, especially the embedded verses and inscriptions, all of which announce the vanity of human achievement against the power of death.

The Presences in "The Dead City." That Rossetti was drawn to these rather somber stories is not surprising given her temperament and history. Her biographers agree that she was always a serious person, even as a child. She appears to have had a fascination for the theme of death, although R.D. Waller argues that this interest resulted, not from a psychological disposition, but from experimentation with

literary modes in which this was a staple (224). In any case, her poem is quite skillful in the manner in which it achieves the same tone and mood of the original stories in the Arabian Nights, but with an economy of form. Rossetti transforms her source material through "ellipses." She reduces complex structures and plots to their most essential and barest elements. In her poem of approximately four pages, she collapses the detail from the Arabian Nights text that covers over thirty pages in Lane's edition, not including the frame story which introduces the story of the Stone Statues.

In writing her poem, Rossetti used the journey metaphor from both "The First Lady" and "The City of Brass." In her poem, a solitary and unnamed "I" "rambled in a wood" until perceiving a "glimmering beam" which pointed to a city. Entering the city of "white stone," the narrator encounters fabulous wealth:

Till at length I reached a place
Where amid an ample space
 Rose a palace for a king;
 Golden was the turreting,
And of solid gold the base.

The great porch was ivory,
And the steps were ebony;
 Diamond and chrysoprase
 Set the pillars in a blaze,
Capitalled with jewelry. (100)

Continuing onward, the narrator enters a tent in the middle of the city in which a "feast" is underway, only all the

revellers are stone. They are all dead, frozen in lifelike poses:

Yea they were all statue-cold,
Men and women, young and old;
 With the life-like look and smile
 And the flush; and all the while
The hard fingers kept their hold. (102)

The narrator examines the various stone statues, till suddenly everything vanishes. Alone, the narrator prays, overcome by the "hidden mystery" of the city.

As this short synopsis reveals, Rossetti's poem follows the plot of the two stories in the Arabian Nights. In addition, despite the fact that she pares away a great deal of the narrative in both stories, she retains the elaborate imagery pattern that is characteristic of the Nights, and which would eventually distinguish her own verse in a poem like "Goblin Market."⁵ For example, we recall that one of Scheherazade's survival strategies was to give "more" to a story through detail in which individual objects were

⁵One of the first critics to recognize Rossetti's importance was Edmund Gosse who wrote about her early verse in 1882 (although he did not publish his article until 1896). He believed that her early poems already represented her mature style, although "imperfectly;" in fact, he claims that five of her contributions to "The Germ" are among her all time best (146).

Gosse characterizes Rossetti's verse as having two noticeable qualities: "In the first an entirely direct and vivid mode of presenting to us the impression of richly coloured objects, a feat in which she sometimes rivals Keats and Tennyson; in the second a brilliant simplicity in the conduct of episodes of a visionary character, and a choice of expression which is exactly in keeping with these..." (144).

In both his articles, B. Ifor Evans argues that "The Dead City" anticipates "Goblin Market."

described very specifically. Rossetti echoes this in her poem:

In green emerald baskets were
 Sun-red apples, streaked and fair;
 Here the nectarine and peach
 And ripe plum lay, and on
 each
 The bloom rested everywhere.

Grapes were hanging overhead,
 Purple, pale, and ruby-red;
 And in panniers all around
 Yellow melons shone, fresh found,
 With the dew upon them spread.

And the apricot and pear
 And the pulpy fig were there... (101)

Similarly, Rossetti particularizes the stone revellers whom the narrator finds.

In addition to borrowing the plot and imagery from the Nights, Rossetti borrows the explanation for the city's destruction as well. We recall that the inhabitants in "The First Lady" were destroyed owing to their "impiety and their arrogance," while the inhabitants of "The City of Brass" were destroyed owing to their greed. Rossetti attributes the latter reason to the people in "The Dead City" although she changes the agency which reveals the explanation for the city's destruction. In the original, the tablet inscriptions told the visitors how to interpret what they saw. Here Rossetti gives the same role to natural agents, the "wind" and "breezes," which whisper to the narrator:

'Enter in, and look, and see
 How for luxury and pride
 A great multitude have died.' (101)

It is clear, then, that Rossetti retained much of the structure of her original sources. She borrowed the plot, the journey to a petrified city, and the theme, spiritual famine amidst material luxury, from both "The First Lady" and "The City of Brass." She took the stone and lifelike corpses, as well as its solitary narrator, from "The First Lady" while she took the explanation for the city's destruction from "The City of Brass." In addition, she used the verbal style of the Arabian Nights as a whole in her use of detail.

The Absences in "The Dead City." However, Rossetti did far more than retell two complicated stories in a simpler fashion. She molded and transformed the original sources as well as having borrowed from them. Here I would like to examine two significant "absences" which exist in Rossetti's poem. They are the source material she did not use. Instead, she altered the material so that it conformed to her own values and experiences.⁶ First, she entirely eliminated the

⁶The only other comparison of "The Dead City" with its sources is by Annan. First, she argues that Rossetti's changes were in descriptive treatment, the combined use of two stories, and the heightening of suspense. Annan maintains that Rossetti, perhaps as a result of her youth, was drawn to the beauty in the Nights, and that she presents the luxury as seductive, not an admonition against wealth (250). For me, the excessive luxury is a contrast to the spiritual famine.

Second, Annan points out that Rossetti took the cause of destruction from the "City of Brass" and combined it with the effect from "The First Lady" (250). Third, Annan shows how Rossetti delayed the appearance of the petrified bodies

Islamic background of her sources. She "Christianized" the imagery and the conclusion to her poem. In doing so, she refuted the materialism of the Nights, which largely endorses great wealth, although as we have seen in "The City of Brass," the tales show the wrath of God against greed. Second, Rossetti omitted the realism of the source stories. Although they include the supernatural, the tales imply that the experiences of the characters are real, that they actually took place. Thereby, the tales reinforce the general Arabic belief that life is a mixture of the supernatural and the real. Rejecting that, Rossetti presented the narrator's experience as if it were a dream. In using a dream frame, Rossetti is consistent with the interest in dream experience of the PreRaphaelites, and of William Morris's "The Man Who Never Laughed Again."

Even though both "The First Lady" and "The City of Brass" examine the vanity of human achievement in a manner that seems consistent with the Judaeo-Christian tradition, they are recognizably Islamic in their settings, details, and consequently meaning. For example, in "The First Lady," there are several mentions of the Koran and the importance of religious adherence, specifically indicating an Eastern philosophy. When the narrator tries to fall asleep, owing to her exhaustion, she recites verses from the Koran.

until the end of her poem whereas in the originals, they are seen much earlier. I concur with these observations, but I feel that Rossetti's other alterations are more significant.

similarly, the young man survives the destruction of the city only because he has practiced the Muslim faith taught to him as a child. He explains:

The old woman accordingly received me, but took care to instruct me in the faith of El-Islám, teaching me the laws of purification, and the divine ordinances of ablution, together with the forms of prayer; after which she made me commit to memory the whole of the Kur-án. (80)

It is clear that the story suggests, not that any religious faith is sufficient, but that the true faith is Islam, and that religious worship involves both the understanding and practice of Islamic ritual. Similarly, in "The City of Brass," there are repeated reminders that the tale is Islamic. For example, in the frame narrative in which the travellers go to seek the imprisoned genii, their leaders fear that if they are gone too long, enemies will come and pillage their town: "and our country is near unto the enemy; so perhaps the Christians may come forth during our absence: it is expedient therefore that thou leave in thy province one to govern it" (626). Clearly, the original tales reverse the expectations of Western readers.

In addition, as Andras Hamori demonstrates, "The City of Brass" frequently alludes to Solomon to establish its meaning, a very Islamic one. Hamori argues that the story is an allegory, and that readers unfamiliar with the references and their implications in Islamic thought will not

understand the true significance.⁷ In Islamic thought, Solomon occupies a position of great importance, certainly much more than in Western religion. His domination of the genii through his seal ring is a frequent allusion in the Nights, and it figures prominently in "The City of Brass." For example, there is a lengthy scene which Rossetti omits entirely in which an imprisoned genie narrates Solomon's fall from grace despite his great wealth and power. The genie's story prefigures the arrival into the doomed city of lifelike corpses since the inhabitants there also could not prevent destruction despite their wealth.

These specifically Islamic images characterize the general religious background of the Arabian Nights. While the Arabian Nights is a fantasy collection in which incredible events happen with great regularity, it is a collection which clearly reveals the Islamic beliefs of its authors. In story after story, the characters behave in ways

⁷For example, he discusses several images in the story in ways that are not familiar to Westerners. He pays particular attention to the "homiletic" inscriptions which the travellers encounter. His insights are illuminating, and reveal a very different approach to the tale.

Clearly Rossetti would not have understood the story as Hamori does since her background was Anglican, not Islamic. Yet, I would argue that she clearly perceived the Eastern religious experience as different from hers. Since she was an extremely orthodox Anglican, she modified the source material to conform to her own beliefs. Personally, Rossetti accepted the religious non-conformity of both her brother and her friend Algernon Swinburne, who did not espouse her religious standards, but she refused to accept the same attitude in her suitors. There is ample evidence to show that within a few years after the composition of this poem, she broke a marital engagement over a religious issue.

that show their adherence to religious custom and ceremony. Even without Lane's copious notes, a reader could identify morally acceptable actions according to Eastern standards. For example, there are lengthy passages describing almsgiving and the rituals of food preparation and prayer. Invocations to Allah are commonplace, as are frequent anecdotal stories of the great prophets, as we have seen in the case of Solomon.

The Arabian Nights actually begins with a prayer addressed to Allah, "In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful" (1). Following a short list of God's power, the text tells us "The lives of former generations are a lesson to posterity; that a man may review the remarkable events which have happened to others, and be admonished; and may consider the history of people of preceding ages, and of all that hath befallen them, and be restrained." The prayer concludes by announcing that the following "romantic stories and fables" are lessons. As this invocation establishes, the stories are exempla about moral and righteous behavior. Nonetheless, this fact has often been overlooked. We recall, for example, that Dickens never concerned himself with the morality of the Nights since he valued it for its imaginative power.

In her poem, Rossetti combines the Islamic atmosphere of the original with Christian imagery. She makes muted allusions to the Christian Bible, and to Christian ritual.

In so doing, she proves theories of intertextuality which argue that all texts are actually a "mosaic of citations" of previous works. It is readily apparent that, in addition to the Arabian Nights, another intertext of "The Dead City" is the Bible, for it provides several images and ideas for Rossetti's poem. For example, at the beginning of the poem, the narrator rambles unsuspectingly in what can only be seen as an Edenic woods in which everything is fertile and "life-begetting." The fruit is ripe, the animals are tame, there is no "strife." The narrator describes this idyllic landscape as "blessed," and speaks of a "beatitude" of solitude, a word connoting the Sermon on the Mount. Similarly, the narrator is directed to the Dead City by "a pallid light" which is "A pale solitary ray/ Like a star at dawn of day" (100) certainly an echo of the Star of Bethlehem, whereas in "The First Lady," the narrator discovers a fabulous apartment filled with marble and gold by following the illumination of a "brilliant jewel." Later, when she looks for the young man, she follows the candles, not dawn stars.

Western imagery is seen also in the poem's references to wine since the Islamic culture forbids the imbibing of any intoxicating drinks:

Vines were climbing everywhere
Full of purple grapes and fair;

...

Who shall strip the bending vine?
Who shall tread the press for wine? (101)

furthermore, one of the stone statues is frozen with a wine goblet still clasped in his hand. Clearly this scene is not Islamic, despite its having been inspired by the Arabian Nights. In addition, the wine images, coupled with the earlier allusions to Christ, seem to suggest the Christian ritual of communion. The revellers here celebrate their Last Supper, but it is an eternal one of damnation, not of God's saving grace.

Finally, the poem ends with another image that is distinctly Christian, that of the narrator falling down to pray:

All these things that I have said
 Awed me and made me afraid.
 What was I that I should see
 So much hidden mystery?
 And I straightway knelt and prayed. (103)

While it is true that the characters in the Nights often pray, their sense of prayer is very distinct from that of Westerners. In Rossetti's poem, the prayer is contemplative, an attempt to understand the visions which the narrator has seen. In Islamic culture, prayer is generally congregational and prescribed; it is done in union with others according to predetermined times and events. Prayer reminds Muslims of their affiliations to one another and to specific behavior. It almost always consists of the recitation of certain verses from the Koran, and is seldom done without rituals of ablution. While certain postures accompany prayer, simple

kneeling is uncommon (Lane Medieval Society 11-14). In addition, in both source stories, the travellers do not pray after their experiences despite their having been very influenced by what they saw. The last image of "The Dead City," then, is Rossetti's addition, and a distinctly Christian interpretation of the narrator's vision of the petrified city.

Taken collectively, Rossetti's alterations of the source stories result in a Christian response to an Islamic plot. She rejects the importance of the Koran, and substitutes what might be seen as the message of a Christian parable instead. Retaining the imagery of the Arabian Nights, Rossetti infuses the petrified city with a different meaning. Her stone statues speak a New Testament message.

In addition to "Christianizing" her source, Christina Rossetti made another significant alteration to her material. In contrast to the originals in which the experiences are presented as if they are real, even though they involve the supernatural, she frames her narrator's experience as though it is a dream, as though it never happened. Her narrator suggests this very early in the poem, even before reaching the petrified city:

I went on as in a dream
 A strange dream of hope and
 fear-- (100)

After seeing the stone inhabitants, the narrator remarks:

Full of fear I would have fled;
 Full of fear I bent my head,

Shutting out each stony guest--
 When I looked again, the feast
 And the tent had vanished. (102)

This is an alternative approach to that of the Arabian Nights which repeatedly stresses the infusion of the supernatural into life. In the Arabian Nights, characters do not have to "dream" marvelous events; they accept that they occur, and on a regular basis. For example, in "The First Lady," the narrator explains to Haroun Alraschid, "O Prince of the Faithful, my story is wonderful..." (77). She means this in the most conventional way: her story is filled with "wonder," both of the events she witnesses and in the "wonder" of life which allows for the miraculous to occur. In her tale, she expresses only slight incredulity regarding the stone statues she sees:

We were amazed at the sight, and as we walked through the market-streets, finding the merchandise and the gold and silver remaining in their original state, we rejoiced, and said, This must have been occasioned by some wonderful circumstance. (79)

Similarly, in "The City of Brass," the characters express no skepticism regarding the existence of genii sealed in brass bottles or the effret, described as:

a person sunk to his arm-pits, ... [who] had two huge wings, and four arms; two of them like those of the sons of Adam, and two like the fore-legs of lions, with claws. He had hair upon his head like the tails of horses, and two eyes like two burning coals, and he had a third eye, in his forehead, like the eye of the lynx, from which there appeared sparks of fire. (631)

In framing the narrator's experience as if it were a dream, Rossetti is depicting a literary concern which she shared with her PreRaphaelite friends. Carole Silver has recently examined the interest which the PreRaphaelites had in dreams, and while she is primarily interested in Dante Gabriel Rossetti, William Morris, and Algernon Swinburne, her remarks apply to Christina as well. Silver maintains that the Victorians were interested in "reverie, nightmare, visionary and premonitory experiences." Inspired by Keats and Blake, poets used dreams to "communicate with other worlds" (7). Even in a preFreudian world, the Victorians knew that dreams were a means of exploring truths about the human mind, that dreams could intensify human experience. As early as 1842, the Britannica "anticipated" Freudian ideas by demonstrating that dreams transformed "time, space and image" and that dreams dealt with "character and emotion masked by waking life" (10).

The PreRaphaelites were particularly drawn to the depiction of dream experience. According to Silver, the first edition of The Germ (1850) contained numerous selections dealing with dreams, and Dante Gabriel Rossetti was personally inspired by writers who had used dreams, especially Dante and his circle. It is not far reaching to assume, therefore, that Christina would have shared his interests, especially since she shared his upbringing and education in the classics. Later in this chapter, we shall

see how William Morris also uses a dream experience in his transformation of the Arabian Nights source.

In molding her source materials into a dream experience, Christina Rossetti presents a spiritual vision which the narrator has undergone. She depicts the experience in surrealistic terms appropriate to that experience. She heightens the focus by making the narrator's vision a journey into darkness, broken by illumination. On one level the illumination is the petrified city, but on the spiritual level, the illumination is a parable, which announces that stored material wealth will not defeat death or adequately prepare the soul for salvation. In this dream experience, Rossetti animates natural forces so that they "speak" and enlighten the narrator about her vision. The inanimate objects, including the highly detailed fruits and flowers, eloquently testify about a petrified race, rich in "luxury and pride," who have been unable to resist death.

At the conclusion of the poem, the narrator admits to being "awed and alone," suggesting both a reverential feeling associated with a visionary experience, as well as fear. The narrator is "afraid" despite the fact that "the dreariness was gone." She fears that the vision could become real in another way, to include anyone who has failed to heed the warnings. By presenting a dream, the narrator comes to a revelation of spiritual feeling. Harkening the warnings of the Arabian Nights, the narrator has been admonished.

In using dream experience and in Christianizing her sources, Christina Rossetti transformed the original stories from the Arabian Nights so that they conformed to her own interests and religious beliefs. By using "ellipses," she reduced two elaborate stories into a simple narrative poem, which anticipated some of the stylistic characteristics of her own mature verse. Absent from her poem is the Islamic background of the original, as well as its "wonderful" blend of the supernatural and real.

Intertextuality. Just as intertextual borrowing enriches a new text, the use of the same material by later authors paradoxically enlarges the meaning of the pretextual material. According to Laurent Jenny, the intertextual process works against textual "inertia"; it is a deliberate strategy for "scrambling the message" of previous texts (61). Thus, it reactivates and invigorates literary truth by preventing it from becoming stagnant or a mere cliché. As he notes, "Works of literature are never mere 'memories', they rewrite what they remember, they 'influence their precursors' as Borges would put it" (37). Thus, in this brief section, I would like to shift the focus to show how the meaning of the Arabian Nights has been shaped by the process which Rossetti used. I shall now "read" the Lane text through the text of Rossetti's poem. I shall show how Rossetti's use of source

material gives a different understanding to Scheherazade's survival strategies.

We recall that Scheherazade uses three survival strategies to postpone her death, and that each of these strategies results in narrative and thematic consequences. The three basic themes of the Arabian Nights are the power of storytelling, the perpetual narrative, and the gratification of desire by the supernatural. In using "The Dead City" as a lens, each of these takes on a different meaning. Originally we saw that stories are empowering against tyrants, that they can be used for ransom. Now we see that they can also be used against spiritual death as well; stories can be used to offer examples of bad behavior or erroneous attitudes so that the "self" does not die. Instead of a real-life tyrant like Shahriyar, stories can ransom the soul from other tyrants such as infidelity or greed, just to cite the two which Rossetti knew from her source material. Stories can be used to ransom the soul from spiritual famine.

Similarly, Rossetti's poem adopts the second major theme of the Nights, the perpetual narrative, which is usually achieved through the devices of interruption, embedding, and elaborate detail. Rejecting the first two of these, Rossetti retains the use of elaborate detail and adds another "perpetuating" structure, the imagery of stone bodies. Lifelike in appearance, they will tell their stories

forever, to whomever passes. The statues' stories cannot be depleted for they exist in the perpetual, in the infinite. Their story-telling is ongoing.

Finally, Rossetti changes the meaning of the "gratification of desire by the supernatural," the third theme. Originally it referred to the satisfaction of carnal or material desire in the satisfaction of a lover or wealth. Now, the satisfaction of desire, here for spiritual life, is obtained in the truth the stories reveal, truth which is, by its nature, inexhaustible. So just as supernatural intervention satisfies desire in most of the tales, it does so here. Allah, or God if you will, satisfies all, once and forever.

By looking back to the source text by way of Christina Rossetti's interpretive poem, we see new meanings emerging from it. Rossetti enhances the significance of the Arabian Nights in a paradoxical way. In her poem she reduces many of the elaborate structures which she borrowed, yet, in so doing, she augments the original; she extends it. By adding her own "story" to that of the Thousand and One Nights, she contributes new meaning to the perpetual narrative and the gratification of desire by the supernatural.

William Morris and "The Man Who Never Laughed Again"

History. "The Man Who Never Laughed Again" is the second selection for the month of October in William Morris's The Earthly Paradise, which was published between 1867-1870 in four volumes. Although it appears in the third volume of the collection, there is evidence to suggest that it was written before some of the material in volumes one and two (Marshall 60). The Earthly Paradise is a doubly framed series of tales told by "the idle singer of an empty day." In the first frame, the singer introduces the Wanderers, medieval men who abandoned their European homes to discover paradise and immortality, as well as to flee the plague and other corrupting effects of civilization. After years of searching, they give up their quest when they realize its futility. Since they have been unable to discover an earthly paradise, they each tell several tales about the "paradise within," stories which speak of past glories and past heroic achievement. In a pattern loosely based on the Canterbury Tales, the individual tales are told by different speakers (Calhoun 71). For each month of the year, a medieval tale follows a classical one. Of the twenty-four tales, twenty deal with erotic love "achieved or failed, triumphant over or destroyed by fate, saving men from destruction or condemning them to death" (Silver EP 31). In

these tales, the Wanderers celebrate the immortality of the dead after recognizing that it is the only immortality they will ever reach (Silver EP 29). However, at the conclusion of the poem, the idle singer himself admits the futility of all human attempts to find any paradise, even that of love. He announces that all searches end as failures since Edens of any sort are not possible (Silver EP 42). Thus, as a result of its ending, critics see the poem as pessimistic (Silver 42; Strode 71).

The Source Text. In contrast to Christina Rossetti's poem, there is no doubt regarding the source for "The Man Who Never Laughed Again." As we have seen in the introduction, May Morris readily identifies it as Edward Lane's translation of the Arabian Nights, which marks it as unusual for The Earthly Paradise since the majority of other tales are based on ancient Greek, Roman and European sources.⁸ Interestingly enough, this story is certainly one of the more obscure in the Nights. For one thing, it is actually included in a rather lengthy footnote and is not part of the

⁸Both Margaret Annan and Ralph Bellas point out that May Morris attributes some of the details in another of the poems in The Earthly Paradise, "The Land East of the Sun and West of the Moon," to another Arabian Nights tale (274; 257). However, even Annan admits that the details which Morris borrows, the capturing of a bird maiden, are seen in many fairy tales. My own reading of this Morris poem shows the correspondences to the Arabian Nights to be minor. In contrast, "The Man Who Never Laughed Again" is clearly based on "The Fifth Wezeer's Tale."

regular cycle of stories. Lane preferred to include the major stories as part of the main text, while reserving the shorter stories and anecdotes for his notes in which he summarizes rather than narrating stories in their entirety. However, the selection which Morris used is one of the fuller stories in this cycle and it comprises almost three single-spaced, double-columned pages of small type.

"The Fifth Wezeer's Tale" is part of a cycle of ransom stories, which we have seen to be a commonplace in the Nights. In this cycle, a wealthy king is told a prophesy regarding his son: if the boy should speak during the week, he will die. To avoid this fate, the king sends his son to the harem to be diverted by the women. There, however, one of the king's concubines falls in love with the young man although he does not love her. In anger over her rejection, she convinces the king that his son really intends sexual betrayal. When the king threatens his son with execution, the Wezeers use the power of storytelling to distract the king whom they feel will eventually relent in his anger. Meanwhile, the young woman decides to challenge the Wezeers with her own tales. Presumably, then, all the storytellers have a purpose: the Wezeers tell tales involving the wickedness of women as they attempt to show the king that his son is blameless, while the young woman relates tales about "the perfidy of men." In this duel of storytelling,

men are pitted against women since each is desirous of showing the duplicity of the other.

The Fifth Wezeer's tale concerns a young dissipated man who is finally penniless. He is approached by a sheykh who offers him a job: if the young man will act as servant to ten other sheykhs, he will be given food and shelter and paid a good wage. There is one condition, however: he cannot tell of anything he sees while he is serving the men. The young man agrees, and returns with the first sheykh to a great mansion, decorated in gold and silk. Despite the wealth, however, all the inhabitants there are wailing and weeping. Wanting to hear the reasons for their sadness, the young man remembers his pledge and keeps silent. After serving the men for a "period of years" during which all but one dies, the young man asks him what has caused their great unhappiness. The sheykh tells him that the secret of their unhappiness lies behind a locked door, but that if he opens it, he will come to repent his action. Thus, the sheykh advises the young man to remain ignorant. After initially resisting the locked door, the young man can no longer control his curiosity and he opens the door, discovering a hidden passage. Following it, he emerges at the side of a riverbank, where he is carried aloft by a giant eagle which strands him on an island. He is rescued by a passing ship filled with beautiful damsels who greet him with royal robes. He travels with the women across the sea until they

reach land where he is approached by a King and his great army. However, soon the "King" reveals "himself" to be a woman. She asks the young man to marry her, to which he agrees. He is told that he has the command of the kingdom and its wealth, but again there is an injunction: he may not open a locked door in the palace for "if thou open it, thou wilt repent, when repentance will not avail thee" (1220). After living in harmony and great love with his wife for seven years, the man thinks about the locked door. Believing that the room beyond it contains unlimited riches, he opens the forbidden door. Immediately he is transported by the great bird back to the riverbank where he discovers that he cannot return to his wife. Finally, meditating on all he had lost, he returns to the home of the original sheykhs, having realized that his experience paralleled theirs. They too had opened the locked doors and lost their beloveds. The young man is eventually buried at the side of the other sheykhs.

The Presences in "The Man Who Never Laughed Again." In his retelling of this tale, Morris faithfully adapts the structure and main narrative, although he alters the emphasis. As we have seen in the discussion of Rossetti, the most fruitful discussion of this sort of intertextual transformation is via the presences and the absences, comparing the focused text with the original on which it is

based.⁹ Whereas Christina Rossetti approaches her source material through "ellipses," Morris does the opposite. He reinforces the meaning of the pretext by suggesting other applications or possibilities. Just as Scheherazade adds

⁹Three earlier dissertations discuss Morris's use of source material for The Earthly Paradise. Oscar Maurer (Yale 1935) essentially repeats May Morris's observations that Morris made the tale more "English," that he omits the original "Oriental flavour" by substituting details which connote England. For example, Maurer reads the river mentioned in the poem as a recreation of the Thames and its countryside (142). Likewise, he notes that Morris introduces a nightingale into his garden (141). Maurer accepts versions of the tale which were never published, those that May Morris includes in her introductory discussion. As I shall show, Morris is quite faithful to the original text. His alterations are important, but to regard his version as merely an Anglicized retelling misses many significant aspects.

Margaret Annan (Northwestern 1945) also accepts that the detail is less Oriental than the original. She emphasizes that the poem is more meditative than Lane's version in which events are fast-paced. Annan feels that Morris's poem considers the "act of deciding" that Bharam undergoes as he debates whether or not to open the forbidden doors. She characterizes the treatment as "slow, descriptive and analytical." While she mentions that the poem is more psychological and moral than the original, she analyzes the characters very differently than I do. She identifies Bharam as a "generic type rather than a single adventurer" (272) whereas I see him as a psychological "self" who meets other aspects of himself in the characters of Firuz and the sheiks. I do agree, however, with her conclusion that the "mystical treatment" by Morris makes the poem far more unworldly than its source.

Ralph A. Bellas (U of Kansas 1960) discusses how Morris "broadens the scope" of his version, particularly in his treatment of romantic love. While he sees that Morris has included a different social dimension than the original, Bellas minimizes that aspect since he concentrates on Bharam's character. As he states, "In fact, the handling of the love element constitutes the chief change Morris makes in his source. It is the key to the interpretation of Bharam's character and a mainspring to the action, particularly the psychological action, in the central episode of the tale--Bharam's life with the queen in paradise" (277).

"more" through her survival strategies, Morris imitates her. He substitutes his own version of the original tale, interpreting it to suit his impulses toward socialism, as well as his PreRaphaelite interest in dreaming. Thus, his manipulation of the borrowed material directly corresponds to his own interests as a writer; his additions to the text are not determined by generic requirements alone. Hence, his contribution to the intertextual process is significant.

In amplifying source material, Morris was giving expression to his belief that creativity can never be original. Blue Calhoun argues that Morris's practice of using preexisting source material was a deliberate refutation of Romantic theories of composition, particularly their stress on individual achievement and imagination (64). According to Calhoun, Morris maintains that true originality is impossible; he:

deliberately returns to subjects and 'forms used hundreds of years ago' (CW 22:7). He speaks of conventional forms as 'windows to look upon the life of the past' (CW 22:7) and in his idle moments he not only recalls his 'own experience' but enjoys 'communing with the thoughts of other men, dead or alive' (CW 22:7).

So, in amplifying the original, Morris was quite consistent with his general attitude toward creativity.

Superficially, "The Man Who Never Laughed Again" is quite like its original source. In fact, Morris even took his title from the original. In Lane's version, the Fifth Wezeer introduces his tale by saying it is about "the man

who never laughed for the rest of his life" (1217). If we look at the amplification closely, however, we see that Morris was concerned with much more than the loss of a beloved by a young man. Particularly in the first half of his poem, Morris is concerned with the effects of wealth on a person's life, and a person's corresponding relationship to the society to which he belongs. Morris's additions all underscore the pain of privilege, the agony of being dissatisfied amidst material wealth. Like Christina Rossetti, Morris is concerned with spiritual and psychological famine in the middle of comfort.

We recall that the young man fails twice at resisting the temptation to unlock a forbidden door. In the first case, he wants to understand the cause of the sheiks' great unhappiness, whereas in the second he anticipates greater wealth. While it is true that the cause of the sheiks' unhappiness is ultimately revealed as their inability to retain their beloveds, Morris attributes the unrest that the young man feels during the first part of the narrative to other causes as well, causes that are a result of class and status. To develop this theme, Morris amplifies the imagery of the pretext and adds poetry suggesting internal monologue on the part of the protagonist, thus achieving a psychological depth not in the original.

To emphasize his concern with the social aspects of possessing wealth, Morris opens his poem with a scene in

which he contrasts the simple folk who gave up their cares to engage in mirth, and "the rich man [who] forgot his fears awhile." Later, Morris reinforces the images of wealth and poverty. For example, when the sheiks invite the young man, whom Morris names Bharam, to serve them in their mansion, he is startled to see their misery and despair in a palace fit for a "king new wed," sculpted with marble walls, so grand as to "mock eternity." In contrast to the feelings of its inhabitants, the palace is refreshing to Bharam who has recently had to contend with his own poverty:

And still despite his fellow's woeful face,
 And that sad cry that smote him yesternight,
 The strange luxurious perfume of that place,
 Where everything seemed wrought for mere delight,
 Still made his heart beat, and his eyes wax
 bright,
 With delicate desires new-born again,
 In that sweet rest from poverty and pain. (167)

By fracturing the traditional fairy tale image of castles and happiness, Morris emphasizes the palace's wealth as a contrast to the inhabitants and their pain. His intent is to make a social commentary, to specifically underline how wealth in and of itself is unsatisfying. We see this in the dialogue between Bharam and Firuz, the sheik who hired him, before he dies. Firuz continually reminds Bharam that, in exchange for his services, he will have wealth:

But thou, O friend, I pray thee from this day
 Help thou us helpless men, who cannot pray
 Even to die; no long time will it be
 Ere we shall leave this countless wealth to thee.

A few lines later he tells Bharam:

Lo, now thy task, O fellow! In return
A mighty kingdom's wealth thou soon shalt earn.

Hearing this,

Now as he spoke, a hard forgetfulness
Of his own lot, the rich man's cruel pride,
Smote Bharam's heart...(169)

Ironically enough, even though Firuz originally offered Bharam the wealth as an incentive to stay and work for them, when he is about to die, Firuz tells Bharam to leave the palace rather than stay there, and to return later with a mule caravan to claim the wealth, "wealth we held in vain." Bharam heeds his advice, and leaves, a move which reanimates him after the ordeal of having worked for the sheiks. When he travels away, however, he thinks back to the wealth in store for him:

And not so much of that sad house he thought
As of the wealthy life he thence had brought;

So amidst thoughts of pleasant life and
ease...(177)

At first he is satisfied being away, but soon he becomes listless and realizes that he does not fit into society at all:

Yet when this mood was passed by, what was
this,
That in the draught he was about to drain,
That new victorious life, all seemed amiss?
(179)

In the stanzas that follow, we see that Bharam cannot be moved by love, that he finds working for glory is empty, and that for him, knowledge is unsatisfying. Having no

purpose and no center to his life, he grows weary of the thought of "A life of aimless ease and luxury." Yet,

So to the foolish image of delight
That rich men worship, now he needs must cling
Despite himself, and pass by day and night
As friendless and unloved as any king;
Till he began to doubt of everything
Amidst that world of lies; til he began
To think of pain as the very friend of man.
(179)

For two years he continues to live the life of wealth despite its strangulation on his soul. Finally, unable to endure his torment any longer, he resolves to return to the palace and open the forbidden door.

If we consider Morris's treatment of wealth with that of his source, the Arabian Nights, we see how radically different his approach is. First, the achievement of great wealth is a characteristic theme in the Nights. One needs only think of such tales as "Ali Baba" or "Aladdin" to recall that a standard story in the collection depicts the rise of a relatively obscure person into the ranks of the rich. Having wealth is always regarded as a mark of Allah's favor, and while there are attendant responsibilities for a rich man such as giving alms, he is a model which many try to emulate. Lane's version also mentions the wealth of the sheykhs' mansion, but there is no suggestion that it is a cause of discomfort to them. For example, Lane describes the ceilings as being of "gold" and "ultramarine," while the carpets are of silk. The sheykh even shows the young man a chest containing "thirty thousand pieces of gold." Later,

when he meets the woman who will become his wife, he is struck by the "vast affluence and great prosperity" of her kingdom. Nowhere is there any suggestion that the young man questions his good fortune. In fact, his motivation for opening the second forbidden door is to acquire the additional wealth he feels to be hidden there. Furthermore, we have seen that one of the principal themes in the Arabian Nights is the gratification of the desire for material comfort. Since the supernatural structures of the Nights ensure that characters have their wishes fulfilled, it would be inconsistent for the tales to challenge the desirability of great wealth in the manner Morris does. Thus, while Morris greatly augments the opulent imagery, he undercuts its desirability by showing how it is a source of discomfort rather than of pleasure. He inverts its original value.

Just as Morris amplifies the social dimension of the pretext in providing additional reasons for the young man's unease, he augments the dream imagery in his source material. In Lane's version, the young man questions if his experiences are dreams ("I wavered in opinion as to whether I were asleep or awake" [1219]), but in the context of the narrative his "dreaming" merely emphasizes the unreality of his experiences, especially the great wealth and honor he achieves, whereas in Morris's poem, the 'dreaming' seems to suggest a transition from daylight reality to the reality of sleep in which persons question their experiences through

unconscious images. Furthermore, the enclosure imagery that Morris uses to describe this section of his poem suggests that the journeys which Bharam undertakes are journeys within himself, rather than journeys to specific places. He literally keeps moving "inside" of things. The recurring association of dreams with Bharam's adventures suggests that he is moving into a psychological space, not a literal one.

For example, even in the opening stanzas, Morris frames the scene in which we first meet Bharam. We observe Bharam through the doorway as he stands against the wall in a room. Superficially this scene is appropriate to its Arabic origins. In many illustrations, including those to Lane's translation, individual scenes are bordered by elaborate Arabic scroll. What Morris does here poetically is what the illustrators did with their engraving pencils. Psychologically, however, the framing focuses our attention on Bharam, and spatially on the inside of things, the recesses behind the walls that are not seen from the street. Even Firuz's metaphoric association of "day" as "a flowery gate/ Through which we passed to joy" (162) emphasizes transition, the movement through. Similarly, as Bharam and Firuz journey to the palace they increasingly travel "into" darkened areas. At first they travel through a "forest close and blind" (163); next they venture into gardens "Within white walls" (165); and finally into the palace itself where they enter a hall within the palace (166). As they journey,

there are time shifts: night giving way to dawn and its new illuminations. Furthermore, Bharam remarks on his sense that what is happening is not real, but part of a dream. For example, he describes the burial of the dead sheik:

And through a narrow path they took their way,
 Less like to men than shadows in a dream,
 Till the wood ended at a swift broad stream.
 (170)

While Calhoun cites evidence to show that Morris "abominated" introspective poetry (3), it certainly appears as if his imagery and journey metaphors reveal an attempt to explore hidden feelings and concerns, an attempt to enter the reality of the unconscious. This is shown most effectively in the scene in which Bharam crosses the stream so he can reach the forbidden door, "as in an old unfinished dream" (183). Later, when he journeys with the women who bring him to the maiden, he travels on the ship "As one who dreams" (186). Even when he receives the love of the fair woman, he is unsure of its reality; "Thereat the silver trumpet's tuneful blare/ Made music strange unto his lovesome dream" (192). At the conclusion, after Bharam has failed at the test of love and opened the forbidden door, his world has become shadowy, and he moves as though he were sleepwalking:

Yet still he staggered onwards to the door
 With arms outspread, as one who in dark night
 Wanders through places he had known before...
 (201)

Aching for the world he had lost, he cries aloud, "Come back, come back to me!" and shuts his eyes, "lest he perchance might be/ Caught by some fearful dream within a dream,/ That he might wake up to his gold bed's gleam" (202). Finally, unlike the original in which the young man dies and is buried next to the other sheykhs, Bharam is forced to wander the earth like a zombie. Dead in spirit, he cannot die, and children point to him as "THE MAN WHO NE'ER SHALL LAUGH AGAIN."

From these examples, it is clear that the experience which Bharam undergoes has the quality of being unrealistic or unconscious. The constant journeying into darkened regions, the movement across water, the opening of hidden doors, and the like, suggest that the journey is actually one into his own soul. The mirroring also suggests this. At first Bharam is led by Firuz, a man who looks externally like Bharam, and then at the conclusion, he is "transformed" into the image of the other sheiks. In many ways, they are fractured images of himself and the "self" he will become. They are unconscious phantoms of aspects of his personality.

Although Bharam's experiences are "dreamlike," they are not escapist; rather, they express deep feelings and emotions. As we have seen in the discussion of Christina Rossetti, the PreRaphaelites shared an interest in dreams and reverie experiences. According to Silver, this was particularly true of Morris. He believed that since dreams

lacked voluntary control, they were a means of exploring desires and feelings which the conscious mind rejected. She points out that seven out of the eight stories which Morris contributed to The Oxford and Cambridge Magazine (1856) contained dreams "as their framework or as vital components of their plots" ("Dreamers" 26). As we have seen earlier, writers of the period expressed their understanding of the dynamics of dream experiences, experiences that Freud would codify later in the century. For example, Morris anticipates Freud's notion of "irradiation" or "diffusion" by which a person sees himself as a double or multiple figure in dreams. I would argue that Bharam/Firuz serves this function in Morris's poem. Each character represents aspects of one composite personality, one man who is actually summoned to his eventual despair by himself in another guise.

Silver characterizes Morris's use of dream experience in his work (although she surprisingly omits any discussion of The Earthly Paradise) as that of "hyperclarity." Instead of making dream sequences vague and blurred, Morris tends to intensify the color and detail. As she writes, "Morris' dream landscapes (both those identified as parts of dreams and those presented as 'natural' in tales that are dreamlike) are described in superlatives, vividly depicted, and carefully particularized." She concludes that for Morris, the dream realm "does not provide an escape from reality as [Dante Gabriel] Rossetti's does, but serves

instead as a place of transformation in which the dreamer is prepared to encounter problems with a new perspective" ("Dreamers" 29).

In his amplification of the dream experience present in the source tale, Morris changes the focus. Just as he had earlier introduced a socialist perspective in his implied criticism of wealth, he here injects his own PreRaphaelite interest in dream experience as a metaphor for the unconscious. He takes the original material and expands it to highlight his own preoccupations.

The Absences in "The Man Who Never Laughed Again." Just as in the case of Christina Rossetti, William Morris omits some of the material which appears in his Arabian Nights source. Rossetti combined the Islamic background with her own Christian parable. In "The Man Who Never Laughed Again," Morris omits two aspects of "The Fifth Wezeer's Tale" which deal with sexuality, specifically appropriate feminine behavior, and secondly, "the war between the sexes." In the first instance, Morris omits the androgyny of the woman in Lane's version, who appears first as a man, only later revealing herself to be a woman. Morris casts his heroine quite differently. He paints her as a beautiful and alluring figuré whom the narrator cannot retain owing to his own inadequacies. In the second instance, Morris entirely omits the frame narrative in Lane's version which establishes that

"The Fifth Wezeer's Tale" is being told to show the duplicity of women. The frame determines that readers are meant to see the woman who entices the young man as evil; she is a seductress. Presumably the young man is victim, just as is the King's son, whom the Wezeers want to ransom. In addition, this frame also establishes one of the principal themes in the Nights, that of the power of storytelling, its ability to ransom lives.

The two "absences" in Morris's poem are related. Since Morris alters the characterization of the Queen, he can then easily change the reasons for the young man's failings. Morris's woman is patterned after the heroine in a chivalric romance, in stark contrast to the source tale in which she is quite powerful and "manly." In Lane's version of "The Fifth Wezeer's Tale," when the young man finally reaches land after his ship voyage, he is greeted by a King on his "courser" leading his troops. After an exchange of salutations, the young man accompanies the King to the palace. They walk together, "the young man's hand being in the hand of the King." After seating the young man on a throne of gold, the "King" reveals that "he" is a woman: "And when the King removed the litham from his face, lo, this supposed King was a damsel, like the shining sun in the clear sky" (1219). The text continues:

Then the damsel said to him, Know, O King, that I am Queen of this land, and all these troops that thou hast seen, including every one, whether of cavalry or infantry, are women: there are not

among them any men. The men among us, in this land, till and sow and reap, employing themselves in the cultivation of the land, and the building and repairing of the towns, and in attending to the affairs of the people by the pursuit of every art and trade; but as to the women, they are the governors and magistrates and soldiers. (1219-20)

Furthermore, the chief wezeer and the cadî (law officer) are also women, women "with their hair spreading over their shoulders, and of venerable and dignified appearance." Most significantly, the Queen is powerful in her own right, although she shares her power with her husband. After he opens the forbidden door and is taken back to the place of the sheykhs, he recalls past glories, how he had ridden before the troops commanding them.

Lane's portrayal of the women as female warriors is consistent with other tales in the Nights, particularly the story involving Hasan and the Bird Maiden in which a woman rules over the "amazons" and genii. Similarly, his depiction of the queen as a "transvestite" has parallels, notably the story of Camalrazaman in which Budoor successfully lives as a sultan for many years. Lane's version of "The Fifth Wezeer's Tale" makes no attempt to distort the women's power or to disguise the fact that the land over which they rule is an inversion to most kingdoms. In this land, women have power and the men are caretakers. As we have seen in the introduction, the openness of sexuality in the Nights is quite characteristic. Not only do the tales suggest forms of sexual expression that many Westerners would dispute, but

they endorse androgyny, the blurring of the distinctions between what is traditionally seen in the West as the polarized realms of masculinity and femininity.

William Morris, however, changes all this. His Queen retains no vestiges of her manliness at all. She becomes a visionary object of Bharam's affection as they travel by ship. She sits in stately grandeur, and as he contemplates her beauty, he imagines a "Song" of love, love that beckons him to "thirst of love thy lips too long have borne,/ Hunger of love thy heart hath long outworn" (188). In a tribute to her loveliness Bharam later remarks:

How can I give her image unto you,
Clad in that raiment wonderful and fair?
What need? Be sure that love's eye pierceth
through/
What web soever hides the beauty there--
To tell her fairness? Measure forth the air,
And weigh the wind, and portion out the sun!
This still is left, less easy to be done. (190)

Thus, just as Morris transforms the "King" astride "his" horse to a "queen" seated on "cushions," he transforms the image of warrior. In Lane's version, the women act as soldiers, whereas Morris includes a passage in which Bharam becomes a victorious hero in a war while his wife wails in grief until his return (193). Morris appears to accept the conventionalities here; women wait at home for their conquering heroes. Furthermore, Morris invents a reason why the Queen must leave her husband. She tells him "I, at the command/ Of one whose will I dare not disobey,/ Must leave thee..." (194). In Lane's version, the woman is "King,"

having absolute power. In Morris's version, she is subservient to an unknown force.

Since Morris has established the desirability of his Queen in a conventional Western pattern, he omits the frame narrative to the original which suggests a meaning quite different from his. By doing so, Morris lays the blame for the loss of the beloved on the young man. As we recall, Lane concludes "The Fifth Wezeer's Tale" with opening of the second forbidden door and the young man's realization that he has forfeited all he loves, including his wife. Quite quickly Lane describes the death of the young man after an unspecified time in which he experiences "grief" and "anxiety," and during which he relinquishes "food" and "drink" and "pleasant scents."¹⁰

By comparison, Morris's conclusion is quite elaborate. First, despite the fact that Bharam is ruling the kingdom while his wife is away, administering "good justice," he begins to suspect that she will eventually love someone else. He broods over her:

Perchance some other heart those eyes shall bless,
Some other head upon that bosom lie, (196)

¹⁰The Arabian Nights frequently describes perfume scents. For example, it was commonplace to place a bowl of rosewater on the table during dinner. Likewise, heavily perfumed oils were used during the baths. These details reinforce the sensuality connected with the tales. That the young man gave up "pleasant scents" suggests the severity of his despair.

ultimately "baneful jealousy" overrules his reason and he restlessly wanders near the forbidden door each night. One morning he can no longer resist his own imaginings, and he opens the door to discover the bridal chamber. Now, however, there is an important change. Although the room looks as if his wife had recently left, Bharam spies a "cup the work of cunning men/ For many a long year vanished from the land,/" (199). In addition, he notices a "tablet" with strange writing on it. Thinking that they will reveal the secret of the chamber, he decides to drink the cup and read the tablet. Written on it are several verses which finally tell him that "thine old life is done." As he drinks from the cup his entire life becomes shadowy, "E'en in that minute." Then "a dark veil fell/ O'er all things there."

He falls across the door and has a restless and disturbing dream. He is magically transported back to the riverbank from which he had at first begun his journey. His predominant feeling at this time is one of "shame," the sense that he has defiled his great love. At the home of the sheiks, he realizes that he is condemned to wander the earth, that he cannot die. Returning to the opening images of the blazing sun, Morris describes how Bharam reaches the city gates. Yet Bharam can never return to the life there; he wanders through the people as a phantom spirit. In his alteration of the conclusion, then, Morris assigns the blame to Bharam for having failed at the task of love.

Unable to resist the locked door, he condemns himself to a life of misery.

Several critics have discussed this pattern of failure by the hero. Oberg points out that three other tales in The Earthly Paradise repeat this theme (57). She also argues that Morris differs from Keats who examined the same situations in several of his poems, emphasizing the culpability of the women who entice men to despair. She says that Bharam is not the "victim of a cruel fay," but rather of his own failings (57).¹¹

Since Morris changes the source material to reflect poorly on the hero's inability to sustain his beloved, many critics have assumed this poem, as well as others in The Earthly Paradise, to be autobiographical. They have connected the theme with William's loss of his wife, Jane, to Dante Gabriel Rossetti. Starting with J.W. Mackail, Morris's major biographer, most critics have suggested that Morris saw himself as unable to sustain the love of a beautiful woman. For example, Marshall mentions that Rossetti was particularly brutal to Morris during the time when he was composing The Earthly Paradise. Rossetti drew a

¹¹Marshall argues directly against her position. He calls the woman one of the most "malignant and murderous" of those in The Earthly Paradise (133). I find no justification for his conclusion. As I see it, the Queen gives Bharam ample warnings regarding his fate should he open the door and there is no evidence whatsoever to suggest that she is unfaithful to her husband. It is Bharam's own jealousy which compels him to enter the forbidden.

series of sketches depicting Jane Morris as falling asleep while reading sections of her husband's work (104). For reasons like these, Marshall believes that Morris ultimately felt Jane had feigned ever loving him, that he felt she wanted to ridicule him. Therefore, in response to his own despair, he rewrote sections of The Earthly Paradise.

Oberg is more dramatic: "Now that time has made discretion unnecessary, we may state boldly that the month poems express Morris's feelings during the period of Jane Morris's affair, or emotional involvement with Rossetti. Although we cannot know for certain, it seems probable that the Morrises' estrangement was not so much caused by Rossetti as that the Rossetti affair resulted from the Morrises' estrangement..." (66). Hence, the disillusionment expressed in the failure of the quests in The Earthly Paradise is generally seen in relation to Morris's private griefs and despairs.

It is certainly true that Morris's poem lacks several features of his original source, and that these "absences" demonstrate his conventional expectations of feminine and masculine behavior. We shall see later, in the chapter on George Meredith, that not all Victorians accepted the limitations on the female spirit. Meredith, also using an Arabian Nights framework, would cast his heroine, Noorna, quite differently. Thus, I accept that the autobiographical readings of "Never Laughed" are correct. There appears to be

substantial evidence to demonstrate that Morris's personal life greatly influenced his creative undertakings. Unable to distance himself from his own feelings of inadequacy, he transferred these tensions in the Earthly Paradise. His own subjectivity as an individual influenced the manner in which he rewrote the pretextual material, especially his recasting of the "manly" queen in Lane's version into a portrait of his wife, Jane. Returning to the discussion of chapter one, I see William Morris as a prime example to disprove those theories of intertextuality which minimize the individual author's involvement in textual production. It is all too obvious that Morris shaped the source material in response to private, rather than strictly cultural, concerns. His own impulses as a budding socialist, PreRaphaelite dreamer, and despairing husband combined to influence the manner in which he wrote.

Intertextuality. Just as reading Christina's "The Dead City" changes our understanding of the principal themes in the Arabian Nights, a reading of "The Man Who Never Laughed" alters our understanding of the meaning inherent in two pretextual themes, those of the perpetual narrative and the gratification of desire by the supernatural. The first theme of the Arabian Nights, the power of storytelling, is

altogether missing from Morris's poem since he eliminated the frame narrative of which it is a part.

For Morris, the perpetual narrative is revealed, not through interruption or embedding, but through the accumulation of detail, the "more" in his poem. As a PreRaphaelite designer, Morris shared the belief in highly detailed art, art which revealed the particular rather than the abstract. "The Man Who Never Laughed" accomplishes in poetry the same end. It particularizes the opulence of wealth, as well as the despair of its hero in acquiring it. The poem appears to repudiate the third theme of the Arabian Nights, the gratification of desire, both for the material and for the sexual, because it suggests that wish-fulfillment does not guarantee happiness. In fact, wish-fulfillment almost may be said to cause great unhappiness instead. As a Victorian interested in the inequalities of class, Morris fashions his poem to emphasize the contrast between those who have wealth and those who do not. His poem calls for a reconsideration of the very aspects of the Nights which had so captivated Dickens: the supernatural gratification of desire.

In analyzing both Christina Rossetti's "The Dead City" and William Morris's "The Man Who Never Laughed Again," I have emphasized "displacement," the shift in focus from the source text to the new work. I have shown how both authors

refuted the materialism of the Nights, and how, following the interests of the PreRaphaelites, they recontextualized source material into dream experience. In addition, I have demonstrated how reading an old text through the lens of a new one alters our perception and understanding of the first.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE USE OF SUBTEXTS

Having done this, she spread her wings, and soared aloft towards heaven. She rose from the precincts of the saloon, and continued her upward flight through the sky until she drew near to the lowest heaven, when she heard the flapping of wings flying through the air. So she proceeded in the direction of their sound, and when she approached the being to whom they belonged, she found him to be an 'Efreet, named Dahnash, whereupon she pounced upon him like a hawk. When Dahnash, therefore, perceived her, and knew that she was Meymooneh, the daughter of the King of the Jinn, he feared her; the muscles of his side quivered...

"The Prince Kamar-ez-zeman and the Princess Budoor"
(321)

In the previous chapters, I examined two different types of intertextuality which represent the Victorian use of the Arabian Nights by Charles Dickens, Christina Rossetti, and William Morris. Dickens alluded to the Arabian Nights while Rossetti and Morris based narrative poems directly on Arabian Nights source material. Both approaches resulted in differing sorts of intertextuality since the degree to which the Arabian Nights was present and absent in their texts differed considerably.

In this chapter, I shall examine yet another approach, one in which an author borrows a narrative framework, or "subtext," from a previous work which is then incorporated into an entirely new context, forming only a fragment of the new text. As I shall demonstrate, the frequent references to the Arabian Nights by Charlotte Brontë are connected to one another, forming narrative threads between them. Thus, the nature of the intertextuality established between her works and the Arabian Nights is different from that of the previous Victorian works we have studied. However, while significantly different, the nature of the intertextuality is difficult to examine owing to the complex nature of the textual integration.

As Laurent Jenny notes, the absorption of one textual fragment into another is determined by "period, the intention, and the stringency of the requirements for structural integration" (45). Thus, an author must decide how faithfully he wishes to use the preexisting material, and his "solution" to the problem of integration may involve "total respect" for the material or its "quasi-disintegration in the space of the [focused] work" (46). In other words, the nature of the textual integration is a matter of choice. As a result, a subtext may be hidden in the language or structure of the focused text, obscured by other aspects of the text of which it is a part; hence, intertextuality of this sort is often difficult to

recognize. As Jenny explains, this difficulty occurs because borrowing a narrative framework does not demand strict parallelism with the original text:

In reality, the maintenance of strict linearity in the narrative is not at all obligatory. Chronology can disappear, and the narrative become lacunary, as long as a unity finally appears, a structure is produced, where the intertextual materials can find a place....The text is slowly built up of non-isotopic (non-homogeneous) representational links. (47)

Taken collectively, all of these "links" establish a recognizable unity although they may never strictly follow any of the original sources. Nonetheless, the fragments in the focused text constitute a "totality" in comparison to the originals despite the "remaining gaps" (48). As a result, critics are able to identify subtexts hidden inside works without needing to establish one-for-one correspondences between all the textual elements. Paradoxically, however, recognizing a subtext is still often a serendipitous undertaking since it demands not only a familiarity with the original text which the author is citing, but the recognition of narrative links between fragments that may be pages apart. Often the subtext is ignored until it is isolated and examined apart from the context in which it appears.

For example, while critics have long recognized William Faulkner's use of Biblical allusions, until recently they have failed to recognize how thoroughly he connects his allusions to one another, establishing a network between the

individual references. To cite the first of two instances: Nancy Blake demonstrates that William Faulkner's Absalom, Absalom! is actually a recapitulation of the Biblical story of Genesis; numerous parallels exist between the actions and language of Faulkner's Sutpen and the God of Genesis (128-129). Faulkner's references to the Bible constitute a "chain of signifiers" which he uses in his work; they are not mere isolated allusions. In addition, according to Blake, Faulkner's version, while paralleling the original, replaces the importance of "voice" and "naming" that are found in the original with new values. This suggests that the embedded fragments also undergo a transformational process, just as we have seen earlier: authors seldom retain the original significance of the borrowed material. Instead, they adapt it to suit their own needs, creating intertextual relationships that can take different forms.

Similarly, Francois Pitavy argues that the Bible is a subtext in Faulkner's The Wild Palms and that the intertextuality established between them is not a matter of mere "quotation or reminiscence," but much more (117). In this instance, the Bible functions not "as a text within the text," but "rather as a pattern--a chart--informing the circular, regressive structure of the novel" (118). Pitavy implies that while specific analogies exist between the two works, it is also possible to speak about how the Bible permeates the Faulkner text without being specifically

mentioned. For example, she isolates both "Babylon" and "Jerusalem" images which dominate the Faulkner text, establishing how Faulkner relies on the Biblical connotations of those landscapes. Here, the Biblical subtext is established, not through actual textual fragments of the original, but through a "taste, an odor" of the Bible which is evident in the modern text (118). Furthermore, Pitavy demonstrates that letters about the composition history of The Wild Palms reveal that Faulkner did not "base" his novel on the Bible in the sense that he consciously used the Bible as a model for writing; rather, he came to recognize that there was "some controlling principle" to his own work and that this principle related to Scripture, specifically its "legality." She concludes, "In other words...the Biblical analogy did not so much originate the novel as it confirmed an organizing principle already at work, then recognized and named" (125-126).

What these rather paradoxical statements imply is that a subtext can exist within another work and contribute to its meaning although the manner in which it exists cannot be easily established. A subtext may take many forms. However, it functions differently than an allusion in that a subtext involves a pattern of reference rather than an isolated instance of it. The subtext exists because narrative connections are established between the fragments. Furthermore, the manner in which the subtext "informs" the

focused text varies considerably from one example to the other.

In this chapter, I shall examine the manner in which two different subtexts taken from the Arabian Nights are used in the works of Charlotte Brontë. In part one, I shall examine the frequent references to the genii, the supernatural creatures, which occur in Brontë's juvenilia. In addition to shaping her own characters like the familiar models, she also recontextualized the originals in her newly created stories, just as Tom Stoppard borrowed Rosencrantz and Guildenstern from Hamlet in writing his modern play. She transplanted them into her own imaginative world. By examining these frequent imitations and recontextualizations together, we see that the references are not mere allusions; a subtextual pattern emerges when we connect the references to one another. By identifying the subtext, it becomes apparent that the structural foundation of the juvenilia parallels that of the Arabian Nights: the genii act as causative agents since their supernatural powers advance plots and resolve narrative problems. They function in Brontë's writings just as they do in the original, by governing and controlling the events.

To begin this examination of the genii, I shall briefly introduce Charlotte's imaginary kingdom of Angria to place the selections under discussion in a context. To best demonstrate how the genii figure positively in the early

juvenilia, I shall summarize two of the short stories which Charlotte wrote, "The Twelve Adventurers" and "The Search After Happiness," since they demonstrate this pattern most clearly. In addition, these two works also demonstrate how thoroughly Brontë relied on Arabian Nights structures. However, Brontë was forced to curtail the genii for several personal reasons and in her early poems she expresses a growing resistance against them. An examination of the differing views expressed in the subtext reveals that Brontë was ambivalent about imaginative power, and through her repeated references to "genius," she identifies the tension between positive uses and destructive tendencies. This subtext in the juvenilia establishes the first example of a general pattern in Brontë's work which her biographers have observed: her deliberate attempt at curtailing imagination.

Although Brontë eventually tried to reject the genii, as well as the supernaturalism of her early works, she could not entirely relinquish the familiar. To compose Jane Eyre, she relied on another subtext from the Arabian Nights. This time she borrowed the frame narrative and the character of Scheherazade. Using Scheherazade's persona under the guise of Jane Eyre, Brontë created an enormously powerful heroine who would defy and defeat her antagonists. In part two, I will examine the subtext of Scheherazade in Jane Eyre, and the manner in which Jane defeats her antagonists through narrative. My discussion will show that Jane Eyre is not

merely a romance. Instead, it is a study of narrative art, especially that of a woman's role as author in an age of confinement of the feminine voice. By associating her heroine with Scheherazade, Brontë empowers Jane with the ability to confront obstacles that foil her self-hood. Jane Eyre becomes the mythical storyteller who ransoms herself against the Sultan Rochester, and, in redeeming herself, she succeeds in redeeming all women.

The Juvenilia of Charlotte Brontë And Her Genii

The Juvenilia. The juvenilia comprise a vast saga of literature which depicts the establishment and history of a complicated imaginary kingdom named Angria.¹ The Brontë children wrote these imaginary pieces for one another, not

¹Several critics have summarized this world. In addition to Christine Alexander, see Fannie Ratchford and Winifred Gerin, whose works are regarded as standard.

Victor Neufeldt disagrees with Alexander's claim that the majority of the early poems deal with Angria (xxv). However, I distrust his conclusion. In his collection of Brontë's poetry, he removes poems that were originally part of prose works from their contexts, which often proves their Angrian connection. While he provides notes which indicate the poems' sources, his notes are misleading. For example, Neufeldt may note that a poem originally appeared in The Young Men's Magazine (a newspaper by Charlotte and Branwell), but not identify that it was "written" by one of Charlotte's imaginary heroes. Certainly the poem's meaning is altered by changing the intended narrative voice. In several instances, I had to rely on Alexander's discussion of elsewhere unpublished material to identify the speaker of a poem and/or the referents since Neufeldt fails to provide that important information.

Unless otherwise noted, all references to Alexander refer to The Early Writings of Charlotte Brontë.

for publication. Since the children looked to each other for companionship and intellectual stimulation, and felt awkward among strangers, these works compensated for their isolation and were extremely real for them (Gerin Genius 106). Seldom mentioned to outsiders, the manuscripts became known only after Charlotte's death when Mrs. Gaskell obtained them from Charlotte's husband. The writings are interrelated, frequently referring to incidents in other stories, and using a stock group of characters. Although the individual stories sometimes have traditional endings, the textual boundaries between the stories and poems are fluid: understanding the juvenilia demands a familiarity with the corpus as a whole.

According to Alexander, Charlotte Brontë's juvenilia was written in distinct phases, each being dominated by different literary influences. The genii figure prominently in the works of the first phase, which began on June 5, 1826. During this first phase of writing, Brontë, as well as her siblings,² was concerned with the establishment of "Glass Town," the imaginary kingdom in Africa which they created as the home for their characters. Alexander argues that it was Charlotte who introduced the idea of the genii

²After initially participating in the Angrian world, Anne and Emily created their own kingdom of Gondal. Therefore, most of my discussion pertains to Charlotte and Branwell although it is apparent that the other girls contributed some ideas to the original.

to her siblings (30).³ The genii are first mentioned in Charlotte's "The Twelve Adventurers" written in April of 1829;⁴ they do not figure in earlier manuscripts by Branwell (31). Immediately thereafter, however, the genii take over. Throughout the summer and fall of 1829, Brontë continued her infatuation with them. She mentions them frequently in her stories and poems.

Despite being a story of only fifteen pages, "The Twelve Adventurers," is divided into several chapters, demonstrating Brontë's attempt at modeling her own works after the forms which she knew. In chapter one, "The Country of the Genii," the narrator describes a remarkable sight, a huge skeleton in the desert which is bound by chains. The

³I have not been able to locate any biographical documentation of the Arabian Nights in Charlotte's possession. In answer to an inquiry to the Brontë Parsonage regarding this, Miss S. E. Johnson, the assistant librarian, noted that the book is not listed "in any of the libraries which the Brontë children are said to have access to, namely those of the Keighley Mechanics' Institute and Pondon Hall." She further speculates that the book might have been owned by the family and that it was sold in a sale in 1861; however, "in the catalogue most books were not listed by title." In the absence of proof, it is speculative to decide which edition the children read. What is apparent, however, is that Charlotte was familiar with several stories, as I shall demonstrate in my discussion.

⁴The dating is confusing. The published version edited by C. Shorter, entitled "The Twelve Adventurers" is dated April 2, 1829. However, Alexander indicates that the story was written on April 15, 1829 (29; 251); furthermore, she renames the story "A Romantic Tale," presumably because the story was one of "Two Romantic Tales." The original manuscript is lost (Alexander 251). In my citations, I refer to the Shorter version under the more familiar name.

"bones strove to rise, but a huge mountain of sand overwhelmed the skeleton" and it was buried beneath the sand, never to be seen again. The narrator concludes:

Now, if this account be true--and I see no reason why we should suppose it is not--I think we may fairly conclude that these skeletons are evil genii chained in these deserts by the fairy Maimoune. (4)

Here the narrator alludes to Maimoune, a fairy who figures prominently in the Arabian Nights tale of "Camalrazaman," and who possesses great power, surpassing that of many lesser genii (see headnote). However, the mention of a character from the Nights is not restricted to this single citation, for the genii reappear in later chapters of Brontë's first tale, taking different manifestations. Frequently when they offer assistance, the genii appear as elements of the weather, embodying both sand and sea storms. In an example of this embodiment, the "Genius of the Storm" (a title which he wears on his forehead) suddenly appears, bearing a trumpet in one hand, and fiery darts in another. Furthermore, the adventurers narrate the assistance that the genii have provided. The genii, working at great speed, have helped the men to build their magnificent city. At another point, the men are led by yet another genius who takes them to the middle of the desert where they discover a palace of diamonds. Enthroned in the midst of this palace sit the "Princes of the Genii," surrounded by gems of ruby, sapphire and emerald. There one

of the genii even announces a prophesy concerning one of the characters. In the concluding sections, other powers of the genii are again mentioned. Characters envision the genii as their protectors; the men feel that if they are in danger, the genii will assist them.

The same pattern of reference appears elsewhere in Brontë's fiction. For example, the next mention of the genii in the prose occurs in another supernatural story, "The Search After Happiness," written in August of 1829. In this tale, Brontë elaborates on the Arabian Nights motif. Not only does she use the genii, but she uses other images and narrative patterns from it, specifically the "tale within the tale," which we have seen to be one of Scheherazade's survival strategies. In this story, Henry O'Donell, a disillusioned man, abandons his home to search for happiness. Looking back on the land he is about to leave, he thinks lovingly of his friend, the king: "May he be preserved from all evil! May good attend him; and may the chief genii spread their broad shield of protection over him all the time of his sojourn in this wearisome world" (32). Picking up a travelling companion, O'Donell continues his journey, entering another Arabian Nights staple, the subterranean cavern. When the opening to the cave is mysteriously closed behind them, the companion remarks: "I suppose it is only some Genius playing tricks" (33).

In this story, as in the earlier example, Brontë employs a familiar pattern: she celebrates the enormous power of the genii over the universe which the human characters inhabit. For example, in chapter four of this story, the "Old Man's Tale,"⁵ the speaker recounts how he mysteriously found himself in the opulent palace of the genii. Composed of rare gems (ruby, topaz, sapphire), it is the home of "thousands and tens of thousands of fairies and genii" who sing a song in which they describe how "no mortals" have seen their "fairy land of light." The grandeur of their palace is so magnificent that if men were to see it, it would "fit them for the shroud." In the second stanza, the singers relate that men only know of the genii from their appearance as elements of the weather -- when they inhabit sea storms and walk on the clouds. Speaking through thunder, the genii announce:

The music of our songs,
 And our mighty trumpet's swell,
 And the sounding of our silver harps,
 No mortal tongue can tell.

Eventually the old man is returned to the starting point, the glen, and he is forced into servitude under the man who had taken him to the magic palace. He is released from bondage, by being literally lifted above ground by

⁵The opening of this narrative is borrowed from the Arabian Nights story of "Aladdin." In that tale, an idle, shiftless boy is befriended by the Evil Magician who offers to show him "marvelous things." A comparison of this story with Brontë's reveals many parallels.

"invisible hands," presumably those of the genii. In the next chapter, the old man mysteriously leaves his new companions. The last sight they have of him is in a chariot of light, borne through the skies. Finally, another genius appears who grants O'Donell's wish that he be allowed to return home. He does, in a "they lived happily after" closing scene.

Brontë also refers to the genii in several early independent poems. Like the prose we have examined, mention of the genii is coupled with imagery suggestive of opulence and power. Also, the human characters directly refer to the powers the genii used over them. However, there is a marked change: whereas the earlier examples from the stories essentially regarded the genii as benevolent, the poems signal what would ultimately be Brontë's rejection of their presence, and there is a different attitude towards their arbitrary power.

For example, in poem #7, "THE SONG of THE ANCIENT BRITON'S ON LEAVING GENILAND BY U T,"⁶ the speakers abandon their new homeland to return to England. In so doing, they

⁶Brontë's early poetry has numerous spelling and grammatical errors. I quote from the Neufeldt edition which leaves the errors intact.

Alexander generally interprets "U T" to mean "Us Two," that is, Branwell and Charlotte, suggesting a collaborative effort. However, she also feels it sometimes refers to imaginary characters in the Angrian saga, indicating that Charlotte alone wrote the poems, but used a double narrative voice (38). This appears to be the case with the poems I cite, for the content suggests that they are spoken by Angrians.

identify the reason for their departure: the genii are tyrants who rule over them, and that instead of living in geniland, they will seek "freedom's palace" at home. Poem #8, "ON seeing the Garden of A Genius by U T," reveals the same attitude: that it would be a "pleasant" world if everyone followed the rule of the genii, but that resistance is still better since the genii are no longer benevolent:

But now the eye of hatred
follows where ere they go
in the sea or in the firmament
it tries to work them woe

they may robe themselves in darkness
themselves with lightning crown
they may wield the sword of vengeance
but to them we'll not bow down

Another reason for resistance is given in an untitled poem, #41. Here the speaker expresses awe for the power of the "white robed beings" who can "glance & fly/ & rend the curtain from the sky," but who forbid humans to speak:

Heark I hear the thunder swell
Crashing through the firmament
'tis by wrothful spirits sent
Warning me to say no more

...
I veil my eyes with a holy fear
For the coming visions no mortal may bear

The speaker of this poem believes that the good effects of the genii are bought at a dear price, that of silence. The genii appear to be so powerful that no one can challenge their authority.

As these short poems reveal, the Angrian characters openly express their contempt for the governance of their

universe. They recognize that the genii can be benevolent, but that to live under the genii is to forfeit one's freedom, even that of speech. However, the most sustained rejection of the genii is given in poem #63, written on December 11, 1831. Here, the "ruler of Spirits" has called "his dread legions" to himself: "A giant host of winged forms/ Rose round their mighty King." Sitting in a great hall, the genii and fays dominate the scene:

No mortal may farther the vision reveal
Human eye cannot peirce what a spirit would seal
The secrets of Genii my tongue may not tell.

As the palace of the genii mysteriously disappears, the city beneath, still unaware of its loss, goes on as before, but there is a void:

And yet the great city lay silent & still
No chariot rode thunderous adown the wide street
Nor horse of Arabia impetuous & fleet
The river flowed on to the foam-crested sea
But unburdened by vessel its waves murmured free
The silence is dreadful....

With the departure of the genii, the "angel of Death" had come, leaving in its wake a city of "mute" inhabitants, including "The King & the peasant the lord & the slave" who "Lie entombed in the depth of one wide solemn grave." The concluding stanzas reinforce the loss of the genii. "Ruin, daemon of the wild" rules over the city, and the sounds that are heard are those of wailing. The tigers howl and the desert bird moans; the gentle wind is "unheard" and the heaven's balm is "unfelt." While Brontë had obviously found the genii quite useful in her early work, she clearly

figures her rejection of them in her description of their departure.

Intertextuality. "The Twelve Adventurers" and "The Search After Happiness," as well as the early poetry, reveal all the faults of authorial immaturity. The dialogue is poor, the plots are implausible, and the characterization is flat. It would be easy to attribute these faults to Brontë's inexperience since she was, after all, only a teenager when these stories were written; they form part of her apprenticeship. As a result, it is not surprising to see why Alexander attributed the repeated use of the genii to an "inventive power" of the author which was flagging (50). But it is also true that Brontë was quite faithful to the Arabian Nights models which she was using, for in her use of the genii, Brontë is entirely consistent with the characterizations of the Arabian Nights.⁷ Alexander's

⁷Jane Stedman maintains that the children used Tales of the Genii more than the Arabian Nights in creating the genii, and her conclusion has been accepted by other scholars (see Alexander, 18). Nonetheless, there are inaccuracies in her argument. First, she suggests that Tales was a "perfect book for a clergyman's nursery" because it is didactic under pretense of being imaginative (16). Her conclusion here is forced since virtually all Charlotte Brontë's biographies show that her father was quite liberal in educating his children; they were familiar with the Bible and other religious books, but they were equally raised on Byron and Scott. The Rev. Brontë never censored reading. Thus, his making the children read the Tales for its moralizing seems inconsistent with his enlightened attitude. Second, Stedman maintains that the genii in the Nights "remain anonymous and undifferentiated in the ranks" (17). This is certainly not true in the story of "Camalrazaman"

evaluation of the genii as a fault on the part of the inexperienced author obscures how thoroughly Brontë was familiar with the pretextual material she was borrowing, and, to borrow Jenny's phrase, how much she "totally respected" its form and significance. The intertextual correspondences that exist between Brontë's genii and the originals are quite strong.

For example, the enormous power of the genii in building is a frequent refrain in the Nights, especially references to the building of the City of Jerusalem under the reign of Solomon. Lavish palaces built by the genii are commonplace, and the most memorable mentioned are those in "Aladdin" and "Prince Ahmed and the Fairy Peri-Banou," two tales which Brontë alludes to elsewhere. In the former work, Aladdin's palace literally flies from place to place, carried by the genii, whereas the latter story describes in great detail the palaces of enormous wealth occupied by the fairies and genii.

from which Brontë borrowed two genii whom she uses in several stories, namely Dahnash and Maimoune. Third, Stedman argues that genii in the Nights do not protect men or act as guardian angels. This is incorrect; the fairy Peri-Banou from the story of that name tells Prince Ahmed that she had watched over him for a long time. That Brontë knew this story is evident from the references to it in Shirley (256) and Villette (662). In conclusion, I accept that Brontë uses the genii in ways that are much more consistent with those found in the Nights, not Ridley's Tales. I shall demonstrate that other textual allusions in the juvenilia point to the Arabian Nights as source.

In addition to building and carrying palaces, one of the powers of the genii is to change their forms. While frequently appearing as men, they can travel as whirlwinds, sandstorms or waterspouts, manifestations which Brontë uses. Furthermore, when commanded by a talisman, the genii may do harm to men, just as Brontë's "evil genius" Dahnash attempts to do in several stories. According to Lane in Arabian Society, the genii have the powers to foresee the future, and to act as guardians to the inhabitants of certain areas of a city (39). Since the genii are creatures of fire rather than of blood, they live extraordinarily long lives, sometimes even for centuries (32). Therefore, Brontë's image of the evil genii chained in the desert is quite accurate. Presumably they will stay that way until the final resurrection, an event that even their power will not resist. In the Arabian Nights, there are both good and evil genii, a fact that Brontë recognized.

Throughout these short works, Brontë refers to the powers held by the genii in the Arabian Nights. However, her references are not allusions in the strictest sense since she does more than refer to incidents in the former book. Instead, she transfers the powers of the genii into her own works, in which the genii function as in the original. Brontë's genii result from several sources: they are recontextualizations of the original characters into an entirely new context; new characters modeled after the

originals; and personifications of the characters which the Brontë children were playing at the time (see Appendix). Clearly the genii are a mixture of fictional and autobiographical elements.

Regardless of their origin, Brontë's references to the genii constitute a network and are connected to one another. The pretextual materials are linked to one another through repeated patterns of imagery, and more importantly, of function. For example, mention of the genii is always coupled with mention of opulence and power, especially that of building. Furthermore, the human characters recognize and comment upon the role of the genii in their universe; the humans reinforce the notion that the genii govern it. Based on what the humans say, we see that they regard the genii as benevolent, harmful and even playful. Thus, the fragments, rather than taking readers back to the pretext, remind them of other instances within the juvenilia in which the genii operate. The references evoke one another rather than actual incidents taken from the Arabian Nights or the children's lives. As a result, the references to the genii constitute an "organizing principle at work" which unifies all the individual references with one another.

While Brontë borrows the supernatural creatures from the Arabian Nights, she inserts them into texts which are imitations of the other literary genres she knew, such as romances patterned after Scott as well as newspapers and

journals. Therefore, while the genii appear, they do so in texts quite unlike that of the Nights. Thus, Brontë creates a true intertextual "pastiche" with her early work, for it is an amalgamation of many textual fragments and forms. The genii, borrowed from an Eastern tradition, find themselves summoned by noble Englishmen and Englishwomen rather than by aristocratic Arabs. Her integration of the pretextual characters is not stylistic.

In borrowing the genii as the ruling force in her universe, Brontë realized that the genii allowed her to introduce highly implausible situations without challenge. Because she was writing fantasy, she did not have to concern herself with the realism of her tales since everything that needed explaining could simply be attributed to the genii. They were responsible for all that happened, and they were the power behind the stories. They account for virtually everything that happens once the stories are underway. As such, they resemble the genii of the Arabian Nights who function in precisely the same way; they "grant wishes" and work mysteriously behind the scenes to resolve all the action. Furthermore, in associating the genii with opulence, Brontë uses the same imagery that virtually all Victorian authors who alluded to the Arabian Nights do.

In addition to its imitative form, the repeated references to "genius" and "genii," using the pluralized form, suggest other meanings. The word "genius" certainly

suggests the conventional meaning of a person of great talent or unusual ability. It is this suggestiveness as an aspect of intertextuality to which Jenny refers when he notes,

either intertextual processing will multiply the links introduced to integrate the borrowing on several levels at once, or else the intertextual fragments will profit from their ambiguity to project a range of combinatory possibilities toward the context. In either case the intertextual fragment tends to behave, not like a story within the story, but like a word of a poem in its relationship with its context, with everything that this implies concerning stylistic instability, unverifiability, incongruity. (53)

In this case, the word "genius" leaves behind its pretextual correspondences and acquires the conventional meaning. Now, when we read the poems, especially #56, "Reflections on the fate of neglected genius," we see that Brontë is also addressing the battle between poetic inspiration of the positive sort and destructive power. Here, the "clouds" on which the genii walk shower evil. The poem contrasts "some fair scene of nature breaks" with "a dark cloud that natures mighty hand/ Hath piled aloft, cumbering the earth with gloom." If we accept that the word "genius" here refers neither to the genii of the Arabian Nights variety nor to the Brontë children themselves, we see that genius can overmaster humanity, bringing with it great suffering and pain.

In this sense, Brontë is also examining the powers of authorship in her early works, for her references to the

powers of the genii also correspond to the powers of the author over text. Just as O'Donnell remarked earlier, that "some Genius was playing tricks" in closing a door behind him, so does an author also possess the power to manipulate and control the characters and events in her fiction. Brontë establishes an analogous relationship: the genii are to the universe as the author is to her fiction. Furthermore, when we see this relationship emerging, the other words in the fiction also change their correspondences, just as new meanings seen in a word in a poem automatically create new relationships between other elements in the poem. For example, previously we have seen that most biographical readings of the genii equate them with either the Brontë children or the Arabian Nights genii. Now, however, if the references to "genii" and "genius" are seen as personifications of the creative intellect, the "humans" in the stories and poetry may be seen to mirror Brontë herself and human ability; that is, through her early fiction, she is expressing doubts over the ability of reason (the humans) to challenge the powers of fancy and imagination (the genii). Thus, all the powers of the genii which she has identified (to change shape, to be arbitrary, to resist control, etc.) are those of her own imagination, a fact that frightened her considerably. Hidden in the subtext involving what appear to be superficial references to supernatural creatures borrowed from another source is a debate over the

power of creativity. At times "genius" is beneficial while at other times it is threatening and too powerful to be controlled.

That these associations are included in the references to the genii is confirmed by Brontë's biographers, all of whom admit that she was particularly troubled by the overuse of her imagination. Here again, just as we have seen earlier in the case of Dickens, Rossetti and Morris, the author manipulates the pretextual material to conform to her own interests and dispositions. For example, Brontë's biographers offer some insights into her decision to exile the genii in poem #63. As they have noted, Brontë's poem is patterned after Byron's "The Destruction of Sennacherib." As "The trumpet hath sounded" suggests, Byron would come to influence Brontë quite dramatically from this point onward. Where her earlier work had been based on fairy tale models, from now on her stories concern her hero, the Duke of Zamorna; his many romantic escapades fill her imagination for the next several years.

In addition to Byron's overwhelming influence, Alexander suggests another reason why Charlotte may have wanted to exile the genii. She argues that the poem did not result from Charlotte's having outgrown a childish interest. Rather, Charlotte wrote it in response to what she perceived to be undesirable inclinations by Branwell. As Alexander shows, Branwell's interest in the genii, and the role he

played in the Angrian kingdom, was primarily to create intrigues between his characters. He used the genii as instruments of war; in this role, he envisioned himself as an avenging angel. "Awful Brannii" is how he addressed himself in works of this period. Jane Stedman also records statements he makes relative to his role; in one, Branwell describes himself as

Awful Brannii, gloomy giant,
Shaking o'er earth his blazing air,
Brooding on blood with drear and vengeful soul
He sits enthroned in clouds to hear the thunders roll.
(18)

Alexander's opinion confirms that of an earlier critic, Ratchford, who demonstrates that Branwell saw the genii as demons of destruction while Charlotte used them for resuscitation, to restore the dead (55-56). Presumably Charlotte realized that to continue the charade of playing the genii would only encourage Branwell still more. So she poetically ended the game, using the skill at her command. Quite paradoxically, as she minimized the powers of the "genii," including herself, in the Angrian world, especially as they pertained to Branwell's insistence that the genii destroy and kill, Charlotte empowered herself as an author by taking over their role. She used the utterances of her own characters to voice resistance to her brother's despotism, underscoring how reality and fictionality merged in the Angrian world. Instead of challenging an antagonist by conventional patterns, she used literature to do so, a

pattern that would mark her mature fiction as well. The demise of the genii was a jolt to Branwell, since he wanted to continue his pastime. So resistant was he to the exile of the genii that he tried to resurrect interest in them during 1832 and 1833. He even wrote a short article lamenting their neglect (Alexander 84-5).

Charlotte's attempts to banish the genii document a general pattern in her life: her continual need to suppress her imaginative powers. Starting with Mrs. Gaskell, critics have argued that Brontë feared the overuse of her imagination, and that her mature novels reveal a tension between reason and passion. Her early poems which deal with the genii also anticipate this pattern.

The Continual Presence. Despite Brontë's decision to exile the genii, she was not altogether successful in doing so. It is apparent that she relied on their narrative power and abilities and they reappear in later stories beginning with "The Bridal" of 1832 and "The Foundling," written in 1833. In both cases, Brontë cleverly reinserts the genii by predating the material she is discussing. For example, although "The Bridal" was written in 1832, it presumably concerns events in 1831, before the genii had departed. In this story, the evil genius Dahnash is defeated by another supernatural power.

Like "The Bridal," "The Foundling" also contributes to the Angrian legends. The story concerns Edward Sydney's attempts to discover his true parentage, but it also includes a lengthy flashback at the end, referring to events that had happened much earlier to other Angrian characters. The first part of the story has several examples of supernaturalism, but, for the most part, Brontë relies on a realistic presentation. At the conclusion, however, she resorts to her familiar pattern of having the genii undertake implausible narrative solutions. For example, in this instance, the genii are actually responsible for reanimating a corpse which is seven weeks old:

'Mortals,' they cried, in a voice louder than the previous thunder, 'We, in our abundant mercy, have been moved to compassion by your oft-repeated and grievous lamentations. The cold corpse in the grave shall breathe again the breath of life, provided you here pledge a solemn oath that neither he nor his relatives shall ever take revenge on those who slew him, for it is the mighty Branni's will to revivify both the murderers also. (288)

"The Foundling" ends with a flashback involving an adventure describing the discovery and freeing of a woman entrapped by an evil genius, a staple from the Arabian Nights. When the heroes kidnap the woman away from her captor, the evil genius Dahnash appears to reclaim her. He is defeated by the fairy Maimoune, whom we had earlier seen in Brontë's first story, "The Twelve Adventurers." Maimoune tells the men that she had been ordered to protect them by the "Four Genii Sovereigns" who rule over their universe.

she eventually tells everyone that she had also guarded Edward Sydney from his birth, that she had been his protector all along. It turns out that Sydney is really a noble; he had been kidnapped and abandoned by the evil genius. Alexander points out that this story was the most intricate that Charlotte had attempted to write thus far, and it is poorly constructed (92). Not surprisingly, she relies on familiar subtexts to help her out of complicated narrative situations.

As this short synopsis reveals, the reappearance of the genii signals several things. First, the references to Genius Branni and the Four Sovereign Genii indicate that the Brontë children had never fully abandoned their childhood game despite Charlotte's earlier poems. Second, by intruding into their imaginative world in the guise of genii, the children retained the association of genius/author that had characterized the early stories. Most importantly, however, this incident reveals Charlotte Brontë's continual reliance on the supernatural to resolve narrative problems. While desperately attempting to write in a more realistic vein, she ultimately resorts to magic and fancy to solve the riddle of Sydney's life. This tendency will mark even her mature fiction for, as many critics have noted, the supernatural elements in Jane Eyre are implausible explanations for events. Furthermore, in the next section, we shall see how Brontë again uses a familiar subtext to

structure her mature novel. Here she couples power, not with the genii, but with Scheherazade, the heroine of the Arabian Nights.

The Subtext of Scheherazade in Jane Eyre

As Brontë matured, she attempted to write more realistically, although with little success in her first effort, The Professor, which was rejected for publication. Therefore, when Brontë began her second novel, Jane Eyre, she returned to the familiar genres of her youth and combined the romance patterned after Scott with a subtext taken from the Arabian Nights. In borrowing the frame tale of the Arabian Nights and narrative patterns of the Eastern collection, Brontë undermines the surface narrative of Jane Eyre, the melodramatic treatment of a young woman in love with a married man. In presenting the hidden story of a woman narrator who resists the loss of personal identity in a culture that regards her as suited only to a limited existence, Brontë challenges assumptions regarding suitable women's behavior.

In part one, I shall establish the mythic paradigm of the Scheherazade frame story and its analogue in Jane Eyre. In addition to showing that Rochester is patterned after the Arabian Nights ruler, Sultan Shahriyar, in both imagery and behavior, I shall prove that Jane Eyre is modelled after the narrator of the Nights who was forced to tell a tale each

night to ransom her life from a dictatorial sultan. In contrast to the subtext involving the genii, here we shall see that the subtextual correspondences between the pretext and Jane Eyre are very strong; numerous parallels exist between the two texts.

In part two, I shall analyze the effects of this subtext and how they are used structurally within Brontë's novel. Through their use, Brontë develops her theory of narrative fantasy in a realist tradition. To support this thesis, I shall examine aspects of the novel critics often felt to be troublesome -- the supernatural features and the blinding and maiming of Rochester. These elements are all organic, not intrusions or disruptions to the narrative structure. They are logical expressions of the tensions which exist between an overly realistic vision of art and an imaginative one, and they allow Brontë to use her subtext to challenge the limitations of realism.

The Rochester/ Sultan Shahriyar Correspondence. As we recall, the main point of the frame tale to the Arabian Nights is that a disillusioned sultan seeks revenge against women for the infidelity of his wife. This brief summary of the frame narrative is, however, insufficient to demonstrate how it figures in Jane Eyre. Since the novel parallels the frame story in many details, I shall periodically give it a much fuller treatment in order to establish how faithfully

Brontë uses its thematic structures and overall imagery. By doing so I can demonstrate the extent of Brontë's indebtedness.

As we recall from the introductory discussion of the frame tale, the nature of the sultan's betrayal is sexual. No matter how expurgated the edition, the underlying point is that the king recognizes his wife's infidelity. If we examine the superficial parallels between this frame narrative describing women's sexual autonomy and Jane Eyre, we see that Brontë frequently associates the two. As Muhsin Ali suggests, Rochester is equivalent to the disillusioned sultan. While Ali's brief discussion does not develop this association fully, his observation is sustained by other textual evidence: the imagery surrounding Rochester used throughout Jane Eyre; and Rochester's mimicking of the behaviors of Sultan Shahriyar.

The imagery surrounding Rochester certainly evokes the Arabian Nights associations of power and wealth, achieved as a result of being a sultan. For example, Thornfield Hall is described as having a huge "Turkey" carpet and lush carvings that suggest exotic detail (125). The brilliant black horse which Rochester rides is called Mesrour (208), a name borrowed directly from the Arabian Nights. Mesrour is the executioner in the court of Haroun Alraschid, the principal caliph in the collection, one who figures in over fifty stories.

Other associations of Rochester with a sultan occur in Jane Eyre. One major instance of this is the tableau scene in which Rochester and Blanche impersonate Biblical characters, Eliezer and Rebecca. The imagery here is distinctly Oriental; it evokes not just the Bible, but also the Arabian Nights. For example, Rochester is described as having "dark eyes and swarth skin" with "Paynim features [that] suited his costume exactly." He is wearing a set of shawls with a "turban on his head." The whole picture makes him appear like an "eastern emir" (229). Later in the novel, Brontë again directly compares him to a sultan in the scene in which he lavishes gifts upon his bride-to-be. Jane remarks, "I thought his smile was such as a sultan might ... bestow on a slave" (339). Here Rochester playfully talks of Turkish harems and Jane remarks on his metaphor: "The eastern allusion bit me again: 'I'll not stand you an inch in the stead of a seraglio,' I said; 'so don't consider me an equivalent for one: if you have a fancy for anything in that line, away with you, sir, to the bazars of Stamboul without delay...'" (339).

In addition to imagery which suggests Rochester's association with a sultan, the novel also associates the actions of Rochester with those of Sultan Shahriyar. The first association is based on the similar manner by which both discover their lovers to be unfaithful. In the original frame, Sultan Shahriyar spies on his wife by standing at a

window overlooking the garden. There he sees her with her naked handmaidens; his wife and her servants are cavorting with twenty black slaves in the middle of a lush garden. Rochester's actions also mimic those found in the frame. When he comes back to Thornfield, for example, he tells Jane he has just been disillusioned again, this time by his mistress Céline Varens. He had spied on her by hiding in her room where he had witnessed her with her new lover. Rochester hid on a balcony window in her apartment, amidst the flowers, as he looked down upon her return home (176-177). Just as in the original, in Jane Eyre, the man discovers the infidelity of the woman as he spies from above. Similarly, Brontë's scene emphasizes the erotic imagery of flowers as they become associated with sexual infidelity.

Another similarity that exists between Rochester and Shahriyar is the fact that they both test women to verify their beliefs regarding the feminine soul. In the original, before he establishes his nightly beheading of women, the sultan travels with his brother to confirm his negative beliefs about women. In their journeys, they come upon a genii who has imprisoned his mortal lover in a box with chains. He hides her so that she cannot cuckold him while he is away. However, the genii must occasionally release her, and he often does so as he sleeps. During that time, she does successfully manage to cuckold him, taking from each of

her new lovers a signet ring as symbol of her victories over her sleeping captor. She adds to her collection the rings of sultan Shahriyar and his brother as she convinces them both she will have them destroyed if they fail to please her. In the Arabian Nights, the genii's lover confirms the Sultan's worst fears about his wife and female nature.

In Jane Eyre, Rochester again mimics the sultan, for Rochester also attempts to discover the true nature of women before he acts against women in general. Rochester plots to have Jane tell him about her true nature, and that of men and women, when he impersonates a gypsy. Prodding her to reveal what she is thinking, especially about himself, he deliberately introduces the topic of the relationship between the sexes and he asks Jane to reveal her understanding of that relationship. During his interrogation, he notices that Jane has a "flame" flickering in her eye. He senses that she possesses the "passions [that] may rage furiously" although reason, in her forehead, will curb them (252). Just as in the Nights, a man questions a passionate woman to determine his beliefs regarding the true nature of womanly souls.

Finally, the third parallel between Rochester's actions and those of Shahriyar is Rochester's seduction by a woman to whom he gives a signet ring as tribute to her conquest. In the original, Shahriyar (and his brother) surrender their signet rings to the genii's lover out of fear that they will

otherwise be destroyed. The genii's lover is literally enclosed in boxes, although they do not prevent her from wreaking havoc as her master sleeps. In Jane Eyre, Rochester also falls victim to a sexually aggressive woman who is locked up. As many critics have noted, Bertha symbolically suggests uncontrollable sexuality. John Maynard, for example, speaks of her "sensuality and passion run amok," while Ruth Yeazell attributes her insanity to "unrestrained passions." Just as the genii's lover collects signet rings, Bertha seduces Rochester into surrendering his marital ring. Similarly, despite her imprisonment, she succeeds in hurting him as he sleeps.

As these parallels in behavior all suggest, Rochester is analogous to Sultan Shahriyar. Furthermore, Brontë's depiction of imagery suggesting power and privilege underscores that Rochester conceives of both the world and its people as slaves to his whims. Rochester, like Shahriyar, is unchallenged lord over his kingdom.

The Jane Eyre/Scheherazade Correspondences. While a literary analogue certainly exists between Jane Eyre's Rochester and Sultan Shahriyar, it is Brontë's association of Jane Eyre with the mythical Scheherazade that is Brontë's greatest achievement. By creating a narrator who consciously echoes the Eastern storyteller, she is able to present a cogent theory of imaginative fiction. Not only does Brontë

associate the heroine of her novel with Scheherazade in several textual allusions, as well as in the character traits the two women share, she thereby extends scheherazade's mythical stature to Brontë's narrator.

Jane Eyre uses the same narrative strategies as does Scheherazade in her relationships to St. John Rivers and Rochester, both of whom demand that she abandon her autonomy to them. In the first instance of using Scheherazade's survival strategies, Jane tells St. John an interrupted narrative that so interests him that he wades through waist-high snow in order to hear its sequel. His arrival in the midst of a blizzard startles Jane. In response to his request to enter, she says, "But why are you come?" To which he replies,

"Rather an inhospitable question to put to a visitor; but since you ask it, I answer, simply to have a little talk with you: I got tired of my mute books and empty rooms. Besides, since yesterday, I have experienced the excitement of a person to whom a tale has been half-told, and who is impatient to hear the sequel." (482)

It is obvious from this passage that part of Jane's power over St. John lies in her ability to tell him interrupted stories, in her role as narrator. Furthermore, she recognizes this power in her relationships and says so in another passage to Rochester. In that scene, Jane has returned to find him blind and maimed. Yet, despite his asking, she withholds from him information about her stay at the Rivers home. He is impatient to know what has happened,

and he angrily confronts her: "Who have you been with, Jane?" To which she replies,

"You shall not get it out of me to-night, sir; you must wait until to-morrow: to leave my tale half-told, will, you know, be a sort of security that I shall appear at your breakfast-table to finish it." (561)

As we know, in addition to postponing the ending of a narrative through interruption, Scheherazade also extends the narrative act by embedding narratives within one another. Furthermore, the embedded narratives often reflect back on the action of the frame tale. Jane resembles her Eastern counterpart in that she likewise embeds countless other stories in her own life's tale. Just as Scheherazade created the Arabian Nights to postpone her own execution, Jane employs countless other fairy tales to help her in her quest for maturity and to forestall her own loss of self. Many critics have noted the parallels to other popular tales within Jane Eyre.⁸ In addition to narrating fairy tales

⁸Among the critics who have noted Brontë's use of fairy tale patterns in Jane Eyre are Karen Rowe, who sees parallels to Gulliver's Travels, Cinderella, Sleeping Beauty and Little Red Riding Hood, among others. Robert Martin sees parallels to Rapunzel and Briar Rose, while Brother Clement David identifies other patterns. J. Sloman also writes of Jane's use of popular children's literature.

These critics are all convincing in their discussions, but ultimately their analyses seem limited for two reasons. First, while elements of these (and other) fairy tales exist within Jane Eyre, few are sustained throughout the novel. However, the association with Scheherazade begins the novel as Jane sits like a "Turk" in the breakfast room, eventually narrating to us from a boudoir, the red room. Similarly, she ends her novel just as did Scheherazade: speaking of her own marriage and the restored harmony of the kingdom. Second, the basic "female" pattern of these

about herself, she also embeds other stories and forms, such as songs, poems, letters and pictures, into her novel. In using all these embedded constructions, Jane deliberately prolongs her narrative activity and power.

Similarly, just as the embedded tales which Scheherazade tells reflect on her own story, Jane's embedded narratives may be seen to purposefully reflect on her own story. For example, early in the novel Bessie tells Jane a ballad of the "orphan child" who is clearly a metaphor for Jane herself (21). In this case, the ballad comments on Jane's plight and extends her narrative in a somewhat circular fashion. The reader moves from Jane, the narrator, to the orphan child, and back to Jane again. The ballad serves as a prose mirror just as the real mirror imagery within the novel serves the same function. The embedded narratives are used structurally to reflect on the central action. Similarly, the Biblical tableau of Eliezar and Rebecca is a prefigurement of the outer narrative in the "frame" story of Jane and Rochester; he too will have to "work" through his prolonged absence from her to gain her hand in marriage. This circularity of technique allows any allusion or image to gather resonance as it continues to spiral through the novel. In addition, Jane becomes

stories, in which women are passive, does not account for Jane's character, especially her intense independence. While there may be a sense in which Rochester figures as a prince in Jane's life, she is much more autonomous than most fairy tale heroines.

analogous to all the other storytellers she mentions. Furthermore, as Edgar Shannon points out, Jane attempts to keep her narrative timeless by shifting the verbs to the present tense in at least seven passages in the novel (141). These passages ensure a dramatic quality in the presentation since readers imagine that they are actually witnessing the action rather than reading about a completed event. Here again we see how important it is for Jane to fight against time, whether by creating a perpetual present or a perpetual narrative.

The need to spin the perpetual narrative is also an expression of the fact that the mythic Scheherazade is empowered against all her antagonists only through her role as narrator. By being a story-teller, she overcomes all the limitations to her personhood including the physical and temporal. Earlier I referred to Ghazoul's labelling of Scheherazade's power as her "nocturnal cogito." That Jane Eyre's power also results from her language ability and her storytelling, her arsenal of words, is apparent to any reader of the novel. Not only is she the narrator and central character in her book, but she controls the events in her life by her narrative skill; she alters events and others' perceptions of her by the careful way in which she provides them with information or withholds it from them. Other critics have noted this. For example, J. Sloman says, "Jane learns to manipulate difficult situations by

maintaining the appearance of self-control and she learns to speak wittily or ironically to the powerful figures who try to control her" (111).

Speaking about her own role as narrator, Jane repeatedly tells us that she consciously uses language as a tool of power. She does not intend for it to be destructive, but she uses it to react in troubling situations. Two examples which confirm her association with Scheherazade's mythical powers may suffice to demonstrate some of Jane's storytelling ability. We recall that early in the novel, Mrs. Reed had criticized Jane openly in the presence of Mr. Brocklehurst by suggesting she was defiant. Initially, Jane stood there mute, unable to challenge the accusations, but she resolves to confront her enemies: "Speak I must: I had been trodden on severely and must turn: but how? What strength had I to dart retaliation at my antagonist? I gathered my energies and launched them in this blunt sentence..." (38-39). Here, the "bluntness" of the truth asserts Jane's autonomy against forces that are threatening to overpower her. She admits that after her outburst she feels powerful. She tells us, "Ere I had finished this reply, my soul began to expand, to exult, with the strangest sense of freedom, of triumph, I ever felt. It seemed as if an invisible bond had burst, and that I struggled out into unhoped-for liberty." She concludes: "I was left there alone--winner of the field. It was the

hardest battle I had fought, and the first victory I had gained" (40). By battling with her tongue, Jane defeats her superior in wealth and position.

The same mastery over language characterizes Jane's later relationship with St. John Rivers. For one thing, she repeatedly interrupts him, especially when he introduces topics that make her uncomfortable, as with his marriage proposal. It is almost as if by controlling the language of an event, she controls its ultimate structure. She will not allow St. John to narrate the story of her life in a way that differs from her own conception. For example, we see this in what has come to be called the "mysterious summons" scene. Prior to this scene, St. John had been debating with Jane about how she could best use her "powers" to serve God as a Christian missionary. She had repeatedly contradicted him and said that she had no true vocation to follow him as his wife. Slowly, however, she felt herself slipping under his spell. It is only at night when she is startled by hearing her name called that she is able to "break" from St. John once and for all. In so doing, she tells us:

I broke from St. John; who had followed, and would have detained me. It was my turn to assume ascendancy. My powers were in play, and in force. I told him to forbear question or remark; I desired him to leave me: I must, and would be alone. He obeyed at once. Where there is energy to command well enough, obedience never fails. (536-537)

This scene is important for two reasons. One, it demonstrates Jane's resolve not to listen to St. John any

longer; she deliberately silences him, and, as a result, her "own powers" are put back "in play." She will narrate. She alone will speak. She will gain in stature. Two, her response to the spoken word, the "Jane! Jane! Jane!" of Rochester's call, reveals her own response to the "word"; we see that she is far less influenced by the Word of Christianity than by the words of passion, of desire, of love. Rochester can speak the words to which Jane will respond while St. John cannot.

In these two examples, then, we have briefly seen how Jane can manipulate the events in her life by using her "nocturnal cogito." She narrates and brings all her selves into being. Like Scheherazade, she inverts power relationships with her ability to speak. In this examination, I have proved how Brontë associated both Rochester and Jane Eyre with characters from the Arabian Nights. As I have shown, there are clear textual and structural allusions to the Eastern collection within Jane Eyre. The references certainly constitute a subtextual pattern even though they are spaced far apart in the novel. Likewise, as Jenny has established, even though "gaps" in the pretextual material exist, there is still a recognizable unity of reference in Brontë's novel. The subtextual correspondences between the characters allow Brontë to evoke all of the mythical significance of the borrowed material. Thus, Rochester becomes a tyrannical

sultan while Jane Eyre becomes the narrator who defeats her antagonists with her interrupted and embedded tales. Jane's power overmasters theirs.

Jane Eyre and Imagination. If we accept that a literary analogue exists between Jane Eyre and Scheherazade, we can now examine Jane's theory of imaginative literature as it is presented in the novel. Once again, I shall show that Brontë borrows heavily from the Arabian Nights tradition. She incorporates many features that are notable within the collection, especially its attitudes toward the marvelous and the supernatural. In this section, I shall demonstrate how, by building on its tradition of storytelling, Jane Eyre counters both didacticism and realism. By structuring her novel as she does, through Jane's use of the marvelous and supernatural to explain herself, Brontë validates fantasy and rejects the notion that all narrative art must be realistic.

By using the "mise-en-abyme" approach characteristic of the Arabian Nights in which all of Scheherazade's stories bear some relation to the matrix frame story, Jane Eyre periodically comments upon its own narrative art and also presents its own vision of the scope of the novel. We can see this if we examine a short dialogue between Helen Burns and Jane Eyre. If we compare the two girls and their attitudes toward fiction, we see that Brontë sets up a

polarity of vision that reflects two attitudes about art that existed during her lifetime: the notion that art had a didactic purpose and the notion that art existed for entertainment and enjoyment, that it could extend beyond the limits of "consensus reality."

In the scene in which Jane introduces herself to Helen Burns, Helen is reading Rasselas. Although the title has an appeal to her at first, Jane looks through it and says, "Rasselas looked dull to my trifling taste; I saw nothing about fairies, nothing about genii; no bright variety seemed spread over the closely printed pages" (55). In a nutshell, Jane summarizes precisely the problem of fiction as she understands it--it no longer contains expressions of things that she regards as important or necessary: those elements of fancy and the supernatural. Rather, in a book like Rasselas, the didactic intent erases the possibility of imagination.

The young Jane Eyre is very astute in her comments here, as any reader of Rasselas will attest. As Martha Conant observes, the book is a prototypical moral tale. Although it imitates an Oriental structure, including even a journey through Arabia and Egypt, it clearly avoids the descriptive lavishness that one associates with the Arabian Nights. Instead, it replaces the splendid detail of the original with "vague terms and places" as it concerns itself with instruction (121). The hero of the tale regards most

human achievement as vain since he intends to seek a more heavenly kingdom. The moral of the novel is to be satisfied with events that occur and not to question the rightness of God's plan. There certainly is very little of the exotic for which Jane yearns.

As a result of the forced didacticism of literature such as that in Rasselas, Jane cannot engage her imagination as she desires. Early in the novel she laments the general condition of life in England. She no longer finds Gulliver's Travels enjoyable, despite the fact that previously she had "again and again perused it with delight." She even goes so far as to say that she had formerly regarded it as a "narrative of fact." It has, however, lost its appeal:

for as to the elves, having sought them in vain among foxglove leaves and bells ... I had at length made up my mind to the sad truth that they were all gone out of England to some savage country ... when I turned over its [Gulliver's Travels'] leaves, and sought in its marvelous pictures the charm I had, till now, never failed to find--all was eerie and dreary.
(20)

What has interfered with Jane's enjoyment of imaginative literature is the very fact of her own life and its misfortunes. Too much "reality" has distorted the fancy of Swift's narrative.

Similarly, shortly after the Gulliver remark, Jane tries to take another volume down off the shelf to read. This time the "Arabian tales" have lost their appeal as well (41). Owing to her intense anger at Mrs. Reed and what has

befallen her, Jane is unable to escape from her real life. She cannot indulge in the pleasures of reading and she leaves for a walk that proves equally unrewarding. She tells us that she cannot enjoy the book "I had usually found fascinating" because "my own thoughts swam always between me and the page." Jane's editorial comments reveal a great deal about her attitude toward art and fiction. Jane's hatred for didacticism and realism will stay with her throughout her lifetime.

One of the reasons why Jane values fantasy is because it allows the expression of forbidden desires, something she also wishes to include in her autobiography. For example, if we examine what Jane says, we see that she speaks of those things she cannot have. As a result, she resorts to fantasy to make those forbidden desires obvious to us--she employs marvelous occurrences, such as the voices that draw the lovers together, to confirm things as they "ought to be." Like all other fantasists, who, according to Rosemary Jackson, challenge the values of "bourgeois culture," Jane camouflages what she does through language and form. As Jackson states, "fantasy characteristically attempts to compensate for a lack resulting from cultural restraints: it is a literature of desire..." (3) Jackson suggests that fantasy introduces disorder or "illegality" into realism; it brings forward "that which lies outside the law" or "that which is outside the dominant value system" (4).

Again and again we see Jane overcoming restrictions by offering fantastic alternatives. In so doing, she succeeds in circumventing the limitations that confine her, and she gives expression to forbidden passions and desires. For example, in Jane's social life she is particularly limited by her womanhood; she simply cannot be heroic in the sense that a man could; nonetheless, she longs for a chance to experience masculine accomplishments, especially adventure. Early in the novel she says, "It is vain to say that human beings ought to be satisfied with tranquility: they must have action; and they will make it if they cannot find it" (132). She further discusses how women's needs parallel those of men despite the fact that society will not allow them to express these feelings, and she condemns the social order that looks down upon women who desire to do more than knit stockings and embroider bags. Yet, this social order really does limit women, as Jane well knows. Thus, Jane's "daily" life is one of limitation and curtailment. By comparison, her nightly life and her narrative life are characterized by precisely opposite conditions. Her "nocturnal cogito" is a stark contrast. She says,

I used to rush into strange dreams at night: dreams many-coloured, agitated, full of the ideal, the stirring, the stormy--dreams where, amidst unusual scenes, charged with adventure, with agitating risk and romantic chance, I still again and again met Mr. Rochester... (468)

In real life, Jane cannot express her lingering passion for Rochester because it would clearly violate social custom; by

"dreaming" about it, however, she succeeds in introducing it into her narrative and in giving it authenticity in her life.

Similarly, when the realistic will not allow Jane to have power, she employs the supernatural as the agency of her power just as Scheherazade did. The mythical storyteller defeats the sultan's opinion that women are unfaithful and deceitful by telling him many tales involving virtuous women, especially those involving women with second sight or powers not held by men. These women evoke their supernatural abilities and their powers eventually succeed in changing the sultan's mind.

Jane employs a supernatural agency that achieves the same result, only she uses it as a stimulus to her own actions. Throughout her life, Jane reintroduces into literature the very elements that as a young girl she found wanting. Quite literally, as Rochester tells her, she herself becomes a "good genii" to him. More importantly, she grants herself the very powers that she recognizes as predominant among the genii--the powers of transformation, the power to mold reality into other shapes. Rochester recognizes this power of Jane's from the very first meeting. He tells her that when he fell off the horse he thought that she had "bewitched him." He says, "No wonder you have the look of another world. I marvelled where you had got that sort of face. When you came upon me in Hay Lane last night,

I thought unaccountably of fairy tales, and had half a mind to demand whether you had bewitched my horse" (149). When he accuses her of waiting for "her people," he suggests that they are the men in green who revel in the moonlight. Jane tells him no, that these men fled England a century before, but she never contradicts the implication that she herself possesses some sort of magic ability, especially in her narrative role. And, of course, she does.¹⁰

Jane's presentation of the supernatural agency in her autobiography corresponds exactly to those types of depictions that one repeatedly finds in the Arabian Nights. The tales reveal that no boundary exists to separate the "real" from the "unreal," but that each expresses a function of the divine in life. Ali says that the stories reveal an "absolute faith in God" in which there is "no demarcation between the natural and the supernatural." Within the stories, Scheherazade presents events which otherwise would be regarded as miraculous as completely within the realm of possibility. Likewise, Jane presents the "miraculous" or "marvelous" as commonplace and as causative; her universe is not the conventional Judeo-Christian one. She sees incredible coincidence and inexplicable natural events as ordinary. Her presentation of the correspondence between

¹⁰Gribble discusses the use of the supernatural as an alternative to the reality of ordinary life. She maintains that Jane expresses Brontë's understanding of Coleridge's theories regarding "primary imagination" and "the fancy" (282).

nature and man is evident throughout all the symbolism and tropes she employs; rather than embodying the pathetic fallacy, they are a vision of the world as she understands it. This partly accounts for why Jane Eyre has been seen to represent an unChristian point of view. As Robert Heilman maintains, the novel is permeated with an attitude in which Jane rejects the orthodox authority of Christianity, preferring a pagan substitute (13). Maynard, who also agrees that the causality in the novel is unorthodox, discusses the providential control within the novel as a sort of "scaffolding" which represents "signs and evidence of a divine plot that metes out appropriate rewards and punishments as it takes its necessary and certain course" (94).

This attitude, that the "divine plot" controls the novel's events, leads to my discussion of the novel's conclusion in which Jane is reunited with a maimed and blinded man. It is a feature of the novel that distresses many critics. At the most extreme, several psychoanalytic speakers have denounced the terrible physical changes in Rochester as "symbolic emasculation" or as a sign of "castration."¹¹ They believe that Brontë's retaliation against the lopsided values of a patriarchal society was for her to reduce the hero to a virtual dependency on Jane, the

¹¹See Martin Day, "Central Concepts of Jane Eyre," Personalist 4 (1960), 504; Annette Schreiber, "The Myth in Charlotte Brontë," Literature and Psychology 18 (1968), 51.

heroine. On the other hand, critics such as Maynard and Moglen reject this point of view and feel that Rochester's transformation is a metaphor for his purgation, that is, for the fact that he is now cleansed of his pride and sinfulness. As Maynard writes of him, Rochester, although maimed, is clearly a potent sexual force as his eventual fathering of children demonstrates (138). Moglen suggests that Rochester has been metaphorically stripped of his power over Jane. She quotes Carolyn Heilbrun who believes that "Rochester undergoes, not sexual mutilation as the Freudians claim, but the inevitable sufferings necessary when those in power are forced to release some of their power to those who previously had none" (142).

However, another interpretation of this conclusion is possible if we accept Jane as analogous to Scheherazade. The conclusion of Brontë's novel parallels that of the frame narrative in the Arabian Nights quite dramatically in this regard. In the original, Shahriyar comes to realize that Scheherazade is "chaste, pure, ingenuous, pious" after he listens to her narratives; he replaces his beliefs about women with a new attitude based on her influence. He realizes that he has misused his powers and that he must restore the kingdom to its former state. He does this by conferring honor on Scheherazade and her family and by giving gifts and alms, as well as praise, to the Almighty.

Similarly, through her tales to him, Rochester has also come to recognize that Jane's actual self is "chaste, pure, ingenuous, pious." He too recognizes the need for a new kingdom, one that will be governed by more charitable laws-- a partnership, not a dictatorship. Through Jane's "light," Rochester has come to see the world, both literally and symbolically. His blindness is relieved only through her presence, that of narrator. She tells us at the conclusion that she never wearied of "putting into words the effect of field, tree, town, river, cloud, sunbeam--of the landscape before us; of the weather round us--and impressing by sound on his ear what light could no longer stamp on his eye" (577). Here she emphasizes her narrative role; she will provide him with new visions of reality, just as she had earlier calmed his passion and anger. Her visionary sight replaces his physical sight.

Through this visionary narrative, Jane also accomplishes another feat analogous to that of Scheherazade: she redeems all womanhood by her own actions. Just as Scheherazade convinces Shahriyar that his vision of women as deceitful is false, Jane convinces everyone that women are entitled to passionate identity, but one defined on their own terms. Ali summarizes the ending of Jane Eyre this way:

Like Shahriyar, Rochester appears in the concluding scenes of the narrative as one domesticated and subdued by an intelligent female. Shahriyar concludes by saying to Scheherazade: "I receive you entirely into my great graces, and I will have you looked upon as the deliverer of many

damsels I have resolved to have sacrificed." Similarly, Rochester admits that he has undergone a change due to Jane's influence: "I have never met your likeness, Jane, you please me, and you master me...I am influenced--conquered; and the influence is sweeter than I can express....(Scheherazade 60)

In addition, one final similarity between Jane Eyre and the frame narrative to the Arabian Nights is the fact that both end presenting the inevitability of death, even within a paradise. In the original Eastern tale, the text tells us that Shahriyar and Scheherazade lived happily until they were "visited by the terminators of delights and the separators of companions," an awareness of death as the final annihilator. Similarly, Jane Eyre ends with the realization of death in the concluding remarks of St. John Rivers. Even though Jane is presumably still narrating to Rochester, Rivers announces that he will not see them again. Alluding to both Revelation and the Final Coming, he tells them that he will meet his Master with the joy of his Christian faith.

By drawing upon the Arabian Nights in her use of imagery, theme, and especially character, Charlotte Brontë was able to circumvent the restrictions placed upon her art by Victorian convention. By associating her central character with that of Scheherazade, she challenged both the role of a woman narrator in an age of the male voice and the role of realism as the dominant literary tradition. In

preferring to use an Eastern source for her structure, rather than using the chivalric tradition of English letters, she asserted a woman's claim to sexual autonomy and creative freedom.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE ART OF IMITATION: THE SHAVING OF SHAGPAT

Know, O my brothers, that I was enjoying a most comfortable life, and the most pure happiness, as ye were told yesterday, until it occurred to my mind, one day, to travel again to the lands of other people, and I felt a longing for the occupation of traffic, and the pleasure of seeing the countries and islands of the world, and gaining my subsistence.

"The Second Voyage of Es-Sindibád of the Sea" (582)

And he considered his case, crying, "Surely this comes of wandering, and 't is the curse of the inquiring spirit! for in Shiraz, where my craft is in favour, I should be sitting now with my uncle, Baba Mustapha, the loquacious one, cross-legged, partaking of seasoned sweet dishes, dipping my fingers in them, rejoicing my soul with scandal of the Court."

The Shaving of Shagpat (2)

In the previous chapters I used referential models such as allusion, source text, and subtext to explain the intertextual relationships that exist between selected Victorian works by Dickens, Rossetti, Morris, Charlotte Brontë and the Arabian Nights. In this chapter, I shall examine another intertextual pattern, that of imitation. George Meredith's The Shaving of Shagpat is a self-admitted

imitation, even subtitled "An Arabian Entertainment."¹ Meredith announced in the Preface that "the only way to tell an Arabian Story was by imitating the style and manner of the Oriental story-tellers." So convinced was he of the accuracy of his imitation that he was fearful readers would assume that his book was a translation. To avoid this, he added the above disclaimer insisting on its originality.

Nonetheless, while admitting its imitative form, several critics have argued that it imitates other texts, not the Arabian Nights. For example, in 1936, W.F. Mainland argued that the novel had been partly based on German sources. A year later, Milton Millhauser argued that it was based on a Welsh source, an argument that Jack Lindsay adopted. In his biography, he says that Shagpat is more essentially Welsh than Arabic (68). Splitting hairs in quite another manner, Ian Fletcher maintained that the novel is really more Persian than Arabic. He insisted that it is derived from poetic works of the Spasmodics, especially Festus, or possibly from Richard Horne's Orion. While differing on the sources Meredith may have used, these critics are similar in that they attribute Meredith's novel to essentially European, rather than foreign, influences.

¹Although the first edition bears an 1856 copy date, it was actually published in December of 1855 (Ellis 79). All references to the text refer to this edition. Some more recent editions of the novel, including The Centenary Edition published by The Limited Edition Club, are abridged, although not identified as such.

While I shall demonstrate that their conclusions regarding the source of Shagpat are wrong, they are somewhat understandable, for defining an imitation is a difficult critical task. The critics have assumed that mere parallels in plot constitute an imitation, but they have neglected to consider the more important similarities in structure and verbal patterns between Shagpat and the Arabian Nights. However, as Joel Weinsheimer argues in Imitation, identifying one is not easy:

Imitation is not a genre...it is impossible to determine the essence of any particular imitation because an imitation has no independent or autonomous essence. It consists in a relation to something else which, one must finally admit, both is and is not the same as itself. (1-2)

Later he writes, "Imitations...must differ from the originals to which they in other ways conform" (7). In essence, imitations are not duplicates of originals, although both may share many features. Hence, discussing them may only be done in terms of relatedness. Unlike allusions or quoted materials, imitations mimic while preserving their own originality. Nonetheless, while lacking a fixed definition for imitation, it is possible to discuss the interplay between Meredith's The Shaving of Shagpat and the Arabian Nights.

In this chapter I will examine the intertextuality in The Shaving of Shagpat in terms of its imitative form. After a brief introduction to establish the composition history, I shall demonstrate how Shagpat borrows the verbal style of

the original Arabian Nights, and how the novel alludes to specific tales in the collection, thus proving that Shagpat is indeed what the author claimed it to be: an Arabian entertainment. Furthermore, I shall discuss what effect that knowledge has on the reader's understanding of the intertextuality between the two books.

However, Meredith did not merely adopt the verbal style of the original to produce yet another sequel to a popular book. He exploited the characteristic freedoms of a fantasy genre. By borrowing on the Arabian Nights tradition, Meredith was able to circumvent the restrictive treatment during the Victorian age regarding two important subjects--sexuality and the role of a woman. Therefore, in the first section, I shall also show how Meredith used this freedom of expression to introduce sensual detail into his novel, as well as a brave, active heroine quite unlike her Victorian sisters.

In the second section, I shall address the meaning of the novel. Long regarded as an allegory, it has baffled critics who have insisted on reading it with fixed referents. In contrast to them, my emphasis will be on Shagpat's imitative form and how that can serve as a key to understanding both the structure and significance of the novel. I shall show how the embedded elements in Shagpat are self-reflexive to the main narrative just as they are in the Arabian Nights. Similarly, I shall examine another parallel

that exists between the two novels: just as the Arabian Nights is a story about itself, a story about storytelling, The Shaving of Shagpat is a novel about its own composition, about its own "mastering of an event." I shall prove how seeing the two novels as analogous helps with a reader's understanding.

Background. Imitations of the Arabian Nights certainly had precedents in the nineteenth century. Prior to Meredith's book there had been Tales of the Genii (1805), Lalla Rookh (1817), and Hajji Baba of Isphahan (1824). Nonetheless Meredith's motivation for writing his first novel using an Arabian Nights format remains clouded, although evidence points to his desire for a commercial success. Thus, the enormous popularity of the Arabian Nights made it a suitable text for imitating.

Jack Lindsay and Lionel Stevenson demonstrate that information about Meredith's life during the early 1850's is quite sketchy. Even the editor of his collected letters, C.L. Cline, speaks of an "hiatus" of correspondence dating from this period (19). The biographers do establish, however, that during this time Meredith was involved in a lawsuit over inheritance and was struggling with debts so enormous that he and his family were forced to move into the home of his father-in-law, Thomas Love Peacock. Since their relationship was acrimonious, this was a trying period in

the author's life. Furthermore, his earlier book of poetry had not been successful either economically or critically. In fact, Stevenson surmises that in order to survive, Meredith was writing literary hack work at this time (46). Presumably, then, part of his motivation for writing an imitation was the hope that Shagpat would prove popular and sell widely, a hope that was not to be realized despite the high praise it received from George Eliot, who encouraged readers to buy it since it was "a work of genius" (26).

In writing an imitation, Meredith was also experimenting with fantasy literature as an alternative to the realistic novels of the period. As Stephen Prickett establishes, the eighteen fifties and sixties would see the publication of several noteworthy Victorian fantasies, including John Ruskin's "The King of the Golden River" (67); George MacDonald's Phantastes (153); and the most famous of them all, Lewis Carroll's Alice in Wonderland (150). All of these authors demonstrated a growing dissatisfaction with the limitations of realism. Meredith obviously shared their view, for not only was his first novel patterned after an Arabian folklore source, but the second, Farina: A Legend of Cologne (1857), was based on a German one. Furthermore, his correspondence indicates that he attempted another Arabian story during 1859 but apparently abandoned it, partially out of the feeling that he had "lost the style" of the original (37-38). All of this suggests that Meredith was quite

consciously attempting to write fantasy imitations at this period of his career.²

Although Meredith chose an imitation as his format, at least part of his novel resulted from a chance encounter. Lindsay reports that Meredith attended a party at which he heard the details of a story involving a femme fatale that intrigued him. He went home and wrote the "Bhanavar the Beautiful" section of his novel as a means of exploring that theme. Later, however, he created the frame narrative, the Shibli Bagarag adventure, to minimize the importance of the other idea (63). In the final version of the novel, he subordinates the "Bhanavar" narrative to the story of Noorna and Shibli. It becomes just one of the nested narratives, although it is much longer and more important than the others.

Thus, while the explanation as to why Meredith selected an imitative form is forever lost, Shagpat remains as a testimony of his desire to exploit the structural and fantasy elements which an imitation afforded him. As we shall see in the discussion of the novel's meaning, Meredith carefully used all the advantages that the Arabian Nights

²Meredith also wrote poems based upon themes from the Arabian Nights. Lindsay discusses one of his first poems, "The Sleeping City" which uses Arabian Nights imagery (32).

In addition, in 1862, Meredith wrote "Shemselnihar" about one of the caliph Haroun Alraschid's concubines who also has a lover. Torn between gratitude to her lord, and love for Ali Eben Becar, she wishes that the caliph would hate her so that she could forget his generosity towards her.

possessed to create a subversive novel which uses fantasy to challenge the established order of the "Identical."

A True Imitation

Verbal Patterns and Allusions. As we have seen in the introduction to this study, the verbal style of the Nights is highly metaphoric, allowing for lavish descriptive passages which add "more," thus assuring another of Scheherazade's survival strategies. Similarly, Meredith's style is highly ornate, often a result of lavish similes. For example, when Shibli appears on the scene, his thoughts of hunger are: "the illusion of rivers sheening on the sands to travellers gasping with thirst" (2); Shagpat "was as a sleepy lion, cased in his mane; as an owl drowsy in the daylight of applause" (11); while Noorna "was in agitation, so that her joints creaked like forest branches in a wind, and the puckers of her visage moved as do billows of the sea to and fro" (18).

These few examples, all of which occur in the opening pages of the novel, nonetheless characterize its verbal style, which is highly metaphorical and reminiscent of the Arabian Nights. Furthermore, Shagpat frequently uses conventional expressions that are borrowed directly from the Eastern text and most probably from Edward Lane's translation. For example, characters in Shagpat enlist divine assistance by saying, "I call Allah (whose name be

praised!) to witness" (5), echoing the same phrase in Lane's translation. In addition, Meredith even employs those special marks of distinction that characterize uniqueness in the Nights, such as a mole which signifies greatness. Not surprisingly, Shagpat has one: "Oh! no mistaking of Shagpat, and the mole might discern Shagpat among myriads of our kind" (6).

These examples demonstrate that Meredith is carefully following his original source. He appears to be familiar with Arabian customs, suggesting that he might have used Lane's elaborate notes to his translations as the basis for some details. For example, Meredith's characters stop to perform ablutions, honor the laws of hospitality, give blessings to one another, and the like. They act essentially like the characters in the Arabian Nights and could easily be transplanted there.

In his imitation, Meredith alludes to specific Arabian Nights tales. For example, although the names he selects are probably partly symbolic (Bagarag=bag of rags³) or based

³Hearn argues that this is also true for the name Shagpat. The first part, "Shag", suggests hair, while the second "pat" is a pun on "pate" (382). Hence, the character has a shaggy head of hair.

Within the text there is also the suggestion that the names are anagrams. For example, at one point Noorna attempts to teach the bird Koorookh to speak. He masters many names, but is unable to pronounce that of Shibli Bagarag. Noorna is surprised, but she finally concludes: " 'There is in this a meaning, and I will fathom it.' So she counted the letters in the name of her betrothed that were thirteen, and spelt them backwards, afterwards multiplying them by an equal number, and fashioning words from the

on their sound qualities, at least one of them, Baba Mustapha, is a direct allusion to a character in "Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves." In that tale, Baba Mustapha is the nosy cobbler who eventually sews up the carcass of Cassim Baba once he is killed by the robbers.

Similarly, in selecting a barber who gets thwacked for no apparent reason (or so it seems to him), Meredith is loosely following a cycle of stories told by a barber in the Arabian Nights, conflating elements from each of the different narratives. The general pattern of these narratives involves an old hag who invites a young man to adventure. Inevitably he is humiliated, often undergoing bodily disfigurement, as the titles suggest. For example, in the tale of the "How El-Haddar Lost His Beard," an old woman

selection of every third and seventh letter" (290). After some more magic, "it was revealed to her that Shibli Bagarag bore now a name that might be uttered by none, for that the bearer of it had peered through the veil of the ferrying figure in Aklis."

Ian Fletcher has some rather perplexing comments regarding the names. He attempts to define what they mean according to their meaning in Arabic or Persian. Hence, he tells us that Shibli has no meaning in Persian, but that it means "young lion" in Arabic. Noorna is a composite of two words meaning "light ray" or "light beam" while Karaz "in the Persian bifurcates into kar, 'work' or 'business dealings,' while az means 'from' while raz represents 'secret' or 'cherished desire.'" (63)

For Fletcher, the names are significant although he concedes that there is no evidence that Meredith had access to a "polygot dictionary comprising Arabic and Persian with transliterations and translations into English." (63). Consequently, I tend to believe that the names were selected more for their sound qualities and general playfulness than anything else.

unsuspecting victim by playing on his vanity and suggesting that he will have the chance to make love to beautiful women and acquire great wealth if he but follow her. Instead, once he arrives at their home, the beauties ask if they can shave his beard, to which he agrees, despite the fact that being clean-shaven is not permitted in Arabic society.⁴ Eventually he is publicly humiliated. Similarly, in Shagpat, Noorna is an old hag who entices Shibli to his great adventure.

Other allusions in Shagpat to specific Arabian Nights tales occur. For example, during his adventure, Shibli is given a magical bar through which he can see distant places. A similar object is found in one of the most popular Arabian Nights narratives, one which Brontë used, "Prince Ahmed and the Fairy Peri-Banou." Likewise, other artifacts that Meredith employs have their parallels in the Nights. The gown that renders the wearer invisible is very like the cap of invisibility in "Hasan and the Bird Maiden." The transformation of the genie Karaz into the troublesome flea is taken from the tale of Camaralzaman in which the fairy Maimoune changes herself into a flea to awaken the sleeping

⁴Lane discusses the importance of shaving within Arab culture. He notes that while shaving facial hair is not done, "the head of the male is frequently shaven, a tuft of hair is generally left on the crown, and commonly for several years another also over the forehead" (Arabian Society 191-192). Furthermore, one of the most important duties of a father was to have his son's head shaven for the first time. Since this is the custom, it is apparent that Shibli's profession is an honorable one, and that Shagpat's refusal to allow his head to be shaved is an indication that he is violating strong cultural norms.

prince. The giant bird, Koorookh, who transports Shibli, Noorna and others in the course of their adventure, carrying "the seven youths and the Princess and Shibli Bagarag...under its feathers like a brood of water-fowl" (275), closely resembles the giant rukh of the Sindbad stories which is able to carry baby elephants to its nest where they are fed to the infants.

Based on these textual allusions and his style, it is apparent that Meredith clearly knew the conventions of the Arabian Nights when he wrote The Shaving of Shagpat. In alluding to the Arabian Nights in his imitation, Meredith creates an intertextual relationship between them that succeeds in doing two things simultaneously. First, he "reactivates" the original source by emphasizing those features which he borrows, establishing a "tradition" which links his text with the original, as well as with other imitations. Second, he introduces into his own narrative echoes of another "voice," establishing what one modern critic has termed a "dialogical" structure (Ross 77).

Both Weinsheimer and Jenny argue that "traditionizing" is an important feature of imitative literature, a form which has been undervalued by contemporary critics. For example, Weinsheimer argues that many critics regard imitators as mere copyists since the critics have been dominated by the bias of "originalism," which maintains that imitation is a "tired joke" promoting something "once more"

(50). Advocates of "originalism" believe that "The highest praise of genius is original invention" (52). In contrast, Weinsheimer insists that imitation is essential to the tradition of literature. He maintains that "true" literature is that literature which is imitated; "false" literature is that which is limited to the time in which it was written. True literature is "fertile," begetting more like itself; false literature is a historical curiosity:

Likewise the truth of the original depends upon its value, to the present and the future; if it has none, it need be addressed to no one. The regard which literature invites arises in great measure from its influence on futurity, on its being imitated--known, applied, transmitted, and so demonstrated thereby to be once valuable and true. (169)

Similarly, Jenny admits, "pure repetition does not exist"; "The author repeats in order to encircle, to enclose within another discourse, thus rendered more powerful. He speaks in order to obliterate, to cancel" (59). While speaking in different contexts, both critics see imitation as a form of rejuvenation, an attempt to "avert the triumph of the cliché" (Jenny 59). Hence, through his imitation, Meredith succeeds in giving new life to the original text.

Furthermore, in writing an imitation, Meredith establishes what Mikhail Bakhtin has called a "dialogical" model of discourse, that is, there is "the presence of another voice" in Shagpat behind the one that readers are hearing, a voice which can "warp" the focused text (Ross 77). Readers understand that the more modern novel can be

only fully understood when seen in its relationship to the original with which it shares many features; the pretext remains as a part of the structure of the new work. In this sense, the misattribution of Meredith's earlier critics takes on importance because their attempts to see Shagpat as only related to English and classical sources distort the reader's perception of how it relates to the Arabian Nights. The "voices" those critics hear are from England and Rome, not Arabia and the desert, and their understandings are therefore quite different from those readers who acknowledge an Eastern source as the foundation for Meredith's novel. And while it is certainly possible that Meredith's novel is an intermingling of many "voices," the critics have obscured how faithfully he evokes the textures, images, and structures of the Arabian Nights.

Sensuality. As my introduction argues, much of the appeal of the Arabian Nights lies in its sensuality and sexuality. We have seen how other Victorians, specifically William Morris and Charlotte Brontë, used these themes. In the case of Meredith, however, the sensual detail is interwoven into the narrative so that it is not as much the theme as it is the landscape in which the action takes place. In his imagery, especially that related to serpents and flowers, Meredith sidesteps the restrictions on subject matter that so plagued his contemporaries. Rather than providing scenes

of lovemaking as does the original Arabian Nights, Meredith's imitation echoes it in providing imagery that suggests more than it shows.

As Prickett's study of Victorian fantasy shows, the discussion of the irrational was suppressed during that age. Since writers lacked a vocabulary with which to approach such matters, they turned to fantasy as an outlet. Since fantasy did not adhere to the tenets of realism, it afforded writers opportunities for a surrogate language with which to discuss sexuality and other unconscious drives. Although it is difficult to determine the extent to which individual authors were conscious of these themes in their work, it is obvious to modern readers that the "innocent" fairy tales of the Victorian age were anything but that; the stories contain a tremendous amount of both implicit and explicit sexuality. This is certainly true of Shagpat, for in its supernatural imagery it depicts events which are sexually suggestive.

On the whole, Shagpat is a chaste novel. The principal lovers, Noorna and Shibli, do little more than kiss and embrace although they are betrothed in a culture that would have allowed them much more familiarity at that point. Since the novel primarily concerns the "mastering of an event," their love for one another is instrumental since it provides an opportunity and reason for them to work together. While their marriage occurs at the novel's

conclusion, it is merely a byproduct of Shibli's success, not his ultimate objective.

Thus, while the frame narrative is essentially tame by modern standards and certainly acceptable to Victorian tastes, there are other sections of the novel that violate the rules of Victorian propriety. Not surprisingly, the most sustained examples of eroticism take place in the embedded tale of "Bhanavar the Beautiful," which involves the destructive effects of a woman's beauty. Early in this story, Meredith presents the image of Bhanavar and her first lover as they meet near the lake:

and he folded her to him, and those two would fondle together in the fashion of betrothed ones (the blessing of Allah be on them all!), gazing on each other till their eyes swam with tears, and they were nigh swooning with the fullness of their bliss. (29)

In case readers should let their imaginations dwell on this scene and draw the wrong conclusion, the next sentence reads, "Surely 'twas an innocent and tender dalliance." Here Meredith acknowledges Victorian respectability in refusing to allow these lovers the sport which the original Nights would have allowed them, although he does include a line indicating a divine benediction on their embraces, an endorsement we have seen to be favored within the Arabian Nights. Even in a scene that closely follows this one, one in which Bhanavar lies naked among her handmaidens, there is little suggestion of eroticism. We recall that many painters of Oriental themes during the Victorian era

emphasized the lesbianism of the harem in their work.

Meredith's prose is far removed from that:

So they undressed her and she lay among them, and was all night even as a bursting rose in a vase filled with drooping lilies; and one of the maidens that put her hand on the left breast of Bhanavar felt it full, and the heart beneath it panting and beating swifter than the ground is struck.... (33)

However, once Bhanavar succumbs to her temptation to possess the Jewel and she becomes the Queen of the Serpents, the sexual imagery intensifies. Among other things, she wears the jewel in "its warm bed in her bosom" (54) suggesting a heat that is missing from the earlier description. Similarly, she becomes entranced by her own nakedness in a manner that contrasts with her experience among the slaves. At one point she closely examines her naked body fearing a change in its appearance since her husband has momentarily left her (69).

One could argue that Meredith is taunting Victorian sensibility here in his depiction of nakedness, and that even in these passages he is more explicit about sex than his contemporaries; surely no one could miss the eroticism of the dance of Bhanavar with her serpents.⁵ In this

⁵This scene was depicted in the frontispiece to the second edition of Shagpat. The engraver, Frederick Sandys, prepared original studies which show Bhanavar naked (Frederick Sandys 48). Years later, the depiction of Bhanavar so pleased a friend of Meredith that she asked for a copy, and Meredith commissioned a duplicate from Sandys in 1894 (see letters 302-303 in Frederick Sandys 49).

passage, Bhanavar has summoned her serpents "to delight her soul with the sight of her power." She:

rolled and sported madly among them, clutching them by the necks till their little red tongues hung out, and their eyes were as discolored blisters of venom. Then she arose, and her arms and neck and lips were blazed with the slime of the serpents, and she flung off her robes to the close-fitting silken inner vest looped across her bosom with pearls, and whirled in a mazy dance-measure among them, and sang melancholy melodies, making them delirious, fascinating them; and they followed her round and round, in twists and curves, with arched heads and stiffened tails; and the chamber swam like an undulating sea of shifting sapphire lit by the moon of midnight. Not before the moon of midnight was in the sky ceased Bhanavar sporting with the serpents, and she sank to sleep exhausted where they were. (88-89)

Few passages in Victorian literature could surpass the eroticism of this dance.

Once the novel leaves the Bhanavar narrative and returns to the frame story of Shibli and Noorna, the sexual imagery decreases substantially. There are, however, occasional echoes of the heightened sensuality in the recurring images of serpents and flowers throughout the novel. We recall from the discussion of the frame tale and Jane Eyre that Shahriyar spies his unfaithful wife amidst her garden flowers, thus establishing the association of women's free sexuality and flowers, an image that is therefore sinister. Hence, Meredith's frequent coupling of the seductive Bhanavar with flowers continues that

tradition.⁶ Therefore, even what might at first appear to be innocent scenes of flower imagery in Shagpat take on new significance. For example, the scene in which Khipil must suffer his punishment of smelling the non-existent flowers seems to have an altogether different meaning. Here:

Khipil plucked a handful of the nettles that were there in the place of flowers, and put his nose to them before Shahpesh, till his nose was reddened; and desire to rub waxed in him, and possessed him, and became a passion, so that he could scarce refrain from rubbing it even in the King's presence. And the King encouraged him to sniff and enjoy their fragrance, repeating the poet's words:

'Methinks I am a lover and a child,
A little child and happy lover, both!
When by the breath of flowers I am beguiled
From sense of pain, and lull'd in odorous
sloth.' (140)

The novel also returns to the harem images and examples of Arabian beauty in the section in which twenty-seven beauties attempt to seduce Shibli and forestall his mastery of the event. In this section, Shibli sprinkles some of his magic water on the women so that they are forced to confess their thoughts to him truthfully. Each in turn tells him that she

⁶Flower imagery is also associated with the other women as well. In an example of sustained imagery, the Princess Goorelka is associated with the Enchanted Lily (190), one of the objects which Shibli must obtain. His grabbing of her beating heart, which he literally wrenches from her bosom, is another of the most erotic scenes in the novel, combining an explicitly sexual scene with bloody violence (232-233). Similarly, Noorna associates herself with a flower in speaking about how she was found among strangers (199) and when she describes the infatuation of the genie Karaz (211). The hall with the beautiful women out to tempt Shibli is also referred to as "a very rose-garden of young beauties" (247).

would give herself to him sexually if he were but to ask. For example, one of the beauties says, "My heart is another's, I cannot be tender;/ Yet if thou storm it, I fain must surrender." Another tells him, "Sweet't is in stillness and bliss to lie basking!/ He who would have me may have for the asking" (248).

Meredith also exploits another image from the Nights, that of the sensuality of the bath, by depicting the nakedness shared by Noorna, who

went to the bath-room with Luloo, and at her bidding Luloo entered the bath beside Noorna naked, and the twain dipped and shouldered in the blue water, and Noorna splashed Luloo, and said, 'This night we shall not sleep together, O Luloo, nor lie close, thy bosom on mine.' (339)

As these examples demonstrate, Meredith certainly pushed the boundaries of the Victorian novel by using an Arabian Nights structure. It is unlikely that he could have been as sexually suggestive had he written a conventional Victorian novel. It would be decades before the Decadents and Aesthetes would challenge decorum in the way that Meredith anticipated. Using a fantasy imitation afforded him great imaginative freedom.

Noorna. Just as using the Arabian Nights model allowed Meredith greater thematic freedom, it allowed him greater freedom in characterization, especially of Noorna bin Noorka. In comparison to the typical heroines of the Victorian age, Noorna is exceptional. She is free in her

actions quite unlike any of her nineteenth-century sisters. She is truly a feminist precursor.

At the start of the novel, Noorna is everything that a typical heroine is not. Enchanted by Goorelka's sorceries, she appears to be an old hag so despicable in appearance that Shibli actually shuns her (15). Nonetheless, she approaches him with the lure of an adventure and in doing so, proposes that she will guide him in his quest: "Now I propose to thee this--and 'tis an excellent proposition--that I lead thee to great things, and make thee glorious, a sitter in high seats, Master of an Event" (17). As these lines reveal, Noorna intends to participate in this action. She will not merely be a passive woman awaiting his return. Rather, in very literal ways, she will lead him throughout his undertaking. Furthermore, she establishes the contract of their union: she will assist him only if he agrees to marry her, and she periodically demands kisses from him as a reminder of their pledge.

As the novel progresses, it becomes increasingly evident that Noorna surpasses Shibli in both knowledge and power. First, she has the use of magic and the resources of the genie Karaz. Second, she is able to avoid all of the temptations to which Shibli falls. Lacking his vanity, she sees that flattery can easily lead one astray. For example, she must counsel him against remaining on the Horse Garraveen once he has removed the three hairs. He defies

her, however, crying: "I will not alight from him!" (162). As he remains, "He gave no heed to her words, taunting her, and making the animal prance up and prove its spirit." Despite her warnings, he succumbs to his own egotistical pleasure instead, and, in doing so, must be rescued at great cost since his rash actions result in the loss of the genie Karaz. What this experience teaches him, however, is how thoroughly he needs Noorna. As she prepares to leave him, he says: "Leave me not, my betrothed: what am I without thy counsel? And go not from me, or this adventure will come to miserable issue" (164).

In her manifestation as the talking hawk, Noorna continually rescues Shibli from the snares of evil and temptation, especially those of vanity. For example, Shibli is readily deceived by the words of the sailor who flatters him by announcing, "thou art upon the track of great things, one chosen to bring about imminent changes" (168). In response to this speech, Shibli "puffed his chest, and straightened his legs like the cock, and was as a man upon whom the Sultan has bestowed a dress of honour, even as the plumed peacock" (169). What he does not see, however, is that the sailor is the evil Karaz in disguise, a fact that the talking hawk immediately recognizes. The hawk is described as having "eyes red as rubies, its beak sharp as the curve of a scimitar" (170), a fearful and warlike quality that is usually never associated with a woman. By

allowing Noorna to take on various shapes, thereby mixing the advantages of fantasy and feminism, Meredith is free to give her qualities that typical heroines would be denied. She can be brave and active and she can disregard the conventional attributes of femininity.

Initially, it is only when she is a hag or acting in a transformed state that she can act heroically. Yet at the conclusion of the novel, Meredith allows Noorna to be both beautiful and active, especially in her display of great physical dexterity. For example, at one point she must rescue Shibli and Abarak. Quite literally she draws them to her bosom as they almost drown:

but she, knotting her garments round the waist to give her limbs freedom and divine swiftness, ran a space, and then bent and plunged, catching as she rose the foremost to her bosom, and whirled away under the flashing crystals like a fish scaled with splendors that hath darted and seized upon a prey.... (292)

Her rescue of Shibli reanimates his desire to master an event. As he lies against her bosom, he tells her father, "This thy daughter, the Eclipser of Reason, was ever such a prize as she? I will deserve her. Wullahy! I am now a new man, sprung like fire from weak ashes. Lo, I am revived by her for the great work" (297).

This unusual strength is seen most effectively in the novel's conclusion, for there she must use not only her wit and cunning, but also her physical power, even though her "role" is presumably a passive one. In contrast to her

father who hesitates in action ("so thirsted he for the Event, yet hung with dread from advancing"), she enters the fray: "Then she smote her hands, and cried, 'Yea! though I lose my beauty and the love of my betrothed, I must join this, or he'll be lost" (374). She is not at all a reluctant heroine: she prefers the active life. So while she joins the fight, managing to deflect the power of Karaz who pinions her to a pillar, Shibli successfully shaves Shagpat, thereby mastering the event. In the confusion that follows, a scorpion stings Noorna and she is saved only through magical intervention.

In this characterization, Meredith certainly introduces a new mode of female heroism. While we have seen that Jane Eyre achieves mastery through narration, Noorna does it through physical strength. She is an active agent, never content to remain on the sidelines. In this manner, she follows the tradition of female heroism in the Arabian Nights. For example, in "Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves," the slave Morgiana displays great cunning in helping her master outwit the thieves hiding in the caskets. Similarly, in the tale of Camaralzaman, the Princess Badoura displays such strength and understanding during her impersonation of a man that she is proclaimed Sultan, a role which lasts for several months. In addition, there are powerful female fairies and genii and a race of Amazons who rule themselves.

Using an Arabian Nights model for his heroine allowed Meredith much greater narrative power than he would have had if he had used an English model. He was able to give Noorna magical powers as well as freedom of action not associated with women in earlier English literature in which female characters traditionally had circumscribed social roles. We recall, for example, that William Morris rejected the androgyny of the Arabian Nights by insisting upon an English model for his own heroine. In direct contrast to him, Meredith preferred the more permissive Eastern woman, giving himself a real advantage. As with the suggestive imagery, the imitation of the Arabian Nights afforded Meredith great flexibility.

Analogous Relationships

Embedded Elements. As we have seen throughout this study, one of Scheherazade's survival strategies is the use of embedded narratives. They ensure the theme of the perpetual narrative by postponing endings, as well as reflexively commenting on her own tale. On the other hand, the embedded poems in the Arabian Nights amplify the feelings or thoughts of the characters. Similarly, The Shaving of Shagpat employs embedded poems and songs which are reflexive of the main action of the novel, and which do not advance the main plot, that of Shibli's mastery of the event. Hence, knowing how the embedded structures in the Arabian Nights operate

helps us to understand the function of the embedded elements in Shagpat in the same way that knowing generic conventions assists in understanding any new work which employs them. This approach will demonstrate that Meredith's "voice" sings in unison with the original by following the same melody.

George Eliot was the first critic to recognize the importance of these lyrical elements in the novel. In her reviews, she argues that they serve several functions. They give emphasis, allow more intense expressions of passion, and finally, elevate the descriptive passages (28).

Likewise, Lindsay argues that the poems introduce a "mass effect" into the narrative. Since the verses are presumably from sources other than the speaker, they represent the "distilled wisdom of the centuries of suffering and struggling men" (69). He maintains that the verses suggest the universality of the experiences which the protagonists undertake.

In addition to embedded poetry and songs, there are several lengthy embedded narratives. The most noteworthy embedded story is the ninety-four page story of "Bhanavar the Beautiful" which is introduced after only twenty-six pages of the main narrative. Others include the stories of Khopil the Builder's punishment, Noorna and the genie Karaz, and the Vizier's recitation. Similarly, the embedded stories in the novel all are reflexive since they mirror the action

of the main narrative and in so doing, directly comment on it. I shall examine two of them in particular, "Bhanavar the Beautiful"⁷ and "The Punishment of Khipil," to show how they mirror the novel, and also how they contribute to the novel's meaning.

Shibli personally introduces the story of Bhanavar by directly associating it with his own experiences with Noorna. At this point Noorna is an old hag, but she has begun her transformation into a beautiful woman. She sits arrayed in splendor with her father as Shibli thinks to himself, "Surely the aspect of this old woman [Noorna] would realize the story of Bhanavar the Beautiful; and it is a story marvelous to think of; yet how great is the likeness between Bhanavar and this old woman that groweth younger!" (25). These lines direct readers to draw parallels between the two women.

As the story of Bhanavar progresses, this association becomes more striking, for both Noorna and Bhanavar are the victims of enchantment. While the details of Noorna's story are withheld until much later, even her early appearance is clearly not a normal one since she acts younger than the

⁷Fletcher briefly discusses some parallels between the Bhanavar section and the main story. He interprets the embedded story to be a satire against Romanticism and its idealization of the Fatal Woman. He suggests that the women characters in Meredith's novel have their identities thrust on them by men; they are not allowed true selfhood.

However, since his approach is thematic, he neglects to see the structural similarities between all the embedded narratives and the main story.

old woman she appears to be. The novel reveals that her "real" face is beautiful, whereas her external appearance is, at first, repellent and forbidding. On the contrary, the story of Bhanavar shows the opposite: the beauty of Bhanavar is deceptive, for her "real" self is the haggish woman. Unless she sacrifices a lover annually to the serpents, she cannot retain her beauty. Both stories concern transformation. Noorna changes from the hag into the beauty; Bhanavar changes from the beauty into the hag.

Similarly, both women seduce men into adventure, but to different ends. Noorna invites Shibli to "master an event" which he eventually does to his great honor, while Bhanavar invites her first lover to steal the Jewel, quickly resulting in his death. All her subsequent lovers also suffer; although she truly loves Almeryl, he is slain because her beauty has prompted the jealousy of several other men who desire her for themselves.

Both women possess prophetic power, but the ultimate significance of their power is quite different. In recollecting her history, Noorna describes a dream: one night she saw incredible events in the heavens including stars that moved together and a comet that lost its luster as it darted across the horizon. She interprets the sights she saw as the defeat of Shagpat and concludes that she will be an instrument in his overthrow:

Now when my soul recovered from amazement at the
marvels seen, I arose and went from the starry

roofs to consult my books of magic, and 'twas revealed to me that one was wandering to a junction with my destiny, and that by his means the great aim would of a surety be accomplished-- Shagpat Shaved! (131)

In Noorna's case the dream proves to be true. So does the dream that Bhanavar has: Bhanavar dreams about herself as a great "red whirlwind of the desert" that wreaks havoc, bringing "great folds of darkness across kingdoms and empires of earth where joy was and peace of spirit." The dream so distresses her that she awakens (47). It is, however, truly prophetic, for her beauty ultimately causes great destruction. Similarly, while both women possess magical powers, they use them differently. Noorna always uses her power to further the quest, to help Shibli in his mastery of the event, whereas Bhanavar uses her powers over the serpents ultimately to murder and destroy. To retain her beauty, she sacrifices everyone who has loved her.

Just as the embedded story of Bhanavar comments on the character of Noorna, and ultimately on the theme of womanly beauty, the embedded tale, "And This Is the Punishment of Shahpesh, the Persian, on Khipil the Builder," reflects on the main narrative of Shibli. Just as Shibli introduces the Bhanavar story in association with Noorna, the Vizeer tells the story of Khipil to Noorna and Shibli as an exemplum. It is a direct comment on their inability to begin their quest. Having left them alone for a time during which he has worked behind the scenes to secure some help for their undertaking,

the Vizeer returns home to discover that they have not yet begun their job. He says to them, "ye that were left alone for debating as to the great deed, ye have not yet deliberated as to that! Is't known to ye, O gabblers, aught of the punishment inflicted by Shahpesh, the Persian, on Khipil the Builder?" (133-34).

His story concerns a builder who has procrastinated for fourteen years over his task, that of building the King's palace. Instead of working, Khipil wastes time "reciting to them adventures, interspersed with anecdotes and recitations and poetic instances, as was his wont" (135). Finally Khipil's constant delay angers even the king. By way of punishment, the King and Khipil go on a walking tour of the unfinished palace. Everywhere they go, the King pretends that the building is completed, and he forces Khipil to participate in his charade. For example, he makes Khipil sit for hours haunched on his legs as though he were really sitting on a finished throne. Khipil cannot move until his time is up or archers will shoot him. Similarly, he is forced to smell weeds growing in the unfinished garden as though they were flowers.

The implied comparison to Shibli is apt since Khipil and Shibli are analogous. Frequently Shibli fantasizes about the future, to the glory that he will achieve when he masters an event, rather than to the tasks he must accomplish beforehand, namely, procuring the magic artifacts

instead of starting his quest. Thus, Khopil's narrative is clearly reflexive to the main action. No matter what meaning the reader may assign to Shibli's quest, it is clear that it cannot be undertaken except by industry and action. Simply talking about it as though it were finished will not do.

In these examples, we have seen how Meredith reflects on the characters and action that he is creating in the main quest narrative. Instead of functioning as digressions, these embedded narratives evaluate the action before us. Similarly, the embedded narrative, "And This Is the Case of Rumdrum, A Reader of Planets, That Was A Barber," anticipates the successful mastering of the event, the shaving of Shagpat, and the rightful honor given to a barber. In the other short narratives which Meredith includes, those of Noorna and the Vizeer, he amplifies on past action. For example, we learn what has caused Noorna's enchantment and why she is so ugly. We also learn in the Vizeer's story how events have progressed during Shibli's absence. Through these nested narratives, Meredith enlarges the main story. By imitating the structure of the Arabian Nights, he expands his narrative in a non-linear way. Similarly, we, as readers, come to understand how the embedded structures in the two novels are analogous.

Shagpat's Meaning. Just as understanding the relationship of the parts to the whole (in this case, the embedded elements and the entire novel) helps readers to understand how the novel "works," understanding another parallelism helps us to more clearly understand the novel's meaning, one that has eluded most critics. Perhaps the best indication of the confusion regarding the meaning of The Shaving of Shagpat is seen in the comments Meredith himself made throughout his lifetime regarding it. From his correspondence, it is obvious that he grew impatient and angered by the attempts to fix a particular meaning to his narrative. He understood its problematic nature, but was upset by adverse criticisms.

Meredith recognized that the novel was not to everyone's taste. He frankly admitted that many readers abandoned it after a few pages. Writing to a friend in 1859, he remarked, "But it is ten to one against your being able to read it [Shagpat]. I have known kindly persistent people defeated very early in the opening pages. And in truth the main story is too much spun out" (41).⁸ Four years later, he commented to his American publishers regarding the book: "Those who like it like it greatly; though I am bound to admit it is a little caviare to our multitude" (234).

⁸Despite her generally high regard for the novel, George Eliot also admitted that the novel is overly complicated. I agree with her assessment: it takes great determination to follow the plot. Reading the conclusion is very much like seeing a Saturday morning cartoon show in which characters rush frantically around. Nothing stops long enough for a viewer to focus.

Meredith's acknowledgment that the book was difficult to read and understand was largely a reaction to the popular belief that there was some hidden truth behind the wildly fantastic tale, that it must represent something other than an entertainment. In the "Preface to the Second Edition" (1865), Meredith attacked this popular belief by noting that

the Allegory must be rejected altogether. The subtle Arab who conceived *Shagpat* meant either very much more, or he meant less; and my belief is, that, designing in his wisdom simply to amuse, he attempted to give a larger embrace to time than is possible to the profound dispenser of Allegories, which are mortal; which, to be of any value, must be perfectly clear, and, when perfectly clear, are as little attractive as Mrs. Malaprop's reptile.

Nonetheless, Meredith appears to have contradicted himself in several letters which he wrote to friends about the novel. In 1888, for example, twenty-two years after its publication, he answered the inquiry of a friend who had asked for "some enlightenment" on the meaning of Shagpat: "The author's masquerade was assumed with occidental earnestness under an oriental gravity: but I fancy that he did incline to play with ideas behind it" (937). Perhaps half in jest he later wrote to another friend about it in 1892:

Wonderful to hear that there is a woman who can read of *Shagpat*! I suppose he does wear a sort of allegory. But it is not as a dress-suit; rather as a dressing-gown, very loosely.... I think I once knew more about ... the meaning, but I have forgotten, and am glad to forget, seeing how abused I have been for having written the book. (1095)

Even George Eliot addressed the issue of the book's possible meaning, although in her review for The Leader she concluded, "our imagination is never chilled by a sense of allegorical intention predominating over poetic creation" (27-28).

However, early critics of the novel not only insisted on reading it as pure allegory, but they even went so far as to disregard Meredith's own views on the matter. Where he had hinted that its allegorical meaning was a "loose dressing-gown," they substituted literal correspondences between the characters and certain values or abstractions. For example, both Henderson and James McKechnie saw Shibli as a "reformer" contending with abuse. Hence, they relate every incident in the novel to Shibli's ability to master corruption or other moral failings. While I would certainly accept that individual sections of the novel may have allegorical significance, the novel as a whole fails to sustain their strictly allegorical readings since their analyses strain textual incidents considerably.

More recently, critics such as Walter Wright and Barbara Kerr Davis have rejected a strictly allegorical approach, preferring to see the novel as more suggestive than literal. They relate the book to later novels which Meredith wrote by identifying two themes in it that later became important to the novelist: the mastery of egoism, and the defeat of illusion which otherwise can destroy an

individual. Ian Fletcher follows them, but rather than looking forward, he looks to literary precursors. He places Shagpat in the tradition of the "neo-classical mock epic," and establishes parallels that exist between Shagpat and other literary works like the Dunciad and Paradise Lost. In his view, Shibli's triumph represents a new order which defeats the old order represented by Shagpat. Comparing Shibli to other classical heroes, Fletcher rejects the idea that the novel is allegorical since that would demand accepting stable values for the "meaning" of the characters and events. Most recently, in 1983, Joseph Moses argued that Shagpat is an exercise in literary irony. He maintains that Meredith examines the nature of illusions that confront all men as they struggle to give meaning to their lives. While he does not develop an allegorical reading, he nonetheless concludes that the novel teaches us that "Illusion is at the same time evil and necessary, just as man's noblest aspiration is to see through that which is false and illusory while still retaining enough faith to sustain himself and the worth of his enterprises" (111).

While each of these critics, especially Moses, has something of interest to say about Meredith's novel, they fail to consider how its imitative form contributes to its meaning. The fact that Meredith chose to pattern his first novel after a familiar form is significant. As we have noted, Weinsheimer insists that imitations rejuvenate the

forms from which they borrow by revealing their timelessness. Consequently, the "meaning" of an imitative work is, at least partially, related to the "meaning" of an earlier text. He observes that the meaning of the imitation is "not identical with the old, clearly, but not entirely discontinuous with it either" (Weinsheimer 115).

Using Weinsheimer's notion, that there is a continuity of meaning between a source text and its imitations, we can analyze The Shaving of Shagpat in terms of the book it imitates. This interpretation can be justified if we keep in mind that Meredith's "allegory" is a "loose" - fitting one. If we do not insist on exact correspondences between characters or events in the story and their referents, we will see that Meredith suggests more than he dramatizes. Meredith's comments regarding Shibli's mastery of the event are a comment on the act of writing his tale. They pertain to more than questing in general. Thus, one "meaning" of the novel concerns its own composition history.

We have seen that the Arabian Nights is essentially about the act of storytelling. Just as Scheherazade describes other storytellers who defeat their antagonists through narration, The Shaving of Shagpat is about its own composition. Shagpat itself "masters an event" just as the story describes such an action. The novel establishes an analogous relationship between Shibli and the author of Shagpat. Thus, both "master an event" by defeating the

believers in the Identical. Each must complete a task in order to achieve heroic stature despite all the temptations, including those of vanity and imagination, that exist along the way. Each must heed the advice of the poets in order to accomplish his intention. Thus, everything that Meredith says about Shibli can be seen to pertain to the author himself since Shibli functions as Meredith's alter ego.

This association is apparent in the imagery which Meredith uses to metaphorically compare Shibli's actions and those of literary composition. For example, Shibli begins his story of Bhanavar shortly after he accepts the challenge from Noorna to "master an event." His narrative is quite long, and by the time it is completed, it will represent almost one-third of the entire length of the novel. Thus, although Shibli is ostensibly a man of "heroic" action, he tells tales. Not surprisingly, then, since he is as much a storyteller as anything else, Shibli uses metaphoric language to emphasize this role. For example, after the incredibly complicated undertakings that finally result in his acquiring the Sword of Aklis, Shibli realizes that he must confront the event before him. Before this he had been detoured by vanity and his imagination. He had wasted considerable time, and in the chapter, "The Plot," he finally resolves to complete his task: "The season of weakness with me is over, and they that confide in my strength, my cunning, my watchfulness, my wielding of the

sword, have nought but to fear for themselves. Now this is my plot, O Feshnavat" (311-312).

In this speech, the word "plot" can mean many things and have many different referents. For example, "The Plot" is, at first, merely the chapter title, taking its place beside the other self-defining ones which Meredith uses. On the other hand, "the plot" refers to the elaborate stratagem for shaving Shagpat; it is the plan which Shibli will undertake. On still another level, though, the term has a technical meaning for authorship. It is the narrative sequence of events in a novel. Thus, when Shibli tells us MY plot, he is simultaneously revealing Meredith's plot of the novel in which Shibli is a character.

Similarly, shortly thereafter, Shibli says, "'Tis well! The second chapter of the Event is opened; so call it, thou that tellest of the Shaving of Shagpat. It will be the shortest" (319). Here again the language suggests authorship, specifically a section of a written fictional account. On one level, Shibli's remarks are addressed to future tellers of his tale since the novel begins by announcing: "Ripe with oft telling and old is the tale" (1), which suggests that Shibli's quest has been frequently transmitted. On another level, however, the remarks are addressed to the current author of Shagpat who, like Khipil, has strayed from his task with his digressions. He is, in effect, advising himself through Shibli's words that he had

better return to narrating the action at hand and end his story or, like Khopil, he will never finish what he has undertaken. Instead, along with Khopil, he will be associated with the "palace of the Wagging Tongue" (143). As Khopil procrastinated by telling tales, Meredith has simply let his unrestrained imagination run wild. Just as Shibli rode the wild horse too long, the author of Shagpat has become smug in his own achievement. He too is vain enough to think that he can continue to ride his narrative, showing off before us. In addition, Shibli's remarks are prophetic in that the "second chapter" of his quest parallels the second section of the novel: both represent a little over sixty pages of text. Compared to the ninety-four page "digression" of the Bhanavar story, the conclusion actually is quite short.

Furthermore, once Shibli has resolved to complete the task, he accepts the wisdom provided by the poets who instruct him about his behavior. Virtually everything that they say to Shibli also can apply to the author. For example, the poets advise Shibli to be steadfast (23), persistent (312), and constant (337) in his undertakings if he wants to succeed. They tell him to learn from past mistakes, and to look to his "shield" as well as to his sword for protection. Most importantly, they advise him that in order to succeed, he must endure "thwackings" by his enemies. They note,

Lo! of hundreds who aspire,
 Eighties perish--nineties tire!
 They who bear up, in spite of wrecks and wracks,
 Were season'd by celestial hail of thwacks.

Fortune in this mortal race
 Builds on thwackings for its base;
 Thus the All-Wise doth make a flail a staff
 And separates his heavenly corn from chaff. (380)

Earlier, Shibli had been told:

If thou wouldst fix remembrance--thwack!
 'Tis that oblivion controls,
 I care not if it be on the back,
 Or on the soles. (227)

Similarly, the author should heed that advice. No matter how inspired a man is, the ultimate artist is the one who finishes the task. He is also the man who relies on both defensive and offensive strategies to succeed, and who successfully endures all the criticism leveled against him.

In addition to offering general advice which might apply to virtually any undertaking, the poets advise Shibli about undertakings that seem particularly literary in nature. In their adages, the poets offer their wisdom regarding the "composition" of Shibli's task. Their metaphoric comparisons emphasize the parallelism between what Shibli is doing and what Meredith does. Furthermore, their advice establishes how any apprentice writer inevitably looks to earlier writers for counsel. For example, a poet warns Shibli, "Ye that intrigue, to thy slaves proper portions adapt;/ Perfectest plots burst too often, for all are not apt" (314). Here, the poet counsels

for moderation, "proper portion [ing]," and the acceptance of imperfection in the "plot," because if it is too elaborate, it may "burst." This advice seems a reasonable scolding for the author to inflict upon himself, for thus far he has been much too elaborate in his undertakings, creating overly complicated narratives that succeed in going nowhere although doing so beautifully.

Similarly, a few sentences later Shibli is told, "To master an Event/ Study men!/ The minutes are well spent/ Only then" (314). This injunction recalls that earlier Shibli had misused his magical powers by commanding the fountains to speak while men were available who could have answered his questions just as well, a fact which the fountains point out to him when they tell him how he should not waste his magic (168). Taken together, these maxims suggest that "plots" advance only if more attention to "men" is paid. The writer must learn from them, rather than relying on inanimate objects or magic. Presumably the aspiring novelist must realize that too much imagination or inventive power will be purposeless. A little realism can temper overindulgence in fancy.

If we accept that the reflexive nature of the novel loosely associates Shibli with an author, we can see how their quests are parallel. An author is forced to suffer the humiliation of being unappreciated by men who value the Identical, or sameness in art. Readers of this sort are

quite unwilling to have anyone strip them of their illusions as an author can, particularly one who points to their false value systems. They prefer the complacency of worshipping the all-powerful Identical, whose power is best dramatized at the conclusion of the novel. Here the Identical assumes mammoth proportions, burning for three days and nights, while the people below fast in anticipation of the defeat of barbering. The tempo of the verse in which the poet expresses their enthusiasm is almost frantic:

Their eyeballs glisten'd, while the pride
of Shagpat, from his cushion'd throne,
Awe to inspire,
Proclaim it! Proclaim it!
Rose in fire,
That none might shame it;
Rose in fire,
Proclaim it! Proclaim it!
Up to the zenith, and illumed the zone. (364)

Meredith metaphorically describes the enormous power that the Identical possesses in its domination of the people who simply bow in awe before it. No matter what it ultimately represents, it is huge and forbidding. The fowls of the air fly around it with screams and mad flutters, thus suggesting its additional power over nature. Taken allegorically, the Identical destroys the power of men to think independently. They must act in a mass before it.

Taken all together, the frequent poetic advice embedded in the novel tell Shibli, the author, and ultimately the readers, the "meaning" of the quest. Instead of focusing on the importance of what it is that Shibli accomplishes, the

ultimate shaving of Shagpat, the novel shows us the "how," that is, the manner in which great undertakings (and great works of literature) are done. In fact, relatively little space in the novel is devoted to the actual defeat of Shagpat. Instead, far more space is given to the quest itself. Quests inevitably involve chastisement, temptations that must be overcome, and a sense of mission that must be reanimated periodically. What a quest achieves is less important than the attitude of the person who is involved in it. Only when he understands the rigors of the task at hand, can he truly "master an event."

Thus, we see that virtually everything undertaken by Shibli has simultaneously been undertaken by the author. Just as Shibli used his magic waters to make his tackle speak to convince the king of his power, Meredith has made his prose and poetry, his tackle, speak to us. His tackle convinces us of his narrative power. Similarly, just as Shibli and Noorna skillfully used the "evil tools" at their discretion to overcome temptation and to obtain the Sword of Aklis (149), Meredith has used dangerous tools in his undertaking, especially unrestrained imagination. While serving good ends, they can be used poorly; they can simply get out of hand.

If we accept this parallelism, we conclude that, at least on some level, The Shaving of Shagpat is an allegory

about its own creation. It is a story in which the author chastises himself, obtains magic objects, and defeats his enemies with his Sword. Remembering the long honored association of the sword and the pen, we see that Meredith "shaves" the Shagpats of the world who worship sameness or the Identical in life, who fear originality or the unconventional. Just as Shibli's sword had proven to be illuminating (274), Meredith's pen has enlightened readers about conformity.

Furthermore, Meredith's book uses an imitative form to defeat mere duplication, more "identicalness" in copying a popular format. He succeeds in reanimating the eternal truths of the Arabian Nights by polishing the faded metallic surface of the original. At the same time, Meredith also borrows the "voice" of the original by inserting it into his own novel. As an intertext for his own work, the Victorian Arabian Nights is always "present" in his writing. Paradoxically, however, The Shaving of Shagpat also demonstrates its own originality while it revitalizes the Eastern text.

CHAPTER SIX

ROLLING UP THE MAGIC CARPET

Joy spread through the palace of the King until it became diffused throughout the city, and it was a night not to be reckoned among lives: its colour was whiter than the face of day. The King rose in the morning happy, and with prosperity inundated;...Then he conferred robes of honour upon all the wezeers and emeers and lords of the empire, and gave orders to decorate the city thirty days... "The Fortune That Befell Shahrazád" (962)

Throughout this dissertation I have been concerned with intertextuality, that is, the relationship of selected Victorian texts to the Arabian Nights, a collection of medieval Arabic fairy tales. In each chapter, I examined differing approaches to the integration of textual material taken from one source used in another. Although the approaches taken by these Victorian authors do not encompass all the possible methods of textual integration, their uses are representative and demonstrate a growing complexity of organization, and ultimately, meaning. Furthermore, their approaches also suggest different degrees of pretextual "visibility," to borrow a phrase from Laurent Jenny.

Starting with Charles Dickens, who alluded to selected tales using the transformational patterns of synecdoche, inversion, and assimilation, I examined isolated instances of textual borrowing. Next, I discussed the presences and absences in the use of Arabian Nights source material by Christina Rossetti and William Morris, who nonetheless retained much of the original material in their reshaped narrative poems. Then I examined subtextual patterns that structured both the juvenilia and a mature novel, Jane Eyre, of Charlotte Brontë, whose borrowings formed networks between the individual citations. I eventually moved to the imitative form of George Meredith, whose The Shaving of Shagpat borrowed not only verbal and structural patterns, but also the "meaning" of the original Arabian Nights. By knowing the form he was using, I was able to identify certain patterns emerging in his novel that parallel those used in the Arabian Nights.

Despite the methods employed by each of these authors, which has justified differing approaches to analysis, there are some commonalities that apply to all the writers, dealing with both theories of intertextuality and with the specific texts in question. In this chapter, I shall briefly summarize these similarities.

Intertextuality. As we have seen repeatedly in this study, textual production is never the action of a solitary

individual who composes in isolation. Like all language systems, writing is a complex interaction, drawing upon what has gone before to enrich and expand the new text. As Jenny notes, this "echo effect" allows for "literary readability," for without it, a "literary work would simply be unintelligible, like speech in a language one has not yet learned" (34). He explains,

We grasp the meaning and structure of a literary work only through its relation to archetypes which are themselves abstracted from long series of texts of which they are, so to speak, the invariants. These archetypes, each deriving from a 'literary act', encode the usages of that 'secondary language'... which we call 'literature'." (34)

This implies that the relationship between texts should always be important to the literary critic, and that one valid task of criticism should be the investigation of the ways in which texts speak to and of one another, the ways in which they establish a literary language. Recognizing that a text's meaning is clearly a function of its relatedness to other texts is a critical truth that bears examination, especially in Victorian literature which purposefully announced its reliance on previous texts through structural devices such as headnotes and frequent allusions.

As we have seen in the introduction to this study, this attitude regarding the importance of intertextuality is new, having been articulated during the last decade. Until very recently, contemporary critics have been dominated by

the New Criticism which insisted on the autonomy of the text and which only reluctantly saw a text in relationship to anything but itself. These critics refused to acknowledge the use of pretextual materials, preferring to "read" a text by closely examining its language and structures in isolation. For them, the "context" of a work of literature was always the text itself. Now, however, following the ideas of Julia Kristeva and Roland Barthes, critics acknowledge that the context of literature can be both discourse and culture, two broader considerations.

Yet, until studies like "The Strategy of Form" by Laurent Jenny, there has never been a systematic investigation of the various ways in which intertextuality operates within given texts. He has provided one of the few approaches to this subject, establishing both a methodology and a vocabulary. By using theories related to transformational grammar, he has demonstrated that the use of pretextual materials is never mere "word substitution"; it is a process of adaptation by which one text changes the language and form of the original to suit its own needs and conventions. Furthermore, it is also a process of rejuvenation which works against the "stagnation" of meaning; it attempts to reject a fixed signification of material (60). Jenny has amply shown how intertextual borrowing is a liberating process, one that frees meaning and which paradoxically allows the formation of traditions

without limiting textual possibilities. Thus, I have frequently relied on his discussion to establish my own analysis of specific texts.

In examining intertextuality, I have also shown the extent to which an individual author contributes to the process of intertextual transformation. While generic expectations can determine some aspects of textual integration, the individual author retains the power and authority to use the pretextual material according to his or her own needs and interests. Hence, the lives of these Victorian authors were also a factor in the manner in which they used the Arabian Nights. Rejecting the idea that the "author is dead," I have examined authorship in terms of conscious manipulation of outside material.

In his manipulation of source material, Charles Dickens mythologized the Arabian Nights. He celebrated its saving power, but, in doing so, distorted some of its characteristic attention to both sexuality and violence. Similarly, Christina Rossetti and William Morris also changed aspects of the original stories they borrowed. Rossetti mixed the Orientalism of the Arabian Nights with more orthodox Christian imagery in "The Dead City," creating her own personal exemplum of righteous behavior. Meanwhile, Morris expanded the significance of Lane's "Fifth Wezeer's Tale" in "The Man Who Never Laughed Again." He included socialist concerns over the

inequalities of wealth, and he rejected the androgyny of the original heroine, substituting a woman modelled after one in a chivalric romance, a substitution that has been read autobiographically. Like the other authors, Charlotte Brontë also employed pretextual material to complement personal concerns. She took two powerful agents of the Nights and transplanted them into her own writing. In her juvenilia, she used the genii and their remarkable powers to rule her universe, while in Jane Eyre, she modelled her own heroine after Scheherazade. In both cases, her interest in "genius" and the uses of imaginative power determined her use of outside material. Finally, The Shaving of Shagpat demonstrated Meredith's first attempts at imitative form and employment of fantasy structures as alternatives to the realism of the period.

The Use of the Arabian Nights. In examining this intertextuality, we have seen that while the relationship between texts can take many forms, it is also true that the texts themselves somewhat determine the manner in which later authors borrow the materials. For example, while it is possible for a contemporary author to "negate" the meaning of an earlier work, it is more likely that he will follow its lead, allowing his own work to share in the "richness and density" of the original (Jenny 45).

Thus, the characteristics of the Arabian Nights helped determine its interest and appeal to these Victorian writers, and their own historical circumstances affected the way in which they referred to the text. The Arabian Nights certainly was more than a popular book that interested them momentarily and then left their imaginations. Without exception, each of the authors we have studied read the book as a child, but retained his or her enthusiasm for it well into adulthood. It never lost its appeal for them, suggesting that it offered continuing textual possibilities for reworking and assimilation, not just nostalgic reminiscence.

This was largely a result of the book's content and particular form, for both were unique. In terms of content, the Victorians regarded the Nights as a storehouse of imagery and story from which they could borrow. Knowing their audience's familiarity with the work, they enriched their own writing by adding to it the echoes of an exotic foreign world. They could introduce the smells and textures of the middle East by a simple allusion, or they could develop more sustained correspondences by larger textual borrowings. Hence, the Nights became a "source text" for future reworkings, especially of sensual and imaginative detail unavailable elsewhere.

In addition, the Victorians recognized that the frame narrative to the Arabian Nights dramatized the enormous

powers of storytelling as an activity. What the collection emphasized was that the act of narration was as important as the message conveyed in the stories. Thus, the Victorians regarded Scheherazade as an active heroine who used her voice to conquer and dominate. Following her lead, they envisioned themselves as part of this tradition -- for them, storytelling became a means of empowerment, particularly to the extent that it freed the imagination from conventionality and conformity. Furthermore, they used allusions to individual tales not only to evoke popular characters such as Aladdin, Ali Baba, and Peri-Banou, but to emphasize that characters like these resulted from a storyteller's imaginative powers. Rejecting the didacticism of children's stories, these Victorians turned to the Nights because it offered them a metaphor for their own activities. Just as Scheherazade defeated Shahriyar and his tyrannical rule through narration, other fictional Victorian narrators would also similarly defeat their own antagonists. Hence, David Copperfield and Jane Eyre used their own verbal power to conquer their enemies.

To further imitate Scheherazade, the Victorians borrowed her "arsenal of words," and the manner in which she "spoke." They deliberately imitated her use of survival strategies to sustain the narrative act. From her example, they borrowed the embedded story and the use of elaborate amplified detail, both of which deferred an ending. The

victorians assimilated these narrative patterns into their own writings, and to the same purpose. For example, Dickens characteristically wrote with elaborate detail, creating fantastical lists, and he deliberately tried to mimic Scheherazade in his editorship of Victorian periodicals. Similarly, Rossetti began her poetic apprenticeship by imitating the sensual detail of the Nights in her early poem. Thus, these writers were drawn to the book because it afforded them both a content and form which they could borrow.

Whatever the shape of textual borrowing, the extent of the Victorian indebtedness to the Arabian Nights is enormous, and it is this indebtedness which I have examined in this study. As a result, I have also indirectly demonstrated how limited is the ethnocentric field of vision which insists that English letters is solely the result of a Judeao-Christian and Western influence. Much of Victorian writing is permeated by the sights and sounds of Arabia, however muted they may be to most Western eyes and ears. The Victorians used their imaginations to ride the magic carpets of the Arabian Nights to mythological places like Baghdad and Istanbul, and that in their imaginings, they soared above the real world. Like Sindbad and others, they sailed many voyages on the seas of Scheherazade's voice.

APPENDIX

Of all the authors in this study, Charles Dickens was the greatest popularizer of the Arabian Nights, a role that he fully cherished. For example, on receipt of his own copy of George Meredith's imitation, The Shaving Of Shagpat: An Arabian Entertainment, he remarked: "I take it home to-night to read, and shall not be unworthy to enter on its perusal, as one of the most constant and delighted readers of those Arabian Entertainments of older date that they have ever had, perhaps" (Kotzin 34). This statement appears not to have been mere hyperbole, for, as Harry Stone points out, Dickens would buy copies of the Arabian Nights to read on railways as he travelled (Invisible 56). Listed among his possessions at the time of his death was his own copy of the Arabian Nights, a translation done by Scott (Letters I 534).

Not content to merely enjoy the book himself, Dickens shared it with friends. For example, in 1857, when Hans Christian Andersen was visiting, Dickens gave him several books to enjoy during his stay. Among them were two collections of fairy stories, The Fairy Family and the Arabian Nights. Writing to a friend, Andersen later

remarked, "You will see from this what Dickens judged to be my taste" (Thomas 60). That Dickens shared these medieval Arabian stories with a man who would be forever associated with the fairy tale tradition seems suggestive of their importance.

The Arabian Nights also became the lens through which Dickens saw the rest of the world (Kotzin 45). In his travel narratives, he alluded to it in ways that indicate it was constantly in mind. For example, in Pictures from Italy (1846), he described the streets of Avignon:

It was all very like one of the descriptions in the Arabian Nights. The three one-eyed Calendars might have knocked at any one of those doors till the street rang again, and the porter who persisted in asking questions--the man who had the delicious purchases put into his basket in the morning--might have opened it quite naturally.
(354-55)

Later, this time in Piacenza, he metaphorically associated the palace with the Arabian Nights. He said, "A mysterious and solemn Palace, guarded by two colossal statues, twin Genii of the place, stands gravely in the midst of the idle town; and the king with the marble legs, who flourished in the time of the Thousand and One Nights..." (399).

For Christina Rossetti, the Arabian Nights had been a childhood favorite. As her brother Michael recollected, the family first owned the Galland translation and later the Lane edition (Dante Gabriel Rossetti: His Family Letters I 60). Later, In the "Preface" to his edition of her poetry,

he notes of his sister, she "was by far the least bookish of the family--liking a few things heartily, such as The Arabian Nights and the lyric dramas of Metastasio, but generally not applying herself with assiduity to either her books or her studies" (xlix). Nonetheless, the Arabian Nights served as the inspiration for several of her earliest works and pastimes. In addition to enacting scenes from the tales, Christina and her brother, Dante Gabriel, used them as the source of their own writing and art. "Aladdin and His Magic Lamp" interested them both. Dante wrote "Aladdin, or The Wonderful Lamp, by Gabriel Rossetti, Painter of Play-Pictures" (His Family Letters I 66), while Christina began "The Dervise," based on the same story (Poetical Works xlix). Even though her adult poetry became increasingly religious and mystical as it moved away from fairy tale origins, she retained her enthusiasm for the lavish imagery of the Nights. Certainly her own interest was matched by that of her friends, the PreRaphaelite associates. Thus, it is not surprising that in 1876, at the age of forty-six, she wrote to her brother Dante, "The Arabian Nights is far beyond my praise" (Family Letters 57).

The most noteworthy piece of evidence regarding William Morris is his inclusion of the Arabian Nights in his list of "Best Hundred Books" published in 1886. As J.O. Baylen points out, the Pall Mall Gazette asked "one hundred eminent

persons in politics, literature and the arts" to contribute a list of books which they considered to be "necessary for a Liberal Education." In submitting his, Morris wrote, "the list I give you is of books which have profoundly impressed myself....My list comprises only what I consider works of art" (62). Morris divided his list into eight categories, giving an explanation for each. In the category of "Mediaeval story-books," he included The Thousand and One Nights, The Morte d'Arthur, the Decameron, and The Mabinogion. He starred the Arabian Nights with an asterisk which indicates that he regarded it as one of his "Bibles," books which "cannot always be measured by a literary standard, but to me are far more important than any literature" (63). As Baylen argues, Morris's list was meant to be instructional since he provided the reasons for his choices.

Much later in his lifetime, during the 1880's and 1890's, Morris's interest in the world of the Arabian Nights expanded from the stories themselves to an interest in Persian art. For example, according to a letter written in 1883, he planned to design a series of Persian tapestries to go along with his projected ones on Greek and Scandinavian heroes (165). Although he never completed them, Morris appears to have done some preliminary work along with Edward Burne-Jones. Even while his own works were incomplete, he was quite enthusiastic about purchasing Persian and Islamic

art, which he did in large quantities. As Patricia Baker demonstrates in "William Morris and his Interest in the Orient," Morris eventually became an expert on Persian artifacts and was called on to decide museum purchases. He particularly liked Islamic patterns, with their repetitious designs and interlocking motifs (69). Baker points out that Morris once described his London house as having an "atmosphere" right out of the Arabian Nights since it was so filled with Persian textiles.

Like Christina Rossetti before her, Charlotte Brontë wrote early stories based upon themes and characters taken from the Arabian Nights. As a young child, and as an aspiring writer, she was particularly entranced by the supernatural agents, the genii. Not only did she populate her own stories with them, but she and her siblings impersonated them in their creation of their imaginary kingdoms. In their childish plays and stories (written until they were well on their way to adulthood), they each became a genius. They were: Chief Genius Talli [Charlotte]; Chief Genius Branni [Branwell]; Chief Genius Emmi [Emily]; Chief Genius Annii [Anne] (Ratchford 12). In the guise of the genii, the children intruded in their own creation and entered its fictionality. For example, Alexander notes in her introduction to "Something About Arthur":

The children became both creators of the play and creators within the play....Levels of reality

became blurred and make-believe characters even questioned the reality of their make-believe world. One of Charlotte's characters, for example, was astonished to find that he was merely a figment of his creator's imagination: 'It seemed as if I was a non-existent shadow--that I neither spoke, eat [sic], imagined, or lived of myself, but that I was the mere idea of some other creature's brain. (12)

Thus, in their miniature newsletters, they even addressed their own creations. For example, this "impressive communication" is recorded in one of them:

Sir,--it is well known that the Genii have declared that unless they [the Young Men] perform certain arduous duties every year, of a mysterious nature, all the worlds of the firmament will be burned up, and gathered together in one mighty globe, which will roll in solitary grandeur through the vast wilderness of space, inhabited by the four high princes of the Genii, till time shall be recorded by eternity. (Ratchford 24)

In addition to writing about themselves as genii, the children also painted themselves as such; they even advertised the admission cost (3d) to the exhibition of the "Chief Genii in Council," a self-portrait, at "Captain Cloven's house" (Ratchford 25).

The greatest tribute that George Meredith made to the importance of the Arabian Nights in his life was that he wrote his first book, The Shaving Of Shagpat: An Arabian Entertainment, published when he was twenty-seven, in imitation of it. Much later, he remembered how influential the book had been to his imagination. In 1906, he remarked

to a friend, "As for me, you ask of my readings of the formative kind. They were first the Arabian Nights..." (Letters 1556). Sprinkled throughout his correspondence are several comments which express flattering views of Oriental experience. For example, in 1877, he said, "I am...of your opinion that we learn much from looking Eastward" (554).

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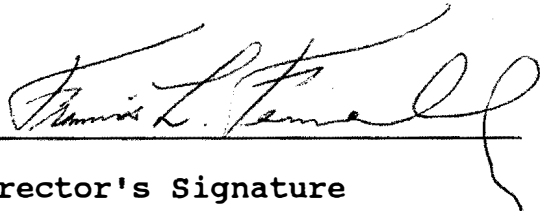
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The final copies have been examined by the director of the dissertation and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated and that the dissertation is now given formal approval by the Committee with reference to content and form.

The dissertation is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

October 31, 1988

Date


Director's Signature