



Woman in Culture and Arts

To Be a Man or Not to Be; That Is the Question Women's Narratives from the "Magic Fountain" of One Thousand and One Nights

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Article Info	ABSTRACT
<p>Article type: Research Article</p> <p>Article history: Received: 02 October 2023 Received in revised form: 24 November 2024 Accepted: 30 November 2024 Published online: 2 October 2025</p> <p>Keywords: <i>Fountain of Magic,</i> <i>Feminist Rewriting,</i> <i>Feminist Criticism,</i> <i>One Thousand and One Nights,</i> <i>Todorov's Poetic.</i></p>	<p>Introduction The legend of the "Fountain of Magic" from <i>One Thousand and One Nights</i> is retold in "Fahd's stories in the world of women". The author of this retelling critiques the events in the narrative of <i>One Thousand and One Nights</i> from a female perspective and attempts to rectify any misogynistic elements by redefining them. The purpose of this research is to investigate the process by which female storyteller construct her own female retelling of the original narrative of <i>One Thousand and One Nights</i> by examining the female narrative.</p> <p>What is the significance of the feminist rewriting of this story if, in contrast to other narratives, males are cunning and malevolent? These are the inquiries that the forthcoming investigation intends to resolve. The suspicion that something is amiss in this story from a feminine perspective is exacerbated by the intellectual origin of the author and the background of her women-oriented activities. So she has endeavored to rectify that inaccuracy in her rendition. However, where did the masculine narrative deviate from the straight and narrow, and how did the female narrative rectify this? A cursory examination of the narrative of <i>One Thousand and One Nights</i> reveals that "being a woman" is the greatest tragedy in the eyes of men, and it is presumed that this concept is the foundation of the masculine narrative being inaccurate. Therefore, female narrator should also endeavor to reestablish the woman's lost value. To provide a precise response to these questions, it is necessary to compare the male and female narrations. However, prior to that, it is important to acknowledge that the narrator's gender influences the narrative. The narrators' assertion that they have read and rewritten the stories from a feminist perspective implies that "being a woman" is one of the propositions that shape the narratives under investigation. However, is it feasible to assess the narrator's gender through the structural analysis of the narrative, as is the case in narratology? To comprehend this matter, we introduce Tzutan Todorov's approach and subsequently employ it to read the texts in order to answer this question.</p> <p>Methodology Two approaches have been implemented to investigate women's retelling: Tzutan Todorov's model and feminist analysis. The first research methodology is structural. The literary work in Todorov's emporium is the result of the connection of narrative units. The three concepts of proposition, sequence, and text establish a hierarchy that governs the syntactic aspect of literary discourse. A proposition is the smallest narrative unit and is composed of a predicate and a participle. Based on these two components, the proposition is classified into various types. Every narrative contains at least one Sequence, and each sequence will contain a maximum of five propositions. The five fundamental phases of narrative development are illustrated by these propositions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Exposition; 2. Rising action; 3. Climax; 4. Falling action; 5. Resolution. <p>Using feminist analysis, we can determine why the aforementioned narrative is anti-feminist and requires rewriting by women. We also comprehend the manner in which feminist critics have eliminated the anti-feminist elements from the "Magic Fountain" in their newly constructed narratives.</p>

Results and Discussion

“Fountain of Magic” is the narrative of a prince who is resolute in his objective to marry a princess. The king’s minister is requested by the girl’s cousin, who was unsuccessful in his proposition, to avert this union. The minister enticed the boy to drink from a spring that has the ability to transform males into women. The prince becomes powerless after transforming into a woman, and he remains so until the magical prince arrives. He transports her to his palace, and they proceed to the “black” land following the feast. He compels her to consume the water of a spring, which, when consumed by women, transforms them into males. Ultimately, he will transport him to the court of the duchess. This narrative provides a comprehensive comprehension:

Table 1. Sequences of the narrative of *One Thousand and One Nights*

Propositions		
The prince decides to marry the princess.	Exposition	1
The minister gives the prince a drink from the spring.	Rising action	2
The prince becomes a woman.	Climax	3
The fairy prince gives him a drink from another spring.	Falling action	4
1. The prince becomes a man. 2. The prince marries the girl.	Resolution	5

Table 2. Sequence of Fahd’s narrative in the world of women

Propositions		
The prince decides to marry the princess.	Exposition	1
The minister gives the prince a drink from the spring.	Rising action	2
The prince becomes a woman.	Climax	3
Salsabil washes the prince in the spring water.	Falling action	4
The prince becomes a man.	Resolution	5

Conclusion

If we examine the structure of the two narratives that have been analyzed using Todorov’s approach, we discover that they are all similar. Five propositions are present in all two, which illustrate episodes of equilibrium, disequilibrium, and the transition from instability to stability. From this examination of the female narrator, it is evident that the sole modification she has implemented is the transformation of the aide from a man to a woman, and the transformation of the fairy prince into Salsabil and the princess. However, the narrator has altered the narrative, as evidenced by the female perspective on the narration. Despite the fact that the narrative of *One Thousand and One Nights* is akin to the story she has told, female narrative narrated a distinct narrative by adhering to the course of events. This endeavor has been accomplished through the implementation of numerous strategies.

Table 4. Narrative revisions

Characterization	Adding a new character	Choosing a name	Changing the title of the story	
✓	✓	✓	✓	Fahad’s story

Meanwhile, the last option has been more influential than the others. The prince in the *One Thousand and One Nights* narrative is a straightforward and superficial character. He is a representative of a patriarchal society that prioritizes mortality over female gender, adhering to the prevailing societal norms. He derives no advantages from this physical transformation. However, in women’s narrative, physical transformation results in a shift in perspective; the prince acquires fortune and generates new inhabitants as a result of inhabiting a female body.

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