Narrative Storytelling in the Poetry of Ibn al-Rumi (d. 283 AH)

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Abstract: Ibn al-Rumi, belonging to the Abbasid era, is among the most distinguished poets historically. The poet developed his singularity due to his fascination with the way experimentation appears in poetic imagery. The text involves a narrative structure within the poetry, and the broad domain of the work reflects the artist's idea of the connection between innovation and humanity. The excellent and beautiful Ibn al-Rumi poetry contains various elements of art, such as imagery and structure, as well as the principles, for instance, experimentation and innovation. His poetry was characterized by its remarkable ability of transforming into vibrant, lifelike scenes, utilizing figurative techniques that blend meticulous psychological insights with a profound analytical tendency, which granted his poems a clear dramatic character, and one of the most prominent artistic features that capture the scholar's attention in his poetry is the presence of the poetic tale as an expressive tool that transcends the boundaries of traditional lyricism, as the poet resorts to constructing narrative scenes that includes characters, events, and dialogues, thereby transforming the poetic text into a narrative space pulsating with movement. These narratives weren't just artistic decoration, but also expressive of his vision of reality, and a way to reveal the contradictions of Abbasid society, the social and psychological phenomena that surrounds it. And the importance of the narrative in his poetry is manifested in its ability to embody the poetic stance in a vivid manner, since it serves as a density where multiple voices overlap and meanings are intricately woven together. The tale also reveals the poet's tendency for detail and accuracy in observation. Such intricate detailing underscores the poet's contemplative essence and his rigorous analytical mind. This is where were delving into the narrative element of Ibn al-Rumi's work becomes an essential gateway to deciphering his aesthetic architecture and intellectual depth, it effectively peels back the layers of how storytelling was structured within the framework of classical Arabic verse. This study aims to map out these narrative occurrences, dissecting their artistic makeup and semantic roles to illustrate how they define his particular stylistic identity. Structurally, the research opens with a conceptual exploration of the 'Narrator' (Rawi) both linguistically and terminologically before bifurcating into two core investigations: the first identifies the foundational elements of the tale, while the second probes its distinctive traits in Ibn al-Rumi's corpus, ultimately synthesizing the most vital conclusions.

Keywords: Narratives, Ibn al-Rumi, Arabic verse.

Introduction

The Tale has long been established. As one of the most. Primitive Profoundly, Sophisticated, modes of human expressions and medium through which experience, knowledge and imagination are channeled.

It serves as a comprehensive vessel, allowing individuals to transmit events, ideas, and emotions within a structural mold that reflects a specific worldview. Far from being a mere chronological recitation of facts, narration functions as a complex linguistic, psychological, and cultural construct that articulates meanings beyond the surface of abstract incidents.

Within the realm of literature, narration provides the foundation, the foundational scaffolding for both prose and poetic works, acting as the primary bridge of communication between.

The creator and the recipient. This research delves into the tail as manifested in the poetry of Ibin and Rumi, exploring how it acted as a catalyst in sharpening his poet, poetic genius, and creative faculty.

Section one: The foundational components of narrative.

At its core, the tail represents A primordial human trait, driven by an instinctive. Urge to share insights, preserve collective memories, and forge a shared perception of reality. Linguistically, the Arabic term Hikaya' (Tale) originates from the tri-consonantal root 'H-K-Y', fundamentally denoting the act of narrating or transmitting a report. As noted by [1]*Ibn Manzur in Lisan al-Arab*:

'The Tale: the report and the narration; it is derived from "al-Haki," meaning to narrate and inform.

Terminologically, the concept has evolved into a specialized literary term, signifying a structured narrative form whether oral or written characterized by a cohesive internal architecture where various elements synergize to form a complete textual entity.

Consequently, the tale has shifted from a simple report of an incident to an intricate narrative sequence of events linked by cause and effect, aiming to entertain, educate, or illuminate specific existential themes.

Section two: Critics perspectives on the tale.

To grasp the narrative dimension in Ibn al-Rumi's work, one must first anchor the concept within critical thought. Critics define the tale as a narrative sequence of interconnected events centered on interacting characters within a specific spatial and temporal frame, narrated to an audience for entertainment, education,

or ideological expression. The Russian critic Vladimir Propp emphasizes the tale as a cohesive narrative unit revolving around a central event or a 'dramatic knot' (climax) that ultimately leads to a resolution. Thus, the tale is not a random sequence, but a deliberate literary construct governed by the interplay of event, character, time, and space, mediated by a narrator's distinct stylistic lens.

Section One: The Fundamental Constituents of Narrative

A narrative is fundamentally constructed upon four primary pillars that ensure its internal cohesion: Event, Time, Space, and Character. Each of these elements plays a pivotal role in weaving the overall meaning and shaping the story's impact on the recipient.

While the 'Tale' serves as a universal artistic and literary vessel for conveying human experiences or chronicling specific occurrences, its manifestation in poetry diverges substantially from its prose counterpart. This divergence—spanning artistic architecture, linguistic choices, and functional roles—is dictated by the inherent nature of each literary genre. Poetic narratives demand a higher degree of condensation and metaphorical depth, whereas prose tends toward transparency, logical progression, and linear sequencing.

In this investigation, we aim to scrutinize the essential distinctions between poetic and prose narratives, elucidating how these differences influence both the construction and the perception of the 'Tale' within each respective context.

The Narrative Paradigm in Prose Texts

Narrative within prose frameworks represents a sequential progression of events, articulated through a clear and logical lens. Prose tales are typically distinguished by their chronological transparency, consistency of setting, and a unified architecture traditionally comprising an exposition, a rising action, and a final resolution.

The prose medium prioritizes accessible and direct language, focusing on the straightforward depiction of facts and occurrences without excessive reliance on intricate symbols or complex allegorical imagery. Consequently, the primary objective of a prose narrative

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[1] Ibn Manzur , Lisan al-Arab. Entry of Haky

is to transmit a factual or fictional experience directly to the audience, ensuring that the comprehension of events remains intuitive and seamless.

Distinctive Attributes of Narrative in Poetry

In stark contrast to prose, poetic narrative is defined by its intense artistic density; it transcends the mere reporting of events to encapsulate a refined expression of emotions, sensations, and philosophical reflections within an aesthetic mold. By its very nature, poetry is governed by meter, rhyme, and rhythm structural elements that inevitably render the narrative less direct and more contemplative.

Poetic language is steeped in high symbolism, employing rhetorical devices such as metaphors and metonymy to articulate profound meanings that explicit prose often fails to capture. Furthermore, the poetic tale frequently adopts a non-linear trajectory, where scenes may overlap based on the resonance of imagery and emotive triggers rather than a rigid chronological timeline.

This renders poetry significantly more 'open' to interpretation, assigning the reader an active role in reconstructing the narrative's meaning unlike prose, which tends to provide a more defined and closed interpretive[2] loop.

Distinctions Between Poetic and Prose Narratives

1. Artistic Structure:

In prose, the tale relies on a transparent and sequential narrative build-up. Conversely, poetic narrative is often fragmented or reductive, distilled within stanzas where chronological consistency is not a prerequisite for the text's coherence."

2. Language and Style:

Prose language typically adopts a direct and communicative approach. In contrast, poetic diction hinges on emphasis, symbolism, and condensation, carrying profound semantic dimensions that transcend the literal meaning of words."

3. Musical Rhythm:

Poetry is intrinsically constructed upon specific meter and rhythm, which imbues the narrative with a distinct

artistic resonance that shapes how the recipient perceives the story. Prose, however, does not rely on these rhythmic constraints."

4. Narrative Function:

The primary objective of narrative in prose is to convey an event or a concept with clarity. In the poetic realm, the 'Tale' serves as a medium to evoke contemplation, transmit deep-seated emotions, or embody complex artistic visions.

The Interplay Between Narrative and Narration in Poetry

The relationship between 'The Tale' (the story) and 'Narration' (the act of storytelling) within poetry stands as a pivotal subject that illuminates the essence of poetry as a narrative art one possessing distinct attributes that set it apart from prose. While poetry occasionally relies on the tale as a foundational pillar, the methodology of its presentation differs fundamentally from prose.

This necessitates a profound investigation into the nature of poetic narration and its interaction with the story or the events that the text seeks to convey or reference.

The Tale and Narration: Interconnected Yet Distinct Concepts

Though inherently intertwined, 'The Tale' and 'Narration' are distinct concepts that must not be conflated, as each carries its own functional and substantive significance within the text. The Tale represents the core content—the cluster of events, characters, and settings that form a cohesive thematic unit intended to transmit a specific experience. Conversely, Narration is the technical process through which this content is articulated. It encompasses the poet's strategy in delivering these events to the recipient, including the arrangement of incidents, the selection of perspective (point of view), linguistic style, artistic structure, and the employment of aesthetic tools such as rhythm, repetition, and symbolism.

In the poetic realm, narration assumes central importance; it is not merely a vehicle for transporting the story, but rather a sophisticated artistic framework. This framework can accommodate fragmented scenes,

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[2] Ibn Rashiq al-Qayrawani, Al-Umda fi Mahasin al-Shi'r wa Adabih wa Naqdih, edited by Muhammad Muhyi al-Din Abd al-Hamid, Dar al-Sa'ada, Egypt, 3rd ed., 1963, p. 198.

non-linear events, or subjective experiences that defy traditional narrative boundaries. Therefore, understanding the intersection of the tale and narration in poetry transcends the simple inquiry of 'how the story is told. It delves into how language, rhythm, and symbolic repetition reshape the story, reconstructing it within entirely new dimensions.

Regarding Al-Mu'tamid, he composed verses when the Caliph departed from Samarra (Surra Man Ra'a) heading toward [3]Al-Mada'in. This occurred during the rise of the Zanj rebellion and the advancement of Al-Saffar. At that time, Zayruk was stationed in Janbalae, where the Zanj attempted to entrap him, plotting to consume him with a blazing fire they had ignited however, their stratagem ultimately recoiled upon them.

لا زلتَ تسلكُ نحوَ رُشدٍ مَسلكا	لمّا استقلّ بكَ الطريقُ إلى العِدا
نالتْ حواشيها وليّكَ زَيرُكا	غشيتْكَ من نصرِ الإلهِ سحابةٌ
كانت لجمعهمُ هلاكًا مُهلِكا	فسَما إلى الزّنجِ الأخابثِ سَمْوة
واللهُ ۟ حينَهم لذاكَ فأوشكا	وبكيدِهم كِيدوا لهُ لا كيدِهِ
ملكٌ إذا طلبَ الأعاديَ أدركا	شَبّوا لهم نارًا فأحرقهم بها
فحمَتْ مُباحَ دمائهم أن تُسقكا	كانت أحقّ من السيوفِ بأخذِهم
لو كادَهُ جبلٌ _ إذًا _ لتَدكدَكا	راموا بكيدِهمُ وليَّ مظفرٍ
حُقّ امرؤٌ وعَظْتْهُ ألا يُؤْفكا	واهًا لها عِظةٌ لهم ولغيرهم
وليَتركِ الغيَّ المبينَ متركا	فليَصرفِ الصَقارُ عنكَ عِناتَهُ
وعلى بقيّةِ شِلوهِ أن تُهتكا	وليُبْقِ أن أبقى على حوبائِهِ
إنْ عبرةٌ نفعَتْ، وإنْ قلبٌ ذكا[1]	فلقدْ رأى ما فيهِ معتَبَرٌ لهُ

The poet recounts the confrontation that erupted between Caliph Al-Mu'tamid and the Zanj following the escalation of their rebellion and their defiance of the Caliph's authority. Central to this narrative is the intricate trap they devised to ensnare his loyalist, Zayruk. The essence of the tale unfolds as Al-Mu'tamid leads his army against the insurgents, securing a decisive victory that thwarted the conspiracy against his lieutenant and extinguished the flames of sedition.

Woven into this primary event are several sub-incidents, such as Zayruk's deployment to engage the Zanj and their subsequent attempt to entrap him by fire—avoiding a direct, conventional military confrontation.

The narrative reaches a turning point with the Caliph's timely arrival at the battlefield, where he masterfully managed the situation.

Characters maintain a distinct presence throughout the tale: The Caliph is invoked through the second-person pronoun, the Zanj are portrayed as the orchestrators of the plot, Zayruk serves as the intended victim, and Al-Saffar, the Zanj leader, is depicted as the mastermind behind the rebellion. Each figure is assigned to a specific descriptive register aligned with their role: exaltation and praise for the Caliph, condemnation and disdain for the Zanj, and empathy and compassion for the Caliph's loyalist. This is exemplified in his saying:

[3] Vladimir Propp, Morphology of the Folktale, trans. Dr. Said al-Ghanimi, reviewed by Dr. Shakir Laibi, Dar al-Shu'un al-Thaqafiya al-Amma, Baghdad, 1998, p. 78.

يا أيها الملك السعيد المُعرِسُ   لا زلتَ تخلِقُ ما كساكَ المُلبِسُ

إن يُهدِ مُنفِسةٌ إليكَ وليُها   فلقد أتيحَ لها الوليُّ المُنفِسُ

وبحقِكم وبحقها قُدِرتْ لكم   ومن الحقوقِ مبيّنٌ وملبِّسُ

من غرس أيديكمُ جنَتْ أيديكمُ   كرُمتْ مَجانيكم وطابَ المَغرِسُ[1]

The 'narratee' is explicitly identified from the very outset of the stanza through a direct vocative appeal to the 'Fortunate King'. The discourse narrative is meticulously constructed around the event of a precious gift presented by the poet. Throughout the text, second-person singular pronouns labor to underscore the centrality of the addressee, reinforcing the directed nature of the speech. Consequently, the addressee emerges as a vivid persona within the text, defined by attributes of boundless generosity—symbolized by the 'planting of hands,' a potent metaphor for the lavish grants and favors bestowed upon the narrator-poet.

Thus, the narratee is rendered 'manifest' via the vocative, maintaining a singular presence that precludes any ambiguity or multiple interpretations, despite the absence of an explicit name. The title, denoting the high status and prestigious rank of the praised figure, serves as a more than sufficient substitute for a direct mention; indeed, a blunt naming would have been inconsistent with the significant circumstances that prompted the poet to craft his discourse in such a sophisticated manner.

[4]He likewise says:

تاللهِ يا ابنَ أبي أميّةَ قُل لنا: إن كنتَ مَسعِداً فأينَ المَنكَسِه؟

دنَّستَ يا ابن أبي أمية كنيةً   غَنِيَت زماناً وهْيَ غيرُ مدنَّسه

تُكنى أبا يَعلى ولستَ بأهلها   ما لم يقُلها القَائلون منكَّسه

أصبحتَ قنّعتَ الكتابَ خَزِيّةً   قد كان قنّعَها أبوكَ الهندسة

فليُبعِدِ اللهُ الكتابةَ إنّها   لا شكَّ إذ قِيلتْكَ غيرُ مقَدَّسة

The Satirical Addressee and Narrative Persona

In this passage, the 'satirized figure' emerges as the explicitly declared narratee through the use of the vocative (call), identifying the recipient with precision. However, a distinct shift—necessitated by the nature of satirical discourse is evident in the explicit mention of the subject's name and the construction of the narrative around it here, the patronymic (Kunyah) follows the name, serving as a direct signifier of the intended persona.

Pronouns function to establish a dual relationship: between the narrator and the narratee on one hand, and between the narratee and the narrated events on the other. Second-person pronouns (the 'K' and 'T'

suffixes in Arabic) anchor the narratee's presence within the narrative process, imbuing the discourse with an impactful force by creating the illusion that the addressee is actively hearing the poet's words and confronting the shame in real-time. Meanwhile, third-person pronouns define the 'narrated content, clarifying the incidents that prompted the poet's acerbic tone. This style strips the addressee of his essential identity, as seen in the verse:

(تُكنى ابا يَعلى ولستَ بأهلها)

Furthermore, a prominent trait related to the subject's profession (writing/scribing) is highlighted to explain the

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[4] Yousef Hatini, In the Narrativity of the Narrative Poem: Mahmoud Darwish as a Model, Syrian General Organization of Books - Ministry of Culture, Damascus, 1st ed., 2010, p. 98.

negative behavior that warranted contempt. Thus, the poet-narrator constructs an ethical dimension of the persona centered on professional betrayal, justifying the direct, unmediated confrontation through the [5]explicit naming and shaming of the individual.

Section Two: Characteristics of the Poetic Tale
Poetic narration possesses unique attributes that distinguish it from prose, reflecting how the poetic text engages with the 'Tale':

1. Condensation and Reduction:
Poetry relies on distilling meaning into fewer words, rendering the narrative or its scenes fragmented, brief, or implicit. This leaves gaps for the reader to fill mentally and emotionally, granting the text high suggestive power.

2. The Interplay of Rhythm and Meter:
Musical rhythm and meter act as central artistic constraints. They may compel the poet to present the tale according to rhythmic requirements rather than strict chronological logic, creating a non-linear poetic narrative.

3. Symbolism and Complexity:

طوالعُ شَيبتَين ألمّتنا بي

إلى المِقراض حُبًّا في التَصابي

لتشهدَ بالبراءة من خِضابي

أقمتُ به الدليلَ على شَبابي[1]

In these verses, the poetic tale appears in a highly condensed form, laden with symbolism. The poet weaves a story where a mirror is on the stage, and the emergence of two white hairs is the central event. This simple scene conceals profound psychological and philosophical depths. The 'terror' (Rū') he feels upon seeing the gray hair signifies a pivotal transition a sudden awareness of the relentless passage of time.

The two hairs represent diverging psychological paths: the first triggers a desire for 'Tasabi' (acting youthful), leading him to the shears to physically erase the evidence of age. The second hair is spared, serving as a

Beyond mere reporting, the poetic tale evolves into a network of symbols and interconnected imagery, opening the text to multiple semantic dimensions and interpretive horizons.

4. Intertextuality and Temporal Displacement:
Poetry frequently employs 'Intertextuality'—the invocation of external texts or implicit references—alongside temporal shifts like flashbacks. As noted by Muhammad Abd al-Muttalib, intertextuality is the 're-presentation of ancient texts, whether through direct clarity or subtle concealment.'

5. Interpretive Openness:
The poetic text remains open-ended, allowing the reader to reconstruct the tale within their own mind. This transforms the relationship between the tale and narration into a multi-layered interactive experience.

Case Study: The Tale of the Two White Hairs

Ibn al-Rumi's poetry is rich with narratives, often culminating in a kernel of wisdom (Hikmah). Among his most miraculous short tales is the story of two white hairs. While he frequently contemplated graying hair, these verses represent a brilliant 'intellectual flash:

نظرتُ إلى المرآةِ فروّعتني

فأمّا شَيبةٌ ففزعتُ منها

وأمّا شيبةٌ فصفحتُ عنها

فأعجَبُ بالدّليل على مَشيبِ

witness to his honesty and refusal to deceive. This shift from tension to acceptance represents a philosophical reconciliation with the self. The narrative reaches its zenith in the final verse, where the remaining hair becomes dual evidence: affirming his physical aging [6]while validating an inner youth that stems from truth and awareness. Ibn al-Rumi masterfully builds this poetic wisdom from the heart of the event itself, rather than imposing an external moral.

In another brief narrative, Ibn al-Rumi recounts a personal ordeal involving his turban (Imama):

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[5] Ali Boumelhem Hamade, In Literature and Its Arts, Al-Matba'a al-Asriyya, Beirut, 1998, p. 87.

[6] Ali Boumelhem Hamade, In Literature and Its Arts, Al-Matba'a al-Asriyya, Beirut, 1998, p. 87.

بُرهةٌ مِن القرِّ طورًا والحَرورِ إذا صَقَعْ   تعَمَّمتُ إحصائًا لرأسِيَ

لمَتي فأزرَى بها بَعدَ الإطالةِ والقرَعْ   فلمّا وَهَى طُولُ التَعَمُّمِ

حيلةٌ لتَستُرَ ما جرّتْ عليّ من الصّلَعْ   عزمتُ على لبسِ العِمامةِ

جعلتُ إليه من جِنايتِهِ الفزَعْ   فيا لك من جانٍ عليّ جِنايةً

جَعلتُهُ دَوائي على عمدٍ وأعْجِبْ بأنْ نقَعْ   وأعْجبْ بشيءٍ كان دائي

In this concise poem, Ibn al-Rumi crafts a scene that blends with bitterness, mixing self-deprecating irony with candid admission. He presents a personal experience regarding his attempt to conceal baldness by wearing a turban, yet he elevates this simple incident into a narrative framework of laden with psychological and intellectual dimensions that transcend the event's surface.

The poet opens his tale by declaring that he initially donned the turban to protect his head from the winter cold and the summer heat—practical and natural motives. However, he soon reveals that this outward justification hides a deeper reason rooted in a personal condition that evokes embarrassment: his baldness. As the prolonged wearing of the turban damages his already thinning hair, it exacerbates the very baldness he sought to hide, turning the turban itself into the catalyst for the defect of worsening.

Through this narrative escalation, the poet creates a dramatic paradox infused with dark irony; the tool intended for protection and concealment becomes the cause of exposure and aggravation.

Ibn al-Rumi captures and magnifies this paradox with a [7]satirical flair that highlights his unique style of self-critique. He finds himself in an absurd position: seeking refuge in the very thing that 'assaulted' him to escape the consequences of that same assault. He expresses this in a verse of profound irony: O what a criminal against me, yet I fled toward his crime out of fear. This paradox is the heart of the poetic tale, where the turban shifts from a covering to a wound, and from a means of discretion to a tool of exposure, leaving the narrator in

a surreal confrontation that evokes both laughter and pathos simultaneously. The poet further develops this intricate psychological interplay in the final verse, where he subverts his own satirical logic to introduce a higher level of complexity.

He marvels at how a thing that was once his 'ailment' was deliberately transformed into his 'remedy,' expressing a profound, lingering astonishment at its efficacy. This concluding verse does not resolve the tale with a rational explanation or a didactic moral instead, it leaves the narrative open to the absurdity of existence, the chaos of experience, and the irony of fate. It is as if the poet is surrendering to the paradoxes of a life that defies logical expectations a life that consistently betrays and manipulates him.

The discerning reader will note that these verses are not merely a superficial digression on physical appearance; rather, they pulsate with a deep expression of the perception of time and the transformations of the body. The emergence of baldness serves as a harbinger of mortality and change, while the act of wearing the turban becomes a symbol of the perpetual human endeavor to conceal flaws or more precisely, a defensive stratagem against the unyielding march of time. Though this narrative is deeply personal and subjective, it reflects a universal human predicament, showcasing the poet's ability to seize the mundane details of daily life and transmute them into philosophical poetic material that articulates his acute awareness of self-contradiction and the psychological ruses that often recoil upon him as a burden.

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[7] See: Haya Abdulaziz Al-Dirham, The Image of the Sea in Modern Arabic Poetry in the Gulf (1960–1980), Qatar, 1st ed., 1986, p. 62.

See: Ali Ashry Zayed, Summoning Heritage Figures in Contemporary Arabic Poetry, Dar al-Fikr al-Arabi, 1997, p. 65.

Within this miniature tale, the essential elements of a complete story are embodied: a simple event (donning the turban), a clear protagonist (Ibn al-Rumi himself) undergoing a psychological journey of tension and disappointment, an indefinite yet suggestive timeframe indicating advancing age, and a setting rooted in everyday life. The narrative style is a poetic one, predicated on the gradual construction of irony; it begins with a logical justification, unmasks the underlying psychological motive, recounts the reversal of events, and finally elevates the paradox to a philosophical level that marries sarcasm with wonder.

Ibn al-Rumi's brilliance lies in employing the poetic tale to deepen the emotional and intellectual impact on the reader. Instead of merely describing or lamenting baldness, he weaves a dramatic and narrative structure around it, inviting the reader to engage with his psychological transformation—from concealment to exposure, and from gravity to irony. Each verse functions as a clear narrative step, driving the scene forward without compromising rhythmic meter or rhetorical imagery. Unlike many of his other works that conclude with a traditional 'kernel of wisdom' (Hikmah),

these verses offer no resolution or salvation. Instead, they return the reader to the starting point in a state of compounded bewilderment, exposing the futility of the human's attempt to escape frailty.

Moving from these 'short-short' stories which mirror the flash fiction we see in modern newspapers today it might seem as though contemporary writers were influenced by Ibn al-Rumi's literary legacy.

However, I highly doubt this; in fact, I am almost certain they were not. Most contemporary short story writers neglect their Arabic heritage, hesitant to align their work with it for fear of being labeled reactionary. They operate under the misconception that progress lies in distancing oneself from Arabic literature and tradition. One wonders: what remains for them if they do so? Nevertheless, we have before us a complete story by Ibn al-Rumi, which he undoubtedly intended as such; he concludes it in the manner of a modern short story without imposing a sermon or a moral adhering to the doctrine of [8]'Art for Art's sake.'

He says:

كتبتْ ربّةَ الثنايا العِذابِ   تتشكى إليّ طولَ اجتنابي

وأتاني الرسول عنها بقولٍ   لم تُبيّنْهُ في سُطور الكِتابِ

رأيُها الظالِم الذي قدّرَ اللهُ   به في الأنام طولَ عَذابي

لو علمتِ الذي بجسمي مِن السُّقـ ـمِ   وضرّ الهوى لكنتِ جوابي

فتجشّمتُ نحوَها الهولَ والحرّ   اس قد هَوّمُوا على الأبوابِ

وهي في نِسوةٍ حَواسِرَ لم يَكـ ـحلنَ جَفناً برقدةٍ لارتِقابي

طالِعاتٍ عليّ من شُرَفِ القصـ ـر يُحاذِرنَ رَقبة البوّابِ

ولها بينهنّ فيّ حديثٌ   جلُهُ ليتَهُ يرِقُّ لِما بي

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[8] Ibid., 3/11.

فتوقَّفتُ ساعةً ثم نادي۔ـتُ   سلامٌ مِنِّي على الأحبابِ

فتَباشَرْنَ بي وأشْرَفْنَ نَحوي   بِشهيقٍ وزفرةٍ وانتِحابِ

ثُمَّ قالت: أمَا اتقيتَ اللهَ   والنّ۔ـاسَ في طُول هِجرتي واجْتِنابي

قلتُ: ما عاقَ عن زيارتِكِ الكا   سُ وصوتٌ يَهيجُ مِن أطرابي [1]

In these verses, Ibn al-Rumi presents another paradigm of what can be termed a [9]'complete poetic tale.' This narrative involves a clear dramatic construction, sequential narrative phases, interacting characters, and an internal emotional conflict manifested in a realistic external situation. The story commences with a silent grievance penned by a beautiful woman to the poet, reproaching his desertion and distance.

However, he astutely notes that the most eloquent complaint lay not in the words inscribed on paper, but in the verbal essence conveyed by her messenger who seemed to carry an emotion more profound than the literal meaning of the letter. Thus, the primary inciting incident is established: the beloved's grievance through both the letter and the messenger, an act that flings open the doors to a past burdened with abandonment, deprivation, and longing.

Receiving this message, the poet resolves to act, propelled by a physical frailty and spiritual exhaustion wrought by passion and distance. By stating, Had you known the malady and the harm of passion within my body, you would have been my answer,' he confronts the recipient with the truth: his absence was not callousness, but the result of a hidden suffering unperceived by the beloved. Consequently, the abandonment once seen as a negative act by the poet is transformed into a tragic consequence of love itself, imbuing the story with a rich psychological dimension and evoking the reader's empathy for this vanquished lover.

The narrative then [10]shifts to a second external event: his visit to the beloved. Here, he paints a vivid scene charged with suspense and peril. He describes defying obstacles and bypassing the palace guards who 'slumbered at the gates,' and portrays the vigilance of the watchful women sentinels, who remained awake in anticipation of his arrival.

In this scene, Ibn al-Rumi demonstrates high narrative caliber, surrounding the protagonist with an aura of risk and surveillance, as if infiltrating a closed, forbidden world. These obstacles heighten the value of the emotional event, rendering the anticipated encounter more compelling.

As the plot progresses, the beloved appears among the women and begins a tender yet reproachful admonishment, questioning if he had forgotten God and people during his prolonged absence. At this point, emotional tension reaches its zenith. [11]However, rather than offering a dry, defensive retort, the poet provides a lavishly [12]aesthetic confession: his absence was caused not by deliberate desertion, but by the distractions of wine and musical assemblies. This startling admission reflects a painful paradox: the grief-stricken poet, ill from passion, has fallen into a state of diversion a psychological ruse to escape the cruelty of love.

It suggests that his absence was a failed attempt at forgetting; he eventually returns to stand repentant before the beloved, admitting without equivocation that passion never truly releases him.

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[9] Ibn al-Rumi, The Diwan, 2/197.
[10] Karim Shighaydil, Interdisciplinary Arts in the Modern Iraqi Poem: A Study of Post-Sixties Poetry, Dar al-Shu'un al-Thaqafiya al-Amma, Baghdad, 1st ed., 2007, p. 87.

[11] Ibn al-Rumi, The Diwan, 1/183.
[12] Ibn al-Rumi, The Diwan, 2/211–212.

This poetic tale does not offer a direct moral or explicit wisdom; instead, it concludes at a moment of peak tension, where reproach meets confession without resolution. This open-ended narrative style, which eschews moral closure, aligns the poem's structure with the modern short story capturing a complex moment and leaving interpretation to the reader.

This aligns with the 'Art for Art's sake' doctrine, where the focus remains on the beauty of expression [13][14]and the evocation of emotion rather than imposing a lesson.

The characters are clearly defined: the poet as the central protagonist, the beloved as the catalyst, and several secondary characters—the messenger, the sleeping guards, and the watchful women—who enrich the narrative environment and transform it from an internal meditation into a tangible experience of conflict. While time and space remain implicit, the context suggests a fortified palace guarded at night, a setting that enhances the poetic tension and renders love a dreamlike adventure that pierces through barriers.

Ultimately, Ibn al-Rumi's mastery lies in employing the poetic tale not as a didactic tool, but as an instrument to move the reader, presenting a human condition where desire, regret, longing, and betrayal intersect.

He shows how love is fraught with external constraints and internal struggles, transforming the human being into a creature lost between desire and action. In doing so, Ibn al-Rumi was a [15]poet ahead of his time, bridging ancient traditions with modern narrative techniques to create an unforgettable story in every verse.

Conclusion

This research has endeavored to explore the narrative tale within the poetry of Ibn al-Rumi, revealing him as a poet significantly ahead of his time. He masterfully transformed the tale into an artistic instrument that enriches poetry, ensuring that every verse serves as a deliberate step within an unforgettable story.

The poet engaged with various dimensions of the 'narratee'—ranging from the internal intra-diegetic to the complex internal-external—as well as the manifested vocative. Each of these primary categories seamlessly intersected with other sub-types, such as the specified narratee and the distinctions of gender (masculine and feminine).

Ultimately, it is evident that Ibn al-Rumi's poetry offers a fertile ground for narrative studies, where narrative and analytical tools can be applied with greater breadth and depth. Such investigations are expected to yield highly significant results regarding the authenticity and originality of narration in classical Arabic poetry.

This adds a luminous dimension to our understanding, demonstrating that this heritage is steeped in diverse artistic techniques that—despite their brilliance—have not yet received sufficient attention in traditional studies or classical criticism.

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14 Ibn al-Rumi, The Diwan, 2/211–212.

15 Ibn al-Rumi, The Diwan, 2/198.

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