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AUTHORS: Drmohammed Yaseen

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# TOWARDS A DEEPER UNDERSTANDING NARRATIVE STRUCTURE, VISIONS, AND FORM OF THE SHORT STORY IN ARABIC LITERATURE\*

Mohammed AbdulKareem Yaseen\*\*

## Abstract

The narrative structure is a quintessential pillar within Arabic literature, establishing a nuanced and intellectual bridge that connects stories to their respective audiences. This exploration seeks to dissect the pivotal components of narrative structure vision and form each serving a distinct purpose. Vision, enveloping the author's philosophical and ideological lens, endeavours to articulate the underlying themes and worldviews the author seeks to convey. In contrast, form acts as the aesthetic medium through which vision is transposed, interlacing elements such as temporal-spatial orchestrations, character interplays, and event trajectories. In recent epochs, Arabic literature has undergone transformative shifts in narrative structures, welcoming innovative styles and methodologies that elevate storytelling, offering nuanced levels of engagement and suspense. Canonical texts, including “One Thousand and One Nights”, Naguib Mahfouz’s “The Cairo Trilogy”, and Taha Hussein’s “The Days”, illustrate multifaceted narrative structures that have permeated Arabic literature across generations. This dynamism extends to contemporary works that adeptly deploy evolved narrative elements—complexity, tension, and unforeseen plot twists—to perpetually captivate the reader’s interest. This article navigates through a multidimensional exploration of Arabic literature’s narrative structures, identifying and deconstructing developmental stages—preparation, genesis, climax, and resolution. Within these stages, an array of storytelling techniques is judiciously employed to arrest and sustain reader engagement, successfully fulfilling the author's communicative and artistic aspirations.

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**Keywords:** Arabic Literature, Artistic Formation, Character Dynamics, Literary Dynamics, Narrative Framework, Short Story.

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\*\* Dr., Department of Arabic Language and Rhetoric, Faculty of Theology, Basic Islamic Sciences, Yozgat Bozok University, Yozgat, Türkiye, e-posta:mohammed.yaseen@yobu.edu.tr, ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3206-9884>

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## Arap Edebiyatında Kısa Hikâyenin Anlatı Yapısını Daha Derin Anlama: Vizyon ve Form

### Öz

Arap edebiyatında anlatı yapıları; hikayelerle, ilgili kitleleri birbirine bağlayan ince ve entelektüel bir köprü oluşturan temel bir unsurdur. Bu inceleme, anlatı yapısının temel bileşenlerini—vizyon ve formu—ayrıntılı bir şekilde ele almayı amaçlamaktadır. Vizyon, yazarın felsefi ve ideolojik bakış açısını kapsayarak, yazarın iletmek istediği altta yatan temaları ve dünya görüşlerini ifade etmeye çalışır. Buna karşılık, form, vizyonun aktarıldığı estetik bir araç olarak işlev görür ve zaman-mekân düzenlemeleri, karakter etkileşimleri ve olayların seyirleri gibi unsurları içerir. Son dönemlerde, Arap edebiyatı anlatı yapılarında dönüşümcü değişiklikler geçirmiş, hikâye anlatımının seviyesini yükselten yenilikçi stiller ve metodolojiler benimsemiştir. Bu yenilikler, katılım ve gerilim seviyelerinde nüanslı değişiklikler sunmaktadır. “*Binbir Gece*”, Necîp Mahfûz’un “*Kahire Üçlemesi*” ve Tâhâ Hüseyin’in “*Günler*” adlı eserleri gibi kanonik metinler, nesiller boyunca Arap edebiyatına sızan çok yönlü anlatı yapılarını sergilemektedir. Bu dinamizm, karmaşıklık, gerilim ve beklenmedik dönemeçler gibi gelişmiş anlatı unsurlarını ustalıklı kullanan çağdaş eserlere de uzanmaktadır ve okuyucunun ilgisini sürekli olarak çekmeyi başarmaktadır. Bu makale, Arap edebiyatının anlatı yapılarının çok boyutlu bir incelemesini yaparak, hazırlık, oluşum, doruk noktası ve çözüm gibi gelişim aşamalarını tanımlayıp deşifre etmektedir. Bu aşamalar içinde, yazarın iletişim ve sanatsal hedeflerini başarıyla yerine getiren, okuyucunun ilgisini çekmeyi ve sürdürmeyi hedefleyen bir dizi hikâye anlatım tekniği dikkatlice kullanılmaktadır.

**Anahtar kelimeler:** Arap Edebiyatı, Sanatsal Oluşum, Karakter Dinamikleri, Edebî Dinamikler, Anlatı Çerçevesi, Kısa Hikâye

### Structured Abstract

The objective of this study is to delve deeply into the narrative structure of Arabic short stories, with a particular focus on the dynamic interplay between vision and form. Vision refers to the thematic and ideological underpinnings of the stories, encompassing the underlying messages, cultural contexts, and philosophical perspectives that shape the narrative. Form, on the other hand, pertains to the structural and stylistic elements that give the story its unique shape, including narrative techniques, plot construction, and linguistic features. By examining the intricate relationship between these two components, the study aims to uncover how they collectively contribute to the storytelling process, ultimately enhancing the depth and richness of the narrative experience in Arabic literature. This exploration seeks to provide a comprehensive

understanding of the ways in which vision and form interact to create compelling and meaningful short stories, shedding light on the artistic and cultural significance of this literary form in the Arabic literary tradition.

In this study, the methods employed are grounded in a qualitative approach, which involves a thorough and detailed analysis of a carefully selected collection of Arabic short stories. This selection is diverse, encompassing stories from different periods, regions, and literary schools within the Arabic literary tradition. The analysis is multifaceted, delving into the narrative techniques employed by the authors, the thematic exploration within the stories, and the stylistic elements that characterise the narrative form.

To decode the stories' underlying visions and forms, the study employs literary theory and narrative analysis as its primary tools. Literary theory provides a framework for understanding the broader philosophical, cultural, and aesthetic underpinnings of the stories, while narrative analysis allows for a close examination of the storytelling techniques and structural components of the narratives. This includes an investigation of elements such as plot structure, character development, narrative voice, and the use of literary devices like symbolism and metaphor.

By utilising these methods, the study aims to uncover the intricate ways in which vision and form interact in the construction of Arabic short stories. The goal is to reveal how these stories are not merely vehicles for storytelling but are also complex artistic creations that reflect the rich tapestry of Arabic culture and literary tradition.

Here are a few sample stories from 'Modern Arabic Short Stories' by Mohammed Mandour, along with an explanation of the basic pillars of the art of the short story through these examples:

### **1. Story Example: 'The Stranger'**

- Plot: The story revolves around a stranger who arrives in a small village and disrupts the daily lives of the villagers. The plot is tightly focused on the stranger's interactions and the resulting changes in the village.

- Setting: The setting is a small, isolated village, which adds to the story's tension and atmosphere. The limited setting helps to concentrate the narrative and heighten the impact of the stranger's presence.

- Theme: The primary theme is the fear of the unknown and the impact of change on a close-knit community. This theme is explored through the villagers' reactions to the stranger and their eventual acceptance or rejection of him.

- Characters: The characters are well-defined, with the stranger serving as a catalyst for revealing the true nature of the villagers. The interactions between the stranger and the villagers drive the narrative forward.

- Style: Mandour uses a straightforward yet evocative style, employing descriptive language to create a vivid picture of the village and its inhabitants. The dialogue is natural and helps to develop the characters and their relationships.

## **2. Story Example: 'The Last Night'**

- Plot: This story follows the final night of a condemned man, exploring his thoughts and emotions as he awaits execution. The plot is linear and focused on the protagonist's internal conflict.

- Setting: The setting is primarily the prison cell, which creates a claustrophobic and intense atmosphere. The confined setting mirrors the protagonist's mental state and heightens the story's emotional impact.

- Theme: The theme of mortality and the human condition is central to this story. It delves into existential questions and the protagonist's reflections on his life and impending death.

- Characters: The protagonist is the central character, with minor characters such as the guards and fellow prisoners providing context and contrast. The story is deeply introspective, focusing on the protagonist's inner world.

- Style: Mandour's style in this story is introspective and philosophical, with a focus on the protagonist's internal monologue. The language is reflective and poignant, enhancing the story's emotional depth.

These examples illustrate the basic pillars of the art of the short story—plot, setting, theme, characters, and style—demonstrating how Mandour effectively employs these elements to create compelling and thought-provoking narratives.

The results of the study reveal a sophisticated blend of vision and form within the narrative structure of Arabic short stories. Vision, which encompasses the thematic and ideological foundations of the stories, is deeply intertwined with form, the stylistic and structural components that shape the narrative. The analysis identifies several notable structural features that are characteristic of Arabic short stories:

1. Non-linear Timelines: Many of the stories employ non-linear timelines, where events are not presented in chronological order. This technique allows for a more complex exploration of themes and characters, as well as the creation of suspense and surprise.

2. Varied Perspectives: The stories often feature multiple perspectives, providing different viewpoints on the same events or characters. This multiplicity of voices adds depth to the narrative and allows for a more nuanced understanding of the story's themes.

3. Symbolic Imagery: Symbolism is a prominent feature in these stories, with objects, characters, or events often representing larger concepts or themes. This use of symbolic imagery enriches the narrative and invites readers to engage in deeper interpretation.

4. Focus on Existential Themes: Many of the stories delve into existential themes, exploring questions of identity, meaning, and the human condition. This focus adds intellectual stimulation to the emotional depth of the stories, encouraging readers to reflect on their own experiences and beliefs.

These structural features contribute significantly to the emotional depth and intellectual stimulation of Arabic short stories. They demonstrate the intricate craftsmanship of the authors and the rich literary tradition from which these stories emerge.

The discussion of the findings delves into the profound impact of vision and form on the narrative structure of Arabic short stories. This intricate interplay not only enhances the storytelling experience but also provides a rich canvas for exploring diverse human experiences and cultural identities. The study underscores how this dynamic relationship between vision and form elevates the literary and aesthetic value of short stories, making them a powerful vehicle for storytelling in Arabic literature. Through this exploration, the research highlights the significance of narrative structure in shaping the thematic and stylistic elements of the stories, ultimately contributing to their depth and resonance within the broader context of Arabic literary tradition.

In conclusion, the study highlights the dynamic nature of narrative structure as an integral component of Arabic short stories' literary form. The intricate interaction between vision and form plays a crucial role in creating stories that are not only engaging but also deeply reflective of the human condition. This research significantly contributes to a deeper understanding of narrative strategies in Arabic literature and emphasises the short story's potential as a powerful medium for cultural expression and exploration. The findings underscore the importance of narrative structure in shaping the thematic and aesthetic qualities of the stories, making them a vital tool for literary analysis and appreciation.

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Narrative structure, notably regarded as an integral component of Arabic literature, orchestrates an intricate yet captivating medium through which stories unfold and are conveyed to audiences. Predominantly, it gravitates around two foundational axes: vision and form. The former, vision, encapsulates the author's intellectual undertones, intertwining the principal message, themes, and core ideology of the story, while the latter, form, pertains to the artistic modality employed to mould and portray the story, enveloping elements such as temporal-spatial arrangement, character dynamics, and event sequencing. The story's various elements and developmental trajectory are fundamentally conceptualized through vision and subsequently manifested through form.

Historically, Arabic literature has undergone noteworthy transformation in narrative structure, meticulously crafting the story's framework, and fostering an aura of suspense and engagement, thereby amplifying its resonance with the reader. Delving into this structural modality becomes crucial to augmenting our understanding and propelling the forward momentum of Arabic literary practices.

Modern Arabic literature perpetuates this tradition, embedding innovative styles and methodologies that not only captivate readers but also spark intrigue with respect to narrative unfolding. By harmoniously blending complexity, tension, and dramatic twists and turns, both novels and short stories in contemporary works enrapture audiences, showcasing a consistent and evolving emphasis on narrative structure across both classical and modern Arabic literary creations.

In essence, acquiring mastery over this structural dynamic is vital for writers to captivate readers, realize their artistic ambitions, and convey their intended messages with clarity and precision. The narrative structure in Arabic literature traditionally unravels across distinctive stages: preparation and setup, genesis and development, and climax and resolution. Within each stage, a suite of specialized techniques is judiciously employed to captivate the reader's attention, ensuring coherent alignment with the author's overarching communicative and artistic objectives.

## 1.1 Background

The art of the short story has long been a treasured component of world literature, with its concise format demanding precision, clarity, and evocative storytelling. The genesis of the short story is diverse, with origins traced back to ancient civilizations, oral traditions, and folktales. In the Arab world, the short story as a literary form has undergone significant evolution. Rooted in the rich tapestry of Arabian Nights, maqamat, and classical poetic traditions, the Arabic short story blossomed with the Nahda (Arab Renaissance) in the 19th and early 20th centuries. This period saw a confluence of traditional Arabic storytelling techniques with Western narrative structures. With an increasingly interconnected world, contemporary Arab writers began to intertwine political, social, and psychological themes, reflecting the region's intricate socio-political landscapes. This blending of the old with the new, the local with the global, has produced a unique narrative vision in the Arabic short story, making it an exciting field of study and exploration (Belkilil, D., 2019, p. 36).

## 1.2 Purpose of the Study

The short story, as a literary genre, presents a concentrated medium for exploring a myriad of themes and visions. However, understanding its underlying structures and narrative perspectives is paramount to appreciating its full depth and breadth. This study aims to:

**1.2.1. Delineate the different types of visions** inherent in short stories, with a special focus on the distinctions present in Arabic literature. Through this, we intend to highlight the unique contributions of Arabic writers and the interplay of cultural, political, and social factors shaping their narratives.

**1.2.2. Examine the structural elements** that constitute the backbone of a short story, illustrating how they dictate the flow, pacing, and eventual impact of the narrative. Recognizing these structural elements, from plot to style, helps to demystify the crafting process and provides insight into the writer's intentions and artistry.

**1.2.3. Propose a structured approach** to crafting and analyzing short stories, informed by key literary scholars and practitioners. This approach can serve as a foundational guide for aspiring writers and as an analytical tool for educators and researchers.

Through this exploration, the study endeavors to enrich our understanding of the short story genre, celebrate its diversity, and spotlight the unique nuances of Arabic short stories in the broader tapestry of world literature.

## 2. Methodology

To achieve a comprehensive understanding of the various visions and structures intrinsic to the short story genre, especially in the context of Arabic literature, this study employed a multifaceted methodological approach:

**2.1. Literary Analysis:** A systematic review of representative short stories across various eras and regions was conducted, with particular emphasis on Arabic literature. This allowed for the extraction and examination of recurrent themes, narrative techniques, and structural elements.

**2.2. Comparative Analysis:** Stories were juxtaposed to observe variations and similarities in the treatment of themes, especially concerning religious, political, social, and psychological visions. This helped in discerning the unique facets of Arabic literature in contrast to global narratives.

**2.3. Consultation of Scholarly Works:** Principal scholarly works, like those of Ashraf and McCloskey, were consulted to comprehend theoretical underpinnings and historical shifts in short story writing and analysis. Their insights aided in grounding the findings of the study in established literary theory.

**2.4. Narrative Inspiration:** The narrative draws inspiration from renowned short story writers, blending their distinctive styles and themes into the framework of the study. This not only helped enrich the discussion but also served as a testament to the dynamic and evolving nature of the short story genre. Through this methodological approach, the study aimed to offer a holistic, nuanced, and informed perspective on short story visions and structures, amplifying the richness and versatility of the genre.

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## 3. Main Narrative (Main discussion)

### 3.1. Analysis of Narrative Structure

An exhaustive analysis of the narrative structure of a short story necessitates the exploration of various concepts, which may encompass:

3.1.1. Theme: Exploration and development of the primary theme throughout the narrative.

3.1.2. Characters: Interactions and dynamics among primary and secondary characters in various events and scenarios.

3.1.3. Setting and Time: The influence of time and place on narrative events and character development.

3.1.4. Events: The evolution of primary events and their impact on character dynamics.

3.1.5. Literary Style: The influence of the writer's literary style on reader interpretation

3.1.6. Insights and Structure in Arabic Literature: Shaping of insights and ideas in harmony with Arabic literary traditions.

#### **4.1. Ibrahim (Ibrahim, 2017) categories the Arabic short story into three distinct types:**

4.1.1. The Traditional Story: Characterized by unity in event, time, and place, this type adheres to conventional structures with archetypal characters and distinct, clear endings.

4.1.2. The Modern Story: Embarking on narrative transformation, this type presents intricate plot shifts, multi-dimensional characters, and open, often ambiguous endings.

4.1.3. The New Short Story: Notably daring, this type ventures into bold experimentations with novel forms and narrative patterns. Ibrahim probed into the characteristics intrinsic to these types, contributing a critically rich addition to Arabic literature discourse. Particularly noteworthy is the author's adoption of a streamlined, accessible style, broadening the work's appeal to a diversified reader demography. Arabic literature, through its narrative structures, artfully employs devices such as symbolism to convey not merely cultural and aesthetic messages but to encapsulate and herald Arabic heritage. The stories provide an immersive experience that stimulates reader engagement and nurtures a profound identification with the characters and unfolding events.

### **5. Article Subject**

This article delves into the analysis of narrative structure within Arabic short stories, with a specific lens on the formation of visions and ideas and their alignment with the prevailing traditions of Arabic literature.

### **6. Significance of the Article**

Narrative structure, an integral component of short stories, profoundly shapes the reader's interpretation and experience of the narrative. Comprehending how this structure is articulated in Arabic literature not only enhances understanding and interpretation of the stories but also augments appreciation for the rich tapestry of Arabic literature and culture.

### **7. Objective of the Article**

Exploring the intricacies between visions and formation in the narrative structure of Arabic short stories, this article seeks to unfold how visions and ideas are crafted and integrated within the narrative. It aims to proffer a

rejuvenated perspective on Arabic short stories and elucidate facets of Arabic literature by scrutinizing alignment with its narrative structure.

## **8. Conceptual Framework**

Narrative structure is pivotal in dissecting stories and novels, establishing a conceptual scaffold that organizes narrative elements, including events, characters, themes, and symbols. There exists a rich history exploring the origins and evolution of narrative structure as a theoretical concept, particularly emerging towards the late 19th century, influenced significantly by Russian intellectuals like Vladimir Propp, who explored oral traditions in his book "Morphology of the Folktale". The theory further evolved through substantial contributions from theorists such as Roland Barthes (1975), Gérard Genette, and Tzvetan Todorov. Barthes (1975) introduced the theory of structural analysis, delving particularly into story composition and the interaction of codes that formulate meaning, perceiving the text as a structure composed of various semantic units or codes. Conversely, Kittler (Kittler, 1987, p. 7) navigates through the concept of 'inside and outside,' elucidating multiple levels of narrative analysis, asserting that the novel transcends mere narration and embodies a distinct structure and sequencing. Moreover, Lévi-Strauss (Lévi-Strauss, 1962, p.32) proposes that stories embody deep structures that mirror cultural conflicts and tensions. Narrative structure within literature remains a field in flux, resulting in varied story interpretations dependent on the reader, text, and cultural context.

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## **9. History of the Story: Navigating Between Genesis and Formation**

The inception of storytelling dates back to antiquity yet pinpointing the exact moment when the story crystallized as an independent literary genre proves challenging. While some scholars posit that the first literary story took root in ancient Greece, Raşîdî (1964) casts his gaze towards the 14th century, observing:

9.1. In the annals of Western literature, early iterations of short stories can be traced back to 14th-century Rome, specifically to a Vatican Palace chamber dubbed the 'Factory of Lies'. Frequented by the Pope's secretaries, these embryonic narratives, though succinct, lacked the formal structure characteristic of short stories, serving instead as a medium for leisurely reading and exchanging news.

9.2. Rushdi contends that the short story, in its contemporary artistic guise, is a relatively nascent literary genre, originating no earlier than the 19th century. Paradoxically, it remains deeply entrenched in historical literary forms.

9.3. Exploring further, elucidates that the rich tapestry of Arab heritage is interwoven with varied story forms, ranging from news stories and historical

narratives to folk tales and rhetorical and philosophical compositions. Anthologies like Al-Jahiz's "The Misers" and Al-Tanukhi's "Relief After Hardship" spotlight specific themes, mirroring the lush storytelling traditions imbedded in Arab culture (Sharuni, 2001, p.76).

### 10. Critical Structural Analysis of the Short Story

Embodied as a pivotal component of narrative literature, the short story distinguishes itself through brevity and a meticulous focus on a singular incident, illuminating nuanced details and character intricacies. Characters and events swiftly blossom, often steering towards a denouement that is simultaneously surprising and impactful. The short story, with its ability to convey poignant messages and spark contemplation in a succinct format, permeates various realms including critical, popular, academic, and media literature (Belkilil, D, 2019, p.59).

10.1. navigates through a perspective widely upheld by Western critics, such as Friedman and Ferguson, encapsulating a belief that short stories and novels reside under the expansive umbrella of a singular narrative genre, diverging merely in length. Both mediums, they argue, share a commonality in techniques, origins, and expressions embedded in the middle social class, and both emerge contemporaneously in the modern era. However, Friedman admits to a degree of divergence in the organization and tools intrinsic to the short story when juxtaposed with the novel, albeit not in their essence. Conversely, Ferguson underscores that the fundamental formal characteristics of the novel permeate the short story, elucidating (Kurdi, 2005, p. 135).

10.1.1. The short story, distinguished by its acuteness of insight, an immersion into inner emotion, and an economy of style, frequently leans into metaphor and simile to sculpt characters and events, eschewing chronological temporality in favour of inventive time manipulation. Perceived by some critics as a genre cemented in impact, owing to its brevity, critic Joseph Frank perceives it as impressionistic, while Russian critic Shklovsky wrestles with pinpointing a singular, definitive narrative structure.

### 11. Balancing Structural Norms and Creative Freedom: A Critical Perspective on the Short Story Narrative Structure

11.1. The short story, as a literary form, intertwines limited characters and temporal scopes with a meticulous focus on stylistic, artistic, and social elements. It leverages structural norms for coherent organization while wielding creativity for artistic depth. Achieving a resonant story necessitates a delicate equilibrium between these dichotomous elements. In his book "The Narrative Structure of the Short Story", Abdul Rahim Al-Kurdi intricately dissects the genre into two pivotal structural components: the inherent structure of the genre

and the specific structure of the text, underscoring the imperative for a harmonious amalgamation of structure and creativity.

11.2. The short story melds imagery and news through a lens of descriptive and illustrative language, hallmarked by spatial and temporal equilibrium. This form diverges from the novel through its harmonious amalgamation of image and news, anchoring itself on a narrative structure that seamlessly blends time and place, while showcasing distinctive focus and eloquence.

11.3. Moreover, the short story employs a specialized narrative structure that intertwines images and news, thereby further distinguishing it from the novel. This structure harnesses time, place, and language to sculpt a unique vision, which is symbiotically influenced by cultural and historical factors. Beyond the overt textual structure, internal frameworks add to the complexity of a text, infusing layers that render each story distinct (Shebib, 2013, p. 17).

11.4. The texture of a text derives its uniqueness from individual creativity, even as it adheres syntactically to genre norms. According to Saussure's principles, individual variations do not destabilize genre stability. Nonetheless, confusion between these layers can spawn misunderstandings concerning the short story genre. For example, critics might inaccurately attribute text-specific traits to the genre, erroneously implying that structural norms fluctuate with each new text.

11.5. Artistic Structuring in Narrative Form According to Mohammed Saleh Al-Shant

Shantí (2001) posits that, in discussing the structural formation of short stories, a critical delineation must be established between two distinct types of narratives: traditional and innovative. Traditional narratives typically adhere to a straightforward and predictably structured trajectory, conforming to well-established literary conventions that encompass a defined beginning, middle, and end. Conversely, innovative narratives might embrace nonlinear structures, incorporate multimedia elements, or employ varied artistic techniques such as temporal shifts or alterations in point of view.

## **12. Analyzing Key Elements of the Traditional Short Story**

The first type, the traditional short story, encapsulates several pivotal elements, each weaving into the fabric of the narrative to craft a coherent and impactful tale:

12.1. Event: A compelling short story necessitates a beginning that firmly establishes the initial situation, while also defining the narrative's time and setting. The middle naturally evolves from this introduction, infusing complexity into the plot, and subsequently, the conclusion amalgamates the

myriad forces related to the situation, thereby bestowing the event with profound meaning (Temîmî & Mes'ûdî, 2023, p. 24).

12.2. Character: A lucid understanding of the characters immersed in the event is paramount, as it illuminates the underlying motivations propelling the narrative forward. The event casts the character into action, thereby rendering the character and event intrinsically intertwined (Burabih, N, 2019, p.147).

12.3. Meaning: The occurrence at the heart of the story must be imbued with meaning. Should meaning be presented as an isolated component, the story risks diminishing its intrinsic value. Hence, the meaning ought to be seamlessly interwoven into the event, subtly suggested through the unfolding narrative, and reaching fulfilment at the pivotal point of illumination (Garnavut & Ibn 'Ashur, 2020, p.19).

12.4. Moment of Illumination: A short story typically spotlights a specific instance within a person or group's trajectory, rather than encapsulating an entire lifespan. The presence of a discernible moment of illumination is imperative, for without it, the narrative falters in qualifying as a succinct short story.

12.5. Language and Style: The essence of the story is encapsulated within its language, spanning description, dialogue, and narration. The language ought to flexibly adapt to various levels of complexity within the story. Employing mere reporting jeopardizes the narrative's intricacy because it narrates the event rather than vividly depicting it. Consequently, the event, characters, meaning, moment of illumination, and textual fabric collectively distil the quintessence of the short story.

12.6. Artistic Truth: Short stories craft an illusion of reality, wherein an artistic truth, sculpted by the author's visionary lens, is pivotal. The meticulous selection of details and strategic isolation of events are crucial, with every word concurrently serving descriptive and suggestive purposes. Traditional stories, often written with the potential to shock the reader, traditionally pivot upon tangible themes and narration, distinguishing them from their modern counterparts (Ibrahim, 2017, p. 63).

### **13. Exploring the Modern Short Story**

Modern writers usher in innovative approaches to narrative structure, delving into psychological intricacies and utilizing both poetic and reportorial language. Although the modern short story embraces complexity, particularly through elements like dreams, certain traditional aspects—such as unity of impression—remain crucial in both conventional and contemporary short stories.

13.1. Unity of Impression: A paramount structural feature within the short story, unity of impression materializes through the meticulous condensation and synthesis of various elements, thereby eliminating redundancy and digression. This strategic process crafts a unified psychological impact on the reader (Bu'afiye, 2017, p. 37).

13.2. Moment of Discovery: This represents the pivotal, transformative moment within the character's life or event. Such moments germinate from a dynamic interaction between the character and the crisis, fostering an enhanced understanding of the essence of the character or event (Abbas, İ, 2002, p. 96).

13.3. Language of the Story: The language embedded within a story hinge on two pivotal aspects: the cognitive aspect, which emphasizes depiction and revelation, and the emotive aspect, concentrating on subtle suggestions and rhythmic flow.

13.4. Acoustic Characteristics: Intrinsic to language and acoustic features of the story enhance the narrative, crafting an audibly rich environment that resonates with readers and augments the emotive undertone of the text.

13.5. Design Consistency: Traditionally, the term 'plot' pertains to the strategic arrangement of events within a story, crafted to sculpt a specific impression or scenario. Writers manipulate these events—which often incorporate crises—to align with their distinct vision. The sequencing of these events can unfold in varied manners, fostering diverse expectations and probabilities in the reader's mind. Sequencing can manifest in several forms: Firstly, causal, or logical sequences, which methodically progress from premises to conclusions, allowing readers to foresee ensuing events. Secondly, qualitative, or typological sequences, which are anchored in intuition and symbolism rather than strict logic. Lastly, repetitive sequences that revisit the narrative in a novel form, broadening its scope without transmuting its essence (Mikraz, C. 'A. 'A, 2012, p. 94).

#### **14. Artistic Formation in Narrative Structure: Insights from Youssef El-Shaarony**

Şârûn (Sharuni, 2001,83), in his seminal work, "The Story: Evolution and Rebellion," articulates that the short story, once relegated to the realm of childhood amusement, has forged its distinct identity. Contrasting entertainment, perceived as a medium blending enjoyment with educational intent, with art — a creative endeavour aiming for aesthetic pleasure and transcending immediate pragmatic aims — art differentiates itself by embodying a heightened degree of originality and creativity.

The short story stands as an autonomous literary form, carving out a niche distinct from the novel. While sharing the narrative attribute with novels, the

scale and focal point of the short story diverge markedly from those of its lengthier counterpart, especially when one contemplates evolving novella concepts. In this context, Edgar Allan Poe underscores the 'unity of effect,' advocating for a reading duration of 30 minutes to two hours, highlighting distinctive meld of creativity and artistic foresight of the short story. Zooming in on the intricate facets of individual existence, such as isolation and internal conflicts, the short story, divergent from the novel, employs specialized techniques to afford concise, pinpoint portrayals. The harmonious amalgamation of form and content in the short story yields an intensified artistic vision, thereby securing its place as a unique literary form.

### **15. Elements of the Short Story**

15.1. Texture: The literary texture, which encompasses language, dialogue, and narration, is pivotal for storytelling that leans heavily on character development. Language not only mirrors the identity of a character but should also be wielded by the writer with a rich yet unpretentious lexicon to ensure maximal impact upon the reader (Khalifi, 2013, p. 5).

15.2. Complication: The complication within a story pertains to the sequence and causality of events, addressing the questions 'What will happen?' and 'Why?' This element goes beyond a mere succession of incidents; it further elucidates causality, as in a queen perishing from sorrow subsequent to the king's demise. Complications inject conflicts of various types into the narrative, whether they be social, interpersonal, or internal.

15.3. Character: Characters within stories are inherently multi-dimensional, boasting physical attributes, social contexts, psychological motivations, and intellectual beliefs. Importantly, characters can manifest as animals or objects, but they must be accorded the same complexity as human characters, thereby providing multiple layers to the storytelling.

### **16. Structure of Narrative Discourse in the Short Story**

In "The Structure of Narrative Discourse in the Short Story", Mîrgânî (2008) suggests that understanding the concept of structure is best achieved through linguistic study, echoing sentiments expressed by Mahmoud Rajab. Within Arabic grammar, 'structure' signifies adherence to a specific state for each word. Notably, the term 'structure' is not used in ancient texts, and Arabic dictionaries provide no sufficient definition for it.

While the term 'structure' is absent from both the Quran and Hadith, it was utilized by ancient Arabic scholars such as Ibn Aqeel in the context of word composition. In the Western sphere, Saussure recast it as a linguistic system, influencing subsequent scholars like Lévi-Strauss and Piaget. Birthed in the Netherlands through the influence of Russian scholars, structuralism posits

language as a foundational element. Lévi-Strauss envisioned this concept as a dynamic system, while Salah Fadl defined it as a set of interlocking relationships, thereby broadening its conceptual scope.

Despite its focus on form, structuralism has faced criticism for sidelining meaning and reality. Nonetheless, scholars, including Lévi-Strauss and Goldmann, have defended and fine-tuned its principles. Perspectives on this matter range from perceiving literature as a reflection of reality to viewing structures as mirrors of social relationships. Within the field, experts tend to prefer integrating form and meaning within cultural contexts.

### **17. The Vision in a Short Story**

The vision in a short story refers to the narrator's perspective on the events and characters within the narrative. Encompassing a broad spectrum, the themes and visions within a short story can span religious, political, social, and psychological domains, among others. It is vital that each story is considered independently and analyzed deeply to unearth its latent messages.

#### **Types of Visions in the Short Story:**

**Religious Visions:** Focusing on beliefs, these elements tackle religious issues and explore various religious values and ideas.

**Political Visions:** These delve into commentary on the political state, expressing political ideologies and exploring conflicts. In contemporary Arab literature, these perspectives often mirror the tensions and political shifts within the Middle East and North Africa.

**Social Visions:** This domain in literature scrutinizes social issues, tackling themes like poverty, discrimination, and social justice.

**Psychological Visions:** Exploring mental and psychological journeys, these visions delve into mental health, trauma experiences, and internal conflicts of characters.

The mode of vision in a story intricately shapes how the reader perceives the events within it. For example, a first-person perspective immerses the reader directly into the character's experiences, while a third-person omniscient viewpoint provides a holistic, all-encompassing overview. Conversely, a limited third-person perspective navigates through events strictly through a single character's lens (Fehmavi, S., 2007, p. 73).

According to "Narrative Vision in the Short Story" by Ashraf (Sherifuddin, 2018, p.134), there are three predominant types of narrative perspectives:

**First-person Perspective:** The narrator relays events from the viewpoint of a character within the story.

**Third-person Omniscient Perspective:** The narrator recounts the tale, exploring viewpoints from all characters within the story.

**Limited Third-person Perspective:** The narration unfolds from the viewpoint of a single character, privy only to this character's knowledge and experiences. The chosen narrative perspective meticulously directs how readers perceive and interpret the events within the narrative.

### **18. Short Story Structure**

The structure in a short story broadly pertains to crafting a narrative framework, steering the story's trajectory and managing the presentation of events. The structure, albeit simple or complex, demands meticulous crafting to yield a coherent and impactful story. McCloskey (1983) proposes several aspects to consider in structuring a story, which include:

**Characters:** Who are the pivotal players? What drives them, and what challenges do they encounter?

**Setting:** Where and when does the story unfurl?

**Plot:** What events cascade through the story, and how do they interconnect?

**Suspense:** How is the reader's interest piqued and maintained?

**Conclusion:** How does the story culminate? Did the characters realize their objectives?

#### **Clarification of Key Structural Elements in the Short Story**

**18.1. Plot:** Unlike a novel, which might weave multiple, interlinked plots, a short story typically harbours a singular plot. It zeroes in on a distinct event or situation with focus and descriptive precision.

**18.2. Setting:** Short stories generally tether events to a single or limited array of settings, contributing to an intensely focused narrative.

**18.3. Theme:** Short stories commonly underscore a unified concept or idea meant to conjure a specific mood or delve into a particular question, enhancing its concentrated nature.

**18.3. Style:** The style, involving the language and narrative techniques utilized, significantly shapes the narrative. Whereas some stories might lean on straightforward language, others might employ a more descriptive, intricate linguistic tapestry to illuminate events and characters.

In this context, McCloskey provides insights for short story crafting: commence with a robust idea, delve into character understanding, pinpoint the story's goal, orchestrate events, ensure engaging narration, and conclude with

impact. Structuring extends beyond mere functionality, evolving into a creative, fulfilling endeavour for writers.

Literary devices, such as similes, guide and deepen the narrative, enhancing reader comprehension. The Arabic language, with its rich poetic traditions, therefore, casts a potent spell on readers. The structure of a short story delineates how event sequencing and character deployment influence the reader.

In Arabic short stories, structuring amplifies event progression and sways the reader through detailed depictions and narrative techniques, like dialogue, directing attention toward pivotal junctures.

وإليك بعض النماذج القصصية من كتاب "القصة القصيرة العربية الحديثة" لمحمد مندور، مع شرح للأركان الأساسية لفن القصة القصيرة من خلال هذه النماذج:

#### ١. نموذج قصة: "الغريب"

الحبكة: تدور أحداث القصة حول شخص غريب يصل إلى قرية صغيرة ويعرقل الحياة اليومية لسكان القرية. تركز الحبكة بإحكام على تفاعلات الغريب والتغيرات الناتجة عن ذلك في القرية.

المكان: المكان هو قرية صغيرة معزولة، مما يزيد من توتر القصة وأجواءها. يساعد الإطار المحدود على تركيز السرد وزيادة تأثير وجود الغريب.

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الموضوع: الموضوع الرئيسي هو الخوف من المجهول وتأثير التغيير على مجتمع متماسك. يتم استكشاف هذا الموضوع من خلال ردود أفعال القرويين تجاه الغريب وقبولهم أو رفضهم له في نهاية المطاف.

- الشخصيات: الشخصيات واضحة المعالم، حيث يعمل الغريب كمحفز للكشف عن الطبيعة الحقيقية للقرويين. تدفع التفاعلات بين الغريب وأهل القرية السرد إلى الأمام.

الأسلوب: يستخدم مندور أسلوباً مباشراً ومثيراً للذكريات في آنٍ واحد، مستخدماً لغة وصفية لخلق صورة حية للقرية وسكانها. الحوار طبيعي ويساعد على تطوير الشخصيات وعلاقاتها.

#### ٢. مثال على القصة: "الليلة الأخيرة"

الحبكة: تتبع هذه القصة الليلة الأخيرة لرجل محكوم عليه بالإعدام، وتستكشف أفكاره وعواطفه أثناء انتظاره تنفيذ حكم الإعدام. الحبكة خطية وتركز على الصراع الداخلي للبطل.

- الإعداد: المكان في المقام الأول هو زنزانة السجن، مما يخلق جوّاً خائفاً ومكثفاً. يعكس هذا المكان المحصور الحالة النفسية للبطل ويزيد من التأثير العاطفي للقصة.

الموضوع: موضوع الفناء والحالة الإنسانية هو محور هذه القصة. فهي تتعمق في الأسئلة الوجودية وتأملات البطل في حياته وموته الوشيك.

- الشخصيات: بطل الرواية هو الشخصية المحورية، مع وجود شخصيات ثانوية مثل الحراس وزملائه السجناء الذين يوفران السياق والتباين. القصة استبطانية بعمق، وتركز على العالم الداخلي للبطل.

الأسلوب: يتسم أسلوب مندور في هذه القصة بالاستبطان والفلسفة، مع التركيز على المونولوج الداخلي للبطل. اللغة تأملية ومؤثرة، مما يعزز العمق العاطفي للقصة.

توضح هذه الأمثلة الركائز الأساسية لفن القصة القصيرة - الحبكة، والإعداد، والموضوع، والشخصيات، والأسلوب - وتوضح كيف يوظف مندور هذه العناصر بفعالية لخلق قصص مقنعة ومثيرة للتفكير.

تكشف نتائج الدراسة عن مزيج متطور من الرؤية والشكل في البنية السردية للقصة القصيرة العربية. وتتشابك الرؤية، التي تشمل الأسس الموضوعية والأيدولوجية للقصص، بعمق مع الشكل، والمكونات الأسلوبية والبنائية التي تشكل السرد. ويحدد التحليل عدة سمات بنيوية بارزة تتميز بها القصص القصيرة العربية:

١. خطوط زمنية غير خطية: تستخدم العديد من القصص جداول زمنية غير خطية، حيث لا يتم عرض الأحداث حسب الترتيب الزمني. تتيح هذه التقنية استكشافاً أكثر تعقيداً للمواضيع والشخصيات، بالإضافة إلى خلق التشويق والمفاجأة.

٢. وجهات نظر متنوعة: غالباً ما تعرض القصص وجهات نظر متعددة، وتقدم وجهات نظر مختلفة حول نفس الأحداث أو الشخصيات. يضيف تعدد الأصوات هذا عمقاً إلى السرد ويسمح بفهم أكثر دقة لمواضيع القصة.

٣. الصور الرمزية: تُعد الرمزية سمة بارزة في هذه القصص، حيث تمثل الأشياء أو الشخصيات أو الأحداث في كثير من الأحيان مفاهيم أو مواضيع أكبر. هذا الاستخدام للصور الرمزية يثري السرد ويدعو القراء إلى الانخراط في تفسير أعمق.

٤. التركيز على المواضيع الوجودية: تتعمق العديد من القصص في الموضوعات الوجودية، وتستكشف أسئلة الهوية والمعنى والحالة الإنسانية. يضيف هذا التركيز تحفيزاً فكرياً إلى العمق العاطفي للقصص، ويشجع القراء على التفكير في تجاربهم ومعتقداتهم الخاصة.

تساهم هذه السمات البنيوية بشكل كبير في العمق العاطفي والتحفيز الفكري للقصص القصيرة العربية. وهي تُظهر براعة المؤلفين المعقدة والتقاليد الأدبية الغنية التي تنبثق منها هذه القصص.

تتعمق مناقشة النتائج في التأثير العميق للرؤية والشكل على البنية السردية للقصص القصيرة العربية. هذا التفاعل المعقد لا يعزز تجربة السرد القصصي فحسب، بل يوفر أيضاً لوحة غنية لاستكشاف التجارب الإنسانية والهويات الثقافية المتنوعة. وتبرز الدراسة كيف أن هذه العلاقة الديناميكية بين الرؤية والشكل ترفع من القيمة الأدبية والجمالية للقصص القصيرة، مما يجعلها وسيلة قوية لسرد القصص في الأدب العربي. من خلال هذا الاستكشاف، يسلط البحث الضوء على أهمية البنية السردية في تشكيل العناصر الموضوعية والأسلوبية للقصص، مما يسهم في نهاية المطاف في تعميقها وصداها في السياق الأوسع للتقاليد الأدبية العربية.

وفي الختام، تسلط الدراسة الضوء على الطبيعة الديناميكية للبنية السردية كجزء لا يتجزأ من الشكل الأدبي للقصص القصيرة العربية. ويلعب التفاعل المعقد بين الرؤية والشكل دوراً حاسماً في خلق قصص ليست جذابة فحسب، بل تعكس بعمق الحالة الإنسانية أيضاً. ويسهم هذا البحث بشكل كبير في فهم أعمق لاستراتيجيات السرد في الأدب العربي، ويؤكد على إمكانات القصة القصيرة كوسيلة قوية للتعبير والاستكشاف الثقافي. تؤكد النتائج على أهمية البنية السردية في تشكيل الصفات الموضوعية والجمالية للقصص، مما يجعلها أداة حيوية للتحليل والتقدير الأدبي.

## 19. Relationship Between Perspectives and Structure in the Short Story

In a short story, the intricacies between perspectives and structure are significantly intertwined. Perspectives encapsulate the ideas, values, and beliefs that the writer aspires to communicate to the reader. Concurrently, structure refers to how the story unfolds through specific literary styles and narrative techniques. The structure can substantially influence perspectives as the author may utilise various narrative techniques to either bolster or modify their intended message (Ayid, M. 'A. C, 2014, p. 82).

The Arabic short story provides writers with a medium through which to convey perspectives, denoting a symbiotic relationship between structure and ideological expressions. The structure has the capacity to both influence and is moulded by these perspectives, enhancing narrative development and fostering reader engagement. This genre uniquely amalgamates linguistic aesthetics with intellectual resonance

In "Writing the Short Story," Baker (2002) delves into the concepts of perspective and structure within the short story genre. Baker contends that perspective and structure epitomize the vantage point from which the narrator shares the story. Following this line of thought, Baker advises writers to:

Contemplate the character through whom readers should navigate the events.

Ponder upon the events that should be spotlighted for the reader.

Reflect on the desired degree of objectivity or subjectivity in the story.

Upon consideration of these factors, writers can select the perspective most congruent with their narrative. In conclusion, the interplay between perspective and structure in a short story is multifaceted. Thus, writers can deploy various narrative techniques to articulate perspectives, and the structural choices made can influence how readers interpret these perspectives.

## **20. Examples from Arabic Literature**

This section reviews specific examples from Arabic literature, demonstrating the interplay between vision and structure through works by various authors. To elucidate the narrative structure in Arabic short stories, this paper presents an analytical study of certain distinctive tales in Arabic literature. This work analyzes these stories based on various narrative elements and explores how vision and structure are employed within them. Notable short stories examined include the following:

20.1. A suitable collection of contemporary Arabic short stories that explores themes of identity, belonging, women's issues, migration, oppression, and social transformations is 'Modern Arabic Short Stories' by Mohammed Mandour. This collection delves into the evolving trends and themes in modern Arabic literature, providing insights into diverse literary experiences and the evolution of literary styles through a contemporary approach and language.

20.2. "One Thousand and One Nights" by various authors (commonly attributed to Mohammed Iqbal bin Abdullah Al-Isfahani, though its precise origins remain elusive): One of the most prominent collections in Arabic heritage, it comprises interwoven tales that utilize narrative vision techniques to convey ethical and philosophical messages, maintaining tension and suspense throughout.

20.3. "Arabic Folktales" by Mohammad Al-Nablusi: This compendium assembles stories representing Arab culture, portraying the Arab world through descriptive visions, elucidating traditions, and cultures, and offering glimpses into the life of the Arab community.

20.4. Modern Arabic Short Stories by Mohammed Mandour: This collection explores the evolving trends and themes in modern Arabic literature. The book offers insights into diverse literary experiences, deepens the reader's understanding of the shifting literary landscape, and elucidates the evolution of literary styles through a contemporary approach and language.

Overall, these literary works reveal the diversity and richness of the narrative structure in Arabic short stories. Vision and structure are utilized to convey messages, develop characters, and construct events that captivate and provoke the reader's contemplation.

#### **4. Conclusion**

4.1. Arabic short stories, characterized by innovation and renewal, reflect the rich and complex nature of Arab culture. More than mere instruments of entertainment, they also serve as tools for critical thinking and social analysis, offering valuable insights into the experiences of individuals and communities within Arab society and thereby holding a significant place in Arab literary culture.

4.2. Contemporary Arabic narrative literature traverses a diverse array of issues impacting Arab society, encompassing themes such as questions of identity and belonging, women's issues in Arab society, stories of migration and asylum, confrontations with oppression, injustice, and tyranny, and the exploration of social and cultural transformations within Arab societies.

4.3. This article aims to illuminate the complexity and depth that characterize modern Arabic literature, focusing on the examination of the structure and thematic influences within Arabic short stories and underscoring pivotal elements such as character development and plot progression. Arabic narrative literature is distinguished by its diversity and its poignant portrayal of pertinent human issues, offering explanations and reflections on the experiences and challenges of life.

4.4. Arabic short stories reveal the potent interplay of structure and vision in conveying narrative messages, establishing these narratives as foundational within Arabic literature. This body of work not only represents a crucial cultural reservoir deserving of appreciation and support but also constitutes a vital component of Arabic heritage, notable for its structural integrity and its utilization of form and vision.

4.5. The Arabic short story, as a rich, sophisticated, and relevant form of Arabic literature, warrants both recognition and propagation. Writers and readers alike should advocate for and uplift Arabic narrative literature, thereby inspiring future generations to express themselves through the written word and

ensuring the continuity, evolution, and innovation of the Arabic short story in future literary discussions.

4.6. However, to realize its full potential, the Arabic short story necessitates ongoing support and promotion. Writers and readers should strive to comprehend its structural intricacies and actively encourage innovation within the genre. Enhancing the quality of the short story involves exploring various styles, introducing contemporary subjects, promoting cultural exchange, and leveraging opportunities presented by the digital age.

4.7. Hence, the continuance of support for research, development, and innovation in the field of short stories is imperative. Augmenting Arabic narrative literature has the potential not only to contribute to the expansion of Arab culture and enrich the literary experience but also to forge connections between writers and readers across the Arab world and beyond, ensuring the sustained vitality and relevance of the Arabic short story in the literary landscape.

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