Elements of Narrative: Moses' Story in the *Holy Qur'an* as a Case Study

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Abstract

The Qur'anic story is not merely a work of art, but a means of guidance and calling. It is unique in that it recounts factual events and has the power to take the reader from one place to another in an engaging manner. This paper is devoted to literary delve into the various narrative elements that combine to form a cohesive unit, crystallize concepts and ideas, and draw the audience's attention to specific conclusions. Additionally, it provides a comprehensive discussion of the art of narrative in Arabic and English literature, as well as the Qur'anic story. It aims to investigate the main elements, types and classifications of narrative, elucidate the value and importance of narrative in Arabic and English literatures, and examine how the elements of narrative are employed in Moses' story in the Holy Qur'an. By using the story of Moses (peace be upon him) as a case study, which is the most frequently repeated story in the Qur'an, this paper also tends to stimulate readers to find a mutual base that connects them with the storyteller. It seeks to provide new prospects of reading the Qur'anic story and how the narrative elements are employed to achieve the Qur'anic goals.

Keywords: *Elements of Narrative*; *Qur'anic Story*; and Moses*' Story*.

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Introduction

Derived from the Latin word "*narre*," 'to reveal or convey information', the verb "*narrate*" means "to tell, to give an account of"; the noun "*narration*" means the "act of telling, that which is told, or an orderly account of what has happened"; the noun "narrative" means "a continued account of any occurrence, or story" (Davidson, 1907, p.1047). Having the same chronological and thematic order of events (Czarniawska,1998, p.59), the literary terms *narrative* and *story* can be used interchangeably. Görlach (2008) defined the *story* as "true narrative, historical account or anecdote" (p.79), while *narrative* is an "account of series of events", and *narration* is "part of an oration in which the facts are stated" (p.57). *Narrative* is "a sequencing of something for somebody," and the *narration* of this narrative is "the symbolic presentation of a sequence of events connected by subject matter and related by time" (Scholes, 1980, p.209).   However, the story is sometimes referred to as a subset of narrative considering the later more encompassing and can have more than one story embedded within it.

A *story* or *narrative* is an interpretation of a sequential series of actions that has the ability to take the reader from a certain place or orientation to another in an engaging manner. Franzosi (1998) declared that "the events in the story must disrupt an initial state of equilibrium that sets in motion an inversion of situation, a change of fortunes—from good to bad, from bad to good, or no such reversal of polarity, just an 'after' different from the 'before,' but neither necessarily better nor worse" (521). The *story* or *narrative* tells the

actions of its characters and the experiences they go through, describing their reactions and conduct towards the changes they do or are exposed to as a way to crystallize concepts and ideas and draw the audience's attention to a specific conclusion. This depiction is declared by Ricoeur (1990), summarizing Gallie (1964) as follows,

> A story describes a sequence of actions and experiences done or undergone by a certain number of people, whether real or imaginary. These people are presented either in situations that change or as reacting to such change. In turn, these changes reveal hidden aspects of the situation and the people involved, and engender a new predicament which calls for thought, action, or both. This response to the new situation leads the story toward its conclusion. (p.150)

In their turn, people generally tend to interpret the stories they are exposed to in their daily life as these stories often include a lot of meaningful aspects and in somehow the listener finds a mutual base that connects him with the storyteller.

Components of Narrative

Smith (1981) summarized the elements of narrative, saying, "We might conceive of narrative discourse most minimally and most generally as verbal acts consisting of someone telling someone that something happened" (p. 232). His definition declared four elements: the narrator (who tells the story), the narratee (the audience, either reader or listener), events (what happened), and past tense. Another declaration of the narrative components is provided by Sari and Ngadiman (2011). They defined four elements that

constitute the narrative text and differentiated it from other texts: (characters of the story; time, place and directions of events), complication (the series of main events that form the story), climax (the most intense and exciting point in the story), and resolution (solution of the conflicts that characters may face) (p. 43).

Narrative's main components can be elaborated as follows:

A- Characters

The most memorable element of the story is the character that drives the actions and reveals the writer's ideas to the audience. The story finds its place in the audience's memory through the good or evil character he or she likes or dislikes**.** To avoid getting the audience bored, the characters of the narrative, whether human or non-human, should be well-developed and originally created with real and expected characteristics. Fisher (1997) indicates that "coherence in life and literature requires that characters behave characteristically. Without this kind of predictability, there is no trust, no rational order, no community" (p.316). Thrall and Hibbard (1936) defined characterization as "the depicting in writing, of clear images of a person, his actions and manners of thought and life. They declared how characters are created saying, "A man's nature, environment, habits, emotions, desires, instincts: all these go to make people what they are. And the skillful writer makes his important people clear to us through a portrayal of these elements" (pp.74-5).

B- Settings of the Story

Kress (2005) defined the setting as "the background on which the writer builds the plot and characters. It involves the entire

environment: time, place, experience, and mood. Setting can be revealed through narration and dialogue and illustrated by the characters' actions, thoughts, and speech patterns" (p.32). Characters move and deal with abstract objects in a space that exists literally in the deep structure of the narrative. Chatman (1980) explained the relationship between the setting and the character and defined the setting as "the place and collection of objects 'against which' his actions and emotions appropriately emerge" (pp. 138-39). The characters affect the place and are, in turn, affected by their experience at this place and its related memories. Considering the time of narrative, we have to differentiate between two types of time: the discourse time and the story time. While the discourse time refers to the time the audience need to read or listen to the story, the story time is the real time of the story's actions. Analyzing the narrative, the analyst should pay attention to the temporal succession of the story's events. The order in which the events are revealed to the audience may differ or be reversed from the order in which they really occurred. So, Chatman (1980) distinguished between two notions related to the story time: "deep structure," which is used to mean the basic sequence of the story's events, and the "narrative discourse," which means the forms and media through which the basic story is expressed and transformed, resulting in different versions of the same story (pp. 22-28).

C-Author and Narrator

The narrative analyst or audience should distinguish between two persons embedded in the process of communicating the narrative:
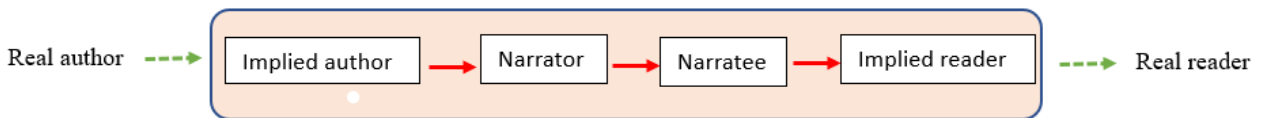
the author of the narrative and the narrator. Beardsley (1981) argues that "the speaker of a literary work cannot be identified with the author-and therefore the character and condition of the speaker can be known by internal evidence alone - unless the author has provided a pragmatic context, or a claim of one, that connects the speaker with himself" (p. 240). Booth (1983, pp. 70-71) presented the idea of the existence of a third party, which he called the "implied author." This "implied author" differs from the narrator but rather surpasses him for being the principal generator or principle that directs the events in a particular way and manages what characters say, do, or are exposed to. Furthermore, "unlike the narrator, the implied author can tell us nothing. He, or better it has no voice, no direct means of communicating. It instructs us silently, through the design of the whole, with all the voices, by all the means it has chosen to let us learn" (Chatman, 1980, p. 148).

Likewise, the process of receiving the narrative text has three different elements: "the real reader, the implied reader and the narrate." The "real reader" is related to the normal "surface or manifestation level of reading," that is, the reading of words, sentences that constitute the narrative text, while the "implied reader" is related to the level of "reading out," which refers to "decoding from surface to deep narrative structures." The process of "reading out" the narrative components gives the possibility of conveying them from one medium to another (Chatman, 1980, p. 42). "The narratee" is defined as "one device by which the implied author informs the real reader how to perform as implied reader"

(p.150). The relationships between the previous elements are summarized by Chatman (1980) in the following diagram:

Figure 1.2

Narrative Text (Chatman, 1980, p. 151)

The figure describes the processes of communicating and receiving the narrative. It declares that the implied author and implied reader are essential elements, while the narrator and narratee are optional. The real author and the real reader symbolize the indispensable polarity of the whole transaction.

Fisher (1997) presented the idea that audience acceptance and adherence to a narrative depend greatly on two main principles: coherence (of structure, material, and characters) and fidelity (of the aims and values for which it calls) (p.315). The narrative events should be organized and decorated in a way that evokes the audience's emotions to complete reading or listening to the whole narrative. Among the narrative events, the climax is the part that arouses the audience the most. Towards the resolution of the narrative, the concepts, attitudes, and whatever ideas the narrator wanted to develop in the audience should have been stated. In oral narration, the storyteller often depends on the assumption of listener's ability to grasp the gist of the story, while in written narrative, the reader needs more linguistic and rhetorical intellect to investigate the lessons and meanings embedded between lines.

Lofland and Lofland (1995) declared this saying, ''Because of the open-ended and creative dimensions of the analytic process, a description of the concrete operations composing it does not entirely capture what goes on'' (p.181). Herrnstein (1980) explains that the conditions that may affect the construction of any narrative come under two main categories: "circumstantial variables" and "psychological variables." Circumstantial variables refer to the cultural, social, and physical context and setting of the narrative, the particular addressee audience, and how the narrator is affected by them. Psychological variables include "the narrator's motives for telling the tale and all the particular interests, desires, expectations, memories, knowledge, and prior experiences" (p. 226).

Narrative in Arabic and English Literatures

A narrative is a universal genre of art, as Barthes (1977) said, ''all classes, all human groups, have their narratives … narrative is international, transhistorical, transcultural; it is simply there, like life itself'' (p.79). The Arabic word 'قِصَّة' '*Qiṣah*' (i.e., a story) is derived from the verb 'قَصَّ أَثَرَهُ' '*Qaṣa Atharaho*' (i.e., 'tracked his course of trail'), and 'قَصَّ الحَدِيث' '*Qaṣa al-hadîth*' (i.e., 'related the speech typically') (Al-Gawhary,1974, pp. 313-14). Arabic Narrative dates back to the pre-Islamic era since the inhabitants of the Arabian Peninsula had stories and narratives about war events and the news of champions and celebrities considering them a prolific resource of stories. With the appearance of Islam, The *Holy Qur'an* came with "the fairest of narratives" (*The Holy Qur'an*: Ghail trans., 2008, p.235). Several studies have been conducted on the narrative, its

origin, types, development, and artistic value. It has been the main focus of some studies and a part of some other studies. Some of the Arabic studies dedicated to the discussion of the narrative are: Khorshid's *"The Art of the Arabic Novel"* (1975), Najm's *"The Art of the Story"* (1955), Abû Sa'd's "*The Art of the Story"* (1959), Ibrâhîm's *"The Art of Stories in Theory and Practice"* (1995), and Abdul Khâliq's *"Story Art, Its Nature, Elements and Its First Sources"* (1987).

On the other hand, much of Western art until the twentieth century has been narrative, depicting stories from religion, myth and legend, history, and literature, as Tomaščíková (2009) historicizes, "Narrative has existed from the time the first stone-age paintings were drawn in caves and the first stories were told at the tribal fires" (p. 281). O'Neill (1994) states that "Narrative firmly anchored in the tradition of the Russian and Czech formalism of the early twentieth century and French Structuralism and semiotics of the sixties" (p.13). Discussions about narrative are found greatly in the context of analyzing fiction works. Philosophers of history studied narrative as a means of clarifying history's dependence on it to investigate and describe the past. Rimmon-Kenan (1996) stated that "the traditional assumption that language and literature can and do mirror or reflect reality was often associated with the Aristotelian term mimesis" (p. xi). However, he declared that "the act of narration does not represent the world directly. Rather, it represents modes of representation, possibilities of doubt and credence, in the worlds the characters inhabit" (p. 20). The narrative style of writing

was adopted in presenting entries in different fields, as Görlach (2008) documents, "Often early entries are very 'narrative' in style and content, providing for the modern reader easily accessible informative (and often amusing) data on cultural history and traditions" (p. 178).

Narrative Types and Classifications

Somers and Gibson (1994) elaborate on four types of narratives: ontological, public, conceptual, and meta narratives. 'Ontological narrative' is one's talk to himself about the value of his presence in life and his own memories. 'Public narrative' is created and circulated among a larger group of people or institutions such as family, media, religious, or social foundations. 'Conceptual narrative' is the "concepts and explanations that we construct as social researchers" (p. 62), depending on the analysis and conclusions of both ontological and public narratives. 'Meta narrative' is defined as the story "in which we are embedded as contemporary actors in history" (p. 63). Rimmon-Kenan (1996) borrowed and defined some of Genette's terms related to narrative levels, describing them as "a phenomenon of embedding, subordination, relations of containing/contained, or outside/inside, between the act of narration and the events narrated, as well as between various stories told in one text" (p. 133). Thus, we have two main levels called "extradiegetic" (the act of narration of the main events) and "metadiegetic" (sub stories told by characters of the main events), which are described as "second-degree narratives."

There are two fundamental literary theories that represent the framework through which narratives can be investigated and explained. The first is the constructionist theory which focuses +

on the components of the narrative and how they are constructed. The second is the functionalist theory which focuses mainly on the role and aim of the narrative (Threadgold, 2005, pp. 262-67). Two main approaches of analyzing the construction of narratives are structuralist and formalist theories. According to Chatman (1980), the structuralist theory entails that the narrative consists of two main parts. The first part is the story composed of content (sequence of events) and existents (characters, time, place). The second part is the discourse which refers to the tools used by the narrator to express the content (pp. 19-20). The formalist theory differentiates between two elements of narrative: "fable" which refers to the basic events of the story, and "plot" that refers to the order and technique in which events are presented to the audience technique (e.g., normal order, flashed-back order). The functional role of the narrative is described by Ryan (2004) as "a mental representation of causally connected states and events which captures a segment in the history of a world and of its members" (p. 47).

Narrative's Literary Value, Importance and Function

Narratives enrich the lives of individuals with so many experiences that they may not have enough time, money, or tools to live. Baker (2006) argued that "narrative provides a basis for shared language and values, thus enabling the mobilization of numerous individuals with very different backgrounds and attributes around specific

political, humanitarian, or social issues" (p. 462). Beside the capability of amusing and entertaining, narratives have the power of reconstructing, developing, and purifying the human intellect, awareness, and soul. Bennett and Edelman (1985) stated that:

> If stories can be constructed to wall off the senses to the dilemmas and contradictions of social life, perhaps they also can be presented in ways that open up the mind to creative possibilities developed in ways that provoke intellectual struggle, the resolution of contradiction, and the creation of a more workable human order. (p.162)

Thus, narratives help in constructing the identity of individuals and communities by providing the ideal pattern that everyone seeks to follow. Hinchman and Hinchman (1997) elucidate that "narratives, along with the values they prescribe ... form the basis of communities large and small, and thereby define who we are" (p. 238). This opinion agrees with Ricoeur's (1991) notion of "narrative identity which constitutes us." Phelan (1996, p. xi-xii) explores the consequences for narrative theory of two significant principles: "(1) narrative is rhetoric because narrative occurs when someone tells a particular story for a particular audience in a particular situation for some particular purpose(s); (2) the reading of narrative is a multidimensional activity, simultaneously engaging our intellect, emotions, ideologies, and ethics." Fisher (1985) suggested that human beings generally have the ability to be storytellers and audiences who "creatively read and evaluate the texts of life and literature" (p. 86). In their analysis and interaction with narratives,

people tend to find links between the expected and ordinary actions of life and the unexpected and exceptional power of imagination. Bruner (1990) declared that the function of the narrative is to find an intentional state that mitigates, or at least makes comprehensible, a deviation from the canonical cultural pattern" (pp. 49-50). The narrative analysts may focus on the structural connections among certain concepts viewed through the story and its semantic features to get the main insights of the story. Some may see the story as a whole unit, and others may break its parts down while investigating the message of each part.

Rimmon-Kenan (1996) discussed two points of view concerning the relationship between language in general, and literature in particular, and the real life. The first view suggests that "language and literature can reflect, convey, render, or refer to reality, and utterances do emanate from a preexistent self" (p. 2). This view may be supported by the principle of MacIntyre (1989) about "the narrative unity of life" (p. 104). The second view is based on the idea that "no such connection to reality and self can be reached through language and literature" (Rimmon-Kenan, 1996, p. 2). He then replaced these two hypotheses by "access whose different connotations allow mutually modifying insights from divergent positions" (p.2). Concerning the function of reflecting the inner voice and ideology of the narrator and the characters of the work, Harrison (1991) compared two points of view. The first is the traditional view, which supports the ability of literature to achieve this role since "words have meaning only as marks of *the ideas of*

the speaker, yet it is the very incommunicability of the speaker's ideas which led to the introduction of language" (p.190). The second is the recent view, which argues that the rule-based system of language and the aesthetic and rhetorical features of the text split the connection between the text and the individual self and voice as he stated, "the formal, rule-governed character of language, the *textuality* of the text considered as a play of rhetorical devices and inter-textual references, is alone sufficient to cut the tie holding together the self and its utterances" (p. 200).

The Qur'anic *Narrative*

Among the 114 suras of the *Holy Qur'an,* 19 suras tell stories. This doesn't mean that the whole sura comes in the narrative style, but you can find one of the narrative's components such as dialogue or character embedded in many parts of it. The Qur'anic story is characterized by its validity as it relates in a very lucid language the valid reality of the previous generations in which there is no place for imagination. Therefore, a need for clear interpretation and awareness of the circumstances, surroundings, lessons, and implied meanings of each story faces the translator in his attempts to convey the precise significance of each word, expression, and action.

Types and Forms of the Qur'anic *Narrative*

Garar (1988) declared that there are three types of the Qur'anic narrative: historical narrative, exemplary narrative, and unseen narrative (p. 68). Examples of the historical narrative tell the stories of the previous prophets and their people. The exemplary narrative exemplifies a model for those who go through experiences similar to

the story's events to get a lesson and an exhortation. For example, Allah the Almighty says in sûrat *An-Nahl* ' النَّحْل ' (i.e., Bee),

"ضَرَبَ ٱللَّهُ مَثَلًا عَبْدًا مَّمْلُوكًا لَّا يَقْدِرُ عَلَىٰ شَيْءٍ وَمَن رَّزَقْنَٰهُ مِنَّا رِزْقًا حَسَنًا فَهُوَ يُنفِقُ مِنْهُ سِرًّا وَجَهْرًا ۚ هَلْ يَسْتَوُۥنَ ۚ ٱلْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ ۚ بَلْ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ (٧٥)"

75- "ᵓAllâh has struck a similitude: a slave possessed (by his patron), unable to determine anything, and one whom We have provided of Ourselves with a fair provision, (and) so he expends of it secretly and openly. Are they equal? Praise be to ᵓAllâh! No indeed, most of them do not know." (Ghali, 2008, p. 275)

The unseen story tackles the unseen events about which we know through the *Holy Qur'an* and the Prophet's sayings (i.e., 'the Prophetic Hadith') such as the events of the Hereafter.

The Qur'anic story comes in different styles; it is sometimes summarized, dwells at length on others and, in some cases, presents alternative accounts and interpretations of events. It sometimes offers detailed accounts of specific historical events. Considering the story of Moses (peace be upon him), the selected model for the research, almost all its stages are detailed in Sûrat 'طَهَ' Tâha that consists of 135 verses, out of which verses 9 to 97 tell the story of Moses, and Sûrat 'القَصَص" Al-Qaṣaṣ (i.e., The Narratives) that contains 88 verses and begins with narrating the story till verse 48. Sometimes, the narrative style draws the audience's attention to the moral significance of an event over its narrative sequence. For example, in Sûrat *Tâha,* the arrogance of the unbelievers and the fates they suffered are emphasized. The story of the day of the festival and the sacrifice of the sorcerers due to following their belief

in Allah are clarified in Sûrat 'الشُّعَرَاء' *Ash-Shu'râ'* (i.e., The Poets). Thus, different points are emphasized and new meanings emerge on every occasion. The Qur'anic story sometimes comes in a dramatic dialogue of which a close study reveals that its usually simple text contains profound insights into the workings of the human mind and the motives behind human conduct. Hence, the interpreter should realize the purpose of adopting a specific style in a certain position of the story as well as the implied meanings of actions and utterances.

Characteristics and Functions of the Qur'anic *Narrative*

The Qur'anic story is not just an artistic or aesthetic work, but it is one of the Qur'anic means for calling and guidance. It has a peculiarity over any work of art as it tells the valid real events and facts for being Allah's words that "Untruth does not come up to it before (Literally: between its two hands) it nor from behind it; a successive sending down from (One) Ever-Wise, Ever-Praiseworthy" (*Holy Qur'an 4*1: 42). The *Holy Qur'an* depends on such stories in calling and guiding people, establishing the Muslim's beliefs and concepts about the religion, and providing the ideal example of man and society to be followed. Allah, the Almighty, says in Sûrat 'يُوسُف' *Yûsuf* (i.e., Joseph),

"لَقَدْ كَانَ فِي قَصَصِهِمْ عِبْرَةٌ لِّأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ ۗ مَا كَانَ حَدِيثًا يُفْتَرَىٰ وَلَٰكِن تَصْدِيقَ الَّذِي بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَتَفْصِيلَ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ (١١١)"

111- "Indeed in their narratives is already a lesson to (the ones) endowed with intellects. In no way is it a discourse fabricated, but a (sincere) verification of what is before it." (Ghali, 2008, p. 248)

It entails that narrating the stories of the previous Messengers with their peoples and the successful or fruitless experiences of the formers is a way for guiding the present and coming generations to the means of happiness in the world and hereafter through seeking good deeds and avoiding bad ones. In his translation of Ibn Kathîr's "*Stories of the Quran*", Al- Ḥalawâni (2021) interprets:

> The *Glorious Qur'an* recounts a number of stories that took place throughout far-remote points of history which are full of events that one's eyes and mind cannot fail to grasp its admonition and advice. These admonitions and advice, if seriously considered, can verify and restore to the right course a great number of false beliefs and concepts. (p. 3)

Furthermore, the Qur'anic story presents a warning for those who don't believe in Allah against the consequences that befell their previous likes as stated in Sûrat الأَعْرَاف' *Al-A'râf* (i.e., The Battlements),

" فَاقْصُصِ ٱلْقَصَصَ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ (١٧٦)"

176- "So narrate (these) narratives that possibly they would meditate." (Ghali, 2008, p. 173)

These functions of the Qur'anic narrative are supported by the Qur'anic eloquent style that has the ability of embedding the audience in the scene as if being a part of it. Sayyid Qutb (2000)

explained the lucid aesthetic style of the Qur'anic narrative saying,

> It expresses, in an imagined sense, the mental meaning, the psychological state, and the human model and nature as if they were a tangible event and a visible scene. Then it rises that drawn image up endowing it the characteristics of a living object or renewed movement. The mental meaning, then, turns into an object or a movement, the psychological state into a portrait or a scene, the human image into a living being. If the element of dialogue is added to the live and vivid events, scenes, stories, and views, then all the elements of imagination are combined together. (p. 71)

Elements of the Qur'anic *Narrative*

Being a part of the revealed text of the *Holy Qur'an*, the Qur'anic story harmonized with the situations, events, objectives and necessity of the prophet's *Da'wah* (calling to Islam). "So, the elements of the Qur'anic story may be combined or distributed in a manner that allows each element to play a role" (Muḥammad Qutb, 1992, p. 114). However, all elements of the literary story existed in the Qur'anic narrative. Characters, dialogue, and setting can be elaborated as follows:

A- Characters

Characters are the pivotal element around which the events of the story are shaped and developed. However, crystalizing the characters is not the main focus of the Qur'anic narrative. It concerns with their conduct, beliefs, and ideologies. So, sometimes a little description of

their shapes and traits is enough to distinguish them. In sûrat 'غَافِر'
Ghâfir (i.e., The Forgiver), a new character in the context of Moses
'story is presented as,

"وَقَالَ رَجُلٌ مُّؤْمِنٌ مِّنْ ءَالِ فِرْعَوْنَ يَكْتُمُ إِيمَٰنَهُۥٓ أَتَقْتُلُونَ رَجُلًا أَن يَقُولَ رَبِّىَ ٱللَّهُ وَقَدْ جَآءَكُم
بِٱلْبَيِّنَٰتِ مِن رَّبِّكُمْ وَإِن يَكُ كَٰذِبًا فَعَلَيْهِ كَذِبُهُۥ وَإِن يَكُ صَادِقًا يُصِبْكُم بَعْضُ ٱلَّذِى يَعِدُكُمْ
إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِى مَنْ هُوَ مُسْرِفٌ كَذَّابٌ (٢٨)".

28- "And a believing man of Firᶜawn's (Pharaoh) house who kept
back his belief said, "Would you kill a man for that he says, 'My
Lord is ꞱAllâh,' and he has come to you with the supreme evidence
(s) from your Lord? And in case he is a liar, then his lying is upon
himself, and in case he is sincere, some of that which he promises
you will alight on you. Surely ꞱAllâh does not guide him who is
extravagant, a constant liar." (Ghali, 2008, p. 470)

Characters of the Qur'anic narrative can be classified into three
types: "central characters, secondary characters, and fringe
characters" (As-Ṣâdiq Abû Ḥassan, 2010, p.61). Central characters
are those about whom the narrative's plot is weaved. Their conduct
and actions manage the scene. Moses (Peace be upon him), Moses'
mother, Moses' sister, Harun, Pharoah, the Sorcerers are central
characters in Moses' narrative. Secondary characters support the
roles and actions of central characters. They may be mentioned for
one time, such as Moses's page and the aged man of *Madyan.*
Without the soldiers on whom Pharoah depends to impose his
control and tyranny on the Israelites, he would be left powerless. So,
Sûrat 'القَصَص' *Al-Qaṣaṣ* (i.e., The Narratives) stated that Pharoah
and his soldiers are partners in sin and in punishment, too.

"وَٱسْتَكْبَرَ هُوَ وَجُنُودُهُ فِي ٱلْأَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ ٱلْحَقِّ وَظَنُّوٓاْ أَنَّهُمْ إِلَيْنَا لَا يُرْجَعُونَ (٣٩) فَأَخَذْنَٰهُ وَجُنُودَهُ فَنَبَذْنَٰهُمْ فِي ٱلْيَمِّ فَٱنظُرْ كَيْفَ كَانَ عَٰقِبَةُ ٱلظَّٰلِمِينَ (٤٠)" .

(39, 40)- "And he, always he, and his hosts waxed proud in the land, untruthfully (Literally: with other than the truth) and they surmised that they would not be returned to Us. So We took him (away) and his hosts, then We flung them off into the main. So look ‘into how was the end of the unjust." (Ghali, 2008, p. 390)

Although being a secondary character, the man who came from the farthest point of the city to warn Moses against those who want to kill him supported and rescued him.

"وَجَآءَ رَجُلٌ مِّنْ أَقْصَا ٱلْمَدِينَةِ يَسْعَىٰ قَالَ يَٰمُوسَىٰٓ إِنَّ ٱلْمَلَأَ يَأْتَمِرُونَ بِكَ لِيَقْتُلُوكَ فَٱخْرُجْ إِنِّي لَكَ مِنَ ٱلنَّٰصِحِينَ (٢٠) فَخَرَجَ مِنْهَا خَآئِفٗا يَتَرَقَّبُۖ قَالَ رَبِّ نَجِّنِي مِنَ ٱلْقَوْمِ ٱلظَّٰلِمِينَ(٢١)"
(القَصَص)

(20, 21)- "And a man speedily came along from the remotest part of the city. He said, "O Mûsâ, (Moses) surely the chiefs are conspiring to kill you. So go out (of the city). Surely I am one of the (sincere) advisers to you." So he went out of it, frightened and on the watch. He said, "Lord! Safely deliver me from the unjust people." (Ghali, 2008, p. 387)

Fringe characters have no essential role in the story events but help in filling the background and forming the surroundings of the actions such as the shepherds in *Madyan*. The prophets and their people represent the majority among the characters in the Qur'anic narrative. It also narrated the stories of righteous men like *Dhulqarnayn* (the two- horned king) and Cave's young men; righteous women such as the wife of Pharoah and Maryam 'daughter

of Imrân'; disbeliever men such as Hamân and Âzar, (the father of the prophet Ibrâhîm 'Abraham' (peace be upon him))'; and disbeliever women such as the wife of Nûh and the wife of Lûṯ. *The* characters can also be nonhuman, such as the Holy Angles and the devil in Adam's creation story, jinn as those who listened to the *Holy Qur'an* and their reactions are narrated in Sûrat 'الجِّن' *Al-Jinn*, and the ant and hoopoe in the story of Sulaymân (Peace be upon him).

B- Dialogue

One of the techniques adopted in the Qur'anic narrative is the dialogue through which the characters, their beliefs and ideas are displayed. The dialogue may be between the person and himself, such as the dialogue between Ibrâhîm (Peace be upon him) and himself mentioned in verses (76-79) in Sûrat 'الأنْعَام ' *Al-An'âm* (i.e., Cattle). It can be conducted between two persons such as the conversations between Moses and Pharoah, or between human and nonhuman characters like the dialogue between Sulaymân and the hoopoe. It also took place between Allah, the Almighty, with Moses, the Angles, and the devil.

C- The Setting

 Setting represents the frame in which the characters move and react to events. It refers to the elements of time and place. They are connected together as each of them represents the context within which the connotation of the other can be explained.

D- The time

Time is the indispensable sequenced organization of the narrated events as it affects the construction of each syntactic unit in the

narrated text and the development of characters and actions. The Qur'anic story has two different time patterns: natural external time and psychological inner time. The natural external time is defined as the time "subjected to external objective criteria and measured by the year, month, day, night, morning, noon or evening" (Djâsim, 2004, p. 128, 129). It differs from the time of narration, as the sequence of events that took many years to occur can be narrated in a few minutes. The natural external time can refer to a certain history, or a cosmic phenomenon (Djindâry, 2013, p.69). For example,

"قَالَ فَإِنَّهَا مُحَرَّمَةٌ عَلَيْهِمْ أَرْبَعِينَ سَنَةً يَتِيهُونَ فِي ٱلْأَرْضِ فَلَا تَأْسَ عَلَى ٱلْقَوْمِ ٱلْفَٰسِقِينَ(٢٦)"

(المَائِدَة, *Al-Mâ'idah*, The Table)

26- "Said He, "Then surely it will be prohibited for them for forty years (while) they go astray in the earth. So do not feel sad about the immoral people." (Ghali, 2008, p. 112)

The expression "forty years" refers to the length of the natural external time that the Israelites spent stray moving away aimlessly as a punishment for their refusal to enter the Holy Land with Moses (Peace be upon him).

"قَالَ مَوْعِدُكُمْ يَوْمُ ٱلزِّينَةِ وَأَن يُحْشَرَ ٱلنَّاسُ ضُحًى (٥٩)"

(طَه, *Tâha*)

59- "He (Mûsâ) said, "Your appointment shall be upon the adornment day, (i.e., the feast day) and let the multitudes be mustered at the forenoon." (Ghali, 2008, p. 315)

While the expression "adornment day" is a natural external time that refers to a certain determined day in which Israelites celebrate, the word "forenoon" is a cosmic time between the morning and the afternoon and in which the challenge between Moses and the successors would be held.

The Psychological inner time is "subjective related and affected by the character's feeling of time. Thus, time loses its objective meaning and becomes an integral part of the character's psychological life" (Qâssim, ,1984, p. 52). It passes fast or slowly according to the good or bad experience the character goes through. It can be expressed through the context or by the characters themselves. For example, for Moses, who was waiting what might happen after the Egyptian was killed, the time passed heavily.

" فَأَصْبَحَ فِي ٱلْمَدِينَةِ خَآئِفًا يَتَرَقَّبُ (١٨)"

(القَصَص , *Al-Qasas,* The Narrative)

18- "So he became frightened in the city and on the watch." (Ghali, 2008, p. 387).

"وَقَالَ ٱلَّذِينَ فِي ٱلنَّارِ لِخَزَنَةِ جَهَنَّمَ ٱدْعُوا۟ رَبَّكُمْ يُخَفِّفْ عَنَّا يَوْمًا مِّنَ ٱلْعَذَابِ (٤٩)"

(غَافِر , *Ghâfir,* The Forgiver)

49- "And the ones who are in the Fire will say to the keepers of Hell, "Invoke your Lord to lighten for us one day of the torment!" (Ghali, 2008, p.472)

Although "one day" is a short period", the companions of the fire hoped to be saved from the degrading torment even for a while. "One day" is very significant for them.

The Qur'anic narrative adopts different techniques in displaying the events chronologically: progressive technique, descending technique, and intermittent time, and omitting techniques (Djindâry, 2013, pp.105-110). The events may come in a progressive display (from the beginning to the end) as in Sûrat *Al-Qaṣaṣ* (The Narratives). The story began with the events of Moses' birth and ended with the drowning of Pharaoh with his army and victory of Moses and his people. Contrariwise, Sûrat *Ṭâha* told the events in descending order. It related the end with Pharaoh first, then turned to a remembrance of the birth events. There are also intermittent time and omitting techniques that are adopted to move from the story's events to the events of the Hereafter, especially in the suras that tell the story briefly like 'العَنْكَبُوت' *Al-'nkabût* (The Spider) and 'النَّازِعَات' *An-Nâzi'ât* (The Pluckers). They depend on omitting the scenes that are not necessary for completing the story to end it quickly and move to another substory, then the conclusion becomes a group of short stories in the same context. For example, in Sûrat 'الأَعْرَاف' *Al-A'râf* (The Battlements), a lot of the story's events are told briefly and moved from one to another in an eloquent language.

A Further point to be elaborated is exchanging the order between the time of the story occurrence and the time of the narration. Considering the time of narration is the time of revelation of the *Holy Qur'an*, three orders can be distinguished. First, the story occurrence precedes the narration time like in the prophet's stories. For example,

"وَمَا كُنتَ بِجَانِبِ ٱلْغَرْبِيِّ إِذْ قَضَيْنَآ إِلَىٰ مُوسَى ٱلْأَمْرَ وَمَا كُنتَ مِنَ ٱلشَّٰهِدِينَ(٤٤) "

(القَصَص, *Al-Qaṣaṣ,* The Narrative)

44- "And in no way were you (i.e., Muḥammad) beside the western (Mount) as We decreed to Mûsâ the Command, and in no way were you of the ones witnessing." (Ghali, 2008, p. 391)

The speech in the verse is directed to the Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) as Allah, the Almighty, tells him about what happened beside the Western Mount confirming that the prophet was not there to witness the scene in a reference that there is no way to know about it except through the revelation. Second, the narration precedes the story occurrence like in the stories of the Hereafter events like in sura

"وَنَادَىٰ أَصْحَـٰبُ ٱلنَّارِ أَصْحَـٰبَ ٱلْجَنَّةِ أَنْ أَفِيضُواْ عَلَيْنَا مِنَ ٱلْمَآءِ أَوْ مِمَّا رَزَقَكُمُ ٱللَّهُ قَالُواْ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ حَرَّمَهُمَا عَلَى ٱلْكَـٰفِرِينَ(٥٠)"

(الأعْرَاف, *Al-A'râf* ,The Battlements)

50- "And the companions of the Fire will call out to the companions of the Garden (saying), "Downpour on us some water, or some of whatever ᵓAllâh has provided you." They will say, "Surely ᵓAllâh has prohibited both to the disbelievers." (Ghali, 2008, p.156)

In this verse, Allah, the Ever-Knowing and the Ever-Cognizant, describes an unseen scene that will occur in the Hereafter between "the companions of the Fire" and "the companions of the Gard". Third, the time of narration coincides with the time of story as in Sûrat ʿ المُدَّثِّر ʾ *Al-Muddaththir* (Shrouded) that tells the opinions and reactions of *Al-Walîd bin Al-Mughîrah* (a disbeliever in Mecca at the prophetic era) towards the *Holy Qur'an*,

"إِنَّهُ فَكَّرَ وَقَدَّرَ (١٨) فَقُتِلَ كَيْفَ قَدَّرَ (١٩) ثُمَّ قُتِلَ كَيْفَ قَدَّرَ (٢٠) ثُمَّ نَظَرَ (٢١) ثُمَّ عَبَسَ وَبَسَرَ (٢٢) ثُمَّ أَدْبَرَ وَاسْتَكْبَرَ (٢٣) فَقَالَ إِنْ هَٰذَآ إِلَّا سِحْرٌ يُؤْثَرُ (٢٤) إِنْ هَٰذَآ إِلَّا قَوْلُ ٱلْبَشَرِ(٢٥)".

(18-25)- "Surely he did think and he determined! So, may he be slain, how he determined! Again, (Literally: Thereafter) may he be slain, how he determined! Thereafter he looked (round); Thereafter he frowned, and he scowled; Thereafter he withdrew, and he waxed proud. So he said, "Decidedly this is nothing except sorcery, transmitted relics. Decidedly this is nothing except the speech of mortals." (Ghali, 2008, p. 576)

E-The Place

The place is the basic element in the story structure, as it represents the ground on which the characters move (An-Nuṣṣîr ,1986, p.151). This means that there is a close relationship and reciprocal influence between the characters and the place in which they live because just as the place shapes the characters, they shape it according to their point of view (Ḫussein, 1991,78). Djindâry (2013, 256) summarizes many types and classifications of place. Two types are related to the general atmosphere of the story of Moses (peace be upon him). The places in which the character of Moses developed can be classified into a domestic place and a hostile place. The domestic place is the place which the person likes and feels comfort in, as he has the control over what exists and happens in it. This may be represented by the city of *Madyan* where Moses spent ten years away from Pharaoh's oppression. On the contrary, the character in the hostile place goes through tough experiences and subjects himself to an

external authority that must be obeyed. This kind of place can be represented by Egypt from which Moses ran away afraid of being killed. The place can have a symbolic connotation like the junction of the two seas, which exemplifies the starting point for Moses' journey of learning from Al-Khidr. It can have historical significance like in Egypt where most of the story's events took place, or religious significance as *At-Tûr* (The Mount) where Allah, the Almighty, spoke to Moses.

Conclusion

The current research presents a comprehensive discussion of the art of narrative in both Arabic and English literatures. It elaborated on the elements of narrative and clarified how they combine to constitute a whole unit to crystallize concepts and ideas, draw the audience's attention to a specific conclusion and, in many cases, stimulate him to find a mutual base that connect him with the storyteller. Then, the research shed light on the Qur'anic story in general, and Moses' story in particular, and how the elements of narrative were employed throughout the story.

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عناصر السرد : قصة موسى -عليه السلام- فى القرآن الكريم أنموذجاً

ملخص

ليست القصة القرآنية مجرد عمل فني أو جمالي، ولكنها إحدى وسائل القرآن الكريم فى الدعوة والإرشاد. فهى تتميز عن أي عمل فني لسردها حقائقاً و أحداثاً واقعية. و للقصة القدرة على تغيير وجهة المتلقى من مكانٍ أو توجهٍ لآخر بطريقةٍ ممتعة. لذا فإن البحث الحالي يسلط الضوء على عناصر السرد المختلفة التي قد تجتمع معًا لتشكل وحدة متكاملة تتبلورمن خلالها المفاهيم والأفكار، وتلفت انتباه المتلقى إلى نتيجة محددة، وتحفزه في كثير من الأحيان على إيجاد رابط مشترك بينه وبين الراوى. كما يناقش البحث بمزيد من التفصيل فن السرد في الأدبين العربي والإنجليزي ،و يلقى الضوء على القصة القرآنية ، ومن ثم يتخذ قصة موسى (عليه السلام) أنموذجاً للدراسة لكونها القصة الأكثر تكرارا في القرآن الكريم.

الكلمات المفتاحية : عناصر السرد ، القصة القرآنية ، قصة موسى .