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Narrating the Sacred Exodus: Literary Structures and Cultural Paradigm Shifts in Early Islamic Prose Narrative

M Triana¹, R Myrna Nur Sakinah²

Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung^{1,2}

Corresponding Author's Email: melatrianarinjani07@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

The Sirah Nabawiyah by Ibn Hisham/Ibn Ishaq has traditionally been scrutinized through the lenses of empirical historiography or theological validation. Such approaches frequently overlook the text's status as a sophisticated narrative artifact that actively charts social transformation. This study aims to critically analyze the narrative structure, characterization dynamics, and linguistic shifts within the "Hijrah to Madinah" narrative to uncover how the text constructs the cultural transition from the tribal Jahiliyah system to the theo-political community of the Ummah. Utilizing a qualitative-descriptive method rooted in literary criticism, this research integrates theories of spatial narratology (Bakhtin, Turner, Foucault), character archetypes (Frye), and critical discourse analysis (Foucault, Barthes). The findings reveal three primary dimensions: First, space is architected as a triadic transformation: Makkah as a stagnant tribal dystopia, the Desert (Cave of Thawr) as a liminal zone of identity dissolution, and Madinah as an inclusive social utopia. Second, the characterization of key figures (Prophet Muhammad, Abu Bakar, Ali, Abdullah bin Urayqith, Suraqah) is cast into universal archetypes that deconstruct blood-ties (asabiyah) in favor of alliances based on faith and professionalism. Third, the text records a radical discursive shift wherein the old clan-oriented vocabulary (fakhr, tha'r) is rhetorically subverted and replaced by a new theo-political lexicon (Ummah, Mu'akhah, Aman), institutionalized within the Constitution of Madinah. In conclusion, the Sirah Nabawiyah is not a passive mirror of history but an active agent of cultural definition that validates the establishment of a universal early Islamic social order.

Keywords: Sirah Nabawiyah, Hijrah, Narratology, Characterization, Ummah, Asabiyah..

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INTRODUCTION

The Sirah Nabawiyah, compiled by Ibn Ishaq and rigorously edited by Ibn Hisham, stands as a monumental landmark within the landscape of early Islamic historiography and the evolution of Arabic prose. As Khalidi (1994) observes in *Arabic Historical Thought in the Classical Period*, the Sirah occupies a foundational position in the Arabic literary tradition, constituting the first sustained prose narrative in Islam and establishing the biographical-historiographical genre (sira) as a culturally authoritative form of communal self-definition. Traditionally, within both classical Islamic scholarship and modern Euro-American Orientalist frameworks, this text has often been scrutinized through a dualistic lens. As noted by contemporary scholarship, early historiographical texts are frequently treated merely as “repositories for theological legitimacy or evaluated purely for their empirical-historical validity” (Ibn Hisham, 2006). Such methodologies, though valuable, tend to overlook the text’s inherent status as a highly sophisticated narrative artifact.

Pre-Islamic culture was deeply rooted in asabiyah a rigid, blood-based tribal solidarity where individual identity, legal protection, and moral obligations rested entirely upon clan lineages. The Hijrah represents a violent rupture from this ancestral paradigm. By voluntarily abandoning their tribal sanctuary and severing blood ties, the Muhajirin committed a radical act. Sociologists of religion often identify this phenomenon as a condition wherein “the subject relinquishes collective structural protection in favor of an existential leap across tribal territorial boundaries” (Turner, 1969). They performed an act that can be classified as a social apostasy against the old order. In its place, the narrative constructs a novel cultural ethos where ideological alignment and a shared faith supplant clan biology. Consequentially, the Hijrah functions as the ultimate liminal nexus in early Islamic history a threshold where “the old world is systematically dismantled and the new society is rhetorically born” (Bakhtin, 1981).

Through this spatial and existential crisis, the text examines how a new cultural subject is birthed from the debris of tribal institutions collapsing under their own structural saturation. This event marks what Foucault defines as a “discursive rupture where the signs of the old culture are no longer adequate to accommodate the newly born subjectivity” (Foucault, 1972). The pre-Islamic Arabian intellectual culture was dominated by oral traditions, specifically Shi’r (poetry) and Ayyam al-Arab (The Days of the Arabs). These oral genres were episodic, fragmented, and highly localized, designed primarily to perpetuate tribal pride (fakhr), lament the deaths of clan heroes (ritha), and preserve eternal blood feuds (tha’r). Structurally, these genres were incapable of sustaining long, linear narrative coherence.

As literary scholars explain, “pre-Islamic Arabic oral poetry operates within a static, cyclical structure where the narrative invariably returns to the glorification of the clan ego without any teleological plot development” (Frye, 1957). Its cultural objective was precisely to reinforce this cyclical and static nature of tribal fragmentation. The narrative prose of the Sirah, as consolidated by Ibn Ishaq and Ibn Hisham, represents a revolutionary formal leap. The text synthesizes isolated oral reports (akhbar), genealogical records, and poetic fragments into a continuous, teleological, and grand linear narrative. This formal transition from fragmented poetic outbursts to a unified prose trajectory directly mirrors the socio-political transition from a fractured tribal wilderness into a cohesive, unified religious community. The literary structure of the text does not merely reflect this cultural shift; it embodies it through meticulous syntactic and narrative codification. Borrowing from semiotic analysis, “the process of transition from a fragmented oral poetic medium to a cohesive written prose organization is a visual decree of society’s



transition from tribal anarchy to centralized communal law” (Barthes, 1957). Through this formal organization, the Sirah Nabawiyah successfully asserts the hegemony of a new discourse that transcends the dark age of orality.

THEORETICAL

Contemporary spatial analysis, as formulated by theorists such as Mikhail Bakhtin through the concept of the chronotope (space-time) and Edward Soja through Thirdspace, asserts that space within literary texts is never neutral. Space is not merely a passive geographical backdrop but an active discursive construction that shapes ideology, constrains character actions, and articulates cultural conflicts. Augmented by Victor Turner's theory of liminality and Michel Foucault's concept of heterotopia, geographical mapping in narrative texts can be read as a mirror of sociological transitions. In the realm of characterization, Northrop Frye's theory of archetypes provides a framework to observe how characters in a grand narrative often represent symbolic projections of a culture's collective fears, hopes, and consciousness shifts. Historical figures in literary texts are dissolved into structural functions to negotiate a new system of values.

The theoretical architecture of this study draws upon four interlocking frameworks that together enable a multi-dimensional literary reading of the Sirah Nabawiyah.

Spatial Narratology: Bakhtin, Soja, and Foucault. The foundational premise of spatial narratology is that geographical space in literary texts is never a neutral backdrop. Mikhail Bakhtin (1981), in *The Dialogic Imagination*, develops the concept of the chronotope “the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships” arguing that “time, as it were, thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible; likewise, space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot, and history” (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 84). Applied to the Sirah, the three spaces of the Hijrah “Makkah, the Desert, and Madinah each constitute a distinct chronotope encoding a specific ideological relationship between human subjectivity and social power. Edward Soja (1996), building upon Lefebvre in

Thirdspace: *Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places*, further asserts that space is socially produced and socially productive: it simultaneously reflects and reproduces the power relations of the society that occupies it. The spatial representation of Makkah in the Sirah is thus readable as the material expression of asabiyah’s total dominion. Michel Foucault’s (1986) concept of heterotopia “spaces that are “simultaneously mythic and real” and that function as counter-sites within the existing social order (Foucault, 1986, p. 24) ”provides the theoretical lens for reading the Nabawi Mosque in Madinah as a radically new spatial institution that transcends all prior clan-territorial logics. Victor Turner’s (1969) concept of liminality in *The Ritual Process* supplies the interpretive framework for the Desert: it is the betwixt and between space (Turner, 1969, p. 95) wherein the subject has shed one social identity but has not yet assumed the next, a zone of radical openness and transformation.

Character Archetypes: Northrop Frye. In *Anatomy of Criticism* (1957), Northrop Frye argues that characters in grand narratives function not as psychologically individuated persons but as symbolic projections of a culture’s collective anxieties, aspirations, and consciousness shifts. “The archetype,” Frye (1957, p. 99) writes, “is a typical or recurring image... which connects one poem to another and thereby helps to unify and integrate our literary experience.” In the context of the Hijrah narrative, the historical



figures of Prophet Muhammad, Abu Bakar, Ali bin Abi Thalib, Abdullah bin Urayqith, and Suraqah bin Malik are dissolved from their individual historical particularity into structural archetypes” respectively: the Transcendental Leader, the Loyal Companion, the Sacrificial Lamb, the Professional Mentor, and the Antagonist Transformed. Each archetype performs a specific narrative function in dismantling the asabiyah order and proposing its universalist replacement.

Critical Discourse Analysis: Fairclough and Barthes. From the perspective of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), language is never a neutral or transparent medium. Norman Fairclough (1992), in *Discourse and Social Change*, argues that “language is a form of social practice” and that “discourse is socially constitutive as well as socially shaped” (Fairclough, 1992, p. 63–64). Specifically, Fairclough’s three-dimensional model of discourse—text, discursive practice, and social practice—enables an analysis of how the *Sirah*’s linguistic choices at the textual level both reflect and produce the macro-level social transformation from tribal Jahiliyah to Islamic Ummah. Roland Barthes (1957), in *Mythologies*, demonstrates how ordinary words and signs undergo a process of mythologization whereby their historical and ideological origins are concealed, making contingent social arrangements appear natural and inevitable. In the *Sirah*, terms such as *fakhr* and *tha’r* functioned as mythologized signs naturalizing tribal violence as moral necessity; the *Sirah*’s discursive labor consists precisely in de-mythologizing these signs and re-mythologizing new lexicons (Ummah, Mu’akhah, Aman) as the universal moral order. As Fairclough (1992, p. 87) observes, “radical shifts in social structure invariably demand a linguistic reorganization, because a new social order cannot stand without a new lexicon that dismantles the old discursive hegemony.”

METHODS OF RESEARCH

This study employs a qualitative-descriptive method rooted in literary criticism, consistent with the interpretive approach defined by Creswell (2014, p. 4) in *Research Design*, wherein the researcher seeks to understand “the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem” through close engagement with textual evidence rather than quantification. The primary object of analysis is Ibn Hisham’s *Al-Sirah al-Nabawiyyah* (2006 edition, Jilid 2, Al-Maktabah al-Tawfiquyyah), focusing specifically on the narrative fragments of the Hijrah to Madinah. The research data consists of textual units, dialogues, poems, and narrative descriptions found within the second volume of *Al-Sirah al-Nabawiyyah*. Data selection followed purposive sampling (Patton, 2002), guided by theoretical relevance to the three analytical axes: spatial representation, characterization dynamics, and rhetorical-lexical shifts.

The data collection technique was executed via critical close reading and thematic codification, following the hermeneutic-phenomenological procedure outlined by Ricoeur (1981) in *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences*, wherein the interpreter engages in a cyclical movement between the part and the whole of the text to construct layered meaning. Data analysis was performed using intertextual techniques, integrating structural narratological analysis (Bakhtin, 1981; Soja, 1996; Turner, 1969) with critical discourse deconstruction (Fairclough, 1992; Barthes, 1957; Foucault, 1972) to uncover how the literary structure of early Arabic prose legitimizes the collapse of the tribal asabiyah system and constructs the identity of the Ummah. Validity of interpretation was ensured through triangulation of theoretical lenses and consistent cross-referencing of primary textual evidence with established scholarly commentary on the



Sirah.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A macroscopic reading of the structural text of the Sirah Nabawiyah reveals three primary structural results within the Hijrah narrative. First, spatial representation in the text is arranged in a progressive, triadic structure: Makkah is architected as a stagnant tribal dystopian space; the Desert (including the Cave of Thawr) is constructed as a zone of liminality where identity is dissolved; and Madinah is established as an inclusive utopian/heterotopian space where new social institutions are founded. Second, the characterization dynamics within the escape plot no longer rely on clan status, but are based instead on universal archetypal functions: Prophet Muhammad as the transcendental leader, Abu Bakar as the ideological companion, Ali bin Abi Thalib as the archetype of self-sacrifice, Abdullah bin Urayqith as a symbol of interfaith professionalism, and Suraqah bin Malik as the antagonist subdued by transcendental law. Third, discourse analysis demonstrates a subversion of the old sign system (fakhr and tha'r) alongside the institutionalization of a new theo-political lexicon (Ummah, Mu'akhah, and Aman), which is explicitly codified in writing within the text of the Constitution of Madinah.

Spatial Representation in the Hijrah Narrative: From Tribal Dystopia to Communal Utopia

Contemporary narratological analysis, as formulated by Bakhtin (1981) through the concept of the chronotope and by Soja (1996) through Thirdspace, reinforces that space in literary texts is never neutral. Space is an active discursive construction that shapes ideology, delimits character agency, and articulates cultural conflict. In Ibn Hisham's Sirah Nabawiyah, the spatial representation of the route moving from Makkah, through the Desert, and culminating in Madinah, is architected as a spatial triad symbolizing the stages of sociological transformation.

Makkah: The Construction of Dystopian Space and Tribal Stagnation. In the opening segment of the Hijrah narrative, Makkah is constructed not as a sacred space, but rather as a dystopian arena experiencing severe social claustrophobia caused by the saturation of the asabiyah system. The social structure of Makkah is predicated upon tribal territoriality, where public space is hegemonically controlled by the Quraysh oligarchy through the institution of Dar al-Nadwah. The spatial nature of Makkah demands total subject compliance with the geometric order of the clan; anyone introducing novel values is spatially marginalized to the city's periphery or excluded from legal protection.

The spatial failure of Makkah reaches its zenith in the narrative of the assassination conspiracy against the Prophet. Ibn Hisham (2006) records with graphic spatial precision that the Quraysh assembled delegates from every clan at the threshold of the Prophet's house so that the blood of Muhammad would be distributed across all tribal hands and no single clan could be held liable for his death: Abu Jahl said: "I think we should take from every clan a young, strong, well-born, and well-connected man, and give each a sharp sword. Then they should strike him together as one man and kill him, so we will be rid of him. If they do that, his blood will be distributed among all the clans, and Bani Abd Manaf (the Prophet's clan) will not be able to wage war against all of their people, so they will accept the blood-money, and we will pay it to them. the passage describing the Quraysh council's decision to collectively surround the Prophet's house with one man from each tribe, so that the blood-guilt would be shared among all clans " Vol. 2, Chapter on



the Hijrah]. This narrative detail is not incidental; it reveals that the very spatial logic of the assassination plot is governed by the law of *tha'r*: murder is orchestrated not as individual violence but as a collective tribal operation, so that the architecture of blood revenge becomes inoperable. The house, which architecturally should function as a secure domestic sanctuary, is deconstructed by the text into an interrogation space and an imminent death threat. This siege underscores that within the dystopian space of Makkah, no private space remains immune to collective clan intervention.

Narratologically, Makkah's stagnation is depicted through its inability to accommodate universal ideas. Makkah becomes a static space locked in the cycle of *Ayyam al-Arab* where space is defined strictly as a clan defense boundary and a field for blood revenge (*tha'r*). Ibn Hisham (2006) documents how the Prophet and his companions endured prolonged spatial persecution in Makkah, including the three-year economic boycott enforced by the Quraysh confederation during which they were confined to the mountain pass of Shi'b Abi Talib: "They wrote a document in which they entered into a covenant against Bani Hashim and Bani al-Muttalib, that they would not marry their women, nor give their own women to them in marriage, nor sell anything to them, nor buy anything from them... Thus, Bani Hashim and Bani al-Muttalib aligned with Abu Talib and entered with him into his mountain pass (Shi'b)." When the Prophet and his companions suffer physical persecution and economic boycotts in Makkah, the text illustrates how a dystopian space stifles both intellectual and spiritual dialectics.

The Desert: A Zone of Liminality, Gestation, and Identity Deconstruction. When Prophet Muhammad and Abu Bakar escape the siege of Makkah, the narrative shifts to the second space: the Desert. Utilizing Victor Turner's (1969, p. 95) theoretical lens of liminality, the desert in the *Sirah Nabawiyah* functions as an intermediate phase (*betwixt and between*). The desert is a space devoid of clan law, a no-man's-land separating the oppressive legal structure of Makkah from the yet-unformed structure of Madinah. Within this liminal zone, old social identities are shed, and characters enter a vulnerable yet transformative pre-molded state. The desert strips away markers of class, tribal status, and aristocratic privilege; there, all entities are reduced to naked wanderers before the ferocity of nature and the absolute nature of destiny.

The most radical liminal nexus within this narrative geography is the Cave of Thawr. Ibn Hisham (2006) describes with precise narrative intensity how the Prophet and Abu Bakar concealed themselves inside the cave for three consecutive nights, while the Quraysh pursuers, in one of the text's most charged moments, stood literally at the cave's mouth without perceiving those inside: "some men of Quraysh reached the mouth of the cave, and they said: 'There is a spider web over it that was spun before the birth of Muhammad,' and they saw two wild doves at the mouth of the cave, so they turned back" the passage describing the Quraysh pursuers standing at the mouth of the Cave of Thawr while the spider's web and the nesting doves were at its entrance" The *Sirah* records that Abu Bakar whispered in fear, "O Messenger of God, if any one of them looks down at his feet, he will see us," to which the Prophet replied with transcendental composure: "O Abu Bakar, what do you think of two when Allah is their third?" Bakar said: "I told the Prophet while I was in the cave: If one of them were to look down at his feet, he would see us." The Prophet replied: "O Abu Bakar, what do you think of two when Allah is their third?" This dialogue enshrined in the text and subsequently codified in the Qur'an (9:40) crystallizes the psycho-spatial drama of the cave: Abu Bakar's human anxiety collides with the Prophet's transcendental tranquility.

Psycho-spatially, the Cave of Thawr operates as a metaphor for a "narrative womb." The cave is a



dark, narrow subterranean space isolated from civilization; it temporarily suspends historical time and insulates it from the reach of the external sociological space. Through this spatial manipulation, Ibn Hisham does not merely recount the miracle of the spider and the nesting doves at the cave's mouth, but is constructing a literary argument that true protection no longer derives from the stone fortresses of the Quraysh or tribal military alliances, but from metaphysical intervention. The desert becomes a space of gestation where reliance on asabiyah is entirely obliterated.

Madinah: The New Utopian Space and the Realization of Communal Heterotopia. This liminal journey reaches its teleological resolution when the narrative enters Yathrib, which is then discursively reconstructed into Al-Madinah al-Munawwarah (The Radiant City). If Makkah is a space of rejection and dystopia, Madinah in the Sirah is built as a space of acceptance and social utopia. The spatial transformation from Yathrib"historically an agrarian space fragmented by chronic civil war between the Aws and Khazraj tribes"into Madinah symbolizes the successful literary resolution of early Arabian sociological conflicts.

Ibn Hisham depicts the Prophet's reception in Madinah with spatial dynamics that stand in stark contrast to Makkah. Instead of a menacing siege of house walls, the text records that every street corner in Madinah was filled with residents scrambling to hold the reins of the Prophet's camel (Al-Qashwa), pleading for him to reside in their clan's territory. Ibn Hisham (2006) preserves the Prophet's direct instruction at this moment of competing spatial claims: "Leave this camel alone, for it moves under divine command" The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: "Leave her (the camel) alone, for she is under divine command." ... until it knelt at the site of the Messenger of Allah's mosque, which at that time was a yard for drying dates belonging to two orphan boys. Arabic text of this statement and the narrative of the camel stopping at the drying ground of the two orphan boys. Surrendering the decision of urban centering to the camel is a brilliant narrative strategy to bypass spatial jealousy among the Ansar clans. When the camel finally stops at a place for drying dates belonging to two orphan boys, that space is immediately allocated for the construction of the Nabawi Mosque.

The erection of this mosque marks the establishment of a heterotopia"to borrow Foucault's (1986, p. 24) term"a space "radically different from all the sites that it reflects and speaks about." The mosque is not merely a ritual space, but a new spatial epicenter where the Muhajirin (who lost their economic space in Makkah) and the Ansar are fused through the institution of mu'akhah (fraternization). Madinah transforms into a utopian space because it successfully redefines the concept of boundaries. The city's borders are no longer demarcated by tribal territorial limits, but by the theo-political commitment enshrined in the constitutional document of the Constitution of Madinah (Sahifat al-Madinah), wherein Jewish, Muslim, and local clans reside under a single legal umbrella as one unified Ummah.

Characterization Dynamics: The Deconstruction of Asabiyah and Construction of Universal Islamic Archetypes

Examining Northrop Frye's (1957, p. 99) archetypal framework regarding grand narratives, characters within such texts often represent symbolic projections of a culture's collective anxieties, hopes, and shifts in consciousness. In the context of Ibn Hisham's Sirah Nabawiyah, the characterization of the actors involved in the Hijrah undergoes a radical textual rewriting. These historical figures are not presented as individuals acting out of personal-parochial motives, but are constructed as narrative archetypes tasked with dismantling the doctrine of asabiyah and laying the foundation for a new, universal system of



transcendental alliances.

Prophet Muhammad and Abu Bakar: Reorienting Archetypes of Leadership and Ideological Companionship. At the primary layer of the narrative, the character of Prophet Muhammad is constructed as the archetype of The Prophet-King or the Transcendental Charismatic Leader, displacing the traditional Arabian concept of leadership (Sayyid). In Jahiliyah culture, a clan leader's authority rested absolutely upon lineage seniority, material wealth, and blind loyalty to blood protection. However, Ibn Hisham (2006) constructs the Prophet's character as a figure whose authority transcends these genealogical bastions. The text records that on the night of the Hijrah, the Prophet slept with supernatural composure even as the Quraysh encircled his home: The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said to Ali bin Abi Talib: "Sleep on my bed, and wrap yourself in this green Hadrami cloak of mine. Sleep in it, for nothing that you dislike will happen to you from them." the passage describing the Prophet's tranquil sleep on the night of the Hijrah while his house was besieged". When facing boycotts and assassination threats from his own kin (Quraysh), the Prophet's narrative agency does not falter; rather, it exudes a supernatural tranquility that positions faith as the new epicenter of power. This prophetic authority no longer seeks legitimacy from the consensus of tribal elders, but enforces its mandate directly from a transcendental legality that severs the vertical lines of tribal lineage.

This shift is reinforced through his narrative interaction with Abu Bakar. The alliance between Prophet Muhammad (Bani Hashim) and Abu Bakar (Bani Taym) is constructed as a manifestation of a spiritual brotherhood that deconstructs the order of asabiyah. In the old social structure, life-or-death commitments were exclusively reserved for biological siblings or clan allies through blood oaths. Yet, during the Hijrah journey, the text depicts Abu Bakar's loyalty transcending his own clan's protection to safeguard the Prophet. Ibn Hisham (2006) captures the dramatic detail of Abu Bakar walking alternatively ahead, behind, to the right, and to the left of the Prophet along the escape route, driven by deep anxiety for the Messenger's safety. Literarily, Abu Bakar's physical anxiety constructs the archetype of The Loyal Companion, whose motives have undergone a complete purification: no longer driven by clan social obligations, but by a radical ideological-spiritual affection. This relationship demonstrates the birth of a new model of social cohesion wherein ideological love supplants the dominance of biological clan instincts.

Ali bin Abi Thalib: The Archetype of Self-Sacrifice and Subversion of Tribal Rights. The character of Ali bin Abi Thalib on the night of the Hijrah execution holds an exceptionally crucial narratological role in dismantling tribal identity. When the Prophet's house was besieged by armed youths from various Quraysh clans ready to shed blood collectively so that the burden of blood revenge (tha'r) would be distributed evenly among all tribes Ali was commanded to sleep in the Prophet's bed wrapped in his green cloak (Ibn Hisham, 2006). Ali's action, read through a literary lens, is a performance of the archetype of The Sacrificial Lamb. Narratively, placing Ali on the Prophet's bed creates an optical illusion that deceives the enemy while simultaneously deconstructing the fatalistic logic of tribalism. Ali, who is the Prophet's first cousin and under the same family line of protection (Bani Hashim), voluntarily surrenders his body as a substitute shield. However, its literary significance lies in the deconstruction of the right to self-protection. Ali acts not to defend the material honor of the clan, but to secure the continuity of a universal divine mission. Sleeping on a deathbed with full awareness is a total subversion of the Jahiliyah warrior mentality, which typically sought glory in offensive inter-tribal battles (mufakharah). Ibn Hisham's text constructs Ali as a symbol of moral transition: that new heroism in Islam is no longer measured by how much enemy



blood is spilled in tribal warfare, but by the willingness to sacrifice one's own existence for the establishment of a macro-justice that crosses blood boundaries.

Abdullah bin Urayqith and Suraqah bin Malik: Professionalism and the Subjugation of Material Power. One of the most revolutionary elements in Ibn Hisham's characterization tactics is the introduction of Abdullah bin Urayqith. He was a guide hired by the Prophet and Abu Bakar to lead them through secret desert routes unconventional for merchant caravans. Explicitly, Ibn Hisham (2006) underscores Urayqith's theological status: he was an adherent of Quraysh polytheism (kafarah) who had not embraced Islam. Yet, the text emphasizes that he was a trustworthy figure (amin) and highly proficient in navigating desert topography. The integration of a non-Muslim character at the most critical juncture of the escape plot functions narratologically to establish the principle of professionalism above group fanatical alignments. Urayqith is positioned as the archetype of The Mentor/Navigator, valued for his technical competence rather than his theological affiliation. Through this characterization, the text rhetorically educates the reader that the ideal early Islamic social space was built not upon sectarian isolationism, but upon an open space of interaction that honors social contracts, professional expertise, and human integrity across borders of belief.

The character of Suraqah bin Malik bin Ju'shum represents the archetype of The Antagonist Transformed. Suraqah is introduced as a pure representation of Jahiliyah material greed: a mounted warrior pursuing the Prophet to claim the bounty of 100 camels promised by the Makkah oligarchy. Suraqah's pursuit symbolizes the economic-military aggression of the tribal system attempting to extinguish the seeds of universalism before they can take root in a new land. However, literary drama unfolds when Suraqah closes in on the Prophet's position. Each time he spurs his horse, its legs sink deep into the desert sand, emitting smoke (Ibn Hisham, 2006). Suraqah experiences this mechanical-physical failure repeatedly until his militant superiority shatters. When Suraqah finally perceives the metaphysical power protecting the Prophet, he turns to beg for protection (aman) and requests a written guarantee of security from the Prophet. This written security guarantee operates as a literary artifact marking the capitulation of Makkah's tribal law beneath the authority of the new law brought by the Prophet. His characterization celebrates the absolute triumph of the spiritual narrative over material-territorial tribal forces.

Linguistic and Rhetorical Paradigm Shifts: Transitioning from Asabiyah Vocabulary to the Ummah Lexicon

As formulated by Michel Foucault (1972) in his exploration of the order of discourse (ordre du discours), language is the arena where power is produced, maintained, and renegotiated. A radical shift in social structure invariably demands a linguistic reorganization; a new social order cannot stand without a new lexicon that dismantles the old discursive hegemony. In the context of Ibn Hisham's Sirah Nabawiyah, the Hijrah narrative acts as a linguistic axis that records and validates this epochal shift. The text documents how the Jahiliyah vocabulary, oriented around blood boundaries (asabiyah), is deconstructed and rhetorically replaced by a new communal theo-political lexicon rooted in the universalism of the Ummah.

Deconstructing Jahiliyah Discourse: The Subversion of Fakhr and Tha'r. Prior to the Hijrah, the semiotic landscape of the Arabian Peninsula was governed by a sign system that glorified tribal pride (fakhr) and the law of eternal blood revenge (tha'r). Through Roland Barthes' (1957) semiotic lens, terms like fakhr and tha'r in the oral tradition of Ayyam al-Arab had undergone a process of mythologization. Clan pride was mythologized as the supreme moral virtue, while spilling enemy blood to avenge a slain clan



member was viewed as an absolute existential obligation. This old discourse locked Arabian society into a static cycle of territorial violence and preserved social fragmentation. Ibn Hisham (2006) critically records how these pre-Islamic oral texts, manifested in poems of pride (Asha'ir al-Fakhr), begin to lose their functional significance when confronting the Hijrah event.

The Hijrah narrative disqualifies fakhr by exposing the helplessness of the Quraysh elites at Dar al-Nadwah. Their rhetoric, initially saturated with the arrogance of tribal power, collapses when their siege operation completely fails. When the text depicts the Quraysh youths standing at the mouth of the Cave of Thawr with all their military hubris yet failing to see the target right before their eyes, Ibn Hisham is executing a discursive subversion: the signifier of Jahiliyah material power has been emptied of its signified actual superiority. The law of tha'r, which dictated that every drop of blood must be repaid with a head from the same tribe, is totally subverted by the fact that Islam united bitter ancestral enemies (such as the Aws and Khazraj) in Madinah without requiring new mechanisms of bloodshed. Blood feuds were neutralized by the mechanism of collective forgiveness offered by the Prophet's leadership.

Institutionalizing the New Lexicon: Ummah, Mu'akhah, and Aman. The core of the linguistic revolution in the Sirah Nabawiyah is the emergence of the word Ummah as the supreme theo-political signifier. Before Islam, the word ummah possessed a fluid meaning, referring to a group of people or a period of time without any binding institutional weight. However, in the post-Hijrah space of Madinah, Ibn Hisham crystallizes this term through the documentation of the Constitution of Madinah (Sahifat al-Madinah). In this document, the lexicon of the Ummah is redefined in a revolutionary manner: "Innahum ummatun wahidatun min duni al-nas" verily they constitute one single community, separate from the rest of mankind (Ibn Hisham, 2006). Theoretically, this codification represents what Foucault terms an epistemic shift. The lexicon of the Ummah discards the genealogical paradigm and replaces it with an ideological-spiritual paradigm (aqidah). Social boundaries are no longer drawn spatially based on clan tents, but are drawn discursively based on ethical-legal commitments to the constitution.

The text of the Constitution of Madinah included by Ibn Hisham serves as a perfect model of Critical Discourse Analysis, where the word Ummah acts as a semantic umbrella that deconstructs traditional clan privileges. The Aws, Khazraj, Muhajirin, and the local Jewish communities are integrated into a single, legally equivalent syntactic structure before the city's law. The legal language in this charter affirms that security protection is no longer an exclusive clan commodity, but a communal right guaranteed by transcendental authority. Beyond Ummah, the paradigm shift in the language of the Sirah is reinforced by the institutionalization of the lexicons of Mu'akhah (fraternization) and Aman (guarantee of security).

Mu'akhah was not an abstract moral concept preached from a pulpit, but a performative linguistic action (speech act) carrying tangible legal, domestic, and economic consequences. Ibn Hisham (2006) notes how the Prophet formally paired an individual from the Muhajirin with an individual from the Ansar at the house of Anas bin Malik, declaring: "Become brothers in Allah, two by two." This performative act deconstructs the concept of ikhwan (brothers of blood/tribe) in the Jahiliyah tradition. Through the rhetoric of Mu'akhah, the text of the Sirah performs a socio-linguistic engineering feat: it transfers the responsibilities of physical protection and emotional bonds, which were originally a monopoly of the blood family, into an artificial yet sacred relationship of ideological brotherhood. The text consciously selects a kinship lexicon to domesticate the wildness of tribal egos, forcing the residents of Madinah to share their domestic spaces and wealth with the refugees from Makkah.



Meanwhile, the word Aman undergoes a semiotic transformation from a personal to a transcendental level. In the old culture, *jiwar* (protection) was granted by a powerful clan chief, rendering it temporal and highly vulnerable to revocation if the clan's political conjunctures shifted. In the Hijrah narrative, this concept evolves into Aman Allah (The Divine Guarantee of Security). When Suraqah bin Malik requests a written guarantee of security from the Prophet, the document is written not in the name of the material power of Bani Hashim, but in the name of a universal prophetic authority. This guarantee symbolizes the birth of a new discursive regime: a written legal system that overrules the unstable oral laws of tribalism. Thus, the shift from the vocabulary of *asabiyah* to the lexicon of the Ummah in the Sirah Nabawiyah is not merely an aesthetic substitution of diction for the stylistic sake of prose, but a literary decree announcing the collapse of tribal ideological hegemony and the establishment of an early Islamic rhetorical empire that is universal, rational, and firmly institutionalized.

CONCLUSION

Through a critical close reading integrating theories of spatial narratology, character archetypes, and critical discourse analysis, this study demonstrates that the narrative of the Hijrah to Madinah within Ibn Hisham's Sirah Nabawiyah is far more than a chronological record of physical migration. The text operates actively as a complex literary architecture that designs, negotiates, and legitimizes a radical socio-cultural transition of Arabian society from the confines of a tribal dystopia (Jahiliyah) toward the universalism of a new theo-political polity (Ummah). This narrative construction is driven by three interlocking macro and micro structural elements that simultaneously dismantle the foundations of the old social system and erect the new paradigm upon its ruins.

The spatial restructuring in the text constructs Makkah as a stagnant tribal dystopian space. The Desert is architected as a transitional zone of liminality with the Cave of Thawr as its narrative womb where old identities are dissolved. This dialectic achieves its teleological resolution in Madinah, constructed as a new utopian space through the institutionalization of the inclusive heterotopia of the Nabawi Mosque. Concurrently, the dynamics of characterization within the Sirah deconstruct blind blood-based loyalties by dissolving historical figures into transcendental narrative archetypes that emphasize ideological companionship, self-sacrifice, and cross-faith professionalism. Finally, the linguistic paradigm shift records a massive reorganization of discourse through the displacement of the vocabulary of *fakhr* and *tha'r* and the institutionalization of new lexicons such as Ummah, Mu'akhah, and Aman.

The theoretical contribution of this paper lies in its success in offering a secular-structuralist reading model toward early Islamic sacred biographical texts. By shifting the analytical focus from pure theological validity to the aesthetic-rhetorical function of the text, this study enriches the field of early Islamic world literature. This paper asserts that the Sirah Nabawiyah is an active agent of cultural definition capable of assembling a persuasive narrative rhetoric, which successfully convinced a historically fiercely fragmented society to demolish blood boundaries in order to embrace the universalism of a community of faith.



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