



Women Poets Iranica  
A Research Compendium

# Narrative as a Rhetorical Device in Līmah Āfshīd's "The Old Woman"

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November 19, 2025

<https://poets.iranicaonline.org/scholar/nasir-ahmad-arian/>

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## Introduction

This article analyzes the deployment of multiple genres, or poly-generic capacity, and particularly the use of narrative games as a rhetorical device and figure of poetic language in Līmah Āfshīd's poetry to illustrate the ways in which narrative operates as literary subterfuge within her verse. The main purpose of this research is to clarify how the artistic use of narrative elements in Āfshīd's ghazal "Ghazal-i tāzah" (The old woman) shapes the poem's poetic possible worlds, and to explore the implicit meanings the poem carries. Narrative, as a device and meaning-making strategy, opens up a new discursive space in the fabric of this poem and contributes to the formation of poetic possible worlds. First, this article describes how Āfshīd's poetry builds upon the traditional form of classical ghazal poetry. The article then analyzes the function of "narrativeness" in Āfshīd's "Ghazal-i tāzah" (The old woman).

Narrative is not merely a storytelling technique; rather, alongside its role in fiction it serves an important aesthetic and semantic mission in contemporary Persian poetry. The author intends to explore an aspect of narrative application that has often been overlooked. This significant aspect is the "deviceness" of narrative as a form of aesthetics and a strategy of signification. In this ghazal, Āfshīd pays attention to this aspect of narrative, and the aesthetic and semantic system of her ghazal is intricately tied to the artistic use of narrative and its essential elements.

The role of suspension, time, place, characters, and other narrative elements in shaping the organic structure of this ghazal is examined. In the end, it will be evident that this use of narrative breathes fresh life into the spirit of the ghazal and unveils its meaningful connections.

Poetry has long had narrativeness.<sup>1</sup> Narrative function, in addition to the realm of folkloric and oral poetry, has played a significant role in reflecting mythology, epic, mysticism, love, and other literary forms in Persian language and literature. Abu al-Qāsim Firdawsī's (319–401/940–1019/1025) *Shāh'nāmah* and other epic texts, along with Jālal al-Dīn Rūmī's (586–652/1207–1273) *Masnavī*, Sanā'ī Ghaznavī's (459–529/1080–1131/1141) *The Walled Garden (Hadīqat al-Haqīqat)*, Attār's (525–599/1145–1221) *The Conference of the Birds (Mantiq al-Tayr)*, as well as Nizāmī Ganjavī's (509–588/1141–1209) *Layla and Majnun and The Seven Planets (Haft Peykar)* possess a narrative quality. However, this characteristic is not prominent in classical ghazal poetry.

<sup>1</sup>Narrativeness is a term first used by Gerald Prince. For Prince, narrativeness is a quality rather than an entity, an adjective rather than a noun, designating a set of traits rather than objects and thus characterizing narrative intensionally. See Gerald Prince, "Narrativehood, Narrativeness, Narrativity, Narratability," in *Theorizing Narrativity*, edited by John Pier and José Ángel García Landa (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2008), 20.



Figure 1: Portrait of Līmah Āfshīd

## Līmah Āfshīd

Līmah Āfshīd is a well-known Persian poet popular for her narratological ghazals in Afghanistan. Āfshīd's birth coincided with the unfurling of the Taliban flag in the presidential pal-

<sup>2</sup> Ādilāh Āzīn, "Līmāh Afshīd; shā'irī kih shahrash dar inhisār-i 'jānī' hāst"  
[Līmāh Āfshīd: A poet whose homeland is under felons], Nīm'rukḥ, Mīzān 28, 1400/October 20, 2021. <https://nim-rokhmedia.com/2021/10/20/lima-afshid-story>

<sup>3</sup> Sūdābah Ahrārī, "Līmāh Āfshīd: 'Tanhā ī-i kūdakī-am rā bā shī'r pur mī'kardam'" [I used to fill the solitude of my childhood with poetry], Khabar'guzārī-i bānuvān-i Afghānistān [Afghan Women News Agency], October 8, 2017. <http://www.awna.af/?p=9608>

<sup>4</sup> Ahrārī, "Līmāh Afshīd."

<sup>5</sup> Alireza Korangi, "Development of the Ghazal and Khaqāni's Contribution: A Study on the Development of Ghazal and a Literary Exegesis of a 12th c. Poetic Harbinger" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 2007), 1.

ace of Kabul in 1996. After a few months, her family migrated from Afghanistan to Pakistan. As 'Ādilāh Āzīn describes in an article about Āfshīd, "The only thing she remembered from her childhood is the hanged bodies and cut off hands by the Taliban and the fascinating day when her family decided to go back to Afghanistan after the Taliban fell to the United States in 2001."<sup>2</sup>

Āfshīd graduated from the Journalism and Communication Faculty at Kabul University in 2017. She pursued writing poetry seriously after being introduced to the group Shi'r-i Dānishgāh (Poetry of the university), a literary weekly gathering at Kabul University dedicated to teaching and discussing the basics of poetry and literary theory. Her favorite poetry form is ghazal and she has written hundreds of poems during the last ten years. When asked in an interview in Afghanistan Women's News Agency about her awards and poems, she said, "After years of being interested in Qahhār 'Āsī's poems, finally, I received the Qahhār 'Āsī Award in 2017."<sup>3</sup> When asked how many of her poems have been published so far, her response was "none." She said, "[a]lthough I have written hundreds of ghazals and published many of them in media, I still think I am not ready to publish them as a collection."<sup>4</sup>

In the last decade, Āfshīd has held a significant position among Persian poets in Afghanistan. The language of her poems, devices, significations, and her innovations in prosody as well as her ability to combine narrative as a literary device are the most significant features of her artworks.

### Traditional and Narratological Ghazal

A traditional ghazal is "a lyrical poem (ghanā'ī) comprised of 5–15 distiches that can deal with a variety of subjects. Its main themes have predominantly been love and romance,"<sup>5</sup> literally means "talking to women." Love, romantic longing for a woman, Sufi mysticism, and wine have been the popular themes of the traditional ghazal. The ghazal developed out of the nasīb,



the amatory prelude or the introductory section of another poetic form, the *qasīdah* (ode). That prelude doesn't have any narrative elements. In a traditional *ghazal*, each couplet and in some cases, each hemistich (line) has a complete meaning (*seme*) with no dependence on the other lines. This characteristic shows that the traditional *ghazal* doesn't have a vertical composition, so a whole traditional *ghazal* in the Persian language doesn't make a unified form. Some believe that narrative elements can be found in the amatory or erotic prelude of the classical *qasīdas*.<sup>6</sup> However, this belief seems imprecise for several reasons. First, description and narrative are distinct; not every description is narrative, and excessive description often detracts from narrative quality. The classical erotic or amatory prelude (*nasīb*) is a description, not a narrative, because the erotic prelude of the classical *qasīda* doesn't contain any events, characters, or sequences of events. Second, according to Vladimir Propp's simplest definition, "narrative is a change from one state to another."<sup>7</sup> No change occurs in the course of the classical *nasīb*, as there is no event and no temporal sequence. The classical erotic and amatory preludes of *qasīdas* have been components of the traditional *ghazal* but not the narratological *ghazal*. Therefore, the origin of narratological *ghazal* poetry should be sought in lyric narrative and mystical narrative compositions, mostly in the form of couplets (*masnavī*). Narrativeness in the *ghazal* form is a product of contemporary Persian lyrics, especially women's poetry. Indeed, one of the essential features of contemporary *ghazal* is its narrativeness. Contemporary *ghazal* employs narrative as a possibility and technique for meaning-making to create an art world. This technique expands the conceptual scope of the *ghazal*, moving it beyond a closed and individualistic circle and making it a diverse construct with a broad conceptual range.

One of the fundamental elements of narrative, according to David Herman, is world-making/world-disruption.<sup>8</sup> Discourse embodies meanings and concepts. Narrative either creates a world in which discourse is produced, or it deconstructs the existing

<sup>6</sup>Rizā Rawhānī and Ahmad Rizā Mansūrī, "Ghazal-i ravā'ī va khāst'gāh-i ān dar shī'r-i fārsī" [The narrative *ghazal* and its origins in Persian poetry], *Pazhūhish-i Zabān va Adabiyāt-i Fārsī* [Research in Persian language and literature] 8 (1386/2007): 105–21.

<sup>7</sup>Alī 'Abbāsī, *Ma'nā'shināsī-i ravā'ī-yi maktab-i Pāris* [Narrative semiotics of the Paris School] (Tehran: Dānishgāh-i Shahīd Bihishtī, 1395/2014), 56.

<sup>8</sup>David Herman, *Basic Elements of Narrative* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 9

world (real world) and reconstructs another world (artistic world). In her poem “Ghazal-i tāzah”, both of these narrative characteristics can be observed. On the one hand, two possible narrative worlds take shape within this poem, and implicit meaning is generated through the interaction of these worlds. On the other hand, the poem deconstructs the traditional world of the ghazal and creates a different structure. The language of the ghazal, within its historical tradition, distances itself from mundane daily life matters. The first thing this distance does is remove the tangible event, which is the initial requirement for narrative formation. Without the presence of an event, a narrative cannot take shape. This is why classical ghazal poetry doesn’t have narrativeness. However, in Āfshīd’s poetry, this traditional distance between poetic language and everyday life matters is removed. In this way, the event takes center stage, and narrative emerges. The narrativeness in the poem signifies a transition from self-orientation (solipsism) to otherness.

Thus, several distinct questions shape this inquiry: What is the main factor in the formation of the artistic world in Āfshīd’s narrative ghazal “Ghazal-i tāzah”? How has the narrative in this ghazal managed to construct the conditions of world-building and aesthetic pleasure? Ultimately, what layers and conceptual levels does the constructed narrative world in this ghazal create that would be inaccessible without the use of narrative techniques? Āfshīd represents a reality in this ghazal through the technique of narrative, creating a gap within the textual landscape of the ghazal that leads to the production of a discursive position within the text, thus constructing a fabricated world for the blossoming and growth of this discursive position.

In the realm of narrative, when we move beyond the real author level, we enter a constructed artistic world where the characters have paper bodies that represent and depict hidden realities. The narrative technique in this ghazal makes a transition from self-orientation to otherness, which is an inherent characteristic of narrative. The transition from self-orientation to other-



ness leads to the formation of a dialectical system in the ghazal, where time, space, and subjects embody the peak of human desperation through engaging in identification with a dog.

## Research Background

Numerous articles have been written in Iranian academic journals about the narrative ghazal, most of which primarily focus on the origin of narrative ghazals, but the results of these articles have been problematic. This is because they have considered the origin of the narrative ghazal to be the prelude of *qasīda*. Rawhānī and Mansūrī in an article titled “Ghazal-i ravā’ī va khāst’gāh-i ān dar shi’r-i Fārsī” (The narrative ghazal and its origins in Persian poetry), after providing detailed explanations about ghazal, narrative, and the historical background of the genre, identify its origin as the prelude of *qasīda*. Dasht’khākī and Murtizā’ī in an article titled “Kārkard’hā-yi ravā’ī dar shi’r Tāhirah Saffār’zādah bar asās-i nazariyah-’i ravāyat’shināsī-yi Bārt” [Narrative functions in Tāhirah Saffār’zādah’s poetry based on Barthes’ narrative theory] mechanically map the functions of the ghazal onto Barthes’ narrative pattern, without reaching a significant conclusion.<sup>9</sup> Qanbarī ‘Abd al-Malikī also addresses the question of whether the narrative structure of Sohrab Sepehri’s poem “The Traveler” can be read based on the structuralist model of Vladimir Propp.<sup>10</sup> In most of these articles, narrative patterns are imposed on the poems, and apart from considering the formal compatibility of the poem’s structure with narrative patterns, no significant work has been done.

This article critically examines the proposed theories regarding the origin of the narrative ghazal. It conceptualizes narrative in a modern sense as a device for the formation of the artistic world and in the realm of Āfshīd’s ghazal, highlighting how narrative creates enchantment and influences the emergence of prominent artistic possible worlds. Such research with this approach has not been conducted before. Moreover, this particular ghazal has not been studied from this perspective. Analyzing

<sup>9</sup>Alī Ziyā al-Dīnī Dasht’khākī and Sayyid Javād Murtizā’ī, “Kārkard’hā-yi ravā’ī dar shi’r Tāhirah Saffār’zādah bar asās-i nazariyah-’i ravāyat’shināsī-yi Bārt” [Narrative functions in Tāhirah Saffār’zādah’s poetry based on Barthes’ narrative theory], *Majallah-’i Funūn-i Adabī* 8, no. 4 (Winter 1395/2017): 97–112.

<sup>10</sup>Rizā Qanbarī ‘Abd al-Malikī, “Barrisī-i tahlilī-i sāktār-i ravāyat dar shi’r-i ‘Musāfir’ bar asās-i ulgū-yi rikht’shināsī” [An analytical study of the narrative structure in the poem ‘The Traveller’ based on the morphological model], *Majallah-’i funūn-i adabī* 8, no. 4 (Day 1395/January 2017): 191–206.

the ghazal from this viewpoint creates a fresh space for Persian narratological poetry enthusiasts, highlighting its polyphonic capacities.

### Limah Āfshīd's "Ghazal-i tāzah"

پنجره، برف، پشه‌های کرخت، یخ زده خانه و هوایش را  
پیرزن در پیاله‌ای می‌ریخت، آخرین قطره‌های چایش را  
پشت دروازه کوچۀ خالی، پشت دروازه زوزه‌های بلند  
سگ دیوانه‌ای که دندانش، می‌جود استخوان پایش را  
سگ افسرده‌ای که چشمانش، به گذشته به فقر زل زده بود  
فقر آنبار مادرش را خورد، فقر این بار چوچه‌هایش را...  
کوچه تا کوچه راه می‌پیمود کوچه تا کوچه جستجو می‌کرد  
نان گم کرده بود، می‌پالید، بین آن کوچه‌ها خدایش را  
آخرین راه، خودکشی بود او، رفت در راه موتری خوابید  
هیچ بالا نکرد هیچ کسی، بعد از آن لای ماجرایش را  
آسمان، ابر و برف می‌بارید، آسمان بی‌بهاغه غم می‌ریخت  
لاش یک سگ سرسرك ماند و پیرزن سرکشید چایش را

### The Old Woman

Window, snow, torpid mosquitoes, icy home, and its air.

The old woman poured the last drops of her tea into the cup

Empty streets behind the door with a high howling of a dog  
chewing the bones of its feet

A melancholic dog with eyes haunted by the past's poverty.

It devoured its mother's destitution, now it feeds on its own  
scraps.

Street by street, it roams, searching through the alleys,

Lost bread, scavenging, finding God among those streets.



The last step was suicide, he walked into the path of a car,

No one looked up, no one cared for his story.

The sky sheds clouds and snow, the sky pours sorrow without cause.

Only the head of a dog on a stick remained, and the old woman had drunk her tea.<sup>11</sup>

The function of narration in this ghazal not only constructs a world in which societal sorrows are articulated but also serves other significant functions. Namely, in these verses, the poet employs narration as a tool for semantic ingenuity and the aesthetic device of cognition. The significance of narration in this verse becomes more perceptible when we consider the removal of the narrative chain.

### **The Function of Narration in the Formation of Meaning in “Ghazal-i tāzah”**

The first step in interpreting a narrative poem is to read the entire poem as a whole, paying attention to the sequence and progression of events in order to understand the overarching story. Through repeated readings, one should be able to provide a summary of the entire poem. If one can identify a summary of the events, time, and location of the poem through close reading, the first sign of narrativeness is revealed. A summary of Āfshīd’s ghazal could thus be rendered as follows:

During a cold winter, an old woman sitting behind the window of her house is dropping the last drops of tea in her teacup. She sees a dog in the street, chewing on its bone. Then she searches the street for something and finally, as she sips her tea, she sees the carcass of the dog on the street.

The time and place of the narrative are established in the first

<sup>11</sup>Līmah Āfshīd, “Ghazal-i tāzah” [The old woman], Kābul Nāth 432 (Saratān 25, 1402/July 16, 2023). <https://kablunath.de/Sal-e-19daom/Schomare-436/lima%20afshid-1.html>.

line of the poem: window, snow, and the torpid mosquitoes indicate the time as winter, and the location behind the window. The first line not only sets the time and place (setting) of the narrative but also creates the atmosphere for the generation of the narrative world. These three key elements raise the fundamental question of the narrative process in the mind of the reader: window, snow, torpid mosquitoes, and then what? This question shapes the progression of events and marks the reader's entry into the narrative world. In the second line, the old woman's action of pouring the last drops of her tea shows the event. In the third line, a new atmosphere is created that tells us of the formation of another narrative world. Following the first narrative event, which is the narrative of the old woman's actions, the second narrative, which is the narrative of the hungry dog, gives shape to a new atmosphere. In this narrative, we also observe the progression and sequence of events, which themselves indicate the temporal aspect of the narrative. First, we see the dog howling on the empty street, then chewing its bone, and after that, we witness its eyes haunted by past poverty, and finally, we see it wandering through the alley until it falls asleep on the way to a passing car, and its carcass becomes the subject of the initial narrative observation. All of these events have a temporal sequence, contributing to the formation of a narrative. A significant factor that enhances the interaction of the narratives in this poem is that the second narrative functions as a prelude, creating a suspension for the first narrative. While the second narrative is in motion, the first narrative remains suspended from the beginning to the end.

Time, the primary narrative line, undergoes a zero-degree rupture and temporal disruption. The entire sequence of events takes place between the pouring and the sipping of the last drops of tea. Thus, we observe that the narrow range of time and the intensity of presence coincide here. The peak of tension and the contraction of cognitive range signifies the reflection of a world that passes through the filter of the subject's inner experience and shapes the sensory-perceptual discourse.



The interaction of the two narrative lines generates implicit meanings which are discussed below. This indicates that the poet has not merely employed narrative to give a narrative aspect to the poem or to merely relay a story as in classical narrative poems, but has used narrative as a prelude to create implicit meanings and hidden discourses. The rupture of time, suspension, narrative interaction, etc., contribute to the formation of a symbolic form in the poem, which the old woman and the hungry dog engage in.

As stated above, the events in this poem have a temporal and sequential structure, and this dynamic and sequential functioning is a sign of narrativeness. No line of the poem can be omitted, as removing any of the lines would disrupt the narrative sequence of events. The coherence and composition in the vertical axis of the poem are products of employing the narrative technique. Narrativeness has brought coherence in imagination, the organic nature of images, and linguistic dynamism into the poem, transforming the discursive field of the poem into a dance of words and spectacle of events. Therefore, the primary factor in creating the enchantment of influence in this poem is the artistic use of narrative technique. The order of events shapes the narrative in this poem and makes the main theme easily understandable. We can observe the two fundamental requirements of narrative in this poem, namely, eventfulness and temporality. However, in the modern sense, narrative is not just a sequence of events and a narration of incidents; it also possesses other artistic characteristics that give purpose and objective to its application in the text such as realism, world-building, homo-diegesis, temporal disruption, and so forth.

## **Analysis of the Narrative Elements in Āfshīd's Poetry**

### **Narration**

One of the fascinating aspects of narrative formation in Afghan women's modern poetry and especially in "Ghazal-i tāzah"

<sup>12</sup>Nasir Ahmad Arian, *Rivāyat dar hikāyat* [Narrative in fiction] (Kabul: Maqsūdi, 2020), 60.

<sup>13</sup>Gerard Genette, *Narrative Discourse: An Essay and Method*, trans. Jane E. Lewin, foreword by Jonathan Culler (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1983), 50.

<sup>14</sup>David Lodge, *The Art of Fiction* (London: Penguin Books, 1992), 12.

<sup>15</sup>Mikhail M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 324.

is the non-intrusive narrator with a third-person perspective. This type of narration is referred to as heterodiegetic narration, where the narrator does not have an active role as one of the characters in the story.<sup>12</sup> It means that the narrator is not trapped as a character within the story and, as Gerard Genette puts it, uses third-person pronouns (he, she, they).<sup>13</sup> The silence of the author's voice in this narrative intensifies the reader's engagement with the text and the repeated narrative events, which becomes one of the enchanting factors in this ghazal. The narrative in "Ghazal-i tāzah" is similar to the narrative in E. M. Forster's novel *Howards End* because it does not dismiss our imagination of life inside the story and creates a fictional world that "invites our sympathetic interest in the characters and their fortunes by referring to them as if they are real people."<sup>14</sup> In some contemporary Afghan ghazals, narrative techniques have been employed in such a way that they represent a complete transformation. This transformation or trans-meaning constitutes a special type of double-voiced discourse. This discourse "serves two speakers at the same time and expresses simultaneously two different intentions: the direct intention of the character who is speaking and the refracted intention of the author. In such discourse, there are two voices, two meanings, and two expressions...these two voices are dialogically interrelated... Double-voiced discourse is always internally dialogized. Examples of this would be comic, ironic or parodic discourse, the refracting discourse of a narrator, refracting discourse in the language of a character, and finally the discourse of a whole incorporated genre all these discourses are double-voiced and internally dialogized."<sup>15</sup>

## Suspension

As mentioned before, narrative in the modern and postmodern sense is not only a sequence of events. Narration can also pause time, which, in turn, leads to the suspension of events. According to David Lodge, narrative, whether in the medium of words, film, strip-cartoon, or otherwise, holds the interest of



an audience by raising questions in their minds and delaying the answers.<sup>16</sup> The main question posed by the narrative process in “Ghazal-i tāzah” appears within the opening couplet:

**“Window, snow, torpid mosquitoes, icy home, and its air.**

**The old woman poured the last drops of her tea into  
the cup”**

The reader asks themselves, “What happens next?” and this question is suspended from the beginning to the end of the ghazal, creating an atmosphere of fear and anxiety for the reader. Suspension means being in a state of hanging. In this ghazal, the primary form of suspension can be observed because the initial narrative remains suspended until the final couplet. The old woman is pouring the last drops of tea, and these drops are suspended until the end of the poem. The narrative of the hungry dog disrupts the chronotope of the old woman’s narrative, causing a delay and awakening the reader’s questioning sense. Once evoked, this “questioning sense” leads the reader through to the end of the poem with fervor. One of the main reasons for the enchanting effect in this ghazal is the delay in raising the reader’s questioning sense, and the thread of this device is subtle in that it only connects the two sides of the ghazal at the end of the poem. This delay is the artistic and poetic use of narrative suspension that Samuel Taylor Coleridge calls “willing suspension of disbelief” in poetry.<sup>17</sup> After the initial description of the window, the snow, and the mosquitoes, the poet introduces the main character (the old woman) and immediately breaks the flow of time. Breaking time at this stage becomes a device that transforms the narrative of the hungry dog into an understanding and awareness of the old woman, guiding the reader’s perception to the side, and leading to the conclusion that the old woman herself perceives the second narrative. Breaking time creates the foundation for the introduction of another narrative line and dominates the fluid narrative atmosphere throughout the entire poem. This fluidity of actions gives the narratives the

<sup>16</sup>Lodge, *The Art of Fiction*, 14.

<sup>17</sup>Zoe Beenstock, “How Samuel Taylor Coleridge Suspended Henry Fielding’s Disbelief,” *SEL Studies in English Literature 1500–1900* 60, no. 4 (Autumn 2020): 673.

<sup>18</sup>Keith Green and Jill LeBihan, "Critical Theory and Practice: A Coursebook," In *Critical Theory and Practice* (London: Routledge, 1996), 221.

<sup>19</sup>Lodge, *The Art of Fiction*, 219.

characteristic of slipperiness and uncertainty. The window and other spatial descriptions depicting winter connote that the old woman is in front of a mirror, and this mirror reflects the destiny of a dog that has lost everything due to poverty, including its bone. Now we see that the narrative serves as a device and a signifying technique that weaves concepts and creates implicit meanings. The requirement for any suspension is the breaking of time and penetrating into the realm of time. Therefore, breaking time is also a narrative element, and when used effectively by a poet or writer, it creates meaning and the formation of an artistic world.

### **Aporia**

In classical rhetoric, *aporia* refers to uncertainty—moments of doubt and contemplation on the part of the speaker.<sup>18</sup> Or, as Lodge writes, "[a]poria is a Greek word meaning difficulty, being at a loss, literally, a pathless path, a track that gives out. In classical rhetoric, it denotes real or pretended doubt about an issue, uncertainty as to how to proceed in a discourse."<sup>19</sup> This narrative device is used to arouse curiosity in the reader. In this ghazal, a selection structure of narrative devices is used in such a way that each one becomes the material for the next device. *Aporia* is born from the heart of suspension in this ghazal and reaches its climax in the final hemistich: "the head of a dog on a stick remained, and the old woman had drunk her teacup." The narrative of the old woman reaches its climax as an immediate and urgent event ends in an unfinished manner. This final hemistich leaves the reader in a world of contemplation and doubt, and the aesthetic sense of this abandonment opens countless doors of interpretation for the reader, marking an unexpected ending.

The old woman, through the narrative of the second character (the hungry dog), engages in self-reflection and portrays her own life in a famine-stricken. A significant indicator that opens the path to such an interpretation among countless others, in addition



to the narrative-semantic structure, is the position of the second narrator (the old woman). She sits behind the window and follows the dog's fate through the glass or mirror. The mirror represents the old woman herself, and she projects her inevitable fate onto the dog's narrative, seeing her own life reflected in the life of a dog who chews on its own leg in the extreme cold of a street devoid of humanity, searching for bread throughout the alley. She has lost her mother and children due to the cold and famine, and the only choice left for her is annihilation and destruction.

Water symbolizes life, and she pours the last drops of tea into the cup, signifying the end; in the sorrowful conclusion of this ghazal, she ends and ceases to exist.

## **Conclusion**

The analysis of narrative device structures in this ghazal demonstrates that Āfshīd's poetry employs narration as a technique, creating an artistic performance world that not only has an aesthetic effect, but also generates hidden and implicit meanings within the verse. This study reveals that narration is not only the sequence of events but rather a literary device through which the passage from the monotonous space of discourse can be achieved, facilitating the formation of a possible world where the suspension of disbelief is artistically and aesthetically present.

Furthermore, the findings of this study indicate that the powerful and significant factor that creates a magical sense of pleasure in this ghazal is the use of narrative techniques. These techniques allow the poet to create a world and represent reality in an imaginative and captivating manner. The interaction between the dual lines of narrative in this ghazal is another important tool in the poet's hands that embellish the discursive structure of the poem. This interaction occurs in such a way that one narrative serves as a preparatory element for the other narrative, shaping a space of self-reflection (identification).