

The Art of Prose in Modern Algerian Literature: Between Eloquence and Evidence (The Genre of Maqama in the Works of Sheikh Muhammad al-Bashir al-Ibrahimi as a Model)

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Abstract:

One of the most prominent forms that contributed to enriching Algerian literature and highlighting its unique aesthetic and intellectual identity was artistic prose. It provided a fertile space for the manifestation of literary talent and its interaction with religious, social, and political issues. The Maqama is a prose genre that characterized Algerian literature, which, in many of its texts, adopted a reformist and educational tone to the degree that it reached its peak in the writings of Sheikh Muhammad al-Bashir al-Ibrahimi, one of the leading figures of the Renaissance and reform movement in Algeria. The present article aims to shed light on artistic prose in Algerian literature through the study of al-Ibrahimi's Maqamat ; it examines their artistic, semantic, and symbolic dimensions and highlights the intellectual and reformist stances they unfold, which reflect the writer's vision in resisting colonialism and preserving the Arab-Islamic identit..

Keywords: Algerian prose, modern literature, maqama, al-Bashir al-Ibrahimi, reformist maqama.

1. INTRODUCTION

Prose is one of the literary forms that accompanied the development of Arab consciousness since the early centuries, serving as a vessel for thought and a tool for representing the human experience with all its social, political, and intellectual dimensions. The different forms of prose-such as speeches, articles, letters, and Maqamat-are widely present in Algerian literature, as is the case in other Arab literatures, bearing the special features of the Algerian environment and its historical transformations, especially under colonialism and the ensuing struggles on the level of culture and identity.

Among these prose forms, the Maqama emerged as a composite art that combines beautiful phrasing with profound ideas, satire with reform, and the Algerian writers, particularly Sheikh Muhammad al-Bashir al-Ibrahimi, found it a sophisticated artistic medium to give voice to the issues of the nation and to advocate for awakening and awareness. The Maqamat of al-Ibrahimi are not imitations in any way of the ancient literary heritage; rather, they are a reworking of it to address current issues and to oppose colonialism with intellect and eloquence.

The present study aims to discover the features of the artistic prose in the Algerian literature through the Maqama genre, specifically al-Ibrahimi's Maqamat, by considering their characteristics-including the linguistic, stylistic, and intellectual dimensions-and how al-Ibrahimi used this traditional art in order to express his reformist vision. The central problem emanates from this question: How did Sheikh Muhammad al-Bashir al-Ibrahimi make use of the Maqama genre to represent the Algerian and Arab reality by merging artistic authenticity with a reformist message? And up to what point has such use contributed to enriching the development of Algerian artistic prose and affirming its identity?

2. Prose and Prose Genres in Modern Algerian Literature:

Prose is a fundamental component of Arabic literature, and it has become a notable space for expression and change in modern Algerian writing.

2.1. The Concept of Prose:

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Prose is one of the fundamental literary arts and, together with poetry, forms the two wings of human expression throughout history. It is free speech without meter and rhyme, whose only aim is to express ideas and thoughts freely, without any restriction of verse. However, it is not without beauty, richness of language, or stylistic subtlety. Different critical approaches have given different definitions of prose. Some consider it to be a refined variety of speech in daily life that represents human experience in its intellectual and social aspects. Others look at it as an open expressive system in which the language potentials manifest themselves in its rhetorical and semantic levels. Dr. Shawqi Dayf considers in his book *The Art and Its Schools in Arabic Prose*: "Prose is speech not organized into meters and rhymes, and it is of two types. The first is ordinary prose, through which people deal with their everyday needs, which does not possess any literary value except for what is used from among proverbs and wisdom. The second is the elevated prose, in which the practitioners use language skillfully, artistically, and eloquently, and this second type is what the critics of different languages concern themselves with, studying and analyzing its various stages and its different development. (Dayf, no date of publication p. 15)

The scope of prose expands to encompass multiple forms of writing, such as essays, speeches, Maqamat, stories, novels, plays, autobiographies, and letters. Thus, it is a wide field for reflection, thought, and experimentation. It is also a mirror of social, political, and intellectual realities.

2.2. Modern Algerian Prose:

The transformations in modern Algerian prose occurred during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, in conjunction with the colonial reality that was imposed on Algeria since 1830. Early prose works came to carry mainly the traits of cultural and intellectual resistance, whereby the pioneers of the Algerian intellect and letters played a pioneering role in defending the Arab-Islamic identity and rejecting all attempts at erasing it and substituting it with Westernization. This resistance was manifested in

articles, speeches, letters, and manifestos that were published in national and Arabic newspapers and journals such as *Al-Basa'ir*, *Al-Shahab*, *Al-Islah*, and others, which were platforms for reformist thought and calls for national and religious awareness. It was distinguished by clarity of ideas, strength of argument, and solidity of style, often bending toward rationality and rhetorical speech, expressive of the concerns of the nation rather than paying attention to the aesthetics of literature.

In that sense, with the advent of the 20th century, and especially during the first half of it, modern Algerian prose became stronger and more mature, where the literary essay, the social one, and the political all came to be differentiated as specific forms of writing. Prominent figures such as Abdelhamid Ben Badis, al-Bashir al-Ibrahimi, and others participated in this endeavor, using prose as an instrument for resuscitating Arabic and strengthening national consciousness. During this period, the first seeds of narrative storytelling began to grow in early attempts at literature characterized by moral and social counsel, which gradually underwent development into more artistic and realistic forms. Modern Algerian prose enjoyed a qualitative leap after the independence of Algeria in 1962, wherein the novel and the short story took center stage as genres through which the exploration of the major changes occurring in Algerian society was effected. Iconic writers produced their work, such as Mouloud Feraoun, Kateb Yacine, and Tahar Wattar, who led Algerian prose from its function as a means of communication and appeal to reform to an arena of artistic expression that dwelled on issues of humanity, memory, and identity. This was characterized by the integration of critical realism with symbolic expressiveness, with the introduction of new narrative tools such as interior monologues and polyphonic voices.

2.3. Genres of prose in modern Algerian literature:

Prose genres in modern Algerian literature have diversified to reflect social changes and the varied perspectives of writers. This section offers a brief overview of the most prominent forms.

2.3.1. The Art of Travel Writing:

The art of travel writing is one of the oldest prose genres in Algerian literature, with notable activity since the 18th century. It prominently featured works reflecting both individual and collective experiences of

travel and knowledge. One of the most significant early works is the Journey of Ibn Hammadush (1743), a text titled *Lisan al-Maqal fi al-Naba' 'an al-Nasab wa al-Haal* (The Tongue of Speech in the Report on Lineage and Condition). The Wartelani Journey is also considered one of the finest examples from that period, as it provides a comprehensive portrayal of the economic, social, political, and religious conditions in the Arab world. In the 19th century, this genre evolved and took on multiple dimensions. Omar Ben Qina classified it into three types: the pilgrimage journey, exemplified by Muhammad Abu Ras al-Nasser's *Fath al-Ilah wa Minatuh* (The Victory of God and His Grace); the geographical exploratory journey, exemplified by the Al-Ghuwati journey (1826–1829); and the political journey, as represented by the journeys of Suleiman Ben Siam to France in 1852 and Ahmad Ben Qada's *The Qadi's Journey*. All of these works revealed increasing interactions with the West and the evolving intellectual and social outlooks in Algeria. In the 20th century, travel writing became intertwined with the reformist and intellectual renaissance movements. (See: Bkhiti, , 2014, p. 85.)

Abdelhamid Ben Badis embarked on internal journeys with a social and call-to-action character, and al-Bashir al-Ibrahimi followed a similar path in his eastern journeys, marked by eloquent expression and powerful imagery. Additionally, the journeys of Ahmed Rida Houhou to the Soviet Union, Al-Bahi Fadhla to Egypt, and Al-Mukhtar Iskander to the Levant exemplified the Algerian intellectual's openness to global and Arab intellectual and artistic experiences, affirming the continuation of this genre as a mirror reflecting the transformations of Algerian society and its cultural consciousness. (Din, 2023, p. 36, 37)

2.3.2. The Art of Oratory:

Modern Algerian literature oscillates between religious, political, jihadist, and reformist oratory. Speeches during the Emir Abdelkader era, for example, focus on calls to jihad and resistance against colonialism and include the Bay'a Speech and the Treaty of Tafna Speech. These speeches differentiated themselves from forced rhyme, clarity, and simplicity, thus making them more genuine and strong in conveying the message of national and religious awakening.

In the age of Sharifs and Murabitun, too, many great orators spread the call for jihad and preaching: Sharif Bouzian, al-Mokráni, and Bouamáma were among those well-known resistance figures. Reformist oratory emerged in the early years of the 20th century with Sheikh Mouloud Ben Moheb in 1908, followed by the activities of the Nadi al-Tarbiya, represented by Al-Tayeb al-Aqbi, Ben Badis, and Ahmed Toufiq al-Madani. Most speeches by Ben Badis were marked by honesty in expression and rich in quoting, while that of al-Bashir al-Ibrahimi was distinguished by eloquence and a strong ability to move all strata of society. (See: Al-Khatib, 1985, p. 122.)

Moreover, the educational speeches in Algeria became a vital means for cultural awareness and were usually held at school festivals during opening or on awarding prizes. They encouraged the students to engage in education and be of service to their nation. For instance, Hassan al-Barihamat's speech emphasizes that education is not only molding an individual but also society. Religious speeches were also held during Fridays and religious occasions by imams, scholars who were advanced in eloquence and memorization of the Quran, though they deteriorated during the colonial period since they faced cultural decay and immigration of scholars. (Sa'ad Allah, 1998, p.104,107)

2.3.3. The Art of the Novel:

The novel is one of the most significant genres in Algerian literature, witnessing notable development in its modern trajectory. Its emergence is closely linked to the rise of the Arabic novel in general, rooted in Arab and Islamic traditions that nourished the genre. Muhammad Ben Ibrahim is considered one of the pioneers of the Algerian novel with his work *Hikayat al-‘Ashiqin fi al-Hubb wa al-Ishtiyāq* (The Story of Lovers in Love and Longing) published in 1849, which helped lay the foundation for narrative consciousness in Algerian literature. (See: Ben Ibrahim, 1983, p. 5.) Several attempts followed, and by the 1940s, the novel *Ghadda Umm al-Qura* (1947) by Ahmed Rida Houhou emerged as the first Algerian novel written in Arabic, according to Ahmed Monwar and Wasini al-Araji. (See: Al-Araj, 1986, p.18.) In the 1950s, the literary movement continued with the publication of *Al-Talib al-Mankub* (1952) by Abdelmajid Chafai, and *Al-Hariq* (1957) by Nourredine Boujdoura, followed by *Sawt al-Gharam* (1967) by Muhammad al-Mani’a. However, the novel movement

experienced a brief stagnation until the 1970s, when a new phase began with Abdelhamid Ben Hadouqa's *Rih al-Janub* (1970), published in 1971, which marked the beginning of artistic maturity and thematic diversity in Algerian novels. In this context, Tahar Wattar emerged as one of the cornerstones of modern Algerian narrative with his novel *Al-Laz*, solidifying the place of Algerian novels within the broader Arab literary scene. Omar Ben Qina notes about *Rih al-Janub* and *Al-Laz*: "These two novels represent the correct foundation for establishing the Algerian novel in Arabic. What distinguishes Algerian novels is their strong connection to reality, reflecting both societal and human realities, as demonstrated in these two works, which carefully depict and portray this reality. (See: Qawal, Haji, 2021, p. 308.)

2.4.3. Short Story and Short Fiction:

The modern Algerian short story is one of the prose genres that have developed step by step with the historical transformations and intellectual revolutions that Algerian society has witnessed. The reason for its relatively late appearance, compared with other Arab countries, is the political and cultural circumstances that French colonization imposed, to then suddenly find its path to development and maturity. Among the earliest works are "The Debate Between Ignorance and Knowledge" by Al-Disi (1880) and "The Lame Happiness" by Muhammad Ben al-Abed al-Jallali, published in *Al-Shahab* under a pseudonym. These compositions were among the first attempts at narration that helped usher in this genre in Algeria. This beginning was also marked by an explicit reformist approach, represented in the writings of Muhammad Sa'id al-Zahri through his use of the short story as a means for confronting missionary thought and fighting against ignorance and illiteracy. All this allows us to say that the real beginning of Algerian short fiction dates back to the mid-1930s with both Muhammad Ben al-Abed al-Jallali and Muhammad Sa'id al-Zahri, with their use of the short story as a tool for guiding and reforming society and intellect. (See: Mortad, 1990, p.7.)

With the outbreak of the War of Liberation in 1954, Algerian short fiction reached a stage of artistic and intellectual maturity, whereby writers sought to make use of it to voice the spirit of revolution and concerns of

national liberation. Besides the stories written in Arabic, there emerged writing in French meant to attract the world's attention to the cause of the Algerian people and to defend the struggle of its sons. Examples from this period include "The Messenger of Revelation" by Ahmed Rida Houhou and "Cowardly Thieves" by Ahmed Ashour. Through the efforts of Abū al-Qāsim Sa'ad Allah, Abd Allah al-Rikibi, and Uthman Saadi, this art continued to be developed and passed on by the writers of the 1970s, including Abū al-‘Aīd Dūd and others, who helped establish the aesthetic and intellectual features of modern Algerian short fiction, making it a strong artistic expression of the nation's reality, concerns, and aspirations. (Din, 2023, p41)

2.5.3. The Algerian Maqama Genre:

The Maqāmā genre of literature is one of the oldest types of prose that is deeply rooted in the historical record. It is far from an Algerian innovation that resembles a recent development of modernity; Algerian literature witnessed the first examples of Maqama back in the 5th century of Hijri. Its importance faded thereafter for a period of time before it reappeared again in the 14th century with Ibn Mahrez al-Wahrani, who innovated his Maqamat, which he called Al-Manamat (The Dream Stories). In the hands of al-Wahrani, it revived the lost spirit of the Maqama and manifested its capability of crossing between humor, wisdom, and social criticism. Another example (Namra, 2022, p. 567.)

In the 19th century, the Emir Abdelkader emerged with his experience in presenting semi-Maqamat in his book *Al-Mawaqif fi al-Tasawwuf wa al-Wa'az wa al-Irshad* (Positions in Mysticism, Preaching, and Guidance). Without giving them an independent title, they are a mature model of the Maqama genre, combining religious discourse with philosophical reflection. They are characterized by their direct style and spiritual depth, with the ability to reveal the intellectual and religious stance of this writer, playing the role of a bridge between the classic heritage of the Maqama and modern Algerian prose. His Maqama opens with a narrator who speaks in the first person and later turns out to be the Emir using the name Isam in the last paragraph, even though he includes another character, Al-‘Arif (the leader), who plays a central role in that narration. (Ben Qina, 2000, p. 281, 282)

In his mystical Maqamat, Emir Abdelkader advances a vision of divine opening, Fath, as God's grace bestowed on righteous persons after

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they have attained spiritual purification, asceticism, sincerity, and true love for God, while those who did not rise to such spiritual heights did not deserve this grace. He has expressed this vision in a literary genre that combines prose and poetry, and an introspective attitude that mingles deep mystical expression with high literary language. "The spirit of the Maqama," he writes, "or what I call the semi-Maqama, derives its essence from the joy and peace that comes with the realization of spiritual revelation, while the misguided wander in their ignorance, barred from the gate of divine grace."(Ben Qina, 2000, p. 287, 288)

This genre of writing continued to see revivification in the late 19th century by Sheikh Muhammad Abd al-Rahman al-Disi in his Maqamat on the debate between knowledge and ignorance, published by the Bikar & Co. Press in Tunis. While the title suggests a dialogue, these works are structured as Maqamat in their narrative structure, their characters, plot, and rhetorical style based on rhyme and verbal music. Through them, al-Disi presented an intellectual struggle between the voices of knowledge and ignorance within a narrative dialogue that reflects his reformist vision. He followed his Maqamat with an extended explanation entitled Bestowal of Generosity for the Reading of the Maqama (Badh al-Karama li-Qira'at al-Maqama), a manuscript of approximately 130 pages. He strove in it to deepen the literary and intellectual understanding of his Maqamat, encouraging dialogue and creativity to take up the eternal human theme of the ignorant and illiterate usurping the wealth and power, leaving those of knowledge marginalized. The text is critically social and transcends its temporal and spatial context.(Ben Qina, 2000, p. 292)

The renewal of this genre was carried out in the 20th century with distinguished literary personalities, such as Omar Ben Barhimat and his Literary Maqama, (al-Rikibi, 1976, p.7) which was published in Al-Maghreb newspaper in 1903. He recounts therein his journeys in the East and West, especially between Tunisia and Paris, in a style that was purely narrative, yet full of introspection. Muhammad al-Salih Khabbash al-Qasantini became similarly famous with his Maqamat, entitled Zafrat al-

Qulub (Sighs of the Hearts), which were published between 1927 (issues 406–422) in *Al-Najah* newspaper. The title of every Maqama was subsumed under the general heading of it. Some of these were signed as Sati after the famous protagonist of the Maqamat of Hafidh Ibrahim, while others used the name Al-Harith bin Haman, borrowed from the Maqamat of al-Hariri. In this same tradition, Shaikh al-Bashir al-Ibrahimi produced intellectual Maqamat of a reformist color, to which we will return later.

The examples cited above elaborate that the modern Algerian Maqama has diversified both in form and function—from the documentary account, as can be noted with the works of Ibn Hammadush and Ibn Maymun, to the mystical one by Emir Abdelkader, the intellectual one by al-Disi, and the reformist one by al-Ibrahimi. Indeed, this reflects the richness of this genre and its evolution within the landscape of modern Algerian literature.

3. The Art of the Maqama in the Works of Sheikh Muhammad al-Bashir al-Ibrahimi:

The art of the Maqama is a major prose form in modern Algerian literature, combining literary, social, and political expression of the national experience. A notable example is the Maqamat of Sheikh Muhammad al-Bashir al-Ibrahimi, distinguished by their clear reformist nature and resistance to colonial policies.

3.1. The Ibrahimian Maqama in Terms of Content:

The Maqamat of al-Bashir al-Ibrahimi represent a natural extension of the Algerian Maqamat that preceded them, but they are distinctly characterized by their clear reformist nature. The themes of these Maqamat primarily focus on resisting colonial policies and ways to confront them intellectually and socially. One of the most important examples is the Maqama of Eulogy written by al-Ibrahimi in 1941 in mourning for Sheikh Abdelhamid Ben Badis. Al-Ibrahimi sent this Maqama to his colleagues and students in Constantine. Sheikh Al-Ghasiri later named it Maqama in Eulogy of Imam Ben Badis. It was not published until 1949 in issue number 76 of the *Al-Basa'ir* newspaper associated with the Association of Algerian Muslim Scholars. Some passages were removed for political reasons, and it

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was published under a different title, "A Broken Prayer for Necessity's Sake".

The present Maqama is written in the form of a poignant prayer at the tomb of the deceased, highlighting how deep the spiritual and intellectual tie was between al-Ibrahimi and Sheikh Ben Badis. At the same time, it gives expression to the human and national aspect of the Maqama in modern Algerian literature. Al-Ibrahimi writes:

"O grave, how hard is it for thy occupant to bear patience. O grave, how powerless is God to cover up a knowledge that filled the world in an inch. O grave, we have never known a tomb before you, one that hides the sun or a space measured by a finger's ease, then devours a rotating sphere, and traps a wandering star. O grave, do you know whom you house? What jewels you contain? You have contained a nation in one body, a scholar in one soul." (al-Ibrahimi, 1997, p. 3–4)

He constantly extols Ben Badis for all the deeds he had been able to leave behind, this being the quintessence of the Maqama of eulogy.

The Priestly Speech Maqamat represented an artistic method to inspire ambition, deepen determination, and raise awareness among the peoples through symbolic and encoded messages directed at both rulers and the ruled in their struggle against corruption and ignorance arising from colonialism, while insisting on holding onto the pure Arab heritage and its identity against Western cultural influences. In this respect, al-Ibrahimi writes:

"The difference between the words 'Arab' and 'West' is but a point, and in it lies all the secret and all the evil. The West stood at the door and you did not move. Then it sank its claws and teeth, and you did not resist. It buried its nose in the dirt and found the smell of oil. Then it sought to stand at your doorstep, and you trampled on the edges of your house." (al-Ibrahimi, 1997, p. 525.)

In these Maqamat, al-Ibrahimi used satire interwoven between magnanimity and eloquence for religious, social, and political reform. He endeavored to debunk the conception of colonialism and reveal its true face

to the people in the hope that this would wake up the Arab consciousness from deep slumber and enable the nations to decide on their fate.

Al-Ibrahimi's Maqamat represent a distinguished model of social and political criticism directed against both Arab governments and their peoples, accusing them of their cowardly, humiliating positions regarding the most vital issues, especially the Palestinian cause. His works were characterized by a strict reformist tone meant to revive awareness, stir up resolve, and awaken the collective conscience from its lethargy. However, despite the sharp criticism that al-Ibrahimi unleashed, he did not waver in his positions. He remained balanced on the intellectual level and used the old form of Maqama in a modern manner that blended eloquent rhetoric with realistic criticism. In his Maqamat, the narrator or the preacher is the voice through which he presents his reformist philosophy. He says in the introduction to the Maqamat of the Priestly Speech :

"These chapters, if they are not in the spirit of the priest at least carry his rhythm. If they do not echo the true voice of the priest, they echo its reverberation. In them is the articulate hum, the enlightening ambiguity, the reprimand, the mockery, the hinting and the striking word. In them is sweetness for the righteous though few they be and sting for the wicked though many they be. Mayhap they will stir a dormant soul amongst the sons of Arabism or encourage a sluggish one so that we may harvest some fruit from the intention and change the course of these fixed names." (al-Ibrahimi, 1997, p. 518.)

The difference between al-Ibrahimi's Maqamat and some of the older Maqamat, such as those by Al-Hamadhani, lies in content and purpose. Whereas the latter Maqamat tended toward ornamental language for the sake of literary expression and pleasure, al-Ibrahimi's Maqamat had social and political reform in mind. They demonstrate an acute consciousness of the reality of the nation and encompass the voice of both the religious reformer and the intellectual of the renaissance who wished to revive the spirit of awakening and reform in his society. In relation to this, his Maqamat are closer to the reformist religious Maqamat of Azmashari.

3.2. The Ibrahimian Maqama in Terms of Style and Language:

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Language is the tool whereby the Maqama writer expresses his inner thoughts and feelings. It is “an element in the artistic formation of the Maqama, emerging from itself and forming an independent entity that points to itself and then reflects back. The words within a sentence and the sentence within the paragraph, in their growth and integration, leap forward, active and vibrant, carrying the writer’s ideas.” (al-Saafin, 1987, p. 118.)

In the Maqamat of Sheikh al-Bashir al-Ibrahimi, language stands as the very tool whereby he expresses his intellectual and emotional visions.

At first glance, it is evident that the vocabulary and expressions in these Maqamat differ from his articles and speeches, which had a reformist tone. The language of these other forms is marked by clarity, simplicity, and directness. In contrast, in the Maqamat, al-Ibrahimi leaned toward using an elegant, strong language whose structure and vocabulary borrow much from the classical literary tradition. Some of his expressions are even unfamiliar to the modern reader, requiring contemplation and explanation in order to be understood. He followed in the footsteps of the earlier writers of this form, first among them Al-Badi' al-Hamadhani,

"It is clear that al-Ibrahimi mastered the subtleties of the Arabic language, which he used as he wished, with a rich lexicon. He was also psychologically in need of using rare words to express his intended meanings and express his feelings. In this usage, his purpose was not obscurity, but an expression of the ability of the Arabic language to carry important meanings and to fabricate styles in keeping with the contexts in which he was writing. His style is eloquent, well-chosen, which reflects his vast religious and literary culture and his experience of the different styles of writing." (Fadheli, 2018, p.159,160). Samples of such elevated vocabulary include: "Al-Mutadawwi", "Al-Mab'ath al-Tayyah", "Ladh' al-Hawajir", "Shahri Najir", "Al-Tafweef", and "Al-Wadiqat al-Saykhhood".

As for the rhetorical aspects, al-Ibrahimi employed various rhetorical techniques with great artistry, making use of many figures of speech, particularly saj' (rhyme), which became a prominent feature of his Maqamat, similar to other great writers of the genre. However, al-Ibrahimi

distinguished himself by making his saj' light in rhythm, with finely tuned pauses, gentle embellishments, and melodious sounds, which lent his style a smoothness and musical quality that appealed to the listener. He paid great attention to varying the internal rhythms in his sentences, maintaining harmony between words and phrases, making verbal harmony and syntactical balance key features of his Maqamat. This imbued his texts with a balanced musical rhythm that captivates the ear and enchants the reader with its beauty and sweet resonance.

"His saj' came closer to being natural than forced, and it flowed with simplicity. As he followed through with his sentences, he employed fitting elements such as jinas (paronomasia), tabak (antithesis), muqabala (counterbalance), and muwazana (equivalence)." The harmony of words, the coherence of expressions, and the matching of phrases in his Maqamat lend a musical tone to his style, creating an effect that is pleasing to the ear. Examples of jinas include. (Fadheli, 2018, p.165). "Al-Wu'ud wa al-Ru'ud" (Promises and Thunder), "Mawaakibaha wa Sawakibaha" (Her Processions and Her Torrents), and "Al-Khayal wa al-Khabaal" (Imagination and Madness). Examples of tabak include: "Awaliyaha wa Awakhiraha" (Its Beginnings and Its Ends), "Al-Qareeb wa al-Ba'id" (The Near and the Far), "Al-Awwalin wa al-Akhirin" (The First and the Last), and "Akanī wa Asrah" (I Conceal and I Declare). And as for saj', his Maqamat are structured around it from beginning to end.

In terms of rhetorical clarity (bayān), al-Ibrahimi married a concern for linguistic form to the expression of strong emotion and passion. He balanced the reformist impulse of his content with the aesthetic beauty of his expression. He also paid close attention to visual imagery. Language in itself, for al-Ibrahimi, was as much an end as a means. It is this, above all, which gives his style its peculiar character, marked by innovation in meaning, variety of structure, and a fierce concentration on metaphor. (Abdelmalek Boumenghel, 2009 p. 30)

Al-Ibrahimi's ability to employ imagery made him particularly adept at using bayān. Thus, "Arabic eloquence in al-Ibrahimi's style is a reflection of an intellectual stance, a material event, and a psychological

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reaction, and this is the true measure of real values.” (al-Ibrahimi, 1997, p. 427.)

Among his visual metaphors, we find his use of metaphors such as: "The morning smiles upon him," a metaphor of personification, and "The vast sea was folded into a few inches," another example of metaphor. He also used kinaaya, indirect expression, as in: "Though he was stripped of the fleeting adornment, he was dressed in the lasting virtues of history." In another example, he uses simile: "Swords like deceitful silver coins."

One cannot pass by the element of al-Majlis in al-Ibrahimi's Maqamat. He is used to beginning his Maqamat with greetings and salutations, then directing his speech directly to the audience, as is clearly noticed in the Maqama of Eulogy. He often initiates his texts with a rhetorical and eloquent style that involves calling out and addressing the audience, which gives the Maqama a more dynamic, interactive quality, similar to a speech or direct talk with someone. As for the protagonist character in his Maqamat, it takes various forms. Sometimes it is explicit, while at other times it is implied or symbolic. The protagonist is unmistakably there in explicit form in the Maqama of Eulogy, when the late Sheikh Abdelhamid Ben Badis is addressed through his tomb, or in the Maqama of Determination, wherein he represents the figure of the fiery 'Ifrit. At other times, the character is implied or symbolic, as in the Maqamat of Priestly Speech, wherein he represents an intellectual or social model, not an individual person.

Regarding the narrator, al-Ibrahimi was different from his forerunners in not using a specific, unique narrator. The role of the narrator was not crucial in his Maqamat; rather, he himself was the narrator, expressing his feelings and ideas directly by means of speech, without intermediaries or representatives to convey these. Thus, in Maqama of Eulogy and in Maqama of Determination, he writes in the first person, while in the case of Maqamat of Priestly Speech, he concludes with the signature of the priest alive, as a symbol of the same consciousness of the writer. In addition, it should be mentioned that al-Ibrahimi did not follow the tradition of

classical Maqama and did not start with usual narration verbs such as "he told," "he reported," or "he narrated." Instead, he started his works by presenting his thoughts and his dialogue directly, emphasizing his artistic independence from traditional form and his reformist and intellectual perspective in a more dynamic and realistic language.

3.3. The Ibrahimian Maqama in Terms of Symbolic Meaning:

The Maqamat of Sheikh al-Bashir al-Ibrahimi is a rich field of symbols and allusions, predominantly marked by profound interpretative layers. One of the most significant symbols which al-Ibrahimi used in his Maqamat is the duality of the Arabs and the West. The Arabs were a symbol of degradation, defeat, and loss. Sheikh al-Ibrahimi presents them as an easy victim of the West, which violated their religious principles and destroyed their civilizational bases. This is a symbolism that refers to the turmoil, stagnation, and isolation which afflicted the Arab nation. Al-Ibrahimi writes:

"O Arabs, is there any remnants of war or warriors among you? Scorpions have crept among you and you are kin to one another. The streams have soured, the tents have collapsed, and the tents have been sealed. The wise and the vigilant are absent."(al-Ibrahimi, 1997, p. 524.)

Regarding the West, al-Ibrahimi presents it as a sign of tyranny, oppression, and domination through the image of the French or Zionist colonizer whose own practices are epitomized by horrific crimes committed against the innocent as well as the plundering of the resources and treasures of the people. He portrayed the colonial powers that came from across the seas as a brutal force that took control of Arab land and its hidden treasures.

This is clearly related to the historical period that Sheikh al-Ibrahimi lived through, which was filled with tremendous losses for the Arabs in general and Algeria in particular: material and human losses. The era also comprised repeated setbacks and disasters, a reflection of exhausting efforts on the part of the Arab people to maintain their lands, identities, and cultural heritage. These efforts ultimately failed in the face of the oppressive grip by colonialist forces. From this point of view, al-Ibrahimi draws on symbols, figures, and moments from Islamic history, comparing

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the glories of the past, full of heroism and victories, with the weakened, disillusioned, and fractured present. For example, he writes:

"They avenged the West through Palestine, and no pumpkin tree grew from it; demons stirred to tempt after demons, and the day of Hattin is upon you." (al-Ibrahimi, 1997, p. 528.)

Here, Palestine symbolizes catastrophe, defeat, and the loss of Arab honor, while Hattin represents victory over the Zionist entity, both being significant historical geographical symbols. He further writes:

"They fell from all directions, wolves led by monks and crows shaded by crosses, with souls full of hatred, striving for the legacy of Islam and the ascension of the Prophet of Islam. Have you forgotten what Salah al-Din did?"

The wolves, crows, and monks are the symbols of the enemy and its cunning, the deep-seated hatred the West has toward Arabs since the time of Salah al-Din, and the word crosses serves to symbolize the revived Crusader animosity with Palestine being the venue for setting accounts straight from old ideological and civilizational grudges. Salah al-Din here is a historical symbol of Muslim victory over their enemies, a defeat that Jews will never forget. Al-Ibrahimi also says:

"By God, Palestine was not lost today but it was lost when they promised it to them."

It symbolizes a historical event-the infamous Balfour Declaration-in which Palestine was promised as a gift to the Zionists in exchange for their support of the British.

Not only does Sheikh al-Ibrahimi use historical symbols, but he also uses literary ones in his Maqamat. For instance, Sheikh al-Ibrahimi invokes the figure of Al-Mutanabbi, turning him into a symbol of prophecy with intellectual and artistic connotations. He says:

Abu Tayyib al-Mutanabbi is one of our supporters, and from whom we inherited prophecy. He was called Al-Mutanabbi because he was both a poet and a prophet. and when he was summoned to Jordan, it was a prophetic moment in the present situation.(al-Ibrahimi, 1997, p. 414.)

He refers to Al-Mutanabbi's name to point out the division and confusion Arabs are facing in the present. He also uses natural symbols, like the palm tree, to which he assigns meanings of pride and endurance in order to represent the deep-rooted Arab authenticity in history and culture. He says:

"The sons of Qaila sought refuge in the shade of the palms, and the Ghassanids turned to the gardens of the Levant. And what have your descendants done today? Naked on the mountains. shattered by the shepherds of the desert, now slaves to the seafaring shepherds."

Here, the palm tree symbolizes the steadfastness and roots of Arab culture, while the sea is used as a symbol for the colonizer who used it as a route to invade Arab lands

4. CONCLUSION

From the discussion above, we can summarize that:

1. It is to be underscored that artistic prose in Algeria had not been exclusively a means of expression but rather an intellectual act of cultural resistance, becoming at the same time an act of aesthetic awareness and national commitment. The different genres of prose, such as essays, speeches, and Maqamat, among others, all expressed the preoccupation of the Algerian and Arab peoples in front of historical, social, and political changes.
2. The Maqamat of Sheikh al-Bashir al-Ibrahimi are one of the great manifestations of this artistic prose. Combining deep ideas with beautiful expression, symbolic depth, and a reformist purpose, Al-Ibrahimi employed the Maqama as a means for reform, critique, and enlightenment. With his skillful use of the rhetoric and its devices that he had mastered, he served noble causes, led by the awakening of collective consciousness to resist cultural and intellectual colonialism.
3. Sheikh al-Bashir al-Ibrahimi succeeded in reviving the Maqama on a dignified and moral basis; he used it as a tool for delivering his messages because of its ability to absorb ideas and deliver language in an interesting and ironic way. He employed the magic of the mix between unfamiliar and familiar expressions in drawing the audience to the atmosphere of reformism. And even though this genre is much about style, more than it is

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about content, driven by the need for logical response in the educational context, yet it always aimed at delivering reformist messages and directly urged the audience to carry the banner of this thought, continue it, and decode the encrypted messages that it hid within the Maqamat, all in the pursuit of leading society to safety from the depths of ignorance and the schemes of corruption.

4. Sheikh al-Bashir al-Ibrahimi did not condone beginning his Maqamat with a traditional narrative structure, such as "He told us," "He narrated," or "He related."; instead, he presented his ideas directly and attributed the narration at the end of each Maqama with the signature "the living priest" in his Maqamat of Priestly Speech. Further, al-Ibrahimi did not include the kadiyyah, or fictional anecdotal introduction of the Maqamat of Al-Hamadhani and others; instead, he offered reform, guidance, and prayer. His themes were concentrated on the revival of the nation through holding onto moderation, never excess or deficiency.

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