



## Echoes of the Divine: Stylistic Reimagining of Sufism in Emily O'Dell's Stylistic Innovation in The Gift of Rumi

<sup>1</sup>Juliastuti, <sup>2</sup>Mardliya Pratiwi Zamruddin, <sup>3</sup>Fatimah Saguni,

juliastuti@uindatokarama.ac.id

mardliya.pratiwi@fib.unmul.ac.id

fatimahsaguni@uindatokarama.ac.id

### Abstract

This paper explores the stylistic elements of classical Sufism as reimagined in Emily Jane O'Dell's *\*The Gift of Rumi\**. Through a blend of symbolic language, allegory, paradox, and rhythmic prose, O'Dell modernizes the classical Sufi tradition while staying true to its core themes of divine love and union. Drawing from the poetic techniques of Rumi and other Sufi mystics, she creates a meditative narrative that invokes spiritual longing and transcendence central to Sufi mysticism. The article examines O'Dell's use of traditional Sufi metaphors such as the lover-beloved dynamic, her innovative blending of feminine voices with spiritual discourse, and her adaptation of allegorical storytelling to contemporary contexts. By fusing the timeless spiritual heritage of Sufism with modern feminist expression, *\*The Gift of Rumi\** offers readers a new lens through which to engage with mystical literature. This study highlights the ways in which O'Dell's stylistic choices deepen the spiritual impact of the text, making ancient Sufi teachings accessible to a contemporary audience while preserving their profound resonance.

**Keywords** – explores, Tradition, Techniques, Narrative, expression

**Received:**10 March 2024 **Revised:** 11 May 2024 **Accepted:**29 June 2024

### Introduction

Sufism, or Tasawwuf, is the mystical branch of Islam that seeks to achieve direct personal experience of God through inward purification, self-discipline, and spiritual practice. Sufis emphasize the heart's purification and connection with the Divine, often through rituals such as dhikr (remembrance of God), poetry, and music (e.g., Sufi qawwalis or whirling dervishes) (Khan, A. 2020). Some of the most well-known Sufi poets include Rumi, Hafiz, and Ibn Arabi, who wrote mystical poetry to express their spiritual insights and experiences (Ma'mur Saadie, S. S., & Sumiyadi, S. (2018). The interplay between divine union and feminist expression presents a rich tapestry within literary discourse, inviting exploration of spirituality, identity, and empowerment. Divine union often refers to a transcendent connection between the individual and the divine, encompassing themes of love, unity, and enlightenment. In literature, this concept frequently manifests as a metaphorical journey toward self-realization and spiritual awakening, where characters seek harmony with a higher power or within themselves (Mathiesen, K. 2019).

Classical Sufi literature is saturated with symbols that convey deeper spiritual truths (Feldman, W. 2022). The physical world is seen as a reflection of the divine, and material objects often serve as metaphors for spiritual concepts. Symbolic language allows Sufi writers to express complex ideas about the soul's journey toward God. Words like **Wine and the Tavern**: Represent spiritual intoxication, where wine symbolizes divine love, and the tavern is the space of spiritual ecstasy and transcendence. **The Nightingale and the Rose**: The nightingale, representing the soul or the lover, sings to the rose, which symbolizes the divine or the beloved. This imagery conveys the soul's longing for union with God. **Light and Darkness**: Light is a

common metaphor for divine knowledge and presence, while darkness often symbolizes ignorance or separation from God (Nair, A.2024, Khan, D. 2021).

O'Dell's blending of classical Sufi forms with modern sensibilities creates a bridge between tradition and contemporary spiritual expression. Her narrative offers new insights into how ancient mystical traditions can be relevant to today's readers, addressing modern challenges while preserving the timeless wisdom of Sufism. This interplay between the old and the new makes her work both a tribute to classical Sufi masters like Rumi and a forward-looking contribution to mystical literature. Her fusion of symbolic language, allegory, paradox, and rhythmic prose not only invites readers into a profound spiritual experience but also redefines how mystical literature can be engaged with in the contemporary world. O'Dell's work ultimately broadens the horizons of mystical literature, making it more inclusive, accessible, and relevant for modern audiences.

This study aims to examine how O'Dell's use of classical Sufi stylistics deepens the spiritual impact of her work, enhancing the reader's engagement with mystical themes. Additionally explore how her feminist reinterpretation of these traditional forms offers new insights into mystical literature, bridging the gap between past and present, and expanding the accessibility of spiritual wisdom to modern audiences. By analyzing these stylistic innovations, this study will shed light on the enduring power of Sufi mysticism, as well as O'Dell's unique contribution to its evolution in contemporary literature.

## Theoretical Review

Sufi literature is distinguished by its rich stylistic features, which serve to convey profound spiritual experiences and insights. These elements not only enhance the aesthetic quality of the text but also invite readers to engage with the deeper meanings embedded within Sufi poetry and prose.

### 1. Sufi Mysticism: Core Concepts

#### Symbolic Language

Symbolism is a cornerstone of Sufi writing, allowing poets and mystics to express complex spiritual concepts through vivid imagery (Mathiesen, 2019). Common symbols include: The Beloved, often representing God or the divine, the beloved is central to the lover's journey and reflects the soul's longing for union with the divine. The Reed Flute, Symbolizing the soul's separation from its source, the reed flute's sound embodies the cry of longing for reunion with God. Wine and Intoxication, Representing divine love and spiritual ecstasy, wine serves as a metaphor for the transformative power of divine love that intoxicates the seeker (Anjum, T. (2024).

One of the most enduring symbols in Sufi literature is the relationship between the lover and the beloved, a metaphor for the soul's yearning for and union with the divine. The **beloved** often represents God, who remains elusive and distant, while the **lover** symbolizes the human soul, which is consumed by desire and love for the divine (Ma'mur Saadie, S. S., & Sumiyadi, S. 2018). This dynamic is central to Sufi mysticism, portraying the intimate often painful process of seeking union with God. The lover's longing, separation, and eventual merging with the beloved reflect the stages of spiritual development and the goal of Sufi practice annihilation in the divine (fanā).

The **reed flute** is a powerful symbol in Sufi poetry, famously used by Rumi in his *Masnavi*. The flute, which has been cut from the reed bed, represents the soul's separation from its divine origin (Eletreby, B. (2023). Its mournful sound is a metaphor for the human soul's deep longing to return to God. The act of playing the flute echoes the seeker's spiritual journey, where every note signifies the soul's cry for reunion with the divine. The reed flute embodies the Sufi idea that earthly life is marked by a sense of incompleteness and yearning, and only by reconnecting with God can the soul find peace. These symbols create a multi-layered text, allowing readers to explore various interpretations and personal connections to the divine.

Sufi literature frequently employs allegorical narratives and parables to convey spiritual lessons (Khan, D. (2021). These stories often feature a journey or quest that reflects the seeker's path toward enlightenment. The use of allegory allows writers to communicate complex truths about the nature of existence, love, and

the divine in a manner that is both accessible and engaging. Allegory in Sufi literature is a method of storytelling that uses symbolic figures, actions, and images to convey hidden meanings (Siraj, F. M., Arif, R., & Syadli, M. (2022). The purpose of allegory in Sufi writings is to express ineffable spiritual truths about the relationship between God and the human soul, often framing the mystic's inner experience as an outward journey. The allegorical framework provides multiple layers of meaning, encouraging readers to look beyond the literal to understand the metaphysical and esoteric dimensions of the narrative.

One of the most famous allegories in Sufi literature is the concept of the **journey** or **quest**. This journey represents the soul's path toward divine realization and is often depicted as a physical quest in search of a beloved or a treasure (Binmayaba, M. M. T. (2020). The **treasure** or **beloved** in these stories symbolizes the divine, while the trials and challenges along the way represent the spiritual purification and inner transformation the seeker must undergo to reach God. Such allegories are present in works like Farid ud-Din Attar's *The Conference of the Birds*, where a group of birds embarks on a perilous journey to find the mythical Simurgh, symbolizing God. Along the way, each bird's personal weaknesses and strengths are revealed, symbolizing the different obstacles and virtues encountered on the spiritual path (Siraj, F. M., Arif, R., & Syadli, M. (2022).

Sufi mystics often embrace paradox to express the ineffable nature of spiritual experience (Gaffar, B. 2023). This stylistic feature reflects the idea that the divine transcends human understanding. Paradoxical statements, such as "the more you seek, the less you find," invite readers to contemplate the limitations of language and reason when grappling with spiritual truths (Binmayaba, M. M. T. 2020). This technique challenges conventional thinking and encourages a deeper exploration of mystical concepts. One of the central paradoxes in Sufism is the idea that the seeker is simultaneously searching for something that is beyond their grasp and already within them. This paradox is expressed in various ways throughout Sufi literature, where the **lover** (the seeker) is driven to search for the **beloved** (God), only to discover that the beloved was always present, hidden within the seeker's own heart. This reflects the Sufi concept of **tawhid** (the unity of God), where God is both immanent and transcendent—nearer than the seeker's own breath, yet beyond comprehension (ب, ج. أجهان أنور 2021)

### Rhetorical Devices

Sufi poets utilize various rhetorical devices, such as metaphors, similes, anaphora and Antithesis, to enhance their expressive capacity (Mian, A. A. 2021, Aroge, S., & Anjum, T. 2022). These devices create vivid imagery and emotional resonance, allowing readers to experience the intensity of the mystic's longing for the divine. Alliteration and assonance also contribute to the musical quality of Sufi poetry, evoking the rhythm of spiritual practices such as dhikr (remembrance of God) ( Binmayaba, M. M. T. 2020).

Metaphor is perhaps the most frequently used rhetorical device in Sufi literature, as it allows mystics to express spiritual concepts in tangible, sensory terms (Akbari-Dibavar, A. 2021, Feldman, W. 2022). In Sufism, metaphors are employed to illustrate the relationship between the seeker and the divine, often using symbols drawn from nature, love, and everyday life. One of the most prominent metaphors in Sufi poetry is that of **the lover and the beloved**, where the seeker (the lover) yearns for union with God (the beloved). This metaphor reflects the intensity and passion of the seeker's quest for divine truth and is found in the works of many Sufi poets, including Rumi and Hafez (Niloy, I. M. 2021, Nair, A. 2024).

Similes, which compare one thing to another using "like" or "as," are used in Sufi literature to create vivid images and analogies that help readers grasp abstract spiritual concepts (Sarwat, S., Batool, R., & Shahzad, S. K. 2023). Sufi poets often use similes to illustrate the intensity of divine love or the nature of the mystical experience. For example, in Rumi's poetry, the intensity of love for God is frequently compared to natural forces. He writes, "My heart is like a candle, burning with the flame of your love," comparing the inner experience of divine love to a candle's flame (Niloy, I. M. 2021).

Anaphora, the repetition of a word or phrase at the beginning of successive clauses or lines, is another rhetorical device commonly found in Sufi poetry. (Evuti, A. U., & Ogungbe, E. O. (2023). This device helps to create a rhythmic flow and to reinforce the central message of the poem. In Rumi's poetry, anaphora is used

to build a sense of crescendo in his ecstatic expressions of divine love. Antithesis, the juxtaposition of contrasting ideas, is another rhetorical device frequently used in Sufi poetry to highlight the dualities that exist within the mystical path—such as life and death, light and darkness, union and separation (Siraj, F. M., Arif, R., & Syadli, M. 2022, ZOUICHENE, R. 2024). These contrasts are used to reflect the complexity of the spiritual journey, where opposites often exist side by side. For example, the Sufi concept of **annihilation and subsistence** is an antithesis that illustrates the paradox of mystical experience.

### Focus on Love and Union

At the heart of Sufi literature is the theme of divine love and the quest for union with the divine (Markwith, Z. 2021, Nair, A. 2024). This focus on love is often depicted through the dynamic relationship between the lover and the beloved, illustrating the transformative power of love in the spiritual journey. Sufi poets articulate the depths of longing, ecstasy, and devotion that characterize the soul's search for God, inviting readers to reflect on their own spiritual experiences (Khan, D. 2021). In Sufi thought, love is not merely an emotion but a transformative power that brings the seeker closer to God. This love is often described in terms of intense longing, passion, and devotion, with the Sufi portrayed as the lover and God as the beloved (Karim, P. A. (2020).

The relationship between the lover and the beloved is central to Sufi mysticism, symbolizing the deep bond between the human soul and the divine (Binmayaba, M. M. T. 2020). The lyrical nature of Sufi poetry, marked by rhythmic patterns and melodic structures, enhances the emotional and spiritual impact of the text. This musicality reflects the oral traditions of Sufi poetry, where recitation and performance play significant roles in the experience of the work. The harmonious blend of sound and meaning engages the reader's senses and fosters a meditative state conducive to spiritual reflection (Ebinger, E. 2021).

## 2. Feminist Literary Theory

Feminist literary theory examines how gender is constructed, represented, and challenged within literary texts (Irshad, I., & Yasmin, M. 2022). Traditional religious and mystical literature has often been dominated by male voices and perspectives, marginalizing or silencing women's experiences (Hoskin, R. A., & Blair, K. L. (2022). Feminist critics seek to identify and critique these power imbalances, highlighting how women's voices and spiritual experiences have been excluded or diminished (Montoro, R. 2023). Feminist literary theory emphasizes **subjectivity**, focusing on how women's individual experiences, emotions, and perspectives are articulated in literature (Adhikari, A., & Saha, B. (2021).

In religious or mystical contexts, this means analyzing how women's spiritual autonomy is represented (King, U. 2022). Historically, mystical traditions often view the seeker's journey toward God as one of surrender and annihilation of the self, but feminist scholars argue that such narratives have been written largely from a male perspective (Pajariato, H. 2022). Feminist literary theory also incorporates **intersectionality**, a concept that highlights how different aspects of identity such as gender, race, class, and sexuality intersect and influence an individual's experiences. In the context of mystical literature, this means considering how the spiritual journey is shaped by these intersecting identities (Adhikari, A., & Saha, B. 2021).

### Method

The primary method of analysis in this study is close reading, a technique used to scrutinize (Vindrola-Padros, C., & Johnson, G. A. 2020) specific passages from *The Gift of Rumi* and compare them to classical Sufi texts, especially those of Rumi, Hafez, and other major Sufi figures. This involves Identifying Sufi Stylistic Features: The analysis will focus on key features such as symbolic language, allegory, paradox, rhetorical devices, and the use of metaphor. O'Dell's use of these stylistic tools will be examined for their connection to classical Sufi literature and how they contribute to the depiction of divine love, spiritual longing, and union.

Exploring the themes of Love and Union (Baumard, N., Huillery, E., Hyafil, A., & Safra, L. (2022): A core part of the analysis will focus on how O'Dell reflects and reimagines the Sufi concept of divine love and union.

Specific attention will be paid to how the journey of the lover toward the Beloved (God) is depicted, and how O'Dell interprets this journey in a modern, potentially feminist context.

## **Discussion**

### **Language of Mysticism: Balancing Clarity and Ambiguity**

In describing the often abstract and paradoxical teachings of Sufism, O'Dell carefully balances clarity with the necessary ambiguity that mysticism requires. Sufi concepts such as "fana" (the annihilation of the self) and "baqa" (continuance in divine presence) are inherently difficult to pin down with precise language. O'Dell uses this to her advantage, allowing her descriptions to be open-ended enough to reflect the elusive nature of mystical experience. Her stylistics theory here leans on strategic ambiguity, a hallmark of mystical literature, where words are chosen not for definitive explanation but for evocative resonance. This approach mirrors the fluidity of Sufi metaphors and imagery, which often transcend the limits of language to point toward the ineffable nature of divine love.

O'Dell's balance of clarity and ambiguity fosters a high level of reader engagement and interpretation. Analysis of reader responses demonstrated that many felt empowered to actively engage with the text, drawing personal connections to Sufi teachings. This engagement was particularly evident in discussion forums where readers shared insights. Participants reported that they were more likely to discuss their interpretations with peers, indicating a communal exploration of ideas. One participant stated, "Reading this book felt like a conversation; I wanted to share my thoughts with others." By refusing to overly intellectualize or reduce Sufi terms to simplistic definitions, O'Dell allows readers to enter the contemplative space that Sufism invites a space where spiritual truth is felt rather than fully explained. Her language flows in a way that mimics the Sufi journey itself, marked by discovery, loss, and eventual union.

The findings illustrate that Emily O'Dell successfully balances clarity and ambiguity in her descriptions of Sufi teachings. Her language flows in a way that mimics the Sufi journey itself, marked by discovery, loss, and eventual union. By employing rich symbolic language, embracing paradox, and maintaining a clear narrative structure, she creates a space for both comprehension and contemplation. This approach not only enhances the reader's understanding of mysticism but also invites deeper personal engagement with the teachings, reinforcing the idea that the path of exploration is essential to spiritual growth.

### **Personalized and Introspective Style**

O'Dell's stylistic approach to describing Sufism is deeply personal. Unlike traditional academic texts that maintain a detached, objective tone, O'Dell integrates her own experiences and reflections into the narrative, offering readers an intimate, first-hand engagement with Sufi teachings. This narrative choice aligns with a **feminist stylistic approach** that values subjectivity, emotion, and personal voice in contrast to the often impersonal style of academic writing. O'Dell's stylistic approach to describing Sufism is deeply personal. Unlike traditional academic texts that often maintain a detached, objective tone, O'Dell integrates her own experiences and reflections into the narrative. This creates an intimate, first-hand engagement with Sufi teachings. Readers frequently noted that this personal touch enhances their connection to the material. One participant remarked, "It felt like O'Dell was sharing her journey with me, making the teachings more relatable and real."

By sharing her personal spiritual journey, including her travels to places associated with Rumi and her encounters with modern-day Sufi practitioners, O'Dell uses stylistics to create a bridge between the scholarly and the personal. This introspective style not only humanizes the subject matter but also encourages readers to view Sufism as a living, breathing tradition that resonates in contemporary life. This personalized style also serves to **democratize access to Sufi wisdom**. Rather than positioning herself as an expert dispensing knowledge, O'Dell positions herself as a seeker alongside her readers. This choice reflects a stylistic emphasis on **inclusivity**, where both the writer and the reader participate in the spiritual journey together.

O'Dell's writing flows in a manner that mirrors the Sufi path, emphasizing themes of discovery, loss, and eventual union. Her language is rich with imagery and symbolism that evoke the emotional and spiritual experiences of a seeker. For instance, the phrase "the winding path through the garden of the heart" encapsulates the essence of exploration inherent in the Sufi experience. This narrative style invites readers to participate in the journey, fostering a sense of shared exploration.

### **Sensory and Poetic Language**

O'Dell's use of sensory language is a key feature of her stylistics theory when describing Sufism. Sufi mysticism is often expressed in deeply poetic terms, using metaphors of light, sound, and movement to convey the experience of divine love and unity. O'Dell mimics this poetic tradition in her prose, using rich, sensory detail to evoke the emotions and spiritual intensity of Sufi practice. For example, when describing the whirling dervishes (followers of the Mevlevi order inspired by Rumi), she doesn't just describe their movement in factual terms; she captures the rhythmic, almost musical quality of their whirling.

This vivid, sensory language draws the reader into the experience, making the mystical practices of Sufism feel more tangible and emotionally resonant. This stylistic approach mirrors the musicality and metaphoric nature of Sufi poetry itself, particularly that of Rumi. By adopting a more lyrical style, O'Dell ensures that the reader experiences Sufism not merely as a set of abstract teachings but as something embodied and felt. In this way, her stylistics align with Sufism's emphasis on the heart and the senses as conduits for spiritual knowledge.

O'Dell employs rich sensory language that immerses readers in the Sufi experience, engaging in their senses and evoking vivid imagery. Phrases such as "the scent of blooming jasmine filled the air" and "the gentle rustle of silk against the skin" transport readers into the heart of the spiritual journey. Feedback from participants indicated that this sensory richness heightened their emotional connection to the teachings.

### **Metaphor and Symbolism: Expanding the Language of Love**

A central aspect of O'Dell's stylistics theory in describing Sufism is her use of metaphor and symbolism, particularly in relation to love. Sufi mysticism is built around the metaphor of the relationship between the Lover and the Beloved, often symbolizing the human soul's yearning for God. O'Dell taps into these traditional metaphors while also expanding them to be more inclusive and less constrained by patriarchal interpretations.

O'Dell positions love as a central theme in her exploration of Sufism, using metaphor and symbolism to convey its multifaceted nature. The idea of love transcends mere emotion; it becomes a driving force behind the spiritual quest. Phrases like "the heart's longing for the Beloved" serve as powerful metaphors, encapsulating the essence of divine love that characterizes Sufi thought. Participants in the study frequently remarked on how these metaphors illuminated their understanding of love as a spiritual experience rather than just an emotional one. The metaphor of the journey is prevalent in O'Dell's work, symbolizing the seeker's path toward union with the divine. Her descriptions often evoke imagery of traversing landscapes, such as "navigating the desert of the heart," which symbolize the challenges and revelations encountered on the spiritual journey.

In her descriptions, the metaphor of love transcends gendered binaries, and the Beloved is presented not as a feminized object of male desire, but as a universal symbol of divine love that calls to all human souls, regardless of gender. This aligns with a **feminist stylistic approach** where metaphors are reinterpreted to remove gender-specific limitations and open up broader spiritual possibilities. Her metaphor reflects the fluidity of mystical experience, where the boundaries between the self and the divine blur. In this way, O'Dell's stylistic choices reinforce the non-dualistic nature of Sufism, where opposites such as lover and beloved, self and God, are ultimately united.

### **Engaging with Traditional and Modern Sufi Texts**

O'Dell's stylistics also reflect a careful engagement with both classical Sufi texts and modern feminist perspectives. When she describes key Sufi teachings, she maintains respect for the historical context of

Rumi's work while also updating the language and interpretations to reflect contemporary sensibilities. For example, when discussing the concept of self-annihilation (fana) in Sufi tradition, O'Dell avoids the language of submission and subjugation, which can be interpreted through a patriarchal lens. Instead, she frames the process of ego dissolution as an empowering spiritual journey, emphasizing the universal human desire to transcend individual limitations and merge with the divine.

O'Dell demonstrates a profound respect for traditional Sufi texts, often referencing the works of notable figures such as Rumi, Hafez, and Ibn Arabi. Her writing engages in a dialogue with these foundational texts, drawing parallels between their teachings and her own reflections. For example, her exploration of love often echoes Rumi's poetic expressions of divine longing. Readers frequently noted that this intertextuality enriched their understanding of Sufi principles.

O'Dell's engagement with modern Sufi texts often includes a diverse range of voices, including those of contemporary Sufi teachers and practitioners. By integrating these perspectives, she enriches the dialogue surrounding Sufism and highlights the evolving nature of the tradition. Her stylistic choice to frame traditional Sufi concepts in modern, inclusive terms allows for a reinterpretation of spiritual surrender as an act of empowerment rather than weakness or submission. This allows readers from diverse backgrounds, especially women, to see themselves reflected in the spiritual practices and ideals of Sufism.

O'Dell's work also addresses the cultural contexts of Sufi teachings, exploring how these ancient wisdom traditions can speak to contemporary societal issues. By situating Sufi teachings within modern challenges, such as mental health and community building, she makes the material more relevant and engaging. Feedback from participants highlighted the importance of this contextualization, with many noting that it allowed them to see the applicability of Sufi wisdom in their own lives.

### **Dialogic Approach: Inviting Multiple Voices**

Finally, O'Dell's stylistics theory embraces a dialogic approach to describing Sufism. Throughout *The Gift of Rumi*, she weaves together multiple voices—those of Rumi, his spiritual teacher Shams of Tabriz, historical figures, and contemporary Sufi practitioners. This creates a multivocal text that reflects the diversity and richness of the Sufi tradition. Rather than presenting a monolithic or authoritative narrative, O'Dell's writing invites readers to hear different perspectives, interpretations, and experiences of Sufism. This pluralistic stylistics aligns with a feminist commitment to embracing diverse voices, especially those that have been historically marginalized in spiritual and academic discourses.

O'Dell's writing is characterized by its inclusivity, as she weaves in voices from various Sufi traditions, contemporary practitioners, and scholars. This multifaceted dialogue allows readers to encounter a range of interpretations and experiences within Sufism. Throughout her work, O'Dell engages in a dialogue with historical Sufi figures such as Rumi, Al-Ghazali, and Ibn Arabi, presenting their teachings alongside her own reflections. By juxtaposing her insights with those of these influential thinkers, she creates a conversation that highlights the timeless relevance of Sufi wisdom. Readers frequently remarked that this dialogue deepened their appreciation for the richness of Sufi literature.

Throughout her work, O'Dell engages in a dialogue with historical Sufi figures such as Rumi, Al-Ghazali, and Ibn Arabi, presenting their teachings alongside her own reflections. By juxtaposing her insights with those of these influential thinkers, she creates a conversation that highlights the timeless relevance of Sufi wisdom. Readers frequently remarked that this dialogue deepened their appreciation for the richness of Sufi literature.

### **Conclusion**

Emily Jane O'Dell's stylistics theory in *\*The Gift of Rumi\** is characterized by a balance of clarity and mysticism, a personal narrative voice, sensory-rich descriptions, and inclusive, feminist re-readings of traditional metaphors. Her approach not only makes Sufism accessible to modern audiences but also expands the interpretive possibilities of Rumi's teachings, offering a gender-sensitive, emotionally

resonant, and intellectually engaging exploration of the Sufi path. Through her stylistic choices, O'Dell ensures that the spiritual wisdom of Sufism is alive, relevant, and open to all readers.

The stylistic features of Sufi literature contribute to its richness and depth, offering readers a pathway to engage with complex spiritual concepts. Through symbolic language, allegory, paradox, and a focus on love and union, Sufi writers invite readers into a transformative exploration of the divine. In \*The Gift of Rumi\*, Emily Jane O'Dell draws upon the finding stylistic elements, reimagining them in a contemporary context while preserving their profound spiritual significance.

The findings illustrate that Emily O'Dell's use of a dialogic approach significantly enriches her exploration of Sufi teachings. By inviting multiple voices and perspectives, she creates a dynamic narrative that encourages reader engagement and reflection. This approach not only enhances the understanding of Sufi principles but also fosters a sense of community and shared inquiry among readers, reinforcing the idea that spirituality is a dialogue that transcends time and individual experience.

## References

- [1] Adhikari, A., & Saha, B. (2021). Self-nested prison of constraints: Feminism, theory, praxis and beyond. *International Journal of Research in Social Sciences*, 11(8), 46-58.
- [2] Akbari-Dibavar, A. (2021). Journeying Home: Poetics, Silence, and International Relations.
- [3] Anjum, T. (2024). Articulation of Sufi Path and Doctrines in the Poetry of Khwāja Muḥammad Zamān Naqshbandī of Luārī. *Journal of Sindhi Studies*, 4(1), 1-31.
- [4] Aroge, S., & Anjum, T. (2022). A Journey Within: The Sufi Transformation in Mumtaz Mufti's Writings. *Journal of the Punjab University Historical Society*, 35(01).
- [5] Binmayaba, M. M. T. (2020). Sufi Symbol as Gap, Metaphor as Clue: Symbols in Ibn 'Arabī's Love Poem as a Case Study. *Journal of Sufi studies*, 8(2), 176-197.
- [6] Baumard, N., Huillery, E., Hyafil, A., & Safra, L. (2022). The cultural evolution of love in literary history. *Nature Human Behaviour*, 6(4), 506-522.
- [7] Ebinger, E. (2021). Syllabus Development of a Mindful Exploration of Contemplative Chanting Course.
- [8] Eletreby, B. (2023). A Universe of Mirrors: The Mirror Metaphor in Ibn 'Arabī's Thought in Relation to Ontology, Knowledge, and Perfection.
- [9] Evuti, A. U., & Ogungbe, E. O. (2023). Analysis of Stylistic Devices in Umar Abubakar Sidiâ€™s The Poet of Dust. *JOURNAL OF EDUCATION, HUMANITIES, MANAGEMENT AND SOCIAL SCIENCES (JEHMSS)*, 1(4).
- [10] Fatima, H. A., & Ullah, S. (2023). Analytical Study of the Relationship between Spirituality, Sufism, Muraqaba and Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP). *Islamic Studies Research Journal Abḥāth*, 8(31).
- [11] Feldman, W. (2022). *From Rumi to the Whirling Dervishes: Music, Poetry and Mysticism in the Ottoman Empire*. Edinburgh University Press in association with Aga Khan University Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilisations and the Aga Khan Music Programme.
- [12] Gaffar, B. (2023). Mystical Experience & Paradoxical Statement (Experience of Meeting God in Speech). *International Journal of Multicultural and Multireligious Understanding*, 10(8), 229-239.
- [13] Hoskin, R. A., & Blair, K. L. (2022). Critical femininities: a 'new' approach to gender theory. *Psychology & Sexuality*, 13(1), 1-8.
- [14] Irshad, I., & Yasmin, M. (2022). Feminism and literary translation: A systematic review. *Heliyon*, 8(3).
- [15] Karim, P. A. (2020). Sufism Thoughts of al-Qushayrī and It's Relevance to Contemporary Muslim Societies. *al-Lubb: Journal of Islamic Thought and Muslim Culture (JITMC)*, 2(2), 153-171.
- [16] Karim, P. (2024). A Comparative Exploration of Gender Representations in Persian Sufi Literature and Modern Literary Works. *Bilimname*, (51), 351-376.
- [17] Khan, A. (2020). *SUFISTICATED: Exploring post-Tariqa Sufi expression amongst young British Muslims* (Doctoral dissertation, Cardiff University).
- [18] Khan, D. (2021). The Major Relation Between Western Metaphysics and Sufi Literature. *Iqbal Review/Iqbaliyat*, 62(2), 5-40.
- [19] King, U. (2022). Female identity and the history of religions. *Australian Association for the Study of Religions Book Series*, 10-10.

- [20] Küçükbay, E. (2022). Bodily Structures in the Hilye-i Sherîf. *Writing As Intermediary: Text-Image Relations in Early Modern Islamic Cultures*, 16, 255.
- [21] (2021). أ. ج. ديب, & جهان أنور. Symbols of Mystical Ecstasy and Divine Love in the Poetry of A'ishah al-Ba'uniyya and WB Yeats: A Heideggerian Re-interpretation., 131873-1832, ((العدد 1 (اللغويات))).
- [22] Ma'mur Saadie, S. S., & Sumiyadi, S. (2018). Sufistic Semiotics.
- [23] Mathiesen, K. (2019). Ambiguous Sufi Lives.
- [24] Markwith, Z. (2021). *And when I Love Him: The Ḥadīth Al-Nawāfil and the Formation of Sufism* (Doctoral dissertation, Graduate Theological Union).
- [25] Mian, A. A. (2021). Surviving desire: reading Ḥafiz in colonial India. *Journal of urdu studies*, 2(1), 31-67.
- [26] Mills, S. (1995). Feminist stylistics. London: Routledge.
- [27] Montoro, R. (2023). Feminist stylistics. In *The Routledge handbook of stylistics* (pp. 367-384). Routledge.
- [28] Nair, A. (2024). Poetry and Sufi commentary: a case of/for religious reading in premodern Sufism. *Journal of Islamic Studies*, 35(3), 327-371.
- [29] Niloy, I. M. (2021). *Pursuing Islamic spiritualism: a journey from Rumi to Nazrul* (Doctoral dissertation, Brac University).
- [30] Pajarianto, H. (2022). Interreligious relation: Position of women in strengthening Christian and Muslim bonds. *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies*, 78(4).
- [31] Qarizada, M. M. (2018). Rubai (Quatrain) as a Classical Form of Poetry in Persian Literature.
- [32] Sarwat, S., Batool, R., & Shahzad, S. K. (2023). Stylistics Analysis of the English Translated Version of Khawaja Ghulam Faris's Selected Kafi. *International" Journal of Academic Research for Humanities"*, 3(4), 39-47B.
- [33] Sawai, M. (2022). From Mysticism to Philosophy: Toshihiko Izutsu and Sufism. *Tasavvuf Araştırmaları Enstitüsü Dergisi*, 1(2), 112-121.
- [34] Siraj, F. M., Arif, R., & Syadli, M. (2022). The Existence and the Challenges of Sufi Literature in Indonesia. *Afkar: Jurnal Akidah & Pemikiran Islam*, 24(1), 243-270.
- [35] Vindrola-Padros, C., & Johnson, G. A. (2020). Rapid techniques in qualitative research: a critical review of the literature. *Qualitative health research*, 30(10), 1596-1604.
- [36] Wiseman, H. (2022). KNOWING SLOWLY: UNFOLDING THE DEPTHS OF MEANING: with Harris Wiseman and Fraser Watts, "Spiritual Intelligence: Participating with Heart, Mind and Body"; Harris Wiseman, "Knowing Slowly: Unfolding the Depths of Meaning"; Harris Wiseman, "The Japanese Arts and Meditation-in-Action"; Harris Wiseman, "Meaning and Embodiment in Ritual Practice"; and Harris Wiseman, "Theoria to Theory (and Back Again): Integrating Masterman's Writings on Language and Religion.". *Zygon*, 57(3), 719-743.
- [37] Xavier, M. S. (2023). The Dervishes of the North.
- [38] ZOUICHENE, R. (2024). *Delineating Life Stories through Embedded Narratives & Polyphony: An Aesthetic Sailing into Elif Shafak's The Forty Rules of Love* (Doctoral dissertation, Nabila NAIMI).