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1 The Construction of Gérard Genette's Theory in Celestial Bodies: A Narrative Discourse Analysis

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Article History	ABSTRACT
Received: 00-00-2020;	<p>Background: This study highlights the significance of narrative structure in revealing cultural identity and ideology, focusing on <i>Celestial Bodies</i> by Jokha Alharthi, a complex novel yet rarely analyzed through Genette's narratological lens.</p> <p>Purpose: The purpose of this study is to examine the application of Genette's narrative theory in revealing the structural and ideological dimensions of Celestial Bodies.</p> <p>Method: This research applied a qualitative descriptive method with a narrative discourse analysis approach. The data source was the full text of the novel Celestial Bodies, which consists of 58 chapters named after different characters. The sample was chosen purposively due to its narrative intricacy. Data collection was conducted through intensive close reading, while the analysis employed Genette's five narrative categories: order, duration, frequency, mood, and voice. The analytical process involved identifying, classifying, and interpreting the narrative techniques and focalization shifts across chapters.</p> <p>Results and Discussion: The results revealed that the novel makes use of narrative fragmentation, including flashbacks (analepsis), flashforwards (prolepsis), internal focalization, and a dual narration style—heterodiegetic and homodiegetic (through Abdullah). These elements are utilized not only to enrich the plot but also to reflect themes of historical memory, gender conflict, and social transition in Oman. This study helps address a lack of structural analysis in Arabic literature and demonstrates the cross-cultural applicability of Genette's theory.</p> <p>Conclusions and Implications: In summary, the novel shows how narrative techniques can act as vehicles for deeper ideological expression. This research suggests that future studies should continue applying narratological models to diverse literary traditions to uncover global patterns of storytelling and representation.</p>
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Latar Belakang: Penelitian ini menyoroti pentingnya struktur naratif dalam menangkap identitas budaya dan ideologi, dengan fokus pada novel *Celestial Bodies* karya Jokha Alharthi yang kompleks namun jarang dianalisis melalui lensa naratologi Gérard Genette.

Tujuan: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji penerapan teori naratologi Genette dalam menganalisis dimensi struktural dan ideologis dalam novel *Celestial Bodies*.

Metode: Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif dengan metode analisis wacana naratif. Sumber data utama adalah teks penuh novel *Celestial Bodies* yang terdiri dari 58 bab dan dinamai berdasarkan nama tokoh. Sampel dipilih secara purposif karena kompleksitas naratifnya. Data dikumpulkan melalui pembacaan mendalam (*close reading*) dan dianalisis menggunakan lima kategori naratologi Genette: *order*, *duration*, *frequency*, *mood*, dan *voice*. Proses analisis mencakup identifikasi, klasifikasi, dan interpretasi teknik penceritaan serta pergeseran focalisasi antar bab.

Hasil dan Pembahasan: Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa novel ini memanfaatkan narasi terfragmentasi, termasuk penggunaan kilas balik (*analepsis*), loncatan waktu (*prolepsis*), focalisasi internal, serta perpaduan gaya narator heterodiegetik dan homodiegetik (melalui tokoh Abdullah). Teknik-teknik tersebut tidak hanya memperkaya alur, tetapi juga mencerminkan tema memori sejarah, konflik gender, dan perubahan sosial di Oman. Studi ini turut mengisi kekosongan dalam kajian struktural sastra Arab modern dan membuktikan bahwa teori Genette dapat diterapkan lintas budaya.

Kesimpulan dan Implikasi: Secara keseluruhan, novel ini menunjukkan bahwa teknik penceritaan dapat berfungsi sebagai sarana ideologis yang mendalam. Penelitian ini merekomendasikan agar kajian naratologi terus diterapkan pada karya sastra dari berbagai tradisi budaya untuk menggali pola naratif dan representasi global yang lebih luas.

Kata Kunci Naratologi, Gerard Genette, *Celestial Bodies*, Struktur Naratif, Sastra Arab



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INTRODUCTION

Narratology is a significant approach in literary analysis, particularly in examining the structure and mechanisms of storytelling that shape the reader's experience of a text.[1] Gérard Genette stands as a central figure in the development of structuralist narratology, introducing key concepts such as order, duration, frequency, mood, and voice within the framework of narrative analysis. Genette's theory provides a solid methodological foundation for exploring the relationships among story, discourse, and narrative in literary texts.[2]

While other narratologists like Vladimir Propp and Mikhail Bakhtin have made influential contributions—Propp with his morphological analysis of folktales and Bakhtin with his dialogic imagination and concept of chronotope—the narrative structure of *Celestial Bodies* aligns more closely with Genette's focus on temporal manipulation and narrative voice. Propp's structuralism emphasizes fixed narrative functions common in folklore, which are less applicable to the novel's non-linear and character-driven plot. Bakhtin's approach, while valuable for analyzing dialogism and heteroglossia, does not offer the same analytical precision in dissecting narrative time and focalization. In contrast, Genette's framework is especially relevant for examining how *Celestial Bodies* constructs meaning through shifts in narrative order, duration, and perspective, making it the most suitable choice for this study.

In the realm of contemporary Middle Eastern literature, the novel *Celestial Bodies* by Jokha Alharthi has garnered global attention. Presenting the lives of three sisters in Oman during a period

of social, cultural, and political transition—from slavery to modernity—the novel won the 2019 Man Booker International Prize.^[3] Through its complex narrative structure and diverse narrative perspectives, *Celestial Bodies* offers both challenges and opportunities for research focused on narratological studies. The novel features a non-linear narrative, shifts between past and present timelines, and employs multiple character perspectives. As such, it is rich in narrative dimensions that merit in-depth exploration.

While numerous studies have been conducted on *Celestial Bodies*, most have primarily focused on themes such as the representation of women, the legacy of colonialism, cultural transitions, and postcolonial or feminist approaches. Research by scholars such as Rabiatul^[4] has highlighted how the novel reflects social transformation in Oman, while a thesis by Wulan^[5] examined the moral dimensions of female characters. However, studies that specifically apply Gérard Genette's narratological framework to *Celestial Bodies* remain scarce. This indicates a research gap in structural analysis of the narrative—how narrative time and voice are constructed, and how storytelling techniques contribute to deeper meanings regarding Omani society.

Filling this gap is crucial, as narrative techniques play an essential role in shaping readers' engagement with a text. In the case of *Celestial Bodies*, the novel not only portrays social life in Oman but also does so through a complex narrative that reflects the psychological, historical, and cultural conditions^[7] of its characters. Understanding the narrative structure and storytelling techniques thus allows for a more profound interpretation of the novel's content and messages.

⁵
The novelty of this research lies in the application of Gérard Genette's theory within the context of modern Arabic literature, as structuralist narratology has predominantly been applied to Western literary texts. Employing Genette's framework to analyze *Celestial Bodies* demonstrates the flexibility and relevance of his theory in examining narrative structures in non-Western literature. This novelty represents a valuable contribution to expanding the scope of narratological studies and enriching global literary discourse by bridging European structuralist theory with Middle Eastern narrative practices.

Ultimately, this study aims to explain how the narrative in *Celestial Bodies* is constructed and organized. Using Genette's narratological approach, the research seeks to uncover the hidden regularities in the text—such as the arrangement of narrative perspective, the recurrence of events, and the structural patterns that guide readers toward specific interpretations.^[6]

¹²
The primary objective of this research is to analyze the construction of narrative elements in *Celestial Bodies* through Gérard Genette's narratological framework. Specifically, the study aims to: (1) identify and describe the narrative techniques used in the novel, including aspects of order, duration, frequency, mood, and voice; (2) analyze how these techniques shape the overall narrative structure; and (3) uncover the meaning embedded in the narrative structure in relation to the social and cultural context of Omani society.

This research is expected to make a significant contribution to the development of narratological theory, enhance the understanding of *Celestial Bodies*, and enrich contemporary Middle Eastern literary studies through a rigorous structural approach.

LITERATURE REVIEW

As a branch of structuralist theory, narratology is an approach in literary studies that emphasizes how a story is told, not merely its content or theme. Narratology aims to identify and classify the constituent elements of narrative and how these elements interact to create meaning. It emerged as a formal and systematic method of analyzing texts, focusing on the relationship between narrative structure and its mode of presentation.^[7]

Several studies have applied narratology to Western literature with notable success, but its application to non-Western texts—especially Arabic literature—remains underexplored. Recent scholarship has begun to address this gap by investigating how Arabic narratives, with their own cultural and historical complexities, engage with narrative structures in unique ways. However, many of these studies tend to favor thematic or postcolonial readings, leaving a methodological gap in formal structural analysis.

In this context, Gérard Genette's narratological framework offers particular advantages for the analysis of modern Arabic literature, such as *Celestial Bodies*. Genette's detailed categories—such as anachrony (order), duration, frequency, focalization (mood), and narrative voice—allow for a nuanced reading of non-linear, multi-perspective storytelling. These features are especially relevant for Arabic novels that incorporate fragmentation, memory, and layered voices to represent social transformations. By applying Genette's theory, this research can reveal how narrative form itself participates in expressing historical and cultural experiences, making it an effective tool for analyzing the structural dimensions of Arabic fiction.

Gerard Genette's theory in narratology

Gérard Genette is a central figure who has had a significant influence in the field of modern narratology.^[8] His seminal work, *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method* (1980), introduced five key concepts in narrative analysis: Order – the relationship between the chronological sequence of events in the story and the order in which they are presented; Duration – the comparison between the time span of the story and the narrative time; Frequency – how often an event is narrated; Mood – the narrative distance and perspective; and Voice – who is speaking and from what narrative level. These five elements are used to deconstruct how a narrative is formed and how its structure can influence readers' interpretations of a literary text.^[2]

In this context, *order* refers to techniques such as analepsis (flashback) and prolepsis (flashforward). *Duration* deals with the comparison between actual story time and the length of its narration in the text, such as through techniques of summarization or deceleration. *Frequency* examines the repetition of events—whether certain events are told once or multiple times. *Mood* refers to the narrative focus and the degree of the narrator's involvement in the story. Meanwhile, *voice* concerns the narrator's position and level of involvement—whether homodiegetic (the narrator is a character) or heterodiegetic (the narrator is outside the story). Genette's narratological approach has been widely used to analyze modern literary texts in order to uncover hidden narrative structures.^[9]

Genette's Structuralism.

This research aims to make a conceptual and methodological contribution by integrating Genette's structural narratology theory into the study of contemporary Middle Eastern literature. Applying Genette's approach to *Celestial Bodies* allows for an in-depth exploration of how narratives are constructed and how these narrative strategies influence readers' understanding of Oman's social and cultural context. Thus, this study not only addresses a gap in previous research but also demonstrates the flexibility and relevance of Genette's theory in analyzing non-Western literary texts.

Theoretically, this study is based on a structural approach to narrative analysis, particularly Gérard Genette's theory.^[10] Conceptually, it uses the definition of narratology as the study of the structure of stories and the techniques of storytelling in literary texts. Narrative construction is understood as the result of interactions between story elements and their mode of delivery, which shape the reader's aesthetic and interpretive experience. Using this framework, the research will examine how the narrative structure in *Celestial Bodies* is constructed through the techniques of

order, duration, frequency, mood, and voice, and how these techniques create social and psychological meaning within the story.[11]

Previous Studies of *Celestial Bodies*'s Novel by Jokha Alharthi

As global literary studies evolve, narratology has not only been applied to Western literature but is increasingly used to understand narrative structures in non-Western works, including modern Arabic literature. One novel that presents a compelling case for analysis through this approach is *Celestial Bodies* by Jokha Alharthi. This novel is written with a complex structure, featuring non-linear narration, frequent shifts between past and present, and multiple points of view, including both first- and third-person narration.

Celestial Bodies is set in Oman and tells the story of three sisters in a society transitioning from a period of slavery to modernity. The novel blends history, psychology, and social dynamics in a non-conventional narrative form, making it highly suitable for analysis through a structural narratological lens.[9] The complexity of its plot, variations in narrative time, and shifts in narrative perspective offer a rich opportunity to explore how narrative techniques construct social and cultural meanings within the text.[12]

Nevertheless, most studies on *Celestial Bodies* remain focused on thematic approaches. Rabi'atul[4], for instance, analyzes the novel through feminist and postcolonial lenses, highlighting the cultural and patriarchal pressures faced by female characters, as well as their resistance. Manshi[13] explores the historical context and social transitions in Omani society, including the legacy of colonialism and slavery. Meanwhile, Wulan[5], in her thesis, emphasizes the moral dimensions of female characters, outlining representations of piety, honor, and resilience under cultural pressure. While these studies offer valuable insights into the novel's content, they have yet to examine its narrative structure and techniques in depth. In fact, the narrative structure of *Celestial Bodies* plays an active role in shaping meaning, rather than merely serving as a passive vessel for thematic elements.

Within narratological studies, the application of Gérard Genette's theory to modern Arabic literature remains limited. Several scholars have employed it in analyzing Indonesian and Western literary texts. Jambak, for example, in his study of *Ranah 3 Warna*, highlights the importance of focalization and identifies a combination of internal and external focalizations. Saputra and Qadriani[14], in their analysis of *Laut Berberita*, apply Genette's theory comprehensively, identifying techniques such as analepsis, scene, summary, various forms of focalization, and the use of a homodiegetic-intradiegetic narrator, contributing to a non-linear and emotionally charged narrative. Qulub and Rizky[10] demonstrate the flexibility of Genette's framework in spiritual texts like *Fibi Ma Fibi*, while Alfiazky[15] examines narrative order and frequency in *Dekat dan Nyaring* to convey psychological tension. Similarly, Oki[16] apply all five aspects of Genette's theory in their study of *Mualaf*, identifying analeptic structures, scene and pause durations, internal focalization, and a homodiegetic narrator at the extradiegetic level.

These studies affirm the utility of Genette's narratology in uncovering the deeper narrative layers of literary texts. However, to date, no comprehensive study has applied this framework to *Celestial Bodies* by Jokha Alharthi, despite the novel's rich narrative complexity, characterized by its non-linear structure, multiple perspectives, and shifts in time and space.

METHOD

13
This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach using the narrative discourse analysis method based on Gérard Genette's narratology theory.[17] This approach is chosen due to the nature of the research, which aims to uncover and describe hidden narrative structures within literary texts.[9] The analysis focuses on narrative elements such as order, duration, frequency, mood, and voice in the novel *Celestial Bodies*.

The design of this research allows the researcher to explore how narrative techniques are employed by the author to construct a complex narrative, and how these structures contribute to the social and cultural meanings within the novel. Since the object of study is a work of fiction, a structural approach is combined with the sociocultural context of Oman as the story's setting in terms of time and place. This study is non-experimental, as it does not involve quantitative independent or dependent variables, but rather relies on textual interpretation based on a systematically structured narratology theory.[11]

In this research, the population refers to all literary works that exhibit narrative structural complexity and are relevant for analysis using Gérard Genette's theory. However, due to the qualitative nature of this research with an in-depth focus, one work is selected as the primary sample, namely the novel *Celestial Bodies* by Jokha Alharthi, which consists of 248 pages and 58 narrative chapters.[18] The selection of this novel is done purposively, based on several considerations: its international recognition through the 2019 Man Booker International Prize, the complexity of its narrative techniques—including non-linear storytelling and multiple points of view—and the lack of previous studies analyzing it through the lens of structural narratology. Therefore, *Celestial Bodies* is chosen as the sole sample as it represents an ideal object for exploring narrative construction within Genette's theoretical framework.

The main instrument in this study is the researcher herself, acting as an active reader and text analyst, as is typical in qualitative approaches.[19] The role of the researcher is to interpret textual data critically and systematically based on Gérard Genette's narratology theory. The five core concepts of this theory—order, duration, frequency, mood, and voice—serve as the conceptual tools to identify, classify, and analyze the narrative elements in the novel. The researcher employs the close reading technique to highlight relevant narrative parts, then records them in the form of quotations organized thematically according to theoretical categories. Thus, the research instrument is conceptual in nature and relies on the researcher's interpretive ability to analyze literary texts systematically and objectively.[20]

9
The data collection technique used in this study is the reading and note-taking technique. This method is applied to extract data by intensively reading the text that serves as the data source—namely the novel *Celestial Bodies* by Jokha Alharthi. The collected data is then analyzed using Gérard Genette's narratology through a descriptive-analytical technique, which includes identifying, classifying, and concluding based on the data obtained from the source text. The coding and categorization of narrative data were conducted manually by the researcher. Each relevant narrative segment was marked, extracted, and categorized according to Genette's five narratological concepts. Data segments were entered into a structured table to facilitate systematic comparison and pattern identification. The coding process did not involve software tools (such as NVivo or Atlas.ti), as the limited data volume and interpretive depth required closer human analysis. The categorization was entirely done by the researcher herself to maintain consistency and ensure theoretical alignment with Genette's framework.

To ensure the validity and credibility of the findings, triangulation was conducted through peer review and supervisory consultation. The researcher discussed the analysis regularly with academic advisors and colleagues familiar with narratology and Arabic literature. Furthermore, the inclusion of direct textual quotations from the novel served as strong evidence to support each analytical interpretation and helped prevent subjective bias.[2] The procedural steps of this research include several systematic stages[19]: 1) Textual Data Collection: reading the entire novel intensively and repeatedly to understand the general context of the story, enabling identification and marking of text segments that contain narrative elements relevant to Genette's theory; 2) Classification: segments containing the elements of order, duration, frequency, mood, and voice are coded and classified according to theoretical categories. This process is conducted manually with the help of classification tables to facilitate the identification of narrative patterns and structures;[21] 3) Data

Analysis: once classified, each narrative element is analyzed based on Genette's concepts. The analysis involves describing the function of each narrative technique, how it operates within the story structure, and the meaning it produces; [22] 4) Interpretation and Conclusion Drawing: the analysis results are compared with the social and cultural context of Oman as portrayed in the novel. The researcher then draws conclusions regarding how the narrative techniques in *Celestial Bodies* shape a complex and meaningful narrative structure; 4) Validation of Findings: to maintain validity, the researcher engages in peer discussions with academic advisors and colleagues familiar with narratology theory. In addition, textual quotations from the novel serve as strong evidence to support each analytical result presented. [23]

RESULT

This study reveals the narrative structure of the novel *Celestial Bodies* by Jokha Alharthi through the narratological approach of Gérard Genette, which encompasses five key elements: **order, duration, frequency, mood, and voice**. The findings of **this research** are based on a close reading of the text and thematic coding based on the narrative techniques employed across the novel's 58 chapters.

Structurally, the novel consists of 58 chapters, each titled after a character involved in the story. Naming chapters after characters is an effective technique to signal focalization, while also giving readers a hint about who serves as the center of narrative experience in each chapter. This pattern reinforces the polyphonic effect and broadens the reader's perspective on the novel's complex and layered fictional world. Narratively, *Celestial Bodies* employs two primary points of view:

1. Heterodiegetic narrator – an omniscient narrator who is not a character in the story, delivering the narrative from outside the characters and describing events with a wide and neutral perspective. [24]
2. Homodiegetic narrator – the character Abdullah, the only male character who serves as an internal narrator in several chapters. Abdullah speaks in the first person, opening a space for readers to access his inner conflict and personal reflections from his own perspective.

The following table presents a selection of chapter titles that are key to understanding focalization in the novel:

Table 1: Type of Focalization in the Novel *Celestial Bodies*

No	Chapter Title	11 Type of Focalization	Narrator	Brief Explanation
1	Abdullah	Internal focalization	Homodiegetic (I)	Abdullah narrates his life directly in the first person, revealing his inner struggles and personal trauma.
2	Mayya	Internal focalization	Heterodiegetic	The external narrator highlights Mayya's thoughts and her silent resistance to a forced marriage.
3	Asma	Internal focalization	Heterodiegetic	Limited focalization reveals Asma's moral dilemmas and her efforts to be a devoted wife and daughter.
4	Khawla	Internal focalization	Heterodiegetic	The narrative focuses on Khawla's rejection of modernity and her love for a cousin who refuses to marry her.

5	Masouda	Internal focalization	Heterodiegetic	The narration presents the experience of a former slave and the unspoken burden of historical trauma.
6	London (Abdullah)	Internal focalization	Homodiegetic (I)	This chapter depicts Abdullah's experience abroad and his struggle with personal identity.

The table above shows that *Celestial Bodies* employs a highly structured narrative pattern based on character focalization. Each chapter uses internal focalization centered on the character after whom the chapter is named. Thus, the reader alternates between the perspectives of both main and secondary characters, reinforcing the polyphonic effect or multiplicity of voices within the text. In terms of narration, two dominant types are found:

1. Homodiegetic narrator is used exclusively by the character Abdullah, who speaks in the first person ("I"). This narrator's presence deepens the inner experience of the only male character granted a direct narrative voice.
2. Heterodiegetic narrator is used for the female characters, where an external narrator narrates their thoughts and emotions, but with full access to their inner lives (internal focalization).

This pattern reveals two important insights:

1. The author combines personal and observational narration to create narrative depth.
2. Although female characters dominate the story as subjects, their narratives are still mediated through an external narrator, while the sole male character is given the space to narrate directly—an aspect worth examining in terms of gender representation and narrative authority.

This focalization technique also serves as a medium to animate memory, trauma, and the internal conflicts of the characters.^[25] Through this approach, readers are invited to understand the characters' inner struggles more deeply, beyond just observing their outward actions.^[26] The presence of these two types of narrators results in a contrastive yet complementary combination of perspectives, creating a complex narrative structure that allows readers to navigate between personal and objective storytelling.

DISCUSSION

The narrative technique in *Celestial Bodies* demonstrates a sophisticated engagement with storytelling that merges aesthetic form with ideological critique. By structuring each chapter around individual characters—such as Mayya, Asma, Khawla, and Masouda—the novel employs internal focalization to reveal complex psychological experiences shaped by Omani society's gendered and historical dynamics. These shifting perspectives are not merely stylistic choices but ideological interventions that expose inner conflicts and societal pressures, particularly around issues of patriarchy, female agency, and cultural transformation. Mayya's silence and emotional detachment reflect the trauma imposed by patriarchal norms, while Asma's moral rigidity signals the conflict between intellectual ambition and social expectation. Analepsis, frequently used in the novel, allows the narrative to weave individual memory with collective histories—especially those related to slavery and class. Masouda's storyline exemplifies this, connecting personal suffering with the inherited trauma of enslavement, thus embedding historical critique within narrative form.

By applying Gérard Genette's narratological framework, this research positions *Celestial Bodies* within a global narratological discourse while contributing to the underrepresented field of Middle Eastern narrative studies. Genette's concepts—especially internal focalization and temporal manipulation—offer a precise analytical vocabulary to uncover how the novel structures meaning

through form. This study demonstrates that Genette's structuralist approach, though Western in origin, can be productively adapted to non-Western contexts to illuminate how narrative devices articulate socio-cultural tensions. In doing so, it expands the applicability of narratological theory and affirms its relevance in analyzing Arabic literature's evolving narrative strategies.

Narratively, the use of two types of narratorial voices—heterodiegetic and homodiegetic—is a major strength of the novel.[27] The heterodiegetic narrator provides a comprehensive view of Oman's social and cultural panorama, while Abdullah's homodiegetic narration offers a personal male voice grappling with inner conflict, guilt, and memories of paternal dominance. Abdullah's voice is crucial, as he is the only male character given a direct narrative platform, creating a contrast with the female narrative dominance, and simultaneously revealing the fragile position of men within a rigid patriarchal system.

Furthermore, the narrative structure constructed by Jokha Alharthi shows that storytelling techniques are not merely tools for conveying a story, but serve as instruments to express ideological complexities and collective historical consciousness. The placement of female characters under the control of an external narrator, while the only male character is granted a direct narrative voice (homodiegetic), reflects the ambivalence of gender roles within Oman's patriarchal culture: women's voices are many, yet still framed. To clarify the research findings, the following table presents the analysis results:

Table 2: Analysis narrative structure of Novel

No	Data	Information	Explanation
1	Order (story sequence)	The use of analepsis (flashback) and prolepsis (flash-forward) is present.	The story is structured non-linearly. Flashbacks are used to reveal the past of characters such as Azzan and Masouda. Prolepsis appears when characters imagine the future.
2	Duration (narrative duration)	The techniques of summary and scene dominate; pause and ellipsis are also found.	Key events such as death, marriage, and trauma are told in detail (scene), while routine parts are condensed (summary). Some events are deliberately omitted.
3	Frequency (narrative frequency)	Instances of repetitive representation are identified.	Themes of slavery and the oppression of women are repeatedly told through many characters across different generations, reinforcing the effect of historical and social trauma.
4	Mood (narrative mode)	The narrative mostly uses internal focalization, shifting between characters.	Each chapter gives space to a specific character to narrate or become the focal point. This creates a strong emotional engagement for the reader.

Table 2 provides an overview of how narratological elements operate across the text. The interplay between form and content deepens the novel's exploration of identity, trauma, and memory.

The concept of focalization in this context concerns not only *who sees*, but also *who is authorized to narrate*.[28] This offers critical insight into how culture operates within narrative texts: even when female characters are at the center of the story, they remain framed by an external narrator. Thus, the narrative technique functions as an ideological structure that reflects symbolic power relations in Omani society.[29]

The combination of analepsis and prolepsis creates a mosaic-like temporal structure in which the experience of time is non-linear—fragmented and layered. This not only adds artistic nuance but also serves as a strategy to emphasize that historical experience—both personal and collective—does not unfold in a complete or chronological manner. Past wounds, future hopes, and present uncertainties overlap in the characters' experiences, reflected in the novel's treatment of time as psychological and affective rather than factual.

In this regard, *Celestial Bodies* rejects the conventional linear storytelling method, choosing instead to construct narrative through fragments of memory, dreams, and introspection. This approach transforms the reader from a passive observer of plot into an active participant in reconstructing meaning from fragmented experiences—just as the characters themselves struggle to understand their identities and histories.

More than just conveying a story, the technique of repetition or *repetitive narrative* is employed to build a narrative imbued with emotional and social resonance.^[30] When experiences of slavery and female subjugation recur across various chapters and perspectives, the narrative becomes a site for reproducing trauma. This implies that such experiences cannot be erased from personal or communal histories. Repetition here is not rhetorical redundancy but a deliberate strategy to embed the persistence of social wounds within cultural structures.

Meanwhile, the technique of *pause* used in certain narrative segments allows the reader to experience emptiness, silence, and existential pauses in the characters' lives. When the narrative halts to present character introspection, the reader is invited not only to follow the plot but also to feel the emotional intensity of doubt, fear, or loss experienced by the characters.^[31] This is what transforms the novel from mere storytelling into a vivid rendering of lived experience.

From this entire structure, it can be concluded that *Celestial Bodies* is a work that uses narrative technique consciously and strategically to represent fractured identities, wounded histories, and a society struggling between tradition and transformation. The narrative functions not merely as a story but as a discursive arena that invites the reader to reevaluate gender roles, cultural heritage, and power in contemporary Omani society.

Within the context of this study, the application of Gérard Genette's theory proves highly effective in uncovering the structural and ideological dimensions embedded in the text. Although Genette's theory originated within the Western structuralist tradition, it is adaptable enough to analyze texts from Eastern contexts such as *Celestial Bodies*, demonstrating that narratology is flexible and can be applied across cultures and geographies.^[32]

Thus, this study not only fills a gap in the narrative analysis of *Celestial Bodies* but also provides a methodological contribution to the development of narratological studies in the realm of non-Western literature.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This study investigates the application of Gérard Genette's narratological framework to *Celestial Bodies* by Jokha Alharthi, a modern Arabic novel that has gained international recognition. Through a structural narratological approach, the research identifies how the novel employs complex narrative strategies—such as analepsis, prolepsis, scene, summary, iterative narrative, and a combination of heterodiegetic and homodiegetic narration. The chapter arrangement based on character names and the shifting narrative perspectives enrich the novel's polyphonic structure and foster a deeper psychological portrayal of each character. These techniques are not merely formal devices but serve as instruments to articulate ideological tensions between tradition and modernity, patriarchy and female agency, and historical trauma and contemporary identity. The narrative thus becomes a medium for cultural and social critique, rooted in the lived experiences of Omani society.

Theoretical Contribution

This research contributes to the field of narratology by demonstrating the flexibility and relevance of Gérard Genette's theory when applied to non-Western texts. While Genette's framework was originally grounded in Western literary analysis, this study shows that its categories—such as order, duration, frequency, mood, and voice—can productively illuminate the narrative logic of modern Arabic literature. Specifically, in *Celestial Bodies*, Genette's concepts reveal how narrative structure encodes cultural memory, gendered subjectivity, and social transition. By bridging structuralist theory with Arabic literary analysis, this study advances the discourse on how Western theoretical models can be critically adapted to engage with diverse literary traditions.

Practical Contribution

On a practical level, this research offers methodological guidance for scholars and students interested in exploring Arabic literature through narratological lenses. It suggests that Genette's framework can be a powerful tool not only for textual analysis but also for uncovering deeper ideological meanings within narratives. Future researchers are encouraged to expand the corpus beyond a single text by conducting comparative analyses of various Arabic novels—particularly those written by women or dealing with themes of gender, history, and identity. Such studies could uncover recurring narrative patterns and ideological critiques that speak to broader cultural transformations across the Arab world. This work also encourages interdisciplinary approaches that combine narratology with feminist criticism, postcolonial theory, or cultural studies, to enrich the interpretation of literary texts in cross-cultural contexts.

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