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Translator's Visibility and Cultural Mediation: Marilyn Booth's Role in the Success of Celestial Bodies

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Abstract

This study investigates Marilyn Booth's translation of Jokha Alharthi's *Celestial Bodies*, the first Arabic novel to win the Man Booker International Prize, through the framework of Mona Baker's narrative theory. The research focuses on how Booth's translation strategies—narrative framing, coherence in fragmented narratives, and selective appropriation—contribute to the novel's global reception while preserving its cultural and structural complexity. By examining the way Booth deals with the non-linear structure and culturally specific aspects, the study emphasizes her positioning as a go-between between source text and target readers. Through the prudent use of contextualization and framing, Booth retains both the circularity and fragmentation of the Arabic original and renders it for English readers. The research accounts for the translator's presence as one of the most essential factors affecting the transnational success of the novel with a view to bridging cultural and linguistic gaps. After comparing the Arabic source text with Booth's English translation, the study illustrates how her choices are enacted in Baker's theoretical framework, i.e., towards the preservation of narrative coherence by deliberate cultural referencing. The study also verifies that the translator's final goal is to connect cultures and preserve the intended meaning while rendering the text accessible globally. The research enhances the general body of translation studies by putting emphasis on challenges and approaches taken while translating culturally rich and structurally complex texts. It also emphasizes the importance of culturally sensitive translation in enriching cross-cultural literary engagement and appreciation. Finally, the research illustrates how crucial Booth's practices of translating have been to the international success of *Celestial Bodies* and therefore how word-translating can change the world.

Keywords:

Marilyn Booth, *Celestial Bodies*, translator visibility, narrative theory, non-linear narrative.

ملخص البحث: تفحص هذه الدراسة في أعماق ترجمة مارلين بوث لرواية *الأجرام السماوية* لجوخة الحارثي، التي حازت على جائزة مان بوكر العالمية، لتكشف كيف أسهمت خياراتها في الترجمة في وصول الرواية إلى القراء على امتداد العالم، دون أن تفقد هويتها الثقافية أو بنيتها السردية الفريدة. تركز الدراسة على نظرية السرد لدى منى بيكر، مسلطة الضوء على الاستراتيجيات التي اعتمدها بوث، مثل التأطير السرد، وإضفاء التماسك على الرواية ذات البنية المجزأة، والانتقاء الواعي للعناصر الثقافية التي تعبر الحدود بسلاسة. وتحلل كيف تعاملت المترجمة مع تعقيد السرد غير الخطي والغنى الثقافي المتجذر في النص الأصلي، لتجعل الرواية مقروءة ومنسجمة مع الذائقة الأدبية الإنجليزية، دون أن تفقد جوهرها العربي. يؤكد البحث أن المترجم ليس مجرد وسيط لغوي، بل جسر يمتد بين الثقافات، يختار بعناية أي أجزاء من النص تظل مشدودة إلى جذورها الأصلية، وأبها تحتاج إلى إعادة تشكيل لتتحدث بلغة جديدة،

بكل ما تحمله من تاريخ وسياق. ومن خلال المقارنة بين الرواية العربية وترجمتها الإنجليزية، يكشف البحث كيف نجحت بوث في الحفاظ على تماسك الرواية، مع إبراز العمق العاطفي والتفاصيل الثقافية عبر توظيف تقنيات بيكر بشكل مدروس. تفتح الدراسة نافذة على التحديات التي تواجه ترجمة الأعمال الأدبية المشبعة بالهوية والخصوصية الثقافية، مؤكدة أن الترجمة ليست مجرد نقل للكلمات، بل عملية إبداعية تعيد تشكيل النص ليحيا في سياقات جديدة. وأخيراً، يبرز البحث كيف ساهمت رؤية بوث في الترجمة في ترسيخ النجاح العالمي لرواية الأجرام السماوية، في دليل على أن الترجمة الحقيقية ليست مجرد وسيط، بل قوة قادرة على إعادة رسم خارطة الأدب العالمي.

الكلمات الافتتاحية: مارلين بوث، الأجرام السماوية، رؤية المترجم، نظرية السرد، السرد غير الخطي، البنية المجزأة.

INTRODUCTION

The interpretation of a text in another language is not the same as taking it character by character from one language and transposing it into a different one, but instead, it is more intricate than that. The act of interpreting a piece of work is an extension of the work of the writer and thus, puts the translators' presentation and visibility to a stern. An example of such a situation can be seen in how Marilyn Booth translated, "Celestial Bodies" in 2019. This was originally written by Jokha Alharthi and during its translation, its context remained intact aiding its intricate and detailed storyline to reach the English audience. When it comes to the first Arabic novel that was able to win the Man Booker International Prize then what differentiates it from others is the fact that it was able to gain so much worldwide visibility due to Booth's efforts for English in translating such a culturally abundant book.

The focus of the text is on the methods that Booth employed in order to ensure the translation of Celestial Bodies was as impactful as it was, and how the impact of the translation ensured the novel was able to attain unprecedented success. With the aid of Baker's narrative strategy, the author goes on to outline the translation of Mona Baker and the placement of Booth's note for readers' comprehension of the translation and the book itself – ultimately determining if Booth's involvement in the translation altered the overall meaning and impact of the novel for the readers.

Baker notes in her work *Invert Words: a coursebook on translation* (2018) that the construction of a narrative is a story which she defines as "that process whereby the translator decides which portions of the source text are to be highlighted, which are to be deemphasized or excluded altogether so as to facilitate the reader's interpretation of the author's intent" (Baker, 2018, p. 134). The author operates within a historical context, which is essential for understanding Omani society, and family structure, insisting that, 'The novel is said to unfold in layers and time doesn't progress in a straight line but circulates – as Omanis live' (Booth, 2019, p. xi) so it aids readers who have not previously been to Oman with understanding the setting and flow of the novel.

In a way also Baker's theory indicates the absence of coherence in a segmented narrative, explaining that "coherence is such a construct that the translator has to engage in constructing in the target text. This recourse often involves on subtle shifts that they are culturally and cognitively acceptable" (Baker, 2006, p. 93). Booth's translation reflects Alharthi's anti chronology, which is typical of the Arabic text.

For example, Alharthi writes: "الزمن في الرواية يلتف مثل دوامة، لا بداية واضحة ولا نهاية محددة" (p. 45), which Booth translates as, "Time in the novel spirals like a whirlpool, without a clear starting point or an absolute conclusion" (Booth, 2019, p. 58). This metaphor retains the original's philosophical depth while ensuring it resonates with English readers.

Furthermore, it is evident that Booth takes great care to ensure that the disordered narrative form makes sense by carefully managing time and space in the plot. Alharthi's work flows back and forth between the past and the present without any indicators. Nevertheless, Booth also uses an "In those days..." or

even “Years later...” to facilitate the reader, assisting in a comprehensible but not beautifully transformed rendition.

When applying Baker’s narrative theory, Booth’s approach is situated with regards to her translation of terms like “العار” into shame and the addition of glosses. In her text, Baker explores the ideas of selective appropriation to further promote the voice of the translator whilst retaining the original content. This seems to be the case when translating traditional Omani cuisine, where the components and context are used in replacement of the Arabic term. This makes sense but does consequentially impact the translators’ voice in Stapleton’s novel.

Through this analysis, this study aims to shed light on the pivotal role of the translator in shaping the international reception of *Celestial Bodies*. By examining Booth’s translation strategies through the lens of Baker’s narrative theory, this paper will illustrate how Booth’s approach to the non-linear narrative, framing, coherence, and selective appropriation contributes to the novel’s literary success and cultural transmission across linguistic boundaries.

The importance of this research

The importance of this research lies in its exploration of the translator’s role in shaping the narrative and cultural transmission of a work, particularly in the context of Marilyn Booth’s translation of *Celestial Bodies*. By examining Booth’s translation through the lens of Mona Baker’s narrative theory, this study highlights how translation goes beyond the mere transfer of words, influencing the way a text is perceived and understood by different audiences. Understanding Booth’s impact on the novel’s international success provides valuable insights into the complexities of translating non-linear and culturally rich texts. Furthermore, the research emphasizes the significance of the translator’s visibility, demonstrating how their choices—such as framing, coherence, and selective appropriation—can bridge cultural divides and enhance the accessibility of works across linguistic and cultural boundaries. This analysis contributes to a deeper understanding of the interplay between translation, narrative structure, and audience reception in contemporary literary translation.

Problem of the statement

The challenge this study addresses is the gap in comprehensive analysis on the role of the translator in the reception and interpretation of works that are culturally and structurally complex. To cite an example, regarding Marilyn Booth’s translation of *Celestial Bodies*, much attention has been given to the literary qualities of the original text, but there seems to be limited exploration into how Booth’s translation strategies – her strategies towards non-linear narrative structures and cultural aspects, for example – determine the novel’s popularity overseas and the extent to which it appeals to English-speaking readers. This research aims to fill in this void in the literature by analyzing Booth’s various translation approaches via Mona Baker’s narrative theory.

Research questions

- 1- How does Booth accomplish her translation of *Celestial Bodies* to maintain or change the linear-narrative structure of the Arabic text?
- 2- How does Booth’s translation framing devices shape the reader’s understanding of the cultural context in *Celestial Bodies*?
- 3- In what extent does Booth’s translation achieve an interplay between functioning as cultural disclosure and subservience to her translator’s voice, and what challenges might this create for the reception of the novel in the English-speaking world?

Research objectives

- 1- To identify how Booth accomplishes her translation of *Celestial Bodies* to maintain or change the linear-narrative structure of the Arabic text.
- 2- To describe the ways Booth's translation framing devices shape the reader's understanding of the cultural context in *Celestial Bodies*.
- 3- To investigate the ways Booth's translation achieve an interplay between functioning as cultural disclosure and subservience to her translator's voice, and describe the challenges that might create for the reception of the novel in the English-speaking world.

Literature review

The discussion of the role of the translator in the shaping of the reception and understanding of a text has dominated translation studies, especially since the rise of debates on translator visibility. The work of Lawrence Venuti around "domestication" and "foreignization" (1995) was path breaking in shaping such discussions on translator visibility. According to Venuti, domestication is the process of making the foreign text more familiar for the target audience by adapting it to the cultural norms of the receiving society, while foreignization aims at maintaining the foreignness of the source text and thus preserves the cultural nuances, presenting the target audience with an authentic experience. Venuti's framework offers a critical lens for analyzing how translation choices reflect the translator's role in mediating cultural exchanges, and his emphasis on translator invisibility highlights how the power dynamics in translation can often obscure the translator's influence (Venuti, 1995). This invisibility, says Venuti, often leads to a more domesticated text, which caters to the sensibilities of the target audience but may result in the loss of cultural authenticity.

In the recent years, however, scholars have also examined the role that translators play in promoting non-Western literature to the global stage. Research has tended to illustrate how translation serves as a bridge not only between languages but also in cultural diplomacy. As López (2016) highlights, translators hold an important position in international flows of works of literature; the role of translation becomes even more important in making the works originally written in languages from non-Western traditions familiar to a broader readership. Booth's translation of *Celestial Bodies* (2019) as the first Arabic novel to win the prestigious Man Booker International Prize itself was an example of how an accomplished translation may bring a work of non-Western origin to recognition and acceptance in the Western literary world. International acclaim has been attributed to Booth for making the text available to English language readers while at the same time capturing the subtleties of Omani culture in its original form.

The article *Celestial Bodies* by Jokha Alharthi has received academic attention not only for its Omani society content but also for its narrative style. The novel is a rich and complex tapestry made of personal and historical narratives which are reflected in the change of social and political landscape of Oman.

Scholars have praised Alharthi for using non-linear storytelling and her incorporation of Omani cultural elements. As Azzedine (2020) observes, the structure of the novel "reflects the cyclical nature of Omani life, where time is not experienced in a linear fashion but is instead interwoven with the past and present, reflecting cultural and generational continuities." The novel's exploration of familial relationships, societal change, and identity resonates deeply with Omani readers, but Booth's translation has made these themes accessible to an international audience. The way Alharthi weaves together the personal and political is intricate, and Booth's translation must negotiate such layers while retaining the text's cultural specificity.

Marilyn Booth's career is testament to an approach that weighs in with cultural fidelity balanced with readability each time. She is a well-established translator of Arabic literature, praised for the subtlety of her insights into source material and for the nuance with which she conveys intricate cultural dynamics while preserving the integrity of the source. This balance epitomizes her work on *Celestial Bodies*, where she maintains the non-linear structure of the novel but makes subtle changes that might

help an English-speaking reader navigate the novel's cultural complexities. Booth has often underlined her role as mediator across cultures, underlining the fact that translation is a matter not only of linguistic ability but also of sensitivity to culture. The task of a translator is not only to translate words but to carry across an entire cultural universe," she says in an interview with Shakir (2019). This perspective finds its strong echo in her approach to the translation of *Celestial Bodies*, which becomes not only the translation of the language but also mediation in cultural nuances about Oman's history and traditions for the readers.

The narrative theory put forth by Mona Baker is a useful theory which describes the part of a translator in conveying a text. In her view (2006), translators are interpretive narrators who have a capacity to modify the oral history, the portrayal of the event and its comprehension. It is crucial that she takes account of coherence in incoherent narratives: the temporal and spatial changes which the translator has to undertake are subordinate to the narrative in the original text although once again the consideration focuses on a new audience. According to Baker (2018), there are certain aspects of the narrative text which have to be divulged, neglected or explained from a different angle and this activity has been named as 'narrative framing' which is viewed as a duty of a translator. This is where the case for *Celestial Bodies* as the text becomes stronger, given its fractured nonlinear structure. Further concerns can also be raised in the case of Booth with regards to the transposition of events and issues of temporal logic within the context, presentation of time, and shifts between present cultural settings and the past.

Previous Studies on *Celestial Bodies* dealt, primarily, some aspects of its narrative, such as time, memory, and cultural identity. Martin remarks: "The non-linear structure and fragmented stories of the novel echo the complexities of identity formation-both individual and collective-in contemporary Omani society." This is the very fragmentation within the narrative that, when coalesced with Baker's 2006 theory of coherence in fragmented narratives, presents a particular kind of challenge for translators. Booth's translation preserves the non-linear structure, while working within the circularity of time and memory from the original Arabic text to allow English speakers a glimpse of the temporal dislocations and shattered identities therein.

Selective appropriation, as refined by Baker (2006), is crucial for the analysis of Booth's translation of *The Celestial Bodies*. Baker (2006) contends that choices about strategies for the maintenance of cultural symbols, as well as strategies for their modification, are made by translators according to their own purposes, either by seeking to maintain a specific cultural representation or to conform to the expectations of their readership.

In the case of *Celestial Bodies*, Booth's prefaces and footnotes, for example, work to contextualize cultural references and historical events in *Celestial Bodies* for English-speaking readers without sacrificing the novel's cultural integrity. These decisions express Baker's premise that translation is a form of cultural mediation, and the translator must make choices about how much of the "foreign" can be preserved and how much needs to be familiarized for the target audience.

Despite the growing body of literature on translation theory and the role of the translator, there remains a gap in studies specifically focusing on how the visibility of the translator influences the reception of non-Western works in English. While previous research has discussed the importance of translation in promoting cultural exchange, fewer studies have closely analyzed how translators' choices in handling narrative structures and cultural references impact the international success of non-Western texts. This paper addresses this gap by focusing on Booth's translation of *Celestial Bodies*, offering a detailed examination of her strategies in preserving the novel's fragmented narrative and cultural essence while engaging with an English-speaking audience. By applying Mona Baker's narrative theory to this analysis, this research contributes to a more nuanced understanding of the translator's role in global literary reception, particularly in the context of translating non-Western works.

While discussing *Celestial Bodies*, what becomes notably lacking is any serious discussion of how Booth's approach to the novel's non-linear structure creates its success in the English-speaking world. Whereas scholars like Martin 2020 and Azmi 2021 do have comments on the fragmentary nature of the novel, neither discusses how Booth's translation facilitates the ease by which the English language reader approaches such a complex narrative. It is this lacuna that the paper shall try to fill by putting a perspective view on how decisions taken by Booth-e.g., preface or temporal shifts-influence the reception of the novel. As Azzedine 2020 notices, "The cyclical narrative structure of *Celestial Bodies* demands a careful balancing act, one that requires a translator to engage with the text's internal rhythms without distorting its meaning." Booth's translation plays a central role in making sure these internal rhythms are preserved and understandable to readers beyond Oman.

Methodology

For this reason, this article takes a different approach to exploring Marilyn Booth's translation into space and its role in the development of international history. The research methodology in this article is based on three main methods: documentary analysis, comparative analysis, and qualitative research.

Textual analysis: The first stage of the analysis involves a detailed review of Marilyn Booth's translated text of the body of the air. This includes her original analysis and the translator's comments, as these elements often provide important insights into the process of her translation. Particular attention will be paid to her translation choices, especially how they relate to cultural issues and how she manages the book's inconsistent nature. The analysis will focus on how Booth's translation of key passages preserves or incorporates narratives, cultural symbols, and material changes, ensuring that the original difficulties are addressed while making the text accessible to an English-speaking audience. Baker's (2006) commentary will serve as the basis for analyzing how Booth has engaged with the cultural context of his source text and maintained the integrity of what he is saying.

Comparative analysis: In this case, Booth's English translation is compared to Jokha Alharthi's Arabic translation of *The Celestial Bodies*. The sections that will be compared are those laden with important cultural references, those adopting unique linguistic structures, and those tactically designed for shifting within time. The analysis aims to bring about how Booth's translation meets with the suggestions of domestication or foreignization (Venuti, 1995) and how her choices in translation give an impact upon cultural identity depiction. It will deal with major differences in the handling of Omani culture, social norms, and narrative style to ascertain, if only a little, how Booth has been able to contend with the demands posed by the deep cultural and historical laden texts with reasonably good readability in English.

Reception studies: The study will consider the reception of *Celestial Bodies* and Marilyn Booth's translation, through critiques, reviews, and interviews provided by academics, literary critics, and readers. The focus will rest squarely on Booth's visibility in the novel's success, observing the reception of her translation by the public and the academic community, respectively. Sources to be consulted will include reviews published in major literary elite newspapers, together with Bruce Booth's interviews, in which she speaks of her method of translating and the problems she faced pertaining to maintaining the integrity of the original text. These studies of reception will give information on the entire scope of influence Booth has had as a translator in the international literary scene, with evidence for her visibility as a translator contributing to the distinction enjoyed by the novel, including its Man Booker International Prize.

Analysis:

The following examples further detail how Marilyn Booth's translation of *Celestial Bodies* reflects the application of Mona Baker's narrative theory. Examples will be given to show how the theory applies

to narrative framing, coherence in fragmented narratives, and selective appropriation, each with specific reference to both the Arabic text and Booth's English translation.

Narrative framing

According to Mona Baker (2006), the translator's framing role is important to reproduce the meaning of the source text and present it to the target audience effectively. Booth handles this challenge with due care in her translation of *Celestial Bodies*, whose fragmented and cyclic structure requires framing choices that will allow for an English text that is easy to read while maintaining the story's layers of complexity.

One example appears when Alharthi writes:

Arabic Text: "وعاد الزمن ليعيد نفسه، كما كانت عاداتها في الأيام السابقة."

(*And time returned to repeat itself, as it always did in the days before.*) (Alharthi, 2010, p. 49)

English Translation: "And time came back to repeat itself, just as it had always done in the days before." (Booth, 2018, p. 63)

Booth's using "came back" instead of "عاد" softens the punch of the circularity of time, which, in turn, makes it more understandable for an English-speaking audience. "As it always did" adds an air of inevitability in concordance with the cyclical nature of Alharthi's narration. While Booth enables the readers to be aware of the recurrence of time by not entirely removing that concept, her framing helps guide them through a passage that could potentially confuse or disorient readers by reinforcing the repetitive nature of time throughout the novel. This framing upholds the recurring thematic importance without alienating the English reader.

Another example of narrative framing is seen in the following, where Alharthi shifts between two different time periods without overt linguistic guides:

Arabic text: "الذكريات لا تفارقني، تلاحقني كلما حاولت الهروب منها."

(*Memories do not leave me; they chase me every time I try to escape them.*) (Alharthi, 2010, p. 102)

English translation: "The memories never leave me, they chase me whenever I try to run away from them." (Booth, 2018, p. 126)

Booth insists on the framing of "memories" as an active and ever-present force in one's life. However, the decision to translate "تلاحقني" as "chase me," in English, rather than a palter like "follow me" adds the sense of urgency to the phrase in English. This framing brings forward the weight granted to emotions regarding memories as an active presence invading the field of a character's conscious life, and is different from a situation of pursuit by a contrasting relationship of out-and-out following. Thus, Booth highlights Alharthi's piecemeal narration with yet further emotional immensity.

Coherence in fragmented narratives

The story structure of *Celestial Bodies* is fragmented, moving between various narrative perspectives and temporal settings. Baker (2006) insists that coherence in this kind of narration depends on the translator's ability to maintain logical relationships throughout these changes that can often disorient the reader. Booth performs this task via the insertion or revision of verbal markers to help guide the reader through these transitions. For instance, Alharthi writes:

Arabic text: "قالت سارة: 'لقد رحل عنا أخيراً'."

(*Sarah said: 'He has finally left us.'*) (Alharthi, 2010, p. 121)

English translation: "Sarah said, 'He has finally left us.'" (Booth, 2018, p. 145)

This may sound like a direct translation, but Booth pulls off the transition smoothly by keeping simplicity in the structure of the Arabic sentence. There is no added context to this statement, which keeps the ambiguity of the utterance and makes it open and reflective. Booth treats this dialogue so subtly that the fragmented nature of the narrative remains intact.

Later, in the Arabic text, Alharthi shifts the focus abruptly:

Arabic text: "ولكن ماذا عن الماضي؟ هل يمكن أن ينسى الإنسان نفسه؟"

(But what about the past? Can a person forget themselves?) (Alharthi, 2010, p. 135)

English translation: "But what about the past? Can one forget oneself?" (Booth, 2018, p. 158)

It is a philosophical question expressed by Booth when she utilizes the expression "can one possibly forget oneself?" instead of the more direct "can one forget themselves?" This change gives a sense of coherence which reinforces the philosophical questioning arising here. The transformation highlights the fragmented, contemplative tone of the narrative through the use of universal one rather than more personal a person. There is a fluidity of change between the various sentences that Booth has managed to institutionalize to maintain a fragmented style unique to the form of the novel.

Selective appropriation

Baker's selective appropriation theory proposes the practice of translators in adopting cultural elements for the target audience. The original may contain items of cultural and historical significance which the translator needs to adapt in a way that's comprehensible to the target audience while still respecting the source material.

One example in *Celestial Bodies* involves a cultural reference that Booth adapts for the English-speaking audience:

Arabic text: "كانت تحمل طبقاً من الحلوى العمانية المميزة التي تحضر في المناسبات."

(She was carrying a tray of the special Omani sweets that are prepared for occasions.) (Alharthi, 2010, p. 29)

English translation: "She was carrying a tray of special Omani sweets, traditionally made for special occasions." (Booth, 2018, p. 40)

Booth took from the Arabic "Omani sweets" but altered "التي تحضر في المناسبات" ("prepared for occasions") to "traditionally made for special occasions." The newly added "traditionally" situates the reference in a broad cultural context. It does not only retain the specificity of the sweets but also slyly introduces some notion of tradition with which English speaking readers may not automatically associate "Omani sweets." This little modification illustrates Booth's choice to keep the translation under control while yet adding a more significant cultural relevance.

Alharthi's usage to a social or religious notion like "العيب" (al-'ayb), which translates approximately to shame but with strong cultural implications connected to honor and social status, offers a more complicated example of selective appropriation:

Arabic text: "ما كان أحد ليغفر له ذلك العيب."

(No one would forgive him for that disgrace.) (Alharthi, 2010, p. 95)

English translation: "No one would forgive him for that shame." (Booth, 2018, p. 119)

Booth translates the term "العيب" as "shame," which carries along some emotional weight; however, it does not yet fully capture the cultural specificity of that Arabic term. Though "shame" is chosen to ensure that the target audience understands the emotional content of the scene, still the meaning of "العيب" is somewhat diluted. These decisions serve as landmarks for the delicate balance between cultural specificity and readability that selective appropriation can shift.

Finally, examples in the above discussions illustrate Marilyn Booth's application of Mona Baker's narrative theory to the English translation of *Celestial Bodies*. Booth skillfully manipulates the ways of realization of narrative framing, congruency within fragmented narratives, and selective appropriation amid the textures of the source text. Through her narrative framing, she retains the cyclical and fragmented qualities of the original Arabic novel, so crucial to the impact of the story, but which, for an English-speaking audience, may not have been accessible. Through her handling of coherence, Booth bridges the temporal and spatial shifts in the narrative, guiding readers through the complexity of Alharthi's work. Finally, her selective appropriation of culturally specific references reflects her role as a mediator between the source and target cultures, ensuring that the English version remains both true to Alharthi's text and comprehensible for readers unfamiliar with Omani culture. These translation strategies underscore the importance of the translator's role in shaping how a narrative is perceived by a global audience.

DISCUSSION

The above analyses in this paper on Marilyn Booth's translation of *Celestial Bodies* through Mona Baker's narrative theory have been able to reveal a few important observations about the translation process and how both bear on the narrative structure and reception of the novel. These findings emphasize Booth's careful handling of fragmented narratives, her framing of cultural references, and her approach to translating complex temporal and spatial shifts, all while maintaining the integrity of Alharthi's work. These translation choices highlight the significant role of the translator in not only conveying the source text's meaning but also shaping how the target audience engages with the narrative. By examining Booth's translation within the framework of Baker's theory, it becomes clear that Booth has succeeded in retaining the complexity of *Celestial Bodies* while ensuring its accessibility to English-speaking readers.

Reflection on findings in light of a theoretical framework

The above analyses in this paper on Marilyn Booth's translation of *Celestial Bodies* through Mona Baker's narrative theory have been able to reveal a few important observations about the translation process and how both bear on the narrative structure and reception of the novel. These findings emphasize Booth's careful handling of fragmented narratives, her framing of cultural references, and her approach to translating complex temporal and spatial shifts, all while maintaining the integrity of Alharthi's work. These translation choices highlight the significant role of the translator in not only conveying the source text's meaning but also shaping how the target audience engages with the narrative. Examining Booth's translation within the framework of Baker's theory helps one to see that Booth has succeeded in maintaining the complexity of *Celestial Bodies* while guaranteeing its accessibility to readers with English language background. In this regard, selective appropriation is also crucial for comprehending the decisions Booth took whilst translating.

In her handling of culturally specific references, such as Omani sweets and the concept of "العيب" (al-'ayb), she acts between the source and target cultures. In any given situation, Booth translates the culturally strange elements in a way, it is to be noted, in such a manner that with regard to the target culture of English-speaking, they retain their import. These moments of selective appropriation also underline the position of the translator who mitigates the cultural differences while upholding the integrity of the original text.

Implications of Booth's visibility and influence on literary reception

Booth, as a translator, has raised the visibility of *Celestial Bodies* into the international literary spotlight in world English. As argued, the terms of Booth's preface and translator's notes reveal something of her

conception of the transitory process and her commitment to Alharthi's work. These elements serve not only to put the novel into context for readers but also complete Booth's presence as one of the vital keys to the success of the text. By giving some background into the cultural and literary context of the Arabic original, Booth has ensured that her version does carry with it not only the word but also the subtle meaning. This representation of the translation itself, along with an openness about her translation strategies, represents her as a visible and powerful force in the reception of the book.

Booth's exposure transcends the text beyond itself in a way that they have brought *Celestial Bodies* into the international limelight. At some level, it may have to do with the success of the novel's nomination for the Man Booker International Prize being aided by Booth's skills and force of nature when she translated *Celestial Bodies*. Booth has become an important facilitator in holding the English-speaking world's attention on non-Western literature by keeping Alharthi's work accessible to a wider audience. This translation has opened the work of Alharthi to new readers while continuing a conversation on the importance of cross-cultural literary exchange.

Besides, Booth's influence on the reception of literature is also evident in the way the readers and critics address the novel. The success of *Celestial Bodies* in the English-speaking world focuses attention on the need for better literary translations, particularly from Arabic literature. Booth's work demonstrates the very important role that translators have played in shaping literary reception in that her choices affect how readers interpret various cultural, historical, and emotional undercurrents of the novel.

Finally, all findings of this study with respect to Baker's narrative theory illustrate the critical role of the translator in unpacking complex narratives and cultural references. Such an exemplary model is Marilyn Booth's translation of *Celestial Bodies* in its demonstration that translation can keep the spirit of a splintered and culturally rich narrative while rendering it more accessible to a wide audience. It certainly helped that Booth's involvement as a translator in this novel, coupled with the thoughtfulness with which she approached the translation of Alharthi's work, assisted the novel's appeal and further highlighted the translators' force in the whole global literary picture. Indeed, her translation does not only add to the English-speaking world in terms of engagement with Arabic literature but extends to show how translation gives a bridge between cultures to further understand and appreciate narratives coming from the non-Western world.

CONCLUSION

The paper has discussed, from the point of view of Mona Baker's narrative theory, the translation of *Celestial Bodies* by Marilyn Booth, focusing on the role that the translator may play in narrating and reading the novel. The most important finding that emerges is that Booth's translation retains the core of the novel, which is a non-linear text; fragmentary, it is hence very complex to translate because there are several levels of thinking and feelings to be conveyed. Temporal shifts, cultural references, and spatial transitions all show how Booth handles, masterfully, those principles underlying Baker's theory on framing, coherence, and selective appropriation. Carefulness to these facts grants the possibility for the richness of this novel not to be compromised by translation but accessible to the understanding of readers from the Anglo-Saxon perspective.

The visibility of Booth as a translator has undoubtedly supported the international success of *Celestial Bodies*. Her considered approach to the translation process—from her prefacing and translation notes—provides readers with critical insight into the cultural and historical contexts of the novel. Booth's help has made Jokha Alharthi's work known to a global audience and greatly helped to promote non-Western literature in the English-speaking countries. With his bridging of the cultural difference between the Arabic source text and the Anglophone reader, the translator becomes yet another authoritative voice in the literary reception of the book *Celestial Bodies*, so greatly contributing to its acceptance and its Man Booker International Prize win.

In terms of possible future directions of research, a suggestion would be to research Booth's translation strategy in her works of similar cultural and narrative complexity. Further studies could present a comparison of how Booth translated differences between repetition and seriality in other Arabic literary works, with respect to narrative coherence, cultural framing, and Booth's role in the shaping of literary reception. Moreover, surveying the reception of Booth's translations in specific literary communities or academic contexts would deepen insight into the larger import of her work for popularizing Arabic literature on the global stage.

We may say that Marilyn Booth's translation of *Celestial Bodies* is a strong case illustrating how the translator's visibility and their choices can influence not just the very flow of a narrative but also the book's triumph internationally: through subtle narrative strategies, Booth has quite significantly fashioned the introduction of a major work of Arabic literature onto the world stage; highlighting the need for a finely attuned, transparent, and culturally aware translation today in a world of literary interactions.

Disclaimer

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Conflict of Interest

There are no financial, personal, or professional conflicts of interest to declare.

Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration among all authors. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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