



## The Dynamics of Narrative Structure in Depicting the Repercussion of Migration Movements in Razan Naiem Almoghrabi's *Women of Wind*

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### Abstract

*Writers of narrative fiction employ certain techniques in the structure of their literary works that reinforce the theme of the story. These techniques and narrative tools can be used in the various stages of the building block of the narration and enable the writers to manipulate such techniques in favor of producing certain images and ideas. Narrative voice, focalization, and interconnectedness of spatial and temporal presentations are among the most important tools available in the narrative structure of novels. Razan Naiem Almoghrabi in Women of Wind (2010) utilizes these techniques and tools available in narrative structure to depict the experiences of migrants from different nationalities who set out their migration from the shores of Libyan cities with the facilitation of human smugglers. The focus of this paper is on the effect of the narrative structure in portraying the mental and physical conditions of migrants. The major research question is how the narrative structure and techniques implemented in Women of Wind capture specific repercussion of migration movements. To depict a vivid portrayal of the suffering of migrants and the risks they encounter during their migration journey, Almoghrabi employs different narrators that allow the perception from different angles. The deployment of internal focalization through the eyes of one of characters, augmented the narration of subjective human experience. The intermingling of different voices and the nonlinear narration that shifts from one tempo-spatial presentation to another recreates in words the turbulent worlds of the characters in this novel.*

**Keywords:** migration, migrants, smugglers, narrative structure, narrative voice, focalization. space. time.



## Introduction:

Movements of humans, either individuals or groups, is a socio-political phenomenon that has been a recurrent topic and theme in the literature of many nations. Poets, novelists, and dramatists from different historical periods and regions depict the experiences of humans migrating either voluntarily or forcefully. Throughout the centuries, the world has witnessed people's forced migration from their countries or places of residence. On the other hand, the twentieth and early twentieth-first centuries have witnessed mass voluntary migrations which involve groups of people who seek to move to countries in Europe, looking for safer places to live or better economic opportunities because they suffer from wars, political conflicts, or economic depressions in their homeland. The movement of these people toward Europe often takes an irregular and unofficial route that passes through some countries among which Libya becomes a major staging base for sailing to the North.

Razan Naiem Almoghrabi's is a Libyan writer. Her novel, *Women of Wind* (2010), which deals with the migration issue, was longlisted for the Arabic Booker Prize (International Prize for Arabic Fiction) in 2011. In 2015, Almoghrabi was recognized with an Oxfam Novib/PEN Award. *Women of Wind* has been translated from Arabic to Dutch and Italian languages. However, there is no English translation for the novel up to the time of writing this paper. Hence, the translation of some excerpts from the novel in this paper is done by the researcher. Almoghrabi in this novel depicts the experience of people who attempt to venture migration from the shores of Libya heading North towards the Italian coast, taking a risky sea-journey that is facilitated by human smugglers. The focus of this paper is on the effect of the narrative structure of Almoghrabi's novel in portraying the mental and physical conditions of migrants. The major research question is how the narrative structure and techniques implemented in *Women of Wind* capture specific repercussion of migration movements. This includes analysis of the dynamics of narrative techniques and tools such as the narrative voice, focalization, and the interconnectedness of space and time, which are utilized by the author to illustrate the suffering of migrants and the inhumane exploitation of their attempts in pursuing their dreams of a safer and better living conditions.

## Literature Review

Mass movements of people toward the North have become a major global migration crisis that occupies a great deal of attention in the literature. Writers depict in their literary works human movements, either forceful or voluntary. Robert Hayden in "Middle Passage" (1943), for example, gives a vivid account of the mass expulsions of Africans from their homelands by slave traders who shipped them as slaves to America. Other writers explore the topic of migration to the North in the twentieth and twentieth-first centuries. Tayeb Saleh's *Season of Migration to the North* ([1966] 2012), for instance, explores migration from different angles which includes identity confusion and searching for a new homeland. Khaled Mattawa in *Fugitive Atlas* (2020) depicts in his poems the tragedies of these migrants, or refugees, from different prisms and situations. The concern of these writers, such as Mattawa, has risen over the violations and exploitation of these



migrants and their unfulfilled dreams. They also include in their works shocking images and stories of traffickers and beneficiaries who are indifferent to migrants' human suffering and subject them to heinous abuses, psychologically and financially by tricking them and giving them false promises in the most horrendous way.

As a result of limited official or legal channels and mechanisms for receiving such a large number of migrants in these European countries, the smuggling business of human trafficking has flourished (Zhang, Sanchez, and Achilli, 2018). By forming gangs all through the migrants' routes, smugglers keep strict control over this profitable business out of the misery of migrants who are anxious to arrive in Europe. Migrants are abused, inhumanly treated, and exploited in the various stages of their trip (Sanchez, 2020). Smuggling of migrants is a recent notion that is defined as "the procurement of the irregular, unofficial or undeclared entry of a person into a country different from his or her own for a material benefit" (UNODC, 2000). People who are involved in facilitating human smuggling are described by the European Union as "unscrupulous smugglers who seek to benefit from the desperation of the vulnerable" (European Commission, 2016). The business of human smuggling in Libya, as Gabriella Sanchez (2020) concluded from various sources, show that "this violence is often procured by militias and tribes who prey on migrants' desperation" (p.231).

The artistic representation of these devastating experiences of migration is facilitated by the techniques and tools available in narrative structure which has a profound impact on how the story is perceived by the reader. Narrative voice, focalization, and interconnectedness of spatial and temporal stretches of discourse facilitate authors' depiction of the misery of these migrants. These narratological discourse categories of *time*, *space*, *narration*, and *voice* allow the story to be arranged and rearranged in different orders and ways to provide different presentations. The choices available in each of them can be employed to affect the presentation of fictional narratives. Gérard Genette (1980) uses the term narrative situation to refer to more complex patterns of narrative features. The narrator is the most crucial element in any analysis of fictional narratives. The narrator's identity, the extent and method of presenting this identity in the text, as well as the selections inferred give the text a particular form and distinguished shape (Bal, 1997). In the influential typology of narrators presented by Genette (1980), certain categories are labeled based on the level of narration, in addition to the extent and degree of narrator's participation in the story. The first category distinguishes narrator's relation to the world of fiction, or *diegeses*. A *heterodiegetic* narrator is one that is positioned outside the action of the narrative, while a *homodiegetic* narrator is one that takes part in the action of the narrative.

The concept of focalization is introduced first by Genette (1980) and is further extended and elaborated by Mieke Bal (1997) and Rimmon-Kenan (2002). Focalization is based on the assumption that although the narrator's voice tells the story, there is another narrative agent who sees and represents the events through his/her perspectives. In this regard, the notion of focalization distinguishes between two different questions, "who speaks" and "who sees." Bal (1997) recognizes two types of focalization, external focalization and internal focalization. In



internal focalization the character is the one who sees, while in external focalization it is the third-person narrator who sees.

As pointed out by Bal (1997) "the focalizer, which is the subject of focalization, presents the elements from his/her angle" (p.146). In this way the conventional method of seeing and telling of events in a story is disrupted, creating innovative techniques for seeing, and developing multiple voices for the characters with different means of knowledge or lack of knowledge. Different approaches to focalization (Genette, 1980) provide novelists with significant tools for "viewing characters and events through singular, serial, parallel, and embedded focalizations" (Kern, 2011, p. 148). Novelists experiment with voicing as well. Instead of all knowing third-person narrator, they transform to first-person narrators as a character, or many characters narrate simultaneously, creating in the process multiple viewpoints, which stresses the subjective nature of experience.

Rimmon-Kenan (2002), in addition, points out that focalization is presented in the narrative text through three facets: *perceptual*, *psychological*, and *ideological* facets. In the perceptual facet, which is governed by the notions of interconnectedness of space and time, the focalizer orients the narrative towards his/her sense of perception, of what he/she smells, tastes, hears, sees, or/and touches. From a spatial dimension, there could be either "a bird's-eye view or a limited observer." The first is attached to a narrator-focalizer who can have "a panoramic view or a 'simultaneous' focalization," but never to a character-focalizer, whose focalization is always limited. In the psychological facet, the focalizer's state of mind and emotion influence his/her perception of the world as represented in the narrative. The focalizer in the ideological facet represents the world in the narrative from his/her own ideologies, a particular worldview or value system (Rimmon-Kenan, 2002). If a character is focalizing his/her own past, the focalization is retrospective.

The new perceptions of space recognized at the beginning of the twentieth century by Émile Durkheim in 1903 and José Ortega y Gasset in 1910 influence novelists' presentation of space. Durkheim in his investigation of "spaces in different societies," recognizes that they differ based on their prescribed "social structure" and, accordingly, he asserts that these social spaces "are not singular or inert" (Kern, 2011, p. 68). Gasset developed the theory of perspectivism, grounded on the notion that there are unrestricted number of spaces as long as there are different worldviews (Sheppard, 2002). These new conceptions of space encourage novelists to experiment with textured spaces and develop separate ways of exploring inner space of the mind (Kern, 2011). On the other hand, space, according to Bal (1997), is not just a frame in which events unfolds, but it also can be "thematized," (p. 137) evolving into an object of discourse-presentation. Thus, it can be an "acting place" that influences the discourse presentation of the narrative. In fictional narratives about mobility and displacement, mobility in space becomes an acting place and the discourse space is functioning dynamically (Bal, 1997).

Free indirect discourse is another technique that novelists utilize in their fictional narratives to represent inner experience. This technique depends on fusing the narrator's voice with that of a character, and it ranges from free indirect speech to free indirect thought (Geoffrey Leech and



Mick Short 2007). This is devised when depicting the flow of thought of characters, which usually involves memories, emotions, judgements, and many more. Full utilization of free indirect discourse reflects a significant historical shift of the narrative element of spatiality from the exterior fictional world into the inner space of the mind of characters. Kern (2011) thinks that this "relocation to inner consciousness" is "a way of accessing that world most directly and presenting it most vividly" (p. 81). Indeed, novelists dramatize and recreate events more vibrantly through probing into the consciousness of characters and depicting the way characters experience the world within their mental space.

Time is one of the formal elements of narratives that undergone a significant experimentation by novelists through subverting its major features in the process of telling. Text time is traditionally organized according to chronological order and occasionally this order is disrupted, according to Genette (1980), by *flashback*, referring to when going back in a story, or by *flashforward*, to take something from advance. The achronological orderings of fiction writing through flashbacks and flashforward as well as repetition facilitate capturing the instability of the temporal range in the mind. Novelists subvert the traditional convection of the beginning and the end with novels that begin in the middle of things. According to Melba Cuddy-Keane (2008), novelists even adopt "anti-beginnings" (p. 109) that deny or prevent any beginning. For example, some novels begin in the middle of a conversation, or with an interchapter that is not related to the narrative. The writing style of incorporating inter-chapters is a narrative tool that is implemented by some writers for different purposes. Some writers introduce inter-chapters to reflect on the events of the story without the influence of subjective narration. One famous usage of inter-chapters is in John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* (1992 [1939]), where the interchapters upgrade the suffering of the displaced people from the personal experience of the characters into a communal issue. Nevertheless, not just the beginning that undergone modification in novels, the ending also has its share of subversion. The world and life are regarded as having no eventual ending and thus this is reflected in the open-ended feature of life in the endings of the novels.

### Narrative Structure of *Women of Wind*

Razan Naiem Almoghrabi writes two literary works, a novel and a short story about smuggling migrants from Libyan coasts. In both works, she depicts experiences of people who deal with the crisis of migration from different perspectives. In her novel, *Women of Wind* (2010), she presents stories of migrations from migrants' perspectives. While in the short story "Souls for Sail" (2007), Almoghrabi presents the story from the smuggler's point of view. This paper examines the narrative structure of *Women of Wind* (WoW), which sheds light on the tragedies and suffering of these migrants from the moment they take the decision to migrate, looking for a trustworthy human smuggler, to the time when they are boarding the smuggling ship, and through the final stages of their destiny. She creates full-fleshed fictional characters that are endowed with typical human traits of pursuing what they hope for while struggling with their fears and doubts. These characters express deep psychological dilemmas that haunt them and upset their piece of mind. As part of human nature, such a decision to migrate usually evolves and is pursued through many stages of



development either internally, inside the migrant's mind him/herself, or externally, related to different variables that direct the migrant to take a certain action. The same course of action that is derived from internal and external reasons may motivate the human smugglers and dictate their actions.

*Women of Wind* is about Bahija's migration venture, a story that drew from human endeavor. Bahija is a Moroccan woman, who is working as a servant in some Libyans' homes in the city of Tripoli. One of the women whom she works for is a writer and when she hears about Bahija's plan to migrate to Europe, she gives her a tape recorder to record all the details of this risky journey that Bahija is about to take. When Bahija met the writer's husband in France, she sent back with him the recorded tape. The details of Bahija's preparation for her migration and the miserable conditions in the smuggling boat are intermingled with stories about other women whom she works for and who live in the same apartment building where the writer lives. Bahija's story is also interspersed by the account of Om Farah's failed migration attempt. The events in the novel are set in two geographical spaces, one in the city of Tripoli and the other is on a migration boat which is sailing from the Libyan coast of the city of Zuwarah to the shores of the Italian island, Lampedusa. The chapters and the discourse of the novel do not follow the order of events of the story and are interrupted by inter-chapters that focus on spatial dimensions of the landmarks in the city of Tripoli. Through flashbacks, memories, and reminiscences the mosaic of the Bahija's and other people's lives is constructed, fragmentally.

### Non-linear, Multiple Narration

The narration in *Women of Wind* is achronic, a sequence of temporally unordered events (Genette 1980), proceeding through time in a nonlinear fashion. Moving forward and backward from one chapter to another, the narration starts in the first chapter with the last episode of the story. It is considered a prologue in which the concluding chapters of Bahija's migration trip unfolded in France where Bahija is working as a cleaning lady in one of the hotels there. When she met the writer's husband by chance, she sent with him the metal recorder that the writer gave her to record all the details of her migration trip. The writer who narrates some of the chapters starts writing Bahija's story mingled with other stories of other women in the neighborhood where she lives and where Bahija works.

In order to create a panoramic worldview covering vividly the migrants' circumstances and their plan of action from various angles and situations, Almoghrabi employs a narrative situation that mixes two types of narration that are coined by Genette (1980) *heterodiegetic*, relating to a third-person narrator, and *homodiegetic*, which refers to a first-person narrator. The thirty-two chapters in *Women of Wind* are narrated sometimes by a heterodiegetic narrator who, most of the time, utilizes a character's internal focalization or reflection to depict this character's mental processes and her/his surrounding world as perceived by her/him. The narrations of other chapters shift from time to time into the homodiegetic narration, where one of the characters in the story who speaks with an experiencing "I" tells her/his part of the story from his/her point of view. Most





homodiegetic narrated chapters in this novel present the voice of the main character who is writing Bahija's story and is called "The Writer" without assigning a proper name for her.

This inter-shifting of narrative situations that occurs all along the novel facilitates the ability to envision the events as perceived by different characters, which enhances the coherence of the events and the effect they impose on the course of actions taken all through the story. For example, an exchange between Bahija and Om Farah is carried out in The Writer's flat, where Bahija is eager to hear about Om Farah's failed attempt at migrating and the fraud she and her family were trapped in by a gang of women. They were trying to talk without getting the attention of The Writer: "She remembered how she met Om Farah, when she was in The Writer's apartment dyeing her hair, Bahija took advantage of the homeowner entering the bathroom and asked her about her unaccomplished migration that she avoid talking about to others" (*WoW*, p. 18). In a later chapter narrated this time by The Writer who recalled this incident: "I noticed that she was talking to Bahija; in a whispered voice, I didn't care much about them, and I got busy calling my husband who was out of the country" (*WoW*, p. 22). Here the same episode, at the same time and place, has been narrated twice by different characters, each presenting it from her angle of perception carrying with it her loaded feeling of interest or lack of interest.

Re-narrating certain episodes from different narrators is sometimes used as a foreshadowing of these events by giving ambiguous accounts and then it is clarified or expanded by another narrator from her/his perspective. This occurs, for example in the incident of Bahija hearing strange voices from inside the bedroom, when she tiptoes, trying to eavesdrop, she was surprised by a quiet wailing sound (*WoW*, p.174). In a later chapter that is narrated by Yousra, she described in detail what happened to her and Somma in that bedroom and they end up crying in a soft voice, which Bahija mentioned earlier. So many of these techniques are used in *Women of Wind*, providing an incomplete account of an incident or an action by one narrator and then another narrator gives more detail or/and explanations.

Alternating the narrative situation in this manner from heterodiegetic to homodiegetic also promotes access to a multiplicity of voices, which generate different prisms through which the characters and the events are viewed and considered. This is emphasized by presenting more than one character-narrator, some have a major role in the shaping of the story events, such as The Writer, and others have minor or secondary roles, such as Yousra, but also add to the overall coherence of the story. The technique of multiple perspective narration is expressed through fragmented shifts of time and space within which rise multiplicity of voices. This type of mix of heterodiegetic narration with more than one homodiegetic narrator sometimes causes confusion and clashes of voices, creating in the process what Bakhtin (1981) calls polyphonic discourses.

## Focalization

Although the main chapters in *Women of Wind* are heterodiegetic - told by a third-person narrator, they are mostly filtered through the eyes of Bahija, the major character in the novel. Thus, Almograbi utilizes the technique of focalization to depict the scenes from the perspective of a



person inside the story. The heterodiegetic narrator signal that the focalizer is Bahija: “Bahija, the Moroccan, was contemplating softly in silence at some of those who are waiting and dreaming of a new world” (WoW, p. 12). Bahija, therefore, is an internal focalizer, because the actions in the story are presented through her eyes (Jahn 2021). The heterodiegetic narrator in this novel has a limited perception which is through Bahija’s focalization. That is why the rooftop of the boat is not accessible to the reader because the narration is limited by the focalizer’s spatial position: “Throughout the journey, she did not know that there were disputes on the deck, the sound of the powerful engine prevented the transmission of many things” (WoW, p.188). The focalization in the heterodiegetic narration facilitates the depiction of the magnitude and the confusion of facing these circumstances through the eyes of Bahija and the other characters on whom she centered her perception and who present other dimensions of perception.

This narratological tool of focalization allows the reader to perceive spatial dimensions through the lens of the migrants. The facets of perception as highlighted by Bal (1997), can be through the different senses; sight, hearing, smelling, and touching. This variability of perception creates vivid scenes of what is happening to these miserable migrants. As a focalizer, Bahija perceives these scenes through her vital senses: “when I heard the call for Maghrib prayer, the rectangular room in which they were cramped became crowded, and the smells of their bodies began to rise, mixed with their heavy breaths” (WoW, p.12). Here Bahija uses her senses of hearing the pray call, seeing the people cramped in the room, smelling the odor of their bodies, and hearing their breathing. A mixture of perceptual mechanism is utilized to augment the poetic and lyrical description of humans in the surrounding space experiencing these disturbing circumstances. The senses of seeing and hearing are more distinguished in Bahija’s narration, describing the terrors faced by her and the other migrants when the waves rose, and the boat shook violently:

***A new tremor and a tilt to the right was stronger than before, some slipped in the opposite direction, the pent-up screams of the frightened - freed from their shyness - became intensified, the voices trying to calm them were lost amid the crowds of things, the noise and the darkness. (WoW, p.92)***

The sense of touching is also utilized but less than the other facets of perception. There are times when things are, in addition to being seen, they are also felt by touching some bodies. For instance, Khadija noticed “[t]he urine of frightened children and adults began seeping towards the feet of those sitting on the ground” (WoW, p. 92) because of the terror facing the migrants. When the narration is presented through an internal focalizer, the perception will be limited to what can be seen from the focalizer’s spatial position. Bahija uses different facets of perception when she describes the actions occurring in the space visible to her, which is the lower inside section of the boat. Nevertheless, she uses mainly her sense of hearing when she describes what is happening at the roof of the boat. In her description of the reaction of the people on the rooftop, she focuses on the sound she hears and says that “the sounds of their feet were terrifying” (WoW, p. 92).

## Multiple Voices





Almoghrabi's utilization of the system of speech presentation allows the presentation of multiple voices in the narration of *Women of Wind*. This is built on the retrieving of selected segments of the character-narrator's memory and the reported memory of the focalizer in the heterodiegetic narration. The largest part of the narrated memories of Bahija is in indirect reported speech (IRS) mingled with direct reported speech (DRS) in a new line, signaled by an initial bullet mark. Within this combination of Bahija's indirect and direct reported speech, emerge the direct voices of other characters who exist at the time and place of her now-experience, or who are figures in her conjured-up memory. This is blended with dialogic exchanges between these voices in the form of direct speech, mixing these competing voices and, in the process, producing a mosaic of migrants from different countries and backgrounds. Bahija hears these voices and other sounds and articulates about this state of multiplicity of voices: "the voices and cries of children who had grown weary of waiting rose, strange voices and accents intermingled in the oblong room" (WoW, p. 15). In some other times the heterodiegetic narrator tends to give a summary of Bahija's speech and actions.

Almoghrabi, in *Women of Wind*, utilizes the hyponarrative technique of presenting different experiences from multiple perspectives and worldviews. The heterodiegetic narrator presents most of the story through Bahija, who, in her narration of the events, gives space to Om Farah's story, creating thus a framed story within the main story. As introduced to the reader earlier in the novel, Bahija, after all the tension and harsh conditions of traveling on a boat to Europe, has finally reached her wished destiny, France. However, Om Farah's experience with an earlier attempt of migration was a failure. She and her family were victims of a fraud that ripped them off their hopes, money, and dignity. A gang of women tricked them, and many other Iraqis living in Libya, and pretended that they were taking them to Europe in special boats. Om Farah says: "We were driven like cattle to their pens or to their death, we don't know" (WoW, p. 30). After receiving the amount of money for the trip, the smugglers crammed them with some Africans in a zodiac boat that after a short time of sailing landed on another Libyan shore. To add to their shock, they were surrounded by Libyan coast guards who immediately arrested them. Om Farah describes to Bahija the inhuman treatment and the false promises that her family and the other people faced during this unaccomplished attempt of migration. She warned Bahija against such an endeavour of migrating. Through this technique of hyponarrative, Almoghrabi presents different experiences of migrations and raises the issue of deceit and exploitation of migrants by human smugglers.

The authorial narrator in *Women of Wind* in some instances reveals him/herself by addressing the readers and commenting on the actions of the characters. As noted by Jahn (2021), third-person narrators may "liberally comment on action, characters, and storytelling itself" (p. 8). When Bahija and the other migrants finally reached the north shores, they went through questioning procedures by the Italian security guards. In response to their questions, Bahija neglected the Iraqis advice to say she is an Iraqi because they would immediately grant her humanitarian asylum, and instead, she followed the other migrants who preferred silence rather than revealing their nationality. The narrator comments on this decision by a disclosure of him/herself to the reader overtly: "I ask



myself aloud: why are they silent? Why are they ashamed to belong to their homelands” (WoW, p. 191)? This is followed by the narrator’s other questions about these migrants: “If they are able to repeat migration after its failure, despite death, why not repeat a new experience on their homeland if it fails them once” (WoW, p. 191)? The narrator continues asking about the merits of migration and why these migrants not give their homeland another chance as they do with many attempts for migration: “Is it easier to escape the confrontation, or to face death is more merciful, and to confront the European arrogance is less harsh” (WoW, p. 191)? Addressing these comments and questions openly blends the identity of the real author and the narrator. The voice of the author here may be heard through such comments. Ironically, Almoghrabi, years after writing this novel, has taken a similar decision of migrating to a European country. The living conditions faced by the migrants in this novel have been harsher and life-threatening for our author in 2015.

### Unstable worlds

When these migrants are planning and taking this trip across the waters to Europe, they experience a state of living in-betweenness. They are leaving behind them what they considered one day home and are now heading for a new place where they want to establish a new residence and, probably, a different identity. The heterodiegetic narrator describes the tired faces of these migrants on the ship, each with a unique feature and special colour, and how “each face has a soul that carries a homeland that it had before now” (WoW, p.96). They found themselves coming to “this isthmus of Libya,” where they are located “between life and death, intending to move to another unknown world representing a paradise for them.” Each one shares with the other migrants “the journey of moving between this isthmus and the promised paradise” (WoW, p.96). the same scene described by the heterodiegetic narrator is also perceived from Bahija’s angle. While she is in the boat, she looked at the people around her, not believing that she is now sharing this experience with them, “dumping the past here and hoping for the beginning of a new chapter of their life” (WoW, p. 139). She wonders if they also share the same experience of miserable life in their past, or maybe she is alone, “emotionally drained and exhausted from a life that bore only one name for her a ‘servant’? She clings to hope, trying to find a little corner in this world where she becomes a lady” (WoW, p. 139). Bahija and other migrants are not only going through a state of in-betweenness but also this conditional, or liminal existence confuses their long-lived identity. For some of these migrants, such as Bahija, however, their migration to the North is urged by a look for a new different identity that suits their expectations of a better standard of life. Bahija, while observing the other migrants on the boat she remarks that those people are “waiting and dreaming of a new world, another homeland that they would cling to its mud and its shores” (WoW, p. 12)..

In a close reading of the chapters, a kind of tension is created. This tension is manifested in ironical and paradoxical images and ideas. Om Farah reveals the deception of the smugglers who promised things and ironically the opposite happens. She says, “I remembered the chief saying, ‘You won’t get your clothes wet!’ and so we found ourselves walking into the water to get on the rubber boat” (WoW, p.31). Bahija also is ironic about how smuggling business has taken the place



of normal fishing business: "I was enjoying the contemplation of the port of Tripoli that morning, crowded with fishing boats that started to turn into boats gathering wealth from human trafficking instead of from fishing!" (WoW, p.90). The contradiction articulated by Bahija and Om Farah are narrative tools that show the paradoxes of what is expected versus the reality. The voice of an Algerian migrants in the boat articulated a paradoxical situation of migrations throughout the centuries when merchants from the North used to come to the South to drag men forcefully into their boats: "they were paying money for those trips ... Now look, we gladly pay them and sell them our souls, but we wish our lives would not end on their shores with lifeless corpses in spirit" (WoW, p. 153). The ironic situation is that these migrants in this century are, voluntarily, paying these human traffickers to take them to the North, while in the past centuries the human traffickers paid money to force human migration for a trade business.

The unordered sequence of events in the discourse of the novel highlights the disturbed world that these migrants are caught in. The non-linear chapters which are presented achronologically, moving from one time and space backwards and forwards, augment the turbulence of the migrants' life. This shifts between different times and spaces are not only among chapters but also within chapters through devising the mental processes of characters, thought, memories, and associations. The fifth chapter titled "The First Lesson of Migration," for example, starts with Bahija in the boat looking at the other migrants around her and wonders if they have had a previous failed attempt of migration. This conjures up a memory of Om Farah's story, taking her mentally into different time and place where she was meeting Om Farah who tells her part of the story of her experience with some smugglers. Even the flow of Om Farah's story in her recollected memory is not linear as it is interrupted by the narrator's comments giving details about the beach where they are meeting. Bahija continues bringing up details about other topics by association that moves her focus to the story of her adopted child, Sara, and then to her relationship with her previous employer in a different time and place. The chapter continues in this manner mixing Bahija's mental thoughts and recollected memory with the actions and details about her surrounding environment. Such instability of narration that jumble stretches of spatial and temporal presentation enhance the depiction of the unsettled circumstance that these migrants are going through.

The non-linear presentation of the chapters is escalated by introducing inter-chapters that are not directly dealing with the flow of the story in the novel. These are five expository inter-chapters distributed among other chapters. They deal with illustrative accounts about certain historical buildings and location in the city of Tripoli. What adds to the instable presentations is that the beginning of the novel starts with one of these inter-chapters. This is what Melba Cuddy-Keane (2008) considers an example of "anti-beginnings" (p.109) when the narrative fiction starts with an inter-chapter that is unlinked to the story or stories in the novel. To begin the narration with an inter-chapter in *Women of Wind* signifies the unsettled world of the characters in the novel and implies the confused boundary of opening and of closing their life narratives. This disturbance of order is augmented by the following chapter which opens with the last episode of the story of Bahija.



The choice of such writing style that incorporate inter-chapters in *Women of Wind* promotes the element of space as a theme that will be developed in the following Chapters. Derived from Bal's notion of "thematized space," space in this novel is not just a setting in which the events unfold but it is the acting force behind the story. Specific characterization of humans, a type of personification has been denoted to it: "Every evening, Tripoli merely locks the doors of secrets and leans on the pillow of its beach sand, drowns in sleep, while humans wake up to mislead their sea after drinking its pure water" (*WoW*, p. 42). Tripoli here with all its buildings and landmarks presents a place of settlements and of departure. The interchapters about the city of Tripoli hint to the multitude of events and secrets that are harbored inside and around the city's buildings and streets. The last inter-chapter that has the title "Demolition Scheme for Development" appears just before the last chapter of the novel and signals the end of old life and a beginning of a new one. In the last chapter the Blond called Bahija while she was still in Zuwarah and told her that she had broken off her relationship with Yousra, one of the toxic relationships among the women in the apartment building has come to an end. Not just this relationship but the whole building comes within the new plan for the development of the city of Tripoli and is going to be knocked down as well as all the networks of noxious relationships that once existed under the roofs of the apartments in this building. Not just the women of the building who are leaving behind their old life, Bahija also arrives at the Italian coast and is able with four others to escape from the Italian coast-guard camp heading for the unknown and leaving behind her a life that once was hers.

## Conclusion:

*Women of Wind* offers microscopic lens of migrant's stories presented through the character of Bahija, Om Farah, and other people attempting migration from the shores of Libya. The individual stories of these characters are representative of the stories of many other migrants that experience the same socio-economic circumstances that lead them to pursue such journey of migration that are fraught with danger. These characters may be considered allegorical, through which their narratives are elevated to the macro-world of the communities of migrants. The narrative technique applied in the novel preserves a communal memory of events through narrating individual stories that apply to others who share the same circumstances. The stories of Bahija, Om Farah and other migrants deal with people who find themselves stretched between two worlds, an old one that they identify with but eager to leave behind, and a new one that they struggle to reach and be part of it. Social, economic, and even wars and political radical circumstances place these people in a state of in-between-ness, struggling to move to another place that they hope it will provide them with better life either through respected social status or higher financial income.

In this narrative text, the author grabs the sense of this turbulent world that these migrants experience through the freedom of abrupt movements between stretches of time and space. The randomness of temporal and spatial stretches of discourse creates new insights and meaning in a disorderly world. The juxtaposition of narratorial and internal focalization enable the reader to momentarily have access into Bahija's head to witness her thoughts, recollected memories, and



perceptions more directly. These spontaneous recollections of scattered stories are interconnected by a narrative thread and recurring images that captures the tortured psychodynamics of these migrants. This representation of migrant's worlds is vividly depicted through perceptual facets, using multiple senses that produce deeper dimensions of the event of the story. The narrative structure of *Women of Wind* altogether facilitates how experience is depicted and enhances the representation of human's struggle in time of distress.

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## ديناميكيات الهيكل السردى في تصوير تداعيات حركات الهجرة في رواية نساء الريح لـ رزان نعيم المغربي

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### المستخلص:

يستخدم كتاب الخيال السردى تقنيات معينة في بنية أعمالهم الأدبية التي تعزز موضوع القصة التي تتناولها الرواية. يمكن استخدام هذه التقنيات والأدوات السردية في المراحل المختلفة من البنية الأساسية للسرد وتمكين الكتاب من التلاعب بهذه التقنيات لصالح إنتاج صور وأفكار معينة. يعد الصوت السردى والتركيز والترابط بين العروض المكانية والزمنية من بين أهم الأدوات المتاحة في الهيكل السردى للروايات. تستخدم رزان نعيم المغربي في رواية نساء الريح (2010) هذه التقنيات والأدوات المتاحة في الهيكل السردى لتصوير تجارب المهاجرين من جنسيات مختلفة، الذين يباشرون هجرتهم من شواطئ المدن الليبية بتمسير من مهربي البشر. تركز هذه الورقة على دراسة تأثير الهيكل السردى في تصوير الظروف العقلية والبنيوية للمهاجرين من خلال تحليل العناصر البنيوية في الرواية. السؤال البحثي الرئيسي هو كيف يبرز الهيكل السردى والتقنيات المنفذة في نساء الريح تداعيات تحركات الهجرة. توظف المغربي تقنيات سردية مثل تعدد الرواة بحيث يسمح برؤية الأحداث من زوايا مختلفة من أجل تقديم صورة حية لمعاناة هؤلاء المهاجرين والمخاطر التي يواجهونها أثناء رحلة الهجرة. أدى توظيف الكاتبة بؤرة التركيز الداخلي من خلال رؤية أحد الشخصيات إلى التعمق في السرد الذاتى للتجربة الإنسانية. كما أن المزج بين الأصوات المختلفة والسرد الذي ينتقل من سرد زمني- مكاني إلى آخر ساعد في تصوير العوالم المضطربة للشخصيات في هذه الرواية. الكلمات الدالة: الهجرة، المهاجرون، المهريون، الهيكل السردى، الصوت السردى، بؤرة التركيز، المكان والزمان.