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**THE PRESENTATION OF PLACE IN IBRAHIM AL-KAWNI'S *FROM THE DESERT'S MYTHS***

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**ABSTRACT:** *This study examines the manifestations of place in Ibrahim Al-Kawni's *From The Desert's Myths*. Aware of the importance of place and its profound impact on the various aspects of people's lives and its strong presence within the human psyche and its major functions in the structure of the novel, Al-Kawni has paid place special attention. In his novel, Al-Kawni has depicted place concurrently as a factual and imaginary reality and as an artistic structure. To be more specific, he chooses the world of the great desert dominating Libya, Morocco and Mauretania, which is a real place, to portray his fictional universe. Besides, the desert is simply rich with special places like the mountains, oases, caves, sand hills, etc., which require careful examination. It is our goal in this study to look into Al-Kawni's employment of place to learn more about its manifestations and the author's attitudes and philosophy.*

**KEYWORDS:** **Place, From the Desert's Myths, Ibrahim Al-Kawni, myths, oasis, Waw homeland and paradise.**

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## **INTRODUCTION SETTING**

Place has always had a profound impact on the diverse parts of our life especially the psychological aspect. Since fiction seeks to depict the human life, it has also recognized the significant effect of place in its fabric. Ibrahim Al-Kawni, the Libyan novelist, has paid place and its diverse manifestations a lot of attention. In his *From the Desert's Myths*, he treats place as both a factual and fictional reality and as a momentous component that goes into the structure of his novel. It is our goal in this study, to examine how Al-Kawni chooses the atmosphere of the desert—home of Tawareg for thousands of year, encompassing large areas of Libya, Morocco and Mauritania to give a picture of his fictional world.

Al-Kawni's selection of the desert as a place full of various symbols and as a stage of the events of his story has its roots in the history of many traditions and cultures. The desert allows the human

being to see it in polar conceptions. It appears usual and exceptional, vertical and horizontal, hard and plane, black and light and full and blank. Besides, the desert stands for a variety of things. Its openness symbolizes unbounded access. Distance is infinite due to lack of hindrances and expansion to all directions makes prospects boundless. In addition, the desert serves as a background for many stories and fables such as *Aladin's Lamp* and *The Arabian Nights* and a place where the characters are placed in a conflict against the forces of nature mainly heat, lack of water, wind, storms of sand, and mysterious creatures. It, therefore, challenges man's patience, tolerance, strength, confidence, goodness, power of imagination etc. Hence, it was only logical that all prophets had their own adventures in deserts: Moses and the Israelites, Jesus and Mohammad. This suggests that the desert's landscape is the most favorable home for godly revelation. However, in case of failure all these symbols can be turned upside down and achieve the opposite goals. It becomes a barrier, an obstacle hindering man from accomplishing his aims.

### **The Function of Place in the Novel**

As the title of the novel clearly points out, Al-Kawni has schemed to make the desert the central arena where the events of the novel take place. The centrality of the desert, therefore, reflects the novelist's awareness that this place, as maintained by Hussein Khaled, has the power "to dig deep trenches in the features of the characters" (1998 46).<sup>1</sup> That is perhaps why Al-Kawni has created his major character from this place. It seems he considers the desert as "the home of heavenly visions" (Al-Kawni 2006, 109), where reality is turned into an imaginary symbol. In other words, the desert is perceived along the novel as an image, which depends on the two polarized notions: reality and fiction. Moreover, Al-Kawni has adopted the Tawareg's belief that the desert is the heart of the world whereas the world outside the desert is a marginal place. Inside this spacious, borderless place inhabited by a well-established community, which has its own social morals, vision of the world and life, and tales and stories, Al-Kawni places his characters.

Al-Kawni frequently asserts the spaciousness of the desert. Readers are told that when the protagonist "returns to the desert while tired..., he succumbs to vague dream. On his lips an unknown smile dances..." (2006, 26). The smile ironically indicates loss triggered by the expansiveness of the place rather than happiness: "The desert continued to expand and diverge throughout the travel. The spacious, tough, eternal wilderness generates at its end a malicious horizon" (109). Travelling thought of as a long tiring journey is dwarfed by the greatness of the desert, which is painted as a living creature enjoying a variety of unique traits such as expansion, toughness, wilderness, and diversified scenery all of which result in malice. Repeating the same idea somewhere else, the narrator says, "He toured the whole desert but he did not stop travelling. He slept in the openness or under a wild tree" (132). Again, the narrator asserts the notion of loss, miniaturization and minuteness procured by the desert's spread-out scales. On other occasions, the desert is presented as a wavy, torn and scattered universe causing everlasting confusion and inhabited by lives governed by obscure, strange and contradictory purposes. At times, it transcends its literal meaning as a reference to a particular space. More often than not, it stands for freedom, "because the desert does not submit to the authority of anyone. Nor is it owned by anyone. Even the State and its authorities are distant so that the State cannot practice its oppressive power. So

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<sup>1</sup>. All translations from Arabic sources including extracts from the novel in addition to the titles of the cited works are ours.

the desert becomes a distant myth” (Gaston Bachelard, 2006 6). Beyond the elements of breadth and freedom, the desert is no longer a setting that decorates the event, or integrates within the event. Rather, it is a free, dynamic, live factor acting in a consistent manner and owning a motivation. It has its own self-governing will and an immense unconquerable power.

These notions about the desert are well perceived by the grandmother, a wise, experienced figure who gives a very balanced formula: association with other places suggests submission and slavery while association with the desert, implies freedom and closeness to Allah. She “repeats and reiterates: He who lived under a roof or settled at a certain land is a slave. We say there is no freedom without a desert. There is no freedom save for an emigrant in the wide desert of Allah. Have you heard an opinion like this before?” (71). However, if one fails to understand the bond between desert and freedom, then the desert as such leads to torture and death: “Freedom is death” (71), the grandmother maintains. The desert is still an agent that causes an action; it rewards some characters and punishes others.

The mountain plays a similar role. Al-Kawni frequently provides it with human qualities and mythical subtexts instead of keeping it a stage for the event. Exactly like a human being, the mountain rebels against its bottom, representing a chain that keeps the mountain fixed, restrained. Not only is it rebellious and stubborn, it also shows others towers that can reveal new horizons. One of these is a young boy in a swaddle, which like the mountain’s bottom restricts the boy’s movements. Having got rid of the chain, the boy sets off to discover the secrets of the mountain. One finding is a “stone tablet buried in a cave adjoining the top porch. It was not dark-colored like the other stones on the mountain” (28). Now Al-Kawni leads us to his mythological places. We are told that the “tablet was a place hiding inside it men who hide their faces with masks. They carry niches to pursue ghosts whose upper halves are human creatures while their lower parts are real animals” (29). Apparently, the tablet, like the cave and the mountain, resists its traditional concept as a solid, inanimate object. Together these animate places have a weighty effect on the characters and the readers because they become living and mythical components, which authenticates the legendary implication of the place.

More important, the mountain governs part of the narrative fabric. It is the source of the treasure (the stone tablet). On it, the boy has found a bottle and a skull, which “addressed him in a language he does not understand” (29). Inside the bottle, there has been an *ifrit*. Upon his release, he expands until he covers the sun and he laughs so loudly and insidiously that the earth shakes and the mountain is terrified. Therefore, it is clear that the mountain is portrayed in such a legendary manner that it turns the novel into a great work.

Another function of the mountain is discerned in its reflection of the characters’ psychological mode. When, for example, the boy returns to the mountain after what happens in the oasis, he is shocked to see that the mountain has lost its posture. He turns to the fortune-teller who answers, “The creatures did not exterminate the mountain even though they had soiled and plowed him in search of their damned treasure. The mountain, which changed and began to disappear, is not the oasis’ mountain. It is another mountain which you have carried” (32). This quotation shows that the mountain has different postures. The real one is maintained while the others change in accordance with the beholder’s vision. Besides, the boy’s deed of carrying the mountain, which

signals stability and fixity, cannot be real in our world but Al-Kawni renders it possible. In so doing, he makes us enjoy moments of living a spacious universal dream, an opportunity which everyone welcomes (Bachelard 2006, 123).

It must be pointed out that the employment of the place, despite its symbolical aspects and its unreality, it is often reflected in the psychology of the character and sometimes it controls the character's existence. The oasis, for example, transcends its symbolical dimension as a location indicating stability to become a chain that draws its inhabitants to the ground turning them into slaves. When Tazidirith asks her grandmother if city people are slaves, the grandmother replies "without hesitation: 'Of course, they are.' 'And people of the oases?' She nodded her head in agreement before she supports her attitude with language: 'They are slaves, too. He who slept under a roof, or lived under a wall, every one that settled on Earth'" (67). Clearly, natural locations are described as hostile agents rather than as friendly ones. On another occasion, the oasis is openly regarded as "the frying pan or wailing dust" (51). Obviously, the oasis as an aggressive factor represents Tazidirith's psychological interior. Those who are obsessed by hunger, drought and other worries see the oasis as a place of miserable life: "Hunger has terminated half of the tribe... very few survived. Those who clutched the miserable life in the oases" (48).

By contrast, the author makes the desert a symbol of pride and affiliation. In the dialogue between the father and his son, the father asserts that being a native of the desert is a compulsory condition for education. Then the father asks, "Are you proud that you are the son of the desert?... The boy answered without hesitation, of course" (114).

Sometimes Al-Kawni gives the place various shapes or colors and relates to its components a variety of aspects. Describing the desert, the narrator says, "The ground cracks, the stones splits showing a thousand species of plants. In a few days, the desert greens and the arid valleys are covered with woods. The flowers blossom..." (62). The new formed shapes and the colors help to give the place a visible image. In addition, the green color doubles the implication of the image since it stands for life and eternity. The word green in Arabic (*akhdar*) is reminiscent of Al-Khadr, who in folk traditions and conventions is an eternal human being who turns out to have more knowledge than Moses, the prophet. As such, colors, which prove to have undeniable social and psychological values (Shaker Abdul Hameed, 1997 20), add more functions to place.

Annexed to the mountain, the oasis and the desert is a list of other places. The sea, to start with, indicates hope after loss and certainty after mirage. During his journey, the father is curled up by a "northern breeze soaked with the distant sea's water" (134). The field, too, has psychological signals. When the father reaches the hill, he sees a spacious field, which extends "from the bottom of the edges covered with black thick stones." He can see wide areas packed with chamomile, arugula, and Artemisia, and many other plants" (135). By definition, the field suggests plainness, ease and serenity. According to Bachelard, the field creates quietness in the characters and the dreamers who are prone to anxiety (2006, 185). This explains why Al-Kawni abundantly uses the field, as an essential component that goes into the structure of the desert. He must have been aware of its diverse indications.

The valley is another meaningful location, which traditionally connotes life, fertility, husbandry, herds and the shielding womanly aspect. Indeed, we are told, "The valleys formed a place for grazing because they were nearer and their edges were rich with wild trees" (57). Apparently, the valleys provide food for herds. Inspired by their figurative connotations of feeding, life fertility and the sheltering feminine aspect, Tazidirith is naturally attracted to the valleys to gratify her psychological needs.

Another natural location presented by Al-Kawni is the black rock. We are told that Tazidirith "sat over the black rocks" (61). Stones and rocks mean firmness, constancy, heaviness, gravity and being grounded. Some ancient cultures used stones for currency. As such, stones implied value, power, interaction and even antiquity. Blackness is often associated with evil and mystery. Thus, Tazidirith's selection of black stones indicates her ability to stand up to evil powers and to develop her personal traits in harmony with the other implications of the stones.

Al-Kawni's delineation of the different locations, therefore, are harnessed to express the psychological mode of the character. The place seems to represent an image of the self. Thus, the genre of fiction declares itself not only through movement or deeds but through the investment of the place, which becomes a consistent phenomenon of the personal and communal experience in the natural world. To be more specific, the internal feelings of characters are acquired from the features of the place. The condition of the father and his son during their departure obtains its attributes from the place around them, "The father sighed three successive times; the matter has to do with the distant horizon.... But, the wilderness does not end and horizon does not surrender" (110).

In addition, Al-Kawni mixes the moral, philosophical and mythical dimensions and gives them a prominent, existential inclination thus uniting between what is real and what is imaginative or legendary, and between what is real and what is ideal. The Waw Oasis, for example, is a legendary location, which everyone dreams to enter. It represents the paradise or "the lost homeland... Waw is a homeland among homelands.... There are some people who carry it in their hearts and emigrate and others who spend their lives in search for it" (113). Waw is like a dream amid that desolate world. In creating it, Al-Kawni perhaps wishes to decode the puzzle of existence and survival that perplexes the man of the desert.

Furthermore, the symbol inspired from the place perhaps does not come from the whole place. Rather, it may descend from one of its elements. The soaring of the bird in the air, for instance, may be explained "as a symbol of freedom and the superego" (Ibrahim Hafiz, 1994 43) because the place represents perfection and noble goals. This expounds why Maylud sees the girl as a deer who feels "light like a feather capable of soaring... like birds" (89). The sky, too, may stand for ascension, spiritual rise, strength and immortality because the sky in many popular beliefs is held as the seat of gods. However, Al-Kawni employs it as clue of inclusiveness and inconceivable vastness. The presence of the deer in the sky might be regarded as a symbol of the spiritual and moral virtue and the angelic purity.

To conclude this part, it can be said that the novel is simply teeming with places suggestive of various signs. Al-Kawni offers us a long record of places in the desert all of which are precisely described. The most important ones can be seen in the following list:

<b>The place</b>	<b>Its Symbol</b>
The Qadriyyah Narrative	The true place that directs people out of darkness and hell
The slope of Tasilie Mountain	Suffering and exhaustion
The grave	Shelter and protection
Hasnawa Mountain	The source of myths
The field	Source of livelihood
Huts	Destruction and damage (psychological function)
The distant horizon	Anticipation, vacancy and looking for the deer
The Ratam Forest	Pleasure, laughs, dreams, the appearance of the sacred bird (psychological function)
Over the valley	Loss (psychological function)
The tent's pillar	A place for torture, beating and the lash
The earth's belly	(Legendary Indication) mythical flowers which haunt us in the valleys and plains
The earth and the sky	(Legendary Indication) worship and gods

Additionally, in his novel, Al-Kawni depicts places not just as a background for the event or a stage where the events take place. Places always have connotative implications. Some bear psychological indications others legendary meanings while others have social connotations. In so doing, Al-Kawni has lent the location more aesthetic, artistic and spacious values.

### **The Significance of the Geographical Place**

Tracing the place imagery in Al-Kawni's *From the Desert's Myths*, the reader is surprised by its profuse use and therefore he is placed before a variety of interpretations. Initially, the reader recognizes that most of the places mentioned are geographically real but embedded with a touch of the imaginary. Consider Hasnawah Mountain and Nafusah Mountain (47); the Oasis, the Northern Desert, and the Southern Desert in his saying, "The Oasis lies at the contact point between the two deserts: the muddy northern and the sandy southern" (52). In the context of describing the emigration movements in the desert, Al-Kawni also mentions Ayer, the Country of the Blacks, Tunisia and Algeria. He says, "The tribes dispersed: some clans emigrated to Ayer and the country of the Blacks; other families emigrated to Tunisia, Algeria and Timbuktu, and the remnants of the diaspora continued to move in Al-Hamada, which suffers the tyranny of the sun and the cruelty of the long drought" (49). Sometimes Al-Kawni presents the factual geographical place immersed with an imaginary decoration. When he, for example, presents Tasilie, he associates it with ghosts in order to give a convincing portrait of his characters. He says, "Neither cheering nor calling were astonishing for a man like him, who lived all his life amid the Jennies and ghosts of Tasilie" (192). Simultaneously, Al-Kawni creates suppositious places from which he has inspired his legendary and queer stories such as Waw, the promised paradise, where man of the desert seeks to get rid of suffering, misery and roughness and to enjoy peace and affluent provisions. The narrator says, "Waw has distanced those who were here but it is closer than the jugular vein, ... Waw is a lost

homeland; it is a unique homeland among homelands” (112) and “if they had not been happy, passion to return to it would not have killed them” (115).

Perhaps Al-Kawni’s most significant treatment of place lies in his creation of polar links between different places. Importantly, these places are often depicted in “the form of opposite pairs, or convergence between conflicting elements so that they can reflect the relationships and recurrences which cause contact between the narrator or the characters and the places of the events” (Hassan Bahrawi, 1990 33). Some of these pairs are Waw versus the desert; the sky (what is up) versus the earth (what is low) and the top of the mountain versus its slope.

Examining the first pair, i. e. the Homeland Waw versus the desert, it might be established that they have a variety of clashing implications, which have provided the novel with a new spirit. Throughout the novel, Waw has been associated with life, love, domesticity, rest, a great opportunity and fertility despite being in the middle of a desert. However, these positive subtexts will be turned upside down when the oasis proves to be a mirage: “Remember Waw is the mirage” (115).

While Waw is substantial yet imagined, the desert is an open, spacious place. It is a factual location, which was created by God: “Why has God created the desert a desert?” (67). Yet, its expansion and roughness allude to imagination. In addition, the desert has been linked with openness, infinity, liberty, adventure, imagination, power, purity and spirituality but it can suggest exhaustion and misery, treachery and negativism, loss and the lack of opportunities.

In regards for the sky and the earth, they are major elements of the universe. Being permanent, great, fixed, boundless and unrestricted, they have played crucial roles in man’s life. Nevertheless, each can bear negative and positive connotations and be the opposite of the other. In the novel, for example, we are notified that Satan “was expelled from the Paradise of Bliss to find out that he has been turned from a heavenly, merciful angel into an earthly damned devil” (186). On another occasion, the pure sky is watched while getting close to the desert at sunset, allowing the two lovers to unite in a fervent hug amidst descending darkness (279). The extracts are simply full of opposites: Paradise of Bliss against hell, merciful angel in contradiction with the damned devil, heavenly against earthly, light against darkness, eternity versus death and up against down.

And the top of the mountain versus the slope receive special treatment from Al-Kawni. First, it must be asserted that the mountain has occupied key places throughout the novel owing to its importance in the life of the desert’s man. Al-Kawni believes, “The Mountain is the pillar of the proud desert universe, the absence of gods, the great healer” (180) and it is also regarded as “The temple of al-Wadan, the desert sacred place. In its caves creatures are bred and from its top you ascend to the sky... The place where the young girls of the ancestors are kept..., on its lap the desert people meet the invisible people” (179). Apparently, this extract highlights the sanctity of the mountain which is achieved in isolation from other gods and which causes the emergence of other godly traits. Besides, being a daily scene of the desert man, the mountain’s tops and slopes mirror his life, his dreams as well as stages of life.

Throughout the novel Al-Kawni reaffirms the traditional links between mountaintops and thunder, rain, sun, perception, ambition and repudiation of earthly desires. Al-Kawni adds his own associations. For him the top suggests pride, loneliness, distance, nakedness, invisibility while the slope is related to humility, gloominess, nearness, covertness and visibility.

In presenting these elements of nature, integral parts of the desert, Al-Kawni attempts to make the desert the backbone of the novel and the central stage where the events take place. Moreover, examining Al-Kawni's treatment of the location motif, one recognizes that through words he has built a magnificent architectural edifice of places. It starts from the deep bottom and extends in a wonderful horizontal manner towards the surface, and from the surface upward and from the surface downward. Within these beautiful and consistent horizontal and vertical extensions, Al-Kawni manages to illustrate the expansion of the place and endow it with the most beautiful indications.

The crown of this edifice is the title. Both critics and writers recognize the significance of the title and its relation to the text. Al-Jazzar, for example, regards the title as independent subtext parallel to the text that it represents though both have a dialogic link: the title leads to the text while the text leads to the title and influences its formation. Because of its ability to capture the reader's attention most, he maintains, the title is the most efficient linguistic factor capable of affecting the receiver off the cuff and spontaneously engaging him in the process of interpretation (Fikri Al-Jazzar, 1998, 31, 10). Thus, the title transcends the traditional role of naming to play a crucial role in the function, form and content of the text. According to Fisher, titling is an intentional act (1984 289) through which the author tries to guide the reader to a certain interpretation. Genette has been more specific when he maintains that the title has four major functions: hinting at the function of the text, attracting the reader, giving direct data about the literary work like naming the characters or hinting at the major event and finally identifying the work like in the case of proper nouns (1988 719). And Ibrahim Taha regards the title as a collar that encloses the general function of the literary work. Most of these functions are in the sphere of addition, summary, focalization, irony, parody, paradox, interpretation or metaphor (2000 68).

Al-Kawni has been aware of the centrality of the title and its strong relation to the notion of place. For Al-Kawni, the title is the threshold upon which the reader must walk before entering the text. Hence, Al-Kawni has coined the title in such a manner that corresponds with the various functions of the title. Examining it carefully one notices it consists of three lexical items (with the article "the" excluded as it is not an independent word in Arabic): *From/ the Desert's/ Myths (men asatir as-sahra')* or *Myths/ from/ the Desert (asatir men as-sahra')*. The first title can be regarded as a predicate for a deleted subject supposedly "These." Thus, the assumed full title would be "These are from the Desert's Myths" (*hathehe asatir men as-sahra')*. In shortening the title, Al-Kawni forges a new complex structure through which the reader receives a sense installment consisting from a preposition and a noun pointing to nothing specific (*men as-sahra')*. The noun (*asatir*) "myths" is indefinite by itself but becomes definite when associated with word "desert" (*sahra*). In consequence, the myths become a signifier that refers to the desert only. The reference is thus not to general myths but to specific ones that are derived from the desert and are affiliated with the "desert." The title can be read as a "noun sentence." Such a structure, as maintained by Sibawayh, the most prominent linguist and grammarian of Arabic (c. 760–796), is very possible in Arabic.

He proposes that “some utterance are more influential than others. Verbs are heavier than nouns because nouns are the first and more capable.... Don’t you see that the verb must have a noun if it were not a speech and that the noun may not need a noun” (1975 20-21). Therefore, Al-Kawni has wanted his book to be forged in the way it was because of the semantic power arising from its noun structure. Moreover, the novelist prefers the current title to others to highlight the majesty of the desert and its sanctity in regard for its occupants, and to whet the reader’s appetite to read the book to know the vents, news and stories.

Interestingly, the title of the novel cooperates with the photos, profiles and illustrations on the external cover. What characterizes the external front cover is the domination of the brown color. The desert preoccupies the greatest space. A photo of a veiled, huge bodied man appears amid the desert, to indicate the strong will of the Tawareg man amongst this alienating space.

### **The Rhetoric of Place**

The study of rhetoric is achieved with a close language investigation because language endows the location with existence and forges its comprehensive structure. Moreover, through language the novelist records the setting, time and place. Indeed, throughout the novel Al-Kawni has exerted his efforts to excite and attract the reader by liberating the language from all sorts of restriction and solidity. Besides, he has fuelled it with strong expressions that are well attuned with the atmosphere it seeks to depict. Beyond doubt, language in Al-Kawni’s *From the Desert’s Myths* is, as Hanna Minah reckons, the “language of discovering the unknown regions” (2004, 23). Besides, in the spirit of the fact that the major task of language is telling the news (Jamil Abdel Majid, 1999 19), Al-Kawni employs language to tell about the news of the desert and to disclose its beauty.

The most significant place, which Al-Kawni’s novel deals with, is naturally the desert. Hence, Al-Kawni’s language is full of beautiful images to express the characters’ sense experience in the desert. One clear example is seen in Tazidirith’s conversation with her friend: “The flow is coming. Where can he [the flow] fly [go]? Do you think he is your love alone? The desert has more craving than you do. Its ground has more longing and it suffers the abandonment more than you do. Be patient! Where can he fly? ”(75). Clearly, Tazidirith’s talk is poetic. Nothing can point out the desert’s desperate need for water better than the example of a lover’s flammable longing for his beloved. So the presentation of the love metaphor and the employment of personification as the literary tool (the human speaker and hence Al-Kawni ascribes human traits such as longing, lust, suffering and love) creates an amazing imaginary aesthetic living scene of the place. In so doing, Al-Kawni is not subjected by language, as the structuralists would maintain. Nor does he use it as a tool to express his philosophy of life and his vision of man and society. Rather, Al-Kawni treats language as a goal or a topic. In his novel, Al-Kawni depicts life as a whole through descriptive extracts, which, to restate, Rohie Samar Al-Faisal, is “characterized by some sort of textual autonomy. It stands on its own like a stable portrait that can be extorted from the novel like independent units” (1995, 103). This, however, does not mean that these extracts are independent of the comprehensive structure of the novel. To the contrary, despite its autonomy, language is invested in such a skillful manner that it shows the aesthetic aspects of the novel while giving the narrative process more shadows and significant indications.

More important, readers notice that the language formations vary in accordance with the diversity of the place and the characters portrayed. Al-Kawni uses the classical Arabic to correspond with the rank of the characters. In the remarkable talk between the child and his father, the former requests the father to tell him about Waw. He says, “Will you tell me about Waw? Waw is a lost homeland.... Have you ever entered Waw before?” The father paused a little then said, ‘... Waw is a unique homeland amidst homelands....’ ‘What do people do in Waw?’ ‘I do not know....’ ‘Are they happy?’ ‘No doubt’” (113-114). Obviously, the language is literary but not complex. It fits the child’s age and perception. It is beautiful, expressive, and precise and consists of short clauses that are clear for the two panelists. The dialogue is perfected by “Focus, brevity and allusion” (Al-Faisal 1983 269). It is very clear that Al-Kawni has succeeded brilliantly in building Waw as an actual place through his words and sentences. Waw, as already illustrated, is an imaginary place and an instrument, which reflects the characters’ ideal desires owing to its profound impact on their development and the process of their lives. It is the oasis, which God has promised his believers if they do good deeds. In a way, it is a dream place amongst that desolate area. Through language, Al-Kawni has managed to mold Waw in an artistic manner immersed with an aesthetic dimension.

This beautiful scene is only one of many, which are scattered everywhere in the novel. Hence, one cannot examine this phenomenon comprehensively. Rather, when discussing spatial imagery, one needs to demonstrate their distinct beauty formed by things and items present in these places. Besides, there is a need to emphasize their “aesthetic mark which is the goal of the narrative text” (Abdullah Al-Ghadami, 1987 12). This mark is created by the place and the figurative language submerged in the text. Place contributes much to the establishment of artistic sign including its indications, inspirations and overtones.

## CONCLUSION

The aesthetic aspect of the place is regarded a device that measures the novelist’s ability to create places different from what the recipient is used to, and to present the places in which the recipient lives in a different aesthetic manner. In this paper, we have found out that the place has played a fundamental role in Al-Kawni’s novel. It, for example, has a key function in founding the framework for the event, in being part of the fictive imagination and in causing the event. No matter whether the place is real or imaginary, specific or general, Al-Kawni makes it go into the fabric of narration so that the reader will not feel lost in the absolute space of the novel’s abstract philosophical ideas. As a result, he is anchored and is metaphorically related to the earth and its various implications: fertility, nurturing, growth, rootedness and strength.

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