

2019

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### Recommended Citation

Alkhoul, Khitam (2019) "The Setting in the Novel of Al-Tanturiya," *Association of Arab Universities Journal for Arts* مجلة اتحاد الجامعات العربية للآداب: Vol. 16: Iss. 1, Article 13.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.aaru.edu.jo/aauja/vol16/iss1/13>

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## The Setting in the Novel of Al-Tanturiya

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Received Date: Oct. 10, 2018

accepted Date: Dec. 12, 2018

<https://doi.org/10.51405/16.1.13>

### Abstract

This study deals with the setting and its connotations in Al-Tanturiya novel. The setting dominates the novel from beginning to end. It also highlights the effect of the setting on characters, their behaviors, morals, customs, traditions, and reactions. Moreover, this article proves that place remains unforgettable and stored in man's memory throughout his lifetime. It is always the incidents and events that rummage in the memory and reveal the memories of settings with its signs, significance, and symbols.

The setting in this novel comes in a variety of forms such as the countryside, the city, and the immigration country: (Lebanon, UAE, Egypt, and Canada). This diversity imparts to the text an aesthetic embodiment that involves the patterns of the setting and its implications in the novel.

This research is based upon the methodological approach by extracting the spatial artistic structures, analyzing them, showing their aesthetics, meanings, and impacts on the text. The study will cover different elements in the novel such as:

1. An introduction that presents a short overview about the novel and its emergence;
2. The setting with its significations and patterns through different and diverse places in the novel such as the countryside, the immigration countries of Lebanon, Egypt, UAE, Canada;
3. The impact of the setting and its reflection on man and his surroundings;
4. The mechanisms of artistic embodiment of the setting and its aesthetics by shedding light on the aesthetic element of language and its manifestations in the text.

Key Words: Place, Al-Tanturiya, Stylistic Approach

It is clear that critical studies took an interest in dealing with and analyzing the elements of the novel and gave considerable attention to the setting, its diversity and effect as it represents the scene of events and their progression. As far as Arabic literature is concerned, the setting is a fundamental and pivotal element since early poets used to approach it and shed tears over their beloved ones who departed from their habitations. They, therefore, used to write the peerless poems (or what might be called the hanging odes), where they commenced with matchless prologues describing the debris, routes, brooks, valleys, mansions, trees, stones, rivers, dunes, gardens, hillocks and palaces. To put it differently, "the natural Arabic milieu had a profound impact on the life of the Arab people and their feelings and imposed upon them a special lifestyle by which they were so touched that it inspired all their behaviors."<sup>(1)</sup>

Since the Arab heritage of the novel has a special character as it did not emerge in its conventional form in the modern age, its roots in the ancient Arab history took some forms such as biographies, the Quranic stories, and the Maqamat of Al Hamadhānī and Al Ḥarīrī. If we consider the Maqamat to be the base of the novel, then the setting developed therein has thus been diversified to include the city together with its markets, gathering places, parks, houses, mosques, palaces or government offices (divans). These literary patterns almost depended upon narration that is based on a progressive event, a single, crucial character, a precise plot and a specified setting.<sup>(2)</sup>

As the novel tops all other literary genres in the modern age, we find that it does not only rival poetry but also competes with it to win the first place. It has also drawn the attention of both men of letters and critics who paid special heed to it. Furthermore, we can say that the novel has always been a fertile soil for critical studies. Novelist Radwa Ashour depended upon the setting in her "Al Tanturiya" and gave it variety so that it could be the pivotal point of her novel and the center of its events. The diversity of the setting adds a special flavor to the scenes of the novel. This diversity is primarily founded on her heroine Ruqayyah who moved through the settings of the novel and reflected their mysteries and influence on her behavior, frame of mind, her interests and her upbringing for her children.

Ruqayyah was born at the village of Tantura which overlooked the Mediterranean Sea and was near the city of Haifa. She grew up and flourished at the same village. "When a child is born, his knowledge of place does not go beyond his external sensations, but when he grows up, not only the memories of place do develop with him but his feelings; thinking and intuition evolve as well."<sup>(3)</sup>

### The Setting in the Novel of Al-Tanturiya

The starting point of the novel is the village of Tantura, the place that extends through harmonious, successive circles that contain characters and events and from which the narrative text arises and depends on the element of the setting. Tantura is the childhood and the spatial space from which other new places issue after displacement. The change and transformation, which happened to the life of Ruqayyah, were mainly caused by colonization, which had a basic role in the spacial shift of the novel.

It is thus obvious that the setting is the element that controls the thought, feelings and real life of Radwa Ashour. Therefore, the setting was at the forefront of her mind and for this reason she entitled her novel "Al Tanturiya". The title is the constituent, which attracts readers and drives them to seek all the possible means to decipher it and add it to their repository of knowledge. It is also the cue thereby the mysteries of events, the rhythm of their dramatic pattern and narrative tension are solved. Moreover, "the title is important to deduce the semantic structure of the text, identify the features of narrative discourse and spotlight the texts through these features." <sup>(4)</sup>

The setting is, thus, the scene of events and their progression. It attributes definite traits to the characters and leaves its own stamp on them before it grants them their identities. The setting gives inhabitants their features, language, culture and inspires their behaviors. It also breathes into them the spirit and guides them to good morality. So, what would be the case when the setting embodies land and sea. The writer exemplifies all of this when she introduces her character in the first chapter "The Sea Jettison". She wrote, "He got out of the sea. Indeed, this is what happened. It seems as if he was a sea creature which waves threw it away. I watched him walking with tightly drawn legs towards the beach, pulling his feet out of sand and inserting them into it to approach me. He had nothing on but white pants tied around his waist with a string, with his face and shoulders glistening with drops of water." <sup>(5)</sup>

The writer has substantiated in this prologue of her novel that she got along with place and characters to the point that she claimed that this "terrestrial" human came from the bottom of the sea. She also showed that the characters are in harmony with place. The seaside was the first setting to witness the event because the connection between the setting and the event is imperative. This is because it makes the narrative text cohesive and consistent and creates the suitable spatial environment. "The setting is one of the fundamental factors on which events are based." <sup>(6)</sup>

Radwa Ashour in this opening scene joined the setting (the sea) and Ruqayyah the heroine, and portrayed them as a pivotal pair. She identifies the heroine with the sea. This makes readers believe that Ruqayyah had the ability to

Alkhouli

extrapolate the future. The sea seemed as if it was her shelter, her spirit, her breaths, and her voice and tone. She seemed as she knew that one day soon she would be deprived of the sea which she passionately loved and whose waves used to sway before her eyes and would forcibly separate from it. The occupier kept her and each Palestinian away from the sea and implanted itself at the same place.

Actually, because Ruqayyah parted with the sea, all Palestinians departed from it and it became forbidden to them except their memories and hearts. The Zionists have occupied the coastal strip and seaports up to now. The coastline adjacent to Gaza became forbidden and troublesome since it is on-again and off-again and anyone who comes near it will surely lose his life. Fishing itself is banned for the people who live in this area.

Apprehensions and premonitions are apparent in Tantura and they typify the different Palestinian milieus that affected the lives of Palestinians in all of their actions. So this novel reflects the suitable environment that displays the marine and rural milieus at the same time and combines them together to the degree of homogeneity. The places through which Ruqayyah moved were mostly maritime ones. But each place had its own character, heritage and features and had an impact on her life.

The writer accentuated the beauty of the village of Tantura and acquainted us with its internal and external characteristics. She seems to have personified this place as a human being whose traits are analyzable. She wrote, "The sea incarnates the village and envelops it with its smell which we detect in the furnace bread. I can't remember when I learnt to swim, nor can I recall when I learnt to walk or speak."<sup>(7)</sup>

The writer identified with the setting when she mentioned that she could not recall when she learnt to swim. But she pointed out that she learnt to swim in her early days at Tantura. She breathed the sea air and was fed with it as she ate furnace bread. The village was the water, food and air. The novelist personifies the sea as a person who partakes in wedding ceremonies and nuptials together with the ground, the sky and the celebrators till it falls asleep. She said, "Those who celebrate wedding ceremonies lie down on the seaside which is illuminated by the trilling cries of joy, songs, debka troupes, the aroma of roasted sheep and torches. The echoes of "Attaba" and "Uf" songs go off from men, soar high in the air to exceed the neighboring villages and entertain the whole inhabitants of the coast from Ras Al Naqoura to Rafah. The sea may be captured by the spectacle and forget itself and still or gradually fall asleep after staying up late for a long time."<sup>(8)</sup>

### The Setting in the Novel of Al-Tanturiya

The novelist presents to us the setting in the most brilliant form. She gives us a vivid, dynamic, and colorful picture and offers it to readers on a plate embellished by deep-rootedness, history and authenticity. She proves to readers that these traditions, folk songs, ballads and debka are but a genuine heritage that was born out of this place. That's why she describes the sea and humans as being captivated by the lovely wedding ceremonies and their related songs till they fall asleep. She stresses that place is linked to man and his freedom. The relationship between place and freedom is dialectical from this angle. In this regard, freedom means the actions man can do without coming into conflict with barriers resulting from the external environment."<sup>(9)</sup>

The setting in Tantura is lively and dynamic. It goes beyond its static conventional pattern, weaves the threads of the event, frames characters and enlivens them. This is clear in the structure of the text through the places which Radwa Ashour highlighted. It turns out that she combined time and place. So "Tantura" is the central place and foundation stone of the structure of the text. The setting is associated with other places through its effective heritage that influenced the remaining places in narrative fiction. The writer has established an active relation between time and place because shifting from a spatial space to another is also accompanied by a temporal transition.

The names of the Palestinian villages embellish the narrative text. Each village has its own beauty and splendor such as Ein Ghazal and Qaysareyya which is situated at the Mediterranean Sea and is next to Tantura. The village of Qaysareyya was the first one to be seized by the Jews as told by Wisal who lived in it and was afterwards forced out of it together with her mother and took refuge in the house of Ruqayyah since they had no breadwinner. Ruqayyah relates, "My friend said that the Jewish troops besieged the village, attacked it and expelled people from their houses."<sup>(10)</sup>

The village of Qaysareyya is regarded as a historical site; it is a source of authenticity and civilization. Wisal boasts of her village and says to Ruqayyah, "We have more fantastic monuments; pure white marble columns dappled with strange colors. If you dig in the sand, you would come upon flagstones and statues. It seems as if the bowels of earth consisted of buildings paved with flagstones and decorated with paintings.

### How?

Once a young man from our village excavated and found a colored portrait of stone pieces sticking together. At that moment he said to other young men, "Excavate more. They found flagstones with images of pelicans, ducks, flowers and colored leaves. An old man of the village said, "These monuments date back to the Byzantine period or a time prior to it."<sup>(11)</sup> If this conversation signifies

anything, it points to the roots of this village, its civilization and the treasures buried in the bowels of the earth. The writer made these stones speak and relate their authenticity and pedigree throughout history. Therefore, Qaysareyya was the first village whose dwellers were displaced by the Zionists.

Some odd names for certain places occur in the novel like *kubbaneyyah* (a cabana). This word signifies the confiscation of many areas of the Palestinian territories, the construction of Jewish settlements on them and giving them new Jewish names so that the Jews would sow their first seeds in the land of Palestine through these cabanas.

Ruqayyah asks Wisal, "Are there any Christians at your village?"

Wisal replies, "Yes. There are Muslims, Christians and Jews."

Ruqayyah asks, "And Jews?"

Wisal replies, "Yes."

Ruqayyah asks, "At the cabanas or the village?"

Wisal replies, "At the village."

Ruqayyah asks, "Are they many?"

Wisal replies, "No, they are not many."

Ruqayyah asks, "Have the occupiers forced them out?"

Wisal replies, "The occupiers came to give them the whole village. So how can they force them out?"<sup>(12)</sup>

The cabanas were but the first cancerous cells in the body of Palestine. In the beginning the purposes of these cabanas were not unclear. The dwellers of these cabanas waited for some time till they became more powerful and began killing and dispersing the people of the village. Then they expelled those who escaped their plots and bullets.

The setting plays an important role in the narrative text, that is to say historiography. The place was a witness on the fall of the Palestinian cities one after the other. Abul Amin told his brother Abus Sadiq that the city of Haifa fell into the hands of the Zionists. This city has a peculiarity: it is the backbone of all other surrounding villages. He relates, "Haifa fell over two days, Abus Sadiq. I was there as you know. The city was besieged from all directions and was encircled by settlements. Inside the city the occupiers stayed on the mountain while we were on the plain. They had guns whereas we had to behave as jugglers to get weapons. We obtained 250 rifles from Syria. But Rashid Al Hajj Ibrahim received only 89 rifles as the rest were out of order and old."<sup>(13)</sup> It is clear from this conversation that Abul Amin knew the area inch by inch and its plains, hills and routes. He was one of the inhabitants of this city and used to

## The Setting in the Novel of Al-Tanturiya

resist the Zionist occupation along with other revolutionaries. But the enemy possessed more weaponry and power. The British colonist handed this city over to the Jews after it made an example of its men and young people.

As place connotes existence and entity, the novelist relates to us the scene of departure from houses and the feelings of the owners of these houses. Thus she uses some symbols and related objects like house, key, door, and parentless she-goat. She relates, "We left the house; my mother closed the gate and locked it with a big iron key and turned it into the latch seven times. Then she kept it, and suddenly she noticed that I was carrying a little motherless she-goat. She asked why I was carrying the she-goat. I replied that I would take it with me. She made no remarks and decided to go to the house of my uncle Abu Gamil."<sup>(14)</sup>

This scene affirms that this house was not endangered. The Palestinians who lived in it were safe. But at this moment they had to depart and lock the gate with an iron key which Ruqayyah saw for the first time. Umm As-Sadiq turned the key seven times as the house was sacred and private property. She kept the key as it was the symbol of return to home. She assumed that departure would be temporary and opted to go to her uncle's house to feel safe. Her husband and sons were fighting the occupation forces. The novelist showed in this scene that she believed firmly that the setting imparts to characters their make-ups, spontaneity and ethics. As nature reflects one's state of mind, contributes to understanding his personality, it also reveals the system of social values that individuals follow and determine one's relationship with community."<sup>(15)</sup>

The novelist translated this concept in her text when she related that Ruqayyah carried the little she-goat as a token of mercy and pity towards it. This at the same time implies that aggression involved humans, stones, animals and fish. So the novelist realized that the girl of the coastal village reflected the features, manners and spontaneity of Tantura.

The pace of evacuating Ruqayyah and her mother along with the rest of the Palestinian people from their villages and towns was quick in the theatre of events. We note that place and time worked together at the time of moving from a place to another. Movement predominated; there was no room for peace or stability. It seemed as if the writer raced against time in displacement since she wanted to suggest that the occupier desired to expedite displacement so that the Palestinians could not consider or make any arrangements. The occupier killed the revolutionaries and perpetrated massacres to strike terror into the Palestinians' hearts, catch them off balance and get them to be out of their senses. The rest of Palestinians were easily evacuated amid obscure and secret information. In this very scene we find that the writer accompanied Ruqayyah, her mother, her little brother and Wisal who took refuge with them together with



Alkhouli

her mother after their village was seized and moved with them from a village to another and a town to another. She seemed as if she had wanted to show to readers how fast she jumped from these places to others. She meant to communicate to readers anxiety, fear, and unstability. She elucidated by the tongue of Ruqayyah the names of places and the time they passed by them. She drew a map of real Palestinian places.

The events were true even if reality was much bitterer. Ruqayyah relates, "We arrived at the house of Abu Gamil and the noise of explosions and bullets were everywhere. We heard roosters crowing, then dawn broke and we heard footsteps and three armed men stormed the house and drove us to the house of Al Mukhtar. They intimidated us with the bayonets and shot bullets above our heads."<sup>(16)</sup> The aforementioned scene was the first step towards the displacement of the Palestinian people. The other steps were nothing but painful experiences that stuck in their memories. The novelist relates, "On our way we watched Hasan Abdul Al who was blind and his wife Azzah Al Hajj Al Hendy lying near their house and being surrounded by a pool of blood. We also saw a corpse of someone who I couldn't identify."<sup>(17)</sup>

The occupier intentionally left corpses lying in streets to terrify survivors. The displacement of Ruqayyah did not stop at this extent. It went through many thorny stages. She relates, "They drove us towards the seashore and divided us into two groups. Men were in one direction while women, children and some aged men were in another. This was the first time I had seen young women wear military fatigues and carry weapons. They spoke to us in Arabic and began to body-search us one by one. They robbed us of whatever they found with us, be it money or jewelry, and put it into a helmet. Whenever it was full of valuables, they emptied it on a big blanket outspread over the ground. The female soldier did not notice the she-goat. She caught sight of my earrings and immediately removed them from my ears so violently that they bled. I wiped the blood with the edge of my garment. She also took the cans of oil, olives and cheese from me and divested my mother of her ring, pair of earrings and chain."<sup>(18)</sup>

Of course, everything was arranged and planned. After the occupation forces gathered the unarmed residents, they split them into two groups: men were in one direction whereas women and children were in another. Men were eventually tortured and killed. Women, children and aged people were robbed and divested of their possessions. Earrings were taken as well. The occupation forces plundered their land, property and foodstuff. The narrator goes on relating the journey of displacement, "The train of women began to move and we were driven towards the graveyard. On our way we saw three corpses and then two other ones and I could not identify any of them. Two vans waited at the graveyard. At gunpoint we were compelled to get on them. A female soldier

## The Setting in the Novel of Al-Tanturiya

snatched away the she-goat from me. We were nearly five or six hundred people. They crammed all of us onto the two vans which started to move. All of a sudden I screamed and grabbed my mother's arm, pointing to a heap of corpses. My mother gave a glance and shouted, "Gamil, my cousin. I grabbed her arm by my left hand and pointed with my right hand to the corpses of my father and brother. Their corpses were thrown beside that of Gamil a few meters ahead of us."<sup>(19)</sup>

In this scene the novelist casts more light on the brutality of the occupier and its hideous designs. After it appropriated the whole Palestinian land, it turned to people and killed men whether they were among the revolutionaries or those who remained with women to protect and look after them. The corpses were heaped up near the graveyard. The female soldier snatched the she-goat away from Ruqayyah and forced her to get on the van to throw them away. The occupation forces showed their brutality when they compelled women and aged men to climb the van beside the graveyard. This very place played a serious role in terrifying unarmed women who had no choice but to pray to Allah and cry. It seems as if they said to them, "This is your end: either you climb onto the van and leave your homeland or you lose your lives at this graveyard where there were heaped corpses, including those of Abus Sadiq and his two sons who preferred to stay at their native land and defend it to their last breath.

When Ruqayyah saw the corpses of her father and brothers among the casualties, she reacted instinctively to this view to the point that she became inarticulate. She wanted her mother to see the corpses to do something about them but she was also entirely helpless and powerless and was forcibly evacuated. Ruqayyah was forced out of Tantura, the sea, its sand, its smell and the she-goat. Leaving her father and two brothers who were martyred and whose corpses lied beside the graveyard was hard on her.

The second stop was Al Fureidis where the vans landed women, children and aged people at the house of Al Mukhtar and were afterwards received by the people of the town. At Al Fureidis children worked at the settlement of *Zikhron Ya'akov* for few pennies. After four weeks they left Al Fureidis for the Triangle where the Red Cross delivered them to Jordanian officers. Then buses carried them to Tulkarem. The narrator relates to us what happened at this station, "They landed us at a school close to the railway of Hijaz. At Tulkarem the Israeli aircrafts attacked us with bombs. The son of Yahya Al Eshmawy and his daughter were martyred. Two weeks later other vans came to transmit us to the Monastery of Al Maskubeyya in Hebron. Abd shadowed me and used to sleep beside me. I used to warm up his hands and feet and pat his head till he fell asleep. I was unable to sing for him as I used to do when I was at my village."<sup>(20)</sup>

The Zionist forces kept chasing and killing Palestinians wherever they went. Their military aircrafts bombarded the displaced in Tulkarem. Those fated to survive had to move to another station, namely Hebron. Ruqayyah goes on relating to us the scenes of the Palestinian villages and towns using the subject pronoun "we" and the object pronoun "us" as she talks about large numbers of displaced people. She says, "We stayed; such-and-such entertained us; we buried; we received; we arrived and so on." Whenever she wanted to say something personal, she used the two pronouns "I" and "me". The novelist realizes that narrating in the first person pronoun enables the writer to reach the inner thoughts and feelings of the protagonist without affectation or mincing words and present them to us in a narrative way or via a stream of consciousness."<sup>(21)</sup>

The narrative method suggests that the setting is the basic element of narration which controls characters, events, expressions and poetic language. This is because spatial space is a verbal one, and thus it is meaningful."<sup>(22)</sup> Also places are constituted through events and crystallize in minds and have exciting images that run through our imaginations. The image of the seaside of Haifa in the mind of Ruqayyah differed from any other maritime cities. While she and her paternal cousin Ezz were walking on the seaside of Sidon, he said, "The seaside of Sidon is similar to that of our village." She replied, "But the seaside of our village is much better. Here there are no islands, the Well of Sukkar or ochre. The entire atmosphere of the village is different as well."<sup>(23)</sup>

This emphasizes that image in spatial imagination captures all senses. There is no other place that is as equally important as the place of one's birth and homeland. Abul Amin continued to reject the notion of dislodgement and replacing Tantura with Sidon since the former was his life and it remained in his memory for twenty seven years. He used to oppose his status as a displaced person and was engrossed in limited military operations across the man-made borders. He also declined to register himself in the *United Nations Relief and Works Agency* for Palestine Refugees due to his self-esteem. He never gave up or accepted things the way they were. However, his son Ezz registered his family without the knowledge of his father so that he would not hurt his feelings or bring an end to the sweetness of place which none tasted but those who lived in Palestine.

The novelist gave the key a spatial symbol as it was a shadow of the occupied place. She focused the territories occupied on this key and employed it in her text as a sign of homeland, nostalgia, prestige, dignity and hope for return. Palestinian women carried the keys and fastened them around their necks under the commitment that they should keep these keys all their lifetimes. They tied

## The Setting in the Novel of Al-Tanturiya

them with strings so that they would dangle over their breasts as though they had provided them with heartbeats and inspired them to patience and perseverance.

Never were these keys kept away from the breasts of Umm As-Sadiq or other displaced Palestinian women. Rather, they kept them for as long as they were alive. These keys turned into spatial Palestinian heritage. Umm Al Amin handed Ruqayyah the key of their house at Tantura after the death of her mother. Ruqayyah relates, "She put the key on my left-hand palm. I looked carefully at it; it was an old dark-colored iron key. It was somewhat heavy. I fingered it with my right hand and I recognized it well. Suddenly, I smiled and realized that I was silly. I took hold of the small string with my hands, lifted it and inserted my head through it."<sup>(24)</sup> In this scene Ruqayyah put the key in her left-hand palm and handled it gently with her right hand as if she had hugged her baby and cradled it to her bosom, caressing it with her right hand. The key was nothing but a symbol of a missing home.

Place is one's identity, and thus Abul Amin stressed this identity while he was in Sidon. This began when he refused to register his family in the UNRWA. He continued to sneak into his native land and pinpoint the sites of the enemy and their barracks. He commanded the guerilla forces in Sidon and trained them to take up arms. Abul Amin put more emphasis on this identity in another way. He named his grandchildren after his nephews Sadiq, Hasan, and Abdurrahim who were among the revolutionaries. He also taught them patriotism the time when he made his grandchild As-Sadiq join the cadets, taught him about the boundaries of his country and how to draw the map of Palestine and the locations of all its towns and villages.

Moreover, he used to add other new villages to the existing ones for the new generation and call them, for example, Ruqayyah and Amin. He devoted his attention to strengthening the concept of identity when he was in charge of his grandchildren who memorized the Anthem of My Homeland and learned about the Palestinian poet who wrote it. They also studied other national poems like the one reading, I will carry my spirit on my palm and make it fall into ruin. They learned about the poets Ibrahim Tuqan and Mahmoud Aburrahim. Not only did the grandchildren of Abul Amin know these figures but they also learned about the Palestinian caricaturist Nagy Al Aly, the village of Ash Shagarah where he was born and the place of his immigration, namely Ain al Hilweh Camp, in Lebanon. Thus the novelist proves to readers that Palestinians bequeathed not only the keys of their homes but also their scholars, poets, men of letters and the names of villages and towns. Spatial knowledge was enduring and was closely connected with the Palestinians' memories, feelings, customs and traditions. In other words, place represents one's homeland and his culture.

The novelist highlighted the setting and its constituents and made memory a store for both place and time. She made the voice of Wisal of Jenin, the West Bank set off all the memories of the past as if they had been a volcano. She relates, "I held the handset, put it on my ear and as soon as I heard her voice, I recognized her, yet I said perplexedly, 'Wisal?! My voice ceased and it seemed as if had returned to Al Fureidis and lost my ability to speak.'<sup>(25)</sup> It was the handset which she picked up in Sidon and connected her to the missing place where she went completely mute when she eyed the corpses of her father and brothers in Al Fureidis. In this place she lost all love and feelings. She had only some memories of the sea, Tantura and the corpses of her father and brothers which were heap up. These painful memories made Ruqayyah lose her ability to speak again and break down in tears. The novelist linked present with past and Sidon with the occupied home through the sonic vibrations of her friend Wisal via the wires of the landline.

Place has a direct impact on characters and their behaviors according to its nature. Each place has a specific influence on the characters of the novel and the kind of this influence should differ from a place to another. All of this depends upon the nature of place as well. The impact of narrow places is completely different from that of wide or open places. The behaviors and makeup of a person who lives at an open place necessarily differ from those of a person who lives in a camp encircled by a high fence so that such a person will not upset the tourists who visit Beirut. Such a personality has a special nature. It either struggles to exit from this enclosure or surrenders and despairs.

There was a child called Sa'id who was nearly four years. His mother relates to Ruqayyah how he enrolled himself in school when he overtook his brother Muhammad and entered a small room in the camp which served as a toilet before. He met a young teacher who said to him, "Where are you going?" Sa'id pointed to Muhammad his brother. My name is Sa'id. I was born on the Night of Al Qadr and for this reason I was called Sa'id. But my grandmother calls me Mabrouk." The young teacher said to him, "Go back, Sa'id. Tomorrow bring your father and the documents to enroll you." Sa'id said, "But my father leaves home in early morning; he works as a baker and returns at night to fall into a deep sleep. What should I do? Can I bring him with me next Friday before prayer?" The young teacher said, "The school is closed on that day." Sa'id said, "Why is it closed? What will you do about my father? It is me who is going to school, not my father." The young teacher said, "Okay. Go home and tomorrow we will bring you a chair to sit on. How can you learn while you are standing?" Sa'id said, "There is some space at the back of the class. It was a basin without water inside it or a tap. Immediately Sa'id hurried towards the basin and sat into it."<sup>(26)</sup> This young child broke all the limitations of place with his own will and

The Setting in the Novel of Al-Tanturiya

his inborn spontaneity overruled all that which was normal. In this respect Ibrahim Gabra says, "Place lays a material siege to character."<sup>(27)</sup>

The writer points out that there is a correlation between character and place. This correlation arises when a character forms in a specified place and lives in it. A hidden storm and spiritual link develop inside a character and make it love a particular place and hope to return to it to feel at ease even if this place is substandard compared with the new one. Because of this we find that Hasan, the son of Ruqayyah yearned for Sidon after they moved to Beirut. Ruqayyah relates, "We go to Sidon every weekend. Amin takes us in his Rhino. The children like Sidon very much. Hasan is crazy about it and says that he loves its smell, the alleys and buildings of the ancient town, the gardens around it and the sea. He says, "We can hardly notice the smell of the sea. In Sidon we detect the smell of the sea as well as the aroma of the flowers of orange trees."<sup>(28)</sup> This correlation between place and the spirit of character results in the fact that love of place is a genuine and deep sentiment in human conscience, especially when place is the home of rapport and affiliation."<sup>(29)</sup>

Place has a noticeable impact on the lives of Ruqayyah and other displaced Palestinians who underwent painful and bitter experiences. Place is the indicator which exhibits their experience, lives, desires and innermost thoughts that distinguish them from others. The relationship between a Palestinian and place emanates from his sense of banishment, pain and expatriation that resulted from coercive departure from native land. Therefore, this sense motivates him to dream of his return to it no matter how far he is from it and how many places he turned to for shelter. Even if he established intimate relations with other places, he remained attached to his native country, and this would reflect on his state of mind either positively or negatively. These places never prevented the Palestinians from dreaming of return to the place out of which they were forced."<sup>(30)</sup>

The novelist entitled chapter seventeen "Place 1975", and she intended to forge a link between place and the apprehensions which overwhelmed her heart and her memory. This memory was refreshed by the events that took place in the new place which she took refuge in after she was expelled from Tantura. The novelist also activated her text when she cast light on the heroine and the misgivings which confused her and troubled Beirut and Sidon. Sidon flared into rage against the government which monopolized fishing industry for ninety days for the benefit of a private company owned by some top officials and headed by *Camille Chamoun, the ex-president of Lebanon*.

The protests and defence of the rights of fishermen were led by patriot Ma'arouf Sa'ad who was assassinated afterwards. But his assassination sparked

Alkhouli

unrest and serious riots throughout Lebanon. These events affected the memories of Ruqayyah and Abus Sadiq who recalled everything from the moment he met Ma'arouf Sa'ad in Haifa and recollected how he resisted the trucks loaded with vegetables and fruit which used to head for northern Palestinian to supply the settlements and Israelis with foodstuff. The painful memories of the despoiled places, struggle and martyrs claimed the life of Abus Sadiq who passed away along with his wishes and agonies.

As for Ruqayyah, the tragic events which happened to her and her displaced fellow compatriots confused and caught her off-balance. The fears of the tragic past haunted her, so she wanted to know more about the new place where she lived. She asked her son Hasan to draw a map of Beirut and its suburbs. She said, "Illustrate for me by drawing the districts and suburbs of Beirut. Do you know East and West Beirut? Do you know where the museum is? Where is the Martyrs' Square? Where is the area of hotels? Where is the market? Where is Khaldah? Where are Naameh and Damour? Where is Ain Rummana? Where is the district of Ghawarba? Where is Sabnay? Where is Nabah? Where are Maskh and Karintina? Where is Ashrafeyya?" Again she asks Hasan to draw a map and he says, "I drew a map, mum. Where is the one I drew for you?"<sup>(31)</sup>

Insistence on redrawing the map with all its details indicates the fears which occupied Ruqayyah's mind. She wanted to keep these places etched in her memory and heart so that she would not lose them as she lost Tantura and whole Palestine in 1948. Yasin An Nasir says, "Place is the "creative geography" of artistic works. If the vision that precedes an artistic work is determined by current events, the artistic work is at present part of an event and depends entirely on it. It is an effective means in an event, not a formative end."<sup>(32)</sup>

Place has a huge effect on the characters who live therein. It is the social entity which contains the substance of the interaction between man and his society. Thus place is like any social product that is part of the morality, thoughts and awareness of those who live in it."<sup>(33)</sup> Place influences the way one dresses, his thinking and his lifestyle. It also has an effect on behavior and ethics. This is clear in the meeting between Ruqayyah and her lifelong friend Wisal who eventually lived at Jenin Camp, in West Bank, Palestine.

As regards Ruqayyah, she was destined to live with her mother in Sidon, Lebanon. When the two friends met after a long absence, Wisal prepared for Ruqayyah a traditional garment which she embroidered with silk threads. Wisal continued wearing this kind of garments so that she would not be alienated from her homeland and its traditions. Ruqayyah lived in Sidon and Beirut and used to wear tight-fitting, almost knee-length garments and tie her hair with a black ribbon. She brought a present to Wisal in the form of a bottle of perfume and a

## The Setting in the Novel of Al-Tanturiya

gold chain. These paradoxes preoccupied Ruqayyah and aroused her apprehensions again. This motivated her to draw a comparison between her personality and that of Wisal to conclude how far place and her being away from homeland affected her and her outer appearance. These differences were confirmed when Wisal gave Ruqayyah a tin of oil and some bottles filled with olives. Wisal said, "Oil is extracted from our olives in Jenin. I pressed the olives into bottles and I closed them tightly so that you would not have difficulty carrying them to Beirut."<sup>(34)</sup> Oil and olives are two national symbols for Palestine and a brand of their affiliation with native land. That's why Wisal opted to present her lifelong friend these three *hypostases*: the embroidered garment, oil and olives.

Place and its furnishings play a great role in reflecting the social status and mental state of its dwellers. What drew the attention of Ruqayyah when she visited the house of the bride of As-Sadiq in Oman was the furniture, accessories and three paintings. "The reception room was spacious, with big chairs with golden frames. At the middle there was a big rectangular table covered with a pane of glass with crystal ashtrays and several rosaries on top. All of these objects were exhibited as if they had been masterpieces. Three large paintings with golden frames and which were hung on the wall attracted my attention. The painting which was at the middle was of a porter or water carrier with a picture of Al Aqsa Mosque on his back. And on both sides there were two paintings: one of a sluggish sea and the other of a table with a bowl of dull fruits on top."<sup>(35)</sup>

The description of the place and the stately furniture indicates the social standing of the inhabitants of this house. The gilded furniture and crystal ashtrays are suggestive of aristocracy and luxury. As for the three paintings, each one has its special magic. The middle painting is of a porter who carries a picture of Al Aqsa Mosque symbolizes a Palestinian refugee who is expelled from his native land and carries an image of his religious heritage for fear that Zionists should desecrate it. On the other hand, Jerusalem is the main concern of Palestinians since Zionists' designs are primarily concentrated on establishing their capital in it. This is the most serious danger that Jerusalem faces. As for the two other paintings, the dull sea and fruits with dull colors represent surrender and submission to fate and the other disasters that befell the Palestinian people who were displaced in 1948 and forced to immigrate in 1967.

A fierce conflict overwhelmed the mind and heart of Ruqayyah. She thought of leaving Lebanon to join her son and family in Abu Dhabi. She was unable to take this step and wondered, "Why didn't I depart? Did I inherit from my uncle Abul Amin the sense of disestrangement? Or did it appear to me after I was raised in this place that I was as estranged as some of the people who resemble



Alkhoul

us here? Perhaps I was unwilling to get away anymore. It seems that the seaside of Beirut takes me to the seaside of my village. It seems as if Shatila was a street which if I walked through straight on, I would arrive at Tantura."<sup>(36)</sup>

The secret of her adhering to living in Beirut is her childhood and youth which she spent in it. She grew up in Beirut and benefited from its bounty. However, the most important element is Beirut's proximity to Palestine. In addition, a single sea binds them together.

Ruqayyah moved to Abu Dhabi to join her son As-Sadiq after she put off leaving Beirut several times. She carried her weight and left her painful past and the throttling memories of Beirut, Sidon and the lanes of Ain al-Hilweh and Shatila which witnessed the brutal massacres perpetrated by the Phalangists militias and Christians against her fellow Palestinian compatriots. The members of her family are dispersed again across the globe. As-Sadiq, the elder son, lived in Abu Dhabi; Hasan lived in Canada; Abd, the youngest son, lived in France after he was detained several times by the Phalangists. He had to depart from Lebanese territories as they did not put up with anything related to Palestine. Ezz, Ruqayyah's brother-in-law, immigrated again to Jordan with his wife. The major concern was that she left behind the cause of her patriot husband Amin who worked as a doctor and was later detained by the Phalangists. She had news about him. All news affirmed that the Phalangists executed him when they broke into the hospital where he worked and committed killings on grounds of identity. Al Amin's identity caused Zionists to displace him with his family from Palestine, and it was the same reason behind his execution by the Phalangists.

Ruqayyah lived with her son and his family in Abu Dhabi. Although it is located on the Gulf, she missed Tantura, Haifa, Sidon and the distinguishing smell of the sea in each of these places. She never forgot her memories or the Palestinians who lead miserable lives in the camps. For her, it was only the physical place which changed whereas the actual place was still engraved in her memory that flapped over the Palestinian camps in Lebanon. This is because she experienced their sufferings and sensed their powerlessness which embodied identity.

Place was a major problem for Palestinians who dispersed throughout the world. Hasan, the son of Ruqayyah, recognized a Palestinian young woman from Lod who lived in Canada. How could the two families meet to strike the marriage contract and hold a wedding ceremony? The members of the two families are scattered in Canada and Lod, in occupied Palestine, Lebanon, Jenin, Jordan, Emirates, Tunisia and Tel Aviv. At last As-Sadiq suggested that they should meet at a place where everyone was able to go to Piraeus, in Greece. Members of the two families and friends met and held a Palestinian-style

### The Setting in the Novel of Al-Tanturiya

wedding ceremony in which they sang traditional ballads and songs. Hands were held in a typical debka show. This indicated that they were concerned with homeland wherever they went.

Even if place does not remain in memory, it is translated into pieces of jewelry we present to one another and wear them. Abd who became an expatriate in Paris gave his mother Ruqayyah a silver chain as a present and she wore it around her neck along with the key of her house at Tantura. This silver chain was made by a Kurdish artist who lived in Paris. The silver chain was similar to a miniature book cover or a pared-down sheet of paper taken from a miniaturized notebook. The silver chain was covered with enamel and the word "Tantura" was engraved on it<sup>(37)</sup>

Mariam who was adopted by Amin and Ruqayyah in Sidon after she lost her family during the Lebanese Civil War chose Egypt to complete her university education in Alexandria. Alexandria is bordered by the Mediterranean Sea which joins the towns and villages that Ruqayyah loved very much like Tantura, Sidon and Beirut. Mariam wanted to reward her mother by choosing this place and refresh her memories and bring life back to her soul. It seems that she desired to reduce distances in spatial imagination. Longing for almond trees at Tantura, indigenous jasmine trees, the fragrance of lilies that mingled with the smell of the sea prompted her to grow plants at her small flat. She said, "The first plant I grew was mallow in seven rectangular containers which I fixed on the balcony wall. The air and sun of Alexandria suited mallows. Even in winter they retained their leaves and colors: flame red, violet and another confusing color. After that I placed two deep containers at one of the corners of the balcony and planted into them flax and jasmine. Jasmine grew rapidly and crept over the marble of the kitchen. Below the big window there were containers of mint, basil, and sage. The third garden was situated at the entryway of the flat, and it contained seven containers of different types of cactus of varying sizes. All used to flower only once a year."<sup>(38)</sup>

Nostalgia for homeland and place formed the progress of the events in the novel since nostalgia drove Mariam to turn her small flat into a garden. She believed that her native land was a paradise together with its earth, sea, trees, lilies, and basil. So she grew different types of flowers and other plants that could breathe life into her in her exile.

Once she was about to finish her study in Alexandria, she decided to return to Sidon, simply because she wanted to live near Palestine. She also preferred to live with and support Palestinian refugees who led wretched lives and who were part of her homeland.

Alkhoul

The novelist concludes her novel at the point of convergence between Palestine and South Lebanon after Lebanese territories were recovered from Israel. She opted to close her novel at the place where barbed wires formed a barrier between the Palestinians who lived in occupied Palestine and the Palestinian Diaspora. In the midst of her unspeakable joy of arriving in Palestine though from behind barbed wires, she meets on the Palestinian side her son Hasan who came back from Canada along with his wife Fatima and his three children. He lifts his little daughter from above the barbed wires and hands her to her grandmother to recognize her. In doing so, he demolishes the barriers of place and rises above the barbed wires between the two sides.

The novelist emphasizes this when Ruqayyah presents her granddaughter the key of her native house that generations inherit from one another. It seems as if she handed over the trust of homeland and the key of victory and return to succeeding generations. Galal Addin Ar Roumy writes in his poem "The Moan of the Pipe": And I said to the pipe, "Why does your tone of voice appear so sad?" He replied, "Since I was cut from the woodland, I have pined for my origins."

### المكان في رواية الطنطورية

ختام الخولي، قسم اللغة العربية واللغات الأجنبية، كلية الآداب والعلوم، الجامعة الأمريكية الكويتية، الكويت.

#### ملخص

تتناول هذه الدراسة صور المكان ودلالاته في رواية الطنطورية؛ هذا المكان الذي هيمن على الرواية من العنوان إلى النهاية، وتبرز أثر المكان في الشخصيات وسلوكياتهم وأخلاقهم وعاداتهم وتقاليدهم وعلى ردود أفعالهم. وتحاول هذه الدراسة أن تثبت أن المكان يبقى مخزوناً في عقل الإنسان طوال حياته، وأن الأحداث هي التي تنبش الذاكرة دائماً، فتتوالى ذكريات الأمكنة وما تحمله من علامات ودلالات ورموز.

والمكان في رواية الطنطورية تنوع وتشكل في صور مختلفة كالريف، والمدينة، والمهجر: لبنان - الإمارات - مصر، وكندا، وقد أضفى تنوع المكان وتشكيلاته على النص صورة جمالية شملت أنماط المكان ودلالاته في الرواية.

The Setting in the Novel of Al-Tanturiya

يعتمد هذا البحث على المنهج الأسلوبي وذلك عن طريق استخراج البنى الفنية المكانية ثم تحليلها وبيان جمالياتها ومدلولاتها وتأثيرها في النص الروائي. وستغطي الدراسة عناصر مختلفة في الرواية من مثل :

1. مقدمة تبرز نبذة قصيرة عن الرواية ونشأتها.
2. مفهوم المكان ودلالته ورصد أنماطه من خلال الأمكنة وتنوعها في الرواية من مثل : المكان في القرية، المكان في المهجر من خلال البلدان الآتية : لبنان، مصر، الإمارات، كندا.
3. أثر المكان وانعكاسه على الإنسان ومحيطه.
4. آليات التصوير الفني للمكان وجمالياته؛ وذلك بإبراز العنصر الجمالي للغة وتجلياته في النص.

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Alkhoul

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