

The Aesthetics of Place in Najrani Poetry: An Applied Study of The Poem "Wahabba Hawana"

¹Dr. Reem bint Mohammed bin Abdullah Al-Jalil, ²Dr. Rasha Abdel raouf Abdel fattah Elhebishy and ³Dr. Wadha bint Ahmed Musad Al Warqash

^{1,2,3}Department of Arabic Language, College of Arts and Sciences, Najran University, Saudi Arabia

*Corresponding Author
rmaljalil@nu.edu.sa

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Abstract:

This research aims to study the image of place in the poetry of Muhammad Naji Al Saad through an analysis of his poem "Wahabba Hawana" (Our Wind Blew) to reveal the dimensions of the relationship between the poet and his Najrani environment in light of the dialectic of influence and being influenced. The research adopted a descriptive-analytical approach based on textual reading to uncover the aesthetic and intellectual structure of place in terms of its natural, social, and symbolic connotations. The study showed that place in Al Saad's poetry transcends the geographical framework to become an emotional and cultural space that reflects the poet's awareness of identity and belonging. In the poem "Wahabba Hawana," place is manifested as a mirror of the self and a haven for longing and nostalgia, while in the poem "Salam Ala Najran" (Peace Be Upon Najran), it transforms into a national and human symbol that combines history, glory, and dignity.

Keywords: Muhammad Naji Al Saad, Najran, place in poetry, poem "Wahabba Hawana".

INTRODUCTION

Place is one of the most important elements of the poetic experience, viewed not merely as an external framework, but as a vital space where the self intertwines with nature, longing with identity, and memory with emotion. Modern critics have paid particular attention to the study of place in literary texts, recognizing its influence on shaping poetic vision and highlighting its artistic and semantic distinctiveness.

The poet Mohammed Naji Al Saad is among the poetic voices that have presented a vivid image of Najran in his collection, "A Cloud of Revelation," where the features of the local environment are revealed in his poems, enhanced by emotional dimensions and nostalgia, transforming the place into a living poetic memory.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH:

The significance of this research stems from its attempt to highlight the presence of place in contemporary Najrani poetry, as a semantic space that embodies human identity, culture, and belonging. It sheds light on an important aspect of the poetic experience in the Najran region, which still requires further critical attention, and reveals the unique artistic vision of the poet Muhammad Naji Al Saad in his representation of place and the local environment within a poetic framework that combines authenticity and modernity.

RESEARCH PROBLEM

- The problem addressed by this research lies in attempting to answer the main question:
- How is the image of place manifested in Muhammad Naji Al Saad's poem "Wahabba Hawana" (He Gave Our Love), and what are the features of influence, being influenced, and nostalgia within it?

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the features of place in the poem "Wahabba Hawana?"
2. What are the manifestations of influence from heritage and being influenced by the environment in the poem?
3. What is the role of nostalgia in shaping the image of place?

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To reveal the image of place in the poetry of Muhammad Naji Al Saad.
2. Highlighting the role of the Najran environment in shaping the poetic experience.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research relies on the textual analytical method to uncover the connotations of place in the poem "Wahabba Hawana" (He Gave Our Love), while also employing the thematic method that traces the themes of place and longing in the texts.

PREVIOUS STUDIES:

A number of researchers and critics have addressed the topic of place in Arabic poetry from multiple perspectives, with their approaches ranging from aesthetic and thematic to historical studies. This demonstrates the presence of this element as a fundamental pillar in shaping the poetic experience. The following are some of the most prominent studies that have approached this topic or its content:

- Place in Saudi Poetry (1400-1430 AH), (1436 AH), by Abdul Khaliq bin Khadran bin Musa'id Al-Zahrani: This study examines the aesthetics of place in Saudi poetry during the period from 1400 AH to 1430 AH.

RESEARCH STRUCTURE

This research consists of an introduction, a preface, three sections, and a conclusion, as follows:

- Introduction
- Preface
- Section One: The Image of Place in the Poem "He Gave Our Love"
- Section Three: Place Between Influence and Being Influenced
- Conclusion
- Sources and References
- Appendices Introduction

Place is one of the most prominent concepts that has preoccupied modern Arabic literary criticism, given its aesthetic and cognitive role in constructing poetic texts. "Place is a fundamental unit of literary and artistic work in literary theory." In poetry, it is not reduced to a geographical space or a framework for events, but rather a living entity in which the poetic self interacts with memory, environment, and identity. The concept of place has evolved in modern literary studies to encompass its symbolic, psychological, and social dimensions, becoming a mirror reflecting the poet's vision of the world and a semantic field that translates their stance on reality and existence. Therefore, studying place in poetry is an entry point for understanding the poetic experience in its human and aesthetic depth.

The term "space" is prevalent among Western critics, who use it in the titles of their books and articles, while the term "place" appears less frequently, serving specific purposes. Arab critics, in particular, do not readily employ the term "space" in their critical writings. The term "place" holds a more prominent place in their work. Poetry in the Najran region serves as a prime example of this close connection between the poet and their environment. Najran is one of the Saudi regions distinguished by its geographical and cultural richness. Its diverse landscape—mountains, plains, valleys, palm groves, and oases—is reflected in the poetry of its people as a tapestry of longing, pride, and belonging. Thus, in Najrani poetry, place becomes an expressive voice of collective identity and local character, blending Arab authenticity with environmental specificity. "The city is a highly contemporary concept, linked to the twentieth century and its achievements, where the contemporary poet embarks from a civilizational perspective, offering a new vision of the universe, society, and humanity."

The selection of the poem "Wahabba Hawana" for this research stems from its prominent representation of the presence of place in the poetry of Muhammad Naji Al Saad. It expresses place in both its natural and symbolic dimensions, allowing for a comprehensive reading of the image of place in his poetry from two complementary perspectives. Through the analysis of this poem, the research seeks to uncover the aesthetic and semantic structure of place in Najrani poetry, and the relationship

that connects place as an emotional state that evokes the past to affirm the present.

THE IMAGE OF PLACE IN THE POEM "WAHABBA HAWANA"

The poem "Wahabba Hawana" is one of the poems that clearly reveals the unique significance of place in the poetry of Muhammad Naji Al Saad. In it, the poet intertwines personal experience with the Najrani environment, which forms the backdrop of his emotions and poetic inspiration.

This poem represents an expressive field that reflects the intimate, individual relationship between the poet and place. It is built upon a sincere personal longing that translates his belonging to his land and his early past, making place a mirror of his self and an extension of his emotions. In this poem, place is not merely an external frame or decorative image, but rather a space of feeling that embodies the relationship between humanity and the land, and the enduring connection between the past, identity, and longing.

Hence, the importance of this poem emerges as a personal, emotional experience representing the initial seed of the poet's awareness of place, before this awareness expands in his other poem, "Peace Be Upon Najran," to become a comprehensive national dimension.

FIRST: THE NATURAL LANDSCAPE AS A MIRROR OF THE SELF.

The poet begins his poem by depicting the features of Najran in a vibrant image, where valleys, mountains, and palm trees form the spatial landscape that embraces the poetic experience. "It is a fundamental source of poetic expression, given that poetic discourse is a discourse of the self, from which it derives its particularity. It is a discourse of memory, from which it draws its poetic themes—individual, collective, and human—and from which it draws its imagery, metaphors, and even its language." Through this description, the poet evokes the real environment to which he belongs, making it a mirror of his self and a tool for expressing his belonging. He says in the opening lines of the poem:

- "Our love has been bestowed upon us by (Radhiya), as has been decreed.
- "Oppressive, and whatever you command, the heart will obey".

Thus, "place has a significant presence in shaping the poetic text, contributing actively, along with the other formative elements, to its transformation from the self to the written word." In this context, the poet presents, in one of the opening lines of his poem, a vivid depiction of the Najran region in natural imagery that expresses the vitality of the environment and its harmony with his emotions. He says in it:

Peace be upon the chaotic canal that has been pampered

Whose streams dance to the pulse of a fingertip

In this poetic scene, the Najran landscape is embodied as a living, breathing entity. The canal and streams overflow with water and life, moving "dancing" to the rhythm of nature's fingertips. The place here is not static, but rather unites with the poet in a delicate, emotional feeling, revealing his attachment to the land and his being filled with its fragrance and voice. The poet emphasizes this harmony in his words:

As if the waterwheels, if we tighten the pulley

At dawn, are a melody or the warbling of a nightingale
For the tools of agriculture are transformed into a musical melody, in a scene that unites man, place, and nature in a sensory unity that transcends description to become a spiritual experience. Likewise, he says:

On every (sow) that strikes (its udders),

Its fragrance fills the nostrils despite the wetness.

In this verse, scent blends with the sensual nature, making the natural setting a symbol of fertility and beauty. The place becomes a mirror of his self, overflowing with love for his land, and a reflection of his pure belonging to Najran and its environment.

SECONDLY: THE PLACE IS THE HOME OF IDENTITY AND INDIVIDUAL BELONGING.

The presence of place in the poem extends to become the home of cultural identity and tribal affiliation. In his words:

A land where (Banu al-Sa'd) raised their son
And she said with determination, "Take glory and drink deeply"!

The place transforms into a home of heroism and pride. It is not merely a physical space, but a bearer of collective memory and a source of values and glory, "and one of the fundamental components of identity." Here, the land speaks with pride and urges its sons to continue on the path of glory. The poet reinforces this awareness of place when he says:

- (Yam) is at the head of the entire tribe
- (Kahlan) is the ancestor of all, in its entirety

And from the lineage of the great (Qahtan) our roots have boasted of our glories in every lineage.

He evokes the historical tribal structure (Yam, Kahlan, Qahtan) as the roots of identity that bestow upon the place a quality of sanctity and historical depth, thus making the place synonymous with belonging, dignity, and authenticity. He then connects the present with the past, making the place a witness to the continuity of glory and the inheritance of values from generation to generation. "The place is linked through its relationship with time, due to the complementary relationship between them." If time is the path along which events unfold, then place accompanies and encompasses them.

In light of this, we find that Al Saad makes place a central element in building the identity of the individual and the group. The poem reveals features of pride and belonging to the land and the tribe, through the evocation of images of nature, customs, and social relationships that constitute the collective consciousness of the people of Najran. This is especially true since "the concept of place in the poetic text appears in two main directions: the first concerns the impact of place or environment on the poet, making place a fundamental factor in the formation of the poetic self; the second addresses the relationship of poetry (the text) to place, whether in relation to the construction of the poetic verse, the artistic image, or spatial alienation"...

THIRD: PLACE IN ITS RELATION TO THE ANCIENT ARABIC POETIC TRADITION

The reader of ancient Arabic critical and rhetorical heritage will encounter numerous references to the concept of place and its essence in general as a theoretical construct, and specifically to the concept of place in the poetic text. Emphasis is placed on the effectiveness of place in the poet's life and psyche, and consequently on its formation within the poem and its role in its artistic and semantic structure. In this poem, the poet demonstrates a profound influence of the Arabic poetic tradition in its language, imagery, and artistic structure. He draws inspiration from the structure of the traditional poem, which begins with longing for the home, similar to the opening lines of pre-Islamic poetry. "For the pre-Islamic Arab poet, dwelling upon the ruins is of paramount importance; a poem devoid of this is incomplete and has not attained maturity and perfection." This influence is evident in his words:

Oh, if only I were like a bird soaring in the sky

(In Ghumdan) to the east, in (Radhiya), my home
He employs the expression of longing, "if only," as ancient poets did when recalling ruins and yearning for their homeland. The influence of classical Arabic poetry is evident in the grandeur of the language and the richness of the vocabulary, as well as in the evocation of chivalric values and tribal heroism, as in his lines:
If Naji calls out to the men, they will flock

To 'Ilb Sham, here is the opinion, so act!

Here, the spirit of enthusiasm and collective pride that characterizes traditional Arabic poetry is manifest. Thus, the poet utilizes heritage not as mere imitation, but as a creative continuity that connects the past and present within a framework of authenticity and renewal.

FOURTH: THE EMOTIONAL DIMENSION AND NOSTALGIA IN SHAPING THE PERSONAL EXPERIENCE.

The poet evokes the places of childhood, familiarity, and tranquility in a language imbued with longing and tenderness. This return to the past and the summoning of bygone memories is called "nostalgia" in Arabic literature and "longing for the past" in Western literature.

It has roots in the Greek language, derived from "nostas," meaning to return, and "algos," meaning pain. Nostalgia, therefore, signifies the feeling of pain and regret for what has passed and is gone. The equivalent of nostalgia in dictionaries is: an intense longing and yearning to return to the past, a deep love for it, and the summoning of its people, events, and places, along with a detailed and expansive recollection of the memories associated with it.

Longing is linked to place, which influences the poet's psyche and inspiration. The poet's relationship to place and its impact on his poetic state are evident. It was said to Kathir: "What do you do when poetry becomes difficult for you?" He replied: "I wander through the local quarters and verdant meadows, and the most concise verses become easy for me, and the best ones quickly emerge." In the poem, this place takes on a deep emotional dimension connected to memory and nostalgia. "For spatiality in literature is the artistic image that reminds us or evokes in us memories of the childhood home." He says:

Oh, if only I were like a bird soaring in the sky

(In Ghumdan) to the east, in (Radhiya), my home

The poet is overcome with longing and yearning, wishing to return to his original homeland. "And since the most fitting motive for poetry is longing, yearning, and nostalgia for familiar homes and their inhabitants upon leaving them, and remembering their good times and the good times they shared there, and since the poet desires to preserve a memory, or to compose an essay that imagines the state of his loved ones, and to establish the meanings that imitate them in the mind as their images and appearances, and to imitate all their affairs so that the meanings become examples of them and their circumstances, they preferred to arrange the sayings—in which they deposit the imagined meanings of their loved ones residing in the mind as images, examples of them and their circumstances—in a manner that, in terms of its position in the ear, is like the arrangement of their enclosures and houses. And there is a similarity between the arrangement of those in relation to what the ear perceives and the arrangement of these in relation to what the eye perceives." And we find the poet He expresses his feeling of alienation from his original place, which has become a longing in his memory. He reinforces this meaning in his words:

And in the shade of (Al-Habna), I was not unaware

Of a covenant there, time extended as a refuge.

Here, the shade symbolizes shelter and spiritual warmth, and the covenant represents a continuation of loyalty and connection to the place. He also says:

Here is the source of my smile, which I received as a gift, like a divine revelation.

Thus, in the poet's view, the place becomes a source of joy and inspiration, and a cradle of emotional identity that is retrieved through memory. The nostalgia in this

poem is not merely a longing for a lost place, but rather an emotional summoning of a beautiful time that restores the poet's balance and tranquility.

Thus, the poem intertwines natural, social, and symbolic elements of place to form a grand semantic unity that reflects the duality of belonging and longing. It highlights place as an artistic axis uniting the poetic self with the memory of the homeland, a human and spiritual entity that embraces experience and reshapes awareness of identity and belonging

Based on the foregoing discussion, an analysis of the poem "He Gave Our Love" reveals that place constitutes the essence of experience and its deepest semantic space in the poetry of Muhammad Naji Al Saad. It transcends its descriptive role to become a human and spiritual entity in which the self is manifested in a moment of identification with the land and memory. The poet has succeeded in transforming the Najran region into a mirror of the collective consciousness, utilizing its natural, tribal, and traditional vocabulary to express his belonging, identity, and longing. The imagery of place varied, ranging from the natural dimension expressing vitality, to the social dimension rooted in tribal memory, to the heritage dimension inspired by the spirit of classical Arabic poetry, culminating in the emotional dimension imbued with nostalgia and the recollection of the past. Thus, place in his poetry became a voice of belonging and a memory of identity, a space where heritage and the present converge in an aesthetic unity that highlights the uniqueness of the Najrani poetic experience in its human and emotional dimensions.

PLACE: BETWEEN INFLUENCE AND BEING INFLUENCED

Place as an Influencer in Shaping Poetic Vision

In the poem "He Gave Our Love," we perceive how place reshapes the poet's emotions, as the Najrani landscape becomes a mirror to his feelings and an echo of his memories, as in his lines:

Peace be upon the chaos of a canal whose streams danced to the pulse of a fingertip.

Here, the poet is influenced by place as a source of inspiration and a reference point for feeling, transforming it into a living entity that reciprocates life and emotions. The poet influences place through its poetic reshaping.

The poet doesn't merely experience the influence of place; he artistically reshapes it, imbuing it with symbols and meanings that transcend reality. "Place here becomes a vessel for expressing the poet's anxieties and visions, a vast arena for his reflections, thoughts, and emotions." In the poem "He Gave Our Love," the poet reproduces real places in vibrant, symbolic images, as in his lines:

Here was the source of my smile, which I received as a gift, like a divine revelation.

This verse transforms place into a source of joy and inspiration, not merely a geographical scene, demonstrating the poet's impact in transforming real place into a symbolic, spiritual space.

The integration of place and self in constructing poetic identity.

Mohammed Naji Al Saad's experience has evolved from expressing place as a mirror of the self to expressing the self as the voice of place. This transformation is what gives his poetry a comprehensive humanistic character, linking the local and the national, the individual and the collective, in a unified emotional and semantic whole, reflecting the poet's connection to his heritage. The meaning of the poet's connection to his heritage, and the meaning of heritage from a creative perspective, is this: the poet is not bound to the written material of the heritage, but rather to what lies beyond it—to the depths and primordial essences that nurtured that material and gave rise to it. The written material is static, existing only in books, ideas, and opinions. It enters into the poet's culture, not his creative process. His creative process is connected, or should be connected, to the very spirit of his nation, to the wellsprings of its life, to its ideals and aspirations, to the seeds and origins.

Place as a bridge between individual and collective memory.

In the poem "He Gave Our Love," the poet Al Saad evokes his childhood and personal past, while in the poem "Peace Be Upon Najran," he recalls the nation's history and glory.

This transition from the personal to the universal represents a form of being both influenced by and influencing place simultaneously, as the poet dissolves his subjective experience into the collective consciousness, thereby reproducing the image of Najran as an eternal homeland in poetry and emotion.

In conclusion, this study reveals that place in the poetry of Muhammad Naji Al Saad constitutes an integrated semantic system based on the dialectic of influence and being influenced between humanity and the land, and between individual memory and collective identity.

In "He Gave Our Love," place manifests itself as a powerful force in the poet's consciousness, awakening within him longing and wonder.

CONCLUSION

This study, through an analysis of the poem "He Gave Our Love" by the poet Muhammad Naji Al Saad, demonstrates that place in his poetic experience is not merely a descriptive element, but rather a vibrant aesthetic and human entity, representing the axis of self-awareness, identity, and belonging. The analytical reading reveals that place in Al Saad's poetry transforms into an active force in constructing meaning and shaping emotion.

Through this interaction between the self and place, between the individual and the community, the poet achieves a balance between tradition and modernity, between emotion and intellect, making Najran an artistic model for the encounter between humanity and its land within a comprehensive national and human framework. The study confirms that Al Saad's poetic experience reflects an evolution in vision from subjective place to collective place; in the poem "He Gave Our Love," place appears as an emotional space encompassing the nostalgia of childhood and the warmth of individual belonging.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

1. Place in the poetry of Mohammed Naji Al Saad constitutes the essential structure of his poetic discourse; it is a mirror of the self, the voice of the land, and the memory of belonging.
2. The connotations of place in his poetry are distributed across four dimensions: the natural, the social, the historical, and the symbolic, in a cohesive artistic unity.
3. Place in his poetry transforms into a symbol of dignity and national identity, as he embodies Najran as a microcosm of the homeland, encompassing historical glory and human values.
4. Al Saad's poetic experience reveals an interaction between the individual self and the collective consciousness, making place a medium for unifying individual memory and collective identity.
5. His poetry exhibits an artistic and aesthetic balance between the emotional and intellectual dimensions, making his work a mature model in contemporary Saudi poetry in terms of structure, meaning, and vision.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Expand studies of the aesthetics of place in contemporary Saudi poetry, linking them to the cultural and social transformations taking place in the Kingdom.
2. Focus on studying the work of Muhammad Naji Al Saad within a comprehensive critical project that examines the characteristics of the modern Najrani poetic school.
3. Include Al Saad's texts in Saudi literature and modern criticism curricula, given their balanced national and aesthetic representation that blends tradition and modernity.

RESEARCH APPENDICES

The Poem "Our Love Has Gone"

- Our love has gone from (Radiya), no oppressor has decreed, "and whatever you command, the heart will obey"
- For her, I used to crawl within the folds of her ribs for years, here I would play like a pampered child

- I planted a dream within her, and its chapters lengthened according to the guidance of days and a postponed dream
- Here was the source from which my smile was born, which I received as a gift, like a divine revelation
- Homes whose loved ones lament their separation, my people have turned away from them without a watering place
- Peace be upon the chaos of a canal whose streams danced to the pulse of a fingertip
- As if the (waterwheels), if we tightened (the rope) with the dawn, were a melody or the warbling of a nightingale
- Upon every (waterwheel) striking its (waterwheel), its fragrance wafts through the nostrils despite the wetness
- Is there no Would that I were like a bird soaring in the sky, (in Ghumdan) eastward, in (Radhiya), my home.
- And a thorny bush on (Shiblān) still preserves my longing, even if youthful passion fades away.
- And a similar longing has taken hold of (Ghaylān), (in Ghayāfa), flowing from the overflowing stream.
- If I were in (Shuklāl), I would inhale its fragrance, like the cascading blossoms of carnations.
- And in the grove of (Al-Habna), I was not unaware of its covenant, time stretching to a haven.
- A proud (with the sharp sword), awe and majesty, (and a lightness) from the east of the lands (and a neglected one).
- Its collar of black ravens is firmly in place, surrounding its soil from the south. And the north
-)For Dakhfa) from the east of the lands, a position like a great crown upon a revered head
- And if you come from the foot of (Al-Sawail) by the side, you will see towering trees of the Bahkal
- camel driver on the saddle of a she-camel, and however much you hasten with the caravan, slow down
- Here, people seek shade out of love for its shade, and a gainer increases with a laden saddlebag
-)In Kahlan) the night was its lightning, and in its dawn the watering of the thick, tangled crops
- As if when (Sayhan) is flowing at night, I listen to the thundering voice of the roaring lion
- If the flood covers it once a year, and the riders learn of the harvest, they descend
- Lands where the sons of (Al-Sa`d) her son, so she said with determination, "Take glory and drink deeply"!
- Her youth on the day of war is called "Mujawir," wielding her staff, and if the enemy is struck with it, he is killed.
- When (Naji) calls out to the men, they flock to ('Ilb Sham), "Here is the opinion, so act"!
- For your sake, we lead you in battles, attacking, and with us, we scatter the enemy's ranks and burden them.
- And a mother, if she suspects that her son has shown cowardice, says, "O son of (Hamdan), kill him"!
- When the field is cleared of our horses' kicks at sunrise, we turn it into a night of darkness.
- The youth among us grows up following his grandfather's path, building lofty structures of glory and ascending high.
- And if the guest of hardship ever comes to our home Our companion is the meat of the camels, the best of them.
- And I truly love the horse, attacking with Ibn Juhayz, whose worries are harsh and clear.
- A darkness like the night when it arrives is like an inscription on a loom woven from the threads of a spindle.
- And if the race ends with a round, he soars like a falcon in the sky and spins.
- And however long a bird stays in its nest, it will inevitably leave and depart due to time.
- And everyone has their roots in the world and meets with the generations the role of the complement.
- With Ghawth, we have a refuge, a source of strength and support, and in Zayed and Al-Ghazz, we find a haven.
- And Yam is at the head of the entire tribe. (And Kahlan) is the ancestor of all, in its entirety.
- And from the lineage of the great (Qahtan) are our roots. Glory boasts of us in every lineage.
- And in the favor of the days, we led a civilization, so we are not isolated from the guidance of time.
- We built with the edifice of knowledge glory and eminence, guidance appeared in the meeting of every gathering.
- And a generation of ours in every science is renewed, we have a share in it, if the people strive, we will drink.
- And in the state of glories, we have a civilization, Saudi Arabia, in a unity that has not been crowned.
- And in a renaissance that enjoys every progress, research on development in every source.
- Spread upon the beautiful the brilliance of its beauty, like a spirit here that lives with the spirit of the revered.

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