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<p>Teggar Fouzia</p>	<p>RESEARCH ARTICLE </p> <h2 style="text-align: center;">Transformations of Novelistic Discourse: A Cultural Reading of Tourism Representation in “<i>Spring of Corona</i>”</h2> <p>Department of Arabic Language and Literature, Hamma Lakhdar University, El Oued Algeria Email: teggarfouzia@gmail.com</p>	
<p>Keywords</p>	<p>literary discourse; cultural tourism; spatial representation; Arabic novel; cultural heritage; Ahmed El Hadi Reshrach.</p>	
<p>Abstract</p> <p>This study examines the relationship between literary discourse and cultural tourism in Ahmed El Hadi Reshrach’s novel <i>Spring of Corona</i>. It explores how the novel constructs spatial representation through narrative description, cultural memory, and symbolic geography, transforming literary space into a medium of cultural visibility and tourism imagination. The article focuses on the representation of Tunisia, Libya, and China as narrative environments shaped by historical memory, architectural heritage, food culture, and emotional belonging. Rather than approaching place as a passive background, the novel presents it as a dynamic cultural structure that influences the movement of characters and the reader’s perception of identity and space. The study further investigates the ways in which literary narration contributes to the formation of a cultural image capable of encouraging symbolic and cultural forms of tourism. Through descriptive narration and the aesthetic reconstruction of cities, streets, historical sites, and everyday cultural practices, the novel creates an interpretive bridge between literature, memory, and the experience of travel. In this sense, <i>Spring of Corona</i> reflects a broader transformation in contemporary Arabic fiction, where literary texts increasingly engage with questions of cultural representation, heritage, and social experience beyond purely aesthetic functions.</p>		
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Introduction:

Place occupies a central position in contemporary narrative studies because it functions not only as a physical setting for events but also as a cultural and symbolic structure through which identity, memory, and social experience are articulated. In modern Arabic fiction, spatial representation frequently exceeds descriptive realism and becomes associated with broader questions of belonging, cultural history, and the reconstruction of collective imagination. Literary space therefore participates in shaping the reader’s understanding of both geographical and emotional worlds.

Within this context, the relationship between literature and tourism has attracted increasing scholarly attention. Literary texts often contribute to the formation of cultural images of cities and regions by transforming them into spaces of imagination, memory, and symbolic movement. Through narrative description, novels may encourage readers to engage imaginatively with places that later acquire cultural and touristic significance. The interaction between literary representation

and tourism discourse has consequently become an important area of interdisciplinary inquiry connecting literary criticism, cultural studies, and heritage studies.

Ahmed El Hadi Reshrach's novel *Spring of Corona* provides an important example of this intersection between narrative aesthetics and cultural representation. The novel reconstructs a series of spaces extending across Libya, Tunisia, and China, presenting them through detailed narrative observation and emotional reflection during the period of the COVID-19 pandemic. These spaces are not merely geographical references; they function as cultural environments shaped by architecture, memory, food traditions, urban life, and historical consciousness. Through this narrative strategy, the novel transforms place into a central mechanism for representing cultural identity and human experience.

This study aims to examine how *Spring of Corona* constructs tourism-oriented cultural imagery through literary narration. It analyzes the role of spatial description, heritage representation, and cultural symbolism in shaping a discourse that connects literature with tourism imagination and cultural visibility. The article also seeks to explore how the novel reflects broader transformations in contemporary Arabic narrative discourse, where literary texts increasingly interact with social, cultural, and economic dimensions of modern life.

Literature Review

The relationship between literature and place has occupied a central position in modern literary criticism, particularly within studies concerned with spatial representation, cultural memory, and narrative identity. Contemporary literary scholarship increasingly views place not as a passive geographical background but as an active narrative structure that shapes human experience, historical consciousness, and cultural imagination. Within this framework, literary texts participate in reconstructing cities, landscapes, and social environments through symbolic and aesthetic representation, thereby contributing to the formation of collective perceptions of space and identity.

Early discussions of literary space can be traced to the works of Gaston Bachelard (1964), who examined the poetic dimensions of space and the emotional relationship between human beings and inhabited places. Later, Henri Lefebvre (1991) emphasized that space is socially produced and culturally organized rather than naturally neutral. This perspective significantly influenced narrative studies, where literary space came to be understood as a cultural and ideological construct embedded within social relations and historical memory.

Within Arabic literary criticism, scholars such as Saïd Yaqtin (1992) and Hamid Lahmadani (1991) highlighted the importance of spatial representation in the modern Arabic novel. Their studies demonstrated that place in Arabic fiction often functions as a symbolic framework through which political history, cultural identity, exile, memory, and social transformation are articulated. Similarly, contemporary Arab novelists including Naguib Mahfouz, Tayeb Salih, Abdul Rahman Munif, Ahlam Mosteghanemi, and Waciny Laredj transformed cities and landscapes into narrative spaces saturated with cultural and emotional significance. Through their works, Cairo, Constantine, Khartoum, and desert environments became literary geographies deeply embedded within the imagination of readers.

At the same time, interdisciplinary studies connecting literature and tourism have expanded considerably over the last two decades. Researchers in cultural studies and tourism studies increasingly argue that literary texts contribute to shaping the "tourist gaze" by constructing symbolic images of places that influence readers' perceptions and travel desires. Urry (2002) explains that tourism is not limited to physical movement but also involves systems of representation through which places acquire cultural meanings. In this context, novels may function indirectly as cultural mediators that transform cities, monuments, streets, and landscapes into destinations of symbolic attraction.

The concept of "tourism literature" emerged within this intellectual context to describe literary works that incorporate travel, spatial movement, cultural description, and heritage representation. According to Waghliissi (2012), tourism literature belongs to a broader category of spatial writing that intersects with travel narratives, exile literature, and geographical discourse. Such texts often combine aesthetic narration with descriptive representation, producing literary experiences that encourage cultural exploration and imaginative travel. Similarly, Badran (1998) argues that literary discourse enables readers to traverse distant worlds symbolically, thereby transforming narration into a form of cultural journey.

Several international literary examples illustrate this relationship between fiction and tourism. Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code* contributed significantly to popular tourism associated with Paris and the Louvre Museum, while Italo Calvino's *Invisible Cities* transformed urban imagination into a philosophical and aesthetic exploration of place. Within Arabic literature, the novels of Naguib Mahfouz played an important role in introducing readers to the cultural and architectural identity of Cairo. Likewise, Ahlam Mosteghanemi's *Memory in the Flesh* reconstructed Constantine as a city shaped by nostalgia, memory, and emotional attachment.

Despite the growing body of scholarship concerning literary space and tourism discourse, relatively limited attention has been devoted to contemporary Maghrebi novels that connect cultural heritage with tourism imagination in the context of post-pandemic narrative writing. Existing studies often focus either on spatial aesthetics or on tourism discourse

independently, without examining how narrative representation transforms cultural heritage into symbolic tourism capital within the novelistic structure itself.

Accordingly, the present study seeks to contribute to this emerging field by examining Ahmed El Hadi Reshrach's novel *Spring of Corona* as a narrative text situated at the intersection of literary aesthetics, cultural memory, and tourism representation. The study explores how the novel reconstructs Libya, Tunisia, and China through descriptive narration, heritage imagery, and cultural symbolism, transforming literary discourse into a medium that simultaneously preserves identity and stimulates cultural imagination associated with travel and tourism.

Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative interpretive methodology grounded in literary and cultural analysis. The research is primarily based on close textual reading of Ahmed El Hadi Reshrach's novel *Spring of Corona*, with particular attention devoted to the representation of place, cultural heritage, tourism imagery, and narrative discourse. The analytical approach combines concepts derived from narrative criticism, cultural studies, and spatial theory in order to examine the interaction between literary aesthetics and tourism-oriented cultural representation.

Table 1. Narrative Representation of Space and Its Symbolic Functions in *Spring of Corona*

Spatial Representation	Narrative Function	Symbolic Dimension	Tourism Significance
Shanghai, Beijing, and Wuhan	Spaces of movement, education, and intercultural encounter	Cosmopolitanism, modernity, and global mobility	Construction of an international tourism imagination associated with urban beauty and cultural diversity
Sidi Bou Said and Tunisian coastal spaces	Emotional and relational environments within the narrative	Nostalgia, intimacy, and aesthetic harmony	Promotion of cultural and heritage tourism through architectural and visual representation
Tripoli and Libyan urban landscapes	Reconstruction of homeland and collective memory	Identity, belonging, and historical continuity	Repositioning Libya as a culturally significant and symbolically attractive destination
Historical streets, squares, and monuments	Preservation of cultural memory through narrative description	Historical consciousness and urban identity	Transformation of literary geography into a symbolic tourism map
Pandemic-related spaces of isolation	Reflection of emotional confinement and existential uncertainty	Longing, displacement, and psychological fragmentation	Intensification of the desire for mobility, travel, and rediscovery of place

Interpretation: The novel employs spatial representation as a central narrative mechanism through which cultural identity and tourism imagination are simultaneously constructed. Place operates not merely as a physical setting but as a symbolic environment carrying emotional, historical, and civilizational meanings. The narrative discourse therefore transforms literary space into a culturally attractive geography capable of stimulating imaginative forms of tourism and intercultural engagement.

The methodological framework of the study is informed by spatial criticism and theories of cultural representation that understand literary space as a symbolic and social construct rather than a purely geographical setting. Within this perspective, place is analyzed as a narrative component carrying historical, emotional, and ideological meanings. The study therefore investigates how the novel reconstructs cities, streets, historical landmarks, food traditions, and architectural environments through descriptive narration and symbolic language.

The analysis proceeds through several interconnected stages. First, the study examines the narrative representation of spatial environments in the novel, particularly the depiction of Libya, Tunisia, and China as culturally charged spaces. Second, it analyzes the descriptive mechanisms employed by the novelist in constructing tourism-oriented imagery, including visual description, emotional memory, sensory language, and references to historical and cultural heritage. Third, the study explores the relationship between narration and tourism discourse by identifying the ways in which literary representation encourages symbolic forms of travel, cultural curiosity, and imaginative engagement with place.

The research also employs a contextual reading of selected narrative passages in order to interpret how the novel reflects broader cultural and social transformations associated with globalization, mobility, heritage preservation, and post-pandemic

human experience. Particular emphasis is placed on the role of literary discourse in reshaping the reader's perception of space and in transforming local heritage into a culturally meaningful and symbolically attractive environment.

Rather than relying on quantitative analysis or statistical procedures, the study prioritizes interpretive depth and textual meaning. The objective is not to measure tourism impact empirically, but to analyze how narrative language itself participates in the symbolic production of tourism imagination and cultural identity. Consequently, the methodology remains rooted in humanistic inquiry, emphasizing textual interpretation, contextual understanding, and critical engagement with narrative representation.

The selection of *Spring of Corona* as the primary corpus of analysis is based on the novel's rich spatial structure and its extensive engagement with cultural landscapes across different geographical contexts. The novel provides an appropriate literary framework for examining how contemporary Arabic fiction negotiates the relationship between narrative aesthetics, heritage representation, and tourism discourse in the context of modern cultural transformations.

2. The Representation of Place and the Effectiveness of Tourism Promotion in the Novel *Spring of Corona*

Place is considered one of the fundamental narrative components upon which the structure of the novelistic text is built, as it constitutes a central element in shaping the narrative world and constructing its meanings. Thus, its significance appears alongside other novelistic elements: time, characters, and events. The novelist is always in need of a spatial framework for the events of the novel, and therefore it is impossible to imagine a narrative structure without its cornerstone, namely "place." The critic Hamid Lahmadani emphasized this in his conception of place as an important element for the recipient, because "the embodiment of place in the novel is what makes its events appear plausible to the reader." In the novel *Spring of Corona*, Ahmed El Hadi Reshrach focused on varying the representation of places in a vivid and detailed manner, combining closed and open, interior and exterior locations as major spatial poles, highlighting their aesthetics from a striking tourism perspective.

2.1. The First Spatial Pole and Its Role in Stimulating International Tourism

Open places with geographical references varied in the novel *Spring of Corona* as major tourist poles through which the protagonist moves, enjoying their scenery and recalling his beautiful memories during the period of the Corona pandemic, affected by the state of isolation and anxiety imposed by the crisis. He exploits this situation to weave a novelistic discourse that combines the portrayal of human suffering with the highlighting of the particularities and aesthetics of place, especially in relation to spaces with an international dimension such as China. In this context, the role of spatial poles emerges in encouraging international tourism, as they pave the way for liberation from the suffocation of quarantine by stimulating the desire to travel and discover places whose aesthetic value the text has revived.

• China: The Charm of the East

This is the first place from which the protagonist began his touristic journey around the world. China in the novel *Spring of Corona* constituted an active and vital pole for the development of events. It is the place where the protagonist, Omar, studied for many years and obtained a master's degree from Shanghai University. It also contains many tourist and recreational cities and places that he portrayed accurately, such as Beijing, Shanghai, and Wuhan. He spent an entire week wandering around Shanghai, saying: "I spent a whole week wandering through Shanghai, the Pearl of the East, bidding it farewell and enjoying its beautiful nature." This phrase reveals his deep admiration for the city of Shanghai, as his description was not merely an incidental observation but rather a celebration of the aesthetics of the place. This is clearly reflected in his statement: "I went to the Yu Garden, visited the magnificent tourist landmarks such as the Jade Buddha Temple, and contemplated its extraordinary architecture."

The protagonist succeeded in painting a vivid and engaging image of the city, through which he was able to capture the cultural diversity that distinguishes it. In his view, it is the space that "combines the charm of the East with the creativity of the West." He also did not overlook the city's vibrant side, expressing his enjoyment of visiting the "paradise of shopping lovers, Tianzifang," which reflects his fascination with Shanghai's ability to merge spiritual heritage, modern architecture, and flourishing commercial activity. Therefore, China is considered a leading tourist and educational destination attracting visitors from all over the world.

2.2. The Maghrebi Spatial Poles and Their Role in Representing Domestic Tourism in the Novel

The Maghrebi countries in general possess strong and diverse tourism assets that make them important tourist destinations. This image is employed by the writer in his narrative text as pivotal spaces enjoying a strong presence within the narrative, specifically Tunisia and Libya. Here, the aesthetic function of the novel intersects with its pragmatic dimension, where narrative description becomes an indirect tool for promoting places and stimulating the desire to discover them, as follows:

A. Green Tunisia

Tunisia is one of the important places in the novel and received considerable attention in detailed description. It is an Arab country located in the far north of Africa, known as “Green Tunisia.” It is a leading tourist destination upon which the pillars of the national economy and public income development rely. The term “green” is not limited to describing its lush nature; rather, it symbolizes prosperity, refinement, and enduring growth that characterize this generous land.

Table 2.Forms of Cultural Heritage and Their Narrative Functions in *Spring of Corona*

Heritage Element	Form of Representation in the Novel	Cultural Function	Narrative and Tourism Role
Traditional Tunisian and Libyan cuisine	Descriptive references to couscous, Bazeen, Ka'k al-Warqa, and Maqroud	Preservation of collective identity and social memory	Development of gastronomic tourism imagery through sensory narration
Historical monuments and archaeological sites	Representation of museums, mosques, old cities, and Roman landmarks	Reinforcement of historical continuity and civilizational depth	Enhancement of cultural tourism through architectural and historical symbolism
Urban architecture and streets	Detailed depiction of Sidi Bou Said, Tripoli, and old urban centers	Construction of emotional and visual attachment to place	Transformation of cities into aesthetically desirable destinations
Folk customs and hospitality rituals	Representation of family gatherings, coffee traditions, and social interaction	Preservation of intangible cultural heritage	Presentation of everyday culture as a component of tourism attractiveness
Cultural memory and oral heritage	Integration of memory, nostalgia, and local narratives	Protection of cultural identity against symbolic erasure	Establishment of a narrative bridge between heritage and contemporary tourism discourse

Interpretation: The findings demonstrate that the novel integrates both tangible and intangible cultural heritage into the narrative structure as active elements of cultural representation. Heritage is not treated as static folklore; rather, it becomes part of a dynamic literary discourse that preserves identity while simultaneously promoting cultural visibility and symbolic tourism attraction.

Furthermore, Tunisia in *Spring of Corona* represents the country to which the protagonist and his family fled because of the circumstances experienced in Libya. It is the second tourist pole that significantly contributed to the development of events. In this context, the discourse highlights the protagonist’s admiration for the aesthetics of Tunisian places, where facilities and public squares became spaces of exploration and delight. Habib Bourguiba Avenue occupied a central position as the city’s focal point, alongside other landmarks such as Gamal Abdel Nasser Avenue, La Marsa, Halq al-Wadi, the Lake, and Sidi Bou Said.

It is no wonder that these places acquire essential value in the novel *Spring of Corona*, as they form the emotional stage that embraced the love story and brought together the protagonist and his beloved Olfa amidst those events. He says: “I suggested to Olfa that we take a walk in the marina of Sidi Bou Said, perhaps my mood would improve.” He also adds, describing the place: “We arrived in Sidi Bou Said around 4:30 (...) As soon as we arrived, we toured the enchanting and attractive old town, with its magnificent architecture, beautiful buildings distinguished by the colors white and blue, and stone-paved winding streets exuding the fragrance of history.”

It is noticeable that the writer deliberately uses descriptive language and expressions overflowing with attraction in order to stimulate the recipient’s imagination and emotionally engage him. These descriptions do not stop at the boundaries of artistic beauty but become argumentative tools aimed at convincing the reader of the uniqueness of the place, transforming the recipient from a virtual reader into a potential tourist. In this sense, the novel transcends its narrative role to become a motivating tourist guide, indirectly contributing to economic development through the promotion of place.

B. Libya, the Bride of the Mediterranean

Libya represents the protagonist’s homeland and is one of the important spatial poles in the novel. It is a pivotal Arab country distinguished by possessing the longest coastline among the Arab and African countries overlooking the Mediterranean basin. It also includes historical urban centers and ancient cities that constitute a civilizational and economic weight, foremost among them the capital Tripoli, Benghazi, Misrata, and Al Bayda. These cities combine the fragrance of history with modern urban development. In his novel *Spring of Corona*, the novelist succeeded in conveying a distinctive and expressive image of Libya, making the reader eager to visit these places, become acquainted with them, and enjoy their scenery.

To illustrate this, we may mention some of the places evoked in the novel, such as Tripoli, the capital, and Omar Al-Mukhtar Street. The narrator, while expressing affection for his homeland Libya, says: "I set out with Al-Taher, my childhood and youth friend, heading to Tripoli, the sorrowful bride of the Mediterranean." In doing so, he grants Libya an exceptional status among the countries overlooking the basin and conveys the image of a country shining with beauty on the shores of the Mediterranean. This endearment does not stop at aesthetic description but reflects the protagonist's love and belonging to his homeland.

The novelist further elaborates in describing several places in Libya, saying: "I needed to recover my memories of wandering through its beautiful streets. We entered through Bab al-Bahr, paused for a while beneath the Arch of Marcus Aurelius, then headed toward Clock Square in the old city, and from there to Martyrs' Square (...) Sadness hovered over it despite the charm of its beauty." Elsewhere, he mentions the ancient streets of Libya: Martyrs' Square, Omar Al-Mukhtar Street, Mizran Street, Haiti Street, and Al-Hassna Street since the Italian invasion. The mention of these streets is not merely a geographical inventory but rather an evocation of the memory and identity of place. This diversity of names reflects Libya's cultural and architectural diversity, making history a living material that the tourist can see and touch in architecture, trees, and monuments.

Based on the foregoing, it can be said that when the novel deals with places in detail, mentioning streets, alleys, tourist and heritage spaces, it transforms into a visual tourist guide encompassing historical, cultural, and natural tourism. Through it, the writer draws a mental "road map" for the reader because the cities and streets mentioned constitute the beating heart of the intended country, and mentioning them stimulates the desire for actual wandering in order to emulate the protagonist's experience.

3. Cultural Heritage and the Formation of Tourism Identity in the Novel *Spring of Corona*

At the outset, cultural heritage represents a fundamental pillar of tourist attraction and a soft power that contributes to enhancing the competitiveness of tourist destinations and attracting visitors of all categories, local and foreign alike. Tourism, in its essence, is not a modern phenomenon but rather an ancient human activity reflecting humanity's innate inclination toward travel and passion for exploring new horizons and learning about different civilizations. From this perspective, the relationship between heritage and tourism appears as a complementary and reciprocal one. While heritage provides tourism with its raw material and distinctive identity, tourism offers heritage a window for sustainability and a means of introducing the treasures of the past and the values of human cultures to the world.

It is worth noting that transforming heritage into a competitive tourism product depends on adopting promotional strategies with motivating aesthetic dimensions. Here emerges the role of the novel as a skillful artistic tool that addresses the emotions of the reader/tourist. Our novel succeeds in transforming heritage into attractive narrative tableaux through which the world glimpses the charm of these places. It is "the epic of the modern and contemporary age and the literary genre most closely attached to heritage, to which people resort in times of hardship" in order to preserve the features of Arab identity in the face of Western cultural domination. Thus, it becomes a cultural weapon for defending identity. On the other hand, the novel represents a contemporary model of what is called "novelistic travel literature," where Ahmed El Hadi Reshrach invested the circumstances of the pandemic to open a narrative window onto the shared heritage memory of Libya and Tunisia, linking the present with the past. What is this heritage and what are its forms?

3.1. Tangible Cultural Heritage and Tourist Attraction in the Novel

Heritage is the sum of the tangible remains and legacies inherited by generations from their ancestors. It includes everything with a material existence, such as buildings, archaeological sites, and artistic artifacts that have endured through time and become part of the cultural identity of society. It also includes all "techniques, skills, and practices transmitted across generations, such as house construction, clothing production, food preparation, farming, fishing, and others." We are now before novel rich in diverse Maghrebi cultural heritage that can be observed through the following elements:

A. Diversity of Foods and the Promotion of Cultural Tourism

It is well known that traditional cuisine is classified as intangible cultural heritage (according to UNESCO), because it represents identity, language, and a bridge connecting generations. When tourists visit a country to experience its authentic dishes, they are in fact discovering the history and geography of its people. In Ahmed El Hadi Reshrach's novel, authentic Tunisian and Libyan foods are presented with elaborate descriptions of their appearance and flavors, often explained in page footnotes. Thus, the text is transformed from a mere fictional work into an ethnographic reference that helps both Arab and foreign readers understand the components of the everyday identity of these peoples. Among these foods are:

- **Tunisian sweets:** He speaks of many sweets, including *Ka'k al-Warqa*, an Andalusian heritage that settled in the Tunisian city of Zaghuan four centuries ago. It is a luxurious pastry made from almond dough infused with the rare "Nesri fragrance" for which the city is famous, becoming today a symbol of its cultural identity and historic tourism. He also mentions *Ka'k al-Anbar*, made from ground almonds, white sugar, pistachios, and drops of amber

essence, usually round in shape. In addition, the novelist refers to traditional foods such as *Samsa*, *Bajawiya*, and almond sweets, which are famous in Tunisia and reflect the richness of its local cuisine and food identity, making the novel's discourse indirectly contribute to attracting food tourists.

- **Libyan sweets:** In the same context, the protagonist presents several Libyan sweets no less important than the Tunisian ones while drinking Arabic coffee flavored with orange blossom. He eats sweet cakes, savory cakes, and *Maqroud* to the rhythm of old Libyan songs. Ahmed El Hadi Reshrach evokes Libyan identity through this final hospitality scene, portraying the features of Libyan heritage that combine the pleasure of taste with the authenticity of traditional musical art.
- **Tunisian food:** The writer evokes many dishes, including couscous with seafood. It is known that couscous is the common denominator of Maghrebi cuisine, yet Tunisian couscous is distinguished by its unique maritime touch, as it is famously prepared with fish. This is what the narrator refers to when he mentions that it was the first dish he ate upon visiting his aunt Saliha's home in Sousse: "My aunt had prepared couscous with seafood for lunch because she knew that we preferred this dish."

There is no doubt that this type of couscous reflects the connection of the Tunisian people to their maritime environment, which the novelist highlights as an identity element transcending its role as a mere meal to become a symbol of openness and cultural diversity. It represents a model of sustainable cultural tourism, where local marine resources are transformed into a universal heritage linking history (couscous as an ancient dish) and geography (the rich Tunisian coast).

- **Libyan food:** Libyan cuisine is diverse and reflects the country's civilizational diversity. The writer mentions a dish that constitutes the cornerstone of the Libyan table: *Bazeen* or *Aish*, made from barley flour and served with broth, meat, and lemon. This dish symbolizes social solidarity. The writer documents in his novel the ritual of gathering around it as a principal and almost sacred Friday meal, where the Libyan family assembles as an expression of identity and family cohesion. Thus, Libyan cuisine is considered an excellent tool of tourist attraction.

From the foregoing, the role of food in the "narrative" of the tourism novel becomes evident. It promotes foods indirectly, thereby stimulating tourism in multiple directions and contributing to sustainable local economic activity.

B. Ancient Historic Cities as Tourist Landmarks in the Novel

When the protagonist returned to Tunisia and Libya, he visited several archaeological tourist sites. Therefore, the ancient cities in the novel constituted a living stage for events. They were not merely geographical locations but became symbols of identity and cultural and tourist landmarks linking the past and the present in Libya and Tunisia. Among them are the old city of Sidi Bou Said, Dar Al-Abani Museum, Dar Nejma Ezzahra Palace, Ain Draham, the old city of Sousse, and the Great Mosque.

Upon arriving in Libya, he mentioned the following places: the Arch of Marcus Aurelius, the Old City, the Clock Tower, the Red Castle, the Statue of the Maiden and the Gazelle, Bab al-Bahr, and the Red Castle Museum. Through this precise depiction of historical cities, the novelist succeeded in transporting the reader to the heart of place, transforming geography from mere administrative boundaries into living spaces pulsating with events and interacting with the novel's characters. These places also became cultural and aesthetic symbols. Their literary presence enabled them to become prominent tourist attractions and desirable destinations visited by readers and tourists alike from different parts of the world, in addition to being resources that support the national economy in many countries.

Based on the foregoing, it can be said that the Libyan writer Ahmed El Hadi Reshrach succeeded in making his novel *Spring of Corona* a tourist guide directing the reader toward the architectural treasures of Tunisia and Libya, treasures that carry symbolic, historical, and religious dimensions. He employed them in his narrative discourse to paint a comprehensive picture of the material and aesthetic heritage of both countries, reflecting the writer's awareness of the importance of cultural tourism and its role in economic development.

Findings and Discussion

The analysis of Ahmed El Hadi Reshrach's novel *Spring of Corona* reveals that spatial representation constitutes the central organizing principle of the narrative discourse. The novel does not employ place merely as a neutral geographical framework for the movement of characters; rather, place functions as a cultural and symbolic structure through which memory, identity, and tourism imagination are reconstructed. Through detailed narrative description, the novel transforms cities, streets, monuments, and everyday cultural practices into meaningful spaces capable of generating emotional and cultural engagement with the reader.

Table 3. Major Thematic Transformations in the Novelistic Discourse of *Spring of Corona*

Literary Dimension	Traditional Function of the Novel	Transformative Function in <i>Spring of Corona</i>	Broader Cultural Implication
Representation of place	Spatial background for events	Cultural and tourism-oriented symbolic geography	Expansion of the cultural role of literary narration
Narrative description	Aesthetic and artistic expression	Mechanism for tourism imagination and heritage visibility	Intersection between literature and tourism discourse
Cultural memory	Preservation of personal and collective experience	Reconstruction of identity through heritage and mobility	Reaffirmation of local culture within global modernity
Travel and movement	Narrative transition between events	Symbolic resistance to isolation during the pandemic	Association of mobility with freedom and emotional recovery
Literary discourse	Primarily aesthetic communication	Cultural mediation between reader, place, and heritage	Emergence of contemporary Arabic fiction as a form of cultural representation and symbolic investment

Interpretation: The novel reflects a broader transformation within contemporary Arabic narrative discourse, where literary texts increasingly engage with cultural, social, and symbolic dimensions beyond purely aesthetic concerns. Through its integration of tourism imagery, heritage representation, and spatial symbolism, *Spring of Corona* demonstrates how modern fiction can function simultaneously as artistic expression, cultural memory, and a medium of intercultural visibility.

One of the major findings of the study is that the novel establishes a strong relationship between literary narration and tourism-oriented cultural representation. The descriptive language used throughout the narrative contributes to constructing an attractive image of the represented spaces, particularly in relation to China, Tunisia, and Libya. These spaces are presented not only through geographical references but also through emotional memory, aesthetic appreciation, and cultural symbolism. As a result, the narrative discourse acquires a dual function: it preserves the literary dimension of the novel while simultaneously encouraging symbolic forms of cultural tourism.

The findings further demonstrate that the representation of China in the novel reflects a discourse of intercultural openness and global mobility. Cities such as Shanghai, Beijing, and Wuhan are depicted through imagery emphasizing architectural beauty, urban modernity, and cultural diversity. The protagonist's movement through these spaces reflects both personal memory and a broader fascination with transnational cultural experience. China therefore appears as a narrative space associated with education, cosmopolitanism, and discovery, contributing to the international dimension of the novel's tourism discourse.

In contrast, the representations of Tunisia and Libya are closely connected to questions of heritage, belonging, and emotional attachment. Tunisia is constructed as a space of beauty, refuge, and cultural harmony. The narrative descriptions of Sidi Bou Said, La Marsa, and Habib Bourguiba Avenue emphasize architectural aesthetics, historical atmosphere, and emotional intimacy. Through these representations, Tunisia becomes a literary environment that combines tourism attractiveness with personal memory and affective experience.

Similarly, Libya is represented not only as the protagonist's homeland but also as a space carrying historical depth and cultural continuity. The novel reconstructs Libyan urban spaces through references to streets, squares, monuments, and historical landmarks such as the Arch of Marcus Aurelius and the Red Castle. These representations contribute to preserving cultural memory while simultaneously presenting Libya as a space of symbolic and aesthetic value. The narrative discourse therefore resists stereotypical representations of the region by emphasizing beauty, history, and cultural diversity despite the presence of political and social suffering.

Another important finding concerns the role of cultural heritage in shaping tourism identity within the novel. The study demonstrates that the novelist employs both tangible and intangible heritage as central components of narrative representation. Traditional foods, sweets, architecture, music, and historical sites are integrated into the narrative structure as symbols of collective identity and cultural continuity. These heritage elements are not presented as isolated folkloric details; instead, they become active narrative mechanisms contributing to the aesthetic and cultural richness of the text.

The analysis also reveals that food discourse occupies a particularly significant position in the novel's tourism-oriented narrative. Tunisian and Libyan cuisine are represented through elaborate sensory descriptions that connect taste, memory, and cultural belonging. Traditional dishes such as couscous, Bazeen, Ka'k al-Warqa, and Maqroud function as narrative

symbols through which the novel reconstructs local identity and social cohesion. In this sense, culinary representation contributes to the formation of what may be described as “gastronomic tourism imagination” within the literary text.

Furthermore, the findings indicate that the COVID-19 pandemic serves not only as a historical background but also as a narrative condition that intensifies the significance of mobility, memory, and spatial longing. The atmosphere of isolation and uncertainty encourages the protagonist to revisit places emotionally and imaginatively through narrative recollection. Consequently, the novel transforms travel into a symbolic act of resistance against confinement and social fragmentation. The narrative discourse thus acquires an existential dimension in which tourism and movement become associated with freedom, emotional recovery, and cultural reconnection.

Finally, the study demonstrates that *Spring of Corona* reflects broader transformations within contemporary Arabic fiction, where literary texts increasingly interact with cultural, social, and economic realities. The novel moves beyond purely aesthetic narration toward a form of discourse that engages with heritage preservation, cultural visibility, and tourism representation. Through this intersection between literature and tourism, the narrative constructs an alternative cultural geography that repositions Maghrebi spaces within contemporary literary imagination.

Conclusion

This study examined the transformations of literary discourse in Ahmed El Hadi Reshrach’s novel *Spring of Corona* through a cultural reading focused on spatial representation, heritage imagery, and tourism discourse. The analysis demonstrated that the novel reconstructs place not merely as a geographical framework but as a dynamic cultural and symbolic environment shaped by memory, identity, and emotional experience. Through detailed descriptive narration, the novel transforms cities, historical sites, architecture, and everyday cultural practices into spaces capable of generating aesthetic attraction and tourism imagination.

The study revealed that the relationship between literature and tourism in the novel extends beyond simple descriptive representation. Rather, literary narration functions as a cultural medium through which places acquire symbolic visibility and emotional resonance. The representations of China, Tunisia, and Libya illustrate how narrative discourse may contribute to reshaping the reader’s perception of geographical and cultural space while simultaneously preserving elements of heritage and collective memory.

The findings also highlighted the importance of cultural heritage in constructing tourism identity within contemporary Arabic fiction. Through the representation of traditional foods, urban landscapes, historical monuments, and local customs, the novel establishes a connection between narrative aesthetics and cultural preservation. In this context, literary discourse becomes a form of symbolic cultural investment capable of promoting local identity and encouraging imaginative engagement with place.

Moreover, the study demonstrated that the COVID-19 pandemic plays a significant role in intensifying the novel’s focus on mobility, nostalgia, and spatial longing. The experience of isolation transforms travel into both a psychological and symbolic necessity, allowing the narrative to reconstruct places through memory and emotional attachment. Consequently, the novel reflects broader human concerns related to belonging, displacement, cultural continuity, and the search for meaning during periods of global uncertainty.

In conclusion, *Spring of Corona* represents an important example of the intersection between literary aesthetics and tourism-oriented cultural discourse in contemporary Arabic narrative writing. The novel contributes to expanding the functions of literary representation beyond artistic expression alone by engaging with questions of heritage, identity, and cultural visibility. The study therefore suggests that contemporary Arabic fiction can play a significant role in preserving cultural memory and shaping symbolic forms of tourism imagination within an increasingly interconnected global context.

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Author Contributions

Teggar Fouzia was solely responsible for the conceptualization, literature review, methodology, analysis, interpretation of findings, and writing of the manuscript.

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Institutional Review Board Statement

Not applicable. This study is based exclusively on literary and textual analysis and did not involve human participants, clinical data, or experimental procedures.

Data Availability Statement

No new empirical data were generated or analyzed in this study. All materials examined are publicly available literary and scholarly sources cited in the reference list.

Conflict of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this study.

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Ethical Approval

This article complies with international standards of academic integrity, research ethics, and responsible scholarly conduct.

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