

Original Research Article

Literature City Sana'a with Special Reference to (The Book of Sana'a) by Abdu Al-Aziz Al-Maqaliah

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ABSTRACT

Al-Maqaliah is considered to be one of the greatest poets in Arabs world. Some of his great works have been translated into foreign languages including English. Actually, his works need to be investigated and presented in English to present the richness of Yemeni literature to the whole world. To cope with the universality of the poet, we try to focus the image of Sana'a in al-Maqaliah's the book of Sana'a. the present study aimed to investigate the image of Sana'a in al-Maqaliah poetry with reference to (The Book of Sana'a). Therefore; the main aim is to analyze the poems and then to induce the general image of Sana'a. This paper was divided into four chapters. The first chapter talks about the poet biography, his works and his position in literature. In addition to that, it revealed the attitudes and views of the poet towards different controversial points in poetry. The second chapter, the focus was on the main image of Sana'a in "The book of Sana'a", sub-dividing this image into various images for the original one. The third chapter talked about the other images wove found in "the book of Sana'a as Sana'a as paradise, holey place... etc).The fourth chapter included the conclusion of the research.

Introduction

In literature, rarely we can find a poet who wrote more than one hundred poems, flirting and immortalizing a city. Each poem has its unique image from the other one. Before we read and analyze these poems, let's have a stop to see the magic city that mesmerizes the mind of our great poet, Abdu al-Aziz Al-Maqaliah. From the first glance, Sana'a could surprise us and make us feel that it's she who selects the parts of its whole. Furthermore, she successfully draws her picture as she likes. Between the breeze of spring and the sky, Sana'a lies peacefully there. ."What a wonderful city she is" is an exclamation statements that the tongues of her visitor get tired from.

We don't know who gave Sana'a the freedom to select its wonderful location. Historically, more myths about Sana'a were said. One myth states that Sana'a came with existence of the earth and was drawn by "Twfan".⁽¹⁾

As al-Hamdani and al-Razi reported, Sam Ibn Nuh initially intended to build Sana'a in the western side of the Sana'a plain, but as he was laying out the building, a bird flew off with the measuring cord and placed it upon a rise at the foot of Jabal Nuqum. Understanding that God intended to

construct Sana'a there, Sam complied:

A dove traced her from after the tidal wave receded;

and flood grew quiet. (3rd poem, the book of Sana'a ,2000).

No one, except the wisdom of providence who select the wonderful location of Sana'a. Geographically, Sana'a lies at 15 to the north of longitude, and rises more than 2000 feet at sea level to hug Gernich path at 40. She flew away from the North to protect herself from the severe cold, and rose highly to save herself from the excessive heat, and the she appeared in her graceful appearance.

In the thirtieth of the last decade, Sana'a was about to ruin because its long suffering of Imamate rule. In that darken time, Sana'a was in appointment with a Yemeni child, coming from al-Maqalih village (Ibb governorate) to save her honor from the destruction.

He looked at her ruthless state with pity and sorrow, and began to build her again with his golden words. al-Maqalih saw Sana'a (women) as it found in his poems, with admiration. Being lose her beauty because the ups and downs of life, our poet with aid of his verse make her a beautiful woman in the bloom of youth. After he became the son of Sana'a he began to take the revenge on those who dragged the reputation of Sana'a down.

If Sana'a could speak, she would immortalize this poet as he does in "the book of Sana'a" giving him all her treasures. He came for the sake of her and was about to die in her love. Moreover; he becomes an essential part of her and she in turn becomes the soul of al-Maqalih. For these reasons al-Maqalih must do something to express his profound love for her through his writings. Image by image, he drew e her beautiful part in his mind, and then he collected these parts through the book of Sana'a. The book of Sana'a is a unique one, since it is the only book that contains about sixty poems describing one city. The book of Sana'a establishes a new vision in

poetry. Skillfully, the poet inspired the ideas of Romantic poets who appreciate the beauty of rural nature to use it in opposite place. Unlike romantic poet's Dr. al-Maqleh appreciates the beauty of the city to enhance the co-operative life rather than the solitary life of rural areas. In al-Maqalih's view, the city represents the progress and prosperity of nations. Frankly speaking, the book rewrote the history of Sana'a again. Al-Maqaleh succeeded to make the book of Sana'a a global one, since it has been translated to French and English. What's more, the book of Sana'a become more like a mobile city that bears to the world her panoramic vision.

The book of Sana'a received a great attention by most of Arabs critics and poets as the great poet, Adonis, and the famous critic Slah Fadhal. The book of Sana'a unites the poetry, place, and human in a beautiful image. This image can only be felt by the readers who find themselves full of sentimental feeling, juxtaposing with holy angelic music. Image by image, we will try to make the image of Sana'a clear as it has been seen in the book in Sana'a by the writer himself, to the readers.

Al-Maqalih use more than one image for Sana'a, to reflect his profound love. Once, he compares Sana'a as a woman, in another poem he compares her as holey place. Therefore; we will try to classify and clarify these images.

Aim and Objectives of the study

The aim of the present study is to find out the main image of Sana'a in "The Book of Sana'a" as it seen by the writer himself. In particular, it tries:

- To discover how Sana'a was viewed in "The Book of Sana'a".
- To find out the other images of Sana'a.
- To select the most important image and to look for the reasons behind that.

Importance of the Study

Al-Maqalih is a great poet whose works have been translated into many languages. He is well-known to Arabs and foreigners, but few researches and studies were conducted about his works, especially in foreign languages. As an example, the book of Sana'a was translated into French and English. The poems were only translated; however, these translations lack truthfulness and effectiveness.

Thus, it doesn't convey the message of the poet effectively. This work is to serve an immediate purpose. The book of Sana'a received a great attention by most of critics and poets. However; no one has talked about the image of Sana'a in "The book of Sana'a".

To kill two birds with one stone, we try to conduct our research about this topic that was never conducted neither in Arabic nor in English, and to clarify the ambiguity that foreigners face in understanding some poems. Most of texts were analyzed

though the bad situation where references are scarce about the book at Sana'a. Image by image, we will try to make the image of Sana'a clear to the readers.

We are wondering that nothing was found in the internet except a rough translation about his life and works in English. We hope that al-Maqalih will take a large space in media as much as Shakespeare.

Limitation of the study

This research is limited to the images of Sana'a in "the book of Sana'a" by al-Maqalih. The book of Sana'a may need more than one research and study because it is full with poetic uniqueness.

In addition, only the lines that talk about the images of Sana'a were analyzed. Being conducted for the first time, this research will be a great step to do further researches in al-Maqalih works.

Al-Maqalah and his role in Yemeni Literature

" Sana'a has many large gates, but the largest and attractive is a man named " Al-Maqalih"."(Dr.Mahfauth.A, Balanced Modernity Beirut,,1989..)

Abdu al-Aziz al-Maqalih is one of the most influential poets in 20th century who had a great impact in Arabic Literature in general and Yemeni Literature in Particular. He freed the Yemeni poetry from the restriction of rhyme. Most of his works in poetry are written in the form of free verse. However, he combined free and rhymed verse in more than one book. Al-Maqalih was greatly affected by Sayab, Nazik, Baiyti and Salah Abd al-Sabour .

Thabit Bidary states that besides Adonis and Khalil, Maqalih is considered as a pillar in Arab Modernism. His poetry has received a great attention in Arabs and Western Countries. Therefore, his poetry has been translated into different languages as French, English, Russian and other languages.

Unlike others, al-Maqalih has a new point of view about poetry. He mixed between realism and imagination in most of his poems. Furthermore, he appreciated the beauty of rural areas and city; he was distinguished from romantic and realistic poets. Later on, he argued that music and rhythm differs from one musician to another, questioning why not every poet invents his metre and music.

As a matter of fact, a group of poets paved the way for lighting the sparks of revolution in Yemen. Those poets are al-Zubairy, al-Moshiqi, al-Bardoni and al-Maqalih. They revolt against both the backward rule, the restriction of classic poetry and blindness to beauty. He with his revolutionary vision gradually could change poetry from classical to metrical and then to prose poetry.

Though, all this controversial speech, al-Maqalih confessed that material poetry is the best saying:

There's a big difference between metrical poetry and prose verse; the first is more like making status from mud, whereas the latter as making statue from gold.(Dr.I. al-Jaradi,Balanced Modernity, Beirut,,1989..)

Al-Maqalih tried to awake the dead words, and considered it as a double- edged weapon. Bravely he destroyed the principles of backwardness, and began to build the pillars of progress and development.

He says:

فلتشهد عيون كل الأحياء
وأرواح كل الموتى
أننا في اليمن المتخلف
سنظل نرغم أحزاننا الكبيرة
نحفر في الظلام ونقرع الأجراس، حتى مطلع الفجر

The eyes of all people
And all the souls of dead, shall witness
That in the under developed country
We still, though, much grief
Digging in the darkness, and knocking the bells
Till the coming of dawn.()

Beyond every creative poet, there is Al-Maqlih's supporting and guidance. Al-Rawi said that .Abd al-Aziz al-Maqlih, was the first person who encouraged him to start printing book in a newspaper every month and distribute it as a gift to the readers of Al-Thawra Newspaper.

Regarding his themes, he talked about revolution, nature, history, immigration, patriotism and the problems of life

Sana'a as a Woman

In this chapter the focus will be on presenting the general image of Sana'a as it seen by the poet himself. This chapter includes sub-aspects of the main image Sana'a as women; Sana'a as the beloved; Sana'a as mother of poets; Sana'a as ageless women (eternal beautiful women; Sana'a as nymph; Sana'a as revolutionary and fighter woman; Sana'a as a sad women in the dress of mourning; Sana'a as ambiguous character and Sana'a as old women. The poet is succeeded to invent the mythical image of Sana'a as women by describing Sana'a in the first lines of his book:

"She was a woman
Who fell from the sky
Of dew
And become a city"

He also repeats these words to complete his journey from where he begins in mythical atmosphere that combines history and geography as well as the past and present.

Sana'a poet's beloved

" Sana'a is incomparable and I will never depart her what ever was the price".

(al-Maqlih to Sha'ryat Magazine)

In this part, the main point is the intimate relationship between the poet and his beloved Sana'a. The majority of poets in the world used to give a wide space of their poetry for praising and immortalizing their beloveds. Similarly, al-Maqlih exceeded all those poets in immortalizing his beloved, describing her part by part, and sharing her ups and downs of life.

The poet was surprised by the attractive appearance of his beloved; therefore; he is still remembering the first sight of Sana'a. he says in the 4th poem:

" I remember
I was a child wilt overwhelmed eyes,
I saw her charms
And the shadow of her veil
I followed the flood of her steps
I drank her fragrance"

The poet's love is deep-rooted this idea is supported by the co-existence of both Sana'a and the poet. This can be clear from the 14th poem:

"When I was born, Sana'a was with me
In my swaddling clothes.
In the morning's milk I saw
The whiteness of her minarets
And domes"

It's a wonderful image that the poet combines between the whiteness of morning and clothes which both symbolize pleasure and comfort. The poet in the same poem continues to say:

"When I abandoned this country,
Is set out for
A musky continent"

Here, the poet refers to his second stage in life when he was in exile (Egypt). He added that Sana'a was not absent from his mind, she was everywhere around him in his poem, in myth books, in alphabets and in the starry script of the night sky. And as lovers usually do on dates, Sana'a gives her beloved perfumes and promises and say "come". This was clear in the 14th poem.

"She beckons: "come"[4th poem]

Commenting on the 14th poem, Dr. Al-Sakr . H, says that this poem represents the biography of the poet, since he refers to Sana'a in past and present. Therefore, the poet remembers his early days:

"in third grade

In a dream, he called out to her" [4th poem]

Al-Maqalih frankly confesses that Sana'a attracted him:

Sana'a enralls him" [12 poem]

He also still remembers his hanging around Sana'a:

"His wasting time was between the first

Gate and her lost

He remembers his days in the winter of his childhood"

Like darlings, his eyes take glances from his beloved's face secretly and this can be shown in the 16^h poem:

"His ardent eyes know well

The whispering of pilfering

In shame, they dream of an unsullied face,

Warm eyes"

It's clear that Sana'a is a very beautiful, so the poet eager to see her close to him. In the beginning of 35th poem, he says:

"in he middle of night

My hands hunger to touch your eyes

But my lonely fingers are intertwined"

Here, the poet begins this poem with referring to "the middle of night" to reflect the fact that lovers spend most of their nights thinking about their love.

In the 54th poem, the poet says that Sana'a forget its lover because of those who court her unfaithfully:

"Has been besieged by buildings that court her unfaithfully,

For their sake, she forgets

The faces of her true lovers"

As result of this, whenever the poet comes to her, she turns her face:-

"Fearing that they'll be discovered

Whenever I said to her. "I have come" she drew away".

However, the poet could not believe that lovers decline each others. The poet then suggests that women do this to awake passion and love in their darlings hearts.

"Can a lover be false?
Does ardor deceive its heroes?
And be guile their fragrant speech?
Or do women – cities
Make ready o leave,
Or inspire embers of passion."

In the last line of this poem, the poet emphasizes that his love for Sana'a will last forever:

"I want her to know that my love will endure
To the last page, letter and period in the book of life"

The poet fused in Sana'a love and he is going now to courts her from the early morning:

"A beautiful, pure morning
O Daughter of the sun!
Nothing on my lips, just the kiss of words".

The poet gives reason to his coming in such time that he has nothing, just he wants to kiss her.

When the poet decided to leave Sana'a, she told him there's no refuge for him except hew heat.

"You can't hide your grief
Or shelter the misery of your eyes
Except within me"
Thus, spoke the rock of Sana'a
Bidding me farewell
As I traveled for away"

Sana'a as Ghyman's Beloved (cumulus).

In this wonderful image, the poet talks about the intimate relationship between Sana'a (the woman) and cumulus (her eternal lover and guardian). Since he is so, it is a must to protect her from (hungry eyes) of colonizer.

"He is her eternal guardian:
Kisses her when she falls asleep,
He is her pillow when she dreams." (2nd poem,p)

The poet uses very selective words to refer to the intimate relationships as "kisses" "her pillow". These words indicate that "cumulus" is the husband of Sana'a, and for this reason, he is standing beside her proudly.

Being cumulus drinks his coffee from the hand of his beloved every morning; he will not be weak or old because he takes his extraordinary strength from his beautiful beloved.

Although, his name was cumulus, but his enemies disgraced him and they called him "Revenge", cumulus doesn't pay attention to them. Therefore, stones blame him for being satisfied with his fate.

"At night the stones dream and ask "what sun feeds you?"

"What chisel rewrote your name?"

And: "How can you sip your morning coffee and not feel ashamed when your new name summons the dust of vengeance?" (p)

Here metaphorically, stones represent the consciousness of the mountain (Ghyman) that remorse him for such satisfaction. They ask him to revolt against his new name or at least feel ashamed. They asked him wondering how could he dare to drink his coffee from the most beautiful women(Sana'a) and his name is still unchanged .Stones asked him to change the name since it is derived from revenge.

In the 3rd poem, the poet again refers to the duality of Sana'a and cumulus:

Indeed. Sana'a was first born eight thousand years ago,

Created from the ribs of the mountains surrounding her.

"cumulus" was the first to inscribe on her brow

The crescent of his desire,

The first who gave his left rib

For her bedrock.

From his flesh he gave her alabaster that waits for sun,

Windows that loom over the wadi(valley).

In these lines, the poet refers to ancient birth of Sana'a numerically. He says that the first birth of Sana'a was before eight thousand years ago. Then, al-Maqalih compares the birth of Sana'a as the birth of Eve.

Here, the poet personifies "cumulus" as Adam from whom "Sana'a" Eve is created. The poet goes on to assure that "cumulus" was the first who gave his left rib for her bedrock. Implicitly, the poet wants to say that all these high palaces and buildings in Sana'a come from the rib of cumulus. Skillfully, the poet attracts the attention of readers by his reference to Adam and Eve creation. The poet may have another intended message, he might mean that Sana'a is the mother of whole Arabs. The poet continues to mention the gifts that cumulus (Ghyman) gave Sana'a as the trees from which human beings make windows.

He compares the trees as something given from cumulus flesh. The repetition of "gave" indicates that man must "give" not "take" so he is responsible for his wife, necessities.

The poet continues to say that Cumulus is still standing up beside his beloved with open-eyes, waiting for paint-brush of time to paint unforgettable image for him and his beloved.

One of the most important features of "book of Sana'a is that the poet divides every poem into two part; the first is metrical poetry; the other is prose poetry. Always al-Maqalih explains and clarifies the ambiguity of metrical poetry in the prose poetry.

As an example, in the 30th poem, he begins his poem with talking about the old relationship between Sana'a and the surrounded mountains:

"Between Sana'a and mountains that surround her

Jan ancient love

And an ancient emptiness".

The reader wouldn't understand what the poet means, till he reads the other part of poem (prose poetry):

"The mountain opens his window every morning
To sing a greeting before his fading secret".

Here, the ambiguity of the first part is revealed by the fact that cumulus greets his beloved every morning. In the first lines, the poet use contradiction, he says, there is an ancient love as well as ancient emptiness (fear) between Sana'a and cumulus. He wrote this in purpose, to state the fact that Sana'a share her beloved his love and fear, since he is the eternal guardian. She is more like fighter's wife who bears love and at the same time, she is worried about him.

The poet in the second part wants to assure this woman (Sana'a) not to fear, since cumulus (Ghyman) opens his window every morning greeting her.

In the 11th poem, the poet begins his poem with the clefts of "Cumulus":

"The clefts in the chest of cumulus
And Mt. Ayban
Deep caves that hide the tales of Sana'a from the tide of discovery."

Since cumulus the beloved and the guardian of Sana'a, she gives him all the secrets. It is normal that husband and wife share secrets and emotion to each other.

In the same poem, the poet argues that since Sana'a is eternal, cumulus also has the same characteristic:

Words flicker to life, only to die
Thrones are built, then they are obliterated.
Cumulus sits on his throne
Enigmatic, silent.

The poet begins these lines with argument, he argues that while words come to life only to die, and thrones are built only to be conquered and ruined, cumulus (the husband of Sana'a) still eternal on his throne silently. The poet here has a new vision, in his opinion, words must die by the passage of time whereas Shakespeare believed that words wouldn't die and live as soon as there's a life on the earth saying in his poem "Shall I compare you to Summer's Day" that his words would immortalize his beloved for ever:

"When all intended lines to time though grow'st
So long as men can breathe or eyes can see
So long lines this, and this gives life to thee"

Cumulus resists the ravages of time to bear the keys of his wonderful woman (Sana'a).Therefore; the relationship between cumulus and Sana'a is not like any couples that ends one day with divorce or the death of one of them. However, cumulus love won't be affected by the ravages of time and will go on forever.

Sana'a as Ageless (Eternal Beautiful woman)

In this part, the poet may use this image to refer to the ancient birth of Sana'a. This can be clear in the third poem:-

"She was born with Sam Ibn Nuh"

Al-Maqaliah here refers to the ancient birth of Sana'a, telling us the story that reports that Sana'a was the first city in the world after Tufan (1). It was built by Sam at that time. Though Sana'a is old enough, she is still beautiful. The poet give reasons to that, saying:-

"Neither submit to the ravages of time
Nor reveal their age"

In the 9th poem, the poet says about Sana'a;

"A waif
In desert rags,
Dusts of dust on her eyelids
Covered in clouds of sorrow,

(1)Tufan is another name for the over-flood that God punish the disobedient in Nuh time.

This is The first Sana'a,
Who planted the foundation stones
Of all civilization on the earth"

The poet here refers to old age of Sana'a and he compares her as a passenger who took a long journey. Therefore, her dress changed and become in the color of dessert and her eyelids painted with dust. After giving us this information, the poet revealed the identity and name of this passenger. She is Sana'a the first city who brought civilization to the world. Then, the poet asked readers to look at her beauty and not to fish for her drawbacks as wrinkles and dust in her eyes. Though she is old, the history of Arabs is summarized in her lips. Here, the poet may refer to Sana'a as stone- foundation of Arabs:

Look at her drink deep and long wondrous eyes;
Face wrinkles will never tire you.
Eyelids dust will never sadden you.
Drink deep and long her marvelous mouth;
Her lips is a history of our people;
Tracing the floods that nearly
Washed away the mountains (9th poem)

Skillfully, the writer draws a beautiful portrait for Sana'a. he begins drawing her wondrous eyes, then her face, then her eyelids, and finally her mouth. By doing such, the poet finished his drawing in logical way as he was a painter (artist). There he assures us that Sana'a will never become old, because she knows the secrets that make her everlasting beautiful woman:

"Don't worry about senility
Sana'a knows a secret that lets her
Cast off old age and leave behind the years of despair" (9th, p).

In 21st poem, the poet begins his poem skillfully in dramatic way. Light was fading while the "time" is looking for his days and asking stones about his youth. This indicates the old age of this person (time) who is asking himself about the beautiful woman (Sana'a) who came from clouds:

"Light is fading
And time takes his time
In the alleys
He asks the stones about his youth
Does he remember when Sana'a came from the clouds

To settle on the earth ". (21st poems)

Unlike this aged person, (Time) who has deep wrinkles,

his friend (Sana'a) was still beautiful. There is a wide difference between the wrinkles of the two friends.

The poet made such comparison between Time and Sana'a to reflect the resistance of Sana'a to ravages of (time) who become older than her:

"Time itself has withered with age,
But Sana'a, though old,
Is still standing." (21st poem, p119)

That's why he called her as the maiden of the new age and the lady of the past:

In 41st poem, the poet describes Sana'a as marvelous and colored women as butterfly:

"Marvelous and colored, like a rainbow wing
The harvest of years pass by on her shoulders
The bereavement of the dead
She is intoxicated, spinning off love and color",

Though Sana'a is old, she still in the bloom of youth. Her dwellers passed away and the wheel of years is going fast, though this, Sana'a takes no care! Emphasizing that her beauty is eternal:

Beauty is all she knows.
O! Sana'a, wakening to the sparrow's chirrup,
Dozing off to the pigeon's coo"(41st poem, p209)

The poet relates beauty to woman to support the idea that women have pure instinct. "Wakening" and "dreaming" reflects woman's love for life. Unlike other cities, Sana'a has intimacy with winter and summer, so her winter is warm and her summer is cool. These are the reasons that make Sana'a beautiful:

Her winter is timid and warm
Her summer is cool, gentle. (41st poem, p 209)

Sana'a as nymph (woman in paradise)

The poet begins the book with this verse:

"She was a women
Who fell down from the sky"

to invent a mythical atmosphere for the book, introducing Sana'a as a woman fell from the sky which indicates (paradise). For this reason, we find Sana'a in many poems is very beautiful, though she is very old. This indicates the characteristic of nymphs who never lose their beauty in paradise.

In the 3rd poem, the poet also refers to Sana'a as nymph who came in her perfection of femininity:

"She departs from the dusk of time
A lady in the perfection of femininity
Did she vain down from a book of mysteries?"

Actually, we know that perfection cannot be found among women in the earth. Here, the poet may refer to the perfection of nymphs in paradise. Therefore, he is wondering about her origins.

Sana'a as the Mother of Poetry and Poets

This part of research focuses on a very wonderful image for Sana'a. In the previous part Sana'a was a nymph and now she has another image, Sana'a is compared to a kind woman (mother). Al-Maqalih refers to his mother (Sana'a) in 23rd poem, while he was sitting in the hug of her, listening to her bright words (poetry):

Sitting amongst the pages of her history,
He craves gleaming words
And shining glances

When his mother is in trouble, he cries but when she is in delight and pleasure, he, in turn, becomes very happy:

He cries when she is broken,
Sings when she is victorious.
He is her child.

He is her blossoming qasidah (poem).

The words "cry" and "sing" reflect the strong relation between the child (Al-Maqalih) and his mother (Sana'a). In the same poem, the poet confesses that he is not the only who suckle poetry from Sana'a, but there are a lot of poets who suckled also from the poetry of Sana'a:

"Over the mountain paths,
On steeds of words,
They have come
From the peaks of a qasidah"

Here, words are compared as horses for poets who are coming to Sana'a in permanent way:

They hug the streets, radiant with history
And, like warm mother's milk,
They drink these qasidahs.

Whenever the poet begins to lose his poetic language, he takes refuge to Sana'a to provide him with poetry:

Despaired the poverty of language
There I threw myself against some forgotten wall
And bemoaned the weakness of memory, the dryness of ink
Ah! above me water: a translucent voice, a kindly face!

In 73rd poem, the poet mentions his departure from Sana'a to Egypt, when Sana'a addressed him:

"where are you off to, my son?"
From the milk of the rock in quarter of Musk,
May god feed you (37, p191)

She tells him not to go, remembering him that Sana'a is the mother who feeds him with poetry.

And may you know the secret,
Of this qasidah(poem) (37,p191)

Sana'a is full with natural beauty and mythical atmosphere. There are a lot of myths talking about the treasures of Asa'd al-Kamil, and anyone listen to these myths:

"And whoever listens to it
Ever if only once.
Becomes a philosopher or maybe even a poet"(37, p191)

Sana'a as Fighter and revolutionary

In this part, Sana'a has a new image "Sana'a as harsh fighter". The poet talks about the strong ability that Sana'a owns against invaders. In the 32nd poem, the poet says:

She is a Believer
And her belief pours forth like rivers.
But she says No to conquerors
Even if thy too are Believer. (23, p.165)

Here, the poet may refer to resistance of Sana'a against Ottomans and other invaders of Yemen, who have the same religion, Islam. Then, the poet reveals that Sana'a hate Turkish invasion and will resist until the end:

What Anatolia want?
Sana'a would never submit to a foreigner
Or a raven who perched on her minarets. (23, p.165)

Here, Ottomans invasion (1539-1636) is compared to raven which is used to represent (pessimistic). In that time, Yemen gained a reputation as the graveyard of Turks.

2.6 Sana'a as old women

In this part, Sana'a begins to change due to the ups and downs of life. The poet refers to Sana'a as old woman, leaning on a crutch and forgetting past and present:

Like the phrase "it was"
Disappearing behind the centuries,
Sana'a comes to you, pale
Leaning on a crutch
She doesn't even remember today.()

Answering our question, the poet gives reason to the selection of this image, saying that it represents certain periods, especially when Sana'a submits to the ups and downs of life. The poet also refers to Sana'a as changeable (round character). Sometime, she looks like a beautiful woman and in other times looks as a very old women waiting for death.

The poet here refers to Sana'a in both pleasure and trouble:

Sometimes delicate eyelashes
And a nose hungering for a fight.
Sometimes an old woman

Preparing for oblivion()

Sana'a in the dress of mourning

In 1947, many people died as a result of famine and epidemic disease.

1947.

Sana'a is a city asleep in death

There aren't enough shrouds to go around,

So great is the ghastly number of dead (44, p221)

In the 45th poem, the poet describes Sana'a under the imamate rule, burying her grief and mourning on her martyrs. However, after she buried her grief by the revolution against Imam in 1948 and 1962, she regains her smile and charms.

"I watched Sana'a a burying her grief,

Morning corpses without graves

After she had buried her grief

In the hidden spaces of these mountains,

She slowly reclaimed her charms

And her smile". (45, p223, 225)

The poet skillfully describe the disastrous state by which Sana'a comes to:-

Everything is dying

Nothing gives birth (46, p 229)

Sana'a also doesn't forget the martyrs of revolution

The blood of a martyr who lived justice

But turned the page of life too soon (47, p 233)

Here, the poet may refer to al-Zubeiry, the leader of the free Yemeni who was killed in 1965 in the north of Yemen before finding success. Then the writer portrays Sana'a before revolution in very fearful images (insomnia, tremble, corpses):-

There is insomnia in her eyes,

A thirst that trembles in her bones

Sana'a tries to close her eyes but cannot

Corpses block her eyelids (47, p 235)

Meanwhile this painful decade, the poet addresses Sana'a to take off her mourning clothes. Implicitly, the poet addresses revolutionaries to forget the past and continue in their strife against Imam:

"Wipe away the tears of your heart,

The tears on the windows and oriels

Leave behind your dress of mourning " (49, p 241)

The failed revolution in 1948 resulted in extraordinary number of prisoners who still fight with their words to bring the comfortable life for generation:

Qasidahs rise from prison cells

To bring spring to an earth renewed (49, p 243)

Again, the poet is very optimistic, he expects the revolution soon. He tells us that Sana'a will take her revenge from Imam and celebrate her victory:

Sana'a is sleeping, still alive

Will she awake in a year?

O! Delight of my eye!

Haven't your eyes gotten their fill of dread (50, p245)

The poet here compares the night as (Imamate rule) who pour Sana'a with all kinds of cruelty:

Don't be frightened

Don't be sad

Night has stolen your daylight

Traitors have made off with your lantern light.

However, the poet confirms that the night is about to have an end (referring to Imamate rule) and revolution is coming soon:

But night is nearly over

And the time of beauty draws near

Don't be sad (51, p249)

Sana'a in a new dress

After the address of the poet to Sana'a, she responds him and revolts against Imam in 1962:

Sana'a shattered her chains

She burst from the vessels of her grief. (52, p 235)

The poet now is going to talk about 1963 revolution. At that time, revolutionaries fought British colonization in Aden, and free the south of Yemen after Aden has waited more than one century and half under British occupation.

"Aden clung to black rock,

Wrestling with sea dragons

While the sea endured a century of labor pains,

And drew a picture of its children " (52, p255)

Finally, the poet completes his story about Sana'a with the Reunion of south and north of Yemen, defeating Imamate rule and British invasion:

"The semblance of distance between the mountains has shrunk

As has the distance between the coasts.

The waves brought by the storms of invasion.(53,p256)

The writer sequences these historical events from the 47th poem till the reunion of Yemen in the 53rd poem as it was a chapter in a book.

Other Wonderful Images

In this chapter, the poet is going to add some images to beautify Sana'a in an extraordinary manner. To the poet, Sana'a as a woman is not enough and she deserved more and more. From time to time, he sees Sana'a as multi-images, including the capital of spirit, holey place, a wonderful portrait, a paradise and fresh song.

To prove his image, the poet compares Sana'a to famous beautiful cities as London and Paris.

Sana'a as the capital of spirit (poet's soul capital)

Al-Maqalih opens the first poem saying :

Sana'a: capital

Of the spirit

In these lines, the poet considers Sana'a as very important part of his body, his soul.

This image is very clear from his answer to our question to him about the capital of spirit. He said that as the place is the capital of human's body, similarly it is also the capital of human's soul. He added that Sana'a deserved to be the soul of the poet and the soul of Sana'a dwellers who find their comfort and rest in. At the same poem, the poet describes the weather of Sana'a in which the souls are filled with delight and pleasure.

In winter the drought is a friend

In summer ever the dog days are light (1,p25)

Here the poet describes the marvelous weather of Sana'a. Sana'a weather is distinguished because of her warm winter and her moderate summer. This exceptional climate reinforces the intimacy and kindness of Sana'a (the female). Therefore; the two season, winter and summer, are harsh to other cities of the world, but Sana'a not.

The poet refers to Sana'a more than once in the book of Sana'a. In 4th poem, he says:

Sana'a of the spirit

Flooded light and incantations.

The trees of my memory blaze with light whenever her (4, p 84)

In another poem, he says:

Sparrows cry to Sana'a of the spirit:

What happened? (46, p228)

The writer in this image asserts the duality of Sana'a and the poet. He regards himself and Sana'a as two part of the same body. Sana'a represents the soul while the poet represents the body, so what is the value of body without soul? The poet support this idea in "crying between the hands of Sana'a"

حاولت أن أنساك فانطفأت طرق الهوى في سائر المدن

الروح هائمة لا تخش: ليس هنا سوى البدن

I tried to forget you, but love's path burnt out in all cities

And my soul is crying: don't worry only the body is here.

This lines said by the poet when he was in exile. He clarifies that his body is tied to his soul (Sana'a), asserting that only his body was in Egypt, but his soul is far away. This indicates the unity between the poet and Sana'a.

Sana'a as a paradise

In a very beautiful comparison between Sana'a and paradise. Al-Maqalih says:

Her gates are seven and paradise
Her gates are seven
Each gate will satisfy a desire
For you, traveler,
And from whatever gate you have entered
Peace be upon you,
Peace be upon Sana'a (1st poem, 25)

The poet compares Sana'a gates to paradise gates, proving that as paradise has seven gates, similarly Sana'a has seven gates. This earthly paradise satisfies the desire of its visitors, so they feel comfortable in Sana'a. In paradise faithful believer in God enter peacefully from whet ever gate they want. Skillfully,, the poet gives Sana'a the same description of paradise. As a matter of fact, we all do believe that paradise located under the Throne of God. Al-Maqalih conveys to us the same image through these lines:

"Sana'a sleeps under the Throne of God
And anoints her trees blossoming with perfume" (3rd poem, p39)

The poet confidently continues to compare Sana'a as an earthly paradise emphasizing that Sana'a has beautiful nymphs as paradise:

Hush! The city nymphs appear in
A rustling of their anklets (30 poem, p155)

In these lines, the nymphs of Sana'a appeared as they were in paradise. The poet succeeded to make this image close to that of paradise in the minds of readers. The poet has the right to enter this paradise whenever he wants sine there is no barrier between him and paradise:

I don't need a key
To enter your kingdom
I float upwards,
No time separates us
No space is between us (37, poem p191)

Sana'a as a Holy place

In this holey image, the poet compares Sana'a as a holey place to leave deep impact in the readers. Since it is a holey place, killing is forbidden and only innocent and faithful men are allowed to enter such place. The poet says:

Sacred Sana'a consecrated.
A holy place by custom,
By custom from the first.
The heart cannot enter Sana'a courtyard with hatred in its blood,
Until it is washed in love.

How could Hashid and Bakil call Sana'a a fair game?

(48 poem – p237)

The poet here uses religious words beginning with "sacred" and ending with "wash"(washing before the prayers). The poet asserts that Sana'a is a holy place since it is built by Sam; therefore, it is forbidden to kill someone in the courtyard of this city. Then the poet wonders how Hashid and Bakil (Brothers descended from Hamden and ultimately from Saba) call Sana'a a fair game. The poet here refers to 1948 revolution when Imam Ahmed rallied the tribes to fight revolutionary fighters. In the same poem, the poet skillfully compares Sana'a as (Jerusalem). As Jerusalem locates in the centre of the earth, so do Sana'a locates in the centre of Yemen. Moreover, as Jerusalem citizens are vigorous, similarly Sana'a people are strong enough to defend this holy place:

Sana'a is located in heart
Of ancient Yemen,
Surrounded by a wall of vigorous men
Of Hashid and Bakil.(48,P 239)

Angels surround this place after humans sleep in beds, praying and kowtowing to God. Naturally, holy places are used to be religious places for worshipping. The poet means in the following lines that angels awake Queen Bilqis (the queen of Saba who visited King Solomon is recorded in the Qur'an)(27: 20-44) from her sleep to walk around Sana'a as it was Mecca (the holy place of Muslims):

"when the sidewalks fall asleep,
Right in the quiet of things,
Angels wake queen Bilqis from her rest
and form a procession with the Damsels of Ghayman
Walking to prayer in their nightly promenade" (35th, p185)

The poet continues to say that Sana'a is so pleased with the advent of Bilqis and her prayers in exaggerative lines:-

"The breast of the city trembles in joy,
The heart of the earth sighs in contentment:
O! God, what charms she has!
After her departure,
All beauty seems anemic,
The legs of the women turn
Into walking prosthetics"

The reader is surprised to know that all beauty of women is nothing beside Bilqis' beauty. Even the heart of earth takes a long sight to the advent of the beautiful queen Bilqis. The poet invents an exceptional image for the beauty of Bilqis, he says that beauty has anemia after Bilqis' departure and what is more, the legs of women turn into walking prosthetics.

Sana'a as a fresh song.

After the poet has given us something spiritual to please our souls with image of holy place capital of spirit and paradise, he is going to give us the image of fresh song to make us ready to enjoy ears and ourselves with Sana'a (the fresh song).

In the 25th poem, the poet opens with the sun writing a silver melody in the reflection of windows in Sana'a houses. There here goes on to say that such melody never come to dust, however, this melody becomes garden for the light, wings of affection and havens fro love:

The sun writes a silver melody
In the reflections of ancient houses.
The melody doesn't rust
It tremolos blossom and become a garden
For the light
Wings of affection
Havens for love (25th page 135)

As a result of this melody, the poet asserts that Sana'a is not just houses but is also fresh songs. It is sung by singers in both happiness and sadness.

"Sana'a is not house, the eyes say
Sana'a I music, the scent of jasmine from her oriels"
She sings when she is content,
She sings when she is content,
She flings her childhood to the clouds, (25th page 135)

Then the poet enrich this image with a very famous and beautiful songs which is well known to every sanani(people who live in Sana'a):

"Scatters fables to her folk and then sleeps
On a bed of qasidahs, guiding them to the ground:
Oh, people of Sana'a,
Let the whiteness of my hopes
And the music of Sana'a embraces every song (25th page 135).

Actually, these are names of songs that talks about Sana'a. For example, "O people of Sana'a" is a poem written by Abdu Al-Rahman Al-Ansi and sung by M.S. Abdullah. The famous singer A.Bakar Salem sings "The Music of Sana'a Embrace Every song". The poet at the same poem goes on to mention to the poets who wrote about Sana'a.

In another poem, Al-Maqaliah describes Sana'a as fresh songs in heydays of Sana'a and as empty skull in black days (Imam, invasion, wars) this two contradictory images refer to the periods of time by which Sana'a passed.

"Sometimes tender with life,
Humming fresh and a song.
Sometimes and empty skull,
Filed with emptiness and crouching smoke" (33rd page 137).

When the poet was wondering about the souqs of sliver and the streets of gold that he saw in his dreams someone whispered to him:

"Someone whispered to me: that was Sana'a
Singers and poets roamed round".

Sana'a is wonderful portrait

Now, Al-Maqalih is going to please our eyes with a new image after he pleased our ears in the last image; the fresh song.

The poet addresses the admirers who admire painting portraits in the light of its beautiful surface. However, the portrait of Sana'a cannot be appreciated unless he sees beyond the surface, the walls, and space. In addition, you can recognize the beautiful image of Sana'a if you stand in the high room (Manzar) and look at her with open eyes

Stop! You can not enter a painting:
It is a beautiful surface and nothing more.
Sana'a may be a beautiful image
But unless you go beyond the surface
Passing through her wall and spaces
straight inside of her
stop in the manzar (8th poem –p 36)

Then the poet addresses us that if we let our eyes walk and our sight and heart feel the portrait, then we will be convinced that neither rainbow nor the brush of Salvador Dali painted this walls of portrait:

Let your eyes pass to the other side of the glass,
Let your mind rest with the rest
Of this painting
Not a lightning bolt
Not a rainbow,
Not even the brush of Salvador Dali,
But she, she who crafted these windows
And painted these walls in marvelous light. (8th poem. P63).

This portrait is painted by angles not by the brush of artist:

My heart saw angels painting the horizon
with wadis and palaces.
My eyes heard the sound of her brush
And my ears saw the clouds becoming
Not only a color" (u the page 43, 45)

This portrait not only mesmerizes the mind of the poet but also all the poets; therefore, we find them wondering about its fantastic beauty:

Poets walk around in the plaza
Of the Republican castle
Asking one another
"Is this a cityscape or portrait"
Hanging in the space

And if this is a city, where does this wind come from,
Rushing through the earth's lungs? (53rd page 257)

Sana'a in comparison to other beautiful cities

In the 1st poem, the poet refers to Sana'a juxtaposing with other capitals of the world:

Mecca is the capital of the Quran
Paris is the capital of the Art
London is the capital of the Business
Washington is the capital of the Might
Cairo is the capital of the History
Baghdad is the capital of the poetry
Damascus is the capital of the Roses

And Sana'a is the capital of the spirit. (1st page 27)

When the light is off, any cities lose its beauty, but Sana'a is more beautiful in the same situation, because the stars provide, Sana'a with a unique sparkle and luster of light. Sana'a enjoys herself in such romantic scene:

Cities aflame with lights
Waste away in darkness.
Sana'a slumbers in the wadi (village)
The stars here possess a unique luster
And the sky is so close (13th page 83)

Again, the poet addresses Paris saying: it is true that you are the mother of magic beauty and perfume. Then he shifts to address London saying: It is right that you have a wonderful weather. The poet continues this comparison, that Sana'a also seems equal to Paris and London and may it exceeded them in beauty:

Paris: second to you
In perfume
And magic,
London: second to you in light
And texture,
In radiance
And shadow,()

In the same poem the poet refers to al-Jawhri 's poem when he compared Sana'a to Paris, London, Roma and Washington, concluding that all these cities' beauty are man-made, but the beauty of Sana'a came from God. Here, the poet refers to the naturalness of Sana'a' beauty:

Here's one by a poet from a hunted years ago
Paris is second to you in beauty, so is London
And the capitals of the Byzantines and the Americans.

To reconcile emotion and truth,
 The poet has added a sentence:
 For the beauty of those cities is affected
 And man – made,
 But as for the beauty of Sana'a, is comes from God

To conclude, according to the view of the poet, the sweetest city is not the city that was built with gold and silver, but the city that brings delight to the eye and soul. Here, the poet may compare Sana'a with Iram city of Ad (God destroyed Ad and their city with a mighty windstorm after they disobey the prophet Hud):

The sweetest city
 is not surrounded with silver bricks,
 With gold bricks
 The sweetest city
 Is surrounded by jasmine
 That washed the heart
 And inspires the eye
 With a sudden tranquility (4th page 47).

Discussion

In this chapter, the gist of my study will be exposed in brief. It is true that al-Maqalih sees Sana'a as a very beautiful and ageless woman. This image takes a large space in the book of Sana'a.

To assure that Sana'a is not mere women, the poet gives this woman the characteristics that cannot be found in any women in the earth. Metaphorically, the poet makes Sana'a a perfect woman who combines all the admirable qualities of women in general. When Sana'a is old, she is at the same time very beautiful. In addition, Sana'a doesn't resist only the ravages of time, but also she resists the invasion. What's more, Sana'a is religious woman owns the spiritual bright in her face and combines the good traits of wises, martyrs and poets:

Sana'a has the face of a saint
 The tongue of a sage
 The voice of a martyr
 And the proclivities of a poet. (33rd poem, p175)

The poet selects this image to reflect the striking similarities between city and women. He succeeded to invent the mythical image of Sana'a by describing her at the opening of the book and the end:

She was a woman ;
 Who fell from the sky of dew

The poet refers to Sana'a by the Arabic pronoun "She" in many poems: She was born with Sam bin Nuh, she is the Mistress of light, she is believer, she is a memory in motion, she is sleeping ... etc. [Note, but translator didn't translate the Arabic pronouns "She" in most poem.]

The poet opens most of poem with the absent feminine pronoun to emphasize the absence of his beloved (Sana'a). The poet proves the intimacy between him and Sana'a from the early childhood to the present days through his poems:

"When I was born, Sana'a was with me"

This idea proves the duality and co-existence of Sana'a and the poet. This mythical woman appears in the poems sometimes as a happy girl and sometimes as a sad one; the poet clarifies this in his interview saying "this reflects the stages that Sana'a passed by".

Al-Rubai stated that the book of Sana'a is a Romantic poetry talks about woman who turn to a city overlooks the past that is linked with the future by invisible link. (Rubali, A, al-zaman, mag 2009).

Also, Abd al-Malik. We can expect the unity of the poet and Sana'a through his poem when he called her:

"The capital of spirit (2nd Friday,2001).

To assure the ancient age of Sana'a, the poet creates a very beautiful image calling Sana'a as Eve the wife of Adam (Ghyman). In another poem he asserts that it Sana'a who brought civilization to earth after Tufan.

This is the first Sana'a,
Who planted the foundation stones
Of all civilization on the earth.

In the poet's views, Sana'a deserve more and more therefore; he adds to the image of perfect woman other images. Once he describes Sana'a as the capital of spirit in another, he describes her as paradise that has numerically the same gates of Sana'a. The poet asserts that Sana'a is a paradise who mesmerizes the minds of her visitors, talking about a tourist, Al-Maqaliah says. One day, a tourist called out:

"Sana'a sleeps beneath Sana'a" (24th poem, p133)

Then, he continues the story of that tourist and his strong astonishment in finding a staircase of marble that leads to rooms of light, and seeing a white marble lamps speak in language that he didn't understand. Moreover, before he flew away to the way of airport; he saw people sleeping next to swords of pure gold:

But before madness could save him,
He was in his way to the airport: (24th poem, p133)

In another poem, Al-Maqaliah sees Sana'a as a holey place as same as Mecca: therefore, killing is prohibited in its courtyard.

Then, the poet shifts to portray the image of Sana'a as a fresh song that pleases the ears of its listeners, mentioning to the great lyric songs that talk about Sana'a, and at the same time he doesn't forget the famous poets who surrounds Sana'a with their poems.

Moreover, Sana'a in the eyes of the poet is a very wonderful portrait that may exceeds the portrait of rainbow and ever the brush of Salvador Dali.(French artist)

Finally, the poet put Sana'a in comparison to beautiful cities in the world as Paris and London, concluding that Sana'a beauty is natural whereas the beauty of Paris and London is just man-made!

Why does the poet select Sana'a as a woman?

The poet was skillful enough to choose this beautiful image. Many poets select this image to portray city, because both have something in common. In our interview, the poet says "Describing cities as woman is not something new" referring that there are many poets who select such image to represent city. Usually, woman symbolizes beauty.

As an example, Nizar addresses Damascus in a poem:

"O Beirut my female from among millions of women"

As a matter of fact, women take a large space in poetry in past and present. They have also a secret power to attract men's attention and that is why Al-Maqalih compares Sana'a as women. However; women lose their beauty by the passage of time but Sana'a has eternal attraction.

Through the history of poetry, poets used to give the best of their poems, immortalizing women. The poet refers more than once that cities have the same characteristic of women:

Beautiful cities, beautiful women:

Neither submit to the ravages of time

Nor reveal their age (3rd poem, p39)

Usually, women look younger than their age, and they never reveal their right age. Similarly, Sana'a looks very beautiful though she is very old. In addition to this, the poet:

Or do women-cities

Make ready to leave,

To inspire embers of passion (45th poem, p265).

The poet suggests that cities are more like women who turn away to awake passion and love in their darlings' hearts.

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