

Sana'a and Women in Al-Maqalih's Book of Sana'a Yemen

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to find out Sana'a's imageries in Al-Maqalih's book of Sana'a. It argues that Al-Maqalih has intensely and extensively used Sana'a as a metaphor. The analytical method has been used to analyze the Al-Maqalih's poems. Interviews with Al-Maqalih was carried out to clarify ambiguity in some of his poems. This study finds that Sana'a is metaphorically used by Al-Maqalih as poet's beloved, as Ageless (Eternal Beautiful woman) and as a revolutionary and fighter woman, as Eve the wife of Adam (Ghaiman), the mother of poets and poetry, as a nymph, and an older woman.

Keywords: *Imagery; Poetic Images; Verse Style; Sana'a City.*

INTRODUCTION

Al-Maqalih was born in 1937 in Al-Maqalih village (Ibb governorate), Yemen. At seven, his family moved to Sana'a, seeking a better life. After a short time, his father was arrested and imprisoned in Hajjah for his resistance against Imamate Rule. Al-Maqalih's earliest experience with poetry occurred in the late teens; at the same time, his academic success earned him a scholarship to study in Cairo, then he joined the company of the Yemen Poet, Mohammed AL-Zubiery and other free poets whose revolutionary activities had landed them in exile. His time in Cairo was cut short for financial reasons after two years in the Department of Journalism at the University of Cairo. Al-Maqalih returned to Yemen in 1961. Until 1967, al-Maqalih worked as broadcaster for Sana'a Radio, a key element in the republican movement whose regular participants including al-Barduni and Mohammed al-Sharfi. Despite holding several positions in the Ministry of Education, in 1967 AL-Maqalih resolved to return to Cairo to complete his education. He received his B.A. from the Department of Arabic at Cairo University in 1971, his M.A. from the Department of Letters at the University of Ayn Shams in 1973, and his Ph.D. from the same university in 1977. Returning to Yemen, he held the Presidency of Sana'a University from 1982 to 2001. During this time, he presided over the establishment of the colleges of Agriculture, Medicine, and Engineering as well as the establishment of branch universities that have since grown into fully-fledged universities in their own right. In addition, Al-Maqalih is the long-standing president of the Yemen Center for Studies and Research. He maintains a desk amongst its library shelves, and offers advice and encouragement to all students and scholars. Al-Maqalih received the Lotus prize for literature in 1986 and the UNESCO

Prize for Arabic Culture in 2002; the French Government awarded him the “Knight of the 1st Rank in Arts and Letters” in 2003. He also received A'awis for poetry in 2010.

The Features of the Book of Sana'a

Book of Sana'a seems to be a very valuable book since it has something that may not be found in others. To assure that features, they are worth mentioning:

a. Balance Between Romanticism and Modernism

The book of Sana'a established a new vision in poetry. Skillfully, the poet inspired the ideas of Romantic poets who appreciate the beauty of rural nature and remote places to use it in appreciating the beauty of city, enhancing the co-operative life rather than the solitary life of rural areas. Therefore; city represents the prosperity and progress of nation in Al-Maqalih's view.

b. Al-Maqalih's Priority

Al-Maqalih is the first poet in the world who grant a city more than one hundred poems, 57 poems are included in the Book of Sana'a and the rest are included in "Sana'a.... no escaping her where your travels take you", Rarely, we can find such poet who devote his poetry as well as his life for the sake of his city.

c. The Book of Sana'a

The poet called this work as a book not as collection "Diwan" (collection of poems), passing beyond the narrow boundaries of "Diwan" in which the poet may include poems talking about different ideas. To make Sana'a's book seem like a book, Al-Maqalih gives the book opening (preface), body, and conclusion, omitting the names of poems that are replaced by just numbers. Moreover, the poet includes two kinds of poetry in this book: material poetry; and the latter prose poetry. However, prose poetry is preceded by secular poetry to show the superiority of poetry on prose. To distinguish poetry from prose, the poet makes its printing in bold.

d. The Organic Relevance between the Poems and Poet's Environment

Unintentionally, the book's readers realize the organic relevance between the poems and the poet's environment. The poet sometimes transfer from Bukira mosque to al-Yua'furs Mosque, from perfume Suq (market) to raisin Suq, from al-Musk quarter to Khudir street and from Doa'ni honey to the daughter of dish (Bint-al-Sahn). This relevance reveals the value of poetry and history in poet's mind. To the poet, Sana'a is more than Suqs, quarters, streets, girls, raisins, Sana'a bread, and coffee; it is the poet's dream that he dreamt about from early childhood.

e. Sana'a as a biographical account or note?

Once the poet was asked to write a biography, but he couldn't find the time to write it, so he intended to include parts of his biography in the book of Sana'a and village. The poet confessed this when he asked in an interview in "Majalat Sha'ryat". He then added that Sana'a history interact with the personal life of the poet.

Many critics agree that "The Book of Sana'a" is a biography for Al-Maqalih. "It may be correct to some extent. It is a biography in harmony with the spirit of the poet, so Sana'a and its beautiful memories are in the mind a half century ago" (AL-Maqalih: interview). Fakhr AL-Deen (2008) states: "Al-Maqalih draw the image of Sana'a with child hood's illusion, youth's dreams, and manhood's experience and after he drew her between the hands of mountain, he set him free in vast space". Al-Maqalih also relates between his biography and his mistress "Sana'a" in more than one poem, so Sana'a's book may be seen as a romance book that talks about the poet and his beloved (Sana'a). What's surprising is that the number of poems corresponded to the poet's life when he finished his writing for Sana'a's book.

In literature, we rarely can find a poet who wrote more than one hundred poems, flirting and immortalizing a city. Each poem has its unique image. 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-Maqalih. 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, an exclamation statements that the tongues of her visitor get tired of.

We don't know who gave Sana'a the freedom to select its outstanding location. Historically, many myths about Sana'a were said. One myth states that Sana'a came into existence of the earth and was drawn by "Twfan". Twfan is another name for the over-flood by which God punished the disobedient in Nuh time. As AL-Hamdani and AL-Razi (1989) reported, Sam Ibn Nuh initially intended to build Sana'a in the western side of the Sana'a plains. Still, 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, BS, 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 above 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 thirties of the last decade, Sana'a was about to ruin because of her long suffering of Imamate rule. In that darken time, Sana'a was an 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 of 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 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. It 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. AL-Maqalih appreciates the city's beauty 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. AL-Maqalih 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 becomes 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. The readers who find themselves full of sentimental feeling, juxtaposing with holy angelic music, can only feel this image. 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 uses more than one image for Sana'a, to reflect his profound love. Once, he presents Sana'a as women, when he compares her as Poet's beloved, Nymph (woman in paradise), etc.

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"." Mahfaudh. A (1989). Abdu al-Aziz al-Maqalih is one of the most influential poets in 20th century who had a great impact on 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 (1989: 54) 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 French, English, Russian and other languages.

Unlike others, AL-Maqalih has a new point of view about poetry. He mix 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. AL-Maqalih criticized poets praising others to earn money and described them as

materialist, calling them mercenaries. Actually, he combined between classic and modern poetry. Then he established new sights for modern poetry, suggesting a change in meter and rhyme in accordance with the principles of modern poetry. He assured that rhyme and meter are the core of the poem form; otherwise, the poetry would become mere speech. However, he agreed to neglect the rhyme of poetry because of its restriction. Later on, he argued that music and rhythm differ from one musician to another, questioning why not every poet invents his metre and melody.

He expected that prose verse will be the future verse because its vitality. He proved that rhythm has no relation with rhyme, so modern poetry based only on rhythm. Al-Maqalih welcomed the prose verse in condition that it must have metre beside the real imagery. He said that the great art achieves the goals easily. Regarding diction, AL-Maqalih convinced other poets to use the language of every day, giving them freedom to write freely out of the imitation and restriction. He says once "Though the prose verse frees itself from the limitation of metre and rhyme, it remains poetry". He uses abstract images in his poems that are independent from one to another. 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 (1989). They revolt against both the backward rule, the restriction of classic poetry and blindness to beauty.

Al-Maqalih, 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. AL-Jaradi (1989). Al-Maqalih tried to awake the dead words, and considered as a double- edged weapon. Bravely he destroyed the principles of backwardness, and began to build the pillars of progress and development. He says:

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-Maqalih's support and guidance. Al-Rawi said that. Abdulaziz AL-Maqalih, 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.

The Book of Sana'a is a poetic work by Al-Maqalih, whole book contains of 56 poems, written in free verse. This book was published in 2000 and translated to English by Holman and Liebhaber. The Book of Sana'a has taken the attention of many poets, critics, researchers and writers such as Hatim Al-Sakr, Salah Fadhl, Abdulrazzaq

Alrubaiyee, Judat Fakharuddin and Adunis, etc. According to Hatim Al-Sakr (2009) "The Book of Sana'a will become the most important work among all Al-Maqalih's poetic works." Al-Hamdani, Al-Razi, Abdulrahman Al-Ansi and Abas AL-Dylami describe Sana'a as the most beautiful City in the world. Ali Mohammed Al-Ansi's view about Sana'a:

يا أحبة ربا صنعاء
رعى الله صنعاء
لو يقع لي إليه أسعى على الرأس لأسع

Oh, lovers of Sana'a
May God protect her.
If I have the chance to visit,
I will come walking even on my head,

Famous singers like Abu Bakar Salim also sang this poem. Abas AL-Dylami states his views about Sana'a and describes as in the following lines:

صنعاء حسبك يا ابنة الحسب
يوم التفاخر شامخ النسب
يكفيك أنك يا مليحتنا
أخت النجوم وجارة الشهب

Sana'a, the daughter of honor,
It is enough that.
You came from great ancestor
It's also enough, our beautiful girl,
That you're the stars' sister And Nizak's neighbor, (AL-Dylami).

Sana'a and women in Al-Maqalih's poetry

Al-Maqalih describes Sana'a as a beautiful woman who cannot be affected by age and still smile and give the hope to others even in spite of her troubles and sadness:

ينقذني وجه صنعاء لايشيخ
الذي
الذي في المنام رايت ابتسامته
تشهر السيف في وجه احزاننا

The face of Sana'a that never gets old saves me,
The face I saw smiling in my dream,
She draws the sword in the face of our sorrows. (Al-Maqalih's Divan 577)

1. Sana'a as Poet's Beloved

The poet was surprised by the attractive appearance of his beloved; therefore; he still remembers the first sight to 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 (BS, 43)

The poet's love is deep-rooted, and 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 (BS, 85)

It's a wonderful image that the poet combines between the whiteness of morning and clothes, which both symbolize pleasure and comfort. And how her love was mixed with his milk when he was a child. The poet in the same poem continues to say:

When I abandoned this country,
I set out for
A musky continent.
Sana'a was with me
in qasidahs filled with secret songs
I see her
And she favours me with perfumes and promises
With a billowing of the sails of longing
She beckons to me: "Come!" (BS, 85)

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. AL-Maqalih fell in a deep love with the beautiful city even when he is outside Sana'a especially when she shares him this love as a human beloved. The beautiful city feels with loneliness and sadness especially when she sees his beloved (the poet) traveling to another city:

You can't hide your grief
Or shelter your eyes
Except within me.
Said the rocks of Sana'a when they bid me farewell.
Thus spoke the rock of Sana'a
Bidding me farewell

As I traveled far away
Far
Far
Worn out,
Beat down,
My sadness swollen on foreign roads.
I realized where my longing led me:
To my refuge at her fingertips. (BS, 187)

In the lines above, the deep romantic feelings between the poet and his beloved city prove that, Sana'a city become everything in AL-Maqalih's life whatever the poet is close or far from here. 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 (BS, 183)

Here, he 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 last line of this poem, Al-Maqaleh emphasizes that, his love for Sana'a city 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 (BS, 110)
In the lines above, AL-Maqalih shows his emotions and love toward Sana'a city.

2. Sana'a as Ghaiman's Beloved (Nuqum)

In this wonderful image, the poet talks about the intimate relationship between Sana'a (the woman) and Ghaiman (Nuqum) Mountain (her eternal lover and guardian). Since he is so, it is a must to protect her from (hungry eyes) of colonizer. So, Ghaiman Mountain surrounds Sana'a city from the east and it overviews the whole city geographically.

He is her eternal guardian:
He caresses her when she arises
Kisses her when she fall asleep,
He is her pillow when she dreams. (BS, 31)

The poet uses very selective words to refer to the intimate relationships as "kisses" "her pillow." These words indicate that "Nuqum" is the husband of Sana'a. For this reason, he is standing beside her proudly and devoting his time to making his beloved Sana'a comfortable, especially when making himself as her pillow when she comes to sleep. This is reflect a high degree of love and romance towards each other. 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, his enemies disgraced him and 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? (BS, 35)

Here metaphorically, stones represent the consciousness of the mountain (Ghaiman) 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, AL-Maqalih again refers to the duality of Sana'a and Ghaiman:

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). (BS, 39-41)

In these lines, the poet refers to ancient birth of Sana'a numerically. The poet says that the first birth of Sana'a city was before eight thousand years of age. Then, AL-Maqalih compares the birth of Sana'a as the birth of Eve. Here, the poet personifies "Ghaiman" as Adam from whom "Sana'a" Eve is created. The poet goes on to assure that "Ghaiman" 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 Ghaiman. 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 Ghaiman gave Sana'a as the trees from which human beings make windows.

He compares the trees as something given from Ghaiman 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 Ghaiman 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 feature of "book of Sana'a is that the poet divides every poem into two parts; 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 by 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 mean, 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 Ghaiman 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 Ghaiman. 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 (Ghaiman) opens his window every morning greeting her.

3. 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 3rd poem:

She was born with Sam Ibn Nuh

Al-Maqalih 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 .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,
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 to 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 that 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 (BS, 67)

Skillfully, the writer draws a beautiful portrait of 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 (BS, 67)

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. (BS, 119)

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 (BS, 207)

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. (BS, 209)

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. (BS, 209)

4. Sana'a as a Female 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, AL-Maqalih says:

She is a believer
And her belief pours forth like rivers.
But she says 'No' to conquerors
Even if they too are believers.
Even if they cry in the prayer alcoves,
Even if they devote their days to prayer.
While she was building the mosque,
It was their cannons that drove her on,
Silencing the quiet of the pigeon's coo.
The minarets they erected were nothing but terror
To those praying,
Nothing but blood that sets fire to the fields. (BS, 165)

The Ottomans are one of the foreign Muslim dynasties which invaded Yemen two times in the 16th and 19th century. Here, the poet may refer to resistance of Sana'a against Ottomans and other invaders of Yemen, who have the same religion, Islam. Sana'a, which consider the capital and heart of Yemen in the above lines, hates all invaders even if they belong to the same religion, Islam (invaders remain invaders). The poet emphasizes that, Sana'a hates invaders due to the bloodshed and violence in this beautiful city. Then, the poet in the 32nd poem, reveals that Sana'a hate Turkish invasion and will resist until the end:

What did Anatolia want?
Sana'a would never submit to a foreigner
Or a raven that perched on her minarets. (BS 165)

Here, Ottomans invasion (1539-1636) is compared to raven which is used to represent (pessimistic) and a symbol of bad omen as known in Arabic literature. AL-Maqalih compared Sana'a as a female fighter who can fight for her honor against invaders. In that time, Yemen gained a reputation as the graveyard of Turks.

5. Sana'a as Nymph (woman in paradise)

The poet begins the book with this verse to invent a mythical atmosphere for the book, introducing Sana'a as a woman fell from the sky, which indicates (paradise). AL-Maqalih compared Sana'a as a beautiful woman (a nymph) who live in paradise.

She was a woman
Who fell down from the sky in robes
Of dew
And became
A city. (BS, 23)

For this reason, 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 AL-Maqalih describes Sana'a as a holy woman, this reflect his love and admiration to this city especially when he consider Sana'a as a nymph. 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 rain 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.

6. 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 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). (BS, 127)

The words "cry" and "sing" reflects 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, (BS, 129)

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. (BS, 129)

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 mention to 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" (BS, 191)

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

And may you know the secret,
Of this qasidah" (BS, 191)

Sana'a is full with natural beauty and mythical atmosphere. There are a lot 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 (BS, 191)

7. Sana'a as a Midwife

AL-Maqalih describe Sana'a as a woman (first midwife) in the following lines:

Sana'a is the midwife
Who announces to every newborn

The home is a home and not a grave
And women are women and not chattel. (BS, 71)

“Yes, this may mean what the poet intended. It reflects the real situation nowadays; women are liberated and get rid of illiteracy, after the revolutions” (AL-Maqalih: interview). Metaphorically, in the 10th poem above AL-Maqalih presents Sana'a as the midwife who tells newborn children, this reflect the important role that Sana'a in enlightening women about their rights to learn and work after the revolution. Al-Maqalih appears Sana'a as an activist fighting for women's rights such as health, learning and freedom of speech especially after 1962 revolution.

8. Sana'a as an Old Woman

As the result of the ups and downs of life, Sana'a begins to change due to the effects by age as described by AL-Maqalih. In 29th poem, the poet refers to Sana'a as an old woman, in a weak condition, 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.
Her walls are decaying,
Her bricks are flaking away.
I read a death-rattle in her stones,
Her windows tremble with fear.
I smell despair in the color of her eyes. (BS, 151)

AL-Maqalih describes Sana'a in the above lines as an old woman (pale woman) metaphorical, referring to Sana'a's old houses and their need for maintenance and restoration, as the fact that their houses date back thousands of years. All these verses above call for mending its buildings: decaying walls, death-rattle in stones, flaking off bricks. Al-Maqalih describes Sana'a's old decaying windows as an old lady trembling from fear. Metaphorically, when the Al-Maqalih fuses between an old city (old Sana) which did not receive any care or attention and the signs of an old woman as in the above lines such as pale , trembling, walking stick, weakness, and desperate eyes.

In the above lines, Al-Maqalih criticizes the concerned authorities' negligence and those officials indirectly those don't care about Sana'a city. Al-Maqalih gives a reason for choosing this picture, saying it represents certain periods, especially when Sana'a submits to the ups and downs of life. He also refers to Sana'a as changeable (a round character). Some time, she looks like a very beautiful woman and in other times looks as an old woman (pale woman) waiting to 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. (BS, 175)

Sana'a in different historical periods passes through both pleasant and troubled times. Al-Maqalih here describes Sana'a as an old woman may reflect his psychological state especially after he gets very old. The intense love of the poet and his sitting for a long time in Sana'a and psychological state, especially after he becomes very old, make Al-Maqalih describe Sana'a as an old city.

After investigating this study, it was found that Sana'a's general and dominating image was "the woman". The researcher clarified why AL-Maqalih selected such an image. It was found also that AL-Maqalih was very selective in choosing such an image that had already left a profound effect on the readers.

CONCLUSION

Al-Maqalih selects Sana'a as a woman and gives her the characteristics that cannot be found in any women in the earth, this reflect the highest degree of love. 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 to many poets who select such images to represent city. Usually, a woman symbolizes beauty. Women take ample space in poetry in past and present. They also have a secret power to attract men's attention, which 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. Throughout 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 (BS, 39)

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 (BS, 265).

The poet suggests that cities are more like women who turn away to awake passion and love in their darlings' hearts. "Describing Sana'a as woman is not something new. Sana'a had various images, sometimes she is a beautiful girl, and sometimes she is a kind woman, but when she submits to the ravages of time, she

becomes an old woman. The various images reflect Sana'a's state in different periods, and it indicates the stability and wars periods by which Sana'a passed in the long run" (AL-Maqalih: interview). In many poems, the poet talks about his love for Sana'a. Once Sana'a was the mother of the poet, in another poems Sana'a was the mother of poetry .Sana'a came with him and it is she who suckled him the milk of poetry .Therefore; the poet called himself the son of Sana'a. "Sana'a means all these things; she is the mother, the beloved and the spirit. It is she who taught the poet the writings and by Sana'a inspiration, the works of al-Maqalih came to the light" (AL-Maqalih: interview).

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. (BS, 175)

The poet selects this image to reflect the striking similarities between city and women. The poet 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 down from the sky in robes of dew
And became
A city (BS, 23)

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.

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. A states that we can expect the unity of the poet and Sana'a through his poem when he called her: "The capital of spirit (2 nd 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 (Ghamian). 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. (BS, 65)

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