

The writing's characteristics in Yousha's *Ghadames: Features and Pictures* and its contribution to the Libyan history

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Abstract:

The paper focuses on the characteristics of Yousha's writing *Ghadames: Features and Pictures*. It specifically explores both sides of the text of the book: the form and content through an attentive reading to its language and the different levels of its narration. It attempts to demonstrate the cognitive value of this writing despite its defects in form and content. The paper aims to evaluate the contribution of the early literature of the non-academic writers in feeding the field of history and heritage in Libya with invaluable sources. It suggests the choice of simplicity and free writing results in the richness of the writer's text with a wide range of information. The paper applies the formalist method for being an appropriate strategy in providing the researcher with essential techniques for the process of analysis and description of Yousha's writing.

المستخلص:

تركز الورقة البحثية على خصائص الكتابة في نص غدامس: ملامح وصور، للمؤلف بشير قاسم يوشع. وهي تحديدًا تبحث في الشكل و المحتوى من خلال قراءة عميقة للغة النص ومستويات سرده المختلفة، قاصدة أن تبين القيمة المعرفية لهذه الكتابة على الرغم من نقائصها شكلًا و مضمونًا. تهدف الورقة إلى تقدير مساهمات الكتابات المبكرة للمؤلفين غير الأكاديميين في تغذية حقل التاريخ و التراث في ليبيا بمصادر قيمة. تقترح الورقة أن اختيار البساطة و الكتابة الحرة ينتج عنه غنى النص بالتنوع المعلوماتي. تعتمد الورقة المنهج الشكلي باعتباره إستراتيجية ملائمة في تزويد الباحثة بالتقنيات الضرورية لعمليتي الوصف و التحليل لكتابة المؤلف بشير قاسم يوشع.

Introduction :

Writing is not an easy option whether it narrates a private experience conditioned by personal terms or an academic topic conditioned by conventional ones. The bulk of the difficulty is incomparable when it comes to writing about a general subject. "The artist ploughs his own furrow; the scholar, even in the privacy of his study, cultivates a common field. He is responsible to others for what he does; he feels the need to explain his purpose, to justify his efforts"⁽¹⁾

The writer of the second option needs to consider the conditions of writing and its requirements while also considering the evaluation of others who might pose more questions than the writers could answer or suggest more points than they could explore. Those brilliant readers and qualified critics undoubtedly could intimidate the most conscious writers of their great responsibility towards others.

So, if such a writer fears taking this step (writing in a common field), they will not be blamed. But once again when this step is taken by challengers of men and women who know that writing about a common field must fulfill the terms of academic writing:

Well –organized

Clearly developed

Logically structured

Accurately written

Cohesively produced

and conventionally documented, this gutsy step should be brought into the limelight because it achieves, under difficult circumstances, an aim that the whole community is looking forward to.

This study aims to evaluate the contribution of the early literature of the non- academic writers in feeding the academic writing for history with invaluable sources, taking the book ***Ghadames: Features and Pictures***,⁽²⁾ as an example of this contribution. The author of this book saw a spot of darkness around an area of which he knew as much as he loved. What should he do? Should he curse the darkness? Feel afraid of his disability and continue waiting for those granted talent and knowledge to fight the darkness? The answer was no. He ignited a torch and forged ahead to explore it because this area is his birthplace, his society, his heritage, and first and foremost his endless love for his country. Love sufficed for him to take this responsible and courageous step which produced this valuable book. Otherwise "the consequence of neglecting the matter of documentation and loss of heritage is that the history of generations or rather centuries of the society's past is lost."⁽³⁾

This paper sheds light on the aspects of the author's writing of this book. The light helps to identify the functional value of this writing and consequently its contribution to the field of history and heritage. "Researching the topic of heritage results in an interesting and beneficial project because heritage contributes to our history; moreover, relates to define the character of the society and its role in establishing human civilization."⁽⁴⁾

The argument that this paper raises is based on the idea that Bashier Ghasem Yousha, the author of the first complete account of one of the most ancient cities in Libya, Ghadames, is one of a few risk-taking writers whose writing simply and freely achieves

a significant referential book fulfilling an urgent demand for the Libyan library. "The author, who undoubtedly made a great effort in compiling the material and organizing its content, has achieved a comprehensive and descriptive study of the ancient city of Ghadames throughout history."⁽⁵⁾

The paper specifically explores both sides of the text in this book: the form and content through an attentive reading of its language and the different levels of its narration. It suggests that the choice of simplicity and free writing may result in richness of the writer's text, with a wide range of information, oral accounts, personal witnesses, individual memory, popular mythologies and folk legends because there is nothing that may thwart the flow of words when they are written freely.

The Methodology:

The paper applies the formalist method which is an appropriate strategy in providing the researcher with essential techniques in the process of analysis and description of Yousha's writing. This application is achieved in two ways: one leads to the surface of the language, namely its form and the other leads to the depth of the language, its content.

Moreover, the choice of this method may help to answer the key question of this study which is to analyze to what extent the content of the book outshines the flaws of the form.

The Author:

Every piece of writing is to some extent coloured by the personal history of its writer: his life, education and work. According to biographical critical strategy, it might be true that the more we know about the writer the better we know about his writing. "A knowledge of an author's life can help readers understand his or her work more fully."⁽⁶⁾

Basheer Ghasem Yousha was born on 24th August 1930 in Ghadames. He studied at the Italian-Arabic primary school in Gha-

dames. He memorized Koran Kareem in some Koranic Zawyas inside Ghadames's old city. In 1972, he published his first book (Ghadames: Features and Pictures). In addition to this book, he also prepared the following works:

- The Index of Copied Manuscripts of Ghadames, 1st ed, 1986, the Center of the Libyan Jihad for Historical Studies
- Ghadames: Historical, Social Economic Documents, the first part in 1986, the Center of the Libyan Jihad for Historical Studies
- Ghadames: Historical, Social Economic Documents, the second part in 1995, the Center of the Libyan Jihad for Historical Studies

He wrote and published articles and essays in several specialised magazines. In addition to his remarkable activity in writing, he made valuable contributions to various scientific conferences in the years 1980-1990. The author also gave presentations about the city of Ghadames in Ghadames and Tripoli. He died on 22nd October in 1994 in Benghazi⁽⁷⁾

Basheer Ghasem Youshaw was not academic, but "He was an autonomous learner who educated himself until he became a modest, hard-working, risk-taking writer who was willing to accept criticism and advice."⁽⁸⁾

What is more, he believed that his limited education ought not to be a setback on his way to do his duty toward the heritage of his city, which partially constitutes the history of his country. "There are tiny pieces of writing about Ghadames, but do not do justice to its historical and cultural position. Waiting for those specialists to take responsibility and do their best, I felt that it was my duty to collect information and accounts about the past and the present of the city."⁽⁹⁾

He highly appreciated its importance and its need to be deeply explored and well presented in a book for readers and researchers who suffer from a deficiency of such a book. He indeed worried that his skills at writing for history are too limited to enable him to be a historian or a specialised researcher, but his enthusiasm for selecting his beloved city to be the star of a permanent work was bigger than his fears. Therefore, he worked hard to accomplish a hard work in hard times for a wide variety of different readers-researchers, tourists, and other writers who might now appreciate his work. His work is the fruit of a faithful personal effort, more than ever thanks to this biographical knowledge that "sometimes biographical information does not change our understanding so much as it enriches our appreciation of a work."⁽¹⁰⁾

The Book

The study is based on the second edition of *Ghadames: Features and Pictures*, published in 2001, after the death of the author, under the supervision of his sons." We took into our consideration not to make this edition different from the first edition except in the areas where there were notes written by the author himself on the book while he reviewed it before he died."⁽¹¹⁾ The first edition was published in 1972.

The content of the book is a portrait or a biography of a city in which a part of its text is built on the author's memoir. "Furthermore, I relied on my knowledge and my methods of investigation, which had a potential impact on achieving this work."⁽¹²⁾

The Title :

The title of a book can set the style of the author; it can open the first window of communication between the author and his readers, it can make the readers anticipate the content of his book and all that is done by a phrase, if not a single word. Hence, the title is the first message to the eyes of the readers, and it should be selected to be sufficiently expressive especially when the subject belongs to a common field. Yousha considers this simple fact when he decides

to add the phrase *Features and Pictures* (MelamehwaSwaer) to the title of his book, which is *Ghadames* (the name of the city).

“The word (ملامح) Melameh is a plural of (لمحة) Lemha which is derived from the verb ملح *Lemh* or (ألح) Almeh.”⁽¹³⁾ The verb in Arabic means to have the first glance of something without much concentration on it.

He, the author of the book, is not an academic historian or a professional writer, so the readers of his book may deduce this limitation of his verbal skill from the title. Then he doesn't postpone giving this piece of information to the moment of writing the introduction of his book, “I am neither a historian nor an excavator but only a collector of news.”⁽¹⁴⁾ Initially, he catches the first chance to state that meaning in the title of his book

The Study :

It centers on the written characteristics displayed in Yousha's book *Ghadames: Features and Pictures*. The study consists of two main parts: the first part gives a close reading to the form and the second part pays considerable attention to the content. The outcome is weighing the contribution of the book to Libyan history.

Part1: Form

Writing is a communicative skill providing a message for an audience. It seems here that the author doesn't pay so much attention to his audience, which affects the (Form) with fragility and simplicity, as he focuses on the purpose of his book which reflects the immensity and diversity of the (Content). Therefore, his text mimics the impression of a draft, not a final product. The main reason for this primary trait is the sort of writing the author adopts in verbalizing his subject, as it appears like a non-stop writing whose fluency is not impeded with the necessary process of reviewing, revising, and editing. Surprisingly enough, he follows a simple rule, whether or not he consciously knows it “The key to writing fluency is to separate writing from editing.”⁽¹⁵⁾

Furthermore, the author wrote about the city in which he was born

and lived, so he knew it well. This intimate knowledge enables him to write freely. Free writing is traditionally defined as a pre-writing technique in which the writer writes continuously for a specific period of time without worrying about aspect of correct or actually academic language.⁽¹⁶⁾

In Yousha's case, free writing is less a stage in the writing process and more of a question of possibility. His education would by no means assist him to distance his language from the effects of writing without revising. These effects can readily be noted in many areas of his text:

- Poor organization of information in structure based on the unity of ideas and the lexical distinction between opinions and facts
- Limited use of academic and objective language
- Limited use of punctuation
- Partially redundant information

Generally speaking, the author's adopted language reveals three aspects of non-academic writing.

Spoken: The style of writing is conversational. "Now let us go inside the house..."⁽¹⁷⁾ 'The developing paragraphs mostly start with a connective 'and' in Arabic 'و' as if he speaks not, writes.⁽¹⁸⁾ The use of verbs such as talk, chat, and speak is common aspect, "I am going to talk about..."⁽¹⁹⁾ "I can say that Ghadames ..." ⁽²⁰⁾

Informal:

The writing is arbitrarily paragraphed. (Some paragraphs are as long as 11-14 lines, while others next to them are only 2-3 lines. ⁽²¹⁾ The reader is much addressed with the pronoun you, the passive voice is less used while the author's voice is much used. Cautious language is clearly lost. "The spread of Christianity in the Great Sahara was very limited."⁽²²⁾

Personal: This aspect is the most dominant one, even in the chapters that display the historical periods of Ghadames. The

personal aspect is so noticeable in the book that it turns a huge part of Chapter 3 into a modest tourist guidebook.

Structure

The book is divided into 12 chapters not including the introduction and the conclusion, as the following:

Chapter One:

Ghadames

The location

The origin of its people

The archaeologies and the remains

Chapter Two:

The wall of Ghadames

The Gates of the City

Ain el-Fares

The Canals of Ain el-Fares

Chapter Three

Ghadames:

The doctrine of the people

The Streets

The houses

Chapter Four: Ghadames during the Roman period and the Turkish and Pre-Turkish periods

Chapter Five: Ghadames during the Italian period

Chapter Six: Ghadames during the French colonization

Chapter Seven: Ghadames during the unreal independence

Chapter Eight: The reception of the people of Ghadames to the Revolution of September 1969

Chapter Nine: The Social Customs of Ghadames

Chapter Ten: The Municipal System and the Clubs in Ghadames

Chapter Eleven: Mosques, Sufi Zawayias and annual habits and the town of Toneen

Chapter Twelve: al-Twarek

The first point to be noted about the division of the book into these chapters is that some of these chapters are not ordered chronically well which results in poor classification. For example, Chapter 4 combines two periods from completely different and distant ages which are the Roman period and the Turkish and Pre-Turkish periods. The former belongs to classical times while the latter is relatively modern. The same note applies to Chapter 11. The town of Toneen needs an independent chapter while Mosques and Sufi Zawayias can be displayed within Chapter 3 and the annual habits are annexed to Chapter 9 which presents the social customs of Ghadames.

Although the arrangement of these chapters gives a poor impression to the reader, it gives him a good idea that the content is well covered and the tale of Ghadames is well traced.

The text itself shows some other poor levels of structure and organization. For example, the first paragraph of Chapter 4, which records the history of the city during the Roman and Turkish periods, lacks unity and coherence due to the poor structure of this paragraph. The topic sentence is about the Roman invasion. Nonetheless, the following developing sentences discuss some points about archaeological remains such as their description and their origins, and then go further to use these remains as a proof of the greatness of the city while the author is still unable to identify their origin⁽²³⁾. In Chapter 8, he includes the speeches by national leaders of the period, which is utterly irrelevant according to his structure, while he could attach these speeches in an appendix. The conclusion of the book also shows a trait of being not well structured. It doesn't conclude the content of the book; rather it develops into a personal speech describing the author's worries, hopes and plans. The impersonality characteristic is apparently absent from the text in some areas and scarcely present in some others. There are two factors which might justify this disappearance in such cases: The

first factor is attributed to the nature of the content (the history of a city) in which the domain of the personal point of view is inevitable. The second factor is the attitude brought by the author through his language, in which his choice of words, phrases, and sentence structures, that reflect his diction, is an individual decision.

Diction

According to this sort of individuality, there are four types of diction:

- Formal diction
- Informal diction
- Middle diction
- Emotional diction

It might be a self-evident judgment to decide that the author's diction takes a middle position between the formal and informal. Despite that, it needs a more thoughtful decision if the size of the book is taken into consideration. While the academic style requires the unity of diction, the free writing style might be unable to avoid a sort of diversity in diction.

In Chapters 4 to 8, whose content should reflect the objectivity and the impersonality of the topic (the history of Ghadames from the Roman period to the modern history), the author seems adopt a formal diction, but then again he adopts inappropriate attitudes to be either emotional or informal.

The following examples are arbitrarily selected from these chapters: "Thus this smug army entered the city of Ghadames..."⁽²⁴⁾"this great nation whose citizens could travel from Haderamaut in Yemen to Tangier in Morocco and the Tangerine would not feel that the coming traveler is not Tangerine by birth... and permitted his great spirit to stand against the tyrant Timor to defend not only his birthplace but the whole land of the Arab nation."⁽²⁵⁾"while we mention that, we feel pain squeezes our hearts".⁽²⁶⁾"One of the old books demonstrates that..."⁽²⁷⁾

This informality of his diction provides him an opportunity

to be himself not a copy of the typical image of the history writers. He frees his presentation from the dictations of the authoritative voice; as a result, his text becomes rich in details, varied in colours and extraordinary in trends. A good illustration of this richness is his description to a heritage discovery (a journal made of the skin of Ghazal) while he chronicles the past history of the Spring of Ain al-Fares. "The journal deserves to be studied and investigated for more information about the spring itself"⁽²⁸⁾

Tone

Besides the informal tone, the text of the book shows some other traits of the author's tone:

Patriotic:	Ghadames has always been the cemetery of the invaders, for its people have been as steadfast as their lofty mountains, their vast deserts, and their spring Ain al-Fares, which is the source of their life and the life of their pleasant prosperous grooves." ⁽²⁹⁾
Nostalgic:	For those people, I would like to say that every woman should be always able to create some of these handmade objects." ⁽³⁰⁾
Sarcastic:	"For many years our Michael has stayed involved in his work until his body is afflicted with rheumatism and he is unable to continue; then he goes to his house to take care of his sick body, leaving his chair to another victim." ⁽³¹⁾
Emotional:	"What a strange thing that stimulates disgusting and despising! one enemy gets defeated and another makes victory upon an Arabic land whose people are regardless, ignored, and non-taken into consideration." ⁽³²⁾

Part2: Content

The content of the book is based on three types of narrations:

- The personal narration
- The mythological narration
- The referential narration

The Personal Narration

The author is an authentic member of the city's community; accordingly, he confidently and fearlessly relies on personal knowledge rather than informed reading. On one hand, he demonstrates a general problem which is the shortage of the material resources about the city. On the other hand, he reacts to a private problem, which results in the intimate proximity between the writer and the content of his writing in which a sort of a positive neutralism cannot easily be maintained and negative alignment definitely cannot be evaded. "This land, which is a part of the land of the Arabs and the Muslims, has the right to be proud of being the place which contains the mortal remains of one of the prophet's companions."⁽³³⁾

While the author builds the narrative of his city using his own point of view, he sometimes uses constructive blocks and succeeds in hiding the identity of the personal voice of the author. Yet, in some other areas; he distances his language from the targets of the impersonal narrator which are clarity, precision, and objectivity when using those deconstructive blocks. "I have been told by whom I trust in him that..."⁽³⁴⁾ Therefore, he exposes his narration to serious defects when he totally gets involved in this personal language. The following table gives examples chosen randomly from many alike in the book:

The defect	The example
Digression	"By the way, I say that Ghadames is, to some extent, an agricultural town." ⁽³⁵⁾ While he details how the spring of Ain el-Fres is cleaned during the Revolution of September 1969
Irrelevant asides	"We might aside from the theme we are talking about, we said that..." ⁽³⁶⁾
Bathos	"After that, they all headed to the hotel of Ain el-Fares to have lunch at the expense of the donators." ⁽³⁷⁾
Circumlocution	The best example here is the writing about <i>Ain el-Fres</i> . Under this headline, ⁽³⁸⁾ the author adds 13 heads introducing the spring. Every heading is a paragraph or a page but the last heading (How the Earlier People Cleaned the Spring in the Past) contains an additional five subheadings, each the size of a paragraph or a page. The exception is the last one about its cleaning during the Revolution of September 1969 taking nine pages stuffed with unneeded information.
Extravagance	The best examples are his accounts about the notable men of Ghadames ⁽³⁹⁾
Pathos	A fine example is captured under this subheading: <i>The French occupation after the evacuation of the Italians</i> . The author allots one paragraph for the topic and a full page to his feelings about a united Arab nations and his nostalgia to the glories of the Arabs and their victories against the Crusaders and al-Moguls ⁽⁴⁰⁾
Reiteration	"The early people of Ghadames from Bani Mani from Fezara branched into three sections: Derar, Fathl, Worghen." ⁽⁴¹⁾ This piece of information is repeated in four Streets of seven)

These defects are unlikely to cause immense disharmony or make flagrant gaps because they conform to the features of a personal language that dominates the narration. Moreover, they can scarcely deform the dominant characteristics of the author's narration for the subtlety of his purpose which is narrating the story of Ghadames perfectly. For the expressed reason Because he makes a great effort in using his watershed experience to enrich his writing with interesting accounts and charming narration, the readers might reconcile themselves with these defects for the sake of these efforts whose key target is to keep the treasures of a great city from sinking into oblivion.

As a witness of his age and his city's critical transformations, he feels a moral responsibility towards first, his unique wellsprings of his life in an ancient civilized city such Ghadames, and second towards his national responsibility to invest his distinctive knowledge in constructing his narration. "I saw people working together in such collective work that I had never seen before"⁽⁴²⁾ "I was among those who attended his classes in grades 1 and 2."⁽⁴³⁾ "Although the second congress of Ghadames adopted a project to restore it, the participants didn't turn their words into deeds." "That is why I kept the word of the request as it was since nothing has been done to save this old mosque."⁽⁴⁴⁾

By the same token, this creative narration demonstrates the range of the author's knowledge about his historical city of Ghadames; consequently, the readers accept his own opinions and ideas when he is voicing them, whether or not they are informed by the research in the field. "The French interest in Ghadames and Ghat appears in the book's journey of the Tunisian traveler al-Hasheshi, who was cooperating with the French authorities especially in the cultural field."⁽⁴⁵⁾

The Mythological Narration

Myths constitute a fundamental part of the Libyan heritage and its impact on the local culture can be captured either in the historical accounts or the literary works that record the cultural history of

the Libyan cities and their societies. Ghadames is one of these cities which possesses a great part of this heritage. Undoubtedly, the collective memory of the city vividly preserves the most colorful images of these myths. "Myths can be a window onto a culture's deepest perceptions about itself because myths attempt to explain what otherwise seems unexplained a people's origin, purpose, destiny."⁽⁴⁶⁾ However, this collective memory of society cannot stand forever against the arrow of time unless the sensitive minds do their job and accumulate the scattering archives from the memory of the people in lasting timeless works.

In his book about Ghadames, the author uses mythologies in three different ways:

The first one appears explicitly when he has to employ myths to give answers or explanations to some issues and when he gives a reason or an evidence for the existence or the importance of remarkable places. The following examples successively show his first way of using myths in his narration: "We previously mentioned in brief that the reason behind establishing the city of Ghadames is Ain-al-Fres, and we had narrated the myth of its foundation...this myth is familiar to the people of Ghadames, who keep narrating it amongst themselves"⁽⁴⁷⁾. "A myth says that when the Arab Muslims were about to conquer the city, the chiefs of the tribes gathered together for consultation and negotiation about what might they do with the coming conquerors. Among those chiefs were the owners of these palaces."⁽⁴⁸⁾

The second way is the use of myth as an autonomous element to enrich the text only, in other words; the myth has no role or function. One great example to show this is the usage of the myth of Beblal, the ghost of Ain al-Fares "This myth is about a horrifying ghost called Beblal living in Ain el- Fares."⁽⁴⁹⁾

The third way of mythological use appears when the author uses them implicitly in different terms:

A mysterious symbol: “They call Monday night the Night of Morina. For this Morina, I cannot find anyone who may explain it to me. It might be a mysterious symbol, which deserves to be expounded.”⁽⁵⁰⁾

Aneccentric custom: “I remember an old custom whose origin is not known. It takes place on the first night of moonless nights when the unengaged girls are permitted to go up to the roofs to celebrate the night, which is called the night of **Memro**.” “...There is no one who knows who Memro is, whose death is announced, and we never even know whether Memro is a man or a woman as the word is sometimes masculine and at other times it is feminized.”⁽⁵¹⁾ The people of Ghadames used to organize a symbolic party ... which is called the **Doll of Jinni**”⁽⁵²⁾

A miracle: For example, the miraculous stories about the extraordinary works of some pious men of Ghadames. One of these stories happened in the presence of the famous governor Yousef Pasha al-Karamanly⁽⁵³⁾ “When he grew aged, he lost his sight, so he travelled to Tunisia for remedy. On the road, he experienced a miracle witnessed by his accompanier, who was his student.”⁽⁵⁴⁾

A popular account: “The elderly people of the city have been talking about a great finding owned by this street...”⁽⁵⁵⁾ “In another account, the Sheikh Mohammed Ibn Ali el-Senusi was the one who sent this copy to al-Medina.”⁽⁵⁶⁾ Another account says that a feud was between Waleed and Wazeet, and it lasted for a long period of time.”⁽⁵⁷⁾

In any way the author uses a myth in his narration, he at times deals with it as a reference or an evidence on which he builds his arguments. “A myth says that ... If the myth is to be believed, the associated people spoke three different languages: Arabic, Ghadames, and Latin which verifies that the two languages were familiar to the people of Ghadames besides their dialect.”⁽⁵⁸⁾ The author indeed uses myths not only as components to build up a part of his

narration, but also as references to prove a point, and to discuss and argue views built on these myths or their semantic representation. "Myths help people organize their experiences; these systems of belief (less formally held than religious or political tents but no less important) embody a culture's assumption and values."⁽⁵⁹⁾

The Referential Narration

In general, the book indexes 66 quotations extracted from 12 references. In particular, the author uses three different types of referencing while he narrates the narrative of Ghadames:

The First Type:

The author refers to a documented source such as a book, a transcript, a publication or a letter. Here are some examples of every type: "The Tunisian historian, Ibn Abd ElberAlhamiri, introduced Ghadames in one of his books. He says, "It is located in the Sahara."⁽⁶⁰⁾" Motolinski, in his publication 25- states, "Ghadames is an ancient town"⁽⁶¹⁾" After all, I reviewed a transcript found in Ghadames which mentioned some of what has been stated by Motolenski."⁽⁶²⁾" There is a letter dated in the 4th of Di Alkadawas sent by a Ghadamesi whose name is Mustafa to his uncle Hajj Muhammad al-Kilani..."⁽⁶³⁾

The Second Type

This is a reference to unnamed resources and it is used by the author in three different cases: the first case is his way of using common names such as the elderly people or the people of the city. "The people of Ghadames say that the grave of this Companion in Ghadames, although this does not agree with what has been said by many others..."⁽⁶⁴⁾" The elderly people of the city have been talking about a great finding owned by this street which deserves to be mentioned or written in golden water."⁽⁶⁵⁾

The second case is his use of the subject pronoun (they) someone, or (it). The phrases such as "they say", "It says", and "someone says" are used often through the whole text of the book. "They

say that the “they say that the land of palms will never become poor”⁽⁶⁶⁾ “someone I trust in him told me...”⁽⁶⁷⁾

The third case is his use of the passive voice forms with the neutral subject (it) either in the present or the past tense: “it is said” and “it was said” are used so frequently that they occur six times, in different contexts, in one page.⁽⁶⁸⁾ “It was said that the General was punished by the Italian officials, who were in charge of Tripoli.”⁽⁶⁹⁾ “It is said that the Greek...”⁽⁷⁰⁾

The Third Type:

It is his special use of the first subject pronoun (I) to contrast the third subject pronouns he or they. “The Tunisian historian, Ibn Abd Elber Alhamiri declared... But I say the inhabitants of Ghadames are not veiled except Twareq.”⁽⁷¹⁾ “Some people may comment that the purpose of marriage is ... For those people, I would like to say that every woman...”⁽⁷²⁾ Apart from the first type of references which are conventional, all the other types make problems of a documentary type. However, there is one more type which comes within the context of narration and might cause a semantic issue. It is the use of deictic expressions (indexicals) whether they refer to time or place. The following are randomly selected examples: “and **this** is what it will reach sooner...”⁽⁷³⁾ “**at the present time**, these changes...”⁽⁷⁴⁾ “I say **this** and proudly, respectfully mention ...”⁽⁷⁵⁾

The Book's Contribution:

Ghadames: Features and Pictures is the first complete book to have been written about this city since 1970. For this reason, it should be taken less critically and judgmentally. The initiative of an institution is commonly highly esteemed for its cooperative benefits; why is not the initiative of an individual more highly valued for nearly the same benefits?

The book undeniably suffers from poor structure, and problematic issues coming from both its form and its content. Nev-

ertheless, it displays a wide variety of sources, both primary and secondary materials with some of them as first-hand evidences. Although the study examines the author's free writing, and underlines some examples of its defects, which could be easily manipulated by qualified editors, it suggests that these defects do not underestimate or undermine this earnest and conscientious work. Undoubtedly, the book presents a wide range of information based upon unsustainable resources such as the memoir of the author himself, the memories of the old people of his community, and materials or objects which are not durable. Accordingly, it provides the academic researchers with a valuable database that forms an important part of Libyan history and heritage.

The book succeeds in obtaining one of its aims "which is to establish a core for the writing about this good city." Of these writings about Ghadames, which heavily use this book as a main reference, is the *Delight of Narration* by Maryem Salama which was delivered to the publisher one year ago. It is about 30 Libyan cities and sites, and Ghadames is one of them. Another work is a historical novel by Ibrahim al-Imam (Alshghat): *The Squad*.

Certainly, there are several other works published after 1970, and any available literature review can show them. In essence, the content of the book outshines the flaws of the form to enough extent to be an exceptional monumental work of his genre.

So long as "Literary works can help us to understand the time in which they are set," ⁽⁷⁶⁾ so long this free writing resounds far and wide through all the current and next generations of the academic researchers.

The Conclusion in Points

- The paper evaluates the contribution of the early literature of the non-academic writers in supplying Libyan history and heritage with invaluable sources, taking *Yousha's Ghadames: Features and Pictures* as an example.

- The writing's characteristics in *Yousha's Ghadames: Features and Pictures* is a study that describes and analyzes the author's language.
- The researcher uses the formalist strategy in the process of description and analysis
- The paper concentrates on both form and content of the author's language
- The form shows some defects in structure, diction and tone
- The content shows some defects in the three levels of narration: the personal, the mythological, and the referential narration
- The paper concludes that the book, *Ghadames: Features and Pictures*, by Basheer Ghasem Yousha outshines its free writing's defects for two main reasons: its cognitive value as a first book written about Ghadames and its wonderful contribution to Libyan history and heritage.

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