

## The Aesthetic Description of Istanbul City in the Poetry of Ahmed Shawky

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### Abstract

Artists find fulfillment in unexpected occurrences and significant events, transforming them into aesthetic expressions that reflect their unique creative spirit. When one artist explores a particular subject, their artistic interpretation differs from that of another artist due to the individual psychological and social influences they experience. This research aims to reveal the aesthetics of the description of nature from the city of Istanbul in the poem (That Nature) by the poet Ahmed Shawky, and the influence of his poetry on the place, the effect of the place on his poetry, and the statement of the most important dimensions of the image of Istanbul that he focused on, within his vision of the place as in his description, and its connection to the haunting issue of the poet, an explanation of the relationship between literature and place, based on the aesthetic textual study. This study analyzes the artistic images used by the poet in his poem and shows the creative poetic style in describing it. The finding shows that Ahmed Shawky's poems manifest the poet's profound longing for the multifaceted dimensions of existence, underscored by an unwavering stimulation derived from the intrinsic significance of beauty.

**Keywords:** The Istanbul Place, Ahmed Shawky's Poetry, Influencing and Impact, Artistic Aesthetics

### Introduction

Throughout history, poets have consistently shown a deep fascination with describing nature. This enduring interest spans from ancient times to the present day. Poets continue to depict the various facets of nature in their works, either dedicating independent poems solely to nature or blending it with other themes. This is only natural, as poets are products of their environment. They live within it, experience its manifestations, breathe its air, and draw inspiration daily. The desert, with its sandy landscapes, flora, and fauna, including animals like

camels and horses that serve as means of transportation, movement, and even warfare, all become subjects that poets portray. Furthermore, they also capture the essence of ruins and the elements they contain as mere extensions of nature. The poet portrays these natural elements and their impact on him, reflecting his emotions such as pain, love, and abandonment (Al Kafawin, 2020).

Ahmad Shawqi, who lived from 1868 to 1932, witnessed numerous significant events that profoundly impacted Arab and Islamic nations. These experiences left an indelible mark on his life and greatly influenced his poetic works. Shawqi resided in Egypt during the pre-occupation period and lived through the Orabi Revolution. He observed the British occupation of Egypt and the national movement spearheaded by Mustafa Kamel and Mohamed Farid. Following the First World War in 1914 and the removal of Khedive Abbas, Shawqi was exiled to Spain by the British. However, he fervently supported and praised the 1919 revolution in Egypt from his exile, closely observing the nation's internal struggles. Upon its victorious conclusion, he returned from exile in 1920. Shawqi's time spent in France and Britain influenced his exposure to European lifestyles, yet it did not diminish his profound connection to his Eastern origins and cultural roots. Through his poetry, Shawqi immortalized the events of his era, with his collections serving as a testament to a crucial period in Egypt's history, the era of the Caliphate, and the broader Arab world (Al-Rifai, 2017).

Ahmed Shawky, the renowned poet, dedicated significant attention to describing the city of Istanbul in his poetry, recognizing its prominent, diverse, and distinguished nature. This research aims to explore Ahmed Shawky's poems that specifically mention Istanbul and its parks, delving into his intricate descriptions of the city. There are several main ideas that the poet relied on in his poem (That Nature), which are:

1. The poet's description of the beauty of nature on earth; To demonstrate through them the great creation of the Creator (verses 1-2).
2. The poet's call to all human beings to walk in the land among the beautiful nature motivates them to think and meditate on the wonderful creation of God in his land (verses 3-4).
3. Navigating the poet's description of nature, he mentions trees and the waters of streams at one time; at other times, he mentions the sky and the rain that falls from it (verses 5-18).

In this article, we journey through Shawky's poetic lens, exploring the aesthetic description of Istanbul city. Our motivation lies in uncovering the unique perspective and artistic depth with which Shawky rendered the vibrant essence of Istanbul. By delving into his poetry, we seek to unravel the intricacies of his poetic craft and the multifaceted emotions Istanbul stirred within him. Furthermore, this exploration offers an opportunity to reflect on the broader themes in Shawky's poetry. His works often delve into notions of identity, heritage, and the interplay between past and present. With its rich tapestry of civilizations and ever-evolving nature, Istanbul catalyzes Shawky's introspection and contemplation of the human experience.

In addition, exploring Shawky's poetic portrayal of Istanbul offers several notable contributions; 1) The article provides a comprehensive analysis of Ahmed Shawky's poetry, focusing specifically on his depictions of Istanbul. It examines Shawky's use of imagery, symbolism, and language to capture the city's essence, thereby shedding light on his poetic

techniques and artistic prowess. This analysis enriches our understanding of Shawky as a poet and contributes to the broader field of Arabic literature. 2). Cultural Understanding: Istanbul, with its unique blend of Eastern and Western influences, serves as a lens through which Shawky explores themes of identity and heritage. By studying Shawky's poems dedicated to Istanbul, the article deepens our understanding of the city's cultural significance and impact on artists and writers. It offers insights into how Istanbul's history, architecture, and multiculturalism shaped Shawky's perception of the world and contributed to the cultural understanding of Istanbul as a global city.

### 1. Objectives

This paper seeks to elucidate the aesthetic aspects of Ahmed Shawky's portrayal of nature in Istanbul, shedding light on the most notable artistic imagery and its unique stylistic characteristics. Moreover, it aims to explore the implications and psychological dimensions inherent in Shawky's poetic descriptions. The outcome of this research endeavor can be the following questions:

1. How was Ahmed Shawky's poetry affected by the place and the effect of the place on his poetry?
2. What creative artistic images and poetic styles in describing the nature of the city?
3. What is the poetic purpose of describing the nature of the city?

### The Research Gap

Existing scholarly research has yet to explore the specific domain of analyzing the aesthetic aspects related to the depiction of urban nature in Ahmed Shawky's poetry. Furthermore, no independent study has exclusively delved into the aesthetics of describing the natural elements within the city of Istanbul, as evidenced in Ahmed Shawky's poem "that nature." Thus, there remains a significant knowledge gap regarding the examination and revelation of the artistic imagery employed by the poet in this particular context. In poetic expression, Ahmed Shawky's verse exhibits an exceptional and inventive description style, particularly evident in his portrayal of the natural world. However, despite the breadth of scholarly investigations surrounding Shawky's works, only a few studies have comprehensively examined this facet. This study aims to address this research gap and shed light on the distinctive characteristics and notable elements of Shawky's creative poetic style in his depiction of nature. By closely analyzing his poetry, several significant research emerges as particularly noteworthy, including

1. **(Al-Shawqiyat)** by Shawky (2012) Hindawi Foundation for Education and Culture in Egypt. This book shows the parts of the poems by Ahmed Shawky, dividing them into four parts and presenting Shawky's hyperbole more clearly in the language aspect than in the meanings aspect, as he is with his meanings, images and fantasies encompassing what is in The West, with all that the oriental character is satisfied with, and the eastern civilization accepts
2. **(Features of style and its aesthetic and psychological dimensions in Ahmed Shawqi's poetic Andalusia)** by Lamrat and Jaghbala (2020) Master's research in the Faculty of Arts and Languages at the University Echahid Hamma Lakhdar-El-Oued. Through this work, the researcher clarified problems related to Shawqi's Andalusia, shed light on

its most prominent stylistic peculiarities and looked at its implications and psychological dimensions, and it may contribute to illuminating an aspect of the richness and distinction in modern Arabic poetry.

3. **(Nouniya for Ibn Zaidoun and Andalusia for Ahmed Shawqi -study balancing)** By Dr. Hasan (2016) University of Baghdad - College of Education for Women - Arabic Language Dept. The paper discusses the balance between two poems, the Nouniya for Ibn Zaidoun and Andalusia for Ahmed Shawky. Therefore, the present paper has concluded that Ibn Zaydoon's Nouniya is better than Shawky's Andalusia due to what we got through reading and analyzing an aspect of their poems.
4. **(The Intertextuality of Ahmed Shawqi's Poems and Abu Nuwas' Khumriyat and Sonnets)** by Mehr (2021) Islamic Azad University. The paper talks about Ahmed Shawky, the Prince of Poets of contemporary Arabic poetry, who was raised among a host of Arabic literary works and benefited from the best of each poet. He borrowed the description of wine and sonnets from Abu Nuwas. This approach and attention have led to the formation of intertextual types and forms in his poems, which in all cases have been done consciously. There are all three types of intertextual relations between the two texts, and in this paper, in addition to explaining the intertextual relations of Ahmed Shawky's poems and (Khumriyat) Abu Nuwas in the form of "intertextual" critical theory, the impact of these poems on Ahmed Shawky's poetry will be examined.
5. **(National manifestations in the poems of the Prince of Poets Ahmed Shawqi)** by Saleh et al (2022) Journal of Linguistic and Literary Studies, 13(2), 226–250. This article studied the most notable national manifestations in the poems of the Prince of Poets Ahmed Shawky, which is among the most significant literary works that influenced the Egyptian social, political, and emotional environment. The descriptive method will be applied to track Ahmed Shawky's poems in his Al-Shawky collection, and an analytical approach to present and analyze the most important poetic verses related to national poetry. This study produced significant findings, such as clarifying National hemes in Ahmed Shawky's poems and revealing the most prominent stages of patriotism in poet Ahmed Shawky's life through his poems and their impact on Egyptian society.

The existing body of literature reveals a general tendency wherein some studies have comprehensively examined Ahmed Shawky's poetry holistically and objectively, encompassing its artistic merits. However, these studies have offered limited insights into the specific realm of aesthetics associated with depicting nature within the city of Istanbul and its constituent elements. Consequently, this research endeavors to fill this crucial void by diligently investigating these aspects. The significance of this scientific endeavor lies in its potential to offer novel perspectives and contribute fresh insights to the scholarly discourse surrounding Ahmed Shawky's poetic works.

### Methodology

This research adopted a descriptive-analytical approach to examine Ahmad Shawky's poem, specifically selecting "That Nature" as the focal point of the study. The descriptive analytical

approach is widely recognized for comprehending phenomena through problem identification, diagnosis, and description and identifying the interrelationships among variables and trends. Its objective is to acquire a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon's manifestation, surpassing mere description by providing explanations, comparisons, and evaluations to facilitate a deeper comprehension of the creative work.

Each line or verse of the poem was categorized into distinct segments based on their meaning and significance to facilitate analysis. The research process commenced with an extensive review of collections, biographies, encyclopedias, and various reliable sources, serving as the foundational groundwork. Subsequently, the researcher delved into a broad historical framework pertinent to the project, and an exhaustive exploration of relevant literature ensued, encompassing academic journals and doctoral dissertations authored by fellow researchers.

### Description of the Nature of Istanbul

These are scenes of nature on the way from Europe to Istanbul All-Hofi (1980), the occasion of the poem ((That Nature)) that Ahmad Shawky wrote when he visited Istanbul and studied its beauty and splendor, so Ahmad Shawky took a new way to his poetry, and this is unusual in his poetry, as he described nature and also began praising Sultan Abdul Hamid II with this poem. At the poem's beginning, Ahmed Shawky addresses the walker, who is thinking of the creator's creativity, and says to him: "Stand up, walker, and meditate a little on the creator's creativity." He says to him: The earth on which you stand and the sky above us has been shaken by the beauty and splendor of this beautiful scenery.

حَتَّى أُرِيكَ بَدِيحَ صُنْعِ الْبَارِي	تَلَكِ الطَّبِيعَةَ فِيفِ بِنَا يَا سَارِي
لِرَوَائِعِ الْآيَاتِ وَالْآثَارِ	الْأَرْضُ حَوْلَكَ وَالسَّمَاءُ إِهْتَزَّتَا
أُمُّ الْكِتَابِ عَلَى لِسَانِ الْقَارِي	مِنْ كُلِّ نَاطِقَةِ الْجَلَالِ كَأَنَّهَا
لِلدَّلَةِ الْفَتْحَاءِ وَالْأَحْبَارِ	دَلَّتْ عَلَى مَلِكِ الْمُلُوكِ فَلَمْ تَدَعِ
تَمَحُو أَثِيمَ الشَّكِّ وَالْإِنْكَارِ	مَنْ شَكَّ فِيهِ فَتَنْظَرُهُ فِي صُنْعِهِ

1. Stop and enjoy your eyes with the beautiful nature,  
What you see is the marvelous creation of the Creator.
2. Earth and sky were shaking at rejoicing attractively,  
Under wonderful miracles, bless with delightfully.
3. One of the marveling sights tells that instead of magnificent nature,  
It is considered a main Sura of the Book on the tongue of the reader.
4. It refers to the ability of the Creator, without doubt,  
It left nothing to pontiffs and religious men for a suspect. ◌
5. If someone has a suspicion about the creation of God and seems unsteady,  
He may look deliberately at nature, then he will believe surely,
6. Then the veil of doubt will be removed away immediately.

كَشَفَ الْغِطَاءَ عَنِ الطُّرُولِ وَأَشْرَ	قَت مِنْهُ الطَّبِيعَةَ غَيْرَ ذَاتِ سِتَارِ
شَبَّهْتُهَا بَلْقَيْسَ فَوْقَ سَرِيرِهَا	فِي نَضْرَةٍ وَمَوَاكِبِ وَجَوَارِي
أَوْ بَابِينَ دَاوُدَ وَوَاسِعَ مُلْكِهِ	وَمَعَالِمَ لِبَعْرِ فِيهِ كِبَارِ
هُوجُ الرِّيَّاحِ خَوَاشِعُ فِي بَابِهِ	وَالطَّيْرُ فِيهِ نَوَاسِئُ الْمِنْقَارِ

Furthermore, nature becomes shiny in his sight and delivers nakedly.

7. It is similar to Balkis lying on her bed seems very beautiful.

Maybe Balkis alike inside her fellows was going on a convoy.

8. Or it is alike Suleyman of large wealth, the triumphant,  
Prestigious glory on his favors is obvious and abundant.

9. Gusty winds on His door look weak and humble,  
Birds altogether also low their beaks and seem amenable.

رَضْوَانٌ يُزْجِي الْخُلْدُ لِلْأَبْرَارِ	قَامَتْ عَلَى ضَاحِي الْجَنَانِ كَأَنَّهَا
مِنْ ذَاتِ خَلْخَالٍ وَذَاتِ سَوَارِ	كَمْ فِي الْخَمَائِلِ وَهِيَ بَعْضُ إِمَائِهَا
فِي النَّاعِمَاتِ تَجْرُ فَضْلَ إِزَارِ	وَخَسِيرَةٍ عَنْهَا الثِّيَابُ وَبِضَّةٍ
وَعَرِيقَةٍ فِي دَمْعِهَا الْمِدْرَارِ	وَصُحُوكٍ سِنَّ تَمَلُّ الدُّنْيَا سَتَى

10. Nearby, Heaven's outlook seems as if a favorable blessing,  
It was dedicated to those devoted people who desire and wish.

11. Many beautiful virgins there are on thickets of Heaven,  
Adorned with anklets and bracelets, anyhow, they are driven.

12. A tender girl is similar to them in her naked garment apparently,  
When she goes out, her dress' train sweeps the ground gently.

13. She has smiling teeth adorns the place with pleasure,

وَكثيرة الأتراب بالأغوار	ووحيدة بالنجد تشكو وحشة
والتبُّ مراً زهت باطار	ولقد تمُرُّ على الغدير تخالهُ
كأنامل مرّت على أوتار	حلو التسلسل موجه وخريزهُ
فيها الجواهر من حصي وجمار	مدّت سواعد مائه وتألقت
منسوجة من سندس ونضار	ينساب في مخضلة مبتلة
منشقة من أنهر وبحار	وترى السماء ضحى وفي جنح الدجى

A passionate girl, her eyes shed more tears moreover.

14. She is suffering the loneliness of dwelling alone at a certain mound,  
Deep profound girl between her counterparts, her visage told.

15. Perhaps you come close to the brook to enjoy its picture,  
Moreover, you can see the grasses surrounding it growing as if a mirror.

16. What an attractive view when you hear the murmuring sound!  
It is as if fingers play delightfully on strings back and round.

17. A hundred fingers of water waves touch the brook's edge quietly,  
Drifting gravels and grasses, its sound echoes musically.

18. The colors of the sky in the morning and the dusk,  
same as the changes in the colors of rivers and seas.

## Discussions

### Aesthetics describing the nature of the city

Stylistic analysis of the poem describing the nature of the city

The examination of stylistic elements within the poem illuminates the distinctive artistic style employed by the esteemed poet Ahmed Shawky, characterized by an abundance of words carefully chosen for their profound meanings, harmoniously aligned with the overarching idea



of the poem. The meticulous descriptions and profound exploration of the poem's subject matter exemplify the poet's adeptness at crafting vivid imagery and evocative narratives. Comprehensive analysis shows that this poem profoundly reflects Ahmed Shawky's poetic oeuvre, epitomizing its notable objectives and intentions.

In this poetic composition, the poet urges us to engage our senses fully and behold the extraordinary artistic manifestations intricately crafted by the omnipotent Creator. The harmonious interplay between terrestrial and celestial elements evokes a profound sense of exultation as we witness the awe-inspiring wonders that permeate our immediate environment. Nature, as portrayed by the poet, stands as an unequivocal testament to the boundless capacity of the Creator, leaving little room for skepticism or uncertainty among religious scholars and individuals of devout conviction. For those who may harbor lingering doubts, the poem posits that deliberate and contemplative observation of the natural world will dissipate any lingering hesitation and disclose the irrefutable verity of divine origination.



Figure 1. Ahmed Shawky's poetry connection. (Source: Author, 2023)

### Aesthetics Describing the Nature of the City

Artistic images that the poet used in his poem

1. He likened the earth and sky to a person dancing and rocking.
2. He likens the beautiful landscapes due to their creativity to the opening of the Qur'an, and the similarity is to the abundance of creativity and mastery.
3. A contemplative look at God's creation is like an eraser that erases the sins of doubt and denial.
4. The thick, winding trees and the plants hiding beneath them resemble girls, some of whom have been adorned with anklets and others with bracelets.
5. He resembled the beauty of nature as if she were a beautiful girl with a jovial, laughing face that filled the world with light and brightness.
6. He likened the sky when it was raining a lot to the drowning girl with her flowing tears.
7. He likened the brook and the greenery surrounding it to a beautiful framed mirror.
8. The sound of the waves during the flow of water is likened to the sound of the music of the Oud.
9. He likens small pebbles pulled by water to jewels that show luster.
10. He likened the land surrounded by water and covered with greenery to a garment of silk adorned with pure gold.

Within this poetic composition, Ahmed Shawky, the esteemed poet, masterfully portrays the enchanting allure of nature, extending a heartfelt invitation to humanity to contemplate and appreciate the magnificent craftsmanship inherent in God's creation that surrounds us. The poet deftly navigates his descriptive journey, seamlessly transitioning between vivid depictions of the terrestrial beauty bestowed upon the Earth while evoking reminiscences of the celestial realm and its ethereal manifestations. His evocative poem captures nature's radiant beauty as it unfolds before the observer's eyes. The poet draws parallels between the splendor witnessed and the legendary figures of Balkis and Suleyman, emphasizing the awe-inspiring magnificence that emanates from nature's tapestry. The gusty winds and humble birds at the doorstep of this majestic scene further accentuate the sense of reverence and harmony within the natural world. The poet's skillful imagery reminds us of the timeless allure and captivating presence within nature's realm.

### **Conclusion**

The poems mentioned above are manifestations of the poet's profound longing for the multifaceted dimensions of existence, underscored by an unwavering stimulation derived from the intrinsic significance of beauty. In conclusion, this profound poetic composition encapsulates many emotions and enthralling imagery that emerges from the resplendent beauty of the natural world. The poet adeptly captures the essence of a fervent young girl whose tears witness the depths of her inner turmoil and profound solitude. The poem stands as a poignant reminder, urging individuals to embrace and wholeheartedly appreciate the wondrous marvels bestowed by the natural world, thus dispelling any lingering doubts or uncertainties concerning the celestial origins of creation. Through this introspective odyssey, the reader discovers solace and experiences a reaffirmation of their unwavering belief in the resplendence and magnificence intrinsic to the divine artistry of the Creator.

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