



Eliotic Seeds in B. S. Al Sayyab's Poem "The Rain Song": An Analytical Study*

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Abstract:

"The Rain Song" is considered one of the most notable poems of modern Arabic poetry in general and of B. S. Al Sayyab in particular. It is a landmark in the history of modern Arabic poetry. The present paper aims at unearthing the seeds of T. S. Eliot in Al Sayyab's poem "The Rain Song". Eliot is a literary figure who reshaped the literary scene not only in England, but also in the world. Accordingly, the present paper has ploughed the soil of the poem "The Rain Song" to discover some scattered Eliotic seeds. Modernism affected Arabic poetry early in the first half of the twentieth century. As a translator and a poet, Al Sayyab is able to delve into English poetry which becomes a catalyst that has infused him to modernize the Arabic poem. Unmistakably, Al Sayyab does not copy the Eliotic techniques of modernism. He has blended them to create something new and creative based upon the Arabic heritage. This study concludes that the free verse, mythical, imagist, symbolic, and allusive methods are the Eliotic seeds implanted in "The Rain Song". Such new techniques were not used in the classical Arabic poetry. Some examples of these seeds and fingerprints, in "The Rain Song", are presented in this study.

Keywords: The Rain Song, Al Sayyab, Eliot, Modern Arabic poetry

Introduction:

Poetry is a human phenomenon. While studying poetry comparatively, it is not an easy task to say that the poetry of this nation is better than the poetry of another since it is the oldest literary genre and still the most modern all over the globe. Poetry has a human flavour whether it is Japanese, Chinese, English, Arabic, or whatsoever. Poetry has a universal appeal. Regardless of the translation effects, a man of literary sense can have the feel of it. The global atmosphere whether politically or socially can affect the poets worldwide at the same time. The World Wars in the 20th century had tremendous effects not only in Europe but also all over the world. The Arab world was not an exception. The Arab poets were influenced positively and negatively from Iraq eastward to Morocco westward. Arabic poetry was not a stagnant literary genre. There was a strong desire to run away from the old literary canons. Arabic poetry sometimes flourishes, sometimes does not. This is due to several reasons. Some pioneer poets made Arabic poetry a living entity. They exerted their efforts to enhance the position of Arabic poetry worldwide. One of these poets was Badr Shaker Al Sayyab, an Iraqi poet (1926 – 1964) who is considered the founder of modern Arabic poetry and his poem, *The Rain Song* is the first modern Arabic poem as a modern poem should be. Many poems were written before it but they were not up to the standard of real modernity. Al Sayyab influenced many Arab poets in the twentieth century who were fed up with the rules and conventions of classical Arabic poetry. This century was an age of freedom for the Arabs in many fields of life politically, socially and culturally in which many Arab countries got their

independence from the western colonisation including Iraq, Egypt, Syria, Algeria, etc. This sense of freedom in the Arab world smashed every conventions, rules and limits in the society. Poetry was not an exception. Many pioneer poets in Egypt, Syria, and Iraq took the initiative to break off the barriers and rules of the classical Arab poetry. The intellectual background was also another reason for such breaking off the classical poetry. The leftists were in favour of such breaking off. Badr Shaker Al Sayyab, with a leftist background, revolted against the political regime in Iraq after the expulsion of the British colonisation. This revolt foreshadowed the revolt against the rules of classical Arabic poetry. As a result, *The Rain Song* was a breakthrough in modern Arabic poetry. This revolt is the outcome of some Eliotic seeds found in the poetry of Al Sayyab. Al Sayyab imbibed an Eliotic taste in his poetry in general and in his masterpiece the poem "*The Rain Song*". Many Arab writers and critics studied his poetry within the span of more than half a century, yet many topics are still worthy of analysis. No critical study has tackled the Eliotic seeds with a national touch of Al Sayyab in *The Rain Song*. English modernism paved the way for Arabic modernism in literature in general and in poetry in particular. Accordingly, the feature of intertextuality has played a significant role in this impact between T. S. Eliot and B. S. Al Sayyab especially in the poem *The Rain Song*.

Objectives of the Study:

This study aims at understanding the modern features in Al Sayyab's poem *The Rain Song*. The present study goes deeper to identify the Eliotic seeds found in Al Sayyab's poem *The Rain Song*. The researcher keeps this point in view while critically analysing some

examples taken from the poem. Moreover, this study investigates how Al Sayyab has modernised Arabic poetry. To put it simply, this study finds answers to the following questions:

- 1- What are the modern features of Al Sayyab's poem *The Rain Song*?
- 2- What are the Eliotic seeds found in Al Sayyab's poem *The Rain Song*?
- 3- What is the influence of T. S. Eliot on B. S. Al Sayyab?
- 4- How does Al Sayyab modernise Arabic poetry?

The Significance of the Study:

There is no modern Arabic poem, rather than *The Rain Song* of Badr Shakir Al Sayyab, which attained such a prolific critical discussion. These prolific studies done on *The Rain Song* indicate the significant position of this poem as the harbinger of the modern Arabic poem. *The Rain Song* is a barrier between two literary periods in Arabic poetry. It was a challenge to the classical Arabic *qasida*. Many studies were done on *The Rain Song* presenting different layers of this poem but none of them studied the Arabic modern fabric and the Eliotic seeds in this poem. Some critics studied it comparatively introducing the intertextual features between T. S. Eliot and Badr Shakir Al Sayyab. While others found it a mere imitative copy of *The Waste Land*, destroying the creative and unique style of Al Sayyab both in the form and the content. The present paper introduces the distinctive element of Al Sayyab while modernizing the Arabic poem and maintaining the Arabic fabric and getting benefits from the techniques of modern poets like T. S. Eliot. This study presents this Arabic fabric in which Al Sayyab relies on the Arabic heritage of myths, symbols,

images and allusions. To some extent, Al Sayyab maintains a slight rhythm and rhyme in the use of free verse. This study will help those who are interested in modern Arabic poetry especially among the non-Arab researchers due to the paucity of materials in English on modern Arabic poetry.

Method of Analysis:

This study is qualitative. Therefore, the method of analysis is qualitative as well. The researcher has applied library, descriptive, analytical and interpretative method for the present study. The poem is the primary source of the study. The researcher has used the method of content analysis to analyse the poem *The Rain Song*. Moreover, a literary survey is done on the secondary sources which include the works, papers, theses, and books of writers and critics. The researcher surveys these sources taking notes on T. S. Eliot, B. S. Al Sayyab and the mutual techniques while modernizing poetry and presenting the Eliotic seeds found in this poem, *The Rain Song*. According to the theory 'literature is a mirror of society', it is found that, in spite of the mutual techniques between Eliot and Al Sayyab, *The Rain Song* mirrors the Arabic heritage used by Al Sayyab. A comparative traces, with examples, between the two poets are made to explore what is mutual and what is distinctive between Eliot and Al Sayyab. Finally, the outcomes and results are concluded

Previous Related Studies:

Several studies were done on *The Rain Song* exactly after its publication in 1954. Most of the following studies have focussed on the form as a revolt against the classical literary canons. Some of them have focussed on some thematic issues which were not found before

the dawn of Arabic modernism. Abdal-Latif Shararah (1954), the first critic of *The Rain Song*, considers it "like the other modern Arab poems that broke off the standard rules of the classical Arabic poems. He adds: this reminds us with the first change of the Andalucian Muwashahat (Stanzas). Shararah (1954), also, indicates that in this poem, Al Sayyab has imbibed thematically and emotionally the free verse of modern English poetry as if Al Sayyab is whispering that he has dismissed the old thematic issues of Arabic poetry. Ihsan Abbass (1992), another critic, finds *The Rain Song* poem's success is coming from its simplicity and optimism. Such optimism can be noticed at the end of the poem:

And every drop shed of the blood of slaves
Is a smile awaiting new lips.
Or a nipple growing pink in the mouth of a new born
babe
In the youthful world of tomorrow, the giver of life!"
And the rain pours down... Deyoung (1993)

Rita Awad (1983) in her study, *Badr Shakir Al Sayyab* finds that *The Rain Song* is the most faithful poem about death and life in which the myth of death in life and life in death are embodied through the myth of Tammuz or through Al Sayyab himself. Rita Awad reads *The Rain Song* through myths and symbols which is a modern reading of Arabic poetry. Rita Awad mentions that Al Sayyab has dismissed Romanticism since the age is not an age of Romanticism. It is an age of revolution against the classical rules of Arabic poetry which can be seen in *The Rain Song*. Twentieth century was no longer an age of Romanticism.

M. M. Badawi (1992) in his book *Modern Arabic Literature* claims that *The Rain Song* is written in "true Eliotain fashion that

implicitly incorporated the Tammuzian fertility myth of resurrection through life-giving rain". Badawi finds a foreign influence in *The Rain Song*. Yet, this influence is not a matter of imitation since it incorporated the ancient Arab myths. Badawi finds that the Babylonian fertility myths are the linking device between Eliot and Al Sayyab. Eliot benefited of the eastern myths of Old Iraq – Mesopotamia – found in *The Golden Bough* which paved the way for the Eliotic seeds to be planted in the poetry of Al Sayyab especially the poem *The Rain Song*.

Deyoung (1993) argues that 'Hymn of the Rain' (Unshüdat al-Matar) has always been identified as a landmark in the poetic development of the Iraqi poet Badr Shakir al- Sayyab. This is because, Deyoung clarifies, it integrates political statement with personal experience. She further clarifies that it is the first step toward using symbolism derived from ancient pagan fertility myths as poetic source material. So, as a researcher I find that this is the first attempt to use the symbolic significance of the ancient Arabic heritage in Arabic poetry by Al Sayyab. Deyoung finds a symbolic touch in Badr Shaker Al Sayyab in her 'New Reading of Al Sayyab's *Aunshudat Al Matrr*'. These pagan fertility myths were not used by poets before Al Sayyab because of religious reasons.

Another study finds an equality in the impact of *The Waste Land* and *The Rain Song* as both milestones in English and Arabic poetry. This study gives Al Sayyab an equal poetic vision with Eliot. This study is by Mohammed Awaad (1996). Awaad, in his study *The Waste Land and The Rain Song: Two Milestones of Modernism*, has confirmed the poetic position of the two poems; one as the main

milestone of modernism in the English poetry and the other as the main milestone of modernism in the Arabic poetry during the twentieth century. Such a comparison takes *The Rain Song* to the international level, mainly to the level of modernity. Simultaneously, *The Rain Song* has taken Arabic poetry to new horizons of modernity as a concept and modernism as a poetic literary movement. Mohammed Awaad's reading of *The Rain Song* has compared to *The Waste Land* by T. S. Eliot that is not done at random. It is because of the similarity between the two most famous poems in both English as well as Arabic poetry. This similarity is the focus of this study which will be justified through the influence of T. S. Eliot on B. S. Al Sayyab.

Badr Shakir Al Sayyab (1926 – 1964):

Badr Shakir Al Sayyab, in spite of the short span of his life, was a prolific poet, translator and author. He was a specialist in Arabic and English literature as he studied at the Teachers' College in Baghdad. He began his career as a romantic poet since he was influenced by Wordsworth, Keats and Shelley. Later, he changed his poetic vision into free verse which is one of the most notable features of modernism.

According to Issa Boullata (1969) Al Sayyab shook the poetic world with his verse. His free verse poems dealt with socio-political topics related to his life and that of all the Arabs. Boullata (1969) adds that "Al Sayyab's influence continued to grow among Arab poets who appreciated and developed his use of myth in poetry, especially ones unifying the sundry images in a poem". Al Sayyab, according to Boullata, was up to modernize Arabic poetry in which he

disconnected poetry with the past and connected it with the present. Therefore, he is considered one of the founders of Modern Arabic poetry.¹ The sense of modernity in Arabic poetry came as a result of his poetic achievement with other poets like the Syrian Adonis, the Iraqi Nazik Al Malaeka and others. Yet, his modernity of the Arab poetry is not only of the form of the Arabic poem but of the content of it. By assimilating Western modernism and literary traditions into Arabic poetry, Al-Sayyab ironically rediscovered nationalist myths and recalled ancient narratives which shaped the cultural history of the Middle East and the Arab world, Gohar (2007). He made use of the Arabic heritage to the maximum. Many images, myths, allusions were taken from the Arab folklore and heritage by him. Challenging the classical poetic standards was not an easy task at that time. Yet, Al Sayyab dared to challenge those standards. It was the Marxist thought that enabled him to be up to the literary challenge. He longed to create something new and unique. Before Al-Sayyab, Arabic poetry failed to meet the new challenges raised by the new post-war era. The great traditional poets Ma'aruf al-Rusafi and Mohammad Mahdi al-Jawahiri in Iraq, Ahmad Shawki and Hafiz Ibrahim in Egypt, Badawi al-Jabal and Omar Abu Richah in Syria - continued to write in old forms while trying to express new contents, Namdari, (2013). This shows that even though the classical Arabic poetry did not vanish during the period in which Badr Shakir Al Sayyab was living. Classical Arabic poetry was taken to be one of the landmarks of the Arabs. So, violating the classical standards may endanger the life of

¹ Some critics think that Nazik Al Malaeka is the first one to experiment free verse, but Al Sayyab thinks that Ali Ahmed Bakathir, the Yemeni poet and dramatist, is the first Arab poet who wrote in free verse.

anyone who wants to deviate that poetry which is considered the *diwan of the Arabs* (the repository of the Arabs). Ghareeb (2018) finds that the Iraqi poet Badr Shakir al-Sayyab was a pioneer in approaching western poetry in both ways, as a poet and as a translator. This contact with western poetry was a catalyst that infused him to modernize the Arabic poem. Unmistakably, he did not copy the western techniques of modernism. He blended them to create something new and creative. This creative and unique style can be seen in most of his poems especially those which were written after 1946.

According to Badawi (1992) "he accomplished the first successful modernist experiments, introducing the fertility myth, the historical archetype and the theme of the city, and spearheading the movement in the fifties." So, the first successful modernist experiments in Arabic poetry are attributed to Al Sayyab. Many other Arab poets have contributed in modernizing the Arabic poetry, yet Al Sayyab's role is considerable and essential.

Badr Shaker Al Sayyab suffered a lot in his life because of his way of modernizing the Arabic poetry and because of his communist background. Moreover, his political views against the rulers of Iraq made him isolated in the exile life away from his beloved Iraq. *The Rain Song* was written in Kuwait which reflects his political and personal affairs mingled together in it. Al Sayyab describes *The Rain Song* as a poem written in the days of loneliness and suffering in exile in the Gulf. Unless the Beirut Literary magazine *Al Adab* published it in 1954, Al Sayyab would not find any literary recognition. *The Rain*

Song has become a literary identity card for him. *The Rain Song* is known for Al Sayyab and Al Sayyab is known for *The Rain Song*.

T. S. Eliot and B. S. Al Sayyab:

Modernism was a movement that affected life in the west as well as in the east. The English poetry ran far away from the gentility of the Victorian poetry. Ezra Pound and T. S. Eliot played a significant role in the process of modernizing the English poetry. Similarly, Arabic poetry witnessed a critical change far away from the classical canons of writing poetry. Frangieh (1990) has mentioned that "Under the influence of genuine Western poets like T.S. Eliot (1888-1965), modern Arab poets as Badr Shakir Al-Sayyab (1926-1964), Abdul-Wahhab Al Bayyati (1926-1999) and Nazik Al-Mala'ika (1922-2007) have "led Arabic poetry beyond the constraints of classical Arabic forms". The main change in Arabic poetry is because of the coming of free verse from modern English poetry either through the translation of some of the English poems of the twentieth century or the acquaintance of the poems of T. S. Eliot, Jabra I. Jabra (1971). *The Waste Land* was the most famous translated poem into Arabic. This poem was the landmark not only in English poetry but also in its effect on modern Arabic poetry. Al Sayyab acknowledges his acquaintance with the English poetry saying: "I studied Shakespeare, Milton and the Victorian poets. Moreover, in the last two years of my study, at the College of Teachers, I studied T. S Eliot for the first time. I appreciated John Keats as much as I did with Eliot", Awad (1996). Gohar (2007) says: *The Waste Land* provides an impetus for poets from different cultures, particularly from the Arab world, who adapted Eliot's urban modernism to fulfil local purposes. Awad (1996)

mentions that Al Sayyab might read *The Waste Land* during his study at the Teachers College in the 1940s. Furthermore, Awad (1996) adds that: Al Sayyab had recognized the influence of T. S. Eliot on the Arab literature including all the types whether socialist or non-socialist.

An intertextual reading of Al-Sayyab's poetry reveals at first sight an extensive use of allusions and references adapted from Eliot, Gohar (2007). From the first sight while I was reading *The Rain Song* undoubtedly I thought I was reading *The Waste Land*.² T. S. Eliot has haunted many Arab poets because of his new poetics and techniques. Being erudite, Eliot has made a global impact on the literary levels. He is the most notable English poet in the twentieth century worldwide. Even the thematic issues of his poetry deal with themes from different places worldwide. Jabra Ibrahim Jabra (1971), in his book *Modern Arabic Literature and the West*, comments on the great impact of Eliot on the Arab poets:

"It was in the early 1950s that Anglo- Saxon writers began to impinge on Arabic. Foremost among them was T. S. Eliot, whose influence was eruptive and insistent. This influence came at first through his early poetry and was partly possible for the great change that has since overtaken Arabic poetic forms."

This impingement can be seen completely in the new poetic technique of the *Free Verse*. The free verse was a shock to the classical Arab poets who opposed this strange technique in modern Arabic poetry. The impact of T. S. Eliot in this impingement was demanding. The

² This belief of similarity between *The Rain Song* and *The Waste Land* was the seed for doing this paper. As majored in English literature, I studied *The Waste Land* extensively in my B. A. The spirit of *The Waste Land* remained in my literary taste. Such spirit helped me to discover the Eliotic seeds in *The Rain Song* of Al Sayyab.

most notable factor in such influence was the translation of Eliot's *The Waste Land*. Abdul Sattar (2014) has commented on the great role of Eliot's *The Waste Land* saying: "*The Waste Land* came to Iraq with all its perplexities, vague allusions, new techniques, and furthermore, the great difficulty in rendering it into Arabic." The Arab poets received *The Waste Land* with warmly. This is due to the allusion to the Babylonian myths like Tammuz or Ishtar and the strong desire to run away the classical rules of writing poetry. Arab poets adopted free verse because it enabled them to treat pressing issues in a more flexible and innovative form. Moreover, there are many issues that matter between T. S. Eliot and B. S. Al Sayyab. Even the product of any poet is not only his own. It is an accumulative outcome of his poetic experience. T. S. Eliot himself got influenced by many poets. A glance on *The Waste Land* reflects the intertextuality between Eliot and many poets before him. Similarly, Al Sayyab got attracted to the mythical method of T. S. Eliot. So, it can be found that "... all the social, religious, political and historical issues that interested Eliot interested Al Sayyab as well. The themes of death and resurrection, sacrifice and salvation, and faith and grace, as manifested in the modern world, also engaged Al Sayyab's interest in the Tammuz or Adorns myth, which was central to *The Waste Land* and was to become central to Arabic poetry of the 1950's and 1960's.", Abdul Sattar (2014). That is why it is obvious that the fertility myths of *The Rain Song* are similar to the fertility myths of *The Waste Land*. This similarity is also because of his reading of Frazer's chapters on the fertility gods in *The Golden Bough*.³

³ This book was found with Al Sayyab's daughter Alaa'a by the Iraqi translator Sahar

The state of death and fragmentation in the waste land of Arabs during the twentieth century is another reason that forced Al Sayyab to be attracted by the poetry of T. S. Eliot. *The Waste Land* was very influential as it came into contact with chords with Arab feelings of frustration and isolation, and the longing for an Arab renaissance. Moreover, the Arab poets desire to experiment with poetic modernism. The Western poets found the poetry of Eliot as "the most devastating critique of the entire project of modern Western civilization", De Young (2000). Al Sayyab found a very dexterous way in the mythical method of Eliot to critique the political life of Iraq in which he can attack indirectly. Using Eliot's poetry as an intertext, Al Sayyab does not aim to dismantle the Western literary canon but to challenge local hegemony, Gohar (2007). This hegemony is the cause of sterility in Iraq and the whole Arab World. In spite of the fact that Iraq is full of rain and production, there is still hunger and starvation in Iraq. That is why "Not one year passed when there was no hunger in Iraq", (*The Rain Song*, 81). The poor are suffering, while the rich are blessing. The political hegemony is prevailing the whole scene in Iraq. Accordingly, Al Sayyab justified his use of the Eliotic mythical method saying: "Hopefully, I am the first poet to use myths and symbols for a political reason fighting against the royal regime of Nuri Al Saeed. This is because the retinue of the king cannot understand myths and symbols", Al Kailani (2008). Though, Al Sayyab got exiled because of his indignant views and beliefs in his poetry.

Eliot, more than any other European poet or critic, inspired Al-Sayyab and his generation of *vers-libristes* to move ahead in their quest for a new style and form to embody their changing experiences in the modern world. Eliot's *The Waste Land*, *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock*, and *The Hollow Men* were the grandiose examples to model the new Arab poem upon. They were milked, parodied, emulated, and translated to create a matrix of the new modernist paradigm at the start of this rocky journey of experimentation in the new poetic vision, Abdul Sattar (2014). This journey was rocky because of the aftermath of the reaction against the avant-garde poetry. Many classical poets were opposing this modern poetry, namely what is called free verse or Shi'r Hur. The classical poets like Jawaheri, Al Aqaad, Al Rafe'ei, and Omer Abu Risha opposed this free verse. They thought that this free verse is an attack on Arabic

Ahmed who translated Deyoung's article "A New Reading of Badr Shakir Al Sayyab's Hymn of the Rain" into Arabic.

poetry which they were proud of as a feature of the Arabs. Such imitation of the *verse- libre* was thought to be a matter of weakness⁴. They thought that the free verse is not poetry rather than prose.

Eliotic Seeds in *The Rain Song*:

T. S. Eliot has changed not only the form of Arabic poetry but also the content of it. Thematically, the modern Arabic poetry has been changed by the pioneer Arab poet, Al Sayyab. Eliot's influence is manifested throughout *The Rain Song*. *The Rain Song* is a good example to plough out the seeds of T. S. Eliot in Arabic Poetry. Let us discuss all these seeds:

1- Mythical Method in *The Rain Song*:

The mythical method is one of the Eliotic seeds in the poetry of B. S. Al Sayyab in general and in his poem *The Rain Song* in particular. Translation is the first medium through which myths had been transferred into Arabic poetry. Al Sayyab translated many poems for many poets among which was T. S. Eliot. *The Waste Land* supported him with many myths. The use of myths in the poetry of T. S. Eliot stirred the use of myths in the poetic vision of B. S. Al Sayyab. Gohar (2007) argues that "By assimilating Western modernism and literary traditions into Arabic poetry, Al-Sayyab ironically rediscovers nationalist myths and recalls ancient narratives which shaped the cultural history of the Middle East and the Arab world." In the Arabic heritage, there are many myths which were not used by the Arab poets, like those of Sinbad, Antara, Abu Zaid el Hilali, Tammuz,

² Ibn Khaldoon (1967) says: "The vanquished always want to imitate the victor in his distinctive characteristics, his dress, his occupation, and his other conditions and customs". Yet, in the case of Eliot and Al Sayyab, it is not a matter of imitation. It is a matter of intertextuality as Eliot got benefit from the French imagists, Shakespeare, John Donne and others.

Ishtar and the like. Moreover, fertility myths had been assimilated through his reading of James Frazer's *The Golden Bough* and J. L. Weston's *From Ritual to Romance*. These myths enriched the poetry of Al Sayyab. Myth, according to Neimneh, et al (2015), is symptomatic of his universal vision, relevance, and embrace of external influences. Resurrection, rebirth, life and death, aridity, life and productivity are among the universal themes of myths found in both T. S. Eliot and B. S. Al Sayyab.

The mythical method is a linking unit between Eliot's *The Waste Land* and Al Sayyab's *The Rain Song*. This linking unit helped Eliot to express his views upon the western aridity and bareness after the WWI, whereas it helped Al Sayyab to express his personal and national worries at the same time. Al Sayyab used the mythical method as an indirect weapon in *The Rain Song*. Al-Sayyab, as Gohar (2007) argues, found solace in Eliot's fertility myths, assimilated from Frazer's *Golden Bough*, using them in different contexts to express a longing for change and political transformation. Al Sayyab justified his use of myth: "Today we are strongly in need of the use of myth more than the past. This is because in the present we cannot find poetic values in the direct expression of poetry. The poet, accordingly, resorts to use myths to create new horizons for poetry", Issa Boullata (1969). Al Sayyab denied any poetic experience in the classical canons of Arabic poetry in the twentieth century. So, he did his best to renew Arabic poetry. Myths were used to modernize Arabic poetry. Some of these myths in *The Rain Song* are as follows:

The Rain Song is replete with myths assimilated with ones from Eliot's *The Waste land*. Ishtar is one of the myths used by Al Sayyab in *The Rain Song*. Ishtar is the great mother goddess and the beloved of Tammuz, the embodiment of the reproductive energies of nature according to the Babylonian myth. Al Sayyab commences *The Rain Song*:

Your eyes are two groves of palm trees at the hour of dawn
Or two balconies from which the moon has begun to recede.
Your eyes: when they smile the vines put forth leaves
And the lights dance...like moons [reflected] in the river
Rippled gently by oars at the hour of dawn,
As though, twinkling in their two depths, there are stars.

Deyoung (1993)

Here, the name Ishtar is not mentioned directly. The poet describes his beloved which can be a woman or his country or both of them. The third opinion is the right one since the beloved is like one's country. All the features of Al Sayyab's beloved or country or both indicate the features of Ishtar, the goddess of fertility which regenerates fertility in nature. That is why Al Sayyab says "Your eyes: when they smile the vines put forth leaves". The smile of his beloved brings back life and fertility to Iraq, the country of Al Sayyab, like Ishtar that brings back fertility to nature. Readers can find the similarity between his beloved and the goddess Ishtar.

Tammuz is another myth used by Al Sayyab in *The Rain Song*. It is Jabra Ibrahim Jabra who is the first critic using the term Tammuzi to name some Arab poets as Tammuzi poets. This is because of their use of the myth of Tammuz. Al Sayyab is one of these poets. In the myth of Tammuz, it is believed that the god of fertility dies once a year. When he was dead, his beloved had disappeared and looked for him. In her absence, the land became barren and sterile. Once Ishtar and Tammuz came back, the land became fertile and full of productivity. In *The Rain Song*, Al Sayyab has used the mythical concept of death and life, resurrection and rebirth. *The Rain Song* starts with the emphasis of the fertility of nature in which "the vines put forth leaves" and the lights dance...like moons [reflected] in the river". The scene of Iraq at the outset of the poem is rainy and productive. Yet, this fertile and productive scene of Iraq is changed to be the land of hunger and poverty. Al Sayyab says:

And there is hunger in Iraq
And the harvest season scatters the crops there
So that the crows and locusts may eat their fill
And the storehouses and the stones grind [the grain]
A mill turns in the fields...with men around it
Rain...
Rain...
Rain...

Deyoung (1993)

There is hunger in Iraq because of "the crows and locusts" which "may eat their fill". The crows and locusts in Iraq are the corrupted rulers and politicians who may eat their fill forgetting the poor in Iraq. That is why every year there is hunger in Iraq. The use of the myth of

Tammuz and Ishtar helps Al Sayyab to attack the Arab waste landers as T. S. Eliot does with the Western waste landers after the WWI.

Moreover, according to Gohar (2007), "reversing Eliot's modernist techniques and fertility motifs, Al Sayyab utilizes rain as a mythic symbol to generate suggestions integral to the Arab poet's local context and political ideology, viewing Baghdad as a sterile wasteland in dire need of resurrection". This assimilation of the myth of Ishtar and Tammuz is similar to the one mentioned in the final part of *The Waste Land* "What the Thunder Said":

Here there is no water but only rock
Rock and no water and the sandy road ...
Where the hermit-thrush sings ill the pine trees
Drip drop drip drop drop drop drop
But there is no water Eliot (1963)

In the western land, there is no water but only rock as it is in the Arab land especially after the loss Palestine in 1948. Eliot's myths of death-rebirth are used in *The Waste Land* guided by James Frazer's *The Golden Bough*. Abdul Sattar (2014) argues that "The rise from and descent to the underworld of Adonis and other fertility deities is perceived as an expression of man's desperate struggle to extend his own life through the death and rebirth". This rise and descent which is a Tammuzi feature is a shared feature in both Eliot and Al Sayyab. It is an Eliotic seed in *The Rain Song*. Even the Eliotic onomatopoeic words "drop drop drop" are the seeds of the Al Sayyab's onomatopoeic words "Rain.. Rain.. Rain", which indicate both death and rebirth according to the Tammuz myth. The myths of Ishtar and Tammuz in *The Rain Song* are discussed as an example of the Eliotic mythical seeds in Al Sayyab.

2- Imagist method in *The Rain Song*:

Images were used for the first time by the French imagists, then transferred into English poetry by T. S. Eliot and Ezra Pound. Then they were transferred into Arabic poetry by the modernist Arab poets like Al Sayyab and Nazik Al Malaeka. The use of images is something new to the Arabic literary scene. According to Badawi (1992), "The attempts of Al Sayyab became a major reference for the new imagery of modern poetry. A master of the metaphor, he could produce an immediate striking effect, exploring all kinds of kinetic, auditory, organic and visual imagery. However, his images were too crisp, clear and direct to serve maximally the modernist cause of poetry". This modernist cause is due to his reading of T. S. Eliot. This imagist method is assimilated by Eliot from the French imagists like Rimbaud and Mallarme. The elements of imagery that Al-Sayyab used enabled him to abandon his romantic subjectivism to make a distinct shift engaging his poetry in the critical issues of his age and modernize his poetry, Neimneh (2015). Therefore, the use of images is another Eliotic seed in Al Sayyab's poetry in general and in *The Rain Song* in particular. Al Sayyab used images as an indirect expression to attack the corruption of the political regime of Nuri Al Saeed. *The Rain Song* dovetails the political and the cultural with the personal. So, images are the best medium for Al Sayyab to tackle with such personal, cultural and political issues.

The Rain Song is replete with images that appeal to all the five senses of the reader. These images are from the Iraqi environment from which Al Sayyab was exiled. While he was in Kuwait, he was watching the rain in Iraq; such a sight evoked many images out of

which he painted an artistic picture of Iraq. The image of the eyes of his beloved is the most famous image. This image of the eyes of his beloved, as "two groves of palm trees at the hour of dawn" or "two balconies from which the moon has begun to recede⁵", makes these two lines one of the most memorable lines in modern Arabic poetry.

Other images of the Iraqi shores full of "stars and shells" and the mountains and plains of Iraq are full of "thunders and lightnings" can be seen in these lines:

The shores of Iraq clean with stars and shells,
As though they were harbingers of sunrise,
.....
I can almost hear Iraq storing up the thunder
And massing the lightning in the mountains and plains.
Deyoung (1993)

These images suggest the coming revolution against the regime of Nuri Al Saeed. Al Sayyab foretold the revolution against corruption in Iraq and it became true by then. The image of "the gutter spouts sob when it pours down" is an auditory image. Though the gutter is pouring rain down heavily, it indicates sadness and loneliness. The image of the gutter sobbing indicates alienation, that alienation of Al Sayyab in Kuwait. Many Eliotic seeds of images are scattered here and there in *The Rain Song*. In Eliot's *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock*, we can find a far-fetched image of evening to the poets of twentieth century:

⁵ This image of the eyes as "two balconies from which the moon has begun to recede" caught my attention one day while I was praying in the mosque at Dawn prayer in my village. That day the moon was about to recede. I watched the moon, from the inside of the mosque, through two semi-circular upper windows called in Yemen *Qamariat*. The image of Al Sayyab beloved's eyes came to my mind. It was a practical image since the moon was receding backward like two irises of the eye. I was astonished how identical this scene to that image in the mind of Al Sayyab and how that image came to his vision. This image entails sadness and departure.

"When the evening is spread out against the sky
Like a patient etherized upon a table", Eliot (1963)

This image of evening is not much different from the one in Al Sayyab's line of *The Rain Song*:

"And they drown in a mist of transparent grief
Like the sea, stroked by the hands of the evening".

Deyoung (1993)

The image of the evening is one of the most beautiful images used by Eliot and Al Sayyab. Eliot's image of the evening is like a patient etherized upon the table, whereas the image of the evening of Al Sayyab is like a doctor stroking his hands upon the sea like a patient to comfort and pacify him. Al Sayyab's image of pearls is identical with Eliot's image of pearls in *The Waste Land*. In *The Rain Song*, Al Sayyab is addressing the gulf:

"O gulf, O giver of pearls, of shells, of death",

Deyoung (1993)

In *The Waste Land*, Eliot has a similar image of the pearls:

"Those are pearls that were his eyes.
'Are you alive, or not? Is there nothing in your head?' "

Eliot (1963)

The image of pearls suggests death in both lines of Al Sayyab and Eliot. Deyoung (1993) argues that "The strong emphasis on images of death seem to suggest that this is what shortcircuits the speaker's vision at this point. He cannot find any positive value in suffering and dying." Though the image of pearls can be seen as an image of life, Al Sayyab has used it as an image of death which is similar to that one of Eliot. This is because Al Sayyab can find nothing positive in his exile in Kuwait. *The Rain Song* is full of Eliotic imagist seeds indicating light and darkness, death and life, fertility and sterility, so on and so forth. Al Sayyab used a set of scattered images while helps the reader

to grasp the whole scene of Iraq in the 20th century. This set of images is called "the objective correlative" which is purely an Eliotic seed in the poem *The Rain Song*. The Eliotic seed, the objective correlative, helped Al Sayyab to avoid expressing his emotions directly. This indirect way of expressing the poet's emotion is the key factor in his poetics. Images are something new to the Arab poets assimilated by Al Sayyab in his poem *The Rain Song*.

3- Symbolic method in *The Rain Song*:

The use of symbols in this poem is another Eliotic seed assimilated by Al Sayyab. It adds something new to the modern Arabic poem. According to Abdul Sattar (2014), symbols evoke a range of additional meanings and a complex of ideas beyond their literal significance. He adds: "The suggestive nature of symbols makes them valuable for poets and evocative for readers". Another reason for using symbols is that meaning is compressed through the use of symbols. Al Sayyab used the style of symbols in modern Arabic poetry. Eliot's use of religious symbols made an influence on Al Sayyab's poetry especially in his poem *The Rain Song*. Babylonian, Christian and Muslim symbols were utilized by Badr Shakir Al Sayyab. Abdul Sattar (2014) considers *The Rain Song* as the most representative poem of Arab mythical poetry, integrating ancient symbols and rituals into the modern situation in Iraq, where man's struggle for life and survival is juxtaposed with the cruelty of nature and political, social, and cultural forces. Therefore, the use of symbols is another Eliotic seed in Al Sayyab's poem *The Rain Song*.

The symbol of "Rain" is the most frequent symbol in the poem *The Rain Song*. It is a symbol of life and death. It is a symbol of personal love and sadness and a symbol of childish joy. In Arab society, children sing happily while rain is falling. The repeated word "Rain"... "Rain"... "Rain"... is an echo of this childish joy. Al Zahrani (2005) argues that "the symbol of "Rain" in the poetry of Al Sayyab is a dominant symbol for fertility and sterility as well." At the outset of the poem, *The Rain Song*, Al Sayyab has used rain as a symbol of fertility as heralding the coming of Ishtar which is the prime source of life in which the vines "put forth leaves" and "the lights dance like the moon in the river". Rain is the symbol of omen and death as it is the case with the fisher in this poem. Al Sayyab says:

On the hillside sleeping the sleep of the tomb
Gulping down their soil, drinking the rain;
As though a sad fisherman gathers his nets
And curses the water and fate. Deyoung (1993)

The rain is used to remind Al Sayyab the death of his mother. His mother in the grave is drinking the rain as his comrades whispering. Moreover, he is compared to a fisherman coming back from the sea with nothing. The rain is a negative symbol for the fisherman. This is because rain forces the fisherman to come back with nothing. That is why the fisherman "gathers his net" and "curses the water and fate". So, rain, here, is a symbol of death and nothingness. The fisherman who "gathers his net" and "curses the water and fate", is similar to the sailor in Eliot's *The Waste Land* in this line:

Is your card, the drowned Phoenician Sailor?, Eliot
(1963)

In Eliot and Al Sayyab, rain and water are symbols of death and decay. Al Sayyab made use of the symbolist seed of Eliot to the maximum. Yet, he made a difference relating it to fishing in the Arabic Gulf. That is why the Gulf addressed as the giver of death.

Al Sayyab, however, has used the symbol of rain for optimism at the beginning, the middle and at the end of the poem *The Rain Song*. In middle of it, he says:

In the youthful world of tomorrow, the giver of life!
Rain...
Rain...
Rain...
Iraq will grow green with grass in the rain...", Deyoung
(1993)

Here, the symbol of rain is no more than the giver of life in the future of Iraq politically and socially. Al Sayyab has ended the poem with the same hope and rain is also the giver of life where in Iraq the rain pours down.

Many symbols used by Al Sayyab like the 'Palm tree' as a symbol for Iraq, 'the vine' is a symbol for Christ, 'serpents, crows and locusts' are symbols for corrupted rulers of Iraq. Many more symbols are scattered in *The Rain Song* which were not used to found in classical Arabic poetry. Deyoung (1993) argues "while critics have identified many important symbols found in '*Hymn of the Rain*' individually, they have seldom looked at the interrelationships between those symbols, or how they contribute to the overall design of the poem". To decode the interrelationships between these symbols and to the best of my knowledge, these symbols are an amalgamation of contradictions; of dark and light, of optimism and pessimism, fertility and sterility, and finally the contradiction of death and life. It

is Al Sayyab who brought this Eliotic seed in Arabic poetry and did something unique to it.

4- Allusive method in *The Rain Song*:

Abdul Sattar (2014) argues that " Eliot's extensive use of allusions spurred Al Sayyab and some of his contemporaries to return to their own cultural reservoir of myths and legends, to revive them for use alongside the new themes and concepts of the modern era". Therefore, the allusive method is another Eliotic seed in the poem *The Rain Song*. Yet, these allusions are taken from the Mesopotamian heritage, The Holy Quran and from the Arabic culture. According to Neimneh (2015), "Al-Sayyab relied on Eliot and adopted his poetry, taking from Greek and Roman traditions and Western motifs and biblical allusions what fits the Arabic and Islamic context". Al Sayyab has made use to the maximum of Eliot's technique of allusions in *The Rain Song*. Allusions are mixed with myths by so many critics like in Abdul Sattar (2014). However, allusions from The Holy Quran are never like the allusion myths of the Arab heritage. The Quranic allusions are real and authentic and have nothing to do with other allusion myths. This a very significant point while critically analysing Al Sayyab's use of allusions.

An example of the allusions used by Al Sayyab is the Quranic allusion of Thamud. Al Sayyab alludes to the story of Thamud in The Holy Quran in the lines:

I can almost hear Iraq storing up the thunder
And massing the lightning in the mountains and the plains,
Until, when men tear away their seal
The winds from Thamud will not leave
Any trace in the valley. Deyoung (1993)

Thamud stands for the tyrants and corrupted rules of Iraq. Al Sayyab has prophesied the rebellion against the dictators of Iraq. The rebellion is like the wind that destroyed Thamud. The sinful people of Thamud were destroyed by furious storm⁶ as mentioned in The Holy Quran, Haqqa sura (69):

4. The Thamud and the Ad people (branded) as false the
Stunning Calamity! 5. But the Thamud, --they were
destroyed by a terrible Storm of thunder and lightning!,
translated by Abdullah Yusuf Ali, (1946)

Deyoung (1993) argues "this Koranic allusion is not accidental and must be integrated into any interpretation of the poem." Al-Sayyab draws an analogy between Iraq and the land of Thamud which had been swept by wind like the fertile Iraq which has been by the colonizers and corrupted rulers. Deyoung (1993) finds a reason behind Al Sayyab's use of this allusion that it will help readers to understand "the political upheavals then sweeping the Iraqi scene." The wind that destroyed Thamud is, moreover, an Eliotic seed imbibed by Al Sayyab in *The Rain Song*. T.S. Eliot in *The Waste Land* says:

'What is that noise?'"
The wind under the door.
'What is that noise now? What is the wind doing?'
Nothing again nothing. Eliot (1963)

This wind stands for nothingness in both Eliot and Al Sayyab. The wind brings nothingness to both Thamud and the fertile land of Iraq. In Eliot, it stands for the nothingness of the modern man.

⁶ In The Holy Quran, Thamud was destroyed by furious storm not by the wind. Ad was destroyed by wind. Yet, Al Sayyab mentioned the opposite. What is important is that the destruction of both Thamud and the fertile land of Iraq. It is a warning from Al Sayyab that the rebellion will sweep the dictators and colonizers of Iraq like that sweeping of Thamud by the wind. The readers of this poem easily comprehend the religious comparison made skilfully by Al Sayyab.

Another example of allusion is the one which is related to the Arab folk tales which is about the fertility cults. This folktale says, according to Deyoung (1993), that at the end of the rainy season, the oysters at the bottom of the sea rise to the surface during storms. There, they open their shells and, once a raindrop has fallen inside, they return beneath the waves, where the raindrop develops into a pearl. Al Sayyab has used pearls here not only to indicate life but to indicate death since the shells of the gulf are without pearls right then in Iraq. So, the allusive method is no more than an Eliotic seed assimilated by Al Sayyab in his masterpiece *The Rain Song*. Al Sayyab benefited of the Arab heritage to use allusions skilfully.

5- Free Verse method in *The Rain Song*:

Al Sayyab's *Rain Song* is regarded one of the most significant poems in Arabic modernist poetry composed in free verse, using a new diction with strong and rhetorical words which gave credibility to Arabic free verse movement, Al Husami, (2010). Free verse is the most important Eliotic seed in Al Sayyab's poem *The Rain Song*. According to Neimneh (2015), "Al Sayyab laid down the origins of modernism in Arabic poetry through his eloquent use of articulate diction and (the Eliotic) free verse style". This transition from the classical Arabic form (Qasida) into the free verse form is a turning point in the modern Arabic poetry. The essential concept of free verse, according to Badawi (1992), is the reliance on the free repetition of the single foot in the poem, where the poet varies the number of feet in a single line according to need. So, the regular two-hemistich verse with its fixed number of feet in the line of poetry was destroyed by the new movement of Al Sh'r Al Hur, literally the free verse movement.

Abdul Sattar (2014) argues that "The free verse movement altered the total picture of the poetic tradition in Iraq and, with vigour and faith, liberated the Arabic poem from rigidity and conventionalism". This liberation of Arabic poetry was a novel attempt of Al Sayyab who has laid the foundation of modernism in Arabic poetry. This liberation of Arabic poem was the result of war between the old and the modern. Al Sayyab states in an interview:

That free verse is more than a prosodic renewal:
—Free verse is more than a variation of the number of similar feet in different verses. It is a new technical structure, a new realist trend that came to crush romantic limpness, the literature of ivory towers, and the rigidity of classicism. Deyoung (1998)

Al Sayyab finds that free verse is more than changing the structure of the poem. Some critics regard free verse to the number of feet to be found in the lines of a poem or the lack of rhyme of the Arabic poem. Though it stands upon the number of feet and the loose use of enjambment, it gives the poem coherence and unity. This change in form has laid to the change in the content of the Arabic poem as emphasized. Al Sayyab started his poetic vision as a romantic poet but he found that the time of Romanticism is over in the twentieth century. The romantic gentility and the personal themes are no longer to be found in modern Arabic poetry. This change in the form is one of the causes of his retreat from romantic issues towards other modern topics of poetry.

The Rain Song differs in its rhythm and rhyme from the regular rhythm and rhyme of classical Arabic poetry. This deviation is also another Eliotic seed in the poetic vision of Badr Shakir Al Sayyab. Such deviation in modern Arabic poetry is called *Tafeela* poetry, literally free verse. *Tafeela* poetry is another form of free verse which has one or more than one metrical foot. In Arabic poetry, there are sixteen metres proposed by Al Khalil Ibn Ahmed Al Farahidy. *The Rain Song* was not written in any one of these regular metres of Arabic poetry, rather than it was written in *rajaz* metrical foot which varies in the number of feet that is called *Tafeela* metre. Many modern Arab poets were not writing poetry neither in regular metrical system

nor the *Tafeela* metre such as Jabra Ibrahim Jabra, Adonis and others. Therefore, Al Sayyab in *The Rain Song* was not running away totally from metres as his companions were doing. There is internal rhythm and an end rhyme which is frequent in (ر) sound as in the following lines:

عَيْنَاكَ غَابَتَا نَخِيلِ سَاعَةِ السَّحْرِ ،
 أَوْ شُرُفَتَانِ رَاحَ يَبْأَى عَنْهُمَا الْقَمَرِ .
 عَيْنَاكَ حِينَ تَبْسُمَانِ تُورِقُ الْكُرُومُ
 وَتَرْفُصُ الْأَصْنَوَاءُ... كَالْأَقْمَارِ فِي نَهْرِ
 يَرْجُهُ الْمَجْدَافُ وَهَنَا سَاعَةَ السَّحْرِ

Your eyes are two groves of palm trees at the hour of dawn

Or two balconies from which the moon has begun to recede.

Your eyes: when they smile the vines put forth leaves
 And the lights dance...like moons [reflected] in the river

Rippled gently by oars at the hour of dawn. Deyoung (1993)

This end rhyme is matched with the refrain words of

... مَطَرٌ

... مَطَرٌ

... مَطَرٌ

Rain ... Rain ... Rain ...

Al Sayyab has used the *rajaz* metre which consists of the foot "mustafelun" and it is differently repeated from one line into another. This variation in the number of feet is the novel attempt of Al Sayyab. The musical significance of this metre *rajaz* indicates monotony of the exile life of Al Sayyab in Kuwait, the continuity and fluidity of rain in Iraq. The musical variation in number of the "mustafelun" from one

line to another is like the repeated musical tune of the fall of the rain in Iraq as well as in the poem *The Rain Song*.

Let us have the scansion of the first lines ⁷ of *The Rain Song* to

عَيْنَاكَ غَا بَتَا تَخِيلُ سَاعَةَ السَّحَرِ ،
 عَيْنَاكَ غَا / بَتَا تَخِي / لِن سَاعَتَسْ / سَحَرُ
 0 // 0// 0/0/ 0// 0// 0// 0/0/
 مُسْتَفْعِلْنَ مُتَفَعِلْنَ مُسْتَفْعِلْنَ فَعْلَ
 أَوْ شُرْفَتَانِ رَاحَ يَتَايَ عَنهُمَا الْقَمَرُ .
 أَوْ شُرْفَتَانِ / ن رَاحَ يَتَايَ / أَيْ عَن هُمَا / قَمَرُ
 0// 0// 0/0/ 0// 0// 0// 0/0/
 مُسْتَفْعِلْنَ مُتَفَعِلْنَ مُسْتَفْعِلْنَ فَعْلَ
 عَيْنَاكَ حِينَ تَبْسُومَانَ ثُورِقُ الْكُرُومِ
 عَيْ نَاكَ حِي / ن تَبْسُومَانَ / ن ثُورِقُ / كُرُومِ
 00 // 0// 0// 0// 0// 0// 0/0/
 مُسْتَفْعِلْنَ مُتَفَعِلْنَ مُتَفَعِلْنَ فَعُولَ
 وَتَرْقِصُ الْأَضْوَاءَ ... كَالْأَقْمَارِ فِي تَهْرِ
 وَتَرْقِصُ / أَضْوَاءَ كُلِّ / أَقْمَارِي / تَهْرِ
 0// 0// 0/0/ 0// 0/0/ 0// 0//
 مُتَفَعِلْنَ مُسْتَفْعِلْنَ مُسْتَفْعِلْنَ فَعْلَ

find out the deviation of the regular metre of Arabic poetry:

This scansion indicates that even the metre is *rajaz*, the metre is not regular as it is in the regular metre of Arabic poetry. Looking at the full scansion of the whole poem gives a clear picture of the total change of the metrical system of Arabic poetry. The system of lines differs from the standard metres. One line includes four feet, another includes one foot or more than one. The feet vary from one line according to the idea or the mood of the poet himself. The scansion of the previous lines shows different feet which are shorter than the

⁷ This scansion is by teacher Majed Al Ja'afari, Arabic Department, College of Education, Taiz University, Yemen.

'tafeela', 'mustafalun' the main foot of rajaz⁸. The scansion shows other feet like 'mutafelun', fa'uol, and fa'l. This scansion indicates that the poem, *The Rain Song* is the real initiation of free verse into Arabic verse in a mature process. However, there are something unique, which is the use of Tafeela. Tafeela means that there is still a slight rhythm inside the poem. T. S. Eliot abandoned the classical metres used by Shakespeare, Milton and others. However, Al Sayyab maintained a slight rhythm and rhyme in *The Rain Song*. Al Sayyab was brave enough to create something new and modern in Arabic poetry. This modernist approach in Arabic poetry is the cultivation of the Eliotic seeds ploughed in the soil of Arabic culture in general and the Arabic poetry in particular.

Conclusion:

Badr Shakir Al Sayyab is one of the poets who made Arabic poetry a living entity after a stagnant period. This tremendous effect of Al Sayyab upon Arabic poetry has modernised it along the mainstream of modern poetry in the world. Having read T. S. Eliot and inspired by him, Al Sayyab imbibed some modern techniques in writing Arabic poetry which were not found beforehand. Al Sayyab made a revolution in Arabic poetry as a result of the socio-political life in the 20th century. He changed both the form and the content of Arabic poetry. *The Rain Song* is the best example to manifest the modern techniques and the Eliotic seeds. *The Rain Song* is a line demarcation between Classical Arabic poetry and modern Arabic poetry. Moreover, it is the product of his mature poetic career. Critically analysed, *The Rain Song* presents the fact that, in spite of the Eliotic seeds, Al Sayyab made use of the Arabic heritage including Babylonian myths, images and symbols taken from the Arabic environment. *The Waste Land* helped Al Sayyab to go deeply to the bottom of T. S. Eliot. The barren land of the west and Iraq was a mutual factor to write such modernist poetry. The mythical approach

⁸ *Rajaz* is one of the sixteen metres in Arabic poetry similar to the metres in English poetry like iambic, trochee, anapaest, and dactyl.

is one of the Eliotic seeds found in Al Sayyab's *The Rain Song* which helped him to mingle his personal and national worries. The fertility myths of Ishtar and Tammuz of Frazer's *Golden Bough* are the matching element for the existence of Eliotic seeds in *The Rain Song*. The imagist method is also another Eliotic seed in *The Rain Songs* that helped Al Sayyab to attack corruption in Iraq indirectly and to foretell the revolution against the political regime in 1957. The symbolic method is another Eliotic seed implanted in *The Rain Song*. The symbol of "Rain" is frequently used in it referring to death and life simultaneously. The allusive method is an Eliotic seed found in the poem, *The Rain Song*. Some of these allusions are taken from the Holy Quran like the allusion of Thamud prophesying the sweeping of the dictators of Iraq. The free verse is the most notable Eliotic seed discovered in Al Sayyab's *The Rain Song*, through which Al Sayyab laid down the origins of modernism in Arabic poetry. The regular two-hemistich verse with its fixed number of feet in the line of poetry was destroyed by the new movement of the free verse. This liberation of Arabic poetry from the old literary canons is the novel attempt of Al Sayyab in the twentieth century. In spite of the modern element of free verse, this study has found that there is still a slight rhythm and rhyme in *The Rain Song* which is a clear deviation of the old and classical metrical system of the Arabic *Qasida* as well. Al Sayyab finds this novel attempt of free verse more than a variation of the number of similar foot or feet. According to Al Sayyab, it is a new technical structure, a new realist trend that came to crush romantic limpness, the literature of ivory towers, and the rigidity of classicism. This is the newest and the modernist breakthrough in Arabic poetry influenced by the Eliotic seeds assimilated in the poetry of Badr Shakir Al Sayyab.

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