

# Shelley's Hellas and Al Sayyab's Poetry

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## هلاس لشيلي وشاعرية السياب

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**Abstract:-**

Al Sayyab, an avant-garde figure in contemporary Arabic literature, was influenced by a number of English poets. Some scholars believe that most of his poems took inspiration from T.S. Eliot noting particularly his use of myths. In this article we argue that Al Sayyab was also influenced by Percy Bysshe Shelley's poetry, most notably by Hellas. Figuration of some of the themes, names, images and myths in Al Sayyab's poems seems to be attributable to Shelley's influence. Drawing on the French school of comparative literary studies, we aim to reappraise Al Sayyab's poetry in terms of its inspirational sources and influences.

**Key words:** Al Sayyab, Comparative Literature, Myth, T. S. Eliot, Percy Bysshe Shelley.

**المخلص:-**

قد تأثر السياب رائد الشعر العربي الحديث بعدة من الشعراء الغربيين. بعض الناقدين يرون أنه في معظم قصائده استلهم من تي. إس. أليوت. إنهم يرون بأن توظيف الأساطير في قصائده يدل على تأثره بأسلوب تي. إس. أليوت. في هذه الورقة البحثية نستدل بأنه كان متأثراً بالشعراء الآخرين لاسيما بقصيدة هلاس لبرسي بيش شيلي. يبدو أنه في توظيف المضامين والأسماء العلم والأساطير والصور كان مستلهما من شيلي. معتمدا على المنهج الفرنسي في الدراسات المقارنة يبدو تحديد البحوث في قضايا تأثره بالشعراء الغربيين له أهمية كبرى.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** السياب، الأدب المقارن، أسطورة تي. إس. أليوت، برسي بيش شيلي.

## 1- INTRODUCTION

Our main purpose in this article is to show that Al Sayyab was influenced by Shelley's Hellas. Evidencing this is the Iraqi poet's use of some of the themes, images, words/phrases, names and, especially, myths figuring in Shelley's work. We compare Shelley's Hellas with Al Sayyab's poems, in particular "The Elegy of Jaykur" (Marsiah Jaykur). In order to appraise the extent of Shelley's impact on Al Sayyab's poetry, we have explored the whole corpus of Al Sayyab's poems. We contend that some scholars overemphasize the influence of Eliot's The Waste Land to the exclusion of Shelley's impact on Al sayyab's poetry.

Some Arab critics maintain that Al Sayyab was influenced by T.S. Eliot's The Waste Land in some parts of his poem "The Elegy of Jaykur." However, comparing Al Sayyab's poem with T.S. Eliot's poem shows that the evidence for the alleged impact of the English poet on Al Sayyab is insubstantial. The impact of Eliot as the most influential English poet, who was contemporary with Al Sayyab, is evident; however, its extent and its modality do not match the account that these scholars provide. Additionally, these scholars argue solely on the basis of what has been mentioned by Al Sayyab himself in some of the references in his poem.

In a comparative study based on the French school of comparative literature, we try to look into the themes, images and myths Al Sayyab uses in his poems, especially in "The Elegy of Jaykur," under the influence of Shelley's Hellas. We also examine the validity of the claim that Al Sayyab has been influenced by Eliot's The Waste land.

## 2- Al Sayyab's Life

Badr Shakir Al Sayyab along with Nazik al-Malaika (1927-2007) are famous in Arabic literature for seeking to change the Khalilian metrical or Amoodi mode of traditional Arabic poetry to what was named "Al-Shear Al-Hor" (Free Verse). However, Moreh believes that Al-Sayyab's style was similar to "irregular verse" (1976: 273).

Furthermore, these poets are famous in modern Arabic literature for making use of modern styles and themes.

Al Sayyab was born in southern Iraq, in a small village called "Jaykur" in 1926. His mother died when he was six years old and his father abandoned him to marry a woman from another village. Al Sayyab lived with his grandmother (Maoosh 2006: 12-13). After finishing elementary school, he went to Basra to continue his studies in high school. Then, he went to Baqdad to attend "Dar Al-Moallemin Al- alia" (Higher Teacher Training) which was a college for educating young teachers (Balatah 1981: 32). There, Al Sayyab developed a liking for English literature and changed his major from Arabic literature to English literature. Ahsan Abbas believes that in this college Al Sayyab read the book Golden Treasury through which he got acquainted with some English poets such as Keats, Shelly and Wordsworth (1992: 68-69).

In 1945, Al Sayyab joined the Communist party in Iraq. Ali maintains that this was mainly due to social reasons (1978: 87). He left the party after eight years and wrote some articles to express his opposition to it. After several years of illness, he died in 1964 (Shakib Ansari 1997: 253).

### 3- French Comparative Literature

The French school of comparative literature focuses, in an empirical spirit, on similarities and dissimilarities in literary works of different countries. Its goal is to identify similarities in two or three bodies of literature by studying the "passing route" comprised of three parts: the beginning (emitter), the ending (recipient), and media (transmitter) (Cao 2013: 12).

Also, French scholars have focused on how to establish comparative literature as a unified scientific discipline. The representative figures of the French school (Baldensperger, Van Tieghem, and Guyard) agree on the following points. First, positivism must be emphasized and arbitrariness must be removed. Secondly, the history of literary relationship should be taken into consideration while analogical study, without factual contact, should be overlooked. Thirdly, objective values, instead of uncertain aesthetic ones, should be obtained (Cao 2013: 11).

In the French comparative method we should prove the occurrence of influence. We initially concentrate on some important parts of a writer's life; then, we try to explain how he was influenced by his favorite writer (Ghunaymi, Hilal 2008: 14-16). Following the historical research, we compare some themes, images, names and use of myths in the works compared. In our case, we attempt to find some key themes and images in Al-Sayyab's poems. Afterwards, we compare Al Sayyab's poems with Shelley's and to trace the possible influence of the English poet on the Iraqi one.

We cannot trust the similarity between these poems, because mere similarity does not prove anything in itself (for example, many poets have composed poems about death). Therefore, for an empirical study and homogeneity with factual linkage (as French school emphasizes), we should concentrate on some particular elements. First of all, we need historical evidence which can be found in a poet's life, his ideology, his statements and the testimony of his friends. To that aim, we try to concentrate on the historical influence of western poets on Al-Sayyab's poetry.

#### 4- Historical Evidence

Abbas claims that Al Sayyab had been familiar with Shelley's poetry before he went to Dar Al-Moallemin. He argues that Al Sayyab had read Shelley's translated poems by Ahmad Al-Savi (احمد الصاوي) and after that he had tried read Shelly in English (1992: 72). Interestingly, Al-Sayyab gave a lecture entitled "Commitment or Non-commitment in Modern Arabic Literature" at a conference in Rome in October 1961 in which he remonstrated with the poets of the Apollo Group (1932-4) (Ar. Jamā'at Apollo) for their ignorance of Shelley's works, especially Prometheus Unbound and The Revolt of Islam (Alqarfy 43). Also, in his letter to his friend Khalid Al-Shawwaf (خالد الشواف), Al Sayyab writes about his passion for Shelley's Prometheus Unbound (Saedi 2018: 240).

Moreover, it seems that when Al Sayyab was a member of the Communist Party (between 1945-1954) he had found in Shelley a like-minded poet. Both of them were committed to communal and social issues such as poverty and oppression and both had rebellious and revolutionary sentiments. Furthermore, like Shelley, Al Sayyab did not care about religion.

We conjecture that Al Sayyab had read Shelley's Hellas before the 1950s, because he composed "The Elegy of Jaykur" in 1948. During that time, he was a member of the Communist Party in Iraq. Although the influence of Hellas in "The Elegy of Jaykur" is more noticeable than other poems, we can also trace its impact on Al Sayyab's other poems.

With the poem "The song of rain" ("Unshudat al-Matar") he established himself as a mature poet. According to his friend Al-Samerayi, he tried to revise his earlier stance on religion and metaphysics. This period of his life was heavily influenced by concepts in "The Book of Job" (2012: 21-22).

Ashari Zayed notes that from the advent of Islam using mythology had been considered paganistic (1999: 11). Al Sayyab was the first Arab poet who used myths extensively. As he himself points out: "Perhaps I am the first contemporary Arab poet who started using myths to take symbols from them" (Ali 1978: 91). This admission implies a greater admiration for Shelley than for Eliot.

In this research we have frequently drawn on Ahsan Abbase's book about Al-Sayyab's life and poetry and the writings of some scholars like Balatah, and Abdolreza Ali. Some recent articles on the influence of T. S. Eliot on Al-Sayyab do not seem to offer strong evidence.

Iyad Ayasrah and Latiff Azmi (2019) in "Intertextuality between T. S. Eliot and Al Sayyab's poetry" consider some poems in Diwan Al Sayyab as inspired by Eliot. They provide no convincing evidence. So the case with the article by Shadi Naymneh and Al Qaisi titled "The Poetry of B. S. Al-Sayyab: Myth and the Influence of T.S. Eliot" (2015). The writers unconvincingly mention a few phrases in Al Sayyab's poetry as possibly being inspired by T.S. Eliot.

However, as mentioned, Al-Sayyab had read a considerable amount of Shelley's writing. Comparing the mythological images in Shelley's poems with Al-Sayyab's, we find compelling evidence of Shelley's influence on the Arab poet. For example, when Al-Sayyab tries to depict Djamila Bouhired (جميلة بوحيرد), an Algerian revolutionary woman, as a heroine, he uses Shelley's "The Witch of Atlas":

All came, much wondering how the en-wombed rocks/ Could have brought forth so beautiful a/ birth. (Shelley 1901: 274, X 57)

Al-Sayyab writes in "To Djamila Bouhired":

"و الصخر منشدٌ بأعصابها حتى يراها في إنتظار الجنين". (السياب ٢٠١٦: ٥١)

(The rock tightened her nerves until he saw her waiting for the fetus.)

The Greek myth of Atlas had been unknown in contemporary Arabic poetry. Al Sayyab sings:

"أو أزهرت في أطلس عوسجة". (السياب ٢٠١٦: ٥٢)

"Or bloomed in an Atlas bramble."

(Heydaribeni, Aslani and Pirnajmuddin, Kufa, 80-81)

In another poem he uses the myth of Medusa in portraying prostitutes epitomizing the social plight of many people in the Arab world. He draws on the images in Shelley's translation of Faust and his poem "On the Medusa of Leonardo Da Vinci":

A lifeless idol; with its numbing look./ It freezes up the blood of man; and they/ Who meet its ghastly stare are turned to/stone, / Like those who saw Medusa.(Shelley 1901: 544)

Medusa is described as a cold and senseless creature who turns men into stone. Al Sayyab writes:

تفتحت كأزاهر الدفلي مصابيح الطريق/ كعيون "ميدوزا" تحجر كل قلب بالضعيفة/ كأنتها نذر  
تبشر أهل البابل بالحريق.(السياب، ٢٠١٦: ج ٢، ١٤٤)

(The lamps of the road opened like oleanders, like the eyes of Medusa that harden every heart with grudge, as if they were a vow to herald the people of Babylon with fire.)

Al Sayyab has also mentioned the myth of Hercules in the ode "Book of Job":

بالعضل المقتول والسواعد المجذولة/ هرقل صارع الردى في غاره المحجب بظلمة من  
طحلب (السياب، ٢٠١٦م: ج ٢، ٣١٨)

(With strong muscles and tangled forearms / Hercules wrestled with the dead in his cave veiled in the darkness of moss.)

He depicts this myth as if it were inspired by Shelley's Prometheus Unbound.

Hercules: Most glorious among spirits! thus doth/ Strength/ To wisdom, courage, and long- suffering/ love,...There is a/ cave...and all around are mossy (Selley 1901: 191, III, 1-21). (Heydaribeni, Aslani and Pirnajmuddin 2021: 84)

It is important to pay attention to this point that these themes and images along with myths are used for the first time in Arabic poems and it shows his being influenced by Shelley.

## 5- Hellas

Shelley has stated that he wrote this play under the influence of Aeschylus' The Persians, a Greek play depicting the defeat of Xerxes by the Greeks. Shelley believes that the conflict between the Ottoman emperor, Mahmud, and the Greeks has roots in historic events and it dates back to the Achaemenid Empire (since Xerxes (Khshāyarsha) invaded Greece). He believes that this conflict has continued until the Ottoman Empire's expansion into parts of Europe (Shelley 1901: 318).

Unless we remove arbitrariness, we cannot conduct a scientific research on these poems.

For this purpose, we try to concentrate on motifs, themes, images, and specially the myths that Al Sayyab has used under the influence of Shelley's Hellas.

## 6. Images

Guyard, a French comparatist, believes that when people from different cultures are in contact, they are apt to construct generalization or "images" (or occasionally "mirages") of foreign characters. He proposed to study such "images" as a focus for reviewing comparative literature (Domínguez, Saussy and Villanueva 2015: 70). Listed below are some Special images, which Al Sayyab has derived from Shelley's Hellas.

### 6-1. Volcano

Shelley had composed:

"Like mountain twins that from each other's veins / Catch the volcano fire and earthquakes spasm,/ Shake in general fever through the city" (588-590).



Similarly, in the poem "al-Ma'bad al-Gharīq" (drwoned temple), Al Sayyab depicts an image of a Volcanic mountain flowing fever from its mouth and shaking every stone in its way. This poem was composed in 1962, two years before the poet's death.

هنالك قبل ألف، حين مج لظاه من سقر/ فم يتفتنح البركان عنه فتتنفض الحمى/ قرارة كل ما في  
الواد من حجر على حجر. (السياب ٢٠١٦: ج ٢: ٢٥٤)

(Before thousands of years, when its flame splashed from hell / there was a mouth opening the volcano/ then the fever destroyed every stone in the mountain's valley.)

This image is an uncommon one. The similarity between the two images cannot be accidental as it seems highly unlikely that Al Sayyab may have used this image of volcanic mountain (with its feverish eruption shaking everything), based on his own poetic imaginings. Also, we know that there are no volcanoes in Iraq.

And in the same poem he follows and sings:

تفجر باللظى رحم البحيرة ينثر الأسماك و الدم. (السياب، ٢٠١٦: ج ٢، ٢٥٤)

(The womb of the lake spouts fire, Sprays fishes and blood)

Shelley sings in "The Wandering Jew":

And earth spouts fire from her riven womb. (Shelley 1901: 582, III 38)

The humanization of the elements of the universe and the construction of distinctive metaphors at al-Sayyab are likely techniques. These contents and images in his poetry coincide with the poetic components of Shelley's poetry.

## 6-2. Cross:

Shelley has used many religious symbols in his poems. Some of these recur in Al Sayyab's "The Elegy of Jaykur".

Shelley believes that the name "Christ" has become literally a curse word and metaphorically a curse for humankind in which the religion of love is used to justify religious wars and bloody oppression" (Abrams 2000: 2: 740). Al Sayyab has frequently used the word "Cross" in his poetry, particularly in the poem under discussion. The "cross" is depicted as casting its shadow on "Jaykur", like the shadow of an airplane on, causing havoc.

يا صليب المسيح ألقاك ظلا/ فوق جيکور طائر من حديد. (السياب ٦٧)

(O the cross of Christ, cast you, like a shadow, on Jaykur, of an iron airplane.)

Al Sayyab also has composed:

فاكتست منه بالصليب الذي ما كان الا رمزا للهلاك الأبد: / لا رجاء لها بأن يبعث الموتى ولا  
مأمل لها بالخلود. (٢٠١٦: ج ٢، ٦٧)

(It was covered by a cross, merely a symbol of terrible destruction, / there is no hope for the resurrection of the dead, and there is no hope for eternity for them.)

In these verses, al-Sayyab metaphorically sees the shadow of the occupiers' warplanes as a cross that brings destruction. Similarly, the following lines refer to the "Roman emperor Constantine who converted to Christianity when he saw a bright cross imposed on the sun at noon (Abrams 2000: 2: 770):

While blazoned as on heaven's immortal/ noon/ The cross leads generations on. ( Shelley: 1901: 222-224)

In another important cross image Shelley points to the historic event about the shadow of cross:

But in the Omnipresence of that Spirit / In which all live and are. Ominous signs/ Are blazoned broadly on the noonday sky; / One saw a red cross stamped upon the/ sun;/ It has rained blood; and monstrous births. (1901: 600-604)

Like Shelley, Al Sayyab, in this part of his poem "The Elegy of Jaykur" has obviously hinted at that historic event reproducing that image a bit differently.

الصليب، الصليب! إنا رأيناه و قد مر كالخيال الشroud،/ قد رأيناه في الصباح وفي الليل سمعنا  
كقعقات الرعود/ أ هو الذي يريدون؟ أشلاء وأنقاض منزل مهدود. (السياب ٢٠١٦: ج ٢: ٦٨)

(Cross, cross! We saw it, and it passed like a confused delusion, / we have seen it in morning and we have heard in night something like the collision of thunders. / Is this what they want? The rotten organs, and the parts of ruined home?)

This image is repeated in Al-Sayyab's poem, stressing that the shadow of cross can cause darkness similar to the darkness of grave. he composes:

يا لظل كظلمة القبر في اللون، وكالقبر في ابتلاع الخدود. (السياب ٢٠١٦: ج ٢ ٦٨)

(O Shadow, as grave as darkness, in its color, and as grave, in its' devouring of cheeks.)

Al-Sayyab despairs of the return of life and hope to Jaykur As a symbol of ideal utopia. He sees that the cross is no longer considered a symbol of life and revival of the dead, but rather a symbol of ruin and death.

Alsayyab, like Shelly, doubts people's belief in God:

أكانت النساء والرجال مؤمنين/ بأن في السماء قوّة تُدبّر،/ تُجس، تسمع الشكاية، تُبصر،/ ترق،  
ترحم الضعاف، تغفر الذنوب؟ (السياب ٢٠١٦: ١٢٨)

Did men and women believe/ that there is a force in heaven that  
devises,/ feel, hear complaints, see,/ Be kind, have mercy on the  
weak, forgive sins?

This Cartesian doubt can be seen in Shelley's Hellas when Xerxis speaks:

Ahasuerus'/ Is there a God! — ay, an almighty God,/ And  
vengeful as/ almighty!/ Once his voice/ Was heard on earth; earth  
shuddered at the sound;/ (Shelley1901: 22, 83-89)

### 6-3. Moon

In Shelley's verse drama, the moon is the image of Ottoman's flag:

Look, Hassan, on yon crescent moon, emblazoned/ Upon that  
shattered flag of fiery cloud/ Which leads the rear of the departing  
day. / An emblem of an empire fading now / See how it trembles in  
the blood-red air. / And like a mighty lamp whose oil is spent. (1901:  
336-340)

Al Sayyab also seems to have been inspired by the following image in Shelley's Hellas:

The moon of Mahomet/ Arose, and it shall set; (1901: 220-222)

These lines refer to crescent moon, the emblem of Islam, which was founded by prophet Mohammed in the sixth century CE. (Black, et al 2010: 749)

The words used by Al-Sayyab allude to the weakness of the Islamic countries, and he used these words conscious of their meaning; moreover, the moon - as a symbol of Islam - turned into "the lonely moon's eyelid". In these words we notice a kind of weakness mixed with pity for this country.

يا رمادا تذر الزرع الشعثاء في مقلة القمر الوحيدة. (السياب ٢٠١٦ ج ٢: ٦٩)

(O, Ashes, disheveled disruption splashes them on the lonely moon's eyelid.)

Can be found its impact on Al Sayyab's other poems composed before his death. It seems that he has reacted to Shelley's viewpoint about Islam in Hellas. For instance, Al Sayyab's poem "The birth of Mohktar" (Moled Al Mokhtar) is a eulogy to the Prophet "Muhammad." This poem was composed in 1961 (Maoosh 2006: 78-79). It seems that at issue here is a "reverse influence" (when the poet acts against the viewpoint of the influential poet.). Furthermore, Al Sayyab composed the poem by Amoodi method:

نبي الهدى يأنفحة الله للورى / ويا خير ما جاد الزمان المقتر... ولولاك ما اندكت عروش و  
لا هوى / صليب على كفيه كنا نسمر / وكم سار في شرق من الغرب جحفل / بقرآنك الهادي وفي  
الغرب عسكروا. / (بلاطه ١٩٨١: ٢٠٧)

(O prophet of guidance, the sweet breath of the divine,/ And O, the best of what the days of helplessness have donated, you are the .../ Were it not for you, no sovereigns would be toppled, no thrones overturned / no cross on which we were nailing,/ and how many armies, guided by your Quran, venture from the west and the east and campaigned in the west)

In this poem, he once again depicts "volcano" and its' revolutionary power in changing the grave condition of Arab nations.

ألا تفجر البركان في مقفرتنا/ فيستبسل الأحرار أيان يفجر. (بلاطه ١٩٨١: ٢٠٧)

(Erupts not the volcano in our deserts? The freemen prepare for war, and ask about the eruption time)

## 7. Myths

### 7-1. Orpheus and Eurydice

Al Sayyab uses some myths he apparently derives from Shelley's Hellas. We try to examine them one by one.

Orpheus and Eurydice is one of the important myths that is repeated in both Shelley's and Al Sayyab's poems. These lines are from Shelley's poem:

Another Orpheus sings again. /And loves, and weeps, and dies (1074-1075).

Al Sayyab has used this myth in his poem "Daro Jaddy"(دار جدي):

بل كأني انبعثت (ارفيوس) / تمصه الخرائب الهوى الى الجحيم / فيلتقي بمقلتيه، يلتقي بها  
بيورديوس. (السياب ٢٠١٦ ج: ٢، ٢٣٠)

(As if I resurrected Orpheus/ Ruins of love absorb him to hell/  
And casts his look on Eurydice.)

Also, Shelley has a poem dedicated to Orpheus in which we can find more similarity with the above-mentioned poem by Al Sayyab:

Not far from hence. From yonder pointed/ hill,/ Crowned with a  
ring of oaks, you may be-hold... / Does he still sing? / Methought he  
rashly cast away his harp/ When he had lost Eurydice. (1901: 43-44)

## 7-2. Sphinx

In 1954, Al Sayyab composed "The Blind Prostitute" in which he attempts to draw Arabs' attention to women's social problems, especially the plight of some women who were forced to be whores, because of grinding poverty and famine. In order to describe the desperate situation of Baghdad, Al Sayyab uses some special images and myths. The myth of Sphinx figures in one of his poems. In one part of this story, Sphinx renews the riddles of death at the city gate, and asks every person this question: who walks on his four limbs at dawn? on two at noon? On three at night? Oedipus solves the riddle whose answer is man (Al Sayyab 2016: 145). The lines below are from Al Sayyab's poem:

باب "طيبة" ما يزال يلقي "أبو الهول" الرهيب عليه، من رعب ظلال/ والموت يلهث في  
سؤال/ باق كما كان السؤال، ومات معناه القديم/ من طول ما اهترأ الجواب على الشفاه/ وما  
الجواب؟/ "أنا" قال بعض العابرين... (السياب ٢٠١٦ ج: ٢، ١٤٥)

(Terrible Sphinx still casts a shadow of fear on Thebes' door/  
Death pants for questioning/ Still the same question, and there  
perishes its old meaning/ Because of tattering the answer on his lips/  
What is the Answer? "I" said some passer-by...)

Some mythical names like Sphinx and Thebes and the images of the desperate situation of the city are similar to this part of Shelly's Hellas.

Although a subtler Sphinx renew/ Riddles of death Thebes never knew. (1082-1083) (Heydaribeni, Aslani and Pirnajmuddin 2021: 260)

### 7-3. Ulysses:

We can find some other myths that Al Sayyab has used in his poems such as Ulysses/Odysseus, the king and hero of Ithaca. Speaking of his hope for freedom, the English poet writes:

A new Ulysses leaves once more/Calypso for his native shore.  
(1901: 1076-1077)

Shelley has used this myth (Ulysses) in his other poems, but one of the things that makes this part noticeable for us is the similarity between Shelley and Al Sayyab in their themes and the idea of returning home. Al Sayyab also writes thus in his poem "Shabak Vafiqah":

عوليس مع الأمواج يسير/ والريح تذكره بجزائره المنسية. (٢٠١٦: ج ٢، ٢٥١)

(Ulysses sails with waves / And the wind reminds him of his forgotten islands.)

### 8. Names:

#### 8-1. IA 'elAha 'ellallAh

In this part we try to study some recurring proper nouns in the writings of both poets. First of all, we analyze this phrase which has been mentioned by some scholars as indicating the influence of Eliot's The Waste Land.

خورس: شيخ اسم الله.. ترللا/ قد شاب ترل ترل ترار.. ماهلا/ ترلل... العيد ترللا./  
(السياب ٢٠١٦: ج ٢، ٦٨)

They believe that Al Sayyab has been inspired by this part of Eliot's poem: "Weialala leia/ Wallala leialala". They have merely pointed to this single phrase but if we analyze Eliot's poem as a whole, we will find that this is too scanty as evidence. As a matter of fact, the relevant part of "Elegy of Jaykur" includes some motifs and characters that have no accord with Eliot's phrase. What is more important in this poem is the motif of "Chorus" ("a large group of

singers" (Oxford English Dictionary) that Al-Syyab uses in its Arabic form" Khores" (خورس) and repeats it a number of times. This motif is one of the most widely used words in Shelley's Hellas.

"Allah" is one of the names mentioned in these lines. Al Sayyab, in his own commentary on this poem, says that this phrase has been derived from folkloric poems and the name of "Sheikhon Esmohou Allah" (شيخ اسمه الله) is the name of a plant. But we can see the influence of Shelley's poem on Al Sayyab's in his use of the letters and their repetition that can create a kind of musical pattern. In this phrase we can see the repetition of (L), (H) and (A) which creates a certain sound effect. It seems that Al Sayyab has been inspired by the following words in Shelley's poem:

When the fierce shout of Allah-illa- Allah rose like the war-cry of the northern/ wind. (1901: 289-291)

"Allah-illa- Allah" (whose correct form is IA 'elAha 'ellallAh) is the most important revolutionary slogan of Muslims and Shelley has used these holy words three times in his play. The first time, it is uttered by Emperor Mahmud (Shelley 335), the second time by Muslim soldiers and finally it is mentioned at the end of this lyrical play.

## 8-2. Bethlehem

Can be seen some other important names in Shelley's Hellas that Al Sayyab has used in his poem. One word that gives credibility to this theory is the name "Bethlehem" which can be found in Shelley's Hellas in the following lines too:

The powers of earth and air/ Fled from the folding star of Bethlehem;/ Apollo, Pan, and Love, / And even Olympian Jove. (230-233).

The lines refer to the foretelling of the birth of Christ by the three Magi or wisemen from the East. They saw his star at its rising In Bethlehem of Judea and followed this miraculous guiding star to thence (Matthew 2:1-12).

Al-Sayyab seems to have attributed this part of the Hellas ode to Mary and the birth of Christ.

And day peers forth with her blank /Eyes so fleet, so faint, so fair.

He has used the name of "Azra". This name is a nickname for "Maryam" which means virgin

والتهام العيون عن كل عذراء كعذراء "بيت لحم" الولود. (السياب ٢٠١٦: ٢، ٦٧)

(To devour every virgin eye, like the fertile virgin of "Bethlehem")

### 8-3. Mahmud

One of main characters in Hellas is the Ottoman emperor Mahmud I (1680- 1754). This name recurs throughout the play. Analogously, Al Sayyab repeats this name in his "The Elegy of Jaykur" but in Al-Sayyab's poem Mahmud symbolizes a man who is killed on his wedding night because of the destruction caused by the colonialists and oppressors.

أين محمود؟ ليس محمود في الدار ولا الحقل. يا أبا محمود. (السياب ٢: ٦٨)

(Where is Mahmud? He isn't home nor is he on the farm. O Mahmud's father.)

### 8-4. balls of flame

There are some special words used in Al Sayyab's "The Elegy of Jaykur" for which can be found the references only in Shelley's poems. An example is the phrase "a ball of flame". This word in Shelley's poem means "fire balloon". Al Sayyab has composed:

ثمة التم في كرات من النار...فألقى عليك صمت اللحد. (٢٠١٦: ج ٢، ٧٠)

(They gathered there in balls of flame...Then threw on you the silence of the graves.)

It seems that Al Sayyab was inspired by the following phrase in Shelley's Sonnet: "To a Balloon laden With Knowledge" (Shelley 1901: 569).

Bright ball of flame that through the/gloom of even/Silently takest thine ethereal way. (1-2)

There are other figurations of the East in Shelley's play too such as Mahomet, Hassan, Abel, Koran, Dervise (Soofi), Lebnan, Syrian, Damascus, Hems, Aleppo, and Persia.

## 9. The impact of T. S. Eliot's poetry

Most of the critics writing about lines of influence in Al Sayyab's poetry – like Balata, Ali and Abbas – have emphasized the impact of





Al-Sayyab knew the effect of these repetitive sounds and how they sounded in the ears of the recipients and the extent of their beauty in the structure of the new poem, and he deliberately repeated this word with knowledge of its impact because he mentioned this word thirty-three times in this short poem in relation to the poem *The Waste Land*. However, Eliot used this word only four times in his poem and included a phrase indicating his disappointment with the improvement of the situation.

### **8. Why did the scholars not focus on Shelley's influence as they have focused on Eliot's influence on Al Sayyab?**

Apparently, some similar images and rhythmic qualities in some of the works of the two figures; Shelley and T. S. Eliot, have led scholars to generalize about all of Al Sayyab's poems.

Eliot's and Shelley's styles exhibit some similarity in terms of musical features. This similarity between Shelley's poetry and that of Eliot has led to the conclusion that Al Sayyab, in most of his poems, has been inspired by Eliot.

In the 1942 essay, "The music of poetry", Eliot discusses the notion of music in poetry with particular reference to Shelley:

"It is not from rules or by cold blooded imitation of style that we learn to write: we learn by imitation indeed, but by a deeper imitation than is achieved by analysis of style. When we imitated Shelley, it was not so much from a desire to write as he did, but from the dominance of the adolescent self by Shelley, which made Shelley's way, for the time, the only way in which to write." The poem "Song" which was published in 1907 shows the extent of Shelley's influence on the young Eliot (Lowe 2002: 13-14).

Though Eliot disagreed with Shelley's beliefs, it seems that both of them have one thing in common. The idea that poetry, to some extent, is dependent on images; Shelley articulates the essence of poetry in his essay, "A Defence of Poetry" (1821) thus:

Poetry is the record of the best and happiest moments of the happiest and best minds,... . Poetry, in a general sense, may be defined to be 'the expression of the imagination and poetry is connate with the origin of man,... Poetry is a mirror which makes

beautiful that which is distorted." ... "Poetry is the language of the imagination and the passions. (Yadav 2018: 80).

Most of the myths used by Al-Sayyab are not found in Eliot's poetry, but these myths are present in Shelley's poetry along with special images, Myths like: Sphinx, Orpheus, Eurydice, Ulysses, Hercules, Medusa and Atlas.

On the other hand, Moreh maintains that the idea of "Free Verse" (Al Shear Al hor) influenced Al Sayyab from "Irregular Verse" or "Cowleyan Ode". According to Moreh, Shelley is among those who have composed these kinds of poems. (Moreh 1976: 273-274)

### 10. Results:

In this article we pointed to Alsayyab's influence from Shelley. This influence had a great impact on his poetry as well as contemporary Arabic poetry. The changes which were brought about by Alsayyab's poetry can be considered from a linguistic as well as thematic aspects.

1. Various mythologies were introduced into literature for the first time.
2. Some poetic techniques were introduced to Arabic poetry.
3. Modern Arabic poetry became more mysterious and ambiguous due to the use of unfamiliar Western myths and images.
4. Some social problems which were not talked about previously, such as women's rights and lower classes of society, became part of literature.
5. Religious elements lost their sacredness and were applied to talk about social problems.

If we want to do a real comparative work with conclusions, we need some empirical studies conducted based upon similarities, analogous themes, images, and, specially, myths. However, cannot be found any of the mentioned similarities evidencing the alleged proposition of influence exerted on Al Sayyab's poetry by Eliot's The Waste Land.

Conversely, when we examine al-Sayyab's poems, especially "The Elegy of Jaykur" we observe a miscellany of images, names, particular places, and special myths that more cogently prove that Al Sayyab was influenced by Shelley's poetry. It seems that we need a reappraisal of comparative studies on Al Sayyab's poetry.

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