



**The Impact of Imagism on the  
Poetry of William Carlos  
Williams and Badr Shakir Al-  
Sayyab  
A Comparative Study**

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## **Abstract:**

The proposed study seeks to introduce a close analysis about the impact of imagist values on both the American poet William Carlos Williams and the Iraqi poet Badr Shakir Al-Sayyab who represent the valuable principles of the modern free poetry. In addition, both of them are more associated with Modernism and introduced several contributions to literature. Despite of the cultural difference of each, their poet-ic works represent the principles of imagism by using a special and distinguished style in their poetry and that what appears the similari-ties and differences between the two poets as a comparative Study. Furthermore, this study seeks to determine the similar aspects in the content of both Williams and Al-Sayyab to certain how they extent the similar issues to reflect their community affairs although of the ex-isted difference in the surrounded environment, but their poem contain common factors and principles. Also this research tries to discuss the common ability between the two poets to make the reader realize dif-ferent in-terpretations of the poem.

**Key words :** Imagism - Modern poetry – Visuality- The variable foot-  
The sound devices.

## **الملخص:**

تسعي هذه الدراسة الي تقديم تحليل دقيق عن تأثير القيم التصويرية على كلا من الشاعر الامريكي ويليام كارلوس ويليامز والشاعر العراقي بدر شاکر السياب اللذان يمثلان المبادئ القيمة للشعر الحر الحديث. بالإضافة الي ارتباط كلا منهما بالحدائثة وتقديم اسهامات عديدة للأدب، بالرغم من الأختلاف الثقافي بينهما إلا أن أعمالهم الأدبية تمثل المبادئ التصويرية من خلال أسلوب خاص و مختلف وهذا ما يؤدي إلي إيضاح التشابه و الاختلاف بين الشعارين كدراسة مقارنة كما إنها تسعى إلي تحديد أوجه التشابه في محتوى القصائد لكلا من الشعاران و مدي الاتفاق في قضايا معينة لتعكس شؤون المجتمع حيث أنه علي الرغم من إختلاف البيئة المحاطة بهما و الفرق الثقافي إلا أن قصائدهما تحتوي علي عوامل و مبادئ مشتركة. بالإضافة الي تحديد العوامل التي ظهرت علي ملامح القصيدة و ساهمت في إظهار طبيعة حياة و ميول كلا من الشعارين بالإضافة الي تحديد العوامل التي ظهرت علي ملامح القصيدة و ساهمت في إظهار طبيعة حياة و ميول كلا من الشعارين. كما انها تسعى هذه الدراسة إلى مناقشة مدي القدرة المشتركة بين ويليام كارلوس ويليامز و بدر شاکر السياب في إمكانية وصول القارئ الي تفسيرات متعددة للقصيدة الواحدة.



Poetry has many movements and the most well-known movement which the study seeks to discuss it is the movement of Imagism in the twentieth century. Imagist movement is the dominant movement among poets in that era. Imagist movement deals with the thing itself and creates imagery in a strong language. Imagism was occupied by some poets like Ezra Pound who had a great influence on both of Williams and Al-Sayyab.

Modern poetry is characterized also by the adherence to free verse that means poetry is free from regular rhyme schemes, meters, grammar rules and regular line length. Thus, this study aims to explain the impact of Imagism on the Poetry of the American poet William Carlos Williams and the Iraqi poet Badr Shaker Al-Sayyab. Williams and Al-Sayyab's methods were to renew and refresh the traditional approaches with their own style to express reality and the events that represent the actuality of their own life to embody their experiences in writing the poems and convey their notions.

In accordance with the Imagist poetry, Williams always evoked the object itself as the physical quality into the poem to embody his unique characteristics and the poetic observation. All poems are a part of his experience without distorting and that is to permit the reader measure the used language and selective images. He didn't swerve from the belief of composing the concrete imagery but he always sought in composing a good framework and content of the poems whereas that is what made him rewrite the poems again to produce the most suitable form of imagism as in the poem of "Young woman at a window" and "The Locust Tree in Flower". Williams managed to link his theories with reality together to practice these theories in producing poems show how poetry represent the life events, he insisted that poetry must revive the poet's role to reflect his society.

From another side, in a small village which called Jaikur in the South of Iraq, Badr Shakir Al-Sayyab was born in 1926. This



village impacted significantly on the literary career of Al-Sayyab. He became one of the most important leaders of the free Arabic verse movement and the pioneer of Arabic modernism. Al-Sayyab grew up between the simplicity of the countryside with its purity of simple houses and the glossy nature. Both Williams and Al-Sayyab dealt with Imagism as a new era of the human intellectual that rejects many previous concepts and methods. Williams, as being an Imagist poet applied the properties of Imagism in poetry to convey the feelings and thoughts of the common people. The same is due to the impact of al-Sayyab's translation for the modern English works such as Ezra Pound and T.S. Eliot that made him influenced by their style and freedom in writing.

According to the similar used method between the two poets' works, this study tries to extract and discuss the following points ;

1-Discussing the Imagist principles according to William Carlos Williams and his role in imitation the affairs of his society.

2-The ability of Badr Shakir Al-Sayyab in embodying the Arabic free verse to convey the Iraqi position and suffering.

3-The poetry capability to make poets from different culture represent their society to put similarities and difference between them.

The Objective of this research is summarized in exploring Williams and Al-Sayyab's techniques and their incarnation of the Imagist principles according to the American and Arabic free verse. As well as, this study highlights on how the different culture of both the poets makes creative writers who are aware of their society and how they were able to appeal the actuality of



life through their poems. Also one of the major points of this study is the formative capacity of poetic works to support the same attitude in writing although of the difference of culture and upbringing according to the two poets.

Although much of the literature and comparative studies have not focused on giving analysis of Imagism between the English and Arabic poetry, but the study seeks to investigate the influence of this movement on both Williams' and Al-Sayyab's poetry. Hence, the search highlights on Williams' and Al-Sayyab's poetry to include the next questions as the following ;

1. How does Williams's and Al-Sayyab's poetry appeal the aesthetics of Imagism ?
2. How were the circumstances of their special life enabled them to share the real conditions of their society ?
3. What is the cultural impact on both of the two poets ?
4. Although of their own culture, what are the similarities and difference ?

Williams wrote many different poems and all of these poems are considered as masterpieces and good examples of the brilliant Imagist poetry. From his concentrated invoking to the spirit of modernism, we notice that he frees himself and style in writing from the formal precedent and refuses following other contemporaries in his time. Thus, Williams' poems oriented towards a lot of directions to convey the everyday life and the society events where he lived. He developed poetry with the concrete and clear images. He supported his free poetry with the new



quick rhythms of the irregular patterns of rhyme. In the approach the free new poetry, followed the steps of the Imagist poem which depends first on the concrete and precise perception depending of the surrounded events and the material world. As an Imagist poet, many of his poems are depended on this vision. Because of his insisting on reinforcing the imagist principle, he always sought to develop his poetry to be in the better style as his rewriting of the poem "Young Woman at a Window" to be written in two versions. He developed poetry and displayed new ways of conception to compose the informal poetic style which suits his thoughts and methods in addition to reviving the use of myths under the power of war to be refreshed again.

A good example of imagist poetry according to Williams is his poem "Young woman at a window". One of these versions is supposed to be rewritten or reformed of the other. But from the analysis of the two poems, we can notice that there is one which is more imagist than the other and this is the second version as follows:

She sits with  
tears on

her cheek  
her cheek on

her hand  
the child

in her lap  
his nose

pressed  
to the glass (Williams 369)



By examining the poem, we notice that it demonstrates that Williams' poetry to be recognized as a mirror reflects reality and represents the aesthetic values of Imagism. To make abbreviated and accurate analysis according to the Imagist theme, it is noteworthy easily that Williams's focus on imagist principles is clear in his language which is based on the common speech and the use of simple and precise words to convey his ideas and thoughts. Nonetheless, he left us with great confusion about which reason which makes that lady cry. Also it is remarkable that Williams adhered more to the Imagist essentials in producing new rhythms which are different from the other poets' poems. At the same time, being as an Imagist poet and associated with free verse, he didn't use regular meter patterns or specific rhyme and that is to make his readers follow the musical rhythm of natural speech. All these changes in his poetry made him away from the others. He incarnated the second principle of imagism for producing new rhythms Dhanya G asserted on Williams using the "variable foot" (93). Furthermore, he employed the sound devices as alliteration and repeating the similar consonant of /h/ in the beginning of the words of "her" and "hand" beside consonance and repeating the similar sound of consonant of /d/ at the end "hand" and "child". And the fourth one of presenting the real image of the reality life, so Williams portrays here a visual image and draws it as a the photographer to be clear in all its parts in front of our eyes.

Then to the poem of The fool's song. The poem consists of three stanzas in sixteenth line. In my own interpretation is that Williams is very rooted with the people's emotions and suffering in life. So, my interpretation is that the poem reflects the strong relation between the cage and the bird through impersonating metaphor of the aggressive ruler to be represented in the image of a cage. From the other side, the people freedom or rights is the image of the bird. Therefore, because of the foolishness of the ruler who restricts the rights and freedom this ends his way to



reach the third line of each the second and third stanza when he says "it broke my pretty cage" and "I had nor bird nor cage". Whereas the two sentences articulate the symmetry of the same end. In accordance with the imagist principles and the first principle which used the common and recognized language. The second of creating new rhythms appears when he repeats the sentence "Truth in a cage !" at the end of every stanza and " Sing merrily, Truth : I tried to put Truth in a cage" in each stanza when Williams wrote ;

I tried to put a bird in a cage.  
O fool that I am !  
For the bird was Truth.  
Sing merrily, Truth : I tried to put  
Truth in a cage ! (19)

Williams enriches the poem with his sensitive rhythm when he incarnates the sound devices like consonance of the sound /d/ in the words "tried and bird" in the first line of the first stanza and /d/ the end of 'had and bird' beside the sound of /n / in the words of 'when and flown' in the first line of the third stanza. For the fourth element of presenting the visual imagist images, here the poet portrays the poem lines in front of our eyes to appear as depending on the essence of the visual image and the clarity within its details and content. Thence, the poet enables us to draw the conflicting dynamic picture between the bird and the cage through the juxtaposition of the words. For the fifth principle of producing poetry clearly, Williams' words and phrases are clear and pure thus he sought to make his poem in the resonated manner to appeal the disorder of thoughts between reality and mirage inside him. Although the poet repeats and ends his stanzas with an exclamation mark as "Truth in a cage !" but he lets us aware that he has disorder of the current events and injustice around him. So, his poem aims to introduce the image of the injustice and bad behavior of the governors. Although this is a lyric but the content appears to be as a narrative style or a story which has





the developments of events to arrive us to the climax and excitement in reading.

And in the poem of "Sicilian Emigrant's Song", we go in the way of writing a lyric again as the previous poem of "The fool's song". The poem consists of three stanzas, each is an octave which are written simply. Williams as being associated with modernism and developed the imagist thoughts, he enshrined his poetry in different techniques to be as the mirror of everything in order to appeal the reality and experiences. Thence, in this poem he succeeded in portraying an accurate double image of emigrants' suffering and longing to their country. From the other side, he showed the fact of feeling with the convenience and safety in the homeland. In the first stanza, the poet reflects happiness in the homeland as he conveys that walking in Palermo the traditional town in Italy makes him enjoy the amazing atmosphere of the beautiful landscape such as blue sky , lovely sun, breeze and bay as Williams mentions in the next stanza;

O-eh-lee ! La-Ia !

Donna ! Donna'

Blue is the sky of Palermo ;

Blue is the little bay ;

And dost thou remember the orange and fig,

The lively sun and the sea-breeze at evening ?

Hey---Ia !

Donna ! Donna ! Maria ! (Williams 35)

The poem involves many principles of the imagism whereas the first element of using common language penetrate into the poem. The poet incarnates the words and pure expression to be clear in the interpretation. To the second one of producing the new rhythms whereas the poet turns his poem to be as a song and a resonated tone as he wrote " O---eh---lee ! La---La" in the first and "Donna ! Donna !" in the second line of each stanza. At the same point, he ends each stanza with the same line and rhythm



"Donna ! Donna ! Maria !" to add more music inside the poem. Furthermore, he embodies the sound devices as alliteration of /s/ in the words 'sun, sea' in the sixth line of the first stanza. Also he uses consonance in the sixth line of the last stanza and the sound of /g/ in 'sang, sing' and alliteration of /s/ at the beginning of them. Also the alliteration of /w/ in "woman, with" in the sixth line of the second stanza and /g/ at the beginning of the words "Grey, green" in the fourth line of the same stanza. The fourth principle of producing clear and accurate images, the poet emphasizes on his visual imagery with nature by giving the quality of colors for things as the blue sky, blue bay, gray and green water and grey dawning. Moreover, in the fifth line of the first stanza he evokes us to remind with the taste of orange and fig as he says "And dost thou remember the orange and fig," to embody the gustatory imagery which depends on the taste.

In the approach of the poem "To a Poor Old Woman", there is a series of poems which deals with the working-class and the poet's sympathy towards them. Thus, he portrays some poems to appeal the social instability and suffering. This series involves "Proletarian Portrait" in 1935, "The Poor" in 1930, "To waken An Old Lady", "Africa" and the poem of "Apology" in 1917 which begins with a question as if the poet speaks directly with the reader and this question of "Why do I write today" to refer that there must be a reason or a motive for writing the poem.

In the imagist vision of "Apology", the poet seeks to introduce the actual image of the working-class suffering and injustice which makes women work and back their home late in the dark casting off their clothes because of the cruel atmosphere and coldness. He supports the poem with precision and brevity to introduce its limited objectivity as that is in conformity with Cecilia Anne Polkinhorn who asserts that "These succinct lines are rich with "the precision, exactitude, with rendered experience rather than statement"" Polkinhorn 33-34). Accordingly to the second principle of producing new rhythms, he used the sound de-



vices as the consonance of /d/ in the second stanza between "old, experienced". In the last stanza, the poet utilizes the consonance of the sound /r/ between 'your, stir ', in addition to another consonance of the sound /t/ "between, but". But in the second stanza, he embodies the assonance of the sound /o/ at the beginning of the words "old, oak". Thus, the sound devices enables the poet to add more music to the poem. In sequence of the fourth principle of presenting the image, Williams raises the visual imagery to give not a specific color of these women but he mentioned that "colored women, day workers". Then to the fifth element of producing clear and blurred poetry, the poet employs meaningful functions through the figure of speech to convey the misery of the working women image whereas he incarnates a simile in the last two lines of the second stanza when he says "faces like /old Florentine oak", he resembles the women in their stability and struggle with the old Florentine oak which is a symbol of the strength.

Among many poems of Williams' masterpieces comes the poem "The Attic Which is Desire". This poem is considered one of the most affluent poems with its visual images or the symbolic functions and metaphors. It consists of nine couplet beside the stanza of the sign "SODA". Whereas this poem is described as "The poem's quick, clipped lineation, enacts this Cubist freedom"(Gemp 34).

Beginning with the title of "The Attic Which is Desire", it might conclude two interpretations for the poem. The first one is that the poet introduces a contrast image between the excitement of the urban cities and the inability of enjoyment with its sensational aspects. The poet prefers the isolation although of the different attractive entertainments in the city as he says in the seventh stanza "ringed with the running lights". The second one is the use of the symbolism, whereas the poet resembles himself as an unused tent that doesn't enjoy time but waiting for night and day succession. Hence, this symbolic function of the unused tent



is in the corresponding to the poet's feeling of alienation and exile even in his country and this interpretation supports the third principle of having the absolute freedom in choosing the poem title. The second principle of creating new poetic rhythms, although the poet doesn't depend on repeating words or lines but the poem re-resonates and revives the musical tone of the common speech depending on the short lines which involve the harmony through the technique of "the variable foot" between the stressed and unstressed sounds. Also he utilizes the sound devices to create more music and harmony as alliteration of /b/ in "bare, beams" in the second stanza and /r/ in "ringed, running" in the seventh stanza. In the third stanza, he embodies the consonance of /t/ in "wait, night". Then to the fourth principle of producing the visible image, the poet creates visible and clear image as Robert L.G. Tucker refers that the poet "literally attempts to transcribe or 'transfix' the object as a visual structure directly onto the page. Careful scientific scrutiny of the subject leads to an almost photographic poetic" (90).

Moving towards the poem which entitled "The Cod Head" in 1832. The poet innovated in embodying the whole image of the poem to be as the sea rhythm as it is mentioned that ""The Cod Head" (1932) almost sounds like a fisherman's freestyle" (6). Whereas the poet liberates his poem to move smoothly from a position to other without any bounds or restrictions. In creating new rhythms diverges from the conventional ones, the poet doesn't focus on repeating words or lines but here his poem resonates the rhythm of the sea through the waves sound up and down as Robert Grenier asserted that "Williams manages the organic structure he persistently sought through a skillful approximation of sea rhythms" (14). Also he creates the music through the long vowels as "weed, feet, green, deep, night, day, by, agitate, moons, four, vitreous" and the short vowels as "in, but, cross, red, rocks, fathom, which". Furthermore, he embodies the sound devices as the alliteration of /st/ in "strands, stems" as well



as the consonance of 's' in the first stanza in the four words of "Miscellaneous, strands, stems and debris" when Williams mentioned ;

Miscellaneous weed  
strands, stems, debris\_\_  
firmament (333)

Also in the point of producing new rhythm "The poem operates in an early form of Williams's "variable foot": a unit of poetic measure longer than a stress but shorter than a conventional line" (Colon 7).

In the other side of the Iraqi poet Badr Shakir Al-Sayyab, the glossy nature of his country and the actual events impacted significantly on his writings. He became one of the most important leaders of the free Arabic verse movement. Al-Sayyab grew up between the simplicity of the countryside with its simple houses and glossy nature. Therefore, he immortalized more of his poems to imitate his hometown Jaikur. Al-Sayyab is known as most other Arab poets, his writing has been translated into many languages in the West. At the same time, he influenced and admired different writings of the Western poets as the modernist English poet T.S. Eliot and Edith Sitwell. Although Al-Sayyab died at early age about thirty-eight years old but his poems have occupied a notable place in the modern Arabic poetry. Al-Sayyab as being a poet and an active revolutionary, he was imprisoned for many times because of the poem content.

Thence, the study tries to discuss the function of language on the Al-Sayyab's poems and how the surrounding circumstances affect generally his thoughts and writings. His poetry enjoys the liberation of the traditional methods like Williams. He sought to develop his poetry under the free verse power and the impact of the Western poetry. Al-Sayyab lived in a period of disturbance during the invasion in Baghdad and suffered a lot from this position in Iraq. These events have contributed to introduce



him not only as a poet but also as a politician, at the same time he criticized the situation in the Arab world especially Iraq through his poetry. On the other hand, he wanted to revive the culture domination of the Arab countries because it is diminished particularly after invasion.

Al-Sayyab 's style of writing tended to the modernist movements and the imagist vision. He liberated his poems from the regular rhyme scheme patterns to be away from the conventional writing in the Arabic poem. As it is mentioned that "the overall meaning of a poem was not as interrelated with each of its poetic phrases (abyāt). Al-Sayyāb's poetry did not incorporate this notion, where his abyāt served to add to the overall meaning of their respective poems"(Fakhreddine14).

One of Al-Sayyab's most important poem is "The Rain Song". Whereas he succeeded in introducing the meaningful and emotional images. He conveyed his honest feelings towards his hometown Iraq. So, he sought to rehabilitate the Arabic poetry to be consistent with the free European poetry and simultaneously for reviving the simplicity of the countryside beside the awareness of the surrounded events in Iraq and his huge sadness as he explains in the next lines :

[Rain . . .

Rain . . .

Rain . . .

And in Iraq, there is hunger

Harvest Season in it strews the corn

So that the crows and locust are satiated

Whereas what grinds hay and stone

Mills that revolve in the fields. . . surrounded by folks

(Al\_Sayyab125, tr. Haitham K, 2014,199)

Similarly, in the terms of modern American poetry, Al-Sayyab adopts the ideal model concept of new free verse which are composed on the poetic imagism principles. Thus, this poem



"The Rain Song" occupies the imagist principles to be discussed from this vision. Therefore, Al-Sayyab embodies the first principle of using common language and using common words as "whispered, ringing, sobbing or whimpering, karkar (giggled), rippled and echo". All these words are usual vernacular and easy speech to be understood as they came naturally as part of his own texture as "they are imposed by the semantic, syntactic and the phonological structure of the poem" (Haitham K187). The poet uses the words which are more related to his simple life and the simple farmers in the countryside and "crops, fields, grinding, harvest, whimpering, gulf, crows, grasshopper, oars, villages, nectar and moan".

In the second element of producing new rhythms, the poets as being the pioneer of the new verse he depends on the musical creativity through the tone of the natural rhythm of speech. Here, he revives the rhythmic thematic by repeating the word "Rain" thrice between the passages of the poem in order to add more music and move smoothly from one passage to another as "Therefore, the recurrence of "Rain . . . Rain. . . Rain" eight times in the texture of the poem not only enhance the music of the poem" (Haitham K189). This repeating reinforces the musical rhythm and unity the images in the poem. "The word maṭar is musically striking in the sense that it can be used to describe the sound of rainfall"(Fakhreddine51).

The poet depicts a visual sad imagery in each drop of rain which comes from the red and yellow flowers and every tears because of starvation and the slaves blood to give an optimistic vision for the future. He hopes that these tears and suffering could be as a smile for a good future and lack of starvation. He gives the colors of the yellow and red flowers to portrayed in our mind as if we see them in front of our eyes.

In every drop of rain which falls  
Yellow or red from the heart of a flower,



And every tear shed by the hungry and the naked,  
 And every drop spilt of the blood of serfs  
 (Al-Sayyab127, tr. by Bishai, 1986, 28)

Another poem in which he maintained the rich employment of the imagist vision to repeat the same empathy of the poem "The rain Song" as he depicted the same feeling of sadness in the poem of "Al- Christ After Crucifixion". The poet narrates the scene of the Christ Jesus who heard and saw after the crucifixion, Al-Sayyab allows the aspects of Imagism to penetrate into the poem as the first element of using common language. Thus, the poet embodies very accurate and abbreviated words to lead the need function of introducing the whole image of death. In the second principle of producing new rhythms, the poet creates the natural rhythm through the tone of narrating common speech smoothly as well as he depends on repeating the word "foot" thrice or twice to add more music to the poem and moves in sequence from passage to another. This repeating is similar with the repetition of "rain" in "The Rain Song" to remove fragmentation or unclearness among passages beside strengthening the unity among lines as he says;

A foot is running, foot, foot  
 The grave, due their footsteps is about to collapse  
 Did they come ? Who else but them ?  
 Foot, foot, foot.  
 (Al\_Sayyab112-113, tr. by Haitham K,189).

Then in the fourth principle of producing a clear image, the poet conveys the situation as if we watch a movie in front of our eyes. He incarnates the auditory imagery through words as "mourning ", the poet makes us imagine the sound of mourning as if we hear literally. Furthermore, he employs the gustatory imagery to reflect the taste of food in the first line of the second stanza when he says that "When the berries and oranges bloom" (111) whereas makes us imagine the taste of berries and oranges





as if we taste them actually. The fifth principle of imagism in producing pure language, the poet enriches his poem with many similes or personification to create purity in the used expressions whereas in the second stanza he resembles or personates the Christ's heart with many images of fertility as the sun which shines and the earth which produces wheat and with the flowers and pure water. Thus, Al-Sayyab makes a contradictory image between death and its benefit to make the other live safely as it mentioned that "It is as if the whole city is in labor giving birth to life through death" (Neimneh & Zainab 187). Al-Sayyab enhances the poem toward the imagist style to convey his aim with the real vision and provides us with the visual image about the inevitable end of death.

Moving towards one of the most known poems of Al-Sayyab which contains many stanzas and it entitled "Weapons and Children" in 1954. Although this poem includes many themes but in a general look about the Al-Sayyab's work, we conclude that he was aware of the English literature role in spreading peace in over the world as he pointed to Shakespeare's works in this poem in spreading peace. He worked hard to develop and renew the Arabic poetry through the correlation with the Western poetry and the Arabic poetry. The whole content of the poem reveals the tension in Iraq and the fragmentation among children seeking for the peaceful future and this poem is considered as a direct message from the poet to support peace in anywhere in over the world not just in Iraq especially whereas he emphasizes and repeats the word "peace" in different situations and places as China, Paris, Tunisia, Asia, Ganges, Venice and Carnival as he mentions next ;

Peace to the whole wide world  
 Peace to the Ganges, overflowing with blessings  
 Peace to China, the farmers,  
 And tanned fishermen,  
 The blood of revolutionaries planted in the ground,



Shining from the red flag  
 Peace to the whole wide world  
 To east and west alike,  
 Peace to Avon, which filled the veins  
 Of Shakespeare, the flowers, and the waterwheel  
 Peace to the Paris of Robespierre,  
 (Al-Sayyab190-191, tr.by Thompson111).

From the imagist point, Al-Sayyab's language swings between the easiness and difficultness to sketch the accurate images in the poem. In the first principle of using common language, he depends on the common speech of the Iraqi people's language such as "clinking, gurgling, hissing, mumbling, swing, woe, lanterns, whisper, ploughs, muddy, mines, tents, nightingale and giggle(karkara), the loaf, swings" as Thomas Levi Thompson points that "the poem's reliance on Iraqi-specific language, imagery, and symbolism—the waterwheel (nā'ūrah), the marsh Arabs' muḍīf dwellings made of qaṣab reeds, and gods from ancient Near Eastern mythology"(112). In the second principle of imagism and producing new rhythms, he focused on repeating sentences or words like "Birds ? Or children laughing" and words as hadid (iron) and rasas (bullets) to add more music and move from the stanza to the other in sequence. According to the fourth principle of producing clear images, the poet conveys a vital visual imagery when he incarnates the children image in front of our eyes play where they run in the fields with their bare feet. Also he embodied the auditory imagery when he uses some verbs as "hear, echo, sing, beat clap and giggle" to employ the auditory sense as well as describing the sound of their laughing to make us imagine as if we hear this sound as he writes'

Birds ? Or children laughing,  
 A glint of tomorrow sparkling at them ?  
 Their bare feet  
 Are seashells clinking on a waterwheel  
 The hems of their robes are the north wind,



Blowing over a field of wheat,  
 The hiss of bread baking on a holiday,  
 Or a mother gurgling her newborn's name  
 Sweetly whispering to him on his first day.  
 It is as if I hear the sails flapping  
 As Sindbad storms out to sea.  
 He saw a vast treasure between his ribs,  
 Chose no other treasure, and returned.  
 (Al\_Sayyab177, Tr. by Thompson 124)

The line which produces another visual imagery is the fourth one of the fourth passage when he says "on it with his blue lantern" whereas the poet emphasizes on conveying the truthful action with its color beside the incarnation of other colors such as black, red and green. Furthermore, he employs the gustatory imagery when mentions the words as "apple, loaf, tea and berries", to make us imagine the actual taste of them. Therefore, the fifth elements of using pure poetry and blurred, the poet swings among the poem themes in sequence although the poem is very long and has miscellaneous aims. He lended some myths here as Sindbad as in the previous stanza to give his poem the flexibility to introduce different themes. Over and above, his language is symbolic when he refers to children for hope and happiness, different kinds of weapons for violence and merchants for exploitation. As well as, he employs different similes when he resembles the children with birds to emphasize that they are glossy and lovely things in our life so we must support their freedom and their rights.

Throughout the following lines of Al-Sayyab's poem "The City of Sindbad" which exposes that Al-Sayyab is more associated with nature and uses symbolism items in writing to make his poetry clear and visible. Al-Sayyab alluded on conveying the imagist position of using symbolism in his poetry whereas "Rain" is a symbolic item for the fertility and goodness but he implied this symbol indirectly to indicate the infertility and sadness in his



village when he mentions that Spring came without any rain, flowers or fruit. The idea here is about integration the symbolic ideal and the Sindbad's myth who returned the country after his adventure in the sea. He began his poem directly to refer to hungry and huge suffering in the country whereas he explained that he is hungry and there isn't food beside that he expanded his expression to be nude without clothes in the snow so he cries and requires the sky for raining as he wrote in what follows ;

Hungry in grave without food  
 Nude in snow with clothes  
 Cried in Winter  
 Sky, rain  
 (Al-Sayyab115, translated by me).

Throughout the imagist vision and the first principle of using common language and abbreviated words, the poet represents sadness and infertility through the very accurate words as "plague, rain, tear, death and dark" as in the following passage ;

Who is this that gave us to drink from a mirage,  
 And concealed the plague in the rain ?  
 Death is being born in houses,  
 Cain is being born in order to tear out life  
 From the womb of earth and from the wellspring of water,  
 And it will soon be dark  
 (Al\_Sayyab118, tr. by Khouri1974 : 101).

In what follows, the embodiment of the modernist aesthetics in the poem Jaikur and the City in 1958 makes the poet draw a simple image of the beauty, innocence and happiness of his village. Whilst he embraces his unattainable resurrection dream to rescue his village Jaikur from destruction and death. Also in this poem he appears his longing to his beloved country and his angry for being exiled away from it. He entrenches his motive for renewing creative poetry in order to launch the best honest emo-



tions. The following lines prove his strong love for his country as he mentions ;

And Jaikur is green,  
the dusk has touched  
the crests of her palm trees  
with sorrowful sun.

(Al\_Sayyab79, Tr. Jayyusi : Modern Arabic Poetry 432).

According to the imagism principles, the first element of the using common language through abbreviated and precise words is clear and the second principle of having the absolute freedom in choosing the poem's title, almost his choosing that title as a proof of his relation and loyalty to his village. Then in the fourth principle of producing clear images, Al-Sayyab conjures the rural visual image as he described it with the green color Jaikur which refers to the color of plants to make us imagine this beautiful scene as if we see it actually to appear simplicity of the countryside unlike the city. Whereas it mentioned here as "and when it is green it is a symbol of life. Jaikur becomes a mythical symbol of life, death, and rebirth"(Neimneh182). Moreover, he portrays an another visual image when he describes his walking in the city streets instead of Jaikur as ropes coil around him to make all his mind and spirit with his village. As well as he, reflects his difficult feelings in life of being solitary beside the alienation and the feeling of oppression in prison under the injustice. The relation between the poet and the village highlights the pain and deprivation as well as his desire to revive Jaikur from blood and separation. He incarnates a symbolic language to make the poem easier to be understood and facilitate the meaning.

Due to his deep suffering of the exile and suffering in his country. These conditions turned Al-Sayyab's life into a prison like the life in a city as we pointed before that according to Al-Sayyab that the life in the city is as a prison. In his poem "City without Rain", he incorporates symbols and myths to reflect the



image of deteriorating in Iraq and the Arab nations. In addition, Al-Sayyab repeats the symbolic item of rain most in his poem and here to portray the image of infertility and starvation as he says " we are hungry and sorry !" also he depicts his sorry of the passing years in pain without benefit. This poem transfers his success to convey the human tragedy and people suffering because of drought and hungry as well as the death which surrounds the children's life. This poem is as the other poems whereas he embodies the imagism features professionally to reflect his thoughts and convey how sadness and sorry towards his colonial country as he mentions in what follows ;

But Years passed, we don't count  
 Without rain even a drop  
 Without flowers even a flower  
 Without fruit  
 (Al\_Sayyab134, Translated by me)

In this poem, he incarnates the Imagist features professionally. Firstly choosing of the symbolic title which reflects what is the image of the poem through suffering and starvation. Secondly is the dependence on the tone of the natural rhythm of the speech. The first principle is in using common through the employment of precious and abbreviated words. The poet employs the simplicity and purity of using the widespread speech and the specific words which lead the meaning of the poem's thoughts or themes. These words are posed in the common speech of "hungry, thirsty, sunset, clouds, breath, cold, fruit, palms, whispering, clay, pottery, drums, cane, darkness, seed, ants, butterfly, breast, nipple, karkara (guffaw)". Thus, Al-Sayyab exploits everything around him such as the living things as ants or the body parts as "face, feet, hands, breast". From another side, the poet utilizes the contradiction between the words as "sleep and wake", "dark and light", "live and die" "big and small" to discover the conflict in life and their weakness. In the second principle of producing new rhythms against the conventional meter, he repeats some words



and especially the present verbs as "die, beat, fly, invite us, call and rise" to give the rhythmic flow. Repeating the questions as who will save us ? and who will die ? is a proof of balance between the poem's images and themes to showcase the conflict of confusion and dissatisfaction between the poet and his desire of reviving the social and cultural life. According to the third principle of having the absolute freedom in choosing the poem's title, Al-Sayyab's title of "City without Rain" is very simple and has a symbolic function to reflect the image of infertility and exploitation in his country. For the fourth principle of producing clear images, he used the verbs as "shout, beat, hiss or call us and giggle" to make the auditory imagery. Beside introducing the visual imagery through words like "darkness, lit and green" to imagine this as if it is in front of our eyes. Moreover, employing the sad adjectives of "fear, thirsty, sorrow, sorry, cold, tired and hungry" shapes clearly the organic imagery to represent the internal sensation of Al-Sayyab's country people.

Al-Sayyab appeals us with all our sense like the vision when he mentions the green and black color when he says "With the shades of the water, the green, the fire" and "the black world" to convey his visual imagery and convey his sad feeling and suffering in order to make us participate his feeling and emotions. In addition, the poet incarnates the gustatory imagery when he mentions the "grapes and cane" to makes us imagine this food as if we taste them. Also his mentioning of the flowers reinforces the olfactory imagery to maintain the glossy smell of the flowers.

Every poem from Al-Sayyab's poetry has its own freedom to be organized in an open understanding from all sides which maybe social, political or even emotional. Al-Sayyab puts many points in his mind to take his poem with the indication to the content from the title as what he did in this poem "River and Death" to drag us from the beginning to compose an initial perception about the poem's content. "The poem "al-nahr wa al-mawt" was published 1963 in the collection 'azhār wa 'asātīr. The poet often



used mythical elements of imagery, and the theme of water and the river Buwayb of his home-town Jaykur are recurring motifs in his works" (Jansson12). In that, the poet begins his poem with the mention of the river "Buwayb" where it is existed in his country to give an extended meditation to it. In the imagist vision, the poets give us a symbolic key to enter the poem world that there is conflict as river refers to life and death to the end of life. Among the poem, Al-Sayyab repeats Buwayb twice at the beginning and end of in the next passage ;

Buwayb...

Buwayb...

Bells of a tower lost in the sea bed  
dusk in the trees, water in the jars  
spilling rain bells  
crystals melting with a sigh  
"Buwayb ah Buwayb,"

(Al\_Sayyab107, Jansson 54, tr. by Jayyusi and Christopher, Modern Arabic Poetry, 1988).

Again, Al-Sayyab asserts on repeating "Bywayb ah Buwayb" twice and in the same line to symbolize indirectly his love for his country and everything that is related to it. Whilst he draws a common image of the river which refers to life and happiness but in this poem he creates from this river different mirrors to convey sadness and frustration similarly with rain for sadness whereas he conjures his sad memories. To analyze this poem from the imagist vision and in the first principle of using common and accurate language, the poet creates words suit the river as being a good blessing as water, tress, sea, wheat, flowers, moon, grow, fill, fish, starts, oyster, fruit, birds, silk, feed, victory, life" and the sadness expressions as "sad river, blood, death, strange, dark, tears, hell, fire, forest, bullet, onus, sink" in addition to other words which lead the two functions of happiness and sadness. The poet withdraws us from the beginning of the rhythmical text to make reader interacts actively with a visual





and audio interaction. Thus, he embodies different kinds of images when he utilizes the verb hear in the line "hear the pebbles hiss in your depths" to embody the auditory imagery. Also the line of "sibilance of a thousand birds in the trees" has a visual and an auditory imagery.

According to the previous analysis of the poems of the two poets, it is noticeable that both Williams and Al\_Sayyab are considered as the major pioneers in the modern poetry and more associated with the free verse. However, they are different in the language and culture but their poetry imitate the actual events in their society even in our life or until now. They shared the similar attitudes in life to write about different issues.

Both of them shared the employment of reality in their poetry. Whereas, William and Al\_Sayyab resorted to link between reality and imagism. As they describe the thing automatically as itself. As well as, they enhanced us that it is better to search for the concept of linking reality and fiction in order to expand the interpretation of the poem. Both of them embody their poetry to imitate the reality of life.

Evidence of this is the first version of "Young Woman at a Window" in Williams' poetry, the poem only briefly describes the exact image of a crying woman carrying a baby on her lap in front of the window, and nothing more. In this section there is no insight or even a mention of the woman's life, feelings, relationship with the boy, or perhaps something beyond what the eye can see. Williams just left us confused about what is the reason for the woman crying and what did the child rob from her? But he made us imagine and differ in giving reasons for that. The same thing is mentioned in his second version but without mentioning the robbing.

It is as if the poet was a sculptor engraving the image of the woman and child on marble with those words. The first version of the poem was originally more emotional, but it moves away from bringing a visible and clear image. Herein even in the first



or the second version, the poet narrates the reality of life and suffering from many aspects and leaves the result of crying in general to let the reader guess the reason of crying.

For Badr Shaker, he embodies reality to a large extent in his poem "Jaykur and the City". It is a typical picture of innocence, simplicity, and largely happiness. From another side, he emerges reality with imagination to achieve the poem's target. Al-Sayyab tried to relate here a descriptive comparison between the despicable city, which he described as robes wrapped around him, and his village, Jaikur. He does not have access to Jaikur, its beautiful fish, the breathtaking sunrise or sunset touching the palm trees. Although the poem tends to be largely fictional, the poem depicts the feelings of loneliness and alienation of the poet who cannot bear this new life of persecution and exile.

In addition, the feature of symbolism is occupied widely in their poem especially Al-Sayyab. In the poem "The fool's song", Williams used the bird as a symbol of freedom and the cage of the injustice ruler. Also in "Apology," when he utilizes the "old Florentine oak" as a symbol of the women's strength. Beside "The Attic Which is Desire", the used tent is as an example for lonesomeness and alienation even in his country. The same thing is in Al-Sayyab's poems, Jaikur becomes a symbol of innocence, purity and virtue. And in his poem "Weapons and Children", he uses symbolize the children with birds.

According to the employment of the ancient myths, Al-Sayyab is likened to William in the wild imagination that gives the reader an opportunity to think about what might be and what realism is. Especially since he uses the mythical meaning in the entity of his poetry in order to go with the reader's imagination to think about everything about expression. The use of this myth allows Badr Shaker to criticize the political despotism and corruption associated with city life in Iraq. Throughout his poem "The City of Sandbad", he emerges his sorrows towards the actual sad events



in Iraq with his desire to handle this position even it is impossible through the myth of Sandbad.

Both Williams and Al-Sayyab used very simple and pure language as they used the literary devices to introduce the poetry role through abbreviated words especially in Williams' poems. But these words and expressions other thoughts that weren't written directly. On one hand, Williams incarnates the literary devices to complete the action. In his poem "Approach of winter," repeatedly describes the winter and its phenomenon. We greatly know what accompanies the winter, but Williams broadens the image or view of winter and its description. He uses the image of leaves fluttering drily, unlike what we have accustomed with. When we hear about winter, snow, dead trees, and a cold climate of course came to our minds. These images are basic and indicate the beauty of nature that Williams adheres to within his poem. The diction he uses expresses the real and clear image that we associate winter with. The poem is rich in literary devices as simile, imagery, and personification. It compares the dropping of the leaves to the falling of hail using "like" as Williams mentioned :

the leaves flutter drily  
and refuse to let go  
or driven like hail  
stream bitterly out to one side  
and fall (197)

On the other hand, Al-Sayyab in his poem "Rain song" laments the prejudice, tragedy, and destruction he witnessed in his beloved Iraq. Simultaneously, Al-Sayyab utilizes the imagery and symbolism vision of rain to convey both of sorrow and hope. Rain is not only falling drops of water out of the sky, but also indicates a sense of solitude, sadness and also a source of fertility. Al-Sayyab initially compares rain to the tears of a child who has lost his mother.



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