

## ***Hymn of the Rain: Assayyab's Decolonizing Task***

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**Abstract:** *The Waste Land* has always been considered as Eliot's most celebrated poem in the critical writings in Arabic. Many critics often attribute the revolutionary change brought into Arabic poetry partially to this poem, and Badr Shakir Assayyab himself stresses that it should be admitted that *The Waste Land* has had a great influence on modern Arabic literature. Likewise, Assayyab's poem, *Unshudat al-Matar (Hymn of the Rain)*, has always been viewed as a landmark in the history of modern Arabic poetry. The poem has received a great deal of criticism, focused mainly on its new style, themes and images. It has enjoyed unprecedented success apparently because of its unprecedented rendering of the theme of rain. However, a considerable number of Arab critics enthusiastically contend that many of Assayyab's techniques and themes were acquired mainly from Eliot. This claim was usually followed by a reference to *The Waste Land* and to its influence on *Hymn of the Rain*.

*In this paper, I do not deny the influence of Eliot, but things should be put in their context: Assayyab had the poetic vision which helped him reclaim his national symbols and counter Eliot's colonizing approach.*

### 1. Introductory

In the second half of the twentieth century, *The Waste Land* was Eliot's most celebrated poem in the critical writings in several Arab countries, and many critics often attributed the revolutionary change brought into Arabic poetic form partially to this poem. (Jabra 1971: 76). Badr Shakir Assayyab, the leading figure in the movement of modern Arabic poetry, stressed that it should be admitted that *The Waste Land* had a great influence on modern Arabic literature. The largest flow of such critical writings appeared in literary journals, particularly *Al-Adab* and *Shi'r* of Beirut, in the 1950s and 1960s when "the serious impact of Eliot's poetry reached Arabic literary circles." (Asfour 1988: 49). The poem was translated into Arabic many times, the corpus of criticism it received might have been beyond expectation,<sup>1</sup> and it was surprising that "by the middle of the [sixth] decade [of the twentieth century], the list of Eliot's translators was distinguished by at least a dozen prominent names in Arabic poetry." (ibid).

The reasons for this significant position the poem occupied were examined thoroughly and it became obvious that the attention paid to *The Waste Land* was mainly because Eliot offered what Arab poets had been seeking: stylistic, prosodic and thematic freedom from the traditional Arabic poem, and a form of

realism which is not hostile to the life of the spirit, but permits the poet to treat his subject unhampered by the rhetorical conventions. (ibid.)

But there were other viewpoints that emphasize the fact that the attention paid by Arab writers and poets was particularly a reflection of the poem's unprecedented critical reception in the West.<sup>2</sup> Likewise, Assayyab's poem, *Unshudat al-Matar (Hymn of the Rain)*, has always been viewed as a landmark in the poetic career of the Iraqi poet, in particular, and in the history of modern Arabic poetry, in general. Published in 1954, the poem has received a great deal of criticism, focused mainly on its new style, themes and images. (Niyazi, 1995).

This, apparently, reflected the success which could be attributed to several reasons. At the forefront of these is the poem's unprecedented rendering of the theme of rain in the context of the rituals of fertility. This theme has given the poem a focal point in the literary discussion that has continued since its publication.<sup>3</sup> However, a considerable number of Arab critics have enthusiastically contended that many of Assayyab's techniques and themes were acquired mainly from Eliot. This claim was usually followed by a reference to *The Waste Land* and to its influence on Assayyab's masterpiece.

In this paper, I do not deny the influence of Eliot, but things should be put in their context: Assayyab had the poetic vision which helped him reclaim his national symbols and counter Eliot's colonizing approach.

## 2. Traditional Readings of *Hymn of the Rain*

It seems that the notion of 'western influences' in Arabic literature permeated Arab critical writings, especially in the 1950s. The impression for example that Assayyab's "writing in the *taf'ila* form was only an external development of the Arabic poem, which was prompted by the influence of literary Western models," (Khoury 1981: 28) paved the way for many assessments claiming that *Hymn of the Rain*, like many other poems Assayyab wrote in the 1950s, had the styles and themes of T. S. Eliot and/or Edith Sitwell. The writings of Mahmud al-'Abta, Issa Boullata, Simon Jarji, Abdul-Wahid Lu'lu'a and a few other writers have shown an obvious inclination towards linking Assayyab's poem to James Frazer's *The Golden Bough*, Eliot's *The Waste Land*, and Sitwell's *Still Falls the Rain* and *The Canticle of the Rose*. However, some of these critics concentrated in their writings, particularly, on the theme of rain, which – they thought – came to Assayyab from his English 'master'. Muhammad Shahin is an obvious example. In an extensive reading of Eliot's and Assayyab's masterpieces Shahin insists that "Through a close reading of *The Waste Land* and *Hymn of the Rain*, we find that Assayyab made use of ... the last part of [Eliot's] poem, *What the Thunder Said*." (Shahin 1992: 22). Shahin, in fact, makes a direct, obvious and firm statement that

Assayyab found in the poem [*The Waste Land*] what other Arab poets, who were influenced by Eliot, had failed to do. He found in it his personal ... desire for expressing the shattered reality at moments of the most acute pain when the soul gets purified, insight focused and given birth at the hands of a genuine

artist. ... With a skill of a unique poet, Assayyab managed to seize those moments and subdue their rhythm to his own needs and potentials. (ibid.: 23).

This is not all, Shahin, goes on to say. The two poems have many features in common: the internal rhythm and the critical moment “which gathers in the poem two close intermixed situations: rain’s cessation and waiting for rain, the aridity due to the rain’s cessation and the fertility awaited for.” (ibid: 23-4). Here lies the affinity between the two poems, Shahin believes. But if Eliot found in the myth of rain a medium for expressing the crisis of his society, Assayyab has had all the more reason to find in rain a more appropriate medium for a different kind of expression, he theorizes. In Assayyab’s country rain’s cessation poses an immediate danger threatening people’s lives, and this – according to Shahin – is what probably invited Assayyab to choose, from among all the myths and rhetorical borrowings that fill *The Waste Land*, what is related to rain.

This ‘Eliotic’ element is also considered by Daizera Saqqal. In her article, ‘Al-ardh al-kharab wa-sh-shi’r al-‘Arabi al-mu‘asir,’ she considers *Hymn of the Rain* as one of the poems where the influence of Eliot appears more obvious than in any other one.” (1981:123). This is particularly noticed, she believes, with “the ‘waiting for rain’ theme of *What the Thunder Said*.”

These two viewpoints of Shahin and Saqqal stand out as examples that mainly concentrate on what these critics find in many of Assayyab’s poems as reflections of Eliot’s own ‘stamp’. They seem to have ignored, as other critics believe, the remarkable way in which Assayyab handled his themes. Borrowing styles or localizing patterns do not rule out originality because “it will not harm a writer, no matter how ingenious he is ...that he assimilates the [literary] productions of others to produce something typically his.” (Hilal 1977: 17). Moreover, creative ideas, to borrow M. G. Hilal’s words, have for hundreds of years had their roots in the one common tradition of humanity. Accordingly, the idea remains that great writers and poets, like Shakespeare and Eliot himself, integrated in their writings many references and allusions because

the possibility of each literature renewing itself, proceeding to new creative activity, making new discoveries in the use of words, depends on ... its ability to receive and assimilate influences from abroad. (Eliot 1954: 114).

In this regard, one may argue that Eliot could not be seen as being a poor poet just because he had many literary allusions in his poems. Likewise, no writer could argue that Shakespeare was a poor playwright just because he sometimes used stories, thoughts, and verses from Italian and French poets or from older compatriots. The point is that:

What we appreciate in Shakespeare is not that he borrowed extensively (if this is so) but rather something else: that he succeeded in creating unique and coherent works of art of all these borrowings and impulses. The moral of this is that one should have a less moralistic view of influence: it need not be a fault or a sign of weakness to be influenced by others. (Hermeren 1975: 130-1).

Drawing upon this, the other side of the argument gets momentum.

In her examination of *Hymn of the Rain*, Reta 'Awad (1983) emphasizes Assayyab's new techniques, images and themes which were "a qualitative turning point in his poetry, in particular, and in contemporary Arabic poetry, in general." (P. 33). According to her, one of the most important themes in the poem is the expression of a completed Tammuzi cycle of fertility, and the analogy to the revival of the nation. In the poem, according to her, Assayyab discovers the life-death myth when he turns back to ancient traditions of his own people. In them, he finds that "woman-mother, nation and land are associated," (ibid: 33-4) and because of this he is absolutely certain of the rebirth, as if he refuses to believe that death was an end. His mother, serving as an example, will be resurrected because she is unified with the land and with the rain.

By so doing, Assayyab emphasizes the central theme of the death-life circle, after he renders it from his own national past. For him, darkness, barren branches, aridity and hunger stand for death while light, blossoming, and rain stand for rebirth. Thus, he focuses on rain because it is not confined to its semantic connotations: "it is a symbol of life, which rain gives to the awaiting land." (ibid: 35). If Assayyab links the poem's life-death cycle to the ancient waste land myth, which was known to the people of Mesopotamia, the notion of Western influence in this very area is diminished, as 'Awad's reading suggests.

In this context, another example stands out. Elias Khouri (1981) presents a more distinct reading in his book, *Dirasat fi Naqd ash-Shi'r*. His main focus is the importance of examining *Hymn of the Rain* in the context of the real change that took place in Assayyab's poetry. Like several other writers, Elias Khouri says that the poem crowns the Iraqi poet's experimentation and is, therefore, "one of the first modern poems in our Arabic poetry, setting off from the Tammuzi symbol." (P. 29). The first area to focus on is his emphasis that the poem fuses the Tammuzi symbol and the realistic dimension of the theme. The "splendid way" in which the poem "wears the symbol" makes the presence of the myth in each word noticeable, even though there is no direct reference to it. (ibid: 30).

And this is yet more stressed when Nazeer El-Azma highlights several remarkable differences and fewer instances of similarity between the two poems. If Eliot reveals in his poem a complex network of relationships in a context of the rituals of vegetation, his main emphasis is a waterless-and-barren-land vision, which stands for a Western view of a civilization on the verge of collapse. Though water seems for Eliot to be a symbol of life-giving and fertility, his speaker in the poem suffers frustration when he feels many times that there is no hope for reviving his waste land, "since there is no water":

Where the hermit-thrush sings in the pine trees  
Drip drop drip drop drop drop  
But there is no water (*The Waste Land*, ll.357-9).

In this framework, Eliot's influence on Assayyab, to borrow El-Azma's words, is restricted to the symbolic system. While their theme is strikingly similar, the

Iraqi poet has a fundamentally different attitude towards the rituals of vegetation.

Moreover, in Assayyab's poem, water, the giver of life, is approached appropriately as a symbol of fertility, triumph and rejoicing. It symbolises hope for resurrection and rebirth, and by so doing Assayyab is weaving these elements of the water-as-life-giving vision in an organic union. He foresees an imminent revolution: rain in the poet's very-near future will wash Iraq, and the wind will sweep away injustice, hunger and tyranny.

Another striking difference between the two poems is again obvious, but this time in the general tone. In *The Waste Land*, Eliot tries to epitomize sterility versus fertility and raises a question in the prelude:

That corpse you planted last year in the garden,  
Has it begun to sprout? Will it bloom this year? (ll. 71-2),

which is frustratingly answered in *What the Thunder Said*:

Here is no water but only rock  
Rock and no water and the sandy road  
The road winding above among the mountains  
Which are mountains of rock without water  
If there were water we should stop and drink  
Amongst the rock one cannot stop or think  
There is not even silence in the mountains  
But dry sterile thunder without rain. (ll. 331-42)

But Assayyab is different. He is sure that his hope for resurrection is achievable, so he alters Eliot's "dry sterile thunder," which is "without rain," to a "singing" thunder that gives rain. After "the heavens have clouded up" and as his country is "storing away the thunder," he can be almost certain that rain is going to rejuvenate the land. And although one can immediately observe that the image of water dominates in *The Waste Land* and that the image of rain, as an equivalent symbol, dominates in *Hymn of the Rain*, critics should not go immediately to the conclusion that Assayyab, in relying upon the Tammuz myth, is imitating Eliot. Salma Khadra Jayussi (1977), for example, strongly believes that Assayyab departs from the way in which Eliot tackles the connection between rain and the barren land. She detects the difference when she notes that the Iraqi poet modifies the symbol to represent "the fertility of the rain-drenched land and the aridity of the human soul." (P. 725). She specifically designates the falling of rain in the fertile valley of Mesopotamia and the subsequent sprouting of grass.

### 3. Post-Colonial Readings

Assayyab's sense of national belonging and his attempt to counter the colonial implications of the core-periphery theory in literature are other significant points in his modernizing project. The theme of rain, as far as it represents a

distinguishing characteristic in his poetry, is, therefore, seen in another perspective. There are many writers, for example, who suggest Arabic, Qur'anic and Biblical sources for the theme, and consider the fact that *Hymn of the Rain* and *The Waste Land* have fundamental dissimilarities. Assayyab renders the theme of rain differently from Eliot, who has the thunder but not rain, they thought. An obvious example is "Diyaliktiyyat ath-That wat-Tabi'a,"<sup>4</sup> a paper written by Jacques Burques, who stresses that the themes of the poem, especially those which are related to rain, bear a resemblance to themes prevalent in the poetry of pre-Islamic Arabia. Other examples are works written by Muhammad Mustafa Badawi; M. A. 'Abdul-Halim, Malik al-Muttalibi, who emphasizes a local Iraqi setting.

One of the most significant contributions, however, is DeYoung's second reading of Assayyab's poem in her book, *Placing the Poet: Badr Shakir al-Sayyab and Postcolonial Iraq*. This time, DeYoung stresses that Assayyab's poems generally belong to a post-colonial context in which the Iraqi poet chooses to 'misread' Eliot

in a particular way that initially empowers him to construct *The Waste Land* in his imagination as a counter-discourse to be deployed in testing and weighing, if not breaking open, the monolithic facade comprising the canonical texts of western civilization. (1998: 68).

Through such an understanding, DeYoung emphasizes Assayyab's conscious endeavour to accommodate Eliot. By so doing, the Iraqi poet conducts a parallel project in which he makes a critique of Arab civilization "in much the same way as he believed Eliot had conducted a critique and demystification of the sources of Western civilization after World War I in *The Waste Land*. (Ibid: 72). But Assayyab extends Eliot's method beyond the limits of the Western 'reading' to emphasize a remarkably different approach. Through such an approach he

could in a way be seen as practicing 'supplementation'... offering an additive reading that would tend to supplant its precursor because it was more comprehensive and inclusive than the original. (Ibid).

DeYoung's reading of *Hymn of the Rain*, in which she emphasizes the Qur'anic source for Assayyab's apocalyptic discourse, highlights Assayyab's explicit allusion to a national symbol. The significance of this reading lies in the fact that DeYoung chooses to work out a system that contrasts the various readings prevalent in the typical Tammuz-myth structure. Very important in this context is her interpretation of *Hymn of the Rain* as Assayyab's direct employment of the apocalyptic discourse to oppose the colonizers' claim that they were restoring Iraq to its original Edenic condition.

Although DeYoung suggests that Assayyab's description of the more dismal aspects of his native world has a Western framework, she nevertheless asserts that the Iraqi poet holds a view that counters that of Eliot. Assayyab depicts the winter rains in a way which shows that the fertility of the land is not at issue. The problem to him lies in the serpent, which is absent from the Western

accounts he is reacting to. Depicting the people of Iraq as being robbed by crows and locusts,

Assayyab seems to be reminding us of that particularly effective form of exploitation, which draws its strength from colonial distortions of social relations, and equating these intrusions of colonial power to this serpent figure. (Ibid).

Assayyab's strategies of inversion and supplementation of well-known Western stories are also important in this context. Manipulating them from a native point of view

appears to be aimed at more than just demonstrating the intruder status of the colonizer. As he presents it in this poem, then, it also exposes the fact that they are there and doing what they are doing in order to gain advantage for themselves, to 'suck the dew' and not for the lofty purposes of restoring Paradise or aiding those less fortunate than themselves, as official colonial discourse so often advertised. (Ibid: 28-9).

Within such a context, Assayyab never misses the implications of Eliot's notion that spaces are colonizable (Eliot 1923:421; Eliot 1954: 113) and thus understands that the coloniality of *The Waste Land* is obvious in Eliot's endeavour to colonize the mythological spaces of the Near East, motivated by a conscious pursuit of self-renewal. Eliot, as perceived by Assayyab, attaches great significance to assimilating foreign influences in literature. Eliot (1954), readers may remember, emphasizes that "the possibility of each literature renewing itself ... depends on ... its ability to receive influences from abroad." (P. 113).

Another aspect of *The Waste Land's* coloniality is its proclamation of the Western literature versus peripheral literatures. In such a perspective, Hussein N. Kadhim (1999: 145) stresses the main focus of the critical writings of both Hatim Al-Sagr (1995) and Franco Moretti (2000), who highlighted the vigorous attempts on the part of the colonized literatures to counter those of the colonizers.

#### 4. Conclusion

It is obvious that Eliot's stylistic influence on Badr Shakir Assayyab is strong. However, this fact does not justify accusing Assayyab of slavish imitation because it is also obvious, according to the various readings of *Hymn of the Rain*, that Assayyab dealt with the themes of his poem in a way which is incompatible with that of Eliot. I can, therefore, claim that the poem was created as an antithesis of *The Waste land* in a number of respects and that the two poems were systematically different.

First, Assayyab's theme of rain in the context of the fertility rituals, central to both poets' masterpieces, is not identical with Eliot's. Rain in the *Hymn* stands for a rejuvenating element in a context of two paradoxical pictures. The first picture is the poet's expression of the fact that rain is a life-giving source which

should result in crops and flowers. The second picture is depicted through a series of images in which the poet intends to alter the pessimistic tone of the poem. The repetition of the word "rain," especially at the end of each section of the poem, has "a hypnotic effect, creating an almost magical atmosphere in which the poet is confident that his prayer for life-giving rain for the whole of his country will be answered." (Badawi 1993:65). This repetition prepares the scene for a growing optimistic solution. Iraq, "gathering thunders and storing up lightning," will soon get pouring rain that indicates the poet's intention to refuse perpetuating futility.

Second, though I do not rule out the influence of Eliot on Assayyab's initiating the artistic use of myths, particularly those of the Babylonian origin, Assayyab has his own distinguishing characteristics in this context. The way in which Assayyab handles the Tammuz myth, for example, demonstrated that:

A fundamental difference between the English and Arabic interpretations of the Adonis [Tammuz] myth, and of *The Waste Land* itself, exists and supports the contention that the spiritual pessimism of much twentieth century Western poetry has never quite infiltrated modern Arabic poetry. (Asfour , 1988: 51).

This emphasis on the distinctive national dimension of the Tammuz myth was a product of a distinctive poetic vision that fused Eliotic form with local material. This literary product proved to have developed a local form that responded to the local setting of the mythical theme.

Third, countering Eliot's approach to colonizing the mythology of the Near East, and to centring the Western Metropolis, (Kadhim 1999: 145) Assayyab attempts to restore the balance. If Eliot's masterpiece was perceived as a step in the process of staking claim to the cultural spaces of peripheral literatures, to use Franco Moretti terminology, and appending them to the Western core, Assayyab's masterpiece was written as a conscious endeavour to reclaim the mythological symbols of his nation. Accordingly, such perception is the heart of the matter in Assayyab's de-colonizing task. Bearing in mind from his schooling days that Iraq, though formally independent, was still colonized by Britain, he was preoccupied – as the many other Iraqis were – with a task by which he could contribute to the process to restore the balance between the literatures of the core and periphery.

Fourth, Assayyab attempts in many of his poems to 'Iraqize' and 'Arabize' universal symbols and cast them in a system in which the borrowed patterns were converted. Much evidence in his poems, where many mythological symbols were converted and localized, abounds to this effect.<sup>5</sup> One obvious and interesting poignant example is his declaration at the end of his poem, *A Letter from a Graveyard (Risala min Maqbara)* that Sisyphus has thrown away his rock.

سيزيف ألقى عنه عبء الدهور  
و استقبال الشمس على "الأطلس" !

Sisyphus has hurled away the burden of centuries  
And turned his face to the sun on the "Atlas"! (ll. 56-7).

It is obvious here that Assayyab converts the Greek setting of the Sisyphus myth into a national setting.

Fifth, when some critics observe that Assayyab extensively uses mythical allusions and they, therefore, contend that he found his 'lost treasure' in the two translated chapters of *The Golden Bough*, and that the debt of directing him to it goes to Eliot, countering claims are in evidence. One obvious example, which shows that he does not accord well with the way Frazer handled universal and eastern myths, is the mill imagery used in *Hymn of the Rain*.<sup>6</sup> In regard to Eliot, Assayyab recognizes that *The Waste Land* was almost entirely built upon the Mesopotamian myth; and although it is true that Assayyab was fascinated with – what he considered – its most vehement lampoon of the Western society, it is also true for him that this lampoon also applies to a certain extent to the sick, backward Arab society. Therefore, one may confirm that he sees in it

how a Western poet was able to benefit from [our] own symbols, such as the symbols of Tammuz and Osiris, and he thus called [our] attention to a matter to which [we] had previously paid no attention. (Gharfi 1986:55).

This perception, nonetheless, motivates Assayyab to attempt a local mythological strategy, endeavouring to recapture his national lost myths, especially when he envisions his role as a committed poet in the context of the age-old struggle against the foreigners. In the context of such a vision, *The Waste Land* for Assayyab was a structure in which he could transcend the centre-periphery system and redirect the symbolic emphasis of the Tammuzi myth to correlate with the national requirements as perceived in an anti-colonial attitude. His endeavour relies upon a triangular system, to draw upon Moretti's words again, by which he blends Arabic tradition and Western form to create a new form, typically local. In *Hymn of the Rain*, he transposes Eliot's handling of the myth and keeps its general scheme, transcending *The Waste Land's* vision and setting up an antithetical system. One striking antithetical element, for example, lies in his success in building up a structure wherein the rebirth cycle is completed. Rain that was awaited all through the sections of the poem pours down at the end.

Finally, it is imperative to argue, borrowing John Lehmann's words, that it would be "putting matters into a false perspective" (1952:11) to insist too exclusively on Assayyab's direct indebtedness to T. S. Eliot. Assayyab's excelling in the choice of the precise words "as though each word were the only one to fit the context," (Jayyusi 1977: 670) and his "strong auditory sensibility and the way he feels the sounds in the Arabic system" (I. Samarrai 1980: 229) testify that he is, above all, deeply rooted in the Arabic tradition. His ability to "make the *taf'ila* and the musical phrase yield to the desired emotional impact" (Asfour 1988: 50) signifies his innovative contribution to the development of modern Arabic poetry. If his poetry and critical views show English influences,

they also show that Arabic poetry – from Abu Tammam down to az-Zahawi and ar-Rusafi – nourished his poetic spirit. It is this extreme richness of the poetic soil, to borrow Lehmann's terminology again, that fostered his flowering. His poetry, which is marked by a strong attachment to his childhood surroundings, takes his village, Jaykur, and her river, Buwaib, to a legendary level.

This and his creative blending of an Eliotic form with local material to generate a new form, typically his, express the heart of the fact that Assayyab wrote poetry with the originality of a great poet, in his language, of the stature of Eliot in English. It was confirmed that he parodied – appropriated, incorporated, and modified – diverse elements from other poets, but the fact remains that Assayyab was an authentic poet, though he was full of literary echoes.

If Eliot's world was waste because rain never came, the issue with Assayyab is different because

سَيُعْتَشِبُ الْعِرَاقُ بِالْمَطَرِ ...

Iraq will bloom with the rain... (*Hymn of the Rain*, l. 95).

## Notes

1. One of the early attempts to translate Eliot's poem was made in the 1950s by Tawfiq Sa'igh, *Al-Adab* 1 (January 1955): 93. Other translations followed by Nabila Ibrahim (1959) and Luis 'Awad (1962). In 1980, one of the most accredited translations was published in Baghdad by the Iraqi writer and critic 'Abdul-Wahid Lu'lu'a. After a few years the edition ran out of print and a second one appeared in 1986, which ran out of print again. The translator noted that the relatively short time during which the editions of the translated poem ran out of print indicated the serious attention paid by Arab readers to Eliot's poem. In 1995, the translation appeared in a revised edition and the book, *T. S. Eliot, al-Ardh al-Yabab, ash-Sha'ir wal-Qasida*, which contained explanations of the poem's footnotes and a review of the critical studies on it, indicated – once again according to Lu'lu'a – that the poem was still widely read in the Arab countries.

2. Many critics, especially M. M. Badawi, have often highlighted the notion that Western criticism would – almost always – be reflected in Arabic literary criticism. The case of European Romanticism, with its echoes in Arabic literary movements of the twenties, thirties and forties of the twentieth century, is a good example. For more details, see Muhyi-d-Din Muhammad, "Ash-Shi'r al-Hadith ila Ayn?". *Al-Majalla*, 4: 1964, 50; and Abdul-Wahid Lu'lu'a, *T. S. Eliot, al-Ardh al-Yabab, ash-Sha'ir wal-Qasida*, Beirut: Al-Mu'asasa al-Arabiyya lid-Dirasat wan-Nashr, 1995, p. 181.

3. According to Majid Al-Samarrai (1982: 14), Assayyab, more than any other modern poet in the Arab world, is expected to remain for many years to come a main focus of continued literary discussion and argument.

4. See also Reta (1983: 32).

5. See for example, *Min Ru'ya Fukai, Fil-Maghrib al-'Arabi, Al-Mumis al-'Amya'*, and many other poems. *Diwan Assayyab*, 1971.

6. For details, see De Young, 1993, p. 51.

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