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# The Narrative Sequence in Badr Shakir Al-Sayyab's "The Rain Song" Using Technology Drawing: A Semiotic Reading

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## Abstract

*The study aims to re-enact the narrative sequence in Badr Shakir Al-Sayyab's "The Rain Song" by drawing signs and images using technological drawing. Fifty images will be drawn as signs that have profound implications and meanings in the Poem. The Canva program was used, which converts speech and ideas into visual images. The research assumes that re-representing the narrative sequence using images will contribute to understanding the development of semantic meaning from the "sign" to the "symbol." The research assumes that the logical sequence of the narrative in the visual signs representing the meaning also contributes to deepening the influence of the "rain song" on the cultural and mythological structure of Arab culture in general, and mainly the Iraqi audience in particular. The research relies on the analytical approach to understand the narrative sequence in "The Rain Song," where we can place the visual signs in their correct place in the narrative line in the poem, which in turn, makes the construction of cultural and mythological meaning in the mind of the recipients clearer. The research results in several conclusions, the most important of which is that converting the narration from written form to visual one helps to deepen the meaning as to move the recipient from feeling the idea to living it as if it were an actual experience.*

**Keywords:** *visual narrative, semiotics, The Rain Song, technological drawing, signs, images*

## 1. Introduction

The nineteenth century was teemed with critical approaches whose interest was placed on studying literature through the influences surrounding the text and the writer (the text and the writer), such as the psychological approach, the historical approach, and the aesthetic approach. (Eichenbaum, B. 1965). However, such approaches were not able to give the text the literary and artistic value it deserves, so the Russian Formalist School came around 1915-1930 AD to present new concepts for the study of literature, the most important of which was that the literary text must be studied from within without paying attention to external influences. The formalist approach came as a reaction to the dominance of previous critical approaches. (Erich, V, 1973). The formalist approach contributed to changing the way of studying literature, as it began to view the literary text as a scientific subject. This new approach imposed a set of standards that focused on cutting off the literary text from any ideological influences from outside the text, so it mainly intended to study the internal structures of the literary work, such as the narrative functions according to Vladimirprop (Gorman, D. 2019), and the study of stylistics according to Eichenbaum (Eichenbaum, B. 1965) and Tynyanov (Joseph, L.P.

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1994), and the phonetic side as in Jakobson Roman's approach (Jakobson, R., & Halle, M. 2020.); Their methodological conceptions were transformed into “an independent science that places literature as its subject” (Eichenbaum, B. 1965).

At a later stage synchronized with the Russian Formalists, linguistic research in Europe and America provided cognitive concepts to understand the function of the sign in linguistic communication, when two points of view emerged to establish the understanding of the structure of the sign and its function in the human context including Saussure's semiology in France 1913, and Charles Peirce's semiotics in America 1914. Then semiotic research developed, and various research approaches emerged that sought to deconstruct the structure of the sign according to its function in the text, such as the semiotics of meaning in discourse according to Barthes (Barthes, R. 1988), and Jacques Lacan (Benvenuto, B., & Kennedy, R. 1986), And Julia Kristeva (Van Wert, W.F., & Mignolo, W1974). Other approaches included the semiotics of symbolic philosophy according to Cashier, the semiotics of culture as proposed by Juri Lotman, the semiotics of narrative as seen in Greimas, and the semiotics of philosophy as suggested by Umberto Eco and Michel Foucault.

Perhaps the research of Saussure 1913 and Peirce 1914 had a major impact on the development of linguistic research regarding the sign as a linguistic communicative achievement, as contemporary linguistic research began to turn to visual narration as one of the most important contemporary communicative discourses in the media and elsewhere. However, contemporary linguistic research still focuses its goal on transforming visual signs into verbal or written narration, and vice versa. Still, converting verbal or written narration into visual signs lacks research relations with artificial intelligence science.

However, there are distinguished works that have played a major role in creating attention to the relationship between verbal/written narration and visual narration. McCloud worked on understanding visual narration, but without paying attention to any syntactic grammatical procedures, as he believes that it is difficult to think about setting fixed standards as to determine the grammatical equivalent of signs, instead the focus was on the idea stored in the visual narration, considering the image or drawing as an integrated linguistic whole (McCloud, S., & Martin, M. 1993). On the other hand, Eisner believes that visual narration does not differ from verbal or written narration. We understand pictures and drawings because they have a phonetic, morphological, grammatical, stylistic, and rhetorical structure. Eisner worked on the procedures for analyzing sequential visual narratives based on image data according to what is consistent with the mental grammatical structure. (Eisner, Will, 2000).

Eisner confirms that the sequence in image signs is accompanied by a linguistic sequence, and the recipient can also mentally hear sounds and feel movement based on the image scene he is interacting with. Neil Cohn (2013) also works with a group of researchers at the Visual Language Lab on visual narrative analysis, and asserts that sequential drawn forms have the potential to form a visual language in a similar way that sequential, organized images can become spoken language.

There are many studies that focused on examining "the Rain Song", but most of these studies did not study the process of semiotic transformation from sign to symbol, nor did they care about linking the relationship between the sign and cultural or mythological discourse. Most of these studies followed traditional methodologies in deconstructing the signs in the rain song, which makes them far from conducting semiotic perceptions. Among these was a study on al-Sayyab's "Rain Song" by Sinan Antoon (2011). The author talked about Al-Sayyab's poetry and

how he described the situation in Iraq when it was struggling under a pro-British monarchy, which kept the country's wealth and power in the hands of the elite. However, the regional and global climate was full of liberation projects and struggles that gave hope to many. However, this study did not address the structure of the poem and its semiotic, cultural, mythological, and artistic themes.

Ahmed Taher Abdu Nagi's study entitled "Eliotic Seeds in B. S. Al Sayyab's Poem "The Rain Song": An Analytical Study" revolved around the idea that Badr Shaker Al-Sayyab assimilated some modern techniques in writing Arabic poetry that did not exist before. Because he was influenced by the poet T. S. Eliot, The Rain Song is an example of showing modern techniques and Eliotian roots. The Rain Song is a dividing line between classical Arabic poetry and modern Arabic poetry. Moreover, it is the product of his mature poetic career. It is obvious that after a critical analytical reading of the poem, and despite the Eliotian influence, Al-Sayyab made use of the Arabic heritage including Babylonian mythology, along with images and symbols taken from the Arab culture. "The Waste Land", a poetic masterpiece by Eliot, helped Al-Sayyab delve into the depths of his enigmatic poem. The drives behind writing "The Wasteland" are the same for both of the West and Iraq, and were common factors for writing such modernist poetry. The mythological method was evident in "the Rain Song" poem. The fertility myths of Ishtar and Tammuz besides the golden branch of Frazer are the corresponding elements to the presence of Eliot's influence in the Rain Song. The imaginative method is also another Eliot's element in the rain song that helped Al-Sayyab to attack corruption in Iraq implicitly and predict the revolution against the political regime in 1957. Symbolism is another Eliotian seed planted in "The Rain Song". The symbol of rain is often used to indicate death and life simultaneously. The allusive method is an Eliotian seed present in the poem. Some of these references are taken from the Holy Qur'an, such as "Thamuds" reference to predicting the sweeping away of the tyrants of Iraq. Free verse poetry is the most prominent Eliotic seed in Al-Sayyab's "Rain Song".

In this research, the focus will be poured on converting written narration into visual narration through the use of the Canva program, where 50 signs were chosen as major signs that have a significant impact on building the narrative sequence. The 50 signs were coded with numbers 1-50 according to their occurrence in the poem, but this order does not mean arranging them in the narrative sequence. This research will provide a new step in reading narratives in literature, by visually evoking signs and enabling interaction with them as if they were vital visual series.

## **2. Terms and Concepts: A Theoretical Introduction**

### **2.1. The Sign**

The term "sign" began to appear since the seventeenth century, when the philosopher John Locke pointed out the relationship between meaning and the sign that the brain stores (Matten, B., & Ringham, F. 2008), and he sought to explain meaning through the sign. However, Saussure 1913 in Europe (De Saussure, F. 2011) and Peirce 1914 in America (Yakin, H. S. M., & Totu, A. 2014), attempted to explain the language system on the basis of understanding the sign and its social function. Saussure confirmed that the sign is composed of two things: the signifier and the signified, one of which is inseparable from the other, just like the two sides of a coin (De Saussure, F. 2011), and that the relationship between (signifier and signified) is an arbitrary relationship (Holdcroft, D 1991), that is mainly traditional and dependent on

inheritance of social and cultural signification (Stawarska, B. (2015). As for Peirce, he was interested in the relationship between the sign, logic, the philosophy of ontological (existential) symbolic forms, and mathematics. He also linked the sign and phenomenology as a strong starting point for defining perception, its processes, and its moments (Binkrad, S. 2012). Pierce developed a triadic model to investigate the elements that make up the sign, which are (interpretant, sign, and object) (Danesi, M. 2004). At present, the sign has become a fundamental pillar in semiotics studies and communication theories because the sign occupies an important place in the study of meaning implications within communicative discourse, whether in spoken or written speech, a literary text, or anything else.

## 2.2. The Symbol

Symbolism became a literary and artistic philosophy with its own terms and concepts in the second half of the nineteenth century despite its very ancient roots. The symbolic approach was the most important part in lyric poetry after Romanticism, as it appeared in European literature around 1880 (Ben Sousha&Iman, Layat, Faiza, 2018). I believe that symbolism, even if it appeared and originated in the second half of the nineteenth century, it emerged in ancient Arabic literature, but its appearance was limited either through the use of fictitious names instead of real names, or mainly through the use of some metaphorical images of animals which they basically represent humans. For example, they used the word “deer” instead of a woman. In the nineteenth century, symbolism became an artistic and literary method and school, as it became one of the characteristics of modern literary poetry. Symbolism aims to create a literary experience in which words are used to evoke conscious or subconscious emotional situations. Symbolism in poetry and literature came as a reaction to what prevailed before it, as it was a counter-revolution. It rejected realism in its documentation and photographic observation of reality, and romanticism in its drift with the spontaneous flow of feelings, as it suggests what happens within a person in terms of feelings, experiences, or sensations without directly presenting the words.

The connection between the signifier and the signified in symbolic formations requires a deep sense and understanding for monitoring and analysis (Ragheb, Nabil, 2003). Symbolism was characterized by many features, including: great insistence on the idea of organic unity of artistic construction, which differs from objective unity. This means that poetry develops naturally from within, becoming a living, unified texture in which each cell builds on the previous until the entire work of art is totally produced. It has become difficult to separate the poem into separate entities; because doing so would harm the aesthetic and moral components of the poem. The ability of the symbol as a means of expression is its second characteristic. The use of symbols as a means of expression is not a new art form; rather, it is a well-established and versatile style that cannot be achieved by statements. Poets use symbols as a means of expression because they believe that ordinary language is incapable of encapsulating emotional experience, bringing out the subconscious, or inspiring the reader to create numerous ideas (Debi, Nadia, 2014). Symbol develops a number of direct influences, all of which are expressed in “those transformations that I knew Western and Arab societies, which resulted in the emergence of a number of phenomena related to the psychological state of the individual, such as fatigue, misery, anxiety, and complaining (Bousqata, Al-Saeed, 2008).

With regard to contemporary Arab criticism, we discover that “Adonis” considered the symbol to be the thing that enables us to think and contemplate, where the sign represents the revelation of the hidden meaning, “It is the language that begins when the language of the poem ends, which is formed in your consciousness after reading the poem, it is the lightning

that allows consciousness to discover a world without limits, so it is an illumination of the dark existence and a threshold towards the essence (Bousqata, Al-Saeed, 2008)

### 3. Analysis of Poetic Stanzas in the Narrative Sequence of Signs

In this part, the poem will be divided into poetic stanzas in accordance with the narrative connection that unites them. This division comes to simplify the reading of the narrative sequence between the signs, and on the other hand to perform a pictorial representation of each sign. This division will show the signs in each stanza and will reveal the function of repeating the sign (repeated signs) and its role in the development of meaning from sign to symbol.

#### 3.1. Poetic Stanza No. (1): The Beginning of the Poem Using the “Eyes” Image

The poem begins in stanza No (1) by addressing a woman (the female sign). This female represents a main sign to which the poet returns when the narrative becomes tense and reaches its climax. The female in the Rain Song is represented as an unspecified symbol. The female may be the homeland, the lover, or the wife, or the daughter, but despite its symbolic function, it represents a stage of stillness, calm, and the search for stability. Rather, it is a point of refuge to which a poet flees whenever the suffering intensifies.

*Your eyes are forests of palm trees at dawn,  
Or two balconies from which the moon has moved away.  
When you smile, your eyes make the vines blossom*

The poem begins with a lyrical verse that conjures an image of “a woman’s eyes.” The “eyes” sign deviates to become “two palm forests” at the end of the dark night, then it deviates again to become “a balcony” overlooking the bright moon. These eyes represent enchanting beauty and deep love for the poet. They have a connection to the vines that turn green whenever they smile. One last time, the eyes turn to become a river in which the moonlights are reflected, and the stars appear dancing in the middle of those eyes. This narrative sequence of eye movement contains meanings with an ancient philosophical, social, and mythological dimension among the Assyrians and Babylonians in Mesopotamia (Mackenzie, D. A, 2016). The mythical meaning is represented by fertility, which is associated with (palm trees - vines), and the social meaning is related to (the female), which It represents a cultural pillar for the Arab recipient when he searches for spatial stability.

The visual narrative sequence can be understood through the following signs (1-4):

(1) Your eyes (2) Two palm forests at the Dawn hour (3) Two balconies (4) The foliage of the vine.



The narrative sequence in signs (1-4) changes the meaning of sign (1) from being a flirtatious sign to becoming a sign of stability and lost warmth. The eyes that represent (the female) came as a symbolic key in search of safety and warmth through the signs in (2) and (3) and (4), the palm tree is a sign that symbolizes goodness, but the poet does not see the palm tree as it should be, so he looked for stability through the eyes of the (female), and the two balconies symbolize the place overlooking a new hope, so they were the eyes through which the poet sees A hopeful world that represents a distant insight into a future different from what is happening in Iraq.

The narrative becomes tense and reaches its climax with the symbol of the sign (3), which is new hope, as vines are a symbol of growth and fertility. The development of meaning in each sign served as a foundation for the next sign, and the narrative ended with sign (4), which represented what the poet was searching for as a human being suffering from hunger, poverty, and loss. The transition of the narrative from the sign to the symbol refers to the female whom Al-Sayyab addresses, not referring to his search for (love), but rather referring to the female, an ideological concept linked to stability and security, and this idea is present in many of the poems of the poet Al-Sayyab in which he referred to his need for a female (Boezar, R., Mehr, M. S., & Husseinjanzadeh, F. 2016)

*And the lights dance...like moons in a river  
The oar shakes him, and here is the hour of dawn.  
As if the stars were pulsing in their depths,  
And you drown in a mist of pure sorrow  
Like the sea, hands spread over it in the evening  
The warmth of winter and the chill of autumn*

(5) The lights dance (6) the paddle is the dawn hour (7) the stars pulse in the eyes (8) the eyes sink into the fog.



Within the narrative sequence of signs (5), (6), (7), and (8), the narration is focused on the image of the eyes that do not have stability, just like the movement of the moon in the river in sign (5). The narration is tragically interrupted in sign (6). For the fisherman who started collecting nets and returned home without catching; the lack of stability of the eyes will affect the hunter's instability in the face of miserable hunting attempts. Once again, the narrative returns to try to continue the sequence by using an image of the movement of the moon's reflection in the river, just like the movement of the stars in the female's eyes in sign No. (7). It can be said that the narrative sequence was only a transition from a smaller image (the image of the stars) to a larger image (the image of the moon). ), then move from the image of the river to the eyes, and make those stars animated by the movement of the water in the river and the movement of the pulse in the eyes also animated in the eyes. This movement will disappear when the fog that hides the eyes behind it intensifies. But the disappearance of the movement of the eyes behind the fog represents a semantic development from the sign to the symbol. In

signs (5), (6), (7) and (8), the meaning is developed from talking about narrating the movement of (natural phenomena) as simple signs symbolizing those images as meanings that indicate fear, instability, distance, and migration from the homeland (Hassanin, S. 2020). The narration began in (5) as the sign of the movement of the stars in the river, which is a symbol of preparation for departure, and in sign (8), the eyes disappear in a mist filled with sadness. The narration ends with migration, just like the migration of eyes in the mist (8). Through the relationship between successive signs, it will appear. It is clear how the poet Al-Sayyab continues the symbol to convey deep and hidden meanings (Neimneh, S., & al Qaisi, Z. 2015), as immigration is one of the issues that the poem expresses in a deep symbolic style.

### 3.2. Poetic Stanza No. (2): The Rain Sign Develops Symbolically as a Natural Phenomenon with Multiple Connotations

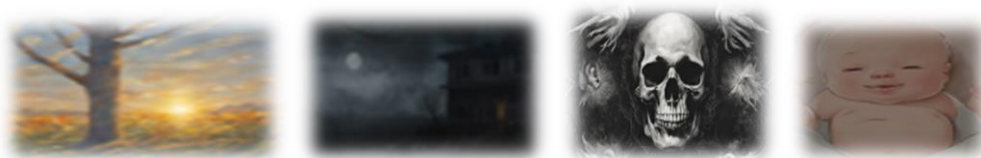
In poetic stanza No. (2), the narrative sequence works through contradictions, and these contradictions represent a decisive stage in the suffering that the poet narrates. What draws attention to it is that the narrative sequence in stanza No. (2) Begins in the opposite way. Instead of beginning with birth, we find that the narrative begins with death.

*And death, and birth, and darkness, and light  
Then the fullness of my soul awakens, the tremor of crying  
A monstrous ecstasy that embraces the sky  
Like the ecstasy of a child if he is afraid of the moon!  
As if the bows of the clouds were drinking the clouds  
And drop by drop melts in the rain...  
And the children crawled in the vineyards  
And the silence of the birds in the trees tickled*  
Rain Song  
Rain  
Rain  
Rain

Rain” represents one of the most important signs that was used repeatedly 35 times in the rain poem. The poem is based on rain as a main sign in two contradictory actions: the first that rain is a symbol of life, goodness, and happiness, and the second, that rain is a symbol of misery, deprivation, and death (Hamad, M 2020)

Therefore, the repeated rain sign indicates a new symbol and a new semantic function each time, as the rain sign transforms from its basic meaning (good, happiness, and new birth) to new symbols according to the contextual meaning and according to human suffering in Iraq, and the basic meaning of the rain sign is linked to natural phenomena. As a result of the movement of the four seasons and the rotation of the Earth around the sun, this natural movement that causes rain to fall is completely similar to the short-term movement that causes the migration of Iraqi humans. Consider the following signs (9-18)

(9) Death (10) Birth (11) Darkness (12) Light.



(13) Tremor of crying (14) the child is afraid of the moon (15) Cloud bows (16) Children chirping in the vines.



(17) The silence of birds on the trees (18) Rain Rain Rain.



Looking at the signs (9-18), we will find that determining the starting point of the logical narration requires rearranging the signs other than their narration in the song, as it is logical that the narration begins with the sign (10) as a reference to birth, and then ends with the sign (11) as a reference to death. Likewise, the sign (12) refers to light, which is logically prior to darkness in (11). But this illogical arrangement indicates a hidden, stored symbolism that expresses the desire to die as a result of constant darkness, and it is a reference to the suffering of a person who rejoices in the rain every year but goes hungry. This sadness and the feeling of wanting to die continues to reach its suffocating climax in the sign (15), where the cloud arches begin to drink up the clouds, which is an indication that the rain that falls in Iraq is absorbed by the clouds before it touches the ground. Then the narration in the sign (16) is interrupted by an imaginary thought, when the image of the children playing in the vines becomes a sign of life instead of death, and light instead of darkness. Although they play in the vines, they will die of hunger.

We can read the visual narrative sequence of the signs (1-18) according to their occurrence in the poem. In sign (9), the narrative sequence begins with death, then it is interrupted in sign (10), which refers to birth, then a new attempt comes to accomplish another narrative sequence, so the narrative begins with darkness in sign (11), then it is interrupted again in sign (12), which refers to light; The sign (12) represents the closure of the narrative in (9), (10) and (11), and a new beginning of the narrative sequence in (13-18). After the narrative failed twice in an attempt to eliminate death by birth, and darkness by light, an Ecstasy toward crying grows higher in the poet's heart. This euphoria was represented in the sign (13) as the beginning of a new narrative filled with brokenness. The narrative continues to deteriorate until fear appears completely in the sign of a child who is afraid of the moon (14). Although the moon represents brightness and light, it was a source of fear, so the child stands afraid in front of the light, then the narrative continues to worsen through the sign (15), where the clouds begin to exploit the fear settled in the souls of people and children and their inability to resist the



darkness, so the cloud arches begin to drink the clouds mercilessly. The sign (15) represents a closure to the narrative represented by fear, betrayal, brokenness, and death as the children come to begin a new narrative in (16) heading towards the vines saturated with rain, life and fertility. The narrative sequence continues in sign (17) when the birds begin to depart towards life, in sign (18) the narrative reaches its climax as the rain continues to fall. When we consider the previous signs (9-18), we find that there are three signs related to children as a symbol of life, the signs: (10), (14), and (16), and the sign (14) specifically represents a message directed to children who are still afraid of the moon. Specifically, they should not be afraid of the moon and go towards the sign (16) that forces the rain to give them the life they want.

### 3.3. Poetic Stanza No. (3): The Meaning Relationship between the Sign (Child and Female Mother)

In the poetic stanza No. (3), the narrative centers around the child's sign, as in the signs (20-23). The child's character grows toward misery and darkness, as the child loses his mother. Perhaps this stanza may be the most difficult situation to talk about, as the signs shift from their basic connotations to profound symbols that describe deprivation, loss, and death, let us consider the stanza and then explain the narrative sequence of the signs.

*The evening yawned, and the clouds were still  
 She wipes away the heavy tears she sheds.  
 As if a child was hallucinating before he fell asleep.  
 That his mother woke up a year ago  
 He did not find it, then when he delved into the question  
 They said to him: "The day after tomorrow will return."  
 You must come back  
 Even if the comrades whispered that it was there  
 On the side of the hill, sleeps forever  
 It pours from its dust and drinks the rain  
 As if a sad fisherman gathering his nets  
 He curses water and fate  
 And singing is spread wherever the moon sets  
 Rain  
 Rain*



(19) The clouds are still raining (20) A child raving before sleep (21) His mother who woke up a year ago (22) did not find his mom.



(23) He goes into asking about his mother (24) She sleeps in her grave (25) A sad fisherman gathers his nets.

The visual narrative sequence of the signs (19-25) begins according to their occurrence in the poem in sign (19), the narrative sequence begins by talking about the rain continuing to fall, and then it stops in sign (20), which refers to the child who started crying when he wanted to sleep. The child was accustomed to sleeping next to his mother, but he suddenly lost her, sign (21) it represents a mental evocation of the memories that brought the child together with his mother. The child sees his mother very clearly, but suddenly he loses her, as in sign (22) where he goes looking for her everywhere but does not find her. In sign (20) the semantic function shifts from the main meaning to the symbol. The mother is the homeland that the poet Al-Sayyab kept searching for (Hassanin, S. 2020). The child continues to search for his mother, as it appears in the sign (23) that he asks a group of people about his mother, and they in turn mention to him that she has gone to a place and to whom she will return, and they assure him that she will return, but also when they talk to each other away from him, they confirm that she is dead, and that she won't come back. Signs (22) and (23) represent a narrative sequence of signs and a transition from the basic meaning to the symbol, where the mother represents that Iraqi immigrant person who will not return or who have lost hope that he will return. The narrative sequence continues in sign (24) as the brain works to represent the image of the mother who died there on the distant hillside. The narration ends at sign (24), meaning that the narrative related to the child is closed.

A new narrative begins from a different point of view in an attempt to change the pattern of the narrative sequence. Sign (25) begins by showing the image of the sad fisherman collecting the plumber returning to his home after a miserable journey in search of... Hunting (DeYoung, T. 1993). In signs (20-22), the focus is on the child as a symbol of weakness and helplessness, and these signs embody feelings of isolation and despair, as the child is depicted as alone and in danger due to the loss of his mother. This miserable experience of the child is clearly shown in the suffering that the poet Al-Sayyab depicted about life in Iraq indicating that children lose their mothers without mercy, the signs (20-22) are generally able to focus on a sensitive, sensual aspect towards children, and they represent Al-Sayyab's masterful ability to convey complex emotions through simple yet powerful images that enhance the poem as a timeless exploration of human experience.

### **3.4. Poetic Stanza No. (4): Development of Meaning in the Sign or Image of (Rain - Female)**

In poetic stanza No. (4) We notice a complete transformation of the narrative. After the deep suffering that surrounded the child, as in signs (20-22), the narrative returns us to sign No. (1), the female. The poet Al-Sayyab tries to rearrange the narrative again, where he represents Sign (1) as a place that the poet seeks whenever the difficult and miserable conditions become too

heavy for him (Almayahi, H. 2023). Let us consider the following stanza and analyze the narrative sequence of the signs (26-32)

*Do you know which sadness the rain sends?  
And how gutters weep when it pours down?  
And how the only feel lost in it?  
Without end, like spilled blood, like the hungry,  
Like love, like children, like the death, it is rain!  
And your eyeballs in me float with the rain  
And across the Gulf waves flash the lightning  
The coasts of Iraq with stars and shells,  
As if she was counting on the sunrise  
Then the night draws a blanket of blood over her.  
I shout to the Gulf: "O Gulf!  
O Giver of pearls, oysters, and destruction! "  
The echo comes back  
It's like sobbing  
"O Gulf  
O Giver of shellfish and rain*



(26) The Rain (27) Feeling lost in the rain (28) Hungry children (29) death.



(30) The Rain (31) your eyeballs are in the rain (32) the lightning Sweep the bay.



In signs (26-32), we notice that the narrative sequence focuses on the sign of rain, and this sign is considered one of the main signs around which the narrative revolves in the poem. Rain

comes in sign (26) with a different meaning from the meaning inherited around it. The basic meaning of rain is happiness, goodness, and growth. However, the narration shows the rain as a sign of sadness, misery, and fear. The narration grows in the sign (27). The loss and loneliness came because of the rain. This meaning is a complete shift from explicitness to symbolism. The good that the rain brings to Iraq is the reason for Iraq's loss. The good things that Iraq possesses are a reason behind the loss of Iraq, just as rain is a reason for a person's loss and loneliness. The narrative grows in sign (28), as the children are hungry in the rain. They do not benefit from the rain coming to their land. The narrative reaches its climax in sign (29), where rain is a cause of death. The narrative sequence of signs (27-29) is based on a logical order where it begins with loneliness, then hunger, then death. Unfortunately, despite all the troubles that the rain brings, it continues to fall, as in sign (30). The narration is interrupted and the poet returns to sign (1), the female sign that he flees to whenever he feels fear and loss, where the eyes appear in the rain as an attempt to escape fear and loss.

### 3.5. Poetic Stanza No. (5): Development of Meaning in the Sign or Image of the (Female)

In the poetic stanza No. (5), the narrative moves from signs that refer to humans to new signs related to (nature = rain - - thunder - lightning - earth) and place (= villages - cities / Iraq), and to the historical narrative (Thamud) (Britannica, T 2020). And it focuses on describing Iraqi nature, and how rain can be a symbol of misery. The narration also presents the Gulf as a place for pearls, oysters and fishing, but it quickly changes the narration to make the Gulf a symbol of death.

*I can almost bear Iraq thundering  
He stores lightning in the plains and mountains,  
Even when it was released, the men sealed it  
The wind did not leave Thamud  
There is a trace in the valley.  
I can almost bear the palm trees drinking the rain  
I hear the villages groaning, and the immigrants  
They struggle with oars and slings,  
Gulf storms and thunders, singing:  
Rain  
Rain  
Rain*

(33) Iraq summons thunder (34) Thamud (35) Palm trees drink rain.





(36) Villages groan (37) Migrants struggle with the rain

The narrative sequence begins with the sign (33), which indicates the heavy rain season. The narrative focuses on the powerful lightning sign, and how the geography of Iraq is able to exploit and store rain. Then the meaning shifts from referring to the sign of the earth as a natural element that receives rain to a human symbol that can store rain. For the coming years, this symbolism clearly indicates that the geography of Iraq cannot starve, and also the human being in Iraq should not die of hunger. Turning to sign number (34), which takes the narration back to an ancient history in reference to the people of *Thamud*, the narration shows an illogical sequence of the relationship between sign (33) and (34), as sign (33) symbolizes fertility and growth, while sign (34) symbolizes Suffering and death. From this relationship between the two signs, we can understand the implicit narrative sequence between them, as rain in Iraq is a cause of destruction and death. The narrative continues to indicate that rain is the cause of blood. The narrative reaches its climax in sign (36) where the villages begin to groan. And hunger. Despite the rain falling in signs (33) in the nearby narration, as well as signs (18), (19), (26), (30), (31), and (32) in the previous narration, the villages are starving. The narration ends. An inevitable result is migration across the Gulf, as shown in (37).

**3.6. Poetic Piece No. (6): Development of Meaning in the Sign or Image of (Hunger)**

The Poetic stanza No. 6 represents a negative outcome. The rainy season has ended, but hunger has begun in Iraq. This outcome is what accompanies the fear of rain throughout the winter season, and makes rain a sign of misery, hunger, and migration.

*There is hunger in Iraq  
 The grains are scattered there during the harvest season  
 To satisfy the crows and the locusts  
 And grind the thorns and stones  
 A windmill revolving in the fields with people around it  
 Rain  
 Rain  
 Rain*



(38) Hunger in Iraq (39) Harvest season (40) to satisfy the crows and locusts.



(41) Millstones with humans rotating around them (42) Rain Rain Rain.

When looking at the rain falling in signs (18), (19), (26) and (30), which all hope for good as a result of the rain falling, we are surprised by the painful result in sign (38), which represents the narrative crisis after the winter season, despite the continuous rain. Except the people were unable to live, and the rain did not have any positive result, and the sign (39) comes to present a contradictory idea. Although the people were hungry, the harvest season was abundant. The rain was indeed abundant and the harvest season was also abundant, but in the narrative the cause of hunger is revealed in the sign (40). The crows are the ones who benefit from the rain, and they are the ones who wait for the harvest without suffering. The sign (40) comes as an evolution of the meaning from the sign to the symbol. Crows are a symbol of bad luck to the Arabs, and they are a symbol of the devastation that befalls the region. . The poem refers to real suffering that has nothing to do with rain, but rather indicates the presence of another kind of devastation that makes people die of hunger and migrate. The narrative returns as a point of remembrance in signs (41) and (42), people begin to remember the presence of people around the harvest grinding machine, waiting Season, they also remember the heavy rain throughout the winter. This remembrance represents a state of despair over the repetition of the rainy season and the repetition of hunger. The narration ends with the closing of Don't Want the Rain with subdued music (rain - rain - rain)

### 3.7. Poetic Stanza No. (7): Development of Meaning in the Sign or Image of (Migration / Departure)

The following two signs (43) and (44) represent the end of the narration for the entire poem. Unfortunately, the rainy season and the harvest season have ended, and hunger and devastation continue, and the people decided to migrate to another place. The sign (43) represents the decision to leave and emigrate, and the narration came to choose winter as a season of migration, which is a symbolic reference to choosing the season of goodness and growth as a season of migration

*How many tears we shed on the night of departure.  
Then we became ill with fear that we would be blamed for the rain...*

*Rain*

*Rain*

*Since we were children, the sky has been*

*Cloudy in winter*

*And the rain falls,*

*And every year, when the soil is full, we go hungry*

*Not a year has passed and there is no hunger in Iraq.*

*Rain*

*Rain*

*Rain*

(43) Harvest season (44) Rain, rain (45) In Iraq, hunger (46) since we were young the sky has been cloudy.



In the following signs (45-46), we find a contrast between the conclusion in sign (45) and the recollection in sign (46), which is an interrogative narration: Why are we hungry? And it has been raining since we were children? The sign (45) represents a symbol of the destruction that befell Iraq due to the crows and devastation that surrounds it. The sign (46) comes next to it as a hope settled in the memory regarding the rain that lives in the souls of children since childhood. But the sign (46) is considered a dividing point between the narration in all signs (1-45) and signs (46-50), and it represents a stage of complete closure of the previous narration that is, as if the poem begins from scratch, as will appear in stanza No. 9 next. The sign (46) is a closing point for the previous narrative, and an indication of the beginning of a new narrative. This does not mean that there is no semantic connection between the signs (47-50) and the previous signs (1-46).

### 3.8. Poetic Stanzano. (9): Development of Meaning in the Sign or Image of (Birth Children)

Stanza No. 9 represents the beginning of a new narrative in the poem. It is considered the final poetic one. The narrative begins by talking about the rain from a completely new and different perspective. This time, the rain is heading towards a new hope represented by the symbol of red and yellow roses as follows:

*In every drop of rain  
Red or yellow flower embryos.  
And every tear from the hungry and the naked  
And every drop of the blood of slaves that is shed  
It is a smile waiting for a new smile.  
Or a nipple that turns red on the newborn's mouth.  
In the young world of tomorrow, the giver of life!  
Rain  
Rain  
Rain*

(47) Many colors of flowers (48) Tears of hungry people and migrants (49) The New Born (50) Bright Tomorrow\Hope.



Sign (47) represents the image of rain that wets red and yellow roses and other colors. This sign is a symbol of hope for the past that brings children together with their mothers at the moment the rain falls. In sign (48), we find that the calmness represented by remembering childhood suggests resentment against immigration, and resentment against Hunger, which is an explicit invitation to look to the near hope and bright tomorrow. The narrative continues to grow to take us back to childhood in the sign (49), where the narrative adopts the sign of children as a new hope, and as an overwhelming desire for change. The narrative ends in the sign (50), which represents bright hope. With image (50) we can say that the narrative has ended, and it is a symbol that hope will come and that Iraq will have a bright, completely different tomorrow. In an attempt to link the sign (50) with the sign (1) as follows:

(1) Your eyes (50) Bright Tomorrow\Hope.



TO

We find that the narrative sequence was busy building an image cut between two meanings: the first: injustice, hunger, migration, and fear, and the second: bright hope. Through sign number (1), the poet Al-Sayyab was looking at sign (50), and the female represented a starting point for victory, love, and safety. The female sign was a crucial point that the poet continued to resort to whenever circumstances became difficult.

The following poetic stanza represents repeated signs and ideas that the poet Al-Sayyab wanted to repeat to emphasize them, as it begins by affirming that Iraq will be a source of goodness, and the Gulf will be a source of livelihood for fishermen, and Iraq will be a place of hope, stability, and life.

*Iraq will be covered with rain..."*  
*I shout to the Gulf: "Ob Gulf..."*  
*O Giver of pearls, oysters, and destruction! "*  
*The echo comes back*  
*As if sobbing:*  
*"O Gulf!*  
*O Giver of shellfish and destruction. "*  
*The Gulf scatters its many blows,*  
*On the sand: the foam of brine and shellfish*  
*What remained of the bones of a drowned wretch?*  
*One of the immigrants kept drinking squid*  
*From the depths of the Gulf and the decision,*  
*In Iraq, a thousand snakes drink nectar*  
*From a flower that the remains grow with dew.*  
*And I hear the echo*  
*Ringing in the Gulf*  
*Rain*  
*Rain*  
*Rain*



## Conclusions

The research presented a semiotic study of the signs in "The Rain Song" poem. The research relied on the main idea of transforming the written narrative into a visual narrative, by drawing the signs visually using artificial intelligence programs. The research reached the following results:

- Converting the written narrative into visual signs contributes to understanding the narrative sequence and enables deepening and assimilating the meaning.
- The visual narrative works to make the recipient under great influence in understanding the transformation from sign to symbol
- Visual signs involve the recipient in interacting with ideas, as the brain reacts to visual signs with greater sensitivity
- The Rain Song poem relies on building a narrative sequence in two ideas: the first, building the narrative to empower the meanings of the injustice that occurred in Iraq, and the second, to empower the meanings of bright hope for children and future generations.
- The narration is interrupted whenever the events intensify and the narration becomes more difficult, and the female sign is the place to which the poet escapes.
- In the poem, there is a clear shift from the sign to the symbol, and transforming the signs into visual signs contributed to a greater understanding of the symbol.

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