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Frequency of Traditional Rhetorical Figures in the Poetry of Badr Shakir Al-Sayab

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Abstract: Al-Sayab is regarded as one of the pioneers of modern Arabic poetry. His work stands out for its distinctive contribution to the evolution of poetry, both in form and substance. Because of the depth and diversity of Al-Sayab's poetic experimentation, his works have sparked substantial scholarly interest, with numerous literary researchers delving into his poetry to investigate his key role in developing the modern Arabic poetic movement.

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This article provides a thorough statistical study of the employment of conventional rhetorical tropes in Al-Sayab's poetry. These figures vary in type, and some famous examples include the following:

1. Religious figure: Al-Sayyab blended with his religious characters to the point where all borders were completely dissolved, and there are a total of 156 personalities that are diverse and varied. Many of these figures gave expression to the pain and groans that plagued his body and lingered in his mind.
2. The mythological character ranks second in number, yet these figures clearly reflect Al-Sayyab's influence by Western literary schools. The incorporation of myth in his poetry reveals his broad and open-minded cultural background. The total number of such characters reached one hundred and twenty-three**.**
3. The fabricated character comes after the aforementioned two types, with a total of seventy-seven characters. A close reader of Al-Sayyab's poetry will notice his deliberate and conscious engagement with these fabricated figures, from which he drew symbols and masks through which he voiced his poetry**.**
4. The historical figure appears in sixty-nine instances throughout Al-Sayyab's poetry. His selection was not random; rather, he deliberately chose characters with deep resonance in the collective human consciousness. Through them, he crafted poetic visions that harmonized with his intellectual and artistic ambitions**.**
5. Al-Sayyab employed literary figures that embody the breadth of human knowledge. Many of these characters possessed a flexible vitality that seamlessly blended with the poet's imagination. The number of such figures in his work amounts to forty-eight**.**

6. The folkloric character appears in seven instances, making it one of the least frequent types in Al-Sayyab's poetry, yet it holds significant symbolism within the collective human memory**.**

7. The characters categorized above totalled four hundred and eighty-nine figures, each possessing its own referential dimensions and artistic presence within Al-Sayyab's work. These heritage characters have been compiled in the following tables**.**

No	Poem Name	Religious Figure	Frequency	Mythical Figure	Frequency	Constructed Character	Frequency	Historical Figure	Frequency	Literary Figure	Frequency	Folkloric Figure	Frequency	Page	Volume
1	**The Delusion of Love**	**Eve (PBUH)**	one											142-141	1
2	**The Desecrated Beloved**									Lord Byron	one			148-147	1
3	**The Breaker of Shackles**									The Songster Robson	one one			184-182	1
4	**The Lover of Illusion**	Eve (PBUH)	one											186 -185	1
5	**Wishes**			**The Child of Passion**	one									189 -187	1
6	**Oh Nights**	Eve (PBUH) Cain **Abel (PBUH)**	one one one							The Poet of the Nights (Alfred de Musset) Majnun Layla	one one			201-196	1
7	**A Letter to Yazid**	**Al-Husayn (PBUH)** Al-Zahra daughter (PBUH) **The Infant**	four two one					Yazid	three					204-202	1
8	**To the Palace Beauty**			**The Girl of the Hut**	two									210-205	1
9	**The Return**					Hameed	two							227-225	
10	**Vengeance Rampaged, So Cry Out, O Victims**							**Jaafar**	two					243-242	1
11	**I Shattered a Bond Among the Chains**							Hitler	one					246 -244	1
12	**On the Day of Palestine**							Hitler	two					248-247	1
13	**The Furious Tigris**							**The Western Commander (Montgomery)**	one					255 -253	1
14	**A Memory of a Meeting**									The Ailing Genius (John Keats)	one			332-330	1
15	**The Dawn of Peace**	**Cain**	one											381-372	1

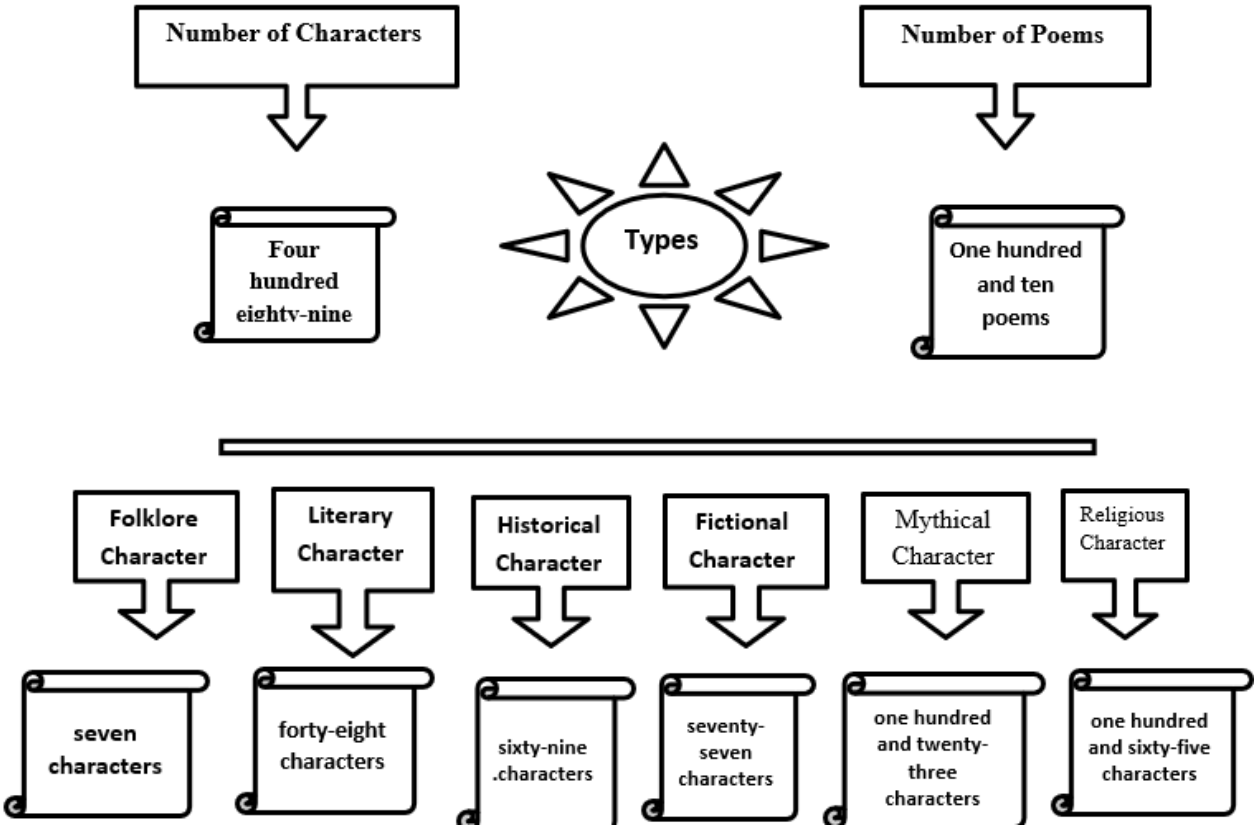
No	Poem Name	Religious Figure	Frequency	Mythical Figure	Frequency	Constructed Character	Frequency	Historical Figure	Frequency	Literary Figure	Frequency	Folkloric Figure	Frequency	Page	Volume
16	The Withering of Oleander Blossoms									Wordsworth	one			387	1
17	Streams Whose Water Has Dried									Wordsworth	one			388-389	1
18	The Abandoned Nest									Wordsworth	one			390-391	1
19	Prince of the Shatt al-Arab									Wordsworth	one			394-395	1
20	A Stream with Lush Banks									Wordsworth	one			400-401	1
21	The Huntress									Majnun Layla	one			403-404	1
22	A Revolt Against Eve	Eve (PBUH)	one											405-406	1
23	Between Contentment and Anger	Eve (PBUH)	two											407-408	1
24	Conversation (5)									Ibn al-Ahnaf	one			414-418	1
25	The Curses Into the Fire (1)									Dante	one			424-425	1
26	The Curses The Devil's Laughter (2)	Satan Iblis Adam Eve (PBUH) Azrael Cain Noah	one four one two one one one											426-429	1
27	The Curses Satan's Wrath (3)	Iblis	six					Socrates	one	Layla Homer Beelzebub	one one two			430-435	1
28	(4) The Curses Against Shireen	Iblis	one					Plato	one	Beelzebub	three			436-440	1

No	Poem Name	Religious Figure	Frequency	Mythical Figure	Frequency	Constructed Character	Frequency	Historical Figure	Frequency	Literary Figure	Frequency	Folkloric Figure	Frequency	Page	Volume
29	A Stranger on the Gulf	Christ (PBUH)	one					Afra	one	Hizam (Urwah ibn Hizam)	one			4-9	2
30	Hail, Ghilan	Christ (PBUH)	three	Ishtar	two									10-12	2
				Tammuz	one										
				Sisyphus	one										
31	A Song in the Month of August			Tammuz	four									13-17	2
32	García Lorca									García Lorca	one			18	2
33	The Informer	Cain	one											24-21	2
34	Elegy for the Gods	Cain	one	Tammuz	one			Karb	two					29-31	2
		The Son of Al-Hallaj	one												
		Pharaoh	one	Medusa	one										
		Al-Lat	one	Oedipus	one										
		Judas	one												
35	From the Vision of Fukuy	Christ (PBUH)	one	Kongai	fourteen			Fukai	one					32-38	2
		Cain	two												
		Abel (PBUH)	two	Tammuz	one			Genghis	two						
		John (PBUH)	one					Sazak	four						
		Eve (PBUH)	one												
36	The Caravan of Loss	Abel (PBUH)	one					The Mongols	two					32-38	2
		Cain	two												
		Adam (PBUH)	one												
		Christ (PBUH)	two					The Magi	one						
		د	two												
37	To Djamila Bouhired	Cain	one	Ishtar	one			Bouhired Beauty	two					48-55	2
		Christ (PBUH)	one												
38	A Letter from a Graveyard			Sisyphus	three									56-58	2
39	The Arab Maghreb	Muhammad (PBUH)	five					Abraha	one					59-64	2
		Jesus (PBUH)	one					Al-Nu'man Blood	one						
		Christ (PBUH)	one												
40	Elegy for Jaykur	Christ (PBUH)	two	Heraclius	one			Yazid	one	Qays	one			65-69	2
								Al-Shamir	one	Homer	one				
		Hud (PBUH)	one	Abu Zayd al-Hilali	one			Fukai	one						
								Al-Basus	one	Chorus	one				
41	Tammuz Jaykur			Tammuz	one	Jaykur	seven							70-72	2
				Ishtar	two										
42	Jaykur and the City			The Sphinx	one	Jaykur	eight							73-77	2
				Tammuz	two										
				Ishtar	one										
43	Return to Jaykur	The Virgin (PBUH)	one			Jaykur	sixteen							78-83	2
44	A Vision in the Year 1956 1956	Christ (PBUH)	two	The Divine Falcon	one			Genghis	two					84-93	2
				Ganymede	one			Hafsa	one						
		Judas	one	Tammuz	five										
		Lazarus	one	Atis	two			The Tatars	one						
				Ishtar	four			Shakhnoub	two						
45	The Reader of Blood	Cain	one											94 - 97	2
		Judas	three												
46	The Fox of Death	Azrael (PBUH)	two											98-99	2
47	The River and Death					Buwayb	nine							103-105	2
48	Christ After Crucifixion	Christ (PBUH)	one											106-110	2
		Judas	two												
49	City of Sinbad	Lazarus	two	Adonis	three			The Tatars	two					111-118	2
		Eve (PBUH)	one												
		Muhammad (PBUH)	two	Ishtar	two										
		Christ (PBUH)	four												
		Cain	one	Sinbad	one										
		Judas	one												
50	Rain Song	Thamud	one											119-124	2
51	Sybrus in Babylon			Sybrus	five									125-127	2
				Tammuz	two										
				Ishtar	one										
52	City Without Rain			Tammuz	one									128-132	2
				Ishtar	three										
53	Por Said	Azrael (PBUH)	one					Socrates	one					133 - 141	2
		Christ (PBUH)	one					Genghis	one						
		Lat	one					The Romans	one						

								The Tatars	one						
		Uzza	one					Saladin	one						
		Omar	one					The Crusaders	one						
54	The Blind Prostitute	Cain	one	Medusa	one	The Blind Prostitute	two			Abu al-‘Ala’ al-Ma‘arri	one			142-166	2
				Oedipus	one										
		Adam (PBUH)	one	Jukst	one										
		Abel (PBUH)	one	The Sphinx	one										
				Aphrodite	two										
		Gog	two	Faust	two										
		Magog	one	Helen	one										
				Apollo	one										
55	The Grave Digger	Judas	one			The Grave Digger	seven							167-181	2
		Azrael (PBUH)	one												
		Cain	two												
		Add	one												
56	Weapons and Children			Sinbad	one					Juliet	one			182-203	2
										Shakespeare	one				
										Macbeth	one				
										Robespierre	one				
										Elwar	one				
57	Window of Wafiqa (1)	Jesus	two	Ulysses	one									205-207	2
58	Window of Wafiqa (2)			Astarte	one									208-210	2
59	Gardens of Wafiqa	Eve (PBUH)	one	Astarte	one									211-214	2
				Tammuz	one										
60	Mother of Brom			Persephone	one			Hadi al-‘Ays	one					215-218	2
61	The Strange Cloud							Quixote	one					223-224	2
62	My Grandfather’s House			Orpheus	one									225-228	2
				Burdis	one										
				Sinbad	one										
63	Longing in Rome							Antarah	one					231-229	2
64	The Mother and the Lost Child			Persephone	one									232-235	2
				Sinbad	one										
65	The Sunken Temple	Cain	one	Ulysses	two			The Tatars	one					250-256	2
								Hafsa	one						
				Zeus	one			Al-Riqqa‘	one						
66	The Shades of Jaykur			Abu Zayd	one	Jaykur	twelve							257-260	2
				Sinbad	one										
67	The Cursed Poet			Narcissus	one					Charles Baudelaire	one			261-263	2
				Tantalus	one					Sappho	one				
68	Ibn al-Shahid							The Tatars	one					265-267	2
69	Jaykur Shabat	Cain	one			Jaykur	seven							271-273	2
70	Sahar	Noah	one											276-278	2
		Noah	one												
71	The Testament	Azrael (PBUH)	one	Ulysses	one									279-282	2
				Sinbad	one										
				Abu Zayd	one										
72	The Day Has Passed			Sinbad	three									284-286	2
73	Spring of Algeria	Cain	one	Agnes	one									290-292	2
74	The Book of Job (1)	Ayob (PBUH)	three											297-298	2
75	The Book of Job (2)	Ayob (PBUH)	one											299-300	2
		Cain	one												
76	The Book of Job (3)	Ayob (PBUH)	one											301-302	2
		Cain	one												
77	The Book of Job (4)	Ayob (PBUH)	three											303-304	2
		Noah	one												
78	The Book of Job (5)	Ayob (PBUH)	one											305-307	2
		Lazarus	two												
79	The book of Ayob (6)	Ayob (PBUH)	one											308-309	2
		Adam (PBUH)	one												
		Eve (PBUH)	one												
80	The book of Ayob (7)	Ayob (PBUH)	one											310-311	2
81	The book of Ayob (8)	Ayob (PBUH)	one							Lamiae	one			312-313	2
82	The book of Ayob (9)	Ayob (PBUH)	one	Heraclius	one									314-315	2
		Christ (PBUH)	one	Tammuz	one										
		Noah	one	The Sirens	one										
83	The book of Ayob (10)	Ayob (PBUH)	one											316-317	2
84	They Spoke to Ayob	Ayob (PBUH)	three											332-333	2
		Cain	one												

85	The Last Night			Sinbad	one			Al-Hasan al-Basri	one					334-336	2
86	The Poem and the Phoenix			The Phoenix	one									337-339	2
87	A Poem to Revolutionary Iraq			Tammuz	one			The Tatars Hafsa Qassim	one one three					342-343	2
88	Shanashil, Daughter of Al-Jalabi	Virgin Mary	one	Sinbad	one	Daughter of Al-Jalabi	four							345-348	2
89	Aram Dhāt al-‘Imād	Add	one	Sinbad	one					Antarah Ablah	one one			349-353	2
90	At Night	Azrael (ع)	one											354-355	2
91	Waiting for a Letter	Noah (pbuh)	one											356-358	2
92	A Night in Paris (2)			Ishtar	one							Shahryar	one	364-366	2
93	A Night in Iraq (2)			Sinbad Ishtar Tammuz	one one one									371-372	2
94	The House Emptied	The Jinn	one											371-372	2
95	Song of the Jinn Girls			Sinbad	one							The Daughters of the Jinn	two	388-390	2
96	Umm Kulthum and the Memory									Umm Kulthum	one			397-398	2
97	Prisoner of the Pirates											Prisoner of the Pirates	four	401-403	2
98	The Reed and the Galaxy			Odysseus	one									417-419	2
99	Louie McNeice	Christ (PBUH)	one							Louie McNeice	one			422-424	2
100	Hamid					Hamid	three							425-426	2
101	In the Forest of Darkness	Christ (PBUH) Lazarus	one one											430-432	2
102	Nafs and the Grave	Christ (PBUH)	one											437-438	2
103	Layla									Layla Qays	six one			442-444	2
104	O Father of the Free			Tammuz	one									447	2
105	Nafs and the Grave							Kawa	two					450-451	2
106	His Sister’s Killer									Layla	one			452-455	2
107	The Day Revenge Was Quenched	Cain	one					Abdul Karim	one					458-459	2
108	The Night of Destiny							Abdul Karim	one					460-461	2
109	The Birth of the Chosen	The Prophet of Guidance (pbuh) Abu al-Hasan (pbuh)	three one					Khosrow (Kisra) Caesar Qarmatian Qays Mundhir	one one one one one					462-464	2
110	The Revolution of 14 Ramadan	Harun	one					Ja’far	one					465-466	2

Chart of Traditional Characters' Appearance Frequency



See: The Complete Poetic Works, Badr Shakir al-Sayyab, Volume One, Beirut: Dar Al-Awda, n.d., 2005, pp. 3–446; and see: The Complete Poetic Works, Badr Shakir al-Sayyab, Volume Two, Beirut: Dar Al-Awda, n.d., 2005, pp. 3–473.