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# The Textual Dialogue Between Adonis and Al-Niffarī in Adonis's Poem “*The Transformations of the Lover*”

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**To cite this article:**

Fadi Ma'louf. The Textual Dialogue Between Adonis and Al-Niffarī in Adonis's Poem “*The Transformations of the Lover*”. *International Journal of Literature and Arts*. Special Issue: *The Woman as a Sufi Motif in Modern Arabic Poetry*. Vol. 10, No. 2, 2022, pp. 74-81.

doi: 10.11648/j.ijla.20221002.12

**Received:** February 9, 2022; **Accepted:** March 3, 2022; **Published:** March 15, 2022

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**Abstract:** This article deals with the textual dialogue between Adonis (born 1930) and al-Niffarī (died in 965 AD) in the poem, “The Transformations of the Lover,” from Adonis’s poetry collection *The book of Transformations and Migration in the Day and Night Regions* (1965) and reveals Adonis’ melting of the mystic text of al-Niffarī in his own text. First, this article discusses Adonis's discovery of al-Niffarī- the unknown Ṣūfī who lived in the margins of the religious and Ṣūfī institution in his time. Then, it examines Adonis’ introduction of al-Niffarī to the Arab reader through the articles that he published in *Mawāqif* (Attitudes) journal in 1971. A journal whose name was taken from al-Niffarī’s *Kitāb al-Mawāqif* (The Book of Spiritual Stayings) showing the relationship which connects between Adonis and al-Niffarī. The study shows the pattern of intertextuality in “The Transformations of the Lover,” where Adonis’ words are integrated with al-Niffarī’s without indicating reference. It has been noticed that in these texts the poet moves greatly away from the mystical meaning of al-Niffarī’s words, thus giving the physical and human experience dimensions that intersect with the situation described by al-Niffarī, with a clear change in the speaker and the addressee, as well as the essence of the experience. In so doing, the study concludes that Adonis was able not only to illuminate the text of al-Niffarī but also to fill it with influences that give al-Niffarī both authentic and modern depth. As a result, Adonis created a multi-dimensional and multi-semantic text that could convey his own idea or concept, related to the human being present in time and space.

**Keywords:** Adonis, Al-Niffarī, Intertextuality, Dialogism, Textual Dialogue

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## 1. Introduction

Julia Kristeva founded the term “Intertextuality” based on Mikhail Bakhtin's theory "Dialogism". Kristeva has expanded the term and its concept and shown the different layers of overlap between texts. She has also given an accurate description of the text as the absorption and transformation of many other texts, emphasizing that the relationships between the texts are numerous and varied and they illuminate the deep structure of the text during the reading process [1]. Yet, dialogism is more suitable to represent aesthetically the relationship between an earlier text and a later text in general. It is this concept which is adopted in this study to monitor the relationship that the Syrian poet Adonis weaved in his poetry, with Mohammed bin Abdul Jabbār al-Niffarī, the Ṣūfī writer and poet [2].

Why is textual dialogue endorsed rather than intertextuality?

Dialogue is a process that requires two separate characters, or two different entities in identity and substance; each has its own specificity and distinctiveness, and its own existential character. It never occurs between identical entities since what exists between the two similarities is agreed upon and nothing is to be added. Besides, through dialogue, each interlocutor seeks to discover what he does not have with the other, receives what the other offers with passion and attention, and in sequence, he re-thinks his attitudes towards his world and attracts from the other something that releases his energies.

Thus, when the text is seen as a living entity that debates the text/other entity that the author's imagination has brought and put his existential proposals before his own text, a "magical" movement takes place in the recipient's mind. It is characterized by its exchangeability and seeing the two texts separately and together, through which the texts are removed from their previous existence to be newly re-formed with

implications and connotations that generate as many readings as possible. In contrast, the term intertextuality refers only to the overlap between the two texts without a clear reference to the nature of this overlap.

Adonis read al-Niffarī's al-Mawāqif around the year 1965 as he himself tells in 1971 through the journal that he established and carries the name Mawāqif [3]. But Adonis' meeting with al-Niffarī's book was before he published his *Transformations and Migration in the Day and Night Regions* in 1965. He wrote the poems that were influenced by al-Niffarī two to three years prior as mentioned in the first version of the book. In these poems readers observed his clear and hidden textual dialogue with al-Niffarī. In the same article, he emphasizes the great impact that this Ṣūfī writer has left in himself,

*I don't know how to describe my surprise when I read it. I know that I felt, as I read it, that what I read was the act of killing: killing most of the poetry that preceded it, and most of the poetry that came after it, so I realized that I was in front of a great poet [4].*

This moment of encounter between Adonis and al-Niffarī was followed by Adonis' investment in the text of al-Niffarī at two levels: the first is to foster the idea of modernity in Arabic poetry with a heritage dimension characterized by distinction and difference from the Arab poetic heritage. Adonis, thus, considered al-Niffarī as one of the heritage tributaries that the Arab poetic modernity should shine with, and a model of breaking the norm and bypassing the traditional poetic structure and the prevailing literary system. The second is the creative textual dialogue and hosting the text of al-Niffarī in his poetic text. In so doing, Adonis transported al-Niffarī from the margins of the literary system to its center, and the literary reader sees him in a new light, intertwined with modern thought and literature. He found an added value that enriches that stage of development of Arabic poetry when efforts were made to renew the artistic and aesthetic dimensions of modern writing. This study examines the basis of the connection that Adonis sought to document and deepen with al-Niffarī, at the level of his relationship with poetic modernity. Then it traces al-Niffarī in Adonis's poem "The Transformations of the Lover" from his book *Transformations and Migration in the Day and Night Regions* (1965) to show part of the specificity of the textual dialogue between the two poets.

## 2. Al-Niffarī in the Mirror of Modern Arabic Poetry

Adonis sees al-Niffarī as a heritage equivalent of the modern Arabic poetic experience, and maintains that his ideas coincide with ideas founded in *Shi'r* (Poetry), a journal which Adonis established with Yūsuf al-Khāl (died 1987), and he developed it in his journal *Mawāqif* (Attitudes). In the conclusion of his series of articles, "Founding of New Writing" published in 1971, Adonis announces [3, 5, 6],

*This is how Al-Niffarī changes our measures: the value of the poem, in the Classical Arabic scale, is the clarity of meaning and the completeness of the form. But the value of the*

*poem, starting with al-Niffarī, suggests more than one meaning, it is not complete but remains open, it is a starting point, rather than a point of arrival, and, as a human being himself, it ever moves towards an open existence [4].*

Through this text, Adonis approaches the text of al-Niffarī in terms of his representation of the concepts of modernity and the open modern text. In his contents, writing and spiritual ideas, al-Niffarī is a reflection of a cultural separation with the prevailing trend in the religious institution and even in the Ṣūfī institution itself [7]. This was reflected in al-Niffarī's writings, which built "another system of vision, writing, ways of expression, and the relationship between language, thing or signifier and signified" [8].

Therefore, Adonis presents al-Niffarī in his articles as a model for the new writing he seeks to establish. What is this "new writing" Adonis refers to? And what characterizes it?

Adonis distinguishes between the foundation of a new poem — as he and others did in *Shi'r* — and the foundation of a new writing, and tries to define its features as follows: First, creativity is a search for the unknown, not the known. Put differently, creativity in writing is a departure from what was written at a distance of a moment ago to enter at a distance of a coming moment. Second, the change in writing must be a qualitative change; the boundaries that divided writing into types must go away, so that there was only one type of writing. Readers no longer seek the criterion of distinguishing between the quality of the written, whether it is a poem or a story, a play or a novel, but they seek it at the extent of its creative presence. If writing had been a map on which the boundaries of species were drawn, and its shelves and drawers were designated, and everyone who entered it had to enter as a visitor, submitting his own qualitative credentials, this map is today white without drawers or shelves. He who enters it is the renovator of the old, shaker of the traditional and the fixed. Thirdly, it is no longer enough to create a moving poetic time, but we must create a moving cultural time, for man is not the product of heritage, but its producer. The essence of the poem is its difference rather than agreement and submission to prevailing standards. It is the one who multiplies the world or extends it. If the essence is in the difference, i.e. variance, nothing compensates for or replaces poetry. Matter is one, but the human is numerous. Fourth, "The productive act is more important than the product." Here Adonis emphasizes that the act of creation is more important than what we create, and perhaps this indicates the significance of the present creative moment compared to what it constitutes, as it is what keeps the possibilities of development open. Fifthly, culture is not a restoration, but an innovation. Culture is not in what was founded, but in what moves by itself, moves and establishes other things. Sixth: The transference of the concept of poetic creation from considering "writing as a product of meaning", to a new point of view ascertaining that "meaning is the product of writing." Hence, the saying "meditation" replaces the saying "understanding." Seventh: After the hurricane that erases the boundaries of species from the writing map, calmness falls on the writing ground, and a new formation begins for a new writing [9].

The features mentioned relate intrinsically to al-Niffarī's experience of writing. Al-Niffarī's writing is a step in the unknown, and it is writing the future in terms that it does not imitate or restore another writing, but rather it shapes and creates thought. It is a writing that is not so preoccupied with breaking restrictions as it denies and transcends the very idea of restriction, through its union with meaning. Thus, it emerges from the sharp difference that its exploratory conduct forms in its process towards meaning. In resisting being fixed at a certain form, it highlights the significance of the action and transformation and takes away from the text or man the limits and confinement of immovability. The text is always moving and is multidimensional.

The idea of "writing produces meaning" negates the Creator's infinite preexistence. It can be interpreted that His essence follows His existence. This notion is an existentialist notion which influenced the modernist Arab poets. In Şūfī religious context this notion is unacceptable. Therefore, it can be seen in a different perspective which is that "writing is an act of discovering the meaning". Al-Niffarī in his act of writing aspires to discover the essence of the Creator.

Adonis believes that the concept of the new writing he pursues, is manifested in al-Niffarī's *al-Mawāqif*, because al-Niffarī's writing does not adhere to a classified literary type, but is transcends the genres, appealing to value and meaning, moving in "no form" paradoxically creating its form, and with its creation of its form, it creates its meaning or discovers it. By this means, it coincides with the modern poetic creation, whose revolution over poetic tradition, when this book was discovered, reached its peak in creating a prose poem.

*Al-Mawāqif* has set a new horizon in the cross-genre writing, and it is much more important - in terms of its embodiment of the value of poetry - than today's most of Arabic prose poems. In his articles, Adonis presents it as a writing that transcends every traditional way, reflecting self-energy and passion for research and exploration, without taking on an earlier form. Rather, it discovers its form and meaning as it goes through time, which, in this sense, intersects with Surrealist writing.

Adonis, therefore, wanted to look at the literary future and contribute to its founding. He did so starting out with Şūfī heritage, because of the open and arguable ideas and texts that it carries, and the rebellion it constitutes against classical and stereotypical traditions of thought and writing. However, he does not deny that his orientation to re-explore Şūfī heritage, in the light of modernity, since the 1960s was through his exposure, initially, to the French Surrealist experience [10]. Readers also find that his book *Şūfism and Surrealism* published in 1995, is just the exact depiction of the mild parallelism that he sees between the two experiences despite being different in form. The first believes in divine capability, while the second is manifested in history as an atheist movement, which has led some surreal-Arab poets to criticize it.

However, Adonis did not eliminate the primacy of surrealism's effect in shaping his poetry. In his proposal, he explores the Arab self through its dialogue with the other, because the dialogue necessarily incites oneself to self-explore and determine what makes it different from or

similar to the other. Through this process, man regains his true being, and becomes distinct and diverse at the same time.

Adonis' book *The Book of Transformations and Migration in the Day and Night Regions* is the first modern Arabic poetry book that employed al-Niffarī and revealed fragments of his texts to the Arab reader. Adonis quoted from *Kitāb al-Mawāqif* on the first page of his book, under the title of the first poem "The Flower of Chemistry" ([11], p. 9). He also returned and placed the introductory quotations from al-Niffarī under the title of the second section of the poem "The Regions of Day and Night" called "The section of al-Mawāqif" that corresponds to al-Niffarī's *Kitāb al-Mawāqif* ([11], pp. 110-166). The influence is evident in the poem "The Transformations of the Lover" in many places, in terms of language and style, and this is what will be dealt with in the following pages.

### 3. The Textual Dialogue in "The Transformations of the Lover"

The word "lover" in the title may refer to the love of a woman, to divine love, to the love of the homeland, or to the love of a human or moral value. The word "lover" is added to the word "transformations," thus highlighting the state of transformation and the transition from an old situation experienced by the lover to a new one. So, readers don't expect a description of a specific fixed form or - in the language of Şūfism- a fixed "Maqām" which the lover/the murīd has reached, but we expect to follow the changes, conditions and "Mawāqif" that the lover undergoes before he reaches the "Maqām" – a state of stability.

Adonis places two quotes under the title: one from the Quran, "They (your wives) are your garment, and you are a garment for them" (2:187)," and the other from the words of St. Gregory Palamas: "The body is the dome of the soul." Through this, it is inferred that the poet devotes his poem to celebrating the body, and the action of physical love between men and women, which is confirmed as the reader proceeds to read the poem.

This depiction of the human lover, and the relationship between men and women becomes apparent through Şūfī and religious terminology, as the quotations indicate, and as will be shown through tracing the intertextuality between al-Niffarī texts and the poem. It also constitutes a significant civilized view of the body, which has an overlooked religious reference. Adonis emphasizes this view in the two quotations accompanying the title.

Reading the poem in parallel with reading *al-Mawāqif* revealed many threads connecting the two texts. It is noticed that Adonis argues with al-Niffarī and is influenced by him at several levels: language, style, and poetic imagery in order to establish his own meaning. In the following paragraphs I am going to examine the positions where Adonis was influenced by al-Niffarī in this poem, and quoted from him and, in consequence, readers will realize the elements of similarity and difference between the two texts in all these places.

Her name was walking silently in the forests of letters.  
And letters are arches and animals like velvet.  
Army fighting with tears and wings<sup>1</sup> ([11], p. 113).

Here, readers note the poet's use of the expression "forest of letters" to describe the place where the adored woman was formed. She's the daughter of forests, forests whose trees are made up of letters. From the trees the letters generate names, and from nature she is born. Note here that Adonis in mythology, whose name was borrowed by the poet, was born from a tree trunk [12].

Adonis' creativity for this metaphor and these poetic images converse with an image created by al-Niffarī in the "Mawqif of reminding" when he says, "Everything has trees, the tree of letters is names" ([13], p. 47). The first section of the phrase corresponds with the Book of Transformations ([11], pp. 10-24) and the second section is found close to the first sentence, at the level of the poetic image that is brought in the mind of the reader: "Her name was walking silently in the forests of letters."

When following the Adonis' text, one reads,  
Tighten the eyelid shut.

The day announces the night- Wake up! ([11], pp. 122-123)  
Addressing the adored woman here parallels al-Niffarī's following text:

The night has set, and risen in the face of dawn, and day-break becomes intense. Wake therefore, O thou that sleepest, into thy appearing: stand upon thy prayer-rug. Verily I shall come forth from the Miḥrāb: so let thy face be the first that I shall meet. ([13], p. 59).

In his text, the speaker calls on the woman to make love, while in the Ṣūfī text she is invited to the dawn prayer, to stand in the chapel, where her face is the first thing he wants to see. The speaker invites his lover at night to celebrate the body, while the speaker in the Ṣūfī text invites her to wake up at dawn to a spiritual experience. In his text, the poet reflects an intersection between the euphoria of love and spiritual ecstasy, which appears in the poet's use of language and the mystic term to express the experience of love. He says:

I hear your hallucinating limbs,  
I hear the gasp of the waist and the salute of the hips,  
Overwhelmed by the ḥal:  
I get into the desert of horror, calling your name,  
Descending into the lowest stages,  
In the presence of the narrowest world-  
I watch the fire and tears in one dish. ([11], p. 124).

Obviously, the poet employs the saying "I am overwhelmed by the *ḥal*" which has Ṣūfī hints. He who is overwhelmed by the *ḥal* lives a state of spiritual ecstasy. Here, in this extract, the poet describes a situation resulting from the experience of love as if he were a Ṣūfī in a state of *shafḥ* (intoxication), employing the Ṣūfī language in the service of his expression of the meaning of his poem.

Then Adonis adds,  
The days of the year gather around me  
I make them houses and beds, and enter every bed and

house.

I bring together the moon and the sun,  
And the hour of love resurrects. ([11], p. 125).

This extract is analogous to al-Niffarī's in many places which carry a mix of different cultural elements: internal Shiite (Al-Baṭīnyah), Zoroastrian, Manic, and Christian. The reference is to: Mawqif of "my time has come", Mawqif of "and I shall loose the belt", and "Address, Gospel and Announcement". The latter, as the reader will note, is the part which Adonis most benefited from in this poem. Al-Niffarī says:

I shall appear: and the stars will be gathered about me. and I shall join the sun and the moon together. and I shall enter into every house: and they will hail me, and I shall hail them. All this, because mine is the Will; and by my permission the hour will come, and I am the Mighty and Merciful. ([13], p. 31)

In "Address, Gospel and Announcement" he says:

Set up for me the thrones, and spread out the earth for me in habitation: raise the covering that were let down against my sudden coming"([13], p. 183).

Adonis used the last scene elsewhere in the poem when he said:

You set up your bed  
Or spread the ground with mat  
We plant the trees of the body,  
Cover ourselves with our voices  
Until the time of appearance comes. ([11], p. 127).

Adonis uses the same vocabulary and sentences as al-Niffarī, but inserts changes depending on the situation he portrays. In al-Niffarī's text, the speaker is the divine voice that dominates the discourse and asks the slave to be ready and to prepare the earth for His coming, and asks the sleeper to wake up to receive Him. Adonis, however, makes the speaker prepare for the hour of love; he is the lover who awaits the coming of his beloved. When she comes, she does not act like a goddess to whom she has set up the beds and laid the earth, but participates in the act of love, and lives it with her lover. It should be noted that the change in pronouns carries an important significance. The speaker in al-Niffarī's text is the divine self that uses the act of command, and the discourse is subject to this dominant voice, while the style of discourse in Adonis' words is part of a statement describing what the beloved does; it also includes an expression of participation between the two lovers: "we plant," "we cover." The expression, "the time of appearance," used by Adonis at the end of the last quote above leads readers back to al-Niffarī's use of it in the previous paragraph of the last line quoted above from "Address, Gospel and Announcement" when the Lord announces His coming by saying, "Thy hour is come, and the appointed season of my appearing is at hand ([13], p. 182). In Adonis' text, he does not tell about its signified and, therefore, can have a variety of explanations.

Adonis' citations from al-Niffarī are clear also in the following sections:

O woman written by the lover's pen,  
Walk whereby you wish between my limbs,  
Stand up and speak:

1. The author translated all quotations and titles of Adonis poems.

My body splits and my treasures come out.  
 Budge my fixed stars  
 And lie under my clouds and above them  
 In the depths of the springs and on the peaks of mountains  
 High, high, high,  
 Become my face arising from every face,  
 A sun that does not come out of the east and does not set in the west,

And do not wake up nor sleep ([11], p. 126).

Even at the level of speech, these passages echo al-Niffarī, despite the difference between "The Woman of God"/The Sun in the mystic text, and the woman/human in Adonis' poem. Adonis' alterations are confined to changing the addressee from the sun to the woman and absorbing the images of al-Niffarī and turning them into a different connotation and a new rhythm.

In the following text, readers can easily note the images from which Adonis benefited. Al-Niffarī says,

Thou art My face rising from every aspect: so take faith for thy pledge. and when thou goest forth, enter unto Me, that I

may kiss thee between your eyes, and secretly tell thee that which is not meet for other than thee to know, and that I may go forth with thee into the path. and thou shalt see thee companions as if they if they were hearts without bodies. and when thou settlest upon the path, stay: for this is thy quest. Thus saith the Lord: put forth thy right hand, and set up thy knowledge therewith; sleep not, and wake not until I come to thee. ([13], p. 180).

Thus the Lord stayed me, and said to me: say to the sun, O thou that wast written by the pen of the Lord, show forth thy face, and display thy sides, and go whither thou seest thy joy, according to thy endeavor. send the moon before thee, and let the fixed stars be set about thee. Go beneath the Cloud and rise upon the depth of the waters: set not in the west, and rise not in the east. But stay in the shadow. Thou art the mercy of the Lord, and His holiness. He sendeth thee to whomsoever He will, and this is a guidance by which God guides whomsoever he wills. ([13], p. 182).

To illustrate the parallel more sharply, let's study the following table (Table 1):

**Table 1.** Comparison between Adonis and al-Niffarī (1).

al-Niffarī's Version	Adonis' Version
Thou art My face rising from every aspect sleep not, and wake not until I come to thee. O thou that wast written by the pen of the Lord. and let the fixed stars be set about thee. Go beneath the Cloud. and rise upon the depth of the waters. set not in the west, and rise not in the east.	Become my face arising from every face And do not wake up nor sleep. O woman written by the lover's pen Budge my fixed stars And lie under my clouds and above them In the depths of the springs A sun that does not come out of the east, does not disappear in the West.

With "Address, Gospel and Announcement" readers observe a sort of intertextuality elsewhere, when Adonis says:

We rise  
 The confined borders widen  
 The captivity dashes  
 We let go the suns that we stopped,  
 Everything is unfolded, and we look to its light blooming  
 And bearing fruit,  
 The world suddenly comes out to us,  
 Saying:  
 The tree of the soul has grown in the earth ([11], p. 129).

The mention of the suns that the lovers let go, and everything unfolded, and the blooming of light and the bearing of fruit, brings back to al-Niffarī, who addresses the woman (the sun) in his text. He tells her: "Be spread forth like the land and sea, and be raised up like the raised heavens" ([13], p. 181). In addition, the last line of the quote is similar, and even explains the al-Niffarī's saying: "The tree of Riches will grow in the earth" ([13], p. 183).

"Address, Gospel and Announcement" is the most influential text on Adonis in writing the poem "The Transformations of the Lover". It is because it is almost the only text in *Kitāb al-Mawāqif*, where a female character appears, which lends al-Niffarī's text poetic and figurative images consistent with the idea of love that Adonis' poem conveys. But Adonis benefitted in the text of the poem itself from other Mawāqif texts, both in terms of the linguistic

template as we see in his parallelism with "Mawāqif of a Light" or in terms of the poetic imagery as we see in his analogous writing with "Mawāqif of "Who art thou and who am I"":

Adonis says:

I took grains I have seeded and told them grow, and they grew. I said be harvested, and they were harvested. I said: be rubbed, and they were rubbed. I said: be ground, and they were ground. I said: be baked, and they were baked. ([11], p. 130)

And in a different place, he says,

O Body! contract and expand, reveal and conceal,  
 So it contracted and expanded and revealed and concealed.  
 ([11], p. 144).

Al-Niffarī says in "Mawāqif of a Light":

He stayed me in a light, and said to me: I shall neither contract it, nor expand it, nor fold it, nor unfold it, nor conceal it, nor reveal it.

And he said: O light, be contract and expanded and folded and unfolded and concealed and revealed. And it was contracted and expanded and folded and unfolded and concealed and revealed. ([13], p. 79)

Adonis uses the same language template that al-Niffarī used in these models, but Adonis does not find it sufficient to borrow the linguistic template. He employs it in a sense that, as it appears, contradicts the meaning that al-Niffarī wants. While the mystic addresses the light, the poet addresses the body. Adonis puts the body in the place of light, celebrating it,

and stirring meaning intensively. Put differently, Adonis integrates scenes inspired from different situations together to shape his poetic image. He succeeds what he was inspired by "Mawāqif of a Light" with a scene inspired "Mawāqif of "Who art thou and who am I"" and then with a sentence of "Mawāqif of Greatness". Adonis says,

O Body! contract and expand, reveal and conceal,  
So it contracted and expanded and revealed and concealed.  
And I saw my vesture inclining away from me,  
And the darkness covering me,  
And the world coming out of me screaming like a lance:  
"Go deep deep into the darkness."

I fell into the darkness,  
I beheld the stone as a light and the sand as water running,  
And I met you, and I beheld myself,  
And I said,

"I will stay in the darkness and I will not go out,"

But the sun came and released me

And I saw everything entering the sun...

And how did you marry me? ([11], p. 144).

In "Mawāqif of "Who art thou and who am I"" al-Niffarī says:

And He said to Me: Thou knowest me, but I do not know thee.

And I saw the whole of him connected with my vesture, and not connected with Me, and he said: This is my service. and

my vesture inclined, but I did not incline. And when my vesture inclined, he said to me: "Who am I? And the sun and the moon were darkened, and the stars fell from the sky, and the lights grew pale, and darkness covered everything save him. And my eyes did not see, and my ears did not hear, and my senses stopped. And everything spoke and said: "God is most great" and everything came to me, bearing in its hand a lance. and he said to me: Flee. And I said: Whither shall I flee? And He said: Fall into the darkness. and I fell into the darkness, and beheld myself. And He said: Thou shalt never more behold other than thyself, and thou shall not go forth from the darkness henceforth forever: but when I expel thee from it, I shall show thee Myself, and thou shall see Me; and when thou seest Me, yet shalt thou be further from Me than all that are far. ([13], p. 80)

In of "Mawāqif of Greatness" al-Niffarī says:

He stayed me in Greatness, and said to me: None beside me has the right to be wrathful. So do not thou be wrathful: for if thou art wrathful, thou wilt be wrathful, and I shall humble thee, for to Me alone belongs the might.

And I saw that everything had entered into the wrath. ([13], p. 80)

The similarities between the poem of Adonis and the last three texts quoted of al-Niffarī are linguistically shown as follows:

Table 2. Comparison between Adonis and al-Niffarī (2).

al-Niffarī's Version	Adonis' Version
O light, be contract and expanded and folded and unfolded and concealed and revealed. And it was contracted and expanded and folded and unfolded and concealed and revealed.	O Body! contract and expand, reveal and conceal, so it contracted and expanded and revealed and concealed
vesture inclined, but I did not incline.	And I saw my vesture inclining away from me.
and the darkness covered everything save him.	And the darkness covering me.
and everything came to me, bearing in its hand a lance.	And the world coming out of me screaming like a lance:
he said to me: Flee.	But the sun came and released me.
He said: Fall into the darkness!" and I fell into the darkness, and beheld myself.	I fell into the darkness.
And He said: Thou shalt never more behold other than thyself.	And I met you, and I saw myself.
and thou shall not go forth from the darkness henceforth forever.	"I will stay in the darkness and I will not go out."
And I saw everything had entered into the wrath.	And I saw everything entering the sun...

Simple readers who are inclined to easily judge poetry and poets will say that what Adonis does is clearly plain plagiarism, and he builds glory on the shoulders of an ancient literary figure. What appears as a result of a comparison between the texts is that Adonis has plagiarized an image created by al-Niffarī; but literature, as could be considered through the textual dialogue, reflects this interaction differently.

If Adonis is accused of plagiarizing the meanings of al-Niffarī, academic scholars are requested to cope with a serious claim: Adonis is the one who presented al-Niffarī to the Arab reader in the journal *Mawaqif*, issue 18 of 1971, and in the texts he presented the readers find: "Mawāqif of a Light" and "Mawāqif of "Who are thou and who am I"". If he had intended to camouflage his references to al-Niffarī, he would not have published them! What is interesting about Adonis's dialogue with al-Niffarī, is that when he borrows any

image, he integrates it into a set of relationships that readers do not find at al-Niffarī, and he creates meanings and contexts that typify his own poetic world.

When al-Niffarī says, "my vesture inclined", he perhaps tells about the world's leaning and its fall, according to the semantics of the dress in the "Mawqif of Raiment" when he says, "He stayed me in Raiment, and said: Verify thou art in everything like the Raiment's scent in the Raiment" ([13], p. 83). Man is like the smell of the dress to the world, in the moment of darkness he lives, and through this darkness he discovers the light inside him, as he sees himself.

Adonis borrows this moment of enlightenment from al-Niffarī and employs it to reveal the first-person narrator's experience of love. He – the narrator- goes deep into the darkness and does not come out, out of that darkness purity and poetry emerge in him. He also places the adored woman in God's place in the scene he portrays when he says, "I met you

and saw myself." This path in the darkness may remind readers of poets such as Arthur Rimbaud (died 1891), Lautréamont (died 1870) and Charles Baudelaire (died 1867), and poets of the surreal experience, who found deep in the underworld, what incited or illuminated their deeper spiritual experiences [14].

The last sentence referred to in Adonis' text: "I saw everything entering into the sun" brings us back to the saying of al-Niffarī in "Mawāqif of Greatness" which is: "I saw everything had entered into wrath". Here, Adonis has nothing but the use of the language template without any relationship between the contents of the two sentences.

Readers finally observe a convergence in the poetic image that can be seen between the "Mawāqif of the Sea" when al-Niffarī says:

He stayed me in the sea, and I saw the ships sinking, and the planks floating; then the planks sank also. and he said to me: whose sails is not saved.

He runs a risk who fling himself in and does not sail.

He perishes who sails and does not risk.

And the wave came, and raised up what was beneath and ran along the shore. ([13], p. 31).

And between Adonis' saying,

We were together on a boat, and you were pregnant. And as we were hugging intimately, the boat broke, and we survived on a piece of its woods, you delivered your baby on it ([11], p. 131).

Although the two poetic images are different, there are common elements: the boat which sinks/breaks, the plates are safe, and the passenger who climbs the boards returns and sinks. By contrast, the lovers in the poem survive by floating on planks, on which their child is born. The two images are different here, and have opposing meanings, and Adonis, through this image, debates and confronts the image of al-Niffarī with opposite arguments. This is what readers have seen in most of the analogies: al-Niffarī chooses to drown while Adonis chooses survival and hope (the birth of the child); al-Niffarī addresses the light while Adonis the body; al-Niffarī's beloved is written with God's pen while with Adonis she is written with the lover's pen and al-Niffarī finds God in darkness whereas al-Niffarī finds the beloved.

Adonis has conducted a dialogue with al-Niffarī in this text. Through using al-Niffarī's words, expressions and poetic images, but in this poem he emphasizes the meaning and value of the body, while al-Niffarī sees the body as a prison and a barrier that prevents him from annihilating in God. Thus, Adonis' idea is to sanctify the body, an attempt which has its support in some spiritual resonances, even among some of the Sūfī schools. Perhaps the poet's quotations under the title of the poem are the best proof of this.

The poem "The Transformations of the Lover" shows an important dimension of the poetic relationship that Adonis developed with al-Niffarī; this kind of textual dialogue with *al-Mawāqif* was not found in any other poem in Adonis' book that this poem was taken from. In the other poems collected in the poetry book, intertextuality is confined to some quotations, as shown in the poem "The Flower of Chemistry," or in titles scattered in the book.

## 4. Conclusion

This article attempts to illuminate the initial influence of the Sūfī text on modern Arabic poetry, by highlighting Adonis' discovery of al-Niffarī and employing him in his poetry. Adonis pushed the text of al-Niffarī to the center of modern Arabic literature, revealed his texts to the reader, and linked his style to poetic modernity. Equally important, Adonis conducted a kind of dialogue with the content of al-Niffarī's book, *al-Mawāqif*, specifically through *Transformations and Migration in the Day and Night Regions*, and through a limited number of poems in other books.

The textual dialogue between Adonis and al-Niffarī was traced in "The Transformations of the Lover". The findings were that Adonis takes advantage of al-Niffarī's text and alters it to serve the meaning he reflects in his own text. Adonis sometimes accurately quotes *al-Mawāqif* and sometimes makes changes to suit his own text. Through the Sūfī terms contained in *al-Mawāqif* that reflect a spiritual experience, he expresses a love experience that celebrates the body. He tends to make it parallel to the light that is manifested in the mystical radiance and reflects in the experience of al-Niffarī.

Some researchers tend to accuse Adonis of stealing from the text of al-Niffarī, especially from his language, style and poetic images, but this article contradicts this point of view, and considers that what Adonis did is a deep dialogue with the text of *al-Mawāqif* that led him to express a civilized attitude concerning the body and his cultural and human horizons. Adonis is not Sūfī, of course, but through his dialogue with the Sūfī text he has been able to reflect the aesthetics of Sūfī expressions and, at the same time, express his civilized and human position.

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