

## Narrating the Self: The Amalgamation of the Personal and the Impersonal in Eliot's and Adonis' Poetry

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### ABSTRACT

This article demonstrates how the self—reference to personal stories—infiltrates some, if not most, of the poems by two renowned modernist poets and literary critics: the American/Englishman T. S. Eliot and the Syrian/Lebanese 'Alī Aḥmad Sa'īd, popularly known as Adūnīs or Adonis. The article compares the two poets' depictions of the personal and the impersonal in poetry, and it reaffirms the great influence that Eliot's poetry has on Adūnīs and other Arab modernist poets. While Eliot's criticism discourages any biographical reading of his poetry, Adūnīs holds a different view by openly acknowledging the inclusion or existence of the personal in his poetry. Adūnīs' poetry, in particular, stresses the link between texts and historical figures in the realm of literature.

### INTRODUCTION

This article provides a comparative study of the poetry of T. S. Eliot and 'Alī Aḥmad Sa'īd, otherwise known as Adūnīs or Adonis. Eliot's famous poem, *The Waste Land*, and some of his critical essays are examined to show how they collectively portray his views on the personal and the impersonal in poetry. Some of Adūnīs's poetical and prose works are then considered, revealing the similarities and differences between the two modernist poets-critics vis-à-vis the concept of narrating the self in poetry. It is concluded that while Eliot discourages any biographical reading of his poetry, Adūnīs acknowledges and encourages this, and that Adūnīs' poetry illustrates, more than Eliot's, the link between literary texts and historical heritage.

#### Narrating the Self in Eliot's Poetry

It is on record that, during his lifetime, Eliot did his utmost to keep biographers away from infringing upon his privacy and delving into his personal life. He discouraged any attempt at writing his biography (*Letters* xv). Nevertheless, *The Waste Land* provides some hints about the existence of some personal material in his poetical works. Many biographical works on him have also been published, with the support of his wife Mrs. Valerie Eliot. Most notable among

his biographies is *The Letters of T. S. Eliot* (1988). Those letters have helped in some way to provide some insight on the stories behind the composition of some of his poems. They have also helped to clarify the ambiguities or ambivalences in some elements of those poems.

For instance, a letter to Aiken in 1916 (*Letters* 125) shows that Eliot considered Verdenal's (his supposedly secret lover) death, his first wife Vivienne's health, and his own financial problems among the reasons why he could not produce much at that period of time. This letter has engendered what is known as the Verdenal hypothesis, developed by John Peter (1952): that the poem is a kind of elegy for Verdenal who died in W.W.I and for whom Eliot dedicated *Prufrock and Other Observations* and *Poems 1920* (Moody, *Poet* 330). Peter identifies the fictional character Phlebas with Verdenal, on the one hand, and with the Hyacinth girl in "The Burial of the Dead" section of *The Wasteland* (247), on the other hand. In the same vein, F. W. Bateson argues that "April is the cruellest month" for Eliot because Verdenal died in the war in April (5-6). Other critics have also argued that Eliot's recalling Verdenal as "coming across Luxembourg Garden in the late afternoon, waving a branch of lilacs" points to the resemblance between the scene of the Hyacinth girl and Eliot's memory of Verdenal (Canary 29-30).

A much more celebrated line of biographical interpretation is the explanation of the poem in terms of the poet's relationship with his first wife, Vivienne Haigh-Wood. A firsthand account of people such as Bertrand Russell, among others, who knew the couple claimed that their personalities were incompatible and that the couple suffered much from the union (Southam 25). Mrs. Valerie Eliot, the second wife, claimed that "it was the sheer hell of being with [Vivienne] that forced [Eliot] to write [*The Waste Land*]" (Southam 25), a statement that can be corroborated by Eliot's confession in 1960 that "to [Vivienne] the marriage brought no happiness [...] to me it brought the state of mind out of which came *The Waste Land*" (*Letters* xvii).

Furthermore, Richard Ellmann remarks that the neurotic lady in:

"My nerves are bad to-night. Yes, bad. Stay with me."

"Speak to me. Why do you never speak. Speak.

"What are you thinking of? What thinking? What?

"I never know what you are thinking. Think." (111-14)

Is often considered to be "an almost philosophical rendering of Vivienne's status" in Eliot's life (Ellmann 117). Vivienne herself marked the same passage as "Wonderful" (*Facsimile* 11), and it is believed that she had made her husband remove the lines as they appear to be a reference to Russell who supposedly had a love affair with her (Ackroyd 69). Eliot's dedication of *Poems 1909-1925*, "For my dearest Vivienne, this book, which no one else will quite understand" (*Facsimile* 12), further serves to underpin the autobiographical elements in his poetry.

### ***The Waste Land* as an Expression of Personal Grouse Against Life**

Although Eliot himself admitted that, generally, the poem brought to him "the relief of a personal and a wholly insignificant grouse against life; it is just a piece of rhythmical grumbling" (*Facsimile* 1), one can identify some aspects of *The Waste Land* that depict the poet's troubled emotions occasioned by his life experiences. For instance, the lines

"On Margate Sands

I can connect

Nothing with nothing." (300-02)

Were said to have been written in Margate after he was granted a three-month leave from the bank on account of a nervous breakdown. As Ackroyd notes, the permission to be absent from the bank was a god-sent opportunity for Eliot to regain his energy and recuperate from his nervous breakdown. It was at that time that most of *The Waste Land* came into being thereby serving as a cure for his nervous breakdown (113-16).

According to Harry Trosman, with the statement "'these fragments I have shored against my ruins,' [Eliot] described a process of partial integration that brought about a relief from his personal grouse against life" (717). This informs why David Craig describes the poem as the product of Eliot's defeatist personal depression but presented "in the guise of a full impersonal picture of society" (200), and why Harold Bloom labels it as "an American self-elegy which has little to do with the decline of Western culture and everything to

do with a poetic crisis that Eliot could not quite surmount" (*Waste Land* 5).

Some of the psychological interpretations of the poem see it in light of the Oedipal complex and guilt. This can be corroborated by several of Eliot's statements which indicate that his relationship with his father was a complex one: Eliot-the-son wanted to prove to his father that he had not "made a mess of [his] life" (*Facsimile* xviii). Failing to do so before his father's death, the junior Eliot directed his desire to prove himself towards his mother: "My father has died, but this does not weaken the need for a book at all—it really reinforces it—my mother is still alive" (*Facsimile* xviii). But when his mother left London to go back to America, the strain was too much for Eliot and he collapsed. As Chester G. Anderson writes, "Eliot's early poems are filled with Oedipal guilt, impotence, decapitation, castration and anal regression" (qtd. in Canary 41). This view is also expressed by Gregory S. Jay who states that "literary potency and sexual potency become a single problem," adding that "certainly one of the strongest of the obscure impulses behind *The Waste Land* is Eliot's dread that his poetic springs had run dry" (153-54).

A hasty conclusion would mean that Eliot is schizophrenic. As a critic, he defends "the impersonal theory of poetry" (discussed below) but as a poet, he works in a totally different mode. This point implies that his criticism is a cover rather than an elucidation of his poetry, a situation that has lured, for almost half a century, critics such as Leavis, Richards, Matthiessen, Kenner, and so on to take Eliot's story for history until Craig and other younger generation of critics began to read the poem in autobiographical terms to unfold its "real" meaning. As Eliot himself has rightly argued, a poem is meant to be a celebration of influence and multiplicity: The first danger is that of assuming that there must be just one interpretation of the poem as a whole, that must be right... But as for the meaning of the poem as a whole, it is not exhausted by any explanation, for the meaning is what the poem means to different sensitive readers. (*On Poetry* 126)

In this context, the plea against exclusiveness is one of the main arguments of Eliot's essay, "Tradition and the Individual Talent," and it applies perfectly to *The Waste Land*.

One can say that some of the autobiographical interpretations of *The Waste Land* stop exactly where they should begin thereby producing a kind of literary gossip. To limit the poem's meaning to being primarily an expression of a 'personal grouse against life' or a mere document of criticism directed to Eliot's age only is to delimit its scope and significance. Nevertheless, the existence of the personal material in *The Waste Land* seems to be undeniably clear such that it utterly contradicts Eliot's theory advanced in his critical essay "Tradition and the Individual Talent."

### **Eliot-the-critic: "the Impersonal Theory of Poetry"**

What Eliot calls the "impersonal theory of poetry" encompasses both general history and the poet's own history. It entails a situation whereby "History and his story" (Hutcheon's phrase, 158) are fused during the process of writing. In other words, "the impersonal theory of poetry"

does not prevent the use of the poet's life as material for poetry. In "Tradition and the Individual Talent," Eliot states that "it is not in his personal emotion, the emotions provoked by particular events in his life, that the poet is in any way remarkable or interesting" (29). The poet does not have "a 'personality' to express, but a particular medium" (28). This medium, Eliot adds, is "the mind which creates," which "may partly or exclusively operate upon the experience of the man himself" (27). He concludes that "impressions and experiences which are important for the man may take no place in the poem, and those which become important in the poem may play quite a negligible part in the man, the personality" (28).

It is clear, therefore, that the "impersonal theory of poetry" does not repress or eliminate personal experience in *The Waste Land*, just as the existence of personal aspects does not mean that the whole poem is autobiographical. To use the resemblance between Eliot's description of his dead friend, John Verdenal "coming across Luxembourg Garden in late afternoon, waving a branch of lilacs" with that of the hyacinth girl as the bit that explains the whole as Canary (29-30) has claimed seems to me, at the very least, reductive. Likewise, identifying only an articulation of the unhappiness of a husband or an outlet for a nervous breakdown might hinder a grasp of the full significance of the poem. My claim here squares with Eliot's declaration in "Blake" that "you cannot create a very large poem without introducing a more impersonal point of view, or splitting it up into various personalities" (*Selected Essays* 278).

That the origin of a work of art is one thing and the work of art itself is another can be supported, for example, by the fact that many years after the publication of *The Waste Land*, the 'source' of the second half of the first stanza was discovered. For instance, "Marie", in the following stanza was identified as Marie Larisch (Morris 86):

My cousin's, he took me out on a sled,  
And I was frightened. He said, Marie,  
Marie, hold on tight. And down we went.

According to a personal acquaintance, Eliot had known Marie Larisch and had read her book (Morris 86). One can argue that while this shows that the information about Marie is more factual than fictional, it, nevertheless, does not enlighten the reader regarding the meaning of the stanza.

What is important, then, is the way the artist handles the material, and how that material, be it personal or impersonal, is transformed. This point can also be supported by several other views expressed by Eliot in his essays. For instance, writing about Shakespeare from the point of view of "Tradition and the Individual Talent," Eliot describes the task of the poet as "the struggle—which alone constitutes life for a poet—to transmute his personal and private agonies into something rich and strange, something universal and impersonal" (*Selected Essays* 117). For Eliot, "the great poet, in writing himself, writes his time" and "the essential is that [he] expresses, in perfect language, some permanent human impulse" (*Selected Prose* 55).

One can contend, therefore, that the concept of the "impersonal theory of poetry" also entails the "expression of

personality" ("Tradition" 24), for the poet does not have "a 'personality' to express, but a particular medium" (28). The "escape from personality" is not achieved through muffling the "private agonies" but by transcending that personality, by setting one's own personality within a larger frame. The impersonal and the universal frame helps the poet to be detached from everyday personal worries and torments, to be able "to dissociate the permanent from the temporary" (*Selected Prose* 185). This is why Eliot gives so much importance to the notion of the impersonality of art.

Some of Eliot's perspectives on how a work of art should be read are also expressed by Roland Barthes in his influential article, "The Death of the Author." For Barthes,

Writing is the destruction of every voice, of every point of view. Writing is that neutral, composite, oblique space where our subject slips away, the negative where all identity is lost, starting with the very identity of the body writing. (222)

He also complains:

The *explanation* of a work is always sought in the man or woman who produced it, as if it were always in the end, through the more or less transparent allegory of the fiction, the voice of a single person, the *author* "confiding" in us [.]. It is language which speaks, not the author; to write is, through a prerequisite impersonality [.]. to reach that point where only language acts. (222-23)

The effort to dismantle the authority of the author is reinforced by famous French feminist theorist Julia Kristeva with her "theory of the irreducible plurality of texts within and behind any given text, [that should deflect] the critical focus away from the notion of the subject (the author) to the idea of textual productivity" (qtd. in Hutcheon 126). Thus, Eliot's concept of "the impersonal theory of poetry" is not about focusing on the nature of the material that goes into art as much as on "the intensity of the artistic *process*, the *pressure*, so to speak, under which the *fusion* takes place" ("Tradition" 27, emphasis mine). This is because he believes that "poetic originality is largely an original way of assembling the most disparate and unlikely material to make a new whole" (*On Poetry* 119).

### Narrating the Self in Adūnīs' Poetry

Unlike Eliot, however, Adūnīs has more openly acknowledged the inclusion or existence of the personal in his poetry. In an interview published in *AlḤayāt* daily, for instance, Adūnīs acknowledged the lasting influences of his father on his life and career. When queried by the interviewer 'Abdu Wāzin that "the image of the father is absent" in his poetry, Adūnīs responded: "Maybe [he is not] on the personal level, except in two small poems that I wrote as salute and elegy. On the symbolic level, however, I believe he is deeply present in my poetry, but in a complex way" (*AlḤayāt* March 20, 2010: 7). One of the two poems that Adūnīs was referring to is "marthiyatan ilā wālidī" (Two Elegies to my Father) that is part of the larger section entitled "al-Mawt" (Death) which features in his poetry collection, *Al-A'māl al-Shi'riyya* (The Poetical Works; 40). Of course, Adūnīs' works are replete with references to death and to *nār* (fire), in reference to the manner of his father's death: he died in 1951 in a



car accident in which all the passengers were burnt to death (*Al-Hayāt* interview of May 20, 2010: 4).

One can notice that there are scattered passages and phrases in Eliot's work which may give a hint at a personal vein but are suppressed such that they seem to resist giving a direct notion of a personal voice. This article believes that Adūnīs also uses the same tactic. For example, he claimed in the earlier-mentioned interview with *Al-Hayāt* that he has only two elegies dedicated to his father:

أبي غد يخطر في بيتنا شمسا فوق البيت  
يعلو سحاب أحبه سرا عصيا دفين  
وجبهة مغمورة بالتراب أحبه صدر  
رميما، وطنين

My father is a morrow spiriting our house  
[As] a sun and above the house the cloud is high  
I love him a buried unfathomable secret. And a forehead  
(a battlefield) covered with sand  
I love him a decayed chest, and clay (PW 40).  
And:

على بيتنا، أن يشهق صمت وبيكي سكون لأن أبي  
مت، أجدب حقل وملت سنونو

Above our house a silence sobbed  
Because my father died the field became barren and the  
swallow died. (PW 40)  
But one can also contend that "The Cloak" (al-'Abā'a)  
is also a poem for his father:

في بيتنا عباءة فصلها  
عمر أبي خيطها بالتعب  
تقول لي- أنت على  
حصيره الغصن المنجرد  
وأنت في ضميره  
غد الغد

In our house [there is] a Cloak  
Cut out by my father's life  
Sewn by his sweat.  
It tells me—you were on his rug  
Like a sleek branch  
And you were in his consciousness  
The morrow of tomorrow

One should note that the context of Arabic poetry is different than that of English poetry and does not warrant Adūnīs or any other Arab poet to be worried about his poetry being read only on a personal level. The mainstream in conventional Arabic poetry is lyrical modes whereby the personal and the universal interact, giving vent to a multifaceted poetics of lamentation, boast, panegyrics, praise, and elegy (Stetkevych 2002). While taking it for granted that he/she belongs in a large and rich tradition of many centuries, the Arab poet often places his personal intimation or grumblings into a large intertext from which he selects what suits his taste and disposition. Each Arab poet's register has this amalgam that brings together an objectified history, a personal experience, or a subjective reading of tradition in line with his/her own stand.

### Myth, Mask and other Strategies in Adūnīs' poetry

Teirab Ashshareef notes that the mythical time featuring in Adūnīs' poems in *Qasā'id ūlā* [First Poems] (1957) and *Awraq fī al-rīh* [Leaves in the Wind] (1958)—is borrowed

either from T. S. Eliot or from the Syrian Social Nationalist Party leader Antūn Sa'ādah, (21-22). One of the instances where Adūnīs employs myth is the poem "Dream"—the first part of the larger poem "Resurrection and Ashes"—in which he dreams of the rebirth of the Phoenix:

أحلم أن في يدي جمرة آتية عل  
جناح طائر من أفق مغامر  
أشم فيها لهبا هيا أليا لبعلك- مذبح، يقال  
فيه طائر موله بموته وقيل باسم غده الجديد  
باسم بعته يحترق، والشمس من رماده و  
الأفق

I dream that there is an ember in my hand  
Coming on the wing of a bird  
From an adventurous horizon  
I smell in it a temple-fire...  
Ba'albak has an altar  
They say it has a bird that is fond  
Of his death  
And they said in the name of its new  
Morrow, in the name of its resurrection  
It burns itself. (Ashshareef's translation, 30-31)

These lines portray sacrifice and resurrection, and death and fire as positive entities; they also show that death is needed for rejuvenation; death does not mean the end but rather the beginning and, as such, sacrifice is necessary. On the poetic level, the poet is willing to sacrifice himself for his community; on the personal and private level, the death of the father is given a mythical dimension to justify the loss. All this is subsumed in the need for the community to be born again from the ashes of death. As M. M. Badawi has noted, Arab poets like Yūsuf al-Khāl, [Adūnīs] and Khalil Ḥawī have produced excellent results, in which the private world of the poet and the society in which he lives are so inextricably bound up together in the poet's apprehension of reality that the personal salvation he seeks in his poetry is at one and the same time the salvation of his community. (xx-xxi)

So the mythical method, as Eliot calls it, is one strategy that some Arab modernist poets have used in their quest to yoke together the personal (his story) and the impersonal (history).

Adūnīs also uses the 'strategy of the mask', which as Jābir 'Asfūr explains, is the use "of two different voices of two different persons; they work together in a poem that supports both voices in order for the meaning of the mask to be the sum of the two voices at the same time." The mask, 'Asfūr concludes, is "a means through which the poet contemplates his self in relation to the world (*Fuṣūl*, July 1981, 124). Adūnīs adopts, for instance, the 'the mask' of Ṣaqr Quraysh in the second volume of *The Poetic Works* (85-132), in which Ṣaqr's plight is portrayed as that of the poet too.

Both Ṣaqr and Adūnīs are exilic entities who are ready for sacrifice to accomplish a rebirth of their nation. Ṣaqr succeeds against all odds to re-establish the Umayyad rule in al-Andalus (Muslim Spain) and Adūnīs hopes to replicate that by re-establishing the kingdom of poetry in contemporary Arab cultural milieu (91). This aspect of Adūnīs' poetry exemplifies the kind of narratives and self-narratives that one encounters in reading modern Arab poets in their quest for meaning and search for a way out of the liminal impasse of fluctuation and instability that modernity imposes on them.

The memories that the poet extracts from al-Andalus are telling of his fight and flight with the im/personal; the historical framework here informs the personal one.

### Romance, Language, and Nationalism in Adonis' Poetry

Another example that shows how personal experience is transformed in a work of art can be found in a poem that Adūnīs wrote to “Celebrate a love relationship with a young woman he became acquainted with while he was a professor at [a] Syrian university in Damascus” (Boullata, 541). The poem, “Khalīṭ iḥtimālāt ... quddās bilā qaṣd” (An Unintended Worship Ritual, a Blend of Probabilities ...) has two trends: the personal and the impersonal, with the latter growing out of the former. At the beginning of his analysis of the poem, Issa Boullata notes that his interest in studying it:

is to see how the poet expresses his love, and what he does with it as a theme that, though basic to the poem, is made to transcend the limitations of private personal feeling and reach out to basic things in contemporary Arab society. The poet's private consciousness, in this case, has been enlarged to involve collective Arab consciousness. (542)

Here Boullata is arguing for the use of the personal event as a base from which the poet is attempting to understand the wider cultural scene, and vice versa. Boullata notes how, in the first part of the poem, Adūnīs re-incarnates elements of the pre-Islamic ode, such as mentioning *al-aṭlāl* (the abandoned campsites) and the surroundings thereof. In the classical Arabic poetic convention, the narrator (or speaker in the ode) reflects much on his situation and anticipates his loved one's ability to help him overcome his sorrow and form a new beginning (see, e.g., Stetkevych 2002).

The condition of the speaker in the classical Arabic ode reflects a similar state of decay that pervades the contemporary Arab world, while his loved one is likened to the Arab city that awaits regeneration. It can be argued, then, that Adūnīs' goal in “Khalīṭ iḥtimālāt” is one of using a language he loves to incite change, to replace the old and unfulfilled with the vitality of a new Arab life. His love for language is mirrored in the similar emotions he experiences towards the young Arab lady, who is shown to reciprocate this love, taking “root” in the narrator and growing in a magical way that is suggestive of the growth of creative language that comes with each new poem composed. The continuous innovation through love and language is then extrapolated as necessary ingredients for the renaissance of Arab society. Moreover, the poet is willing to sacrifice himself and his lover in an effort to bring about positive change (Boullata 557).

### Adūnīs and the Acts of Writing and Reading

The acts of writing and reading are an important theme in Eliot's and Adūnīs' poetry. And Eliot's borrowing of the French writer Baudelaire's proclamation “mon semblable, mon frère” (*The Waste Land*, 76), which means my double, my brother, as an invitation to the reader to share the liminality of the poet in his quest, runs true for Adūnīs. In his poem *Mufrad bi-ṣiḡhat al-jam'* (Singular in the Form of Plural), Adūnīs echoes Eliot in addressing the reader as

أبيها الضائع، أبيها الشجرة وأنت،  
المنكوسة/يا شبيهي

And you understand me, you the lost one, you the bent tree/mon semblable [my double].

As Jayyusi notes, “In his poetry [Adūnīs] is mostly either dealing with ideas, or bemoaning his own suffering... Adūnīs' self-centered suffering often falls short of finally identifying with the reader's own experience of life, and remains somehow isolated” (*Trends* 688).

I think Jayyusi's criticism here does not take into consideration this particular aspect of the kingdom of poetry that is shared between the poet and the reader. It is an essential aspect of the modernists' “raid on the inarticulate” (Eliot's phrase), understood as the search for the unknown, which often make people consider poets Eliot and Adūnīs too difficult to understand. Adūnīs often relies on his partnership with the reader. This aspect of his poetry is aptly represented in *Mufrad*, a four-part poem that is more than 200 pages long and starts with *ن يولفت* (Genesis). Sounding autobiographical, the poem encapsulates the sufferings of the poet and of his age and its paradoxes.

Like *The Waste Land*, *Mufrad* has a spiral movement like a moving tornado with no center. The poem's agenda is announced at the very beginning: to discover and search in order to tell a different story. ‘Alī (Adūnīs' real name), the child, is accompanied/guided by Buhlūl—the archetypal idiot-savant (*Islamic Encyclopedia*)—to make the marginal become the center. The story of ‘Alī/Buhlūl/man is then told from many perspectives. We see him as a familiar person, as a hero, and as a little man, in an attempt to juxtapose the immense varieties in the universe, blending opposites, and searching for what unifies all. Despite the poem's centerlessness, one can argue that Adūnīs-the-poet is still in the background echoing the intensity of the personal aspect of the experience. Consider these lines for example:

كيف يخلق فراغات أخرى ليتقدم كيف يعطي مكانا لما بهم أن يولد بين عينيه

How can he create a space for himself to advance?

How can he give a place to what is about to be born in his eyes?

For Adūnīs, creating a place for himself among the great poets of history is the ultimate goal. It is within this framework of opening space for his own sake that his poetic strategies should be understood.

### Adūnīs: Fusing a Forebear-poet with the Self

Adūnīs views the precursor—in this case the tenth-century neo-classical Arab poet al-Mutanabbī—as a person before all else, in whose work “the personal [always] grows into the poetic” (al-Musawi, “Dedications” 29). Al-Mutanabbī was a poet with several defining qualities, such as a desire to love, a tendency to rebel, and a piercing ability of perception. Adūnīs' analysis of al-Mutanabbī's poetry revolves around these characteristics. Adūnīs' fascination with this forebear is encapsulated in his prose work, *Al-Kitāb: ams, al-makān al-ān: makḥūṭa tunsab li-l-Mutanabbī* (The Book: Yesterday, the Place Now: A Manuscript Attributed to al-Mutanabbī). The book is an effort to recreate a real al-Mutanabbī from several inaccurate portrayals of him distorted through history. To this end, Adūnīs embarks upon a journey of annotation,

rephrasing, introducing details of history, and providing readers with other insights into the life and poetry of al-Mutanabbī. What emerges then is a revisionist piece which not only reassesses history as narrative but, more importantly, allows Adūnīs to open a space thereafter for *himself* and evolve further in his career. This is not strange, as some other Arab poets have also used dedications to forebears or other archetypal figures as a means to achieve self-awareness and rebirth.

## CONCLUSION

Evidently, Eliot has had some influence on Adūnīs and other Arab modernist poets, and many scholars have examined the extent of that influence. In the foregoing, some of the similarities and differences between Eliot's and Adūnīs' poetical and critical works were reexamined by highlighting some of the strategies the two poets have used in either revealing or beclouding personal material in their poetry. While Eliot denounces an autobiographical reading of his poetry, Adūnīs overtly acknowledges and encourages such readings. The article concludes that, in stressing the link between texts and historical figures, both poets depict through their poetry the arduous, tense journey of amalgamating the personal and the impersonal in poetry to express the universal.

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