

# Defamiliarization in Selected Poems of E.E. Cummings and Adonis

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### Abstract

Defamiliarization as a modern concept, coined by the Russian Viktor Shklovsky (1893 – 1984) in his essay “Art as Technique,” breaks the grounded rules of modern poetic writings at different levels either form, language, images, or punctuation. Hence, this paper aims at epitomizing different examples of the views of E. E. Cummings (as an American poet) and Ali Ahmad Said Esber, also known by the pen name Adonis or Adunis, (as an Arab poet) towards applying the concept of defamiliarization in their selected poems. Belonging to different cultures and using different languages, both poets conceptualize defamiliarization in different ways. Hence, the paper answers questions like “to what extent does Adonis express such tendency towards defamiliarization in a way similar to Cummings?” and “Does Adonis do the same to the same degree?” the researcher, through the analysis and the synthesis of Cummings’s poems “r-p-o-p-h-e-s-s-a-g-r” and “1(a...(a leaf falls on loneliness);” and Adonis’s poems “The Beginning of Doubt,” and “Search,” hypothesizes and presupposes how both poets approach defamiliarizing language, form, and style in distinctive literary manners. However, both poets seek to make readers conceive the poetic experience at more human and universal levels. Still, in relation to the cultural background along with other language considerations, Adonis becomes conservative in his defamiliarization, unlike Cummings who reaches a limitless ground of defamiliarizing his poetry. Through defamiliarization, both poets try to make of their private writings human and universal experiences. Thus, this paper fills the gap of studying two different poets in relation to conceiving and applying the modern concept of defamiliarization and opens new horizons for further studies.

**Key words:** Defamiliarization; Cummings; Adonis; Modern; Human; Universal

### **Introduction: Defamiliarization**

This paper discusses and analyses the aspects of defamiliarization technique in the selected poems of both Cummings and Adonis. The term “defamiliarization” is a modern term that has been coined by the Russian critic, literary theorist, and writer, Viktor Shklovsky. He is one of the Russian formalists who believe in the importance of examining and perceiving the written works of art without connecting them to their historical authenticity. Viktor Shklovsky (1893 – 1984) is one of the Russian Formalists, a name given to a group of literary scholars and linguists (1916 – 1929). They attempted to develop a group of innovative theoretical norms related to the literary works. Other pioneers are Osip Brik, Boris Eikhenbaum, Roman Jakobson, and Boris Tomashevsky. All these writers and critics belong to the Moscow Linguistic Circle and OPOYAZ (the Society for the Study of Poetic Language) in St. Petersburg.

The aim of this research is to study how defamiliarization is theorized and applied in two culturally different poetic texts and contexts. This entails the analysis and synthesis of two major American and Arab poets: the American poet E.E. Cummings and the Arab poet Adonis. The researcher seeks to prove that although the peculiarities of the two experiences are different, still, they are tied by and have similar assumptions which render the two poetic experiences, although different, obtain universal human paradigms and applications.

Shklovsky firstly named the term “defamiliarization” in his well-known essay “Art as Technique” where he elaborates that the readers should be forced, by the writer, to view the ordinary literary works of art as being new, uncommon and unfamiliar ones. To elaborate, through introducing the term “defamiliarization,” Shklovsky highlights the idea of refreshing our perception of absorbing realities through the mechanical essence of life, the complex psychological approaches to man's behaviors, and the

overwhelming scientific nature of relationships, in a new subjective way, opposite to the conventional objective representation of apparent concrete demeanor. Shklovsky (1965) stresses the fact that the literary work comprises certain stylistic tools, which possess aesthetic values, partaking in formulating the literariness of the work of art (8-9). Meanwhile, these stylistic features must be envisaged in a way that develops and creates a new sensation of the literary work. Shklovsky (1965) proposes that writers must reject the habitual sense of perceiving the work of art through introducing unpredictable and surprising language and imagery, which, in turn, leads to a sense of deautomatizing perception (12-13). Watters (2010) states that Shklovsky's concept of "Ostranenie", or "making strange," "disrupts the mundane and everyday life, allowing that which has become familiar or automatic to be seen anew." (4)

As a formalist, Shklovsky's intrinsic premise is to adopt "a theory of literature concerned with the writer's technical prowess and craft skill" (Selden 30). This craftsmanship enables the writers to deviate from the familiar usage of words, language, and images to other unfamiliar horizons. By doing so, managing writing literature in such an ambiguous, divergent, and incompatible way induces and reinforces the "literariness" of literature rather than its literary nature. In other words, being distinguished by its unique use of language, and achieving "its distinctiveness by deviating from and distorting" "practical language" (Selden 31), entail focusing on the "how" of the written text and not its "what". The "how" of literature in general is related to "its phonetic and lexical structure as well in its characteristic distribution of words and in the characteristic thought structures compounded from the words... ." (Shklovsky 21). In addition, the "how" of the literary work involves the arrangements of imagery and many other technical devices. This means a new arrangement of phonetic lexical and structural levels of language.

Experiencing both aestheticism and “artfulness” in demonstrating the object of the word in such a concurrent moment of understanding, sustains the motto of “art for art’s sake” (Landa 13) reviving the active dynamic processes of individualistic vision as the focus of the artist is fostered on how he should present his artistic material to break its familiar predicaments. In other words, defamiliarization is “to make forms difficult, to increase the difficulty and length of the perception because the process is an aesthetic end in itself and must be prolonged. *“Art is a way of experiencing the artfulness of an object, the object is not important.”* (italic in the origin) (Shklovsky 12).

Furthermore, images through the mechanism of defamiliarization are handled and defined in a peculiar way which is different from the conventional habitual projection. Shklovsky (1965) rejects Potebnya’s slogan “art is thinking in images” (6), claiming that this leads to “farfetched interpretations of individual works of art” (6). He focuses on the process of arranging the images of poetry rather than creating them, as images belong to no one; they are “the Lord’s” (7). The image, thus, is not envisioned for its own sake, but is rather reconsidered and reviewed in relation to how it is represented. In other words, Shklovsky sacrifices the literary nature of the images for their literariness or formal representation.

Finally, Shklovsky’s project of defamiliarization seeks viewing ordinary literature as being strange, written in uncommon style and language. This entails the fact that objective social, political, and psychological paradigms are perceived subjectively through images, words, and style, making the familiar unfamiliar. The writer, hence, contextualizes an unexpected and a surprising way of representing and reintroducing the literary textual formal and thematic praxis in a way that mirrors the complexity and ambiguity of his /her modernity. Thus, the modern representation of reality focuses on creating literary works which express the new

scientific, philosophical, and social changes inundating the modern spatial and temporary context driven by the growth of the industry and scientific inventions. This is done through the subjective aesthetic writing experiences rather than their traditional objective verisimilitude of reality. This imparts a sense of virginity to the human experience within literary works; virginity, here, is meant to be a process of ongoing refreshing of the automatized and familiarized language, rearranged in a way that makes us feel all the time the new temporal and spatial possibilities of language, recognized and perceived through sensations to explore new realms of language away from the familiarity we encounter every day.

### Defamiliarization in the poems of Cummings and Adonis

Edward Estlin Cummings (1894 – 1962) is an imminent modern American experimental painter, essayist, author, playwright and poet who brought poetry into new robust topographical concerns. Cummings experienced a tough time through his life when his only daughter refused him; this left him lonely and in a desperate state (Kennedy 480). Thus, he spent a long time in his life, especially after the World War I, travelling alone around Europe where he met other poets and artists by whom he was significantly inspired. The emergence of modern features and writing techniques, among them defamiliarization, in Cumming's poetry renders his poems tangibly close to the modern visual art.

Adonis, or Ali Ahmed Sayed Esber (1930 - ) is a Syrian writer, critic, translator, and poet. Esber adopted his pen-name (Adonis) at the age of seventeen, which is the name of the fertility god in the ancient Greek myth as to “alert napping editors to his precocious talent and his pre-Islamic, pan-Mediterranean muses” (Jaggi). In 1985, Adonis moved to France with his wife, Khalida Said, and his two daughters, Arwad and Ninar. Adonis is one of the

most admirable Arab poets whose poetry marks a new and an experimental move concerning the use of language and images in an unprecedented way. His modernity lies in his rejection of the traditional norms of both language and images. Through this modern innovation, he manages to universalize his poems which are translated into many languages, among them English (Mattin).

Most of the poems of Cummings and Adonis are considered self-reflexive which means they break the barriers of the traditional literary forms to reflect not only the extra ordinariness of the modern world, but also the upheaval of perceiving the consciousness of the modern literary language. In “a poet's advice to students”, Cumming, writes “[N]othing is quite as easy as using words like somebody else” (Cummings, 1972). This means that Cummings decides not to use words like anyone else (as a kind of defamiliarization). As for Adonis, Al- Mkawy (2023) states that Adonis’s “... language is his method of expression and creativity; it is his music, colors, and ideas. It is the raw material through which he creates a creature that has facial features and personal characteristics.” (82-83) This entails introducing new perception of both language and form to invade new realms or horizons of defamiliarity. This proves that both Adonis and Cummings have made of language a concrete indication of certain ideas or themes which obsess them. The same is applied to both form and images.

Although Adonis belongs to a different Arab culture and language, he adopts almost the same literary canon of defamiliarization as Cummings, yet, in variable degree. Shartah (2020) comments on Adonis's philosophy of writing poetry stating that “the existence of defamiliarized form of the poem is evidence that the poet has similar philosophy concerning his material contemplations, as he awaits, contemplates, and thinks, still he does not reach the truth...” (33). Adonis creates a kind of language that is considered to be both creative and expressive; his language comes to life in a form of blood and flesh which makes of this



language a kind of defamiliarization reflect of cosmic human experience shared by the poet. The following are the analysis and synthesis of Cummings's poems "r-p-o-p-h-e-s-s-a-g-r" and "1(a...(a leaf falls on loneliness);" and Adonis's poems "The Beginning of Doubt," and "Search."

### Defamiliarization in E.E. Cumming

In the "r-p-o-p-h-e-s-s-a-g-r" poem (see appendix 1), Cummings adopts a defamiliarized technique of writing concentrating on portraying the word or the concrete image of "a grasshopper" from different dimensions playing on the re-arrangement of the same letters of a word many times within the same poem until the viewer reaches the organized form at the end of the poem. The following analysis of the poem includes the thematic level, the topographical pattern, and the words.

Firstly, at the thematic level, the grasshopper is seen from manifold angles, indicating a social dimension; it is personified and is given certain human attributes and has certain aspects to respect. The word "become" reveals his attempts to change and be socially accepted. Secondly, the actual linear sequence of the topographical horizontal shape of the sentence is "the PPGORHRASS, which as we look, now upgathering into leaps, arriving to become, rearrangingly, a grasshopper" (Friedman 123-4). This topographical variation of the same word adds a certain social dimension to the poem making us view the same image from different unfamiliar profiles in one frame. Fairley (1975) argues that Cummings's innovative writing technique has enabled him to initiate words with new meanings as well as to reestablish a uniquely concrete or compact manner based on an old concept. Such achievements are arduous because it is very challenging to "state concisely the meanings conveyed by these expressions" (9 – 10). These words ensure that Cummings, through these different variations of the same word, foregrounded grammar, and new

usage of words, convinces the readers that these portrayed images are real.

Moreover, the topographical pattern, which distorts the traditional form, either of the lines or the words, reveals dizzy movements, visualized and concretized, within the lines, along with its intersection of spaces. For example, the first line includes a puzzling group of letters which are unorganized and chaotic. The second line comprises one word "who" following the mysterious way of the first puzzle. Then, in the third and fourth lines, we are introduced to the movements and the actions of this "r-p-o-p-h-e-s-s-a-g-r," but this time, the movement of "upgathering" is interrupted by "now" and "PPEGORHRASS;" this matrix constructs the present experience along with its immediacy. It may also be the first guessing of reordering the fragmented word at the beginning, yet, in capital letters. "[T]he," which defines the word "PPEGORHRASS," as if to form a chaotic identity, occupies a lower position than the other word it defines. The seventh, eighth, ninth and tenth lines introduce another action or movement "...I/eA/!p:/s)" (see appendix 1) in a present tense again to stress the immediacy mode. Cummings succeeds to manipulate every blank space in this poem, to decode certain semantic meaning. Cohen (1990) reassures this idea, writing:

[I]n exploiting the visual potential of each black mark on the white page-its potential as ideograph, as abstract shape, as implied line, as something to slow or speed the pacing, as visual embodiment of semantic meaning- Cummings made the real subject of his poems the experience of reading and seeing them: their process, their continuous becoming, their inexhaustible trans formativeness. (71)

This explains how Cummings managed, through his poems' defamiliarized structure and format, to let readers not just read words, but experience a real world through his writings.

Finally, at the level of vocabulary, the poet starts with the letters of the word fragmented without identity "r-p-o-p-h-e-s-s-a-g-r," then, in its first attempt to form an identity, it is already flux and chaotic "PPEGORHRASS"; this trial is characterized by its capital letters, evoking his hyper exaggerated endeavor to be mixed with a society, which is marked by disregarding those who are like this grasshopper. The second attempt is somehow different; "gRrEaPsPhOs", including a mixture of both capital and small letters in a systematic order. This infers his continuous attempt to form an identity, which is still unorganized. He tries different ways to satisfy both society, as a priority, and his ego, as a second one. Still, disorganization and chaos dominate the line of thought. From a defamiliarized perspective, the word "grasshopper" is rearranged many times to indicate the motion and the movement that the grasshopper himself does throughout his work; he moves right and left, leaping, jumping to gather the grass. Furthermore, the word "leaps" is drawn in such a way to visualize the process of jumping. It conveys its concrete visualized movement through its topographical pattern. Again, this is interrupted by another attempt of re-ordering the word "grasshopper," after introducing two mobi/le clues, illustrating motions: "leaps" and "arriving," it is now "gRrEaPsPhOs." The adverb "rearrangingly" is set by the end of the poem, written in a topographical pattern: (rea (be)rrang (com) gi (e) ngly), interrupted by the word "become," to assure that this is the final attempt of obtaining an identity which is "grasshopper."

The final topographical word is "grasshopper" which ends the journey of searching for one fixed identity, through which, he could deal with the social surrounding, until he becomes like what he wants a "grasshopper," still, he does not know if it is suitable or not. At least, he is no longer fragmented like the beginning of the poem "r-p-o-p-h-e-s-s-a-g-r."

In the following poem “1(a...(a leaf falls on loneliness)” (see appendix 2), Cummings experiments a striking layout of ideogram related to the modern painting through illustrating a death-like experience of a leaf falling, but this recurrent falling is permeated by another durable, emotional and psychological experience of “loneliness,” drawn, materially, by applying intersecting spaces and planes of lettering. The poem comprises two main words written in a zigzag movement until the leaf “falls” on the ground. The title of the poem may be read as “1(a...,” as “a” is part of “a leaf falls,” or as an initial, economical prologue to the poem, signaling number “1” and the letter “a” may indicate as if a new life starts in its cradle. Yet, its transience is marked by accelerating the random tempo of falling letters. Then come the multiple readings of the word “loneliness,” which includes the elements of mystery at the beginning of the poem; “1” may be considered as number “one” or it may be attached to “loneliness,” to form a complete word after closing the brackets of (A leaf falls), causing confusion, at the mental level, and fragmentation, at the physical level. Overall, it discloses that “loneliness” is a sort of “loneliness” or vice versa. This entails the readers to read the poem from different perspectives. The writing formula of this poem of Cummings encourages the reader to take place in the understanding of his poems through thinking and interpreting the meanings of his words on his own. Riffaterre (1978) argues that “he [the reader] reads and modifies his understanding of it in the light of what he is now decoding... He comes to recognize ... that successive and different statements, first noticed as mere ungrammaticalities, are in fact equivalent, for they now appear as variants of the same structural matrix.” (5–6). This entails that Cummings does not make these patterns of irregular grammar randomly, as Riffaterre ensures.

In the poem, the main image is the juxtaposition between the abstract feeling of loneliness, associated with the psychological state of the poet, who sits alone watching a leaf falling, and the

concreteness of the process of falling itself. Secondly, there is another juxtaposition between the internal sensation of "loneliness", related to human psyche and the external kinetic movement related to the leaf falling, leading to "death" which is affiliated to both the human's and the leaf's by the end of the poem. Although juxtaposed, both death and loneliness are, psychologically, conceived of within a correspondent and parallel relation; Cummings withholds such vice-versa movement through his practical topographical form, through which, he types the letters of the words (a leaf falls) and "loneliness" in interrelated and crossing pictorial planes of the letters. The poem, in this sense, correlates the paradigm of defamiliarized poetry which "is likely to be marked by concern with visual form (which itself may range from cube-like stanza or a radical arrangement of the printed page that far exceeds the experimentation of the free verse), by a distortion of a normal stanza, line, and the word boundaries, with its own modernism." (Brogon 6). As the quotation indicates, the unfamiliar spacing, structure, and form of the poem, where it is more like a painting that expresses the loneliness of the speaker, are signs of the modernity of Cummings's poems. In other words, Cummings makes use of visual forms at the level of topography to break such traditional barriers of the modern form, seeking to defamiliarize the shape of poetry.

In addition, the poem emphasizes a great deal of defamiliarized patterns, identified through phonetic variations scheme; for example, the experience of a leaf falling, is manifested through a plane of spaces. It presents the visual fall of leaf in palpable phonetic degrees, as "le" is followed by a space to let the phonetic spatial dimension of the vowel |i:| extend into the second line on the page. This is emphasized by the prolongation of another long vowel |ɔ:| in (fa/ll). The sound "s," then, comes to give the sense of fall its metaphorized living nature, inferring the termination of the temporal, periodic movement of life by meeting death. This phonetic space, beyond the sound "s," pinpoints such

uncanny emptiness after death. In reality, falling of a leaf should not produce the sound "s;" juxtaposing what is visual and psychological in one poetic frame is a defamiliarized poetic feature. At the same time, the motion of the leaf is closely coalesced to the defamiliarized understanding of the world as moving speedily and rapidly: as the leaf symbolically represents the world fragmented in a form of letters while falling. The movement decreases and descends till the moment of death reaches marked by the total fall of a leaf. This is visually incorporated by the inclusion of the word "loneliness" which encompasses the leaf till it dies. The words mix and match the themes beyond the poem, isolation and death. Isolation leads to the end of life which is signaled formally by the shape of the letters and thematically by the mixture of both seclusion and demolition. The mobility of the leaf is sketched through the vertical and horizontal division of letters, signifying a negative direction towards demolition and annihilation. Every pattern of letters represents a periodic phase of a dying leaf on stepping towards death. Besides, the motility itself is negative, from top to bottom, or from up to down, marking the confused and fragmented modern mentality. The adventures of both the leaf and the poet are flux; both vanish beyond the hollowness of the sound "s" in the letter "s" and the suffix "iness," signaling the end of the experiences of hopelessness, falling, isolation, and confusion of both Cummings and the leaf as well. The sound "s" denotes the feeling, of annihilation, ending the experience of the leaf. This is reflected implicitly on Adonis' experience of death Vishnyakova et al (2019) states that the use of certain sounds within a poem leads to perceiving "a quality, a tone, a connotation, etc. from the domain of meaning to the sound pattern" (308). According to Västfjäll (2012), the received sounds including their "loudness" and "sharpness" affect the state of the emotions and their reactions. Therefore, the sound "S" "L" "n" and "F" convey such rhythmical falling and inevitable end of the leaf. Death for both the leaf and Cummings is the end of such rhythmical

movements of life; both fall and die. Such implications of rhythmical sound tempo in the poem “are not heard with the room of the poem, but they are heard within a memory of hearing that is the total auditory experience of the listener in response to what knowledge of the poem is extant at a given poem” (Stewart 33); the sound “s,” with its variations, thus, bestows an auditory experience of the listener, which links it with the context of the poem.

This poem, like other ones, proves Cummings' individual philosophy in writing poetry. Cummings ensuring this sense of individuality states that:

So far as I am concerned, poetry and every other art was and is and forever be strictly and distinctly a question of individuality.... If poetry is your goal, you've got to forget all about punishments and all about rewards and all about self-style obligation and duties and etcetera ad infinitum and remember one thing only: that it's you –nobody else –who determine your destiny and decide your fate. (Cummings 91)

This makes of Cummings' poetry a panorama of individualistic expression along with a collective sense of human suffering.

### Defamiliarization in Adonis

Moving to Adonis, the first poem "The Beginning of Doubt" (Appendix 3) represents an outstanding model of Adonis's poetic vision in presenting a distinctive poetic unfamiliarity at the levels of both the form and composition of the poem either horizontally or vertically. Adonis is involved in his personal experience through which he tries to relate himself to the comic experience of the whole people. For this reason, he attempts to make such experience of suffering unfamiliar through depicting defamiliarized image: “I love this sighing”, “I seek people-a spring and sparks” and “and this glory / in people’s dust”. Such inclusion and link between what is the poet’s and what is the people’s echo Adonis’ defamiliarized vision of writing poetry. Even the punctuation which is represented in using dash (-) and slash (/) and the empty space at the beginning

of the verses convey explicitly such concept of defamiliarized writing which reflect implicitly the similarity between the two experiences which become one. The poem revolves around the poet's short poetic lyrical experience where he merges between his own personal experience and the universal one; both are soaked in suffering, tragedy and death. Since his birth, the poet sees his experience as being interconnected with the cosmic realm. He always "seeks" people and "loves" what is related to them "sighing", "brows", "glory" and "dust". This is what defamiliarizes the private, making of the poem an encompassing portrait of both the poet and the people together. This enables him to feel their agonies. Not only does he just feel them, but also adorns their moans and pain. The poet asserts that these reincarnations and adoration of human suffering make him enlightened every time he reads his poetry. As a result of being enlighten through reading about the people's suffering, he "seeks" people writing about them, and reassuring his human linkage with them: pain, suffering, and glory are all his and the people, as well during to the toiling effort which marked by the place "here", the time "being born" and ends in "dust". Again, Adonis depicts the cycle of life as being a collective through which gather all people, and Adonis in one inevitable life cycle. He even glorifies their image through describing certain details of their countenance; for example, the dust on their forehead becomes a source of splendor.

Thus, Adonis focuses on the themes of suffering and toiling which make of the people's lives poetic experience to write about the reading such poems "enlighten" the readers, and the poet as well. This makes of Adonis's poems synthesized incorporation of life cycle through which he not only explores his inner self rather generalizes what is private in a form of public frame including other forms of people's suffering. This what creates senses of glory and enlightenment. This is what Abu-Fakhr (2000) argues "Adonis no longer asks insightful questions, but rather involves in the process of searching and exploring, and analyzing the answers of



these questions, contradictorily, without detailing nor disclosing." (5) These themes are analyzed and synthesized through defamiliarized image, language, and space.

Firstly, at the level of language, Adonis assumes the sense of continuity of that human holistic experience through the present tense verbs "*being born, love, read, covers, and am illuminated.*" These verbs represent an unfamiliar demonstration of these stages of relation between the poet and these human beings along with their suffering and the tragedies. Adonis uses sensory images in the poem. For example, there is an auditory image in "*sighing*" and other visual images in "*drawings, glory, sparks, and dust.*" This special use of vocabulary and the unique construction of such relation among them are what constitute the beauty of Adonis's language as Dr. Taweryaret (2009) confirms; "Adonis's beauty of language is due to using such words which reflect the genuine poetic experience through the use of certain expressive words echoing the poet and human's psychological states (20). This renders the poetic experience closer to human perception: in other words, Adonis uses auditory word "sighing", visual words "brows", "spring", "sparks", and abstract words "longing", "space" and "glory". Such words address various human senses. In addition, the existence of both "dust" and "glory" convey the sense of modesty of those people, still, they can achieve what other cannot fulfill: "glory".

Secondly, at the level of the poetic structure, in order to sustain the universality of the experience of misery, the poet writes his poem as if he is a painter; the poet varies the formation and the shape of verses at the level of the plain page as a scheme of defamiliarization. This entails a significant subsequent scenario of meanings; the first line starts from the very beginning of the plain page as if announcing and marking the speaker's birth at the outset of the line. Then the following line is followed by an inward space "*seeking people.*" Then he writes the next two lines after leaving an

increasing indent (more than the rest of the other verses of the poem) "*I love this sighing/ this space/ I love this dust that covers the brows/ I am illuminated.*" These two lines represent the pinnacle of the poet's passion and the stages of his transformation from a person who just aspires to people, to a person who loves them and then finally enlightens others with such suffering through writing about them. Next, like the first line, the poet keeps the same vertical indented distance in this line that follows the former two lines. By doing this, the poet seeks to propose that after his journey that ended with enlightenment, he is reborn through "*I seek people.*" These people are transformed metaphorically into "*spring / sparks.*" Moreover, the poet is overwhelmed with a sense of nostalgia towards this splendor that exists on the toilers' foreheads.

Thirdly, at the level of figures of speech, Adonis could depict an amazing poetic image where he becomes a wanderer among human faces, heralding their struggle and pinpointing their suffering. According to the researcher's understanding and analysis of the poem, Adonis sees himself as a preacher and an enlightened. Henceforth, the poem is a figurative journey that sheds light on human suffering that begins with the time of birth, and then proceeds to show how the persona's experience becomes part and parcel of the universal human experience and how the persona revels in that. "I love this sighing" is a paradox where the poet expresses the depth of his willingness to share the universal human experience of suffering; sympathy is what makes one human. This process of defamiliarization is repeated in "this space", "I am illuminated" where the poet reveals the transcendence of his own message "I read my drawings, nothing but longing and this glory/ in people's dust". This makes the poet a prophet who seeks "a spring and sparks". These images of both "spring and sparks" visualize what the poet metaphorically sees on the brows of such people. Mixing between both "longing" and "glory" as abstract concepts in "people's dust" completes the panoramic portrait of the cosmic experience of these people who struggle for living.

Moreover, the poem implies unfamiliarity at the level of punctuation marks (caesura); in the first line Adonis expresses the recent start of the process of writing through using (-) and then (: ) in the second line to express a new stage that begins with love. The poet uses the comma (,) twice in two consecutive lines with different implications; in the first time, it is to separate "*sighing*" and "*space*" leaving a space of plain emptiness. Metaphorically, that "*sighing*" unleashes the feelings and sympathy of human beings towards these strugglers. The other use of the slash (/) is to separate the stage of *love* and that of *illumination*. Moreover, the fifth line contains the dash (-) then slash (/) with distinctive functions: the dash (-) comes after "*I seek people*", which commences the new phase after birth. Then comes the mark (/) between the words *spring* and *sparks* in order to diversify the sources of splendor of that dust on the *brows* of the strugglers. In the sixth line, Adonis uses (-) after "*I read my drawings*," which symbolizes the feelings of nostalgia and admiration for this grandeur on their foreheads. Hence, the poem "The Beginning of Doubt" embodies an unusual paradigm related to the poem's format at both vertical and horizontal levels- and also at the level of punctuation. These contribute to a visual and auditory depiction of the human experience of suffering and struggle.

The second poem "Search," (see appendix 4), reflects Adonis' scheme of defamiliarization in the use of punctuation and the figures of speech. The poem is a depiction full of smallest details; still, it is so concise. Thus, it is similar to the school of "Imagism," a modern poetry school pioneered by Ezra Pound that focuses on introducing new forms and images, which economize the poem in a form in one concise image (Fariha 36). Following is an analysis of this poem on two levels; figures of speech and punctuation.

Firstly, at the level of figurative language like a painter, Adonis paints a picture of a *bird* flying in the sky with its wings outspread. Then the poet wonders whether these *wings* contain a book among their feathers, if these *wings* themselves are "*words*" in "*a labyrinth*", and if the bird's "*neck*" clings to the "*horizon*." The poet unleashed his bird in a spatial space in which the bird spreads its wings on the vertical plain of the page by placing the word "*bird*" at the end of the first line alone. "*The wind is a book inside its feathers*" is double unfamiliar metaphor as the wind is compared to a book placed in the feathers of a bird. Furthermore, the bird itself is compared to a library. The wind is transformed into a concrete image "a book" which indicates knowledge. This is stressed later by "...the wings are words" which makes of this relation between the feathers and the wings a complex one. All these are "swimming in a labyrinth" which adds the image of spatial vastness surrounding the bird. Knowledge is limitless keeping the bird always in the sky. If it falls, the bird will fall too. According to D'couto (2016)

Birds are also a source of inspiration ... in order to understand and relate with nature in different aspects like feelings, signs, beliefs, and as messages.... Poets have used nature and its beauty to express their thoughts and feelings; birds have always inspired poets in their qualities like their accuracy and stealth, their ability to hover around the highest snowcapped mountains to the un endless seas and oceans.

This confirms that birds have always been a symbol of poetic inspiration and creative imagination for poets.

In the sixth line, the poet continues his unfamiliar comparisons as he likens the wing of a bird to "*words*," and at the same time such words are like human beings swimming in "*a labyrinth*." Hence, this poem "Search" represents Adonis's tendency to depict an unfamiliar canvas of writing at the levels of both punctuation and figurative language.

Secondly, at the punctuation level, Adonis moves away from the use of the ordinary as usual; for example, the poet begins with the punctuation mark (/...) as it is not standard in the Arabic language to start with such marks. However, it is possible that this connotes implicitly the beginning of the search; hence, the dash (/) in the poem "The Beginning of Doubt" indicates the beginning of a new phase. It marks implicitly initiating the search of the secret why the bird spreads its wings in the sky. What confirms this hypothesis is the use of the same sign (/) at the end of the poem, which is evidence of the end of a phony and aimless search as "*swimming in a labyrinth ...!*" indicates. Moreover, the use of the dots (...) after the dash (/) in the first line is intended to leave a space figuratively to meditate before starting the process of search. The repetition of the same mark (/) in the last line is to contemplate the verity of answers suggested and assumed concerning the hypothesis of spreading of the bird's wings: "*Is it afraid the sky will fall?*" or "*That the wind is a book inside its feathers?*" Or is it "*the wings are words /swimming in a labyrinth*". Then the poet concludes these assumptions by placing (...) at the end to let the readers think which proposition is more correct. The poet leaves us in "the *labyrinth* "of "*search*" without determining a certain solution. Moreover, the poet uses two punctuation marks without separation in an unusual way such as the second line (,-); the mark (,) indicates the beginning "a bird spreading its wings" and then the dash (-) presupposes listing the assumptions. At the end of the third line, the poet uses the letter "ل" separated from the following word "*wind*." The same thing happens in the fourth line where the suffix " ل " stands alone before the word "*neck*." This separation implicitly denotes the poet's disapproval of any of his assumptions as if he hesitates to give the reader the right to decide.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, Adonis is different from Cummings in the sense that Cummings is closer to modernity than Adonis as Cummings's modernity is a tool of deconstruction rather than construction either in relation to language, form, or even human ties. If Cummings uses his own defamiliarized language and form seeking a world that is socially, politically, humanly and even literally bizarre, Adonis seeks to deepen the personal and the human experiences to explore new horizons. Hence, like a traumatized modern poet, Cummings adopts the role of the real modern poet who "devastates every heritage starting from the scratch he tends to using the hard-featured expression, disadvantageous expressions, shaken fixities, abrogated rules, dissipated obscenity, and irreverence" (Al- Mkawy 125). In this sense, Adonis seeks different aims beyond his demonstrating such modern usage of defamiliarization; he necessitates the need to modernize Arab poetry but in his own terms not in Cummings' understanding of modernity. In fact, the poetic style of Cummings features breaking "traditional poems into unusual bits and pieces;" it is shown in his method of treating the typography. This reflects his recalcitrant character that revolts against the conditions of the modern world. (High 130 – 155). Both poets apply the concept of defamiliarization in their poems although they belong to different cultures and languages. Adonis is more conservative than Cummings during to the traditional canon as he tries to keep his own heritage. Moreover, Cummings is more modern than Adonis in employing language with all its levels. Similarly, both employ defamiliarization in depicting themes like death, cycle of life, nature, and suffering. Moreover, their attempt to transform what is private into a collective experience is commonly shared by both poets. All these features are shown in the analysis of the selected poems above.

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Appendix 1

r-p-o-p-h-e-s-s-a-g-r  
who  
a)s w(e loo)k  
upnowgath  
PPEGORHRASS  
eringint(o-  
aThe):l  
eA  
!p:  
S a  
(r  
rIvInG .gRrEaPsPhOs)  
to  
rea(be)rran(com)gi(e)ngly  
,grasshopper;

Appendix 2



### Appendix 3

#### أول الضلّة

ها أنا أولدُ الآنَ -  
أرئو إلى الناسِ :  
أعشقُ هذا الأنينَ / الفضاءَ  
أعشقُ هذا الغبارَ يغطّي الجبينَ / تنوّرتُ  
أرئو إلى الناسِ - نبعٍ / شرّذ  
أتقرّى رسوميّ - لا شكلاً غيرَ الحنينِ  
وهذا "أ-أ"  
في غُبارِ البشرِ .

#### THE BEGINNING OF DOUBT

Here I am being born—  
seeking people.

I love this sighing, this space.

I love this dust that covers brows. I am illuminated.

I seek people—a spring and sparks.

I read my drawings, nothing but longing,  
and this glory

in people's dust.

## Appendix 4

### SEARCH

/ . . . A bird  
spreading its wings—                      Is it afraid  
the sky will fall?                      Or that the  
wind is a book inside its feathers?  
The neck  
latches to the horizon  
and the wings are words  
swimming in a labyrinth . . . /

### بحث

/ . . . طائر  
بأسط جناحيه ، هل يخشى  
سقوط السماء؟ أم أن  
الرياح كتاباً في ريشه؟  
عُنقُ استمسك بالأفقِ  
والجناح كلامٌ  
سايحٌ في متاهة . . . /