



# The Poetics of Adonis and Yves Bonnefoy

Poetry as  
Spiritual Practice

Kareem James Abu-Zeid

Resources in Arabic and Islamic Studies

THE POETICS OF ADONIS  
AND YVES BONNEFOY

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KAREEM JAMES ABU-ZEID

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## Contents

Series Editors' Preface	vii
Acknowledgments	ix
List of Abbreviations	xi
Introduction: On Mysticism and the Spiritual Path of Poetry	1
1. Spiritual Turbulence: The Early Phase of Bonnefoy's Poetry	17
2. Coming Back to Earth: The Spiritual Practice of <i>Pierre écrite</i>	49
3. The Struggle for Arab Culture: On Adonis's Critical Thought and Poetry	87
4. Shaddād's Reply: The Intertextual Spritual Practice of "Songs of Mihyār the Damascene"	113
Conclusion	141
References	143
Index	151



## Series Editors' Preface

When we learned that the poet and translator Kareem James Abu-Zeid had no publication plans for his doctoral dissertation on Adonis and Bonnefoy (University of California, Berkeley, 2016), we asked him if he was interested in letting us publish it; he enthusiastically agreed. *The Poetics of Adonis and Yves Bonnefoy: Poetry as Spiritual Practice*—a lightly revised version of the thesis—examines and compares the work of two pre-eminent poets of the second half of the twentieth century and the early part of the twenty-first. Yves Bonnefoy was a French poet, essayist, art and literary critic, editor, and translator; he died in 2016 at the age of 93. Ali Ahmad Said Esber, known by his pen-name Adonis (Adūnīs), is an Arab poet, essayist, artist and literary critic, editor, and translator (including of Bonnefoy's poetry); he turned 90 last year. Through close readings of key moments in their poetry, Abu-Zeid illustrates how both writers, in their own unique ways, construct poetry as a form of spiritual practice, that is, as a way of transforming both the poet's and the implied reader's ontological, perceptual, and creative relationships with their internal and external worlds. Sustained studies of Adonis are, surprisingly, few and far between; those comparing Adonis to other poets rarer still. We are delighted, therefore, to be able to include this important and groundbreaking study in our series.

We are most grateful to the Barjeel Art Foundation, Sharjah, its founder Sultan Sooud Al-Qassemi, and curator Suheyla Takesh, for permission to reproduce a 2003 art work by Adonis on the cover. Our thanks go also to publisher Billie Jean Collins, cover designer Susanne Wilhelm, and distributor Ian Stevens—with all of whom it is always a privilege and pleasure to work.

Joseph E. Lowry  
Devin J. Stewart  
Shawkat M. Toorawa





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## Index

- «A une terre d'aube», 42  
 ʿAbd Allāh ibn Qilāba, 116  
 Abdel Haleem, M. A. S., 122–123  
 «L'Abeille, la couleur», 72–73  
 Abū Bakr (caliph), 125  
 Abu Deeb, Kamal, 122n26  
 Abū Nuwās, 94  
 Abū Tammām, 94  
 Abū ʿUbayda, 122  
 «L'Acte et le lieu de la poésie», 19, 45–46, 56  
 ʿĀd, people of, 114–124, 127, 129–133, 137–139  
 Adam, 132, 138  
 Advaita Vedanta, 10, 12, 57n8  
 Adyashanti (Stephen Gray), 57n8  
 agency, 10–11, 88, 99, 103, 138, 141–142  
 ʿAlawites (sect of Shia), 95n22, 104, 126  
 Alcoholics Anonymous, 11n27  
 Alexandria, 124n30  
 alexandrine (French metrical form), 20, 44, 58, 62, 66, 69, 73, 82  
 Ali, Abdullah Yusuf, 110, 114, 118n16  
 ʿAli, Ibn Abī Ṭālib, 95n22  
 Althusser, Louis, 103, 121  
 al-Aʿmash, 127  
 Amichai, Yehuda, 99, 100n41  
 Amir-Moezzi, Mohammad Ali, 125–126  
*anapanasati* (meditation on the breath), 82–83  
*anatta* (“no-self” or “no-separate-self”), 32  
*anicca* (“impermanence”), 32  
*Anti-Platon*, 15, 18–24, 29, 30, 31, 36, 53n3  
 Anṭūn, Farah, 94  
 Arberry, A. J., 87, 110, 114n3, 115n5  
 «L'Arbre, la lampe», 73–74  
*L'Arrière-pays*, 41, 51–52, 55, 56, 77, 83  
 arrogance, 114, 132, 137–139  
 «Art de la poésie», 80–85  
 Austin, J. L., 90n5, 103  
 Ba Khin, Sayagyi U, 39  
 Baghdad, 124n30  
 Baker, Augustine, 38–39  
 Barthes, Roland, 99  
 Baudelaire, Charles, 20  
 Beard, Michael, 135n58  
 “The Bee” (Qurʾan), 87, 138  
 Beirut, 105, 112n80  
 Bergson, Henri, 14  
*bhanga nana* (“knowledge of dissolution”), 33, 37n41  
 Bible, 79, 100n41, 105n61, 116, 127  
 Biʾr Barhūt (cavern in Yemen), 124  
 Bishop, Michael, 30  
 Bishr ibn al-Muʿtamir, 126  
 Blanchot, Maurice, 35  
 “The Bliss of Madness,” 111  
 Borchert, Bruno, 3, 4  
 Breton, André, 18, 22–23  
 Brobjer, Thomas, 102  
 Brophy, Michael, 70n25, 79  
 Büchner, Georg, 44n56  
 Buchs, Arnaud, 19n4, 23, 24n11  
 Buddha (Siddhartha Gautama), 6, 7n19, 8, 9, 32, 57  
 Buddhism, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 13, 24n13, 32–33, 37n41, 38, 39n47, 72, 82, 83n40, 101n47, 141  
 Butler, Judith, 87, 102–103, 120–121, 126, 133–134  
 Carman, Taylor, 29n20

- Carmelites (Catholic order), 6, 17n2, 37  
*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 38–39  
 Cavallini, Concetta, 85n48  
 “The Cave” (Qur’an), 110  
 Caws, Mary Ann, 31n26  
*Ce qui fut sans lumière*, 59–60n11, 79  
 Chah, Ajahn, 13  
 «La chambre», 70–72  
 «Les chemins», 71n27, 74n29  
 Chol, Isabelle, 61n15  
 Christ, Jesus, 11, 39, 46, 54–55, 68, 76, 78–79, 124n28, 135–136  
 “The City of the Helpers” (*Madīnat al-anṣār*), 130n43, 134–135  
 Cobb, Paul M., 124n30  
*Le Cœur-espace*, 18n3  
 Conway, Daniel W., 101  
 Cook-Greuter, S. R., 12  
 Cratylus, 23  
 creation (*al-khalq*), 87, 92–94, 97, 101–102, 121, 139, 140  
 creativity (*al-ibdāʿ*). See innovation  
 Creswell, Robyn, 112n80  
 critique, 2, 4, 13, 24–25, 29, 31, 80–82, 85, 89, 98, 109  
 Culadasa (John Yates), 8, 38n43, 39n47, 40, 83  
  
 Ḍāhir, ʿĀdil, 109n75  
 Damascus, 105, 124, 136–137  
*Dans le leurre du seuil*, 34n33, 34n34, 61n14, 84–85  
 Dark Night of the Soul, 15, 16, 17, 33, 37–47, 49–50, 52, 64–68, 73, 74, 78, 82n40, 88, 141  
 “The Dawn” (Qur’an), 114, 121  
 “Death Restored” (section title), 112n81  
 «Delphes du second jour», 42  
 «Derniers gestes», 31n27, 33  
 Descartes, René, 9, 20n5, 25  
*Dévotion*, 45n60, 81n39  
  
*The Dhammapada*, 32  
 «Le dialogue d’Angoisse et de Désir», 75–85  
 Dries, Manuel, 101–102  
*Du mouvement et de l’immobilité de Douve*, 15, 24, 29–41, 42, 43–44, 46, 49–50, 52, 53, 56, 59, 60–61, 64, 71n26, 77, 85, 88, 108n73, 109, 112n81  
 Dubois, Mathieu, 31n27  
 Duchesne, Ricardo, 36n48  
*dukkha* (“suffering” or “unsatisfactoriness”), 32, 38  
 The “dynamic” tendency (*al-mutaḥawwil*), 89–98  
  
*Ecce Homo* (book by Nietzsche), 104–105  
 “Elegy for al-Ḥallāj,” 95n23  
 Eliot, T. S., 95n22, 99  
 The Empty Quarter, 116n8  
 enlightenment, 5, 6–12, 24n13, 32, 38n42, 43–44, 57, 82–83  
 Epstein, Mark, 7n17  
 «L’Eté de nuit», 50–75, 77, 81  
 Eubanks, Ivan, 98n34, 135n58  
 Eurydice, 99–100  
  
 Faddul, Atif Y., 95n22  
 Falcicola, Bernard, 40, 51  
 al-Farrāʾ, 122  
 Favre, Yves-Alain, 51n2  
 figurative language (*majāz*), 97–98  
 Finck, Michèle, 42n53  
 Foster, Jeff, 6  
 Foucault, Michel, 96  
 “Fuṣṣilat” (Qur’an), 138  
  
 Gasarian, Gérard, 54n4  
*The Gateless Gate*, 4n8  
 Genette, Gérard, 23, 99  
 “Ghāfir” (Qur’an), 138  
 al-Ghazālī, 94, 96n27

- Giguère, Ronald Gérard, 84n46  
 Gilgamesh, 124n28, 129  
 gnosticism, 22–23  
 Goenka, S. N., 32, 39n47  
 Gordon, Alex L., 53n3  
 Gospels, 11, 127  
 Graham, Gabriela Cunninghame, 39n46
- Hades (god), 99  
 Hadot, Pierre, 1, 14  
 Ḥaḍramawt (region in modern-day Yemen),  
 116, 117n13, 124n28, 130  
 Hafez, 2  
 al-Ḥallāj, 94, 95, 124, 138  
 al-Ḥāqqah (Qurʾan), 110  
 Harris, Sam, 2–3, 9  
 Ḥāwī, Khalīl, 100n42  
 Haydar, Adnan, 135n58  
 “He Is Not a Star” (*laysa najman*), 105,  
 106n67, 111n79, 129n40  
 The Headless Way, 4n8  
 Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich, 30–31,  
 34–36, 41, 59, 65n18, 94–95  
 Heidegger, Martin, 8, 14, 24–31, 34, 46, 49,  
 50, 56n6, 58, 70–71n25, 80  
 “The Heights” (Qurʾan), 124  
 heresy (*bidʿa*), 95–96, 125–127  
*Hier régnant désert*, 15, 17, 37–47, 49–50,  
 52–53, 56, 58, 66, 67, 72, 73, 76, 78, 82,  
 85, 113, 141  
 Higgins, Kathleen Marie, 105n46  
 Hijra, 134  
 Himy, Olivier, 24n12  
 Hinduism, 3, 5, 7, 32  
 Hishām ibn ʿAbd al-Malik (caliph), 125  
 Hixon, Lex, 6, 8–9  
 Hölderlin, Johann Christian Friedrich, 41,  
 49  
 Hollingdale, R. J., 17n1, 102n49, 113n1  
 “Homeland” (*Waṭan*), 136
- “How Does Revolutionary Poetry Work?,”  
 89n3, 98  
 Hūd (prophet), 114, 117–119, 124, 129–130,  
 137–138  
 “Hūd” (Qurʾan), 114, 118, 121  
 Huszar, George de, 102n51  
 Huxley, Aldous, 11n27, 17, 83n42
- “I Have No Limits,” 108  
 Iblīs. *See* Satan  
 Ibn ʿArabī, 3, 111n78  
 Ibn al-Athīr, Ḍiyāʾ al-Dīn, 122  
 Ibn Kathīr, 119–120  
 Ibn al-Muʿtazz, 122  
 Ibn Qutayba, 122  
 Ibn al-Rāwandī, 94  
 Ibn Taymiyya, 126, 131n46  
*iltifāt* (“alternation”), 120, 122–125  
 immanence, 3, 22, 42, 50, 52, 56, 67–72, 76,  
 79, 81, 84, 88, 100, 112n81, 123, 133,  
 134, 135  
 imitation (*taqlīd*). *See* traditionalism  
 Imrū al-Qays, 94, 118n16  
 Ingram, Daniel M., 6n11, 33n32, 37n41,  
 38n42, 38n43, 40n48  
 inimitability of the Qurʾan (*iʿjāz al-qurʾān*),  
 139  
 Inizan, Yvon, 79–80n35  
 innovation (*al-ibdāʿ*), 11, 16, 89–98, 102,  
 114, 121, 122, 125, 126, 128, 141–142  
 insanity. *See* madness  
 intertextuality, 16, 93n16, 98–103, 107–  
 114, 120–122, 124, 126, 128–129, 131,  
 132, 134, 135, 138–139  
 intratextuality, 16, 33–34, 80, 87, 89, 108–  
 113  
 “An Invitation to Death,” 112n81  
 Iram (legendary city), 114, 116–119, 124–  
 125, 129, 133, 136–137, 139  
*Iram* (poetry collection), 120n22

- “Tram of the Pillars” (section title), 114, 136  
 Iranian Revolution (1979), 126n34  
 Izutsu, Toshihiko, 129n41
- Jackson, John E., 21n6, 21n8, 22, 23, 25n14, 55n5, 68, 69, 75, 84n46  
 Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq, 127  
 James, William, 1, 2, 3–4, 5, 12–13  
 «Le jardin», 58, 60–61  
 Jinn, 109–111, 129  
 John of the Cross, Saint (San Juan de la Cruz), 2, 17n2, 37–40, 44n57, 45  
 John Paul II, Pope, 39  
 «*Le jour franchit le soir, il gagnera*», 36–37, 43–44  
 Judgment Day, 129–133  
 al-Jurjānī, ‘Abd al-Qāhir, 139n68  
 al-Jurjānī, al-Qāḍī, 122
- Ka‘b al-Aḥbār, 115n6, 117  
 Kabir, 2, 3  
 Kaufmann, Walter, 102n49  
 al-Khāl, Yūsuf, 93, 100n42  
 Khalafallāh, Muḥammad, 116n7  
*Khorda Avesta*, (*Book of Common Prayer*), 107  
 al-Khuljān, 137–138  
 Kierkegaard, Søren, 80n35  
 Kinnell, Galway, 36n37, 39n47, 42n52, 43n54  
 al-Kisā‘ī, 115n6, 116n8  
*al-Kitāb*, 112  
*Kitāb al-qāṣā’id al-khams*, 15n6  
*Kitāb al-Ṭawāsīn*, 138  
 Klee, Paul, 11  
 Knappert, Jan, 115n6, 117  
 “The Knight of Strange Words” (section title), 109  
 koans, 4n8  
 Kohlberg, Etan, 125–127  
 Kornfield, Jack, 38n42, 38n43, 40n48, 49  
 Krishnamurti, Jiddu, 6n13  
 Kristeva, Julia, 99  
 Kronfeld, Chana, 99–100, 102, 121  
 Kufa, 125–126
- «La lampe, le dormeur», 60–61n13, 67  
 Lang, Susanna, 65n19, 70n25, 81n38  
 Largier, Niklaus, 7n18  
 Larkin, Margaret, 139n68  
 Lawall, Sarah, 70n25, 75–76  
*Leitkultur* (“dominant culture”), 90–92, 94, 103  
 Leonard, Philip, 3  
 Lévi-Strauss, Claude, 99n36  
 Leuwers, Daniel, 80  
 «Le lieu des morts» (title of two poems), 64, 65–66  
 «Le livre, pour vieillir», 74–75  
 LSD, 11n27  
 Luke, Gospel of, 11  
 «La lumière, changée», 72, 74  
 Lyon, James K., 24n13  
 Lyons, Malcom C., 119n21, 128n39, 131n45, 131n47, 133n52
- al-Ma‘arrī, Abū l-‘Alā, 94  
 Macnaghten, W. H., 119n21, 128n39, 131n45, 133n52  
 madness, 3, 15, 110–111  
 Madou, Jean-Paul, 30n23  
 Maharshi, Ramana, 12n29  
 al-Malā’ika, Nāzik, 100n42  
 Mallarmé, Stéphane, 19, 30n23, 35, 47, 51n2  
 Marshall, David, 115n4, 130  
 Martin, Graham Dunstan, 21n7  
 Martin, Jeffrey, 9n9, 12  
 Martínez Montávez, Pedro, 135n58  
 Mathieu, Jean-Claude, 61n15  
 Mattawa, Khaled, 135n58



- Mecca, 115n6, 118, 122, 124n30, 129–130, 131, 134, 137
- Medina (city in Saudi Arabia), 134–135
- Meister Eckhart, 3, 7, 9n23
- Merleau-Ponty, Maurice, 14
- mescaline, 83n42
- A Midsummer Night's Dream*, 61n14
- Miḥyār al-Daylamī (Persian poet), 103–107
- Minkowski, Anne Wade, 135n58
- Mithra (Zoroastrian divinity), 106–107, 124n28
- “The Moon” (Qur’an), 114, 121, 122
- Moore, Thomas, 38n43
- Moses, 127, 139
- “The Mount” (Qur’an), 110–111
- Mu‘āwiya ibn Abī Sufyān (caliph), 116–117
- Mufrad bi-ṣiḡhat al-jam‘*, 112
- “Muḥammad” (Qur’an), 115
- Muhammad, the Prophet, 95n22, 115, 116, 118, 125, 127, 128, 130, 134–135
- Murthid ibn Sa‘d, 137–138
- al-Musawi, Muhsin, 91, 99, 103–104
- al-Mutanabbī, 94, 122n26
- mysticism, 2–6, 12–13, 32
- Nagel, Tilman, 116n7
- Namto, Achan Sobin S., 33, 37n41
- Nancy, Jean-Luc, 85
- Nasser, Gamal Abdel, 136
- Naughton, John T., 39n47, 40, 44n57
- Née, Patrick, 67–68n20
- neti neti* (meditation), 101n47
- “The New Noah” (poem), 135n57
- “The New Testament” (poem), 107, 110–111, 135–136
- Nietzsche, Friedrich, 16, 17, 19, 20n5, 42n53, 46, 47, 82, 84, 93, 100–103, 104–109, 113, 123, 125, 127, 128, 139n67
- Nisargadatta, Maharaj, 10
- Noah, 114, 117n13, 121, 124n28, 135n57
- non-duality, 4n8, 5–6, 10
- Noor, Ashraf, 46n63, 70–71n25
- Odysseus, 124n28, 129
- «L’Oiseau des ruines», 43–44, 56, 58, 72
- Olafson, Frederick, 28–29
- Orpheus, 98–100, 124n28
- Palestine, 124n30
- Paradise, 52, 55, 78, 116, 117, 131, 133
- Paris, France, 1, 18, 22, 89, 137n60
- «La parole du soir», 73n28, 74n29
- pastism (*al-māḍawiyya*), 90–93, 96, 103, 113–114
- «La patience, le ciel», 74
- «Le pays découvert», 42
- Peers, E. Allison, 39n46, 44n57, 45n58, 45n59
- Persephone, 99
- Peterson, Daniel Carl, 139n66
- Pevear, Richard, 36n37, 39n47, 42n52, 43n54, 81n38
- Pharaoh, people of, 114, 122, 127, 139
- phenomenology, 14, 96
- Phoenix (mythical creature), 32, 41–42, 136
- Pierre écrite* (collection title), 1, 16, 17, 18, 29n20, 30, 37n40, 45n60, 47, 49–85
- «Pierre écrite» (section title), 58–71
- Pinet-Thélot, Livane, 53n3
- Pit of the Void, 37n41, 38
- Les Planches courbes*, 60n11, 83n44
- Plato, 18–23, 31, 37, 49, 52, 67–68, 84, 97
- Plotinus, 3, 67–68
- “The Poets” (Qur’an), 117
- Porphyry, 67–68
- Prajnaparamita Sutra in 8,000 Lines*, 6, 8–9n22
- “Prayer” (poem), 111
- “Presence” (poem), 107–108n71
- Prokop, Michaela, 125n32
- «Proximité du visage», 83–84

- “Psalm” (title of various poems), 98–99, 107, 111, 136–137, 140
- “Qasīdat Thamūd,” 115n6
- al-Qāsim, Samīḥ, 120n22
- Qayl ibn ‘Anz, 137–138
- Qurʾan, 87, 90, 92, 100, 102–103, 109–112, 114–135, 136, 138–139
- Quraysh, pagans of, 122, 134
- al-Rabaʿī, Abū l-Ḥasan, 124n30
- Rabau, Sophie, 99n35
- al-Rāzī, Abū Bakr, 94
- refusal (*rafḍ*), 93, 114, 123, 125–128, 132, 138–139
- reevaluation (*Umwertung*), 16, 88–89, 93, 100–103, 105, 106, 109, 111, 113–114, 120, 121, 123, 125, 127–128, 130, 133n51, 138–140
- rhyme, 20, 62, 108–109, 112, 121, 129, 132–133
- Ricœur, Paul, 79n35
- Riffaterre, Michael, 99n36
- Rimbaud, Arthur, 34, 46, 62, 91
- «Rimbaud Mystique», 91
- Roberts, Bernadette, 5, 6–7, 9
- “The Rocky Tract” (Qurʾan), 109–110, 132
- Romanticism, 111n77
- Rudolf, Anthony, 39n47, 42n52, 43n54
- Rumi, 2
- Saadeh, Antoun, 136
- “Ṣād” (Qurʾan), 132n49
- Satan, 109–110, 132–133, 138–139
- Saudi Arabia, 125n32
- Saussure, Ferdinand de, 21n7, 33, 80, 97
- al-Sayyāb, Badr Shākir, 100n42
- Schopenhauer, Arthur, 47
- “The Second Coming,” 65
- Sergeant, R. B., 124n29
- Shaddād ibn ‘Ād (legendary figure), 114, 116–121, 123–124, 127, 129–133, 137, 138–140
- “Shaddād” (poem), 113–140
- Shaddād the younger (son of Shaddād ibn ‘Ād), 130
- Shakespeare, William, 49, 61n14, 84n46
- Shankara, Adi, 12
- sharīʿa* law, 92
- al-Sharīf al-Raḍī, 94, 104
- Shawqī, Aḥmad, 94
- “The Shell,” 109–111
- Shia Islam, 91n9, 95n22, 104, 125–128, 131n46
- Shumayyil, Shiblī, 94
- Sindbad, 124n28, 129
- Skarżyńska-Bocheńska, Krystyna, 106–107
- Solomon, 128–129
- Songs of Miḥyār the Damascene*, 1, 16, 88–89, 98–140
- The Static and the Dynamic*, 89–98, 112, 133
- “static” tendency (*al-thābit*), 89–98, 101, 133
- Steiner, George, 49
- Stetkevych, Jaroslav, 115, 118n16
- Stewart, Susan, 44n55
- Stories of the Prophets (literary genre), 115–119
- “Story of the Fisherman and the ‘Ifrīt,” 128–129
- Sufism, 3, 16, 32, 91, 97, 111n78
- Sufism and Surrealism*, 91, 97, 111n78, 126n35
- Sunni Islam, 89, 91n9, 94, 95n22, 100, 104n57, 109, 125–127
- «Sur un éros de bronze», 68
- «Sur une pietà de Tintoret», 78–79
- Surrealism, 1, 13, 15, 18–24, 28, 29, 31, 41, 47, 49, 55, 85, 111, 141
- Symbolism (literary movement), 23, 99n36

- Tammūzī poets, 136  
 al-Ṭarafī, Ibn Muṭarrif, 117n13, 118–119, 124n30  
 temporality, 4, 28–30, 46n63, 49, 50, 52, 56n6, 59, 63–65, 69, 71, 80–84  
 Teresa of Ávila, Saint, 2  
 Thackston, W. M., 115n6  
 al-Thaʿlabī, Abū Ishāq, 116–119, 131n47, 133n52, 137–139  
 Thamūd, people of, 114, 115, 118n16  
 «Théâtre», 35, 36n39  
 Thélot, Jérôme, 34n33  
 Theravada Buddhism, 6n11, 8, 13, 33, 37, 38, 82, 83n40  
 “This May Be My County” (*Qad taṣīru bilādi*), 137  
*The Thousand and One Nights*, 116, 119, 128–133  
*Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. *See* Zarathustra  
 Tibetan Buddhism, 6n11, 8  
 Tibi, Bassam, 90n5  
 Tintoretto (Jacopo Robusti), 78–79  
 Tolle, Eckhart, 9n23  
 «Les Tombeaux de Ravenne», 24, 29–30, 65n19  
 Torah, 117n10, 127  
 Tottoli, Roberto, 117n13, 124n30  
 Tours, France, 18  
 traditionalism (*al-taqlīdiyya*), 89–98, 104n57, 120  
*Traité du pianiste*, 18n3  
 transvaluation. *See* revaluation
- Ubac, Raoul, 83–84  
 Ubar (legendary city), 116n8  
 ʿUmar (caliph), 125  
 «Un feu va devant nous», 69–75  
 «Une pierre» (title of multiple poems), 59–60, 61, 63–65, 67–68  
 «Une voix», 68–69
- Valéry, Paul, 19–20, 22, 36  
 vipassana, 7n19, 32–33, 38n42, 39n47  
 “A Voice” (*Ṣawt*), 136  
 «Vrai corps», 31n27, 71n26  
 «Vrai lieu», 42
- Wehr, Hans, 106n65  
 Weidner, Stefan, 101, 104n58, 107n69, 124, 129n40, 132, 133, 135n58, 136n59  
 Wilson, Bill (“Bill W.”), 11n27  
 “The Winds of Madness,” 111  
*The Winter’s Tale*, 49, 61n14, 84n46
- Yathrib. *See* Medina  
 Yeats, W. B., 65  
 Young, Julian, 30n24  
 Young, Shinzen, 37n41
- Zarader, Marlène, 29  
 Zarathustra (Nietzschean figure), 17, 46n62, 101, 104–108, 113, 128  
 Zarathustra (Persian prophet). *See* Zoroaster  
 Zayd ibn ʿAlī, 125–126  
 Zen, 4n8, 57n8, 77  
 Zoroaster, 104–108  
 Zoroastrianism, 106–107  
 “al-Zumar” (Qurʾan), 138