

**Sufism and Transcendentalism: A Comparative Study between
Ibn Arabi, Emerson and Whitman**

الصوفية و فلسفة التعالي: دراسة مقارنة بين ابن عربي و اميرسون و ويتمان

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**Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for the
Master of art degree in English Language and Literature**

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January- 2018

Authorization

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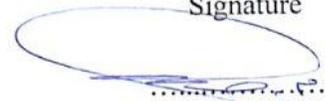
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Acknowledgement

I thank Allah, the Most Gracious and the Most Merciful, who blessed me through providing me with strength and people who guided me in writing this thesis. I would like to express my special thanks, sincere gratitude and deep appreciation to my Supervisor Dr. Mohamad Haj Mohamad for his inspiration, support and for his patience through which this thesis appeared in its final form.

Special thanks are to the instructors of the Department of English Language and Literature at Middle East University for their help and cooperation. Special thanks are extended to committee members for their generous help and guidance.

My deep gratitude is to my wonderful family for supporting and encouraging me to pursue my dreams especially my father, mother, my brothers and sisters.

Finally, I would like to thank my dear friends who supported me with help and love and encouraged me to go on till the end.

Dedication

I dedicate this work to the memory of the first person who inspired me, my grandfather and to the memory of the woman who loved unconditionally, my grandmother.

I dedicate this work to my parents who supported me along the whole way and lit the darkest days with love. To my mother who is the source of infinite love, for her help, support, caring touch and her belief in my potentials and to my father who is the source of my strength and the one who taught me to be patient to reach my goals.

I dedicate this work to my supportive brothers and sisters, the ones who showed me how far I can go because they are a great blessing in my life.

Finally, I dedicate this work to my friends for their help and encouragement through the hardest times and to my mystic friends who are rare but still can be found.

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**Sufism and Transcendentalism : A Comparative Study
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Abstract

This thesis is a comparative study between Ibn Arabi , Emerson and Whitman's interpretation and depiction of the concepts of love and nature in Ibn Arabi's selected poems from *Tarjuman Al Ashwaq*; Emerson's selected poems and an extract from his essay *Nature* and Whitman's poems that are selected from his *Leaves of Grass*. It explores the similarities and the differences between the interpretations of each poet for the concepts.

Adopting the methods of comparative literature and drawing upon Sufism as well as Transcendentalism doctrine/movement, the study explores the poems/essay of the very well-known poets through highlighting the concepts of love and nature that each one of the poets interprets. The different ways of conveying each poet's perception are emphasized in an attempt to explore the differences and the similarities between the poets' interpretation of the concepts. The three poets have something in common concerning the interpretation of the concepts of love and

nature that all of them are searching for the ultimate reality by observing everything around them .Moreover, all of them see in nature and beauty symbols and keys that lead to the divine that manifests in every beautiful element. The difference between the poets is in the way each one explains his beliefs and in the way he perceives love and beauty of nature.

Key words: Comparative literature, Sufism, Transcendentalism, spirituality.

الصوفية و فلسفة التعالي: دراسة مقارنة بين ابن عربي و اميرسون و ويطمان

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الملخص

هذه الرسالة مقارنة بين تأويل وتصوير ابن عربي واميرسون و ويطمان لمفاهيم الحب والطبيعة في مجموعة من قصائد ابن عربي المختارة من ديوانه ترجمان الأشواق، ومجموعة من قصائد اميرسون، بالإضافة إلى جزء من مقاله *الطبيعة* وقصائد ويطمان المختارة من كتابه أوراق العشب. تكشف الدراسة أوجه الاختلاف والتشابه بين طريقة كل شاعر بتأويله لهذه المفاهيم .

وباستخدام أساليب الأدب المقارن وبالاستعانة بمذاهب أو حركات الصوفية وفلسفة التعالي، تتناول الرسالة المقال أو القصائد ذات العلاقة لكل من الشعراء المشهورين من خلال إلقاء الضوء على المفاهيم التي أولها كل منهم. وتبين الدراسة اختلاف طريقة إدراك كل شاعر للمفاهيم ليتم شرح أوجه الاختلاف والتشابه بين الشعراء في شرحهم لهذه المفاهيم.

الشيء المشترك بين هؤلاء الشعراء في تأويلهم لمفاهيم الحب والطبيعة هو أنهم جميعاً يبحثون عن الحقيقة المطلقة من خلال التأمل بكل ماحولهم. بالإضافة إلى ذلك أنهم جميعاً يجدون في الطبيعة والجمال رموز ومفاتيح ترشد إلى الإله الذي يتجلى في كل ما هو جميل . الفرق بين الشعراء يكمن في طريقة شرح كل منهم لاعتقاده وبطريقته في إدراك الحب والطبيعة .

الكلمات المفتاحية : الأدب المقارن، الصوفية، فلسفة التعالي،الروحانية .

Chapter One

1.0 Background of the study

Introduction

Writing about love and nature in poetry is something profound and deep like inscribing the first alphabet of humanity . Every poet has her/his own distinguished understanding of love and nature. The poet describes his emotions, feelings, ideas and imagination. Sometimes he/she may go further to put his mysticism and symbolism in words .Poetry may be seen as mystic, symbolic and painful by a certain poet and as flammable for another poet. The different way of describing love and nature depends on the different and specific background of each poet. This background includes the poet's way of life, experiences, personality, philosophy, memories, way of comprehending and interpreting the concepts, etc.

There are similarities and differences between a Sufi poet writing about love and nature and a Transcendentalist poet writing about them. Yet both of them have something in common .They both depict the same concepts that lead in their point of view to one ultimate divine reality. The ecstasy because of the beauty of nature

that generates that deep feeling of love is explained by these poets because their doctrines glorify nature, the place of divine manifestation.

Aminrazavi (2014) clarifies that Sufism as an Islamic doctrine and practice can hardly be separated from the beliefs of mainstream America .The study of the poetry that results from following Sufism or Transcendentalism opens the door for an interactive understanding between Islamic and American souls. Aminrazavi states that this study “will provide a springboard for a deeper understanding of the opportunities that literatures provides as a medium for reconciling seemingly intractable differences.” (p.3)

Sufi and Transcendentalist thinkers address their questions along with their mystical experiences that are full of strange beauty when the spiritual consciousness of man is developing. For a common reader, their works seem difficult until one dives into the unfathomable seas of these writings.

It is the power of beauty, love and nature that is perceived by imaginative writers using this creative imagination to portray these concepts .

Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi (1165 -1240AD)

According to *The Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi Society*, Ibn al-Arabi (Abu Abd-Allah Muhammad ibn Ali ibn Muhammad ibn al-Arabi al-Hatimī al-Tai) or the Greatest Master was born in 560/1165 AD in Murcia (Southeast Andalusia Spain), the center of a fertile age of Islamic, Christian, Jewish thoughts. When he was young, he studied the theories of linguistics, theology, mathematics and cosmology .He travelled through the Western Islamic world where he studied with different scholars and mystics. He went to Mecca and resided there for three years and finally settled down in Damascus where he raised a family, taught many learners and completed writing many books. He died there in 638/1240 AD. He is considered as one of the most prolific, influential, mystic writers. His unique use of terms was of a great interest for many philosophers. He wrote more than 350works including the Futuhat al-Makkiyya which is an encyclopedia of spiritual knowledge, Fusus al-Hikam that is an exposition of the inner meaning of wisdom. In his Tarjuman al-Ashwaq and Diwan, he wrote a very refined Arabic poetry. These considerable writings expose the Unity of being, the single reality that is manifested in all images in the world. Ibn Arabi had an influence on the philosophy and literature of the Western world and his wisdom offered an understanding of what it means to be a real human .

Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882)

The American poet, essayist and philosopher Ralph Waldo Emerson, was born on May 25, 1803, in Boston, Massachusetts. His father was a clergyman and after his death Ralph was raised by his mother and his aunt Mary Moody Emerson. The intelligence of his aunt influenced him through his life. He studied at Harvard and then became a teacher for a short time. He was licensed as a minister in 1826 and after three years he was ordained to the Unitarian church. His wife died of tuberculosis when she was nineteen and this event affected Emerson professionally and personally. He was so sorrowful and as a result he resigned from the clergy. Emerson travelled to Europe and met great literary figures like Thomas Carlyle, William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge the British writer and the very significant friend of him. Coleridge had a great belief in the power of the individual and his visions helped Emerson to reshape his philosophy and ideas.

Emerson was the leading spokesman of Transcendentalism, the philosophical literary movement. He was interested in many philosophies, doctrines, texts and literatures like Indian, Islamic, Chinese, Persian in addition to German and English Romantics, etc. Transcendentalist writers including Emerson believe that individuals could transcend beyond the physical world and into deeper spiritual

experience through intuition. Akrami(2015)explains how Emerson was fascinated with Persian poetry and how he countlessly referred to the two Sufi persian poets Sa'adi and Hafiz in his essays. According to *Poetry Foundation*, his first glimpse into Sufism that aspired his works later was through the translated work of Thompson *The Practical Philosophy of the Muhammedan People* (1839). Emerson wrote poetic prose and poetry and his works are of great importance in the American culture. His beliefs strongly influenced the works of his contemporaries Henry David Thoreau and Walt Whitman as Myerson(2000a) mentions: “He has been seen as beginning a line in American poetry that runs from him to Walt Whitman to Allen Ginsberg”(p.3). He died of pneumonia in 1882.

Walt Whitman (1819-1892)

Walt Whitman, one of America's most significant and ingenious poets was born on May 31,1819,in West Hills and lived in Brooklyn. He was a self-educated poet. He started teaching at the age of seventeen to turn after that completely to journalism. He was familiar with the Bible and the works of Shakespeare, Homer, and Dante and was inspired by the Persian poetry. Whitman was a puzzling poet even for the ones who admired him. He made use of paradox to create remarkable images that were a combination between his spirituality and sensuality.(Cliffsnotes,n.d)After reading Emerson's essay *Nature*, Whitman was highly inspired to write *Leaves of Grass*. Emerson had highly appreciated

Whitman's first edition of *Leaves of Grass*. In his great *Leaves of Grass*, he described how the self overcomes all the boundaries to reach reality and shed the light on the universe and the man's relationship to it. He died on March 26, 1892.

In this research, the concepts of love and nature are discussed in Ibn Arabi's , Emerson's and Whitman's works by focusing on some relevant poems by each poet. The researcher selects and concentrates on the following: "Ode (I)", "Ode(XXV)", "Ode(XI)". These poems are the focus of this discussion regarding Ibn Arabi's *Tarjuman Al-ashwaq*. Likewise, selected poems from Emerson's poetry about love and nature are examined: "Give All to Love" and "Each and All" and also an extract from the essay *Nature*. Furthermore, the poems: "A Persian Lesson", "A Glimpse" as well as "Chanting the Square Deific" from Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* are analyzed. The researcher compares the poems and investigates the way each poet understands love and nature.

1.1. Statement of the Problem:

This study analyzes poems by Ibn Arabi, Emerson and Whitman that deal with love and nature. The similarities and the differences between the three writers are discussed. The study attempts to identify the way each poet perceives love and nature. Moreover, the research highlights the doctrine/movement that each poet has followed and how it has influenced his work.

1.2. Objectives of the Study:

1. Examining the similarities and the differences between Ibn Arabi, Emerson and Whitman's love and nature poems/extract.

2. Investigating the way of perception of the concepts of love and nature for each poet and how he has portrayed it.
3. Highlighting the doctrine/movement that each poet has followed in writing poems and how it has influenced his works.
4. Identifying the themes utilized by each poet in his selected poems.

1.3. Questions of the Study:

1. What are the main similarities and differences between the selected poems of Ibn Arabi, Emerson and Whitman?
2. How does each poet identify the concepts of love and nature and how does each one describe them?
3. What are the thematic points used by the three poets in their selected works?
4. What is the doctrine/movement that each poet has followed in writing his work and how it affected his poems?

1.4. The Significance of the Study:

The significance of the research emerges from concentrating more on the concepts of love and nature in Ibn Arabi, Emerson and Whitman's works. Further, the results of this research will be useful for those who have interest in poetry and

prose. Hopefully, this study may fill a gap in literature concerning these themes because spiritual poetry has become an important subject in contemporary literature. Moreover, this study discusses how each poet is affected by a certain doctrine/movement.

1.5. Delimitations of the Study:

This study is limited to the work of Ibn Arabi *Tarjuman Al Ashwaq* and the works of Ralph Emerson in addition to the work of Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* on love and nature. Some selected works from Ibn Arabi's , Emerson's, and Whitman's collections that deal with love and nature provide the main text for the study.

1.6. Limitations of the Study:

The findings of the study may not be applied to other works of the same poets. Since Ibn Arabi's poems are read, analyzed and treated using their English translation, they may lose some of their intentions and original flavour. The other limitation is that Ibn Arabi belongs to a cultural and historical background which is different from Emerson's and Whitman's.

1.7. Definitions of Terms

Comparative Literature:

It is a systemized method of study which is set exclusively in humanities. Comparative literature includes an organized endeavor to compare two units or items with a great focus on the points of similarity and the points of difference between the units or items. According to *Encompass Dictionary*, it appeared in European literature and then extended to its American. Finally, it becomes a universal literary theory. Comparative literature is the study of two or more languages or literatures especially when they are of different cultures and histories. It deals with specific topics like writers and their biographies. (Encompass,2006). Remak (1961) outlines comparative literature as “ the study of the relationships between literature on one hand and other areas of knowledge and belief, such as the arts (e.g., painting, sculpture, and music), philosophy and history”

The American School of comparative literature came as a reaction against the French one. It focused on the literary texts themselves and their context rather the influence between the texts. It expanded and was different in a way that the scholars of this school“... loved always to expand the section of Comparative Literature for the entrance of various global artistic and literary trends in this zone.”(Abd Rahman and Shamsuddin,2012)

Sufism:

It is an approved term for Islamic mystical tradition. Sufism is seen as a school for the awareness of divine moral values. It's a way to free the heart from guilt, imperfections and bad manners. Sufism aims at the enlightenment of the inner soul of individuals. According to the *Islamic Supreme Council of America*, Sufism: "is a spiritual path which means seeking the pleasure of God and peaceful love in one's self". It's how to build harmony with all kinds of creations and following the prophets' tracks in one's life. (Islamic Supreme Council of America, n,d)

Transcendentalism:

It is a philosophical movement in the early nineteenth century. This American political literary movement was associated with Ralph Waldo Emerson as the center of it. According to *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (2017), Transcendentalism was stimulated by German as well as the English Romanticism and other philosophies. The intuition for transcendentalists is the way to truth.

Spirituality:

According to *Encyclopedia Britannica* (2017), spirituality is the attribute of being distinguished by a concern with religious questions and ethics widely conceptualized. This term is used in a non- religious sense to indicate the idea which dominates the mind to recognize the fundamental metaphysics, or existential questions in the matter of the nature of the self or the soul. It introduces the deep meaning of life with the deep religious belief that immortality is possible.

Chapter Two

Review of Literature

2.0 Introduction:

The main aim of this chapter is to review the theoretical and the empirical studies that tackle the themes that are related to the research. The first part reviews views, definitions and books that are beneficial for the study. The second part deals with the studies that have a relation with the thematic points of the research.

2.1 Review of Theoretical Literature:

William Chittick (1989) takes a major step to expose the deep visions of Ibn Arabi. The theology, ontology and the spiritual life of Ibn Arabi are observed closely. He interprets Ibn Arabi's mystical views and consequently helps to understand Ibn Arabi better. He starts with a survey of the teachings of Ibn Arabi and continues to explain his thoughts. He gives specific definitions of Ibn Arabi's basic terminology and argues that Sufism should be the cornerstone in the "harmonization" of the various branches of intellect. Chittick emphasizes that Ibn Arabi is the one who "helped bring the teachings of Sufism into the main stream of Islamic Intellectuality."(p.xviii)

Joel Myerson (2000b) explores Transcendentalism with all its phases and highlights all of the important names that take part in forming the philosophy of the Transcendentalists. He gives an overall vision for the historical events that affect and inspire the theories of Transcendentalism.

Arthur Versluis (1993) investigates the history of American Transcendentalism. He examines how the transcendentalist orientalism had been created and how the Transcendentalists were amazed by Asian religions and affected by them. He explains how the German idealism affected Transcendentalism. He also introduces how Transcendentalism was a product of religions, thoughts, theories and philosophies.

Catharina Raudvere & Leif Stenberg (2008) have examined the contemporary Sufism that attracted the young to find a parallel way between Islamic spirituality and modernity. They tackled the subject of movability of ideas and humans. They give international boundaries to Sufism as a doctrine. They discussed different ideas including: the innovation of the Sufi communities in Syria and the noticeable Turkish Sufism. They examined the fact that contemporary Sufism exists in local Muslim societies. They also discussed the widespread Sufi net works as well as the traditions and the rituals of Sufis adapted by modern religiosity.

Mehdi Aminrazavi & Jacob Needleman (2014) have juxtaposed Sufism with the nineteenth century American writers. For them, Sufism is a “doctrine and practice embedded in the region of Islam.”(p.xi) They explain that now it’s very hard to isolate Islam from the views of dominant America; there are still vital touches of a philosophical combination that resonate clearly in some important American poetry. They assume that searching in these traces is not only a starting gate of an intermutual understanding between the souls of Muslims and Americans, but also way of deepening the understanding of literature as a mid-way to achieve a harmonious adaptation to the strict differences.

Caroline F.E.Spurgeon (2016) defines mysticism as: “an attitude of mind founded upon an intuitive or experienced conviction of unity, of oneness, of likeness in all things” (p.4). She investigates mysticism and finds out that mysticism is a temper or atmosphere rather than a doctrine system of philosophy or a doctrine. For her, the bestowal of the elements of the truth can be gained by believing in mysticism. She discusses that some Romantic poets like Wordsworth got the “revelation of divinity” from nature because of their mysticism. She clarifies that the central idea of unity is all things are but phenomena of the “one divine life” and according to this, man must “share the nature of God.”(p.5)

2.2 Review of Empirical Studies:

Jeffrey.M. Einboden (2005) proposes the mystical meaning of Emerson's poetry which can be understood only within the Persian outline. It clarifies that Emerson's works can be interpreted within the German traditional context of exegesis. It demonstrates that Emerson's pursuit of Eastern tradition rises from his understanding of "German post Kantianism".

Ahmad Almansour (2005) investigates three American pre –Civil war cases in his study, Emerson, Hawthorne and Poe who found the East as the appropriate environment for giving attention to nature. In the case of Ralph Waldo Emerson, he was attracted to the notions of perfection, sublimation and divinity of Sufism represented by its poets especially the Persian ones.

Zagar Cyrus Ali (2008) presents the writings of two 7th /13th –century Islamic mystical poets, Muhy i al-Din ibn al-‘Arabi and Fakhr al Din ‘Iraqi from an artistic viewpoint as they evaluate the beauty that can be detected in their writings. According to Zagar's study, Sufi's Romantic poetry was misunderstood by the poets' contemporaries as well as the ones who study them recently. The study examines two Muslim mystics who were from different backgrounds. A close attention is given to Ibn Arabi in addition to an investigation for his description for

beauty as the fundamental purpose of love .Iraqi is an admirer of the divine beauty which is shown in humans.

Ibrahim Ahmad (2014) discusses the theory of “Divine love” in his thesis represented by Ibn Arabi. The Meccan Openings (al-Futuhāt al-Makkiyya), chapter 178 is closely analyzed in the study because the text is considered to be one of the very rich texts that tackles the concept of divine love. The thesis explores deeply the metaphysical doctrine of Ibn Arabi and it refers to the love theory which becomes a cornerstone in the Sufi tradition.

Davidson Ryan (2014) discusses the nature and the link between Blake and Whitman in his thesis. He also studies the effect of the romantic poet on Whitman’s writings which was obvious in the Leaves of Grass.

Apparently, the reviewed theoretical and empirical studies enriched the researcher’s knowledge about the topic and provided the researcher with a framework for the study. They also supported the analysis of the researcher. However, studies that investigate the works of Ibn Arabi, Emerson and Whitman can be found but what makes this study different from the previous ones is that this one is the first that combines together the works of these three poets in a comparative study that highlights love and nature in their works.

Chapter Three

Methods and Procedures

3.1 Methodology:

The methods that will be used in the study are analytical, comparative, critical and descriptive methods. These methods will enable the researcher to clarify the similar and the different points between the three poets' works as mentioned earlier. Furthermore, the study will shed the light on the way of each poet describing the concepts of nature and love and how each poet perceives these concepts.

3.2 Sample of the Study:

The sample of the study will include Ibn Arabi's Odes: (I), (XXV) and (XI) from his book *Tarjuma Al Ashwaq*. Emerson's poems consist of two poems that are: "Give All to Love" and "Each and All" and an extract from his essay *Nature*. Whitman's selected poems from his *Leaves of Grass* include: "A Glimpse", "A Persian Lesson" and "Chanting the Square Deific". The concepts of love and nature will be investigated in the poems from the perspective of each poet.

3.3 Procedures of the Study:

The researcher will follow these procedures in researching and in writing the thesis:

1. Reading the biography of Ibn Arabi.
2. Reading the biography of Ralph Emerson.
3. Reading the biography of Walt Whitman.
4. Highlighting the concepts of love and nature in Ibn Arbi, Emerson and Whitman's works.
5. Analyzing the similarities and differences between the three poets in depicting and perceiving the concepts of love and nature in their works.
6. Discussing the findings in the research.
7. Making recommendations related to the findings.
8. Documenting references with primary and secondary sources according to the APA style, fifth edition, the documentation system adopted by Middle East University.

Chapter Four

Discussion and Analysis

4.0 Introduction:

This chapter will present the concepts of Sufism and Transcendentalism, through the poems of Ibn Arabi, Emerson and Whitman. It will provide a discussion of these concepts followed by quotations and examples from the poems to strengthen the argument.

4.1 Sufism:

According to *Encyclopedia Britannica*, because of the tradition of wearing wool garments, Sufis were given their name and that was a sign of their disapproval of the materialized temporal earthly things. So the Islamic mysticism was called Sufism since the beginning of the nineteenth century in Western languages as a kind of an abstract word derived from the Arabic word ‘ Tasawwuf ‘ which means to dress wool.

Historically speaking, the Islamic spirituality had grown through different phases covering “1) the appearance of early asceticism. 2) The development of classical mysticism of divine love and. 3) the rise of proliferation of fraternal

orders of mystics.” However, the history of this spirituality is mostly a history of personal experience which is mystical.

The stage which comes first arose in circles, pious ones, that were formed as a response to the early Umayyad era (661-749) that spread worldly. Because of the Sufis’ continual practices of continual pondering in the Holy Quran words about judgment Day, they were looked at as ‘those who always weep’ or the ones who saw the world as a ‘hut of sorrows’. They were also famed for the strict meticulous realization and fulfillment of the Quranic injunction in addition to their acts which reflect piety and notably the fondness of prayers at night.

The second phase of Islamic spirituality was mysticism when the aspect of love was added to asceticism. It is imputed to Rabi’ah –al-Adawiyah who first drew up the idealistic idea of the love of Allah along with fear and hope. Hope for entering paradise and fear of hell. After that, sublime, mystical trends spread around in the Islamic community.

The third phase started to take a final shape after the crystallization of brotherhood and the leader centered teachings of Sufism. The thirteenth century was overshadowed by the Mongolian invasion into the Islamic regions in the East though it was the golden brilliant age of Sufism. Ibn Arabi, with his far reaching theories created his system that was described as comprehensive and theosophical and in its essence the cornerstone for the “unity of being” philosophy .This theory

presents the idea of the oneness of existence which is a “manifestation of the underlying divine reality.”

The traditional themes of Sufism were exploited for aesthetic reasons. Moreover, the Sufi poetry possesses that very powerful effect on Transcendentalism and Romantic poetry. It didn't only provide an Oriental imagery but also has some themes like the similarities between experience in love and nature, the pride of the world and the failure of human reason to give an explanation to the mysteries around were mundane to Sufism. However, the Romantics and the New Englanders fell for the enchantments and wonders of Sufism.

“The East” was seen as the cradle and the fertile womb of wisdom in the world by possessing the mystical knowledge which was absent or missing in the West. It became popular again as a result of its similarities with Romanticism in which they were affected by the irreplaceable essence of the East.

The Easterner's message has the same essence that is living with focus on love, peace and goodness away from the materialized world.(Aminrazavi,2014)

The idealistic Utopian model inspired by the East is developed by the intellectual masters of European and American literature because of the fact that

there is nothing like this magnificent East, and that the charming Orient has that plenty of cultures.

The captivating idea around the clichéd image of the East and Eastern cultures maybe a result of the wounds of the Post- Civil War American Society. The scars, inhumanity and the tragedy of the Civil War became clear. What was therapeutic and consoling to American Society was the message perceived from the East; that life is trials of suffering and it will not be considered life if one does not pass through such hardships in order to be labeled under the category of a living being.

Indeed, the wisdom of the East in its core of love and brotherhood has surpassed the barriers of worldliness. Furthermore, the Sufi poetry that was available in the nineteenth century increased greatly as the century went on. When the decade was close to its end, Sufi poets met the crowd who did really acknowledge and enjoy their poetry on all levels concerning religion, literature and philosophy. The New Englanders took from the same sources and produced an unexampled written forms of letters, poetry and essays that manifested their fascination with the Persian inspired ideals of Sufism. After that, the spiritual landscape of New England spread throughout America in a form of inspired movements like Transcendentalism which declared that the wise people of the East approached the same universal wisdom like Emerson and Whitman. (Aminrazavi, 2014,p.3).

4.1.1 Ibn Arabi's *Tarjuman Al-Ashwaq*:

When Ibn Arabi interpreted his love, he wrote poetry to express his longing to his beloved and his suffering in his love.

Whenever I mention a name in this book I always allude to her, and whenever I mourn over an abode I mean her abode. In these poems I always signify Divine influences and spiritual revelations and sublime analogies, according to the most excellent way which we (Sufis) follow . . . God forbid that readers of this book and of my other poems should think of aught unbecoming to souls that scorn evil and to lofty spirits that are attached to the things of Heaven ! Amen ! (Nicholson ,1911, p.4)

In his pilgrimage to Mecca, Ibn Arabi met a young Persian woman who embodied the divine wisdom. This appealing experience gave him the opportunity to write *Tarjuman Al- Ashwaq*. Nizam was the young daughter of Makinu 'ddin. The society of her father and aunts sculptured her noble nature. Her astonishing beauty and silver tongue, reason and ascetics inspired Ibn Arabi to write this volume . He glorified Nizam through his poems using vivid sensory images though in the margins of his volume he explained that he “could not express even a small

part of the feelings roused in him by the recollection of his love for her in past times.” (Nicholson,1911, p.3)

In his preface, Ibn Arabi justified using sensory style and expressions because the human souls can be infatuated with these charming expressions. Ibn Arabi composed *Al-ashwaq* because of a request of his friends in the city of Aleppo. One of his companions (Shamsu ‘ddin) had heard that some theologian said that Ibn Arabi’s revelation in his preface was false. That is to say, the love poems he wrote were severely criticized for adopting a sensual style for he is a man of religion and piety. Eventually one of Ibn Arabi’s strict critics acknowledged that: “he would never in future doubt the good faith of any Sufis who should assert that they attached a mystical signification to the words used in ordinary speech.” (Nicholson, p.5)

4.1.2 Concepts of Love and Nature in Ibn Arabi’s *Tarjuman Al-Ashwaq*:

4.1.2.1 Ode (I)

(I)

Would that I were aware whether they knew what heart they
possessed!

And would that my heart knew what mountain-pass they
threaded!

Dost thou deem them safe or dost thou deem them dead?

Lovers lose their way in love and become entangled. (Nicholson,
1911. p.67)

Poetry is like weaving the unseen with human language and poetry for Ibn Arabi is those endless metaphors and symbols with their unbound intentions and unfading impressions. While reading some lines of Ibn Arabi's love poetry, any reader could remember some pre-Islamic poetry attributed to Majnun Layla the one who went mad for Laila's love. Love which others regard natural phenomena has a deeper level of meaning for Ibn Arabi as he looks deep into the implicit as well as figurative .

In his own commentary on his lines of Ode (I), he mentioned that "They" refers to the "divine ideas" to which the souls of gnostics are eagerly captured and the spirits are distressed and for whose sake the God-fearing workers perform their work of passion and devotion. Mohammadan heart, the perfect one, is the one that intended by the word heart. It's not restricted by stations, nevertheless, it is obsessed with Divine Ideas for they pursue who pursues them. They (the ideas) can't recognize that they possess that heart because they are part of its fundamental nature.

Therefore, these divine ideas only exist in the existence of the seer and when the seer is gone, they are dead. Ibn Arabi indicates the mountain-pass which shows that it's fixed and unchangeable and on the other hand, there's the fleeting 'state' that is contrasted with the 'station'. The two perplexing opposite things that baffled lovers that the lover longs to be in full harmony with the beloved. Moreover, the lover wants to unite with Him. So the dilemma of the lover exists when the beloved wished to part from him.

4.1.2.2 Ode (XXV)

Love is evoked in the perceiver because of the beauty and lovability of the perceived object .In other words, the objects awaken love because of their beauty. The beautiful is doubtlessly divine and the divine is the reality and the existence which love results from. So each beautiful aspect mirrors the divine since the soul of every person has a breath from the divine spirit. (Zagar, 2010.p.5).

(XXV)

O grief for my heart, O grief! O joy for my mind, O joy!

In my heart the fire of passion is burning, in my mind
the full moon of darkness hath set.

O musk! O full moon! O bough of the sand-hills!

How green is the bough, how bright the moon,

how sweet the musk!

...

She is the morning sun rising in a heaven, she is the
bough of the sand-hills planted in a garden.

Fear made me watch her incessantly while I watered the
bough with falling rain.

If she riseth, she will be a wonder to mine eye, or if she
setteth she will be a cause of my death.

Since Beauty bound on her head a diadem of unwrought
gold, I am in love with gold that has been wrought.

...

If Bilqis had seen her couch, the throne and the
pavement would not have occurred to her mind.

...

A musky odour which exhales its fragrance to us from
the flowers of thy lowlands or the flowers of the hills,
O ban tree of the valley, show us a branch or some twigs

that can be compared with her tenderness!

... (Nicholson, 1911. pp.97-98)

The nature with its alluring and beautiful elements called Ibn Arabi's beloved to his mind. As a reader of the mystics of nature, one should not look at the universe as a literal thing but observe it closely to find the symbols in nature within which the divine is manifested and may be unveiled to the perceiver. Nature is even mentioned in the Holy Quran "Though all the trees of earth were pens and the seas were ink ; yet would the words of God not be spent" (*Luqman*,31:27) and with all its units is a fertile place for an ordinary observer so what if the observer was a poet who is reminded with his beloved when looking at these scenes and how about a bewildered lover like Ibn Arabi who found a lot of symbols in nature that awakened his memories said in his own explanation of his(XXV Ode) that he is afraid that the grief of love will weaken his body, the body by which he grasped Divine Sciences. He also described the full moon that is shown in the darkness and risen in his mind after having set in the sensible world. He compared his beloved to the moon since her light is borrowed from the light of God who manifests Himself in her. Next in the Ode, he portrays the green bough that is clothed with the Holy Divine Names, it's the same image when the leaves are there to clothe the boughs. Other aspects of nature are mentioned in this Ode. They are veiled under

profound meanings that excite him in his writing when he began to behold her in everything. They are clear in the first three lines of Ode.

Ibn Arabi used symbolic language. He compares the bubbles to the water which symbolizes life .When the breaths of mercy flow; the Divine mercy that results from the Divine life appears and this is mentioned in line 4 “smiling mouth whose bubbles I loved! And O saliva in which I tasted white honey!” (Ode XXV) Additionally, he likens his beloved to the sun, the illuminative guidance, repeatedly in several odes. The sun is in heaven, the place within which the manifestation happens. In line (7) Ibn Arabi also refers to the valley that represents the knowledge in the hearts. He mentions the flowers that indicate the “inaccessible veil of the Divine glory.” Here, Ibn Arabi wants to show that the divine wisdom is manifested in all things around.

In his article, Chittick(2009) said, “life is presupposed by every divine quality... life also pervades all creatures, because creatures are simply the traces and properties of the divine names.” (Chittick, 2009)

All creatures including animals have a strong presence in Ibn Arabi’s Odes. They are given symbolic meanings. For example, the gazelles in line 18 of the same ode refer to beauty: “Or at the sand-hills and where the vale bends beside the guarded pasture or at La'la', where the gazelles

come to browse.” moreover, in line 20 the dove seems to be like a Gnostic’s soul where the lofty expression of the dove inflames the poet’s yearning for God: “whenever a turtle-dove moans, is thrilled by the remembrance of his beloved and passes away.”

Ultimately, it is shown in the last lines that beauty is in an inseparable relationship with nature, that each one reflects the other that is to say, the language love utters is beauty and by no means poems written by beauty are nothing but pure love.

4.1.2.3 Ode (XI)

Ibn Arabi with his striking style, depicted a “religion of love” (din-al -hubb) a distinct way for those whose hearts receive every divine aspect, or to put it differently, that heart which “fluctuates to suit its Lord’s state-changing quality.” (Zagar, 2010)

(XI)

...

They encompass my heart moment after moment, for the
sake of love and anguish, and kiss my pillars,

...

A gazelle whose pasture is between the breast-bones and

the bowels. O marvel ! a garden amidst fires !

My heart has become capable of every form : it is a
pasture for gazelles and a convent for Christian monks,
And a temple for idols and the pilgrim's Ka'ba and the
tables of the Tora and the book of the Koran.

I follow the religion of Love : whatever way Love's
camels take, that is my religion and my faith.

We have a pattern in Bishr, the lover of Hind and her
sister, and in Qays and Lubna and in Mayya and
Ghayldn. (Nicholson, 1911. pp.66-7)

Ibn Arabi's "universalisms" is shown in the lines of Ode (XI), where he emphasizes the idea of "the Sūfī doctrine that all ways lead to the One God." That profound idea which asserts that love already exists in all religions. The relationship between the sources of love is like a river and its streams. (Religions) are the streams of the same river (source), and any path one takes will lead to the source which love springs from. Religions are sent from a merciful God who is the infinite source of love, and innately, humans are drawn to this source.

God is the Ultimate Reality whose name is al-Wadud or the one who bears love, and to love Him, one should know him first and those who love Him are the ones who yearn to his supreme love that aims at union and togetherness.

Seen and expressed by other philosophers in Islam, Ahmad Al Ghazali exposes love meaning in his *Sawanih*. He explained that God loved human beings before they loved Him. This notion is taken from the Qur'anic verse "He loves them and [therefore] they love Him." So love starts from the side of the Divine. It is that gift from God to all creation. (Chittick, 2013)

Finally, in Ibn Arabi's (XI) Ode, he mentions the lovers in the Arabic poetry who are widely known like Qays and Lubna, Bishr, the lover of Hind and her sister, Mayya and Ghaylun who had written love masterpieces to celebrate their love which is all about duality, tied bonds and separateness. Love for Ibn Arabi is an inevitable source of suffering that puzzles the lovers and reveals the fragility of human beings. Suffering is explained as the gateway to true love in his Ode.

And for Ibn Arabi, Nizam is the embodiment of beauty and the symbol of knowledge and love.

4.2. Transcendentalism

As history tells and according to Myerson (2000b), Transcendentalism came with its sense of novelty and the Transcendentalists were called the "New School"

so the originality which accompanied Transcendentalism was everywhere in America when there was a notable change in the life of America and Americans. Transcendentalists borrowed ideas from many literatures, religions and philosophies. They took whatever matches their beliefs. These borrowings were shaped into a new system that suits their thoughts.

To many writers, Transcendentalism was primarily a religious passion, revolution and enthusiasm and the Transcendentalists who were occupied by Unitarianism were mostly ministers and felt that Unitarianism with its austere structure couldn't remove the chains of theology. The difference between Puritans is not only huge but also unquestionable. Puritans have the idea of the original human sin that corrupted the world; a world which is hostile, strange and saved by chance before birth. The world for them is fated and predetermined, contrary to the Unitarians, whose universe is ordered enough to be in progress towards the best through the good deeds which are taken into consideration on the Day of Judgment. Their leader William Ellery Channing (1780–1842) helped give a name to the Unitarian movement in his speech "Unitarian Christianity". In "Likeness to God", he propounded that mankind "partake" of Divinity which means that divinity can be perceived by anyone whose life is in harmony with divinity and that the divinity can be found within nature and humankind. They believe that if

nature itself is something divine then observing nature can set the scene to analyze and examine the representations, workings and expressions of the divine mind.

From their deep belief in the importance of intuition, Transcendentalists placed emphasis on the individual interpretation of the religious texts. Transcendentalists' Parents had great faith in John Locke's standpoint of the world. To Locke, the human mind is like an empty page on which the experiences of the individuals are carved, so the book of lives was originally blank at birth and individuals themselves write their own experiences. Nonetheless, the younger generation had something else. For them Immanuel Kant's views were the ones to adapt. They think that the book that they are given at birth is simply not blank. This book embraces the recognized truths of the universe and from the beginning one intuitively reads the book than writing it. "Understanding" and "Reason" are two terms used by Transcendentalists in their writings to differentiate between: the intuition of Kant and the empiricism of Locke. These two terms came into the American writing by Samuel Taylor Coleridge who explained understanding as "the faculty according to sense" and he defined reason as "the Power of universal and necessary Conviction, the Source and the Substance of Truths above Sense, and having their evidence in themselves."

Transcendentalists took precedence over British writers in literature. Moreover, they were the ones who endorsed the British Romantics when it was not sure if the reception of their works will be certainly positive and free from doubts.

The audience which was digging in all the things around them to light upon self-definition and poetic inspiration found something in Wordsworth and Coleridge's poetry which theme concurs with daily life. To Transcendentalists' knowledge, Frederic Henry Hedge, a Unitarian minister who attended Harvard Divinity School was one of the important sources for the German Romantics. He wrote a review for Coleridge's *Christian Examiner* (1833) indicating Coleridge's genius bestowal of expression as well as his attachment to the metaphysics of the German , he lamented that he hadn't made Kant's transcendental philosophy attainable to the English audience. Hedge also arranged what is in the course of time became the Transcendental club. (Myerson, 2000b)

In his article, Goodman(2014) claims that the view of nature was alive and used by Wordsworth and Coleridge along with Emerson. The power of the mind in Wordsworth's works extends through Emerson's *Nature*. In his essay, he writes that nature is biddable to spirit, he also counsils each one to "Buildyour own world". Wordsworth has a similar style that depends on receiving from nature where one's heart can watch and receive universal truths .Emerson likewise has a receptive vogue starting from Nature and on when he describes an experience in

the woods : “I become a transparent eyeball. I am nothing; I see all; the currents of the universal being circulate through me.”

Furthermore, Goodman continues that Transcendentalists show a far-reaching interest in Asian religions. Nevertheless, Europeans discovery of the Orient precedes the American Transcendentalists’ discovery. John S Harrison said that undoubtedly Hermetic and Neoplatonic beliefs and thoughts prepared for the enthusiasm and fascination of the Romantics and Transcendentalists with “Oriental religions”. However, It is hard to define or put Transcendentalism into words as a term because Transcendentalists themselves never acceded to its ultimate meaning, though, one can be satisfied with this definition, “Transcendentalism is fundamentally an intuitionism, a belief that Truth can be intuitively perceived by higher Reason that this intuition precedes and invigorates all religious awareness, and that it can penetrate the various forms of world religions, extracting from them their essence.” (Versluis,1993,p.13)

Hence, Transcendentalism is an early nineteenth century movement that combines politics, literature in addition to philosophy; stimulated by German and English Romanticism; Hume’s skepticism; Herder and Schleiermacher’s Biblical criticism with Emerson who is the center of this movement despite the fact that there were other important Transcendentalist like Henry David Thoreau, Amos

Bronson Alcott, Theodore Parker, Frederic Henry Hedge, and Margaret Fuller.
(Goodman, 2014)

4.2.1 Concepts of Love and Nature in Emerson's Poems and Essays

poets for Emerson are those prophets who feel, watch, receive and say lines that come from their own hidden world. Emerson was not only an influential essayist and lecturer but he was also a great poet. Emerson tried to put his philosophical ideas with lyricism in his poems. He also used traditional poetic devices in writing his poems like rhyme though some are free form.

4.2.1.1 Give All to Love:

Love to Emerson is something inexpressible, it's not bound to anything else .It lifts one's soul up because it is divine.

Obey thy heart;

Friends, kindred, days,

Estate, good fame,

Plans, credit, and the muse;

Nothing refuse.

'Tis a brave master,

Let it have scope,
Follow it utterly,
Hope beyond hope,...
But 'tis a god,
Knows its own path,...
It requireth courage stout,
Souls above doubt,
Valor unbending;
Such 'twill reward,
They shall return
More than they were,
And ever ascending...
Cling with life to the maid,...
Though thou loved her as thyself,
As a self of purer clay,
Tho' her parting dims the day,
Stealing grace from all alive

Heartily know,

When half-gods go,

The gods arrive (Oliver, pp.697-698)

Emerson's poem "Give all to Love" that consists of six stanzas is about giving everything up for love. The reader of the poem is expected to know what the meaning of true love is. Emerson explains in his poem that love means being able to lose the very important things in one's life such as friends, money, plans, fame and even muses. For Emerson, to love means to lose all life pleasures and let go the precious things in the world without being hopeful that they will come back again. Nevertheless, the lover is bestowed by love and many things are going to come in return to him or to her but designed differently. Therefore, it takes too much courage and bravery to be a lover and keep your love alive because one should take the orders from the heart and follow them.

At the end of his poem, Emerson reminds his readers of the harsh reality of missing. He expresses his suffering when his days become dark because of the absence of his beloved. This idea is very clear in the lines "Tho' her parting dims the day/Stealing grace from all alive."

Emerson expresses a similar idea in his essay *Love*. He explains his feelings towards his beloved in her presence and absence as well. He mentions that the

lover “became all eye when one was present, and all memory when one was gone”.(Oliver,2002.p.193)

The idea of the poem is the unconditional love, love with all one’s heart and suffering because of love.

Emerson has that deep belief that one should let go the shallow empty concepts that impoverish the hearts of humans and this is the way to reach God and this is what is expressed in his last words that hit in each one’s heart.

4.2.1.2 Each and All:

Like many poets, nature is an essential inspiration for Emerson and one of his major thoughts. That is to say, the beauty that exists in nature stimulates Emerson to write about love that every natural phenomenon is nothing but a symbol of love.

...

Nothing is fair or good alone.

I thought the sparrow's note from heaven,

Singing at dawn on the alder bough;

...

He sang to my ear, — they sang to my eye

The delicate shells lay on the shore;

The bubbles of the latest wave

Fresh pearls to their enamel gave;

And the bellowing of the savage sea

Greeted their safe escape to me.

...With the sun, and the sand, and the wild uproar

...Over me soared the eternal sky,

Full of light and of deity;

...Beauty through my senses stole;

I yielded myself to the perfect whole.

...The lover watched his graceful maid,

As 'mid the virgin train she stayed,

...The gay enchantment was undone,

A gentle wife, but fairy none.

Then I said, "I covet truth;

Beauty is unripe childhood's cheat;

...Running over the club-moss burrs;

I inhaled the violet's breath;

Around me stood the oaks and firs;... (Poetry Foundation, 2017)

In his essay *Love* he said, "The passion rebuilds the world for the youth...Nature grows conscious Every bird on the boughs of the tree sings now to his heart and soul ...the clouds have faces as he looks on them. The trees of the forest."(Oliver,2002.pp.193-194) so nature is like a poem that is beyond analysis yet one has the power to enchant and sense the beauty within it. Emerson believes that the poet is not only a poet but also a seer or even a prophet because he can reflect other worlds .He depicts in his *Nature*, the understanding of the real would come through the manifestation of the divine with nature and here comes the role of the poet who becomes a part of revelation using the language which may seem perplexing but in total harmony with the indescribable and unutterable that is received by the poet. Emerson writes another poem, *Each and All* and according to Yoder(1978) the main idea of the poem is that the path to the truth is paved by the astonishment and surprise of the poet and "that truth, beauty, and goodness are not isolated elements but aspects of the 'perfect whole'". (Yoder, 1978)

The sudden enlightenment of the persona in *Each and All* surpasses the facts of matter; in other words, instinctly he is experiencing nature parts and absorbing it as a whole using his senses. A poem which leaps from the beginning to a conclusion towards the foundation of things where the beauty of nature mesmerizes such a

poet like Emerson, "All are needed by each one / Nothing is fair or good alone". In the poem, the poet uses examples from the nature, the shells, sparrow, and the maiden to test the fundamental that "Nothing is fair or good alone". Although the poem includes images for the interaction between humans like the wife but the major idea is nature. A good example is the seashell which is with its simplicity stands in a relation to all things where it can be seen beautiful in nature and not separately. That all nature aspects are interwoven together, the sea, the sun, the shore and the sounds, the visual as well as the aural, to awaken the senses of a bewildered lover of nature.

In a perfect interaction between the intellect and senses, the persona in the poem is in a moment of knowing. This moment doesn't come from understanding alone but from the poet perceiving the real heart of nature and diving from the surface to the depths of the physical world by achieving harmony with nature.

The lover is there in the poem of nature watching, speculating and maybe waiting to be inspired more and more by nature or by the beauty of his beloved .

4.2.1.3 Nature:

In his remarkable essay *Nature*, Emerson explains how a wise man turns into a child with all his inquisitiveness to seek the secrets of nature around him:

The stars awaken a certain reverence, because though always present, they are inaccessible; but all natural objects make a kindred impression, when the mind is open to their influence. Nature never wears a mean appearance. Neither does the wisest man extort her secret, and lose his curiosity by finding out all her perfection. Nature never became a toy to a wise spirit. The flowers, the animals, the mountains, reflected the wisdom of his best hour, as much as they had delighted the simplicity of his childhood. (Oliver, p.364)

In his essay *Nature*, Emerson refers to nature as ‘she’, therefore, one can compare nature to one’s dearest beloved with whom he can escape his sorrows and reach to the point where he can transcend towards the divine realities or like a mother for the man who becomes as a child in his curiosity towards nature. For Emerson, the heat of nature opens an observer’s perception to love everything and everyone, so love, beauty and nature are inseparable concepts that lead to each other.

Emerson tries to free his mind from all sorts of entanglement in order to perceive the influence and wonders of nature completely as Buell(2009) mentioned that Emerson “opened up the prospect of a much more profound sense of the

nature, challenge, and promise of mental emancipation, whatever one's race, sex, or nation might be.”(Buell,2009.p.5)

According to *Cliffsnotes*, gazing at the stars separates Emerson from the material world. They always and forever exist in the sky so they are a reminder of the eternity of the divine. They can always move one's feelings and give him or her a chance to retain the sense of wonder even with familiar aspects of nature. For Emerson adults should have balance between the inner and the outer world to perceive nature innately. One loses manhood when he has a pure curiosity towards the miracles of nature; as if it is a phase of transformation when a man becomes a child who devotes his whole being to nature with engaged senses and intertwined soul. “In nature, which is also a part of God, man finds qualities parallel to his own. There is a special relationship, a sympathy, between man and nature.”(Cliffsnotes,n.d)

Emerson, the iconic writer believes that nature is the way to find divine realities that can not be found anywhere else. For him, one should look inside his inner soul and the outer world to achieve harmony.

4.2.2 Concepts of Love and Nature in Walt Whitman's Poems from *Leaves of Grass*

Walt Whitman is one of the most original American poets who has his own national voice. According to Corrigan (2012), many intellectuals consider Walt

Whitman as the poet of the body although Whitman and Emerson are quite similar in their poetic ascetics. In his well-known *Leaves of Grass*, he discusses his own self and expresses the mysteries of life; he explores the two spiritual elements of man, body and soul. He also has his own relationship with nature for he considers it divine.

4.2.2.1 A Glimpse:

The ecstasy in life is momentary or even like a glimpse. This is the depiction of a moment when Walt Whitman tries to slow down the time or freeze it forever; he immortalizes a moment that within the unbearable nostalgia exists. Therefore, everyone can read Whitman's poem *Glimpse* till now.

A glimpse through an interstice caught,

Of a crowd of workmen and drivers in a bar-
room around the stove late of a winter night,
and I unremark'd seated in a corner,

Of a youth who loves me and whom I love,
silently approaching and seating

himself near, that he may hold me by the hand,

Along while amid the noises of coming and

going, of drinking and oath and smutty jest,

There we two, content, happy in being

together, speaking little, perhaps not a word.

(Whitman, p.122)

As Dougherty (1993) stated, a note was found on one of the scripts that were unpublished on which Whitman wrote "Pictures": "Break all these to several picture". Dougherty continued that, it means to open the helmet of one's consciousness and then all images will flow to be reshaped as words then poems. "A Glimpse" is one of Whitman's poems that depicts the freedom from the conquering mind. It shows how someone can move from the outside to the inner self and from the noise of the barroom to the quietness and closeness of love. An eye that glimpses and a soul that knows and finds love. In this poem Whitman describes a situation which is preferable for him in his poems. The poem is a simple portrayal for a couple battling to gain a moment or a glimpse of peace through all the turmoil of the daily life.

The speaker separates himself from the crowds to look through them for his love, unseen to others in the corner to enjoy moments of solidarity with the one he

loves. It is the power of love that brings back the stillness to the mind despite all the noise around and it is the language of lovers when they say nothing at all.

4.2.2.2 A Persian Lesson:

The Near East with a natural setting is depicted in Whitman's poem *A Persian Lesson*. The images and the philosophy of Persia exist in this poem and the "lesson" is given by a Sufi, who is like other Sufis, believes in intuition to reach the truth. The effect of the Persian poet Jalal al-din Rumi is obvious. Ghulam M. Fayez (1979) suggests that Whitman is closest to Rumi "by affinity of mystic temper as well as poetic characteristics," and he indicates that Rumi may have been Whitman's inspiration for "A Persian Lesson."

For his o'erarching and last lesson the greybeard Sufi,
 In the fresh scent of the morning in the open air,
 On the slope of a teeming Persian rose-garden,
 Under an ancient chestnut-tree wide spreading its branches,
 Spoke to the young priests and students.
 Finally my children, to envelop each word,
 each part of the rest ,
 Allah is all, all, all is immanent in every life
 and object ,

May be at many and many-a-more removes

– yet Allah, Allah, Allah is there.

“Has the stray wander’d far? Is the reason-
why strangely hidden?

Would you know the dissatisfaction? The
urge and spur of every life;

The something never still’d –never entirely
gone? The invisible need of every seed?

It is the central urge in every atom, (Often
unconscious, often evil, downfallen,)

To return to its divine source and origin,
however distant, Latent the same in subject
and in object, without one exception”

(Whitman, pp.490-491)

In the introductory five lines of the poem, the inspiration of natural elements is noticeable where the Sufi is about to give a lesson in the open air in the morning under the chestnut trees in a Persian rose-garden when the reader can smell the aromas in the morning which represent God’s messages to the man in Sufi poetry.

The image of the Sufi lecturing in such a natural scene builds a mental picture of wholeness and holiness as well. The nature that is divine inspires the Sufi to lecture and Whitman to write. In his essay, Ford (1987) mentions that the rose-garden image is used frequently in Sufi poetry but Whitman uses these images unknowingly of their symbolism and mysticism in the Sufi poetry. In other words, the Sufi poets use this kind of symbolic language that allows them to speak of something while they mean a totally different thing. For example, the rose-garden stands for the soul. Ford doubts if Whitman is aware of the arch image that is connected to the prayers place in a mosque and to broaden the idea, the niche where one communicates with God. So Whitman in his reaction to the Sufi poetry has the same attitude of Emerson and Ibn Arabi that is the unmistakable relationship between nature, man and the divine. According to *Spring Magazine on English Literature*, the poem portrays a greybeard Sufi, metaphorically Whitman himself, telling his students about Allah as the 'One'. Whitman emphasizes the doctrine of the manifestation of the divine in each and every single aspect of universe as stated by Khosla (1987) that God is one truth "unitive" in character, and evident to be in a "variety of forms".

Sufism enriches the poems of Whitman that one can notice his Sufi consciousness. *A Persian Lesson* is Whitman's touch of the pure insight combined

together with other mystical Persian elements to form this Sufi Transcendentalist masterpiece.

4.2.2.3 Chanting the Square Deific

When someone like Whitman wants to find his transcendental self, it may take him a life time or beyond. Whitman's transcendental self is centered around religion or soul. The religion that he tries to speak about is the discovery of the divine in all things. It is when someone believes whole heartedly in the eternal life of the spirit that is hidden behind every apparent phenomenon. Whitman's understanding of religion indicates that contradictions that result from observing the universe should not shake one's faith.

Chanting the square deific, out of the One advancing, out of the sides,

Out of the old and new, out of the square entirely divine,

Solid, four- sided, (all the sides needed)...

I am time, old, modern as any ...

As the Earth, the Father, the brown old Kronos, with laws,

...yet ever new, ever with those mighty laws rolling,

...Consolator most mild, the promis'd one advancing ...

From this side! The Lord Christ gazes! Hermes! Mine is Hercules
face,

All sorrow, labor, suffering, I, tallying it, absorb in myself ,

...Wending my way through the homes of men, rich or poor, with
the kiss of affection,

For I am affection...

And my sweet love bequeath'd here and elsewhere never dies.

Aloof, dissatisfied, plotting revolt,

Comrade of criminals, brother of slaves ...

Lifted now and always against whoever scoring assumes to rule me ...

Defiant, I am Satan, still live, still utter words ...

Permanent here from my side, warlike, equal with any, real as any,

Nor time nor change shall ever change me or my words.

...Beyond Paradise, perfumed solely with mine own perfume,

Including all life on earth, touching, including God, including Savior
and Satan,

Ethereal, pervading all (for without me what were all? what were
God?),

Essence of forms, life of the real identities, permanent, positive,
(namely the unseen,)

Life of the great round world, the sun and stars, and of man, I, the
general soul,

Here the square finishing, the solid, I the most solid,

Breathe my breath also through these songs.

(Whitman, pp.400-401-402)

Symonds (1893) comments on Whitman's understanding of religion: "Everything in the world is the thought of some spirit or soul, for which the name of God is a convenient symbol." (Symonds, 1893. pp.21-22)

Whitman's poem "Chanting the Square Deific" is about the basic concepts that are important to the Divine. Symonds continues that the first essential side of Whitman's understanding of the divine using the idea of the square is law which is proved by science in the first stanza of the poem.

The second side of the square is love that creates supreme beings such as Christ who consoles the sufferings and sorrows in the world, Hercules and Hermes that are referred to in the poem because they are half gods. This idea is explained in the second stanza of the poem.

The third conception is Satan's revolution as mentioned in the first lines of the third stanza.

And the fourth conception that forms the fourth side of the square becomes clear according to Whitman's attitude to the universe when he unites all these conceptions in a more spiritual way. That is to say, there is always something beyond love, law, hatred and the man's religion for Whitman and this thing is reaching the fundamental reality by unifying them all .

As if that Whitman writes this poem that consists of four stanzas for four conceptions that are represented on a square of four sides on purpose.

4.3. Comparison and Contrast

It is worth mentioning that Sufism, represented by Ibn Arabi in this research, is one of the most important doctrines that Transcendentalism, represented by Emerson and Whitman, is influenced by. Despite the fact that there is no direct link between Ibn Arabi on one hand and Emerson and Whitman on the other, the bonds between their works cannot be denied. They all depict the same themes concerning love and nature. In their works, the three poets show how nature, beauty along with love are essential concepts that lead to the divine reality. They are united by their choices in writing about these concepts. All of them pinpoint their ideas that are

similar to each other, yet they express their awareness of the concepts differently. The difference between them is a matter that depends on each poet's perception.

As mentioned before, in *Ode (XXV)* for Ibn Arabi love is a deep idea and not only a love between a man and a woman. It goes beyond the normal boundaries of love that the beloved becomes a manifestation of the divine. Similarly, in his "Give all to Love" Emerson's love is a master that deserves letting go all the pleasures of life for its sake, and when one leaves the pleasures of life for love, it means that the one is transcending beyond the materialistic love towards the spiritual one.

Ibn Arabi suffers from the idea of his beloved being away from him and the same is Emerson when he describes the sadness and the darkness that shed his days when his beloved is gone. This is essential in Sufi doctrine because man must suffer otherwise love is meaningless. Whitman tackles a similar idea in the poem "A Glimpse" where he portrays the happiness of the lover and the quietness that prevails everything around when the lover and the beloved are together. So one can say that the lover will be confused and sad if his beloved is not around. The difference between the three poets can be found in the way each one apprehends the idea of love. For Ibn Arabi, anything can remind him with his beloved, he finds her a manifestation of the divine giving the impression that he is a Gnostic obsessed by the divine and his love comes from the only divine source. Emerson does not talk about such details in his poem; his love is only spiritual that is

accompanied with leaving the enjoyments of life. It is not like Ibn Arabi's belief that love and the beloved lead to the real divine.

Whitman's setting in "A Glimpse" is totally different; it is not a natural scene like Ibn Arabi's and Emerson's; it is a bar which is a place that leads the reader to Whitman's sensual love that has nothing to do with spirituality. The setting in Whitman's poem is unlike the tranquil one of Ibn Arabi and Emerson. So Whitman in "A Glimpse" is not a spiritual poet like Ibn Arabi and Emerson. In his major works, Whitman likes to celebrate the body claiming that it is the vessel that contains the soul. According to Gentry(1990), Emerson himself did not accept some of Whitman's sensual poems. He was hesitant at the very beginning to support Whitman because of this reason.(Gentry,1990)

Nature is a stimulating picture that evokes the three poets to draw memorable pictures in their poems. It is the concept that stirs up the poets to see beyond the things. The similarity of natural themes in Ibn Arabi's, Emerson's and Whitman's works is generally recognized. Nature for Ibn Arabi is full of symbols; he uses these symbols that are a reminder of the divine reality that he is seeking. As previously explained, in his Ode (XXV), Ibn Arabi is not amazed by the existent things in nature but by what is hidden behind them that every element stands for something divine. Likewise Emerson glorifies nature that expresses the divine, and finds it the best place to unlock the mysteries in the universe. The difference

between Ibn Arabi and Emerson is that the latter considers the man as the child of the Mother Nature in his essay *Nature*. Whitman, influenced by Emerson as well as Persian poetry describes nature in his poems and has the same attitude of Ibn Arabi and Emerson that the divine is manifested not only in every object in nature but in each atom as mentioned in his poem "A Persian Lesson".

The two poets follow Ibn Arabi's track but in different ways. The extraordinary notion about love comes from the genius Ibn Arabi, "I follow the Religion of love" (p.67). The core of Sufi doctrine explains that every way leads to one merciful God. The notion of the Religion of love is only found in Ibn Arabi's poem. Nevertheless; Emerson and Whitman pursue a similar way of thinking but with different components. In reference to Emerson's life, he derives his ideas from different sources and takes from different philosophies, theories as well as religions. He does not mind what to take or from which spring to drink as long the way guides to one ultimate reality. This is similar to Ibn Arabi's notion of religion of love though Ibn Arabi who finds his religion and calls it love. Whitman, however, is still confused about his religion. In his poem "Chanting the Square Deific", Whitman's experience is different from Ibn Arabi's and Emerson's. Religion for him is a matter of discovery. He links the religion to four concepts that should be put together to reach reality. For the three poets, the poet is a seer who is looking

for the truth in all his surroundings yet each poet tries to find answers to his questions in his own way.

Chapter Five

Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion:

Ibn Arabi's *Tarjuman Al Ashwaq* is one of the important books that depicts his love journey towards the tranquility of the divine light. Ibn Arabi sees the real love for his Nizam as a leading way to the divine reality. The pleasing nature with all its symbols to Ibn Arabi is not only a mystic place to meditate but also a trigger for the sensitive poet's emotions to reflect. Nature calls his beloved to his mind that both are beautiful and in both the divine beauty is manifested. He presents the beauty of the one he loves, finds symbols in nature and interprets them in his own mystical and religious way. In his Odes "Ode (I)", "Ode (XI)" and "Ode (XXV)", love, beauty and nature are connected tightly to each other to represent the divine source of love and beauty.

His Ode (XI) contains his universal confession that his Religion is love which becomes like a proverb that gives a shelter for each one who still can love unconditionally. Ibn Arabi's way of thinking is religious. Nevertheless, his revolt against the traditional way of thinking is remarkable. He generates a new understanding that can be detected in the two poets' works. Referring to Emerson,

it is known that he was inspired by the Persian poet Shams-ud-Din Muhammad Hafez-e Shirazi. Hellal(1971) mentions that Emerson himself translated some works of Hafiz and described him in his essay *The Persian Poetry*: “There is no example of such facility of allusion, such use of all materials...he fears nothing, he stops for nothing.”

According to the *Arab Encyclopedia*, Hafiz is an iconic poet. He lived in the eighth century that witnessed prosperity of Sufism. Hafiz was interested in studying the Holy Quran and its interpretation, Al-hadith and the Arabic poetry especially Ibn Arabi's and Ibn Al-Farid's poetry. So Hafiz who influenced Emerson was himself interested in Ibn Arabi. In his book, Lewisohn(2015) explains that it was proved that Hafiz with his sensitivity could absorb the mystical and philosophical ideas in the culture contemporary to him and “the mystical philosophy of Hafiz ...is the complicated speculative theosophy of Ibn Arabi and his followers.”(Lewisohn,2015,p.61). Therefore, Ibn Arabi is a very influential figure even after centuries.Ibn Arabi influenced Hafiz and Hafiz inspired Emerson then Whitman was influenced by Emerson's style. Ibn Arabi's oneness in his religion paves the way for poets and writers after him. After centuries, one can find Ibn Arabi's influence in the works of Emerson and Whitman. Thus one can admit the universality of this great poet.

Regarding Emerson's representation of love and nature, he gives a complete vision for both; again Emerson sees nature as symbolic. In the symbols of nature he can see the one he loves. In his poem "Give all to Love" the loss of one's love may darken the poet's day as if she was the sun that lights his days. Emerson considers nature as a mother for the human beings which is a unique depiction of nature where man loses his manhood and becomes an innocent child between the arms of nature in order to find the divine truth that he is seeking.

Both, the Sufi Ibn Arabi and the Transcendental Emerson share the same belief of the spiritual love for each and every element to reach the ultimate and finite reality. Being influenced by Transcendentalism along with Persian Sufism, Whitman in *Leaves of Grass*, portrays love and nature in his different sensual way, though he shows his Sufi trend in his poem "A Persian Lesson" within which there is nothing except natural beauty and tranquility. Whitman like Ibn Arabi and Emerson is seeking the infinite truth but with a different vision for his square in his poem "Chanting the Square Deific".

The three great poets wrote poetry that can be studied over and over again. To find the greatness of their poems, the reader should dare read and dive more into the unfathomable sea of their lines and dig deep to find the hidden meanings of their words.

5.2 Recommendations:

It cannot be denied that the translators of Ibn Arabi exerted great efforts to try to give a clear translation for his symbolic ideas. Nevertheless, a translation of Ibn Arabi's sophisticated works from an Arabic point of view is recommended to try to give the exact flavor of the words.

Another recommendation is that the poems can be discussed through a feminist approach by focusing on the female existence as a savior and an image in the works of the three poets despite the fact that the portrayal of the female figure is different from one poet to another. Another approach can be investigated like the psychoanalytic by concentrating on the metaphysical aspect of the human soul that can be studied in this case. Another recommendation is applying deconstruction approach to interpret Ibn Arabi's works because the works can be interpreted in different ways.

Another recommendation is to study the symbols used by Ibn Arabi in the outline of Sufism .

Finally, the square that is mentioned in Whitman's poem "Chanting the Square Deific" can be investigated in a study that each side of it has many ways to be interpreted in.

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