# "...Hafiz, With Thee Alone The Strife Of Song I Seek..." Impact of Islamic Mysticism on German Romanticism: The Case of Goethe

Raid al-Daghistani

University of Münster, Centre for Islamic Theology, Hammer Str. 95, 48153 Münster, Germany
raid.aldaghistani@uni-muenster.de

*In the present paper, I aim at outlining the impact of Islamic mysticism on the German Romanticism, especially Islamic mystical poetry of Muḥammad Shams ad-Dīn Ḥāfiẓ (d. 1390) on the work of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (d. 1832). Hereto I am focusing particularly on the perception and reception of Islam in the context of Goethe's* West-Eastern Divan, *stressing thereby not only his great affection to Islamic mystical heritage and poetry, but also his fascination for the Arabic and Persian language as well as for the language of the* Holy Quran. *For it was precisely the aesthetic dimension of Islam, which besides its moral-spiritual aspects, inspired the creativity of this important German poet and thinker of the eighteenth century. The article then concludes with some critical remarks.*

Keywords: German poetry / romanticism / Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von / literary influences / Islam / islamic mysticism / Persian poetry / Ḥāfiẓ

## Introduction

Regarding the impact that the Islamic culture had on the non-Islamic culture, particularly on the western, we can point out at least three periods in which this impact reached its peak in history. The first period can be dated in the 12th and 13th century, when especially Islamic mysticism and theology left a deep mark on the Iberian Peninsula and shaped the intellectual and spiritual discourses of Christian as well as Jewish scholarship. The second period can be dated in the time of the European Romanticism, i.e. the late 18th to the mid-19th century. The third (and perhaps the most subtle) historical phase of the Islamic impact on the western thought can be observed in the beginning of the 20th century, when especially authors and intellectuals of the so called

*perennial school* like René Guénon, Frithjof Schuon, Martin Lings, Titus Burckhardt, as well as the greatest orientalists of that period like Reynold Alleyne Nicholson, Henry Corbin, Arthur John Arberry, and Annemarie Schimmel, not only embraced Islamic spirituality, but also published groundbreaking works, contributing to a better understanding of the Islamic world.

To investigate the representation and depiction of Islamic culture in the western non-Muslim discourse means also and above all, to examine the West: in our case, the period of German Romanticism. This however does not mean that Islam is merely "a blank screen upon which the West simply projects whatever facet of itself it happens to be displaying" (Almond 15). As I will try to show in the present paper, in the context of German Romanticism the relationship with Islam was much more symbiotic than a mere projection, although its representatives did not have direct contact with Muslims (on an everyday basis). However, as Ian Almond correctly observes, "if desire is built into the representation of the Other, then the constitution of that Other will tell us, to some degree, exactly what the Same desires" (16). The kind of Islam our society and our culture encounters reveals a great deal about what we fear or yearn for (16). Thus, to study the representation of Islam or Muslims in a particular non-Islamic culture means at the same time to study that culture itself: "[I]t means to see how that culture – or author, or readership – is fragmented within itself" (17).

After the attacks on 11th September 2001 it became urgent to find better understanding and dialog between Muslims and Christians, between *Islam* and the *West*. Katharina Mommsen, a German expert on Goethe and Islam, notes correctly, that authors, who are promoting the idea of the "clash of civilizations" and claiming that the Islamic world and the West are condemned to conflict, misuse their intellectual influence to spread resentment and hostility.[1] Unfortunately, since 11th September 2001, we too often hear voices who vehemently deny any reasonable alternative regarding relationships between Islam and the West (whereby putting *Islam* and the *West* as two opposing categories is quite problematic).

On the contrary, the most influential thinkers, scholars and poets of German Romanticism[2] have already 200 years ago shown incredible open-mindedness towards Islamic culture, intellectual curiosity for

[1] On Goethe's relation to Islam, see Mommsen.

[2] Like Friedrich Rückert (d. 1866), Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (d. 1832), Johann Gottfried Herder (d. 1803), Friedrich Schiller (d. 1805), Friedrich Schlegel (d. 1829), and Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall (d. 1856), to name only a few.

its richness, and – most important – understanding for a sympathetic coexistence. I think that in the context of our current socio-political situation, when the need for interreligious and intercultural dialog is perhaps more important than ever before, we should turn our attention to these German thinkers and poets and learn to appreciate their courage for breaking down prejudices and their effort to bridge the gap between cultures, between worlds.

## Goethe and Islam

I want to focus especially on Goethe's attitude towards Islam in general and Islamic mysticism in particular. Goethe already started to learn Arabic at his early age. With help from Orientalist pioneers such as Heinrich E. Gottlob Paulus (d. 1851), Goethe would delve into Arabic writing and the art of calligraphy.[3] Later, in his *West-östlicher Divan*, he even plays with the names of various styles of Arabic calligraphy, like *naskh* and *taʿlīq*, claiming that "whatever style the beloved uses, it does not matter as long as he expresses his love" (Schimmel, *Calligraphy* 2). He also confesses that "in no [other] language, perhaps, are spirit, word and script so primordially bound together [as in Arabic]" (Einboden 61).[4] Jeffrey Einboden observes, that for Goethe Arabic represents "a medium that merges not only 'scriptʾ and 'word', but also 'spirit', a vehicle that moves from physical, to verbal, to metaphysical", building therewith "a seamless ladder" from the realm of the phenomena to the realm of the hidden (61). Einboden concludes that "this intrinsic originality of Arabic reflects Goethe's own established interests, leading him to pursue

[3] Arabic calligraphy is the most representative element of Islamic art. "The art of Arabic writing is by definition the most Arab of all the plastic arts of Islam. It belongs nevertheless to the entire Islamic world, and is even considered to be the most noble of the arts, because it gives visible form to the revealed word of the Koran" (Burckhardt 52). "In the same way that the psalmody of the Noble Quran as the sonoral sacred art of Islam *par excellence* is the origin of the traditional sonoral arts, so is the art of calligraphy, which reflects on the earthly plane the writing of His Word upon the Guarded Tablet, the origin of the plastic arts. Quranic calligraphy issues at once from the Islamic revelation and represents the response of the soul of the Islamic peoples to the Divine Message […] Inasmuch as there resides a Divine Presence in the text of the Quran, calligraphy as the visible embodiment of the Divine Word aids the Muslim in penetrating and being penetrated by that Presence in accordance with the spiritual capabilities of each person" (Nasr 17–19).

[4] "In keiner Sprache ist vielleicht Geist, Wort und Schrift so uranfänglich zusammengekörpert…" (Goethe, *Sämtliche Werke* 398).

years of personal apprenticeship in Islam's liturgic language, forming a hidden linguistic foreground to his public literary enterprise" (61).

Goethe however did not only learn Arabic and practice the art of calligraphy, but also studied the *Holy Quran* and the biography of Prophet Muhammad. While for example Voltaire wrote a satire about Muhammad[5] – in which he actually expressed the general orthodox view of the church of that time – Goethe praised the Islamic Prophet, whom he dedicated a dramatic poem, called *Mahomet* (Dowden xi). In the opening lines Goethe portrays the Islamic Prophet with a great "meditative sensitivity" as "a lonely and sympathetic seeker" with "natural power and sublime beauty", speaking of him "in sensitive questions, rather than thundering declarations" (Einboden 61):[6]

> Can I not share it with you, this feeling of Soul?
> Can I not feel it with you, this sense of the All?
> Who, who turns ear to the prayer?
> To eyes, still beseeching, a look?
> (Mommsen 59)[7]

This poem stands as a powerful testament to Goethe's appreciation of the Prophet Muhammad, which, as Einboden claims, "offers a positive precedent of Islamic appeal that will rarely be matched by his Romantic successors" (Einboden 61). Respect and admiration are those elements that more than anything else characterized Goethe's attitude towards Islam, Prophet Muhammad, and the *Quran*. And it is the wisdom, piety, and peace that Goethe saw in Islam and in the East (Dowden xiii). In a letter to his spiritual mentor, Johann Gottfried Herder, Goethe writes that he wishes to be able to pray as Moses in the *Quran*: "O, Lord, make space in my narrow chest!"[8]

Goethe's veneration for the *Holy Quran*[9] and the fundamental

---

[5] See Voltaire, *Le Fanatisme: ou Mahomet le Prophète. Tragédie*. Publié par Gwénola, Ernest et Paul Fièvre, Théâtre classique 2015.

[6] See also Mommsen, *Goethe and the Poets of Arabia*.

[7] Translated by Andrews, *Goethe's Key to Faust* 546. See also: Einboden 11. Cf. the German text: *Teilen kann ich euch nicht dieser Seele Gefühl / Fühlen kann ich euch nicht allen ganzes Gefühl / Wer, wer wendet dem Flehen sein Ohr? / Dem bittenden Auge den Blick?*

[8] Cf. *Quran*, 20:25. The phrase of "opening the chest" alludes to increasing the "self-confidence, contentment, and boldness" (See *The Noble Qur'an* 448).

[9] In his notes to *West-östlicher Divan,* Goethe emphasizes the ambiguity and semantic diversity of the Quranic text which occupied Muslim scholars over the centuries: "Nun ward, gar bald nach seinem Ursprung, der Koran ein Gegenstand der unendlichsten Auslegungen, gab Gelegenheit zu den spitzfindigsten Subtilitäten, und, indem er

impact that this Book left on his own writing becomes obvious in his masterpiece titled *West-östlicher Divan* ("West-Eastern Divan"),[10] which can be regarded as one of the greatest tribute of a non-Muslim author to Islam. This important body of Goethe's lyrical poetry, not very-well known to a broad reading audience, is the work which Hegel placed in "forefront of modern poetry", whereas Heine was amazed by its "ethereal lightness" (Dowden ix–x). Verses of the *Divan* are full of Islamic allusions, "epic conversations" between different characters, including Persian poets, Quranic figures and the Islamic Prophet himself (Dowden ix–x). Goethe has succeeded to masterfully interweave Quranic messages into the lines of his own poetic composition. In one of the *Divan*'s book, Goethe even openly addresses the *Quran* by the following very significant lines:

> Is the Qur'an from eternity?
> That, I will not ask.
> Might the Qur'an created be?
> No answer – a thankless task.
> That it the Book of Books need be
> My Muslim faith made clear to me.
> (Goethe, *West-Eastern Divan* 124)

> Ob der Koran von Ewigkeit sei?
> Darnach frag' ich nicht!
> Ob der Koran geschaffen sei?
> Das weiß ich nicht!
> Daß er das Buch der Bücher sei
> Glaub' ich aus Mosleminen-Pflicht.
> (Goethe, *West-östlicher Divan* 92)

With these lines Goethe puts the Islamic Holy Scripture at the center of his poetic questioning; moreover: he favors the *Quran* as the "Book of all Books", affirming its authenticity as well as canonicity (Einboden 76). The *Quran* – the text that Goethe not only studied, but also lectured – indeed played an essential role in his literary development (Einboden 78).

Remarkable is also Goethe's view on Islam itself, which he understands principally in its *primordial* and *perennial* meaning, i.e. as sub-

---

die Sinnesweise eines jeden aufregte, entstanden grenzenlos abweichende Meinungen, verrückte Kombinationen […] Daher finden wir denn auch in der Geschichte des Islam Auslegung, Anwendung und Gebrauch oft bewundernswürdig " (161).

[10] See Goethe, *West-östlicher Divan*, and *West-Eastern Divan*.

mission to God's will (Dowden xiii). In an often cited verse from his *Divan*, Goethe reflects on Islam with striking affection and estimation:

> The folly! Every man in turn would still
> His own peculiar notions magnify!
> If Islam means submission to God's will,
> May we all live in Islam, and all die.
> (Goethe, West-Eastern Divan 86)

> Närrisch, daß jeder in seinem Falle
> Seine besondere Meinung preist!
> Wenn Islam Gott ergeben heißt,
> In Islam leben und sterben wir alle.
> (Goethe, West-östlicher Divan 59)

These verses from the "Book of Proverbs" of Goethe's *Divan* clearly indicate that if the term "Islam" is to be understood etymologically and in its genuine Quranic meaning as a pure monotheism, then it embraces each and every one, encompassing the entire spectrum of human existence (Einboden 4). Einboden states that Goethe's universal understanding of the Islamic message "expresses the flexible definition involved in Romantic readings of Islamic traditions, as well as in our own reading of 'Islam' and 'Romanticism'" (4).

Goethe's very positive attitude towards Islam and his immense interest for its poetic and spiritual heritage may to some extent be connected also with an idea of the Enlightenment, which promoted tolerance and called for recognition of values of other religions (Mommsen 5). Leibniz, Lessing and Herder have already tried before Goethe to do justice to Islam, representing its humanistic, ethical, and universal values. I hope that we all know how to appreciate Lessing's *Nathan the Wise* in the context of religious tolerance and dialog. In his *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit* Herder even took a step further, not only acknowledging Muhammad's teaching of true monotheism, but also praising the achievements of the entire Islamic civilization (Mommsen 7). However, the uniqueness of Goethe's *Divan* in some way surpasses the efforts of his predecessors, because it does not only reflect Goethe's intellectual engagement with Islamic culture, but also his deep personal inclination to its aesthetic and spiritual dimensions. With other words: it is not just tolerance and acknowledgment, but rather profound inspiration and personal admiration that characterize Goethe's engagement with Islam, especially with its mystical poetry. The figure who drew Goethe's attention more than any other within

the Islamic tradition, was the Persian mystic and poet from the 14th century, Muḥammad Shams ad-Dīn Ḥāfiẓ.

## Goethe and Ḥāfiẓ

Ḥāfiẓ (d. 1389), whose *magnum opus*, the *Divan*, arrived in Germany at the beginning of the 19th century through the translation of the Austrian orientalist and historian Joseph Hammer-Purgstall, is beside Ḫayyām (d. 1131), ʿAṭṭār (d.1221), Saʿdī (d. 1292) and Rūmī (d. 1273) considered as the greatest Persian mystical poet of all time. It was precisely this "higher literature" (Oueijan 15), combining sublime language and aesthetic spirituality, that was the most appealing and attractive feature of Persian-Islamic Mysticism to the German Romantics in general, and to Goethe in particular. It is needless to say that not all Muslim mystics were poets, but many prominent figures of Sufism were also (among) the greatest poets of Islam, using poetry or poetic prose as a medium to express and explain their inner experiences (Oueijan 15), which they ultimately placed "above the authorities of traditional dogmas and doctrines" (Oueijan 13).[11] Personal mystical experiences on the one hand, and Quranic verses on the other hand, constitute the main subject of Sufi poetic contemplation, whereas their

[11] We can observe that in the Islamic religious tradition poetry has become the preferred modus of expression for mystical experience. The reason for that may lie in the fact that "the language of poetry is categorically different from the argumentative language of science and logic as well as from everyday use of language" (Knysh 151). Poetic language is essentially marked by its "open-endedness". Then, its "aesthetic value rests on the creation of tension between various levels of meaning, never to be resolved, because it is the tension, rather than the resolution, that poetic language has its effect" (Knysh 151). We can therefore conclude that the value of poetic language grounds in its elasticity, which allows "each reader to create meaning [and] to enjoy the interplay between symbol and potential interpretation" (Knysh 151). Against this background, the similarities between poetic language and the articulation of mystical experience seems to be obvious. Their complementariness and affinity springs especially "from their common use of symbols as a means to convey subtle experiences that elude conceptualization in a rational discourse which by its very nature requires lucidity and a rigid, invariable relations between the signifier and the signified" (Knysh 150). In the writings of Muslim Mystics in general, the words become "secret paths, horizons and symbols", through which they turn towards the transcendence One and begin to talk with the Divine through their innermost experience. In this sense "the discourse becomes a straight dialogue between the I and the you, between God and man" (Adonis 96). For the relationship between inner experience and language in the Islamic Mysticism see e.g. Al-Daghistani 162–172.

"joy in linguistic play" (Schimmel 13) and the semantic richness of the Arabic and Persian language enable them to disclose their innermost mysteries (Arab. *sirr*, pl. *asrār*).[12] Even if Romantic authors "were not as joyful in 'linguistic play' as the Sufi poets", they were nonetheless "equally enraptured by lyrical poetry" (Oueijan 15). It could be added that the Sufism, especially of Persian mystical tradition, attracted the attention of the German Romantics because of its literary differences and artistic originality, signifying "new modes of expression involving new morphological, lexical, and syntactic components, which produce a peculiar literary intertextuality" (Oueijan 18).

Although Islamic-Persian mysticism and German romanticism arise from very different historical as well as metaphysical contexts, they meet on a "deeper level". If, on the one hand, the aesthetical worldview of romantics is grounded in the concept of autonomy of the human subject and, on the other hand, the spiritual aesthetics of Muslim mystics primarily find its highest realization in the self-effacement (*kenosis*),[13]

[12] More for this keyword of the *mystical anthropology* in Islam see e.g. al-Jurjānī 190–191.

[13] The mystical state of a self-effacement, which represents the ultimate stage and the final goal of mystical ascent on the "Ladder of Perfection" (*scala perfectionis*), is in Sufism known as *fanāʾ-fī-llāh*, "annihilation in Gott". This state is, however, in the context of Sufi spirituality subsequently followed by the complementary experience of "subsistence through God", *baqāʾ bi-l-llāh*. Al-Qushayrī writes on this subject the following: "By 'annihilation' the Sufis refer to the disappearance of blameworthy qualities, whereas by 'subsistence' they refer to the persistence of praiseworthy qualities. The servant of God cannot but have one of these two types [of qualities], for it is well known that if he does not have one type, he will inevitably have the other" (Al-Qushayrī, "Epistle on Sufism", 89). He then continues: "When the power of the True Reality takes possession of someone, he no longer notices the essences, effects, traces or vestiges of anything other than God. They say of such a person: 'He has been annihilated from [God's] creatures and now subsists in God.' The servant of God is annihilated from his blameworthy deeds and base states when he does not perform them, and he is annihilated from his own self and from all creatures when he ceases to perceive both them and himself" (Al-Qushayrī, "Epistle on Sufism", 90). Finally: "After the servant of God is annihilated from his characteristics, as we have just described, he advances from this stage [to the next one] at which he loses sight of his annihilation. […] The first annihilation is from one's self and one's attributes through subsistence in the attributes of God. Then comes the annihilation from the attributes of God in the contemplation of God. Then one is annihilated from the vision of one's own annihilation by being subsumed in the existence of God Himself" (Al-Qushayrī, "Epistle on Sufism", 91). The *fanāʾ–baqāʾ* experience can be therefore considered as the Sufi version of *apotheosis*, whereby "Divine become his [believer's] ears to hear, and his eyes to see and his hands to grasp, and his feet to walk" (Bukhari, *Hadith Qudsi*). The highest level of spiritual self-realiza-

they both share a profound experience of self-transcendence as well as its lyrical expression in the poetic language. It is perhaps exactly the *literary experience* – this "another language of communicating" and "another dimension in writing" (Adonis 157) – that goes beyond ordinary reality, in order to plunge into deeper Reality and discover its innermost mysteries, which romantics and Sufi-poets share the most. What Adonis claims regarding the writing of an-Niffarī, could be therefore easily applied to the great literary works of German romantics and Islamic mystical poets: The world they write about is neither determined nor defined: "It does not have a ready-made identity, but one that appears to be constantly arriving and never ending" (156).

No doubt that the German Romantics drew their inspiration for literary creativity from the works and ideas of Persian Sufi poets. However, Goethe's relationship to Ḥāfiẓ represents a unique case.[14] Not only did Goethe produce his *West-östlicher Divan* based on his readings of Ḥāfiẓ's opus, he also dedicated to him a whole chapter, titled simply as "Book of Hafiz", where he chose him as his fictive partner in a lively poetic debate (Einboden 70). In the poem, called *Unbegrenzt* ("Limitless"), Goethe praises the greatness of Ḥāfiẓ's spirit, identifying him as a "true poetic fount" and as his own "twin-brother":

Ah! let the whole world slide and sink,
Hafiz, with thee alone the strife
Of song I seek! Twin-brothers we,
Our pain, our pleasure common be!
To love like thee, like thee to drink,
Shall be my pride, shall be my life.
(Goethe, *West-Eastern Divan* 26)

Und mag die ganze Welt versinken,
Hafis, mit dir, mit dir allein
Will ich wetteifern! Lust und Pein

---

tion in Sufism manifests therefore as an active self-denial, in which the Divine will "replace" the ego. It is a matter of the condition, which belongs to the true Gnostics (*al-ʿārifūn*), to the "beloved of God" (*muḥibbūn*) or "friends of God" (*al-auliyāʾ*), the condition beyond fear, sorrow and grieve: "No doubt! Verily, the *Auliyāʾ* of Allāh […] no fear shall come upon them nor shall they grieve" (*Quran*, 10:62). For more on this subject see also Al-Daghistani 60–75.

[14] In his notes to *West-Eastern Divan* Goethe describes Hafis as "ein großes heiteres Talent, das sich begnügte, alles abzuweisen wonach die Menschen begehren, alles beiseite zu schieben was sie nicht entbehren mögen, und dabei immer als lustiger Bruder ihresgleichen erscheint" (Goethe, "West-östlicher Divan" 164).

Sei uns, den Zwillingen, gemein!
Wie du zu lieben und zu trinken
Das soll mein Stolz, mein Leben sein.
(Goethe, *West-östlicher Divan* 25)

In the "Book of Proverbs", Goethe again expresses his love and admiration for the great Persian Mystic-Poet, emphasizing thereby that:

With force far-flung the Orient rose,
And passed the Midland See! Alone
For him who Hafiz loves and knows
Ring wright the songs of Calderon.
(Goethe, *West-Eastern Divan* 26)

Herrlich ist der Orient
Übers Mittelmeer gedrungen;
Nur wer Hafis liebt und kennt
Weiß was Calderon gesungen.
(Goethe, *West-östlicher Divan* 60)

However, Goethe does not only praise Ḥāfiẓ, but also allows him to speak *for himself*, clarifying for example the etymology and meaning of his surname, "Ḥāfiẓ" (i.e. "one who memorized the whole Quran") (Goethe, *West-östlicher Divan* 22; *West-Eastern Divan* 21). Goethe's entire *Divan* can be considered as a dynamic dialog between him and the Persian master, between Western and Islamic culture. In a certain sense Goethe's *Divan* becomes a mirror for Ḥāfiẓ's own legacy, whereas Goethe himself emerges as a German Ḥāfiẓ (Einboden 70). This reflection is manifested not only in the poetic style and language of Goethe's work, but also in the variety of its topics, images, and symbols, taken from Ḥāfiẓ's *oeuvre* or even directly from the *Quran*.

God's oneness and the beauty of His creation, as well as the vastness of man's soul and his trust in God's providence are among many others consistently emphasized themes of the *Divan*. Goethe brings to life many named and unnamed poets, caliphs, sages, wanderers, beggars, and lovers, letting them share their own stories, expressing thereby their faith, joy, pain, longing, suffering, wondering, doubts, fears and hopes. Some poems are composed from numerous sayings of the Islamic tradition and Goethe's own reflections; others represent a kind of fusion of Ḥāfiẓ's mystical maxims and Goethe's poetic contemplation. But the central motive of Goethe's poems, like in those of Ḥāfiẓ, is love[15]

[15] Love is not only a main element of the Persian mystical poetry, but also one of the central topics of the classical Islamic mysticism in general. For ʿAbduʾllāh al-Anṣārī

(divine as well as earthly) (Dowden xiv), whereas the textual core of this "West-eastern correspondence" is the *Quran* – the Islamic Holy Book, which "now promotes dialog with Persian poetry, allowing Goethe and Ḥāfiẓ to mirror each other" (Einboden 72).

In short: Goethe's West-Eastern poetry collection embodies not only the resemblance between Romantics and Sufi artistic values, but also the cultural and spiritual encounter between Occident and Orient. This "West-Eastern correspondence" exists since 2000 also as an official reminder eternalized in the form of the *Goethe-Hafiz Memorial*, which is situated at the heart of German's capital of culture in the city of Weimar. It is a concrete reminder of an impact which Islamic culture has exercised on Western creativity, voicing a poetic dialogue between these two great writers, who were geographically so distant from each other, yet so close in spirit (Einboden 1).

## Conclusion

In the light of the above mentioned, we come to the conclusion that what appears to be the most attractive element of Persian Sufism to German Romantics is not only its poetic language, full of mystical symbolism, but also its fundamental *Weltanschauung*, often resulting in "a desire to dynamize human thought in order to free it from orthodoxy" (Oueijan 17). Sufism indeed emphasizes the importance of the inner experience of the Divine more than the doctrinal knowledge about God, which is perhaps one of the reasons that many Sufis were accused as heretics and even executed by the orthodox Islamic authorities.[16] It was exactly this preference of the individual experience, immanent to the worldview of Sufism, which so much attracted the representatives

(d. 1088–89), love represents the columniation of all "mystical stations", then all "stations are dissolved in the field of love (*mahabbat*)" (Al-Anṣārī 140), whereas the great Sufi master and author of the famous *Epistle on Sufism*, al-Qushayrī (d. 1072–74) claims that the servant's love of God is a state of his heart, "too subtle for any expression". Such a spiritual state "may move the servant to exalt Him, to seek His satisfaction, to be impatient, and to long passionately for Him, to be restless without Him, and to find intimacy with Him in his heart by remembering Him. The servant's love of God – praise be to Him – involves neither an inclination nor a limit. How can this be otherwise, when His everlasting Essence is too holy to allow any contact, grasp or comprehension?" (Qushayri 327).

[16] Perhaps the most notorious case of execution in the Islamic history is that of the famous Islamic mystic Manṣūr al-Hallāj (d. 922), who was posthumously declared a martyr and an inspiring example of Sufi love. For more see e.g. Massignon 72–82.

of Romanticism. The Romantics gladly embraced any idea, revolting against static systems and fixed canons, and promoted on the contrary dynamics, changes, and growth. Naji Oueijan comes even to the conclusion that "if Romanticism is a spiritual revolution against orthodoxy, then one could coin Sufism as an early form of Eastern Romanticism; or, even better, one may consider Romanticism as a moderate form of Sufism (18)."

However, this is just one side of the coin. Sufism can, historically seen, neither be reduced merely on the artistic expression nor can it be considered as an antidote to the Islamic orthodoxy. Quite the opposite: among the Sufis were many thinkers who were attempting to systematically establish Sufism as an "initiatic way" (Geoffroy 26) or "spiritual science",[17] based on the Islamic law and prophetic tradition.

Thus, the examination of Muslim representation in Western literature means implicitly also the investigation of the non-representation. Because, as Ian Almond asserts, "what we leave out is as important as what we put in" (18). It is however of great value for our todays (social, cultural, and religious) context to realize, what an effect Islamic sources had on western authors, more precisely, how Romantic responses that surpass mere "Orientalism", formed "the beginnings of an authentic, global literary culture" (Einboden 7). By highlighting the impact of Persian Sufism on German Romanticism (with its culmination in Goethe's poetical monument), the reader could be reminded of the aesthetic-spiritual dimension of Islam, which is crucial for the understanding of the Islamic religion itself.[18] Reading Goethe's *Divan* may therefore also help to reverse what Ian Almond calls "the collective amnesia that is making people believe that Islam is deeply non-Western and hostile to Christian West" (Almond 9–10).

[17] See al-Kalābādhī 59; *Kitāb at-taʿarruf* 74. Abū Bakr al-Kalābādhī (d. 990) – author of the famous Sufi manual *Kitāb at-taʿarruf li-madhhab ahl at-taṣawwuf*, ("The Doctrine of the Sufis"), which is deemed as one of the most valuable treatises on Islamic mysticism (Arberry xiii) – defines Sufism as a science of the spiritual states (*ʿilm al-aḥwāl*). Al-Kalābādhīs contemporaries Sufi masters Abū Naṣr as-Sarrāj (d. 988) and Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī (d. 996) also treated Sufism primarily as a "spiritual science" (*ʿilm at-taṣawwuf*), which deals with so called "actions of the heart", i.e. inner experiences, feelings, inspirations, thoughts, conditions and epiphanies. See as-Sarrāj 1–4, 18, 23–24, 100; and al-Makkī 228–235, 240–242.

[18] For an aesthetic approach to Islam see e.g. Karimi 186–199. See also Kermani and Neuwirth.

WORKS CITED


Adonis. *Sufism and Surrealism*. London: Saqi Books, 2016.

Al-Anṣārī, ʿAbdullāh. *Sad Maydan, Stations of the Sufi Path*. Translated and introduced by Nahid Angha. Cambridge: Archetype, 2010.

Al-Daghistani, Raid. *Epistemologie des Herzens: Erkenntnisaspekte der islamischen Mystik*. Köln: Ditib, 2017.

Al-Hilālī, Muhammad and Khān, Muhammad, eds. *The Noble Qur'an*. Riyadh: Darussalam, 1997.

Al-Jurjānī, ʿAī ibn Muḥammad. *Kitāb at-Taʿrīfāt*. Dar an-nafaes: Beirut, 2012.

Al-Kalābādhī, Abū Bakr. *Kitāb at-taʿarruf li-madhhab ahl at-taṣawwuf*. Beirut: Dār aṣ-ṣadr, 2001; *The Doctrine of the Ṣūfīs*. Translated from the Arabic by Arthur J. Arberry. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1935; 2000.

Al-Makkī, Abū Ṭālib. *Qūt al-qulūb*. 2 Vol. Ed. by ʿAṣim Ibrāhīm al-Kīyālī. Beirut: dār al-kutub al-ʿilmīyah, 2005.

Almond, Ian. *Representations of Islam in Western Thought*. Sarajevo: CNS, 2010.

Al-Qushayrī, Abū Al-Qāsim. *Epistle on Sufism*. Translated by A. Knysh, Garnet Publishind, 2007.

As-Sarrāj, Abū Naṣr. *Kitāb al-lumaʿ fī-t-taṣawwuf*. Ed. with critical notes, abstract of content, glossary, and indices by Reynold Alleyne Nicholson. Leiden: Brill, 1914.

Burckhardt, Titus. *Art of Islam: Language and Meaning*. World Wisdom Inc: Bloomington, 2009.

Einboden, Jeffrey. *Islam and Romanticism: Muslim Currents from Goethe to Emerson*. London: Oneworld, 2014.

Geoffroy, Éric. *Le Soufisme. Voie intérieure de l'islam*. Paris: Fayard, 2003.

Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. *The West-Eastern Divan: In Twelve Books*. Translated by Edward Dowden. London and Toronto: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1914; 1980.

– – –. *West-östlicher Divan*. Ed. by H.-J. Weitz. Berlin: Insel Verlag, 2015.

Hammer-Purgstall, Joseph, and Rückert, Friedrich. *Der Islam. Texte aus dem Arabischen in Übersetzung von J. von Hammer-Purgstall und F. Rückert*. Paderborn: Voltmedia, 2015.

Karić, Enes. "Goetheove duhovne portage". *Oslobođenje* 20. 6. 2017: 22–23.

– – –. "Goetheovo zanimanje za islam i Kur'an". *Oslobođenje* 3. 6. 2017: 22–23.

Karimi, Ahmad Milad. *Hingabe: Grundfragen der systematisch-islamischen Theologie*. Freiburg im Breisgau: Rombach Verlag: 2015.

Kermani, Navid. *Gott ist schön: Das ästhetische Erleben des Koran*. München: C.H. Beck: 2011.

Massignon, Louis. *The Passion of al-Hallāj. Mystic and Martyr of Islam*. Translated by H. Mason. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982.

Mommsen, Katharina. *Goethe und der Islam*. Stuttgart: Goethe-Gesellschaft, 1964.

– – –. *Goethe and the Poets of Arabia*. Trans. by M. M. Metzger. Camden House, Boydell & Brewer, 2014.

Nasr, Seyyed Hossein. *Islamic Art and Spirituality*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987.

Neuwirth, Angelika. *Die koranische Verzauberung der Welt und ihre Entzauberung in der Geschichte*. Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 2017.

Oueijan, Naji B. "Sufism, Christian Mysticism, and Romanticism". *Palma Research Journal* 7 (2001): 9–22.

Schimmel, Annemarie. *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1975.
– – –. *Calligraphy and Islamic Culture*. London: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd, 1990.

# »... Hafis, le s teboj želim tekmovati ...« Vpliv islamske mistike na nemško romantiko: primer Goetheja

Ključne besede: nemška poezija / romantika / Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von / literarni vplivi / islam / islamska mistika / perzijska poezija / Hafis

V članku poskušam povzeti vpliv islamske mistike na nemško romantiko, predvsem vpliv islamske mistične poezije Muḥammada Šamsa ad-Dīn Ḥāfiẓa (u. 1390) na delo Johanna Wolfganga von Goetheja (1749–1832). V ta namen se osredotočam še posebej na zaznavanje in sprejemanje islama v kontekstu Goethejevega *Zahodno-vzhodnega divana,* pri čemer izpostavim ne le njegovo veliko afiniteto do islamske mistične dediščine in poezije, temveč tudi njegovo navdušenje nad arabskim in perzijskim jezikom kot tudi nad jezikom svetega *Korana*. Kajti ravno estetska razsežnost islama je bila tista, ki je poleg moralno-duhovnih aspektov navdihovala ustvarjalnost tega pomembnega nemškega pesnika iz 18. stoletja. Članek nato zaključim z nekaj kritičnimi opažanji.

1.01 Izvirni znanstveni članek / Original scientific article
UDK 28-428.5:821.112.2.09-1Goethe J. W.