

FTIS Foundation Gazette

Jan 2023

ماهنامه بنیاد حامیان دانشکده







The influence of Islamic mysticism on Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

by M. J. Nourani

BA Student at *FTIS*

Early Encounters with Islamic Mysticism

Goethe was exposed to Islamic mysticism through various literary works and cultural exchanges prevalent in Europe during his time. One of the notable influences was the "Divan" by Persian poet Hafez. This collection of poems deeply intrigued Goethe and inspired his own poetry, particularly his collection known as the "West-östlicher Divan." In this collection, Goethe attempted to fuse Eastern and Western themes, echoing the spiritual and philosophical themes found in Sufi poetry.

Influence on Philosophical Thoughts

Sufi ideas had a significant impact on Goethe's philosophical outlook. The Sufi emphasis on unity, the quest for inner truth, and the concept of spiritual growth through love and intuition resonated with Goethe's own ideas about unity and the interconnectedness of all things. These themes found expression in his works, such as "Faust," where the protagonist's pursuit of knowledge and spiritual enlightenment mirrors Sufi quests for inner illumination.



Key Themes and Motifs in Goethe's Work

Union of Opposites

Sufi philosophy often centers on reconciling apparent opposites to reach a higher truth or unity. This theme is evident in Goethe's works, especially in "West-östlicher Divan" and "Faust," where he explores the reconciliation of good and evil, material and spiritual, often echoing Sufi notions of transcending dualities.

Spiritual Journey and Self-Discovery

The Sufi emphasis on the inner spiritual journey and self-discovery deeply influenced Goethe's portrayal of characters, particularly in "Faust," where the protagonist embarks on a quest for knowledge, experiences spiritual crises, and seeks redemption.



Conclusion

Goethe's engagement with Islamic mysticism, particularly Sufism, significantly impacted his literary, philosophical, and spiritual perspectives. The Sufi themes of unity, spiritual growth, love, and the pursuit of inner truth found resonance in Goethe's works, shaping his exploration of human existence and the interconnectedness of diverse cultures and philosophies.

This cross-cultural exchange and incorporation of Sufi themes into his writing demonstrate Goethe's openness to diverse philosophies and his recognition of the universal aspects of human experience, transcending cultural and religious boundaries.

*Philosophical Yalda Night
at FTIS
22nd Talk with Eminent Thinkers*

Dr. Nadia Maftouni, Associate Professor at University of Tehran, had an open-to-public webinar entitled “The Joys of Philosophy” on Yalda night, Dec. 21th 2023 with Prof. Dr. Therese Anne Druart. Druart whose first research interest is Islamic Philosophy, is an emerita faculty at Catholic University of America, Department of Philosophy. This was Maftouni’s 22nd talk with eminent philosophers and thinkers since 2019 among them should be mentioned Zizek, Chomsky, Gutas, and Rescher.

Besides teaching at The Catholic University of America, Prof. Druart was a Visiting Professor of Andalusian Arabic Philosophy at the Universidad de Navarra, Pamplona, Spain in the spring of 1993. In fall 1995, she taught a weekly seminar in Arabic philosophy at the University of Pennsylvania. She was twice a Visiting Professor during the summer at the Université Catholique de Madagascar. In May 2005, she gave a one-week intensive seminar on Avicenna’s Metaphysics at the Universidad de Los Andes in Chile.



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Dec. 21th 2023



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1402**



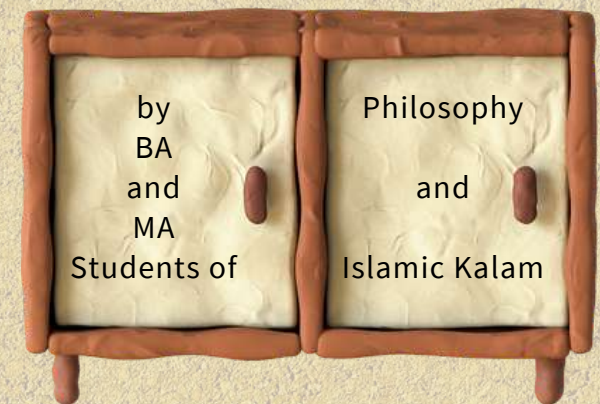
Earth and Heaven 60x80cm - Acrylic



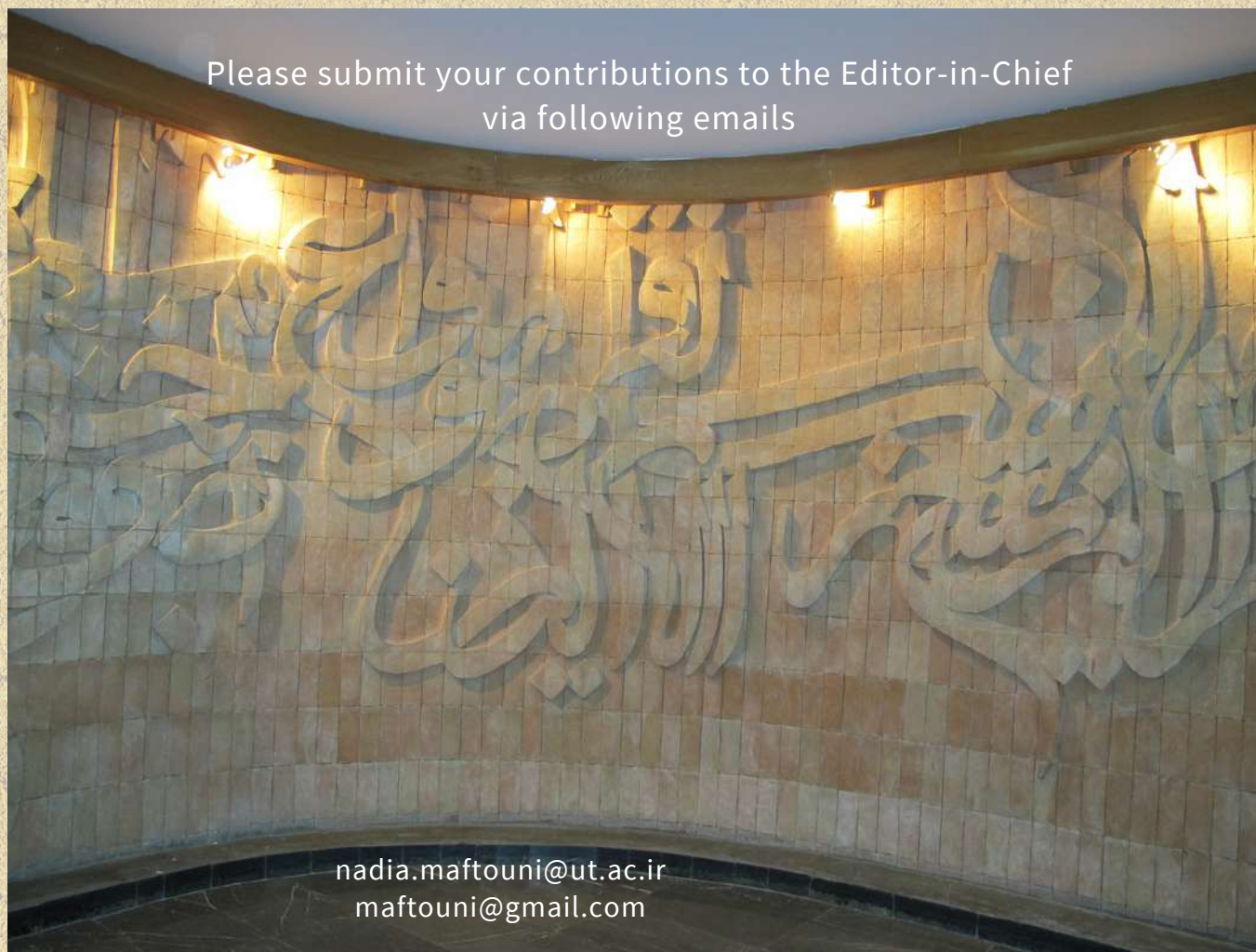
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Goldfish 60x80cm - Oil Color and Acrylic



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via following emails



nadia.maftouni@ut.ac.ir
maftouni@gmail.com

Faculty of Theology and Islamic
Studies
University of Tehran
No.47, Motahari St., Tehran, Iran.
Google Map:
<https://goo.gl/maps/dxjRk9QdrdM2>

