



HERMENEUTICAL ANALYSIS ON IBN ARABI'S POEMS

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to analyze or interpret Ibn Arabi's poems on *Tarjuman Al-ashwaq*. The method used in this research is a qualitative descriptive method with content analysis by analyzing poems with a hermeneutic approach. This abstract explores the use of hermeneutical analysis in interpreting the poems of Ibn Arabi, a prominent Sufi philosopher and poet. A hermeneutical analysis is a method of interpretation that focuses on the meaning and significance of a text. Ibn Arabi's poems have many symbolism and metaphors rooted in Islamic mysticism, and hermeneutical analysis provides a framework for understanding his poems' deep spiritual and philosophical themes. Through this approach, the abstract examines the various layers of meaning in Ibn Arabi's poems, including the spiritual insights they offer, the relationship between the individual and the divine, and the concept of divine love. Overall, this abstract highlights the importance of hermeneutical analysis in unlocking the profound and complex meaning of Ibn Arabi's poems.

INTRODUCTION

Ibn Arabi, also known as *Muhyiddin Ibn Arabi*, was a notable Sufi and Islamic philosopher from Andalusia, Spain (1165–1240). He is referred to as "*Sheikh al-Akbar*" or "*Murshidul Akbar*" which signifies the greatest instructor or ultimate spiritualist in the Sufi tradition. He is regarded as one of the greatest Islamic philosophers in history, and his

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work encompasses Islamic philosophy, mysticism, theology, and cosmology.

The most famous of Ibn Arabi's works are *Tarjuman Al-Ashwaq* (The Translator of Desires), *Fusus al-Hikam* (The Bezels of Wisdom) and *Futuh al-Makkiyya* (The Meccan Revelations). *Fusus al-Hikam* is considered his greatest creation, a collection of his 27 treatises dealing with various aspects of Islamic theology and mysticism. *Futuh al-Makkiyya* is his 37-volume monumental work covering many subjects, including theology, cosmology, philosophy, and Islamic spirituality.

Tarjuman Al-ashwaq or The Translator of Desire, is one of Ibn Arabi's famous works. *Tarjuman Al-Ashwaq* has 61 poems that represent love and admiration for God and women metaphorically and symbolically. Nevertheless, *Tarjuman Al-Ashwaq* is considered a controversial work because it reveals a lot of vulgar words that are deemed inappropriate to read by some people.

However, Ibn Arabi was affected by controversy during his life and afterward. Some Islamic scholars and thinkers disagreed with some of Ibn Arabi's ideas and views and even attempted to denounce his work as heresy or deviation from Islamic teachings. Nevertheless, Ibn Arabi continues to be revered as one of the greatest figures in Islamic history, and his work continues to influence Islamic thought and spirituality to this day.

Expanding on the scholarly perspectives, here are some of them. According to Gadamer (2004), hermeneutic analysis is a way to understand the meaning of a text or experience that is discovered through dialogue between the reader and the text. Bowie (1998) also states that hermeneutics is an interpretation of art that is the subject of discussion in artworks. It can be concluded that Hermeneutics is an interpretation of artwork based on the reader's experience after reading the artwork and discussing its meanings.

Through a hermeneutic, the researcher explores how Ibn Arabi's poems reflect and respond to his time's social, political, and religious issues while resonating with readers. He reveals timeless and universal themes that examine his use of metaphor, symbolism, or language. This approach not only scrutinizes the poet's use of metaphor, symbolism, and language but also underscores the broader impact of his verses, resonating with readers across diverse contexts and epochs.

METHOD

This research uses a qualitative descriptive method by analyzing the contents

using a hermeneutical approach in Ibn Arabi's poems. Otta (2018) says that the qualitative descriptive method is a part of literature research. Mukhtar (2013) also stated that a qualitative descriptive method is used by researchers to achieve a knowledge and theory on the research at certain times. It can be concluded that the qualitative descriptive method explores the research topic in-depth and thoroughly.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Poems express things that are seen in terms of content or meaning, such as the disclosure of events centered on the main things. Events that are centered on the main things only. However, it can include events that expand and deepen. Meanwhile, in terms of language, it can be seen from the economical use of language and word choice.

- **Release**

By: Ibn Arabi

The poem is taken from "*Tarjuman Al-Ashwaq*" or "Translator of Desires" (page 5). There is the interpretation of the poem using the hermeneutical analysis approach.

In stanza 1, it is mentioned that there are "red-roans" known as horses, who went away with "peacocks high in howdahs". Howdah is a chariot seat attached to the back of an animal (elephant or camel), usually fitted with a canopy and railings. Howdah used in royal ceremonies and military battles were often ornate and decorative.

Relating to stanza 2, the parable by using the term "Who takes possession with glances that kill like Bilqis of Sheba" symbolizes the wisdom and beauty of the queen of Sheba, and "her throne of Pearl" symbolizes wealth or luxury.

In stanza 3, "She crosses the polished glass and you see the sun circling in Idris's sphere" symbolizes the limitless intelligence of a woman interpreted by Prophet Idris, who was the first prophet to go to the 4th heaven.

In stanza 4, "What her glance kills her speech revives, bringing the dead to life, like Isā" symbolizes the power of the woman's words that can bring a dead soul back to life. Same as Prophet Isa, who can make a dead become alive.

In stanza 5, "Like Torah's tablet her legs in splendor I follow, Learn and recite like Mūsā" symbolizes the wisdom taken in the Torah and makes Prophet Musa as an example of learning spiritual matters.

Overall, the poem weaves together concepts and images from several traditions to evoke awe and amazement through a rich tapestry of religious and historical connections. The poem has a sense of mystery and magic that comes from the strength of the language, the draw of foreign imagery, and the reverence for spiritual knowledge.

- **Mirror**

By: Ibn Arabi

The poem is taken from "*Tarjuman Al-Ashwaq*" or "Translator of Desires" (Page 35). There is the interpretation of the poem using the hermeneutical analysis approach.

In stanza 1, "she" is wondering about glory love among the garden flowers. "The garden flower" is used as a metaphor for natural and beautiful love. "She" describes that love as something beautiful.

However, in stanza 2, The poet disagrees about what "she" said. The poet considers that love is just a reflection of the human who sees it. The poet states that humans do not need to rely on validation from others.

Overall, this poem teaches that the poem portrays a conflict between the urge to remain rooted in a greater sense of purpose or identity and the desire for emotional interactions. The reader is encouraged to focus on the subtleties and complexity of interpersonal relationships as well as how our own views and beliefs can affect how we understand love and connection using metaphor.

- **Gown of Dark**

By: Ibn Arabi

The poem is taken from "*Tarjuman Al-Ashwaq*" or "Translator of Desires" (Page 25). There is the interpretation of the poem using the hermeneutical analysis approach.

Stanza 1 is describing a meeting place called "*Zamzam*" after circling the "middle tent" and "boulders". It can be understood that they will meet after doing tawaf in the *Kaa'ba* (Mecca).

In stanza 2, "starved by love's fever" refers to the intensity or passion and falling love with *Kaa'ba* as the center of Muslim worship, and "the scent of those who lured him" refers to the spiritual aspect or the positive influence of a religious event.

In Stanza 3, "they loosen their hair and let it fall " refers to *Tahallul*. *Tahallul* is the act of shaving one's head after doing *Hajj* or *Umrah*. And "enfolding themselves in dark" refers

to a sense of submission to a higher power or force. The poem suggests that *Zámzam* is a place of spiritual renewal and transformation (*hajj* or *umrah*).

Overall, the poem makes the case that the feeling of love and connection with others can lead to spiritual and emotional transformation and that holy sites like Mecca can serve as a potent setting for these kinds of encounters.

- **You Now**

By: Ibn Arabi

The poem is taken from "*Tarjuman Al-Ashwaq*" or "Translator of Desires" (Page 161). There is the interpretation of the poem using the hermeneutical analysis approach.

In stanza 1, "Three moons needing no adornment rose over *Tan'im*, faces veiled" The poet depicts a mystical sight with three moons rising over it, but the location of Tan'im is not mentioned. The moon is said to be beautiful or powerful without any decoration alluding to these qualities. The reference to their "faces" being shrouded may be used to suggest that they are enigmatic or obscured from view.

In stanza 2, "Lowering the veils they glowed like the sun" The moons are now described as cutting their veils, making them shine like the sun. This represents a revelation or the divulging of knowledge or hidden truths. And "I'm here for you now by the stations they chanted" The poet addresses a second person, stating that they are there for them. The mention of "stations" being chanted is ambiguous but could refer to religious or spiritual practices or perhaps a ritualistic aspect of the scene.

In stanza 3, "They passed with a gait like that of sandgrouse, skipping along in dappled gowns." Now, the moon described as having a specific gait is comparable to the sandgrouse bird's. They were described as "skipping along in dappled gowns," which can be taken as either a humorous or lighthearted part of the image or possibly a more romantic or sensual.

Overall, the poem's use of natural imagery may be interpreted as a critique of how people interact with nature. The moons and sandgrouse are portrayed as self-sufficient and attractive in their own right, without requiring any help or meddling from humans. This could be interpreted as a reminder of the value of maintaining and safeguarding the natural world as well as of our place within it.

- **Bewildered**

By: Ibn Arabi

The poem is taken from "*Tarjuman Al-Ashwaq*" or "Translator of Desires" (Page 3). There is the interpretation of the poem using the hermeneutical analysis approach.

Because this poem only has two lines in each stanza, researchers will combine each stanza into a few paragraphs. The poet's feelings of insecurity and vulnerability in a romantic relationship are conveyed in this poem. The poet appears to be apprehensive of whether their beloved is aware of their effect on their heart in the initial lines. The metaphor of a "high-ridge track," which suggests that the lover's course is challenging to predict or comprehend, heightens this ambiguity.

The poet's thoughts of worry and concern for their lover's safety are further emphasized with the inquiry, "Do you see them safe or perishing?" Although it is unclear from the language whether the poet is concerned about emotions, it is evident that they lack the ability to defend their beloved.

The poet's lover may also be feeling uncertain and confused in the relationship, according to the poem's concluding line, "The lords of love are in love ensnared, bewildered." The term "lords of love" elevates the drama or greatness of the situation, while the adjectives "ensnared" and "bewildered" emphasize the lover's helplessness and fragility.

Overall, the poem highlights the power dynamics, uncertainties, and deep emotions that can occur in love relationships while capturing those connections' complexity and emotional depth.

- **Fifty Years**

By: Ibn Arabi

The poem is taken from "*Tarjuman Al-Ashwaq*" or "Translator of Desires" (Page 155). There is the interpretation of the poem using the hermeneutical analysis approach.

The first stanza, "word spoken between *Haditha* and *Karkh*" symbolizes the mighty past glory evoked between *Haditha* and *Karkh* (Mesopotamia) and also serves as symbolic locations that represent past experiences or relationships that have personal or emotional significance.

The second stanza, "After fifty years of hard thinking" explains that the poet has been going through this period for fifty years and implies the poet has reached a turning point in his life.

In the third stanza, the poet is nostalgic for his youth and glory. Splitrock and *Hajir* are

symbolic of the place where the poet is nostalgic.

Even in the fourth stanza, the poet feels nostalgic when he leads the camel troops to Najd and Tiham. "Flametree and *Makh*" can be interpreted as a sense of burning enthusiasm when he was there.

Overall, This poem has themes of nostalgia and glory.

- **Sweet the Gaze**

By: Ibn Arabi

The poem is taken from "*Tarjuman Al-Ashwaq*" or "Translator of Desires" (Page 159). There is the interpretation of the poem using the hermeneutical analysis approach.

The first stanza, "Lion and other beasts" can be understood as a power and strength that can be suddenly melted by "the glances of beautiful women" that make these savage creatures captivated.

The second stanza, *Zarud*, represents the location where this event occurred. Then "What are lions before dark eyes?" symbolizes that beauty is blind or a mystery.

The third stanza, "Sweet the gaze of the hunter's child" implies that there is a gentle charm in this woman that can tame even the most savage of creatures.

Overall, the poem explores the appeal of the beauty of things that can conquer even the fiercest of beasts.

- **A Persian Girl**

By: Ibn Arabi

The poem is taken from "*Tarjuman Al-Ashwaq*" or "Translator of Desires" (Page 169). There is the interpretation of the poem using the hermeneutical analysis approach.

The first stanza explains that among Medina, Mecca, and Jerusalem, Baghdad is the city that the poet loves the most. According to Islamic rules, these cities are holy and peaceful. However, Baghdad is described by the poet as the most emotional, peaceful, and connected city to the poet.

The second stanza suggests that the poet is genuinely expressing his love for the city of Baghdad, which may have a personal or spiritual history for the poet, reinforced by the statement, "My *imam*'s there to guide me". It is not known who the imam of the poet is, but it can be inferred that the imam is a religious leader or figure in the city.

In the third stanza, "a persian pearl" refers to a beauty, value, and specialty. That beauty

is described as having a smooth movement and a sad eye that has its own charm for the poet.

In the fourth stanza, "Who kills with a glance" represents the power and ability of the girl whose gaze can captivate anyone who sees her. Her words can revive the life or feelings that have been dead. Then, the phrase "Tempering fierce beauty with compassion " indicates that the girl has the ability to balance a strong sense of empathy, kindness, and beauty.

Overall, the theme of this poem is love for the city of Baghdad as the city he loves the most, and he admires a girl who has a special attraction for the poet.

- **Like a Doubled Letter**

By: Ibn Arabi

The poem is taken from "*Tarjuman Al-Ashwaq*" or "Translator of Desires" (Page 219). There is the interpretation of the poem using the hermeneutical analysis approach.

The first stanza describes a separation between two things. However, they are related to each other, and the two letters come together to form a harmonious unity and a single purpose.

In the second stanza, the poet realizes that they are indeed in different forms and identities. However, they also seem to be united as a harmonious form of perfection to each other.

The third stanza's phrase, "he's light and I am shadow" shows imagery for the reader. The poet describes himself as a shadow and is compared to light. It can be concluded that light has the meaning of holy, happy, and positive. At the same time, the shadow has the meaning of unnoticed, oblivion, and emptiness. The poet also revealed that it is the moaning that can make her visible to reality under the light.

Overall, This poem is about interdependence, differences, and unity in a relationship by using imagery.

- **Done**

By: Ibn Arabi

The poem is taken from "*Tarjuman Al-Ashwaq*" or "Translator of Desires" (Page 211). There is the interpretation of the poem using the hermeneutical analysis approach.

The first stanza describes a woman who has curly hair like a snake. The snake itself is

symbolized as a betrayal or defection. It is also explained that the woman has left a lost man. It can be concluded that she has left the man who was together.

The second stanza is described as a form of imagery that coils the man with her curly hair. It can be said that the man is attracted to the woman. However, in the end, the man was dumped by the woman with the form of imagery "left him stricken on the bed" as a form of the man's powerlessness when left by the woman.

In the third stanza explains that the man is the victim of the woman's fake love. Then it is explained in "Whichever way you've come" that the woman also tricked the man in various ways, and she lured the man. "You're done" is interpreted as a form of finished or the end of the man's history because he was trapped in his fake love.

This poem is about betrayal, denial, and manipulation using imagery and symbols.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

This research explores the use of hermeneutical analysis in interpreting Ibn Arabi's poems (*Tarjuman Al-Ashwaq*). A hermeneutical analysis is a method of interpretation that focuses on the meaning and significance of a text. It examines the various layers of meaning in Ibn Arabi's poems, including spiritual insights, the relationship between the individual and the divine, and the concept of divine love. The poems highlight the power dynamics, uncertainties, and deep emotions that can occur in love relationships. It uses natural imagery to critique how people interact with nature and emphasizes the value of maintaining and safeguarding the natural world. It also encourages readers to focus on the subtleties and complexity of interpersonal relationships and how our own views and beliefs can affect how we understand love and connection.

The researcher concludes that hermeneutical analysis of poems is a very scientific and thoroughly researched method from the numerous explanations presented in this study. Because a hermeneutic analysis of a poem depends on how we understand a structured poem, it can be easier for readers to understand the context of the poem. However, the facilitates accessibility making it more approachable for readers to grasp the contextual nuances embedded within the poem.

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