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2004

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

THE PHENOMENON OF TEXTUAL
AND CONNOTATIONAL TRANSFORMATION
IN IBN ARABI'S TURJUMAN AL-ASHWAQ

by
WASSIM ADNAN ATTAR

A thesis
submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts
to the Department of Arabic and Near Eastern Languages
of the faculty of Arts and Sciences
at the American University of Beirut

Beirut, Lebanon
June 2004

مستخلص لأطروحة

وسيم عدنان العطار

لماجستير في الآداب
الاختصاص: اللغة العربية و آدابها

العنوان: ظاهرة التحول في النص والدلالة في ترجمان الأشواق لابن عربي

AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

Master of Arts for Wassim Adnan Attar
Major: Arabic Language and literature

The Phenomenon of Textual and Connotative Transformation in Ibn Arabi's Title:
Turjuman al- Ashwaq

Ibn Arabi's love poems, *Tarjuman al-ashwaq*, went through two phases. First, he composed a series of Arabic love poems in honor of Nizam, a Persian girl with whom he fell in love. This stage – the human love affair – constitutes the formative phase of the work. Later, Ibn Arabi composed an esoteric commentary on his earlier love poems called *al-Dhakha'ir wa al-a'laq*. In this commentary, Ibn Arabi transforms his earlier statements of mortal love into expressions of human love for God. This transformation of earthly love poetry into prose dealing with abstract and spiritual themes was the first of its kind.

The proposed thesis begins by introducing the position that *Turjuman al-Ashwaq* occupies among the literary and mystical works of Ibn Arabi. This part deals with the love poetry of Ibn Arabi from stylistic and thematic perspectives. Following this, a survey of the details of the book under consideration is presented in order to illustrate its Arabian urban and nomadic poetic characteristics. This includes issues like the *atlal*, female Bedouin beauty, travel in the desert, dialogue...etc. This part present a study of the structure of the poems in regard to traditional and novel love poetry in the times of Ibn Arabi when Arabic literature was going through its early stages of decline, stylistically and thematically. Standard modes in the poems of *Turjuman al-Ashwaq* are also another issue that the thesis tries to present with the objective of illustrating the “terminological” and “dogmatic” nature of Ibn Arabi’s poetry that unfolds itself in the consequent commentary *Al-Dhakha'ir wal-A'laq*.

This thesis will explain the mechanisms Ibn Arabi employed to achieve this transformation. This transformation is accompanied by another one when the "Nizam", the human & earthly figure, is transformed into a symbol that has cosmological status in Ibn Arabi's system.

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*The Mystical Philosophy Of Muhyiddin Ibn Arabi, 21*²

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Sufi of Andalusia, 143²

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The Feminine Element in Ibn Arabi's Mystical Philosophy, 8 ²

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Huda Lutfi,"The Feminine Element in Ibn Arabi's Mystical Philosophy" in ⁵
Alif: Journal of Comparative Poetics (Spring: 1985), 10.

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Henry Corbin, *Creative Imagination in the Sufism of Ibn Arabi* (Princeton: ¹

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Cultural & Linguistics Studies, 1966), 194-195
The Feminine Element in Ibn Arabi's Mystical Philosophy, 13³

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Creative Imagination in the Sufism of .

Ibn Arabi, 338-339

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Creative Imagination in the Sufism of Ibn Arab, 160²

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