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SUFISM IN THE EYES OF THE WEST

Colonialists, Romantics, and Transcendentalists

As the tradition of *tasawwuf* was being pushed from the center to the margins of Muslim civilization by anti-Sufi movements, non-Muslims – and in particular European colonialists – began to draw (or pull) Sufism into their own Western cultural context. This would lead to the presentation of Sufism as something other than Islam. For Orientalists, Sufism was largely understood as being different from Islam, whereas most Muslims, historically, did not see any such difference.¹ Orientalist scholarly interest in non-European religions unfolded during the colonial period and was framed within a Christian, and specifically Protestant, lens and further filtered through European Perennialism and esotericism. While not all Orientalists were involved in imperial and colonial endeavors, some of the key figures of the Orientalist project were engaged in colonial activities. These scholars tended to focus on the regions that their nations had colonialized, such as South Asia and parts of the Middle East. For other writers and artists, their diplomatic and trade relations with empires, such as the Ottomans in Turkey, also led to cross-cultural exchanges.

Historically, in European and North American contexts, the idea of an “Orient” basically meant “the East” or, more broadly, the “non-West.” In this vast region – generally referred to as the “Orient” – European scholars encountered new cultures, histories, and religions, including Hinduism, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, and Islam.² As we explored in [Chapter 1](#) “Orientalism” is a term that has been used in various ways, first to describe a form of academic inquiry that was devoted to understanding the languages, cultures, and peoples of the “non-West”; and later as a *critical* label for this academic enterprise of studying non-Western peoples, based on the conviction that it was inherently biased, distorting, and harmful. There was a variety of scholars, artists, and government officials who either labeled themselves or were labeled “Orientalist.” One of the ways that Orientalist scholarship affected Western and later Muslim understandings of Sufism was to effectively separate it from Islam.

The term “Sufism” itself was a word coined by 18th-century European scholars, most of whom were connected with the East India Company, the British institution established in India during its imperial control of the region. The construction of Sufism as an “ism” placed it in the “tableaux of modern Western ideolog[ies].”³ In naming the tradition, colonial explorers and scholars defined the framework of the thing they named.⁴ It is the process of this construction of Sufism in the European and Orientalist paradigms that this chapter explores.⁵ This framing of Sufism by Europeans was taking place just as Muslims were questioning Sufism’s theological, legal, and metaphysical place in Islam (as laid out in [Chapters 1–3](#)). This interest in Sufism by non-Muslims would further propel anti-Sufi Muslim movements. These two processes – that is, the push and pull factors, as they were – unfolded concurrently, adding complexities to the trajectory that Sufism would take in colonial and postcolonial contexts.

Orientalists’ definition of Sufism emerged within a context of longstanding Western stereotypes of Islam. European images of Muslims as fanatical warriors and dry legalists have roots as far back as the Crusades, when Christian knights and warriors fought the “infidels” in the Holy Land. Negative perceptions of Muslims are best represented in the rhetoric of Pope Urban II’s (d. 1099) fiery speech in 1095 that helped mobilize Crusaders. In calling for the Franks (Crusaders) to reconquer Jerusalem, Urban II describes Muslim Turks as destroying church altars with “filth and defilement” while they are “pleased to kill others by cutting open their bellies, extracting the end of their intestines, and tying it to a stake.”⁶ Over time, European travelers and diplomats encountered Muslims and their texts, and developed an image of the Prophet Muhammad as a charlatan and a fraud, in addition to an image of his followers as violent warriors.⁷

Gradually, European scholars concluded that Islam was far too legalistic to foster the mystical illuminations and universalistic tones that they discovered in Sufi poetry. Although some early interlocutors like Johann Wolfgang Goethe (d. 1832) perceived the way in which Sufism, with its metaphors of drunkenness and love, was connected to the Islamic tradition more broadly – notably in his treatment of the famous Sufi poet Hafiz (d. 1390) – many Orientalists did not think that Sufism was inherently Islamic. Sufism, then, in the Orientalist analysis, largely came to be seen as a form of perennial truth that had origins beyond Islam, and just happened to be absorbed by some Muslim practitioners. Sufism, in the literary and scholarly works of Orientalists, was largely ahistoricized for a European audience. The European understanding of Sufism during this period was particularly influenced by the reading and translating of Persian poetry, more than Arabic and Turkish texts. For the colonial scholars, mastery of the Persian language, with its literary beauty, offered a critical currency in their administrative positions. The same capital did not exist with gaining proficiency in Arabic, the language of the Qur’an, unless it was used for Christian apologetics. In their readings of Persian texts, most Orientalists understood and compared Sufism to Christian mysticism, which was compatible with Neoplatonic frameworks (a shared emphasis between Sufis and Christian mystics); but they also related Sufism to Eastern traditions such as Hinduism and

Buddhism. This comparative approach further disconnected Sufism from an Islamic particularity while emphasizing its universality.

European encounters with Sufism did not simply result, however, in the reframing of Sufism. Sufi ideals, worldviews, and poetry also transformed European and American intellectuals and literary figures in new and fascinating ways. Two key figures stand out in this symbiotic relationship: namely, the German author Goethe and the American poet, essayist, lecturer, and leader of the Transcendentalist movement (discussed later in this chapter) Ralph Waldo Emerson (d. 1882). These two individuals' engagements with Sufi poetry and personalities, particularly the Persian poets Hafiz and Sa'di (d. 1291), offer exemplary illustrations of how Sufi traditions became distilled through translation, but also transformed European spiritual and literary movements. In contrast to a variety of Orientalists, Goethe and Emerson engaged with Hafiz in a substantial way, and their own works and worldviews were powerfully influenced by his poetry. Hafiz's irreverent, satirical, joyous, and at times individualistic poetry, with its critique of religious moralism and institution, resonated strongly with Goethe and Emerson, whose Romantic tendencies matched closely with the tenor of Hafiz's poetry. Though their encounter with him was in many ways exceptional, neither Goethe nor Emerson spent time in places like Iran and Turkey, and hence did not develop a keen sense of how Hafiz's poetry was interwoven into the everyday lives of Muslims. Sufism, though deeply loved by many European and American intellectuals, remained somewhat removed from the lived practice of Muslims in their understanding. The Europeans who did interact with Sufis in their travels were far more mystified by their exotic and wild tendencies, and did not associate the universal poetry they came to experience in textual traditions to their wandering mendicancy. In general, colonial encounters, whether through travel, business, or poetry, resulted in popular perceptions of Sufism as a philosophical and poetic tradition outside of Islamic theology and law, which set the precedent for the contemporary popularization of a form of universal Sufism in the 21st century in the West.

Before Orientalism: Ramon Llull and early medieval encounters with Sufism

Premodern encounters between Muslim and non-Muslim civilizations unfolded through trade, diplomatic relations, or through times of war, while translation of Muslim textual sources was another form of cultural and religious exchange. One of the earlier instances of the translation of the Qur'an dates back to 1142 in the Iberian Peninsula, when Peter the Venerable (d. 1156), an Abbot of Cluny, began translations of the Qur'an at the request of Spain's Emperor Alfonso VII (d. 1157).⁸ As translations of the Qur'an became available, interest also grew in the figure of Prophet Muhammad. In the 15th century, Flavius Mithridates (d. 1489), a Jewish convert to Christianity, who also taught Kabbalah to Pico della Mirandola (d. 1494), translated the Qur'an into Latin, while including Arabic.⁹ The Qur'an was translated several times and stories found in the Qur'an of Prophet Muhammad even

influenced some Europeans. For instance, the *Mi'raj*, Prophet Muhammad's mystical journey to heaven, inspired Dante Alighieri (d. 1321) in his *La Vita Nuova* and *The Divine Comedy* (completed in 1320), despite the fact that Prophet Muhammad was placed in the eighth level of hell in his *The Divine Comedy*. Both of these texts remain seminal in the canon of Italian literature.¹⁰ Prophet Muhammad persisted as a curious and problematic figure for Christians as his life and legacy were antithetical to the finality of Christianity while his followers, through their empires, were a threat to the Christian territorial domain.¹¹ These Quranic translation efforts, then, unfolded with the intent of using the translated text as a tool against Muslims, who were perceived to be enemies.¹² As the translation efforts of the Qur'an continued and spread throughout Europe, there were further renditions of other Islamic texts, such as philosophical, medical, and scientific tracts and poetry, which were also reaching the hands of non-Muslims.¹³ Of particular interest here are Sufi texts.

One of the earliest documented instances of exchanges between Sufi and Christian traditions is found in the figure of Ramon Llull (1232–1315). Llull, a Christian philosopher, theologian, and mystic, is regularly invoked in medieval Christian–Muslim polemics. He was born in Mallorca, Spain, just as James I (d. 1276) conquered the Iberian Peninsula from the Muslims in 1229.¹⁴ Llull served in the royal court until he had a visionary experience that led to a “transcendent conversion,” transforming him into a “peripatetic scholar, evangelist and missionary, ... [and], theological theorist.”¹⁵ This propelled his ventures into theological inquiry and the publication of numerous texts in the languages of Catalan, Latin, and Arabic. His works would play a key role in the revival of Neoplatonic mysticism during the Renaissance and beyond. Llull lived in an era when plans for the second Crusade were brewing, led primarily by Pope Clement IV (d. 1268) in 1266 and King Louis IX (d. 1270) of France (ruled from 1226–1270). This was unfolding just as the call for the Reconquista of the Iberian Peninsula was also being projected. In this larger sociopolitical climate, Llull, who was a follower of St. Francis of Assisi's (d. 1226) teachings, took on the position of instructor of the Franciscan friars in Arabic study at the monastery of Miramar in Mallorca.¹⁶ During this time, he wrote one of his seminal treatises, *The Book of the Order of Chivalry*, presumably for the knights caught on the battlefield. In his understanding, knights and clergy were urged to engage with Muslims to convert them spiritually or kill them in battle.¹⁷ His philosophies of proselytization were not merely rhetorical; he actively mobilized to enact his goals of converting Jews and Muslims, who were a normative feature in Spain's landscape. He was also known to have entered into public debates with Muslims.¹⁸ He traveled to North Africa on three separate occasions to convert nonbelievers, particularly Muslims. During two of his trips, he was jailed and eventually forced to flee.¹⁹ He was stoned while preaching Christianity, which led to his eventual death and martyrdom. Llull occupied two different worlds: one of the Arab Muslims and the other a Western Christian world. With such a liminal position, scholars refer to him as a “personification of paradox.”²⁰ Llull's fierce anathema against Muslims has been noted in the scholarship on him, but the degree to which his works were transformed by the Islamic sources he rigorously mastered is still heavily debated.

It was Llull's deep investment in the proselytization efforts that prompted him to be versed in Islam, particularly in the traditions of Sufism. These Sufi literary and metaphysical traditions also seeped into his own works. Annemarie C. Mayer suggests that Llull was interested in establishing a "single faith and a single universal religious law (*vera religio*)"; but to do so, he needed to contend with the differences between the traditions of Christianity, Judaism, and Islam.²¹ One of the ways he tried to compete with the challenges of Judaism and Islam was through exploring the doctrine of God, which he did by studying all three of Abrahamic religions' mystical, rational, and philosophical traditions. His comprehensive understanding of these traditions is most evident in his text, *Book of the Gentile*.²² In this text, he engages with the attributes of God in Muslim theology (i.e., schools of *kalam*) but also as discussed by the Sufis. He focused especially on the teachings of the presences of God (*hadrat*), connected to the traditions of Ibn al-'Arabi. Llull did the same with Jewish traditions to assert the "compatibility" of the monotheisms.²³

Llull's *Book of Contemplation*, which was written in Arabic, and *Book of the Lover and the Beloved* are "the result of his admiration for the language of Sufis and Sufi *dhikr*."²⁴ In the *Book of the Lover and the Beloved*, love becomes the way of the mystic path for Llull, as he writes: "The Lover asked his Beloved if there remained in Him anything still to be loved. And the Beloved replied that he had still to love that by which his own love could be increased."²⁵ This particular text is part of a larger novel entitled *Blaquerna*, the name of the protagonist of the text. In one instance, Llull writes:

While Blaquerna considered after this manner, he remembered how that once when he was a Pope a Saracen related to him that the Saracens have certain religious men, and that among others are certain men called Sufis, who are most prized among them, and these men have words of love and brief examples which give to men great devotion.²⁶

Llull was aware of the "certain men called Sufis" who were very pious, and was likely well read in their works. Llull's *Llibre dels Cent noms de Déu* (*Book of the One Hundred Names of God*), written in Catalan (not Arabic) is one text where we see again the extent to which Llull was heavily influenced by Sufi theologies. This particular text mirrors the traditions of the *asma al-husna* or the beautiful names of God.²⁷ The text includes an introduction for the Pope, and one hundred chapters which discuss the qualities of God.²⁸ Each chapter ends with benedictions to God, Jesus, and the Virgin Mary,²⁹ as follows:

In each of the hundred names of God, we aim to put ten lines of verse, which can be recited in the same manner as the Psalms are recited in the holy Church; and we do this because the Saracens recite the Koran in their mosques, for which reason these lines of verse can be recited according to the manner in which the Saracens recite [theirs.] ... I therefore advise that each day one should say the Hundred Names of God and should carry them

around on one's person in written form. Once one has said a chapter, one should utter this laud ...; Praise and honour to the essence of God and to His divine Persons and to their Dignities. And let us call to mind and love Jesus the Nazarene and the Virgin Mary, his mother. This laud is uttered in the same way as is the Glory Be to the Father in the Psalms.³⁰

According to interpreters of the Qur'an, only ninety-nine names are revealed in the sacred text and the hundredth name of Allah remains mysterious and beyond the reach of those in ordinary states. So even the title suggests a level of superiority mastered by Llull in presenting a Christian version of a Sufi tradition. In creating a text (out of a Quranic tradition of the names of God), Llull aims to show that the beauty espoused in the Qur'an is not divine in nature but can be replicated, as he does, by a human being. This mastery of poetics and style of the Qur'an is purposefully attempted to be matched in the Catalan style, rhythm, and prose by Llull's version of the names of God.³¹ This particular text also indicates how Islamic practices influenced Christian ones.

Llull was influenced by Greek philosophy (Platonism and Neoplatonism) and the Arab philosophers, such as al-Kindi (d. 873), al-Farabi (d. 950), and Ibn Sina (d. 1037), in addition to Sufi thought. Though much of his particular Sufi influence is hard to map, it has been suggested that Llull was influenced by al-Ghazali.³² Llull wrote the *Compendium of al-Ghazali's Logic*, which is a summary of al-Ghazali's *Maqasid al-falasifa*, and the text itself is written in Arabic, Latin, and Catalan.³³ Aside from reference to al-Ghazali, Llull does not directly cite any specific Arabic sources in his writings.³⁴ It is for this reason that there has been much debate regarding Llull's exact sources of inspiration, especially in regards to Sufism. Scholars point to Ibn al-'Arabi as a possible source of Llull's intellectual themes, especially his notions of presences or God's attributes.³⁵ Another source of possible influence includes the Ikhwan al-Safa (the Brethren of Purity).³⁶ Still, it is these Sufi elements that have led scholars, such as Carl W. Ernst, to categorize Llull's thought as "Christian Sufism," though as we can see, the extent of these elements is debatable. Annemarie Schimmel also points to Llull as the "first [to have] contact" with Sufism among the Europeans.³⁷ Llull's "Christian Sufism" in many ways "prepare[d] the ground for Western reception of Sufism" in the centuries to come.³⁸ This link is particularly evident in the impacts Llull had on Marsilio Ficino (d. 1499) and Giovannia Pico della Mirandola (d. 1494), who would engage with Neoplatonism, Hermeticism, and Kabbalah, all of which would be seminal for later esoteric and philosophical trends in the West, including the Perennialism of Jones and Guénon, the Romanticism of Goethe, and the Transcendentalism of Emerson.³⁹

Aside from Llull, there are other recorded instances of Sufi literary texts in European literary worlds prior to the beginning of colonialism. For instance, the famous 9th-century female Sufi figure Rabi'a al-'Adawiyya was also one of the first figures that Jean de Joinville (d. 1317), Chancellor of King Louis IX in the 13th century, introduced into European writings. Joinville used Rabi'a as an example of "Divine love" in his treatise. This classical Sufi figure will be discussed further in

Chapter 6.⁴⁰ These early encounters with Sufism and Islam were not restricted to Christian theologians. For instance, Arabic Sufi literature influenced Maimonides's (d. 1204) son, Abraham Ibn Musa (d. 1237), who claimed that Sufism originated in Judaism.⁴¹ Greek philosophical traditions, especially Neoplatonism and ideas of "emanationism," were shared resources among Jewish, Christian, and Muslim mystical traditions.⁴² These resources led to interest by Jewish Kabbalist and Christian mystics in Sufism (and vice versa) in early and late medieval periods.⁴³ Not only were philosophies and texts transmitted across religious borders, but in the 15th and 16th centuries, Europeans were writing about their encounters with Sufis and their practices.

Dervishes and non-Muslims in Ottoman Turkey

Martin Luther (d. 1546) is most known for igniting the Protestant Reformation with the nailing of his ninety-five theses on a church door in Wittenberg in 1517, just as Selim I was demanding the caliphate from the Mamluks. During Luther's time, the Ottomans were expanding in power and Turkish Muslim presence was a growing reality. Due to his immediate climate, similar to Llull, Luther also had a compartmentalized relationship with Islam and Sufism. He was convinced that the religion of Prophet Muhammad was false and destructive, both spiritually and politically.⁴⁴ However, Luther believed that it should not be refuted based on sensationalistic falsehoods, but genuine understanding. Hence, he was greatly appreciative of a Latin work that highlighted the impressive virtues and religious discipline of the Turks, but ultimately condemned them.⁴⁵ Luther wrote the introduction to this book, *Treatise on the Customs, Conditions and Wickedness of the Turks*, which was first published in 1480. The text itself was written as a caution against being beguiled by the apparent piety of the Sufis, the dervishes.⁴⁶ The text is credited to George of Hungary, a Dominican friar sold into slavery in Anatolia under Ottoman rule, where he became a Sufi but later reverted back to Christianity.⁴⁷ George is arguably the first Western Sufi, but by no means the last. Wojciech Bobowski, known as Albertus Bobovius Leopolitanus (d. ca. 1675) in Latin or 'Ali Ufki in Turkish, was a page and musician in women's quarters (seraglio) in the Ottoman palace. A book by the title of *The Inner Palace (Seray-i Enderun)* (1665) is attributed to him, in which he describes his experiences in the seraglio. What is fascinating about Bobowski is that although he was to become a well-known author and translator, because of his language abilities in Ottoman, Arabic, Latin, Italian, French, German, Polish, and maybe even more languages, it is likely that he converted to Islam and even entered the Helvetiye Sufi brotherhood. There does not seem to be a sense that he reverted or converted for the sake of survival, unlike friar George.⁴⁸

When Christian Europeans met Sufis in Ottoman Turkey, their experiences varied. However, one common theme found in these early primary sources is the gravitation toward the "dervishes" because of their use of music and dance. Guillaume Postel (d. 1581), a French linguist, astronomer, and diplomat was interested

in spirituality. His experience of the dervishes unfolded during the time of the French King Francois I (r. 1515–1547) and Suleiman the Magnificent of the Ottoman Empire (r. 1520–1566). In Postel's writing, one can note precisely this attention to the practices and rituals of dancing and music that he noted during a dervish ceremony:

They begin by bowing the head, and all the body, one toward the other, saying “alla, alla, alla, alla, alla” so many times and repeating it for so long that they fall as if they were stunned, and they say that their spirit takes the prayer to God. In Syria and Anatolia or Turkey there are some who begin to whirl so powerfully while repeating “alla, alla” etc. that a pirouette could never imitate them; so that finally they are all stunned and remained as if dead, in ecstasy, and they say that their spirit goes with God.⁴⁹

Postel's attention to detail, especially of the “pirouette” and the “bowing the head,” calls to mind the practices of whirling and *dhikr* of the Mevlevis. The “dances” of the dervishes were commonly described in the works of many European travelers to Ottoman Turkey as they were exotic in the eyes of foreigners. Pietro della Valle (d. 1652), a Roman antiquarian, composer, and musicologist, also recorded similar practices. Between 1614 and 1626 he traveled to the Holy Land, the Middle East, and North Africa, including Istanbul (Constantinople). In one of his letters from the European quarter of Istanbul, he describes a visit to a mosque, where dervishes “danced” and whirled while “repeating loudly the word *Hu*.”⁵⁰

Charles de Ferriol (d. 1722), an ambassador of Louis XIV (d. 1715) to the Ottoman court, was heavily influenced by the paintings and engravings of Flemish artist Jean-Baptiste Vanmour (d. 1737), and included descriptions to some of his works. Ferriol goes on to write about these works in the book he published in 1715, *Recueil de cent estampes*:

This engraving represents the temple of the Pera Dervishes, which is a dome; it is clear and well parquetted: there is a gallery where the music is performed. We have added here the musical notation of the air which the musicians play in order to make the dervishes turn: they turn with open arms and seem in ecstasy: the young turn at an incredible speed. The Superior and the elders turn more slowly, and when they are tired they place themselves on their knees with their faces to the ground. It is music that animates them; they claim that it is in some way divine: many have assured M. de Ferriol that, without the music, they would not be able to perform three turns without falling, while they turn for nearly an hour.⁵¹

Here with Ferriol's descriptions, mainly of the engravings produced of whirling dervishes by Vanmour, there is early indication of the interest in music and dancing that becomes a fascination for Europeans who encountered the Mevlevi

tradition, one that will continue well into the contemporary period, especially with the popularization of Rumi in the West. Music and dance would then be central to facilitating interest in Sufism, especially by musicologists from Europe. Others, such as Giambattista Toderini (d. 1799), are an example of the attention to Ottoman music that motivated some European travelers. Toderini was a Jesuit abbot who arrived in Istanbul in 1781, during which time he wrote his *Letteratura*, which among many things appealed to musicologists who were interested in Ottoman music. Toderini includes discussions with Mevlevi dervishes and even explores musical instruments, such as the *ney* (classical Middle Eastern flute), not only in the Ottoman context, but also within the Arab–Persian context.⁵² He writes:

The Mevlevi dervishes, who are named in this way after their founder, having introduced the dance as a religious devotion in their oratorio, practice music assiduously, and are among the best musicians. They play wind instruments, and kettledrums, as I saw when I was at their whirling dances.⁵³

Toderini was also very inquisitive of the practices he was observing. In one instance, he writes the following:

We need to ask what the Mevlevi sema was likely to have represented for Ottoman hosts. Was it a performance of which they were especially proud? Why did Ottomans think that European visitors would have enjoyed such a ceremony or been impressed by it? And for their part, why were Europeans almost invariably fascinated? What did they see in such rituals?⁵⁴

From as early as the 16th century, then, European travelers, diplomats, and scholars positioned in Istanbul encountered forms of whirling and Turkish Sufi music. This set the trajectory for one of the most seminal ways in which Sufi practices were disseminated to Europeans – that is, through music and dance. Dervishes were influencing music and making appearances in paintings and even as characters in novels and plays (vaudeville) in Europe, such as in Gotthold Ephraim Lessing's (d. 1781) play *Nathan the Wise* (1779), a trend that would only continue well into the 21st century.⁵⁵ The latter forms of engagement were just the beginning, while new forms of scholarship on the Orient led to more intensive translation efforts for Sufi poetry. Sufi poetry continued to find its way to European audiences slowly through the 16th century. The earliest to mention Persian poetry in English was George Puttenham (d. 1590) in 1589.⁵⁶ Puttenham included four unnamed “Oriental” poems in “The Art of English Poesie,” while Sa’di’s *Gulistan*, which was translated by the Dutch Orientalist Georgius Gentius (d. 1687), was available in Latin as early as 1654.⁵⁷ These somewhat sporadic European encounters with Islamic culture and text (and more specifically, Sufism) would give way in the late 18th and 19th centuries of the colonial era to a more concerted European engagement with Muslim societies and their Sufi traditions.

Orientalists and Sufism: Scholarly constructions and poetic transmissions

Early translations and interpretations: Jones, Malcolm, and Wilberforce

Sir William Jones (d. 1794) is often given the epithet of the “Father of Orientalism,” because of the extensive scholarly writings he left behind on this topic. Many of Jones’s works, as well as others like him, were an outgrowth of their affiliation with the East India Company under the British Crown in India. Jones went to India as a judge in 1784, and was posted to Bengal and Calcutta. During his posting, he used philology and literary studies to pursue his intellectual endeavors.⁵⁸ Jones rendered pre-Islamic poetry into English and introduced his readers to Indian and Persian literature.⁵⁹ Jones reported back to England and America through forums such as the *Asiatic Researches and Asiatic Miscellany*, sharing his encounters of the cultures, peoples, and poetic traditions of the East.

During this period, Persian became a language of social and economic currency and correspondence, whereas Arabic language study was already established by this period. For instance, Simon Ockley (d. 1720), the Sir Thomas Adams’s Professor of Arabic at the University of Cambridge, felt that Arabic was important in understanding Hebrew since, unlike Aramaic and Syriac (other languages of biblical exegesis), it was still a living language.⁶⁰ Another reason for Arabic study was also to understand the Qur’an. Ockley writes:

It is by no means unsuitable that the theologian should read this book, which has subjugated so large a portion of the globe; his duty is to know not only the things that are true but also in order that he may be able to refute and contradict them.⁶¹

During Jones’s time in the East India Company, however, Persian became a language of more interest, primarily because it was viewed as a language of India or the East. Persian was not only studied in India by the British but also in England in institutions of higher learning, such as Oxford.⁶² Special fonts were created in manuscript printing presses to ensure the production of Persian classics, while schools were established to promote Persian language training for civil servants.⁶³

In 1771, Jones told his students that they should practice Persian by translating selections from Sa’di’s *Gulistan* into English. This text became one of the primary sources of instruction for civil servants in British India at Fort William College, which was founded in 1801, and Haileybury College in England, which was established in 1806. The first selections from Sa’di’s *Gulistan* were translated in 1774 and were seen as “nothing particularly striking ... recommending justice and humanity to princes, which in regions of the East, can never be too much inculcated.”⁶⁴ Sa’di was already known at this juncture. Renaissance scholars had introduced him to Europe through Latin translations as early as 1651.⁶⁵ Men of the Enlightenment

era – such as the writer, historian, and philosopher Voltaire (François-Marie Arouet) (d. 1778) and the author, scientist, and statesman Benjamin Franklin (d. 1790) – found his works attractive, and even tried to pass off verses of their poetry as missing chapters from Sa'di's poems.⁶⁶ Sa'di was translated by numerous figures, such as the British explorer, translator, and writer Sir Richard Burton (d. 1890), and would also be invoked by Emerson, who will be discussed further below.⁶⁷

This openness to the traditions of the East was not uniformly held by all of the Europeans who were engaging with the Orient:

Of late years some writers of the French nation, partly from an affectation of singularity and partly with a view to depreciate the religion of Christ, have set up the Arabians and the doctrines of Mahomet, as it were in opposition to the people of Europe ... They have represented the nations of Arabia as a civilized, polite people who possessed the arts and sciences at a time when Europe was buried in ignorance and barbarity.⁶⁸

There was still a growing sentiment that the cultures of the East were uncivilized, especially the Arabs. Yet, figures like Jones viewed certain languages, such as Sanskrit, and later Persian, as occupying a class of their own. In Jones's 1786 third presidential address to the Asiatic Society of Bengal, one sees how languages of Asia, such as Sanskrit, became associated with a larger worldview:

The *Sanskrit* language, whatever be its antiquity, is of a wonderful structure; more perfect than the *Greek*, more copious than the *Latin*, and more exquisitely refined than either, yet beating to both of them a stronger affinity, both in the roots of verbs and in the forms of grammar, than could possibly have been produced by accident; so strong indeed, that no philologist could examine them all three, without believing them to have sprung from some common source, which, perhaps, no longer exists.⁶⁹

Persian was grouped with Indian and European languages as a “common source,” as alluded to above. Over time, these groups of languages came to be viewed as Indo-European or “Aryan” (“noble”) languages, while Hebrew and Arabic were categorized under the Semitic language family. These categorizations of languages would become racially infused, particularly by Wilhelm von Humboldt (d. 1835), the Prussian minister, education reformer, and linguist.⁷⁰ These language categories further reinforced the thesis that Islam was a religion based on the Semitic language of Arabic, and was hence different from the Persian Indo-European language, which also happened to be the main language of the Sufi poetry experienced by Europeans. This is evident in how Jones defines Sufism. For him, Sufism was a “metaphysical theology, which has been professed immemorially by a numerous sect of *Persians and Hindus*, was carried in part into *Greece*, and prevails even now among the learned *Muselmans*, who sometimes avow it without reserve.”⁷¹ For Jones, like many who came after him and similarly engaged with Sufi poetry, Sufism was a

universal tradition that was not limited to Islam. This particular outlining of Sufism is essential, then, to Sufism's reception among Europeans who, be they influenced by Deism, Spinozian philosophy, or pantheism, felt that Sufism fit the model of what they were looking for.⁷²

As Jones's reading of "Oriental" texts grew more pervasive, he became an enthusiastic advocate of the profundity of Islamic scripture and literature:

In no language, Hebrew excepted, are there more pious and sublime addresses to Being of beings, more splendid enumeration of His attributes, or more beautiful descriptions of His beautiful works, than in the Kuran (Arabic), in the poems of the Sa'di, Nizami, Firdausi (Persian).⁷³

The collected letters of Jones shed light on his sources and the poets he was attracted to, which led to his positive evaluation of Sanskrit and especially Persian, and even his perceptions of Sufism. In his letters, Jones quotes extensively across different religious traditions, philosophies, and cultures, referring to Confucius as the "Chinese Plato" and relating stories from the *Arabian Nights*. He also expresses his commitment to learning different languages, such as Chinese, Latin, Persian, and Arabic. From the collected letters, one can glean that he corresponded extensively with a number of significant historical figures. The first mention of Persian poets in Jones's letters appears as early as 1768 in his correspondence with Charles Revczky (1737–1793), a Hungarian-born diplomat. The editor of the letters, Garland Cannon, explains that it was Revczky who was "responsible for Jones's interest in Persian poetry, especially Hafiz."⁷⁴ In a letter to Revczky dated to April 1768, Jones writes, "Our Hafiz is most assuredly a poet worth to sup with the gods; every day I take pleasures in his work, which daily gives me more delight by its charms and attractive style."⁷⁵ Throughout their correspondence over the years, Revczky mailed Jones Latin renditions of Hafiz's Persian poetry. It is through these letters that Jones's love for Hafiz and also for Persia continued to grow. For Jones, Hafiz was the "'Persian Anacreon' because many of the *ghazals* (odes) in his *Divan* (collection) are panegyrics and drinking songs."⁷⁶

Jones was not alone in noting the similarity between Hafiz and the Greek Anacreon. John Nott (d. 1825), an English physician, also translated portions of Hafiz's poetry in *Select Odes from the Persian Poet* (1787).⁷⁷ In his "Preface" to the *ghazals* of Hafiz that Nott translates, he writes:

Whether Anacreon borrowed the gaiety of his Odes from the Persian *Gazel* or whether Hafez enriched his native language by an imitation of the Teian bard, I will not venture to determine. The similarity of sentiment is oftentimes wonderful. And perhaps it may be said of both, that they both wrote not so much to the understanding, as to the heart.⁷⁸

Nott was even unsure who inspired whom. Such presentations of Persian poets like Hafiz, as embodying universal themes beyond the Persian context, led to

“depriv[ing] [Hafiz of] his nationality,” which further universalizes the traditions with which he was associated, such as Sufism.⁷⁹ This literary interest resulted in a complex relationship between the Orientalists and Persian poetry. John D. Yohannan writes:

The dual loyalties of the late eighteenth century, on the contrary, moved the first Orientalists to present the Persian poets in the more or less familiar garb of eighteenth-century poetics. The result was that at first a considerable injustice was done to the genius of two of Persia’s three greatest poets, Firdausi and Hafiz. The third, Sadi escaped with no violent distortion.⁸⁰

Still, there is a sense that these early encounters of the poems of the East were inspirational for figures like Jones. He writes:

Yet I cannot but think that our European poetry has subsisted too long on the perpetual repetition of the same images, and incessant allusions to the same fables ... and if the languages of the Eastern nations were studied in our great seminaries of learning ... a new and ample field would be opened for speculation; we should have a more extensive insight into the history of the human mind; we should be furnished with a new set of images and similitudes; and a number of excellent compositions would be brought to light, which future scholars might explain and future poets.⁸¹

Jones’s perennialist conceptualization of Sufism may have been a result of his reading of the Persian text *Dabistan-i madhahib*. The author of this text is still unknown, but it was likely written between 1645 and 1658. In the *Dabistan*, Sufism is framed as a “supra-confessional” universalistic tradition and a form of Neoplatonic philosophy, which is what Jones thought of Sufism.⁸² Lieutenant James Graham (d. 1845) wrote a brief unpublished paper in 1819. Graham continued Jones’s conceptualization of Sufism as a universal tradition. The two authors framed Sufism within their own milieu, which was shaped by Romantic and Perennialist tendencies, as previously discussed. This particular text was then used by Major-General Sir John Malcolm (1769–1833) in his seminal work on Persia.⁸³

Malcolm wrote a two-volume study entitled *The History of Persia from the Most Early Period to the Present Time*. It was printed in London, in 1815. Malcolm was a soldier-diplomat, who served as a governor of Bombay from 1827 to 1830.⁸⁴ He was one of the formative administrators and “ideologues” of the East India Company, and wrote nine books along with articles, pamphlets, and poetry, mostly to do with “Asian topics.”⁸⁵ His *Sketch of the Political History of India*⁸⁶ was one of the most consulted texts on India by the British Empire, while his *The History of Persia* contributed significantly to European understanding of this region near India.⁸⁷

In his *The History of Persia*, Malcolm dedicates some space to the topic of Sufism. He begins by placing the “Sooffees” of Persia within the “Mahomedan” tradition.

He estimates on good account that there are “between two and three hundred thousand persons” who are “Sooffees in Persia.”⁸⁸ Malcolm adds:

The great proportion of the Sooffees of Persia are not to be distinguished from the other part of the Mahomedan population. They are in fact required, when in the first ranks of this mystic faith, to conform to the established religion: and the gradual and unseen manner in which men are led into infidelity, is justly stated, by Mahomedan divines, to be one of the greatest dangers that attend this delusive doctrine.⁸⁹

Even in situating Sufism as Islamic (at least superficially), Malcolm considers it to be a pernicious corruptor of the true faith from within. He writes in a footnote a word of caution regarding Sufis, proposing to help local opponents of Sufism eradicate the tradition:

As the Sooffees have at this time extended their belief to an alarming extent, and obtained many foolish and credulous converts who adopt their faith, and dress in their fashion; as all this is contrary to the interest of the true religion, and has occasioned much thought to the wisest of our state; as you also have urged us much on this subject, we have taken the ill into consideration, and have written to all our governors and officers to punish these offenders if they do not recant; to take from them all which they have plundered from weak men; and, if the proprietors of this wealth cannot be found, to distribute it among the poor. We have, in short, ordered, that the sect be extirpated and put an end to in order that the true faith may flourish.⁹⁰

Here, the Persian Sufis to whom Malcolm refers warrant negative attention due to their fashion and their habits of misleading innocent people, which results in punitive legal responses. The text also seems to indicate that local anti-Sufi sentiments were influencing European perspectives on Sufism, as Malcolm is made “ill” by what the locals have informed him of these “Sooffees.” Still, despite this cautious outlook, Malcolm goes on to discuss the poets of this tradition, particularly “Ferdosi” and “Nizamee” as “epic poet[s],” while Rumi, Hafiz, Jami, and Sa’di are also referenced as poets who “rank the highest.”⁹¹ He writes of Rumi and Hafiz the following:

The author of the Musnavee is generally called the Mollah of Room; while Hafiz is usually known by the title of Khaujah. The Persians conceive that the former far surpasses the latter in penetration and judgment. I have heard their opinion of these two celebrated Sooffee poets illustrated by the following anecdote – “A learned person,” they say, “was asked how it came that the author of the Musnavee and Hafiz, two Sooffees, had expressed themselves, in the commencement of their works, so oppositely on the subject of divine love; Hafiz having said, ‘The path of love appeared at first easy, but afterwards proved full of difficulties.’” – while, according to Jellâl-u-deen, “Love at first appeared like a murderer, that he might alarm all who were without his pale.”

The learned man replied, with a smile, “That which the Moollah saw at first was only found out at last by the Khaujah.”⁹²

Malcolm here is presenting a bifurcated Sufism; the literary Sufism of Rumi and Hafiz is appreciated, while everyday embodied Sufism is viewed as pernicious. It is the theme of love as it is found in the poetry of Rumi and Hafiz that Malcolm highlights in the comparative anecdote above. In referring to the poetry of Hafiz and Rumi, love and beauty are universal themes that were appealing and relatable to the Oriental translators; it is these themes that non-Muslims would consistently invoke when it came to Sufi poetry. Malcolm continues, “Many of these poems are remarkable for harmony of numbers and luxuriance of imagination; but they all abound with the most extravagant and hyperbolical passages.”⁹³ The beauty and lyricism of the poems were not lost on Malcolm; they existed in the realms of “imagination.” Malcolm adds further:

Many discussions have arisen regarding the real and mystical meaning of the writers of this class, and particularly of Hafiz, whose Odes are chanted as songs, to excite the young and the dissipated to pleasure, and recited as hymns to remind the old and the devout of the rapture of divine love ... among the many classes of Soofees, the natural feelings which man has on earth, and the immortal longings of the soul after its Creator, are deemed inseparable: and, with a poet of this persuasion, it was likely that the subjects should be so blended, as to render it impossible to distinguish when he meant to sing earthly or of heavenly joys.⁹⁴

Again, the noticeable trend between figures such as Jones and Malcolm, who were positioned in India as civil servants, were the poems of Sufis, primarily Hafiz, who was given the epithet of “the Prince of Persian Poets.” Sa’di and Rumi were also receiving attention, as collectively their poems were far more universalistic in nature. Jones and Malcolm found the emphasis on love a pleasing theme; such intimacies and romances of the divine were far more appealing than any “Mohammadan” legalism they associated with Islam. These two examples illustrate how Jones and Malcolm found pathways into the Sufi tradition, mainly through literature. As Malcolm illustrates, whereas Sufi poetry was lauded, the practice of Sufism was condemned. As discussed in [Chapter 2](#), the Salafi reformers (al-Afghani and ‘Abduh) similarly valued some Sufi texts and ideals, though in practice they tended to be critical of lived Sufism as superstitious and backward. Orientalist and Salafi perspectives on Sufism were mutually influential in creating a broader trajectory that has shaped contemporary Sufism.

These trends are also noted with other figures, particularly as they engaged with Persian sources. For instance, Lieutenant Colonel H. Wilberforce Clarke (d. 1903), who was part of the Royal (late Bengal) Engineers and a life member of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland and member of the Asiatic Society of Bengal. He was the author of the *Persian Manual*, and one of the early translators of *The Bustan-i* by Sa’di, *The Sikander Nama-i-Nizami* and *Divan-i Hafiz*. He also translated Shaykh

Shahabuddin Suhrawardi's (d. 1234) *A Dervish Textbook: From the 'Awarifu-l-Ma'Arif, Written in the Thirteenth Century*. In *A Dervish Textbook*, Clarke suggests that:

The term *sufi* was first adopted by Abu Hashim, a Syrian Zahid (d. 780 A.D.); in his time was built the first *takya* (convent). But some say that the seed of *sufiism* [*sic*] was sown in the time of Adam, germed in the time of Nuh, budded in the time of Ibrahim, began to develop in the time of Musa, reached maturity in the time of Christ, produced pure wine in the time of Muhammad.⁹⁵

As discussed in [Chapters 1–3](#), Sufis themselves have long emphasized the universal meaning of Islam and hence Sufism. Here, Clarke draws the lineage of Sufism back to the first prophets of the Abrahamic tradition, starting with Adam, transforming with Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus and becoming fully developed with Muhammad. He explicitly highlights this universal strand of the Sufi tradition. Clarke goes on to add that, “The Sufis (men of heart; men looking behind the veil; inward men) developed the Greek mysticism” and mentions “Faryabi ... Abu Ali Sina ... Ghazali ... Ibn Rashid” as key figures in this development.⁹⁶ For Clarke, Sufis teach, “God to be the One, the Necessary Being, the only Reality, the Truth, the Infinite, the First Cause (source of all action, good and evil).”⁹⁷ Of Clarke’s 1891 translation of Hafiz’s *Divan*, Paul Kane writes that it was “the strangest of all the translations (a bewildering mixture of verse and prose commentary that only a late Victorian could have produced).”⁹⁸ Clarke’s translation of Hafiz would be followed by one of the “best-known translations” by the English writer, traveler, spy, administrator, and archaeologist Gertrude Bell (d. 1926) in her *Poems from the Divan of Hafiz* (1897).⁹⁹

Jones’s framework of universal Sufism is further confirmed with Malcolm’s text on Persia, though his work is receptive to Sufi poets, and not necessarily the mischievous Sufis themselves, whose cheeky behaviors seem to have created tensions with local communities. Clarke’s text also highlights how some Sufis have framed their approaches in universal ways, which further affirmed the European reception of Sufism as such. Scholarship on Sufis by Europeans is not homogeneous, but captures the emerging categories in the study of Sufism – that is, textual and poetic versus encounters of Sufi communities were solidifying even early on. Sufism permeated culture and religious practices in diverse ways, and Europeans were meeting most of these facets of Sufism. Edward William Lane (d. 1876) and John P. Brown (d. 1872) further showcase Sufis, not through textual traditions but through their everyday life, which concretized the popular perceptions of Sufis that were already present in the European imagination.

The travelogues of Lane and Brown

Europeans traveling through the Middle East and other Muslim societies also came to encounter fascinating figures that offered the allure of the exotic. Early instances of such meetings have already been documented above, especially under the

Ottoman court and the presence of whirling dervishes. European travelers came face to face with dervishes, some who whirled, others with a propensity to chant, dance, and sing in rituals. Most of them did not associate these exotic figures with normative Islam. Edward William Lane, the Arabic lexicographer, had a number of encounters with such enticing “dervishes” or wandering mendicants. His descriptions can be found in his *An Account of the Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians*, which was written during his time in Egypt from the 1820s to the 1830s. The first edition of this book alone sold over 6,000 copies and was a foundational source of information in the study of Egypt.¹⁰⁰ Lane set off to Egypt on July 18, 1825, due to issues of personal illness but also to cultivate his growing interest in Arabic (he was initially pursuing studies in mathematics).¹⁰¹ He writes:

I was not visiting Egypt merely for my amusement; to examine its pyramids and temples and grottoes, and after satisfying my curiosity to quit it for other scenes and other pleasures: but I was about to throw myself entirely among strangers, among a people of whom I have heard the most contradictory accounts: I was to adopt their language, their customs, and their dress; and in order to make as much progress as possible in the study of their literature, it was my intention to associate almost exclusively with the Muslim inhabitants.¹⁰²

Much of the text is dedicated to describing his daily activities, such as how he changed his attire (from British to Turkish outfits) and his wanderings through the cities of Cairo and Alexandria and many more. He was also acquainted with Shaykh Ahmed, a bookseller who, prior to this occupation, was interested in nothing but (writes Lane) “zikrs; which consist in the repetition of the name and attributes, &c [etc], of God, by a number of persons, in chorus; and in such performances he is still often employed.”¹⁰³ According to Lane, Shaykh Ahmed was part of the “Saadeeyeh durweeshes” who were apparently popular for “devouring live serpents” and Shaykh Ahmed was himself a “serpent-eater.”¹⁰⁴ Lane’s descriptions of this Sufi *shaykh* he encountered in Cairo also highlight a gravitation toward two terms in discussions of Sufi traditions: (1) *fakir* (Arabic *faqir*) and (2) *dervish*, which both loosely translate to “poor man.”¹⁰⁵ European travelers from as early as the 16th century associated the dervishes with Catholic monks or friars, which with Luther further marginalized them among Protestants, as noted above.¹⁰⁶ By the 18th and 19th centuries, these dervishes became more “sensational[ized],” because they were documented by European travelers throughout Ottoman Turkey, who noted their “dancing, whirling and howling.”¹⁰⁷ This is evident in the work of Alexander Pope (d. 1744), an English poet best known for his translation of the epic *Homer*. In his *Essay of Man*, Pope writes of the “eastern priests,” which Ernst suspects is referring to the whirling dervishes associated with Rumi’s order (Mevlevi) in Turkey:¹⁰⁸

Go, wondrous creature! Mount where science guides.
Go, measure earth, weigh air, and state the tides;
Instruct the planets in what orbs to run,

Correct old time, and regulate the sun;
 Go, soar with Plato to th' empyreal sphere,
 To the first good, first perfect, and first fair;
 Or tread the mazy round his follow'rs trod,
 And quitting sense call imitating God;
 As eastern priests in giddy circles run,
 And turn their heads to imitate the sun.
 Go, teach eternal wisdom how to rule—
 Then drop into thyself, and be a fool!¹⁰⁹

Pope saw these “eastern priests” as the “deluded followers of Plato” running in circles with their faces to the sun, which was likely a misinformed description of the Whirling Dervishes performing *dhikr*.¹¹⁰ These descriptions of “dervishes” are seen further in the works of John P. Brown, another Orientalist.

Brown, in his “Author’s Preface” to *The Darvishes or Oriental Spiritualism*, which was composed in Constantinople, writes “that the Spiritual Principles of the Darvish Orders existed in Arabia previous to the time of the great and talented Islam Prophet cannot be doubted.”¹¹¹ Brown gleans from the works of Lane and Malcolm in writing his own treatise on the “darvishes”. His text is quite comprehensive. In skimming his chapter titles alone, one can see a range of topics from the early Abrahamic prophets, “On the Origin of the Dervish Orders,” and customs and practices of different orders. Brown explains that “Islamism” or Islam originated with the “perfect submission” of Abraham with his willingness to sacrifice Isaac to God. He describes that, “the spiritualism of the Darvishes differ[ed] in many respects from Islamism” since it had its “origins in the religious conceptions of India and Greece.”¹¹² He mainly uses Turkish, Arabic, and Persian sources to introduce Sufism to his readers.¹¹³ He is convinced that many of his Christian readers may find the darvishes “unfavorable” but he holds strongly that they are “liberal and intelligent, sincere, and most faithful friends.”¹¹⁴ Brown explains that these spiritual guilds are between Indian Jogis (yogis) and Islamic traditions:

Placed between the Pantheism of the Indian Jogis and the *Qurān*, which is sometimes an informal copy of the Bible, their philosophers, named Sūfis, have established a pantheistic school appropriate to Islām ideas – a sort of esoteric doctrine of Islamism, which must be distinguished from Indian Pantheism, though indeed it presents only the errors of the *Vedānta* and the Sāṅkhya. “Pantheism, as a moral doctrine, leads to the same conclusions as materialism – the negation of human liberty, the indifference to actions, and the legitimacy of temporal enjoyments.” In this system, *all is God, except God Himself*, for He thereby ceases to be God.¹¹⁵

Brown includes numerous illustrations of dervishes, such as a “Bekdash Dervish Inhaling Hasheesh,” “Dervishes of the Mevleeve Order,” and “A Rufa’ee Dervish in an Ecstatic State.”¹¹⁶ In his discussions of the “howling dervishes” (the Rufa’ees), he provides a list of the “*Esmā el Husnā*, or the ‘Beautiful Names of God:’ ninety-nine

in number.”¹¹⁷ Brown also incorporates large sections from Lane’s *The Modern Egyptians*, who also wrote extensively on these “dervishes,” explaining that nothing more needs to be said of the dervishes than what has already been explained by Lane:

Durweeshes are very numerous in Egypt, and some of them who confine themselves to religious exercises, and subsist by alms, are much respected in this country, particularly by lower orders. Various artifices are employed by persons of this class to obtain the reputation of superior sanctity, and of being endowed with the power of performing miracles. Many of them are regarded as welees [*walis*].¹¹⁸

Brown, in quoting Lane, goes on to highlight traditions of the “Rifā‘eeyeh,” referring to their “turbans” and their “wonderful feats” such as

pretend[ing] to thrust iron spikes into their eyes and bodies without sustaining injury; and in appearance they do this in such a manner as to deceive any person who can believe it possible for a man to do such things in reality.¹¹⁹

He adds further, “they also break large masses of stone on their chests, eat live coal, glass &c.; and are said to pass swords completely through their bodies, and packing-needles through both their cheeks, without suffering any pain, or leaving any wound.”¹²⁰ Highlighting these examples of dervishes as radical and fanatical figures with wild practices contributed to making them an integral feature of the landscape of the East. For European travelers, they were the token representation of exoticism on par with yogis and mendicants from other religious traditions. Lane and Brown documented Sufi practices, such as rituals of *mawlid*s,¹²¹ dances, and *dhi*kers, but also their miraculous and phenomenal feats, such as eating snakes and self-mortification.

These models of Sufi fraternities, such as the activities of the *Rifā‘i* mentioned by Lane and Brown, would become a “necessary subject for European colonial administrators.”¹²² Sufi orders were the local community establishments in the various regions occupied by the Europeans. They became significant interlocutors between the colonized and colonial administrators.¹²³ Studies of Sufi orders’ activities and rituals, then, were not only for the sake of intellectual curiosity (as they initially began), but also became a requirement for colonial administrative control and success. However, Orientalists’ scholarship on Sufism was not relegated to administrative realms, as these texts on Sufism – especially the poetry translated by the likes of Jones and Nott – migrated to European audiences. In its new locality, Sufi poetry began inspiring the new generation of Romantic poets who were coming of age in a post-Enlightenment Europe.

The Romantics and Sufism

The era of Romanticism (ca. 1780s–1830s) – broadly known as a literary and aesthetic movement that emphasized individualism, freedom of thought, emotion, and creativity – was ignited by the French Revolution. The falling of the Bastille on July 14, 1789, was marked by political revolutions and “resistance to massive despotism,”

which led to new intellectual discussions on democracy and freedom.¹²⁴ These political shifts inspired a new generation of thinkers, leaders, and poets, who “were reacting against political and cultural centralization.”¹²⁵ As political changes in France spread throughout Europe, there were also growing interactions between European and non-European countries through colonialism. Orientalists were relaying their experiences through their travelogues and translations of texts, as captured above, which led to the rise of new literary traditions, motifs, themes, and figures in France, Germany, and Britain. This movement redrew new geographical and literary imaginaries of Muslim, Indian, and Chinese worlds.

The distinguishing aspect of the Romantic Age was the serious effort given to language study, especially Persian, Arabic, Turkish, and Sanskrit. This interest in language developed in part as a requirement for colonial administration. However, it was also rooted in the Romantic movement’s concern with spiritual and emotive themes in literature. Romanticism emerged after the Industrial Revolution in Europe and turned inward, emphasizing *emotion* as central to human experience and spirituality. With regard to Islamic traditions, Romantics had an

ambiguous attitude to Islam: on the one hand, it offered a convenient symbol of the tyranny that they all sought to overcome; but on the other, it offered an alternative to the compromised or corrupted political and social systems of Europe.¹²⁶

It was not Islam that was merely suspect of corruption and delusory ideas, this was seen as the tendency of all religions, and thus Romantics emphasized a far more spiritual, inner orientation toward the world.

The early British Romantics were swayed by tales such as *Arabian Nights* and the Andalusian philosopher Ibn Tufayl’s (d. 1185) *Hayy Ibn Yaqzan*. Ibn Tufayl’s book was the first Sufi text to be popularly known in the West, but it was not so much known as a Sufi text as a philosophical one.¹²⁷ Persian poets and mystics, such as Omar al-Khayyam (d. ca. 1123), al-Suhrawardi (d. 1191), Farid al-Din Attar (d. 1221), Sa’di, Rumi, and Hafiz were familiar in different parts of Europe.¹²⁸ Islamic works “helped the British Romantic poets not only in finding their own voices, but also their themes, metaphors, symbols, characters and images.”¹²⁹ British poets like William Blake (d. 1827), William Wordsworth (d. 1850), Samuel Taylor Coleridge (d. 1834), George Gordon Byron (d. 1824), Percy Bysshe Shelley (d. 1822), and John Keats (d. 1821), known as “The Big Six,” were seminal figures who were reading Orientalist translations, such as the ones discussed above.

For instance, Jones’s translations of Hafiz made their way to Byron and other Romantic poets.¹³⁰ Shelley was translating Plato’s *Symposium* from Greek to English, but he was also gleaning from Hinduism, Kabbalah, and Hermeticism, and Persian Sufi poetry, especially the works of Hafiz.¹³¹ Neoplatonism was a facilitator for cross-cultural exchange between the Romantics and Persian Sufi poets.¹³² Although centuries separate these different theological, philosophical, and mystical movements, there are “archetypical themes” that are shared between these cultures which are too hard to dismiss.¹³³ Some shared motifs include death (annihilation), unity of

religions, and the feminine, which can be found in the poems of Khayyam, Shabistari (d. after 1340), Hafiz, Rumi, Blake, and Coleridge.¹³⁴ For instance, Leonard Lewisohn compares the theme of annihilation (*fana'*), a central motif found in Sufi literature, such as in Shabistari's *Garden of Mystery* with the Romantic poet William Blake:

Go! Take this "self" which bars the path;
Each moment engage yourself in faith anew.
Inside us all the lower soul's an infidel:
Rest not content with this Islam of outer form.¹³⁵

One can note a similar theme of annihilation in Blake's *Milton* (1804):

I will go down to self annihilation and eternal death,
Lest the Last Judgment come & find me unannihilate
And I be seiz'd & giv'n into the hands of my own Selfhood.¹³⁶

New figures, characters, and imageries appear in English literature: "the wanderer ... the mystic ... lonely travelers, seaports, islands, caves, ... caravans, and desert filled ... landscape."¹³⁷ These imageries are repeatedly invoked: the seeker and her/his place in nature and its interface with the divine are what stand out in the works of the Romantics and Transcendentalists. They are also what drew these groups to Sufi poetry, particularly that of Hafiz. These metaphors and themes were influenced by what was being read. Lord Byron provides us with his reading list:

Turkey. –I have read Knolles, Sir Paul Rycaut and Prince Cantemir besides a more modern history, anonymous. Of Ottoman history I know every event ... Arabia. –Mahomet, whose Koran contains most sublime poetical passages, far surpassing European poetry. Persia. –Ferdousi, author of Shah Nameh, the Persian Illiad, –Sadi, and Hafiz, the immortal Hafiz, the oriental Anacreon. The last is revered beyond any bard of ancient or modern times by the Persians. Who resort to his tomb near Shiraz, to celebrate his memory. A splendid copy of his works is chained to his monument.¹³⁸

Lord Byron's reading list includes numerous Muslim sources, but from the Persian world, it is Hafiz, the "immortal Hafiz," on which he expends additional notes, comparing him even to the Greek poet Anacreon, as Jones and Nott had done before him. Other British Romantic poets such as Blake also embody the "mystic" and are "understood in a Sufi context where the erotic is blended with the divine."¹³⁹ Andrew Warren challenges the thesis that the young Romantics, Byron, Keats, and Shelley, were only writing in "Orientalized settings" because that was the fad of the day.¹⁴⁰ For Warren, the young Romantics were far more sophisticated in their methodology of employing the Orient:

The Orient – self-critically understood by the Young Romantics – was a historically determined phantasmatic projection of the West's own fears and desires, and provides a setting in which to explore and critique the

epistemological, existential, and above all political limits of their own solipsistic imaginations. It is simultaneously an escape from and return to the self, a vicious circle.¹⁴¹

In this interpretation, Islam was a “spiritual resource” for Romantic writers, and Sufism in particular played a role in this stimulation.¹⁴² Perhaps no other example but Goethe, and his relationship with Hafiz, could capture this powerful sharing of words and worlds.

The poets of the East and the West: Hafiz and Goethe

In May 1799, the Austrian Joseph Hammer was in Istanbul, Turkey, working as a translator for the Turkish court.¹⁴³ Hammer was born in Graz, Austria, in 1774 into a Catholic family.¹⁴⁴ In 1816, he married Caroline Heinkstein, a Jewish convert to Catholicism.¹⁴⁵ From his marriage, to his interests, travels, and work – such as his *History of the Ottoman Empire* (1827–1835), the “Assassins,” and “The Mithraic cult” – one sees in Hammer a relative openness to religions beyond his own. Hammer ascended up the social ladder by inheriting property from the Purgstall family in 1835.¹⁴⁶ As a baron, he took on the name Hammer-Purgstall, and moved to south Austria with his wife, who died unexpectedly on May 15, 1844.¹⁴⁷ The death of his wife commenced a new project, the *Prayerbook*. In the first pages of this text dedicated to his wife is the *Surah al-Fatiha* (The Opening), the [first chapter](#) of the Qur’an and the oft repeated prayer of Muslims. In his own memoir, Hammer explains that the *Prayerbook* was “suitable to be prayed by members of all religions.”¹⁴⁸

Islamic influence on Hammer extends beyond his texts and publications, but can also be noted in his aristocratic estate, where Arabic inscriptions, such as the names of Allah or the *Surah* of Joseph (Yusuf, Qur’an 12:64), are found on entryways. There are even walls inscribed with the name “Hafiz”: a name alluding not only to God’s quality or the one who has memorized the Qur’an but also Hafiz, the poet Hammer translated.¹⁴⁹ Throughout his time in Istanbul and in his life in Vienna, Hammer continued to collect manuscripts, which he stamped with the Arabic insignia: “as-Sayyāh, as-Sāmīr Yūsuf Hāmīr” (The Itinerant, the Night Converser Joseph Hammer).¹⁵⁰ This is quite indicative of the transformations Hammer experienced in his interactions with the Arabian Islamic world, one that is no longer unilateral but symbiotic for him. As Jeffrey Einboden expresses:

Fashioning his new persona in poetic terms, this seal is not only innovative in style, however, but also in spirituality, characterizing Hammer as “The Itinerant, the Night Converser” – terms that seem to typify the Austrian as a wandering dervish, engaging in holy rambling and repartee. Self-describing as a mystic traveler and talker, Hammer’s stamp itself travels into new regions of religion, speaking a fresh Sufi identity through a complex act of code shifting . . . Hammer no longer renders his German reader in the pages of his Muslim translation, but instead renders his own German name into Muslim expression,

with Europe's translator of Sufi poetry himself translated into a slide of Sufi poetry.¹⁵¹

This transformation into the world of Sufism would “reshape western poetry, exercising a formative impact on Romantic Orientalism.”¹⁵²

In June 1799, Hammer began copying and writing commentaries on Hafiz's *Diwan* and he continued until he had a German “rendition” of Hafiz's Persian work in 1806.¹⁵³ He published two volumes of translations in 1812 and 1813, which included over 500 of Hafiz's *ghazals*. In the preface to his work on Hafiz, Hammer explains his intention for translating this particular work: “he wished less to translate the Persian poet [for] the German reader, than the German reader [for] the Persian poet.”¹⁵⁴ From his formative translation of Hafiz's *Diwan*, his personal transformation and inscriptions in architecture, one sees how Hammer redefined his relationship with the Islamic world and not only brought aspects of it to his Austrian homeland but also set the path to help transmit Hafiz to the rest of Europe and eventually America.¹⁵⁵ However, Hammer's engagement with Islam, and especially Hafiz, would be felt most profoundly with a German figure.

On January 30, 1800, Johann Wolfgang Goethe (1749–1832) opened *Mahomet: Transuerpiel: in Fünf Aufzügen* (*Mahomet: A Tragedy in Five Acts*), a tragedy in Weimer Theatre, which was a German translation of Voltaire's original staged in 1741 and published in 1774. Goethe was a German playwright, poet, and philosopher.¹⁵⁶ This particular play was staged just as Napoleon's troops were entering into Egypt and Syria in 1798 and 1799.¹⁵⁷ In contrast to many Western Orientalists whose interest in Islam was limited exclusively to Persian Sufi poetry, Goethe came to this Persian Sufi poetry after a general interest in Islam. Goethe's interest in Islam soon focused in on the poetry of Hafiz. Goethe claims that it was Hammer's *Diwan* that enabled him to first “grasp the inner nature” of Hafiz.¹⁵⁸ Though Hammer's text provided the ability to enter the world of Hafiz, Goethe was determined to access Hafiz directly and so set out to learn Arabic and Persian.¹⁵⁹ For Goethe, Arabic was seen as the “primordial” language. His interest in Arabic started early in his life, but he returned to it later to engage with Islamic texts, notably the Qur'an.

The *West-östlicher Divan* (*West-Eastern Divan*) of Goethe is divided into twelve books, which include two titles: one from the East and the other from the West.¹⁶⁰ Early on in the second book, in a section entitled “Surname,” Goethe uses fictional characters that parallel Hafiz and himself. The two characters, “Hafiz” and “the Poet,” are in conversation with one another, using the Socratic method to engage with existential questions. Goethe begins:

Poet:
Tell me why, Muhammad Shamseddin,
you are “Hafiz” to
worthy folk.

Hafiz:
For asking, you

Merit thanks. I answer, then:
 Legacy of the Qur'an
 I unaltered carry on
 Hallowed in my memory
 And, by acting piously,
 Daily every injury
 Ward away from me and those
 Who the Prophet-word and see
 Treasure and their duty heed.
 So my name the people chose.

Poet:
 Hafiz, it would seem to me
 That, I needn't yield to you:
 Like another I will be
 When I think as *he* would do.
 We are quite alike, I see.
 Taking in an image of
 Value from the Book I love-
 As upon a cloth that He
 Image of the Lord impressed-
 I revived in quiet breast
 (Quelling foe, denier, thief)
 With the image of belief.¹⁶¹

It is the parallel image of the Poet and Hafiz that is noteworthy from this passage, as Goethe writes, "We are quite alike." In examining this excerpt, Einboden writes, "Mirrored as tandem twins, German and Persian poets occupy opposing positions in this cultured dialogue, yet they also emerge as identical in their nominal substance."¹⁶² The focus is on the "heart," which acts like a mirror and reflects similarity more than difference. Goethe emerges as a German "Hafiz," with both poets meriting this shared "name due to their mutual memory and captured 'retention.'"¹⁶³ Goethe's interest in Hafiz does not emerge out of a vacuum, but arises out of his engagement with the Qur'an. The Qur'an, which he cites from as early as 1772, was of interest, and is invoked again and used in 1819 in his "Notes and Essays."¹⁶⁴ Goethe writes:

Is the Qur'an from eternity?
 That I will not ask.
 Might the Qur'an created be?
 No answer- a thankless task.
 That is the Book of Books need be
 My Muslim faith made clear to me.¹⁶⁵

It is precisely this synthesis of textual encounters that has resulted in scholars, such as Ziad Elmarsafy (2009), to suggest that "Goethe's oscillation between poetry and

prophecy as literary paradigms,” was immensely significant for the literary translation of Sufism and Islam throughout Europe.¹⁶⁶ A return to the Islamic sources, especially the Qur’an, becomes more and more prominent in the last days of Goethe’s life.¹⁶⁷ The *Divan* would be republished again five years before the death of Goethe to include new poems, including the following on the Qur’an:

Of old the sacred Koran did they cite,
They named the verse and chapter ever blest,
And each good Muslim, as was but was at rest.
The modern Dervish nothing better knows,
But prates of old and new with endless zest;
Each day our most admired disorder grows.
O sacred Koran! O eternal rest!¹⁶⁸

Goethe not only really struggled to understand the meaning of the Qur’an but also tried to process his relationship to the Prophet Muhammad himself.¹⁶⁹ Goethe’s relationship to these Islamic sources was facilitated by his engagement with Hafiz. Hafiz led Goethe to the Qur’an at the end of his days. Goethe’s encounters with the Islamic sources of the “East” placed him in a particular interface, which is captured in the following:

He who knows himself and others
Will also recognize that the
orient and the occident are no
longer separable.¹⁷⁰

He further wrote, “If Islam means submission to God, then we all live and die as Muslims.”¹⁷¹ These literary cultural exchanges were not limited to Goethe, but involved numerous German Romantics such as Friedrich Schlegel (d. 1829), who wrote under the pen name Novalis. He was also engaging with Arabia, Islam, and Muhammad at the same time. Still, it was due to Goethe’s German translation of Hafiz in his *West-Eastern Divan* that Germany and Europe had come to know Hafiz as “the sweet singer of Shiraz” and even the name Hafiz became “a nom de plume.”¹⁷² Hafiz and the Sufi poets did not remain only in the European realm and, in fact, they would travel further West across an ocean to America.

American Transcendentalism and Sufism

Sa’di’s *Gulistan*, Hafiz’s *Divan*, Khayyam’s *Ruba’iyyat*, and Firdausi’s *Shah Nameh*, were all available to English audiences in some form by 1790.¹⁷³ As these texts were being made available for European readers, they were also making their way to American intellectuals. The *American Museum* of 1792 was the first popular source in the United States to have a printed (an “uncredited”) publication of Hafiz entitled, “Ode Translated from the Persian of Hafez,” which was Nott’s original translations

from 1787.¹⁷⁴ This particular text was then followed by the “Tale of Hafez” which was included in the *New York Magazine or Literary Repository* (1790). It comprised a story of two characters, Hafiz and Sa’di, and though the tale was not representative of these poetic figures, it does indicate the popularity of these names by this time in New York.¹⁷⁵ This growing interest in Sufi poetry converged with a seminal spiritual and intellectual movement known as Transcendentalism.

The Transcendental movement began in New England in the 1830s. Members of the movement asked, “what is there beyond the individual?” and “what is universal?” Responses to these questions resulted in a range of approaches in the movement that came to be known as Transcendentalism. Transcendentalism as a movement, then, was in no way uniform. Those who pursued social reform (i.e., emphasis on the outward) mobilized around the formation of communal societies, such as at Brook Farm in 1841. George Ripley (d. 1880), a social reformer, Unitarian minister, and journalist, was one of the main figures behind this approach. There were those who were far more invested in introspection and stressed self-reformation. These ideas can be seen in Ralph Waldo Emerson (d. 1882), and in Henry David Thoreau (d. 1862), the poet, philosopher, and abolitionist known for his work *Walden*.¹⁷⁶ In Thoreau’s *Walden*, we see him removed from society living in a cabin in the woods in search of the meaning of life. He retreated to Walden Pond for two years, two months, and two days.¹⁷⁷ He emphasized the solitary, contemplative life while in communion with nature. The link between European Romantics and American Transcendentalists, however, is most evident in the figure of Emerson.

The Concordians and the Sufis: Emerson, Whitman, and Hafiz

Emerson met Coleridge, a leading English poet of the Romantic movement in England, before he died. Reputedly, during this visit, Emerson purchased a copy of the Qur’an. The German Romantic influence of Hammer-Purgstall was also crucial for Emerson. He acquired Hammer-Purgstall’s German translations of the *Divan* in April 1846. Emerson began to translate the texts into English five months later, with poems such as “From the Persian Hafiz” and “Ghaselle: From the Persian of Hafiz,” both of which were published in 1847.¹⁷⁸ Emerson was also influenced by the poems of Sa’di and eventually Khayyam, but it was the poetry of Hafiz that had the greatest impact on his own poems. Of Sa’di, Emerson writes that he “speaks to all nations, and like Homer, Shakespeare, Cervantes, and Montaigne, is perpetually modern” and viewed the *Gulistan* as a Bible of the world, with “universality of moral law.”¹⁷⁹ In a lecture given by Emerson in 1854 entitled “Poetry and English Poetry,” he lists five paradigmatic poets: Homer, Milton, Hafiz, Hibert, and Wordsworth.¹⁸⁰

Emerson began to share his translations among his fellow Concordians, who were also wanting to read more Sufi poetry.¹⁸¹ Emerson seems to have known about Hafiz well before this, however. In his essay “History” (1841), Emerson mentions Hafiz for the first time. This early encounter may have been due to his reading of Goethe’s *West-östlicher Divan* (1819).¹⁸² Goethe’s and Emerson’s encounters with Hafiz closely “parallel” one another.¹⁸³ Where Goethe found a “kindred spirit”

in Hafiz, Emerson followed suit, “enthusiastically” translating the Persian poet.¹⁸⁴ Both also adopted “similar stances toward the religious and esoteric dimension of Hafiz’s work.”¹⁸⁵ Emerson translated over seven hundred lines of Persian poetry, most of which were by Hafiz. He would then publish “Persian Poetry” in *The Atlantic Monthly* in 1858, writing:

Hafiz is the prince of Persian poets, and in his extraordinary gifts adds to some of the attributes of Pindar, Anacreon, Horace and Burns, the insight of a mystic, that sometimes affords a deeper glance at Nature than belongs to either of these bards. He accosts all topics with an easy audacity.¹⁸⁶

Like the early translators, Emerson compares Hafiz to the likes of Anacreon, while stressing the mystic’s ability to offer deeper knowledge of nature, which for Transcendentalists was a manifestation, if not a reflection, of God. In Emerson’s essay on *Nature* (1849), he calls for solitude but also the need to look to the stars: “But if man would be alone, let him look at the stars. The rays that come from those heavenly worlds, will separate between him and what he touches.”¹⁸⁷ These themes are found not only in Emerson but also in works by his students such as Thoreau and Walt Whitman (d. 1892), who emphasize the soul of the human being as the site of spiritual encounter (“over-soul” or “private-man”), notions which also tie to themes found in Sufism, such as the *insan al-kamil* or the perfected human being, where the human being is the microcosm of the cosmic macrocosm.

Emerson was also drawn to the themes stressed by Hafiz’s poetry:

Hafiz praises wine, roses, maidens, boys, birds, mornings and music, to give vent to his immense hilarity and sympathy with every form of beauty and joy; and lays the emphasis on these to mark his scorn of sanctimony and base prudence.¹⁸⁸

Again, as noted with Goethe, and even Brown, Emerson was moved by the themes represented in Hafiz’s poetry, but also the notion of “beauty and joy,” which appealed to the Transcendentalist goal of seeking the emotions of the heart and feeding the soul. Emerson adds of Hafiz:

The other merit of Hafiz is his intellectual liberty, which is a certificate of profound thought. We accept the religions and politics into which we fall, and it is only a few delicate spirits who are sufficient to see that the whole web of convention is the imbecility of those whom it entangles, – that the mind suffers no religion and no empire but its own. It indicates this respect to absolute truth by the use it makes of the symbols that are most stable and reverend, and therefore is always provoking the accusation of irreligion.¹⁸⁹

Here Emerson calls attention to Hafiz’s ability to transcend the “imbecility” of conventions, such as religion and politics; it is Hafiz’s “irreligion” that makes him a “reverend” and “stable” figure of emulation. The appeal of Hafiz is precisely due

to his religious ambiguity, one that has been noted from early Orientalists to the Transcendentalists:

Scholars and critical interpreters, including translators, tend to fix Hafiz along a spectrum that ranges from a worldly savant with a savage distrust of religiosity on the one side, and a dedicated Sufi writing esoteric verses requiring an initiated understanding on the other.¹⁹⁰

This pattern of interpretation was evident in Hammer-Purgstall, who was Christian but also religiously fluid, as was Goethe. Both sought for a truth beyond religious confines, and both found the same irreligious affinity with Hafiz, one removed from Islam and Christianity, reflecting a universal truth. Their approach is one that was again shared by Emerson in his reading of Hafiz. From 1864 to the end of his life, Emerson maintained his readership in Hindu philosophy, Neoplatonism, Oriental mysticism, and Persian poetry. Among these topics, Hafiz remained one of his favorite figures, citing his “cheerfulness” even in his last journal entries and letters.¹⁹¹

The American Transcendentalists’ exposure to Sufi poetry was not limited solely to poetry of Persian Hafiz. In his *Leaves of Grass* (1855), Whitman uses the love motif found in Hafiz, the same motif that appealed to figures like Emerson and others before him. However, more than Hafiz, it is Rumi’s voice that abounds in Whitman’s poems. In “A Persian Lesson,” which was originally titled “A Sufi Lesson,” Whitman uses the “greybeard Sufi” Rumi to speak for him and his longing for the divine:

Finally my children, to envelop each word, each Part of the rest,
Allah is all, all – is immanent in every life and object
May-be at many and many-a-more removes – yet Allah,
Allah, Allah is there.¹⁹²

Whitman’s mysticism was influenced by Rumi’s own worldview, which is evident when comparing Whitman and Rumi’s poetry:

Whitman: 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

Rumi: The motion of every atom is towards its origin;
A man comes to be the thing on which he is bent.
By the attraction of the fondness and yearning, the soul and the heart
Assume the qualities of the Beloved, who is the Soul of souls.¹⁹³

Here in the first stanza, by Whitman, it is the centrality of the “atom,” as a site of human origins that is stressed, a theme found in Rumi’s poem. The *Mathnawi* of Rumi was gaining attention as some of its couplets were being translated. The

Mathnawi is a vast compendium of poems, six books in total, which had not been fully translated at this time. For Muslims, the *Mathnawi* is often referred to as the “Qur’an in Persian.” This particular text gained more attention in the 20th century, the topic of [Chapter 5](#). In the 19th century, figures such as the Reverend Edward B. Cowell (d. 1903), English translator of Hafiz and Professor of Sanskrit at Cambridge, also translated portions of Rumi’s *Mathnawi*. Cowell’s “The Mesnavi of Jelaleddin Rumi” appeared in the London-based *The Gentleman’s Magazine* in 1848.

Cowell also translated Khayyam, the Persian poet Qasim-i Anwar (d. 1433), along with Buddhist *Mayahana* texts. Cowell taught Persian to Edward Fitzgerald (d. 1883), whose translation of Khayyam’s poems would become more popular than Hafiz. Initially, the poem was privately published, just 250 copies in 1859, but sales had increased by the 1880s and onwards.¹⁹⁴ Cowell had issues with some of Khayyam’s poetry, and consequently was fonder of Rumi.¹⁹⁵ The extent of Khayyam’s influence can be seen in Mark Twain (d. 1910) (also known as Samuel L. Clemens), F. Scott Fitzgerald (d. 1940), T. S. Eliot (d. 1965), and Ezra Pound (d. 1972) – the latter named his son Omar Shakespeare Pound. In writing about Fitzgerald’s translation of Khayyam, Yohannan writes, “In its less than one-hundred year history it has achieved a greater fame for Khayyam than his original verses were able to do in over eight hundred years.”¹⁹⁶ This interest in Khayyam led to the formation of Omar Khayyam Clubs of England and America, who endorsed goods such as chocolates, cigarettes, and tobacco, while numerous illuminated versions of Fitzgerald’s translations of Khayyam also came into print.¹⁹⁷ Khayyam’s poetry completely permeated popular culture and the imagination – every reader saw Khayyam’s poetry as what they sought, be it Sufism, Arab philosophy, or even “hedonism.”¹⁹⁸

Students of Emerson, like Whitman, continued to read and translate other poets of the East, precisely because of the shared appeal of universalism found in Sufi and Islamic poetry. Sufi literary traditions became “entrenched” in the American literary and spiritual milieu, a reality which would continue into the 20th and 21st centuries with the explosion of interest in Rumi’s poetry.¹⁹⁹ William Rounseville Alger (d. 1905) from Boston, Massachusetts, in his *The Poetry of the East* (1856) is another example of an American Unitarian minister with interest in religions of the Orient, including Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, and Sufism. He was influenced by the translations of Sufi poetry from Jones, Hammer-Purgstall, and Goethe.²⁰⁰ He includes in his compendium of Oriental poems those of Firdusi, Hafiz, Sa’di, who he writes are “as familiar on the banks of the Rhine and beneath the lindens of Vienna, as they are ... amidst the kiosks of Shiraz.”²⁰¹ He refers to the works of Malcolm’s *History of Persia* and the Protestant theologian August Tholuck’s (d. 1877) work on Sufism in his compendium of the poetry of the East. For Alger:

The Sufis are a sect of meditative devotees, whose absorption in spiritual contemplations and hallowed raptures is unparalleled, whose piety penetrates to a depth where the mind gropingly staggers among the bottomless roots of being, in mazes of wonder and delight, and reaches to a height where the

soul loses itself among the roofless immensities of glory in a bedazzled and boundless ecstasy.²⁰²

Alger's text showcases for us that by the mid-19th century, these prominent Sufi texts, especially poetry, were ubiquitous in the American spiritual circuit, particularly in Boston. For them, the female Sufi personality Rabi'a was known as a "celebrated Mohammedan saint," and was an exemplar of ecstatic love in Sufism. But so is "Dschelaleddi Rumi" or Jalaluddin Rumi, the universally acknowledged "head and master" and the "greatest mystic poet of the whole Orient, the oracle of the devotees, the nightingale of the contemplative life, the lawgiver in piety, the founder of the principal order of Dervishes, and author of the *Mesnavi*."²⁰³ Alger goes on to introduce the "*Mesnavi*," writing that "From the banks of the Ganges to the Bosphorus it is the hand-book of all Sufis, the lawbook and ritual of all the mystics."²⁰⁴ In a collection that includes titles such as "Goethe's West-Oestlicher Diwan," "The Ramayana," "The Shah Nameh of Firdousi," and many more, the Sufis (and Rumi in particular) receive much attention.²⁰⁵ In comparing the works of Oriental poetry and the poetry of the translators from whom he is borrowing, Alger writes that "the imaginations of the two countries are, after all, not so different as has been supposed."²⁰⁶ Alger continues:

During the past year the United States government has imported from Palestine several specimens of a tree called the Carob, or St. John's Bread [locust bean], and employed skillful arboriculturists to try and see if it cannot be made to grow and yield fruit, even in a clime and air so remote from its own ... Who knows but the effort may be successful, and lead to the transplantation and acclimation in America of hundreds of the richest indigenous growths of Asia? And so might the present humble work – seeking to import into the West, and exhibit there, some specimens of the Thought, Sentiment, and Fancy of the East – be but a forerunner of many abler works in the same direction, which shall be worthier representations, in our English speech, of that wonderful Oriental poetry, whose most characteristic treasures are as sparkling with the splendor of imaginative genius, and as odorous with the fragrance of exquisite sensibility, as though they had been "strained through starry strata and the musky loam of Paradise!"²⁰⁷

Conclusion

Contemporary Western fascination with Sufism has significant historical precedent, which extends as far back as the 13th and 14th centuries. From Ramon Llull's "Christian Sufism" to early travelogues of diplomats and linguists in Ottoman Turkey, the European encounter with Sufism is deeply rooted. First, there is a textual transmission, often mediated by Neoplatonic traditions, and proselytization efforts in which Christians were engaging with Islamic scholarship of the Qur'an, Arab philosophy, theology, and Sufism. These textual exchanges, such as with Llull,

resulted in an impact on Lull's own framing of Christianity, including meditative practices on the names of God which he included in his treatise. While other early European travelers under Ottoman rule such as the Dominican friar George of Hungary also engaged with Sufism, sometimes they were forced to do so. However, most were drawn to the musical traditions, especially the dancing performed by the dervishes. Their beauty of movement and incantations (*dhikr*) drew wide attention among musicologists and artists. Paintings and renditions of these curious dancers appeared throughout Europe, in plays and novels.

These early instances of exchanges only continued with the development of Orientalist scholarship, particularly as it emerged with Jones. His early translations of texts from Eastern religious traditions, including Sufi ones, showed an inclination toward Persian texts. Jones's reading of the Persian text *Dabistan* and other poetry, especially that of Hafiz, also led him to frame Sufism as a phenomenon outside of traditional and legalistic Islam. It was a universal tradition, but it was also associated with Persian and Turkish cultures, and was not an Arab one. Aside from the literary transmission that was taking place by Orientalist scholars, travelogues of Persia and Egypt, such as by Malcolm and Lane, continued to supplement the textual exchange with mystifying renditions of curious "Soofees" who wandered in woollen robes with begging bowls, and lived antinomian existences defying social and religious norms. These two extremes – one of Sufi poetry as attractive and universal, and the other of Sufis as wild wandering mendicants who employed austere practices (e.g., snake handling) – became the two poles that represented Sufism to non-Muslim Europeans and Americans.

The reception of Sufi poetry, though, had a seminal influence on Romantic figures, such as Goethe, and among the Transcendentalists, including Emerson and Whitman. The Sufi poetry of Hafiz, Khayyam, and Sa'di was not only being translated but also deeply resonated with European and American translators. Goethe proved to be a unique exception, however, in the type of engagement he had with Sufism. His relationship with Islam and Sufism was interrelated, but his relationship with Islam is not one that is often recalled in the history of these civilizational encounters. As Sufi poetry made its way into American societies, names such as Hafiz regularly appeared in popular Romantic and Transcendentalist literature. The ideals of transgressing religions, and the seeking of a deeply personal experience of the divine, appealed to figures like Emerson who were seeking to reform Christianity in the American landscape. As Alger's final quote in this chapter indicates, Oriental poetry, which included Sufi poetry, was fully imported into the Western intellectual, spiritual, and popular landscape. It had preceded the arrival of Sufi teachers from the East and even Sufi-Muslim immigrants who came to America in the early 20th century. These literary transmissions of Sufism were foundational to the development of European and American spiritualities, but it was a Sufism that was not Islamic in nature. It was a universalistic, pantheistic, esoteric, and individualistic Sufism, which was primarily mediated by poetry. The latter transmission of Sufis through literary traditions also meant that aspects of Sufism – such as music, dance, and dervishes – seeped into the popular culture and imagination.

Dervishes were on stages in Germany and France, and appeared in novels by writers such as Oscar Wilde (d. 1900). Clubs that formed around these figures, such as that of Khayyam, also used their organizations to endorse goods, like chocolates and tobacco. In many ways, the stage was set for what would ultimately unfold in the 20th and 21st centuries. While Hafiz and Khayyam were the leading figures of this era, Alger, who is quoted at the end of this chapter, pointed to Rumi as the next Sufi figure to rise to prominence. Rumi would not only take Sufi poetry in the West to new heights, but in so doing, he would pervade all aspects of popular culture, from the Hollywood big screen to social media forums, with millions of followers in tow.

Notes

- 1 Carl Ernst, *Sufism: An Introduction to the Mystical Tradition of Islam* (Boston, MA: Shambala Publications, 1997), xvii.
- 2 Ibid., 1.
- 3 Algis Uždavinys, "Sufism in the Light of Orientalism," *Acta Orientalia Vilnensia* 6, no. 2 (2005): 114.
- 4 Ibid.
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 Alexander Knysh, *Islam in Historical Perspective* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 356. For more, please see Maya Shatzmiller, ed., *Crusaders and Muslims in Twelfth-Century Syria* (Leiden: Brill, 1993).
- 7 For more on this, see Kecia Ali, *The Lives of Muhammad* (Boston, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016).
- 8 Ziad Elmarsafy, *The Enlightenment Qur'an: The Politics of Translation and the Construction of Islam* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2009), 1.
- 9 Ibid., 3.
- 10 In his *Islam and the Divine Comedy* (1926), Miguel Asin Palacios examines the symbolic similarities between Ibn al-'Arabi and Dante, suggesting the influence the former had on the latter.
- 11 Ali, *The Lives of Muhammad*.
- 12 Elmarsafy, *The Enlightenment Qur'an*, 5.
- 13 Exemplary here are the works of the famed philosopher and physician, Avicenna (Ibn Sina) (d. 1037). His treatises on healing and medicine, such as *The Canon of Medicine*, which includes instructions for physicians on treating patients, were regularly translated and consulted by Christian monks in monasteries and continue to have traction in the medical world today.
- 14 José Bellver, "Mirroring the Islamic Tradition of the Names of God in Christianity: Ramon Llull's *Cent Noms de Déu* as a Christian Qur'an," *Intellectual History of the Islamicate World* 2 (2014): 287–304.
- 15 Ramon Llull and Noel Fallows, *The Book of the Order of Chivalry*, new ed. (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell & Brewer, 2013), 1.
- 16 Ibid., 2.
- 17 Ibid., 10.
- 18 Ramon Llull, *The Book of the Lover and Beloved*, trans. Allison E. Peers (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1923), 8.
- 19 Bellver, "Mirroring the Islamic Tradition of the Names of God in Christianity," 291.
- 20 Llull and Fallows, *The Book of the Order of Chivalry*, 1.
- 21 A. Mayer, "Ramon Llull and the Indispensable Dialogue," *Quaderns de la Mediterrània* 14 (2010): 53–59.

- 22 Ibid., 55.
- 23 Ibid.
- 24 Fatiha Beniabbah, "The Idea of Human Unity in Ibn Arabi and Ramon Llull," *Quaderns de la Mediterrània* 14 (2010): 32.
- 25 Llull, *Lover and Beloved*, 18.
- 26 Lola Badia, Joan Santanach, and Albert Soler, *Ramon Llull as a Vernacular Writer: Communicating a New Kind of Knowledge*, new ed. (Suffolk: Boydell & Brewer, 2016), 296.
- 27 Bellver, "Mirroring the Islamic Tradition of the Names of God in Christianity," 292.
- 28 Ibid., 294.
- 29 Ibid.
- 30 Badia, Santanach, and Soler, *Ramon Llull as a Vernacular Writer*, 296–297.
- 31 Bellver, "Mirroring the Islamic Tradition of the Names of God in Christianity," 294.
- 32 Beniabbah, "The Idea of Human Unity in Ibn Arabi and Ramon Llull," 32.
- 33 Bellver, "Mirroring the Islamic Tradition of the Names of God in Christianity," 290.
- 34 Ibid., 291.
- 35 Beniabbah, "The Idea of Human Unity in Ibn Arabi and Ramon Llull"; Bellver, "Mirroring the Islamic Tradition of the Names of God in Christianity."
- 36 Ibid.
- 37 Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* (Chapel Hill, NC: North Carolina Press, 1975), 7.
- 38 William Rory Dickson, *Between Transformation and Tradition: Living Sufism in North America* (New York: SUNY, 2015), 67.
- 39 Ibid., 68. For more on these transmissions, please see also Mark Sedgwick, *Western Sufism: From the Abbassids to the New Age* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).
- 40 Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, 7. Alexander Knysh in *Islamic Mysticism: A Short History* (Leiden: Brill, 2000) has suggested that the imagery of the torch and pitcher of water was often noted in early French stories, some to the 14th century, while another was by the French Bishop Jean-Pierre Camus (1582–1653) in his book published in 1961, entitled, *La Caritee ou le purtrait de ay vraye charite historie tiree de la vie de Saint-Louis* (Paris, 1641).
- 41 Carl W. Ernst, "Between Orientalism and Fundamentalism: Problematizing the Teaching of Sufism" in *Teaching Islam*, ed. Brannon M. Wheeler (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 115; Sedgwick, *Western Sufism*, 57.
- 42 Sedgwick, *Western Sufism*, 50–68; Ernst, "Between Orientalism and Fundamentalism," 115. These premodern examples of non-Muslims' experience with Sufism can also be found in South Asia, especially with the Chishti Order, particularly because of interaction with a living Sufi teacher or saint. Sikhism, the tradition that emerged with the figure of Guru Nanak (d. 1539), is another example of the degree to which Sufism in South Asia intermingled with Bhakti traditions of Hinduism and Islam. The Sikh sacred text, *Guru Granth Sahib*, includes within it songs (*ragas*) from the gurus that led the community after the first guru, Guru Nanak, but it also includes Sufi poetry. The 15th-century poet and mystic Kabir (d. 1518) is another example of the interface of Hindu and Muslim traditions of South Asia. Kabir was an antinomian figure. Beyond knowing that he was from Varanasi and born sometime in the 15th century into a family of weavers, much of his biography is hagiographic. He has been claimed by Muslims, Sikhs, and Hindus. Much of what is known about him has been passed down via written compilations of his oral poems, which encourage all to be seekers of truth. Most have also experienced Kabir in the Sikh sacred text known as the *Adi Granth*, where some of Kabir's teachings are also included.
- 43 Ibid.
- 44 Luther described the religion of Muhammad as a "doctrine of works and the sword," suggesting that "with lies," Muhammad "kills souls and murders bodies," Sarah Henrich and James L. Boyce, "Martin Luther – Translations of Two Prefaces on Islam," *Word & World* 16, no. 2 (1996): 254.

- 45 Sedgwick, *Western Sufism*, 71.
- 46 Ibid.
- 47 Ibid.
- 48 Giovanni de Zorzi, "In Constantinople among Music and Dervishes: Reports by European Travelers from the Sixteenth Century to the Eighteenth Century," *Mawlana Rumi Review* 6 (2015): 43.
- 49 G. Postel, quoted in Zorzi, "In Constantinople among Music and Dervishes," 37.
- 50 Pietro della Valle, quoted in Zorzi, "In Constantinople among Music and Dervishes," 39.
- 51 Charles Ferriol, quoted in Zorzi, "In Constantinople among Music and Dervishes," 54.
- 52 Zorzi, "In Constantinople among Music and Dervishes," 60.
- 53 Torderini, quoted in Zorzi, "In Constantinople among Music and Dervishes," 61–62.
- 54 Ibid., 65.
- 55 Sedgwick, *Western Sufism*, 115.
- 56 Mehdi Aminrazavi, "Introduction," in *Sufism and American Literary Masters* (New York: SUNY, 2014), 1.
- 57 Ibid.
- 58 John D. Yohannan, "The Persian Poetry Fad in England, 1770–1825," *Comparative Literature* 4, no. 2 (1952): 137.
- 59 Samar Attar, *Borrowed Imagination: The British Romantics and Their Arabic-Islamic Sources* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2014).
- 60 A. J. Arberry, *Oriental Essays: Portraits of Seven Scholars* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1960), 11, 14.
- 61 Ibid., 14.
- 62 Yohannan, "The Persian Poetry Fad in England," 138.
- 63 Ibid., 139.
- 64 Quoted in Yohannan, "The Persian Poetry Fad in England," 141.
- 65 Ibid., 143.
- 66 Ibid.
- 67 John D. Yohannan, ed., *A Treasury of Asian Literature* (New York: The John Day Company, 1956), 10.
- 68 Quoted in Yohannan, "The Persian Poetry Fad in England," 137.
- 69 Tomoko Masuzawa, *The Invention of World Religions: Or How European Universalism was Preserved in the Language of Pluralism* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 150.
- 70 Dickson, *Living Sufism in North America*, 36.
- 71 Quoted in Dickson, *Living Sufism in North America*, 37.
- 72 For a thorough discussion of these trends, please see Sedgwick, *Western Sufism*.
- 73 H. Wilberforce Clarke, trans. *The Dīwān-i-Hāfiz* (Bethesda, MD: Iranbooks, 1998), xii.
- 74 Ibid., 5.
- 75 Quoted in Garland Cannon, ed., *The Letters of Sir William Jones, Vol. 1* (Oxford: Oxford at the Clarendon Press; London: Oxford University Press, 1970).
- 76 Anacreon was a Greek poet who lived from ca. 582 – ca. 485 BCE. Yohannan, "The Persian Poetry Fad in England," 143.
- 77 This text contains over eight pages of names of "subscribers." It also includes a letter of dedication to "His Grace the Duke of Richmand, Master of General of Ordnance," in his preface. Nott further acknowledges the translation efforts of Count Revifki, Mr. Richardson, and Sir William Jones. He adds, "We would alike recommend a more intimate acquaintance with the Persian tongue. And we lament whilst years are bestowed in acquiring an insight into the Greek and Roman authors." John Nott, *Select Odes, From the Persian Poet Hafez* (London: T. Cadell. 1777), v.
- 78 Nott's texts include the Persian original (in Persian script), English transliteration, and Nott's own translation, with occasional footnotes. Nott, *Select Odes*, ix.
- 79 Yohannan, "The Persian Poetry Fad in England," 144.
- 80 Ibid., 143.

- 81 Jones, quoted in Yohannan, "The Persian Poetry Fad in England," 142.
- 82 Sedgwick, *Western Sufism*, 111; Carl W. Ernst, "The Dabistan and Orientalist Views of Sufism," paper presentation, "Sufism East and West: Mystical Islam and Cross-Cultural Exchange between the West and the Muslim World," International Workshop in Memory of Professor Annemarie Schimmel, Erfurt University, Erfurt, Germany, April 15–17, 2016). Thank you to Professor Carl W. Ernst for sharing this paper with us.
- 83 Sedgwick, *Western Sufism*, 110.
- 84 Jack Harrington, ed., *Sir John Malcolm and the Creation of British India* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 1.
- 85 Ibid., i.
- 86 John Malcolm, *Sketch of the Political History of India from 1784 to 1823* (London: John Murray, Albemarle-Street, 1811).
- 87 Ibid.
- 88 John Malcolm, *The History of Persia from the Most Early Period to the Present Time* (Delhi: Gyan Books, 1815), 423.
- 89 Ibid.
- 90 Ibid., 422.
- 91 Ibid., 540.
- 92 Ibid.
- 93 Ibid., 541.
- 94 Ibid.
- 95 Shahbuddin Suhrawardi, *A Dervish Textbook: From the 'Awarifu-l-Ma'Arif*, trans. H. Wilberforce Clarke (London: Octagon Press, 1990), 1.
- 96 Ibid.
- 97 Ibid.
- 98 Paul Kane, "Emerson and Hafiz: The Figure of the Religious Poet," *Religion & Literature* 41, no. 1 (2009): 115.
- 99 Ibid.
- 100 Arberry, *Oriental Essays*, 87.
- 101 Ibid., 88–89.
- 102 Quoted in Arberry, *Oriental Essays*, 89–90.
- 103 Ibid., 94.
- 104 Ibid., 95.
- 105 Ernst, *Sufism*, 3.
- 106 Ibid.
- 107 Ibid.
- 108 Ibid.
- 109 Mark Pattison and Alexander Pope, eds., *Essay on Man*, 6th ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1881), 38.
- 110 Ernst, *Sufism*, 3–4.
- 111 John P. Brown, *The Darvishes or Oriental Spiritualism* (Haarlem, Holland: Grafische Industrie, 1868), v.
- 112 Ibid.
- 113 Ibid.
- 114 Ibid.
- 115 Ibid., 8.
- 116 Ibid., 310, 379, 119.
- 117 Brown, *Darvishes*, 116–119.
- 118 Lane, quoted in Brown, *Darvishes*, 244.
- 119 Ibid., 245.
- 120 Ibid.
- 121 Arabic term for birthday. Sufis usually honor the birthdays of Prophet Muhammad and Sufi saints. This was especially the case in places such as Egypt.
- 122 Ernst, *Sufism*, 5.

- 123 Ibid., 3–4.
- 124 Mohammed Sharafuddin, *Islam and Romantic Orientalism: Literary Encounters with the Orient* (London; New York: I.B. Tauris, 1996), xvii.
- 125 Ibid.
- 126 Ibid., xxi.
- 127 Ibn Tufayl's novel, *Hayy Ibn Yaqzan*, published in 1160/1170, was translated from Arabic into Hebrew in 1349, then into Latin by Pico della Mirandola. It would go on to be translated into English, Dutch, German, and other European languages. For more, please see Samar Attar's study, *Borrowed Imagination*.
- 128 Attar, *Borrowed Imagination*, xvi.
- 129 Ibid.
- 130 Yohannan, *A Treasury of Asian Literature*, 343.
- 131 Lewis Lewisohn, "English Romantics and Persian Sufi Poets: A Wellspring of Inspiration for American Transcendentalists," in *Sufism and American Literary Masters*, ed. Mehdi Aminrazavi (New York: SUNY, 2014), 16.
- 132 Lewisohn, "English Romantics and Persian Sufi Poets," 17. For more on this, please see also Sedgwick, *Western Sufism*.
- 133 Lewisohn, "English Romantics and Persian Sufi Poets," 18.
- 134 Ibid., 16.
- 135 Ibid., 29.
- 136 Ibid.
- 137 Attar, *Borrowed Imagination*, 6.
- 138 Quoted in Attar, *Borrowed Imagination*, 14.
- 139 Ibid., 112.
- 140 Andrew Warren, *The Orient and the Young Romantics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 3.
- 141 Ibid.
- 142 Jeffrey Einboden, *Islam and Romanticism: Muslim Currents from Goethe to Emerson* (London: Oneworld Publications, 2014), 7.
- 143 Ibid., 47.
- 144 Ibid., 50.
- 145 Ibid.
- 146 Ibid., 51.
- 147 Ibid.
- 148 Ibid., 53–54.
- 149 Ibid., 56.
- 150 Quoted in Einboden, *Islam and Romanticism*, 49.
- 151 Ibid., 50.
- 152 Ibid., 47.
- 153 Ibid.
- 154 Quoted Einboden, *Islam and Romanticism*, 48.
- 155 Ibid., 50.
- 156 Ibid., 18. Goethe's *Mahomet* is an example of what Einboden calls "transnational translations": it is "a German rendition of a French drama with an Arabian setting." See Einboden, *Islam and Romanticism*, 18.
- 157 Goethe and Napoleon met each other on October 2, 1808, and Napoleon even took some of Goethe's early fiction with him as he entered Muslim lands. See Einboden, *Islam and Romanticism*, 21.
- 158 Ibid., 59.
- 159 Ibid., 60.
- 160 Ibid., 69.
- 161 Quoted in Einboden, *Islam and Romanticism*, 70–71.
- 162 Ibid., 71.
- 163 Ibid., 72.
- 164 Ibid.

- 165 Ibid., 75.
- 166 Elmarsafy, *The Enlightenment Qur'an*, ii.
- 167 Einboden, *Islam and Romanticism*, 77.
- 168 Quoted in Einboden, *Islam and Romanticism*, 78.
- 169 Katharina Mommsen, *Goethe and the Poets of Arabia*, trans. Michael M. Metzger (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2014), xi.
- 170 Quoted in Attar, *Borrowed Imagination*, 2014.
- 171 Ibid.
- 172 Yohannan, *A Treasury of Asian Literature*, 343.
- 173 Aminrazavi, "Introduction," 4.
- 174 Ibid.
- 175 Ibid.
- 176 Henry David Thoreau, *Walden; or, Life in the Woods* (Boston, MA: Ticknor and Fields, 1854).
- 177 Many spiritual seekers of the 1960s, who will be discussed in [Chapter 5](#), were reading Thoreau's *Civil Disobedience* at the time of the counterculture movement and were influenced by his ideas of nature.
- 178 Kane, "Emerson and Hafiz," 113.
- 179 Yohannan, *A Treasury of Asian Literature*, 10.
- 180 Kane, "Emerson and Hafiz."
- 181 Aminrazavi, "Introduction," 4.
- 182 Kane, "Emerson and Hafiz," 113.
- 183 Ibid., 114.
- 184 Ibid.
- 185 Ibid.
- 186 Ibid., 118.
- 187 Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Nature* (Boston, MA; Cambridge: James Munroe & Company, 1849), 5.
- 188 Ralph Waldo Emerson, *The Atlantic Monthly: A Magazine of Literature, Art, and Politics* (Boston, MA: Phillips, Sampson, and Company, 1858), 728.
- 189 Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Works* (London; New York: George Routledge and Sons, 1883), 482.
- 190 Kane, "Emerson and Hafiz," 115.
- 191 Mansur Ekhtiyar, "Emerson's Interest in Persian Mysticism," in *Sufism and Literary Masters in America*, ed. Medhi Aminrazavi (New York: SUNY, 2014), 69.
- 192 Quoted in Ghulam M. Fayz, "Images of the Divine in Rumi and Whitman," *Comparative Literature Studies* 17, no. 1 (1980): 35.
- 193 Ibid.
- 194 Sedgwick, *Western Sufism*, 122.
- 195 Yohannan, *A Treasury of Asian Literature*, 21–22.
- 196 Ibid., 285.
- 197 Reportedly, one of the more expensive illuminated versions of Khayyam's poetry in translation (valued at an estimated £1,000) went down with the Titanic in 1912. Sedgwick, *Western Sufism*, 122.
- 198 Sedgwick, *Western Sufism*, 123.
- 199 Aminrazavi, "Introduction," 3.
- 200 William Rounseville Alger, *The Poetry of the East* (Boston, MA: Whittemore, Niles, and Hall, 1856).
- 201 Ibid., 12.
- 202 Ibid., 64.
- 203 Ibid., 66.
- 204 Ibid.
- 205 Ibid.
- 206 Ibid., 19.
- 207 Ibid., 92.

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