

Exploring Melancholy

(Place to Place)

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Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirement of the
Degree of Master of Philosophy, June 2015

Acknowledgement

“To my Mother and Father, thank you for everything you have done, from loving me unconditionally to raising me in a stable household”.

"I would like to send a well-deserved thank you to my Personal Tutor Professor Erik Knudsen, my Supervisors Dr Ben Halligan and Mr Jonathan Carson and also Mr Sean Gregory as the proof-reader in The University of Salford . Thank you for your patience, faith and support".

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Abstract

This study presented here is built on practice-based research into photographic images of melancholic landscapes. According to Stedman et al. (2004), few photographers are interested in examining the different meanings of the settings in their work. This wider field of research will address how setting effects meaning in my work. The aim of this research is to explore the idea of melancholy through the study and practice of landscape photographic imagery. Moreover, sometimes melancholy may be understood in relation to unhappiness and pain; nevertheless, it usually accompanies happiness. The photographs will be shaped by the viewpoint of the researcher and the influence of ideas about, for example, melancholy, the Sublime and nostalgia. Those kinds of emotions, which are rarely similar to unhappiness, nonetheless are more advanced and refer to some level of enjoyment. In addition, on this level of melancholy, positive motivation and pleasure will be more deliberate. This study is limited to a certain cultural, historical context, especially with regard to particular fine artists and poets, and also my emotional response, as a self-reflexive person, to the body of work that I have produced in the content of my findings regarding the concept of melancholy. This study adopts an innovative approach to the historical and aesthetic language of melancholy. In terms of symbols, cultural knowledge in relation to the meaning of melancholy in both Iran and the UK is reflected. Theoretical and practical perspectives are introduced, in order to gain an understanding of the way in which the language of images and culture is similarly or differently implied. The range covers the provision of previous historical contexts, myths, poems and paintings.

In practice, photographs are considered to be witnesses that offer descriptive evidence and ultimately are based on my opinion and my understanding of melancholy and to some extent the Sublime and nostalgia. In my literature review, I focus on definitions of melancholy, nostalgia and the Sublime and their relationships to each other, according to theorists such as Brady and Haapala (2003), Burton (1676), Cassagnere (2006), Soufas (1993), Rubenstein (2001), Sedikides et al. (2008), Wells (2000, 2011), Riding (2010), Meredith (1987), Kant (1790), Holly (2007), Sontag (1979, 2003), Kristeva (1980, 1989), Berger (1972), Barthes (1957, 1970,

1972), Ashfield and de Bolla (1996) and Duffy and Howell (2011). Hence, I reviewed some historical texts, with regards to poets such as Khayyam (1120 A.C.E), Saadi (1258), Wordsworth (1793, 1798, 1833, 1800) and Keats (1817, 1820), and art works such as the paintings of Caspar David Friedrich (1821, 1920), John Constable (1810, 1821), and J.M.W. Turner (1832, 1835, 1838).

As for the methodology, this study is based on photography and paintings. The method I have used is qualitative; the nature of my approach is A/r/tography, which for Sullivan (2010: 59) is “a creation of new relationships among theories, ideas, forms, and contexts as assumptions about concepts, and categories that tend to fix meanings are brought into question”. In relation to my research practice, based on A/r/tography, some ideas about melancholy by artists should be considered, as well as theoretical understandings and their practical work through melancholic arts. Consequently, I have decided to write in the first person, an active voice, in order to communicate self-awareness. For this purpose, I have also decided to integrate self-evaluation and self-reflection into this research. On the whole, melancholy is recognised as an action of love by Sufism, in Eastern countries, whereas it can be understood as a feeling of love and misery according to some philosophical theories in Western culture. It can be concluded that melancholy in Persian culture contains more happiness than that in Western culture. In addition, a book of 84 landscape photographic images, and writing in the region of 20,000 words, with a 70/30 split and balance, have been submitted.

12% (Some Notes on Melancholy) +

8% (Methodology)

6% (On Visualising Melancholy)

4% (Conclusion)

30% Writings

Section 1

Introduction

The study is built on practice-based research into melancholic landscape photography and is partly linked to the subject of my Master's dissertation, which was the implementation of Eco-tourism in the environment. In this earlier research, it was suggested that love of the environment, can potentially bring and offer benefits to local residents and stakeholders. This research was concerned with recording images of places, would be suitable for Eco-tourism, which would be beneficial to and respectful of the communities and ecosystems existing in them. The first idea arose from wishing to protect the environment by showing the beauty of the pastoral landscape in various settings and locations, such as some country parks located in Manchester areas in England, some parts of Lagos in Portugal, Tehran and Saveh areas in Iran. Therefore, I have intended to focus on capturing images and research about melancholic landscapes photographic image including some parts of nature especially England and my homeland Iran and emphasising my emotional response to pastoral landscape. Sometimes, my interpretation of the images is made through the lens, which could be different from using other media. Sometimes, some of the images that are taken are similar to other images, such as previous aesthetic paintings. Nevertheless, one point should be noted here: According to Kozloff (1987:236) in *Photography And Fascination*, "a main distinction between a painting and photograph is that the painting alludes to its content, whereas the photograph summons it". Moreover, my photographic landscape images should indicate that these images will be viewed as an aspect of realism in some cases.

I have also focused on semiotic analysis of different elements of nature. In response to my research question, I ask: In what ways can the notion of melancholy be utilised in both the conception and experience of photographic images of landscape? I need to focus on the analysis of visual representations, such as poems, paintings and photographs, and analyse them in the context of cultural and historical texts of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

1.1. Statement of the problem

Because melancholy is lumped with sorrow and little research has been done about the happiness and enjoyment aspect of melancholy, thereby I decided to concern myself in this research with an examination of melancholic landscape images. These images are taken from various settings and locations, especially some parts of the UK and Iran.

Keats (1820) mentions that:

Melancholy is best friends with happiness, they come together. There has to be pain to be pleasure. If one just gives into the melancholy then they are conquered. (Keats, 1820:20)

Keats (1820), in reference to the concept of melancholy, maintains that it may be strongly felt as happiness by some individuals, others are more subject to melancholy and these two aspects cannot be separated. Sometimes, melancholy may be considered in relation to unhappiness and pain, nevertheless it usually comes with pleasure, because it provides the opportunity for self-reflection according to Brady and Haapala (2003) in description of Melancholy as an Aesthetic Emotion.

1.2. Significance and purpose of the study:

The aim of the research is to answer the following question:
In what ways can the notion of melancholy be utilised in both the conception and experience of landscape photographic images?

This study contributes to the field of understanding of cultural similarities and differences in the context of melancholy by addressing the following aims:

1. To produce a series of photographic images, which explore the idea of melancholy in the context of landscape.
2. To review the concept of melancholy in the context of cultural difference between Iran and the UK.
3. To explore the concept of melancholy in a historical context, especially with regard to particular artists and poets.
4. To evaluate the body of work I have produced, particularly in the context of my findings regarding the concept of melancholy.

1.3. Delimitation of the study

This study is limited to a particular cultural, historical context, especially with regard to particular fine artists and poets, and also my emotional response as self-reflexivity. Moreover, this study centres on a self-reflexive emotional response to the body of work I have produced, both to capture and contextualise the concept of melancholy. Theoretical and practical perspectives are introduced in order to understand the way in which the language of images and culture is understood via the provision of previous historical contexts, myths, poems and paintings. Such an approach, however, requires an understanding of the impact of media in the learning of culture and in the field of image-making.

1.4. What do I want to achieve?

The images are about a reflection of the past. Indeed, the landscape images are more about giving pleasure to the moments. There is a belief that melancholic emotions have more positive effect on an individual than a pessimistic influence on their emotions. Therefore, there can be found some happy moments and pleasure in my landscape photographic images by viewing them. Because, I began to imagine what old times were like and discovered that I had experienced them at previous times. Recounting the story of the images and how I took the images and the locations, made me smile and forget about the pains of the modern world. Meanwhile, the landscape photographic images are created by my feelings about the past and the present in an uplifting and transcendental sense. I have spent some years devoting my time to the erratic rereading of my landscape images and thus I was able to remember good and inspiring old times. Sometimes photographic landscape images are more like poetic re-imaginings of what pleasurable feelings mean in my landscape photographs.

Section 2: Some Notes on Melancholy, from Western and Other Perspective

2.1. Melancholy

Romanticism emerged in the late eighteenth century and arguably came to an end in the middle of the nineteenth century. Romantic poets and artists such as Wordsworth, Constable, Turner and Casper David Friedrich frequently used melancholic and sublime ideas to express love or tragedy. According to this definition of melancholy, Cassagnere (2006) in *Keats's Gleaming Melancholy*, states that :

Absence of hope can be psychologically explained as melancholia, or the unhappiness or hidden grief that are deeply apparent. Melancholy is no longer sadness without a cause, but sadness with a secret cause, which is the loss of a primordial object, a loss with which the self cannot come to terms. (Cassagnere, 2006:3-6)

Hence, melancholia is a psychological issue that is associated with deficiency in hope by having grief. Melancholia is different from melancholy due to being recognised mood or temper, by some theorists. Melancholy is related to anxiety, whereas melancholia is a similar to mental disease or as an imbalance of mood and anger. However, according to the Oxford English Dictionary, melancholy is a “deep and long-lasting sadness”, and melancholia is a “mental condition” marked by persistent depression and “ill-founded fears”.

According to Burton in his book, *Anatomy of Melancholy* (1676) he argues that:

Melancholy is a kind of desire, a voluntary affection, as the individual wishes to enjoy that subject, which is precious. It is a passion of the mind, if love participates in melancholy. It is a feeling that arises from a desire for an object, which is beautiful and fair, and this can be defined as an action of the mind. (Jackson, 1978:7)

Certainly, melancholy is believed to be the dialectical method of reviewing the past. New movements in literature and art, for instance renaissance period, set out to represent human thoughts with elements of melancholy. Moreover, the psychologists Brady and Haapala (2003) in *Melancholy as an Aesthetic Emotion*, point out that:

Melancholy is not simply a debilitating mood, rather it also involves the pleasure of reflection and contemplation of things we love and long for, so that the hope of having them adds a touch of sweetness that makes melancholy bearable, while misery alone is not. (Brady and Haapala, 2003: 3)

In confirmation of Brady and Haapala's assertion, it can be claimed that when somebody's mood is desending, he or she might feel grief and distress on several different levels. Brady and Haapala (2003:3) may have been right when they stated that, "melancholy is something we even desire from time to time, for it provides an opportunity for indulgent self-reflection... this reflective element can be even exhilarating or uplifting". This view is similar to John Keats' concept of melancholy, when he pointed out, "The more strongly we feel happiness, the more subject we are to melancholy".

Furthermore, art, as argued by Kristeva, in her work *Black Sun* (1989), can go beyond melancholy. Kristeva's analysis closely resembled Walter Benjamin's arguments (according to Letiche, 2005) where he rejected the internal melancholic spirit and attempted to engage with the world, trying to catch glimpses of meaning. "He yearns for the lightning flash of intuition, which brings pre-reflective, pre-conscious, connectionist meaning, and this is the source of his irresolvable melancholy" (Letiche, 2005:298), with the main difference being that Kristeva declined to accept melancholy as the creative engine of Western culture, instead arguing it is incapable of resolution or stability.

Nonetheless, for Kristeva, discussing visual art, this process of engaging with melancholy represented a continually repeated effort by the artist, without any ending or resolution, and for Benjamin, focussing on language and literature; successful work can be achieved through melancholy, according to Leitch argument in *Picture Melancholy* (2005). Benjamin and Kristeva accept that art can go beyond melancholy. Nevertheless, if one is supposed to accept these arguments of Kristeva and Benjamin concerning the worthlessness and meaninglessness of melancholy, ideas of the other theorists and psychologists about melancholy being an emotional response to real life must be rejected. For the purposes of my visual art work and research, I have to disagree with these opinions as they reject melancholy as whole and consider it to be meaningless. Rather, it is clear that an emotion plays a role for

both artist and viewer, as Ann Reboul (1994) states, art is responded to through the feelings as well as through cognitive thought. Nevertheless, she also believed that “it does not mean that emotion and feelings, thus cognitively used, are different from what they are created by art, neither does it mean that they are less strong” (Reboul, 1994:6). Such anxiety felt by an artist can lead to creativity and encourage them to reach their goal or grasp the truth of their feeling in a positive way. In commenting on melancholy, Agamben (1999) in *The Man without Content* claims:

Only what is ungraspable can truly be grasped. Such melancholy represents the suspension in time, where it continues between possession and loss. This directly engages with the work of melancholic art, when the anxiety of art can be seen in negative terms. (Agamben, 1999:224)

Walter Benjamin (1977) in *The Origins of German Tragic Drama* suggested that in melancholy all meanings are tentative and unstable and their own significations are lost. The importance of melancholy within the arts gathers force with the notion of Romantic melancholy that emerged at the end of the eighteenth century. During this period, there is an emphasis on feelings such as solitude, darkness, grief, sorrow, despair, desire and sadness. Painters of that period, such as Caspar David Friedrich, captured a variety of reactions and moods in dark, haunting landscapes. It has been observed that the conflicts of the sixteenth century solidified melancholy into a ruthless reality, which subsequent thinkers tried unsuccessfully to remove through a thousand solutions and discourses.

During the Renaissance, melancholy is characterised through philosophy and European literature. In fact, one might argue that “the melancholy is related to sadness and depression and it can hardly be separated from these psychological states” (Agamben, 1999:225). The below arguments are a brief explanation of the psychology of melancholy and theories based on the psychological experiences of the artist and the individuals.

2.2. Criticism on melancholy

It can be assumed that the imbalance leading to melancholy, or the mental disorder of melancholia, can cause psychological problems, and these are linked to each other.

It causes instability in the mind, emotion and spirit, as well as antisocial and obsessive behaviours. However, according to Toohey (2007) in *Melancholy, Love, and Time*:

Melancholia became a disease as well as a character trait and was produced by any excess of black bile. This was typified by coldness and dryness and was dangerously common in autumn. This conception seems to have based itself on popular traditions, which associated melancholia with madness and mania during the fourth century. (Toohey, 2007:28)

Evidently, theorists accepted the depressive side of melancholia attributing it to black bile, which we would understand as bipolar condition in the present world. There is also a suggestion that people in a melancholic mood hold the potential for sensitive wisdom. This attitude and unconscious imagination are allied to the dialogue of mad intelligence or genius. Perhaps these intellectual achievements are a product of artistic creativity, implied by melancholic, artistic genius. Wordsworth's greatest poetry competes pictorially with the art of Constable and Turner. Constable's work displays some of the ideas of Wordsworth's poetry, which is different from Turner's paintings. Wordsworth attempted to choose events and locations from common life; modest and rustic life. He tried to combine his verses with beauty, harmony and pure nature. As opposed to Turner whose focus was on the sublimity of darkness, Constable developed on the themes set out by Wordsworth for his paintings, which are haunted by transcendental feelings.

The idea of melancholy can also be seen in Western literature of the nineteenth century. John Keats (1795–1821) is one of the most celebrated English Romantic poets and a major figure in the Romantic Movement. Born in London in 1795, he was one of the most important artists of the second generation of the Romantic Movement, together with Lord Byron and Percy Bysshe Shelly (National Magazine, 2012). According to Hilton, "Keats wrote well-known poems such as 'The Eve of St. Agnes', 'Ode to a Nightingale' (1818), and 'La Belle Dame sans Merci'" (Hilton, 1839). Keats writes:

But when the melancholy fit shall fall
Sudden from heaven like a weeping cloud
That fosters the droop-headed flowers all
And hides the green hill in an April shroud (Keats, 1820).

These lines can be compared to the nostalgic moments of fall and seasonal

changes. Moreover, trees are elements of nature, which transmit the symbolic meaning of the landscape and the changing season. The storyline of transforming seasons continues. This movement, from unhappy circumstance to pleasurable meaning, and the transformation from the anguish of autumn to the blissful moments of spring becomes transcendental.

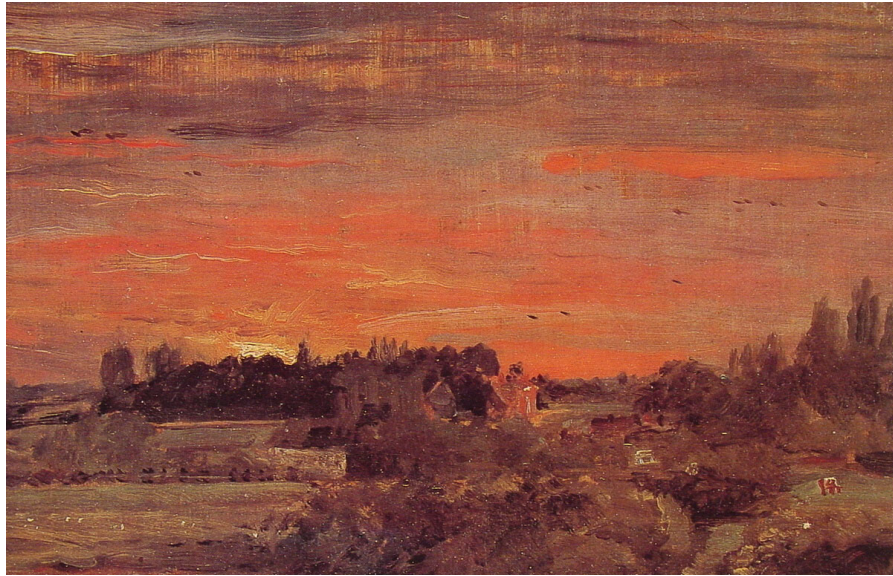
2.3. Romantic poetry and paintings and some of my visual reflection on them

The themes of solitude and sweet sorrow are associated with melancholy, the Sublime, and are also common in Romantic paintings and poetry. According to Brennan (2005) in *Wordsworth, Turner, and Romantic Landscape; a study of the traditions of the Picturesque and the Sublime*:

Like Wordsworth, Constable felt that the moral feeling of landscape could be best expressed by presenting nature pure, as Wordsworth does it in 'The Tables Turned' and as Constable does in 'The Hay Wain'. (Brennan, 2005:111)



The Hay Wain (John Constable, 1821)



East Bergholt Rectory (John Constable, 1810)

Wordsworth (1798) composed his view of the landscape as:

Do I behold these steep and lofty cliffs
That on a wild secluded scene impress
Thoughts of more deep seclusion; and connect
The landscape with the quiet of the sky. (lines 4-8 quoted in Brennan,
2005:51)

In order to contemplate the meaning of Wordsworth's poem, I found a secluded relaxing spot in which to be alone. Some of Wordsworth's poems describe how he uses his experience of nature to bring on joy and spiritual transcendence. Moreover, memories, imagination and recalling good sensations became a force that I could use to illustrate what is in my heart. I might describe these experiences as affecting me deeply, having a psychological influence or even providing a spiritual experience. These poems helped me to recall my own experiences of places that had provided me with a pleasurable experience, and my feelings emphasised though nature can provide a healing process.

The sun above the mountain's head,
A freshening lustre mellow
Through all the long green fields has spread,
His first sweet evening yellow (Wordsworth, "The Table Turned", 1798)



The New Moon or I've lost my boat (J.M.W. Turner ,1840)

As with my creative response to Wordsworth's poetry, I sought to form a reflexive reaction to the work of visual artists working in this era. Brightness for Turner, similar to that depicted in the paintings of Friedrich, was an important reflection of the supernatural spirit and power of the Creator. He also noticed the play of light on the sea, the sparkle of greys and blues and natural ruins. In addition, Turner's reflective artworks on light, especially sunset, suggest negative sublime or the sublimity of dusk, which made me enthusiastic about capturing images of sunsets.

Indeed, this recalled my childhood memories, when I used to play in the desert, gazing up at the mighty blue sky and the surrounding wheat farms and mountains in the far distance and returning home with some of my family before moonlight. It seemed that travelling again on this road after ten years caused within me a melancholic sense, and this encouraged me to create emotionally alive and vivid images. It could certainly be a melancholic feeling in some aspects; those summer days reminded me of past memories and the good old days, and made me smile for a moment.

Nevertheless, I felt unhappy about missing my childhood and being separated from family and friends, which is similar to a nostalgic mood. I also have spent a great deal

of time walking through the fields and forests before sunset, and the sunlight above those magnificent landscapes was a symbol of the light of Divinity.



Village of Peyman , Iran (Afsaneh Tayyar, 2012)



Village of Peyman, Iran (Afsaneh Tayyar, 2012)

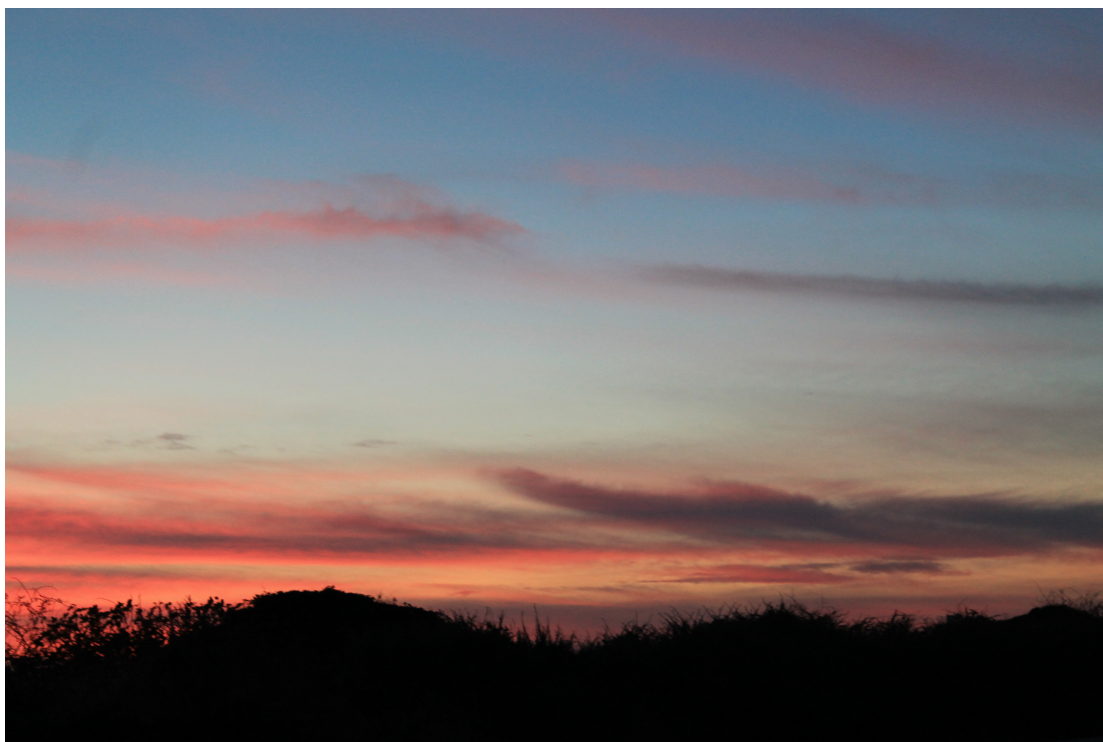
Additionally, some of Wordsworth's poems are focused on the atmosphere of sunset. He expresses the quiet and peaceful beauty of an evening in nature. Sunset is a blessed and holy period in many of Wordsworth's poems. Wordsworth's appreciation of this time of day can be equated to sacred nightfall appropriate for the adoration of God. The beauty of sunset is praised and twilight is compared with devotion in his verse. He imagines the sunset as beautiful, since, for him, heaven exists in the sky at this time. In "By the Seaside", Wordsworth writes:

The sun is couched, the sea-fowl gone to rest,
And the wild storm hath somewhere found a rest (Wordsworth, "By the Seaside", 1833: lines 1-2)

My silent thanks at least to God be given,
With a full heart, our thoughts are heard in heaven (Wordsworth, "By the Seaside", 1833: lines 38-39).



Lagos, Portugal (Afsaneh Tayyar, 2013)



Lagos, Portugal (Afsaneh Tayyar, 2013)

In several of my photographic images, it can be seen that there is a lack of human beings in the background of the images, which can be related to an isolated area and place, because in reality the human being can take rest without the disturbance of others at quiet places. The silent and peaceful nature can be seen as giving calmness to the individual as a gift from the creator.

Nature and its surrounding elements will be considered in my practical research by drawing out a group of main changes in the human relationship towards God. There are many efforts to challenge nature and the universe's hidden power and there is little concern and care about humanity. Capturing human figures is not my main goal, and my ultimate intention is to examine how we can save our planet's nature and its surroundings.

Brennan made a comparison between different artists and poets and their special attention to sunrise and sunset. Their works show the importance of light according to their faith. Brennan argues that: "In both Wordsworth and Turner sunset is an even more common source than sunrise of the positive sublime. The image of sunset

develops more striking chiaroscuro and greater obscurity because it dissolves into the Sublimity of darkness” (Brennan, 2005:62). By way of illustration, Rodner (1997) in *J.M.W. Turner; Romantic Painter of the Industrial Revolution*, writes:

Turner repeatedly depicted the contest between energetic steam power and superior environmental forces. For him, nature would always remain omnipotent. (Rodner, 1997:164)



Port Sunlight (J.M.W. Turner, 1832)



The Thames above Waterloo Bridge (J.M.W. Turner, 1830-35)

“Painters were focused on the rustic and spiritual beauty of landscapes, during the Industrial Revolution, they started to notice the power of machines and technology” (Deller, 2013). The Industrial Revolution had a great impact on the style of Turner’s paintings.



Fighting Temeraire (J.M.W. Turner, 1838)

Meanwhile, pictures of sunlight, water, light and clouds by J.M.W Turner, for example *Fighting Temeraire*, are incomprehensible. Some of them were unfinished and seen as aberrations and the product of that talent turned a little mad. They are now regarded as portraying his personal, painful moments and hailed as an advance in Impressionism, as well as being cited as evidence of his merit as a pure painter, forever pushing at the boundaries of art. There were many reasons for Turner's self-identification. Turner, as an artist, struggled with the human figure and was driven by the desire to give landscape painting the power to move and elevate through pastoral views, river scenes framed by trees with a sun-infused colour, and a thoughtful use of close observation. Turner combined the continental landscape tradition with the British countryside creating more melancholic landscapes. He used to build up oil paintings from dark to light to inject more melancholic emotion to his art work. He painted on light grounds to achieve a greater sense of transience.

According to Prodger (2012) in *J.M.W Turner, The English Claude*, these paintings are evidence of Turner's search of the audience. They are the proof of his loyalty to a religion of his own, expressed for the first and last time on his deathbed, where the sun is God. This can be connected to the Sublime feeling, which is related to melancholy. The Sublime means greatness, magnitude and gloriousness, according to Ridding (2010); by having this emotion we are connected to melancholy, which according to Brady and Haapala (2003) and Kant (1724-1804), combines pleasure and displeasure together. The pleasure is caused by the imagination of the magnificent world and displeasure caused by feeling fear, when staying in the heart of the superb

power of nature. Edmund Burke (1729-1797), on the other hand, makes the link between the sublime emotion and beauty. He describes that the beauty of massive nature can be found as a strong evidence of the individual's pain and pleasurable feelings. There are also theories about the relationship between power and the Sublime. According to Burke, the idea of power exists within the pain and pleasure of the Sublime, echoing the feeling of pain created through fear of the superior power and pleasure of adoring this creator of the universe. He describes that whatever brings the viewers the feeling of danger, terror and pain is a form of the Sublime, but the feeling of admiration and respect is the Sublime too. Ashfield and Bolla (1996) argue that according to Burke there is also association between pain, pleasure and the Sublime, as noted :

Whatever is fitted in any sort to excite the ideas of pain, and danger, that is to say, whatever is in any sort terrible, or is conversant about terrible objects, or operates in a manner analogous to terror, is a source of the Sublime, that is, it is productive of the strongest emotion which the mind is capable of feeling. (Ashfield and Bolla, 1996:131).

Additionally, amazement is the condition of the soul with some level of fear. Nevertheless, the result of the Sublime, at its maximum point or in the lower effects is wonder, admiration and respect. Similarly, whatever is horrifying, related to this view, is the Sublime too. The emotions of fear and wonder can be expressed as the Sublime. Therefore, I started to look at nature which had not been affected by human disturbance. I learned to observe and pay more attention to my inner feelings; I tried to inscribe the peaceful moment and non-violent silence in the language of the images by recording them without human figures. The spiritual power I find in nature is emphasised by Wordsworth. In the poem "An Evening Walk", he makes reference to God as the sublime supremacy in the Creation. The sunset in the poem is full of spiritual meaning, which can be taken as a reflection of the poet's mystical connection to nature. As Wordsworth (1793) writes in "An Evening Walk":

The sun declines Mountain farm, and the cock slate quarry,
Sunset superstition of the country connected with that moment
Swans female beggar twilight sound western light-spirits,
Night moonlight hope night sounds conclusion (Wordsworth, 1793).

In 1828, Constable painted the sun setting over Shoreham Bay, west of Brighton, one of the most pleasant and rural situations in the vicinity. As an Impressionist, Constable used a long, thin format to show the extent of the beach and the expanses of

sea and sky on a summer's day. "Shoreham Bay, Evening Sunset" was inscribed in 22 May 1828, and was painted at the time when his wife's health was declining. Some paintings of sunsets by John Constable can be seen as evidence of the prominence of sunlight, including "East Bergholt Rectory" (1810) and "Shoreham Bay, Evening Sunset".



Shoreham Bay Evening Sunset (John Constable, 1828)

Sunset, a time of holiness for Keats, is as quiet as a "Nun breathless with adoration: the broad sun is sinking down in its tranquillity". John Keats (1817) writes in "A Draught of Sunshine",

We will drink our fill,
Of golden sunshine,
Till our brains intertwine
With the glory and grace of Apollo! (Keats, "A Draught of Sunshine", 1817)

I intended my landscape photographic images to convey a brief snapshot of my feelings, as captured by John Constable in the sketches he made from the nature surrounding him at the time. My photographic landscape images seek to incorporate the truth of nature and how it is affected by light and shadow. I captured the impressionist effect of John Constable's canvas paintings. He developed the atmospheric study of trees, clouds and outlooks, painting different parts of England

between 1820 and 1834. I also tried to capture the transient effect of light over different seasons and times of day. I carried out much of my study abroad, in the very hot bright midday sun, to reflect John Constable's painting of "Shoreham Bay, Evening Sunset" and record the past moments of his sketches. Moreover, Constable took to the open landscape, painting trees from around the UK, such as Hampstead and "East Bergholt Rectory". I too expressed my delight at the effect of broken sunlight falling through greenery.

Some reflections on Casper David Friedrich Paintings

Friedrich's paintings were also his individual and expressive response to light as part of nature. Brightness was the signifier of the world he saw, and sunlight was the light of divinity and immortality. Friedrich took lengthy walks by himself, through fields and forests, frequently starting before sunrise. Friedrich had a distinctive style and believed that nature had significant spiritual meaning. Nevertheless, there is a spirituality through the observation of nature in his paintings, by covering tree branches, mountains and hills, the crashing of waves beyond a beautiful view. Furthermore, he was deeply inspired by Ludvik Gerarld Kusergarten, a theorist who believed that nature is symbolic expression of God. For Friedrich, sunlight was the light of God; it expressed pure nature by heavenly meaning. Watson (2006) in *Back to Nature: The Green and Real in the Late Renaissance*, states:

Nature is purely a setting for the great spiritual adventure of humanity and sympathizes with human activities; this means that modern western culture symphonizes with nature as a collective victim. (Watson, 2006:168)



Evening (Caspar David Friedrich, 1821)

Friedrich, as part of the Romanticism movement, put greater emphasis on his imaginative, emotional and transcendental appreciation of the beauties of nature. His paintings comprised an obsessive interest in folk and ethnic culture. Constable, Turner and Friedrich were painters who turned to nature as both a scene of inspiration and a powerful symbol of their own personalities. Friedrich's paintings are generally landscapes, but are clearly designed to express the emotional and psychic state of the artist.

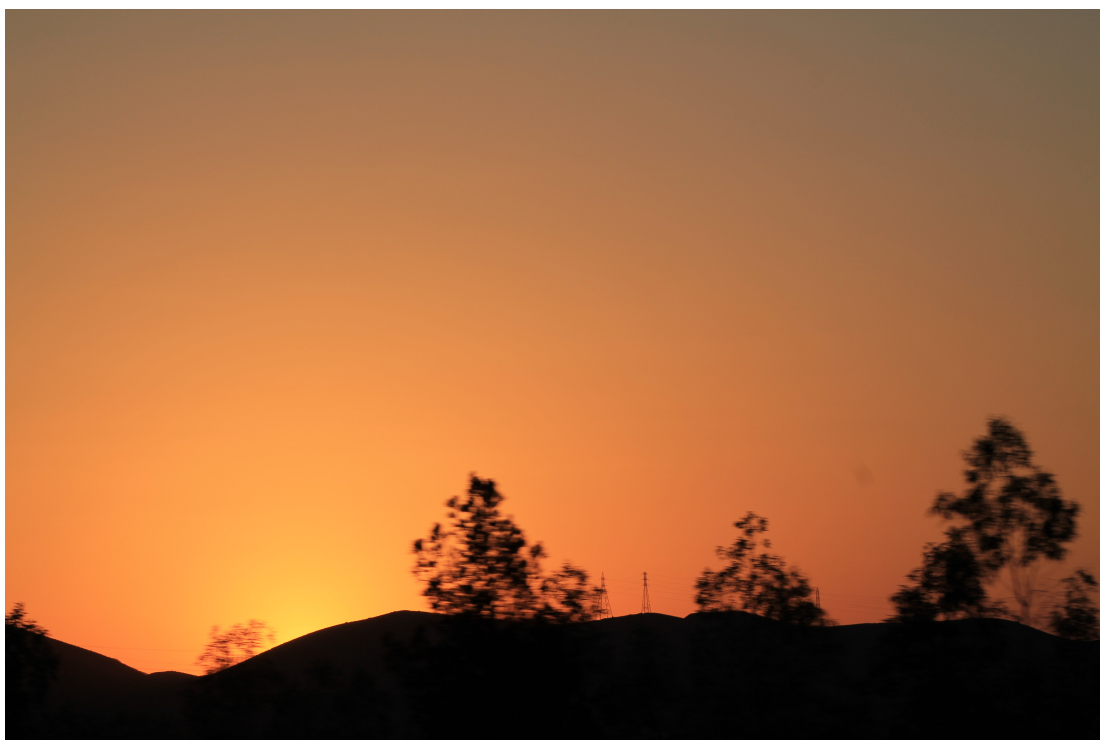
Those paintings inspired me to look for other subject matter. I began to concern myself with issues such as the effects of light, the relationship of colours, and the fundamental character of form and marks. Comparison of my landscape photographic images with paintings by such artists as Constable, Turner and Friedrich shows that I was selecting and simplifying, flattening, intensifying, or maybe abstracting the view. I reduced the detail down in my mind's eye to basic forms. Having nostalgic thought is a journey of recollection into the unique past experience, imagined as a perfect past. In this sense, nostalgia calms the feeling of damage, helping as a form of self-reflection. Nostalgia increases self-esteem and reduces depression and thus creates an optimistic response in the individuals' minds.



Moses Gate Country Park, England (Afsaneh Tayyar, 2013)

Nostalgia's function is to increase the importance of matters, events and people. Personal nostalgic reactions that change in intensity, such as loss, regret, warmth, and loving emotions, are notably enhanced through a melancholic response. By simplifying and abstracting the images I tried to reflect the peace and tranquillity that influenced my responses. The subject matter of Impressionism was light. I was therefore interested in studying how changes in light consequently affected colour and emotion.

Defalco and Iowa (2004) in *A Doubled- Edged Longing* declare that nostalgia is at the heart of discussions of representation, a fake memorial force able to transform reality into imaginary entertainment. From this perspective, nostalgia is an obsessive homesickness born from a disorder of the imagination and, as a result, stimulates the desire to return to one's native land (Defalco and Iowa, 2004).



Village of Peyman, Iran (Afsaneh Tayyar, 2012)

Thereby, comparing my images of Iran to Lagos, Portugal, creates a desire to find a relationship between my homeland and a foreign land, landed me into the trembling heart of a strange world whose reality is as yet unimaginable. This area of Portugal can be observed as a similar natural landscape to some parts of Iran, especially through my images of sunset in Saveh, Iran. Nevertheless, an unexpected nostalgic feeling enveloped me while witnessing such beauty with transcendent effect. There was a painful feeling of missing my homeland and regret of abandoning my hometown.

According to Ladino (2012) in her arguments in *Reclaiming Nostalgia*, she states that: hopeful passion does not ban nostalgia, although urban spaces may have been the primary site for motivation, permission, and creativeness, the countryside is often nostalgically represented in the form of the pastoral environment; to capture a careful embrace of the beauty of rural landscape in images, to illustrate a painful longing for connections to the natural world that have been lost (Ladino, 2012:60).



Village of Peyman, Iran (Afsaneh Tayyar, 2012)

The idea of home perseveres, and its consideration in my landscape photographic images is present as part of memory. The desperate grief that there is no real home to return to, or maybe it no longer exists. Although, there is no true home for the exiles, at least no home free of social-political problems. Nevertheless home involves peace of mind psychologically, security, comfort, and order and in the terms a foreign land is not a real home at all.

A foreign land is not a regular space, and it is certainly not a space of home life or usual family relationships. It is a multiplicity of spaces, a collection of neighbourhoods, each with its own group of interactions, stories, and lived in places. The landscape images look backward, and then the sense of nostalgia that does not quite wish for a return to that imperfect homeland. Some landscape images are nostalgic not for the way that the past had been better. Nevertheless they are nostalgic due to a different present that could be improved if conditions in the past had been better.

2.4. Spiritual culture and scholarship from Iran

According to the Persian Dictionary, melancholy is interpreted as a psychological problem, such as depression, sorrow and unhappiness. The word with a similar meaning to melancholy in the Persian language is *Malikhulia*. In Arabic, especially in the *Holy Quran*, the word *Huzn* refers to pain and sorrow over a loss or the death of a relative and is interpreted as a feeling. Many Persian manuscripts which were written as verses or critical writing by Persian poets and novelists, and are referred to as melancholic. The interesting point is that the notion of melancholy as lovesickness or a malady that may be caused by a human being reaching their old age is found in Persian culture. The Persian physician Avicenna (980-1037 CE) identified this feeling as being lovesick, which is similarly to Robert Burton's discussion of melancholy (1632) in *Love- Melancholy* chapter, and can be caused by fear of death, or lost love.

While in Persian culture and literature much of the foolishness in people's behaviour is exemplified as darkness in their minds, it is worth considering why melancholy is represented as a mental condition called *Malikhulia* (melancholia), which is described as black bile. According to Toohey (2007) in *Melancholy, Love, and Time*:

Melancholia referred to the presence within human body of the substance termed black bile, which occupying scant place in the speculation of the earliest Greek medical texts. It is a normal physical constituent of the human psychology, like blood, bone or hair, rather than an illness. (Toohey, 2007:27)

Therefore, melancholy can be described as a wishful desire by older people to be young again in some cases, remembering their blameless earlier times during their childhood. A second interpretation of melancholy in Persian culture is about love and suffering, either the love of a human or spiritual love. Schollay (2012) in *Love and Devotion From Persia and Beyond* comments:

By the 12th Century, mystic poets, especially those based in and around Herat in eastern Iran, began to attach spiritual meanings to some of the old stories of love and beauty, so that the life-changing process of chaste human love being transformed into divine love became an overarching theme. (Schollay, 2012: 15)

Nevertheless, I believe, as an individual who is familiar with Persian culture, that this kind of suffering love can direct characters to religious love. I find here it is necessary to note the interesting echoes of the special connection of Burton's declaration of love-melancholy in his book *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (1632:17) to other's opinions such as Avecina's (980-1037), Schollay's (2012), Derin's (2012). He attempted to offer a state of mind and mood as alternatives to the customary object relationship to religious love.

According to Burton (1632), "love is universally taken and is defined as a desire, as a word of more sufficient meaning and it is a longing for what is decent" (Burton, 1632:11). Consequently, I link this structure to Derin's spiritual love and Burton's accounts of mood and love-melancholy, and to my claim that there is a positive and productive relationship between melancholy and philosophy that rests on certain types of philosophical activity. Derin (2012: 55) in *Earthly and Spiritual Love in Sufism*, claims that there is a philosophical effort in the practice of the expression formed as a Sufi community. The effort made by Sufis is an unawareness of self-attention and a focus on admiration and divine love. Rumi was one of the greatest Persian poets who belonged to this community. According to his verses he links earthly love to spiritual love, while he writes:

The outward form is a pot, and beauty is the wine: God is giving me wine
from her form,
He gave you vinegar from her pot. Let's love should pull you by the ears
(Derin, 2012:65).

Nevertheless, the anxiety and concept of fear in the relationship with God are highlighted in the philosophy and way of thinking in early Sufism, including Rumi, which claims that they are earthly and spiritual lovers. Meanwhile, Burton (1632:320), commenting on religious melancholy, confesses that "true religion honours God. True religion, where the true God is truly worshiped, is the way to heaven". He declares that fear of eternal punishment and the last judgment for a cause of those enthusiastic and desperate persons put them in too much devotion, which led to melancholy. Love at this stage can be defined as a melancholic discourse that everybody can own. Therefore, at this point, I find a link between the Sufi philosophical effort to reach divine love and Burton's arguments about religious love. A Sufi has to turn his face to divine beauty and follow it, going further than mortal

love. Moreover, as in Persian literature, there are manuscripts written about love related to melancholy, and there are stories like the ones about the judge presiding over Samson and Delilah's espousal, about the kings, about David and Bathsheba's adulteries, about Amnon and Tamar, Solomon's concubines, etc.

2.5. Melancholic poetry from Persia

The preceding exploration of metaphors or representations of melancholy dealt mainly with a literal metaphor or verbal discourse, and can be found again in Persian literature in the rhymes of Omar Khayyam (1048-1122), a great Persian poet who was also a mathematician, philosopher, and astrophysicist. Melancholy has the literal meaning of sadness, according to this Persian poet. As Omar Khayyam (1120) writes:

Before the phantom of False morning died,
Me thought a Voice within the Tavern cried,
When all the Temple is prepared within,
Why lags the drowsy Worshipper outside? (Translated by Fitzgerald, 1859)

The poetry of Omar Khayyam consists of both suffering and happiness. Indeed, numerous people have suffered to reach happiness, which can be directly connected to melancholia. Feelings and emotions which are related to deep sorrow, combined with pleasure, can be discovered and observed in his literature. This poetry could be described as harmonising suffering and enjoyment.

Therefore, this passion in the mind, which is an expression of love, is aroused from the desire for an object, which is only reachable and beautiful at that moment.

Ah, make the most of what we yet may spend,
Before we too into the Dust descend;
Dust into Dust, and under Dust to lie,
Sans Wine, sans Song, sans Singer, and sans End! (Fitzgerald, 1859)



Miniature art (Muhammad Farshchian ,1963)

Alas, that Spring should vanish with the Rose!
That Youth's sweet-scented Manuscript should close!
The Nightingale that in the Branches sang,
Ah, whence, and whither flown again, who knows! (Khayyam's poem
translated by Fitzgerald ,1868).

The question is how is love related to melancholy? And how, through the feeling of melancholy, can we achieve a love of God? According to Beecher and Ciavolleta (1990) in *a Treatise on Lovesickness*.

Love is a disease of the soul that slowly pervades the entire body, just like madness, and that must be eradicated before it completely upsets the physio-psychological balance of the man (Beecher and Ciavolleta, 1990: 52).

Therefore, there is suspicion of love by theorists and it is believed that in much ancient literature examples of manic lovesickness occurred. However, disorder of the mind can be created by love and is connected to melancholia. At this point, the declaration of the Sublime feeling can be expressed, when a human being has love for and fear of God's creation. In this regard, it is worth comparing the famous Christian

poet Dante with Iranian poet Rumi: “it can be concluded that Dante falls far below the level of charity and tolerance promoted and accomplished by Rumi”. However, according to Schollay (2012:15): “In Europe, Dante’s allegory, the Divine Comedy, closely paralleled Eastern models of love as a mystical and transformative journey from obsession with a beautiful beloved to an ecstatic experience of the Divine”.

Dante writes in his verses:

But already my desire and my will
We’re being turned like a wheel, all at one speed,
By the love which moves the sun and the other stars (Dante, *Paradiso*, Canto XXXIII: lines 142-145, C.H. Sisson Translation)

Meanwhile, similar interpretations of love can be seen among different cultures. According to the theorist Toohey, “love is a very dangerous emotion. When it is blocked it can lead even to death” (Toohey, 2007: 88), which is related to Iranian philosopher Avicenna’s theories of lovesickness or depiction of melancholia. According to Derin’s (2012) declaration the only difference between believing in love in Persian and Western literature is that the Sufis do not warn that Earthly love is a necessary evil. They suggest that for the true gnostic it is necessary for men to love women. Therefore, “the idea of marriage or love of women in general is the cause of separation from God, is an error entirely inconsistent with the Prophetic paradigm of love” (Derin, 2012:58).

Manuchihri, another Iranian poet, belongs to a period, when poets paid particular attention to love of nature and the environment as a spiritual love. The dominant style during this period is called the Khorasani period, particularly found in his poems, which very much reflected happy spirits causing prevailing happiness and taking refuge in nature and profiting from naturally beautiful manifestations. Manuchehri (1040) writes in “The Master of the Masters”:

His dignity is like a mountain,
and in that mountain lies the Cave of Faith
His nature is like a sea, and in that sea is the pearl of intellect (Clinton, 1972: 3).

It can be linked these verses to the idea of the sublime, which is connected to melancholy similarly. Nature and its surrounding elements are considered in these verses by drawing out a group of main changes in the human relationship towards the God Almighty. There are many efforts to challenge nature and the universe's hidden power and there is little concern and care about humanity.

2.6.Narration of Shahnameh (Book of Kings) and Taziyeh (Drama Theater) as an appearance of Melancholic culture in Iran

Iran is the birthplace of the *Taziyeh* or *Shabih*, the famous Islamic drama. In this kind of drama, the suffering and death of Imam Hussein, the grandson of the Prophet of Islam, are enacted by the performers. In 680, Imam Hussein was massacred along with his family by his enemies on the plains of Karbala near Baghdad in Iraq. This drama, a very powerful form of theatre, which was praised by the theatre director Peter Brook when he first saw a *Taziyeh* performance in 1970 in Iran. The admiration of this drama is important because according to Malekpour (2005) in his argument in *The Islamic Drama*, *Taziyeh* is part sacramental, part history, part poetic narration, part storytelling, part music and part song. It offers room for political and religious interpretation. The objective of *Taziyeh* is to make the audience emotionally and psychologically involved, therefore they feel total empathy with the sacrifices. Participation in *Taziyeh* is much more an act of religious faith than it is theatrical demonstration. Nevertheless, the whole community is called upon to participate, to announce its dignitaries and its emotions. *Taziyeh* is rooted in mourning ritual; those involved wear black and must maintain a skilled level of ceremonial suffering.

Malekpour (2005) supposes that the closest Western equivalent might be the *Oberammergau Passion Play*, which is still performed every ten years in Germany, and has remained an important religious and theatrical event for several hundred years, while also going through a variety of textual interpretations. The origin of *Taziyeh* goes even further back in time than the Oberammergau performance to Zoroastrianism (the ancient Persian religion) and Mithraism in its development as part of early *Shia* Islam. *Taziyeh* is a special performance that performs the essential dramatic conflict between the good and the bad, the faithful and pagans. According to Fischer (2004), melancholia is a popular commentary and is best explained in terms

of the contrasts between Zoroastrian optimism and Shia melancholic realism. According to Fischer (2004) in *Mute Dreams, Blind Owls and Dispersed Knowledge; Persian Poesis in the Transnational Circuitry*, “The passion plays of Karbala paradigm parallel Benjamin’s account of the baroque *Trauerspiel* Tragedy. In Persian community melancholic emotion is rooted in mourning for the hero *Siavash*” (Fischer, 2004:388). Siavash is a major figure in Ferdowsi’s epic, the *Shahnameh*. He was a legendary Iranian prince from the earliest days of the Iranian Empire. A brave and desirable young man, his name literally means "the one with the black horse" or "black stallion". Meanwhile, the works of the *Ghahveh Khaneh* (Persian traditional wall painting) were most influenced by the literary masterpiece *Shahnameh* (*Book of Kings*) by Ferdowsi (940-1020 CE), the great Persian poet, which provided the main subject of illustration for the early *Ghahveh Khaneh* artists. “In *Shahnameh* is recounted the real and methodological history of Iran up to the fall of the Sasanian dynasty in the mid-7th century. It draws the heroic narrative that flourished under Sasanian rule” (Scholly, 2012: 201). In the classic *Shahnameh*, the great myths of Persian literature are retold; grounded in the Ghahveh-Khaneh style is a desire to depict reality for its own sake.



Persian Wall painting based on Shah name of Ferdowsi

According to Talebi (2009) in *Iranian Oral Storytelling*, these wall paintings constituted a significant attempt to detach art from royal courtyards and make it available to common people. The themes of these wall painting stories are full of performances of bravery, suffering, love, anxiety, mourning and human passion. They are about the *Book of Kings* by Ferdowsi, and it can be claimed that *Shahnameh* holds the history, culture and epics of the Persian people. It is composed of 60,000 verses, and covers the heroism stories of the Persian Empire from the Creation up to the tenth century, before the Arab and Islamic invasion.

These traditional legends are full of melancholic settings, emotions and inner dialogue of the main characters. According to Heller (2013) in *Shahnameh, Re-Imagined: A Colorful New Vision of Old Iranian Folklore*, the ancient mythology of Iran is loaded with heroic adventures of superhuman champions, magical creatures, heart-wrenching love stories and centuries-long battles. Written in the tenth century, Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh* is the longest epic poem ever written, and the foundation of mythology, comparable to *The Odyssey*, *Nibelungenlied* and *Ramayana*.



Damavand Peak, Iran (Afsaneh Tayyar, 2012)

For instance, the story of Persian legend of Arash Kamangir in Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh* is echoing in every Persian's mind, while gazing at Damavand mountain located in north of Tehran. The brave hero who had to climb on Damavand Mountain and had to determine Iran's border by shooting one arrow. He used all his strength and released an arrow that travelled for kilometres and by that the borders of great Iran was determined. It can be felt a remorseful feeling and the story of his life is full of heroic adventure, melancholy, gratification and sadness.

Section 3: Methodology

3.1. My Methodology

This study is based on photography and paintings. The method I will use is qualitative: “Qualitative study and programme theory work better than the large scale of studies such as: quantitative studies”, and the simply define as: “research that does not employ number or statistical procedures and rely on non-statistical modes of data collection and analysis” (Klenke, 2008:6). The nature of my approach is A/r/thography, which for Sullivan (2010) in *Art Practice as Research: Inquiry Visual Arts* is:

A creation of new relationships among theories, ideas, forms, and contexts as assumptions about concepts, and categories that tend to fix meanings are brought into question (Sullivan, 2010: 59).

In relation to my research practice, which is based on A/r/tography it should be considered the whole ideas of melancholy between artists, and theoretical understanding and their practical work through melancholic arts. In this part, I should consider my practical work in terms of the interest of the audience regarding melancholic photographs. Viewers could find my melancholic images interesting, calm or uplifting. According to Sullivan (2010):

A/r/tography seeks to integrate theory and practice by embedding art-making processes at the heart of inquiry along with a strong appeal to audiences to practice by identifying with the stories, language, images, and histories that are part of what brings individuals and communities together. (Sullivan, 2010: 59)

The study attempts to create new relationships that directly inform my photography. The relationships between ideas and theories of melancholy, according to Brady and Haapala (2003), Burton (1676), Sontag (2003), Holly (2007) and Soufas (1993), Ashfield and de Bolla (1996), and semiotic analysis of my photographic images, are considered in this research. I engaged in qualitative study by examining signs; and undertaking semiotic analysis of images in my practical work in relation to

their cultural context. Moreover, Smith and Dean (2009) in *Practice-led Research, Research-led Practice in the Creative Arts*, argue that:

An assumption behind qualitative research is that the best way to gather data about an issue or idea is to allow the subjects to express their thoughts in their own way, rather than making it essential for them to respond to a preconceived analytical framework drawn up by the researcher. (Smith and Dean, 2009:4)

The semiotic analysis can be discussed in terms of the individual signs of melancholy in two countries: Iran and the UK. Some elements of nature offer specific signs of melancholy, which have different meanings in both countries as a ‘social reality’. The standard example of semiotic analysis is found in Barthes’s work in 1994:85. Consequently, I have decided to write in the first person, an active voice, in order to communicate self-awareness. For this purpose, I have also decided to integrate self-evaluation, and self-reflection in this study. I am informed by this idea. For example, Denzin and Lincoln (2008) in *Collecting and Interpreting Qualitative Materials*, mentions:

Narrative researchers often write in the first person, thus emphasising their own narrative action. The several distinct approaches to narrative analysis are physiological, sociological, anthropological, auto ethnographic, and performances studies of identity. (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008:46)

In this study narrative enquiry and analysis can include sociological (study of society), anthropological (study of humankind) and perhaps psychological approaches. I hope to create stories in the form of personal narratives, possibly to form the basis of a social movement. Telling stories about how people think and feel can help to create a public space which others are allowed to hear. For this purpose, one of my objectives is to evaluate the body of work I have produced, particularly in the context of my findings regarding the concept of melancholy. Besides semiology, aesthetics raises the question of how objects and elements of everyday life become aesthetic signs. This question could be studied in the semiotics of arts. According to Noth (1990) in *Handbook of Semiotics*, “not only artefacts but also natural objects, such as rocks or pieces of wood, may be viewed as aesthetic signs” (Noth, 1990:440). Saukko’s (2008:458) table, which describes ‘three validities’, is fundamental to my research. Saukko writes:

The proposed methodological framework builds on the long-term tradition of doing empirical research in cultural studies, while also pushing it in a new direction. The integrated but multidimensional methodological framework hopes to offer both a survival kit and a critical toolbox in the brave new world, helping to make sense of what it is, how it affects different people, and what our role is in it. (Saukko, 2008:459)

Table 1. The three validities or Methodological Programs in Cultural studies in an Integrated Framework (Saukko, 2008:458). Social Reality, Local Realities and Social Shaping of Reality are highlighted as in the original Framework of Saukko.

	Contextual Validity	Dialogic Validity	Self-reflexive Validity
Contextual dimension	Social reality	Local realities in social context	Research shapes 'real' social processes
Dialogic dimension	Local repercussions of social processes	Local realities	Local awareness of social shaping of reality
Self-reflexive Dimension	Research shapes social process or reality	Local realities are socially shaped	Social shaping of reality

In this section I will discuss more details of key themes of this table. As Saukko (2008) in *Methodological for Cultural Studies, An Integrative Approach*, argues, “the recent intellectual and historical developments have modified the characteristic methodological approach of cultural studies” (Saukko, 2008:457). Saukko also argued that:

Social reality means traditional social research and truthfulness of the research, which describes reality.

Local repercussions of social processes can be achieved by paying attention to the way in which these social processes maybe experienced differently in particular local contexts.

Local realities can be investigated by the interpretation of texts and cultural studies.

Social shaping of reality refers to the contextual and realist commitment of cultural studies and how the research makes sense of the historical and social reality (Saukko, 2008:458).

Cultural studies focus on cultures, peoples, real texts, audiences, or production in communication studies. Cultural studies relate to lived realities, and contextualist /realist investigations of historical, social and political structures of power. In this regard, I will focus on my objectives, one of which is to review the concept of melancholy in the context of cultural differences between Iran and the UK. Saukko writes:

Interest in lived realities runs into a contradiction with interest in critical analysis of discourses, posing the question: how can one be true to lived experiences and, at the same time, criticise discourses that form the very stuff out of which our lived realities are made? (Saukko, 2008:457-458)

The quotation above refers to the analysis of social and historical processes and text. This allows me to know how to take photographs to determine people’s opinion of melancholy. I will also explore the concept of melancholy in a historical context, especially with regard to particular artists and poets. The contextual dimension of research refers to an analysis of social and historical processes, and the worth or

validity of the project depends on how thoroughly and defensibly or correctly this has been done (Saukko, 2008:461).

Saukko mentions that:

Dialogic validity has its roots in the classical ethnographic and hermeneutic project of capturing the native's point of view, or to realise people vision of the world. Classic ethnography, however, believed that it was possible for research to comprehend the internal universe of informants objectively or through the rigorous use of method, such as participant observation. (Saukko, 2008:464)

The above quotation refers to the investigation that will also be conducted through hermeneutics (interpretation of texts). Therefore, I will consider the opinion of melancholy and interpretations of melancholic texts in the two countries (Iran and the UK), and how this is used with my photographs. As Saukko describes:

Self-reflexivity is critical reflection on how social discourses and processes shape or mediate how we experience ourselves and our environment, and perhaps is the most prominent feature of cultural studies. (Saukko, 2008:457-464)

For me, the above quotation refers to the interpretation of text and critical reflection on social discourses and how the research influences the processes of study. Thus, to evaluate the body of work I have produced, particularly in the context of my findings regarding the concept of melancholy, is one of my objectives, which should be considered in the above section. According to Kress and Leeuwen (2006) in *The Semiotic Landscape*:

The new realities of the semiotic landscape are primarily brought about by social and cultural factors: by the intensification of linguistic and cultural diversity within the boundaries of nation states, and by the weakening of these boundaries, due to multiculturalism, electronic media of communication, technologies of transport and global economic developments. (Kress and Leeuwen, 2006:120)

Every culture and landscape have a different meanings to its society and generation, according to its contextual-historical text, and literature. For instance in *Appropriation of Sublime Nature in the Lake District* by Wurth (2004) he declares:

English nature suggests a lush land of sweet, harmonious forms, a land of nostalgia made familiar in the popular imagination through the novels of Jane Austen, which contrasts sharply with the barrenness and form-contrariness familiarly associated with the sublime like the Welsh

mountains, the Peak District, the Lake District and Scottish highlands.
(Wurth, 2004:19)

Consequently, I will produce a series of photographic images that explore the idea of melancholy in the context of landscape from Iran that is my roots, and the UK and other parts of Europe. Iran can be recognised as a land of heroes and Persian Empire full of mysterious legends, and melancholic landscape. Feeling connected to the mother land was excelled by watching the hometown people enjoying the sceneries as if it was similar to a drawn picture of a painter's or a poet imagination. It kept the old memories alive, and people who shared this place and left their mark but are forgotten now just because they are gone from the passage of time.

3.2. How Saukko's (2008) key ideas inform my research

My study will be focused on visual cultures in Britain and Iran, and how the character of society changes from the text to images and representation. Certainly, every society is affected by its cultural-historical context. For instance, such effects can be measured by different elements of nature, which have different meanings in both countries according to their cultural and historical background. Different elements can also be investigated in terms of similarities between the meanings of natural and realist writing and texts, poems, histories, art works and so on, and how much they can be true in understanding culture. These effective references and texts can be transformed into images. Mitchell et al. (2011) in *Picturing Research ; Drawing as Research Methods*, in their discussion of artistic images, argue:

Something just needs to be shown, not merely stated. Artistic images help us to access those elusive hard, to put into words aspects of knowledge that might otherwise remain hidden or ignored. (Mitchell et al., 2011:19)

In response to my research question, I ask: in what ways is the notion of melancholy utilised in both the conception and experience of photographic images of landscape? I need to focus on the analysis of visual representations, such as paintings and photographs in relation to the cultural and historical texts of the nineteenth century that some ideas about melancholy by artists were considered, as well as theoretical understandings and their practical work through melancholic arts. It is necessary to look at how elements in nature could be used as symbols of melancholy through my landscape photographic images as whole, or recognising single elements

as significant. Then, I should consider my findings on the idea of melancholy as self-awareness to evaluate my practical work. Denzin and Lincoln (2008) argue that:

Contextual analysis of social and cultural structures and processes may focus on what these structures are. Such analysis will be enriched, however by paying attention to the way in which these social processes may be experienced very differently in particular local contexts (dialogism). It also will benefit from thinking through how the research itself, for its small or big part, influences the processes it is studying (self-reflexivity). (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008:459)

The cultural context can be understood in terms of semiotics and the study of signs as the individual ideas and signs of melancholy in both Iran and the UK. Specific signs of natural elements have different meanings in the two countries. For example, trees are the symbol and recollection of the gardens of the heavens in Persian culture and literature; and bare trees are the symbol of nostalgia, age and losing power, whereas trees in Western cultures such as the UK, are a symbol of life, and there can be seen some comparison between cultures in the meaning of this element, since in both they are also a symbol of paradise. Allen (2003) in *Routledge Critical Thinkers: Roland Barthes*, argues that:

Semiotic analysis is the idea of general study of the sign systems, which make up our societies. Barthes arguments are to escape from the linguistic model, since it is in that model that we find the most compelling and comprehensive account of what signs are and how they work. Semiotic system are relied at some point on language, whatever the reliance involves a caption added to a photograph in a newspaper or magazine. (Allen, 2003:46)

The experimental or ethnographic study, which is related to the study and efficient recording of human culture through close observation, reading, and interpretation methods, is based on reflection in society. There is variety in this methodology, including direct observation often contained in anthropology, regarding the study of humans that can be referred to my research according to my original cultural past and present as self-reflexivity to understand the complexity of culture across some of human history. It can be measured through designed interventions by including my social involvement (Smith and Dean, 2009).

According to Manghani et al (2006) in *Images; a Reader*:

The place of visual communication in a given society can only be understood in the context of the range of forms or modes of public

communication available in that society and their uses and valuations. This refers to semiotic landscape. The metaphor is worth exploring a little, as is its etymology (study of word origins). (Manghani et al., 2006: 119)

Therefore, for me, the meaning of images is more valuable than linguistic communication, when I make an effort to communicate with the audience through my photographic images. In terms of methodology, I examine the old styles of photographic images and paintings, which continue to fascinate me. I can learn from these primary pictures and repeat their methods. I also consider the following argument by Brown and Sorensen (2009) in *Integrating Creative Practice and Research in the Original Media Arts*:

It is common for arts practitioners to have significant knowledge without necessarily being able to adequately describe that knowledge. In other words, knowledge embedded in practice is often personal and ineffable. In order to make this personal knowledge more generally useful a process of reflection and contextualisation is often required. Reflection can help to find patterns that make this personal knowledge more generally applicable and contextualisation helps to place those findings within a broader history of accumulated knowledge. These processes are important because they are essential to transforming personal knowledge into communal knowledge. (Brown and Sorensen, 2009:163)

These procedures are significant due to being essential to transforming personal knowledge into communal knowledge. This understanding and knowledge can be accessed through the various presentations of art works, usage of some resources, written descriptions, critical analysis, level of process and explanations.

3.3 Study of signs or Semiology

The Garden of Eden

According to Chegini (2011) in *Studying the Penetration of Semitic Myths in Persian Poems* he states that: “in Iranian myths are myths about plants. In Zoroastrian myths, the plant is the fourth material creature in creation of the world” (Chegini, 2011:38). Trees are the representation of melancholic emotional situations. It is possible that trees are considered as nostalgic objects and the work of memory recalls the forest as a nostalgic place. Nevertheless, does nostalgia necessarily imply an unhealthy relationship with the past? Segal (1999) describes:

The primary symptom of both nostalgia and melancholy is a sense of loss without an object. Nostalgia, or homesickness, is famously not about the past but about felt absences or ‘lack’ in the present. Nostalgia is a continual that are revisiting or replaying of the past that has often lost any direct contact with this past. Nostalgia enables us to reclaim a past and, sometimes, to change our experience of it in the present. (Segal, 1999:37)

The bare trees in composition on the right or left are symbols of movement and distance and are linked to our intellect and melancholic imagination. Karas (1991) in *The Solstice Evergreen: History, Folklore, and Origin of the Christmas tree*, states:

Evergreens, in ancient Europe were placed inside the house at the winter solstice, the longest night of the year, as a sign of hope and a reminder of the continuity of life through the darkness of winter. This custom is preserved today in the form of Christmas tree. (Karas. 1991:137)

The transformation of bare trees in winter into trees with blossoms in spring is symbolic of movement from sadness to hope. It is also the transformation or passing of time, which is also related to our emotional states. Moreover, the vertical shapes of trees are representations of the elements of life, energy and strength. The congregation of enormous trees is glorious and joyful, although the nature of trees is an element of melancholic character.

Chegini describes, “Growth of plants in the spring and its depression in the winter is considered the origin of plant-gods in the mind of early mankind and Adonis, Tammuz, Ishtar, Baal, Osiris and Siavash are amongst such plant-deities” (Chegini,

2011:38). Hill (2003) in 'The Garden Of Eden: A Modern Landscape' mentions that, "assuming a traditional, biblical-genealogy date of about 4000 B.C. for Adam and the Garden of Eden, the four rivers would have confluence at the Persian Gulf in Iran at a position somewhat inland from where the Persian Gulf is today" (Hill, 2000:39).

The gladness of Paradise was further than any happiness we can be familiar with; how then can be explained? If it can be described, how is different from normal happiness? The answer is the greatest objects of nature are the most pleasing to watch, and next to Heaven. Nostalgia is represented as a wish for certain advantages and powers in life that a human being has actually has lost, and it is touchable in this storyline. At the same time, it shows the inabilities of the person, due to lack of similar initiatives and belongings, to make the Lost Paradise, which should satisfy the particularities of lived experience in the present. Hence, the nostalgic emotion relies on what we do not have and what we desire to have.

It is described by some theorists that the primary symptom of both nostalgia and melancholy explains as "a sense of loss without an object". Similarly, it is argued that "nostalgia, or homesickness, is famously not about the past but about felt absences or 'lack' in the present". Nostalgia is described as "a continual revisiting or replaying of the past that has often lost any direct contact with this past, nostalgia enable the individuals to reclaim a past and, sometimes, to change our experience of it in the present. This ability to alter the experience of the past by reexamining it in the present moment importantly forms identities and behaviors for the future. According to Lerner (1972) in *The Use of Nostalgia; Studies in Pastoral Poetry*:

For some poets such as Matthew Arnold the tree is objective correlative for his regaining of hope at the end of poem perhaps a rather theoretical regaining, not as deeply convincing as the earlier melancholy, but all the same it bursts into the poem with the delighted impact of a visual surprise. (Lerner, 1972:236)

Moreover, Murno claims that if human beings tend to design utopias, these ideas originate from their imagination, a dreamy place similar to paradise. He also examined the illustration of Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*. According to Murno (2005), there is reason beyond the creation of a garden and melancholic

contemplation. He argued that to have meditation and melancholic intellect it was necessary to form gardens in the Romantic period. Murno (2005) states that:

Getting 'out' of the stultifying effect of the formal garden clearly became a rallying point for many English artists and intellectuals, at least those of a temperament unsuited for the fashion of French formalism. (Murno, 2005:280)

According to Ala Amjadi (2011) in *Heaven Is a Feeling Not a Place; The Persian Garden Story*, he notes that it is well to remember that the aims of the formal garden go back to the Arabian idea of paradise as an enclosed space. The conception was intensely 'inward', creating a space in which the 'outside' was banished, particularly through the use of walls and high hedges. Nevertheless, the efforts of the Persian nation in creating four seasons of the Persian garden through all lifecycles should not be forgotten. Thus, the spring is symbol of hope, summer is the symbol of desire and rest, the season of autumn is the symbol of loss and melancholy, and winter of gloom and loneliness, recalling the beautiful feeling of harmony combined with pleasure and nostalgia (Ala Amjadi, 2011).

Element of Water



Damavand, Iran (Afsaneh Tayyar, 2012)

Glasgow (2009), in writing on the concept of water declares:

Water is a sign of neatness, simplicity, transparency, and pureness to a world of wishful thinking of rain, or on the river on the boat influence symbolize nostalgic day of freedom. Imagine a narrator on the water, in which he spends some moments alone in his boat on a ghostly river covered in fog, he is in melancholic atmosphere. (Glasgow, 2009:173)

In Persian culture, moreover, water can be associated with rain, a river and blessing, as well as emotional elements such as tears. Persian culture respects humans associated with nature. Islamic beliefs consider nature as a sign that present the power of the Creator as a basis of reflection and miracle, similar to declaration of Abram (2011) in *Symbols and Images: Water, Wind, Moon*, in discussing the element of water, mentions that:

The symbol of water according to Coleridge ideas, he hides it behind a metaphor of “undraped tears gleam of the stream beneath or the vernal showers that gladden the green earth”. It symbolises how short and

meaningful our life is although we are not fully aware of it, as well as the pace of life and the productivity of our thoughts. (Abram, 2011:22)

The peaceful Persian gardens were imaginable symbols of the paradise overhead and besides a symbolic approximation of another place, where the souls would finally live. Similar themes can be found in Hebrew and Christian stories of the tree of life, which grew in the Garden of Eden (Karas. 1991:137).

River of Eden

According to Hill (2000), from about 5000 to 2000 B.C., Ur was possibly a seaport located at the confluence of the Euphrates River with the Persian Gulf, and it is also possible that the Pishon River flowed into the Persian Gulf at or near this locality. A spring rising forth in Eden makes sense. All four rivers, the Pishon, Euphrates, Tigris, and Gihon once converged near the (then) head of the Persian Gulf to create a fertile land fit for a garden. The river created by the spring flowed out from the garden to where it met with the confluence of the four great rivers (Hill, 2000: 39-40).

Glasgow (2009) in *The Concept of Water*, states:

For some reason it was supposed that the existence of paradise is somewhere beyond the inhabited world. The Irish monk Brendan famously undertook a voyage in search of it, assuming it to be an island located somewhere in the Atlantic. Such was the faith placed in his travel tales with their stirring adventures and self-moving islands accessible to the saintly. Brendan's promised land of the saints subsequently is known as the Brendan's Island or Lost Island. (Glasgow, 2009:173)

Similarly, the violent, loud sea and suddenly the silent of the river, then the oceanic thunder and waves and whispering of seaside make the water or river a place of secrecy and melancholic but pleasant suffering. The river looks so far-reaching and massive, gloomy and silent especially appearing as an image of melancholy when it is in the heart of an great city. In addition, the desire beyond this journey on water and the pleasant confidence integrating with suffering desire to find the Lost Paradise can be the symbol of melancholy in this story. The Earth surrounded by a circular and never-ending ocean is also a symbol of indefinite nature. The mystery of the ocean is regarded and described as wonderful loneliness. Besides, if water is linked to compassion and tears, then water is the melancholic element.

The semiotic analysis can be discussed in terms of the individual signs of melancholy in two countries: Iran and the UK. Some elements of nature offer specific signs of melancholy, which have different meanings in both countries as a 'social reality'. The standard example of semiotic analysis is found in Barthes's work. Barthes (1983) in *Empire of Signs*, discusses water he sees:

Fluid as water, gives the idea of a clear destiny, of a nutritivity without grease, of an elixir all the more comforting in that it is pure: something aquatic, something delicately marine suggest a spring, a profound vitality. (Barthes, 1983:14)

The importance of sunlight in both Persian and British culture as the symbol of melancholy

A kind of Sublime mood can be perceived in the melancholic times of sunrise and sunset. Meanwhile, it can transform a person's feelings from a depressed mood to an uplifting emotion at these times of the day, depending on the individual's character. Thereby, the indication is that sunset and sunrise are two important elements of nature which could lead the individual to moods of melancholy or the Sublime, which are substantial factors in this study. There is evidence that the sunlight is considered to be very significant in Persian and British literature, culture and different religions. In most ancient cultures, including Persia, the start of the solar year was marked to celebrate the victory of light over darkness and the renewal of the sun. In Iran, the longest day of winter has been celebrated for centuries and is called *yalda* night, which refers to the birthday or rebirth of the sun. *Yalda* is an ancient Syrian word meaning birth. This ceremony is traced to the primal concept of Light and Good against Darkness and Evil in the ancient Iranian religion. This night, which incorporates Evil, is considered as unlucky. The last day of the Persian month of *Azar* is the longest night of the year, which is in December.

Besides, the use of the word *Nur*, or light, in the *Holy Quran*, is an obvious example of homonymy with life. "*Allah is the Light (Nur) of the heavens and the earth.*" (Al-Nur 24:35). Although the sun's light is brighter, Allah uses the word *Nur* to describe how the light of His guidance loomed in the middle of all surrounding darkness. It is certain that the light of God is described as spreading light peacefully

without any burning flames. Subsequently, maybe that is why Banani(1988) in *Ferdowsi and the Art of Tragic Epic*, as a Muslim confessed that: “a Saturn-like image, is a reminder of the tragedy of death and loss, yet the next sunrise comes, bringing with it hope of a new day” (Banani,1988: 110).

Meanwhile, Saadi (1184-1283) one of the major Persian poets, wrote in his poem of the *Garden of Roses* an indication of the importance of the sun. Saadi (1258) writes:

Cloud and wind, moon and sun move in the sky
That thou mayest again bread, and not eat it unconcerned
For thee all are revolving and obedient
It is against the requirement of justice if thou obeyest not (Burton, 1850).

Throughout the Holy Bible God is light. If light represents goodness, the antithesis of the evil associated with darkness, it is a natural step for the biblical authors to understand God, the ultimate good, as light. Light symbolises God, God's presence and favour (Psalm 21:1; Isa 9:2; Cor 4:6). Throughout the Old Testament light is regularly associated with God and his word, with salvation, goodness, truth, and life.



The Cross on the Mountain, Dresden (Friedrich, 1808)

The New Testament resonates with these themes, and the holiness of God is presented in such a way that it is said that God lives in unapproachable light (1 Tim 6:16). God is light (1 John 1:5) who dispels darkness. Jesus Christ is life-giving light, in whom is life (John 1:4), and those who follow him will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life (John 8:12; Wilkins, 2013).

Moreover, it is apparent that based on these beliefs, some of Friedrich's famous paintings are religious expressions. In 1808, one of his most controversial paintings, “The Cross in the Mountains” (Gemaldegalerie, Dresden), was put on display. The most important aspects in his painting are the dominant rays of the evening sun, which represented the setting of the old, pre-Christian world. The mountains symbolise a steady faith, while the evergreen trees are an expression or metaphor of hope. Friedrich painted several other important compositions in which crosses overlook a landscape.

During the 1920s, Friedrich’s paintings were appreciated by the Expressionists, and in the 1930s and 1940s, the Surrealists and Existentialists frequently drew on his work. Brennan (2005) in *Wordsworth, Turner, and Romantic Landscape; a study of the traditions of the Picturesque and the Sublime*, mentions :“the sense and blessed mood of a quietism like that of such German transcendentalists as Caspar David Friedrich represent the positive sublime through a sympathetic energy” (Brennan, 2005:52).

I have mainly focused on paintings by Friedrich. Caspar David Friedrich in the Romanticism movement put greater emphasis on his imaginative, emotional and transcendental appreciation of the beauties of nature. His paintings comprised an obsessive interest in folk and ethnic culture. John Constable, Turner and Friedrich were types of painter who turned to nature, as both a scene of inspiration and a powerful symbol of their own personalities. Friedrich’s paintings are generally landscapes, but are clearly designed to express the emotional and psychic state of the artist.

The image of a turbulent sea of fog is a reflection of my inner emotion turned from me as the viewer; the subject emphasises the sublime power of nature towards the distant horizon, bold and apprehensive. Viewers could gaze out at a mysterious landscape, wide and maybe threatening, like many of Friedrich paintings, which are mystical, melancholic, religious and quietly profound. The universe for Friedrich remained a kind, warm, benevolent place in which he found comfort. Friedrich’s attitude towards nature, like that of Shelley, was often ambivalent:

The everlasting universe of things flows through the mind and rolls its rapid waves, now dark, now glittering, now reflecting gloom, the wilderness has a mysterious tongue which teaches awful doubt or faith so mild. (Shelley, "Mont Blanc", 1816)

In "Mont Blanc", Percy Shelley compares the power of the mountains to the power of the human imagination. He is concerned with the human mind and its ability to comprehend truth through a study of nature. Thus, I intend to perceive my message by the intention that was to create something emotional, nostalgic and melancholic.

Those paintings inspired me to look for other subject matter. I began to concern myself with issues such as the effects of light, the relationship of colours, and the fundamental character of form and marks. Comparison of my landscape photographic images with paintings by such artists as Constable, Turner and Friedrich, shows that I was selecting and simplifying, flattening, intensifying, or maybe abstracting the view. The image as an abstract is helpful in the development of high-level thinking skills. Collaborative learning via images is essential to a discussion of how researchers and photographers focus on particular styles of image-making. Bruner (1971) in *The Relevance of the Education* suggests that people are frequently followed by what they have learned. It is a dynamic and successive process of understanding new worlds. Besides, the subject matter of Impressionism was light.

I was therefore interested in studying how changes in light consequently affected colour and emotion. In examining the paintings of Friedrich and Turner, I focused on the importance of bright light. As in the paintings of Friedrich, Turner reflected the supernatural spirit and power of the Creator. The light on the sea, the sparkle of greys and blues and natural ruins were reflected in Turner's paintings. Therefore, I have tried to replicate sunset and sunlight in my visual work for an indication of the spiritual meaning and sense of these times of the day. At these times of the day, it is important to pray, for Muslims and most people who belong to other religions. It is a symbol of a blessed time for them, when they prepare to pray, much like Friedrich's attention to sunlight. Sunset and sunrise for Friedrich was the light of divinity.

On some occasions, in a few of my photographic images, it can be seen that there is a lack of human beings in the background of the images, which can be related to an

isolated area and places. Due to the atmosphere of such quiet places, a human being can take rest without being disturbed by others. The silent and peace of nature can be seen as giving calmness to the individual as a gift from the Creator. Nature and its surrounding elements have been considered in my practical research by means of drawing out a group of main changes in human relationships toward the God Almighty. There have been many efforts to challenge nature and the universe's hidden power and there is little concern and care about humanity. The human figures are not my main goals, and my ultimate intention is how we can save our planet's nature and its surroundings.



Before sunrise in the mountains (Caspar David Friedrich, 1835)



Sunset, Tehran (Afsaneh Tayyar, 2012)

Section 4: On Visualising Melancholy

4.1. Theory, Travel and practice:

The theories of melancholy, which create meaning and the subjective presence of the image, are considered in my research. They are reflected not only in the text, but also the production of images and their reading. This has been taken into account in reference to the social relations with melancholy and nostalgia within the meanings that are produced and used. The photographic images are composed to verify the sense of my national identity, by also allowing for a cultural understanding of melancholy. When reading the photographs I may choose to concentrate on the formal qualities of the image, for example, its arrangement within the frame, or the dispositions, stances and gestures of its subject. According to Wells (2000) in *Photography: a Critical Introduction*, he argues that: “we may note the similarities and differences from other works or we may want to explore the way in which the image may be examined from the standpoint of landscape” (Wells, 2000: 43).

Some part of the sky around the Village of Peyman, nearby Saveh city was full of reflected light, with a beautiful orange rose colour placed on yellow-blue slate. I belong to the generation born shortly before the Shah years that left Iran after the revolution. I belong in the period of war between Iran and Iraq during 1980-1987. These areas in Saveh are situated on a long road that connects the countries of Iran and Iraq. The landscape photographic images represent the village of my grandfather's motherland. They show the steppes, the swamplands, the fields and mountains, and the lands of care somewhat banished that some families passed through. Moreover, there was something intensely melancholy in that wild and desolate landscape, similar to Anna Shteynshleyger, who born in Russia in 1977 and captured magnificent photographs in Siberia in 2001. It also reminds me of the Bosnian landscape photographed in 2004 by Christian Schwager from Switzerland, who was born in 1966. According to Herschdorfer (2001) in *Afterwards: Contemporary Photography Confronting The Past*:

Her images from Bosnia look peaceful enough. They seem to invite us to walk through a countryside that has never known any kind of disturbance. Nevertheless, in fact, they are linked to terrible atrocities. Viewing these places more than ten years after the war, which tend to focus on the dramatic scenery. (Herschdorfer, 2001:90)



Siberia (Anna Shteynshleyger, 2001)



Village of Peyman, Iran (Afsaneh Tayyar, 2013)

In the Middle Ages, the Volga commerce route connected Northern Europe and North-western Russia with the Caspian Sea, via the Volga River. The Russians used this route to trade with Muslim countries on the southern shores of the Caspian Sea,

sometimes penetrating as far as Baghdad. Now, by travelling again to this land, Saveh, I could realise better why Bosnian landscapes are so similar to these areas in Iran.

Keorner (1990) in *Casper David Friedrich and the Subject of Landscape*, in his discussion on the subject of landscape expresses the idea of nostalgia by picturing the blind path: “The blind path or an endless path seems to lead somewhere but the imagination of the end of the path is apprehensive. Especially when somebody is walking on the pathway, it means that someone is already there. Suddenly that ending pathway makes us wonder where the first travellers have gone. Perhaps viewing a traveller walking into an empty landscape makes us feel melancholic” (Keorner, 1990). In my practical work, there are no traces of forced labour, death, violence, suffering, cruelty or disgrace, nor the experience of prison camps, as lived by countless victims in Iran. Similar to Schewager’s landscape photographs, those suffering were not clearly in my mind and images as I travelled through these landscapes. My landscape photographic images are not presented as evidence of past events or circumstances: they are created by my feelings about the past and the present. Gazing at these landscapes, doubt begins to emerge when I look at photographs and observe them one by one.

The beauty of landscapes gradually gives way to other mental images that represent these areas in the effects of war far from there. Walking on this land reminded me of my late grandfather, who passed away here and was buried on this land, and my late uncle, who lost his life as a loyal soldier at the end of this road. At that moment, I felt that I was haunted by a paradoxical nostalgia: nostalgia for all of the past and all of the futures that were lost. My nostalgia is not defined by yearning for the past; past is past, but viewing all these beautiful landscapes, which are changing gradually to a silent place without a flooded river, upset me. It was like a ghost land. These rivers used to be full of water, it was a pleasant village to live in with happy people, but they all migrated to the cities for a better life.



Bosnia (Christian Schwager, 2004)



Village of Peyman, Iran (Afsaneh Tayyar, 2013)



Village of Peyman, Iran (Afsaneh Tayyar, 2013)

At that moment, I could identify other photographers' points of view. Comparing my landscape photographic image to Shteynshleyger's images, it convinced me that she tried first to create the appearance of something that was absent. Gradually, it became evident for me that the images showed how something or somebody had formerly looked. The image makes it possible for the viewer to receive the narrative, even if it was set in some eternal period, beyond historical time. This approach, in the present through the use of art images, or of the imitation of the historical past, is granted as current reality and the honesty of present history under the influence and coldness of some glossy illusion.

Damavand Mountain, Iran

3 August, 2012

After ten years separation from my motherland, since I arrived in Tehran, I travelled up to a higher level in the mountains in Damavand. I could feel the weather changing as the freshness increased and the temperature dropped. However, the climate changing did not influence the impression I was getting from the magnificent scenery and pure raw nature. Getting closer to the top of the hills, almost near the peak, I found myself walking through clouds and misty surroundings. At this point the atmosphere around me had a melancholic feel to it, which so vividly contrasted the peak of the mountain with the surface. I felt incredibly inspired and at this point nothing but a deep breath could express how I was feeling. This overjoyed sensation continued as I viewed the splendid landscape with mountain peaks touching the blue sky like strong pillars preventing this glorious castle of elegant sky from falling down. Bowles (2005) explains in *Baptism of Solitude* his 'loneliness' in nature as follows:

It is a unique sensation, and it has nothing to do with loneliness, for loneliness presupposes memory. This wholly mineral landscape lighted by stars like flares, even memory disappears, and nothing is left but your own breathing and the sound of your heart beating. A strange and by no means unpleasant, process of reintegration begins inside you and it remains.
(Bowles, 2005:119)

It was possible for me to have a nostalgic feeling as well, as it can be expressed that nostalgia is a legitimate work of memory. According to Segal (1999) in his declaration about nostalgia in the section of From the Private to the Public, he implies the relationship between present and the past. The unattainable objects or immaterial experiences of the past, which constitute nostalgia, are actual material of the self. Through changing one's relationship to the past, one's interiority is also altered, thereby changing one's relations with others.



On the way to Peak of Damavand, Iran (Afsaneh Tayyar, 2012)

In the illusory world, human relationships coped in close connection to natural environments provide a space for critique and possibility within which beauty, sustainable, ethical relations between human and other spaces might flourish. Maybe the landscape images cultivate a green culture of life, political alliances of the idea of life, imagines a world where respect for natural and cultural diversity inspires a dedication of rectifying geopolitical inequality. So nostalgia can help imagine new ways for pre-death of nature stories to circulate more productivity within a transcendent, post natural world to benefit of both nonhuman nature and human culture. The religious and environmental overtones of this mystifying insistently re-indicating of nostalgia for an Eden in which human live in harmony with each other and with the environment.



On the way to Peak of Damavand, Iran (Afsaneh Tayyar, 2012)

Sometimes an uplifting feeling is closer to the sublime and sometimes is closer to melancholy as Brady and Haapala (2003) mentioned. Although it was calm, peaceful contemplation mixed with anxiety and fear, but this solitude nature gave raised to my melancholy mood and feelings. There is also a connection between the Sublime power and melancholic feeling. According to Ashfield and De Bolla (1996) in *The Sublime; a Reader in British Eighteenth Century Aesthetic Theory*, Edmund Burke states that for the sublime the idea of pain is at its highest degree and is stronger than the pleasure. The idea of power belongs to pain and pleasure, which is associated with melancholy. Pleasure arises from love and admiration while pain arises from the enormity and fear of the power of God. So the sublime is a pleasant horror or an awful joy.

Based on my own personal experience and findings it can be confirmed that Brady and Haapala's (2003) theory about melancholic feelings is that they can be joyful rather than cause a person to be depressed or feel sorrow. In fact, during the journey to this part of Iran, my melancholic emotions were mixed with emotions of joyfulness and sadness but engaged more importance on pleasure and enjoyment. Therefore, through this experience I acquired a reflection and recollection of pleasurable

memories and moments. Despite Sontag (2003) in *On Photography: Melancholy Objects* that she explains of melancholic emotions through pictures and she refers to them as having a sense of regret and remorse, it can be strongly argued that there is a belief that emotions have a more positive effect on an individual than a pessimistic influence. This is concluded in John Keats' (1820) theory, which confirmed the connection between joyfulness and melancholic emotions: as was said "melancholy is a best friend with happiness and they come together".



Damavand Mountain Chains, Iran (Afsaneh Tayyar, 2012)

North of Iran, Village of Masouleh

24th August 2012

The rough curve of highlands mixed with the misty atmosphere filled me with praise and contentment. The sense of liveliness and feeling of joyfulness were increased when drops of rain were left on my face due to heavy fog surrounding the village and I realised that the nature of Iran has been diverted through climate change within the past decade. Therefore various places have different temperature levels in the same season. According to Cassagnere (2006), feelings of displeasure in melancholy are because of the loss of an old object but the hope of having that thing we love and long for brings pleasure and positive emotion and makes melancholy bearable.



Village of Masouleh, Iran (Afsaneh Tayyar, 2012)

I have been looking at nostalgic and melancholic paintings by Caspar David Friedrich, who used a classical approach to nature and ruins to create ideal scenes of

rustic glory. My photographs of ruins and nature are an attempt to evoke nostalgia, struggle with ideas of reality, and question the value that others place on traditional ethics. It is natural to experiment with the significance of nostalgic desire and I use this effectively in my current landscapes. I approach these pictures as an investigator. These photographs of true locations contain whatever confusion is related to the definite topics, but living spirits exist among the ruins and landscapes.

Back to the UK



On the Flight Back to the UK (Afsaneh Tayyar, 2013)

Sedikides et al (2008) in *Nostalgia as Enabler of Self-Continuity*, state that:

Another key function of nostalgia is that it may facilitate continuity, between past and present selves. Nostalgia may facilitate use of positive perceptions about the past to bolster a sense of continuity and meaning in one's life. (Sedikides et al, 2008: 232)

My experience of travelling to Iran and returning to the UK again provides me with many chances to check norms, images and memories alongside reality. Nevertheless, I think that life can only be complete within these two worlds; without

the comparison between Iran and the UK, they are both only nonsense. Individuals are unable to return home as they do not want to accept the realities of their homeland, but rather rely on a nostalgic fantasy. Stephan et al. (2008) in *Magic of the Past*, discussing nostalgia, states: “an additional function of nostalgia may be its motivating potential. Nostalgia may boost optimism, spark inspiration, and foster creativity” (Stephan et al., 2008: 306). Family and close friends have been described to be of high importance as placed in the nostalgic daydream. Although there is clear evidence that such personal memories are mostly positive, nostalgia stimulated by different objects such as a view or landscape, a perfume, or a music note may still cause a melancholic mood and sentimentality. A nostalgic feeling is never filled with those emotions that people usually think of as negative, such as misery, annoyance, hopelessness and hate. Consequently, melancholy is a desire or feeling that is always with us; nevertheless, nostalgia is a time-based feeling that can be called the recollection of good old times. Nostalgia can be felt for a moment and then leave us for another moment, but melancholy can be felt for days and days.



Dunham Massey, England (Afsaneh Tayyar, 2013)

In below section, I want to examine the link between nostalgia and melancholy. Rubenstein (2000) in *Home Matters: Longing and Belonging, Nostalgia and Mourning in Women's Fiction*, states that in description of nostalgia, which he

qualifies:

The painful awareness of nostalgic and melancholic emotion is simultaneously describing nostalgia, which also is a response to universal inevitability of separation and loss and the existential condition of adulthood. The spatial or geographical separation and homesickness can be considered as nostalgia, which reflects a temporal dilemma. (Rubenstein 2000:4-5)

Nostalgia is a feeling integrated with sadness and a yearning to an irresistible desire. It continues and deeply distresses the individuals attempt to cope with their present circumstances. A nostalgic journey is a trip of grief. It is the realization that the past is hopelessly lost and is only one extremely undesirable emotion.

Freud (1984) in *Mourning and Melancholia* states that:

The distinguishing mental features of melancholia are profoundly painful dejection cessation of interest in the outside world, loss of capacity to love, inhibition of all activity, and a lowering of the self-regarding feelings to degree that find utterance in self-reproach reviling and culminates in a delusional expectation of punishment. (Freud, 1984:252)

Furthermore, the most common relationships between melancholy and nostalgia are:

- Feel interruption within relationships to the others.
- Not able to recreate the past.
- The lack of an affiliation and developing fears of loss.
- Wishful thinking about past memories.
- The memory of tradition and past experiences that are loaded with feelings of pain and pleasure.



Moses Gate Country Park, England (Afsaneh Tayyar, 2013)



Dunham Massey, England (Afsaneh Tayyar, 2013)

However home is wherever you make it

The beautiful country of my birth reminds me of and recalls the good old times but remembering all these memories is not painful for me. My nostalgia depends on the creation of both understanding and recollections of the past events, which for me no longer lasts at some points. For this reason, the theory of Rubenstein (2000) in *Home Matters: Longing and Belonging, Nostalgia and Mourning in Women's Fiction* makes it clearer to me that nostalgia can be a temporal problem, especially when it is related to a geographic split and homesickness. Nevertheless, I should bear in mind that the positivity of nostalgia will help to boost my self-confidence, social connections and develop my social behaviours, according to Sedikides et al. (2008) in *Nostalgia as Enabler of Self-continuity*, as it is concerned with my social experience.



Dunham Massey, England (Afsaneh Tayyar, 2013)

As I am aware of my nostalgic recollection, I begin to investigate nature as meditation to recover my feelings. Then I prefer to dream about my origins from a long distance, fostering those in other lands and grasping them in creative ways. Although return itself would have a sense of new transformation, however I attempt to spend some moments in nature to refresh my mind. For this purpose, I sometimes try to visit the green lands and enjoy the beauty of nature and link with the beauty of two places. My aim is to find out more about culture, identity, and to review the concept of nostalgia and melancholy between Iran and the UK as my determination and conclusion.

5. Critical Reflection on Technique

In the scientific and technical aspects of some of the photographic images, I felt that there was a lack of emotion and seeing qualities. In this regard, I tried to consider the image processing techniques, to become a more creative photographer and to contribute my shared emotion on the research subject. However, learning about the artistic aspect of photographs is very important. Thus, I started to write about photography and art, and did not stop to look further. Moreover, by considering photographs as an art form, I was capable of expressing what I saw and felt as an artistic medium. I also looked at art forms from both a historical and contemporary prospective. I have taken over 1,100 landscape photographic images. Certainly, some of the images were revised, while some would be pushed aside and new ones introduced. However, I felt more confident starting to create my book and visual practice, knowing that I could proceed further than a couple of images. In some of my visual works I feel that there is an expression of my personal dreams and visions through colours and sunlight, forms and compositions. The reflection of dreams means to me that the images possess a quality of rhythmical verse, although some images are evidence of my anxiety and wartime distraction.

It is possible that my approach to making the transcendental images resulted from poetic compositions. It seems that the poems of Wordsworth influenced my reaction to facts and emotions, which are deeply ingrained in tradition. Wordsworth's poems often closely observe the objects of the natural world and I reflected upon the thoughts, emotions and memories that these objects evoked. The resultant reaction to the verse can thus be seen in the landscape photography. As to whether these images were successful or not, I can also refer to Wordsworth's poetry and its descriptive verses which gave nature a sort of ambiguity and transcendental strain. Thus, I found in the poetic verses the language of emotions and the aesthetic ideal for the natural form. The emotional effect of nature can therefore be seen in some of my landscape images.

The ambition of good composition ought to show the subject in a flattering landscape, visually pleasing manner. However, such an opinion is a little shallow. Not

every work of art is supposed to be attractive or pleasing to the viewer. Some artists try to express different, stronger ideas, and their subject, as well as their composition choices, will help to achieve that. For example, if an artist wants the viewer to feel uncomfortable or nervous, they will choose the least natural composition, and then come up with something unexpected and shocking. In my case, I considered using shocking moments of lights during the sunrise and sunset, by using a silhouette technique. Maybe less disturbing moments can be felt in my landscape images. Indeed, there is something meditative in those images. Nevertheless, the contrast of lights and shadows can be advocated for as representing those feelings of melancholy or nostalgia that can be experienced at these particular times of day.

Sharper or more in-focus objects may attract more attention than a blurry shape, but not continually. For this reason, I tried to use all of the available means to achieve my favourite results. Sometimes de-focusing objects in the foreground or background does not deny their influence on the overall composition of the image. Moreover, simple shapes, tones, shadows, highlights and colours are all strong elements of composition. As a technique, I decided to take silhouette snapshots when the sun was right above the skyline, usually at sunset. I preferred this time of day, because the sun causes the sky to be at its lightest for a better contrast between object and sky. It was an effort to point at the objects with the sun directly behind for a radiance around the silhouette. When the sky is too bright and the object small, it is possible to create the silhouetted image.

In some images of sunrise and sunset, one can observe my attempts to illustrate the source of the positive and negative Sublime. Furthermore, the importance of brightness and reflection of the uncanny spirit and power of the Deity are highlighted as my individual response to nature. For this purpose, in visual practice, one should be aware of the weak light that could cause the images to look flat and lifeless. Nevertheless, if the amount of light is right, it can help establish a tone, and bring depth and texture to my images. The fundamentals of basic lighting setups could help to breathe life into a bland view. There were some enchanting hours and moments of photography. The magnificent light for the setting was provided by the first and last hours of sunlight.

Some images are taken from below the subject and have the power to make the subject look influential, powerful and intimidating. Such low angle shots help to give a sense of mystification to the viewers. The added height of the object may make it inspire fright and anxiety in the viewer, who is emotionally dominated by the shape in the frame. Some of the backgrounds of the low angle shot are just the sky or branches of trees, and the lack of detail in the setting adds a sense of loss to the viewers, which might be connected to a melancholic sense.

Meanwhile, some shots from a point of view (POV), which shows the viewers the image through the subject's eye, can create an illusion and dreamy sense in relation to nostalgia. Moreover, in some high angle shots, in which the camera angle is located above the eye line, the camera looks down on the subject. High angle shots also make the object seem weak or powerless. This is an effort to make the moment more sharp. By taking a picture from above, the photographer highlights the imposing height effect, which makes the audience feel a certain way. Therefore, the camera can create a sense of superiority in this landscape image. With the camera in this position, the Sublime feeling or mood can be created for the viewers. For instance, staring and looking at deep valleys and huge high rocks where human figures are absent or shown as very tiny in front of this massive wild nature, is uplifting but mysterious in these photographic images.

In addition, to express such a melancholy mood and moment, the attempt was made to create a few photographs using silhouette, because these types of image are directly connected with nostalgia and represent a melancholic look. There is also a possibility for the viewer to have a nostalgic feeling by viewing these kinds of landscapes, as it can be expressed that nostalgia is a true work of memory. Nostalgia expresses the relationship between the present and the past.

Sometimes following the basic technical rules helped my photography to create completely balanced images and to reflect and transfer the sense of the powerful, wonderful Sublime to the viewers. Nevertheless, not always obeying these rules and techniques was helpful in transferring some sense of a feeling of emptiness from the aspect of melancholia and sometimes from a feeling of the Sublime. Therefore, I tried to break these rules occasionally, and to avoid following the rule of thirds to consciously unbalance my images, to achieve and transfer the feeling of emptiness or

hollowness in my melancholic landscape images.

Depth can be created in a photograph by including objects in the forefront, middle ground and background. Another useful composition technique is overlapping, where the photographer purposely separates one unclear object from another, and creates an image with more depth. This can isolate a subject from its background and foreground, for instance when using a shallow depth of field.



Tehran, Iran (Afsaneh Tayyar, 2013)

The work of my memories and my landscape photography as a form of gladness expresses my inner senses and self as a private communication with the setting and locations. Meanwhile, nostalgia can reappear in my contemplations, so there is a relationship between my traumatic experience and dreams. Furthermore, I invoke that nostalgic past in the service of interpreting and approving the present. Consequently, perhaps in my landscape images viewers could see through me. Nevertheless, they could never see into me, which can be referred to as my real emotions.

Section 6: Conclusion

6.1. Melancholy and melancholia

Below table is the summary of my comprehension and understanding of what are the origins differences between melancholy and melancholia:

Melancholy	Melancholia
1. Deep and long lasting sadness	16. Absence of hope
2. Sadness with a secret cause	17. Unhappiness
3. Kind of desire as action of mind	18. Hidden grief
4. Passion of mind if love is involved	19. Mental condition
5. Feeling of loss of an object	20. Persistent depression
6. Unconscious imagination related to Mad intelligence or artistic genius	21. Ill-founded fears
7. self-reflection	22. A kind of disease as black bile
8. Feeling	23. Madness and mania
9. Fear of death or lost love	24. Bipolar condition
10. A kind of transcendental feeling	25. Mood
11. Internal feeling	26. Disorder of the mind that can be caused by love
12. Mystical	27. Manic lovesickness
13. A kind of emotion	28. Pain
14. Philosophical activity	29. Sorrow and grief
15. Suspension in time between Possession and lost	30. Imbalance of mood
16. Anxiety	31. Temper

1, 2, 15, 16, 17; Cassagnere (2006: 3-6).

9, 26, 29, 31; Avicenna (980-1037).

3, 4, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 26, 27, 28, 29; Burton (1978:11,17).

14; Derin (2012:55).

7, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24; Toohey (2007:28).

8, 25, 29, 30; Brady and Haapala (2003: 3).

On this table as noted, according to Avicenna (980-1037) in his book *Al-Shafa*, Burton (1978) in *Anatomy of Melancholy*, Derin (2012) in *Love and Devotion*, and Brady and Haapala (2003) in *Melancholy as an Aesthetic Emotion*, that melancholy is

a kind of feeling and emotion that is associated with anxiety. However, in accordance with the declarations of Toohey (2007) in *Melancholy, Love, and Time*, Brady and Haapala (2003) and Burton (1632), melancholia is similar to a mood such as mental disease or an imbalance of mood/temper. Meanwhile, melancholia can also be classified as a mental disorder such as mania and bipolar, nevertheless it is recognised as a philosophical activity. However, there are some common points that can be seen as a kind of anxiety and hidden grief in both melancholic character and melancholia.

6.2.Understanding Melancholy

Based on different cultures and societies among individuals, which have been created by their perception and knowledge of historical text and literatures, there are differences between some definitions and reflections on melancholy. For instance, according to Banani (1988: 110) in his book *Ferdowsi and the Art of Tragic Epic* he states: “a Saturn-like image is a reminder of the tragedy of death and loss, yet the next sunrise comes, bringing with its hope of a new day”. At this point, Banani refers to the beauty in the brightness of days and considers these as a privilege that leads human beings to have hope during the sunlight, and darkness that can be illustrated as misery and disaster.

Meanwhile there is a connection between melancholy and nostalgia. Nostalgia is a sentimental longing or wistful reflective affection for a period in the past. Nostalgic thought is a journey of one’s recollection of enjoyment in a unique past experience, which people often imagine as a perfect past. In this sense nostalgia calms the feeling of damage and helps as a form of self-admiration. Nostalgia may increase the appreciation of what we hold and also reduces depression; for this reason it helps mainly to create an optimistic response in individuals’ minds. The role of nostalgia is to increase importance of the past events and incidents in people’s lives and help to build up self-confidence. This is in contrast from the concepts in melancholia, where the points of view stimulated by those conditions are usually regarded as unwelcoming and undesirable. Besides, melancholy shares a family connection with love, longing, yearning or missing something as well as feeling nostalgic.

Nostalgia's yearnings are for what cannot be kept and can be described as an incapacity to approach past moments in a spirit of nostalgia's melancholy aspect. Nostalgia reduces depression by increasing self-esteem. Brady and Haapala (2003), who have different theories about melancholy and nostalgia, describe how melancholy is connected to the sublime too:

According to Kant (1724-1804) "the sublime is a complex feeling that combines both displeasure and pleasure". The agitation and an overwhelming of the senses and imagination cause the displeasure. In the dynamically sublime the displeasure also seems to be caused by a feeling verging on fear. This feeling of displeasure gives way to pleasure from an elevated imagination in which we have a feeling of being at home in the world. (Brady and Haapala, 2003: 2)

However, the sublime is a complex feeling of pain and pleasure combined with fear; therefore, there is a connection between the sublime and the melancholy due to having delight and displeasure in both sublime and melancholic feelings. Besides, both of these feelings are linked to happiness and a pleasant moment, which assists the soul in being overjoyed and lifted up.

I can assume that there is an intention in their ideas about how beauty surpasses apart from other beauty concepts in some philosophers' thoughts. Normally, in various cultures and different religions, people can experience a calm feeling about times of the day such as sunrise and sunset, which can be linked to some level of appreciation in relation to God. It can be called a melancholic feeling at first, therefore when it has been sensed by the viewer they feel that need to pray. Then, an uplifting mood of the sublime can be felt, which might be caused by feeling blessed, as we witness the beauty of sunlight during a day. This type of effort creates and offers intellectual depth to the subject and cross-cultural curiosity fosters and stimulates this type of pleasure, which is not a pleasure of the momentary type. In this respect, expressing love and melancholy can be referred to as the examples of earthly love that have led humanity to divine love. However, Derin (2012) in *Earthly and Spiritual Love in Sufism* adopted the assumption that love in Persian culture is full of anxiety and suffering, and that these fears are sufficient to control a person's emotions when they are in a melancholic mood.

An expression of life, in some way, may be seen as the representation of people's emotions in their own society. Some behavioural codes of emotions, such as honour,

modesty and suffering, have been strongly influenced by examples of poetic language and literature, music, dance and paintings in Iranian society. In particular, the different levels of expression or symbolic emotions in art as a form of love, anxiety, suffering and bravery are combined with tradition in the Persian culture. For instance, traditional Persian music is full of anxiety, yearning and melancholic emotion, which is integrated with Old Persian poems and literature.

In the literature review and background research, an awareness and understanding of individuals' melancholic emotions is psychologically examined from medical and theoretical perspectives. There is also a spiritual knowledge of the understanding of melancholy with the delight of suffering and its meaning in Persian literature. This sense is affirmed as an act of mortal or divine love in Sufism.

However, spiritual love and melancholic feelings can be seen in the paintings and visual works of Caspar David Friedrich, and in the literary contexts of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in European art and culture as well. Furthermore, this research aims to raise an awareness and understanding of melancholic art and emotion. On the whole, melancholy is recognised as an action of love by Sufism in Eastern countries, whereas it can be understood as feelings of love and misery according to some philosophical theories in Western culture. My revision is that melancholy in Persian culture contains more happiness than it does in Western culture, although melancholy is described beautifully as a better way of understanding the relationship of humanity with God that is similar to the sublime feeling in Western art and literature. I believe that in Eastern culture the human relationship with God is associated with fear and love, while in Western culture this affiliation is associated with appreciation of the beauty of nature, as created by God.

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