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RFC: AT1120618V12

Revista Dilemas Contemporáneos: Educación, Política y Valores.

<http://www.dilemascontemporaneoseduccionpoliticaivalores.com/>

Año: VI

Número: Edición Especial

Artículo no.:107

Período: Marzo, 2019.

TÍTULO: Estudio comparativo del concepto de niñez sobre el romanticismo británico y el trascendentalismo estadounidense en comparación con la poesía mística de Mevlana.

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RESUMEN: Este artículo estudia el concepto de la infancia y sus diversos usos en algunos poetas románticos y trascendentalistas, incluido Mevlana, con quien Emerson estaba bastante familiarizado. La infancia, el tema dominante tanto en el romanticismo como en el trascendentalismo cubre el tema principal en la poesía de Blake, Wordsworth, Coleridge en Europa y Emerson y Whitman en América. Este concepto también se ha utilizado de manera ambigua y simbólica en la poesía mística de Mevlana, por lo que vale la pena compararla con las obras del romanticismo inglés y el trascendentalismo estadounidense.

PALABRAS CLAVES: Emerson, Transcendentalism, Romanticism, Childhood, and Mevlana.

TITLE: A Comparative Study of the Concept of Childhood on British Romanticism and American Transcendentalism in Comparison with Mystical poetry of Mevlana.

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ABSTRACT: This paper studies the concept of childhood and its various uses in some Romantic and Transcendentalist poets including Mevlana whom Emerson was quite familiar with. Childhood, the dominant theme in both Romanticism and Transcendentalism covers the main theme in the poetry of Blake, Wordsworth, Coleridge in Europe and Emerson and Whitman in America. This concept has also been used ambiguously and symbolically in Mevlana's Mystical Poetry, and so is worth comparing with the works of English Romanticism And American Transcendentalism.

KEY WORDS: Emerson, Transcendentalism, Romanticism, Childhood, Mevlana.

INTRODUCTION.

Our country Iran has always been considered as the main source for mysticism in the world. Iran has presented so many great and influential mystics to the world. Thus, it is worth and it is also felt as a necessity to portray the antiquity of Persian mysticism and its themes. It is so rich it can attract the attention of everybody everywhere. This comparative study portrays the grandeur of Persian mysticism. It is a fact that no literature is fully understood unless it is compared with that of other nations. This reveals its development and its relation with others. The need for such comparative study is deeply felt for Persian Literature and culture. A comparative study deals with the similarities and differences between literary texts written in different languages and that how they affected each

other. It also means the analysis and the literary interactions between two societies or so speaking different languages.

Anoushirvani admits the importance and the aim of comparative literature as a course this way: The features of the works of one language is better understood when they are compared with the works of other languages. In comparative literature, comparisons are done beyond national bounds. They result in a deep understanding without which such high understanding is not possible by separate analysis of a nation's literary works. What matters in comparative literature is how concepts and literary thoughts have entered and affected each other. It is comparative literature that creates an atmosphere for a dialogue and an understanding that helps a better understanding of one reflected in another mirror or language. No doubt, only those having a good knowledge of their own literature will come to a deep understanding of foreign cultures.

Emerson's words in the article "The American Scholar" confirms this point when he says: When the sun is hid, and the stars withdraw their shining, –we repairs to the lamps which were kindled by their ray to guide our steps to the East again, where the dawn is. We hear that we may speak. The Arabian proverb says, “A fig tree looking on a fig tree, becomes fruitful”.

To show how literatures in different languages need each other for their growth and development, Emerson cites the famous Arabian proverb that a fig tree becomes fruitful by looking on a fig tree. It seems these trees reflect each other as if they were mirrors and thereby bring them to fruition and perfection. Emerson, as mentioned above, thinks of the East as “where the dawn is” and as where they can turn to get light. These interactions between literatures of different nations are helpful and actually guide “our steps” as Emerson says. He emphasizes the point that the literature of other nations is important for him because it helps America find and create its own native literature.

DEVELOPMENT.

Statement of the problem.

This paper gives a brief introduction of Romanticism and Transcendentalism (American Romanticism), dealing mainly with how Ralph Wald Emerson as the founder of Transcendentalism was influenced by Persian literature and especially by its mysticism. The existence of so many similar themes and concepts between Persian mystical literature and Transcendentalism well shows Emerson's immersion and research in Eastern and Persian literature and culture (Abdollahiyan, 1999).

Transcendental philosophy is not a monologist philosophy but a vast combinational one. The concept of childhood will be discussed as a common theme in the three schools: Romanticism, Transcendentalism, and Persian literature. Just at the outset of his article entitled "Persian Poetry" Emerson refers to Mevlana (which indicates his acquaintance with him) and thereby with Persian poetry. The "childhood" concept is discussed together with its various meanings in the works of some Romantic and Transcendental writers and Mevlanawhom Emerson knew well. Now the need is felt to define Romanticism and Transcendentalism first.

Romanticism.

The Enlightenment period of Europe which was based on wisdom and logic failed to build a human civilization or to express and interpret the secrets of the universe. Its failure led to the fact that man's trust on his feelings and emotions in rebuilding the civilization and realizing one's needs was no longer considered wrong or superstitious (Abrams, 1999).

This idea created an atmosphere that attracted artists, authors, and poets to itself. Romanticism is believed to be a special historical era in which the Europeans could pass from classicism to modernism. This European phenomenon entered other lands and became a universal movement.

It found significance when the traditional man, going from the disciplined world into a chaotic world, faced conflict and dualism and mourned for the bygone days (al-Asi, 1990).

The modern man needs to cross this chaotic situation so as to make his universal move. Romanticism is not only a literary but a universal movement. It covers fields such as literature, philosophy, social and political sciences, architecture, music, painting, cinema and the like. Up to now, there has been no comprehensive definition of Romanticism and according to Forest, anyone who wants to offer a definition of Romanticism actually enters a challenging task.

The reason why the English Romanticism has been chosen lies on its precedence over other European countries. Romanticism is not only older in England compared to all other countries but it is the most obvious revolting humanism inviting man against artificial civilization and the dream of history. It takes man to human nature, revives the lost joy and kindness in him and leads his uprooted soul towards a respect to life. The great English Romantics are: Wordsworth, William Blake, Coleridge, Shelley, Keats, and Byron. According to some literary historians, English Romanticism starts simultaneously with the publication of the common work of Wordsworth and Coleridge, the *lyrical Ballads*. But if one wants to be exact in its starting time, one can name the publication time of William Blake's "*Songs of Innocence*", namely (al-Khatib, 1959).

Transcendentalism.

Transcendentalism is the philosophical and literary movement of America in the nineteenth century. One can consider it as a branch of Romanticism manifested in America. Thus, the general principles of it are the same as those of Romanticism. They include: individualism, introversion, idealism, inspiration from nature, pure inner feelings, and a trust on intuition rather than science and wisdom. The Persian Moaser Dictionary has offered "High Philosophy" as an equivalent for "Transcendentalism". Emerson, the founder of Transcendental school, was a religious person who had a tendency to mysticism. The Asian mysticism boosted his mystical ideas so much so that he always thought of the Eastern thought at the top considering himself as a child brought up in the East. Transcendentalism is a new way to interpret spirituality.

A Transcendentalist is one who can rid himself from the material world so that he can enjoy the spirituality of natural world (Baldick, 2001).

Of its highest principles is the superiority of intuition over wisdom and reasoning. Intuition is believed to have an indescribable relationship with the source of existence and universe. Transcendentalism points to the fact that inside the mind there exist a special intuition which dominates all one's experiences. However, the eighteenth century philosophy was based on materialism. Its dominant philosopher is John Locke who takes the mind as a clean slate carved by one's science and experience. Contrarily, Transcendentalists suggested an opposite view. For them, mind has its own science independent from the tangible and the material world. Naturally, followers of soul offer special ideas on the truth and falsity, goodness or badness, duty and freedom or even immortality which is beyond experience. They value the inner science, far beyond the superficial and tangible world. They are not bound to a special belief in anything but follow a good and pure life and thought. They emphasize the high thought and simple life as well (Barahani, 1983).

How Emerson as the Founder of the Transcendental school was affected by Persian Literature.

An indescribable instant in the history of world literature is when the literary elites of different nations meet each other. The appearance of Romanticism in Europe caused more attention to Persian Literature. Persian literature deeply affected great European poets and authors.

A lovely example in the 19th century is Fitzgerald's translation of Omar Khayam. Translation of Hafez's poems not only caused more reputation of Hafez and Persian literature in the west but also became as a source of inspiration in the works of many European poets and authors. "The Austrian Orientalist Von Hammer was the first to translate all Hafez into German and therewith influenced Europe. Having read the translation of Hammer, Goethe mentioned some of Hafez's sonnets in his poetry which led to the reputation of Hafez in Europe. Poets like Emerson, Thoreau, Whitman, Hawthorne, and Melville welcomed it in America.

Interestingly, Emerson's familiarity with Persian literature was influential in cultural movements and literary works of America. It was Emerson who changed the superficial and imitative approach to a careful and academic one towards Persian literature. In this regard, Ghaderi holds that Emerson really loved Persian literature (Faghih, 2001).

It is widely believed that European Orientalists introduced Emerson to the literature and philosophy of the East and Persian literature in particular. What Emerson holds in his praiseworthy article "Persian Poetry" clearly shows his love and admiration for Persian poets. What follows will suffice as an example: We owe much of our knowledge on Persian literature to Von Hammer who, translated into German, besides the Divan of Hafiz, specimens of two hundred poets... The seven masters of the Persian Parnassus—Firdusi, Enweri, Nisami, Jelaleddin, Saadi, Hafiz and Jami—have ceased to be empty names; and others like Ferideddin Attar and Omar Khayyam, promise to rise in Western estimation.

One can see the effect of this familiarity in his poetic style and thought. He could publish his first collection of poems in 1847 in Boston which includes the translation of two sonnets from Hafez and a long poem having 176 lines entitled Saadi (Forster, 1955).

A survey of Literature.

To study Romanticism in Persian literature one can find lots of works like Lilian forest's "Romanticism", MasoodJafari's "A survey of Romanticism in Europe" and Reza Seyed Hosseini's "literary schools". Contrarily, there are few articles and sources on transcendentalism and on Emerson's thought and works. Of course, there are books, articles and dissertations in America and other countries written in English. Some of these are as follows:

In his dissertation entitled *Emerson's Ideal Transcendentalism, Nature Writer* Julie Meloni portrays the effect of American transcendentalism on the philosophy of Moarand points out the similar and dissimilar aspects between Moar, Emerson and Thoreau (Mirsadeghi, 1997).

In his work *Sufism, Taoism and Emerson* Leon Allen Raikes talks about rhetoric and teaching of Sufism and Taoism. For him, this kind of language is filled with deconstruction, symbol and wonder. He thinks of Emerson as an important guide, towards the rhetorical concepts of the East.

Fakahani writes in the article "Islamic Influence on Emerson Thought" that Emerson had a strong belief in the Eastern thought. To emphasize this, she mentions some evidence from Emerson's articles.

Janathan Crowley shows the relationship of Emerson and Thoreau with the philosophy of the East in his work. He also studies the direct and indirect effect of the classical works. Ahmed Nidal Almansure's work "*The Middle East in an Antebellum America: The Cases of Ralph Waldo Emerson, Nathaniel Hawthorne and Edgar Allan Poe*" is about the appearance of the middle east in the works of American authors when America started to have its own literary identity (Mojaddedi, 2007).

He bases his arguments on Raymond Schwab's *The Oriental Renaissance* He adds that the chosen authors in his dissertation aimed at unity with the eastern thought. He believes that the three authors found in the East what America needed for its improvement in the individual level. Walter Edward Dunnavent is the writer of a dissertation by the name of *Ameen Rihani in America: Transcendentalism in an Arab American writer*. It shows Rihani's life and depicts how he was affected by transcendentalism. It also deals with the similarities of his work with the ideas of Emerson and Thoreau. The newness and value of the present paper is the comparison of childhood in Romanticism, Transcendentalism, and Mevlana's mysticism (Payandeh, 2003).

The importance of the research.

This paper emphatically shows the fact that the rich Persian literature has reached far beyond Asia. The translation of Persian poets writing in Iraqi Style including Mevlana has been helpful in the

development of new political and instructional philosophies and also new aesthetics in the literature of America and Europe. It depicts the achievements the East has had for the West. However, as Edward Saeed says, the Westerns have always tried to belittle and downgrade the culture of the East and thereby portray the Eastern people of a lower race. The Westerns have always had their pre-judgments of the East. Now it is time to be united in order to revive and portray the greatness of our culture. Through the interactions in comparative literature one can conclude that any philosophy which gives us peace and quiet in this vast world and rids us from lie, ignorance and superstition making us respect human right and reach transcendental things is a good philosophy. So, we are proud of our literary culture without belittling that of others (Schimmel, 1992).

Argument: Childhood and Philosophy.

Childhood is a period in which children directly and with no preconceptions try to contact the world around them. They have no pre-judgments and no special mentality in their contact. The main theme of childhood which has attracted great mystics, Romantics and transcendentalists and made them feel nostalgic for those good days.

They have suggested man to cope with nature childlike so that he can have a better life and understand deep spiritual moments. This is in contrast to the approach man had in the last centuries when he wanted to master the universe through wisdom.

According to them, throughout his life man gradually loses his talent for being amazed about the world. He also loses the truth in him, the truth which philosophers try to revive. Philosophers hold that there is something in man telling him life is a big secret. This is where philosophers seem distinct from other people. A philosopher never fully gets used to the world. For him, the world is ever understandable and mysterious. Of course, philosophers and children have something in common. The world is as much instructive for philosophers as it is for children. Even the features that are considered negative in children are not without blessing and wisdom.

Self-love or narcissism of children is itself considered as a gratitude to the Lord who has given them life. Love yourselves so that you can perfect your selves.

Emerson's article "American Scholar" takes the child and the philosopher the same. He says: "In fact, I believe each individual pass through all three. The boy is a Greek; the youth, romantic; the adult, reflective" (Solaymani, 1991).

The Concept of Childhood in English Romanticism.

Freedom, individualism and pure feelings are major principles of Romanticism which can be found in a child too. According to Abjadian, childhood is a subdivision among major principles of Romanticism that is after the ideal inner world. Simplicity, honesty and the inner purity of children are the features Romantics follow. Both in Romanticism and Transcendentalism, introversion, simplicity and purity are of high importance: "English Romantics value childhood with all its purities and that is why its poets and authors always remember childhood memories. Childhood shows its purity on the one hand and expresses its lost innocence on the other, Jean Paul states, dream takes us to our childhood and Novalis emphasizes that to study nature one needs the simplicity and credulity of children. The concept of childhood finds a philosophical and social aspect in Romanticism.

For instance, William Blake tries to create a golden era in him through intuition and through reviving his childhood memories. To do this, he trusts his imaginative power in his philosophy. His "Songs of Innocence" well shows his ideas and attitudes.

He puts this state in him face to face with the state of experience discussed in "Songs of Experience". He believes that experience destroys the childhood innocence and replaces it with some destructive power. For instance, the poem "Lamb" in "Songs of Innocence" has happy and childlike rhythm and tone. Lamb is a symbol of childhood, innocence, and also Christ. It is crystal clear that belief in Christ is a principle of Romanticism. Following the parables of scriptures, Christian poets take some forms as signs of God. For them, pigeon, lamb and child are symbols and each refers to an attribute of the

One God. William Blake addresses the lamb in a childish language and takes both the child and the lamb as symbols showing the purity, innocence, kindness, beauty and the first love. He calls them as he calls his Lord. In The poem "The Lamb" Blake says:

Does thou know who made thee

He is called by the name

For he calls himself a lamb

He is meek and he is mild

He became a little child (Mohsen, 1998).

Interestingly, when Wordsworth refers to his adulthood, he can hear "Silent sad music of humanity" but the music in his childhood memories is exThe Oxford Anthology citing and has got the power to purify man. It seems Wordsworth has been able to keep his childhood purity and innocence even in his adult life. His poem "My Heart Leaps Up" reads thus:

My heart leaps up when I behold

A rainbow in the sky:

So was it when my life began;

So is it now I am a man;

So be it when I shall grow old,

Or let me die!

The child is the father of the man

And I could wish my days to be

Bound each to each by natural piety.

Through the above poem Wordsworth values childhood and takes it as the best thing man needs for his safety, release, freedom, independence, perfection and the like. The poem starts with the pronoun "My" and then comes the holy word "Heart". Whatever is lies in the heart which is solely enough for

salvation. Spiritually speaking, one's heart has the potentiality to lift one upward. If one finds the chance to look up and see a rainbow, for example, in the sky, he has actually been given abundant blessing. This chance opens the way for him to rise from the mundane physical world to the spiritual one. It gives him the opportunity to follow his heart rather than his mind. Because heart is the only valuable thing one needs for perfection and for transcendental things (Ziegler, 1989).

Man has been endowed with a pure heart since birth but unfortunately, as William Blake holds, each experience he gets through life estranges him from the world of innocence and purity of childhood. The more he goes forward in the world of experience, the more he loses his innocence and finally changes to no more than a machine or a robot working mechanically and not spiritually.

Despite all the problems and misfortunes of the world of experience, Wordsworth has kept his God-given childhood innocence throughout his life and that is what he is proud of. He gives his life story as a good example for all the followers of truth and beauty. He has lived with and kept his innocence as it was given to him and he intends to keep it through his life. The only thing giving him grandeur is his childhood innocence, the innocence he was born with. He knows that if he is born innocent, he needs to have it and keep it as it was bestowed upon him. He was born with a heart filled with purity. His purity and innocence are not given later to him. They are as old as he is. His main duty is to keep it. He says: "so was it, so is it, and so be it". He strongly believes that it is better to die than live if one can't keep it. That is why he prefers to keep it even in old age. Otherwise, he wants to be dead saying: "Or let me die". What is true for Wordsworth is also true for all humanity. If one is born with innocence and purity, he is actually born for it, that is, for innocence and purity.

For Wordsworth, "the child is the father of man". Namely, the child or the father are actually one. It is the child himself that needs to grow and come to completion and perfection. The best teacher for one's perfection is nobody else but him, his own childhood innocence, the innocence he was born with. The inner child can also stand for one's true self or real me. So, everything for perfection and

spirituality lies in man himself. He needs to search nowhere but himself to find his true self and true being which is spiritual and transcendental. The scriptures all utter that God created everything out of his own image, so man has a spiritual side in him and he is intended for spiritual perfection.

When Blake holds that a child and a Lamb are called by God's name, one can conclude that what Wordsworth means by child is God. It points to the fact that everyone needs to follow the spiritual road to God and that this journey is not physical. It is an inner journey to truth, beauty and God.

All Romantics, and Transcendentalists are of the view that children are closer to nature and thereby to truth and innocence. They can be taken as fathers or guides. Their innocence is called as "natural piety".

Samuel Taylor Coleridge has also admired the simplicity of childhood. Coleridge has got a soul unbound by habit or tradition. He studies everything with the cuteness and wonder of a child.

The concept of childhood in Transcendentalism based on Emerson's Works.

Since Transcendentalism follows Romanticism in America, the concept of childhood gets paramount importance in Transcendentalism. In addition, Transcendentalism, like Romanticism, expresses pure feelings, mostly possible in childhood, which covers much of Emerson's works. In Emerson, the whispers of angels are not something uncommon to children. On the contrary, only few adults might have such an opportunity and relationship with nature, and that only rarely and shortly. Emerson pertinently elaborates this in "Nature" thus: The sun illuminates only the eye of the man, but shines into the eye and the heart of the child. The lover of nature is he whose inward and outward scenes are still truly adjusted to each other; who has retained the spirit of infancy even into the era of manhood. That is, very few people can see nature as it is. They can't see or look at the sun and in case they do, they get a superficial understanding of it. Though the Sun may shine on the eyes of the grownups, it shines directly on the hearts and eyes of children. A true lover, for Emerson, is one in whom the inner and outer world are so compatible with each other that he can keep his childhood soul and innocence

in adulthood. Only in such a condition can he know the relationship between the earth and the sky and live in harmony with them both (Mojaddedi, 2007).

For Emerson, the only controlling element for this corporeal world is death and childhood. One needs either to be or to live childlike so as to be united with the universe and with eternity or to die and leave the world. The reason why the world seems disjointed lies in the fact that he has been separated from his pure soul. In this regard, Farah Yeganeh cites Emerson thus:

A man is a god in ruins, When men are innocent, life shall be longer, and shall pass into the Immortal, as greatly as we wake from dreams. Now, the world would be insane and rabid, if these disorganizations should last for hundreds of years. It is kept in check by death and infancy. Infancy is the perpetual Messiah, which comes into the arms of fallen men, and pleads with them to return paradise. For The sake of emphasis, it is worth repeating that for Emerson, "a man is a god in ruins" and "infancy is the perpetual Messiah ". This reminds one of the Christs who uttered man can in no way come to perfection and truth unless he becomes a child again. Therefore, childhood is the gate to beauty, truth and unity with nature universe and God (Baldick, 2001).

In chapter one of *Nature* Emerson writes:

"To go into solitude, a man needs to retire as much from his chamber as from society," In the woods too, a man casts of his years, as the snake his slough, and at what period so-ever of his life, is always a child.

The above lines indicate the important point that in his birth man is both naked and innocent. It is the society and the world of experienced grownups that they clothe and give him experiences intending to prepare him for a better life. They are unaware of the fact that the more they involve him with their own world of experience the more he is estranged from his world of nakedness, truth and innocence.

Therefore, a man needs to cast off his years and his experiences as the snake casts of his slough. For his revival, he needs to have a change in him. Such a revival in old age is possible only by returning to childhood innocence.

When man finds and reenters his childhood, then he can see into the life of things and come to unity. Emerson adds In *Nature* that: "standing on the bare ground, my head bathed by the blithe air, and uplifted into infinite space, all mean egotism vanishes. I become a transparent eyeball. I am nothing. I see all. The currents of the universal being circulate through me: I am part or particle of God.

Through the above lines Emerson emphatically asks Americans to rid themselves of the bounds and shackles of the past and face nature as their ancestors did. In his introduction to "Nature" he states: "Foregoing generations beheld God and nature face to face; we through their eyes. Why shouldn't we also enjoy an original relation to the universe". He believed man should do his best to keep his relationship with the world and with nature. He endeavors to create a contact with even what seems to be other than him. He believes that it is a need for man to come to unity with himself, with others, with nature, and with the universe. For Emerson, such a unity is possible only when one becomes a child and sees nature with his childhood innocence. Here it is pertinent to cite Emerson:

To speak truly, few adult persons can see nature. Most persons do not see the Sun. At least they have a very superficial seeing. The Sun illuminates only the eye of the man, but shines into the eye and the heart of the child. The lover of nature is he whose inward and outward scenes are still truly adjusted to each other; who has retained the spirit of infancy even into the era of manhood. His intercourse with heaven and earth, becomes part of his daily food.

In his poem "Woodnotes" Emerson shows the inferiority of the world of men compared to the superiority of the children and their world and asks his readers to cast behind them all that belongs to grownups and stick to children and their world. He states:

"Behind thee leave thy merchandise, leave all the pendant love apart; God hid the whole world in thy heart. Love shuns the sage, the child it crowns, Gives all to them who all renounce".

The above lines portray what makes the difference between adults and children. While adults use their eyes and minds, children use their inner eyes and hearts. While adults pretend to know what love is, love actually shuns them and chooses children for itself. The world of adults is drowned in mentalities, philosophies and experiences. But children enjoy their world of innocence, unity, and love. Adults know, but children live with it. Children can easily create a kind of compatibility and continuity between their knowledge and acts. Emerson beautifully holds that "if knowledge, 'said Ali the caliph, "calls upon practice, well; if not, it goes away".

In Contrast to adults whose minds and hearts are affected and contaminated by their experience, children study things with their inborn pure minds and hearts. In "The American Scholar", as Wayne cites, Emerson states: Nature has laws, even a "school boy" can have a relation and 'sympathy' with nature. He sees that nature's 'beauty is the beauty of his own mind. Its laws are the laws of his own mind.' In this moment, Emerson is confident, 'the ancient precept', know thyself', and the modern precept, 'study nature', become at least one maxim (Payandeh, 2003).

Emerson holds that each individual pass through three epochs. They are classic, romantic and reflective or philosophical age. The boy is e Greek; the youth, romantic, the adults, reflective". However, for unity and perfection, man needs to create a balance between his childhood innocence and his age-old philosophies. Whitman also loves childhood in which one can be one with nature and live in harmony and unity with everything. This idea of Whitman can be clearly seen in his poem "There Was a Child Went Forth". The poem begins thus: "there was a child went forth every day and the first object he looked upon, that object he became, and that object became part of him for the day or a certain part of the day, or for many years or stretching cycles of years". Whitman considers both a child and grass as something perfect or as signs of God. In section 6 of *Song of Myself*, he adds:

A child said what is the grass? Fetching it to me with full hands;
 How could I answer the child? I do not know what it is any more than he.
 I guess it must be the flag of my disposition, out of hopeful stuff woven.
 Or I guess it is the handkerchief of the Lord,
 A scented gift and remembrancer designedly dropped,
 Bearing the owner's name someway in the corners, that we may see and remark,
 and say Whose?
 Or I guess the grass is itself a child, the produced babe of the vegetation.

The concept of Child and Childhood in Mevlana's Masnavi.

Mevlana uses the word "child" ambiguously. Sometimes he uses the term to show those quite unaware of the truth who do not know the way to perfection. Though they may be old and aged, they are yet considered no more than simple-minded and inexperienced people. For him, just being aged does not mean one has reached purity, maturity, and experience. He believes that colors, forms, riches, and businesses are the playthings of children for which they are ready to fight tooth and nail. He names these aged people who have fully neglected the spirit and the truth lying within them as children. Contrarily, those who have come to an understanding of the eternal and spiritual world are considered as grownups or perfect ones by Mevlana.

He even challenges philosophers for the childlike stance they take towards truth. According to him, they deal with forms, colors, and mere reasons not based on truth, insight, or intuition. As children are not knowledgeable, these scientists and philosophers unwittingly follow and imitate some rules, principles, and even customs which are mostly not based on truth.

However, sometimes Mevlana uses the term "child" to mean the guide, guru, and the perfect man who knows the truth and has come to unity and peace with the One God and with the universe. In this sense, the term child actually portrays Mevlana's spiritual and mystical ideas. Because of his unity

with the divine knowledge, the child is also ever present and ever knowing. His unity with the divine has made his words and deeds to be considered divine too. Here, Mevlana puts intuition against science and offers that their intuitive knowledge is highly admired and causes their endless happiness. Their cry is a sign of their strong will to achieve their needs and realize their wishes, that is, truth.

A child in contrast to an adult (a wise and learned man) in Mevlana.

Filled our apron is with soil of old,

We take it as a mine of gold.

A child cannot equal grownups,

Not the same are they for gods.

What Mevlana means in the above poem by the word "children" is the childlike adults and by the "grownups" he means those who know spiritual values. That is why he holds children and grownups cannot stand on the same pedestal. Age does not count for Mevlana. Anyone can reach perfection even at a very low age and those who have not been able to cover the spiritual path even in adulthood are actually considered no more than imperfect and ignorant babies.

some fruit may be unripe, though it is old,

When green, unripe it is called.

That sour fruit may reach a hundred,

But compared to the fully learned,

Still it is green and unwanted.

Mevlana takes forms and colors as something deceiving children. For him, even the adults start endless wars for no good reason. They stick so much to transient things and are unaware of the permanent ones. All these show their childlike ignorance and their urgent need to come to fruition and full growth.

It is children the earth is cradling

For grownups, it is narrow and dwindling.

Again, Mevlana compares the children with the grownups. Children are well satisfied with the blessings of the physical and material world, while the earth with all its blessings cannot convince the free, learned, and perfect ones, those he names as grownups. They are after the ultimate reality which is far beyond the mundane world. Elsewhere, he shows his enmity with the philosophers who, childlike, have just adhered to some forms and reasons without coming to a complete understanding of them.

Children think of the nurse, milk or sheep,

Of the raisin, walnut or their weep,

They are imitators and follow others

They discuss and analyze, yet it bothers.

Their reasoning and formulation,

Estranges them from truth and intuition.

In the above poem, milk, nurse, raisin and the like indicate worldly toys and riches. They have obsessed people so much that, unknowingly, they take stone for gold.

From the rivers you gathered stone and cone,

Not knowing gold from stone.

You thought them gold, but they were not,

They wasted your life and made you rot.

They will in no way the truth knows

But to wisdom when they go.

It is not white hair that makes the guru

It is wisdom, and it is true.

Mevlana states that though gurus and sages are perfect human beings, they must necessarily talk according to the level of their audience's understanding and then step by step they can improve the level of their talks.

For the sake of the child, the father first coos and chatters,

Though wise enough for geometry and other battles.

He speaks in the child's tongue,

To teach him right from wrong.

Like his children he sees all men,

And gives them advice when they ken.

The high and mystical concept of childhood in Masnavi.

In contrast to what was said about the negative aspects of childhood, Mevlana addresses it as the best topic to portray his elevated mystical themes. In this sense, the child is the same as the sage or the guru with whom nobody can be compared. This is similar to Wordsworth's idea who takes the child as "the father of man".

Oh! The children who are uneducated and yet old

Look so powerful and so bold

Children of the Lord are the sages for their cognizance,

They all know and feel God's presence.

In this sense, Mevlana equals the child with the sage or the guru who has come to unity with the One God who sees them as parts of Him. Similarly, Emerson also holds "we are particles of God". Like all Romantics and Transcendentalists, Mevlana admires the hostility of children towards science, since it brings them endless happiness. He says "The wise feed on sadness but sugar is the portion of a child. Emerson utters that he admires all the teaching and preaching offered so far, but he wants to go his own way and follow his own heart like children. In the poem "The Problem", he says:

His words are music in my ear,
 I see his cowled portrait dear;
 And yet, for all his faith could see,
 I would not the good bishop be.

Walt Whitman also admires science and technology in *Song of Myself* but emphatically holds that “they are not for my dwelling”. For Mevlana, the children's lack of knowledge and experience is not obstructive but constructive. He is of the view that children are endowed with some special capacity since their birth to be intuitively united with the source of life, that is God. "Even a one-day old child knows /the time to cry when the nurse away goes".^{136/5} This shows the fact that men of God are and should always be under the support and shelter of the Lord as the children need the care and support of the nurses.

Without any effort, children enjoy God's blessings. His blessings precede anybody and anything. They do not rest on what they will merit later.

What God blesses to children out of His favor

Nobody can achieve with a hundred years of endeavor.

Mevlana strongly states that, in their joy and sorrow, children have no other place to refer to but to their mother's lap. He concludes that the same is true with all men. It is similar to the Quranic verse that "We are from Him and to Him we return", Mevlana states:

Even in anger the child is with the mother,

When she slaps, still he sticks to her laps.

He seeks help from nobody,

But the mother who is everybody.

CONCLUSIONS.

Childhood is the time when the child communicates with the world around without any help from his mind or his pre-conceptions. This direct relationship with the universe and the divine is the main theme in Romanticism, Transcendentalism, and Persian mysticism as well. These three schools in Europe, America, and the East take childhood as unconscious and yet constructive powers in man. His unconsciousness and inborn powers bestowed to him since his birth can help him cover the way to truth and unity. Romantics wished to return to their childhood memories as a way and remedy to come to peace and truth. That is why their poetry is imaginative and mostly deals with the poets' own childhood.

With his intuitive and mystical insight, William Blake emphatically portrays the beauties of childhood in contrast with the cruelties of adulthood in *Songs of Innocence* and *Songs of Experience*, respectively.

Transcendentalism follows European Romanticism in America. Its major representative, Ralph Waldo Emerson, repeatedly admits to have proudly followed Persian poets. Like the Persian Mevlana, he has a high and mystical understanding of children and childhood. In the world Emerson depicts, children directly contact the angels and the divine.

Mevlana portrays the childhood concept ambiguously. On the one hand, a child shows the unaware people who are obsessed with colorful and transient things and have finally deprived themselves from the ultimate reality, though they may be in the old ages. He calls these unelevated people as children. However, the grownups for Mevlana are the elevated and the perfect ones who can easily and directly contact the universe and the divine, though they may be at low ages of life. He uses these children to symbolize the true knowledgeable ones and the gurus and also to indicate his mystical ideas. In this sense, children are equal to gurus or "Pirs" whose words and deeds are like that of the divine, because they are in unity with God. Like Plato who has an antagonistic stance to poets, Mevlana dislikes the

philosophers who have stuck themselves to some reasoning not rooted in truth. They are unaware of what truth is. They just see the appearance, and not the reality. Similarly, children dislike science and philosophy and yet they can find truth within them and have easy access to the divine through their inborn insight and intuition. This is what all Romantics, Transcendentalists and Persian mystical poets unanimously admit.

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RECIBIDO: 2 de febrero del 2019.

APROBADO: 13 de febrero del 2019.