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The Pursuit of an Ideal State in the First Mystical Tradition: Rumi's Utopia

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Abstract
The degree of social engagement within the early mystical tradition continues to be a subject of scholarly inquiry. A thorough understanding of their societal beliefs and perspectives is crucial for a nuanced and realistic interpretation of their teachings. Central to this understanding is the exploration of the concept of utopia. Utilizing an analytical approach, this research aims to define the ideal state according to Rumi's *Mathnawi* and outline the path towards its realization. From Rumi's perspective, an ideal state is characterized by peace, mercy, harmony, justice, and ultimately, equality. The construction of this utopian society relies on the interdependent roles of individuals, society, and the natural environment. To achieve such a state, Rumi posits a two-stage utopian model: first, the cultivation of ideal individuals, followed by the establishment of an ideal society. In the initial stage, individuals attain peace, mercy, and harmony through their connections with themselves, the Divine, and their familial communities, thus preparing them for the construction of an ideal society. This stage also involves learning through their relationship with nature that the essence of all is one, fostering a sense of unity. Humility, modesty, kindness, and honesty further facilitate dialogue, consultation, and support, laying the foundation for justice and equality. However, various obstacles complicate the journey through each stage, all characterized by a common element of deception. In traversing the second stage, political and economic governance assumes a pivotal role, potentially serving as a foundation for the realization of Rumi's utopia.
Keywords: First Mystical Tradition, Mysticism, *Mathnawi*, Rumi, Utopia.

Introduction

While utopian ideas remain a source of inspiration for social reconstruction, the detailed examination of mystical views on the pursuit of a perfect state has largely been overlooked. Examining utopian ideas through the perspective of Islamic mysticism reveals mystics' social concern. This approach highlights the definition and dimensions of a utopia envisioned by mystics, particularly during the destructive conditions that Rumi encountered, highlighting the need for an explication of their contributions to the development of an ideal world.

More than in other periods, there was a widespread yearning to build an ideal society in ancient Persia, which significantly impacted social movements around the world. The early thirteenth century, spanning from the second to the ninth decades, identified a priority for the pursuit of an ideal state, largely influenced by the Mongol conquest (Coleman, 1982). The Mongol invasion, with its forceful administration and control of resources, catalyzed transformative changes in

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Iran and neighboring regions (see Petrushevsky, 1968, p. 483-549; Allsen, 1987, p. 116-143; Aigle, 2008, p. 67). This period was simultaneous with the rise of mysticism as a potent socio-spiritual movement (See Lambton, 1968, p. 296-298). Seeking solutions to the prevailing conditions, mystic authors of the first mystical tradition employed didactic poetry and narratives to awaken individuals and communities to the possibilities of personal and collective transformation. (For mystical traditions, see Mir-Baqiri Fard, 2012; Reisi, 2017, p. 95-100).

During the reign of the Ilkhanid dynasty (1290-1335), poets played a crucial role in offering a critical lens on society and contributing to the ongoing pursuit of an ideal state (Lane, 2003, p. 229-230; Arberry, 1964, p. 16; Ersever, 1999, p. 42-50). Mystics, poets, and mystic writers channeled their aspirations for a more just and equitable world through literature, fostering a sense of hope and possibility amongst the populace (See major distinguishing features of mystical poetry and its transformations in Milani, 2013, p. 215; Muẓaffari et al., 2019, p. 47; Ḥusayni, 2006, p. 47).

Among these figures, Jalal al-Din Rumi stands out as a multifaceted personality, encompassing the roles of author, Sufi master, and social influencer. His writings, particularly *Mathnawi*, a universal treatise on Sufi principles and a compelling portrayal of an ideal state on a global scale, reveal a profound fascination with utopian ideals (Istiʿlami, 2010, p. 433-434).

Through an analysis of Rumi's observations on individuals, social structures, and the natural world, this research highlights his proposed solutions for creating a peaceful, merciful, harmonious, just, and equal state, both individually and collectively. Examining Rumi's utopia provides an essential framework for understanding the relevance of mysticism and society.

Previous studies on Rumi's utopian thought have primarily compared his insights with those of non-Sufi poets and philosophers. Few contrasted the hierarchical societies of Farabi and Plato with the multi-class structure of Rumi's utopia (Aman, 2016). Others argued that while Plato's ideal state is characterized by a dichotomy between politics and ethics, James Harrington's work and Bacon's utopia are fundamentally essentialist (Ḥaqlisan & Azizi, 2018). Conversely, 'love' is recognized as a central element in Rumi's utopian vision (Ḥaydari, 2014). Despite existing studies, understanding his ideal society requires an exclusive focus on his contributions to the pursuit of a perfect world.

Adopting an analytical method, the research suggests that the Mongol conquest, while imposing significant challenges, inadvertently fostered a surge in mystical thought and its application to societal concerns. Rumi's spiritual notions emerged, in part, as an attempt to address these challenges. To fully grasp the works of Persian utopian writers, one must explore their concept of an ideal world, the means that make its realization possible, the approaches and aspects that facilitate this process, as well as the anticipated results. In doing so, two key areas of investigation are crucial: firstly, exploring the definition of his ideal state and secondly, examining the conception of the relationship between human beings, society, and nature in relation to his utopia.

Utopia in *Mathnawi*

Throughout the history of Islamic mysticism, some have addressed utopian ideals; however, Rumi is distinguished as a particularly optimistic figure who embodies the potential for realizing such visions. Rumi's model of an ideal society relies on the efforts of individuals, the collective society, and the surrounding environment; nonetheless, the foremost determinant remains the individual's inner self.

Rumi's core conviction rested upon the belief that each individual possesses an inherent, boundless potential. In his view, every human being embodies the entirety of the universe within his being, and thus, possesses the inherent capacity for achieving spiritual perfection through a dedicated pursuit of self-actualization (Mirbaqeri Fard, 2003, p. 73-74; Rumi, 2014, Vol. 4, line 521). The inherent microcosmic nature of each individual, encapsulating within them the potential for virtuous development, leads to the compelling deduction that every human being is, in essence, a nascent utopia. In doing so, they become essential catalysts for building a perfect state where virtues thrive and harmony prevails.

In Rumi's envisioned utopia, individuals possess a profound cognizance of their choices and actions, fully aware that these elements will subsequently shape their reality. His emphasis on the intricacies of human behavior and the interpretability of social interactions is integral to the fabric of this idealized world. Specifically, Rumi characterizes the purified heart as a "treasure of light," thereby imposing upon humanity the obligation to eschew resentment, alerting them to the grave repercussions such negativity may entail (Rumi, 2014, Vol. 1, lines 434-435). The concepts articulated within this utopian framework are aligned with aspirations toward a broader horizon of equity, justice, unification, and peace, as well as the realization of these ambitions.

Acknowledging the significant influence of human existence, Rumi drew upon notions that individuals enact to address the myriad personal, social, and environmental challenges afflicting the world. This idea serves to illustrate the pathways through which happiness and prosperity can be attained via profound self-awareness (Forouzanfar, 1988, Vol. 1, p. 262). Consequently, individuals are encouraged to attenuate their engagement with the material realm, emphasizing the transformation of inherent weaknesses into strengths. He posits that a person must endeavor to convert vulnerabilities into sources of resilience, for it is through the harnessing of one's limitless potential that one may transcend base instincts (see Forouzanfar, 1988, Vol. 3, p. 810).

Mathnawi serves as an archetype of the 'mystic utopia,' transcending the confines of geographical, religious, and cultural boundaries. In his exploration from the realm of dreams to that of consciousness, Rumi's *Mathnawi* postulates a profound correlation between ignorance and an extended state of slumber (Cox & Cox, 1976, p, 483-491). Consequently, the poet implores humanity to embark upon the journey of self-discovery. Echoing the precepts found in mystical thought, which accords particular significance to the role of the individual in cultivating a harmonious community, Rumi imbues the human being—who "dominates the worlds by his reason and spirit"—with the profound responsibility of effecting a renaissance in the world (Golpinarli, 1992, p. 854).

By accentuating the pivotal role of humanity, Rumi employs a tapestry of narratives and illustrative examples to educate individuals, elucidating their interconnections with society and thereby forging a vision of utopia. Employing the metaphor of 'the reed,' Rumi characterizes any individual, including himself as the poet, who awakens to the realities of existence through the trials of suffering and an insatiable quest for perfection. The hollowed reed serves as a poignant symbol,

embodying the essence of the human odyssey along a path fraught with sacrifice—a "way full of blood"—which necessitates a keen awareness of one's internal and external conditions (Rumi, 2014, Vol. 1, line 13). It is through the enlightening parable of the reed that one perceives the contours of utopia, for it represents "the very marrow of our inward state" (Rumi, 2014, line 35). By drawing upon the archetypes of prophets, moreover, he insists that those who allow themselves to become enmeshed in the material trifles of existence overlook the truth that the melody of the reed flute constitutes an essential progression toward the ultimate ideal of perfection (Rumi, 2014, lines 9-13).

Three Dimensions of Rumi's Utopia in *Mathnawi*

Rumi's utopia is built upon a relationship between three dimensions working in concert throughout two states. The relationship individuals have with their inner selves promotes self-awareness and the refinement of inherent qualities. This process is enhanced through their connection with the Divine, which provides solace and opens avenues for the pursuit of Truth. Interpersonal relationships among people should be founded on loyalty and compassion, particularly within families, and improved through dialogue, collaboration, and mutual support, fostering goodwill and eradicating discrimination. This state would facilitate the creation of a multicultural society characterized by close-knit relationships, where peace, harmony, and compassion thrive. In the second state, just governance and a focus on non-materialistic values contribute to the establishment of a society marked by equity. The relationship between humans and nature encourages an appreciation for our shared existence. Ultimately, Rumi's utopian model embodies peace and equity, built on a foundation of harmony, mercy, and justice (see Table 1).

Table 1. Rumi's Utopian Model

States	Component A	Component B	Objective	Anticipated Results
State 1: Educating ideal beings	Human	Divine	Restoring comfort	Peace
	Human	Inner-self	Purifying intrinsic traits	Mercy
	Human	Human (Family)	Promoting loyalty and compassion	Justice
State 2: Developing an ideal state	Human	Nature	Realizing the shared origin	Harmony
	Human	Human (Society)	Promoting unity through communication, support, and assistance, enhanced by qualities such as humility, honesty, modesty, and kindness	Equity

Individuals

Rumi believed that there is a direct link between a person's inner self and their relationships with others. To make a positive impact on the world and move towards an ideal state, individuals should reflect on themselves to cleanse their intrinsic traits and foster connections with others, striving for temporary unity and long-lasting peace and mercy. Rumi profoundly understood the role of self-awareness in the cultivation of a just world: "Question your own intentions, O youth; do not doubt the inevitability of justice's recompense" (Rumi, 1977; Rumi, 2014, Vol. 6, p. 26-28). He underscores that spirituality, which serves as the primary distinguishing feature of humanity within the broader context of creation, purifies the self and facilitates progress toward perfection. In his renowned narrative, he highlights the perspectives of the Greeks and the Chinese, who are depicted as presenting two contrasting thresholds of understanding. The Greeks assert that "Only the removal of rust is appropriate for our craft," suggesting a focus on cleansing rather than embellishing (Rumi, 2014, Vol. 1, p. 220). Furthermore, it fosters strong connections among individuals, promoting unity (Golpinarli, 1992, p. 333; Kashani, 2000, p. 19). In essence, the cultivation of a pure spirit alongside the acquisition of essential human qualities shapes individuals into ideal beings and aids them in reaching an elevated state of existence.

He posits that introspection and the innate interconnectedness of individuals are pivotal components on the journey toward personal and collective perfection, with particular emphasis on the modalities of human communication. By advocating for dialogue as an antidote to despair, he underscores the importance of interpersonal collaboration within his envisioned utopia (Rumi, 2014, Vol. 1, line 22). Moreover, Rumi suggests that the act of consultancy—which encapsulates many facets of his philosophical insights—functions as a balm that alleviates a multitude of afflictions while simultaneously dispelling anxieties (Rumi, 2014, lines 150-153). The ultimate end for this relation of humans is the social order predicated on unity and values such as humility, honesty, modesty, and kindness. Rumi describes a "clairvoyant workshop of non-existence," wherein duality is absent, as there is "no room for two I's". Within this framework, individuals experience a state of "non-being in His presence," fostering conditions conducive to peace and mercy for humanity (Rumi, 2014, Vol. 1, lines 318, 3063; Vol. 2, lines 763 and 1940; Vol. 4, lines 3345-3347).

Rumi establishes two essential conditions: first, the connection between individuals and the Divine, which brings comfort and ultimately leads to the discovery of Truth (Rumi, 2014, Vol. 2, line 2735; Vol. 3, line 101); and second, prioritizing love over self-interest. As such, the less one is preoccupied with self-importance, the greater wisdom one attains, thereby becoming "loved by all" (Rumi, 2014, Vol. 5, lines 2396 and 2665).

Other essential conditions for the growth of this state include the elimination of egoism, arrogance, jealousy, vain imagination, and insincerity. Egoism invariably yields "woe

and bane" (Rumi, 2014, Vol. 5, line 2396). He posits that individuals ensnared in arrogance remain oblivious to the repercussions of their actions. The avoidance of egoism emits a fragrance, while envy disperses "a vapor of stench" (Rumi, 2014, Vol. 5, lines 3348-3349). Jealousy acts as "the everlasting death," and crosses "countless deserts," engendering discord and mortality (Rumi, 2014, lines 14, 1216; Vol. 6, line 4770; Naṣri, 1952, Vol. 4, p. 104). Furthermore, the issue of "weaving plots in vain imagination and cunning" emerges as a third impediment. An illustrative parable, featuring a teacher in Rumi, exemplifies the pernicious influence of deceit. While illusions ensnare individuals in a web of false realities and the falsehood or insincere friendships divert individuals from the path towards perfection (Rumi, 2014, Vol. 3, line 4227; Vol. 5, line 468; Vol. 6, p. 276-278), acts of kindness and love possess the capacity to thwart guile and trickery.

Thus, it is the individual—distinguished as the unique creation of the Divine—who assumes a crucial role in the quest for a harmonious world; the necessity of a utopian vision is intricately linked to the behaviors exhibited at interpersonal levels (Istiʿlami, 2010, p. 219; Rumi, 2014, Vol. 4, p. 523-525).

Society

In his investigation of interpersonal relationships, he regards the family as crucial for establishing an ideal society. He asserts that cultivating loyalty and compassion within families promotes goodwill in the larger community. This contributes to his vision of a multicultural environment where people from various backgrounds feel a sense of connection and belonging, without the impulse to create divisions. His aim is to encourage harmony and peace within this community.

The family unit assumes a pivotal role in shaping social expectations, with a pronounced emphasis on loyalty and compassion within various groups. Rumi asserts that compassion should ideally extend from one's immediate family—spouses, children, and close relatives—to encompass all individuals within the broader social fabric (Forouzanfar, 1988, p. 1034). He articulates this sentiment metaphorically, stating: "From the trees of faithfulness there are wings to heaven; its root is fast, and its branch is in the sky" (Rumi, 2014, Vol. 3, p. 276-277; Naʿim, 2008, p. 194). This metaphor suggests that friendship serves as a prescribed conduit to societal goodwill, promoting a greater common good through the cultivation of compassionate relationships (Golpinarli, 1992, Vol. 3, p. 135, 176). Rumi envisions an ideal society characterized by multiculturalism and a shared intrinsic nature among its members. It is paramount that individuals do not sever their personal and communal bonds but rather cultivate relationships that foster mutual support and assistance (Forouzanfar, 1988, p. 1195). Consequently, in this envisioned utopia, the principles of amity, peace, and harmony emerge as fundamental and inseparable constituents. Despite the diversity of backgrounds among its populace, the members exist in a state of intimacy and kinship. Rumi's portrayal of King Solomon, who exemplifies peaceful governance, underscores this notion of camaraderie: "In the time of his just sway the deer made friends with the leopard and ceased from war" (Rumi, 2014, Vol. 2, p. 224-226).

He warns that factors such as biases, preconceived ideas, dishonesty, self-importance, and discourtesy impede the progress of peace in communities (Rumi, 2014, Vol. 3, line 1297; Gölpinarli, 1992, Vol. 1, p. 777). In his analysis, he broadens his arguments to encompass the impact of authorities' decisions and economic conditions within the collective systems that contribute to achieving the ideal state.

Politics

Rumi's conceptualization of an ideal political utopia was profoundly shaped by his experiences of governance in antiquity, characterized by coercion, subjugation, and tribal prejudice—an era wherein rulers exercised authority according to their arbitrary whims. For Rumi, it is crucial to recognize that governance transcends mere political machination; it embodies a social, and civic endeavor intimately intertwined with the collective human experience. He posited that individuals are invariably influenced by the archetypes of administrative conduct, akin to water integrated with a reservoir. Thus, equality amongst individuals stands as a pivotal tenet within Rumi's envisioned utopia. Rumi establishes key principles for an ideal government founded on respect for citizens, authenticity, and integrity—three essential characteristics of a utopian society. Furthermore, justice plays a critical role in promoting peace and reconciliation, paving the way for the realization of utopia.

In Rumi's vision of an ideal society, the importance of nurturing inner strength and enhancing weaker qualities is also emphasized through the concepts of help and guidance (Rumi, 2014, Vol. 4, p. 80-81). He asserts, "With two intellects you will be delivered from many afflictions," highlighting that seeking assistance can alleviate doubts, thereby preventing future regret (Rumi, 2014, Vol. 2, p. 136-140). This perspective fosters meaningful conversations that illuminate an individual's inner self, inspiring people to actively shape their own realities (Rumi, 2014, Vol. 3, p. 155). Ultimately, as aware members of society, individuals can rise against oppression, reclaiming their autonomy. Rumi's tale of "The Caliph Who Surpasses Hatim of Tayyi in Generosity" illustrates his belief that the true caliph—an opponent of bias and champion of beauty—embodies the ideal human whose generosity extends globally, as noted in the phrase: "his largesse reached from Qaf to Qaf" (Rumi, 2014, Vol. 2, lines 3700-3702). Unlike imperial rulers who prioritize their self-interests, often driven by material gains, the authority's qualities of kindness and generosity unite people from diverse backgrounds. This narrative suggests that a genuine commitment to overcoming racial biases and prejudices can lead to a just and bountiful utopia.

The effectiveness of this kind of utopia diminishes due to manipulative, authoritarian actions and utilitarianism, including the shrewd Mongol relates greed to moral corruption, leading to utilitarian behaviors (Rumi, 2014, Vol. 3). Rumi connects the concept of evil with "precipitation and haste," which denotes a dismissal of cunning (Rumi, 2014, Vol. 5, line 2570). Furthermore, he points out that the quest for superiority challenges individuals' identities and heightens fear and violence. This dynamic operates within structures of authority, sharply contrasting with Rumi's vision of a harmonious utopia (Rumi, 2014, Vol. 4, p. 78-79).

Economics

Upon attaining dominion, the Ilkhanate embarked upon a pursuit of centralization through a variety of mechanisms. Among these mechanisms, taxation emerged as a significant factor, which, by the conclusion of the thirteenth century,

precipitated the nation's descent into economic turmoil (Petrushevsky, 1968, p. 490). Specifically, the "unchecked proliferation of various and extraordinary levies" during the sixth decade of the thirteenth century, coinciding with the reign of Möngke Khan, laid the groundwork for economic disintegration and the proliferation of official malfeasance (Allsen, 1987, p. 151-153). According to Rumi, the pathway out of the predicaments engendered by rampant materialism lies in the cultivation of contentment and the practice of beneficence. Furthermore, he posits that human existence serves as a wellspring of blessings and tranquility, acting as a bastion for the oppressed and marginalized.

In his discourse, Rumi adopts a spatial perspective regarding the state, identifying avarice as a fundamental impetus driving individuals to engage in the usurpation of property (Golpinarli, 1992, p. 847; Rumi, 2014, Vol. 3, line 3020). The ramifications of such greed manifest as an exacerbation of selfishness and ambition, particularly contributing to the proliferation of poverty. He portrays the ingratitude exhibited by the obstinate indigents and asserts that avaricious behavior effectively bars access to "the gate of mercy". Additionally, the poet emphasizes the consequences faced by the discontented followers of Moses, who, after being presented with celestial sustenance, experienced the cessation of "heavenly bread and dishes" (Rumi, 2014, Vol.1, line 82). In a broader context, it can be inferred that those who engage in philanthropy, irrespective of their financial status at any given time, are deemed benefactors. Within Rumi's envisioned ideal society, the transcendence of both objective and subjective phenomena is posited as a vital endeavor, as it serves to mitigate transient pleasures and purify the inner self (Forouzanfar, 1988, p. 999). More specifically, perfection is conferred upon those for whom "mines have ceased to hold value" (Rumi, 2014, Vol. 4, line 677; Forouzanfar, 1988, Vol. 3, line 1195).

Rumi critiques those who are solely preoccupied with external appearances and bodily nourishment, denoting that such fixations obscure their capacity to overcome selfish inclinations and ambition. Furthermore, he asserts that envy acts as a formidable barrier to achieving perfection. In a historical context, he explores the multifaceted nature of humanity, acknowledging that while needs drive individuals toward cultivation, robust desires lead them toward the usurpation of property (Golpinarli, 1992, Vol. 3, p. 847). As such, Rumi actively engaged in advancing a series of significant initiatives aimed at enhancing the well-being of human life and society (Naṣri, 1952, p. 73). Faced with the specter of poverty and destitution, individuals are compelled to become industrious and ambitious. Notably, Rumi's work encapsulates the subjugation of greed and envy as pivotal to societal advancement; he posits that avaricious tendencies ultimately debilitate humanity. The poet makes compelling references to the perils of greed, initiating his narrative with allusions to the impudent wretches through whom Rumi envisioned an alleviation of poverty (Rumi, 2014, Vol. 1, p. 6-7).

In the aforementioned account, the insatiable avarice of individuals who remain discontented despite their fortunes emerges as a threat to an idyllic existence. Rumi underscores the ingratitude of the persistent indigent and reiterates that greedy conduct inhibits their access to mercy. The initial verses of this tale foreshadow the deleterious repercussions of greed, including the exacerbation of poverty. Furthermore, he reiterates the ramifications experienced by the discontented adherents of Moses, who, despite receiving divine sustenance, soon found themselves deprived of "heavenly bread and dishes".

Nature

In Rumi's concept of utopia, nature serves as a nurturing influence that promotes human self-realization, and human connections, guiding individuals to recognize their shared roots and focus on what unites them rather than what divides them. He also warns that the destruction of nature hinders the achievement of this ideal state. In Rumi's conception of utopia, nature is emblematic of creation, essence, and temporal self-reflection (Rumi, 2014, Vol. 2, line 2539). His narratives depict a unified world, yet *Mathnawi* is richly imbued with vivid natural imagery. Rumi envisions a profound interconnectedness between humanity and the natural world, founded upon the premise of equality among all living organisms, which serves as a guide for humanity's pursuit of perfection (Sorouri et al., 2020, p. 9). He posits that "the world of creation was a phenomenon of his mastery," evidencing our shared origin, and claims that "we were one substance," underscoring the intrinsic link between individuals and nature (Rumi, 2014, Vol. 1, line 687). Consequently, the notion of an ecological utopia emerges as a means to foster awareness. While Rumi centralizes nature as the spiritual heart of his utopia, framing it as an essential component in the quest for perfection, he simultaneously critiques humanity's utilitarian tendencies that render "the world to be frozen" (Rumi, 2014, Vol. 5, line 5854).

Utopians

Despite the poet's significant contribution to the advancement of utopian ideals since the thirteenth century, Rumi adeptly utilized utopian narratives and archetypes to resonate with his audience. These figures, introduced in various allegories, amplify the universal significance of Rumi's envisioned ideal state by illustrating a hierarchy among individuals. Mystics, drawing from religious teachings, referred to exemplary figures to elucidate the grandeur of humanity; Rumi similarly engaged in this practice. In *Mathnawi*, particular emphasis is placed on primary utopians, notably Prophet Muḥammad, Imam ʿAli, Moses, and Khiḍr, whose unifying essence serves as a symbol of harmony and collective purpose (see Roḥani, 2018, p. 90-120). To bridge the existential chasm afflicting humanity, Rumi implores individuals to mirror the inner state of these prophetic figures (Roḥani, 2018, p. 116).

Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH) unequivocally stands as the paramount "perfect model for all mankind," thus embodying the true architect of utopia in Rumi's exposition (Bayat, 2008, p. 50). His intrinsic perfection radiates illumination across the world; indeed, "as the grandeur of the Prophet becomes established, none feels envy" (Rumi, 2014, Vol. 2, line 814). In contemplating Prophet Muḥammad, one encounters the essence of contentment, which emerges as an invaluable treasure (Pourkhaliqi Chatroudi, 1992, p. 348). He beckons humanity towards this state of tranquility, positing it as an ultimate avenue for peace (Rumi, 2014, Vol. 6, lines 2611-2613). Concurrently, he emphasizes the importance of consultative discourse as an essential mechanism for resolving conflicts, thereby mitigating human shortcomings (Naysari Tabrizi, 2006, p. 116-137).

Moreover, Imam ʿAli (PBUH) is particularly venerated for his unwavering commitment to justice, his renunciation of

material pursuits, and his unparalleled expertise in governance (Rumi, 2014, Vol. 1, line 3843). He epitomizes the principle of emanation, wherein "righteousness would bestow treasures and kingdoms". It is noteworthy that Rumi and Imam Ali differ in their prioritization of values, revealing a subtle yet significant divergence in their utopian perspectives. Rumi believes compassion serves as the foundation for justice, while in his *Nahj al-Balaghah*, Imam Ali prioritizes justice itself: "Al-ʿadlu yaḍaʿu al-umūra mawaḍiʿaha, wal-jawdu yakhrujuha min jihatiham wa al-ʿadlu saʾiysu, wa al-jawd-u ʿariḍ-u khaṣṣu, fa al-ʿadl-u ashrafuha wa afḍaluhuma" (Abduh, n.d, Vol. 3, p. 258).

Among the myriad prophetic narratives, the recurring tale of Khiḍr and Moses occupies a central place in *Mathnawi*. Moses, embodying intellect, serves as an archetype for the steadfast seeker on the path to perfection (Gorji, 2005, p. 191-192). Deeply enamored with the essence of love, he abhors arrogance and the tyranny of the soul. Limited by his exoteric knowledge, Moses must acquiesce to Khiḍr, who symbolizes the realm of transcendental wisdom (Pourkhaliqi Chatroudi, 1992, p. 346). Limited by his exoteric knowledge, Moses must acquiesce to Khiḍr, who symbolizes the realm of transcendental wisdom (Pourkhaliqi Chatroudi, 1992, p. 347-348; Sayf & Mousawand, 2002, p. 73; Gorji, 2005, p. 191-192). As Moses endeavors toward perfection, Khiḍr assumes the role of the 'Sufi master,' while Moses is remembered as the "journeying disciple," whose resilience against adversity illustrates a profound lesson in the adherence to virtuous conduct (Gorji, 2005, p. 9-10; Sayf & Mousawand, 2002, p. 72-73).

Significantly, the narratives surrounding these universal exemplars exhibit variation, as they are informed by diverse historical contexts. These tales not only offer varied interpretations but also serve as incentives for humankind to embark on the quest for perfection. Accordingly, the aforementioned four figures collectively embody a comprehensive instructional schema that advocates for behavioral transformation, with the ultimate goal of fostering human flourishing.

Suggestions for Future Research

The present study introduces a concept articulated by mystic poets, including Rumi and other Persian luminaries, which can be termed 'mystic utopia'. Its temporal exploration reveals the expansive influence it wielded on subsequent authors who espoused non-mystic utopian ideologies. Consequently, an examination of both mystical and non-mystical literary representations of an idealized state, contextualized within a historical framework, anticipates the evolution of utopian thought, particularly as it pertains to the formulation of a theory surrounding mystic utopia. Moreover, given the absence of an exhaustive study addressing the phenomenon of thirteenth-century utopianism—particularly notable for its globally renowned authors—it is advisable to explore the approaches inherent in the teachings shared by mystics, who, despite their variations, exhibit striking similarities, alongside the transformative awakening they promote.

According to the findings, it appears that the divergences between the utopian visions of Rumi and those of Western writers, as analyzed in extant literature, outweigh the parallels. Furthermore, the framework for comparative analysis remains nebulous, primarily due to the lack of exploration concerning the interactions and influences shared between the disparate authors and cultures. A subsequent investigation into these utopian frameworks—particularly through the lenses of spatial and thematic considerations—uncovers unique attributes that distinguish them. In addition, as canonical literary works meticulously address contemporary social and political dysfunctions, interdisciplinary research that engages with the interplay between societal evolution and the utopian ideals present in mystical literature could yield valuable insights for the enhancement of today's societal landscape.

Conclusions

Rumi's utopian ideas illuminate the link between mysticism and societal well-being. Rumi's utopia is not just a physical space but a manifestation of deep spiritual values that thrive within its inhabitants. This ideal state flourishes when its individuals establish relations with their inner-self and the Divine and cultivate peace, generosity, and empathy, standing as pillars of a community grounded in mutual support and understanding. The journey towards this utopia unfolds in two sequential states that interweave the inner transformation of the self with the collective aspirations of society.

State 1: The Creation of Ideal Individuals. In the first state, the focus is on the development of individuals who are at peace with themselves, connected to the Divine, and involved within their familial and communal networks. Rumi emphasizes the importance of self-reflection and inner peace as foundational elements. Through meditation and spiritual practice, individuals begin to recognize their interconnectedness with all beings, fostering a profound sense of unity. This awakening nurtures qualities like humility, simplicity, kindness, and honesty—traits that are essential for meaningful interactions. In this stage, individuals also engage with nature, not merely as a resource, but as a living entity that reflects the unity of existence. This relationship emphasizes that all life is interdependent, reinforcing the understanding that harm to one is harm to all. As individuals embody these values, they begin to communicate more effectively, sharing their thoughts and concerns with openness. This foundation of trust creates an environment ripe for collaboration, consultation, and support, which are crucial for the next stage.

State Two: The Establishment of an Ideal Society. With individuals prepared through their inner growth, the second stage involves the creation of an ideal society. Here, the roles of political and economic governance become crucial. Rumi envisioned a societal structure where justice and equality are not mere aspirations but are intricately woven into the fabric

of governance. Leadership should reflect the same values that individuals cultivate: empathy, integrity, and a commitment to the common good. Political governance should be transparent and inclusive, prioritizing the voices of the marginalized and ensuring that policies promote the welfare of all citizens. Economic structures must support sustainable practices that honor the environment and uphold social justice. This holistic approach recognizes that the health of the society and the well-being of its individual members are interconnected. However, this journey towards an ideal society encounters various deterrents, primarily rooted in deception—the illusion of individuality over unity, the false promise of power over service, and the lure of materialism over spiritual fulfillment. These challenges can undermine the values established in the first stage, leading to discord and inequality.

In conclusion, Rumi's ideal city can only emerge through a dedicated process of personal and collective transformation. This dual journey invites individuals to cultivate a deep sense of connectedness, fostering a society that is rooted in justice, mercy, and equality. Together, these stages form a pathway to a harmonious existence, where the essence of humanity shines brightly in every interaction.

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