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# The Impossible Space Between Desire and Pleasure: A Comparative Study of Love in Rūmī and Lacan

Arzu ve Zevk Arasındaki İmkânsız Mekân:  
Mevlâna ve Lacan'da Karşılaştırmalı Bir Aşk İncelemesi

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## Abstract

The present article is a study on the notion of love in the works of Jalāl ad-Dīn Muhammad Rūmī, one of the most influential poets and mystics, and Jacques Lacan, the renowned French psychoanalyst and philosopher. In this research, love is approached from two perspectives, namely, love from Rūmī's view, which is considered to be one of the highest levels of mysticism that cannot be expressed through language and entails a wholesale renunciation of logical

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reason, and love from Lacan's perspective, which is as an imaginary and illusory relationship, based on narcissistic roots. This comparison makes clear that the difference between the two views goes back to their difference on the definition of love. For Lacan, love is located inside the imaginary order, as an optical illusion which gives the subject the false promise of unity and completion with the Other. However, for Rūmī love belongs, in Lacanian terms, to the real order, which is deemed as the only way to escape the chains and shackles of the bodily form and embrace the Other in the truest possible sense. As a result, love finds a highly negative place in Lacanian psychoanalysis, since it impedes the subject's development from their imprisonment to images and objects, while in Rūmī's perspective, love finds a positive status due to its ushering of the subject into a full jouissance of the Other's presence. This study offers a Rūmī-Lacanian definition of love through translating Rūmī's ideas and expressions into the language of psychoanalysis.

**Keywords:** *Rūmī, Lacan, love, imaginary order, real order*

## Öz

Bu makale, İran ve Türkiye'nin en etkili şair ve mutasavvıflarından biri olan Celâleddin Muhammed Rūmī ile ünlü Fransız psikanalist ve filozof Jacques Lacan'ın eserlerindeki aşk kavramı üzerine bir incelemedir. Bu çalışmada aşk, Mevlâna'ya göre, tasavvufun dille ifade edilemeyen en yüksek mertebelerinden biri olarak, ve mantıksal akıldan toptan vazgeçmeyi içeren Lacan'a göre narsisist köklere dayanan hayali ve yanıltıcı bir ilişki olmak üzere iki açıdan ele alınmıştır. Bu karşılaştırma, iki görüş arasındaki farkın, aşk tanımındaki farklarına kadar uzandığını açıkça ortaya koymaktadır. Lacan'a göre aşk, özneye Öteki ile birlik ve tamamlanmaya dair sahte bir vaat veren optik bir yanılsama olarak hayali düzenin içinde yer alır. Bununla birlikte, Mevlâna için aşk, Lacancı terimlerle, bedensel formun zincirlerinden ve prangalarından kurtulmanın ve Öteki'ni mümkün olan en gerçek anlamda kucaklamanın tek yolu olarak Gerçek düzene aittir. Sonuç olarak aşk, Lacancı psikanalizde öznenin imgelere ve nesnelere hapsolmesiyle gelişimini engellediği için son derece olumsuz bir yer bulurken, Mevlâna'nın dünya görüşünde özneyi Öteki'nin varlığının tam anlamıyla bir zevk haline getirmesiyle olumlu bir statü bulmaktadır. Bu çalışma, Mevlâna'nın fikir ve anlatımlarını psikanalizin terminolojisine çevirerek Mevlâna-Lacancı bir aşk tanımı ortaya koymaya ve bu durumda aşkın Lacan'ın düşüncesinde kendi aşk tanımına kıyasla nasıl bir yer alacağını görmeye çalışmaktadır. Mevlâna'nın psikanalizinde aşk, narsisizm anlamına gelmez ve özünde hayali veya aldatıcı değildir, ancak ruhu maddi görünüş dünyasının dünyevi kaygılarından, ruhla sınırlı olmayan saf anlam dünyasına götüren bir firkateyn gibidir. Aşk, ancak aşğın aklını ve aklını terk edip varlığını yokluğa dönüştürdüğü zaman ruhunda beliren bir anlam olarak ortaya çıkar. Makalede, aşkı akıl yürütme yolu ile tanımlamaya çalışmanın boş bir iş olduğu ispatlanmaya çalışılmıştır.

**Anahtar sözcükler:** *Mevlâna, Lacan, aşk, hayali düzen, gerçek düzen*

## **Introduction**

The present research is an attempt to compare the concept of love in psychoanalytical thoughts of Jacques Lacan (1901-1981) with the mystical view of love in the poetry of Jalāl ad-Dīn Muhammad Rūmī (1207-1273), medieval Persian poet and Sufi mystic. The purpose of this research is, firstly, to find and establish a connection between two independent fields in human sciences, i.e., psychoanalysis and Islamic mystical literature. It should be noted that there has never been a study on the relationship between Lacanian psychoanalysis and Rūmī's poetry, and the current study could serve as a basis for further interdisciplinary studies in this area.

Secondly, this study aims at examining, in a comparative manner, the points of convergence and divergence in Rūmī's and Lacan's systems of thought when they come to discuss the subject of love. The results will indicate that their interestingly different takes on the subject at issue are not due to their different religious or ideological outlooks but rather the different angles from which they look at the human soul and psyche.

Finally, this research seeks to open the terminology of psychoanalysis to Rūmī's mystical views and words to enrich the studies of the human mind and soul. Given the position of Lacanian psychoanalysis in the humanities, this study and the unique approach it offers, will benefit the field of literary criticism. It should be noted that this study was conducted using an analytical-critical methodology.

## **Discussion**

To claim to have an absolute answer to the question of what love is, might seem like being immersed in a deep, endless ocean, and whoever has attempted to define love, on the basis of reasoning, has come to admit his failure in the end. There is no doubt that language cannot capture the essence of love. Once emotions are yoked by words, they lose their distinctiveness and become mere abstraction, because in the process of signification, there is always something that eludes the law of language and refuses to accept servitude to reason and intellect.

In Persian mystical literature, situations abound where reason and love stand vis-a-vis. Philosophers have long identified the human as a 'talking animal', in which the 'talking' does not just denote the ability to talk but the faculty of reasoning and thinking. Humans think and that is what distinguishes them from other living beings.

Philosophical reasoning has itself a turbulent history. Whether reason can think purely and distinctly, from externalities, has been a subject of controversy between philosophers, especially rationalists and empiricists for centuries. However, the common point between these different intellectual schools is that what characterizes human beings, which is reason rather than feeling. Reason, by the means of deduction, reveals the details from the totality, and, by virtue of induction, derives general rules from the

details. This proves that the gateway to the world's knowledge and the discovery of its realities is merely 'reason'.

Now, whatever has existence should necessarily be expressed in terms of language, since language is the instrument of the reasoning faculty in expressing concepts and thoughts. In *Cratylus*, Plato speaks of the necessity of concomitance between words and meaning, since names refer to the truth of objects, and that an idea requires a special name given to it by a philosopher (Sedley, 268). The *Holy Qur'an* also maintains the necessary concomitance of the name and the meaning: "And He taught Adam the nature of all things; then He placed them before the angels and said: "Tell Me the nature of these if ye are right." (al-Baqara, 31). Language in all its various forms is created by and belongs to God: "And among His Signs Is the creation of the heavens And the earth, and the variations In your languages And your colours : verily In that are Signs For those who know." (Ar-Rum 22). Thus, one can conclude that whatever cannot be expressed in language is either irrational or beyond reason, because the construction of reason and reasoning is based on logical propositions, and these are constructed and uttered in language.

This is where reason is most vulnerable, because throughout history, from ancient Greece to the present, it has always objected by some philosophers – such as the Greek Sophists and modern day post-structuralists - that not only does it not rule over language, but is itself trapped in the system of signs; reasoning without the instrument of language is impossible. According to these philosophers, whatever is expressed and deemed by reasoning, as 'pure truth' or 'ultimate signified', is merely an intralinguistic construct which has no existence beyond the system of signification. In other words, there is nothing outside language. Everything exists in language. (Habib, 2005: 67-70; 650)

Nonetheless, from the point of view of the mystics, love is neither trapped nor measured by rational scales and reasoning, and since it is beyond reason, it cannot be expressed in any language and idiom. Jalāl ad-Dīn Muhammad Rūmī is one of the renowned Sufi mystics who has left us with an invaluable literary heritage pertaining to the concept of love and its constant battle with reasoning. One cannot speak of Rūmī and not recall his dicta in favor of love and his dismissal for formal reasoning. Of course, in the works of Sufis, love is considered as the heart of the mysteries of Creation and the key to the knowledge of the Divine. However, in the *Holy Quran*, love does not find a linguistic determination and, for this reason, there has been an unending quarrel amongst mystics and religious scholars regarding its legitimacy. In other words, a glance into the mystic and Sufi literature reveals beyond doubt a substantial and ontological difference in the concept of love between the two sides of the feud. From the Sufi's point of view, love is the ultimate zenith of monotheism; it is the point where the boundary between the worshipper and the worshipped is annulled and the former becomes one with the latter. Surprised at the words of those who limit love to images and idols, Ghazzali wonders

how people do not find the love for their leaders (who have passed away for centuries) astonishing and odd, but deem the love for the everlasting and ever-present God unusual and unreal:

It is surprising to see that people approve of love for those whom they have never seen, only on the basis that they have led them towards virtue. However, they deny the verity of love for Him who is the source of all beauty, virtue and kindness in the universe: He who all the beauty and fairness which eyes, ears, and the other sense intuit, from the beginning of the world to its last stage, from the zenith of the universe to the nadir of the creation, are naught but an iota of the horde of His power, and a ray of His Presence. Would I ever know how the love of Him whose attributes are these is deemed unintelligible, and how those who know Him should not fall in love with Him! (Al-Ghazāli, 1972: 606).

Therefore, in the discourse of Sufism, such a love cannot be directed to a being other than the Divine except from the path of the figurative language, because the definition of love necessitates the exclusion of partnership, and whatever differs from this love admits it. A beloved other than God can have an example, either actually or potentially. However, for Him there can be no example, not in existence nor in possibility. Thus, love to a being other than God is pure metaphor, not a matter of Truth. (*ibid* 607)

It seems as if it is this exclusive love and the denial of partners which find such a resonance in the words of the mystics. Thus, it should be noted that in the mystic parlance, love finds a fresh new significance. For example, the mystics look at the *Qur'an* as a book of love from the beginning to the end, a book containing the words of that eternal beloved who has created and made possible everything that exists in the whole universe, so that wherever one turns the face of the Primordial Beloved appears.

I look at the desert, and I behold you in it;

I look at the sea, and therein I see you.

Wherever I turn my eyes, to the mountains and meadows;

I see the trace of your beautiful face. (Baba Tahir)

In every movement and in every rest there is a trace of God's existence;

In everything there is a sign that signifies that God is only One. (Abu-l-'Atahiya)

In such a state when the slave is dissolved in his Master's love, and beholds nothing beyond His being and deeds, God comes the nearest to the presence of his slave. In a divine saying we read:

When a slave of Mine draws near to Me a span, I draw near to him a cubit; and if he draws near to Me a cubit, I draw near to him a fathom. And if he comes to Me walking, I go to him running. (Al-Bukhari, Book 1, Hadith 96)

In other words, God's love for His slave is much higher than the latter's love for the Creator, or better said, the slave cannot find the path of love towards God unless God intends

it in the first place: “But ye shall not will Except as God wills,-The Cherisher of the Worlds.” (*Holy Quran*, Al-Takwir 29). Therefore, one can claim that the reason behind the creation of the universe was love, as it is its ultimate purpose; a love which finds shelter in the heart and not in the mind and reason:

In the beginning, the light of your beauty dawned;  
Love appeared and set the whole universe on fire.  
You turned your face to the angels yet saw them incapable of love;  
Out of zeal you were filled with fire and then cast it on man.  
The reason aspired to borrow light from that fire;  
The fire of zest went aglow and set the whole world ablaze. (Hafiz)  
From the dew of love man’s dust turned into mud;  
A hundred passion and zeal filled the universe.  
The vein of soul was cut with the knife of love;  
A drop fell thereof and it was called the heart. (Abu Sa’id Abu-l-Khayr)

It was in the vein of such a belief, in the wake of the appearance of the divine spirit in the form of Shams-e Tabrizi, that Rūmī began composing love poems. In Rūmī, love finds a new voice. He takes love to the farthest limits known to man, to the point where it suddenly ceases to mean, becomes completely impossible and goes beyond the frames of language and analogy. In other words, as Rūmī appears on the mystic stage, he beholds a mansion built by his predecessors, in which, however, he cannot confine his soaring spirit. From behind the bodily world, he catches sight of the fountainhead and the eternal abode of life, and thus burnt in the fire of separation, like a bird in search of the phoenix, he embarks on the journey to the place of no place:

Like a flood we are, we are like streams; towards You we all flow;  
O God, the final abode of every flood is in the main of the sea. (Rūmī)  
From the high we are and towards the high we soar;  
We are from the sea, and towards the sea we flow.  
We are not from here nor are we from there;  
We are from nowhere and towards nowhere we go. (Rūmī)

Rūmī stares at the mansion of love and sees in it nothing of limits and bounds, since everything which finds shape in language falls far away from its essence. Therefore, Rūmī takes an axe in his hands and brings down the lofty building of love. This love, which can be put into words, is not true love, but the product of logic and reason. Yet, how far is the passionate lover from the sane and reasonable logician! In order to reach the summit of knowledge, reason should be sacrificed, being should be revoked, and nonbeing must be embraced:

O saki! Pour me more wine, so fear and hope would leave me alone;  
Cut the neck of Reason, no relation should ever be between it and us.  
Bring forth the sweet mead, dig out the roots of reason;  
Take off that non-covering cloak from the body of being. (Rūmī)

Reason cannot transcend the limits of logic; by nature and essence, it is bound to form and body. Whatever reaches it through the senses is in the physical form and, then, is expressed in a linguistic nature. However, in passing through the material world, humankind is capable of cutting loose, where the shreds of time and space and become linked with the spiritual universe. And it is precisely at this point that reason and language cease to function, because there only meaning that is found and accidents find no way to its confines. It is against such a formalistic rationalism that make Rūmī cry out:

Let the flood wash away all these rhymes and fallacies;  
They are cover, cover they are, well suited to the limited minds of poets! (Rūmī)

Taking cover in language, while expressing love, is like finding refuge in a roofless house in a stormy night. Love is inexpressible, because its realm has no limits; it is a land where everything both is and is not. It *is* because it can be felt, and it *is not* because it cannot be reasoned. In love, duality, which according to logicians is the basis of understanding and reasoning, no longer exists. As soon as reason comes face to face with the boundless and infinite shores of meaning, it yields to its power and encounters its own limits. Love entails non-being, and it is interesting that out of it, being is attained, like a phoenix that once forsook duality and burnt in unity, rose once again out of its own ashes, transcended through time and space, and became eternal. According to Rūmī:

In His presence, no duality can fit. You say 'I' and he says 'I.' To leave duality, either you die before Him or He dies before you. But He cannot die, not in reality nor in the mind, since "He [is Him] Who lives and dies not" (*Holy Quran*, Al-Furqan 58). He is so kind that if it were possible, He would die for your sake. Now that it is impossible for Him to die, you die, so He can appear to you and duality remains not. If you tie two birds together, although they now have four wings, they can fly, because duality still holds. Now, if you tie a dead bird to a live one, the latter can fly because duality no longer exists" (Rūmī, 2006: 24)

As soon as love takes wings and leaves behind the animal world, its definition becomes impossible. The definitions offered by the previous mystics, all lose color in Rūmī's world and, instead, covered the truth of love like a veil. Love can be found in every nook and corner of Rūmī's works *Diwan-e Shams* and *Mathnavi*, yet always the words end in silence and the insufficiency of the reason in offering a proper definition. It seems as if Rūmī, conscious of the efforts of his predecessors to define love, is persistent on pushing it love forever behind the reach of reason and logic, to where he even gives a new account for the beginning of Creation; an account no doubt the product of his mystic leanings:

No matter how much I define and explain love  
When I come to it I feel ashamed of it.  
Although the interpretation by language is enlightening,  
Love without language is more pleasing and delighting.  
When the Pen was in a hurry writing everything,  
It sundered in twain as it came to write of love.  
The reason failed in explaining it, as an ass stuck in the mud,  
Love itself explained love and what it means to love. (*Mathnavi*)

We can say that for Rūmī, love resides in a world in which the doors will forever remain closed to reason. The intoxicated lover escapes the chains of reason and consciously embraces madness; breaks down the rules, leaves the world of duality, and builds a new world based on unity. He is a nameless and unknown lover, who every now and then receives a life-giving gift from the sea of love.

Psychoanalysis can be called a story of love. The book of psychoanalysis begins with the love story of a woman who is fond of Josef Breuer (1842-1925), Austrian psychologist and Sigmund Freud's (1856-1939) coworker (Strachey, 1981: 12). So, it is not surprising that love has a vibrant and eternal presence in psychoanalytic literature, since what follows from the study of the creation of this branch of human knowledge is that love is undoubtedly an essential element in everyone's psyche, and any study of the human psyche which is unmindful of love and its nature will be futile.

Jacques Lacan (1901-1981), a contemporary psychoanalyst and philosopher, devoted a significant amount of his lectures and writings to the subject of love and its relationship with 'desire' and language. However, since speaking about the concepts of Lacan's psychoanalysis might seem like swimming in a turbulent sea of contradictory terms and concepts; however, we do not claim to offer a complete guide to his ideas here. On the other hand, any attempt to summarize the views of this thinker will be but simplistic and conducive to the misunderstandings and distortions of his words. The writers thus only focused on Lacan's view of love and the painful pleasure of confronting the Real (which could be otherwise termed as 'Jouissance').

In Lacan's teachings, love, like many other key concepts, sees many ups and downs. However, with a thorough and comprehensive look at the topic of love (especially in his seventh, eleventh, seventeenth, and twentieth Seminars) leads the reader to the perception that the Lacanian view of love is the child of a human's weakness and disability. Lacan speaks of a "*specific prematurity of birth*" in mankind, a factor that causes a "primordial discord" in an infant and leaves him at the mercy of the two worlds, inside and outside, "or, as they say, between the *Innenwelt* and the *Umwelt*" (Lacan, 2006: 78). In this state of desperation, the mother is the one who takes the infant under her protective wings and fulfills his needs. In a mystical way, the infant and the mother become united in the desire of each other, and there is thus no sign of plurality and separation. But this imaginary

union does not last long because soon the infant's intelligence grows and he comes to see the reality. The mother's frequent absences, as well as the experience of pain caused by dealing with objects around the child, makes the infant understand that he and his mother are two separate beings. Such perception of disunion confronts the child for the first time with his intrinsic loneliness, and the fact that he is lonely in this world and needs others' recognition and attention to survive. Thus he starts the journey of his life in the midst of turbulent waves in order to know his place in relation to the other. In Lacan's words, a child's life becomes an attempt to find out "what place do I have in the other's world?" (*ibid.* 690). Therefore, the successive demands of the infant, in addition to his physical needs, turns into a demand for love (*ibid.* 689), a love that serves as a dependable shelter for his weaknesses and disabilities. In Philippe van Haute's words, the infant's demand is "to be loved for itself, independent of any economic calculus" (109).

Accordingly, love is always self-love. In the first seminar, Lacan speaks of the 'Ideal-Ego' and its relation to human subject; then he goes on to define love: "It's one's own ego that one loves in love, one's own ego made real on the imaginary level" (Forrester, 1975: p. 142). In the eleventh seminar, Lacan once again emphasizes self-love and explicitly refers to the structure of love as "essentially narcissistic" and describes the subject's relation to love objects as "narcissistic identification" (Lacan, 1998: 243-256). Love, although seemingly is bound to the existence of the beloved, it is an instrument for fulfilling the desires of the self.

The unlimited demand of an infant to be loved indicates that the object of demand is distinct from the object of need, in that, unlike the object of need, the object of demand is not there to fill physical gaps (Van Haute, 2002: 109). When I need something, the gap and the object needed to fulfill it are both real. However, in the case of demand, the situation is different. Love has no visual connection with any particular object, or rather, it is impossible to embody the object of love in the form of something which is outside the world. The object, therefore, can only take on a symbolic form, in the sense that since it is abstract, it must take the form of a signifier, so that it can be directly referred to. In such a situation, the object of love falls in the trap of the virtual movement of the signifier in the system of signification, and will remain incomplete in an always-open signifying chain. The significance of this argument is that if the demand for love can separate itself from a one-to-one correspondence with a certain object, only then can the emergence of desire be possible. However, love according to Lacan's thinking is a potential danger in the realization of desire (Lacan, 2006: 689) because in most cases, love remains in the imaginary order and does not allow desire to emerge. The reason behind this is that the object is hindered from symbolization, and it is only when the subject tries to free herself from the fetters of love that desire finds the possibility reveal itself.

One can now see the reason behind Lacan's negative view of love. Love for him is a fantasy, an illusion. In his fantasies and imagination, the child believes that the mother's lack (or, in other words, the other's lack) is a true and real object that can be returned to

him where he can then possess her eternal love. This is where the child is wrong. Because the mother's lack, is in reality, the Name of the Father. In other words, the mother's lack is not an actual object, but a lack in the system of signification. Lacan calls the symbolic form of this lack the 'Signifier of the Other's Desire' or the 'Signifier of the Other's Lack' and the subjugation of the child to it (that is, the Symbolic Law) is the beginning of the child's castration and his entry into the world of the father, the world of law, and the world of plurality and refraction. However, love is a kind of rejection of the Law of the Father, crossing the boundaries of the Symbolic Order and returning to the imaginary world of union.

In the eleventh seminar, Lacan defines love in relation to the *objet petit a*: "I love you, but, because inexplicably I love in you something more than you-the *objet petit a*-I castrate you" (Lacan, 1998: 286). This means that love always perceives something beyond the beloved, something that the lover finds but the beloved is not aware of it. This object of love that is beyond the beloved is what Lacan calls the *objet petit a* or the object-cause of desire: an object which is from the very beginning is lost and non-existent, which, with its ghostly appearance, seeks to fill the intrinsic lacuna within the human being, an effort that always fails. Love considers this object real, and tries to possess it in the real world, whereas desire is only obtained when the subject searches it in the system of signification, not in the outside world. It can never be fulfilled, but can only be covered, because its absence is essentially based on an imaginary lack.

Love stops the movement of the signs and forms an imaginary crossover between the signifier and the signified. The *objet petit a*, which is the cause of desire and is indescribable, crystallizes in love, and therefore Lacan calls love deceptive: "As a specular mirage, love is essentially deception" (*ibid.* 268). In fact, "to love is to give what one does not have. Love is directed not at what the love-object has, but at what he lacks, at the nothing beyond him. The object is valued insofar as it comes in the place of that lack" (Evans, 2006: 286).

From Lacan's point of view, such a connection, which is all based on imagination, can never be the end point for mental and psychological problems. Only when one becomes aware of one's own inherent loss, only when one becomes aware that what is lost is non-repayable, and only when one releases the desire for total fulfillment richness and mental integrity, it is only then one can courageously face the reality of being and acknowledge that the world of unity is a myth, because reality is nothing but a refraction and lack. In fact, the tragedy of human life, from Lacan's point of view, is acknowledging this lack. The end point of Lacan's psychoanalysis is the release from this dream of unity. If we realize that we live in an imperfect world of endless signifiers, we will no longer be depressed and discouraged by the absence of unity, because we now know that like Sisyphus – the mythological king of Corinth, who was punished by the Olympian for his trickery – we are doomed to push a boulder up the hill only to watch it roll down again. Therefore, in this case, the best solution, from the perspective of Lacanian psychoanalysis, is to enjoy the

endeavor itself, the effort that, despite our awareness of the ultimate downfall, we put into repudiating the laws of being.

Nonetheless, when we fathom into the mighty words of Rūmī on love, we immediately discern a clear contradiction between his view and Lacan's view of the subject at hand. As mentioned above, in Rūmī's religion, love is the secret of secrets, and the purest of liberating wines, and the only way to free us from the prison of our solipsism. In Rūmī's belief, love is a point at which the lover leaves behind the last moments of his misguided egocentric life and becomes ready for annihilation in the being of the beloved. In an Islamic tradition we read that "the world is a prison for the devoted believers and a paradise for the misbelievers" (Tusi, 1993: 377). This tradition is resonant in every line of Rūmī's poetry:

When your body becomes buried, your soul flies to heaven;  
When your bodily cloak is torn, you will become everlasting.  
The wandering soul in this world yearn for the city of nowhere;  
Why is the animal life always busy grazing, wherefore, why?  
O pure soul, how long will you live the life of a traveler?  
You are the King's falcon, toward His whistle fly once again. (Rūmī)  
You have not given me sweet water to drink ever since the table is ready;  
Since the time I have known myself, you have tied my hands and feet.  
How much shall I speak of up and down, I have my root in nowhere;  
I do not belong to a place, thus how shall I tell hither from thither apart? (Rūmī)

In the world of love, Rūmī does not talk about himself at all, but his love poetry is an invitation to quit separation and become one with the will of the eternal beloved. While for Lacan love is essentially self-love and a basis for narcissism, Rūmī abolishes the 'self' all at once, and the only thing that comes out of his self-less love is the beloved, the 'other.' Contrary to Lacan, who considers the roots of love in the imaginary order and in connection with external objects, Rūmī considers love indescribable, and believes that love belongs to the world of abstractions and ideas. When using Lacanian terminology, it can be said that love for Rūmī exists in the Real Order. It is tangible, yet indescribable. In Rūmī's words, love will not emerge unless the soul frees itself from the shackles of both intellect and thought;

First you shall drink a cup of wine which will intoxicate you with delight;  
Then, you will lose your mind and reason, and towards us take your wings. (Rūmī)  
May the philosopher be blind, may the light from him be forever away!  
The flowers of religion will never grow in him, since he never sows the seed! (Rūmī)  
Love is not in need of thought, since though is a cane;  
Reason needs a cane, since it cries aloud, "I am blind!" (Rūmī)

In fact, by drawing on Rūmī's words on love and expressing it within the framework of Lacanian psychoanalysis, one can formulate a new interpretation of love. Accordingly, love is a confrontation with the reality of being and existence, with a reality that cannot be expressed in the language of thought and logic; in other words, love is an experience of *jouissance*: "a pleasure that is excessive, leading to a sense of being overwhelmed or disgusted, yet simultaneously providing a source of fascination" (Fink, 1995: xii). Indeed, the Lacanian Real Order is a world full of presence in contrast to the Symbolic Order, where there is no absence and lack therein (Tomaselli, 1988: 313). In other words, the world of *Jouissance* is an experience of pre-linguistic unity, a world which is not yet disturbed by the introduction of language. For an infant, the universe is a homogeneous totality which is characterized by presence and not absence of any sort. With the advent of a speaking subject, language disturbs the Real Order: "the signifier brings forth something new in the real or drains off more of the real into the symbolic" (Fink, 1995: 71), and thus the formless world of an infant is shaped and given form. In Lacan's words, "it is the world of words that creates the world of things" (Lacan, 2006: 229). However, the sign is incapable of destroying the whole Real Order:

In the process of signification, a lacuna emerges which "resists symbolization absolutely" (Forrester, 1975: 66). The Real Order is characterized by its resistance to absence and lack, and its refusal to enter the Symbolic Order, and therefore, signs will always remain obscure. In fact, the Real Order is "improbable-impossible" (*ibid.* 181), and it looms over the life of the subject, a shadow which is always present and "is always and in every case in its place; there being nothing that can exile it from it" (Lacan, 2006: 17)

In Rūmī's thoughts, love is manifestation of such a presence in the world of a human being who submerged in the world of forms and symbols. With the advent of love, all rules and laws of causality and logic are broken. Love is undoubtedly an experience of encountering the Real, and it is like *jouissance*, a pleasure tainted by pain and sadness, and in Rūmī's words, Rūmīit is both poison and an antidote. Love is a return to one's origins. In short, one can say that Rūmī's view of love is very different Lacan's with a difference that arises from their different attitudes towards the human spirit and soul. In other words, what distinguishes Rūmī's and Lacan's interpretation of love is not their differing religious beliefs, but their differing view of the human psyche.

## Conclusion

In Rūmī's version of the human psyche, love does not stand for narcissism and is not essentially imaginary or deceitful, but it is like a frigate that takes our soul from the mundane cares of the material world to the pure world of meaning, which is not limited by the restraints of language and symbols. Love is a meaning, which dawns upon the lover's soul only when he forsakes his mind and reason, thus changing his being into non-being; it is the prologue of a journey towards the summit of life, a voyage through seas of trial, and an ordeal towards the shores of oneness and unity.

**Research and Publication Ethics Statement:** This is a research article, containing original data, and it has not been previously published or submitted to any other outlet for publication. The author followed ethical principles and rules during the research process. In the study, informed consent was obtained from the volunteer participants and the privacy of the participants was protected.

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