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"YOU AND I": THE IDEA OF ONENESS WITH LOVE IN THE EARLY SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY BRITISH POETRY AND THIRTEENTH-CENTURY ANATOLIAN SUFI POETRY

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Abstract

Early seventeenth-century English verse and thirteenth-century Anatolian Sufi poetry, though from different cultures and eras, converge in their exploration of going beyond material existence through love. In the verses of Edmund Spenser, John Donne, George Herbert, Mawlana Jalaluddin Rumi, Yunus Emre and Haji Bektash Veli, love emerges as a medium for spiritual awakening that liberates individuals from mundane life and socio-political conflicts and leads to an elevated consciousness merged with the divine. Thus, this article will analyse Donne's "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning," Rumi's "You and I," Spenser's "An Hymne in Honour of Heavenly Love," Emre's "Lovers Die Not," Herbert's "Love III," and Veli's "The Transcendence of Saints" in light of Plato's idea of Oneness and the Sufi doctrine of wahdat-i wujud and suggest that these poems reveal love as a transformative power enabling individuals to transcend their worldly existence and become One with the beloved, namely the divine.

Keywords: *John Donne, Edmund Spenser, George Herbert, Mawlana Jalaluddin Rumi, Yunus Emre, Haji Bektash Veli.*

"SEN VE BEN": ON YEDİNCİ YÜZYIL BAŞI İNGİLİZ ŞİİRİ VE ON ÜÇÜNCÜ YÜZYIL ANADOLU TASAVVUF ŞİİRİNDE AŞK İLE BİRLİK DÜŞÜNCESİ

Öz

On yedinci yüzyıl başı İngiliz şiiri ile on üçüncü yüzyıl Anadolu Tasavvuf şiiri, farklı kültürlerle ve dönemlere ait olsalar da, aşk aracılığıyla maddi varoluşun ötesine geçme arayışlarında birleşirler. Edmund Spenser, John Donne, George Herbert, Mevlana Celaleddin Rumi, Yunus Emre ve Hacı Bektaş Veli'nin dizelerinde aşk, bireyleri dünyevi yaşamdan ve sosyo-politik çatışmalardan özgürleştiren ve ilahi olanla bütünleşmiş yüksek bir bilince götüren manevi bir uyanış aracı olarak karşımıza çıkar. Dolayısıyla, bu makale Donne'ın "Veda: Yas Tutmak Yasak," Rumi'nin "Sen ve Ben", Spenser'ın "Tanrısal Aşk Onuruna İlahi" Emre'nin "Âşıklar Ölmez", Herbert'in "Aşk III," ve Veli'nin "Erenler Demi" şiirlerini Platon'un Birlik düşüncesi ve tasavvuftaki vahdet-i vücud öğretisi ışığında ele alacak ve bu şiirlerin aşkı, bireylerin dünyevi varlıklarının ötesine geçip sevgiliyle, yani tanrıyla Bir olmalarını sağlayan dönüştürücü bir güç olarak tasvir ettiğini öne sürecektir.

Anahtar kelimeler: *John Donne, Edmund Spenser, George Herbert, Mawlana Jalaluddin Rumi, Yunus Emre, Haji Bektash Veli.*

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Miseries and joys have no religion or country, nor does love. Beyond an emotion, love has been an enigmatic part of existence for ages and a subject of interest for poets, artists and philosophers. One of the most influential figures in Western thought, Plato, in his Symposium (5th BC), also touches upon love and defines this mysterious feeling as “of the good’s being one’s own always” (Plato, 2017: 41). Claiming that all the beings in the visible world are mere shadows and imitations of the Forms which are immaterial, flawless and unchanging concepts or ideals residing in the invisible realm of Ideas, Plato asserts that every being has a soul desiring the Good that stands for the soul of all the souls in the world. Hence, as goodness partially resides in the material world, man feels attracted to the beauty of the beloved. Accordingly, the strong attraction of the individual to beauty and goodness is the manifestation of the eagerness and fascination of all beings for the Good (2017: 42). Plato’s ideas about love and the Good have had a great impact on Western and Eastern thoughts and initiated many doctrines built upon the tenet of cosmic unity created by a perfect god. As artistic manifestations of those ideas, the verses of the Metaphysical poets and the Anatolian Sufi thinkers address oneness as a central theme and elaborate on the ideas of unity and singularity of existence via love. Thus, “A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning” and “You and I” stand out as works that picture love directed to another human being and delineate the unified souls of the lovers that bestow them a higher presence. On the other hand, the idea of love is explored via a devotee’s lens and presented as the divine love in “Love III”, “An Hymne in Honour of Heavenly Love,” “Lovers Die Not” and “The Transcendence of Saints” which all communicate the worshipper’s desire for reunion with god or namely the Beloved. Nevertheless, regardless of its addressee, love is outlined in all the verses as a transmuting force that urges the individual to undergo a major change by leaving his old self behind for a unique, non-conformist and free version of self. In other words, written in ages and lands weary of invasions, conflicts and upheavals, Donne, Rumi, Herbert, Spenser, Emre and Veli all represent absolute peace, felicity and salvation via the annihilation of the self in the beloved, or the Beloved, which echoes the Platonic idea of love that signifies a journey towards oneness; a voyage beginning with physical love, proceeding with the unification with the beloved’s soul and ending with the union with the Good.

Few poets in English Verse have merged love with such intellectual complexity and profundity as John Donne (1572-1631). A prominent figure in the metaphysical school of poetry that readdresses existence, truth or causality with conceits and wit, Donne stands out with his sensual love poems beside his religious verses exploring his relation to god. Framing the mutual attachment of two souls, his “A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning” exalts a sacred, timeless and unique state of love against a carnal affection. Believed to be a farewell speech Donne wrote for his wife while leaving for a diplomatic mission to France in 1611, the poem foregrounds the persona’s request of his beloved not to mourn and “make [...] noise” with “tear-floods” after their separation but act solemnly like “virtuous men” do when they are “pass[ing] away” (Donne, 1993: 1093). Moreover, Donne’s verse elaborates on the duality between the understanding of the majority, namely “laity” and the lovers’ mystical and esoteric attachment to one another that can only be comprehended by the clergy (1993: 1093). Thus, upon warning his beloved that expressing their sorrow will disgrace the greatness and sublimity of their love, the speaker highlights their heavenly feelings for each other via a metaphor resembling their love to the movements of heavens that are unnoticed, innocent and “greater” contrary to the love of ordinary people that is like a massive earthquake that “brings harms and fears” (1993: 1093). Thus, common love is portrayed as superficial and destructive in contrast to the lover’s experience which is spiritual and divine. Accordingly, owing to the servitude of “dull sublunary lovers” to physical intimacy and sexual desire, the speaker claims that the infatuation of those cannot last long after losing each other’s company (1993: 1093). Through its portrayal of the lover’s bond as a pure and immanent devotion beyond a physical or sensual attachment, the poem highlights the transcending experience of love by suggesting true love as a gift unifying two souls against the baseness of carnal intimacies. In other words, the poem pictures love as an exceptional, spiritual affinity that bestows the lovers the dignity and sanctity beyond mundane, everyday existence or physical love: “But we by a love so much refined,/ That our selves know not what it is,/ Inter-assured of the mind,/ Care less, eyes, lips, and hands to miss” (1993: 1093). In that sense, via the portrayal of the lovers’ sublime states and their indifference to the material world, “A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning” sets forth the spiritual attachment of the two lovers as a path to a more elevated and higher self that ignores physical togetherness or infatuations, which corresponds with the Platonic idea of love framing a tendency towards the Good/ Beautiful and sublimates human by unveiling the uniqueness in one’s soul:

in the construction of harmony and rhythm there is no difficulty in discerning the influence of love, and love as a duality is not as yet in evidence here. The well-ordered individuals, including those who, while not yet well-ordered, will be helped by love to become so, who should be gratified, and their love safeguarded. Theirs is the beautiful, the heavenly Love that is from the Heavenly Muse (Plato, 2017: 19)

Donne's poem treats the state of wholeness by rendering the unified souls of the lovers despite their compulsory separation: "Our two souls therefore, which are one, / Though I must go, endure not yet/ A breach, but an expansion,/ Like gold to airy thinness beat" (Donne, 1993: 1093). While the oneness of the lovers' souls resembles "an expansion" that is like the gold leaves stretched to greater surfaces after being beaten, the word "expansion" here also suggests love as a powerful part of existence residing always in the cosmos, a force one is never devoid of. Thus, by mirroring the mystical attachment that has eradicated their egos and led them to a spiritual, peaceful state, the poem sets forth love both as a transcending force the lovers have embraced and "an antidote to the impermanence and mortality that characterize the rest of the world" (Guibbory, 2006: 138). Moreover, the poem also sets forth a metaphor of compass to underline their strong bond and oneness in two different selves: "If they be two, they are two so/ As stiff twin compasses are two;" (Donne, 1993: 1093). The persona resembles the fixed foot of the compass to the beloved's soul that "makes no show/ To move" and his to the foot moving around the other one (1993: 1093). Thus, as long as her soul resides in the centre of the existence of the persona, his soul can always find its way, "come home" and be whole like the outer circle that can only be flawless via the foot in the centre (1993: 1093): "Thy firmness makes my circle just,/ And makes me end where I begun" (1993: 1093). In this respect, as a symbol of perfection and oneness, the circle represented in the poem not only illuminates their sacred love that merges their souls into one that is unadorned but perfect like a circle but also signifies love against "the fragmentation and corruption the speaker finds in the world" (Guibbory, 2006: 141). Therefore, "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning" puts forth the attachment between two souls as an immortal, sublime love that is more emancipating and unique than physical, temporary affections to highlight the selfless domain of love turning the lovers into transcendent figures strongly connected to one another, the cosmos and existence.

The idea of love that uncovers a unique version of self that centralizes Donne's "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning" is also masterfully treated by another great poet-philosopher who lived three centuries earlier in Anatolia. An exceptional devotee and great poet like Donne, Mawlana J. Rumi (1207-1273) with his *Matnawiye Ma'nawi, Diwane Kabir and Rubaiyat communicates his universal and timeless doctrines based on unconditional tolerance, goodness and love*. He was a prominent Sufi master whose verse touches upon his devotion to God and love for his friend and spiritual guide Shams Tabrizi. His poetry and Donne's poems meet on common ground in their attempts to represent the contrast between earthly and divine love through the dichotomy of body and soul. Moreover, as the bold and original voices of their ages, both poets juxtapose spirituality and passion in their love poems without fear of religious dogmatism. Concerning the portrayal of love in the verse of the great mystic, Rumi's idea of love is shaped by the tenet of the unity of existence and oneness, namely a "primordial existence with god wherein the creator and the created are found together" (Zarrabi-Zadeh, 2014: 36). To clarify, according to Rumi, love is the primal cause of the creation of the cosmos which is always in motion due to this mysterious force. In other words, the Sufi thinker "connects [the state of selflessness of non-existent entities] to [their] essential love for the being who is their divine origin, the love that leaves no place for anything but the divine in them" (2014: 36). Thus, the Sufi thought of wahdat-i wujud that stands for the unity of being or existence centralizes his ideas of love and oneness. Defined as the "ascent of the finite to the infinite by outdoing oneself", wahdat-i wujud is a belief echoing Plato's ideas in its portrayal of love as the desire of all beings to reunite with God (Atalay, 1991: 81). This Sufi doctrine defines God as an eternal soul and the entire universe as a reflection and manifestation of God's "wujud (body) out of which all other realities emanate (1991: 81). Furthermore, wahdat-i wujud involves three main stages in becoming one with the divine. The first degree is the phase of "nefi" that is going beyond oneself, and the second is "ispat-ı mihas" that stands for proving one's qualification for the divine love (1991: 80). The final and highest stage a human being can attain is "Fena fi Allah" which means absolute unification with God, the absolute reality in which there is no lover but only God (1991: 80). Accordingly, Rumi, in his poetry, offers love not only as the essence of all creations but also as a bridge between the material and immaterial, finite and infinite. Love in his verse is not a mere human emotion, but an immanent desire beyond human will, a transmuting power that erases ego, doubts and worldly aspirations and makes one soul yearn only

for its mate: "Because of that fore-ordainment all the particles of the world/ repaired as mates and are in love with their own mate/ Every particle of the universe is desiring its mate,/ just like amber and the blade of straw" (M. J. al-Dīn Rumi, 1925, ll. 4401–2). Thus, love is "the root of existence" intrinsic in each atom that is attracted by this mysterious energy in their cosmic movements (Rustom, 2013: 192):

After having delved into the Ocean of Love [...] one's own qualities, self-perception and 'ego' cease to be... What subsists is [...] the soul transformed by the power of love so that it can dwell in the sacred presence of God, not as an individual 'I' that is separate from God but an 'I' that is wholly indistinguishable from the Ocean (Rustom, 2013: 192).

His "You and I" like Donne's poem addresses the spiritual bond between two lovers and offers the heart as the home of both love and faith guiding the soul to God. Love urges the lover to annihilate himself in the beloved and become a whole, one immanent being. Thus, the lover rises from the realm of mortals, loses himself in the divine and becomes an eternal non-being that has returned to his origin/God/the Beloved. In that regard, love in Rumi's poem is a transforming experience that awakens man into the love of the divine. Capturing the Sufi philosophy that puts forth love as the highest state of existence; "Fena fi Allah," "You and I" recurrently highlights the oneness of the lovers while ironically referring to them as "you and I" (Rumi, 2000: 36). Like Donne's persona communicating the lovers' spiritual togetherness despite their physical singularities, Rumi's particular verse pictures the perfect union of their souls indistinguishably merged into one another with love, "one in soul" despite materialized in two bodies; being "apparently two" (2000: 36). Furthermore, the persona draws a parallel between their dignified state and nature by referring to "the stars" "watching" them, "the birds singing" to them and their transformation into "a thin crescent moon", which all points out their unified self immanent in every particle in the universe (2000: 36). Thus, the references to nature communicate the persona's ecstatic state and rapture with love that has heightened the lovers from their everyday existence into a timeless divine presence dissolved into the universe. Their "indifference to idle speculations" also suggests the unique presences of the lovers due to their undermined egos and "unselfed" transcended beings that "will be together" (2000: 36).

Even what is more amazing
is that while here together, you and I
are at this very moment in Iraq and Khorasan In one form upon this earth,
and in another form in a timeless sweet land (Rumi, 2000: 36).

Thus, defining love as a cosmic force unifying the individual with the universe/God, "You and I" sets forth love directed to the human as the manifestation of divine love and a path to awakening, mystical rebirth and becoming both all and nothing.

While Donne and Rumi's particular poems highlight the voyage of the individual from a mundane presence towards a spiritual ecstasy and emancipation through the perfect union of the lovers' souls, Spenser, Emre, Herbert and Veli's poems thematize divine love and man's mystic journey in which the devotee as the lover yearns for a reunion with God. Accordingly, as one of the most prominent figures of the English Renaissance, Edmund Spenser (1552-1599), in his poetry, merges Christian teachings with courtly, Platonic and Neoplatonic ideas of love, which is a tradition in his time:

the metaphysical and mystical aspects of Platonism (as Neo-Platonism) and of Christianity had interacted upon each other until they can be distinguished, in the age of Spenser only by determining whether the mysticism is predominantly intellectual and metaphysical like that of Florentine Platonists [...] or emotional and devotional like that of the medieval and Renaissance Roman Catholic mystics. (Bennett, 1935: 134).

His *Fowre Hymns* (1596) that involves "An Hymne in Honour of Beautie", "An Hymne in Honour of Heavenly Beautie", "An Hymne in Honour of Love" and "An Hymne in Honour of Heavenly Love" illustrates the poet's concerns for his unrequited love to God and Jesus Christ through a hierarchical structure built upon earthly beauty, earthly love, divine beauty and heavenly love. As a work exploring what a true devotee is to do to attain God's love, Spenser's "An Hymne in Honour of Heavenly Love" comes forth with its portrayal of Jesus Christ as the symbol of love and love itself as a bridge between worldly and heavenly presences, namely,

between God and man. The poet-persona advises man to love the divine “[w]ith all [his] heart, with all [his] soul and mind” and obey God’s rules to be loved by the Beloved (Spenser, 1849: 20). Going beyond one’s carnal desires, ego and material world is also presented as a must for reaching divine love since worldly pleasures and “[w]eak fancies” “stir up affections base” (1849: 20). Hymnes reflect Spenser’s Platonic ideas and suggests the ultimate love as “a purgation of passion” (Fletcher, 1911: 453). In this regard, man is to follow the example of Christ who has sacrificed himself voluntarily for the salvation of humanity and “give [him]self unto [God] full and free” (Spenser, 1849: 20). Furthermore, portraying love as a possession, “Heavenly Love” illuminates the search of man “spirit” for possessing and being “possessed” by the divine, which suggests the Platonic idea of love as Jefferson Fletcher also asserts: “But, say the Platonists, what the mind truly knows, it possesses; therefore, truly knowing God’s mind, or Wisdom, or Sapience, the true and faithful lover shall at last attain the object of love, which is possession; he shall possess, become one wit” (Fletcher, 1911: 457). Therefore, the poem sets forth an analogy of sensual love to mirror how divine love takes up man’s soul:

Then shalt thou feel thy spirit so possessed
And ravished with devouring great desire
Of his dear self, that shall thy feeble breast
Inflame with love, and set thee all on fire
With burning zeal, through every part entire. (Spenser, 1849: 20).

Thus, man’s affiliation with God is mirrored as an intimate relationship mimicking the fervent affair of two lovers. Spenser’s speaker delineates the invasion of one’s heart by divine love with a connotative diction echoing copulation. In other words, the soul is conquered by God’s love very much like the body seduced and overtaken by sexual desires stirred by the beloved’s body. In that regard, referring to the Platonic ladder that begins with earthly love and ends with divine love, the persona renders God’s love as the highest state of being that makes him “plainly see” and “delight [God’s] sweet and amiable sight”, thus changes his self into a more eminent existence dissolved in “celestial love” and filled with “heavenly thoughts far above human skill” (Spenser, 1849: 20). Therefore, through the representation of the ascent of man’s soul to the divine presence, “A Hymne in Honour of Heavenly Love” is the lyrical attempt of the poet to call for seeking divine love rather than yielding to earthly pleasures or mundaneness.

On the other hand, as an eminent Anatolian mystic and contemporary of Rumi, Yunus Emre (1238-1320) is one of the leading poets of the Turkish language whose lines communicate tolerance, humanistic values and divine love. Concerning the two forms of love directed to the divine and the human in Sufi doctrine, his poetry explores “true love” (aşk-ı hakiki) which as the divine love is a means to the reality behind the illusionary world rather than the “allegorical love” (aşk-ı mecaz) leading the lovers to God (Köprülü, 2014: 347). As the reflection of the idea of wahdat-i wujud in Emre’s works, his Beloved is a timeless, eternal being from which all the cosmos originated and incarnated with striking diversity. Thus, for the poet, love surrounds nature, humans and God while life and death are nothing but the works of love (Bayrakdar, 1991: 21). Thence, as an unadorned and sincere poetic expression of his “true love”, his verse communicates his suffering for being separated from the divine and his strong yearning for reunion. Accordingly, conveying his agony for being parted from the divine and his cry for returning to his creator, the poet-persona of “Lovers Die Not”¹ voices like a lovelorn person longing to reunite with his beloved. In other words, the poem echoes love lyrics, which is also illustrated through the metaphor of a non-healing, invisible wound that stands for eternal love: “*Yârab bu ne derttir derman bulunmaz/ (My God, what pain is this which has no remedy?)/ Ya bu ne yaradır zahmı belirmez/ (What wound is this, it bleeds, yet no mortal can see) (Emre, 2013: 201)*. Nevertheless, the persona moves beyond his remonstrant attitude about his suffering and portrays divine love as a mystic power transforming him into a lover who is emancipated from earthly, materialistic and common ways of the world and “who is never weary of love” in his ecstatic state: “*Benim garip gönlüm aşktan usanmaz/ (What shall I do with my heart? Love never makes it weary)/ Varır aşka düşer hiç bana dönmez (It goes and plunges into love--never returns to me)” (2013: 201)*. As divine love requires man to annihilate his ego to ascend to a sublime being, the lover in Emre’s poem negates his self and turns a blind eye to everything except for the beloved/God:

¹ “Lovers Die Not” (CXLIV) has been translated by Talat Halman (Yunus Emre-Selected Poems, Talat Halman, Publication of the Ministry of Culture, Ankara-Turkey, (Emre, 1988) Retrieved from <https://www.frntr.com/9358709-post1.html>

*Âşık olan gönül aşktan usanmaz/ The heart in love is never weary of love
Âşık ki cana kaldı âşık olmaz/ A lover absorbed in his own selfhood is no lover;
Canın terk itmeyen mâ'şuku bulmaz/ One must give up one's life to find beloved beauty." (Emre, 2013: 201).*

Thanks to love, the restraints of the material world and the vision of the afterlife lose their meaning for the persona. Thus, ironically, only through being stuck in the beloved, the persona becomes truly free as all other things cease to exist for the lover except for love: "Âşık bir kişidir bu dünya malın (The lover knows full well that all these worldly possessions) / Âhıret korkusun bir pula saymaz/ (And all fear of the hereafter are not worth a penny)" (Emre, 2013: 201). The fact that with "true love", the individual leaves his beastly side behind and embraces an unselfish and transcendent self also turns death from a dark, frightening erasure into a cherished part of existence that marks the return to origin/God:

*Âşık öldü diye selâ verirler/ They proclaim him dead and they chant prayers for the lover;
Ölen hayvan durur âşıklar ölmez/ Death is for beasts alone, it's not the lover's destiny.
Yunus bu tevhide gark oldu gitti/ Yunus plunged: He now stands immersed in the Oneness of God;
Geri gelmekliğe akli derilmez./ His mind will never return from Eternal Unity. (Emre, 2013: 201).*

Thus, in its treatment of the reunion with the creator, "Lovers Die Not" sets forth becoming one with the divine as the most supreme state of being while offering love as a force transforming, regenerating, completing and awakening the individual into absolute bliss and peace. Yunus Emre, in his poem, reflects the unity of existence or wahdat-al wujud and incorporates Platonic and Sufis views that every being yearns to attain and merge into the Good/Beloved/God. In that sense, Emre's speaker, like those of Donne, Rumi and Spenser, unchains himself from the bonds of society, ego and material world to reach a higher self, much like the caveman in Plato's allegory.

On the other hand, as another great figure of English Metaphysical Poetry, George Herbert (1593-1633) also meditates on the idea of divine love and explores man's affiliation to God in his works. Marked by pure diction, the directness of expression, intellectual wordplays and unique conceits, his verse centres on religious issues and "the relationships between the world of daily reality and the world of transcendent reality that gives it meaning" (Hodgkins, 2010: 47-48). His poems were published in *The Temple: Sacred Poems and Private Ejaculations* (1633), which according to Herbert, offers "a picture of the many spiritual conflicts that have passed between God and [his] soul, before [he] could subject [his soul] to the will of Jesus, (his) Master in whose service [he has] now found perfect freedom" (Walton, 1888: 277-278). First appeared in the main section of *The Temple*; Love (III) is a part of "The Church" and his third verse in his sequence with the same title. Portraying a loving God soothing the uncertainties Herbert experienced in his devotional life, the poem illuminates the nature of love concerning a man's desire to be a true devotee.

Based on a dialogue between the persona and the divine personified as Love, Herbert's verse delineates God as a welcoming and forgiving host who attempts to persuade the self-critical guest to stay despite his imperfections and failures as a worshipper. In that sense, the portrayal of God as a tender host presented as Love rather than the Lord, Father or the Almighty echoes the Platonic idea of the Good which is the perfect, absolute source of life and embodiment of goodness. Thus, through entitling his sequence and personifying God as Love, the poet meditates on the affiliation between love and faith and pictures "an experience of love" that is "the love of man and God" rather than "an idea of heaven" (Bloch, 1978: 331-332). Besides, the sincere dialogue between the persona and Love also suggests love as an impetus much more effective and crucial than the punishment of hell and rewards of heaven for the devotee to re-embrace his faith. Moreover, the "dust and sin" persona feels "[g]uilty of" signifying earthly affairs and pleasures that have kept the worshipper away from God's grace, which illustrates Plato's views on the vulgarity of existence in the material world and man's innate yearning for returning to the Good or the Ultimate Being (Herbert, 1993: 1388). Nevertheless, the forgiving Love refuses all the objections of the speaker who feels himself undeserving of divine love, draws him "nearer", "took [his] hand" and assures the guest that He is the creator of all beings, including his guest with all the vices and virtues of his worshipper. Eventually, the persona submits to Love, "sit[s] and eat[s]", thus finally becoming

a part of God's domain, which underlines the speaker's reconciliation and reunion with the divine (1993: 1388). Herbert's persona reaches a sublime and liberated state upon experiencing forgiveness and love of the divine and becoming a part of God's being. In other words, through projecting upon the formation of self from an incomplete, self-critical state into an assured and self-affirming presence, the poem incorporates the idea that divine love bestows man a serene and eminent self filled with peace and love rather than self-doubts, guilt or fear of God's punishment. Furthermore, Anna Williams in his "Gracious Accommodations: Herbert's 'Love III'" (1984) claims that the poem illustrates "a biblical trope of Christ the bridegroom [and] the soul as bride" that is "shy" in "her wedding fest" yet "later asks to take a humbler position in the household" (1984: 17). Thus, as a verse beginning with the word "Love" and representing the intimacy between the devotee/ lover and the beloved/ God, the poem is Herbert's lyrical attempt to form a bridge between God and the self. In other words, the poem universalizes and humanizes the divine by portraying God as a source of compassion, forgiveness and tolerance as close to man as a host to his guest rather than a distanced, unreachable being. Hence, through the ending that dramatizes the Communion and the celebration of divine love, the poem not only merges the ordinary with the extraordinary and the human with the divine but also visualizes "the end of that journey and the beginning of a new life that no symbols, no words, no human poetry could ever accommodate" (1984: 18).

Similar to Herbert and Emre in his portrayal of God as the beloved, Hacı Bektashi Veli (1208-1270) is the founder of Bektashism, a highly influential and popular Sufi order in Anatolia and the Balkans. Still a mystery to scholars and historians, the preeminent Anatolian mystic puts forward the divine love as the utmost aspiration for the individual and calls for embracing humane values and purifying the self with modesty and love in the opuses attributed to him; *Makalat* (Discourses) and *Vilayetname-i Hacı Bektash-i Veli* (Hagiography of Hacı Bektaşî Veli). Besides expressing his teachings that frame the notions of peace, fraternity, tolerance and love of humanity and God, his verse also situates the human in the centre of the universe. Moreover, Veli's poetry is built upon the Bektashi idea of the threeness of "Love of Universe-God-Man" which suggests love towards the created as the only means to attain the love of the creator and foregrounds the heart as the home of God as sacred as Kaaba (Şişman, 2013: 29–30). Furthermore, as a humanistic school, Bektashism sets forth the idea that the soul can reach absolute truth thanks to God's attributes residing in itself. In other words, the Bektashis highlight the God in man/ woman's soul and his or her journey from material to meaning (women are not regarded as lesser human beings in Veli's teachings). As the path to divine love lies in one's self-realization, the person is to know himself or herself first to know beyond his or her self. In that regard, his "The Transcendence of Saints" (Erenler Demi) revolves around Bektashi philosophy and addresses the idea of *wahdati wujud* (unity of existence) by depicting God as a star from which there is no other being apart.

Haktan emrolundu geldim cihana / With God's command I came into the world
Girdim açtım mail oldum ol burca / Entered, opened, fell for that star
Kamil oldum, hak kelamın okudum/ I turned into a perfect human being, read God's word
Elif kaddim, dal yazıldı ol burca / Aleph, Holy lines were written in that star. (Veli, 2011: 161).

God is delineated as a star distanced yet ever-present. With the star metaphor, the poem communicates the Bektashi tenet that God is as close to the person as his heart which is the home of the divine. Nevertheless, the creator is also as far as a star from the individual who is to annihilate his/her ego to be "insan-ı kamil", namely a perfect human being that is unified with God. The star image also portrays the divine as the guide in darkness always shining if one looks above. Furthermore, very much like Rumi's poem, the symbol of the star not only suggests nature as the manifestation of God but also underlines divine love as the creating cause of the natural world. On the other hand, the persona's emphasis on the fact that he "came into the world" with God's will signifies the Sufi tenet that every being has come from God and will eventually return to its creator. As another imagery that epitomizes "true love" as a spiritual birth and awakening, the persona "opened his eyes" to the reality of the divine by reading the word of the creator in every creation (Veli, 2011: 161). In that regard, Veli's verse underlines the idea that divine love is not a matter of coincidence but a state of illumination that requires effort, courage and contemplation. On the other hand, the poem also pictures the heart as the foremost path to God rather than lodges, monasteries, convents or "God's mansion" the "traders" attend (Incel, 2019: 62–63). Nevertheless, unlike those hypocrites, the persona has become a lover who cannot content himself with the

ways of the world. In a state of exile for being separated from God, Veli's speaker does not have a calm moment for "days and nights" (Veli, 2011: 161):

*Konaktan bezirgan çıkagörünce/ At the sight of the trader from the mansion's door
Ne gündüzüm gündüz, ne gecem gece/ Neither day nor night as before
Bir burç vardır cümle burçlardan yüce/ Above all stars, one shines from afar
Muhammed Miraç'a çıkar ol burca /Muhammad ascends, to that star. (Veli, 2011: 161).*

Due to his love and "desire for his master" that has recreated him and perfected his imperfectness, the persona no longer feels himself to belong to this world where there is "[n]o place left" for the people whose sole concern is God's love (Veli, 2011: 161). Thus, "The Transcendence of Saints" mirrors love as a force that creates a new self after which man can no longer conform to his society, feel a part of everyday life and satiated with its pleasures that all seem too simple. Consumed by love, the persona communicates his long-lasting search for the Beloved and his strong desire to dissolve into God:

*Anlımıza yazılıptır yazılar/ Destined for experiences
Mürid olan mürşidini arzular/ His master, a true disciple desires
Yeryüzünde yer kalmadı gaziler/ No place remained on earth, ghazis.
Ar yüzünden bir yol gider ol burca/ From modesty a road goes to that star. (Veli, 2011: 161).*

On the other hand, the ending of the poem calls for "search[ing]" for God through the creator's manifestations in this world, emancipating himself from the bonds of his cultural and social environment and "transcend[ing]" into a new being one with the divine for eternal happiness. Veli's last lines suggest that one has to look into his heart as "[f]rom each heart a road goes to that star" (Veli, 2011: 161).

*Hacı Bektaş Veli arayıp bulmuşam/ I, Hacı Bektaş Veli sought and found
Erenler deminden bir pay almışam / From the transcendence of saints, I took my share
Bir hakikat deryasına dalmışam/ Plunged into a sea of truth
Her gönülden bir yol gider ol burca / From each heart a road goes to that star. (Veli, 2011: 161).*

Thus, after "diving into a sea of truth", the persona-poet finally consumes himself in "true love" and becomes one with God by reaching the stage of "hakikat" (truth) (Incel, 2019: 62). Thus, as a direct, lyrical expression of divine love, "The Transcendence of Saints" not only communicates the poet-persona's longing for being God's beloved and returning to the creator but also illustrates his spiritual journey to realize his highest human potential and become insan-ı kamil. Since, for many Sufi mystics like Hacı Bektashi Veli, it is not the rewards of Heaven or the punishment of Hell, but the love of the divine that leads man to ascend to his sublime state of non-being and unify with God, which is also elaborated in Spenser's, Emre's and Herbert's verses. Those poems in their representation of divine love set forth a humanized and universal God's image through rendering the divine as the beloved one feels within himself rather than far above the sky.

To conclude, John Donne, Mawlana J. Rumi, Edmund Spenser, Yunus Emre, George Herbert and Hacı Bektashi Veli all meet on common ground in their portrayal of love that is not only a transmuting and liberating experience which emancipates the human being from the chains of sublunary desires and reason but also an immanent power which bestows recognition, a sense of wholeness, a state of perfection and a 'new' self through becoming one with the divine. In other words, thanks to the love directed towards either a human being or God, the reasoning self goes beyond the material world and a new consciousness uncovers itself. In that sense, the self transcends its limits not by falling in love but by being the love itself. Thus, through picturing the power of love that unveils the human essence and desire for spiritual awakening, "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning," "You and I," "An Hymne in Honour of Heavenly Love," "Lovers Die Not," "Love III", and "The Transcendence of Saints" communicate long-lasting and universal mystical wisdom via poetry. Above all, those poems highlight the reality of being human by mirroring man's timeless urge to go beyond the visible and take shelter in a greater being with the enigmatic feeling of love. As these outstanding poems reflect, despite being the voices of different ages and lands, poets speak the language of humanity, words of love.

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