



A Cross-Cultural Analysis of Love Metaphor in Rumi's *Divan-i Kebir* and Dante's *Divine Comedy*

Mevlânâ'nın *Divan-ı Kebir*'i ve Dante'nin *İlahi Komedya*'sında
Aşk Metaforunun Kültürlerarası Analizi

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Abstract

Focusing on two of the most influential writings of the East and West, Mawlana Jalal al-din al-Rumi's *Divan-i Kebir* and Dante Alighieri's *Divine Comedy*, this study utilizes Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), pioneered by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (1980) and further expanded by Zoltán Kövecses's (2002) work on emotion metaphors to examine how these two masterpieces utilize Shams-i Tabrizi and Beatrice Portinari who function as "intermediary metaphors" of divine love and spiritual guidance. The study is grounded in an integrated methodological

Geliş tarihi (Received): 24-03-2025 Kabul tarihi (Accepted): 10-04-2026

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framework that brings together Translation Studies, Cognitive Linguistics, and Hermeneutic textual interpretation. The analysis reveals that while the theological foundations of love in the two traditions are markedly different, both poetic systems employ similar metaphorical mechanisms in which the “object of love” is positioned as a symbolic intermediary directing the seeker toward transcendence. By centering on metaphor translation and the interpretive function of the translator, this study argues that translation is not merely as linguistic transfer but as a form of cognitive and cultural mediation. Within this framework, the translator assumes an active role in the circulation of mystical thought in the broader framework of world literature. The use of Conceptual Metaphor Theory in the Turkish and English translations of *Divan-i Kebir* and *Divine Comedy* demonstrates how metaphors employed in these translations have expanded to identify new categories and concepts, filling lexical and cultural gaps in the discourse. The findings of the study are intended to contribute to discussions in the fields of Translation Studies, Comparative Literature, and Cognitive Poetics by proposing a model that demonstrates how metaphorical representations of “object of love” can transcend linguistic and cultural boundaries while preserving their conceptual coherence.

Keywords: *conceptual metaphor theory, Shams, Beatrice, Kovecses, cultural transfer, metaphor translation*

Öz

Doğu ve Batı edebiyatının en etkili eserlerinden olan Mevlânâ Celâleddin Rûmî’nin *Divan-i Kebir*’i ve Dante Alighieri’nin *İlahi Komedya*’sı üzerine odaklanan bu çalışma, George Lakoff ve Mark Johnson (1980) tarafından öncülüğü yapılan ve sonrasında Zoltán Kövecses’in (2002) duygu metaforlarına ilişkin çalışmalarıyla geliştirilen Kavramsal Metafor Kuramı’ndan (KMK) yararlanarak, söz konusu iki başyapıtın ilahi aşk ve manevi rehberliğin “aracı metaforları” olarak işlev gören Şems-i Tebrîzî ve Beatrice Portinari figürlerini nasıl kullandığını incelemektedir. Araştırma, Çeviri Çalışmaları, Bilişsel Dilbilim ve Hermeneutik metin yorumlamayı bir araya getiren bütünlük bir yöntemsel çerçeveye dayanmaktadır. Yapılan çözümleme, iki gelenekte aşkın teolojik temelleri belirgin biçimde farklılık gösterse de her iki şiirsel sistemin de “aşk nesnesini” hakikati arayan kişiyi varlığın ötesine geçişe yönlendiren sembolik bir aracı olarak konumlandıran benzer metaforik mekanizmalar kullandığını ortaya koymaktadır. Metafor çevirisini ve çevirmenin yorumlayıcı işlevini merkeze alan bu çalışma, çevirinin yalnızca dilsel bir aktarım değil, bilişsel ve kültürel bir aracılık biçimi olduğunu ileri sürmektedir. Bu çerçevede çevirmen, mistik düşüncenin dünya edebiyatının geniş düzlemindeki dolaşımında aktif bir rol üstlenmektedir. *Divan-i Kebir* ve *İlahi Komedya*’nın Türkçe ve İngilizce çevirilerine uygulanan Kavramsal Metafor Kuramı, bu çevirilerde kullanılan metaforların yeni kategoriler ve kavramların belirlenmesini sağlayacak şekilde anlam alanını genişlettiğini ve böylece söylemdeki sözcüksel ve kültürel boşlukları doldurduğunu göstermektedir. Çalışmanın bulguları, “aşk nesnesine” ilişkin metaforik temsillerin kavramsal tutarlılıklarını koruyarak dilsel ve kültürel sınırları nasıl aşabildiğini gösteren bir model önererek, Çeviri Çalışmaları, Karşı-

laştırmalı Edebiyat ve Bilişsel Poetika alanlarındaki tartışmalara katkı sağlamayı amaçlamaktadır.

Anahtar sözcükler: kavramsal metafor kuramı, Şems, Beatrice, Kovecses, kültürel aktarım, metafor çevirisi

Introduction

Poetry, as a literary genre in which the semantic, sonic, rhythmic, and imagistic possibilities of language are intensely explored, represents one of the most challenging domains within Translation Studies. Contemporary translation theories and the perspective of World Literature reconceptualize translation not as a process of loss but as one of renewal, enabling a text to acquire new life and circulate across cultural and linguistic boundaries. Translating poetry is not merely a matter of transferring words from one language to another; rather, it involves the reconstruction of a culture's affective universe, ontological perspectives, and aesthetic values. As with other literary genres, in poetry translation, both the poet and the poem experience a transformation, shifting from their original, embodied connection with their native cultural and linguistic universe into a recontextualized form within a different cultural framework. With the cognitive analysis of metaphors beginning in the 1980s, the view that metaphorical language is one of the most frequently used tools in human communication has gained widespread acceptance. Through metaphor, the individual “speaks of something as though it were another” (Richards, 1936: 116). While developing theories to explain the nature of metaphor in literature, researchers often concentrate on the aesthetic and artistic aspects of figurative language. These structures, which are the subject of study in metaphor theory, are considered among the most important aesthetic components of poetry. Within this perspective, metaphors can be one of the fundamental tools that allow the translator to reconstruct the aesthetic texture of the source text for the target reader. In this context, this paper focuses on the translation of metaphor not as a lexical transfer but as a conceptual process, using two canonical literary works as illustrative case studies.

The present study is grounded in the theoretical foundation of Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), pioneered by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (1980), with particular reference to Zoltán Kövecses's (2002) research on emotion metaphors, which emphasize the cognitive and cultural dimensions of metaphor translation within two monumental works of world literature: Mawlana Jalal al-din al-Rumi's *Divan-i Kebir* and Dante Alighieri's *Divine Comedy*. The study conceptualizes the aforementioned works as a coherent comparative corpus and suggests that examining these texts together provides a productive analytical ground for revealing how similar metaphorical patterns of “object of love” and spiritual transformation emerge within different literary and cultural traditions. As an initial point, although Rumi's *Divan-i Kebir* and Dante's *Divine Comedy* originate from distinct theological and literary contexts, namely Christian Scholasticism (Sammon, 2008) and Islamic Sufism, notable structural similarities are observed in the ways these works articulate the “ineffable.” To this end, the study argues that both texts developed sophisticated linguistic strategies to

address a shared apophatic problem: the attempt to express an immaterial and transcendent divine presence through concrete and sensory discourse. Crucially, the research does not aim to equate these two traditions on a doctrinal level; instead, it operates from the perspective of CMT, which proposes that metaphor is a fundamental cognitive mechanism enabling humans to make sense of abstract experiences (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). According to this approach, metaphors function not merely as aesthetic or rhetorical elements, but as cognitive schemas that organize emotional and spiritual experience. A further point to note is that the study utilizes Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) CMT to move beyond a surface-level content analysis of "love" toward an examination of the cognitive mapping mechanisms underlying the "Transcendental Voyage" metaphor. Within this framework, these works are examined together because metaphor serves as a *tertium comparationis* (common ground) for cross-cultural inquiry; in other words, metaphor emerges as a fundamental cognitive tool that enables the interpretation of the ontological gap between finite human experience and infinite divine essence through shared metaphorical schemas.

Accordingly, this study argues how the cognitive architecture of "object of love" is reconstructed during the translation process, arguing that the translation of Rumi and Dante is not merely a linguistic transfer but a cognitive re-mapping that utilizes shared conceptual metaphors to render divergent ontologies intelligible across cultural boundaries, focusing on the categories and micro-strategies derived from cognitive linguistics in the selected sections of *Divan-i Kebir* and *Divine Comedy*. The comparison undertaken in this study is grounded not in theological equivalence; rather, it focuses on the shared cognitive and metaphorical patterns through which mystical love is articulated. Bringing together two traditions that are culturally distinct yet conceptually parallel offers a robust analytical site for investigating the nexus of metaphor, cognition, and cultural transfer. Furthermore, by investigating the representation and translation of these metaphors in Turkish and English versions of the texts, the study reveals the mechanisms through which culturally embedded spiritual experiences are negotiated and reframed across linguistic frontiers. In this regard, this work seeks to contribute to translation studies by highlighting the complexities of mediating metaphysical discourse.

Laying the Background

Comparative literature is an academic discipline that examines literature and cultural modes of expression by transcending linguistic, geographical, national, and disciplinary boundaries. This field "aims not only to treat literature within the borders of a specific country but also to investigate its relationship with other literatures, as well as its connections with art forms, philosophy, history, politics, economics, sociology and other domains of knowledge and belief" (Block, 1964: 78). The comparative study of translated literary texts significantly expands the scope of literary research. Examining these literary works also offer valuable contextual knowledge for translators, enabling them to better grasp the framework within which the source text should be interpreted and to determine how it can be appropriately conveyed to the target culture. The comparative relationship between Rumi's

Divan-i Kebir and Dante's *Divine Comedy* gains further significance through the recognition of these two works as foundational texts within the "World Literature." The justification for evaluating these two masterpieces together lies not only in their origins within distinct medieval traditions but also in their global acclaim and the similar historical trajectories they followed during their processes of canonization. Through their Turkish and English translations, both works have been subject to a systematic process of "transculturation," largely facilitated by translation strategies that tend to "universalize" or "recontextualize" their original mediating metaphors. In this respect, analyzing these texts together allows for an inquiry into how translation functions as a cognitive and cultural filter. At the same time, it helps reveal the shared linguistic mechanisms, the construction of the "Beloved" figure as a bridge to the "Infinite." Therefore, this study does not merely compare two distinct ontological perspectives; it also investigates how the dynamic process of translation shapes and transforms mediating metaphors into global literary value.

This research adopts an interdisciplinary perspective that synthesizes approaches from translation studies, cognitive linguistics, and hermeneutic literary analysis. At the core of the study lies the transfer of metaphors during the translation process and the interpretive agency of the translator in mediating culturally embedded discourses of "object of love" into the target language. In this context, CMT (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) is employed as the primary analytical tool to identify how "love" is metaphorically conceptualized in Rumi's *Divan-i Kebir* and Dante's *Divine Comedy*. Rather than treating metaphor as a mere aesthetic or rhetorical device, this theory views metaphor as a cognitive structuring mechanism that gives meaning to abstract experiences. This methodology facilitates a systematic investigation into how Shams-i Tabrizi and Beatrice Portinari as the "objects of love" is manifested in the source and target texts. Furthermore, a hermeneutic close-reading is utilized as a complementary interpretive layer to position these identified metaphors within their broader spiritual and literary landscapes. Building upon this analytical model, the study draws on translation studies paradigms that position the translator as an active mediator in intercultural negotiation, examining how these metaphorical structures are represented in the source and target texts. The theoretical approaches are organized within an integrated framework that the translation of metaphors and translator agency are placed at the core of the research, while CMT (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) and hermeneutic interpretation serve as the primary tools supporting the analysis. In this way, the study establishes a holistic and consistent methodological structure to examine how metaphors of "objects of love" are transformed across divergent linguistic and cultural landscapes.

1. Rumi and the Sufi path of love: A conceptual exploration

In Sufi thought, divine love is fundamentally understood as the profound devotion of the lover (or servant) to Allah, predicated on the belief that the ultimate beloved is the all-powerful Creator. Love transcends conventional definitions, representing an ardent longing for the Creator. The affection directed towards a mortal being is conceptualized as figurative or metaphorical love, serving as an expression of divine love and a pathway to ultimately attain

true, divine love (Koçin, 2003: 396). Sufis consistently acknowledge the ineffable nature of their spiritual experiences, often preferring silence rather than attempting comprehensive descriptions or explanations. The primary objective in Sufism is the attainment of union with Allah, a journey that necessitates confronting every challenge encountered along the path (Akarpınar, 2004: 5). Consistent with other traditional spiritual teachings, Sufism asserts the ego as a transient manifestation of an individual's authentic, transcendental self. Consequently, the pursuit of spiritual knowledge or "spiritual realization" is seen as a means to overcome the impediments that separate humanity from the Creator and one's true essence, thereby facilitating the realization of full human potential (Chittick, 2005: 10).

In line with the spiritual legacy of his father, Bahaeddin Veled, Rumi exhibited a profound interest in Sufism from an early age and studied under numerous spiritual guides throughout his mystical development. A pivotal moment in his spiritual transformation occurred in 1244 with his encounter with Shams-i Tabrizi (d. 644/1247?). Following this meeting, Rumi underwent a significant personal and spiritual shift, abandoning his sermons, scholarly duties, and daily engagements with religious texts in favor of continuous discourse with Shams. According to Sultan Veled, the bond between Rumi and Shams paralleled the Qur'anic relationship between al-Khidr (Hizir) and Moses (Musa) and wherein Moses (Musa), despite his prophetic status, sought knowledge from al-Khidr (Hizir). Similarly, Rumi's spiritual journey reached its peak through his discipleship to Shams and his unification with the latter's inner light (Chittick, 2005: 441-448). Within the context of this study, Shams is conceptualized as the "object of love," a mystical figure through whom Rumi accessed deeper layers of spiritual perception and transcendence. Shams is portrayed as a being beyond the material realm, whose presence enabled Rumi to attain experiential knowledge of existence, essence, and divine reality. The meeting between Rumi and Shams thus stands as a transformative event in the mystical unfolding of Rumi's Sufi journey.

2. A Dantean perspective: "Love" reimagined

As noted by William R. Inge, a prominent scholar particularly recognized for his contributions to the study of Christian mysticism, mysticism represents a pure and universal dimension of religion that transcends temporal, spatial, ethnic, and doctrinal boundaries. Inge defines mysticism as "the endeavor to bring God into presence within both spirit and nature" and more broadly, as an attempt to recognize that what is created in human thought and emotion exists within the Divine, just as the Divine is present in creation itself (1899: 2). Within the Christian mystical tradition, one of its most fundamental characteristics is the concept of divine grace, to which every believer is expected to demonstrate sincere devotion. This mystical orientation has a profound influence on the religious lives of Christians, as the experience of divine grace is considered both deeply personal and uniquely manifested in each individual. Accordingly, the path to union with God in Christian mysticism is not pursued through reason or sensory perception, but through the faculties of the heart and will (Woods, 1980: 472). To conclude, the mystical tradition constitutes a foundational element within the broader framework of Christianity.

Similar to other mystical traditions, Christian mystics who seek to establish a spiritual union with the Absolute Being typically undergo a series of preparatory stages involving discipline and inner refinement. In this context, Dante, participating in the literary milieu of poets exploring innovative perspectives, conceptualizes the “beloved,” Beatrice, as an unattainable, wholly transcendent figure. In his early poetic works, Beatrice is portrayed not merely as a woman but as an idealized, angelic presence, distinguished by both physical and spiritual perfection. Through this elevation, the beloved is abstracted beyond the limits of human experience and reconfigured as a religious symbol, an embodiment of divine perfection and an intermediary guiding the soul toward the sacred. Beatrice represents the figure to whom Dante is eternally devoted, embodying the ideal of transcendent love within his literary and spiritual vision. In Dante’s oeuvre, she functions as the object of love, and her presence blurs the boundaries between the miraculous and the ordinary. She is a manifestation of spiritual realities within the material world and a symbolic representation of the soul’s realm. According to Jaeger (2017: 81-82), Dante conceives the beloved woman’s face as a prominent symbol of Christian faith, as it affirms the existence of the transcendent and thereby lends credence to the miraculous nature of Christ. In this sense, Beatrice serves as a mediating figure who guides Dante toward the Divine. His profound, almost ineffable love for her becomes a metaphorical path leading to spiritual enlightenment. Ultimately, through this sanctified love, Dante attains a direct encounter with God. The *Divine Comedy* thus emerges as an allegorical account of Dante’s realization of the ultimate truth of love, namely, the unification of the soul with divine love.

3. Lakoff and Johnson’s conceptual metaphor categories

Metaphors, as exemplified through the figures of Shams and Beatrice, serve as linguistic reflections of human experience and play a crucial role in articulating complex emotional and cultural concepts. Because metaphors often involve personalized language and culture-specific references, their translation requires extensive background knowledge and cultural sensitivity to ensure appropriate equivalence in vocabulary, syntax, and discourse features.

The field of translation studies extensively explores the translatability of metaphors, revealing diverse perspectives. Early scholars like Vinay and Darbelnet (1958), Nida (1964), and Dagut (1976, 1987) proposed that metaphor translation inherently results in the creation of a different metaphor. This view often stems from the premise that metaphors are largely unpredictable and thus nearly untranslatable, given their deep roots in cultural experiences and intricate semantic connotations. Conversely, researchers such as Reiss (1971), Kloepper (1981), and Mason (1982) argued for the translatability of metaphors, emphasizing that no single theory could encompass all approaches to their translation (cited in Fernández et al., 2005: 67). A major change took place in 1980 with the introduction of the cognitive linguistic perspective on metaphor by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson. This new approach challenged the traditional understanding that metaphors are primarily based on similarity. Lakoff and Johnson contended that metaphors are motivated by more than just resemblance. They proposed that metaphorical terms refer to concepts rather than isolated words, and that

metaphors serve a functional purpose beyond mere artistic or aesthetic embellishment; they aim to enhance our understanding of particular concepts. Furthermore, they asserted that metaphor use is not exclusive to individuals with specialized skills; instead, it is a pervasive and effortless aspect of everyday language for everyone. Ultimately, this perspective reframes metaphor not as an optional linguistic ornament, but as an indispensable component of human thought and reasoning (Kovecses, 2002: x).

Within the scope of Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), metaphor is viewed as a cognitive mechanism that enhances our comprehension of abstract concepts. This emphasis on metaphor as a tool for conceptual understanding has led to its functional classification into three primary types: ontological, structural, and orientational metaphors. **Ontological metaphors**, in particular, involve the representation of abstract or non-physical entities as concrete or physical objects (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003: 25). These metaphors are context-dependent and may be realized differently across cultures. In translation, practitioners may retain the source text's original ontological metaphors or reconstruct them in a culturally and linguistically relevant way to align with the target language system. The adaptation of metaphors to the target context can significantly influence how the translated text is received and interpreted by readers. Consequently, translators often employ strategies aimed at reifying abstract concepts during the metaphorical transfer process. The concept of **structural metaphor** pertains to the roles metaphors assume in the target text and the new semantic frameworks they inhabit based on their placement and usage. These metaphors are intricately linked to the translator's lexical and syntactic choices. While ontological metaphors involve the concretization of abstract elements within the text, structural metaphors elucidate the interrelationships among those concretized elements, highlighting how metaphors interact and form coherent networks. As noted by Lakoff and Johnson (2003: 178), structural metaphors contribute to textual coherence by linking literary elements, rooted in human experience, to one another, thereby anchoring them in the reader's prior knowledge and experiential background. **Oriental metaphors** establish the spatial relationships between concepts and function by mapping one conceptual system onto another, rather than organizing a single concept in isolation. As Lakoff and Johnson (2003: 14) explain, these metaphors are rooted in both physical experience and cultural context, shaping how abstract ideas are spatially conceptualized, such as through oppositions like up/down or in/out. Although such spatial orientations are grounded in the physical world, their metaphorical extensions are subject to cultural variation and can be adapted to align with the cognitive and linguistic norms of different societies.

Translation Path: Cross-cultural transfer of metaphors of “love”

The poetic expressions of divine love in Rumi and Dante exhibit comparable metaphorical patterns. In both intellectual traditions, the figure of the beloved, embodied through Shams in Rumi and Beatrice in Dante, functions as a symbolic intermediary that guides the human soul toward divine reality. When evaluated through the perspective of CMT (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), such representations can be interpreted as cognitive structures that allow abstract

spiritual experiences to be expressed through more comprehensible metaphorical domains. In both poetic traditions, the beloved is not merely an object of human affection; rather, they are a symbolic figure mediating the divine experience. While Beatrice represents the guidance of divine wisdom in Dante's spiritual journey, Shams acts as a catalyst in Rumi's poetry, enabling the poet to encounter the transformative power of divine love. Thus, through these figures, abstract mystical experience is articulated in a more comprehensible way through metaphorical expression. While CMT (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) provides the opportunity to compare metaphorical structures across different cultural contexts, the analysis also takes into account the metaphysical framework specific to Sufi thought, in which divine love in Rumi's poems is predominantly expressed through metaphors of annihilation (fana), union, and spiritual ecstasy. For Sufi mystics, reality is a phenomenon that neither philosophy nor reason can fully reveal; only the wisdom of the heart, gnosis, can provide the insight necessary to grasp certain facets of it (Schimmel, 1975: 4). For this reason, the heart is regarded as the central axis of human spiritual consciousness. In a comparable manner, the meaning and effects of love hold a position of paramount importance within Dante's intellectual and cultural world. Critical commentaries on Beatrice are often closely linked to assessments of Dante's broader conception of love. These works emphasize the significance of medieval mystical thought on love while discussing, from various perspectives, how love is conceived as a redemptive power through the representation of Beatrice. In this context, Guglielmo Gorni (2008) specifically emphasizes Beatrice's symbolic and allegorical value, arguing that this dimension lies at the very heart of Dante's poetic experience.

This study focuses on the selected examples from two specific translations of Rumi's *Divan-i Kebir* (1996) by Nevit O. Ergin, translated via Turkish and Dante's *Divine Comedy* (2011) by Selin Ceyhan Gülsay, translated via English. As a qualitative research, this study defines metaphors in accordance with Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) conceptual metaphor categories, which serve as the basis for the micro-level analytical strategies. Moving beyond the micro-level, this study integrates Zoltán Kövecses's (2010) model of emotion metaphors, which offers a culturally grounded and cognitively informed perspective on how emotions, particularly love, are conceptualized and linguistically expressed across languages. Within this framework, selected metaphors referring to the "object of love" are systematically identified in both the source and target texts of *Divan-i Kebir* and *Divine Comedy*.

Divan-i Kebir

Widely regarded as a seminal contribution to World Literature, *Divan-i Kebir* constitutes a lyrical anthology distinguished by its rich and extensive use of metaphor. However, since this research specifically focuses on the analysis of metaphors associated with Shams-i Tabrizi and Beatrice Portinari as symbolic figures of love, only the metaphors relevant to this thematic scope are included in the analysis, resulting in 5 tables containing 12 metaphorical instances drawn from *Divan-i Kebir*. Among these, 6 metaphorical expressions identified in the (indirect) source text were analyzed. Of these, 5 were translated using ontological conceptual metaphor; while only 1 was translated using structural conceptual metaphor.

Furthermore, within the group of 5 ontological metaphors in the source text, 2 examples retained their ontological nature in the target text, whereas 2 were reinterpreted as structural metaphor, and 1 was transformed into orientational metaphor during translation. Only 1 example of structural conceptual metaphor in the source text maintained its original structural nature in the target text. Notably, no orientational metaphors were observed in the source text, but only 1 in the target text.

Divine Comedy

Widely regarded as a cornerstone of World Literature, *Divine Comedy* is a monumental epic poem noted for its rich use of metaphor. In alignment with the scope of this study, focused on metaphors related to the “object of love”, only 5 tables comprising 10 relevant metaphorical examples from *Divine Comedy* have been included. From the analysis of 5 metaphorical instances identified in the (indirect) source text, translated from Italian into English, 1 was translated using ontological conceptual metaphor strategy, 1 through structural conceptual metaphor strategy, and 3 via orientational conceptual metaphor strategy. In the target text, 1 ontological conceptual metaphor retained its ontological form. Among the 3 orientational metaphors in the source text, only 1 retained its orientational form and 2 were reinterpreted as structural metaphors in the target text.

This study also applies Zoltán Kövecses’s model of emotion metaphors to examine how metaphorical representations of love are translated in Rumi’s *Divan-i Kebir* and Dante’s *Divine Comedy*. Kövecses’s framework (2000, 2010) provides insight into how the abstract concept of love is rooted in embodied experiences and culturally shaped understandings, and how these conceptualizations are either maintained or transformed in the translation process. As Lakoff and Johnson (1980: 22) suggest, the core values of a culture are closely aligned with the metaphorical structure of its most fundamental concepts. Therefore, the metaphors we rely on to make sense of abstract notions, such as time, inner life, moral values, emotions, and social institutions, and they play a crucial role in shaping how we experience these concepts within a cultural context (Kövecses, 2005: 2). Kövecses emphasizes that emotions are frequently understood and expressed through metaphors that draw on universal human experiences and bodily knowledge. He identifies several conceptual metaphors for emotions, such as EMOTION IS A FLUID IN A CONTAINER, EMOTION IS AN OPPONENT, EMOTION IS A NATURAL FORCE, and EMOTION IS HEAT (Kövecses, 2004: 26). By analyzing the selected metaphors through this lens, the study explores how love is conceptualized in each work and how these metaphorical structures are conveyed, or modified, through translation.

The following examples from *Divan-i Kebir* and *Divine Comedy* illustrate how Rumi and Dante conceptualize love through rich and layered metaphorical expressions. Drawing on Zoltán Kövecses’s framework of emotion metaphors, the analysis below explores how abstract emotional experiences are grounded in embodied, often dramatic, imagery. Each example is analyzed in terms of its conceptual metaphor, cognitive implications, and its parallel with Kövecses’s categorization.

Table 1. Mapping ‘Love’ Metaphors in *Divan-i Kebir* and *Divine Comedy*: Source Text to Target Text Conceptualizations

Example 1.	(ST) “Aşk, kutluluk sırrıyla Mûsâ’nın sopasıdır sanki” (Mevlânâ, 2007: 9) (TT) “Love is like the staff of Moses” (Rumi, 1996: 5, Meter I)
Conceptual Metaphor (Lakoff&Johnson)	LOVE IS A PHYSICAL FORCE/LOVE IS WAR
Cognitive Implication	Love, in this context, is conceptualized as a force that transcends both reason and individual agency. It physically overwhelms the individual, an effect metaphorically described as “bending” them into submission. This portrayal frames emotional surrender as a complex duality: it is simultaneously a sacred, spiritual act and a violent, aggressive encounter.
Kövecses Parallel	This conceptualization fits within Zoltán Kövecses’s models of LOVE IS A PHYSICAL FORCE and LOVE IS INSANITY, which capture the overwhelming, non-rational, and physically impactful nature of the emotion.
Example 2.	(ST) “Ey gül gibi gülen aşk, ey Akl-ı Küll gibi güzel bakış; ey “Hel etâ” meydanının eşsiz binicisi,” (Mevlânâ, 2007: 40) (TT) “O Love, smile like a rose. O One whose looks are similar To that beautiful universal intelligence, O peerless rider of the land of Heletâ,” (Rumi, 1996: 54, Meter I)
Conceptual Metaphor (Lakoff&Johnson)	LOVE IS A PERSON
Cognitive Implication	Love is cognitively framed as a personified entity, directly addressed and attributed with human traits such as a “smiling” countenance like a rose and “beautiful looks.” It’s also depicted as a “peerless rider,” suggesting its inherent agency and dominant nature.
Kövecses Parallel	This aligns with Kövecses’s conceptualization of EMOTIONS ARE PHYSICAL FORCES/LOVE IS A FORCE OF IMMENSE POWER, which metaphorically attribute an extraordinary, even impossible, level of control to love.
Example 3.	(ST) “ey yüzlerce Asaf kulu kölesi kesilen, Süleyman’ı bile aşkıyla hayran eden dilber.” (Mevlânâ, 2007: 48) (TT) “O Charmer to whom hundreds of Asafs Turn into slaves, Even Solomon becomes astonished with His Love.” (Rumi, 1996: 67, Meter I)

Conceptual Metaphor (Lakoff&Johnson)	LOVE IS DIVINE/LOVE IS AN OVERWHELMING FORCE (that subordinates all others)
Cognitive Implication	Love is cognitively understood as an ultimate, humbling force that diminishes even the most exalted figures, thereby reifying the beloved as sacred. The “object of love” is depicted as possessing such immense power that numerous existences, sultans, and wise men (Asafs) are rendered insignificant or subservient. This overwhelming influence is underscored by even Solomon, a symbol of ultimate wisdom and power, experiencing astonishment.
Kövecses Parallel	This illustrates “THE OBJECT OF LOVE IS A DEITY” and “LOVE IS ELEVATION.” This directly conceptualizes the beloved as holding ultimate authority and power over all creation and even other powerful figures.
Example 4.	(ST) “Ey anasının sütüyle beslenir gibi aşkla beslenip gelişen padişah, yürü, çoş ey arslan, ey babasının canı, gir oyuna.” (Mevlânâ, 2007: 283) (TT) “O Sultan who grows with love Like a baby with its mother’s milk, Come, be exuberant. O Soul of his father, get in the dance.” (Rumi, 1996: 14, Meter II)
Conceptual Metaphor (Lakoff&Johnson)	LOVE IS NOURISHMENT/SUSTENANCE:
Cognitive Implication	The translation effectively preserves the LOVE IS NOURISHMENT conceptual metaphor, directly rendering “develops through love just as a baby grows nourished by its mother’s milk.” Furthermore, the calls to “be exuberant” and “get in the dance” maintain love’s conceptualization as an animating, joyful force. While condensed, the “lion” metaphor still successfully conveys the powerful and noble attributes linked to the “Sultan.”
Kövecses Parallel	The metaphor LOVE IS A NUTRIENT and THE OBJECT OF LOVE IS APPETIZING FOOD is evident in the example, portraying love as essential for growth and development.
Example 5.	(ST) “...senin hayalinin güzelliğinden meydana gelen o neliksiz-niteliksiz inciye gözlerimizde yer vermişim dedim.” (Mevlânâ, 2007: 87) (TT) “...I put that pearl In a space in my eye, that pearl Is made by the beauty of your image.” (Rumi, 1996: 128, Meter III)
Conceptual Metaphor (Lakoff&Johnson)	LOVE IS A VALUABLE OBJECT/LOVE IS A CONTAINER

Cognitive Implication	The beloved is deeply cherished, occupying the speaker's internal visual and emotional landscape. This "object of love" is directly conceptualized as a "pearl," metaphorically representing preciousness, rarity, and beauty.
Kövecses Parallel	This falls within Kövecses's frameworks of LOVE IS A TREASURE and LOVE IS CONTAINMENT. Furthermore, the notion that this pearl is "shaped by the beauty of your image" positions LOVE/BEAUTY as a generative LIGHT/VISUAL IMAGE, implying that the beloved's beauty and the love it evokes create something invaluable within the lover's perception.
Example 6.	(ST) "...run to love like rays of light that come to anything that shines." (Alighieri, 2011: Canto 15, Purgatory) (TT) "...cisme koşan ışık gibi, aşka doğru koşar." (Alighieri, 2012: 187, Canto 15, Purgatory)
Conceptual Metaphor (Lakoff&Johnson)	DIVINE GOOD/LOVE IS LIGHT/LOVE IS ATTRACTION
Cognitive Implication	Love is cognitively understood as a natural force, transcending mere emotional or spiritual connection. This implies its inevitability, a gravitational pull, and an inherent capacity for illumination. The "Good" is compared to rays of light that reach everything that shines, conceptualizing divine love as an omnipresent, radiant, and attractive force. The act of "running to love" suggests love as a destination or a magnet.
Kövecses Parallel	This aligns with the broader metaphor "LOVE IS A NATURAL FORCE" and "LOVE IS LIGHT", where the beloved becomes the source of illumination, attracting the divine like a physical law. Dante illustrates this through an active, almost physical manifestation of divine goodness flowing towards love, effectively using the light metaphor to convey its pervasive and illuminating essence.
Example 7.	(ST) "...which love, in governing the spheres," (Alighieri, 2011: Canto 1, Paradise) (TT) "...Ey göğü idare eden aşk," (Alighieri, 2012: 263, Canto 1, Paradise)
Conceptual Metaphor (Lakoff&Johnson)	LOVE IS ORDER/LOVE IS COSMIC POWER
Cognitive Implication	Love is cognitively understood as a creative force, capable of both forming and renewing the soul, signifying a transformation that is not merely spiritual but ontological.

Kövecses Parallel	This exemplifies the metaphor “LOVE IS A CREATIVE FORCE,” which builds on “EMOTION IS MOTION” and extends it into existence and metaphysics.
Example 8.	(ST) “She – as the sun who first in love shone warm into my heart,” (Alighieri, 2011: Canto 3, Paradise) (TT) “Vaktiyle, bağrımı aşkla tutuşturan bu güneş,” (Alighieri, 2012: 268, Canto 3, Paradise)
Conceptual Metaphor (Lakoff&Johnson)	LOVE IS FIRE/LOVE IS SUNLIGHT
Cognitive Implication	Love is cognitively understood as more than mere passion; it functions as an epistemological gateway to truth, bridging emotional insight with spiritual knowledge.
Kövecses Parallel	This conceptualization aligns with Kövecses’s integrated metaphors of “LOVE IS FIRE” and “LOVE IS ENLIGHTENMENT,” revealing the duality of warmth (emotion) and light (intellect) in religious love.
Example 9.	(ST) “ ‘Your words in waves,’ I said, ‘They warm me through, and light me more and more.’ ” (Alighieri, 2011: Canto 4, Paradise) (TT) “sözlerin beni... öyle ısıtıyor ki, giderek canlanıyorum!” (Alighieri, 2012: 274, Canto 4, Paradise)
Conceptual Metaphor (Lakoff&Johnson)	LOVE IS A SUBSTANCE/LOVE IS ENERGY
Cognitive Implication	The speech of the beloved triggers a mind-body reaction, where emotional intensity manifests physically, reflecting patterns found in embodied metaphors.
Kövecses Parallel	This fits within “EMOTIONS ARE INTERNAL FORCES” and “LOVE IS HEAT”, particularly emphasizing love’s capacity to energize and stimulate life.
Example 10.	(ST) “...burned more fiercely still to turn its eyes once more to where she was.” (Alighieri, 2011: Canto 27, Paradise) (TT) “...gözlerimi ona çevirmeye beni her zamandan daha fazla istekle özendiriyordu.” (Alighieri, 2012: 381, Canto 27, Paradise)
Conceptual Metaphor (Lakoff&Johnson)	LOVE IS A FIRE/LOVE IS LONGING
Cognitive Implication	Love is cognitively portrayed as an uncontainable flame that burns within the individual, serving as an inner drive or emotional engine that guides the mind and directs attention. This internal force translates into concrete actions, for instance, “the turning of the eyes,” in accordance with a desire-driven action model.

Kövecses Parallel	This closely matches with Kövecses's conceptual metaphors of "LOVE IS FIRE," "LOVE IS A JOURNEY," and "LOVE IS A FORCE THAT MOVES THE SELF." The love blazed with a desire to look once again portrays love as a compelling force driving action.
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Conclusion

The motif of the journey manifests in diverse forms throughout literature, each offering unique interpretive possibilities. When this motif assumes a mystical dimension, it evokes a sense of enigma that stimulates the human drive for discovery. By examining the Sufi tradition Rumi's works and the mystical framework in Dante's thought, it becomes evident that outward appearances serve merely as veils for deeper spiritual truths. Aligned with the previously mentioned assumptions and findings, this research adopts a holistic approach of methodological triangulation in order to examine the complex intersection of mysticism, cognition, and cross-cultural transfer. Rather than treating different theoretical approaches in isolation, the present study integrates CMT (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), Translation Studies, and Hermeneutic textual interpretation within a unified analytical framework. Through the synthesis of these approaches, the research goes beyond treating translation as a merely descriptive process; it aims to reveal more profoundly how "ineffable" mystical experiences are cognitively preserved or transformed during their circulation within the context of World Literature. The common ground for comparison is to investigate the cognitive and cross-cultural mechanisms through which metaphors of "object of love", "Shams" and "Beatrice" as symbolic intermediaries, are translated and recontextualized across divergent literary traditions by situating the selected sections of Rumi's *Divan-i Kebir* and Dante's *Divine Comedy*.

The translators have employed all three of Lakoff and Johnson's micro strategies in translating the 22 metaphorical examples found in *Divan-i Kebir* and *Divine Comedy*, focusing on the symbolic figures of "Shams" and "Beatrice" as embodiments of divine love, reveals both convergence and divergence in metaphorical conceptualization and translation. In *Divan-i Kebir*, ontological metaphors dominate, reflecting Rumi's emphasis on the inward, existential dimension of love, while structural and orientational metaphors play a more limited yet transformative role in translation. In contrast, *Divine Comedy* exhibits a more balanced distribution among ontological, structural, and orientational metaphors, with orientational metaphors featuring more prominently, indicative of Dante's spatialized spiritual journey through the afterlife. Since poetry is a literary genre that frequently employs abstract elements to tell its story, it can be proposed that the underlying cause of this situation is that these literary works exemplify the genre of poetry. Notably, the translation process often results in shifts in metaphorical categorization, particularly from ontological to structural, or from orientational to structural, highlighting the inherent complexity of conveying mystical and affective nuance across languages. These shifts underscore the dynamic interplay between

metaphor, cultural context, and linguistic structure. Ultimately, both works apply metaphor not merely as a stylistic device but as a vehicle for articulating profound spiritual truths, with the object of love, whether “Shams” or “Beatrice,” functioning as a metaphysical guide toward the Absolute. Furthermore, the analysis of Zoltán Kövecses’s model of emotion metaphors reveals that both works draw on a wide range of metaphors to articulate the transformative and often transcendent nature of love, but they do so within distinct cultural, theological, and poetic frameworks. Kövecses’s typology of metaphors provides a useful lens through which to examine how metaphorical structures are either preserved or reinterpreted in translation. In *Divan-i Kebir*, metaphors predominantly emphasize love’s physicality, vitality, and divine origin, with expressions like LOVE IS WAR, LOVE IS NOURISHMENT, and LOVE IS A PRECIOUS OBJECT conveying both the intensity and divinity of the emotional experience. These metaphors are largely grounded in embodied cognition, yet also deeply interwoven with Sufi symbolism. Translators often face the challenge of maintaining both the cognitive implications and the spiritual undertones of these metaphors, which can lead to shifts across metaphor categories, for example, from ontological to structural or orientational metaphors. In *Divine Comedy*, love is equally potent but is more frequently conceptualized through cosmic, epistemological, and metaphysical metaphors (LOVE IS LIGHT, LOVE IS ORDER, and LOVE IS A CREATIVE FORCE). These metaphors frame love as a means of spiritual ascent and divine understanding. Dante’s use of metaphor often operates simultaneously at emotional and intellectual levels, requiring the translator to navigate between literal meaning, symbolic depth, and theological resonance.

The translators of *Divan-i Kebir* and *Divine Comedy* have approached the task with sensitivity to both the structural and cultural dimensions of the source texts. Their translations reflect an awareness not only of linguistic form but also of the broader contextual and cultural frameworks embedded within the original works. Importantly, the translators’ interpretive choices, shaped by their individual perspectives, play a significant role in shaping the translated texts. In this sense, translators function as co-creators, assuming an authorial role in the production of the target text. Their efforts have resulted in translations that provide a fluid and engaging reading experience, allowing readers to encounter foreign linguistic and cultural worldviews while retaining the sense of reading a work originally composed in their native language. Across both texts, translation involves a dynamic negotiation between preserving the embodied universality of emotion and adapting to culturally specific metaphorical expressions. Kövecses’s framework not only clarifies how emotional metaphors function within each original text, but also reveals the nuanced transformations they undergo through translation. Ultimately, the study posits that the analysis of metaphor plays a fundamental role in understanding the conceptual effort of human consciousness to “map the infinite.” By revealing how such metaphors are preserved and the forms in which they are transformed during the translation process, the work contributes to ongoing debates in translation studies, cognitive poetics, and comparative literature regarding how literature facilitates the global circulation of spiritual and philosophical thought.

Research and publication ethics statement: This paper is based on the Master's Thesis titled "A Comparative Study on the Translation of the Metaphorical Representations of 'Object of Love' in Rumi's 'Divan-ı Kebir' and Dante's 'Divine Comedy'" and subsequently submitted to the relevant journal. The study has not been presented at any symposium, congress, or similar academic event, nor has it been submitted to any other journal for evaluation.

Contribution rates of authors to the article: First author 50%, second author 50%.

Ethics committee approval: Ethics committee approval is not required for the study.

Support statement: No financial support was received for the study.

Statement of interest: There is no conflict of interest between the authors of this article.

Araştırma ve yayın etiği beyanı: Bu makale, "Mevlânâ'nın Divan-ı Kebir'i ile Dante'nin İlahi Komedyası'nda 'Aşk Nesnesinin' Metaforik Temsillerinin Çevirisine İlişkin Karşılaştırmalı Bir Çalışma" adlı yüksek lisans tezinden üretilmiş ve ardından ilgili dergiye gönderilmiştir. Araştırma herhangi bir sempozyum, kongre vb. sunulmamış ya da başka bir dergiye değerlendirilmek üzere gönderilmemiştir.

Yazarların katkı düzeyleri: Birinci yazar %50, ikinci yazar %50.

Etik komite onayı: Çalışmada etik kurul iznine gerek yoktur.

Finansal destek: Çalışmada finansal destek alınmamıştır.

Çıkar çatışması: Çalışmada potansiyel çıkar çatışması bulunmamaktadır.

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