

Louise Erdrich'in *Love Medicine* Adlı Romanının Türk Kültürel Benzerlikleri Üzerine Analizi: Erdrich'in *Love Medicine* Romanında Türk Temasını Bulma *

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Öz

Amerika; yerliler, Meksikalı Amerikalılar, Japon Amerikalılar ve bunlar gibi farklı etnik grupların birleşiminden oluşmaktadır. Yerli Amerikalılar bunların içinden en eskileridir ve Amerika'nın esas yapı taşlarını oluşturmaktadır. Bu nedenle, Amerika'nın etnik farklılıklardan oluşan bir ülke olduğunu söylemek yanlış olmaz. Diğer etnik gruplar gibi yerliler de beyaz Amerika'da pek çok zorluk ile kültürel ve fiziksel ayrımcılık yaşamıştır. Yerli Amerikalıların ataları uzun ve güçlü tarihleriyle bilinmektedir, çünkü gelenekleri köklü ve bağlayıcı aile değerlerine dayanır. Geçmişlerine ve aile kültürlerine saygılarından dolayı, yerliler toplu yaşamı inşa etmişlerdir ve Amerika bireyseli bakış açısıyla bu düzene karşı çıkmaktadır. Bu nedenle, tarih boyunca yerliler ile beyaz Amerika arasında devam eden bir çatışma olmuştur. Bunun yanı sıra, Yerli Amerikalılar ile Türkler arasındaki bağlantı tarihte uzun yıllar tartışma konusu olmuştur.

Louise Erdrich'in kitabı *Love Medicine* hangi yönlerden yerlilerin motiflerini yansıtmaktadır? Yerli Amerikalılar ve Türkler arasındaki esas ilişki nedir? Erdrich Yerli Amerikalıların tarihine nasıl yaklaşmıştır? Bu çalışma, Türk ve Amerikan kültürleri arasındaki yakın benzerlikleri ifade edilen sorular çerçevesinde yansıtmaya çalışacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Yerli Amerikalı, Türk, Louise Erdrich, *Love Medicine*, Sözlü Gelenek.

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The Analysis of Louise Erdrich's *Love Medicine* in The Aspects of Turkish Cultural Similarities: Finding Turkish Motifs Inside Erdrich's *Love Medicine* *

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Abstract

In America, there are numerous ethnic diversities, such as Indigenous people, Mexican Americans, Japanese Americans, etc. Native Americans are the oldest nation, which constructs the essential origin in the U.S., so it can be said that America was created with various patterns of ethnic minorities. Like other ethnic groups, Native Americans encounter many hardships and discriminations, such as cultural and physical assimilations in the white dominant American system. Ancestors of Native people are known for their long and robust history because their traditions are based upon strong and unifying family values. Because of respecting their past and family traditions, Indigenous people construct their communal way of life, and America is against this notion with its individualistic outlook towards life. Thus, throughout history, there have always been great clashes between the whites and Native people. Besides, many debates have existed about the relationship between Native Americans and Turks throughout history. From which perspectives does Louise Erdrich reflect the Native American motifs in *Love Medicine*? What is the essential relation between the Native Americans and the Turks? How does Erdrich approach the history of Native Americans? This study sheds light on these questions with the close similarities between the Turkish and American cultures.

Keywords: Native American, Turks, Louise Erdrich, *Love Medicine*, Oral tradition

* Ethical Statement: * It is declared that scientific and ethical principles have been followed while carrying out and writing this study and that all the sources used have been properly cited.

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Introduction

The cultural tapestry of America is woven with threads of diversity, each strand representing a unique ethnic heritage and worldview. Among the rich mosaic of cultures that call the United States home are Indigenous people, Mexican Americans, Japanese Americans, and countless others, each with distinct traditions and values. While Western thought often emphasizes individualism and self-reliance, a parallel perspective is deeply rooted in collectivism and reverence for familial bonds within Native American communities; there is a pronounced inclination towards collectivism, characterized by a holistic approach to cognition. This manifests in a persistent endeavor to identify and establish patterns and connections between events and the accumulation of knowledge. This collectivist mindset shapes the Indigenous people's social fabric, fostering a profound respect for the family institution. Bowers aptly notes that many values are unconsciously transmitted through colloquialisms, catchphrases, and cultural metaphors, underscoring the importance of exploring their stories and narratives to comprehend their historical and cultural foundations.

Beyond their communal lifestyle, Native Americans exhibit a profound connection with nature, viewing it as a source of healing and spirituality. Their history, however, is marked by diversity among tribes, yet a shared truth prevails—the spirit of the universe. American Indian culture extols values like harmony with nature, resilience in the face of suffering, respect for others, and an inherent belief in the goodness of humanity. These values, while noble, can sometimes hinder individuals and families in times of adversity, as seeking help from non-Indigenous sources can be met with fear and mistrust borne out of past oppression and discrimination. This study also delves into the striking commonalities shared by Native Americans and another group, the Turks. These commonalities encompass belief systems, family values, and storytelling traditions. Through a genetic lens, paleo geneticist Eske Willerslev's research reveals the intricate web of human migration and mixing that led to the emergence of Native Americans. This genetic study provides vital insights, confirming that Native Americans possess genetic ties to western Eurasia, a revelation that traces back to an ancient ancestry.

As Willerslev's research suggests, the ancestors of Native Americans diverged from their East Asian counterparts and moved north, encountering a group from western Eurasia, exemplified by the Mal'ta boy. Their mingling forged the path for their descendants to journey eastward into North America, solidifying their connection to the Western Eurasian roots. Moreover, anthropologist and geneticist Jennifer Raff's work from the University of Texas at Austin

reinforces the Siberian ancestry of Native Americans, contributing to our understanding of the origins of these ancient peoples. While Native American narratives about their heritage persist, it is essential to acknowledge alternative explanations proposed by non-Indigenous sources, such as the belief that Native Americans share genetic ties with Turks and Tatars from Asia, a theory championed by luminaries like Thomas Jefferson and Constantine Rafinesque. In exploring diverse cultures and their ancestral roots, we embark on a journey to comprehend the intricate tapestry of American society better, weaving together the stories, traditions, and genetic connections that bind Indigenous peoples and their Turkic counterparts to a shared human history.

1. Who is Louise Erdrich?

Louise Erdrich is a prolific and influential author known for her extensive body of work that traverses diverse thematic terrains, all deeply rooted in the experiences of Native Americans. Her literary prowess is marked by a descriptive language that vividly captures the essence of Native culture and history. This study, focusing on her renowned work "Love Medicine," aims to explore the commonalities shared between Native Americans and Turks within the context of her tetralogy, which includes "The Beet Queen" (1986), "Tracks" (1988), and "The Bingo Palace" (1994). Erdrich's literary oeuvre is deeply inspired by her ancestral experiences, positioning her works as significant autobiographical sources within Native American literature. Her unique perspective arises from her mixed heritage, with a German father and a Chippewa Indian mother, allowing her to offer an authentic lens through which to narrate these stories. This multidimensional aspect contributes to the richness of her descriptive language and distinctive style.

Louise Erdrich's literary career spans an impressive seventeen novels, in addition to volumes of poetry, children's literature, short stories, and a memoir delving into her early motherhood experiences. Her literary accomplishments are underscored by numerous prestigious awards, with "The Round House" securing the National Book Award for Fiction, "The Plague of Doves" earning the Anisfield-Wolf Book Award and being a Pulitzer Prize finalist, and her debut novel, *Love Medicine*, claiming the National Book Critics Circle Award. Further recognition includes the Library of Congress Prize in American Fiction, the esteemed PEN/Saul Bellow Award for Achievement in American Fiction, and the Dayton Literary Peace Prize. Erdrich's contributions extend beyond her writing, as she is also the proprietor of Birchbark Books, a cherished independent bookstore in Minnesota. In this academic exploration, we delve into the literary world of Louise Erdrich, investigating the intricate web

of themes, narratives, and cultural resonances that underlie her works. We aim to unravel the common threads connecting Native American and Turkic experiences, as reflected in the pages of her tetralogy, thereby shedding light on the multifaceted dimensions of Native American literature and the profound impact of Erdrich's contributions to this literary landscape.

2. Exploring Love Medicine: An In-Depth Analysis of Family, Traditions, Religion, and the Dynamics of Chance and Fate

Love Medicine, a collection of short stories from a Native American perspective, is a captivating exploration of the Native American voice skillfully crafted by author Louise Erdrich through the lens of the traditional Chippewa story cycle. Within this literary tapestry, an array of distinct families, including the Kashpaws, Lazarres, Lamartines, Nanapushes, and Morriseys, emerges, each weaving its unique narrative while sharing cultural practices that encapsulate the essence of Native American heritage. Erdrich's narrative prowess emanates from her understanding of and compassion for individuals of mixed heritage, a perspective she draws from her own life, acknowledging that the complexities of mixed ancestry were not a fictional construct but a lived reality deserving exploration. This novel can be likened to an intricately woven spider's web, with its intricate familial relationships as the threads that bind the characters together. Through a lens of the family anthology, *Love Medicine* encompasses a tapestry of trickster tales, ritual practices, and deep reverence for both nature and ancestry. A central theme in the novel is the importance of the past in shaping tribal authority and culture. The respect accorded to the past highlights its significance as a guiding element in tribal history.

Furthermore, the novel explicitly showcases the Native American reverence for nature, which is portrayed as an essential and inseparable element of their lives. Within *Love Medicine*, the extended family is the touchstone of Indian American identity. The complex interrelationships described in the novel illuminate how the characters are bound together, not just psychologically but also psychically. These interrelated patterns mirror the cyclical nature of the natural world, a profoundly significant notion for Native Americans and one that is intricately woven into the fabric of the narrative.

This study also delves into the intriguing parallels between the thematic approaches in *Love Medicine* and Turks' cultural and traditional lifestyles. These shared resemblances, which will be examined in greater detail in subsequent sections, underscore the enduring commonalities between these two seemingly distant cultures. Scientific research, such as the International

Weekly Journal of Science findings, reinforces the historical connection between far-flung nations, revealing shared DNA codes and cultural practices that have transcended geographical boundaries over millennia. In *Love Medicine*, Louise Erdrich deftly highlights her Chippewa tribal ancestry while drawing connections to Turkish traditions, emphasizing these themes as central to the narrative. This comprehensive exploration aims to uncover the profound similarities between Native American and Turkish cultural traditions as depicted in the novel, shedding light on the stories of the families within its pages and offering a deeper understanding of the cross-cultural intersections that shape their experiences.

2.1.The Vital Significance of Family: Nurturing Bonds, Traditions, and Identity

The central theme of the family stands as the cornerstone of Louise Erdrich's *Love Medicine*, where intricate and intertwined relationships take center stage, presenting a narrative tapestry rich in complexity. Five distinct families intertwine their stories within the narrative, revealing the profound significance of familial bonds and their complexities. A closer examination of the family tree illuminates the intricacies of these relationships, which play a pivotal role in shaping the characters' lives and experiences.

In *Love Medicine*, the narrative perspective is dynamic, with fourteen stories that shift the focus among various characters. Amidst this narrative diversity, the Kaspaw family emerges as a prominent and active figure. The relationship between brothers Nector and Eli takes center stage within this family, embodying the stark contrast in their upbringing and life experiences. Nector's journey to the reservation, representing white supremacy and assimilation, contrasts Eli, who is sheltered from this influence by their mother, emphasizing his connection to nature. These two brothers serve as symbols of the constructed spheres where the white and Indigenous worlds intersect, highlighting the complex identities that result from these intersections.

The character of Marie, Nector's wife, assumes significant importance in the narrative as she embodies the prevailing gender roles within the story. Depicted as obedient and submissive, Marie's character undergoes significant trials, including betrayal by her husband, Nector. Despite these challenges, she endeavors to preserve her family unit and resorts to superstitious practices to bind Nector to their home. It is worth noting that the concept of "home" symbolizes gathering disparate pieces, where everyone contributes to creating their realities and identities.

Lulu Lamartine is another character in *Love Medicine* whose portrayal exemplifies the consequences of love affairs outside the bounds of marriage. Her numerous romantic entanglements, including one with Nector Kashpaw, illustrate the turmoil often accompanying extramarital affairs, ultimately leading to their dissolution. Furthermore, the novel explores the intricate dynamics of extended families, wherein grandparents and their children coexist, exemplifying the intergenerational ties that bind these characters. These familial relationships underscore the multifaceted nature of identity construction and the enduring influence of family in shaping the characters' lives. This study delves into the multidimensional portrayal of family within "Love Medicine," offering a comprehensive examination of the complexities of family relationships, gender roles, and the enduring significance of home and extended family networks within the narrative.

2.2.Traditions Unveiled: Exploring Mythic and Oral Cultural Heritages

Traditions serve as invaluable cultural markers, offering insights into the essence of nations and communities. Native Americans hold their mythic and oral heritages, including the art of storytelling and the presence of trickster stories, in high regard. Within these traditions lies a treasure trove of morality tales, each imparting valuable lessons, including rejecting excessive pride, lust, and greed for children. These instructive narratives reveal the Native American quest for truth and wisdom, encapsulated within the intricate fabric of their cultural practices.

Love Medicine, as a literary work, reflects numerous Native American traditions, prominently featuring the concept of the trickster tale. Before delving into the examination of specific characters within the novel, it is crucial to establish the essence of the trickster and how it manifests in these stories. In Native American literature, "trickster" refers to shape-shifters who embody diverse attributes, from creators to destroyers. Their supernatural characteristics hold significant mythological roles in creating the human narrative, making them central figures within Native American mythology. In the context of the Chippewa legend, the trickster takes on a pivotal role, often endowed with extraordinary supernatural strength. Within the pages of *Love Medicine*, several characters embody the essence of the trickster. Gerry, for instance, possesses an unmatched agility that allows him to elude capture by law enforcement, consistently slipping through the grasp of the authorities. Lulu, another character within the narrative, personifies the archetype of the attractive trickster. Her life is characterized by a string of lovers, resulting in the birth of numerous children from these relationships. Lulu embodies the allure and enigmatic qualities often associated with the trickster figure in her actions.

Albertine, the daughter of Swede and Zelda (with Zelda being the daughter of Marie and Nector), represents a unique manifestation of the trickster archetype within the narrative. Her trickster-like actions are not driven by a desire to deceive but rather by a pursuit of oneness—a central facet of Chippewa culture. This way of thinking and navigating the world underscores the multifaceted nature of trickster tales within Native American traditions. This study seeks to unravel the complexities of Native American traditions and their embodiment within the trickster tales of *Love Medicine*. Through a comprehensive analysis of these traditions and the characters who personify them, we aim to shed light on the rich tapestry of cultural heritage interwoven within the narrative, illuminating the enduring significance of these practices in shaping the characters' lives and the broader Native American experience.

2.3.Spiritual Threads: Exploring Religion's Influence on Culture and Identity

While religion does not occupy a prominent position in the narrative of *Love Medicine*, its presence within the story holds profound significance. Native Americans, deeply rooted in their belief in the supernatural and a higher power, have historically faced the pressures of Christian conversion due to white society's oppression. These pressures, often manifested through civilizing practices, have left an indelible mark on the cultural landscape of Native American communities. Within *Love Medicine*, the character of Marie, the wife of Nector, emerges as a poignant example of the impact of Christianity on Native American individuals. Her attendance at a white school exposes her to the harsh treatment and mistreatment by Sister Leopolda, a white nun. Marie's experiences serve as a stark reminder of the turbulent history of Native Americans grappling with the encroachment of Christianity and the accompanying cultural shifts.

The novel also weaves a tapestry of religious symbolism into its narrative fabric. The drowning of June, Lipsha, and King Kashpaw's mother takes on a deeper resonance, symbolizing a form of salvation akin to the story of Jesus Christ. Louise Erdrich, influenced by the practices of Christianity, subtly incorporates these elements into her work. However, she does not shy away from depicting the negative aspects of Christianity, offering a nuanced exploration of its impact on Native American communities. Simultaneously, Erdrich extols her characters' enduring spirituality and belief systems, underscoring their resilience in the face of cultural assimilation.

The title of the novel's second chapter, "Saint Marie," is a significant indicator of the themes explored. It highlights the process of Native American assimilation into white society's practices, where religion becomes a vehicle for imposing dominant ideologies upon the

indigenous population. Here, European settlers wielded religion as a tool of captivity, representing the imposition of foreign beliefs on Native American cultures. Through the lens of Louise Erdrich's *Love Medicine*, this academic examination delves into the subtle yet profound influence of religion on the lives of Native Americans. It explores the complex interplay between spirituality, assimilation, and cultural identity within a changing world, highlighting the enduring effects of white society, religious conversion, and the creation of reservations on Native American communities and their belief systems.

2.4.Navigating the Tapestry of Chance and Fate: A Literary Exploration

Within the intricate narrative tapestry of *Love Medicine*, chance and fate emerge as central and inextricable elements that shape the lives of its characters. This exploration delves into the profound significance of these themes, revealing how the characters' destinies are intricately tied to the whims of chance and the inexorable forces of fate. A poignant example of fate's influence is embodied in the character of Nector, whose untimely demise stems from a superstitious act by his wife, Marie, and their grandson, Lipsha. The novel's narrative, along with the perspectives of its characters, often portrays Nector's death as an act of fate, underscoring the pervasive belief in destiny within the community.

In *Love Medicine*, chance also plays a pivotal role in guiding the characters' paths. For instance, the meeting between Nector and Marie occurs due to a chance encounter, as does the fateful connection between Nector and Lulu, which leads to a profound love affair. It is believed that the capricious nature of chance influences significant life decisions, ultimately shaping the characters' trajectories. The characters within the novel, like many Native Americans, view chance as a fundamental aspect of existence, deeply intertwined with fate.

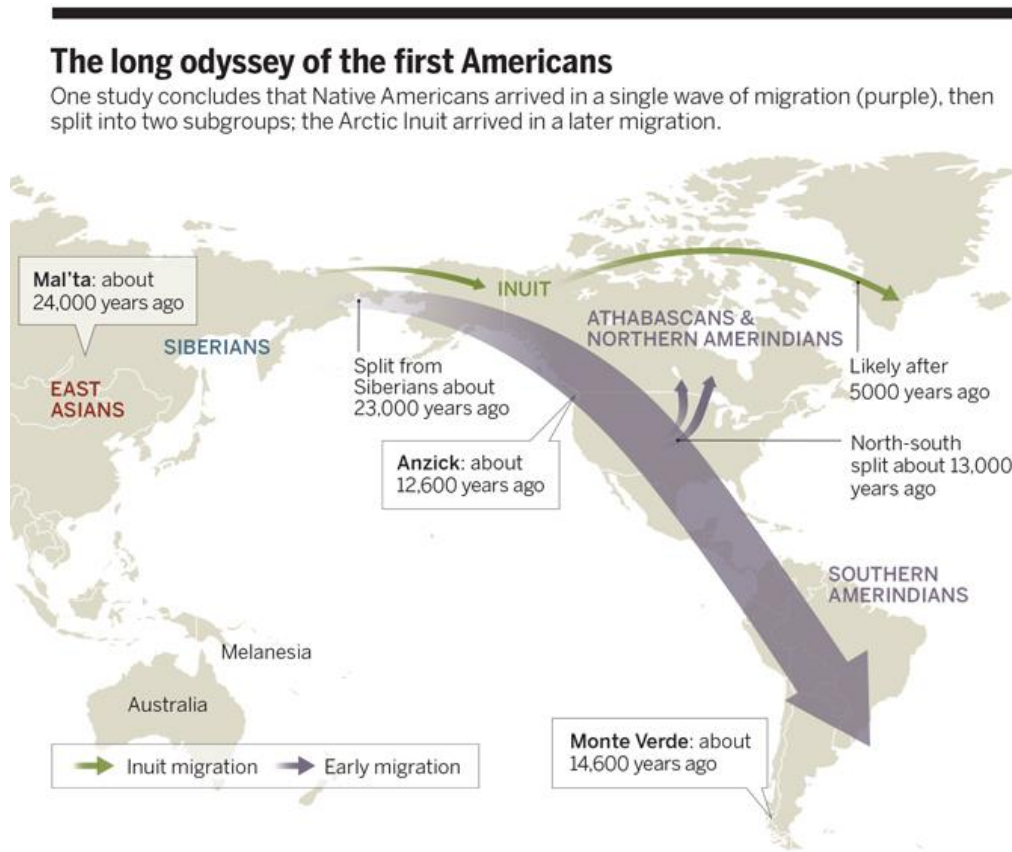
Towards the novel's conclusion, the emergence of a casino symbolizes the theme of chance in life. Lyman's decision to open the casino and collect funds for the tribe underscores the enduring significance of gambling within the Chippewa tradition, offering a poignant reflection of the Indigenous belief in the interplay of chance and fate. These elements are seen as the ultimate outcomes of the natural world, a fundamental principle that permeates the lives of Native Americans and informs their worldview. This academic examination seeks to unravel the complex dynamics of chance and fate manifesting in *Love Medicine*. By delving into the character's experiences and the cultural backdrop of Native American beliefs, it endeavors to shed light on the profound interconnections between these themes and their enduring influence on the lives and decisions of the novel's characters.

3. Exploring the Complex Interplay Between Native Americans and Turks: Scientific Discoveries, Historical Examples, and Cultural Experiences

Understanding the relationship between Native Americans and Turks requires a multifaceted exploration that encompasses genetic, historical, and cultural dimensions. To lay the groundwork for this investigation, it is essential to consider the concept of haplogroups, which are genetic population groups sharing a common ancestor along either the patrilineal or matrilineal line. These haplogroups are categorized using alphabet letters, further refined by additional alphanumeric combinations. Of relevance is haplogroup J2, which serves as the primary Y-DNA marker for Turkey, the Levant, and Iran. This genetic framework provides a broader context for examining the connections between various nations before delving into the relationship between Native Americans and Turks. The exploration of the intricate relationship between Native Americans and Turks has been a subject of scholarly inquiry and scientific investigation throughout history. In Turkey, the work of Reha Oğuz Türkkan stands as a significant contribution to understanding the close ties between these two nations, as detailed in his book "Türkler ve Kızıldereliler." Within the annals of Turkish history, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founding father of modern Turkey, displayed a keen interest in the American Indian question. He dispatched historian Tahsin Mayatepek to Mexico as a Turkish Ambassador, tasked with researching the potential Turkic origins of the Maya civilization. Türkkan's book "Türkler ve Kızıldereliler" provides a comprehensive account of numerous examples that illustrate the profound relationship between Turks and Native Americans. These examples encompass diverse articles and visual materials, such as a New York Times Magazine article suggesting that the first settlers in America, dating back to 4000-5000 BC, were of Turkish origin. This publication also includes a depiction of their supposed route to the Americas. Another article from the Turkish Times highlights cultural similarities between Indians and Turks, with Dr. Arslan attributing these resemblances to mere "coincidences." However, as Türkkan meticulously points out, the wealth of scientific and cultural parallels suggests a more profound connection, some of which are explored in this paper.

Türkkan's visual examples further emphasize the striking similarities between Native Americans and Turks. Notably, sculptures of Indians depicted in these materials resemble Turkish stereotypes, notably characterized by the presence of handlebar mustaches—a significant indicator of Turkish identity. Most of these sculptures proudly sport mustaches and beards, standard features among Turkish men and integral to their cultural identity. Genetic studies also shed light on the shared heritage between Native Americans and Turks. These

studies reveal that all Native Americans, both ancient and contemporary, trace their origins back to a single ancestral population in Siberia, which diverged from other Asian people approximately 23,000 years ago. Subsequently, this ancestral population inhabited the land of Beringia for up to 8,000 years before embarking on a single migration wave into the Americas, where they eventually diverged into northern and southern branches approximately 13,000 years ago. This academic exploration seeks to unravel the intricate web of genetic, historical, and cultural connections that bind Native Americans and Turks. By delving into scientific discoveries, historical encounters, and cultural parallels, it endeavors to illuminate the depth of the relationship between these two nations, offering a comprehensive understanding of their shared heritage.



Adapted from Raghavan et al., Science (Retrieved from

<https://www.sciencemag.org/news/2015/07/mysterious-link-emerges-between-native-americans-and-people-half-globe-away>)

This academic discourse embarks on a journey to explore the multifaceted phenomenon of intercultural encounters and the resulting address between the Melungeons, Turks, and their shared heritage. A pivotal starting point is the compelling research documented by Brent Kennedy in his seminal work, "From Anatolia to Appalachia: A Turkish-American Dialogue"

[Kennedy, 7]. This research reveals an intriguing narrative of cultural exchange that has unfolded since 1995, involving hundreds of children from the Appalachian regions of Virginia, Tennessee, and Kentucky who have forged connections with Turkish pen pals. This exchange has given rise to a rich tapestry of cultural interactions, exemplified by native Turkish musicians harmonizing and dancing with traditional Appalachian fiddlers and singers. Of central significance is Kennedy's proposition that the Melungeons are descendants of Ottoman Turkish slaves who made their voyage to the New World alongside the renowned explorer Sir Francis Drake during the sixteenth century [Kennedy, 7]. However, the Melungeons' enigmatic origins have been embroiled in a contentious debate within the US blogosphere. Accusations have emerged, suggesting that both the community's leadership and the Turkish lobby in Washington have exploited the Melungeons to advance Ankara's political agenda.

Our exploration ultimately leads us to a profound understanding of the Melungeons, the enigmatic people whose heartland resides in upper East Tennessee. It unveils the intriguing fact that "From Anatolia to Appalachia," subtitled "A Turkish-American Dialogue," is an earlier publication from the same publisher, addressing the potential connection between the Turks of the Ottoman Empire and the Melungeons (Kennedy, p. 7). Remarkably, Turkic people have been migrating to America for many centuries, a narrative that has largely escaped recognition until now. This book, primarily composed of interviews with interested Americans and Turks, refrains from definitively concluding. Nevertheless, the importance of this inquiry extends beyond academic curiosity, encompassing vital medical considerations [Pennington et al. 4-5]. The discourse culminates by emphasizing the crucial significance of interdisciplinary research in unraveling the intricate connections between the Melungeons, Turks, and the broader scope of historical and genetic narratives. It underscores the enduring value of exploration, discovery, and understanding in the intricate tapestry of human heritage and culture.

The term "Melungeon" has been broadly applied to a geographically dispersed group of people primarily associated with the regions of Tennessee, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Kentucky within the United States. This group is often recognized as mainly concentrated in the contiguous areas of Eastern Tennessee, Southwest Virginia, and Northwest North Carolina. References to Melungeon groups in Ohio and Louisiana exist [FamilySearch]. As a collective identity, the Melungeons are characterized by their mixed-race heritage. Various definitions and descriptions of what constitutes a Melungeon have

emerged, but a common thread among these definitions is their multiracial ancestry (FamilySearch).

One notable aspect that transcends this multifaceted identity is the presence of Shamanism within Melungeon culture. Shamanism, a belief system encompassing religious, traditional, and cultural elements, stands out as a significant commonality shared between Indian Americans and Turks, particularly those from Central Asian Turkish states and communities. Both groups believe that Tengri is the world's creator and attribute spiritual qualities to the shaman, who serves as a spiritual guide and possesses unique healing abilities (Rogers). In Native American culture, shamans are perceived as individuals having special powers that enable them to journey to other realms, where they interact with spirits, obtain spirit helpers, and access knowledge that aids them in various activities in the mundane world. These activities encompass curing ailments, influencing game animals, and inducing rain, among other functions (Rogers).

Conversely, within Turkish culture, shamanism is intrinsically linked to the belief in Tengri. The parallels between Native American and Turkish Shamanism are further evidenced in linguistic terms. An excerpt from a Turkish source elucidates this connection, citing archaeological findings in Siberia, which included bone sewing needles and tools for throwing spears made from deer antlers. Strikingly, similar items are found in the Americas today, referred to as "atl-atl" in the Aztec language (Arslan). This shared technology highlights the commonality of hunting and crafting sharp tools for survival between Turkish and Native American cultures. Scientific experimentation has also lent credence to the resemblances between these cultures. For instance, DNA tests conducted on human remains found in America and Siberia have provided compelling evidence. These tests demonstrate the genetic similarity between human bones on both sides of the Bering Strait, affirming the presence of a joint ancestral group that arrived in America approximately 20,000 years ago (Arslan). The connection between the ancestors of Turks and Native Americans is further substantiated by the historical movement of ancient Central Asian peoples, including the forebears of the Turkish population. These migratory patterns indicate the dispersion of these groups from their Central Asian and Siberian homelands toward the east, west, north, and south (Kaya).

Conclusively, American Indians' ancient migration from Asia to the Americas is well-documented. Moreover, the linguistic evidence proposed by paleoanthropologist Polat Kaya supports the notion that the ancestors of certain Native American groups and the progenitors of Turks and other Altaic people resided in shared or neighboring geographic regions of

Central Asia and Siberia. Kaya's analysis of critical linguistic root words such as "ata," "apa," and "ana" and their derivatives reveals their prevalence in numerous languages spoken by Native populations in North, Central, and South America. These shared linguistic elements can be construed as "linguistic artifacts" passed down from the common language spoken by these ancient communities while dwelling in Central Asia and Siberia before their separation, estimated to have occurred over 10,000 years ago (Kaya). While some members of these ancestral groups remained in their Asian homelands and others embarked on migrations to North America, a shared linguistic heritage endures, underscoring the enduring connections between the Melungeons, Turks, and Native American communities across the expanse of time and space (Kaya).

4. Cross-Cultural Parallels: Exploring the Resonance Between Native American Love Medicine and Turkish Cultural Traditions

This section of the paper delves into the intricate relationship between Native American and Turkish cultures, drawing references from the literary work "Love Medicine" by Louise Erdrich. Native Americans and Turks, residing in distinct geographical regions with unique cultural practices, share intriguing similarities in their familial structures and cultural values. This analysis categorically explores commonalities, highlighting the significance of extended families, reverence for grandparents, and the intricate web of family relations in both societies.

4.1. Extended Family Structures: The first striking similarity between Native American and Turkish cultures lies in their strong emphasis on symbolic family structures. In "Love Medicine," the Chippewa Native Americans exemplify the importance of communal living. Louise Erdrich underscores this point by "the main house, where all of my aunts and uncles grew up" (Erdrich, 1984, p. 11), emphasizing the close-knit bonds within Native American families. Similarly, Turkish society prioritizes family, considering it the cornerstone of the community. It is customary for individuals to reside with their parents until marriage, fostering close family ties. The novel further illustrates this concept as cousins are raised together, mirroring the practice of familial cohabitation prevalent in Turkish culture. The romantic relationship between cousins in "Love Medicine" reflects an approach that, while diminishing in contemporary Turkey, continues to persist as a cultural phenomenon.

4.2. Reverence for Grandparents: Native American and Turkish cultures hold their grandparents in high esteem, recognizing them as custodians of cultural heritage.

Erdrich's "Love Medicine" depicts grandparents actively raising their grandchildren, emphasizing the deep emotional connection. Lipsha, the grandchild of Marie and Nector, reflects this sentiment when he states, "They were like parents to me, the way they had taken me home and reared me" (Erdrich, 1984, p. 192). Turkish society shares this reverence for grandparents, often relying on them to care for grandchildren while parents work or as a testament to the trustworthiness of traditional child-rearing methods. The strong family bond both cultures foster is exemplified by the pivotal role of grandparents in raising children.

4.3. Family Naming and Interconnectedness: Unlike English naming conventions, both Native American and Turkish cultures exhibit diverse family naming systems that emphasize interconnectedness and shared lineage. "Love Medicine" features an intricate family tree within the Chippewa tradition, illustrating the profound significance of familial relationships. This web-like structure underscores the Native American pattern of extended families, akin to the domestic fabric in Turkish culture. The multifaceted storytelling within "Love Medicine" weaves various narratives, reflecting the complexity of family relations. This narrative approach mirrors the Turkish cultural preference for intertwining family narratives, celebrating the shared heritage that binds generations.

4.4. Reverence for Nature and Shamanistic Practices: Native Americans and Turks both exhibit a profound reverence for nature, a sentiment stemming from their shared spiritual heritage rooted in shamanism. "Love Medicine" is replete with references to hunting, an integral aspect of the natural world. Louise Erdrich's portrayal of Uncle Eli's hunting endeavors exemplifies the significance of this tradition, as he strives to "snare himself a deer" (Erdrich, 1984, p. 27). While this tradition has waned due to assimilation into white society, there remain individuals who steadfastly uphold their customs, akin to the historical reliance on hunting among early Turkish tribes such as the Kai. Hunting is a group-oriented activity, a cultural practice in which many men from Native American and Turkish communities engage for sustenance and recreation.

4.5. Spiritual Beliefs and Supernatural Practices: The spiritual beliefs of Native Americans and Turks are deeply intertwined with their everyday lives and rituals. In "Love Medicine," Erdrich showcases the spiritual significance of practices such as love medicine in the Chippewa tradition. The statement, "These love medicines are something of an old Chippewa specialty" (Erdrich, 1984, p. 199), highlights the cultural continuity of these practices from ancestral roots. Despite the younger

generation's skepticism, this tradition persists, underscoring its importance in Native American culture. Similarly, Turkish society also embraces supernatural beliefs that transcend the boundaries of logic. The narrative of Lipsha, Marie and Nector's grandchild, struggling to comprehend these superstitious practices reflects the preservation of such beliefs from the past. Furthermore, the notion of spirits existing after death, as depicted in "Love Medicine," resonates with Turkish ideas in the journey of souls to the afterlife. Both cultures believe in the existence of spirits and an afterlife, forming a spiritual bond.

4.6. Patriarchal Systems: Another noteworthy similarity lies in the prevalence of patriarchal systems in Native American and Turkish societies. Erdrich highlights the gendered spheres within the Chippewa community, with practices and responsibilities divided between men and women. The statement, "all fruits preserved by Grandma Kashpaw or my mother or Aurelia" (Erdrich, 1984, p. 12), underscores the separation of roles, including the kitchen, primarily women's domain. This division of labor finds resonance in Turkish society, where women often manage household affairs, including cooking, while men engage in traditionally male roles. Erdrich's portrayal of Lynette changing King Junior's diaper emphasizes the notion of motherhood as an essential duty in Native American culture, mirroring the expectation placed on Turkish mothers to care for their children. The father's role as the primary breadwinner in both societies contributes to establishing distinct gendered categories, reaffirming the patriarchal structures that define their cultures.

4.7. Reverence for Ancestral Heritage and Historical Memory: Native American and Turkish cultures value their ancestral heritage immensely and deeply respect the past. In "Love Medicine," grandparents are depicted as unifying figures carrying time-honored traditions' weight. Erdrich's portrayal of Grandpa Kashpaw as a repository of historical knowledge is encapsulated in the statement, "dates, numbers, figures stuck with Grandpa since he stayed" (Erdrich, 1984, p. 16). Grandpa is a living link to ancestral heritage, preserving traditions passed down through generations. In Turkish culture, a similar reverence for grandparents exists, with grandparents often residing with their families and playing pivotal roles as custodians of family history and values.

4.8. Erdrich further emphasizes the importance of historical memory by highlighting the cultural significance of experiences and traditions. For Native Americans, particularly in "Love Medicine," the ability to snare deer is passed down through generations. The statement, "Only real old-time Indians know deer good enough to snare" (Erdrich,

1984, p. 28), underscores the preservation of cultural practices and knowledge. Turkish society exhibits a parallel sentiment, with a solid commitment to remembering the past and cherishing cultural heritage, as reflected in the veneration of national symbols like the flag and participation in traditional ceremonies. The notion of togetherness is also a shared value in both cultures. In *Love Medicine*, the intricate family tree exemplifies the interconnectedness and close relations between family members, emphasizing the importance of familial bonds. The statement, "We had always been together" (Erdrich, 1984, p. 150), underscores the characters' commitment to their familial relationships. Similarly, in Turkish culture, the importance of family bonds and the sense of togetherness are deeply ingrained values. This shared desire for unity and connectedness is a testament to the sincerity with which both communities regard their familial and historical ties.

4.9. Common Historical Experiences: Native Americans and Turks share everyday historical experiences that have shaped their identities. Both cultures have faced challenges and transformed throughout history, developing unique traditions and narratives. In the case of Turkish history, a significant aspect is the unifying and connecting memories that form the basis of their historical records. These collective memories unite diverse Turkish communities and reinforce their cultural identity. Similarly, in Native American history, shared experiences such as displacement, cultural preservation, and adaptation have led to the emergence of resilient cultural traditions that continue to define their identities.

Conclusion

Examining *Love Medicine* provides compelling insights into the intricate cultural parallels between Native American and Turkish societies. Their reverence for nature, spiritual beliefs rooted in shamanism, adherence to patriarchal systems, and deep respect for ancestral heritage and historical memory all testify to the enduring significance of cultural traditions. The standard historical experiences that have shaped these cultures underscore their shared histories and the connections that bind them. This comparative analysis sheds light on the profound impact of cultural values and practices on familial relationships and societal structures within these two distinct yet interconnected cultures.

Despite their geographical separation on the world map, Native Americans and Turks share a rich history characterized by numerous striking similarities in physical characteristics and cultural practices. Beyond their scientific affinities, their cultural and traditional resemblances

provide compelling evidence of their shared historical roots. Turks and their forebears are identified as Central Asian people, with ancestral roots extending deep into the annals of history within Central Asia and vast parts of Siberia, potentially spanning thousands of years before recorded history. This traditional heritage subsequently led to migrations to various parts of the world, with a significant number of ethnic Turkish communities inhabiting regions ranging from Siberia to the Kara Sea north of the Ural Mountains, the East Siberian Sea, and even as far as the Bering Strait in the east, as well as within Central Asia itself.

Similarly, the ancestors of most Native Peoples in North, Central, and South Americas are believed to have embarked on a migration from Asia, traversing the Bering Sea, likely more than ten millennia ago (Kaya, 1986). Considering these historical facts, it is plausible that in the remote past, the ancestors of some Native American groups and the progenitors of Turks and other Altaic peoples inhabited overlapping or neighboring geographical regions within Central Asia and Siberia. Consequently, these groups could have been part of the same or closely related populations, possibly speaking similar or closely related languages. This historical proximity hints at the potential for cultural and linguistic connections between these groups, despite some remaining in their Asian homelands while others ventured to North America (Kaya, 1986).

The shared cultural heritages between the ancestors of Turks and Native Americans are abundant, encompassing a reverence for nature, a tradition of oral storytelling, such as legendary narratives, and a shared belief in the healing properties of water within their mythologies. Furthermore, both nations believe in Shamanism, a central aspect of their belief systems. Native American beliefs regarding Tengri, a spiritual concept, closely parallel Turkish Shamanist ideas. These shared cultural elements are elucidated in the analysis of literary works like "Love Medicine," these resemblances are expounded upon through various examples, including themes of family, faith systems, and social principles such as patriarchy and marital experiences. Moreover, the concept of Melungeons, as explored in the work "From Anatolia to Appalachia: A Turkish-American Dialogue" by Kennedy Brent, presents an intriguing theory that further reinforces the connection between Turks and Native Americans. Brent's observations during his Turkey visit highlight distinctive cultural traits these groups share, such as the tradition of hugging when meeting, which contrasts with the customary handshake greeting in the United States.

Despite the numerous scientific and cultural correspondences, it is essential to acknowledge that this relationship remains a subject of ongoing investigation, and definitive conclusions

are yet to be reached. Consequently, this presentation sheds light on additional findings concerning these two nations' multifaceted and interconnected histories. Even historical figures of great significance have contributed their thoughts to this discourse. For example, Thomas Jefferson posited that American Indians had Turkic and Tartar origins, having migrated across the Bering Sea from Asia. At the same time, his contemporary John Filson proposed the Phoenicians as their forebears. Consequently, this topic finds its foundation in historical and cultural references, thereby contributing to a multidimensional perspective within the field of history (Boorstin).

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