

KÜLTÜRÜN VARLIĞINI DEVAM ETTİRME REFLEKSLERİNDEN BİRİSİ OLARAK AYRIŞMA

Turgay KABAK*

Öz

İnsanoğlunun üretimi olan her şeyi kapsayan kültür, üzerine en çok çalışılan konulardan birisidir. Antropoloji, arkeoloji, sosyoloji, etnoloji gibi birçok disiplin, kültürü merkezine alarak; ancak farklı açılardan kültüre bakarak çalışmalar yapmaktadır. Kültürle ilgilenen ve diğerlerine göre daha genç olan bir disiplin de folklor disiplini. Kurulduğu 1846 yılından günümüze hızla gelişen bu disiplin hem inceleme alanının genişliği hem de uyguladığı kuram ve yöntemlerin zenginliğiyle kültür araştırmalarına çok büyük oranda katkı sunmuştur. Sözlü kültür ürünlerinden somut ve somut olmayan kültürel mirasa kadar çok geniş bir yelpazede inceleme yapan folklor bilimi kültürün daha iyi anlaşılması ve yaşatılması için yerel ve uluslararası otoritelere çok önemli bilgiler sunmaktadır. Bu çalışmada folklorik bir bakış açısıyla kültürün ayrışma fonksiyonu incelenmiştir. Nasıl ki hücreler organları, organlar da insan bedenini oluşturuyorsa kültür de motif, kült, sembol, davranış gibi küçük yapı taşlarının birleşimiyle oluşmaktadır. Bu yapı taşları kültürel öğeleri, kültürel öğelerin birleşimi de bir milletin kültürünü oluşturmaktadır. Kültürel öğeleri oluşturan motif, sembol, kült gibi yapı taşları, geleneğin zayıflaması, sözlü kültürün unutulması/unutturması, işlevini kaybetme ve kültürel etkileşim gibi durumlarda bütünden ayrılarak başka bir parçanın içerisine girmekte eski kültürel öğeyi yeni kültürel yapının içinde yaşatmaya devam etmektedir. Böylece kültür yok olmamakta, sürekli kendini yenileyebilmekte ve yeni kültürel üretimler yaparak kültürel sürekliliği sağlayabilmektedir. Bu durumun gelecekte de devam edeceğine dair elde güçlü doneler mevcuttur. Çalışmada tespit edilen bu durum sebepleriyle birlikte incelenerek bu fonksiyonun, kültürel öğeler üzerinde uygulanmasına “Ayrışma Kuramı” denilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Ayrışma, kuram, ayrışma kuramı, folklor, kültür.

* Doç. Dr. Necmettin Erbakan Üniversitesi Sosyal ve Beşeri Bilimler Fakültesi Türk Dili ve Edebiyatı Bölümü, Konya/Türkiye.
turgaykabak@gmail.com. ORCID: 0000-0002-0823-3074

DISINTEGRATION AS ONE OF THE REFLEXES OF CULTURE TO SUSTAIN ITS EXISTENCE

Abstract

Culture, which encompasses everything produced by humanity, is one of the most extensively researched subjects. Various disciplines such as anthropology, archaeology, sociology, and ethnology all focus on culture, but they conduct studies by addressing it from different perspectives. A discipline relatively newer than others that focuses on culture is folklore studies. This rapidly developing discipline since its establishment in 1846 to present has made significant contributions to cultural studies, both in terms of the breadth of its research scope and the abundance of the theories and methods it employs. Folklore science, which examines a wide range of topics from oral cultural products to tangible and intangible cultural heritage, provides very important information to local and international authorities for a better understanding and survival of culture. In this study, the disintegration¹ function of culture is analyzed from a folkloric perspective. Just as cells form organs and organs constitute the human body, culture is formed by the combination of small building blocks such as motifs, cults, symbols, and behaviors. These building blocks constitute cultural elements, and the combination of cultural elements constitutes the culture of a nation. In situations like the weakening of tradition, forgetting/make forgotten in oral culture, loss of function, and cultural interactions. The building blocks that constitute cultural elements, such as motifs, symbols, and cults, detach from the whole and enter into another part and continue to preserve the old cultural element alive in the new cultural structure. Thus, culture does not cease to exist; it can continuously renew itself and ensures cultural continuity by engaging in new cultural productions. There is strong data that this situation will continue in the future. This situation identified in the study was examined together with its causes, and the application of this function on cultural elements was termed “Disintegration Theory”

Keywords: Disintegration, theory, disintegration theory, folklore, culture.

Introduction

One of the most discussed, debated, and studied concepts, culture, is the common core of many scientific disciplines today. Folklore, one of the disciplines that has culture in its starting point, is among the young disciplines that acquired the status of a scientific field in the 19th century. With the influence of geographical discoveries, folklore researches, initially started with an amateur manner through the quest for tracing the origins of European nations, evolved over time into a scientific discipline with contributions from disciplines such as anthropology, sociology, archaeology, ethnology, theology, and history. The term "folklore," used by W. John Thoms in the article he published in the journal *Atheneum* in 1846, was accepted worldwide and became the name of the discipline (Çobanoğlu, 2015: 19-24). The widely accepted equivalent of this term in Turkish is 'halk bilim' (folklore). The aim of this study is to examine the disintegration feature of culture, taking into account the theories put forth in the field of folklore, and to place this subject on a theoretical basis.

The scientific journey of folklore started with the Grimm Brothers' work "Household Tales" rapidly developed, proving itself within a short period of time, and quickly became as an independent discipline (Çobanoğlu, 2015: 23-24). The rapid development of folklore into an independent discipline was also significantly led by the theories and methods employed during the research and examination phases. In folklore, data in field-based studies was typically collected through methods such as observation, participant observation, and interview (Ekici, 2010: 64-67).

In order to analyze the obtained data, theories and methods, many of which are also employed by other disciplines such as anthropology and linguistics, were used. We can categorize these theories, which aim to understand and interpret cultural elements obtained from the field, into three main groups: early theories, text-centered theories, and context-centered theories.

Early Theories

Among the early theories, the theory known as "Mythological Theory" or "Mythological School" is the first. The emergence of this theory is based on J. Grimm's application of the 'comparative linguistics' method, which he originally employed for the German language and its dialects, to oral cultural products. J. Grimm also applied his method, which aims to reveal common language families, to folklore products. He gave priority to myths among these products. According to J. Grimm, oral poetry is of utmost importance because of the development stages it has gone through since the earliest times, and these genres, forming a vast repertoire alongside genres such as riddles, proverbs, folktales, jokes, and legends, contain the oldest examples of German beliefs. Grimm meticulously studied the entire corpus of the literature and material he obtained on the German language and literature, resulting in the emergence of his work titled "Deutsche Mythologie" (German Mythology/Teutonic Mythology). This theory, influencing many subsequent researchers, has been further developed (Çobanoğlu, 2015: 117).

Adalbert Khun, who is also a linguist like J. Grimm, studied Indo-European myths by applying the comparative linguistics method. According to the fundamental idea advocated by Khun, many myths are rooted in natural phenomena such as wind, storm, lightning, and thunder. This idea was further developed by Schwartz, a student and follower of Khun (Çobanoğlu, 2015: 118).

Schwartz claimed that lightning is the origin of myths in all groups in his work titled "Der Ursprung der Mythologie" (The Origin of Mythology), published in 1860. According to Schwartz, thunder is so dreadful and frightening for primitive humans that they have associated all supernatural beings with it. Schwartz also associated many myths with the opposition between darkness and light, because, according to him, primitive humans were constantly confronted with this contrast by observing how clouds covered the sun despite their eventual defeat against it. Schwartz argued that what he termed "low mythology," comprising many superstitions prevalent among popular masses, should not be regarded as weak remnants of former times, but rather as the initial manifestations of primitive thoughts (Sokolov, 2009: 54-55).

Schwartz's ideas about the formation of myths later served as an inspiration for the works of the German researcher Max Müller. Müller explained the formation of myths with a phenomenon he himself termed "disease of language". According to Müller, primitive humans, particularly the ancestors of the Indo-Europeans, were thinking concretely; therefore, words initially had a single meaning. However, as language evolved, words began to take on abstract meanings, resulting in the emergence of multiple meanings for words. The meanings, which have become indistinct and interconfused over time, have caused complexity in naming. This semantic confusion Müller referred to as the "disease of language" has resulted in the formation of fantastical ideas about natural phenomena, namely the myths (Sokolov, 2009: 55-56).

Text-Centered Theories

The first theory that comes to mind among the text-centered theories, which represents the second stage in the history of folklore research, is the "Development Theory". The founder of this theory, essentially questioning how cultures and civilizations form, how their similarities and differences emerge, and why some cultures and civilizations develop while others lag behind, is the English anthropologist Edward Burnett Tylor. The first foundations of the theory put forward in the late 19th century is based on the thesis that certain societies have advanced significantly in culture and civilization, while others are still in the early ages, and some fall in between these two, nevertheless, there are many similarities in the beliefs, tools and equipment and oral culture of these nations. According to the development theory, culture and civilization progress in a straight line and, when necessary, underdeveloped societies can produce the cultural elements that advanced societies have. The second most crucial thesis of this theory is that the human spirit is one and the same everywhere. Even when people don't know each other, they can still create similar cultural elements when necessary because the human mind always comes up with the same solutions to the same problems. Development theory explained the situations in which different nations have similar cultural elements with these two theses (Ekici, 2020: 70-71).

The 'Diffusion Theory', which aims to answer similar questions as the development theory, was proposed to determine if there is a primary cultural center in the world. Researchers holding the view of the diffusion theory are divided into two groups. The first group, led by Eliot Smith and his colleagues, argues that the initial center forming culture and civilization in the world is Egypt, while the second group, led by Friedrich Ratzel and Leo Frobenius (also known as the Vienna Diffusionists), posits the idea of multiple centers. According to the core idea of this theory, every nation does not have the capacity to develop culture and civilization. Nations having this capacity due to factors such as nature and geographical location have created culture and civilization, and it has spread to other nations through various means such as migrations, wars, and trade (Ekici, 2020: 72-73).

Another text-centered theory that should be mentioned after the development theory is the "Historic-Geographical Theory / Finnish Theory." This theory played a very important function in its time as it prevented the Scandinavian countries like Sweden, Norway, and Finland from being assimilated and extinct against Russian culture. Elias Lönnrot, a medical student, compiled the famous Finnish epic Kalevala by assembling it from various variants using this method, thus became, in fact, the pioneer of the theory. Then, the founder of the method, Julius Krohn and his son Kaarle Krohn, formed the basis of the theory by identifying the sources of the Kalevala epic, meticulously explaining how parallel texts were discovered and how they spread. Written according to this method, Axel Olrik's book 'The Epic Laws of Folk Narratives,' Stith Thompson's 'Motif-Index of Folk-Literature,' and later the expanded version of Olrik's book under the title of 'The Epic Laws of Folk Narrative Creations' broke ground in folklore studies. These works have paved the way for many studies almost everywhere in the world (Ekici, 2020: 74-75).

This theory is based on comparison, this is why it is also referred to as the comparative method. According to this theory, for instance, identification of the oldest version of a folktale can be achieved by compiling and comparing all its variants. Thus, both the "ur-form," which is the oldest form of the folktale, and how it has spread to different regions can be determined (Dorson, 2006: 11-18). Although it has lost its former popularity today, Historic-Geographical/Finnish theory is still used in folklore studies.

Psychoanalytic theory, like the Historic-Geographical Finnish theory, is another text-centered theory that continues to be applied in folklore studies today, which is, in fact, widely used in a broad range of fields from psychology to literature. Wilhelm Wundt laid the foundations of experimental psychology as a scientific discipline. Based on this discipline, psychoanalysis was founded and introduced to the world by Sigmund Freud, his student Carl Gustav Jung, and their followers. Freud's primary focus of his studies was on the formation and meaning of dreams; however, when he was unable to explain dreams and how the subconscious works, he started to utilize elements of folklore such as myths, tales, jokes and taboos. According to Freud, dreams reflect the subconscious, especially the traumas of childhood. Myths are the dreams of societies. They reflect the fears and profound traumas that societies experienced in past dark ages. Freud's theory has resonated widely, but it was criticized for its foundational emphasis on sexuality. It was his student Jung and his followers who reversed this situation and put the theory on a more solid foundation (Ekici, 2020: 86-87).

The last group to be mentioned among text-centred theories are structuralist theories and methods. Although all text-centred theories are concerned with text structure to some extent, structuralist methods differ from the others as they attempt to reach conclusions based on the basic features of text structures (Ekici, 2020: 91).

In structuralist theories, structural methods that analyze the biography of the hero occupy a very significant place. Researchers like J. G. Hanh (who identified around sixteen common points) and Otto Rank who noticed similar characteristics among the heroes in religious, mythic, and epic narratives, have been pioneers in the development of this method. However, the most extensive study on the biographies of heroes, particularly in folk narratives, was conducted by Lord Raglan. In his book titled "The Hero: A Study in Tradition, Myth, and Drama" Raglan identified 22 characteristics of heroes and suggested that the number of traits could be further increased. According to him, the narrative plot revolves around these characteristics and is completely fictional (Ekici, 2020: 91-92).

The aim of the method known as the "Morphological Method", which was proposed by the famous Russian folklorist Vladimir Propp within the structuralist theories, is to investigate not where a tale was produced and by which nation, namely its historicity, but rather for instance, what functional features a fairy tale possesses and the historical origins of these functions. Actually, with this theory, Propp suggested conducting synchronic analysis instead of diachronic analysis. Vladimir Propp achieved a structural definition of tales by explaining how the components that constitute a narrative whole contribute to its overall structure.

Context-Centered Theories

In the history of folklore studies, while each theory has solved certain issues, they have not been adequate in addressing other problems. Thus, while existing theories have been improved, new theories have also been developed. Context-centered theories, emerging to address the shortcomings of text-centered theories, are theories that fundamentally aim to understand and explain the culture that is complex and multilayered. The most significant difference between these theories and their predecessors is that they take into account not only the text, but also the context in which the text is created and performed.

Functionalism, one of the context-centered theories, is a theory that fundamentally questions why cultural elements emerge, what purpose they serve, and what function they have in human life. The starting point of this theory is not the texts of folklore creations but rather the context in which these texts are composed, created, recreated, and transmitted. This is why the theory is classified among context-centered theories. Representatives of this theory, also known as "Anthropological Theory and Method," include figures such as Bronisław Kasper Malinowski, Franz Boas, Margaret Mead, Frances Shapiro Herskovits, and Ruth Benedict. William Russell Bascom is the first scholar to create a model based on his studies on the functions of folklore creations. According to Bascom, folk literature products have roughly 4 functions: a) Entertainment, amusement and recreation, b) Justifying social institutions and rituals, c) Transmission of knowledge and culture to younger generations, d) Relief from social and personal pressures (Ekici, 2020: 96-97). These four functions have been developed through studies and it has been discovered that each cultural element actually has many specific or general functions.

Oral-Formulaic/Composition theory is another context-centered theories. The origin of this theory is related to the resolution of the problem known in the scientific world as the Homeric Question. Milman Parry, the founder of the theory, and his student Albert Bates Lord were working on the epic poems they compiled from Yugoslavia when Parry died, and Lord took over and completed the work. In this study, concepts such as "formula" and "theme" were developed, explaining how even long epics consisting of thousands of lines were memorized and transmitted by performers. The main idea of the theory is based on the notion that, instead of memorizing the entirety of poems, performers learn formulas, constructing other parts based on their own ability and the context of the performance (Ekici, 2020: 99-100). In a sense, this theory explains how the different variants of narrative texts emerged.

In the field of folklore research, it can be asserted that, the most influential theory among context-centered theories is the Performance Theory, whose weight and relevance are increasing day by day. The issue of context and performance, to which all theories examining the formation and transmission of folk knowledge and folk literature creations call attention in some way, is the focal point of the Performance theory. The theory is based on the idea that a folklore product can change entirely or partially depending on variables such as the setting in which it is performed, the conditions of the performer, and the audience. According to the theory, the performer, audience, and performance environment cause changes in the structure, form, genre, and content of a cultural element. Therefore, evaluating a text detaching it from its context will not lead the researcher to accurate conclusions (Ekici, 2020: 100-101).

Besides these theories, various theories that are also used in other disciplines such as ecological theory, feminist theory, and oral history theory are employed in contemporary folklore research, as well. As different dimensions of the culture, which has a multi-layered and complex structure, are continuing to be explored, the need to formulate and use other theories will always remain. Because the phenomenon called culture is a living thing. Many factors contribute to the formation of culture, but three are fundamental: geography, belief, and economy. Culture, built upon these three main foundations, is constantly changing with the contribution of internal and external factors. This is the reason why it is considered as a living thing; because of this reflex of change, transformation and, accordingly, survival.

Disintegration

Actually, every living being possesses a survival instinct, a reflex to sustain its existence. This reflex exists in culture as well since it is alive. No cultural element wants to disappear; they are open to change, but they do not want to vanish. They develop specific reflexes to prevent this. The ability to disintegration is one of the reflexes that culture develops to avoid extinction and ensure its existence. This ability is not an externally imposed artificial skill but a capability developed by culture with its own dynamics in the natural processes.

Disintegration precisely means the separation of a cultural element into its constituent parts and the continuation of its existence within another element. In other words, it is the case in which one or more components that constitute a cultural element separate from the whole and transition to another cultural element, and there, keeping the spirit of the whole and transferring its characteristics to the new element. Through this transmission, cultural vitality and continuity are provided. Cultural elements consist of various building blocks, just as human organs are made up of cells and substances are made up of atoms. Examples of these building blocks are motifs for oral culture narratives, cults for beliefs, symbols, images and figures for other cultural elements. In the transfer of parts through disintegration, variables such as similarities between cultures and needs play a significant role.

Disintegration feature exists in all oral culture products; however, the first that needs to be examined is myths. In Eliade's definition, myths are narratives that recount a story that happened and was over in the earliest time, in the beginning, in the time specific to tales (2001: 16). Since myths originated from the mental activities of humans seeking to understand themselves, their environment, and the universe, as well as the events occurring within it, and since they are the very first narratives created by humans, myths disintegrated into their constituent elements, and then continue to exist in all narrative genres, including epics, fairy tales, legends, and others. For example, horse is an important motif in Turkish mythology. From the earliest

periods, it has been regarded as an animal associated with the sky and resembling it (Roux, 2011: 35). Among the ancestral animals known to the Khitans, there is a pair consisting of a horse and a bovidae (Roux, 2002: 191). The Yakuts also have mythical texts describing the birth of a creature as half horse and half man, from which the man is told to have derived. Additionally, the horse was the most prominent sacrificial animal in the old times. A horse with white fur is sacrificed to Ürüñ Ayı Toyon (Dilek, 2014: 28). As can be seen, horse, which was a significant motif in the mythological era and present in numerous myths, did not disappear with the end of the mythological era. The horse motif in myths has managed to integrate into epics, which are literary products of the new period, by separating from the myth to which it originally belongs to. The horse is one of the most foremost motifs in the epics of various Turkic societies. Especially in the epics like Köroğlu and Manas that consist an epic circle, the horse shares the same fate with the hero of the epic, and their birth, naming and death always happen at the same time (Kalenderoğlu, 2006: 98).

The horse motif did not disappear after the epics, as well. Horses, which have extraordinary attributes in mythical narratives, have continued to exist with their exceptional peculiar characteristics in subsequent narrative forms such as legends, folktales, and stories. The horse which we see in epic narratives with its attributes such as guiding, swift travel over long distances, having intuition, emerging from the sea, and ability to fly, has continued to persist in folk tales as well (Çetin 2020: 207).

The horses referred to by their riders in the Göktürk inscriptions conveyed to the epics as the riders referred to by their horses, and from there they have continued to live in folk tales. The statement “Kül Tigin, Bayırkun [ung ak adgı] r [1g] binip oplayu tegdi/ (Kül Tigin mounted Bayırkunun's white studhorse and charged forward” has continued to live in the narrative tradition in the form of mounting of Manas on Akkul, Battal Gazi on Aşkar, Hz. Ali on Döldül into battle (Çetin, 2020: 207).

The same horse motif has also found its place in idioms and proverbs. For example, the horse in proverbs such as "at ölür meydan kalır, yiğit ölür şanı kalır" (the horse dies, the battlefield remains; the hero dies, his glory remains), "at murattır" (the horse is the wish), and "at sahibini tanır" (the horse knows its owner) (Çobanoğlu, 2020: 88-93), bears the traces of the horse motif as the companion of the hero in the past.

As seen in the example of the horse, the figure in the mythological era possesses extraordinary features, and this quality persists as it transitions from myths to other genres such as epics, folk tales, idioms, and proverbs. In other words, the motif keeps its world of meaning and characteristics in other genres in which it is transmitted, and provides the transfer of the characteristics of the narrative from which it is separated to the narrative it is involved in. Thus, cultural continuity is ensured as well.

A similar situation applies to cults, too. Again, from Turkish culture, the tree cult provides an excellent example. In the Altai Epic of Creation compiled by Wilhelm Radloff, a tree with branches reaching up to the sky, that is, uniting the three cosmic realms (underground, earth, and sky) is mentioned. This tree has nine branches and from these nine branches nine human beings were derived, and from these nine people, nine tribes emerged (Ögel, 2010: 453). The tree mentioned here is the ancestor of man. As it also unites the three cosmic realms, it is a sacred tree and the source of the tree of life motif that will be formed later. We can see this sacred tree cult in contemporary legends, weaving patterns and architectural works. In today's Anatolia, there are still trees visited in search of remedies for various ailments. The tree motif is woven by women into rugs and engraved by foremen onto architectural works, especially on mosques (Kabak, 2023a: 117-120)

When giving examples for culture's separation and sustaining its existence within other elements, it is essential to specifically mention weaving. Because many patterns used in today's weavings are symbols of a cultural accumulation from the mythological ages to the present day. For example, patterns like birds (e.g., eagle, goose), fertility and abundance symbols, turtle, camel neck, scorpion, wolf mouth, pitchfork, human, Yörük seal, Yöreyyir seal (hands on waist, girl motifs) (Durul, 1987: 1-50) seen in Turkish weavings are motifs that contain animals, fertility symbols and tribe seals of mythological ages. At first glance, they may appear as mere rug motifs; however, upon closer examination, it becomes evident that they are symbols that carry the meaning and worldview of the era they originated from to today.

When viewed in general terms, culinary culture is a whole; however, the individual components constituting this whole are separately foods and dietary habits. A nation's culinary culture is shaped by the combination of various factors such as the geography it resides in, primary livelihood, climate, and vegetation. The old Turks, who led a nomadic life on the vast steppes of Asia, relied on the fundamental food sources of meat and dairy products obtained from the animals they raised. When the Turks migrated to Anatolia, the effects of the new geography and changing economic life led to alterations in their dietary culture; however, due to the disintegration feature of culture, many products managed to find a place in their new dietary culture. For instance, sucuk and pastirma, made from red meat and characterized by their durability, have continued to be consumed here, separating themselves from other foods. Today, Turks continue to make sucuk and pastirma as remnants of their old culinary culture (Kabak, 2023b: 51-70). Yoghurt, like sucuk and pastirma, is one of the foods originated from the Central Asian Turkish culinary culture. The Turks have not only introduced yogurt, a food made from an animal product, milk, to Anatolia but have also spread it to the entire world. This product, which is pronounced as *yogurt* in Italian, *joghurt* in German, *yoghurt* in French, *yoghurt* in English and *jugurt* in Russian (Pedani, 2018: 16), is a cultural element that has separated from the Turkish culinary culture and transferred to the world culinary culture.

The transfer of the word yoghurt from Turkish to other languages can be given as an example of the disintegration feature of language, which is a part of culture. All languages are in relationship with other languages, borrowing and lending words for various reasons such as needs and cultural transmission. These reasons will be discussed in more detail later. The fact that a word separating from one language and transmitting to another language is due to its ability disintegration. While there are many words related to Turkish culinary culture, the word "yoğurt" has been adopted by other languages with the introduction of the food item known as yogurt. This is due to the absence of an existing word in those languages to describe this particular product. The language chose to adopt the word "yoğurt" rather than creating a new term.

A product similar in this regard to yogurt is pizza, which is a creation of Italian cuisine. While not all the products of Italian cuisine spread to the world, pizza has become widespread to the extent that it has entered almost every culinary culture around the world. Pizza is a product, separating from Italian cuisine, has passed on global culinary culture. Like yoghurt, pizza and along with it its name have entered the languages of the countries where it is spread (İşin, 2019: 348).

As seen from the examples provided, cultural disintegration can occur both within a culture itself and among different cultures. While the transfer of the horse motif from Turkish myths to epics, folk tales and proverbs is an example of intra-cultural disintegration, the transfer of yoghurt from Turkish cuisine to other cultures and the transfer of pizza from Italian cuisine to other cuisines are examples of intercultural disintegration.

In order to fully understand the ability of culture to survive through disintegration, it is essential to examine the underlying reasons for this phenomenon. Based on our research, these reasons are as follows:

Culture is intertwined with social life and, for the most part, shaped accordingly. Cultural elements that have a function or relevance in social life persist, while those whose function has ended are expected to fade away; however, through disintegration, culture prevents the extinction of these elements and provides that cultural element like motifs persist in the components created by the new culture. From an external perspective, this seems like a change of form of the cultural element. In fact, the parts separate from the cultural element whose tradition is weakening form a new tradition.

As an example, from Turkish culture, the relationship between myth-epic-folk tale can be given this phenomenon. Like many societies, the Turkish nation's first period is a mythological era, and the cultural production of this period is myths. As time progresses and man's knowledge about nature and himself advances, the mythological era ended, giving way to the nomadic steppe life period, characterized by a primary economic livelihood on animal raising. During this period, the tradition of myth narration weakened, and myths were supplanted by epics. However, the motifs within the myths (e.g., wolf, eagle, horse, sacred tree) separated from the myths and blended into epics, serving as the fundamental building blocks of the epics.

In the following period, especially with the transition to a settled life that started with the migration of Oghuz tribes to Anatolia, the era of epics came to a close; in parallel with new life conditions and the development of the Minstrelsy tradition, folk stories took the place of epics. However, with the end of the epic tradition, the motifs within epics did not disappear. Instead, they managed to separate from epic texts and found a place within folk tales, which emerged as a product of the Minstrelsy tradition. The best example of this is the horse motif. Horses, hero's closest friend, which are endowed with extraordinary gifts such as speaking, flying, and foreseeing the future in epics, also appear with the same features right beside the folk tale heroes. Köroğlu's horse Kırat (Özdamar, 2023) and Beyrek's horse Boz Aygır (Gökyay, 1973: CDXXXVII) can be shown as an example. The transition from epic to folk tale has been provided easier that way. In the 20th century, with the emergence of the novel, cinema, theatre and television, the folk tale tradition weakened; however, the motifs still managed to find a place in new genres. The protagonist of Genghis Aitmatov's novel *The Dreams of the She-Wolf* and Tarkan's companion in the film *Tarkan* (1969) is a wolf, the protagonist of the film *Köroğlu* (1968) is Köroğlu, a figure known from epics and folk tales.

In the cultural structure, the weakening of tradition could lead to the elements that constitute a culture to disappear without being transmitted to future generations or genres. This situation compels a culture to take measures. Culture's solution against this situation is that the cultural element whose tradition is weakened separates its structural components, such as motifs, and integrates them into the newly emerging genre. This way, cultural accumulation is preserved from extinction, and the continuity of tradition and the emergence of a new genre is assured.

Migrations

Migrations, as old as human history, have been triggered and made by various factors such as war, famine, invasion, and settlement policies until today. Some migrations, like The Great Human Migration, were massive, while others were in smaller groups. It is widely accepted among culturalists and theorists that all migrations, whether large or small, carry the culture from one region to another. Similarly, the comparative method, based on the Historical-Geographical Finnic approach, places particular emphasis on the concept of migration while elucidating the formation of the Indo-European language families and the reasons behind the common motifs revealed through motif comparisons.

Compared to settled societies, the concept of migration has been a more decisive factor in the cultural life of nations that have engaged in long-distance and mass migrations, spread over a vast geography from the steppes of Central Asia into the interior of Europe, and from the steppes of Siberia to Africa. As is known, Turks have a rich epic tradition in Central Asia. However, they could not transfer all the epic tradition to Anatolia while migrating because they could not carry it to this new geography due to reasons such as forgetting and change of the way of living. Nevertheless, similar to Europeans, they succeeded in carrying over motifs and heroes. This is not a conscious act of people; rather, it is culture's reflex of self-protection. Continuing with the theme of epics, the hero of the *Alıp Manaş* epic, one of the epic heroes of the Turks in Central Asia, has been transposed to Anatolia as *Bamsı Beyrek/Bey Böyrek*. While the *Alıp Manaş* epic itself did not make its way to Anatolia, its main hero, *Alıp Manaş*, has successfully found a place as a hero in the narratives of *Dede Korkut* in Anatolia (Özkan, 2021: 1067-1073). Similarly, the epic hero *Köroğlu* from Central Asia has come to Anatolia as a folk tale hero and a minstrel. Today, there exist three different *Köroğlu*: the epic hero *Köroğlu*, the minstrel *Köroğlu*, and the *Köroğlu* who rebels against the ruler of Bolu (Çetin, 2020: 16-17). Even if the culture could not be able to bring the *Köroğlu* epic to Anatolia, it succeeded in carrying over its main character and developing a new narrative around him.

The Forgetting/Make Forgotten Feature of Oral Culture

Through oral culture, many narratives, beliefs, and practices have been produced and transmitted within culture. The era described as the primary orality by Ong (2012: 30-41) refers to the period before the invention of writing, in these times all production and transmission were done verbally, through language. Oral environment is of tremendous importance in the birth, growth, and development of culture, contributing to its arrival to the present day, and in its transmission to the future despite various challenges, but it also has its drawbacks. The first one among these is forgetting or cause to forget. The recording space or, in other

words, the memory of oral culture is the human mind. By its very nature, the human mind tends to forget things that are not continuously reminded and used. Additionally, it seeks to forget undesirable, unpleasant situations, and traumas that evoke discomfort. Although this situation may seem to be individual, since the consciousnesses of individuals constitute the collective consciousness in total, when the culture is considered in general, especially cultural elements that lose their tradition, lose their function or are not used because they are no longer needed in new living conditions are forgotten over time. Nevertheless, some parts of these elements separate from their original structures and join another to sustain their existence. For instance, there is a perspective suggesting that seemingly nonsensical word and phrases found in genres such as rhymes, folk verses (mani), fairy tales, and riddles once had magical/mystical meaning in the old times and employed in Shamanic rituals. However, over time, their meanings were forgotten; detached from their original contexts, these words persist within other genres (Duymaz ve Şahin, 2020: 241).

There is also a similar situation in folk beliefs. Today, people on impulse knock-on wood, do not approve cutting young trees, and refrain from trimming nails at night. Most of these beliefs are rooted in the shamanic period. At the present time, the Turks in Anatolia no longer have a connection with shamanism. However, these beliefs, detached from the shamanic tradition, have managed to integrate into Islam and endure to the present day. Many people continue to practice these kinds of beliefs and rituals without knowing their origins and meanings. In this way, culture keeps alive many elements that would normally be forgotten due to the change of context, lost functionality, or negative reception by society.

Loss of Function

One of the reasons that compel culture to separation is the loss of functionality. Each cultural element emerges to address various needs in social life, and as long as these needs persist, the cultural element continues to exist. However, as the need diminishes over time, the existence of the cultural item becomes jeopardized. In such a case, there are two options in front of the cultural element: it either disappears or separates - also changes and transforms- to continue its existence in another cultural element. Strong cultural elements usually take the second path. They do not disappear; instead, they undergo change and transformation, transferring themselves into another cultural element. However, in the 19th century, with the emergence of entertainment mediums such as theater, radio, and cinema, and later television, the tradition of minstrel and the need for minstrels diminished. This led to the weakening of the tradition. Faced with this situation, the minstrel tradition adapted itself to the era through mediums like records, cassettes, and later television, managing to survive. However, as the 20th century arrived, the musical tastes of society began to change. Thus, this tradition found no choice but to disintegrate and continue its existence in other music genres. The soul of the minstrelsy tradition persists within genres referred to as "türkü," Anatolian rock, original music, and others today. These genres continue to be fed by the minstrel tradition in various aspects, including vocal style, melody, musical instruments, lyrics, and composition (Çelikten, 2021).

Cultural Interaction

Cultural interaction is one of the most effective factors that cause cultural products to disintegration and pass from one culture to another. In other words, the main reason for the disintegration between cultures is cultural interaction. Since man is a social being, he has always felt the need to communicate with others and to live together. This is as applicable to individuals as it is to societies, at least to an equal extent. While in the past, interaction between societies generally occurred on the occasions such as migration, trade, border neighborhood and war, in today's era of technology thanks to digital medias like internet, television and cinema, it is possible to interact with a transcontinental culture without any of these above.

Cultural interaction, wherein a cultural element separates from the whole and transitions to another culture, is often related to requirement. For instance, Turks and Mongols lived together for many centuries. When the Mongols established a great empire during the era of Genghis Khan, they benefited from Uighur Turks as clerks and statesmen, because the Mongols lacked a developed culture of state and a tradition of written culture until that time (Çakan, 2019: 22-25).

One of the areas where the transition from one culture to another is most prevalent through disintegration is culinary culture. Culinary culture is a whole comprising numerous elements, including the materials used, preparation methods, kitchen design, and varieties of dishes. Some of these elements can separate and enter the culinary culture of another nation with ease. As previously mentioned, yogurt is a product of Turkish cuisine and has spread to world cuisine, notably in Europe. Turks, living together with Armenians and Greeks in Anatolia, enriched Turkish cuisine by adapting dough-based products from Armenian cuisine and seafood from Greek cuisine. Products from Turkish cuisine such as yoghurt and baklava entered their cuisine. In the Ottoman period, characterized by intensive interactions due to living under the roof of the same country, many dishes from Arab cuisine, such as *herese1*, first entered to the palace kitchen and then to the Turkish cuisine. (Pedani, 2018).

One of the areas where intercultural transition intensively occurs through disintegration today is clothing. Many elements of the Western way of dressing have been transferred to the clothing cultures of other nations with the particular influence of fashion concept. The most apparent example of this is the wearing of suits. People, also with the concerns of social status, wear suits like Westerners on special occasions, ceremonies, or in formal institutions. The suit is a clothing item that Western culture has given to the dressing culture of almost all countries around the world. Almost all heads of state and high-ranking officials wear suits to meetings and negotiations. This has become an almost universal rule.

Intercultural interaction and the transmission of a cultural element into another culture through disintegration are quite normal due to the nature of culture and generally follows a direction from strong culture to weak culture. However, when the cultural transition from a strong culture to a weaker one intensifies, the weaker culture tends to lose its identity, leading to a phenomenon known as cultural assimilation. There are numerous examples of it worldwide. The assimilation of the culture of Native Americans living in America into American culture and the gradual assimilation of Mongols into Turkish culture, resulting in their be Turkicized, can be given as examples. These cultures have not completely vanished in reality; the spirit of the culture still lives in the lands of its origin (e.g. existence of Native American names and some traditions in American culture), but as the culte lost its systematic functioning, only separated elements could survive. Indeed, assimilation is not the complete disappearance of a culture but rather the loss of its systematic functioning. Even though the systematic functioning of a culture is lost, its separated cultural elements persist in other cultures.

The disintegration feature of culture will persist as long as the phenomenon referred to as culture continues to exist. Also indicated by technological developments, one of the main areas for the production and transmission of culture in the future is the digital world. Internet-based movies, series, animations, cartoons, and games have become the most rapid medias for the transmission of culture. It is observed that mythological elements, narratives, and heroes already hold a significant place in these environments. Marvel films, the series Vikings, series centered around the theme of King Arthur, history and war-themed computer games, cartoons featuring heroes such as Kelođlan and Dede Korkut represent the best examples of this. Similarly, the fact that American and European lifestyles affect all cultures with the influence of the digital environment shows us that the transmission of culture through disintegration will continue in the future.

Conclusion

As stated throughout the study, it can be concluded that a culture uses the function of disintegration to prevent its extinction and to pass on to future generations. Thanks to this function, no culture completely disappears; instead, the separated components continue to perpetuate the spirit of that culture.

The function of disintegration is a kind of self-protection reflex of culture and happens spontaneously. Culture puts this function in place in situations like loss of function, forgetting/make forgotten, and being assimilated. As a result, no culture or cultural element disappears, rather they continue to live, albeit changing and transforming. This situation, in fact, provides an answer to the question of the development and diffusion theories of how similar motifs are found in different cultures. Cultural elements sustain their existence through disintegration both spreading within a culture and across cultures. Similar elements are found in different cultures by this means. Considering that the function of disintegration works in every culture and at

all times, this phenomenon could be termed as the “Disinteration Theory”.

Endnotes

1 A dish made with wheat, flour, water and chicken meat.

Bibliography

- ÇAKAN, V. (2019). Uygur Türklerinin Moğol imparatorluğundaki rolü. *Asya Araştırmaları Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, 1(3). 19-28.
- ÇELİKTEKİN, H. (2021). *Âşıklık Geleneği ve Kültür Değişimleri*. Ankara: Grafiker Yayınları.
- ÇETİN, İ. (2020). *Türk Halk Hikayeciliği Türkiye Sahası*. Ankara: Nobel Yayıncılık.
- ÇOBANOĞLU, Ö. (2015). *Halkbilimi Kuramları ve Araştırma Yöntemleri Tarihine Giriş*. Ankara: Akçağ Yayınları.
- ÇOBANOĞLU, Ö. (2020). *Tarihte ve Günümüzde Türk Boylarının Ortak Atasözleri Sözlüğü* (s. 88-95). Ankara: Akçağ Yayınları.
- DİLEK, İ. (2014). *At. Resimli Türk Mitoloji Sözlüğü* (s. 28). Ankara: Grafiker Yayınları.
- DORSON, R. M. (2006). *Günümüz Folklor Kuramları*. (Haz. Selcan Gürçayır ve Yeliz Özyay). Ankara: Geleneksel Yayıncılık.
- DURUL, Y. (1987). *Anadolu Kilimlerinden Örnekler: 2*. İstanbul: Grafik Sanatlar Matbaası.
- DUYMAZ, A. ve ŞAHİN, H. A. (2020). “Halk Şiirinde Tür ve Şekil” (Ed. M. Öcal Oğuz). *Türk Halk Edebiyatı El Kitabı* içinde (s. 209-286). Ankara: Grafiker Yayınları.
- EKİCİ, M. (2010). *Halk Bilgisi (Folklor) Derleme ve İnceleme Yöntemleri*. Ankara: Geleneksel Yayıncılık.
- EKİCİ, M. (2020). “Kuramlar ve Yöntemler” (Ed. M. Öcal Oğuz). *Türk Halk Edebiyatı El Kitabı* içinde (s. 65-108). Ankara: Grafiker Yayınları.
- ELİADE, M. (2001). *Mitlerin Özellikleri* (Çev. Sema Rıfat). İstanbul: Om Yayınları.
- GÖKYAY, O. Ş. (1973). *Dedem Korkudun Kitabı*. İstanbul: Milli Eğitim Basımevi.
- İŞİN, M. P. (2019). *Avcılıktan Gurmeliğe Yemeğin Kültürel Tarihi*. İstanbul: YKY Yayınları.
- KABAK, T. (2022). “SOKÜM’ün Aktarılmasında Yaşanan Sorunlara Bir Örnek Olarak Bayburt’ta Zanaatlar ve Zanaatkârlık”. *Milli Folklor*, C. 34, S. 17, 176-187.
- KABAK, T. (2023a). *Yazılı Kaynaklar ve Anlatılar Işığında Türk Mitolojisi*. Çanakkale: Paradigma Akademi Yayınları.
- KABAK, T. (2023b). *Yerelden Ulusala Doğu Karadeniz Mutfak Kültürü*. Çanakkale: Paradigma Akademi yayınları.
- KALENDEROĞLU, İ. (2006). “Nogay Destanlarında At Motifi”. *Türk Dünyası Dil ve Edebiyat Dergisi*, S. 21, 97-117.
- ONG, W. J. (2012). *Sözlü ve Yazılı Kültür Sözümleri Teknolojileşmesi* (Çev. Sema Postacıoğlu Banon). İstanbul: Metis Yayınları.
- ÖGEL, B. (2010). *Türk Mitolojisi*. C. 1. Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları.
- ÖZDAMAR, F. (2023). *İran Türklerinde Köroğlu Destanı Geleneği, Bilimsel Birikim, İnceleme ve Metinler*. İstanbul: Ötüken Neşriyat.
- ÖZKAN, İ. (2021). “Alıp Manaş’tan Bamsı Beyrek’e, Yılmaz” (Ed. Serhat Sabri Yılmaz vd.). *Doğan Kaya Armağanı 70. Yaş Hatırası* içinde (s. 1067-1073). Sivas: Vilayet Kitabevi.

- PEDANİ, M. P. (2018). *Osmanlı'nın Byk Mutfadı* (ev. Gken Karacan řahin). Ankara: Hece Yayınları.
- ROUX, J. P. (2002). *Trklerin ve Mođolların Eski Dini* (ev. Aykut Kazancıgil). İstanbul: Kabalcı Yayınları.
- ROUX, J. P. (2011). *Eski Trk Dini* (ev. Musa Yařar Sađlam). Ankara: Bilgesu Yayınları.
- SOKOLOV, Y. M. (2009). *Folklor: Tarih ve Kuram*. (ev. Yerge zer). Ankara: Geleneksel Yayıncılık.