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CRITICAL ANALYSIS AND OBSERVATIONS OF İLHAN BAŞGÖZ'S ARTICLE, "DIGRESSION IN ORAL NARRATIVE: A CASE STUDY OF INDIVIDUAL REMARKS BY TURKISH ROMANCE TELLERS"

İlhan Başgöz'ün "Sözlü Anlatıda Konudan Sapmalar: Türk Roman Anlatıcılarının Bireysel Sözleri Üzerine Bir Vaka Çalışması" Başlıklı Makalesinin Eleştirel Analizi ve Gözlemler

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Abstract

In the research, based on the examples of Turkish folk tales, legends and folk songs, the deviations from the subject during the performance and the changes in the oral tradition products were evaluated in the axis of İlhan Başgöz's work, which is the subject of the article. The "digression", which took place when the narrator wanted to see himself as a part of the narrative, gave the opportunity to new verbal creations. In this sense, there have been changes in the products of oral tradition. In the research, the deviations from the subject during the performance and the changes in the oral tradition products were evaluated in the axis of the article, based on the examples of Turkish folk tales, legends, and ballads. My advisor Prof. Başgöz published a major digression research which is often referred to by the American scholars in the Journal of American Folklore.[1] In this paper I will do first, and necessarily, a critical analysis of Başgöz's article and then I will report my own observation concerning digression based on the data I collected in Turkey in the Summer of 2009 when I worked on my incomplete. Also, apart from the compilations, the content on "digression" in my master's thesis, which I completed under the supervision of Başgöz, was briefly mentioned in the study. My data deals with the digression in folksongs, legends and the daily conversation.

Keywords: Digression, İlhan Başgöz, analysis, folk song, compilation.

Öz

Yapılan araştırmada Türk halk Hikâyesi, efsane ve Türkü örnekleri baz alınarak, icra sırasındaki konudan sapmalar ve sözlü gelenek ürünlerindeki değişimler eleştirel bir bakış açısıyla İlhan Başgöz'ün makaleye konu olan çalışması ekseninde değerlendirilmiştir. Anlatıcının kendisini anlatının bir parçası olarak görmek istemesiyle ortaya çıkan "digression" (konudan sapma), yeni sözel yaratımlara fırsat vermiştir. Bu anlamda sözlü gelenek ürünlerinde de değişimler yaşanmıştır. Araştırmada Türk halk hikâyesi, efsane ve türkü örneklerinden hareketle icra sırasında konudan sapmalar ve sözlü gelenek ürünlerindeki değişimler makale ekseninde değerlendirilmiştir. Danışmanım Prof. Başgöz, Journal of American Folklore'da Amerikalı akademisyenler tarafından sıklıkla atıf yapılan önemli bir konu dışı araştırma yayınlamıştı. Bu yazıda önce ve zorunlu olarak Başgöz'ün makalesinin eleştirel bir incelemesi yapılmış ve ardından 2009 yazında Türkiye'de derleme çalışırken topladığım verilerden yola çıkarak digression ile ilgili kendi gözlemlerim aktarılmıştır. Ayrıca derlemeler dışında, Başgöz danışmanlığında tamamladığım yüksek lisans tezimdeki "digression" konulu içeriğe de çalışmada kısaca değinilmiştir. Veriler; türküler, efsaneler ve günlük konuşmalardaki konudan sapmalarla ilgilidir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Digression (konudan sapmalar), İlhan Başgöz, analiz, halk türküsü, derleme.

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Introduction

Since there are limited studies on "digression" and these studies usually occur during performance, the study needs to be observed in the field. When I received this question I tried, first what the term digression means beyond the daily usage. Then checked the folklore Bibliographies in English and Turkish to find out the scholarly approach to digression research. Standard dictionaries define digression as "departure from the main subject, a passage which deviates from the central themes". As for the digression research I did not find any research on the topic in English except a short article by Robert George.

Robert George noticed that his mother included some individual remarks to the narration of anecdotes. His data was so limited that he was not sure, as the title of his article suggests, whether the narrator digresses or not. The title of his article: It was, "Do Narrators Really Digress" (1983, p. 245-249).

The studies of Turkish oral narrative, folk tales and epics in Turkey begin in 1923 when Ziya Gökalp, (1876-1924) the founder of Turkish nationalism, collected and published folk tales from Diyarbakır (Tansel, 1952, p. 207). Under the impact of Herder's romantic nationalism Gökalp did not publish them without editing essentially. He reshaped the themes, changed the characters, and versified some of them to promote his ideology, the Turkish nationalism. For example, England, a character in one of his tales was a stepmother, The Moon Lady, another tale character was Turkey and the Star İslam. (Tansel, 1965, p. XXVI). Gökalp neither included digressions in his collection nor paid any attention to that aspect of the tale. In fact, until 1940's the individual remarks in Turkish folklore continued to be unnoticed. In his publications of folktales, such as *Zaman Zaman İçinde*, (Boratav 2007), *Az Gittik Uz Gittik* (2006), Pertev Naili Boratav, recorded digressions and preserved them when they were published. And in 1975 Umay Günay, another scholar included digressions in her collection and publications of *Elazığ Masalları*. I quote a digression from her book to provide an example of such early recording of individual remarks of the teller. Muhsine Karaçorlu, a female folk tale narrator stops the narration for a while and says: "In hour village they collect animal dung to burn as fuel. This is a custom here, the girl (in the folk tale) also went to collect dung." (Günay, 1975, p. 431). Neither Boratav, nor Günay who noticed the existence and recorded them, devoted any study to digression.

Başgöz collected abundant data during his many attendances of Hikâye performances from 1943 until 1973. The number of digressions he analyzed is 29. Although his data deals mainly with the Turkish folklore he believed that his finding could be applied to international folklore studies and for that reason he quoted digression from Havelok, a medieval romance and from the Callimaque and Chrysorrhoe, a Greek novel Here is a quotation from Havelok, which is very interesting in establishing formal similarities with the Turkish digressions: " Listen good folks, wives, maidens and men, and I will tell you the tale of Havelok …but fill me a cup of good ale, ere here the story begins. And may Christ shield us all from Hell" (Basgöz, 1986, p. 231). In fact most of the digressions in Turkish oral narrative begin by such an address to the audience and the teller asks the permission from the audience to drink a cup of tea during the performance. Based on these observations Başgöz states that: "Those individual remarks which are also called audience aside, or parenthetical remark, or digression are cross cultural folklore phenomenon" (Başgoz, 1986, p. 231).

Başgoz' analysis of digression is limited to the Hikâye performances. But Başgöz did not deal with digression in anecdotes, folk tales, legends of saints. A narrator in a Hikâye performance which may last evenings, has enough time do digress on many topics from the daily life, and every aspect of present and past culture without any pressure of time. In a short narrative such as Hikâye, anecdote, and legend the teller did not have the luxury of unlimited time to digress. And then what would happen, how he introduces digression, on what topics. Specially in folktale which is the creation and performance of woman what selection is made, what is the differences of digression introduced to the oral narrative by man and woman? Although Başgöz briefly remarks that "In smaller scale digression is found in folksong" he did not go further to analyze digression in folksong.

1. Discussion and criticism

My remarks should not be taken as a criticism to Başgöz research, it would not be fair the expect in such a study to deal with every aspect of the digression in Turkish oral narratives. I expect his article will open a new way to study of oral narrative by other scholars in Turkey and other countries.

Obviously, as the article shows, Başgöz did not suffice to collect data only from oral sources but went on to examine major publications of the narratives which were published in book form between 1943 and 1974. His examination of the books is rewording because he finds digressions preserved in the Book of Dede Korkut which was written down in the second half of the 15th century. Here is a digression from that book. In the heroic fight of a son to save his father, the narrating bard says: "O my Khan, in those days a son did not go counter to his father's word; had done so, the father would not have acknowledged him as his son." (Lewis, 1974, p. 93). Başgöz also finds digressions in the early Turkish novels written between 1865 and 1880 by Namık Kemal (1840-1888) and Ahmet Midhat Efendi (1844-1913) who used digression to inform the readers of some modern technological inventions such as central heating and to teach them good behaviors. Başgöz claims that they learn the technique from the oral narratives. I believe if the publication of the early Ottoman history, such as Tevarih-i Âl Osman, edited and published by Prof. Kemal Silay (Silay, 2004) and the travel book of Evliya Çelebi (Evliya Çelebi) are carefully examined we will find other digressions preserved in books or manuscripts.

Based on these data Başgoz defines the digression, its place in the performance, its characteristics and function. My reading of the article suggests that Başgöz does not like a short definition of anything. He prefers instead finding, examining, and analyzing the main attributes of the topic. He recognizes the difficulties that the medievalists experienced in identifying and defining the digression in a single published epic, such as in Iliad or Odysseus. And then he says that it is not hard to recognize, identify, collect, and classify digression in a performance situation of Turkish folk narratives. A teller of, let us say a romance, finds some ways during his performance to inform his audience directly that he is shifting now to tell something different than the traditional story. He may address the audience saying: "O my dear guests, or my esteemed friends, my dear beys" and begins to interject himself into the performance and continue to tell his own life, feelings, comments etc. And almost always stops the tell the story in the third person narrative and shifts to the first one, beginning wit I. If he does not address the audience as such, he may change the pitch of his voice which indicates that the story line, or the channel of communication is changing. Başgöz explains this move from the narration of a traditional story by examining the issue of human identity. He refers to the study of Gert and Mills (Gert and Mills) to explain that every human personality is composed of the combination of several identities. A person may be a teacher, a member of a family, or a club, supporter of an ideology, member of a church and so on, and enacts from time to time the role of one of them. For example, the storyteller assumes, for a limited time, until the end of his performance the identity of a performing artist and plays that role. This means he will act on the stage the way a storyteller must acts, move an accepted way by the audience, or behaves the way such role requires. His main role there is to narrate a traditional story which took place in the past. Selecting "the role of a storyteller and enacting it for a limited time does not eliminate the other roles and selves; it just pushes them aside" (Başgöz, 1986, p. 233). On the stage, he is not anymore, a father, a husband, a farmer etc. During the performance for some reasons which cannot be easily guessed, one of these other identities comes to the for. And that personality begins to talk, and the teller interjects this personality into the traditional narration. "He speaks about his own troubles acting out the role of a patient in group therapy. He discloses his opinions, ideas, values enacting the role of an old man, a father. And he praises, protests, criticizes individuals, institutions, and human relations of the past and present like a social commentator. Thus, he deviates from the narration of the story." (Başgöz, 1986, p. 233). To Başgöz, the digression in folk narrative is this deviation.

In his research Başgöz recognizes three categories of digression which are:

1. Explanatory and Instructional
2. Opinion, Comments, and criticisms,
3. Self-reproach and Confession.

To Başgöz, the first category includes digressions dealing with the teller explanation of the topic and he believes that his audience does not know.

Müdami, for example, used, in one of his performances, the word *imrahor,* an old Ottoman name meaning a person who is in charge of the imperial stable. Knowing that his audience does not know

the meaning of that word, he digressed: "This means tavla onbaşısı (recent military terminology meaning the corporal of the stables). At that time the corporal of the stable was called imrahor." (Başgöz, 1986, p. 242).

The second category includes comments, criticism, and suggestion to many aspects of social and individual life. This includes suggestion of good behavior, envy of good old times, explanation of this or that side of the past, attack to the platform of political parties. Here are two examples from that category:

Müdami, after talking the beauty of young hero in the story digressed:

"The hair of the girls in olden times reached to their ankles, long and soft like silk. They were not like today's girls who look like chicks without tale." (Başgöz 1986, p. 246).

Behçet Mahir, a narrator from Erzurum forwarded a comment and criticized with a digression, the policy of the political party in power which did not want to have tourist in Turkey. He said: "Foreigners come to our country and spend money like crazy. They purchase old rusty keys and locks. Let them buy. Some people who have no intelligence objects to their coming and accuse them of influencing our moral badly. This is not true. We should not bar their visits. Why should we kill the chicken which lays the golden egg." (Başgöz, 1986, p. 245).

The third category includes the comments of the teller about his own problems and troubles. For Müdami, for example being fat and old for Muhsine Karaçor being stupid. Such digression always is attached to the narrative by "like me".

Two examples: Müdami, an old, fat and diabetic man talked about a powerful hero who was hired to kill the hero, he commented: "See that man, killing a strong man is not a problem for him, unlike me who cannot kill a chicken. A doorman in Ankara university, the repository of a folktale, in the narration of the tale talks about young heroes who sell his property to see the World Beauty. At that pint the narrator says, "like me" (Başgöz, 1998, p. 247).

His life story reveals that he was a peasant from Sungurlu who sold his field and property to move to Ankara for a better life. But he did not succeed in this big city and remained penniless. The digression "like me" give him a chance to talk about his trouble and confess the mistake he made. It is not hard to guess that the confession provides relief for the teller This is the psychological dimension of the function. Başgöz refers to his earlier study to explain when and why the teller opens his heart before an audience: "The teller candidly unveils his problems before a friendly audience. The unresponsive audience functions as a deterrent to honest confession." (Başgöz, 1976, p. 172).

In his research Prof. Başgöz, recognizes a different category of digression in Turkish oral narratives which consists mainly the incorporation of traditional folklore forms such as proverbs, folk poetry, anecdote, a short folk tale into the performance. In this category of digression, the teller is the selector, not the creator. The digression does not directly reflect his own feelings, ideas, values etc. instead his selection does it indirectly. In the selection of such digressions the teller often uses proverbs in his performance. "These proverbs transmit messages related to past norms and values and lend prestige of the traditional culture into the teller's point of view." (Başgöz, 2008, p. 173). Başgöz provides he proverb quotation of the teller and how he incorporates it into the narration: In a blaze of rage a khan in Aliyar story orders the execution of his young wife. There the storyteller quotes a proverb to condemn this unfair order: "Our ancestors say anger comes and make the eyes blind it goes and makes the face black."' (Başgöz, 2008, p. 173). In all proverbs quoted in a folk narrative the aşık refers to ancestors. In fact, the Turkish term for proverb, atalar sözü means the word of ancestors.

Aşık Behçet Mahir and Sabit Mudami sometime incorporate one or two stanzas from folk poetry. For example, when Aşık Behçet Mahir suggests young students to keep their tongue tied to avoid trouble, he quotes this quatrain from Aşık Sümmani: (1862-1914):

Clean your heart from lie.

Don't worry then for the earth or sky.

Don't break anyone's heart by bad word.

No avail when you feel sorry later (Başgöz, 1986, p. 245).

Prof. Başgöz in this research also reports us some examples of the audience's digression. If the audience, or some members are pleased for the artistic ability of the teller they express their praise openly or tacking money to the musical instrument of the narrator. If they are displeased of the performer's art, they openly criticize him. Basgöz' research provides us such an example of the audience response who strongly criticized the narrating artist of ignorance (Başgöz, 2008, p. 238).

Başgöz is convinced that the digression in general creates a contemporary atmosphere in the performance place. The story takes place in the past, the characters of the story live in the past and the plot contains past events. But the teller represents a contemporary individual and the audience a contemporary group of people. There is a gap between the worlds of these peoples. Digressions which transmit the individual problems of the teller, the concerns of the contemporary audience transform the romantic Hikâye, into a modern novel. As the digressions in the appendix clearly demonstrate that what they introduced to the traditional narration are all contemporary concerns and problems. The digression no.14 for example, tells us the increasing food price and inflation, no.21 complains about the behavior of young university students who learns science and knowledge but do not know how to behave properly and who are not patriotic. And addresses them saying: "Oh, Turkish youth! Why do you fight each other? You are not the enemy, you are brothers. Do not be misguided. And no. 25 the hard life of the poor people. There is no need to extend the number of the digressions. The above selections shows that digression creates in the performance place a contemporary society by using digressions. This is the subject of modern novel.

In concluding his research Başgöz forwards a hypothesis dealing with the function of folklore. He says folklore in general and each folklore genre in particular should not be attributed a general and constant function or functions. He believes that every performance may have a different function, depending on the ideology, lifestyle and education of the teller, and the structure, education, and social origin of the listeners. And digression plays a major role in introducing function to performance.

He criticizes William Boscom's four functions and claims that the four functions ascribe a politically and socially conservative role to folklore. Because all of them tend to maintain the stability and peaceful operation of the social system. Başgöz provides data from Turkish folklore to show that folklore also functions as a force which creates protest, disunity, fighting and rebellion. Başgöz expressed that hypothesis in previously published research titled "Protest: the fifth function of folklore." [2] (Başgöz, 1998, p. 339-356).

In this part of my paper, I would like to report my own finding and analysis of digression in the daily conversation and folk song:

2. Digression in conversation

Last summer when I collected data for my master thesis, I met İbrahim Koç, who lost his hands as a result of an accident. Marxist, Leninist İbrahim is an Alevi, but for a while in the past he identified himself with a Marxist ideology and did not care about his Alevi culture and background. Now, contrary to his revolutionary identity he returned again Alevism and became an active speaker, in Alevi organisations, such as Pir Sultan Abdal Cultural Association., and Haci Bektaş-ı Veli Cultural Center. He is very energetic and forcefull speaker. He writes, from time to time for Alevi journals and newspapers.

I came together with İbrahim in the summer course of Dr. Başgöz in Güre where a third person psychiatrist Taner Mehmet joined us. Four of us talked, until early morning and mainly listened to İbrahim's life story.

Songs were composed about him in the family. Suddenly he departed from the main theme and İbrahim was talking about his family and the place of Pir Sultan Abdal in the family. He explained why Pir Sultan Abdal was so important in the family and why every year several lament songs were created in the family. And asked Dr. Taner Mehmet: *(Digression 1)* "Do you remember once I asked you something about phantom pain?" Dr Mehmet said "Of course." He continued to talk about this phantom pain. Following the incident when he lost his hand and fingers he felt terrible pain, from time to time, in the place of the lost organ. He believed that if he forgot the tragedy it would help. It

did not. Then he stopped again the narration course and said: *(Digression 2)* "I was born and raised in this house".

İbrahim continued to talk about his family and said whenever my mother talked about Pir Sultan Abdal tears run from her eyes like rivers. I observed this very often. Here again İbrahim shifted the conversation and begun to talk about himself. He said: *(Digression 3)* "Of course, at that time I was a child. I did not know history. I mean I did not know that Pir Sultan Abdal was hanged four hundred years ago." İbrahim introduced another short digression to the conversation when he talked about the long-lasting impact of the death of Pir Sultan Abdal and Hüseyin, the son of the caliph Ali in the Alevi community. He said I believe the strong impact of their death was due to the fact that they were murdered much earlier than they would normally die, they were young: *(Digression 4) "*Just like how I lost my hand in an untimely fashion."

Then İbrahim talked about a legend related to the life of Pir Sultan Abdal. The legend reports that Hızır Pasha, the governor of the Ottoman government at some point before he ordered the execution of Pir Sultan, proposed a deal, and said "If you sing three songs in which you would newly mention the name of the Shah, the Ruler, I will pardon you. Pir Sultan sung three poems all of which praised the Shah in every stanza. Here İbrahim intervened again and digressed: (*Digression 5) "*Alevi's mean Ali, the caliph when they say "shah", sometimes they mean the Shah of Iran who battled with the Ottoman Sultan Yavuz Selim who massacred Alevi's, sometimes to both."

The legend reports that Hızır Pasha ordered everyone stone Pir Sultan Abdal. Peoples stoned him with the exception of a friend who threw a pebble, in a variant a rose. At that point İbrahim quoted two lines from Pir Sultan poetry which read:

None of the stones of this world may hurt me.

But a single pebble thrown by my sweetheart terribly wounds me. In the second variant of this poem the pebble is replaced by a rose. Feeling that Prof. Başgöz would know the second variant İbrahim shifted the narration into a discussion and said *(Digression 6). "You* know Hızır Pasha who ordered killing of Pir Sultan Abdal, was a cruel tyrant of the Ottoman Empire. The Ottoman Empire after the 16th century was the worst enemy of the Alevi people. Who would dare to throw a rose to Pir Sultan Abdal before such a cruel Paşha who ordered his execution."

İbrahim talked about the death of Hüseyin, the son of Ali and said: They beheaded Hüseyin, brought his head to Damascus, *(Digression 7)*, "as my mother said". He repeated the reference to his mother twice in the same paragraph.

The selection, the nature and function of digression in my analysis of a single conversation, agrees in general with Dr. Başgöz research. Digression number 4, for example is definitely a self-reproach and confession as Dr. Başgöz named it. And the digression nu. 1, 3, 5 are informative and explanatory. İbrahim introduced them into conversation when he believed that we did not know the historical background and he should teach us that page of history, or his daily life. Digression number 7 is very informative in that it reveled us a very important part of his psychological life, a strong love for his mother. The impact of the mother who is a very strong believer and domineering individual is so strong on İbrahim that he filmed his mother's life story and gave a copy of this film to Dr. Başgöz.

It should be mentioned that, as my observation indicates, digression occurs very often in the daily conversation, especially if it is long. Following this experiment with İbrahim, I begin to think our casual conversation with friend. Specially, if we are not sure that we explained something effectively, we digress. The introduction of folklore forms such as proverbs, anecdotes and reference other subjects to daily conversation, or discourse are very much a part of the conversation.

Another point which should be emphasized is the context of the conversation. In my case contextual component are the speaker, the listeners, and the place of conversation. These components interact in the creation of digression. The knowledge of the main speaker about the education, personality and social standing of the listeners plays a role in selecting the digression. For example, İbrahim would not introduce digression nu.4 if he did not feel that Dr. Başgöz knew the poem of Pir Sultan Abdal.

Audience's familiarity of the subject matter in conversation is another major contextual element in the selection and frequency of selection of digression. İbrahim knew that we did not know much about his life, tragedy, and his activity during his revolutionary years. That is why he stopped the main conversation line and digressed nu; 3,4, 5 just to inform us about his life story. Theoretically, as Dr. Başgöz examined in his research, audience also digress. But our admiration of İbrahim's strong personality, his energetic discourse and his survival from such a tragic life had such a great impact on us that we were almost speechless before such a strong personality. Consequently, we did not dare to stop his discourse and interfere the conversation.

Digression, in my case study seems to be a very informative source of the psychological life of the speaker. Digression number 7, for example, reveals us the strong bond of the mother and son, which is usually a matter of privacy in Turkish context. By means of a digression İbrahim opened his hearth with no hesitation before an audience which he met for the first time. In this sincerity Dr. Başgöz's played a role. Because when we met İbrahim he expressed his admiration of Dr. Başgöz's research and Başgöz's approach to Alevi culture with love and admiration. This is another example of the correlation of digression and social context.

I believe s hearth with no hesitation, which is a matter of privacy. That is why we learned how much this strong Alevi believer was influential on İbrahim to become a hero, who would sacrifice his life for a moral and ideological belief, like Pir Sultan Abdal.

1. Digression in legend texts

In Bingöl Legends, which I compiled under the supervision of my teacher İlhan Başgöz, Legends do not have a specific narrative technique and language of their own. Each narrator was shaping the legends that I had compiled according to his own flow of thought and putting them into words. The narrators generally used their own dialects and language features. I have preserved this language to the extent that it is understandable. Since some narrators had a stream of consciousness, deviations from the subject, that is, memories and adventures, were also included in the legend, adding a believable feature to the legend.

İlhan Başgöz's view on this issue is as follows:

"Taletellers (tale-mothers) tell folk tales, while Minstrels tell the folk tale. But anyone can tell the legend and use their own language as the language of legend. According to the narrator's wishes, the legend can be shortened, lengthened, and take the form of a story or a fairy tale, or even an anecdote if the belief in it is ridiculed.

……

The fact that every person can easily tell the legend, and that every narrator puts it into the mold that he listens to, makes the legend, after all, the property of the society; easily makes it a collective narrative genre" (Bazancir, 2010, p. 5).

In my research on legends, the narrators began to present me tales, anecdotes, their own life stories, interesting events they had experienced as a child, and memories from loved ones of the region. A narrator presented the people who were loved, respected and respected in Bingöl as legendary figures.

I experienced deviations from the subject in almost all narrators. When I intervened and wanted to draw the narrators into the material I wanted to learn, I was wasting time. Then I developed a solution and presented the narrators with examples from the Legends of Bingöl and the Legends of Diyarbakır, and I read examples from the legend books I had. This association worked very well, and people told themselves various legends from the classifications I read (Bazancir, 2010, p. 23).

2. Digression and folk song

Alevi's are known as people who are very fond of music and poetry. In every Alevi household you find at least a saz and a singer who plays that musical instrument. The published folk song in Turkey and my attendance in a concert in Ankara which has taken place in a Türkü Bar (song bar) revealed some interesting data on digression in folk song. Here is an example: A folk song from Bursa which is called Uzun Kavak (the tall tree) Includes the following two lines:

Uzun kavak ne uzarsın boyumca (the tall tree why did you grow so tall like me.) Kurban olayım o boyuna bosuna. (May I sacrify myself for your height.)

The song has 11 syllables line, a typical folk song style and the rhythm pattern aa. In a variant of the song the two lines included a minor digression, definitely reflecting the feeling of an unknown singer:

Uzun kavak, ne bilem ne bilem, ne uzarsın boyumca.

Kurban olayım o boyuna bosuna. (The tall tree, how do I know, how do I know, why did you grow so tall like me).

This small interjection breaks the traditional song style, still remained in the song line. It suggests several questions which cannot be answered by just examining the published text. Did someone among the audience ask the teller why the tree is so tall? Or the singer was a really tall man and felt to express his feeling by interjecting a brief digression How do I know how do I know.

A different form of digression in folk song, more common in fact, is the addition of some individual remarks at the end of the musical line. Such individual remark may consist of a single, but repeated word. Aşık Ali İzzet, an Alevi aşık provides a good example. Here is a stanza from this song:

Bir Allahı tanıyalım (Let us worship to a single god).

Ayrı ayrı bu din nedir (Why are so many religions).

Senlik benliği nidelim (Why selfishness, why self-interest)

Bu kavga döğüş kin nedir? (Why is this hatred, this conflict, and this war?).

Prof Basgöz witnessed the performance of the song before a friendly audience. Here is that form:

Bir Allahı tanıyalım

Ayrı ayrı bu din nedir dost dost dost. (O friend, friend, friend)

Senlik benliği nidelim

Bu kavga döğüş kin nedir dost dost dost. (O friend, friend friend)

The noun dost, is used in the Turkish society to address to a very close friend. To mean more than a friend. In the Alevi discourse it may mean a soul brother. By adding the digression *dost, dost dost* the singer establishes a strong bond between himself and the member of the same religious order. This is the expression of individuality within the tradition. That kind of digression at the end of a musical line may consist of more than one single word. The following is an example:

İbrişim örmüyorlar oy oy (They do not wseave the silk, oy oy)
Sevmişim vermiyorlar (I love but I can not have her)
Tanrının zalimleri oy oy (God's cruel creatures oy oy)

Münasip görmüyorlar. (They dont beleive that we match.)

In the second recording in the individaul archive of Kubilay Dökmetaş the song was included a rather extended digression:

İbrişim örmüyorlar (oy oy)
Sevmişim vermiyorlar, dayanamam ben, sabredemem ben. (I can't take anymore, I can't wait anymore)

Tanrının zalimleri (oy oy)
Münasip görmüyorlar, sabredemem ben. (I can't wait anymore.)

Digression in folk song, may take place in the beginning of a line, and a member of the audience may also digress. Whenever Prof. Başgöz becomes very emotional in a folk song singing party he always screams saying "Anan öle oğul anan öle, may your mother die my son, your mother die. The singer takes this interjection as a great appreciation of his talent.

Result

In the formation process of folklore texts, personal creations are directly affected by environmental factors and the immediate psychological state of the narrator. The contents may vary depending on the subject chosen by the narrator during the transfer of a folk song, legend or tale. The influence of the mental state and mentality on the narrative is inevitable. As can be seen in the above narrative, İbrahim Koç, who is a political personality, has added his own worldview and belief structure to the narratives with the influence of his political ideology and emotionality. Deviations from the subject, which are subjectively regarded as the product of individual creation, or expressions that have acquired a new form should be regarded as organically new creations.

Başgöz believes that deviation in general creates a contemporary atmosphere in the performance space and the transmission process. In a sense, the person who realizes the "digression" puts his signature by adding his own existence and mentality to the genre. The audience or audience taking place during the transmission has a significant impact on the formation of this improvisation or new creation. Another thing to know about "Digression" is accumulation. The narrator can add meaning to this new narrative thanks to his command of the law and his knowledge.

We hope that our study of digressions in colloquial speech, folk song, and legends will make a small contribution to researchers working on this subject.

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Sonnotlar

[1] See for details: Başgöz, Ilhan (1986). *Digression in Oral Narrative, by Turkish Romance Tellers*. Journal of American Folklore 99, pp. 5-22. Republished in Turkish Folklore and Oral Literature, Selected Essays of Ilhan Başgöz, ed. Kemal Silay. Indiana University Turkish Studies Publ., Series 19, 1998. pp. 231-250.

[2] See for details: Başgöz, İlhan. (1998). *Protest: The Fifth Function of Folklore in Turkish Folklore and Oral Literature*, Selected Essays of İlhan Başgöz. ed. Kemal Silay. Indiana University Turkish Studies Series19, Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

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