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The Construction of the Batyr Identity in Kazakh Heroic Fairy Tales: The Relationship Between Journey, Horse, and Collective Memory

[1]Yerlan Zhiyenbayev

PhD, Faculty Member, Department of Turkish Philology, Faculty of Philology, Khoja Akhmet Yassawi International Kazakh-Turkish University, Turkistan, 161200, Kazakhstan.

email: yerlan.zhiyenbayev@ayu.edu.kz ; **orcid**: 0000-0001-9234-4780

[2]Elzada Beibit

Researcher, Department of Turkish Philology, Faculty of Philology, Khoja Akhmet Yassawi International Kazakh-Turkish University, Turkistan, 161200, Kazakhstan.

email: elzadabb@gmail.com ; **orcid**: 0009-0006-5737-4259

Abstract: In this study, the heroic fairy tales Akjan Batır, Altın Aydar, Boz Atlı Boran Batır, and Bayğulan, which rank among the foundational texts of the oral tradition, are subjected to an analytical investigation within the framework of character, space, and time elements. The primary objective of the research is to uncover the structural and functional roles of these three narrative components in the construction of the Kazakh national identity and the institution of batyrhood through an interdisciplinary methodology. For the purpose of textual analysis, the study synthesizes Vladimir Propp's morphology of the folktale, Joseph Campbell's monomyth theory, Mircea Eliade's sacred-profane space theory, Carl Gustav Jung's archetypal criticism, Jan Assmann's philosophy of cultural memory, and Nurullah Çetin's model of literary text analysis. According to the findings obtained, within the context of character elements, the heroes shed their individual/raw identities to transform into ideal batyr prototypes who assume public responsibility; the enemy figures (dev, jeztırnak, mıstan kempir) reify chaos or internal loci of betrayal that threaten the collective order; and the horse cult functions as an alter-ego that signifies the rational intellect and strategic genius of the hero. At the level of spatial elements, it was determined that the narratives are built upon a dichotomy of profane (safe/camp) and sacral (uncanny/wild) domains; the "sea/water" element serves as an ontological threshold of baptism, while the "Akshahan Mountain" and the "turning into stone" motif function as incubation spaces where self-discipline and social resilience are forged and solidified. In terms of temporal elements, it is concluded that chronological time is suspended and the narrative is positioned within a mythological erte zaman (absolute past) slice that keeps memory alive; furthermore, time—which bends during moments of crisis—is restructured at the end of the adventure through the "grand feast" (toy) ritual, symbolizing cosmic restoration. Consequently, it has been demonstrated that the elements of character, space, and time in Kazakh heroic fairy tales are not mere fictional decor, but semiotic and ideological code systems that transmit the value system of the nomadic steppe ontology from generation to generation.

Keywords: Kazakh Folk Literature, Heroic Fairy Tales, Batyr Identity, Cultural Memory, Cosmic Threshold, Cyclical Time.

Introduction

Oral cultural products are the most dynamic mechanisms of cultural memory that transmit the historical experiences, worldviews, value systems, and aesthetic perceptions of their respective societies across generations. Making up the most characteristic link of the Turkic world's narrative tradition—specifically within the sphere of steppe culture—Kazakh oral literature has played a central role in preserving collective memory and constructing national identity. Foremost among the genres possessing the highest structural and symbolic density within this tradition are heroic fairy tales. Beyond being mere entertaining texts through which extraordinary adventures are relayed, Kazakh heroic fairy tales are cultural texts that embody the social codes of nomadic steppe life, the ideal human model, and the struggle for collective existence. The batyr (hero) figure positioned at the

center of these texts emerges as a concrete projection of societal norms, courage, justice, and self-sacrifice.

In the scholarship of Kazakh folklore, the institution of batyrhood and the phenomenon of heroism have generally been addressed within the matrix of epic poems (batyrlar jırı or heroic epics); conversely, heroic narratives in the form of fairy tales have mostly been evaluated within the framework of children's literature or pure fantastic elements. However, compared to epics, heroic fairy tales are structures that harbor the mythological and archaic strata more vibrantly, conveying the phases of human psychology and identity construction through a more symbolic language.

In this study, the construction of the batyr identity is addressed through an interdisciplinary approach along the axes of Joseph Campbell's theory of the monomyth (The Hero with a Thousand Faces), Vladimir Propp's methodology in the Morphology of the Folktale, and Jan Assmann's theory of Cultural Memory. Within these tales, the hero's departure from home, his crossing of seas, and his struggle against storms in the mountains are not ordinary geographical displacements; rather, they are "initiation rituals" within the individual's process of acquiring a social identity. Throughout this process, the hero's most vital complement—far beyond being a mere beast of burden—is the horse cult, which functions as the batyr's alter-ego, protective spirit, and the symbol of steppe ontology. Consequently, the batyr identity is immortalized in the collective memory by being constructed through the psychological maturation brought by the journey and the mythological/physical support provided by the horse.

The primary objective of this study is to demonstrate how the hero, who is born as an individual figure within Kazakh heroic fairy tales, transforms into a societal batyr identity by means of arduous journeys, cosmic thresholds that must be crossed, and the horse cult, which serves as his loyal helper and protective spirit. The ultimate goal of this paper is to deconstruct the position of the batyr identity within the Kazakh collective memory and the contribution of these narratives to the sustainability of social identity by analyzing the psychological and sociological backgrounds of the symbolic motifs (such as turning into stone, crossing the sea, and being tested by storms) found in the narratives.

This research is limited to four fundamental heroic fairy tales selected from the rich corpus of Kazakh folk literature, representing the construction of the batyr identity through different structural aspects. These texts are: the tales of Akjan Batır and Altın Aydar, found in the 75th volume of the monumental publication of the Kazakh oral tradition, the Babalar Sözi (Babalar Sözi) series; and the tales of Boz Atlı Boran Batır and Bayğulan, which were compiled and brought into the literature by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Seyfullah Yıldırım. In this study, secondary motifs (such as romance or economic pursuits) other than the motifs of "journey / spatial transgression" and the "horse cult," which directly impact the hero's identity construction process, have been excluded from the scope of the research.

A vast accumulation of literature exists on the analysis of fairy tales and epics within Turkic and Kazakh folklore studies. In Kazakhstan, scholars such as M. Auezov, A. Margulan, S. Kaskabasov, and Sh. Ibrayev have established the foundational sources on the classification, mythological origins, and generic characteristics of Kazakh fairy tales. In Turkey, the structural and functional studies by Pertev Naili Boratav, Saim Sakaoğlu, Ali Berat Alptekin, and Özkul Çobanoğlu on Turkic world fairy tales and heroic typologies serve as guiding lights. In terms of textual analysis methodology, Nurullah Çetin's approaches to poetic and textual analysis have facilitated the determination of psychological depth within these tales. However, a specific study in the literature that directly examines the batyr figures in the Babalar Sözi (Volume 75) and Seyfullah Yıldırım's collections by synthesizing them with theories of collective memory in the context of the journey and horse cult stands out as a conspicuous gap. This article aims to fill this void in the literature by subjecting the aforementioned texts to a comparative analysis.

Methods and Materials

An interdisciplinary methodological approach was adopted in the collection, analysis, and interpretation of the data within this research. The analytical techniques and approaches that form the methodological framework of the study are detailed below:

Text-Centered Qualitative Analysis and Document ReviewThe primary data collection method of the research is the document analysis technique, which is frequently utilized in qualitative research designs. The texts of the Akjan Batır and Altın Aydar fairy tales, selected from the Babalar Sözi (Volume 75) corpus, alongside Boz Atlı Boran Batır and Bayğulan, which were compiled by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Seyfullah Yıldırım, constitute the primary sources of the study and were passed through the filter of document analysis. In this regard, the texts were deconstructed line by line in terms of plot, motif structure, character typologies, and symbolic background. Typological and Comparative Literary MethodThe four fairy tales obtained from different sources and variants were subjected to a comparative and typological analysis method. Through this method:

The convergent and divergent aspects in the "batyrization" processes of the heroes across different narratives (Akjan, Altın Aydar, Boran, Bayğulan) were identified;

The functional and mythological variations of the "horse" figure in different tales were compared;

The stylistic and content dynamics stemming from the transmission channels of the oral tradition (corpus publications versus personal field collections) were typologically classified.

Structuralist and Myth-Analytical Approach (Monomyth Theory). To ground the hero's departure from home, spatial transgression, and return processes within a structural mold, Vladimir Propp's Morphology of the Folktale and Joseph Campbell's theory of the Monomyth ("The Hero with a Thousand Faces") were utilized. Geographical and cosmic obstacles within the tales (crossing the sea, scaling mountains, struggling against storms) were decoded through Campbell's triad of Departure (Separation) – Initiation (The Belly of the Whale / The Road of Trials) – Return. Thus, it was methodologically established that the physical journey is, in essence, a psychological and social identity construction (initiation).

Cultural Memory and Symbolic Anthropological Analysis. In analyzing archetypes present in the tales—such as "turning into stone," the "spiritual sea," and the "tulpar/horse"—Jan Assmann's theory of Cultural Memory and Mircea Eliade's symbolic anthropological approaches within the context of the Sacred and Profane were taken as a basis. This theoretical framework allowed for an objective explanation of which mythological stratum and identity code within the collective memory of Kazakh society correspond to the individual actions of the batyr in the texts.

Nurullah Çetin's Model of Textual AnalysisIn order to capture the aesthetic, psychological, and semantic depth of the texts, Nurullah Çetin's method of literary text analysis was adapted to the structure. Through this model, not only the visible (exoteric) plot of the fairy tales but also the implicit (esoteric) semantic layers, ideological paradigms, and cultural value systems lying behind the words and motifs were revealed.

Research and discussion: the construction of the batyr identity through character elements

The dramatis personae in Kazakh heroic fairy tales constitute the most fundamental building block forming the ideological, cultural, and mythological backbone of the narrative. As Nurullah Çetin (2017, p. 112) emphasizes in his model of literary text analysis, the character roster in a narrative is not composed of mere fictional figures; rather, they are concrete projections of the worldview that the author or the collective consciousness intends to present to society. The characters present in the four tales under investigation (Akjan Batır, Altın Aydar, Boz Atlı Boran Batır, Bayğulan) are functionalized within the triangle of the protagonist (batyr), antagonist (dev, jeztırnak, mıstan kempir) and the helper/guide character (the horse) to construct the ideal human model and collective memory of Kazakh society.

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The Character Arc and Individuation Process of the Protagonists (Batyr) All of the primary characters in the examined tales are presented at the beginning of the narrative as impulsive and immature child/youth figures who do not yet possess a social status, wisdom, or the title of "batyr". This situation exhibits a parallel with the stage defined as "initial lack" or "villainy/injury" in Vladimir Propp's (2011, p. 34) morphology of the folktale.

Akjan Batır and Altın Aydar: These two characters, featured in the Babalar Sözi (2011) corpus, are initially under familial protection, oblivious to the chaotic structure of the external world. When confronted with the "Call to Adventure" stage in Joseph Campbell's (2010, p. 58) "Monomyth" theory, they are compelled to abandon their individual comfort zones. Boran Batır and Bayğulan: Transmitted from Seyfullah Yıldırım's (2023) field collections, these two characters confront the harsh reality of the steppe at an earlier age, directly during a moment of crisis (the death of a father or the invasion of the homeland). This psychological evolution, termed the "individuation process" by Carl Gustav Jung (2006, p. 84), culminates in the tales not merely through the heroes gaining physical muscle power, but through their liberation from selfishness and their assumption of public responsibility. By sacrificing his childish desires (ego death), the hero takes on a "batyr" identity that establishes social justice. In the oral memory of the Kazakh people, this transformation legitimizes the axiological reality that the survival of the camp (oba) and the nation—rather than the individual—is sacred (Assmann, 2015, p. 92).

Antagonist Types: Representatives of Chaos and the Shadow ArchetypeIn Kazakh heroic fairy tales, the brilliance and social legitimacy of the batyr identity are directly proportional to the power and uncanniness of the enemy figures (antagonists) he encounters (Table 1). In the examined texts, the enemies are typologized into two main groups.

Table 1. The Image of the Enemy in Kazakh Heroic Fairy Tales

Antagonist Type	**Corresponding Figure in the Examined Tales**	**Mythological / Social Function**
Supernatural / Mythological Threats	*Gözlü Dev* / One-Eyed Giant (*Akjan Batır*) *Jeztırnak* / Iron-Claw (*Boz Atlı Boran Batır*)	Uncontrollable primal forces of nature, extra-civilizational chaos.
Social / Intra-Familial Betrayals	*Mıstan Kempir* / The Malicious Witch (*Altın Aydar*) Treacherous Mother/Sibling (*Bayğulan*)	Locus of betrayal undermining order from within; erosion of trust, the archetype of the "Bad Mother."

In the tale of Akjan Batır, the One-Eyed Giant (Tek Gözlü Dev) encountered by the hero is the concrete manifestation in the text of what Eleazar Meletinsky (2016, p. 143) describes as the "primal chaos that the culture hero must liquidate before bringing order to the universe." The giant is a universal threat that devours societal resources (water, livestock, humans).

The Jeztırnak (Copper Claw) figure, reified in the tale of Boz Atlı Boran Batır (Yıldırım, 2023), is the female demon archetype residing in forested and mountainous areas that hunts humans through trickery, as noted by Abdülkadir İnan (2006, p. 67) in his research on Turkic mythology. Boran Batır's elimination of the Jeztırnak symbolizes the cultural hegemony that the steppe people established over the uncanny and wild forces of nature.

The more destructive type of enemy consists of the Mıstan Kempir (Malicious Witch) and the Treacherous Mother/Close Relative figures observed in the tales of Altın Aydar and Bayğulan. Corresponding to the "Shadow" archetype in Jungian psychology (2006, p. 115), these characters sprout not from the outside, but from within society and the family. The batyr punishing these internal enemies and figures who betray the customary law (töre) certifies how vital a social memory

code the preservation of loyalty and lineage is within the Kazakh family structure (Kaskabasov, 1984, p. 201).

The Horse Cult as a Character and an Alter-Ego

In Kazakh heroic fairy tales, the "horse" is not merely a beast of burden or an ordinary helper (donor) object that simplifies the hero's task. As Wilhelm Radloff (1995, p. 89) emphasizes in his historical assertion, "For the steppe nomad, the horse is an inseparable half of his physical existence." In the examined texts, the horse is constructed as an independent character that speaks, reasons, foresees the future, and shares a common destiny with the batyr. The Grey Horse (Boz At) in the tale of Boz Atlı Boran Batır (Yıldırım, 2023) fully assumes the function of a "celestial guide and protective spirit (iye)," as identified by Mircea Eliade (1991, p. 134) in his studies on shamanic initiation. Warning the hero before he even perceives danger and decoding the enemy's ruses, the Grey Horse represents the batyr's suppressed rational intellect and intuitive power. Operating much like Jung's (2006, p. 142) archetype of the "Wise Old Man," this horse counterbalances the hero's impulsive decisions.The Tulpar character encountered in the tale of Bayğulan (Yıldırım, 2023) constitutes, as Shamil Ibrayev (1998, p. 77) remarks, "the registration of the batyr's existence within the steppe ontology" due to its extraordinary speed, wings, and capability to clear seas in a single bound. Within the collective memory of the nomadic Kazakh society, a batyr without a horse is an individual devoid of identity and status (Margulan, 1985, p. 118). In the fairy tale texts, the horse and the batyr lock together like a single organism. This symbiotic relationship functions as the most powerful narrative mechanism allowing an individual character to become eternalized in the collective memory (Assmann, 2015, p. 136).

Analysis of spatial elements and cosmic thresholds

In Kazakh heroic fairy tales, space is far beyond being a neutral and geographical plane upon which events transpire; rather, it is a semiotic structure that generates meaning, governs the spiritual transformation of the hero, and harbors social codes. As Nurullah Çetin (2017, p. 145) states in his textual analysis methodology, space in literary texts is an expression of the hero's inner world and a stage where ideological and cultural conflicts are reified.

The thesis of the non-homogeneity of space, put forward by Mircea Eliade (1991, p. 22) in his work The Sacred and the Profane, provides a fundamental key to understanding the spatial configuration of Kazakh heroic fairy tales. Space in the narratives is structured through a sharp dichotomy consisting of the safe, orderly, and known "profane domain" (home, camp/oba, palace) and the uncanny, chaotic "sacred/sacral domain" (the wild, sea, mountain, cave) dominated by extraordinary forces. The construction of the batyr identity is made possible only through the transgression of the cosmic thresholds situated between these two domains.

The Threshold of the Sea (Water) and Ontological Rebirth in the Tale of Altın Aydar

In the tale of Altın Aydar (Babalar Sözi, 2011), the "sea/great water" that the hero is compelled to cross is a space of crisis corresponding to the "Crossing of the First Threshold" and "The Belly of the Whale" stages in Joseph Campbell's (2010, p. 85) monomyth schema. On a mythological plane, water represents formlessness, chaos, the prime matter (prima materia) from which everything originates, and concurrently, death (Eliade, 1991, p. 118).

Altın Aydar's act of crossing the sea with his horse is not an ordinary river crossing. This water is a space of ontological purification (liquidation) wherein the hero's childhood identity is drowned and destroyed, and in its stead, a social "batyr" identity is born (Kaskabasov, 1984, p. 154). When the hero reaches the opposite shore of the sea, he is no longer an ordinary individual; rather, he is an initiated batyr who has transgressed the cosmic boundary. Within the Kazakh collective memory, the water threshold symbolizes the vast migratory waves, geographical barriers, and national existential struggles that the nomadic society encountered and was forced to overcome throughout history (Assmann, 2015, p. 112).

Akshahan Mountain and the Space of "Turning into Stone" in the Tale of Bayğulan

Akshahan Mountain, which is positioned at the center of the plot in the tale of Bayğulan (Yıldırım, 2023), functions as a "Cosmic Center" (Axis Mundi) in the sense conceptualized by Eliade (1991, p. 35). The mountain is the locus where the sacred is concentrated, connecting the earth with the sky (Tengri). However, this sacredness harbors immense perils and trials within it.

The violent storm to which Bayğulan is exposed at the summit of Akshahan Mountain, and the resulting phenomenon of 'turning into stone' (petrification), constitutes the most radical example of space's power to transform the hero (Yıldırım, 2023). In Vladimir Propp's (2011, p. 56) morphology of the folktale, the spaces where the hero undergoes a "metamorphosis (transformation)" constitute the pinnacle of his initiation process. The space of the storm is a cosmic furnace that beats the hero's impulsive and selfish nature, forcing him into patience. Turning into stone at the peak of the mountain, Bayğulan purifies himself of the immaturities of his ego within a static state of frozenness.

Stone is a symbol of immortality and immutability (Jung, 2006, p. 167). The hero petrifying and subsequently rejuvenating within this sacred space is the geographical projection in collective memory of the Kazakh society's reflex to remain as resilient as stone in the face of historical catastrophes (particularly cataclysms such as Aktaban Shubyryndy) and to be reborn from its ashes (Assmann, 2015, p. 115).

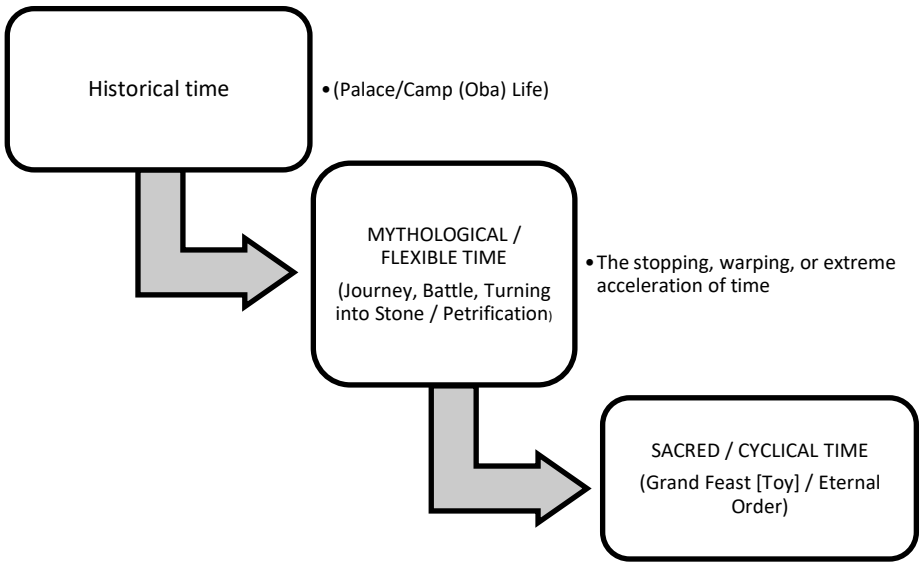
The Wild Nature (Wilderness), Cave, and the Liquidation of ChaosIn the tales of Akjan Batır (Babalar Sözi, 2011) and Boz Atlı Boran Batır (Yıldırım, 2023), the "caves, forests, and uncanny wild spaces" inhabited by the enemies (Tek Gözlü Dev and Jeztırnak) mark the boundaries where civilization and social order terminate. As Meletinsky (2016, p. 145) asserts, the primary duty of the culture hero is to penetrate these chaotic and wild spaces, liquidate the loci of malevolence residing there, and "humanize" those uncanny domains. Akjan Batır entering the giant's cave or Boran Batır combating the Jeztırnak in the mountainous wilderness aligns with Campbell's (2010, p. 97) archetype of the "Descent into the Underworld" (Nekuia). By destroying the forces of chaos within these dark spaces, the batyr converts the wild domain back into a secure piece of the homeland where order reigns. This evolution of space from chaos to order (cosmos) demonstrates that the batyr transcends being an individual warrior and transforms into a collective agent who establishes and protects the homeland (Ibrayev, 1998, p. 104). The "palace and feast (toy) space" reached at the conclusion of the adventure constitutes the final link of spatial transformation; this is a sacred center where the achieved victory becomes publicized and societal homeostasis (equilibrium) is successfully restored (Çobanoğlu, 2002, p. 142). Ultimately, this tripartite division of space from profane stability through sacral chaos and back to a restored cosmic center proves that spatial transgression in Kazakh folktales is intrinsically linked to the geographical preservation of nomadic cultural boundaries and the ontological validation of the batyr's socio-political authority.

Analysis of temporal elements and mythological/cyclical time

In Kazakh heroic fairy tales, time does not present a calendar-based or chronological (linear) continuity. On the contrary, the narrative is built upon a mythological, flexible, and cyclical perception of time that transcends history and possesses its own distinct rules. As Nurullah Çetin (2017, p. 168) states in his theory of literary text analysis, time in literary texts is an aesthetic element that determines the rhythm of events, regulates the hero's pace of transformation, and structures the ideological/philosophical depth of the text.The theory of "sacred time" (illud tempus / primal time), conceptualized by Mircea Eliade (1991, p. 62) in his work The Sacred and the Profane, constitutes the fundamental theoretical groundwork for explaining the perception of time in Kazakh fairy tales. By suspending linear time (historical/profane time) within these tales, a transition is made into an eternal and cyclical temporal frame, opening the gates for the hero to complete his cosmic initiation process.Indeterminate/Mythological Time and Ahistoricity in Narrative OpeningsThe examined fairy tales of Akjan Batır, Altın Aydar, Boz Atlı Boran Batır, and Bayğulan all commence with formulaic temporal expressions that detach the listener and reader from historical reality, transporting them into a mythological universe. Formulaic expressions frequently encountered in the Babalar Sözi (2011) corpus, such as "Erte zamanda..." (In primal times / Once upon a time) or "Ertede bir batır bolıptı..."

(Once in the past, there was a batyr), point to a time-exempt cosmic dimension defined as the "initial situation" in Vladimir Propp's (2011, p. 28) morphology of the folktale.This indeterminate temporal configuration aligns with the concept of the "absolute past" in Jan Assmann's (2015, p. 74) cultural memory theory. In order to rescue historical traumas, wars, and invasions from the painful reality of linear history, the Kazakh people position their idealized batyr figures within this ahistorical (outside of history) golden age. Consequently, the erte zaman at the beginning of the fairy tale does not correspond to a temporal duration that occurred and concluded in the past; rather, it represents a cyclical "present" that can be revitalized in the collective memory at any given moment (Assmann, 2015, p. 78).The Elasticity/Expansion of Time in Ordeal and Transformation ProcessesWith the departure of the hero, the flow rate of time in Kazakh heroic fairy tales detaches completely from the physical world. Joseph Campbell (2010, p. 210) points out that within the structure of the "Monomyth," the perception of time warps during the hero's journeys into the underworld or the unknown (Figure 1), emerging as a structural rule in these tales.Time in the Tale of Altın Aydar: The hero's act of crossing the sea or battling a monster is compressed into a single moment that lasts for "days and months," or conversely, a maturation process that would normally require years is experienced within a single night (Babalar Sözi, 2011).Time in the Tale of Bayğulan: Caught in a storm on Akshahan Mountain and entering the phase of "turning into stone," Bayğulan's static state represents a period in the text where time stops completely and chronology is reset (Yıldırım, 2023).Ultimately, this deliberate manipulation of temporal velocity establishes that the batyr's path to maturity cannot be measured by ordinary human frameworks, demonstrating that the structural expansion and suspension of time serve to elevate the hero's trials from mundane occurrences to timeless, archetypal milestones of national survival.

Figure 1. Conceptions and Associations of Time



According to Jung's (2006, p. 182) principle of the "timelessness of archetypes," the hero escaping the bounds of time through petrification breaks down the temporal limitations of his individual ego, enabling him to reach the eternal layer of the collective unconscious.

The batyr reaches maturation precisely during these moments of crisis where time stands still; when the storm subsides or the petrification dissolves, he returns to linear time as a much wiser and more potent actor (Çetin, 2017, p. 172). This structural and psychological suspension demonstrates that in Kazakh epics, the path to becoming a true leader necessitates a complete departure from the ordinary, linear flow of history. By entering an ahistorical and mythic dimension, the hero undergoes a symbolic death and rebirth that purges his personal flaws. Consequently, his return to chronological

reality is not merely a physical comeback, but an existential elevation, positioning the batyr as a timeless guardian of the community's collective survival and cultural identity.

"Toy (Feast) Time" as the Restoration of Cosmic Time

"Toy Time," which constitutes the ultimate destination of the fairy tales and is generally expressed through the formulaic phrase "He held games for forty days and a feast (toy) for forty nights," represents the zenith of the cyclical perception of time. Eleazar Meletinsky (2016, p. 156) states that following the hero's triumph over chaos in mythological narratives, time is reorganized and a new order (cosmos) is bestowed upon the universe.

The forty-day and forty-night toy duration in Kazakh fairy tales is not merely a calendar of entertainment; rather, it is a symbolic "time of restoration" during which chaos is liquidated, social justice is certified, and sacred time (kut) is re-established over the camp (oba) (Sh. Ibrayev, 1998, p. 112).

"In the number symbolism and rituals of the Turkic world (İnan, 2006, p. 94), the number forty symbolizes the completion of a cycle—the sacred temporal threshold where immaturity ends and wholeness/perfection (kemal) begins."

This phenomenon, which Özkul Çobanoğlu (2002, p. 158) explains in folkloric theories as "the preservation of social equilibrium through ritualistic times," transforms the batyr's time of victory into the collective time of the entire community. At the conclusion of the fairy tale, chronological time resumes; however, this time, the initial state of "lack or damage" has been eradicated, and the flow of time has been sanctified thanks to the justice established by the batyr (Assmann, 2015, p. 142). This ritualistic conclusion demonstrates that the toy acts as a crucial socio-political and cosmological mechanism in Kazakh folklore, bridging the gap between mythic disruption and social reality. By embedding the victory within the highly symbolic threshold of "forty days," the narrative ensures that the batyr's individual achievements are permanently socialized and codified. Consequently, the return to chronological reality does not merely signify a return to the status quo, but rather inaugurates a rejuvenated, morally rectified epoch where nomadic societal boundaries and divine order (kut) are completely harmonized.

Conclusion

In this study, the fairy tales of Akjan Batır, Altın Aydar, Boz Atlı Boran Batır, and Bayğulan—which constitute the foundational texts of Kazakh oral culture and folk narrative tradition—have been analyzed within the framework of character, space, and time elements through an interdisciplinary methodology incorporating morpho-functional, mythocritical, psycho-philosophical, and cultural memory theories. The findings demonstrate that these three fundamental narrative elements are not arbitrarily constructed literary ornaments; on the contrary, they operate as encoded semiotic structures serving the construction of Kazakh national identity and the institution of batyrhood (heroism).

The primary conclusions reached as a result of this study can be summarized under the following headings:

Character Development and Socialization: While the protagonists of the four analyzed tales are initially impulsive, egoistic, and socially unawakened young figures, they undergo a symbolic "ego death" through the crises and trials they must overcome, transforming into ideal batyr types who assume public and collective responsibility. This transformation validates the axiological value system of Kazakh society, which subordinates individual interests to collective existence.

The Liquidation of Chaos and Internal Threats: An analysis of the antagonist characters reveals that supernatural beings (Tek Gözlü Dev [The One-Eyed Giant], Jeztırnak) symbolize the uncontrollable, wild forces of nature and primitive chaos, whereas intra-familial traitors or witch archetypes (Mıstan Kempir) signify the erosion of social trust and betrayal of the traditional customary law (töre). The batyr's liquidation of these enemies is a narrative reflection of the societal reflex to protect social order and lineage purity.

The Ontological Role of the Horse Cult: The "horse" element in the tales (Boz At [The Grey Horse], Tulpar) is not merely a helper figure; it is structured as an alter-ego and wise guide representing the batyr's rational mind, intuitive depth, and strategic genius. The absolute impossibility of a batyr without a horse in steppe ontology certifies the foundational and constitutive role of this cult within the collective memory.

Spatial Dichotomy and Threshold Theory: Space in these narratives is structured around a sharp dichotomy between the "profane/secure space" (the camp [oba], the palace) and the "sacral/uncanny space" (the sea, the mountain, the wilderness). The hero's acquisition of a true identity is fundamentally tied to his capacity to cross these cosmic thresholds between the two universes.

The Symbolism of the Sea and Akshahan Mountain: While the "sea" (derya) in the tale of Altın Aydar serves as a space for a rite of passage where the old identity is dissolved and the new one is baptized, "Akshahan Mountain" in the tale of Bayğulan stands as the locus of celestial sanctity. The motif of "turning into stone" (petrification) experienced at the summit of the mountain functions as a temporary incubation or death phase through which the hero disciplines his ego (nafs), thus symbolizing the hardened will of resistance of the Kazakh people in the face of historical catastrophes.

Mythological and Cyclical Perception of Time: In these tales, linear/historical time is suspended, and the narrative is embedded within a mythological erte zaman (primal time) conceptualized as the "absolute past." This temporal displacement allows historical traumas to be rendered elastic and idealized, thereby keeping the collective memory vital and active.

The Warping of Time and Cosmic Restoration: During the hero's trial processes (turning into stone, battling monsters), time either stands still or becomes extremely stretched; following the victory, time is restructured through the ritualistic "forty days and forty nights of feast (toy)." Toy time represents a sacred moment of cosmic restoration during which chaos is terminated, and a new order (cosmos) based on divine grace/blessing (kut) and justice is bestowed upon the universe.

Recommendations. In light of the data and theoretical conclusions established by this study, the following recommendations are offered for future academic research:

Comparative Textual Analyses: The four Kazakh heroic fairy tales examined in this study can be subjected to comparative analyses with Kyrgyz, Altai or Bashkort heroic tales and epics across the parameters of character, space, and time. This would map the collective subconscious of the shared Turkic world on a much broader scale.

Digital Humanities and Geographical Modeling: The spatial elements and geographical orientations mentioned in the tales could be mapped using Digital Humanities tools and Geographic Information Systems, thereby reifying and concretizing the connections between the mental geography of oral narratives and actual physical geography.

Psychoanalytic and Gender-Oriented Readings: The uncanny female figures in the narratives (Jeztırnak, Mıstan Kempir) and the "Betraying Mother" archetype could be examined not only through Jungian archetypal criticism but also within the context of Gender Studies, allowing for a deeper exploration of the symbolic positioning of women within steppe culture.

Cultural Memory Transmission in Education: The developmental arc of the ideal batyr prototype—from individual ego to public consciousness—can be transformed into pedagogical models within children's literature and values education, making it adaptable to contemporary educational curricula.

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