

FOLKLORIC MANIFESTATION OF PRIMITIVE IMPULSES: FOLK RIDDLES

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Abstract: It is known that factors stemming from human nature play an active role in the emergence of riddles, which are one of the oral products. It is obvious that the riddle as a genre, which is thought to have been born and developed for purposes such as having fun, having a good time, arousing curiosity, and solving the unknown, has deep traces of the psychological structure of the human being. In this study, the effect of basic impulses on riddles is discussed with different dimensions. The research is based on document analysis and it was conducted on Turkish riddles that were established with obscene associations with a decent answer, creating a threatening perception and containing insult and cursing, and the samples belonging to the genre were analyzed from a psychoanalytic perspective. At the end of the study, some inferences were made such as the one to the effect that sexuality and aggression impulses can be satisfied without being subjected to any censorship thanks to the peculiar structure and characteristics of riddles.

Keywords: aggression, primitive impulses, psychoanalytic folklore, sexuality, Turkish folk riddles

INTRODUCTION

Being one of the most common products of anonymous folk literature, the riddle is a genre used by all members of society both in verse and prose. This type, which is an indispensable entertainment tool for both children and adults, is also very functional in terms of mental reasoning and of developing thinking ability. The riddles performed within the presence of at least two people, one asking and the other answering, constitute a social interaction field in terms of individual-individual and individual-society relations. Riddles, which have a long history in the culture of societies and have an active place in both folkloric

texts and socio-cultural life, have started to lose their vitality, especially in today's world. It was inevitable that the riddles would disappear or assume a new form with some variations due to the change in the cultural needs of people, the emergence of different entertainment activities, and a variety of visual-virtual activity areas that started to replace this genre. However, riddles will continue to exist, albeit in a new form, as long as humankind's inclination towards mystery, and its need to ask and answer within a cultural and artistic context, remain valid. That is because in the formation of riddles there are some fundamental factors stemming from human nature.

In the emergence of riddles, the desire of man to solve the unknown, his tendency to the mystery, and his sense of curiosity are dominant. These feelings played an active role in the literary works of human beings and in their daily life. Trying to solve the mystery or to arouse curiosity in someone else by playing hide-and-seek in childhood, the individual maintains similar type of curiosities in various stages of their later life wherein riddles become like a game of hide-and-seek. In the game, the pleasure of rendering void the judgment of the seeker of the hiding person is similar to the question-answer relationship in riddles. The asker of the riddle – just like the child in hiding – aims to negate the guess of the person answering by hiding the abstract-concrete objects or by depicting them in a way to invoke curiosity (Karademir 2007: 9–10). As Tezel (1969: V) states, riddles are not products created for or by children. They only attract their attention.

For some others, the origin of riddles is based on magic, taboos, secret language and various ceremonies existing in the primitive thought system. The taboos stemming from the animist belief and the secret languages that developed around them lost their magical nature over time and became riddles (Bekki 2013: 343). According to the animist way of thinking, primitive people in ancient times thought that all the elements in nature were alive and had a soul. Especially people who failed during hunting came to the conclusion that the animals could feel the hunters' presence and they therefore developed some words that describe the game animals by considering their various characteristics without directly uttering their names in order to prevent them from fleeing. In time, this became the case for other beings, and people did not mention their names for reasons such as not to anger the spiritual beings they believed to exist and not to humiliate their holiness. Thus, this practice has led to the emergence of riddles in the historical process (İçel 2005: 193). So, it is very likely that in the researches in the Western world, riddles have been used as a key to unlock perceptions of culture (Green & Pepicello 1979: 6).

The relationship of riddles with the concept of hidden language in ancient times and the description of objects based on the principle of analogy indicates

that the genre in question may have originated from the same source as poetry. Indeed, the riddle is a paradise of poetry, and it has the same spirit as poetry that speaks by analogy. Just as poetry is an expression of admiration for beauty, riddles are made up of the individual's expression of new things for the same purpose. That is because when a person looks at the world he lives in with a restful soul, he sees everything as it is, but when a soul, kneaded with wonder and admiration, comes into play, all the elements related to the object in question come together, and that object reminds the perceiver of the things that are similar to it (Güney 1971: 159–162). The fact that it uses connotations, as in poetry, ensures that the genre in question has a literary value, and thus it is preserved and passed on to the next generations with its poetical quality (Boratav 2000 [1969]: 109). The closeness of the riddle to poetry is not only due to its content or use of similies but also to its formal and structural characteristics. Being mostly in poetic form, this genre has a formal quality that resembles poetry. As a matter of fact, according to Banarlı (1956: 2282), the folk riddle has a more aesthetic style compared to many colorful, flamboyant, and harmonious poems.

In the context of its poetic character, most of the riddles are set up with aesthetic and elegant words, but a considerable number of riddles, on the contrary, contain vulgar and obscene words. In fact, slang and vulgar expressions are used more than elegant words. That is because the language used in riddles is uncensored. The reason for this is the people's lack of boundaries in humor and ridicule. Where the riddle is used as an element of entertainment, the concept of shame is removed and replaced by tolerance. The vulgar and obscene expressions are an ordinary part of public life and have an important place in the vocabulary of the public (Karademir 2007: 335–336).

Although forms of expression conveying eroticism are used abundantly in riddles, direct words about sexuality are not often included. This is because the way the question is asked already expresses sexuality. According to Kaivola-Bregenhøj (2017: 198), riddles differ from other folklore products due to the fact that they are performed in the home environment by employing a language that should be constructed in a way that children should hear. Bolding (1992: 5), on the other hand, approaches the subject of suggestive language from a different angle. According to the researcher, the purpose of posing riddles in an indirect language is to make sexuality concrete and to render the sexual issues more intelligible.

As can be seen, there are many factors that affect the emergence of the riddle and the style in which it is executed. The common feature of these factors is that each is based on the spiritual world of man. Psychic processes peculiar to the human species have taken over in riddles as in other folkloric products,

playing an important role in the perception of riddles as a cultural element in the context of formation, creation, and implementation.

THE METHOD AND DATA

In this study, primitive drives are added to the psychological factors that are effective in the emergence of the riddle. These drives, which are accepted by many psychoanalysts, especially Freud, and evaluated in a theoretical framework, are the life and death instincts. While these psychic powers, which form the basis of sexuality and aggression, are pushed out of consciousness with some censorship in daily life, they come to light in folkloric life as camouflaged within the aesthetic identity of riddles.

In this context, riddles existing in Turkish folk literature and having the following features were chosen as samples:

- Riddles implying all the processes of sex and what it is associated with;
- Riddles depicting female and male genitalia;
- Riddles involving perversion and various fantasies;
- Riddles intended to embarrass and humiliate through sexual overtones;
- Riddles with swear words and insults;
- Riddles containing threats and death wish.

Riddles with names of genitals and words directly related to sex are not encountered in Turkish folklore. Therefore, as there are no words expressing sexuality in the review part of the article, the censorship problem encountered in such riddles is not applicable to this article. This quality of Turkish riddles is compatible with the basic arguments of psychoanalysis. This is because primitive impulses that cannot be expressed in real life manifest in dreams and can be satisfied, albeit indirectly.

Within the scope of Turkish folklore studies, riddles with these features have not previously been subjected to any research and examination to the best of our knowledge, although they are still alive among people and can be found in Turkish written sources. In addition to approaching the genre in question from a psychoanalytic perspective, this article is unique in that it is the first research on Turkish riddles about sexuality and aggression. The reason for the emergence of such riddles, in which researchers have not shown much interest because they are both about sexuality and include rude words, is an important problem. While there are more decent and appropriate descriptions, why did the public seek to use sexual descriptions in addressing some events? Why did people always feel the need to compare certain objects to sexual organs? When

asking a riddle, for what reason does the individual construct the premise with an insult? What is the real meaning of the death wish contained in the riddles? It is certain that the answers to such questions will have a significant impact on finding the reason why such riddles under question emerge.

Aiming to make universal psychoanalytic evaluations about the genre based on Turkish riddles, the data examined in this study were collected from previously compiled sources and analyses based on document analysis were made on these data. The riddles, all of which were obtained from printed sources, were chosen from among the examples that best reflect the Turkish tradition of asking riddles. These preferred examples largely reflect and represent other similar examples in the Turkish riddle literature in terms of being suitable for the purpose of the article. As a matter of fact, Turkish riddles containing sexuality and aggression are included in written sources as they are classified in this study. Being peculiar to the geography of Turkey, the Turkish riddles are a cultural phenomenon with a very old origin as a genre that preserves certain syntactic characteristics with its stereotypical structure. Therefore, Turkish riddles, in every environment in which they appear, are able to preserve some of their distinctive features with the formal quality of being stereotyped. That is to say that the riddles remain the same in different environments and contexts and that their texts have not deteriorated for many years without undergoing extensive changes, hence they can be evaluated with reliable results in text-centered studies.

DISCUSSION

Different meanings are attributed to individuals' life, thought systems, religions, or various social structures. According to some, life in this world is a preparation for the life to come after death, while others think that it is a phenomenon that occurred by chance. According to the famous psychoanalyst Freud (2011: 56), life is a battleground of the drives inherent in living things. Being the scene of the struggle between the life instinct (Eros) originating from sexuality and the death instinct (Thanatos), which drags life to death, life is shaped by the individual's various defense mechanisms. As a result of the interaction of the spiritual layers known as the id, ego, and superego, the life instinct, which is reflected in daily life, comes to light as sexuality, while the death instinct manifests itself as aggression.

The individual, who is a social being and has to live in a community at every stage of life, is obliged to suppress the primitive impulses stored in the id by the imposition of the superego. In order to survive in the society and not

to be isolated from social groups, a person who tries to crush the unlimited energy accumulation with ruthlessness can only find a balance between the id and the superego with the help of the ego. Thus, the ego both harnesses the lustful desires of the id and fulfills its conscientious responsibility towards the superego (Freud 2020a [1923]: 64–65). However, the ego can reflect primitive impulses that are not approved by conscience, morality, and social norms to the outside world through different channels such as dreams, slips, and jokes. This interaction that takes place in the psychic system of the individual is also applicable to the community. Societies can also reveal the various wild impulses that exist in the subconscious in cultural products like myths, tales, and other folkloric products (Abraham 2017: 46). In other words, oral culture products belonging to societies are a reflection of the collective social ego just like the dreams of the individual.

RIDDLES CONTAINING SEXUALITY

The riddle is a genre that is quite suitable for the sexual drive to emerge in cultural/artistic dimensions. The humans having this primitive impulse in their nature encounter the prohibitions brought by social norms and sanctions under the banner of shame, sin, and crime, and respond to their psychic needs by reflecting the said impulse to riddles. It is possible to see traces of lust, perversion, and other things that are considered shameful, especially in riddles created with obscene reconciliations, for some features peculiar to the genre allow this.

For example, it is essential to create internal contrasts and confusion in riddles formed through the False Gestalt technique. With this method, the image (Gestalt) asked in the puzzle is made ambiguous and the details are arranged in order to allude to something else. Therefore, it suggests a certain answer. However, the answer given to the riddle is wrong. Although the actual answer is often the product of an embarrassing, obscene and yet misleading reference, it is extremely innocent (Abrahams & Dundes 2009: 300–301). Therefore, within the framework of this technique, all kinds of concepts related to sexuality can be embedded in the fictional patterns of the riddle. Thus, even if the impulse in question is censored, both the wild desires of the id will come to light and the individual's exposure to social sanctions is prevented. As a matter of fact, as Havryliuk (2019: 143) states, such riddles are a perfect language game in which the answer is no less important than the question. For example, in the riddle "*Eğrice kiren, kızlara giren – küpe*" (A curvy cranberry, entering the missy – earring) (Başgöz & Tietze 1999: 450), the earring element is depicted within such a usage framework. Although the phrases "curvy" and "entering

the missy” in the riddle were constructed in a way to bring to mind the male genitalia, the answer is extremely decent and simple. However, while there are many descriptive phrases and ways of associative images that can describe the earring, there may be only one explanation for the formation of the puzzle with sexual images. This explanation maintains in a folkloric form the manifestation of lust, which cannot be expressed in daily life. Thus, the individual can easily express their desires thanks to the magnificent camouflaging feature of the riddle and can easily bypass the censorship mechanism in their spiritual nature. Thanks to the latent language of expression belonging to the genre in question, the sexual drive can be camouflaged between the lines. For this reason, it is possible to evaluate the riddles created by the influence of sexual drives under three headings.

Riddles suggestive of sexual intercourse

Sex drive, also known as libido, appears as an effective instinct at every stage of an individual’s life from infancy. According to Freud, this impulse is the instinct to reach pleasure that enables the relief of inner tensions. Sexuality that concentrates in the pleasure areas of the body is achieved through some chemical changes in the body. Thus, a person who searches for a sexual object begins to establish close relationships with the opposite sex in order to satisfy the need for pleasure (Fromm 2019 [1980]: 152). In cases where the need in question is not met, dreams and fantasies come into play. The unbridled desires of the id, which is a great repository of the libido (Freud 2020a [1923]: 30), find expression through these channels that include also folkloric creations such as riddles. In short, while it depicts another action or situation, the text of the riddle may incorporate sexual acts or other fantasies about sexuality. This is because knowing that the answer is not related to sexuality but will be extremely decent and innocent gives this opportunity to the person asking.

As a matter of fact, in the riddle¹ “*Ananın büküp büküp attığı, babanın sokup sokup çıkarttığı – mantı*” (That which the mother twists and throws, the father pulls out and puts in – ravioli) (Başgöz & Tietze 1999: 474), the way of preparing ravioli, a Turkish dish, is likened to the movements of the woman to harden the penis before sex, for ravioli is a dish prepared by women for men, and the process of shaping ravioli is done in a way similar to the hand movements that provide pleasure to the penis (see Fig. 1). In addition, in the context of this riddle, it is noteworthy that eating and the pleasures of sexual intercourse are associated. A similar situation is also present in the riddle “*Başı kalın beli ince, mübarek deliğine girince, rahat edersin bir gece – kaşık*” (A thick head, a thin

neck, and a happy night upon entering the blessed hole – spoon) (Kaya 1999: 511). In the text, the spoon is likened to the penis, while the mouth – to the vagina. When the spoon enters the mouth, the person is relieved by satisfying their hunger. This process is associated with sex in the riddle, and the people who created the riddle have implicitly emphasized that eating and sex give the same comfort and pleasure.



Figure 1. Ravioli. Source: <https://www.haberturk.com/manti-tarifi-nasil-yapilir-hbrt-2527400>.

Providing pleasure, another physiological act that is associated with sex is sleep. The riddle “*Et ete bitişir, kıl kıla yapışır; ne kadar yaparsan o kadar hoşlaşır – uyku*” (The flesh sticks to the flesh, the hair sticks to the hair; the more you do, the happier you get – sleep) (Bağgöz & Tietze 1999: 629) emphasizes that sleep and sex are based on a common source of pleasure. While sleeping, the eyelids of the person are closed and thus the eyelashes made of fine hairs come into contact with each other. In the riddle, the closing of the eyelids is likened to the contact of the male and female organs during sex, and the joining of the eyelashes is likened to the coming together of the genital hairs. As a matter of fact, both actions (sleeping and sex) are actions that give pleasure as long as they are performed.

The satisfaction of the basic needs of the individual results in pleasure. This makes it clear that the basis of pleasures is based on a common psychic source. The desire to meet the needs inherent in human nature is a phenomenon that constantly affects daily life. However, while meeting some needs is not subject

to any censorship, even the voicing of some other needs can be met with harsh sanctions. The riddles above describe the basic needs of sleeping and eating. As it is known, these needs can be met without any prohibition or obstacle. Although sexuality is one of the basic needs such as sleep and food, the satisfaction of it can be subjected to various sanctions. So, this impulse is hidden between the lines of riddles to avoid social sanctions. The fact that these lines, which seek sleeping and eating as an answer, contain images related to sexuality, which is another basic need, is due to the fact that all these needs and pleasures come from the same psychic root.

The most important feature that distinguishes riddles from other folklore products is that it is based on the relationship of asking and answering questions and while doing this, it employs misleading images. This feature enables the sexual drive to manifest itself in the literary and aesthetic form of the riddle. That is to say, no matter how strong the sexual image and associations are in the question, the person who asks it is well aware that the answer to it is a different object or concept. Sexuality, which is highly censored in daily life, also takes extensive advantage of the opportunities offered by this technique of employing misleading images. Powered by the complacency of the answer being linked to a non-obscene conclusion, various fantasies that cannot be expressed in ordinary conversations become freely expressible and this is rendered possible through making the classifications accepted in the cultural mind a subject of discussion and shake them with the power of imagination (Şaul 1974: 85). As a matter of fact, the world of meaning in the riddles is so wide that it is possible to make new additions to the subconscious sexual fantasies. The person asking the riddle can describe situations related to sexuality in detail and at length, thanks to the imaginative narration technique.

For example, while the riddle “*Soktum kustu, çektim küstü – cezve*” (I inserted, it vomited, I pulled out, it turned sulky – coffee pot) (Kaya 1999: 478) describes sex, the answer to it has nothing to do with sex. Namely, the coffee pot used to cook Turkish coffee has the feature of overflowing immediately when placed in the oven with coffee and water in it. The overflow of the coffee pot in the oven is associated with the discharge of the penis into the vagina during sex. Taking the coffee pot out of the oven after it overflowed and allowing it to calm down was thought to be the loss of the hardness of the penis after sex.

The analogy of some features specific to things to sex is also found in the riddle “*Uzundur boyu kertiktir başı, sürttükçe dürttükçe akıtır yaşı, gidip geldikçe bitirir işi-divit – dolma kalem*” (Long it is with a notch on his head, it sheds as it rubs and pokes, it finishes the work as it moves along – fountain pen) (Kaya 1999: 511). In the text, the pen is likened to a penis because of its length and notched shape. At the same time, the pen also has the feature of ink flowing

as it moves, just like the penis can ejaculate during sex. Thus, while the penis ejaculates, the pen ends the writing process with its ink. Another process considered as sex is the use of mortar to crush the grains like wheat. It is expressed in the riddle “*Anam yayılıp yatar, babam sallayıp sokar – dibek*” (My mother lies down, my father shakes and inserts – mortar) (Başgöz & Tietze 1999: 245); the mortar stone with a hole in the middle is compared to the vagina, and the long object that goes into the hole is likened to the penis (see Fig. 2). Pushing the long object into the hole repeatedly to crush the wheat in the hole was also likened to sexual intercourse.



Figure 2. Mortar. Source: <https://www.milliyet.com.tr/yemek/tarif/dibek-kahvesi-nasil-yapilir-2569010>.

Riddles containing perversion

Another dimension of sexuality is perversion. Although perversion is a concept that is highly debated and whose boundaries cannot be determined with certainty, it is an impulse that exceeds normal sexual satisfaction, willing to have more or different pleasure. According to Freud (2019a [1905]: 68), perversion is innate and found in all humans. The person who asks the riddle can express their subconscious desires with the camouflaging feature of this genre, revealing the inherent perversity by fulfilling his or her needs by undermining the privacy of sexuality.

For example, “*Elle beni belle beni, iskelede bekle beni; ben hanımım, ben kadını, şekerlerle besle beni – baklava*” (Hand me, call me, wait for me at the pier; I am a lady, I am a woman, feed me with sweets – baklava) (Başgöz & Tietze 1999: 151), a Turkish dessert, baklava, is considered as a woman, taking into account the pleasure that the man feels during sex. It is not an ordinary situation for a woman to want to be touched and to express her desires

openly in daily life. But in the wide fantasy world of riddles, this supposedly perverted behavior of women is commonplace. Since the knowledge that the answer to the riddle will be extremely innocent allows the questioner to express his seemingly perverted thoughts in a suggestive way. These kinds of riddles, which associate sweet foods with sexuality, are very functional in that they contain extreme and different examples of sexual pleasure.

A situation that is met with harsh sanctions in terms of social norms for a man is to allow his daughter to be kissed by unrelated men. Yet, in the riddle “*Benim bir kızım var; gelen öper, giden öper – su bardağı*” (I have a daughter; kissed by the incoming and the outgoing – water glass) (Başgöz & Tietze 1999: 584), the opposite is the case. The primitive perversion impulse can be clearly seen in the riddle, in which the kissing of the daughter by everyone is expressed as extremely normal. The glass is likened to a girl because of its hollow inside feature, and considering the habit of using only one glass to drink water in every house, and the fact that people’s mouths come into contact with this glass, hence it is thought that the daughter is kissed by everyone. This action, which makes human beings uneasy even if it is thought of or verbalized, let alone being practiced, constitutes an example of excessive sexuality, that is, perversion. The drive for perversion can manifest by hiding behind the camouflaging feature of the riddle. A similar case is seen also in the riddle “*Yol üstünde gelin diklenir, gelen geçen ağzını öper – çeşme*” (The bride stands on the road, the passerby kisses her lips – fountain) (Kaya 1999: 484). Especially in the rural areas of Turkey, many fountains have been built on the roadsides for passengers to drink water. In this riddle, the fountain is imagined as a bride waiting by the roadside for people to kiss her. As it is known, the bride is the wife of a man, and showing sexual interest in her is forbidden by society. But this prohibition is not an obstacle to lust for a married woman. As a matter of fact, the perverse impulse can emerge through the riddle and satisfy the person without being attached to social norms. Finally, it is not wrong to say that there are also group sex desires and dreams in riddles, considering that the glass and the fountain are objects of common use.

One of the perverse impulses that tends to be excessive or demands different forms of sexual pleasure is the attitude of exposing nudity and another is removing the secrecy of sexuality. Fromm (2017 [1951]: 92), who argues that exhibitionism is one of the tendencies of human nature, considers the dreams of being naked in the middle of the crowd and without sanctions and a sense of shame as a manifestation of this tendency. In other words, an individual who cannot clearly display their nakedness and sexual acts in social life can easily realize this desire in their dreams. In this context, riddles are just like dreams. For example, a male individual can, through riddles, easily satisfy this

desire by describing his genitals, which he cannot show to girls in daily life. In the premise of the question, the man, who can describe his genitals down to the smallest detail, is both able to avoid the sanctions of social norms and satisfy the irrepressible desires of his primitive impulses, with the complacency of the very decent answer. As a matter of fact, in the riddle “*Dibi kılıdır, ucu sallanır – biber*” (The bottom is hairy, the tip swings – pepper) (Başgöz & Tietze 1999: 270), pepper is identified with the male organ (see Fig. 3). Before being plucked from the plant in which it grows, pepper is a vegetable with hairs at the bottom and swinging. Considering that the penis with the genital hair looks the same as the pepper, it will not be difficult to guess that the male individual who asks this riddle to the girls takes pleasure as though he is displaying his organ. This is because, thanks to the implicational feature of the riddle, the man, in a way, chooses to show his own organ to the girls by describing it in detail.



Figure 3. Pepper. Source: <https://tarfin.com/blog/biber-yetistiriciligi-nasil-yapilir>.

Being able to see the nudity of individuals of the opposite sex as well as exhibiting their own nudity gives a person a different pleasure. As a matter of fact, the riddle “*Yol üstünde çıplak bacak – eğreti otu*” (Bare legs on the road – fern) (Başgöz & Tietze 1999: 267) was created with the desire to expose nudity. Sexuality and nudity are phenomena that are not usually displayed in public. But the public display of lust-inducing organs is a fitting example of the manifestation of the perverse drive. In the riddle, the fern is likened to a woman

showing her bare leg by the roadside. The desire to see the legs of a woman, which is unlikely to be well satisfied in daily life, can be expressed thanks to the functional feature of the puzzle, and the perverse impulse manifests itself in the riddle.

Riddles with implications of sexual organs

Though it is a phenomenon that protects and maintains species, sexuality is an impulse that cannot be expressed explicitly. Despite this, the human mind has been constantly preoccupied with sexuality and has been able to express the concept with various symbols through psychic censorship mechanisms. In fact, as Abraham (2017: 24) relates, human beings associate everything with sexuality, and this association appears with various symbols in dreams and folkloric products. Especially the sexual organs are identified with objects that can be associated with them. In this context, riddles under the domination of sexual impulses also help to grasp the phenomenon of symbolization, which is one of the main pillars of psychoanalysis. Freud (2016 [1917]: 166–168) argues that any object resembling a male sexual organ represents this phenomenon in dreams (and hence in folkloric products). Thus, objects that are long, raised, that can penetrate into anything, that have the property of injuring and that can pour fluid through, are a symbol of the male sexual organ. On the same logical plane, objects that can contain things and appear as a closed space are also symbols of the female sexual organ. Many myths, fairy tales and similar folkloric creations have been analyzed considering these assumptions and a large body of literature has been created within the scope of psychoanalytic folklore research. In fact, according to Brunvand's (2009: 297) observation, it has been revealed that some British and Anglo-American riddles have some implicit sexual symbolization, albeit weakly. The same is true for Turkish riddles, which are virtually a material for the verification of psychoanalytic theories in folklore research.

For example, in the riddle “*Don içinde başı sallanır – uçkur*” (That which shakes his head in the underwear – *uçkur* (the name given to the tip of a waistbelt-like accessory which is inserted into the panties)) (Başgöz & Tietze 1999: 626), *uçkur* is likened to the penis (see Fig. 4). It is a pendulum-like end of a sort of waistbelt used in the past in order to prevent the trousers from falling off. Indeed, this item would hang in the trousers or panties, just like the phallus. Another item that is compatible with this physical and qualitative analogy is the flute. “*Kuru girdi, yaş çıktı; ağlar gözlü baş çıktı – kaval*” (That which enters dry and comes out wet with a weeping eye – flute) (Kaya 1999:

511), the flute is thought of as a penis. As described in the riddle, the flute is dry before it enters the mouth and gets wet after it leaves the mouth, which is associated with the penis before and after sex. Another riddle that describes the condition of the male and female organs during sex is “*Hanım yatar, bey sokar çıkarır, çarşafa siler – mürekkep kalemi, hokka, kâğıt*” (The lady lies down, the gentleman stabs her, wipes it on the sheet – inkwell, ink pen, and the paper) (Başgöz & Tietze 1999: 721). In the riddle, the pen is compared to the penis, the inkwell to the vagina, the ink to the semen, and the paper to the napkin. The pen enters into and comes out of a hollow object, just like a penis, and its tip is cleaned by wiping on a piece of paper.



Figure 4. Old Turkish pants with uçkur. Source: <https://www.osmanlidunyasi.com/silebezi-salvar-09>.

In another riddle alluding to the genitals, obscenity is there by reminding us of the genital hairs. As a matter of fact, in the riddle “*Kıllı ağzını açtı, çıplak içine kaçtı – çorap, ayak*” (The hairy opened her mouth, the bare escaped into it – socks and foot) (Kaya 1999: 511), socks were thought of as a vagina with hairs because of its wool and holes. The foot, on the other hand, is both bare and long, like the penis, and can be inserted into the socks that contain a closed space. The same situation is in the riddle “*Oturdum önüne, soktum deliğine – sandık, anahtar*” (I sat in front of it, I inserted into its hole – the chest, the key) (Kaya 1999: 511). The key is likened to the penis in that it is long and hard, and the chest is likened to the vagina with its keyhole.

Obviously, in other folkloric products, the people who associate the male and female genitals with similar objects admit in their own words how they created this symbolism in riddles and almost approve the phenomenon of sexual symbolism, which is one of the basic assumptions of psychoanalysis. Accordingly, in riddles – as Freud describes – a pencil, foot, flute, and key and similar other objects are likened to the male genitalia in view of their length, and quality to enter into an object. The inkwell, socks, and chest hole, which can hold objects

and contain a closed space, represent the female sexual organ. Obviously, the objects in question are depicted by likening the sexual organs, which fully confirms the basic premise of sexual symbolism.

The female genitalia can also be represented by fruit symbolism. Considering that the garden image represents the female body in folkloric creations (Freud 2016 [1917]: 170), it will be seen that some fruits grown in the garden are symbolized as sexual organs. The most famous of these fruits that we encounter in many folk literature products is pomegranate. For example, in “*Var git, var git, var getir; ellenmemiş bahçeden dikilmemiş nar getir – gelin*” (Go, go further and bring; bring an untasted pomegranate from an untouched garden – bride) (Başgöz & Tietze 1999: 290), the virgin body of the newly married bride is expressed with the image of “the untouched garden”, her genitals are thought of as a pomegranate. In the riddle “*Çarşıya git, al getir, vermez ise yalvar getir; satılmadık çarşıdan tadılmadık kız getir – nar*” (Go to the bazaar to fetch it, if not given beg for it; Bring an untasted girl from the newly set market – pomegranate) (Başgöz & Tietze 1999: 503), it is seen that the answer pomegranate to the riddle is described as a virgin girl. It is already known that the pomegranate symbolizes the feminine gender and even represents the woman having sexual intercourse (Karabaş 1981: 272). The riddles above provide evidence for this situation and confirm the sexual organ / fruit relationship so much so that while the pomegranate depicted in the premise of the first riddle symbolizes the female reproductive organ, it appears as the answer to the description of a virgin woman in the second riddle. In other words, the identification between the pomegranate and the female genitalia is already associated in the world of meaning peculiar to riddles. Thus, riddles alone, through the associations created with the fruit element, can explain the concept of sexual symbolism without the need for comparison with any other public creation.

RIDDLES CONTAINING AGGRESSION

Aggression arises from the death instinct inherent in human nature, according to Freud. As with biological structures, psychic powers also tend to return to the oldest, primary form. All living things made up of inanimate matter die due to internal causes and turn back into inanimate matter. Thus, the main purpose of life is death; that is, living beings live to die (Freud 2011: 45–46). But the death instinct is in conflict with the life instinct. Although the psychic structure of the creature tends to die, its life instinct, on the contrary, keeps the organism alive. Thus, the death instinct directs its destructive effect towards different objects other than the organism itself, and it manifests itself as aggression, targeting

other living things in the outside world. Trying to prevent aggression, which is an unavoidable impulse, is like clogging the mouth of a boiler that contains steam and whose steam temperature is constantly increasing. The most effective method of aggression is to direct this impulse and transfer it to another convenient object (Yavuzer 2013: 46). In this respect, human beings are not a kind and loving species that defends itself only when attacked. It strongly nurtures aggression as part of its instinctive trait. In other words, for the individual who is forced to establish social relationships by civilization, other people are not only helpful and sexual objects, but also creatures to satisfy the need for aggression, to exploit and to be made to suffer. Therefore, the perception and discourse that other people should also be loved is against human nature (Freud 2020b [1929]: 54–55). In this context, riddles containing the impulse of aggression can be examined under three headings.

Riddles of sarcasm aiming to embarrass

Riddles created with sexual images aim also to embarrass the person asked, and in this respect, they can serve for the impulses of aggression and hatred. This is because the purpose of such expressions in the structure of the riddle is to sexually humiliate the person being asked, rather than implying sexuality. The sexual images are constructed in such a way that the question premise of the riddle seems to point to only one concept. This is because depictions of the images contain obscene concepts and objects in the finest detail, including perfectly all the features that most people shun from using directly due to being shy. Thus, the person answering the riddle is left with no choice but to make a guess about sexuality. But, as stated before, the answer to the riddle is rather decent and has nothing to do with the obscene guess put forward. The deliberately guided false prediction will create a moral layer between the person answering the riddle and the person asking it, and even for the other individuals in the environment, for the individual who gives obscene answers to the riddle will assume an identity that is immoral in the eyes of others, with a mind full of sexuality and rudeness, and this will humiliate him or her. In this respect, one of the purposes of riddles that are created with sexual images but whose answers are not obscene is to embarrass and humiliate other people. In other words, such riddles are a folkloric manifestation of the individual's striving for superiority over other people.

According to Koestler (1997: 54–55), one way to discharge the innate impulse of aggression is to make fun of other people. While there are many ways to relieve softened aggression, laughter is a physiological response. As the human brain

developed during the evolutionary process, the individual began to express the inherent aggressive impulse in different ways compared to other living things. The impulse is manifested in the form of mockery and laughter. In other words, the main reason for individuals to mock and laugh is to harm other people. Therefore, it is not wrong to say that the same purpose is pursued in riddles that aim to make others come up with obscene predictions by distorting the image. For when the person who replies with a nasty concept for the answer, they will be punished by being condemned and ridiculed by other individuals who witness it. In other words, the individual will be psychologically damaged by being exposed to laughter, which is a manifestation of the aggressive drive in human nature.

Some of these riddles are examples of the kind that boys ask to the girls. Especially young boys and girls of school age plan to give an obscene answer by posing these riddles to each other. An obscene answer to these questions, in which the sexual element can be described in all its aspects without mentioning its name, will cause humiliation and ridicule of the respondent. As a matter of fact, foreplay and oral sex are described in the following riddle which is asked to the girls: “*Bacaklarını gereyim, arasına gireyim, şapur şapur edeyim – elek*” (Let me stretch your legs, get in between them, smack them – sieve) (Bağgöz & Tietze 1999: 271). The sieve, which is the answer to the riddle, has two long sticks resembling a human leg, and by swinging it from side to side, the grains are separated from stones, grass, etc. It is a tool for cleaning foreign objects (see Fig. 5). In the riddle, the opening of the sticks is compared to the opening of the legs of the woman and the sound during the shaking of the sieve is likened to the licking sound that occurs in oral sex. In this context, the depiction of love-making is expected to mislead the responding girl, make her give an obscene answer, and cause men to make fun of her.



Figure 5. Sieve. Source: <https://www.hepsiburada.com/dk-kalbur-erek-no-10-pm-HB000003LG40>.

It is known that most men have the habit of humiliating the opposite sex through riddles (Kaivola-Bregenhøj 2001: 82). However, it is not only men who use the

genre to embarrass and ridicule the opposite sex, thanks to its camouflaging feature. Girls can lure boys into the same trap in a similar way. For example, in the riddle “*Fatih Sultan Mehmet’in iki bacağı arasındaki kıllı şey nedir? – at*” (What is the hairy thing between the two legs of Fatih Sultan Mehmet? – horse) (Riddles n.d.), the girls have established a similarity between the horse and the penis. This is because when the horse is ridden, it stays between the two legs of a human just like the penis. Men who hear the premise of the question will first think of the penis. But when the real answer comes out, the boys will be humiliated and ridiculed by the girls as it is not the answer to the riddle.

In Turkish folklore, there are also riddles that men ask each other, and the purpose of these riddles is to embarrass and humiliate the addressee. These riddles, which also cause the emergence of humor, bear the traces of both aggression and sarcasm. As a matter of fact, the riddle “*Beyaz kıızı parmakladım – yoğurt*” (I fingered the white girl – yogurt) (Başgöz & Tietze 1999: 652) is quite common among men. As it is known, yogurt is white and tasted with fingers after fermentation. The act of sticking a finger into yogurt has been likened to the fantasy of using fingers during sex in the riddle. The person asked will also think about this fantasy and come up with the response, “Who is the white girl?” This answer will be enough for the owner of the riddle and other men in the environment to laugh and make fun of the person who answered it, as the answerer will think of a girl being fingered, not yogurt.

Some riddles that are asked among men and whose purpose is to embarrass are for younger children who are to recognize sexuality yet. The askers of such riddles, which are asked to children who do not yet have the ability to think abstractly and who do not know the terms related to sexuality, are usually young men who have completed their adolescence. In these riddles that adults ask young children, the humiliation occurs not because the riddle is answered incorrectly, but because it cannot be answered. This is because when the younger child hears an obscene riddle, their inability to make sense of it and their confusion will cause older boys to feel superior, for they are not little children anymore; they know very well about sexuality, sex, and the female body. For example, in the riddle “*Ananın ki yapışık, babanın ki dört parmak – kadın ve erkeğin namaza duruş şekli*” (That of the mother is attached, the father’s is four fingers – the way men and women stand during prayer) (Kaya 1999: 511), an allusion is made to the male and female organs. But this picture is quite complex. In Islam, women’s fingers should touch each other while worshipping. Men, on the other hand, should keep four fingers apart. This has led to the identification of the positions of the fingers of men and women during worship with the genitals. Both the fact that the riddle is constructed with a complex description and the child’s inability to recognize the genitals make it almost

impossible to answer the riddle. The helpless and meaningless gaze of the little boy creates an opportunity for young men to make fun of him.

Considering the implicative feature of the riddle type and looking at the examples above, it is noteworthy that the premises were constructed by depicting both the object in the answer, and the male and female sexual organs. However, obscuring the image in the text of the question, and even directing it to the obscene organs causes the answerer to make the wrong guess and to be embarrassed as stated earlier. Falling into this situation results in being exposed to shame and mockery by other people, which serves as a powerful social sanction.

Riddles with swear words and insults

The most common verbal form of aggression is swearing. Swearing as a form of verbal violence against the honor or dignity of a person has emerged with the transformation of the physiological aggression drive into a verbal action in the human species. In other words, unlike other living things, human beings try to respond to this instinctual need by inflicting psychological damage on their addressee by transferring their destructive urges to linguistic forms. But the social superego has also curbed verbal insult in parallel with the development of civilization. As a result, verbal insults, which replaced physical violence, were suppressed by the mechanism of social censorship. It is inevitable that this suppression will reflect on folkloric products. Thus, swearing has become a phenomenon that is suppressed in daily life and manifested in riddles, but has turned into an artistic expression of the aggressive drive existing in the subconscious of the individual. In other words, riddles enable the individual to engage in destructive activities towards the honor and dignity of other people.

The riddle is a genre formed by the feeling of superiority in itself. In environments where the tradition of asking riddles is practiced and is perceived not only as a means of entertainment but also as an important and serious issue, albeit softly, the anxiety of superiority becomes more evident. With the comfort of asking questions and the tension of having to guess the correct answer, individuals try to win a war against each other. According to Boratav (2000 [1969]: 113–114), this struggle for superiority in riddles was felt more strictly in the old times. The riddles that emerged with the replacement of bloody wars by word and knowledge competitions enabled societies to defeat each other without using weapons. Today, in the environments where the tradition of asking riddles is practiced, the donation is expected by the person who cannot give the correct answer, even if symbolically, or the virtual sale of their body in parts

bears the traces of this practice.² The riddles that the flagbearers³ asked each other at the weddings and the enigmas of the bards⁴ still preserve the primitive functions of this genre (Başgöz 1986: 248–249). In addition, the effectiveness of the aggressive impulse is clearly seen in some riddles containing insults, humiliation, and swearing. Thanks to the riddles in question, the individual is able to convey their inherent feelings of aggression and hatred to someone else in a literary manner and thus, while satisfying their primitive impulses stored in their id, they avoid the sanctions of their superego.

In the riddles with insults and swears, the clue in the premise of the question is deliberately chosen from obscure, complex or meaningless words. This is because the answerer must be misled so that the aggressive instincts of the asker of the riddle can be satisfied. For example, in the riddle “*Çıt pıt, bunu bilmeyen it – kibrit*” (Hit click, you are the dog if you can’t answer it – matchstick) (Başgöz & Tietze 1999: 420), the word “click” defines the sound that comes out when a match is lit. But it is impossible to guess. As a matter of fact, the word click can be used for many other situations, as it does not fully correspond to the sound in question. The person asking the riddle is aware of this uncertainty, and it leads the addressee to the wrong answer. This is because if the person being asked gives the wrong answer, the asker will be able to insult them.⁵ A similar situation is also present in the riddle “*Bir bacada lak lak, bunu bilmeyen ahmak – leylek*” (Lak Lak on the chimney, idiots to fail to answer – stork) (Kaya 1999: 508). However, this riddle is more meaningful than the previous one, and its answer is more predictable. The interjection “*lak lak*” was preferred because it resembles the sound of storks. The biggest clue in the riddle is the chimney, for the storks mostly nest on the chimneys of buildings. Those who cannot answer the riddle correctly despite all these clues are described as idiots. Thus, the insulting desire of the person asking the riddle originating from the aggressive impulse is realized.

In many societies, the most destructive abusing words are those that target sacred values. These values may consist of religious and national elements as well as elements deemed sacred by the individual. Among individuals who belong to the same nation and who mostly believe in the same religion, swearing is undoubtedly a matter of conflict between individuals. In this context, riddles are expected to contain destructive words against personal sanctity when used as a tool of blasphemy by members of the same ethnic group and religion. As a matter of fact, this situation can be mentioned in the ensuing riddles. For example, in the riddle “*Bir kara hindi, anana bindi – çarşaf*” (A black turkey got on your mother – burqa) (Başgöz & Tietze 1999: 207), the black burqa was worn by women to cover their backs in the old Turkish society and it was used as a tool of insult by being likened to a turkey. This is because the word “get

on” in Turkish is also used in the sense of a man having sex with a woman. Therefore, the person asking the riddle replaces the female figure with the mother of the addressee and can satisfy the aggressive impulse whether the answer is correct or not. Therefore, it does not matter whether the answer is guessed incorrectly or correctly in riddles constructed with sexual images of the mother. The asker of the riddle fulfills the purpose in the premise of the riddle and is able to verbally decipher the destructive instincts towards the addressee.

In Turkish, it is quite common for many verbs to allude to sexual acts or to be used in a sexually suggestive way. Even though it has nothing to do with sexuality, any verb can refer to something completely obscene depending on its use in the sentence. For example, although the expression “to hand over” means “to put something in someone else’s hand”, when used alone it corresponds to a great insult, meaning “to hold the penis”. For example, in the riddle of “*Bizim eve gel de eline vereyim – ekmek*” (Come to our house and I will hand it over to you – bread) (Başgöz & Tietze 1999: 268), the premise is designed as offering bread to the guest who comes to the house, but actually carries a sexual overtone and aims to insult the addressee. Another riddle that is constructed based on this semantic feature of Turkish verbs and carries the purpose of insult is as follows: “*Gelme evime, korum dibine – iskemle*” (Don’t come to my house, lest I will place it in your deep – chair) (Başgöz & Tietze 1999: 557). The verb “place” in the Turkish language is also considered a sexual insult and is used to mean “to insert as in sex”. The word “dip (deep)” is used in the sense of the human defecation organ. Thus, although it is constructed in the sense of “giving a chair to the guest to sit”, this riddle contains an insult focused on sexual action and serves the aggressive impulses of the person asking. A similar method is also found in the following riddle: “*Ağrıtmadan, acıtmadan ananın eline kıpkırmızı giren nedir? – kına*” (What is it that goes into your mother’s hand red without pain or hurt? – henna) (Başgöz & Tietze 1999: 414). Henna is a functional substance in Turkish society. On special or ordinary days, women want to look beautiful by applying this red-colored substance to their hands (see Fig. 6). In the riddle, henna is associated with the penis because of its color. This is because the penis also takes on a reddish color upon erection. Henna is also a substance found on women’s hands, and its likeness to a penis has the effect of being identified with a fantasy that occurs during sex. This fantasy is for the penis to orgasm with the woman’s hands. But in the riddle, the mother of the interlocutor is targeted, and the reason for this must be sought in the subconscious of the person asking. The asker of the riddle, who expresses his harmful words towards his interlocutor in an aesthetic form, that is, with the mask of a riddle, has satisfied his motivation regardless of the answer to it.



Figure 6. Henna. Source: <https://pratikyontemler.com/kina-lekesi-nasil-cikar/>.

The mother is sacred to all in the Turkish culture, and swearing at one's mother is equivalent to the greatest psychological destruction that can be done to that person. In other words, the highest point that the aggression and destructive desire in the individual's instincts can reach in the verbal context is through the cursing at the "sacred" mother figure. When the riddles above are approached from a psychoanalytic perspective, it is seen that the words and associations preferred for the description of the image in the answer are created to remind one of sexual intercourse. That is because, as Freud (2014 [1901]: 84–86) also states, the associations that a person unconsciously makes or the things they say reveal a wide range of thought content that they have made a great effort to conceal, the content that even they themselves are not aware of. Implying things that are forbidden and reflecting the subconscious, the only purpose of these words is to refer to what is shameful through a seemingly innocent medium. In this context, blasphemous depictions of the mothers in riddles, which are the sociocultural equivalents of the slips and jokes that we encounter in daily life, could well be considered as the reflection of the social subconscious. Although the riddles in question were created by making sexual implications, the way they are perceived by the addressee is insulting and cursing, as a result of the fact that Turkish verbs also benefit from the meaning of insulting with a hint of sexuality. In other words, riddles implying having sex with a person's mother mean a severe insult rather than sexuality in the collective perception of Turkish society. Therefore, the riddles with this feature were evaluated among examples of aggression and insults in the study.

Riddles of aggression containing death wish

Aggression is a manifestation of the death instinct inherent in human nature. Suppressing the destructive impulse towards its own body, a human being's psyche directs it towards another target. Therefore, death is a natural phenomenon that can be willed for even the closest relations or friends. While the human subconscious cannot even imagine its own death, it can easily accept the death of another. The reason for this is that the death of other people is insignificant to the individual, even a demanded situation. Even at the roots of the sincerest love, there is a desire for death. This is because nature has placed the feeling of hate right after the feeling of love in order to keep the latter alive and awake (Freud 2019b [1915]: 51–57). However, the expression of words and behaviors that are reflective of the desire for other people's death is prohibited by various social norms. In this case, riddles step in and it becomes possible to express the desire to kill and the hatred felt since the primitives, albeit censored.

For example, "*Erguvan yaprağı, hazret toprağı; ya bunu bileceksin ya bu gece öleceksin – kına*" (The Judas tree leaf, the earth of the Hadrat; either you will know this or you will die tonight – henna) (Kaya 1999: 508) contains the expression that death will occur if the correct answer is not given. Henna is an ornamental material that is accepted as a religious element in Turkish society and believed to be the earth of paradise. As a matter of fact, this religious sanctity is implied by the word "hadrat" (close to excellency in meaning but used usually to address the prophets, caliphs, and other religious leaders) in the riddle. Therefore, according to the logic of the riddle, not being able to guess the holy henna figure correctly, no matter how complex it is, is a great crime and the penalty for this crime is death. A similar situation exists in the riddle "*Minare minare, minarenin üstünde bir ocak, bunu bilmeyen bu sene ölecek – bulut*" (Minaret, minaret, there is a hearth on the minaret, whoever does not know this will die this year – cloud) (Başgöz & Tietze 1999: 181). Although the answer to this riddle is not sacred or religious, the premise of the riddle contains elements of belief. The minaret, which is the highest part of the mosques, is a religious element and is associated with the cloud as it is close to the sky. The sanction of not correctly predicting the cloud, which is associated with a religious and holy building, is death. As can be seen, in both riddles the urge to kill has been tried to be expressed through religious elements that the society considers sacred, in order to establish a logical and sound reason.

The desire to kill, directed at the respondent, is perceived through the implied image/answer association in the riddles. However, as can be seen in the examples, it is almost impossible to solve this association, that is, to guess the answer to the riddle correctly. The descriptive words that form the first part of

the question premise are so mysteriously established that they virtually set the stage for the realization of the conditional action expressed in the second part. This action, on the other hand, is aimed at the death of the person answering the riddle and is deliberately constructed by the person asking. In other words, the main reason underlying the questioner to create the puzzle in a complex and unpredictable way is to make the responder face death, albeit symbolically, by making them fail to give the correct answer. This undoubtedly satisfies the urge to kill to some extent.

CONCLUSION

Various aspects of human psychology were instrumental in the emergence of the riddle. Its potential to maintain the mystery and a point of angle that sees objects and events through different glasses, along with having sexual and aggressive drives in its essence, are the main factors that play a role in the emergence of this genre. As a reflection of the life and death instincts inherent in human nature, these drives are particularly prominent in riddles that contain obscene associations and threatening words and express insults and blasphemy. Sexuality, which constantly occupies the human mind, can freely navigate between the lines with the method known as image deflection or False Gestalt. In this way, sexual fantasy and perversions can be expressed in detail in riddles and new additions can be made to this vast world of imagination. In short, riddles are a manifestation of the human pursuit of sexual pleasure. The riddles are also proof and verification of the phenomenon of sexual symbolism, one of the basic assumptions of psychoanalysis. Although sexual symbolism has been criticized since the time it was put forward, the cultural products of the societies confirm the claims of psychoanalysts, as can be seen in the riddles questioned.

One of the functions that riddles have is to serve the aggressive drive. An individual who has the impulse of aggression drive along with sexuality can have superiority over other people thanks to this genre as they satisfy their destructive urges by humiliating and embarrassing them. They can even mock the answerer and laugh at the wrong answers to the riddle, making the destructive effect of laughter a servant to their own instincts. A person who camouflages the desire to perform harmful actions that they cannot perform in daily life can, by the aesthetic feature of riddles, insult and swear at other people. In other words, they satisfy the need for aggression. In addition, riddles that contain statements that the respondent will die if the correct answer is not given bear the traces of the desire to kill, which is inherent in human nature. In short,

primitive impulses known as sexuality and aggression open to the outside world by finding an open door in the human mind through the riddle-asking activity. Thus, the individual satisfies the wild desires without being blocked by both mental and social censorship mechanisms.

Although Turkish riddles have been examined as samples, the findings and interpretations made in this article bear a universal character. That is because sexuality and aggression are one of the common psychic traits of all humanity, regardless of nationality. However, riddles containing obscenity, threats, and curses are among the folkloric elements present in the oral tradition of all societies. Thus, it would not be wrong to say that humanity has the opportunity to express the drive for sexuality and aggression stemming from its instincts in different languages, but in similar ways. Thus, the Freudian reading of the Turkish folk riddles can be seen as a verification of the view that the human spirit is the same everywhere and shows a similar course of development, especially if it can be supported by other similar researches on the folkloric products of other cultures.

NOTES

- ¹ As can be seen in these riddles and the examples to follow, the premises provided in the riddles explicitly signify something sexual or indecent and they obliterate the real or decent answer almost totally in many cases. In other words, when the person who was asked learns the real answer, they find themselves in a state of total deception so much so that they cannot associate what is provided in the premises with the actual answers in most cases, even after learning the answer.
- ² In environments where the Turkish riddle tradition is practiced, a person who cannot guess the riddle correctly is asked to donate something in jest. The winner of the riddle competition asks a question like “What are you giving us?” On the other hand, the loser answers like “giving away the key to Heaven, Kaaba, half of Istanbul”. In addition, the organs of the defeated person can be put up for sale symbolically (see Kaya 1999: 466–467).
- ³ At Turkish weddings, Flagbearer is a person who represents the family to which he belongs, holding the Turkish flag and having a large archive of riddles. Flagbearer riddles are performed at weddings in a ceremony called “meeting the bride”. In this ceremony, the family of the groom goes to the bride’s house with a large crowd, with their flagbearer in the front. The flagbearer of the groom’s group competes with the flagbearer of the bride’s side. At the end of the contest, whichever party is defeated will deliver the flag to the other, and the defeated family has to do what the other family says during the wedding (see Başgöz 1986: 248–249).
- ⁴ The tradition of minstrelsy is the artistic and literary activities of the folk in Turkish geography since the archaic times. A bard is a poet who belongs to this tradition and who comes out of common folks and sings poems according to the literary taste of the people and tells stories. In the Turkish minstrelsy tradition, the conundrums he asks have an important role in determining the power and poetry of the bard. Customarily,

a bard forms an enigmatic lyric on various subjects, especially religion. Other bards, trusting their skills to compete against his poetry, try to solve this enigma and create another lyric containing answers. The bard who solves the answer is given various gifts and the bard who is the owner of the riddle is considered defeated (see Artun 2018 [2005]: 98–99).

- ⁵ The word ‘it’ used for a dog or kopek in Turkish is a synonymous one and it is usually pronounced when humiliating someone.

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