



*Uluslararası Türkçe Edebiyat Kültür Eğitim Dergisi Sayı: 15/1 2026 s. 163-183, TÜRKİYE*

*Araştırma Makalesi*

**ARCHETYPES OF THE BLACKSMITH AND THE DEVIL IN BASQUE AND ANATOLIAN FOLKLORE FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF CULTURAL MEMORY: AESTHETIC PROJECTIONS IN THE FILM *ERREMENTARI***

**Serap SARIBAŞ\***

**Geliş Tarihi: 15 Eylül 2025**

**Kabul Tarihi: 13 Ocak 2026**

**Abstract**

This study advances a comparative analysis of the *Errementari* narrative in Basque folklore and the blacksmith-devil constellation in the Anatolian oral tradition, situating both corpora in relation to cultural memory. The analysis examines the apotropaic efficacy of iron, the purificatory valence of fire, and the liminal positioning of the blacksmith as symbolic codifications of social order and traces the rearticulation of ritual continuity across aesthetic and mythopoetic registers in the *Book of Dede Korkut*, the legend of Blacksmith Kawa, and talismanic practices. Drawing on Jan Assmann's theory of cultural memory and Mircea Eliade's account of mythic sacrality, the study conceptualizes archetypal oppositions as historically sedimented and culturally operative structures, approached via a comparative folkloristic methodology. The article contributes to interdisciplinary debates across folklore, memory studies, and aesthetics by elucidating the dynamic interplay of continuity and transformation governing the persistence of mythical imaginaries in modern cultural formations.

**Keywords:** Cultural memory, ritual continuity, comparative folklore, apotropaic practices, *Errementari*.

**KÜLTÜREL BELLEK PERSPEKTİFİNDEN BASK VE ANADOLU FOLKLORUNDA DEMİRCİ VE ŞEYTAN ARKETİPLERİ: *ERREMENTARİ* FİLMİNDEKİ ESTETİK İZDÜŞÜMLERİ**

**Öz**

Bu çalışma, Bask folklorundaki *Errementari* anlatısını Anadolu sözlü geleneğinde yer alan demirci-şeytan motifleriyle kültürel bellek perspektifi üzerinden karşılaştırmalı biçimde incelemektedir. Demirin apotropaik işlevi, ateşin arındırıcı niteliği ve demircinin liminal konumu aracılığıyla toplumsal düzenin sembolik kodlanması değerlendirilmekte; Dede Korkut hikâyeleri, Demirci Kawa efsanesi ve nazarlık pratikleri üzerinden ritüel sürekliliğin estetik ve mitsel düzeylerde nasıl yeniden üretildiği açıklanmaktadır. Çalışma, Jan Assmann'ın kültürel bellek kuramı ile Mircea Eliade'nin mitin kutsal işlevine dair yaklaşımlarını kuramsal zemin olarak benimseyerek, karşılaştırmalı folklor incelemesi yöntemiyle arketipsel karşıtlıkların tarihsel ve kültürel işlevlerini ifade etmektedir. Çalışma, arketipsel karşıtlıkların sinema aracılığıyla yeniden kodlanışını, toplumsal hafızanın sürekliliğini

\* Assoc. Prof. Dr.; Karamanoğlu Mehmetbey University Department of English Language and Literature, [serapsaribas@kmu.edu.tr](mailto:serapsaribas@kmu.edu.tr), ROR ID: [037vxf096](https://orcid.org/037vxf096).

pekiştiren ve modern estetik bağlamlarda işlevsel dönüşümler yaratan bir süreç olarak konumlandırmaktadır. Böylece makale, folklor, bellek ve sanat arasındaki kesişim alanına disiplinler arası bir katkı sunmakta ve mitik imgelerin çağdaş kültürdeki süreklilik ile dönüşüm dinamiklerini açıklamaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Kültürel bellek, ritüel süreklilik, karşılaştırmalı folklor, apotropaik uygulamalar, *Errementari*.

### Introduction

The forge necessitates conceptualization as a liminal dispositif, a crucible marked by the co-implication of sacralization and perdition, its flames instituting the simultaneity of creation and annihilation as a constitutive condition. The paradox inscribed in cultural imaginaries that embed demonic figures inside furnaces oriented toward survival consequently demands sustained hermeneutic scrutiny. Within this epistemic configuration, folklore foregrounds its operation as symbolic economy, functioning as a cultural assemblage by cosmological schemas are formalized, collective anxieties ritualized, and archetypal structures subjected to continual reactivation across mutable temporal regimes. Dundes's formulation of folklore as "the mirror of culture" (Dundes, 1965, p. 3) thereby designates not a mimetic surface but an apparatus of cultural production positioned at the intersection of reflection and invention. Thompson's *Motif-Index of Folk Literature* monumentalized this apparatus by consecrating the motif as "the smallest element in a tale having a power to persist in tradition" (Thompson, 1955, p. xii), thus rendering intelligible symbolic constellations capable of transposition across heterogeneous cultural terrains. At this level of theoretical articulation, Jung's analytical psychology inscribed the blacksmith as an archetype of transformation, intimacy with fire staging the shadow, the demonic underside constitutive of cultural life (Jung, 1968, p. 112). Eliade intensified this ambivalence with the assertion that "the forge is always a sacred space because it transforms the raw into the usable, the dangerous into the necessary" (Eliade, 1996, p. 55). Within this regime of sacral ambivalence, sacrality remains inseparable from peril, sanctification inflected by transgression, and the smith configured as a liminal mediator whereby creation and dissolution enter conjoint articulation.

Anatolian repertoires generated elaborations of the same archetype along divergent symbolic trajectories. In the *Book of Dede Korkut*, smiths consecrated the heroic economy through the fabrication of weapons embodying communal survival (Boratav, 2012, p. 85). The insurgent myth of Demirci Kawa (*Kawa the Blacksmith*) enacted a transfiguration of the forge into locus of political revolt, the hammer sacralized as metonym of collective emancipation (Sakaoğlu, 2003, p. 67). Surpassing the confines of epic narration, the *ocak* archive (*sacred hearth lineage*) functioned as genealogical archive of charisma, mediating between communal body and metaphysical order (Ocak, 1999, p. 54). The *nazarlık* (protective talisman) figures less as amulet than as semiotic condensation of unseen anxieties, the objectification of alteric threat in material form, a ritual economy rendering collective fear materially legible (Örnek, 1971, p. 112). Counterposed to Basque symbolic inscriptions that cast the smith as an uncanny neighbor, Anatolian imagination elevated him to the status of guarantor of communal integrity, a configuration resonant with Nancy's theorization of community as exposure, a collectivity constituted not by essence but by vulnerability (Nancy, 1991). Liminality here becomes recoded into sanctity, metallurgy transfigured into protection.

Academic discourse, in contradistinction, perpetuated methodological provincialism. From Barandiarán to Ott, Basque scholarship monumentalized the mythographic assemblage, remaining circumscribed by regionalist frames; Turkish scholarship, emphasizing metallurgy's sacral charge, reproduced an insularity effacing its European homologues. These archival delimitations, safeguarding invaluable material, occluded comparative horizons and effaced possibilities of cross-cultural semiotics. Recent interventions including Siikala's work on mythic mentality and symbolic imagination (2002), Koven's reframing of *cinematic folklore* (2021), and newer studies on intercultural adaptation published between 2022 and 2023 have shifted the analytic horizon, myth reframed as mobile semiotic regime instead of bounded cultural artifact. Assmann's dictum that "tradition survives not by preservation but by reactivation" (Assmann, 2011, p. 25) acquires decisive resonance here: endurance results not from conservation but from symbolic migration across cultural terrains. Within this reframed horizon, the present analysis situates *Errementari* in dialogue with Anatolian corpora, unearthing stratified semiotics configuring the smith-devil motif across divergent landscapes.

The interpretive dispositif elaborated in this inquiry interrogates the academic inclination to provincialize myth, narratives sealed within national or regional containers as though immutable artifacts. Confronting this reduction, the blacksmith assumes the status of transhistorical archetype, his cultural fate divergent: pariah in Basque imagination, protector in Anatolian ritual. He operates, in Assmann's formulation, as "a figure of reactivation" (Assmann, 2011, p. 25), locus through which communities negotiate fear, liminality, and authority by reconfiguring inherited codes into new symbolic constellations. To situate *Errementari* in dialogue with the *ocak* tradition or the insurgent myth of Demirci Kawa constitutes less a juxtaposition of tales than an excavation of the subterranean grammar of cultural semiotics through which cultures articulate precarious economies of sanctity and peril, continuity and rupture, communal integrity and alteric threat, myth disclosed as both enduring structure and mutable negotiation. This study articulates a comparative folkloristic inquiry grounded in cultural memory theory, directing analytical attention toward the persistence, transformation, and aesthetic reinscription of the blacksmith-devil constellation across Basque and Anatolian traditions. Folkloric narrative, ritual practice, and cinematic representation converge within an integrated analytical horizon, enabling examination of archetypal configurations as historically sedimented symbolic formations mediating continuity, authority, and cultural meaning across divergent temporal and medial contexts.

### 1. Methodology

This study situates itself within an interpretive humanities methodology that conceptualizes folklore and cinema as epistemic formations articulating symbolic knowledge across historical time. Folkloric narrative and cinematic representation operate as culturally productive systems of signification mediating memory, authority, and symbolic continuity. Within this methodological orientation, myth attains analytical visibility as a mode of meaning production sustained by reiteration, displacement, and aesthetic reconfiguration. The research advances a comparative folkloristic methodology grounded in relational analysis. Comparison functions as a critical heuristic designed to render legible the structural logic governing differential inscription of analogous archetypal configurations across distinct cultural imaginaries. Basque folklore, particularly the *Errementari* narrative complex, and Anatolian folkloric corpora including the *Book of Dede Korkut*, the myth of *Demirci Kawa*, and apotropaic

belief practices enter analytical consideration as culturally specific articulations of a shared symbolic grammar shaped by divergent historical, religious, and aesthetic regimes.

The analytical procedure integrates close textual reading, symbolic interpretation, and aesthetic analysis. Folkloric narratives receive sustained examination with attention directed toward narrative architecture, liminal figuration, ritual function, and socio symbolic positioning of craft, fire, and demonic agency. This analytical orientation draws on folkloristic emphases on function, performance, and transmission, enabling interpretive movement beyond descriptive motif cataloguing toward examination of symbolic activation, negotiation, and endurance within cultural memory. Cinematic material, with particular emphasis on *Errementari* (2017), enters analysis through film-oriented folklore studies and visual hermeneutics. Cinema acquires analytical status as a cultural dispositif enabling condensation, displacement, and symbolic intensification of mythic material. Analytical focus concentrates on *mise en scène*, sound design, iconographic density, spatial configuration, and narrative rhythm as aesthetic mechanisms facilitating the translation of oral tradition into cinematic allegory. Filmic representation participates in mythopoetic production and contributes to the rearticulation of folkloric memory within modern visual culture.

The methodological architecture draws conceptual orientation from cultural memory theory, particularly Jan Assmann's formulation of cultural memory as a process sustained by reactivation. This orientation enables tracing the endurance of archetypal figures such as the blacksmith across temporal and medial displacements through reiterative inscription within ritual practice, narrative circulation, and aesthetic form. Archetypal criticism, informed by Jungian and post Jungian perspectives, operates as symbolic analytics elucidating structures of transformation, liminality, and ambivalence embedded within cultural imagination. Myth theory and semiotics reinforce this orientation by situating myth within historically contingent regimes of signification. The methodological stance resists disciplinary compartmentalization. Folklore studies, film theory, philosophy, and memory studies intersect as mutually informing analytical domains, reflecting the composite nature of the object of inquiry traversing narrative, ritual, aesthetic, and philosophical registers. This interdisciplinary positioning privileges relational coherence over additive synthesis and preserves cultural specificity across media. The research corpus consists exclusively of published folkloric texts, archival sources, and publicly accessible audiovisual works. Absence of empirical fieldwork, interviews, surveys, or interaction with human or animal subjects eliminates the requirement for ethical committee approval. Methodological emphasis remains anchored in interpretive rigor, theoretical reflexivity, and contextual sensitivity, foregrounding folklore and cinema as living cultural formations sustaining collective memory and archetypal imagination.

## 2. Theoretical Framework

A theoretical engagement with the blacksmith-devil constellation presupposes a discursive architecture resisting reduction to taxonomy and interrogating the symbolic economies sustaining the motif. The classificatory tradition in folklore, epitomized by Stith Thompson's *Motif-Index of Folk Literature*, designates the motif as "the smallest element in a tale having a power to persist in tradition" (Thompson, 1955, p. xii). The expression "power to persist" signals a hermeneutic problematic: persistence eludes construal as mechanical continuity, attaining legibility only as cultural reinscription within shifting semiotic infrastructures. Pertev Naili Boratav intensified this register by articulating Turkish folk

narratives as deriving meaning through their “function in the community, not through isolation as texts” (Boratav, 2012, p. 27). Function registers reactivation; classification articulates distribution. The conjunction of these registers configures the motif as transnational circulation entwined with communal articulation, breadth interwoven with ritual density.

The comparative horizon accentuates this dialectic. The Aarne-Thompson-Uther catalogue delineates transnational distribution, yet classificatory neutrality occludes cultural inscriptions granting demonic figures situated resonance. Anatolian legends, as Sakaoğlu’s analysis inscribes, figure the devil less as universal adversary than as ritualized presence embedded in oral performance and communal practice (Sakaoğlu, 2003, p. 114). Treating such practices as typological residues effaces ritual intensity. Classification thus demands alignment with Roland Barthes’s conception of myth as “a type of speech chosen by history” (Barthes, 1991, p. 118). The smith’s deception of the devil materializes less as abstract plot unit than as discursive formation intelligible through its mythographic archive and ritual economy.

Archetypal and myth criticism amplify this framework by exposing symbolic sedimentations underlying narrative figuration. Carl Jung theorized the blacksmith within the archetypal order of transformation, intimacy with fire dramatizing the *shadow*, the demonic underside constitutive of cultural life (Jung, 1968, p. 112). Transformation is articulated at the register of psychic confrontation, with technical craft displaced and the forge functioning as a metaphor for the unconscious. Georges Dumézil’s tripartite model situated the smith in the productive function, yet his capacity to overpower demonic sovereignty destabilized the very order tripartition intended to secure (Dumézil, 1968, p. 87). Northrop Frye configured comparable figures within ironic and tragic modes of Western narrative, liminal agents, presence unsettled hierarchical structures (Frye, 1957, p. 162). Considered in contrapuntal relation, these approaches render the smith an archetypal anomaly: simultaneously productive and sovereign yet irreducible to either, embodying liminal figuration of cultural ambivalence.

The modern reinscription of myth within cultural production discloses this ambivalence with renewed clarity. Barthes theorized myth as “speech chosen by history” (Barthes, 1991, p. 118), a semiotic regime perpetually reframed in new discourses. Linda Hutcheon extended this logic into adaptation theory, defining adaptation as “repetition without replication” (Hutcheon, 2006, p. 7). *Errementari* enacts precisely such rearticulation: the Basque legend reappears inflected by Gothic aesthetics and Catholic eschatology. Walter Benjamin’s claim that technical reproducibility reconfigures without effacing the “aura” of tradition (Benjamin, 1968, p. 223) illuminates this transformation, for cinematic reactivation diminishes oral immediacy even as it intensifies allegorical resonance. Contemporary film theory consolidates the point. Fredric Jameson conceptualized allegory as historical structure (Jameson, 1981, p. 67), Noël Carroll analyzed Gothic horror as dramatization of cultural anxiety (Carroll, 1990, p. 28), and Laura Mulvey theorized the gaze as determinant of cinematic meaning (Mulvey, 1975, p. 8). Viewed in analytic constellation, these frameworks construe *Errementari* as cinematic allegory, a mythopoetic archive reframed through Gothic visuality and modern spectatorship.

Cultural memory theory situates this cinematic reactivation within ritual economies. Jan Assmann articulated cultural memory as surviving “not by preservation but by reactivation” (Assmann, 2011, p. 25), a dictum resonant with Boratav’s functionalist emphasis and Anatolian ritual practice. The *ocak* lineage, as Ahmet Yaşar Ocak documented, operates as a genealogical archive of charisma that situates authority in familial transmission and spiritual inheritance

(Ocak, 1999, p. 54). Within this archive, the blacksmith mediates between communal body and metaphysical order. Sedat Veyis Örnek theorized iron and fire as apotropaic forces, the *nazarlık* functioning as condensation of communal anxiety into objectified emblem (Örnek, 1971, p. 112). Eliade's sacral metallurgy intersects with this ritual economy: metallurgy consecrates matter through transformation, materializing fear into protective symbol (Eliade, 1996, p. 55).

Philosophical inflections consolidate this architecture by theorizing exclusion and community. Julia Kristeva's analysis of *abjection* elucidates Patxi's marginalization in *Errementari*, yet it also illuminates Anatolian legends in *şeytan* and *cin* embody expelled impurity securing communal boundaries (Kristeva, 1982, p. 4). Jean-Luc Nancy's meditation on community as exposure complements this perspective, conceptualizing the *ocak* lineage as collectivity constituted by vulnerability, not essence (Nancy, 1991, p. 35). Applied to the Basque corpus, Nancy's reflection renders intelligible Patxi, marked by abjection, paradoxically safeguards the very community that repudiates him. Juxtaposing Kristeva and Nancy across Basque and Anatolian registers foregrounds abjection and exposure as twin modalities through communities negotiate alterity.

This theoretical architecture provides not an ornamental backdrop but the condition of interpretive possibility. In the absence of classificatory mapping, circulation remains untraceable; without archetypal analysis, anomaly collapses into banality; stripped of cultural memory, ritual reactivation dissolves into inert preservation; uninflected by philosophy, communal stakes evade articulation. The framework elaborated here secures the epistemic horizon for the analysis that follows, a horizon uniting folklore, cinema, ritual, and philosophy to configure the blacksmith not as folkloric residue but as archetypal sediment, ritual mediator, and cinematic allegory of cultural memory.

### 3. The Blacksmith and the Devil in Basque Folklore

The *Errementari* legend occupies a pivotal locus within the Basque mythopoetic archive, its narrative configuration predicated on the figuration of the smith deceiving and restraining the devil through cunning, ritualized fire, and the apotropaic potency of iron. Barandiarán's ethnographic inscription delineated this configuration as "a theatre of reversal, human ingenuity subjugates cosmic disorder" (Barandiarán, 1972, p. 142). Within this hermeneutic economy, the smith figures simultaneously as an object of dread and reverence, his craft mediating marginality and indispensability in a symbolic order that inscribes liminality as communal necessity.

Performance theory rearticulates the tale as enactment rather than inert residue. Bauman theorized performance as "a mode of communicative display that validates tradition through enactment" (Bauman, 1986, p. 3). Oral circulation during communal gatherings enacted tradition's authority, dramatizing the smith's triumph as an allegory of collective cohesion. Hymes's (1981), ethnopoetic perspective registered the structuring force of parallelism and rhythm, Ong situated orality as a technology of memory (Ong, 1982, p. 41). The forge, positioned on the village periphery, functioned as liminal topography, enacting what Van Gennep delineated as threshold practice (Van Gennep, 1960, p. 15) and Turner configured as a locus of *communitas* (Turner, 1969, p. 94).

Theological sedimentation complicates the narrative's density. Christian's study of Iberian religiosity documented Catholic orthodoxy infiltrated vernacular religion, translating demonological categories into oral discourse (Christian, 1989, p. 76). Inquisition records revealed repertoires permeated by diabolic imagery, producing, scholars designate as *folk Catholicism*, the vernacular reworking of theological categories into allegories of temptation, punishment, and redemption.

Motif analysis embeds the tale within transnational repertoires. Thompson's *Motif-Index* codified the "Smith and the Devil" narrative complex (D1400-D1499) as an international type. Afanasyev's Russian corpus inscribed smiths, entrapped the devil through contractual trickery (Afanasyev, 1946, p. 211). Anatolian oral tradition configured analogous logics in *Keloğlan* tales where demonic or jinn figures succumbed to wit (Sakaoğlu, 2003, p. 115). Norse myth articulated Wayland the Smith as a paradoxical embodiment of mastery and exile (North, 1997, p. 64). Greek religion positioned Hephaistos as a liminal deity of fire, stigmatized and indispensable simultaneously (Burkert, 1985, p. 170). Central Asian epic archives, as Ergun demonstrated, presented smith-shamans as ritual mediators, their manipulation of metal constituting sacral agency (Ergun, 2004, p. 88). Dundes conceptualized such recurrence as "international types" encoding universal anxieties within local idioms (Dundes, 1965, p. 14).

The pervasiveness of this narrative topology derives from metallurgy's symbolic function. Iron mediated the transformation of raw matter into usable form, configuring the threshold between nature and culture, survival and peril. The smith therefore inscribed the archetype of liminality, anomaly, and ambivalence. Siikala's analysis of mythic mentality demonstrates symbolic motifs travel across cultural contexts and undergo reinterpretation within new cosmological frameworks (Siikala, 2002). The *Errementari* legend exemplified such palimpsestic inscription, universal anxieties sedimented into local narrative and ritually reactivated within Basque society.

Urkiyo Alijo's *Errementari* (2017) rearticulated this folkloric constellation as cinematic allegory, oral motifs re-inscribed through Gothic visuality, Catholic semiotics, and Basque cultural memory. Filmed in Basque, the production constituted cultural reappropriation, embedding oral heritage in modern media and articulating linguistic distinctiveness within cinematic discourse.

Cinematic composition intensified folkloric codes. *Mise-en-scène* foregrounded metallic textures, chiaroscuro illumination, and spatial confinement. Chains, rusted tools, and the forge functioned as allegorical props. The soundscape saturated the diegesis with metallic reverberations and infernal growls, materializing the devil's presence as auditory inscription. Catholic iconography, including purgatorial flames, penitential suffering, and infernal judgment, interlaced with folkloric trickery, engendered a semiotic surplus whereby oral symbolism acquired allegorical density.

Historical inscription magnified allegorical potency. The Carlist milieu dramatized civil fracture, the narrative reconfiguring Basque history as allegory of communal rupture. Douglass emphasized folklore as a medium of survival under Francoist repression (Douglass, 2000, p. 48). The Carlist setting thus functioned as palimpsest of trauma, re-inscribing folklore as an archive of resistance. Barthes's dictum that myth constitutes "a type of speech chosen by history" (Barthes, 1991, p. 118) materialized in this cinematic discourse. Aleida Assmann's

theorization of cultural trauma clarified the film encoded communal wounds as allegorical figuration (Assmann, 2011, p. 25).

Character figuration demanded philosophical hermeneutics. Patxi embodied Kristeva's *abjection*, exclusion stabilizing communal identity, rendering the *abject* indispensable for symbolic order (Kristeva, 1982, p. 4). Usue enacted innocence as justice, dramatizing Nancy's "community as exposure," collectivity constituted by vulnerability rather than essence (Nancy, 1991, p. 35). Sartael's chaining reiterated transnational trickster logic, aligning the Basque archive with Slavic and Anatolian repertoires. Gender analysis amplified this configuration: Usue materialized feminine vulnerability rearticulated as ethical authority, aligning folkloric tropes of female mediation with feminist readings of innocence as resistance.

Adaptation theory consolidated the interpretation. Hutcheon defined adaptation as "repetition without replication" (Hutcheon, 2006, p. 7). *Errementari* repeated oral motifs yet reconfigured their symbolic resonance through Gothic allegory. Benjamin theorized technical reproducibility as a process that "reconfigures without effacing aura" (Benjamin, 1968, p. 223). The film exemplified this reconfiguration, oral immediacy yielding to reproducibility, allegorical intensity escalated. Jameson articulated allegory as historical structure (Jameson, 1981, p. 67). Carroll theorized Gothic horror as dramatization of anxiety (Carroll, 1990, p. 28). Mulvey exposed spectatorship's structuring force through the gaze (Mulvey, 1975, p. 8). These frameworks, in contrapuntal relation, configured the film as mythopoetic palimpsest.

Comparative cinema contextualized *Errementari* within the folk horror revival. Eggers's *The Witch* (2015) reinscribed Puritan folklore as allegory of colonial trauma. Sarnet's *November* (2017) reframed Baltic tradition through surreal Gothic figuration. Feigelfeld's *Hagazussa* (2017) rearticulated Alpine folklore as a meditation on witchcraft and trauma. Koven theorized cinematic folklore as "reframed mythologies" (Koven, 2021, p. 14). Within this constellation, *Errementari* inscribed Basque folklore into a continental cinematic trend, configuring oral heritage as allegory of memory, identity, and resilience. The film thus constituted a cinematic archive in folklore, Gothic aesthetics, Catholic semiotics, and Basque history converged. Its vitality derived from continual reinscription, motifs enduring as symbolic resources perpetually reactivated across cultural, political, and aesthetic regimes.

#### 4. The Blacksmith Motif in Anatolian Folklore

Anatolian folklore situates the blacksmith within a mythopoetic continuum extending from Central Asian epic repertoires into Islamic-era narrative economies. The *Book of Dede Korkut* codifies artisanal labor as constitutive of heroic order. Boratav articulated this dynamic by affirming that "the sword, the spear, and the bow remain sacred not in themselves but because they embody the collective life of the people" (Boratav, 2012, p. 85). The blacksmith, as fabricator of these instruments, mediates between technical production and symbolic defense, his forge delineating the threshold where communal survival acquires material and ritual form.

The insurgent figure of Demirci Kawa reactivates metallurgy as locus of collective emancipation. Across diverse mythological traditions, the figure of the blacksmith emerges not merely as a craftsman but as a symbolic mediator of transformation. Iron working is frequently invested with apotropaic power, situating the smith within a liminal sphere where creation and protection converge. As Finneran (2003) demonstrates in his analysis of evil eye belief and iron symbolism, metalworking traditions are often associated with magical agency and the capacity

to repel malevolent forces. Within such symbolic economies, iron exceeds material function and becomes a ritualized medium of defense, encoding communal anxieties while simultaneously asserting control over destructive energies.

The hammer functions as emblem of revolt, embedding resistance within cultural memory as archetype of liberation. Through this figuration, the forge is displaced from the sphere of neutral labor into the domain of allegorical renewal, re-inscribing craft as political symbolism.

Central Asian mythology codifies metallurgy as sacred agency. Ergun delineated the smith-shaman as ritual mediator, manipulation of fire and iron engendering sacral authority (Ergun, 2004, p. 88). Iron materializes as cosmogonic sign, articulating liminal transition between chaos and order. Through Oghuz migrations this symbolic matrix transferred into Anatolia, subsequently layered with Islamic demonology, reconfiguring the smith as intermediary through community negotiated both survival and metaphysical peril.

Ethnographic and folkloric scholarship substantiates the apotropaic dimension of iron. Within Anatolian belief systems, iron and hearth symbolism function as ritual thresholds that articulate communal protection and ancestral continuity (Külahlı, 2022; Örnek, 1971). Hammers, anvils, and tongs thus function as ritual artifacts, configured less as tools of craft than as semiotic defenses embedded in daily practice.

Archetypal hermeneutics magnifies this symbolic density. Jung situated the smith within the transformation archetype, fire dramatizing confrontation with the shadow, “the demonic underside of life” (Jung, 1968, p. 112). Eliade rearticulated metallurgy as sacral operation: “the forge is always a sacred space because it transforms the raw into the usable, the dangerous into the necessary” (Eliade, 1996, p. 55). Through these interpretive frameworks, Anatolian traditions redefined the blacksmith, shifting his presence from artisan of material goods into mediator of renewal, cultural survival, and symbolic continuity. The Anatolian blacksmith is inscribed as an archetypal anomaly, his craft operating as a site of symbolic condensation where continuity, revolt, and sacral mediation converge. The forge is accordingly configured as a composite formation, simultaneously constituting economic infrastructure, ritual threshold, and mythopoetic archive.

Anatolian belief systems inscribe metallurgy as a ritualized apparatus of defense mobilized against invisible forces, extending its significance beyond the domain of technical craft. The forge articulates liminality as a structural condition, with fire and iron configured as mediating substances that regulate transition and protection within the symbolic order. Turner conceptualized liminal sites as “betwixt and between” (Turner, 1969, p. 94), a formulation rendered materially operative in the blacksmith’s workshop, spatial thresholds are enacted and the convergence of danger and protection attains tangible form. Within this setting, ordinary labor undergoes symbolic elevation, acquiring ritual density and cultural authority as an index of collective negotiation with vulnerability and threat.

Iron sustains communal security through ritual practice. Within Anatolian belief systems, fire functions as a sacred and protective medium embedded in ritual practice (Öztürk, 2023). Villagers situate knives beneath pillows to avert nightmares, suspend iron fragments above doors to repel malign intrusion, and heat embers for ritual purification. These practices

illustrate tools of craft are rearticulated into apotropaic devices, embodying duality in which utility and symbolism circulate together.

Begiç conceptualizes the nazarlık as a material condensation of invisible threat within Anatolian belief systems (Begiç, 2022). Beads, charms, and forged amulets embody collective anxiety, translating it into material artifact. The nazarlık functions as a protective materialization of communal anxiety within folk belief structures (Begiç, 2022). For this reason, hammers, anvils, and tongs circulate as talismanic props, recast from implements of work into ritual objects animating communal defense.

The institution of the *ocak* extends this symbolic economy into lineage and charisma. These lineages mediate healing, exorcism, and cohesion, sustaining continuity between craft, kinship, and ritual. Assmann's cultural memory thesis clarifies this endurance: tradition endures insofar as it is reactivated (Assmann, 2011, p. 25). Each act of suspending iron above a threshold or circulating charms in ritual performance exemplifies such reactivation.

Eliade's meditation on metallurgy corroborates this position: "the forge is always a sacred space because it transforms the raw into the usable, the dangerous into the necessary" (Eliade, 1996, p. 55). In Anatolia, this sacral intuition persists in gestures of daily life. A villager placing a nail near a cradle rearticulates transformation as ritualized safety. The blacksmith is inscribed as a guardian figure, exceeding the register of manual labor, his craft sustaining regimes of collective protection and sedimenting as a durable stratum within cultural memory.

The Anatolian blacksmith articulates a symbolic register marked by the structural convergence of transformation, fear, and renewal. The forge assumes a dual ontological status, constituted simultaneously as a site of artisanal labor and as a locus of mythic inscription. Iron exposed to fire exceeds instrumental utility, materializing the ambivalence of danger transfigured into necessity. On this basis, the blacksmith is inscribed as an archetypal mediator, his figuration negotiating the threshold between communal survival and metaphysical anxiety.

Jung's analytical psychology codifies this figuration within the archetype of transformation, assigning fire a central semiotic function in the dramatization of psychic confrontation. He theorized that fire stages the encounter with the shadow, "the demonic underside of life" (Jung, 1968, p. 112), a formulation that situates metallurgy within the symbolic economy of inner conflict. This insight renders the recurrent appearance of the forge in Anatolian narrative traditions analytically legible, marking it as a site where chaos undergoes symbolic reconfiguration into order. Each strike of the hammer consequently exceeds material fabrication, operating as a ritualized inscription of psychic struggle and affirming the forge as a performative arena of transformation.

Eliade's phenomenology of religion delineates a complementary perspective. He conceptualized metallurgy as sacral operation, asserting that "the forge is always a sacred space because it transforms the raw into the usable, the dangerous into the necessary" (Eliade, 1996, p. 55). This emphasis illuminates the logic underlying protective rituals. A villager suspending an iron nail above a cradle or placing a knife beneath a pillow enacts this conviction: altered matter retains potency and functions as apotropaic safeguard. In such gestures, mythic codes are inscribed directly into domestic life.

Epic traditions corroborate the archetypal density of this motif. His formulation, read against ritual practice, demonstrates the doubleness of metallurgy. The hammer that shapes ploughs and swords circulate simultaneously as talismanic protection. A villager touching the anvil before a journey enacts the same archetypal logic, embedding security into an ordinary act. Such details underscore the extent to which archetypal imagination permeates both mythic narrative and everyday practice.

At the register of archetypal codification, the Anatolian blacksmith renders the ambivalence of liminality analytically legible, embodying the convergence of labor and sacrality, utility and ritual, continuity and rupture. The forge consolidates this doubleness as a structural formation, functioning simultaneously as material infrastructure and as an archive of mythopoetic memory.

The comparative perspective reveals both shared articulations and divergent codifications of the smith-devil motif in Basque and Anatolian traditions. At the symbolic level, the forge conveys liminality, its fire and metal functioning as media of transformation, defense, and confrontation with demonic adversaries. Thompson's *Motif-Index* registers this narrative cluster under D1400-D1499, a typological entry that confirms the circulation of a trans-cultural grammar binding the smith to infernal powers (Thompson, 1955, p. D1400-D1499).

In the Basque mythographic archive, the *Errementari* legend represents the smith as marginal and distrusted. Barandiarán referred to the tale as “a theatre of reversal in which human ingenuity subjugates cosmic disorder” (Barandiarán, 1972, p. 142). Authority is expressed through the binding of the devil, yet intimacy with fire leaves the smith marked by suspicion. Anatolian traditions register the figure differently. Boratav's claim that weapons in the *Book of Dede Korkut* “embody the collective life of the people” (Boratav, 2012, p. 85) situates the blacksmith within the communal body, his forge anchoring survival and continuity. The contrast lies not in motif but in placement: Basque imagination associates liminality with exclusion, Anatolian repertoires associate it with sacral integration.

Points of convergence remain nonetheless clear. Iron and fire continue to be expressed as protective codes. Within Anatolian belief systems, fire occupies a central position as both sacred substance and protective medium. Rather than functioning merely as an elemental force, fire is embedded in ritual practice as a mechanism of purification, defense, and symbolic regeneration. As Öztürk (2023) demonstrates, the cult of fire in early Turkic belief structures articulated communal protection through the sacralization of domestic and ritual space. Iron and hearth-centered practices thus operate as liminal thresholds, materializing communal anxieties while simultaneously reaffirming cultural continuity. The placement of iron objects beneath pillows, the suspension of metallic fragments above entrances, and the ritual maintenance of the hearth exemplify how protective codes are inscribed into everyday life through symbolic condensation (Öztürk, 2023; Örnek, 1971). Striking is that in both repertoires, craft transforms into ritual defense; practical objects are recast as carriers of symbolic protection.

Theoretical reflections help consolidate these observations. Assmann's dictum that “tradition survives not by preservation but by reactivation” (Assmann, 2011, p. 25) clarifies motifs endure: through cinematic adaptation in Basque culture and ritual repetition in Anatolia. Kristeva's analysis of *abjection* makes legible the Basque smith's exclusion, his proximity to infernal powers rendering him abject; the same analysis explains Anatolian demonological tales,

the *cin* defines community through acts of exclusion. Nancy's meditation on "community as exposure" (Nancy, 1991, p. 35) introduces another register: Basque stories dramatize vulnerability through suspicion of the smith, while Anatolian *ocak* lineages embody exposure as continuity sustained by ritual charisma. At the archetypal level, the blacksmith is inscribed as mediator of liminality. Basque repertoires narrate this stigma and marginalization, Anatolian repertoires through sacral protection. The motif persists because it expresses a universal paradox: fire ensures life yet threatens dissolution, and the craftsman, sustains the community simultaneously unsettles its symbolic order.

The Anatolian repertoire attains interpretive density at the level of theoretical articulation, where smith-related practices are apprehended as durable formations of cultural memory. Cultural memory codifies the persistence of these practices as a process sustained by reiteration and enactment than inert continuity. Assmann conceptualized this endurance as survival via reactivation, tradition inscribed into the present by renewed performative investment instead of static preservation (Assmann, 2011, p. 25). Iron placed beneath pillows, nails positioned above cradles, and the circulation of nazarlık materialize protective gestures as reactivated symbolic codes. Each gesture stabilizes ancient symbolic economies by embedding them into the ordinary rhythms of domestic practice.

The register of abjection and the logic of exposure converge to illuminate the smith's symbolic placement. Kristeva conceptualized abjection as the expulsion through communities stabilize identity (Kristeva, 1982, p. 4), while Nancy emphasized exposure as the very condition of communal existence, vulnerability supplanting essence as constitutive ground (Nancy, 1991, p. 35). These insights delineate the paradox of the Anatolian blacksmith: marked by proximity to impurity yet indispensable for cohesion, embedded in ritual lineages that transform fragility into continuity. Archetypal hermeneutics consolidate this symbolic economy. Jung codified the figure within the transformation archetype, fire rendering legible confrontation with the shadow and dramatizing renewal through the manipulation of matter (Jung, 1968, p. 112). Eliade extended this hermeneutic by conceptualizing metallurgy as sacral operation, the forge transfiguring danger into necessity and inscribing cultural order upon material transformation (Eliade, 1996, p. 55). The integration of these frameworks reveals the Anatolian blacksmith as more than residual folklore. His labor codifies continuity and rupture, his forge consolidates ritual protection, and his lineage reactivates memory through charismatic inheritance. The motif functions as symbolic infrastructure, perpetually reconfigured within narrative, ritual, and communal imagination.

### 5. Comparative Analysis

A comparative perspective on Basque and Anatolian repertoires delineates the smith-devil complex as archetypal grammar sustained across civilizations yet continually reframed symbolic codifications. The forge is articulated as threshold, metallurgy configured as medium divergent of transformation, apotropaic defense, and confrontation with demonic adversaries. Thompson's *Motif-Index* inscribes this constellation under D1400-D1499, codifying it as international narrative type (Thompson, 1955, p. D1400-D1499). Slav folktales recount devils entrapped through contractual deception (Afanasyev, 1946). Norse mythology situates Wayland as ambivalent craftsman oscillating between mastery and exile. Central Asian epics delineate smith-shamans, channel fire as mediators of cosmic balance. Arabic and Persian traditions narrate *jinn* subdued by iron and flame, trajectories embedded into Anatolian repertoires,

metallic thresholds acquired ritual force. These international parallels substantiate the durability of an archetype that persists by being continuously reinscribed into local symbolic economies.

The shared symbolic grammar between these two traditions becomes most visible in ritual practices where iron and fire are materialized as protective codes and narratively inscribed as signs of symbolic mastery. *Errementari* dramatizes infernal defeat through chains forged in the furnace, translating human ingenuity into allegorical power. Anatolian rituals embed identical materials in household defense: knives beneath pillows, nails suspended above cradles, and *nazarlık* circulated as tangible condensation of unseen peril. Protective objects such as the *nazarlık* operate as ritualized embodiments of communal defense within Anatolian cultural memory (Begiç, 2022; Irmak, 2022).

Narrative economies in both traditions portray demonic defeat achieved through deception and ritual containment rather than force. Usue's figuration rearticulates innocence as symbolic justice in *Errementari*, while Anatolian epics situate children as bearers of continuity and Demirci Kawa transforms the hammer into emblem of revolt. In each articulation, metallurgy becomes symbolic apparatus of defense, renewal, and justice.

The contrast between Basque and Anatolian repertoires is most clearly articulated in the cultural codification of the smith's social placement, a process through one tradition situates the artisan as marginal outsider marked by stigma the other configures him as custodian of sacral authority embedded in genealogical descent. Basque narratives inscribe authority consolidated through confrontation with demonic figures yet perpetually shadowed by suspicion. Catholic demonology and the Inquisition encoded proximity to fire as contamination, a stigma amplified in *Errementari* through Gothic *mise-en-scène*, chiaroscuro, and infernal imagery. Anatolian repertoires, by contrast, anchor the smith in sacral charisma. The *ocak* lineage inscribes legitimacy in descent, embedding metallurgy into ritual authority. Ottoman ahi guilds reinforced this symbolic economy by integrating artisanship into moral codes and communal solidarity. The forge materializes as a nodal formation of ritual legitimacy and collective integration, consolidating symbolic authority and anchoring communal cohesion within a shared economy of meaning.

The divergence in aesthetic configuration is illuminated by the contrast between cinematic and oral modalities, since *Errementari* channels Gothic allegory through darkness of palette, dissonant soundscapes, and Catholic iconography, while Anatolian epics are enacted through oral recitation in communal assemblies where memory is collectively sustained. Performance theory renders this asymmetry legible: cinema dramatizes exclusion by isolating the smith, whereas orality enacts cohesion by embedding memory in communal participation. Basque cinematic representation configures the forge as solitude; Anatolian oral performance anchors it within the symbolic continuity of the community.

The symbolic economy of gender provides an additional register of comparison, as Basque cinema codifies innocence through Usue's figuration as allegory of justice while Anatolian ritual economies situate protective power in women's production of *nazarlık*, embedding apotropaic efficacy into domestic space. Female characters in the *Book of Dede Korkut* are inscribed as guardians of lineage, their agency configuring continuity through ritualized action. The juxtaposition clarifies that innocence and protection are not neutral

categories but gendered inscriptions, linking cinematic allegory of purity with ritual practices enacted by women in Anatolia.

Interpretive density is expanded when the smith-devil motif is examined through a theoretical scaffolding that spans cultural memory, abjection, exposure, archetypal transformation, and sacral metallurgy. Assmann conceptualizes cultural memory as survival through reactivation, clarifying that Basque legend is reanimated in cinematic allegory while Anatolian archetypes are reiterated in ritual repetition (Assmann, 2011, p. 25). Kristeva's theory of abjection delineates Patxi's exclusion and the Anatolian *cin*, both functioning as figures that mark communal identity through expulsion (Kristeva, 1982, p. 4). Nancy articulates exposure as constitutive of community, rendering visible divergent modalities: Basque repertoires dramatize fragility through suspicion of the artisan, while Anatolian *ocak* traditions transform vulnerability into continuity sustained by ritual charisma (Nancy, 1991, p. 35). Jung situates the smith within the transformation archetype, fire articulating confrontation with the shadow (Jung, 1968, p. 112). Eliade interprets metallurgy as sacral operation, the forge transfiguring danger into necessity (Eliade, 1996, p. 55). Benjamin situates cinematic adaptation within reproducibility, clarifying that *Errementari* reconfigures aura without extinguishing folkloric authority (Benjamin, 1968, p. 223). Hutcheon frames adaptation as repetition without replication, contextualizing cinema and ritual alike as reinscriptive practices (Hutcheon, 2006, p. 7). Barthes interprets myth as discourse historically chosen, a dictum exemplified in both *nazarlık* and Gothic allegory (Barthes, 1991, p. 118). Durkheim conceptualizes ritual as collective effervescence, situating the forge as symbolic site of cohesion (Durkheim, 1995, p. 422-430). Douglas interprets iron as material that embodies pollution and sanctity, articulating ambivalence as ritual logic (Douglas, 1966, p. 36-40).

The integration of historical, aesthetic, gendered, and theoretical perspectives consolidates the comparative paradox of the forge, a paradox through iron, fire, innocence, and demonic confrontation are articulated as archetypal constants while being continuously reconfigured within divergent cultural matrices. Iron is codified as protection and fire is configured as transformation. Innocence is rearticulated as justice, while confrontation with infernal beings is dramatized as climax. Yet these constants acquire different semantic registers in Basque and Anatolian repertoires, the former inscribing liminality through stigma and exclusion, the latter consolidating it through sacral authority and protective charisma. The smith-devil motif thus substantiates the principle that folklore operates as recurrence of archetypal grammars in simultaneity with cultural reinscription shaped by historical contingency.

Theoretical perspectives substantiate this conclusion. Durkheim situates ritual as effervescence; Douglas frames metallurgy as ambivalent matter; Assmann codifies memory as reactivation; Kristeva interprets exclusion as abjection; Nancy articulates exposure as continuity; Jung anchors archetypal transformation; Eliade reconfigures metallurgy as sacral operation; Benjamin reframes aura through reproducibility; Hutcheon theorizes adaptation as reinscription; Barthes delineates myth as discourse historically chosen. These frameworks articulate symbolic grammars that sustain the continual reactivation of metallurgy as cultural infrastructure.

In its fullest articulation, the smith-devil motif is substantiated not as residue of folklore but as symbolic architecture embedded in cultural memory. Persistence is secured not by static preservation but by ongoing reactivation, adaptation, and reinscription. The forge embodies ambivalence. Fire sustains and annihilates, metallurgy secures and destabilizes, artisanship anchors identity and exposes fragility. Comparative analysis advances folklore scholarship by clarifying how international types operate as archetypal grammars while acquiring distinct semantics through cultural inscription. In simultaneity, it contributes to cultural memory studies by substantiating that myth survives as discourse, perpetually rearticulated to negotiate danger, justice, and survival. The paradox of the forge, protective and perilous alike, consolidates the comparative argument: folklore endures because it codifies contradictions at the core of human culture.

The endurance of the smith-devil motif across Basque and Anatolian traditions reflects the activation of cultural memory, a dynamic that recalibrates symbolic codes and embeds them within evolving social and aesthetic horizons. Continuity derives not from the passive preservation of inherited forms but from the ongoing renewal of practices that anchor archetypal patterns in collective life. Oral recitation positions the narrative as performative inscription, ritual gestures with iron configure protection within domestic and communal settings, and cinematic adaptation reframes folklore within the semiotics of modern allegory. Each instance substantiates memory as cultural practice, sustaining archetypal motifs by repositioning them in the present. Assmann formulates this dynamic as reactivation, a mode of cultural survival achieved by repeated renewal of symbolic forms within shifting historical contexts (Assmann, 2011, p. 25). The protective nail fixed above an Anatolian cradle and the devil chained in the furnace in *Errementari* exemplify this logic of continuity, both materializing memory by rendering protection narratively and ritually tangible.

Transmission manifests in distinct modalities across cultural configurations. In Anatolia, *ocak* lineages ground legitimacy in genealogical charisma, mediating ritual knowledge through descent and sustaining it in communal performance. Oral repertoires exemplified by the *Book of Dede Korkut* position identity within narrative enactment, each retelling generating collective belonging as much as recalling ancestral memory. The nazar boncuğu, as a folkloric object, embodies the material codification of protective belief (Irmak, 2022).

Basque traditions follow a different trajectory: the ethnographic work of Barandiarán registers oral repertoires within textual archive, and the cinematic adaptation of *Errementari* repositions that archive within visual allegory. Benjamin's reflections on reproducibility substantiate this shift by conceptualizing aura as a modality of displacement than attrition, its transposition into emergent regimes of reception intensifying the legend's symbolic resonance (Benjamin, 1968, p. 223).

The interpretive significance of these processes resides in the recognition that folklore survives as cultural practice continuously renewed. Transmission is mediated through ritual gestures, sustained in narrative performance, and reframed in aesthetic adaptation, each articulation embedding archetypal structures within contemporary symbolic orders. The smith-devil motif demonstrates that folklore persists as symbolic infrastructure: it is not a residual inheritance but a cultural formation that secures continuity by binding memory to transformation and inscribing survival within the living fabric of collective imagination.

In the Anatolian setting, ritual economies anchored in the forge position metallurgy as institutional formation, translating technical practice into symbolic authority and embedding it in the maintenance of collective order. *Ocak* lineages designate legitimacy through genealogical charisma, inscribing ritual expertise in descent and mediating it across practices that articulate protection in healing rites, configure healing as symbolic restoration, and sustain solidarity through communal participation. The ahi guild system of the Ottoman world further codified this role by situating artisanship within civic responsibility and ethical regulation, reconstituting the forge as both productive infrastructure and moral institution. Durkheim's theorization of collective effervescence substantiates this constellation, the smith's workshop embodying the condensation of communal identity through ritual action (Durkheim, 1995, p. 422-430). Douglas extends this interpretive horizon by positioning iron within a dialectic of sanctity and peril, its manipulation dramatizing tension between contamination and protection and codifying metallurgy within a broader symbolic economy of ambivalence (Douglas, 1966, p. 36-40).

Basque repertoires codify ritual power through exclusionary logic. The *Errementari* tradition situates the forge at the edge of community, aligning the artisan with infernal imagery and social suspicion. Catholic demonology and inquisitorial discipline reinforced this stigmatization, construing mastery of fire and metal as trespass into the sacred domain. The cinematic adaptation of *Errementari* intensifies this symbolic displacement by employing chiaroscuro to dramatize contrast, metallic resonance as auditory marker of dread, and infernal iconography as visual inscription of theological fear. Comparative interpretation delineates metallurgy as symbolic apparatus situated within divergent cultural matrices: in Anatolia, ritual authority consolidates communal order through sacral charisma and institutional structures, in Basque tradition it is codified as stigma and estrangement, revealing ritual power as a category that simultaneously consolidates cohesion and generates exclusion.

The blacksmith figures as embodiment of liminality conceived as political formation, situating the artisan simultaneously on the perimeter of communal life and within the symbolic nucleus of collective identity, a paradox that substantiates the mechanisms through which boundaries of belonging are articulated, contested, and consolidated. Anatolian traditions inscribe the smith within *ocak* lineages, genealogical charisma converting ritual competence into communal defense and sacral guardianship. This transformation of marginal impurity into protective authority resonates with Kristeva's theorization of abjection, a framework that interprets the abject as generative category once institutionalized inside ritual structures (Kristeva, 1982, p. 4). Basque narratives disclose a divergent trajectory: the artisan is bound to infernal semiotics and subjected to inquisitorial discourse that codifies liminality as threat, translating ambivalence into exclusion and reinforcing cohesion through symbolic marginalization. Nancy's meditation on exposure extends the comparative perspective by describing community as formation constituted in vulnerability than immutable essence (Nancy, 1991, p. 35). At this conceptual register, the forge mediates fragility under divergent regimes. Anatolia valorizes fragility as sacral charisma sustaining solidarity. Basque tradition reconfigures fragility as stigma generating estrangement. The politics of liminality emerges as structural principle of cultural identity, delineating artisanal presence as threshold phenomenon that secures collective order while simultaneously rendering visible the precarious condition of inclusion.

The smith-devil motif reveals an archetypal constellation, metallurgy is configured as transformation, fire signals ambivalence, and the artisan is inscribed into mythic grammar as mediator of renewal and peril. Jung interprets this constellation through the transformation archetype, assigning the smith the role of confronting the shadow, an interpretation situating metallurgy in psychic as well as material registers of change (Jung, 1968, p. 12). Eliade advances this analysis by defining metallurgy as sacral operation, a ritual technology that converts chaotic matter into ordered form and elevates the forge into a locus charged with creation and risk (Eliade, 1996, p. 55). Basque cultural production reconfigures the archetypal matrix in *Errementari*, where Gothic aesthetics translate primordial elements into cinematic codes: chiaroscuro constructs visual density, metallic resonance conveys infernal atmosphere, and allegorical imagery frames the narrative through Catholic cosmology. Anatolian repertoires employ distinct aesthetic strategies, epic storytelling attributing heroic centrality to the smith in the *Book of Dede Korkut*, while ritual practices integrate iron as apotropaic material circulating in domestic and communal contexts. Benjamin conceptualizes reproducibility as relocation of aura, clarifying how cinematic retelling intensifies symbolic resonance than diminishing authenticity (Benjamin, 1968, p. 223). Hutcheon theorizes adaptation as reinscription, showing that each medium sustains archetypes by reiterating them under altered conditions without extinguishing their symbolic force (Hutcheon, 2006, p. 7). The convergence of archetypal grammar and aesthetic practice supports the argument that the smith-devil motif endures as cultural configuration, continuously regenerated through ritual enactment and artistic representation anchoring mythic structures in the shifting terrain of collective imagination.

Collective imagination is constituted as symbolic economies aligning innocence with justice and inscribing both into archetypal figuration and communal performance. Basque tradition, exemplified by *Errementari*, introduces Usue as allegorical instantiation of innocence, her presence initiating moral recalibration that reorients the narrative economy toward redemption and redefines violence through the possibility of renewal. Kristeva's theorization of abjection elucidates this dynamic by showing how purity embodied in the child mediates the expulsion of demonic excess and transforms disorder into cultural potential (Kristeva, 1982, p. 4). Anatolian repertoires delineate justice through alternative semiotics: the legend of Demirci Kawa elevates the hammer into revolutionary emblem of liberation; the *Book of Dede Korkut* narrates heroic continuity grounded in loyalty and protection of kinship ties. These traditions converge on a cultural logic where innocence and justice function as enacted categories than abstract ideals, innocence materialized in the child as figure of moral renewal and justice instantiated in the blacksmith as agent of collective emancipation. Collective imagination consolidates itself through symbolic contrasts that position innocence as horizon of ethical possibility and justice as horizon of social cohesion, each reiterated across generations through narrative transmission in oral traditions, ritual performance in communal contexts, and aesthetic reinscription in visual adaptations.

The thematic analysis of the smith-devil complex conceptualizes the motif as cultural infrastructure generated through the interplay of ritual practice, narrative transmission, and aesthetic mediation, each dimension embedding archetypal codes into the symbolic order of community. The exploration of memory emphasized reactivation as the operative principle of continuity, every enactment repositioning inherited structures within shifting historical circumstances. The investigation of ritual and power characterized metallurgy as apparatus of moral authority and communal protection, transforming technical practice into symbolic

guardianship. The inquiry into liminality portrayed the artisan as threshold presence, marginal inscription producing both cohesion and fragility as constitutive features of social formation. The discussion of archetype and aesthetics demonstrated that myth attains renewed intensity through performance and artistic representation, symbolic energy amplified whenever archetypal figures are transposed into new expressive registers. The analysis of innocence and justice clarified collective imagination organizes ethical and political categories into figural embodiments, innocence materialized as sign of renewal and justice instantiated as emblem of emancipation. These perspectives construe the smith-devil complex as regenerated symbolic formation, a configuration that grounds collective identity in acts of remembrance, in ritualized authority that legitimizes cohesion, in aesthetic codifications that stabilize cultural imagination, and in ethical projections that extend myth into lived experience, simultaneously repositioning archetypal patterns in response to historical transformation.

## 6. Conclusion

The blacksmith-devil constellation examined in this study evidences mythic figuration as irreducible to antiquarian residue, thereby materializing a locus of cultural inscription and symbolic reproduction. These constellations operate as dense symbolic matrices condensing collective anxieties, aspirations, and negotiations with alterity into legible cultural codifications. Iron, abstracted from utilitarian materiality, is reinscribed as apotropaic potency, invested with capacity to neutralize malign agency. Fire, displaced from elemental status, materializes as ritual purgation, cyclical regeneration, and liminal passage. The blacksmith, always exceeding artisanal designation and never reducible to craft alone, figures within a liminal economy, simultaneously creator and annihilator, mediator and transgressor, an archetypal palimpsest of cultural fear.

Myth configures itself as temporal fold, a curvature of memory bending cultural time back upon itself and resisting linear chronology. The blacksmith-devil polarity dramatizes destructive energies and redemptive gestures, staging a dialectic of annihilation and restitution through which cultural survival is rhythmically structured. Ritual continuity manifests as metamorphosis, displacing repetition, every return of gesture, symbol, and object inscribing difference. The mythic endures through displacement, condensation, and refiguration, vitality sustained by absence as much as presence. Myth never disappears; it mutates. Continuity is nothing without rupture.

Cinema intensifies this process, inscribing myth into image, rhythm, and affective modulation. The screen materializes as threshold, a membrane between past and present, inherited motifs transposed into novel semiotic economies, fossilization displaced. Visual symbolism, narrative reorientation, and stylistic elaboration constitute modalities enabling folklore's migration into contemporary sensibility. In *Errementari*, the blacksmith-devil constellation is reconstituted in light and sound, endowed with secondary life as nexus of memory and invention. Cinema unsettles preservation, transforms reiteration, and constitutes a medium of mythopoetic reinscription, continuity materializing as metamorphosis, the archaic reanimated within modern sensibility. It does not simply conserve; it generates excess, a surplus of meaning irreducible to origin.

Folklore materializes as grammar of existence (more than archive, more than residue), irreducible to ethnographic description and uncontainable within archival boundaries. Memory operates as generative force, reshaping symbolic fields, displacing inert accumulation, opening past and present to mutual transformation. Mythic imagery functions as site of negotiation among sacred and profane, archaic and contemporary, communal and individual registers, an echo chamber of cultural anxiety as well as invention. The comparative horizon furnishes conceptual architecture tracing these negotiations across temporal strata and medial registers, revealing folklore's plasticity as irreducible condition of imagination itself.

The blacksmith-devil constellation exemplifies mythic vitality as living grammar animating collective imagination. Its recurrence across oral tradition and cinematic adaptation substantiates myth as cultural negotiation, neither static inheritance nor obsolete survival but spectral residue persisting through metamorphosis. Archetypal figures endure through condensation, reiteration, and reinscription, their survival secured by transformation of form and by the negativity that underwrites renewal. Myth operates as renewable energy, shaping imagination of identity, community, and power, displacing the notion of archaic burden. Considered within this horizon, the conclusion inaugurates further vistas: myth persists as subterranean current within cultural temporality, binding memory and invention, past and present, archaic imagery and contemporary expression within an indivisible continuum. By foregrounding the entanglement of folklore, memory, and aesthetics, this research foregrounds archetypal thought as a mode of spectral mediation within collective imagination, a mediation anchored in perpetual absence and iterative renewal rather than in stability.

### **Declarations**

**Acknowledgements:** The author thanks the anonymous reviewers for their constructive comments.

**Copyright Statement:** Published under the CC BY-NC 4.0 license.

**Funding / Supporting Institutions:** No external funding was received for this study.

**Ethical Approval and Participant Consent:** Ethical approval and participant consent were not required, as the study is based on publicly available sources.

**Plagiarism Statement:** This article has been scanned with plagiarism detection software. No plagiarism was detected.

**Data and Materials Availability:** The data supporting the findings of this study are available within the article and its references.

**Use of AI Tools:** No AI tools were used in the production of the academic content of this article.

### References

- Afanasyev, A. N. (1946). *Russian fairy tales* (N. Guterman, Trans.). Pantheon.
- Assmann, A. (2011). *Cultural memory and Western civilization: Functions, media, archives*. Cambridge University.
- Assmann, J. (2011). *Cultural memory and early civilization: Writing, remembrance, and political imagination*. Cambridge University.
- Barandiarán, J. M. (1972). *Selected writings: Basque mythology and folklore*. Txertoa.
- Barthes, R. (1991). *Mythologies* (A. Lavers, Trans.). Noonday.
- Bauman, R. (1986). *Story, performance, and event: Contextual studies of oral narrative*. Cambridge University.
- Begić, H. N. (2022). Anadolu nazar inancı ve nazarlıklar. *Hars Akademi Uluslararası Hakemli Kültür Sanat Mimarlık Dergisi*, 5(3), 170-187. <https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/download/article-file/2007166>
- Benjamin, W. (1968). The work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction. H. Arendt (Eds.), *Illuminations* (pp. 217-252). Schocken.
- Boratav, P. N. (2012). *100 soruda Türk folkloru*. Gerçek.
- Burkert, W. (1985). *Greek religion*. Harvard University.
- Carroll, N. (1990). *The philosophy of horror, or paradoxes of the heart*. Routledge.
- Christian, W. (1989). *Local religion in sixteenth-century Spain*. Princeton University.
- Douglas, M. (1966). *Purity and danger: An analysis of concepts of pollution and taboo*. Routledge.
- Douglass, W. A. (2000). *Basque cultural studies*. University of Nevada.
- Dumézil, G. (1968). *Mythe et épopée I: L'idéologie des trois fonctions dans les épopées des peuples indo-européens*. Gallimard.
- Dundes, A. (1965). *The study of folklore*. Prentice-Hall.
- Durkheim, E. (1995). *The elementary forms of religious life* (K. Fields, Trans.). Free.
- Eliade, M. (1996). *The forge and the crucible: The origins and structure of alchemy*. University of Chicago.
- Ergun, P. (2004). *Türk kültüründe demir ve demircilik*. Atatürk Kültür Merkezi.
- Finneran, N. (2003). Ethiopian evil eye belief and the magical symbolism of iron working. *Folklore*, 114(3), 427-436. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0015587032000145414>
- Frye, N. (1957). *Anatomy of criticism*. Princeton University.
- Hutcheon, L. (2006). *A theory of adaptation*. Routledge.
- Hymes, D. (1981). *In vain I tried to tell you: Essays in Native American ethnopoetics*. University of Pennsylvania.
- Irmak, Y. (2022). Cam sanatından bir folklorik objeye: Nazar boncuğu. *Kahramanmaraş Sütçü İmam Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, 19(3), 1377-1384. <https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/pub/ksusbd/article/1215415>
- Jameson, F. (1981). *The political unconscious: Narrative as a socially symbolic act*. Cornell University.

- Jung, C. G. (1968). *The archetypes and the collective unconscious* (R. F. C. Hull, Trans.). Princeton University.
- Koven, M. J. (2021). *Folklore and film: Reframing cinematic mythologies*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Kristeva, J. (1982). *Powers of horror: An essay on abjection* (L. S. Roudiez, Trans.). Columbia University.
- Külahlı, N. (2022). A review on the term of hearth in Hittite mythological documents: Anatolian hearth belief. *ASYA: Journal of World History Culture*, 8, 265-274. <https://doi.org/10.31455/asya.1190693>
- Mulvey, L. (1975). Visual pleasure and narrative cinema. *Screen*, 16(3), 6-18. <https://doi.org/10.1093/screen/16.3.6>
- Nancy, J.-L. (1991). *The inoperative community* (P. Connor, Trans.). University of Minnesota.
- North, R. (1997). *Heathen gods in old English literature*. Cambridge University.
- Ocak, A. Y. (1999). *Türk halk inançlarında ve edebiyatında evliya menkıbeleri*. Türk Tarih Kurumu.
- Ong, W. (1982). *Orality and literacy*. Methuen.
- Örnek, S. V. (1971). *Anadolu folklorunda ölüm*. Ankara Üniversitesi.
- Öztürk, V. E. (2023). Eski Türk inançlarında ateş kültü ve günümüze yansımaları. *Bayterek Uluslararası Akademik Araştırmalar Dergisi*, 6(2), 285-302. <https://doi.org/10.48174/buaad.1116089>
- Sakaoğlu, S. (2003). *101 Anadolu efsanesi*. Akçağ.
- Siikala, A.-L. (Eds.). (2002). *Myth and mentality: Studies in folklore and popular thought* (Studia Fennica Folkloristica 8). Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura. <https://doi.org/10.21435/sff.8>
- Thompson, S. (1955). *Motif-index of folk-literature*. Indiana University.
- Turner, V. (1969). *The ritual process: Structure and anti-structure*. Aldine.
- Van Gennep, A. (1960). *The rites of passage* (M. Vizedom & G. Caffee, Trans.). University of Chicago.