

Understanding Culture through Language and Literature

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Edited by

Seniye Vural, Erdem Erinç
and Ali Küçükler

Cambridge
Scholars
Publishing



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This book first published 2018

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Lady Stephenson Library, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2PA, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

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ISBN (10): 1-5275-0785-8

ISBN (13): 978-1-5275-0785-2

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PREFACE

The connection among culture, language, and literature is undeniable and has been attracted the attention of scholars for decades. This book presents the intertwined relationship between culture and literature, culture and language, and culture and history or art history respectively. Its central concern is to investigate issues related to culture from different contexts and how it is reflected in literature, language, or history/art history at a particular place. Therefore, it takes an interdisciplinary stance as it has been designed to present the readers with research on culture viewed from a literary, linguistic, or historical perspective.

Scholars from different disciplines presented their research on this perspective at the 4th Symposium of Asian Languages and Literatures, and it was believed that there was a need to share the papers with a wider audience. As a consequence, the scholars contributed to this book with their original work addressing culture from the perspective of their area of interest.

In brief, culture has been dealt with from a variety of perspectives in the chapters of this book, which consists of three parts, including three chapters each. Part 1 is related to *Culture and Literature*, and Part 2 and Part 3 include research on *Culture and Language* and *Culture and History/Art History* respectively.

In **Chapter 1**, based on Sir Thomas Malory's *Le Morte D'Arthur* (*Death of Arthur*), the most complete collection of Arthurian literature in English Literature, and *Dede Korkut Stories*, the oldest and well-known epic of the Oghuz Turks, **Banu Akçeşme** comparatively examines cultural, historical, and ideological constructions/representations of and attitudes towards the non-human world in these two cultures in the Middle Ages. It is stated in the chapter that both in *Dede Korkut Stories* and *Le Morte D'Arthur*, the characters display an ambivalent attitude towards nature. On the one hand, they see nature as a sacred source of spirituality; on the other hand, they consider it the greatest, the most dangerous enemy they have ever had. While they acknowledge their dependence on nature and natural resources for their survival and fulfilment of their basic needs, they, at the same time, seek mastery and victory over nature. The chapter analyzes the reasons behind this conflicting, changing, and unstable relationship

between the medieval people and nature with references to the sociocultural, historical, and psychological factors that have disturbed harmony, peace, and togetherness between nature and human.

Anuj Sharma and Shubhra Gupta question whether the protagonist, PK, in the commercial film, PK (2014), can be called a Hero in **Chapter 2**. They seek to explore what constitutes a Hero by going deeper into the meaning of the term as defined by the renowned mythologist, Joseph Campbell, in his book, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. Therefore, the aim of the chapter is to investigate whether the character PK may be called a Hero along the lines of a mythological Hero based on Campbell's definition. To this end, first, they verify the validity of the Monomyth in the case of PK's journey. Like countless Heroes before him, does PK prove himself a real hero by accepting the *call to adventure*, navigating through uncharted and new territory overcoming obstacles along the way, facing a supreme ordeal and finally returning to his own world, as a *master of two worlds*, in order to share the lessons he learns so that society as a whole may grow and benefit thanks to his experiences? Second, they evaluate if PK fits the description of a modern Hero as detailed by Campbell in his book.

In **Chapter 3**, **Hatice Eşberk** analyzes the concept of *mimesis* in the cultural context through an understanding of *mimesis* including the concepts of language, identity, and culture within the frame of *mimesis* as imitation and/or representation. In analyzing these interrelations, *mimesis* is investigated in two senses: *mimesis* in general and *mimesis* in the field of theatre. The post-structuralist philosophers' re-evaluating the operations of language, the influence of these re-evaluations on the analyses of human psychology (both conscious and unconscious), their outcomes in identity formation, and the role of social relations in subject formation form the bases for the recent theories on *mimesis* in general. As for the investigation of recent theories on *mimesis* in the field of theatre, the chapter presents the influences of the concepts such as metadrama, theatricality, and performativity.

Chapter 4, by **Thilini Meegaswatta**, points out the consideration of Sri Lankan English (SLE) as a variety on par with other well-known varieties of English in the world upon the emergence of the concept of World Englishes in the late 90s. However, according to her, SLE is still to be clearly prescribed given the difficulty of codifying unique features of SLE that are common to all users of English in multi-ethnic and multicultural Sri Lanka. In this context, this chapter aims to suggest semantic innovation as a point of general agreement among an eclectic group of speakers in

determining the distinctive features of SLE. First, it identifies instances of semantic innovation through observation and literature survey, and second, it explores the use of such innovations in the context of both writing and speech through unstructured interviews of twenty respondents. Third, it determines levels of acceptance through a correction task given to teachers of English. Such an exploration reveals that the use of semantic innovations in both speech and writing is widespread among fluent bilinguals, albeit with varying levels of assimilation and acceptance, with a marked conservatism in the context of written English. However, the ease with which innovation takes place while negotiating internal models and external standards hints at diminishing linguistic insecurity. Hence, she concludes that semantic innovation offers a relatively neutral approach to vocabulary generation, assimilation, and acceptance, thereby offering a starting point for codification of lexical features that are uniquely Sri Lankan and applicable to all fluent users of SLE.

Chapter 5 includes another linguistic study from Sri Lanka, by **Upeksha Jayasuriya**. It focuses on linguistic variation, which presents speakers with diverse ways of expression by allowing a choice of languages in accordance with the social context or the domain and the person one interacts with. It is highlighted in the chapter that in multicultural and multilingual settings such as Sri Lanka, it is of vital significance to study the interplay among languages as it often unravels diverse perspectives on code switching and code mixing. With this in mind, Jayasuriya examined the diverse usages of the Sinhala interjections *aney* and *aiyo* by the bilingual speakers of English and Sinhala as well as the social factors that impinge on their usage. Jayasuriya concludes that *aney* has, over the years, been attributed with multiple connotations despite its original use, which is to express sadness. With regard to *aiyo*, it could be stated that discourse markers have semantics of their own, deciding the contexts in which it should be used as well as avoided when speaking in English. Further, the results indicate that gender and the first language of the speaker determine the usage of *aney* and *aiyo* while drawing a parallel between gender and politeness formulae. In brief, vernacular interjections such as *aney* and *aiyo* have become part of the Sri Lankan English linguistic repertoire, so much so that it has been codified in local dictionaries as well as the Oxford English Dictionary.

The last chapter on linguistic analysis is by **Suman Beniwal**. In **Chapter 6**, Beniwal calls attention to linguistic sexism in Indian newspapers. She explores aspects of linguistic sexism in various Indian newspapers like *The Hindu*, *The Times of India*, *Deccan Herald*, and *The Hindustan Times*

during the past five years from January 2012 to July 2017. More specifically, she analyzes the media discourse in these newspapers with a view to exploring the extent of linguistic sexism and the use of gender-biased and politically correct terms, such as the generic use of masculine pronouns, derivational suffix *-man*, and titles for women like Miss, Mrs, and Ms. The tendency, according to Beniwal, is that woman is often invisible in Indian media discourse due to the generic use of masculine pronouns and derivational suffix *-man* in various nouns, which are still abundantly used as well as the word *man*. The neutral term *person* instead of *man* mostly refers to females. The use of titles *Mrs* and *Miss* clearly reflects the marital status of women while a positive trend is noticed in the usage of *Ms*. Finally, women are still defined in terms of their appearance rather than profession, and wrong analogies are drawn in respect to women. Although generalizations cannot be made, it can be concluded that linguistic sexism still exists in Indian media discourse.

In **Chapter 7, Özden Erdoğan** highlights the dynastic competitions and political strife among the Timurid princes (mirzas) and the fact that the region was divided into a number of principalities after the death of nomadic conqueror Temür, which resulted in the appearance of multiple political centers, competing princely courts. In this chapter, this political atmosphere is analyzed within the frame of power-sharing (*ülüş*), which was one of the most important parts of Turco-Mongol political tradition. The concept of power-sharing derives its principle meaning from inheritance, where each member of the ruling family had a right to rule. According to this concept, the territory is regarded as joint property of the ruling family and shared by the members of it, which means that each member of the ruling family, as one of the heirs, has a right on sovereignty. In this context, the territories, shared by the Timurid princes, had autonomous structure both politically and economically. Babur Shah, who was descended through his father from Temür and through his mother from Chinggis Khan as the last Timurid ruler in Central Asia and the founder of Mughal dynasty in India, was grown up in such political atmosphere and became the heir of the Turco-Mongol political tradition. Starting from this point of view, Erdoğan supposes that both his ideas and actions were shaped by this tradition. In fact, while Babur Shah established his rule in India, the relationships he maintained with his close agnates and his followers indicate his acceptance of this Turco-Mongol political phenomenon.

Chapter 8, by **Celil Arslan**, deals with how culture is reflected in minarets, more specifically Qutb Minar in India. Qutb Minar has an important place

in that it qualifies as a Turkish period minaret example in India. The concern is to examine the characteristics of Qutb Minar in the Turkish minaret architecture tradition and how it reflects this tradition. The chapter also compares Qutb Minar with other minarets constructed based on the Turkish tradition.

Finally, in **Chapter 9, Fadime Özler** seeks to examine Itimad-ud Daulah, an example of Mughal architecture in Agra, India, and a memorial grave building which was built in the 17th century and has survived till today with its original state. Considering the tomb as one of the best models, Özler aims to analyze the decoration plans and the figurative objects in the architecture of the tombs in Mughal. In addition, the base of architecture in this period and the interpretations of the styles and images by the artists are explained, and the formal characteristic of the figures in the decorations are compared with the types of architectural buildings and the applications in other fields of art. Finally, the place and the position of the figurative decorations of the architectural tomb are evaluated based on Mughal-Turkish art.

In sum, this book should be of considerable interest to scholars who investigate culture from literary, linguistic, and historical perspectives as well as the ones who are interested in interdisciplinary and comparative work. We hope that it will be beneficial and inspiring for the scholars, contribute to the knowledge in the related fields, and promote further research on issues discussed in it.

Editorial Team

PART I –
CULTURE AND LITERATURE

CHAPTER ONE

ECOCRITICAL INSIGHTS INTO MEDIEVAL
EPIC ROMANCES:
A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF *LE MORTE*
D'ARTHUR AND *DEDE KORKUT STORIES*

İFAKAT BANU AKÇEŞME*

**Introduction to *Le Morte D'Arthur* (Death of Arthur)
and *Dede Korkut Stories***

This paper aims to examine the medieval approaches to nature as reflected in medieval epic romances in English and Turkish cultures with references to *Death of Arthur* and *Dede Korkut Stories*. The epic romances disclose the fact that the characters display ambivalent attitudes towards the environment, nature, and natural phenomena. First, this paper will examine the various representations of nature in epic romances, and second, it will focus on the underlying socio-cultural, historical, philosophical, and psychological reasons that lead to this ambivalence in the medieval attitudes.

Sir Thomas Malory's *Death of Arthur* (it will be referred to as *DA* from now on) and *Dede Korkut Stories* (it will be referred to as *DK* from now on) are comparable in several ways including their genre, characterization, plot, setting, and the society depicted. Both works are important and leading examples of the Medieval Epic Romances. Both *DA* and *DK*, originally products of oral literary traditions, offer the blend of history and fiction, the mixture of pagan and an institutionalized religion, fact and imagination, reality and fantasy in a magical world peopled by both life-like and supernatural characters. As the representatives of heroic literature, both are action-centered, and the main action is organized around hunting, chasing, fighting, jousting, slaying, battles, pursuit, captivity, escape, and

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revenge. *Arthurian Epics of the Celts* and *DK* give clear ideas about their socio-cultural traditions, civilizations, religions, daily lives, and practices. The main characters in both works belong to high-ranking noble families and ruling classes, and they live in hierarchically structured patriarchal societies. It is crucial for the characters to display manly qualities such as courage, strength, honor, and loyalty in their heroic deeds and adventures.

Sir Thomas Malory's *DA* is the most complete collection of Arthurian literature in English Literature. Arthurian legends, which mainly deal with the heroic deeds and adventures of Arthur, the knights and Merlin are derived from Celtic traditions and mythology. Arthur is one of the well-known heroes in Medieval European Literature as the representative of Celtic king and a medieval heroic leader. Arthur's chivalric world is characterized by perfect and excellent knights and extremely beautiful ladies and damosels. The Celts are warriors constantly fighting in battles, and Arthurian romances are peopled by these warriors, travelling knights, knight-errants, who are constantly seeking adventures especially in forest journeys.

The first written sources of Arthurian legends go back to the 12th century. Time is uncertain in romances, and the time of the events in *DA* is also not specified, but the events were supposed to take place in the fifth century. There is an agreement that Arthurian romances reflect the 12th century Christian Medieval society since the inspiration for the English version of Arthurian romances is derived from the 12th century France and French versions. The setting in the Arthurian romances is an imaginary place at an imaginary time:

The world of chivalric adventure in Malory [...] is a world remote and unreal in place and time. It is Logres, a never-existent England in the past, a land of forests to ride through and castles to stay the night in, and every so often 'a hermitage was under a wood, and a great cliff on the other side, and a fair water running under it' (Pearsall, 2003, p. 97).

DA was published by William Caxton in 1485:

God hath sent me, under the favour and correction of all noble lords and gentlemen, enprised to imprint a book of the noble histories of the said King Arthur, and of certain of his knights, after a copy unto me delivered, which copy Sir Thomas Malory did take out of certain books of French, and reduced into English (Pearsall, 2003, p. 85).

After the revival of Arthurian stories, they function as the leading inspiration for romances and epics. Malory, in *DA*, makes use of existing French and English sources and brings together various Arthurian

legendary stories as the expression of “idealizing admiration for the golden age of chivalry” (Pearsall, 2003, p. 83). Arthur and the knights of Round Table represent the society noble in their blood and manner; virtuous in their conducts; kind, protective, and courteous towards women; friendly, loyal, merciful, just, and honest towards their friends; and courageous, determined, and strong in the battles.

DK, the oldest and well-known epic of the Oghuz Turks, consists of 12 separate stories which reflect the cultures, traditions, and daily lives of the nomadic tribes of Oghuz Turks, especially Beys and Khans. *DK* stories are based on the fruitful combination of real historical events, lived daily life experiences, mythology, and fairy tales that reflect the collective unconscious of the Oghuz Turks who lived from the 10th to 17th centuries. Common people can never act as a hero in these stories. The hero position is always occupied by Beys or sons of Beys. Bayindir Khan is the leader of the tribes. Kazan Bey takes over the leadership after Bayindir Khan, who is the most influential figure, and he appears as the hero of many stories. These stories became very popular especially from the 13th to the 17th centuries. Although the time setting for the events that take place in the stories is vast on scope from the 5th century to the 11th century, *DK* stories were written down in the 15th century when Turks had already been converted to Islam. Thus, Islamic concepts and idioms entered into the story later.

Korkmaz (2006) observes that nature in *DK* displays both its malignant and benign sides. Since they are nomadic tribes, life is harsh and full of hardships and difficulties mostly posed by nature. Thus, nature is viewed as a threatening and malevolent force to be defeated and taken under control. The struggle against nature makes man want to be both physically and morally stronger not only because of their sense of superiority but also for the fear and anxiety they feel against nature (pp. 252-254). At the same time, they appreciate the beauty of nature and see it as a source of spirituality. When people are separated from mountains, this means separation from God. If there is God, there is goodness, abundance, stability, and peace in nature.

Various Representations of Nature in *Le Morte D'Arthur* (Death of Arthur) and *Dede Korkut Stories*

Rollason (2012) examines the meaning and uses of the word *forest* in the Middle Ages, and he finds out that the word goes back to the Latin word *foresta* or *forestis*:

The word may have derived either from Latin *foris* ('outside') or from Continental Germanic *first* ('enclosure'), but in either case its primary meaning seems to have been an area of land set apart, a land under the king's right, presumably in the sense that it was outside the normal law and government of the kingdom in the way that the English royal forests of the later Middle Ages were under the forest law and, to an extent at least, withdrawn from the common law (p. 430).

Aberth (2013) draws attention to famine and plague in *An Environmental History of the Middle Ages* as the source of ecological crisis in the 1300s. High rate of mortality caused people to question economic activities that brought about ecological harm and natural disasters. Earlier texts and some later documents employed "the term *silva* with a meaning of 'wood', or *saltus*", a term which is derived from Roman usage, and it refers to "an uncultivated and lordless area" which, in the Roman culture, belonged to the emperor (Rollason, 2012, p. 431). So, the word *forest* refers to "the claims of kings to rights over lordless and uncultivated land, and including rights over woods and water" (Rollason, 2012, p. 431). Forests were also "granted away to followers of kings, and at certain times created by non-royal persons, although often with the sanction of kings" (Rollason, 2012, p. 431).

Middle Ages were influenced by the culture of Anglo-Saxons who "viewed the natural world, itself a tangled web of Christian, Germanic, and Latin science and philosophy, as an enemy, an oppositional force against which their civilization tenuously stood" (Harlan-Haughey, 2016, p. 29). The attitude Anglo-Saxons had towards nature was based on the feelings of paranoia, threat, and fear. Anglo-Saxons showed "fearful defensiveness" against natural entities since they felt threatened by the wild animals like wolf, bear, and boar, by small predators who destroyed the crops, vegetable World "in the form of crop-choking weeds" and hostile and indifferent weather and climate conditions (Neville, 1999, p. 7). Neville suggests that human beings are encircled, enclosed and defined by hostile natural forces, and they, in return, encircle the natural World in their representations and constructions: "They manipulate the representation of the natural World and make it what they want it to be" by reducing it to the roles they assign to it according to their wish and needs (Neville, 1999, p. 178). Thus, "the representation of the natural World is never an end in itself and is always ancillary to other issues" (Neville, 1999, p. 18).

In Turkic language, sky and God were used synonymously since the Turkic people used to believe in Sky God (Kek Tengri) who ruled the heavenly earth. Shodoev (2012) maintains that the attitude towards nature in Turkic culture has been largely shaped by Pantheism, shamanism and

the worship of Sky God, the highest deity, in which the deification of Nature and the worship of spirits of Nature can be clearly observed. The Turkish-Mongolian word for the *sky* and the God come from the word *tıngır/ tengeri*, which means high. It is believed that along with the homeland and place, sacred mountains, ancestral tree, forest, valley, and animals have guardian spirits. The worship of Sky God can be traced back to the Hunnish Period. The Sky offered not only life and a state to individuals but power to the Khans. The Khans of Turkic states accepted themselves as the sons of Tengeri, the name of the Sky Deity, and his representatives on Earth. The Sky God provided protection for the ruler as long as he ruled in accordance with the Heavenly laws. When the ruler failed to rule properly, Sky God withdrew his support. Tengriism requires a life in harmony with nature along with care and respect for natural forces. Shamanism, on the other hand, is concerned with mystical teachings, and spirits of nature and shamanism has been practiced to communicate with the spirits of nature to treat the sick or relieve the souls of the deceased (Shodoev, 2012, pp. 12-14).

In Sky-God culture, mountains were considered to be the center of the world, a passage from the earth into the heaven, thus the closest to God. Mountains were the holy places where prayers were offered to God after the victory in wars and leaders were buried (Kucukkalfa, 2015, pp. 75-76). Every Turkic community has a sacred mountain, tree, and forest. As Gokturk-Orkhon inscriptions indicate, Turkic societies regarded the forest called *ötügen* as sacred and the imperial tent of the ruler (*otagi*) was located in there. *Cennet*, which means heaven in Turkish seems to be derived from *cennel*, which means dense forest, moor (p. 75).

Kucukkalfa (2015) states that the life of the Turks started in the forests of Siberia which are surrounded by inaccessibly high mountains, and Turkish language has rich vocabulary related to forest life that comes from the *Sky God religion* of the Turkish shamans and closely related to shepherds' lives. Siberian Forests are also the place where shamanism and Sky God emerged (p. 69). Kucukkalfa (2015) also seeks the origin of the word *orman*, which means forest in Turkish, and he finds out that *orman* is closely related to the word *orak*, sickle, which comes from *or*: *reap*, *orum*: *cut*, *ornamak*: *to settle, settlement*, *orun*: *place, space*. Initially the word *orman* was used to refer to the meadow/pasture where horses graze. This reveals man's interference with and action in and upon nature to reshape it according to the needs of men (p. 73).

In Turkish mythology, the motif of the sacred tree is very common. In a dream where the tree grows up from a hearth, belly or chest is a symbol of

the rightful government or political power. The Uighurs turned to a tree-birth myth (tree of life) away from a wolf-birth myth according to which Bogu Khan was born out of a tree.

In Turkish culture, there is a close relation between death, soul and mountain, and the dead were buried in the mountains so that they could more easily pass from this world into the heaven (Ergun, 2003, p. 79). Ergun maintains that the mountain in Turkish culture is closely associated with Khan, and since Khan is accepted as the representative and messenger of God, mountains reflect and stand for some aspects of God like “greatness, grandeur, magnificence, color, fertility, shape, power, vegetation, etc” (translation mine) (Ergun, 2003, p. 75). The rituals and ceremonies for birth, death, naming, marriage as well as the prayers reflect this mountain cult. The highest, the most magnificent and splendid mountains with full of animals and water are regarded as holy since they are taken as the representatives of God on Earth (Ergun, 2003, pp. 75-76). The association between nature, nobility, and holiness is obvious in *DK* where there are many references to the mountains. Trees and water are also the symbols of God on earth, and they are seen as the means to reach God. For instance, Uruz talks to the tree and asks the tree not to take away his spirit.

The most preeminent representation of nature in both *DA* and *DK* is the use of nature as the physical setting, a background, backdrop, and a cliché, necessary for the action to take place. In *DA*, stories usually begin with a reference to nature to give a sense of direction and destination taken and reached during the journey of the knights who leave the court of King Arthur or their castles to search for adventure in nature as can be seen in the following examples: “They passed the sea and rode towards the city of Benwick” (p. 24). “Sir Launcelot rode into many strange and wild countries and through many waters and valleys” (p. 78). “Sir Launcelot rode many wild ways. As he rode in a valley, he saw a knight chasing a lady with a naked sword” (p. 83). “Sir Launcelot rode through many strange countries, over marshes and valleys, till he came to a fair castle” (p. 81).

Secondly, nature functions as a test to be passed, a trial to be faced with, a challenge to be overcome, a rival to be defeated, against which heroic and manly qualities and values are measured. Thus, in both works, nature is a place where adventure is sought by the knights on errand and heroes to obtain fame, reputation and recognition. The forest offers a set pattern of adventures with a knight chasing another knight or a lady or a hart, or with a knight resting unarmed at a well in *DA*. Nature is established as a place

of adversary and obstacle, creating an oppositional force. When King Pellinore was riding along with the lady in a valley full of stones, the lady's horse stumbled (p. 61). Such threatening and dangerous nature is depicted as cruel, unpredictable, and hostile, creating hardships and difficulties to keep the characters from achieving their destinies or obtaining their goals. She fell off the horse and was badly injured. In another example, Sir Tristram was driven back to England by the tempest when he was on the ocean to bring La Belle Isoud as ordered by the King Mark (pp. 96-97). In *DK*, it is also believed that when something like a stone or a piece of wood is taken away from the mountains, it should be returned back, otherwise a disaster can occur (Ergun, 2003, p. 82).

In another representation, nature provides a meeting place where these adventurous heroes encounter to challenge each other and invite one another to a duel. Forests reflect political strife, conflicts, discord, and unrest. Peaceful activity or relation in nature is a rare occasion while vicious fighting in an English forest is a common occurrence with references to wild animals "indigenous to the deciduous woodlands of England" (Grimes, 2013, p. 354). In *DA*, it is a custom for errant knights to joust with one another, which cannot be avoided, rejected or delayed without being called a coward who "disgrace[s] all knighthood" (p. 139). The forest, because of several challenges it poses, helps the knight to display a heroic action to surpass the other knights so that he can establish his reputation by proving his knightly qualities. They can act as a rescuer, as the best hunter or chaser. In *DK*, the characters refer to their victory over nature to prove their greatness and distinction while they introduce themselves to others since victory gained over nature is essential for social acceptance and recognition. Kazan, for instance, introduces himself as follows: "I am Kazan who can hold the rocks that come down from the magnificent mountains with my heels" (p. 103).

In *DK*, the warriors are seen not only fighting against the rival tribes but also against the physical environment. A young boy, in order to gain a name, status, respect, and recognition in the society, should display heroism in public against strong animals. A son is not named until he sheds blood or cuts off a head. Bogac Khan, at the age of 15, defeats the bull which belongs to Bayindir Khan who can grind the rock like flour. Bogac punches into the head of the bull and pushes him out of the square. Their struggle lasts for such a long time that eventually the bull's power and strength is drained and it falls down. He cuts off the head of the bull, and he is named after the bull.

Similarly, nature measures the worth of the knight in *DA* and rewards those who can prove good qualities and punishes the others who fail to catch up with the requirements and expectations of how a good knight should be. One day, the lady comes to the court of Arthur with a sword tied to her, giving a great pain and suffering, and she tells them that only a “man of great virtue without villainy or treason” (p. 33) can take off the sword. The sword can be taken only by Balin, and when the lady asks for the sword back, Balin wants to keep it unrightfully, which brings his destruction: “You will slay the best friend that you have and the man you love most in this world, with this sword. And the sword shall be your destruction” (p. 34).

The warriors’ experiences in nature are enlightening for them. They enter into a learning and self-discovery process. During the wedding feast of King Arthur, a male deer intrudes into the hall with thirty couples of hounds. A white hart appears with a white hound after him. A lady on a white palfrey comes in after the white hound which belongs to her (p. 51). This incident brings the knight into nature. Anne Rooney (1993) suggests that a hart, the most popular game in Middle English hunting, is often used to “ennoble a figure, showing him as courtly, noble, elegant, sophisticated and civilised” (p. 3). Grimes (2013) also states that “the hart constitutes noble prey, worthy of a great huntsman. Hunting this type of game animal was a privilege restricted by law almost exclusively to the king” (p. 347). Sir Gawain is assigned a duty to chase after the white hart by the court, but he has to joust with other knights who are also after the hart which is eventually destroyed by the hounds of Sir Gawain (p. 53). In his quest of the hart, he slays a lady and refuses to give mercy to the knight who kills his hounds for slaughtering the hart. As a punishment, the queen orders him to be the protector of all ladies and fight for them (p. 55). This adventure teaches Sir Gawain a lesson. He learns the true value of courtesy and deference to be a real gentleman.

Since nature is acknowledged to be the greatest challenge, when defeated, conquered or taken under control, this victory is regarded as the obvious indication and evidence of manliness, courage and physical strength. In *DK*, Kanturali wants to marry not a traditional girl who is domestic, submissive and weak, or fragile, but a girl of action who can skilfully ride a horse, shoot an arrow and fight courageously. To marry such a girl requires a man to prove his worth. Tekfur in Trabzon has a very beautiful daughter, Selcen Hatun, and he demands the suitors to defeat three very strong and angry animals, a lion, camel, and a bull, each of which is like a dragon. (p. 68). A lot of young men are killed by the bull even before they

see the camel and the lion. Kanturali, the son of Kanli Koca, feels obliged to go and kill the animals in order not to bring shame and disgrace to himself and his family after the father mentions the challenge: "I found a type of girl you would like to marry. Go get her if you have enough courage, strength and skill" (p. 69). He marries Selcen Hatun only after he manages to kill the bull with his fist, breaks the bones, strangles the bull and takes off the skin to take to Tekfur. Selcen Hatun is a warrior with masculine qualities. When Kanturali is attacked by the enemies, it is Selcen Hatun who saves his life by driving the enemy away (p. 75). To deserve to marry such girl, a young man has to prove his worth and manliness by gaining victory over nature.

In *DA*, many times damosels and ladies introduce the knights to adventures while riding into the deep forest. Female characters are deprived of active agency as a doer since they are reduced to the function of plot. Thus, they initiate heroic adventures and act either as catalysts that "amplify or delay the action" or as kernels to keep the male action going on by opening "an alternative to the action" (Rimmon-Kenan, 1986, p. 45). Once, Sir Lancelot runs into two ladies while riding into the deep forest in his pursuit of the hound (p. 79). One of the ladies, a sorceress, has wounded the knight who killed her husband, and the other lady is looking for help for the wounded brother since only a knight can heal the wound by bringing a piece of bloody cloth wrapped up to a dead man and a sword into the Chapel Perilous (pp. 79-80). Sir Launcelot agrees to undertake this adventure. Similarly, King Pellinore is assigned a quest to find and bring the lady, and he has found her in the pavilion in the forest (p. 59).

Another most prominent function of nature in these epic romances is to provide a physical setting where privileged and socially high-ranking men including knights can hunt for relaxation, sports or for physical exercise. The forest is "a playground, an extension, through the hunt and the pavilion, of the courtly world" (Saunders, 1993, p. 40). Forest was thus considered a place of courtly creation. Rollason (2012) finds out that many royal residences in the Middle Ages were located within forest areas, and forests were adjacent to the palaces, referring to the enclosed areas including the parks (p. 434). Therefore, nature was an indispensable part of the lives of nobles, aristocrats, and clergymen as the main source of entertainment.

Hunting is a character-defining act, and the hunt is employed in courtly literature as a means to ennoble "a masculine warrior hero", "showing him as courtly, noble, elegant, sophisticated and civilised" (Rooney, 1993, pp. 51, 98). The noble hunt is an important means of stylized courtly self-

fashioning and self-representation. Hunting brings fame to Sir Tristram who is recognized as “the best chaser of the world and the noblest blower of the horn” (p. 135). Medieval hunting not only functioned as a ritualistic pastime and the sport of kings but it was also considered essential since it provided a training for war and a rite of manhood. Royal hunting plays an important role in “preparing the king’s vassals and fideles for warfare by giving them the skills and proficiency either in handling horses or in the use of weapons which would prepare them for battle” (Rollason, 2012, p. 439). Thus, hunting is an empowering act for the king. Janet Nelson (1987) explains the function of hunting as follows: “an exercise in, and a demonstration of, the virtues of collaboration”, and with the aristocrats, the king “shared his favor, his sport, his military training and his largesse, and helped at the same time to provision their palace” (p. 169). Moreover, participation in the pursuit and killing of royal hunt is “a sought-after privilege defining the level of intimacy and the importance of the relationship between the king and his vassals and fideles” (Rollason, 2012, p. 439). Thus hunting, as a mark of prestige and “an enduring part of rulership in the ancient world”, is also used to impress the other warriors or rulers through which king could display his strength and prowess (Rollason, 2012, p. 441). However, Ursula K. Le Guin (1996) in her article *The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction* discusses how hunting for meat creates the tradition of killing, establishing a greater-than-life hero, and the conflict between man and nature, culture and nature, man and animal.

Nature, on the other hand, has been associated with witchcraft and enchantment where sorcery and evil prevail. It is a common pattern that sorceresses and enchantresses live in a forest and set up a trap to get the man they are in love with. Malory’s representation of women in forests and castles, in deed, reveals fear of the feminine. Balin, to take revenge, killed the Lady of the Lake who killed his mother and several knights by using black art to take revenge: “this lady was the untruest lady living, by enchantment and sorcery she was the cause of the death of many good knights, and because of her, my mother was burnt” (p. 35). When the four queens, one of whom was Morgan Le Fay, found Launcelot sleeping under an apple tree, they enchanted him to be brought into the castle as their prisoner (p. 72). They asked him to choose one of them as a wife; otherwise, he would die in prison, but Launcelot did not yield: “I shall rather die in prison than choose one of you for you are false enchantresses” (p. 73).

Nature is constructed as a place outside the normal, rational and the standard where strange, extraordinary and magical events occasionally

occur and supernatural beings dwell. King Arthur has seen “the strangest beast” at the well in the forest (p. 27). When Sir Launcelot lives in the depth of the forest for 3 months, the giant named Tawleas is introduced to the reader, and this monster wanders around in the forest to “do mischief” (p. 117). Similarly, in *DK*, Tepegoz, a one-eyed giant monster, appears as a mythological character. Every day, Tepegoz is given 500 sheep and two men as food. Basat manages to kill him by blinding his eye while he is sleeping. Such representations of nature disclose the fact that man has projected his fear for the unknown, uncanny and mysterious onto nature, which leads to the emergence of monstrous images concerning the depiction of nature.

Nature is also established as a place where one can be attacked, murdered or kidnapped any time, so one’s life is always at risk. Such nature emerges as a destroyer or a source of destruction. King Pellinore realizes that the wounded knight and the lady who was indeed his own daughter whom he refused to help at the well since he was in a hurry were later eaten away by wild beasts in nature (p. 63). Many knights are slain, captured and imprisoned in the forest (p. 71). Sir Turquine captured and put into a dungeon many knights including Sir Ector and Sir Lionel. In *DK*, nature also functions either as a murderer or as a setting where murder is committed. Burla Hatun asks Kazan Bey when he comes without their son Uruz: “Did you push him off the steep rocks, did you give him away to the lions?” (translation mine) (57).

The conceptualization of Nature as a place of destruction where there is always a risk of death since you can be attacked, murdered, destroyed or entrapped any time with no good reason is in conflict with the construction of nature as a healer with its power and potential for renewal and rebirth. Nature here acts as a life-giving force rather than as a destroyer. In *DK*, nature functions as a healing power (p. 24). When Bogac is wounded, Hizir treats him with mountain flowers and mother milk (p. 24). Forest also functions as a place of reunions where siblings, close friends and lovers meet after a long period of absence. Balin is reunited with his brother Balan in the forest in *DA* (p. 36).

Nature does not heal only wounds, but it also enlivens emotions and feelings through the image of idealized and romanticized virgin nature which is untouched and uncontaminated, thus pure and beautiful. Such nature is represented through images and symbols of innocence, exile, purification, nostalgia, sexual and spiritual awakening, and women. Forest here acts as a romantic backdrop for the expression of ardent desire and passion. The depiction of nature to refer to sexual awakening that comes

along with the arrival of spring can be seen in *DA*. Nature is never described in detail in any of the stories in *DA* although *DK* is richer in vegetation and animal imagery. The inner worlds of the characters are reflected through the likeness to and associations with flowers, plants and animals. The beauty of women is also described in terms of nature metaphors and similes. In *DA*, nature is represented in terms of forest, wood, wilderness, trees, animals, valleys, well and spring, and the most detailed description of nature is offered when May comes in: "When every strong heart begins to blossom, and to bring forth fruit; for as herbs and trees bring forth fruit and flourish in May" (200). Spring is the clear indication of peace, hope, replenishment and rejuvenation. However, the arrival of Spring is depicted here not to celebrate the rebirth or renewal of nature, but to refer to the sexual awakening of the lovers: "It gives all lovers greater courage, that mighty month of May [...] All herbs and trees renew man and woman, and lovers recollect old gentleness and old service and many kind deeds that were forgotten" (p. 201). Winter is considered to be a destroyer of not only nature but also "unstable love in man and woman" (p. 201).

Another ambivalent attitude towards nature can be observed between the image of imprisoning and entrapping nature and the image of liberating nature where one can celebrate freedom. Nature creates an imprisoning trap for the characters. Merlin is imprisoned by one of the ladies of the lake, Nimue, in a rock under a stone where he dies out of his love for her. Nimue represents wisdom, knowledge, common sense and the benevolent aspect of nature. However, when she wants to get rid of Merlin since she grows tired of his sexual advancement, Nimue plays a trick on him by making him believe that she will respond to his love if he teaches her all the marvels and secrets of nature and the universe. She asks him to go under a huge stone to see whether there is any wonder, and Merlin could not get out despite his skills and black art (pp. 65-66), and she leaves it to nature to handle Merlin. Queen Morgan le Fay also sets up a trap for Sir Launcelot into the forest. She orders 30 knights to wait for Launcelot to kill him. It is Nimue who saves him with the help of Sir Tristram.

Similarly, the wife of Sir Phelot sets up a trap to capture Sir Launcelot and asks him to climb up a very tall elm tree to rescue the falcon: "Oh Launcelot, Launcelot, the flower of all knights, help me to get back my falcon, for if my falcon is lost, my lord will destroy me!" (p. 82). When he climbs up, Sir Phelot comes out of the wood to slay him (p. 82). King Meloidas, while pursuing a deer in the forest to hunt, comes to the old castle where he is taken as a prisoner by the lady who loves him (p. 86).

Two ladies with Queen Isoud attempt to kill Dame Bragwaine by tying her to the tree in the forest when she has been sent into the forest to bring some herbs, and she is saved three days later by Sir Palamides (p. 101). Likewise, in *DK*, Kara Tekfur in the story of Segrek creates a wood and puts animals including deer and chicken into it to attract the brave young men of the Oghuz so that they can be taken as captives (p. 95).

Nature, on the other hand, provides a physical and spiritual shelter and security for the characters, especially for those who are seriously wounded or those who are tracked down to be destroyed. The image of nature inherently imposing danger as explained above and Nature offering a sense of security and comfort of home create ambivalence. "The shade of a wood" (p. 187) provides protection when Sir Launcelot is badly injured with a spear by Sir Bors who did so without knowing it is Launcelot. He rides to the hermitage which is located deep in the forest with a great cliff on one side under which a stream is running (p. 188) with the hope that the hermit, Sir Baudwin of Brittany, a good surgeon, who is skilful and resourceful, can heal his wound (p. 188).

The forest as a place of exile where life is tough emerges as another common and recurrent motif in the medieval literary discourse. The characters end up in nature after leaving the court or a city, which is either a self-imposed exile or mandatory exile required by the ruler, circumstances, wrongdoings, forbidden love, etc. Sometimes it is an escape from human society when the characters encounter something too challenging, too painful or too unbearable. Thus, nature emerges as the most frequently preferred hiding place when people run away from enmity, tyranny, injustice or oppression. On one occasion, Sir Bors advises Sir Launcelot to hide in the hermit near Windsor when he is banished from the court by Queen Guinevere out of jealousy (p. 173). Sir Bors and Launcelot hide in the forest to see whether the queen will be put to the fire or not after the espionage to Launcelot and Guinevere when Launcelot is caught in the queen's chamber, and both are announced to be betrayers and adulteresses (p. 209). When the queen was put on the iron stake to be burnt, Launcelot came out of the wood on a white horse to save her (p. 179). Similarly, while Sir Palamides and Tristram are fighting for La Belle Isoud, she escapes into the forest (p. 103).

Wild nature with the castles and monasteries inside refers to the representation of nature as a place of spirituality, meditation, deep thoughts, and reflection. Arthur "sat down by a fountain and fell in great thoughts" (p. 27). Nature turns into a hermitage where people escape to take relief when they are frustrated, disappointed, or feel heart-broken.

When Sir Launcelot found the letter written for La Belle Isoud by Sir Kehydius, he gets furious and rides away into the wilderness by leaving his horse and armor in the forest. He gets rid of his clothes and lives with shepherds as a naked and mad man. In courtly love traditions, it is a common tradition that the lovers who cannot get united live in madness in the wood. For three months, he does not ride back to towns or villages (p. 115) and lives in a hermitage as well.

Nature is also created as the other of civilization and culture. Forest lacks the rules and laws of the civilized social and cultural life, justice and moral codes of conducts. Thus, forest is chaotic and unruly; its unpredictability and unmanageability render nature an inaccessible and ideal place for criminals, lepers, outcasts, traitors and false knights who intentionally fail to meet the requirements of knighthood. Since those who violate the social rules and fail to keep up with the expectations of society such as sinners, the insane, criminals, and outcasts are exiled into nature, nature functions as a disposal area where the unwanted are dumped to keep the civilized space clean. The knight who gives hard time to ladies and damosels by robbing and raping them live in the forest (p. 77). A knight cannot break the rules in the court, but he can defy “the order of knighthood” (p. 77) easily in the forest without taking any responsibility for his unacceptable deeds. Sir Launcelot kills this troublesome knight: “O false knight and traitor to knighthood” (p. 77). In *DK*, mountains are also the place where social outcasts and outlaws live. Tepegöz robs and kills men by constantly exposing a threat to those on the ways (p. 82).

This otherized image of nature with its hostility, indifference, animosity creates a paradox with the representation of nature as benevolent, generous and fertile mother who is a nurturer, care-giver and provider. In *DK*, the shepherd in the story of Salur Kazan when his *otagi* (tent) has been plundered uproots the huge tree he is tied to and carries it along with him while following Salur Kazan to cook for him in case he gets hungry when he fights against the enemy who attacked his *otagi* in his absence (pp. 32-33).

On the other hand, nature functions as a mirror help up to the society. Nature reflects either the health, prosperity, and strength of the community or the chaos, conflict, and corruption in *DK*. Nature is mentioned in prayers to ask God to protect it, keep it fresh, fertile, and functioning. As long as nature under your control and within the boundary of your territory is protected, your safety will be granted: “May your cliffy mountains not collapse, may your tree which provides a shadow not cut off, may your river which runs not dry up” (translation mine) (p. 26).