

ANIMALISTIC MYTHONYMS IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK LINGUISTICS

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ABSTRACT

Animalistic mythonyms, or mythological names associated with animals, play a significant role in folklore and mythology across cultures. These creatures often embody symbolic meanings, representing concepts such as power, wisdom, protection, or destruction..The contrast between English and Uzbek animalistic mythonyms highlights different cultural approaches to the supernatural. English mythology features a greater number of hybrid creatures beings that merge human and animal traits, often symbolizing power, mystery, or divine judgment.

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Dragons in English and Uzbek mythology embody various aspects of power, wisdom, and destruction. In English folklore and literature, dragons are often depicted as fearsome adversaries, representing chaos and danger, which is deeply rooted in the medieval Christian worldview, where the dragon often symbolized the Devil or temptation. This association with evil is evident in the story of St. George slaying the dragon, a powerful allegory for the triumph of good over evil.

However, even within English tradition, the dragon isn't always purely negative. In some Arthurian legends, dragons possess wisdom and are connected to the land's ancient power, suggesting a more complex relationship with these creatures. This duality likely reflects the remnants of pre-Christian beliefs where dragons may have held more ambivalent roles. The legendary dragon slain by St. George symbolizes the triumph of good over evil, a motif prevalent in medieval romances and modern fantasy literature. While predominantly evil in English folklore, some Welsh dragons are benevolent. The red dragon on the Welsh flag is a symbol of national pride. Even in some English tales, dragons are seen as wise or possess ancient knowledge.

The pervasive presence of the dragon motif within linguistic and cultural frameworks, despite its mythical origins, warrants rigorous academic scrutiny. To advance beyond superficial interpretations of «dragon» phraseologisms, a nuanced examination of the symbol's multifaceted nature is imperative. This necessitates a move away from simplistic binary oppositions (e.g., good vs. evil) and towards a comprehensive understanding of the dragon as a complex semiotic entity.

Firstly, the dragon functions as a potent signifier of «otherness» encompassing both internal and external manifestations. Externally, as evidenced by the historical cartographic annotation «*here be dragons*,» the dragon demarcates the liminal space between the known and the unknown, embodying the anxieties associated with uncharted territories. Internally, within idioms such as «*chase the dragon*» or «*fighting dragons*,» the dragon symbolizes the intrapsychic «other», representing destructive impulses, addictive behaviors, or mental afflictions. This complexity extends into English phraseology, where dragons serve as metaphors for daunting challenges. The idiom «*chase the dragon*» (referring to addiction) highlights the dragon as a symbol of a destructive force, while the phrase «*to slay a dragon*» metaphorically denotes overcoming a significant hardship [J.Simpson, 2010]. This dual function underscores the dragon's capacity to serve as a projective surface for human fears and anxieties.

In Uzbek mythology, the **Ajdaho** (dragon) is a powerful and often malevolent entity associated with water, storms, and chaos. The Ajdaho's association with water in Uzbek mythology points to a deep connection with the life-giving and destructive forces of nature. Central Asia's arid climate makes water a precious resource, and the Ajdaho's control over it reflects this importance. Its connection to storms and chaos likely stems from the unpredictable nature of these phenomena, which can bring both blessings and devastation. Unlike the European dragon guarding treasure, the Ajdaho's power is tied to the natural world, suggesting a worldview where humans are more directly subject to the whims of nature. This connection to water also echoes ancient Turkic beliefs about dragons as deities of natural forces, as noted by M. Ismailov [M.Ismailov, 2015]. A. Khudoyberganov further highlights that the Ajdaho functions as an archetype of power and destruction, similar to the dragon in Western folklore, though its role in Central Asian mythology is more intricately tied to the balance of nature rather than moral dualism [A.Khudoyberganov, 2021].

Despite cultural differences, both the **Ajdaho** and the Western **dragon** serve as mythonyms encapsulating human struggles, fears, and aspirations. Whether as malevolent beasts to be vanquished or powerful entities to be revered, these mythical creatures serve as linguistic and cultural touchstones, reinforcing humanity's universal fascination with forces greater than oneself. Their presence in both phraseological expressions and literary narratives underscores humanity's ongoing engagement with the symbolic power of mythical creatures.

Mythical birds have long captured human imagination, symbolizing themes of transformation, wisdom, and destiny across various cultures. Scientific studies in ornithology and evolutionary biology suggest that real-life avian species with remarkable regenerative abilities or unique migratory patterns may have inspired some of these myths. The mythological figures of the Phoenix, Simurgh, and Baxt qushi serve as powerful symbols of transformation, wisdom, and destiny in various cultural traditions. These legendary birds

represent renewal, guidance, and fortune, reflecting deep-rooted human aspirations and beliefs about the cyclical nature of life and fate.

The **Phoenix**, a potent symbol of cyclical renewal, transcends mere mythological narrative, serving as a profound reflection of human resilience and the enduring hope for rebirth. Its origins, as J.Nigg argues, are rooted in the human tendency to extrapolate profound meaning from the observable world [J.Nigg, 2016].

Beyond its potential origins in natural observation, the Phoenix's enduring appeal lies in its capacity to symbolize deeper philosophical and religious concepts. Mircea Eliade extensively explored the symbolism of fire as a transformative element. He argued that fire, across numerous cultures, represents a process of purification and spiritual renewal [M.Eliade, 1957].

In Western literature, the Phoenix's metaphorical significance extends beyond mere perseverance, embodying the concept of regeneration and resilience. What is more, the Phoenix does resonate with the concept of psychological transformation. The *«rise like a Phoenix from the ashes»* idiom encapsulates this symbolism, signifying not just recovery, but a transformative rebirth, a process of emerging stronger and more resilient from hardship. This linguistic usage reflects the deep integration of the Phoenix myth into the English language and its cultural understanding.

The concept of a mystical bird representing destiny and fortune is also present in Uzbek folklore through the **Baxt qushi**, or «Bird of Fortune.» Unlike the Phoenix or Simurgh, which are primarily associated with transformation and wisdom, Baxt qushi symbolizes fate and the fleeting nature of luck. In Uzbek tradition, it is believed that this bird brings good fortune to those it chooses, and its presence in proverbs reflects this belief. For instance, the saying *«Baxt qushi boshiga qo'ngan»* translates to «The Bird of Fortune has landed on one's head,» signifying an unexpected stroke of luck or prosperity. This mirrors the English phrase «luck is on one's side» and illustrates how different cultures conceptualize the role of fate in human affairs.

In conclusion, the comparative analysis of animalistic mythonyms in English and Uzbek folklore reveals both shared human concerns and distinct cultural perspectives. Dragons, whether as the malevolent Ajdaho controlling natural forces or the multifaceted Western dragon embodying chaos, wisdom, or moral struggle, reflect humanity's attempt to personify and negotiate power, fear, and the unknown. Similarly, mythological birds like the Phoenix, Simurgh, and Baxt qushi illustrate universal themes of transformation, resilience, and fortune, while also highlighting cultural variations in interpreting destiny and renewal. These mythonyms, embedded in literary narratives, idioms, and folklore, serve not only as symbols of human experience but also as linguistic and cultural touchstones, demonstrating the enduring fascination with forces beyond human control and the ways in which societies articulate their values, fears, and aspirations through the symbolic power of animals..

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