ISSN:2828-6235
Impact factor:13.77

International Journal of Literature and Language Studies(IJLLS)

HERO ARCHETYPES AND THE IMAGE OF THE WORLD IN UZBEK AND TURKISH FOLK TALES

Hasanova Dilsabo Musurmon qizi
Qoraqalpoq davlat universiteti
Adabiyotshunoslik (O‘zbek adabiyoti)
yo‘nalishi 2-kurs magistranti
Doi: https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.24084951

Abstract. This article provides a comparative and typological analysis of the cultural, artistic features, spatial models, and hero archetypes of Uzbek and Turkish folk tales, which share common Turkic roots. The three-layered structure of the universe in fairy tales, along with the conflicts between the lower world (underground, cave, well) and the upper world, is examined in relation to ancient mythopoetic beliefs. Furthermore, the socio-psychological nature of the Kaldan (Kachal polvon) archetype in Uzbek folklore and the Keloğlan archetype in Turkish folklore is comparatively analyzed, highlighting their struggle against social inequality through wit, irony, and humor. The study demonstrates the vital role of folk tales of both fraternal nations in reflecting collective worldviews and cultivating universal ethical values.

Keywords: Uzbek folklore, Turkish folklore, folktale, archetype, Kaldan, Keloğlan, Simurgh, Zümrüdüanka, spatial model, comparative analysis, ethnocultural values.

INTRODUCTION. Oral folk art is the most ancient and authentic page of humanity's spiritual history. Humanity has preserved its past fears, joys, thoughts on justice, and dreams for the future not through written laws, but through the art of living speech—fairy tales. Turkic peoples, particularly the Uzbek and Turkish ethnos, despite living at geographical distances from one another and following distinct socio-historical paths, share spiritual roots, ways of perceiving the universe, and artistic thinking styles that trace back to a single ancient cradle. A fairy tale is not merely a tool to amuse children or lull them to sleep. It is a grand educational school that, from primitive stages of human society to the present day, shapes human personality and teaches the boundaries between good and evil, beauty and ugliness, bravery and cowardice. Just as the heroic deeds of Kenja botir or Kachal are cherished in Uzbek fairy tales, the actions of the young prince or Keloğlan are greeted with the exact same warmth in Turkish tales.

The relevance of this study lies in the fact that exploring the cultural heritage of fraternal peoples in a general context, scientifically substantiating their spiritual affinity, and revealing the unique facets of all-Turkic folklore samples are becoming key directions in modern philological research. By comparing Uzbek and Turkish tales, one can deeply understand not only the similarities in the storytelling traditions of both nations, but also their unique national features polished under the influence of their natural-historical environment.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND LITERATURE REVIEW. This research extensively utilizes comparative-historical, typological, structural-semantic, and ethnographic analysis methods. Collections of Uzbek magic and everyday folk tales as well as primary texts of Turkish folk tales served as the object of study. Vladimir Propp's morphological theory, recognized in world folkloristics, serves as an important theoretical basis for studying the internal structure, plot movement, and character systems of folklore works. Propp substantiated that the development of events in magic tales is subject to certain stable functions, and regardless of how diverse actions may be, their sequence and purpose remain constant. This regularity is of unparalleled importance in analyzing the compositional structure of Uzbek and Turkish tales.

Looking back at the history of Uzbek folkloristics, we witness the creation of a vast scientific school in this field. In the studies of scholars such as Hodi Zarifov, Mansur Afzalov, Bahodir Sarimsoqov, Tora Mirzayev, Komiljon Imomov, Mamatqul Jurayev, and Jabbor Eshonqul, the genre features, mythological layers, and character worlds of Uzbek folk tales have been fundamentally researched. While Mansur Afzalov developed a precise classification of the genre by dividing Uzbek tales into three main types (animal tales, magic-fantastic, and everyday tales), Bahodir Sarimsoqov deeply revealed the typological nature and artistic fiction laws of fairy tales.

In Turkish folkloristics, the services of major scholars such as Pertev Naili Boratav, Saim Sakaoğlu, and Ali Berat Alptekin in collecting, classifying, and scientifically analyzing fairy tales are invaluable. Particularly, the catalog "Types of Turkish Folk Tales" created by Pertev Naili Boratav in collaboration with Wolfram Eberhard marked a major turning point in integrating Turkish tales into the international Aarne-Thompson (ATU) system. Saim Sakaoğlu's studies on tale motifs and characters serve as a solid theoretical support in determining the all-Turkic roots of fairy tales.

Section 1. The Spatial Model of the Universe in Magic Tales: The Conflict Between the Lower and Upper Worlds (On the Example of the Tales "Kenja botir" and "Zümrüdüanka Kuşu"). The most ancient layer of oral folk prose is magic-fantastic fairy tales. The thinking style of every nation is determined by its boundaries of perceiving the universe, ie, spatial concepts. The plot construction of Uzbek and Turkish magic tales, the hero's direction of movement, and the mechanisms for overcoming obstacles rely on the three-layered vertical universe model of all-Turkic mythology—the upper celestial world, the middle world inhabited by humans, and the underground dark world.

In magic tales, the hero's transition from a peaceful middle world into an unknown, terrifying, and perilous space constitutes the central axis of plot development. This unknown space often manifests as the lower world—a cave, a bottomless well, or an earth fissure. The hero's descent into the underground is not merely a spatial relocation, but the artistic expression of ancient initiatory trials, spiritual death, and archetypal concepts of rebirth. This motif is fully manifested in "Kenja botir" (The Youngest Hero), a widely popular tale among Uzbek magic folk tales. Three princes chasing a creature stealing golden apples from the king's garden arrive at a huge well in the steppe. The well serves as the sole cosmic gateway connecting the middle world with the lower world. The reluctance of the elder and middle brothers to descend into the well, contrasted with the youngest brother's daring courage to descend into the lower world, demonstrates the profound difference in character and level of spiritual maturity between the brothers. Opening the door at the bottom of the well, Kenja botir finds himself in a completely distinct, separate world.

This exact compositional line and system of motives are identically repeated in Turkish magic tales, particularly in "Üç Şehzade" and "Zümrüdüanka Kuşu". In the Turkish tale, the king's three sons also set out in pursuit of a supernatural force by their father's command and stop at the threshold of a huge cave or dry well. After the older brothers timidly withdraw, the youngest prince descends. As Saim Sakaoğlu noted, the lower world in Turkish tales is the artistic reflection of Erlik's kingdom in ancient shamanistic beliefs. As the hero descends there, he struggles against dark forces hostile to humanity. The hero fully carries out his epic duty in the lower world: he defeats giants, liberates captive maidens, and sends them to the upper world (the surface of the earth) via the well rope. However, precisely at this point, an unexpected socio-psychological conflict arises in both tales: the brothers waiting above cut the rope out of envy and greed, leaving the young hero stranded at the bottom of the well. Through this betrayal motif, the tale transitions from a mythological layer to a socio-ethical layer. The hero no longer fights merely with supernatural creatures, but confronts the betrayal of his closest kin. The hero left underground now faces a single complex task—returning from the lower world to the luminous world. Ordinary

human strength falls short here; a sacred, legendary creature capable of mediating between two worlds—the Simurgh or Zümrüdüanka bird—must enter the arena of events.

Section 2. The Archetype of Simurgh and Zümrüdüanka: The Motif of Self-Sacrifice and Rebirth. The process of the hero's return from the lower world to the luminous world is the most thrilling stage of the tale. In this blind space where natural means of exit are impossible for a human being, the hero requires a patron figure endowed with divine power and cosmic scale. The legendary giant bird, known as Simurgh in Uzbek tales and Zümrüdüanka in Turkish tales, performs this mediating role. This figure is not merely a winged animal, but the vivid archetypal reflection of ancient Turkic mythology and totemic views. In the ancient Turkic worldview, the legendary bird was perceived as a sacred creature nesting at the top of the cosmic tree (Bayterak), connecting the sky and the earth. It is a symbol of goodness, generosity, and supreme patronage. The hero's winning of this bird's affection does not happen by chance; he proves his nobility by rescuing the bird's chicks from the clutches of a dragon, the embodiment of evil in the lower world. While the dragon devouring the bird's chicks every year is a constant assault of chaos, the hero slaying the dragon is an act of restoring world equilibrium. When the hero mounts the back of the Simurgh or Zümrüdüanka and begins to ascend upward, the most touching point of the tale emerges—the meat-cutting motif. As the journey lasts long and reaches the threshold of the bright world, the prepared forty flasks of water and forty batman of meat run out. The bird turns its head for the last time to ask for sustenance. If the hero does not give it food, the bird is bound to fall back down and both will perish. At that moment, the hero cuts a piece of meat from his own thigh or calf without hesitation and places it in the bird's mouth.

This episode in the Uzbek tale "Kenja botir" matches the scene in the Turkish tale "Zümrüdüanka Kuşu" word for word. Recognizing from the sweetness of this flesh that it is human meat, the bird does not swallow it, keeping it hidden under its tongue. Upon reaching the luminous world, seeing that the hero has become limping, the bird places that flesh back, heals it by smoothing it with its saliva and wing, and restores him. Folklorist Vladimir Propp, analyzing the episode of cutting meat from one's own flesh in fairy tales, called it the highest degree of symbolic death and complete self-sacrifice. The hero sacrifices his material body in the lower world, and the bird, by carrying him to the luminous world and healing his wound, endows him with a new, invincible body. This signifies resurrection and the achievement of perfection. Saim Sakaoğlu also emphasizes that this motif is an artistic monument of ancient Turkic beliefs in sacrifice and devotion. The hero returns to the luminous world not as an ordinary youth, but as a public-spirited, perfect human being who has passed through the severest trials.

DISCUSSION. The evidence is obtained as a result of the comparative-typological analysis of Uzbek and Turkish folk tales shows that alongside a common ancient stratum, there are signs of independent development in the artistic thinking of both ethnos. First, regarding the structure of the universe in magic tales, the spatial boundaries in Uzbek and Turkish texts are expressed through almost identical symbolic signs. In Uzbek tales, the hero's descent into a well, passage to the lower world via a cave or earth fissure, relies on views concerning the underground kingdom of ancient Turkic mythology. In Turkish tales, the young prince's descent to the bottom of the well and transforming the darkness there into light repeats this exact line. This situation demonstrates that Turkic tribes who migrated to the Anatolian region preserved their ancient mythopoetic concepts from Central Asia even in a new geographical environment. The conflict between the lower world and upper world is not merely an adventure, but a necessary stage of the hero's spiritual testing, initiatory elevation, and establishing goodness over evil.

The second important issue is interpretations surrounding the archetype of Simurgh and Zümrüdüanka. In both nations' tales, this sacred bird acts as a mediator (an intermediary between two worlds). Comparing the texts, the motif wherein the hero rescues the bird's chicks from the dragon, the bird assists him in return, and most importantly, during the flight when provisions run

out, the hero cuts meat from his own body—his thigh or calf—operates with word-for-word identical mechanisms. This motif is connected to primitive human beliefs in sacrifice and devotion, expressing that for a supreme goal, a human must be able to release their material existence. The bird's refusal to swallow human flesh and instead attaching it to the hero's wound to heal it upon reaching the luminous world is a symbol of spiritual rebirth and perfection.

The third direction is the issue of the folk hero in social-everyday tales. The figures of Kaldan (Kachal polvon) in Uzbek folklore and Keloğlan in Turkish folklore are complete socio-psychological typological twins. They are depicted as having a physical defect outwardly (bald head) and belonging to the most destitute strata according to social origin (an orphan, the breadwinner of an aging mother). However, in the development of tale events, beneath this mask of destitution and simplicity lie the sharp wit, eloquence, and irony of the people. In both tales, the main protagonist fights against oppression, injustice, and court arrogance not with physical force or weapons, but with wordplay, resourcefulness, and laughter. This stems from the people's unshakable belief in achieving intellectual and moral victory over any despotic power. Thus, such profound commonality between Uzbek and Turkish tales is no coincidence. This phenomenon is vivid proof of the fraternal peoples' shared ethnic past, unity of worldview, and spiritual memory passed down from ancestors to generations across centuries.

CONCLUSION. The comparative-typological analysis of Uzbek and Turkish folk tales allows us to draw the following main scientific conclusions: **Commonality of Genesis and Mythological Foundation:** The spatial architecture of Uzbek and Turkish magic tales is based on the three-layered universe model of all-Turkic mythology. The hero's descent into the underground world (well, cave) and struggle with chaos forces there (giant, dragon) is the artistic reflection of initiatory tests and humanity's age-old desires to secure light over darkness. **The Archetype of Devotion and Salvation:** The figures of Simurgh and Zümrüdüanka serve as sacred intermediaries between two worlds. The motif of the hero cutting from his own flesh is the artistic expression of all-Turkic totemic and sacrificial traditions, ensuring that through complete self-sacrifice, the hero ascends to a new spiritual status—the level of perfection. **The Power of Folk Wit and Laughter:** Through the figures of Kaldan (Kachal) and Keloğlan in social-everyday tales, the people's intellectual rebellion against social injustice is manifested. Responding to violence with laughter, and to trickery with sharp intelligence and quick-wittedness, is the primary character trait of these figures. **Ethnocultural Values Mirror:** Fairy tales are not merely an aesthetic phenomenon, but the most touching program of folk pedagogy, teaching generations noble qualities such as bravery, truthfulness, respect for family and parents, and extending a helping hand to the helpless.

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