



THE FORMATION OF THE IMAGE OF THE DOG IN UZBEK AND ENGLISH FOLKLORE

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Abstract:

This article analyzes the historical, spiritual, and artistic formation of the image of the dog in Uzbek and English oral folklore. As one of humanity's oldest companions, the dog has been reflected in the collective consciousness as a symbol of loyalty, protection, love, and at times, evil or betrayal. In Uzbek folklore, the image of the dog is predominantly associated with faithfulness, trust, and devotion, often linked with religious and mythological layers. In English folklore, however, this image appears as a symbolic representation of the spiritual world, witchcraft, loyalty, and the miraculous. The article provides a comparative analysis of the common and national characteristics of the image of the dog as reflected in both nations' oral traditions.

Keywords: dog image, folklore, mythology, loyalty, symbolism, oral tradition, typological similarity, artistic thinking.

O‘ZBEK VA INGLIZ FOLKLORIDA IT OBRAZINING XALQ OG‘ZAKI IJODIDA SHAKLLANISHI

Annotatsiya:

Ushbu maqolada o‘zbek va ingliz xalq og‘zaki ijodida it obrazining tarixiy, ma’naviy va badiiy shakllanish jarayoni tahlil qilinadi. It obrazi insonning eng qadimiy hamrohlaridan biri sifatida xalq ongida sadoqat, himoya, muhabbat, ba’zan esa yovuzlik va xiyonat timsoli sifatida aks etgan. O‘zbek folklorida it obrazi ko‘proq sodiqlik, ishonch va fidoyilik ramzi bo‘lib, diniy-mifologik qatlamlar bilan bog‘liq holda shakllangan. Ingliz folklorida esa bu obraz ko‘pincha ruhiy olam, jodugarlik, sadoqat va mo‘jiza bilan bog‘langan timsol sifatida namoyon bo‘ladi.



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Maqolada ikki xalq og‘zaki ijodi namunalarining o‘zaro qiyosiy tahlili asosida it obrazining umumiy va milliy xususiyatlari aniqlanadi.

Kalit so‘zlar: it obrazi, folklor, mifologiya, sadoqat, ramziylik, xalq og‘zaki ijodi, tipologik o‘xshashlik, badiiy tafakkur.

Introduction:

The oral folklore of every nation represents its worldview, values, and moral system as one of the oldest layers of cultural heritage. The depiction of animals—particularly the image of the dog—in folklore reflects the relationship between humans and nature as well as the artistic representation of social relations. The dog, having lived alongside humans since ancient times, was domesticated about 15–20 thousand years ago according to anthropological sources. Therefore, in the collective consciousness, it has emerged not only as a loyal companion but also as a symbol embodying moral and spiritual values. In Uzbek oral tradition, the dog is viewed mainly as a symbol of loyalty, protection, and devotion, whereas in English folklore it takes on a dualistic form, being associated with spirits, miracles, and witchcraft. Such similarities and differences stem from each nation’s worldview, religious beliefs, and historical experience. The purpose of this study is to analyze, from a scientific perspective, the historical and artistic evolution, symbolic meanings, and typological similarities of the image of the dog in Uzbek and English folklore.

Main Part:

In the ancient belief systems of both peoples, the dog was regarded as a mediating creature between life and death—a *liminal* being. In Uzbek mythology, the dog is portrayed as an entity capable of seeing spirits, sensing evil forces, and driving them away. The proverb “*It hurgan joyda jin bo‘lmaydi*” (“There are no spirits where a dog barks”) reflects this ancient belief. In some Uzbek legends, the dog is praised as a faithful protector that never abandons its owner, even at the moment of death. In English folklore, the image of the dog often appears through the motif of the “Black Dog,” a creature linked with the spirit world and seen as an omen of death. However, this symbol is not limited to a negative meaning; in many English legends, the black



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dog protects its master from evil spirits and is depicted as a miraculous, loyal companion. Thus, in English mythology, the dog embodies both protective and warning functions.

In both Uzbek and English mythological traditions, the dog shares a common archetypal role—as a guardian of the cosmic boundary and protector of humans from evil forces. Yet, its symbolic meanings vary according to each culture’s religious and societal context. In Uzbek proverbs, fairy tales, and epics, the dog carries clear moral and ethical connotations. Proverbs such as “*It sodiq, odam nodon*” (“The dog is faithful, the man is foolish”), “*It o’ladi, nomi qoladi*” (“The dog dies, but its name remains”), and “*Egasiga it bo’lgan yomon emas*” (“Being a loyal dog to one’s master is no shame”) express the people’s understanding of loyalty, faithfulness, and honesty. In folk tales like “*Oq it bilan qora it*” (“The White Dog and the Black Dog”) or “*Bo’ri, echki va it*” (“The Wolf, the Goat, and the Dog”), the dog typically plays a protective or assisting role.

English folklore also includes moral interpretations of the dog. Proverbs such as “*Every dog has his day*” highlight the fairness of fate, while “*Let sleeping dogs lie*” teaches prudence and the importance of maintaining peace. In English tales, dogs are often portrayed as faithful servants, compassionate companions, or miraculous helpers. For example, in the Welsh legend “*Gelert the Faithful Dog*,” a dog sacrifices its life to protect its master—closely resonating with the Uzbek notion of ultimate loyalty.

Thus, in both Uzbek and English folklore, the image of the dog symbolizes faithfulness, conscience, devotion, and humanity, though these ideas developed within different religious and social frameworks. The similarities in the image of the dog across the two traditions can be explained by shared features of archaic worldviews. In both cultures, the dog serves as a loyal companion, a guardian against evil, and a symbol of steadfast devotion. However, their cultural and semantic differences are shaped by religion and environment. In Islamic belief, although the dog is traditionally viewed as an impure animal, folk creativity transcends this religious constraint and instead emphasizes the dog’s moral qualities—faithfulness, love, and protection—thus reflecting the humanistic essence of Uzbek folklore. In English folklore, Christianity coexists with remnants of Celtic pagan beliefs.



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Consequently, the dog is depicted both as a loyal companion and as a mystical creature associated with death, spirits, and miracles. Legends such as “*Black Shuck*” or “*Padfoot*” portray the dog as a harbinger of death, while “*Gelert*” represents self-sacrifice. Hence, while the image of the dog in both Uzbek and English folklore shares a common mythological root, its semantic evolution has diverged under different religious and cultural systems.

Conclusion:

The image of the dog in Uzbek and English oral folklore serves as an important symbolic figure that embodies human moral ideals, societal values, and metaphysical beliefs. In Uzbek folklore, it represents sincerity, protection, and honesty—the essence of humanity itself—whereas in English folklore, it embodies duality, symbolizing both loyalty and mystical power. In both traditions, the dog acts as a *liminal archetype* mediating between man and nature, good and evil, life and death. Thus, the dog’s image in both cultures stands as a universal symbol of artistic thought, reflecting each nation’s historical experience, religious beliefs, and social life. Through this image, humanity artistically expresses its most vital virtues—loyalty and conscience.

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