Composition and Chronotoping of Traditional Uzbek and English Folk Legends

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the composition and chronotope of traditional Uzbek and English folk legends, with a particular focus on the ways in which time and space are constructed in the narrative structures of both cultures. The analysis considers the distinctive features of these legends, including their mythological themes, moral lessons, and cultural symbolism. The study employs a comparative approach to examine the manner in which folk traditions in Uzbekistan and England influence the characters, settings, and temporal frameworks of their respective legends. By examining the manner in which these traditions interweave narrative elements with the social and historical contexts of the two regions, the paper offers insights into the role of folklore in shaping collective identities and cultural heritage. Moreover, the study illuminates the similarities and differences in the portrayal of universal themes, such as fate, magic, and human virtue, which are central to both Uzbek and English folklore. This analysis of folk legends demonstrates the cultural richness and the narrative techniques employed by storytellers in both traditions, offering insights into how folklore serves as a medium for preserving and transmitting values across generations.

Keywords: In the world folklore, in the Uzbek folklore, legends, in the theoretical concepts, motive, typology, mythological legends.

INTRODUCTION

One of the main characteristics of traditional folk legends is their composition and chronotope, which are based on an imaginary

world set in the "absolute past". In Uzbek folk tales, the narrative often commences with traditional phrases such as "according to the legend," "as the story goes," or "in ancient times," which introduce the mythical events that follow. The main part of the story describes these events, often concluding with phrases such as "it is said that this is still true" or "this is how it has remained," which serve to reinforce the reader's belief in the tale.

The article analyses the structure of these legends, focusing on the representation of time and space, and how they reflect cultural values and traditions. It highlights the narrative techniques used to shape storytelling and strengthen the connection between the mythical past and the present.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study of folk legends has been researched in various cultural contexts, including English, German, Russian, and Turkic traditions. Some important studies have been done by folklorists such as V. Vundt, E. S. Hartland, R. F. Fleck, V. A. Tayson, V. R. Feldman, Don Yoder, V. M. Jirmunskiy and V. Ya. Propp, Snesarev, Tolstova, Ye. Gusev, Azbelev, Yemelyanov, Chistov, Kravsov, Lazutin, Anikin, Kruglov, and Levskaya. These scholars have made important contributions to the study of folk narratives in different national traditions.

Other scholars who have done important work in Uzbek folklore include K. Imomov, B. Sarimsoqov, U. Jumanazarov, M. Zhorayev, Sh. Turdimov, J. Eshonqulov, N. Rahmonov, M. Rahmonova and A.M. Bakimbetov. Their work has helped us understand Uzbek folk legends better.

This study uses collections of folk legends and mythological stories that have been passed down orally and later documented in various folklore anthologies. The main sources for Uzbek legends are transcriptions and publications by Uzbek folklorists. For English legends, the main sources are well-known folklore compilations, such as those by the Brothers Grimm, J. R. R. Tolkien, and Edwin Sidney Hartland's English Fairy and Other Folk Tales (1906).

Secondary sources include books and articles by folklorists from around the world and from Uzbekistan. Other important sources are the works of V. M. Jirmunskiy and V. Ya. Propp, V. Vundt and O. B. Nayok, F.A. Nadrshina, E.M. Aliyeva & S.N. Azbelev.

RESULTS

The legend is short and has one or two events based on different myths. The historical legend "Polvon Ata Khassasi" is about people in a difficult situation who ask for help, a saviour who helps them and a miracle with a sickle (drawing water). In the legend, Polvon Ata is a saintly figure who helps the villagers. The legend tells of a village near Khiva that is suffering from a lack of water. The people ask Polvon Ata for help. Polvon Ata travels to the Jayhun River and strikes with his sickle, drawing water and providing the village with an abundance of water. The story shows that Polvon Ata is a very powerful man.

O. B. Nayok explains the difference between legends, myths and fairy tales. Legends are incomplete, unlike myths and fairy tales. English folk legends don't have a fixed structure, but they do have an introduction and a conclusion. In an English folk tale, the introduction tells you when and where the events happened. The conclusion shows that the events actually happened.

The introduction and conclusion of the legend show that it is an epic. This is shown by the narrator's relationship to the story. 'The Legend of the Sons of the Conqueror' begins by describing the king as lost in thought. This means: "One day William was lost in thought. His courtiers asked him why.

The introduction of English folk legends helps to show where and when the story took place. In 'The Legend of the Sons of the Conqueror' we learn that the story takes place in England and is about King William. The legend ends with the fate of King William and his sons. "Henry would be wise, prudent and peaceful unless forced to fight, and would die in peace after gaining many possessions. When King William was dying, he remembered what his wise men had said. He gave Normandy to Robert, England to William and his own treasures to his younger son Henry. Henry became king of both countries and ruled for a long time.

In English folk legends, particularly toponymic legends, one of the characteristic ways of providing information about the place and people involved in the events in the introduction is through the use of onomastic lexicon, such as place names (toponyms), hydronyms and anthroponyms. For example, in the introduction to 'The Legend of the Rollright Stones,' information is given about the fictional village of Rollright, a hill near the village, and the unusual nature of the stone circle: "Not far from the borders of Gloucestershire and Oxfordshire, and within the latter county, is the pretty village of Rollright, and near the village, on a hill, stands a circle of small stones, and a larger stone, such as our Celtic antiquarians say were erected by the Druids. As soon as the Druids left, the fairies, who never failed to take possession of their deserted shrines, seemed to have taken a special care of these stones, and any one who ventures to interfere with them is sure to meet with very great misfortune.

The legend describes the village of Rollright, the hill and the stones as having been created by the Druids, and after they left the fairies took possession of the place. The story goes that a local farmer, ignoring the warnings of the village elders, took one of the stones to use in construction, only to suffer misfortune and lose everything. However, when he returned the stone to its original place, his life improved and he became prosperous.

Similarly, 'The Origin of Rheidol Mountain' begins with information about an evil giant who decided to dam the River Severn: "Long ago in Wales there lived an old, evil giant who, for some reason, harboured hatred against the Mayor of Shrewsbury and all his people. He decided to dam the River Severn and create a flood that would submerge the whole town."

The introduction immediately informs us that the events are set in ancient Wales by using toponyms such as Wales, Shrewsbury, Wellington, Shropshire and the hydronym Severn. The legend tells of a dialogue between the evil giant and a wise man, in which the giant's plan to flood Shrewsbury is thwarted by the wise man's decision. The giant eventually retreated, and Mount Rheidol continues to rise to this day. The legend also mentions how the earth taken from the giant's retreat formed a hill beside Rheidol Mountain.

In the conclusion of English folk legends, various lexical units (verbs, adverbs and constructions) are used to reinforce the belief that the events of the story continue today. These lexical elements include time expressions such as once every twelve years, from time to time, only at certain times of the year, every year, and other expressions indicating the ongoing nature of the events such as to this day, nowadays, always, still, often, remain, and still sometimes. For example:

> There is a pot of gold buried somewhere near here, but no one has found it. Many have tried, just as many have taken the stones to make walls and gates; but the devil always brings them back and inflicts a terrible punishment for disturbing Simon's barrow....

> Where he dropped the lump of earth, the mountain of Rheidol still rises, and from the heap of earth he scraped from his boots near Rheidol, a little hill has risen.

Some English folk legends indicate that the extraordinary events described in the story no longer occur in the present by using expressions such as the last, back again, nor...again, never, never more. For example: "...Brownie took the green coat, but was never seen again. We can assume that, tired of his domestic chores, he went to join the fairies in his new outfit."

Some legends reinforce the belief in the fictional nature of the events described by means of certain ready-made conclusive constructions and formulae. Examples are:

> "The stone was soon in its place, and the horse and cart returned home, and from that moment the farmer's affairs began to improve, until in a short time he was a richer and more substantial man than he had ever been before".

> "...in a moment the devil descended to the lower regions through the floor of the school, leaving a great crack in the hearthstone through which he passed, to testify the truth of this story to future generations".

> ...the names of whom, for the better credit of the story, I have written down...

These constructions serve to increase credibility and reinforce the authenticity of events in the eyes of the audience. For example, at the end of the legend 'Dando and his dogs,' this feature is prominently displayed: "This chair still stands in the church of St Germain, and all those who doubt the truth of what happened can see the story carved into sturdy oak. If they wish, they can sit in this chair until they fully believe it. On Sundays, early in the morning, you could often hear the priest's dogs chasing game." In this legend, the events described, including the priest Dando's fall into sin, his pact with the devil and his bizarre hunting adventures, are given an extra layer of credibility. The story culminates in a final resolution that involves Dando's disappearance and the carving of the story into the chair in St Germain's Church. The story is framed with the idea that anyone who still doubts the story can sit in the chair and experience the truth for themselves, and that the sound of the priest's dogs chasing prey can still be heard on Sundays. This reinforces the sense of continuity and belief in the legend. R. Kh. Elmuratov's views on historical legends in Uzbek and Karakalpak folklore are significant:

> Historical legends, which are known to all of us, were widely spread among the people, passed from mouth to mouth, and reached the following generations. Historical legends also have their own genre character. And it is well known that they are fictional accounts of historical events. Therefore, one of the characteristics of historical legends is that they reflect real historical events. The main characters in them are historical personalities who lived in those times and witnessed important historical events. These characters were created in specific historical periods. This is also confirmed by folk works, because in the genre of folk legends, historical reality is transformed into artistic reality based on the images of these people. Through historical legends we can learn about the past and the historical figures of that time.

Kaari Koski also talks about the nature of legends:

> In traditional telling of legends, the personality of the teller and his or her view of the content of the tale are the most important variables, although the role of the audience and the preceding discourse may

also influence the telling, causing the teller to change his or her conventional interpretation. Variation occurs mainly in the areas of field and tenor. However, a remarkable change of mode occurs when the same legends are transmitted in the form of photocopies, e-mails or web pages. Such a change of mode profoundly affects the roles of narrator and audience, reducing the role of immediate feedback. Similarly, when the same legend is written down by a folklorist, the new version is significantly affected by the change of mode: its transformation from oral to written form. The new audience may not be familiar with the context of the legend, and the plot needs to be communicated more clearly, without elliptical references. A handwritten, archived record of a legend is clearly a different linguistic genre from the oral performance it reproduces. We can also say that it is no longer folklore, but a document about folklore. But it is still a legend. The point is that there are different sets of generic categorisations, and their relationships to each other should not be assumed to be stable. Legends are associated with a variety of genres. Legend + written archival record' may not be an interesting combination for scholars who are more excited by 'legend + everyday conversation' or 'legend + ghost excursion'. Studying different forms of the same legend separately and together can open up interesting perspectives on their functional variation.

To analyse Uzbek and English folk legends, we need to consider the work of M. M. Bakhtin, who introduced the term "chronotope" to literary theory. Bakhtin defined the chronotope as "the interrelation of time and space in literature." A chronotope is how time and space are connected in a literary work. Bakhtin says that time and space in historical or mythological stories are not just physical. They have cultural and ideological meanings too.

In folk legends, like those in Uzbek tradition, Bakhtin's concept of the chronotope helps create meaning. In folklore, the ideal human figure is tied to space and time. The ideal hero in folk stories is not just big or strong, but also important because of their past and where they are from.

In many folk tales, the hero is depicted as very large or strong, often requiring vast amounts of space. This is particularly true for legendary figures who are larger than life. These characters tend to perform actions that impact both space and

time. Their achievements or mistakes are usually linked to a mythical, undefined past. Events in folk legends occur in the past, but the exact time is often unclear. Phrases like "long ago" or "once upon a time" signal that the story is not grounded in reality. Uzbek folk legends show that time and space are flexible, not fixed. They often begin with phrases such as "long ago," "once upon a time," or "in ancient times," suggesting that the events took place a long time ago. The absence of specific time markers indicates that the story exists in a world where time is less important than the actions and lessons it conveys.

Bakhtin argues that in folklore, the hero's greatness or power is always connected to the space and time in which the actions unfold. In many folk stories, these characters undergo transformations, only to return to their original state. According to Bakhtin, folklore does not emphasize a direct relationship between physical size and spiritual significance. He states: "In folklore, a person is great in their own right, and they can defeat an entire army by themselves."

In the 'Legend of Dando and His Dogs,' the setting is unclear, but it highlights the fact that the story is not meant to be taken as real. The spaces described, such as a church, a forest, and a hunting ground, serve as the backdrop for a mixture of morals and magic. This suggests that time and space are not just passive elements in the tale; they play a crucial role in shaping the story.

S. R. Mirzaeva provides an insightful perspective on romantic epics, noting that in these tales, space and time are epic and conditional. The space and time in romantic epics differ from the real world. They are psychic-artistic and form a conceptual space and time within the epic tradition. Mirzaeva cautions that comparing the chronotope of these epics with real space and time would lead to inaccurate conclusions. In romantic epics, space and time represent the idealized conditions of life. These epics are often set in mythical or perfected realms where heroic deeds occur. The realms portrayed cannot be tied to real, physical locations; they are shaped by the ideals and collective concepts of the community, blending mythological and legendary elements.

Thus, it can be concluded that space and time in folk legends are structured according to a conditional chronotope. The

narrative is based on imaginative constructs, and the setting is indicated by certain clues. In Uzbek folk legends, events often take place in mythical spaces, such as heaven, the underworld, or other supernatural realms.

'The legend of Musa and the Fish' begins with "Long ago," signaling its mythic or legendary nature. The chronotope of this story indicates that time and space are not confined to the real world but are instead shaped by the mythological context of the tale.

Similarly, in 'The Nightingale' story, phrases like "Once upon a time" and "in ancient times" introduce the story within an undefined past. These temporal markers allow the story to explore themes of love, loss, transformation, and fate. The nightingale's continued singing in gardens and orchards reinforces the idea that it was once human. We see this same theme in 'The Story of the Rich Son,' which also begins with "Once upon a time..."

In this tale, the rich son is the heir to a wealthy man but refuses to listen to his father. In a moment of anger, the father curses his son, who is then transformed into a bird. From that moment on, people call him the "Rich Bird." This tale not only explains the origin of the term *boyugli* (rich bird) but also teaches a moral lesson about the consequences of poor parenting. This story follows a narrative structure and shares similarities with other tales such as 'The Story of the Dog' and 'The Story of the Olashakshak.'

In one version of 'The Story of Olashakshak,' the tale begins with "In ancient times," setting the stage for a mythic event. The story describes a man who was a peddler, traveling from village to village, causing trouble and stirring gossip. In response, people curse him, saying, "May you fly like Olashakshak." As a result, he is transformed into a bird. This version explains how the peddler became a bird due to the curse.

In another version, the story begins with "One day... when he was coming," establishing the tale in a more specific, yet still undefined, moment in the past. As Hazrat Ali flees from battle, a tree splits open and shields him from his enemies. Olashakshak, seeing Hazrat Ali's cloak through the crack in the tree, betrays

him by revealing his hiding spot. As the enemies begin to cut down the tree, Hazrat Ali curses Olashakshak, saying, "You will only give birth once a year, on New Year's Eve." This is why Olashakshak only gives birth once a year.

This version of the story provides an explanation for Olashakshak's unusual reproduction cycle, linking it to the events involving Hazrat Ali. The tale involves the motif of the tree splitting and hiding someone, and while it mentions Hazrat Ali, the exact time and place of the events remain unspecified.

O. B. Nayok, who has studied the concepts of space and time in folk legends, myths and fairy tales, says.

> Unlike myth, whose primary category is mythological time, legend narrates events that took place after the end of mythological time, usually in historical time, and occupies a place among genres that lie between myth and historical narrative. Since the events of a myth take place before the creation of the world as we know it today, the myth is less localised and more distant in terms of time and place, expanding its boundaries compared to a legend, where time and space are more defined and tied to a specific geographical reality and sometimes even to a specific historical, biblical or apocryphal figure. For example, in legends based on religious beliefs, mythical time is transformed into the era of the lives and deeds of saints.

In the light of the above, we have attempted to clarify the manifestation of the categories of space and time in English folk legends, particularly in their introductory and concluding sections. As we have noted, one of the characteristic ways of verbalising information about the places and persons where events take place in the introductory parts of English folk tales is the use of onomastic lexicon (toponyms, hydronyms and anthroponyms) such as "a hill," "a village," "a town," "a farmer," etc. In English folktales, to use O. B. Nayok's terminology, the legend narrates events that take place after the end of mythological time, usually in historical time. Accordingly, in religiously inspired legends, time is transformed into the period of the saints' lives and deeds. On the basis of the scholar's views, we can say that in historical legends, the legendary time

corresponds to the lives and deeds of historical figures, while in toponymic legends the imaginary reality of the real world, real places and times is portrayed.

For example, in 'The Priest and the Clerk,' the legend begins with a framing narrative about the extraordinary red sandstone rocks that rise out of the sea near Dolisha, a part of Old Cornwall. It mentions that as these rocks are part of Old Cornwall, it will not go beyond its purpose to tell the true story of these unusual rocks. The introductory part of the legend refers to the places where the events take place, using onomastic terms such as "Dolisha," "Exeter Cathedral," etc. The story tells that the Bishop of Exeter lies in Dolisha, and that a priest from the East regularly visits him, intending to take his place. The priest and the scribe, travelling at night, search for the bishop, and the events unfold according to the "road motif": the priest accidentally says to the scribe: "I should have made you the devil's guide, not you." As a result, the legend, structured around a road chronotope, ends in a "home" chronotope where the priest's sin is revealed during a gathering of a guide farmer and his drunken friends. Unable to take the place of the deceased bishop, the priest is transformed into a rock. At the end of the legend, it is revealed that the leading farmer is the devil and the drunken friends are also devils. The next morning, two horses are found abandoned near Dolisha, and the priest and the scribe, now transformed into rocks, stand frozen as if about to climb them. These rocks in the shape of horses are a warning and an eternal monument for future generations. In the legend 'The Priest and the Scribe,' the time when the events take place is described as an undefined "unlucky night" and "night" in the legend. In this story, the reasons for the shape of two rocks in Dolisha, which is part of Old Cornwall, resembling a man and a horse, are explained within a mythological framework based on the images of devils and demons.

F. A. Nadryshina, in her research on space and time in folk legends, states:

> Spatial and temporal representations are arranged in a similar way: the events depicted in legends often take place in the distant past, in

the cosmos, in boundless water spaces or in the underwater world... There are plots in which the retrospective nature is emphasised with phrases such as This happened in the distant past. At that time there were neither stars nor the Milky Way' ('TSosh Yuly'), 'In ancient times the earth was the size of a spoon and the sky the size of a cup' ('Yetegan' - 'Big Dipper')...

Introductions in the form of "In ancient times" are used by storytellers to draw attention to the remoteness of the events being told, and they appear in both legends and fairy tales. However, because of the nature of the genre, which is based on the communication of reliable information, or information whose reliability is quite possible, the introductory phrase does not carry the nuance of archaism. When used as a finished traditional formula, such an introduction is not usually accompanied by additional details that reinforce the motif of antiquity. On the contrary, the narrative makes it clear that the time is relatively distant, in keeping with the genre of "legend."

In fact, as F. A. Nadryshina has pointed out, in the legend there is a representation of events in the distant past, in the cosmos, in boundless water spaces and underwater worlds. In both Uzbek and English folk legends, the reality of events in an undefined past, described by retrospective phrases such as "in ancient times," "when nothing was created," is common. The folklorist Z. Eshanova analyses the legend of the creation of man, in which the mythological origin story speaks of man coming out of the crevices of the Qoratoqchi mountain. It is said that man came from two individuals called Oi Ata (Father Moon) and Ayva (Mother). When they died, their children buried their bodies in a cave and sealed it with a golden door. This story begins with the traditional introduction, "In ancient times, when nothing had been created", and describes the events at the actual site of "Qoratoqchi."

Based on F. A. Nadryshina's ideas, we can conclude that the traditional introductory phrase "In ancient times" appears in both legends and fairy tales. In folk legends, it often describes an unclear but real past that takes place in an archaic, mythical space and time, while in fairy tales it usually describes a fantastical world that is unreal. In stories we see events taking place in unreal, fantastic places and times. For example, in the legend

'The Little Merchant of Suoffem,' the story begins with the traditional phrase "Once upon a time, long ago..." and goes on to give information about the place and time of the events:

> It is said that a long time ago in Suoffem, Norfolk, there lived a small merchant who dreamt that if he could get to London Bridge and stand on it, he would hear very good news". In this legend, the event takes place in Suoffem, Norfolk, and is framed by the traditional retrospective phrase "Once upon a time, long ago...

The merchant's dream is linked to the bridge on which, if he stands, he will hear good news. In the narrative, retrospective elements are presented in the context of this formula. The merchant goes to the bridge and talks to a shopkeeper who also has a similar dream. In the dream, the shopkeeper tells him that if he goes to Suoffem in Norfolk and digs up a treasure in the house of a small merchant, he will become rich. The merchant, without further argument, returns home, digs up the treasure and becomes rich. At the end of the story, the legend states: "To this day, in this church, there stands his stone statue with a sack on his back and a dog at his feet. His memory is still kept in the form of similar images in most of the old tavern and pub windows in the town". This final part of the legend uses a traditional retrospective formula, 'to this day', to confirm the reality of the story and reassure the listener that the events really happened. The statue remains in the church, and the memory of the merchant is preserved through images in tavern windows, completing the retrospective element of the tale.

The introduction to the 'Worcestershire Fairies' legend does not begin with a traditional formula, but it does provide specific information about the location where the events take place: "According to the legend, the promontory known as Osberrow Rock or Osbury Rock, near Olfric by the River Teme in Lallis, just opposite Knightsford Bridge, is a favourite dwelling place of the fairies". The events of the legend take place near the River Teme in Lallis, at Osberrow Rock (or Osbury Rock), a mountain and cave near Olfric, opposite Knightsford Bridge. After introducing this location as a place inhabited by fairies, the story moves on to the time in which the events take place, introduced

by the traditional phrase "In ancient times..." or "In olden days it was said..."

The legend tells how fairies, as mythological figures, live in a cave in the mountain and ask people for help when they lose something. The fairies then invite the people who help them to visit them and predict that these people will have good luck in the future. The end of the legend tells us that the cries of the fairies can still be heard at the site today.

In conclusion, we can say that Uzbek and English folk legends share remarkable typological similarities in terms of genre, narrative style and compositional structure. While the two traditions show clear similarities in genre, narrative technique and composition, their differences are mainly influenced by the religious beliefs, geographical location and historical events of each culture. For example, Uzbek folk legends often include place names and historical figures from the region, while English folk legends often include place names and historical figures specific to England. The mythological imagery in both traditions is also unique to each culture; English folk legends include mythological figures such as goblins, fairies, elves, demons, the devil, green children, magicians and ghosts, while Uzbek folk legends include characters such as Khizr, the fish, mountains, swallows, Hazrat Ali and Musa.

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