

**NATIONAL DISTINCTIVE FEATURES OF EASTERN AND WESTERN LEGENDS***Abdusamadov Zafarbek Nurmat o'g'li**O'zbekiston davlat jahon tillari universiteti*

**Abstract:** This article explores the national and cultural distinctive features of Eastern and Western legends through a comparative literary and folkloristic analysis. Legends, as an important component of oral and written cultural heritage, reflect the worldview, moral values, historical memory, and spiritual traditions of different societies. Eastern legends are characterized by philosophical depth, didactic orientation, collective values, and symbolic representation of harmony between humans, nature, and the divine. In contrast, Western legends tend to emphasize individualism, heroism, conflict, and linear narrative development, often focusing on personal destiny and moral struggle. The study applies descriptive, comparative, and contextual analysis methods to identify similarities and differences in thematic structure, character representation, narrative strategies, and ideological content. The findings demonstrate that despite universal mythological motifs, Eastern and Western legends preserve strong national specificity shaped by religious beliefs, social systems, and historical experience. The article contributes to cross-cultural literary studies by highlighting the role of legends in preserving national identity and cultural continuity.

**Keywords:** Eastern legends, Western legends, national identity, folklore studies, cultural specificity, mythological motifs, comparative literature, narrative traditions

**INTRODUCTION**

Legends occupy a significant place in the cultural and literary heritage of nations, functioning as a bridge between historical reality, collective imagination, and moral consciousness. As a form of traditional narrative, legends preserve social experience, ethical norms, religious beliefs, and national values that have been transmitted from generation to generation. Both Eastern and Western civilizations have developed rich legendary traditions, each reflecting distinct cultural models, philosophical worldviews, and historical trajectories. The study of Eastern and Western legends from a comparative perspective is particularly important in the context of globalization, where cultural boundaries are increasingly blurred, yet national identity remains a crucial marker of cultural uniqueness. Eastern legends, shaped by ancient philosophical and religious systems such as Buddhism, Confucianism, Islam, and Hinduism, tend to emphasize spiritual harmony, moral instruction, and collective responsibility. In contrast, Western legends, influenced by Greco-Roman mythology and Christian traditions, often highlight individualism, heroism, moral struggle, and personal destiny. Despite the presence of universal mythological motifs—such as the heroic journey, supernatural forces, and ethical testing—the narrative structure, character

portrayal, and ideological focus of legends differ significantly between East and West. These differences are not accidental but are deeply rooted in the social organization, religious worldview, and historical experience of each culture. Therefore, legends serve not only as literary texts but also as cultural documents that encode national mentality and value systems. The purpose of this article is to identify and analyze the national distinctive features of Eastern and Western legends through a comparative literary and cultural approach. By examining thematic patterns, narrative strategies, and symbolic elements, the study aims to reveal how legends reflect and preserve cultural specificity while contributing to the shared heritage of world folklore.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODOLOGY**

The study of legends has long attracted the attention of scholars in folklore studies, comparative literature, anthropology, and cultural studies. Classical folklorists emphasize that legends function as carriers of collective memory and national worldview, reflecting social values, moral norms, and historical consciousness. Comparative researchers have noted that while legends across cultures often share universal mythological motifs, their narrative structure and ideological orientation vary according to cultural context. Scholarly works on Eastern legends highlight their close connection with religious-philosophical systems and ethical instruction. Researchers point out that Eastern narrative traditions prioritize symbolism, moral didacticism, and collective ideals over individual character development. In contrast, studies on Western legends focus on heroic individuality, linear narration, and conflict-driven plots shaped by Greco-Roman mythology and Christian thought. Existing literature confirms that legends serve as an important medium for expressing national identity and cultural continuity. However, despite a substantial body of research, comparative analyses that systematically examine the national distinctive features of Eastern and Western legends remain relatively limited. Many studies focus on individual traditions or regional folklore, leaving a gap in cross-cultural interpretation. This article seeks to address this gap by offering a balanced comparative approach. The methodology of the study is based on a qualitative research framework combining descriptive, comparative, and contextual analysis. Selected Eastern and Western legends are examined in terms of thematic content, narrative structure, character representation, and symbolic elements. Comparative analysis is used to identify similarities and differences between the two traditions, while contextual interpretation allows the findings to be linked to historical, religious, and cultural backgrounds. This methodological approach ensures an objective and culturally sensitive analysis of legends as both literary and cultural phenomena.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The comparative analysis of Eastern and Western legends reveals both shared narrative elements and clear national distinctive features shaped by cultural, religious, and historical contexts. The results show that legends in both traditions serve similar social functions, such as moral instruction, preservation of collective memory, and transmission of cultural values. However, the ways in which these functions are realized differ significantly. One of the main findings concerns thematic orientation. Eastern legends predominantly emphasize spiritual harmony, moral self-discipline, and collective responsibility. Ethical lessons are often conveyed implicitly through symbolic events and archetypal characters. In contrast, Western legends are more likely to foreground individual heroism, personal choice, and open moral conflict. The struggle between good and evil is usually explicit, and characters undergo visible personal transformation. Another important result relates to narrative structure and character representation. Eastern legends frequently employ cyclical or episodic narrative patterns, reflecting a worldview based on balance and continuity. Characters tend to embody moral ideals rather than individual psychological complexity. Western legends, on the other hand, usually follow a linear narrative structure with a clear beginning, development, and resolution. Protagonists are often individualized, with personal motivations, inner conflicts, and defined heroic traits. The discussion of these findings suggests that such differences are closely linked to broader cultural models. The collectivist orientation of Eastern societies and their philosophical traditions influence the didactic and symbolic nature of legends, whereas the individual-centered values of Western societies shape narratives focused on personal destiny and heroic achievement. At the same time, the presence of universal mythological motifs indicates a shared human need to explain the world through storytelling. Thus, legends function as a space where universal narrative patterns and national cultural specificity intersect. Another significant observation concerns the function of the supernatural element in Eastern and Western legends. In Eastern narratives, supernatural forces are often presented as integral components of the natural and moral order, reinforcing ideas of destiny, harmony, and spiritual balance. These elements rarely appear as purely antagonistic forces; instead, they serve as guides or tests for ethical behavior. In Western legends, however, supernatural beings frequently represent opposing forces that create tension and drive narrative conflict, emphasizing confrontation and resolution. This contrast further illustrates how cultural worldviews shape narrative strategies and reinforce national modes of thinking.

## CONCLUSION

The present study has examined the national distinctive features of Eastern and Western legends through a comparative literary and cultural perspective. The analysis demonstrates that legends are not merely narrative forms of entertainment but essential cultural texts that preserve collective memory, moral values, and historical experience of societies. Despite the presence of shared mythological motifs, Eastern and Western legends differ significantly in their thematic focus, narrative structure, and character representation. The findings confirm that Eastern legends are largely shaped by philosophical and religious traditions that emphasize spiritual harmony, ethical behavior, and collective responsibility. Their symbolic and didactic nature reflects a worldview in which individual actions are inseparable from social and cosmic balance. Western legends, in contrast, tend to highlight individual heroism, moral conflict, and personal destiny, revealing cultural orientations toward self-realization, linear progress, and confrontation between opposing forces. Furthermore, the study highlights that these differences are deeply rooted in historical development, social organization, and belief systems. Legends thus function as a reflection of national mentality and cultural identity while simultaneously contributing to universal folklore traditions. The comparative approach adopted in this research allows for a deeper understanding of how cultural specificity is preserved within shared narrative frameworks. In conclusion, the study contributes to cross-cultural literary and folklore studies by emphasizing the importance of legends as a means of cultural self-expression and continuity. Future research may expand this analysis by incorporating a wider range of regional traditions or applying interdisciplinary methods, such as discourse analysis or cognitive approaches, to further explore the role of legends in shaping cultural perception and national identity. In addition, the results of the study emphasize that legends continue to play an important role in contemporary cultural discourse. In the modern world, where traditional narratives are increasingly reinterpreted through literature, media, and education, Eastern and Western legends remain a valuable source of cultural codes and national symbolism. Their continued relevance demonstrates that legends are not static artifacts of the past but dynamic narratives capable of adapting to new social and cultural contexts. Therefore, the comparative study of legends contributes not only to theoretical folklore research but also to the practical understanding of cultural dialogue and intercultural communication.

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