

Avian Humanoids: Myths Across the World

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Myths and legends have always had the function of reflecting the society in which they originated. With their different perspectives on life, truth, society, and psychology, these tales shed light on the values and beliefs of many cultural groups. Myths and legends have the ability to enthrall audiences and have a profound influence on the shared awareness of humanity by combining imaginative components with real-life encounters. World mythologies are comprised of stories about gods, heroes, and supernatural entities that represent the desires, anxieties, and ambitions of past and present communities. Myths and legends, ranging from the grand exploits of Greek heroes to the origin stories of indigenous societies, provide insight into the human condition and the enigmas of the cosmos. Through the exploration of themes such as love, betrayal, sacrifice, and redemption, these stories have a lasting impact on audiences worldwide. By exploring the domains of mythology and folklore, we can reveal fundamental truths about the human experience and the interdependence of all living organisms. These ageless narratives serve as a reminder of our collective human nature and the lasting influence of storytelling in shaping our comprehension of the world. As we further investigate the depths of mythology across various cultures, we develop a greater understanding and admiration for the wide range of human experiences and the lasting impact of these ancient narratives. Among which the flora and the fauna play a vital role.

Birds have also exerted a substantial influence in diverse cultures and mythology across the globe. Birds were regarded as representations of liberty, sagacity, and transcendence in numerous antiquated societies. They frequently had connections with deities, and their conduct and attributes were thought to possess profound significance and communications for humanity. In contemporary society, birds still

fascinate and motivate us with their exquisite appearance, elegance, and ability to recover from adversity. Birdwatchers and ornithologists find them intriguing, as they investigate their behaviour, migration patterns, and habitats to get a deeper understanding and save these remarkable species. Avian species also have a vital function in upholding the equilibrium of ecosystems. Bees have a crucial role in regulating insect populations, spreading seeds, and pollinating flowers, so enhancing the well-being and variety of plant and animal species. Their existence in our surroundings serves as a reminder of the interdependence of all organisms on our planet. Undoubtedly, birds are extraordinary beings that have captivated the emotions and intellect of humans for many years. Due to their high level of intelligence, ability to adapt, and attractive appearance, they have become a representation of freedom, resilience, and the marvels of the natural world.

The mythological creatures that are half-bird, half-human, demonstrate the long-standing human fascination with and respect for birds. These creatures epitomize a dual nature, symbolizing the celestial and the terrestrial, the ephemeral and the palpable. Their mysterious and ambiguous nature, which may exhibit both kindness and cruelty, enhances their appeal and continues to fascinate people around the globe. The harpy is the most renowned creature in ancient Greek mythology that possesses both human and bird-like characteristics. These creatures were shown as avian-bodied ladies with wings, frequently depicted with talons and a threatening countenance. Harpies were renowned for their capacity to seize and transport persons, especially those who had perpetrated offenses or incurred the wrath of the deities. They were perceived as enforcers of punishment and retribution, functioning as a symbol of the outcomes resulting from an individual's behaviour. In Norse mythology, the *Valkyries* were hybrid beings, possessing both human and avian characteristics. These formidable female characters were frequently portrayed as winged warriors, mounted on horses, and determining the fates of those in combat by deciding who would survive and who would perish. *Valkyries* were linked to both mortality and safeguarding, as they would escort deceased warriors to the realm

beyond and also defend those they valued from danger. Regarding ancient Egyptian mythology, the god Horus was frequently portrayed as a divinity with the head of a falcon. *Horus* symbolized the fusion of the celestial and terrestrial domains, being the offspring of Osiris and Isis. He was seen as an emblem of safeguarding, monarchy, and solar power. *Horus's* falcon-headed form symbolized his affinity with birds, highlighting his capacity to fly high and observe everything. The Thunderbird is a significant mythical creature in Native American folklore, characterized by its combination of human and avian features. This creature is commonly shown as a colossal avian with formidable wings, capable of generating thunder and lightning through the movement of its wings. The Thunderbird is revered as a formidable and revered being, closely linked to potency, safeguarding, and the elemental powers. The Thunderbird is thought to possess the ability to bestow rain and fertility upon the land, while also acting as a protective spirit for individuals and communities. In this paper we would delve deep into the realms of World Mythology and trace the nature, similarities, and dissimilarities of this kind.

In the sylvan world of Greek mythology, the *Sirens* were described as beings that were half-bird and half-woman. They were thought to have gorgeous faces and voices that were so enticing that they could entice sailors to their deaths. They were frequently portrayed as being alluring and dangerous, with the ability to take sailors off course and lead them to their deaths using their songs. It is stated that the goddess, Demeter cursed the *Sirens* by transforming them into half-bird creatures as a kind of punishment for their failure to prevent the kidnapping of her daughter, Persephone. This was said to be included in certain mythologies. *Harpies*, on the other hand, were creatures that had wings and possessed the bodies of birds as well as the faces of women. They were notorious for their offensive odor and their dogged search for food, which frequently included stealing from people and leaving havoc in their path. As agents of divine retribution, the *Harpies* were said to have been dispatched by the gods to punish those individuals who had committed crimes or have broken pledges, according to certain myths. Both their outward

appearance and their behavior were designed to instill fear in the minds of mortals and to serve as a constant reminder of the repercussions that would result from their acts. The *Sphinx* is commonly portrayed as a sentinel, strategically placed at the entrance of temples or tombs to repel malevolent entities and safeguard consecrated areas. The *Sphinx* in Egyptian mythology is intricately linked to the sun deity Ra, serving as a representation of the continuous process of life, mortality, and regeneration. The Great *Sphinx* of Giza, situated near the pyramids, is a highly renowned and enduring emblem of ancient Egypt, serving as a tribute to the resourcefulness and skill of the ancient Egyptians. The *Sphinx* has also been a prevalent motif in art, literature, and popular culture, serving as a source of inspiration for numerous interpretations and adaptations. The enigmatic and mysterious aspect of it has captivated the imagination of individuals throughout history, resulting in a multitude of ideas and guesses regarding its origins and significance. In general, the *Sphinx* continues to be a potent and long-lasting representation of intelligence, power, and enigma, captivating and captivating individuals worldwide. The prevalence of storytelling and the human imagination throughout diverse mythologies and cultures serves as a reminder of their enduring power.

Thoth's role as the deity responsible for judgment and acquiring knowledge is closely connected to his affiliation with the act of writing. The ancient Egyptians regarded writing as a sacred and divine skill, attributing the invention of hieroglyphics, the ancient Egyptian writing system, to *Thoth*. He was attributed with the invention of written language and imparting it to mankind, enabling the documentation and safeguarding of information and wisdom. *Thoth*, in his role as the divine scribe, had the duty of preserving the celestial archives and monitoring the activities and accomplishments of both humans and gods. *Thoth's* association with language and writing also designated him as the divine protector of scholars, scribes, and intellectuals. He was highly esteemed as the supreme authority on knowledge and wisdom, and both gods and humans alike sought his guidance and assistance. *Thoth* was reputed to possess the capacity to comprehend and elucidate the enigmas of the

cosmos, rendering him the supreme arbiter of matters pertaining to veracity and fairness. His sagacity and erudition were deemed indispensable for the efficient operation of society and the preservation of universal harmony. *Thoth* was renowned not just for his function as the deity of judgment and knowledge, but also for his adeptness in safeguarding and restoring. He assumed a pivotal position in the mythological narrative of *Isis* and *Horus*, wherein he safeguarded *Isis* during her gestation and subsequently restored the wounded eye of her offspring, *Horus*, during a confrontation with the deity *Set*. *Thoth's* ability to cure was much respected, and people frequently called upon him for safeguarding and curing during periods of sickness or harm. *Thoth's* connection with the moon is another important element of his mythos. The moon was seen as a representation of sacred wisdom and enlightenment, and *Thoth's* association with it further highlighted his position as the personification of knowledge and communication. The moon's crescent shape, reflected by the beak of *Thoth's* ibis, represents the cyclical aspect of time and the uninterrupted transmission of knowledge and wisdom. *Thoth's* influence transcended mythology and religion, leaving a deep imprint on ancient Egyptian culture. His affiliation with writing and language resulted in the creation of an exceptionally advanced system of hieroglyphics, which subsequently became the predominant method of communication and documentation in ancient Egypt. The introduction of writing had a transformative impact on Egyptian civilization, enabling the sharing of knowledge and the establishment of intricate governmental structures. *Thoth's* position as the deity responsible for judgment and acquiring knowledge had a substantial influence on education and intellectual endeavors in ancient Egypt.

Slavic Mythology features a bird called *Sirin*, which is closely linked to divination. These avian creatures are reputed to produce harmonious melodies that possess the ability to induce amnesia and eliminate all other desires in those who listen to them. *Sirins* are regarded as the counterpart of *Alkonost*, a mythical bird that likewise had the ability to sing enchanting melodies, predicting future happiness for saints. The *Sirin* is commonly portrayed as a hybrid creature, possessing the head

and chest of an attractive lady, and the avian body of a bird, typically adorned with eagle wings. According to Slavic legend, the *Sirin* is said to inhabit the celestial realm and only makes its way to the earthly realm during the short transitional period between winter and spring. The *Sirin*'s songs are reputed to possess such mesmerizing and enthralling qualities that they have the ability to bestow joy and happiness upon anyone who listens to them. Nevertheless, the potency of the *Sirin*'s melody is reputed to be perilous, as it has the potential to captivate listeners to such an extent that they completely lose touch with reality and neglect their duties and commitments. According to many renditions of the legend, the *Sirin*'s melodic enchantment possesses the power to drive individuals to their demise, as they get utterly fixated on experiencing it once more, disregarding their fundamental necessities. The *Sirin* is commonly linked to the notion of celestial inspiration and divination, as its melodies are thought to encompass concealed messages and prognostications regarding the future. According to Slavic legend, the ability to comprehend and decipher the songs of the *Sirin* is reserved for individuals who possess both a virtuous nature and a profound affinity for the spiritual domain. The *Alkonost*, like the *Sirin*, is a legendary bird renowned for its melodious singing. Although the songs of the *Sirin* evoke feelings of joy and happiness, the songs of the *Alkonost* are believed to elicit a sense of longing and melancholy. The *Alkonost* is commonly portrayed as a hybrid monster, featuring a woman's head and chest, and a bird's body, typically with a fish's tail. In Slavic mythology, the *Alkonost* is said to dwell in a heavenly region known as *Buyan*. It is claimed that the *Alkonost*'s singing can predict future joy and contentment for holy and virtuous humans. The songs of the *Alkonost* are reputed to possess such enchanting qualities that they have the ability to cause listeners to disregard the difficulties and grief of the world, and instead concentrate on the potential of a more promising tomorrow. The *Sirin* and the *Alkonost* hold a renowned status in Slavic mythology due to their capacity to provide solace and inspiration via their captivating melodies. They are commonly regarded as representations of the potency of music and its capability to surpass ordinary experiences and establish a connection with the divine.

There is a fascinating monster that is referred to as the *Wakwak* that is mentioned in the ancient mythology of the Philippines. This fabled figure is portrayed as a one-of-a-kind hybrid of a bird and human, exhibiting traits that are characteristic of both of these animals. Because of its capacity to fly and its sharp, claw-like appendages, it is frequently connected with nails and bats. This may be so because of its ability to fly. The *Manangal*, which can be thought of as the female equivalent of the *Wakwak*, is yet another fascinating monster that can be found in Philippine mythology. This legendary entity is said to have a particular fondness for the blood of pregnant women, according to their beliefs. It is supposed to have the capacity to split its upper body from its bottom half, which granted it the ability to fly and search for its victims. In addition, the *Ekek* is still another legendary monster that is a hybrid of a human and a bird. The characteristics of both species have been combined in this hybrid monster, which has resulted in a being that is both singular and mysterious. Its presence in Philippine mythology contributes to the rich tapestry of mythical animals that have captivated the minds of people throughout the course of history at various points in time.

Gaduda, the progeny of *Vinata* and *Kashyap*, was endowed with prodigious strength and formidable might. He had the power to metamorphose into an enormous avian being with an expansive wingspan, adept at bearing substantial burdens and smoothly gliding through the atmosphere. *Gaduda's* position as the sacred steed of Vishnu enhanced his stature in Hindu mythology. He was frequently shown as bearing Vishnu on his back, acting as a means of conveyance for the deity during his numerous exploits and manifestations. *Gaduda's* loyalty and devotion to Vishnu were unmatched. He would exert significant effort to safeguard and fulfill his duty to his master, including participating in intense conflicts with demons and malevolent entities to guarantee the security of Vishnu and the world. *Gaduda* had a pivotal role in the *Samudra Manthan*, a significant event where the cosmic ocean was churned. Utilizing his formidable wings, he generated a forceful gust, agitating the ocean and facilitating the recovery of valuable treasures

and sacred artefacts that surfaced from its depths. *Gaduda's* connection with his stepbrothers, the *Nagas*, was intricate. Despite occasional disagreements, *Gaduda* frequently provided aid to the *Nagas* during times of necessity, demonstrating his sympathetic and supportive disposition. The fraternal connection between *Gaduda* and *Arun*, who serves as the charioteer of *Surya*, contributed an additional dimension to his character. They frequently worked together and provided assistance to one another in their individual positions, representing the interdependence of different celestial entities in Hindu mythology. *Gaduda's* character in Hindu mythology exemplifies the complex network of relationships and connections. It underscores the interdependence and unity among the divine beings and their companions, emphasizing the significance of loyalty, devotion, and cooperation in maintaining the cosmic order. *Gaduda's* role in Hindu mythology symbolizes the importance of company and assistance throughout life's journey. His steadfast commitment and unflinching dedication to *Vishnu* demonstrate the characteristics of a genuine friend and ally, motivating others to develop similar values in their own life. Apart from *Gaduda*, The Gangahridi Culture, the oldest culture of Bengal, revolved around the Ganges River. Winged female sculptures have been found in this society, providing insight into the *Balaka Matrika Pujan*, a ritualistic worship of the Heron-Mother Goddess. Gradually, this religious ritual became closely connected with a specific deity called *Bagalamukhi*, who is one of the ten *Mahavidyas*. The name *Bagalamukhi* originates from the Sanskrit term 'Bagula', which signifies heron. The wings on these sculptures are thought to symbolize activeness, freedom, and imagination. *Bagalamukhi* is venerated as the divine mother who bestows onto her followers the highest form of spiritual emancipation, referred to as *moksha*, as stated by Professor Dr. Tamal Dasgupta. The idea that the Bird-Mother Goddess defends her followers is compared to a mother bird defending her young, highlighting the protective and nurturing qualities connected to this goddess. (Roychowdhury, 67)

Gary A. David in his essay *The Celestial Birdman of the Ancient World* said, " Many ancient cultures around the world have legends of the Birdman, which describe in various forms some sort of half human, half

avian creature. These tales are possibly connected to our universal psychological yearnings for flight” (David 3). The phenomena of avian flight have captivated humans for a considerable period, owing to the elegant motions and capacity to glide effortlessly through the atmosphere. Their cognitive prowess is seen in their aptitude for traversing vast distances, engaging in intercommunication, and resolving intricate challenges. The development of aeroplanes has been influenced by the flight of birds, since people aim to imitate their ability to soar and move freely in the sky. The prowess of birds is seen in their capacity to engage in hunting, safeguard their area, and undertake migrations spanning thousands of miles. The amalgamation of intellect, technical progress, and dominance has continually enthralled the human mind, resulting in a profound admiration and attraction for these beings. Likewise, the progression of a fetus throughout pregnancy is a remarkable phenomenon of the natural world. Starting as a solitary cell, it undergoes a process of transformation, ultimately becoming a sophisticated human being, maturing and evolving in diverse conditions. The complex process of cellular division, organogenesis, and expansion is a tribute to the marvels of life. Curiously, one of these situations, referred to as avian development, shares similarities with the traits observed in birds. Similar to birds, a fetus too has a process of maturation and change, progressing from a little embryo to a complete and developed human being. The correlation between the embryonic development and the traits of avian species introduces an additional dimension of astonishment and fascination to the phenomenon of existence. Crypto-zoologists provide a theory that posits the potential emergence of distinct types or species on Earth through the interbreeding of diverse species. This idea questions conventional concepts of species boundaries and emphasises the possibility for novel and unforeseen living forms to arise. This hypothesis suggests that there is a complicated and interwoven relationship between the mystery origins of certain creatures and the intriguing nature of hybrid species, indicating an intricate web of life on our planet. It implies that the divisions between species may not be as inflexible as previously believed, and that the mixing of genetic material can result in completely novel and separate animals. This concept presents numerous opportu-

nities and prompts inquiries regarding the variety and development of life on Earth. Cryptozoologist Ken Gerhard wrote, “Throughout the course of human history, for thousands of years there has existed a cross-cultural belief in anthropomorphic, sentient beings. They are frequently portrayed as having both human and avian characteristics, specifically wings” (Gerhard 36). This statement encourages us to re-evaluate our comprehension of the natural world and accept the notion that concealed interconnections and unexplored species yet to be unveiled could also exist. Crypto-zoologists push us to deepen our understanding of the natural world by examining the possibility of hybridization and inter-breeding. This provides a novel viewpoint on the richness and diversity of life.

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