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**THE INNER FORM AND FUNCTION OF FANTASY CREATURE NAMES
BASED ON THE “DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS” MANUAL**

The ways people name the things and events of the surrounding world usually follow some principles. The task at hand was to figure out whether there are any specifics that go into naming something that does not exist and, if so, what those specifics are and how they are parallel with the usual process of naming.

The research is based on the creature names within the 2024 Dungeons and Dragons “Monster Manual”. “Dungeons and Dragons” is a tabletop roleplaying game, the rules of which are contained in several books, the “Monster Manual” being one of the three books in an edition of the game. Within the book are 515 names, 390 of which – names of fantasy creatures – were the subject of the research. 94 of the names are folklore based names, 82 names are comprised of two and more words, 75 names are based on loaned words, 47 names are

comprised of one word and are morphologically (28), semantically (18) and phonetically (1) motivated names, 46 are names of dragons, 32 are unmotivated original names and 15 are borrowings from literature.

Folklore based names include direct borrowings – *banshee*, *erinyes*, or adapted names, like those with altered spelling – *couatl*, *djinni*. There are names that are a combination of multiple folklore creatures – *gnoll*, *marilith*, attributive names referring to real concepts, like *sphinx of valor* or in-game realia, like *minotaur of Baphomet*.

Names comprised of two and more words are united by means of inseparability, interrelation and equal importance, as in *axe beak*, *displacer beast* and are different from names with added modifiers. Modifiers are words added to a name for an in-game purpose of denoting any supplementary information about the creature's function – *sahuagin baron*, age – *bulette pup*, number – *swarm of stirges* or size – *giant axe beak*.

Single-word morphologically – *darkmantle*, *cloak*; semantically – *beholder*, *mimic*, phonetically – *flumph* motivated names reflect the stated principles of naming. These types of naming notably have various motivating factors that went into the naming process, such as visual, functional, origin factors. Unmotivated original names, like *hezrou*, *chuul*, *glabrezu* lack etymological or phonetic basis and do not provide any description about the creature.

Loanword based names include direct loans of entire words *azer* – 'fire' in persian, combinations of loanwords *kenku* – 'tengu' and 'karasu' in japanese. Borrowings from literature include names taken from the works of J.R.R. Tolkien – *wight*, *worg* which have etymological basis, or names taken from other authors' works, such as George R.R. Martin's *githyanki*, which don't.

Dragon names follow two formulas. It's either age + colour / metal / characteristic + 'dragon': *adult brass dragon*, *juvenile shadow dragon* or colour / metal / characteristic + 'dragon' + age: *black dragon wyrmling*, *faerie dragon adult*.

The research demonstrates the similarities in patterns of naming real-world concepts and those pertaining to fantasy, as well as underlines the differences and establishes genre-specific tendencies in naming.