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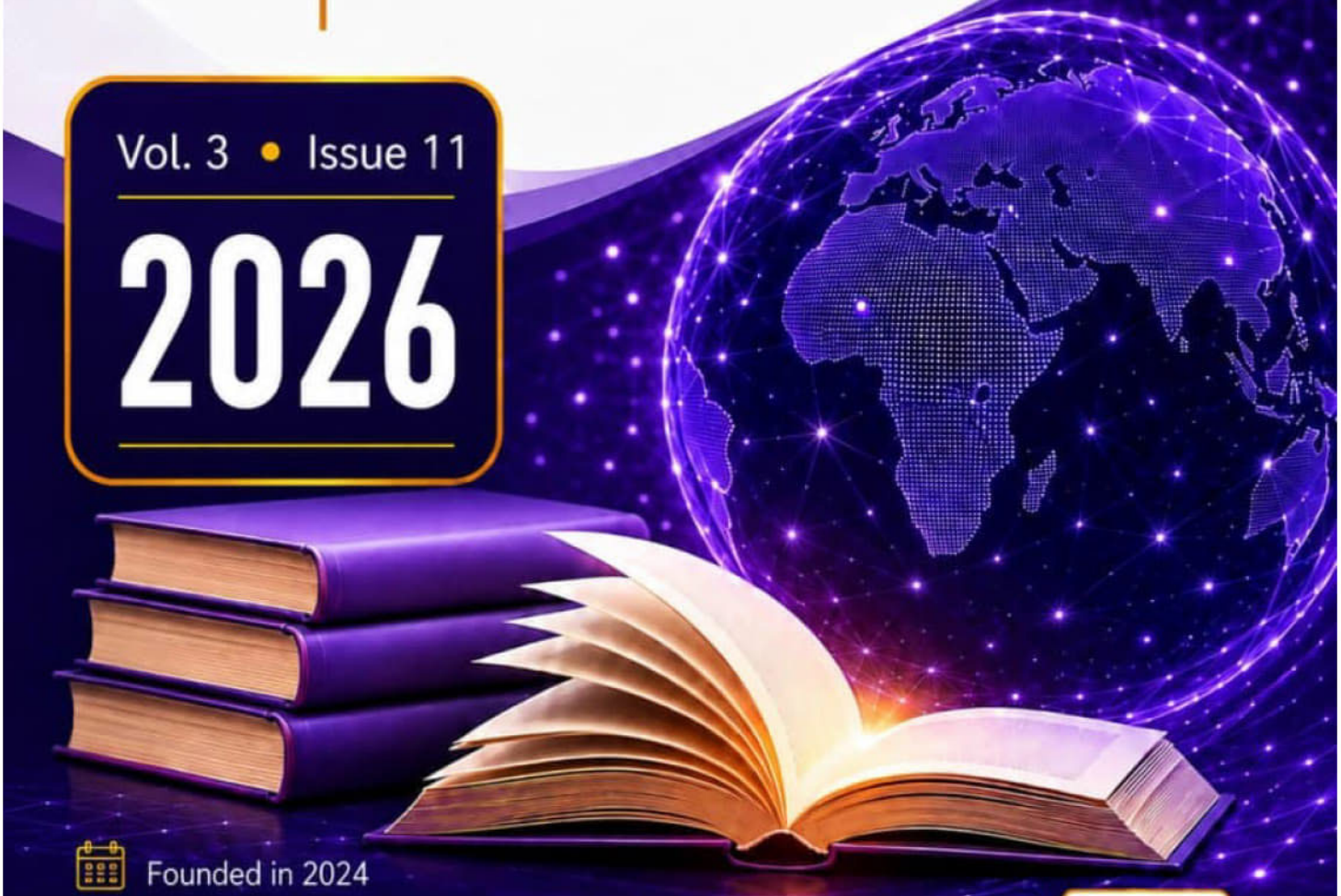
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INGLIZ FOLKLOR NASRIDA GROTESK OBRAZLAR

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Annotatsiya.

Mazkur maqolada ingliz folklor nasrida grotesk obrazlarni yaratishda qo‘llaniladigan badiiy vositalar va poetik mexanizmlar tadqiq etiladi. Tadqiqotning nazariy asosini Mixail Baxtinning grotesk realizm konsepsiyasi hamda Vladimir Proppning folklor syujetlarini tahlil qilishga oid struktur-funksional yondashuvi tashkil etadi. Grotesk effektlarni shakllantirishga xizmat qiluvchi asosiy badiiy mexanizmlar sifatida giperbola, grotesk karikatura, qora yumor, absurd obrazlilik va nonsens poetikasiga alohida e’tibor qaratiladi. Jozef Jeykobsning English Fairy Tales (“Ingliz xalq ertaklari”) to‘plamidagi “Jack and the Beanstalk”, “Jack the Giant-Killer”, “The History of Tom Thumb” va “The Old Woman and Her Pig” ertaklari, shuningdek, Edvard Lirning nonsens she’riyati namunalari asosida tana o‘lchamlarining o‘zgarishi, jismoniy deformatsiya, takror, absurdlik hamda sabab-oqibat va mantiqiy munosabatlarning buzilishi tahlil qilinadi. Tahlil natijalari shuni ko‘rsatadiki, giperbola voqelikning odatiy miqyosini o‘zgartiradi, karikatura tana me’yorlarini deformatsiyalaydi, qora yumor fojiali yoki qo‘rqinchli mazmunni kulgili kontekstga joylashtiradi, nonsens esa an’anaviy mantiqiy va sabab-oqibat aloqalarini ataylab buzadi. Maqolada ingliz folklor nasridagi grotesk tasvirning o‘ziga xos xususiyati voqelikni butunlay inkor etishda emas, balki uning odatiy o‘lchamlarini vaqtincha o‘zgartirishda namoyon bo‘lishi asoslanadi. Natijada ayni bir folklor obrazi bir vaqtning o‘zida kulgili, qo‘rqinchli va absurd ma’nolarni kasb etib, grotesk poetikasining ko‘p qatlamli xususiyatini yuzaga keltiradi.

Kalit so‘zlar: ingliz folklori, folklor nasri, grotesk, grotesk obrazlar, giperbola, karikatura, qora yumor, absurdlik, nonsens, limerik, xalq ertagi, Mixail Baxtin, Vladimir Propp, Jozef Jeykobs, Edvard Lir.

ГРОТЕСКНЫЕ ОБРАЗЫ В АНГЛИЙСКОЙ ФОЛЬКЛОРНОЙ ПРОЗЕ

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Аннотация.

В статье рассматриваются художественные приёмы и поэтические механизмы создания гротескных образов в английской фольклорной прозе. Теоретическую основу исследования составляют концепция гротескного реализма Михаила Бахтина и структурно-функциональный подход Владимира Проппа к анализу фольклорных сюжетов. Особое внимание уделяется гиперболе, гротескной карикатуре, чёрному юмору, абсурдной образности и поэтике нонсенса как основным художественным механизмам формирования гротескного эффекта. На материале сборника Джозефа Джейкобса English Fairy Tales («Английские народные сказки»), в частности сказок «Джек и бобовый стебель», «Джек — победитель великанов», «История Мальчика-с-пальчик» и «Старушка и её поросёнок», а также произведений нонсенс-поэзии Эдварда Лира анализируются изменения телесных масштабов, физическая деформация, повторение, абсурдность и нарушение причинно-следственных и логических связей. Результаты анализа показывают, что гипербола преобразует привычные масштабы действительности, карикатура деформирует телесные нормы, чёрный юмор помещает трагическое или устрашающее содержание в комический контекст, тогда как нонсенс намеренно разрушает традиционные логические и причинно-следственные закономерности. В статье обосновывается положение о том, что своеобразие гротескного изображения в английской фольклорной прозе заключается не в полном отрицании действительности, а во временном преобразовании её привычных масштабов. В результате один и тот же фольклорный образ может одновременно приобретать комические, устрашающие и абсурдные значения, формируя многослойность гротескной поэтики.

Ключевые слова: английский фольклор, фольклорная проза, гротеск, гротескные образы, гипербола, карикатура, чёрный юмор, абсурдность, нонсенс, лимерик, народная сказка, Михаил Бахтин, Владимир Пропп, Джозеф Джейкобс, Эдвард Лир.

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GROTESQUE IMAGERY IN ENGLISH FOLKLORE PROSE

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Abstract.

The article examines the artistic devices and poetic mechanisms employed to create grotesque imagery in English folklore prose. The theoretical framework of the study draws on Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of grotesque realism and Vladimir Propp's structural-functional approach to the analysis of folklore plots. Particular attention is given to hyperbole, grotesque caricature, black humour, absurd imagery, and the poetics of nonsense as the principal artistic mechanisms contributing to grotesque effects. Drawing on Joseph Jacobs's collection English Fairy Tales, particularly Jack and the Beanstalk, Jack the Giant-Killer, The History of Tom Thumb, and The Old Woman and Her Pig, as well as examples from Edward Lear's nonsense poetry, the study analyzes transformations of bodily scale, physical deformation, repetition, absurdity, and disruptions of causal and logical relationships. The analysis demonstrates that hyperbole transforms the conventional scale of reality, caricature distorts bodily norms, black humour places tragic or frightening content within a comic context, and nonsense deliberately disrupts established logical and causal patterns. The article argues that the distinctive feature of grotesque representation in English folklore prose lies not in the complete rejection of reality but in the temporary transformation of its conventional dimensions. Consequently, the same folkloric image may simultaneously acquire comic, frightening, and absurd meanings, thereby producing the multilayered nature of grotesque poetics.

Keywords: English folklore, folklore prose, grotesque, grotesque imagery, hyperbole, caricature, black humour, absurdity, nonsense, limerick, folktale, Mikhail Bakhtin, Vladimir Propp, Joseph Jacobs, Edward Lear.

Introduction. In English folklore prose, the grotesque is realized not only through specific images or supernatural events but also through the interaction of artistic devices. Among these, hyperbole, grotesque caricature, dark humor, the depiction of absurdity, and the poetics of nonsense occupy a special place. The common feature of these devices is their ability to transform the conventional dimensions of reality, excessively exaggerate or diminish certain characteristics of an image, combine opposing semantic elements within a single image, and deliberately disrupt the logical connections expected by the reader.

M. M. Bakhtin's concept is of particular importance in the study of grotesque theory. Bakhtin associates grotesque realism with the unity of physical, social, and cosmic principles, interpreting the grotesque body not as a closed and individually bounded entity but as an open, changing, growing, and renewing form. In his view, the grotesque body differs from the fixed and clearly defined human body because it is constantly involved in movement, transformation, and interaction with other bodies [1].

This principle is also useful for explaining figurative devices in English folklore prose. Hyperbole or caricature does not necessarily create the grotesque on its own; rather, these devices can transform an image into a boundary-crossing, distinctive, and polysemantic form by disrupting the conventional dimensions of reality. In our view, a grotesque means of representation should be understood not only as a way of creating a comic or frightening image but also as an artistic mechanism that transforms the conventional logic of reality and introduces multiple semantic layers into an image.

One of the most common devices used to create the grotesque in English folklore prose is hyperbole. Folkloric hyperbole is based on the representation of a particular characteristic of an object, person, event, or action in a manner that significantly exceeds its actual dimensions. However, the function of folkloric hyperbole is not limited to exaggeration. It also serves to reveal a character's social status, strength, capacity to inspire fear, or comic qualities.

This principle can also be linked to V. Ya. Propp's views on the structure of folklore. Propp suggests interpreting fairy-tale characters not only through their external characteristics but also through their functions within the plot [2]. Therefore, it is appropriate to evaluate hyperbolic representation according to its narrative function rather than merely the degree of external exaggeration.

For example, in Joseph Jacobs' fairy tale Jack and the Beanstalk, included in the collection English Fairy Tales, the exaggeration of physical scale in the image of the giant establishes the contrasting structure of the plot. The story begins on page 59 of Jacobs' collection. The giant's physique, voice, strength, and depiction as several times larger than an ordinary person clearly emphasize Jack's physical weakness. However, the narrative paradox lies in the fact that the physically small hero possesses the advantage within the plot, whereas the giant is defeated through intelligence and cunning.

Here, hyperbole becomes a source of the grotesque. The larger the giant's body is depicted, the more pronounced Jack's comparatively small stature becomes. As a result, the traditional associations between greatness and strength, and smallness and weakness, are disrupted. Instead, the small body becomes a symbol of intellectual superiority, while the large body becomes associated with defeat.

In this regard, interpreting the giant in Jacobs' fairy tale simply as a "big man" is insufficient. Through the excessive

enlargement of human physical proportions, the giant is positioned at the boundary between a human being and a supernatural creature. This is precisely where the grotesque emerges: the giant simultaneously resembles both a human and a fantastic being.

In Jacobs' fairy tale Jack the Giant-Killer, the exaggerated representation of the giants' physical strength can also be observed. In this story, Jack confronts several giants. In Jacobs' version, the hero's victories over the giants result not from physical strength but from intelligence and cunning [3]. The appearance of another giant after Jack defeats the previous one also transforms exaggeration into a repetitive narrative structure. In Jacobs' text, the tale continues on page 104 with Jack killing a giant and earning the title "Jack the Giant-Killer."

Here, another function of hyperbole is revealed: it visually intensifies the conflict between the hero and the opposing force. In other words, the more terrifying and powerful the giant appears, the more unexpected and humorous Jack's victory becomes.

Therefore, hyperbole in English folklore prose can be understood not merely as quantitative exaggeration or diminution but also as a grotesque mechanism that expands the semantic dimensions of conflict.

The second device closely associated with hyperbole is grotesque caricature. In caricature, certain external or internal characteristics of a character are deliberately exaggerated. In grotesque caricature, this exaggeration transcends the boundaries of reality, transforming the character into a distorted image.

In M. M. Bakhtin's theory of the grotesque, the incompleteness of the body, the openness of its boundaries, and its susceptibility to transformation are among its principal characteristics [4]. When this principle is applied to folkloric caricature, the excessive enlargement or alteration of particular body parts, such as a character's nose, head, mouth, stomach, height, or limbs, produces a grotesque effect.

For example, the image of Tom Thumb in English folklore prose represents a distinctive form of grotesque caricature. In Jacobs' The History of Tom Thumb, the character's body is dramatically smaller than that of an ordinary person. In Jacobs' collection, this tale appears among the narratives following Jack the Giant-Killer.

The grotesque in the image of Tom Thumb is constructed according to the principle of "the great becoming small." In tales about giants, a small human being is contrasted with an enormous force, whereas in The History of Tom Thumb, the human figure itself is reduced to miniature proportions. However, the character's small size does not diminish his narrative agency. On the contrary, his diminutive stature becomes a source of cunning and unusual behavior.

Here, we consider it appropriate to extend and apply Bakhtin's understanding of bodily boundaries: the grotesque arises not only when an object is represented as "ugly" or "terrifying" but also when it deviates from conventional categories of measurement and proportion.

In folklore prose, external deformation is often associated with a character's inner qualities. Thus, grotesque caricature is not merely a device for provoking laughter; it can also serve as a means of visualizing moral characteristics.

This principle is clearly reflected in the image of the giant in Jack the Giant-Killer. The giant's body is exaggerated, his movements are rough, and his actions rely on physical force and are directed against human beings. Consequently, physical deformation is accompanied by moral deformation.

Here, a distinctive mechanism of folklore poetics can be observed: an internal quality is transferred into an external form. Evil is represented through a frightening body, weakness through a small body, and intelligence through narrative superiority despite physical limitations. Such correspondences strengthen the semantic significance of folkloric imagery.

Among the devices of grotesque representation, dark humor occupies a special place. Dark humor refers to the representation of situations traditionally perceived as tragic, such as death, injury, punishment, disaster, fear, or physical suffering, within humorous, ironic, or absurd contexts. However, caution is necessary when applying this term directly to folktales. The modern category of "dark humor" was not explicitly employed in classical English fairy tales. Therefore, it is more appropriate to use it here as an analytical category.

For example, in Jacobs' fairy tale The Old Woman and Her Pig, the overall plot is constructed through a chain of interdependent actions: a pig refuses to cross a bridge, a dog refuses to bite the pig, a stick refuses to strike the dog, a fire refuses to burn the stick, and so forth. Jacobs included this tale on page 21 of his 1890 collection.

A distinctive feature of the plot is the transformation of violent actions into a comic sequence. A dog biting a pig, a stick striking a dog, or a fire burning a stick are inherently aggressive or conflict-related actions. However, their successive repetition evokes amusement rather than fear. Thus, the mechanism of dark humor in this example is based on the contrast between content and form: the content is potentially harsh, while the narrative form is playful and repetitive.

In our view, this is where the connection between folkloric humor and contemporary dark humor becomes evident. In folklore, it is not necessarily death or physical violence itself that produces the comic effect, but rather the repetition of such actions and their incorporation into an absurd and playful context.

Another device of grotesque representation in English folklore prose is the deliberate disruption of logical connections. This device subsequently developed significantly in nineteenth-century nonsense literature. Nonsense, as a distinct literary form, became established in the mid-nineteenth century through the works of Edward Lear and Lewis Carroll. However, researchers have identified its roots in English folk poetry, nursery rhymes, proverbs, and absurd folkloric forms. Anna Barton does not strictly confine nonsense to a single genre; instead, she demonstrates that it can appear in various texts as a genre, literary mode, or stylistic device [5].

This idea is important for our research because treating nonsense as a completely isolated literary phenomenon, separate from the grotesque, risks overlooking its folkloric origins.

The poetics of nonsense is based on the contrast between meaningful form and meaningless or unexpected content.

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A text may be grammatically correct, while the events described within it do not follow conventional cause-and-effect logic.

Kathy Wales, who studied the works of Edward Lear, demonstrates that the discrepancy between the expectations of "normal" reality in the limericks of his books A Book of Nonsense and More Nonsense and the world created by Lear produces an effect of humor and absurdity [6]. Here, the connection between the grotesque and nonsense is clearly visible. Both involve a violation of the usual order. However, there is also a difference between them. While the grotesque often relies on physical, figurative, or semantic deformation, nonsense disrupts logical, syntactic, semantic, and cause-and-effect relationships.

Therefore, we propose the following classification:

- Grotesque — changes the form of an image;
- Hyperbole — presents a characteristic in an exaggerated form;
- Caricature — deforms the representation of a character;
- Dark humor — places sad or frightening content in a humorous context;
- Nonsense — disrupts logical connections themselves.

However, these devices can be used simultaneously within a single work rather than separately.

One of the most famous forms in nonsense literature is the limerick. Edward Lear's A Book of Nonsense was published in 1846 and played a significant role in popularizing the limerick form. Further research shows that Lear's absurd world is created through the combined use of nearly 200 poetic texts and visual elements in his collection.

The traditional limerick consists of five lines and follows the AABBA rhyme scheme. In one of Lear's limericks, researchers identify violations of categorical boundaries between humans and animals, humans and objects, and humans and the natural environment [7]. For example, in Lear's limerick "There Was an Old Man of Whitehaven," the movements of a person and a crow are intertwined. A person dances with a crow, and this action appears absurd from an external perspective. In scholarly research, such examples are analyzed as instances of categorical blending between humans and animals [8].

This example is particularly important for the poetics of the grotesque because the human body retains its form, while its movements approach those associated with the animal world. Thus, the grotesque emerges here through a change in the categorical status of movement rather than through physical deformation.

Another characteristic feature of Edward Lear's limericks is the unexpected ending. While the final line in a conventional narrative is generally expected to resolve the conflict, the final line of a nonsense limerick sometimes intensifies the absurdity of the situation. Hugh Haughton demonstrates that the poetic form of Lear's works is associated with the principles of linguistic and musical play, unexpected imagery, and anomalous narration [9].

Therefore, the limerick cannot be equated with the grotesque as a whole. The limerick is a poetic form, whereas the grotesque is an aesthetic principle. Nevertheless, the limerick form provides a particularly suitable poetic space for grotesque imagery, absurd movements, and violations of categorical boundaries.

At this point, it is necessary to address a methodological issue. It would be one-sided to interpret nonsense literature solely as a creative innovation introduced by nineteenth-century authors. Studies indicate that absurd, rhyming, and illogical folklore materials existed in English culture before the works of Lear and Carroll. Anna Barton argues that the history of nonsense can be traced back to English materials dating from the eleventh century [10].

Therefore, it is not possible to establish a direct genre equivalence between the repetitive structure of collected folktales such as The Old Woman and Her Pig and the absurd logic of Lear's limericks. However, both demonstrate poetic principles such as repetition, unexpected connections, and the transformation of logical sequences into forms of play.

This principle can be considered a transitional stage in the development of the grotesque in English folklore prose. In other words, the patterns of repetition and absurdity found in folktales become conscious aesthetic principles in later written nonsense literature.

The materials analyzed above demonstrate that the grotesque in English folklore prose is not limited to a single artistic device. Rather, hyperbole, caricature, dark humor, absurdity, and nonsense interact to form a coherent system of imagery.

For example, the image of a giant combines hyperbole, caricature, and the grotesque; the folktale The Old Woman and Her Pig combines repetition, absurdity, and humor; and Lear's limericks employ nonsense, grotesque imagery, and paradox.

Each of these devices reveals a different semantic aspect of the grotesque. Hyperbole violates the boundaries of measurement, caricature distorts physical norms, dark humor violates emotional expectations, and nonsense disrupts logical order.

Therefore, the grotesque in English folklore prose can be represented through the following model:

GROTESQUE

Physical deformation — caricature;
→ Extreme exaggeration of scale — hyperbole;
→ Violation of emotional boundaries — dark humor;
→ Disruption of logical order — nonsense;
→ Blending of categories — human/animal, large/small, reality/fantasy;
→ Emergence of new aesthetic meaning.

While M. M. Bakhtin's theory provides a framework for explaining the physical and cultural foundations of the

grotesque, V. Ya. Propp's structural approach helps determine its role in narrative development. Edward Lear's poetics of nonsense exemplifies the expansion of the grotesque from physical deformation to logical deformation.

Therefore, grotesque imagery in English folklore prose cannot be limited solely to the categories of humor or fantasy. It is based on the principle of transforming the conventional dimensions of reality. While hyperbole exaggerates actual proportions, caricature distorts physical norms, dark humor transfers frightening or sorrowful content into a humorous context, and nonsense deliberately disrupts causality and logical order.

Folklore materials demonstrate the interconnectedness of these devices. The image of the giant in the tales Jack and the Beanstalk and Jack the Giant-Killer intensifies grotesque conflict through hyperbolic imagery, while The Old Woman and Her Pig approaches the comic grotesque through repetition and absurd actions. In Edward Lear's limericks, these principles acquire a new aesthetic form within the poetics of written nonsense. The inclusion of these folklore materials within Jacobs' collection also demonstrates the breadth of the figurative system of English folk prose.

In our view, a characteristic feature of grotesque representation in English folklore is not the complete negation of reality but the temporary transformation of its dimensions. Folkloric images and events retain their connection to reality, yet through hyperbole, caricature, humor, or nonsense, they transcend conventional perception. As a result, readers can simultaneously experience comedy, horror, and absurdity. This multilayered quality is one of the principal characteristics of grotesque poetics in English folklore prose.

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