



HUMOR AND SATIRE AS TOOLS OF SOCIAL CRITICISM IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK LITERATURE

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Abstract. This article examines the role of humor and satire as effective instruments of social criticism in the English and Uzbek literary traditions. Based on the analysis of key works by Jonathan Swift, George Orwell, Abdulla Qahhor, Gafur Ghulam, and other authors, the study identifies general patterns and nationally specific features of using the comic to denounce social vices, political regimes, and human weaknesses. Special attention is paid to the theoretical concepts of M. Bakhtin (carnival culture) and S. Freud (psychological mechanisms of humor), which help explain the universal nature of laughter culture. The article demonstrates that despite all the differences in cultural contexts and artistic methods, humor and satire in both literatures perform similar functions: exposing hypocrisy, criticizing power, protecting humanistic values, and providing therapeutic impact on society.

Keywords: humor, satire, social criticism, English literature, Uzbek literature, comparative literary studies, grotesque, irony, carnivalization, Jonathan Swift, George Orwell, Abdulla Qahhor.

Аннотация: В данной статье рассматривается роль юмора и сатиры как эффективных инструментов социальной критики в английской и узбекской литературных традициях. На основе анализа ключевых произведений Джонатана Свифта, Джорджа Оруэлла, Абдуллы Каххора, Гафура Гулама и других авторов, исследование выявляет общие закономерности и национальные особенности использования комического для обличения социальных пороков, политических режимов и человеческих слабостей. Особое внимание уделяется теоретическим концепциям М. Бахтина (карнавальная культура) и С. Фрейда (психологические механизмы юмора), которые помогают объяснить универсальный характер культуры смеха. В статье показано, что, несмотря на все различия в культурных контекстах и художественных методах, юмор и сатира в обеих литературах выполняют схожие



функции: разоблачение лицемерия, критика власти, защита гуманистических ценностей и оказание терапевтического воздействия на общество.

Ключевые слова: юмор, сатира, социальная критика, английская литература, узбекская литература, сравнительное литературоведение, гротеск, ирония, карнавализация, Джонатан Свифт, Джордж Оруэлл, Абдулла Каххор.

Annotatsiya: Ushbu maqola ingliz va o'zbek adabiy an'analarida ijtimoiy tanqidning samarali vositasi sifatida hazil va satira rolini o'rganadi. Jonatan Svift, Jorj Oruell, Abdulloh Qahhor, G'afur G'ulom va boshqa mualliflarning asosiy asarlarini tahlil qilish asosida tadqiqot ijtimoiy illatlarni, siyosiy rejimlarni va inson zaifliklarini fosh qilish uchun komediyadan foydalanishdagi umumiy naqshlar va milliy xususiyatlarni ochib beradi. Kulgi madaniyatining universal mohiyatini tushuntirishga yordam beradigan M. Baxtin (karnaval madaniyati) va S. Freydning (hazilning psixologik mexanizmlari) nazariy konsepsiyalariga alohida e'tibor qaratiladi. Maqolada madaniy kontekstlar va badiiy usullardagi barcha farqlarga qaramay, ikkala adabiyotda ham hazil va satira o'xshash funktsiyalarni bajaradi: ikkiyuzlamachilikni fosh qilish, hokimiyatni tanqid qilish, gumanistik qadriyatlarni himoya qilish va jamiyatga terapevtik ta'sir ko'rsatish. Kalit so'zlar: hazil, satira, ijtimoiy tanqid, ingliz adabiyoti, o'zbek adabiyoti, qiyosiy adabiyot, grotesk, istehzo, karnavalizatsiya, Jonatan Svift, Jorj Oruell, Abdulloh Qahhor.

Introduction. Humor and satire have occupied a special place in world literature since ancient times, performing not only an entertaining function but also a crucial socio-critical one. As N. Sultonova rightly notes, "humor, in its diverse forms-irony, parody, wit, exaggeration, absurdity-allows writers to reveal flaws and contradictions inherent in human behavior, social norms, and political systems. Satire, in particular, sharpens this effect, combining humor with criticism, often directed against power structures, hypocrisy, and injustice". The appeal to laughter culture allows literature to penetrate those spheres of social life that are closed to direct didactic expression, making criticism more accessible and, most importantly, more effective.

English literature is rightly considered one of the richest traditions of satirical writing: from Jonathan Swift and Charles Dickens to George Orwell and Evelyn Waugh. Parallel to



this, Uzbek literature, having absorbed the traditions of Eastern literature and folk laughter culture, has also developed unique forms of social criticism through humor and satire—from the classical works of Abdulla Qadiri to the brilliant satirical stories of Abdulla Qahhor and contemporary authors.

The **relevance** of this study is обусловлена the need to understand the dialogue of cultures and to identify both universal mechanisms of artistic criticism and nationally specific forms of their manifestation. The **aim** of the work is a comparative analysis of the functions and artistic techniques of humor and satire as tools of social criticism in English and Uzbek literature.

Theoretical Foundations of the Study.

Addressing the theoretical understanding of the nature of laughter culture, it is impossible to overlook the concept of "carnivalization" by Mikhail Bakhtin. The researcher emphasized that "carnival laughter creates a temporary liberation from the established order, allowing suppressed voices and marginal ideas to manifest" . This subversive capacity of humor makes it a unique rhetorical tool resonating in various cultural contexts.

Sigmund Freud, in turn, considered humor as a psychological mechanism for coping with social tensions. Henri Bergson, the French philosopher, asserted that "laughter is a social corrective, punishing rigidity and promoting flexibility in human behavior". This concept is particularly important for understanding the ethical dimension of humor in literature—the comic effect often arises when the human is perceived as mechanical, and the violation of expected behavior generates laughter and reflection .

Contemporary theorists such as Linda Hutcheon view irony and satire as "parodic structures" that simultaneously imitate and undermine the authority of the original . This dual function allows authors to criticize not only their subjects but also the literary and cultural systems in which these subjects exist . Homi Bhabha, a postcolonial theorist, points out that "mimicry—a form of satirical imitation—can become a powerful postcolonial tool for destabilizing colonial power" .

The English satirical tradition has deep roots. Jonathan Swift in "A Modest Proposal" uses black humor, suggesting eating Irish infants as a solution to the problem of poverty.



The grotesque exaggeration mocks British indifference to Irish suffering. The text's power lies in its use of irony, masking anger under the guise of rationality. In "Gulliver's Travels," Swift employs hyperbole and irony to expose the absurdity of the British government and intellectual pride.

George Orwell in the parable-novel "Animal Farm" intertwines humor with allegory to criticize the corruption of socialist ideals. The transformation of pigs into indistinguishable oppressors reflects the betrayal of the revolution, and Orwell's satirical tone underscores the absurdity of political slogans like "All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others". In the novel "1984," satire achieves a tragic resonance, creating a model of totalitarian society where the function of humor evolves into a philosophical investigation of the nature of power.

In the 20th century, the tradition of social satire continues in the work of Evelyn Waugh, who in the novel "Vile Bodies" creates a "too, too shattering" world of high society, using humor as a means of exposing the moral decay of the aristocracy. Lisa Colletta, analyzing the modernist tradition, notes that dark humor becomes a defining characteristic of modernism, allowing writers "to revel in the irrational, the unstable, and the fragmented".

Contemporary British writer Jonathan Coe, as noted by José Ramón Prado-Pérez, uses the grotesque as a form of political subversion. Coe "plays with the contradictions of humor against themselves, providing entertainment while simultaneously exaggerating the grotesque to counter any potential blunting effect." The grotesque in Coe represents "a distorted and deformed reality which itself becomes the standard of normality".

Uzbek literature, with its rich heritage of oral folk art, has also developed unique forms of satirical criticism. In classical Persian-Tajik and Uzbek poetry, humor often served as a means of moral instruction and criticism of social injustice. The work of Ubayd Zakoni, the satirical verses of Hafez and Saadi laid the foundations of the Eastern satirical tradition.

Abdulla Qahhor is rightfully considered the founder of modern Uzbek satirical prose. In the novella "The Little Bird" (1958), the writer with subtle irony depicts an opportunist trying to use his imaginary service to society for personal enrichment. Qahhor's satire



performs a moral-educational function, denouncing philistinism in its Soviet variant. In the novella "The Scorpion from the Altar" (1960), the writer exposes religious hypocrisy and fanaticism, using elements of grotesque and sarcasm to uncover the roots of social conflicts.

Gafur Ghulam, an outstanding Uzbek poet and prose writer, also actively used satire in his work. His stories and feuilletons, directed against the remnants of the past, bureaucracy, and philistinism, became classics of Uzbek satire. Abdulla Qadiri in the historical novel "Days Gone By" ("O'tgan kunlar") "uses subtle satire to criticize feudal customs and the subordination of women," creating a multi-dimensional narrative where "the comic serves not only for entertainment but also for subtle criticism of social stagnation and moral hypocrisy under colonial rule" .

In contemporary Uzbek literature, the tradition of satirical writing continues in the work of Erkin Azam and Khojiboy Tojiboyev. Contemporary Uzbek humorists "use anecdotes and wordplay to reflect on moral and social dilemmas without open confrontation" , creating space for critical understanding of reality through laughter.

A comparison of English and Uzbek satirical traditions reveals both typological convergences and national-cultural differences.

Commonalities:

Objects of Criticism: In both traditions, satire is directed against social injustice, hypocrisy, bureaucracy, abuse of power, and moral decay. Like Swift and Orwell, Qahhor and Qadiri denounce power detached from the people.

Use of Irony and Grotesque: Both literatures actively use irony as a means of creating ambiguity and the grotesque as a way of exaggerating vices to absurd scales.

Didactic Function: Behind the comic in both traditions, there is always a positive ideal—an idea of a just society and a moral person.

Differences:

Scale of Criticism: English satire, especially in the works of Swift and Orwell, often acquires a global, universal character, addressing all of humanity. Uzbek satire is more local, focused on national problems and specific social types.



Connection with Folk Laughter Culture: Uzbek satire maintains a closer connection with folklore tradition, the Eastern anecdote, and folk theater (maskharaboz). English satire is more oriented towards the intellectual, bookish tradition.

Narrative Tone: English satire, especially in the 20th century (Orwell, Waugh), often acquires a dark, tragicomic shade ("black humor"). Uzbek satire, even in its sharpest manifestations, retains a connection with life-affirming folk laughter, containing more hope for correction.

As N. Sultonova notes in her study, "despite cultural differences, the global consensus is that humor—especially in its satirical form—is an effective means of literary criticism. It allows writers to confront difficult truths while preserving aesthetic appeal" .

Conclusion.

Humor and satire in English and Uzbek literature demonstrate a remarkable unity of functions amidst a diversity of forms. They serve as a mirror in which society can see its vices, and as a tool capable of warning about impending dangers. English satire, from Swift to Orwell and Coe, developed as an intellectual tool for analyzing political systems and human nature. Uzbek satire, from the classics to contemporary authors, has retained its connection with folk laughter culture, using humor for the moral purification of society and the fight against social vices.

Together, these two traditions demonstrate that genuine satire always stands guard over humanistic values, regardless of the language or cultural tradition in which it is created. The study of parallels between Eastern and Western satirical traditions opens new perspectives for modern comparative literary studies, allowing for a deeper understanding of the universal mechanisms of artistic criticism and the nationally specific forms of their embodiment.

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