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# The Trickster Essence of the “Zhlobness” Phenomenon in Contemporary Ukrainian Art

## Трікстерська сутність феномена «жлобство» у сучасному українському мистецтві

**Abstract.** The article deals with the cultural aspects of the “zhlobness” phenomenon and its trickster essence in contemporary fine arts, literature and music. Despite the relevance of these issues, they still remain under-researched, although they are of great importance to the acute problem of spreading of zhlobness within all strata of society, its influence on the contemporary Ukrainian culture (popularization of mass art, formation of the zhlobbish model of behavior, heroization of an antihero). It is revealed that the phenomenon of “zhlobness” is a global one, common to almost all world cultures. Still, it has some national characteristics. The history of emergence of “zhlob-art” artistic movement through the prism of trickster features has been examined and its place in contemporary art has been revealed. The influence of creativity of the “zhlob-artists” on the formation of ideologically similar artistic groups and associations has been outlined. The trickster features of the phenomenon of zhlobness in modern Ukrainian popular and professional music, in particular, in S. Lunev’s opera *Moscow-Petushki* have been investigated. Common features of Soviet zhlobness have been revealed: marginality, mediation, liminality, laughing nature, and “turning” the high and the low upside down. The characteristic trickster features of the phenomenon of zhlobness and their reflection in contemporary Ukrainian art have been justified. It has been emphasized that zhlobness is common to all strata of society and is a leverage of influence over the development of modern culture.

**Keywords:** trickster, zhlobness, “zhlob-art”, contemporary Ukrainian art, S. Lunev’s opera *Moscow-Petushki*.

**Problem statement.** The phenomenon of zhlobism is a mass one; its main features may be found in all strata of society, regardless of social and financial status. The characteristics of zhlob, such as a social behavior, failure to follow any established rules and regulations, ability to provoke their change and initiate the creation of new ones completely correspond to the essence of trickster. However, like trickster, zhlob does not create rules. The marginal nature of trickster, as well as of zhlob, encourages the upturn of social and cultural norms, brings an element of chaos to order, and treats traditions of society ironically. Both characters function as mediators, mediating between worlds and social groups, facilitating cultural exchange, rethinking the semantic encoding of basic human values. Like trickster, zhlob can resort to tricks; he can play the fool with his opponent. Such trickster feature of zhlob creates “special little worlds, special chronotopes”, in other words “aesthetic space” (according to M. Bakhtin): “Scammer, clown and fool <...> These are the actors of life, their existence coincides with their role, and beyond this role they do not exist at all” [4, p. 309].

It should be noted that the phenomenon of zhlobness is not inherent only to Ukrainian culture, it is of global scale,

common to almost all countries, yet having certain national characteristics. According to a “zhlob-art” artist O. Mann, “zhlob-art” is what in other countries is called “social-critical art” [23] and is represented, for example, by Art de Racaille in France, Chav-art in England, Yankee art in Japan, White Trash art in America, Hop-art in Russia, etc.

“Zhlob-art” movement emerged in the mid-2000s as a reaction to the phenomenon of zhlobness, and remains relevant today, as modern culture continues to produce and maintain low-grade commercials and series on television, mass-market printed materials, publicity-stunts in the popular press and “sharovarshchyna” in art. All this blurs the boundaries of traditional understanding of moral and ethical values and aesthetic tastes in society. That is why the main goal of “zhlob-art” is not only the demonstration of modern Ukrainian life “in the raw” with all its flaws and shortcomings, but also the desire to improve it by using satire and mock-obscene language in art, to draw attention to painful problems.

“Zhlob-art” in Ukraine is represented by almost all kinds of art: fine arts, literature, music, actionism and performing arts. Increased demand for art products in this area indicates the societal interest in such flamboyant works; performances

of actors and musicians, exhibitions of zhlob-artists attract many visitors; literary works of zhlob-writers are being widely read; there are millions of views of “zhlob-art” YouTube videos, which contributes to the increasing popularity of this movement and confirms its relevance. The phenomenon of zhlobness attracts attention in music culture as well. *Moscow-Petushki* opera by contemporary Ukrainian composer S. Lunov, where the environment around the main hero Vienichka serves as an exemplary display of zhlobness, became a truly emblematic event.

**Analysis of recent research works and publications.** The trickster phenomenon (tricksterness) and its manifestations in culture have been explored in various fields of the humanities. This term was introduced by the American anthropologist P. Radin [26]. Among the scientific researches and explorations stand out works on the mythological essence and mediatory of trickster by M. Eliade [31], W. G. Doty [2], K. Kerényi [12], C. Lévi-Strauss [15], W. Hynes [2], C. Jung [32], A. Bykonja [6]; the liminality and marginality of the trickster were studied by M. Bakhtin [4], M. Lypovetskyi [17], V. Turner [28].

Due to the growing interest, “zhlob-art” became the subject of various scientific explorations and analyzes by Ukrainian art critics, cultural scientists, artists, actors, writers, journalists and more. In particular, special attention deserve the scientific explorations by O. Petrova, who considers the cultural and artistic project “zhlob-art” in the “context of the traditions of laugh culture and postmodern artistic concept within the marginal discourse” [25, p. 61]. Among other articles by this author on this issue are: “The social and artistic content of the zhlob-art project” [25] and “The critical realism of zhlob-art” [24]. Also must be mentioned O. Naiden’s research “Lack of taste of the masses or a generous gift to the tastes of intellectuals” [22], which features the analysis of the Ukrainian folk “bazaar-kitsch” art that became the forerunner of the modern movement “zhlob-art”.

Worth noting is the “encyclopedia of Ukrainian zhlobness”, a collection of essays by figures of Ukrainian cultural elite which studies the zhlobness phenomenon: *Zhlobology: An Art and Cultural Project* by A. Mukharskyi [21], which is, in its essence, the primary source for exploration of “zhlob-art”. An artistic supplement to the exploration of this issue is I. Semesiuk’s book *The Diary of an Ukrainophob* [27], which is a perfect illustration of “zhlob-art” in literature.

A number of journal articles and interviews with “zhlob-artists” provided a fruitful material for the research of “zhlob-art”, in particular A. Mukharskyi’s article “Nowadays, zhlobness everywhere is the product that we produce the most and the best” [3], E. Oliinyk “Why culture needs zhlobs?” [23], articles devoted to the creativity of S. Koliada “Alternative Shevchenko” by the artist Sergiy Kolyada (Photo) [1], O. Kostyrko and I. Semesiuk “The Larva of zhlob” [13] and others.

A number of scientific researches and explorations by A. Henis [8], S. Lashchenko [14], M. Lypovetskyi [16] and others are devoted to V. Yerofeiev’s poem *Moscow-Petushki*. They deal with intertextual connections between

the poem’s text and huge variety of cultural texts that were indirectly cited or directly borrowed by V. Yerofeiev in *Moscow-Petushki*. Musicological studies by T. Bachul [5], N. Vasina [7], A. Motsar [18, 19, 20] explore the features of S. Lunov’s creativity. S. Lunov’s opera *Moscow-Petushki* is studied in the dissertation “Ideas of the theater of the absurd in the process of updating the musical theater of the last third of the 20<sup>th</sup> through the early 21<sup>st</sup> century” by A. Motsar [19], who was the first to analyze the opera in the context of the aesthetics of the absurd.

However, despite many mentioned scientific and artistic publications on the “zhlob-art” movement, the question of the trickster essence of zhlobness and its reflection in contemporary Ukrainian art remains insufficiently studied.

**Objective of the study:** to reveal the trickster essence of the phenomenon of “zhlobness” in contemporary Ukrainian art.

The defined objective implies the following tasks:

- to examine the phenomena of “trickster” and “zhlob”, their significance in modern culture,
- to investigate the history of the emergence of “zhlob-art” movement,
- to examine the specific trickster features inherent in the Ukrainian “zhlob-art”,
- to analyze the phenomenon of zhlobness in S. Lunov’s opera “Moscow-Petushki” and to identify its trickster features.

**Presentation of the main research material.** In modern Ukrainian culture, along with serious, official art, there exists a parody, a “low” art: black humor, graffiti, various drawings on fences; other types of so-called street art are gaining popularity. The artists resort to deliberately unprofessional painting. Such an ambivalent juxtaposition is not accidental, as a dual perception of the world existed even during the early stages of cultural development. Alongside the serious myths, there were laughable myths, and next to the cultural heroes—their parody counterparts-doubles—tricksters. The latter is one of the most contradictory and mysterious images of archaic mythology. The trickster’s image is present in almost all cultures, however, it has its own unique versions, varieties and modifications. He is a timeless prototype, from which, according to the Hungarian-Swiss philologist and religious scholar K. Kerényi, “all the Clown characters of world culture originate” [12, p. 245].

In order to understand the essence of trickster archetype, its function in culture, one should refer to the etymology of the word. “Trickster” means “cheated”, “agile person”, “dodger”, “cunning”. Usually, trickster is presented as an asocial character, myths describing him always have an element of satire on the social order and structure; trickster ignores the rules and norms established by society, because “disorder is an integral part of life, and trickster embodies the spirit of this disorder”; its function is to “clutter up the order and, thus, to create ‘the whole’, to incorporate the illicit experience into the licit framework” [26, p. 257]. Trickster exists beyond morality, “lives” in the intervals, at the joints.

According to the American folklorist P. Radin, who conducted the first fundamental study in this field, *The Trickster:*

*A Study in American Indian Mythology* (1956): “Trickster is at one and the same time creator and destroyer, giver and negator, he who dupes others and who is always being duped himself. He possesses no values, moral or social, is at the mercy of his passions and appetites, yet through his actions all values come into being” [26, p. 3].

Trickster is capable of producing valuable things for people. Being a comic double of a cultural hero, he is not only a glutton or a libertine, but also a hero standing on the other side of law and morality. Usually trickster embodies features that contradict each other: strong—weak, their own—stranger’s, etc., through which absurd, comical situations are created. As a result of such internal contradiction, trickster and his antics create situations where either good or evil wins, and the idea of established values is overturned. Trickster is the incarnate spirit of disorder that is an integral part of life. Its function in mythological plots is to make a mess from order, and thus to create a whole, to include illicit in the licit framework of what is allowed.

It should be noted that trickster characters may be found not only in mythology and folk art, but also in literature, theater, music, cinema, psychology, politics, etc. One of the striking expressions of tricksterism in contemporary Ukrainian art is “zhlob-art”. “Zhlob-art” was launched as a cultural and artistic project named “Zhlob. Zhlobness. Zhlobizm”, which was initiated in the mid-2000s by Ukrainian actor, TV presenter, writer, founder of the Union of Free Artists “Freedom or Death” A. Mukharskyi. The basis of this project is not only a humorous (ironic) interpretation of the Ukrainian “mass” person, but also the exploration and study of the very phenomenon of zhlobness. Participants of the project—contemporary Ukrainian artists S. Voliazlovskyi, A. Yermolenko, S. Koliada, D. Kryshovskiy, O. Mann, A. Mukharskyi (aka Orest Liutyi), I. Semesiuk, S. Khokhol and others—by using irony and satire demonstrate their attitude to the phenomenon of zhlobizm in Ukrainian society, oppose undermining moral and ethical values, condemn the principles of life that zhlob follows.

The project *Zhlob. Zhlobness. Zhlobizm* has lasted for five years (2009–2014). Among the many exhibitions held, the most famous is “Zhlob-art. Biomass”, 2013. However, the final chord was the exhibition under the eighth Art Kyiv Contemporary art forum at the Mystetskyi Arsenal, where various performances were presented: *Zhlobopark. Zviroliudy, Troieshchynskiy Handel, Terekons from Seeds, Chinese Happiness*. For this event the “encyclopedia of Ukrainian Zhlobness” was published under the title *Zhlobology. Art and Cultural Project* [21]. The book presents short essays by Ukrainian writers, artists, and figures of Ukrainian cultural elite (Yu. Andrukhovych, S. Vasyliiev, V. Bebesko, Y. Izdryk, L. Podervianskyi, O. Liutyi, etc.). They consider the phenomenon of zhlobness from different points of view: philosophical, aesthetic, ethical, cultural and so on.

The main theme of “zhlob-art” movement was the presentation of the average mass person-zhlob, whose life is guided only by emotions, who responds to all comments with

rudeness and aggression, who is concerned only with the arrangement of his or her own material world and pursuits only narrow self-interests. It is through “mass” element that zhlob can initiate and provoke socio-cultural changes, the results of which may be unpredictable, even for himself, which allows us to draw a parallel with trickster. However, despite the fact that the zhlob phenomenon does have trickster features, it is not exactly identical to it, since zhlob is first and foremost a consumer of culture, not its creator, while trickster, on the contrary, performs a creative function. He is able to create new and unexpected combinations of situations, thus overcoming all the rules of rational thinking.

The word “zhlob” derives from “jobber” [3], the root of which is “job”, which in English means “employment”, “work”. English architects who built Odessa in the nineteenth century used the word to name employees coming from the surrounding villages to work there. Over time, the term “jobber” was transformed into “zhlob” to describe “a person who came from the village and could not get used to the ‘urban context’” [3]. In the 1920s, the term “zhlob” was in the lexicon of Soviet prisoners, describing a greedy person. The word “zhlob” had this very meaning until 1953, and was widely used in penal institutions. However, after the “Great Amnesty” in the urban environment the new term “zhmot” denoting the greedy person was separated from the initial term “zhlob” which began to signify a person “who places primal instincts of his own self in the first place” [3]. The term “zhlob” can be matched by synonyms that are close in meaning and reveal different aspects of the concept: “bro”, “rougul”, “limita”, “panayahavshi”, “kuguty”, “raklo”, “jew”, “zabuzhanyn”.

In the modern sense, zhlob is an uneducated person whose vocabulary is limited to the constant use of “surzhik” (mix of Ukrainian and Russian languages), because he is not fluent in any of the source languages. He is characterized by a negligence, which is manifested not only in his attire, but also in the culture of speech, his behavior, the ability to listen to his interlocutor. Due to lack of intellectual development, lack of culture and laziness, zhlob is not interested in the values lacking material component; he does not seek cultural self-education. Such a person is characterized by a passive perception of his being and his social position, because such attitude does not require much effort. However, zhlob is cunning, because he is characterized by a “living” sense of the situation—at the same time, he can demonstrate his affection and reverence for a person who is stronger than and humiliate the weaker one for his self-aggrandizement.

The exhibitions in the gallery Apartment No... became a meaningful continuation of the trend of ridicule and exposing social problems and shortcomings of society. Ukrainian artists I. Semesiuk and O. Mann became the project’s ideological founders. The exhibitions featured art of counterculture. At first, the artists created this project solely for themselves, but later their circle expanded and the Bacteria group was founded. It included artists I. Semesiuk, O. Mann, A. Gauk, and P. Lemtybozh. The founder of Bacteria I. Semesiuk attributes the works of the group members to social art, a kind

of pop-surrealism, and O. Mann wrote a manifesto, which outlines the main idea of this group—display of the horror of social manipulation, Ukrainophilia and Ukrainophobia, an agriculture-szlachta fight and the imposition of various cults, zombification and robotization of the population, the search for a modern hero and the praising of anti-heroes, an anthropological portrait of the era etc. It should be noted that the main idea of the Bacteria group has been embodied in the collection of “hints, rethinks, assumptions and prophecies”—the *Diary of Ukrainophobia* (2014) by I. Semesiuk [27]. This book presents the eclectic combination of contemporary mass art artifacts (cinema, theater, fine arts, music, etc.) with Ukrainian realities, in particular, politics.

Worth citing is one more striking example of the use of the “zhlob-art” features by L. Podervianskyi, as he, according to the Ukrainian politician and public figure O. Donii, is “the first of the researchers of zhlobness in contemporary Ukrainian literature” [21, p. 111]. In his writings, Podervianskyi made zhlob a character of a monumental epic, similar to the common and social satire from the best works of M. Gogol, M. Saltykov-Shchedrin, and M. Zoshchenko. The image of zhlob in the L. Podervianskyi’s works has become a full-fledged character with its own features, image, development and worldview. The writer uses the following effective methods of cultural resistance against zhlobness: humor, irony, satire, through which he in an ironic-sarcastic way ridicules zhlobness inherent to Ukrainian nation. The writer also uses surzhyk, intentionally writing in a “low” style. However, many members of zhlobness do not realize that they became the object of ridicule, believing that, on the contrary, such “heroization” and “exaltation” promote their way of life and thinking.

It is through “zhlob-art” that project participants ridicule and expose the ills, shortcomings and troubles of society, using sharp, ironic language in their art, trying to illuminate the deviant behavior of society and to heal it. Despite the closure of the project, the main ideas of this trend continued to evolve during the Revolution of Dignity (“Artistic Barbacan”) and in our time.

In addition to fine arts, the trickster features of “zhlob-art” can be found in contemporary Ukrainian pop music: Alyona Alyona’s songs *Pisces* and *Pisces 2*; TIC *Alcoholism*, *Reindeer*, *Sveta*; Dzizio’s *Minibus*, *Banda Banda*, *I am a Millionaire*; Kurhan feat Agregat *Ships in the Pond*, *Bloody Fist*; Hryby *Ice Is Melting*, *Cops*, *No Bazaar*; Jerry Heil *Security Canceled*, *Free Cash Desk*, *White Snickers* and more.

The image of zhlob got its reflection in the professional music too. S. Lunov’s opera *Moscow-Petushki* (based on the eponymous poem by Venedykt Yerofeiev), represents the whole world of Soviet zhlobness, and with the musical means the composer actually creates the effect of double coding, thus enhancing the impression of what can be seen and heard.

V. Yerofeiev wrote his poem *Moscow-Petushki* in 1969. In the USSR it appeared in an abridged version and was first officially published in the journal *Sobriety and Culture* during

the M. Gorbachev’s anti-alcohol propaganda campaign, which created a certain ironic-grotesque context as the protagonist of the poem is an intellectual alcoholic Vienichka, or as he is called by the author of the poem—Vienichka Yerofeiev. The abridged version of *Moscow-Petushki* had numerous errors, distortions and cuts, that is why the text was not perceived as a complete work of art with a deep philosophical subtext and the poem lost the implications laid down by the author himself. The full version of *Moscow-Petushki* was published by Prometheus in 1989.

S. Lunov became familiar with the poem by V. Yerofeiev in the year of the writer’s death, the 1990. At the same time, the composer began to create the libretto, and in 1991—to compose the score. In greater depth, the composer encountered the work by V. Yerofeiev in the form of a theatrical play, staged at the Zerkalo theater. As S. Lunov himself notes, he felt the urgency of the poem on the turn of the epoch: when USSR collapsed and new states began to emerge [19]. The basis of the plot of the opera *Moscow-Petushki* is the journey of the protagonist Vienichka from Moscow to Petushki, which personifies the quests and the hardship of a lonely soul.

In addition to the primary source, the composer also refers to other texts by V. Yerofeiev, namely, using fragments from the play *Walpurgis Night or the Commander’s Steps*, *The Psychopath’s Notes*, and the author’s notebooks. Given that the basis of the opera *Moscow-Petushki* is a literary text of a dramatic nature, “filled with numerous lyrical deviations <...> It was necessary to overcome the narrative nature of the literary genre <...>” [18, p. 142], that is why S. Lunov makes cuts in the libretto.

The protagonist of the poem/opera Vienichka Yerofeiev has some common features with trickster: clown behavior, funny and playful nature. However, unlike zhlob, Vienichka embodies both the features of a trickster and of a cultural hero. Through his behavior, he demonstrates disagreement with the rules of the environment—the Soviet society where Vienichka belongs and does not belong at the same time. Seemingly, he is a citizen of the Soviet Union, a “unit of society”, a “cog in the system”, but in his inner world, as portrayed in the poem/opera by V. Yerofeiev and S. Lunov, he cannot get accustomed to any of his surroundings.

One of the first examples of Vienichka’s encounter with zhlobness is a scene at a restaurant at the Kursk Station where the main character went to hang on (Second scene. “Kursk Railway Station Restaurant”). The scene begins with an allusion to the romance by L. Malashkin *I met you...* based on a poem by F. Tiutchev. However, the allusion to this music piece is presented in grotesque and distorted manner with almost a zhlobbish mockery of everything that is considered by restaurant workers to be “intelligent”. First, only the first phrase of the romance is used, and it is followed by purely zhlobbish stanza “...and all that...” Secondly, the composer’s use of arpeggios, which sound out of tune, parodies the actual accompaniment to the romance-reminiscent of both the negligence of the restaurant performers and is the example of a certain kitsch and satire. The entire conversation between the main hero and the restaurant staff

is accompanied by rhythms of hard tango, which in no way corresponds to the lyrical and sublime words of the romance. In this scene S. Lunov inherits the musical “restaurant” tradition—the live musical performance. If we talk about the difference between the opera and the poem *Moscow-Petushki*, it should be noted that in the poem Vienichka mentions singer I. Kozlovskiy, whom he hears on the radio at the Kursk station. However, the name of the singer is not mentioned in the opera libretto, instead a “live” voice sounds against the backdrop of restaurant music, which immediately introduces trickster context, as a comparison between the romance, which is symbolized by the voice of the famous tenor of the USSR and embodies a “high” style of an era, and the “low”, the zhlobbish style of the restaurant’s music that “kills” the pathos and the high spirit of the romance.

Another striking example is the main character’s meeting with companions on the electric train, when Vienichka watches two “intellectuals” who spend their time drinking (Fourth scene. “Karacharovo-Chukhlinka”). He can hear only fragments, unrelated sentences from the conversation. For example, the exclamation, “Trans-cen-den-tal-no!” gets the following response from the companion: “Appetizer type ‘I beg you!’”. Matching such phrases sounds like an oxymoron, because when the companions are shouting “intelligent” words and phrases, they want to present themselves as intellectuals. The degree of intoxication of one of the characters in S. Lunov’s opera is emphasized by the musical language of the vocal and orchestra parts, the drunken pronunciation of the word “transcendentalnost” resonates against the ascending chromatic scale. In general, the dialogue between these characters is saturated with various constant exclamations like: “well gone”, “aha”, “ogo”, “hoo”, “o”, “a”, etc., which are intended to demonstrate narrow-mindedness and zhlobness of the characters.

Another Vienichka’s encounter with zhlobness is the first interlude of the opera: Scene “Vienia and the Four”. It begins with a lyrical introduction that seamlessly evolves into the musical material of the main part, namely the parts performed by the Four. The transition is being made through overlaying one music layer (introduction) with another one (musical material of parts). By its function, the introduction is a kind of flashback in which Vienichka remembers how he lived in the dormitory and how his delicacy spoils his life. Musical episodes are contrasting: the sublime introductory music combined with the intonations of the parts sounding like kitsch. It should be noted that the parts of the Four sound against the background of laughter and the carnival atmosphere, emphasizing the contrast between Vienichka and the Four enthusiasts even more. These citations are used by V. Yerofeiev in his tragedy *Walpurgis Night or the Commander’s Steps*: “I do not care in the world. / I do not care that I am ..., / That I drink bad wine / Without the addition of anything else. / I’m glad I’m a degenerate, / I’m glad I’m drinking a denaturant. / I am very glad that I for a long time / Cannot hear the Factory’s horn...” [6, p. 78].

The dialogue between the Four and Vienichka takes place against the background of the musical material of the parts,

and unlike the second scene, where Vienichka’s intonations seem confused and uncertain; here the protagonist internationally corresponds to the tone of the Four. However, if there is aggression in the parts of the Four, then we could hear the kind of surprise in his part, as he does not understand what they want from him. The presence of the Four in the opera reinforces the impossibility of the protagonist to settle down in any social environment, because the behavioral model of the Four is completely zhlobbish; through humiliation and hounding the weaker person they achieve self-fulfillment; they are trying to reshape Vienichka in their own image, trying to guilt him for becoming haughty with people.

It should be emphasized that there is a significant difference between the trickster character of the main hero and all others representatives of the Soviet zhlobness. Through alcohol Vienichka in a trickster manner tickles over everything and everyone around him. He is a trickster image of the carnival culture, the embodiment of binary opposition to a daily life and to the official seriousness of the USSR, because only due to the carnival there is a temporary escape from any rules laid down by society.

As for the difference between the trickster features of the main character and the trickster essence of zhlobness in the poem by V. Yerofeiev and in the opera by S. Lunov, the latter is distinguished by the poetry of “oxymoronic rapprochements”, the indistinguishability of praise and blame, by the supercilious attitude of the representatives of zhlobness towards Vienichka, by controversial behavior, collectivism (as zhlob does not feel confident being alone). Comparison between the protagonist and the representatives of zhlobness creates the conditions for the acute parody of the latter.

Still, there is a lot in common in the trickster essence of Soviet zhlobness and Vienichka Yerofeiev. They are related by:

- mediation between social worlds and groups. Even C. Lévi-Strauss wrote that trickster is a kind of marginal mediator character, since he often initiates a change in people’s worldview and outlook, a rethinking of basic human values, and therefore a change in understanding such stable cultural concepts as “high”—“low”, “mass”—“elitist” [15],

- liminality (from the Latin “limen”—“threshold”): life at joints of different positions, laws, customs, as zhlob (as well as Vienichka) can never find himself in any environment. Trickster, according to V. Turner [28], is a liminal figure, destroying and blending all the classical ethical and aesthetic categories of culture in order to transfer the system from one condition to another, often losing its structure and hierarchy. Likewise, zhlob “turning things around” brings an element of chaos in the existing order, contributes to deidealization, to the transformation of the ideal world into the real one,

- the ability to reduce the high to the level of the low, which is manifested in the humor origin of Vienichka through irony and through the gross sarcasm of the representatives of zhlobness,

– Vienichka and zhlobs are marginal: through their behavior they abolish established relations between people, with marginality becoming the center of new meanings, anti-behavior becoming the norm.

**Conclusions.** The characteristics of trickster and zhlob phenomena are described, their influence on the modern Ukrainian society and significance in a broad cultural context are justified, which gives an opportunity to reveal the “common merits of human cultural expression” [2, p. 2–4]. The history of the emergence of “zhlob-art” movement is considered, which gave impetus for the creation of a number of ideologically similar cultural and artistic projects and groups. Important trickster features of zhlobness were highlighted: mediatorship, liminality, asociality, marginality, it was found that the trickster essence of zhlob is a “living feeling” of the situation. He can be an

asocial character, trying to rebuild social order, may ignore the rules and regulations established by society, thus proving that understanding of the cosmic order cannot exist unless it causes disorder, chaos. In this sense, zhlob, like trickster, has traditionally facilitated the exchange of cultural values between social groups and the “translation” of information from the sphere of the unknown into the sphere of the known. S. Lunev’s opera *Moscow-Petushki* is analyzed in terms of the trickster essence of the phenomenon “zhlobness”; the common features and the difference between the trickster character of the main hero and all representatives of the Soviet zhlobness are revealed. It is proved that despite all the negative manifestations of zhlobness, this phenomenon exists in almost all social strata of society; is inherent in all world cultures and influences the development of society in general.

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Турчина М. О.

**Трикстерська сутність феномена «жлобство» у сучасному українському мистецтві**

**Анотація.** Розглянуто культурологічні аспекти феномена «жлобство» та його трикстерську сутність у сучасному образотворчому, літературному та музичному мистецтвах. Не зважаючи на актуальність, проблематика й досі залишається недостатньо дослідженою, хоча і пов'язана з гострими питаннями поширення жлобства у всіх соціальних прошарках суспільства, його впливовістю на сучасну українську культуру, що спричинене популяризацією масового мистецтва, формуванням жлобської моделі поведінки, героїзації антигероя. Виявлено спільні та відмінні риси понять «жлоб» і «трикстер», їхнє сучасне розуміння, вплив на сучасне українське мистецтво, трансформаційні процеси в українському суспільстві. Визначено, що феномен «жлобства» — глобальне явище, властиве майже для всіх світових культур, проте воно має свої національні характеристики. Розглянуто історію виникнення мистецького напрямку «жлоб-арт» крізь призму трикстерських рис та розкрито його місце у сучасному мистецтві. Виявлено вплив творчості митців-жлобистів на формування ідейно близьких за змістом мистецьких угруповань та об'єднань. Досліджено трикстерські риси феномена жлобства у сучасній українській естрадній та професійній музиці, зокрема опері С. Луньова «Москва — Петушки». Проаналізовано специфіку цього феномена у контексті співставлення трикстерства головного героя опери й представників радянського жлобства, виявлено їхні спільні риси: маргінальність, медіаторство, лімінальність, сміхове начало, «перевертання» високого та низького. Обґрунтовано характерні трикстерські риси феномена жлобства та їхнє відображення у сучасному українському мистецтві. Визначено, що жлобство властиве всім верствам населення та є рушійним важелем впливу на розвиток сучасної культури.

**Ключові слова:** трикстер, жлобство, «жлоб-арт», сучасне українське мистецтво, опера С. Луньова «Москва — Петушки».

Турчина М. А.

**Трикстерская сущность феномена «жлобство» в современном украинском искусстве**

**Аннотация.** Рассматриваются культурологические аспекты феномена «жлобство» и его трикстерская сущность в современном изобразительном, литературном и музыкальных искусствах. Несмотря на актуальность, данная проблематика до сих пор остаётся недостаточно исследованной, хотя и связана с острыми вопросами распространения жлобства во всех социальных слоях общества, его влияния на современную украинскую культуру, что кроется в популяризации массового искусства, формировании жлобской модели поведения, героизации антигероя. Выявлены общие и отличительные черты понятий «жлоб» и «трикстер», их современное понимание, влияние на современное украинское искусство, трансформационные процессы в украинском обществе. Определено, что феномен «жлобства» — глобальное явление, свойственное почти всем мировым культурам и имеющее свои национальные характеристики. Рассматривается история возникновения направления искусства «жлоб-арт» сквозь призму трикстерских черт и раскрывается его место в современном искусстве. Выявлено влияние творчества художников-жлобистов на формирование идейно близких по смыслу художественных групп и объединений. Исследованы трикстерские черты феномена жлобства в современной украинской эстрадной и профессиональной музыке, в частности, в опере С. Лунёва «Москва — Петушки». Проанализирована специфика этого феномена в контексте сопоставления трикстерства главного героя оперы и представителей советского жлобства, выявлены их общие черты: маргинальность, медиаторство, лиминальность, смеховое начало, «переворачивание» высокого и низкого. Обоснованы характерные трикстерские черты феномена жлобства и их отображение в современном украинском искусстве. Определено, что жлобство свойственно всем слоям населения и является движущим рычагом влияния на развитие современной культуры.

**Ключевые слова:** трикстер, жлобство, «жлоб-арт», современное украинское искусство, опера С. Лунёва «Москва — Петушки».