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Научная статья

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**Аннотация**

Цель статьи заключается во всестороннем анализе афористики Сергея Довлатова, а также в рассмотрении некоторых вопросов теории афористики. Стиль Довлатова можно назвать афористичным, в его художественных текстах содержится множество изречений, которые были извлечены и исследованы.

Афоризмы Довлатова раскрывают его индивидуально-авторское мировоззрение в семантических полях человек/люди, талант, гений, свобода, качества человека (снобизм, равнодушие, низость и пр.). В корпусе изречений Довлатова отчетливо просматривается оригинальность и неоднозначность (в некоторых случаях противоречивость) его уникальной концептуальной и языковой картины мира.

Афористика Довлатова антропоцентрична, в центре ее стоит человек со всеми сложностями и экзистенциальными вопросами бытия.

**Ключевые слова:** афоризм, афористика, изречения Сергея Довлатова.

**APHORISTIC NATURE OF SERGEY DOVLATOV**

Research article

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**Abstract**

The aim of the article is to make a comprehensive study of aphoristic nature of Sergey Dovlatov and to analyze some aspects of aphoristic theory. Dovlatov's style can be called aphoristic, as there are many adages that were extracted and analyzed.

Dovlatov's aphorisms reflect his individual author philosophy in the following semantic fields like people/person, a talent, a genius, a freedom and individual qualities (snobbery, indifference, meanness, etc.). In the corpus of Dovlatov's adages the reader can clearly understand the originality and ambiguity (and in some cases inconsistency) of his unique concept and linguistic worldview.

Dovlatov's aphoristics is anthropocentric. In the centre of his aphoristic system, there is a man with all the difficulties and existential mode of life issues.

**Keywords:** adage, aphoristics, Sergey Dovlatov's aphorisms.

**Introduction**

In the definite periods, nations face with the demand for some moral, philosophic and worldview concepts that are reflected in pearls of wisdom. That is why the origin and existence of aphorisms in the first instance are due to social and historical factors and aphoristics has been known since the earliest times of human development. The study of aphoristics is a difficult issue as there isn't a joint understanding of the notion aphorism on account of the fact that aphorisms are objects of study of linguistics, literary studies, philosophy, sociology, cultural linguistics and etc.

We believe that nowadays almost all viewpoints on aphoristics can be divided into several groups:

- Aphorism as a literary genre;
- Aphorism as a branch of knowledge;
- Aphorism as a linguistic phenomenon.

According to a viewpoint concerning the aphorism nature and essence, scientists offer different methodologies and methods of their studying.

Let us analyze the study of aphorisms from the linguistic point of view.

**Firstly**, the aphoristics can be studied in the frames of functional and semantic typology of rhetoric.

The following concept is developed by Yu.E.Prohorov [7], [8], some parts of the concept are presented in the monograph "Aphoristics" by N.T. Fedorenko and L.I.Sokolskaya.

In works by E.E.Ivanov "National and cultural semantics of aphoristics and the problem of its linguistic and cultural representation", "Афарыстычныя адзінкі у беларускай мове", "Linguistics of the aphorism" the author confirms that the understanding of the deep sense of aphorism can be reached not along with the knowledge of a language but with the understanding of mental peculiarities of the culture.

E.E.Ivanov offers the following general understanding of the essence of the aphorism: “aphorism is a short adage in the form of a finished statement that include a general idea of theoretical (or practical) content” [2, P. 4].

**Secondly**, aphoristics can be studied as a unit of phraseology of a language. Due to our concept, that was presented in numerous works, including forewords to the dictionaries of aphorisms and monographs, aphorism is a short-form adage of a phraseological kind that has the following properties: the concept-words in its structure; reproducibility; separability; brevity [3, P. 37].

This approach makes possible to distinguish the aphorisms in the texts of any functional style, to make up dictionaries of aphorisms that means to include the aphoristic material into scientific lexicography, to differentiate between aphorisms and aphoristic adages or other close notions.

**Thirdly**, the essence of aphorism is studied from the point of view of structural paramiology.

The study of aphorisms in frames of paramiology level of the language allows offering different structural models of aphorisms and narrowing the frames of ambivalent notion of aphorism as well as analyzing the syntactic nature and text functions of adages. However, this approach makes it impossible to make up dictionaries of aphoristics and differentiate between proverbs, sayings and aphorisms.

**Fourthly**, aphorisms can be studied in frames of Cultural linguistics, with all their national specific character. E.M.Vereschagin and V.G.Kostomarov in their works (“Language and Culture”, “To the problem of proverbs, sayings and winged expressin in the language and culture learner’s dictionary”) classify aphorism as an adage (usually in the form of a phrase) that expresses some general idea. Both the completeness of a thought and brightness and form elegance are obligatory for aphorisms [Kostomarov, Vereschagin 1979: 5]. In the stated works the authors point out that aphorism due to the structure is a unit not less than a sentence that can be reproduced.

From the point of view of E.M.Vereschagin and V.G.Kostomarov aphorisms perform cumulative functions, i.e. recording the experience of people. We can add that aphorisms reflect the national worldview of the nation.

The national, cultural and historical contexts matter in aphoristics, but concurrently adages reflect universal human values. The correlation of cultural and ethical universals in aphoristics of different time layers is closely connected with the author’s personality that is extremely important for the writer like Sergey Dovlatov.

We have a theory that aphorisms are highly fragile linguistic and literary category that can express philosophic and worldview concepts.

### Methods

Conducted analysis of Dovlatov’s aphorisms is based on the descriptive and analytical methods. The main methodical principle is semantic and structural analysis of Sergey Dovlatov’s aphorisms. About two hundred units were analyzed.

The study material is Sergey Dovlatov’s aphoristics stated by A.V. Korolkova as part of authorial group in The Dictionary of Russian Writers’ Aphorisms (XVIII – XX cc.). Aphorisms were extracted from Sergey Dovlatov’s texts, the basis of the methodology were the keywords of aphorisms that classify them as members of a specific thematic sphere.

### Text of article

Sergey Dovlatov’s artistic legacy is profoundly particular and is now a question of discussions due to ambiguousness of his poetic style [5], [6]. Contemporary readers consider Dovlatov to be a member of grotesque view of life author of 70-80<sup>th</sup> of 20<sup>th</sup> century. There is an amazing mixture of comedy and tragedy, infernality and nonsense in his literary works. Carnivalism (M.Bahtin’s term) is the basis of Dovlatov’s artistic method and it structures the system of his philosophic, social and aesthetic views. His creative world is tuneful and anthropocentric and there is a man in the central point of his world with all his weaknesses, sins and values. In Dovlatov’s works there are neither positive no negative characters. Dovlatov considers the conflict in mentality of a common person to be natural. He never blames anyone and he does not offer any problem solving, he describes the real life with an amazing and cutthroat accuracy.

**Человек человеку... как бы это получше выразиться – табула раса. Иначе говоря – все, что угодно. В зависимости от обстоятельств.**

\* \* \*

### **Одни и те же люди выказывают равную способность к злодеянию и добродетели.**

While analyzing creative works of any author, the researchers traditionally highlight a style feature like aphoristic nature, i.e. fiction works or social and political essays display an essential quantity of adages, many of which become well known.

There are a great number of aphorisms in Sergey Dovlatov’s literary works that are easily recognized as they always have a keyword (a concept). However, we emphasize the fact that his works present a deep stylistic specific nature with irony and sarcasm often with a hint of grotesque. That is why while sampling aphorisms (all Dovlatov’s aphorisms are narrative in Fedorenko and Sokolskaya’s terms) it is necessary to bear in mind the individual writer’s worldview.

Aphoristic nature can be considered as a specific style feature of Dovlatov’s works. We also should comment on the fact that almost all his works tend to laconism. He is often called a minimalist writer as well as his adages tend to briefness.

Sergey Dovlatov’s aphoristic corpus include the adages various in semantic and syntactic structure.

Let us provide a quantitative analysis of the relevant thematic groups of Sergey Dovlatov’s aphoristics.

The subject of his aphoristic is timeless. Moral, ethical and philosophic issues have always been actual problems in literary works. They are the so-called timeless issues like love, friendship, betrayal, patriotism, human life values, good and evil, etc.

For example:

### **Женщины любят только мерзавцев. Однако быть мерзавцем дано не каждому.**

It should be noted that in his reasoning about the essence of good and evil, Sergey Dovlatov expresses a peculiar and even a counterintuitive author’s position. Good and evil in his works are represented as ambivalent entities.

**Зло определяется конъюнктурой, спросом, функцией его носителя. Кроме того, фактором случайности. Неудачным стечением обстоятельств. И даже – плохим эстетическим вкусом.**

\* \* \*

**Человек способен на все – дурное и хорошее. Мне грустно, что это так. Поэтому дай нам Бог стойкости и мужества. А еще лучше – обстоятельств времени и места, располагающих к добру.**

\* \* \*

**Разумеется, существует врожденное предрасположение к добру и злу. Более того, есть на свете ангелы и монстры. Святые и злодеи. Но это редкость.**

Moreover, Dovlatov's aphoristics reflect the burning issues of today connected with the interpretation of totalitarianism, oppression and ambiguous development of the soviet society. Dovlatov's creative manner depends on the history of the state and the society.

In the corpus of Dovlatov's adages, there are aphorisms about publicity, falsehood in official public diplomacy, vulgarity of the outward, indifference.

For example:

**Гласность – это правда, умноженная на безнаказанность.**

The topic of writer's genius has a specific meaning for Dovlatov. He reasons about genius, talent and responsibility of writers to the world.

For example:

**Талант. Божий дар, как сокровище. То есть буквально – как деньги. Или – ценные бумаги. А может, как ювелирное изделие. Отсюда – боязнь лишиться. Страх, что украдут. Тревога, что обесценится со временем. И еще – что умрешь, так и не потратив.**

\* \* \*

**Гений – это бессмертный вариант простого человека.**

The topic of journalism is one of the main topics in Dovlatov's works (this fact is illustrated by his background). This group comprises adages with the keywords of the theme group "journalism". The author muses upon its essence, speaks ironically about official soviet directions of ideological kind in the media content.

**В журналистике каждому разрешается делать что-то одно. В чем-то одном нарушать принципы морали.**

Dovlatov's individual style is based on the critical plot and composition simplicity as well as the language.

**Syntactical characteristics of Sergey Dovlatov's aphoristics.**

Structurally Dovlatov's aphorisms tend to a specific simplicity. However, this simplicity is rather relative. The adages consist either of one final statement (conclusion) that leaves preliminary reasoning beyond the limits of an aphorism, or a specific thought that results from the final statement. The aphorisms consisting of a final statement prevail in the literary works of Dovlatov.

In the theory of aphoristics, there is not a joint understanding of the content of an aphorism. We are of the view that an aphorism should comprise not more than three sentences of different syntactic structure. A classical aphorism in terms of its structure is an adage consisting of one simple sentence. There are many of them in Dovlatov's works.

**Скудость мысли порождает миллионы единомышленников.**

More often, the aphorisms in Dovlatov's works syntactically consist of a number of simple semi-composite sentences. The author finds it not enough to use short form of simple sentences.

**Собственнический инстинкт выражается по-разному. Это может быть любовь к собственному добру. А может быть и ненависть к чужому.**

\* \* \*

**Свобода одинаково благосклонна и к дурному, и к хорошему. Под ее лучами одинаково быстро расцветают и гладиолусы, и марихуана.**

Dovlatov's aphorisms are peculiar, introductory and are different in their syntactic and compositional structure.

## Results

The article deals with the analysis of aphoristic corpus of Sergey Dovlatov's works that amounts to 200 units. The main themes of Dovlatov's aphoristics are stated in the keywords of his adages. We need to point out that it is like in the world aphoristics his keywords (adages themes) coincide with the basic universal concepts of Russian culture.

The main topics of Dovlatov's aphoristics are presented in the keywords of his adages. We should point out that the keywords (topics of adages) coincide with the basic general meanings, the same as in the world aphoristics in its entirety.

Traditionally, as in the entire Russian aphoristics of XVII-XX centuries, Dovlatov's aphoristics include the following issues like love, friendship, the opposition of good and evil, life and death, author's individual opposition of love and falsehood.

The aphoristic units illustrate the author's individual paradigm in the following semantic fields like a person/people, a talent, a genius, a freedom and individual qualities (snobbery, indifference, meanness, etc.).

We need to make a pointed reference to the fact that quantitatively relevant in Dovlatov's aphoristics are adages with the keywords love, friendship, betrayal, truth, genius, freedom that classify the writer's aphorisms as specific semantic fields.

In the corpus of Dovlatov's adages the reader can clearly understand the originality and ambiguity (and in some cases inconsistency) of his unique concept and linguistic worldview.

There is a specific stylistic peculiarity of Dovlatov's aphorisms. A small quantity of figures in his adages correlates by the way with the tendency to simplify the literary text.

Syntactically Dovlatov's aphorisms consist of a number (it is often three or four sentences) of simple semi-composite sentences. There are some adages that are expressed by different types of complex sentences and there are no stated cases when his aphorisms are expressed by the complex syntactic integer.

### Conclusion

The basis of Sergey Dovlatov's aphoristics is a human life with its conflicts, difficulties, existential mode of life issues, considerations about good and evil, the human life essence.

Dovlatov's aphoristics combines "the carnival view of life and a specific Dovlatov's humor that is opposite the tragic and existentialistic attitude to the world" (Zh.Y.Motygina).

In Dovlatov's aphoristics, the reader observes an amazing correlation of deep moral truths, irony, specific humor, paradoxal and grotesque, some observations on the definite life situations (life and death, honor, indifference, etc.).

The subject matter of Sergey Dovlatov's aphoristics unveils some specific moral values of the Russian people of the XXth century and changes happened in the national and cultural consciousness of people as well as the individual author philosophy.

### Конфликт интересов

Не указан.

### Conflict of Interest

None declared.

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