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THE ART OF APHORISMS IN „THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY” BY OSCAR WILDE

Aphorisms have attracted the attention of people all over the world for centuries, but during the age of scientific and technological progress their significance has increased especially. It is essential to note that in some countries aphorisms are developing rapidly, and in some places have reached their heyday. In comparison with the almost complete absence of literary works in the past, a number of meaningful, theoretical articles on aphorisms have been published recently, and works of a linguistic nature have also appeared. Problems of aphorisms are considered either at literary congresses, or numerous thesis. Significant for our manuscript are scientific studies on the aesthetic and expressive potential of aphorisms. Namely, the works by O. Berkova, M. Ovrutskyi, L. Roizenzon, I. Shmeliova, S. Shulezhkova, V. Pirohov, O. Selivanova and others.

The relentless interest in aphorisms is due to the fact that by virtue of their universality, they correspond to the spirit of modern society. They are equally close to both science and art; they organically interact with the principles of scientific and artistic creativity. In this regard, it is natural that many prominent scientists were at the same time the aphorisms creators. It is worth of remembering the ancient scientist, the ancestor of aphorisms Hippocrates, the authors of aphoristic books Pascal, Goethe, Lichtenberg, who were great scientists at that time (Khlebtsova, 1999). Being at the junction of science and art, aphorisms are considered to be a kind of link between them.

„Expressiveness and imagery bring together aphorisms with fiction, the property of synthesis of ideas, establishing a connection between phenomena; accuracy and conciseness unite them with science” (Fedorenko, 1999, p. 52). Abroad, there are still supporters of the theory of affiliation of aphorisms not to literature, but to science, in particular to philosophy, there is controversy on this issue. Aphorisms, undoubtedly, should be considered a literary genre, but they are close to science, and this contributes to their popularity in our time. However, the analysis of the aphoristic nature of a certain literary work, the results of which would have interdisciplinary significance – a symbiosis of literary theory and linguistics. On the one hand, the artistic-semiotic analysis of the work successfully implements research in the field of literary criticism,

and on the other hand, a careful analysis of the aphorism in the canvas of the work overcomes the established dispute between literary criticism and linguistic study of a literary text.

The objective of the article is a comprehensive study of aphorisms as „insert structures” in „The Picture of Dorian Gray” by O. Wilde.

Achieving this goal involves the following tasks solving:

- substantiate the methodological basis of the study;
- to outline the features of the functioning of aphorisms in a literary work;
- to consider the aphorism as an aesthetic and expressive phenomenon in the literature of England in the second half of the 19th – early 20th century;
- to find out the author’s strategies for the creative realization of aphorisms in the work under consideration.

It should be mentioned that although aphorisms are a significant and ancient science, theoretical ideas about it are very vague. The very concept of “aphorism” is defined as ambiguously and understood differently. There are a huge number of definitions of the aphorism proposed by various scholars. In the understanding of some linguists, the aphorism appears as a deep, instructive thought in a short figurative form; whereas in the presentation of others the aphorism is a paradoxical judgment in a refined style that tends to originality.

In order to describe the aphorism more fully, the author considers some of the most revealing definitions. Definitions taken from foreign sources give a deeper idea of the concept of aphorism, as well as reflect its additional characteristics, e.g. 1) „Aphorism – a short clever saying that is intended to express a general truth”; 2) „Aphorism – a terse saying embodying a general truth, or astute observation”; 3) „Aphorism – a concise expression of doctrine or principle of any generally accepted truth conveyed in a pithy, memorable statement”.

The objective and tasks determined the choice of the following appropriate methods of scientific knowledge: artistic-semiotic, descriptive and comparative methods, methods of component, and distributive analysis.

The aphorism has several defining properties. The first sign of an aphorism is the depth of thought, which seeks the truth – its most important feature. The main thing in it is that its author, touching on a big, serious problem, really wants to convey to people the correct, from his point of view, view of it. The second sign of the aphorism is a generalization. The aphorism arises as a result of the synthesis of many facts and considerations and is rightly considered as the conclusion, rule, principle, result. Generalization, synthesizing experience, contributes to the depth and truth of thought. The third feature of the aphorism is brevity. The extreme brevity of the statement, condensing the idea, deepens its meaning and, in addition, can give the aphorism a mystery that attracts attention to it and helps to remember it better. The expressiveness of ones increases with a decreasing number of words; it is claimed that about 3/4 of all aphorisms consist of three or five words, although in practice the aphorism includes eight – ten words. The fourth feature is the

completeness of thought, which emphasizes the ability of the aphorism to exist independently. The aphorism must be complete in meaning and clear without further explanation. The fifth feature could be called the sharpness of thought, i.e. its extreme clarity, accuracy, expressiveness, brought to perfection. Sharpening is a characteristic feature of the aphorism, as its structure requires filigree processing. Finally, the sixth feature of the aphorism is its artistry, which is achieved through the use of various emotional and stylistic means. The aphorism should be not only wise but also beautiful. The aphorism is generated by wit, in the broadest sense of the word, and combines, in addition to the depth of thought, its beauty, which is achieved through the use of artistic and stylistic means. This aspect is very important, only art gives the aphorism a strong place in literature. We can add that it is the art that gives that shade of novelty and surprise of aphorisms, the subject of which most often concerns traditional „eternal questions”.

The aphorism is very stable, each word has its permanent place in it, and none of them can be added or subtracted. For this reason, aphorisms are very difficult to translate into another language. This view of the aphorism is somewhat prevalent abroad, justifying to some extent the frivolity given to the aphorism there. In many foreign countries, it is assumed that aphorism has only an entertaining function. In science, there is no complete list of linguistic functions of aphorisms. However, researchers in the linguistic literature on aphorisms, note the following functions: characterological (contains a description of people, nature, events, etc.), didactic, aesthetic, commenting, evaluative (allows the author to clearly express their assessment of events), expressive (Fedorenko & Sokolskaya, 1999).

Aphorisms, which are created as independent literary works, very rarely gain wide popularity and are massively reproduced in language, i.e. become winged, and only in isolated cases lose the associative connection with the name of its author, i.e. begin to be used as proverbs. This can be explained by the fact that aphorisms as literary works are characterized, on the one hand, by the highest degree of individualization (in understanding reality, its evaluation) and concentration of idiosyncrastic means, and on the other hand, usually lack linguistic (situational) context, expression with a certain (typical or possible) situation of its use. The presence of situational context in aphorisms uttered orally by a famous person in certain circumstances or on a well-known occasion significantly increases the chances of such expressions to become part of winged units and even proverbs.

The stability of the aphorism implies its regular reproduction in the language in the same form, with the preservation of all components and the order of their sequence. A sign of intertextuality is that aphorisms, as a rule, are successfully intertwined in the outline of other texts and often contain references to other texts. The presence of a specific author means that the authorship of the aphorism is well known and recorded in material sources. The completeness of the aphorism lies in its semantic and structural integrity. A sign of the brevity of the aphorism is that most aphorisms are characterized by a small volume and, as a rule; one aphorism is a single sentence, although,

of course, there are exceptions. The expressiveness of the aphorism lies in its special expressiveness, which is achieved through the use of vivid language forms. The easy-to-remember form of the aphorism is determined by its peculiarity of the rhythmic-intonational form; this subsequently affects its use

Usually, the theme of aphorisms is aimed at „eternal questions”: about truth and justice, life and death, war and peace, happiness and unhappiness, about the state system, etc. It reflects all aspects of human individuality and human society.

Facing extremes, combining the incompatible, O. Wilde, in his own way, embodies the theory of aesthetics in his work. He allows contradictions through paradoxes, showing us that extremes have a right to exist. Truth, according to O. Wilde, is subjective. The analysis shows that the largest numbers of aphorisms in „The Picture of Dorian Gray” are the following reflections:

About love:

„Every time that one loves is the only time one has ever loved” (Wilde, 1979, p. 216).

„When I like people immensely I never tell their names anyone. It is like surrendering a part of them” (Wilde, 1979, p. 77).

„The only way to get rid of temptation is to yield to it” (Wilde, 1979, p. 105).

About marriage:

„Long engagements give people the opportunity of finding out each other’s character before marriage, which is never advisable” (Wilde, 1979, p. 209).

About life:

„Experience is merely the name men gave to their mistakes” (Wilde, 1979, p. 86).

About art:

„Paradoxically though it may seem, it is none the less true that life imitates art far more than art imitates life” (Wilde, 1979, p. 21).

„Every portrait that is painted with feeling is a portrait of the artist, not of the sitter” (Wilde, 1979, p. 19).

About religion:

„Religion is the fashionable substitute for belief” (Wilde, 1979, p. 307).

About a person:

„Man is least himself when he talks in his own person. Give him a mask and he will tell the truth” (Wilde, 1979, p. 107).

„Nowadays people know the price of everything and the value of nothing” (Wilde, 1979, p. 49).

„Whenever a man does a thoroughly stupid thing, it is always from the noblest motives” (Wilde, 1979, p. 208).

All these thoughts are logically structured, wise, instructive, sometimes unexpected, and paradoxical.

It should be stressed that O. Wilde also has several distinct themes. As a supporter of aesthetics, the English writer paid great attention to the beauty, both external and internal. In this regard, one of the leading themes of his aphorisms can be considered *the beauty theme*:

„It's better to be beautiful than to be good, but it's better to be good than to be ugly” (Wilde, 1979, p. 51).

„Beauty is the only thing that time cannot harm. Philosophies fall away like sand, creeds follow one another, but what is beautiful is a joy for all seasons, a possession for all eternity” (Wilde, 1979, p. 49).

A significant number of aphorisms by O. Wilde are dedicated *to women*:

„A man can be happy with any woman, as long as he does not love her” (Wilde, 1979, p. 135).

„Women love men for their defects; if men have enough of them, women will forgive them anything, even their gigantic intellects” (Wilde, 1979, p. 96).

„Women are never disarmed by compliments. Men always are. That's the difference between the sexes” (Wilde, 1979, p. 109).

„As long as a woman can look ten years younger than her own daughter she is perfectly satisfied” (Wilde, 1979, p. 112).

„A woman will flirt with anyone in the world as long as other people are looking on” (Wilde, 1979, p. 78).

Aphorisms about success:

„Moderation is a fatal thing. Nothing succeeds like excess” (Wilde, 1979, p. 304).

„Anyone can sympathize with the sufferings of a friend, but it requires a very fine nature to sympathize with a friend's success” (Wilde, 1979, p. 308).

About enmity:

„A man can't be too careful in the choice of his enemies” (Wilde, 1979, p. 181).

„Always forgive your enemies; nothing annoys them so much” (Wilde, 1979, p. 183).

About age:

„The old believe everything, the middle-aged suspect everything, the young know everything” (Wilde, 1979, p. 234)

„I am not young enough to know everything” (Wilde, 1979, p. 57).

It can be summarized that O. Wilde's novel „The Picture of Dorian Gray” is full of aphorisms on various topics, their accurate use gives a special sound of the text, expressiveness and aesthetic content.

We see the prospect of further research in the consideration of a certain semantic group of aphorisms in a number of works of Ukrainian and English literature.

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Хайруліна Н. Ф. Мистецтво використання афоризмів у романі О. Вайлда „Портрет Доріана Грея”

Статтю присвячено дослідженню природи афоризмів у художньому тексті. Вичерпно надано варіанти дефініцій терміну „афоризм” у сучасній науці, їх функцій та семантичних особливостей в тексті. Схарактеризовано принципи використання афоризмів в англійській літературі, на прикладі роману О. Вайлда „Портрет Доріана Грея”. Надано класифікацію та тлумачення афоризмів, що зустрічаються в тексті англійського письменника мовою оригіналу. Аналіз афоризмів показав, що найпоширенішими у письменника є теми любові, шлюбу, життя, мистецтва, буття людини, релігії. Однак поряд із загально-філософськими є ряд тем, характерних виключно для О. Вайлда. Наприклад, теми краси, естетики, успіху і т.д. Аналіз структурних особливостей афоризмів продемонстрував, що у вибірці є афоризми, що складаються з одного речення, і афоризми, що складаються з двох і більше речень.

Ключові слова: афоризм, естетика, англійський роман, парадокс, сатира.

Хайруліна Н. Ф. Искусство использования афоризмов в романе О. Уайльда „Портрет Дориана Грея”

Статья посвящена исследованию природы афоризмов в художественном тексте. Исчерпывающе предоставлены варианты дефиниций термина „афоризм” в современной науке, его функции и семантические особенности в тексте. Охарактеризованы принципы

использования афоризмов в английской литературе на примере романа О. Уайльда „Портрет Дориана Грея”. Предоставлены классификация и интерпретация афоризмов, которые активно используются в тексте английского писателя на языке оригинала. Анализ афоризмов показал, что наиболее распространенными у писателя являются темы любви, брака, жизни, искусства, бытия человека, религии. Однако наряду с общефилософскими темами, есть ряд тем, характерных исключительно для О. Уайльда. Например, темы красоты, эстетики, успеха и т.д. Анализ структурных особенностей афоризмов продемонстрировал, что в произведении есть афоризмы, состоящие из одного предложения, и афоризмы, состоящие из двух и более предложений.

Ключевые слова: афоризм, эстетика, английский роман, парадокс, сатира.

Khairulina N. F. The art of aphorisms in „The Picture of Dorian Gray” by Oscar Wilde

The article under consideration is devoted to the study of the nature of aphorisms in an artistic text. Variants of definitions of the term „aphorism” in modern science, its functions, and semantic features in the text are fully provided. The objective and all the tasks for solving are realized during the process of investigation. The principles of using aphorisms in English literature are described on the example of O. Wilde’s novel „The Picture of Dorian Gray”. The classification and interpretation of aphorisms that are actively used in the text of the English writer in the original language are provided. The analysis of aphorisms showed that the most common themes of the writer are love, marriage, life, art, human existence, religion. However, along with general philosophical themes, there are a number of themes that are unique to O. Wilde. For example, topics of beauty, aesthetics, success, etc. The analysis of structural features of aphorisms has shown that in the work there are aphorisms consisting of one sentence, and aphorisms consisting of two and more sentences. It is proved that the stability of the aphorism implies its regular reproduction in the language in the same form, with the preservation of all components and the order of their sequence. A sign of intertextuality is that aphorisms, as a rule, are successfully intertwined in the outline of other texts and often contain references to other texts. The presence of a specific author means that the authorship of the aphorism is well known and recorded in material sources.

Key words: aphorism, aesthetics, English novel, paradox, satire.

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