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## РЕПРЕЗЕНТАЦИЯ МОРТАЛЬНОСТИ: ОТ ГРЕЧЕСКОЙ ФИЛОСОФИИ ДО СОВРЕМЕННОСТИ

## REPRESENTATION OF MORTALITY: FROM GREEK PHILOSOPHY TO MODERNITY

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В XXI веке одной из малоизученных проблем современной лингвистической науки является определение категории деструктивности. Данная статья исследует отношение философов и писателей разных времен к категории смертности, смерти, а также анализирует их высказывания с лингвистической точки зрения. Отмечается наличие разных взглядов на существование загробной жизни. Описаны различные лингвистические средства, использованные в предложениях: эпитеты, оксюморон, фразеологизмы и сравнения. Представленные в статье примеры были отобраны с помощью метода сплошной выборки.

*Ключевые слова:* смерть, категория деструктивности, философия, смертность, страх.

In the XXI century, one of the little-developed problems of modern linguistic science is the definition of the category of destructiveness. This article examines the attitude of philosophers, writers of various times to the category of mortality, death, and analyzes their statements from a linguistic point of view. The presence of different points of view about the existence of the afterlife is noted. Various linguistic means that are used in sentences are described: epithets, oxymoron, phraseological units and comparisons. The illustrated examples were selected by the continuous sampling method.

*Keywords:* Death. Category of destructiveness. Philosophy. Mortality. Fear.

The 21st century, with its phenomenal speed and clarity, has highlighted the crisis of humanity that has paralyzed the modern civilization. Today we are seeing a huge amount of news regarding to the world wars, violence, terrorism, natural disasters and in general the suppression of the individual on an unlimited scale, which morally and physically destroys and kills a person.

Nowadays, studies of those aspects of the language problems that are associated with its functions as a translator of ongoing events in society are of great importance, and that is why the issue of destructiveness is one of the most urgent tasks of modern philosophy, on the solution of which the health of society and the spirituality of the individual depend. Lack of spirituality, lack of humanity qualities, unwillingness to improve ourselves – all of these are indicators of a «broken» or destructive person, which are an obstacle to his spiritual wealth and perfection on his path.

It is known that one of the indicators of destructiveness is the category of mortality, which expresses the finitude of being, the interruption of existence.

In this article, we will analyze how representatives of Greek and modern philosophies are related to the destruction of human existence, death, and also consider the interpretation of this phenomenon in modern journalistic discourse and analyze it from a linguistic point of view.

The phenomenon of mortality has attracted the attention of scientists and philosophers for many

centuries because any rebirth is preceded by death – all phenomena contain two principles: creativity and destructiveness. Greek philosophers devoted a huge number of treatises to the phenomenon of death and the destruction of being. In antiquity, three variants of attitudes towards death were noted: regret about life, acceptance of death as a “cure” and at last recognition of the totality of death. These attitudes were based on the understanding of death as a phenomenon that is unknown to the living and frightens them, as well as on ideas about the salvation of the human soul after death, based on the belief in the independence of the soul, which leaves one body and passes into another. For example, for Socrates, death is the transition of the soul to the afterlife, the «recovery» of the soul from the earthly life. Therefore, the life of a philosopher as a person striving for an ideal is a preparation for death as the separation of the soul from the body. In the «*Apology of Socrates*» the following statements of a mortal trait can be found: *It is already time to go from here, for me to die, for you to live, and which of us is going for the best, this is not clear to anyone except God. Since we do not know what death is, it is illogical to fear it. Death is a realistic illusion of humanity. When we live, it is not there yet, when we have died, it is no longer there. So if death is like that – he continues, I, for my part, will call it an acquisition... or as an amazing communication, comparable, perhaps, only with «bliss»* [1]. Despite the negative meaning of the noun death and the verb to die, the philosopher

does not put a pejorative meaning into his phrases. He questions the negativity and existence of death, because for a living person there is no death, and it makes no sense to be afraid of something that does not exist. Socrates also considers death an acquisition and an amazing communication, which he compares with bliss – complete, unruffled happiness.

The disciple of Socrates, Plato, stated the following: *“Death is not the worst thing that can happen to a person. To fear death is nothing more than to ascribe to oneself a wisdom that one does not possess. After all, no one knows either what death is, or even whether it is not the greatest of blessings for a person, yet they are afraid of it, as if they know for sure that it is the biggest of evils [1].* In these statements, there is a connection between the teacher and the disciple, where both are convinced that death is not the worst thing in a person’s life, but maybe not all bad at all. Plato compares *the fear of death* with the attribution of *«false» wisdom*, in which he clearly denies the negative side of mortality.

Aristotle, the disciple of Plato, used the definition of *beautiful* to describe death (*The one who fearlessly goes towards a beautiful death is called courageous*), but a modern person would call this expression an oxymoron – an imaginative combination of contradictory concepts, a paradox.

Many thousands of years separate us from Greek philosophy, but the phenomenon of death has remained one of the most interesting phenomena in modern European philosophy.

Modern European philosophy is the philosophy of the XX-XXI centuries, divided into analytical and continental philosophy.

For example, one of the founders of analytical philosophy, an Austrian-British philosopher Ludwig Josef Johann Wittgenstein, wrote in his book *“Logical and Philosophical Treatise”* that *death is not an event of life: it is not experienced and the fear of death is the best sign of a false and a bad life [2].*

Through the statements of a person, one can always deduct his attitude to a certain phenomenon: in this case, Ludwig Wittgenstein did not define death as an event, since an experienced event is a moment that you are able to feel, after or at the moment of which a person experiences emotions, and when a person is dead – all his emotions and feelings are lost.

Additionally, the author, using a comparison in the form of a sentence with a compound nominal predicate *fear is the best sign*, notes that life in fear cannot be good, because it is enclosed in the framework of fear and is not full-fledged, natural.

Martin Heidegger, a German thinker, one of the greatest philosophers of the XX century, wrote many works dealing with the issue of death. In one

of his most important works, *“Being and Time”* [3], he wrote the following: *Already «thoughts of death» are considered in public as cowardly fear, instability of presence and gloomy escape from the world.* Like Wittgenstein, Heidegger uses the comparison of *«thoughts of death»* and the epithets *cowardly fear, instability of presence, and gloomy flight.* He believes that in the face of death, a person turns away from the world of things and finds an opportunity to turn to the inner self. It is noteworthy that Heidegger does not tear or separate death from life, on the contrary, he links them into a single whole: *Death in the broadest sense is a phenomenon of life.*

In the *“Lectures on Metaphysics”*, Heidegger notes: *Death is the possibility of the cessation of all possibilities [4].* The author calls the destruction of being a way to stop all life actions, a kind of solution.

Nowadays there are also many questions about the phenomenon of death. To represent this phenomenon in the modern journalistic discourse, we chose the newspaper *“SB. Belarus Today”*, which reflects examples of a person’s attitude to death and his interpretation of this phenomenon.

Everyone knows that the pages of the 21st century, unfortunately, reflect events such as wars, crashes and so on which are sadly often the causes of the death of many people. Today, the concept of death is directly related to the concept of war, so it is used by the authors as a *«habitual outcome»* of the situation: *Everyone knows that war is scary, but here it is honestly shown what it is «scary» and how unbearable and abnormal it is when death becomes a familiar thing [5].*

The desire to “unravel the riddle” about the existence of a person after death makes people turn to the works of Russian classics and try to find answers to questions: *All our lives we have been looking for answers to the questions posed here from Pushkin, Chekhov, Gogol, Dostoevsky, Khlebnikov: what is there, beyond the death line? Is there a sequel to this [6]?*

However, it is not possible to find answers to some questions concerning death, even after reading deeply these philosophical works. There are also articles on the pages of various newspaper that talk about the description of the death feeling by the famous Russian classic – Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoevsky: *In his novel “The Idiot”, the state of a criminal sentenced to death who being on the scaffold, goes crazy with fear and horror in the face of death, is clearly described: “Think! When there is torture there is pain and wounds, physical agony, and all this distracts the mind from mental suffering, so that one is tormented only by the wounds until the moment of death. But the most terrible agony many not be in the wounds themselves but in knowing for certain*

that within an hour, then within ten minutes, then within half a minute, now at this very instant – your soul will leave your body and you will no longer be a person, and that is certain; the worst thing is that it is certain [7]”. The author uses the phrase *in the face of death* to describe what the protagonist of the work “*The Idiot*” feels. He describes his feelings – horror and fear – existing, which, according to ancient Greek and Western modern philosophers, are manifestations of a cowardly, unreceptive person, an expressed bad life. Further, the author describes the physical or mental suffering, depending on the method of death, emphasizing that the worst thing, in his opinion, is it to know the moment of your own death. Dostoevsky describes the moment of death as the liberation of the body from the soul, the cessation of human existence. However, he is not sure that death occurs in this way and he focuses on the fact that this is only an assumption.

Since most people are interested in the phenomenon of death, authors often use this noun in headings to attract readers’ attention: *The Latin phrase memento mori (“remember death”) is perhaps the most succinct definition of the philosophy of life. “Nothing lasts forever under the moon”, “We are only guests in this world» thinkers, poets, and churchmen have been echoing each other for thousands of years in different variations. But no matter how much the priests give comfort, reminding during the funeral service of the deceased that there is no death, the loss of a loved one is a heavy grief for each of us [8].* The title of this article contains the famous phrase «remember death», which is both a terrible warning to remember that everyone will have to leave this world, and a simultaneous call to enjoy life. The author focuses on the fact that for thousands of the years there has been an opinion about only a temporary stay in our world, which makes possible assumptions about the continuation of life after death. But even if they are true, relatives and friends feel pain and regret because of the loss of a person.

*Death is not a dead end, not the result of life, but some episode of life, and not the last one – another headline of the article of the newspaper “SB. Belarus today” [9], which informs about the possible continuation of life. This article is devoted*

to the book “*A walk through the eternal city*” by the British journalist and traveler Henry Morton, who notes that *this is an exceptional gift of Christianity – the attitude to death as an assumption, the attitude to death as a friend who should visit you, who came to visit you, a friend who is blessed by your God, the Creator. That is, death is one of the episodes, the same episode as, for example, admission to the institute. In the same way we experience death. But after this exam there will be something else, life will continue.* The author compares *death* with a friend – with constructive nomination, trying so to interpret death as a positive phenomenon. Also, *death* is compared to *entering an institute*, where life does not stop, but is only a typical moment of being, followed by others.

The title *Scientists told where people go after death [10]* would be able to interest the reader as much as possible, since the author refers to scientists, in whose words there can be no fiction, everything is based on specifics and validity. *Robert Lantz, dean of Wake Forest University, believes that a person’s life does not end after biological death. In his opinion, after dying, people fall into a parallel world where they live in a different form.* Like previous authors, Robert Lantz says that death is not the end, but only a transition to another form of existence.

Some authors use the noun *death* to create irony in their texts, and put a place of stay and the possibility of traveling after death into question: *But even if Paris has never been the city of your dreams, it certainly occupies the top (even if not the most, but certainly the top) line in the mandatory list: to have time to see the Champs-Elysees in life, because there is no certainty that you will get there after death [11].*

Thus, *death*, both in the ancient Greek period and in the modern one, has remained a phenomenon that has not been fully understood, despite the large number of works devoted to this issue since the ancient Greek period. In general, we trace a lot of similarities between the representation of this category in different eras: people believe that there is no need to be afraid of death and believe in the continuation of life after death. To argue their points of view, the authors resort to the use of comparisons, phraseological units and epithets, which also affect the perception of texts by readers.

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