

DOCTOR'S DUTY AS A SEMANTIC CATEGORY IN RUSSIAN POETRY

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The article analyzes the image of healthcare professionals shown in Russian poetry of the XX century through the lens of a duty. The topic declared as the subject of a special comprehensive survey has not been brought up in the Russian scientific field. The notion of 'a duty' is defined, a summary of research literature related to this issue is provided. The author mentions that the category of a doctor's professional duty, which appeared in Russian poetry in the beginning of the XX century only, is firmly fixed and reflected herein during the entire investigated period. Meanwhile, poetry provides examples both for children and adults. In this paper, pieces of poetry by Mayakovsky VV, Chukovsky KI, Drunina YV, Zabolotsky NA and Rutkovsky MA have been analyzed. It is indicated that poetry produces a specific effect on the reader. The author concludes that the images of devoted doctors and nurses that have been created by Russian poets can play a significant methodological and educational role in developing the professional identity and personality of future healthcare professionals.

Keywords: ethics, duty, doctor, nurse, morality, national poetry

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ВРАЧЕБНЫЙ ДОЛГ КАК СЕМАНТИЧЕСКАЯ КАТЕГОРИЯ ОТЕЧЕСТВЕННОЙ ПОЭЗИИ

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Статья посвящена анализу образа медицинского работника в отечественной поэзии XX в. применительно к категории долга. Заявленная тема в качестве предмета специального комплексного изучения еще не ставилась в российском научном пространстве. Определяется понятие долга, дается краткий обзор исследовательской литературы по теме. Автор отмечает, что категория профессионального долга врача, появляясь в отечественной поэзии лишь в начале XX в., прочно закрепляется в ней и находит свое отражение на протяжении всего исследуемого периода. При этом поэзия дает примеры как для детского возраста, так и для взрослых, зрелых читателей. В данной статье анализируются поэтические произведения В. В. Маяковского, К. И. Чуковского, Ю. В. Друниной, Н. А. Заболоцкого, М. А. Рутковского. Указывается на особую воздейственную силу поэзии на читателя. Автор приходит к заключению, что созданные отечественными поэтами образы врачей и медсестер, подвижников своего дела, могут иметь методологическое и воспитательное значение в процессе формирования личности будущего врача.

Ключевые слова: этика, долг, врач, медсестра, нравственность, отечественная поэзия

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A distinctive feature of the Russian educational system is the combination of both the teaching and upbringing components. It means that the problems of ethics and culture play an important role in the formation of a harmoniously developed personality who is not just a craftsman and a focused specialist, but also an expert in his field and a dedicated citizen. The level of moral perfection/imperfection of a society is an indicator of its development, and, in relation to a particular profession, it forms the image of its representatives in the minds of citizens. This determines the relevance of the study on the embodiment of ethical categories such as duty, honor, and benefit in the image of a doctor in Russian poetry and in the profession of a doctor in general.

By synthesizing definitions of the word "duty" given by different dictionaries, we can define it as an ethical category expressed in the moral, internally determined need of an individual, a group of individuals, or an entire society to act in a certain way under specific conditions. In a broad sense,

a duty can be considered as a universal category. In this case, it is determined by timeless and extra-spatial moral norms of a universal nature (for example, the refusal of Marie and Pierre Curie to patent their radium extraction processes in the name of humanity). A duty to the country and people is rooted in accepted social norms and so on. Ideally, they never contradict one another.

Needless to say, when addressing specific duties, someone will immediately say that duties and rights are intrinsically correlative. The question of whether it is ethical to enforce a physician's professional duty when state and societal structures fail to provide adequate living and working conditions. It should be mentioned here that the problem of rights is the subject of another study. We define a duty strictly as 'a self-imposed commitment' [1], in contrast to imperative norms. Ultimately, the concept of a duty is intrinsically linked to an individual's yearning to harmonize personal actions with the collective good. By tackling the profound issues of existence

and mortality, one uncovers a sense of purpose, self-worth, and existential joy.

The ethical disposition of physicians is a well-documented subject within our research literature (papers written by Vagner EA [2], Kharlamov EV [3], collections of articles from various conferences [4], etc.). The thesis by Ivanov NG is devoted to the formation of a conscious professional duty among future military doctors [5]. The works devoted, among other things, to the embodiment of the image of a doctor in fiction are of particular interest. Thus, Kovelina TA notes: "The artistic representation of a physician serves to emotionally resonate with the audience, shaping public perception, driving professional socialization, and acting as a key motivator for career choice [6]. In addition, both domestic and foreign studies are developing a new approach to fiction called a "medical reading" or LM (Literature and Medicine) [7]. There is a growing academic consensus regarding the role of literary narratives in medical training [8].

However, a systematic analysis of the doctor's poetic image still remains a missing component in current literature. As the most compressed and potent form of literary discourse, poetry imbues every lexical item with profound meaning within its broader context. Through the precise interplay of rhythm and rhyme, it offers an unrivaled capacity to resonate deeply within the listener, profoundly influencing their psyche and moral framework. It is no coincidence that early medical literature drew heavily on a poetic style (the works of Asclepiades, Ibn Sina, Lucian, Celsus, Lapidario by Rennes Marbode, The Salerno Code of Health by Arnold of Villanova, etc.).

Specialized studies corroborate the significance and efficacy of integrating poetry into the teaching process, with students reporting 'the emergence of associative, three-dimensional, and figurative connections between abstract academic concepts and concrete, everyday subjects' [9]. Thus, the identification of the poetic image of a doctor has both methodological and practical significance.

Having studied a whole range of Russian poetic texts, we concluded that the concept of medical duty — as a defining component of a physician's moral persona — has been embedded within this literature since the 1920s. This was due to the fact that poetry was beginning to acquire a propagandistic character, especially in the poems of revolutionary poets.

In the work by Mayakovsky VV, a medical worker performs a national task. The poet shows the image of a smallpox-fighting paramedic, as opposed to quackery, superstition and reliance on God's mercy. At the same time, the paramedic works together with the Red Army soldier, who in the minds of the people was a fighter for a just cause, a fighter against remnants of the past, a progressive-minded element of society. Implicitly, the paramedic (doctor, medical worker) is indued with similar features in the narrative, and presumably in popular perception, through the method of expansive transfer.

"Done," he says.

"The smallpox vaccine has taken.

Trust in medicine, not in God's mercy" [10].

In subsequent poetry, a doctor represents the intellectual elite who is not just fulfilling his civic duty, but is also setting an exemplary standard of ethical conduct. In general, a truly remarkable facet of Soviet ideology was the desire to elevate every person — from a worker to an intellectual,

from a toddler to an old man. Therefore, literary examples are positive: they provide prototypes of virtue, embodying ideals that inspire readers to strive for self-betterment. And in poetry, the appearance of a doctor acquires features that evoke a deep sense of respect in the reader. Simultaneously, there is a growing recognition that a doctor is the same employee who works for the common cause of the welfare of the country, performs his specific social duties, and guards' public health.

Thus, the original poetic narrative of Aibolit was introduced to the public by Korney Chukovsky in 1929. The author himself admitted that he intentionally used a lot of visual images and enhanced dynamism to produce a more productive effect on the child's mind. Children's initial introduction to the medical profession was, furthermore, associated with its material world — namely, medicines and thermometers. For an entire generation of Soviet youth, Dr. Aibolit stood as the ultimate vocational role model.

Chukovsky creates the image of Dr. Aibolit as a defender of all the offended, because the disease in his poems can develop from the sting of a wasp: "The thirst for protection of the offended, a precious human feeling, so easily perceived by the child's soul ..." [11]. Chukovsky's hero strives to help those who seek his help, even forgetting about himself, ready to bravely overcome any difficulties. The poem is characterized by a strong heroic pathos, and the image of the doctor is enriched in the children's imagination by such characteristics as sacrifice, service, care, duty: if not me, then who?

The words by Sechenov IM should be quoted here: "He (the child — LR) associates himself with all the characters passing through his consciousness and with all their properties ... Merging himself with any image, the child begins to love all his properties ... Love of truth, generosity, compassion, selflessness ... develop ... through frequent repetition of passionate ideas in the consciousness... One can hardly be surprised when a young person, with an absolute devotion to veracity, is ready to suffer severe trials in defense of that truth. After all, he knows that his ideals, his knights suffered for the truth, and he cannot help being a knight, having lived its heavy burden from the age of five to 18" [12].

Later, this topic will be addressed in children's poems by Barto AL. A distinctive feature of Barto's poetry is the playful construction of a child's self-image. By adopting the persona of a caring doctor, the verse fosters a seamless identification, encouraging young readers to embody a compassionate, empathetic medical professional ("Tamara and I", "In the cat emergency room", etc.).

The dedication of medical personnel to their duty emerged as a pivotal motif in Soviet war poetry during the Great Patriotic War. A lot has been written about the war, as well as about orderlies, nurses, and doctors. Olga Bergholz's poetry ("In the Hospital" and others) is widely recognized for its raw, penetrating, and frequently harsh nature. Health professionals such as Nikanorkin AI, Milyavsky AI, Tushnov VM, etc. were also poets. Soviet poet Yulia Drunina dedicated much of her poetry to the sacrifice of Soviet health professionals. Yulia Drunina lived through the entire war. Thus, the beginning of the war, she joined a voluntary sanitary squad at the Regional Red Cross Society. She finished the war as a medical officer who was awarded the Order of the Red Star and the Medal for Bravery. Her poetry is rooted in her direct daily experience, so all her poems are filled with profound honesty.

"Turning pale,
 Clenching teeth until they crunch,
 From your own trench
 Alone
 You must tear yourself away,
 And through the breastwork
 Dash under fire
 You must.
 ...You must. For you cannot pretend
 To yourself,
 That you don't hear in the night,
 How, almost hopelessly, 'Sister!'
 Someone out there, under fire, is screaming..." [13].

In her poetry, Drunina Y creates an image of medical workers not as abstract symbols, but as individuals with "flesh and blood and soul" for whom there is no higher vocation than to save a man, a comrade who defends the freedom and independence of the Motherland. Qualities such as dedication, attentiveness to everyone in need of medical help, caring for them, and the ability to maintain self-control come to the fore. The recognition of an individual life as the supreme value for Soviet survival fundamentally elevated the status of medical personnel, rendering the roles of doctors and nurse's indispensable.

"Believe me, there is nothing more beautiful
 (And I have seen all sorts of things in my life!)
 Than to shield a comrade from death
 And carry him out from under fire" [14].

She was on the verge of death, needing medical help. During the Great Patriotic War, medical professionals performed a remarkable feat by returning over 70% of wounded soldiers and over 90% of sick soldiers to duty.

But the war was marked not only by elevated poetry, but also by soldiers' folklore. The plots were different, often naive, but close to everyone: the nurse who saved the soldier turns out to be his sister or fiancée, the soldier, who was taken to the hospital in a serious condition, dies, and the nurse recognizes him as her lover or son. A woman in military songs appears in the image of a nurse, an orderly, a signaler, a partisan, always ready not only to follow her lover to the front line and fight "in battle, in flames together with the fighters" [15] for the Motherland, but also to continue the fighter's legacy in the event of his death. In military folklore, a woman or a girl is not a soldier's dream, but his real companion and assistant, brave and loyal.

"You will go to war, my dear,
 And I will go to war with you.
 I will bandage your wounds,
 For you, my darling" [16].

With the end of the Great Patriotic War, all national efforts redirected toward economic recovery, peaceful construction and raising the standard of living of citizens, both economically and culturally. The poets address the problems that worried the inhabitants of the country in peacetime.

In 1957, deeply moved by a brief report in the newspaper *Pravda* regarding a heroic medical worker, Nikolay Zabolotsky composed the poem "Death of a Doctor" [17]. The poet is attracted by the image of a simple man, the ordinary doctor, and admires his great moral strength. Behind this central figure stand countless archetypes; in the

absence of concrete setting or time, it is solely the doctor's representation that remains objective. The provincial doctor from the steppe is transformed into a quintessential Soviet persona, representing timeless moral values. Seemingly placed in an existential, life-or-death situation, the character makes a fatal sacrifice to save the foreman, compelled by an imperative that allows no questioning of his duty to help. He is not even tormented by doubts about the correctness of his choice, he does what he considers the only possible thing for himself — to save another person's life, even at the cost of his own. In "poetic philosophy (Zabolotsky — LR), one reads not only a desperate attempt to overcome the finiteness of being, but the same natural "normality" of experiencing suffering, as well as experiencing happiness, contentment, etc." [18].

"No limit is set for human power:
 He, standing in his grave,
 Did what he wanted" [19].

The doctor in Zabolotsky's poem, thus, rises above existence, everyday life, time and space due to his high morality, purity of soul; he spiritualizes the world, bringing into it his particle of kindness, love, honestly fulfilling his civic duty, when the main thing becomes a "creative, world-transforming human action that will long survive the "physical" age of the creator himself" [20]. The death of a doctor, according to Zabolotsky, is included in the general flow of life, and he — the doctor — is the life's moral and spiritual particle. The poet frames death as a meaningful sacrifice, elevating it to an act of ultimate humanity rather than a meaningless loss.

However, even in peacetime, the theme of war is woven into consciousness again and again, and poets of the 1960s and 1970s continue to address it (Isakovskiy MV, Rozhdestvenskiy RI, Simonov KM, Tvardovskiy AT, Tikhonov NS, and others). Throughout the 1980s, a body of poetry emerged that honored Soviet military medics for their dedicated service during the Afghan conflict.

For poets in the 1970s, the Great Patriotic War, that exposed the eternal problems of the confrontation between good and evil, life and death, truth and lies, was an opportunity not only to express their gratitude to the generation of veterans, to consolidate in people's memory the image of great fighters for a just cause, defenders of the Motherland, but also again, with a sense of awareness of the great importance in the life of a society of moral values, raise the topic of ethics of human behavior. Unfortunately, post-Soviet re-evaluations left much 1970s verse estranged from scientific and shelved until its eventual rediscovery. However, the power of the word they possess, the enduring values embedded in them, and the importance of maintaining continuity in the overall development of Russian literature compel us to return to them and rethink them.

Among these poets was Rutkovskiy MA, who would later become a distinguished Professor and Doctor of Historical Sciences. In 1986, he wrote a poem "About a Soldier and Panfilov's Daughter", highlighting themes of brotherhood and national unity. The historical basis for this is the Battle of Moscow in November 1941. All the images are being heavily compressed within a short text containing the images of a simple soldier, a general, a nurse, but each of them is an image of perseverance and humanity. Strangers who have never known each other before become relatives and friends, united by one misfortune, having a single goal to defeat the enemy, to defend the Motherland. A soldier and

a general, a nurse and a doctor, fathers and children, brothers and sisters, wives and husbands stood together. The poem is filled with lexemes of different word forms expressing the idea of kinship such as a sister, a father, a stepfather, a father, a family. And in this lexical and semantic paradigm, the image of a nurse is highlighted, steadfast and heroic, courageously fulfilling her duty, ensuring that not even for a second do the wounded soldiers perceive her suffering, her feelings, her mental anguish.

“Just one step from the front, to the field hospital ward,
The soldier struggled, whispering, breaking through the pain:
“Sister... Father is gone...” — a phrase that struck a chord,
For all knew the General was the “Father” they called by name.
Not by regulations, but out of love, they held him dear...” [21].

Thus, vivid representations of doctors within 20th-century verse hold substantial pedagogical and methodological significance, providing essential insights for those committing

to a career in medicine. Due to its increased emotionality and semantic capacity, which combines brevity of presentation and extreme accuracy in selecting the means of expression and each word, poetry has a special effect on the moral image of the perceiving subject and has the property of deeply imprinting it. Educating children on the ethical, compassionate nature of the medical profession demands the inclusion of poetry that champions medical duty as an essential moral trait. The archetypal figure of the Russian medical professional — encompassing doctors, nurses, and assistants — has been profoundly shaped by Russian literature through the image of the compassionate altruist seen in Korney Chukovsky's *Aibolit*, the wartime heroism of combat medics depicted in Yuliya Drunina's poetry, the “realistic standardization” celebrated in Nikolai Zabolotsky's works and by cementing authentic historical narratives and collective memory within the consciousness of future generations, mirroring the approach found in Rutkovsky's poetry.

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