

RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Problem of Educating the Younger Generation in The Works of V. Rasputin

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Abstract

This article studies the pedagogical content of Valentin Grigoryevich Rasputin's fiction through the problem of educating the younger generation. Rasputin's prose is interpreted as a morally concentrated artistic system in which childhood, school, family, native land, memory, conscience and compassion form a single educational field. The article focuses on the stories and novellas where a child or young person enters difficult ethical situations and learns not through abstract instruction, but through pain, shame, gratitude, responsibility and living example. The research argues that Rasputin's educational idea is inseparable from the crisis of intergenerational continuity, the weakening of traditional rural culture and the conflict between formal norms and genuine humanity. The study also reveals the methodological potential of Rasputin's works for value-oriented reading, ethical dialogue and the development of students' reflective thinking.

KEY WORDS

Valentin Rasputin, younger generation, moral education, pedagogical problem, family upbringing, teacher image, village prose, conscience, memory, value-oriented reading.

INTRODUCTION

The problem of educating the younger generation occupies a central position in the artistic world of Valentin Grigoryevich Rasputin. In his works, education is not limited to school instruction, administrative discipline or the mechanical transfer of knowledge from adults to children. It is represented as a deep moral process in which a young person gradually learns compassion, gratitude, shame, dignity, responsibility and loyalty to human truth. Rasputin's prose is therefore important not only for literary scholarship, but also for pedagogy, because it shows how artistic narrative can become a space of ethical formation. The writer does not offer ready didactic formulas. He places the reader inside morally difficult situations and allows the pedagogical meaning to arise from the inner experience of characters[1]. The relevance of this topic is especially clear in the context of modern education.

Today the younger generation receives a large amount of information, but information itself does not always form moral judgment. A student may know many facts and still remain indifferent to another person's suffering. Rasputin's works remind us that upbringing requires not only intellectual development, but also the formation of emotional responsiveness and value orientation[2]. His prose teaches that human dignity may be protected by a single act of kindness, that family memory can become a moral support, and that the loss of native cultural roots may produce spiritual loneliness. For this reason, the study of Rasputin's texts is useful for developing value-oriented literary education[3]. Rasputin is usually connected with Russian village prose, a literary movement that turned to the fate of the village, the peasant worldview, the destruction of traditional ways of life

and the moral price of modernization. Kathleen F. Parthe describes Russian village prose as a movement that drew on the memory of rural childhood and the image of a disappearing traditional world[4]. David C. Gillespie places Rasputin within the wider Soviet literary and social context and emphasizes that his prose is not only nostalgic, but also ethically critical. These scholarly perspectives help explain why the education of youth in Rasputin's works is connected with memory, land, home, elderhood and responsibility before the past[5]. The story 'French Lessons' is the most direct example of Rasputin's pedagogical thinking. Its central situation is outwardly simple: a poor village boy studies in a district school and receives help from his French teacher, Lydia Mikhailovna. Yet the moral content of the story is very complex. The teacher does not merely teach a subject; she sees the child's hunger, loneliness and wounded pride. Her help is delicate because she understands that open pity can humiliate the pupil. The educational meaning of the story lies in this ethical tact. The boy learns not only French pronunciation or grammar, but the meaning of human kindness that protects dignity. The teacher's action becomes a lifelong moral lesson because it is based on compassion and personal responsibility[6]. The problem of youth education appears in a wider social form in 'Farewell to Matyora', 'The Last Term', 'Money for Maria' and 'Live and Remember'. In these works, the younger generation often faces a broken connection with elders and with the moral memory of the community. Rasputin shows that when the home loses its sacred meaning, when old people are forgotten, and when modernization destroys the cultural space of memory, young people may become socially active but spiritually rootless. Thus, the writer connects upbringing with the preservation of moral continuity. A child grows not only through school, but also through family speech, village labor, respect for elders, memory of ancestors and the ability to feel guilt before another person[7]. The purpose of this article is to reveal how the problem of educating the younger generation is artistically and pedagogically expressed in Rasputin's works. The object of the study is the moral-pedagogical content of Rasputin's prose, while the subject is the system of educational conflicts connected with childhood, family, teacher responsibility, intergenerational dialogue and cultural memory. The article is based on the assumption that Rasputin interprets upbringing as the formation of a spiritually responsible personality. A young person becomes mature not only when he or she obtains knowledge, but when the individual becomes capable

of compassion, self-restraint, repentance and moral choice[8]. From this perspective, Rasputin's prose has practical significance for literature lessons and pedagogical reflection. His works can be used to organize ethical discussions, interpretive reading, reflective essays and debates about the relation between formal rule and moral action. The pedagogical value of his texts lies in their ability to develop students' inner dialogue: the reader is invited to ask what kindness requires, why memory matters, how dignity is protected, and what happens when a society educates the young generation for usefulness but forgets moral responsibility.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In the Uzbek scholarly environment, Rasputin's works are studied mainly through Russian literature teaching, comparative interpretation, translation issues and pedagogical analysis of literary texts. L. U. Radjabova's work on the development of students' unprepared speech through V. Rasputin's 'French Lessons' and A. S. Makarenko's 'Pedagogical Poem' is especially relevant to the present topic. Radjabova interprets the literary text as a means of developing communicative competence, but her approach also has a strong moral-pedagogical dimension. In 'French Lessons', the pupil's speech, self-awareness and moral sensitivity develop together. The story creates a situation in which students can discuss poverty, dignity, teacher tact and the ethical meaning of help. Therefore, Radjabova's research supports the idea that Rasputin's prose can be used not only for literary analysis, but also for forming students' spontaneous speech, empathy and reflective judgment[9]. Another important Uzbek research direction is represented by A. R. Makhkamova's analysis of the moral-philosophical aspects of Rasputin's prose. Her study of Rasputin's stories of the 1980s emphasizes the crisis of the human soul, the problem of spiritual emptiness and the search for moral foundations in changing social conditions. This approach is valuable because the education of the younger generation in Rasputin's works cannot be understood only through the image of the child. It must also be examined through the moral atmosphere into which the child enters. If society becomes indifferent, loses respect for elders and abandons memory, then the educational process becomes internally weak even when schools continue to function. Makhkamova's perspective therefore complements Radjabova's: one researcher highlights the pedagogical and communicative possibilities of a school-centered story, while

the other reveals the wider moral-philosophical structure of Rasputin's artistic world[10]. Foreign scholarship provides a broader theoretical basis. Kathleen F. Parthe's research on Russian village prose explains the cultural importance of rural memory and the literary image of a disappearing traditional world. David C. Gillespie's monograph on Rasputin and Soviet Russian village prose places the writer in a historical context where literature becomes a critique of social transformation and moral alienation. Studies of psychologism in 'French Lessons' show that Rasputin carefully depicts the adolescent inner world: hunger, pride, fear, gratitude and shame become psychologically convincing signs of moral development. Together, these scholarly approaches allow the present article to interpret Rasputin's works as a literary-pedagogical system in which the upbringing of youth is linked with conscience, memory, speech culture and responsibility.

METHOD

This article used a complex literary-pedagogical methodology suited to the multidimensional nature of Rasputin's prose. The main method was hermeneutic analysis, because the educational meaning of Rasputin's works is often hidden in artistic details, pauses, gestures, memories and emotionally charged situations. Hermeneutics made it possible to interpret not only the plot, but also the moral subtext of the characters' actions. In 'French Lessons', for example, the teacher's help is not treated as a simple act of charity; it is interpreted as a pedagogical act that protects the pupil's dignity and creates conditions for moral awakening. The second method was literary-pedagogical analysis. Through it, the article identified the educational situations created by the writer: the relation between teacher and pupil, child and elder, family and community, individual conscience and social pressure. The comparative method was used to connect different works by Rasputin. 'French Lessons' reveals the personal dimension of kindness; 'Farewell to Matyora' reveals the cultural dimension of memory; 'The Last Term' reveals the tragedy of weakened family responsibility; 'Live and Remember' shows the consequences of moral isolation. Comparing these texts made it possible to identify stable categories of Rasputin's pedagogy: conscience, memory, mercy, shame, responsibility and fidelity. Axiological analysis was also applied because the education of youth always involves the formation and transmission of values. This method helped clarify that Rasputin places kindness above indifference, memory above forgetfulness, conscience above convenience and spiritual

continuity above practical calculation. Elements of socio-cultural analysis were used to examine how modernization, migration, urbanization and the destruction of rural life influence the moral development of the younger generation. Psychological analysis was applied to adolescent characters, especially the narrator of 'French Lessons', whose hunger, pride and gratitude reveal the internal process of moral formation. Finally, synthesis was used to combine the literary, pedagogical, axiological and psychological results into one general conclusion: Rasputin represents upbringing as the formation of a human being capable of preserving dignity and compassion in difficult historical circumstances.

RESULTS

The results of the study show that the problem of educating the younger generation in Rasputin's works is built around the conflict between living moral experience and the loss of cultural continuity. Rasputin does not present children and young people as passive objects of instruction. He places them in situations where they must experience poverty, loneliness, shame, gratitude, loss or responsibility. These situations become morally educative because they force the young person to understand the value of human kindness and the danger of indifference. In 'French Lessons', the boy's poverty is not merely a social fact; it becomes a test of dignity. Lydia Mikhailovna's help teaches him that compassion must be tactful and that true education protects the inner worth of the child. A second result is that Rasputin connects youth education with the authority of elders and the memory of the family. In 'The Last Term', the children's relation to their dying mother reveals that external adulthood does not always mean moral maturity. A person may become socially established and still fail to respond deeply to the suffering of a parent. This artistic situation demonstrates that upbringing must be evaluated not only by professional success, but also by the ability to care, remember, repent and remain spiritually connected with one's origins. For Rasputin, the family is not only a domestic institution; it is a school of moral memory. A third result concerns the connection between education and native land. In 'Farewell to Matyora', the destruction of the village is represented as a cultural and pedagogical catastrophe. When houses, graves, rituals and familiar landscapes disappear, the younger generation loses a living space of memory. Rasputin shows that modernization without moral responsibility may produce technically organized people who are spiritually disoriented. Therefore, the education of

youth must include ecological and cultural responsibility. Students should learn not only to adapt to change, but also to evaluate change from the standpoint of human dignity, memory and justice. The study also found that Rasputin's pedagogical model is based on example rather than abstract preaching. Lydia Mikhailovna educates through a risky act of kindness; old villagers educate through fidelity to memory; suffering characters educate the reader through the painful consequences of moral failure. This means that Rasputin's works are useful for educational practice because they develop ethical interpretation. Students can analyze what a character does, why the action is morally meaningful and how the situation changes the inner world of another person. Thus, Rasputin's prose forms moral reflection through artistic experience.

DISCUSSION

The discussion of youth education in Rasputin's works becomes clearer when viewed through the polemic between foreign scholars. Kathleen F. Parthe and David C. Gillespie represent two approaches that do not contradict each other completely, but emphasize different aspects of the writer's prose. Parthe's interpretation of Russian village prose highlights rural memory, childhood experience and the image of a disappearing traditional world. If Rasputin is read through this approach, the education of the younger generation depends on the preservation of inherited moral forms: home, labor, family speech, respect for elders, ritual continuity and responsibility before the dead. The young person becomes morally whole when he or she remains connected with this cultural memory. Gillespie's approach encourages a more historically dynamic interpretation. By placing Rasputin within the Soviet literary and social context, he shows that the writer is not simply defending the past. Rasputin also criticizes bureaucracy, alienation and historical changes that destroy the moral foundations of life. From this perspective, the education of youth cannot be reduced to a return to tradition. It must also include the ability to judge modernization, to distinguish genuine values from empty conservatism and to make responsible decisions in new social circumstances. This polemic is important for pedagogy because it prevents a simplified reading of Rasputin. His prose is not a museum of the past; it is a living ethical dialogue between memory and change. The debate is especially visible in the interpretation of 'French Lessons'. One view presents Lydia Mikhailovna as a symbol of timeless teacher kindness. Another view stresses

the institutional ambiguity of her action: she breaks formal expectations in order to fulfill the higher moral purpose of education. The story therefore raises a serious pedagogical question: should the teacher always remain within institutional rules, or can authentic education require personal responsibility that exceeds bureaucratic norms? Rasputin does not give an easy answer. He shows that the teacher's act is risky, but also deeply humane. This ambiguity makes the story powerful for teacher training and ethical discussion. A similar polemic appears in readings of 'Farewell to Matyora'. Some scholars see the novella mainly as a defense of traditional rural morality against destructive modernization. Others warn against idealizing the village and insist on the complexity of historical change. Pedagogically, both positions are useful. Students should understand that Rasputin does not call for blind attachment to the past; rather, he asks what must be preserved so that human beings do not lose moral responsibility. The younger generation should not inherit tradition mechanically, but should understand its ethical content. This is why Rasputin's works remain valuable for modern education: they teach students to think critically about progress, memory, compassion and the human cost of social transformation.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the problem of educating the younger generation in V. Rasputin's works is one of the main dimensions of his artistic worldview. Rasputin understands education as the formation of a morally responsible personality within the space of family, school, native land, community and historical memory. His prose shows that young people cannot be educated only through formal lessons or external discipline. They need living examples of kindness, courage, responsibility and respect for human dignity. In this sense, 'French Lessons' is a model pedagogical text because the teacher's compassion becomes more important than the official school situation and remains in the pupil's memory as a moral truth. The article has shown that Rasputin identifies several dangers for youth education: poverty, loneliness, indifference, bureaucratic formalism, weakening of family ties, loss of respect for elders and destruction of cultural memory. At the same time, he creates a positive value system based on conscience, mercy, gratitude, shame, responsibility, home and native land. These values are not expressed as abstract slogans; they are embodied in plots, psychological conflicts and artistic details. Therefore, Rasputin's works have strong

methodological potential for literature lessons, ethical dialogue and reflective writing. The scientific significance of the topic lies in the fact that Rasputin's prose helps modern pedagogy rethink the relation between knowledge and morality. In contemporary education, competence and practical adaptation are important, but they should not replace moral development. Rasputin reminds the reader that the main result of upbringing is the human being capable of compassion, memory and responsible choice.

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