

THE EDUCATIONAL POWER OF KINDNESS IN VALENTIN GRIGORIEVICH RASPUTIN'S "FRENCH LESSONS"

Shoira Isroilovna Djuraeva

teacher of Russian language and literature

Department of Uzbek and Russian Philology
Asia International University
Bukhara, Uzbekistan

E-mail: Jurayevashoira74@gmail.com

Abstract: This article explores the educational value of Valentin Grigorievich Rasputin's story "French Lessons." The themes of education, mutual understanding, and kindness always remain relevant.

Keywords: Mercy, kindness, humanity, moral value, lessons of humanity

Аннотация: В статье рассказывается о воспитательном значении рассказа Валентина Григорьевича Распутина «Уроки французского». Тема образования, взаимопонимания и доброты всегда остаются актуальными.

Ключевые слова: Милосердие, доброта, человечность, нравственная ценность, уроки человечности

V. G. Rasputin's short story "French Lessons" rightfully occupies a special place in 20th-century Russian literature. This work is striking not just for its superficial events, but for the depth of its moral content. Against the backdrop of a simple life story, the writer reveals the most important human values—mercy, compassion, generosity of spirit, and moral responsibility. This is precisely why the story possesses enormous educational power, shaping the reader's understanding of true kindness and humanity.

By the author's own admission, the story is deeply autobiographical, drawing on his childhood experiences. After completing four years of school in his village, the future writer was forced to move to the regional center of Ust-Uda to attend high school. It was a difficult time for the eleven-year-old boy: living with strangers, living in semi-starvation, unable to afford proper clothing and food, and being rejected by his classmates. The story describes real events, and it was precisely this path that the future writer Valentin Rasputin experienced. He believed that childhood is the key to the formation of not only character but also talent; it is in childhood that a person becomes an artist, writer, or musician. He drew inspiration from childhood for the rest of his life.

This story is written in a spirit of realism. The central idea is that there is an extremely fine line between the concepts of "bad" and "good." Humanity, kindness, and one person's desire to help another help distinguish them. The theme is childhood and the influence of adults on a child's personality development.

The problem is that the kind teacher's actions, her selfless help for a child, were misinterpreted in an environment where indifference prevailed. In this environment, the principal didn't bother to investigate the true motives and the true significance of the teacher's actions and decided not to intervene.

Composition

The exposition introduces the protagonist and reflects on the influence of teachers in life. The introduction: a boy goes away to study far from home. The plot develops: the child survives, goes hungry, begins gambling, and gets into trouble. The climax: the teacher herself gambles with the student, a fact that is discovered by accident. The denouement: the teacher is fired and leaves, leaving the boy alone to face his problems.

Literary Devices

An unusual composition, in which the protagonist seems to play a game with fate itself: he sometimes wins, sometimes loses. The narrative is psychologically charged—the author carefully depicts the protagonist's psychological experiences in difficult situations where he is forced to make choices. The contrast between memories of childhood and life in the village and the difficult period of his lonely new life (in the space of a few months, the boy faces hunger, betrayal, illness, the longing of loneliness, etc.)

The narrative centers on the story of a boy who leaves his native village during the difficult post-war years to continue his education. From the very first pages, the reader senses how difficult life was for the child: hunger, loneliness, poverty, and the constant struggle to survive. However, the author depicts not only the hero's material difficulties but also his inner world—pride, independence, and the desire to maintain dignity even in the most difficult circumstances.

This is precisely one of the most important educational aspects of the story. The work teaches respect for people, regardless of their status. The young hero lives in poverty, but he doesn't evoke pity in the derogatory sense of the word. On the contrary, his strength of spirit commands respect. He doesn't complain, doesn't look for easy ways, and doesn't lose his sense of self-worth. Through this image, the author cultivates in the reader the understanding that a person's true worth is determined not by wealth, but by inner resilience, honesty, and moral strength.

The central character of the teacher, Lidiya Mikhailovna, occupies a central place in the story. It is through her that the work's main idea—the idea of active kindness—is revealed. The teacher notices the boy's plight and tries to help him. But her help is more than simple sympathy. She displays sensitivity, wisdom, and deep respect for the child's personality. Understanding that the boy will not accept direct help due to his sense of self-worth, she finds another way—she helps without humiliating him.

This act has enormous educational value. The story convinces us that true kindness requires not only compassion but also tact. It's not enough to simply want to help—it's important to do so in a way that preserves the other person's dignity. It is precisely this kindness that constitutes a true moral value. Through the character of Lydia Mikhailovna, the author exemplifies genuine humanism, based on respect, tact, and generosity of spirit.

The moral conflict plays a special role in the story's educational impact. Formally, the teacher's actions are beyond the pale: she violates established rules. But the writer emphasizes that in some situations, moral law prevails over formal norms. This motif prompts reflection on the relationship between duty and mercy, rules and humanity. The reader comes to the conclusion that true morality lies not in blindly following rules, but in the ability to act according to one's conscience.

This understanding is especially important for educational purposes. The story fosters moral sensitivity, the ability to see beyond external circumstances to a living person, their pain and need. It cultivates in the reader a desire not to remain indifferent. After all, indifference is one of society's most serious moral problems, while compassion becomes the foundation of human relationships.

Equally important, the teacher's help becomes a life lesson for the hero. He receives not only material support but also a moral example. This example stays with him throughout his life, shaping his understanding of goodness. Thus, the story demonstrates that goodness possesses immense spiritual power: one noble act can transform a person's inner world, teaching them compassion and gratitude...

This is another important educational idea of the work: goodness has a lifespan. A sincere act doesn't vanish without a trace—it leaves a mark on a person's soul, awakening their best qualities. Through this idea, the author affirms the moral continuity of goodness, its ability to be passed on from person to person.

In terms of artistic structure, the story is constructed with extreme succinctness. Rasputin avoids excessive emotionality, but it is precisely this restraint of narrative that enhances the text's impact. The author does not force an assessment on the reader; he creates a situation of moral choice and allows us to determine our own position. This is where the writer's true mastery is evident.

What's particularly valuable is that the story's educational impact is achieved without being preachy. The author doesn't overtly lecture or offer moral advice. All moral conclusions emerge naturally, through the characters' experiences and real-life situations. This is precisely why the story leaves a powerful emotional impact. The reader not only understands the importance of kindness intellectually, but deeply feels its necessity.

A significant theme is that life's true lessons don't always coincide with the lessons on the school schedule. The story's title has a profound symbolic meaning. "French Lessons" is not only a foreign language lesson, but, above all, lessons in kindness, humanity, and moral maturity. It is these life lessons that become the most important for the protagonist.

Moreover, the story fosters respect for the memory of difficult historical periods. The post-war period is depicted without excessive dramatization, but with great authenticity. Through everyday details—hunger, modest clothing, and harsh living conditions—the author conveys the atmosphere of the era. This fosters historical memory, respect for the generation that lived through difficult times, and an understanding of the value of human resilience.

The story "French Lessons" cultivates the finest human qualities: compassion, respect for the individual, empathy, and a desire to help. It reminds us that true human greatness is revealed in our relationships with others. In a world where cruelty and indifference often prevail, this work retains a special moral significance.

Thus, the educational purpose of the story is to affirm humanistic values. Through the boy's fate and the teacher's actions, the author demonstrates that kindness, compassion, and generosity can overcome life's difficulties and become a support for a person. The work convinces us that the most important lessons in life are lessons in humanity. They are what shape a moral personality and make society spiritually stronger.

References:

1. Akhmadullina, R. Reading Valentin Rasputin's Story "French Lessons" / R. Akhmadullina // *Literature*. - 2008. - № 21.
2. Kraynik, O. M. Portrait of a Hero in Fiction: Deepening the Concept of "Portrait" in the Study of V. Rasputin's Story "French Lessons" // *Literature in School*. - 2016. - № 7
3. Davydova, E. "There is No Position in the World More Beautiful...": (a lesson based on V.G. Rasputin's Story "French Lessons") / E. Davydova // *Literature*. - 2007. - № 14.
4. *French Lessons: Novellas and Short Stories* / V. Rasputin. - Moscow: Khudozhestvennaya Literatura, 1987.

5. Valentin Grigorievich Rasputin, V. G. Live and Remember. Moscow: Sovetsky Pisatel, 1974.
6. Valentin Grigorievich Rasputin, V. G. Farewell to Matera. Moscow: Khudozhestvennaya Literatura, 1976.
7. Valentin Grigorievich Rasputin, V. G. French Lessons. Moscow: Detskaya Literatura, 1973.