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The Violence Plot as a Reflection of the V. Rasputin Transformed Worldview: novels “The Last term”, “Ivan’s Daughter, Ivan’s Mother”

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This paper deals with the recurring plots of violence, shown in the novels “The Last Term” and “Ivan’s daughter, Ivan’s mother”. In the first narrative the violence plot is not realized, the episode is minor, it does not affect the development of the plot, but in the second narrative the violence becomes the plot-constructing element, which determines the fate of the characters. The situations are developing in opposite ways, this fact suggests the rethinking of provisions, forming the basis of the writer’s worldview. The chronotope, the image of the “Other”, the ability of the kin and the community to protect, and gender roles offer a radically different solution of conflicts in the latter work. Analysis of recurring plots seems promising for understanding the transformation of V. Rasputin’s original worldview, allowing revealing the relevant categories and tracking philosophical changes.

Keywords: V. Rasputin, “The Last Term”, “Ivan’s Daughter, Ivan’s Mother”, violence, recurring plot.

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Research area: philology.

Introduction

Recurring plots are found in the whole world literature, the researchers believe the number of plots to be exhausted, ranging from 4 to 36. A. Veselovskii builds his theory of literature on the following toposes: recurring themes and motifs. However, one can select toposes in the works of a single author. For V.G. Rasputin these are the repetition of images, motifs, many of which pass through all his works, and in fact, create the artistic worldview. These toposes include transition motives, leaving for the war, the

flooded villages, the images of old women and fools for Christ.

Statement of the problem

In this paper we will focus on the plot of violence that appeared in the novel “The Last Term” (1970) and was transformed into the narrative collision in the final novel “Ivan’s Daughter, Ivan’s Mother” (2003).

Violence in culture and literature has long been a taboo topic, excluding both the perpetrator and the victim from the “pure” space. R. Girard

in “Violence and the Sacred” establishes a link between sexuality and violence as such, noting that “the most extreme form of violence cannot be directly sex in their nature simply because they are collective. The crowd can easily carry out the same general violence, infinitely multiplied by the fact that it adds up all the individual situations of violence; but there cannot be truly collective sexuality, on the contrary. This reason only would be enough to explain why the interpretation of the sacred, based on sexuality, certainly eliminates or minimizes the crucial role of violence, while the interpretation, based on violence, would undoubtedly put sexuality on a significant place, its rightful place in any primitive religious thinking” (Girard, 2000, 28). Thus, violence is an individual act, breaking the laws of life, violating the integrity of the very world order.

Omission of Violence in the novel “The Last Term”

In the story “The Last Term” the situation is given retrospectively: Lusya having come to say goodbye to his mother went to the forest, where the memories overtake her. The preceding episode tells the story of her childhood about horse Igrenka, nearly killed by overwork. Connection of violence with sacrifice is described in detail by R. Girard, we shall note only that the horse would be sacrificed in exceptional cases: the Slavs buried with the horse together with the dead owner. However, Igrenka was raised up to continued work – plowing, which symbolically means the continuation of life.

This recollection occurred suddenly, it is not subject to the heroine: Lusya went the same way as many years ago, but “she does not choose where to go, what she is sent by some external, living in these places and hearing her today’s confession force” (Rasputin, 2007, 108). The theme of confession and repentance generally occurs in this episode for many times; the very

nature prods the heroine to make it; words, names and memories are caused by “either herb, or windy voice” (Rasputin, 2007, 97). A bountiful bird cherry tree, which could see a trouble, which almost happened, is not casual, too. N. Kopytov mentions the link of bird cherry tree symbolism with the feminine nature, especially paying attention to the relationship of bird cherry tree with the negative experiences, “according to popular belief, bird cherry tree is more related to the lower world” (Kopytov, 2005). Surprisingly fructiferous bird cherry tree means Lusya’s growing up and her transition from a teen to a girl and at the same time also threatens with disaster. In “You Live and Love” (1981) the walk for berries turns out to be initiation, but also the story describes gathering of berries as taking the women’s mission: “For convenience Lusya tied her apron up and poured from it only when the load on her stomach started to weight down” (Rasputin 2007, 109).

A stranger appears out of the bird cherry bush, when children decided to return to the tree. The image of the prisoner is given through the perception of the girls, “like a ghost < ... > unfamiliar, scary man in winter hat with ears tied up < ... > a short, stocky, with a black, unshaven face, concealing his age, colorless eyes burn with white, crazy fire” (Rasputin, 2007, 110). Interestingly, description has double accentuation of temporal category: impaired one – in summer in the winter hat and obscure – concealing the age. The appearance of the stranger from the void places him outside the chronotope; he felt alien to the flow of life and space. Madness is stressed not by chance, it is also a sign of staying beyond.

The prisoner could not catch Lusya while running across the arable land: the generic space, the field associated primarily with the vitality, the continuation of life, would not let a stranger come: “The boots sank into the soft ground and staggered in the snow” (Rasputin 2007, 111). But

on the road he almost caught up with the girl, Lusya threw a bucket and called for her brother to help. Michael, the younger brother, is ready to defend his sister, the hero's name refers to the image of the Archangel Michael, the protector and warrior. It is noteworthy that the childhood of Michael is characterized only by this single episode, which Lusya recalls, while the other children are alive in the memories of an old woman, Anna. Michael defends his sister by his presence itself: "He again tried to scare Michael, but he budged no longer; clutching a stone in his hand, he waited. Then the man in sooth rushed on him, rushed and immediately turned aside" (Rasputin 2007, 112). Thus, the behavior of the stranger is labeled as unclean, marginal, while Michael is shown as a liberator and protector, who managed to prevent violence.

Violence as a Plot Collision in the Novel "Ivan's Daughter, Ivan's Mother"

A quite different story is told in the novel "Ivan's Daughter, Ivan's Mother", in which violence is the primary collision. The very setting – the city predetermines a different solution to the conflict. The misfortune overtook Svetka on the market, and the choice of place is not accidental, as it is the center of the city that had lost the values and focused on profit instead. The market appears as the hell: "Over the market, above all its trading outskirts and drifts, as over a smoky stove there hung a murky yellow hazy cloud" (Rasputin, 2007, 227). The topic of money in the prose of V. Rasputin is strongly associated with sin and marginality of the city. Even in the first story "Money for Maria" (1970) trade promises death and money belongs to a man working in the timber industry, a harbinger of future "arkharovtsy" (marginal people without roots). In the story "Out of the Blue" (1997) Senya Pozdnyakov first saw Kate, the angel girl (Kovtun,

2010, 87), on the market asking for alms. Then one biddy – Lusya tried to sell the girl to him, and in the final episode when the girl was taken away by force she left her money to Senya. So the motive of money highlights the marginalization and risks of the city.

Tamara Ivanovna sees the cause of trouble in the haggling: "It's all trading, only it, sneaking ... < ... > everything around, the whole life turned into a noisy and sticky bazaar" (Rasputin, 2007, 201). Spatial contrast is emphasized by the fact that the prisoner attacked Lusya in an empty, deserted, remote site, and the girl ran for help to the village, to people. The situation with Svetka is different, there are many people on her way: she was taken away from the market not alone, but with a girl – her friend, there were a lot of people there, as well as at the tram stop, an old man (his age should have denoted wisdom and focus on foundations) in a residence home for those lacking families did not interfere with what was happening, condoned violence, all these facts indicate a loss of values in the society. It was impossible to seek the protection of the people: "I was afraid . < ... > There was a lot of screaming ... if I screamed, no one would have helped" (Rasputin, 2007, 207). People are divided, it is not worth waiting for help and salvation, on the contrary, each person met holds danger.

The rapist is described as a stranger, primarily because of his nationality, "a Caucasian in a denim jacket, black, ungrown, with a furious face and blazing big eyes" (Rasputin, 2007, 180). Madness of the prisoner in "The Last Term" is replaced in "Ivan's Daughter, Ivan's Mother" with aggression and rage. While the winter hat in the summer is an attribute of otherness, things turned upside down, the denim jacket, on the contrary, is a bright symbol of the new era, buying and selling, so the violence is not alien to reality, it is rather its reflection.

Svetka also has a brother, Ivan. However, he is not there, he is not able to protect and defend her, just like her father and grandfather. About Michael's childhood in the novel "The Last Term" almost nothing is known, but his whole adult life characterizes him as the patriarchal hero. He served in the army, realizing man's mission. But above all, he works on the ground. Michael is the only child of Anna who remained in the sacred space of the upper chamber, performed his destined functions, and is aware of the inevitability of his mother's death: "She as if hid us, we could feel free of fear. And now, think and live" (Rasputin, 2007, 32). Michael takes someone else's blame on himself (saying that he sent a telegram to Tanchora, in which he ordered her not to come) and for this involuntary deception he managed to ask for mother's forgiveness: "It's nothing, mother, after a long silence, he said, and sighed. Nothing. We will live through. As we used to live, we will continue. Do not be angry at me. I, of course, a bad son of yours, but I am here" (Rasputin, 2007, 209).

Ivan in his childhood ("Ivan's Daughter, Ivan's Mother") was "more independent and able to insist on his will" (Rasputin, 2007, 187). By the time he got 16, he had grown up a "tall and handsome guy" (Rasputin, 2007, 188). He is passionate about the word, looking for its meaning, after the arrest of the mother in the solitude he felt almost cathartic because of the sound of Old Slavonic words. The word in the V. Rasputin's prose is associated with individual beginning, Ivan being focused on intellectual activity, was not able not only to defense but also to simply be side by side with his sister, he was not capable to find the right words: "She is your sister, she is your poor sister, talk to her." – But what about? He would not have managed to calm her down, and his pity would have hurt Svetka" (Rasputin, 2007, 323).

It was after the catastrophe when the narrative logic brought Ivan on the shore of Lake Baikal, where he "has not picked up a single book, surrendering himself to new and living impressions" (Rasputin, 2007, 348), in this manner turning him in the direction of the archetypal origin. Ivan would be able, after his grandfather, defend himself on the river, he would join in the army, in the end, he would go to build a temple in the home village of his mother and grandfather, symbolizing a return to the kin. While Michael was a static character, characterized by a focus on the patriarchal way of life, Ivan after the catastrophe underwent the return path to the kin and changes.

In V. Rasputin's final story it was the mother, but not the brother who took active steps: but instead of defending abilities there was only the possibility of revenge. R. Girard says that "There are no very clear differences between action that is punished by revenge and revenge itself. Revenge feels as if punishment, and every penance requires a new one. <...> Revenge is compulsory precisely because murder is terrifying, because it is necessary to prevent people from killing. Duty of never shedding blood does not differ essentially from the commitment to avenge the blood shed. Therefore, in order to stop the revenge (like in our days to end the war), convincing people in horridness of violence is not enough; precisely because they are convinced in that they feel obliged to avenge" (Girard, 2000, 5), and find a solution in "institutionalized vengeance", i.e. justice. However, in V. Rasputin's novel there is no justice, because society itself is marginal and fragmented.

Image of Tamara Ivanovna is the deepest and the most described in the story. As a child, she was raised along with her brothers, not staying behind in whatever they did: hunting, motorcycle, "at fifteen she was behind the wheel" (Rasputin, 2007, 147) The heroine left the village early,

started to work in the telegraph, then working as a driver, doing this men's work she met her husband, at whom "for nearly a year she looked narrowly, before saying "yes" and allowing to embrace herself" (Rasputin, 2007, 144). Her image is pronouncedly dynamic: "walked like a man" (Rasputin, 2007, 144), "did everything with depth, with a provision" (Rasputin, 2007, 144).

Revenge for her is both the preservation of the foundations, the kin protection, and a return to the law of talion; an attempt to stop violence with violence does not help preserve the kin, brother Nikolay lost, Svetka scares her daughter with the grandmother.

In "The Last Term" violence is simply not permitted, guarding did not allow the evil to happen, and therefore did not multiply the violence. However, in later works V. Rasputin showed patriarchal foundations only in retrospect; they were possible only in utopian space of the past, while a new world is chaotic, devoid of landmarks; it is also important that the characters often tend not to enter into the metaphysical space, they do not even seek the preservation of traditions, but rather they strive to survive, creating new traditions.

Lusya as a child, too, is described through the lens of patriarchal culture: the girl loved "voluntary Sundays works" – helping the neighbors. This work united the whole village, what is remarkable, the writer especially depicted the work with live trees. While the timber industry in rural prose is traditionally seen as the destruction of space, structure, it draws the "careless" people opposed to "natural ploughmen", the live work with wood is as sacred as plowing itself, since it accompanied the vital cycle of the village life. The closeness to nature is emphasized by the fact that "instead of water they drank birch sap" (Rasputin, 2007, 96). Working in the field to the full exhaustion, a division of the burdens of postwar plowing with an emaciated

horse testify to the ancestral relation with the land and the native solidarity with the people.

However, adult Lusya is alienated from the kin almost more than all the other children of the old woman. She lives in a city which on its own separates her from the kin, in traditionalists' prose for any woman a city is a dangerous and rotten place. The theatrical nature of Lusya reveals itself in the city: "Lusya also is over forty, but she does not look her age: she is youthful, which is not typical of this place, with a clean and smooth as on the photograph face and she is dressed quite well. Lucy left the village immediately after the war and for many years have learned, of course, how to take care of herself from the city dwellers. What to say? what has she to worry about without any kids? And God did not give children to Lusya (Rasputin, 2007, 13). Childlessness, focus on external beauty are artificial life attributes. Alienation of Lusya from the kin is clear for Anna: "she is wholly urban, from head to toe, she was born by an old woman, and not from a city lady, probably by mistake, but despite this she found her place afterwards" (Rasputin, 2007, 40). Lusya, having come to say farewell to her mother, first sat down to sew her mourning dress, then picked a quarrel at the bedside of the dying woman, which only emphasizes the loss of communication with the intuitive, vital origin. However, the rejection of the patriarchal foundations, from her destiny (her childlessness attests to this) is associated not with an attempt to abuse her, but with her move to the city.

In the novel "Ivan's Daughter, Ivan's Mother" Svetka's fate changed just after the disaster occurred. She became capable of an action, seeking a meeting with the mother, and thus finding herself: "She suddenly got calm and impenetrable obstinacy" (Rasputin, 2007, 302). It is worth pointing out that after that the girl started to live with his grandmother, Evstolia Borisovna. A pair of "an old woman – a child" passes through

all V. Rasputin's works, it is connected, as a rule, with transfer of experience, connection with the family, the ability to go into the metaphysical space. In this novel, however, such a context is not traceable: Evstolia Borisovna is wrapped-up in TV, which is in V. Rasputin's poetics is a concentration of the evil origin that can destroy a living thing ("Out of the Blue").

The sudden death of the grandmother and the equally sudden Svetka's marriage is presented in parallel situations, which are equally tragic (Evstolia Borisovna's death in front of TV is directly called in the text as "un-Christian" (Rasputin, 2007, 347), there is no hint of the traditional resting place of the righteous deceased). Birth of a daughter with a drug addict husband shall not be a deliverance for Svetka, who continued to live in anticipation of the return of the mother, scaring her daughter with the arrival of Tamara Ivanovna. However, it was Tamara Ivanovna who (the only one in the novel) was able to act and live on her own, so it is quite natural that the expectation of any change is associated with her return.

Conclusion

The plot of violence presented in the stories, marks, in fact, in the opposite directions. In "The Last Term" itself did not occur, the girl's brother was able to defend her, and her appeal to the people in cry turned out to be sufficient protection. In the space of a patriarchal village communion and unity, kin relations could prevent trouble, an episode of violence was a minor one, the story is concentrated on the dying old woman – Anna. This conflict solution is very typical of the early and later prose of the writer: in the generic space the trouble will be impossible, unless the space

itself is destroyed (like in a flooded or moved village).

In the last novel the situation is different. The final scene of the novel showed a city, which was fundamentally impossible for the early V. Rasputin. Violence became the basis for the conflict collision, but the story does not concern a Caucasian rapist only, Tamara Ivanovna herself by administering justice continued the violence, thus multiplying evil actions. Even though the national of the rapist is underlined, he was a product of the city space itself, of buying and selling market. The girl's brother and father were not able to stand for her, and her mother could only take revenge, but not to save her.

It is noteworthy that in both stories the outcome is not favorable for girls: childless, having lost her destiny Lusya; Svetka with a child in her arms, waiting for and fearful of the return of her mother. Both women were not able to find a reason for life in themselves.

Summing it up, in the late writer's prose his worldview transformed significantly: the patriarchal foundations were destroyed without new ones to appear, city space is shown as marginal and dangerous, and even the farmhouse of Ivan Savelyevich was not able to keep anyone out of trouble: Nikolay walked into the woods and went missing. Gaining the ability to act is due to the eradication of the former in itself, due to the symbolic death, which was shown in the stories "Izba" and "In the Same Land".

Recurring plots represent a significant aspect of the analysis of the poetics of Rasputin's prose, allowing identification of some relevant categories and tracking changes in the author's worldview.

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Сюжет насилия

как отражение трансформации мировоззрения

В. Распутин: повести «Последний срок»,

«Дочь Ивана, мать Ивана»

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В статье рассматривается повторяющийся сюжет насилия, представленный в повестях «Последний срок» и «Дочь Ивана, мать Ивана». В ранней повести речь идет о неслучившемся насилии, эпизод является второстепенным, не влияет на развитие сюжета, в финальной же повести насилие становится сюжетообразующим элементом, определяющим судьбу персонажей. Решение ситуаций противоположным образом свидетельствует о переосмыслении положений, составляющих основу мировоззрения писателя. Место действия, образ «чужого», способность рода и сообщества защитить, гендерные роли – всё это позволяет говорить о кардинально ином решении коллизий в позднем творчестве писателя. Анализ повторяющихся сюжетов представляется перспективным для осмысления трансформации художественного мировидения В. Распутина, позволяет выявить релевантные для него категории, отследить изменения.

Ключевые слова: В. Распутин, «Последний срок», «Дочь Ивана, мать Ивана», насилие, повторяющийся сюжет.

Научная специальность: 10.00.00 – филологические науки.
