

THE IMAGE OF THE FAMILY AND FAMILY VALUES IN 20TH-CENTURY LITERATURE

Polovinkina Tatyana

National Pedagogical University of Uzbekistan named after Nizami
tanya.polovinkina86@gmail.com

Abstract: This article examines the image of the family and family values in 20th-century literature, drawing on the works of M. Bulgakov, V. Nabokov and M. Sholokhov. It explores the distinctive features of the portrayal of the family amidst historical upheavals, spiritual crises and shifting social values. Particular attention is paid to the problems of relationships between family members, the role of traditions, moral values and spiritual foundations in the formation of personality. Analysis of the works shows that the family in 20th-century literature functions not only as a form of organisation of an individual's private life, but also as the most important foundation for the preservation of cultural and national identity.

Keywords: family, family values, 20th-century literature, image of home.

Introduction

The ideal family is one in which all members strive to create and maintain a healthy environment where everyone can find the understanding and support they need. Relationships within the family are built on mutual respect, and everyone's opinion is valued and listened to.

Shared goals and interests can unite the family, creating a common bond. Another important element is supporting the individual development of family members and creating a safe space for expressing feelings and identifying one's own values.

Literature review and discussion

In 20th-century literature, the image of the ideal family is often called into question or analysed, reflecting the complex socio-cultural changes of the time.

In the works of Mikhail Bulgakov, family values are often viewed through the prism of social and historical changes. In the novel "The White Guard", Bulgakov depicts the Turbin family facing the tragic consequences of 1917, which highlights the instability and changes in society. "The family is, as it were, a living "laboratory" of human destinies – both personal and national, and moreover, of each nation individually and of all nations collectively", wrote I. Ilyin⁹⁶.

In M. M. Bulgakov's novel "The White Guard", the author offers a glimpse of the Civil War through the eyes of the Turbins, a noble family. The family's cosy world is captivating in its unity and the warm, sensitive and tender way its members treat one another. The family raised honest, kind, responsible, conscientious children who deeply loved their parents. It is in this that the happiness of the Turbins lies, along with the important quality that, in M.

⁹⁶Ilyin I.A. Collected Works: in 10 vols. – Moscow, 1996. – Vol. 1. – p. 143

Bulgakov's words, allows them to be classified as belonging to "the finest stratum of Russia."

With concise yet vivid brushstrokes, the artist paints a portrait of the mother – the "radiant queen," as her children called her. Even in the funeral scene, when grief pierces the hearts of the orphaned children, a light colour palette prevails: a white coffin, cherry trees and acacias, which "completely blocked the lancet windows"⁹⁷ of the church where the mother's funeral service was held.

The Turbins' mother had succeeded in creating a true family home: the family members had grown accustomed to feeling safe and secure in a world where every object was linked to some happy childhood memory. The contrast between the atmosphere of family happiness and comfort and the terrible events unfolding beyond the windows of the family stronghold holds the temptation to idealise this abode, making it the meaning of life. The cosiness of the Turbin flat embodies the harmony of this closed-off world, which is subjected to the most brutal historical trials. In this sense, "The House" functions in the novel not merely as a place of physical habitation, but as a unique, hierarchically structured universe, a world centred around the stove, that source of life-giving warmth, not only physical but also metaphysical: 'Many years before her death, in house number 13 on AlekseevskySpusk, the tiled stove in the dining room warmed and nurtured little Yelena, older Alexei and tiny little Nikolai. How often "The Saardam Carpenter" was read by the heat-radiating tiled surface, the clock played the gavotte, and always at the end of December there was the scent of pine needles and multicoloured paraffin burned on green branches"⁹⁸. It is significant that the stove in the house serves not only as a source of heat, but also as a kind of domestic "chronicle", where everyday events are recorded, which ultimately transcend the ordinary and take on metaphysical qualities⁹⁹.

The theme of the family as the foundation for the formation of a person's character and value system is one of the central themes in Vladimir Nabokov's work.

In the novel "The Luzhin Defence", the marital relationship between husband and wife is illustrated through the example of Luzhin's parents, the family he has formed himself, and the relationship between the elder Luzhin and his aunt.

In the novel "The Luzhin Defence", the theme of love permeates the entire narrative, from the tragic fate of the protagonist to the subtle nuances of family relationships. Particular attention is paid to the Luzhin family, where love seems to be absent, dissolving into emptiness and hopelessness.

Relationships with men in Luzhin's mother's life fade into the background, becoming obsolete. Her grief stems from discovering her husband's infidelity. Due to her husband's complete neglect, Luzhin's mother quietly withered away.

The image of women in the family is portrayed in Vladimir Nabokov's novel "The Luzhin Defence" in several guises:

⁹⁷ Bulgakov M.A. *The White Guard*. – Moscow: KhudozhestvennayaLiteratura, 2023. – p. 26

⁹⁸ Bulgakov M.A. *The White Guard*. – Moscow: KhudozhestvennayaLiteratura, 2023. – p. 7

⁹⁹ Berdyaev O.S. The Tolstoyan Tradition in M. Bulgakov's Novel "The White Guard" // The Writer's Creativity and the Literary Process. – Ivanovo, 1994. – p. 22

1. A woman is assigned the role of a relative. In this case, it is Luzhin Jr.'s aunt.

2. A woman who is a mother. The image of motherhood in the writer's interpretation is traditional. Such a woman is consumed by cares for her child. Luzhin's mother appears to the reader as rather faded, as if painted with "dulled" colours. She has "a constant expression of sleepy tenderness on her plump, snow-white face"¹⁰⁰. She is unhappy in her marriage, and motherhood has not brought her the expected joy; her own son is growing distant from her.

3. A woman destined to be a wife. In this case, she is married to a man who is the protagonist's equal. Luzhin's bride has no name; she is described in the novel only in broad strokes. Just as her appearance is somewhat lacking, so too is her own personal name. An anthroponymic designation appears only after her marriage to Luzhin. The woman takes his surname. Thus the heroine – Luzhina – appears¹⁰¹.

The writer describes Luzhin's wife as follows: she constantly feels tender pity for this "helpless and unhappy" creature¹⁰². This character trait forms the basis of her relationship with the opposite sex, whom she perceives as a child.

The author provides almost no description of Luzhina's appearance; he merely mentions that she is quite attractive, yet there is a flaw – something is missing from her delicate, regular features.

Getting married was an excellent strategic move for Alexander Ivanovich Luzhin. His wife – the daughter of a wealthy Russian émigré family – married Luzhin despite her parents' objections.

The relationship between Luzhin's wife and her parents illustrates the "fathers and children" conflict. The bride's father opposed the marriage because of their differing social status, but the mother expresses her attitude toward Luzhin and his union with their daughter in starkly negative terms, calling Luzhin a "boor", a "Bolshevik" and a "clerk": "He's not even a human being. ... And what a face, what a face. No, no, stay away from people like that"¹⁰³.

The protagonist's wife is a highly complex figure, and it is not surprising that on his deathbed he thanks her with the simple phrase, "It was good".

She is unable to restore her husband to a full life; it is beyond her power to do so. She was merely able to introduce him to an artificial world.

Thus, in the novel "The Luzhin Defence", the themes of the characters' alienation and loneliness are central to the portrayal of the family. In the novel, the family becomes merely a part of the game with which Luzhin substitutes for life.

Another 20th-century writer who explores the theme of the family in his work is Mikhail Sholokhov. In his writing, particularly in the novel "The Quiet Don", he presents the ideal of the family as a vital element of Russian peasant life. The focus of his narrative is

¹⁰⁰Nabokov V.V. The Luzhin Defence. – St. Petersburg, 2012. – p. 31

¹⁰¹Muradyan, I.V. Features of the Anthroponymic Space in V.V. Nabokov's Novel "The Luzhin Defence"// Mova. – 2015. – No. 24. – p. 101

¹⁰²Nabokov V.V. The Luzhin Defence. – St. Petersburg, 2012. – p. 107

¹⁰³Nabokov V.V. The Luzhin Defence. – St. Petersburg, 2012. – p. 19

usually a peasant family, which the author presents as the foundation of social structure and the bearer of traditional values.

In his novel “The Quiet Don”, Mikhail Sholokhov examines family values as a key element of Cossack life during the First World War and the Russian Civil War. The novel highlights the essential characteristics of the Cossack family, such as loyalty, tradition and mutual support.

1. Loyalty and devotion: family ties in the novel are strong and unbreakable. The characters remain loyal to their families, even in the face of turmoil and loss.

2. Traditions and rituals: M. Sholokhov describes traditional Cossack customs and rituals, which strengthen the bond between generations and emphasise the enduring nature of cultural values.

3. Mutual support: in difficult times, Cossack families come together to support one another. Mutual aid and solidarity become an integral part of their lives.

4. Love and care: The novel highlights the importance of love and care within the family. Relationships between family members, particularly between parents and children, reflect deep feelings and a sense of responsibility.

5. Education and traditional roles: M. Sholokhov also addresses issues of education and traditional roles within the family, presenting a balance between preserving old values and adapting to a changing world.

For the characters in “The Quiet Don”, the family unit permeates every aspect of human life. Each individual was viewed not only in terms of their own worth, but also, inevitably, as part of a greater whole – the family and the clan. Relationships between relatives – both close and distant – formed a vital part of everyday life. These relationships were clearly defined by centuries-old customs, and any breach of them was considered a grave sin. Kinship was placed above friendship, romance, business relationships, regional ties, neighbourliness, and so on. Naturally, even the most distant kinship was strictly observed and required appropriate attention and ritual observance¹⁰⁴.

In Cossack and peasant circles, kinship ties were observed with great precision. There are plenty of examples of this sort in the novel; here is just one of them: Mishka Koshevoy walks past the house of the old Cossack Arkhipov in his native village, where three young “women” (that is, in the language of the time, married or widowed Cossack women) are whitewashing the hut. It is mentioned only in passing in the text that these are two daughters-in-law and one resident daughter: that is, the two wives of the Arkhipov brothers and one sister of these brothers, whose husband lives in his father-in-law’s hut. Such subtleties of intra-family relations were common knowledge in folk life.

Much has been written on the subject of the patriarchal nature of pre-revolutionary Russian villages – in particular, on patriarchal structures in the narrow sense, that is, the father’s absolute authority within the family. Yes, this was certainly the case, and particularly so in Cossack communities, with their inherent military traditions and hierarchy based on seniority.

¹⁰⁴Semanov S.N. In the World of “The Quiet Don”. [Electronic resource]. – URL:<http://sholohov.lit-info.ru/sholohov/kritika/semanov-v-mire-tihogo-dona/semeynoe-ustroenie.htm>

For several centuries, the Christian faith formed the unshakeable foundation of the spiritual life of the Don Cossacks. It shaped their worldview, their sense of justice, and the very spiritual character of the Don Cossack, who consistently appeared throughout history as a defender of the Orthodox faith against the “infidels”. Orthodoxy also defined the foundations of family life among the Don Cossacks and helped to instil moral principles into family life. The traditional Cossack family, in turn, acted as the guardian of the faith.

It was precisely such families that M. Sholokhov described in “The Quiet Don”, where an indispensable feature of every hut was “the dull sheen of silver icons in the corner beneath embroidered towels”, and “on Sunday mornings they would flock to church in family groups”¹⁰⁵. For the older generation of Cossacks depicted in the novel, faith served as a source of spiritual strength and enabled them to endure the harshest blows of fate.

The epic novel “The Quiet Don” presents a unique concept of the family, which occupies a central place in the work’s thematic framework and is directly linked to its main epic theme – the fate of the nation. By placing his protagonist at the point of “connection” with his family and his clan, and by interweaving the life of this clan with the dynamic historical existence of the Don Cossacks as one of the most resilient ethnic subgroups of the Russian people, M. Sholokhov ensured the most organic and vivid depiction of the full scope of national life in all its fluidity.

Conclusions

To sum up, it should be noted that in 20th-century literature, the image of the family and family values is explored through the depiction of complex historical and social processes that influence a person’s inner world and their relationships with loved ones. In the works of M. Bulgakov, V. Nabokov and M. Sholokhov, the family becomes the most important means of understanding moral values, the spiritual foundations of the individual and national traditions. At the same time, the writers explore the issue of family relationships in different ways: in M. Bulgakov’s work, the family serves as a symbol of spiritual unity and the family hearth; in V. Nabokov’s, the emphasis is on the characters’ alienation and inner loneliness; and in M. Sholokhov’s, the family is presented as the foundation of folk life, the guardian of faith, traditions and the continuity of generations. Despite the differences in artistic approach, in all the works under consideration, the family is understood as the most important spiritual and moral value, determining the formation of the individual and their relationship with the surrounding world.

REFERENCES

1. Berdyaev O.S. The Tolstoyan Tradition in M. Bulgakov’s Novel “The White Guard” // The Writer’s Creativity and the Literary Process. – Ivanovo, 1994. – 146 pp.
2. Bulgakov M.A. The White Guard. – Moscow: Khudozhestvennaya Literatura, 2023. – 149 pp.
3. Ilyin I.A. Collected Works: in 10 vols. – Moscow, 1996. – Vol. 1. – 160 pp.

¹⁰⁵Sholokhov M.A. The Quiet Don. [Electronic resource]. – URL: <http://sholokhov.lit-info.ru/sholokhov/proza/tihij-don/1-3-glava-i.htm?ysclid=lwpxxy4v6611085514>

4. Muradyan I.V. Features of the anthroponymic space in V. V. Nabokov's novel "Luzhin's Defence" // Mova. – 2015. – No. 24. – pp. 100–110
5. Nabokov V.V. "Luzhin's Defence". – St Petersburg, 2012. – 150 pp.
7. Semanov S.N. In the World of "The Quiet Don". [Electronic resource]. – URL:<http://sholohov.lit-info.ru/sholohov/kritika/semanov-v-mire-tihogo-dona/semejnoe-ustroenie.htm>
8. Sholokhov M.A. The Quiet Don. [Electronic resource]. – URL:<http://sholohov.lit-info.ru/sholohov/proza/tihij-don/1-3-glava-i.htm>?ysclid=lwpdxyy4v6611085514