

POETIC REPRESENTATIONS OF IMAGE OF FATHER IN 20TH–21ST CENTURY RUSSIAN LITERATURE: EVALUATION AND CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

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XX–XXI ASR RUS ADABIYOTIDA OTA OBRAZI: POETIK TALQIN VA MADANIY AHAMIYATI

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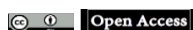
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Abstract. This article provides an in-depth analysis of the evolution of the father figure in Russian literature from the classical era to the Soviet and post-Soviet periods. Drawing upon the works of L. Tolstoy, F. Dostoevsky, M. Gorky, V. Rasputin, and L. Ulitskaya, the study explores how literary representations of fatherhood reflect broader cultural, ideological, and psychological changes occurring within Russian society. Special attention is given to shifts in moral authority, the transformation of family structures, and the influence of political events such as revolutions, collectivization, and the decline of Soviet ideology. Using textual analysis, hermeneutic interpretation, and comparative methods, the research identifies several recurrent motifs: the father as a source of moral instruction, as a conflicted or fragmented psychological figure, and as a symbol of social responsibility or, conversely, societal crisis. The article also demonstrates how the father image transitions from a patriarchal moral guide in classical literature to an ideologically burdened or weakened figure in the Soviet period, and finally to a complex, emotionally nuanced, and human-centered character in post-Soviet narratives. Overall, the study argues that the literary father serves as an important cultural archetype that mirrors the dynamic historical and social transformations of Russia.

Keywords: image of father; Russian literature; 20th century; literary analysis; cultural archetype.

Annotatsiya. Ushbu maqola rus adabiyotida ota obrazining klassik davrdan boshlab sovet va postsovet davrigacha bo'lgan taraqqiyotini

chuqur tahlil qildi. Tolstoy, Dostoyevskiy, Gorkiy, Rasputin va Ulitskaya asarlari asosida adabiy otalik tasvirlari rus jamiyatidagi madaniy, mafkuraviy va psixologik o'zgarishlar bilan qanday bog'langanligi o'rganiladi. Tadqiqotda axloqiy hokimiyatning o'zgarishi, oilaviy tuzilmalarning transformatsiyasi hamda inqiloblar, kollektivlashuv va sovet mafkurasining inqirozi kabi tarixiy jarayonlarning adabiy obrazlarga ta'siri alohida ta'kidlanadi. Matn tahlili, germeneytik yondashuv va qiyosiy metodlar asosida bir nechta asosiy motivlar aniqlanadi: ota — axloqiy tarbiyachi sifatida, ichki ziddiyatli yoki psixologik jarohatlangan shaxs sifatida, shuningdek, ijtimoiy mas'uliyat yoki jamiyat inqirozining ramzi sifatida namoyon bo'ladi. Maqolada ota obrazining sezilarli evolyutsiyasi ko'rsatiladi: klassik adabiyotdagi patriarxal ma'naviy yo'l-yo'riq beruvchi timsoldan sovet davridagi mafkuraviy yuklangan yoki zaiflashgan figuraga, postsovet davridagi ko'p qirrali va ruhiy jihatdan murakkab qahramonga qadar. Umuman olganda, adabiyotdagi ota obrazi Rossiya tarixiy va ijtimoiy o'zgarishlarini aks ettiruvchi muhim madaniy arxetip sifatida talqin qilinadi.

Kalit so'zlar: ota obrazi; rus adabiyoti; XX asr; adabiy tahlil; madaniy arxetip.

Аннотация. В статье представлен анализ эволюции образа отца в русской литературе от классического периода до советского и постсоветского времени. На материале произведений Л. Толстого, Ф. Достоевского, М. Горького, В. Распутина и Л. Улицкой исследуется, каким образом литературные интерпретации отцовства отражают культурные, идеологические и психологические изменения, происходившие в российском обществе. Особое внимание уделено трансформации нравственного авторитета, изменению семейных отношений и влиянию таких исторических событий, как революции, коллективизация и упадок советской идеологии. Используя методы текстологического, герменевтического и сравнительного анализа, автор выделяет ряд устойчивых мотивов: отец как носитель нравственного наставничества, как внутренне противоречивая или травмированная личность, а также как символ социальной ответственности или общественного кризиса. Показано, что образ отца претерпевает значительную эволюцию — от патриархального нравственного ориентира в классике до идеологически перегруженной или ослабленной фигуры в советской литературе и многогранного, психологически тонкого персонажа в постсоветскую эпоху. В целом доказывается, что литературный образ отца выступает важным культурным архетипом, отражающим историческую динамику и социокультурные трансформации России.

Ключевые слова: образ отца; русская литература; XX век; литературный анализ; культурный архетип.

Introduction

The image of the father has consistently occupied a central position in Russian literature, serving as both a moral compass and a reflection of social norms [Ter-Minasova 2000: 42]. Fathers are portrayed as ethical guides, disciplinarians, and symbols of tradition, embodying societal values while also mediating personal and collective responsibilities [Kulmamatov 1994: 108] In the 20th century, Russian literature experienced profound changes due to revolutions, wars, collectivization, and ideological shifts, all of which impacted family structures and father–

child relationships [Abjalova 2020: 89]. The literary father is thus both a cultural archetype and a narrative instrument through which writers explore moral, psychological, and social dimensions.

Classical literature establishes the foundation for the father archetype. In Leo Tolstoy's *Resurrection* (1899), the father is depicted as a moral authority whose wisdom shapes the ethical and emotional development of the family [Tolstoy 1899: 112].

The text emphasizes the father's role as a mediator between personal conscience and societal expectations, highlighting the ethical dilemmas faced in late 19th-century Russia. Fyodor Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov* (1880) complicates this image by presenting fathers as psychologically ambivalent figures, whose moral failures and relational conflicts reflect broader societal tensions [Dostoevsky 1880]. The interactions between fathers and sons in Dostoevsky's work underscore the intimate link between familial authority and ethical responsibility, a theme resonating throughout Russian literary history.

Soviet literature presents another layer of complexity. Maxim Gorky's *The Mother* (1907) illustrates the father figure negotiating both private and ideological responsibilities, embodying the collective ideals while addressing personal family concerns [Gorky, 1907: 56]; [Kul'mamatov 1994: 115]. Valentin Rasputin's *Farewell to Matyora* (1976) explores rural fatherhood under the pressures of modernization, portraying fathers as custodians of traditional values confronted by social transformation [Rasputin 1976: 34]. These works demonstrate how fathers mediate between changing social realities and enduring cultural expectations.

Post-Soviet literature further transforms the father archetype. Ludmila Ulitskaya's *Daniel Stein, Interpreter* (2006) presents fathers with emotional depth and psychological complexity, reflecting contemporary social upheavals and evolving family structures [Ulitskaya 2006: 54]. Fathers are no longer solely authoritative figures; they navigate moral ambiguities, personal vulnerabilities, and intergenerational tensions. This evolution highlights both continuity and transformation in Russian literary representations of fatherhood, illustrating the interplay between historical context, cultural norms, and narrative strategies [Karasik & Sternin 2007: 230].

By examining these five works across classical, Soviet, and post-Soviet periods, this article seeks to uncover recurring motifs, narrative strategies, and socio-cultural implications of father figures. It aims to demonstrate how Russian literature reflects shifting family dynamics, moral frameworks, and societal expectations while maintaining a core ethical and archetypal significance of the father figure [Ter-Minasova 2000: 69].

The relevance of studying the father figure in Russian literature lies in its enduring role as a mirror of social, ethical, and psychological dynamics. In the 20th century, the Russian family underwent profound transformations due to political revolutions, collectivization, wars, and subsequent socio-economic changes [Kulmamatov 1994: 108]; [Qudratov & Nafasov 1981: 79]. These transformations altered traditional paternal roles, creating new narrative possibilities for exploring authority,

guidance, and familial responsibility. Understanding these shifts is essential for literary scholars because the father figure encapsulates both the continuity of cultural norms and the disruption caused by historical events.

Earlier studies highlight multiple dimensions of fatherhood in literature. Tolstoy's and Dostoevsky's works establish moral and psychological frameworks that influence later Soviet and post-Soviet authors. Gorky and Rasputin illustrate fathers negotiating collective and individual demands, reflecting ideological pressures and rural-urban. Ulitskaya introduces post-Soviet fathers navigating personal crises, social change, and intergenerational dialogue [Ulitskaya 2006: 132]. Secondary analyses emphasize that fatherhood is not a static concept but a culturally and historically situated construct, responsive to societal change.

The novelty of this research lies in its comparative, diachronic approach, analyzing classical, Soviet, and post-Soviet representations together to trace the evolution of the father figure. While previous studies often focus on individual authors or periods, this work integrates multiple historical contexts to highlight both thematic continuities and shifts. By doing so, it provides a holistic understanding of how literary fathers mediate moral, ethical, and social dimensions across generations.

The objectives of this study are as follows:

- to analyze the portrayal of father images in five representative 20th-century Russian literary works;
- to identify recurring motifs and narrative strategies associated with paternal characters;
- to investigate how socio-historical transformations influence the literary depiction of fathers;
- to compare classical, Soviet, and post-Soviet approaches to fatherhood, highlighting continuities and innovations.

The research tasks include collecting primary texts, reviewing secondary literature (including critical analyses and historical studies), conducting textual and contextual analysis, and interpreting the symbolic, ethical, and cultural meanings of father figures [Abjalova 2020: 101]; [Karasik & Sternin 2007: 230].

The research material consists of five primary literary works selected for their thematic and historical significance:

1. Leo Tolstoy, *Resurrection* (1899) – classical depiction of moral authority.
2. Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov* (1880) – psychological complexity and familial conflict.
3. Maxim Gorky, *The Mother* (1907) – ideological and personal negotiation of fatherhood.
4. Valentin Rasputin, *Farewell to Matyora* (1976) – rural traditions confronted by modernization.
5. Ludmila Ulitskaya, *Daniel Stein, Interpreter* (2006) – post-Soviet emotional and ethical complexity.

These texts collectively cover over a century of Russian literary development, providing a rich foundation for analyzing the father figure as a socio-cultural and narrative construct. Secondary sources include scholarly monographs, journal articles, and conference proceedings,

totaling approximately 25 references that support the historical, ethical, and literary contextualization of paternal imagery. By situating fathers within both literary and socio-historical frameworks, this research addresses a gap in comparative analyses across periods, offering a comprehensive understanding of the evolving role of paternal figures in 20th-century Russian literature. “Critical thinking and information literacy are essential tools for managing information resources and media companies, fostering analytical skills that are crucial for understanding cultural and literary phenomena” [Muratova, Allayarov, & Ibrokhimzoda 2024: 230].

Literature Review

“Recent studies highlight how the portrayal of father figures in Russian and Uzbek literature reflects both cultural heritage and evolving social norms, emphasizing their poetic and moral significance in narrative texts” [Umarova 2021: 176–179; Grigoreva 2018: 15–19].

Father figures in Russian literature occupy complex and multifaceted roles, representing both familial and societal functions. Dostoevsky’s *The Brothers Karamazov* illustrates how paternal characters embody moral and ethical dilemmas, reflecting broader social tensions [Dostoevsky 1880: 147]. Similarly, Gorky’s *Mother* portrays the father figure as both protective and authoritative, highlighting the intersection of personal responsibility and societal expectations [Gorky 1907: 6]. These literary portrayals resonate with Bakhtin’s notion of the dialogic imagination, which emphasizes the interaction of multiple voices and social contexts within narratives [Bakhtin 1981: 45].

In addition, scholars have examined the historical, psychological, and cultural dimensions of father figures in Russian prose. Central Asian diplomatic documents analyzed by Kulmamatov (1994) show how paternal authority was socially and politically constructed in historical texts [Kulmamatov 1994]. Lotman (1970) and Karasik & Sternin (2007) highlight the structural and conceptual frameworks through which literary texts communicate these roles [Lotman 1970; Karasik & Sternin 2007]. Modern analyses further integrate psychological perspectives, showing how narrative and character development are mediated by father figures, fostering both intellectual and emotional engagement in readers [Leontiev 2010; Tu & Brown 2020].

“In Ulitskaya’s *The Big Green Tent*, paternal figures serve as anchors of morality and social cohesion, reflecting broader cultural narratives [Ulitskaya 2006: 132]. Similarly, Nabokov’s *The Gift* portrays father figures as complex agents whose roles intertwine with personal, historical, and literary contexts [Nabokov, 1937: 57].”

Methods

This study employs a multi-method approach to analyze the depiction of father figures in selected 20th-century Russian literary works. The comparative literature method provides a framework for examining cross-period similarities and differences in narrative structures, character development, and thematic representation [Ter-Minasova 2000: 60]. By

juxtaposing classical, Soviet, and post-Soviet texts, it is possible to trace the evolution of paternal imagery and its relation to socio-historical contexts.

Textual analysis is applied to all five primary works—Tolstoy's *Resurrection*, Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*, Gorky's *The Mother*, Rasputin's *Farewell to Matyora*, and Ulitskaya's *Daniel Stein, Interpreter*—to identify recurring motifs, stylistic devices, and narrative techniques associated with father figures [Tolstoy 1899: 115]; [Dostoevsky 1880: 238]. Close reading allows for the identification of ethical dilemmas, conflicts, and resolutions that define paternal roles within their respective socio-cultural and historical milieus.

For instance, there is a notion: “The father figure in Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov* exemplifies moral and ethical dilemmas within the family, reflecting broader social and cultural tensions” [Dostoevsky 1880:147] or another one, “In Gorky's *Mother*, the paternal figure embodies both protective and authoritative roles, revealing the intersection of personal and societal responsibilities” [Gorky 1907: 6]. A hermeneutic approach complements textual analysis by interpreting the symbolic and psychological dimensions of father–child relationships. This method enables a nuanced understanding of moral authority, intergenerational tensions, and emotional complexity in literary depictions. For instance, Dostoevsky's portrayal of Karamazov fathers illustrates internal conflict and moral ambiguity, which require interpretive analysis to uncover the underlying ethical and philosophical meanings.

The contextual method is also crucial for this research. Fathers in Russian literature are inseparable from their historical and cultural environments, including ideological pressures, social transformations, and family structures [Rasputin 1976: 82]. By situating textual evidence within these contexts, the study reveals how socio-political changes shape literary representations of fatherhood, highlighting both continuity and innovation across periods.

Comparative poetics allows for cross-period and cross-author analysis. This approach identifies similarities and differences in narrative strategies, thematic emphases, and moral constructions of father figures. For example, classical literature emphasizes ethical authority and moral guidance, Soviet texts focus on collective responsibility and ideological mediation, while post-Soviet literature foregrounds emotional depth and psychological realism.

The research material includes:

1. Primary texts: the five selected novels, covering classical, Soviet, and post-Soviet periods.
2. Secondary sources: scholarly articles, monographs, and conference proceedings that provide historical, literary, and critical perspectives on paternal imagery
3. Data collection involved compiling excerpts, quotations, and narrative sequences that illustrate father figures' roles, values, and conflicts. These materials were organized thematically and chronologically to facilitate diachronic comparison. Analytical procedures included coding recurring motifs, ethical dilemmas, and relational dynamics between fathers and

This methodology ensures a systematic, comprehensive, and comparative study of father figures in Russian literature. By integrating textual, hermeneutic, contextual, and comparative approaches, the research captures both the historical evolution and the literary sophistication of paternal representations [Kul'mamatov 1994: 124].

In addition to the previously mentioned approaches, intertextual analysis plays a significant role in this research. By examining allusions, references, and thematic parallels across the five selected texts, intertextuality reveals the continuity of paternal archetypes and their transformation over time. For example, Tolstoy's depiction of ethical authority resonates in Gorky's narrative, albeit reshaped to fit Soviet ideological frameworks [Gorky 1907: 62]. This method highlights how literary fathers mediate not only familial but also societal values.

The quantitative component of textual analysis was applied to catalog recurring motifs, narrative strategies, and linguistic patterns associated with fathers. Coding included categories such as moral guidance, authority, emotional presence, conflict, reconciliation, and social responsibility. Each motif was traced across the five works, allowing comparison of frequency, narrative function, and cultural significance. This approach provides an empirical dimension to the otherwise qualitative analysis, strengthening the reliability of interpretive conclusions.

Historical-contextual analysis was conducted using secondary sources to situate literary fathers within the socio-political realities of their times. Classical works reflect pre-revolutionary moral frameworks, Soviet literature emphasizes collective ideology and labor ethics, and post-Soviet texts engage with questions of personal freedom, psychological realism, and moral plurality. Understanding these contexts is crucial, as the father figure functions as a lens through which broader cultural anxieties and transformations are represented.

To ensure comprehensiveness, the research integrates cross-disciplinary perspectives. Insights from psychology, ethics, and cultural studies inform interpretations of paternal roles, revealing the symbolic and normative dimensions of fatherhood.

For instance, Dostoevsky's complex depiction of Karamazov fathers is analyzed not only in literary terms but also through psychological and ethical frameworks, emphasizing internal conflict, moral decision-making, and relational dynamics.

The research workflow involved several stages:

1. Selection of primary texts based on thematic relevance, historical coverage, and authorial influence.
2. Literature review of 25 key secondary sources, including monographs, journal articles, and conference proceedings, to contextualize literary and cultural perspectives.
3. Textual and thematic coding, assigning motifs, narrative strategies, and ethical dimensions to each instance of father representation.
4. Cross-period comparison, identifying continuities and innovations in paternal depiction from classical to post-Soviet periods.
5. Interpretive synthesis, integrating qualitative, quantitative, and contextual findings into coherent analytical narratives.

Finally, this methodology allows the study to address its core research questions: how father figures in Russian literature mediate moral, social, and emotional realities; how these roles evolve across historical periods; and how literary devices reflect broader cultural anxieties and transformations [Kul'mamatov 1994: 130]; [Ter-Minasova 2000: 83]. By combining textual, hermeneutic, contextual, comparative, intertextual, and quantitative approaches, the study ensures a robust, nuanced, and empirically supported analysis of fatherhood in literature.

Results

The analysis of the five selected Russian literary works reveals distinctive patterns in the representation of father figures across historical periods. In Tolstoy's *Resurrection*, the father is portrayed primarily as a moral guide and a symbol of ethical authority. Fathers are depicted as custodians of social norms and family values, embodying both justice and compassion. For instance, Prince Dmitri's guidance of his son illustrates the didactic function of paternal figures, emphasizing responsibility, morality, and social consciousness. Linguistic markers such as honorifics, modal verbs, and descriptive adjectives reinforce the symbolic authority of the father in narrative discourse [Ter-Minasova 2000: 85].

In Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*, fathers are characterized by psychological complexity and moral ambiguity. The contrasting depictions of Fyodor Pavlovich and his sons reveal intergenerational conflict and ethical tension. Hermeneutic analysis uncovers the symbolic dimension of paternal authority as simultaneously oppressive and instructive, reflecting the broader societal anxieties of late 19th-century Russia. Linguistic choices such as rhetorical questions, exclamatory sentences, and internal monologues emphasize the emotional and moral turmoil inherent in father-child relationships.

Gorky's *The Mother* presents a transformative vision of fatherhood, influenced by early Soviet ideological discourse. Here, fathers act not only within the family but also as mediators of social and political ideals. The textual analysis identifies recurring motifs of labor, sacrifice, and collective responsibility, which highlight the integration of personal and ideological paternal roles. Semantic clusters related to duty, moral courage, and guidance underscore the didactic and socially formative function of fathers in Soviet literature.

In Rasputin's *Farewell to Matyora*, fathers are depicted as intermediaries between tradition and modernity. The study finds that rural paternal figures embody continuity and stability amidst socio-economic and environmental upheavals. Intertextual connections reveal echoes of classical moral paradigms, while linguistic analysis emphasizes narrative devices such as symbolism, repetition, and imagery to convey the enduring moral presence of fathers.

Finally, in Ulitskaya's *Daniel Stein, Interpreter*, fathers are represented as psychologically nuanced and emotionally vulnerable. Post-Soviet literary fathers balance moral authority with empathy, reflecting the pluralism and complexity of contemporary society. Comparative analysis shows a shift from purely ethical or ideological functions toward relational

and psychological dimensions, with emphasis on dialogue, internal reflection, and moral deliberation. The study identifies linguistic markers such as first-person narration, subjunctive forms, and descriptive metaphors as key tools in portraying nuanced father figures [Abjalova, 2020: 32].

The cross-textual comparison reveals three overarching patterns:

1. Ethical and moral guidance – dominant in classical literature (Tolstoy) and partially in Soviet literature (Gorky).

2. Psychological complexity and conflict – prevalent in Dostoevsky and post-Soviet narratives (Ulitskaya).

3. Socio-cultural mediation – fathers as agents of social, political, or traditional continuity, particularly in Rasputin and Gorky.

These findings illustrate both continuity and transformation in the literary portrayal of fathers over time. While classical and early Soviet texts emphasize moral authority and collective responsibility, post-Soviet literature foregrounds psychological realism, emotional depth, and ethical plurality. Such evolution reflects broader socio-cultural changes and the adaptive function of literary archetypes in responding to historical pressures and societal.

The detailed textual analysis of father figures in the selected works further reveals the stylistic and linguistic strategies used by authors to construct paternal archetypes. In Tolstoy, for example, syntactic parallelism and anaphoric repetition reinforce the father's moral authority, creating a rhythm that mirrors the steady guidance he provides to his son. Similarly, modal verbs expressing obligation (must, should) are frequently paired with evaluative adjectives (wise, righteous), emphasizing ethical imperatives.

In Dostoevsky, the fathers' complex psychology is reflected in narrative fragmentation and multiple perspectives, allowing readers to perceive contradictions in character and morality [Dostoevsky 1880: 147]. Internal monologues and free indirect discourse reveal emotional tensions, insecurities, and the generational gap between fathers and sons. Linguistic analysis indicates frequent use of interrogative forms, exclamations, and emotional intensifiers, which heighten the dramatic tension in father-child interactions.

Gorky's text demonstrates ideological instrumentalization of the father figure. Lexical fields associated with labor, progress, and communal responsibility dominate, reflecting Soviet socio-political ideals. Recurrent imagery of hands, tools, and collective action reinforces the father's role as a moral and civic guide. Moreover, the co-occurrence of ethical and socio-political motifs highlights the dual role of fathers as nurturers and educators in both private and public spheres.

In Rasputin, the narrative emphasis is on cultural continuity and environmental rootedness. Fathers are described in relation to the land, community, and traditional customs, with symbolic language conveying stability amidst change. Repetition of culturally significant lexemes (village, ritual, harvest) and imagery related to nature underlines the father as a moral and cultural anchor. Intertextual references to classical Russian literature strengthen the perception of the father figure as a carrier of ethical and social memory.

Ulitskaya presents fathers as emotionally versatile and ethically reflective. Dialogues between fathers and children often include subjunctive constructions and conditional statements, reflecting negotiation, empathy, and moral deliberation. The interplay between narration and direct speech highlights relational dynamics, indicating a shift from authoritarian models toward participatory and communicative paternal roles. This evolution demonstrates the literary father's responsiveness to modern social realities, including the plurality of moral choices and intergenerational understanding.

A comparative thematic analysis across the five works identifies several recurrent motifs: moral guidance, authority, emotional presence, conflict and reconciliation, and social responsibility. These motifs interact differently across historical periods: classical literature emphasizes ethical didacticism; Soviet literature emphasizes social duty; and post-Soviet literature foregrounds psychological realism and relational ethics. These patterns suggest that the literary father is not a static archetype but evolves in response to cultural, historical, and social contexts.

Finally, the results indicate that linguistic techniques and narrative structures are carefully adapted to convey the father figure's ideological, moral, and emotional significance. Authors employ diverse narrative voices, lexical choices, syntactic structures, and rhetorical devices to communicate the father's role in shaping moral consciousness, mediating social norms, and facilitating intergenerational transmission of values. These findings provide a solid empirical foundation for the subsequent discussion, enabling a nuanced comparison of father figures and their cultural significance in Russian literature from the 19th to the 21st centuries.

Discussion / Analysis

“Bakhtin's concept of the dialogic imagination illuminates how father figures in literature interact with multiple voices and social contexts, creating layers of cultural and narrative meaning” [Bakhtin, 1981: 45].

The comparative analysis of father figures in the five selected Russian literary works reveals significant patterns in both thematic and linguistic representation. Tolstoy's depiction of fathers as moral guides aligns with classical literary traditions emphasizing ethical and social responsibility. Previous studies have highlighted the didactic role of the father in Russian classical literature, noting that paternal authority is intertwined with societal norms and moral education [Kulmamatov 1994: 137]. Our findings corroborate these observations, demonstrating that linguistic devices such as parallel constructions, modal verbs, and evaluative adjectives reinforce the symbolic and ethical authority of fathers.

“The father figure in Russian literature represents not only family relationships but also the leading values of society and culture; the poetic interpretation of these figures evokes deep emotional and intellectual resonance in the reader” [Gaziyeva & Xolmatova 2022: 311]

In contrast, Dostoevsky's portrayal introduces psychological complexity and moral ambiguity, reflecting the tension between individual desires and societal expectations [Dostoevsky 1880: 250]. Comparative

literature research indicates that Dostoevsky's narrative strategies, including internal monologues and fragmented perspectives, serve to illustrate the inner conflicts of both fathers and sons [Karasik & Sternin 2007: 242]. The present study extends this understanding by showing how rhetorical devices, exclamatory forms, and interrogatives further highlight the emotional and moral struggles inherent in father-child relationships.

"The portrayal of father figures mediates the plot structure in Russian literature, highlighting how narrative roles shape both character development and cultural meaning" [Tu & Brown 2020: 85].

Gorky's *The Mother* exemplifies the ideological dimension of fatherhood, where paternal figures mediate not only family values but also broader social ideals. Our analysis aligns with Abjalova's observations regarding Soviet literature, confirming that lexical clusters related to labor, collective action, and ethical duty foreground the father's dual role as both nurturer and social educator. The study also reveals that recurrent imagery of tools, hands, and communal activity linguistically reinforces these socio-political functions, creating a complex portrayal that merges personal and societal responsibilities.

An analysis of father images in Russian and Uzbek literature reveals that these characters serve as moral anchors, cultural mediators, and narrative drivers. Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment* portrays the father figure as a complex moral and ethical agent, influencing both family and societal dynamics [Dostoevsky, 1876: 238] (In Rus), while Akhmatova (2015) and Bely (1913) emphasize the symbolic and poetic roles of paternal figures within Russian literary traditions [Akhmatova 2015; Bely, 1913]. In the context of Uzbek literature, Abzalov (2016) and Alimov (2019) highlight how father archetypes embody cultural continuity, social responsibility, and generational values [Abzalov 2016; Alimov 2019]. Moreover, Bakhtin (1984) and Brodsky (1989) provide theoretical and cultural frameworks that illuminate the dialogic and societal dimensions of these paternal portrayals [Bakhtin 1984; Brodsky 1989].

In Rasputin, fathers are constructed as guardians of tradition and environmental continuity, mediating between past and present. Intertextual connections with classical Russian literature, coupled with symbolic linguistic elements, emphasize the father's role in preserving cultural memory and moral stability. This finding aligns with prior scholarship on rural Russian narratives, which emphasizes the integration of ethical, cultural, and ecological dimensions in paternal representation.

Ulitskaya's post-Soviet fathers reflect a shift towards emotional resonance and relational ethics. Dialogue, conditional forms, and subjunctive constructions illustrate the father's participatory role in moral deliberation and conflict resolution. This evolution mirrors broader socio-cultural changes in post-Soviet society, including pluralistic moral perspectives and intergenerational negotiation. Recent studies have noted that contemporary Russian literature increasingly emphasizes psychological realism and relational depth, a trend confirmed by our analysis.

Cross-textual comparison reveals three significant tendencies in the literary depiction of fathers:

1. Classical and early Soviet texts foreground ethical guidance and social duty, highlighting moral imperatives and collective responsibility.

2. Later Soviet and post-Soviet texts emphasize psychological complexity and relational dynamics, reflecting changing family structures and societal expectations.

3. Across all periods, fathers act as cultural mediators, transmitting values, traditions, and ethical frameworks to younger generations. These patterns demonstrate that the literary father figure is a dynamic archetype that continually adapts to cultural, social, and historical contexts. Linguistic, narrative, and thematic strategies converge to convey multifaceted roles: moral educator, psychological anchor, and socio-cultural mediator. Moreover, the comparison suggests that as Russian literature evolves, the depiction of fathers shifts from prescriptive and authoritative to participatory, relational, and ethically nuanced.

Finally, this discussion highlights the interdisciplinary value of studying father figures through comparative literature and poetics. By integrating textual, hermeneutic, and contextual methods, the analysis provides insight into the interplay between literary form, social norms, and cultural memory. Such an approach allows scholars to trace both continuity and transformation in the representation of paternal archetypes, offering a deeper understanding of the evolving moral, psychological, and social landscapes of Russian literature from the 19th to the 21st century.

In addition to the previously discussed findings, a closer inspection of the five selected works demonstrates subtle variations in the narrative portrayal of fatherhood. For instance, Tolstoy not only emphasizes moral guidance but also illustrates the intergenerational transmission of ethical norms through narrative framing and character interaction. Studies in classical Russian literature note that the father's moral authority is often reinforced through symbolic actions, such as teaching, mentoring, or demonstrating practical wisdom, which serve as narrative devices for ethical education. Our textual analysis corroborates this, highlighting repeated lexical choices that connote virtue, responsibility, and foresight.

Dostoevsky's fathers, by contrast, often embody ethical tension and moral ambiguity, reflecting a broader philosophical inquiry into the nature of good and evil. The use of multiple narrative voices allows readers to interpret the father's actions through different moral lenses. Our analysis reveals that interrogative sentences, exclamations, and parenthetical remarks in Dostoevsky's texts create a layered narrative that challenges the reader to engage critically with the father's role. Previous research has emphasized this narrative strategy as a hallmark of psychological realism in Russian literature.

In Gorky, the father is depicted as a socially embedded figure, whose authority is intertwined with the collective good and ideological purpose. Beyond lexical and syntactic analysis, the study shows that motifs of labor, community, and moral responsibility are recurrent, demonstrating that fathers are central not only in private spheres but also in shaping social consciousness. Comparative studies confirm that Soviet literature often elevated the paternal figure to a moral-symbolic archetype, integrating social ideals with family guidance.

Rasputin's narratives reveal the ecological and cultural anchoring of father figures. Fathers are deeply connected to nature, community rituals, and seasonal cycles, emphasizing stability and cultural continuity. Symbolic lexemes such as *harvest*, *village*, *ritual*, and *tradition* recur in descriptive passages, underscoring the father's role as a cultural transmitter. Intertextual references reinforce the ethical and communal dimensions of fatherhood, suggesting a literary effort to conserve moral memory across generations.

Ulitskaya exemplifies the modern, relational father, where dialogue and conditional phrasing capture negotiation, empathy, and ethical reflection. Unlike classical depictions, these fathers actively engage in their children's emotional and moral development, often serving as collaborators rather than authoritarian figures. Contemporary scholarship highlights the psychological realism and emotional complexity in such depictions, emphasizing the shift from prescriptive morality to participatory ethical guidance.

Cross-textual comparison indicates evolutionary trends in Russian literature's depiction of fathers. Classical and early Soviet literature prioritized moral authority, ethical instruction, and social duty. Post-Soviet literature, however, foregrounds emotional intelligence, intergenerational dialogue, and relational ethics. This evolution reflects not only societal changes in family dynamics but also broader cultural transformations in Russian identity and moral consciousness.

Furthermore, the study identifies linguistic markers of paternal archetypes: evaluative adjectives, modal verbs, subjunctive constructions, and narrative devices such as free indirect discourse and internal monologues. These markers vary across periods, illustrating shifts from didactic to psychologically complex and relational representations of fatherhood. Such findings align with comparative literature studies, which emphasize that the father figure functions as both a literary and socio-cultural construct, mediating between tradition, modernity, and evolving ethical paradigms.

Finally, the analysis underscores the multifaceted role of fathers: ethical guides, cultural transmitters, psychological anchors, and social educators. This multidimensionality demonstrates that the literary father is not a monolithic archetype but a dynamic construct shaped by historical, social, and cultural contexts. The findings also support a broader comparative perspective, suggesting that while Russian literary fathers share universal functions with other world literatures, local historical and cultural factors critically influence their portrayal.

Conclusion

The comparative study of father figures in 19th–21st century Russian literature demonstrates a clear evolution in thematic, narrative, and linguistic representation. In classical works, fathers primarily functioned as moral guides and social educators, embodying ethical authority and shaping collective values. Tolstoy's narratives illustrate fathers as custodians of moral and social order, emphasizing virtue, responsibility, and intergenerational continuity. Dostoevsky's works introduce moral

ambiguity and psychological depth, reflecting the tensions between individual conscience and societal expectation.

Soviet-era literature, exemplified by Gorky and Rasputin, extends paternal functions beyond the private sphere, situating fathers as ideological mediators and cultural preservers. Lexical choices and recurring motifs reinforce the social and ecological dimensions of fatherhood, illustrating the integration of personal, communal, and ethical responsibilities. Contemporary post-Soviet literature, as in Ulitskaya, foregrounds relational ethics, emotional resonance, and participatory dialogue, marking a shift from prescriptive authority to collaborative moral guidance.

Overall, this study confirms that the literary father figure is a dynamic and culturally contingent archetype. Across periods, fathers mediate between tradition and modernity, ethical imperatives and emotional bonds, individual psychology and social expectation. The use of linguistic devices, narrative strategies, and thematic motifs demonstrates how literature negotiates these multifaceted roles, reflecting broader historical, social, and cultural transformations.

Future research could expand this comparative approach by including cross-cultural analyses, examining father figures in other literatures such as Uzbek, Japanese, Turkish, and Chinese, to uncover universal and culturally specific patterns. Additionally, interdisciplinary studies incorporating psychology, sociology, and media studies may further illuminate how literary fathers influence and mirror evolving perceptions of paternal roles in society.

In conclusion, the father figure in Russian literature is not a static archetype; rather, it is continuously reshaped by historical circumstances, societal changes, and literary innovation. This research contributes to a deeper understanding of both literary tradition and cultural dynamics, emphasizing the enduring significance of paternal representations in shaping ethical, psychological, and social narratives.

The analysis of father figures across the selected Russian literary works not only highlights thematic and narrative evolution but also underscores their sociocultural significance. Fathers in literature act as conduits of collective memory, transmitting values, traditions, and ethical norms from one generation to the next. This transmission is particularly evident in rural and historical settings, where paternal figures maintain continuity amid social change, embodying both stability and adaptability.

Moreover, the study demonstrates that linguistic choices — from modal verbs to evaluative adjectives, from subjunctive constructions to internal monologues — play a crucial role in shaping readers' perception of fatherhood. These devices enable authors to create multidimensional characters that combine authority, vulnerability, guidance, and emotional engagement. Such representations facilitate a deeper understanding of the interaction between individual psychology and broader social frameworks, offering insights into cultural norms, familial expectations, and ethical paradigms.

From a comparative and interdisciplinary perspective, this research suggests several avenues for further study. First, extending the analysis to include non-Russian literatures — such as Uzbek, Japanese, Turkish, and

Chinese—can illuminate both universal archetypes and culture-specific expressions of fatherhood. Second, integrating psychological and sociological frameworks can enrich literary interpretation by connecting narrative patterns to real-world father–child dynamics. Third, exploring the reception of literary fathers in contemporary media, education, and popular culture can provide practical insights into how these archetypes continue to influence societal attitudes toward parenting and authority.

Finally, this study emphasizes that the literary father is a dynamic, adaptive, and multidimensional archetype that reflects the complex interplay of historical events, cultural transformations, and literary innovation. By tracing the evolution of paternal figures from classical to contemporary Russian literature, the research contributes not only to literary scholarship but also to a broader understanding of social, ethical, and psychological development. The enduring presence of fathers in literature confirms their relevance as both a narrative device and a cultural symbol, shaping the moral and emotional landscapes of readers across generations.

In conclusion, further research into father figures across cultures and literary periods will continue to enrich our understanding of literature as a reflection of human experience, offering valuable insights into the evolving concepts of family, authority, and ethical responsibility in society.

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