

LECTURE No. 11. STUDYING EPIC WORKS

Plan:

- 1. General tasks of working on an epic work.*
- 2. Analysis of the plot and compositional basis of the work. Work on the episode.*
- 3. Work on the image of the hero.*
- 4. Comprehension of the author's position.*

Epic works make up a significant part of the school curriculum. The epic is represented at the school by various genres: fable, story, novel, epic. But genre differences should not be removed when studying what is in common, which is the essence of the epic kind of literature - its narrative and the ability to embrace life in its objective fullness. This feature of epic works affects the goals, ways and ways of working on them in school. When studying them, attention will inevitably be concentrated on those components of the literary text that are essential for the epic genus. In school conditions, they usually turn out to be:

1. Theme, problems, plot. Considering them, students comprehend the work as an aesthetic reality, as a transformed reality.
2. Images of heroes (getting acquainted with them, students comprehend a variety of human characters and types).
3. The author as a creator, as the creator of a special artistic world of a given work.

At different stages of education, not all components will be in the field of view of students, and in general, the completeness of the analysis of large epic works in school is unattainable. Therefore, it is important in each case to look for the main lines, dominants of the analysis, through which the student would go to understand the ideological and artistic meaning of the work at a level accessible to his age.

To help schoolchildren to penetrate deep into the work, it is necessary to teach them to re-read it. They should receive all the richness of artistic impressions from personal and direct contact with the work, and the teacher's task is to help them realize these impressions, clarify the author's intention, the author's concept of life (moral and aesthetic ideal). This is easier to do when studying a fable, a story, where the volume of the text is small, the characters of the characters are revealed in any one event, collision. When it comes to a story, about a novel, the selection of material and emphasis in its interpretation, which episodes to consider in detail, which to omit, acquire special significance; what to highlight in the characters of the heroes as the main thing, and what to leave without attention and evaluation; what sides of the author's ideal to focus on - all these questions have to be constantly addressed when the system of lessons for studying a large epic work is being pondered. The school has a fruitful historical-functional approach, when, when interpreting a work, its life in the reader's minds of different eras is taken into account. This allows us to dwell on those

aspects of the work that could have seemed less significant at the time of its appearance, but have acquired special significance today. M. Khrapchenko writes, for example, that in the novel "Fathers and Sons" it is not the historical-specific conflict that is important now, but the philosophical meaning of the contradictions between the commoners and the nobles, which "is by no means limited to the time that was depicted in Turgenev's novel. And in the image of Bazarov, the modern reader is attracted not so much by the manifestation of nihilism ... as by the qualities of an active, purposeful nature." When searching for or choosing the interpretation of a work, the school takes into account the psychological aspect - the need to arouse the interest of students, their need for active participation in working with the text. Therefore, it is so important for a teacher to know the opinions of students about the work, to take into account their perception. As a rule, the teacher focuses the students' attention on the content layer of the work, which was difficult for them to access when reading on their own. When studying the "Son of the Regiment", for example, this may be the theme "War and the Theme", when working on L. Tolstoy's story "After Dinner" - the problem of a person's moral responsibility for the evil reigning in the world, and when analyzing "A Hero of Our Time" - the ideological and artistic significance of the novel for the 30-40s. last century. Of course, it cannot be allowed that the versatility of epic works is greatly narrowed by the selection of material and the conceptual nature of its interpretation: after all, an artistic phenomenon is always wider and larger than any interpretation. Therefore, when studying the "Son of the Regiment" attention will be paid to the characters of the characters (Vanya Solntsev, scouts, Captain Yenakiev), and psychological situations. And in A Hero of Our Time, the socio-ideological approach will not exclude, but even sharpen, interest in the author's ideal and moral and philosophical questions that Lermontov poses: the problem of duty, fate, the rights and obligations of an individual to himself and the world, etc. The concept chosen by the teacher will be the cementing principle of the analysis, it will connect and unite the observations of schoolchildren concerning the various ideological and artistic aspects of the work.

Regardless of which way of analysis will be accepted as the main one, the epic work should be studied holistically, as an artistic unity, in the continuity of content and form. "Without a deep analysis of the form," writes V. Kozhinov, "a work inevitably appears as a message about something, and not as an original artistic world." I must say that the integrity of a work is not always possible to reveal even to the authors of modern literary works. It is all the more difficult to do this in school, where, due to the "discontinuity" of analysis and the distribution of material among lessons, one or another dismemberment of artistic unity is inevitable. This has to be done for various reasons - because of the inability to read the entire work in class, because of the limited time for study, because of the need to systematize the knowledge of schoolchildren, etc. The danger of dismemberment is less felt in grades IV-V, where the analysis of small works is structured as a process of thoughtful reading into the text followed by a generalization of observations. At the senior level of the school, starting from VII, when the studied works become large, and the real study time, on the contrary, decreases, it

is necessary to isolate in the analysis both images-characters, and composition and style. In this case, not only the integrity of the work can be destroyed, but also the integrity of perception, as a result of which the text in the minds of the students begins, as it were, to disintegrate into cells. Meanwhile, it is important that each "cell", each structural element of the work is understood not in its isolation, but in correlation with the artist's general idea, with the entire system of images. It is impossible to understand, for example, Pechorin, if we do not see him through the eyes of different storytellers, in different plot twists, surrounded each time by a new opening of nature, i.e. you need to constantly establish internal connections in the text. We can name several conditions, the observance of which weakens the impression of fragmentation of the analysis and allows you to preserve a relatively holistic view of the work. First, one should strive to alternately focus the attention of schoolchildren on the elements of the figurative system in the process of gradual "movement in the text." Secondly, it is necessary to avoid schematism, abstraction, "anatomization" of the text. The analysis should be constantly accompanied by synthesis, and it is important at each moment of work not to be limited to logical and conceptual conclusions, but to revive the concrete-figurative representations of schoolchildren. Thirdly, it is necessary to create conditions for the emergence and preservation of emotional reactions of students in the process of analysis. Epic works are studied throughout the years of study. Differences in the approach to them in different classes are associated with the age and cognitive capabilities of children, adolescents, and young men. But even with younger adolescents it is impossible to reduce work on the text to retelling, making plans and talking only about the event side. The analysis of an epic work in any class must be meaningful. In grades IV-V, the main thing is usually the understanding of the plot, as well as the actions and experiences of the heroes in the central episodes of the work. Observations of the composition, genre features, the author's attitude to what is depicted, accumulate so far in the form of concrete ideas, but do not become the subject of generalization. In the 7th grade, the communicating moment is significantly enhanced. In high school, analysis can be built on a solid theoretical and literary foundation.

= Differences in the work on an epic work depend on genres, the age of schoolchildren, educational levels, but a common feature is the need to group the literary text around certain problems and consider all the components of the figurative system in their interconnection and linkages. episodes.

Analysis of the plot and compositional basis of the work and work on the episode. The reader who picks up a book, regardless of whether he is a schoolchild or an adult, primarily perceives the plot. The plot of an epic work consists of events lined up in a certain sequence and taking place in a certain time and space; from the actions of the heroes-characters; from the linkages of the various circumstances in which these heroes operate. Events in a work can develop quickly or slowly, captivate with sharpness or seem monotonous, but they certainly move.

The plot is "unity moving in time." The arrangement of events, their conditioning, the interaction of images constitute the composition of the work. "Each writer constructs a work in a different way, arranges pictures of events, scenes and episodes in different ways, organizes the plot in different ways." Each work represents a unique artistic world, where there is a system of relations between authors and heroes, its own laws of time and space. Entering this inner world of a work usually begins at school with mastering the plot-event basis, but before embracing it in its entirety, it is extremely important to feel the author's intonation and artistic atmosphere, which are already the initial chapters of stories or novels. The dense, tragic atmosphere of Dostoevsky's Petersburg in *Crime and Punishment* or the abnormality of the usual way of life of the city, in which it is possible to carry out Chichikov's enterprise in *Dead Souls*, opens from the first pages of the work. Therefore, it is natural to begin the study of epic works by re-reading them and emotional commenting (or conversation). This creates a setting for subsequent analysis. The development of the plot-compositional basis of works is served at school by drawing up plans for the entire story or its individual parts, as well as storytelling. If we see in these types of work "not only skills, but also methods of penetrating into the content and meaning of what is being read" (MA Rybnikova), then they can help to master the author's text, will stimulate creative activity. A plan is needed when students are not fluent in the events of the work. It has been noticed, for example, that fifth-grade students do not immediately manage to understand the twists and turns of the plot of Kataev's story "A lonely sail whitens." Therefore, you need to help them highlight the main events of the story. First, let's offer questions that are aimed not only at reproducing the plot, but also addressed to the personality of the fifth grader (it is important to interest him): "If you were offered to tell the most interesting event in the story, which one would you choose?" (A teacher can name only the facts, without telling about them.) "What events seem to you to be the main ones in the fate of Petya? What - in the fate of Gavrik? Why? Without what event there would have been no other changes in the lives of the heroes of the story?" etc. we will write down all the named events on the board, and then, together with the students, arrange them in chronological order. Let's give each highlighted event a title, for example: "Meeting with a sailor", "Strange passenger", "Working Easter", etc. along the way, we ask the students to remember as precisely as possible the time of the course of each event. Having grouped the largest of them by time, we draw up a plan for a concise presentation of the story. It looks like this: "An extraordinary day in the life of other friends", "Rescue of a sailor from the battleship Potemkin", "The beginning of a new life or big changes." At home, students should compose a story one of the points or answer in detail the question-task: "What events of an extraordinary day would I tell if I remembered about it in a year?" a kind of work on mastering the events of a work can be tracing the line of a certain character, grouping events around him. Such work is especially useful in cases where multi-character works with complex compositions are being studied.

Mastering the plot-compositional basis and the artistic world of the work is the work on its individual parts: chapters, episodes. In this case, one should strive for the entire work to be present in the highlighted part. Like a close-up in a movie, the episode being analyzed brings the hero and the author closer to the reader, allows you to see in detail the manifestation of a separate character in certain circumstances and take a closer look at the circumstances themselves. An episode is always a link in the chain of events. Each of them is related to the others. In the middle classes, when analyzing them, events often come to the fore, in the older ones - heroes and the author's position. So that the episode does not overshadow the entire work and so that it does not crumble in the minds of students into an unrelated chain of episodes, it is necessary, firstly, to strictly select them for detailed analysis, secondly, to constantly link the part and the whole, the episode and the entire work, and thirdly, to vary the techniques of analysis when considering different episodes of the same work. Let's keep in mind that the same scene can be turned to the student by different faces, depending on which path of analysis it is included in. Let us illustrate this with one example, an analysis of the episode of Grinev's second meeting with Pugachev. It is impossible to bypass this meeting when analyzing the story. But the angle of view on the episode can be different. So, if we follow the author, then the episode will be considered, first of all, in the series of events. Then the sequence of questions will turn out to be as follows: at what moment does the second meeting between Grinev and Pugachev take place, what important events precede it? How is this meeting externally and internally different from the first? What significance did it acquire in Grinev's life and how was Pugachev interested in? If the study of "The Captain's Daughter" is carried out in a different way, then the nature and sequence of questions will be different: what relationship did Grinev and Pugachev have before their second meeting? How are the characters revealed during the conversation? How are both attractive in their own way at the moment of explanation (what is the manifestation of the nobility of each)? What feeling for the heroes of the story can be aroused in the reader by their conversation? How did the second meeting affect the subsequent relationship between Grinev and Pugachev?

Finally, if the analysis of *The Captain's Daughter* is problematic and if the main thing is to reveal Pushkin's understanding of the idea of duty, honor and inner freedom, then the analysis of the episode is guided by the only question: why can this meeting between Grinev and Pugachev be called a "duel in generosity"?

Since in real practice the ways of analysis are usually combined and combined, a plurality of approaches is almost always realized in the analysis of an episode: it is considered how it is included in the plot, and how the characters of the heroes are revealed in it, and what problems are solved. Therefore, for the analysis of this episode, the following sequence of questions is natural and expedient: "At what moment does the second meeting between Grinev and Pugachev take place and what significance does it have for each of them? What questions do Grinev and Pugachev decide for themselves during the conversation? How does each of them understand duty and

honor, and whose understanding seems broader to you? Why can this meeting be called a "duel in generosity"? "

While working on an episode, one should strive to preserve the emotional attitude of students towards characters and events. It is necessary to provide for such tasks that would create a setting for an emotional response and would help to manifest the experience that arises in schoolchildren. The most typical tasks of this kind are the following: preparing students for expressive reading of the episode as a whole or its fragments, as well as the reading itself in the faces of the dialogue between Grinev and Pugachev. In order for the reading to be conscious, seventh grade students need to think about and imagine what each of the characters experiences in the course of the conversation, what feelings are hidden behind the spoken remarks. Personal assessment of the hero's behavior in a specific situation. For example: "What attitude does Pechorin evoke in you during the last meeting with Maksim Maksimych", preparing for a meeting with Pechorin, and what is going through when talking with him? " Motivation for the words and actions of the character, unexplained by the author. For example, imagine what Pechorin could feel from the minute he learned about the abduction of Bela Kazbich, until the moment the Circassian woman died, and explain on the basis of what author's "signs" (words, descriptions, assessments) we can guess the hero's state.

Completing such tasks leads to the expansion of the students' own range of feelings and enriches their inner world.

Work on the image of the hero of the epic work. No less than the events of the narrative, the reader likes to follow the actions of the characters, the fate of the heroes. The literary hero is one of those artistic realities, without which it is impossible to understand either the world of the work or the author's position. Creating the image of a person, the writer explores him "as an integral personality" - in the unity of mental, emotional and bodily qualities. Therefore, it is difficult to recognize as legitimate the identification of the hero's "traits" that have existed for a long time in school and the compilation of his summary characteristics. Such an approach to the image is destructive for him, much more expedient is the path of study when the work of the character is considered in unity with the action. Moreover, behavior, as L. Ginzburg writes, is not only actions, actions, but also any participation in the plot movement, involvement in ongoing events and even any change in mental states. " For studying in school, it is especially important that the character always carries an ethical author's assessment and thereby helps the readers to develop value orientations.

In different classes, the process of getting to know a literary hero cannot be the same, since schoolchildren of different ages and different literary preparedness will master the image each time. It is known that pupils of IV-VI, and sometimes VII-VIII grades see the literary heroes as living people.

They believe in the real existence of Vanya Solntsev, Nastya and Mitrashi, Petit and Gavrik. This does not mean that children of this age do not at all understand artistic conventions. They know that the hero is still the creation of a writer, but they continue

to think of him as a real person, rebuilding this perception, it is impossible to completely destroy in a schoolchild the precious reading property of “recognizing a person” in a hero and accepting him in their own way. After all, when in the 1st grade there are arguments about Bazarov or the question of how it could have happened that Natasha Rostova almost ran away with Anatol Kuragin, the same direct, inexperienced reader continues to live in the students who tries on heroes for himself, correlates his personal experience with them ... Without a detailed "effect of assimilation" the reader's communication with art becomes impoverished and devalued. Therefore, in school, it is important to constantly identify the reader's impression of the character. In this regard, it is useful to encourage the children to motivate the behavior of the heroes, using questions such as why did the shepherd not tell the White Guards about his meeting with the Blizzard? What prevented Vasya from telling his father the truth about the doll's fate? Ultimately, such questions should help to see the author's assessment of the character and clarify the students' own attitude towards him.

In high school, it is not the behavior that is motivated and explained, but the moral position of the hero, his psychology; therefore, the questions become more complex and altered. For example: “What makes Pechorin say the words:“ And what does it matter to the joys and disasters of men... ”and so on. - and with what feeling does he pronounce them? What do you see in Onegin's answer to Tatiana - a confession or a sermon? Etc.

Different aspects of the hero's personality and his behavior are perfectly revealed through the comparison of the character with another character in a similar situation. For example, what is the attitude of Alyosha's grandparents to the changes in their situation after the fire? ("Childhood"). What is the difference between Kostya, Ilyusha and Pavlusha's behavior around the fire? ("Bezhin Meadow", etc.) Such questions orient schoolchildren towards the perception of the depicted human character and its correlation with their own life experience, their own ideals. Gradually, one should develop the ability for such a perception, when a second layer is built over the primary layer of understanding (the hero is a person): this is an image created by the artist's fantasy and expressing the author's idea. Already in the 4th grade, observations of the author's attitude to the hero are organized, which manifests itself in style, in a portrait sketch, in intonation, etc. For example: with what feeling does the author describe Nastya and Mitrasha at the beginning of the "Pantry of the Sun" and in what words is this feeling especially noticeable? The older the schoolchildren become, the deeper the author's position in relation to the character is comprehended, and it should become the most important argument in the classroom in disputes whether the hero is right or wrong. For example, in the 7th grade, some students believe that Mtsyri should not have entered into a fight with the leopard, because although he won, he was weakened and could not then reach his homeland. It is impossible to convince them: students operate with everyday standards, and at this level their reasoning is legitimate. Therefore, it is important, analyzing the fight with the leopard, to show how Lermontov conveys the feelings of Mtsyri, how the verse sounds, what mood is created in the

reader. The perception of Mtsyri's struggle with the leopard as such, and the image of this battle, the author's evaluative attitude towards it, will refute the everyday, naive-realistic approach to the hero's behavior. At 7 and especially in the senior grades, questions about the author's position when considering the image of the hero already become constant (the author's intention, the author's concept of character are analyzed). As a result, high school students acquire the ability to perceive the hero both in his real content (as a person) and in the artistic-conditional (as the creation of an author carrying an idea). A large role here belongs to generalizing moments, they are present in the work on the character both when he is observed in a specific situation, and when the student is invited to motivate his attitude towards the hero. For example: "What do I like about Gavrik?", "Why would I like to be friends with Valek?"

In the senior grades, at the generalizing stage, tasks of a problematic nature are advisable, orienting the student to the search nature of the activity. For example, to generalize ideas about Pechorin, a teacher can recommend the following tasks:

1. Pechorin says to Dr. Werner: "From the storm of life I brought out only a few ideas - and not a single feeling ... I weigh and analyze my own passions and actions with strict curiosity, but without participation." After analyzing several participations in "Princess Mary" and other stories, prove or reject these words of Pechorin.

2. Select in "Princess Mary" and "Taman" a number of Pechorin's statements about the role he played in the lives of the people he met. With what feeling does he pronounce these words? How does he explain himself, how do you explain why the hero did not bring happiness to anyone?

3. On the night before the duel Pechorin admits to himself that he feels "immense" strength in himself. What are his actions, thoughts, deeds can confirm the correctness of these words?

Discussion questions

1. How does acting out scenes help students understand characters, emotions, and dialogue more effectively than reading alone?

2. In what ways can studying the historical and cultural context of a play enhance comprehension and interpretation?

3. How can group discussions and role-plays improve critical thinking and collaborative skills in drama lessons?

4. What are the advantages and limitations of using multimedia and filmed performances in studying drama?

5. How can teachers balance the focus between literary analysis and performance to achieve a comprehensive understanding of a play?