

EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN IN THE FORMATION CONTEXT OF RUSSIAN CULTURE

EDUCAÇÃO PARA CRIANÇAS NO CONTEXTO DE FORMAÇÃO DA CULTURA RUSSA

EDUCACIÓN INFANTIL EN EL CONTEXTO DE FORMACIÓN DE LA CULTURA RUSA

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ABSTRACT: The article discusses some details of education for children in Russia in the 18th century. The author examines pedagogical principles of A.T. Bolotov and N.I. Novikov. The worldview goal of writing "Children's Education" as the first book for children in Russia. Clarified practical educational purposes such as «understanding faith» for personal happiness. The biographical contexts of Bolotov, which motivated him to write a book in the genre of moralizing dialogue, are characterized. The goals of creating the first children's magazine "Children's reading" are determined. The practical importance of the journal in the teaching and education of Russian youth is noted. The author makes an attempt to reconstruct the main didactic line of the journal. The research materials make it possible to characterize the influence of "Children's Education" and "Children's Reading" on the formation of intellectual culture in the 19th century.

KEYWORDS: Education for children. Children's magazines. Moral teaching. Applied philosophy.

RESUMO: O artigo discute alguns detalhes da educação de crianças na Rússia no século XVIII. O autor examina os princípios pedagógicos de A. T. Bolotov e N. I. Novikov. O objetivo da visão de mundo de escrever "Educação infantil" como o primeiro livro para crianças na Rússia. Esclarecimento de objetivos educacionais práticos, como «compreender a fé» para a felicidade pessoal. São caracterizados os contextos biográficos de Bolotov, que o motivaram a escrever um livro no gênero do diálogo moralizante. Os objetivos de criação da primeira revista infantil "Leitura infantil" são determinados. A importância prática da revista no ensino e na educação da juventude russa é observada. O autor tenta reconstruir a principal linha didática da revista. Os materiais de pesquisa permitem caracterizar a influência de "Educação Infantil" e de "Leitura Infantil" na formação da cultura intelectual do século XIX.

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PALAVRAS-CHAVE: *Educação para crianças. Revistas infantis. Ensino moral. Filosofia aplicada.*

RESUMEN: *El artículo analiza algunos detalles de la educación de los niños en Rusia en el siglo XVIII. El autor examina los principios pedagógicos de A.T. Bolotov y N.I. Novikov. Se analiza el objetivo de la cosmovisión de escribir "Educación infantil" como el primer libro para niños en Rusia. Propósitos educativos prácticos clarificados como «comprender la fe» para la felicidad personal. Se caracterizan los contextos biográficos de Bolotov, que lo motivaron a escribir un libro en el género del diálogo moralizante. Se determinan los objetivos de la creación de la primera revista infantil "Lectura infantil". Se destaca la importancia práctica de la revista en la enseñanza y educación de la juventud rusa. El autor intenta reconstruir la principal línea didáctica de la revista. Los materiales de investigación permiten caracterizar la influencia de la "Educación infantil" y la "Lectura infantil" en la formación de la cultura intelectual en el siglo XIX.*

PALABRAS CLAVE: *Educación para niños. Revistas infantiles. Enseñanza moral. Filosofía aplicada.*

Introduction

At the end of the 20th century, author's innovative pedagogical approaches were widely applied in Russia. One of them was the project by N. S. Yulina (YULINA, 2005) and L. T. Retyunskikh (RETYUNSKIKH, 2003) on the introduction of education and philosophy into the secondary school curricular program. It was based on the international program *Education and Philosophy for Children* developed in the USA in the 1980s by M. Lipman (LIPMAN, 1988) and his colleagues from the Institute for the Development of Education and philosophy for Children (Montclair, USA) (LIPMAN; MATTHEW; SHARP, 1983). The main goal of the program is to develop the skills of logical thinking and social communication.

However, Russian education and philosophy has its own sources for children. A feature of educational thought in Russia from its very inception was a close connection with wisdom of life. This connection came into sharp focus in the moralizing works *Vladimir Monomakh's Precept', Domestic Order, Ifika and Hieropolitics* and other monuments of Old Russian literature. The topic of education and training of worldly wisdom is prevailing in Russian folklore material of proverbs, sayings, fairy tales, epics, as well as in moral teachings addressed to the youth and is connected with Orthodoxy proliferating in Russia.

As a special phenomenon, education for children appeared in the Russian Empire in the 18th century. In accordance with the ideals of the Enlightenment, in the clerisy, there was an increased attention to the problem of education and upbringing, and philosophy was presented

as the main source of morality. In Russia, there took its rise literature for children, appeared the first children's magazines and moralizing works. The thought of that century was marked by the strong influence of European ideas which fit into traditional Russian thinking.

Methods

The source analysis of primary source materials, including manuscripts, has revealed the main features and characteristics of the most marked educational and philosophical works for children in the Russian Empire of the 18th century. The biographical material of the memoirs by A. T. Bolotov is used for the reconstruction of the actual contexts of writing *Children's Education*. The role of the first children's magazine *Children's Reading for the Heart and Mind* in the development of the national tradition of raising children with the help of the didactic potential of practical education and philosophy is redefined. Practical education and philosophy within the scope of the paper is understood as ethics as the area of knowledge closest to everyday life.

Results and Discussion

Andrei Timofeevich Bolotov (1738 – 1833) is famous in literary criticism as a memoirist and encyclopedic scholar (NEWLIN, 2001). His *Life and Adventures of Andrei Bolotov* described by him for his descendants has been published several times. No less famous are his scientific articles in the journals *Scientific Works of the Free Economic Society*, *Rural Citizen* (1778-1779), *Economic Shop* (1780-1790), *Agricultural Journal* (since 1797). However, one of the central philosophical works by Bolotov (and one of the few published during his lifetime) *Children's Education or Morality Conversations between a Lady and Her Children, Composed to Assist the True Benefits of Young People* is the first in philosophy for children in Russia. The first part of *Children's Education* by A. T. Bolotov was published by Novikov in 1776, and the second – in 1779. Neither philosophers nor teachers have found meaning in this work so far. In 2012, through the efforts of T. V. Artemieva and M. I. Mikeshin, its new edition was prepared (the work was published for the first and only time in 1776) (ARTEMIEVA; MIKESHIN, 2012).

In the main biographical source, *Notes* (BOLOTOV, 1988), A. T. Bolotov pointed out that he wrote *Children's Education* in imitation of *Children's School* by J.-M. Leprince de Beaumont, in the form of moralizing conversations. However, despite the stylistic and thematic

similarities, the works by A. T. Bolotov and J.-M. Leprince de Beaumont are markedly distinct in content, although they set similar goals and use similar means. For Leprince de Beaumont, the problem of women's education and upbringing in keeping with the spirit of Christianity is topical. The work describes governess's conversations about Scripture, history, philosophy, literature with the pupils (LEPRINCE; DE BEAUMONT, 1865). A. T. Bolotov's *Children's Education* emphasizes the importance of worldview issues for education.

The knowledge of God, the world and man is undeniably the most excellent, but together it is the most useful and necessary knowledge of all other human knowledge. For what is more necessary for us, how to know the one who is our cause and be able to answer the following great questions: what are we? Where from and why did they come? Where and under what circumstances and why do we live, and what will happen to us in the future? And when one is not completely aware of all this: so, at least, so as not to be completely ignorant in the discussion of these points, but to have at least some correct understanding of this and, by necessity, already sufficient? A person who does not think about that and never wants to think does no longer deserves the honor of bearing his/her name (BOLOTOV, 2012, p. 35)

The author of *Children's Education* begins with these lines. *Children's Education* has the form of an excursion into philosophical problems, adapted for children. A dialogue between the mother and her children adds to it. Bolotov immediately makes it clear that the fundamental issues of philosophy in his understanding are closely related to the Christian doctrine. At the time of the writing in 1763, the author had become a dedicated Christian who, however, was embracing the ideas of the German Enlightenment. He notes in his autobiography (BOLOTOV, 2002) that self-improvement coming from the knowledge of God remains the main value for him throughout his life. A circumstance of no small importance established A. T. Bolotov's position is the fact that he received home education and learnt on his own all his life and considered reading books to be the most important (VESELOVA, 1999). That is why he began to write *Children's Education* in 1763 to educate his future wife, and then used it as a program of instruction in the boarding school he created in the Bogoroditsk for noble children,

[...] I desired to use some of this (time) for the benefit of my children, my friends and acquaintances of the Mother of God ... and I wanted to turn them to their advantage and use them to teach them what they did not study at boarding school and could not be taught, namely geometry, physics and morality, and for them to significantly benefit, and to their fathers, from my end to render a friendly service and such a service with which they would be very pleased. For ... reading, again I have chosen my *Children's Education* with which I have already made up many parts [...] (BOLOTOV, 1988, p. 31-32).

Children's Education outlines the principles of humane pedagogy. In the first conversation of Mrs. Ts *** with her children Theona (15 years old) and Cleon (14 years old), the children ask their mother to teach them, because, having realized their lack of knowledge compared to other people (peers and adults), they feel ashamed. They wonder why the mother has not yet begun to train them, to which she replies that children should learn at pleasure, only voluntary learning will be beneficial. Ignorance is associated by A. T. Bolotov with moral imperfection: self-indulgence and laziness, therefore, starting the training, Mrs. Ts *** asks her children to promise that they will give up on their amusements. She asks to have faith in her authority. Bolotov demonstrates a learning set for a dialogue: the conversations will take place if the children wish and with the duration they wish, moreover, the children's response is necessary in the form of misunderstanding and questions. A practical, visual approach in teaching by Mrs. Ts *** is prominent, the conversations will take place in the open air, while taking walks in the garden. Explaining the peculiarities of her approach to learning, the mother not only sets the children up for the acquisition of knowledge but also piques their curiosity, she promises that the learning will not be difficult but fun. Thus, a lively interest of children in learning is formed.

In passing from teaching methods to content, Bolotov notes that Mrs. Ts *** will teach children a science that will help them become not merely smart but also virtuous and prosperous, therefore, this science is “the most important in the world.” Thus, usefulness replaces the primary motive for learning – shame. Children develop a desire to learn, which can no longer be hindered by laziness and “playfulness” (BOLOTOV, 2012, p. 51).

Discussing explicitly how to teaching, Mrs. Ts *** demonstrates, using the example of two married women, that wisdom (reasonableness, prudence) contributes to a happy life. Wisdom is associated with the manifestation of Christian virtues, trust in God's will and humility. So, from the practical question “how to become happy”, Bolotov comes to the question *what God is*.

Bolotov encapsulates the *Children's Education* in one of his letters *On the Purpose and Order of All Human Knowledge* as follows, “First, knowledge of oneself. Second, development of the world knowledge. Third, and finally, knowledge of God” (ARTEMIEVA, 2013). Despite the affirmation that it is impossible to determine which of them is more important, he suggests starting with the knowledge of God, and then studying human nature and the world around. This order is explained by the need for reasonable faith in God, which guides a person in life and leads to happiness. And although these three areas of knowledge are inextricably linked, it is better to start learning with fundamental worldview issues.

A. T. Bolotov's long association with N. I. Novikov began with the publication of *Children's Education* in 1776-1779. Later, for ten years, Bolotov worked on the author's magazine *Economic Shop, or Collection of Any Economic News, Reviews, Discoveries, Instructions, Notes and Advice*, which was published as an appendix to Novikov's *Moscow Gazette (Moskovsky Vedomosti)*.

Nikolai Ivanovich Novikov (1744 – 1818), a famous Russian educator, a major publisher of books and magazines, created the first Russian magazine for children in 1785 (it had been issued until 1789) *Children's Reading for the Heart and Mind*, which was published weekly a free sixteen-page supplement to the newspaper *Moscow Gazette (Moskovskie Vedomosti)*, and then formed into books per quarter (a total of 20 were formed).

The authorship of the preface to *Children's Reading* is attributed to Novikov with relative reliability since it is very close in content and style to the insertion of a subscription to *Moscow Gazette* in 1785 which was written on behalf of the publisher, that is, Novikov (PRIVALOVA,1976). In *Supplements to the Moscow Gazette* in 1783, Novikov published his pedagogical treatise *On the Upbringing and Instruction of Children for the Dissemination of Universally Beneficial Knowledge and General Well-Being* which structured similar views of the goals of upbringing. Also in *Supplements*, N. I. Novikov published his main pedagogical works: *Discourse on Some Ways to Arouse Teenagers' Curiosity* (1784); *On Early Childhood Education* (1784); *On the Socratic Method of Teaching* (1784); *On Aesthetic Education* (1784).

In the first issue of *Children's Reading*, Novikov states a reason for the emergence of the magazine – the publication of only German and French magazines for children in the Russian Empire. The first Russian-language magazine is designed to support, reacquire an interest and earn back respect to the native language from noble children. Unveiling purposes of the magazine, Novikov directly points to the imitation of German children's magazines. Russian children, according to the authors of the magazine, need useful “reading for their age” in their native language. *The content* of the magazine, according to Novikov's idea, will include moralizing plays that will promote respect for God, the Emperor, parents and mentors, for all people and ourselves. Reading these plays should help children become prosperous and happy in life. Thus, Novikov considers the formation of a moral and respectable person to be the goal of upbringing (CHILDREN'S READING FOR THE HEART AND MIND, 1785).

In addition to morality, the magazine was intended to educate the readers' minds through educational plays, the topics of which were “physics, natural history, geography and other sciences”. Also, the authors of the magazine decide not to disclose their names and ranks

in introduction, so as not to gain the weight of authority, but to stay a close friend or a casual friend for children. Each issue of the magazine contained one verse from Scripture.

The magazine was published under the tactful guidance of N. I. Novikov. The editor of the magazine who was “considered an excellent translator” in the literary circles also published translations and the first literary works by N. M. Karamzin. The magazine published the works by the greatest German and French children’s writers, namely, the publication of translations from *The Children’s Library* by J. H. Campe, from the magazine *Friend of Children* (Kinderfreund) by K. F. Weisse, *Les veillées du chateau* by Genlis (PRIVALOVA, 1964). A valuable source to establish the authorship of the works is *Letters of a Russian Traveler* by N. M. Karamzin (KARAMZIN, 1987) which mention his meetings with K. F. Weisse and the letters to Bonnet. An equally valuable source is the correspondence between Karamzin and Petrov which touches on issues of the magazine.

Prominent teachers of that time such as A. A. Prokopovich-Antonsky who was the rector of Moscow University from 1819 to 1826, writers V. S. Podshivalov, N. N. Sandunov worked upon the magazine *Children’s Reading*.

The magazine presents paroemiatic novelets, stories, fairy tales, fables, conversations, and scientific essays are presented in an encyclopedic variety. The authors sought to make reading not only useful but also enjoyable, so they did not avoid humor and placed anecdotes on the pages of the magazine. One can see in this the continuation of the line of Novikov’s satirical magazines *Shirker (Truten’)* (1769-1770), *Bletherer (Pusomelya)* (1770), *Painter (Zhivopisets)* (1772-1773), satirizing follies of modern society, especially its ignorance.

On the pages of *Children’s Reading* moral problems are clearly expressed in the context of upbringing: prudence and diligence are opposed to ignorance, frivolity and idleness. “One of the central questions of the magazine is the question of fostering true nobility, friendship, devotion, honesty, generosity in children” (BABUSHKINA, 1948).

N. I. Novikov is known for his humanistic orientation in matters of pedagogy, as evidenced by his charitable activities. In the 70s, in St. Petersburg, he opened schools for children of deacons, barber, impoverished officers, using the funds from publishing and charity. His main pedagogical articles also express the desire to educate children in the spirit of humanism and dialogue, taking care of their benefits, so that learning is easy and interesting.

Summary

At the end of the 18th century, education for children was practice-oriented, therefore it acquired the form of moral teaching in which life instructions were pointedly given, which became the result of cultural experience and reflection of an adult man. A. T. Bolotov with his *Children's Education*, sincerely wishing to share the acquired wisdom, and the authors of the magazine *Children's Education* edited by N. I. Novikov align with this literary tradition.

Children's Education reflects the ideas of humane pedagogy. Moral improvement occurs through the acquisition of knowledge about God, man and the world. The practical goal of learning is seen in the achievement of happiness, therefore, A. T. Bolotov considered it to be the most powerful motivation for learning. In *Reading for Children*, we see an attempt to give a great number of children the opportunity to simultaneously get education and smarts from the best domestic and foreign teachers of their time.

We observe the results of the educational work by A. T. Bolotov and N. I. Novikov in the next generation of the Russian intelligentsia, which brought Russian culture and philosophy to their height in the 19th century.

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