

AUTHOR'S POSITION IN THE PORTRAYAL OF THE MAIN CHARACTERS OF V.P. ASTAFYEV'S STORY "FLYING GOOSE"

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Abstract: The purpose of this article is to identify the problem of moral choice of a person through the prism of the author's position in relation to the described events and characters of the story "Flying Goose".

Keywords: V.P.Astafyev, "Flying Goose", hero's concept, human choice, author's position

The name of the remarkable writer Victor Petrovich Astafev is well known all over the world. In 2001 in the magazine "New World" was first published a story by V.P. Astafev. It was for him Astafev was awarded the Yuri Kazakov Prize in 2002 and posthumously the state prize and it was staged in the Chekhov Moscow Art Theater. Chekhov. The story "Flying Goose" is the last work published during Victor Astafev's lifetime. The main moral problems in the story "Flying Goose" are the problems that have always worried Russian classical literature: the relationship between man and historical time; the problem of moral choice; the problem of duty, conscience, honor, love, death-immortality. From the finale of the story we learn that "it was one thousand nine hundred and forty-ninth year" [1, p. 3]. This compositional illogic is explained in the beginning of the story, which is full of hopelessness and abandonment. Already in the first paragraph the world, "shifted out of place, immersed in a fog, in wetness and clouds" [1, p. 3]. Even the very name of "the corner of the country that sheltered the newlyweds, united by their needlessness and unaccustomedness, cuts the ear and breathes some absurdity and meaninglessness ... Chu-fy-ri-no.... This name was invented by Danila, when it was just

joyful at heart from the victory, just wanted to shout, dance, hug everyone, and all sorts of jokes, funny, punning words to say" [1, p. 6]. But the pun came out clearly not cheerful. Maybe, through the exhilaration of victory there was already a premonition of the needlessness of "heroes and winners", who were used to being thought for in the army, to be thought for them, to be led, guided, determined somewhere. They could not believe that now they would be "taken and thrown" to the mercy of fate. But they were "taken and thrown". The different vocabulary immediately draws attention to itself. On the one hand, "heroes", "winners", "the Great Victory", and on the other hand - expressive-abbreviated words like "they were smoking wildly", "eating lard". And another accident on the railroad, which scattered the soldiers all over Belarus, is perceived as a catastrophe, as the collapse of ridiculous hopes. In "Flying Goose" hope collapses at once and from the brightest, purest, weakest and most defenseless being - from a child, from little Arkani. This is atypical for Astafev's worldview. Suffice it to recall "Ludochka", written in the 90s, full of sadness and tragic events (the girl commits suicide, not having survived the physical and moral violence, and her father kills the rapist), the author sees salvation from the universal atrocity in the unborn baby, because it is the child is a pure angelic being and he owns the future. In "Flying Goose" Victor Astafev kills this hope at once in the person of Arkasha, who "died in late fall, almost in winter, no powders and pills did not work. Painful and long was the outcome of the child, he suffered, looked at his mother, his father, his grandmother Ita adult reproachful eyes, as if reflected from the lamp light glittered in the depths of these burning eyes, and something questioned the child's eyes of adults" [1, p. 11]. Was it only time that killed the boy? "We're not taught, we don't know how to live!" "What kind of husband am I? "What kind of father am I? I am not fit for these responsible positions!" [1, p. 12] - shouted in despair Danila after the funeral of his son. This is the main misfortune of the "lost" military generation..... As Victor Astafev himself said: "...war - what kind of biography is it? Empty time, wasted in vain" [5]. But it leaves non-healing wounds in the soul. After it there are people who know how to fight, but do not know how to live. The writer denies Arkani life, as he does not see a future for

him. Revealing the fates and characters of the main characters of the story, Victor Astafev convinces the reader that they have chosen their own fate in accordance with their moral standards and laws. Marina and Danila Solodovnikovs live a difficult, harsh life: "It cannot be said that the first post-war winter was very difficult for the newlyweds, it was, like many people in the country, just difficult". Already at the beginning of the story we learn that Danila Solodovnikov is waiting in "a small one-room hut, barn-roofed with a hewn gutter, wife and son Arkanya ...", who "painfully tearful, often sick with a runny nose, he had a recalculation protruded on the sides of the ribs, he looked two and a half years old, although it was his fourth. And all from the disorder, from nervousness, from poor nutrition of the mother. And where can they get anything? They are playing here, playing with their teeth". [1, p.18-19]. But Victor Astafyev likes Danila and Marina very much.... "Flying Goose" is precisely interesting because it makes us think about the questions that everyone strives to answer for themselves: what is behind the high moral choice - what are the forces of the human mind, soul, fate, what helps a person to resist, to show amazing striking vitality, helps to live and die in a human way. Before meeting Marina at the "broken station" Danila felt his "loneliness and mental abandonment" [1, p.24]. Meeting the girl at the water pump changed his whole life. Danila began to show concern for his unmarried wife from the very first minutes of their joint stay in the echelon. "He cautiously moved to her, covered her and himself with his overcoat and thought soothingly, even pitifully: "Tired, poor"" [1, p.24]. Living at the landlady Vitalia Gordeevna, the guy did not shy away from any work: "I painted and patched what was necessary, learning everything in the process of life and on the advice of experienced people, repaired the furnace, moved the chimney, repaired the porch, fixed the rotted dry goods in the cellar. He worked, knowing neither holidays nor weekends" [1, p.25].

Danila took even greater responsibility when, at the end of winter, he brought his wife from the railroad maternity hospital and brought his son Arkasha in his arms. The sense of responsibility for his home, for his family, for the sickly boy is very close to the author. He looks in detail at how not for life, but to death fights a former soldier, saving

his son. Danila goes to "prachtikants" to Pakhomka Vereshchak, whose main vocation in life was hunting. "If Danila had not been a humble and patient man by birth, he would have abandoned all this complex and tricky science of suburban fisherman But he endured everything, all prevailed and learned, though not very well, to shoot, to own duck decoys, grouse peeper, to make scarecrows, put loops on hares, wandered all the neighborhoods, learned the mysterious meaning of life of Russian forests and waters, got a lot of joys and a lot of grief" [1, p.32-33]. In terms of vitality, will, aspiration he is very close to the author, although there is a taut string of hopelessness already at the beginning of the story, when Danila, having gone before dawn into the taiga, without making a single shot and without meeting a single bird suitable for brew, was forced to wander through the wet, cold forest. He could, as he had done before, jump into a freight train to "return home as soon as possible, dry off, warm up and sleep" [1, p.35]. But he could not, having no right to return empty-handed, it was impossible to leave the boy without meat broth. A migrating goose - a dead goose - is a symbol not of life, but of the subsequent death of the whole Solodovnikov family. They will also "fly" through life. And though Danila held firmly, even in difficult moments constantly remembered his dignity, his honor, the honor of his family, but the death of his son broke Danila. Apparently, Victor Astafev realized that Danila simply could no longer live and fight. His pain was akin to death. His human face, he did not lose, until the end of his short life in anything does not change himself: not in a hurry to return from the tuberculosis hospital, so as not to complicate the life of Marina. Secretly came to check on the sick Victoria Gordeevna, leaves his wife a note that she often did not come to him, and better more rest, and even brings him the food due to him. Danila died quietly in the isolation ward from a short-lived consumption. But the author, observing the hero, emphasizes that the silent steadfastness of Danila reveals a truly Christian attitude to the world: he has neither hatred nor anger towards "a whole army of darmoedi and lackeys" [1, p.39], he humbly endures all the trials. And by the way Marina in a fit of despair and hopelessness threw the cushion with awards into the grave, as "mooed muffledly, and tightened the black handkerchief

under her chin" [1, p.41], as stopped to enter into conversations with Nelly Sergeyevna, makes the reader realize that Marina also made her choice, she too "flew" through this world.

Victor Astafev considers her, Marina Solodovnikova, to be the strongest and most courageous person. From the very first pages of the story, the heroine attracts the readers' attention. We see a serious, thin, short-cut girl, neatly dressed. "But still, she was a pretty girl, her eyes were blue, her lips were smiling ... nose even, not small and not big, hair is cheerful and wavy, proudly thrown sideways and back" " [1, p.48].

Marina is a girl energetic, intelligent, having her own opinion and able to stand up for it. She impressed Danila when in the echelon "all the sick soldiers in need of help deftly and quickly pampered", forced to clean up the carriage. Thus she made herself respect "used to live freely and wildly in the trenches" [1, p.44].

Like Danila, Marina had not accumulated a biography, and she had nowhere to go either. She is the mistress of her own destiny. And Victor Astafev is very impressed by her self-sufficiency, spiritual and moral strength. She forever says goodbye to her old life and gives herself entirely into the hands of Danila. Marina believes that a new world will open up before her, and bravely goes with her "unreasonable wonder" to the unknown town of Chufirino. Life in a new place does not scare Marina. She "melted after work and on weekends, whitewashed everything, shook all the junk in the house and medical duties coped skillfully and skillfully" [1, p.49]. Marina helped all the suffering at any time, without taking any payment from them.

Marina, from the author's point of view, inherited the best features of a woman of Russian classical literature. There is not a drop of falsity in her, she is natural, frank, hardworking, honest before people and before herself.

And is very sad that instead of "slapping a wet rag on the face" Nella Sergeyevna, spanking for the candy taken from the table, made little Arkasha cry.

Victor Astafev admires and is proud of the Solodovnikovs. They have their own happiness: the happiness of understanding and fusion of kindred souls, the happiness of

understanding the highest holy meaning of their lives. Such happiness is not given for free, does not come by itself. It must be earned, to suffer, to go through temptations, to defeat the evil in themselves and worthily withstand the trials of the outside world. The main characters of the story, seemingly defenseless against evil, penetrating into every home, every family, full of great moral strength, the source of which is true love. And we see that in the clash of two forces - the cruelty of some people and the mental purity, fortitude, heroic firmness of others, the inner victory over evil is won by good, but this victory, according to the author, was not claimed by anyone, moreover, retreated into the background, was in denial. And although during the feast Marina breast protects her husband from the evil so unexpectedly piled on them, in front of the abomination of humanity turns out to be unarmed. "It must have hurt her, that that here is a well-fed, well-groomed lady shoots here, rights shaking, and she, so much hard, bloody and terrible work at the front overcame, can not, or what, can not stand up for his Danila, let the gaunt chest can not overshadow the fighter, yes?" [1, p.52].

Marina is a strong woman, but the death of her son and Danila broke her. Now her life "went on as if in a half dream". Not used to living at the expense of others, Marina does not want to go to church. No, she is not godless, it's just that behind this, too, there is a higher morality, her choice. "What is this, again speculation, again adaptation, the desire to live with someone else's help. No, let the Mukomolovs and all others similar to them live, she, once cut off, a fish by life, will cope with her own small affairs" [1, p.55]. Victor Astafev shows that Marina is quite sane, that her suicide is borne, chosen and justified by her. It is impossible to live without a family, without Danila and Arkasha in this world "long ago cursed and blown away by all winds": "Here, here, here, here, my darlings. I'm coming to you. Why am I here alone and alone?" " [1, p.53]. It turns out that she cursed the world and therefore left it, acting not in a godly way, but in accordance with her worldview. Victor Astafev does not justify Marina, he knows that she is driven into a dead end, and sees no way out for her.

Victor Astafyev sharply contrasts the second young family of the Mukomolovs - Vladimir Fedorovich and his wife Nelly Sergeevna. He is the son of Vitalia Gordeevna, who, thanks to her spiritual generosity and kindness, became a native mother for the Solodovnikovs and "Baba Itya" for Arkasha. However, the return of her son caused her an oppressive feeling. Vitalia Gordeevna wondered how people like her son and daughter-in-law could lead a worthless, empty life, while being satisfied with themselves and their lives. "Do they both with their Nellyushko do not realize that they were tangled in the feet of the warring, now they are tangled in the feet of working people, preventing them from living and working normally" " [1, p.44].

The attitude to the people, and their lives with all the hardships and joys are the main measure of the moral essence of man. Good and evil are inherent in man (such is human nature), and he himself makes a choice and is responsible for this choice. In every person there is inner evil in the form of low feelings and thoughts, but everything depends on how the person himself treats the manifestation of these low feelings in himself: if he does not strive to overcome them in himself, he himself finds himself in their power, then they control him, determine his behavior, his actions.

Vladimir Fyodorovich, heeding the advice of his dying father, safely graduated from military school, but the war prevented him from studying further. He tried to do something heroic on the Volga, near Stalingrad, where the war took him. Once even replaced the commander of a rifle company, but quickly realized that it is dangerous, "here and can kill. And more Vladimir Fedorovich did not expose himself to dangers and firmly internalized that "the main task of him and the political department of the whole heroic, Stalingrad army - not to interfere with people, but also to keep so that they were not forgotten...". He acquired at the front a solid body and wife Nelly Sergeevna. "With his waggishness, unquestioning judgment, the ability to conduct small talk at a decent ideological level, even gait, stoic, unyielding, he suppressed, morally ruled over all " [1, p.58-62]. Wanting to emphasize his attitude to the Mukomolovs, Victor Astafev again mixes stylistic layers of his description: "to create heroic"; "small talk and ideological

level"; "acquired a body and a wife" [1, p.62]. Continuing to develop the image of the Mukomolovs, Victor Astafev writes: "The Mukomolovs arrived with a pile of good, ruddy, handsome, nobleman-like and with noble, albeit still looking gaunt, habits and manners. Of course, only irritation and hatred were aroused in them by Marina and Danila Solodovnikov, who had worked themselves to death. They became the denunciation of the life of the Mukomolovs, they destroyed them with themselves. That is why "a silent, unknown war began in the Mukomolovs' house. And the words of Khrunchikha, a friend of Vitalia Gordeevna, sound prophetically: "Well, Vitalia, hold on. These gentlemen will not give life to you or to the robitishki, they will burn you out of the world" [1, p.63-64]. And they did it slowly, systematically, with some kind of scrupulous mutilation. Where were the "robitishki" to cope with the "gentlemen"? Nelly Sergeevna not only deliberately put gold rings, expensive brooches, threw money, "testing the tenants and Vitalia Gordeevna herself for strength" [1, p.64], but also mocked Arkasha, putting candy in front of the hungry boy ... But the terrible thing is not only that Mr. Mukomolovs drove Marina and Vitalia Gordeevna out of the house, but also that their life with Nelly Sergeevna was gaining confidence and strength. Next to the fact that Arkasha and Danila were dying next to them, as exhausted, trying to save them, Marina, Vladimir Fedorovich Mukomolov went to the party committee, got a job "in accordance with the rank and party rank", "for a short time went to the plant on foot, then rode on the duty bus, and here he was assigned a personal black Volga" [1, p.68]. When Danila was chasing a goose to feed his son, "the party gentleman carried himself carefully along the ground, spoke importantly and condescendingly to his subordinates, he got a staff in the party committee, and Nellyunchik smoothly moved to the office of a caring husband"[1, p.67].

It is clear that the author entrusts his thoughts to Vitalia Gordeevna, who "silently observing the surrounding reality" [1, p.44], was amazed by life. Entire armies of darmoedovs, lackeys were on the horse of life, believed that in war and in peaceful life without them a step can not do, that they were the main driving force of victories and reviving progress, so still believe. And here are some Solodovnikovs "digging in their

heels". Attack them! Destroy them! And destroy them. Why did Victor Astafev leave no hope? Most likely, the author shows Marina's suicide as a protest and deliverance from a shabby life. Maybe the suicide was a manifestation of the very moral strength and courage opposed to Mukomolov. Marina chose death against life among the Mukomolovs because the world was at the mercy of these gentlemen.

Why did Victor Astafev not save his heroes, who certainly sympathized with him? What is connected with such a sad and hopeless prospect of the existence of our world in the eyes of the writer? Perhaps with his disappointment in the last years of his life in those bright, cloudless ideals on which life should be built.

Man lives in three dimensions: historical, physical and moral time. So if the historical and physical go forward, hence the feeling of flightiness and transience of human life, the moral time, from the point of view of Victor Astafev, stopped in 1949, so the story ends with the fact that in the moral plan time has frozen, and we continue our existence in the age of blood and violence, in the age of domination of the Mukomolovs.

Victor Astafev's story can not leave indifferent. Where is salvation? I remember a passage from the speech of A. Solzhenitsyn, which he says when receiving the Nobel Prize. "To live not by lies." Solzhenitsyn believes that "works that scoop up the truth and present it to us condensed alive, seize us, join us powerfully" [6], literature can actually help today's world. And "Flying Goose" by Victor Astafev is a vivid confirmation of this. This is a call for a man to rebel against open violence, as a simple step of a simple courageous man not to participate in evil, then the sprouts of good and truth will sprout, and "one word of truth will tug the whole world" [5].

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