

smislu Günther, polazeći od premise da je “pravi junak Platonovljevih djela njihov jezik” (53), nastoji u svojoj knjizi pokazati da upravo Platonovljeva nekonvencionalna i nestandardna upotreba jezika također pridonosi osjećaju apsurdna. U svakom slučaju, Güntherove interpretacije Platonova nisu nimalo plošne, nego su, zahvaćajući sve razine analiziranih djela, pronicljive i višeslojne. Na kraju nije naodmet istaknuti da će ova problemski intrigantna knjiga zasigurno privući čitatelje ne samo uvjerljivom

argumentacijom i iznimnom autorovom erudicijom nego i jasnoćom i preciznošću njegova izlaganja.

Živa Benčić

## LITERATURA

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## VIKTOR ASTAFYEV THROUGH THE LENS OF PAST AND PRESENT RESEARCH. TWO ISSUES IN HONOUR OF THE CENTENARY OF THE WRITER'S BIRTH

Natalia Sergeevna Tsvetova (ed.). *V. P. Astaf'ev: Pro et contra. Lichnost' i ideino-khudozhestvennoe nasledie V. P. Astaf'eva v otsenakh otechestvennykh i zarubezhnykh issledovatelei. Antologiya* (V. P. Astafyev: *Pro et Contra. The Personality and the Ideological and Artistic Legacy of V. P. Astafyev in Russian and Foreign Scholarship. An Anthology*), Sankt-Peterburg: Izd-vo RKhGA, 2024, pp. 800.

Natal'ia Vadimovna Kovtun (ed.). *Ekho Astaf'eva; aktual'nost' tvorcheskogo nasledia. K 100-letiiu so dnia rozhdeniia pisatel'ia* (Echoes of Astafyev: *The Relevance of His Creative Legacy. on the Centenary of the Writer's Birth*), Sankt-Peterburg: Izd-vo RKhGA, 2024, pp. 264.

The year 2024 marked the centenary of Viktor Astafyev's birth (1924–2001), a prominent Russian writer of the second half of the twentieth century. Astafyev is widely regarded as a central figure in Russian “village prose”, one of the most influential literary movements of the last century and is also credited as a pioneer of ecological prose in contemporary European literature. A veteran of World War II, he made a significant contribution to Russian military prose, consistently adopting a pacifist stance and offering an unflinching portrayal of the horrors of war. His work condemned both German Nazism and Soviet communism, a position that continues to provoke complex and often contradictory responses in contemporary Russia. This tension is particularly evident in two academic volumes published in Russia to mark the anniversary of his birth.

The first book under review, *V. P. Astaf'ev: Pro et contra. Lichnost' i ideino-khudozhestvennoe nasledie V. P. Astaf'eva v*

*otsenkakh otechestvennykh i zarubezhnykh issledovatelei. Antologiya*, was published as part of the renowned Pro et Contra series, present in Russia since 1993. In line with the series' tradition, the editors compiled nearly fifty texts by various authors – including Astafyev himself – written between the late 1960s and 2022. These contributions reflect a broad spectrum of perspectives on Astafyev's work, legacy, and personality, ranging from high praise to sharp criticism.

Regrettably, the volume pays little attention to the military dimension of Astafyev's legacy – an aspect central to his overall oeuvre. In the introduction, Natalia Tsvetova and Pavel Goncharov explain this omission by stating that Astafyev's "war" texts "require special discussion and an approach that urgently needs renewal" (18). This justification, however, is questionable. Astafyev's military prose has long been the subject of serious scholarly inquiry, and while curating a small selection of representative works might have posed challenges, it is precisely this kind of editorial decision that the Pro et Contra series is known for addressing. As the series aims to provide a comprehensive overview of current scholarship on each featured author, the exclusion of Astafyev's war prose creates a significant gap. Moreover, the suggestion that the discourse on his military writings needs "renewal"—particularly within the current political climate in Russia—raises concerns. One hopes that this omission will be rectified in a future volume that highlights key academic contributions to the study of war literature and Astafyev's role within it, as well as his broader significance in twentieth-century Russian literature.

The structure of the volume reflects the diversity of the texts it brings together. The book is organized into six thematic

sections. Following the introductory text by the editors, the first section, titled "Ot pervogo litsa" ("From the First Person"), presents a selection of autobiographical texts by Astafyev himself. These include his essay "Podvodia itogi" ("Summing Up"), originally published in the fifteen-volume edition of his collected works in 1997, excerpts from interviews, and selected quotations from his extensive correspondence with fellow writers. The section concludes with two additional texts: an article by Yuri Rostovtsev—the author of Astafyev's first biography, published in 2009 in the *Zhizn' zamechatelnykh liudei* (*The Lives of Remarkable People*) series by the Molodaia Gvardiia publishing house—and an analytical essay by Natalia Tsvetova devoted to Astafyev's confessional piece *Iz tikhogo sveta* (*From the Quiet Light*). Together, these works offer a multifaceted portrait of the writer's personality and lay the groundwork for the themes explored in the subsequent sections of the volume.

The second part of the collection, "Shtrikhi k avtoportretu" ("Strokes for a Self-Portrait"), brings together articles written over several years that shed light on Astafyev's personality and body of work. Of the five texts included, three stand out as particularly noteworthy: excerpts from the memoirs of Galina Shlenskaya, a long-time acquaintance of the writer and a respected scholar of his oeuvre; Vladimir Bondarenko's article "Poslednii poklon Astaf'evu" ("The Last Bow to Astafyev"), which captures the complex relationship between Astafyev and the conservative literary milieu; and a timely contribution by Dmitry Dyakov, published in commemoration of the writer's centenary. Dyakov's piece focuses on Astafyev's interactions with fellow writer and front-line veteran Yuri Goncharov. As Dyakov demonstrates,

the relationship between the two men serves as a lens through which to view the broader dynamics of historical change in postwar Russia, as well as the influence of these transformations on Astafyev's evolving worldview.

The third section of the collection, "Khudozhestvennyi mir pisatel'ia" ("The Writer's Artistic World"), features a number of significant scholarly articles that reflect the richness and diversity of Viktor Astafyev's poetics. It includes sixteen contributions devoted to various aspects of the literary style and thematic concerns found in the works of this twentieth-century Russian classic. Among them are articles by prominent scholars addressing key themes in Astafyev's prose, such as "pochvennichestvo" (the native soil movement) (Alla Bolshakova), Ural motifs (Lyudmila Slabozhaninova), the theme of family and home (Natan Leiderman), the concept of eternal femininity (Irina Plekhanova), narrative structure in the novel *Tsar'-ryba* (*The Tsar-Fish*) (Nikolai Yanovsky), the role of colloquial speech in the writer's prose (Igor Shaitanov), and the poetic qualities of the "Siberian text" in the cycle *Zatesi* (*The Notches*) (Alexander Kubasov).

This section—the most extensive in the volume—evokes mixed impressions. On the one hand, the high academic standard of the contributions is indisputable; on the other, the lack of articles devoted to Astafyev's military prose leaves the overall presentation of his creative legacy somewhat incomplete.

The fourth section, "Astaf'ev i literaturnyi process" ("Astafyev and the Literary Process"), includes twelve articles. First and foremost, we would like to highlight an article by Alfia Smirnova, which discusses ecocentrism in Astafyev's work within the context of literary tradition. Olesya Zolo-

tukhina, in turn, examines the evolution of the writer's religious quest as reflected in his prose. Notably, Zolotukhina's article is one of only two in the collection that address Astafyev's war writing. The researcher emphasizes the significant role of religious motifs in *Pastukh i pastushka* (*The Shepherd and the Shepherdess*) and *Prokliaty i ubity* (*Cursed and Killed*), convincingly arguing that "the writer's consciousness encompasses two types of mentality — Soviet and Christian Orthodox" (515). The former dominates his early work, while the latter emerges more clearly in his later writing. The question of Astafyev's relationship to the Christian Orthodox tradition is further explored in Olga Gaidash's article. According to Gaidash, it was precisely this Orthodox worldview that imparted a sense of optimism to the otherwise bleak portrayal of modern humanity in Astafyev's prose.

Two additional texts in the fourth section are also noteworthy. The first is a brilliant article by Tatyana Rybalchenko titled "Situatsiia vozvrashcheniia v siuzhetakh russkoi realisticheskoi prozy 1950–1990-kh gg." ("The Situation of Return in Russian Realist Prose of the 1950s–1990s.") While Astafyev's work is not the central focus, the article provides a broad overview of literary developments during this period, allowing readers to independently assess the writer's role in twentieth-century Russian literature and the significance of his legacy from a contemporary perspective. The second text, "Rechnye pisateli. Viktor Petrovich Astaf'ev (1924–2001), Valentin Grigor'evich Rasputin (rod. v 1937 g.)" ("River Writers: Viktor Petrovich Astafyev (1924–2001), Valentin Grigorievich Rasputin (born 1937)"), by contemporary writer and essayist Mikhail Tarkovsky, was first published in 2014. In this article, Tarkovsky compares the writings of these two

classics of Russian "village" prose through the lens of the river topos found in both authors' works. According to Tarkovsky, the river topos carries a pronounced spiritual and moral significance for both writers, symbolizing the life and grandeur of nature and the homeland. As Tarkovsky notes, "the feeling of native land is the only thing that can inspire a true Russian writer" (571). Both authors perceived human interference with the ecosystems of Siberian rivers as a sign of a profound spiritual crisis in modern humanity and have passionately advocated throughout their lives for the preservation of these sacred landscapes.

The collection also includes articles that draw comparisons between specific motifs in Astafyev's writing and the contributions of authors from other national literatures. Elena Kriklivets examines the topos of home in both Astafyev's and Belarusian writer Viktor Kazko's works; Svetlana Burdina explores the theme of the ecology of the soul in Astafyev's writing and the prose of Chinese writer Zhang Wei; and Vera Degtyareva provides a concise overview of how Polish, Czech, and French literary scholars perceive the legacy of the Russian author.

The fifth section is devoted to one of the most controversial aspects of Viktor Astafyev's life and legacy: his scandalous correspondence with the Soviet writer and literary critic Nathan Eidelman. Alongside the letters themselves, the editors of *Viktor Astafyev: Pro et Contra* include four key responses that illuminate different facets of this dispute. First, Yuri Karabichevsky offers a highly critical analysis of Astafyev and the Russian intelligentsia of the latter half of the twentieth century. In contrast, renowned poet and translator David Samoilov provides a thoughtful and balanced article that highlights the stubbornness and ideological rigidity present in both correspondents.

Completing the picture are contributions from Oleg Nehaev, who explores the negative consequences of the dispute for Astafyev, and Lev Anninsky, who examines the particularities of the epistolary genre in the works of the Krasnoyarsk writer. Together, these texts present a multifaceted view of a complex issue connected to Astafyev's personality, enabling readers to engage with the material critically and draw their own conclusions.

The concluding section, "Vmesto poslesloviia" ("Instead of an Afterword"), presents four texts published after Viktor Astafyev's death in 2001. These articles not only reflect the richness of his literary legacy but, above all, highlight the diversity of opinions about his work and personality within the contemporary Russian literary and cultural context. Ivan Esaulov in "Sataninskie zvezdy i svyashchennaia voina. Sovremennyi roman v kontekste russkoi dukhovnoi traditsii" ("Satanic Stars and Holy War: The Contemporary Novel in the Context of the Russian Spiritual Tradition") – the second contribution in the volume devoted to Astafyev's military prose – offers high praise for *Prokliaty i ubity*, emphasizing the Christian principles that permeate this war novel. In stark contrast stands what is, in our view, the most controversial piece in the collection: Yuri Pavlov's "Pozdnii Viktor Astaf'yev: temnye i svetlye znaki sud'by" ("The Late Viktor Astafyev: Dark and Light Signs of Destiny"). Written in the style of a Stalinist denunciation, Pavlov's article contains numerous defamatory statements about Astafyev, his family, and his literary legacy. While the editors' intent to present a full spectrum of perspectives is understandable, it must be acknowledged that the substantive quality of this article is clearly inferior to the other contributions in the volume. At the same time, given that

it was written in 2020, the piece may also be viewed as a reflection of the aggressive nationalist rhetoric prevalent in Putin-era journalism. The other two texts that conclude the volume are “Vremia Astaf’eva prodolzhaetsia” (“The Time of Astafyev Continues”) by Vladimir Zamyshlyaev and a brief essay “Mesto na kryl’tse” (“A Place on the Porch”) by the esteemed literary critic Valentin Kurbatov, who sadly passed away in 2021. These pieces, fortunately, bring the reader back to the core truth about Viktor Astafyev’s significance for twentieth-century Russian literature and culture. Both highlight his true talent as a writer, the consistent humanism in his work, and his independent stance on essential moral issues.

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The second publication, *Ekho Astaf’eva; aktual’nost’ tvorcheskogo naslediiia. K 100-letiiu so dnia rozhdeniia pisatel’ia*, was also published by the same publishing house, RHGA, as part of the “Universalii Kultury” series. This volume contains articles by scholars who participated in the international conference “Echoes of Astafyev,” which was dedicated to the writer’s centenary. In the preface, Natalia Kovtun, the editor of the volume, underscores the multifaceted nature of Astafyev’s literary legacy and describes his work as “linked to the most important trends in contemporary Russian literature: traditionalist, military, and ecological prose” (5). Kovtun highlights the close connection between Astafyev’s oeuvre and themes such as the preservation of peasant civilization, utopianism, and the safeguarding of folk traditions and Siberia’s natural resources.

The articles in the collection are organized into four thematic sections, each exploring a distinct aspect of the writer’s literary legacy. The first section, “Tvorchestvo V. Astaf’eva na peresechenii khudozhestvennykh napravlenii: derevenskaia, voennaia i ekologicheskaja proza” (“V. Astafyev’s Creativity at the Crossroads of Artistic Trends: Village, Military, and Ecological Prose”), includes eight articles that examine the thematic and poetic diversity of the Siberian writer’s work. The opening article by Alexander Kulyapin offers a detailed analysis of the language used by the characters in Astafyev’s early novella “Krazha” (“Theft”). Kulyapin argues that, even in his early work, Astafyev made an unsuccessful attempt to break free from the socialist realist poetics that still dominated Russian literature in the 1950s.

The next four articles, by Anatolii Sobenikov, Elena Prikazchikova, Maria Larina, and Elena Kriklivets, delve into aspects of Astafyev’s war prose. Sobenikov’s article explores the concept of “truth” in the war novel *Proklyaty i ubity* (*Cursed and Killed*), emphasizing its anti-war message. Prikazchikova examines the motif of the dead enemy in *Veselyi Soldat* (*The Jolly Soldier*) and compares it to the Russian literary tradition, highlighting Astafyev’s original approach to depicting the military foe. Larina’s article compares the portrayal of the road motif in Astafyev’s war prose and in the works of the German writer Hermann Kant. Kriklivets, in turn, provides an overview of the depiction of the Great Patriotic War in contemporary Belarusian literature.

Elena Novikova’s article addresses the significance of the ecological theme in the works of both V. Astafyev and V. Rasputin, examining how this focus continues in the prose of contemporary writer R. Senchin. Tamara Klimova. She then proceeds to

analyze Astafyev's dramatic works, which remain relatively unknown to the general reader. The section concludes with an article by Albina Gontareva, which reflects on the connection between the famous story "Lyudochka" by this Siberian prose writer from the Perestroika period and the poetics of sentimental prose.

The second section, "Proza V. Astaf'eva i okrestnosti..." ("The Prose of V. Astafyev and His Surroundings..."), is devoted to the historical, literary, and cultural contexts of the writer's work. It features Galina Spiridonova's analysis of the image of the Siberian rogue in nineteenth-century Siberian literature and Arina Burylo's exploration of the fairy tales of Astafyev's daughter, Anastasia Astafyeva. Tatiana Zagidulina examines the transformation of the traditional journey-initiation plot in the story *Yartsevo-Yertsevo*, in which the writer again exposes both Stalinist terror and the totalitarian nature of socialist realist poetics. Anastasia Ignatieva, in turn, focuses on the work of another classic of village prose, V. Rasputin, analyzing the symbolic role of female characters in his writing. Andrey Grachev and Irina Prudius discuss the motif of restoration/reconstruction as a symbol of the destruction of home, based on E. Walsh's film script *The House*. David Gillespie and Marina Korneeva analyze the craft of translating literature to cinema, drawing on examples from film versions of works by traditionalist Russian writers.

The third section of the collection addresses issues of literary continuity. Irina Mitrofanova explores the continuation of the traditions of V. Astafyev and V. Rozanov in Andrei Antipin's series of miniatures "Zhivye Listia" ("Living Leaves"), while Lyudmila Sinyakova's article, based on Roman Senchin's stories, analyzes the theme of the individual confronted with a moral

choice, considering the transformation of ethical values, which plays a crucial role in contemporary non-traditionalist prose. Nikita Valyanov examines the perception of Astafyev, as well as the similarities and differences in worldview between him and Mikhail Tarkovsky, a writer recognized as one of Astafyev's steadfast literary heirs. The next two articles, written by Elena Lysyuk and Polina Zubkova, focus on the continuity of traditionalism in Russian literature, with both exploring the works of leading contemporary literary figures, particularly Evgeny Vodolazkin. The section concludes with an intriguing article by Lyubov Oreshina, which compares the depiction of Russia in the works of Yuri Mamleev and Vladimir Astafyev, noting the balance between Mamleev's metaphysical realism and Astafyev's apocalyptic traditionalism.

The final section of the collection, "Proizvedeniia V. Astaf'eva v sovremennom muzevedenii i kritike" ("The Works of V. Astafyev in Contemporary Museology and Criticism"), contains three articles. Olga Glushenkova and Tatyana Zagidulina examine the process of the "museumification" of the writer's literary heritage in his small homeland, the village of Ovsyanka in Krasnoyarsk Krai. Ksenia Sokolova writes about the portrayal of Astafyev's Vologda period in his epistolary and journalistic legacy. Olga Kurgina's article surveys the publication of works by rural writers in the journal *Okhota i Okhotnichie Delo* (*Hunting and Hunting Affairs*).

Both collections reviewed here are of high scholarly value, reflecting the current state of research into the rich literary legacy of Viktor Astafyev. Despite the challenges posed by political circumstances, these publications address a wide array of issues related to the themes, poetics, ideological, and moral questions within the writer's work.

Thanks to the methodological approach taken by the compilers, both collections have become invaluable reference points for

further studies of Viktor Astafyev's work and contemporary Russian traditionalist prose.

Aleksander Wawrzyńczak

## PROTURJEČNI JUNACI DOSTOEVSKOG

Jovan Popov, *Gordi i ponizni. Paradoksalisti Fjodora Dostojevskog*, Beograd: Srpska književna zadruga, 2024, 446 str.

Prošle je godine u biblioteci "Kolo" Srpske književne zadruge, profilirane za književnoteorijske radove, objavljena knjiga Jovana Popova o gordosti i poniznosti junaka Fjodora Dostoevskog. Autoru je nedavno za tu značajnu studiju uručena nagrada "Nikola Milošević" Radio Beograda 2 koja se dodjeljuje za najbolju knjigu u području teorije književnosti i umjetnosti, estetike i filozofije. Spomenuti valja neke od dobitnika te nagrade, ustoličene 2002. godine. To su, primjerice, Dragan Stojanović za knjigu *Energija sakralnog u umetnosti* (2010); Jasmina Ahmetagić za knjigu *Pripovedač i priča* (2014), koja je inače jedna od autorica važne i studiozne *Knjige o Dostojevskom* (2013); Tihomir Brajović za knjigu *Tumačenje lirске pesme – od teorije do interpretativne prakse* (2022); Mirko Zurovac za knjigu *Ontologija umetnosti* (2023) i dr. Nagrada Jovanu Popovu za knjigu o paradoksalistima Dostoevskog

potvrđuje njezinu vrijednost i znanstvenu ozbiljnost kojom se taj profesor na Filološkom fakultetu Univerziteta u Beogradu može podičiti, to više što je o Dostoevskom napisano mnoštvo knjiga i rasprava, koje nerijetko više sputavaju nego što pomažu u pronalasku vlastite perspektive u proučavanju stvaralaštva toga pisca.

Rakurs koji je odabrao Jovan Popov jest paradoksalnost, što je zasigurno jedan od ključnih pojmova u određenju poetike Fjodora Mihajloviča Dostoevskog. Nemali broj teoretičara mučio se s karakterizacijom njegovih junaka, analizom njihova ponašanja, njihovih dvojbi, ideja i sumnji i, u kojem se god smjeru krenulo, zaključak se svodio na proturječnost, odnosno paradoksalnost. U godini dvjestote obljetnice Dostoevskog, kada su se na brojnim sveučilištima organizirali skupovi posvećeni poetici toga književnika, u Genovi je organiziran međunarodni kolokvij na temu paradoksalnosti (*F. M. Dostoevskij. Humor, paradoksalnost, demontaža*, 2021), koja je "srce njegove poetike" (Farafonova 2023: 7), nakon čega je objavljen i zbornik (ur. D. Farafanova, L. Sal'mon, S. Aloe, 2023). Podsjećajući na članak "Paradoxical Dostoevsky" Graya Morsona u svom prilogu iz navedenog zbornika, Laura Salmon, talijanska prevoditeljica i neumorna proučavateljica