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METAPHOR IN THE WORKS OF V.P. ASTAFYEV: ARTISTIC-SEMANTIC FUNCTIONS AND STYLISH SPECIFICITY

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Abstract: This article examines the characteristics of V.P. Astafyev's metaphorical thinking as a crucial component of his artistic system. The main types of metaphors used in the writer's prose are analyzed, identifying their meaning-making and expressive-evaluative functions. Particular attention is paid to the metaphorical nature of the natural world, as well as metaphorical models related to understanding war, memory, and human moral responsibility. It is demonstrated that metaphor in Astafyev's works serves not only an aesthetic but also a conceptual function, shaping the philosophical subtext of the text.

Key words: metaphor, artistic image, Astafyev, conceptual metaphor, individual style, natural metaphors, war prose, author's position.

Viktor Petrovich Astafyev is one of the most significant figures in Russian prose of the second half of the 20th century. While he continues the traditions of realistic prose, his artistic method is distinguished by a high degree of imagery and expressiveness. Metaphor is a key means of artistic expression in Astafyev's works, not only embellishing the narrative but also fulfilling important meaning-making functions. In the writer's artistic world, metaphor is closely linked to a natural-philosophical perception of reality, moral issues, and the tragedy of human existence. Metaphorical imagery acquires particular significance in depictions of war, human destiny, and the relationship between man and nature. The purpose of this article is to identify the primary functions of metaphor in the works of V.P. Astafyev and to define the writer's metaphorical thinking. The relevance of this study lies in the fact that metaphor in Astafyev's prose not only fulfills a traditional decorative and stylistic role but also becomes a mechanism for shaping the author's worldview. It allows the writer to explore key issues: the relationship between man and nature, the tragedy of war, the moral degradation of society, and the need for spiritual purification. Metaphor is traditionally viewed as a trope based on the transfer of meaning through similarity. In artistic speech, metaphor serves as a means of creating an image and expressing the author's assessment. In modern linguistics, metaphor is understood not only as a stylistic device but also as a mechanism for conceptualizing the world, reflecting the characteristics of national and individual thinking. In Astafyev's work, metaphor becomes a tool for moral and philosophical understanding of reality and shapes the author's distinctive style. Natural metaphors, as the foundation of Astafyev's artistic world, are saturated with metaphorical imagery in his descriptions of nature. For the writer, nature serves not as a backdrop, but as an independent agent. Metaphors help to enliven the landscape, making it psychologically significant and meaningful. Astafyev often employs the technique of "personifying metaphor," in which natural phenomena acquire human characteristics: the forest "breathes," the river "speaks," and the earth «groans.» Such metaphors reinforce the sense of unity between man and nature. Nature is perceived as a living organism capable of suffering and resisting human intervention. In the writer's works, the Yenisei River, the taiga, mountains, and fields acquire symbolic significance. Through metaphorical images of nature, the author expresses the idea of a moral law: the disruption of

harmony leads to tragedy, and the preservation of natural purity becomes the measure of human spirituality. In Astafyev, natural metaphors are inseparable from emotional evaluation. A landscape can reflect a character's inner state, becoming a « psychological mirror» of their feelings. Thus, metaphor performs a «psychological function, connecting the external and internal worlds.

The research material is based on the works of V.P. Astafyev ("Tsar-Fish," "The Last Bow," "Cursed and Killed," and short stories from various years). The article's methodological basis consists of: 1) linguostylistic analysis; 2) methods of contextual and semantic analysis; 3) elements of a conceptual approach to metaphor, which views it as a mechanism for shaping a worldview [4, p. 112]. The theoretical basis of the study is based on works on the theory of tropes and artistic speech (V.V. Vinogradov, Yu.M. Lotman), as well as on contemporary research on metaphor as a cognitive phenomenon [6, p. 58]. In the artistic world of V.P. Astafiev, metaphor is one of the main means of modeling reality. Its use is associated with a special type of artistic consciousness of the writer: the desire to understand the world through a concrete image capable of expressing moral and philosophical meaning. Metaphor in Astafyev is not a random stylistic embellishment: it is organically integrated into the narrative structure, creates an emotional backdrop, heightens the drama of events, and expresses the author's assessment [2, p. 41]. One of the dominant features of Astafyev's prose is the text's richness in natural imagery. Nature is depicted as a living and spiritual force, and its elements become full-fledged participants in the artistic world. Landscape in the writer's prose serves more than just a descriptive function: it becomes a means of expressing the characters' inner states and the author's attitude toward events. In this context, metaphor plays a psychological role, connecting the external world with the world of human experience [1, p. 97]. In the story "The Tsar Fish," the elements of nature often acquire symbolic significance. The image of a river, water, and fish becomes a metaphor for the eternal law of existence. In Astafyev, nature possesses its own moral "truth," and anyone who violates this harmony inevitably faces punishment [7, p. 165]. In Astafyev's works, nature is metaphorically related to the concepts of "life," "memory," and "homeland." The image of the earth as a maternal principle is especially significant: the earth feeds and protects, but at the same time demands respect and responsibility [5, p. 88]. Thus, natural metaphors in the writer's work perform the following functions: 1) the formation of artistic space;

2) expression of the philosophical idea of harmony; 3) moral assessment of human actions. The military theme occupies a central place in Astafyev's work. The writer is a representative of "lieutenant's prose," yet his artistic approach is distinguished by a distinctly anti-romantic stance. War is depicted not as a heroic event, but as a national tragedy that destroys the human personality. Astafyev's metaphors of war are built on images of destruction, cold, and death. In the novel "Cursed and Killed," war is presented as a realm of "hell," where man is deprived of moral support and forced to struggle not only with the enemy but also with himself [3, p. 204]. Metaphor becomes a means of conveying a sense of catastrophe. It emphasizes the idea of war as an event that disrupts the natural order of life. In Astafyev, war is often likened to a soulless mechanism that grinds destinies and turns people into victims [8, p. 55]. Of particular significance is the juxtaposition of the "natural" and "military" worlds. While the writer associates nature with life, war with a dead space. This enhances the tragic meaning of the text and emphasizes the author's moral position [7, p. 198]. The Moral-Evaluative Function of Metaphor Metaphor in Astafyev's work is closely linked to the expression of moral categories. The writer strives not only to depict events but also to evaluate them, demonstrating spiritual degradation and

simultaneously the possibility of moral purification. Metaphors often appear in his texts, juxtaposing light and darkness, warmth and cold. Light symbolizes truth, spirituality, and goodness, while darkness and cold denote evil, inhumanity, and cruelty [2, p. 76]. The moral significance of metaphors is also evident in the depiction of human memory. In Astafyev, memory becomes a metaphor for conscience, an inner judgment that cannot be deceived. This is precisely why the writer's artistic language is saturated with images of pain, wounds, and a lingering scar [5, p. 114]. In the works "The Last Bow," the metaphor of memory is closely linked to the theme of childhood and one's native land. Here, the metaphor takes on a soft, lyrical tone, distinguishing it from tragic military imagery [1, p. 133]. An important feature of Astafyev's artistic world is that metaphor often reaches the level of symbolism. Symbolic metaphor allows the writer to convey the philosophical meaning of a work through a concrete image. For example, in "The Tsar Fish," the image of a huge fish takes on a symbolic character: it correlates with the idea of a person's moral ordeal, their greed, sin, and retribution. The fish becomes not just an object of hunting, but a metaphor for fate and moral choice [7, p. 174]. Such metaphors form the conceptual core of the text, transforming the work of art into a philosophical parable. This is precisely why metaphor in Astafyev becomes a crucial means of creating subtext and expressing the author's conception of the world [4, p. 121]. The conducted analysis allows us to conclude that metaphor in the work of V.P. Astafyev is not only a stylistic device, but also a fundamental element of the writer's artistic thinking. Metaphor performs important functions: 1) figurative and expressive; 2) psychological; 3) moral and evaluative; 4) philosophical and symbolic. Natural metaphors create a sense of the world's harmony and emphasize man's responsibility to nature. Military metaphors express the author's tragic worldview and anti-war stance. Symbolic metaphors create a profound philosophical subtext related to issues of memory, conscience, and moral choice. Thus, metaphor is one of the key components of Astafyev's artistic system and defines the uniqueness of his individual style. Metaphor in the works of V.P. Astafyev is a key means of artistically modeling the world. It serves not only figurative and expressive functions but also becomes a tool for moral and philosophical analysis of reality. The main characteristics of the writer's metaphors are: 1) a close connection with the natural world and the traditions of Russian realistic prose; 2) the tragic focus of military metaphors; 3) an axiological function expressing the author's moral assessments; 4) the symbolic nature of individual metaphors, which forms the philosophical subtext of the works. Thus, metaphor in Astafyev's artistic world is a crucial element of his individual style, contributing to the revelation of the writer's central ideas: man's responsibility to nature, history, and his own conscience.

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