

# THE “ICON-LIKE” APPROACH TO VISUALISATION OF OPPOSING IMAGERY IN A SIBERIAN TEXT IN ILLUSTRATIONS BY SERGEY ELOYAN FOR VIKTOR ASTAFYEV’S *THE TSAR FISH*

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**Abstract.** *A developed tradition of illustrating Siberian texts in Russian literature makes it possible to identify several approaches and corresponding principles for interpreting texts through illustrations. The approach examined in this article can be for convenience called an “icon-like” as it focuses on the Orthodox tradition in visual arts and is related to corresponding iconographic patterns in illustration. One of the key representatives of this approach is an*

Irkutsk artist Sergey Eloyan, who turned to the art of book illustration in 2003 within a large-scale project by Gennady Sapronov aimed at publishing the most outstanding works by Siberian writers. An edition of *The Tsar Fish* by Viktor Astafyev ranks significantly in this series. As the book is very complex in terms of genre, the “icon-like” approach became a means for the artist to visualise the liminal chronotope and paradoxical nature of Astafyev’s images when illustrating the piece. Moreover, Eloyan challenged a certain tradition for illustrating Astafyev’s books which complicated the artist’s task. Established in the Soviet period when Astafyev’s works were subjected to severe censorship, that tradition of illustrating did not allow to reveal the fundamental for the author inseparability of the beautiful and unbearable, the substance of life and the substance of death through a set of pictorial imagery. When freed from the shackles of censorship in the post-Soviet period, *The Tsar Fish* turned out to be saturated with completely polar imagery: the beautiful and disgusting, the high and low do not simply coexist, but merge into something inseparable. It would appear very difficult to even imagine an integral concept of illustration that could translate such a wide range of emotions into static imagery. Since the beginning of the 2000s, however, two attempts have been made to create a systematic pictorial set of images for *The Tsar Fish*. The first of these are Eloyan’s illustrations, and the second those of Oleg Mikhailov in 2013. Both of these are conceptual interpretations of the task of visualising an artistic text at the junction of traditional and new approaches of book illustration, made from different perspectives.

**Keywords:** Viktor Astafyev, Sergey Eloyan, Oleg Mikhailov, book illustration, visualisation of opposing imagery, Orthodox icon

## Introduction

Interest in *The Tsar Fish* was generated by the fact that various editions of this “narration in short stories” (as the author defined the genre of work) visually reveal the problem of the boundaries of illustrating literary texts in general, and of a Siberian text with its own specific features in particular. In this realm, the language of visual art has evolved in such a way that more and more subtle subtexts have become objects for illustration. At the same time, the development of individual genres of graphic narrative in American and European comics and Japanese manga illustrations have significantly expanded artists’ views on what can (should) and cannot (should not) be illustrated.

Siberian works, in particular those by Viktor Astafyev, are permeated with descriptions of “the unbearable” – namely, trials that befell a person who was born in Siberia or for various reasons ended up living there<sup>1</sup>. Methods for visualising the unbearable have long been developed in book illustrations: we can recall, for example, the famous effect of

1 Ogden, J. A. Siberia as Chronotope: Valentin Rasputin’s Creation Of A Usable Past in Sibir’, Sibir’. *Ab Imperio*, 2004, № 2, p. 647–664. Etkind, A. *Internal Colonization: Russia’s Imperial Experience*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2011. Gillespie, D. Russian Writers Confront The Past: History, Memory, And Literature, 1953–1991. *World Literature Today*: Russian Literature At A Crossroads, 1993, vol. 67, № 1, p. 74–79. Razuvalova, A. *Pisateli-«derevenshhiki»: literatura i konservativnaya ideologiya 1970-h godov [Village Prose Writers: Literature And The Conservative Ideology Of The 1970s]*. Moskva: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2015.

using zoomorphic characters in *Maus: A Survivor's Tale* by Art Spiegelman<sup>2</sup>, thanks to which even the most impressionable reader – the reader-child – can withstand the story from the Holocaust, while at the same time the story does not lose its drama. However, it is easier to apply such game strategies in illustrating a contemporary work whose visual field has not yet been formed by tradition. For the illustrator of a classical text, representing the unbearable remains one of the most difficult tasks: the contemporary reader expects a certain rigidity of subjects and plots from the artist, while tradition essentially limits his choice of means for expressing them.

In the current tradition of illustrating Siberian texts, the subject of the unbearable could be avoided by instead emphasising the ecological tenor of the text and accompanying it with epical or lyrical pictures of Siberian nature. Conversely, within the same tradition, the subject of the “unbearable” could be touched upon by using the principles and approaches of the Severe Style of Soviet art, making a correction for its inevitable heroisation as a side effect. Attempts to avoid heroisation compel the artist to turn to pre-Soviet times or even earlier, which at the level of artistic tools signifies the actualisation of the iconographic principles of “art before the era of art”<sup>3</sup>. These help the artist to solve an even more difficult task than representing the terrible – representing the paradoxical. The writer possesses a huge choice of means allowing their polar perception to be embedded into a single image, making it simultaneously both beautiful and terrible. The history of illustration of *The Tsar Fish* shows how the illustrator can find similar expressive means in the visual arts. With a certain degree of conventionality, we will call these “icon-like” in this article.

They certainly are as such for the artist, who will be further discussed: he lives and works in the Orthodox tradition, which he also chose as his main creative guideline<sup>4</sup>. Yet on the scale of the history of images in general, this is certainly a much broader phenomenon associated with image presence, which in the religious realm functions as a structure-forming center, and any structured representation, from a single image to a monumental cycle, church building or book, constitutes the means for affirming the meaning of the central image<sup>5</sup>. The use of the term “icon-like” in relation to a certain type of illustration is in this case based on a deep affinity for this style of illustration, which favours the evidence and seeming concreteness of the anthropomorphic image over the suggestiveness and universality of the landscape, as well as the cultic image that tries to make the invisible visible in the human representation. “Icon-like” in this case is not only a method for accentuating the religious tone of the text, which has a place and

2 Charlson, J. L. Framing The Past: Postmodernism And The Making Of Reflective Memory In Art Spiegelman's *Maus*. *Arizona Quarterly*, 2001, № 3, vol. 57, p. 91–120.

3 Hamburger, J. Hans Belting's 'Bild und Kult: eine Geschichte des Bildes vor dem Zeitalter der Kunst', 1990. *The Burlington Magazine*, 2011, № 1294, vol. 153, p. 40–45.

4 *Priangar'e. Gody, sobytiya, lyudi. Elektronnyi kraevedcheskii spravocchnik* [The Angara Region. Years, Events, People. Electronic Local History Guide]. URL: <http://inark.net/irkutsk/object/1811837263> [accessed 10/01/2018].

5 Belting, H. *Likeness And Presence: A History Of The Image Before The Era Of Art*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994.

has repeatedly become the object of study by philologists<sup>6</sup>, but is also a way of solving many wider problems in illustrating an artistic text associated with the visualisation of opposing imagery.

## 1. Opposing imagery and the objectives of illustration

Several intersecting approaches and associated principles of interpretation for verbal sequences can be identified in the work of illustrators of Astafyev's writing. These can be designated as the search for a person (portrait of a protagonist), search for a relationship (a genre or household scene that reveals the nature of a relationship between people), search for impression (an image of the environment, natural or human-made, such as nature up close or a still life), or search for significance (an epic landscape-panorama).

As a rule, several approaches are combined in the developed and systematic visual series of images considered here, a result of the complexity of the tasks with which the artist is faced in illustrating Astafyev's text. There is therefore a task in visualising its liminal chronotope. Any character in Astafyev's texts (whether belonging to the world of people or the world of an animate and inanimate nature) exists on the tenuous border between life and death, and this liminal nature of existence essentially de-heroises the character – making them both miserable and incredibly prominent. The extremely tense opposing imagery of the text comes into conflict with the established tradition of illustrating Astafyev's works, which contains no means for visualising the paradoxes or depicting the absolute inseparability of the beautiful and unbearable, humiliation and greatness, and the matter of life and death.

We should keep in mind that this inseparability was not always so obvious. The illustrative tradition was formed in the Soviet period, when artists did not have access to the uncensored text of Astafyev, and even if they did, illustrations were subject to the same strict censorship as the text. This is partly the reason why, despite all the undeniable advantages of this tradition, nowadays it is perceived as a narrowing of the genre-related, imaginative and emotional spectrum of the text. It would seem that a contemporary artist, just like an illustrator of Astafyev's works published in the 1970s and 1980s, faces the task of reflecting the social drama of Astafyev's protagonist, namely the drama of separation from one's roots. However, in the censored text this drama appeared primarily as a confrontation between "the city and the village", which the artist could convey using the methods of the so-called Severe Style of Soviet fine art<sup>7</sup>. Meanwhile, in the original

6 Mainly in the frame of "Christianisation" of Russian literary criticism: Terras, V. A Christian Revolution In Russian Literary Criticism. *The Slavic and East European Journal*, 2002, vol. 46, № 4, p. 769–776.

7 An artistic movement of the 1960s and 1970s. There are not many English texts about the "severe style": Talvoja, K. 'Severe Style' In The Context Of Soviet Studies. *Kunstiteaduslikke Uurimus*, 2012, vol. 21, iss. 1–2, p. 112–133; Bown, M. C. *Socialist Realist Painting*. New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 1998. In Russian: Karpova, K. V. Surovyj stil'. Sud'ba napravleniya: avtoref. dis... kand. iskusstvovedeniya [Severe Style. Destiny Of The Artistic Movement: Synopsis Of A Thesis For A Degree Of PhD In Art Criticism]. Moskva, 2014. You can see some severe style

version of the text, the metaphysical rupture of the protagonist with reality comes to the foreground, and the artist is compelled to look for different methods of illustration.

## 2. The illustration tradition

The edition of *The Tsar Fish* published in 2013 by St Petersburg's Vita Nova publishing house with illustrations by Oleg Mikhailov should certainly be recognised as the summit of the Russian tradition of illustrating Astafyev's works<sup>8</sup>. An artist who made the decision to work in line with tradition would face no less difficult a task than that of an artist-innovator. The best examples of this tradition and the very idea of systemic illustration of texts during the Soviet period were concentrated in children's books, and were inevitably oriented towards softening contrasts and representing the generally accepted image of Siberia. A specific feature of literary genres that since the 19th century have been involved in forming the Siberian text of Russian literature (such as novels, short stories, travel writing, travel diaries, et cetera) is a romantic and – due to inevitable distancing – “external” view of Siberia, producing a number of well-known clichés, such as vast expanses awaiting development, the harsh beauty of nature, severe simplicity and the strength of the Siberian character. The novel (a variation of which is Astafyev's “narration in short stories”) was chosen by Siberian writers in the second half of the 20th century as the most promising for showing Siberia from the inside, since this genre entails a thorough knowledge of local material and its interiorisation<sup>9</sup>.

Illustrations for Astafyev's short story “Vasyutkino Lake” by Nikolai Ustinov convey a beautiful and distanced image of Siberian nature. The artist's skill makes this image so aesthetically significant that it would be easy for the reader, focusing on the illustrations, to ignore the borderline topic of the short story. In the text, the taiga is beautiful, yet it poses a mortal threat to the lost boy; the “existential cold” (in the words of Joseph Brodsky) breathes from it with the horror of complete alienation from everything that is dear to the child – their home, family and life itself. The softening of the bipolarity in the image of the taiga does not consist of a softness of landscape: nature as represented by Ustinov is extremely severe, and the specific aspects of forms, lighting and colour are

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paintings here: Severe Style, on *The Premier Site For Russian Culture*. URL: <http://www.rusartnet.com/russian-artistic-movements/20th-century/modern/soviet/severe-style> [accessed 10/01/2018].

8 Astafyev V. P. *Tsar-ryba: Povestvovanie v rasskazakh / il. O. Mikhailova* [The Tsar Fish. Narration In Short Stories / Illustrations by O. Mikhailov]. Sankt-Petersburg: Vita Nova, 2013.

9 The image of the region as “territory” is associated with imperial discourse, genres of travel essay and travel novel, and romanticism: Etkind, A. *Internal Colonization: Russia's Imperial Experience*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2011. Kleespies, I. Russia's Wild East? Domesticating Siberia in Ivan Goncharov's “The Frigate Pallada”. *The Slavic and East European Journal*, 2012, vol. 56, № 1, p. 21–37. The interiorisation of the Siberian space in the “storytelling” of Astafyev takes on the character of a struggle with imperial and romantic distancing from this space: Razuvalova, A. *Pisateli-«derevenshiki»: literatura i konservativnaja ideologija 1970-h godov* [Village Prose Writers: Literature and The Conservative Ideology of the 1970s]. Moskva: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2015, p. 363–367, etc. Kovtun, N.V. “Derevenskaja proza” v zerkale utopia [Village Prose In The Mirror Of Utopia]. Novosibirsk: Izdatel'stvo SO RAN, 2009.

reproduced accurately. The polarity is removed when the artist, although being attentive to the boy's emotions (fear, repentance and a sense of loneliness), does not focus on them. Most illustrations can exist separately from the book as magnificent landscape graphic art, with simply no boy-protagonist present in them. His little figure more often appears in small dynamic sketches separated from page-sized and double-spread landscapes<sup>10</sup>.

Landscape illustrations by Mikhailov can also be easily separated from the body of the book. They appear in exhibitions and in a way represent a chronicle of the author's travels not only in the artistic space of *The Tsar Fish*, but also in the geographical space of Siberia. The artist solves the problem of opposing imagery by deliberately destroying the stylistic unity of the visual series of images, making the style of illustration dependent on the emotional colouring of the plot. A poetic view of the beauty of the taiga appears in illustrations of an impressionistic nature that accentuate the textures of animate and inanimate nature<sup>11</sup>. A much harsher view on unsettled everyday life, difficult and often painful relationships between people, the drama of confrontation between the city and village, and the gloomy atmosphere of the taiga are conveyed in illustrations that develop the achievements of the Severe Style of Soviet art<sup>12</sup>. Such illustrations combine the expressiveness of spatial distortions and deformations of figures with a fairly well-balanced overall composition<sup>13</sup>. The variety of uses of colour from a soft and complex palette to highly contrasting and achromatic combinations, also emphasises one or another emotional tenor of the illustrations.

The Severe Style gives the artist the opportunity to respond to Astafyev's challenge, namely the ability to combine two poles of perception of the same phenomenon and same character in a single image – such as admiration and horror, or respect and contemptuous commiseration. Yet these opportunities are limited, considering that the basis of the Severe Style is the protagonist's heroisation, which is very difficult to transcend with the mere expression of spatial deformations.

### 3. Illustrations by Sergey Eloyan

In the 2003 edition of *The Tsar Fish* published by Gennady Sapronov's publishing house (Irkutsk), Eloyan<sup>14</sup> has built a unified concept of the visual series of images around

10 Astafyev, V. P. *V tajge, u Eniseja / Il. N. Ustinova* [In The Taiga, Near the Yenisei / Illustrations by Il. Ustinov]. Moskva: Malysh, 1986. URL: <https://fantlab.ru/edition25303> [accessed on 10/01/2018].

11 The Illustrations For Astafyev's *The Tsar Fish* By Oleg Mikhailov, in *Vita Nova Publishing House*. URL: [http://vitanova.ru/galereya/illyustratsii/illyustratsii\\_k\\_knige\\_viktor\\_astafev\\_tsar\\_riba\\_950](http://vitanova.ru/galereya/illyustratsii/illyustratsii_k_knige_viktor_astafev_tsar_riba_950) [accessed 10/01/2018].

12 Ibid.

13 Ibid.

14 Astafyev, V. P. *Tsar-ryba: Povestvovanie v rasskazakh / hudozh. S. Eloyan* [The Tsar Fish. Narration In Short Stories / Illustrations by S. Eloyan]. Irkutsk: Izdatel' Sapronov, 2003; Astafyev, V. P. Dalekaya i blizkaya skazka: Rasskazy, zatesi / hudozh. S. Eloyan [A Distant And Close Fairy Tale: Short Stories, Notches / Illustrations by S. Eloyan]. Irkutsk: Izdatel' Sapronov, 2008. About the artist: S.N. Eloyan. Biograficheskaya spravka [Eloyan, S.N. A Biographical Note], in

the character's figure: the Siberian landscape fades into the background giving way to the person – the author of the short story and his protagonist. The artist connects the modern principles of illustration (page spread illustrations that actively interact with the space outside the page and with the text inside, and imply a parallel perception of text and illustrations instead of switching between reading and viewing) and compositional techniques typical of the Orthodox icon-painting canon. The low horizon corresponds to the border of the “earth” on the icon; the figure of the protagonist rises above, taking up all the space allocated for the illustration just as the figure of a saint dominates the space of an icon and the space of a praying person. A plot-related image or the print space hang above the narrow line of the panorama on the lower margin of the page, and the panoramic image below endows them with additional importance by pushing them forward to the viewer in the same way as in the compositions of miracle-working icons appearing “in the air.”

The visual series of images in the book almost do not contain pure landscapes. As a rule, the foreground is always dominated by a massive figure or part of the figure of the author or protagonist. Even in cases in which the protagonist is lying down and his figure is horizontal, he still dominates the landscape's horizontal line.

The page spread that opens the chapter “Not Enough Heart” illustrates a similar situation as that in “Vasyutkino Lake”: the protagonist, this time a runaway prisoner, is also looking for a way to get to the Yenisei river and also sees an endless indifferent sea of taiga in front of him. But in the illustration by Eloyan, the protagonist is placed between the reader and the taiga, and no matter how small, disoriented and unstable the protagonist is, he is the first thing that catches the reader's eye. This is one of the few compositions that has a high horizon, yet the panoramic landscape does not consume the protagonist and on the contrary slips away, leaving the reader alone with the protagonist's figure<sup>15</sup>.

The illustration or text in a frame, surrounded by a panorama, dominates the background and thereby acquires both significance and clear identity. The problem of

*Entsiklopediya i novosti Priangar'ya* [Encyclopedia And News Of The Angara Region]. URL: [http://irkipedia.ru/content/eloyan\\_serгей\\_norikovich](http://irkipedia.ru/content/eloyan_serгей_norikovich) [accessed 10/01/2018]. Exhibition “The Siberian Saga Of Sergey Eloyan. Illustrations For The Books “The Tsar Fish” by V. Astafyev and “Farewell to Matyora” by V. Rasputin at the State Literary Museum in Moscow: Sibirskaia Saga Sergeia Eloyana [The Siberian Saga Of Sergey Eloyan], in *Muzei Rossii* [Museums of Russia]. URL: <http://www.museum.ru/N49068> [accessed 10/01/2018].

- 15 This and some other illustrations are usually chosen to represent the whole book: Astafyev, V. P. Tsar-ryba [Astafyev, V. P. The Tsar Fish], in *Knizhnyi labirint* [Book Labyrinth] URL: <http://www.labirint-bookstore.ru/id/247504/> [accessed 10/01/2018]; Ilyustratsii k knigam Astafyeva i Rasputina predstavit prepodavatel' IrGTU Sergej Eloyan v Gosudarstvennom Literaturnom muzee v Moskve [Sergey Eloyan, The IrSTU Professor, Will Present His Illustrations For The Books By Astafyev And Rasputin In The State Literary Museum In Moscow], in *Irkutskii natsional'nyi issledovatel'skii tekhnicheskii universitet* [Irkutsk National Research Technical University.] URL: <https://www.istu.edu/news/14115/> [accessed 10/01/2018] and in *Novosti goroda. Irkutsk* [Irkutsk. The City News]. URL: <http://irkutsk.bezformata.ru/listnews/prepodavatel-irgtu-sergej-eloyan/10612784/> [accessed 10/01/2018]; Viktor Astafyev: “Ya pishu nepravil'no” [Victor Astafyev: “I Write Incorrectly”], in *Literaturnaya Rossiya* [Literary Russia], 2009, № 7. URL <http://old.litrossia.ru/2009/07/03847.html> [accessed 10/01/2018].

the “Russian” identification of the plot is solved, and its cultural importance for the vast Russian space becomes validated, just like the importance of the very space that produced such plots. The same thing happens in manuscript miniatures and marginal scenes on icons that represent narrations about miraculous icons and holy objects that appeared “in the air” over the Russian land and chose it as their place of constant presence<sup>16</sup>.

The changing panorama of place in marginal scenes and miniatures supplements the unchanging iconographic pattern of exhibiting the holy, known already in Byzantium. This simultaneously affirms the importance of the holy object and the importance of the land that it chose and passed over in the air before taking root there. In the secular equivalent of such an arrangement, any plot-related image or the text itself – the print space – takes the place of the icon, as happens in the illustrations of Ivan Bilibin. The depicted subject and the spaces below mutually reinforce each other’s importance<sup>17</sup>.

A very strong effect that gives a sense of physical presence to the painted image in the tradition of icon painting is associated with the principle of depicting a full-sized figure on a narrow band of “earth.” The viewer, who is accustomed to seeing a linear perspective in the picture, is inclined to unconsciously and automatically perceive the border of the “earth” as a horizon line. The lowered horizon line in the background gives the figure a significance that makes of the external observer feel incommensurably insignificant. The image dominates not only the space of the representation, but also the space of the viewer<sup>18</sup>.

The epical, lyrical or panoramic landscapes that for other artists may be important in themselves, sometimes nullifying the presence of the protagonist in a short story, are moved further back in the illustrations of Eloyan, not just thrusting out the protagonist, but making him completely defenceless before the reader-viewer. And the protagonist is in great need of such a protection. He is forlorn, he is ignoring the laws of gravity and anatomy, he is the embodied weakness of the artist’s hand, and yet he is always in the foreground, always strikes the eye, and is an open target for criticism. Exactly such a protagonist gets the status of a significant image – an image-presence – resulting from the composition approaches described. As a picture, he thus simultaneously causes interest and irritation, and as a person pity and respect, disapproval and sympathy, and other opposing feelings; moreover, these feelings are truly vivid.

16 Shalina, I. *Relikvii v vostochnohristianskoi tradicii* [The Relics In Eastern Christian Tradition]. Moskva: Indrik, 2005, p. 78–79, 82.

17 Mar’ja Morevna. Skazki / Il. I. Bilibina [Marya Morevna. Fairy-Tales / Illustrations by I. Bilibin]. Moskva: SZKJeO, 2014. Lagerljof, S. *Chudesnoe puteshestvie Nil’sa s dikimi gusyami* / Il. B. Diodorova [The Wonderful Adventures of Nils / Illustrations by B. Diodorov]. Moskva: Drofa, 2001. Rosenfeld, A. Between East and West: The Search for National Identity in Russian Illustrated Children’s Books, 1800–1917. *From Realism to the Silver Age. New Studies in Russian Artistic Culture*. DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2014, p. 168–188. Some images from the Bilibin’s tales: Tales by Ivan Bilibin, in *Wikimedia Commons*. URL: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Tales\\_by\\_Ivan\\_Bilibin](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Tales_by_Ivan_Bilibin) [accessed 10/01/2018].

18 For example, the icons of St. Nicholas Zاراиский: Nikolai Chudotvoretz (Zaraiskii) [St. Nikolai The Wonderworker (Zaraisky)], in *Ikony Rossii* [Icons Of Russia]. URL: <http://www.iconrussia.ru/iconography/759/> [accessed 10/01/2018].

#### 4. Image of the author

De-heroisation of a character is much easier for an artist who is not constrained by the boundaries of a certain style. Such an artist can afford to go all the way and portray the character as pathetic (maybe even sacrificing their own reputation as a graphic artist in doing this), draw a sluggish lopsided figure with dry and expressionless facial features. Yet we will never see anything like that in the representations of Astafyev that often appear among the illustrations. De-heroisation in these images occurs only at the expense of avoiding any grandiloquence. The author of the book is a private person who does not have claims to power and might, but is not in any way pitiful – and this is manifested, among other things, at the level of the drawing<sup>19</sup>.

Eloyan continues the tradition of the watercolour portraits of Astafyev that emerged among Krasnoyarsk artists (such as Toivo Rännäli and Valery Kudrinsky). Portraits by Kudrinsky can be viewed as illustrations, given that they are linked to quotations and to some extent serve as visualisations of the narrative. Thus, the blackened logwork of a village house, hanging over the bent figure of the writer takes up the entire left side of the watercolour “Memory, Portrait of V. P. Astafyev”. The wall of logs and storm clouds press on the figure, making physically tangible the meaning of the words, “The load of memory bends me down to the ground, breaks my tail bone”<sup>20</sup>. In this and other Krasnoyarsk portraits<sup>21</sup>, Astafyev is wearing a plain white shirt and cardigan or sweater, with his hair tousled by the wind and his figure engaged in the implicit but persistent movement of the landscape. He is a private person, a part of his environment; he is participating, but not dominating; he is not a hero, not a reformer.

In the illustrations of Eloyan, this same image gained an additional dimension – Astafyev is also an observer, and a panoramic landscape is visible behind his private, unostentatious figure. The representations of Astafyev in the book show that the “weakness” of drawing in portraying some of the characters for Eloyan is a method and not a flaw in the artist’s individual style. This method stems from a response to the challenges of Astafyev’s text discussed above. If the author reveals the unpleasant facets of human nature, including – or even primarily – of his own nature, the artist is expected to produce a similar action in the visual realm and disclose his own weaknesses, which on the reader’s part would cause the same sense of rejection of the character as

19 For illustrations with portraits of the author, you can see the sources cited in the footnote 14.

20 Kudrinsky, V. *Svet osennikh berez: Akvarel'* [The Light of Autumn Birches. Water-colours]. Krasnojarsk: Vital, 1995, p. 31. Some albums and catalogues of the artist: Kudrinskii, V. I. [Kudrinsky, V. I.] in *Izdatel'stvo Rastr* [The Rastr Publishing House]. URL: <http://www.rasterprint.ru/content/kudrinskii-valerii-innokentevich> [accessed 10/01/2018]

21 See, for example, Toivo Rännäli's portrait: V Kemerovo otkryvaetsya vystavka “Viktor Astafyev v izobrazitel'nom iskusstve” [The Exhibition “Victor Astafyev In Fine Arts” Opens In Kemerovo], in *Kul'tura 24* [Culture 24]. URL: <http://культура24.рф/news/4183/> [accessed 10/01/2018], about the artist: Kozharsky, R. Toivo znachit nadezhda. Zhizn' i tvorchestvo T. V. Ryannelya [Toivo Means Hope. Life And Art Of Toivo Rännäli], in *Krasnoyarskoe obshchestvo “Memorial”* [Krasnoyarsk “Memorial” Society]. URL: <http://www.memorial.krsk.ru/Work/Konkurs/10/Kojarsky/0.htm> [accessed 10/01/2018].

the author's verbal description. Yet by making an emphatically miserable figure a compositional centre and forcing it to dominate, influence and shape the environment, the artist simultaneously achieves an entirely opposite response from the reader that also arises while reading: interest, respect, and sympathy for the character.

## Conclusion

Entering into interaction with the genre type of *The Tsar Fish*, each concept of the visual set of images involves some of its own subtexts that draw the reader's attention to a quite definite tone of the story. It can be a poem in prose about a harsh but beautiful land and the people who live there, but can also be a legend, an epic narrative about the difficulty of spiritual endeavour. Choosing specific genre guidelines, artists thereby offer various solutions to the problem of aesthetic visualisation of the opposing imagery of a very difficult and harsh, but simultaneously very poetic text. Against this background, the approach of Eloyan is primarily of interest in terms of the proposed solution to visualising the paradoxical nature of the Siberian protagonist, which is very relevant for illustration techniques for Siberian texts.

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IKONIŠKAS PARALELINĖS VIZUALIZACIJOS INTERPRETAVIMAS  
SIBIRIETIŠKUOSE SERGEJAUS ELOJANO PAVEIKSLĖLIUOSE,  
ILIUSTRUOJANČIUOSE VIKTORO ASTAFJEVO  
„ŽUVIS CARAS” APSAKYMĄ

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**Santrauka.** Sibirietiški tekstai išsiskiria iš visos rusų literatūros savo iliustracijų tradicija. Iliustracijose išvegliamą tekstą galima interpretuoti keliomis kryptimis. Šiame straipsnyje bus taikomas ikoniškas interpretavimo metodas, nes jis siejamas su ortodoksų menine tradicija ir juo remiantis galima analizuoti ikonografinius paveikslėlių objektus. Tokios meninės raiškos žinomiausiu atstovu laikomas Irkutsko dailininkas Sergejus

Elojanas, kuris ėmėsi iliustruoti knygas 2003 metais, prisijungęs prie Genadijaus Sapronovo žymiausių Sibiro rašytojų tekstų publikavimo projekto. Reikšminga šios leidybinės serijos publikacija tapo Viktoro Astafjevo knyga „Žuvis Caras“. Ikoniškoji interpretacija suteikė menininkui galimybę perteikti šio sudėtingo kūrinio ribinę chronotopinę ir paradoksalią Astafjevo vaizdinių prigimtį, jo žanrines iliustracijas. Užsibrėžtą siekį komplikavo ir jau susiklosčiusi Astafjevo kūrinių iliustravimo tradicija, kuriai Sergėjus Elojanas metė iššūkį, mat pati tradicija susiformavo sovietmečiu, kai Astafjevo darbai buvo stipriai cenzūruojami. Ankstesnioji iliustravimo tradicija neleido vaizdiniais atskleisti grožio ir nepakeliamos kančios glaudumo, gyvenimo ir mirties pagrindų artimumo. Posovietiniu periodu, kai „Žuvis Caras“ išsilaisvino iš cenzūros gniaužtų, paaiškėjo, kad tekstas apvilktas labai prieštariniais, įstabiai gražiais ir pasišlykštėjimą keliančiais vaizdiniais: aukštumos ir žemumos ne tik egzistuoja greta, bet susilieja į neišskiriamą darinį. Sunku net įsivaizduoti konceptualias iliustracijas, kuriose visa emocijų skalė atsiskleistų statiškame vaizde. Po 2000-ųjų imtasi net poros bandymų suformuoti sisteminį vaizdinį pasakojimą apie „Žuvį Carą“. Pirmas bandymas – Sergejaus Elojano iliustracijos, o antrasis pasirodė 2013 metais – Olego Michailovo. Jie abu iš skirtingų perspektyvų konceptualiai interpretuoja menininko tekstą, glūdintį tarp tradicinių ir naujoviškų knygos struktūrų.

**Reikšminiai žodžiai:** Viktoras Astafjevas, Sergėjus Elojanas, Olegas Michailovas, knygų iliustravimas, kontraversiškų įvaizdžių vizualizacija, ortodoksų ikona.

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