



The Evolution of the Nature of the Character of Lieutenant Kuznetsov in the Novel by Y.V. Bondarev "Hot Snow"

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Abstract: Among Yuri Bondarev's books about the war, "Hot Snow" occupies a special place, opening up new approaches to solving the moral and psychological problems posed in his first stories - "Battalions Ask for Fire" and "Last Salvos". These three books about the war are an integral and developing world, which has reached the greatest completeness and figurative power in "Hot Snow". The first stories, independent in all respects, were at the same time, as it were, a preparation for a novel, perhaps not yet conceived, but living in the depths of the writer's memory.

Keywords: Yuri Bondarev, "Hot Snow", psychological problems, novel, attitude.

The image of Kuznetsov occupies one of the central places in Hot Snow. The novel shows, first of all, the development, formation of the character of a young lieutenant. And the test of death is a significant stage that he is forced to go through. In the course of the evolution of the lieutenant's personality, his attitude towards death changes. Y. Idashkin makes a very accurate remark in his study: "And in one day, compressed by events to an instant and at the same time stretched to the duration of a lifetime, Kuznetsov makes his way from a beginner to a wiser with the hardest experience, a mature one who switched to "you" with death commander".

Kuznetsov received a baptism of fire in the battles near Roslavl. It was then that for the first time he met face to face with death and what it gives people: a nervous breakdown, fear, suffering, "as if everything holding back was pulled out, like some kind of rod" Then the lieutenant did not feel anything for such soldiers, except for "disgust at human weakness", and the only thing he was afraid of was to succumb to a similar state. Not the fear of being killed, but the fear of being powerless, took root in Kuznetsov's mind. Moreover, he fears, first of all, spiritual impotence, the loss of that inner core, in the absence of which a person will die soon. This attitude to human weakness is largely due to the maximalism inherent in the youth of the hero. But it is not in harshness and cruelty that he shows his feelings, like Drozdovsky, but on the contrary, pity is mixed in his soul with contempt for faint-hearted people. A vivid example of this is his ambivalent attitude towards Chibisov. The most important changes in the character of Kuznetsov begin to occur in the battle of Stalingrad. Bondarev reveals the lieutenant's psychology through his internal monologue: "I have no right to do so. I have not! This disgusting impotence... Panoramas must be taken! Am I afraid to die? Why am I afraid to die? A fragment in the head... Am I afraid of a fragment in the head?.. No, I'll jump out of the trench now. Where is Drozdovsky?.. Ukhanov knows that I am ready to order... Why? To hell with them, with sights! I don't have enough strength to jump out of the ditch... I'm ready to order, while I myself sit here. If I jump out of the ditch, nothing will protect me. And - a red-hot fragment in the temple? .. What is this, nonsense?.. Natural human fear is mixed in Kuznetsov's soul with a reasonable and conscious rejection of weakness and powerlessness, both in others and in himself. But he is able to admit to himself his confusion, and this is strength. It is interesting that Kuznetsov is not afraid of death in general, but of its very specific form - a fragment in the head. His anxious mind cannot understand how a small hot piece of iron can deprive him of the most important and valuable thing -

life. As I.V. Strakhov, "in its most general function, the interrogative form of speech means that consciousness is turned towards something new." This situation, which implies a moral choice, is fundamentally new for Kuznetsov, not encountered before.

This new makes the hero reflect, comprehend his feelings, imagine a possible death. But during the battle, he cannot analyze all the mental processes taking place in his soul. Therefore, noting, or rather, fixing the most exciting moments, Kuznetsov makes the most simple and understandable conclusion for him in this case, which is also given in an interrogative form, that all this is nonsense. The lieutenant's obsessive thought about the fragment is a kind of psychological quintessence of fear for his life.

The novel expresses the understanding of death as a violation of higher justice and harmony. Recall how Kuznetsov looks at the murdered Kasymov: "now there was a shell box under Kasymov's head, and his youthful, beardless face, recently alive, swarthy, turned deathly white, thinned by the terrible beauty of death, looked in surprise with moist cherry half-open eyes at his chest, on a torn to shreds, excised quilted jacket, he didn't even understand after death how it killed him and why he couldn't get up to the sight. In this unseeing squint of Kasymov there was a quiet curiosity about his un-lived life on this earth and at the same time the calm mystery of death, into which he was overturned by the burning pain of the fragments when he tried to rise to the sight.

Even more acutely Kuznetsov feels the irreversibility of the loss of the driver Sergunenkov. After all, the mechanism of his death is revealed here. Kuznetsov turned out to be a powerless witness to how Drozdovsky sent Sergunenkov to certain death, and he, Kuznetsov, already knows that he will curse himself forever for what he saw, was present, but failed to change anything.

Probably the most mysterious of the world of human relations in the novel is the love that arises between Kuznetsov and Zoya. The war, its cruelty and blood, its terms, overturning the usual ideas about time - it was she who contributed to such a rapid development of this love. After all, this feeling developed in those short periods of march and battle, when there is no time for reflection and analysis of one's feelings. And it all starts with a quiet, incomprehensible jealousy of Kuznetsov for the relationship between Zoya and Drozdovsky.

And soon - so little time passes - Kuznetsov is already bitterly mourning the dead Zoya, and it is from these lines that the title of the novel is taken, when Kuznetsov wiped his face wet from tears, "the snow on the sleeve of the quilted jacket was hot from his tears."

One of the most important conflicts in the novel is the conflict between Kuznetsov and Drozdovsky. A lot of space has been given to this conflict, it is exposed very sharply, and is easily traced from beginning to end. At first, tension that goes back to the background of the novel; inconsistency of characters, manners, temperaments, even style of speech: soft, thoughtful Kuznetsov, it seems, is difficult to endure Drozdovsky's jerky, commanding, indisputable speech. The long hours of battle, the senseless death of Sergunenkov, the mortal wound of Zoya, in which Drozdovsky is partly to blame - all this forms an abyss between the two young officers, the moral incompatibility of their existences.

It is extremely important that all Kuznetsov's connections with people, and above all with people subordinate to him, are true, meaningful and have a remarkable ability to develop. They are extremely non-service, in contrast to the emphatically service relations that Drozdovsky puts so strictly and stubbornly between himself and people. During the battle, Kuznetsov fights next to the soldiers, here he shows his composure, courage, lively mind. But he also grows spiritually in this battle, becomes fairer, closer, kinder to those people with whom the war brought him together.

The relationship between Kuznetsov and senior sergeant Ukhanov, the gun commander, deserves a separate story. Like Kuznetsov, he had already been fired on in the difficult battles of 1941, and in terms of military ingenuity and decisive character he could probably be an excellent commander. But life decreed otherwise, and at first, we find Ukhanov and Kuznetsov in conflict: this is a collision of a sweeping, sharp and autocratic nature with another - restrained, initially modest.

At first glance, it may seem that Kuznetsov will have to fight against the anarchist nature of Ukhanov. But in reality, it turns out that without yielding to each other in any principled position, remaining themselves, Kuznetsov and Ukhanov become close people. Not just people fighting together, but knowing each other and now forever close. And the absence of author's comments, the preservation of the rough context of life makes their brotherhood real, weighty.

The ethical, philosophical thought of the novel, as well as its emotional intensity, reaches its highest height in the finale, when Bessonov and Kuznetsov suddenly approach each other. This is a rapprochement without close proximity: Bessonov rewarded his officer on an equal basis with others and moved on. For him, Kuznetsov is just one of those who are set to death at the turn of the Myshkov River. Their closeness turns out to be more sublime: it is the closeness of thought, spirit, outlook on life. For example, shocked by the death of Vesnin, Bessonov blames himself for the fact that, due to his lack of sociability and suspicion, he prevented friendly relations between them from developing ("the way Vesnin wanted, and the way they should be"). Or Kuznetsov, who could do nothing to help Chubarikov's calculation, which was dying before his eyes, tormented by the piercing thought that all this, "it seemed, should have happened because he did not have time to get close to them, understand everyone, fall in love ...".

Divided by the disproportion of duties, Lieutenant Kuznetsov and the army commander, General Bessonov, are moving towards the same goal - not only military, but also spiritual. Unaware of each other's thoughts, they think about the same thing and seek the truth in the same direction. Both of them demandingly ask themselves about the purpose of life and about the correspondence of their actions and aspirations to it.

They are separated by age and have in common, like father and son, and even like brother and brother, love for the Motherland and belonging to the people and to humanity in the highest sense of these words.

In the article "A look into the biography", Y. Bondarev wrote: "... we knew that in misfortunes the spiritual value and health of the people is manifested and weighed; we were not afraid of tragedies, we wrote about a person who found himself in the most inhuman environment. We looked in him for the strength to overcome ourselves, and in difficult days we looked for good and tried to see the future. We portrayed the war as we saw it ourselves, as it was."

The novel features a relatively small number of characters. Using the example of one battery commanded by Drozdovsky, the author reveals the great strength of the Russian character, the terrible tragedy of the people. The characters in this tragedy are ordinary Soviet people. This is a young lieutenant, platoon commander, Kuznetsov, gun commander Sergeant Ukhanov, experienced, calm gunner Evstigneev, riding Sergunenkov, medical instructor Zoya Elagina, commander Deev, General Bessonov, member of the Military Council Vesnin. Yuri Bondarev is trying to convey to the reader that everyone is equal before death. The shy rider Sergunenkov, the beautiful Zoya Elagina, the calm Vesnin, wise with life experience, Kasymov - they are all victims of the war.

An important stage in the creative evolution of Y.V. Bondarev was writing the novel "Hot Snow" (1965-1969), which was a work summarizing what was said earlier, and at the same time a step forward towards a philosophical novel, which from the 70s would take the main place in the writer's work. Y.V. Bondarev noted that "we are on the eve of a new kind of novel, moral and philosophical." And in one of the interviews, the author figuratively defined the similarities and differences between his "military" stories and the novel "Hot Snow": "In "Hot Snow" I wrote about the war in a slightly different way than in the story "Battalions ask for fire." And not only in terms of art, but also in terms of history: after all, eleven years have passed between the novel and the story. This was also a desire for knowledge and, as it were, an impetus for biography - it was time for a broader understanding of a person in war, a time for some kind of accumulation made not by me, but by time itself. It is a kind of categorical imperative that comes from life itself. However, "Battalions Ask for Fire" and "Hot Snow" do not seem to argue with each other. These are siblings, the later brother only has more wrinkles and more gray hair in the temples.

In the novel *Hot Snow*, Kuznetsov, walking around the battlefield, also sees the body of a German, his age. Kuznetsov took a few more steps and, with a stubborn and irresistible curiosity incomprehensible to himself, looked into the face of the first man killed.

The German lay on his back, arching his chest unnaturally, clutching the belt on his overalls with both hands, under his arms there was something black, glossy frozen - as Kuznetsov later guessed, a bloody leather helmet; the naked head of the dead man is thrown back to the limit so that his chin, covered with a crust of ice, is pulled up by a sharp wedge, his long hair is frozen to the snow in threads, the white youthful face stretched out to the sky is ossified in a grimace of surprise, as if his lips were preparing to cry out in incomprehension, and the left, not covered with snow the side of this hard-plaster face was pure purple, in the depths of the eye, opened in the last horror, a glass light burned like a dot - a reflection of the glow. In the soul of Lieutenant Kuznetsov, the bitterness of the loss of his soldiers is still too strong, therefore, towards the murdered German, he experiences only a mixed feeling of disgust and curiosity before the unsolved mystery of death.

One of the main characters of the novel, Lieutenant Kuznetsov, feels the very essence of death with his whole being. He is powerless to prevent the senseless death of Sergunenkov, to which the battalion commander Drozdovsky sent him. The young lieutenant knows for sure that he will curse himself for this unnecessary death, which he could not prevent. Very organically, the writer weaves the past of the characters into the canvas of the novel. Not in separate chapters, but as if in between, unobtrusively, pouring into the present past, revealing their relationship.

One artillery battery in such a grandiose battle is a grain of sand in the sea, but the artist, using the example of this battery, standing to death at the turn of the Myshkov River, showed the inflexibility of the Russian character. Out of more than a hundred fighters, only a few people remained from the battery, but the enemy did not pass. And these terrible sacrifices were not in vain; even one battery, one platoon, one man can decide the outcome of a grandiose battle. But forever and ever, the Motherland will not forget its heroes!

One cannot but agree with the opinion of the critic A. Lanshchikov: “The heroes of Y. Bondarev are truly and sincerely demanding of themselves and a little indulgent towards the weaknesses of others, which gives them that softness of character that attracts people so much. They are courageous in battle and defend every inch of their native land to the last drop of blood. They are stubborn in their delicacy and delicate in their perseverance, and up to their last breath they defend their spiritual world, the world of high moral values of their people; such is Lieutenant Kuznetsov.

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