



MYSTICISM AND THE SUPERNATURAL IN THE SHORT PROSE OF V. Y. BRYUSOV: THE BOUNDARIES OF THE REAL AND THE IRREGULAR

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Abstract

The article examines the features of the artistic embodiment of mysticism and the supernatural in the short prose of V. Ya. Bryusov. The methods of crossing the boundaries of the real and the unreal, manifested through images, plot twists and psychological states of the characters, are analyzed. Particular attention is paid to the role of the mystical as an aesthetic category, as well as the functioning of supernatural elements within the framework of the modernist poetics of the early twentieth century. The study is based on structural and intertextual analysis, as well as elements of psychoanalytic criticism. It is concluded that Bryusov consciously uses unreal components as a tool for philosophical understanding of reality and expanding the boundaries of world perception.

Keywords: Bryusov, short fiction, mysticism, supernatural, modernism, unreal, real, aesthetics, psychologism, artistic image.

Introduction

The beginning of the 20th century in Russian literature was marked by rapid changes in artistic thinking, searches for new forms of expression and increased interest in the irrational, mystical and supernatural. These trends were most vividly reflected in the works of representatives of symbolism and modernism. Among them, a special place is occupied by Valery Yakovlevich Bryusov - a poet, prose writer, critic and philosopher, whose artistic heritage is a multi-layered system of meanings filled with complex symbolism, philosophical allusions and expressive images.

Although Bryusov is best known as a poet, his short fiction also deserves close attention from researchers. Short stories written in the spirit of mysticism, fantasy and gothic aesthetics serve as a kind of laboratory in which the author explores the



boundaries between reality and imagination, consciousness and the unconscious, rational and irrational. It is in these texts that Bryusov's penchant for analyzing transcendental experiences, spiritual metamorphoses and unusual states of the human psyche is manifested.

The mystical and supernatural in Bryusov's prose cannot be perceived only as an attribute of the genre or a means of building up intrigue. These elements serve deeply philosophical and aesthetic functions: they help the author comprehend the nature of being, question the linearity of time, the unambiguousness of truth and the stability of personality. Through the heroes' contact with the other world, ghosts, and unknown forces, Bryusov seeks to show the fragility of human reality, its susceptibility to destruction when confronted with the unknown. The purpose of this study is to identify the features of the artistic embodiment of the mystical and supernatural in the short fiction of V. Ya. Bryusov and to analyze how the writer forms the boundary between the real and the unreal. The objectives of the study include: analysis of specific stories by Bryusov in terms of structure, symbolism, and imagery; determination of the role of the supernatural in shaping the plot and atmosphere; identification of the philosophical and aesthetic concepts behind the mystical motifs. The scientific novelty of the work lies in the interdisciplinary approach that combines elements of literary analysis, philosophy, and psychology, as well as in the focus on short fiction, which still remains a relatively little-studied part of Bryusov's legacy. The theoretical basis of the study is works on the poetics of symbolism, research in the field of the philosophy of mysticism, as well as psychoanalytic approaches to the literary text. Thus, the short fiction of V. Ya. Bryusov represents a unique artistic space in which clear boundaries between the visible and the invisible, the conscious and the unconscious, the rational and the irrational disappear. The study of this aspect opens up new horizons in understanding not only the author himself, but also the entire cultural paradigm of the Silver Age.

The short fiction of V. Ya. Bryusov is an important component of his artistic heritage and represents a unique field for studying the interaction of mysticism, the supernatural and the philosophical categories of the real and the unreal. This part of the study will examine the writer's key stories, such as "The Last Pages of a Woman's Diary", "Rehearsal", "The Red Lamp", where elements of the mystical



and the unreal are especially clearly manifested, as well as the features of their artistic embodiment.

Firstly, it should be noted that Bryusov consciously uses the traditions of European Gothic literature, including the influence of Edgar Allan Poe, Hoffmann, and the French decadents. However, unlike direct copying, Bryusov synthesizes these traditions with the philosophy of symbolism and his own worldview. Mysticism in his prose is not just an attribute of the genre, but a way of philosophically exploring the boundaries of human consciousness. In the story "The Last Pages of a Woman's Diary" the inner world of the heroine unfolds before the reader in which the line between reality and imagination gradually disappears. The diary form allows the author to convey a gradual immersion in the irrational, where supernatural experiences become reality for the heroine herself. At the same time, Bryusov avoids directly indicating the truth of what is happening, leaving room for interpretation and doubt. Thus, the supernatural does not simply "invade" reality, but is a projection of the internal state.

In another story, "Rehearsal," Bryusov creates an atmosphere of duality, where the line between life and death, sleep and reality becomes indistinguishable. The heroes find themselves drawn into a mystical game, the outcome of which is impossible to predict. Here, the peculiarity of Bryusov's prose is manifested - the creation of uncertainty as an artistic device. The author uses symmetrical structures, repetitions, references to ancient rituals and mystical practices to enhance the impression of the isolation of the world and the doom of the characters. Bryusov pays considerable attention to space and light as symbolic categories. In the story "The Red Lamp" the color red becomes a symbol of transition - it can be interpreted as a sign of passion, danger, death, and possibly another reality. The lighting of the space plays an important role in creating an unreal atmosphere: shadows, light fluctuations, unexpected changes in the perception of the room - all this contributes to the destabilization of perception and the formation of a feeling of anxiety and uncertainty. Another characteristic feature of Bryusov's prose is the use of psychologism, close to early psychoanalysis. The author carefully constructs the internal monologue of the characters, their doubts, fears, obsessive thoughts. This allows us to show that the supernatural may not be an external influence, but a reflection of an internal crisis, suppressed desires, repressed guilt. This approach brings Bryusov closer to the ideas of Freud and Jung, although there is no direct



influence of the psychoanalytic school in his prose. The motif of time in Bryusov's prose is also interesting. In a number of stories, time loses its linearity, begins to "break", turns into a cyclical or disappears altogether. The characters find themselves "outside of time", in a certain intermediate zone between "no longer" and "not yet". This is typical of modernist literature, in which the temporal structure is closely connected with subjective perception and the state of consciousness. For Bryusov, the unreality of time is another way to question the stability of reality. It should be emphasized that Bryusov does not contrast the real and the unreal in a binary opposition. On the contrary, he shows their interpenetration, the fragility of boundaries and the ability of one to transform into the other. This technique is especially important in the context of the philosophy of symbolism, where each object or phenomenon can be a sign of something else, something deep, transcendental. The unreal in Bryusov's prose is not a "secondary" level, but a full-fledged part of being, perceived equally with empirical reality. Thus, the analysis of V. Ya. Bryusov's short fiction allows us to conclude that mysticism and the supernatural play not only a plot role, but also a conceptual one. They become means of artistic cognition of the world, expression of philosophical and aesthetic ideas. By creating ambiguous, disturbing and irrational spaces, Bryusov builds a complex model of the world in which familiar boundaries disappear, and the reader is drawn into the process of interpretation, doubt and search for deep meanings.

Conclusion

The study of V. Ya. Bryusov's short fiction shows that mystical and supernatural elements play not only a decorative or genre role in it, but are important means of artistic expression of philosophical and aesthetic concepts. Through the interaction of the real and the unreal, Bryusov creates a multi-layered narrative in which the world is perceived as fluid, unstable and polysemantic.

The boundary between the real and the fantastic in Bryusov is erased not only due to external events, but also through the internal psychological experiences of the characters. Thus, the supernatural often turns out to be a reflection of their mental state, deep fears or existential crisis. This gives the writer's prose a special philosophical depth and makes it relevant in the context of modernist literature of the early 20th century.



In general, Bryusov's short fiction represents a valuable artistic and philosophical layer of Russian literature of the Silver Age, in which the mystical serves not as a side effect of fantasy, but as an instrument for understanding man and the world. The study of these texts opens up new horizons in understanding symbolist aesthetics and the modernist literary paradigm.

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