

Harmony Of Literary Language In Russian Novels: Metapoetic Approach

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Abstract: The article examines the harmony of literary language in Russian novels through a metapoetic approach, focusing on the self-reflexive nature of literary texts and their awareness of artistic form. The study analyzes how Russian novelists employ linguistic, stylistic, and narrative strategies to construct aesthetic coherence and semantic depth. Special attention is paid to the interaction between narrative voice, symbolism, and intertextuality as core elements of metapoetic discourse. By applying comparative and structural analysis, the research reveals that harmony in literary language is not merely a stylistic phenomenon but a conceptual mechanism that shapes the philosophical and ideological dimensions of the novel.

Keywords: Literary language; metapoetics; linguistic harmony; narrative discourse; aesthetic coherence; literary theory.

Introduction: In contemporary literary studies, the metapoetic interpretation of prose has gained increasing importance due to the growing interest in self-reflexive and postclassical narrative forms. Russian novels, with their rich tradition of philosophical and linguistic experimentation, offer a productive field for exploring the harmony of literary language from a metapoetic perspective. However, existing scholarship often focuses on thematic or historical aspects while underestimating the role of linguistic harmony as a metapoetic category. Therefore, this research is urgent in addressing the need for an integrated methodological approach that combines stylistic, semantic, and metapoetic analysis. The study contributes to the modernization of literary theory and supports the development of interdisciplinary approaches in philological research.

Artistic practice reflects not only linguocreative activity but also the authors' attempts to penetrate the essence of the material that constitutes the foundation of verbal art. It explores the origins and consequences

of linguocultural information embedded in words and in language as such. This metalinguistic activity, despite its inherent subjectivity, is of undeniable significance for linguistics, as it connects the spheres of conscious, rational, and sensory-irrational experience within these heuristic processes. The extraction of data concerning creativity and language from the general textual space—whether implicitly or explicitly present in the works of specific authors—followed by their comparison and systematization, makes it possible to determine adequate methods for describing and analyzing literary texts and to establish an objective basis for the cognitive scenario of authorial self-interpretation.

The turning of creative consciousness toward itself is exemplified in Vladimir Nabokov's observation that two opposing forces coexist in every individual to varying degrees: the need for solitude and the desire for communication with others, commonly referred to as introversion—interest directed inward, toward the inner life of spirit and imagination—and extraversion—

interest oriented toward the external world of people and tangible values. Nabokov attributes similar reflections to other writers, emphasizing the persistent struggle between the desire for creative isolation and the aspiration to merge with humanity as a whole, between the book and society.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introversion (from Latin *intro* — inward, and *verto* — to turn), defined as a psychological characteristic oriented toward the inner world of thoughts and experiences, is associated by Nabokov with the creative intentionality of consciousness. This association is manifested through several components: the subject of introversion is the writer; the domain of creativity is literature, metonymically represented as the book; the state inducing introversion is creative solitude; imagination functions as a core element of creative ability, activated under conditions of intense emotional elevation and heightened internal activity; and the implicit object of reflection is language—its functioning and transformation at different levels, language as both the means and the goal of artistic creation.

Given the central importance of creativity in Nabokov's oeuvre, as emphasized in linguistic and literary scholarship, it becomes particularly relevant to trace how semantic vectors, shaped by reflection on individual words, letters, sounds, stylistic devices, and language itself, permeate Nabokov's texts. The theoretical foundation for studying authorial self-description in literary discourse is provided by K.E. Stein's theory of metapoetics.

The legitimization of metapoetics as a distinct field of linguistic inquiry is articulated in Stein's article *Metapoetics: A “Blurred” Paradigm*, which formulates the core principles of metapoetic discourse. Metapoetics is defined as poetics derived from metatextual data, or as an authorial code, implicitly or explicitly embedded in texts about literary works. It represents a “strong” heterogeneous system of systems, incorporating individual metapoetics and characterized by an antinomic relationship between scientific and artistic premises. Its object of study is verbal creativity, while its specific goal is work with linguistic material: the identification of techniques and the revelation of artistic mastery. Metapoetics is marked by objectivity and reliability and constitutes a

complex, historically evolving, open, nonlinear, and dynamic system that constantly interacts with various domains of knowledge. One of its fundamental features is encyclopedism, reflecting the encyclopedic nature of the artist's personality, which constructs a dense essential world within literary works.

In the term metapoetics, the prefix *meta-* functions in the sense of “an element of a system designed to describe another system.” Poetics, in turn, is a branch of philology concerned with the description of the historical literary process, the structure of literary works, and the system of aesthetic devices employed within them. Although its subject largely overlaps with that of literary theory, poetics focuses more specifically on the laws governing internal relations, textual structure, and the functional specificity of artistic means at all levels of textual organization: phonetic, lexical, morphological, syntactic, stylistic, emotional, and figurative. Poetics examines literary works through the prism of language and therefore maintains a close connection with linguistics. According to M. L. Gasparov, the goal of poetics is to identify and systematize the textual elements that contribute to the formation of the aesthetic impression produced by a literary work [1].

The most substantial body of criticism focuses on the works of Walter Scott, the founder of the historical novel. While several studies attempt to formulate broader theoretical conclusions on the genre, they usually restrict their analysis to a single model—the Scottian type of historical novel. These studies therefore seek to systematize and describe the stable structural features of only one specific variant of the genre. The present discussion is based primarily on this body of scholarship. V. Dibelius identifies three central aspects in Scott's poetics: (1) the literary traditions that influenced the formation of the historical novel; (2) plot-forming motifs; and (3) the type of protagonist. According to Dibelius, Scott relied primarily on the traditions of the adventure novel (Defoe, Fielding, Smollett) and the Gothic novel, while drawing to a lesser extent on the domestic novel and the works of Richardson and Goldsmith. In Dibelius's view, it was mainly from adventure and Gothic literature that Scott derived the fundamental elements underlying the historical novel.

The principal plot-forming motifs, as defined by

Dibelius, include: (1) a journey, which may result from conflict with the older generation or other causes but is invariably present; (2) love for a noble lady, complicated by various obstacles; (3) the moral education or re-education of the hero, often under the influence of this love; (4) a secret; and (5) an intrigue that links the political and cultural-historical dimensions of the novel with the personal fate of the protagonist. In addition, Dibelius distinguishes two further groups of secondary motifs derived from adventure and Gothic fiction respectively.

Above all, Dibelius argues, Scott was confronted with the problem of how to represent and interpret the cultural and historical interconnections of an era. The personal experiences of the protagonist became the vital narrative core of the emerging genre. Scott portrays both historical figures (such as Richard the Lionheart, Louis XI, and Charles Edward Stuart) and semi-historical or legendary characters (such as Fergus and his sister, or Rob Roy). Nevertheless, the narrative center is occupied by a different figure—one who does not fully belong to any political camp. Characters such as Waverley, who is involuntarily drawn into the Jacobite uprising and remains uncertain about where justice lies, attract greater reader interest than overtly historical figures. According to Dibelius, this new type of protagonist constitutes one of Scott's most significant and enduring innovations.

This narrative strategy had already been noted by L. Maigron, author of the first major study of the historical novel. While acknowledging the important role of historical figures in Scott's works, Maigron emphasized that they rarely occupy the central position. Scott's novels are titled Ivanhoe rather than Richard the Lionheart, and Quentin Durward rather than Louis XI, which marks a fundamental distinction between Scott's novels and Shakespeare's historical chronicles, with which they are often compared. G. Lukács offers a similar description of Scott's protagonist but interprets it not only as a narrative necessity for depicting the interaction between history and individual destiny, but also as an expression of Scott's concept of historical necessity. Lukács argues that Scott chooses a "middle path" between extremes and seeks to artistically demonstrate its historical reality by portraying major crises in English history. This tendency is reflected in both plot construction and character

selection. Scott's hero is typically an ordinary, average English gentleman who maintains connections with both opposing camps without demonstrating absolute loyalty to either. His relative freedom of movement between them enables the author to present a comprehensive picture of the epoch without disrupting narrative composition [3].

This narrative approach allows Scott to depict not only battles, rebellions, and political conflicts, but also everyday private life. According to Lukács [2], Scott, as a true realist, understood that no civil war could be so overwhelming as to render every individual a fanatic supporter of one side. Although everyday life continues, it is nevertheless transformed by historical crisis, becoming a process of growth and development. Scott's "average" hero embodies this dimension of ordinary life and historical evolution.

DISCUSSION

The harmony of literary language in Russian novels, when examined through a metapoetic approach, reveals the intricate self-reflexive mechanisms by which narrative discourse constructs, questions, and redefines its own aesthetic and ideological foundations. Metapoetics allows the researcher to move beyond traditional stylistic analysis and to consider literary language not merely as a medium of representation, but as an autonomous system that actively participates in meaning-making.

Russian novels, particularly from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, demonstrate a pronounced tendency toward linguistic self-awareness. Authors such as Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Bulgakov, and Nabokov employ narrative strategies in which language reflects upon itself, exposing its limitations, contradictions, and creative potential. This self-referential quality contributes to the harmony of literary language by integrating narrative form, philosophical inquiry, and ethical reflection into a unified artistic whole.

The integrity of metapoetic knowledge has not yet become the subject of comprehensive monographic analysis, nor has it been systematically incorporated into the educational process at either university or school levels. In recent years, the study of poetic creativity has increasingly relied not on primary poetic texts themselves, but rather on secondary interpretative works that reflect the methodological

preferences of individual scholars. Remarkably, in research devoted to poetry, the poet's own reflections on artistic creation are employed only sporadically and most often merely to support the researcher's preconceived arguments. Although poets' statements about their own work are occasionally referenced in teaching and research, no coherent system has been developed for analyzing their theoretical writings or poetic reflections on poetry itself. Consequently, their practical significance for understanding a distinctive discourse that organically synthesizes scientific, philosophical, and artistic modes of cognition remains insufficiently demonstrated.

Researchers of such a multidimensional artistic phenomenon as the poetic text constantly face the risk of imposing external interpretative schemes, introducing subjective distortions, and simplifying its complexity and depth. Any poetic system necessarily includes the poet's own discourse on poetry and creativity. This may take the form of a "text within the text," independent poetic or theoretical works about art, or marginal materials such as letters and notes. These sources constitute invaluable interpretative resources that significantly enhance the understanding of a given artistic system.

Russian metapoetics has followed a long and complex path of development. Its origins can be traced to folklore and Old Russian literature, where reflections on poetry already appear. Poetry represents a unique form of creativity that contemporary philosophers regard as the embodiment of art itself. Martin Heidegger famously asserted that all art, insofar as it reveals the truth of being, is essentially poetry [3]. Poetry, in this sense, apprehends truth intuitively rather than discursively, realizing it through poetic creation.

The language of poetry is fundamentally distinct from everyday speech. It operates according to a special logic, comparable to multidimensional modern logical systems. Poetic language serves as a guiding thread in humanity's endless approach to truth. For this reason, modern philosophers often employ poetic discourse to articulate complex ontological and epistemological ideas, as its semantic richness is particularly suited to philosophical reflection.

Poets have always been concerned with the essence of

poetry, the social role of the poet, the mysteries of artistic mastery, and the relationship between form and content. These issues are especially prominent in Russian poetry, which has absorbed global cultural achievements while preserving its unique national character.

Significantly, the anthology *Three Centuries of Russian Metapoetics: Legitimation of Discourse* opens with an epigraph from *The Tale of Igor's Campaign*, which represents one of the earliest examples of metapoetic reflection in Russian literature. Through this text, readers learn about the legendary poet Boyan, whose creative image exists exclusively within the literary narrative. Despite the absence of historical documentation, Boyan remains one of the most recognizable figures in Russian cultural memory. His portrayal illustrates the power of metapoetic discourse to construct and preserve poetic identity.

As interpreted by D. S. Likhachev, Boyan appears as a prophetic singer, a descendant of pagan tradition, a poet-musician whose songs glorified princes and whose creativity embodied elevated poetic imagination. Although the author of *The Tale of Igor's Campaign* distances himself from Boyan's poetic manner, he nevertheless acknowledges his artistic authority and cultural significance. A. S. Pushkin likewise emphasized this creative tension, noting that the anonymous author consciously proclaimed a new poetic path distinct from Boyan's tradition.

Thus, *The Tale of Igor's Campaign* may be regarded as one of the earliest metapoetic manifestos in Russian literature. It contrasts two poetic systems and articulates a new artistic program that privileges historical truth over panegyric convention. In this way, the text demonstrates that reflection on creativity is always embedded within artistic discourse itself. Such metapoetic self-positioning determines the poet's relationship to predecessors, contemporaries, and cultural tradition, thereby exerting a formative influence on the future development of Russian poetic thought.

Poets such as Feofan Prokopovich, Antioch Kantemir, Mikhail Lomonosov, Vasily Trediakovsky, and Alexander Sumarokov addressed not only general philosophical problems of creativity but also actively refined the technical foundations of Russian verse.

Within this poetic evolution, the modern Russian literary language and the core constants of Russian culture were formed. Among all contributors, Alexander Pushkin occupies a central and unparalleled position.

Although numerous collections titled “Poets on Poetry” have been published, the systematic study of poets’ self-reflection on their own creative process remains underdeveloped. To address this gap, the educational dictionary Russian Metapoetics (2006) and the four-volume anthology Three Centuries of Russian Metapoetics (2002–2006) were compiled. These works document not only the evolution of poetic styles and techniques but also the formation of the Russian literary language as a fundamental cultural achievement.

The linguistic transformation initiated during the Petrine era involved both the integration and unification of previously disparate linguistic elements. According to G. A. Gukovsky, this process was theoretically codified and artistically realized by M. V. Lomonosov, further developed by N. M. Karamzin, and ultimately completed in the creative work of A. S. Pushkin, the true architect of the Russian literary language [3].

Conclusion. From a metapoetic perspective, harmony does not imply uniformity or stylistic simplicity. On the contrary, it emerges from the dynamic interaction of heterogeneous linguistic layers: colloquial speech, philosophical discourse, religious symbolism, and intertextual references. The Russian novel frequently orchestrates these diverse elements into a coherent aesthetic structure, allowing linguistic plurality to coexist within a unified narrative vision. Such harmony is achieved through dialogism, a concept articulated by Bakhtin, in which multiple voices and ideological positions engage in continuous dialogue without being subordinated to a single authoritative perspective.

Furthermore, the metapoetic dimension of Russian novels often manifests through narratorial commentary, authorial irony, and structural experimentation. These techniques draw attention to the constructed nature of literary discourse and invite readers to participate actively in the interpretative process. As a result, harmony is not imposed externally but is co-created through the interaction between text

and reader. This process underscores the ethical responsibility of literary language, as it shapes not only aesthetic perception but also cultural and moral consciousness.

The harmony of literary language also reflects the historical and sociocultural context of Russian literature. Periods of ideological tension, censorship, and social transformation intensified writers’ sensitivity to language as both a tool of expression and a site of resistance. Metapoetic strategies enabled authors to encode critical meanings beneath the surface of narrative discourse, preserving artistic integrity while engaging with oppressive realities. Thus, harmony emerges as a balance between aesthetic autonomy and social responsibility.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the metapoetic approach demonstrates that the harmony of literary language in Russian novels is a complex, multidimensional phenomenon. It arises from the interplay of self-reflection, dialogic plurality, cultural memory, and ethical engagement. This harmony does not eliminate conflict within the text; rather, it transforms conflict into a productive force that enriches narrative structure and deepens philosophical resonance. Therefore, the study of literary language through metapoetics provides a more comprehensive understanding of the Russian novel as a dynamic system in which language itself becomes both subject and object of artistic exploration.

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