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### VALERY BRYUSOV'S SYMBOLIST AESTHETICS

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**Abstract:** This article analyzes the aesthetic ideas and principles of Valery Yakovlevich Bryusov, one of the senior symbolists. It shows how throughout the creative path of the Russian poet, who always considered himself a symbolist, his theoretical judgments and ideas about symbolism from identifying it with decadence to identifying its own characteristics were formed. The article also analyzes the poet's attitude to the social upheaval - the October revolution. The October revolution opened a new stage of Bryusov's literary and social activities. The poet's work of 1917-1924 is largely devoted to revolutionary modernity. Bryusov sought a profound historical understanding of the revolution, sought new linguistic and verse forms to depict the process of socialist reorganization of the world.

#### INTRODUCTION

The eve of the twentieth century in Russia - a time of flowering of scientific thought, intellectual and artistic creativity - is called the "Silver age". This cultural renaissance was directly related to the socio-political situation, which influenced all spheres of social life. Literature, art, primarily formed the public mood, the ideology of the reform movements.

Symbolism is one of the most influential spiritual and aesthetic currents in the art of Russia in the late 19th - early 20th centuries. The founders of this literary movement, V. Y. Bryusov, N. M. Minsky, D. S. Merezhkovsky, K. D. Balmont, F. K. Sologub, and Z. N. Gippius, have the leading role in the philosophical and aesthetic justification of symbolism. It was the active social position of

literary figures among the "senior" symbolists that contributed to the transformation of the symbolist concept into a spiritual, philosophical direction of public thought, which was joined by the best representatives of the Russian intelligentsia of the first decades of the XX century.

### **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

Valery Yakovlevich Bryusov is a cult figure of Russian Symbolism, a syncretic phenomenon of creative personality, who manifested himself in the culture of the Silver Age in a multitude of roles. Poetry, prose, drama, criticism, journalism, history and theory of literature and culture, translation, editing and publishing, organization of the literary life of Russia at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries - all these are areas of manifestation of Bryusov's multifaceted talent, which formed the basis of his fame as a unique artist.

There is a traditional periodization of Bryusov's work, leading from D. E. Maximov's monograph "Bryusov. Poetry and Position," representing: 1) 1892-1897s; 2) 1900-1909s; 3) 1912-1919s; 4) 1921-1924s [17, 124]. A somewhat different periodization was suggested later by M. L. Gasparov in his article "Bryusov as a poet". The researcher based it on the statistical principle: the intensity of creativity, some stylistic preferences and, above all, stylistic search. M. L. Gasparov suggests: "Bryusov had two periods when verse was the main (or one of the main) focus of his experiments. The first was short, in the late 1890s. The second was a protracted one, roughly in the 1914s and 1920s. For the rest of the time, Bryusov's most important task was not verse, but style. The 1900s are the style of Bryusov's "classical" «Urbi et orbi» and «Stephanos». The 1920s is the style of the "late Bryusov." [3, 98-115]. O.A. Kling in his article "Bryusov: through experiment to "neoclassicism"" offers his own periodization of the poet's work. It is based on the ratio of tradition and innovation in Bryusov's lyricism. The researcher believes that there should be three stages in the creative evolution of the poet. The first one is the beginning to the middle of the 90s, when the novelty attitude prevails in V. Bryusov's artistic world. The second is the late nineties - mid-nineties, when the ratio of tradition and innovation reaches equilibrium. The third period covers the late 1900s to the 1910s, when V. Bryusov consciously immerses himself in the element of "neoclassicism". The exception, according to O. A. Kling, is the post-revolutionary period: the poet succumbs to the general desire of those years to create a fundamentally new art [11, 265-270]. In our study we rely on the traditional periodization of Bryusov's work proposed by D. E. Maximov.

### **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

In 1894-1895 Bryusov published several small collections, which he called Russian Symbolists. The collections contained mainly Bryusov's own poems. They were written in an emphatically decadent spirit. Bryusov deliberately taunted the reader with impertinent attacks. This explained, for example, his famous one-line poem, "Oh, shut your pale legs" [21, 98]. This poem, as well as the

collections "Russian symbolists", brought Bryusov a noisy fame. His new collections (1896-1897) were defiantly titled: "Masterpieces" and "This is Me."

In the poems of this period the decadent themes are particularly clearly expressed. Here is both the preaching of "art for art," and militant individualism, and disregard for real reality. The supreme reality for the poet is his own dream. He deliberately flees from life, declaring:

The day of the end will come for the whole universe,  
And only the world of dreams is eternal. [8, 158]

Bryusov contrasts the surrounding reality with his fantasy world.

I Created in secret dreams  
The world of perfect nature, -  
What's in front of him this ashes:  
Steppes, and rocks, and waters! [8, 162]

The demonstrative denial of real life is even more evident in the poem "Creativity":

The shadow of uncreated creatures  
The shadow of uncreated creatures,  
Like the blades of patching  
On the enamel wall.

Purple hands  
On the enamel wall  
Half-asleep draws sounds.  
In a ringing, sonorous silence.  
.....  
The naked moon rises,  
In the azure moon...  
Sounds roar half asleep,  
Sounds caress me. [8, 173]

As we can see, the whole poem consists of logical inconsistencies ("purple hands", "uncreated creatures", "the month rises under the azure moon"), which indicate a conscious departure from real life. The poem provoked very harsh attacks from critics, but Bryusov continued to stubbornly defend his right to create a dream world that had nothing to do with the real world.

Bryusov's decadent aversion to reality also manifests itself in a special attraction to everything unusual, exceptional, exotic. This is very vividly expressed in the poem "Premonition":

My love is the scorching afternoon of Java,  
Like a dream spills a deadly fragrance,

There the lizards, pupils covered, lie,  
And boa constrictors on the trunks of their trunks. [8, 186]

It should be noted that the anti-realism of Bryusov's aesthetics also determined the artistic features of his early poetry. Bryusov often uses a vague, unspoken image-suggestion. Words lose their ordinary meaning, lose their concrete meaning. From the point of view of anti-realist aesthetics, a logical connection between the images is also unnecessary. Therefore, these images are often incoherent and contradictory.

Significant in Bryusov's poetry was the poem To the Young Poet. It became programmatic for all Russian decadence of the 1900s. In it Bryusov persistently preaches pure art, individualism and anti-humanism:

A pale young man with a burning gaze,  
Today I give you three precepts:  
Accept the first: Don't live in the present,  
Only the future is the domain of the poet.

Remember the second: Have no sympathy for anyone,  
Love thyself infinitely.  
Keep the third: Worship art,  
Only to him, thoughtless and aimless. [8, 196]

A new stage in Bryusov's development begins in the 1900s. He becomes not only a famous poet, but also a recognized leader of decadence. Collections of his poems come out: "The Third Guardian", "To the City and the World", "The Wreath". These collections bring him real recognition.

But simultaneously with the growth of Bryusov's popularity, his divergence from the Decadents is outlined. First of all, Bryusov renounced his stressed rejection of reality.

As early as the late 90s he developed an interest in images of history along with subjectivist and exotic motifs. In his search for the heroic, he turns to the history of various peoples, "traveling" from age to age. So he creates a poetic cycle "Lovers of the Ages" about outstanding personalities of the past: the Assyrian king Assargadon, Alexander the Great, Timur, Napoleon, Cleopatra, the Chaldean shepherd who gave names to the constellations. They are all obsessed with a passion of some sort-striving for unlimited glory, power, a thirst for scientific discovery, knowledge, etc.

However, the poet's contradictory nature was also evident in his search for the heroic. Bryusov is interested only in a strong character regardless of its socio-political orientation. What matters to him is the brilliance and significance of the character in itself. He is not interested in what exactly the hero's strength is aimed at. Bryusov himself emphasizes this supra-class character in the poem "I" (1899).

And strangely I fell in love with the darkness of contradictions.  
 And greedily sought the entanglements of the fatal.  
 All dreams are sweet to me, all speeches are dear to me,  
 And to all the gods I dedicate a verse... [8, 203].

But it is quite clear that to pray to "all gods" is to believe in none of them.

In the 1900s Bryusov begins to take an interest in contemporary events. He delves into real life, he has new themes. A number of poems he dedicates to labor. He glorifies labor in the poem "Work":

Hello, hard work,  
 Plough, shovel and pickaxe!  
 Drops of sweat refresh,  
 I'm sober with sweat, my hand is aching [8,152].

In the poem "In response", Bryusov depicts his dream muse in the form of an ox harnessed to a heavy plow:

Go on, dream, my faithful ox!  
 By will, if not by hunt!  
 I am near thee, my whip is heavy,  
 I myself toil, and thou shalt toil! [8, 173]

This depiction of poetic labor had nothing to do with the decadent perception of poetic creativity. For the Symbolists, the poet was a magician, a prophet who inspirationally reveals the secrets of an unseen world. But for Bryusov, the poet is first and foremost a toiler.

A significant place in Bryusov's poetry is given to the theme of the city. He was one of the first Russian poets to address this theme. The poet loves "the big houses and narrow streets of the city." He loves its "rumbling" and "stones" and "singing noises." The poet wonderfully feels and conveys the frantic rhythm of the city with its endless crowds of people, rushing cars, and blindingly sparkling advertisements:

The street was like a storm. The crowds were passing,  
 As if an unstoppable Rock was chasing them.  
 Omnibuses and cabs and cars rushed,  
 The furious stream of people was inexhaustible.  
 The signs, spinning, flashed with an alternating eye  
 From the sky, from the frightful height of the thirtieth floors... [8, 234]

("The Pale Horse")

It should be noted that Bryusov's enthusiastic glorification of the city also distinguished him from the Symbolists, who saw the city as the embodiment of a mechanical civilization that kills the human soul. However, Bryusov himself saw in his contemporary capitalist city not only brilliance

and grandeur. He was able to see here the contrasts of luxury and poverty, the enslavement of workers. In his poem "To the city" he draws a world where, along with fairy-tale palaces and festive temples, "the evil murmurs unceasingly" and "groans menacingly poverty. The poet predicts the inevitable demise of the capitalist city:

The treacherous serpent with the magic eye!  
In a fit of rage blind,  
You're a knife, with your deadly poison,  
Thou raisest thyself above thyself. [8, 256]

A formidable warning to the bourgeois world also sounds in the poem "The stonemason" (1901), which has become widely known.

The stonemason builds a prison for his own fellows, and in this the fate of the proletariat in bourgeois society. A random passerby asks:

Bricklayer, bricklayer, long nights.  
Who will spend in it without sleep? [8, 568]

And the stonemason answers:

Perhaps, my son, a workman like me.  
That our lot is full. [8, 271]

The last lines of the poem are particularly significant:

The stonemason, the stonemason, will remember, perhaps,

Those who carried the bricks,

- Hey, watch out! Under the scaffold, don't mess about...

We all know it ourselves, keep quiet! [8, 274]

In this harsh answer of the worker there is a clear hint of the coming retribution.

Bryusov's political views are reflected in the poem "Dagger". The poet expressed in it his attitude to the problem of revolutionary struggle. Bryusov admits that there were times of delusion and disbelief. But this "shamefully petty, wrong" system, he always hated. And every time he heard the call of the revolution, he responded to it with all his heart:

But I almost heard the call of the trumpet,  
I heard the call of the trumpet, the fiery banners unfurled,  
I am the caller of the struggle, I am the singer of the struggle.  
I am the thunder of the skies. [8, 305]

The revolution of 1905 deeply excited the poet. He was drawn to it by its grandeur and grandiosity. But at the time he had not yet managed to understand its socio-political meaning. The poet perceived the revolution only as a destructive force.

In 1905, in connection with the publication of the tsarist manifesto giving people "democratic rights," he wrote the poem "Satisfied". Addressing the revolutionary proletariat, he calls on it to fall upon the cowardly and hypocritical bourgeois liberals who are satisfied with the phony manifesto:

On these all, satisfied with little,  
 You children of the fiery day.  
 Rise up with a mortal barrage, a mortal squall.  
 Crush life with it me! [8, 211]

In this poem, Bryusov's contradictory attitude to the revolution is also vividly manifested. On the one hand, he is outraged by the moderation of the bourgeois liberals:

Your contentment is the joy of the flock,  
 Finding a scrap of grass.  
 You don't need to be satisfied any more.  
 There's chewing gum, and blessed are you! [8, 212]

But at the same time, this sincere indignation at the cowardly moderation of bourgeois liberals and the appeal to the proletariat does not prevent Bryusov from praising strength in general, regardless of its social orientation. And he praises force even if it is directed against the people:

Beautiful, in the power of formidable power,  
 The eastern king Assargadon.  
 And the ocean of the people's passion,  
 And the ocean of the people's passion,  
 He splinter'd the dingy throne! [8, 216]

As we can see, for the poet here are equally beautiful both the eastern despot Assargadon, trampling the people, and the people's Guev, who is crushing the king's throne to splinters.

In the poem "The huns to come", also written in 1905, the poet compares the revolution to the spontaneous horde of ancient hun nomads, who destroyed everything in their path. Seeing no distinction between the revolutionary people and these ancient barbarians, Bryusov exclaims:

On us with a horde of intoxicated  
 Fall down from your dark stalwarts -  
 Revive the decrepit body  
 Of water-blazing blood. [8, 223]

The poet does not yet separate himself from the old world, but he is not stopped by the possibility of his own demise. Seeing one side of the revolution-the destructive element-he still welcomes it:

All may be bent without a trace,  
 That we alone know,

But you, who will destroy me,  
I greet you with a salutary hymn. [8, 224]

Bryusov also addresses the revolutionary proletariat in the poem "To the close" (1905). Here, too, he approaches the revolution from an anarchist-individualist position, declaring:

No, I am not yours! Your goals are alien to me,  
I am stranger to your unflattered cry... [8, 224]

Bryusov believed that his task was to "smash the foundations of the age-old". But at the same time he was against organized struggle with clear goals. About this he speaks clearly and definitively:

"But where you shout to me, 'No more!  
But where you sing the song of victory,  
I see a new battle in the name of a new will!  
To break, I will be with you! To build, I will not! [8, 225]

The poem "Praise to man" is also very characteristic of Bryusov of these years. He wrote it at the end of 1906, when the revolution was already on the wane. During this period Bryusov creates a veritable hymn to the creative powers of man. Everything is within the power and everything is available to man:

Rocks, wind, water, flame  
You humbled with your bridle,  
"You've raised the jubilant banner  
Straight into the dome of the blue.

Ever mighty, ever young,  
In the land of Dusk and Ice  
He made the great hammer sing.  
He made the cities shine.

Through the desert and over the abyss  
Thou hast ledst thy paths.  
"And through the wilderness and the abyss  
To braid the earth with a thread.

.....  
I trust you, daring one! Thou wilt set  
The rows of winds upon the earth.  
You will guide with your hand  
The running of the planet between the stars..... [8, 307]



Bryusov begins and ends his poem with the words, "Be glorified, man!" and these words clearly echoed Gorky's hymn to man.

On the whole, Bryusov's work in many ways remained contradictory. In the 900s he still acted as a convinced decadent on many issues.

The poet's theoretical statements on art are imbued with decadent sentiments. However, Bryusov's main statements in the spirit of symbolist theories belong mainly to the first half of the 900s. During these years Bryusov actively defends the theory of "art for art". In the journal «Libra», which he edited, the poet stated that in his quest for absolute freedom he did not accept the doctrine of partisanship in literature.

However, in the 10s in the articles of Bryusov there are already new views on art. He wrote in 1911: "As soon as art is detached from reality, its creations are stripped of flesh and blood, fade and die. When the artist does not want to observe reality, he unwittingly replaces personal observations with imitation of other artists." [7, 112].

Bryusov always appreciated the role of the poet. As early as 1907 in the poem "To the Poet" he wrote:

You must be as proud as a banner:  
You must be sharp as a sword,  
Like Dante, the subterranean flame  
Shall burn thy cheeks. [8, 208]

Now, for Bryusov, the poet is not only a servant of the "holy craft." From the poet, he above all requires a meaningful and realistic art. He is concerned about the "fatal detachment" of contemporary young poetry from life. He says: "Our young poets live in a fantasy world of the young that they have created for themselves, as if they know nothing of what is happening around us. [16, 23].

Bryusov is already openly opposed to symbolist poetry. He urges the decadents to come down from heaven to earth:

No! To the shining abyss  
To the shining abyss, my heart does not call!  
The years go by, and the dream grows kinder.  
The sinful songs of love.

White knights.... the shadow of Palestine...  
The eternal rose and the cross...  
Ah! A kiss replaces one  
To me of all the heavenly brides! [8, 331]

("To Ellis", 1914).

The imperialist war of 1914 played a special role in the creative development of the poet. It became for him a kind of preparatory school for the revolution, helped him to better understand the events taking place. However, he did not immediately understand the true nature of this war. Insight came to him gradually. In 1917, after the February revolution, he published a poem called "Thirtieth month", which denounced the imperialist war as a disgusting, self-serving massacre.

The Thirtieth Month Death and Famine,  
Wandering, knocking at every door;  
Branding those who are old, branding those who are young.  
Children in their mothers' arms!

The thirtieth month God of Europe,  
Free Labour is enslaved:  
He digs trenches for war,  
For death he pours the shells! [8, 352]

Bryusov's new views led him to a rapprochement with Gorky. Soon Bryusov decisively broke with the bourgeois literary milieu and went over to the side of the October revolution. He later wrote: "The coup of 1917 was the deepest upheaval for me personally. [21, 115].

Immediately after the victory of the Great October socialist Bryusov took a very active part in the cultural construction, and in 1920 joined the Communist party.

In Bryusov's post-revolutionary work the main place is occupied by the problems of the homeland, the people and the revolution. They became leading and defining in his collections «In Such Days» (1921). " Far away" (1922) and others [16, 96].

The ideological principledness of Bryusov's work was particularly evident in the poem «To comrades to intellectuals» (1919). The poet himself rightly called this poem an "invective," that is, an accusatory speech. With angry sarcasm, he denounces those bourgeois liberals who used to dream of revolution, but who recoiled from it when it became a reality.

That which flashed in a distant dream,  
Embodied in the smoke in the tula ....  
Why do you squint with an unfaithful eye  
In the forest of a frightened roe deer?  
.....  
To you fantasists or to you aesthetes,  
Or have you fantasists and aesthetes,  
And only in books and in harmony with the poet ,  
Did you love originality? [8, 360]

In its ideological content the poem "to comrades to the intelligentsia" is in many ways close to the article "The intelligentsia and the revolution" by A. Blok.

The subject matter of Bryusov's poetry is very diverse. Along with political lyricism, he worked a lot on the creation of so-called "scientific poetry». He believed that poetry could not be limited to civil themes, themes of love and nature. Poetry should reflect everything that interests and worries modern man. That is why the theme of Bryusov's poems become various problems of modern science, discoveries of modern physics, biology, etc. [16, 101].

After Lomonosov, Bryusov praises the limitless possibilities of modern scientific thought, he is excited by the pathos of new discoveries. In his poem "The world of the electron" (1922) he tries to reveal the mystery of these tiny particles of matter.

Perhaps these electrons are.  
Worlds where the five continents,  
Arts, knowledge, wars, thrones  
And the memory of forty centuries!

And maybe every atom is a Universe of a hundred planets  
A universe of a hundred planets:  
There all that is here in compressed volume,  
But also that which is not here. [8, 401]

Bryusov was always a seeker of new ways. After the revolution, however, he sometimes approached the phenomena of new life not from living reality, but, as he himself admitted, "from books, from museums, from the stage." [16, 103]. Hence the abstract nature of many works in Bryusov's post-revolutionary lyrics.

## CONCLUSION

Thus, as a symbolist poet, Bryusov was primarily drawn to symbolism. But unlike the symbolists, in the mature Bryusov the symbolic images became more and more concrete. There is nothing mysterious, incomprehensible in the image of the bricklayer, in the "coming huns". These symbolic images contain very real semantic content. Hence another principle of Bryusov's poetry - its sculpture and clear delineation. Bryusov's chiseled, concise formulations sharply distinguished his poetry from the musical and melodic mode of the Symbolists ("I am the leader of earthly kings and the king of Assargadon"; "The poet is always with men when the storm rises, and song and storm are forever sisters". [8]).

A characteristic feature of Bryusov's style is also its sublimity. His poems contain many slavisms, archaisms, solemn-sounding historical and mythological names. All this gives a sublime style to his poetry.

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