

MAJOR SYMBOLIST POETS AND THEIR WORLD MODELS (BASED ON THE WORKS OF A. A. BLOK, V.YA. BRYUSOV, AND V.I. IVANOV)

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Abstract

The article analyzes world-building strategies in the poetics of major Russian Symbolist poets: Alexander Blok, Valery Bryusov, and Vyacheslav Ivanov. It examines the aesthetic, philosophical, and mythopoetic foundations of their creative systems that define the structure of their artistic worlds. The study reveals how each poet constructs a unique poetic universe using various symbolic and mythological paradigms. Special attention is given to the function of the symbol as a means of modeling sacred reality and engaging with archetypal collective consciousness.

Keywords: Symbolism, world-building, poetics, mythopoetics, Blok, Bryusov, Ivanov, symbol, myth, sacred.

Introduction

Russian Symbolism, as a literary trend of late 19th – early 20th century modernism, was not only a formal innovation but also a profound shift in the understanding of art's function. The Symbolists aimed not to reflect the world but to recreate it through symbolic language, myth, allusion, and intuition. Poetry was conceived as a vehicle for metaphysical exploration, with the poet acting as a mediator between the visible and the invisible. This article explores the world-modeling (or world-building) practices of three central figures of Russian Symbolism — Alexander Blok, Valery Bryusov, and Vyacheslav Ivanov — each of whom constructed a unique poetic cosmos rooted in mythopoetic and philosophical structures.

Blok's poetry exemplifies mythopoeia, where the artistic world emerges through a dramatic interplay of opposing forces — ideal vs. real, light vs. darkness, eternity vs. time. His early work revolves around the symbolic figure of the Beautiful Lady, merging the Christian Virgin, folkloric witch-maiden, and the Platonic ideal of the feminine. In Verses about the Beautiful Lady and Unexpected Joy, Blok builds a mystical model of the world where the poet appears as an initiate awaiting divine revelation. Over time, this myth undergoes a dramatic transformation: the "Lady" descends into a worldly woman, the city becomes a place of sin, and the world turns into a battlefield for apocalyptic struggle. In The Snow Mask, The Scythians, and especially The Twelve, the energy of modern chaos manifests, breaking



traditional Symbolism into fragments of prophecy, dream, and historical allegory. Blok's poetic world is thus a theatrical mystery, where every event is both real and symbolic, a gateway to the transcendent. His poetics are grounded in antinomy between the actual and the ideal, with language serving as a medium for hidden knowledge.

Unlike Blok, Bryusov represents the rationalist branch of Symbolism. His model of the world is shaped by the logic of the sign: the symbol is not a divine revelation but a tool of thought. He does not reject reality but seeks to synthesize culture, history, and myth into a unified system of images governed by the poet's intellect. Influenced by French Symbolists such as Mallarmé and Baudelaire, Bryusov creates encrypted poetic structures. His lyric imagery — cities, mirrors, secret scripts, stars, books — serve as codes of cultural memory. The cosmos he constructs is orderly, architectonic, and aesthetically organized. In this model, the poet is a demiurge, a craftsman of reality. In *The Third Watch* and the poem *Stefan Dionysius*, Bryusov presents a mythologized space where philosophy, religion, science, and art form a unified text. History becomes a resource for poetic modeling, not an oppressive force. Bryusov's world model represents culture as a semiotic system, and poetry becomes an act of intellectual cognition, deciphering the world's multilayered symbolic nature. Ivanov, the Symbolist-philosopher, develops an ontological model of the world based on sacred structures that reflect divine intent. Central to his worldview are the motifs of sacrifice, mystery, and ritual, with the poet acting not merely as an artist but as a priest. His thinking centers on the Dionysian myth, which fuses elements from Nietzsche, classical antiquity, and Christian mysticism. In *Dionysus and Predionysianism*, Ivanov proposes that cultural renewal is only possible through communal insight into cosmic truth. He aims to revive ancient Greek tragedy as a collective spiritual act, uniting poet, people, and deity.

In works such as *Transparency*, Ivanov constructs a sacred cosmos replete with allusions to the Bible, Plato, Neoplatonism, and Eastern teachings. The world is layered, and each symbol points toward a deeper, transcendent reality. Poetry is initiation — a passage from darkness to light, death to resurrection. Thus, Ivanov's poetic universe is a sacred hierarchy, in which the symbol incarnates rather than represents the idea. His aim is to transform poetry into liturgy and art into a path of spiritual transfiguration. The poetic worlds of Blok, Bryusov, and Ivanov offer three distinct approaches to Symbolist world-building:

- Blok constructs an existential and moral drama, where symbols reflect the tension between the earthly and the divine.
- Bryusov builds a cosmic system, where the symbol functions as a rational code of culture.
- Ivanov formulates a sacred initiation, where symbols enable religious ascent. What unites them is not merely formal technique, but the aspiration to poetic myth-making that reimagines the world as a meaningful whole beyond empirical reality. Each develops a personal mythology, serving as the foundation of a unique poetic cosmos. Thus, Russian Symbolism emerges as not only a literary trend, but a metaphysical project, in which poetry becomes a means of constructing and interpreting the world.



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