

**THE MAIN ARTISTIC MOVEMENTS AND LITERARY TRENDS OF THE SILVER  
AGE.  
SPECIFIC FEATURES**

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**Annotation:** This article examines a turning point in the development of social and artistic life in Russia, a period marked by a reconsideration of artistic values, a renewal of literary techniques, the emergence of new literary movements, and the emergence of a new period in Russian cultural history known as the Silver Age (1890-1920).

**Keywords:** pinnacle of Russian poetry, prose, turning point in historical history, artistic values, literary techniques, literary movements, "Silver Age"

The 19th century, and especially its first half, was the pinnacle of Russian poetry. This was its "golden age." Pushkin, Lermontov, Nekrasov, Tyutchev and Fet lived and worked during this time.

In the second half of the last century, prose dominated Russian literature. No new outstanding poets emerged. At the turn of the 20th century, a "new" poetry emerged.

The early 20th century was a turning point in the development of social and artistic life in Russia. Artistic values were being reconsidered, literary techniques were being updated, and realism continued to evolve.

The theme of Russia's destiny, its spiritual and moral essence, and its historical future became central to the works of writers of various ideological and literary schools. Interest in issues of national character and human nature intensified, but these issues were addressed in different ways. This theme was evident in the works of writers who continued to work in the realistic direction, such as A. I. Kuprin (1870-1938), V. V. Veresayev (1867-1945), I. A. Bunin (1870-1953), M. Gorky (1868-1936), and others.

But poetry developed particularly dynamically. A little later, this period would be known as the Silver Age of Russian Poetry.

The Silver Age is the name of a period in the history of Russian culture (1890-1920). This new literary and historical era was not only a continuation of traditions but also a rejection of the old, a search for new artistic techniques. The social and civic themes of the Golden Age, which had been the foundation of Russian literature, were fading. Poets found interest in the philosophical themes of God, Life, and Death. The Silver Age marked the beginning of Russian modernism and ushered in new literary movements. The main ones were Symbolism, Acmeism, Imagism, and Futurism.

*"Silver Age" of new poetry:*

A. A. Blok, B. L. Pasternak, A. A. Akhmatova,  
S. A. Yesenin, V. V. Mayakovsky, A. Bely,  
M. I. Tsvetaeva, N. S. Gumilyov, V. Ya. Bryusov.

The poets of the "Silver Age" were literate and educated people. They sought to draw on the best of realism, romanticism, and classicism, developing their traditions, and moving forward. They were meticulous with words, because they, above all, expressed the poet's soul.

The "Golden Age" of Russian literature was replaced by a new one—the "Silver Age." It became an era of the formation of new poetic trends, creating communities of poets in which each representative had their own unique style.

*Who invented the "Silver Age"?*

The tradition of naming cultural eras after the properties of metals dates back to antiquity. It's unclear who exactly coined the term "Silver Age." According to one theory, the period was named after the "Golden Age" of Russian literature; another suggests it was taken from Anna Akhmatova's "Poem Without a Hero."

There's also debate about the precise time period encompassed by the "Silver Age." Its beginning is generally placed around the 1890s, with the publication of Merezhkovsky's collections and the poetry of Zinaida Gippius and Konstantin Balmont.

The dates for its end are controversial: some researchers point to the October Revolution and the beginning of the Civil War, while others point to 1921—the year of Blok's death and Gumilyov's execution. Mayakovsky's suicide is also mentioned.

Many poets and writers of the "Silver Age" survived the transition and continued to publish after the 1930s, publishing critical articles and memoirs while in exile.

The Silver Age marked a new stage of development not only in literature, but also in painting, music, theater, and ballet. This was a time of modernism: experiments with symbolism, content, and verse form, and the search for new means of expression.

The poets of the Silver Age sought to renew language and imagery, to go beyond traditional canons.

A deep interest in philosophical and metaphysical questions: unlike the literature of the preceding period, the emphasis was not on pressing social issues, but on global questions of existence, the meaning of life, death, and love.

Mysticism and irrationality: many poets turned to mysticism, religious themes, and were interested in the occult, dreams, and premonitions.

Use of symbols and allegories: Symbolism became one of the key artistic techniques for conveying the polysemy and ambiguity of the world.

Musicality and sound of poetry: Particular attention was paid to the melody and rhythm of poetry, as well as its musical organization.

Development of literary movements and schools: During this period, various poetic associations with their own manifestos and aesthetic programs actively formed and interacted.

*Silver Age Movements:*

*Symbolism*

A new literary movement, Symbolism, emerged from the profound crisis that gripped European culture at the end of the 19th century. This crisis manifested itself in a negative assessment of progressive social ideas, a reconsideration of moral values, a loss of faith in the power of scientific consciousness, and a fascination with idealistic philosophy. Russian Symbolism emerged during the collapse of Narodnikism and the widespread pessimism. All this led to the fact that Silver Age literature addressed not pressing social issues, but rather global philosophical ones. The chronological framework for Russian Symbolism spanned the 1890s to 1910. Two literary traditions influenced the development of Symbolism in Russia:

The Russian poetry of Fet and Tyutchev, the prose of Dostoevsky.

French Symbolism—the poetry of Paul Verlaine, Arthur Rimbaud, and Charles Baudelaire. The central idea is that art is a means of understanding the world.

Symbolism was not homogeneous. It included schools and movements (for example, "senior" and "junior" Symbolists).

"Senior" Symbolists

The "senior" Symbolists include:

St. Petersburg writers D. S. Merezhkovsky, Z. N. Gippius, F. K. Sologub, and N. M. Minsky. The work of the St. Petersburg Symbolists was initially dominated by a mood of decadence and motifs of disillusionment. For this reason, their work is sometimes called "decadent."

Moscow poets V. Ya. Bryusov and K. D. Balmont.

The "older" Symbolists perceived Symbolism in aesthetic terms. According to Bryusov and Balmont, a poet is, above all, a creator of purely personal and purely artistic values.

The "younger" Symbolists (younger Symbolists): these include A. A. Blok, A. Bely, and V. I. Ivanov. The "younger" Symbolists perceived Symbolism in a philosophical and religious vein. For them, Symbolism was philosophy refracted through poetic consciousness.

The symbolic image is polysemantic; its meanings are often only vaguely felt, unable to be fully expressed in a precise word or concept.

For example, "You" in A. Blok's poems is simultaneously a beloved girl, spring, the Beautiful Lady, the Princess, the Eternal Feminine, and the Motherland.

The symbols of dawn, sunrise, stars, fog, ships, wind, and snowstorms are polysemantic.

Color symbolism is also used. A. Bely, in his article "Sacred Colors" (1905), explains the meaning of certain colors: white—goodness, harmony (hence his pseudonym); black—evil, chaos; gray—the presence of evil, chaos, and the devil in everyday life; red—love, passion, suffering, etc.

Symbolist poets made a significant contribution to the development of Russian culture. The most talented of them, in their own way, captured the tragic plight of individuals unable to find their place in life, in a world shaken by monumental social conflicts, and sought new ways to artistically understand the world. They made significant discoveries in the fields of poetics, the rhythm of verse, and the enhancement of its musical element.

#### *Acmeism*

*Acmeism* was born as a protest against Symbolism. Acmeism's founder, Nikolai Gumilev, restored clarity of imagery, references to ancient times, simplicity of language, and a love of life to poetry.

Sensing the crisis of Symbolism, in 1911, Gumilev, together with Sergei Gorodetsky, founded the poetic association "The Guild of Poets." Acmeist poets returned to the naturalness of the material world and primordial feelings, while the Symbolists were perceived as "tragic dreamers."

The name was given by Gumilev; it derives from a Greek root meaning "the highest degree of something, flourishing power." If Symbolism is a search for a path into the unknown, then Acmeism is the real world. They contrasted vagueness and allusions with precise images and clear composition.

The Acmeists offered nothing new—they restored poets' ability to freely use the means of language. For them, "this is a longing for world culture." They sought to find poetry in the mundane details of life.

The Acmeists called for poetry to be purged of philosophy and all "methodological" preoccupations, of the use of vague allusions and symbols, proclaiming a return to the material world and its acceptance as it is: with its joys and vices, evil and injustice, and affirming the principle of "art for art's sake."

Unlike the "younger" Symbolists, the Acmeists do not set the goal of reorganizing the world in poetry. Rejecting the utopias and mythologism of the Symbolists, the Acmeists see poetry not as an ideology (i.e., a doctrine or philosophy), but as a cultural phenomenon, the self-realization of human free creative powers. This understanding of art was an important part of the "spiritual Renaissance" in Russia.

Representatives: Nikolai Gumilyov, Anna Akhmatova, Osip Mandelstam

### *Futurism*

*Futurism* as a literary movement originated in Italy.

Futurism is an avant-garde movement formed on the principles of rebellion and an anarchic worldview, expressing the mass mood of the crowd, rejecting cultural heritage and traditions, and attempting to create art that looks to the future.

If Symbolism is the "poetry of hints," and Acmeism is the poetry of precision and clarity, then Futurism is the poetry of challenge (outrageousness, the refutation of tradition).

The Futurists were V. Mayakovsky, V. Kamensky, D. Burluk, V. Khlebnikov, I. Severyanin, N. Aseyev and B. Pasternak.

From the very beginning, they proclaimed a complete rejection of all literary traditions, and first and foremost the classical heritage, arguing that it was hopelessly outdated.

Russian Futurists considered themselves the only worthy representatives of Russian art, champions of its radical renewal. Futurism's program set the goal of separating literature from politics, from "common sense" and "good taste," affirming the beauty of self-reflective language. The poet is a rebel, a revolutionary, a creator of a new reality. The rejection of the past in the name of the present, and the present in the name of the future.

In the context of the revolutionary upsurge and the crisis of autocracy, Acmeism and Futurism proved unviable and ceased to exist by the end of the 1910s.

### *Imagism*

*Imagism* (from the French and English "image") is a literary and artistic movement that emerged in Russia in the first post-revolutionary years, based on the literary practice of Futurism.

*The main characteristics of Imagism are:*

- the primacy of "image as such"; image is the most general category, replacing the evaluative concept of artistry;
- poetic creativity is the process of developing language through metaphor;
- an epithet is the sum of metaphors, comparisons, and contrasts of some object;

The founders of Imagism were Anatoly Mariengof, Vadim Shershenevich, and Sergei Yesenin.

Imagism was the last prominent school of Russian poetry in the 20th century. This movement was created two years after the Revolution, but in its entire substantive focus, it had nothing in common with the Revolution.

### *Beyond the Movements,*

Among the representatives of the Silver Age were those who did not belong to any of the movements listed above. In addition to the main movements and poetic associations, there were authors who wrote satirical and proletarian poetry, constructivists, and OBERIUs (a group of real artists).

These include Ivan Bunin, Vladislav Khodasevich, Marina Tsvetaeva, Daniil Kharms, and Boris Pasternak, who created their works outside the literary canon.

*What was most notable and defining in the artistic form of Silver Age literature, especially in its poetry?*

What are the main lessons of the Silver Age, its strengths and weaknesses, its discoveries and its mistakes?

It is a century of unprecedented grace and beauty in the Russian language, especially in poetry. Blok and Bely, Tsvetaeva and Mayakovsky, Akhmatova and Gumilev, Yesenin and Klyuyev, and many other first-class poets—these are the names that will remain in Russian memory, and that is undeniable.

Russian poetry of the Silver Age traveled a long way in a very short time.

It sowed its seeds into the future. The thread of legends and traditions has not been broken. Turn-of-the-century poetry is a complex cultural phenomenon, interest in which is only just beginning to awaken. New discoveries await us.

"The poetry of the Silver Age reflected, in its large and small magical mirrors, the complex and ambiguous process of Russia's socio-political, spiritual, moral, aesthetic, and cultural development during a period marked by three revolutions, a world war, and an especially terrible internal civil war.

"The Russian Silver Age is unique. Never before in Russia has there been such a roused consciousness, such intensity of search and aspiration."

The unforgettable dawn of the "Silver Age" will forever remain in the history of Russia.

What is the essence of the "Silver Age" phenomenon in Russian poetry? What makes this phenomenon unified? Despite the diversity of movements and creative individuals, this poetry expressed the worldview of a single era—an era of transition, crisis, and upheaval. This explains the acute sense of individuality, experienced in dramatic moments, shared by all the poets of the "Silver Age."

Disillusionment with previous forms of life and a search for a new harmony with the world. Each poet interpreted the relationship between man and time in his own way, striving to overcome their antagonism. The poetry of the "Silver Age" is imbued with a sense of each person's inseparable connection to the shared destiny of Russia. While imagining the future of their homeland differently, the poets share a common thread: humanism and the idea of a free, creative individual.

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# JOURNAL OF MULTIDISCIPLINARY SCIENCES AND INNOVATIONS

VOLUME 5, ISSUE 03  
MONTHLY JOURNALS



ISSN NUMBER: 2751-4390

IMPACT FACTOR: 9,08

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