

**INTERPRETATION OF METAPHOR THROUGH AUTHORS' NARRATOLOGICAL STRATEGIES: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS IN THE WORKS OF IVAN TURGENEV AND IVAN BUNIN**

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**Abstract**

The article is devoted to the analysis of metaphor in the artistic prose of Ivan Turgenev and Ivan Bunin, considered not as an isolated expressive device but as a key component of the narratological structure of the text. The focus is on the ways in which metaphor determines the narrator's point of view, shapes composition, and organizes the emotional and philosophical space. The article demonstrates that in Turgenev's prose, metaphor is closely connected with lyrical modality and the gentle assimilation of nature and human experience, whereas in Bunin's works it becomes a condensed unit of meaning, a carrier of philosophical concentration and a tragic worldview. The comparative analysis shows that metaphor in their works performs a structure-forming function, reflecting the principles of authorial poetics and models of world perception. The aim of this article is to identify the features of metaphor interpretation within the context of the narratological strategies of both authors, to determine the functions of metaphor in the structure of the text, and to demonstrate how differences in narrative organization shape the specificity of the writers' metaphorical thinking.

**Keywords**

metaphor, narratology, metaphor interpretation, narrative strategies, Ivan Turgenev, Ivan Bunin, artistic prose, narrative perspective, cognitive poetics, emotional structure, mythopoetics, memory, temporality, literary analysis

**ИНТЕРПРЕТАЦИЯ МЕТАФОРЫ ЧЕРЕЗ НАРРАТОЛОГИЧЕСКИЕ СТРАТЕГИИ АВТОРОВ: СОПОСТАВИТЕЛЬНЫЙ АНАЛИЗ У И. ТУРГЕНЕВА И И. БУНИНА**

**Аннотация**

Статья посвящена анализу метафоры в художественной прозе И. Тургенева и И. Бунина, рассматриваемой не как изолированное выразительное средство, а как ключевой компонент нарратологической структуры текста. В центре внимания — способы, с помощью которых метафора определяет точку зрения повествователя, формирует композицию, организует эмоциональное и философское пространство. В статье показывается, что метафора у Тургенева тесно связана с лирической модальностью, мягкой ассимиляцией природы и человеческого переживания, тогда как у Бунина она становится сгустком смысла, носителем философской концентрации и трагического мировидения. Сравнительный анализ демонстрирует, что метафора в их произведениях выполняет структурообразующую функцию, отражая принципы авторской поэтики и

модели восприятия мира. Цель данной статьи — выявить особенности интерпретации метафоры в контексте нарратологических стратегий обоих авторов, определить функции метафоры в структуре текста и показать, как различия в повествовательной организации определяют специфику метафорического мышления писателей.

### **Ключевые слова**

метафора, нарратология, интерпретация метафоры, нарративные стратегии, Иван Тургенев, Иван Бунин, художественная проза, повествовательная перспектива, когнитивная поэтика, эмоциональная структура, мифопоэтика, память, темпоральность, литературный анализ

### **Introduction**

The problem of metaphor has long occupied a central place in philological analysis; however, in recent decades, conceptions of its role in the text have significantly expanded. Metaphor is no longer perceived solely as a figurative device: its study has moved into the domains of cognitive linguistics, poetics, and narratology. According to the concept developed by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, metaphor is a way of understanding the world and a tool for conceptualizing experience. In artistic prose, it also functions as a structural element of the text.

This function is particularly evident in the prose of Turgenev and Bunin. Literary criticism has long noted the aesthetic continuity between these authors; however, their methods of metaphorization differ significantly. Turgenev associates metaphor with a lyrical type of narration and a smooth transition between the external and the internal. Bunin, by contrast, compresses metaphor to maximum density, transforming it into a point of semantic tension—a kind of “micro-flash” of existential awareness.

In Turgenev, metaphor emerges from the very movement of nature and seems to dissolve into its rhythm: the dawn “gently smiles at the world,” the steppe “breathes evenly and calmly,” the road “winds like a quiet thought.” These images do not require effort to perceive—they naturally enter the narrative flow, continuing the emotional state of the character. Here, metaphor is a mode of lyrical “feeling,” a subtle means of establishing harmony between the human being and the surrounding space.

In Bunin, metaphor functions differently—it flashes suddenly, like an instantaneous blow of awareness: the night “collapses into a black abyss,” the moonlight “cuts with a cold blade,” the leaves “burn with dry gold, like the last breath of the earth.” These images do not dissolve in the text but concentrate meaning in a single moment, fixing the tragic uniqueness and sharpness of existence.

### **Narratological Preconditions of Metaphorization: Differences in Artistic Worlds**

Narratological analysis, drawing on the theoretical works of Yuri Lotman, reveals that metaphor in the prose of Turgenev and Bunin arises from different types of artistic perception.

In Turgenev, the artistic world is constructed as a space of organic harmony, where nature and human beings are inseparably connected through internal rhythms. His narrative model is based on the gradual “growing into” the surrounding landscape by the character’s

consciousness. Hence, Turgenev's metaphors are often built on soft, "breathing" images of nature: the wind may "whisper," the grove may "listen to itself," and the sunset may "melt on the horizon like a memory." These images do not disrupt the unity of the world; on the contrary, they emphasize the smooth transitions between human feeling and natural existence.

**Turgenev: lyrical empathy.** Turgenev is characterized by a deep immersion of the character's consciousness into the space of nature. Nature is not an external object of observation but a continuation of the character's inner state. Hence the numerous metaphorical parallels between nature and emotional experience. The steppe may "breathe," the forest may "listen," the field may "hold its breath." These metaphors are not conflict-driven; they create a soft lyrical perspective in which the character's experience and the landscape merge into a unified emotional space.

**Bunin: detachment and philosophical density.** Bunin's prose is built on a different foundation. His narrator is an observer, aesthetically detached, capturing a moment. His artistic world is filled with sharp contrasts of light and color, abrupt transitions from light to darkness, from silence to тревожное напряжение. Here, metaphor is not a means of transition but a point of semantic concentration.

If in Turgenev metaphor is distributed evenly throughout the text, creating a sense of harmonious flow, in Bunin it often becomes the peak, the "striking" position in a sentence—a concentration of semantic energy. Hence, his metaphors appear more dramatic, sharp, and tense.

**Perspective in Turgenev: inner harmony of vision.**

Turgenev uses metaphor to form an internal point of view. The character does not simply describe the world but perceives it through personal sensations, and metaphor becomes the form of expressing this subjectivity. The narrative acquires an immersive quality: the reader enters the character's consciousness, experiencing the world synchronously with them.

Metaphor in Turgenev performs a synchronizing function: it establishes unity between the world and the individual. It sets the rhythm and tone of the narrative, with emotional coloring playing a crucial role—from soft luminous sadness to subtle psychological tension.

**Perspective in Bunin: distance and tragic contemplation.**

Bunin's point of view is the opposite. He emphasizes the separation between the character and the world, the impossibility of complete fusion. Metaphor highlights this distance, imparting alienation to the world. Moonlight may "cut," snow may "grow cold," night may "collapse."

Bunin constructs a narrative in which metaphor фиксирует момент экзистенциального переживания. It appears not as a natural continuation of observation but as its culmination, concentrating meaning.

The emotional structure of Turgenev's text is built on smooth transitions. Metaphor creates an atmosphere of calm, contemplative feeling. Even when tragedy is present, it is not expressed through harsh imagery. Metaphor harmonizes experience, creating an aesthetic field of lyricism.

Bunin's metaphor, on the contrary, is rhythmically ударная. It creates an emotional "explosion," a sudden flash that makes the reader feel the sharpness of the moment. His feeling is not a flow but a discharge; therefore, his metaphor acts quickly, precisely, and painfully.

One of the key philosophical aspects of both authors is memory, and its metaphorization reflects deep differences between them. In Turgenev, memory appears as a gentle flow, like a river carrying a person from the present into the past. It is embedded in a broad emotional and psychological context: it does not wound but reminds, warms, and softens loss. In Bunin, memory is a sharp cut of time, a flash that extracts a moment from darkness and makes it eternal. It is always associated with loss and inevitability. His metaphors are sharp, point-like, instantaneous—like a beam of light striking darkened glass.

Thus, two different philosophies of time emerge: flowing versus fragmented.

Turgenev's mythopoetics is based on harmony between human and nature. Metaphor makes the world transparent, alive, and breathing. Space itself feels and responds.

Bunin creates a different myth—the myth of transience, fragility, and sharp beauty. His world exists between light and shadow, life and death. Metaphor captures this borderline state.

### **Narrative Structure and Functions of Metaphor**

Differences in metaphor are closely linked to compositional features.

- In Turgenev, metaphor often functions as a transition—from landscape description to inner monologue, from observation to reflection. It has a connective structure.
- In Bunin, metaphor is the *вершина фразы*: it завершает meaning rather than connecting it.

Turgenev's metaphors dissolve the character in the world, creating continuity; Bunin's expose and sharpen the moment, fixing the fragile balance between life and death.

### **Authorial Philosophy and Metaphorical Structure**

Turgenev's philosophy is one of harmony, silence, and inner balance; metaphor is its instrument. Bunin's philosophy is one of tragic solitude, transience, and inexorable time; metaphor exposes this rupture.

Thus, philosophical differences are directly manifested in metaphorical structures:

- Turgenev creates a world of flowing harmony;
- Bunin creates a world of extreme concentration and existential intensity.

### **Conclusion**

Metaphor in the works of Turgenev and Bunin is not merely an ornament or trope—it is a fundamental structural and philosophical mechanism organizing narration. In Turgenev, metaphor performs a unifying function: it connects the inner world of the character with external nature, harmonizes emotions, and creates a smooth narrative flow. His metaphors are soft, fluid, and “breathing,” forming a sense of wholeness and inner balance.

In Bunin, by contrast, metaphor is a sharp instrument for capturing the moment. Each metaphor is a concentration of meaning, a point of tension that reveals the fragility and transience of existence. His metaphors are sharp, contrastive, and dramatic.

Thus, comparison shows that metaphor fulfills two equally significant but different functions: in one case, it unifies and harmonizes; in the other, it фиксирует и обостряет. The analysis of metaphor within narratological strategies reveals deep differences in worldview, philosophy, and artistic models, demonstrating how the same literary device can serve entirely different purposes.

Ultimately, in both authors, metaphor is not only a means of artistic expression but also a key to understanding their philosophy, narrative structure, and emotional world, making it a central element of their творчество and an important subject of literary study.

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