

**METAPHOR IN THE WORKS OF V. S. VYSOTSKY AS A WAY OF ARTISTIC
UNDERSTANDING OF REALITY**

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Abstract: This article analyzes metaphor as a key element of Vladimir Semyonovich Vysotsky's poetics. The dominant metaphorical models in the author's song poetry are examined: spatial-travel, physical, military, natural, and socio-existential. Based on Vysotsky's texts, it is revealed that metaphor acts as the main mechanism of artistic thinking and meaning-making, allowing the author to express social criticism, philosophical reflections, and the emotional and psychological state of the lyrical hero. It has been established that metaphor in Vysotsky's work is highly expressive, dramatic, and relies on conversational intonation, giving poetic speech the effect of a direct dialogue with the listener. It is concluded that Vysotsky's metaphors form a holistic authorial worldview, where human existence is understood as a struggle, a journey, and a test, enabling the conceptualization of the themes of freedom, choice, moral responsibility, and the tragedy of human existence.

Key words: V. S. Vysotsky, metaphor, song poetry, artistic image, expressiveness, poetics, tropes, meaning-making.

The work of Vladimir Semyonovich Vysotsky is among the most significant phenomena of Russian culture in the second half of the 20th century. His song and poetry lyrics transcend traditional lyricism, possessing a distinct theatricality, a theatrical focus, and an internal dialogic quality. Vysotsky acts not only as a poet but also as a performer, which allows his works to form a unique type of artistic discourse—a synthetic one that combines poetry, dramatic speech, and intonational expressiveness. One of the key characteristics of this discourse is the metaphorical organization of the text. Metaphor in Vysotsky's poetry serves as a central point of meaning: it helps the author convey internal personal conflicts, highlight the social tensions of the era, and develop a philosophical perspective for understanding reality. It's important to emphasize that Vysotsky's metaphorical constructs often serve not so much an aesthetic as a conceptual function, approaching symbolism and setting the direction for the interpretation of the work [1]. The relevance of this study stems from the fact that metaphor in Vysotsky's work is a means of expressing the author's worldview and a key to interpreting his artistic system. In the context of modern linguistic research, metaphor is considered not only as a trope, but also as a way of conceptualizing experience, which makes its analysis particularly significant for the interpretation of poetic texts [2]. The aim of the article is to determine the features of the metaphorical system in the works of Vysotsky and to identify the main functions of metaphor in his poetic discourse. Research objectives: 1. to describe the main types of metaphors in Vysotsky's texts; 2. to determine the leading metaphorical models; 3. to reveal the artistic functions of metaphor; 4. to show the connection between metaphors and the author's picture of the world.

Metaphor is one of the most universal tools of artistic thought. In classical rhetoric, it was understood as the transfer of meaning through similarity. However, modern linguistics views metaphor more broadly—as a cognitive mechanism that allows us to model reality and express abstract concepts through concrete images. This approach proves productive for analyzing Vysotsky's poetry, as his artistic thinking is oriented toward the concreteness and dynamism of



imagery. As N.D. Arutyunova notes, metaphor in a literary text creates a special "semantic tension," creating multifaceted meaning and expanding the boundaries of interpretation [3]. In turn, the cognitive concept of J. Lakoff and M. Johnson asserts that metaphor is a tool for constructing a picture of the world, and not just a stylistic device [4]. These provisions allow us to consider metaphor in Vysotsky's song poetry as a system-forming category. Vysotsky actively uses metaphors, which imbues his lyrics with drama and a lively dynamic. For example, the phenomena of fate, time, and death in his texts often take on the attributes of a living being. This creates the feeling that man is constantly engaged in a struggle with an invisible but active enemy. Such metaphors reflect the author's philosophical position: Vysotsky's world is not neutral; it confronts man, tests him, and forces him to make moral choices. One of the most persistent metaphorical structures in Vysotsky's work is the image of the path. Roads, movement, boundaries, and "edges" serve as symbols of human destiny, spiritual choice, and the ultimate stress of life. Vysotsky consistently conceptualizes life as a process of rapid movement, which man is powerless to stop. Thus, in the song "Fixitable Horses," the poet creates a tragic image of movement as a metaphor for time and death: "A little slower, horses, a little slower...". One of the central metaphorical models is the path as a symbol of human destiny, freedom, and moral choice. In Vysotsky's lyrics, the road is a test where a person faces danger and the need to overcome it. The physical metaphor is a crucial element of Vysotsky's poetics. Through the body, the author expresses pain, fatigue, internal tension, and psychological states. Vysotsky often uses physiological imagery, which may be perceived as crude, but it is precisely this that lends realism and truth to the text. The physical metaphor makes feelings tangible and material.

In his poetic world, mental suffering is not separated from physical suffering: personal pain is felt as a bodily wound. In Vysotsky's poetry, the body often takes on symbolic meaning. Through the body, the poet conveys spiritual tension, a sense of suffering, and moral fracture. For example, "But I was healthy—healthy as an ox..." ("I Don't Love"). Here, "healthy as an ox" functions as a colloquial metaphor for vitality. However, it later contrasts with the hero's inner protest. Vysotsky demonstrates that physical strength is not equal to spiritual harmony: a person can be physically strong but wounded in spirit. In Vysotsky's songs, pain is often metaphorized as a physical impact, a blow, a wound. This fosters the principle of utmost authenticity: feelings are experienced as reality, not as an abstract state. Natural imagery plays an important role in Vysotsky's artistic system. Through natural metaphors, he expresses the state of society and humanity, as well as philosophical reflections on life and death. In Vysotsky's work, nature often symbolizes freedom, but it can also be a source of danger and trials. Images of mountains, wind, cold, and the sea take on symbolic weight. The natural metaphor heightens the emotional impact of the text and creates an epic effect. This is particularly evident in "Wolf Hunt": "The wolf hunt is on, the hunt is on... For gray predators—seasoned and cubs!" The wolves in the text are not only animals but also a metaphor for free people doomed to be hunted. The image of the hunt becomes a symbol of the pressure of society and the system that destroys independence.

Vysotsky's poetry frequently features images of walls, cages, and confined spaces. They express a sense of the limitations of human life. For example, in the song "Dialogue in Front of the TV," an everyday situation develops into a symbolic depiction of spiritual emptiness and social limitations. Even everyday conversations in Vysotsky's work take on metaphorical weight: everyday life becomes a model for a consciousness deprived of freedom. In the song "Fixitable Horses," the motif of unfreedom manifests itself differently: a person feels trapped by time, which cannot be stopped. The philosophical depth of Vysotsky's poetry is largely built on metaphor. Through metaphor, he conveys ideas of fate, death, time, loneliness, and responsibility.



Vysotsky doesn't simply describe phenomena; he strives to understand them in the most general terms possible. Therefore, metaphor becomes a mechanism for conceptualizing the world. Because Vysotsky was an actor, his lyrics often resemble dramatic monologues.

In this case, metaphor helps create internal conflict and onstage tension. It shapes the dynamics of speech and allows for the development of emotion to be shown: from calm narration to screams, protest, and tragedy.

Characteristics of Vysotsky's Metaphorical Style Vysotsky's metaphors possess a number of characteristics: a conversational basis—metaphors often arise from spoken language; sharpness and contrast—metaphorical images are often built on juxtaposition; dramatic quality—metaphors enhance the sense of tragedy; concreteness—even philosophical concepts are expressed through concrete images; symbolism—individual metaphors acquire the meaning of the author's symbols (road, wall, battle, height).

These features ensure the uniqueness of Vysotsky's artistic world. An analysis of Vladimir Vysotsky's song poetry reveals that metaphor occupies a central place in the organization of his artistic world. It functions not as a secondary trope, but as the primary means of expressing the author's worldview and a means of conceptualizing reality. Vysotsky's metaphorical models shape an image of life as a journey, a struggle, and a trial, where the individual constantly confronts the limits of freedom and the necessity of moral choice. The most productive metaphors in the author's work are those involving spatial travel, physicality, military, and natural symbolism. Their function is to create a highly expressive text, fostering social criticism and philosophical generalization. Vysotsky's metaphors are characterized by drama, dynamism, and reliance on conversational intonation, making them a particularly powerful means of artistic expression.

Thus, metaphor in Vysotsky's poetry represents a mechanism for semantic condensation and, at the same time, a form of civil and existential utterance that determines the uniqueness of his poetic style.

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