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The Subject in Mikhail Elizarov's Lyrics: *Deconstruction or Reconstruction?*

Olesia R. Temirshina 

*Russian State Social University, Moscow, Russian Federation
Yaroslavl State Pedagogical University named after K.D. Ushinsky, Yaroslavl, Russian
Federation*

✉ o.r.temirshina@yandex.ru

Abstract. The article examines the poetics of literary postmodernism in the context of defining the specificity of this movement. The empirical material of the study is the lyric poetry of Mikhail Yelizarov. The choice of the research material is motivated by the potential to problematize the status of postmodernism: on the one hand, Yelizarov's work is interpreted by literary scholars and critics within postmodernist frameworks; on the other hand, Yelizarov himself rejects postmodernism as an ontological phenomenon, reducing it to a problem of reception. The paper demonstrates that, when examined typologically, a postmodernist text at the level of poetics manifests a system of philosophical ideas, the central one being the idea of the dissolution of the subject. It is argued that this idea determines the specificity of all artistic components within the field of subjectivity and personality and underpins the main strategies of postmodernist writing. Specifically, the disintegration of the narrator and the protagonist leads to the collapse of narrative structures and the neutralization of evaluative perspective, which in turn results in the apologia of intertextuality and a specific type of irony. At the formal level, Yelizarov's poetic oeuvre employs certain strategies conventionally associated with postmodernism. However, as the study shows, this formal complex is underpinned by an entirely different system of meanings, the foundation of which is an integral subject.

Keywords: postmodernism, author, song lyrics, New Novel, poetics

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Субъект в лирике Михаила Елизарова: деконструкция или реконструкция?

О.Р. Темиршина 

Российский государственный социальный университет, Москва, Российская Федерация
Ярославский государственный педагогический университет им. К.Д. Ушинского,
Ярославль, Российская Федерация
✉ o.r.temirshina@yandex.ru

Аннотация. Рассмотрены проблемы поэтики литературного постмодернизма в контексте определения специфики данного направления. Объектом исследования выступает поэтика литературного постмодернизма, материалом – лирика Михаила Елизарова. Выбор материала обусловлен возможностью выявления рецептивных противоречий. Данная коллизия связана с тем, что творчество М. Елизарова трактуется литературоведами и критиками в постмодернистских координатах, а сам Елизаров отрицает литературный постмодернизм как онтологический феномен, рассматривая его исключительно как категорию рецепции. Типологический анализ показывает, что на уровне поэтики постмодернистский текст манифестирует систему философских концепций, главной из которых является идея разрушения субъекта. Доказано, что именно эта идея детерминирует специфику всех художественных компонентов, входящих в поле субъектности и персональности, и обуславливает основные стратегии постмодернистского письма. Так, разрушение нарратора и героя вызывает распад сюжетных структур и нейтрализацию ценностной точки зрения, что, в свою очередь, приводит к апологии интертекстуальности и специфическому типу иронии. Поэтическое творчество Елизарова на формальном уровне демонстрирует отдельные стратегии, которые принято относить к постмодернистским. Однако за этим комплексом стоит совершенно иная система смыслов, фундаментом которой оказывается целостный субъект.

Ключевые слова: постмодернизм, автор, песенная поэзия, «новый роман», поэтика

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Introduction

The poetry of Mikhail Elizarov is a complex and under-researched phenomenon. This appears to be due to the notable paradoxical nature of his poetics, which is associated with the elusiveness and fluidity of the authorial stance – a feature observed even at the lexico-semantic level. Thus, his masterfully constructed and intricately organized lyrical texts exhibit a broad semantic and emotional range:

a subtle intertextual interplay (combining references to both literary and musical works) is further “complicated” by obscene vocabulary and other subliterate elements (see: Galustyan, Sergeeva, 2024; Kuznetsova, 2022).

This semantic clash remains entirely “unresolved”: the reader is not offered an unambiguous solution to the “quest for meaning”. As a result, the text’s semantic focal point remains fluid, inducing a sense of “epistemological uncertainty” in the recipient.

The elusiveness of the authorial stance, along with certain formal characteristics of Elizarov’s poetics, allows researchers to explain this “interpretative ambiguity” by attributing the poet’s creative strategy to the postmodern artistic paradigm (Sizykh, 2016). Other sources argue that Elizarov’s work “‘balances’ on the brink of postmodern and realistic practices” (Yuryev, 2016, p. 137).

In this regard, a brief discussion that took place during Elizarov’s lecture on postmodernism is of particular interest. Commenting on Elizarov’s winning of the Booker Prize, I.O. Shaitanov noted that the jury’s decision had caused a “loud scandal”, since the prize was awarded to “Elizarov, a postmodernist, a follower of Pelevin and Sorokin”¹. To this, Elizarov replied that neither Pelevin nor Sorokin are postmodernist authors, nor is he. In the same lecture, M. Elizarov, being a philologist by training, clearly articulated the idea of the communicative-receptive approach to postmodernism:

Just as there is not a single postmodernist author, there is not a single postmodernist text. There is only a brand-new (and at the same time hopelessly outdated) compilative decoding system – one of many others – which offers not the extraction of meanings, but their destruction; not analysis, but a sterile discourse for the sake of discourse. To paraphrase the old joke about the Chukchi, “Postmodernism is not the writer; postmodernism is the reader”².

According to Elizarov, therefore, only the act of reception, based on specific rules of “textual decoding”, can be postmodern, rather than the creative output itself. This semantic “gap” between external and internal identifications defines the central focus of this paper. The purpose of this study is by no means to align Elizarov’s poetic work with the postmodern paradigm or to refute such an alignment. The very presence of these two opposing intentions, as well as the thematic focus of this journal issue, prompts us to raise the question of the criteria for attributing a particular poetic system to a specific movement or trend. In this sense, Elizarov’s work becomes a “convenient” object of analysis: the presence of discursive practices at the formal level coupled with the poet’s own rejection of the “postmodern writing

¹ Elizarov, M. (2024, September 24). *Postmodernism as Cultural Speculation*. RuTube. <https://rutube.ru/video/3aecdb9a7d1fbd2c7c55f6cd6f101eac/>

² Elizarov, M. (2024, September 24). *Postmodernism as Cultural Speculation*. RuTube. <https://rutube.ru/video/3aecdb9a7d1fbd2c7c55f6cd6f101eac/>

code” provides an opportunity not only to reconsider literary postmodernism from a new perspective but also to understand the ontology of this movement and its textual manifestations.

At the level of discursive organization, Elizarov’s lyrical texts demonstrate a “classic” set of devices commonly attributed to the strategies of “postmodern writing”: intertextuality, irony, double coding, the play with authorial masks, and so forth. However, it has long been evident that a mere enumeration of devices is insufficient for identifying a text as postmodern. Indeed, the poetics of the list can be found in Homer, the fragment technique is evident in the works of Pushkin and the Romantics, and a high density of intertexts combined with the aforementioned devices constitutes a characteristic complex of traits of “high modernism” texts. Thus, such a structural-formal approach, oriented toward identifying writing devices specific to postmodernism, fails to perform a “differentiating” function and allows for “interpretative” arbitrariness³. This logically raises the question: where should one look for reliable criteria to define a literary text as postmodern?

Results and Discussion

The Subject Factor

It is generally accepted that artistic movements are entities formed during the literary process, underpinned by a “closeness of substantive principles”⁴. A type of poetics, with its specific features, is a “semiotic derivative” of this system of substantive principles.

In the case of literary postmodernism in its Western iteration, the link between philosophical theory and artistic practice is most clearly visible: postmodern literary texts often act as “manifestations” for philosophical ideas, and postmodern literature itself is integrated into the complex ideological formation of “postmodernism – deconstructivism – poststructuralism”.

A common feature of this triad has been the orientation toward rejecting any rigid meanings. However, the act of rejection itself is not so simple: behind the declarative dismissal of any semantic holism lies a unique hierarchy of deconstruction. In other words, certain philosophical categories are assigned a high negative significance, and it is these categories that become the target of postmodern deconstruction. We contend that the subject functions as such a category.

³ Thus, in some cases, the category of the “postmodernist text” is expanded to an extreme degree, encompassing O. Mandelstam’s *The Egyptian Stamp*, D. Kharms’s *Cases*, and K. Vaginov’s novel *The Works and Days of Svistunov*. See M. Lipovetsky’s work (2008).

⁴ Kormilov, S.I. (2001). Direction, movement, school. In M.L. Gasparov, S.I. Kormilov, A.E. Maxov, V.M. Tolmachev, E.A. Tsurganova, & G.V. Yakusheva (Eds.), *Literary Encyclopedia of Terms and Concepts* (columns 606). Moscow: Intelvak Publ. (In Russ.) EDN: SBSJDP

The concept of the subject, on the one hand, defines the system of philosophical ideas and critical frameworks (poststructuralism, deconstructivism), and, on the other, determines the system of artistic principles (postmodern literature proper). In this sense, postmodern discursive strategies do not constitute a mechanical set of devices, but a system whose constituent elements reflect a significant philosophical invariant: the category of the subject, which finds specific forms of manifestation at the artistic level.

It is precisely for this reason that the rejection of subjectivity leads to a series of typical postmodern shifts and deformations observed at those levels of the literary text that are directly linked to this category. Thus, at the subject-character level, one observes the rejection of the protagonist as an integral personal structure integrated either into the world of social reality (as in realism) or into a mytho-cosmos (as in modernism). The rejection of the holistic protagonist, in turn, leads at the plot-narrative level to narrative chaoticization and the deconstruction of the “mimetic” plot with its logical sequence of motifs: if there is no “personological” point of view, the plot either disappears entirely (as in R. Federman) or becomes problematized (as in U. Eco). At the semantic level, the rejection of the subject logically leads to an apology for intertextuality: the death of the subject initiates the death of the “own”, attributed word, transforming the text into a field of free, unrestricted play with “other people’s meanings” – a total “already-been” (Sasha Sokolov). Concurrently, the collision of intertextual fragments, triggered by the denial of a “psychological” point of view, engenders a specific postmodern irony (pastiche) that disavows any values.

Consequently, the techniques listed above do not constitute isolated discursive practices: when viewed collectively and within the context of the postmodern worldview, these functionally interconnected elements form an artistic system that figuratively and materially embodies a system of philosophical ideas. If this functional connection is absent, however, the devices will be employed separately – to a certain extent, randomly – and the postmodern code itself will, as Elizarov suggests, be defined solely receptively, through a decoding system.

Postmodern Poetics as a Manifestation of the Deconstruction of the Subject

Thus, a genuine postmodern writing strategy involves the deconstruction of literary text structures associated with the embodiment of the domain of subjectivity and personality. In this sense, the deconstruction of the subject within postmodern poetics proves to be not merely an isolated act (as, for instance, in modernism; cf.: the dissociated subject in Hermann Hesse’s novel *Steppenwolf*) but an impulse that seemingly triggers a cascade of processes systemically linked to the neutralization of the subjective center: the protagonist, the character, and the narrator are

dismantled; the narrative and the plot disappear, and the artistic space and stylistic unity of the text fracture. Taken collectively, these shifts and deformations define the postmodern text as an ontological phenomenon.

It should be noted that “ideal” postmodern texts are, to a certain extent, rare. In this respect, the corpus of the movement’s texts is distributed not so much according to the logic of the list, but rather according to the logic of the field. Within this field, there is a small core comprising the most representative texts, and a periphery inhabited by texts with a smaller set of significant features that gravitate toward adjacent artistic paradigms.

Among the core texts demonstrating that this structural type of poetics is a reality rather than a reconstruction, one can include the novels of Alain Robbe-Grillet. At the origins of the writer’s experimental method lies the orientation toward annihilating the character – the subjective, evaluative, and semantic center of the classical novel. In *The Age of Suspicion*, Nathalie Sarraute clearly delineates the crisis of subjectivity presented in Robbe-Grillet’s work: “And it seems that not only has the novelist himself ceased to believe in his characters, but the reader, likewise, is unable to believe in them. As a result, the character of the novel [...] falters and collapses before our eyes” (2000, p. 196).

In Robbe-Grillet’s novels, the protagonist is modeled in defiance of the mimetic principle: he loses his self-identity and disappears as a psychological entity. This deconstruction is achieved through the serialization of the character. Robbe-Grillet constructs his protagonist in such a way that the reader finds it difficult to define him as a holistic – albeit imaginary – entity: instead of a singular protagonist, the reader is presented with a series of nearly identical characters. In these mirror-like reflections, the character splits, multiplies... and eventually turns into a thing, as the human body begins to be described as an object of inanimate nature.

The orientation toward the disintegration of subjectivity logically deforms the technique of narration as well: the narrative focus, which presupposes a fixed gaze, disappears, causing the narrative to become chaotic: “Within each of the series, Robbe-Grillet persistently repeats the same thing, but with minimal variations, so that the distinction between the identical, the equal, the different, the distinct, and the opposite is gradually erased” (Ryklin, 1996, p. 9).

The writer himself, as M. Ryklin notes, “formulated the basic rules of his method as follows: a good protagonist is one who has a double; a good plot is one that is maximally ambiguous” (1996, p. 12). It should be emphasized that the fragmentation of the character is understood by no means as Romantic doppelgängerism (which still presupposes the existence of an “original”), but as genuine postmodern serialization.

The disintegration of subjectivity (ranging from the character to the narrator) also causes the deconstruction of the plot. The serialization of the character leads to the disappearance of classical plot types, which are replaced by the principle of simple repetition of situations with minimal variations. “As a result, we still do not know how many narrators there are in *Project for a Revolution in New York*, how many boys, posts with Gothic curls, and taverns there are in the novel *In the Labyrinth*, or how many temporal layers there are in *Marienbad*” (Ryklin, 1996, p. 9).

The disappearance of the subject leads not only to the disappearance of the narrative point of view, but also to the neutralization of the evaluative position. There is no authorial modality in the novel: horrific tortures are described in a maximally neutral, emotionless manner. This “protocol-like” style should not be understood as a “minus-device” used to heighten emotional impact (as, for instance, in Kafka’s novels); rather, it models a fundamental absence of an “evaluative-emotional” point of view, given that “Robbe-Grillet’s project is devoid of a humanistic orientation” (Barthes, 196, p. 202).

As can be seen, all the identified techniques are grounded in a single basic premise: the disintegration of the subjective center triggers the collapse of other textual structures linked to the domain of subjectivity. Apparently, this “scenario” serves as a semantic invariant for a number of postmodern texts, often regardless of their genre or generic affiliation (cf.: desubjectivization, serialization, citationality, ironic detachment, and the principle of disrupting textual construction in the works of the Moscow Conceptualists).

The Subject in M. Elizarov’s Lyrics

From this perspective, we can now examine Elizarov’s artistic practice. In his poetic texts, Elizarov actively utilizes what appears to be the entire toolkit of “postmodern devices”. “Sub-literary vocabulary”, the blending of genre and stylistic registers, the clash of different “discourses”, a citation-parodic “mask-wearing”, the travesty-like degradation of classical models, the dual-address nature of the text directed at both the mass and the “highbrow” reader, and bifocality – all of this seemingly provides an opportunity to interpret Elizarov’s subject in a postmodern-conceptualist vein⁵. However, the semantic load of these devices is entirely different: by aligning with the functional-target zone of the text, they do not destroy the subject but, on the contrary, emphasize its invariance and integrity. Let us turn to analyzing some of these devices and examine these strategies in their structural-functional interconnection.

⁵ For these devices as “markers” of a postmodern text, see: Skoropanova, I.S. (2007). *Russian Post-modernist Literature* (p. 69). Flinta-Nauka Publ. (In Russ.)

Poetic Masks

The subject in Elizarov's lyrics is associated with a whole set of speech masks, which range from "Tikhon the Kind Maniac" to the "Warrior of the Lord" and "Ivan Khlystos". It is widely accepted that the category of the mask has become one of the indicators of postmodernism: mask-wearing proves to be a principle that personifies emptiness (Deleuze, 1998, p. 342). However, in the case of postmodernism, the term "masks" is used only conventionally. Since poststructuralist philosophy and postmodern artistic practice disavow originality as such, this type of mask does not imply a face. Consequently, the mask, being a sign without a referent, does not refer to a protagonist, but rather points to their fragmentation and serialization.

In Elizarov's lyrics, the mask performs a fundamentally different function: by explicitly pointing to the subject, it hides and simultaneously reveals it. It hides because the subject seemingly conceals itself behind the mask; it reveals because the masks in Elizarov's lyrics are a paradigmatic phenomenon. Thus, despite their apparent diversity, they manifest one common essential trait that unites them into a system: all masks realize the idea of the lyrical subject's marginality.

The protagonist of the song "Matrix", who steps beyond the boundaries of illusory reality; the maniac disillusioned with love ("Chikatilo"); the seeker of a mysterious book accelerating the end of the world ("Necronomicon"); the psychiatric hospital patient possessing secret knowledge ("Warrior of the Lord"); Ivan Khlystos, who has experienced metanoia ("The Rabitz Sect") – all these "lyrical characters" are united by one common feature: they exist outside the "norm" (warriors, madmen, heretics, bearers of occult knowledge⁶).

Thus, the mask in Elizarov's lyrics, proving to be a permanent form of subjectivity, also becomes a form of the protagonist's semantic consolidation within the specific coordinates of a given song. This does not destroy subjectivity (as in postmodernism) but, on the contrary, underscores its ontological invariant status.

Plot Situations

Genetically, a plot and motif are semantic derivative of the subject (the plot being an actional form of the subject's realization). Consequently, the invariance of the subject implies the invariance of the plot situations associated with it. The organization of motifs in Elizarov's lyrics confirms this thesis; thus, there is no postmodernist deconstruction of the lyrical narrative here.

⁶ Interestingly, the "occult-magical" dimension in Elizarov's lyrics organically intertwines with political-ideological and "everyday" meanings, forming a distinct "sublime-low" style (see: Azarenkov, 2021; Merkushev, 2014).

The liminality of the subject establishes a recurring semantic situation: the clash between the protagonist and the world. This situation appears to be plot-constituting; specifically, in particular texts, it can unfold into various micro-plots, one of which is eschatological.

Elizarov typically interprets the eschatological plot either as the global demise of the world (“Necronomicon”) or as the collapse of the country (the USSR, Russia), which is in some cases complicated by the death of love. The general logic of this plot development remains stable: the protagonist, acting as a bearer of secret knowledge, ideals, or norms, encounters an alien reality, enters into conflict with dark forces, loses, and the world collapses. Within the scope of this article, we are unable to provide an extensive analysis of this plot invariant; we will, however, note one important fact. In Elizarov’s work, this plot is pivotal: it connects with the center of subjectivity and proves to be “embedded” into the semantic model of the world (indeed, it appears that this very plot construction underlies the novel *Pasternak*).

Thus, the integrity of the subject ensures that Elizarov’s lyrical narrative remains rigidly organized at a deep level, in contrast to the plot structures of postmodern texts.

Intertextuality

The identified structural integrity of the plot is seemingly concealed behind a scattering of citations and reminiscences with which this plot is equipped. The “other’s word” – in its various forms – appears to constitute the surface level of the subject’s representation in Elizarov’s lyrics. If one considers only this citational layer – without accounting for the functions it performs – it becomes possible to interpret the respective texts in a postmodern vein. However, references to external works in Elizarov’s lyrics are, as a rule, tied to the image of the liminal subject: they seemingly construct the subject’s “citational masks”, serving as a form of its representation.

Indeed, the masks of the protagonists in Elizarov’s songs are constructed at the intersections of various cultural codes: occultism, the works of Lovecraft and Tolkien, Norse mythology, Soviet ideology, and so forth. Yet, despite the heterogeneity of this intertextual field, all references enact the aforementioned eschatological situation. In fact, the very structure of the eschatological plot dictates the rules for selecting citations, which may be drawn from diverse sources.

All of this indicates that the function of the intertext in Elizarov’s work is fundamentally different from its counterpart in postmodern discourse. In the postmodern paradigm, the citation plays the role of a textual “deconstructor”; it problematizes textual integrity and turns the text into a heterogeneous field where different codes collide. In Elizarov’s lyrics, the function of the citation is entirely

different – it is constructive: the citation is integrated into a pre-established textual integrity, shaping its subject and plot framework. Thus, the textual structures (the image of the marginal subject and the motif of its conflict with the world) act as unique semantic filters for selecting appropriate citations. Virtually, an intentional selection of the “other’s word” takes place here, which radically differs from the postmodern principle of non-selection (“anything goes”). In other words, it is not the citation that introduces new meanings into the text, destroying its integrity; on the contrary, it is the text that seemingly infuses the citation with meaning, incorporating it into its own semantic unity.

Authorial Modality and Irony

Elizarov’s irony can also be interpreted in a postmodern vein. From a formal standpoint and within the context of the analyzed eschatological plot of the country’s collapse, this irony can be viewed as a means of dismantling Soviet ideological matrices (a typical topos in Russian postmodernism). However, if we consider Elizarov’s irony in conjunction with other strategies of his poetics, this assumption proves to be untenable.

We contend that the origins of Elizarov’s irony also lie within the subjective plane: irony reveals certain evaluative attitudes of a subject who is in conflict with the world. It should be specified here that the marginal subject of Elizarov’s lyrics does not intentionally fight the world; rather, he is forced to clash with it, and at the moment of this collision, it becomes clear that the subject acts as a bearer of a certain system of values that are fundamentally alien to the world. The conflict that unfolds subsequently is accompanied by the pathos of ironic detachment and triggers Elizarov’s signature sarcasm, which could be mistaken for the annihilation of all evaluative codes, degradation, the disavowal of myth, ideological languages, and so forth.

However, the very logic of Elizarov’s artistic world suggests that harsh irony by no means destroys “evaluative judgment”. Furthermore, Elizarov’s irony paradoxically accentuates the sublime against the background of the low through the collision of different value paradigms: the ideal (“how things should be” from the subject’s perspective) and the real (“how things are” from the world’s position).

An example of such an ironic play is presented in the song *Sovietskaya* [The Soviet], which seemingly offers a pastiche-like combination of verbal and musical intertexts from the Soviet cultural stratum mixed with references to Hollywood cinema (cf. the fragment: “Sometimes, the final moment arrives / And the fifth element is unable to help. [...] / But it was not in vain that we fought for the Motherland, / Nobody gives up, we are all like Bruce Willis”⁷).

⁷ Elizarov, M. (2011, September 7). *Sovetskaya*. Community of Readers and Listeners. <https://ru-elizarov.livejournal.com/212427.html>

This early song proves to be highly indicative, as it retains the modality of Elizarov's novel *The Librarian*. Notably, it was this very novel that critics deemed “postmodern”, linking it to the poetics of Sorokin, who in his texts dismantles the ideologemes of the Soviet era through the ironic deconstruction of the Soviet myth.

It seems that one should not “read” Sorokin-esque meanings into Elizarov's texts: identical techniques can bear different functional burdens, radically altering the nature of the irony. Elizarov's statements indicate that he by no means intended to “deconstruct” Soviet mythology; moreover, the author conceived of the USSR as a certain ideal, celestial holism that – therein lies the tragedy – failed to materialize within the historical chronotope (cf. an excerpt from a 2007 interview: “The Soviet experience is an experience of integrity. This is precisely what needs to be carried over here, to us. The metaphysical Soviet Union was a fantastically whole country. A perfect country. The tragedy is that it did not materialize. [...] The soul of the USSR was beautiful, but its body was imperfect”⁸). In such a context, the assumption of Elizarov's postmodern, all-destroying irony appears highly questionable (as does the interpretation of the novel *The Librarian* within the Sorokin-Pelevin tradition).

A “formal-technical” approach is inherently inapplicable to the phenomenon of irony, given that irony as a specific mode of evaluation cannot be analyzed outside the categories of the subject and the world – it is a derivative of their interaction. If the nature of Elizarov's irony is interpreted in relation to these categories, it becomes evident that it is typologically close to Romantic irony, albeit developing on contemporary material.

In the works of the Romantics, as in Elizarov's lyrics, irony is invariably the outcome of a semantic conflict arising from the collision between the real and the ideal; meanwhile, the subject of irony, while recognizing the fundamental unachievability of the ideal, nonetheless strives toward it. This binarity and dynamics are established as the primary characteristics of irony as early as in the works of Friedrich Schlegel: according to Schlegel, irony “contains and arouses a feeling of an indissoluble contradiction between the absolute and the conditional, between the impossibility and the necessity of a complete communication” (1983, p. 287)⁹.

Within this evaluative context, the Soviet myth proves to be the reality of the ideal of the spirit, which tragically failed to materialize at the level of “matter” (cf. the idea of the celestial USSR). In fact, the celestial USSR is an ontological-social variation of the Romantic utopia. The subject himself appears to be caught between

⁸ Elizarov, M. (2007, October 30). “I do not play in ‘chernukha’ (dark realism)...” [Famous writer answers *Zavtra*'s questions]. *Zavtra.ru*. <https://zavtra.ru/blogs/2007-10-3171>

⁹ This type of irony, typologically close to the Romantic, proves to be equally relevant in modernist poetics, which also balances between the horrific and the comic. See the insightful study by A.V. Mytareva (2024) on this subject.

two “ontological matrices”, balancing between the real and the ideal. Existing in a liminal state, “on the edge”, he perceives everything through a dual perspective, simultaneously affirming the “sublime norm” and detaching himself from it – yet by no means destroying it.

Thus, Elizarov’s irony, being the result of a collision between the real and the ideal, proves to be closely linked to the domain of the subjective, which precludes its postmodern genesis.

Conclusion

The deconstruction of subjective integrity is a core tenet of postmodern philosophy, which gives rise to specific practices of postmodern writing: all elements within the domain of subjectivity and personality are subjected to deformation. Thus, the pivotal elements of this domain – the narrator and the protagonist – are dismantled, and consequently, the plot and narrative structures fracture. The disappearance of the subject as an “evaluative” authority destroys the opposition between “own” and the “other” words, which leads to the construction of the text as an infinite field of intertextual play and generates a specific type of postmodern irony.

This ensemble of devices must be viewed as a cohesive whole whose elements, uniting into a system based on shared worldview premises, turn into a unique, recurring cluster manifested across various texts. We contend that only such complexes, considered in their formal, semantic, and ideological unity, can serve as criteria for identifying a text as postmodern. Individual devices, taken in isolation, do not possess this identifying function.

Therefore, when analyzing the movement-specific nature of a text, it is essential to account for the systemic relationships between its devices, as focusing on isolated strategies leads to interpretative errors. Specifically, at the formal level, Elizarov’s poetic work incorporates certain strategies commonly classified as postmodern (the use of masks, irony, intertextuality, etc.). However, behind this complex lies a fundamentally different system of meanings, rooted in a holistic subject.

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Bio note:

Olesia R. Temirshina, Doctor of Philological Sciences, Professor at the Department of Foreign Languages and Cultures, Russian State Social University, 4 Wilhelma Pika St, bldg 1, Moscow, 129226, Russian Federation; Leading Researcher at the Scientific Laboratory *Subjectivity in Russian Lyric Poetry of the Late 20th – Early 21st Century: Axiology and Forms of Representation*, Yaroslavl State Pedagogical University named after K.D. Ushinsky, 108/1 Respublikanskaya St, Yaroslavl, 150000, Russian Federation. ORCID: 0000-0003-0127-6044; SPIN-code: 5221-7391. E-mail: o.r.temirshina@yandex.ru