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## ARTISTIC DETAIL: CLASSIFICATION, FUNCTION, SYMBOLISM

**Sukhrob Rustamovich Ermetov**

*Lecturer at the Department of Methods of Teaching Russian Language and Literature*

*Chirchik State Pedagogical University*

*E-mail: [sugarsuhrob1131@gmail.com](mailto:sugarsuhrob1131@gmail.com)*

*Chirchik, Uzbekistan*

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### ABOUT ARTICLE

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**Abstract:** The article examines the concept of artistic detail in the interpretation of I.V. Arnold as one of the key elements of text organization. The classification of details by functional features is studied: pictorial, clarifying, characterological and implicative, each of which performs certain textual and aesthetic functions. Particular attention is paid to the symbolic potential of the detail, its ability to evolve into a symbol through repetition and retrospective comprehension. The role of lexical details and actualizers - the title, proper name and details - in creating coherence, depth and conceptual integrity of the artistic text is also analyzed. The work is based on the theoretical provisions of I.V. Arnold and is accompanied by examples from works of foreign literature.

## Introduction

Artistic detail occupies a special place in the structure of a literary work, acting not only as a means of visualizing an image, but also as an instrument of semantic and emotional load of the text. Its semantic and functional potential often goes beyond the description, becoming a link between the levels of narration, subtext and conceptual content. Soviet and Russian linguist I.V. Arnold in his work "Artistic detail" offers a multi-aspect approach to the study of this phenomenon, considering the detail as one of the "actualizers of text categories" along with the title and proper name. In her interpretation, the detail acquires the status of a text-forming element capable of controlling the reader's perception, forming deep meanings and ensuring the integrity of the artistic world of the work. The purpose of this article is to consider the main provisions of I.V. Arnold on the typology and functions of artistic detail, and to analyze its transition to the level of a symbol as the highest form of semantic evolution. Particular attention is paid to the interaction of the detail with other structural components of the text and its role in creating the conceptual and aesthetic integrity of a work of art.

**Materials and methods.** The material for the study was the article by I.V. Arnold "Artistic detail", in which the author sets out the typology and functional diversity of artistic detail in the text, as well as the accompanying concepts of symbolism, textual actualizers and categorical features. The analysis is based on the linguostylistic theory proposed by Arnold, as well as using examples from the fiction she examines: works by E. Hemingway, W. Faulkner, J. Galsworthy, W. Golding, A. Murdoch, and others.

The methodological basis of the study was:

- a descriptive method used to record and classify types of artistic detail;
- structural-semantic analysis, which allows us to identify internal connections between a detail, its functions, and semantic load;
- an interpretative method used to analyze examples of symbolic details and their role in the conceptual organization of the text;

– contextual analysis aimed at establishing the dependence of the semantic meaning of a detail on its position in the text and the frequency of repetition.

Thus, the combination of linguistic and literary methods made it possible to comprehensively consider an artistic detail as a dynamic and polysemantic unit of text organization.

**Result and discussion.** I.V. Arnold "Artistic detail" - this article analyzes the multifaceted role of detail as a means of textual information content and aesthetic expressiveness. Irina Vladimirovna Arnold, a Soviet and Russian linguist, defines the title, proper name and detail as "actualizers of text categories" that implement "the content-aesthetic potential at the level of the entire text" [1, 156]. I.V. Arnold in her article provides readers with a large block devoted to the classification of details by their functional feature. For example, the author identifies four main types:

A pictorial detail creates a "sensation of physical tangibility" and involves the reader in direct perception of the image.

A clarifying detail relies on documentary nature and "appeals to the joint experience of the author and the reader."

A characterological detail, scattered throughout the text, involves the reader in the "process of co-creation", creating a feeling of the author's non-involvement in the conclusion.

The implicating detail focuses on "penetration into the inner essence of the phenomenon" and builds a subtext through hints and associations.

As I.V. Arnold notes, each type has specific text functions and categories (anthropocentricity, systemicity, conceptuality, etc.), which allows authors to elegantly manipulate the reader's attention and depth of perception.

Further in her research article, I.V. Arnold transfers the readers' attention from stylistics to symbolism, where she distinguishes the following three models:

A metonymic symbol, when a real, established connection is established between the sign and the concept. According to I.V. Arnold, metonymic symbolism is manifested in stable

combinations “Let us beat swords into ploughshares” and “The scepter and crown must fall” [2, 241] – phrases that, having entered the language, cease to require explanations and become “stable nominations” of entire concepts. Like an ancient coat of arms, such a symbol bears the imprint of collective memory, but loses its novelty and sharpness of image [2, 241].

Associative comparison, where the connection between a symbol and a concept is only figurative and metaphorical. This phenomenon is illustrated, for example, by A. Murdoch (*The Sand Castle*) and W. Golding (*The Spire*), “where the sand castle and the cathedral spire act as images of the fragility of a dream and pride, respectively” [3, 78]. There is no real connection between the castle and feelings, but this comparison makes the abstract concept tangible and emotionally charged [4,145]. Such symbols of comparison always require retrospective reading, when at the end we return to the title and understand how the message of the image sounded throughout the text. A symbol-detail, when a pictorial or characterological detail moves to the level of a symbol through multiple repetition in context. Ernest Hemingway in “A Farewell to Arms!” embodies misfortune with rain, and in “The Snows of Kilimanjaro” - with a hyena; in the story “The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber,” the lion gradually becomes a symbol of the hero’s courage: “You know, I’d love to hunt a lion again,” said Macomber. “I’m not afraid of them at all now. After all, what can they do?” [5,207]. Similarly, John Galsworthy, using sunlight – “In the sun, in the full sun, in the long sun, in the sun, in the warm sun” [6,312] – turns it into a symbol of love that illuminates the destinies of the heroes.” Symbolism, as I.V. Arnold emphasizes, is not the fifth type of detail, but the highest form of its semantic evolution: a detail that has acquired occasional meaning through retrospective perception and continuous repetition serves as a powerful actualizer of the concept and enhances the coherence and integrity of the text.

Further, I.V. Arnold draws attention to the everyday side of detailing, when a single verb is capable of “painting” a whole picture of an event. As the author notes, figurative words – “to run at a breakneck pace, to rush headlong, to greedily swallow, to devour. to drag, to walk wearily, to drag one’s feet” – not only describe the action, but also convey its emotional coloring:

swiftness, greed, the heaviness of one's steps [7,304]. Such "actualizers" in one word concentrate the reader's collective experience and add expressiveness to even the simplest description.

Thus, I.V. Arnold is close to the idea that it is precisely in such lexical "stones" that the power of the text is hidden - one living detail is enough for us to feel the world inside the page. The effect of an implicating detail is well illustrated by the example of fragments from W. Faulkner's "Evening Sun": external touches - the officer's demeanor, his gaze, movements - reveal unnatural passions and internal discord between him and the soldier, although the story itself literally "hints" at the conflict, without formulating it directly [8,213]. Here, the hinting details work like a weak backlight, snatching the most contradictory impulses from the darkness of the heroes' souls.

I.V. Arnold believes that the repetition and strategic placement of such phrases work like a musical theme leitmotif: with each "return" to the light, we again feel the warmth of the relationship, and the text acquires a special depth and integrity. Thus, it is important to note that, according to Irina Vladimirovna Arnold, only a combination of three "strong positions" - the title, the proper name and the detail - allows one to maximally reveal the artistic potential of a work and ensure its systemic integrity [9, 224].

V. Ya. Bruckel notes in his research works that: "The importance of artistic detail in literature lies in its ability not only to reveal the appearance and environment of the heroes, but also to show their inner world, character, and worldview"[10, 224]. Reading a conventional work, we perceive details as the most important elements that affect our perception of the text and deepen our understanding of its meaning.

In such a context, a detail becomes not just decoration, but a necessary tool for a deeper disclosure of the theme of the work. As literary scholar V. Ya. Bruckel notes: "A detail in a work of art is not just a small element, but a reflection of the entire living space of the hero and the era"[11, 196]. A detail becomes the link that connects the personal with the public, the internal with the external.

One of the most striking examples of the use of details in Russian classical literature is the work of N.V. Gogol. In *Dead Souls*, it is the details that become the most important symbols through which philosophical and social aspects are revealed. For example, descriptions of the appearance of landowners and their interiors, a rich palette of small details, allow N.V. Gogol not only to convey a picture of the world, but also to recreate an atmosphere of decay and spiritual emptiness. As S.A. Soloviev believes: "A clock with a stopped pendulum, for example, symbolizes stagnation, a stop in time, which is extremely important for understanding the psychological state of the characters, their inability to change"[12, 312].

Such attention to detail reflects an era when social processes slow down and lose their dynamics. As N.A. Berdyaev wrote, "The deeper we go into the work, the more we see how invisible forces encoded in the details influence the consciousness of the hero and the reader"[13, 320].

Unlike N.V. Gogol, I.A. Goncharov in *"Oblomov"* focuses on several carefully selected details that become symbols of the hero himself. Oblomov's robe, for example, not only indicates his tendency to laziness and inaction, but also reflects the peculiarities of the hero's worldview"[14, 560]. This robe, with its "oriental" character, seems to indicate the hero's inner exoticism and isolation, his escape from real life into the world of his own, closed reality. A sprig of lilac, as a symbol of brevity and fleetingness, recalls the very nature of the relationship between Oblomov and Olga - warm and sensual, but quickly disappearing. Which, in turn, again emphasizes the central theme of the work - the problem of "passivity" and the loss of the meaning of life in the context of continuous self-destruction.

Literary scholar S.A. Solovyov notes: "Details in Goncharov's works have multiple meanings, they not only provide information about the hero, but also express his state of mind and philosophical vision of life"[15, 198]. A.P. Chekhov, in turn, enriched the literary canon with the use of details that often become not only an expression of the individuality of the characters, but also symbols of their psychology and social roles. The famous "umbrella in a case" and "watch in a gray suede case" in *"The Man in a Case"* serve as an example of how even such simple

objects as accessories can be full of meaning. Belikov, the heroes of A.P. Chekhov, “overwhelmed by internal fears and doubts, becomes an example of a person closed off from the outside world, as if his shell is a case”[16, 287]. As N.A. Berdyaev believes: “Every detail of his life emphasizes his alienation from society and his internal isolation”[17, 280].

Researcher Yu.A. Lotman emphasizes that “Chekhov’s details always serve not only to describe the appearance, but also to reflect the inner, often imperceptible, life of the hero”[18, 284].

Thus, attention to detail can be considered as one of the ways of in-depth understanding not only of the characters’ appearance, but also of their inner world. A.P. Chekhov, like N.V. Gogol uses these symbols to create multi-layered images through which the reader can see not only the external world, but also the internal struggle of the heroes, their insurmountable contradictions and psychological crises.

**Conclusion.** The study of artistic detail based on the theory proposed by I.V. Arnold reveals its exceptional role in the formation of the semantic, aesthetic and conceptual structure of a literary text. Far from being a mere decorative element, the detail serves as a semantic nucleus capable of unfolding entire layers of meaning, organizing the reader's perception and deepening the interpretation of the work. Arnold’s typology — pictorial, clarifying, characterological and implicative details — demonstrates how a seemingly insignificant element can actualize key text categories and become a powerful tool for symbolic and conceptual expression.

The transition of detail into a symbol, as shown through Arnold's concept of retrospective comprehension and repetition, illustrates the dynamic nature of textual semantics: through multiple returns and contextual intensification, a detail acquires not only associative weight, but also philosophical and existential significance. This process is confirmed by numerous examples from world and Russian literature — from Hemingway and Golding to Gogol, Goncharov and Chekhov — where detail becomes a medium of deep psychological and ideological content. The combination of linguistic, literary and contextual methods used in the

study made it possible to examine the artistic detail not as a static unit, but as a dynamic mechanism of text generation. It connects levels of narration, reveals implicit meanings, constructs character images and introduces symbolic coordinates into the reader's perception. As V. Ya. Bruckel, S.A. Solovyov, Yu.A. Lotman and N.A. Berdyaev rightly note, the detail reflects not only the material world, but also the inner state of the hero, the atmosphere of the era and the spiritual horizon of the author.

Thus, the artistic detail in the interpretation of I.V. Arnold is not only a stylistic device, but also a philosophical and psychological category that synthesizes the visible and the invisible, the external and the internal. Its study opens up wide opportunities for a deeper understanding of the author's intentions, the semantic structure of the work and the mechanisms of aesthetic impact on the reader.

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