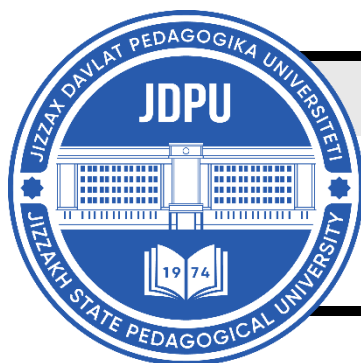


MENTAL ENLIGHTENMENT SCIENTIFIC –
METHODOLOGICAL JOURNALMENTAL ENLIGHTENMENT SCIENTIFIC –
METHODOLOGICAL JOURNAL<http://mentaljournal-jspu.uz/index.php/mesmj/index>DEFINITION OF ARTISTIC DETAIL IN MODERN LITERARY
CRITICISM**Asilbek Khamzaevich Ergashev**

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ABOUT ARTICLE

Key words: artistic detail, symbol, synecdoche, psychologism, function, metaphor, composition, poetics, existence, interpretation.**Received:** 10.06.25**Accepted:** 12.06.25**Published:** 14.06.25**Abstract:** This article examines the artistic detail as a multi-layered and meaning-generating component of literary texts, emphasizing its structural and semantic significance. Contrary to viewing it as a minor narrative element, the detail is analyzed as a central expressive tool shaping the philosophical, psychological, and aesthetic dimensions of the work. The theoretical foundation relies on the scholarship of Russian literary critics such as A.B. Esin and V.A. Kukharenko, whose classifications form the methodological basis for applied textual analysis. The article examines specific literary examples — R. Töpffer's *The Path Beyond the Ocean*, J. Steinbeck's *Escape*, and V.N. Gavrilyeva's *The Road* — illustrating how

symbolic details reflect internal character dynamics, philosophical motifs, and thematic depth. Through the lens of romantic, naturalistic, and socio-psychological paradigms, the study demonstrates that artistic detail functions as a universal mechanism that bridges the particular with the universal and reveals the author's worldview through seemingly minor narrative elements.

Introduction

Contemporary literary criticism increasingly turns to the microstructures of the text as key elements capable of revealing the deep meanings of a work of art. In this context, the artistic detail acquires special significance: by no means secondary, it performs a whole range of functions - from pictorial and characterological to symbolic-philosophical and compositional. At the same time, the very concept of detail remains methodologically complex: its interpretations vary from a purely formal element of description to a multi-layered semantic marker condensing the author's concept. Domestic science has developed a number of approaches to the study of artistic detail. Thus, A.B. Esin proposed a dichotomous classification "external - psychological", emphasizing the conventionality of the boundaries between the types of details, and V.A. Kukharensky focused on their functional role, highlighting such varieties as pictorial, characterological, clarifying and implicating. The works of E.S. Dobin, G.N. Pospelov, L.V. Chernets, I.A. Zhavoronok and T.I. Lazareva complement the theoretical field, revealing the aesthetic and philosophical aspects of the detail as a meaning-forming element. The relevance of this study is due to the need for a systematic understanding of the artistic detail as a phenomenon that unites the structure, imagery and symbolism of the text. An appeal to specific works of prose - "The Path Beyond the Ocean" by R. Töpffer, "Escape" by J. Steinbeck and "The Road" by V.N. Gavrilyeva - allows us to identify the patterns of functioning of the artistic detail in different aesthetic paradigms: romantic, naturalistic and socio-psychological. Based on the interpretations proposed by A.N. Anisimova, I.Yu. Efremova, O.V. Stepanova, T.L.

Androsova and T.N. Vasilyeva, this study seeks to determine how the semantic depth of the text is realized through the artistic detail, characters are formed and the existential space of the heroes is modeled. The aim of the work is to identify the types and functions of artistic detail on the material of the specified works, as well as to interpret its role in the construction of the author's concept of the world. The methodological basis of the study is based on the synthesis of structural-semantic and functional-poetic approaches, which allows us to consider the artistic detail not only as an element of the composition, but also as a representative of the internal content of the literary text.

Materials and methods. The methodological basis of the study is based on a combination of structural-semantic, typological, functional and interpretative methods of analyzing a literary text. The structural-semantic method allows us to identify the connection between an artistic detail and the elements of the narrative structure and determine its role in creating the semantic unity of the work. The typological approach is used to classify details according to their formal and substantive characteristics, based on the developments of A.B. Esin, V.A. Kukharensky, L.V. Chernets and other theorists. Functional analysis is aimed at identifying the pragmatic and symbolic functions of a detail in a narrative, its participation in creating the figurative system of the text, psychological portraits and philosophical issues of the work. The interpretative method is used for an in-depth analysis of the semantics of specific artistic details and identifying the author's intention. The material for the analysis was three works of art belonging to different literary and cultural traditions: the story by R. Töpffer "The Way Beyond the Ocean", the story by J. Steinbeck "Escape" and the story by V.N. Gavril'yeva "The Road". The choice of works was determined by their expressive figurative system and the presence of stable symbolic motifs realized through artistic detail. Each of the works was subjected to a comprehensive textual analysis based on existing scientific interpretations, in particular the works of A.N. Anisimova, I.Yu. The theoretical basis of the study was formed by works on the theory of artistic detail and the poetics of prose, including studies by E.S. Dobin, G.N. Pospelov, I.A. Zhavoronok, T.I. Lazareva and others. Particular attention is paid to the

discussion field of the conceptual apparatus, which made it possible to formulate a more generalized and flexible definition of an artistic detail as a semantic unit functioning at the intersection of structure, imagery and the author's concept.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION. In modern literary criticism, artistic detail appears not just as a decoration of the text, but as the basis of a “microcosm” in which every word, every stroke carries a multidimensional semantic load [1, 93].

Having analyzed a number of articles and scientific studies devoted to artistic detail in the works of various authors, we paid special attention to the works of A. N. Anisimov and Yu. I. Efremova, examining details in R. Tepfer's short story “The Path Beyond the Ocean”, O. V. Stepanova's study devoted to J. Steinbeck's work “Escape”, as well as the article by T. L. Androsova and T. N. Vasilyeva, analyzing V. N. Gavril'yeva's story “The Road”[2, 53]. Taken together, these works demonstrate a unified approach to artistic detail as a structure-forming and symbolic element of a literary text. All the above-mentioned researchers in their works agree on the statement that: “The concept of an artistic detail, despite its apparent obviousness, remains a subject of debate: there is no single terminological definition, since “detail” is understood as both a portrait feature and a symbolic image, and a psychological accent”[3,180]. As E.S. Dobin notes: “It is generally accepted, however, that a detail is the smallest element of a narrative, which in isolation may seem insignificant, but in the context of the entire work reveals the inner world of the hero, builds the composition and absorbs the entire philosophy of the author”[4, 28]. Classical classifications, such as the dichotomy of “external” - “psychological” put forward by A.B. Yesin, help to imagine the spectrum of artistic details: from the description of architecture and things (clothes, household items, landscape) to the subtlest signs of an internal state (experiences, thoughts, emotions)[5, 81]. But A.B. Yesin himself recognized the conventionality of this division: one and the same detail can function in different planes. If the features of a portrait description become the key to understanding the hero's mental world, then a material detail immediately acquires the character of a psychological marker”[6, 57].

Along with this, supporters of the functional approach, for example V.A. Kukharenko, suggest considering details according to their semantic effect: pictorial ones enliven the text, characterological ones reveal the hero's portrait, clarifying ones introduce the reader to the parameters of space-time, and implicative ones send to hidden subtexts [7, 71].

This view allows us to move away from the material-typological framework and focus on what work the detail does within the narrative.

Much attention is also paid to the poetics of the detail - its expressive properties: brevity, capacity and the ability to work on several levels of the text simultaneously.

According to G.N. Pospelov and I.A. Zhavoronok: "the expressiveness of the detail is manifested through contrast and reliance on the symbol." Similar ideas are found in L.V. Chernets, for whom - "an artistic detail becomes a synecdoche - a part representing the whole." According to T. I. Lazareva: "the detail both concretizes and generalizes, turning into a philosophical metaphor"[8, 108]. As A. N. Anisimova and I. Yu. Efremova note in their scientific work, which examines the work of R. Tepfer, "The Path Beyond the Ocean" - "One of the key expressive details in the story is the portrait characteristic of the main character - the hump: "An ugly and frail body ... and in it is the soul of a knight." This detail, acting as a synecdoche, symbolizes the inner strength and nobility of Henri, contradicting his physical weakness" [9, 115] It is the hump, according to A. N. Anisimova and I. Yu. Efremova, that becomes a visual expression of the internal conflict and at the same time serves as a motive for his emigration, as a way to break out of the restrictive social environment." A. N. Anisimova, I. Yu. Efremova, in her analysis of the work, believes that a musical detail plays a significant role in the narrative - a scene of street singing: "She sang so that the heart trembled." Such a sound, according to researchers, acquires a symbolic meaning, becoming a metaphor for spiritual cleansing and hope. Music helps the hero come into contact with another - refined, bright, not overwhelming world, opening the way to rethinking his own destiny and finding faith in the best.

O.V. Stepanova, in turn, analyzing the artistic details in the work of J. Steinbeck "Escape", claims that - "The symbolic object that accompanies the hero throughout the narrative is the

father's knife." Initially, according to O.V. Stepanova, it is perceived as a toy, fun, but later turns into an instrument of death: "The knife - it flew out almost by itself ... It flashed before Pere realized it." According to the researcher, this detail marks Pere's transition from the world of childhood to the tragic reality of adulthood, where every action has consequences. The knife, as O.V. Stepanova asserts, symbolizes the inherited fate and inevitability underlying the conflict. Another expressive detail, according to O.V. Stepanova, is the image of a snake: "The snake's sting has once again bitten into the flesh." The metaphorical nature of this detail emphasizes the cyclical nature of suffering, the fatality of what is happening. The snake, as the author of the article asserts, unites the father's fate with the fate of the son, indicating the repetition of the tragic scenario. In the text, it acts as a symbol not only of danger, but also of fatal predetermination, which is impossible to avoid.

Androsova T. L., Vasilyeva T. N. in their scientific article devoted to the analysis of the work of V. N. Gavriliyev "The Road", on the contrary, believe that: "The symbolism begins with the title of the work: the road in it is not just a space, but the embodiment of the existential path of the protagonist." According to the authors of the article - The line "Life is like a road: straight, but endless" sets the philosophical tone for the entire story and becomes a metaphor for Mikhail's personal search, his spiritual journey and gradual acceptance of losses. A landscape detail – wormwood, "He tramples the wormwood under his feet, and each branch seems to whisper about the bitterness of loss" – symbolizes the bitterness of memories and serves as an echo of mental pain, while simultaneously indicating purification and acceptance of the lived. Wormwood in this context becomes an almost sacred element of the landscape, visualizing repentance.

Androsova T. L., Vasilyeva T. N. pay great attention to the analysis of details and subtext in the work. Thus, according to the researchers, "a material detail – a broken car headlight – also carries a deeply symbolic load". In the description: "Glass shards shine on the ground like broken hopes" – the reader is faced with the image of the destruction of the hero's former world, his lost connection with his father and the rejection of former landmarks. "The headlight that

illuminated the path is now broken – thereby emphasizing the loss of a bright future and the uncertainty of the further life route”. Combining examples of the analysis of artistic details in three different works, we are convinced that an artistic detail reflects not only a microcosm of the surrounding world, but also philosophy, psychology and the author's concept. In the romantic style of Tepfer, it embodies the idea of the greatness of spirit despite physical limitations; in the naturalistic key of Steinbeck - an existential clash with instinct and fate; in the socio-psychological prose of Gavrilyeva - the connection of the individual with collective memory and cultural roots. Thus, an artistic detail acts as a universal tool for the formation of meaning: it structures the composition, forms a psychological portrait, performs symbolic functions and even directs the development of the plot. It is in the combination of "little" and "big" that lies the true power of literary art, consisting in the skillful handling of what at first glance seems insignificant, but in the context of the entire work turns into the key to its understanding.

Conclusion. The conducted analysis of artistic detail in the works of R. Töpffer, J. Steinbeck and V. N. Gavrilyeva allows us to draw a conclusion about the multi-faceted and functionally rich nature of this element of poetics. Detail appears not as a secondary or ornamental means of artistic expression, but as a structure-forming component that plays a key role in the formation of the philosophical and aesthetic concept of the work, the disclosure of the inner world of the characters and the organization of the narrative as a whole. A comparative study of artistic detail in the works of various cultural and genre systems demonstrated its universality and, at the same time, cultural specificity. In the story by R. Töpffer, the detail (portrait, musical) functions as a synecdoche and a symbol of spiritual transformative power. In the story by J. Steinbeck, artistic details (knife, snake) acquire the function of a fatal sign, symbolizing the fatal inevitability of fate and a break with childhood. In V. N. Gavrilyeva's prose, a detail (road, wormwood, headlight) performs existential and memorial functions, turning into an expression of deep psycho-emotional states and cultural memory.

The functional approach used in the study allowed not only to systematize the types of artistic details (pictorial, characterological, clarifying, implicating), but also to trace their participation in the development of plot lines, the construction of a figurative structure and the formation of a symbolic series. The idea of conveying the "big" with the "small" has acquired particular significance: the detail turns out to be a carrier of subtext, a synthesizing link between the particular and the universal.

Thus, an artistic detail in modern literature is not only an element of the narrative, but also an independent semantic unit that performs aesthetic, semiotic, psychological and philosophical functions. In the future, further research can be aimed at an intermedia analysis of the detail, as well as its interpretation in the context of transmedia and cultural paradigms.

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