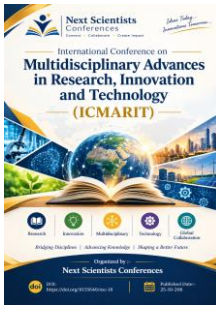
Published Date: - 30-10-2026
Page No: - 211-216



Stylistic And Artistic Devices In Literary Works

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ABSTRACT

This study analyzes literary devices employed in literary works as essential means of aesthetic expression and meaning-making. The research focuses on the functional role of narrative, stylistic, and rhetorical devices—including symbolism, metaphor, imagery, irony, and narrative point of view—in shaping thematic complexity and enhancing readers' interpretative engagement. Through qualitative textual analysis, the study examines the contribution of literary devices to the structural coherence, emotional impact, and ideological orientation of literary texts. The findings indicate that literary and expressive devices are not merely decorative elements but fundamental mechanisms through which authors convey complex ideas, cultural values, and philosophical concepts.

KEYWORDS: Literary devices; expressive devices; narrative strategies; symbolism; stylistic analysis; literary text interpretation; textual analysis.

INTRODUCTION

The relevance of the present study is determined by the growing need for a systematic analysis of literary devices within literary studies, particularly in the context of contemporary interdisciplinary approaches. Modern literary criticism demonstrates increasing interest in the relationship between form and content, as well as in the functioning of artistic and expressive devices as mediators between authorial intention and the reader's receptive perception. Despite the considerable body of scholarly research, a universal methodological model for analyzing literary devices applicable to different literary genres and historical periods has not yet been developed. The present study aims to address this theoretical gap through a structured analysis of literary devices and their functional roles, thereby contributing to the improvement of critical reading practices, the development of literary education, and further theoretical understanding of the issue.

A historical hero in literature can be interpreted as an artistic construct based on a real historical figure but endowed with an expanded cultural and symbolic significance. Such a character functions as a bearer and interpreter of sociohistorical and cultural meanings extending beyond an individual biography. In creating a literary image, the author not only records historical events but also interprets them, representing a subjective understanding of historical processes and patterns of human behavior under conditions of social transformation. Consequently, the historical hero embodies the contradictions of an era, its ideals, and its tragic aspects, serving as a mediator of philosophical reflection on historical reality.

A particularly significant function of the historical hero lies in the formation of national self-awareness. Within literary discourse, this image frequently serves as a personification of the national spirit and a symbolic representation of collective mentality. This function is most

clearly manifested in the genres of the historical novel and drama, where images of prominent historical figures are employed to strengthen national identity and consolidate society around shared values and ideals. Through the figure of the hero, literature not only reconstructs historical reality but also actively constructs collective perceptions of the past, endowing them with emotional and ethical content and integrating them into the structure of cultural memory.

Literature Review

Thus, the image of the historical hero in literature represents a complex, multilayered phenomenon synthesizing elements of documentary authenticity, artistic convention, and symbolic representation. It performs several interconnected functions: reflecting and interpreting historical processes, representing the author's philosophy of history, and serving as a key instrument for constructing and reinforcing national identity. Accordingly, the analysis of artistic strategies underlying the creation of the historical hero's image remains one of the central issues in contemporary literary studies.

Artistic generalization serves as a fundamental principle in constructing the image of a historical hero. This process involves the selective highlighting of particular characteristics and actions from the biography of a historical figure that represent typical tendencies of a specific historical period. As a result, an individual character is transformed into a literary type capable of expressing general historical patterns [10].

The process of artistic generalization requires the author to identify and emphasize essential aspects of the hero's life, creating an image that combines individual uniqueness with typological significance. Such typification ensures both the recognizability and universality of the character.

Within the artistic representation of a historical hero, the dialectical unity of the individual and the typical is realized. The author highlights qualities that make it possible to associate the hero with a particular historical role—such as a ruler, leader, or thinker—while preserving the individual characteristics that emphasize the hero's uniqueness [3]. The writer's artistic mastery is demonstrated through the ability to maintain a balance between these two poles, avoiding schematism while preserving typological clarity, thereby ensuring the multidimensionality and credibility of the image.

The construction of a psychological type constitutes an essential component of artistic generalization. Revealing the hero's inner world, including patterns of thought, emotional reactions, and motivational attitudes, enhances the psychological authenticity and depth of the image [8]. This approach provides a more comprehensive understanding of the character and increases the dramatic tension of the narrative.

The process of symbolization gives the image of a historical hero the status of a sign representing an era, national destiny, or a particular ideological conception. Consequently, the image transcends biographical specificity and acquires universal significance, enabling the author to communicate complex philosophical and ideological constructs [10].

Mythologization endows the historical hero with the characteristics of a mythical figure, transferring the character into a realm beyond specific temporal and spatial coordinates. This device, widely employed in historical prose, gives the image an epic scale and expands the symbolic potential of the narrative.

Depending on the author's conception, the image of a historical hero may undergo idealization, emphasizing its normative and axiological function and moral exemplarity, or demythologization, involving critical and realistic reinterpretation. Idealization generally performs didactic and patriotic functions, whereas demythologization contributes to the reassessment of historical experience and the deconstruction of established myths.

Archetypization reveals universal images and motifs—such as the wise ruler, the defender of the people, and the tragic hero—rooted in the collective unconscious [8]. The incorporation of archetypal structures deepens the semantic richness of the image and ensures its cross-cultural interpretability.

The narrative organization of the text is often based on the biographical principle, allowing the historical period to be represented through the individual destiny of the hero. This approach intensifies the dramatic quality of the narrative and presents historical processes as a dynamically experienced reality rather than an abstract construct.

The historical hero acts as an active generator of conflict: the hero's goals, values, and convictions come into opposition with opposing forces. Conflict, in turn, becomes a mechanism for character development and a means of representing historical contradictions [7].

The hero's image functions as the compositional center of the literary work. The hero's destiny determines the development of plotlines and the emotional dynamics of the text, establishing the character as a key structural element [4]. Compositional strategies are generally oriented toward synthesizing individual characteristics and typological functions, allowing the hero to be perceived simultaneously as a specific historical personality and as a universal type [2].

A significant risk in portraying a historical hero is excessive abstraction, which reduces the character to a purely symbolic construct and results in the loss of psychological authenticity [2]. In this regard, the author must avoid transforming the hero into an ideological scheme devoid of human multidimensionality.

Although artistic generalization should not contradict historical facts, it may extend beyond them in pursuit of a deeper artistic truth. The acceptability of authorial interpretation depends on its historical and psychological justification [5].

Contemporary literature demonstrates a tendency toward increasing complexity and multidimensionality in the portrayal of historical heroes, including the representation of social and cultural diversity and the deconstruction of traditional mythological models [9]. Particular attention is devoted to expressing national character through the prism of cultural traditions, mentality, and worldview. In national literatures, this aspect acquires particular significance because the historical hero functions as a symbol of collective identity [6].

Discussion

In general terms, the image of a historical hero in literature represents a complex artistic construct based on the principle of artistic generalization, which ensures the synthesis of the individual and the typical, as well as the historical and universal dimensions. Through this image, authors represent their own understanding of historical processes, the national spirit, and human destiny. The poetics of the historical hero encompasses a range of devices—symbolization, mythologization, idealization, and archetypization—each of which contributes to the semantic complexity of the image and expands its interpretative potential.

The author's primary task is to maintain a balance between historical authenticity and artistic interpretation, as well as between the typification and individualization of the character. Achieving such a balance requires a high level of artistic mastery and profound knowledge of both historical material and the theoretical foundations of literary creativity. Prospects for further research are associated with the analysis of contemporary literary texts and the application of interdisciplinary approaches integrating literary studies, history, and cultural studies.

The short story genre occupies a significant place in the literary heritage of W. Somerset Maugham and John Fowles. A critical analysis of their short fiction allows Maugham to be classified as a representative of critical realism, whereas Fowles is more appropriately associated with modernist and postmodernist paradigms. Despite belonging to different aesthetic traditions, the works of both authors demonstrate the coexistence and interaction of realist and modernist elements. At the same time, the distinctive features of their short stories, largely determined by their theoretical views on literature, reveal the individuality of each writer's artistic method. It should nevertheless be emphasized that the novel occupies a central position in their overall literary systems.

Chronologically, Maugham's early literary success was associated with drama, particularly the play Lady Frederick, while the novel Of Human Bondage brought him lasting recognition. This was subsequently followed by The Moon and Sixpence and other significant novels. The short stories constituting the primary focus of the present study were written intermittently between his more extensive narrative works.

Maugham's professional experience as a physician exerted a considerable influence on his narrative style. His prose is characterized by vivid imagery, precision of detail, restraint, and a pronounced tendency toward conciseness and stylistic economy. Excessive ornamentation and lengthy descriptive passages are virtually absent from his writing. The author himself observed that medical practice develops observational skills and attentiveness to minor details, making it possible to distinguish essential from secondary elements in the portrayal of characters' conflicts [1]. These characteristics are particularly relevant to the short story genre, in which brevity and compositional discipline are of fundamental importance. At the same time, Maugham emphasized the decisive role of the novel in the formation of his artistic method before he turned to short fiction.

A similar position can be observed in the aesthetic views of John Fowles, who rejected widespread pessimistic assumptions concerning the “decline” of the novel. According to Fowles, by the end of the twentieth century, the novel retained its capacity to encompass extensive narrative spaces and represent diverse forms of human experience that could be adequately expressed within this particular genre [11]. He maintained that the traditional functions of the novel—entertainment, satire, emotional expression, social reflection, and ethical instruction—remained relevant and necessary. Furthermore, Fowles regarded the fundamental mission of literature and art as contributing to the moral improvement of society [12, pp. 165, 179]. He advanced the proposition that didacticism constitutes the true purpose of the novel, pointing out that all great novelists of the past had, to varying degrees, acted as “didactors” (Fowles's neologism), while simultaneously warning against the predominance of overt moralizing [12, p. 8].

Notably, these principles also fully extend to Fowles's short fiction, particularly the collection The Ebony Tower, considered within the context of postmodernist aesthetics. A similar viewpoint is shared by several researchers, including V. S. Naipaul, B. Moore, and A. Wilson. Thus, Naipaul observes that the world has not yet been exhausted by existing symbolic systems, while the domain of short fiction is constantly renewed and remains virtually inexhaustible [13, p. 19].

In the field of short fiction, Maugham primarily acts as a chronicler oriented toward empirical reality, in which artistic invention plays a limited role in shaping the narrative structure. Fowles, in turn, also criticizes excessive stylistic self-display in short fiction, particularly in forms requiring conciseness and linguistic economy. Like Maugham, he considered excessive metaphorization a factor that overloads the limited textual space of a short story. As Fowles emphasizes, the style of a short story, novella, or short novel should not foreground the author's individuality but must correspond precisely and with restraint to the thematic and compositional requirements of the content [12, p. 194].

Conclusion

Thus, literary devices play a decisive role in shaping the semantic and aesthetic structure of a literary work. Through the purposeful use of stylistic and narrative devices, authors create multilayered texts that allow for multiple interpretations and produce a high degree of emotional impact. The conducted research confirms that literary devices function not as secondary decorative elements but as fundamental components of textual organization. Their analysis contributes to a deeper understanding of textual structure and a more accurate interpretation of literary meaning. Prospects for further research are associated with expanding comparative and interdisciplinary approaches to the study of literary devices across different cultures, literary movements, and media forms.

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