THE POETIC FUNCTION OF STAGE DETAILS IN EXPRESSING FEMALE PSYCHOLOGY

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Abstract. The article examines the poetic function of stage details in revealing female psychology in A.N.Ostrovsky's "The Dowryless Girl" (1878) and G.B.Shaw's "Mrs Warren's Profession" (1893). Stage directions, settings, props, costume and sound are treated not as technical instructions but as part of the dramatic text. On the basis of structural-semiotic, comparative-typological and psychological analysis, a five-part typology of stage details (spatial, object, costume, sound-and-light and gestural) is proposed. It is established that Ostrovsky's details work as emotional symbols that anticipate the heroine's fate (the cast-iron railing above the Volga, the guitar, the pistol on the carpet), whereas Shaw's details work as signs of choice and status (the chatelaine with a fountain pen, the books by the hammock, the office door lettered "Fraser and Warren"). The parallel motif of the firearm reveals the key difference: in Ostrovsky the weapon is turned against the heroine, in Shaw the heroine takes it under her control. The results may be used in courses on comparative literature and drama analysis.

Keywords: stage detail, stage direction, female psychology, subtext, scenography, Ostrovsky, Shaw, comparative literary studies.

AYOL RUHIYATINI IFODALASHDA SAHNAVIY DETALLARNING POETIK VAZIFASI

Annotatsiya. Maqolada A.N.Ostrovskiyning "Sepsiz qiz" (1878) va B.Shouning "Uorren xonimning kasbi" (1893) pyesalarida ayol ruhiyatini ochishda sahnaviy detallarning poetik vazifasi tadqiq etilgan. Remarkalar, sahna bezagi, rekvizit, kostyum va tovush texnik ko'rsatma sifatida emas, balki dramatik matnning tarkibiy qismi sifatida ko'rib chiqilgan. Struktur-semiotik, qiyosiy-tipologik va psixologik tahlil asosida sahnaviy detallarning besh turdan iborat tipologiyasi (makon, predmet, kostyum, tovush-yorug'lik va imo-ishora detallari) taklif etilgan. Ostrovskiyda detallar qahramon taqdirini oldindan bildiruvchi hissiy ramz (Volga ustidagi cho'yan panjara, gitara, gilamdagi pistolet), Shouda esa tanlov va maqom belgisi (avtoruchkali shatlen, gamak yonidagi kitoblar, "Fraser and Warren" yozuvli eshik) vazifasini bajarishi aniqlangan. Har ikki pyesadagi qurol motivi asosiy farqni ko'rsatadi: Ostrovskiyda qurol qahramonga qarshi qaratiladi, Shouda esa qahramon uni o'z nazoratiga oladi. Natijalardan qiyosiy adabiyotshunoslik va drama tahlili mashg'ulotlarida foydalanish mumkin.

Kalit so'zlar: sahnaviy detal, remarka, ayol ruhiyati, ostki matn, ssenografiya, Ostrovskiy, Shou, qiyosiy adabiyotshunoslik.

ПОЭТИЧЕСКАЯ ФУНКЦИЯ СЦЕНИЧЕСКИХ ДЕТАЛЕЙ В ВЫРАЖЕНИИ ЖЕНСКОЙ ПСИХОЛОГИИ

Аннотация. В статье исследуется поэтическая функция сценических деталей в раскрытии женской психологии в пьесах А.Н.Островского «Бесприданница» (1878) и Б.Шоу «Профессия миссис Уоррен» (1893). Ремарки, декорация, реквизит, костюм и звук рассматриваются не как

технические указания, а как составная часть драматического текста. На основе структурно-семиотического, сравнительно-типологического и психологического анализа предложена типология сценических деталей из пяти видов (пространственные, предметные, костюмные, звукосветовые и жестовые). Установлено, что у Островского детали выступают эмоциональными символами, предвещающими судьбу героини (чугунная решётка над Волгой, гитара, пистолет на ковре), а у Шоу – знаками выбора и статуса (шатлен с вечным пером, книги у гамака, дверь с надписью «Fraser and Warren»). Параллельный мотив оружия выявляет главное различие: у Островского оружие обращено против героини, у Шоу героиня берёт его под свой контроль. Результаты могут быть использованы в курсах сравнительного литературоведения и анализа драмы.

Ключевые слова: сценическая деталь, ремарка, женская психология, подтекст, сценография, Островский, Шоу, сравнительное литературоведение.

Introduction. A playwright has no narrator. A novelist can tell the reader what a heroine thinks; a dramatist has to show it. Dialogue is the main channel, but it is not the only one. Every play also contains a second layer of text: the stage directions that describe the place of action, the objects in it, the costumes, the sounds and the movements of the characters. R.Ingarden called the spoken words the main text (Haupttext) and the directions the side text (Nebentext) [5]. For a long time the side text was read as a technical note for actors and designers. Theatre semiotics changed this view. Anything placed on the stage becomes a sign, and an ordinary chair or lamp starts to carry meaning simply because the author chose to put it there [3; 10; 14].

This matters especially for female characters in nineteenth-century drama. A heroine of that period was rarely allowed to speak openly about money, desire or humiliation. What she could not say was often transferred to things: a dress, a musical instrument, a view from the window, a door. The stage detail thus becomes a language of the unspoken and one of the main tools of dramatic psychologism.

The article examines two plays written fifteen years apart: A.N.Ostrovsky's "The Dowryless Girl" (1878) and G.B.Shaw's "Mrs Warren's Profession" (written in 1893, published in 1898 and first staged privately in 1902). In both plays the heroine lives in a world where a woman's value is expressed in money. Both authors are known for careful stage directions, yet their manner is very different. Ostrovsky's directions are short and concrete. Shaw's are long, essay-like and often ironic, written for the reader as much as for the director.

The relevance of the study is determined by the growing interest of comparative literary studies in the poetics of drama and in the ways national literatures represent women. Stage detail has usually been studied as part of a single author's scenography; its role in building female psychology has not yet been compared across the Russian and English traditions.

Literature review. In Russian scholarship, A.I.Zhuravleva showed how Ostrovsky turned the comic tradition of Griboedov and Gogol into a drama of everyday life, where the material world of the merchant house becomes psychologically meaningful [15]. V.Ya.Lakshin traced the conflict between the "poetry of feeling" and the prose of commerce in Ostrovsky's late plays [7]. A.P.Chudakov's study of Chekhov's object world demonstrated how a seemingly accidental thing in Russian drama can carry mood and character [2], and V.E.Khalizev described the place of the author's side text in drama as a literary kind [6]. P.G.Bogatyrev's work on folk costume laid the foundation for reading clothing as a system of signs [1].

In Western scholarship, K.Elam [3], A.Ubersfeld [14] and P.Pavis [10] developed the semiotics of the theatrical object and of stage space. Studies of Shaw's heroines, above all J.E.Gainor's monograph [4], focus on how Shaw constructs gender through argument, while E.Showalter places Vivie Warren in the

context of the “New Woman” of the fin de siècle [13]. These works give a solid base, but the stage detail as a means of expressing female psychology in Ostrovsky and Shaw has not been compared. This article seeks to fill that gap.

The aim of the article is to identify the poetic functions of stage details in representing female psychology in “The Dowryless Girl” and “Mrs Warren’s Profession”. The following tasks were set:

– to propose a working typology of stage details and their functions;

– to analyse the stage details connected with Larisa Ogudalova and Vivie Warren;

– to compare the direction in which the details work in each play;

– to explain the differences through the authors’ aesthetic and national traditions.

Methods. The study combines several complementary methods. Structural-semiotic analysis, based on Yu.M.Lotman’s view of the artistic text as a system of meaningful oppositions [8] and on the theatre semiotics of K.Elam and A.Ubersfeld [3; 14], was used to read objects and spaces as signs and to identify binary pairs such as open – closed, display – possession, weapon – hand. The comparative-typological method was applied because there is no evidence that Shaw knew Ostrovsky’s play; the parallels are therefore treated as typological rather than genetic. Psychological analysis was used to connect each detail with a specific inner state of the heroine and with turning points of the action. The descriptive-classificatory method made it possible to group the details and build the typology presented in Figure 1.

The primary material comprises the texts of “The Dowryless Girl” [9] and “Mrs Warren’s Profession” [11], together with Shaw’s preface to “Plays Unpleasant” [12]. All stage directions of the four acts of each play were read, and those details that are directly linked to the heroine – placed around her, handled by her or commenting on her state – were selected for analysis. Each selected detail was then classified by type and by function.

Results.

1. A typology of stage details. The analysis allowed the details to be grouped into five types: spatial (setting, view, border, threshold), object (props, furniture, instruments, weapons), costume (dress, accessories, manner of wearing), sound and light (music, shots, song, lamp, moonlight) and gestural (movement, pose and the way a character handles an object). Each type may perform four poetic functions: characterising (it marks status, taste and social role), symbolic (the object stands for an inner value), prognostic (the detail anticipates the heroine’s fate) and subtextual (the object voices what the heroine cannot say). The model is shown in Figure 1.

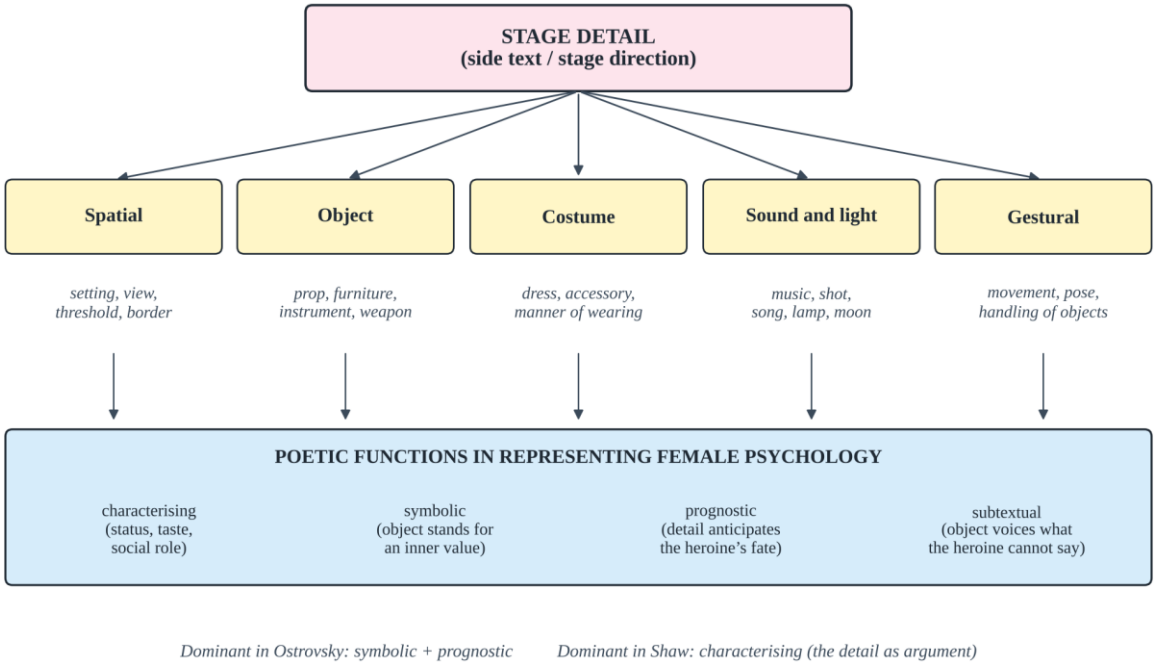


Figure 1. Typology and poetic functions of stage details (compiled by the author)

2. Ostrovsky: the detail as an emotional symbol. In "The Dowryless Girl" almost every detail around Larisa looks forward to the ending. Ostrovsky does not explain her feelings; he places them in things.

The railing above the Volga. The opening direction describes a city boulevard on the high bank of the Volga; at the back there is a low cast-iron railing, and beyond it a view of the Volga and of a wide expanse of forests and villages [9]. The railing is the main spatial sign of the play. It separates the closed world of the town from the open world of the river, and at the same time it marks the edge of the cliff. Already in Act I Larisa looks over it and asks whether one could be badly hurt there. The question sounds casual, but it is prognostic: in Act IV the action returns to the same boulevard, and Larisa stands at the same railing, looking down and unable to make herself jump. The ring composition (Figure 2) turns the open view of the first act into a trap: freedom is visible, but it can be reached only through death.

Costume. Already in the list of characters Ostrovsky gives two short costume notes. Kharita Ignatyevna is dressed "elegantly, but boldly and not according to her years", while Larisa is dressed "richly, but modestly" [9]. The two adverbs in Larisa's note contradict each other, and that contradiction is her situation. The wealth is on display but does not belong to her; it is part of the mother's strategy of "selling" her daughter. The modesty belongs to Larisa herself. The costume therefore holds the conflict between what others make of her and who she is.

The guitar. The direction for Act II mentions decent furniture and a piano with a guitar lying on it [9]. The guitar is Larisa's only true possession and her only free voice. When she asks the gypsy Ilya to tune it and sings, she says through music what she cannot say in words. Yet the same instrument becomes a means of entertaining men: in Act III she is made to sing at Karandyshev's dinner, and her song is the moment when Paratov decides to take her away. The detail of the self turns into a detail of consumption.

The pistol on the carpet. Act III is set in Karandyshev's study, "furnished with pretensions but without taste", where a carpet hung with weapons is nailed above the sofa [9]. Robinson mocks the weapons as stage props, and Paratov, taking the pistol, declares that it will not fire anyway and is good only for driving nails into the wall; he throws it on the table. At the end of the act Karandyshev snatches

the same pistol from the table and runs out. The object that everyone treated as a fake becomes real. The parallel with Larisa is clear: she too was treated as a decorative thing in a men's game, and she too proves to be real – but only at the moment of her death. In Act IV, after the shot, Larisa picks up the pistol and puts it on the table with words of gratitude. Her gesture completes the path of the object: she accepts what has happened instead of resisting it.

Sound. The arrival of Paratov in Act I is announced by a cannon shot on the Volga [9], a sound of male power entering the town. In the finale the song of the gypsy chorus is heard while Larisa dies. The sound frame of the play thus surrounds her: her story begins with a salute and ends with a feast that goes on without her. Even the public space is staged as a disguise – in the coffee house champagne is poured into teapots and served in cups – so that the decorum of the town is literally a false surface.

3. Shaw: the detail as a sign of choice. In "Mrs Warren's Profession" the stage direction is often a small essay addressed to the reader. Its details do not foretell a fate; they show a decision that the heroine has already made or is about to make.

The hammock and the books. Act I opens in a cottage garden near Haslemere. A young lady lies in a hammock, and within reach of her hand stands a kitchen chair with a pile of serious-looking books and a supply of writing paper [11]. The picture of a girl resting in a summer garden is a conventional Victorian image; Shaw keeps the image but fills it with work. The leisure space is occupied by study, and the reader understands Vivie before she speaks.

Costume and accessories. Shaw describes Vivie as twenty-two, "prompt, strong, confident, self-possessed", in a "plain business-like dress, but not dowdy". She wears a chatelaine at her belt, with a fountain pen and a paper knife among its pendants [11]. The chatelaine was a traditional accessory of the mistress of a house, used for keys and household items. Shaw keeps the female form and changes its content: the keys of the household are replaced by tools of intellectual labour. Mrs Warren, by contrast, appears "showily dressed in a brilliant hat and a gay blouse" [11]. The generational conflict is visible before a word is spoken: one woman dresses to be looked at, the other dresses to work.

Gesture. Vivie's gestures are constructed in the same key. She takes Praed's hand "with a resolute and hearty grip" and moves her chair with a vigorous swing [11]. Her idea of rest is "a comfortable chair, a cigar, a little whisky, and a novel with a good detective story in it" [11]. Each object on this list was coded as masculine in the 1890s, and Shaw uses them to show that Vivie has already stepped outside the female role expected of her.

Light. The only moment in which Shaw lets the stage itself become emotional is the end of Act II. After the mother's story Vivie draws the curtains, and the landscape is seen bathed in the light of the harvest moon; Mrs Warren embraces her daughter, "instinctively looking upward for divine sanction" [11]. The romantic lighting expresses the triumph of feeling, but the ironic word "instinctively" already distances the reader. Act III opens in a rectory garden in bright morning sun, and that light brings the revelation that the mother's business still continues. The moonlight was a stage effect, and Shaw lets it fade.

The rifle. At the end of Act III Frank aims his rifle at the departing Crofts. Vivie seizes the muzzle and pulls it against her own breast, and Frank drops the gun. In Ostrovsky the weapon passes from man to man and finally strikes the heroine. In Shaw the heroine interrupts this movement with her own hand: she stops male violence by openly exposing herself to it. The gesture is not emotional surrender but an act of will.

The door with a name. Act IV takes place in Honoria Fraser's chambers in Chancery Lane: an office at the top of New Stone Buildings, with a plate-glass window, distempered walls, electric light and a patent stove [11]. The upper panel of the door is of opaque glass lettered on the outside "Fraser and Warren". Vivie's name is now written on a door in a public, professional space. The irony is that "Warren" is also

her mother's name, but here it stands for a different profession. In the final direction Vivie tears up a note left by Frank, turns to her work and becomes absorbed in its figures. Two kinds of paper meet in this gesture: the love note is destroyed, the figures remain. The play ends not with a word but with an object and an action.

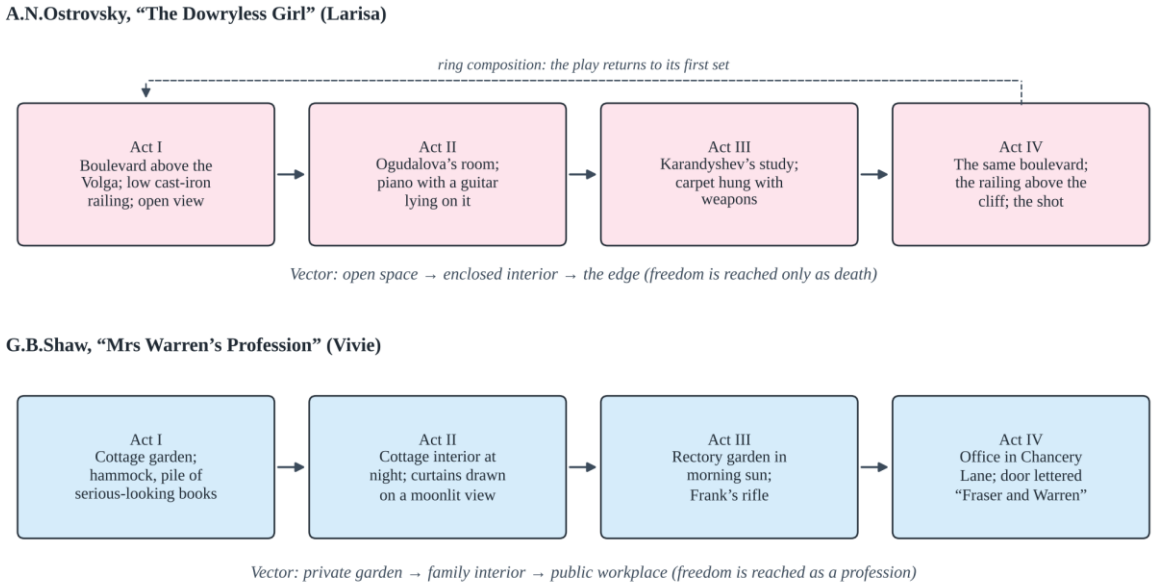


Figure 2. Spatial trajectory of the heroines across the four acts (compiled by the author)

4. Comparative summary. The main paired details of the two plays are presented in Figure 3, and the general differences are summarised in Table 1.

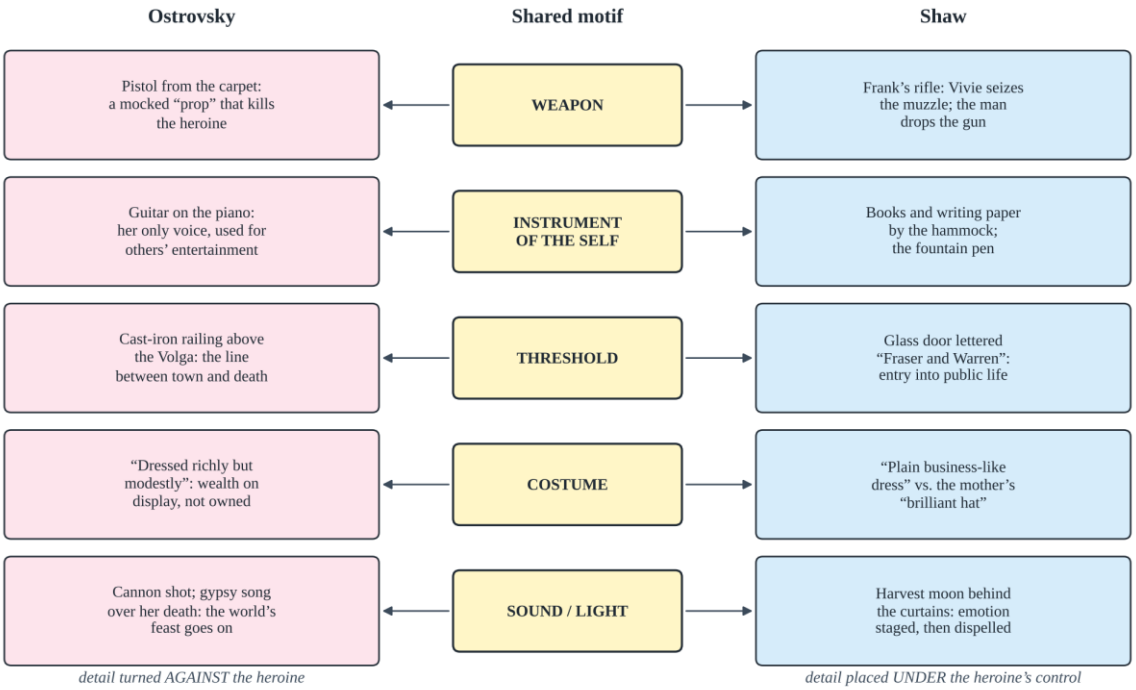


Figure 3. Paired stage details and the direction of their action (compiled by the author)

Table 1

The function of stage details in representing the heroine's psychology

Criterion	A.N.Ostrovsky, "The Dowryless Girl"	G.B.Shaw, "Mrs Warren's Profession"
Manner of stage directions	short, concrete, addressed to the stage	extended, essay-like, ironic, addressed also to the reader
Dominant type of detail	spatial and object (railing, guitar, pistol)	costume and gestural (chatelaine, handshake, office door)
Dominant function	symbolic and prognostic	characterising and argumentative
Heroine's relation to the object	the object is used by others and turns against her	the object is chosen and controlled by her
Spatial vector	open view → interior → edge of the cliff (ring composition)	garden → interior → public workplace (linear movement)
Final detail	pistol laid on the table; gypsy song over her death	torn note; figures on the desk

Discussion. The results show that the difference between the two plays lies not in the number of details but in the direction in which they act. In Ostrovsky the detail moves towards the heroine and closes around her; in Shaw it moves away from her into the world, where she can use it.

Ostrovsky's method grows out of Russian psychological realism, in which the material world absorbs the emotion of the character [15]. His details are few, but almost each one returns: the railing appears in the first and the last act, the pistol is introduced as a ridiculous object and then fires. This principle of the "returning" detail anticipates the poetics of Chekhov, in which, as A.P.Chudakov showed, the object world becomes a carrier of the character's inner state [2]. The pistol on Karandyshev's carpet can be read as an early Russian example of a weapon that must eventually fire.

Shaw's method belongs to the drama of ideas. His stage directions argue together with the dialogue. As J.E.Gainor notes, Shaw's women often serve as vehicles for his social argument [4], and the objects around Vivie – the chatelaine, the cigar, the office door – are arguments in this debate. Still, Shaw is not indifferent to emotion. The moonlit ending of Act II proves that he can stage feeling; he simply refuses to let it decide the outcome. Emotion is shown and then set aside.

The two plays also share a deeper motif: the woman on display. Larisa is dressed "richly" for the market of brides, Mrs Warren is dressed "showily" for the market she runs. In both cases the costume is a shop window. The difference is that Vivie rejects the window altogether: her "plain" dress removes her from the field of the male gaze. This agrees with the historical picture of the 1890s, when education and new professions were opening for English women, as E.Showalter shows [13], while a Russian woman of the 1870s without a dowry had very few realistic choices.

The findings also have a practical side for translation studies. When stage directions are shortened or simplified in translation, the reader loses not decoration but psychology. In Uzbek translations of drama this risk is real, since remarks are often treated as secondary text. The typology proposed here can serve as a checklist: a translator should keep the spatial, object, costume, sound and gestural details that carry symbolic, prognostic or subtextual meaning.

Conclusion. The comparative analysis of stage details in “The Dowryless Girl” and “Mrs Warren’s Profession” leads to the following conclusions:

1. It was established that stage details in both plays are not technical instructions but an independent channel for expressing female psychology; they can be grouped into five types (spatial, object, costume, sound-and-light, gestural) and four functions (characterising, symbolic, prognostic, subtextual).

2. It was shown that in Ostrovsky the details function as emotional symbols that anticipate the heroine’s fate: the railing above the Volga, the guitar and the pistol form a closed, ring-shaped system that ends in Larisa’s death.

3. It was proved that in Shaw the details function as signs of choice and status: the books by the hammock, the chatelaine with a fountain pen, the rifle seized by Vivie and the door lettered “Fraser and Warren” trace a linear path towards independence through work.

4. It was substantiated that the parallel motif of the weapon expresses the main typological difference: in Ostrovsky the object is turned against the heroine, in Shaw it is placed under her control, which reflects both the authors’ aesthetic traditions and the social possibilities of their time.

The results can be used in university courses on comparative literature, the theory of drama and literary translation. Further research may extend the typology to the plays of H.Ibsen and A.P.Chekhov and to the treatment of stage directions in Uzbek translations of European drama.

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