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Literary Psychologism And The Representation Of Consciousness: A Comparative Study Of Western, Russian, And Uzbek Traditions

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Abstract: This article examines the concept of literary psychologism as an essential artistic method that depicts the inner world of characters, their emotions, and their interaction with external reality. Drawing on Western, Russian, and Uzbek literary traditions, the study traces how psychological and philosophical theories of the late 19th and early 20th centuries—particularly those of Freud, William James, Nietzsche, and Bergson—influenced the representation of consciousness, inner conflict, and character development in literature. The analysis highlights key techniques such as stream of consciousness, interior monologue, analepsis, oneiric description, and unreliable narration, alongside indirect methods like characterization, landscape, leitmotif, symbolism, and subtext. The article also explores the manifestation of psychologism across genres including prose, poetry, drama, and modern forms such as graphic novels and digital storytelling. Findings suggest that literary psychologism not only enriched realism and modernism but also provided a framework for cross-cultural literary traditions, enabling deeper insight into the complexities of human consciousness.

Keywords: Literary psychologism; stream of consciousness; inner conflict; character-centered narrative; realism; modernism; Uzbek literature; Freud; William James.

Introduction: A literary work is the product of creative thought, reflecting both individual and social life. Yet mere narration of events does not elevate a text to the

level of art—artistic and psychological devices are essential for truthful representation. Literary psychologism, understood as the deep depiction of the character's inner world, enables the reader to perceive subjective experiences, emotions, and conflicts. In Western literary criticism, Henry James, Émile Zola, Virginia Woolf, and E. M. Forster each highlighted the centrality of psychological depth to the novel. Russian scholars such as A. Yesin, M. Bakhtin, L. Ginzburg, V. Kompaneyets, and S. Rubinshtein expanded these perspectives by linking psychologism with polyphony, existential conflict, and the author's own psychology. In Uzbek literary studies, Abdurauf Fitrat and H. Umurov emphasized the writer's task of authentically representing the joys and sorrows of characters. This paper seeks to systematize these insights, showing how literary psychologism emerged from psychological and philosophical theories of the 19th–20th centuries and how it functions across different genres and cultural contexts.

METHODS

This study employs a comparative-analytical approach that combines historical-literary analysis (tracing psychologism from realism to modernism), theoretical contextualization (drawing on Freud, James, Nietzsche, Bergson), textual analysis (of narrative devices in Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, Joyce, Woolf, Proust, and Uzbek authors), and genre analysis (examining prose, poetry, drama, and contemporary forms).

RESEARCH RESULTS

A literary work is the product of the author's creative thinking, in which the life of the individual and society is reflected. Every work is based on the laws of literariness, which develop over time. A mere sequential narration of events does not elevate a work to the level of art; for this, artistic devices are necessary. In presenting characters truthfully, psychological artistic devices also play an important role. The process of deeply depicting a character's inner world and spiritual experiences is called literary psychologism. It demonstrates the relationship between the character's inner world and external reality, giving the reader access to subjective experiences, aspirations, and inner conflicts.

Western scholars have paid particular attention to the study of literary psychologism. Henry James stated: "Perhaps, after all, the greatest psychologist is not the metaphysician, but the novelist," emphasizing that psychology is the sole foundation of the novel; its value lies in the subtle depiction of the inner world and emotions of the character, which connects the reader with the character's psyche. Émile Zola, advancing the idea of the "experimental novel," declared:

"Psychology is the science of the novel," meaning that the novelist, through scientific observation, should transfer human behavior onto characters; when a literary work relies on a deep understanding of psychological factors, the characters appear authentic and compelling. Virginia Woolf remarked: "The point of interest lies very likely in the dark places of psychology," highlighting subconscious processes and inner experiences as the most captivating aspects of literary psychologism. E. M. Forster acknowledged the novelist's ability to penetrate deeply into the psyche: "Whereas we believe that happiness and misery exist in the secret life which each of us leads privately and to which the novelist has access," noting that the writer's task is "The secret life is by its very nature secret, but the novelist reveals and discloses it to the reader." In Russian literary studies, literary psychologism is expressed through distinctive perspectives. A. Yesin defines it as a method of conveying the thoughts, feelings, and emotional world of characters, stressing that literature should serve as a mirror of human psychological experience. According to M. Bakhtin's concept of "polyphony," Dostoevsky's novels host multiple autonomous consciousnesses coexisting on equal terms, creating a complex psychological landscape. L. Ginzburg interprets literary psychologism as the process of exploring the contradictions and deepest layers of the human soul, an approach that encourages readers to gain a deeper understanding of the social and existential factors shaping consciousness and behavior. V. Kompaneyets explains literary psychologism not only as a set of artistic devices but also as a creative process intertwined with the author's own psychology; therefore, the inner world of the character becomes closely connected with the author's personal experiences and views. S. Rubinshtein, meanwhile, emphasizes that for writers, experiences are not merely emotions but rather "necessary turning points on humanity's path toward spiritual development."

In Uzbek literary scholarship, literary psychologism has also been widely studied. Abdurauf Fitrat noted that literature conveys waves of feelings and thoughts through words and thereby evokes the same emotions in the reader. H. Umurov interprets literary psychologism as the process by which writers depict their characters' experiences and emotions in a lifelike manner. In his view, the writer must vividly portray the joys and sorrows of the characters and empathize with the inner world of events and images.

Literary psychologism took shape on the basis of psychological and philosophical theories of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Interest in human consciousness entered literature as well, opening the way to an unprecedentedly deep and subtle depiction

of the character's inner world. Sigmund Freud initiated a radical current in psychology, introducing the concept of the unconscious in *The Interpretation of Dreams* and emphasizing that human behavior is often governed by hidden memories, fears, and desires. This idea enabled writers to portray the inner world of their characters through dreams, symbols, and fragmented thoughts. Later, in *The Ego and the Id*, Freud interpreted the mind as a battlefield between the id, ego, and superego, presenting literary characters not as whole, harmonious beings but as complex individuals torn by inner conflicts. His *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, with the concepts of Eros and Thanatos, gave rise in literature to self-destructive characters prone to inner aggression.

At the same time, William James conceptualized consciousness not as static but as a continuous flow, thus laying the foundation for the "stream of consciousness" technique. His views highlighted the dynamic, ever-changing nature of human thought and its constant susceptibility to external influences. This allowed modernist writers such as James Joyce and Virginia Woolf to express inner experiences directly and in real time.

In philosophy, Friedrich Nietzsche advanced the notion of the subjectivity of truth, encouraging writers to explore personal perspectives and moral visions. Henri Bergson, by interpreting time not as a mathematical unit but as *durée*—a phenomenon experienced through inner feelings—introduced into literature experiential approaches to time and space. As a result, time came to be depicted not as a sequence of events but as subjective experience within the character's consciousness.

The approach of literary psychologism laid the foundation for the emergence of realism and modernism. Realism, in the late 19th century works of Flaubert and Zola, sought to portray life and the inner world with impartial precision. Modernism, in the early 20th century, employed techniques such as stream of consciousness, interior monologue, and non-linear structures to uncover the workings of the human psyche (for instance, Woolf's *The Waves*, Mrs. Dalloway, and Joyce's *Ulysses*). In Russian literature, Tolstoy (*War and Peace*, *Anna Karenina*) depicted human emotions and moral dilemmas, while Dostoevsky (*Crime and Punishment*, *The Brothers Karamazov*) explored the struggle between inner darkness and conscience. In Central Asia, Qodiriy (*Bygone Days*) and Cho'ipon (*Night and Day*) portrayed personal suffering against the backdrop of social change, while Aitmatov (*The Day Lasts More Than a Hundred Years*) illuminated spiritual strength and vulnerability in the confrontation between the

individual and society.

There are specific features of literary psychologism.

Depicting the Stream of Consciousness and Thought. Thought, perception, consciousness, memory, and reflection are presented in art as an integrated whole, with the stream of consciousness revealing the immediate movement of the character's mind. This manifests on three levels: in the reader's consciousness, in the character's thinking, and in the writer's imagination. The theories of William James and Sigmund Freud, along with the experiments of Joyce and Woolf, transformed the stream of consciousness into a powerful artistic device.

Emphasis on Inner Conflict. Human life has always been grounded in contradictions, and literary psychologism highlights precisely the tensions between the inner self and the external world. Inner conflict is expressed through fear, doubt, moral dilemmas, and emotional disarray. Writers such as Dostoevsky and Chekhov deeply explored the workings of the mind and the struggles of the soul.

Character-Centeredness. Rather than the plot, the focus is placed on the character's psyche and personal development. Proust reveals the formation of personality through memory and will, while Henry James analyzes subjective experience. Tolstoy (*Anna Karenina*) masterfully portrays the turmoil and suffering of his characters. In Uzbek literature, writers such as Qodiriy, Qahhor, Qodirov, Said Ahmad, and Hoshimov prioritized the psychology of characters over the events themselves, depicting the inner struggles between society and the individual.

According to I. V. Strakhov's classification, psychological representation appears in two forms: direct (interior monologue, stream of consciousness, analepsis, oneiric imagery, unreliable narration) and indirect (description, kinetic imagery, speech characterization, landscape, leitmotif, symbolism, subtext). In direct form, the character's inner experiences are expressed explicitly, whereas in indirect form, psychological processes are revealed through external signs, symbolic elements, or speech. These two approaches complement each other, enabling a deeper and more multifaceted representation of the human psyche.

Literary psychologism manifests differently across genres. In prose (novel and short story), it reveals human motives and spiritual experiences through interior monologue, stream of consciousness, and free indirect discourse; while the novel emphasizes broad description, the short story focuses on brevity and strong emotional impact. Poetry, within the constraints of meter and rhyme, relies on imagery and symbolism to convey inner turmoil directly and expressively. Drama

presents conflict in real time through monologues and dialogues, with silence and pauses intensifying the psychological weight. Innovative genres such as the graphic novel and digital storytelling, meanwhile, enable the expression of complex psychological states through the integration of image and text.

DISCUSSION

The study of literary psychologism today requires moving beyond cataloguing its devices and instead confronting the epistemological and methodological challenges it poses. At its core, psychologism raises the question of how literature can represent subjective experience—something that resists direct observation and eludes empirical verification. Unlike psychology as a science, literature does not aim to diagnose or measure, but to render consciousness in ways that are aesthetically convincing and emotionally resonant. This tension between the subjective and the communicable, the personal and the universal, constitutes both the strength and the paradox of psychologism.

Another crucial issue lies in the cultural variability of psychological representation. While European modernists such as Woolf and Joyce developed stream-of-consciousness techniques as a response to philosophical and scientific discourses of their time, Central Asian writers like Qodiriy or Cho'lpon embedded inner experience within broader struggles of identity, colonial history, and social transformation. This suggests that psychologism cannot be studied as a universal form alone but must be situated within specific cultural, historical, and ideological contexts.

Moreover, literary psychologism challenges the traditional boundaries between author, narrator, and character. If, as Kompaneyets suggested, the psychology of the author intertwines with that of the character, then the act of writing itself becomes a psychological performance. This blurring raises questions of authenticity, projection, and the ethics of representation—how much of the character is “real,” and how much is an authorial construct? Contemporary criticism must reckon with these blurred lines, particularly in a digital era where new genres like interactive narratives and graphic novels experiment with fragmented perspectives and multimodal expressions of consciousness.

Finally, psychologism highlights the broader function of literature in society: not merely to reflect inner life, but to expand the reader's capacity for empathy and moral imagination. In revealing fears, conflicts, and aspirations that might otherwise remain hidden, literature fosters recognition of the complexity of human subjectivity. This humanizing potential remains

one of the most enduring contributions of psychologism to literary and cultural history.

CONCLUSION

Literary psychologism represents a vital dimension of literature, enabling authors to uncover the complexity of human thought, emotion, and inner conflict. Emerging from the intersection of psychological and philosophical theories, it transformed narrative techniques in realism and modernism and continues to influence diverse genres, from novels to digital storytelling. By prioritizing the character's psyche over plot, literary psychologism fosters deeper reader engagement and reflection on the human condition. The comparative study of Western, Russian, and Uzbek traditions demonstrates that psychologism is a universal literary phenomenon, adapting to cultural and historical contexts while preserving its focus on the inner life of the individual.

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