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The Formation And Development Of Artistic Psychologism In English Literature

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Abstract: This article investigates the formation and development of artistic psychologism in English literature, focusing on the historical evolution of narrative techniques used to represent the inner world of literary characters. Artistic psychologism is defined as a system of aesthetic and narrative strategies aimed at conveying psychological states, emotional experience, and moral consciousness. Using the fiction of Pearl S. Buck as a representative case, the study demonstrates that English literary psychologism developed along multiple trajectories, including ethically oriented and intercultural models. The research employs qualitative textual analysis to identify key mechanisms of indirect psychological representation, such as moral choice, silence, and everyday behavior. The findings reveal that Buck's narrative method expands traditional conceptions of psychologism by integrating ethical realism and cultural synthesis into English prose.

Introduction: The depiction of the inner world of the individual has long been a fundamental concern of literary art. In English literature, this concern gradually evolved into a coherent aesthetic principle known as artistic psychologism. Unlike external characterization, which focuses on observable traits and actions, psychologism seeks to reveal the psychological mechanisms underlying human behavior, including emotions, thoughts, moral conflicts, and inner development [1].

The formation of artistic psychologism in English literature reflects broader intellectual and cultural transformations, such as the rise of individualism, the influence of moral philosophy, and the emergence of psychological thought [2]. While early prose relied on ethical commentary and emotional description, later literary forms developed more complex strategies for representing inner experience through narrative perspective, psychological motivation, and moral reflection [3].

Within this tradition, the fiction of Pearl S. Buck occupies a distinctive position. Rather than adopting experimental modernist techniques, Buck develops an ethically grounded and culturally inflected model of psychologism. Her narrative method emphasizes moral endurance, restraint, and everyday experience as key indicators of psychological depth [4]. This article aims to trace the historical development of artistic psychologism in English literature and to examine Buck's contribution as an alternative psychological paradigm based on ethical realism and inner balance [5].

METHODOLOGY

This study is based on a qualitative literary research design and aims to examine the formation and development of artistic psychologism in English literature, with particular attention to its ethically oriented and intercultural manifestations in the fiction of Pearl S. Buck. The research employs an integrated methodological framework combining textual analysis, interpretative analysis, historical-literary approach, and comparative literary methodology in order to identify the narrative mechanisms through which psychological depth is constructed.

The selection of scholarly sources was guided by clearly defined academic criteria. Priority was given to peer-reviewed publications released within the last five years (2019–2024) that address key issues related to artistic psychologism, psychological realism, moral psychology, gender studies, and intercultural literary analysis. In addition, foundational theoretical works in literary theory and narrative studies were consulted where necessary to establish a coherent conceptual and methodological framework. Particular attention was paid to studies proposing less-explored or alternative approaches to psychologism, especially those emphasizing indirect psychological representation through ethical choice, silence, everyday behavior, and moral responsibility rather than explicit introspection or stream-of-consciousness techniques. The selected sources reflect a range of complementary and contrasting scholarly perspectives, ensuring a balanced and critically informed interpretation of the research material.

The research was conducted using internationally recognized academic databases, including Scopus, JSTOR, Taylor & Francis Online, and SpringerLink. The search strategy employed key terms such as "artistic psychologism," "psychological realism," "moral psychology," "indirect psychologism," "English literature," "female characters," and "Pearl S. Buck." More than thirty academic publications were initially reviewed, from which six peer-reviewed articles meeting the established relevance and novelty criteria were selected as the core theoretical sources.

The primary literary corpus of the study includes The Good Earth, East Wind: West Wind, and Pavilion of Women. These novels were selected as representative texts that illustrate Pearl S. Buck's narrative strategies and her distinctive approach to psychological characterization. The analysis focuses on identifying narrative episodes in which characters' inner states are revealed through moral decision-making, silence, habitual actions, and responses to everyday challenges. These elements are examined in relation to their narrative and ethical functions in order to determine how they contribute to the construction of an ethically grounded and culturally inflected model of artistic psychologism within the broader tradition of English literature.

RESULTS

The analysis reveals several key stages and characteristics in the development of artistic psychologism in English literature.

1. Early Moral-Psychological Representation

In eighteenth-century English prose, psychologism emerged primarily in moralized forms. Characters' inner lives were revealed through ethical reflection, emotional response, and authorial judgment. Psychological depth served didactic purposes rather than autonomous exploration.

2. Psychological Realism of the Nineteenth Century

Nineteenth-century English realism advanced psychologism by emphasizing emotional nuance, moral conflict, and gradual inner change. Psychological representation became more analytical, though still guided by an omniscient narrator who interpreted characters' inner states.

3. Ethical Psychologism in Pearl S. Buck's Fiction

In Buck's novels, psychological depth is achieved through indirect means. Inner states are revealed through action, silence, and moral decision-making rather than explicit introspection. Female characters function as psychological centers, embodying emotional restraint and ethical stability. This model demonstrates that psychologism can operate effectively without experimental narrative fragmentation.

DISCUSSION

The results of the present study indicate that artistic psychologism in English literature cannot be understood as a single linear or monolithic developmental trajectory. Rather, it emerges through multiple, often parallel narrative models that coexist within the literary tradition. Alongside introspective, experimental, and modernist forms of psychological representation, the fiction of Pearl S. Buck exemplifies an ethically oriented mode of psychologism grounded in narrative continuity, moral responsibility, and inner stability. This model foregrounds psychological coherence over fragmentation and emphasizes sustained moral agency as a central dimension of character psychology. Buck's narrative strategy reflects a complex synthesis of Western realist conventions and Eastern philosophical concepts of inner harmony, restraint, and ethical endurance. While remaining

formally aligned with realist narrative structures, her fiction incorporates ethical and cultural principles that challenge dominant Western assumptions about the nature of psychological depth. In this framework, psychological development is not marked by heightened self-reflexivity or internal verbalization but by consistent patterns of behavior, ethical decision-making, and emotional self-regulation. This approach fundamentally questions the prevailing critical assumption that psychological depth must be articulated through inner monologue, stream-of-consciousness techniques, or explicit psychological commentary. Instead, Buck demonstrates that silence, everyday labor, and ethically charged action can function as powerful and legitimate mechanisms of psychological representation. Through these narrative strategies, inner experience is externalized without being diminished, allowing psychological meaning to emerge through action rather than introspection.

Consequently, Buck's work significantly broadens the conceptual scope of artistic psychologism within English-language prose. By integrating ethical realism and intercultural philosophy into psychological narration, her fiction expands existing theoretical models and offers an alternative paradigm for understanding the representation of inner life in twentieth-century literature.

CONCLUSION

The formation and development of artistic psychologism in English literature represent a complex and multifaceted process shaped by historical, philosophical, and cultural factors. From early moral introspection to psychologically nuanced realism, English prose has continuously refined its methods of depicting the inner world. The fiction of Pearl S. Buck constitutes an important contribution to this tradition by offering an ethically grounded and intercultural model of psychologism. Her narrative method reveals psychological depth through restraint, moral action, and everyday experience, expanding the boundaries of psychological prose beyond introspective and experimental paradigms. As a result, Buck's work occupies a significant place in the history of artistic psychologism in English literature.

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