A COGNITIVE READING OF PSYCHOLOGICAL AND MYSTICAL REALISM IN BRITISH AND UZBEK PROSE

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Abstract

This paper examines psychological and mystical realism in British and Uzbek prose from the perspective of cognitive literary studies. Moving beyond descriptive or thematic approaches, it argues that both modes function as structured simulations of consciousness and perception. Through comparative analysis of selected British and Uzbek texts, the study demonstrates how narratives employ inner speech, reconstructive memory, and intensified perception to engage readers' cognitive processes. Drawing on cognitive poetics, conceptual metaphor theory, mental spaces theory, and Theory of Mind research, the paper shows that psychological and mystical realism share common cognitive mechanisms, while cultural and ethical contexts shape their expression. The findings highlight the potential of cognitive approaches for cross-cultural literary studies and provide a methodological framework for examining consciousness and transcendence in fiction.

Keywords: cognitive narratology, psychological realism, mystical realism, Theory of Mind, comparative literature, mental space theory

Introduction

Recent developments in cognitive literary studies have reshaped comparative research by shifting attention from thematic parallels to mental modeling processes embedded in narrative discourse. Psychological realism and mystical realism, often examined separately, can be reinterpreted as complementary strategies for representing consciousness and transcendence. In British prose from modernist introspection to postmodern metaphysical ambiguity and in Uzbek prose, where spiritual symbolism intersects with ethical and social reflection, these aesthetic

tendencies reveal structurally comparable cognitive mechanisms.

This paper proposes a cognitive-comparative analysis of psychological and mystical realism in British and Uzbek prose. Drawing upon cognitive poetics (Stockwell, 2002), conceptual metaphor theory (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), mental spaces theory (Fauconnier, 1994), and theory of mind approaches to narrative (Zunshine, 2006), the study argues that both literary traditions construct layered simulations of consciousness through metaphorical modeling, ontological blending, and focalization shifts. Rather than treating mystical realism as an opposition to psychological realism, the paper demonstrates that both modes share common cognitive foundations.

Theoretical Framework

Cognitive poetics views literary texts as structured simulations of mental experience. According to Stockwell (2002), readers construct textual worlds by activating schemas and conceptual frames that shape interpretation. Within this framework, psychological realism can be understood as a narrative strategy that foregrounds internal mental states, while mystical realism represents the expansion of cognitive modeling beyond empirical reality. Conceptual metaphor theory posits that abstract concepts are structured through embodied metaphors (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Emotions, memory, faith, and transcendence are frequently conceptualized through spatial or sensory metaphors such as depth, light, journey, or awakening. These metaphorical structures organize the epistemological logic of the text. Mental spaces theory further explains how narratives create parallel ontological domains that can be selectively blended (Fauconnier, 1994). Mystical realism often operates through the integration of empirical and transcendent mental spaces, producing a blended cognitive domain. Zunshine (2006) emphasizes that fiction engages readers' Theory of Mind capacities, prompting them to attribute beliefs, desires, and intentions to fictional characters.

Materials and Methods

The study employs qualitative comparative analysis of representative British and Uzbek prose texts. British material includes works by Virginia Woolf and

Hilary Mantel. Uzbek prose selections include works by Abdulla Qodiriy and Azamat Qorjovov. The methodological procedures include: Narrative-cognitive analysis of focalization and consciousness representation (Stockwell, 2002); Conceptual metaphor analysis of inner and transcendent experience (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980); Mental space mapping to identify ontological blending (Fauconnier, 1994); Examination of readerly mind-attribution mechanisms (Zunshine, 2006); The analysis focuses on cognitive structures rather than thematic comparison alone.

Results

British psychological realism often uses fragmented syntax and shifting focalization to simulate thought (Stockwell, 2002). Stream-of-consciousness techniques create dynamic representations of perception and memory. Similarly, Uzbek prose constructs psychologically complex characters through interior monologue and symbolic narration. Both traditions frequently employ the conceptual metaphor *mind as space*, representing mental states spatially (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980).

Mystical realism integrates transcendent perception with realistic narrative logic. Fauconnier's (1994) mental space theory explains how blending empirical and spiritual domains generates coherent cognitive experiences. Uzbek mystical elements often derive from Sufi symbolism and ethical reflection, whereas British mystical realism appears in metaphysical ambiguity. Both activate dual interpretive frames in readers. Fiction engages readers' mind-reading capacities (Zunshine, 2006). Psychological realism intensifies this process through complex mental states, while mystical realism extends inference to spiritual or transcendental phenomena. Both traditions rely on cognitive empathy and inferential reasoning to create immersive experience.

Discussion

Psychological and mystical realism share underlying cognitive mechanisms: metaphorical structuring, mental space blending, and focalization shifts. Cultural differences shape symbolic vocabulary and ethical orientation Uzbek prose

emphasizes communal and spiritual ethics, British prose foregrounds individual interiority and epistemological uncertainty. Cognitive literary studies provide a methodology to identify these deep structures, bridging national and literary boundaries.

Conclusion

Psychological and mystical realism in British and Uzbek prose can be analyzed as cognitive simulations of consciousness and perception. Both traditions construct complex mental models, engaging readers' Theory of Mind capacities and facilitating the representation of inner and transcendent experiences. This cognitive-comparative approach provides a rigorous framework for cross-cultural literary analysis and opens avenues for empirical and interdisciplinary research.

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