



THE PRAGMATIC FUNCTION OF ARTISTIC PSYCHOLOGISM IN KATHERINE MANSFIELD'S "MISS BRILL"

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ABSTRACT

Katherine Mansfield's contribution to the development of modernist psychological fiction is significant. Especially her short story "Miss Brill" exemplifies the use of artistic psychologism to represent inner consciousness and emotional isolation. This thesis explores the pragmatic function of artistic psychologism in Katherine Mansfield's "Miss Brill." It shows that the protagonist's inner monologue and psychological perception function as pragmatic devices through which implicit meaning, silence, and self-deception are conveyed. The analysis demonstrates that psychological narration replaces direct communication and enables the reader to interpret unspoken emotions and social alienation. The study reveals that artistic psychologism in "Miss Brill" operates not only as a stylistic feature but also as a pragmatic tool that shapes meaning and reader response

Introduction. Katherine Mansfield occupies an important place in modernist literature due to her innovative narrative techniques and deep psychological insight. Her short stories are particularly notable for their subtle representation of inner consciousness and emotional experience. [3;4] Among these works, "Miss Brill" stands out as a significant example of artistic psychologism, where the inner world of the protagonist is revealed through perception, inner speech, and implied meaning rather than explicit narration.

Artistic psychologism in modernist fiction functions not only as a stylistic device but also as a means of indirect communication between the author and the reader. In "Miss Brill," Mansfield employs psychological narration to convey loneliness, self-deception, and social isolation. These psychological elements carry pragmatic significance, as meaning is often implied rather than directly stated. Silence, emotional distortion, and selective perception play a crucial role in shaping the reader's interpretation of the text.

The aim of this thesis is to explore the pragmatic function of artistic psychologism in Katherine Mansfield's "Miss Brill." The study focuses on how inner monologue and psychological focalization operate as pragmatic tools that generate implicit meaning and guide reader response. By analyzing the interaction between psychological representation and

pragmatic effect, the thesis seeks to demonstrate that artistic psychologism is central to the construction of meaning in the story. The research is based on qualitative textual analysis and close reading of the primary text. Through this approach, the thesis highlights how Mansfield's psychological techniques contribute to the modernist emphasis on inner reality and unspoken experience. The study contributes to Mansfield scholarship by emphasizing the pragmatic dimension of artistic psychologism and its role in shaping narrative meaning.

Methodology and Literature Review. Katherine Mansfield's short fiction has been widely studied for its innovative narrative techniques and psychological depth. Literary critics frequently associate her work with modernism, emphasizing her departure from traditional plot-driven storytelling in favor of inner experience and subjective perception.[3;4] Early critical responses to Mansfield highlighted her stylistic originality, while later studies focused more closely on her use of psychological narration and interiority. Scholars such as Robert Humphrey have examined modernist fiction as a literary movement centered on the representation of consciousness, identifying techniques such as inner monologue, stream of consciousness, and psychological focalization as defining features. Within this framework, Mansfield's stories are often cited as examples of artistic psychologism, where characters' inner worlds are revealed indirectly through fragmented thoughts and emotional impressions rather than direct explanation.[2;10]

Critical studies of "Miss Brill" frequently focus on themes of loneliness, alienation, and self-deception. Researchers note that Mansfield constructs Miss Brill's psychological reality through selective perception and inner speech, allowing readers to infer meanings that the character herself does not fully recognize. This approach has been discussed by critics such as Claire Hanson and Sydney Janet Kaplan, who emphasize Mansfield's subtle handling of psychological collapse and emotional isolation.[3,4]

From a linguistic and pragmatic perspective, scholars like H. P. Grice and Geoffrey Leech have provided theoretical tools for understanding implied meaning, silence, and indirect communication in texts. Although their theories were not developed specifically for literary analysis, they have been applied to fiction to explain how meaning is generated beyond explicit language.[5;6] In Mansfield's "Miss Brill," the frequent absence of direct dialogue and the reliance on inner monologue create pragmatic effects that invite reader interpretation.

Despite the existing body of research on Mansfield's psychological technique, relatively little attention has been paid to the pragmatic function of artistic psychologism in her short stories. Most studies focus on thematic or stylistic aspects, leaving the communicative and pragmatic dimension underexplored. This thesis seeks to address this gap by analyzing how artistic psychologism functions as a pragmatic tool in "Miss Brill," contributing to both Mansfield studies and the broader discussion of pragmatics in literary discourse.

Results and Discussion. Katherine Mansfield's "Miss Brill" is a characteristic example of modernist fiction in which artistic psychologism functions as the primary means of meaning construction. The story is narrated through psychological focalization, allowing the reader to experience events almost entirely from the protagonist's inner perspective. This narrative strategy creates a gap between Miss Brill's perception and social reality, generating implicit meaning that must be interpreted pragmatically.

One of the most significant manifestations of artistic psychologism in the story is inner monologue. Miss Brill's inner speech constructs an imagined sense of belonging and participation. She perceives the public garden as a theatrical space, stating that "It was like a play." [1,p.182] This metaphor reveals her psychological need to transform passive observation into active involvement. Pragmatically, this inner discourse produces irony, as the reader recognizes that Miss Brill's sense of inclusion is illusory. Her belief that "they were all on the stage" [1,p.183] further demonstrates how psychological perception replaces objective reality and invites reader inference.

Another important pragmatic feature of artistic psychologism in the story is silence and the absence of genuine dialogue. Miss Brill rarely communicates directly with others; instead, she observes and interprets their behavior. She notes with pride that "she had become really quite expert" [1,p.181] at listening to people's conversations. This statement highlights her role as an outsider whose social participation is limited to observation. Pragmatically, the lack of reciprocal interaction functions as an indirect indicator of social isolation, conveying meaning through omission rather than explicit statement.

The collapse of Miss Brill's psychological illusion occurs when the young couple openly ridicule her appearance, referring to her as "that stupid old thing." [1,p.184] This brief external dialogue carries strong pragmatic force because it directly contradicts Miss Brill's internal narrative of belonging. The cruelty of the remark is intensified by its casual tone, and Miss Brill's silence in response signals emotional shock. The reader interprets her psychological breakdown not through explicit commentary, but through the sudden disruption of her inner monologue.

In the final scene, artistic psychologism reaches its emotional climax through symbolic action and psychological projection. When Miss Brill returns home and places the fur back into its box, the narration suggests that "she thought she heard something crying." [1,p.185] This projection of emotion onto an inanimate object reflects her internal collapse and unacknowledged grief. Pragmatically, the absence of direct emotional expression forces the reader to infer her suffering, reinforcing the indirect communicative power of artistic psychologism.

Overall, the analysis demonstrates that artistic psychologism in "Miss Brill" functions as a pragmatic tool that conveys meaning through implication, silence, and subjective perception. Mansfield's psychological narration enables the reader to recognize emotional truths that remain inaccessible to the protagonist herself, thereby intensifying the story's psychological and pragmatic impact.

Conclusion. This thesis has studied the pragmatic function of artistic psychologism in Katherine Mansfield's "Miss Brill." The analysis has shown that Mansfield uses inner monologue, psychological point of view, and silence to express meanings indirectly. Instead of explaining the character's feelings directly, the story allows the reader to understand Miss Brill's loneliness and self-deception through her thoughts and perceptions. The study concludes that artistic psychologism in "Miss Brill" is not only a narrative technique but also a pragmatic tool that helps the reader interpret hidden meanings. By using indirect expression, Mansfield creates a strong psychological effect and shows the importance of inner experience in modernist fiction.

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