

Article

English Modernism and Uzbek Jadid Enlightenment Movements: Historical-Cultural Context and Literary Representatives

O. S. Normaxmatov¹, Hussein Awad Ibrahim²

1. Department of Second Languages, Faculty of Romano-Germanic Languages, Samarkand State Institute of Foreign Languages

2. Faculty of Languages, University of Kufa

Abstract: This article examines English modernism and the Uzbek Jadid enlightenment movement in a comparative historical-cultural context. Although these two literary and intellectual phenomena developed in different social environments, both emerged in response to a crisis of inherited cultural forms and the urgent need for renewal. English modernism took shape under the influence of industrialization, urbanization, the First World War, the decline of Victorian certainty, and the growing awareness of alienation in modern society. Uzbek Jadidism developed in Turkestan under colonial pressure, educational backwardness, social stagnation, and the demand for national awakening. The article analyzes the cultural conditions that gave rise to these movements and discusses their leading literary figures, including T. S. Eliot, James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, Mahmudkhoja Behbudiy, Abdulla Avloniy, Abdurauf Fitrat, and Abdulhamid Cho'lpon. The study argues that English modernism and Uzbek Jadidism differed in their aesthetic aims and social functions: modernism primarily transformed the form and psychology of literary expression, while Jadidism used literature as an instrument of enlightenment, reform, and collective awakening. At the same time, both movements challenged outdated worldviews, introduced new literary methods, and expanded the moral and intellectual scope of national literatures.

Citation: Normaxmatov, O. S., Ibrahim, H. A. English Modernism and Uzbek Jadid Enlightenment Movements: Historical-Cultural Context and Literary Representatives. International Journal of Language Learning and Applied Linguistics 2026, 5(3), 133-139.

Received: 30th Apr 2026

Revised: 15th May 2026

Accepted: 10th Jun 2026

Published: 29th Jun 2026



Copyright: © 2026 by the authors. Submitted for open access publication under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license

(<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>)

Keywords: English Modernism, Uzbek Jadidism, Enlightenment, Historical-Cultural Context, Literary Representatives, Reform, National Awakening, T. S. Eliot, James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, Behbudiy, Avloniy, Fitrat, Cho'lpon

1. Introduction

The beginning of the twentieth century was a period of deep transformation in world literature. Rapid social changes, new political realities, scientific discoveries, technological progress, and the moral consequences of war forced writers to reconsider the role of art and the meaning of human existence. In Western Europe, especially in English literature, this transformation was expressed through modernism, a literary and aesthetic movement that rejected many stable assumptions of the nineteenth century. In Turkestan, the same historical period witnessed the rise of Jadidism, a powerful enlightenment and reform movement that sought to awaken society through education, literature, journalism, theatre, and public debate.

The comparison of English modernism and Uzbek Jadidism is important because both movements were connected with the idea of renewal. Yet the nature of renewal was different in each cultural environment. For English modernists, renewal meant a radical reorganization of literary form, narrative technique, poetic language, and the representation of consciousness. They were concerned with fragmentation, alienation,

spiritual emptiness, the instability of time, and the difficulty of communication in modern urban civilization. For Uzbek Jadids, renewal meant the intellectual and moral awakening of the nation, the reform of education, the spread of secular knowledge, the development of national consciousness, and the struggle against ignorance and social passivity. Thus, the two movements should not be mechanically equated. English modernism was primarily an aesthetic and philosophical response to the crisis of modern civilization, whereas Uzbek Jadidism was at once a literary, educational, cultural, and socio-political reform movement. However, they can be fruitfully studied together because both were born from dissatisfaction with old systems of thought. Both challenged inherited models of literature. Both gave the writer a new social and artistic mission. Both placed the human being at the centre of a changing world. The purpose of this article is to analyze English modernism and Uzbek Jadid enlightenment movements from the perspective of historical-cultural context and literary representation. The article focuses on the conditions that shaped these movements, their leading authors, their thematic priorities, and their contribution to the renewal of literary thinking. The comparative approach allows us to see how different national literatures reacted to the pressures of modernity and how literature became a means of understanding, criticizing, and transforming society.

Historical and Cultural Context of English Modernism

English modernism developed at the turn of the twentieth century, when old cultural certainties were increasingly questioned. The Victorian period had been associated with belief in progress, moral order, social hierarchy, empire, family stability, and rational development. By contrast, the early twentieth century exposed the fragility of these assumptions. Industrial capitalism changed the rhythm of daily life. Urbanization created new forms of loneliness and anonymity. Scientific theories challenged traditional religious explanations. Psychology revealed the complexity of the unconscious. Above all, the First World War destroyed confidence in European civilization and left a deep sense of disillusionment. In this environment, literature could no longer rely only on linear plots, stable characters, and clear moral conclusions. Modernist writers believed that the modern world was fragmented and that literature had to find new forms to express this fragmentation. [1] The external sequence of events became less important than the internal movement of memory, perception, fear, desire, and thought. The narrative voice became unstable; time became subjective; images became symbolic; and the reader was required to participate actively in constructing meaning. One of the central features of English modernism was its reaction against realism as a dominant nineteenth-century literary mode. Realist literature had often attempted to represent society as an understandable system of causes and effects. Modernist literature, however, emphasized discontinuity, ambiguity, and psychological depth. The modernist text often appears difficult because it reflects the difficulty of modern experience itself. It does not present the world as complete and harmonious; instead, it shows the brokenness of language, culture, identity, and social communication.

The city became a major cultural space in modernist literature. London, Dublin, and other urban centres were represented not simply as geographical locations but as symbolic landscapes of alienation. Crowded streets, fragmented conversations, advertisements, newspapers, train stations, offices, and social rituals created a world in which the individual was surrounded by people but remained spiritually isolated. The modern city in English modernism is therefore both a sign of progress and a sign of inner loss. Another important aspect of English modernism was the search for new artistic methods. Writers experimented with free verse, stream of consciousness, interior monologue, mythic structure, montage, allusion, and fragmented composition. These methods were not decorative devices; they were necessary tools for representing a world that seemed no longer unified by common values. Modernist form itself became an expression of crisis.[2]

Literary Representatives of English Modernism

The development of English modernism is closely associated with the work of T. S. Eliot, James Joyce, and Virginia Woolf. Although each of them had a distinct artistic voice, they all contributed to the transformation of modern literary form and to the redefinition of the relationship between literature and consciousness.

T. S. Eliot is one of the most influential poets of modernism. [3] His poem *The Waste Land* is often regarded as a symbolic expression of the spiritual crisis of post-war Europe. The poem presents a fragmented world in which cultural memory, religious tradition, personal experience, and historical references are placed side by side without simple explanation. Eliot uses allusion, myth, multiple voices, and broken imagery to show the disintegration of modern civilization. The wasteland becomes a metaphor for spiritual emptiness, moral exhaustion, and the difficulty of renewal. Eliot's poetry demonstrates that modernist literature often requires the reader to interpret hidden connections between fragments rather than follow a simple narrative line.[4] James Joyce transformed the possibilities of the modern novel. In *Ulysses*, he used the ordinary events of a single day in Dublin to create a complex artistic structure that connects daily life with myth, language, memory, and consciousness. Joyce's use of stream of consciousness allows the reader to enter the flow of thoughts, sensations, associations, and memories of the characters. This method shifts the centre of the novel from external action to internal experience. Joyce shows that human life cannot be understood only through visible events; it must also be understood through the invisible processes of the mind.[5]

Virginia Woolf developed a deeply psychological and lyrical form of modernist prose. In novels such as *Mrs Dalloway*, *To the Lighthouse*, and *The Waves*, she explored time, memory, female subjectivity, emotional experience, and the fragile nature of identity. Woolf's characters often live between the external world of social duties and the internal world of memory and feeling. Her fiction questions traditional narrative structure and gives special attention to the small moments of consciousness that shape human life. Woolf's modernism is especially important because it connects aesthetic innovation with questions of gender, personal freedom, and the inner life. These authors changed English literature not only by introducing new techniques but also by changing the understanding of what literature could do. Literature was no longer merely a mirror of external reality; it became a means of exploring the deepest structures of consciousness, culture, and historical crisis.[6]

Historical and Cultural Context of Uzbek Jadidism

Uzbek Jadidism emerged in Turkestan at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century. The word *jadid* means new, and the movement was first connected with the *usul-i jadid*, or new method, in education. However, Jadidism soon became much more than a pedagogical reform. It grew into a broad cultural, literary, and social movement that aimed to awaken the nation and prepare it for modern life. The historical conditions of Turkestan were very different from those of England. [7] The region was under the influence of Russian imperial colonial rule, and local society faced serious problems of educational backwardness, limited access to modern sciences, social conservatism, economic dependency, and political weakness. Traditional schools and madrasas played an important role in cultural life, but many Jadid intellectuals believed that the old system was no longer sufficient for the needs of the time. They argued that young people had to study not only religious subjects but also history, geography, mathematics, natural sciences, languages, and practical knowledge. For the Jadids, enlightenment was the foundation of national survival. They believed that ignorance was the main cause of social decline and that knowledge was the only path to dignity, progress, and independence of thought. Their reform programme included the opening of new-method schools, the publication of newspapers and textbooks, the development of theatre, the writing of didactic literature, and the criticism of harmful social customs. In this sense,

Jadidism was a movement of cultural modernization from within the Muslim society of Turkestan. The role of literature in Jadidism was especially important. Literature became a school of national consciousness. It was expected to educate the reader, criticize injustice, expose ignorance, encourage moral responsibility, and present models of a new, enlightened person. Drama, poetry, prose, journalism, and school textbooks all served the common goal of reform. Unlike English modernism, which often turned inward toward the crisis of the individual consciousness, Uzbek Jadid literature usually turned outward toward the needs of the nation and society.

Nevertheless, Jadidism also renewed artistic form. It introduced new genres and new themes into Uzbek literature. The emergence of modern drama, the growth of publicistic prose, the development of the novel, and the transformation of poetry were all connected with the Jadid period. Jadid writers were not only educators and reformers; they were also innovators who expanded the expressive possibilities of Uzbek literary language. [8]

2. Materials and Methods

The Uzbek Jadid movement produced a generation of writers and thinkers who combined literary talent with public responsibility. Among the most significant figures are Mahmudkhoja Behbudiy, Abdulla Avloniy, Abdurauf Fitrat, and Abdulhamid Cho'lpon. Their works demonstrate the diversity of Jadid thought: educational, ethical, philosophical, national, and artistic. Mahmudkhoja Behbudiy was one of the leading ideologists of Jadidism in Turkestan. He was a teacher, journalist, playwright, and public figure. His drama *Padarkush* is usually considered one of the first examples of modern Uzbek drama. The play shows the tragic consequences of ignorance, lack of education, and moral irresponsibility. Behbudiy uses the stage as a public classroom. The family tragedy in the drama has a broader social meaning: it demonstrates that a nation without education may destroy its own future. For Behbudiy, theatre was not only entertainment but also a powerful means of social awakening. Abdulla Avloniy made a major contribution to Jadid educational and ethical thought. His work, *Turkiy Guliston yoxud axloq*, is one of the most important moral and pedagogical texts of the period. Avloniy connects knowledge with morality and argues that education must develop both the mind and character of the young generation. His writings promote discipline, patriotism, honesty, respect for teachers, social responsibility, and the importance of modern learning. In Avloniy's view, enlightenment is not limited to literacy; it is the formation of a complete human being who can serve society.

Abdurauf Fitrat represents the philosophical and intellectual depth of Uzbek Jadidism. His works, such as *Munozara* [9], *The Tale of an Indian Traveller*, and *Abulfayzkhon*, criticize backwardness, political oppression, social injustice, and intellectual stagnation. Fitrat's literary method often combines dialogue, argument, historical reflection, and dramatic conflict. He uses literature to ask difficult questions about power, freedom, reform, and the destiny of the nation. Fitrat's importance lies in his ability to transform Jadidism into a broad cultural philosophy.

Abdulhamid Cho'lpon brought a new lyrical and psychological dimension to Uzbek Jadid literature. His poetry expresses longing for freedom, national dignity, personal pain, and the desire for renewal. In his novel *Kecha va kunduz*, he depicts the contradictions of old society, the suffering of women, moral hypocrisy, and social injustice. Cho'lpon's language is rich in emotion and symbolism. He differs from the more directly didactic Jadid writers by presenting enlightenment through inner experience, poetic feeling, and artistic imagery. His work shows that Jadid literature was not only a movement of instruction but also a movement of aesthetic growth.

Together, these writers created a new model of the Uzbek intellectual. The Jadid writer was simultaneously a teacher, critic, reformer, journalist, dramatist, poet, and moral

guide. Their literary activity was inseparable from the historical task of awakening the people. [10]

Comparative Analysis: Similarities between English Modernism and Uzbek Jadidism

Despite their different origins, English modernism and Uzbek Jadidism share several important features. First, both movements were responses to a crisis. English modernism responded to the crisis of European civilization, the collapse of old certainties, and the psychological trauma of modernity. Uzbek Jadidism responded to the crisis of educational backwardness, colonial dependency, social stagnation, and the danger of cultural decline. In both cases, literature became a field in which the crisis was named, interpreted, and challenged. Second, both movements criticized inherited forms of thought. Modernists questioned the literary and moral conventions of Victorian culture. Jadids questioned outdated educational practices, blind imitation, ignorance, and social conservatism. This critical attitude gave both movements a transformative character. They did not merely continue tradition; they reinterpreted tradition in the light of new historical needs. Third, both movements introduced new literary forms and techniques. English modernists developed stream of consciousness, fragmented structure, symbolic density, and psychological narration. Uzbek Jadids introduced modern drama, publicistic prose, new textbooks, socially engaged poetry, and early forms of the modern Uzbek novel. These innovations show that literary renewal is not limited to one culture; it appears whenever writers feel that old forms can no longer express new realities. [11]

Fourth, both movements changed the position of the reader. Modernist literature often demands an active, interpretive reader who can connect fragments, symbols, and cultural references. Jadid literature demands an awakened reader who can understand social problems, accept moral responsibility, and participate in reform. In both cases, the reader is not passive. Literature becomes an invitation to think differently. Finally, both movements gave special importance to the problem of the human being in a changing world. For English modernism, the human being is often lonely, divided, and spiritually uncertain. For Uzbek Jadidism, the human being is a potential agent of enlightenment and social progress. These two images are different, but both show the centrality of the individual in modern literary thinking [12].

3. Results and Discussion

The differences between English modernism and Uzbek Jadidism are as significant as their similarities. The first major difference concerns their primary aims. English modernism was mainly an aesthetic and philosophical movement. It sought to represent the inner crisis of modern life and to create new artistic forms suitable for that crisis. Uzbek Jadidism, on the other hand, was mainly an enlightenment and reform movement. It used literature as a practical instrument for educating society and preparing the nation for progress. The second difference is related to the image of the writer. In English modernism, the writer often appears as an artist who experiments with language and form to express the complexity of consciousness. In Uzbek Jadidism, the writer appears as an educator and public intellectual whose duty is to serve the nation. [13] This does not mean that Jadid writers lacked artistic ambition; rather, their artistic innovation was closely connected with moral and social responsibility. The third difference lies in the representation of society.

Modernist literature frequently presents society as fragmented, anonymous, and spiritually empty. It focuses on alienation, disconnection, and the difficulty of meaning. Jadid literature presents society as backward but reformable. It criticizes ignorance and injustice, but it also believes in the possibility of improvement through education, moral renewal, and collective effort. The fourth difference concerns language and style. Modernist language is often complex, allusive, fragmented, and symbolically dense. It may deliberately resist easy interpretation. Jadid language, especially in educational and dramatic works, tends to be more direct, persuasive, and didactic because it seeks to reach a broad public. However, in writers such as Cho'lpon and Fitrat, Jadid literature also

achieves symbolic richness and psychological complexity. [14] The fifth difference is historical function. English modernism belongs to a society already deeply affected by industrial modernity. It expresses the anxiety of modern civilization after rapid development and war. Uzbek Jadidism belongs to a society striving to enter modernity under colonial and traditional constraints. It expresses the desire for education, reform, dignity, and national renewal. Therefore, English modernism can be seen as a literature of modern disillusionment, while Uzbek Jadidism can be seen as a literature of modern aspiration.

The Role of Enlightenment and Reform Ideas

The concept of enlightenment is interpreted differently in English modernism and Uzbek Jadidism. In the English modernist context, enlightenment is not usually expressed as a direct educational programme. Instead, modernist writers reveal the absence of spiritual clarity in modern life. Their works expose the crisis of meaning and force the reader to search for new ways of understanding existence. Eliot's *The Waste Land*, for example, does not give a simple moral solution; it dramatizes the need for spiritual renewal through images of dryness, fragmentation, and cultural exhaustion. In Uzbek Jadidism, enlightenment has a much more direct and public meaning. It is connected with schools, textbooks, newspapers, theatre, public speeches, and social reform. Jadid writers believed that the people could be changed through knowledge. Education was the path to moral improvement, economic development, political awareness, and national dignity. Therefore, the Jadid idea of enlightenment was both intellectual and practical. Reform is also different in the two movements. Modernist reform is primarily a reform of literary perception. It changes how reality is represented, how time is structured, how consciousness is narrated, and how language functions. Jadid reform is primarily reform of society through literature and education. It changes the function of literature itself by making it an active participant in public life. This distinction is important because it helps us avoid reducing both movements to the same category. However, both movements prove that literature becomes especially powerful during periods of crisis. When society changes rapidly or when inherited systems lose authority, literature can serve as a laboratory of new thought. English modernism and Uzbek Jadidism demonstrate two different but equally significant ways in which literature participates in modernization: one through aesthetic experimentation and psychological depth, the other through enlightenment, social criticism, and national awakening. [15]

4. Conclusion

English modernism and Uzbek Jadid enlightenment movements are two major literary-cultural phenomena of the early twentieth century. They arose in different historical conditions and pursued different immediate goals, yet both were shaped by the need for renewal. English modernism emerged from the crisis of industrial and post-war European civilization. It transformed literature by focusing on fragmentation, alienation, subjective time, stream of consciousness, and the complexity of inner life. Uzbek Jadidism emerged from the urgent need to reform education, awaken national consciousness, and overcome social backwardness in Turkestan. It transformed Uzbek literature by connecting artistic expression with enlightenment, moral education, and social responsibility. The literary representatives of English modernism, including T. S. Eliot, James Joyce, and Virginia Woolf, developed new forms of poetic and narrative expression. Their works reveal the inner instability of modern human existence and the difficulty of finding meaning in a fragmented world. The representatives of Uzbek Jadidism, including Mahmudkhoja Behbudiy, Abdulla Avloniy, Abdurauf Fitrat, and Abdulhamid Cho'lon, used literature to awaken the people, criticize ignorance, promote education, and express the desire for freedom and national progress.

A comparative study of these movements shows that literary modernity is not a single universal model. It appears differently in different cultural contexts. In England,

modernity produced a literature of aesthetic crisis and psychological experimentation. In Turkestan, it produced a literature of enlightenment, reform, and national awakening.

Both movements, however, expanded the possibilities of literature and proved that writing can become a powerful response to historical change. English modernism and Uzbek Jadidism remain important not only as national literary phenomena but also as part of the broader history of world literary renewal.

REFERENCES

- [1] A. Avloniy, *The Turkish Gulistan, or Ethics*. Tashkent, Uzbekistan: O'qituvchi, 1992.
- [2] M. Behbudiy, *Selected Works*. Tashkent, Uzbekistan: Ma'naviyat, 1997.
- [3] M. Bradbury and J. McFarlane, Eds., *Modernism: A Guide to European Literature 1890–1930*. London, UK: Penguin Books, 1991.
- [4] T. S. Eliot, *The Waste Land*. London, UK: The Criterion, 1922.
- [5] A. Fitrat, *Selected Works*. Tashkent, Uzbekistan: Ma'naviyat, 2000.
- [6] J. Joyce, *Ulysses*. Paris, France: Shakespeare and Company, 1922.
- [7] A. Khalid, *The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform: Jadidism in Central Asia*. Berkeley, CA, USA: University of California Press, 1998.
- [8] M. Levenson, *The Cambridge Companion to Modernism*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2011.
- [9] B. Qosimov, *National Awakening: Courage, Enlightenment, and Devotion*. Tashkent, Uzbekistan: Ma'naviyat, 2002.
- [10] V. Woolf, *Mrs Dalloway*. London, UK: Hogarth Press, 1925.
- [11] V. Woolf, *To the Lighthouse*. London, UK: Hogarth Press, 1927.
- [12] A. Cho'lpon, *Night and Day*. Tashkent, Uzbekistan: G'afur G'ulom Literature and Art Publishing House, 1991.
- [13] N. Karimov, *Panoramas of Twentieth-Century Uzbek Literature*. Tashkent, Uzbekistan: O'zbekiston, 2008.
- [14] A. Khalid, *Making Uzbekistan: Nation, Empire, and Revolution in the Early USSR*. Ithaca, NY, USA: Cornell University Press, 2015.
- [15] P. Childs, *Modernism*. London, UK: Routledge, 2000.