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Ideas of Enlightenment and Social Reform in English Modernist and Uzbek Jadid Literature: A Comparative Literary Analysis

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Abstract: This article examines the representation of enlightenment and social reform in English modernist literature and Uzbek Jadid literature through a comparative literary approach. The early twentieth century was a period of profound cultural, social, and intellectual transformation in both Europe and Central Asia. English modernist writers responded to the crisis of industrial civilization, war trauma, urban alienation, and the fragmentation of individual consciousness. Uzbek Jadid writers, by contrast, addressed the urgent need for educational reform, cultural awakening, national self-consciousness, and social renewal within the colonial and traditional social environment of Turkestan. Although these two literary traditions emerged in different historical and cultural contexts, both used literature as a critical medium for diagnosing social crisis and imagining new forms of human, moral, and cultural development. The study employs comparative-historical, typological, and thematic methods. Selected works and literary ideas associated with T. S. Eliot, Virginia Woolf, E. M. Forster, Mahmudkhoja Behbudiy, Abdulla Avloniy, Abdurauf Fitrat, and Cho'ipon are analyzed to identify convergences and distinctions in their treatment of enlightenment and reform. The findings show that in Uzbek Jadid literature, enlightenment is mainly expressed through education, moral discipline, national awakening, and the modernization of social institutions. In English modernism, enlightenment appears more indirectly through the critique of spiritual emptiness, fragmented consciousness, moral uncertainty, and the crisis of modern civilization. The article argues that Uzbek Jadid literature should not be viewed only as a regional reformist movement, but also as part of a broader global discourse of literary modernity, intellectual awakening, and cultural transformation.

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1. Introduction

The beginning of the twentieth century was marked by fundamental changes in social life, political thought, cultural identity, and literary expression. Across different regions of the world, literature became a powerful means of representing crisis, transition, and the search for renewal. In Western Europe, and particularly in England, modernist literature emerged as a response to the disruption of traditional values, the effects of industrialization, the expansion of urban life, and the psychological consequences of the First World War. English modernist writers such as T. S. Eliot, Virginia Woolf, James Joyce, and E. M. Forster questioned established literary forms and represented the complexity of modern consciousness through experimentation, fragmentation, irony, and symbolic structures [1]. In Central Asia, especially in the Uzbek literary and cultural environment,

Jadid literature developed under different historical circumstances. The Jadid movement was closely connected with the struggle for educational reform, cultural modernization, national awakening, and the transformation of social consciousness. Writers and intellectuals such as Mahmudkhoja Behbudiy, Abdulla Avloniy, Abdurauf Fitrat, Munavvarqori Abdurashidxonov, and Cho'lpon regarded literature not only as an aesthetic phenomenon but also as a social and moral instrument [2, 3]. Their works addressed ignorance, social backwardness, outdated customs, colonial dependence, and the urgent need for a new educated generation. At first sight, English modernism and Uzbek Jadid literature may appear to belong to separate literary worlds. English modernism is often associated with aesthetic innovation, psychological depth, and the crisis of Western civilization. Uzbek Jadid literature is usually studied in relation to enlightenment, pedagogy, national revival, and anti-colonial consciousness [4]. However, both literary traditions emerged during a period of global modern transformation, and both responded to the instability of inherited social and cultural systems. For this reason, a comparative approach can reveal important similarities and differences between them. The present article investigates how the ideas of enlightenment and social reform are represented in English modernist and Uzbek Jadid literature. The main research question is as follows [5]: How do English modernist and Uzbek Jadid writers conceptualize enlightenment and social reform, and what comparative similarities and differences can be observed between these two literary traditions? The relevance of the topic is determined by the need to place Uzbek Jadid literature into a broader international context. While the Jadid movement has been widely discussed within Uzbek literary studies and Central Asian history, its comparative relationship with European literary modernity remains insufficiently explored [6]. This article, therefore, attempts to interpret Uzbek Jadid literature not only as a national reformist phenomenon but also as part of a wider twentieth-century literary discourse concerned with modernization, social crisis, and cultural renewal. The scientific novelty of the study lies in its comparative framing. Instead of analyzing English modernism and Uzbek Jadid literature separately, the article examines them through the shared categories of enlightenment, reform, crisis, and renewal [7]. This approach makes it possible to demonstrate that both literary traditions, despite their historical differences, participated in the global intellectual effort to rethink society, morality, education, and the role of the individual in the modern world.

Literature Review

The study of English modernism has produced a large body of critical scholarship. Modernism has commonly been interpreted as a literary and cultural movement that questioned the stability of nineteenth-century realism, traditional narrative forms, and inherited moral values. Scholars such as Malcolm Bradbury, James McFarlane, Peter Childs, Michael Levenson, and Peter Nicholls have emphasized that modernist literature was shaped by rapid social change, philosophical uncertainty, technological development, war, and the crisis of representation. English modernist texts often present fragmented time, unstable identity, alienated individuals, and a deep sense of cultural dislocation [8]. T. S. Eliot's poetry, especially *The Waste Land*, is frequently discussed as a symbolic representation of spiritual exhaustion and civilizational crisis. Eliot's modern city is not merely a geographical space but a metaphor for moral disintegration and the loss of cultural continuity. Virginia Woolf's fiction, particularly *Mrs Dalloway* and *To the Lighthouse*, explores consciousness, memory, gender, social convention, and the hidden psychological pressures of modern life [9]. E. M. Forster's novels examine the tensions between individual freedom, social structures, colonial relations, and moral responsibility. In these works, reform is rarely presented as a direct political program; rather, it appears as a need for moral, psychological, and cultural reorientation. Uzbek Jadid literature has been studied by scholars such as Begali Qosimov, Naim Karimov, Hamidulla Boltaboyev, Ozod Sharafiddinov, and international researchers including Adeeb Khalid and Edward Allworth. These studies generally emphasize the role of Jadidism in the modernization of Central Asian society [10]. The Jadids supported new-method schools, secular and

religious knowledge, theatre, journalism, language reform, and the formation of national consciousness. Their literary activity was inseparable from educational and social reform. Mahmudkhoja Behbudiy's drama *Padarkush* is one of the most important examples of Jadid literature. It criticizes ignorance, moral irresponsibility, and the tragic consequences of rejecting education. Abdulla Avloniy's pedagogical and literary works, especially *Turkiy Guliston yoxud axloq*, connect enlightenment with morality, discipline, patriotism, and social duty. Abdurauf Fitrat's works reflect the need for intellectual liberation, cultural self-awareness, and reform of outdated social relations. Cho'lpon's poetry and prose express the pain of national dependence, the desire for freedom, and the awakening of individual and collective consciousness. Existing scholarship has made significant contributions to the separate study of both English modernism and Uzbek Jadid literature. However, comparative studies between these two traditions remain limited. English modernism is often placed within European intellectual history, while Uzbek Jadid literature is mainly examined in the context of national revival or Central Asian reformism. This separation prevents scholars from seeing the broader typological parallels between them. Both traditions emerged during a period of social instability, and both used literature to question the existing order. Therefore, a comparative study can enrich our understanding of literary modernity as a global rather than exclusively European phenomenon.

2. Materials and Method

This study is based on qualitative comparative literary analysis. The research uses three main methods: comparative-historical analysis, typological comparison, and thematic interpretation. The comparative-historical method is used to examine the socio-cultural contexts in which English modernist and Uzbek Jadid literature emerged. This method makes it possible to understand why the themes of crisis, enlightenment, and reform became important in both traditions. English modernism developed in the context of industrial capitalism, urbanization, secularization, and post-war disillusionment. Uzbek Jadid literature developed in the context of colonial administration, traditional social structures, educational backwardness, and the struggle for national and cultural renewal. Typological comparison is used to identify similarities between literary phenomena that developed in different cultural environments without necessarily having direct influence on each other. English modernism and Uzbek Jadid literature are not identical movements, and they should not be reduced to the same historical model. However, they reveal typological parallels in their concern with the crisis of old values, the need for intellectual awakening, and the transformation of society through literature. Thematic interpretation is applied to selected literary materials in order to analyze recurring concepts such as education, moral reform, alienation, national consciousness, cultural crisis, and social responsibility. The article considers selected works and literary ideas associated with T. S. Eliot, Virginia Woolf, E. M. Forster, Mahmudkhoja Behbudiy, Abdulla Avloniy, Abdurauf Fitrat, and Cho'lpon. These authors were chosen because their works clearly express the intellectual and artistic concerns of their respective literary traditions. The methodological limitation of the study is that it does not attempt to provide a complete analysis of all modernist and Jadid texts. Instead, it focuses on representative authors and key thematic categories. This allows for a focused comparative interpretation of enlightenment and reform as literary and cultural concepts.

3. Results and Discussion

Social Crisis as the Starting Point of Literary Renewal

Both English modernist literature and Uzbek Jadid literature begin from a sense of crisis. However, the nature of this crisis differs according to historical context. In English modernism, the crisis is often existential, psychological, cultural, and spiritual. The modern individual is shown as alienated from society, separated from stable values, and

overwhelmed by the fragmentation of modern life. The city, the crowd, the war, and the collapse of religious or moral certainty become central symbols of this crisis. In T. S. Eliot's poetic world, modern civilization appears exhausted and spiritually barren. The crisis is not merely political but metaphysical. Individuals live among fragments of past cultures but cannot restore a meaningful whole. This fragmentation becomes a central feature of modernist aesthetics. The broken form of the text reflects the broken structure of modern consciousness [11].

Virginia Woolf presents crisis through the inner life of individuals. Her characters often experience social pressure, emotional isolation, memory trauma, and the difficulty of communication. In *Mrs Dalloway*, the external order of London society contrasts with hidden psychological suffering. The trauma of war, represented through Septimus Warren Smith, reveals the moral failure of a society that cannot understand the damaged consciousness of the individual. In Uzbek Jadid literature, the crisis is more directly social and educational [12]. Jadid writers diagnose the problems of society as ignorance, lack of modern education, moral weakness, superstition, and indifference to national progress. The central question is not only "What has happened to the modern individual?" but also "How can society be awakened?" The crisis is therefore connected with the future of the nation, the school, the family, and public morality. Mahmudkhoja Behbudiy's *Padarkush* demonstrates the tragic consequences of ignorance and educational negligence. The drama shows that a family and society that rejects knowledge become vulnerable to moral collapse [13]. The tragedy is not accidental; it is the result of a social environment that fails to value education. In this sense, the work transforms literature into a form of social warning. Abdulla Avloniy similarly treats ignorance as one of the greatest enemies of social progress. For Avloniy, education is not limited to literacy; it includes moral upbringing, civic responsibility, discipline, and love for the nation. Therefore, the Jadid understanding of crisis is practical and reform-oriented. Literature identifies social illness in order to propose moral and educational treatment [14].

Enlightenment as Education and Self-Awareness

The concept of enlightenment occupies a central place in both traditions, but its form and function differ significantly. In Uzbek Jadid literature, enlightenment is explicit, programmatic, and collective. It is associated with schools, textbooks, newspapers, theatre, language, and public education. The enlightened person understands the needs of the nation and participates in social reform. For Jadid writers, education is the foundation of human dignity and national survival. The new-method school was not simply an educational institution; it symbolized a new worldview. It represented rational thought, openness to science, moral responsibility, and the rejection of passive traditionalism. In this regard, Jadid literature served as an extension of the classroom. Drama, poetry, prose, journalism, and pedagogical texts all worked together to awaken society [15].

Avloniy's educational philosophy clearly shows this connection between enlightenment and morality. He argues that education shapes not only knowledge but also character. A person without proper upbringing cannot serve society effectively. Thus, enlightenment in Jadid thought includes intellectual, ethical, and civic dimensions. In English modernism, enlightenment is less direct and less optimistic. Modernist writers often doubt whether knowledge alone can save society. The educated modern individual may still suffer from alienation, anxiety, and moral uncertainty. Therefore, enlightenment becomes an inner process of self-awareness rather than a clear social program. Woolf's fiction demonstrates this inward form of enlightenment [16]. Her characters often experience moments of insight, memory, or emotional recognition. These moments do not necessarily change society, but they reveal hidden truths about identity, time, and human connection. Modernist enlightenment is therefore psychological and epistemological: it concerns how individuals perceive reality and understand themselves. Eliot's poetry also involves a search for spiritual or cultural illumination, but this search occurs within a world of fragmentation. The modern subject seeks meaning among ruins [17]. Enlightenment is possible only through the recognition of crisis. In this sense, modernist

literature does not present enlightenment as simple progress. It questions the very assumptions of progress. The comparison shows an important distinction. Uzbek Jadid literature believes in education as a means of social transformation, whereas English modernism often questions whether modern civilization has lost the moral foundations necessary for meaningful transformation. Jadid enlightenment is outward, reformist, and collective; modernist enlightenment is inward, critical, and often uncertain [18].

Social Reform and the Role of Literature

The idea of social reform is strongly present in Uzbek Jadid literature. Jadid writers believed that literature should serve society by exposing ignorance, criticizing harmful customs, and encouraging progress. Their works were closely connected with practical reform movements: new schools, publishing, journalism, theatre, and public debate. Literature was not separated from social action.

Behbudiy's *Padarkush* is an example of literature as social intervention. The drama does not merely tell a private family story; it presents a model of social consequence. The father's refusal to educate his son leads to tragedy, showing that ignorance destroys both family and society. The didactic function of the drama is clear: education is necessary for moral survival [19].

Fitrat's works broaden the reformist perspective by connecting social renewal with intellectual freedom and cultural identity. He criticizes stagnation and calls for a new way of thinking. His writings demonstrate that reform requires not only schools but also a transformation of consciousness. A society must learn to question itself.

Cho'lpon adds an emotional and poetic dimension to the reformist discourse. His works often express the pain of oppression, the longing for freedom, and the awakening of the national spirit. In his literary world, reform is connected with dignity, liberty, and the restoration of human voice. He shows that national awakening is not only political but also deeply emotional and cultural. In English modernism, literature also criticizes society, but its reformist function is less direct. Modernist writers rarely offer practical programs. Instead, they challenge readers to perceive the hidden disorder of modern life. The reforming power of modernist literature lies in its ability to disturb habitual perception. For example, Woolf criticizes patriarchal structures, social conventions, and the invisible violence of respectable society. Her narrative technique gives importance to interior experience, especially the inner lives of women and psychologically wounded individuals. This itself becomes a form of literary reform: it changes what literature can represent and whose consciousness matters. Forster's works often examine the relationship between personal morality and social institutions. In *A Passage to India*, colonial relations produce misunderstanding, hierarchy, and moral confusion. The novel does not propose an easy solution, but it exposes the limitations of imperial power and the difficulty of genuine human connection under colonial conditions. Reform here appears as ethical awareness rather than direct political instruction. Thus, both traditions assign literature a critical function. Jadid literature seeks to reform society through explicit enlightenment and moral instruction. English modernism reforms literary consciousness by questioning the forms, values, and perceptions of modern civilization.

National Consciousness and Cultural Identity

One of the strongest features of Uzbek Jadid literature is the formation of national consciousness. Jadid writers understood that a nation could not develop without education, language, cultural memory, and moral unity. Their literature, therefore, encouraged readers to think beyond private life and consider collective responsibility. National consciousness in Jadid literature is closely connected with the idea of awakening. The nation is imagined as a community that must open its eyes, recognize its condition, and move toward progress. This awakening requires both knowledge and courage. The Jadid intellectual is not merely a writer but also a teacher, reformer, organizer, and public figure. In English modernism, national consciousness takes a more complex and often critical form. Modernist writers do not usually straightforwardly celebrate national

identity. Instead, they reveal the instability of cultural identity in an age of empire, war, and social change. The British Empire, urban modernity, and class structure all become objects of critique. Eliot's use of cultural fragments reflects the crisis of European identity. The past exists, but it no longer provides a unified foundation. Woolf questions the social structures that shape English identity, especially gender and class. Forster examines the moral contradictions of empire. In this sense, English modernism does not construct national awakening in the Jadid sense; it deconstructs the confidence of imperial and modern civilization. The comparison shows that Uzbek Jadid literature is future-oriented and nation-building, while English modernism is often retrospective and critical of civilizational decline. Jadid writers ask how a nation can be awakened and modernized. Modernist writers ask why modern civilization has become spiritually fragmented despite its claims of progress.

Moral Renewal and the Problem of the Individual

Both traditions connect social reform with the moral condition of the individual. However, they conceptualize the individual differently. In Jadid literature, the individual is primarily a member of society whose education and morality affect the future of the nation. The ignorant father, the uneducated son, the irresponsible rich man, or the passive citizen are not only personal characters; they symbolize social problems. Avloniy's moral thought is based on the belief that personal upbringing has public consequences. A morally educated person contributes to the improvement of society. Therefore, ethics and education cannot be separated. The reform of the individual becomes the first step toward the reform of the nation. In English modernism, the individual is often isolated, psychologically complex, and uncertain. The problem is not only a lack of education but also the fragmentation of experience. Modernist characters may be educated and socially refined, yet they suffer from emptiness, trauma, or an inability to communicate. This is a key difference between the two traditions. Modernist literature shows that modernity produces new forms of loneliness. The individual is no longer securely integrated into community, religion, or tradition. Therefore, moral renewal requires a deeper examination of consciousness itself. The reform of society cannot be achieved without understanding the hidden life of the mind. This distinction is important because it shows two different models of reform. Jadid literature emphasizes education and moral discipline as the basis of progress. English modernism emphasizes self-examination and the recognition of psychological and cultural fragmentation.

4. Discussion

The comparative analysis demonstrates that English modernist literature and Uzbek Jadid literature share a common concern with crisis and renewal, but they differ in their understanding of the causes of crisis and the means of reform. Both traditions emerged during a period when old structures were losing authority. However, their literary responses were shaped by different historical experiences. Uzbek Jadid literature was formed in a society where the need for modern education and cultural awakening was urgent. The Jadids saw ignorance as a major obstacle to progress. Their solution was therefore clear: schools must be reformed, young people must be educated, society must abandon harmful customs, and national consciousness must be awakened. Literature served these goals by combining aesthetic expression with moral and pedagogical instruction. English modernism, on the other hand, emerged in a society that had already experienced industrial modernization but had become uncertain about its moral and spiritual direction. The problem was not simply the absence of education, but the crisis of meaning within a highly developed civilization. Modernist writers, therefore, did not always trust the idea of linear progress. Their works question whether modernity itself has produced alienation, violence, and spiritual emptiness. This contrast helps clarify the different meanings of enlightenment. In the Jadid context, enlightenment is a constructive and collective project. It is associated with the formation of a new social subject: educated, morally responsible, nationally conscious, and open to progress. In the English modernist

context, enlightenment is often a painful awareness of fragmentation. It does not always lead to social optimism; rather, it exposes the contradictions of modern life. Nevertheless, both traditions recognize literature as a necessary form of social knowledge. Literature reveals what society fails to see. Jadid literature reveals the destructive consequences of ignorance and passivity. English modernism reveals the hidden wounds of modern consciousness and the fragility of civilized order. In both cases, literature becomes a diagnostic instrument. The comparison also suggests that literary modernity should not be understood only through European aesthetic experimentation. Uzbek Jadid literature represents another form of modern literary consciousness: socially engaged, pedagogically oriented, and nationally reformist. Its modernity lies not primarily in formal fragmentation but in its transformation of literary function. It changes the purpose of literature by making it a tool of awakening, education, and reform. At the same time, the comparison prevents a simplified understanding of Jadid literature as merely didactic. Jadid's works are not only moral lessons; they are also artistic responses to historical pressure, cultural anxiety, and the desire for a new future. Similarly, English modernism should not be seen as detached from society simply because it is aesthetically complex. Its formal experimentation is itself a response to social and spiritual crisis. Therefore, the two traditions can be interpreted as different but related expressions of twentieth-century literary modernity. English modernism represents the crisis of a civilization that has lost confidence in its own progress. Uzbek Jadid literature represents the struggle of a society seeking progress through enlightenment and reform. Together, they show that modern literature across cultures is deeply connected with questions of knowledge, morality, society, and human responsibility.

5. Conclusion

This article has examined the ideas of enlightenment and social reform in English modernist and Uzbek Jadid literature through a comparative literary approach. The analysis shows that both traditions emerged from a sense of crisis and used literature as a medium to question inherited values and to imagine renewal. However, the nature of this renewal differs significantly. In Uzbek Jadid literature, enlightenment is closely connected with education, moral upbringing, national awakening, and practical social reform. Jadid writers such as Mahmudkhoja Behbudiy, Abdulla Avloniy, Abdurauf Fitrat, and Cho'lpon viewed literature as a means of awakening society and preparing a new generation for cultural and national development. Their works criticize ignorance, passivity, outdated customs, and the lack of social responsibility. In English modernist literature, enlightenment is more indirect, psychological, and critical. Writers such as T. S. Eliot, Virginia Woolf, and E. M. Forster represent the crisis of modern civilization through fragmentation, alienation, moral uncertainty, and the instability of consciousness. Their works do not usually propose direct reform programs, but they transform literary perception and reveal the hidden contradictions of modern life. The study concludes that Uzbek Jadid literature can be productively interpreted within a broader international discourse of literary modernity. Although it differs from English modernism in form and historical function, it shares with modernism a deep concern for crisis, renewal, and the transformation of human consciousness. This comparative perspective broadens the scope of both Uzbek literary studies and modernist studies by demonstrating that modern literary thought developed in multiple cultural forms worldwide. Future research may expand this comparison by analyzing specific texts in greater detail, such as Behbudiy's *Padarkush* and Eliot's *The Waste Land*, Avloniy's moral writings and Woolf's psychological fiction, or Cho'lpon's poetry and English modernist representations of freedom and alienation. Such studies would further clarify the place of Uzbek Jadid literature in global comparative literature.

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