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ELEMENTS OF MODERNISM IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK LITERATURE: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF VIRGINIA WOOLF, T.S. ELIOT, ODIL YOQUBOV, AND ABDULLA QAHHOR

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Abstract

This article investigates the major elements of modernism in English and Uzbek literature through a comparative analysis of Virginia Woolf's Mrs Dalloway, T.S. Eliot's The Waste Land, Odil Yoqubov's Ulug'bek xazinasi, and Abdulla Qahhor's stories Bemor, Dahshat, and O'g'ri. The study focuses on important modernist features such as stream of consciousness, fragmentation, symbolism, subjectivity, psychological realism, alienation, and modern narrative techniques. The research demonstrates that English modernism developed as an independent literary movement characterized by radical artistic experimentation, whereas Uzbek literature incorporated modernist elements selectively within realist and national literary traditions. Comparative analysis reveals that despite historical and cultural differences, both literary traditions reflected psychological complexity, existential anxiety, and emotional fragmentation characteristic of twentieth-century literature. The article contributes to comparative literary studies and expands scholarly understanding of modernist poetics in English and Uzbek prose and poetry.

Keywords

modernism, stream of consciousness, fragmentation, symbolism, subjectivity, psychological realism, English literature, Uzbek literature, comparative literature, modern narrative techniques

Introduction

Modernism became one of the most influential literary and cultural movements of the twentieth century because it transformed traditional artistic forms and introduced innovative methods for representing human consciousness and social reality. Rapid industrialization, urbanization, scientific progress, political instability, and the consequences of the First World War created a deep crisis within modern civilization. As a result, writers began to question traditional literary methods and attempted to develop new artistic techniques capable of expressing emotional instability, psychological conflict, and existential uncertainty. English modernism emerged as an independent literary movement represented by writers such as Virginia Woolf, James Joyce, and T.S. Eliot. These authors rejected traditional realism and introduced stream of consciousness, fragmentation, symbolism, and subjective narration into literature. In contrast, Uzbek literature followed a different historical and political path. Although Uzbek prose remained connected with realism and national literary traditions, certain modernist elements gradually appeared through psychological analysis, symbolic representation, and philosophical reflection.

This article aims to investigate the representation of modernist elements in English and Uzbek literature through the comparative study of Virginia Woolf's Mrs Dalloway, T.S. Eliot's The Waste Land, Odil Yoqubov's Ulug'bek xazinasi, and Abdulla Qahhor's stories Bemor, Dahshat, and O'g'ri.

Theoretical Foundations of Modernism

Modernism can be defined as a literary movement that rejected stable narrative structures and objective realism in order to represent subjective consciousness and fragmented modern experience. Peter Childs explains that modernism was closely connected with the changing social and philosophical conditions of the modern world. Modernist literature emphasized subjectivity, ambiguity, psychological depth, and artistic experimentation.

One of the major characteristics of modernism is stream of consciousness narration. This technique reproduces the natural flow of thoughts, memories, and emotions within the human mind. Another important feature is fragmentation, which reflects the instability and disintegration of modern civilization. Symbolism also became central to modernist literature because writers attempted to express complex emotional and philosophical meanings indirectly through symbolic images and mythological references.

Modernism was strongly influenced by psychology and philosophy. Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis encouraged writers to explore the unconscious mind and hidden emotional conflict, while philosophers such as Friedrich Nietzsche and Henri Bergson questioned traditional concepts of truth, morality, and time.

Stream of Consciousness and Subjectivity in Mrs Dalloway

Virginia Woolf's Mrs Dalloway represents one of the most important achievements of English modernist fiction. Woolf transformed the structure of the traditional novel through stream of consciousness narration, subjective perception, and psychological realism.

The novel focuses on the internal experiences of Clarissa Dalloway and Septimus Warren Smith rather than external action. Woolf presents thoughts, memories, and emotions as continuous psychological movement. Reality becomes subjective because events are represented through personal consciousness instead of objective narration.

Clarissa Dalloway symbolizes emotional isolation and existential uncertainty despite her social success. Her memories and reflections reveal deep psychological complexity and fear of loneliness. Septimus Warren Smith represents the psychological trauma caused by the First World War. His fragmented consciousness and emotional instability reflect the spiritual crisis of postwar civilization.

Time in the novel is psychological rather than chronological. Woolf demonstrates how past and present coexist within consciousness through memory and emotional association. Such artistic techniques established Mrs Dalloway as one of the most influential modernist novels of the twentieth century.

Fragmentation and Symbolism in The Waste Land

T.S. Eliot's The Waste Land became one of the defining works of modernist poetry because of its fragmented structure, symbolic imagery, and philosophical pessimism. The poem reflects the spiritual and cultural crisis of modern European civilization after the First World War.

Fragmentation functions as both artistic form and philosophical meaning within the poem. Eliot constantly changes speaker, setting, language, and perspective without clear transitions. Such fragmentation represents the instability of modern consciousness and the collapse of cultural unity.

Symbolism occupies a central place in Eliot's poetic method. Images of dryness, ruins, barren land, and empty rivers symbolize spiritual sterility and emotional emptiness. Water appears ambiguously as both destruction and possible renewal. The poem also contains numerous mythological and literary references that connect modern crisis with universal cultural history.

Eliot's portrayal of modern urban life reflects alienation and emotional isolation. Individuals appear disconnected from one another despite physical proximity. Communication becomes

fragmented and emotionally meaningless. Through these artistic techniques, The Waste Land represents the moral and spiritual exhaustion of modern civilization.

Modernist Elements in Uzbek Literature

Although Uzbek literature did not develop modernism as an independent movement, important modernist tendencies appeared through psychological realism, subjectivity, and symbolic representation.

Psychological Portrayal in Ulug‘bek xazinasi

Odil Yoqubov’s Ulug‘bek xazinasi demonstrates significant modernist features through psychological analysis and philosophical reflection. Mirzo Ulug‘bek is represented not only as a historical ruler but also as a psychologically complex individual experiencing loneliness, emotional conflict, and existential anxiety.

The novel focuses strongly on the protagonist’s inner world. Ulug‘bek experiences tension between scientific enlightenment and political power. His intellectual ideals conflict with the violence and betrayal surrounding him. This contradiction creates emotional isolation and spiritual suffering.

Symbolism also plays an important role in the novel. Astronomy and stars symbolize enlightenment, wisdom, and eternal truth, while political conflict represents ignorance and moral decline. Through psychological narration and symbolic imagery, Yoqubov combines historical realism with modern artistic thinking.

Psychological Tension in Abdulla Qahhor’s Stories

Abdulla Qahhor’s stories Bemor, Dahshat, and O‘g‘ri reveal strong psychological realism and modern narrative techniques. Although Qahhor remained connected with realism, his stories contain subjectivity, emotional tension, symbolism, and inner conflict.

In Bemor, psychological suffering becomes more important than physical illness itself. Poverty and helplessness create emotional despair and social alienation. Qahhor uses silence, concise dialogue, and indirect narration to represent emotional tragedy realistically.

Dahshat focuses on fear and psychological instability. Darkness and silence function symbolically, reflecting the emotional condition of characters. External reality becomes closely connected with inner psychological experience.

O‘g‘ri demonstrates how poverty and social injustice influence moral behavior and emotional tension. Qahhor avoids simplistic moral judgment and instead presents human behavior as psychologically complex and socially conditioned.

Comparative Analysis

Comparative analysis reveals both similarities and differences between English and Uzbek modernism. Both literary traditions focused on psychological depth, emotional suffering, subjectivity, and alienation. Writers attempted to represent the instability of modern existence through innovative artistic methods.

However, English modernism developed more radically through fragmentation, stream of consciousness, and formal experimentation. Uzbek literature incorporated modernist elements more gradually within realist and national literary traditions. English writers openly rejected traditional narrative forms, while Uzbek prose preserved stronger connections with historical realism and moral themes.

Despite these differences, both literary traditions reflected the emotional and philosophical crisis of the twentieth century and contributed to the development of modern literary thinking.

Conclusion

The comparative study of English and Uzbek literature demonstrates that modernism significantly transformed literary representation during the twentieth century. Virginia Woolf and T.S. Eliot introduced revolutionary artistic methods such as stream of consciousness, fragmentation, symbolism, and psychological narration. Odil Yoqubov and Abdulla Qahhor adapted modernist elements within Uzbek literary traditions through psychological realism, subjectivity, and symbolic atmosphere.

The research confirms that despite cultural and historical differences, both English and Uzbek literature reflected important modernist tendencies connected with emotional instability, existential anxiety, alienation, and the complexity of human consciousness. Therefore, comparative analysis of these literary traditions contributes to broader understanding of world modernism and demonstrates the interaction between national literature and global artistic processes.

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