

## Eureka Journal of Language, Culture & Social Change (EJLCSC)

ISSN 2760-4926 (Online) Volume 2, Issue 2, February 2026



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# FOLKLORE TRANSFORMATION IN THE POETICS OF MODERNISM: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF UZBEK AND WORLD LITERATURE OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

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### Abstract

This article explores the transformation of folklore elements within the poetics of twentieth-century modernism through a comparative analysis of Uzbek and Western literary traditions. Drawing on mythopoetic theory and archetypal criticism, the study examines how folklore motifs, myths, and archetypes are reinterpreted in modernist literature as symbolic and psychological structures rather than as manifestations of oral tradition. The research demonstrates that while Western modernism tends to universalize folklore as an expression of existential crisis and fragmentation, Uzbek modernist literature employs folkloric codes to preserve and reinterpret national identity within a modern aesthetic framework. The findings contribute to comparative literature studies by highlighting folklore as a shared yet culturally differentiated foundation of modernist poetics.

**Keywords:** Modernism, folklore, mythopoetic, archetypes, comparative literature, Uzbek literature

### Introduction

Modernism represents a radical shift in literary aesthetics, marked by the rejection of realist representation and the exploration of fragmented consciousness,

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symbolic structures, and non-linear temporality. One of the most paradoxical aspects of modernism is its renewed engagement with archaic cultural forms—particularly folklore and myth.

Rather than functioning as remnants of tradition, folklore elements in modernist literature acquire new aesthetic and epistemological significance. This article investigates how folklore is transformed within modernist poetics in both Uzbek and Western literature, addressing the following research questions:

1. How are folkloric motifs and archetypes romanticized in modernist texts?
2. What similarities and differences emerge between Uzbek and Western modernist uses of folklore?
3. How does folklore contribute to the construction of modernist subjectivity and identity?

### Literature Review

Scholarly interest in myth and folklore within modernism has been shaped by foundational works in archetypal and myth criticism. Jung's theory of the collective unconscious positions myth and folklore as universal psychic structures (Jung, 1968). Building on this, Frye (1957) conceptualizes literature as a system of recurring mythic patterns.

In modernist studies, Eliot (1923) famously argued that myth provides a "structuring principle" for modern literature, a claim exemplified in Joyce's *Ulysses*. Lotman's semiotic theory further frames folklore as a cultural code capable of generating new meanings within literary systems (Lotman, 1990).

However, comparative studies that integrate Central Asian—particularly Uzbek—modernist literature into global modernist discourse remain limited. This article seeks to address this gap by situating Uzbek modernist texts within broader mythopoetic paradigms.

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### Methodology

The study employs a comparative literary methodology combined with mythopoetic and archetypal analysis. Selected texts from Uzbek modernist literature (e.g., Cho‘lpon, Fitrat) are analyzed alongside canonical Western modernist works (e.g., Joyce, Kafka, Eliot).

The analysis focuses on:

- folkloric motifs and symbols,
- narrative structures derived from myth,
- archetypal representations of the modern subject.

This interdisciplinary approach allows for the examination of both universal and culturally specific aspects of folklore transformation.

### Folklore and Mythopoetic in Western Modernism

Western modernism reconfigures folklore and myth as symbolic frameworks through which the fragmentation of modern existence is articulated. Joyce’s *Ulysses* reworks Homeric myth into a modern urban context, transforming the epic hero into an ordinary individual navigating alienation and routine.

Kafka’s prose, while less explicitly mythological, constructs archetypal situations of trial, exile, and transformation, reflecting folkloric structures embedded within an absurd modern reality. In these texts, folklore no longer affirms communal values but exposes existential uncertainty.

### Folklore Transformation in Uzbek Modernist Literature

Uzbek modernist literature integrates folklore as a means of negotiating modernity and national identity. In the works of Cho ‘lpon, folkloric imagery—such as the road, night, and journey—functions symbolically to express psychological tension and cultural dislocation.

Unlike Western modernism, Uzbek modernism does not entirely sever ties with tradition. Instead, folklore operates as a mediating structure, allowing modernist

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experimentation to remain anchored in cultural memory. This results in a distinct form of mythopoetics that combines innovation with continuity.

### Comparative Discussion

Both literary traditions employ folklore as a symbolic language capable of articulating modernist concerns. However, their functions diverge significantly. Western modernism tends toward the universalization and abstraction of myth, emphasizing existential rupture. Uzbek modernism, by contrast, uses folklore to reinterpret modernity through the lens of cultural preservation.

This distinction underscores the adaptability of folklore as a poetic system and highlights the importance of cultural context in shaping modernist aesthetics.

### Conclusion

The transformation of folklore within modernist poetics represents a dynamic interplay between tradition and innovation. Through comparative analysis, this study demonstrates that folklore serves not merely as a residual element of pre-modern culture but as a foundational structure for modernist literary expression.

By incorporating Uzbek literature into the comparative framework of modernism, the article contributes to a more inclusive understanding of global modernist practices and affirms the relevance of folklore in contemporary literary theory.

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