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ANTHROPOCENTRIC APPROACH IN CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN AND UZBEK NOVEL WRITING

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ABSTRACT

This article analyzes the application and significance of the anthropocentric approach in contemporary American and Uzbek literature, particularly in novel writing. The author delves into a theoretical analysis of the history of anthropocentrism, examining its role in literature and illustrating the topic with various examples. Special attention is given to personal identity, internal conflicts, and the meaning of life, emphasizing that humans are the central element and explaining how this relates to literature. Additionally, the article explores the commonalities and differences in the anthropocentric approach between American and Uzbek novel writing. Anthropocentrism remains an integral part of literary culture, directly influencing the modern interpretation of humanity.

KEYWORDS

Anthropocentrism, American literature, Uzbek literature, existentialism, modernism, postmodernism, human, personal identity.

INTRODUCTION

Since ancient times, human beings have been considered the highest form of life on Earth,

distinguished by their intellectual, moral, creative, and ethical abilities. Humans are the only living beings

capable of understanding their lives and striving to make them meaningful. This greatness lies not only in their capacity for inventions but also in their ability to do good, care for society, and nurture nature. This lofty status obliges humans to live responsibly and make the world a better place. Therefore, the perfection of humans has been deeply rooted in philosophical, religious, and scientific views, which is why it has become a central theme in literature.

Notably, the concept of anthropocentrism, a philosophical category that views humans as the center of the universe, has played a significant role in literary works for several centuries. The term "anthropocentrism" derives from the Greek words "anthropos" (human) and "kentron" (center), meaning "placing humans at the center." This perspective sees humans as the most important, central, and supreme beings in nature or the universe. According to anthropocentrism, humans are the highest and most significant of all beings; all things and events are evaluated based on human interests, needs, or values; and nature is perceived as being created to serve human needs.

METHODOLOGY

To explore the topic, several works of world, American, and Uzbek literature, primarily novels, were analyzed using cultural-historical and comparative analysis methods.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The philosophical foundation of anthropocentrism emerged in Ancient Greece during the 5th–4th centuries BCE, with its roots in ancient philosophy and religious beliefs. Protagoras, one of the founders of anthropocentric thought, introduced the famous idea

that "Man is the measure of all things," portraying humans as the center of the universe. Aristotle further developed this concept by describing nature as a system designed to serve human needs. During this period, philosophy prioritized humans above all other beings, portraying them as the supreme creatures of nature due to their intellectual and creative capacities.

Anthropocentrism also spread through religion, as many faiths interpret humans as the central figures of divine creation. For instance, in the religious civilizations of Ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia, and Israel, dating back to the 2nd–1st millennia BCE, human creation and dominion over nature were emphasized. Islam, which emerged in the 7th century, also highlights the superior position of humans. The Quran describes humans as stewards of the Earth (Surah Al-Baqarah, 2:30).

During the Renaissance, creators like Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo depicted the human body and its potential as symbols of perfection. Giovanni Pico della Mirandola's Oration on the Dignity of Man celebrated the boundless potential and freedom of humanity. In the modern era, Descartes emphasized humans as rational beings distinct from nature, further advocating their superiority. The Scientific Revolution, exemplified by Galileo and Newton, expanded humanity's ability to understand and control nature through scientific laws. The Enlightenment of the 18th century, known as the Age of Reason, marked the zenith of anthropocentrism, glorifying human intellect and reason.

From the mid-20th century, anthropocentric approaches gained prominence in literary processes. The modernist and postmodernist movements played crucial roles in advancing this perspective. In literature,

anthropocentrism shifted the focus to the complexity of the human psyche and inner life, moving beyond mere social status or external appearance. This approach enabled literature to explore pressing societal issues, conflicts between humans and technology, humans and nature, and individuals and society by centering on human emotions and experiences.

In global literature, the anthropocentric approach places humans at the heart of narratives, evaluating all events and phenomena from the human perspective. It examines the human psyche, emotions, and life experiences, offering profound insights into humanity's relationship with the world. For example, Fyodor Dostoevsky's works delve deeply into the psychological and emotional complexities of human existence. In *Crime and Punishment*, Raskolnikov's inner struggles exemplify anthropocentric exploration. James Joyce's *Ulysses* employs the "stream of consciousness" technique to depict the intricacies of human thought processes.

The anthropocentric approach is also reflected in existential philosophy, which focuses on the challenges of human existence. For instance, Albert Camus's *The Stranger* raises profound questions about life's meaning through the character Meursault. Similarly, authors like Leo Tolstoy and Charles Dickens examine the dynamics between individuals and society in works such as *Anna Karenina* and *Great Expectations*. Postmodern literature, including works by Milan Kundera and Gabriel García Márquez, emphasizes self-awareness and the impact of societal influences on human identity.

In modern American literature, the anthropocentric approach manifests in various styles, particularly

through themes of personal exploration, psychological struggles, and relationships with technology. Modernist authors like Ernest Hemingway highlighted human resilience, as seen in *The Old Man and the Sea*. William Faulkner examined the complexities of human consciousness, as in *The Sound and the Fury*. Postmodernists, such as Don DeLillo and David Foster Wallace, explored the intersection of humanity and technology. For instance, DeLillo's *White Noise* reflects the role of humans in a world dominated by technology.

In contrast, Uzbek literature integrates anthropocentrism uniquely, focusing on spiritual identity, national values, and harmony with society. The anthropocentric approach in Uzbek literature has evolved through several phases:

1. **Jadid Literature:** This period promoted humanistic ideals, with writers like Abdulla Qodiriy, Cholpon, and Fitrat addressing human freedom, identity, and social roles. In Qodiriy's *Past Days*, themes of love, struggle, and the desire for freedom are central.
2. **Soviet Period:** While societal themes predominated, writers like Oybek and Said Ahmad also explored human struggles and emotions. Oybek's *Sacred Blood* depicts how social conflicts shape human psyche and resilience.
3. **Independence Period:** After gaining independence, Uzbek literature began emphasizing self-discovery, spiritual growth, and national identity. Authors like Isajon Sulton, Tohir Malik, and Pirimqul Qodirov portrayed humans grappling with traditional values and modernity. For example, Qodirov's *The Starry Nights* explores Babur's spiritual and emotional journey.

4. Contemporary Writers: Younger Uzbek authors continue to focus on the complexities of human emotions, personal growth, and spiritual development. Their works often examine the individual's struggles in a rapidly changing globalized world.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, contemporary American and Uzbek novel writing reflects anthropocentrism through distinct cultural and philosophical traditions. While American literature delves into individualism and the intricacies of the human psyche, Uzbek literature emphasizes spiritual identity, national values, and societal responsibility. These differences highlight the unique characteristics of each literary tradition, enriching the global literary landscape.

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