



The concept of multiculturalism in the literary works “Beloved” by Toni Morrison and “The women Warrior” by Maxine Hong Kingston

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ABSTRACT

American literature is renowned for its rich and varied contributions to world literature. The greatness of American literature lies in its ability to reflect the diverse and evolving nature of American society. From its beginnings to the present day, it has been a dynamic force reflecting, critiquing, and shaping the cultural, social, and political landscape of the United States and beyond. This article examines how the concept of multiculturalism is introduced into literary works using the examples of “Beloved” by Toni Morrison and “The women Warrior” by Maxine Hong Kingston.

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Toni Morrisonning “Sevimlilar” va Maksin Xong Kingstonning “Jangchi ayollar” badiiy asarlarida multikulturalizm tushunchasi

ANNOTATSIYA

Kalit soʻzlar:

roman,
fantastika,
Amerika fuqarolar urushi,
oʻziga xoslik,
jamoat,
uslub,
xilma-xillik,
til,
meros.

Amerika adabiyoti jahon adabiyotiga qoʻshgan boy va xilma-xil hissasi uchun qadrlanadi. Amerika adabiyotining buyukligi uning ushbu jamiyatining turfa va rivojlanayotgan tabiatini qamrab olish qobiliyatidir. Amerika adabiyoti oʻzining dastlabki ildizlaridan to hozirgi kungacha Qoʻshma Shtatlar va undan tashqaridagi madaniy, ijtimoiy va siyosiy manzarani aks ettiruvchi, tanqid qiluvchi va shakllantiradigan dinamik kuch boʻlib kelgan. Mazkur maqolada multikulturalizm tushunchasi

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Toni Morrisonning “Sevimli” va Maksin Xong Kingstonning “Jangchi ayollar” asarlari misolida qanday singdirilganligi muhokama qilinadi.

Концепция мультикультурализма в литературных произведениях «Возлюбленные» Тони Моррисон и «Женщины-воины» Максин Хонг Кингстон

АННОТАЦИЯ

Ключевые слова:

роман,
художественная
литература,
гражданская война в США,
идентичность,
сообщество,
стиль, разнообразие,
язык,
наследие.

Американская литература известна своим богатым и разнообразным вкладом в мировую литературу. Величие американской литературы заключается в ее способности отражать многообразную и развивающуюся природу американского общества. С самого начала и до наших дней она является динамичной силой, отражающей, критикующей и формирующей культурный, социальный и политический ландшафт Соединенных Штатов и за их пределами. В данной статье рассматривается, как концепция мультикультурализма внедряется в литературные произведения на примере «Возлюбленной» Тони Моррисон и «Женщины-воительницы» Максин Хонг Кингстон.

INTRODUCTION

The greatness of American literature can be attributed to several key factors. American literature encompasses a vast array of voices and perspectives, reflecting the country's multicultural and multilingual society (Gray, 2011). It includes the narratives of various ethnicities, races, genders, and social classes, making it a tapestry of diverse experiences.

American writers have often been at the forefront of literary innovation and experimentation (Leininger, Hart, 1995). From the transcendentalist movement of the 19th century to the modernist and postmodernist movements of the 20th century, American literature has embraced new forms, styles, and themes.

Many works of American literature explore themes of identity, individualism, and the pursuit of the American Dream (Lawrence, 2019). From the rugged individualism of early American frontier narratives to the complexities of identity in contemporary multicultural America, these themes are deeply ingrained in the literary tradition.

American literature has often engaged with pressing social and political issues (Jay, 2018). Works such as Harriet Beecher Stowe's "Uncle Tom's Cabin," which contributed to the abolitionist movement, and literature from the Civil Rights era, like James Baldwin's writings, have played significant roles in shaping public discourse.

The American literary canon includes numerous classic works and authors that have had a profound impact on literature worldwide. Works like Mark Twain's "Adventures of Huckleberry Finn," F. Scott Fitzgerald's "The Great Gatsby," and Toni Morrison's "Beloved" are just a few examples of enduring contributions to literature.

Transcendentalism, a philosophical and literary movement, emphasized the inherent goodness of people and nature. Writers like Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau contributed to the exploration of nature, individualism, and the interconnectedness of humanity and the environment.

Literary movements such as the Harlem Renaissance, the Beat Generation, and the Southern Gothic movement have left indelible marks on American literature. These movements not only produced influential works but also reflected the cultural and social dynamics of their respective periods.

American literature has been shaped by the realist tradition, which sought to portray life as it is. Realist writers like Mark Twain and Henry James depicted the complexities of human experience, contributing to a more nuanced understanding of characters and society.

American literature continues to evolve, with contemporary authors addressing current issues and bringing new perspectives to the forefront. Writers like Toni Morrison, Jhumpa Lahiri, and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie contribute to ongoing conversations about race, identity, and globalization.

Findings. "Beloved" is a powerful and highly acclaimed novel written by Toni Morrison. It was first published in 1987 and is considered a classic of contemporary American literature. The novel is a work of historical fiction that explores themes of slavery, trauma, motherhood, and the struggle for identity (House, 1990). Here's an overview of key aspects of the novel:

Plot Summary:

"Beloved" is set in the years following the American Civil War and centers around Sethe, an escaped enslaved woman who is living in a house with her daughter Denver and her mother-in-law Baby Suggs. The house is haunted by a ghost believed to be the spirit of Sethe's deceased daughter. The story takes a dramatic turn when a mysterious young woman who calls herself Beloved appears, seemingly out of nowhere. Sethe believes Beloved is the ghost of her dead child come back to life.

As the narrative unfolds, the novel delves into the characters' painful memories of slavery, the trauma they endured, and the impact of their past on their present lives. Themes of identity, guilt, and the search for selfhood are intricately woven into the fabric of the story.

Themes:

Trauma and Memory:

"Beloved" explores the enduring impact of slavery on individuals and communities (Rushdy, 1992). The characters grapple with the trauma of their past, and the novel emphasizes the haunting nature of memories that refuse to be forgotten.

Motherhood:

Motherhood is a central theme, particularly Sethe's experience as a mother. Her desperate act to save her children from slavery has profound consequences, and the novel examines the complexities of mother-daughter relationships (Wyatt, 1993).

Identity and Selfhood:

The characters in "Beloved" struggle to forge their identities in the aftermath of slavery (Krumholz, 1992). The legacy of dehumanization and loss affects their ability to define themselves outside the confines of their traumatic past.

Community and Isolation:

The novel depicts the African American community's efforts to come together and support one another in the face of historical and personal hardships (Romero, 2005). However, it also explores the isolating effects of trauma and the difficulty of sharing one's deepest wounds.

Supernatural Elements:

The presence of the ghost and the mysterious Beloved introduces supernatural elements to the narrative. These elements serve as metaphors for the lingering impact of slavery and the ghosts that continue to haunt the characters.

Style and Narrative Structure:

Toni Morrison's writing style in "Beloved" is rich, poetic, and evocative. The novel employs a non-linear narrative structure, with shifts in time and perspective. This technique contributes to the dreamlike quality of the storytelling and allows Morrison to explore the characters' past and present in a nuanced and layered manner.

"Beloved" received widespread critical acclaim and won the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 1988. It is celebrated for its exploration of historical and social issues, its innovative narrative techniques, and its powerful portrayal of the human cost of slavery. The novel remains a significant work in the canon of American literature, addressing profound and enduring themes with a narrative that is both haunting and beautifully rendered.

"Beloved" by Toni Morrison explores the concept of multiculturalism through its vivid portrayal of African American experiences, the legacy of slavery, and the intersectionality of identities. The novel delves into the complex tapestry of cultures, histories, and individual narratives that make up the African American community during and after the period of slavery.

Here are some key aspects related to multiculturalism in "Beloved":

African American Experience:

"Beloved" provides an intimate and multifaceted look into the African American experience during and after slavery (William, McKay, 1999). It reflects on the diverse backgrounds of the characters, their varied relationships with African cultural heritage, and the ways in which their identities have been shaped by the brutality of slavery.

Diversity Within the African American Community:

The novel emphasizes the diversity within the African American community, both in terms of individual experiences and cultural backgrounds. Characters like Sethe, Baby Suggs, Paul D, and Denver each bring their unique perspectives, reflecting the multiplicity of voices within the broader African American narrative.

African Cultural Influences:

While the characters in "Beloved" are deeply entrenched in the American experience, the novel also acknowledges and explores African cultural influences. Memories of African customs, songs, and spirituality are woven into the fabric of the story, highlighting the richness of the cultural heritage that slavery sought to erase.

Language and Vernacular:

Toni Morrison masterfully incorporates African American Vernacular English (AAVE) into the dialogue of the characters. This linguistic choice not only adds authenticity to the narrative but also serves as a celebration of the unique linguistic contributions of the African American community.

Intersectionality:

"Beloved" addresses the intersectionality of identities, considering how factors such as gender, race, and class intersect to shape individual experiences. The characters' identities are complex and multifaceted, and their struggles and triumphs are deeply influenced by these intersections.

Cultural Memory and Heritage:

The novel explores the importance of cultural memory and heritage in shaping the characters' identities. The haunting presence of the past, particularly the trauma of slavery, underscores the characters' efforts to reclaim and preserve their cultural identity despite the erasure attempts of the dominant culture.

Community Bonds:

Multiculturalism is also evident in the strong bonds of community depicted in the novel. The African American characters forge connections with one another, forming a community that provides support, understanding, and a shared cultural context in the face of historical oppression.

"Beloved" stands as a testament to the multicultural richness of the African American experience. By portraying a diverse array of characters with unique backgrounds, memories, and cultural ties, Toni Morrison challenges monolithic narratives and contributes to a more nuanced understanding of the complex and interconnected layers of identity within the African American community. The novel ultimately emphasizes the importance of acknowledging, preserving, and celebrating cultural diversity in the face of historical trauma.

"The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood Among Ghosts" is a highly acclaimed memoir by Chinese American author Maxine Hong Kingston (Shuang, 2009). Published in 1976, the book is a blend of autobiography, fiction, and myth, exploring the complexities of identity, culture, and the immigrant experience.

Here are some key aspects of "The Woman Warrior":

Genre Blending:

One notable feature of "The Woman Warrior" is its blending of genres (TuSmith, 1991). Kingston combines autobiography, myth, and fiction to create a unique narrative that weaves together her personal experiences with Chinese folklore and cultural myths. This blending reflects the complexity of her identity and the multifaceted nature of the immigrant experience.

Chinese-American Identity:

The memoir grapples with the challenges of straddling two cultural worlds—Chinese and American. Kingston explores the conflicts and tensions arising from the clash of traditional Chinese values and the expectations of American society. The process of defining one's identity amid cultural duality is a central theme.

Silence and Finding One's Voice:

Kingston addresses the theme of silence, particularly within the Chinese cultural context. She reflects on the silencing of women in Chinese culture and explores her struggle to find her voice and speak out against societal expectations and restrictions. The act of storytelling becomes a powerful means of breaking the silence and asserting her identity.

Mother-Daughter Relationships:

The memoir delves into the complexities of mother-daughter relationships, especially Kingston's relationship with her mother. The mother is a prominent figure in the book, and Kingston explores the impact of her mother's stories, advice, and cultural expectations on her own sense of self.

Female Empowerment:

"The Woman Warrior" is often celebrated for its exploration of female empowerment. Kingston presents stories of strong and resilient women who navigate a world filled with challenges and limitations. The narrative challenges traditional gender roles and stereotypes, offering a feminist perspective on the Chinese-American experience.

Cultural Myths and Realities:

Kingston intersperses her personal narrative with Chinese cultural myths and legends. These myths serve as a backdrop to her own experiences and contribute to the exploration of cultural identity. The blending of myth and reality adds a layer of symbolism to the memoir.

The Ghosts of the Past:

The subtitle, "Memoirs of a Girlhood Among Ghosts," alludes to the presence of ghosts as symbolic representations of the burdens and traumas carried from one generation to the next. The ghosts represent the weight of cultural expectations, family history, and the struggles faced by previous generations.

"The Woman Warrior" is considered a groundbreaking work in Asian American literature. Maxine Hong Kingston's innovative narrative style, the exploration of identity and cultural duality, and the emphasis on female empowerment have made the memoir a significant contribution to discussions on immigration, feminism, and the Asian American experience.

"The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood Among Ghosts" by Maxine Hong Kingston explores the concept of multiculturalism through the lens of the Chinese American immigrant experience. The memoir vividly captures the complexities of cultural identity, the clash between Chinese and American values, and the challenges faced by individuals navigating multiple cultural worlds. Here are key aspects of multiculturalism in "The Woman Warrior":

Cultural Dualism:

The memoir highlights the cultural dualism experienced by the author as a Chinese American (Bucci, 2007). Maxine Hong Kingston grapples with the tension between her Chinese heritage, as conveyed by her immigrant parents, and the American culture in which she is growing up. This duality shapes her identity and influences her understanding of self.

Conflict and Negotiation:

"The Woman Warrior" portrays the conflicts and negotiations that arise when cultures collide. Kingston explores the difficulties of reconciling the expectations of her Chinese heritage with the values and norms of American society. The negotiation of identity becomes a central theme as she strives to find a balance between the two cultural worlds.

Storytelling and Cultural Transmission:

The use of storytelling in the memoir reflects the importance of oral tradition and narrative in Chinese culture (Kurup, 2019). Kingston's incorporation of her mother's stories, Chinese myths, and folklore serves as a way to transmit cultural values and lessons across generations. It also highlights the role of narrative in shaping individual and collective identities.

Myth and Reality:

Kingston intertwines Chinese cultural myths with her own experiences, blurring the lines between myth and reality. This blending of elements contributes to the multicultural tapestry of the narrative, emphasizing the interconnectedness of personal and cultural histories.

Gender and Cultural Expectations:

The memoir explores how cultural expectations, particularly those related to gender roles, influence the lives of Chinese American women. Kingston examines the constraints placed on women in Chinese culture and the ways in which these expectations clash with the more liberated roles available in American society.

Mother-Daughter Relationships:

Multiculturalism is reflected in the intergenerational dynamics, particularly in the relationships between mothers and daughters. Kingston's portrayal of her relationship with her mother and the influence of her mother's stories underscores the transmission of cultural values and the challenges of bridging generational and cultural gaps.

Ghosts and Cultural Burdens:

The presence of ghosts in the memoir symbolizes the lingering cultural burdens, ancestral expectations, and unresolved traumas carried by the Chinese American community. These spectral figures represent the weight of history and cultural legacy (Ludwig and Zagni, 2014).

Empowerment and Multicultural Identity:

Kingston's journey towards self-discovery and empowerment is intricately tied to her multicultural identity (Bucci, 2007). By navigating and embracing the complexities of her cultural background, she finds strength in acknowledging both her Chinese heritage and her identity as an American woman.

"The Woman Warrior" stands as a poignant exploration of multiculturalism, shedding light on the challenges and richness inherent in the intersection of diverse cultural influences. Kingston's narrative not only provides insight into the Chinese American experience but also contributes to a broader understanding of the complexities of multicultural identities in the context of immigration and assimilation.

Conclusion

In summary, the greatness of American literature lies in its ability to capture the diverse and evolving nature of American society. From its early roots to the present day, American literature has been a dynamic force that reflects, critiques, and shapes the cultural, social, and political landscape of the United States and beyond.

Through its realistic depiction of African American lives, the legacy of slavery, and the intertwining of identities, Toni Morrison's "Beloved" delves into the idea of multiculturalism. The book explores the intricate web of histories, customs, and personal accounts that comprised the African American community both during and after enslavement.

"Beloved" is proof of the African American experience's global richness. To create a more nuanced knowledge of the intricate and linked layers of identity within the African American community, Toni Morrison challenges monolithic narratives by depicting a broad assortment of characters with distinct backgrounds, memories, and cultural links. In the end, the book stresses how crucial it is to recognize, value, and celebrate cultural variety even in the face of suffering from the past.

Kingston's multicultural identity is closely linked to her quest for self-awareness and empowerment. She finds strength in accepting her identity as an American woman and her Chinese ethnicity, and in navigating and embracing the nuances of her cultural background.

"The Woman Warrior" is a moving examination of multiculturalism that highlights the complexities and depth that arise when various cultural influences converge. In addition to offering insight into the experience of Chinese Americans, Kingston's story advances knowledge of the intricacies of multicultural identities in the context of immigration and assimilation.

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