

THE THEMES "FOOD" AND "EATING PROCESS" IN WORLD LITERATURE

Shahlo Obloqulova,
National University of Uzbekistan

Abstract

In modern world literature, food discourse is a common theme that reflects the cultural and social values of different societies. It includes various aspects of food, such as its production, preparation, consumption, customs and beliefs associated with it. Through the food image in literature, writers highlight the importance of food in human life, its role in the formation of social and cultural identity, and the interrelationship between food, society, and the environment.

One of the main tasks of food discourse in modern world literature is to reflect the social and cultural practices of different societies. Food is an integral part of cultural identity, and its consumption, preparation methods and symbolic meanings differ in different regions and communities. For example, in the works of writers such as Isabel Allende, Gabriel García Márquez, and Laura Esquivel, food is often used as a metaphor to describe cultural traditions, gender roles, and family structures in Latin American societies.

The topic of food and eating process has been studied a lot in world literature. Some authors use food as a main theme, while others use it as a way to reveal the inner world of the character. The topic of food and eating in world literature is a vast and diverse field, covering topics ranging from cultural identity and tradition to class and gender. The depiction of food and eating process in literature can serve a variety of purposes, such as creating place and atmosphere, character development, and commenting on social and political issues.

Basically, the theme of food and eating process in literature is a reflection of human culture and experience. Literature often draws on cultural traditions and practices related to food, such as the place of eating in family gatherings and social events, the rituals associated with food preparation and consumption, and the symbolic meanings of certain foods.

Food historians initiated the phenomenon of food as a serious topic for academic study. Important works include Ken Albala's *Eating Right in the Renaissance* (2002), which examines attitudes to food and medicine in early modern dietary literature, and *Food in Early Modern Europe* (2003), which provides a useful and highly accessible guide to all food-related issues relevant to the early moderns, such as the cuisine of specific countries and their regions, the foods consumed by people of different religions, and the type of equipment used to prepare food as well as an invaluable annotated list of ingredients used in the period. Another important work by Albala, *The Banquet: Dining in the Great Courts of Late Renaissance Europe* (2007),

traces patterns of consumption by Europe's elite in the context of a shift in tastes and fashions that distinguished classical sophisticated French cuisine from the typical medieval diet.[1]

Also, of interest is Joan Thirsk's *Food in Early Modern England: Phases, Fads, Fashions 1500–1760* (2007), where the agricultural historian uses her knowledge of food production to consider the change in public attitudes from one period to the next as well as providing sections that discuss specific foods in detail. An earlier, useful, work by Thirsk is her essay "Food in Shakespeare's England" (1999), published to accompany an exhibition on food in the period at the Folger Shakespeare library in Washington.[2]

In world literature, food and eating have been the subject of many works, from classic texts such as Homer's *Odyssey* and Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* to modern works such as Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*[4] and Laura Esquivel's "Like water for Chocolate"[5].

In these works, food is used as a way to create setting and atmosphere, to define cultural identity and traditions, and to explore the relationships between characters. For example, in *The God of Small Things*, the food and traditions associated with the Indian state of Kerala become symbols of social hierarchy and the caste system.

Food discourse in literature serves as a literary tool for enriching narratives beyond just sustenance. Authors strategically use sensory descriptions of food to engage readers' attention and emotions. For example, in Laura Esquivel's (*Like Water for Chocolate*) "Boiling Passion"[6] cooking reflects the passions and desires of the characters, drawing readers into their emotional world. By highlighting the colors, aromas, and textures of food, writers foster a deeper connection between readers and characters, immersing them in the setting of the story. The main character of the play, Tita's cooking serves as a metaphor for her emotions and the oppression she feels as a woman in a patriarchal society. Similarly, Toni Morrison's *Beloved*[7] uses food as a way to explore the legacy of slavery and the role of food in African American culture.

In addition, food discourse in contemporary world literature is often used to explore the relationship between food and social class, ethnicity, and nationalism. Issues of food scarcity, use, and distribution are often used to address social inequalities, economic disparities, and political power dynamics. In Zadie Smith's novel "White Teeth"[8], food is used to convey the cultural diversity of a multiracial society and the social and economic problems faced by immigrant communities.

Culinary traditions are an important aspect of cultural identity and are often depicted in contemporary world literature. They can serve as markers of a character's cultural background and provide insight into their beliefs and values. For example, in Amy Tan's "The Joy Luck Club"[9], Chinese recipes passed down through generations of women in a family are not only

a way to connect with their past, but also represent the challenges of bridging cultural gaps between generations. Food and eating rituals reflect cultural, social and historical contexts. The common meal of the heroes of the play symbolizes unity among diversity, eliminating generational and cultural differences. By combining traditional foods and cooking methods, authors weave cultural heritage into their stories. In this way, food becomes a vehicle for exploring the intersection of personal identity and broader social influences.

In general, food discourse is an important literary device in modern world literature, serving as a means of creating atmosphere, exploring themes, and deepening character development. At this point, the following points about the role and importance of food discourse in Uzbek literature are worthy of attention. "Analyzing the samples of our fiction, we witnessed that our writers effectively used the food discourse in order to depict the conflict between the characters of the work in dramatic colors. This aspect notes that the role of the food discourse is special in Uzbek literature and reveals a unique aspect of the approach to this topic in world literature[10]".

Another important aspect of food discourse in contemporary world literature is its connection with the environment and sustainability. As modern society grapples with climate change, pollution, and unsustainable food production and consumption patterns, literature is creating a platform to raise awareness and promote alternative food systems. For example, works by writers such as Michael Pollan, Wendell Berry, and Barbara Kingsolver explore the complexities of sustainable food systems, ethical food production, and environmental stewardship.

In conclusion, the topic of food and eating process in world literature is a rich and complex field that provides insight into human culture, experience, and identity. By studying different ways of food and eating process in literature, we gain a deeper understanding of the role of food in our lives and our perceptions of the world around us.

References

- [1] Joan Fitzpatrick. Early Modern Literature and Food in Britain. the Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Literature. 29 November 2021
- [2] Ўша манба.
- [3] Joan Fitzpatrick. Food in Shakespeare. Early Modern Dietaries and the Plays. Taylor & Francis. 2007. P. 91-92.
- [4] Arundhati Roy. (2008) The God of Small Things. A Novel. Random House Trade Paperbacks. 333 p.
- [5] Laura Esquivel. Like Water for Chocolate. New York: Anchor Books . 1995. 245 p.

21th-TECH-FEST-2023

International Multidisciplinary Conference

Hosted from Manchester, England

25th December 2023

<https://conferencea.org>

- [6] Laura Esquivel. Like Water for Chocolate. New York: Anchor Books . 1995. 245 p.
- [7] Toni Morrison, 1987. Beloved. Published in the United States by Vintage Books, a division of Random House, Inc., New York, 125 p.
- [8] Zadie Smith. White Teeth. 2001. Vintage. 448 p.
- [9] Amy Tan. The Joy Luck Club. Penguin Books. 329 p.
- [10] Г.К.ОДИЛОВА. ГЛУТОНИК ДИСКУРС АСОСЛАРИ. Тошкент “MUMTOZ SO‘Z” 2020. Б. 117. 296 б.