

The Thoughts on the Nobel Lecture of Toni Morrison

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Abstract

Toni Morrison is widely recognized as an American's prominent novelist, who magnificently explores the life of the black, especially that of black women. Her Nobel Prize Lecture, in which she again tells a story of a black woman, can be regarded as an epitome of Morrison's thoughts. The dialogue between the blind black old woman and the young people is full of wisdom and profoundness.

Keywords: Toni Morrison, Nobel lecture, Culture safety

Toni Morrison is a leading figure in the American literature, who won the Nobel Prize of Literature in 1993. She is exclusively special in language use, and good at employing different points of view in her fictions to show her purpose of writing and produce the tension of beauty. Black history, trace and skillful use of language are indispensable for her fictions, which expose the existing dilemma of black people on the edge of the white dominant society and tries to arouse people's reflection, and recover the original powder of Hero's language and literary, therefore, Hero can maintain and develop Hero's cultural tradition. In addition, Morrison employs symbols and myths in her lecture to communicate sensory impressions.

1. The main idea of her lecture

In her lecture of Nobel Prize-giving, she told a story happening between a blind old woman and a few young men with the whole article. The story tells as follows: young men questioned her wisdom and the reason that she enjoyed the noble prestige, asking her to tell whether the bird in their hands was alive or dead. The old woman broke from her passivity skillfully with "it is in your hands", indicating that the fate of the bird is decided by the young men, that the young men can let the bird alive or they can kill it. At last, the young men got reconciled with the old woman through their pure-heartedness. The story involves the racial issue, and it is also a fable of language. Morrison thought the bird actually stood for the language, so she showed her strong love for Hero language, at the same time, she showed her worry for its situation, which would be swallowed up by the White's language and its culture.

2. The analysis of her writing style

Morrison's Nobel lecture in 1993 can exactly show her artistic style by studying her writing techniques briefly. The fully poetic language and creative techniques of narration are the magic weapons of Morrison to fight her way into the first class of world literature.

Morrison has taken the tradition of Negro's oral literature, applying the Negro's legends and myths to promote her works' artistic glamour. She is not only familiar with the Negro's folk legends, Greek myths and Christian Bible, but also beneficial from the influence of west classic literature. Conjecture of color and music can be easily found in her works, which enhances the beauty of her language.

Morrison is special in realizing her writing purpose and controlling aesthetic distance through narrating stories. She has applied various narrative techniques, narrative voices and gone beyond personal limit in order to make the readers step into the real novel world in reading and really know the characters' mind, therefore share the hero's comforts and hardships, and the mystery in inner world.

In her lecture of Nobel Prize-giving, she represented her writing style exactly, and her literary opinion as well: language will die; it can be forced into army and become the controlling tool of others. Her works are full of

magic realistic elements and these super-realistic elements and Negro's legends and myths contribute some mystery and magic to her novels.

In writing techniques, Morrison braves to explore and create, abandoning the former language of the white to describe the Negro. She devotes her life to recover the original power of Negro's language through novels, and therefore to keep and develop the Negro's cultural tradition.

3. The enlightenments from her lecture

Language is the symbol of a nation. The existence and development of the language is the symbol of existence and development of a nation. The disappearance of the language is the disappearance of a nation. At the same time, the independence of a language is the basis of the existence of a nation. The weakness or strength is closely relative to a nation's status. A nation must keep its language independent, and then absorb the essence of other nations' language to enhance its own language. The issue also involves the safety of a nation's culture, especially for the weak nations, such as Negro's culture and even Chinese culture.

Cultural safety is a serious issue for the weak countries. The development of a nation's language is to develop its culture, and the safety of a nation's language is the safety of a nation's culture. Because language is the basis of its culture, and the existence and development of a nation's culture are mainly dependent on the role and function of its language, especially in the future history. So the protection and creation of a nation's culture is especially important for a nation's existence and development.

The reasons for it are as follows:

1) The value and function of culture are the basis to cohere and encourage the mass and the tie to maintain the solidity of the state and nation. The prosperity and development of culture can not only greatly urge nation's self-confidence, self-importance and self-pride, but also form the safe barrier in people's psychology and mental, therefore, improve the whole state safety degree.

The culture of a nation is its identity. In the development of a nation, culture is the essential symbol to differentiate itself from other nations and the fundamental evidence to make sure its anthropological identity. For a country or nation, the culture is the radical power to cohere and integrate all sources of a nation or country, the loss of any form of the power will endanger the existence safety of a nation and country. A country with high coherence will be unconquerable even in disadvantage temporarily in politics, economy, technology and even military. Otherwise, even though a country has great advantage in various fields, it will be easily defeated if the nations, classes and groups in the country do their own work separately. So the developed culture can not only form great national coherence and cultural identity, but also form the cultural barrier to greatly enhance the whole country's safety degree, and therefore win the satisfactory international safe environments.

2) A certain balance of cultural ecological environments is the essential condition for the existence and development of human being and the variety of culture is the rational choice of human culture development. So it is standpoint for the majority of nations and countries to oppose and resist cultural hegemony, to ensure national cultural safety and maintain world cultural ecological balance.

In fact, the variety of culture is the origin for all races and nations in the world to perform culture exchange, opinion creation and literary creation. The variety and color in the world cultural garden will be humdrum if the national traditional culture with a long history and its characteristic. There is no development condition and advance drive without colorful world culture, without the exchange and collision and use for reference of national cultures. The variety of world culture is the common mental wealth of human being, and the damage of the variety of the world culture means the damage of the mental wealth of all human being. So it has become the common knowledge for the human being to protect the variety of world culture.

3) Culture hegemony makes every effort to push global culture homogenization forward, which has brought serious disasters to nations and regional cultures with specific style in their different steps of development. Culture hegemony insists on unifying international dominant culture in their will. They monopolize information technology norms in the process of spread and cause many national culture and traditional folk art to fade away via media supported by hi-technique, such as north- African culture, Indian culture, theatre art, folk performing art, folk oral history and etc. Culture hegemony makes the national classic art and elegant art drop out by market mechanism. Fortunately, culture imperialism has aroused the world's attention and resistance, and many nations have risen up to oppose culture hegemony and to protect and develop their own national cultures.

4) Globalization is bi-blade sword; culture globalization mainly refers to the fact that the commonness among the different culture is strengthened and individual characteristic of culture becomes weakened and subsidized, which protrudes the weak nations' national cultural safety issues.

The exchange and independence of nations cause national culture to break through limit of zone and refine the common characteristics of world culture, and contribute different nations and regional culture to the world, which form human-share public-civilization wealth and sources.

Cultural globalization means cultural coherence. Human culture has commonness, but has individuality as well, which is more important than former. The individuality is the symbol of a nation to differentiate itself from others. Every nation should do their utmost to keep their individuality and not be assimilated by others.

Globalization means culture colonization. Some west countries have forced to promote their cultural products and values consciously by their dominant status of economy, politics and culture in the international world so as to influence and assimilate other nation's culture, and therefore obtain the dominant power in economy and politics and culture to remold the world according their own value view. All in all, the cultures of the weak countries in economy will be in the edge of being assimilated and weakened.

4. The counter-strategies to culture safety

Since weak countries face many unsafe factors in culture, they should take immediate measures to protect their culture. Presently, the foremost strategy is to innovate their own culture, to innovate their language style to enrich their culture.

The rise and fall of a nation's culture is determined by culture itself can continually advance and innovate with the step of history. Culture innovation is the life of culture, is the unexhausted strength. Culture innovation forms the core of protecting national cultural safety.

Any advanced culture reflects the purpose and direction of social advance, which is the integration of times' spirits and sublimation of former ideas; it is a progress of not only inheriting ancestors' culture, but also continuously going beyond and innovating. A survey from the history, every alteration of culture and every innovation has greatly pushed the human civilization and progress forward. There is no development with innovation; there is no history with development. The country or nation that can consistently innovate its culture can surely keep its flourishing tendency of development, or it will surely stagnate or come down.

Secondly, the development of a nation's culture depends on the exchange with other nations' cultures to great degree; the development and protection of its safety can be realized in the exchange and introjections. So we must have a broader heart to admit other nations' culture. We should discard the "left" and "right" attitude to absorb the superior elements of other cultures to develop and enrich their own culture. At the same time, we should export our culture largely, while we import other cultures. Only in this way, can a nation's culture exist and develop healthily and quickly.

5. The worry about the craziness of Chinese learning English

English has become a universal tool to exchange ideas with people from different parts in the world with the globalization. Undeniably, English has become a bridge for us to learn science and technology, managing experience and etc, but recently Chinese people have become crazy in learning English, almost a civil campaign. A child, from primary school to college, spends the most amount of time learning English averagely. While he is poor in his mother language- Chinese and knows a little about Chinese. A large number of Chinese students have read fewer Chinese classic works, and can't write proper writing, even a message or note. It's dangerous for a child and dangerous for our Chinese nation.

As everyone knows, Chinese is our mother tongue, is the fundamental basis of Chinese people. For any Chinese, Chinese is more important than English, but unfortunately many parents ask their children to learn English from very little, ask them to take part in various kinds of assistant classes, and ignore their Children's Chinese learning, considering their children will become a talent if they learn English well. They forget the fact that he who can't learn and use his mother tongue well can't do anything well. I believe it.

In my view, one should learn foreign language according to his needs and interest. It is a free choice, but now the Chinese children are forced to learn English to be admitted by college, while can't learn it well even they have learned it for even ten years, which is a contorted educational system.

Of course, learning foreign language especially English is necessary. On one hand, English is the one of the UN language, and people in most developed countries use English. On the other hand, we can learn their advanced culture especially science and technology if we learn English well. Furthermore, it is also a real necessary for Chinese to all foreign languages, changing the English dominant situation, because each culture has his advantages, and we need to learn from it to strengthen ourselves, but we should have a scientific system and proper attitude. All in all, the present situation of Chinese learning English is worrying and should be reformed.

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