



EXPLORING IDENTITY AND NARRATIVE STRUCTURE IN THE NOVELS OF THOMAS KING

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ABSTRACT This article analyzes the main themes present in the novels of Canadian writer Thomas King, particularly focusing on identity and narrative structure. King's works emphasize the cultural heritage of Indigenous peoples, postcolonialism, and self-awareness. This study examines his novels *Green Grass*, *Running Water* and *Medicine River*, analyzing their postmodern elements and connection to Indigenous oral storytelling. The research follows the IMRAD format, highlighting the distinctiveness of King's works in the results and discussion sections.

KEY WORDS Thomas King, identity, postcolonialism, oral literature, Indigenous literature, postmodernism, keeping identity

ТОМАС КИНГ КАК РАССКАЗЧИК ОБ ИНДЕЙСКОЙ ИДЕНТИЧНОСТИ

АННОТАЦИЯ Эта статья анализирует основные темы, присутствующие в романах канадского писателя Томаса Кинга, в частности, сосредотачиваясь на идентичности и структуре повествования. Произведения Кинга подчеркивают культурное наследие коренных народов, постколониализм и самосознание. В данном исследовании рассматриваются его романы *Green Grass*, *Running Water* и *Medicine River*, анализируются их постмодернистские элементы и связь с устным повествованием коренных народов. Исследование следует формату IMRAD, подчеркивая уникальность произведений Кинга в разделах с результатами и обсуждением.

КЛЮЧЕВЫЕ СЛОВА Томас Кинг, идентичность, постколониализм, устная литература, литература коренных народов, постмодернизм

TOMAS KING - IDENTITETI HAQIDA HIKOYACHI

ANNOTATSIYA Ushbu maqola kanadalik yozuvchi Tomas King romanlarida mavjud asosiy mavzularni tahlil qiladi, xususan, identifikatsiya va hikoya tuzilishiga e'tibor qaratadi. Kingning asarlari tubjoy xalqlarning madaniy merosi, postkolonializm va o'zini anglash mavzularini aks ettiradi. Ushbu tadqiqot uning *Green Grass*, *Running Water* va *Medicine River*

romanlarini tahlil qilib, ularning postmodern elementlari hamda tubjoy og‘zaki adabiyot bilan bog‘liqligini o‘rganadi. Tadqiqot IMRAD formatiga asoslangan bo‘lib, natijalar va muhokama bo‘limlarida King asarlarining o‘ziga xosligi ta’kidlanadi.

KALIT SO‘ZLAR Tomas King, identifikatsiya, postkolonializm, og‘zaki adabiyot, tubjoy adabiyot, postmodernism, o‘zlikni saqlash

INTRODUCTION

Canadian writer Thomas King is one of the most prominent figures in Indigenous literature, portraying the lives, cultures, and historical processes of Indigenous peoples in his novels. He pays special attention to the representation of Indigenous identity and storytelling. Through his novels, traditional Indigenous knowledge and the struggles within postcolonial contexts become evident.

This paper examines the structure and key themes of Thomas King’s novels using the IMRAD format. First, the literature review and methodology section discusses how King’s works have been analyzed in scholarly research and the methods applied in this paper. The results section presents the key aspects of his novels, particularly their narrative structure and themes of identity. Finally, the discussion section interprets these results and provides conclusions.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODOLOGY

This study employs qualitative analysis to examine Thomas King's novels, with a focus on thematic analysis to identify recurring themes and their connection to postcolonial literature.

The literature review section primarily examines the scholarly discussions on King’s novels. For instance, *Green Grass, Running Water* is often analyzed in terms of its connection between postmodernism and Indigenous oral traditions. To understand King’s style, intertextual references, and role within a postcolonial framework, this study draws upon the works of Indigenous literary scholars and postcolonial theorists.

Thomas King: A Voice for Indigenous Identity in Literature

Thomas King is one of the most influential Indigenous writers in contemporary North American literature. His works explore themes of identity, postcolonialism, cultural resistance, and storytelling. King, of Cherokee and Greek descent, uses literature as a tool to challenge dominant narratives and highlight Indigenous perspectives. His writing blends humor, satire, and intertextual references to expose colonial injustices while offering new ways of understanding Indigenous history and culture.

One of King’s most acclaimed novels, *Green Grass, Running Water* (1993), is a prime example of his unique storytelling style. The novel employs nonlinear narrative techniques, interweaving traditional Indigenous stories with contemporary issues. The novel critiques Western perceptions of history and religion, deconstructing myths imposed on Indigenous peoples. By incorporating oral storytelling traditions, King challenges the rigid structure of Western literature and emphasizes the fluid, cyclical nature of Indigenous narratives.

Another significant work, *The Inconvenient Indian* (2012), is a non-fiction book that critically examines the treatment of Indigenous peoples in North America. Combining history, personal reflections, and sharp wit, King dissects colonial policies, media misrepresentations, and the ongoing struggles of Indigenous communities. His analysis exposes how systemic discrimination continues to shape Indigenous lives, urging readers to reconsider mainstream historical narratives.

King's other novels, such as *Medicine River* (1989) and *Truth & Bright Water* (1999), further explore Indigenous identity, community, and self-discovery. His work highlights the resilience of Indigenous cultures while addressing the complexities of modern Indigenous existence. Through his literary contributions, King has reshaped contemporary Indigenous literature, ensuring that Indigenous voices are heard, respected, and celebrated. His writing remains a crucial force in decolonizing literature and advocating for Indigenous rights.

RESULTS

1. **Identity and self-awareness:** King's characters often undergo journeys of self-discovery. In *Green Grass, Running Water*, this process is intertwined with Indigenous mythology.

2. **Postcolonialism and historical justice:** His novels expose the impact of colonialism on Indigenous communities. This is particularly evident in *Medicine River*.

3. **Storytelling techniques and postmodernism:** Instead of following a traditional linear narrative, King employs interconnected and sometimes fragmented storytelling structures.

DISCUSSION

The findings indicate that Thomas King integrates Indigenous storytelling traditions with contemporary literary techniques. His postmodern approach is deeply connected to oral traditions, creating a unique literary form.

Furthermore, the distinctive nature of King's novels lies in their use of various narrative techniques to depict Indigenous culture. He not only portrays historical and contemporary challenges but also amplifies Indigenous voices through literature.

King's work is also notable for its engagement with humor, irony, and metafiction. These elements challenge traditional Western narrative structures while reinforcing Indigenous storytelling traditions. By blending myth, history, and contemporary reality, King's novels create a unique space where Indigenous perspectives are centered rather than marginalized.

Additionally, King's use of intertextuality, references to Western literary canons, and reinterpretation of historical events allow his novels to serve as critical commentaries on colonialism. His narratives do not follow conventional structures but instead mirror the cyclical and interconnected nature of Indigenous storytelling traditions.

CONCLUSION

This paper has examined the role of identity, postcolonialism, and narrative structure in Thomas King's novels. King uses literature not only to depict Indigenous culture but also to reshape it

through storytelling. His works call for historical justice by addressing the impacts of colonialism.

Ultimately, King’s novels serve as more than just literary works; they are essential tools for preserving and revitalizing Indigenous cultural heritage. Through his creative use of narrative, humor, and postmodern techniques, King challenges dominant historical narratives and creates space for Indigenous perspectives.

Future research on Thomas King’s novels could explore comparative analyses with other Indigenous authors or focus on the role of gender, environment, and political resistance in his works. Additionally, the study of his influence on contemporary Indigenous literature could provide further insights into the evolving landscape of Indigenous storytelling.

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