

Understanding the Changing Concepts of Halloween in America

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Abstract

America has many cultures and most of them brought by the immigrants, as multiculturalism country it provides the people with the freedom to explore themselves with many positive ways, what becoming the issues nowadays is about the origin of a certain culture and how it can be part of American culture. Halloween is very famous in many parts of the country around the world because some of the countries celebrated this day, in America itself celebrated annually with different ways in each state. Halloween has been being part of American culture, this is one of the important celebrations, here will be discussed about the original ideology of this celebration and the changes which happened in American Halloween. For this case, creolization, as theory is able to explain about the study because of the fundamental statement, was none of the cultures were original and there must be influenced by other; furthermore, this study will be clearer with qualitative method and descriptive analysis, at the end of discussion hopes would find the changes that happened in American Halloween.

Keywords

Culture, Halloween, Creolization

1 Introduction

A country must have its own culture because it is a national identity, the identity which described a certain country. Many thinkers conceiving the culture itself, Edward Tylor is one of the men who defined culture as: "culture or civilization, taken in its wide ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society" (Moore, 2009, p. 5). Culture is complex to define due to the different perspective in defining its concept. As Tylor stated that culture is a complex definition which entails knowledge, belief, art, morals values, law, customs, or any human capability that they create in a society or environment.

In the multicultural country, the basic concern is also about culture, in which in a plural society with many backgrounds entail their previous culture, that automatically affect the culture which already exists before. It is the impact that we know as creolization, as Drummond said that creolization is often used merely as a synonym for mixing or hybridity (Eriksen, 2018, p. 156). The discussion about culture will always be related an origin. Some people believed that there is no culture that has never been colonized. A culture may be

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created or brought by people and “creolization” is used to evoke cultural fusion and the emergence of new cultures across the globe.

The United States of America (USA) has many cultures due to its massive population and it is also known as the immigrant country; even the American founding fathers were immigrants from England. Nowadays, the USA continues to be a great country with the concept of the melting pot then salad bowl and constitution. Anyone has their own opportunity to live in America. Most Americans today are of European origins from England, Germany, the Netherlands, Russia and so forth. The settlers who came to America with their own belief, culture, knowledge and then united today as Americans. Although the ancestors of American were from previous backgrounds, the American constitution has never restricted the existence of a specific culture or language in America. The American culture is now believed as a hybrid culture in the creolization process due to external influences that affected the current culture.

At this time, the writer analyzes one of American famous culture that is celebrated annually. This cultural celebration is known as Halloween. The writer believes that this term is widely known by people around the world because it is also celebrated in some country outside of America. Halloween has been known as part of the American culture because it is observed by American society and sponsored by the government. Other media such as literature and film also rapidly spread information regarding Halloween. Outside opinion regarding Halloween often means related to ghost, children, party, costume, candy, witch even murder. These people receive the information about Halloween from story, film or direct judgment and definition of the term Halloween. Possibly some definitions may be right and wrong which mostly are mere definitions without validation. However, the important thing is to gather credible information about Halloween which can start from questions such as definition about American culture which later lead to the origin of Halloween and eventually traced back to its original meaning and the changing of symbol or icon.

2 Theoretical Framework

As the cultural theory in analyzing the object of the study, a creolization is intended to explore American culture, that commonly refers to a historical process specific to colonial sites and moments of the world history. However, nowadays it is increasingly being used to describe many forms of cultural contact, including both reciprocal and asymmetrical exchanges across a wide range of cultural formations (Lionnet & Mei Shih, 2011, p. 1). In very clear ways, creolization can be classified as a theory that deals with the historical process, cultural exchange and formation. In this discussion Halloween as one of American culture has its historical roots and the cultural formation that occurred in Halloween itself. Creolization explains the historical and new cultural formation in America, that is known as cultural creativity in the process of cultural creations. An excellent point is when a culture is in contact, the expressive and performance coming as the encounter, an adaptation creates multiple meaning (Baron & Cara, 2011, p. 3), this creolization can analyze the expression of transition and transformation and a culture process. In the object of the study, creolization theory is an important part to analyze Halloween in America as well as its cultural formation that has been through change in American society.

3 Discussions

It already been clear that culture has many definitions, Edward Tylor defined in very clear ways but in discussing America (USA) towards the culture, it should be clear to define what is American culture by that it can know which is classified as American cultures, American culture is hard to say because the culture in America brought from a place outside of America. *Cristina De Rossi*, an anthropologist at Barnet and Southgate College in London stated that American culture encompasses the customs and traditions within the scope of the United States. "Culture encompasses religion, food, what we wear, how we wear it, our language, marriage, music, what we believe is right or wrong, how we sit at the table, how we greet visitors, how we behave with loved ones, and a million other things," (De Rossi as cited in Zimmermann, n.d). It is clear that culture in America relates to American beliefs, language, music, and many other things, custom, and traditions that are the key to indicate that American culture mostly includes things which origin does not matter. Once the culture arrives in America it will be becoming American culture. Halloween is a tradition in America celebrated annually. It is one of famous cultural heritage and more discussion will be

dedicated to it since it due to its tie with American culture, that is often regarded as imported culture as well as Halloween with its origin before it arrived in America and which later developed to become American culture.

3.1 Misunderstanding of Halloween

Halloween is not merely festival celebrated annually in October 31st; there is essence or values of Halloween celebration. What happened today is Halloween has become a misunderstanding, lost ritual or values in it, the word itself almost has a strange, pagan feel which is ironic, since the name derives from 'All Hallows' Eve'. Prior to about ad 1500, the noun 'hallow' (derived from the Old English *hálga*, meaning 'holy') commonly referred to a holy personage or, specifically, a saint. Then the changing time hallow lost its meaning become known as Halloween (Morton, 2012), The words Halloween is created by misinterpreting meaning, firstly it refers to the words hallow derived from old English means *Holy*, to celebrates *the All Hallow saints day*, and in the middle twentieth historian also added another mistake by stating that Halloween was Roman festival called Pomona.

By the mid-twentieth century, Halloween historians had added another mistake to their understanding of the day, stating that it was based in part on a Roman festival called Pomona, when in fact there was no such celebration. In the 1960s, a veritable cult of urban legends built up around Halloween especially the notorious 'razor blade in the apple' myth, which suggested that innocent young children were at risk during the beloved ritual of trick or treat although there were no recorded instances of real cases behind these modern myths. (p. 9)

Lisa Morton stated that there are four unassailable facts of Halloween. First, it boasts both a Pagan and Christian history. Second, its position in the calendar at the end of autumn/beginning of winter means it has always served in part as a harvest celebration. Third, it is related to other festivals of the dead around the world. Finally, however, its combination of pagan New Year celebration and joyful harvest feast have also given it a raucous side, and it has almost always been observed with parties and mischief-making. Halloween itself known as Celtic harvest tradition, it is right but not many people really understand the word Celtic itself, then sometimes fall into wrong subject identity. The Celts were referred to as *Keltoi* by Greek and Roman writers and it's likely that the name derives from the Indo-European word for 'hidden' (*kel-*), making the Celts literally 'the hidden people'. They once spread across most of Europe and throughout the British Isles, they even occupied in Rome for several months around 400 BC. Celts are a tribe who engage to human sacrifice and choose, the ritual is for gods to ensure fertility, fruit harvest and victory in the battle, they also believed in afterlife and soul journey. Celts believed that the soul will come to the world in the night and door between human and souls will open, that allows the dead to return to the living.

The Celts did engage in human sacrifice, but often chose the victims from within their own tribes by drawing lots in the form of bits of cake – whoever received the piece with the blackened bottom was offered to the gods to ensure the fertility of the herds, a fruitful harvest or victory in battle. They believed in an afterlife, with souls journeying to another world sometimes called *Tir na tSamhraidh*, or 'Land of Summer' (note the similarity to 'Samhain'). They believed that the doors between this world and that Otherworld opened one night a year Samhain, of course. On that night, the dead might return to the living, and creatures called *sidh*, or fairies, could cross over to bedevil human. (Morton, 2012, p. 9)

Celtic culture was recorded by later Christianized Irish scribes, so those same Irish integrated aspects of their ancestors' Samhain into their own All Saints' Day. At the seventh century, the Catholic Church had spread throughout most of Europe. Missionaries such as St Patrick, who would become the patron saint of Ireland, had successfully converted the pagan Celts. In the course of history, Pope Gregory I famously wrote a letter in suggesting that existing temples and even sacrificial rituals should not be destroyed but rather turned to use for Christian purposes. This doctrine, known as *syncretism*, even replaced lesser pagan gods with Catholic saints. By 1550, Samhain had been completely absorbed into the dual festival of All Saints and All Souls (Morton, 2012, p. 20), and yet the Christian celebrations retained much of the pagan character, still offering both joyful celebration and somber contemplation of death. But there were other events happened throughout Europe that had become just as central to the evolution and future of Halloween.

3.2 Americanized Halloween

Halloween celebration has similarity with Day of the Dead (also known as *Día de Los Muertos*). It is a Latin American festival celebrated mostly in Mexico, where it receives the status as a national holiday. Day of the Dead lasts for two days: November 1 and 2. While there are similarities between the traditions of Day of the Dead and All Saints' Day and All Souls' Day (including Halloween), including when they are celebrated, Day of the Dead is a festive occasion rather than a somber one. November 1 is set aside specifically to remember the souls of children who have died prematurely and is known informally as "Día de Los Angelitos" (day of the little angels). November 2 is dedicated to honoring the memories of adults (Montillo, 2009, p. 24), in this tradition holds that on the days the souls can come back to the world and take part in the family's celebrations, so the Day of the Dead is a time when spirits of the dead return to enjoy a visit with family and friends.

Halloween absorbed from Celtic tradition into Catholic festival celebrated All Hallow Saints day (*All Saints* and *All Souls*), initially was of Celtic heritage in offering gratitude and requesting for blessing from gods. It was later replaced from the pagan tradition the human sacrifice in Celtic but Succeed combined to Catholic tradition. In America, Halloween is celebrated on October 31. It has become a major party night for adults, arguably the most important after New Year's Eve. An estimated 65 percent of American adults participate in Halloween, beyond handing out candy. Roughly \$1.5 billion is spent annually on costumes, and a further \$3 billion on party accessories (Rogers, 2002, p. 6). Halloween is not only celebrated by children who ask for candies but also a celebration for the adults. This is just one side of American Halloween that has lost its ritualistic values.

Halloween in America is known to be brought by the immigrants. It is a long discourse due to its celebration outside America. However, what makes it a different discourse is that how does Halloween becomes an American culture. Upon the discussion about who developed the American Halloween, the old world must be explained. England has ties to Halloween. A woman born on Halloween was thought to have supernatural powers, such as an unusual capacity to foretell the future, especially regarding to her own family. It continued to be associated with the supernatural, until after the Reformation in which there was no common set of ritual practices marking the event.

Halloween is a celebration of the harvest, at the beginning to express gratitude to gods. One of which is the god of death, in Agricultural cycle, Halloween was traditionally a time for renewing leases; hiring laborers; rethatching cottages; gathering crops, nuts, fruit, and peat; and slaughtering animals. In the corn-growing areas of Britain, it followed hard on the ritualized cutting of the *cailleach*, the "hag," or last sheaf. Accordingly, the Halloween supper was often a harvest supper featuring grain or fruit-based items, especially those associated with the potato: champ (mashed potatoes with milk, butter, and leeks), colcannon (mashed potatoes with cabbage), or boxty (fried colcannon) (Morton, 2012, p. 66). When it comes to the celebration of Halloween, it would differ depending on the area itself. In England, it was the during the agricultural cycle which planted supper grain from would be harvested. what about America as the new land is it same because the people in America mostly based on England.

Mostly people of America at the beginning was English who already been known about Halloween, but at the same time Irish and Scottish also migrated to North America, in other sources mentioned that the reason Irish moving because in 1845, a disease known as potato blight began to ravage the staple food crop of Ireland. Over the next seven years, approximately one million Irish died, and another million left the country and fled to America. Halloween was brought by the Irish and the Scottish, with their strong tradition of disguise, pranks and a set of games and rituals. The migration of the nineteenth century was likely the reason that drove Halloween to be commemorated in North America by nearly two million Irish people in the US and Halloween celebrated as an ethnic identity. Halloween became an opportunity as a contribution to nation building and representatives. By the time it was accepted in the first decade of the twentieth century, it was celebrated coast to coast by a wide variety of groups: natives and immigrants, rich and poor, blacks and whites, Protestants and Catholics.

Halloween in North America underwent many of the changes that we have already detected in Britain. In fact, American Halloween was celebrated in a more consumerist fashion than in England, Halloween first came to America, it continued to be a family-centered festival as well as an evening of nightly revels. In America, the word 'corn' came to refer to maize, which is harvested in late autumn. Corn-husking contests were sometimes a feature of early American Halloween parties, and to this day American Halloween decorations often include decorative ears of corn (known as 'Indian corn') or corn stalks. Another common American Halloween icon also derived from the harvest: the scarecrow. Scarecrows, which are traditionally figures made of old clothing and straw, serve an important function throughout the growing year, driving birds away from crops; but by late October, once the harvest has been completed. (Morton, 2012, p. 66)

In Britain, children had carved Halloween lanterns from large turnips or Swedes, and in Scotland there are contemporary reports of masked youngsters carrying carved, lit turnips (neep lanterns) and going from door to door asking, Halloween in America was in the process of acquiring what would become its most popular icon, the jack-o'-lantern carved from a pumpkin. The legend of Jack, the blacksmith who outwits the Devil, appears in hundreds of variants throughout both Europe and America and typically ends when Jack dies and, being denied entrance to either Heaven or Hell, instead wanders the earth with his way lit only by an ember held in a carved-out turnip.

American Halloween is different in some cases from other countries, especially England, Halloween in America today looks losing the essence of ritual and meaning of original Halloween, it nowadays looks more consuming fashion of Halloween costume, rather than supernatural elements, then other thing makes American Halloween different is corn, likes what has been explaining above Halloween influenced by what dominant crops in a country. Furthermore, what makes Halloween in America different is Jack-O lantern made from pumpkin, while in England and Scotland has lit turnips (neep lanterns).

3.3 Halloween Icons and Meaning to society.

Besides the story of Halloween in a global world and the history of Celtic who has a ritual as their grateful and offering to their gods which later known as Halloween, tracking back of Halloween, indeed it really influence culture such as England, America, even Asia. There is a very interesting topic to know, it is a Symbol or Icon within Halloween celebration, in the previous sub-discussion. In each country who celebrated Halloween, there must be differentiation because of Halloween as a culture which entering to a new culture; it will be having an impact and effect toward Halloween tradition. This time will be discussed in a specific area; it is America (USA). America celebrated Halloween in many ways, firstly this study will look at the icon of Halloween in America, Something that very authentic of Halloween is a game of Trick or threat that becoming one important part of Halloween celebration, Halloween's appeal for children, especially costuming and trick or treat, have made the holiday far more commercially successful than other festivals (such as Valentine's Day) that are focused more on adults (Morton, 2012, p. 116). Another important thing is costume and the reason for appearing the costumes. In Halloween, there are three symbols of Halloween, especially in America firstly, it must be found character or costume of Black woman witch with broomstick; why this character exists in Halloween, in origin of Halloween there was no this character this is changing value from Christian especially Catholic, because Christian leaders believed these women might really work for the devil, they believed hundreds of thousands were killed by witch, so in the 1800s this character created as part of Halloween celebration.

Secondly, the Black cat also being the icon of Halloween, Christian believed witches used creatures for their evil magic. Some ancient people had prayed to cat goddesses. Black cats became feared at Halloween, People thought they helped witches. The third character is Jack-O-Lantern (Rosinsky, 2002, p. 9-14); there are two dominant colors in Halloween, black and orange. Black refers to the witches wore black and dangerous cats that help witches, then orange is Jack-O lantern blaze and the orange pumpkin that becoming his head. This jack-o'-lantern custom originated in Ireland with the myth of a man named Jack who, after dying, could not get into either heaven or hell. He was doomed to walk the Earth in search of a final resting place. Jack became known as "Jack of the Lantern," which, over time, became abbreviated to "Jack-O-Lantern." People all over Ireland and Scotland began making their own versions of Jack's turnip lantern, sometimes using potatoes instead of turnips. Large beets were used in England. The pumpkins were relatively unknown to the Europeans, but were very important as a means of sustenance in the Americas, and then they became part of the new tradition.

Why Jack-O lantern becoming symbol in American Halloween? It because Christian believed that he can keep away the monster or evil who came to the world. There examples above are symbol of American Halloween costume, but last interesting costume that can be said Americanized is Dracula and bats, these two character never exist in the Celtic mythology but exist in modern Halloween celebration, it, exist based on popularity in society, the icons taken from Bram Stoker's novel, Dracula. The story of the vampire count is in Transylvania who has evil action, then created as American Halloween icon. American Halloween celebration or later becoming party in America, showing the history of Halloween itself that change from the sacred ritual into the social costume even celebration is business for some peoples.

4 Conclusions

America is a multicultural country, Halloween becoming one of its cultures because American Culture encompasses the customs and traditions of the United States. "Culture encompasses religion, food, what we wear, how we wear it, our language, marriage, music, what we believe is right or wrong, how we sit at the table, how we greet visitors, how we behave with loved ones, and a million other things,". The process of creolization happens in this case, none of the culture that is not being colonized, and process of creolization appears in Halloween, and how is a culture in America, celebrated in the country annually but actually the culture is not originally from the country. Furthermore, it is still American culture, as the creolization concept it is a creative process, in America celebration was changed and full with their creativity, American society celebrated Halloween in different ways, this is the concept of creolization theory coming true, Halloween although not originally from America but it through process of Americanization and being Americanized. Halloween is not from America because American society itself which created the culture is not from one country such as England but from German, Ireland, Scotland and many more, Halloween comes from Celtic tribe traditions but already Christianized by erasing human sacrifice but still respect for gods for good harvest and believed in dead of day that combines with All Hallows saints day, In America, Halloween mostly brought by immigrant Irish and Scottish, it having changing values because of modernization but it as the process of creativity, in there some are added like food for Halloween celebration and the character or symbol in Halloween that only found in America as the characteristic of American Halloween.

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