Thanksgiving then and now

Thanksgiving has been celebrated in America for centuries, and these documents present different dimensions of this multi-faceted event. The historical roots of Thanksgiving are explained on culture-sens.fr and the commercial perspective is illustrated in a 2023 article from cbsnews.com, while the political dimension emerges from a critical approach proposed by a Native American in a testimony from time.com and L. B. Johnson’s speech after J. F. Kennedy's assassination. Its modern reality is highlighted by the contrast between Norman Rockwell’s 1943 painting and Matt Wuerker’s 2010 cartoon from politico.com. To what extent does Thanksgiving mirror the evolution of the American society?

Originally, Thanksgiving entailed a family gathering, as depicted in Norman Rockwell’s painting and its modern spoof, in a harmonious balance with the father dominating the scene and the mother waiting on the whole family. This will give all of the family members the cherished memories mentioned in the testimony from time.com. The religious dimension mentioned in the articles is particularly visible in L. B. Johnson’s speech. The turkey, which sits imposingly at the centre of everyone’s attention, and more generally the meal shared by family members of all ages, is a staple of Thanksgiving, as a reminder of gratitude and peace, and a tribute to the meal shared between Native Americans and the settlers after a plentiful harvest, as explained on culture-sens.fr and time.com.

Yet, this idyllic vision is qualified by commercial and political recuperation. Indeed, the time spent with one’s family is being gradually encroached on by the call of buying sprees as shops now promise special Thanksgiving-oriented bargains on that day, the cbsnews article shows, and it can be used to convey questionable messages, as explained on time.com. Indeed, the Natives’ resentment stems from the hidden dark side of history, namely the numerous massacres perpetrated by the settlers. The testimony thus debunks the myth described on culture-sense.fr, and adds that this Thanksgiving tale has often been used to convey colonial and racist ideology. In a different perspective, Norman Rockwell’s painting conveys a political message as it was part of a patriotic, patriarchal, balanced and reassuring strategy in the midst of WW2, just as L. B. Johnson used the Thanksgiving rhetoric to appeal to his citizens’ unity around him in the turmoil following J. F. Kennedy’s assassination. He needed to find common references to get their support, using the myth of Thanksgiving to build the myth of a peaceful and thriving America despite the Cold War tensions, and the myth around J. F. Kennedy at the same time.

Thanksgiving has kept being updated as American society has evolved. Indeed, the activities described on cbsnews.com show how the shift away from religion, described on time.com, has given way to successful commercial, sporting and sometimes unconventional events like turkey bowling, in a society whose values have changed. What happens at Thanksgiving also mirrors the ubiquity of new technologies as people massively buy online, purchasing all sorts of products among which digital devices, that can then be used around the Thanksgiving table as the cartoon shows and maybe ironically denounces. The Native American, despite his critical approach, also showcases a modern approach in which Native Americans can still celebrate Thanksgiving but in an enlightened way, focusing on the positive values and making the event their own.

548 words

Thanksgiving then and now

Thanksgiving has been celebrated in America for centuries, and these documents present different dimensions of this multi-faceted event. The historical roots of Thanksgiving are explained on culture-sens.fr and the commercial perspective is illustrated in a 2023 article from cbsnews.com, while the political dimension emerges from a critical approach proposed by a Native American in a testimony from time.com and L. B. Johnson’s speech after J. F. Kennedy's assassination. Its modern reality is highlighted by the contrast between Norman Rockwell’s 1943 painting and Matt Wuerker’s 2010 cartoon from politico.com. To what extent does Thanksgiving mirror the evolution of the American society?

Originally, Thanksgiving entailed a family gathering, as depicted in Norman Rockwell’s painting and its modern spoof, in a harmonious balance with the father dominating the scene and the mother waiting on the whole family. This will give all of the family members the cherished memories mentioned in the testimony from time.com. The religious dimension mentioned in the articles is particularly visible in L. B. Johnson’s speech. The turkey, which sits imposingly at the centre of everyone’s attention, and more generally the meal shared by family members of all ages, is a staple of Thanksgiving, as a reminder of gratitude and peace, and a tribute to the meal shared between Native Americans and the settlers after a plentiful harvest, as explained on culture-sens.fr and time.com.

Yet, this idyllic vision is qualified by commercial and political recuperation. Indeed, the time spent with one’s family is being gradually encroached on by the call of buying sprees as shops now promise special Thanksgiving-oriented bargains on that day, the cbsnews article shows, and it can be used to convey questionable messages, as explained on time.com. Indeed, the Natives’ resentment stems from the hidden dark side of history, namely the numerous massacres perpetrated by the settlers. The testimony thus debunks the myth described on culture-sense.fr, and adds that this Thanksgiving tale has often been used to convey colonial and racist ideology. In a different perspective, Norman Rockwell’s painting conveys a political message as it was part of a patriotic, patriarchal, balanced and reassuring strategy in the midst of WW2, just as L. B. Johnson used the Thanksgiving rhetoric to appeal to his citizens’ unity around him in the turmoil following J. F. Kennedy’s assassination. He needed to find common references to get their support, using the myth of Thanksgiving to build the myth of a peaceful and thriving America despite the Cold War tensions, and the myth around J. F. Kennedy at the same time.

Thanksgiving has kept being updated as American society has evolved. Indeed, the activities described on cbsnews.com show how the shift away from religion, described on time.com, has given way to successful commercial, sporting and sometimes unconventional events like turkey bowling, in a society whose values have changed. What happens at Thanksgiving also mirrors the ubiquity of new technologies as people massively buy online, purchasing all sorts of products among which digital devices, that can then be used around the Thanksgiving table as the cartoon shows and maybe ironically denounces. The Native American, despite his critical approach, also showcases a modern approach in which Native Americans can still celebrate Thanksgiving but in an enlightened way, focusing on the positive values and making the event their own.

548 words