

The History and Development of British and American Literature

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Abstract: British literature and American literature are both inseparable parts of world literature. No matter at what period of the Anglo-American literature, they have had a significant impact on the political, cultural, historical and even the people's lives in the world. Anglo-American literature has a long history and has been in the process of change and development ever since its birth. It shows different styles in different historical periods. The great writers and works are constantly emerging, enriching the treasure house of world literature. By summarizing the different genres and styles of English literature and American literature appearing in different periods, the article explores the historical development of Anglo-American literature.

1. Introduction

British literature and American literature, as important parts of world literature, have had a significant impact on the politics, culture, history and even the life of the people in the world. They are important reference objects for the development of literature in various countries in the world. In the long period of historical development, Anglo-American literature abides by the law of literature itself, and with the change of political and economic environment, it has undergone many transformations and evolutions, constantly creating literary genres that are compatible with the political and economic current situation, General literature of the times. British literature has gone through such stages as renaissance, neoclassicism, romanticism, realism and modernism, and at every stage a great number of outstanding literary works have emerged. American literature was born along with the development of free capitalism in the United States. Different from the English literature that experienced the long period of feudal monarchy, American literature was less influenced by the feudal rule. Therefore, American literature is more democratic and more individualistic and liberation of personality. At the same time, because the United States is a multi-ethnic United Nations, there are many different national cultures in American literature. Therefore, the style of American literature is very complex and diverse. The development of American literature is to continuously learn and melt all ethnic groups Literary characteristics of the process. [1] According to the historical order, the author discusses the British literature and the American literature separately, hoping to get a better understanding of the historical development of Western literature and to find enlightenment from the literary styles in different periods of Britain and the United States to promote the development of Chinese literature.

2. British literature

From the 14th to the 17th century AD, a vigorous bourgeois cultural movement broke out in Western European countries. This ideological emancipation movement centered on humanism and advocating "human nature" and opposing "divinity" is a battle for Western Europe and even the whole world A profound change of great significance, known as the "Renaissance." Led by this magnificent ideological liberation movement, Britain created an outstanding literary master represented by Shakespeare and created numerous immortal writings. The Renaissance was an important stage in the development of British literature and an important period for the formation of British literary style. The literary works born in this period mostly advocated the emancipation of humanity, the pursuit of a happy life in real life, opposed feudal dictatorship, opposed to the ideological domination of the church as the core, such as Shakespeare's famous comedy works

"Romeo and Juliet", "Venice businessman" and so on It reflects the author's opposition to feudal autocracy and the promotion of human liberation. The European writers of this period decisively abandoned the mesmerizing literary forms in the Middle Ages and conducted explorations and reflections on real life. They hoped to use words to reflect the suffering and real aspirations of the people. In the literary creation, most of the themes chosen come from the real life, with the description of folk and social life as the main themes, and the writing techniques also tend to realistic style. Renaissance, to promote human liberation against feudal autocracy as the core idea, the British literary masters have created a series of popular literary images and immortal literary and dramatic works.

In the late 17th century AD, Britain entered an era of bourgeois constitutional monarchy. With the establishment of bourgeois dominance, the birth of neoclassical literature that advocates clarity, restraint, elegance and the pursuit of perfect harmony, this literary form is the most representative of the literary forms of the people's life and state of mind during this period. [2] The outstanding poetic representative of the neoclassical period was Alexander Pope. Pope's poems are mostly ironic, but they lack the emotional color due to format restrictions. The development of English prose was prosperous during this period, and prose essay embodied neoclassical aesthetic ideas. In the mid-18th century, the first industrial revolution broke out in Britain. The literary creation in the United Kingdom during this period focused mainly on the Industrial Revolution, most of which reflected a series of problems that arose during the transition from the traditional handicraft production to the production of machinery. For example, environmental destruction, displacement of handicraftsmen, to change and so on. The core of this period literature is sadism, the main representative of Olivier Goldsmith's long poem "Deserted Village", James Thomson's "Four Seasons Song" and so on, the main manifestation of the sadistic poetry of the author in the way of life Fear of change, and nostalgia for a simple life in the past.

3. American literature development

Prior to the Revolution, American colonial literature was deeply influenced by Western religions. During this period, most of the American literary works were collected in churches. The representative works include: The Flower of the Americas by Father Granton Mather; And Judge Day of Judge Michael Wiggles, both of which are typical examples of religious works and reflect the situation in the colonial society that was overwhelmed by a strong religious atmosphere. The American literary works of this period mainly focused on the selection of social environment, with the content closely linked to the background of the times.

The U.S. independent revolution not only completely changed the United States but also affected the then capitalist colonial rule of the world at that time, and its influence continued into the present-day society. As early as the War of Independence, the European bourgeois enlightenment had laid down some national independence ideological foundations for the American colonial peoples and promoted the birth of American national literature. The most representative works of American literary works in the period of the independent revolution are advocating self-reliance as the core and advocating patriotism and liberalism. The most representative works are Thomas Jefferson's Declaration of Independence and Franklin's Poor Richard's Almanac, the former focused on the urgent desire of the American people to call for freedom, national independence and national unification. The latter demonstrated Franklin's patriotism and his encouragement for young people to set up their own businesses, which had an impact on the American outlook on life and values Big. Born in the independent revolution, besides the American national literature and American liberalism, the American national literature in this period contains a strong liberal ideology and pursues individual liberation and self-reliance. Since American national literature was born in the period of the War of Independence, the literary works of this period are mainly poems, most of which are very revolutionary in nature. At the same time, a great number of outstanding prose works have emerged.

The change of political form has promoted the development of American literature. After the victory of the War of Independence, the national literature and works of the United States

mushroomed and emerged one after another, and the mode of creation gradually got rid of the religious features of the colonial period. Social status quo led to romantic literature. American romantic writers, drawing on the essence of British romantic literature, depict the real life of the United States in a free and unrestrained manner. The plot of the literary work in this period is bizarre and exotic. From the early 19th century to the eve of the U.S. civil war, it was the heyday of romantic literature and later known as the "Renaissance of the United States." During this period, different styles of writers and national literary works emerged. The most representative works are Whitman's Grass Leaves Collection, Irving's Reading Notes, and Hawthorne's Scarlet Letter.

In the mid-19th century, American literature gradually transformed from romanticism to realism. Its mainstream literature is "native literature." Native literature is the prelude to American realistic literature and the forerunner of scientism. It appeared in the late sixties of the nineteenth century. The masterpiece is Mark Twain's Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, Henry James The "portrait of the lady" and so on. Most of the local literature center on criticizing the social darkness and reflecting the hardship of the folk. The story centers on the hardship of the rural life and the struggles of the people in the bottom of the city. It focuses on the author's sympathy for the people who lived in misery at that time, Spite. In the 1880s, after the U.S. civil war ended and the Americans began to shift their attitude towards the business sector, gradually turning their obscenity into acceptance, the United States embarked on the path of industrialization. After that, the United States launched a vigorous westward movement while moving westward Start building the North American continent. [5] At this time, the Americans constantly freed themselves from the traditional thinking during the feudal colonial rule and shifted the focus of their lives to real life concerns. The American realism literature reflects the mentality of the Americans at the time. With the continuous development of American society, the life of the citizens has become more and more colorful. The poetry and the opera are not enough to express the inner feelings of the people. Therefore, novels are the main forms of literature creation in this period. Representatives are Howells, Howells is the father of American realistic literature, as the representative of "Silas Rapam's fortune", he believes that literary creation should be loyal to the times, loyal to the actual, loyal material, he Opposed to romanticism, the art processing of literary raw materials practices advocated that literature should truly reflect the social reality.

4. British and American literature after the Second World War

Since the 1960s, as social life has stabilized, writers have begun to reflect on the "alienation" and "involuntary" appearance of people in the real world and exposed and criticized them in the form of literary creation. This criticism is certainly not Marx's political economy and philosophical critique, but more means of taking the literature, using irony, exaggeration and even surrealistic approach to literature ideas and creation, directly to the life of the decent and ridiculous, Cruelty and tenderness, pain and joy, horrible and ridiculous fusion, so that readers have some unease or dumbfound mood, to remind the reader to establish a critical awareness of life and the dimension of reflection. We call this literary phenomenon black humorous literature. The most representative works are Heller's Twenty-Two Military Rules and the works by Albi of the representative of the absurd theater in the United States.

Jewish writers occupy a large proportion of contemporary American writers, Jewish literature can be seen as a "cultural tributary." The destiny of history has made them feel a sense of wandering and wandering. The massacres and religious thoughts of their compatriots have made the Jewish writers feel guilty and guilty. Alienated American societies have also left them without a sense of belonging. Therefore, one of the most prominent themes in their works is to find "the nature of self." The typical work is Bello's "The Adventures of Ogi Magi." In addition, Rose (1933-), Malamud (1914-) and other well-known Jewish writers.

5. Conclusion

Anglo-American literature is an important branch of world literature and part of human

civilization. This article respectively narrates the history and development of Anglo-American literature from the independent revolution to the period of the Civil War, the Civil War to the First World War, the two World Wars, and the Second World War. After the passage of Anglo-American literature in so many stages of development, we have reached a very high artistic level. Our analysis and study of the history and development of British and American literature is also more conducive to our understanding and understanding of Anglo-American culture and even Western culture.

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