

The Influence of Cultural Differences on British and American Literary Criticism

Yan-rong Zhang

Independent Researcher

Abstract. Literature represents a country, and literary works can show the personality and products of a country. It is also the cornerstone of a country's cultural development. Different countries will inevitably have different cultural traditions. These cultures have completely different characteristics. This is also the main reason why the world culture is developing in a pluralistic direction. This article discusses the impact of cultural differences on British and American literary criticism, with a view to finding a balance between different cultures to help develop new ways to explore British and American literature.

Keywords. Cultural differences; British and American literary criticism; Influence

© 2022 by The Authors. Published by Four Dimensions Publishing Group INC.
This work is open access and distributed under Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

1. Introduction

British and American literary criticism has an important position in the worldwide circle of literature. Under the diversified cultural background, British and American literary criticism has also produced various differences. Therefore, it is very important to explore the influence of different cultures on British and American literary criticism, and this will have a profound impact on subsequent literary criticism. The main objects of literary criticism include, but are not limited to, reviews of various literary works such as poetry, film & television, and prose. Strengthening the analysis of its influencing factors is conducive to ensuring the accuracy and rationality of reviews, and is also the main way to promote the development of literary reviews in the right direction.

2. The impact of language differences on British and American literary criticism

British culture has existed for a long time and is one of the ancient cultures, and British English is an important part of British traditional culture, which shows the life and habits of British people. Therefore, in the process of creating British and American literary works, British English occupies the greatest advantage. Using this language to create can better express traditional culture and express its profound background. In the reviews of related works, most of the critics will gradually tilt towards the United Kingdom, the inheritance country of British English, which is the worship of the ancient language. Therefore, critics tend to be more careful and regular in their comments on British literary works, and they will not add too many innovative elements, also they will not have more flamboyant feelings poured into them. The reason why this happens is related to the British national culture and its traditional culture. In other words, British traditional culture influences domestic literary criticism. The

United States is an immigrant country and their language is also English, but as it is influenced by colonial culture, the English displayed by them is more free and unrestrained. Also, because its economy, culture and politics are all new, it is not affected by historical problems, so literary critics are

less cautious when making comments, but are more assertive and more individualistic. From this aspect, American literary criticism more reflects the country's liberal and democratic cultural atmosphere, which is also the biggest feature of American literary criticism.

3. The Influence of Cultural Connotation Differences on British and American Literary Criticism

Literary works are actually a different form of presentation of national culture and an important channel for the presentation of national culture. As we all know, different nationalities have different spiritual pursuits and different cultural traditions, and the national cultures formed by them will also be different. Therefore, the cultures of the United Kingdom and the United States will also have great differences, which is also the main reason for the differences in the ideological connotation of literary works. Correspondingly, there will be a relatively large difference in literary criticism. For traditional culture, British Literary Criticism oscillates between inheriting or breaking free, innovating or sticking to tradition, British literary criticism still sticks to the original model. For example, in Shakespeare's "Hamlet", the protagonist was questioned himself when he was taking revenge: *To be or not to be, that is a question*. A simple sentence is enough to show the character of the protagonist incisively and vividly. At the same time, this sentence is also an inquiry to the literary world it faces. However, British literary criticism was initially more or less hesitant, and along with the reconsideration and repeated demonstrations of previous theories by literary critics, British literature also had a new development direction. American literary criticism is also closely related to its national history. The short and rapid development of national culture has brought irreparable defect to American culture, but this defect also brings infinite possibilities to the development of American culture. It is precisely because of this that the criticism of American literary works has always been innovative, open, and extremely inclusive, which also promotes the development of these cultures towards diversity.

4. The Influence of Cultural Carrier Differences on British and American Literary Criticism

Language is the most distinctive feature of human beings, and it is also an important feature that distinguishes human beings from other creatures. For a nation, language reflects the culture of its own nation, and literary works show language in words and display it by hands, formed unique cultural works belonging to the nation. Therefore, in different language forms and different language systems, language will also contain unique meanings. English is an important carrier of British culture, which is full of changes in British history and the wisdom of the people, so British literary works are more expressive when expressing emotions. But it is against this background that British critics will be more careful when making comments, so as not to touch the bottom line of this traditional culture, which also limits the freedom of British literary criticism. Although the United States is also an English-speaking country, the environment of the United States is very special, so American English is produced, and its cultural attributes and literary significance are also an important embodiment of American culture. The United States is a country that advocates freedom and equality. To comment on the literary works of such a country, people don't need to be timid and can boldly express ideas. Therefore, American literary criticism is also biased towards freedom.

All in all, there are many factors that affect the reviews of British and American literary works, and cultural differences are the most important factor among them. It is precisely because of the influence of culture that British literary criticism is relatively limited, and the United States is relatively free and more innovative. Only by fully understanding the impact of cultural differences can we further comment on relevant works and truly show the meaning of the works.

References

- [1] Ling Lin. (2021). *An Analysis of the Differences Between British and American Cultures and Their Influence on British and American Literature Reviews: Commentary on "British and American Literature and Culture Readers"* [J]. *Journal of Tropical Crops*, 42(10): 3077.

- [2] Yongchao Wang. (2020). *British and American Cultural Differences and Their Influence on British and American Literary Criticism* [J]. *Young Writers*, 36: 101-102.
- [3] Bin Xu. (2021). *Research on the Influence of British and American Cultural Differences on British and American Literary Criticism* [J]. *Youth Years*, 17: 15-16.
- [4] Xiaojing Wu. (2021) *Analysis of Differences in British and American cultures and Their Impact on British and American Literary Criticism* [J]. *Cultural Journal*, 10: 169-172.