

The distinctions between Chinese and Western literature

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Abstract:

In today's globalization, the communication between Chinese and western literature is becoming more and more frequent, and the influence between them is also deepening. However, although mixed in some aspects, Chinese and Western literature still maintains its own characteristics and charm. Through the discussion of the differences between Chinese and Western literature, we can better understand the diversity of different cultures, promote cross-cultural dialogue and understanding, and enrich the spiritual world of human beings. This paper discusses the differences between Chinese and Western literature in various aspects, including communication mode, communication medium, development time, cycle, content and core ideas. Through the combination of historical events and objective development laws, this paper explores the influence of literature on economic and political development. This paper discusses in detail the relationship between literature and national and social development and how various social factors affect literature development, both of which restrict each other and cooperate with each other.

Keywords: literary development, influencing factors, social development, civilization

1. Introduction

Literature is one of the precious spiritual and cultural treasures in human history. Its definition is very broad, and different scholars have different interpretations of literature in different periods. However, it is undeniable that literature has played a positive guiding role in the social development of various periods, and it is also the spiritual guidance of later generations. China and the West are both great civilizations in history, and the development of literature in the two regions is the focus of cultural exploration. This paper summarizes the characteristics of literature in these regions and makes a detailed comparison. In order to provide a comprehensive perspective on this important aspect of Chinese and Western literature.

Chinese and Western literature refers to the two major literary systems of Chinese literature and Western literature. Chinese literature has a long history and profound cultural heritage, which emphasizes the creation of poetry and artistic conception, as well as the rhyme and rhythm of language. Western literature originated from ancient Greek literature, and through the inheritance and development of Roman literature, formed a European-centered literary tradition. Western literature emphasizes logical thinking and characterization of characters, as well as plot development and conflict resolution.

2. Classical representation

The representative works of Chinese literature include the Book of Songs, the Ci of Chu, the poems of Tang and Song Dynasties, the novels of Ming and Qing Dynasties, etc. The representative writers are Qu Yuan, Du Fu, Li Bai, Cao Xueqin and so on. Representative works of Western literature include Homer's epic Iliad and Odyssey, Shakespeare's plays, Goethe's Faust, etc., and representative writers include Homer, Shakespeare, Goethe, Tolstoy, etc.

3. Major differences between Chinese and Western literature

There are obvious differences between Chinese and Western literature in many aspects. For example, in terms of poetry, Chinese poetry tends to be implicit and symbolic, while Western poetry focuses more on direct emotional expression and rhyming techniques. In terms of prose, Chinese prose emphasizes the elegance and refinement of classical Chinese, while Western prose pays more attention to the fluency and vividness of vernacular. In terms of drama, Chinese drama emphasizes stage performance and the skills of actors, while Western drama pays more attention to the literariness of scripts and the psychological description of characters. In terms of novels, Chinese novels have a long history and pay attention to the integrity of stories and the typicality of characters, while West-

ern novels have appeared more genres and experimental works in modern times.

The cultural structure of China and the West is different, so the development of literature is not similar. In the *Comparative Analysis of Chinese and Western Literary Theories - Commentary on the Theory and Practice of Chinese and Western Literature* (He Xin), the author discusses in detail the germination of ancient Chinese literature and the foundation and development of Western literary theories, among which the emphasis is on the early existence of Chinese literature in the form of realism. However, most of the main themes of Western literature are religious classics or classical romance. This is a manifestation of the characteristics and differences between the two great civilizations. At the same time, in the *Textile Source of Chinese Paper Making* (Zhu Zijun) mentioned that paper appeared in China ahead of the world's time, and the quality was the highest at that time. Based on this argument, it can be concluded that the reason for the relatively complete preservation of Chinese literature is the high stability and durability of the transmission medium. Compared with the early transmission of Western literature, the medium was basically bark and animal skin, which could not be properly preserved and treated. There was a time lag of about 600 years between the two civilizations in the use of paper.

Commentary on a Dream of Red Mansions

Written by Wang Guowei, a master of Chinese studies, it is the first real comparative study of Chinese and Western literature in the history of Chinese literature. Based on Schopenhauer's philosophical thought, Wang Guowei systematically explored the theme and aesthetic and ethical values of the novel from the content of the story and the description of the characters, which is a milestone in the history of radiology. *A Comparative Study of Chinese and Western Literature from a Cross-cultural Perspective*

This thesis makes a comparative study of Chinese and Western literature from a cross-cultural perspective, and probes into the similarities and differences between Chinese and Western literature in themes, expression techniques, characters, nature and environment descriptions. Through in-depth analysis of the connotation of Chinese and Western literary works, it reveals the conflict and fusion between Chinese and Western cultures, and provides beneficial enlightenment for Chinese literary creation.

Selected Comparative Papers of Chinese and Foreign Literature (Nine)

The book includes nine papers on the comparison of Chinese and Western literature, covering the results of different time periods and different fields of study. It includes discussions on Chinese and Western comparative poetics, cross-cultural studies, ecocriticism, postmodernism,

post-colonialism and cultural studies, showing the diversity and depth of Chinese and Western literature comparative studies. These papers and books not only provide a window for us to deeply understand the differences between Chinese and Western literature, but also provide valuable theoretical resources and methodological enlightenment for literary research. Through these studies, we can better understand the connotation and value of literature under different cultural backgrounds, and promote the communication and development of Chinese and Western literature.

>>>Cultural background: The modern application of Chinese literature is deeply influenced by its profound history and traditional culture, while the modern application of Western literature more reflects the social environment in the process of modernization.

>>>Thematic concerns: Chinese literature tends to discuss the fate of the nation, ethics and family values, while Western literature focuses more on individual freedom, social criticism and human nature exploration.

>>>Literary equipment: Chinese literature tends to use poetic language to express emotions, while Western literature pays more attention to plot and character portrayal.

>>>Values: Chinese literature emphasizes national feelings and traditional virtues, while Western literature emphasizes rationality and individualism.

>>>Methods of expression: Chinese literature focuses on the expression of emotions and images, while Western literature focuses on logic and rational analysis.

>>>Language features: Chinese is rich in expression and aesthetic value in Chinese literature, while English is more accurate and objective in Western literature.

Narrative structure: Chinese literature tends to non-linear narrative, while Western literature tends to linear narrative.

4. The nature and meaning of the content

Based on the above basic analysis, this paper will continue to demonstrate the differences between Chinese and Western literature in content and mode as well as in-depth core ideas. According to Jiang Chengyong's view of the three models of typical shaping in Western literature - the comparison and analysis with modern realism as the center (Jiang Chengyong), one of the theoretical cornerstones of Western traditional literature is "typical theory". This literary theory of character typification comes from the theory of "character type" which has a long history in Western literature. At the same time, by the 18th century, Diderot emphasized the relationship between character and environment and the subtle influence of the character's spirit.

Since then, it is concluded that Western literature mainly emphasizes the spiritual core, but the expression method and the truth degree of the content are not one of the important criteria for the examination of “typical theory”. For Chinese literature, however, the situation is slightly different. In the “cross-border” phenomenon in literary history and the disciplinary boundaries of literary history (Chen Wenxin), the author doubts whether the history of Chinese literature gives more space to a historical figure, whether it is considered in the status of philosophy history or art history. This reflects that Chinese literature is more inclined to record historical literary activities, philosophical development, art history and other objective issues and knowledge systems. However, the spiritual core does not focus on and evaluation, need the reader’s own perception.

5. The concrete meaning of modernization development

The modern application of Chinese literature and the modern application of Western literature are the development trends of literature under two different cultural backgrounds. The modern application of Chinese literature emphasizes the absorption of modern elements on the basis of maintaining the essence of traditional culture, while the modern application of Western literature is more reflected in the innovation of traditional literature forms and the profound revelation of modern social problems.

Chinese literature has played an extremely important role in China’s modernization process. It is not only a carrier of cultural inheritance and innovation, but also an important tool for social change and ideological enlightenment. The following are the meanings of Chinese literature in several aspects of China’s modernization: Recording and reflecting the modernization process Chinese literature records the history of China’s modernization drive through literary works, reflecting social changes and people’s living conditions. The characters, plot design and theme expression in literary works are often closely connected with the background of The Times, thus becoming important materials for the study of Chinese modernization history. Reflecting the aspirations of the people and the reality of society, Chinese literature has always adhered to the people-oriented creation orientation and paid attention to the lives and emotions of the people. Literary works, through the form of art, truly reflect the will of the people and the reality of society, and provide spiritual support and public opinion for the socialist modernization.

Western literature plays a multifaceted role in the process of western modernization. It is not only the product of history, but also the reflection of people’s social life and

mental state in a specific period and region. The themes, plots and characters in Western literary works are often connected with the social conditions and cultural trends of the time, so they can be regarded as a mirror to observe the process of Western modernization. In the process of Western modernization since the 18th century, especially after the Industrial Revolution in Britain, Western literature began to pay more attention to core issues such as science and technology and society, ecology and environment, industry and urbanization trend, materialized society, science and technology and ethics. These works not only reflect the historical understanding and humanistic attitude of the West towards natural ecology, material wealth, science and technology, but also carry out a profound discussion on many social problems arising in the historical process of Western industrialization.

The modernization of Western literature also means the internationalization of Western culture. Through the translation and dissemination of literary works, Western literature has reached out to the world, enhanced international cultural understanding and friendship, and enhanced the status and influence of the West on the international cultural stage.

This paragraph will continue to discuss the modern influence of Chinese and Western literature on their respective regions. Ancient Chinese literature embodies the spiritual wisdom of the Chinese nation. In the analysis of the communication mode and influence of ancient Chinese literature (Yang Jiaqi), it is mentioned that oral and written literature and other visual art forms provide many opportunities for China’s modernization development. China took advantage of these opportunities to complete the rapid economic development, but also inspired the cultural confidence of the people. However, from the perspective of its influence on literature, Western humanism (Wang Xiaoyu) knows that the development of Western literature has experienced a relatively long historical process, which emphasizes the basic concepts of humanity, humanistic spirit, human rights and humanism. Therefore, in today’s Western society, the spiritual value of literature is mainly used in the reform of government and state system, and is used to influence people’s thinking mode and belief.

6. Research gap and improvements

There is no doubt that Chinese and Western literature has undergone great changes from its origin to its application. At the same time, the differences between the two have also influenced regional civilization separately, culture and social development. However, in this paper, the difference between the two is too large, involves too many fields, practical significance is more complicated, worthy

of attention. Besides, due to the profound cultural traditions and values behind Chinese and Western literature, researchers may have prejudices due to their own cultural background and personal preferences, which will affect the objective evaluation and interpretation of literary works. The language difference between Chinese and Western literary works is great. In the process of translation, some subtle meanings and cultural connotations of the original works may be lost, leading to misunderstanding and distortion.

The study of Chinese and Western literature often involves multiple disciplines such as linguistics, history, sociology, etc. The complexity of interdisciplinary research may make it difficult for researchers to fully grasp relevant knowledge, thus affecting the quality of research. Promotion and acceptance of research results Even if researchers draw valuable conclusions, due to the differences between Chinese and Western literature, these conclusions may not be widely accepted by the other cultural circles, limiting the influence of research results. In order to avoid these errors and problems, researchers need to adopt a diversified perspective, strengthen the in-depth understanding of Chinese and Western literature, and adopt scientific and reasonable research methods to ensure the accuracy and reliability of research. In addition, it is also very necessary to strengthen cross-cultural exchanges and cooperation and improve the dissemination efficiency and acceptance of research results.

7. Evaluation

Although literature is an important part of the spiritual culture of each country and region, other components, such as art archaeology, architectural design, etc., affect the overall development of the region all the time. Therefore, we can evaluate the specific importance of Chinese and Western literature to the development of their respective regions.

Chinese literature has an early origin and a large volume, but most of it records the history of the previous dynasties and the state governance plan, which is of little practical significance to the current society and can only provide a rough reference. In addition, Chinese history is relatively complex, there are many dynasties, and the governance system and social type of each dynasty are different, so literature only plays the role of spiritual guidance. For development and China's current national conditions, the literature that can be used for reference dates back to the 1950s at most. Otherwise, the practical significance is not significant.

Western literature emphasizes humanism, human rights and all the juhe ideas related to people, so Western lit-

erature is mostly used for policy system reform, election system, and so on. In this case, the literature material and reference can be used for reference is relatively more, and the practical significance is relatively greater.

For the development of the two regions, this paper emphasizes that it is best to integrate and achieve cultural integration. It may be more critical to refer to Chinese and Western literature at the same time.

8. Conclusion

With the development of globalization, the communication and influence between Chinese and Western literature are increasing day by day. Chinese literature began to absorb some elements of Western literature, such as realism and modernist writing techniques, while Western literature also began to borrow certain characteristics of Chinese literature, such as a deep understanding of nature and the universe. This cross-cultural communication promotes the diversity and innovation of literature.

Based on the summary and extension of the above literature review, the comparative study and practical significance of Chinese and Western literature have been explained. After comparison, it is found that both China and Western countries, literature can effectively change the social status quo and play a positive role in development. The fundamental reason is that it can provide a reference for today's society. Even if it doesn't do much to change the present, the cultural and spiritual core of this area still makes it more attractive. Since then, it can be concluded that Chinese and Western literature may be significantly different in many fields, but its cultural significance has positive effects. May the future development of literature draw advantages and continue to shine the glory of literature belonging to mankind.

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