

Comparison between British Literature and American Literature

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Abstract

The entire study has been engaged itself to make a comparison in between British Literature and American Literature. Both American and English literature has been divided with various periods which have been significantly discussed while analyzing the eminent works and features of each era. The history of English language, British Literature, American literature has been showcased within the entire study. American and British literature both has their own significance in their own sphere of influence. Comparison between both of this literature will be a total disaster but there are still some of the differences. American literature is motivated with ideologies like political infirmity, religions and social conditions. Whereas British literature is full of romantic tales and literature is more motivated to the human as well as moral values. All of the above have been resulted due to the ideologies of both the countries' writers. The British writers are however considered as the classical writers while American writers are the modern writers. The conclusion has given a brief account of this while discussion.

Keywords

American Literature, English literature, periods, writers.

INTRODUCTION

The English is one of the most spoken languages all over the world which makes the entire literature in the English language highly prestigious and attracts the consumers with superior aesthetic taste. A huge number of readers and literature lovers have their superior interest in nurturing the English language in order to fulfil their cravings for elegance. The overall language and literature in English has gone through a huge number of changes and evolution throughout the years due to various political and historical influences. It most significantly impacted the composing literature in the English language. A huge number of scholars, renowned authors, and philosophers have contributed their thoughts and ideas to English literature which have been loved as well as criticized by a number of literature lovers all over the world. The European and most specifically the English imperialism and colonization process in the continent of Northern and Western America flourish the English literature within America.

The overall lifestyle, environmental, political, geographic and social contrast in between England and America has come forth with a significant difference in between American Literature and English literature. This particular study has been keeping its concentration making a comparative discussion and analysis in between British Literature and American Literature. The overall study will discuss in detailed history and periods of both English and American literature. The different features and the different popular literature works such as novel, poetry, drama and many other literature sources from different timelines according to the writers will be concentrated within the discussion. It will help to understand the basic differences between English and

American literature according to different timeframes and helps to make an effective comparison among British literature and American Literature.

DISCUSSION

A concise history of English language

The English language has witnessed a number of syntactic changes within a time frame. The actual origin of the English language has been taken as the Indo-European language group which has been spoken within a vast area of the Europe and Western part of Asia [1]. About 5000 years ago the nomads immigrants who have been roamed the south Easter plain of the Europe has been used to scope the Proto-Indo-European language which is now taken as the parent tongue of now day's English language. The overall evolution and changes in the Proto-Indo-European language due to various political and geographic factors has formed the broadly speaking English language especially in the continental area of Britain. The overall migration process of the Jutes, Saxons, Angles from Germany and Denmark towards Britain has been whistling the trumpet of the English language in Europe [2]. The Norman Conquest over the Saxon tribe due to conquering factors of the English Channel has brought a number of Fresh words especially the food dishes in English language.

The overall history or arrival of English language has been started since the tribes of Jutes, Saxons and Angles through crossing the North Sea. In the 15th century a multiple number of Greek and Latin words had to gain entry within English language [3]. It had a huge influence on the overall accent, syntax and the literature of the English language in Britain. Geoffrey Chaucer the great philosopher and author have been called as the father of English literature through his iconic

work in the English language especially through Canterbury Tales [4]. In recent times there are 40 different English dialects and accents available in the UK which sounds totally different according to the tribal features. Virginia Woolf is known as the mother of the English language through her works, on the other hand William Shakespeare is called as the father of modern English due to their superior contribution towards the English language.

An in-depth understanding of literary periods of British and American literature

Both British and American literature have witnessed a critical evolution and changes in the overall process of making literature which actually divides the literature period of Britain and America with chronological periods. The overall periodic division of British literature has been classified with eight different periods as “Old English”, “Middle English Period”, “Renaissance”, “Neoclassical Period”, “Romantic Period”, “Victorian Age”, “Edwardian Period”, “Georgian Period” and “Modern period” [5]. The entire periodic division has their exclusive and highly different aesthetic features which can be easily distinguished through reading British Literature. On the other hand, American Literature also goes with various changes through different periodic timeframes.

The basic periodic time frame and features of American Literature can be distinguished with four periods as “The Colonial and Early National period”, “The Romantic period”, “Realism and Naturalism”, “The Modernist period” [6]. The initialization of British literature started in the Anglo-Saxon period where most of the literature has been written to glorify the struggles and wars of Anglo-Saxon tribes through empowering the lead protagonist within the entire literature. The history of the Anglo-Saxon tribe and Old Britain can be witnessed through visualizing the potteries and novels which have been written in the old English period of British literature. Most significantly the initial beguile of American Literature started a long after with the arrival of the British citizens to make colonization in America.

The melancholic tone of the nostalgia after shifting the livelihood from The Great Britain to the countryside of America can be recognized within the Colonial and Early National period of literature in America. The Colonial and Early National period in American Literature starts in the 17th century where in contrast most of the epic literature written by Shakespeare has been composed within the similar time frame. It showcased that British literature had its supremacy over American literature in the 17th century. The next periodic era of American Literature was the romantic era which started in 1830 and continued till 1870 [7]. Rip van winkle is one of the most popular child drama and fiction works which has been published in the romantic period of American literature and has been loved by literature lovers all around the world. The overall importance of self-decision making has been portrayed within this particular story written by Washington Irving.

In contrast, the romantic period of British literature has been focused on elaborating the beauty of the environment and romanticism towards Mother Nature within a number of poems and novels written by various scholars such as William Wordsworth, John Keats, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Shelley and many others. The works of Geoffrey Chaucer which have a high tendency of portraying realism have been contested through the writers in the romantic period of British literature in between 1785 to 1832. “A Girl of the Streets” which has been portrayed as a reality of the society and the miscibility of women within the society of America has been illustrated within the entire literature which has been written in the Realism and Naturalism period. In contrast the overall tendency of portraying realism and mocking the aristocracy can be witnessed within the various literature sources which have been written in the Neoclassical Period of English literature. In early 90’s a number of poets and authors who have witnessed the miser ability of the unprofessional human resources within war and the aftermath effects of the wars which has influenced them to make a reality checking tasks of wars through their literature. Wilfred Owen is one of the key writers who have evolved the viewpoint towards the war of the British citizens through his writings and showcased the poor condition of the soldiers which has changed the concepts of war-heroes among the citizens. It has highly influenced the poets and novelists of the writers in America in The Modernist period. It represents a superior impact of British Literature on American literature.

Different periods of English literature

The entire linguistics approach and the literature making process in English have evolved through a huge period of time. A multiple number of scholars, intellectuals, novelists, writers from diverse areas all around the world have involved themselves while practicing English literature which actually influences the overall evolution of English literature globally. A number of political, ideological and expressive factors have mainly played the key role which has transformed the nature of making English literature since past years. The entire discussion will focus on addressing different periods within English literature while discussing the key aesthetic and technical features of each period of English language. The period of English literature has been divided among eight chronological time frames as old English, Middle English Period, The Renaissance, The Neoclassical Period, The Romantic Period, The Victorian Age, The Edwardian Period, The Georgian Period, The Modern Period, and The Postmodern Period [8]. The entire discussion will mainly be going to evaluate the historic and exquisite features of each period within a systematic order.

The Old English period within English literature is also called the Anglo-Saxon period. The basic nature of the literature sources of the Anglo Saxon period mostly establishes a supreme authority of the lead protagonist within the text [9]. The initial history of English and Aglow Saxon inhabitants in Europe can be explored through the help of popular texts in the Anglo Saxon Period (450-1066). Some of

the most significant examples of the literature from Old English or Anglo Saxon period literature are Beowulf. The actual author of the poetry is unknown and it is said that a collective of writers and philosophers from different years has made the entire manuscript of the poetry which makes the entire literature mostly epic in nature in between 5th to 14th century.

Geoffrey Chaucer is one of the legends and philosophers who have written a number of literatures in the Middle English Period. The change of using Grammar, linguistics is the basic thing which differentiates the literature of the Middle English period from Anglo-Saxon period. Geoffrey Chaucer has most significantly come forth a critical evolution of the entire approach of writing in English literature through his iconic creations as examples “The Book of the Duchess”, “The Legend of Good Women” and “The Parliament of Fowls Troilus”, “Criseyde” and “Canterbury tales” [10]. The overall effect of The Renaissance has been most significantly impacted on the overall thinking pattern, way of expression and psychological process of making literature in English. The overall tendency of implementing wit, pun, and melodramas to establish the truth and miser ability of the common people in England can be witnessed while analyzing the features of the Renaissance period in literature in between 1500 to 1600. Some well recognized and highly insurgent literature The Renaissance period are King Lear, Hamlet, The Divine Comedy, Antony and Cleopatra, Utopia and many others which have changed the process and taste of the literature lovers and philosophers of English literature [11]. William Shakespeare is one the most popular and legendary writer, novelist and dramatist who wrote a huge amount of literature such as “Hamlet”, “The comedy of errors”, “Macbeth”, “Julies Caesar” and many other historic and frictional writings from The Renaissance period.

The Romantic Era (1785-1832) of English Literature has shifted its literature viewpoint from lead protagonists to the expiring love and affection towards Mother Nature within the writings especially in poems. Some legendary scholars and their significant works are “My Heart Leaps up” by William Wordsworth, “Frost of Midnight” by Samuel Taylor, “Mont Blanc” written by Percy Shelley, “Ode to a nightingale”

written by John [12]. Lyrical ballads in one of most significant works of the romantic era written by William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge published in the year of 1768. The entire period of English Literature was between 1832-1901 where it has been focused on justifying the true picture and the dark sides of the high profile livelihood of the aristocracy within the literature. The Edwardian Period in between 1901-1914 also witnessed various experiments within the literature. Before the arrival of the Second World War a number of new, young and highly practical poets popular addressed as “War poet” have been experiencing the miscibility of war and poor condition of the untrained military forces within their poems through their real time war experience. It has announced an open war against glorifying the war and treating soldiers like a war hero within literature. The modern period of literature considered the works of the early 20th century and the postmodern era of English literature considered as the Mid-20th century. Virginia Woolf, Scott Fitzgerald, Richard Kulich, John Hawkes are some examples of popular workers in the modern and postmodern era of English Literature.

Introduction to American literature

The overall colonization process of the European brigades in the vast continent of America has started the initial trumpet of English literature in America. The overall initialization of English literature in America started in the 1600s. It has mostly kept its focus on the nonfiction writings which have been made through various renowned British writers who have settled their livelihood in the colonized area of America. One of the most significant works in the initial days of English literature in America can be defined as the Histories of Virginia by John Smith, a renowned English explorer and the president of the Jamestown Colony in America. The glorious tales of exploring the American continent and a number of emotional obligations towards the mother country of England has been introduced as the main features of the America English literatures in early days.

The overall periodic division of American literature can be classified with four categories which has been shown in the below table.

Table 1: Periodic division of American literature

Era	Time- Frame	Eminent Works	Eminent Authors
The Colonial and Early National period	17th century to 1830	“Common Sense”, “Declaration of Independence”, “The Federalist Papers”	Thomas Paine, Thomas Jefferson, John Jay
The Romantic period	1830 to 1870	“Mansfield Park”, “Pride and Prejudice”, “Northanger Abbey”, “Rip Van Winkle”.	Jane Austen, Washington Irving
Realism and Naturalism	19 th century	“The Red Badge of Courage”, “A Deal in Wheat”, “A Girl of the Streets”	Edward Hopper, Frank Norris, Stephen Crane
The Modernist period	1910 to 1945	“The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock”, "In a Station of the Metro", "Pear Tree", “The Old Man and the Sea”.	T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, Hilda Doolittle, Ernest Hemingway

Comparison between British and American literature

American literature and British literature have many similarities and some of the dissimilarities. Both of the countries have different historical past as well as both the countries have different present [18]. The culture of both the countries is pretty much similar as English is the prominent language in both the countries but along with the English the America has deep influence of the Spanish as well as French. The literature of any country is mainly influenced by a lot of factors and the most significant ones are historical, context, writers, narration, style, topic, grammar and punctuation.

Historical

The English language was basically known as the West Germanic language which originated in the mid-5th century to the 7th century. People from the Anglo-Saxon migrants were the people who had spread this language to the Western Europe in countries like North West Germany, southern Denmark and the Netherlands. After that the English language had settled permanently in the United Kingdom and countries which dedicatedly followed the English language were the British, especially the people of England [8]. There have been eight periods of the English language and those are old English, Middle English, renaissance, neoclassical period, Victorian Age, Edward period and Georgian period. In each period the language has been transformed and some outfits vocabulary have been modified or writing sense have been updated. After the 1000 AD most of the European travellers started Voyage through the sea route to different countries and to explore other countries. The sole purpose of the Voyage was to do business along with spreading their literature.

The American continent includes both South America and North America was attacked by the Spanish kingdom. This is the main reason why the South America continent has more Spanish and Portuguese influence. Bruisers tried to capture the lands in the North America continent and were able to grab a large landmass which is currently known as Canada. After that they captured lands in the eastern part of the American but in the year 1775 the American got freedom and they established their constitution but due to the popularity of the English language in the country [13]. In this way the English language had become the prominent language of the country but still Spanish literature had its influence in the southern part of America including the states like California and Texas. This is the reason why the American literature has some of the influences of the Spanish in its south western states.

Narrative

The narrative styles of both the countries are different; in case the literature is closely observed. The American writer tends to use a more classical style of writing as compared to that of Americans [14]. The English writers however use the words which have a complex meaning but the American writer uses the words which are more accessible and are lucid

in nature. Finally it can be said that American literature can easily be understood as compared to that of English literature.

Topic

The English literature writers often write on topics like culture and manners. The best example of the English writer is William Shakespeare who basically writes on the topics which were motivated with romanticism and culture & manners [15]. Meanwhile, the American writers are focused on the topics which have social and political significance. American writers are more motivated to write literature on topics like religion and politics. Some popular American literature writers are Margaret Mitchell, Mark Twain while some of the popular English literature writers are Lewis Carroll and J.K. Rowling. Some of the popular American literature is Realism & Naturalism, and the Contemporary period.

Grammar

The English language is considered the classical language, but the Americans adopted theory literature and modified the English language literature. There are still some differences in grammar of the both the literatures they are as follows; the American writer often focused on simplifying the English language and they do this by removing the words from the traditional English like Americans often use 'color' instead of 'colour'[16]. Along with these grammatical changes Americans use -iz instead of -is in the English vocabulary and the best example is the 'organization' instead of 'organisation'. Regarding the irregular verbs America uses the suffix -ed for the using the verbs in the simple past tense while British uses -t suffix instead. It could be understood that both the writing styles have something in common as both of them use similar words in similar context but the Americans use English vocabulary words which are simple and easily understood.

Style

American Literature is motivated by topics like politics, economics, social and religious status. The writing style of Americans is more or less similar to the Satire, Sarcasm, and Cynicism. The American writers are more focused on romance, human values, ideals, manners, and the differences of class in society [17]. The American writers are mostly cool headed and write the things which come through their mind while the British writing style focuses mainly on the through and words that come from the heart. And it can be said that there are very few minute differences between the both of these writings but still there are some of the differences and ideological differences are more in America than in British. The writing style of both the American and British are pretty much similar including the differences but the speaking is quite different.

Writers

Some of the famous American literature writers are J. F. Cooper, J.D. Salinger, Jack London, E.A. Poe, Mark Twain,

Scott Fitzgerald, W. Faulkner, Flannery O'Connor, Ernest Hemmingway, and Stephen King. Some of the popular English literature writers are like Shakespeare, Bronte, Lord Byron, Kipling, Dickens, Austin, Rowling, Woolf, Tolkien, Orwell, and Collins. Most of the American writers write mostly on topics like which are socially and politically motivated but the British writers are more focused on romantic literature, value based literature and ethical literatures.

CONCLUSION

There are huge differences established in between the overall process of composing literature in the British land and America which has been caused due to high political, environmental, social and geographic differences in between these two places. The entire colonial hangovers of Britain on America have imposed a highly significant influence on American literature. Although, the different historic events, a cross cultural social influence and difference in geographic and atmospheric condition of America has also provided its significant impact on the overall process of making literature and pave the pathway of composing independent literature in America. This particular thing has created a critical divergence and altercation between British Literature and American Literature. The entire study above has been keeping its kingpin while discussing the overall contrast which can be witnessed through analyzing the features of British Literature and American literature. The history of American literature and British Literature has been kept in key attention in order to make an authentic differentiation between English Literature and American Literature.

The entire study has engaged itself while discussing the in depth history of the English language as both American and British literature has been written in English. The syntactical and difference of vocabulary uses have created a significant difference in between American and British Literature. The entire legacy of British Literature has been focused on improving the overall quality of English writing and concentrated on the elegance of interpreting social and political topics. In contrast, American literature has been keeping its eyes to make the literature more flexible, lucid and easy to understand while reading. The great British writers such as Shakespeare, Chaucer, Wordsworth, Keats, Shelley and many other popular writers as mentioned in above study have their key concern on the elegance of writing and carry through the legacy which makes it a little difficult to digest their works for foreign readers. Comparatively the American writers such as Edward Hopper, Washington Irving, John Jay and many others great novelists, poets and philosophers have works to make the literature easy to be interpreted and understood by the foreign readers. These can be taken as the basic contrast which has been established between British Literature and American Literature.

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