

A Comparative Study of British Gentleman Culture and American Cowboy Culture

YANG Weiying

Ningbo University of Finance and Economics, Ningbo, China

This paper makes a comparative analysis by selecting British gentleman culture and American cowboy culture, the two distinctive cultures, to trace their roots, explore their connotations, and search for their similarities and differences, so as to better understand the respective characteristics of British and American cultures. The result shows that although the two cultures have different styles, which can interpret two different ethnic cultures, they are related by blood and have certain commonalities.

Keywords: British gentleman culture, American cowboy culture, comparative study

Introduction

Britain and the United States are the two pillars and typical representatives of western culture. These two cultures have deep roots, but each has its own merits. As far as culture is concerned, every country has its typical cultural image and representative. When it comes to Britain, people think of British gentlemen, and cowboys are also the trademark image of America. This paper compares these two representative cultures and explores their similarities and differences, so as to better understand British and American cultures.

Literature Review

British Gentleman Culture

The origin of British gentleman culture mainly comes from two aspects, one is the noble spirit and the other is the cultural value of the middle class. On the basis of noble spirit, it integrated the values of other classes, and different values developed continuously in the collision, thus forming the gentleman culture we know now. In medieval England, “gentry” was still a social stratum, and its social status was second only to that of noble. Men of this stratum were called “gentleman” when they came of age. Gentleman culture, as a culture derived from aristocratic spirit, was also greatly influenced by Queen Victoria of England. It was under her rule that Britain got the title of “State of Etiquette”. Queen Victoria attaches great importance to personal etiquette and self-cultivation, and her name of elegant personal self-cultivation resounds throughout the European continent. Queen Victoria's high expectations of herself had a great influence on the middle class society at that time. Countless middle-class people have imitated Queen Victoria one after another. It is for this reason that gentleman culture has been greatly improved and developed. Gentleman culture is the essence of English culture. It is based on the noble spirit and mixed with the values of all classes, mainly from the noble spirit and the cultural values of the

YANG Weiying, undergraduate student, Department of Foreign Languages, Ningbo University of Finance and Economics, Ningbo, China.

middle class (Feng, 2018). Gentleman's demeanor embodies the principle of fairness and justice, rational way of thinking, tenacity and determination to pursue honor. Gentleman's spirit also emphasizes the quality of struggle and perseverance, which is a positive absorption of noble cultural quality and an optimization and upgrading of middle class culture. The main origin of English gentlemanly spirit is chivalry handed down from generation to generation in English history. Gentleman's spirit contains many excellent characteristics of chivalry, paying attention to personal demeanor, good manners and communication etiquette, identity and honor, and pursuing fairness, justice, freedom, and competition. Nowadays, gentlemanly demeanor has become a symbol of men's high quality, a basic personality criterion for men, and an affirmation and praise for men (Cai, 2007).

American Cowboy Culture

Cowboy culture originated in the western United States in the early 19th century. At that time, the western part of the United States was still a relatively undeveloped area, and people needed a lot of labor to reclaim land and raise cattle. As a result, many people began to flock to the western region in search of jobs and opportunities. In this process, some people began to engage in equestrian and cow-driven work, and they became what we now call cowboys. These cowboys work in the wild, ride horses, drive away cattle and protect them from wild animals and thieves. Although they were only exploited by the bourgeoisie at first, over time, these cowboys formed their own culture in their work, including special clothes, food, and music. This is what we now call cowboy culture. American cowboy culture, rising from the ground, is a kind of culture that can stimulate unlimited imagination. With the strength of America, American culture has become popular all over the world. Cowboy culture is deeply rooted in the hearts of people with the cowboy images in western movies, and has become a great representative of American culture. Jeans and jeans clothing have become unique symbols of American cowboy culture. The traditional image of cowboy: independent, free, rebellious, rough, bold, chic, brave, ambitious, adventurous, and like to express themselves! The spirit of cowboys is "freedom", which is equivalent to doing what you want, going your own way and being a man. Such a state may be what everyone wants, but not everyone can achieve it. No matter what your status, age, height, fat, and thin, everyone is equal, the world is the same. The packaged person is definitely the real self, and everything else is filtered out. Exploring the essence of jeans is also the spiritual realm of current sensor pursued by modern people-brave, firm, fearless, and indomitable (Smithson, 2014).

Theoretical Framework

Britain and the United States are two countries with similar blood ties in history, but they show different cultural images in front of the world: Britain is regarded as an elegant and noble gentleman, while the United States is a brave and tough fighter "cowboy". There is no difference between the image of a gentleman and that of a cowboy. They represent two different national spirits. To a great extent, this image also explains the historical development of the two countries.

Therefore, the present research, based on the comparison and contrast of British gentleman culture and American cowboy culture, firstly, introduces the characteristics of British gentleman culture; secondly, introduces the characteristics of American cowboy culture; and finally, it compares the British gentleman culture with the American cowboy culture and analyzes their differences.

Results and Discussion

As far as historical origin is concerned, Britain and the United States share the same vein, so they have some

commonalities. Both British gentlemen and American cowboys have a strong sense of mission in the initial stage of their values development, and loyalty and bravery become their first nature. In addition, they all pursue independence and freedom. English gentlemen have inherited the spirit of the British nobility in pursuing freedom and opposing autocracy. The history of British aristocrats runs through the struggle against the king's autocracy and for autonomy. Cowboy spirit also represents independence and freedom. Cowboys are the typical representatives of the pioneers in the western United States. They break away from the shackles of established systems and the shackles of civilization. They often fight for independence, equality, and seek an independent and free life. Another commonality is that they all follow the principle of fairness. Both the image of a gentleman in English literature and the image of a cowboy in American movies, though one is introverted and the other is extroverted, will not achieve their goals in an opportunistic way. Even in British and American literature, the contempt of gentlemen or cowboys for secretly framing others can be reflected. Therefore, the way for gentlemen and cowboys to solve contradictions is to choose a fair duel. The process of duel is a process of fair competition. The pursuit of correct value and the yearning for noble quality of two different cultures are the same.

British and American cultures represent two cultures with different connotations, and there are differences between them. First, gentlemen are conservative and self-styled, while cowboys are open to change. There are many factors in the development of gentleman culture, which inevitably create the characteristics of gentleman's superiority, conservatism, and self-styled. The history of cowboys is a history of struggle for adventure and change of destiny. The origin of cowboys determines that cowboys should strive for change, and adventure, change, and continuous development are their initial and final choices. Second, gentlemen advocate cultivation of intelligence, while cowboys pay attention to practical skills. Gentleman's accomplishment is not only reflected in his elegant speech, decent manners, fashionable clothes, comprehensive manners, and other external manifestations, but more importantly, a gentleman must have good education, rich knowledge, self-discipline, courage to take public responsibility and other internal qualities. If gentleness is a gentleman's trademark, boldness and competence are typical characteristics of cowboys. Cowboys need not only strength and courage, but also all kinds of knowledge and practical skills to survive in the wasteland. Most successful pioneers are skilled and versatile. Third, gentlemen are self-disciplined, while cowboys are willful. British gentlemen are bound by education and are absolutely not at the mercy of passion. Compared with gentlemen, cowboys are more natural and willful, thus creating the simple, bright, and undisguised character of cowboys.

Conclusion

Britain is a traditional European country with a long history. In the past few centuries, British society has been in the state of feudal agricultural society, and it was not until the industrial revolution that it gradually transformed, so the British conservative tradition was deeply rooted. In this case, the British are cautious about change, guarding their own historical and cultural heritage and not making changes easily. And there also has been a long-standing hierarchy and monarch in its society. Therefore, British people are more nostalgia and conservatism. As mentioned above, the perfection and development of English gentleman culture is greatly influenced by Queen Victoria. The United States is just a young country with no deep historical accumulation. Since there are not many traditional things for them to remember and inherit, they need to develop. Various liberation movements and revolutions have thus promoted the opening of American culture. In addition, America is an immigrant country; people from all countries and regions in the world are in America. So, American culture is also very receptive and inclusive, and can accept and absorb all cultural factors. This kind of culture affects

Americans, making them very enthusiastic, cheerful, and good at accepting different people and things. However, compared with the United States, the population structure of Britain is much simpler. Therefore, it is not easy for Britain to accept foreign cultures. Reflecting the British character is more restrained and reserved. These are the reasons why there are such great differences between British and American cultures.

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