

Comparison between Charles Dickens and Lu Xun in Terms of Taunt Style

Shixuan Zhang

University of Science and Technology Liaoning, Anshan, Liaoning, China

906898660@qq.com

Abstract

There is a group of writers in history who ever didn't flatter the rich, but paid much attention to the poverty and describing the experience of the civilians at the bottom of the ladder in the each country's history of literature. As a result, these writers not only reflected the sophisticated social reality for a certain period of time deeply, but also made a tremendous contribution to exploration and development of the local literature of critical realism. Those writers refer to some people like Charles Dickens for Britain. However, for China, there is no doubt that Lu Xun can be a representative of the group of writers. They revealed hypocrisy, greed, and cruelty of the upper class by the taunt writing style, expressed their deep sympathy to the lower class, more importantly, enlightening the public. In this article, the comparison between the applications, functions, and influences of the taunt writing style in these two writers' work was made by describing the essence of the taunt style to elaborate the differences and similarities in the writing between Charles Dickens and Lu Xun.

Keywords

Taunt Style, Dickens, Lu Xun, The Differences And Similarities.

1. Introduction

Among all the writing techniques, the taunt style is so vivid and profound that it can push the negative characteristics of villains forward and impress the readers most. Especially for the realistic article, the taunt writing style plays a crucial role in the whole plots, holds the main structure of the paper, laying the foundation for the climax from the plain.

2. The Essence of the Taunt style

Words are used to record and express the emotion, and the taunt style is one of the most effective writing techniques. In the taunt writing technique, the taunt word is applied for describing the figures to achieve denial and denunciation. Also, the purpose of the taunt is disapproval of falsehood, wickedness, and ugliness, and set as the expressive mode of the specified mood. The taunt can expose the inner conflicts, the irony, and the abhor of the bad guys. That is exactly why the writers choose to apply the taunt to the papers.

The taunt style is made up of jeer and satire. What the taunt does is expressing the authors' ideas in a roundabout way. Although the objective of the taunt and the aim of the straightforward way are the same, the effects of both vary greatly. Actually, the taunt has the characteristic of bleak humor. A number of methods are usually used in the taunt, such as exaggeration, comparison, and irony, depicting characters by the direct and indirect way of description. As a distinctive art, the taunt serves the readers an opportunity to understand the plots in the paper completely as if they were participating. Besides, the writers will be granted the unique writing style due to this art.

3. The Applications of the taunt style

These two giants of literature applied the taunt to their own works unreservedly. Most of the works reflected the reality of the society and enlightened thoughts deeply, like *Oliver Twist*, *Hard Times*,

and *A Tale of Two Cities* of Charles Dickens or *Lunatic's Diary*, *Kung I-Chi*, and *Dawn Blossoms Plucked at Dusk* of Lu Xun.

In the *Oliver Twist*, Dickens exposed and lashed hypocrisy and filth of the upper class in the taunt by describing the experiences of the children of the lower class. The taunt makes the content powerful and impresses the readers. In fact, the author himself was pushed into the flood of society to seek a livelihood as a child because of heavy financial burdens at home. The hero in the novel *Oliver* whose life track related to the author's own painful childhood of child labor.^[1] There is always a holy belief rooted in the writer's heart. Object to injustice in the society, attract the great attention and the intense public opinion of the public, and call on the people to help the civilians in dire straits. *Hard Times* is a key work of the critical realism British master Charles Dickens in his creation golden age, 19th century.^[2] The background was the Britain's industrial revolution in the 19th century, and people had their own character weaknesses under this circumstance. Consequently, they had their own hard times. In this novel, the utilitarianism is set as the principle of life, seeking nothing but profits and exploiting the innocent civilians in excess. The author reflected the conflicts of industrial relations at that time and criticized darkness of the British bourgeois after the British Chartism.^[3] *A Tale of two cities* is also one of the critical realism masterpieces that has the dramatic and breathtaking plots. Based on the French Revolution in the 18th century, the story combined Paris with London, picturing the experiences of small families that fulls of the upper class's barbarity and the civilian's anger. Not only that, the writer exposed that the aristocrats had got declined in the 18th century by the taunt style and hadn't care about the grassroots. The civilians' lives that were filled with the hardships and pains were depicted vividly. Gradually, the public had been changed on account of oppression. They felt more savage toward the upper class, and then here came the French Revolution that overturned regime and fought for freedom.

As an enlightening writer in Chinese history, Lu Xun has written a large amount of impressive works. *Lunatic's Diary* of his is the first novel that attacks the old social system "destroying people" violently in the history of modern Chinese literature. This work revealed the darkness of feudal society through the pungent satire technique and made a crack that the people in the old society were rather numb and blind. Furthermore, the new ideas were declared to throw away ignorance of the old society and welcome New China. Frankly speaking, this novel had a huge influence on China at that time and effected as a beacon in the darkness for Chinese, lighting the way and giving the direction. *Kung I-Chi* is the second vernacular novel of Lu Xun's after *Lunatic's Diary*. The article is not long, but it expresses that the old imperial examination system did harm to the intellectuals mentally and essence of the feudal society "destroying people" by describing the tragic image of the hero Kung I-Chi who was extremely pedantic, weak, always mocked by the people, and finally ruined by the landlord class under the circumstance filled with feudal decayed thought and the old imperial examination system. Undoubtedly, this passage has an overwhelming meaning of anti-feudalism. A great many sarcastic and meaningful plots are in this novel. For instance, when Kung I-Chi talked about what the four different writings of Chinese character Hui are keenly, the people around him just looked at him with disdain and walked away impatiently. This example reflected that there were the decayed feudal thoughts rooted deeply in the society, made a crack that the feudal imperial examination system were really harmful and restricted to the intellectuals, and exposed the shortage of education and the social atmosphere-- What the intellectuals pursue was just knowing about something meaningless like the four different writings of Chinese character Hui. The collection *Dawn Blossoms Plucked at Dusk* based on recording was originally named *Rake up the Past*, recording 10 articles, *Dog, Cat, and Mouse, Ah Chang and Classic of Mountains and Seas, 24 Filial Piety Charts, Five Wild Will, Impermanence, From Hundred-Grass Garden to Three-Taste School, Father's Illness, Fragmentary Recollections, Mr. Tengye, Fan Ainong*. The whole collection is composed of not only poetic expressions, but also sarcastic and humorous words, so it has the powerful infection to the readers. On the clue of his own experiences, the author wrote down his life track lively and showed strong yearnings toward his relatives, friends, and teachers. Meanwhile, the old culture was strongly mocked and attacked. In the *Impermanence*, Lu Xun pointed out that "The impartial judge exists in the

underworld.” by depicting the image of the impermanence, mocking life through the spirits, satirizing the world through the underworld, and mercilessly castigating those so-called perfect gentlemen. A story named *Guo Ju burying His Son Alive* in the 24 Filial Piety Charts described that a man named Guo Ju lived a poor life, deciding surprisingly to bury his 3-year-old son alive to save labor and financial resources for his old woman. Unexpectedly, Guo Ju found the gold that wrote “That is a gift to Guo Ju, and mustn’t be deprived by the government official or other civilians.” when digging out. To be honest, the character Guo Ju’s blind devotion to his mother was extremely disgusting and even dreadful, let alone there was truly a wide gap between the developing track of this story and the reality. It is quite easy to find the author’s satire to hypocritical feudal filial piety between the lines. The hero reached the standards of filial piety superficially at the price of the lives of children. Indeed, this behavior violates ethics and morality, cannot be followed by future generations. In the *Dawn Blossoms Plucked at Dusk*, the writer reminisced and embraced the reality with all the fighting spirit although the work was the collection of the essays. It was still a powerful tool for Lu Xun to attack forces of darkness in the society.[4] Mr. Yudafu has once said wonderfully: “The casual literary notes and the random thoughts of his(Lu Xun) provide the style not the ancients before, and not after one. No wonder the readers can enjoy the cool feeling as if being not afraid of death in spite of drinking the poisonous liquor, the features of this style are the deep observation, the sharp volubility, the concise writings, the artful analogy, and the disposition containing humor.”[5]

4. The functions and influences of the taunt style

There is no doubt that the taunt style plays a crucial role in the article. It helps reach the climax of the plot and gives prominence to theme in a structural sense. On the other hand, it impresses the readers a lot for the content, putting the readers into the background of the novel through the taunt. Only in this way can the readers feel the all kinds of moods of the characters in the novel precisely and understand the emotion that resorts to the words and the belief behind the words completely.

The two literature masters, Dickens and Lu Xun who were good at the taunt influenced the civilians’ way of thinking greatly and baptized the whole society spiritually through the writers’ distinctive methods at the crucial moment. Dickens lived in an era that capitalism in Britain had the rapidly growing economy. Nevertheless, at the same time, the class contradictions became increasingly deepened. The ruling class was extremely profit-oriented, but the working class was in dilemma of unemployment and homelessness. Polarization was really serious. At that time, from the humanitarianism, Dickens fondly called on the ruling class not to deprive the working class of rights when pursuing for profit, but to be virtuous and conscientious. That’s the rules of human’s.

Lu Xun had majored in medicine, but immediately came round to great responsibility and resolutely stopped to become a writer after observing numbness and ignorance of the Chinese at that time. He published a lot to awaken the living dead Chinese in big China. Moreover, his enlightening ideology and crisis consciousness during the times of May 4th had been studied and developed deeply by the later writers. Even now the patriotism, the fighting spirit, and pioneering spirit of Lu Xun’s are always borne in mind of the Chinese nation.

References

- [1] Lai Ganjian. (2012). Charles Dickens: A Critical Introduction [M]. Shanghai: Academia Press.
- [2] Yang Liu. (2013). Research on the Environmental Description in *Hard Times* [D]. Xiangtan University.
- [3] Zhao Yan. (2015). Dickens’s Reformist Ideas from the *Hard Times* [J]. *The Writers*, (02): 180-181.
- [4] Song Jianhua. (2014). The Return of the Spirit without Hesitation: The re-explanation of *Dawn Blossoms Plucked at Dusk* [J], *Lu Xun Research Monthly*. (2).22.
- [5] (1992) *The Random Thoughts of Lu Xun’s—Life of Calling to Arms·Introduction* [M]. Guangzhou: Huacheng Publishing House.