

An Analysis of Asceticism From Humorous Style

Du Xuanlin

Northwestern polytechnical University
NPU Changan District Xi'an Shanxi Province
+8618018965666
935543509@qq.com

ABSTRACT

Asceticism witnessed Mark Twain's unparalleled contribution to pioneering frontier humor. Because of Mark Twain, folklore has undergone a transformation from the original oral literature with rough style and absurd characters without losing humor, and has evolved into a permanent classic in the United States. Through the use of humorous theory and literature, this article attempts to demonstrate that *Asceticism* is the source of Mark Twain's humorous art, and they are also largely the source of humorous artistic techniques in contemporary American black humorous novels.

Keywords: *asceticism, humorous style.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Asceticism is a semi-autobiographical work by the famous American realist writer and humorist Mark Twain. The author recorded his adventure life in the western United States from 1861 to 1865 with exaggerated methods. The plot in the book Most of what the author saw and heard that year and personal experience. Prior to this, *Asceticism* was the only novel by Mark Twain in China that has not been fully translated.

Asceticism provides a detailed description of life in the western United States during the gold rush of the 19th century. The book is composed of hundreds of interesting stories. It is both fascinating and fascinating. It also draws out the abrupt reality of the diverse life in the western United States at that time. It is a facet of social life at that time: rich and profligate, pursuit and adventure, Ambition and desire, strength and ingenuity, hope, struggle, drill camp, frustration, downfall, disillusionment ... in the golden dreams of a million heads, showing a comedy picture.

Asceticism is Mark Twain's second famous work, and it is a sign of his writing skills becoming more mature and perfect, which fully shows his early creative style. The idea is rough and natural, simple and natural, the language is flexible, easy to flow, and the style of writing is humorous. The author appears as a tramp in the book, and uses a first-person description as a 100% field participant, which adds to the novel's authenticity and artistic charm. Sometimes, his pen will touch your laughter nerve unexpectedly, making you laugh back and forth and cannot be yourself.

However, making fun of amusement and humor is not everything in *Asceticism*. The intention of moral education is as much an organic part of *Asceticism* as the passion for advocating political reform. In the book, the author unscrupulously exposed and whipped the ugly phenomena of government's corruption and incompetence, the ignorance of officials, and racial discrimination in society.

It is worth mentioning that there is a chapter in *Asceticism* dedicated to describing the lives of overseas Chinese in the United States. The author praised the overseas Chinese with wisdom, loyalty, honesty and other outstanding qualities with full enthusiasm, and deeply sympathized with the unfair treatment they suffered. At the same time, he also vigorously condemned the US government's racial discrimination policy and the brutality of a handful of bad people with full of indignation.

The title of *Asceticism* has long been scattered in some books, magazines and review articles at home and abroad. It was officially published in February 1872 in the United States. Later, several new versions came out, with slight changes in text. The first edition contains 79 chapters, including 20 chapters describing the author's journey with his brother Orion to Nevada on the train; 41 chapters write about his life in the western United States, participating in gold rush activities and working as a journalist; 16 chapters write about his Hawaii The trip; the last two chapters write about his speech trips after returning from Hawaii to the United States. We use the 1953 version, which deletes the last 18 chapters and ends with the end of the author's western life, so that the meaning of the book is more consistent with the title (Burrus, V. , 1996: 253-255) .

2. COMIC STYLE IN HUMOROUS STYLE

2.1. Implied irony in relaxed humor

Mark Twain was a good joke teller. Lu Xun called him a famous humorist from the end of the last century to the beginning of the present century. He was good at capturing the ridiculous and philosophical dramatic scenes in life, He concentrated, refined and processed the contradictory phenomena in his daily life into profound jokes. Through relaxed humor, he satirized and ridiculed the ugliness of American social reality at that time. The more a person

knows nothing, the more famous he becomes and the more he earns. God knows that if I hadn't been educated, but I was ignorant, not so cautious, but rash, then I could be famous in this cold and selfish world. Behind this ridiculous statement, the deformities and dislocations of American society were exposed at that time.

Real humor can only be produced in a profound and unique sense of life. It not only requires talent and wit, but also requires insight and thought. In particular, the creator of humor should first be a healthy and active person who can feel deep. Mark Twain is such a living person: he uses humor to create comedy plots, and incorporates more rational thinking; he uses humor to ridicule ugliness and inject more serious social content.

Although Mark Twain's humorous articles are seemingly hilarious, they are not the kind of superficial and vulgar teasing which is just for making fun of, making a stunt, and humor alone. There is sharp satire behind the relaxed humor. The combination of playfulness and satire is his weapon, which makes his works different from the game words of pure satire and the persuasive chapters of serious sermons. People are influenced, educated and inspired in the process of pleasing to the eyes and looking forward and backward, which embodies the hope of understanding and moving to the good satire theme (Ellen Muehlberger, 2008: 447-478).

2.2. Absurdity in Western Humor

Scottish critic John Nichol found that humor from the other side of the Atlantic was a rare flower found by some serious people. Their insight was clear and not esoteric. It mainly relied on exaggeration and dignified kneading, which resulted in the effect is like black people singing funny lyrics in sad tunes. In other words, although the western concept of humor is only a product of talking and laughing, it is sometimes reluctant, almost on the verge of despair and failure. Frontier life in the west is empty and lonely, so loneliness breeds melancholy, and melancholy becomes absurd.

Mark Twain showed the comedy color and deceptive essence with extreme humor in his works, bringing people easy laughs and heavy sighs, showing his unique style of western humor, and also revealing the falseness and absurdity behind humor.

The truth of literary works is the truth of art. The exaggeration of art and the truth of art are not contradictory. Mark Twain's exaggerated humorous approach coincides with the theory of true and false adulteration of art proposed by British 18th-century realist writer Fielding: Many of their works are based on real life and exaggerate according to the internal logic of life, while the excellent art can make the true and the false mixed, which can be believed and surprising. In the golden dream of ten thousand heads, *Asceticism* shows a pair of exaggerated, humorous and dizzying comic pictures. Mark Twain is humorous and witty, almost all beginning with a series of comedy deceptions, which is aggressive and

provocative, and it contains brutality and cruelty (King, A., 2010: 253-274). Mark Twain used comic comedy to show the theme of deception, revealing the contradiction between fantasy and reality. The author regards describing and criticizing reality as his duty. His creative themes tend to show serious social problems, showing his sympathy for the weak, contempt for the power, disgust for cruelty, and dissatisfaction with the absurd society, thus exposing the deceptive nature of society.

2.3. Deception in Black Humor

Black humor belongs to the category of comedy, which is a kind of abnormal comedy with the nature of deception. Therefore, black humor is often related to tragedy, sometimes even equivalent to tragic farce. Black humor is different from general humor. It contains heaviness and bitterness, tears and pain, melancholy and cruelty in absurdity. Therefore, it contains tears and even anger in its bitter laughter. Black humor highlights the absurdity of the world around the characters and the oppression of the society on the individuals. It shows the incongruity between the environment and the individuals with a helpless ironic attitude, and enlarges and distorts the incongruity to make them seem more absurd, funny, heavy and depressing at the same time.

Humor and absurdity combined with deception are called black humor, a style that was born of Mark Twain's early experience as a miner and reporter in the West. *Asceticism* is an autobiographical work by Mark Twain, most of which is based on what the author saw and experienced in his adventures in the western United States.

There is fraud in Mark Twain's humor. In order to defeat the rival newspaper and obtain first-hand information, the hero in the novel violates his own conscience, distorts his humanity, and the two sides engage in feuds and swindles. Humor is the only venting vehicle in Mark Twain's writing. Through the use of humor, he demonstrates his disgust and hatred of fraud. Return to the deceptive theme of the novel, and delve into the protagonist's confession: I can't wait for a long time. I don't want to face fraud anymore, please end it. Everyone would rather commit suicide than stay here, no doubt. Mark Twain used humor to reveal the ignorance of the people in the mining area, revealed that they had anesthetized their decay to avoid fraud, and showed their dissatisfaction and resentment against fraud.

Humor is the detection of nuances in seemingly normal behavior, that is, the abnormality in the seemingly normal phenomenon. Humor is a manifestation of a special emotion. It is a way to alleviate mental and psychological stress when humans face difficulties. Humor is not only to shake off jokes, but also to cause people to think deeply about serious content and themes. *Asceticism* Mark Twain's resentment towards real society is revealed in the lines. Light humor, western humor, and black humor all reveal the false, absurd, and deceptive nature contained in it.

3. CONCLUSION

Mark Twain painted a lot of ugly phenomena in the society with his unique humorous style. In his works, he reproduced the real society and the world of mischief at that time. Social reality is deeply observed, excavated, analyzed, criticized and even protested. Mark Twain's comedic colors and absurd endings with extreme humor, bringing people easy laughter and heavy sighs, showing unique black humor and meaningful money and rights transactions, game life, and deceiving the world.

REFERENCES

- [1] Burrus, V. 1996. Book review: women in late antiquity: pagan and christian lifestyles, 4(2), 253-255.
- [2] Ellen Muehlberger. 2008. Ambivalence about the angelic life: the promise and perils of an early christian discourse of asceticism. *Journal of Early Christian Studies*, 16(4), 447-478.
- [3] King, A. 2010. Philosophy and salvation: the apophatic in the thought of arthur schopenhauer, 21(2), 253-274.