

The Repetitive Narrative Technical of *Timm thalers* *Puppen*

Min Li

School of Teacher Education
Qujing Normal University
Qujing, Yunnan, P. R. China 655011

Abstract—*Timm thalers Puppen* is one of the famous works of James Kruss, a famous German writer. The work of the continuation of the "the thousand and one night" and "The Decameron" "Bible" narrative tradition of capitalist commercial civilization, the hypocrisy and ills are relentlessly exposed, this paper, based on the theory of repetition by theorist Miller, with a in-depth analyzes the narrative structure, discourse and theme.

Keywords—James Kruss; *Timm thalers Puppen*; repetitive narration

I. INTRODUCTION

James Kruss (1926-1977) was a famous German writer on children literature, winner of Hans Christian Andersen Literature Award. In 2011, the Chinese versions of James Kruss's works were published by Tomorrow Publishing House in, and became familiar to Chinese readers gradually. However, researches on his works were lagging behind. *Timm thalers Puppen*^[1] is one of his representative works. According to Hillis Miller, "to whatever readers, the understanding of this kind of full-length novel is realized by the recognition of repetition and the meaning of repetition to some extent".^[2]

(1982:1) In *Timm thalers Puppen*, repetitive narrative techniques were easily to be found. Therefore, this paper analyzes on the repetitive narrative techniques and explores the in-depth meaning and theme of the work.

II. REPETITION OF NARRATIVE MODE

A. Repetition of Narrative Structure

As the continuation of *The Boy Who Lost His Laugh*, *Timm thalers Puppen* repeated the story-within-a-story structure in *The Thousand and One Nights* and *The Decameron*, and this narrative structure was widely used in most of James Kruss's works. *Timm thalers Puppen* has two parts. Part one mainly narrates the relationship among me, Timm and the baron, and part two is the story told by Timm, which seems to be independent in its own system, but also echoes with the whole structure.

As the same with most of James Kruss's works, the story of *Timm thalers Puppen* happens in seven days except the preface and ending. In addition, when Timm finishes his last story, the clock on the bell tower strikes seven precisely. If we are familiar with Christian culture, it is not hard to find from

these details that James Kruss repeated the literature tradition in *The Bible*. The number "seven" can be easily found in *The Bible*, for example, the God spent seven days to create the world, the God warned Noah that take with him seven of every kind of clean animal, a male and its mate, and flood would come in seven days and so on. Therefore, "seven" is a sacred number in *The Bible*. The clock strikes seven implies the happy ending of the story. At the end of the story, Grandi, assistant to the baron died, and the baron's intention of buying Timm and I over vanished.

In addition, little Donkor, child of the boss of loquat and apricot wine producer Donkor Company, travelled with uncle Edward to learn the production process of loquat and apricot wine, similar with the stories of heir of Global Pharmacy brother and sister Barney travelled to seek the production process of medicine Stoma Barr and detective big Meyer travelled to Venice to learned the formula of fertilizer. Little Donkor found that the garden that provide raw materials of loquat and apricot wine only needs four couples to work, detective big Meyer found that the selected ingredients of fertilizer are garbage and feces, and brother and sister Barney found the price of Stoma Barr's raw material is very low. The price of the goods is over 500 times of the raw material, and the revenue of the pharmacy is 1400 times of the raw material. These three stories are all the evidence of the excessive profits in the capitalism business operation.

There are more repetitions on the narrative structure in the book, just to name a few.

B. Repetition of Behavioral Pattern

The baron is the antagonist in the book, wandering around Timm and I like the shadow. Each time, he did not show his true face, but changed his status. For example, in the story of the first day, the baron disguised as a traveler in front of Timm and I, and hastened away after Timm and I recognized him. Then he changed into a man sold rabbit feet to talk with us, and hastened away again after Timm and I recognized him. In the following six days, the baron disguised as waiter, old man, and priest and so on. Each time he was recognized, he fled in a shockingly fast speed. The various transform of the baron implies the omnipresent capitalist.

Moreover, according to the capitalist baron and his assistant Grandich, the whole world is a huge shop, and money

has the omnipotent magic to control people. In order to make “me” keep silence and don’t record Timm’s story, they can cost what it may, taking seaside house, yacht, banking account never empty, and beautiful pendant lamp as conditions. In order to bribe Timm to serve for them, they spent money to establish a performance fund, provided old house for Timm’s puppet show. Although the baron’s bribe didn’t work, it cannot be denied that the fertilizer merchant Tibuldius buy detective big Meyer’s silence to the investigation result with a large amount of money. The behavioral pattern of the baron, Grandich and fertilizer merchant are surprisingly same, proving the working pattern and principle of capitalist that money can buy everything.

III. REPETITION OF NARRATIVE WORKS

According to Hillis Miller, “the most powerful repetition in a novel is the purest and most representative words.”^[3] In *Timm thalers Puppen*, we can find that repetition of words is a distinctive feature of James Kruss’s literature creation. These repeated words lead us to explore the author’s intention. In *Timm thalers Puppen*, the commonly found repeated words are:

A. Disposable Goods

Disposable goods is used several times in *Timm thalers Puppen*, including disposable glass, disposable money, disposable tent, disposable people, and disposable cup, etc. Although different in names, they have common features: they are goods and disposable. The come into being of disposable goods is the watershed of traditional commodity production and capitalism commercial production. As advertised in the disposable goods advertisement, they promote the consumption. The use of disposable goods, on the surface, appears to facilitate human life, improves people’s quality of life and makes life looks better. In fact, it not only destroys the natural ecology and pollutes the natural environment, but also increases the cost of life and decreases the life quality. If there is one redeeming thing of disposable goods, that is to create more profits for monopoly capitalists. It can be found that the author holds obvious critical attitude toward disposable goods.

B. Packing

In the business society, every goods need packing, and packing is everywhere. In the story of “loquat and apricot wine”, during the production process of loquat and apricot wine, the beautiful forest is used to packing, the exquisite handmade paper is only used to packing, the old types tell the story of the wine is only used to packing, and paint is used to packing. All these materials that used to packing are exquisite, but these exquisite packing becomes littered rubbish. However, forest is destroyed and cannot be recovered. As the old saying goes “clothes make the man”, the packing of goods decides whether consumers accept the goods or not in a large extent. Although we know the content of the goods is more important than the form, we are still easily to be attracted by the packing when choosing goods and make wrong choice. There is ridicule on the over packing of goods in the book. In the story of “Aunt Rosie”, the author describes that aunt died of drowning “lives in an era that even eggs and potatoes are well packed”. The word packing is repeated used in the novel. By

denying the over packing of commodities, the author negates the justification of capitalism commercial production.

IV. REPETITION OF NARRATIVE INTENTION

As a critical realist writer, James Kruss was worried about the capitalism business civilization that surrounded him. *Timm thalers Puppen* is the continuation of *The Boy Who Lost His Laugh* in the theme of criticizing capitalists and the criticism was directed at commercial advertising.

Commercial advertising plays an important part in the production, sale and circulation of capitalism products. Commodity operators make advertising through the media they controlled in order to sell products as much as possible to maximize their own interests. Every advertising slogan is very seductive and provocative. But what is the truth behind advertising? Through each story told by Timm, the author repeatedly dug out the truth behind the advertisement, which is alarming.

In the first day, Timm Thalers told a story of “sea fish or business mind”. In the story, a hotel had problems with the plumbing system, so the smell of the roast fish from the restaurant downstairs filled in every room through the exhausts, and thus affected the business and no one checked in the room. however, it would take a lot of time to solve the problem. For the business, the boss’s daughter came to an idea that take “sea fish” as the selling point of the hotel room and made advertisement. Suddenly, it became so popular among tourists. Obviously it was the problem of the hotel room, but now it became the sign of the room. The hotel owner made a large amount of profits, while the tourists were immersed in lies without knowing anything.

The story told by Timm Thalers in the fifth day, “glade or profit makes progress”, was also indispensable with advertisement. Banker Egon Sibbet designed a famous slogan, “profit makes progress”. Brown Smith family once owned a glade. They sold the land and move to the city to live. Sometimes they came back to the glade to have picnic with a disposable tent. They owned the land in the past. They can eat the delicious smoked ham made by them, but the picnic they made now was hard to swallow. Disposable tent claims to be convenient, cheap and helpful to protect the environment. Ironically, Banker Egon Sibbet never use disposable tent himself. The commercial advertisement is completely different with people’s real life experience. From the life of the Brown Smith, profits failed to advance their lives, but have greatly reduced the quality of their lives.

The problem of commercial advertising is far more than that. The bigger problem lies in that “Advertising is a major weapon in which manufacturers are trying to build enough consumer markets for their products. In order to do this, advertisements create false demands among people.”^[4] Some people can’t resist the temptation of commercial advertising, which arouses endless desire for commercial products. In the story of the seventh day, a poor mother lost her immunity to the products she had seen in the TV commercials, “the most expensive puppet in the world”. Her two sons, desperate to satisfy their mother’s wishes, grabbed the handbag of an unknown lady. The puppet is not an essential necessity in life

for the mother, but all her thoughts were concentrated on the product, unable to extricate themselves. It can be seen that commercial advertisements affect all aspects of the lives of ordinary people. If there is no television advertising broadcast, then the mother will not have this demand, then the robbery can be avoided. James Kruss has a keen eye and has been aware of the dangers of commercials more than 50 years ago, therefore, in *Timm thalers Puppen*, he repeatedly reveal the hypocrisy and harm of commercial advertising.

In addition to commercial advertising, James Kruss also exposed other disadvantages of capitalist business civilization. For example, the idea of money first resulted to the tragic life of Aunt Rosie. She kept a pile of wealth but lived an ascetic life, money made her lost human kindness gradually. Another example was of drugstore guy Joseph Koster who wrote many poems about human love under difficult circumstance. These poems were printed on rough paper, but they were loved by people. Along with that Joseph Koster improve printing conditions, the making of his poem collection became more and more exquisite, and he was greatly affected by business civilization. In order to make ends meet, he sold drugs while give poem as present. At last, he became a businessman thoroughly that he no longer wrote poem with love from deep heart. The poems wrote by him were only empty and uninteresting "affluence causes crime, buying self-defense weapons". As a poet, he no longer has the value of existence.

Through one after another story, James Kruss clearly represented the theme of the harm to human and society by the business civilization of money first. His works disclosed the gorgeous veil of capitalism and exposed the ugly and hypocrisy behind the commercial civilization.

V. CONCLUSION

James Kruss uses repetitive narration to dig out all kinds of malpractices in capitalist commercial production. From the repetition, he exposed the money first of capitalism and the ugly behavior of capitalists disguised by the so high-sounding slogan mercilessly. Repetitive narration is not only the structural form of the novel, but also the major representative manner of the details. It forms the unique narrative charm of James Kruss's novel and enriches the connotation of the work greatly. If we are going to understand the charm and the in-depth connotation and theme meaning of James Kruss's novels, it is essential to make in-depth interpretation of the repetitive narration in his works.

REFERENCES

- [1] James Kruss. *Timm thalers Puppen*[M]. Zhu Lihua translation. Jinan, Shandong: Tomorrow Publishing House, 2011:1
- [2] Miller J Hillis. *Fiction and Repetition: Seven English Novels*[M]. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1982:72
- [3] Miller J Hillis. *Fiction and Repetition: Seven English Novels*[M]. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1982:72
- [4] Sut Jhally. *The Codes of Advertising* [M]. Ma Shanshan translation. Beijing: People's University Publication House., 2004:3.