

Aesthetic Characteristics of The Adventures of Tom Sawyer

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Abstract

The novel *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, published by American novelist Mark Twain in 1876, has a wide influence in the world. As a famous work at home and abroad, it is very readable. As a great work of children's literature, its aesthetic features have unique educational significance and guiding function. In the book, Mark Twain created a classic image of Tom Sawyer in children's literature, and by depicting Tom Sawyer and his companions pursuing a legendary, adventurous, romantic and happy life, he combined the realistic portrayal of realism with the bold lyricism of romanticism. Because *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* is such a unique style of children's literature, its aesthetic characteristics have changed to pure love, surprise and freedom of three aspects.

Keywords

Aesthetic characteristics; *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*; Mark Twain; Humor.

1. Aesthetic and Children's Literature Aesthetic

As a special social form, literature has its own unique aesthetic attributes, which is not only the unity of emotion and image, but also the unity of ideology and aesthetic value. As a literary type with unique literary values and artistic norms, children's literature has the basic features of being radically different from other literary types in aesthetic sense.

1.1. The aesthetics of children's literature

Aesthetics, also known as "aesthetic activities", is a practice related to beauty within a certain range. It includes aesthetic character and aesthetic personality. The so-called aesthetic character is actually about the aesthetic characteristics of the summary, aesthetic is often intuitive, emotional, pleasurable characteristics. Aesthetic personality is the emotional characteristic of individual with uniqueness, tendency and relative stability. When we examine the aesthetics of literary works, it is not difficult to find that literary aesthetics pays attention to the connection between art and the real world, with society, with life, and with the human heart. Through literary creation, writers achieve the consistency between subjective cognition and objective things. The rich details and grand events of real society are absorbed and accommodated by the spiritual world of literature, and become vivid artistic images and artistic conception.

The aesthetics of children's literature is not only the same as other literature aesthetics, including the creation of children's literature, criticism, perception and other practical activities, but also has its own unique aesthetic characteristics, and these aesthetic characteristics are precisely determined by the essence of children's literature. Since children's literature is not produced by children, but is a kind of literature written by adults for children on the whole, children's literature fundamentally reflects not children's will, but the cultural expectation and will of "adults" (adult society). Understanding this, it is clear that the basic aesthetic features of children's literature can only be examined from the perspective of why "adults" need to create children's literature.

1.2. Aesthetic process of children's literature

Dufhainer divided aesthetic perception into three stages: presentation, representation and imagination, and reflection and feeling [1]. In the aesthetic process of literary works, the first stage is the preparation stage of the subject for the upcoming aesthetic object according to the known information and experience. At this time, what is presented in front of us is only the work and its name and author, and the aesthetic perception is only in its infancy. Due to the lack of practical exploration, the aesthetic perception at this stage is only in its infancy. It often differs from or even contradicts the complete aesthetic perception of the same literary works. The second stage corresponds to that when reading literary works, the subject is in a state of mutual conclusion between representation and imagination when understanding texts or observing images. At this time, the subject's aesthetic perception has been built on the understanding of literary works, which is more complete and based on sufficient evidence compared with the previous stage. The third stage of reflection and feeling is based on the completion of the reading and appreciation of literary works to perceive, integrated individual feelings and reflection of literary works for aesthetic perception.

1.3. Aesthetic features of children's literature

Different from adult literature, children's literature has its unique educational, pictorial and interesting, and its aesthetic characteristics must have its specificity. According to the existing references, the basic aesthetic characteristic of the children's literature of the theorists is that the good is the beauty [2]. Some people believe that the aesthetic characteristics of children's literature are: the "beauty of human nature" of love, the "beauty of interest" of absurdity and the "beauty of freedom" of imagination. The above points of view start from the aesthetic subject of children's literature and the special spiritual characteristics of its main recipient -- children, and basically cover the aesthetic characteristics of children's literature [3].

However, since children's literature can be an independent literature category, it naturally has more abundant artistic connotation and aesthetic interest. The author believes that the aesthetic characteristics of children's literature are far more than that.

1.4. Aesthetic value of children's literature

Guo Moruo put forward in the article "The Management of Children's Literature" : "Literature has a very magnificent effect on human nature, and children's literature can guide children to a mellow region especially between ignorance and ignorance. It can also inspire his good mind and ability, which is expressed in Russell's words, namely the so-called "creative impulse", to reach the free creation, free expression. It is therefore advocated at the bottom of children's literature for our country's thoroughly corrupt society, no creative nationals, the most is the specific medicine of the resurrection of death ", and "the fundamental reform of people should start from the children's emotional education, the education of the United States." [4]. The value of children's literature focuses on the role of educating children to promote the development of human society. The aesthetic value of children's literature is based on the value of children's literature to increase the grasp and perception of the aesthetic sense of literary works. The aesthetic characteristics of children's literature will also lay the foundation of the aesthetic ability of children's literature appreciation and creation.

2. The Aesthetic Process of the Adventures of Tom Sawyer

The Adventures of Tom Sawyer is a novel published by American novelist Mark Twain in 1876, which has a wide influence in the world. As a famous work at home and abroad, it is extremely readable. With a humorous writing method to describe the naughty lovely, innocent lively and rich sense of justice of the little hero Tom Sawyer adventure. With its strong humor with deep

local characteristics and keen observation of characters, it has become one of the great children's literature works.

2.1. Presentation stage

Mark Twain was a famous critical realist writer in the 19th century. He created a large number of works in his life, including novels, plays, essays and poems. After losing his father at the age of 12, he dropped out of school to earn a living. He worked as a typesetter, a Mississippi River coxswain, a gold miner, a journalist and so on. His various experiences also enabled him to witness various ills of the American society at that time. In the 19th century, the United States was an era of great wealth. The United States developed from a backwater and dirt roads into an industrial metropolis and an extensive railway network, from naive and simple to prosperous and miscellaneous. In times like these, people have both hope and fear. Humor and satire are the hallmarks of Mark Twain's writing. Most of his works criticized the dark and ugly side of the society at that time, ironic the evil of human nature, and opposed the unreasonable social phenomenon, with a sense of justice and popularity. The title of the book, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, gives the reader a simple and straightforward description of the subject matter and protagonist of the work, which can be inferred that the work is fiction. Therefore, in the stage of aesthetic perception, readers can clearly perceive the fiction and adventure of the work, and speculate the criticism of the work.

2.2. Representation and imagination stage

The story of the novel takes place in the first half of the 19th century, before the Civil War in the United States on the Mississippi River in an ordinary town. The main plot of the hero Tom Sawyer witnessed a murder, fled to a desert island as a pirate, got lost in a cave and finally escaped, and found a treasure is full of heroic adventurism. At this stage, readers can aesthetically perceive an image of a naughty boy who is playful and unruly, and a wise man who is smart and resourceful by reading the writer's distinctive character personality, wonderful language and action description, delicate expression description and vivid plot setting, combined with their own imagination. A typical figure [5] with a sense of justice and the courage to take responsibility as a man.

2.3. Reflection and feeling stage

In the final stage of aesthetic perception, the reader has finished reading the whole book of the *Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, and will make a comprehensive reflection and feeling of the text. To understand the contrast between children's lively psychology and the conservative ideas of small citizens, to reflect on the stagnation and vulgarity of American local life, the hypocrisy of religion, the stereotyping of school education, and to feel the writer's dissatisfaction with the darkness of society and the ruling class. Have a deep personal understanding of the characters and the plot.

3. The Aesthetic Characteristics of the Adventures of Tom Sawyer

From the perspective of the aesthetic characteristics of children's literature, it is often closely related to the spiritual characteristics of the children, so it often has the basic aesthetic characteristics of innocence, foolishness, joy, simplicity and childlike fun. In *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, Mark Twain has endowed his works with more artistic connotations than innocence, naivete and childishness, thus bringing more profound and important aesthetic characteristics.

3.1. Pure love

Pure love is pure, clean and beautiful love. As the Book of Songs says, "the banquet at the end of the corner is full of laughter and peace." The ignorant love in childhood often seems

particularly moving. Tom Sawyer and Betsy met in class, Tom drew and wrote on the SLATE, he liked Betsy, even when they were alone, they would discuss the topic of engagement, they expressed love to each other. And Betsy cried after hearing that Tom had been engaged to someone else, so she stopped paying attention to Tom and initially reflected the pure and flawless friendship between the children. The plot of Tom being flogged for tearing the principal's favorite book on Betsy's behalf is set to turn the innocent feelings of childhood laughter into love. In the chapter of lost in the cave, Tom takes care of Betsy and supports her faith to live. This kind of responsible love is true pure love.

3.2. Surprise

Witnessing a murder from the perspective of a child is the most important node of the original novel. After that, a series of plot arrangements such as Tom testifying for Potter, escaping to a desert island, appearing at a funeral, and getting lost in Shandong were developed. The setting of such a murder case sounds inconsistent with the aesthetic characteristics of innocence, naivete, joy and simplicity of children's literature [5], and this plot arrangement adds a color of surprise to the aesthetic characteristics of Tom Sawyer. The appearance of the aesthetic feature of surprise can be said to be unusual and direct and profound. Children have little cognitive experience of this practice. At this time, as a work of children's literature, The Adventures of Tom Sawyer not only smoothly introduces the calm exposition of such serious crimes through the amazing aesthetic characteristics, but also plays a role in educating readers with the image of Tom.

3.3. Freedom

The freedom here is completely different from the "beauty of freedom" imagined by other theorists mentioned above. The freedom presented in The Adventures of Tom Sawyer is the freedom in the real sense, both physical and mental. The free body in the Adventures of Tom Sawyer is both action and thought.

In the aspect of action: Tom Sawyer as an orphan adopted by his aunt, American rural child, he is not limited in identity, similar to his good friend "wild child" Huckleberry Finn. Tom teased other children, played truant because he didn't like the school rules and regulations, and fled to a desert island for fear of being hunted by a murderer, all of which reflected his freedom of action.

In terms of ideology: Tom could not recite the Bible, played truant from school, and made fun of the teacher actually conveyed his rebellious spirit to the old things. At that time, the United States was undergoing major changes, especially the old educational system was rotten and even disgusting. The character of Tom Sawyer reflected the germination of liberalism on the children. In addition, the plot of visiting the falsely accused Potter in prison and finally telling the truth to save Potter not only broke through the bondage of action but also had the freedom of spirit. Tom's sense of justice finally broke through all considerations and got the interpretation.

This aesthetic feature of freedom will lead people to break through all the old, evil and unjust shackles, reach a wider world, and pursue the ideal of excellence and a higher level platform.

4. Conclusion

As a kind of literary works with children as the main audience group, children's literature has the significance of enlightening and guiding the physical and mental development of children. Its cultural connotation is rich, and readers can realize the aesthetic characteristics with different characteristics in the aesthetic process. The Adventures of Tom Sawyer is the epitome of an era, as the adventures of the fictional young hero Tom reflect social problems. Our aesthetic features based on the Adventures of Tom Sawyer guide us to interpret the true

meaning of pure love in children's cultural education, to comment on serious events with surprising plots and to explore the liberal ideas in a deeper level.

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