
Swift's Satire Art

As a famous British writer such as Defoe and Ferdin, Jonathan Swift is a shining star in the history of British literature in the 18th century. He is a writer and thinker standing on the high point of his time. Swift makes good use of irony in his works, and his highly lethal political prose "A Modest Proposal" is still passed down to the readers. This article aims to analyze its exquisite irony skills, so that readers can more deeply see how this rhetorical device has become a magical work in the hands of Swift.

The background of "A Modest Proposal" is in the era of double exploitation of people by British merchandisers and Irish landlords. The life of the Irish people is quite hard, and overpopulation, compounded with difficulties such as physical hunger, low living conditions, lack of security, and diseases, made it worse. However, the ruling class at that time did not realize the severity of the problem, and it became even more intensified. As the ruling class wanted to develop industry, it was desperate to exploit the poor people. A variety of policies and regulations have followed, and the focus of such regulations is the economy. From the perspective of economy, population reduction is a basic way for the accumulation of wealth. Therefore, the increase of population was a main problem for the ruling class.

This article uses superb irony techniques. As a famous satirical master, Swift can say that "smirking and screaming are all articles", he skillfully used artistic techniques such as play, innuendo, exaggeration, contrast, and irony in his creation. But the best use, and the most admired by readers is the irony strategy. In this article, Swift can be said to be the best in irony. From the title, it is a wonderful irony. On the surface, this is a "small or mild" suggestion, but, it is extremely "cruel", "bad" and "hateful". In the specific narrative, Swift analyzed the success of this matter in a serious and worrying country as a kind adviser. To make his "trick" become more convincing, he used calculation, enumerated the data, and even cited the classics, and made a fuss about it. Because the satire parts are too realistic, some people believe that what he said is true, it is not difficult for him to be cruel. Swift uses verbal satire, which used the micro-rhetoric techniques to focus on the modification of textual language and words by speaking the opposite of the original intention. This kind of satire often gives people the aesthetic feeling of "speaking here and intending to be". Usually this feeling is done by relying on the role of context. There was a study extends political humor effects research by focusing on two distinct types of satire, Juvenalian and Horatian. Theoretical arguments grounded in the elaboration likelihood model culminated in the positing of a series of interactions between message (Juvenalian, Horatian, traditional opinion-editorial) and recipient ability (high, low) relative to three outcome variables: perceived humor, counterarguing, and attitudes concerning Hillary Clinton's universal health care plan. (Holbert 187)

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The incident of eating infants in "A Modest Proposal" is mainly caused by overpopulation. Mercantilists are always wary of more and more labor can bring huge profits to them, they got this kind of "profit" by exploiting labor. They need a large area to extract the surplus value of the working people to accelerate the increase of their export share and obtain high profits. As the labor exceeds what they need, they just reduced the wages of workers. For the working people, they could do nothing because of the needs of survival. Although overpopulation has led to many social problems, for the bourgeoisie, they are happy to increase their wealth through the poverty of most people. The products produced by the working people to help these mercantilists can help them occupy a favourable share in the international market.

In this novel, Swift puts forward a "moderate" suggestion based on the ruling class at the time which can solve the problem of overpopulation. There are two purposes for killing infants, first one is reducing the population and second one is pleasing the capitalist. In fact, by giving this suggestion, Swift just wants to expose the incompetence of the ruling class to the public.

From the above analysis, it can be clearly seen that the contradiction of overpopulation is the most dominant cause, causing Swift to write "A Modest Proposal". The reason for the excessiveness is that the development of industry and commerce has always been the ruling class. The people are the wealth of a nation. In fact, the meaning of this sentence is that everyone in society is like a commodity, with its own value, and they play an important role in the process of exchange. In "A Modest Proposal", the author frequently uses a series of numbers to express his views. In the eyes of mercantilists, the poor people have no right not to accept the exploitation of them by capitalists which will lead to many social problems.

By setting a suggestion, eating baby to solve the problem of overpopulation highlights the irony of this novel. His shocking approach is to prove that the landlord and their British masters are the real cannibals, and he has pointed this in the text several times, such as ".....giving the rich people a little fun....." (Swift 22), "....., as they have already devoured most of the parents, seem to have the best title to the children." (Swift24), ".....will not offend England" (Swift 26). The six benefits of this proposal are analyzed in his last several paragraphs. Speaking eloquently, it sounds creepy, setting off the cruel and inhumanity of British colonial rule. This article has also become a thrilling accusation against British colonialism. This way of writing reveals the brutality of the social environment and the gloom of human nature which is a kind of condemnation. The reason why Swift's article is hidden and subtle, apart from the irony of the ruler and his strategists, is the panic and shock of the ruler. That is what Swift wanted - government's attention. An online experiment using a representative sample demonstrated that consuming sarcastic political humor can indirectly increase the likelihood of political participation by eliciting negative emotions toward a government policy. (Lee & Kwak 307)

Most of Swift's works reveal national sentiments. He slammed the corruption, darkness and sin

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of the British dynasty. He also showed deep sympathy for the appointment of Ireland, but also whipped up the idea of the backward feudalism of the people. In this article, it is often seen that Swift also uses various tones to express satire. In a serious tone, he talked about the kidnapping of small things that are not worth mentioning. In a careless tone, he talked about such horrific events of human flesh and blood. He described the scenes of women's abortions in painful and painstaking manners. These tones can show Swift's amazing writing skills, as well as highly skilled satirical art. His satirical style of novels expresses his dissatisfaction with society and his deep sympathy for the working people. Swift is also constantly concerned about the future and destiny of the country.

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