



Comparing Writing Style of Male and Female Authors in Victorian Era

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ABSTRACT

The prime objective of this study is to compare the literary writing style of men and women writers of Victorian age. Every writer has an own style of writing and their story telling techniques. This research investigates writing style of male writers and female writers on basis of vocabulary, sentence structure and use of tone. This paper also revealed about condition of men and women during Victorian period.

Introduction

The influence of gender on arts and culture is important study in the humanities and literature .Writing style is an essential part when it comes to literature as it allows the writers to portray their unique identity through literature. Various authorship studies have shown that the identity of an author can be tested by analysing the writing style of a selection of works Style gives form to substance. An authors style determines the techniques that he used to compose the content. After reading this paper we can analyse and compare writing style of both male and female authors in victorian era. This paper introduces the question: are there similarities between the fingerprints of female authors and do female writing styles differ from male authors' writing styles?

The social and cultural background of male and female authors of the Victorian period is vital to understand differences and similarities in their writing style. Although men and women create a flourishing society there are ample differences between both . Women in the Victorian age is that women did not enjoy the same rights and liberties as men. Before nineteenth century , literacy was only restricted to men. Literacy increased swiftly with the introduction of free schools in second half of nineteenth century. Women who spoke in public were view as trying to imitate men or they were portrayed as women cross-

dressing as men . Women did not have the right to vote and in the 1860s the first women's right movements were organised to try to improve the situation of women. In Victorian age it was assumed that novel was a lower form of culture partly because of participation of female writers and because most of the readers were believed to be women.

With the public sphere slowly becoming a platform for the feminist agenda towards the end of Victorian period. Women were denied full participation in the arts – as well as politics and other subjects by being excluded from university education. This also shows how women were expected to be confined to their private and domestic lives. Well known example is Elizabeth Cleghorn Gaskell, who was subjected to quite a lot of criticism during her career. Her reputation was ruined after publishing her novel *Ruth and Gaskell*. She succeeded in regaining her status by engaging a less narrative style and distancing herself from a narrator. As the topic is vast, I have selected two authors to carry out my research: Charlotte Bronte and Charles Dickens. This study referred to a journal article by Robyn R. Warhol called "Narrating the Unnarratable : Gender and Metonymy in the Victorian novel". In her article she discusses how authors of different genders in the Victorian era seem to inherently write in different styles. There were not enough substantial evidences to support the claims that there are concrete differences between the style of men and women. Only well-known works of authors are selected for the research. Triangulation is not done due to limited time period.

Result and Discussion

In order to fulfil the aim of this paper , this research has been divided into three segments: sentence structure , vocabulary and use of tone. In literature , it applies to how something is written. It distinguishes one author from another.

Sentence Structure

Sentence structure refers to the physical nature of a sentence and how the elements of that sentence are presented. In *Jane Eyre* Charlotte Bronte uses complex sentence structure. She never uses periodic sentences even though the story is full of surprise and mystery. Her sentences are long, often with colons, semicolons and elaborate word choice. As for example , Jane narrates her first meeting with Mr. Rochester, " The incident had occurred and was gone for me :it was an incident of no moment, no romance, no interest in a sense: yet it marked with change one single hour of a monotonous life".

Charles Dickens writes in a typical Victorian prose style using compound sentences and complex structure. He also repeats patterns, also known as anaphora. Dickens convey richness and variety of detail in lines from *Great Expectations*: " On every rail and gate, wet *lay* clammy; and the marsh-mist *was* so thick, that the wooden finger on the post *directing* people to the village- a direction which they never accepted , for they never *came* there- *was* invisible to me until I *was* quite closer under it"

Vocabulary

After analysing Charlotte Bronte and Charles Dickens writings found that , Mr is placed third on the list of most frequent words used by men and fifth on the list of words used most frequently by women; Mrs is on the thirty-fifth place on the men's list and on the thirteenth place on the women's list as *cited* in paper: *Literary Writing Style of Women: English-Language Authors of the Victorian Age* by (Dr P.A.F. Verhaar and Dr C. Koolen) on 9 September 2018. Women use three words – mother, miss and woman – and men use two words – sir and men – to refer to their own sex, yet they do not use any more words to refer to the other sex. These words thus corroborate the notion that both sexes might favour their own sex in writing as male and female authors . This seems a preliminary indication that the sexes might be more focussed on their own gender.

Another example can be found in the ten words that are unique for each list. For the female authors, those are: quiet, dear, love, heart, oh, poor, mother, miss, home and woman . For the male authors these are: sir, men, night, ll (the contracted form of 'will'). The male authors frequently use words that can be classed under observations or descriptive words, such as: night, saw, place and head. The female authors use words that can be classed under emotive or subjective words instead, such as: quite, love, dear, oh and heart.

Use of Tone

Every spoken and written communication has a tone . Tone can be neutral, excited, dark , nostalgic, formal. Charlotte Bronte generally uses descriptive language in her writings. In *Jane Eyre* she creates a contrast between hot and cool emotional states, while she uses the pathetic fallacy at important plots points to mirror Jane's inner state, such as when Jane meets Rochester. Every teacher was described in a very unpleasant and sordid manner. The word grotesques especially have a very nasty image.

The Tone of Dickens writing style signifies a serious , ornate piece of literature. Dickens favours a level of formality and eschews casual everyday language; this results in a text that has grand, formal tone befitting its cosmopolitan setting. In the novel *HARD TIMES* his tone varies drastically, but it is frequently ironic, mocking, and even satirical, especially when he describes Bounderby, Hart house and Mr Sparsit. When describing Stephen and Racheal his tone is pathetic and evoking sympathy.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this research was to compare the literary writing style of men and women writers from Victorian age , and found that, there are similarities in sentence construction between female authors in the Victorian period that in general subtly differs from male authors. Male and female authors both have unique and shared vocabulary traits compared to each other. During the Victorian age, both sexes share many words that they use most frequently, however, these words are not used at the same frequency for both sexes.

Moreover, in general they tend to use more words that refer to their own sex more frequently compared to the other sex. There is also a similarity between the most unique words used by both sexes. It is found that the use of a diverse vocabulary does not differ greatly between men and women in the Victorian period. There are some differences and similarities in the use of tone of male and female authors.

However, there are also similarities between works written by men and women, suggesting that there might also be a universal style used by all authors of the Victorian period or in general. Examining the three sections that have been investigated separately, most differences between the sexes appear as subtle nuances. However, adding all these subtle differences together signifies that there is, in fact, an evidently perceivable difference between female writing styles and male writing styles during the Victorian age.

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Jane Austen *Pride and Prejudice*

Charlotte Bronte *Jane Eyre*

Charles Dickens *Hard Times*

Charles Dickens *Great Expectations*