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4 幽默的艺术

在上世纪 80 年代初看我国出版的《辞海》，其中幽默词条的解释，我觉出是错的。

《辞海》里幽默词条写的是：“美学名词。通过影射、讽喻、双关等修辞方法，在善意的微笑中，揭露生活中乖讹和不通情理之处。”

我见过很多漫画，里面一个字也没有，无辞可修，却是幽默逗笑的。又想到侯宝林表演的相声《夜行记》里的几句对话：

乙：二十八块钱你就买车呀？

甲：买旧的。

乙：那能骑吗？

甲：哎，你别看花钱不多，车还可以。

乙：骑得过儿？

甲：反正除了铃不响，剩下哪儿都响。

人一听哄堂大笑，明白说的是这辆车很破旧，感觉这种说法是幽默的。其中并没有像《辞海》里幽默词条上说的“揭露生活中乖讹和不通情理之处”。而且在修辞学里，我想也不会有这种修辞法，能使人按此法修出这类的话来。至少，不懂幽默的人是修不出来的。

再看此后 1989 年版的《辞海》对幽默的注解是：“（1）发现生活中喜剧性因素和在艺术中创造、表现喜剧性因素的能力。真正的幽默能够洞悉各种琐屑、卑微的事物所掩藏着的深刻本质。（2）一种艺术手法。以轻松、戏谑但又含有深意的笑为其主要审美特征，表现为意识对审美对象所采取的内庄外谐的态度。幽默在引人发笑的同时，竭力引导人们对笑的对象进行深入思考。当幽默变得非

said, "What does humor really mean? How should we give an explanation of it?" Mr. Hou was a person who had always paid much attention to theoretical research work. I was at a loss at the two theoretical questions he raised. He also said, "We are both engaged in the art of humor. It is necessary for us to find out the answer." I then decided to search for the answer up in books.

Mr. Lin Yutang, a famous scholar and writer, encouraged the use of humor in the 1930's. In fact, the word *youmo* (for humor) was translated by him based on the pronunciation of the English word. The magazine *Quotations*, edited by Mr. Lin, published many articles on humor. I borrowed some copies of this magazine and from them copied all of the relevant articles. I also copied the entry "humor" from all available encyclopedias published in the United States and the U.K. However I still couldn't find a proper explanation in these books, since each gave its own version instead of a universally agreed explanation.

I believe that the entry of humor in *Cihai*, a comprehensive Chinese dictionary published in the early 1980's, is wrong. The definition in it is "an aesthetic word, meaning exposing what is abnormal or unreasonable in life by means of rhetoric, such as allusion, allegory, or puns." However, I have seen many cartoons which are amusing and humorous in which you can't find a single word, let alone rhetoric. I remember a short dialog in *Xiangsheng* show *A Cycling Adventure in Darkness*, performed by Mr. Hou Baolin.

B: You mean you bought a bike for only 28 Yuan?

运用幽默技法是明显的,也是越来越熟练的。

幽默是社会文明进化而形成的一种语言形式,是艺术化的语言,也是一种艺术技法。它的运用自然是经过一定艺术加工的,一般人不容易掌握好。从事幽默文学艺术创作的人也须多年锻炼后才熟于使用。现在从电视中看到的一些喜剧小品和相声,以及报纸刊物上发表的漫画,其中就有不少是不大善于使用幽默技法的。幽默已成为文学艺术家们所关注的一门学问。不仅文学艺术家,也是许多社会活动家、政治家、医学家、哲学家、心理学家、教育家们所关心和研究的问题。因为幽默语言是文明进化的产物,和社会生活包括人的思想、素质紧密相关。

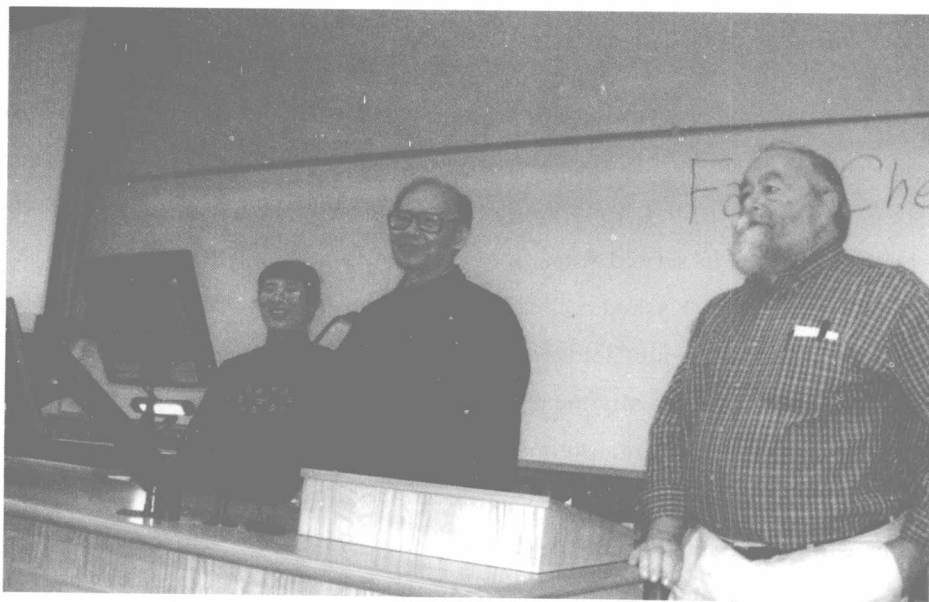
2. A Popular Learning

Since ancient times we have habitually called all that makes people laugh “comicality”. However, we know that there is more than one kind of laugh, such as jocularly, ridicule, banter and so on. In western countries all that makes people laugh is called “humor”, but westerners also know that there is more than one kind of laugh. Mr. Lin Yutang borrowed the word “humor” from English and divided the laughs with a social nature into two kinds of humor, one in a broad sense and the other in a narrow sense. I will borrow these two words to refer to two different jokes: the one that is out of wisdom and used in language is called humor, and the

3. 值得研究的课题

2001年11月,应各国驻京记者们之约,我到北京长城饭店为他们讲有关幽默的理论问题。有人问到中国人的幽默时,我说,中国人应该是很理解幽默的,因为中国有几千年连绵不断的文明史,语言发达,自然会流行幽默语法。我举例说,1971年我在河南农村,看到一块粮食地里的庄稼生长很差,稀稀拉拉不成样子,就问身旁一位农民。他说:“这是块卫生地。”一听我就乐了,明白他说的是这块地里没上肥——当时农村多上农家肥,就是人畜的粪便。他是用曲折说法,很奇特,但意思是清楚的。这就是幽默的语法。

幽默语言各国相通,但其中各有一些特殊之处是不相通的。中国文字、语言和其他国家不同,世界各国文字多半用字母拼成,中国不同,文字是单个的,源自象形——太阳是“日”,月亮是“月”,很像太阳和月亮的形。此外还有用其他方法组成的,所以谐音字很多。我问“气管炎”你们听过吗?引起懂中国话的几位记者大笑。他们知道“气管炎”和“妻管严”谐音,外国人听不懂。我们常以此嘲笑怕老婆的人。中国老百姓常用这种谐音造成曲折表达的幽默话。在相声表演中是常用的。拼音文字也有谐音,但少得多。在幽默语言里用得比我国也少得多。除种种特殊情况之外,各国幽默语言是相通的。我说过,社会文明,必然产生幽默。漫画实际上可说是画出



2005 年在费城天普大学演讲
(Public lecture, Temple University in Philadelphia, 2005)

“sun” is written as “日” and the “moon” as “月”. The shapes of the two characters are quite similar to the shapes of the sun and the moon. There are other characters which originated in other ways. As a result, there are many puns in the Chinese spoken language. In my speech at the Great Wall Hotel, I asked my audience if they had ever heard of the joke about the word “tracheitis”. Some Chinese speakers among the foreign reporters immediately began to laugh, for they knew that in Chinese spoken language, the word “tracheitis” (*qi guan yan*) and “henpecked” (*qi guan yan*) have a similar pronunciation. We often use this pun to make jokes on those who are afraid of their wives. Foreigners cannot understand puns like this. Ordinary Chinese people often speak humorously by using puns to express their ideas indirectly. Comedians in their performances of *Xiangsheng* also often use the technique of puns. In the languages which use an alphabetic system of writing, there are puns, too, but not as many as those in the Chinese language. People use many fewer puns in their humorous speech. Except for some special circumstances, humorous speech in all countries is interlinked. Social civilization will inevitably lead to humor. Cartoons, as a matter of fact, can be considered as humorous speech drawn on paper. This is my understanding about the origin of humor, from which I will now analyze further regarding the character of humor and the ways in which humor is used.

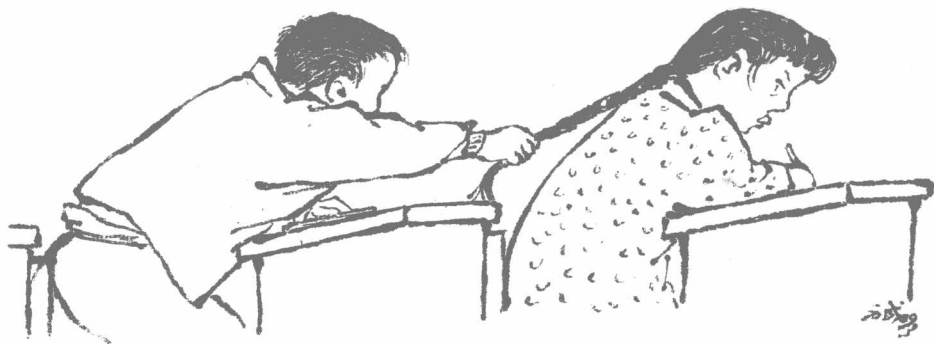
Since the 1980's, I have written quite a few articles on humor, and have published 10 books on the theory of this subject. Some scholars and writers say that humor defies definition, so I have written a thesis named *The Definition of*

Humor, which was published in the *Wuhan University Journal (Humanities Sciences)* Vol. 56, No. 6, so that I might have a cultural exchange and discussion on this subject with scholars and artists over the world. In the autumn of 2005, I gave lectures on the humor in cartoons and the principles of humor in the Philadelphia Communications College and the Temple University. When I talked with the cartoonists there, they told me that they had not yet read the English versions of my articles or books, and that they knew nothing about them. Similarly, I also have to seek the Chinese versions of those articles or expositions on this subject written by foreign scholars and artists. I have bought quite a few books and articles on humor, written by American and French scholars, all of which are in Chinese version. I have also read the Chinese translation of the expositions in the encyclopedias published in the United States, Europe and Japan. Therefore, I have decided to have my theses on humor translated into English and published so as to give further studies to this subject together with colleagues in all countries.

Humorous speech is the result of the development of social civilization and it is inherent in literature and the arts. Because of this, many famous scholars and artists in various countries have paid much attention to this subject and have written and published many theses and books on it as well. Academic exchanges like this date back to about two thousand years ago, when Greek scholars like Plato and Aristotle began to write about jokes. Obviously it is a subject worth further studying.

带，每天找他。一早去时，见他院里的平箩中晾着一小堆米，上面有黑色的米虫。我说：“你家的米长虫子了？”他说：“这是我们家养的。”一听我乐了，知道他开玩笑。按理说，谁家也不会有意去养米虫。他说“我们家养的”听来不合情理，但一想也有合理之处，因为这些米虫确实是在他们家里养出来的。我理解那是他故意取笑。这是利用“养”字的双关含义的巧合造成幽默感，也就是滑稽感。

有时用幽默说法是为了缓和人际关系。宋朝大书画家米芾，平时举止颠狂，人称他“米颠”，可他自己不想承认。朋友们在一起时，他问苏东坡：“人家说我颠狂，你看是吗？”东坡说：“我服从多数。”意思是说他是颠狂的。他为什么不直说“你是颠狂的”呢？那不就是用这种缓和的说法，免得米芾不高兴吗。米芾听了这话，也就一笑了之，别人一听也觉说得有趣。



24 ☆ 幽默的艺术

least they are not as expensive as in Beijing.” I said, “I paid 8 yuan a day and I caught four bedbugs, so each one cost me 2 yuan.” He laughed at once, getting what I was hinting at, and said, “Oh I see. We have done a bad job in sanitation. We will try to improve our work.”

He willingly accepted my complaint. If I had said, “I had a very bad sleep. I had to fight with the bugs for the whole night.” I think, it would not have been as easy as my indirect and implicit way for him to accept my criticism.

5. 几则实例

我常用这个例子来讲幽默：

“您生活怎样？”

“我一个人吃饱，全家不饿。”

他这个家仅有他一个人，是独身生活的——他吃饱也就是全家都饱了。

这句话乍一听很奇特，不合情理，但一想就明白，讲的是一种特殊情况，且是合情理的，这就觉得有趣可笑。会感到这说法的机巧，令人赞服，也会享受到审美的愉悦。人都好奇，对机巧的奇事乐于欣赏。当然，令人担心和厌恶的事是不会引人发笑的。

一位老漫画家向朋友介绍女伴，说：“她是我家长。”一听就明白，她是他的夫人。而且从语气分明觉出他们两人之间的亲密情谊，听来也觉有趣。还感到那是向朋友们显示友情的。对陌生人不会说这样介绍的话。

朋友之间总是喜欢说说笑笑的。新婚的一对来到友人之间，人就爱问他们：“你们俩成家了，谁是这一家之主，一切都听他（她）的？”那位新郎说：“我们不兴家长制，是民主分工。两人意见一致，就全听我的，我做主；意见不一致，就全听她的，她做主。”大家一听就笑了，明白话里的意思。也理解这说法是很幽默有趣的。

有一种自满的荣耀感。或觉得别人错了,但自己没犯错,因而自满。有的是自己出了错,自己发觉,是后我对前我的嘲笑。除此之外,人都有好奇的习性,对无伤大体的奇事很感兴趣,甚至有的会带有赞服之情,会笑起来。人看见动人的表演不就会鼓掌欢笑吗?

这种出奇可分几类:

一是无意中做错了事,或说错了话,使人感到不合常情,不相称,不协调,或偶然出现的情况,但都发生在可理解的生活环境之中。倘是无缘无故出现的怪事,人不理解原因,就不明白,不会笑的。例如因为匆忙,穿错了鞋,穿一只布鞋,一只皮鞋,不成对,就可笑了。笑的是在正常情况下出现的偶然。

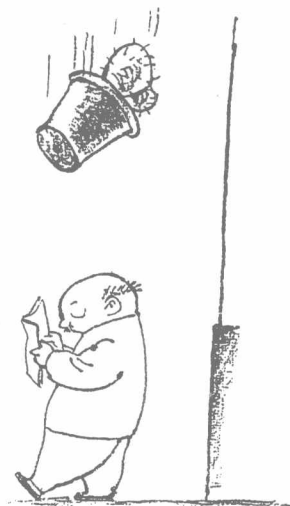
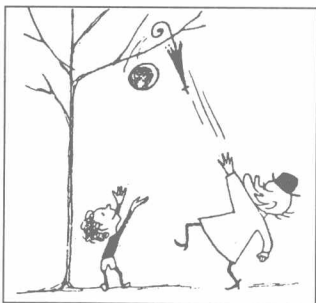
二是生活中偶然出现的巧合。平时见不到,偶然出现,才觉出奇。例如从楼上掉下一棵青菜,恰好落在行人带的菜筐里。又如一个口吃(俗称结巴)的人问路,恰好问到的人也是个口吃的。这一切都发生在生活常情之中,不是无缘无故冒出来的,也就是生活中的偶然现象。

三是出乎意料的难堪,或出乎意料的情况转换。自然也是出于生活中的偶然现象。例如很高兴抱起朋友的幼儿,不料孩子尿了他一身湿。或如兰格仑的这幅漫画,本来想帮助孩子,结果自己需要别人帮助。

四是用巧计解决问题,结果出人意料地成功。

第二种非因出奇而引发的笑,如对什么事感到满意而笑起来,而不是对种种奇象的评比,是不会产生自感优越的乐趣而发笑的。

因出奇而引人发笑,通称为“滑稽”。



有备无患 (Be Prepared)

—The title on the book is “Qigong”.

幽默的特色

THE CHARACTERS OF HUMOR

在他戒烟之前,我已声明过,“先上吊,后戒烟!”

——老舍《何容先生的戒烟》

他身上有那么一股高傲劲儿,像破庙似的,虽然破烂而仍令人心起敬。

——老舍《歪毛儿》

(见第40页“幽默之源”)

7. 幽默之源

考察幽默的来源,首先想到的,是促人发笑的原因。见惯和听惯了的事物,不会忽然令人笑起来,除非因为其中有变动。对幽默的认识中,众所同意的两点:一是逗笑,二是出于人的智慧。由此推想,幽默的产生,就很可能由人与人之间的关系造成,因为人与物之间产生的发笑,不需经过人的智慧创造出来。见到什么或听见什么觉得可笑,不过是因出奇而引起的。而人与人之间的交往,关系就多变也复杂得多。人际交往最明显也最主要的是靠语言,从语言中是否能发现幽默的产生呢?

事情是清楚的。由于劳动生产的不断进步,人与人之间关系也因此逐渐复杂,语言由此也会复杂多变。原始人还住在树上的时候,以渔猎为生,语言很简单,不过说些“上”、“下”、“有”、“无”、“打”、“吃”之类的话。穴居之后,会耕种了,需要说的话也多起来。生产不断发展,社会进步,文明进化,人际关系更加复杂,就不会和儿童那样,想到什么就直接说出来,因为要顾及社会人情。我年轻时,听到人介绍妻子是“孩子他妈”或“家里的”,女人介绍丈夫说是“孩子他爹”、“我那口子”,都拐个弯儿说,人一听就明白。尊长生病说是“欠安”,死了说是“去世”、“不在”,是有所忌讳之故。现在各国人都说“上洗手间”,绝不会和小孩子那样有啥说啥的。世道人情使

therefore their language has also become more and more complicated and changeable. The primitive men lived on trees and made their living by hunting and fishing. Their language was very simple. The words they used were no more than “up”, “down”, “yes”, “no”, “beat”, “eat”, and so on. After moving into caves, they learned farming and they needed more complex words. With the development of production, progress of society and the evolution of civilization, the relationship between people was becoming more and more complicated. When a man wanted to say something, he would not be like a child, directly saying whatever he wanted to say. He had to consider the social circumstances. When I was young, I often heard husbands introducing their wives by saying, “this is my child’s mother”, or “this is a family member”. When wives introduced their husbands, they would often say, “this is my child’s father”, or “this is my man”. Although they expressed their ideas in a circuitous way, people still could understand them. When the elder members in a family were ill, they should say, “they are lacking ease”. When they died, they should say, “they have left the world”, or “they are no longer here”. They say things this way to avoid breaking the taboos. Now throughout the world, whenever someone wants to use the toilet, they speak indirectly, not as children do. Social circumstances and human relationship has made people’s speech to improve, and circuitous and implicit speech is becoming more and more widespread. People often express their ideas implicitly.

There is an old saying, “skill comes from practice”. It is a common truth. The more you practice, the more skillful you will be, and improve

8. 奇巧之术

提到用“奇巧”二字简括幽默的特质和运用方法，再补充几句。奇是出乎意料的，是由主观想法和客观现实之间的矛盾造成；巧是其中又有合情理之处，也就是在矛盾之中，还带有协调之处。可笑就是矛盾造成的，所以幽默大师侯宝林说：“没有矛盾就没有笑话。”说“一个人吃饱，全家不饿”，这话听来不合常情，很矛盾。但一想，他这一家只有他一个人，这就合乎情理，就是协调了。听来矛盾而又能协调，便觉有趣可笑。说“先上吊，后戒烟”，显然矛盾。人一上吊，怎能再去戒烟呢？但一想就明白，意思是“谁要我戒烟，我先上吊，以后再谈。”不就是宁死也不去戒吗？

在相声表演中就常借种种矛盾造成笑料，相声术语称为“包袱”。如侯宝林表演的《改行》，说的是在一位有权势的老爷家里表演：

甲：咱们俩人说段相声，咱们得卖力气。

乙：对！

甲：谁要不卖力气谁是小狗子。

乙：哎！这话没错儿。

甲：坏啦，老爷生气啦。

乙：怎么？这话没错儿呀！

甲：他小名儿叫小狗子。