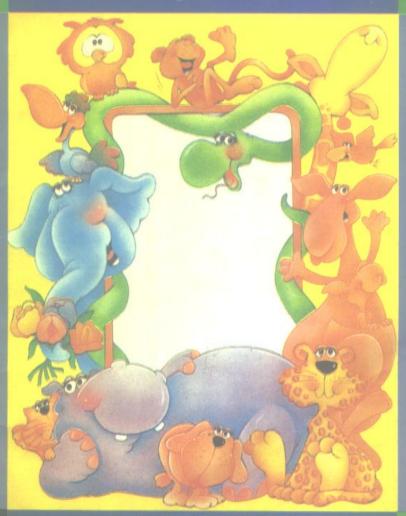
走向世界实用英语

# 智力趣味谜语

汪榕培 编著

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# ENGLISH RIDDLES 智力趣味谜语

(英汉对照)

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# 总 序

年轻的朋友,我们都是幸运的人。跨越世纪是 "百年不遇",跨越千年更是"千载难逢",我们就是这 样的幸运儿。

为了迎接新世纪的挑战,实现走向世界的理想, 越来越多的年轻人正在学习外语。但是,真正做到外 语学有所成、运用自如的人却并不多。很难设想死啃 一种课本的人能把活的语言学到手,很难设想学完 就扔的人能永生不忘。

阅读外语书刊是温故知新的必由之路。每天茶余饭后读上几页外语,也许会是无上的乐趣。短小精悍、饶有趣味、实用性强——这是外语阅读材料的必备条件。摆在你面前的这套丛书就是这样的书籍。你会发现外语学习原来是轻松愉快的事情!

汪榕培 1995年10月于大连

## 前言

谜语是以某一事物或词语为谜底,用隐喻、形似、暗示或描写其特征的方法为谜面,供人猜射的文字游戏,是世界各民族共有的一种民间文学体裁。

#### 一。中英文谜语源远流长

世界各国的谜语都有极其悠久的历史,我国的谜语可以 追溯到 3000 多年前春秋战国时期的"隐语"和"瘦词",《周易》 "归妹卦第五十四"中的"女承筐,无实;士刲羊,无血"实际上 就是一则隐语式的事物谜,谜底为"剪羊毛"。

希腊神话中的带翼狮身女怪斯芬克司(Sphinx)常叫过路行人猜谜,猜不出就将行人杀死,后因谜底被俄狄浦斯道破,她即自杀了。这个世界著名的谜语是:"What goes on four legs in the morning, on two at noon, and on three in the evening",其谜底是"People"(人),因为人在婴儿时四肢在地上爬行,成人后两腿行走,年老后拄拐杖走路。在《圣经》中也有几个著名的谜语,其中之一是"士师记"第十四章中的故事:力士参孙杀死了一头狮子,后来在狮子的尸体里发现一群蜜蜂和苍蝇,于是他就这件事情编了一个谜语:

"Out of the eater came something to eat;
Out of the strong came something sweet."

英语的谜语可以追溯到古英语时期,其中有 99 则谜语一直流传至今。由于古英语与现代英语相差甚远、不容易读懂,在这里抄录第 50 个谜语的现代英语译文,它的谜底是"Fire"

(火):

"There is on earth a warrior wonderfully engendered:
Between two dumb creatures it is drawn into brightness
For the use of men. Meaning harm, a foe
Bears it against his foe. Fierce in its strength,
A woman may tame it. Well will he heed
And meekly serve both men and women
If they have the trick of tending him,
And feed him properly. He promotes their happiness,
Enhance their lives. Allowed to become
Proud, however, he proves ungraceful."

这是一首形象生动的谜语诗,具有较高的文学价值。
作为民间文学的一种形式,中英文谜语在群众中间都得到广泛的流传,具有强烈的民族色彩。先看一则中文谜语:

"小小一个白脸郎,

爬山过岭做衣裳,穿得衣衫来洗浴,洗得浴来脱衣裳。"

(藕)

#### 再看一则英文谜语:

"Little Nancy Etticoat
In a white petticoat
And a red nose
The longer she stands
The shorter she grows."
(A lighted candle)

这样的谜语风趣幽默,读来朗朗上口,不仅大人喜欢,而且儿

童也喜欢,自然得以长时间广泛流传。

许多著名的作家也创作了不少具有文学价值的谜语。例如,在中国的《镜花缘》、《红楼梦》等小说中都有谜语佳作。例如,曹雪芹在《红楼梦》第22回中的谜语:

"能使妖魔胆尽丧, 身如束帛气如雷; 一声震得人方恐, 回首相看已化灰。" <sup>✓</sup> (爆竹)

莎士比亚在他的剧本《哈姆雷特》中有这样的谜语。

"What is he that builds stronger than either the mason,

The shipwright or the carpenter?"

(The gallow-maker, for that frame outlives a thousand tenants)

直到今天,谜语在我国和西方国家仍旧受到广大读者的欢迎,中英文谜语既有相似之处,又有不同之处,比较它们的异同是个十分有趣的课题。

#### 二、中英文事物谜花开并蒂

中英文谜语都有一个主要类别:事物谜。中英文事物谜的谜面构成方法特别相似,都是用隐喻、形似、暗示或描写其特征的方法为谜面,所以,英文的事物谜又叫做"描述性谜语" (descriptive riddles)。

先看以"鸡蛋"(egg)为谜底的几则中文和英文的事物谜:

(1) "大小生来像个桃,

又无核来又无毛, 今日被我吃下去, 免得将来挨一刀。"

(2) "外面白金桶, 里面黄金桶, 一旦打开来, 永远合不拢。"

- (3) "一层墙,二层墙, 中央藏个小红娘。"
- (4) "希奇希奇真希奇, 爹娘生我怪东西, 人家都是皮包骨, 我从生来骨包皮。"
- (5) "圆滚滚一块石头, 石头里一张绵绸, 绵绸里一团破絮, 破絮里一个日头。"
- (6) "When I was going over a field of wheat, I picked up something good to eat, Neither fish, flesh, fowl nor bone, I kept it till it ran alone."
- (7) "I have a little house which I live in all alone, Without doors, without windows, And if I want to go out I have to break through the wall."
- (8) "A box without hinges, key, or lid Yet golden treasure inside is hid."
- (9) "Humpty-Dumpty sat on the wall; Humpty-Dumpty had a great fall.

All the king's horses and all the king's men Couldn't put Humpty-Dumpty together again."

(10) "In marble walls as white as milk, Lined with a skin as soft as silk; Within a fountain crystal clear, A golden apple doth appear. No doors there are to this stronghold, Yet thieves break in and steal the gold."

除了运用的比喻不同以外,中英文事物谜的描述手法基本上是相同的。鸡蛋的形状被比作"桃"、"桶"、"石头"、"房子"、"盒子"等,鸡蛋的外壳被比作"墙",蛋黄被比作"黄金桶"、"小红娘"、"日头"、"宝藏"、"黄金"等。描述的内容包括外壳能打碎、里面的东西可以吃、能孵出东西来等等。这类谜语在汉英互译以后,简直很难认出哪个是原始的谜语。

事物谜猜射的是"事物","事物"自然有其民族特点。上述 谜语中的"小红娘"和"Humpty-Dumpty"、"all the king's horses and all the king's men"等就反映了中国与英国不同的 国情和文化背景。具有民族特色的谜面和谜底经常在谜语中 出现,反映了不同的民俗。例如,

> "四四方方像亩田, 常供书房案桌前, 白头乌鸦偷水喝, 鸟子将军立提鞭。"

这个中国谜语的谜底是"砚台",英美人就难以猜出来了。再看一个英国谜语:

"I saw five birds all in a cage, Each bird had but one single wing: They were a hundred years of age,
And yet did fly and sweetly sing.
The wonder did my mind possess,
When I beheld their age and strength;
Besides, as near as I can guess,

Their tails were thirty feet in length."

这个英国谜语的谜底是"Bells in a steeple"(教堂尖塔里的五口大钟),中国读者是很难猜得出来的。

民族特色还反映在语言特点上。在"What is black and white and red all over?"这个谜语中,由于 red 和 read 的发音相同,英美人不难猜出谜底是"Newspaper"(报纸),而中国读者对于这样的双关语(pun)就会有一定的难度了。同样,这"有道则见,无道则隐,瞻之在前,忽焉在后"这个谜语中,由于"道"和"稻"的发音相同,中国人不难猜出谜底是"脱谷用的连枷",而英美读者对于这样的双关语就会有一定的难度了。这类运用双关语的谜语在汉英互译的时候不容易处理。但是,即使在运用双关语这一点上,中英文谜语也是如出一辙的。

#### 三、中英文字谜异曲同工

中英文的另一个主要类别是字谜,是猜"字(词)"的一种 谜语。由于汉字是方块字而英文是拼音文字,所以在谜面的构 成方法上有所不同。

汉语的字谜是从字形入手来猜"字"的,在字形上做文章。例如,

"三山自三山,山山皆倒悬。 一月复一月,月月还相连。

#### 左右拍双翼,纵横列两川。 阖家都六口,两口不团圆。"

谜底是"用",因为前一句是说"用"字有三个"山"字组成,且都倒悬着。后一句是讲"用"字有两个"月"字组成,且还都相连着的。再后一句说"用"字是由左右两个"羽"字,纵横两个"川"字组成的。最后一句是说"用"字可以分成六个"口"字,而最下面两个口字缺下面的"横"而没合上。人行诗四层意思,环环相扣,是个典型的描述性谜语。

汉语字谜常用的手法还有"会义"和"拆字"等。所谓"会义"指的是先由猜者领会谜面暗示的含义,然后领悟出相应的谜底。例如,

"上不在上,下不在下; <sup>~</sup> 不可在上,止宣在下。"

谜底是"一",因为"一"字既在"上"的下面,又在"下"的上面,同时也在"不"字和"可"字的上面,"止"字和"宣"字的下面。所谓"拆字"(又称"离合格")指的是将一个字拆成若干部分,再组合起来,即"破分其字,一离一合而成"。例如,

"出于幽谷,

迁于乔木。"

谜底是"呆",因为首句离" 个" 余"口", 二句迁"木"字于"口"字,成谜底"呆"字。

英语的字谜(Charades)在字母、音节和整个词的离合上做文章。以字母为谜底的字谜一般采用的是描述法,把字母当做"事物",基本上属于事物谜的范围,但是因为猜射的对象是字母,所以在这里也把这类谜语列入字谜。下面的字谜的谜底是字母"H",整个谜面无非讲的是它(字母 H)在哪些单词里

#### 出现、哪些单词里不出现而已。

"I'm always found at home, no matter when or where;
In houses large, or harbours small, you'll find me always there.
I am no kindred of the great, nor care I for the small;
I visit not the parlour, but I'm always in hall.
In kitchens I can find a place, and there I'm quite at home;
In heaven I shall find some rest. In hope I take delight;
I'm out all day, nor am I tired, but always in atnight.
With holy, reverential care, in churches I am found;
But visit not the grave-yard, nor consecrated ground."

本此五文的全球也平田了株法生。日本分類的句景是

有些英文的字谜也采用了描述法,只不过猜射的对象是 单词而不是事物,固而列入字谜的范围。例如,

"A word that's composed of three letters alone,
And is backward and forward the same;
Without speaking a word makes its sentiments known,
And to beauty lays principal claim."

谜底是"Eye"这个单词,既描述了词形、又描述了词义。

真正的字谜(Charades)采用了加、减、合的方式。有些英语字谜采用的是减字母法(Decapitation),例如,

"Take away one letter, I destroy; take away two and I die, unless my whole saves me."

这个字谜的谜底是"skill",去掉第一个字母以后是"kill"(杀死),去掉两个字母以后是"ill"(生病),整个词"skill"的意思是"技能"。这种方法跟汉语里的减字类谜格(落帽格、摘领格等)有相似之处。

有些英语字谜采用的是加字母法(addition),例如,

"A note upon the piano here you see!

Crowned, here you have part of the verb to be.

Crown me again, a timid thing I flee;

And crowned once more, a portion here to thee."

第一行的谜底是"re",第二行的谜底是"are",第三行的谜底是"hare",第四行的谜底是"share"。这种方法跟汉语里的增字类谜格(加冠格、重头格等)有相似之处。

有些英文字谜采用的是逐个字母排列的方式,例如,

"My first is in sorrow, but not in sad,

My second's in girl, but not in lad,

My third is in near, but not in far,

My fourth is in tram, but not in car,

My fifth is in sure, but not in slow,

My sixth is in reap, but not in sow,

My whole is the season of frost and snow."

这个字谜的谜底是"Winter",由六个字母组成,谜面的前六行描述这些字母在哪些单词中出现,最后一行介绍词义。这种字谜有点像中文里的"文义谜",最后一行有点像中文字谜里的谜目。

还有一些英语谜语采用的是合并音节的方式,例如,

"My first a blessing sent to earth,

Of plants and flowers to aid the birth;

My second surely was designed

To hurl destruction on mankind;

My whole a pledge from pardoning heaven,

Of wrath appeased and crimes forgiven."

谜底的第一部分是"rain"(雨),谜底的第二部分是"bow"(弓),整个谜底是"rainbow"(虹)。这种方法跟汉语里的并字

类谜格(比目格、并蒂格等)有相似之处。

由此可见,中英文字谜的构成方法尽管有不同,然而其基本出发点是相通的,确有异曲同工之妙。

#### 四、中英文谜语异彩纷呈

除了事物谜和字谜以外,中英文谜语还有多种花色谜型是相同的,例如,画谜、数字谜、算式谜、故事谜等等。但是,中文的一种主要谜型——灯谜——是英文谜语所没有的,英文的一种主要谜型——机智与诙谐的问题——是中文谜语所没有的,需要分别介绍。

中文的灯谜原指粘贴在花灯之下供人猜射的谜语,现在专指"文义谜",用文字的意义作为扣谜的条件,利用汉字一字多义的特点,将谜底原意化作新解,达到回互其辞的目的。例如:

#### "好!"——打体育项目 🗸

谜底是"女子棒球",这个谜语以"好"字扣"女子","!"象形为一"棒"一"球",运用拆字和象形,从而构成了文义上的扣合。 灯谜有多种谜格,是中文谜语所特有的形式。

英文的机智与诙谐的问题(shrewd and witty questions),在英语中称作"conundrums",是英文谜语的一种重要类型,中文可译为"智力谜语",是当代新谜语的主体。例如,

"What is the strongest of all things?" 谜底是"Love: iron is strong, but the blacksmith is stronger, and love can subdue the blacksmith."

有些谜语的谜面貌似严肃,谜底却寻常得很,听到答案以

#### 后会使人发出会心的微笑。例如:

"If you were to throw a stone into the Red Sea, what would it become?"谜底是"Wet".

"How many soft-boiled eggs could the giant Goliath eat upon an empty stomach?"谜底是"One; after which his stomach would not be empty".

"Suppose you were to bore a hole exactly through thecentre of the earth starting from New York. If you went in at this end, where would you come out?" 谜底是"Out of thehole"。

有些谜语的谜面貌似简单,却往往会使人上当。例如:

"Which is heavier, a pound of gold, or a pound of feathers?"谜底是"A pound of feathers, which weighs a pound avoirdupois; a pound of gold is a pound troy".

有些谜语的谜面是以比较为基础的。例如:

"Why is an author like a freak of nature?"谜底是"Because his tail(tale) comes out of his head".

"Why is eternity like a circle?"谜底是"Because it has neither beginning nor end".

这类谜语的谜底经常是令人出乎意料的,它们的幽默之处正在于此。例如:

"What is better than presence of mind in case of a serious accident?"谜底是"Absence of body"。

"How do you punctuate the sentence I saw a \$5 bill on the street'?"谜底是"Make a dash after it".

"If you saw a bird sitting on a twig, and you wished to

get the twig without disturbing the bird, what would you do?"

谜底是"Wait till he flew away"。

大多数谜语都是以双关语(pun)为基础的,对于外国学生来说就比较困难。例如:

"Who is the first little boy mentioned by a single word in the history of England?"谜底是"Chap I".

"What can you keep, even after giving it to somebody else?"谜底是"Your word"。

"What is the hardest riddle of all?"谜底是"Life, because we all have to give it up".

英文的智力谜语虽然难猜,但是我们应该知道这类谜语的答案对于以英语作为母语的人说也是很难猜到的,在知道答案以后会发出会心的微笑——因为答案尽管有时有些荒谬,仔细捉摸却不无道理。最常见的两种句型是"What is the difference between…and…?"和"Why is…like…?"。

先看第一种句型的例子。"What is the difference between a presidential candidate and an overworked secretary?"要比较两种事物的区别,一般来说这两种事物应该有明显的共同之处,比较的是次要的差别,而英文智力谜语中要比较的两种事物简直是毫不相干的。总统候选人跟操劳过度的秘书差别太多了,谜底往往是一种文字游戏,这个谜语的谜底是"One can't wait to get into office and the other can't wait to get out of the office",前者迫不及待地要"get into office"(就职),后者迫不及待地要"get out of the office"(下班离开办公室),这条智力谜语巧妙地运用了"office"的两个意

思,同中见异使人读后忍俊不禁。

再看第二种句型的例子。"Why is the end of a dog's tail like the heart of a tree?"狗尾巴梢跟树心毫无关系,有什么可像的呢?看了谜底才恍然大悟:"Because it is farthest from the bark",原来这里巧妙地运用了"bark"一词的两个意思:狗叫和树皮。异中见同也会使人忍俊不禁。

篡改成语、谚语、名句也是智力谜语的常用手法之一。例如,英语有句谚语:"If at first you don't succeed, try, try again."由此而来的智力谜语有:

"What's a boxer's motto?"

答案是"If at fist you don't succeed, try, try again."

"What's a 747's motto?"

答案是"If at first you don't succeed, fly, fly again."

"What's every baby's motto?"

答案是"If at first you don't succeed, cry, cry again." 每个答案都跟原文只差一个词,意思大不一样,却也不无道理,读者不得不佩服谜语作者的高见。这些都是成功的作品,为外语学习也提供了绝妙的教材。

通过英文谜语来学习英语是一种有益和有效的方式,既可以学习语言,又可以学习文化背景知识,同时还可以进行翻译练习和中西文化对比。本书的正文部分以英文事物谜为主,配有汉语译文,本书的附录部分为英文字谜和智力谜语,为读者提供了更多的阅读材料。我们真诚地希望读者在读完这本小册子以后能够有所收益。

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