

# Strategy Analysis of Humor Mechanism in Kyoto Animation Nichijou from the Perspective of Humor Logic

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**ABSTRACT.** *Different from the traditional logic of conventional rational thinking, humor logic, as an irrational logic, deconstructs and transcends conventional logic. Humor logic uses endless forms of expression and fantastic way of thinking to burst out the energy of humor. As a funny cartoon full of funny points, the Kyoto animation NICHIJOU expresses humor and makes people laugh through different modes. This paper will take the humor content in the Japanese Kyoto animation NICHIJOU as the object, analyze the language mode, behavior mode and psychology mode, and then elaborate the construction strategy of humor mechanism in the animation.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Animation, Humor logic, Kyoto animation, Humor mechanism*

## 1. Introduction

Humor, which has been studied for thousands of years, comes from the transliteration of the English word “humor”, which originally had the concept of “liquid”. It was not until the end of the 17th century that “humor” was used in the field of aesthetics as a kind of “ability of behavior, or thinking and expression”. The definition of humor in Hu Fanzhu's humor linguistics is that humor is a spiritual phenomenon. Humor in a broad sense is equivalent to ridiculous. In a narrow sense, humor refers to the spiritual phenomenon with the most aesthetic value. Ordinary humor is a kind of spiritual phenomenon with the “Funny Degree” appeal to reason.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Hu Fanzhu divides humor into three levels: broad sense, common sense and narrow sense. In this paper, the author normalizes “Humor” to “Funny Degree” in the common sense, that no matter in content or form, the funny degree are called “humor”. According to Sun Shaozhen's theory of humor, humor is the structure and Transcendence of conventional logic, mainly an irrational emotional logic.<sup>2</sup> The theory of humorous logic is a kind of double misplaced logic. Although the concept is changed, the two logics do not interfere with each other, but form a blending effect.<sup>3</sup>

The name of *NICHIJOU*, a light and funny Kyoto series animation, also implies the theme of the animation's story “daily life”. The animation is composed of a number of trivial but witty stories in life. There is no strict main line plot guidance.

The animation is composed of a number of trivial but witty stories in life, without strict main line plot guidance, the overall narrative style is plate structure, and there is a certain independence between the story and the story, and no strong viscosity. As an important core element of the animation, “humor”, first of all, through the concept substitution of semantic content, the transfer of frame logic in specific context and the conflict of “law of contradiction” in the basic law of logic, make a hilarious dialogue is produced. Secondly, unconventional exaggeration and the use of logical gap between behaviors that create exaggerated and funny actions, which awaken and maintain the audience's desire and motivation to continue to look down. In the end, the conflict and gap psychology of the non mainstream information are generated, and the use of external behavior has an impact on the internal psychology, thus the absurdity of the inner activities which makes people laugh. At the same time, the accumulation of these “funny degree” humor that promote the audience's enthusiasm for watching, expressing method and artistic conceptions in the natural art of humor, so that the original trite and insignificant plot, design more deeply rooted in the hearts of the people.

## **2. Dislocation: the Mode of Verbal Humor in Humor Mechanism**

The study of humor has a long history, among which verbal humor occupies a very important position. It is related to linguistics, sociology and cognitive science. (verbal humor) draw support from phonetics, words, vocabulary, sentence patterns, through the creative use of a variety of rhetorical devices resulting in humor.<sup>4</sup> The expression of language humor in *NICHIJOU*, from changing the concept of semantic content, including the implication of phonetic morpheme in register or the re-deconstruction of rhetorical form, to the transfer of frame logic in specific context, and the intentional violation of the “law of contradiction” in the basic law of logic, resulting in the contradiction of semantic content, all of which bear the unique connotation of humor.

### **2.1 Concept Substitution of Semantic Content**

In *NICHIJOU*, the commonly used verbal humor mode is to use the re-deconstruction of phonetic morphemes in register theory and the common understanding of special register, or the pun language hint produced by a single sentence form under the logic of inexplicable dislocation. In the eighth episode of animation, Aioi Yuko joked, “it's a nice day today. Do you want to buy a keyboard?” And “people who are attacked by centipedes will say, centipedes are attacking me.” The reason for this humorous effect is that the pronunciation of “weather” (てんき) and “keyboard” (キーボード), “centipede” (むでで) and “attack” (むか) are very similar in pronunciation. In this paper, similar pronunciation puns with similar pronunciation are used as jokes under the unified phonetic morphemes. This kind of funny way is often used in Japanese culture, such as crazy songs, Kawabata, Waka and haiku.<sup>5</sup> Aristotle's logic in ancient Greece stipulated that the concept should be unified when thinking about problems, that is, the first “uniformity” of

rational logical thinking law, which is the consistence of information. However, concept substitution, which often appears in humorous logic, is a kind of confrontation against rational logic. The animation makes use of the polysemy and ambiguity of phonetic morphemes, and puts two homonymous words and concepts together. It deliberately creates misunderstanding in the meaning of terminologies and a sense of disharmony full of contradictions. The stronger the sense of violation, the stronger the humorous effect.

### ***2. 2 The Transfer of Frame Logic in Specific Context***

In any communication involving language, the premise of the existence of a specific context framework is indispensable, which is based on the mutual resonance between a national culture and its derivative life. In verbal humor communication, it is no exception in verbal humor communication. Even the unit link of “Helvetica standard” is set separately in the animation (from the title of another work of the original author). For example, when a civet cat was taught by the rent wife because he could not pay the rent, he pretended to be asleep to avoid the embarrassment of paying the rent. At this time, the rent wife said, “狸寝入りしたってだめなものはだめだ家まで帰らないわよ.” (I won't go back without paying the rent). The literal translation of “狸寝入り” does mean that the cat are asleep. However, as a proverb in Japanese national culture, its actual extended meaning is the act of pretending to be dead by false sleep in an attempt to muddle through. Then the sparrow, the civet cat's roommate, shed tears and was very embarrassed to hand over a copper plate and said, “雀の涙ほどですか...” (Although very few, but...). The literal translation of “雀の涙” does mean that the sparrow's tears, but its extended meaning is to describe something is very few, there is not presentable. In the Japanese language environment, with the support of the ingenious deviation of the fixed logical framework, this homonymous humor response breaks people's habitual thinking and original expectations under the fixed context norms. The comical effect gradually appears in the loss of expectation and the termination of habitual thinking, the dislocation of causality and the contradiction of logic.

### ***2. 3 The Conflict of “Law of Contradiction” in the Basic Law of Logic***

As one of the basic laws of traditional logic, the law of contradiction is an important rule that rational logic should follow. It is usually expressed if is not explicitly specified as part of the propositions A and B, then A may be B at one time, and not at another. This requires that in the same thinking context, we can't make two contradictory judgments on the same object at the same time, that is, we can't both affirm and deny it. It is one of the most important ways of humor to make funny points by using logical contradictions. Sometimes this kind of logical self contradiction seems to be not obvious, and it needs the information receiver to experience before revealing the contradiction. The connection between the obscure contradiction and the delayed will enriches and deepens the appeal of humor.

In *NICHIJOU*, there is a dialogue:

A: *"I can't motivate in anyway. "*

B: *"What are you talking about! We are high school students, and we are still in the new semester. We will have energy when we do it. "*

A: *"I don't have the any energy to cheer me cheer up. How can I get the energy to cheer me cheer up?"*

B: *"Anyway, just do it!"*

In the animation of this paragraph, for the "can be motivated" this matter has produced obvious contradictions. "Do not have the any energy to cheer cheer up" and "have the energy cheer up" are two mutually negative and opposite contents. Therefore, according to the requirements of the "law of contradiction" in the basic law of traditional logic, as two concepts of mutual negation, they can not be established at the same time. "Do not have the any energy to cheer cheer up" is to admit "Can't cheer up" When this judgment is true, condition 2 "raising motivation" is not tenable. This passage is trapped in an infinite cycle of self contradiction. It is forever unsolvable to use "have the energy cheer up" to solve "Do not have the any energy to cheer cheer up". The contradiction can not be justified, but it can make the audience smile and achieve a humorous artistic atmosphere.

In this animation, this kind of common verbal humor mode often appears in the re deconstruction of phonetic morphemes in the register, which produces a sense of insight after the deconstruction and reorganization of semantic objects. Or it is based on the inherent context, processing the logical differences and ambiguity of the framework and shifting the concept, so as to create a sense of ridicule, and enhance the humorous effect of funny objects. As a form of expression of humor, verbal humor has the characteristics of humor, flexibility and unconventionality, which can create a strong humorous effect.

### **3. Absurdity: Behavioral Humor Model in Humor Mechanism**

There are many types of humor that can be presented in funny animation, among which humor under the body behavior mode occupies a very important position. Because animation is different from real-life images, it can show unconventional exaggeration more flexibly after breaking through the limitations of the real physical world, which makes the audience have unexpected contrast surprise to the given impression. With the support of this unconventional exaggeration and the flexible use of logical fault between behavior groups, the behavioral humor model can make people laugh and strengthen their jokes.

#### **3.1 Unconventional Exaggeration**

Exaggeration is to strengthen, to emphasize some main, essential or representative things of people or things, so as to make small amplification, plain

highlights, and fully reveal hidden inside, and produce a striking or unexpected effect.<sup>6</sup> As for the use of exaggerated unconventional behavior humor to create a jokes, we can often see in *NICHIJOU*: a irascible temper person can create all kinds of heavy weapons as he likes; a person who is bitten by a dog and shoots lethal laser light in order to retaliate; or when a poor sports idiot is ashamed of something and then runs away, she even surpasses the fast-moving train. This kind of behavioral humor has gone beyond the limits of common sense. No matter how irascible you are, you can't create things emerge out of the void. This violates the physical rules of reality. Even if you are angry, you can't shoot laser light from your eyes. Even if you have excellent sports talent, you can't be faster than a train. This is not in line with the physiological structure of human beings. These actions based on body movements, exaggerated expressions and intentional violation of the physical rules of the real world and human physiological limits are absurd but full of jokes. This contrast behavior is humorous and direct, but it can effectively create a funny atmosphere of the story.

### **3.2 Application of Logic Fault**

Secondly, another form of behavioral humor is the use of the lack of causal logic and the use of rational logic gap. The audience is introduced into the anticipation under the causal logic, and then in the absence of rational logic, the gap is generated by using the gap of causal logic, which makes people laugh. In *NICHIJOU*, the common mechanism of behavioral humor is “construct the object, discover the object, fail the object and trigger the laughing point”. The audience will naturally have expectations when receiving the plot information, but due to the influence of various failure behaviors, the target object will be lost, which will make the discourse receiver conflict with the expected outcome of the discourse sending content, thus causing laughter. In the animation, the three students go camping together, cooking, catching fish, and performing their duties respectively. According to the logic in the foreground summary, it is expected that they can have a good meal. But the first person upset the dish while showing off his achievements, and then the second person kicked over the rice. At this time, the first “logical gap” appeared. At this time, people will place their hope on the third person who catches the fish. In fact, the fish has been caught as expected. At that time, the presupposition under the background was that there was at least fish for dinner. But then the catcher released the fish. Once again, there is a “logic gap”, that is, there is no place for dinner, and the content of the dinner is set in suspense. Finally, three people can only share a small box of cold noodles. At this time, the foresight is: dinner is available. However, the first person was choked to spit all his saliva in the box when eating, resulting in the third logic gap, which led to the interruption of the purpose of eating, which conflicts with the preset story track. Repetition produces expectation, and then expectation fails. This imbalance between the pre-anticipated and post anticipated events has a strong humorous effect.

The expression of humor elements in *NICHIJOU* can be guided by nonverbal humor, combined with body language and expression in line with the situation at

that time, short-term but effective unconventional exaggeration and failure behavior, or humor produced by logical gap that needs certain structural logic and proper rhythm. By using the specificity of humor limitation among different humor behavior patterns, the purpose of maximizing humor is achieved. With the support of the funny mechanism of behavior mode and powerful camera language, the animation not only enhances the appeal of the story, but also closely fits the audience's interaction.

#### **4. Empathy: Psychological Humor Model in Humor Mechanism**

As one of the humor models which can also produce jokes, psychological humor mode is different from verbal humor and physical humor. It needs the support of the character's internal character and psychological characteristics. The psychological humor makes use of the accumulation of previous experience and ideas as guidance when information receiver to receive information, and also makes use of the falsification of false information, so that the information received by the information receiver conflicts with the actual information, thus leading to the psychological gap. Or it is a kind of operation mode of psychological humor that influences the internal psychology by external behavior and even causes audience resonance.

##### ***4.1 Contradictory Psychological Gap after Information Dislocation***

In other words, the ridiculousness of the real object often stems from its violation of the subject's aesthetic experience and concept.<sup>7</sup> In this animation, the characters are often set with over active psychological activities, even beyond the scope of normal logical thinking, so that eventually in a very human way of thinking caused by the misunderstanding of the capricious event. In an episode of *NICHIJOU*, Aioi Yuko rushes to the classroom when she is already late. She finds that there is a simple trap on the door of the classroom. The back door and escape door are all locked out of the classroom. At this time, she starts brainstorming and assumes in her mind which way to enter the classroom is the best solution. If it is not decent to turn in from the upper window, if turn in from the window in the garden outside, may meet the headmaster. At this time, Aioi Yuko had to admire the logical man who set up the mechanism and able to keep the whole set of traps without any omission. After many times of supposing that Aioi Yuko finally decided to enter through the front door, although she would fall into a trap, might be able to make everyone laugh, so that the teacher would not be able to punish herself. Finally, she opens the door and falls into the trap as she wishes. She finds that the fact is not what she thought. The expected laughter and teacher's criticism have not come as expected. The trap that she thinks is closely logical is just an exaggerated version after her own processing. The classroom was empty, and the whole class just changed the classroom. The character has the judgment or affirmation to the thing, so the animation uses the character's "determination" to achieve the humorous effect. In the story, the character's "judgment" of the current situation thinks that the trap must have been carefully designed. Then, the result of this judgment has two results:

whether the judgment is true is carefully designed or whether the judgment is false is just a simple trap. Animation with the support of false judgment, the final result of the failure to make people laugh, the greater the gap before, the more humorous the moment the false judgment is proved to be.

#### ***4.2 Shame Psychology Caused by External Environment***

Another mode of psychological humor is that after the sudden funny behavior or failure behavior occurs in the external real environment, the wrong behavior is used to trigger the normal psychological reaction of the character, and even the audience is substituted into the psychological change activity. For example, in the animation, on the way to the appointment, Aioi Yuko offered her seat to a old man who is ungrateful refusal in the subway. Then she gets off the bus and stands at the wrong exit. After getting off the bus, she successively takes the dummy model as a conductor and a passer-by to ask for directions. Finally, when she arrives at the place for the appointment, she and her friends agree to make funny postures together in full view of the public. And these mistakes and absurd behaviors are just seen by others and make a choking smile every time, which makes Aioi Yuko's embarrassing inner shame soar. This also allows the viewer to experience the psychological changes launched by the role itself, and this psychological change makes the viewer feel the same, and produces a sense of empathy, which is equally embarrassed and so disgusted. Another kind of psychological activity change caused by exposure is similar to the internal psychological shame caused by external behavior. When the characters fail to hide their secrets, the embarrassment caused by the exposure of the secrets and the efforts to cover up the embarrassment can become the key to successfully make a laugh.

In fact, the strong contrast caused by the incongruous semantic opposition makes the logic gap produce a tension between absurdity and reality. The other kind of psychological humor is to use people's mutual feelings to make the characters' sense of shame and other psychological activities to create a jokes.

### **5. Conclusion**

The main idea of “*NICHIJOU*” is that in the ordinary daily life, because of the existence of laughter, each ordinary day has an extraordinary continuous flash point. As a carrier of content, the operation mechanism of humor elements in the animation is affected by language, behavior, psychology and other modes, and the display forms of humor also produce different humorous effects. In *NICHIJOU*, with the support of flexible humorous means and unconventional funny routines, the relaxed and funny appearance and the happy healing core, finally create a vivid character and their extraordinary daily life.

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