



## “Golden Humor” Embodied in the Discourse of *Typical American*

WANG Jianxin<sup>[a],\*</sup>

<sup>[a]</sup>Associate professor. School of Foreign Languages, Nantong University, Jiangsu, China.

\* Corresponding author.

Received 20 September 2014; accepted 1 March 2015

Published online 25 April 2015

### Abstract

Gish Jen displays talent in the writing of her first novel *Typical American* by utilizing “golden humor”—a unique kind of humor Chinese-American writers used to illustrate frustration, humor, and eternal miracle of immigrant life. Gish Jen is good at using “golden humor” to reveal the bright side of Chinese American life. “Golden humor” inherits the “alienation” characteristic of black humor and abandons its “disillusionment” and “cynicism”, transforms and sublimates it so as to give it a more optimistic attitude, by showing showing the bright, glistening, golden spheres of American life.

**Key words:** “Golden humor”; *Typical American*; Chinese American literature; Gish Jen

Wang, J. X. (2015). “Golden Humor” Embodied in the Discourse of *Typical American*. *Studies in Literature and Language*, 10(4), 60-65. Available from: <http://www.cscanada.net/index.php/sll/article/view/6777> DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3968/6777>

### INTRODUCTION

There is a so-called “the Gang of Four” in Chinese American literary circle—Amy Tan, Gish Jen, Gus Lee, and David Wong Louie—among whom Gish Jen, with the publication of her first novel *Typical American*, has made herself a rising star and established her status in Chinese American literature.

Many of Gish Jen’s stories and articles can be seen in *The New Yorker*, *The Atlantic Monthly*, *The New York Times*, *The Los Angeles Times*, and *The New Republic*.

Her stories are even included in *Houghton Mifflin’s series, The Best American Short Stories of 1988 and of 1995 and The Best American Short Stories of the Century*.

Her first novel *Typical American* is a *New York Times* notable book of the year, and a finalist for the National Book Critics’ Circle Award. Reviewers extol the novel highly and rank Jen with such established Chinese-American writers as Maxine Hong Kingston and Amy Tan. Mojtabai (Mojtabai, 1991) comments in “The Complete Other Side of the World” as follows:

No paraphrase could capture the intelligence of Gish Jen’s prose, its epigrammatic sweep and swiftness. There’s no pause, no underlining, no winking aside to the reader to signal how clever this is, how humorous that is. The author just keeps coming at you, line after stunning line (9-10).

*Typical American* relates Ralph Chang’s progress through his life, exploring the social mobility and decline of the immigrant Chang family. The novel weaves together the lives of the Chang family—Ralph, engineer and “imagineer”; his sister, Theresa; and his delicate wife, Helen—relating their struggle for the pursuit of the American dream after emigrating from China to the United States. The happy ending for the Changs comes not in abandoning the American dream but in finding a way to make it their own.

This paper aims at making a tentative study of Gish Jen’s *Typical American* from the perspective of discourse, so as to analyze her use of narrative strategies as well as “golden humor”, which is embodied in the novel.

### “GOLDEN HUMOR”

“Humor” is the most astounding feature of *Typical American* which instantly grasps the readers by its “lighthearted” and “delightful” characteristics. The critic circle extolled its “heartbreaking humor”, “a sparkling humor uniquely her own” (Jen, 1991), “robust, irreverent sense of humor” (Smith, 1999), “warm humor”

(Herold, 2003), and “golden humor”—a term coined by a Chinese Prof. Zhang Ziqing, who creatively put forward the term to sum up this unique type of writing technique which was employed by Gish Jen and by some other Chinese American writers as well (Zhang, 2000).

Humor, as defined in *Webster's Third New International Dictionary*, is “that quality in a happening, an action, a situation, or an expression of ideas which appeals to a sense of the ludicrous or absurdly incongruous: comic or amusing quality” (Gove, 1996). Avner Ziv (Ziv, 1988) defines humor in *National Styles of Humor* as follows: “humor is... defined as a social message intended to produce laughter or smiling... a way of expressing human needs in a socially accepted manner.” (Introduction ix-x). The different aspects of humor—contents, situations, functions and techniques—may be influenced by culture as mentioned in *National styles of Humor*. The great differences among cultures can be found in these aspects of humor as every nation or every culture has its own unique styles of humor which differentiate it from other nations or cultures. Researchers have found that while most American jokes are sexual and aggressive, Chinese jokes deal more with social interaction, while nonliterate cultures have more jokes about physical environment (Shultz, 1977). The characteristics of American humor may be summed up as an anti-intellectual bent, a heavy use of exaggeration, making fun of ethnic minorities, dialect as deliciously funny, wit as a way of enforcing social norms (Ziv, 1988). As an ethnic minority of the United States, Chinese Americans are sure to meet with these forms of American humor more or less, which also inspires them with ethnic awakening to create their own style of humor in contrast to American humor, which is a bit discriminatory against ethnic minorities.

The term “golden humor” was coined by a Chinese scholar, professor Zhang Ziqing (Zhang, 2000) from Nanjing University, in one of his articles. In the article, he just briefly mentioned “golden humor” to illustrate his opinions without a concrete and thorough discussion of the term itself, which left much room for further study, since up to now very few scholars have ever touched on the subject, not to speak of defining or further discussing it. Then why “golden” but not “silver” or else? To answer the question, it is unavoidable to retrace the history of first Chinese immigrants to the U.S. With the hope of making money in the gold rush, thousands of Chinese people immigrated to the U.S. as gold-diggers, many of whom settled down as the first-generation Chinese Americans. Therefore, in consideration of the aforementioned historical facts, Chinese Americans and Chinese American literature have something to do with immigration as well as “gold” more or less. Literary works reflecting the history permeate throughout the whole process of the development of Chinese American literature, such as Betty Lee Sung's *Mountain of Gold* (1967) and Maxine Hong Kingston's *China Men* (1980). The humor shown by some

Chinese Americans in these works is endowed with more optimistic spirit to exhibit the brighter, shining or “golden” facets of the Chinese American life, thus drawing forth the adjective “golden” naturally as well as supplying the answer to the “why” and the origin of “golden humor”.

Used exclusively by some Chinese American writers, “golden humor” has its own features in characterization and in story-telling, distinguishing itself from other forms of humor. “Golden humor” may also be embodied in the discourse, free direct discourse and free indirect discourse, to achieve comic effect.

## 2. DISCOURSE IN NARRATOLOGY

Discourse may be used in three senses--- in general sense, in linguistics and in narratology. In general sense, discourse is used for all those senses of language which emphasize its “concrete living totality” (Bakhtin, 1981), or a learned discussion, spoken or written, on a philosophical, political, literary or religious topic. In linguistics, discourse denotes a “stretch of language” larger or longer than a single sentence. Some linguists restrict discourse to spoken communication; hence “a well-established definition of discourse views it as a series of connected utterances, a unit of potential analysis larger than a sentence”. In narratology discourse refers “not only to ordinary conversation and its context, but also to written communications between the writer and the reader” (Wales, 2014); hence the term literary or narrative discourse. In this sense it is “the means through which the story is transmitted” (Chatman, 1978), equivalent to the French term *discours* as mentioned in chapter two, the nature of which involving a relationship between a speaker/ writer and a listener/ reader. According to Chatman, story and discourse are two aspects of narrative, which signify content and expression respectively while “the aesthetic object of a narrative is the story as articulated by the discourse” (27). So the analysis of discourse may consist of the discussion of author (real or implied), reader (real or implied), narrator and narratee, as well as point of view, narration, speech and thought presentations, etc.

In *Style in Fiction*, Leech and Short (Short, 1981) discussed separately the presentation of speech and thought in the novels as below:

The presentation of speech: 1. direct speech 2. indirect speech 3. free direct speech 4. the narrative report of speech acts 5. free indirect speech (318-325).

The categorization of thought presentation: 1. free direct thought 2. direct thought 3. free indirect thought 4. indirect thought 5. narrative report of a thought act (337).

With the emphasis on communication, or on mode of communication, discourse is used in discussions of novels to refer to the representation of speech and thought, such as free direct or free indirect discourse, which may be further divided into free direct speech, free direct thought,

free indirect speech and free indirect thought. In this paper, the emphasis is laid upon free direct discourse and free indirect discourse in the discussion of "golden humor" that is embodied in the discourse of *Typical American*.

### 3. "GOLDEN HUMOR" IN FREE DIRECT AND FREE INDIRECT DISCOURSE

Free direct discourse and free indirect discourse are extensively used to embody "golden humor" in *Typical American*, which also presents a typical feature of the novel. The following parts will carry out a detailed analysis of Gish Jen's use of free direct and free indirect discourse separately so as to explore "golden humor" which is embodied in the discourse to achieve comic effect in *Typical American*.

#### 3.1 Free Direct Discourse in *Typical American*

Free direct discourse consists of two forms, free direct speech and free direct thought, which we may find some examples in *Typical American*. Free direct speech may record "originally" what a character says and is freer than direct speech since it appears without the accompanying clause or tag or the quotation marks. The following is a passage from *Typical American*:

Ralph turned to her. *Yes, I could strangle someone*, he said simply, continuing to swing. He approached her. *I am that cold.* How should I tell you anything? How? I am a man become fury. I'm going to turn the light on. *I am a man become steel.* *I'm going to turn the light off* (259).

The passage above is the conversation between Ralph and Helen after the failure of their business and Helen's unexpected affair with Grover behind Ralph's back. Considering the definition of free direct speech by Leech and Short, all the sentences in italics in the conversation may be seen as free direct speech though, in the strict sense, the first italic sentence may not be taken as free direct speech since it is followed by an introductory reporting clause. The rest of the italic sentences except the first one accord perfectly with the requirement of free direct speech since they are accompanied by neither the quotation marks nor the introductory reporting clauses. In the conversation, Helen is reluctant to tell Ralph the truth of her adultery with Grover while Ralph just gives irrelevant answers, which makes Helen feel even more nervous and give up her attempt in the end. The conversation is faithfully recorded through free direct speech, in which Helen's dilemma and Ralph's indifference to her words form a sharp contrast. The two "How" asked by Helen reveals her awkwardness at confessing her adultery, so in a sense the question may be regarded as asking Ralph as well as herself. However, the reply Ralph offers is rather irrelevant. Helen makes another attempt by saying "I'm going to turn the light on."

By this she means to tell all the truth as it is explained at the previous page of the text that "she simply could not imagine herself switching off the light and announcing into the dark that she'd had an affair" (258). Ridiculously enough, Ralph still gives an irrelevant answer, which only changes one word ("fury" to "steel"), which makes an impression on the reader that he is completely absent-minded, or rather abnormal and weird. Seeing that Ralph is in such a condition, Helen has to change her mind by saying "I'm going to turn the light off", which indicates that in the end she gives up her attempt by also changing only one word "on" to "off".

If we change all the free direct speech in the conversation into direct speech, we are sure to sacrifice certain effects to the change. The conversation will be interrupted frequently by the introductory reporting clauses like "he said" and "she said" as well as the quotation marks. Therefore, it will increase the interference of the narrator, which will in turn decrease the sense of reality and the smoothness of the conversation. Let's examine another example of free direct speech from the novel:

It was true that he had just heard, from his wife's soft mouth, words that set his mind to riot; she might as well have twisted knives in his ears. *But what does that matter now?* He saw his sister. And behind her, a second self, her stark shadow against the back wall of the garage—he saw that too (282). (The italics are mine)

In the above passage, free direct speech is a bit imperceptible if without careful and intentional awareness. All the sentences above are in the past tense except one, that is, "*But what does that matter now?*", which is in the present tense, whereas in common cases, the sentence should be presented as "*But what did that matter then?*" so as to conform to the tense of the passage. The sentence is a typical kind of free direct speech since it has omitted both the introductory reporting clause and the quotation marks of direct speech, which is originally like this: *He said, "But what does that matter now?"*

The background of the above quoted passage is that when Grover contemptuously lets it slip to Ralph that he has had an affair with Helen, Ralph violently forces a confession from her, and in his rage, runs his car into his sister Theresa, nearly killing her in a moment he himself recognizes as half accident, half seized by opportunity. Although Helen has confessed to him about her affairs, which might "set his mind to riot", he just does not care about it as the sentence of free direct speech suggests "*But what does that matter now?*" Ralph's indignation and repentance are revealed directly without interruption as if he is saying to Helen and the readers as well. Here in free direct speech, the original words of the character get to the readers without their recognition and preparation. If we change the sentence into direct speech—He said, "But what does that matter now?"—it might seem too abrupt and out of place so that the coherence of narration will

surely be destroyed as the reporting clause “he said” and the quotation marks seem rather redundant. What if we change free direct speech back to the past tense then? The sentence “*But what did that matter then?*” may seem all right as a substitute, but it is so common and insipid that it lacks the effect brought by free direct speech.

Free direct thought, the other form of free direct discourse, is “particularly common in interior monologue as a twentieth-century novelistic device, where the lack of reporting clause leads to a smoother text, and reinforces the absence of an apparently controlling narrator”(Wales, 2014). The sentences are supposed to represent only those thoughts that pass through the character’s mind in free direct thought. The passage below from *Typical American* may serve as an example:

Instead what occurred to him were ways of telling people off. *It may seem to you that others are transfixed by the clarity of your mind, but actually we are just afraid if you don't get your way you will cry.* He liked that one. More often, though, the ideas that flocked to him lacked real sting. *Your mother would be ashamed to see how mean you've become. Or, so you voted no, you have the brains of a dung fly, and what's more, you have no manners...*

*In your next life, I hope you are a sea clam...*

*Why should I listen to you, with all that hair in your nose?* (155-56)

The passage is taken from “Tenure” in Part III of the novel, describing the interior monologue of Ralph when he is struggling drearily to win tenure as a professor of mechanical engineering, a field he himself considers colorless. The interior monologue which is italicized is in free direct thought since they are all in present tense without any introductory reporting clauses or quotation marks. Ralph is rather anxious while waiting for the day of decision so that he resumes his habit of “imagineering”. In the first two sentences in free direct thought, he thinks of the replies he will receive from those committee members who have the right to decide whether or not he will get tenure while the rest of the italicized sentences are all the thoughts of his own replies to those who might vote against him. A certain kind of comic effect is achieved through his own replies, in which curses and personal insults pervade (e.g. *brains of a dung fly, a sea clam, hair in your nose*). The two different replies in his thought seem to make up a conversation, showing his great anxiety for the tenure and his nervousness before the decision. Free direct thought here is so appropriate and natural that it leads to a smoother text, and reinforces the absence of an apparently controlling narrator.

### 3.2 Free Indirect Discourse in *Typical American*

In *Typical American*, free indirect discourse is more frequently used than free direct discourse, which may be considered a great feature of the novel. Gish Jen’s love for free indirect discourse is not without reason as she says in an interview that Jane Austen “have a really big influence” on her (Matsukawa, 1993). It is widely acknowledged

that “Jane Austen is the first English novelist to make extensive and sophisticated use of free indirect discourse” (Flavin 20). According to the statistics, in *Sense and Sensibility* and *Pride and Prejudice*, free indirect speech appears twenty-two and twenty-five times respectively; in *Northanger Abbey* it appears forty times; and in *Mansfield Park* speech is rendered in free indirect form (discourse) on sixty-nine occasions. Likewise, the amount of free indirect thought is also significant: *Sense and Sensibility* has thirty-nine instances, *Pride and Prejudice* forty-four, and *Northanger Abbey* fifty-four, while *Mansfield Park* has 153 instances of free indirect thought (Flavin, 1989). It is apparent that Gish Jen is imitating Jane Austen’s style. The following passage quoted from *Typical American* may serve as a good example of free indirect speech:

“Was miracle.” This was Ralph’s version of the story. “Miracle!” And even so many years later, anyone could still hear in his voice all that the word meant to him—rocks burst into blossom, the black rinsed from the night sky. Life itself unfurled. As he apparently, finally, deserved. *How else could it be, that he should find himself lying in coin-spangled ice slosh, in America, embracing—of all people—his sister? Saved! Know-It-All in his arms! Impossible! ...* (46). (The italics are mine)

Having lost contact with his family and forgot to renew his visa, Ralph is in great trouble and feels so desperate that he even attempts to commit suicide when his older sister, Theresa, who has escaped to America, finds Ralph just in time to save him from suicidal despair. The quoted passage above is the response of Ralph to the coincidence. In the passage, we may find direct speech easily while free indirect speech may be somewhat imperceptible if without a ready and careful eye and mind. Here the transition from direct speech to free indirect speech is so natural and untraceable that it causes no sense of abruptness or awkwardness. Ralph’s excitement is generalized in direct speech in only one word “miracle”, expressing his great joy, whereas his reaction to the incredible fact is represented in free indirect speech. In the italicized free indirect speech, unlike indirect speech, the reporting clause is omitted while the original punctuation and the features of speech remain. The two dashes and the question mark in “*embracing—of all people—his sister?*” restore the form in his original speech as if he is still questioning himself excitedly and breathlessly. The next three exclamation marks which go immediately after in “*Saved! Know-It-All in his arms! Impossible!*” further reveal his excitement. Let’s change the whole sentence into indirect speech to see if there is any difference between them: *He said that how else it could be that he should find himself lying in coin-spangled ice slosh in America embracing of all people his sister, that he was saved as Know-It-All was in his arms, that it was impossible.* All the exclamation marks and dashes being deleted, the sentence is certainly less vivid or readable than the sentence in free indirect speech. Let’s examine another example of passage which contains free indirect speech:

As opposed to Ralph, who, head tilted, mouth slack, looked for all the world like someone in love. Theresa saw it; anyone could have seen it. Especially when Grover, whistling, stood to leave the table. What Ralph would have done then to leave with him—*good-by, Old Chao and his tenure-track job offer! Good-by, social nicety!* Ralph could only ogle, though, helpless with envy, as Grover balled up his napkin. He did not push his chair in, but left it angled out like a door in midswing (95).

This passage is drawn from "Love at First Sight" in Part II when Helen acts as go-between and arranges for her sister-in-law Theresa an introduction to Grover. From the title "Love at First Sight", we may be misled as to mistake it for Theresa and Grover falling in love at first sight. Yet ironically, as a matter of fact, contrary to the expectations of all, the ones in love at first sight are not Theresa and Grover but Helen and Grover, Old Chao and Theresa, and more ridiculously, Ralph with Grover as is implied in the first sentence of the above-quoted passage "head tilted, mouth slack, looked for all the world like someone in love". Ralph admires Grover, the American-born millionaire, at the first sight, and is eager to follow the example of Grover who behaves rudely. The sentence in free indirect speech is what he wants to declare as a departure from the social norms, which may be seen as his acceptance of typical Americanness. If he were bold enough, he would have spoken out bluntly his mind, which may be recorded in direct speech as follows: *He said, "Good-by, Old Chao and your tenure-track job offer! Good-by, social nicety!"* However, he is only an "imagineer" and what he can do is to "only ogle" though "helpless with envy". Free indirect speech here is properly used to reflect Ralph's dilemma of whether to follow the example of Grover or not, in which exclamation marks are reserved while the point of view is transformed to the third person.

In addition to free indirect speech, free indirect thought is also used by Gish Jen in *Typical American*. The following passage is from "A New Life" in Part II, and the situation of which is that Ralph is observing his wife Helen when she is fast asleep to see if she is ill since she often hides things and there is something wrong with her breath:

*Was there something the matter with her? She hid things, he'd discovered—keys, batteries, letters. She kept magazines under her mattress. What else might she be keeping from him? Maybe an illness, he thought, listening hard. For she didn't just breathe; she inhaled, then stopped, then expelled the air in a little burst. Squinting up at the ring-stained ceiling, he tried to make the sound she was making. A slight popping, as if she had been holding her breath. Or as if there were some obstruction... where? In her chest? No, in her throat. Right at the base of his own throat he thought he could feel a little door that might stick. He envisioned visits to the doctor. Cancer. An operation. Where would she want to be buried? He didn't even know. Or worse, he pictured a wife with no throat. How would she breathe? How would she eat? He swallowed. Would he have married her if he had known this would happen? And should he have married her if he wouldn't have? (68-9). (The italics are mine)*

Here Gish Jen relates Ralph's inner life by free indirect thought with the use of stream-of-consciousness technique. As we all know, free indirect thought is one of the best ways used in stream of consciousness to reflect the continuous flow of thoughts, feelings, and memories in the human mind; the other one is free direct thought, which may also be used in stream of consciousness. In free direct thought, this technique is often called interior monologue since it always "presents a character's thoughts directly, without the apparent intervention" of the narrator; while in free indirect thought, it is called indirect interior monologue or narrated monologue, which is generally acknowledged in the western circle of literary criticism (Baldick, 1996). There is a slight yet obvious difference between the stream of consciousness used in free direct thought and in free indirect thought, that is, the person and the presence or absence of the narrator's voice. In contrast to free direct thought, which is always in the first person and lacks the apparently controlling narrator, free indirect thought often replaces the first person with the third person and blends the character's focalization with the narrative voice.

In the above-quoted passage, the flow of Ralph's thoughts leaps from one thing to another aimlessly and illogically, which brings about a ridiculous effect. The flow of his thoughts may be described as follows: at first, Ralph thinks that there may be something wrong with Helen since she often hides things; then out of curiosity and suspicion, he thinks that it is maybe an illness as he begins to observe her breath; next he finds the illness in her throat, but he envisions it at the base of his own throat and it is a cancer and needs an operation; then his thoughts jumps back again to his wife as he considers where to bury her; he even pictures a wife with no throat and ponders over his own reactions to the possibility. We may discern clearly the illogicalness and the irrelevant leap of his thoughts, in which two abrupt digressions from his thoughts of Helen to himself are extremely conspicuous. The last two sentences in free indirect thought further demonstrate the absurdity of his thoughts as he asks the same question in two different ways about his own decision on whether to marry Helen if he has known her illness or if he hasn't known it.

From the narrated monologue in free indirect thought, we may perceive a kind of humorous style. In describing the morbidity and the possibility of death of the character, Gish Jen employs not the techniques which may lead to an impression of helplessness or pessimism but reversely brings about an effect which embodies the optimism, ludicrousness and humor of Ralph as if he is seeking pleasure from "imagineering". This just complies with the optimistic and positive theme of the novel, which reifies Gish Jen's employment of "golden humor".

## CONCLUSION

With respect to Typical American, Gish Jen's strategic use of "golden humor" can be seen as a typically characteristic example of narrative techniques in Chinese American literature. Together with Black American literature and Jewish American literature as well as other ethnic literature, Chinese American literature has made up an essential part of American literature and has been included in anthologies such as Heath and Norton. Fully aware of the development of Chinese American literature, the academic circle is paying more and more attention to Chinese American literature as research works emerge in a constant stream, among which are: in America, Amy Ling's *Between worlds: Women Writers of Chinese Ancestry* (1990), King-Kok Cheung's *Articulate Silences* (1993), Yan Gao's *The Art of Parody: Maxine Hong Kingston's Use of Chinese Sources* (1996); in Taiwan, Shan Te-hsing and Ho Wen-ching's *Cultural Identity and Chinese American Literature* (1994) and *Politics of Representation and Chinese American Literature* (1996), and Shan Te-hsing's *Inscriptions and Representations: Chinese American Literary and Cultural Studies* (2000); in China's mainland, Wei Jingyi's *The Chinese Story in the Western Context* (2002), Cheng Aimin's *A Study of Chinese American Literature* (2003), to list just a few.

Regarding the study of Chinese American literature, issues such as culture, ethnic identity, and the American dream are the most frequently discussed and even the indispensable ones since they constitute the essence and characteristic of Chinese American literary works. However, one may have a kind of misconception, taking for granted that nothing more is worthy of mentioning in Chinese American literature apart from culture, ethnic identity, and the American dream. As a matter of fact, Chinese American literature has been creating unique features of its own in narrative strategies and writing techniques during long years of practice and experimentation.

In consideration of this, Gish Jen's *Typical American* may serve as a typical example with her intentional employment of narrative strategies, which further enriches the tradition of "golden humor" in Chinese American

literature. Utilizing "golden humor", Gish Jen tells us the story of immigration, assimilation, and occasional tensions both inside and outside of the Chang family. Though the novel mainly focuses on the Chinese American immigrant experience, Jen's "narrative charm transcends anything considerably 'Asian American'" (Liu).

## REFERENCES

- Bakhtin, M. (1981). *The dialogic imagination: Four essays* (M. H. a. C. Emerson, Trans. M. Holquist Ed.). Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Baldick, C. (1996). *Oxford concise dictionary of literary terms*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Chatman, S. (1978). *Story and discourse*. Cornell University Press: Cornell University Press.
- Flavin, L. (1989). Austen's persuasion. *Explicator*, 47(4).
- Gove, P. B. (1996). *Webster's third new international dictionary*. Springfield Mass.: Merriam-Webster.
- Herold, K. (2003). *Book review*. Retrieved 18 Sept., 2003, from <http://www.pshares.org/issues/article.cfm?prmarticle ID=3173>
- Jen, G. (1991). *Typical American*. New York: Penguin Group.
- Liu, C. *Who's Chinese American: Gish Jen adds a new dimension to APA literature*. Retrieved 20 Sept., 2003, from [http://www.asianweek.com/062499/ae\\_gishjen.html](http://www.asianweek.com/062499/ae_gishjen.html)
- Matsukawa, Y. (1993). Melus interview: Gish Jen. *MELUS*, 18(4).
- Mojtabai, A. G. (1991). The complete other side of the world. *The New York Times Book Review*.
- Short, G. L. a. M. (1981). *Style in fiction*. London: Longman.
- Shultz, T. R. (1977). A cross cultural study of the structure of humor. In A. J. a. F. Chapman H. C. (Ed.), *It's a funny thing, humor*. London: Pergamon Press
- Smith, W. (1999). The book that hormones wrote. *Publisher's Weekly*, 246(23).
- Wales, K. (2014). *A dictionary of stylistics*. Routledge.
- Zhang, Z. (2000). Chinese American literature that coexists and coprosperes with Asian American literature. *Foreign Literature Studies*, 1.
- Ziv, A. (1988). *National styles of humor*. Connecticut: Greenwood Press.