



Language of Comedy

Social Class

Charlie Higson:

In England we're so crammed together, er, and we're all rubbing up against each other all the time – working class, upper class, middle class – you know, even the north/south divide; it's not that far. Erm, and it's a very small country and we're very, very aware of our differences, er, and I suppose comedy plays on our differences and our similarities and you can get laughs both ways. Certainly, middle class people like me has a plumber in the house, and I try and be, sort of, nice to them and talk about what they're doing, and it's quite clear that we both hate each other. So, the working classes and the middle classes who are rubbing each o-, against each other quite a lot, probably hate each other a lot more than the upper classes and the working classes; they'll be so far apart as, like, they have nothing to do with each other.

I mean, one of the characters that we did on *The Fast Show* is a young aristocrat who is in love with his gardener, and the comedy there, it's a comedy of similarity and it's a comedy of difference. The comedy of difference is, er, that it's, it's a love across every divide that you can think of. You have aristocrat and working class, you have young and old, you have English and Irish – 'cause he's an Irish gardener, and the English and the Irish, again, because they're quite similar and close, hate each other – er, [laughs], and, well, not all the time.

[Speaking Italian].

I wouldn't really know about that, Sir.

[Laughs] I'm sorry, Ted, I was using you as something of a guinea pig to try out my Italian on. Do you like Italian, Ted?

I quite like a Dominos American Hot, Sir.

So, Ralph is coming up to Ted and trying to make some connection with him, and then he completely crosses all the borders that he should do and breaks out of that rigid system, where he, basically, comes out with, with a fairly clumsy chat-up line.

It's the language of song and opera, of love, death, intrigue, sexual passion.

We've a bad case of nematode w-worms in the sheep, Sir.

Nematode worms, yes, yes.