



〔中〕毛荣贵

〔美〕Rosemary Adang

编著

当代美国短文赏读

——成才之途

上海交通大学出版社

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内容提要

成才无秘诀。然而,他山之石,可以攻玉。本书 23 篇短文是精选了近年来发表在美国刊物上的有关成才问题的文章。读后你会在精神上获得多方面的享受,会欣赏到文风各异的篇章,会提高英语阅读水平。

全书分成功探秘、柳暗花明、爱的力量、心理会诊、夺冠之路、青出于蓝、因势利导、稍安勿躁、人格魅力、父母必读等 10 个篇章。每个篇章的各个单篇文章在正文之前有导读;正文的难字均作注释;正文后特设三项内容:Headache Sentences(难句解疑,包括译文及注解); Useful Words & Phrases(从正文中选取并作点评演示); Structural Issues(主要对文中出现的最具实用性的句型作举一反三的解析)。

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前言

埋头编完此书，窗外已是红瘦绿肥。

台历上写着：母亲节（5月10日）。注目“母亲节”三个红字，我想得很多很久很远。

儿时，家境清寒。我们上学的学费令父母不堪负担。记得在上小学的前几天，母亲站在弄堂口和邻居们聊天。她说，送我们去学堂，学几个字，认识路牌不致迷路就行了。

望子成龙，天下父母，人同此心。父母节衣缩食，如牛负重，让我们读完了小学、中学和大学。

事过境迁。目前，望子成龙，这种传统的民族心态已经达到了空前膨胀、空前炽热的状态。我没有探究过，这是否与“独生子女”现象有涉。

昨夜，风雨萧萧。在新村大门口，我又见到了感人的一幕：

几个年轻的母亲顶风冒雨，骑车外出，她们是在送孩子去区少年宫学习绘画。孩子正躲在她们身后的书包架上，被雨披遮挡着。孩子学习画画一周一次，母亲们将在教室外守候两个多小时。

每每见此情形，我就会产生一股难以名状的冲动：

把本书介绍给那些望子成龙心切的父母们，介绍给立志成才的青少年朋友们，介绍给辛勤耕耘的教师同行们。

美国的历史很短，但是自建国以来，社会安定，经济繁荣，教育发达。历经千辛万苦，飘洋过海来到美国的移民，艰苦奋斗，前仆后继，人才辈出。他们为改变美洲大陆的面貌作出了贡献，同时，这也为今人研究“人才学”创造了必要的先决条件。

本书精选了近年发表在美国刊物上的有关成才问题的文章。

本书的文章有“鸟瞰人生”之作。

人生如登攀。景随步移。只有到了一定的高度，才能达到横空出世、鸟瞰人生的境界。猛回首，那如烟的往事才能看得真切，想得明白。

My Father's Advice 一文里的作者 Norman Lewis Smith 就有这样的感受：

Years later when my son, Eric, was born, I pondered what I wanted to teach him. Only then did it dawn on me just how much I'd been taught by my father.

母亲 Deborah Smoot 在 My Worst Mother's Day Ever 一文里，谈到她年轻时曾经为自己设计了“培育子女”的蓝图，而 13 年后，当她已是 3 个孩子的母亲，在回首往昔时，她竟慨叹道：

I realize how naive I was.

Russell Baker 是美国的一位著名报人，一位专栏作家 (journalist and humorist, a columnist for the New York Times)，在他晚年写的一篇文章 The Roots of My Ambition 中，回顾自己的成才之途，还在津津有味地“反刍”母亲几十年之前的一番话：

“Edwin James was no smarter than anybody else, and look where he is today,” my mother said, and said, and said again, so that I finally grew up thinking Edwin James was a dull clod who had a lucky break. Maybe she felt that way about him, but she was saying something deeper. She was telling me I didn't have to be brilliant to get where Edwin had got to, that the way to get to the top was to work, work, work.

本书的文章有“辩证哲理”之作。

笔者在编辑本书的过程中，常常惊诧：纵论横述，从容辩证，这分明出自哲人的手笔！

The Roots of My Ambition 一文的作者的母亲对儿子的未来也怀着一颗滚烫的心：

Mother would have liked it better if I could have grown up to

be President or a rich businessman.

然而,母亲爱“我”,却不自欺:

... but much as she loved me, she did not deceive herself. Before I was out of primary school, she could see I lacked the gifts for either making millions or winning the love of crowds.

母爱没有蒙住她的眼睛,她在看清了“我”既无挣大钱的“才”,又无赢得众人之爱的“能”之后,却能因势利导:

After that she began nudging me toward working with words. 数十年后,“我”终于成了美国的一位著名报人。

Raising Terrific Teens 一文让读者认识到人的生理与心理是相通的,生理发生剧变,其心理也难免不发生跌宕变化。与更年期遥相呼应的青春期,也是人生的一个崭新季节,一个重要的“成才季节”。同理,少男少女的心理也会有潮起潮落的变化。文章自始至终透出的“哲学味”,强调了为人父母者在处理与青春期子女的关系时应该具有的辩证思维:

Examine your own reactions. It's human nature to yearn for the days when you could cuddle a little child in your arms. Let's face it: after 12 years of being the center of that child's universe, you may now feel relegated to the sidelines. The teen years signal the gradual closing of one chapter of your parent-child relationship and the start of another.

How to Find True Love 的作者 Nadine Crenshaw 是美国当代著名的言情小说女作家。

作者那支多情多彩的笔,能点燃年少读者对未来的憧憬,能唤醒年少读者对人生的遥想,能激发年少读者对爱情的渴望。

然而,Nadine Crenshaw 在这篇短文中袒露心扉,开诚布公,撩起一个言情小说作家的神秘面纱!她这样告诉读者:

So remember, true romance—the enduring kind—often comes so cleverly disguised it's easy to overlook.

本书的文章有“指点迷津”之作。

人生的航道布满了急流、险滩和暗礁。稍有不慎，成才热望就会“泡汤”，甚至生命之舟也会倾覆。

“稍安勿躁”栏有两篇文章：

“Mom, I Want to Live with My Boyfriend”和 Just Trying to Be Cool。

前者鞭挞了婚前同居现象。文章情真义切，感情宣泄，奔腾如瀑；点评分析，入木三分。很多议论，对于将要恋爱，或正在恋爱的青年朋友来说都是不可多得的箴言：

... rich lasting love goes through several distinct stages. The first is the “romantic” phase when love is wild and idealistic, when couples believe they have found their “one true love” with whom they will “live happily ever after”.

人生的夕阳西沉，生命的鲜花凋谢，初恋时刻的甜蜜也不会从心底流失。遗憾的是，“婚前同居”者，无法领略初恋的美妙，无法饱览人生这道绝妙的风景！作者提议：

It is an absolutely wonderful time, and couples should linger over it and just enjoy the candlelight dinners, the swooning(心醉神迷), the craziness of it all. Cutting it short to rush into living together could be a major mistake.

后者抨击了青少年吸烟的陋习。作者已经人到中年，在追忆他吸烟的历史时，竟一字一叹，一句一泪！

他见男孩女孩在公众场合吸烟，内心感受如何？作者写道：

I want to grab them by their grunge necks and shake some sense into them, tell them to turn back before it's too late.

措辞可谓“凶狠”，内心却藏真爱。

细读全书，你会暗惊：成才之途漫漫，但是许多“小节”也会影响一个人的前程，更不必说成才。

Help Your Child Overcome Shyness 一文让我们猛醒！

多少年来,我们惯于把 Shyness(羞涩;含羞),特别是儿童和少女的 Shyness 视作一种正常表现,甚至把 Shyness 视作一种人性之“美”!文章让读者恍悟:Shyness 其实是一种心理障碍。Shyness 为害甚广甚烈。就个人事业言:

Shy people frequently earn less and hold less responsible jobs. Even those with skills can hit a career snag(意外的困难), because of difficulties in dealing with people.

本书的文章有的是“文采斐然”之作。

毕竟,我们阅读本套丛书的一个重要目的是学习英语,通过阅读来培养语感,提高阅读能力。而本丛书的目的就是让读者在赏析中兴味盎然地不知不觉地提高英语水平。

“Mom, I Want to Live with My Boyfriend”一文中出现了这样一句:

Clearly, when it comes to marriage, practicing beforehand doesn't make perfect. 初读你也许觉得略嫌费解,但是,当你忽然记起英语的一句名谚:Practice makes perfect. 你会感到豁然开朗。原来,作者在此使用了 Parody(仿拟)修辞格。

Give Your Child an Edge 文中有这样让你眼睛一亮的佳句:

Finally, about 10 p. m., after tears and shouts, everyone goes to bed exhausted.

The Roots of My Ambition 一文毕竟出自老报人之手,走笔老练,文章精致。字里行间散发缕缕幽香,不少段落可以成为人们的座右铭。如:

Small progress was no excuse for feeling satisfied with yourself. People who stopped to pat themselves on the back didn't last long. Even if you got to the top, you'd better not take it easy. “The bigger they come, the harder they fall” was one of her favorite maxims.

细读 Down Suicide Hill,则有品茗的滋味。假如,喝龙井茶喝

到第二杯才能品出滋味,而本文读到第二遍,或者第三遍,文章的幽默、文采及其妙处才走出朦胧。

作者的若干描述让读者忍俊不禁。如:

I lay there for a moment listening to my breath. Alive breath. Daddy breath. When I lifted my head, I saw a half-dozen kids in ski jackets running down the hill toward me like some quilted paramedic unit (拼凑起来的医护小队). Randy was carrying my boot.

本书四大助读栏目(文前导读/Headache Sentences / Useful Words & Phrases / Structural Issues)尽了最大努力阐扬发掘文章主题和语言的闪光点。

成才无秘诀。然而,他山之石,可以攻玉。

本书若有一两处让你拍案,让你浮想,让你铭记,作为本书的编者,我们也就累得其所,苦得其所了。

这又是一本中美学者通过 E-mail 携手合作而成的读物。Rosemary Adang 执教于美国西雅图的 Highline Community College。现代通讯的杰作使我们频频联络,反复磋商,愉快合作。在较短的时间里完成了本书的选材、编写等项工作。

参加本书编写工作的尚有:姚蔷珍、毛竹晨、陈衡和毛竹蔚等。张韧弦同学为本书超出大学英语四级词汇的生词作了注释。离休教授曾鲁以高度负责的精神对全书的初稿作了反复校改。上海译文出版社词典编辑室主任张福基先生为本书的若干疑难词汇提供了汉译。没有他们的参与,本书就难以现在的面目问世!在此特向他们表示最诚挚的谢意。

限于编者的水平,书中欠当之处在所难免,恳望广大读者不吝赐教。

毛荣贵

1998 年初夏

于上海交大东川花苑

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成功探秘



Secrets of Straight-A Students

By Edwin Kiseester. Jr.

本

文难得。

它对美国学习成绩全优的学生作了调查分析,并且从 11 个方面加以总结。言简意赅,醒目易懂。具体实在,容易操作。

天下父母,人同此心:望子/女成龙。为人父母者,与其省吃俭用,为子女去购买“脑黄金”、“考试灵”(有的商人竟然玩起了“不灵退款”的鬼把戏),不如细读本文!

文章的可贵之处在于,既就事论事,又着眼根本:

The most important “secret” of the super-achievers is not so secret. For almost all straight-A students, the contribution of their parents was crucial. From infancy, the parents imbued them with a love for learning. They set high standards for their kid, and held them to those standards. They encouraged their sons and daughters in their studies but did not do the work for them.

有眼光的父母,读了上段,也许会低首凝思。a love for learning / set high standards / encouraged their sons and daughters 是子女成才的“前奏”。全文有此段“垫底”,再言其他的学习诀窍,就让人感到放心,而无“卖狗皮膏药”之嫌。

文章打破了盘桓于人们脑际的若干思维定势:

1. 智商高 \neq 成绩好

Top grades don't always go to the brightest students.

... students with high I. Q. s sometimes don't do as well as classmates with lower I. Q. s.

为什么? 作者的分析是:

For them (指智商高的学生), learning comes too easily and they never find out how to buckle down(全力以赴地去学习).

学习成功的关键在于:

Knowing how to make the most of your innate abilities counts for more. Infinitely more.

2. 学习时间长 \neq 学得多

Indeed, some of these students actually put in fewer hours of homework time than their lower-scoring classmates.

一位优等生说得很生动:

It's not how long you sit there with your books open, it's what you do while you're sitting.

文章罗列了 11 条“诀窍”。笔者愚见,读后印象最深的有以下 3 条:

a. Get organized (归放学习资料有条理)

Even students who don't have a private study area remain organized. A backpack or drawer keeps essential supplies together and cuts down on time-wasting search.

君不见许多学生的书桌/书包乱如麻?一旦急需,耗时费力。其实,remain organized 不仅折射思维的条理性,而且对日后的工作也大有裨益。

b. Learn how to read (学会如何读书)

... the secret of good reading is to be "an active reader"—one who continually asks questions that lead to a full understanding of the author's message.

君不见不少学生囫囵吞枣,甚至对已经会背诵的段落尚不甚了了。此段令人想起英语的一个成语:read between the line。也令人想起汉语的“学问”一词。

c. Study together (一起学习)

这是一个发生在美国名牌大学(University of California at Berkeley)里的真实故事:

Uri Treisman observed a freshman calculus(微积分) class

in which Asian-Americans, on average, scored higher than other minority students from similar academic backgrounds. Treisman found that the Asian-Americans discussed homework problems together, tried different approaches and explained their solutions to one another.

君不见,各地大学的 English Corner 人头攒动? 且国人信仰“三人行,必有我师”久矣! 这也许是 Asian-Americans, 或者 Chinese-American, 或者 Chinese 的美德。

读此文的一个惊喜是,中国的改革在一位美国大学生的心目中也留下了积极印象:

In a lecture on capitalism and socialism, for example, Melendres asked the teacher how the Chinese economy could be both socialist and market-driven, without incurring some of the problems that befell the former Soviet Union.

美国人写文章喜好用 topic sentence(主题句),而在行文的过程中设立小标题,似可视作 topic sentence 的异化。本文因设立了 11 个小标题,令读者生一目了然之感。

其次,文章的若干比喻用得非常精彩,有过目难忘之功效。那些手书潦草的朋友不妨细读以下比喻:

Neat papers are likely to get higher grades than sloppy ones. "The student who turns in a neat paper," says Professor Olney, "is already on the way to an A. It's like being served a cheese-burger. No matter how good it really is, you can't believe it tastes good if it's presented on a messy plate."

EVERYONE KNOWS about straight-A^① students. They get high grades, all right, but only by becoming dull grinds, their noses always stuck in a book. They're

① 全 A(即成绩全部优秀)

clumsy at sports and failures when it comes to the opposite sex.¹

How, then, do we account for Domenica Roman or Paul Melendres?

Roman is on the tennis team at her school. She also sings in the "choral ensemble"^②, serves on the student council and is a member of the mathematics society. For two years she has maintained a 4.0 grade-point average (GPA), meaning A's in every subject.²

Melendres, now a university freshman, was student-body president at his secondary school. He played soccer and basketball, exhibited at the science fair, was honored for academic excellence, character and service, did student commentaries^③ on a local television station and was valedictorian^④.

How do super-achievers like Roman and Melendres do it? Brains aren't the only answer. "Top grades don't always go to the brightest students," declares professor of education Horbert Walberg, who has conducted major studies of super-achieving students. "Knowing how to make the most of your "innate abilities^⑤ counts for more. Infinitely more."

In fact, Walberg says, students with high I. Q. s.^⑥ sometimes don't do as well as classmates with lower I. Q. s. For them, learning comes too easily and they never find out how to "buckle down"^⑦.

Hard work isn't the whole story, either. "It's not how long you sit there with the books open," said one of the many A students we interviewed. "It's what you do while you're sitting." Indeed, some of these students actually put in fewer hours of homework time than their lower-scoring classmates.

The kids at the top of the class get there by mastering a few

② 合唱团, ensemble 是法语, 发音 [ɑ:n'sɑ:mbəl] ③ 评论 ④ 致告别词的毕业生代表 ⑤ 与生俱来的能力 ⑥ (为 intelligence quotient 的缩写形式) 智力商数、智商 ⑦ 全力以赴地(学习)

basic techniques that others can readily learn. Here, according to education experts and students themselves, are the secrets of straight-A students.

1. **Set priorities*^⑧. Top students **brook no intrusions*^⑨ on study time. Once the books are open or the computer is booted up, phone calls go unanswered, TV shows unwatched, snacks ignored. Study is business; business comes before recreation.^⑩

2. *Study anywhere — or everywhere*. Claude Olney, a university business professor assigned to tutor^⑪ failing university athletes, recalls a cross-country runner who worked out every day. Olney persuaded him to use the time to memorize biology terms. Another student posted a vocabulary list by the medicine cabinet. He learned a new word every day while brushing his teeth.

Among the students we interviewed, study times were strictly a matter of personal preference. Some worked late at night when the house was quiet. Others awoke early. Still others studied as soon as they came home from school when the work was fresh in their minds. All agreed, however, on the need for consistency^⑫. “Whatever I was doing, I maintained a slot^⑬ every day for studying,” says university student Ian McCray.

3. *Get organized*. In secondary school, McCray **ran track*^⑭, played rugby^⑮ and was in the band and orchestra. “I was so busy, I couldn’t waste time looking for a pencil or missing paper. I kept everything right where I could put my hands on it,” he says.

Paul Melendres maintains two folders^⑯ — one for the day’s assignments, another for papers completed and graded. Traci Tuschiguchi, a super-achieving secondary school student, has another system. She immediately files the day’s papers in **color-*

⑧ 处理好优先关系,后面紧接着的一句话即是对此的解释 ⑨ 毫不分心 ⑩ 教导、做名词意为“家庭教师” ⑪ 有始有终,一贯保持 ⑫ 本义作“槽、狭缝”解,在这里用作比喻 ⑬ track 指“径赛”,以各种距离的跑步为主,故前面用了 ran ⑭ (英式)橄榄球 ⑮ 文件夹