

袁行桢 主编

# 美英时文选读

SELECTED  
ARTICLES FROM  
AMERICAN & BRITISH PRESS

金盾出版社

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## 内 容 提 要

本书由北师大外语系袁行桢教授主编,由我国英语教学老前辈、清华大学李相崇教授作序。书中的15篇文章是从1995~1996年美英重要报刊节选的,其内容主要是反映当今美国的社会问题和社会面貌,文字流畅,并有较详细的中文注释与译文。本书作为自学材料,对大学生、英语自学者提高现代英语的阅读能力,了解英语国家的文化与社会背景是有益的。

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## 前 言

本书主要节选了1995~1996年《纽约时报》、《美国新闻与世界报导》和《经济学家》等美英重要报刊的文章共15篇。内容涉及美国社会各方面的问题,如种族矛盾、收入分配不公、名牌大学效应、电脑犯罪等。这些文章集知识性、趣味性于一体,又有较强的时代感。每篇文章都有译文并附有语言和文化背景知识的注释,可供具有中等以上英语水平的读者自学,提高阅读能力;对于准备参加托福等水平考试的读者,也具有增加背景知识,学习最新词汇的长远效果。

通过几年来讲授英美报刊文选,我深感在外语教学中,教材内容至关重要。学员感到学习这类文章能够开阔眼界,增加对外部世界的了解,提高学习外语的兴趣,学到地道的现代英语。因此,我相信本书能对读者有所帮助。

感谢英语教学老前辈、清华大学外语系原主任李相崇教授在百忙中为本书作序并提出宝贵意见。参加本书译注的有:池无量、陈平尚、霍立林、张鑫。

由于我们水平有限,书中不足之处,请读者批评指正。

袁行桢

1996.7.1

于北京师范大学外语系

## 序

通读了《美英时文选读》，觉得这本书有两大优点。第一个优点是，选材时把思想内容放在第一位。为了学好英语，当代英美作者的作品是要读的，但是应当注意不要在学习英语的同时把有害的思想也装进头脑里去。在美国的报纸上，想找到对我国读者能起正面教育作用的材料，无疑是极其困难的，只要能反映美国的实际情况，使我国读者对美国社会有所了解，就是好文章了。《美英时文选读》在这方面是成功的。全书 15 篇文章，最后一篇《“平凡”人做不平凡的事》，介绍两个热心服务的人物，这是有积极意义的。其余 14 篇中，多数含有对美国社会各种现象的批评。《上名牌大学，还是平庸一生？》，说到了美国青少年争上名牌大学的不良后果；《勉强度日的家庭》，叙述了一个中产阶级家庭经济拮据而又不得不安于现状的情况；《不公与失望》揭露了分配不公的严重程度；《犯罪问题日益严重》，指出美国刑事案件越来越多，是因为大多数罪犯没有受到应得的惩罚；《一部昂贵的“死亡机器”》，描述了美国死刑判决三番五次复审，耗时费钱的现象；《究竟是什么在破坏着我们的司法制度？》，从辛普森的判决说到黑人把刑事诉讼也看成是种族歧视，而白人也怀疑法院是否有能力公正地办案；《让人的判断重新受到重视》是讽刺美国法律的，法律不允许人们运用判断力，官员们处理现实生活问题的方式反映出他们几乎一点也不了解实际，美国人似乎做到了“两全其丑”（两全其美的反面），即一方面法规系统过于繁琐，而另一方面又不解决什么问题；《两个国家——另一个美国》是反映黑人

齐

和白人的矛盾的,作者不赞成黑人闹独立,批评政府向黑人倾斜的政策反而把黑人和白人在思想上隔离开来,这种观点是否正确,尚可讨论,但“两个国家”的提法突出了黑人和白人的分歧之大;《道德观念面临危机》是措词最尖锐的一篇,说到民主党的现代自由主义政策毁掉了人们的精神防线,美国可能由于社会弊端而逐渐衰败下去;《你信得过民意测验吗?》是一篇议论文,说明美国的民意测验是不能反映人民的真实意见的。

以上十篇文章涉及到美国社会生活的方方面面,包括分配、刑事犯罪、司法、法律、道德、教育、种族问题、民意测验等。当然,这些批评都不触及资本主义制度,这也是可以意料到的。余下的四篇中,《汽车轮子上的国家》叙述了汽车普及对美国社会的影响;《哥伦比亚特区的命运》报道美国首都城市建设中的问题;《电脑空间出了什么问题?》,是一篇科技新闻,其内容是电脑发展到国际互联网络带来的刑事犯罪行为 and 电脑警察的突起;《抓住近期目标是最重要的》介绍了一个企业家的成功秘诀。这四篇文章都是提供一些信息,没有批判。

第二个优点是,每篇文章都有详尽的词汇表和译文。最近几年来,大学英语课的阅读教学,不提倡精读,而主张快读,不要求逐字逐句理解,而以理解 70% 为合格。其检查的方法就是多项选择题。这种题可以猜答案,而且有暗示作用,因此比英译汉要容易得多。实践证明,答对了多项选择题,并不一定能正确理解。可是,由于这种测试方法流行,有些阅读教材中的练习也采取这种形式。《美英时文选读》每篇都附词汇表和译文,就表示希望读者能逐字逐句读懂,这对提高阅读能力的作用是和多项选择题大不一样的。书中没有练习,也许有人认为这是缺点,其实,阅读文章本身就是练习,并不需要再加上额

外的练习。把文章多读几遍,比草草地读一遍就去做练习要好得多。

读者各人掌握的词汇不同,对某一位读者来说,词汇表中所注释的词有些是熟悉的,而有些没有列出的词倒是不认识的。为了逐词逐句正确理解,读者需要自己在词典中查出词汇表中所没有而自己不认识的词。一般的单词和成语在中型的英汉词典中就可以查到,有些也许要查英美出版的较大的词典。本书的词汇表不仅注释单词,而且对某些事件、机构等作了详细的注释,这对于理解文章也有帮助。

译文是正确通顺的,但也是灵活的,有些地方没有拘泥于原文,而是加了一些诠释性的词语,这也是为了帮助读者更好地了解。

当前应试教育虽然受到批评,但仍有很多人乐此不疲,以致书市上英语学习用书多半与应试有关,而真正提高英语水平的书因其销路较窄而不容易出版。这本《美英时文选读》得以出版,对读者来说是一件有益的事。

清华大学外语系原主任

李相崇

1996. 6

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## 1. A Country on Wheels

"It was the beginning of a revolution in America and the world, a revolution that some have yet to acknowledge and many have yet to appreciate," says Harold Skramstad, president of the Henry Ford<sup>1</sup> Museum in Dearborn, Michigan. 1776? No indeed; 1896, when Frank Duryea<sup>2</sup> finally perfected the Duryea Motor Wagon. At its first airing, the contraption<sup>3</sup> rolled less than 100 metres before the transmission froze up. But by the end of 1896 Duryea had sold 13 of them, thus giving birth to the American motor industry.

That industry is being celebrated hugely over the coming months, culminating<sup>4</sup> with a Great American Cruise<sup>5</sup>-in<sup>6</sup> in Detroit in June. "Our goal is to attract the greatest collection of antique and classic cars this nation has ever seen in one place at one time," says Mr Skramstad modestly.

Americans may indeed blame the car for almost everything that has happened to their country, and themselves, since 1896. The car has determined:

※**The way they live.** From cradle<sup>7</sup> to grave, the car marks every rite of American passage<sup>8</sup>. Home by car from the maternity<sup>9</sup> ward; first driving licence (usually at the age of 16); first car of one's own and the make of car is a prime determinant of social status, symbolic of everything a person is or

does. In Las Vegas<sup>10</sup>, and elsewhere, Americans can get married at drive-in chapels<sup>11</sup>. They then buy, or lust after, a house with garages big enough for not one but two or three cars. This allocates<sup>12</sup> more space to cars than to children. And when the time comes, they may lie in state<sup>13</sup> at a drive-through funeral home, where you can pay your respects without pulling over<sup>14</sup>.

※**The way they shop.** Main Street has been replaced by the strip mall and the shopping mall<sup>15</sup>, concentrating consumer goods in an auto-friendly<sup>16</sup> space. A large part of each shopping trip must now be spent, bags under chin, searching for the place where the car was left. (And another point: bags have annoyingly lost their carrying handles since shoppers ceased to be pedestrian<sup>17</sup>.) Since car-friendly living and shopping became the rule, most built-up<sup>18</sup> parts of America now look like every other part. There is simply no difference between a Burger Inn in California and one on the outskirts of Boston.

※**The way they eat.** A significant proportion of Americans' weekly meals are now consumed inside cars, sometimes while parked outside the (drive-by) eatory<sup>19</sup> concerned, sometimes en route<sup>20</sup>, which leads to painful spillages<sup>21</sup> in laps.

※**The legal system.** Dozens of laws have been written to deal with car cases, ranging from traffic disputes to product liability. Drive-by shootings require a car, as do most getaways<sup>22</sup>. The car is a great crime accessory<sup>23</sup>; and it also causes the deaths of nearly 40,000 Americans every year.

※**Personal finances.** Before the age of the car, few people went into debt; no need to borrow money to buy a horse. Now

Americans tie themselves up with extended instalment<sup>24</sup> loans, and this in turn has spawned<sup>25</sup> a whole financial industry.

※ **The wealth of the nation.** By 1908, an estimated 485 different manufacturers were building cars in the United States. Employment grew nearly 100-fold in the industry during the first decade of the 20th century. When Henry Ford, in a stroke of<sup>26</sup> genius, automated his production line he required a rush of new, unskilled labour, which he enticed<sup>27</sup> by offering an unheard-of \$ 5 a day in wages. Henceforth, workers could actually afford to buy what they built.

And Americans never looked back. Today, the Big Three car manufacturers (Ford, GM and Chrysler) generate more than \$ 200 billion a year in business inside the United States. Directly and indirectly, the industry employs roughly one in seven workers. Every car job is reckoned<sup>28</sup> to add \$ 100,000 in goods and services to the economy, twice the national average.

People occasionally suppose that the car is under attack as it enters its second century. Environmental regulators and transport planners (with their talk of car pools and subways) tend to give this impression. There are signs that personal computers may be replacing the sports car as the chief passion, and expense, of young men. But, in the end, nothing beats the idea of individual mobility. The obvious way to celebrate a centenary is just to keep driving.

## 汽车轮子上的国家

“汽车的问世在美国乃至全世界犹如开始了一场革命。对这场革命有些人还没有承认,更多的人还有待于对它充分了解。”在密歇根州迪尔伯恩的亨利·福特博物馆的馆长哈罗德·斯科拉姆斯特德这样说。第一辆汽车是在1776年出现的吗?不,事实上是在1896年。那一年弗兰克·杜里埃最终制成了杜里埃机动四轮车。在它第一次公开亮相时,这个“新玩意儿”行驶了不到100米,变速箱就停住不动了。但是到1896年底,杜里埃已经售出了13辆这样的车子,从而诞生了美国的汽车工业。

在即将来到的几个月内,汽车工业将要举行盛大的庆祝活动,并将以“底特律6月美国汽车大检阅”达到其高潮。斯科拉姆斯特德先生谦虚地说:“我们的目标不过是在美国某时某地人们见到过的老式的和传统式样的汽车最大量地吸引到这次庆祝活动中来。”

美国人的确可能把1896年以来发生在他们国家或他们自己身上的每件事都归咎于汽车。现在我们来看看汽车对于美国人的生活有哪些影响:

**\* 他们的生活方式** 对于一个美国人,从生到死,在他一生中每一阶段的重大事件中都留下了汽车的印记。从产房是乘坐汽车回到家里的;通常在16岁就能拿到第一个汽车驾驶执照;买了自己的第一辆汽车,而汽车的牌子是一个人社会地位的首要决定因素,它是一个象征,说明你是一个什么样的人和做什么工作的;在拉斯韦加斯和其他地方,美国人能在免下车的小教堂里举行婚礼;然后他们购买,或渴望购买一所房子,这所房子要有能放两辆汽车的大车库,这样,汽车占有的空间比孩子占有的还要大。也许有一天人去世后,躺在殡仪馆里接受人们的瞻仰时,人们不必把车停放在路边而是坐在车里向遗体致意。

**\* 他们的购物方式** 城市的主街已经由沿公路的商业区和购物中心所取代,消费品都集中在一个便于汽车驶近的地方。人们每次购物要用很长时间寻找汽车停放的地方,手中提着购买到的各种物品,下巴夹着包儿(顺便提一下,由于购物者不再步行,原来的手提包不再有提手了,这可有点麻烦)。由于适合使用汽车的生活方式和购物方式成了常规,当今在美国建筑物集中的多数地区看上去都很相像,加利福尼亚州的伯格旅店与波士顿市郊的简直没有什么区别。

**\* 他们的饮食方式** 现在美国人每周在汽车里吃饭的时候是相当多的,有时是把车停放在那种不用下车,在售货窗口就可购买的小餐馆外面,坐在车里进餐;有时候就在途中吃,这样常会把饮料洒在大腿上而令人不快。

**\* 法制** 在美国已经制定了数十种法律来处理有关汽车的案件,包括从交通纠纷到产品责任。有的罪犯开着车从车里开枪行凶,大多数案犯逃跑也需要汽车。汽车成了犯罪的一大帮凶;另外,每年它还使近4万美国人因车祸丧生。

**\* 个人财务状况** 在汽车时代以前,很少有人借债,因为不需要借钱来买一匹马;而现在,美国人把自己束缚在分期付款的长期贷款上,为的是购买一辆汽车。这反过来又产生了一个全新的金融行业。

**\* 国家财富** 到1908年,在美国估计有485家不同的工厂在生产汽车。在20世纪的头10年中,在这个行业的就业人数增加了近100倍。亨利·福特靠他天才的灵感使他的生产线实现自动化以后,急需大批新的非技术劳动力,于是他以前所未有的每天5美元的工资来吸引这批劳动力。此后,工人们实际上就能买得起他们自己生产的汽车了。

美国人从不停止不前。今天三大汽车工厂(福特、通用和克莱斯勒)在美国国内经营中年产值就超过2,000亿美元。这个行业直接和间接地雇用了美国大约1/7的工人。包括商品和服务在内,在汽车行业中的每一个职工估计每年能够创造10万美元的经济效益,这是全国平均数的2倍。

人们有时认为,今天,在进入第二个百年时,汽车正受到抨击。制定环保法规和交通计划的人员已提出合伙用车和发展地下铁道这样的建

议。有迹象表明,个人计算机有可能替代跑车成为年轻人的主要爱好和花销,但是到头来,没有什么可以胜过人们开着车到处跑的愿望。庆祝汽车诞生一百周年的最好方式就是继续让汽车在人们的生活中发挥它的不可缺少的作用。

### 注释

1. Henry Ford      亨利·福特(1863~1947),美国汽车制造商,创办了福特汽车公司。
2. Frank Duryea      弗兰克·杜里埃,美国早期汽车发明家,与其兄弟查尔斯·埃德加·杜里埃发明并制造出了第一辆实用汽车。
3. contraption n.      奇妙的装置,新发明的玩意儿
4. culminate vi.      达到高潮
5. cruise n.      缓慢巡行
6. -in      构成复合词,表示公开的集体活动,如 cruise-in 表示汽车大检阅。
7. cradle n.      摇篮
8. rite of passage      标志人生进入新阶段的重大事件
9. maternity n.      产科,产科医院
10. Las Vegas      拉斯韦加斯,内华达州东南部城市,以夜总会、赌场著称。
11. chapel n.      小教堂
12. allocate vt.      把...划归
13. in state      遗体安葬前受公众瞻仰
14. pull over      把车驶到路边停放
15. mall n.      在封闭建筑内的大型购物中心
16. -friendly      构成复合词,表示适合...的
17. pedestrian n.      步行者
18. built-up a.      建筑物多的
19. eatery n.      餐馆
20. en route      在途中
21. spillage n.      溢出,洒出
22. getaway n.      逃跑
23. accessory n.      帮凶
24. instalment n.      分期付款
25. spawn vt.      引起
26. in a stroke of      用...的一举
27. entice vt.      吸引
28. reckon vt.      估计

(霍立林 译注)

## 2. A Family Struggles Just to Get By

Brenda, Amancio, Michelle and Amelia Irizarry are a family of four living in the Bronx, and at first glance, their lives seem to mirror<sup>1</sup> the middle-class ideal<sup>2</sup>.

Brenda heads the parents' association at the local middle school. Her husband, Amancio, bustles off<sup>3</sup> to work early each morning. Their younger daughter, Amelia, 13, accents<sup>4</sup> her jeans with Nikes and Timberland boots. Their older daughter, Michelle, 20, attends college and hopes to become a social worker.

But the Irizarrys have no savings. They rent an apartment, because they cannot afford to buy a home. The family has never taken a vacation trip together, or owned a new car. They go out to dinner at most once a year.

Sometimes Mrs. Irizarry wonders what would happen if there were an accident or death, and her family had to survive on even less.

The Irizarrys live on \$38,000 a year, an income that places them in the financial middle of a city where the gap between rich and poor is among the widest in the nation. The median family income in New York, adjusted for inflation, is \$41,600, based on 1990 census figures<sup>5</sup>. But to be in the middle in New York City, as the Irizarrys' life attests<sup>6</sup>, is not nec-



essarily to have either the security or the comforts so often associated with being middle class.

Often it is the extraordinarily wealthy and the destitute<sup>7</sup> who seem to define<sup>8</sup> New York City. But the Irizarrys of Bainbridge Avenue are more typical, and for them life is neither glamorous nor miserable. But it does contain a kind of quiet drama nonetheless, with the modest triumphs and heartbreaks that define so many families who are on the cusp of hard times and of making it.<sup>9</sup>

Mr. and Mrs. Irizarry have enjoyed a measure of<sup>10</sup> success. They are better off than their parents were. But they have been unable to improve their fortunes beyond a modicum<sup>11</sup> of comfort they achieved several years ago. In fact, they began slipping back after Mr. Irizarry was laid off by a company to which he had devoted much of his life.

Everyone in the Irizarry family works. Mrs. Irizarry, 41, brings in the most money, as an assistant teacher at a nearby day care center. Mr. Irizarry, 52, holds two jobs, stocking goods in a school kitchen by day and cleaning classrooms in another school by night. Michelle spends her evenings doing telephone surveys for a company in New Rochelle. And even Amelia sometimes sweeps floors at her middle school to earn pocket change.

Their household in the northwest Bronx, held together by the industry of the parents, is buoyed<sup>12</sup> by the youthful dreams of the children. And the only real suspense<sup>13</sup> for the Irizarrys is whether their daughters will realize their bittersweet aspira-