

In 1975, stoned, giggling, and trying to separate the real from the fake, my
friend and I stumbled into an Upper East Side boutique that was
We were stunned to find a store that had virtually everything we wanted
and feeling like we had found the perfect place, full of perfect things
lots of money and they gave us lots of clothes designed to last a lifetime
day. The graphics were great, the products imaginative, the colors startling. They didn't have one logo; they had
hundreds. We loved it. I still have three Fiorucci metal purses I bought just because I liked the way they looked.
still like the way they look, but I lost track of the store more than a decade ago. Something happened. We changed.
In the early to mid-1980s, virtually every woman I knew shopped at Esprit. If they couldn't get to the stores, they
log, Esprit virtually pioneered catalog shopping, they made it hip. I used to spend hours
they were clean, they were simple, they were perfect, so...perfect for the era. Then one day
realized I hadn't been to Esprit in a long time. They were gone. The fashion had shifted.
Today, it seems impossible to be alive without seeing Benetton. The controversial United Colors of Benetton ad
Like Fiorucci and Esprit were for their respective decades, Benetton seems positioned for this one. All has
been imaged by the same individual: Oliviero Toscani. If designers can be judged by their impact on society,
Toscani may emerge as one of the most important figures of the modern design, though he still introduces
photographer. He nonetheless has influenced fashion retailing trends for two decades and is now

当代英美 散文名篇选读

下册

方健壮 主编

华南理工大学出版社

21 世纪英语语言文化系列丛书

**Selected Readings
in Modern English Prose**

当代英美散文名篇选读

(下 册)

方健壮 主编

华南理工大学出版社

· 广州 ·

内 容 简 介

本书是按照《高等学校英语专业教学大纲》中关于阅读部分的要求进行编写的英语专业高年级教材。全书分上、下两册,各有10篇散文,包括叙事、描写、说明、演讲、类比、辩论、书评等类型,内容涉及广泛,诸如社会、政治、婚姻、家庭、语言、文学、教育、哲学、美学等。每课均配有大量的阅读理解、词汇练习、句法分析、中英互译等相关练习。

本书可作为高等院校英语专业的教材,亦可供英语教师、英语自学者及英语散文爱好者学习参考。

图书在版编目(CIP)数据

当代英美散文名篇选读(下册)/方健壮主编. —广州:华南理工大学出版社, 2001. 1

(21世纪英语语言文化系列丛书)

ISBN 7-5623-1571-X

I. 当…

II. 方…

III. 英语-阅读教学-教材

IV. H319.4

华南理工大学出版社出版发行

(广州五山 邮编 510640)

责任编辑 潘宜玲

各地新华书店经销

中山市新华印刷厂印装

*

2001年1月第1版 2001年1月第1次印刷

开本:787×1092 1/16 印张:11.5 字数:232千

印数:1—5 000册

定价:18.50元

总序

21世纪正在以惊人的速度演变成这样一个新时代:国际政治多极化、经济全球化、社会信息化、文化多元化。毫无疑问,它将给我国外语教育,尤其是英文教育带来新的机遇和挑战。也就是说,新时代将迫使我们修正英语人才的培养目标和规格。我们认为,未来的英语人才不仅要具备扎实的听、说、读、写、译基本功和较广的知识面,而且还要具备适应知识经济时代的三种能力:强劲的获取并运用知识、处理信息与通信的能力,独立分析问题、提出见解的能力,热爱科学、极具个性和大胆创新的能力。简而言之,21世纪的英语人才要有一流的综合素质和深厚的文化蕴底。于是,我们诚邀各路同仁,精心策划了这套《21世纪英语语言文化系列丛书》。

中国教育部于1999年4月决定进一步深化改革,其改革方案不仅包括高考科目、高考形式和录取方式的改革,更重要的是“高考内容”的改革。这一改革更加注重对考生能力和素质的考察,因此高考命题把以知识立意转变为以能力立意。这无疑向我国高等院校的人才培养提出了更高的要求。而英语专业人才的培养教育则应在加强宏观战略研究的同时,把关照重心放在课程的优化设置、教材的精心选编、课堂的人文管理和能力的充分提高等方面,从而发展学生的跨文化交际能力和继续学习、不断发展的能力。作为“人类灵魂的工程师”,我们应在社会转型、价值速变的今天带领我们的莘莘学子,抵制利禄,放弃窘迫,在市井的嘈杂与喧嚣中呼唤文化素质,呼唤艺术品味,呼唤高尚人格。于是,我们认真选编出版了这套《21世纪英语语言文化系列丛书》。

本系列丛书的策划、选编和出版得到了华南理工大学出版社的积极响应和中华传动的热情支持,在此一并表示衷心的感谢!丛书中一定有许多不足之处,诚望同行专家和广大使用者赐教。

广东外语外贸大学英语语言文化学院 毛思慧博士

前 言

《当代英美散文名篇选读》(上、下册)是广东外语外贸大学英文学院教师根据多年来的教学实践而编写的英语专业高年级教材。从1995年开始,该教材试用于广东外语外贸大学英文学院的英语专业主干课程“高级英语”,在此期间一直根据使用情况和反馈意见进行修改,并于1998年作了较大的调整。近期又在此基础上对教材进行充实提高,更换部分课文,增加注释,修改练习等,使这套教材的形式和内容更加统一、规范和实用。

相比于国内同类课程使用的教材,本书有其鲜明的特色。首先是选文均为非文学类作品,避免与文学课的内容重复。其次,课文内容丰富,风格各异——或风趣幽默,或辛辣嘲讽,或朴实平淡,或隽永清新,题材和体裁具有多样性。第三,注重可读性。语言生动活泼,多姿多彩,每篇课文在谋篇布局及遣词造句方面都有其独到之处。第四,突出人文精神。选文大都具有深沉广博的人文内涵,让学生在学语言的同时,还能体会人生百味,拓展思维方式,充实文化知识,提高交际能力。

为方便使用,现将本套教材的各部分内容简略说明如下:

(1)课文:上、下册各有10篇散文,包括叙事、描写、说明、抒情、演讲、书评、传记和类比等类型,涉及文学、文化、教育与哲学领域中有关政治、社会、家庭、婚恋和大学生活等内容。作者中既有享誉世界文坛的文学巨匠,如Edward Morgan Forster, Virginia Woolf, George Orwell, William Golding, William Somerset Maugham;也有中国读者不太熟悉的语言大师,如John Boynton Priestley, Henry Louis Mencken, James Thurber。课文排列主要根据从易到难的原则,也适当兼顾题材和体裁的分类,教师可根据实际情况,灵活掌握讲授每篇课文的时间。

(2)作者与作品:简单介绍作者的创作生涯、文体风格、主要成就及地位等,概括课文的主要内容和意义。

(3)注释:提供理解课文的必要材料。包括:①历史背景知识(人物、事件、地名、作品等);②基本修辞知识;③个别难词、难句解释;④俚语、古语、专业术语等;⑤其他在语言和内容方面需要说明的地方。

(4)练习:每个单元配有大量形式多样、针对性强的习题,如“理解与讨论”(文章的主旨、作者的观点、修辞手段、风格语气、结构、用词等);“词汇”;“完型填空”;“改错”;“翻译”。除了帮助学生巩固从课文中所学到的语言知识外,这

些练习还可以加深对课文的理解与欣赏,培养学生思考、分析、归纳和批评的综合能力,提高用英语进行自由讨论的水平,对通过各种英语水平考试也大有裨益。

本套教材虽是高等院校英语专业的教科书,但也适宜于作英语教师、英语自学者及英语散文爱好者的学习参考用书。

本套教材配有《教师手册》,内容包括教学建议、难点分析、练习答案和参考资料等,欢迎使用单位与编者联系索取。

先后参与本套教材编写工作的有司季甫、周学麟、李海丽、温宾利、程岸、周宗诒。

本套教材在编写和出版过程中得到了广东外语外贸大学英文学院师生们的大力支持,谨此致谢。

由于编者水平与经验有限,本套教材难免存在诸多不足之处,热诚希望使用这套教材的各界人士不吝赐教,以便日后修改。

编者
2000年5月

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Unit 1

Why Don't We Complain?

抱怨,

William F. Buckley, Jr.

1 It was the very last coach and the only empty seat on the entire train, so there was no turning back⁽¹⁾. The problem was to breathe. Outside, the temperature was below freezing. Inside the railroad car the temperature must have been about 85 degrees. I took off my over-coat, and a few minutes later my jacket, and noticed that the car was flecked with the white shirts of the passengers. I soon found my hand moving⁽²⁾ to loosen my tie. From one end of the car to the other, as we rattled through Westchester County⁽³⁾, we sweated; but we did not moan.

2 I watched the train conductor appear at the head of the car. "Tickets, all tickets, please!" In a more virile age, I thought, the passengers would seize the conductor and strap him down on a seat over the radiator to share the fate of his patrons. He shuffled down the aisle, picking up tickets, punching commutation cards. No one addressed a word to him. He approached my seat, and I drew a deep breath of resolution. "Conductor," I began with a considerable edge to my voice ... Instantly the doleful eyes of my seatmate turned tiredly from his newspaper to fix me with a resentful stare: what question could be so important as to justify my sibilant intrusion into his stupor? I was shaken by those eyes. I am incapable of making a discreet fuss⁽⁴⁾, so I mumbled a question about what time were we due in Stamford⁽⁵⁾ (I didn't even ask whether it would be before or after dehydration could be expected to set in), got my reply, and went back to my newspaper and to wiping my brow.

3 The conductor had nonchalantly walked down the gauntlet of eight sweating American freemen, and not one of them had asked him to explain why the passengers in that car had been consigned to suffer. There is nothing to be done when the temperature outdoors is 85 degrees, and indoors the air conditioner has broken down; obviously when that happens there is nothing to do, except

perhaps curse the day that one was born. But when the temperature outdoors is below freezing, it takes a positive act of will on somebody's part to set the temperature indoors at 85. Somewhere a valve was turned too far, a furnace overstocked, a thermostat maladjusted: something that could easily be remedied by turning off the heat and allowing the great outdoors to come indoors. All this is so obvious, what is not obvious is what has happened to the American people.

4 It isn't just the commuters, whom we have come to visualize as a supine breed who have got on to the trick of suspending their sensory faculties twice a day while they submit to the creeping dissolution of the railroad industry. It isn't just they who have given up trying to rectify irrational vexations. It is the American people everywhere.

5 A few weeks ago at a large movie theater I turned to my wife and said, "The picture is out of focus." "Be quiet," she answered. I obeyed. But a few minutes later I raised the point again, with mounting impatience. "It will be all right in a minute," she said apprehensively. (She would rather lose her eyesight than be around when I make one of my infrequent scenes.) I waited. It was just out of focus — not glaringly out, but out. My vision is 20-20, and I assume that is the vision, adjusted, of most people in the movie house. So, after hectoring my wife throughout the first reel, I finally prevailed upon her to admit that it was off, and very annoying. We then settled down, coming to rest on the presumption that: (a) someone connected with the management of the theater must soon notice that blur and make the correction; or (b) that someone seated near the rear of the house would make the complaint in behalf of those of us up front; or (c) that — any minute now — the entire house would explode into catcalls and foot stamping, calling dramatic attention to the irksome distortion.

6 What happened was nothing. The movie ended, as it had begun, just out of focus, and as we trooped out, we stretched our faces in a variety of contortions to accustom the eye to the shock of normal focus⁽⁶⁾.

7 I think it is safe to say that everybody suffered on that occasion. And I think it is safe to assume that everyone was expecting someone else to take the initiative in going back to speak to the manager. And it is probably true even that if we had supposed the movie would run right through the blurred image, someone surely would have summoned up the purposive indignation to get up out of his seat and file his complaint.

8 But notice that no one did. And the reason no one did is because we are all increasingly anxious in America to be unobtrusive, we are reluctant to make our voices heard, hesitant about claiming our rights; we are afraid that our cause is unjust, or that if it is not unjust, that it is ambiguous; or if not even that, that it is too trivial to justify the horrors of a confrontation with Authority; we will sit in an oven or endure a racking headache before undertaking a head-on, I'm-here-to-tell-you complaint. That tendency to passive compliance, to a heedless endurance, is something to keep one's eyes on — in sharp focus.

9 I myself can occasionally summon the courage to complain, but I cannot, as I have intimated, complain softly. My own instinct is so strong to let the thing ride⁽⁷⁾, to forget about it — to expect that someone will take the matter up, when the grievance is collective, in my behalf — that it is only when the provocation is at a very special key, whose vibrations touch simultaneously a complexus of nerves, allergies, and passions, that I catch fire and find the reserves of courage and assertiveness to speak up. When that happens, I get quite carried away. My blood gets hot, my brow wet, I become unbearably and unconscionably sarcastic and bellicose; I am girded for a total showdown.

10 Why should that be? Why could not I (or anyone else) on that railroad coach have said simply to the conductor, "Sir" — I take that back: that sounds sarcastic — "Conductor, would you be good enough to turn down that heat? I am extremely hot. In fact, I tend to get hot every time the temperature reaches 85 degrees —" Strike that last sentence. Just end it with the simple statement that you are extremely hot, and let the conductor infer the cause.

11 Every New Year's Eve I resolve to do something about the Milquetoast⁽⁸⁾ in me and vow to speak up, calmly, for my rights, and for the betterment of our society, on every appropriate occasion. Entering last New Year's Eve, I was fortified in my resolve because that morning at breakfast I had had to ask the waitress three times for a glass of milk. She finally brought it — after I had finished my eggs, which is when I don't want it any more. I did not have the manliness to order her to take the milk back, but settled instead for a cowardly sulk, and ostentatiously refused to drink the milk — though I later paid for it — rather than state plainly to the hostess, as I should have, why I had not drunk it, and would not pay for it.

12 So by the time the New Year ushered out the Old, riding in on my

morning's indignation and stimulated by the gastric juices of resolution that flow so faithfully on New Year's Eve, I rendered my vow. Henceforward I would conquer my shyness, my despicable disposition to supineness. I would speak out like a man against the unnecessary annoyances of our time.

13 Forty-eight hours later, I was standing in line at the ski repair store in Pico Peak, Vermont. All I needed, to get on with my skiing, was the loan, for one minute, of a small screwdriver, to tighten a loose binding. Behind the counter in the workshop were two men. One was industriously engaged in servicing the complicated requirements of a young lady at the head of the line, and obviously he would be tied up for quite a while, the other — “Jiggs,” his workmate called him — was a middle-aged man, who sat in a chair puffing a pipe, exchanging small talk with his working partner. My pulse began its telltale acceleration. The minutes ticked on. I stared at the idle shopkeeper, hoping to shame him into action⁽⁹⁾, but he was impervious to my telepathic reproof and continued his small talk with his friend, brazenly insensitive to the nervous demands of six good men who were raring to ski.

14 Suddenly my New Year's Eve resolution struck me. It was now or never. I broke from my place in line and marched to the counter. I was going to control myself. I dug my nails into my palms. My effort was only partially successful.

15 “If you are not too busy,” I said icily, “would you mind handing me a screwdriver?”

16 Work stopped and everyone turned his eyes on me, and I experienced that mortification I always feel when I am the center of centripetal shafts of curiosity, resentment, perplexity.

17 But the worst was yet to come. “I am sorry, sir,” said Jiggs deferentially, moving the pipe from his mouth. “I am not supposed to move. I have just had a heart attack.” That was the signal for a great whirring noise that descended from heaven. We looked, stricken, out the window, and it appeared as though a cyclone had suddenly focused on the snowy courtyard between the shop and the ski lift. Suddenly a gigantic army helicopter materialized, and hovered down to a landing. Two men jumped out of the plane carrying a stretcher, tore into the ski shop, and lifted the shopkeeper onto the stretcher. Jiggs bade his companion good-by, was whisked out the door, into the plane, up

to the heavens, down — we learned — to a nearby army hospital. I looked up manfully — into a score of man-eating eyes. I put the experience down as a reversal.

18 As I write this, on an airplane, I have run out of paper and need to reach into my briefcase under my legs for more. I cannot do this until my empty lunch tray is removed from my lap. I arrested the stewardess as she passed empty-handed down the aisle on the way to the kitchen to fetch the lunch trays for the passengers up forward who haven't been served yet. "Would you please take my tray?" "Just a moment, sir!" she said, and marched on sternly. Shall I tell her that since she is headed for the kitchen anyway, it could not delay the feeding of the other passengers by more than two seconds necessary to stash away my empty tray? Or remind her that not fifteen minutes ago she speak unctuously into the loudspeaker the words undoubtedly devised by the airline's highly paid public relations counselor: "If there is anything I or Miss French can do for you to make your trip more enjoyable, please let us —" I have run out of paper.

19 I think the observable reluctance of the majority of Americans to assert themselves⁽¹⁰⁾ in minor matters is related to our increased sense of helplessness in an age of technology and centralized political and economic power. For generations, Americans who were too hot, or too cold, got up and did something about it. Now we can call the plumber, or the electrician, or the furnace man. The habit of looking after our own needs obviously had something to do with the assertiveness that characterized the American family familiar to readers of American literature. With the technification of life goes our direct responsibility for our material environment, and we are conditioned to adopt a position of helplessness not only as regards the broken air conditioner, but as regards the overheated train. It takes an expert to fix the former, but not the latter; yet these distinctions, as we withdraw into helplessness, tend to fade away.

20 Our notorious political apathy is a related phenomenon. Every year, whether the Republican or the Democratic Party is in office, more and more power drains away from the individual to feed vast reservoirs in far-off places; and we have less and less say about the shape of events which shape our future. From this alienation of personal power comes the sense of resignation with which we accept the political dispensations of a powerful government whose hold upon us continues to increase.

21 An editor of a national weekly news magazine told me a few years ago that as few as a dozen letters of protest against an editorial stance of his magazine was enough to convene a plenipotentiary meeting of the board of editors to review policy. "So few people complain, or make their voices heard," he explained to me, "that we assume a dozen letters represent the inarticulated views of thousands of readers." In the past ten years, he said, the volume of mail has noticeably decreased, even though the circulation of his magazine has risen.

22 When our voices are finally mute, when we have finally suppressed the natural instinct to complain, whether the vexation is trivial or grave, we shall have become automatons, incapable of feeling. When Premier Khrushchev⁽¹¹⁾ first came to this country late in 1959, he was primed, we are informed, to experience the bitter resentment of the American people against his tyranny, against his persecutions, against the movement which is responsible for the great number of American deaths in Korea, for billions in taxes every year, and for life everlasting on the brink of disaster; but Khrushchev was pleasantly surprised, and reported back to the Russian people that he had been met with overwhelming cordiality (read: apathy), except, to be sure, for "a few fascists who followed me around with their wretched posters, and should be horse-whipped."

23 I may be crazy, but I say there would have been lots more posters in a society where train temperatures in the dead of winter are not allowed to climb to 85 degrees without complaint.

About the Author and the Text

William F. Buckley, Jr. (b. 1925), an American editor and author, is one of the best-known spokesmen for political conservatism in the United States. He founded the magazine National Review in 1955 and served as its editor until 1990, when he resigned. Buckley also writes a widely syndicated newspaper column and conducts a nationally televised discussion program. In 1965, he ran unsuccessfully as the Conservative Party candidate for the mayor of New York City.

William F. Buckley, Jr. was born in New York City and graduated from Yale University. In his first book, *God and Man at Yale* (1951), he attacked

the liberal viewpoints that he said were common at Yale. His other political books include *Up from Liberalism* (1959) and *The Unmaking of a Mayor* (1966). Buckley has also written a number of spy thrillers, starting with *Saving the Queen* (1975). He tells of his own adventures in *Racing Through Paradise: A Pacific Passage* (1987) and other books.

In this essay, Buckley expresses his surprise at the reluctance of the Americans to assert themselves in matters trivial or grave. He uses a variety of examples — some well developed, others scarcely at all — to make a single generality more specific. And the generality itself, as we can see toward the end, is of considerably broader significance than it appears at first.

Notes and Commentary

- (1) there was no turning back — There was no alternative; he didn't have another choice.
- (2) found my hand moving — To find yourself doing something means to gradually realize that you are doing something, though you have not intended or planned to do it.
- (3) Westchester County — one of the commuter suburbs of New York City
- (4) I am incapable of making a discreet fuss — Whenever I lodge a complaint, I would make a scene of it. Note the use of *oxymoron* in the expression “discreet fuss”.
- (5) Stamford — An important business center in southwestern Connecticut, the city lies on Long Island Sound, about 35 miles northeast of New York City. Stamford, together with Norwalk, forms a metropolitan area with a population of 329,935.
- (6) accustom the eye to the shock of normal focus — We had to adjust our vision to the normal view outside, which seemed a shock after the painful experience in the cinema. *Paradox* is used here to highlight the absurdity of seeing a film that is out of focus.
- (7) let the thing ride — take no action against something that is wrong or unpleasant
- (8) Milquetoast — This is a timid, shrinking, apologetic person after Caspar

Milquetoast, character of this sort in a comic strip by H. T. Webster (1885 – 1952), U. S. Cartoonist.

- (9) shame him into action — To shame sb. into (doing) sth. is to force someone to do something by making him or her feel ashamed.
- (10) assert oneself — behave in a determined way so that people do not make him/her do things he/she does not want to
- (11) Khrushchev — Nikita Sergeyeovich Khrushchev (1894 – 1971), leader of the Soviet Union from 1958 to 1964. He tried to raise the Soviet standard of living and greatly expanded his country's exploration of space. Khrushchev had little pity for weaker nations and his political enemies. But he sometimes showed a good-natured humor and the simple tastes of his peasant background.

Exercises

I . Questions for comprehension and discussion:

1. Is the essay mainly argumentative, descriptive, narrative, or expository? What is Buckley's purpose in writing this essay? Identify the places in the essay where Buckley states his thesis or main idea. Summarize it in a single sentence.
2. Buckley uses personal experience to illustrate his cause-and-effect reasoning. Which personal examples most effectively illustrate the effects of not complaining? Which illustrate the effects of actual complaints?
3. What examples other than those based on personal experience does Buckley use? Is their placement significant in any way? Would the essay be more effective with fewer personal examples? If so, what might be used in their place?
4. Buckley describes a "reversal" experience, his encounter with Jiggs in the Vermont ski shop. Does this episode support or contradict Buckley's overall point that Americans should be more assertive? Does it illustrate when people

should not be assertive? Why does Buckley include it in the essay?

5. Which paragraphs suggest that Buckley is writing for a general audience that may share his personal frustration? Which paragraphs suggest that he is writing for an audience interested in politics and political action? Does Buckley take any steps to select and present the examples in a way that will make them seem representative of the experience of his audience? What steps does he take?
6. What adjectives would you use to characterize Buckley's tone: humble, pompous, charming, egotistical, witty, engaging, self-mocking, courteous, serious, pedantic? Find several paragraphs in this essay that illustrate his tone and personality.
7. This essay illustrates how a number of patterns can work together within the framework of the *exemplification* pattern. Identify the paragraphs that follow a pattern other than *exemplification*. State what pattern they follow. How does Buckley keep the mixture of patterns in the essay from creating confusion?
8. Readers laugh at several points in the essay. What is the source of humor? The conditions that test our patience? Buckley's character that wavers between trying to remain inconspicuous and wanting to vent his irritation and anger?
9. Buckley uses a large number of formal or technical words, many of which are not in the vocabulary of ordinary people. Do you think his diction is sophisticated or pretentious? Is the essay written only for highly-educated people? Should he substitute easier synonyms?
10. "What question could be so important as to justify my sibilant intrusion into his stupor?" (paragraph 2) Is this a rhetorical question? Is Buckley being ironical or humorous? What makes him change his mind when he is about to complain to the train conductor?

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11. Instead of disturbing other passengers or putting up with the heat inside the coach, Buckley can ask the conductor to go with him to the head of the coach and calmly raise the matter there, can't he?
 12. 85 degrees Fahrenheit means about 30 degrees Celsius. Is that unbearably hot? Is the temperature deliberately set so high? According to Buckley, who is to blame for the suffering inside the coach, the conductor or the passengers themselves?
 13. What would his wife not do when Buckley makes a scene? When she says, "It will be all right in a minute," is she afraid that Buckley is about to make a scene, or is she understandingly tolerant of the picture going out of focus at the beginning of the show?
 14. "But notice that no one did." (paragraph 8) Why is this sentence so short? Why is the next sentence which explains the reason so long?
 15. Buckley says he has a strong instinct "to let the thing ride, to forget about it." (paragraph 9) Do you believe he is really a man of endurance? If there is truly a Milquetoast in him, why couldn't he eat the eggs until after the waitress brought the milk?
 16. "Strike that last sentence." (paragraph 10) Why do you think Buckley says it?
 17. "If there is anything I or Miss French can do for you to make your trip more enjoyable, please let us —" (paragraph 18) Only one word is needed to complete this sentence. What is it? This device is called *aposiopesis*. Why is it appropriate to use this device here?
 18. Do you think the stewardess had good reasons to finish serving food to all the passengers before stashing away empty trays? Can't other passengers follow suit and also ask her to stash away their empty trays if Buckley's demand is satisfied? Is it wholesome for a stewardess to serve food with hands that have