现代英语佳作赏析

On Future

来来篇

译注 王英姿 仝亚辉

现代英语 佳作赏析 系列

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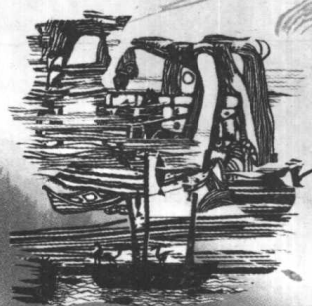
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内容简介

　　"现代英语佳作赏析"系列是为学生和广大英语爱好者增加英美文化背景的一套英汉对照、注释读物。其选文精细，既是名家名作，又是我们从未读过的；译文质量上乘，充分体现原作的风格；注释准确，便于读者了解作家，透彻理解和欣赏作品。《小说篇》精选当代名家代表作12篇，故事引人入胜，风格迥然，文笔流畅，思想深刻。《社会篇》、《未来篇》精选当代英美政治家、专栏作家、科学家等展望21世纪英美及世界文化、社会、家庭、科技、环保等各方面的文章，所选篇目既与我们现在的社会与生活密切相关，又具有极大的前瞻性，对于刚进入21世纪的读者来说颇具启发性。《哲理篇》精选当代名家散文15篇。所选篇目或探讨人生，或抒发情怀，或幽默隽永。该系列也可作为英美文化辅助教材，相信"现代英语佳作赏析"系列会引起广大读者的浓厚兴趣。

总序

　　据说如今文盲的定义有了发展，即不懂计算机。对于中国人来说，不懂英语当然算不上文盲，但毫无疑问的是，和计算机技能一样，英语现也成为国内各行各业要求人材所具备的基本技能与素质。原因很简单：英语是世界普通话。在目前经济全球化的大潮中，在加入世贸组织后的今天，中国要在方方面面与世界接轨，融入世界经济，赶超世界的科技发展，学习世界先进的管理经验，所有这些都离不开英语这一工具。从这个意义上可以毫不夸张地说，一个不能熟练运用英语这一工具的现代科技工作者、企业家或管理者就不拥有进入新世纪的通行证，即使上网冲浪，也只能在自家门前溜达。事实上，英语与英语学习的重要性从现在铺天盖地的英语学习出版物（包括本丛书）和各种各样的英语短训班就可略见一斑。

　　随着英语学习的日益普及，怎样学好英语也成为人们越来越关心的话题。英语五大技能：听、说、读、写、译，同时也是英语学习的五个重要方面。其中，"读"无疑是最为重要的方面和途径。首先，通

过大量阅读，可以接触英语的各种语言现象，有效地扩大词汇量，掌握更多的表达方式和增强对英语的语感；其次，通过大量阅读，有助于我们了解对象国的国情与文化，增进不同国家与民族之间的理解与交流；第三，通过大量阅读，可以让我们领略到英语名篇佳作的独特魅力，怡情养性，不胜快哉！"现代英语佳作赏析"系列即是这样一套多功能、多层面、多风格的英语阅读丛书。

"现代英语佳作赏析"遵循"经典、新颖、广博、地道"的选材原则。

"经典"指所选篇章大多出自英美名家之手。哲学家如罗素；小说家如乔伊斯、海明威；诗人如奥登；评论家如考利等等。即使是社会、宗教、科学等话题也多出自英美享有盛名的专栏作家或社会政论家之笔，其思想深邃、视角独特，文笔优美、语言精炼、措词老道，是我们学习英语不可多得的范文。

"新颖"指所选篇章内容新颖，尤其是《现代英语佳作赏析·未来篇》①中涉及的许多话题，如关于因特网、关于外星人、关于基因、关于环保等，至今，甚至在未来相当长的时期内仍不过时，仍能引起人们阅读的兴趣与对未来的思索与关注。在一个小册子中收集了这么多描述世界未来的英语佳作，这是目前国内众多英语出版物所不多见的。

"广博"不仅指所选篇章体裁上的广泛，如文学、哲理、散文、小品、思辩等等，更指内容上的广泛。整个系列不仅涉及思想、宗教、女性、社会、生活等人文社科领域，还涉及医学、生物、计算机、因特网、天文、环境等自然科学领域，可以说是上至天文地理、下至鸡毛蒜皮，或纵论人生，或评点江山，或警示社会、或预言未来，寓情于理，发人深省。

①以下简称为《未来篇》，同类情况不再一一说明。

"地道"指所选篇章均为原汁原味的英美散文。部分选文的语言较为艰深，超出了大学英语四级，甚至六级的阅读水平，但考虑到选文的整体风格，编者没有做文字上的更动或简化。这样不仅保留了原文地道的语言，也为阅读水平较高的读者留出了一定的发展空间，使本系列的读者面更加宽泛。

"现代英语佳作赏析"系列的四个部分根据其语言的难易程度可按《小说篇》、《哲理篇》、《未来篇》、《社会篇》的顺序进行阅读。但这只是相对意义上的，因为，在《小说篇》中可能有较难理解的篇章；而在《社会篇》中也可能会有较为浅显的文字。读者在阅读本系列时可根据自己的情况调整阅读顺序。好在本系列各篇不仅有较为详细的注释，还有准确流畅的译文供读者参照。另外，本系列四个部分在内容上的区别也只是相对意义上的："小说"、"哲理"、"未来"、"社会"各篇互有关联，只是各有侧重而已。

"现代英语佳作赏析"系列均由解放军外国语学院的中、青年教官编写译注。解放军外国语学院素以作风严谨、功底扎实、阵容整齐闻名于国内外语界。相信这套由他们编写的丛书会给广大英语学习者提供一个学习英语的新园地。

感谢西安交通大学出版社的谭小艺女士为本丛书的编辑、出版所花费的心血与努力。

外籍教师 Mr Pete Marchetto，Mr Nathaneal Siemens，Mrs Rebekka Siemens 用纯正的语言、优美的语调，声情并茂地朗读了部分文章，在此表示感谢。

李公昭
2002 年 1 月 7 日

现代英语佳作赏析
未　　　来　　　篇

译注　王英姿　仝亚辉

前　言

　　许多人都看过魔术表演。魔术表演令人着迷之处在于其未知性。它在满足人们的好奇心的同时，又给人留下了"悬念"：这到底是怎么回事？这怎么可能？这种久久不能释怀的疑惑让人对魔术回味无穷，浮想联翩。而未来，就有着与魔术同样的魅力，它的未知性同样让人始终对它怀有浓厚的兴趣，促使人们千方百计地进行种种预测，努力想描画出一幅逼真的未来图景。

　　本书选取的19篇文章，着眼于"未来"。文章的内容力求新、广、趣。

　　新，一是选材较新，全书有一多半的文章选自近几年的国外杂志。二是内容较新，文章涉及不少当前人们较为关注的科技新领域。"因特网展望"从多个侧面预测了因特网的发展前景。"基因梦想"探讨了生物技术的发展将给人类带来的好处和存在的问题。三是语言新。在这本书中，大家可以接触到原汁原味的、鲜活的当代英语。

　　广，指的是题材广泛。全书的题材不仅涉及医学、生物、计算机、因特网、天文、环境等自然科

学领域，还涉及求职、女性、思想等人文社科领域。随着社会的发展，各学科领域之间的关系也愈来愈密切，本书的不少文章体现了这一特点。如"未来的工作"论述了经济的发展将引起的职业变化。"基因梦想"对生物工程的进步会不会引起新一轮的种族歧视表示了忧虑。"转基因食品"则谈到了转基因技术的应用对人类自身的安全、农业以及环境可能造成的影响。

趣，指的是内容大多涉及人们感兴趣的话题。如长寿，"百岁生日快乐！"与你讨论人到底能活多久。如天灾人祸，"陨石杀手"会告诉你彗星撞地球究竟有没有可能，而"家园正遭破坏"和"地球在升温"则提醒人们关注自己目前唯一可赖以生存的家园发生的变化。另外，一些文章的语言也生动有趣，值得一读。如"封住火山口！"用风趣的语言指出并非所有的环境问题都如人们想象的那么可怕。还有艾萨克·阿西莫夫"永无休止的战斗"用大量生动的事例向人们展示了迷信的荒唐可笑。

有一句话叫做"科技以人为本"。科技的进步最终是为了人类的进步，是为了人类能有一个更美好的未来，人类的未来才是本书关注的焦点。为此，本书除选取多篇科普文章之外，还选取了部分人文社科领域的文章。从某种意义上说，这些文章所提到的问题，更应引起人们的重视。例如，"艾滋病与道德义务"的作者认为，在艾滋病尚无法根治的情况下，潜在的艾滋病患者尽管处于弱势，但同样有责任有义务来保护他人免受感染。"宇宙的法则"的作者发现科学带给他一种宗教意义上的神秘和敬畏。"传统视角：21世纪"的作者从历史的角度看待未来，提醒人们未来"人类的敌人不再是黑暗，而是光明，是太多的光明"。而"永无休止的战斗"则毫不客气地指出，"尽管所有人类技术都取得了更大进步，尽管我们的世界已计算机化，尽

管机器人为人类干着各种粗活，而人类得以解放出来从事创造性劳动，尽管……，但人类的绝大多数依旧沉迷在各种迷信中怡然自得，依旧乖乖地让任何坑蒙拐骗的引诱者牵着鼻子走。"

正如"百岁生日快乐！"一文所指出的那样，人类预测未来的能力实在很差：预料将会发生的事情没有发生，而想也不曾想到的事却已遍及全球。未来的发展往往出乎人们的意料——这证明人类无法完全把握未来。这似乎有些令人沮丧，但正是这种发展的未知性，才使得人们对未来既向往，又担忧，既期待，又恐惧。本书很好地反映了人们的这种矛盾心理。

书中的五篇文章："未来的工作"、"致命的抽象"、"陨石杀手"、"基因梦想"和"传统视角：21世纪"为仝亚辉翻译，其余为王英姿翻译。由于文章内容涉及诸多学科，译者在不少领域实属"门外汉"，加之翻译水平有限，书中难免会有不足。所附译文仅供参考，如有讹误，欢迎广大读者批评指正。

徐国栋先生在百忙之中抽时间完成了大部分书稿的录入工作，在此向他表示深深的谢意。

编　者

2002 年 1 月 7 日

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It's an Internet World

Welcome to the Internet Century. Or at least so go early pronouncements in the future-forecasting business[1]. Far too early to even hazard such a proclamation? Maybe. But perhaps nothing speaks more cogently to the overriding influence of the Internet at the dawn of this new millennium than the fact that you cannot begin to divine the future in any area—communications, medicine, commerce, entertainment, and so on— without accounting for the role the Internet will play in each. And the future of computing, of course, is now inextricably tied to the Internet. But what is the future of the Internet, and most specifically the World Wide Web[2], itself? Without a doubt, the Internet will continue to extend its amazingly rapid (by historical standards) reach across the planet. It seems almost certain, too, that higher-speed Internet pipelines will begin to alleviate[3] the World Wide Wait, as the slow surfing[4] of the Web on analog phone lines is often dubbed.

Forecasting the size and speed of the Internet, however, only sketches the outline of this vast system of electronic connections that is fast becoming a pillar of modern society, in the same league as electricity or the engine. Like those forces, the Internet promises to impact our lives in some

very fundamental and perhaps dramatic ways. At its current rate of progress, which has been nothing short of startling, we're likely to see many work and lifestyle changes within the next 20 years, and perhaps within five. The technologies and trends being nurtured now give us some tantalizing[5] hints of what's to come. Here are a few of the possibilities.

An unleashed Internet will make us a people unplugged. The Web may have a vast store of information and an empowering disregard for physical boundaries, but it also comes with strings attached—namely, phone lines. But as the Web grows beyond infancy, many of world's leading telecommunication and Internet companies are aiming to cut the Web's umbilical cord[6].

To some degree, that's happening already. Sprint[7] PCS[8]'s new Wireless Web service, for instance, lets you receive e-mail and bits of news or stock quotes from the Internet. A variety of handheld devices, from organizers such as the Palm VII to two-way pagers[9], can also do wireless e-mail and grab snippets[10] of data from the Web.

But the broader plan is to bring full-speed, full-color Web surfing to wireless devices. Some of that will come through beefed-up[11] cellular phones[12] and services. Several companies, including Nokia[13] and Qualcomm[14], have shown cellphone prototypes[15] that have (relatively) large color screens. And new wireless networks will be built specifically for the Web. Cisco[16] and Motorola[17] have one such network in the works. Researchers at MIT's Laboratory for Computer Science have an even grander vision. Their "pervasive[18] computing" project called Oxygen[19] envisions[20] a world in which the Internet is wirelessly within reach from handheld devices, but from transceivers built into cars and walls too. Our weaning from the phone jack will not only grant us more freedom with our existing portable devices, it will no doubt spur newer, smaller, and cheaper Web gizmos. It will also change one of the fundamental rules of Web access to date. Rather than coming to the Web, the Web will come to us. That could

mean that the Web calls you when it has important information to relate—whether it's a shoe sale or a stock buy.

A ubiquitous[21] Internet will make every computer your office. Today, PCs are our individual enclaves of software and information, and we are very dependent on these notoriously unreliable and frequently immovable hunks of hardware to help us get our work done. Tomorrow, almost any computer will serve as well as our own, mainly because our software and data won't be on a single PC or office server—it will be on the Web. Put another way, the Web will be your hard disk.

After a few years of more sloganeering than progress, several forces are coming together to make the Web your office. First, computers with Internet access are turning up everywhere, from airport lounges to hotel rooms. And some of the companies now outfitting hotel rooms with PCs hope to do the same for airplane and train seatbacks, including Microsoft[22], Corel[23], and Sun[24], say they intend to make their word processors, spreadsheets[25], and data-bases available for "rent," rather than purchase, via the Web. There'll be room for your data on these Web offices too. The upshot is you'll be able to get at your software and your files whenever and wherever there's an Internet link.

An integrated Internet will go far beyond our computers. Think Internet, and you think computers. But soon, you may think microwave ovens and treadmills[26] too. As computer chips go into more of our everyday appliances, many companies will take the next step and link their products to the Web so they can fix or expand them from afar[27], or have them talk to one another.

In a microwave, Internet access can mean downloading recipes and cooking times to an oven. On a treadmill, it can mean comparing results or even competing against other stationary runners who might be exercising thousands of miles from you. Similarly, video game machines linked to the Web let you wreak mayhem[28] on unseen opponents. Such capabilities will

soon be extended to other types of devices, and with more sophistication.

Anytime you hop into the car, the Web will accompany you. IBM[29] and Siemens[30] have teamed up to produce a "network vehicle" concept car. Siemens is developing software that will use speech recognition to find Web pages as you drive and then read them aloud to you.

A media-friendly Internet will let us conquer time and space. One of the long-standing promises of a more technologically sophisticated world is the ability to hear and see each other as we communicate. But the picture phone has been mostly a perpetual prototype to date, with only a few underperforming products actually making it to market. Videoconferencing[31] gear has brought the same concept to many businesses, but at high prices with limited access. A broadband[32] Internet that easily transports full-color, full-motion, full-screen images will usher in a new video and personal communications era. Everything from digital home movies to Hollywood movies might be easily moved among PCs, TVs, and other screens. Interactive TV[33] might take on new meaning as well, with Web connections between broadcasters and viewers perhaps enabling you to create your own TV content and schedule.

A three-dimensional Internet will transport us to virtual worlds. Everyone can go to the zoo. Not everyone can go on an African safari[34]. But the virtual world realism of an Internet imbued[35] with 3-D imagery might bridge that gap in ways no book or documentary can.

You can see some 3-D images on the Web now, particularly on real estate sites that offer virtual walk-throughs and shopping sites that let you see and manipulate the items you'd like to buy. But these are fairly low-resolution images that take too long to download and view. In retrospect, however, they'll prove to be the crude beginnings of Web sites that can offer photorealistic images or movie-like scenes that offer eerily accurate 3-D simulations of actual or imaginary settings, and make you feel you are in the middle of the action—without special 3-D glasses. MetaCreations[36] and

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others are working on improved 3-D Web techniques that work well even over low-speed links, and some companies are experimenting with curved or "wrap-around" displays that could someday become the norm rather than the flat-faced screens we use today.

With better 3-D technologies, the Web might come alive in ways we could barely imagine before. Virtual visits and vacations could become commonplace, and virtual games and sporting competitions could rival the real thing. Online shopping will closely resemble walking through store aisles and departments.

An atomic-scale net will make your technology disappear. Personal computers? Handheld organizers? Cellular phones? E-mail pagers? Your children know what these are but there's a good chance your grandchildren may not. The notion that you need a piece of hardware in your hands or on your hip to get at your messages or favorite sites could seem quaint to future generations, thanks to miniaturizing technology that promises to make the Web disappear even as it expands.

Far from being finished, the downsizing of digital gear has just begun. Researchers at labs around the country are creating prototype computer circuits on atomic or molecular levels—a rapidly emerging field known as nanotechnology[37]. Hewlett-Packard[38] researchers, for instance, recently demonstrated a working on-off switch (the most basic element in computer circuits) that consisted of a single layer of molecules. Such achievements pave the way for computers that are no bigger than dust particles or bacteria. That, in turn, raises the foreseeable possibility that we could have inexpensive, Web-ready computers embedded in our pens, our clothes, our eyeglasses... and maybe ourselves.

Coupled with advances in key technologies such as voice recognition and wireless transceivers, these invisible computers could give us easy access to the Web (and phone or paging systems) without carrying anything too bulky.