

英语读物

美国之鹰

美国
社会
文化
丛书

之二

主编 折鸿雁



西安交通大学出版社

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· 西安 ·

内容简介

见义勇为、违法犯罪、战争与军人、环境与人类、美德与堕落、求生与自尽、发展的语言、变化的大桥、千钧一发的时刻、平静自足的生活、没有结果的浪漫、令人辛酸的爱情、家庭理财的智慧、婚姻顾问的妙方……打开本书,你会发现自己不仅是在阅读着,更重要的是在思考着。当您对书中的话题有了自己的见解时,相信您的英语阅读能力也在不知不觉中得到了提高。

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“美国社会文化丛书”总序

90年代我们出版社曾多次和几位老编者漫话如何提高学生学习英语的能力,大家一致认为要学好一门外语除了语言因素外,还有许多非语言因素,其中非常重要的一点就是文化因素。读书时如果只是按语法把词汇意义串联起来,而不了解文化背景是行不通的。现在越来越多的学习者已经意识到了这一点,但要切实培养这种跨文化意识却不是一件容易的事。我们的漫话最终导出了一条思路——编一套既能增强英语阅读和理解能力又能了解异国文化的读物,以期助学生一臂之力。这就是1996年前后出版的“当今美国热门话题丛书”的由来。令人鼓舞的是丛书一经发行,读者争相购买,在短短的2年中连续重印,达7万册(各分册数)之多,超出了预期的社会效益。在与读者的交往中,我们深深体会到改革开放以后,人们有着强烈的求知欲,特别是年青的一代,他们不但

want to know more about the world,而且希望能 learn more through the foreign language they are studying。不言而喻,我们的目的达到了,带给我们的是几分成功的喜悦。

喜悦之余就是冷静的思考。思考“丛书”的缺憾和不足,思考“丛书”的意义是否都为读者领悟,思考选材是否典型地反映了美国文化的特点,思考注释点和理解题是否编写适当……。逐渐地,我们感觉到心底起伏着一种不安。首先不安的是“热门话题”这一总命题。

纵观世界历史,任何时候、任何国家和社会总有正面的和负面的现象,这些现象在某一时间范围内可能成为热门话题,但只会是短暂的。我们的“丛书”既然着眼于介绍美国文化就必须尽可能多的让读者了解人民,包括各地的风土人情、百姓的生活习俗、人们的喜怒哀乐、社会的正义和邪恶等等。借用美国前总统里根访华时在复旦大学对学生作的一次演讲中的一段话“... But meeting you and talking to you has only made me want to know more. And I sense that you feel the same way about Americans. You, too, wish to know more.”这里“wish to know more”应该就是指上述的各个方面。因此,这套丛书的确切命题应该是“美国社会文化丛书”。

基于这样的想法,我们立即组织编者修订这套丛书,与其说是修订倒不如说是更新,因为每本书都以更多的新篇章取代了原来的内容,同时也保留了原书部分不忍割爱的精彩篇章。当然每本书均有各自的侧重,但组合起来均围

II

绕总的主题。

语言是文化的载体,要领悟文化的内涵必须掌握语言。对于读惯了教科书的学生来说,阅读英文报刊、杂志会有困难,但如果在阅读过程中能刻意将文化与词汇、文化与语法、文化与语用、民族文化与语言评价等融入阅读,那么语言素质定会有很大的提高。这本来就是这套丛书的一个重要目的。

最后衷心希望新老读者能从这套新书中获得更多新的收益并对我们提出宝贵的批评和意见。

西安交通大学出版社

编辑部

2000年11月

前言

外语学习要重视语言能力的培养,这本是无可非议的。但如果只是重视了学习者的语言能力而忽略了他们的交际能力,那就是一个不小的问题了。正如我们阅读一篇汉语文章一样:认识关键的字词,懂得基本的结构固然重要,可是如果全然不知作者意图何在,不明白文章的主旨,不能够从中得到与现实社会有关的信息,那么这种阅读也就毫无意义了。

外语的阅读也是如此。假如以背单词、学句型为目的去阅读,那么能力的提高必然是极其有限的。用外语阅读和用母语阅读一样要有真正的目的——获取信息或者愉悦自己。找到有趣的或有争议的话题,看看作者的观点,得出自己的看法;或者带着强烈的动机,去发现自己希望得到的信息——这此才是真正意义上的阅读。

当然,外语阅读和母语阅读也有不同之外,

因为语言和文化是息息相关、相辅相成的。我们在中国长大,祖国的文化已深深扎根在每个人的心中,因而阅读中就不会存在文化方面的障碍。而阅读一门外语则不同,要顺利地进行下去,必须了解它的文化背景。

正是本着以上的想法,我们编写了这本书。本书旨在介绍美国文化背景、披露热点问题。书中涵盖的话题极其广泛,从战争、环境到亲情、婚姻;从足球、电影到语言、历史。可以说,几乎每位读者都能从中找到自己感兴趣的话题,从而有目的、有动机地边阅读边思考,在领略异域文的同时,使自己的阅读能力得以提高。

本书由西安交通大学的折鸿雁先生担任主编。鉴于编写时间仓促和水平有限,如有不当之处,望读者朋友不吝赐教。

编者

2000年10月

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1

The Wound That Would Not Heal

创伤难愈

越战中,美国先后投入兵力 270 万,伤亡人数多达 35 万。这在美国人心中投下的阴影是无法抹去的。

同是军人,父亲从朝鲜战场载誉而归,儿子却在越战炮火中失去双腿。带着身体上的巨大创伤和一颗疲惫、绝望的心,他最终选择自杀,将自己从无尽的痛苦中解脱出来。

The Vietnam War has claimed its victims in various dreadful ways, but the death last week of Lewis B. Puller Jr. seemed particularly haunting. Puller, the son of the most decorated member of the Marine Corps in its history, served in Vietnam as a Marine combat leader. Both his legs and part of his hands were blown off when he stepped on a booby trap. He lived, and he became an attorney at the Pentagon and a respected veterans activist. Then, in 1992, he

won a Pulitzer Prize for his autobiography, *Fortunate Son*. Yet his life had recently come to seem barren. His marriage of 26 years was dissolving, and he suffered a serious relapse in his battle against alcoholism. Desperate beyond consolation, he picked up a gun and extinguished a life that had given so many others hope.

Suicide was hardly a concern of Puller's in the summer of 1968. Back then he was trying his hardest to stay alive. Booby traps tormented him and the other soldiers deployed in the coastal region near Danang known as the Riviera. The devices were the spoor, primitive and deadly, of a mostly invisible enemy. Some were as simple as nails coated with excrement pushed through the bottoms of discarded C-ration cans. But the booby trap Puller stepped on, while in full flight from a squad of advancing North Vietnamese regulars, was made with a howitzer shell. Puller described the moment in *Fortunate Son*: "I thought initially that the loss of my glasses in the explosion accounted for my blurred vision, and I had no idea that the pink mist that engulfed me had been caused by the vaporization of most of my right and left legs."

With his legs gone, Puller in an instant became half a man. It seemed virtually certain that he would leave his pregnant wife a widow. The triage experts in Danang did their heroic part, however, as, later, did the surgeons, corpsmen and therapists at the Philadelphia Naval Hospital.

Puller had to learn to live with his physicality diminished self. During two years in the hospital, among his challenges was coping with what the folks who fashioned prosthetic legs drolly called "stubbies." When Puller went to be fitted for the

first time, the designer, himself a double amputee, told him, "We are all out of Caucasian legs, Lieutenant, but if you don't mind, we can fit you with some nice Negro ones." Puller was never able to walk with artificial legs of any color; he resigned himself to using a wheel-chair. Accepting his disability wasn't easy, but he had the help of his courageous wife Linda, or "Toddy," as friends call her. He was also encouraged and inspired by the simple, touching love of his father, who knew more than a little about combat. Lewis B. ("Chesty") Puller had won his general's stars leading his regiment to safety in the harrowing American retreat from the Chosin Reservoir during the first winter of the Korean War.

In 1978 Puller ran for Congress in Virginia. His defeat depressed him. The following year, his first attempt at suicide failed because he was too drunk to turn on the ignition of his car and asphyxiate himself. "He was a person who was beleaguered and battered by life," says Jan Scruggs, president of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. "It is a great American tragedy." In a statement as eloquent as any, Puller's wife—now a member of the Virginia house of delegates—said, "To the list of names of victims of the Vietnam War, add the name of Lewis Puller. He suffered terrible wounds that never really healed."

There are no accurate statistics on suicide among the 2.7 million Vietnam veterans, particularly among the 300,000 who came home wounded. But veterans' groups believe the rate to be far higher than national averages. Puller's death sent waves of anguish coursing through veterans who have known similar despair and have also sought refuge in alcohol or drugs. But not everyone who shared Puller's experience of life after near

death followed the same path. Senator Bob Kerrey, who lived in a ward with Puller during rehabilitation in Philadelphia, lost part of a leg in Vietnam but maintained his spirit. A grieving Kerrey said of his dead friend, "I don't think he died a casualty of something that he did in Vietnam, but I do think he died a casualty of the loneliness that he felt from being set apart."

There is no room on the wall of the Vietnam Memorial for the name of Lewis Puller. To be included, one must have died directly from one's wounds in the war. That will not deter Puller's comrades however. "There has never been a suicide placed on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial," says Scruggs. "But we are going to find a special way to take care of Lew on Memorial Day."

Notes

1. booby trap [军事] 饵雷; 陷阱
2. attorney (业务或法律事务中的) 代理人
3. Pulitzer Prize 普利策奖金。根据报业巨头 Joseph Pulitzer 的遗嘱于 1903 年起所设的年度奖金, 原仅限于新闻, 今已扩大到文学、音乐等各个方面, 共 18 类。奖金亦从 500 美元提高到 1 000 美元。
4. excrement 粪便; 排泄物
5. howitzer shell 榴弹炮壳
6. prosthetic leg 假腿
7. drolly 滑稽可笑地; 古怪离奇地
8. amputee 被截肢者
9. Caucasian 白种人的
10. asphyxiate (使) 窒息
11. beleaguer 围困; 围攻

Reading Comprehension

1. According to paragraph 1 which of the following about Lewis B. Puller Jr. was NOT TRUE?
 - A. He died last week, which was particularly haunting.
 - B. He lost both of his legs in the Vietnam War.
 - C. He committed suicide in despair.
 - D. He became a professional writer by his masterpiece *Fortunate Son*.
2. Lewis B. Puller _____.
 - A. considered suicide when booby trap tormented him and other soldiers
 - B. stepped on the booby trap made with a howitzer shell
 - C. was trapped in the booby trap which was fixed by a squad of advancing North Vietnamese regulars
 - D. presented a vivid description of how he had lost his two legs and part of his hands
3. Who didn't do his (her) part in treating injured Lewis B. Puller?
 - A. Puller's pregnant wife.
 - B. The triage expert in Danang.
 - C. Surgeons and therapists at the Philadelphia Naval Hospital.
 - D. All of the above.
4. When Puller went to be fitted with prosthetic legs, _____.
 - A. he accepted the challenge from the designer of prosthetic legs
 - B. he refused the challenges from the designer of prosthetic legs
 - C. he seemed not to care about what kind of legs he would be fixed with
 - D. he could hardly believe his ears on hearing what the designer said to him
5. Lewis B. Puller accepted his disability _____.

- A. all by himself
 - B. with his wife's help
 - C. when he heard his father's story in the Korean War
 - D. when he won his general's stars
6. The article implies Lewis B. Puller _____.
- A. succeeded in his running for Congress
 - B. attempted at suicide for many times
 - C. spoke as eloquently as his wife
 - D. suffered terrible wounds that never really healed
7. The suicide number of Vietnam veterans _____.
- A. was being investigated nationwide
 - B. was never accurate
 - C. was believed to be greater than that of the Korean War
 - D. stirred up waves of anguish coursing through people
8. What senator Bob Kerrey said meant that _____.
- A. Puller died of the loneliness
 - B. Puller died of great physical pain he could not stand
 - C. Puller should maintain his spirits
 - D. Puller should be honored for his heroic deeds in the Vietnam War
9. The last paragraph seems to say that _____.
- A. Puller's comrades would try their best to find Puller a room on the wall of the Vietnam Memorial
 - B. a room on the wall of the Vietnam Memorial would be offered for Puller even if he died of suicide
 - C. had Puller died directly from his wounds in the war, he would have had a room on the wall of the Memorial
 - D. a special way will have been found to honor Puller when Memorial Day comes