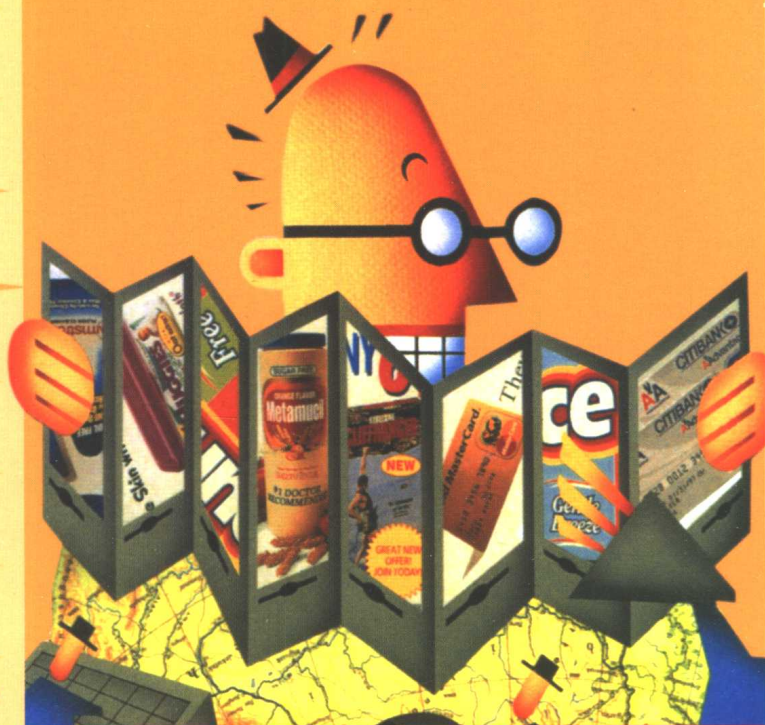


北京青年报（双语视窗）文选

选读


SELECTED ENGLISH ESSAYS 英語小品文

II



Reading
英文系列

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Selected English Essays

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中文译文 张爱学
英文顾问 W. D. White
责任编辑 王 蕊

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前言

在琳琅满目的书店、书摊，众多的记者、作家及海外华人已向人们奉献出了一本本中国人看西方的画卷。那么，西方人又是如何看中国的呢？

本书作为北京青年报“双语视窗”栏目的集萃，恰恰成为了中国读者透过老外的目光反观自身的窗口。这些文章由在华外国友人撰写，以他们在华所见所闻为切入点，生动具体地反映出东西方观念、习俗的异同之处，向我们提出了一个个既有趣又值得深思的问题。“不识庐山真面目，只缘身在此山中”，换一个角度，从外国友人目光的折射中审视一下，更有助于全面地了解我们自身的文化。在二十一世纪的今天，中国需要与世界尽快接轨，也就需要我们尽快地了解世界，了解自己，相信广大读者能从本书中有所感悟。

同时，本书采用英汉对照形式。这些原汁原味的英文不仅有助于加深对作者原意的理解，也是一本学习现代英语的鲜活教材。

希望本书在大家攻克英语的漫长征途上成为一小片绿洲。

北京青年报社 社长 陈 星
总编 张延平

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Chinese Should Develop Their Rhetorical Skills

中國人該練練口才了

(加) Jiang Xueqin

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While I was studying at Yale, I had the good fortune to meet many intelligent and talented Chinese students that, even though they had been studying in the US for a few years, still had great difficulty in communicating with Americans. “I know so many English words and my grammar is perfect,” they would say to me, “but I still cannot communicate very well with Americans.”

The problem is that although they have all the parts to make the machine, they lack the simple theory to make the machine functional. “Although you understand English well enough,” I would reply, “you still don’t understand how native speakers use the language to achieve their ends.” When I came to Beijing to teach English, I realized that this **grasp** of how language is used socially was absent not only in the classroom but in all walks of life ^①.

An American who is a fan of the Chinese women’s football team once said to me, “Why is it that no one goes to watch the team? It’s because they don’t believe it’s interesting enough.”

“Right. No one is interested in the Chinese women’s football team,” I replied, “because they don’t believe that it’s interesting.”

“But if the team had someone **competent** to handle public relations, then that person could make people interested in the team — could, in effect ^②, persuade people that it was interesting. Did you know that a good advertiser was able to turn Florida into a favorite vacation spot for old people and convince people that eating ice cream in winter was a good idea? Marketing and public relations don’t exist in China.”

His last remark was perhaps an **exaggeration**, but it is substantially true that Chinese lack marketing and public relations skills. And this is because they lack a **subtle** understanding of how language can be used. Without that understanding, they cannot create these skills or even readily **assimilate** them from other cul-



tures. Americans are so adept at ^③ marketing and PR because they understand the power of language. If Chinese wish to communicate with Westerners, they must also come to understand this power. The path to such an understanding is the field known as **rhetoric**. Principles derived from rhetoric govern the use of language to shape opinion in the West.

Rhetoric means different things to different people, but essentially it is the analysis of language as power — as a way to communicate with others and persuade them to accept your views, but also as power to understand yourself and the world around you.

Thus rhetoric is about communication and self-expression. And you must first understand how others think and feel before you can enable them to understand how you think and feel. For example, if you were a Westerner applying for a job, you would first strive to tell the firm what you could do for them before telling the firm what they could do for you. As Americans put it ^④, you have to do your homework before you go to a serious job interview: find out what the company does, what it needs, what its executives are looking for in potential employees. Then as much as possible present yourself in line with ^⑤ what you've discovered. Essentially this means that you must plan, order and adjust your words to suit your audience.

The assumption behind rhetoric is that we can only comprehend the world through language; it is language that shapes our understanding of the world and others. **Accordingly**, someone who can control language can shape (and perhaps even control) others' perceptions. That is why in America marketing and public relations are so **pervasive** — because Americans believe that language can be used to change the way people think, and that lan-



guage is used to express oneself.

The Chinese view modesty as a virtue and easily equate self-expression with arrogance; they tend to be **introspective**, even **introverted**. Little wonder then that they find rhetoric as **alien** as Western argumentativeness and outspokenness. However, if a Chinese wishes to communicate with an American, then he should understand the Western approach to language first. And if a Chinese develops an awareness of rhetoric, he may eventually discover that he too, in some sphere or other of his life, has been using rhetoric without knowing it.

In the end, rhetoric is more than just an approach to language — it is a theory of life and living.



当我就读于美国耶鲁大学时，有幸遇到了很多聪明而有天份的中国学生，可他们虽说在美国已经上了几年学，但在与美国人的交往上仍有很大困难。“我掌握了那么多的英语单词，语法也很棒，”他们常常这样对我说，“但我还是不能与美国人很好地交流。”

问题在于，虽然他们拥有了一部机器的所有零件，但却缺乏一种简明的理论使这部机器发挥效用。“虽然你对英文理解得很好，”我说，“但你还没有理解当地人是如何使用该语言来达到他们的目的。”当我来到北京开始教授英语，我意识到对于如何在社会中运用语言这一能力的掌握，不仅在课堂上缺乏，在生活的各个层面都很缺乏。

有一次，一个身为中国女足球队球迷的美国人对我说：“为什么没有人去看她们踢球？那是因为人们觉得没太大意思。”

“是的，没人对中国女足感兴趣，”我说，“因为人们不相信女足踢球有什么意思。”

“但是如果女足球队有善于公关的人，他（她）就能使人们对女足感兴趣——实际上是说服人们认同女足是有意思的。你可知道



一个出色的广告人曾把佛罗里达州变成了老年人喜欢的度假地并使人们相信冬天吃冰激凌是个好主意？而市场营销与公关在中国尚不存在。”

他最后的结论也许过于夸张，但有一点大体上是真实的，那就是中国人缺乏市场营销与公关技巧，这是因为人们缺乏对于如何应用语言的精妙理解。缺乏这种精妙的理解，就不可能创造出市场与公关技巧，甚至不容易从其他文化中吸收这种技巧。美国人之所以精于市场与公关，是因为他们懂得语言的力量。如果中国人想与西方人沟通，就必须理解这种力量，而达到这一理解的道路就是修辞学。源于修辞学的一些原则在西方指导着语言的应用，以阐述观点。

对于不同的人来说修辞学意味着不同的内容，但基本上说来，它是对语言的分析，将其作为一种力量——一种与他人交流并说服别人接受你的观点的方法，但也是了解你自己和周围世界的一种力量。

因此，修辞学就是关于交流与表达自我的技巧。在你使别人理解你的想法和感受之前，你首先要理解别人的想法和感受。比如，如果你是个想找工作的西方人，在你向公司提出要求之前，首先要奋力说明你能为公司做些什么。正如美国人所说的，在面试之前，必须做“家庭作业”：搞清该公司的经营范围、公司需要的是什么？公司负责人在求职者身上寻求的是什么？然后以你所了解到的这些资料为基准，尽可能多地表现出自己符合这些条件。从根本上说这就意味着你必须琢磨、组织、调整你的语言，以适应你的听众。

存在于修辞学背后的一种论点则是：我们只能通过语言来理解这个世界，是语言，构成了我们对世界与他人的理解。因此，能够驾驭语言的人就能构筑（甚至或许也能驾驭）别人的观念。这就是为什么在美国，市场营销与公关如此盛行——因为美国人相信语言可以用来改变人们的思维方式，可以用来表现自己。

中国人视谦虚为美德，也很容易将自我表现视为傲慢。他们往往自我反省，甚至很内向。让人觉得有点奇怪的是中国人将语言技



巧视为与西方人的好辩和直言不讳是同样的外来品。但是,如果一个中国人希望与美国人交流,就应首先了解西方人运用语言的方式。如果一个中国人增强了语言技巧的意识,最终他会发现,在生活中的某个领域,他已经在不知不觉地使用着语言技巧了。

修辞技巧远非仅仅是语言的问题,它终归是生活与生存的理论。

Words to remember

grasp /gra:sp/ *n.* 把握,了解

competent /'kɒmpitənt/ *adj.* 胜任的,能干的

exaggeration /ig,zædʒə'reiʃən/ *n.* 夸大,形容过份

subtle /'satl/ *adj.* 敏锐的

assimilate /ə'simileit/ *vt.* 同化,比较,吸收

rhetoric /'retərik/ *n.* 修辞(学)

accordingly /ə'kɔ:diŋli/ *adv.* 依照,依据,因此

pervasive /pə'veisiv/ *adj.* 普及的,蔓延的

introspective /ɪntrəʊ'spektiv/ *adj.* 内省的,内观的

introverted /ɪntrəʊ'veɜ:tɪd/ *adj.* 内向的,内省的

alien /'eiliən/ *adj.* 异国的,不同的

Key expressions

1. all walks of life: 生活的各个层面
2. in effect: 在功效方面,实际上
3. be adept at doing sth: 做...是内行的(熟练的)



中国人该练练口才了



4. As Americans put it ...: 正如美国人所说的。put 在此是“表达、表述”之意,如: put one's feelings into words 用言语表达感情; to put it more concretely 更具体地说来。
5. in line with: 跟...一致,符合

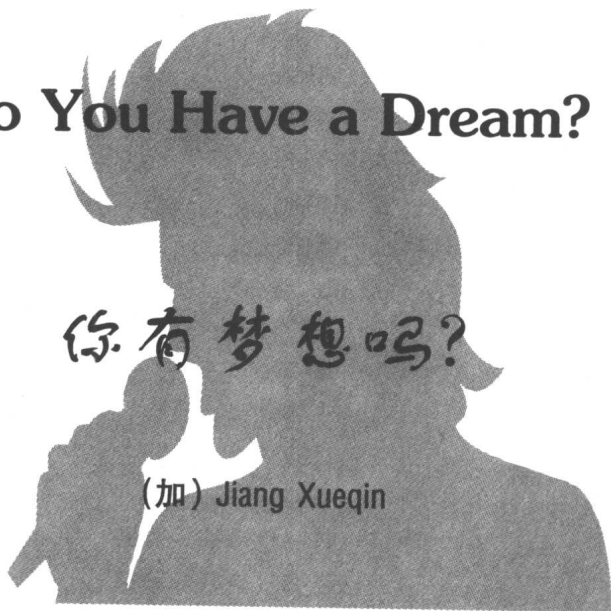




Do You Have a Dream?

你有梦想吗?

(加) Jiang Xueqin



原书空白页