

The American Graffiti

Underneath the Bridge

美国涂鸦英语阅读丛书

大桥之下

3

张鹏编



陕西科学技术出版社

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“美国涂鸦英语阅读丛书”策划

——瓦斯灯工作室 Gaslight Studio



序《大桥之下》

1994年初我参与了“当今美国热门话题丛书”的策划，并着手选编《文化震撼》。当丛书的第一册《美国悲剧》于94年底刚刚出版尚未上市之时，却传来不少对这种读物的非议。他们认为“没有英汉对照，便一定没有市场。”这种论调当时还真叫我好一阵踌躇不前。可后来结果怎样？不仅《美国悲剧》这一册，整个一套“热门话题”受到读者广泛接受。

出书是编者与读者之间的对话，不读该书的局外人有时是无法领悟其中默契的。编者在选材安排等许多细节上的良苦用心，以及许多细节上和风格上的得失只有读者能感觉得到。我曾在很长时间里担心有类似的读物会超过《文化震撼》而影响它的销路，可是后来看到的一些仿照读物非但没有新意，还把一些应忌讳的方面作为特点突出了。我相信那样的编者并未领悟到我们与读者之间那层默契。

理解并超越既成的读物并不是件容易做到的事情。这不单是对他人而言，就连我们自己应邀来到“瓦斯灯工作室”，也只谈得出“热门话题”的得失。如何为新一套书确立一个超越前者的特色，却几乎没有任何切实的想法。

现在，“美国涂鸦”丛书已经成形，它选材

上庞杂、有趣和深刻的特色表现得如此鲜明，可在开始我们当中竟没有一个人能预见到。当我们再次坐到“瓦斯灯工作室”时，编者谈到书中内容时兴奋的神情给我非常难忘的印象。我很少见到在编书者的脸上有那样的兴奋。那些兜售自己肚里存货的作者通常是不会如此兴奋的，只有那些在编写过程中体验到探索 and 发现快乐的人，才会这样兴高彩烈的。

读着那些平静、淡漠的导言，我知道那平静之后藏着惊奇，淡漠之中隐着神秘。我知道这些书的许许多多地方留着大大的伏笔，我知道那是编者们留待读者发现的默契。从一本读物当中能窥见编者的知识面、情趣和个性这是在“涂鸦”之前我不曾知道的。

这一轮编者与读者的对话，我相信是对“当今美国热门话题丛书”的升华。“热门话题”是吸引您用眼去读的读物，而“涂鸦”是召唤您用心灵去感受的读物。这也许是两套书最根本的不同所在。

刘捷

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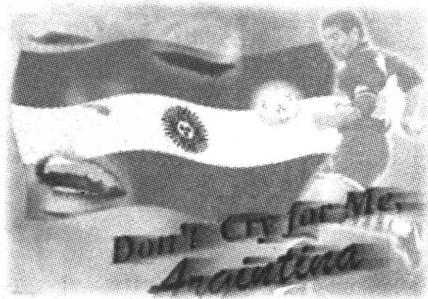


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在我得知马拉多纳不得不离开球场的日子里,我的心中常常浮现这首歌。最近,麦当娜参加拍摄反映贝隆夫人的电影 *Evita* 并再次翻唱这首歌,又使之流行。

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做女人难,做名女人难,做黑皮肤的名女人更是难上加难。雯妮莎是第一位被选为“美国小姐”的黑美人,她的遭遇能说明一切。

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显灵之类的故事往往是讲给小孩子听的，劝大人信教用这类说法就显得很低档。偏偏不久前在公共汽车上被外乡来的农民大嫂强行灌输了一些显灵之类说教，心里很反感。

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电脑中的“道”

The Tao of Programming

老子曰：“上士闻道，勤而行之；中士闻道，若存若亡；下士闻道，大笑之，不笑不足以为道。”想不到这样艰深的哲学竟被美国的电脑程序设计师侃侃而谈，而且饶有趣味。看来“道”之所存，无所不在。

下面的故事多以管理者与程序设计师之间的对话展开，因此与其说是电脑之道，不如说是管理之道。讨厌僵化管理者的人或比较精明的领导会喜欢这 8 个故事的。

1. The wise programmer is told about Tao and follows it. The average programmer is told about Tao and searches for it. The foolish programmer is told about Tao and laughs at it.

If it were not for laughter, there would be no Tao.



The highest sounds are hardest to hear. Going forward is a way to retreat. Great talent shows itself late in life. Even a perfect program still has bugs.

2. A programmer from a very large computer company went to a software conference and then returned to report to his manager, saying: "What sort of programmers work for other companies? They behaved badly and were unconcerned with appearances. Their hair was long and unkempt and their clothes were wrinkled and old. They crashed out the hospitality suite and they made rude noises during my presentation."

The manager said: "I should have never sent you to the conference. Those programmers live beyond the physical world. They consider life absurd, an accidental coincidence. They come and go without knowing limitations. Without a care, they live only for their programs. Why should they bother with social conventions? They are alive within the Tao."

3. There once was a man who went to a computer trade show. Each day as he entered, the man told the guard at the door:

"I am a great thief, renowned for my feats of shoplifting. Be forewarned, for this trade show shall not escape unplundered."

This speech disturbed the guard greatly, because there were millions of dollars of computer equipment inside, so he watched the man carefully. But the man merely wandered from booth to booth, humming quietly to himself.

When the man left, the guard took him aside and searched his



clothes, but nothing was to be found.

On the next day of the trade show, the man returned and chided the guard saying: “I escaped with a vast booty yesterday, but today will be even better.” So the guard watched him ever more closely, but to no avail.

On the final day of the trade show, the guard could restrain his curiosity no longer. “Sir Thief,” he said, “I am so perplexed, I cannot live in peace. Please enlighten me. What is it that you are stealing?”

The man smiled. “I am stealing ideas,” he said.

4. A manager went to the master programmer and showed him the requirements document for a new application. The manager asked the master: “How long will it take to design this system if I assign five programmers to it?”

“It will take one year,” said the master promptly.

“But we need this system immediately or even sooner! How long will it take if I assign ten programmers to it?”

The master programmer frowned. “In that case, it will take two years.”

“And what if I assign a hundred programmers to it?”

The master programmer shrugged. “Then the design will never be completed,” he said.

5. Prince Wang’s programmer was coding software. His fingers danced upon the keyboard. The program compiled without an error message, and the program ran like a gentle wind.



"Excellent!" the Prince exclaimed, "Your technique is faultless!"

"Technique?" said the programmer turning from his terminal, "What I follow is Tao — beyond all techniques! When I first began to program I would see before me the whole problem in one mass. After three years I no longer saw this mass. Instead, I used subroutines. But now I see nothing. My whole being exists in a formless void. My senses are idle. My spirit, free to work without plan, follows its own instinct. In short, my program writes itself. True, sometimes there are difficult problems. I see them coming, I slow down, I watch silently. Then I change a single line of code and the difficulties vanish like puffs of idle smoke. I then compile the program. I sit still and let the joy of the work fill my being. I close my eyes for a moment and then log off."

Prince Wang said, "Would that all of my programmers were as wise!"

6. A manager was about to be fired, but a programmer who worked for him invented a new program that became popular and sold well. As a result, the manager retained his job.

The manager tries to give the programmer a bonus, but the programmer refused it, saying, "I wrote the program because I thought it was an interesting concept, and thus I expect no reward."

The manager upon hearing this remarked, "This programmer, though he holds a position of small esteem, understands well the proper duty of an employee. Lets promote him to the exalted position of management consultant!"



But when told this, the programmer once more refused, saying, “I exist so that I can program. If I were promoted, I would do nothing but waste everyone’s time. Can I go now? I have a program that I’m working on.”

7. A manager went to his programmers and told them: “As regards to your work hours: you are going to have to come in at nine in the morning and leave at five in the afternoon.” At this, all of them became angry and several resigned on the spot.

So the manager said: “All right, in that case you may set your own working hours, as long as you finish your projects on schedule.” The programmers, now satisfied, began to come in at noon and work to the wee hours of the morning.

8. A master programmer passed a novice programmer one day. The master noted the novice’s preoccupation with a hand-held computer game. “Excuse me”, he said, “may I examine it?”

The novice bolted to attention and handed the device to the master. I see that the device claims to have three levels of play: Easy, Medium and Hard”, said the master. “Yet every such device has another level of play, where the device seeks not to conquer the human, nor to be conquered by the human.”

“Pray, great master”, implored the novice, “how does one find this mysterious settings?”

The master dropped the device to the ground and crushed it under foot. And suddenly the novice was enlightened.



Notes

bug “虫”——程序代码或逻辑上的错误。“虫”会完全干扰程序的执行,引起工作失效和数据消失。清除该错误的过程称 de-bug(除虫)。

social convention 社会准则

to no avail 完全没用

puffs of idle smoke 缕缕青烟

log off 退出(终端或机上工作)

the wee hours 凌晨一、二、三点钟

bolted to attention 突然注意

Comprehension (multiple choice)

1. According to story 1, which of the followings might be the author's point of view?
 - A. Tao would always made some people laugh.
 - B. One says he is going forward is backward actually.
 - C. Highest sounds are harmful to ear.
 - D. Geniuses hide themselves somehow.
2. In story 2, the manager
 - A. was satisfied with the programmer's report.
 - B. was interested in the programmers worked for other companies.
 - C. knew what is important to a programmer.
 - D. did not bother with social conventions.
3. Sir Thief, in story 3, was stealing ideas of
 - A. the guards'.
 - B. the trade show.



- C. shoplifting. D. computer programming.
4. What might probably be inferred from story 4?
- A. It would take less than 3 months to design the system by the master programmer himself.
 - B. The master programmer was joking when he said the design would never be completed.
 - C. It did not matter how many programmers took part in the system design.
 - D. The master programmer held the Tao in programming while the manager did not.
5. Story 5 comes from
- A. 庖丁解牛 B. 熟能生巧
 - C. 庄子论剑 D. 朝三暮四
6. What seems to be the main idea of story 6?
- A. A manager is useless to a group of programmers.
 - B. Good programmers are fond of the fun inside programming.
 - C. Managers work for money and promotion.
 - D. Managers should try their best to understand the need of the employees.
7. Story 7 states that
- A. the working styles are not so important in order to complete your task.
 - B. programmers are easy with guys if you give them a bit freedom in time.



- C. working hours is a sensitive problem to employees.
 - D. a clever manager knows the secret of strategy change.
8. Which of the following statements can NOT be inferred from story 8?
- A. The novice's preoccupation was not his job.
 - B. The master programmer understands game players very well.
 - C. The master programmer did not appreciate the computer game.
 - D. The novice finally realized that the game is rubbish.