



世纪英语专业系列教材



在了解和诠释美国社会文化的精神之旅中，我们不仅可以解读英语文字中的文化信息，更可以以英语文字为载体透视美利坚民族之魂。通过学习美国社会与文化，可以更加系统、完整地理解和把握美国文化，进而在理性层面对英语语言既“知其然”，又“知其所以然”，最终自觉使用正确、地道的英语。

美国社会文化

American Society and Culture

王恩铭 编

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举报电话: (010)62752024 电子信箱: fd@pup.pku.edu.cn

《21 世纪英语专业系列教材》编写委员会

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总 序

北京大学出版社自 2005 年以来已出版《语言学与应用语言学知识系列读本》多种,为了配合第十一个五年计划,现又策划陆续出版《21 世纪英语专业系列教材》。这个重大举措势必受到英语专业广大教师和学生的欢迎。

作为英语教师,最让人揪心的莫过于听人说英语不是一个专业,只是一个工具。说这些话的领导和教师的用心是好的,为英语专业的毕业生将来找工作着想,因此要为英语专业的学生多多开设诸如新闻、法律、国际商务、经济、旅游等其他专业的课程。但事与愿违,英语专业的教师们很快发现,学生投入英语学习的时间少了,掌握英语专业课程知识甚微,即使对四个技能的掌握也并不比大学英语学生高明多少,而那个所谓的第二专业在有关专家的眼中只是学到些皮毛而已。

英语专业的路在何方?有没有其他路可走?这是需要我们英语专业教师思索的问题。中央领导关于创新是一个民族的灵魂和要培养创新人才等的指示精神,让我们在层层迷雾中找到了航向。显然,培养学生具有自主学习能力和能进行创造性思维是我们更为重要的战略目标,使英语专业的人才更能适应 21 世纪的需要,迎接 21 世纪的挑战。

如今,北京大学出版社外语部的领导和编辑同志们,也从教材出版的视角探索英语专业的教材问题,从而为贯彻英语专业教学大纲做些有益的工作,为教师们开设大纲中所规定的必修、选修课程提供各种教材。《21 世纪英语专业系列教材》是普通高等教育“十一五”国家级规划教材和国家“十一五”重点出版规划项目《面向新世纪的立体化网络化英语学科建设丛书》的重要组成部分。这套系列教材要体现新世纪英语教学的自主化、协作化、模块化和超文本化,结合外语教材的具体情况,既要解决语言、教学内容、教学方法和教育技术的时代化,也要坚持弘扬以爱国主义为核心的民族精神。因此,今天北京大学出版社在大力提倡专业英语教学改革的基础上,编辑出版各种英语专业技能、英语专业知识和相关专业课程知识的教材,以培养具有创新性思维的和具有实际工作能力,充分体现了时代精神。

北京大学出版社的远见卓识,也反映了英语专业广大师生盼望已久的

心愿。由北京大学等全国几十所院校具体组织力量,积极编写相关教材。这就是说,这套教材是由一些高等院校有水平有经验的第一线教师们制定编写大纲,反复讨论,特别是考虑到在不同层次、不同背景学校之间取得平衡,避免了先前的教材或偏难或偏易的弊病。与此同时,一批知名专家教授参与策划和教材审定工作,保证了教材质量。

当然,这套系列教材出版只是初步实现了出版社和编者们的预期目标。为了获得更大效果,希望使用本系列教材的教师和同学不吝指教,及时将意见反馈给我们,使教材更加完善。

航道已经开通,我们有决心乘风破浪,奋勇前进!

胡壮麟

北京大学蓝旗营

前 言

目前,我国外语教学界正日渐形成这样一种共识,即外语教学与外国文化教育密切相关,不可割离。围绕语言教学与文化教育的关系问题,学术界主要有三种观点。一种观点认为,语言与文化是一种从属关系,即语言为主,文化为辅,英语表述为 language teaching with a cultural dimension。另一种观点提出,语言教学与文化教育应齐头并进,不分主次,互为补充,英语表述为 culture teaching as a parallel to language teaching。还有一种观点主张,语言教学与文化教育构成一个不可割裂的整体,英语表述为 culture teaching as an integral part of language teaching。尽管这三种观点侧重点相异,对文化在语言教学过程中的权重认识不一,但它们的共同点还是显而易见的,即三者都强调文化教育对语言教学的影响和作用。以此推论,即便了解和掌握一国文化不是学好其语言的必要条件,至少也是有助于语言学习和运用的。

正是基于这一认识,本人用英语编写了这本《美国社会文化》,旨在为中国的英语学习者和美国文化爱好者提供一幅以美国文化理念和价值观为主线、以美国民族特性和行为方式为内容、以美国社会结构和地区特色为衬托的“美国社会文化全景图”。众所周知,语言的背后是文化,文化的背后是良知,良知的背后是人性。因此,无论是从现实主义或者实用主义,还是从道德良知或者人文精神的角度来说,知晓和领悟美国文化不仅有助于我们对英语(至少是美国英语)的切实掌握和灵活运用,而且有助于我们人文素养的提升和思想情操的修炼。毋庸说,我们不必把美国文化“照单全收”,更没有必要仿而效之,而应该采取取其精华、去其糟粕的态度,一方面探寻美国人的文化精神,另一方面寻求全人类的共同关怀。在了解和诠释美国文化的精神之旅中,我们不仅可以解读英语文字中的文化信息,更可以英语文字为载体透视美利坚民族之魂。

长期以来,本人在讲授英语语言技能的同时教授美国文化课程。近三十载的教学实践告诉我,英语语言教学必须辅以文化内容,即 language teaching with a cultural dimension。这是最基本的要求,否则语言学习只能流于表面,无法深入内层。事实上,对英语国家文化的生疏和无知不仅阻碍语言习得过程,而且影响甚至制约对语言的准确理解和完整掌握。然

而,比辅助方法更有效和更理想的方式无疑是把文化教育看作语言教学不可分割的一部分,即 culture teaching as an integral part of language teaching. 专门讲授某一英语国家的文化,如美国文化,可以使英语学习者较为系统、完整地理解和把握该国文化,进而在理性层面对英语语言既“知其然”,又“知其所以然”,最终自觉使用正确、地道的英语。本人历时一年编写《美国社会文化》之目的即在于此。这不仅是英语语言学习的需要,也是人文素质培养的需要。

《美国社会文化》以美利坚民族的发展足迹开篇,为全书奠定历史演进和社会变化的背景,之后各章逐一展开美利坚民族的文化价值观念、政治宗教信仰、社会制度机构、少数民族群体、大众文化媒介、流行文化传播、社会福利服务和习俗信念体系等问题,使全书具备一定的历史纵深度,并显现出美国文化的丰富性和独特性。为了便于使用和学习,本教程在每一章节的开头都设有“Learning Objectives”一栏,意在提纲挈领地对本章节的要点(highlights)突显出来,帮助使用者一目了然地得知该章节所涉及的范围及必须掌握的基本内容。同样,为了帮助使用者掌握核心信息和主要观点,本教程的每一章后面都编写了“Summary”一栏,旨在言简意赅地概括出该章节的主要成分。最后,为了帮助本教程使用者巩固所学内容和批判性地解读美国文化,每一章的最后部分还提供了“Essay Questions”一栏,以激发读者对该章节所涉及问题的思考和探究。总之,本教程编者殷切地期望,此书能使喜爱英语语言和美国文化的读者有所收获,并深深地期待他/她们以此为基础深入钻研下去,精益求精,更上一层楼,共同把我国的英语学习和美国文化研究推向一个新的高度。

王恩铭

上海外国语大学

英语学院 美国研究中心

2009年6月28日

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American Society and Culture

美国社会文化

Chapter One

Out of the Past



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Understand a series of triggering events that led to the birth of the United States of America
- Know the democratization process of the new Republic
- Be aware of the rapid development of industrialization and urbanization
- Learn the ways the United States shifted from non-engagement to engagement in world affairs, especially in the two world wars and the cold war
- Make sense of the social reform movements of the 1960s

To understand the society and culture of any nation, we need to, first and foremost, build a reasonable amount of knowledge about the nation's past, for it is out of the past that the nation has traveled to its present, and it is also out of the past that the nation has developed its social institutions and formulated its cultural values.

In this chapter, we will probe into the American past, examining its evolutionary process from the early colonial period to the forging of the republic, from the outbreak of the Civil War to the development of industrialization and urbanization, and from the arrival of the post-industrial society to the emergence of the superpower. Sketchy in style, it is largely designed to furnish the historical background for the discussion of American social and cultural fabrics in the following chapters.

1.1 *The Birth of a New Nation*

The First Americans

In 1492, North America was not an empty wasteland. As many as 7 to 10 million lived north of present-day Mexico, unevenly scattered in small tribes from the warlike Iroquois hunters of the Northeast to the pueblo dwellers of the Southwest. These people, nowadays called Native Americans (also known as Indians), had crossed from Asia to Alaska some 20,000 years earlier, making good use of the land and its resources to lead a nomadic life on this vast continent. Sparse populations of nomads inhabited the Great Basin, the high plains and the northern forests. Fairly dense concentrations, however, thrived along the Pacific coast, in the Southwest and Southeast, in the Mississippi, and along the Atlantic coast. All these peoples grouped themselves in several hundred nations and tribes, speaking many diverse languages and dialects. But the most important Indian social groups were the family, the village, and the clan. Within these spheres, Native Americans fed themselves, reared their children, and tried to sort out the mysteries of life.

By all accounts, Native American society in North America was closely tied to the land. Identification with nature and elements was integral to their religious beliefs. Their life was essentially clan-oriented and communal, with children allowed more freedom and tolerance than was the European custom of the day. Although some Native Americans developed a type of hieroglyphics to preserve certain texts, their culture was primarily oral, with a high value placed on the recounting of tales and dreams. Killing only for food, traveling by water and forest paths, making their weapons and tools from stone and wood, and using animal skins and bark for their shelters, they had left a beautiful virgin landscape largely untouched. Clearly, however, there was a good deal of trade among various groups and strong evidence exists that neighboring tribes maintained extensive and formal relations, sometimes friendly, and sometimes hostile.

Most Indians explained the origin and destiny of the human race in myths told by storytellers during religious ceremonies. In the beginning, said the Iroquois, was the sky world of unchanging perfection. From it fell a beautiful pregnant woman, whom the birds saved from plunging into the limitless ocean.

On the back of a tortoise who rose from the sea, birds created the earth's soil, in which the woman planted seeds carried during her fall. From these seeds sprang all nature; from her womb, the human race. Based on such myths, Native American religions revolved around the conviction that all nature was alive, pulsating with a spiritual power. A mysterious, awe-inspiring force that could affect human life for both good and evil, such power united all nature in an unbroken web. Their belief in supernatural power led most Indian peoples to seek constantly to conciliate all the spiritual forces in nature: living things, rocks and water, sun and moon, even ghosts and witches. To the Indians, humanity was only one link in the great chain of living nature. The Judeo-Christian view that God had given humanity domination over nature was very strange to them.

The Coming of the English

The early 1600s saw the beginning of a great tide of emigration from Europe to North America, with Englishmen making their first permanent settlement at Jamestown, Virginia in 1607. The encounter of these two peoples, the one a hunting society that depended on game and the other an agricultural people who cleared the forests for planting, was often tragic and sometimes brutal. In the short span of less than two hundred years, for example, the Atlantic seaboard that the Indians had known was scarcely recognizable. Vast forest regions had been cleared to build self-sufficient English communities, inter-colonial roads were being constructed to facilitate trade and commerce, the port towns were developing into bustling cities, and a growing number of adventurers were passing through the mountain gaps to settle the Ohio Valley. In short, with the influx of European settlers, Native Americans not only found it difficult to maintain their tribal life, but after the seizure of land by whites, they were literally driven out of the homeland they had had lived in for centuries.

Most European emigrants left their own countries to escape political oppression, to seek the freedom to practice their religion, or to find opportunities denied them at home. Between 1620 and 1635, for example, economic difficulties swept England, with many people thrown out of work without any foreseeable hope in sight. Even skilled artisans could not earn enough to make a decent living. Moreover, the Commercial Revolution had created a burgeoning textile industry, which demanded an