

现代英语 佳作赏析 系列

BEST MODERN ENGLISH ESSAYS

现代英语

佳作

赏析



On Wisdom

哲理篇

译注 武军 李公昭

西安交通大学出版社

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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。

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现代英语佳作赏析

哲理篇

译注 武军 李公昭

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、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、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。

“地道”指所选篇章均为原汁原味的英美散文。部分选文的

^①以下简称《未来篇》，同委情况，不再一一说明。



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发展的空间,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,声情并茂地为本丛书朗读了部分文章,在此表示感谢。

李公昭

2002年1月7日

现代英语佳作赏析

哲理篇

译注 武军 李公昭

前言

本书精选现代英美优秀散文20篇,并配以注释和翻译(英汉对照)。一方面,通过原汁原味的英美散文,可以使读者充分领略到英语的独特魅力,进而培养良好的语感;另一方面,通过适当的注释和翻译,可以减轻读者不必要的负担,便于阅读和学习的展开。这些散文大多出自英美名家之手,语言地道,文笔流畅,同时寓哲理情趣于字里行间。*How to Mark a Book* 与 *Characteristics of the Successful Speaker* 向我们传授了读书和演讲的有关技巧知识,是关于学习态度和方法的佳作;*Middle Age, Old Age* 与 *The View from 80* 是作者的心灵感悟,在对人生的探讨中不乏对读者的启迪;*The Truth about Lying* 与 *Japanese and American Worker: Two Casts of Mind* 则通过丝丝入扣的剖析来教会我们透过现象直视本质,培养分析问题的能力。此外, *On Doors* 以小见大,在平常事物中揭示深刻的道理,是不可多得的哲理文佳作, *Why I Want a Wife* 则文笔幽默诙谐而暗含讽喻,是一篇女权主义思想的奇文。此等例子不胜枚举,总之,本书所选文章语言难易程度适中,



具有极强的可读性，是一本供中等英语程度的英语学习者或爱好者使用的很好的英文读物。

参加本书编写工作的还有曾佑军同志和史松宁同志。本书由俞晓红同志校对，在此一并致谢。

尽管编译者为了本书殚精竭虑，苦思冥想，“选得一篇文，拈断数茎须”。然而由于才学见识所限，书中的不足与错误之处在所难免，还望读者和诸多同行不吝赐教。

编 者

2002 年 1 月 7 日

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论拳击

乔伊斯·卡罗尔·奥茨



Best Modern English Essays—On Wisdom

► J.B. Priestley

At the Tailor's


Between the chaos of Regent Street and the opulent¹ bustle of New Bond Street is a little region that is curiously hushed. It is made up of short streets that pretend to run parallel to one another, but actually go off at all angles. At a first glance these streets appear to be filled with the offices of very old firms of family solicitors². Many of their windows have severe³ wire screens. The establishments there have a certain air of dignified secrecy, not unlike that of servants of the old school, those impassive⁴ butlers who appeared to know nothing, but really knew everything. There is little evidence that anything is being sold in this part of the world. The electric-light bills must be very modest indeed, for there are no flashing signs to assault the eye, no gaudily⁵ dressed windows to tempt the feet to loiter⁶. Whatever the season, no Sales are held there. You are not invited to stop a moment longer than you may wish to do. Now and then you catch sight of a roll of cloth, a pair of riding breeches, or, perhaps, a sober⁷ little drawing of a gentleman in evening clothes, and as you pass you can hear these things whispering "If you are a gentleman and wish to wear the clothes that a gentleman should wear, kindly make an appointment here and we will see what we can do for you." Money, of course, is not mentioned, this



being impossible in all such gentlemanly transactions⁸. For this is the region, Savile Row, Conduit Street, Maddox Street, and the rest, of the tailors or—rather—the tailors. Enter it wearing a cheap ready-made suit, and immediately the poor thing begins to bag⁹ in some places and shrivel¹⁰ up in others. If you have the audacity¹¹ (as I once had) actually to walk into one of these establishments wearing a ready-made suit, you will regret it. Nothing is said, but a glance from one of the higher officials here strips you and quietly deposits your apparel¹² in the dust-bin.



The hush here is significant. It might be described as old-world, and for a very good reason, too. In a new world in which anything will do so long as it arrives quickly and easily, this region has fallen sadly behind the times. It is still engaged in the old quest¹³ for perfection. Behind these wire screens the search for the absolute still goes on. Tailoring here remains one of the arts. There are men in this quarter who could announce in all sincerity that trousers are beauty, beauty trousers, and that is all we know and need to know¹⁴. For them the smallest seam they sew can give thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears¹⁵. That they are artists and not tradesmen is proved by the fact that, unlike tradesmen, they do not labour to please their customers, but to please themselves. A tailor who is a mere shopkeeper fits you until you are satisfied. These artists go on fitting you until they are satisfied, and that means they continue long after you have lost all interest in the matter. You stand there, a mere body or lay¹⁶ figure, and they still go on delicately ripping out sleeves and collars with their little penknives, pinning and unpinning, and making mysterious signs with chalk, and you have long ceased to understand what all the bother is about. And even then they may tell you, quietly but firmly, that they must have another fitting. That they should do this to me is proof positive of their disinterested¹⁷ passion for the art of tailoring.

I never walk into my own tailor's without feeling apologetic. I know I am unworthy of their efforts. It is as if a man without an ear for music



should be invited to spend an evening with the *Lener Quartet*¹⁸. I am the kind of man who can make any suit of clothes look shabby and undistinguished¹⁹ after about a fortnight's wear. Perhaps the fact that I always carry about with me two or three fairly large pipes, matches, about two ounces of tobacco, a wallet, chequebook, diary, fountain-pen, knife, odd keys, and loose change, to say nothing of old letters, may have something to do with it. I can never understand how a man can contrive²⁰ to look neat and spruce²¹ and do anything else. Wearing clothes properly seems to me to be a full-time job, and as I happen to have a great many other, more important or more amusing, things to do, I cheerfully bag and sag²² and look as if I have slept in my suits. I can say this cheerfully here, but once I am inside my tailor's I immediately begin to feel apologetic. They do not say anything, but there is mournful reproach in their eyes as they turn them upon their ruined sonnets and sonatas²³. One day I shall call upon them in evening clothes because I fancy they are not so bad as the lounge²⁴ suits. But I do not know; they may see enormities²⁵ where I see nothing; and so perhaps I had better keep the fate of their masterpieces hidden from them. Possibly they whisper to one another, when they see me slouching²⁶ in, looking like a man who might buy his clothes through the post: "He's one of those gentlemen who're a bit careless during the day. I shouldn't wonder," I hear them adding wistfully²⁷, anxious to convince themselves, "if he takes trouble at night."

They have their revenge, though, when they get me inside one of their horrible cubicles²⁸, for a fitting. By the time I have been inside one of those places ten minutes I have not a shred²⁹ of self-respect left. It is worse than being at the barber's, and fully equal to being at the dentist's. To stand like a dummy³⁰, to be simply a shape of flesh and bone, is bad enough, but what make it much worse are the mirrors and the lighting. These mirrors go glimmering³¹ away into infinity³². At each side is a greeny-gold tunnel. I do not mind that, having only a slight distaste for tunnels and hardly any



at all for infinity. But I do not like all those images of myself. Wherever I look, I see a man whose appearance does not please me. His head seems rather too big for his body, his body rather too big for his legs. In that merciless³³ bright light, his face looks fattish and somewhat sodden³⁴. There is something vaguely dirty about him. The clothes he is wearing, apart from the particular garment he is trying on at the moment, look baggy, wrinkled³⁵, and shabby. He does not pay enough attention to his collar, his boots. His hair wants cutting, and another and closer shave would do him good. In full face he does not inspire confidence. His profile, however, is simply ridiculous³⁶, and the back view of him is really horrible. And a woman and several children are tied to a fellow like that! Incredible that a man can take such a face and carcass³⁷ about with him, and yet entertain a tolerably good opinion of himself! As I think of these things, it is possible that I smile a little. That is what it feels like—smiling a little; but immediately twenty images in that cubicle break into ghostly grins, produce wrinkles from nowhere, show distorted acres of cheek and jowl³⁸. And there is no looking away.

Meanwhile, the tailors themselves, so neat, so clean, so deft³⁹, are busy with the pins and the chalk. They are at home in these little halls of mirrors, and so look well in them from every possible angle of reflection. They pretend a certain subservience⁴⁰, but it is the idlest of pretences. They know—and they know that I know—that I am but a shadow of myself, a puppet⁴¹ in their hands. Their opinions, such as they are, seem to be those of most moderate sensible men, but even if they murmured that it was high time the Spanish Inquisition⁴² was established in this island, I should have to agree with them. They are not all alike, these fitters, or cutters, or whatever they are. Thus my usual trouser man is quite different from my usual coat man. He is smaller and livelier, more bustling, more given to cheerful gossip. A long and intimate acquaintance with trousers has made him far more democratic and earthy. There are times when I feel I can almost hold

my own with him. On the other hand, the coat man is quietly tremendous. He has one of those tight, healthy-looking faces, like a brownish apple; and look something between a priest, a surgeon, and a solicitor who occasionally rides to hounds. Everything about him is clear, polished, and speckless⁴³. He regards me with about the same amount of interest that I give to another man's coat. When he once condescended⁴⁴ to tell me about his boy (who is at a public school) I felt immensely flattered and rushed to agree with everything he said. For a few minutes I was really alive, almost sharing the honours with my coat. But then he became serious again and took out a pin somewhere and made another chalk-mark.

I can understand the feelings of those people who are compelled to live with great artists. I can also understand the inner meaning of the old saying about nine tailors making a man⁴⁵. They have so little common humanity, these artists of the pins and chalk, that it must be difficult to wring⁴⁶ out of nine of them folly⁴⁷ and friendliness enough to make an ordinary citizen. But now that the dandies⁴⁸ are all dead and gone, theirs must be a lonely world. Will they accept these few words of tribute from a pocket-stuffer, a rumpler⁴⁹ and crumpler, a bagger?

注释

1. opulent: 富裕的, 丰富的, 丰饶的, 繁茂的
2. solicitors: solicitor, 律师, 法律顾问
3. severe: 朴素的; 不加修饰的
4. impassive: 无动于衷的; 冷漠的
5. gaudily: 俗丽地
6. loiter: 闲荡, 虚度, 徘徊
7. sober: 不加装饰的; 朴素无华的
8. transactions: 事务, 业务, 交易
9. bag: 做动词用, 像口袋似地松垂
10. shrivel: (使)起皱纹; (使)枯萎
11. audacity: 厚脸, 无耻; 无礼