

SELECTED

ENGLISH

ESSAYS

英语小品文

III


选
读



Reading
英文系列

外文出版社

北京青年报（双语视窗）文选



Selected English Essays

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前言

本书是外文出版社出版的北京青年报“双语视窗”栏目的第6本集萃，前5本均已再版，有的已经印了第三版，足见读者的喜爱之情。

读者之所以喜爱，恐怕是因为从中不仅学习了英文，而且开阔了视野，了解了世界。许多学习英文的朋友常常感叹英文教科书的内容比较陈旧，离现实生活太远，而“双语视窗”的文章则紧扣时代脉搏，读起来兴趣盎然。这些文章多由在华的外国友人以所见所闻为切入点，生动具体地反映出东西方文化的异同之处，细读之后有助于深化我国对自身文化与异域文化的理解。

随着中国加入世贸组织与北京赢得2008年奥运会的主办权，人们学习英语的热情更加高涨。本书与“双语视窗”一样，采用中英文对照形式，这些原汁原味的英文与相应的中文译文为读者提供了学习现代英语的鲜活教材。

学习英语贵在坚持。愿本书成为大家在攻克英语征途上的一个加油站。

北京青年报社 社长 张延平
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敬告读者

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March 15 in the US (I)



(美) John Berry

It was on 15 March 1962 that US President John F. Kennedy gave a speech in which he proposed a “Consumer Bill of Rights” that would include the right to product safety. In spite of President Kennedy’s effort to draw attention to this issue, however, the modern consumer rights movement did not really get underway until a young American lawyer named Ralph Nader made it front-page news ①.

There had been many significant consumer **crusades** before Nader. The popular outrage generated by Upton Sinclair’s **devastating**, fact-based novel about the meatpacking industry in Chicago, *The Jungle*, had helped to create the Food and Drug Administration ② in 1906. In 1962 *Silent Spring*, Rachel Carson’s well-documented account of the environmental and health risks of **pesticides**, became a best-seller. But apart from such occasional **exposés** and **sporadic** movements for reform, consumers as a group did not exert a significant, ongoing force in the conduct of public affairs until Ralph Nader came along.

It may interest readers in Beijing to know that at Princeton University, Ralph Nader, the son of Lebanese immigrants, studied Chinese as well as other languages. He also explored another **unorthodox** topic: the engineering design of automobiles. Later, while studying law at Harvard University, he published an article pointing out that Detroit was designing automobiles for style and higher profit margins, but not — despite 1.5 million injuries yearly — for safety. Nader turned that article into a book titled *Unsafe at Any Speed: The Designed-In Dangers of the American Automobile* and published it in 1965.

The target of the book was the Corvair, an economy car first produced by the Chevrolet division of the General Motors Corporation ③ in 1960. The car’s faulty rear **suspension system** and



rear-mounted engine, quite unusual for an American car of its time, made for pleasant driving but unfortunately also made it possible to **skid** violently and roll over. GM executives had originally thought of relatively conservative drivers as the customers most likely to buy the Corvair. Instead the somewhat sporty car became a favorite among young men, who as drivers are inclined to ④ high speeds and risky **maneuvers** on the road. Nader, however, demonstrated that the main cause of the injuries in Corvair accidents was not the **incompetence** of the driver, but rather the fact that the vehicle was woefully unable to hold up ⑤ well in crashes. This insight, namely that blame often lies not with consumers but rather with manufacturers unresponsive to safety data, would become a **recurring** theme in Nader's many later investigations.

The Corvair was discontinued in 1969, but meanwhile GM had hired private detectives to **tail** Nader in an attempt ⑥ to dig up information that might discredit him. In 1966 a Senate subcommittee summoned the president of General Motors to explain his company's harassment — and obliged him to apologize to Nader. This remarkable incident **catapulted** *Unsafe at Any Speed* to the top of the best-seller lists and underscored Nader's conviction that one person, acting with intelligence and persistence, can make a difference — even if the target is the largest corporation in the world.

For Nader, there was no virtue in being a passive member of the “silent majority”. Real patriotism, Nader asserted, is caring enough about your country to do something to make it more humane, moral and caring. He felt, in short, that one should be an engaged, questioning “public citizen” (what earlier in the century was called a “public-minded citizen”). This is in fact the name of the magazine that Nader and his associates founded in 1971, and



which is still making waves ⑦ 30 years later.

With Nader's **prodding**, Congress enacted a new federal agency, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, which obliged the American auto industry to devote more of its considerable resources to auto safety. A series of reforms that Americans now take for granted were instituted: **rigorous** safety standards for all cars; investigations into safety defects; federally mandated recalls of vehicles with hazardous features; development of new safety technologies; and a highway safety program.

Nader went on to investigate and expose other varieties of corporate abuse. In June 1968 he formed his first task force of crusading law students, later nicknamed "Nader's **Raiders**". Thousands of idealistic students clamored to work for him. One of them went on to document the health hazards of air pollution. Another "raider" exposed the government's lax oversight of the food industry. Aside from automotive products, some of the most notable achievements of the consumer movement include: air pollution emission controls, freshness dating on food packaging, labeling of additives in food products and announcements on prescription drug packages alerting users to harmful side effects.

(51207)



3 · 15 在美国 (上)



1962 年的 3 月 15 日, 美国总统肯尼迪发表讲话, 倡导一项包括消费者有权要求产品安全可靠的《消费者权益法案》。然而, 尽管肯尼迪总统对此做出努力以引起公众注意, 但直到美国青年律师拉尔夫·内德使此问题成为社会关注热点, 当代消费者权益运动才真正开始了(2000 年内德还在美国大选中竞选总统)。

在内德之前, 已经有了很多重要的消费者维权运动。阿普顿·辛克莱所写的关于无可辩驳的芝加哥肉类加工业的纪实小说《屠

场》的出版,激起了人们的普遍义愤,从而促成了美国食品医药管理局于1906年诞生。1962年,雷切尔·卡尔森佐证翔实的纪实文献《寂静的春天》,讲述了农药对环境与人类健康带来的危险,成为当时的畅销书。但是,除了这些偶尔出现的曝光和零星的改良运动,消费者作为一个群体,并没有在公众事务的决定中施加重要而持久的影响力,这种局面一直持续到内德的出现。

有一点北京的读者可能会感兴趣,作为黎巴嫩移民的儿子,内德(1934年生人)在普林斯顿大学学过汉语以及其他语言,他还探讨过另一个在当时比较偏的课题——汽车工程设计。此后,在哈佛大学学习法律时,他发表文章指出,虽然每年有150万人出车祸,但底特律的汽车制造商在设计时只重样式与赚取更高利润,而不重视安全性。内德将此文扩展成一本书,名为《任何速度都不安全——美国汽车设计中的安全隐患》,并于1965年出版。

这本书的抨击对象是阔威尔牌轿车,这是一种经济型轿车,最初是由通用汽车公司的雪佛莱分公司于1960年生产的。该车有缺陷的后悬架系统与后置发动机,在那个时代的美国汽车中很少见。这种结构虽说使开车感觉很痛快,但令人遗憾的是,这也可导致汽车猛烈打滑、翻车。通用汽车公司的经理们最初以为比较保守稳当的人最有可能买阔威尔车,然而,像赛车似的的阔威尔受到了青年人的喜爱,而他们开车时往往爱用高速并玩一些冒险的花活。但内德指出,驾驶阔威尔车出车祸的主要原因并非是司机的不称职,而是因为发生碰撞时汽车根本没有防范保护的能力。责任不在消费者而在于汽车制造商对于安全数据持冷漠态度的这一见解,在内德后来的很多调查报告中成为反复出现的主题。

阔威尔车于1969年停产,但在此之前的一段时间,通用汽车公司雇佣了私人侦探跟踪内德,想挖掘出能够诋毁他的材料。1966年,美国参院的一个委员会召见了通用汽车公司的总裁,请他解释该公司对内德的骚扰,并责成他向内德道歉。

这一引人注目的事件使《任何速度都不安全》一书一跃登上畅销书目的榜首,并且也坚定了内德的信念:一个人运用智慧,拥有恒



心,行动起来就会产生效果——哪怕对象是世界上最大的公司。

在内德看来,在“沉默无声的大众”中做一个消极分子一点儿都不值得称道,他说,真正的爱国主义,应该体现在真正关心你的国家并付诸行动,使其更加人道、更讲道德和更有关爱之心。简而言之,他觉得一个人应该做个积极参与、敢于提出疑问的“社会公民”(上个世纪早期称之为“关心社会的公民”),实际上,这是内德与他的战友于1971年所创办的一本杂志的名字,30年之后该杂志仍具有极大的影响力。

在内德的推动下,美国国会成立了一个新的联邦机构——全美高速公路和交通安全管理局,该机构责成美国汽车工业从其可观的资财中拿出更多的资金来解决安全问题。一系列安全改革措施被制定出来,这些措施当今的美国人已认为是理所当然,它们包括:对所有汽车实行严格的安全标准、对安全缺陷要进行调查、全国性的对有危险特征的汽车强制回收、新的安全技术的开发,以及高速公路的安全性方案。

内德继续调查并揭露其他各类公司的弊端劣迹。1968年6月,他成立了第一支由法律系学生组成的讨伐危害公众权益的行动队,后被人们戏称为“内德突击队”。数千名心怀理想主义的大学生都争着参加内德的工作。其中一名学生继续调查空气污染对人们健康的危害,另一名“突击队员”揭露了政府对于食品业的松懈监督。除了汽车产品外,这一消费者维权运动最引人瞩目的成果还有:对空气污染的排放加以控制、食品包装上要写明保鲜日期、食品应标明添加剂,以及在处方药物的包装盒上标明其有害的副作用。

(本文英译汉为熊显彤女士)

Words to remember

crusade /kruˈseɪd/ n. 改革运动

devastating /ˈdevəsteɪtɪŋ/ adj. 毁灭性的



- pesticide /'pestisaɪd/ *n.* 杀虫药
exposé /iks'pəʊz/ *n.* 揭露, 曝光
sporadic /spəʊ'rædɪk/ *adj.* 偶发的; 单独的
unorthodox /'ʌn'ɔ: θədɒks/ *adj.* 非正统的; 异端的
suspension /səs'penʃən/ *n.* 悬吊; 挂钩
skid /skɪd/ *vi.* 滑向一侧
maneuver /mə'nu:və/ *n.* 巧计; 谋略
incompetence /ɪn'kɒmpɪtəns/ *n.* 无能力; 不适当
recurring /rɪ'kɜ:ɪŋ/ *adj.* 反复出现的
tail /teɪl/ *vt.* 跟在后面; 尾随
catapult /'kætəpʌlt/ *vt.* 使突然上升
prod /prɒd/ *vi.* 促使; 激励
rigorous /'rɪgərəs/ *adj.* 严格的; 严厉的
raider /'reɪdə/ *n.* 袭击者; 侵入者

Key expressions

1. front-page news: 头版头条新闻
2. the Food and Drug Administration: (美国)食品医药管理局
3. the General Motors Corporation: (美国)通用汽车公司
4. be inclined to sth.: 使倾向于...
5. (to) hold up: 停顿, 停止下来
6. in an attempt to do sth.: 试图做某事
7. make waves: 兴风作浪, 这里指产生很大影响。



March 15 in the US (II)

3 · 15 在美国 (下)

