

英美当代小品201篇

黎秀石、汪尧舜 编注

*Sketches from
America and England*

中山大学出版社

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前言

本书精选英美报刊近期发表的小品文共 201 篇，每篇原文之后，附有编者为我国中等英语水平的读者所写的注释、理解题、读后思考三栏，望有助于读者加深理解和提高欣赏英语报刊小品文的能力。

英美报刊小品是短小精悍的杂文，题材五花八门，无所不谈；可以说，生活中的一切事物都是报刊小品的题材。不过，范围虽然这样广泛，报刊小品的题材都有几个共同特点：（1）报刊小品不是新闻报道，内容没有时间性，不因时间的消逝而丧失阅读的价值；（2）英美报刊小品大多不是虚构的，而是写真人真事、以现实生活为主题的；（3）报刊小品富有人情味，可读之处往往超越民族和国界，能引起广大读者的兴趣。

英美报刊小品的体裁不拘形式，从速写、笑谈、寓言，到论文、轶事，无一不可作为小品的体裁，但是，它们都有一个共同的特点：言简意赅。

我们阅读英美报刊小品有两重目的：一是通过这个渠道多认识西方社会现象，因为小品文反映社会生活；二是学习当代英语。

英语小品文字简洁，结构紧凑，中心思想突出，写作手法又多种多样。这些特点正是我们学习英文写作的好范本。长篇小说佳作当然也是我们所必读的，但初学写文，从短文入手，并以社会现实为题材，则是行之有效的途径。

英语小品用语通俗，常以对话形式表达中心思想，这也是我们提高英语口语表达能力的一种好读本，正如话剧本是提高口语能力的好读物一样。小品文有简短的特点，我们可以随时拿起来看，只要几分钟就看完一段并有所得益；读后回忆、复述、模仿，这三个复习步骤也比较容易做到。

阅读英美报刊小品还可以扩大词汇量。英语像汉语一样仍在发展中。人们随着社会生活的变化，在交往中产生的新用语，不断在报纸杂志中涌现出来。因此英美报刊小品是我们探求英文新词语的一个源泉。

英美大型日报登载小品的不多，地方小报紧密结合当地社会生活，小品见报较多。我们国内难以看到英语国家的地方小报，但可以从《读者文摘》一类刊物中采集国外小品。小品文有寓意深远的，有冷嘲热讽的，有含蓄幽默的。欣赏小品文重在读后思考，从中品尝其含义。但仁者见仁，智者见智，读后反思，各人多有不同。编者附在每篇的读后感，只是一己之见，如有错谬，敬请读者指正。

本书是中山大学出版社 1988 年出版的《英美报刊小品 101 篇》的姊妹篇，但内容全新，希读者注意。

编者

1991 年 12 月 10 日

1 A Miner's Humor

Driving an energy expert through the snow and cold, an old miner spread a buffalo lap robe over their knees. "Turn the hair inside," said the expert. "It's warmer with the fur next to the body."

The miner obeyed while muffling a chuckle.

"What's so funny?" asked the expert.

"I was just thinking of that poor buffalo," replied the miner. "What a fool he was not to know a simple thing like that."

—from *Capper's Weekly*

注释

driving an energy expert through snow and cold: 驾车送一位能源专家通过冰天雪地。

spread a buffalo lap robe over their knees: 铺开一张水牛皮的膝被放在他们的膝盖上。

It's warmer with the fur next to the body: 把毛贴近身体会暖一些。

muffling a chuckle: 捂住笑声。

that poor buffalo: 那只可怜的水牛(指那只被剥了皮做膝被的水牛)。

理解题

1. What is the proper way to wear a fur coat, with the fur turned inside or outside?
2. What was the miner really chuckling over?

读后思考

我国皮衣大多把毛做里,欧美的皮衣却多把毛做面。我们的注重实用,他们的注重美观引人注目。

我国北方常在野外赶大车的同胞最懂得该怎样穿皮衣;御寒时毛向里,下雪时把皮衣翻过来,毛在外,毛不粘雪。小品中这个赶车的矿工大概也有这样的经验。能源专家知一不知二,矿工大概是因此窃笑,并讲句笑话来掩盖住他捂住笑声的原因。

2 Shultz's Way of Reaching Reagan

When Secretary of State George Shultz sends a cable to Ronald Reagan, he includes a joke so he can check whether the President has read it. If the Secretary gets back to Washington and Reagan says, "That was a great joke, George. I've been telling it to everybody," then Shultz knows his message got through to the President.

—by Rhods Koenig in *New York*

注释

George Shultz: 乔治·舒尔茨, 里根出任美国总统时期舒氏曾任国务卿。

cable: 有线电报。

then Shultz knows his message got through to the President: 这样子舒尔茨就晓得他发的信息总统收到了。

includes a joke so he can check...: (在给总统的电报中)加上一段笑话以便舒尔茨能够查核...

理解题

reagan

Why did Shultz have to do that?

读后思考

美国国务卿是总统以下最重要的行政长官。我们局外人总没有想到他给总统的电报也会被别人扣压, 上达不到总统的。

美国官场同样有勾心斗角的黑暗面。

3 An Enlightening Reply

In order to kill some time on a long tedious flight, I strolled aimlessly down the aisle of the plane and entered into conversation with the stewardess, a vivacious black woman. "Why is it," I asked "that on all my many hundreds of flight, coffee drinkers are always served before those of us

who prefer tea?"

With a sympathetic smile, she replied, "Now do you see what it is like to be a member of a minority?"

—by A. Jacobson in *New York Times*

注释

in order to kill some time on a long tedious flight: 为了消磨冗长乏味的飞行旅途中的一些时间。

strolled aimlessly down the aisle of the plane: 沿着飞机的通道无目的地闲逛。

the stewardess: 飞机上那个女服务员。

a vivacious black woman: 一位愉快的黑人妇女。

coffee drinkers are always served before those of us who prefer tea: 总是先给喝咖啡的乘客送去然后才给我们这些爱喝茶的送来。

with a sympathetic smile: 带着同情的微笑。

what it is like to be a member of a minority: 作为少数派的成员是什么滋味。

理解题

1. Did the stewardess tell Jacobson why?
2. What did she try to bring home to Jacobson in her answer?

读后思考

雅各布森准是个白人，否则那个黑人不会那样回答他。