**2000-Text5**

①If **ambition** is to be well **regarded**, the rewards of ambition—wealth, **distinction**, control over one' s destiny —must be **deemed** worthy of the sacrifices made on ambition 's behalf. ②If the tradition of ambition is to have **vitality**, it must be widely shared; and it especially must be highly regarded by people who are themselves admired, the educated not least among them. ③In an **odd** way, however, it is the educated who have claimed to have **given up on** ambition as an **ideal**. ④What is odd is that they have perhaps most benefited from ambition — if not always their own then that of their parents and grandparents. ⑤There is a heavy note of **hypocrisy** in this, a case of **closing the barn door after the horses have escaped**—with the educated themselves riding on them.

Certainly people do not seem less interested in success and its **signs** now than formerly. Summer homes, European travel, BMWs — the locations, place names and name **brands** may change, but such **items** do not seem less **in demand** today than a decade or two years ago. ⑥What has happened is that people cannot **confess** fully to their dreams, as easily and openly as once they could, lest they be thought **pushing**, **acquisitive** and **vulgar**. ⑦Instead, we are treated to **fine** hypocritical **spectacles**, which now more than ever seem in **ample** supply: the critic of American materialism with a Southampton summer home; the publisher of **radical** books who takes his meals in three-star restaurants; the journalist advocating participatory democracy in all **phases** of life, whose own children are **enrolled** in private schools. For such people and many more perhaps not so **exceptional**, the proper **formulation** is, ⑧"Succeed at all costs but avoid appearing ambitious."

The attacks on ambition are many and come from **various** angles; its public defenders are few and unimpressive, where they are not extremely unattractive. ⑨As a result, the support for ambition as a healthy **impulse**, a quality to be admired and fixed in the mind of the young, is probably lower than it has ever been in the United States. This does not mean that ambition is at an end, that people no longer feel its stirrings and promptings, but only that, no longer openly **honored**, it is less openly **professed**. ⑩Consequences follow from this, of course, some of which are that ambition is driven underground, or made **sly**. ⑪Such, then, is the way things stand: on the left angry critics, on the right stupid supporters, and in the middle, as usual, the majority of earnest people trying to get on in life.