**U1 *Why Don’T We Complain***

William F. Buckley, Jr

Random reflections of a man who feels we should exercise our right to object

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1. It was the very last coach and the only empty seat on the entire train, so there was no turning back. The problem was to breathe. Outside the temperature was below freezing. Inside the railroad car, the temperature must have been about 85 degrees. I took off my overcoat, and a few minutes later my jacket, and noticed that the car was flecked with the white shirts of passengers. I soon found my hand moving to loosen my tie. From one end of the car to the other, as we rattled through Westchester County, we sweated; but we did not **moan**. 这是整列火车最后一节车厢中唯一的一个空位子，所以也不必再掉头去找了。问题是这里让人透不过气来。外面的气温在冰点以下，而火车车厢里的温度一定有85度左右¹。我脱掉了大衣，几分钟之后又脱了外套，并且我注意到车厢里望去星星点点的都是乘客们的白衬衫。不久我就发现我的手在开始松领带了，在火车哐啷哐啷地行进在韦彻斯特县的时候，，从车厢的一头到另一头，我们全都汗水淋漓，但我们没有吭声。



1. I watched the train conductor appear at the head of the car. “Tickets, all tickets, please!” In a more **virile** age, I thought, the passengers would seize the conductor and strap him down on a seat over the radiator to share the fate of his patrons. He shuffled down the aisle, picking up tickets, punching commutation cards. No one addressed a word to him. He approached my seat, and 1 drew a deep breath of resolution. “Conductor,” I began with a considerable edge to my voice. . . Instantly the **doleful** eyes of my seatmate turned tiredly from his newspaper to fix me with a resentful stare: what question could be so important as to justify my sibilant intrusion into his stupor? I was shaken by those eyes. I am incapable of making a **discreet** fuss, so I mumbled a question about what time were we due in Stamford (I didn't even ask whether it would be before or after dehydration could be expected to set in), got my reply, and went back to my newspaper and to wiping my brow. 我看到乘务员在车厢的头里出现了。查票了，全都把票拿出来。”我想，若是在一个更有男儿气概的时代里，乘客们准会抓住乘务员，把他捆在暖气片上方的座位上，让他也尝尝乘客们受的苦。他慢吞吞地沿着过道走来，验看着人们的票，在长期车票上打着洞。没有一个人跟他说一句话，他来到了我的座位边，为了下决心，我做了一个深呼吸“乘务员”，我用勉强可以听到的声音开口说道。马上，我的同座从报纸间懒懒地抬起阴沉的眼，向我投来懊怒的一望:有什么问题那么重要，值得我用颤魏魏的声音扰了他的入定呢?我在这目光中动摇了我连稍有条理地瞎拉上几句也做不到了，于是只好咕味着问了下什么时候能到斯坦福德县(我甚至没问那是在可以预期发生的脱水之前还是之后)得到回答后，我就一边抹着额头的汗一边重新看我的报纸。



1. The conductor had **nonchalantly** walked down the gauntlet of eighty sweating American freemen, and not one of them had asked him to explain why the passengers in that car had been consigned to suffer. There is nothing to be done when the temperature outdoors is 85 degrees, and indoors the air conditioner has broken down; obviously when that happens there is nothing to do, except perhaps curse the day that one was born. But when the temperature outdoors is below freezing, it takes a positive act of will on somebody’s part to set the temperature indoors at 85. Somewhere a valve was turned too far, a furnace overstocked, a thermostat maladjusted: something that could easily be remedied by turning off the heat and allowing the great outdoors to come indoors. All this is so obvious. What is not obvious is what has happened to the American people. 乘务员毫不关心地走过他身边这八十个流着汗的自由的美国人他们之中竟然没有一个要求他解释为什么那节车厢的乘客得经受如此的折磨。如果外面温度是85度，而里面的空调又坏了的话，，那没办法；显然当那样的事情发生的时候人们是束手无策的，除了或许可以咒骂生不所逢时。但当外面的温度在冰点以下时把室内的温度调到85度，则肯定是人的意愿能控制的范围之内的事。哪儿有个阀门开得太大了，哪个炉子烧得太旺了，或是哪个调温器没调好:总之这些毛病都可以通过把暖气关掉，把外面的空气放进车厢里来轻易地予以纠正。这一切都是如此的明白易见，让人不明白的是发生在美国人身上的事。
2. It isn’t just the commuters, whom we have come to **visualize** as a supine breed who have got onto the trick of suspending their sensory faculties twice a day while they submit to the creeping dissolution of the railroad industry. It isn’t just they who have given up trying to **rectify** irrational vexations. It is the American people everywhere. 不光乘车往返的人是这样的。虽然我们看到的乘车族好像是怠惰的一群，当他们不得不一天两次路上火车忍受缓慢的旅程时，他们已经学会暂停身上的感觉器官了，不只是他们已经放弃试图纠正令他们烦恼的不合理现像。哪儿的美国人都是一样的。(Part1 Hook)
3. A few weeks ago at a large movie theatre I turned to my wife and said, “The picture is out of focus.” “Be quiet,” she answered. I obeyed. But a few minutes later I raised the point again, with mounting impatience. “It will be all right in a minute,” she said apprehensively. (She would rather lose her eyesight than be around when I make one of my infrequent scenes.) I waited. It was just out of focus—not glaringly out, but out. My vision is 20-20, and I assume that is the vision, adjusted, of most people in the movie house. So, after hectoring my wife throughout the first reel, I finally prevailed upon her to admit that it was off, and very annoying. We then settled down, coming to rest on the **presumption** that: a) someone connected with the management of the theatre must soon notice the blur and make the correction; or b) that someone seated near the rear of the house would make the complaint in behalf of those of us up front; or c) that—any minute now—the entire house would explode into catcalls and foot stamping, calling dramatic attention to the **irksome** distortion. 几星期以前在一家大电影院里，，我扭头对我妻子说：“片子没对好焦此距。”“别说话。”，她这样回答我。我遵命了，但几分钟以后越来越失去耐心的我提出再次提出了这一观.点。“马上就会变好的。“她善解人意地说道。(她情愿把眼睛看坏也不愿在我很难得地发一次脾气的时候把脸转过来。)我等着。片确实没对准焦——偏得不算太离谱，，可确实偏了。我的视力是20-20，我想那也是电影院里大多数观众的视力，包括矫正后的。因此，在折磨了我妻子整整第一卷片子之后，我终于使她承认片子没对准焦距，而且这是让人很不舒服的。我们然后平静下来，期待出现以下的可能性:l)某个电影院的管理人员不久就注意到画面的模糊并作出改正；或2)某个坐在电影院后排的人会帮我们这些坐在前面的人来艳怨一下；或3)一现在随时都行了一整个电影院会爆发出倒彩声和踩脚声，以唤起对画面可恶的变形的足够注意。



1. What happened was nothing. The movie ended, as it had begun, just out of focus, and as we trooped out, we stretched our faces in a variety of contortions to accustom the eye to the shock of normal focus. 可什么都没有发生。电影直到结束都和开始时一样没对准焦。当我们这一大群人步出电影院时，我们做着各种面目扭曲的表情以适应正常的焦距对我们眼睛的冲击。
2. I think it is safe to say that everybody suffered on that occasion. And I think it is safe to assume that everyone was expecting someone else to take the initiative in going back to speak to the manager. And it is probably true even that if we had supposed the movie would run right through with the blurred image, someone surely would have summoned up the purposive indignation to get up out of his seat and file his complaint. 我想，如果说人人都在那种场合里遭了罪，应该不会错的，同样地，我认为每个人都在期待着别人先跑到后面去跟经理说也是不会错的。这样的想法或许足有道理的，即就算我们预计到影片会这么模模糊糊地一直放下去，也肯定会有别的某个人会实在气不过，从而起身离座发表他的怨言。



1. But notice that no one did. And the reason no one did is because we are all increasingly anxious in America to be **unobtrusive**, we are reluctant to make our voices heard, hesitant about claiming our rights; we are afraid that our cause is unjust, or that if it is not unjust, that it is ambiguous; or if not even that, that it is too trivial to justify the horrors of a confrontation with Authority; we will sit in an oven or endure a racking headache before undertaking a **head-on**, I’m-here-to-tell-you complaint. That tendency to passive **compliance**, to a heedless endurance is something to keep one’s eyes on—in sharp focus. 但是请注意没有一个人这样做。之所以没人这样做是因为我们在美国越来越相信言多必失，我们不愿意别人听见我们的声音，在要求获得自己的权益时犹豫不决；我们生怕自己的理由是不正当的，或即便它是正当的，也提得不够明确；或即使够明确了，又嫌它太琐碎，不值得为之承受直面权威所引起的恐惧，在我们敢于正面地、用“我现在告诉你”的口气进行抱怨之前，我们会坐在炉子上或忍受折磨人的头痛。这种消极地屈从和不在乎地忍受的倾向是我们必须注意到，并予以深究的。



1. I myself can occasionally summon the courage to complain, but I cannot, as I have **intimated**, complain softly. My own instinct is so strong to let the thing ride, to forget about it—to expect that someone will take the matter up, when the grievance is collective, in my behalf — that it is only when the provocation is at a very special key, whose vibrations touch simultaneously a complexus of nerves, allergies, and passions, that I catch fire and find the reserves of courage and assertiveness to speak up. When that happens, I get quite carried away. My blood gets hot, my brow wet, I become unbearably and unconscionably sarcastic and **bellicose**: I am girded for a total **showdown**. 我有时候会有足够的勇气去抱怨，但如同我明白表示过的那样，我不会柔声细气地抱怨。我的直觉十分强烈，我不会让事情就这么算了，让自己忘了它——或在有人和我一同受到委屈时指望别人来替我出头——只要刺激到了某一个特殊的点，由这一点引起的震动同时激起了我的勇气、厌恶和激情，这时我就会发火，并找到我储备的勇气和自信来开口。这种事发生时，我会有点不能自已。我会热血沸腾，额头冒汗，变得让人难以忍受地、过度地爱挖苦人和好斗；并摆开了和人一争到底的架势。



1. Why should that be? Why could not I (or anyone else) on that railroad coach have said simply to the conductor, “Sir,” — I take that back: that sounds sarcastic—“Conductor, would you be good enough to turn down the heat? I am extremely hot. In fact, I tend to get hot every time the temperature reaches 85 degr—” Strike that last sentence. Just end it with the simple statement that you are extremely hot, and let the conductor infer the cause. 为什么要那样呢?为什么我(或随便哪个别人)在那节火车车厢中不直截了当地对乘务员说，“先生”—我收回:这听上去有点讽刺—“乘务员，能否请您好心把暖气开低一点?我感到太热了。事实上，我每次在温度达到85度的时候都会感觉到热—删去最后一句，就在简简单单地说“太热了”的时候结束，让乘务员去推出原因。
2. Every New Year’s Eve I resolve to do something about the Milquetoast in me and vow to speak up, calmly, for my rights, and for the betterment of our society, on every appropriate occasion. Entering last New Year’s Eve I was **fortified** in my resolve because that morning at breakfast I had had to ask the waitress three times for a glass of milk. She finally brought it—after I had finished my eggs, which is when I don’t want it any more. I did not have the manliness to order her to take the milk back, but settled instead for a cowardly sulk, and **ostentatiously** refused to drink the milk—though I later paid for it— rather than state plainly to the hostess, as I should have, why I had not drunk it, and would not pay for it. 每个元旦，我都下决心要对付在我体内的那个胆小鬼，并发誓在每个合适的场合要平静地开口去说，既为了维护自己的权利，也为了改善社会在去年元旦的时候我的决心更加强了，因为那天早上在吃早餐的时候我为了要一杯牛奶不得不跟女侍应说了三遍。她最终把牛奶拿来了—但那是时我已经吃完鸡蛋了，也就是说我已经不想再喝牛奶了。我没有勇气让她把牛奶拿回去，而是代之以一种懦夫式的不快，并娇情地拒绝喝下牛奶—尽管我后来还是付了牛奶钱—而不是像我应该做的那样，简单明了地告诉女侍应我为什么不喝，并且不付牛奶钱。
3. So by the time the New Year ushered out the Old, riding in on my morning’s indignation and stimulated by the gastric juices of resolution that flow so faithfully on New Year’s Eve, I rendered my vow. Henceforward I would conquer my shyness, my despicable disposition to supineness. I would speak out like a man against the unnecessary annoyances of our time. 于是就在元旦辞别了旧岁，乘着我早晨的怒气来到我身边时，受着元旦前夜大快朵颐时的决心的驱策，我立下了我的誓言。自此以后我要战胜我的羞祛和多一事不如少一事的可那心态。对于不该我们承受的可厌之事。我要像真正的男人刀田羊出言相争。
4. Forty-eight hours later, I was standing in line at the ski-repair store in Pico Peak, Vermont. All I needed, to get on with my skiing, was the loan, for one minute, of a small screw driver, to tighten a loose binding. Behind the counter in the workshop were two men. One was industriously engaged in servicing the complicated requirements of a young lady at the head of the line, and obviously he would be tied up for quite a while. The other—“Jiggs,” his workmate called him — was a middle-aged man, who sat in a chair puffing a pipe, exchanging small talk with his working partner. My pulse began its **telltale** acceleration. The minutes ticked on. I stared at the idle shopkeeper, hoping to shame him into action, but he was **impervious** to my telepathic reproof and continued his small talk with his friend, brazenly insensitive to the nervous demands of six good men who were **raring** to ski. 四十八小时之后，我在佛蒙特州皮科峰的滑雪用具修理店里排队。我所需要的只是借一把小小的螺丝刀，把一个连接处的螺丝紧一紧，这样我就能滑雪了。修理店的拒台后面有两个男人。一位正在忙得不亦乐乎地为排在头里的一位年轻女士服务，，满足她提出的复杂要求。很明显，他一创半会儿脱不开身，另一位一一他的同事管他叫“吉格—是一位中年人，他正坐在椅子里拿着烟斗喷云吐雾，不时和他的伙伴聊上几句。我的脉搏加快了，宛如在向我搬弄着是非。一分钟又一分钟滴答滴答着流逝了。我瞪着无所事事的店主，希望能让他因感到羞愧而起身干活，但他对我用心灵感应发出的谴责无动于衷，仍然继续着和朋友的谈天，厚颜无耻地漠视六个急切想要滑雪的好人的不安要求。



1. Suddenly my New Year’s Eve resolution struck me. It was now or never. I broke from my place in line and marched to the counter. I was going to control myself. I dug my nails into my palms. My effort was only partially successful: 突然间我想到了我的新年决心，此时不为，更待何时?我从队伍里走了出来，来到了柜台前，我把拳头偿得紧紧的，想要控制住自己。但我的努力只部分达到了目的。
2. “If you are not too busy,” I said icily, “would you mind handing me a screw driver?” “如果你不太忙的话，”我冷冰冰地说道，“能否请你给我递一把螺丝刀?”
3. Work stopped and everyone turned his eyes on me, and I experienced that **mortification** I always feel when I am the center of centripetal shafts of curiosity, resentment, perplexity. 忙着的活停了下来，所有人都把眼光转向我，我感受到了一种熟悉的屈辱，这是每次我成为人们好奇、怨恨和疑惑的中心时，我都能感受到的。
4. But the worst was yet to come. “I am sorry, sir,” said Jiggs **deferentially**, moving the pipe from his mouth. “I am not supposed to move. I have just had a heart attack.” That was the signal for a great whirring noise that descended from heaven. We looked, stricken, out the window, and it appeared as though a cyclone had suddenly focused on the snowy courtyard between the shop and the ski lift. Suddenly a gigantic Army helicopter materialized, and hovered down to a landing. Two men jumped out of the plane carrying a stretcher, tore into the ski shop, and lifted the shopkeeper onto the stretcher. Jiggs bade his companion good-by, was **whisked** out the door, into the plane, up to the heavens, down—we learned — to a near-by Army hospital. I looked up manfully—into a score of man-eating eyes. I put the experience down as a reversal. 但更糟糕的还在后头呢，“对不起，先生，”吉格斯恭敬地说道，一边把烟斗从嘴里拿开，“我不应该动的，我的心脏病刚才犯了，”他的话音刚落，一阵什么东西旋转着发出的巨响便从天而降了。我们目瞪口呆地朝窗外望去，那架势就好像有一阵风突然降在了修理店和滑雪缆车之间积雪的院子中。突然一架庞大的军用直升机出现了，盘旋着降落了下来。两个男人抬着一副担架从直升机上跳了下来，拨开人群冲进修理店，把店老板抬到了担架上。吉格斯向他的伙伴道了别，被迅速抬出了门，运上飞机，送上天，然后再回到地上—我们听说的—附近的一家军队医院里。我鼓足勇气抬起了眼睛—遇到了二十多道能把人给吃了的目光»。我把这次经历当作反例给记了下来。
5. As I write this, on an airplane, I have run out of paper and need to reach into my brief case under my legs for more. I cannot do this until my empty lunch tray is removed from my lap. I arrested the stewardess as she passed empty-handed down the aisle on the wav to the kitchen to fetch the lunch trays for the passengers up forward who haven’t been served yet. “Would you please take my tray?” “Just a moment, sir,” she said, and marched on sternly. Shall I tell her that since she is headed for the kitchen anyway, it cannot delay the feeding of the other passengers by the two seconds necessary to stash away my empty tray? Or remind her that not fifteen minutes ago she spoke **unctuously** into the loud-speaker the words undoubtedly devised by the airline’s highly paid public-relations counselor: “If there is anything I or Miss French can do for you to make your trip more enjoyable, please let us—” I have run out of paper. 当我在飞机上写这段东西的时候，我的纸用光了，得从放在我腿下的公文包里再拿一点出来。可如果我腿上的空餐盘不拿走的话，我就没法拿纸。于是我在空姐路过走道的时候叫住了她，她正空着手到厨房去，准备拿上餐盘给前排还没吃饭的乘客送饭。“请帮我把餐盘拿走好吗?”“请稍等片刻，先生。”她一边回答着，一边坚决地向前走去。我该不该告诉她，反正她也是朝厨房去的，，收走我的餐盘不会超过两秒钟，耽误不了其他乘客吃饭?戴者我是不是要提醒她，就在不到十五分钟以前，她还在喇叭里用甜腻腻的声音说着那些显然是航空公司高薪请来的公关顾问设计的话:“如果我戴者弗兰奇小姐能为您做任何使您的旅行变得更愉快的事情，请尽管把您的要求—”我的纸写到这儿用完了。
6. I think the observable reluctance of the majority of Americans to assert themselves in minor matters is related to our increased sense of helplessness in an age of technology and centralized political and economic power. For generations, Americans who were too hot, or too cold, got up and did something about it. Now we call the plumber, or the electrician, or the furnace man. The habit of looking after our own needs obviously had something to do with the assertiveness that characterized the American family familiar to readers of American literature. With the technification of life goes our direct responsibility for our material environment, and we are conditioned to adopt a position of helplessness not only as regards the broken air conditioner, but as regards the overheated train. It takes an expert to fix the former, but not the latter: yet these distinctions, as we withdrew into helplessness, tend to fade away. 很明显，大多数美国人懒得在小事情上坚持自己的权利，我认为这与我们在一个技术发达、政治和经济权利高度集中的时代中日益增强的无助感有关。多少代以来，美国人要是觉得太热戴尤令，他们自己想办法来解决。而现在我们打电话叫管道工、电气工戴修炉子的人。自己动手满足自己需要的习惯显然与自信有关，这是美国家庭的特点，熟悉美国文学的读者对这样的家庭是不会陌生的。随着生活的技术化，我们对物质环境所承担的直接责任也不复存在了，我们不仅习惯了在空调坏了的时候陷入无助的状态也在暖气过热的火车车厢里同样不知所措。空调坏了得要专家来修，可后一种情况里却用不着专家来。然而我们在遁入无助感时往往便无暇顾及这些差别了。
7. Our **notorious** political **apathy** is a related phenomenon. Every year, whether the Republican or the Democratic Party is in office, more and more power drains away from the individual to feed vast reservoirs in far-off places; and we have less and less say about the shape of events which shape our future. From this alienation of personal power comes the sense of **resignation** with which we accept the political dispensations of a powerful government whose hold upon us continues to increase. 我国国民对政治的冷漠也是与此相关的一个现象。每年，无论是共和党还是民主党当政，都有越来越多的权力从个人的手中流失，这些权力足够把远方的大水库一个个给灌满。而且对于那些左右着我们未来的事件，我们变得越来越没有发言权了。随这种与个人权力的疏离而来的是政治上的俯首听命，我们接受了一个对我们的控制持续增强的强大的政府。
8. An editor of a national weekly news magazine told me a few years ago that as few as a dozen letters of protest against an editorial stance of his magazine was enough to convene a **plenipotentiary** meeting of the board of editors to review policy. “So few people complain, or make their voices heard,” he explained to me, “that we assume a dozen letters represent the inarticulated views of thousands of readers.” In the past ten years, he said, the volume of mail has noticeably decreased, even though the circulation of his magazine has risen. 几年以前，一家全国性新闻周刊的一位编辑告诉我，只要有十来封信抗议该杂志某篇文章的编辑立场，就足以令他们召集全体编辑会议来重新审视编辑方针。“抱怨的人太少了，也没人想让他们的声音被人听见，”他对我解释道，“因此我们有理由认为十来封信代表的是几千名沉默的读者的意见。”他说在过去的十年里，来信的数量明显减少了，即便该杂志的发行量是上升的。(Part 2 Exploring the reasons)
9. When our voices are finally mute, when we have finally suppressed the natural instinct to complain, whether the vexation is trivial or grave, we shall have become automatons, incapable of feeling. When Premier Khrushchev first came to this country late in 1959 he was **primed**, we are informed, to experience the bitter resentment of the American people against his tyranny, against his persecutions, against the movement which is responsible for the then great number of American deaths in Korea, for billions in taxes every year, and for life everlasting on the brink of disasters; but Khrushchev was pleasantly surprised, and reported back to the Russian people that he had been met with overwhelming cordiality (read: **apathy**), except, to be sure, for “a few fascists who followed me around with their wretched posters, and should be . . . horse-whipped.” 当我们的声音最终归于沉默，当我们最终压抑了抱怨的本能，无论令我们感到烦恼的事情。是大是小，我们将变成没有感觉的机器人。1959年下半年，苏联总理赫鲁晓夫第一次访问我国时，他已经作好了准备(我们是听说的)要承受美国人对他的暴政、迫害及导致为数众多的美国人死于朝鲜、令美国国民每年付出数十亿计税收且时时生活在灾难边缘的运动所表示的强烈愤概。但赫鲁晓夫感受到的是意外的惊喜，他回去以后向俄国人民报告说，他遇到的绝大部分是热忱，诚然，除了“一小撮法西斯分子举着肮脏的标语到处跟着我，真该有人用马鞭子狠狠抽他们。
10. 1 may be crazy, but I say there would have been lots more posters in a society where train temperatures in the dead of winter are not allowed to climb up to 85 degrees without complaint. 我或许是疯了，但要我说的话，寒冬的火车车厢里温度到5度也没人抱怨，在这样的社会中抗议的标语本该再多些才是。(Part 3 Conclusion)

**Words and Expressions**

**fleck** ---- to mark with spots of color, light or the like; speckle

* The bird’s breast is flecked with brown.
* Sunlight coming through the branches flecked the shadow cast by the tree.
* When a banana ripens it is flecked with brown.

**edge** ---- sharpness; the quality of being sharp or keen

* The remark had a biting edge to it.
* Slander, whose edge is sharper than the sword. (Shakespeare)

**sibilant** ---- hissing; having or making a hissing sound

* When he spoke, his voice was usually low and sibilant.

**stupor** ---- a dazed condition; loss or lessening of the power to feel; a state in which the mind and senses are dulled; partial or complete loss of sensibility, as from the use of a narcotic or from shock; mental or moral dullness or apathy. (SYN) lethargy, torpor

* The injured man lay in a stupor, unable to tell what had happened to him.
* I had only just uttered the word “conductor”, and there was no sibilant consonant in the word. Why did my seatmates consider my question to be a sibilant intrusion into his stupor?）

**discreet** ---- very careful in speech and action; showing good judgement; wisely cautious

* A discreet person does not spread gossip

**set in** ---- to begin

* Winter set in early.
* It seems to me you lived your life like a candle in the wind, never knowing who to cling to when the rain set in.

**nonchalant** ---- without warmth or enthusiasm; coolly unconcerned; casually indifferent; apathetic

* a nonchalant manner
* a nonchalant reply
* She remained quite nonchalant during all the excitement.

**Gauntlet** ---- n. a former military punishment in which the offender had to run between two rows of men who struck him with clubs, etc. as he passed. The conductor should have been consigned to this military punishment.

**run the gauntlet** ---- to be punished by means of the gauntlet; to proceed while under attack from both sides, as by criticism, gossip, etc.

**remedy** ---- to put right; make right; cure; to put back in proper condition; put right; to correct or remove (an evil, etc.).

* A thorough cleaning remedied the trouble.

**visualize** ---- to form a mental picture of; (something not present to the sight, an abstraction, etc.); envision

* to visualize a friend’s face when he is away
* to visualize the scene of a battle

**supine** ---- lazily inactive; listless, esp. morally or mentally; languid, indolent, inert; sluggish; passive

**apprehensively** ---- feeling alarm; afraid, anxious or fearful about the future; uneasy, or worried

* The captain felt apprehensive for the safety of his passengers during the storm at sea.

**glaring** ---- very bright; shining so brightly that it hurts the eyes; dazzling / ---- ALSO, very easily seen; conspicuous; obvious

* The student made a glaring error in spelling.

**hector** ---- to bluster at; to browbeat; to bully; to intimidate; to threaten; (Here) to annoy

* He hectors his children, bewilders his friends. (New York Time)

**irksome** ---- annoying; tiresome (SYN) wearisome

* Washing dishes all day would be an irksome task. Company was irksome to me. (Mary W. Shelley)

**contortion** ---- twisted condition; distorted form or shape

* The acrobat went through various contortions.

**Contort** ---- to twist or wrench out of its usual form into one that is grotesque; distort violently

* a face contorted with pain

**unobtrusive** ---- not obtrusive; modest; inconspicuous

* Poetry should be unobtrusive, a thing which enters into one’s soul and does not startle it. (Keats)

**head-on** ---- with the head or front first; in a direct manner; headlong

* His car was involved in a head-on collision. It collided head-on with a truck. Some lawmakers currently are meeting conservative opposition head-on. (Wall Street Journal)

**unconscionable** ---- not influenced or guided by conscience (SYN) unprincipled, unscrupulous, unreasonable, excessive, or immoderate

* an unconscionable liar
* Sometimes the unconscionable editors will clip our paragraphs. (Washington Irving)

**bellicose** ---- fond of fighting and quarrelling; inclined to war; warlike (SYN) belligerent, combative, contentious, pugnacious, quarrelsome

* There have been disturbances from time to time, but these are put down largely to the bellicose and rapacious nature of the tribes in the frontier areas. (London Times)

**gird** ---- to get ready for action; to prepare (oneself) for action

* to gird oneself to face an examination
* The soldiers girded themselves for battle.

**showdown** ---- any action or confrontation that brings matters to a climax or settles them

**Milquetoast** ---- a timid, shrinking, apologetic person, after Caspar Milquetoast, character of this sort in a comic strip by H. T. Webster (1885 – 1952), U.S. cartoonist.

**fortify** ---- to give support to; strengthen physically, emotionally, etc.

* They fortified each other against the coming ordeal.
* To fortify herself for the task ahead she allowed herself a little more brandy.
* The assurance of Tains Judique’s friendship fortified Babbitt’s self-approval.

**resolve** ---- a thing determined on He kept his resolve to do better.

* He kept his resolve to do better.

**settle for** ---- to be content with; agree upon; accept, often less than one wanted

* But neither the star nor the composer was willing to settle for that kind of routine triumph. (Henry Hewes)

**telltale** ---- showing, signaling, or warning of something; revealing, revelatory, suggestive, meaningful, significant, indicative

* the telltale mud on his shoes
* Careful examination will reveal the telltale nits attached to the hairs.
* Children stealing raspberries with telltale signs round their mouths.
* HERE: Just by looking at the way my pulse accelerated, I knew I would do something I had never dome before.

**impervious** ---- not affected by

* Because he was impervious to our hints, we finally told him it was time to go.
* impervious to pity

**telepathic** ---- **telepathy** n. 〖parapsychology〗 the communication of one mind with another without using speech, hearing, sight, or any other sense used normally to communicate; communication between minds by some means other than the normal sensory channels; transference of thought

**brazen** ---- showing no shame; bold; impudent

**brazen it out** ---- to act in a bold way as if one need not be ashamed

**rare** (**rared, raring**) ---- [Colloq.] to be eager, enthusiastic, etc., used in prp.

* raring to go

**mortification** ---- a feeling of shame; humiliation; chagrin; loss of self-respect (SYN) embarrassment

* mortification at having spilled food on the tablecloth
* There’s no virtue in any mortification, either of the flesh or the spirit.
* His mortification and grief at failing in his resolve knew no bounds.
* He had the mortification of being ordered to retire from the bench.

**centripetal** ---- moving or tending to move toward a center

**deferential** ---- full of respect

**whisk** ---- to move something or someone quickly

* She whisked the letter out of sight.
* After his speech, the senator was whisked out of the building into his car.

**reversal** ---- a change to the opposite as in one’s fortune; reversing or being reversed

* a reversal of attitude
* a reversal in the weather
* The high court’s opinion was a reversal of the lower court’s decision.

**unctuous** ---- too smoothly and oily; characterized by a smug, smooth pretense of spiritual feeling, fervor, or earnestness, as in seeking to persuade; too suave or oily in speech or manner

* the hypocrite’s unctuous manner
* an offensively unctuous speech

**assert oneself** ---- to insist on one’s rights, or on being recognized; to put forward oneself; make demands

* A leader must assert himself sometimes in order to be followed.

**apathy** ---- lack of interest in or desire for activity; indifference (SYN) unconcern, impassivity

* The apathy of the lazy boy was annoying.
* The citizen’s apathy to local affairs resulted in poor government.

**vast reservoirs** ---- centralization of power ???

**dispensation** ---- rule; management

* From 1558 to 1603 England was under the dispensation of Elizabeth I.

**stance** ---- attitude; point of view

to adopt the stance of the Tammany politician to whom nothing matters but victory (Saturday Review)

* Both men adopted the classic stance that they must be free to criticize.

**plenipotentiary** ---- having or giving full power and authority

The United States has either an ambassador or a minister plenipotentiary in most important countries.

**prime** ---- to equip (a person) with information, words, arguments, or the like

* to prime a person with a speech

**Sentences**

**… and I experienced the mortification I always feel when I an the center of centripetal shafts of curiosity, resentment, perplexity**.

* ---- I felt uneasy as I always do whenever I am the center of attention, with everyone staring at me with curiosity, resentment, perplexity on their face.

**I am incapable of making a discreet fuss.**

* ---- Whenever I lodged a complaint, I made a scene of it.

**“If there is anything I or Miss French can do for you to make your trip more enjoyable, please let us …” I have run out of paper.**

* ---- Direct students’ attention to the rhetorical device aposiopesis used here.
* Aposiopesis: 顿绝，话语中断（指说话人在没有办法或不愿意把话讲完的情况下突然中断句子的修辞手法）
* Other examples of aposiopesis: His behavior was ．．．but I blush to mention that.

**When Premier Khrushchev first came to this country late in 1959, he was primed, we were told, to experience the bitter resentment of the American people against his tyranny.**

* ---- Pay attention to the typical cold war sentiment as expressed here in this paragraph.

**Comprehension**

* Organization

**Argumentation supported by exemplification.**

* Started with examples on the train and ended with the last example of American people’s political preference and concluded author’s thesis.
* The examples are not all illustrated in detailed. Some examples covered many paragraphs while others were only mentioned for 1 sentence.
* By analyzing all the examples, the author generalized his ideas by the end of this essay.
* Theme/Thesis

To criticized American people’s reluctance to assert themselves in matters minor and grave.

**Unit 1**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| [Unctuous](#Unctuous) | Insincerely | 虚情假意的 |
| [Mortification](#Mortification) | Shame and embarrassment | 丢脸；难堪 |
| [Discreet](#Discreet) | Careful and prudent | 谨慎的 |
| [Rectify](#Rectify) | Correct | 纠正 |
| [Ostentatiously](#Ostentatiously) | Showily | 铺张的；炫耀的 |
| [Bellicose](#Bellicose) | Fond of fighting or quarrelling | 好斗的 |
| [Deferentially](#Deferentially) | Respectfully | 尊敬的；毕恭毕敬 |
| Reproach | Censure, rebuke | 责备，责怪 |
| [Virile](#Virile) | Full of masculine strength | 阳刚气十足的 |
| [Apathy](#Apathy) | Lack of interest, indifference | 无兴趣，漠不关心的 |
| [Plenipotentiary](#Plenipotentiary) | Fully empowered | 全权的 |
| [Impervious](#Impervious) | Not affected or influenced | 不受影响的 |
| [Unobtrusive](#Unobtrusive) | Not too noticeable | 不引人注目的 |
| [Doleful](#Doleful) | Sad, sorrowful | 悲伤的 |
| [Fortify](#Fortified) | Strengthen | 加强，稳固 |
| [Telltale](#Telltale) | Revealing | 泄露秘密的 |
| [Raring](#Raring) | Very eager | 渴望开始做 |
| [Whisk](#Whisked) | Cause to move very quickly | 使迅速移动 |
| [Notorious](#Notorious) | Infamous | 臭名昭著的 |
| [Resignation](#Resignation) | Passive acceptance, patient submission | 顺从，放弃 |
| [Prime](#Primed) | Brief, prepare | 主要的，准备好了的 |
| [Moan](#moan) | Make a low sound of pain or grief | 呻吟声 |
| [Nonchalantly](#Nonchalantly) | Indifferently, unconcernedly | 若无其事的；漠不关心的 |
| [Visualize](#Visualize) | From a mental picture, imagine | 想象;设想 |
| [Head-on](#Headon) | Firm and direct | 正面的，直接的 |
| [Showdown](#Showdown) | Final fight to settle a dispute | 最后的放手一搏 |
| [Presumption](#Presumption) | Supposition | 推测，假定 |
| [Irksome](#Irksome) | Troublesome, annoying | 厌烦的 |
| [Intimate](#Intimated) | Hint, make known indirectly | 暗示 |
| [Compliance](#Compliance) | Willingness to yield, agreement | 服从；遵守 |