



大学生英语分级阅读（二年级）

THE PROTESTANT ETHIC AND
THE SPIRIT OF CAPITALISM

新教伦理与资本主义精神

（英汉对照）

马克斯·韦伯 (Max Weber) 原著 塔尔科特·帕森斯 (Talcott Parsons) 英译

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简介

马克斯·韦伯(1864—1920)是现代社会学的奠基人和主要学者,著名的经济学家。韦伯生于德国的埃尔福特,父亲是当时一位具有自由主义思想的政治活动家,母亲则信奉加尔文教。在大学就读期间,他主攻法律,博士论文研究的是意大利和西班牙中世纪的贸易组织。1894年和1896年,他先后获聘弗莱堡大学和海德堡大学政治经济学教授。1898至1903年他因病而无法继续从事研究和写作,他最重要的作品,均是1904年后直至他去世这段时间的成果。

《新教伦理与资本主义精神》(1905)是韦伯最著名的作品,也是西方经济和社会理论著作中最著名的作品之一。在此书中,韦伯令人信服地证明,先前被认为与资本主义精神相抵触的新教(清教)思想,实际上却是现代资本主义精神的基石,新教关于抵制物质利益的言论实际上是促使人们去获取物质利益的推动力。韦伯认为,尽管新教倡导人们接受自己卑微的地位,要人们致力于日常平凡的艰苦劳作,而不去考虑诸如获取物质利益、改变社会地位、奢侈的生活等,正是这样的教谕,产生了“勤劳节俭”的伦理原则。韦伯的结论是,“资本积累”的观念虽然并非直接来自新教伦理,但该伦理原则对勤劳和节俭的推崇却在不经意中为资本主义奠定了精神基础。韦伯这一关于资本主义起源的论断在学术界引起了很大的反响和论争,但依然是对资本主义精神和起源的经典解释之一。

韦伯对经济学和社会学的其他主要贡献还在于他的“阐释”社会学和实证主义理论。他的主要著作还包括:《社会学和社会政治知识的客观性》(*The Objectivity of the Sociological and Social-Political Knowledge*, 1904)、《经济与社会》(*Economy and Society*, 1922)、《作为职业的政治》(*Politics as Vocation*, 1918)、《普通经济史》(*General Economic History*, 1923)、《社会科学方法论》(*The Methodology of the Social Sciences*, 1949)等。

FOREWORD

Max Weber, the author of the work translated in the following pages, was a scholar whose intellectual range was unusually wide, and whose personality made an even deeper impression than his learning on those privileged to know him. He had been trained as a jurist, and, in addition to teaching as a professor at Freiburg, Heidelberg, and Munich, he wrote on subjects so various as ancient agrarian history, the conditions of the rural population of Prussia, the methodology of the social sciences, and the sociology of religion. Nor were his activities exclusively those of the teacher and the student. He travelled widely, was keenly interested in contemporary political and social movements, played a vigorous and disinterested part in the crisis which confronted Germany at the close of the War, and accompanied the German delegation to Versailles in May 1919. He died in Munich in the following year, at the age of fifty-six. Partly as a result of prolonged ill-health, which compelled him for several years to lead the life of an invalid, partly because of his premature death, partly, perhaps, because of the very grandeur of the scale on which he worked, he was unable to give the final revision to many of his writings. His collected works have been published posthumously. The last of them, based on notes taken by his students from lectures given at Munich, has appeared in English under the title of *General Economic History*.¹

The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism was published in the form of two articles in the *Archive für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik* in 1904 and 1905. Together with a subsequent article, which appeared in 1906, on *The Protestant Sects and the Spirit of Capitalism*, they form the first of the studies contained in Weber's *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie*. On their first appearance they aroused an interest which extended beyond the ranks of historical specialists, and which caused the numbers of the *Archive* in which they were published to be sold out with a rapidity not very usual in the case of learned publications. The discussion which they provoked has continued since then with undiminished vigour. For the questions raised by Weber possess a universal significance, and the method of his essay was as important as its conclusions. It not only threw a brilliant light on the particular field which it explored, but suggested a new avenue of approach to a range of problems of permanent interest, which concern, not merely the historian and the economist, but all who reflect on the deeper issues of modern society.

1 Max Weber, *General Economic History*, trans. Frank H. Knight, Ph.D. (George Allen & Unwin). A bibliography of Weber's writings is printed at the end of the charming and instructive account of him by his widow, Max Weber, *Ein Lebensbild*, von Marianna Weber (J. C. B. Mohr, Tübingen, 1926). See also *Economistes et Historiens: Max Weber, un homme, une œuvre*, par Maurice Halbwachs, in *Annales d'Histoire Économique et Sociale*, No. 1, January, 1929.

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简介

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前言

以下译本的原著者马克斯·韦伯是一位学识异常渊博的学者，而有幸结识他的人都知
以道，他的人品更为突出。他接受过法学方面的训练，除在弗莱堡、海德堡和慕尼黑任教授外，他还致力著述，内容涉及古代农耕史、普鲁士乡村人口生活状况、社会科学方法论和宗教社会学等诸多领域。韦伯的活动不仅限于教与学，他游历甚广，且对当时政治社会活动兴趣浓厚。在一战结束前德国遭遇的危机中，他曾积极活动，且立场中立；并于1919年5月陪同德国代表团出席了凡尔赛会议。次年，他在慕尼黑逝世，享年56岁。他的很多著作都未能完成最终修订，这一方面是因为他长期健康状况不佳，生活不能自理，而且英年早逝，另一方面也因为他的研究范围确为宏大。韦伯的文集在其身后得以出版，其中最后一篇题为《经济通史》，是学生在慕尼黑讲课时记录的课堂笔记，后用英语整理而成。

《新教伦理与资本主义精神》以两篇论文的形式分别于1904和1905年发表在《社会科学与社会政治文献》上，并与1906年发表的《新教教派与资本主义精神》一起，构成了韦伯《宗教社会学论文集》的第一项研究内容。这部作品一出现，就引起了很多人的兴趣，而不仅限于历史学家，结果刊登该文的几期《文献》迅速售罄，这对于学术刊物而言颇不寻常。作品引发的讨论自此延续下来，经久不息，因为韦伯所提出的问题具有普世意义，而且他在论文中使用的方法与其结论同样重要。作品不仅对于它所研究的特定领域极具启发性，而且为一系列人们永恒关心的问题提供了新的思路。这些问题，不仅历史学家和经济学家关注，所有思考近代社会深层问题的人都为之关切。

The question which Weber attempts to answer is simple and fundamental. It is that of the psychological conditions which made possible the development of capitalist civilization. Capitalism, in the sense of great individual undertakings, involving the control of large financial resources, and yielding riches to their masters as a result of speculation, money-lending, commercial enterprise, buccaneering and war, is as old as history. Capitalism, as an economic system, resting on the organisation of legally free wage-earners, for the purpose of pecuniary profit, by the owner of capital or his agents, and setting its stamp on every aspect of society, is a modern phenomenon.

All revolutions are declared to be natural and inevitable, once they are successful, and capitalism, as the type of economic system prevailing in Western Europe and America, is clothed today with the unquestioned respectability of the triumphant fact. But in its youth it was a pretender, and it was only after centuries of struggle that its title was established. For it involved a code of economic conduct and a system of human relations which were sharply at variance with venerable conventions, with the accepted scheme of social ethics, and with the law, both of the church and of most European states. So questionable an innovation demanded of the pioneers who first experimented with it as much originality, self-confidence, and tenacity of purpose as is required today of those who would break from the net that it has woven. What influence nerved them to defy tradition? From what source did they derive the principles to replace it?

The conventional answer to these questions is to deny their premises. The rise of new forms of economic enterprise was the result, it is argued, of changes in the character of the economic environment. It was due to the influx of the precious metals from America in the sixteenth century, to the capital accumulated in extra-European commerce, to the reaction of expanding markets on industrial organisation, to the growth of population, to technological improvements made possible by the progress of natural science. Weber's reply, which is developed at greater length in his *General Economic History* than in the present essay, is that such explanations confuse causes and occasions. Granted that the economic conditions of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were, in some respects, though by no means in all, unusually favourable to an advance in economic technique, such conditions had existed from time to time in the past without giving birth to the development of capitalist industry. In many of the regions affected by them no such development took place, nor were those which enjoyed the highest economic civilization necessarily those in which the new order found its most congenial environment. The France of Louis XIV commanded resources which, judged by the standards of the age, were immense, but they were largely dissipated in luxury and war. The America of the eighteenth century was economically primitive, but it is in the maxims of Franklin that the spirit of *bourgeois* capitalism, which, rather than the grandiose schemes of mercantilist statesmen, was to dominate the future, finds, Weber argues, its naïvest and most lucid expression.

To appeal, as an explanation, to the acquisitive instincts, is even less pertinent, for there is little reason to suppose that they have been more powerful during the last few centuries than in earlier ages. "The notion that our rationalistic and capitalistic age is

韦伯试图回答的是简单而又根本的问题，即要使资本主义文明的发展成为可能，需要怎样的心理条件。作为个人伟大事业的资本主义，涉及控制大规模金融资源并通过投机、借贷、商业企业、掠夺和战争赚取财富，其存在由来已久。而作为一种经济制度的资本主义，则是近代才有的现象，它有赖于对合法自由的工薪阶层的组织，以牟取利润为目的，由资本拥有者或其代理人执行，并且在社会的每个方面都留下印记。

所有的革命一旦成功，都会被称为是历史的必然。资本主义，作为风行西欧和美国的经济制度，也因其成功，而赢得了人们的绝对尊敬。但在发展初期，它却是个僭越者，经过了数百年的斗争才确立了名号。因为它所涉及的经济行为准则和人际关系体系，与古老庄严的传统，与已被接受的社会伦理，以及与教会法规和大多数欧洲国家的法律都格格不入。如此颠覆性的革新要求先驱倡导者必须具备卓越的创见、足够的信心和不达目的不罢休的精神，而这些也正是现在立志冲破资本主义体制的人所必需的精神。是什么给了他们反抗传统的勇气？他们又从哪里找到代替传统的原则？

对这些问题的传统回答就是否认问题的前提。人们声称，新型经济的崛起是经济环境的特征发生变化的结果，这些变化包括16世纪从美洲大陆流入的贵金属、在欧洲以外的商业行为中积累的资本、扩张的市场（它反作用于工业组织）、增长的人口以及自然科学发展带来的技术进步。而韦伯的回答是，这些解释混淆了原因和诱因，关于这一点不是在本书而是在他的《经济通史》中作了更为详尽的阐述。他承认16、17世纪的经济条件在某些方面（虽然绝不是所有方面）异乎寻常地有利于经济技术的进步，但这些条件在历史上也不时出现过，却从未导致资本主义工业的发展。在很多受这些条件影响的地区，资本主义工业并未得到发展，那些经济文明最为发达的地区也并不一定就为新秩序提供了最适宜的环境。路易十四治下的法国掌握了从当时的时代标准来看极为巨大的资源，却主要浪费在奢侈生活和战争上。18世纪的美国虽然经济落后，但韦伯认为中产阶级资本主义精神却在富兰克林的格言中得到了最为自然、最为明晰的表达——主宰未来的正是这种精神，而不是重商主义政治家的宏伟计划。

以营利本能来作解释则更加牵强，因为没有理由假设在过去的那几个世纪里，人们的营利本能就比之前更加强烈。“认为我们这个现实主义和资本主义时代的特征就是人们对经济

characterised by a stronger economic interest than other periods is childish. The moving spirits of modern capitalism are not possessed of a stronger economic impulse than, for example, an Oriental trader. The unchaining of the economic interest, merely as such, has produced only irrational results: such men as Cortes and Pizarro, who were, perhaps, its strongest embodiment, were far from having an idea of a rationalistic economic life.”¹ The word “rationalism” is used by Weber as a term of art, to describe an economic system based, not on custom or tradition, but on the deliberate and systematic adjustment of economic means to the attainment of the objective of pecuniary profit. The question is why this temper triumphed over the conventional attitude which had regarded the *appetitus divitiarum infinitus* — the unlimited lust for gain — as anti-social and immoral. His answer is that it was the result of movements which had their source in the religious revolution of the sixteenth century.

Weber wrote as a scholar, not as a propagandist, and there is no trace in his work of the historical animosities which still warp discussions of the effects of the Reformation. Professor Pirenne,² in an illuminating essay, has argued that social progress springs from below, and that each new phase of economic development is the creation, not of strata long in possession of wealth and power, but of classes which rise from humble origins to build a new structure on obscure foundations. The thesis of Weber is somewhat similar. The pioneers of the modern economic order were, he argues, *parvenus*, who elbowed their way to success in the teeth of the established aristocracy of land and commerce. The tonic that braced them for the conflict was a new conception of religion, which taught them to regard the pursuit of wealth as, not merely an advantage, but a duty. This conception welded into a disciplined force the still feeble *bourgeoisie*, heightened its energies, and cast a halo of sanctification round its convenient vices. What is significant, in short, is not the strength of the motive of economic self-interest, which is the commonplace of all ages and demands no explanation. It is the change of moral standards which converted a natural frailty into an ornament of the spirit, and canonized as the economic virtues habits which in earlier ages had been denounced as vices. The force which produced it was the creed associated with the name of Calvin. Capitalism was the social counterpart of Calvinist theology.

The central idea to which Weber appeals in confirmation of his theory is expressed in the characteristic phrase “a calling.” For Luther, as for most medieval theologians, it had normally meant the state of life in which the individual had been set by Heaven, and against which it was impious to rebel. To the Calvinist, Weber argues, the calling is not a condition in which the individual is born, but a strenuous and exacting enterprise to be chosen by himself, and to be pursued with a sense of religious responsibility. Baptized in the bracing, if icy, waters of Calvinist theology, the life of business, once regarded as perilous to the soul — *summe periculosa est emptionis et venditionis negotiatio* — acquires a new sanctity. Labour is not merely an economic means: it is a spiritual end. Covetousness,

1 Weber, *General Economic History*, trans. Frank H. Knight, pp. 355–6.

的兴趣比以前任何阶段都强，这种看法很幼稚。近代资本主义的推动精神所拥有的经济冲动并不比，比方说东方商人，更为强烈。只是像这样不受约束的经济兴趣，只能产生非理性的结果：科特斯和皮萨罗或是有力代表，他们完全不具备理性主义经济生活的观念。”韦伯将“理性主义”一词作为专门术语，用以描述这样一种经济制度，其基础不是习惯或传统，而是为实现赢利而对经济手段作出的深思熟虑的、系统化的调节。问题在于，传统态度将无限追求赢利视为反社会和不道德，那么为什么资本主义能够战胜这种传统态度。韦伯给出的答案是，这是16世纪宗教改革引起的社会运动所导致的。

韦伯是作为一名学者，而不是宣传家来写作的。在他的著作中找不到那种历史的敌意，这种敌意仍在扭曲关于宗教改革影响的讨论。亨利·皮雷纳教授曾写过一篇颇具启发性的文章，他在文中指出，社会进步是自下而上的，经济发展的每个新篇章都不是由长期占有财富和权力的阶层创造出来的，而是由出身底层、在卑微基础上建立新体系的阶级所创。韦伯的论点大抵相似。他认为近代经济秩序的先驱是那些新兴阶层，他们从拥有既得利益的土地贵族和商业贵族那里虎口夺食，闯出一条成功之路。支撑他们进行斗争的是一种新的宗教观念，这种观念教他们将追求财富视为义务，而不仅仅是利益。这种观念向尚且软弱的中产阶级注入了一种训练有素的力量，提高了中产阶级的活力，为它易有的缺陷罩上了神圣的光环。简言之，重要的并不是经济利己主义这一动机的力量，这种利己主义在所有时代都很普遍，毋需解释。重要的是道德标准的变化：天生的弱点摇身一变，反倒为灵魂增光添彩；在前代被斥为罪恶的习惯，反被当作经济上的美德而加以神圣化。引起这种变化的力量是与加尔文相关的教义，资本主义是加尔文神学在社会层面的对应物。

韦伯从加尔文神学中援引的核心概念是“天职”，他用这个独特的术语来印证自己的理论。对于路德以及大多数中世纪神学家而言，天职通常指命，是上天为每个人规定好的生活状态，违命就是大逆不道。但韦伯认为，对于加尔文教徒而言，天职不是生来注定的，而是自己选择、并且带着宗教责任感去追求的艰巨事业。加尔文神学或许冷冰冰，却令人精神为之一振。接受加尔文神学洗礼后的商业生活，具有了神圣性，不再被视为灵魂的堕落。劳

2 Henri Pirenne, *Les Périodes de l'Histoire Sociale du Capitalisme* (Hayez, Brussels, 1914).

if a danger to the soul, is a less formidable menace than sloth. So far from poverty being meritorious, it is a duty to choose the more profitable occupation. So far from there being an inevitable conflict between moneymaking and piety, they are natural allies, for the virtues incumbent on the elect — diligence, thrift, sobriety, prudence — are the most reliable passport to commercial prosperity. Thus the pursuit of riches, which once had been feared as the enemy of religion, was now welcomed as its ally. The habits and institutions in which that philosophy found expression survived long after the creed which was their parent had expired, or had withdrawn from Europe to more congenial climes. If capitalism begins as the practical idealism of the aspiring *bourgeoisie*, it ends, Weber suggests in his concluding pages, as an orgy of materialism.

In England the great industry grew by gradual increments over a period of centuries, and, since the English class system had long been based on differences of wealth, not of juristic status, there was no violent contrast between the legal foundations of the old order and the new. Hence in England the conception of capitalism as a distinct and peculiar phase of social development has not readily been accepted. It is still possible for writers, who in their youth have borne with equanimity instruction on the meaning of feudalism, to dismiss capitalism as an abstraction of theorists or a catchword of politicians.

The economic history of the Continent has moved by different stages from that of England, and the categories employed by Continental thinkers have accordingly been different. In France, where the site on which the modern economic system was to be erected was levelled by a cataclysm, and in Germany, which passed in the fifty years between 1850 and 1900 through a development that in England had occupied two hundred, there has been little temptation to question that capitalist civilization is a phenomenon differing, not merely in degree, but in kind, from the social order preceding it. It is not surprising, therefore, that its causes and characteristics should have been one of the central themes of historical study in both. The discussion began with the epochmaking work of Marx, who was greater as a sociologist than as an economic theorist, and continues unabated. Its most elaborate monument is Sombart's *Der Moderne Kapitalismus*.

The first edition of Sombart's book appeared in 1902. Weber's articles, of which the first was published two years later, were a study of a single aspect of the same problem. A whole literature¹ has arisen on the subject discussed in them. How does Weber's thesis

¹ See, in particular, the following: E. Troeltsch, *Die Sozialen Lehren der christlichen Kirchen und Gruppen* (1912); F. Raftahl, *Kalvinismus und Kapitalismus* (*Internationale Wochenschrift*, 1909, t. III); B. L. Brentano, *Die Aufgabe des Modernen Kapitalismus* (1914); and *Der Wirtschaftende Mensch in der Geschichte* (1911); W. Sombart, *Die Fudor und das Wirtschaftsleben* (1911, Eng. trans. *The Jews and Modern Capitalism*, 1913), and *Der Bourgeois* (1913, Eng. trans. *The Quintessence of Modern Capitalism*, 1915); G. v. Schulze Gaevernitz, "Die Geistesgeschichtlichen Grundlagen der Anglo Amerikanischen Weltsuprematie. III. Die Wirtschaftsethik des Kapitalismus" (*Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik*, Bd. 61, Heft 2); H. Sée, "Dans quelle mesure puritains et Juifs ont-ils contribué au Progrès du Capitalisme Moderne?" (*Revue Historique*, t. CLV, 1927) and *Les Origines du Capitalisme Moderne* (1926); M. Halbwachs, "Les Origines Puritains du Capitalisme Moderne" (*Revue*

动，不再仅仅是经济手段，更是灵魂的追求。贪婪，虽则会腐化灵魂，却不如怠惰可怕。贫穷，非但不值得嘉奖，相反人们有义务选择获利更丰的职业。赚钱与虔诚之间也没有什么不可避免的冲突，它们反倒是天生的盟友，因为上帝的选民所凭依的美德——勤奋、节俭、适度、审慎，正是通向生意兴隆最可靠的通行证。至此，曾被当作宗教之敌的对财富的追求，如今却转为宗教之友，从众人畏避转为众人欢迎。由这种教义衍生出来的习惯和制度保持了很久，直到加尔文主义渐渐失效，从欧洲转移到其他合适的土壤之后，这些习惯和制度还存续了很长一段时间。韦伯在他的结论部分指出，如果说资本主义以雄心勃勃的中产阶级的那种实用理想主义为开端，那么它就以沉溺于物质主义为结束。

在英国，资本主义事业的发展经历了几个世纪的渐进过程。英国的阶级制度向来就是建立在财富差异而不是法律地位的基础上，新旧秩序的法律基础之间并不存在巨大的不同。因此英国人并不能马上认可，资本主义是一个明确的独特的社会发展阶段。年轻时平静地接受过关于封建主义含义之教育的英国作家们，会对资本主义嗤之以鼻，认为资本主义只是理论家的抽象概念或政客的口号而已。

欧洲大陆的经济史经历了与英国不同的阶段，因而相应地，欧洲大陆思想家们使用的经济学范畴也就不同。在法国，建立近代经济制度的土壤是通过社会巨变来平整的；在德国，1850年至1900年这五十年里经历了相当于英国二百年的发展，所以很少有人质疑“资本主义文明不仅在量上、而且在质上都与之前的社会秩序迥异”的说法。因此，在法德两国，资本主义产生的原因及其特征成为历史研究的核心主题，也就不足为奇了。资本主义大讨论，由马克思划时代的著作拉开序幕（马克思与其说是伟大的经济理论家，不如说是伟大的社会学家），持续至今，热度不减。这场讨论中，撰写最详尽的一部里程碑式的著作就是桑巴特的《近代资本主义》。

桑巴特这部书的第一版于1902年问世。韦伯的论文（其中最早的发表于1904年）则是对同一问题其中一个方面的研究。随后又涌现了一大批探讨同样主题的文​​献。那么，经过了25年

d'histoire et philosophie religieuses, March — April 1925) and “*Économistes et Historiens: Max Weber, une vie, un œuvre*” (*Annales d'Histoire Économique et Sociale*, No. 1, 1929); H. Hauser, *Les Débuts du Capitalisme Moderne* (1927); H. G. Wood, “The Influence of the Reformation on Ideas concerning Wealth and Property,” in *Property, its Rights and Duties* (1913); Talcott Parsons, “Capitalism in Recent German Literature” (*Journal of Political Economy*, December 1928 and February 1929); Frank H. Knight, “Historical and Theoretical Issues in the Problem of Modern Capitalism” (*Journal of Economic and Business History*, November 1928); Kemper Fulbertson, “Calvinism and Capitalism” (*Harvard Theological Review*, July, 1928).