

高等学校英语专业教材·人文素质教育系列

# 西方文明史概述

*A Survey of Western Civilization*

井卫华 王红欣 主编



中国地质出版社  
www.centuryoriental.com.cn

# 西方文明史概述

## A Survey of Western Civilization

主 编 井卫华 王红欣  
副主编 李 茜 周 雪  
杨 芳 邹德艳

中国电力出版社  
[www.centuryoriental.com.cn](http://www.centuryoriental.com.cn)

## 图书在版编目 (CIP) 数据

西方文明史概述 / 井卫华, 王红欣主编.

北京: 中国电力出版社, 2004

(高等学校英语专业教材·人文素质教育系列)

ISBN 7-5083-2160-X

I. 西… II. ①井… ②王… III. ①英语—阅读教学—高等学校—教材

②文明史—西方国家 IV. H319.4

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字 (2004) 第 009853 号

## 西方文明史概述

主编: 井卫华 王红欣

责任编辑: 李 艳 林 霞

选题策划: 张 敏

出版发行: 中国电力出版社

社 址: 北京市西城区三里河路 6 号 (100044)

网 址: <http://www.centuryoriental.com.cn>

印 刷: 北京地矿印刷厂

开 本: 787 毫米 × 980 毫米 1/16

印 张: 17

字 数: 300 千

版 次: 2004 年 4 月第 1 版 2004 年 4 月第 1 次印刷

书 号: ISBN 7-5083-2160-X

定 价: 29.80 元

版权所有 翻印必究

如有印装质量问题, 出版社负责调换。联系电话: 010-62193493

## 序 言

思辨能力差恐怕是外语学习者的通病。这种问题的根源在于,在外语学习的初级阶段,人们把语言仅仅看作是由语言、语法、词汇所组成的一种符号系统。因此,初学者往往比较注重语言的形式,却不太重视语言的内容。解决这一问题的关键在于,外语学习者在掌握基本的语言技能之后,应涉猎各领域的知识,开拓视野,拓展思维空间,尤其应该学习一些与语言息息相关的文化知识,因为语言既是文化的载体,又是文化的一部分。外国文化的学习应该是外语学习中的一个重要环节。不涉及外国文化的外语学习是不完全、不深入的学习。

《西方文明史概述》一书旨在介绍隐藏在英语语言背后的西方文化背景知识,广泛涉及西方文明的各个层面,如历史事件、哲学思想、文学艺术等等。此书集语言知识与文化知识于一体,可以帮助广大英语爱好者在提高阅读能力的同时,加深对西方文化的了解,提高思辨能力、文化修养和审美能力。对于专业英语学习者来说,这本书将为进一步学习英美文学,进行中西文学及文化对比打下坚实的基础。

西方文明史内容庞杂,一本书不可能面面俱到,因此在材料的安排上,以“突出重点、简明扼要”为原则。全部内容围绕以下11个课题展开:

1. 希腊文化
2. 罗马文化
3. 古希腊、罗马神话
4. 基督教
5. 拜占庭帝国与伊斯兰帝国
6. 中世纪
7. 文艺复兴与宗教改革
8. 巴洛克时期
9. 启蒙运动与革命
10. 浪漫主义与现实主义
11. 现代主义

学习西方文化,并非意味着要放弃本民族的文化。相反,在学习过程中我们应该去主动地进行思考和对比,从而加深对本民族文化的理解,使自己成为沟通中西文化的使者。

在本书的创意、编辑、出版的过程中,得到了许多领导和老师的鼓励和支持,在此深表谢意。更要感谢来自美国 Florida A&M University 的专家张丽萍博士,为本书的编写所提供的宝贵意见及参考资料。由于本书作者的水平有限,可能书中有一些偏颇谬误之处,敬请读者指正。

编 者  
于大连外国语学院

# Contents 目录

## Unit One Greece 希腊

General Introduction 简介 .....	1
The Trojan War 特洛伊战争 .....	1
The Persian War 波斯战争 .....	2
The Romans Conquered Greece 罗马征服希腊 .....	3
Plato's Cave Theory 柏拉图的岩洞理论 .....	3
Aristotle's Philosophy 亚里斯多德的哲学 .....	4
Epicureanism 伊壁鸠鲁学说 .....	5
Homer and <i>Iliad</i> 荷马与《伊利亚特》 .....	6
Sophocles and <i>Oedipus the King</i> 索福克勒斯与《奥狄浦斯王》 .....	8
Origin of Drama 戏剧的起源 .....	9
Sculpture: <i>Venus de Milo</i> 雕塑: 米洛的维纳斯 .....	10
Architecture: Parthenon 建筑: 帕特农神庙 .....	10
Doric, Ionic and Corinthian Styles 多利亚式、伊奥尼亚式和科林斯式圆柱 .....	11
Key Cultural Terms 重要文化术语 .....	12
Selected Reading: 选读:	
A Summary of <i>Odyssey</i> 《奥德赛》的概要 .....	13
Glossary 术语 .....	14
Suggested Readings 推荐阅读书目 .....	16

## Unit Two Rome 罗马

General Introduction 简介 .....	17
From Republic to Empire 从共和国到帝国 .....	18
Pax Romana 罗马帝国统治下的和平时期 .....	18
Division of the Empire 帝国的分裂 .....	19
Stoicism and Romans 斯多葛哲学与罗马 .....	20
Julius Caesar 尤利乌斯·凯撒 .....	21
Augustus Caesar 奥古斯都·凯撒 .....	23
Virgil and <i>Aeneid</i> 维吉尔与《伊尼德》 .....	24
Characteristics of Roman Architecture 罗马建筑的特点 .....	26
Key Cultural Terms 重要文化术语 .....	27
Selected Reading: 选读:	
An Excerpt from Cicero's <i>On Duties</i> 节选自西塞罗的《论责任》 .....	28

Glossary 术语 .....	35
Suggested Readings 推荐阅读书目 .....	36

### Unit Three Greek and Roman Mythology 希腊罗马神话

Gods and Goddesses in Greek and Roman Mythology 希腊罗马神话中的诸神 .....	37
Minor Gods or Heroes 其他的神与英雄 .....	44
Cupid and Psyche 丘比特与普绪客 .....	48
Apollo and Daphne 阿波罗与达芙妮 .....	50
Narcissus and Echo 那喀索斯与厄科 .....	51
Glossary 术语 .....	52
Suggested Readings 推荐阅读书目 .....	54

### Unit Four Christianity 基督教

General Introduction 简介 .....	55
Judaism and Christianity 犹太教与基督教 .....	55
Beliefs of Christians 基督徒的信仰 .....	57
Rise of Christianity in Roman Empire 罗马帝国内基督教的兴起 .....	57
<i>The Bible: Old Testament and New Testament</i> 《圣经》:《旧约》和《新约》 .....	59
Jesus' Four Apostles 耶稣的四个使徒 .....	60
Biblical Stories: 圣经故事:	
Noah's Ark 诺亚方舟 .....	62
Tower of Babel 巴别塔 .....	63
Adam's Apple 亚当的苹果 .....	63
Key Cultural Terms 重要文化术语 .....	64
Selected Readings: 选读:	
<i>Exodus 19</i> 《出埃及记》19 .....	66
<i>Exodus 20</i> 《出埃及记》20 .....	67
<i>Psalms 3</i> 赞美诗 3 .....	68
Glossary 术语 .....	69
Suggested Readings 推荐阅读书目 .....	71

### Unit Five The Byzantine and Islamic Empires

#### 拜占庭帝国与伊斯兰帝国

General Introduction 简介 .....	73
Rise of Byzantine Empire 拜占庭帝国的兴起 .....	74
Characteristics of Byzantine Culture 拜占庭文化的特点 .....	74
Rise of Islam 伊斯兰教的兴起 .....	75

Schism of 1054 1054 年的教会分裂 .....	76
Constantine 君士坦丁大帝 .....	76
Justinian 查士丁尼一世 .....	78
Muhammad 穆罕默德 .....	78
Byzantine Architecture: Hagia Sophia 拜占庭建筑: 圣索菲亚大教堂 .....	79
Key Cultural Terms 重要文化术语 .....	80
Selected Reading: 选读:	
An Excerpt from <i>The Holy Koran</i> 《古兰经》节选 .....	81
Glossary 术语 .....	92
Suggested Readings 推荐阅读书目 .....	94

## Unit Six The Middle Ages 中世纪

General Introduction 简介 .....	95
Rise of Feudalism 封建制度的出现 .....	96
Power of the Catholic Church 天主教会的势力 .....	96
Crusades 十字军东侵 .....	97
Black Death 黑死病 .....	98
Some Consequences of the Plague 瘟疫的后果 .....	99
Monasticism 修道院制度 .....	99
Scholasticism 经院哲学 .....	100
Code of Chivalry 骑士精神的特点 .....	101
Dante and <i>The Divine Comedy</i> 但丁与《神曲》 .....	102
Romanesque Architecture 罗马式建筑 .....	103
Gothic Architecture 哥特式建筑 .....	104
Key Cultural Terms 重要文化术语 .....	106
Selected Reading: 选读:	
An Excerpt from <i>The Divine Comedy</i> 《神曲》节选 .....	106
Glossary 术语 .....	111
Suggested Readings 推荐阅读书目 .....	113

## Unit Seven Renaissance and Reformation 文艺复兴与宗教改革

General Introduction 简介 .....	115
The Rise of the Modern Sovereign State 现代君主制国家的出现 .....	116
Reformation 宗教改革 .....	117
Counter-Reformation 反宗教改革 .....	118
Humanism 人文主义 .....	119
Neo-Platonism 新柏拉图主义 .....	120
Luther's Beliefs 马丁·路德的思想 .....	122

Calvin's Beliefs 加尔文的思想 .....	122
The Medici Family 美第奇家族 .....	123
Petrarch 彼特拉克 .....	124
Leonardo da Vinci 达·芬奇 .....	126
Shakespeare 莎士比亚 .....	127
<i>Don Quixote</i> by Cervantes 塞万提斯的《堂·吉珂德》 .....	128
Michelangelo 米开朗基罗 .....	129
Raphael 拉斐尔 .....	131
Renaissance Architect: Brunelleschi 文艺复兴时期的建筑师: 布鲁内莱斯基 .....	132
Key Cultural Terms 重要文化术语 .....	133
Selected Readings: 选读:	
An Excerpt from <i>The Prince</i> by Machiavelli 马基亚弗利的《君主论》节选 .....	134
An Excerpt from <i>Don Quixote</i> by Cervantes 塞万提斯的《堂·吉珂德》节选 .....	137
Glossary 术语 .....	141
Suggested Readings 推荐阅读书目 .....	143

## Unit Eight The Baroque Age 巴洛克时期

General Introduction 简介 .....	145
France: Absolutism 法国的专制主义 .....	146
England: From Monarchy to Republic to Limited Monarchy	
英国: 从君主制到共和制到君主立宪制 .....	147
The Thirty Years' War 三十年战争 .....	148
Newton and His Theory of Gravity 牛顿及其万有引力学说 .....	150
Francis Bacon 培根 .....	151
Rene Descartes 笛卡尔 .....	152
Hobbes 霍布斯 .....	154
John Locke 洛克 .....	155
Caravaggio 卡拉瓦乔 .....	156
Rembrandt 伦勃朗 .....	158
Bernini 贝尔尼尼 .....	159
Baroque Architecture:	
The Church of St. Peter's in Rome 巴洛克建筑: 罗马的圣彼得大教堂 .....	161
Key Cultural Terms 重要文化术语 .....	162
Selected Readings: 选读:	
Locke's Views on Human Nature 洛克对人性的看法 .....	162
Locke's Views on Government 洛克对政府的看法 .....	163
Glossary 术语 .....	165
Suggested Readings 推荐阅读书目 .....	167



## Unit Nine Enlightenment and Revolutions 启蒙运动与革命

General Introduction 简介 .....	169
The Enlightenment 启蒙运动 .....	170
The American War of Independence 美国独立战争 .....	171
Industrial Revolution 工业革命 .....	172
French Revolution 法国革命 .....	173
Montesquieu's Political Theory 孟德斯鸠的政治理论 .....	174
Kant's Philosophy 康德的哲学 .....	176
Rousseau 卢梭 .....	177
Napoleon 拿破仑 .....	178
Voltaire and <i>Candide</i> 伏尔泰与《老实人》 .....	179
Alexander Pope 蒲柏 .....	181
Rococo Style 洛可可风格 .....	182
Neoclassical Style 新古典主义风格 .....	183
Watteau's <i>Departure from Cythera</i> 华托的《发舟西苔岛》 .....	184
Jacques-Louis David 大卫 .....	185
Key Cultural Terms 重要文化术语 .....	186
Selected Reading: 选读:	
An Excerpt from Rousseau's <i>Discourse on Inequality</i> 节选自卢梭的《论不平等》 .....	186
Glossary 术语 .....	193
Suggested Readings 推荐阅读书目 .....	195

## Unit Ten Romanticism and Realism 浪漫主义和现实主义

General Introduction 简介 .....	197
Romanticism Movement 浪漫主义运动 .....	198
Storm and Stress Movement in Germany 德国的狂飙运动 .....	199
Realism Movement 现实主义运动 .....	200
Darwinism 达尔文学说 .....	201
Goethe 歌德 .....	202
Byron 拜伦 .....	203
Hugo 雨果 .....	205
Pushkin 普希金 .....	206
Charles Dickens 狄更斯 .....	208
Tolstoy 托尔斯泰 .....	209
Goethe's <i>Faust</i> 歌德的《浮士德》 .....	210
Flaubert's <i>Madame Bovary</i> 福楼拜的《包法利夫人》 .....	212

Delacroix's <i>The Massacre at Chios</i> 德拉克洛瓦的《开俄斯岛的屠杀》.....	213
Delacroix's <i>Liberty Leading the People</i> 德拉克洛瓦的《自由领导人民》.....	214
Turner's <i>Snowstorm</i> 透纳的《暴风雪》.....	215
Courbet's <i>A Burial at Ornans</i> 库尔贝的《奥南的葬礼》.....	216
Millet's <i>The Sower</i> 米勒的《播种者》.....	217
Manet's <i>Luncheon on the Grass</i> 马奈的《草地上的午餐》.....	218
Key Cultural Terms 重要文化术语 .....	219
Selected Readings: 选读:	
An Excerpt from <i>The Sorrows of Young Werther</i> 节选自《少年维特之烦恼》.....	220
An Excerpt from <i>Madame Bovary</i> 节选自《包法利夫人》.....	220
Glossary 术语 .....	227
Suggested Readings 推荐阅读书目 .....	230

## Unit Eleven Modernism 现代主义

General Introduction 简介 .....	231
World War I 第一次世界大战 .....	232
The Great Depression 大萧条 .....	232
World War II 第二次世界大战 .....	233
Friedrich Nietzsche 尼采 .....	234
Sigmund Freud 弗洛伊德 .....	235
Einstein's Theories 爱因斯坦的理论 .....	236
Naturalism 自然主义 .....	237
Decadent Writers 颓废派作家 .....	238
Expressionism 表现主义 .....	240
Stream of Consciousness 意识流 .....	241
Vincent van Gogh 凡·高 .....	242
Pablo Picasso 毕加索 .....	243
Salvador Dali 达利 .....	246
International Style in Architecture 建筑中的国际主义风格 .....	247
Key Cultural Terms 重要文化术语 .....	248
Selected Reading: 选读:	
An Excerpt from Virginia Woolf's <i>Night and Day</i> 节选自伍尔夫的《夜与昼》.....	249
Glossary 术语 .....	258
Suggested Readings 推荐阅读书目 .....	260
主要参考书目 .....	262



\*\*\*\*\*

## Unit One Greece

古希腊的地理范围,除了现在的希腊半岛外,还包括整个爱琴海区域和北面的马其顿和色雷斯、意大利半岛和小亚细亚等地。公元前5、6世纪,特别是希波战争以后,经济生活高度繁荣,产生了光辉灿烂的希腊文化,对后世有深远的影响。古希腊人在文学、戏剧、雕塑、哲学等诸多方面有很深的造诣。

在世界文明史上,古希腊文明以其特异的风采与卓越的成就享誉后世,以至有“言必称希腊”之说。的确,它的文化创造达到了人类文明的第一个高峰。古希腊人是一个在继承基础上有着卓越创造的民族,他们的创造性源于他们的好学精神、天生的好奇心、刨根究底的追问与开放的民族性格,促使他们百般寻求知识。他们喜好思想自由,笃信人本主义,重视人和人的自身价值。正是这些优秀的品质使得古希腊人创造了光灿夺目的文明。

### General Introduction

Greece is located at the southeast of Europe and it has borders with Turkey at the east, Bulgaria, FYROM and Albania at the north, and with Italy at the west. Athens, a city with more than 3.5 million residents, is the capital of Greece. It is a country with great natural beauty as well as a long and glorious history.

With the first signs of human activity over its territory dating back to the prehistory, Greece became the center for many civilizations, firstly the Cycladic during the prehistoric times, then the Minoan, the Mycenaean and lastly the Ancient Greek great civilization whose monuments are spread all over Greece and millions of foreign visitors come every year to see them. The Ancient Greeks put the foundations for almost all sciences like medicine, physics, mathematics and philosophy. The Ancient Greek civilization was at its peak in the 5th century BC and continued later until the 1st century BC when Greece was conquered by the Romans.

After the Roman conquest, Greece lost its power and glory, but the Greek spirit and civilization influenced the Romans who imitated it and this was the start to the Greek-Roman civilization which became the base for the whole European culture and civilization.

### The Trojan War

The Trojan War is the main issue of the *Iliad* by Homer, and its later sequence is described in the *Aeneid* by Virgil.



\*\*\*\*\*

The war took place between Achaeans and Trojans, and raged for ten years.

As a consequence of the Judgement of Paris, Helen (wife of the Spartan king Menelaus) was abducted by Paris (son of king Priam of Troy).

Through most of the war, because of Achilles' withdrawal, Agamemnon (king of the Achaeans and brother of Menelaus) was unable to penetrate the fortified city of Troy. On the tenth year, Achilles joined the Achaian's army and killed Hector, the Trojan prince.

After the death of Achilles, the Achaeans built a wooden horse, filled it with warriors and brought it into the city. Once the city was captured, it was destroyed by the Achaeans.

The Trojan king Priam and most of his family were killed, Cassandra, his daughter, was raped and taken as slave to Greece, and Helen, whose abduction had started the war, returned to Menelaus.

---

### **The Persian War**

In 499 BC the Greek cities of Ionia rebelled against Persian rule. The Persian king, Darius, crushed the revolt and sacked Miletus. Darius invaded Greece to punish Athens for the support of the failed revolt in Ionia. A first Persian invasion failed when the Persian fleet was destroyed in a storm off Mount Athos. A second expedition was decisively beaten by the Athenians and their allies on land at the Battle of Marathon in 490 BC.

Xerxes, Darius' son and successor, launched a third expedition on a massive scale on land and sea. To avoid the risk of losing the fleet in a storm, Xerxes ordered a canal to be dug through the Athos peninsula, a notoriously stormy area. As the army advanced along the Thracian coast, Persian diplomats attempted to persuade the Greeks to submit. Many cities and the Greek oracle at Delphi decided to accept Persian terms, but some twenty cities, under the leadership of Sparta, refused to yield.

On August, 480 BC, 300 Spartans and 5600 other warriors died at Thermopylae in a vain attempt to stop the Persian advance. Then, as Xerxes' army marched south, the Athenians were compelled to evacuate the city, which was burned by the Persians.

Yet the Persians had difficulty in supplying their army and Xerxes decided to attack the Greek fleet, which had taken refuge in the Strait of Salamis near Athens. In the narrow Strait, the superior Persian fleet became disorganised and the Greeks, by skillful maneuvering, were able to win a decisive victory. Xerxes ordered an immediate retreat to prevent his army from being trapped.

A token army was left in Greece but this force was destroyed the following year at the Battle of Plataea. After this defeat the Persians abandoned their expansionist aims and the independence of Greek civilization was secured.



\*\*\*\*\*

## The Romans Conquered Greece

The first contact of Rome with the Greeks took place in the area of southern Italy. The Greek cities underestimated the Roman power and their first attempt to stop them from expanding to the south ended in the glorious fiasco of Pyrrus. By 270 BC the Romans had occupied — without any real difficulty — all of the southern Italian peninsula. This unfortunate — for the Greeks — turn of events did not make the rest of them realize the Roman danger, as the west was organized into a unified political system under the Romans. The Romans' first move to the west was invited by those Greek cities that were suffering under the Illyrian occupation. In 225 BC, the Romans declared war against the Illyrians and they became the new occupying force of the region. Egypt, Syria and the Greeks “south of Olympus”, saw this event as the only chance for the destruction of the Macedonian kingdom.

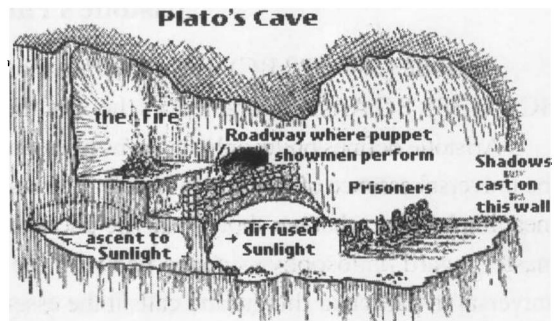
## Plato's Cave Theory

Plato realizes that the general run of humankind can think, and speak, etc., without (so far as they acknowledge) any awareness of his realm of Forms.

The allegory of the cave is supposed to explain this. In the allegory, Plato likens people untutored in the Theory of Forms to prisoners chained in a cave, unable to turn their heads. All they can see is the wall of the cave. Behind them burns a fire. Between the fire and the prisoners there is a parapet, along which puppeteers can walk. The puppeteers, who are behind the prisoners, hold up puppets that cast shadows on the wall of the cave. The prisoners are unable to see these puppets, the real objects that pass behind them. What the prisoners see and hear are shadows and echoes cast by objects that they do not see. Here is an illustration of Plato's Cave:

Such prisoners would mistake appearance for reality. They would think the things they see on the wall (the shadows) were real; they would know nothing of the real causes of the shadows. So when the prisoners talk, what are they talking about? If an object (a book, let us say) is carried past behind them, and it casts a shadow on the wall, and a prisoner says, “I see a book,” what is he talking about?

He thinks he is talking about a book, but he is really talking about a shadow. But he uses the word “book”.





What does that refer to?

Here is Plato's answer:

*"And if they could talk to one another, don't you think they'd suppose that the names they used applied to the things they see passing before them?"*

Plato's point is that the prisoners would be mistaken. For they would be taking the terms in their language to refer to the shadows that pass before their eyes, rather than (as is correct, in Plato's view) to the real things that cast the shadows.

If a prisoner says, "That's a book", he thinks that the word "book" refers to the very thing he is looking at. But he would be wrong. He's only looking at a shadow. The real referent of the word "book" he cannot see. To see it, he would have to turn his head around.

Plato's point: the general terms of our language are not "names" of the physical objects that we can see. They are actually names of things that we cannot see, things that we can only grasp with the mind.

When the prisoners are released, they can turn their heads and see the real objects. Then they realize their error. What can we do that is analogous to turning our heads and seeing the causes of the shadows? We can come to grasp the Forms with our minds.

Plato's aim in *the Republic* is to describe what is necessary for us to achieve this reflective understanding. But even without it, it remains true that our very ability to think and to speak depends on the Forms. For the terms of the language we use get their meaning by "naming" the Forms that the objects we perceive participate in.

The prisoners may learn what a book is by their experience with shadows of books. But they would be mistaken if they thought that the word "book" refers to something that any of them has ever seen.

Likewise, we may acquire concepts by our perceptual experience of physical objects. But we would be mistaken if we thought that the concepts that we grasp were on the same level as the things we perceive.

---

### **Aristotle's Philosophy**

Aristotle (384~322 BC) was a Greek philosopher who studied under Plato (367~347 BC). In 335 BC Aristotle opened a school in the Athens called The Lyceum.

Aristotle defines philosophy in terms of essence, saying that philosophy is "the science of the universal essence of that which is actual". Plato had defined it as the "science of the idea", meaning by idea what we should call the unconditional basis of phenomena. Both pupil and master regard philosophy as concerned with the universal; the former, however, finds the universal in particular things, and calls it the essence of things, while the latter finds that the



\*\*\*\*\*

universal exists apart from particular things, and is related to them as their prototype or exemplar. For Aristotle, therefore, philosophic method implies the ascent from the study of particular phenomena to the knowledge of essences, while for Plato philosophic method means the descent from a knowledge of universal ideas to a contemplation of particular imitations of those ideas. In a certain sense, Aristotle's method is both inductive and deductive, while Plato's is essentially deductive. In other words, for Plato's tendency to idealize the world of reality in the light of intuition of a higher world, Aristotle substituted the scientific tendency to examine first the phenomena of the real world around us and thence to reason to a knowledge of the essences and laws which no intuition can reveal, but which science can prove to exist. In fact, Aristotle's notion of philosophy corresponds, generally speaking, to what was later understood to be science, as distinct from philosophy. In the larger sense of the word, he makes philosophy coextensive with science, or reasoning: "All science (*dianoia*) is either practical, poetical or theoretical." By *practical science* he understands ethics and politics; by *poetical*, he means the study of poetry and the other fine arts; while by *theoretical philosophy* he means physics, mathematics and metaphysics. The last, philosophy in the stricter sense, he defines as "the knowledge of immaterial being", and calls it "first philosophy", "the theologic science" or of "being in the highest degree of abstraction". If logic, or, as Aristotle calls it, Analytic, be regarded as a study preliminary to philosophy, we have as divisions of Aristotelian philosophy (1) Logic; (2) Theoretical Philosophy, including Metaphysics, Physics, Mathematics; (3) Practical Philosophy; and (4) Poetical Philosophy.

---

## Epicureanism

This term has two distinct, though cognate, meanings. In its popular sense, the word stands for a refined and calculating selfishness, seeking not power or fame, but the pleasures of sense, particularly of the palate, and those in company rather than solitude. An epicure is one who is extremely choice and delicate in his viands. In the other sense, Epicureanism signifies a philosophical system, which includes a theory of conduct, of nature, and of mind.

Epicurus, from whom this system takes its name, was a Greek, born at Samos 341 BC, who, in 307 BC, founded a school at Athens, and died 270 BC.

Philosophy was described by Epicurus as "the art of making life happy", and he says that "prudence is the noblest part of philosophy". His natural philosophy and epistemology seem to have been adopted for the sake of his theory of life. It is, therefore, proper that his ethics should first be explained. The purpose of life, according to Epicurus, is personal happiness; and by happiness he means not that state of well-being and perfection of which the consciousness is accompanied by pleasure, but pleasure itself. Moreover, this pleasure



\*\*\*\*\*

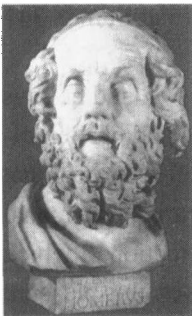
is sensuous, for it is such only as is attainable in this life. This pleasure is the immediate purpose of every action. "Habituate yourself", he says.

To think that death is nothing to us; for all good and evil is in feeling; now death is the privation of feeling. Hence, the right knowledge that death is nothing to us makes us enjoy what there is in this life, not adding to it an indefinite duration, but eradicating the desire of immortality.

The defects of this theory of life are obvious. In the first place, as to the matter of fact, experience shows that happiness is not best attained by directly seeking it. The selfish are not more happy, but less so, than the unselfish. In the next place the theory altogether destroys virtue as virtue, and eliminates the idea and sentiment expressed by the words "ought", "duty", "right" and "wrong". Virtue indeed tends to produce the truest and highest pleasure; all such pleasure, so far as it depends upon ourselves, depends upon virtue. But he who practises virtue for the sake of the pleasure alone is selfish, not virtuous, and he will never enjoy the pleasure, because he has not the virtue. A similar observation may be made upon the Epicurean theory of friendship. Friendship for the sake of advantage is not true friendship in the proper sense of the word. External actions, apart from affection, cannot constitute friendship; that affection no one can feel merely because he judges it would be advantageous and pleasurable; in fact he cannot know the pleasure until he first feels the affection. If we consider the Epicurean condemnation of patriotism and of the family life, we must pronounce a still severer censure. Such a view of life is the meanest form of selfishness leading in general to vice. Epicurus, perhaps, was better than his theory; but the theory itself, if it did not originate in coldness of heart and meanness of spirit, was extremely well suited to encourage them. If sincerely embraced and consistently carried out, it undermined all that was chivalrous and heroic, and even all that was ordinarily virtuous. Fortitude and justice, as such, ceased to be objects of admiration, and temperance sank into a mere matter of calculation. Even prudence itself, dissociated from all moral quality became a mere balancing between the pleasures of the present and of the future.

---

## Homer and *Iliad*



### Homer

Apart from the historical writings of ancient Israel, the two major pieces of epic literature in Western civilization are the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, two books ascribed to the ancient Greek poet Homer.

These two works represent a brilliant retelling of myths and legends. For the Greeks of the 7th century BC, however, these books were their history.





\*\*\*\*\*

About Homer nothing certain is known.

The later historian Herodotus (5th century BC) said that Homer was a Greek from Ionia on the west coast of Asia Minor. He was perhaps a native of the island of Chios and supposedly lived around 850 BC. Other historians place him closer to 750 BC.

Tradition depicts Homer as a blind minstrel wandering from place to place, reciting poems that had come down to him from a very old oral tradition. Many scholars believe that the books as they exist today were not written by a single person and were not put in writing until centuries after they took their present form.

It is probable that much of the epic tradition of the two books was formed in the 200 or 300 years before an alphabet reached Greece in the 9th or 8th century BC. If so, it is possible that Homer used earlier writings to help him, or he could have dictated his poems to someone else because of his blindness or because he was illiterate.

## *Iliad*

The *Iliad* is a summary in verse of what was apparently a very long war conducted against Troy by the Greeks. As in much myth, there is a kernel of reality behind it. That there was such a war is quite likely.

The *Iliad* is an amazing tale of heroes and heroines, gods and goddesses. But most of all it is the story of Achilles, of his anger and determination, and of his slaying of the Trojan hero Hector.

The purpose of the war was to recover the most beautiful woman in the world, Helen. She was the wife of Menelaus, king of Sparta. But she had been carried off to Troy by Paris, son of King Priam of Troy. Menelaus, naturally, swore vengeance. He called upon the kings and princes of Greece to help him. Among those who responded were Achilles, Ajax, Diomedes, Odysseus and Nestor. Agamemnon, king of Mycenae and brother of Menelaus, was chosen commander in chief.

For more than nine years the Greeks besieged Troy unsuccessfully. Then Achilles quarreled with Agamemnon and refused to take further part in the conflict. It was the slaying of his friend Patroclus about two thirds of the way through the book that brought Achilles back to the action. He killed Hector in battle, but later he was himself killed—driving the Greeks to despair of ever winning.

It was then that the crafty Odysseus stepped forward with a stratagem. Aided by the goddess Athena, he planned the construction of a huge wooden horse with enough room to contain 100 warriors. Secretly the best warriors were hidden inside. Then the rest of the Greeks boarded ship as though to sail home in defeat. The Trojans thought the horse was a peace offering to Athena. One of the Trojan priests, Laocoön, warned against “Greeks, even bearing gifts”. Cassandra, daughter of King Priam, also predicted disaster. She had