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留园西方经典文化阅读

西方哲学史

A History of Western Philosophy



英文版

主编◎顾琮雯(Vanessa) 审校◎[美]纳特(Nate)

华东理工大学出版社
EAST CHINA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY PRESS

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编著 ○ 林雯欢 明娜 孙佳怡

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序言

提到哲学，大部分人都会不由自主地“望而却步”。传统观念认为哲学就是“高深莫测”的东西，这一误解让很多中国学子对哲学“拒之门外”。而一贯以来重理工、轻人文的教育环境，让中国学生对“文史哲”的价值感越来越模糊，继而也不愿意将本就非常紧张的学习时间和精力投入到哲学的学习中。

但是，随着关注国际教育的人越来越多，很多家庭即使还没有下定决心让自己的孩子走国际教育之路，内心中也依然希望自己的孩子可以接触并接受国际教育理念。想要更好地完成国际教育，实现“读名校，有成就”的目标，首先就要学好英语。而国际教育的标准对“学好英语”的要求，是超越语言水平的。网络上流传着大量关于批判性思维（Critical Thinking）的讨论，虽然有些偏颇，但是却在一一定程度上暗示了国际教育背景下的英语学习的方向，即学会用英语进行思考。

用英语进行思考，首先要学会的就是思考的方法。滋养英语的土壤是欧洲文化，其根源在古希腊和古罗马。希腊语、拉丁语，与盎格鲁-撒克逊等语言的结合，催生了古英语，而法语等语言的影响，又促成了现代英语的出现。寻根究底，其源头依然在古希腊和古罗马。而这两大欧洲文明的根源，都非常重视哲学思考，这也是英语单词 Philosophy（爱智慧）的由来。

因此，想要将英语学习到可以用来进行思考的程度，没有基本的英语哲学训练，是难以实现的。除此之外，学好英语，“初级阶段是听口训练，高级阶段是读写训练”，这已经成为一种共识。所谓读，就是要多读书。但是，读书与有效读书是有巨大差异的。完整地读过一本英文原版书，或是接触过学术性英语考试（比如美国高考 SAT，美国研究生入学考试 GRE 和 GMAT）的人，都可能会有相似的感受——看懂英文的字面意思，但是无法理解其真正的含义。究其原因，就是还没有做到“文史哲”三位一体。文学（文字）是血肉，历史是骨架，哲学是灵魂。没有骨架和灵魂，只有血肉，当然是无法真正理解的。

自2016年开始，我正式投入研究双语分级阅读课程体系，立愿要开发出一套“适合中国人学习英语的课程”并主持编撰一套“适合中国人学习的英语书籍”。这过程中，走过很多弯路，也有过很多困惑。几经挫折，我们逐渐梳理出一套科学的体系：学好英语，要按照难度分级，分级教材要兼顾中国和英语国家的文化，兼顾文化需要从文学、历史和哲学三大方面入手，最后打通基础英语、能力英语、应试英语和人文英语四个阶段，真正实现“学好英语，向世界介绍中国文化”的英语学习目标。

这本《西方哲学史》和其姊妹篇《AP 英语文学与写作》，共同肩负着重要的使命。希望这套丛书，连同双语分级阅读课程，可以真正帮到学习者，用正确的方法，以更高的目标，学习国际教育体系下的英文。

孙健

2018年仲夏于北京中关村



Brief Introduction

The philosophical ideas presented in the following chapters form much of the basis of contemporary Western philosophical thought. These ideas and their development span millenia, dating back to ancient Greece, where abstract thought about the ultimate nature of the world and human life appeared as a manifestation of the urge to transition from acceptance of superstition towards explanation. For the purposes of this book, we divide Western philosophy into three areas/eras: Ancient (Greco-Roman), Medieval (Christian-European), and Modern. This course focuses on some of the prominent Western thinkers of both ancient and modern times, exploring some of their most compelling ideas about the world and humanity. This course should invite students to ask, think, argue and reason, as well as encourage them to appreciate the many connections and differences between the thinkers presented. Our hope is that there is inspiration herein for students to learn and effectively present their own thoughts regarding the many ideas they will encounter.

Contents

Chapter 1	Socrates	1
Historical Background	Who Was Socrates?	2
Reflective Reading	Topic 1 A Taste of Plato’s Socratic Dialogues	3
	Topic 2 The Art of Discourse.....	5
	Topic 3 A Divine Voice	7
	Topic 4 The Right Insight Leads to the Right Action	9
Further Reading	Plato’s Socratic Dialogues	10
	Pre-Socratic Thinkers	16
After-class Assignment	.....	23
Chapter 2	Plato	25
Historical Background	Who Was Plato?	26
Reflective Reading	Topic 1 Eternally True, Eternally Beautiful, and Eternally Good	27
	Topic 2 The World of Ideas	28
	Topic 3 True Knowledge	31
	Topic 4 Out of the Darkness of the Cave	33
	Topic 5 The Philosophic State	35
Further Reading	Plato’s Birth and Family	37
	Influence on Plato	40
	Plato’s Dialogues	41
	Introduction to the Republic	42
After-class Assignment	.....	45
Chapter 3	Aristotle	47
Historical Background	Who Was Aristotle?	48
Reflective Reading	Topic 1 No Innate Idea	49
	Topic 2 The Form of a Thing Is Its Specific Characteristics	51
	Topic 3 Logic	53



Further Reading	Aristotle's Life	55
After-class Assignment	.....	59
Chapter 4	René Descartes	67
Historical Background	Who Was René Descartes?	68
Reflective Reading	Topic 1 Certain Knowledge	69
	Topic 2 The Perfect Entity	72
	Topic 3 Dualism	76
Further Reading	René Descartes' Life and Works	79
After-class Assignment	.....	87
Chapter 5	David Hume	91
Historical Background	Who Was David Hume?	92
Reflective Reading	Topic 1 Impressions and Ideas	93
	Topic 2 Perception	98
	Topic 3 Causality	103
Further Reading	David Hume's Life and Work	108
After-class Assignment	.....	113
Chapter 6	Immanuel Kant	115
Historical Background	Who Was Immanuel Kant?	116
Reflective Reading	Topic 1 How to Perceive the World	117
	Topic 2 The Existence of God and Reason	124
	Topic 3 The Starry Heavens Above Me and the Moral Law Within Me	127
Further Reading	Immanuel Kant's Life and Works	135
After-class Assignment	.....	138
Chapter 7	John Locke	139
Historical Background	Who Was John Locke?	140
Reflective Reading	Topic 1 Empiricism	141
	Topic 2 Our Perception of the World	144
	Topic 3 Locke's Political Philosophy	147
Further Reading	John Locke's Life and Works	152
After-class Assignment	.....	157

Chapter 8	Thomas Hobbes	159
Historical Background	Who Was Thomas Hobbes?	160
Reflective Reading	Topic 1 The State of Nature	161
	Topic 2 The State of Nature Is a State of War	163
	Topic 3 The Leviathan	165
Further Reading	Thomas Hobbes' Life and Works	168
After-class Assignment	.....	172
Chapter 9	Georg W. F. Hegel	173
Historical Background	Who Was Georg W. F. Hegel?	174
Reflective Reading	Topic 1 World Spirit	174
	Topic 2 The Dialectic	181
	Topic 3 World Spirit	188
Further Reading	Georg W. F. Hegel's Life and Works	191
After-class Assignment	.....	193
Chapter 10	Karl Marx	195
Historical Background	Who Was Karl Marx?	196
Reflective Reading	Topic 1 Turning Point	196
	Topic 2 Marx's Historical Materialism and Class Struggle	198
	Topic 3 Alienation	203
Further Reading	Karl Marx's Life and Works	207
After-class Assignment	.....	209
Chapter 11	Friedrich Nietzsche	211
Historical Background	Who Was Friedrich Nietzsche?	212
Reflective Reading	Topic 1 God Is Dead	213
	Topic 2 After the "Death of God"	215
	Topic 3 Superman and Master-slave Morality	218
Further Reading	Friedrich Nietzsche's Life and Works	222
After-class Assignment	.....	228
Chapter 12	Ludwig Wittgenstein	229
Historical Background	Who Was Ludwig Wittgenstein?	230
Reflective Reading	Topic 1 Bewitchment by Language	231



	Topic 2 No Private Language	234
Further Reading	Ludwig Wittgenstein's Life	235
After-class Assignment		238
Chapter 13 Hannah Arendt		239
Historical Background	Who Was Hannah Arendt?	240
Reflective Reading	Topic 1 Totalitarianism	241
	Topic 2 Banality of Evil	243
	Topic 3 Citizenship and the Public Sphere	244
	Topic 4 Citizenship, Agency, and Collective Identity	247
Further Reading	Hannah Arendt's Life and Works	249
After-class Assignment		251
Chapter 14 Jean-Paul Sartre		253
Historical Background	Who Was Jean-Paul Sartre?	254
Reflective Reading	Topic 1 Freedom	255
	Topic 2 Existentialism Is a Humanism	257
	Topic 3 Absurdity of Our Existence	258
Further Reading	Jean-Paul Sartre's Life and Works	259
After-class Assignment		261
Chapter 15 Jacques Derrida		263
Historical Background	Who Was Jacques Derrida?	264
Reflective Reading	Derrida's Concerns Flow from a Consideration of Several Issues	264
Further Reading	Jacques Derrida's Life and Works	268
After-class Assignment		269
Overall Review Test		271
Appendix		275



Chapter 1

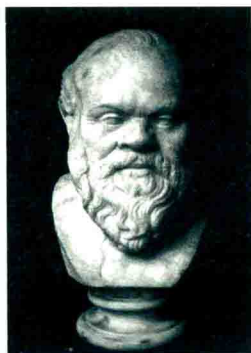
Socrates

The unexamined life is not worth living.



Historical Background

Who Was Socrates?



Socrates (苏格拉底, 470 – 399 B. C.) is possibly the most enigmatic figure in the entire history of philosophy. He never wrote a single line. Yet he is one of the philosophers who has had the greatest influence on European thought, not least because of the dramatic manner of his death. Socrates was widely accepted as the Father of philosophy, the thinkers or philosophers before him were mainly recognized as devoting their attention to questions about the origin and nature of the physical world, it is Socrates whose dedication to careful reasoning and focus in the nature and truth concerning humanity, e.g. ethics, transformed the entire enterprise. These thinkers before Socrates were called in history “**Presocratics**”¹.

We know he was born in Athens, and that he spent most of his life in the city squares and marketplaces talking with the people he met there. Even during his lifetime he was considered somewhat enigmatic, and fairly soon after his death he was held to be the founder of any number of different philosophical schools of thought. Since he sought genuine knowledge rather than mere victory over an opponent, Socrates employed the same logical tricks developed by the Sophists to a new purpose, the pursuit of truth. Thus, his willingness to call everything into question and his determination to accept nothing less than an adequate account of the nature of things made him the first clear exponent of critical philosophy. It was also said of him that “You can seek him in the present, you can seek him in the past, but you will never find his equal.” Nevertheless, he was sentenced to death for his philosophical activities. He could have begged for mercy from the public or escaped with the help of friends, yet he chose the death.

We know that although Socrates was well known during his own time for his conversational skills and public teaching, he wrote nothing, so we are dependent upon his students (especially Xenophon [色诺芬] and Plato) for any detailed knowledge of his methods and results. The life of Socrates is mainly known to us through the writings of **Plato** (柏拉图), who was one of his



1 Presocratics: Abstract thought about the ultimate nature of the world and of human life began to appear in Greece during the sixth century B.C. The Presocratic philosophers rejected traditional mythological explanations of the phenomena they saw around them in favor of more rational explanations. These philosophers asked questions about “the essence of things”, such as:

From where does everything come? From what is everything created? How do we explain the plurality of things found in nature? How might we describe nature mathematically?

pupils and who became one of the greatest philosophers of all time. The trouble is that Plato was himself a philosopher who often injected his own theories into the dialogues he presented to the world as discussions between Socrates and other famous figures of the day. Nevertheless, it is usually assumed that at least the early dialogues of Plato provide a fairly accurate representation of Socrates himself.

Reflective Reading

☉ Topic 1 A Taste of Plato's Socratic Dialogues

Guiding Questions:

If someone asks you what justice is, how would you answer? Do you agree that treating friends well and enemies badly is justice? Why? Write down what you think.

Read the following dialogue (an excerpt from Plato's dialogue "Republic") between Socrates and Polemarchus. What is this excerpt about? What are the characteristics of this excerpt? Think about how Socrates communicated with his interlocutor. Do you agree with Socrates?

Polemarchus: It is just to give to each what is owed to him.

Socrates: Clearly, he does not mean giving back to someone whatever he has lent to you, even if he is out of his mind when he asks for it. And yet what he has lent to you



is surely something that is owed to him, isn't it?

Polemarchus: Yes.

Socrates: But when he is out of his mind, it is, under no circumstances, to be given to him.

Polemarchus: True. I meant friends owe something good to their friends, never something bad.

Socrates: I understand. You mean someone does not give a lender what he is owed by giving him gold, when the giving and taking would be harmful, and both he and the lender are friends.

Polemarchus: It certainly is.

Socrates: Now what about this? Should one also give to one's enemies whatever is owed to them?

Polemarchus: Yes, by all means. What is in fact owed to them? And what an enemy owes an enemy, in my view, is also precisely what is appropriate—something bad.

Socrates: Is it just to give to each what is appropriate to him? And this is what you call giving him what he is owed.

Polemarchus: If we are to follow the previous answers, Socrates, it gives benefit to friends and harm to enemies.

Socrates: Treating friends well and enemies badly is justice?

Polemarchus: I believe so.

Socrates: Then it follows, Polemarchus, that it is just for many people — the ones who are mistaken in their judgment — to harm their friends, since they are bad for them, and benefit their enemies, since they are good.

Polemarchus: I should change my definitions. Someone who is both believed to be good and is good is a friend; someone who is believed to be good, but is not, is believed to be a friend but is not. And the same goes for enemies.

Socrates: Should a just man really harm anyone whatsoever?

Polemarchus: Of course. He should harm those who are both bad and enemies.

Socrates: When horses are harmed, do they become better or worse?

Polemarchus: Worse.

Socrates: With respect to the one that makes horses good.

Polemarchus: Yes.

Socrates: And what about human beings, comrade; shouldn't we say that, when they are harmed, they become worse with respect to human virtue?

Polemarchus: Of course.

Socrates: But isn't justice human virtue?

Polemarchus: Yes, that's necessarily so, too.

Socrates: Then, my dear Polemarchus, people who have been harmed are bound to



Read the following excerpt and think about: What is Socratic Irony (苏格拉底式的佯作无知)? How does Socrates do philosophy?

The Art of Discourse

The essential nature of Socrates' art lay in the fact that he did not appear to want to instruct people. On the contrary, he gave the impression of one desiring to learn from those he spoke with. So instead of lecturing like a traditional schoolmaster, he discussed.

Obviously he would not have become a famous philosopher had he confined himself purely to listening to others. Nor would he have been sentenced to death. But he just asked questions, especially to begin a conversation, as if he knew nothing. In the course of the discussion he would generally get his opponents to recognize the weakness of their arguments, and, forced into a corner, they would finally be obliged to realize what was right and what was wrong.

Socrates, whose mother was a midwife, used to say that his art was like the art of the midwife. She does not herself give birth to the child, but she is there to help during its delivery. Similarly, Socrates saw his task as helping people to “give birth” to the correct insight, since real understanding must come from within. It cannot be imparted by someone else. And only the understanding that comes from within can lead to the true insight.

Let me put it more precisely: The ability to give birth is a natural characteristic. In the same way, everybody can grasp philosophical truths if they just use their innate reason. Using your innate reason means reaching down inside yourself and using what is there.

By playing ignorant, Socrates forced the people he met to use their common sense. Socrates could feign ignorance—or pretend to be dumber than he was. We call this Socratic irony. This enabled him to continually expose the weaknesses in people's thinking. He was not averse to doing this in the middle of the city square. If you met Socrates, you thus might end up being made a fool of publicly.

So it is not surprising that, as time went by, people found him increasingly exasperating, especially people who had status in the community. “Athens is like a sluggish horse,” he is reputed to have said, “and I am the gadfly trying to sting it into life.”

Topic 3 A Divine Voice

Guiding Questions:

What was this “divine voice” that Socrates talked about? What did Socrates think the truth is?

A Divine Voice

It was not in order to torment his fellow beings that Socrates kept on stinging them. Something within him left him no choice. He always said that he had a “divine voice” inside him. Socrates protested, for example, against having any part in condemning people to death. He moreover refused to inform on his political enemies. This was eventually to cost him his life.

In the year 399 B.C., he was accused of “introducing new gods and corrupting the youth,” as well as not believing in the accepted gods. With a slender majority, a jury of five hundred found him guilty.

He could very likely have appealed for leniency. At least he could have saved his life by agreeing to leave Athens. But had he done this, he would not have been Socrates. He valued his conscience and the truth higher than life. He assured the jury that he had only acted in the best interests of the state. He was nevertheless condemned to drink hemlock. Shortly thereafter, he drank the poison in the presence of his friends, and died.

Why did Socrates have to die? People have been asking this question for 2,400 years. However, he was not the only person in history to have seen things through to the bitter end and suffered death for the sake of their convictions.

I have mentioned Jesus already, and in fact there are several striking parallels between them.

Both Jesus and Socrates were enigmatic personalities, also to their contemporaries. Neither of them wrote down their teachings, so we are forced to rely on the picture we have of them from their disciples. But we do know that they were both masters of the art of discourse. They both spoke with a characteristic self-assuredness that could fascinate as well as exasperate. And not least, they both believed that they spoke on behalf of something greater than themselves. They challenged the power of the community by criticizing all forms of injustice and corruption. And finally—their activities cost them their lives.

The trials of Jesus and Socrates also exhibit clear parallels.

They could certainly both have saved themselves by appealing for mercy, but they both felt



they had a mission that would have been betrayed unless they kept faith to the bitter end. And by meeting their death so bravely they commanded an enormous following, also after they had died. I do not mean to suggest that Jesus and Socrates were alike. I am merely drawing attention to the fact that they both had a message that was inseparably linked to their personal courage.

Guiding Question:

Compare and contrast Socrates' trials and Jesus' trials recorded in The Bible, think about the similarities and the differences. What is the truth according to Socrates and Jesus?

 Jesus' Words Concerning Truth

Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." —John 14: 6

"Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth."—John 17: 17

To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

Jesus before Pilate—John 18: 28-40

Then the Jewish leaders took Jesus from Caiaphas to the palace of the Roman governor. By now it was early morning, and to avoid ceremonial uncleanness they did not enter the palace, because they wanted to be able to eat the Passover. So Pilate came out to them and asked, "What charges are you bringing against this man?"

"If he were not a criminal," they replied, "we would not have handed him over to you."

Pilate said, "Take him yourselves and judge him by your own law."

"But we have no right to execute anyone," they objected. This took place to fulfill what Jesus had said about the kind of death he was going to die.

Pilate then went back inside the palace, summoned Jesus and asked him, "Are you the king of the Jews?"

"Is that your own idea," Jesus asked, "or did others talk to you about me?"

"Am I a Jew?" Pilate replied. "Your own people and chief priests handed you over to me. What