普通高等教育“十一五”国家级规划教材




新世纪高等院校英语专业本科生系列教材(修订版)

总主编　戴炜栋

# 西方文化导论

# Western Culture: An Introduction

第2版

叶胜年 / 著



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# 总　序

我国英语专业本科教学与学科建设，伴随着我国改革开放的步伐，得到了长足的发展和提升。回顾这30多年英语专业教学改革和发展的历程，无论是英语专业教学大纲的制订、颁布、实施和修订，还是四、八级考试的开发与推行，以及多项英语教学改革项目的开拓，无不是围绕英语专业的学科建设和人才培养而进行的，正如《高等学校英语专业英语教学大纲》提出的英语专业的培养目标，即培养“具有扎实的英语语言基础和广博的文化知识并能熟练地运用英语在外事、教育、经贸、文化、科技、军事等部门从事翻译、教学、管理、研究等工作的复合型英语人才”。为促进英语专业本科建设的发展和教学质量的提高，外语专业教学指导委员会还实施了“新世纪教育质量改革工程”，包括推行“十五”、“十一五”国家级教材规划和外语专业国家精品课程评审，从各个教学环节加强对外语教学质量的宏观监控，从而确保为我国的经济建设输送大量的优秀人才。

跨入新世纪，英语专业的建设面临新的形势和任务：经济全球化、科技一体化、文化多元化、信息网络化的发展趋势加快，世界各国之间的竞争日趋激烈，这对我国英语专业本科教学理念和培养目标提出了新的挑战；大学英语教学改革如火如荼；数字化、网络化等多媒体教学辅助手段在外语教学中广泛应用和不断发展；英语专业本科生教育的改革和学科建设也呈现出多样化的趋势，翻译专业、商务英语专业相继诞生——这些变化和发展无疑对英语专业的学科定位、人才培养以及教材建设提出了新的、更高的要求。

上海外语教育出版社（简称外教社）在新世纪之初约请了全国30余所著名高校百余位英语教育专家，对面向新世纪的英语专业本科生教材建设进行了深入、全面、广泛和具有前瞻性的研讨，成功地推出了理念新颖、特色明显、体系完备的“新世纪高等院校英语专业本科生系列教材”，并被列入“十五”国家级规划教材，以其前瞻性、先进性和创新性等特点受到全国众多使用院校的广泛好评。

面对快速发展的英语专业本科教育，如何保证专业的教学质量，培养具有国际视野和创新能力的英语专业人才，是国家、社会、高校教师共同关注的问题，也是教材编撰者和教材出版者关心和重视的问题。



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作为教学改革的一个重要组成部分，优质教材的编写和出版对学科建设的推动和人才培养的作用是有目共睹的。外教社为满足教学和学科发展的需要，与教材编写者们一起，力图全方位、大幅度修订并扩充原有的“新世纪高等院校英语专业本科生系列教材”，以打造英语专业教材建设完整的学科体系。为此，外教社邀请了全国几十所知名高校 40 余位著名英语教育专家，根据英语专业学科发展的新趋势，围绕梳理现有课程、优化教材品种和结构、改进教学方法和手段、强化学生自主学习能力的培养、有效提高教学质量等问题开展了专题研究，并在教材编写与出版中予以体现。

修订后的教材仍保持原有的专业技能、专业知识、文化知识和相关专业知识四大板块，品种包括基础技能、语言学、文学、文化、人文科学、测试、教学法等，总数逾 200 种，几乎涵盖了当前我国高校英语专业所开设的全部课程，并充分考虑到我国英语教育的地区差异和不同院校英语专业的特点，提供更多的选择。教材编写深入浅出，内容反映了各个学科领域的最新研究成果；在编写宗旨上，除了帮助学生打下扎实的语言基本功外，着力培养学生分析问题、解决问题的能力，提高学生的思辨能力和人文、科学素养，培养健康向上的人生观，使学生真正成为我国新时代所需要的英语专门人才。

系列教材修订版编写委员会仍由我国英语界的知名专家学者组成，其中多数是在各个领域颇有建树的专家，不少是高等学校外语专业教学指导委员会的委员，总体上代表了中国英语教育的发展方向和水平。

系列教材完整的学科体系、先进的编写理念、权威的编者队伍，再次得到教育部的认可，荣列“普通高等教育‘十一五’国家级规划教材”。我深信，这套教材一定会促进学生语言技能、专业知识、学科素养和创新能力的培养，填补现行教材某些空白，为培养高素质的英语专业人才奠定坚实的基础。

戴炜栋

教育部高校外语专业教学指导委员会主任委员

国务院学位委员会外语学科评议组组长

# 前　言

本书自出版以来已经多次重印，似乎多少说明了西方文化正在引起越来越多人的兴趣。这次修订保留了原书的篇章结构，除了对个别语言上的疏漏与不当作了订正和补缺之外，也对部分章节进行了更新；同时还增添了些图片，让读者增加些对西方文化的感性认识。

本书编写的初衷是向中国学生和一般读者介绍西方文化的全貌，为此我力图挑选那些我认为非常重要的历史时期和相关事件、人物，注意从历史和心智意义上去陈述西方文化发展的历程。说得更为具体一些，这些内容包括古典主义时期的起源、犹太和基督教文化、中世纪、文艺复兴、启蒙运动等不同时期，以及诸如浪漫主义、现实主义、自然主义、新古典主义、现代派和后现代派这样一些文化/文学流派，再加上古典经济学、乌托邦思想、德国古典哲学、马克思主义、达尔文主义、实证主义、功利主义、实用主义、弗洛伊德的精神分析等这些有一定影响的思想理论。这些内容基本上按照时间顺序排列，分为 12 章。

本书着重介绍西方人文思想传统的发展情况，有选择地推介一大批在不同历史时期活跃在西方文化前沿阵地的知识精英。正是由于他们在知识领域的辛勤劳动，西方的社会人文环境才得到了极大的改变。这些领域涵盖了社会学、哲学、经济学、心理学、生物学、人类学、文学、艺术以及科学等门类或学科。他们的代表人物从苏格拉底、柏拉图、亚里士多德、欧几里得和阿基米德起，经过但丁、莎士比亚、洛克、培根、哥白尼、伽利略、牛顿、伏尔泰和卢梭，直到康德、黑格尔、亚当·斯密、大卫·李嘉图、马尔萨斯、边沁、穆尔、马克思、恩格斯、达尔文、孔德、叔本华、尼采、荣格、爱因斯坦和萨特等这样一大批出类拔萃的知识界精英。

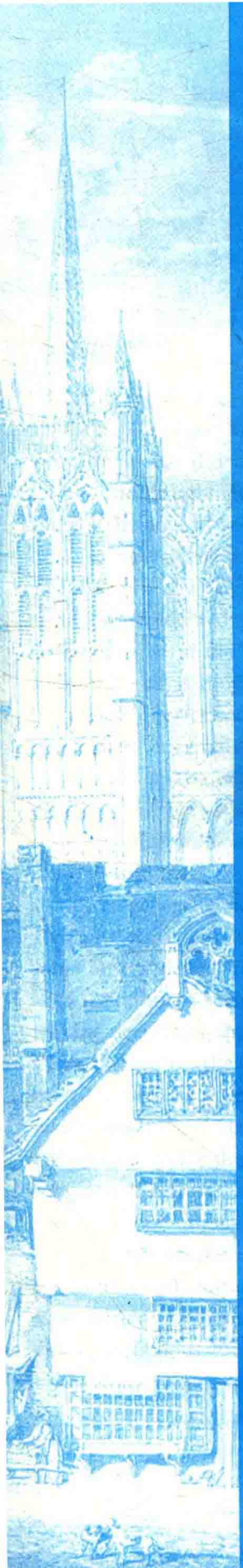
西方文化群星灿烂，包罗万象，即便是简要介绍也会因为内容过多而难以裁定，甚至无法进行。有鉴于此，我想应当有几个要求。首先，上这门课的学生应当学过西方国家概况之类的前期课程。其次，要保证上课的时间。如果想上完全部 12 章，我以为至少需要 40 课时。一般来说，每章需要 3 课时，其中 2 课时用于讲解，1 课时用于课后问题的讨论。再次，课文要预习。由于大部分学生对课文内容和语言不一定很熟悉，所以上课之前最好预习一下，这样听课的障碍可能会少一些。最后，上课形式最好分为两种：讲解

和讨论。讲解可以采用大班方式，学生人数可以多一些，100 人乃至更多些都不要紧；但是讨论课人数则不宜过多，最好在 20 人左右，否则对于深入理解课文会有影响。

本书主要是为了解西方文化提供一个基础，虽然有其自身的教学进度和安排，需要一个合乎逻辑的结构框架，但教学方法可以灵活掌握，允许使用者自由选择，自己决定哪一部分更为重要。如果时间比较紧，甚至可以舍弃某一部分。例如最后两章或者有关哲学理论的部分，都可以由使用者自行安排。鉴于有些老师和自学者对于理解和掌握本书内容有些困难，我们专门编写了教师用书，希望对他们的教学与自学有所帮助。

与此同时，我们应当认识到目前对西方文化的介绍还仅仅局限于一些基本常识，学习这方面的知识虽然可以有自己的选择，但也要尽可能注意到它的系统性和完整性，既不应当求全责备，也不应当仅仅当成一种“故事会”，一笑了之。诚然兴趣对于入门是重要的，但掌握一种重要的知识技能仅仅凭借兴趣又是不够的；只有通过持续和系统的求知和积累才能逐步做到这一点。因此我们鼓励扩大阅读面，建立自己的知识库，同时主张积极的课堂讨论，通过必要的交流和思辨来较为全面地掌握相关知识，探讨某方面的一些重要问题。这样做，无论对于学习者语言水平的提高，还是对于文化观念的更新，都是有益的。另外，学习西方文化也可以借助多媒体手段——实际上如果时间许可，应当鼓励使用多媒体。这样不仅有助于提高学习者对西方文化的兴趣，扩大西方文化的影响，而且也可以加深对西方文化的了解。例如，播放西方文化节目就能保证更为全面地掌握更多西方文化知识，特别是在建筑、艺术、戏剧、电影等方面。教师通过视听功能的展示、表演与动感的沟通，可以为学生提供更多的理解空间。

目前国内已有不少高校都开设了与西方文化相关的课程，但是总的来说，中国的西方文化教学仍然处于起步阶段。或许正因为如此，这门课的意义才更加值得注意。我们国家正在深化改革，随着全球化进程的加快以及与外部世界的进一步沟通，学习与了解西方文化的人数同热情也会不断提升。希望本书可以帮助读者获取一些西方文化的基础知识，为自己的人生道路积累一些文化资本。当他们展翅高飞，穿梭在形形色色的事业空间里，同国内外各种各样的人和事打交道时，或许本书的知识与语言可以始终陪伴在他们身边，为他们增添些智慧和力量。



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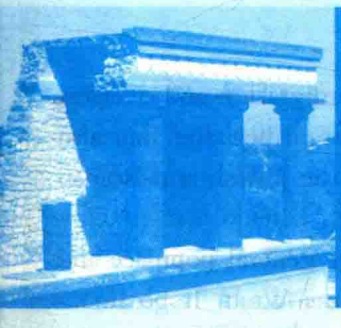
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# General Survey

Though Western civilization[①] has a history as long as Eastern civilization, and has lasted almost 5,000 years since the origin of Cretan society, her rapid growth, high prosperity and world influence did not come until the Renaissance. It is first due to the Renaissance and then to the Enlightenment that the Europeans were liberated from the feudalistic autocracy and the theological yoke before the bourgeoisie took over state power and the culmination in her historical development began. Western civilization was thus able to take on a new look and opened a new page in her historical process towards modernity by stepping up her efforts at an unprecedented pace. When looking back at the tremendous achievements Western civilization has made in the last few centuries, one could not help raising some queries in addition to expressing admiration.

These queries could easily spring to mind: why was it possible for Western countries to make such enormous progress in the last few centuries? How has the human spirit contributed to the material fulfilment of Westerners? What are the characteristic strengths demonstrated at the heart of Western civilization? It is absolutely necessary to acquire some basic knowledge about the history of Western civilization and culture in order to answer these questions.

It is generally acknowledged that Western culture originated in Greek, Roman and perhaps Celtic culture, which is known as classicism, in addition to the influences from some other ancient civilizations like those of Egypt and Mesopotamia. Many aspects of Western culture, such as educational systems, public institutions, ways of counselling and making decisions, spiritual pursuits and concerns for science and culture, are attributed to the influence of the classical period. In addition, Westerners' rational way of thinking, practical spirit, respect for human values and inclination to research nature are obviously the results of classicist heritage. Such classicist effects could be discerned everywhere in Western civilization and culture, as in the political system, the specific results in philosophy, religion, literature, art, science and architecture. One could find countless examples to prove the link among them.

Apart from the influences from classicist origins, Western culture has also benefited a lot from Jewish culture. Jewish culture took root in the Middle East where the Jewish people were born and where they created in antiquity their brilliant, religious civilization. Jewish culture is famous for its originality and persistency in religious faith as well as the Jewish

① Civilization here refers principally to the general conditions of social and cultural developments.

People's ability to endure bitter and tortuous experiences in national migration and overseas Diaspora. Historical sufferings and disasters not only enriched its cultural heritage, but also contributed to the birth of Christianity, which was founded out of the Jewish anti-Roman struggle.

With its increasing dissemination and wide popularity among the general populace and officials, Christianity gradually expanded into a major religion in the West. It became a dominant ideological power exerting widespread influences both in religious and secular domains. Western culture, with the admission of Christianity to its ranks alongside classicism and Jewish culture, became integrated and established. Having played a tremendous role in the ways of thinking and modes of behaviour among the Westerners, Western culture has developed on an unprecedented scale across the limits of time and space, over and above foreseeable social and political changes, and has never ceased to endure throughout thousands of years.

When one feels puzzled at the paradoxical events or phenomena arising out of the historical process of Western civilization in association with its three diverse, sometimes even hostile cultural sources, one's curiosity to acquire more knowledge about Western culture is certainly stimulated. In responding to some events, like the Roman suppression of Christianity and the Vatican hostility towards Jewish migrants and their culture, one feels the need to work out the sophisticated relations and unveil the abnormal motivations hidden behind these cultural and historical mysteries. Tolerant attitudes as well as the practical spirit of Western culture, as in the conversion of Constantine the Great to Christianity, are helpful guides to seeing the positive side of this religion. Tolerance is thus a virtue Western culture fostered in her early days, and has been passed on to the present day, for example, in the form of multiculturalism, a concept and phenomenon, which is becoming widespread in many Western countries.

Notwithstanding the fact that Christianity came out of Jewish culture, it is quite different from Judaism for it broke down many restrictions imposed by the latter, allowing and even encouraging people from different races, sexes and origins to join without discrimination. This was the main reason why it could become so popular and accepted by the Roman ruler as a state religion. Nevertheless, with the passage of time and the entrenchment of its hierarchical system, Christianity's leading body was inclined to be more conservative and corrupted, giving rise to increasing levels of complaint and opposition. Hence, the Religious Reformation was inevitable and led to the schism within Christianity. Catholicism, Protestantism and the Eastern Orthodoxy, which had been separated even earlier, worked independently of each other in the name of Jesus Christ. However, the religious mission and undertaking never seemed weakened during the long years of the Middle Ages when after the fall of the powerful and civilized Roman Empire, Christianity joined in the feudal autocracy of different kingdoms, dynasties and aristocrats.

The Medieval period is one of the darkest ages in Western civilization in the sense that the majority of the Western population could not and did not enjoy significantly any intellectual, political and economic freedom. With the Germanic intrusion and Roman


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decline, Western culture suffered from a period of arrested growth while barbarous Germanic tribes were intent upon destruction and spoil at the beginning of their conquest.

After the medieval nightmarish life of a thousand years or so, Westerners eventually woke up and opened the door to a new era — the Renaissance. When Dante exclaims in *Divine Comedy*: "Man lives not for a life like animals, but in pursuit of virtue and knowledge," doubtless, not only did he convey the Westerners' rejection of feudalistic autocracy and theological persecution at the time, he also sought to cherish a humanist expectation of a new life. The Renaissance demonstrated great talents who had been overshadowed or concealed in the Dark Ages. It saw productions of large numbers of remarkable works and achievements in painting, literature, philosophy and architecture. Perhaps it was the first time in human history that the Westerner, when he had achieved the marvelous results, became happily aware of the advantage in being able to enjoy intellectual freedom.

The significance of the Renaissance lies in its confirmation and manifestation of humanist thinking and application, which sometimes was to enlighten people and to be revaluated ultimately, after a thousand years' forbiddance. It certainly supplied great inspiration to the Westerner in creative work and built up his confidence in bringing about more achievements in art and literature than had been the case for his predecessors.

More important than the visible accomplishment is perhaps the critical spirit the European thinkers and practitioners fostered during the Renaissance. This critical spearhead was directed particularly against scholasticism as a core of theology at the time. Consequently, it paved the way for the development of science and secular culture. One example is the Reformation, which largely changed the religious structure and content of Christianity, based on the whole on the revaluation and criticism of the Christian ideas represented by the Roman Church and the Papacy. The significance of the Reformation is not confined to schism and the appearance of Protestantism, but exemplifies the pluralist and humanist development of Christianity.

Another example of development could be witnessed in the courses offered in the Italian universities where new subjects related to the introduction of classical culture, like rhetoric, philosophy and astronomy, were added to the original religious law, civil law and medicine. The appearance of these non-Christian subjects tended to take the place of the dominant position previously occupied by theology and pointed to a new direction for the development of Western culture.

In the final analysis, the emergence of the Renaissance is both a resistance to theological-autocratic ideology and an affirmation of classical culture. However, the reassessment and reconstruction of classical culture is not simply a kind of representation of classical thinkers and writers, it also suggests the approval and advocacy of a new spirit. Such a spirit is focused on secular ideas with humanism as its core, constituting elements of hedonism, free will and scepticism.

The Renaissance, strictly speaking, is not a movement but a continuation of a certain transitional period from the Middle Ages to the modern era. To be more accurate, the term

Renaissance refers vaguely to the later period of the feudal society, which was a mid-way phase for the transit of human ideas from the old to the new. In spite of the emergence of some new ideas different from those of the Middle Ages, the Renaissance was still limited in its own ideological mode and cannot be said to have fulfilled its historical mission in opposition to theology and autocracy due to the ambiguous attitude of compromise towards the then ruling class and conventions. Such a historical mission had to be passed over to and taken up by the Enlightenment in the eighteenth century.

The Enlightenment thinkers presented a set of systematic ideas far more profound and integrated than those that emerged during the Renaissance. In respect of knowledge of social development, concepts of state institutions, theory on law and even the involvement in politics of the average citizen, they all offered unique views as a challenge to the traditional ideas of theology and autocracy and, therefore, provided a body of intact theoretical principles for the bourgeois revolution and the later capitalist state. These theories include those of social equality from John Locke and Thomas Hobbes, criticism of Christianity and autocracy by Voltaire and other Enlightenment thinkers, social contract of Rousseau and division of state power by Montesquieu and others. They were perhaps not the first thinkers to touch on these issues, but certainly the first to systematically study and sum up these theoretical principles. These ideas were then employed to establish a powerful ideological foundation for the later bourgeois revolution.

Just as important as these ideological theories was the wide circulation of scientific and other new knowledge among the broad masses of the people, demonstrated in the compilation, publication and dissemination of thirty-odd volumes of *The French Encyclopaedia*, a result of collective work by a team headed by Diderot. The conduct of research and dissemination of science had been a long process, undergoing great difficulties in the Middle Ages when Copernicus, Bruno and Galileo suffered from the persecution by the Inquisition. The successful spread of scientific knowledge suggested a great progress for human intellect, not just in terms of scientific acquisition, but also in terms of ways of thinking and living. The emancipation of human mind and the beginning of a new way of life was part of the fruitful achievements of Western intellectual development during the Enlightenment.

From then on, science and technology have worked successfully as an essentially legal and powerful means to help unleash huge natural forces for the benefit of the human race. By outshining all the other modes of thinking and action which man has ever commanded, science and technology, with unprecedented contributions and accomplishments, have committed themselves to permanent creation of human wealth. The Westerner might not be the first in the world to take up science, but certainly was the first to put science in such a primary position of application to promote the development of human fundamental needs. Thus the West has been foremost in pioneering in the combination of theoretical research with practical applications. In a sense, it is the continuation of the practical spirit advocated by classical thinkers, such as Aristotle, although such progress was checked by the Middle Ages. Hence, the rise of science and technology should be ascribed partly to the

Enlightenment, which provided all the necessary intellectual environment and spiritual encouragement to those great figures who ignored the authoritative religious forbiddance.

It is no surprise to observe that the climax of the Enlightenment occurred in France, where long-lasting wars and social turmoil oppressed the ordinary people and led to the French Revolution. The famous slogan *Freedom, Equality and Philanthropy* originated from the Revolution and continued to inspire generations of revolutionaries all over the world.

It is not too much to claim that the charm and strength of Western culture was to put into effect the Enlightenment's ideas and successfully establish a number of capitalist countries with the bourgeoisie in power. The victory of the bourgeois revolution not only opened the possibilities for the bourgeoisie and other people to make fortunes but also created opportunities to expand the capitalist markets overseas. Eventually came the heyday of capitalism and colonialism, which accelerated drastic and all-round changes for modern history. Together with the economic, technological and social developments, there was a prosperous evolvement of Western culture, which went into a rapid growth period as a result of the greater intellectual and academic freedom gained by the newly emerging ruling bourgeoisie. Wave upon wave of intellectual currents strongly lashed out against all outdated conservative ideas of feudal autocracy and divinity. At the same time, new figures, events and tendencies concerning social and economic developments, were coming abundantly to fruition, spreading beyond the national boundaries of leading European countries.

Among the most influential trends subsequently identified were such as classicism, realism, romanticism, naturalism, modernism and post-modernism. A large group of intellectual elite came to the fore and helped to change enormously the social and cultural circumstances in areas such as sociology, philosophy, economics, psychology, biology, anthropology, art and literature. This elite included I. Kant, J. G Fichte, Georg Hegel, Ludwig Feuerbach, Adam Smith, David Ricardo, Charles Fourier, Saint Simons, Robert Owen, Jeremy Bentham, John Mill, William James, Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, Charles Darwin, Auguste Comte, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Sigmund Freud, Henri Bergson, Einstein, Martin Heidegger and Jean-Paul Sartre. Their theories and ideas have contributed considerably to social progress and human understanding of nature and man himself in all the world's great cultures.

The most notable development to come out of these ideological tenets and trends was the Modernist movement of art and literature during the early years of the twentieth century. What followed was the creation of a large number of writers and artists keen to experiment and explore a variety of new ideas and techniques in fiction, drama, poetry, painting, sculpture, architecture and music. Clearly they shared a rebellious and critical spirit. The modernist achievements are notable in that they demonstrate human creative power and the continuation of the Western cultural tradition, although these achievements were not necessarily in accord with the traditional cultural beliefs.

More than half a century has passed since the Second World War. Overall, the development of Western culture for the last fifty years or so could be said to fall into two periods. The passage from the end of the Second World War to the early 1970s marks the

first phase while the years since then could be counted as the second phase. Modernism and other ideological trends from the pre-war period went on for a further period of development. The most noticeable post-war ideological trend was existentialism represented by Jean-Paul Sartre. An intense argument arose after the horrors of the world war about the significance of human existence. It attracted many followers, which greatly expanded the influence of existentialism on Western culture. Consequently, significant numbers of people became more pessimistic and even disillusioned. This mood culminated in the anti-war demonstrations of the 1960s and 1970s. When the Vietnam War ended, the West eventually got rid of the heavy burden and entered a new stage of rapid social and economic development. As well, mutual respect for and tolerance of cultural differences emerged. There was an embracing of feminism and post-colonialism. The former claimed more rights for women and the latter asserted a view of the Western world from a more Orientalist perspective. Similarly critical theories of deconstruction and post-structuralism raised many controversial topics. Associated with these new theories there were some key theoreticians and critics, such as Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, Jurgen Habermas, and Edward Said.

Today the world is in a process of endless change and facing greater globalization with an accumulation of scientific technology and capital as well as intellectual and cultural development. Though change and development still tends to be concentrated in the West, the general situation is quite different from what it was half a century ago. The developing countries, particularly those in Asia and Pacific region, have made good progress for the last few decades in economic, technical and cultural achievements. However, the West still holds an advantage, not only in wealth and quality of life, but also in the creation and employment of new aspects of culture and technology. Therefore, it is of vital importance to inquire into Western culture for a better understanding of both its cultural achievements and its life style.

We will try to introduce a wide-range of cultural issues, from ancient Greece to the contemporary world; from social background to the major cultural achievements of different periods; from ideological representatives to the stars of popular cultural performances. Hopefully all these encounters will provide the reader with an introductory idea of Western cultural development.



# Chapter 1
# Culture in Ancient Greece

As one of the major contributors to Western civilization, ancient Greek culture has provided the creative energy and prototypes for later forms of Western society. Intellectual and cultural achievements, together with social and economic developments in ancient Greece and its neighbouring areas, mark the real beginning of Western civilization and the ending of the barbarous[1] age in Europe.

Greece and its neighbouring islands supplies a beautiful landscape. The Greek peninsula has a very long and much indented coastline, comprising the main part of the country, combined with islands in the Ionian Sea to the west and south, as well as the Dodecanese Islands and Crete. Most of Greek mainland country is mountainous, with the Pindus range forming a backbone to the peninsula. Lowlands are small and isolated, the most important plains being on the west coast, such as the Plain of Thessaly, and along the coast of Thrace. The rugged mountains stretch into the Peloponnese Peninsula, which is connected to the rest of the country and the nearby islands by a narrow strip of land only about four miles wide. The Cyclades, the Dodecanese, Crete, and other islands are the fragmented remnants of a submerged landscape.

Located in a hilly and mountainous part of Mediterranean Europe, Greece enjoys a fairly warm but rather dry climate and is covered with low trees, bushes, and herbs typical of the Mediterranean. The low rainfall and very dry summer account for a general sparsity and a predominance for drought-resisting species of plants, such as olives and laurels.

Greece is lacking in the resources of fuel, raw materials of Western Europe but has some industry in the cities and small towns. Materials for manufacturing include building stone, mineral deposits, raw cotton and wool, sheep and goats, olive oil, tobacco and pottery. These products have been used from early times as goods of commerce and trade, most of which are transported overseas in exchange for the materials Greece can not itself produce. It was under such circumstances that the Greek civilization took shape and that Greece eventually developed into one of the most prosperous and powerful nations in ancient times.

1. barbarous: uncivilized 野蛮的

# I. The Early Period of Greek Civilization

## 1. Cretan Civilization



Ruins of Knossos Palace

It is generally acknowledged that the archaeological discovery at the end of the 19th century by the English archaeologist Arthur Evans on the island of Crete is the earliest representation of Greek civilization. According to Evans' research, the Cretan society dated back to nearly 5,000 years ago, falling into three stages, namely, the early stage dated from 2600 – 2000 BC, belonging to the Neolithic; the middle period dated from 2000 – 1600 BC, a period when social classes appeared and some smaller city-states started to be unified into one country called Minos; and the later period dated from 1600 – 1125 BC when the unified nation Minoan Dynasty was gradually weakened and eventually toppled[1].

The cultural artefacts and buildings of Cretan civilization found at the ruins of the imperial palace at Knossos, the capital of the Minoan Dynasty, include murals, articles of daily life for the royal family, the temple for offering sacrifices to gods and ancestors, the palace for the king and his wives, as well as long decorative corridors. The large number of murals both in and outside of the palace are vividly drawn, demonstrating a style of realistic description which embodies ceremonial processions, natural scenery and various kinds of activities in which the king and aristocrats were involved. About 1400 BC, the Minoan palace at Knossos was unexpectedly damaged by some unknown forces, as were the other palaces on the island. The Dorians from Greece intruded in the 12th century BC and subsequently Cretan civilization sank into oblivion.

## 2. The Mycenaean Society and Cultural Achievements

The ruins of Mycenaean civilization was first discovered by the German archaeologist Heinrich Schliemann in the 1870s and rediscovered by the English scholar Michael Ventris in 1952. It was Ventris who deciphered[2] some syllables and phrases in the scripts of Linear B left by

1. topple: overturn, overthrow 推翻
2. decipher: to read or interpret, decode 解释或破译


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