随着社会的发展,人类对大自然的直接依赖越来越少,而间接的依赖却越来越多。我们远古的祖先生活在大自然的威胁及破坏力的恐惧之中,他们常常连基本的生活物资都无法获取。然而,尽管工具不甚完备,他们确能同心协力,顽强工作,并总是有所收获。在与人类的相互作用中,大自然也发生了改变。森林被破坏了,耕地面积增加了。大自然及其威力被看成是和人类敌对的东西。譬如,森林被认为是野性的和令人恐惧的,因此人类便想方设法使其面积缩小。这一切都是打着“文明”的旗号进行的,所谓“文明”,就是人类在哪里建立家园,耕耘土地,哪里的森林就被砍伐。

As society develops, man tends to become less dependent on nature directly, while indirectly his dependence grows. Our distant ancestors lived in fear of nature’s destructive forces. Very often they were unable to obtain the merest daily necessities. However, despite their imperfect tools, they worked together stubbornly, collectively, and were able to attain results. Nature was also changed through interaction with man. Forests were destroyed and the area of farmland increased. Nature with its elemental forces was regarded as something hostile to man. The forest, for example, was something wild and frightening and people tried to force it to retreat. This was all done in the name of civilisation, which meant the places where man had made his home, where the earth was cultivated, where the forest had been cut down.

自工业革命开始以来,幸福与技术之间的关系一直是社会批评家和哲学家们长期研究的课题,然而,基本上还没有受到经济学家和社会学家们的关注。经济学家理查德 • 伊斯特林(Richard Easterlin)在经济繁荣和幸福的关系方面进行了具有开拓性的研究,并于1974年发表了一篇题为《经济增长改变人类命运吗?》的著名论文。伊斯特林表明,就发达国家而言,一个国家的收入和国民的幸福之间没有真正的相互关系。伊斯特林认为,金钱买不到幸福,至少在(金钱)达到了一定程度以后是如此。伊斯特林认为,尽管贫穷与苦难密不可分,但是,一个国家一旦达到稳定的中产接济水平,富有似乎并没有让其国民感到更多的幸福.

The relationship between happiness and technology has been an eternal subject for social critics and philosophers since the advent of the Industrial Revolution. But it’s been left largely unexamined by economists and social scientists. The truly groundbreaking work on the relationship between prosperity and well-being was done by the economist Richard Easterlin, who in 1974 wrote a famous paper entitled “Does Economic Growth Improve the Human Lot?” Easterlin showed that when it came to developed countries, there was no real correlation between a nation’s income level and its citizens’ happiness. Money, Easterlin argued, could not buy happiness — at least not after a certain point. Easterlin showed that though poverty was strongly correlated with misery, once a country was solidly middle-class, getting wealthier did not seem to make its citizens any happier.

历史充分证明,有些人在一生的某个时刻遭遇失败,的确能激发他们更加努力地追求成功,继续对自己充满信心。美国小说家托马斯·沃尔夫(Wolfe)的第一部小说《天使望故乡》被退稿39次才得以出版,才使他开始了他的写作生涯并赢得了声誉。托马斯·爱迪生(Edison)在10岁左右,还在上四年级的时候就被赶出学校,因为在老师的眼里,他脑子笨,又不乖。以失败为动力,奋发有为,成名成家的例子还有很多。但遗憾的是,对大多数人来说,失败就是奋斗的结束,而不是开始。成名的失败事例即使有,也不多见。

History has sufficiently proven that some failure for some people at certain times in their lives does indeed motivate them to strive even harder to succeed and to continue believing in themselves. Thomas Wolfe, the American novelist, had his first novel Look Homeward, Angel rejected 39 times before it was finally published and launched his career and created his fame. Thomas Edison was thrown out of school in fourth grade, at about age 10, because he seemed to the teacher to be quite dull and ill-behaved. Many other cases may be found of people who failed and used the failure to motivate them to achieve, to succeed, and to become famous. But, unfortunately, for most people failure is the end of their struggle, not the beginning. There are few, if any, famous failures.

处在劳动和玩耍之间的是工作。如果一个人对社会为他支付报酬的工作感兴趣,他就是一个工作者。从社会角度看是必需的劳动在他自己看来却是自愿的玩耍。一个职位是劳动还是工作,并不取决于这个职位本身,而是取决于占据这个职位的个人自己的情趣。这种差异与体力劳动和脑力劳动之间的差异并不吻合。譬如,一个园丁或者皮匠也许就是一个工作者,而一个银行职员则可能是一个劳动者。

Between labor and play stands work. A man is a worker if he is personally interested in the job which society pays him to do; what from the point of view of society is necessary labor is from his own point of view voluntary play. Whether a job is to be classified as labor or work depends, not on the job itself, but on the tastes of the individual who undertakes it. The difference does not, for example, coincide with the difference between a manual and a mental job; a gardener or a cobbler may be a worker, a bank clerk a laborer.