

Received: February 21, 2017

Revision received: July 2, 2018

Accepted: July 5, 2018

Copyright © 2018 ESTP

[www.estp.com.tr](http://www.estp.com.tr)

DOI 10.12738/estp.2018.6.207 • December 2018 • 18(6) • 3066-3071

*Research Article*

# Multi-angle Aesthetic Education on Foreign Literatures Based on Multi-values Theory: Using Feminism Literatures as Examples

Jin Xu<sup>1</sup>

*Tianjin University*

Lisong Wang<sup>2</sup>

*Tianjin University*

## Abstract

Multi-values theory is considered an effective tool in constructing society with diversified cultures and respect for equality and human rights. It has become a mainstream trend for educational development. This paper uses western feminism literatures as examples, and conducts research into multi-angle aesthetic education of foreign literatures. It explains the multi-values theory contained in foreign literatures, discusses elements in the literature works, and proposes diversified teaching strategy and methods on foreign literature aesthetics based on multi-values theory. Through analyzing changes in holders of rights and consciousness of rights, as well as expanding right space thanks to three rounds of feminist trends, this paper sets to promote and contribute to the development of western feminism theory from an aesthetic perspective.

## Keywords

Multi-Values • Foreign Literature • Western Feminism • Education Strategy • Teaching Method

<sup>1</sup>School of Foreign Languages and Literature, Tianjin University, Tianjin 300350, China. Email: wanglisong@tju.edu.cn

<sup>2</sup>Correspondence to: Lisong Wang (MA), School of Foreign Languages and Literature, Tianjin University, Tianjin 300350, China. Email: wanglisong@tju.edu.cn

In the process of economic globalization and information age, the world has seen increasing exchanges and communications among civilizations and religions. A modernized world calls for exchanges and cooperation from varied aspects (Pountain, 2017). We often say that the east and the west are different from each other in terms of values, while the eastern culture highlights collectiveness and the western culture highlights individualism. Both cultures, with long histories, are closely related to the environment of the nations (Cho, 2017). Generally-speaking, there is no high or low in terms of values. All the values in the world have their own values, representing respect towards culture of a nation (Morse, 2018). Multi-values is rooted in a certain environment, and embodied in exchanges and communications between peoples and races, with an aim to enable educates to obtain knowledge, values and conceptions different from those of his/her native place (Thomsen & Ebrary, 2012).

Multi-values should be supported by diversified culture and education. Multiculturalism is expressed in cultural value, historic value and education concepts. Multiculturalist education is irrespective of differences in gender, race, religion or language (Mullahi, 2015). In the 19<sup>th</sup> century and 20<sup>th</sup> century, two large scale feminist movements took place. From then on, the influence of feminism has penetrated into every aspect of the society (Joneskellogg, 2010). The western feminism is not only a theory of social science, but also a social movement. The philosophical thinking patterns and multi-dimensional cognitive minds of feminism have determined a dominant role of women and their values in social activities (Fenster & Hamdansaliba, 2013). Feminism has gone through three rounds of changes, but there is not yet an established, unified and systematic theoretical proposition (Coudray, 2016). This paper is based on the multi-values theory, and looks into feminist education from multiple angels in foreign literatures.

### Elements of Foreign Literatures

Multi-values are often implied in good literatures. And education in this regard should be based on good literatures as well (Bartlett & Henderson, 2013). As literatures constitute important components of human cultural legacy, learning foreign literature not only improves cultural awareness, but also enhances our consciousness. This part of the paper conducts analysis from three aspects of elements found in foreign literature, democracy, humanism, and heroism to understand multi-cultural values implied in foreign literatures (Johnson *et al.*, 2009).

Democracy in literature promotes prosperity and development of a nation, which is good for harmony and stability of society. I have a Dream tells about inequality towards black people in the American society and expresses wishes for equality and democracy by black people. Under the leadership of Martin Luther King, a democratic campaign was launched to demand racial equality and democracy from the government. I have a Dream has exerted such great impacts on the American society that value of democracy has been well-rooted in the hearts of the American black people and everyone else subject to racial discrimination in the world. In around the 15<sup>th</sup> century, the Renaissance was initiated by the emerging capitalist class in Europe. Humanist literature dominated Europe during that period. Shakespeare's Hamlet depicts a classic humanist. He represents humanist essence featuring respect for people, pursuit of love, and passion for life. Humanism has brought

significant ideological changes to a rigidly-stratified and repressive Medieval society. Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea* is a classic heroism work. The old man, San Diego, represents courage in a man facing up to challenges and his resistance of defeats. These literature works are carriers of multi-values, and the representative ones are great examples of foreign cultural essence, hence high value for multi-cultural education in these works.

## **Strategy and Method of Multi-angle Aesthetic Education on Foreign Literatures based on Multi-values Theory**

### **Diversified teaching strategy on foreign literature aesthetic education**

When utilizing foreign literatures works for multi-angle aesthetic education, we mean to use the essence of foreign cultures embodied in these works to influence students' multi-values, and to cultivate spirits to aspire for democracy and sciences, and to fight for what they believe in. In the actual teaching practices, it is observed an issue on insufficient understanding of multicultural values in these literature works, which has resulted in under-performance of multi-cultural value teaching. To address this issue, we hereby propose below strategies on aesthetic education for foreign literature.

**Use of comparative teaching method.** Significant differences are observed between foreign literature and Chinese literature. So, in the process of multi-angle aesthetic teaching of foreign literature, we should compare and analyze differences between two genres and understand how these differences are generated. In this way, students will be able to have enhanced understanding of multicultural values in foreign literatures, and improve their aesthetic and cultural awareness from varied angles on foreign literature. We take sea here as an example. In foreign and domestic literatures, the sea is depicted in different ways. For domestic works, the sea symbolizes philosophic thinking on life as evidenced in works such as *Watch the Sea* (Guan Cang Hai), and *Haizi*' poem *Facing the Sea, with Spring Blossom*. In the meanwhile, the western writers treat the sea with enriched emotions and see it as either a friend or enemy, so they both long for and fight against the sea. The representative works include *Robinson Crusoe*, and *The Old Man and the Sea*.

**Diversify classroom teaching methods.** In conventional classrooms, teaching is highly reliant on lecturing by teachers. Using this method on foreign literature multi-values teaching is not an inductive method to engage students in learning. The knowledge-feeding style of conventional teaching only results in dullness and low efficiency. The main literature styles in the west include drama, novel, essay, lecture, and news. Through teaching research in this area, we can take multiple teaching and learning methods based on the characteristics of each style. For example, methods such as speech contest, drama play, movie watching, and poetry recital can be used in classroom teaching, so as to stimulate learning initiatives and interests in students, and to enhance their understanding on multi-values in literature works.

**Utilize internet-based teaching resources.** Along with development and utilization of internet-based teaching resources, people have wider access to foreign literatures with the help of internet. Conventional teaching methods such as textbook, blackboard and chalks can no longer meet the increasing needs of students

in reading foreign literatures. Development of mobile internet and popularity of mobile phones enable teachers to guide students in capturing information from multiple angles by using the internet. In this way, students will establish his/her capacity in comprehending multi-values in foreign literatures, making them the real dominant role in learning. Utilization in actual classroom teaching can be realized through sharing movies and TV programs based on foreign literatures, for example, *Les Misérables*, *War and Peace*, and *Jane Eyre*.

### **Multiple Teaching Methods in Foreign Literature Aesthetic Education**

Multicultural teaching based on foreign literatures guides the students to learn classic literature works, which is great for stimulating interests and enhancing literal awareness. In present classroom teaching, foreign literature teaching takes up limited teaching hours, so the content is rather reduced. In order to achieve good teaching results in the process of multi-value cultivation through foreign literature works, we hereby propose the following diversified teaching methods based on in-depth discussion on teaching methods.

**Teachers should have extensive knowledge in western culture.** In the process of diversified teaching on foreign literature esthetics, high requirements are imposed on teachers in terms of literacy knowledge and awareness of both the eastern and western cultures. On one hand, teachers are required to be knowledgeable enough to address students' questions and further elaborate on the western literature history so that students will be clear on how foreign literature have been created, and be able to use overall concepts on western literature and culture in their study. On the other hand, teachers should reflect on the problems and issues encountered in teaching practices, and seek to find targeted solutions on their own initiatives. They should rectify any deficiencies and enhance their knowledge structure.

**Refrain from weakening literature education by cultural education.** In the process of diversified teaching on foreign literature esthetics, literature education as the main target should not be undermined because of an emphasis on multi-cultural education. Foreign literature education should be implemented based on certain level of literature education. In the process of teaching, we should instruct students to master languages and words firstly, and engage them in higher level knowledge learning based on this.

**Guide students to conduct extensive reading.** In the process of diversified teaching, due to limited teaching hours allocated to foreign literature, and the fact that teaching materials are mostly based on excerpts, teachers should guide students to conduct extensive reading on the complete work, and even relevant works of the same author. It enables students to gain comprehensive knowledge on artistic features of foreign literatures. Detailed methods include actively introducing the extensive reading materials in the process of teaching. In-depth discussion should be conducted on related topics concerning multicultural values in teaching practice to guide students to actively extend their reading into relevant literature works.

## **Analysis of Feminism Trends**

### **Changes in perception of rights in the feminism trends**

Perception of rights can be summarized as comprehension, use, and protection of rights. In the feminist trends in the western world, the perception of rights tends to be constructed around the origin and meaning of

rights. Take the perception of rights in three rounds of feminist trends as penetration point, we analyze the changes in the holder of rights and awareness of rights, as well as expansion of space of rights.

In feudal societies, the majority of women had less superior social status and rights than what man had. They are reliant on man and subject to their controls. It has resulted in loss of subjective consciousness in women and further their subjective roles. In the trends of feminism, the leaders have made the breakthrough through their endeavors. Based on this, the structure has been further improved. The third round of feminism trend has played a role in elevating women's understanding of their subjectivity, role and value in the external world. These movements changed how people treat genders and allowed more women to participate into economic and political activities in society. Awareness of rights has duality of being rational and yet sensitive. Women tend to be subject to influence of external elements and change their value conception and understanding on rights. Value of equality, as proposed in three rounds of feminist movements, has led to significant differences in women's reflection of rights and their ways of pursuing it. In around the 19<sup>th</sup> century, along with rapid development of capitalism, the society was in significant needs of work force. More and more women took up jobs and got themselves out of the conventional man-reliant model of living. After the WWII, out of social demands, more women have received education, and overall competency of women has been much improved. In terms of income, women demand for equal pay; in terms of household status, they demand for well-deserved equality; and politically, they demand for rights to vote and be voted. This constitutes a strong backbone for the second round of feminist movement. After industrialization reform, space for women's rights has been extended by a great margin.

### **Evaluating Feminist Trends**

The feminist trends have wide coverage and can be analyzed from angles such as history and psychology. Research on the features and value of feminism plays an active role in promoting modern feminism. "Gender theory" and "citizenship theory" generated in the feminist trends in the 20<sup>th</sup> century have laid theoretic foundation for feminist movements. But limited by shorter history of development compared to conventional areas, the theoretic foundation is not yet solid and the overall system should be further improved.

Feminist trends have cross-age significance in terms of overhauling conventional controls of man on women, crippling male-authority, and reshaping cultural value of general equality. On one hand, it helps women realize self-transcendence and make people aware of the aim of feminism movements, to conduct dialectical criticism on conventional perceptions, and to establish complete values and ideology, and to make contributions to improving women's social status and equality towards women. On the other hand, it promotes mainstream culture of social gender. Culture of social gender is relevant to both man and woman. In absence of either party, issue on gender cannot be solved fundamentally. This is why gender mainstreaming is promoted by government in every aspect of social development. Feminism trends have helped advanced harmonious development of gender society, changed gender mechanism in conventional society, determined new positions and values for human society, and promoted sustainable development of the whole society.

## Conclusion

(1) To address insufficient understanding of multicultural values in foreign literature in the course of teaching, comparative teaching method should be utilized in order to enrich classroom teaching, and internet-based teaching materials should be adopted as a diversified teaching strategy in foreign literature esthetics.

(2) To achieve good teaching outcomes in cultivating multi-values in students with help of foreign literature teaching, teachers should be required to have extensive knowledge on western culture, refrain from weakening literature education by cultural education, and guide students to conduct extensive reading.

Feminist trends have cross-age significance in terms of overhauling conventional controls of man on women, crippling male-authority, and reshaping cultural value of general equality.

## References

- Bartlett, A., & Henderson, M., (2013). The Australian women's movement goes to the museum: The cultures of Australian feminist activism, 1970-1990 project. *Womens Studies International Forum*, 37, 85-94. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.wsif.2012.10.013>
- Choo, S. S., (2017). Globalizing literature pedagogy: applying cosmopolitan ethical criticism to the teaching of literature. *Harvard Educational Review*, 87(3), 335-356. <http://dx.doi.org/10.17763/1943-5045-87.3.335>
- Coudray, C. B. D., (2016). A 'disappointing' leader: the postmaternalism of public feminist commentary on Julia Gillard. *Continuum*, 30(3), 1-10. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10304312.2016.1166556>
- Fenster, T., & Hamdansaliba, H., (2013). Gender and feminist geographies in the middle east. *Gender Place & Culture*, 20(4), 528-546. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/0966369X.2012.709826>
- Johnson, S., Williamson, I., Lyttle, S., & Leeming, D., (2009). Expressing yourself: A feminist analysis of talk around expressing breast milk. *Social Science & Medicine*, 69(6), 900-907. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2009.07.001>
- Joneskellogg, R., (2010). The anthology in Portugal: A new approach to the history of Portuguese literature in the twentieth century (review). *Luso-Brazilian Review*, 47(2), 197-199. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1353/lbr.2010.0000>
- Morse, A., (2018). Between summer and winter: Late soviet children's literature and unofficial poetry ☆. *Russian Literature*, s 96-98, 105-135. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.ruslit.2018.05.005>
- Mullahi, A., (2015). Balkan's landscape as per the records of foreign travellers in past centuries. *Agriculture & Agricultural Science Procedia*, 4, 392-398. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.aaspro.2015.03.044>
- Pountain, C. J., (2017). The three Ls of modern foreign languages: Language, linguistics, literature. *Hispanic Research Journal*, 18(3), 253-271. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14682737.2017.1314096>
- Thomsen, M. R., & Ebrary, I., (2012). Mapping world literature: International canonization and transnational literatures. *Orbis Litterarum*, 67(1), 79-80. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1600-0730.2011.01039.x>