Literary Classics Reading and College Students’ Aesthetic Quality Education in the Context of Visual Culture

Qingjuan Nie

ABSTRACT

Visual culture in the postmodern context has posed a great impact on college students’ aesthetic value, resulting in vulgar taste, judgment deficiency and aesthetic concept dislocation. Literary classics is the reflection of culture, history, and aesthetic ideals of a nation, whose aesthetic characteristics provide the possibility to develop aesthetic quality education among college students. Carrying out aesthetic quality education among college students based on classical literature reading can cultivate their noble aesthetic ideal, build up firm aesthetic belief and correct aesthetic concept so that they can grow up to be high-quality talents with knowledge, skills and good aesthetic accomplishment, ready to make contributions to national development and social progress.

MANUSCRIPT

The rapid development of information technology ushered in the era of flourishing electronic media culture. All kinds of media like movies, television, network, electronic games have created a huge visual virtual space for humans, which further develops into a new culture mode, namely, visual culture. Living in such an era, people value appearance more highly than before, overrelying on images, which has created eyeballs economics and era of reading pictures. College students tend to be more affected by this non-textual visual culture. They become more utilitarian and materialistic. Such wrong and dislocated aesthetic values can not only hinder their aesthetic accomplishment but affect their growth. Therefore, how to help college students avoid the negative effect of visual culture as they are enjoying it has become an urgent issue. The article argues developing classics reading activities among college students can cultivate their appreciating ability, help them get pleasantly correct aesthetic experience, feel the
charm of classical art and form correct aesthetic orientation and values, thus consequently improve their aesthetic quality.

**Impact of Visual Culture on College Students’ Aesthetic Quality**

The rise of visual culture has already posed a huge impact on college students' aesthetic quality. Firstly, most college students are post 90s who have received exam-oriented education although they are living in a period when quality education is greatly advocated. Under this system, students attached too much importance to textbook knowledge to the neglect of cultivating aesthetic quality. Therefore, students’ aesthetic qualities are not well developed. They lack aesthetic experience and their aesthetic ability is underdeveloped. With the advancement of information technology, thriving visual culture, fanciful commercial advertising, commercials for personal care as well as delighting electronic goods deeply attracted young college students whose aesthetic ideal and aesthetic qualities have not been established. Aesthetic values dislocation begin to appear among them, leading to vulgar aesthetic taste and utilitarianism. Meanwhile, a variety of visual aesthetic chaos brought by new media network also impact students. Over entertainment like vulgar spoof, pornographic network videos, pop star gossip and network celebrities also deeply affected formation of aesthetic ideas and aesthetic judgment among college students.

As a matter of fact, the illusion about aesthetics is closely related to consumer society and culture. In a consumer society constructed by goods, everything is materialized into commodities and their hidden cultural symbols. Widespread utilitarianism and hedonism transforms consumption of goods into consuming culture. What people consume is no longer mere commodities but their hidden culture and connotation. On campus, this consumption theory is mainly reflected in pursuing famous brand. Long immersed in such sensory stimulus of visual culture, college students find it hard to get free. Thus, college students can’t form correct values and aesthetic quality, resulting in deviation of aesthetic ideas, aesthetic vulgarization, and lack of aesthetic ability. In field of film, television culture, the spread of some vulgar and bad films and TV serials also has a negative impact on students' aesthetic concept. Serious and profound literary classics are ignored while popular culture becomes the mainstream.

**Aesthetic Value of Literary Classics**

Literary classics refers to all kinds of classic literary writings with inherent “great philosophy” and “profound ideas”. They are not only traditionally authoritative, exemplary and original works which can guide readers in their life but also scales measuring artistic accomplishment and aesthetic ideal of a nation and an era. As carriers indicating the element of "aesthetic dignity" of national spirit of traditional culture, literary classics are essentially aesthetic because literature comes into existence and develops out of humans’ aesthetic need. It meets the aesthetic needs of mankind, enriches their spiritual world and cultural life, and thus justifies its existence and value with pursuit, revelation, construction and expression of beauty. Whether a piece of literary work is good or not is based on whether it embodies its own essence, namely, the aesthetic value. Only when the aesthetic value of literature
Literature Classics Reading and College Students' Aesthetic Quality Education

College students are builders of socialism, backbone of the country and the main force of future society. To cultivate their aesthetic qualities can not only promote personal development but also contribute to the progress of both the country and the whole society. Confronted with intense impact of visual culture on college students, self-discipline and self-consciousness alone can’t help to improve their aesthetic quality. Classic literature makes it theoretically possible to improve aesthetic accomplishment for its unique aesthetic value. Therefore, classic literature reading should be carried out and become the right way to cultivate students' aesthetic accomplishment. Authorities in colleges and universities should take initiative to provide external support for colleges students to accept better aesthetic quality education through conducting classic literature reading activities, offering classic literature appreciation courses. Meanwhile, the role of student associations should be fully played. Literary classics reading activities should be conducted in line with Chinese traditional festivals. Colleges of humanities and social sciences should also fully undertake the responsibility for aesthetic education among college students as bridgehead, organizing lectures on literary classics appreciation, carrying out contests about classic literature to strengthen reading classic literature activities among students.

Literary classics can consolidate one's cultural background, foster profound humanistic spirit, provide aesthetic experience and cultivate aesthetic power of high-quality talents because high quality talents not only have rich knowledge, good professional skills but also possess good aesthetic ability which is an important factor for maintaining vitality and creativity. As young people with higher educational background, college students can only become high-quality talents with good manners by constantly improving spiritual realm and enhancing aesthetic ability. Literary classics education can cultivate students' strong aesthetic ability, guide students to transform from "sensory aesthetics" to "sentimental aesthetics", from sensory pleasure to spiritual pleasure.

Conclusion

Heidegger once said, "language is the homeland of our life." Living in an era overwhelmed by images, how to maintain love of language and protect our
homes is our common responsibility. Literary classics opened a window into the world of beauty for us. Therefore, to maintain good reading habits among college students by carrying out reading literary classics can guide them to feel classic beauty, explore classic charm, establish correct esthetic values, cultivate aesthetic ideals and noble minds to make them consciously resist the negative effects of visual culture and finally enable college students to assume historical mission of building our country into a great power in the future.

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