



高等院校英语语言文学专业研究生系列教材（修订版）

总主编 戴炜栋

中西文化比较教程

Chinese and Western Cultures:
A Course of Comparative Study

叶胜年 著

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研究生

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总 序

随着我国经济的飞速发展，社会对以研究生为主体的高层次人才的需求日益增长，我国英语语言文学专业的研究生教育规模也在不断扩大。要使研究生教育持续健康地发展，培养学生创新思维能力和独立研究与应用能力，必须全面系统地加强基础理论与基本方法的训练。而要实现这一目标，就必须有一套符合我国国情的、系统正规的英语语言文学专业研究生主干教材。

基于这一认识，上海外语教育出版社于21世纪之初邀请全国英语语言文学专业各研究领域的知名专家学者，编写了“高等院校英语语言文学专业研究生系列教材”，迄今已陆续出版了二十余种。这套系列教材集各高校之所长，优势互补，形成合力，在教材建设方面，把我国英语语言文学专业的研究生培养工作推上了一个新的台阶，规范了我国英语语言文学专业的研究生课程，为高校培养基础扎实、知识面广、富有开拓精神、符合社会需要的高质量研究生提供了条件。

该系列教材的编写结合了我国英语语言文学专业研究生教学的实际情况与需要，强调科学性、系统性、先进性和实用性，力求体现理论与应用相结合，介绍与研究相结合，史与论相结合，原创与引进相结合，全面融会贯通。每一种教材都能够反映出该研究领域的新理论、新方法和新成果。系列教材推出后不仅被作为我国英语语言文学专业研究生的主干教材，也被作为中国语言文学专业的教师与学生的参考用书。

在多年的使用过程中,全国各高校的英语语言文学专业的专家学者和教师对该系列教材提出了许多建设性的建议。近几年,英语语言文学研究也有了新的发展。为了吸纳这些建设性建议及最新的学科研究成果,进一步完善教材,我们对该系列教材进行了修订。此次修订的主要方面有:内容上查漏补缺,进一步提升教材质量;理论上与时俱进,反映最新的学科研究成果;体例上规范统一,提高学术的严谨性;资料上充实丰富,增加教学资源;版式上全新设计,增强教材的易教性。此外,我们还对该系列教材的选题进行了拓展和延伸,在邀请国内专家学者编写原创教材的同时,精选国外原版教材引进出版。修订后的“高等院校英语语言文学专业研究生系列教材”在选题上中西合璧,覆盖了英语语言文学专业各学科的主要课程,学科方向将更齐全,更能满足我国英语语言文学专业研究生教育在学科建设方面的需求。

教材建设是学科建设的一项重要基本建设,对学科发展有着深远的影响。我们相信,在新世纪推出的这套系列教材,必将大大推动我国英语语言文学专业研究生教育事业的发展,促进我国英语语言文学研究水平的提高。

戴炜栋

2009年5月

PREFACE

Here is a textbook designed for the need of acquiring by comparison a more comprehensive and further understanding of cultural essentials of both China and the West based on a preliminary introduction first made to a group of graduate students about eight years ago. The book falls into nine chapters handling respectively different areas of culture which, I assume, have contributed a great deal to the development of human civilization as a whole no matter how they vary in form, content, performance and popularity.

The nine chapters are largely pertinent to four areas, namely ideology, literature and art, language and science. Among these four respects, the ideological field is of primary importance for it always, in whichever stage of human development, determines the direction, speed and scope of the other fields, such as art, literature, language and science. One could locate different traces of evolvement in these traditional forms of the humanities by focusing on function as well as the general temperament or established features of each category. A comparative study might help expose and identify the advantage and disadvantage of the form concerned on each side in terms of historical retrospect, effect-focused investigation, constitutional calculation, moral judgment and aesthetic estimation without caring much for racial and ethnical distinction which once cast shadows over our points of view. The reader certainly does not have to be limited by the author's perspective though the comparative comments could work as a kind of guidance in reading through the book and following the right way of reading and identification.

With more contact with foreign, especially Western culture in the last three decades, most of the Chinese, either the academic or the non-academic, have regarded it necessary to know about what has happened outside China and fill up a vacancy or gap left by some historical or political events with an amount of information collected from Western culture to deal with academic need as a necessary inspiration to expanding one's perspective or useful reference to seeking background information, or even to deal with daily need in relation to the West. More often than not they have encountered more and more occasions on which they have to think or make use of Western culture as a necessary addition to their own national culture. In a way one can say a connection and even a mixture of Chinese and Western cultures is a frequent occurrence or an inevitable trend. We have to prepare ourselves for the consequence of such a trend, which should serve as an important purpose

of this book, such as the interaction of the two cultures and mutual influence upon each other, including the existent and potential contributions of Western culture to our national culture, which has provided the basis as well as the motivation for picking up as a serious subject comparative studies of Chinese and Western cultures.

As to the dynamics of comparative studies, I would particularly refer to the essence of comparison used both as a purpose and as a method. We do not intend to offer everything concerning comparative studies between Chinese and Western cultures, but rather attempt to build up a basic framework or platform on which we could start to work alongside some fundamental principles and precepts, such as parallelism, mutual reference, generalization, deduction, inference, contrasts or emulation, all of which would go into and interact with our deepening understanding of the cultural similarities and dissimilarities of the two sides. These specific methods or techniques would usually bring into play their potential and sharpen the wits of learners by means of group discussions or individual meditations, both of which I would be pleased to recommend as basic form of learning either in or out of class. It is the reason why some questions and lists of further reading are attached to each chapter. Hopefully they could help heighten the efficiency of learning.

I would hesitate to offer any specific advice to the details of teaching or learning, but would happily help define a general syllabus by which one could find some reference to his or her work on the course. Usually forty teaching periods or so are needed for the teaching of the whole book. Maybe a distribution of four to five periods per chapter is reasonable apart from an additional amount for the introduction and conclusion. I would propose a normal procedure of teaching to be composed of three steps: lecturing, discussion and conclusion. Lecturing as the leading part of the whole process would regularly take two periods by focusing on the basic elements of the chapter concerned, embodying a collection of necessary information, the identification of the perimeter of the subject and preparation for later discussion. The second step is principally used to further the student's understanding of the essential points of the lecture and train his or her ability to research into relevant areas based on the questions and reading lists attached to each chapter. The last step is a necessary summary of the discussion as well as a brief account of the central ideas of the chapter. The reading list might work to extend students' desire to more details of some aspect of knowledge concerned, which points to a direction for those who want to further their studies.

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Chapter

1

Introduction

Globalization, as a current phenomenon, requires further understanding on the part of the average Chinese, of foreign, especially Western culture, or Western ways of living and thinking. Such a need for comprehension comes from frequent use of Western ideas and technology in their daily life and work in almost every aspect of social and economic and cultural developments. Many people have greatly benefited from acquiring such knowledge and understanding, which has subsequently accelerated the process of economic and cultural globalization. Nonetheless, cultural acquisition and understanding is never unilateral but always bilateral. Consequently, there arises an issue of how to handle the relationship between native culture and external culture. Generally no nation would expect to easily give up its own national and cultural identity though national differences could be narrowed and bridged in the process of globalization. People would often, consciously or unconsciously, first take up and then compare what they have acquired to see if they have actually added something to their established way of thinking and behaving. In doing so, they have started to build up a new culture. It is also the case with the development of national identity. This may be the original motivation for making comparisons at the beginning of a course of cultural studies.

1.1

Motivations and grounds for making comparative studies

The necessity for preserving and improving national culture is today acknowledged universally since it has much to do with social and intellectual developments as well as the establishment of the national identity of a country. Traditional culture is certainly one of the most charming elements of national identity. But doubtless, the inadequacies in any tradition have, in a way, retarded social and intellectual developments. When one feels proud of the long

history of one's country and its glorious cultural accomplishment, one has a sense of pity if it has suffered from backwardness and weakness.

This is especially true in modern times when countries with a long history, like China, Egypt, India or even Iraq, declined while the West arose. Comparative study of cultures, from the scholar's perspective, partially helps to sum up the historical lessons of backwardness and inadequacies in addition to the advanced experience and brilliant achievement. It also helps to heighten one's consciousness of the social, cultural and intellectual conditions that give rise to any example of downgrading inclination at a particular stage of modern history.

One of the attractions of comparative studies is the academic freedom and advantages one can enjoy in doing research. Comparative study enables us to explore more easily and to discern more clearly, a more precisely identified range of strengths and weakness on both sides. One can try to put aside all the unnecessary prejudices, political, racial or social, and only focus on one's academic concerns. I trust that comparative study, as an independent discipline as well as a useful method, can aim to develop and establish one's view of certain subjects more consciously, more sharply and more effectively. It can be dangerous to pursue development without understanding one's own culture and the culture of other nations. It is a lesson we should learn from our history and it can benefit our current ways of handling increasingly complicated world affairs.

1.2

The essentials of comparative culture in the present book

As mentioned above, herein lie three aspects of cultural affairs for our current comparative study, namely the ideological, the literary and artistic, and the other areas of the humanities. Among these three aspects, the ideological field is of primary importance for it always, in whichever period of human civilization, contributes to the direction, speed and scope of the other developments.

1.2.1 The leading role of ideology

In a way, ideology is a decisive factor in human civilization and social development. It has been discussed by quite a number of distinguished thinkers in both China and the West. Among them is perhaps Jean-Jacques Rousseau who, as one of the most eloquent speakers for Western culture, argues in his famous *Discourse on the Origin and Foundation of Inequality among Mankind* that human beings were initially little more than animals except for their special sympathy for their own species. Only through the development of reason and language, he asserts, were humans, while retaining this sympathy, able to understand their

individual selves. This leads to a natural community and the closest thing to what he considers humanity's perfect moment. He also suggests, in *The Social Contract or Principles of Political Right*, the practical role of the legislator, and introduces the concept of the general will, as well as the solution to the conflicts between the particular and the universal, the individual and the citizen, and the actual and the moral. All these ideas initiated by Rousseau have provided a theoretical foundation for the later development of a new society established by the bourgeoisie. ① It is impossible to conceive of the bourgeois revolution or capitalist social development without Rousseau's thinking.

Ideology is also central to the development of Chinese civilization. Whether we like or dislike Confucianism, we have to admit that it dominated Chinese social and intellectual developments for about two thousand years. In spite of the ups and downs in the social and intellectual conditions in the long history of Chinese civilization, Confucianism helped maintain a fairly stable though sometimes turbulent or even critical and risky situation. No matter whether such a trend was good or bad for the ordinary Chinese, no one could deny that it was Confucianism that preceded and decided the spirit and nature of Chinese civilization with its social, economic and cultural accomplishments.

Apart from the important role played by ideology, especially by ruling ideology, we also take interest in how these ideas work under different conditions and contribute to social and intellectual developments. Ideology received due attention from society in the early days of both civilizations. It was used as part of the ruling strategies in respective competitive struggles between ideas during the Spring-Autumn and Warring States Periods in China and the Plato-Aristotle period of Greek civilization. Ideology established itself at the time as an independent factor, automatically working for the formation of certain generally accepted moral, ethical, academic, social and intellectual principles. These principles, even if they were rough and incomplete, started to apply to human behaviours as a guiding rule and thus became a kind of necessity in social and intellectual developments. Some of these principles were accepted and put into the building of certain legal system either in China or in the West. For instance, the ritual principles of the Zhou Dynasty or some of the pre-Socrates laws in a number of Greek city states, could be regarded as such demonstrations. During the early days of human civilizations, ideology seemed to take its own course and worked separately, principally as an unofficial force, with little interference from the government. Its position was humble yet independent, and crucial in terms of cultural and intellectual influence without any privilege. However, with the passage of time, such intellectual conditions were changed due to the increasing

① See *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*, p. 800, Robert Audi (ed.), Cambridge University Press, 1999.