

# Dilemmas in Ideological and Political Theory Courses under the background of the era of vision: A Re-examination Based on Visual Methodologies

Xiaoli Xia<sup>1,a,\*</sup>, Junfeng Li<sup>1,b</sup>

<sup>1</sup>School of Marxism, Guang Dong University of Education, China

<sup>\*</sup><sup>a</sup>Xiaoli515@163.com, <sup>b</sup>stleejf@163.com

**Abstract.** Playing videos is a common approach in the teaching of the Ideological and Political Theory Courses. However, teachers usually focus on the contents of the videos but ignore other aspects such as carriers, locations and technologies. Based on such dilemmas in Ideological and Political Theory Courses under the background of the era of vision, Visual methodologies remind us that the process of playing videos itself can affect the subjunctives of the teaching, the understanding and even the accept and refusal to the videos. Therefore, it is important to pay attention to the ways of playing videos in the teaching of the Ideological and Political Theory Courses.

**Keywords:** The Ideological and Political Theory Courses; Dilemmas; Videos; Visual Methodologies; the era of vision.

## 1. Introduction

There is no doubt that the current era is an era of abundant and rapidly expanding image resources, from ubiquitous advertising images to various creative image designs, to short videos that make full use of the fragmented time of the public filling People's Daily life. Art critic John Berger (2001) once said that there is no society of any kind in history. Such concentrated images and dense visual information have ever appeared. Mirtsov (1998) pointed out that the reason why post-modernity takes vision as its center lies not only in the increasing popularity of visual images and people's increasing use of visual methods to express world knowledge, but also in the increasing interaction between us and constructed visual practices. In this picture-reading era, it is of great practical significance for us to reflect on the new path of ideological and political course teaching reform.

However, in contrast, the academic circle lacks sufficient reflection on the application of this kind of teaching resources. Although the number of relevant studies is not small, the research topic is relatively limited, mainly discussing the teaching role of playing red film and television works, and rarely discussing other types and download contents of videos; In terms of theoretical reflection, it mainly discusses the "why", that is, why to use film and television materials, and less discusses the "what", that is, how to use film and television materials and the validity of using this teaching resource, and the relevant analysis is slightly superficial. The key point is that most of these studies are based on the assumption that "broadcasting film and television resources is beneficial to the teaching of ideological and political courses in colleges and universities", and lacking of reflection on this assumption. In fact, as a basic type of visual materials, how to interpret film and television resources in the teaching process is an important practical and theoretical problem, which is ideological and political teachers and humanities and social science researchers must face.

## 2. Film and television production and visual power: The omission of teacher's dominance

The teaching of ideological and political theory cannot be separated from the leading of teachers. At the same time, it is necessary to increase the research of students' cognitive rules and acceptance characteristics, and give play to the role of students' subjectivity. [1] The teaching of ideological

and political theory should not be separated from the leading of teachers. At the same time, it is necessary to increase the research of students' cognitive rules and acceptance characteristics, and give play to the role of students' subjectivity. [2] However, in the process of teaching practice, teacher pays too much attention to students' curiosity about videos and other materials, and choose to play a lot of videos in the classroom teaching process to attract students' attention. In particular, some students even felt that the knowledge explanation in the video was more profound and there was no need to participate in the classroom teaching, thus eroding the teacher's dominance in the course of teaching.

This kind of problem not only appears in the process of the use of knowledge-based film and television resources, but also in the use of narrative film and television clips. The emergence of this problem is closely related to the production of images. Image production involves how, when, for whom and why the image is made and so on. Ross points out that this inevitably involves a question of visual power. [3] Borrowing Foucault's terminology for her analysis, she breaks down the way visual power works in two ways: "The institutional device, which is the form of power/knowledge that constitutes the institution... Institutional technology, the actual technology used to exercise power/knowledge." [4] Although, as Roth himself admits, the two are sometimes difficult to distinguish, this theoretical framework is rather illuminating, because it sheds light on issues such as the subjectivity and effects of visual power.

Roth's analysis of visual power installations and techniques focuses on art galleries and museums as examples.[5] In fact, in China's red museums, which have received more and more attention in recent years, it is also obvious that they try to control the influence on visitors through some visual power devices and technologies. Many red museums have the following distinctive characteristics in common: First, in the arrangement of "the main text and pictures are placed on the higher part of the wall", so that visitors must look up to see, creating a sense of nobility; [6] Second, fewer experiential, participatory and interactive devices are set up, to minimize the entertainment of the exhibition and maintain its seriousness; Third, enumerate a large number of materials and incorporate these materials into the grand narrative of the entire exhibition. But only retain and highlight the content and features that fit into the grand narrative of the exhibition, in other words, transform the subject of visual power from the author of the video material into the exhibitor, thus ensuring that the influence of visual power is grasped by the exhibitor. However, the ideological and political teachers who use film and television resources in the course of ideological and political classroom teaching are essentially only the users and disseminators of the videos played, but not the producers; Once a video is played, it is the author of the video, not the teacher, who can decide what images to present and talk directly with the students in class.

Therefore, in the process of using film and television resources to carry out ideological and political teaching, teachers are the users of image resources rather than producers. In the process of explaining the rich details of the image content, there is a practical problem of dominant omission. Students obtain the meaning production based on the visual subject in the process of watching the image. Based on the subtle relationship between film and television production and visual power, there is a great tension between the two, which affects the teaching effect of ideological and political courses.

### **3. Interpretation of video content and meaning: Dispersion of students' subjectivity**

At present, the videos played in the course of ideological and political teaching can be divided into two categories according to the types, namely, narrative video clips and knowledge-based video clips. Due to the limitation of teaching time, they are usually used in the teaching process in the form of short videos or partial intercepts of the original content. However, is the video content that the teacher extracts according to the needs of the teaching content completely consistent with the meaning interpretation of the ideological and political class? In fact, there is an open problem in

the interpretation of image meaning. On the one hand, the visual effect and meaning of images are open, color, spatial organization, scene scheduling, montage, light and other aspects will affect the viewer, but different viewers may interpret, understand and use the image differently;[8] Second, the content of the image itself is rich and diverse, so it becomes open, that is, different viewers may extract different content and angles to pay attention to and understand.

For the teaching of ideological and political courses in colleges and universities, when the teacher starts to play a certain video segment in the class as a choice to enrich the teaching content, he is also faced with a 'danger': the interpretation and understanding of the students as viewers may be different from the teacher's expectations, or even completely contrary. Therefore, course teachers must carefully consider: Do the visual effects and meanings of the video meet the requirements and purposes of ideological and political teaching? How to interpret the rich and diverse content of the video? It should be said that such a depiction of the Anti-Japanese War not only accords with historical facts, but also can trigger viewers to have a deeper understanding and reflection on this period of history, which is precisely in line with the requirements of ideological and political courses in colleges and universities to emphasize academic rationality and inspiration. However, it is often difficult for viewers to fully grasp, clarify and understand this complexity in a one-time viewing process, and it is likely that they only pay attention to part of it and ignore the rest. Therefore, if ideological and political teachers want to use this film to teach in class, they must give in-depth and detailed explanations to avoid misunderstandings that are inconsistent with or even contrary to the correct ideology.

#### **4. Video viewing and viewing channels: the limitations of the teaching field**

The important way to use video resources in ideological and political teaching in colleges and universities is to let students watch in the teacher during the course of teaching, forming a viewing effect, so that students can receive the meaning conveyed by the teacher through the video in a specific place, a classroom, a specific scene, during the course of listening. And this particular place, that is, the viewing place, is one of the important elements that affect the social mode of viewing, especially the social habits. Teachers of ideological and political courses in colleges and universities use film and television resources in the course of classroom teaching. The most common viewing place is the classroom. Teachers must be aware that this viewing place has the following characteristics, which may have various influences on the meaning of students' viewing and receiving.

First of all, competition. The large screen in the classroom is far from the only screen in a classroom where the vast majority of students have access to electronic devices such as mobile phones and tablets, given the current technology and economy. Other screens can display images/images just as well as the big screen in the classroom, and these images/images create a competitive relationship. Students sitting in the classroom have many more options than focusing their eyes on the big screen. In response to this situation, some teachers and interactive teaching platforms try to eliminate the "multi-screen competition" by "occupying" students' screens and allowing students to focus their attention on the big screen. But such attempts are often ineffective in teaching practice. First, many of today's electronic devices have a split screen function, and students can completely use only one of the split screens to lecture while continuing to watch the other split screens. Secondly, it is not only the images/images on other screens that can compete with the images/images on the big screen. In fact, as far as the student's eyes can reach, they can form a broad image/image, such as sentences in the textbook, the scenery outside the window, and so on.

Second, it is not mandatory. The so-called non-mandatory means that in college classes, there are generally no devices or technologies to force students to focus their eyes on the large screen in the classroom: the function of the classroom requires it to ensure good lighting, which means that the classroom cannot be like a movie theater by cutting off as much light as possible to let the viewer's

eyes only focus on the large screen; The vast majority of colleges and universities will not require students to hand in their mobile phones in class to reduce the competition of multiple screens; [9]nor do many college teachers pay as much attention to students' classroom behavior as primary and secondary school teachers do, and take various measures to keep students focused on their studies. This means that in this particular perspective of the classroom, the above competitive characteristics and their possible negative effects on teachers' video playback cannot be completely and truly eliminated.

Third, the short time. The viewing location not only has the dimension of space, but also the dimension of time. This means that the videos played in college classes, including ideological and political courses, cannot exceed this "capacity" in time, and if they do, they will inevitably be truncated. Moreover, it is impossible for teachers to devote most of their classroom teaching time to playing videos. Therefore, in practice, the videos played by teachers in ideological and political classes in colleges and universities are mainly short videos. The short time means that in the same class, there is not only the video played on the big screen, but also other images/images, such as the teacher's PPT courseware. They may also influence each other.

In the final analysis, the above three characteristics of the university classroom, which is a viewing place, mean that college students have multiple ways to watch images in class. Teachers of ideological and political courses in colleges and universities must have a full awareness of this when playing videos, that is, they should recognize and anticipate that the videos they play are likely to be covered, replaced and affected by other images played in class at the same time.

## 5. Conclusion

When we look at the application of film and television resources in the teaching of ideological and political courses in colleges and universities through visual theory, we can see that in the "picture reading era", the dilemma of ideological and political teaching lies in the realization that the use of film and television resources is not necessarily beneficial to the teaching of ideological and political courses in colleges and universities. Indeed, the use of film and television resources has not only the logical necessity of enriching the teaching content, but also the realistic necessity of integrating information technology into the teaching reform of ideological and political courses. [7]

This paper does not completely deny the teaching method of "using film and television resources", after all, this method still plays a certain role when ideological and political courses in colleges and universities are generally faced with the problem of "how to improve the 'head up rate', but emphasizes that At present, most teachers and researchers of front-line ideological and political courses in colleges and universities ignore the question of "whether the use of film and television resources is beneficial to the teaching of ideological and political courses in colleges and universities", and often assume that the answer to this question is yes, because people often only pay attention to the content and form of videos, but ignore their own complexity. Reflecting on the use of this teaching resource based on visual theory, it is far from enough to only pay attention to the content of film and television resources. The way, place and technology of using film and television resources, will also have an impact on the teaching effect.

In the long run, they should also pay attention to the application of film and television resources at the stage of course design and teaching design, and strengthen the scientific design of film and television resources, so as to better play their teaching role. As for the specific reform countermeasures and methods, it should be based on the detailed empirical research to grasp the actual effect of the use of film and television resources, which needs the joint efforts of the academic circle and front-line teachers.

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