

Moral Education in Light and Shadow: On the Shaping of College Students' Values in Forrest Gump

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Abstract

In today's diverse and information-based society, the values of college students are facing many challenges and impacts. How to effectively guide college students to establish correct values has become an important issue in moral education in universities. As an indispensable cultural and entertainment form in the daily life of college students, film and television works contain moral education resources that cannot be ignored. Forrest Gump, with its unique charm, not only won the love of the audience, but also subtly conveyed positive values, providing useful inspiration for the moral education of college students. Based on this, this article first elaborates on the moral education elements in Forrest Gump, then analyzes the influence of Forrest Gump on shaping college students' values, and finally proposes several suggestions for using film and television works for moral education for reference.

Keywords

Forrest Gump, Moral Education, College Student, Shaping Values.

1. Introduction

General Secretary Xi Jinping pointed out as early as 2016: "We must integrate ideological and political work into the entire process of education and teaching, and create a new situation for the development of higher education in China." Teachers have students complete the teaching task of analyzing the personality traits of "Forrest Gump," cleverly incorporating moral education into classroom teaching. Students not only understand the character image of Forrest Gump, but also learn the positive energy in Forrest Gump, thus achieving the goal of moral education for students, cultivating their positive, serious, responsible, grateful attitudes and excellent qualities such as diligence, honesty, kindness, benevolence, and responsibility.

2. The Moral Education Elements in Forrest Gump

2.1. A Tenacious Spirit

In the film Forrest Gump, the protagonist vividly interprets the spirit of perseverance to us. Forrest Gump faced physical challenges since childhood, but he never backed down. Even in the face of prejudice and injustice in society, Forrest Gump walked out of his own path step by step with extraordinary perseverance and determination. Neither physical disabilities nor external ridicule can break his strong heart. With his own efforts and persistence, he has created one seemingly impossible miracle after another. The story of Forrest Gump can help college students understand that difficulties and challenges are inevitable on the road of life, but as long as we maintain a tenacious spirit and bravely face every challenge, we can gradually move towards success.

2.2. Kindness and Tolerance

In Forrest Gump, his kindness and tolerance become important components of his personality charm. Whether dealing with friends or strangers, he is able to accept them with a tolerant heart.

Even when bullied or misunderstood by others, he never resents them but uses a warm heart to influence them. Forrest Gump's kindness and tolerance not only make those around him feel warmth and strength, but also encourage every college student to learn tolerance and understanding of others. In today's society, friction and conflicts between people often occur, and Forrest Gump's kindness and tolerance provide us with a new perspective for dealing with interpersonal relationships. It tells us that when facing the mistakes and shortcomings of others, we should learn to tolerate them with a tolerant heart, rather than just blaming and complaining. Only in this way can we jointly create a warm and harmonious social environment.

2.3. Optimism and Confidence

Forrest Gump's optimism and confidence are important reasons why he is able to overcome numerous difficulties and create miracles. In the film, Forrest Gump always faces any difficulties with an optimistic attitude, believing that he can overcome them. This not only enables him to succeed in life, but also infects those around him, making them face life more positively. We can only move forward courageously on the path of life by maintaining an optimistic heart and believing that we can overcome all difficulties. During the process of watching movies, college students are influenced by Forrest Gump's optimism and confidence, which makes them more confident in facing the future. They will understand that no matter how difficult the road ahead is, as long as they maintain an optimistic attitude and believe that they can overcome everything, they will definitely be able to create their own glory.

3. The Influence of Forrest Gump on the Shaping of College Students' Values

3.1. Guidance of Ideological Concepts

In the current era of accelerated globalization, the phenomenon of cross-cultural integration and collision has become increasingly complex and diverse. The shaping of ideological concepts among college students in such an environment faces unprecedented challenges and opportunities. In the movie *Forrest Gump*, although his intelligence level is relatively limited and he may be considered inferior in ordinary people's cognition, he faces various challenges in life with his inner beliefs and consistent optimism. He always adapts to the environment with a proactive attitude and tries his best to seek ways to change the status quo. The current job market is filled with talent and job competition is becoming increasingly fierce. Many college students, after repeatedly encountering obstacles in the job search process, are prone to negative emotions, either complaining about the poor employment environment or lamenting their own fate, thereby losing the motivation to continue working hard. However, Forrest Gump's experience can provide college students with a new perspective and coping strategies. College students can learn from Forrest Gump's spirit and shift their focus from external unfavorable factors to improving their own abilities. They can continuously learn professional knowledge, actively participate in various practical activities, and strive to improve their comprehensive quality based on solid ability reserves. With a positive and optimistic attitude, they can explore effective methods to solve employment problems. At the same time, there are some unfair phenomena such as wealth gap and unequal distribution of resources in society, which can easily trigger dissatisfaction and confusion among college students. However, Forrest Gump's calmness and composure in the face of various setbacks in life can inspire college students to view the complexity of society with a more rational and mature attitude. College students should realize that although individual efforts may not be able to completely change the current state of society in the short term, they can contribute to the progress of society within their capabilities.

3.2. Cultivation of Moral Character

In higher education, the cultivation of moral qualities among college students plays a crucial role, and film art, as a highly infectious and influential carrier of cultural dissemination, plays a unique and irreplaceable role in this cultivation process. Forrest Gump's series of shining moral qualities such as kindness, friendship, and integrity in "Forrest Gump" provide college students with a persuasive and infectious role model. When college students immerse themselves in the exciting plot of this film, they can deeply feel the charm emanating from these moral qualities. In addition, under the dual pressure of fast-paced life and heavy academic and career pressures in modern society, some college students may inadvertently overlook the care and companionship of their families. Forrest Gump's story reminds college students that while striving to pursue personal development goals, they must not forget the warmth and preciousness of family and affection. They should actively care about their family's living conditions and emotional needs, so as to effectively take on their family responsibilities and find a balance between family and personal development.

3.3. The Shaping of Life Attitude

In the long journey of life, the shaping of college students' attitudes towards life is of decisive significance for their future development. The magnificent and philosophical life experience of Forrest Gump portrayed in the movie "Forrest Gump" deeply and comprehensively reflects the diversity and complexity of life, providing extremely valuable inspiration and reference for college students. Forrest Gump's life story vividly illustrates a profound truth: the road of life is not smooth sailing, but full of various twists and turns and obstacles. However, in the face of these difficulties and setbacks, as long as individuals can always maintain an optimistic and open-minded attitude, they will definitely be able to find the dawn of hope in the darkness. In Forrest Gump's life journey, he encountered many major setbacks and blows, among which Jenny's multiple departures and his mother's death were undoubtedly the heaviest pains. Jenny, as the woman deeply loved in Forrest Gump's life, her departure plunged him into an emotional abyss, but he did not succumb to it. After struggling in pain, he still chose to embrace life again. Similarly, his mother has always been his spiritual pillar and warm harbor in life, but after experiencing grief, he did not give up his love and pursuit of life. Instead, he transformed this longing and pain into a driving force to continue moving forward. This positive and optimistic attitude towards life has extremely important exemplary value for college students. In the campus life of universities, college students inevitably face various setbacks and failures. For example, failing an exam is a painful moment that many college students will experience. A failed exam may cause some students to fall into self doubt and depression, thinking that their abilities are insufficient and even developing a fear of learning. However, Forrest Gump's experience tells college students that failing exams is just a small episode in the learning process, and should not be seen as the end point but as an opportunity for reflection and improvement. In terms of emotions, some college students may fall into prolonged sadness and depression at the end of a relationship. Forrest Gump's strong and open-minded attitude towards Jenny's departure can guide college students to view heartbreak correctly. College students should understand that heartbreak does not mean a failure in life, but an opportunity to rediscover themselves and others. In terms of campus socialization and self-development, some college students may feel lost and discouraged if they fail to be elected as student union officials or club leaders. But Forrest Gump's story reminds college students that losing the election only indicates that there may be shortcomings in this competition, and they should learn from it, improve their leadership, communication, organizational skills, etc., and face future challenges with a more mature and confident attitude.

4. Suggestions on Using Film and Television Works for Moral Education

4.1. Selecting Excellent Film and Television Works to Enhance the Effectiveness of Moral Education

In the vast world of moral education in universities, if universities want to fully utilize the advantages of film and television resources, they should carefully select those films and television works that have profound themes, distinct character images, and vivid plots, which can touch the hearts of college students and trigger their resonance and thinking. Specifically, universities should focus on selecting works that reflect a positive outlook on life and values, such as Forrest Gump's tenacious spirit in "Forrest Gump" and the desire and pursuit of freedom in "The Shawshank Redemption". These works, through delicate emotional depictions and dramatic plot settings, enable college students to enjoy a visual and auditory feast while subtly receiving the influence of moral education.

4.2. Combining Classroom Teaching to Deepen the Moral Education Elements in Film and Television Works

The combination of classroom teaching as the main battlefield of moral education in universities and film and television works undoubtedly injects new vitality into this field. Teachers can cleverly integrate film and television works into classroom teaching to guide students to conduct in-depth analysis of the themes, character images, and plot development of the works, thereby excavating the moral education elements contained therein. In this process, teachers should not only play the role of guides but also become enlighteners of students' thoughts. For example, when explaining Schindler's List, teachers can guide students to think about profound themes such as the brilliance and darkness of human nature, responsibility and accountability, and then guide students to reflect on their own behavior and values. This teaching method not only enriches the classroom content, but also makes moral education vivid and concrete.

4.3. Post Movie Discussion and Communication: Deepen Understanding and Promote Internalization

The discussion and exchange session after watching the movie is an important part of deepening moral education and promoting students' internalization of knowledge. At this stage, teachers should fully play their leading role and organize students to have in-depth discussions and exchanges around a certain plot, character, or theme in the film. Encourage students to express their unique opinions and perspectives, so that they can further deepen their understanding and recognition of moral education content. At the same time, teachers should provide timely guidance and feedback to help students clarify misconceptions and enhance their thinking and critical thinking abilities. This will invisibly cultivate their teamwork and communication skills, laying a solid foundation for their comprehensive development.

5. Conclusion

In summary, as a classic inspirational film, Forrest Gump provides rich moral education materials for college students with its profound themes, distinct character images, and vivid plot. In the future, with the continuous development and innovation of film and television art, its application in the field of moral education will be more extensive and in-depth, providing stronger support for the comprehensive development of college students and the harmonious progress of society.

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