

Women Awakening: A Hong Kong Perspective on Social Class and Women's

Independence in Early 20th Century Women's Writing

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Abstract

As the world now is taking heed to women's writing, it is not a norm a hundred year ago. Writing as a female is struggling as well as writing about women's right and freedom. While people are constantly exploring the concept of sex, gender and stereotype, literature is acting as a spokesperson to express, to speak up and to challenge the world with subversive ideas on gender issues. To read feminist literature is to have a better grasp at what makes our world unequal in different aspects, such as working conditions, educational opportunity and even simply just social expectation for a person. To trace back into history of feminist writing is also a way to understand the rising of feminism and the astonishing fact of how some of the terrible sexism problems still exist in the 21st century. Some of the issues in feminism are universal as most of the experiences can be found in women with different background and culture. This essay is exploring feminism on social class issues through comparing literature by Western female writers in early twentieth century and a Hong Kong female writer,

Xi Xi. To analyze with focus, issues in feminism would be separated into 2 parts, education and occupation, family and women's duties. The following literary works are chosen to analyze in depth: Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own*, Kate Chopin's *The Awakening*, Xi Xi's *A Girl Like Me* and *Mourn Over the Breasts*.

Reflections

While undertaking the capstone course, I make sure myself pour out my soul and heart on this topic, not only for the sake of finishing the project, but also for how much I enjoy and learn during reading and analyzing women literature. I have some prior knowledge about feminism but this project can really push me further to develop solid ideas on gender-related issues. It also teaches me to appreciate the beauty of literature by those influential and inspiring women, which at the end, inspire me to start writing literature like Virginia Woolf does, in the style of "Stream of Consciousness". Analyzing Xi Xi's novel in English is another new and fresh challenge for me. However, I am grateful to take this challenge and able to read it with Western feminist writings, which offer me a total new perspective of seeing gender inequality.