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ABSTRACTS

On the Dichotomy of Elegance and Vulgarly

Nan Fan • 4 •

The theoretical dichotomy of elegance and vulgarity has a long history and many branches, arousing various Tower of Babel-like confusions of tongues. Elegance and vulgarity have their own aesthetic origins, and are interpreted in relation to sociological categories such as social class and social strata. There is no abstract and absolute definition of the concept of elegance and vulgarity. In the course of history, the accumulation of professional knowledge, selected classics, *avant garde* art for art's sake, and certain activities of the leisured class have often been considered "elegant," while popular experience, folk revelry, and mass media content have been considered "vulgar." In modern literary history in China, the concepts of enlightenment and of class were involved in the dichotomy of elegance and vulgarity in different ways. In Chinese culture in the second half of the twentieth century, this dichotomy began to be reorganized around the notions of "art" and "commodity." The reconceptualization of elegance and vulgarity at each stage of history has often indicated a reconnection between aesthetic interests and history. In this sense, the debate between elegance and vulgarity has always been a testimony to cultural participation in history.

Understanding in an Epistemic Context

Chen Jiaming • 25 •

In the history of Western philosophy, understanding is an important concept, around which different theories of understanding have taken shape. In recent years, understanding, as a way of cognition distinct from knowing, has become a hot new topic in Anglo-American studies of the theory of knowledge. The theory of understanding, which focuses on the connection between meaning and intentionality (psychological causes), opts to start from the concept of meaning and study understanding in the context of a practical theory of knowledge; it has recourse to a psychological cause in the speaker or actor for understanding the meaning of language and action, especially the grasp of intentionality. The quality of understanding in the field of meaning is expressed in the communication and convergence of the minds of the one who understands and the one who is understood (although it may not be revealed), and this is the basic difference between understanding and knowledge. The basis of understanding is reason, not facts. Reason may include facts, but it is

of a new development phase is a transitional one, an important time for the CPC Central Committee to explore solutions to structural problems and to put forward major innovative ideas and strategic thoughts. Through a series of practical and theoretical explorations, structural problems have been identified as the main contradiction that constrains China's economic development. The innovative concepts and strategic ideas represented by the new development philosophy, supply-side structural reform and the promotion of high-quality development are all centered on promoting the resolution of these problems. Addressing structural problems in the new development stage is also long-term, complex and arduous task. It is necessary to balance the decisive role of the market in resource allocation with a better role of government, and to form an endogenous mechanism that promotes balanced, coordinated and sustainable development.

Adhering to Problem-Oriented Innovation in China's Economic Theory

Liu Shouying and Xiong Xuefeng • 99 •

The current innovation of Chinese economic theory lags behind the country's great economic practice. Centering on this situation, we use the two important periods of the 1930s-1940s and 1980s-1990s, when Chinese economic theories flourished, as examples that demonstrate the key role and basic connotations of problem-oriented methodology of political economy in responding to major economic problems and providing theoretical support for economic decision-making, its analytical logic that responds to the major concerns of the times, focuses on the interaction between productive forces and production relations, enters the real world and discovers its own unique character, as well as the methodological advantages in accurately understanding national conditions and institutional characteristics, distils theory from practice, analyses and explains economic and social change, and aims to solve real-life problems. On the new journey of building a modern socialist country in a comprehensive way, it is necessary for Chinese economics circles to adhere to the problem-oriented approach to political economy, to respond to and solve the major economic theoretical and practical problems of the new era, and to actively promote the innovation of economic theories and the construction of an autonomous knowledge system that manifests the Chinese path, Chinese governance and Chinese principles.

The Lord's Economy in the Feudal Era

Huang Chungao • 119 •

The manor was a manifestation of the lord's economy in agricultural production, where the lord used his feudal power to subjugate the serfs and free peasants and make them produce his daily needs. The operation of the manor

reflected the dichotomous nature of livelihood and profit in the lord's economy. This economy was manifest in the cities in the commercial and industrial sphere, where the lord made large sums of money by leasing out land, markets and transferring feudal power. The operation of the city reflected the coexistence of the economic features of an expanding market and the maintenance of tradition in the lord's economy. Feudalism was an expression of the lord's economy in terms of the distribution of income; the rights and obligations surrounding feudal relationships, such as knight-service, shield money, aid money, inheritance payments, marriage payments, etc., were ultimately realized in monetary terms, and the economic gaming between the barons was an outward manifestation of feudal relationships. The lord's economy of the feudal era was thus characterized by the coexistence of a real economy and a formal economy, with many elements of power, morality, markets and money jointly embedded in each.

The Feudal Contract and English Kingship in the Middle Ages

Meng Guanglin • 141 •

In interpreting the feudal contract between kings and nobles in medieval Western Europe, Western historians have tended to elaborate on its interaction, equivalence, and even equality with an emphasis on the resulting restrictions on the king's authority. However, this was not the case in England during this period. After the Norman Conquest, the "imported feudal system" became a firm support for the English monarchy. On this basis, the feudal contract between kings and nobles evolved from an oral to a textual contract and from individual commitment to collective negotiation a process strongly marked by the coercion and inequality bestowed upon it by feudal hierarchical status. In the course of this process, the English kings ceaselessly consolidated their power by breaking down the feudal customs reflected in agreements between the two sides. Although the *Magna Carta*, as a text-based feudal contract, made explicit provisions on feudal custom, it failed to effectively constrain royal power. History shows that if we seek to elaborate on the equivalence and even equality of the feudal contract from the perspective of modern contract theory, thereby magnifying the nobles' right to resist the king, we will inevitably create a myth of "feudal contract determinism."

The Construction of the Pluralistic Integration of Western European Law in the Middle Ages

Zhang Naihe • 155 •

In the course of their migration, the Germanic peoples encountered the unified legal system of the *Code of Theodosius* compiled in the late of the Western Roman

Empire. Thereafter, they established a succession of laws that broke down this legal system and launched a process of pluralistic legal construction. As feudal economic and social life began to stabilize and develop, a tripartite legal system of feudal law, canon law, and maritime law gradually took shape in medieval Western Europe. The revival of Roman law unified the three legal systems in terms of legal principle, thus contributing to the triune pattern of medieval law in Western Europe. Overall, this system's construction underwent a process from integration to pluralism and thence to a new form of integration. This offers an important stimulus for the re-understanding of Western Europe's legal civilization in medieval times.

Anti-Clericalism in the Late Middle Ages

Long Xiuqing • 171 •

From the late Middle Ages to the Reformation, the clergy of the Catholic Church received resentment and criticism about their power, wealth, and morality from various social classes, a historical phenomenon that European and American historians refer to as anti-clericalism. This is a concept based on the needs of historical research on the Reformation. Anti-clericalist criticism was abundant in the late Middle Ages, both from laymen and from some clergy, but not all anti-clericalism caused divisions in the church. Thus, anti-clericalism did not directly contribute to the Reformation, but rather reflected the institutional vulnerability of the Church in the late Middle Ages, including long-standing ills, resistance to reform, and the conflicts between the Church and the secular world. An in-depth analysis of these elements provides a better explanation of the emergence of the Reformation.

Chivalry and the Concept of Nobility in Western Europe in the Middle Ages

Ni Shiguang • 190 •

The nobility in medieval Western Europe had a concept of social obligation that reflected their social status and duties and was expressed in their thinking and culture in relation to society. Since most of the secular nobles were also knights, the social obligations they should assume and the way these should be discharged are clearly stated in three codes of knightly behavior produced in the 13th-14th centuries. At the intellectual level, a detailed analysis of these texts can show the general scope of the social obligations of nobles in the middle and late Middle Ages and allows us to grasp the high standards for carrying these out. The study of these issues will help us to understand the history of medieval Western Europe and the thought and culture of the medieval nobility at a deeper level.