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Value chains

China is fostering its domestic value chains to better integrate into global value chains.



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Sinology with Chinese perspectives

As China deepens participation, the field of Sinology has embraced Chinese perspectives, which has accelerated the integration of Sinological resources worldwide.



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Duality of consumption

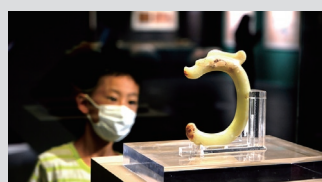
The segregation and integration of consumption are relative and inseparable symbionts, jointly shaping social integration in contemporary society.



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Jade culture

China has a long history of using jade, thus forming a jade culture with rich connotations.



Contacts

Tel: 0086-10-85886198
Fax: 0086-10-85886198
Email: csst@cass.org.cn

Address: 11-12 Floor, Tower 1
No. 15 Guanghua Road
Beijing 100026
P. R. China



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Aesthetics of atmospheres sets new research trends

By DUAN DANJIE

HANGZHOU—As the economy and technology continue to develop, aesthetics is no longer limited to literature, painting, sculpture, music, and other works of art. An aesthetic “atmosphere” can be seen in urban architecture, the green environment, drama, film and television, clothing and beauty, and even food and catering. On Sept. 16–17, the International Conference on the Aesthetics of Atmospheres from a Cross-Cultural Perspective was convened in Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province. Participants gathered online and in person to discuss the philosophical connotations, theoretical origins, and academic value of the aesthetics of atmospheres.

Updating aesthetic notions, practices

Since the 1990s, “atmosphere” has emerged as an aesthetic concept beyond the field of physical meteorology. Based on the concept of atmosphere in the new phenomenology, German philosopher and aesthetician Gernot Böhme put forward the aesthetics of atmospheres, which has been widely used in aesthetic research of architecture, landscape design, drama, music, fine art, film, and daily life.

The atmosphere is a ubiquitous phenomenon with certain emotional qualities. Rodrigo Duarte, president of the International Association for Aesthetics (IAA), said that we all feel an atmosphere



Photo taken on Sept. 30 shows Jianguomennei Street in Dongcheng District, Beijing, is decorated with a festive atmosphere to embrace the National Day, which falls on Oct. 1. Photo: Zhu Gaolei/CSST

in each of our life experiences. From a philosophical perspective, we can better feel and experience the aesthetic meaning brought by an atmosphere. Experiencing an atmosphere involves aesthetic practices based on blending physical perceptions, emotions, and the mind. Rooted in different temporal-spatial, geographical, environmental, historical, ethical, and religious frameworks, an atmosphere exudes certain cultural origins and identities, respectively, Duarte said.

Atmospheres form the basis of life experiences, and we always live, perceive, think, and act within a specific atmosphere. Gao Jianping, president of the Chinese Aesthetics Society, noted that there are many words related to atmosphere in traditional Chinese culture, such as *qi* (vital force), *yun* (rhyme/charm), *qixi* (breath/smell), and *qichang*

(aura). In the history of aesthetics, these concepts have been widely discussed in different fields such as Chinese literature, painting, calligraphy, and music, thus linking modern aesthetics with traditional Chinese aesthetic thoughts.

Wei Lu, director of the College of Media and International Culture (CMIC) at Zhejiang University, said that in contemporary cultural construction and development of aesthetics, the aesthetics of atmospheres fuses with phenomenology, environmental aesthetics, and media aesthetics, and has multiple cultural orientations. Philosophy, aesthetics, the environment, gardening, architecture, and many other fields break down disciplinary barriers, innovate research ideas, and observe people's perceptual experiences, setting the academic trend in the development of contemporary aesthetics.

From nature to life

The aesthetics of atmospheres, founded by Böhme, represents a development of environmental aesthetics or ecological aesthetics, but it has gradually extended from natural life to humanistic, social, and cultural life. Li Yongyin, a professor from the School of Humanities at Zhejiang University, believes that in the construction of the order of existence, natural order is the basis for imagining human existence's free order. The aesthetics of atmospheres constructs an order of human existence, creating a new tendency to freely practice a brand-new, life-based “relationship between man and nature.”

Zhuofei Wang, a professor of philosophy from the University of Hildesheim in Germany and the IAA's assistant secretary general, pointed out the feasibility to advance research on the aesthetics of atmospheres along a cross-cultural track. At present, the field focuses on such topics as nature, the environment, art, and life. As a highly interdisciplinary theory, the aesthetics of atmospheres can further extend its reach to other fields of human life, and strengthen cooperation with other disciplines.

The conference was co-organized by the CMIC and the School of Philosophy at Zhejiang University, the School of Literature at Guangxi Minzu University, and the Department of Philosophy at the University of Hildesheim.

Decolonizing academia: Obstacles and paths forward

By CHEN MIRONG

Although most colonies gained independence following WWII, the presence of colonialism in culture, academia, education, and many other fields still lingers all over the world. In an effort to help contribute to reversing colonialism in academia, CSST recently interviewed a handful of scholars on related theories, challenges to academic decolonization, and paths to achieve it.

Theoretical interpretation

After WWII, decolonization was studied by such leading thinkers as French West Indian political philosopher Frantz Fanon. In an interview with CSST, Johannes Waldmüller, an adjunct professor from the Department for Political Science at the University of Vienna in Austria, defined decolonization as the historical era of formerly colonized regions becoming independent from colonial powers and searching for state administration, collective identity, and nationhood in the process.

Nelson Maldonado-Torres, a professor from the Department of Philosophy at the University of Connecticut in the US, held a similar view, saying that decolonization refers to particular historical moments when former colonies of European empires struggled for their political and juridical independence, particularly within the disciplines of history and the social sciences.

However, “more than juridico-political colonialism, our present moment and future are both deeply marked and haunted by ‘coloniality’—whether one lives in a territory that has been a historical colony or not,” Maldonado-Torres told CSST.

The concept of “coloniality” was coined by Peruvian sociologist Aníbal Quijano in his famous essay “Coloniality of Power,” in which he shed light on the lasting legacy of colonialism within modern society, in the form of social and racial discrimination that has been built into today's social orders. Inspired by Quijano, Argentinian-American semiotician Walter Mignolo put forward the “colonial matrix of power” to unveil the

darkness of modernity. These two scholars laid the foundation for an emerging decoloniality theory in the beginning of the 21st century.

As Waldmüller said, drawing from distinctive Latin American influences and indigenous worldviews, decoloniality emerged as a counter-hegemonic intellectual project against an unjust world order that still exploits the Global South in the name of Northern modernity and progress.

“Unlike decolonization, which tends to be circumscribed to specific historical periods, decoloniality can be better understood as the ongoing production of ideas, feelings, and actions that question coloniality and that contribute to the formation of another world,” Maldonado-Torres said.

Ming Dong Gu, a professor of Chinese and Comparative Literature at the University of Texas at Dallas in the US, said to CSST that decolonialization is a process, while decoloniality is the result of decolonization. Decoloniality pays more attention to the decolonialization of epistemology

and knowledge, he added.

Challenges

It is widely accepted that decolonizing academia is a daunting task. Decoloniality theorists have called for the reconstruction of non-Western epistemological and knowledge models—which move beyond the Western system—but Gu considers this a difficult goal to reach, at least in the short term, citing cultural unconsciousness as one of the reasons.

Due to huge influence of colonialism over global culture, cultural unconsciousness can be more accurately understood as “colonial unconsciousness,” which is the ultimate obstacle to academic decolonialization, Gu said.

Waldmüller agrees with Gu on the lack of consciousness and knowledge about colonial histories and their contemporary remnants, adding that there is also a widespread risk of misleading the process towards superficial betterment for competitive purposes. “Decolonizing academia is not just about

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