

Review on Ecological Aesthetics Theory of Landscape Design in China

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Abstract: Since the construction of ecological civilization was incorporated into the basic national policy in 2007, the strategic concept of "Building a Beautiful China" has brought new opportunities for the development of ecological aesthetics. In the underdeveloped ancient China, the ecological concept of "harmony between man and nature, obedience to nature" coincides with the low-carbon life we advocate today. Studying the present situation of natural aesthetics and modern ecological aesthetics in the ancient garden concept has a good revelation for our sustainable development, which can not only let us see our own endowments, but also let us see our own limitations. This paper selects some representative viewpoints, analyzes their ecological view and design practice, analyzes their similarities and differences, and discusses how to construct ecological aesthetic values with Chinese characteristics.

1. Introduction

For thousands of years, human beings have changed from revering and adapting to nature to transforming and destroying it. With the progress of civilization and industrialization, the relationship between man and nature is becoming more and more complex, and real or potential environmental problems emerge in endlessly. Cities based on human will are cut off from nature, mountains are cut off, water is covered, nature is razed to the ground, and ecology is continually destroyed. With the passage of time, our aesthetic taste in design has changed.

The object of this paper is from ancient times to the present. This paper classifies and discusses the practice and value of ancient landscape aesthetics and modern ecological aesthetics. From Ji Chen's garden monograph "Garden Metallurgy" and ancient Chinese literature. We can see that the ancient people had a profound and mature understanding of the natural ecology of landscape architecture theory in the Ji Chen's landscape architecture monograph "Garden Metallurgy" in the Ming Dynasty and Chinese ancient literature works. There are instincts of conforming to nature and aesthetic taste of pastoral ecological aesthetics. Today, modern ecological aesthetics have made considerable innovation through continuous exploration and development. We have a deeper understanding of landscape security patterns. The improvement of this understanding has led to a large number of design practices guided by natural aesthetics. Mr. Yu Kongjian has made important contributions to the practice and theory of modern eco-friendly, productive and creative landscape design. As a leading figure of modern landscape design in China, he applied "Bigfoot Aesthetics and Low-carbon Aesthetics" in his book "New Taoyuan Vision and Chinese Practice under Low-carbon Aesthetics", and made some theoretical discussions and prospects for the future of urban practice cases.

Chinese traditional natural ecological aesthetics is the return of human aesthetics, values and humanity. Its internal logic is the logical relationship between ecosystem and landscape, ecology and beauty, beauty and art, art and economy, economy and ecology, ecosystem services and natural resources. Although these theories and practices have different voices in different stages, they all express the importance of ecological protection and the urgent need for modern design to return to nature. Today, we review history, summarize results and examine and review key concepts in the development process.

2. Chinese Ecological Aesthetic Design View

Since ancient times, China has advocated the idea of "harmony between man and nature" and "conforming to nature". Ji Cheng also followed this concept in *Garden Metallurgy*. In the chapter of "Garden Metallurgy", he put forward the artistic conception and effect of "although it is artificially created art, but the landscape it presents must be real, just as it is created by nature". He also advocated the ecological aesthetics of harmonious coexistence between man and nature. [1] Wang Runnan pointed out in his paper "Enlightenment of Garden Metallurgy Thought on Urban Construction" that "Garden Metallurgy" refers to many scenes in which people live in harmony with nature and coexist peacefully in the garden environment. *Garden Metallurgy* advocates the natural ecological aesthetics of harmonious coexistence between man and nature. "[2]

In similar literature, from Fu Xiangchen's environmental art and ecological aesthetics under the implication of Zen, as well as Li Jingyi's ecological study of the pastoral spirit in Tao Yuanming's poems, we can see the harmonious relationship between man and society, man and nature in traditional culture, [3-4] and how the simple pastoral aesthetic taste in ancient culture was transformed into elegant aesthetic ideas.

In modern ecological aesthetics and practice, the importance of ecological security model has been paid close attention to, and any natural relationship has been repeatedly emphasized. In *Green Design from the Perspective of Ecological Aesthetics*, Wu Guoqiang emphasizes that all things in the world have their own subjectivity and respect each other's equal life value and dialogue relationship. It is a brand-new understanding of the meaning of life and the premise of establishing the relationship between man and nature in the meaning of life. Therefore, returning to the balance of mutual restriction between man and nature is the aesthetic realm of ecological aesthetics. This view gives priority to the reconstruction of the close relationship between man and nature. In today's society, natural society and human society have long been separated. Our city and landscape are rigid squares drawn between nature, extending in the form of origin. Slowly, we get farther and farther away from nature and are less and less bound by it. In order to restore the relationship between man and nature to the balance of mutual restriction, this modern ecological aesthetics aims to strengthen the relationship between man and nature, and break the isolation of the natural way of life in the city. This view of modern ecological aesthetics is consistent with the ancient simple view of nature, and with the view of integrating landscape into nature.

China has been an agricultural country with rural culture as its main body since ancient times. Our city is a city developed from a wheat field. Since the opening up of China, the traditional concept has disappeared, landscape construction and the past have a great dynasty, pastoral thought is also despised by people. Yu Kongjian put forward the concepts of low-carbon aesthetics and big-foot aesthetics in a series of literatures. "The global and regional situation forces us to combine art with survival, land cultivation and species conservation. Decoration should give way to these goals." *We Need a New Aesthetics — Bigfoot Aesthetics, a Low Carbon Aesthetics* "[5-6]

These three or more kinds of eco-natural aesthetics can be said to be the development of eco-aesthetics. From the simple view of nature in ancient China to the green design in the view of modern eco-aesthetics, these three or more kinds of eco-natural aesthetics pursue the balance between man and nature, and develop into a more specific and contemporary "big-foot aesthetics" with Chinese characteristics. This inheritance is complementary, but also has distinctive characteristics of the times. The ecological view of "Garden Metallurgy" embodies the fear and awe of nature instinct. Modern ecological aesthetics is people's reflection on their own behavior in the face of ecological destruction. However, Bigfoot aesthetics localize the theme of world ecological aesthetics.

3. Ecological Aesthetic Practice of Landscape Design

3.1 Natural Aesthetic Practice of Chinese Traditional Gardens

Ji Chen, the author of *Garden Metallurgy*, is both a theorist and a practitioner. At that time, he presided over the construction of three famous gardens in Suzhou. This makes the work of this paper out of the simple theoretical significance, but also has a strong operability and induction. Under the natural aesthetic concept of "teaching students in accordance with their aptitude and adapting measures to local conditions", this paper puts forward the principle of "skillfully borrowing and skillfully using" in garden construction. Wang Runnan stressed that the "clear reference" design concept can maximize the protection of the original ecological beauty of the base, strengthen the landscape characteristics of the site itself, make full use of the environmental landscape, make full use of the seasonal characteristics of the landscape, enrich the landscape content, enhance the beauty of artistic conception and visual beauty of the landscape, reduce the building volume, and save construction funds. " [2]

This paper introduces the enlightenment of "skillful reference" to modern design of "Garden Metallurgy". Taking the landscape design practice of "Garden Metallurgy" as an example, when "Garden Metallurgy" determines the basic position of pavilions, it mentions that if there is a hill in the garden, the pavilion will be set up halfway up the hill instead of behind the hall, so that people can see further from the height of the hill. When the "Rockery Foundation" mentions mountaineering, it should pay attention to the height and shape of the mountain, taking into account the rockery's sense of space on the ground and upstairs. The "Rockery Foundation" points out that mountains and rivers are places where people live and play, and are designed for people. Some of the drawbacks of contemporary design are that people don't take into account their views of the landscape. The application of natural aesthetics in "Garden Metallurgy" and the principles of landscape creation skillfully borrowed from "Garden Metallurgy" provide a reference for modern design.

Tao Yuanming, as a highly respected scholar and hermit in ancient times, embodied the natural aesthetics of pastoral poetry school in his thoughts of "the unity of nature and man" and "the unity of things and me", from the humanistic spirit to the experience of places, and created the beauty of artistic conception with emotion. Under the guidance of the complementary thought of Confucianism and Taoism, the natural and simple life scenes of "picking asters beneath the Eastern fence, my gaze upon the Southern mountain rests", which he described after his retirement, became the spiritual realm pursued by the ancient literati.

3.2 Relevant Practice of Modern Ecological Aesthetics

In the 1990s, Chinese scholars put forward the proposition of ecological aesthetics. The theory of the modern subject system has not been put forward for a long time in China, but the development of landscape ecological aesthetics in China has a history of more than 30 years. From the study of ancient ecological view, our ancestors had philosophical thinking and practical results on the relationship between human and environment, society, art and so on as early as in ancient times. Today, with the development of social conditions and materials, our ability to transform nature is increasing exponentially. The study of modern ecological aesthetics is different from the ancient people's reverence for natural instincts. Through the accumulation of cruel practical experience and worries about the future living environment, people begin to reflect on the development of ecological design, respect the laws of natural ecology and change the aesthetic taste. Out of concern for urban expansion, environmental degradation and ecological crisis, as well as a sense of mission and responsibility in the new era, our contemporary designers constantly try and practice. They followed closely the international landscape ecology research, combined with Chinese characteristics, from the land use pattern and ecological process, urban ecological land and landscape security pattern construction, nature reserve landscape ecological planning and network optimization, landscape fragmentation and genetic diversity protection, multi-reservoir system and wetland landscape pattern design and a series of practices.

From the research of modern scholars in Discussion on Ecological Aesthetics in Modern Urban Construction[7],Practice Character and Aesthetic Breakthrough—China's Ecological Aesthetics in the Perspective of Publicness[8]and Scaling up ecosystemproductivity from patch to landscape ,we can see that ecological aesthetics is generally acknowledged to have a certain "public aesthetics" basis in modern ecological landscape design.Ecological landscape design involves multiple aesthetic relationships between people and society, between people and the universe, between people and nature, and its ultimate purpose is to improve the non-aesthetic existence of people. Establishing the world outlook of ecological aesthetics is the only way to perfect this ecosystem. Natural ecology has regularity and rhythm, respecting its development law is the foundation of harmonious coexistence. Ecological aesthetics is the key to improve the landscape security pattern in China. [10-14]

3.3 Design Practice of Yu Kongjian

Yu Kongjian believes that the practice of low-carbon aesthetics in China must be localized. "The city of the future is a new peach orchard, a new pastoral city, specifically, a low-or zero-carbon city, a prolific city, a green city with a focus on environmental protection." [5-6] China has been a big agricultural country since ancient times. Cities are rebuilt from rural areas. The most local feature is the rural landscape, which has been neglected for many years. These local landscapes not only have local characteristics, but also form a perfect ecosystem. Their application can not only beautify the scenery, but also increase production. This feature is neither the ancient idea of the unity of man and nature, nor the coexistence of the local landscape with practical function, diversity and cultural significance, which is out of touch with the pursuit of local culture. In recent years, Yu Kongjian's ten-person design office has many examples in ecological landscape design, such as Suzhou Zhenshan Park, Guangzhou Tianhe Smart City, Yichang Canal Park, Beijing Yongxiing River and so on. In recent years, these cases have been aimed at helping to rebuild natural ecosystems through years of ecological rehabilitation of abandoned fish ponds and hardened waterways in cities. These cases combine rainwater and flood management, ecological restoration and recreation. These practices prove the practical significance of modern aesthetics of existence under the influence of ecological concept.

The so-called "Bigfoot Aesthetics and Low-Carbon Aesthetics" has been proved to be feasible by designers' practice, but whether it can be popularized remains to be tested. With the progress of modern civilization, people pursue unrestrained high-yield and rich material enjoyment, which leads to the deterioration of natural resources and the depletion of the environment. On the other hand, however, people must protect nature in a variety of ways, because they resist the noise of cities and materials and pursue the scent of nature. This contradiction perplexes people's lives. Yu Kongjian hopes to change people's aesthetics and create aesthetic taste for native species and culture, which is similar to the idea of "replacing religion with aesthetic education". It advocates the replacement of greed with simple aesthetic standards, resulting in low-carbon and sustainable development .^[15-16]

4.Summary

Ecological aesthetics is a discipline that studies the aesthetic relationship between man and nature, society and art from the perspectives of ecological philosophy, principles of ecological science, ecological ethic feelings and natural aesthetic methods. It emphasizes the beauty of mutual assistance, harmony of body and mind, symbiosis of development and adaptation to environment, symbiosis of co-evolution, and dynamic beauty of material circulation and information feedback. It has a wide range and is closely related to nature, society and even human beings. With the progress of modern civilization, people pursue unrestrained high-yield and rich material enjoyment, which leads to the deterioration of natural resources and the depletion of the environment. Ecological aesthetics is the reflection and development of modernity.

Through the analysis of ancient simple natural ecological aesthetics, modern ecological aesthetics and low-carbon aesthetic design, it is not difficult to find that they all express the idea of advocating nature. The research directions of these three types are the same, but their meanings are different in

different periods. This is also the development of traditional simple view of nature to today's low-carbon aesthetics, the pursuit of low-carbon aesthetics, and the protection of human cultural ecology and heritage. The ecological aesthetics of landscape design is under the guidance of theory, through satisfying the artistic aesthetics, promoting the harmonious coexistence of human, nature and society, and making people's life better.

China is in a new period of development, and the prosperity of construction is the foundation of our progress. Whether from the ancient and modern Chinese and foreign examples, in order to seek progress, ignoring the relationship between man and nature will inevitably lead to catastrophic consequences. China has a large population and is short of resources per capita. Only by rationally planning and protecting limited resources and advocating ecological aesthetics can we ensure long-term development. Low-carbon aesthetics and ecological design play the same role in modern design as the concept of "Taoism is born in nature" put forward in ancient China. In the development of modern science and technology, we may as well re-examine our ancestors' ecological aesthetics — advocating simple natural aesthetics, and combine it with the low-carbon aesthetics advocated today, which has great enlightenment to our landscape design today, and is also an important guarantee for sustainable development.

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