

The Application of Semiotics in Art Implantation in Rural Construction

By

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Abstract

With the help of art implantation integrated with semiotic theory, through the exploration, integration and utilization of rural local resources including natural resources, historical and cultural resources as well as their symbolic resources, they can give new vitality to rural development, in order to improve people's lives and finally to achieve sustainable development in countrysides. This thesis starts with explaining the connotation of semiotics and art implantation as well as their relevance. Followed by analysis of importance of applying semiotic theory in art implantation to rural construction, designers could choose following methods of semiotic theory applied to art implantation in rural construction, such as reduction method, deconstruction and innovation method, situational method, public participation method to revitalize the countryside.

Keywords Art implantation, Semiotics, Locality, Rural construction

Statement

This thesis is an original work, has not been published before, and is not being considered for publication elsewhere in its final form.

Introduction

After the founding of the People's Republic of China, China has made great achievements in economic and social development, urbanization and rural construction. Especially since the reform and opening up in 1978, the Fifth Plenary Session of the 16th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China in 2005 put forward that "building a new socialist countryside is a major historical task in the process of Chinese modernization" (Xi, 2005).

The construction of new countryside has been comprehensively promoted, which has resulted in more rational development and utilization of rural resources, and remarkable achievements have been made in the construction of rural material civilization and ecological civilization. Through the combination of ecological civilization and spiritual civilization, the combination of folk culture and contemporary art and the combination of production and life, the design of a new rural ecology and new environment with great semiotic significance has promoted the sustainable development of rural areas.

This paper starts firstly with explaining the basic connotation of semiotics and art implantation, followed by analysis of the correlation between art implantation and semiotics. Secondly, the importance of art implantation using semiotic in the field of environmental art design is stated. Finally three methods of art implantation applying semiotic theory in rural construction are explained: reduction method, deconstruction innovation method, situational method and public participation method.

Conceptual analysis of semiotics and art implantation

Semiotics and art implantation are related and have different academic priorities. Semiotics theory can better promote the level of environmental art design.

2.1 The basic connotation of semiotics

The definition of semiotics is a basic consensus in academia, that is, semiotics is the study of signs (Conley, 2010). It can also be understood in this way that semiotics is the doctrine of the study of meaningful activities.

Historical development shows that human evolution and social progress are meaningful activities, and they are combined. After thousands of years of civilization baptism, human beings have deepened their understanding of all things in the world. And the significance of human social development has continued to deepen and enrich. The exchanges of civilizations between different ethnic groups and countries have become more extensive and frequent. Chinese President Xi Jinping pointed out: Civilizations are colorful because of exchanges, and civilizations are enriched by mutual learning. Exchanges and mutual learning among civilizations are an important driving force for the progress of human civilization and the peaceful development of the world (Xi, 2014). Communication and mutual learning among civilizations is an important way to build a community with a shared future for mankind. Symbols are born with the exchange of civilizations, and become an indispensable "media" for human information exchange and cultural inheritance and innovation. Symbols themselves are a kind of culture. And the process of human understanding symbols is the process of creating culture (Wan, 2011).

The rural landscape symbols in environmental art design can be classified according to the senses of human beings, that is, according to the five senses to form "five senses of rural landscape": visual rural landscape symbols, auditory rural landscape symbols, taste rural landscape symbols, tactile rural landscape symbols, smell rural landscape symbols. Further subdivisions within each sensory category could be made, for example, visual rural landscape symbols can be divided into symbolic rural landscape symbols, pictorial rural landscape symbols and indicative rural landscape symbols.

2.2 The basic connotation of art implantation

Art implantation belongs to the category of environmental art design. It refers to the use of artistic creativity, design concepts and methods to implant the designed and transformed object, that is, the object obtains vitality, plays a new role, and creates new value through environmental art design. Art implantation in rural construction refers to the use of "local" resources in rural areas with artistic creativity and design concepts and methods, according to construction requirements. And the overall environmental design for rural reconstruction and revitalization are made so as to promote rural construction and stimulate rural construction. Finally it could achieve the vitality of rural economic development and the promotion of sustainable rural development. The so-called "local resources" refers to the locality where the art is implanted, and the resources of "locality" are local resources.

The core concept of art implantation is "implantation", which refers to "implantation" art designs in the local "soil" by grafting, and integrating with local culture, in order to achieve a sustainable effect on local economic and social development. At the same time, on the basis of protecting local traditional culture, art implantation should be coexisted with local traditional culture by including new cultural concept, new art concept and new life concept, so that the economy is more sustainable.

2.3 The relevance of art implantation and semiotics

Art implantation and semiotics belong to mainly academic theories within the category of culture. And both of them focus on methodology and thus have certain relevance. Art implantation is an issue to be discussed within the discipline of environmental art and design, and is an issue of "green" art, science and production, aiming to create a system that conforms to the rural ecological environment and the virtuous circular development of production methods. Semiotics is an issue that is discussed in the integration of the methods of the humanities, social sciences and natural sciences, aiming to express and analyze the relationship of meaning, causation, evaluation, and behavior in phenomena such as civilization, culture, literature, art, and scholarship.

Meaning must be expressed by symbols, and the purpose of symbols is to express meaning. Conversely, there is no meaning that can be expressed without symbols, and there is no symbol that does not express meaning (Zhao, 2016). Therefore, symbols and meaning can be combined, especially the use of semiotic theory in art implantation, which can enrich and develop the meaning and value of art implantation. The combination of art implantation and the specific form of symbols creates a new landscape form of the rural environment, forms a unique rural landscape symbol, and gives new vitality to rural development.

Importance of applying semiotic theory in art implantation to rural construction

By using semiotics theory to carry out environmental art design for rural construction, art implantation can make design projects and their symbols to achieve new development and expressing meaning and value.

3.1 Art implantation with the use of semiotic theory to make design more meaningful

In the field of semiotics, symbol must be interpreted with meaning, it depends on whether it can be explained. Everything that can explain the meaning is a symbol. Designers should be fully aware that the key of using semiotic concepts in art implantation is using "local" resources in the environmental art design, such as local building materials, recycled materials, natural resources, traditional culture, historical relics of the countryside. And every link and every sign must have meaning when using "local" resources in the environmental art design. If the design is separated from these local resources, it will deviate from the purpose of art implantation, and will not get the support of the village committee and villagers.

Art implantation is not a meaningless design that are separated from "locality". According to the characteristics of local resources, it should combine traditional skills with modern design art and technology so that every project, every element, every combination and every brand of design has its meaning and value such as productivity, usability, operation and sustainable development. It could create new production methods and way of life, allowing the villagers to enjoy a new life - a high-quality life with great quality, appearance and taste.

Integrating art into rural life has the following advantages: deepening the role of art in villagers' lives, helping village committees and villagers to develop new production and lifestyles, and generating more social benefits. From products to services, from cities to rural areas, from business to society, from culture to value, design will serve as a powerful catalyst to promote targeted poverty alleviation and effectively empower rural development (Chen, 2020). In order to achieve the purpose of the new rural construction: production development, affluent life, clean village appearance, civilized rural customs, and democratic management (Duan, Lei, 2014).

3.2 Art implantation with the use of semiotic theory to make design more artistic

The artistic conception of environmental art design in rural construction should be based on human emotion and spirit that people would have an immersed sense in the newly constructed artistic and ecological environmental scene. It integrates subjective feelings with thoughts to form a new realm of environmental art, that is, it has the characteristics of situation and reality, and stimulates imagination, so that people can get aesthetic pleasure. That is to say, traditional concepts, folk culture and other humanistic factors convey feelings through design projects, enhance vitality, and constantly sublimate the villagers' yearning for a better life and their deep feelings for local culture. This emotional mood is a goal pursued by art implanted in rural construction. The construction of beautiful countryside proposed by the Chinese government is to reflect this emotional mood. The "locality" of rural construction is the foundation of the new artistic conception of environmental art. From the perspective of semiotics, more rural "regional" resources should be explored. And according to the characteristics of "local" resources, the expression of modern environmental art design should be injected, that is, to enhance the cultural realm of "locality", especially among the artistic emotional mood in landscape design. So that it can better express the creativity pursued by art implantation from the perspective of semiotics, especially the creativity in artistic ideas, design concepts, creative methods, work styles ,etc. It can therefore stimulate the creativity of the village committee and the villagers in order to develop the rural economy and improve the living standards of the villagers.

The rural construction using semiotic theory in art implantation should focus on people, which is the realm that designers should have. To be more precisely, design of art implantation in rural construction should shift from focusing on the design of material objects in the environment to focusing on relationship between people and people, people and materials, as well as materials and materials in the environment (Hu, Zhong, 2020). People-oriented, the unity of man and nature, and the mutual benefit of man and nature are the basic principles for the rural construction in art implantation. The twenty-fifth chapter of the Tao and Teh by Laozi states: "The morality is great, the heaven is great, the earth is great, and the human beings is also great. There are the four great elements in the universe, and the human beings is one of them. Man models himself after the earth. The earth models itself after heaven. The heaven models itself after morality. Morality models itself after nature (Mai, 2010). That is to say, there are four great elements in human society. Humanity cannot be ignored. The relationship between morality, heaven, earth, and human beings must be properly handled. For designers, environmental art design must balance the relationship between human beings and nature and respect the characteristics of "locality". In the final analysis, follow the laws of nature and achieve mutual benefit between man and nature.

Methods of applying semiotic theory to art implantation in rural construction

Art implantation uses semiotic theory to carry out environmental art design for rural construction which could be achieved by following four methods: the reduction method, the deconstruction and innovation method, situational method and public participation method.

4.1 The reduction method of semiotic theory applied to art implantation in rural construction

The reduction method of art implantation using semiotic theory is a common design method in the "local" design of rural construction. The reduction method is through fieldwork, document research, interviews, questionnaires, museum exploration, etc. to explore the symbolic resources in the original regional form of the countryside, especially the most representative cultural symbolic resources. The most representative cultural symbolic resources include expression of traditional ideas, forms of historical relics, traditional architectural styles, intangible cultural heritage, folk crafts and their products, traditional customs and their presentation methods, etc.

It should restore its original appearance as much as possible, because the original shape, form and logo contain unique meaning and value, which can best reflect regional cultural characteristics, humanistic spirit, folk customs, ecological expectations and production methods. These cultural symbols are the resources of environmental art design and the most valuable source of art implantation.

The environmental art design symbols in art implantation in rural construction should integrate with and fully reflect of the historical value of the original cultural symbols. As Jao Tsung-I, a Chinese master of Sinology, said the appearance and arrangement of ancient classics and old books is to carry forward our national spirit and advanced culture, and cultivate our new understanding of past knowledge. We do not criticize the ancient documents without a single word, but we must introduce the old and bring forth the new which is in line with the modern. And a new interpretation should be given to the precious experience of the predecessors' lives (Chen, 2006). Only in this way has art implantation vitality and value.

This method has an important principle, which is to protect the original unique ecological environment, and to protect, restore or reshape in the environmental art design. It could not only reproduce the historical and cultural traditions, but also inherit and activate the cultural genes of the predecessors. The restoration of historical and cultural symbols should be suitable for the current local specific spatial structure and the theme of the times. And the symbolic elements that can most touch people's emotions and symbols in the "local" resources should be integrated and reconstructed through environmental art design. The result of integration and reconstruction should not only conform to the formal beauty of the ecological environment, but also reflect the functionality of production and life. This "local" design is characterized by adapting measures to local conditions and using local material to restore some spatial structures and colors with local characteristics combined with local materials and lifestyles into the narrative theme in art implantation.

4.2 Deconstruction and innovation method of art implantation and application of semiotic theory in rural construction

The "local" design of rural construction should not only reconstruct superficially, but also make innovative use of rural historical and cultural resources including symbolic resources to achieve innovative development. Therefore, while designing the village, on

the premise of respecting the local culture and its functions, modern design theories and environmental art concepts should be used to integrate the rural historical and cultural symbols. The method of deconstruction and innovation may apply symbolic changes such as citation, reference, dislocation, coincidence, cut-off, illusory, etc. It could connect the local rural landscape systems of various contents, forms and styles with each other, in order to develop a comprehensive multi-level landscape symbol semantics (Lu, 2019). Through the application of art implanted in rural environment construction, this method can effectively protect the origin and significance of historical and cultural symbols, including some basic forms and characteristics. So that these symbols could reflect not only traditional and modern characteristics, but also national and fashionable characteristics. And it can get rid of the stale and bring forth the fresh, allowing the villagers to gain cultural identity.

While using this method, the "local" resources, especially the characteristics of historical and cultural resources, should be fully considered. This is not a simple stacking of symbols. The "local" design of art implantation is carried out which is based on fully understanding of the connotation and meaning of rural historical and cultural symbols as well as local productive resources and ecological environment. It can improve the production level and quality of life of villagers, and to achieve sustainable development.

4.3 Situational method of art implantation and application of semiotic theory in rural construction

The "local" environmental art design of rural construction must based on stories, scenes and scenarios which should be close to the life and emotional characteristics of the villagers. They should not only be interesting, but also higher than the expectations of the villagers. The purpose is to help them to improve their skills, production level, and quality of life. Using semiotic theory in art implanted for situational design, which is to turn the rural environment into a creative place. And the creative place could be turned into a new rural community where villagers could live and tourists could experience production and life.

While using the situational method, the historical and cultural heritage of the countryside is the foundation. and the extraction of local natural resources, customary and traditional history and culture are important means to enhance the community atmosphere (Liu, Ge, Song, 2019). And the symbolic system is used to form a collective memory of story, situation, and productivity.

Then using the academic concepts and languages of environmental art design and semiotics to systematically integrate, design and construct the "local" natural environment, ecological environment, production environment, living environment and other elements, so that environmental art design can meet people's diverse needs.

For example, regarding of the township rules and regulations, the "system" formed in the rural folk customs is an important part of the local culture and an important aspect to meet the needs of tourists (Bi et al., 2017). Township rules and regulations are one of the important contents of the situational design, which can arouse the imagination and emotional experience of the villagers and tourists about the life scenes and characteristics of their ancestors. This situational method could transform "local" resources into a participation experience of villagers. So that villagers' cognition level of environmental art design and semiotics could be improved. It could make people to enter a state of empathy and make the rural environment more attractive.

4.4 Public participation method of art implantation and application of semiotic theory in rural construction

Public participation is not only a principle that should be followed in the "local" design of rural construction, but also a method that is often used. Rural construction in art implanted will change the way of production and the life of the villagers. In order for the villagers to recognize, accept and achieve sustainable development, it is necessary to mobilize the committee and villagers should fully participate into the rural construction. On the basis of summarizing the experience of environmental art design in the construction of beautiful village, Xiaoyu Wang put forward several principles that should be adhered to, such as regionality, participation, sustainability, and spatial diversity (Wang, Deng, 2019). The home of village committees and villagers is in the villages. Therefore, designers should reconstruct beautiful villages together with village committees and villagers, jointly create, design, build, maintain and develop well-designed brands, and share design results.

In order to ensure the effective participation of villagers and improve the efficiency of rural construction, designers should popularize environmental art design and semiotics knowledge to villagers, and carry out training to villagers throughout the entire process of art implantation in rural construction. Local governments should give full support such as financial support for art implantation projects. The government and its departments could formulate some policies to inspire the enthusiasm of the village committees and villagers to participate in art implantation projects. The participation of the village committees and villagers will make them cherish the artistic implantation results they have participated in and created.

Designers would be better to down to earth. After the completion of the art implantation projects, they should track and participate in the maintenance and renovation of the projects for a long time, and continuously inject new ideas, new concepts and new technologies of environmental art design and semiotics into the already running projects to ensure artistic design.

Summary and Discussion

To sum up, the purpose of art implantation in rural construction using semiotics theory is to turn "local" resources into a source of development, to create impetus for the development of beautiful rural areas, to stimulate vitality, and to achieve sustainable development. Therefore, for designers, it is necessary to fully explore "local" resources including highly symbolic resources which take their essence and remove its dross. Inheriting the essence that conforms to mainstream values and common values, common development prospects for innovative development and creative transformation is sought. Rural construction in art implanted should not only highlight people-oriented, but also to achieve mutual benefit between human beings and nature. Art implantation in rural construction should not for art's sake and for symbols' sake. It should take people's yearning for a better life as the core goal. At the same time, the relationship between human beings and heaven as well as earth properly should be handled in order to achieve sustainable development in beautiful village. This requires not only from satisfying the needs of the villagers, but also helping the villagers to improve their innovative capabilities in production and exceeding the villagers' living expectations. Therefore, education and training can be used to improve the villagers' production skills and guide the villagers to continuously improve the quality of life, taste, which is an important responsibility of the designer.

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