

The Symbol Reconstruction in Landscape Architecture

Peihuan Wang^{1*}

¹ School of Art and Media, Wuhan Textile University, Wuhan, China

Email Address

designerwph@163.com (Peihuan Wang)

*Correspondence: designerwph@163.com

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Abstract:

In landscape architecture, the symbol plays an important role, while the research on the symbol application is not enough, despite plenty of study about describing and explaining it. The symbol reconstruction is a significant design method, with which designers could create a very new visual sight, necessarily studying on it. In this paper, we aim at researching the symbol reconstruction in Landscape Architecture, discussing its categories, exploring its proceeding, to help the designers summarize an effectively and quickly design method on the symbol.

Keywords:

Landscape Architecture, Symbol, Reconstruction, Design

1. Introduction

In the early 1990s, Swiss F.de Saussure and American Charles Peirce created the system of Semiotic, then the research on symbol spread in French. It has permeated different fields and been an important methodology in recent 20 years. In 2007, Shenghao Chen introduced the symbol into Landscape Architecture in china, founded the design system on landscape symbol. Thus, the discussion on landscape symbol design became more widely. The paper focuses on the application of landscape symbol, and elaborates the reconstruction methodology, basing on plenty of practical cases. It tries to draw a conclusion that the reconstruction not only exists but also has various types and application methods. Through researching, this paper initiates the exploration of the aesthetic reconstruction on landscape symbol.

2. The Symbol Reconstruction in Landscape Architecture

Classified in different ways, there are different results. According to the type, the symbol reconstruction in the landscape architecture is divided into the graphic symbols reconstruction, symbolic-symbols reconstruction, and hybrid reconstruction. Based on method, the reconstruction has varied in Replacement-type, Melt-type, Afterimage type, Cut type, Variant type. In addition, the ways of the landscape symbol reconstruction include decorating and integrating.

3. The Types of Symbol Reconstruction in Landscape Architecture

The landscape symbols refer to the matter, which could express its ideas and conception with the image, voice, color, and smell in the landscape. Moreover, they include the graphic symbol, the indication symbol, and the typical symbol. The graphic symbol often imitated the things in the landscape, abstracting the image features from the objects, such as decorated patterns. The indication symbol equals to the totem, which related to its indicative objects, including the traffic signs and the plaque in the Chinese classical garden. The typical symbol can represent some meanings or idea, it maybe the summing up the culture or custom. For instance, in the ancient china the idea of Round Sky and Square Earth came from the labor and the religion to the sun. In addition, another example is the peony, it always symbolize the riches and honor because of its plump and beautiful shape.

Among the graphic symbol, indication symbol, and typical symbol, often two kinds symbol occur to reconstruct, but the reconstruction shows as the replacement, melt, afterimage, cut-type, variation. It will be elaborated as follows:

The Replacement-type reconstruction is a new form, in which a symbol replaces another one. It always appears between a big symbol and a small one, or a multi-symbol and a single-symbol. That is, when the big symbol shows the character of multi-symbol system, the sub-symbol could be replaced by the small symbol, so that it would reconstruct in the new image, indicative or symbolic patterns.

Besides, when there is a symbol with the character of obvious outside frame, easily recognized by people, and another one with obscure inside frame, the replacement will happen. This is the external around internal model, which can be recognized after carefully observed.

For instance, the Chinese traditional roof is like a bird wing, coming from the Replacement-type reconstruction. It is said that a man named Shaogao had ruled 24 tribes of various birds totem, so the bird wing was used in building roofs as a clan symbol. The roof curves were stretching and the bracket sets were declining under flying eaves, showing the outer contour of the bird wing though without the bird head, whereas the roof materials were black or cyan-grey or yellow tiles and the structure was four or two sloping roofs maybe with double eaves. It is so strong that the bird wing symbol could be recognized only by imagination and association because of its faintness. In this case, the roof symbol has obvious and the bird wing symbol has obscure feature. At the same time, the bird wing symbol is a single-symbol while the roof symbol was a multi-symbol system including material, color and structure symbols.

The same as some Chinese minority architecture roofs were. They tended to reconstruct the hat and the roof. Most minority people like all kinds of hats, and this culture psychology also reflected to their buildings. For example, Palkor pagoda (Figure 1), whose roof is like a female hat decorating with various jewels. Its emissive body gradually changes layer by layer, implying “the Buddha lights illuminate all the ground, and deliver us.” The building plane is a hemispherical dome and the facade adopted the form of the seven floors Pagoda meaning “Seven-storey pagoda”. It is circled by eight white pagodas, showing the solemn and majesty of the Buddha. At the top, it was designed with the color painting, Chinese traditional Bracket Set and the lotus, which was the symbolic pattern in the Buddhism. Decorating the surface in

some mascots such as deer Falun and copper ring, it is so full in the form and so profuse in the building facade.

The Three Saint Palaces (Figure 2) show the result of the replacement between the hat symbol and building. In it, the building composed of the fixed walls, doors and windows, being as a multi-symbol system, and the roof being one member of the sub-symbol system. The surface adopts a form abstracting from a hat of Mongolian girls, changed to a male style hat by stretching and extruding, then replaces the roof symbol, finally reconstructs a new building form. In this reconstruction, the roof is dominant and the hat is recessive, belonging to the strong-weak pattern.

The Melt-type reconstruction indicates that a new symbol plus to another one in a melting way, and as a result the new form is completely different from those two symbols. For instance, the fish-lion sculpture (Figure 3) standing in Singapore square is a classical art after symbol reconstructing in melt way. This is a romantic symbol, composed of a fish and lion. They were not simply joining, but seamlessly melting from the lion into the fish, with the lion head and the fish tail. At the joint of them, the gradual change is obvious. In such the melt reconstruction, the symbol can be concrete or abstract.

The Afterimage type reconstruction especially means that the remainder part reconstructs with other symbols, which conduces to form a novel one, when the original symbol has been fragmentary. This fragment was caused by some manufactured or accident reasons, such as the Broke back Venus Goddess, the ruin of the Summer Palace.



Figures 1. Palkor pagoda.



Figures 2. The Three Saint Palaces.



Figures 3. The fish-lion sculpture.

From the totem image (Figure 4) of NAXI Clan, researchers can find the application of afterimage reconstruction. This landscape sculpture owns the eagle's wing, bird's beak, people's body, so it reconstructs by the afterimage of people, the eagle, and bull. In the afterimage the eagle lose his body, replaced by a man's body with naked navel, strong arms and legs, which has exaggerated curving lines in symmetry, the molding shape showing that the man without head and feet was fighting and pulling, with the bull's head and eagle's claw. Nevertheless, the bull's shape is the afterimage too. Firstly, there are not remainders except for the head of bull. Secondly, instead of the mouth, in the bull's face there is a huge beak, biting a big boa, with the man's hands grasping the boa, and his wings spreading out, his eyes glaring in confidence, equanimity, intrepidity, and victory. It can be concluded that the totem sculpture maybe convey some kind of celebration of victory about fight among clans. As if the clan in eagle totem defeated the clan in snake totem, after it associated with the clan in bull totem, just like the famous The Tiger Block phoenix bird drum (Figure 5). That indicated symbolic meanings is the clan in phoenix totem will be the winner, whereas the clan in tiger totem always the failure, with their knees

for mercy. Since ancient times, the Chinese has paid special attention to the symbolic things, so the sculpture in NAXI Clan was not a simple game in symbol reconstruction. The arts always have its prototype, so the afterimage reconstruction such this might be some special conception.



Figure 4. The totem image of NAXI Clan.



Figure 5. The Tiger Block phoenix bird drum.

The Cut-type reconstruction refers to a method by cutting the symbol into pieces, then rebuilding them. The reconstruction may happen in the single symbol or various symbol. Guggenheim Museum (Figure 6) in Spanish is a conception building belongs to deconstruction; nevertheless, it is deconstructing that the whole building was sliced as a symbol. In fact, the cutting must mean the reconstruction will happen after that. So the space in that way built by Clan Gary, gave people's question whether the traditionally architecture and space could be a stereotype form or not? Must the wall be a wall? The roof is a roof, and the floor is a floor? The new disorderly space and mess could not only get people ponder but also give a novel sight effect and space experience. (Not has been common until today in landscape design, the Cut-type reconstruction can be regarded as a method to be research and do experiment.)

The Variant-type reconstruction refers to the symbol distortion in stretching, exaggerating, twisting under the force, when symbol itself structure is steady. The variation that means the fundamental symbol union has been transformed individually, so that it is not easy to identify although it remain the basic conception.



Figure 6. Guggenheim Museum.



Figure 7. The Portland Falling Water.

The Portland Falling Water (Figure 7) is a typical case in Oregon in U.S. It transferred natural hills to geometry, abstracting from hill symbols and changing into geometry lines from natural curves, as well as simulated to the waterfall. Casually observe transparent water chains, sparkling and splashing, as cloths made of crystal silk, which were blown crinkled, and you will wonder for the miracle created by Variant-type reconstruction of landscape symbols. In this case, the fundamental symbol union is the hill, and the transformation is simulating the linear hills.

While at Tsukuba Center Plaza (Figure 8) in Japan, the designer distorted and shrink Terraced, then placed them in the artificial nature, of course abstracting from the antitype, reducing and generalizing something, so the hilly in various lines showed

the Terraced symbol, to be a special landscape with crowded people sea in the square. Contrary to the uproar of metropolis, it shows a quiet and casual feeling, which the variant reconstructions made it possible.



Figure 8. Tsukuba Center Plaza.

4. The Ways of Symbol Reconstruction in Landscape Architecture

The symbol reconstruction has two ways: decorating and integrating. Decorating the symbol, that is applying representative symbols into some style or culture, and making symbols sparkle among them, which can clue to the culture and image. Symbol decoration is often accompanied by the original symbol extraction, trade-offs, comprehensive, deformation method application, so as to correspond to the main forms in design, as well as they would sparkling in the whole model, just like bringing the painted dragon to life by putting pupils of its eyes. For example, the Beijing Fragrant Hill Hotel (Figure 9) was designed by Ieoh Ming Pei, applying the color symbol of Hue-style Architecture, then decorating the pattern symbol around the windows, with the elegant outlook of white walls and grey roofs, like a delicate traditional Chinese painting. In this symbol decoration, the pattern symbol consist of continuous rectangle and spaced circular component., arraying in a structured way in the walls, similar to the windows of the Podala Palace (Figure 10), while simulating the artistic conception of Suzhou Garden (Figure 11), so we can declare it a reconstruction arts.



Figure 9. Fragrant Hill Hotel.



Figure 10. The Podala Palace.



For another instance, also designed by Pei, the Suzhou Museum (Figure 12) has the appearance like an inverted rice bucket, or like a jade Chinese seal in inverted button shape. So it can be concluded that the reconstruction happened among the seal, bucket, and building. Obviously, the roof structure inserted the main body, and made them more like a building than anything else. At the same time, like some traditional dwellings in Sichuan Province, on the surface of the wall there was a fantastic feature, which shows fuscous separated lines distinguished the white wall, come from the wells dry. On there the separated lines are symbols to be as the reserved marks of the

wood pillars in the wall. As usual Pei used grey paint the lines, white give the walls, completing another elegant and delicate building works.



Figure 11. Suzhou Garden.



Figure 12. The Suzhou Museum.

Xingkuan Wu, contemporary Chinese artist and designer, his concept landscape works named Black River National Restaurant (Figure 13) skillfully applied the symbol decoration. He used a hip roof with doubled eaves, and decorated a red symbol of one-foot dragon pattern on the roof and at the entrance of the restaurant. The symbol was transformed and stretched with amplified volume, forming a shape similar to an exquisite lintel with a bit rough, which immediately made the building glorious. Furthermore, he handled windows with cross of Chinese traditional patterns, which were individual symbol not as complicated as in tradition. There are different approaches but equally satisfactory results with the Brahma Net Hill Hotel (Figure 14), also designed by Xingkuan Wu. It owns the distorted hip roof and stretched gable, which ornament with cross symbol of bracket arm, and embellish delicate trim lines in details., smart windows and entrance design, traditional and exquisite window style, the style facade is rich and colorful, delicate and beautiful. It shows elegant on the relatively steady volume, suddenly bright brightness.



Figure 13. Black River National Restaurant.



Figure 14. The Brahma Net Hill Hotel.

In the same way, Bernard Tschumi designed the La Villette Park (Figure 15) with symbol embellishment. He deconstructed the buildings of the park into points, lines, and then formed a painting with other areas. Therefore, the buildings become some kind of symbol, sparkling and shining in gorgeous red in the park under the pure blue sky. The park was changed into a huge grid, and in which there were 26 elements in the joint of the grid. Some of them were various topic gardens, including the mirror garden, windy garden, water garden, grape garden, bamboo garden, dragon garden, terror tales garden, juvenile garden, and music hall; the others were buildings, such as coffee bar, store, clinic, crafts room, and information center. Among them the aerial rails, tree-lined avenue, and winding alley linked together. Thus, roads and porches were line symbols, wandering for guiding tourists to ramble in it. Lighting design from fireflies illuminated the whole grid at night in the park. More a form than a park, maybe people also could image the designed park as an abstract drawing simulating

the famous painting red, yellow, blue, whereas only red point and red lines in the park, undoubtedly both them in the same structure way.

The symbol integration indicated that forming a grand scene by arranging the symbols from one to two, two to three, three to more. Similar to assemble, the symbol reconstruction happened among many symbols, in which it forms the prior symbol sequence. At the same time, the primary symbol often intensifies the body by rotating, arraying, pulsing.



Figure 15. The La Villette Park.

In Rieu shopping center courtyard (Figure 16), frogs being some symbolic symbol, arise on the surface of the water, arraying in quadrate, the design inspiration came from the fairy tales Frog Prince. Look, the gold frogs immersed in the water ripple, shining and refluxing with gold light created by the water and sun. In the center of the courtyard, frogs array, facing a metal ball, which is a structural sculpture with white wire frame being as the latitude and longitude, symbolic represented the big gold ball falling in the well in Frog prince. At the back of the ball, there is a bridge with white and red railings linked buildings. There are white gravels paving on the ground of the yard, assembling the Japanese dry landscape. What a beautiful view! The whole landscape full of metaphor, going on by symbols, obviously origin from Danish fair tales, Japanese garden, and German postmodernism, then reconstructed in symbolic manner in the landscape arts. All above are good examples on symbol reconstruction.



Figure 16. Rieu shopping center courtyard.

The Stonehenge (Figure 17) in England is another instance. Towards the sun, the huge stone pillars arranged in concentric circles, formed like the beams structure. It concluded to be built for memory of somebody. In an oasis of plain, ancient stones, mysterious lights, all of those bring people fascination about the Universe, which is the result from symbolic integration. There the huge stone pillars are some Commemorative significance symbol, which although we could not know exactly, integrated through arraying, and strengthen the effect of artistic conception. Therefore, we could find the integration symbol more imposing than single symbol, which led to the plenty of application in this way.

In front of the Vietnam War Monument (Figure 18), there are rows and rows of soldier's sculptures, and two deep half-buried granites, which are flat and V-shape, like a vague mirror reflecting the sculptures. In there, V represents the victory, but humbly prostrate into the grass, which show mourning for the dead. At the same time, carving hundreds and thousands of soldiers' names on the monument, that helps people to find their loss folks. In this way, grief was intensified again by arraying, in which name being as symbols of soldiers' sculptures. Thick black granites, tint gray sculptures and fresh green grass, make people sadly rethink, which succeed by the symbol integration.



Figure 17. Stonehenge.



Figures 18. The Vietnam War Monument.

5. Conclusions

From above of all, it can be concluded that the symbol reconstruction is an innovation design method and play an important role in the landscape architecture. From ancient to today, although it has not be attract sufficient attention, analyzing it not only is a significant research but also help designers to understand the landscape works and find a new work way.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

Author Contributions

Text for this section analyzes the symbol reconstruction in Landscape Architecture, and helps designers to understand the landscape works and find a new work way.

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