

Exploring the Cultural Essence of Landscape Paintings: The Role and Analytical Methods of Genius Loci Theory

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Abstract: The theory of "Genius Loci," originating from phenomenology, emphasizes the unique atmosphere and significance of specific places. Widely applied in architecture, urban planning, and landscape design, the concept has recently gained attention in cultural heritage analysis. The absence of a guiding methodology for understanding material culture has led to superficial cultural design practices in cities, undermining the uniqueness of cultural innovation. This paper explores the application of the "Genius Loci," theory in analyzing landscape painting. We introduce the basic concept, fundamental characteristics, and three analytical dimensions of the theory. Through case studies, we reveal the commonalities and differences in landscape painting cultures, emphasizing their interpretive roles. This provides designers with a new perspective to understand and apply material culture in contemporary life.

Keywords: Genius Loci, Landscape Painting, Cultural Analysis, Cultural Essence, Locality.

1. INTRODUCTION

Genius Loci represents the combined identity of a place, encompassing both its material and immaterial aspects (Vecco, 2020). The works of art both influence and express the spirit of a place. This interaction forms the basis for artistic creation and appreciation. Landscape paintings, as tangible objects, embody and convey the uniqueness of a place by integrating these characteristics. Mitchell explores the role of landscape in visual culture (Mitchell, 2002), arguing that it is not just an art form but also a way of seeing and understanding the world. Through landscapes, viewers can experience an idealized natural or social order. Additionally, landscapes serve as symbolic systems conveying specific messages and meanings, reflecting cultural and historical contexts. The "Genius Loci" theory offers a unique perspective for analyzing the cultural essence of landscape paintings. It helps readers understand the cultural connotations and

symbolic meanings of the works by emphasizing the unique atmosphere and historical background of the depicted locations (Al-Zadjali, 2024). Current research on the Genius Loci theory primarily focuses on architecture, urban planning, and landscape design. Despite extensive research in these fields, the application of Genius Loci to art analysis remains limited. Most existing studies emphasize the importance of "Genius Loci" in defining artworks rather than providing specific analyses. This study aims to explore how the theory of 'Genius loci' can be applied to the cultural analysis of landscape painting, focusing on the following research questions: · How can the theory of 'Genius loci' uncover the implicit cultural connotations of landscape painting? · How can the theory of 'Genius loci' be applied to the analysis of landscape paintings? · What are the commonalities and differences in landscape paintings from different cultural backgrounds when analyzed using the theory of 'Genius loci'? Based on these research questions, the study aims to achieve the following objectives: · Introduce and explain the basic concepts and characteristics of the 'Genius loci' theory, and analyze its applicability in the cultural analysis of landscape painting. · Develop an analytical framework based on the 'Genius loci' theory to systematically interpret the cultural connotations of landscape painting. · Validate the effectiveness of the analytical framework through case studies to reveal commonalities and differences in landscape painting across cultural contexts, offering designers and artists new perspectives on the application of the 'Genius loci' theory. This paper primarily analyzes the characteristics and meanings of cultural information in landscape paintings through the "Genius Loci" theory. This analysis includes natural and man-made elements, readers' emotions and experiences, and the social activities depicted in the paintings. The researcher will explore the basic concepts of the Genius Loci theory and explain, through specific paintings, how artists express the cultural connotations of a place through visual language. Key outcomes include establishing a methodology for applying Genius Loci to the cultural analysis of landscape paintings. A proper understanding of culture supports the sustainability of its values in contemporary life.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research Design

This study employs a qualitative research design to investigate the application of 'Genius loci' theory and its role in interpreting artworks

through in-depth analysis of cultural connotations in landscape painting. The research design is based on multiple case studies and a systematic literature review to develop an analytical framework grounded in 'Genius loci' theory. The study utilizes literature analysis and case study methods. Literature analysis is used to establish a theoretical foundation by examining existing literature on 'Genius loci' theory, landscape painting, and cultural connotations. This method identifies key concepts and theoretical gaps, aiding in the construction of the analytical framework. The case study method is applied to explore 'Genius loci' theory by analyzing key elements in each case. Purposive sampling is employed to select a representative sample of landscape paintings from diverse cultural backgrounds. The selected works possess significant cultural or historical significance. They are unique in visual language and cultural expression, reflecting the core dimensions of 'Genius loci' theory. These works originate from various historical periods and cultural contexts to examine commonalities and differences across settings.

2.2 Data Collection Procedures

The data collection process involved the following steps:

- Literature Search and Analysis: Relevant literature was searched through academic databases and library resources, with a focus on research related to 'Genius loci' theory, landscape painting, and cultural analysis. The literature that met the research needs was selected for in-depth reading and analysis.
- Case Selection and Description: Based on the established sampling criteria, representative landscape paintings were selected. Images, background information, and existing research on these works were collected and organized. Each case was described in detail, including its historical background, author, and cultural symbols.
- Application of Analytical Framework: The constructed analytical framework was applied to the selected cases. By analyzing the natural elements, man-made elements, emotional experiences, and dynamic processes in the works, the study explored their cultural connotations in depth and summarized the commonalities and differences in each case.

2.3 Data Analysis and Credibility

Multiple data sources, including academic journals, books, and art reviews, were utilized in the literature analyses and case studies. The diversity of data sources enhanced the comprehensiveness and reliability of our analyses. Cross-validation of information from different sources

reduced potential bias from any single source. A clear analytical framework was adopted, and consistent criteria and steps were followed to ensure the systematic nature and reproducibility of the analytical process. Each selected case was analyzed in depth, with detailed discussions on the cultural context, artistic features, and symbolism of the works. By comparing and analyzing multiple cases, commonalities and differences were distilled, enhancing the representativeness and universality of the findings. Each conclusion was rigorously verified during the analysis process. Each inference was based on a clear logical chain and supported by existing literature, avoiding subjective speculation. Care was taken to interpret the results rationally and to avoid over-interpretation.

2.4 Ethical Considerations

Although this study primarily focuses on the analysis of landscape paintings, artists, individuals, or groups from specific cultural contexts may still be involved in the case studies. The privacy rights of individuals or groups involved must be respected in all cases cited or discussed. For published works and artists, academic norms should be followed to ensure proper documentation of citations and discussions, avoiding misunderstanding or misinterpretation. All data during literature searches and case analyses were obtained from publicly available and accessible sources. Strict academic norms were followed during citation and analysis to ensure source transparency. When third-party data or unpublished information was involved, consent from the relevant parties was obtained. All conclusions in this study are based on systematic analyses and supported by literature, avoiding subjective bias. The researcher assumes full responsibility for all data and results to ensure the authenticity and reliability of the findings.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 Concepts and Characteristics of Genius Loci

The discourse on Genius Loci is diverse and multidimensional, encompassing theoretical approaches from philosophy, human geography, architecture, and cultural anthropology. Broadly understood, it pertains to the physical entity of a place and its sensory-based perception of spiritual experiences and intangible interactions, implying a relationship between space and social processes (Vecco, 2020). The concept of place was first mentioned by Relph in 1976 in environmental studies (Seamon & Sowers,

2008). Later, Norberg urban architect Norberg-Schulz introduced the concept into architecture (Norberg-Schulz, 1979). He argued that a place unites people, giving them a common identity, thus forming the basis for relationships, friendships, and society. He combined the concept of Genius Loci with phenomenology, proposing empirical and psychological concepts from "being" to "grounding" and "space." The introduction of Genius Loci into architectural phenomenology in 1980 emphasized the notion of "inhabitation": "Man inhabits when he can orient himself and identify with his environment, or when he experiences his environment as meaningful (Norberg-Schulz, 1979)." It suggests that place has a "psychic" function, is dependent on identification, and implies a sense of belonging. In this way, Genius Loci gives character and attributes to a place. The distinctive atmosphere unique to each place derives from the various textures, forms, and connotations that cultures assign to their environments, defining their particular Genius Loci (Vecco, 2020). Characterization of Genius Loci from an economic perspective:

- Uniqueness and authenticity: viewing Genius Loci as an intangible heritage value within the context of creating and maintaining cultural resources (Lokas et al., 2023);
- Irreplaceability; 1. Irreducibility; • Social, cultural, political, and historical significance; 2. Long service life compared to typical economic assets;
- Public good: a non-exclusive and competitive asset, meaning no one can be excluded from its consumption and many people can use it simultaneously.

In addition, it possesses characteristics of cultural heritage: • It is an experiential good; • It is a multidimensional and "multi-valued" asset, belonging to various dimensions (economic, social, cultural, etc.) and acquiring different values within each; • It is both tangible and intangible, with immaterial characteristics related to the values and meanings they convey (Klamer, 1997). Vecco defines the holistic character of Genius Loci in terms of meta-concepts, arguing that Genius Loci can be understood as a "collection," an entity and reality constructed by specific historical, cultural, and natural processes. Post-structuralist Massey and Jess argues that place is not a closed system but a multidimensional construction of nature (Massey & Jess, 1995), society, experience, and culture. Based on this assumption, Genius Loci as a meta-concept is composed of different layers, each contributing an important dimension, including biological, social, environmental, physical, and human aspects. The intrinsic and

extrinsic nature of Genius Loci can be understood as a phenomenon consisting of three different dimensions (Vecco, 2020). · Visible and tangible layers of material; · The intangible experience of places created in the human mind; · The fundamental processes of human and natural activity and all the interrelationships between them; The visible and tangible material layer encompasses all material presences that can be seen and perceived. These elements constitute the physical appearance and structure of the place, including both natural and man-made components (Sarihan, 2021). In landscape painting, natural features such as mountains, rivers, and woods reflect the ecological characteristics of the place. Man-made elements such as buildings, bridges, and sculptures reflect human transformation and use of the environment, as well as social development during specific historical periods. The intangible experience of places includes psychological and emotional experiences that are invisible but perceptible. These experiences are formed through interaction with specific places and are highly subjective (Lenzerini, 2011). Specific places evoke particular emotions and atmospheres, such as serenity, pleasure, solemnity, or mystery. This experience is an intuitive response and psychological feeling toward the place. Places carry individual or collective memories and histories, and these intangible experiences impart unique meanings to the place. The intangible experience level reflects the emotional and spiritual connections between people and places (Eckersley, 2017). The fundamental processes dimension includes dynamic interactions between natural and human activities. These activities and processes illustrate the dynamics of a place and the functioning of ecosystems. The interaction between humans and nature is represented (Lokas et al., 2023). This approach provides a clearer, both subjective and objective, view of places while respecting their underlying factors. In this context, socio-economic and cultural dynamics, along with natural processes, are considered the main underlying factors. Values and preferences represent the intangible dimension, while the appearance of the place constitutes the visible tangible dimension (Vecco, 2020).

3.2 The Structure of Culture

Indeed, the interpretation of culture is complex and interdisciplinary (Geertz, 1973). UNESCO divides heritage into tangible and intangible categories. Tangible cultural heritage includes buildings, monuments, archaeological sites, artifacts, and other physical objects that can be perceived and measured. Intangible heritage includes cultural expressions

transmitted orally and through behavior, such as oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals, and festive events (Ahmad, 2006). Consistent with this view, Siu proposes an outer-middle-inner hierarchy of culture (Figure 1) (Siu, 2005). The outer layer is associated with material dimensions, such as visual symbols and crafts. The middle layer corresponds to behavioral activities, linking the outer surface to the inner conceptual layers. The inner layer, in contrast to the intangible categories, serves as the core value that triggers cultural thinking and reflection.

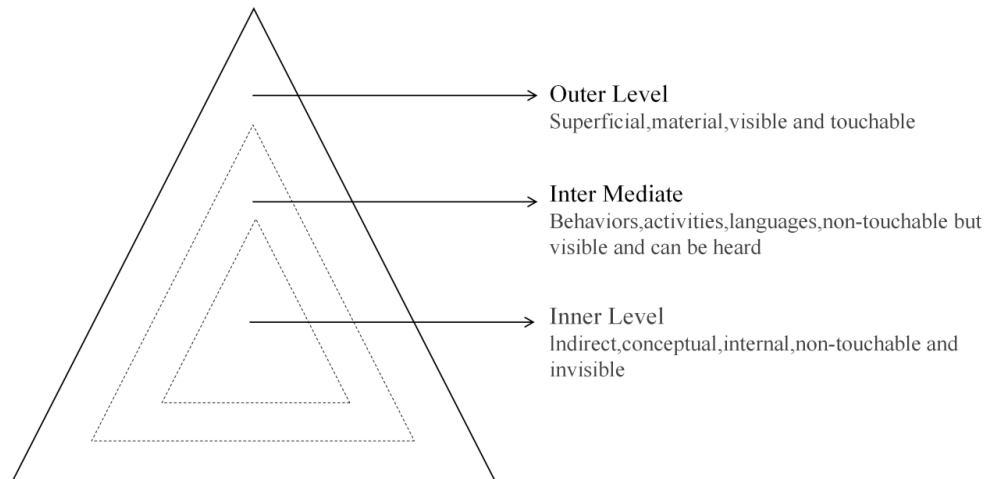


Figure 1: Siu's outer-intermediate-inner leveled structure model of culture

4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYSING THE GENIUS LOCI

Drawing on Sui's proposed cultural hierarchy and Vecco's explanation of the three dimensions of 'Genius loci,' the researcher developed a theoretical framework for analysis (Figure 2).

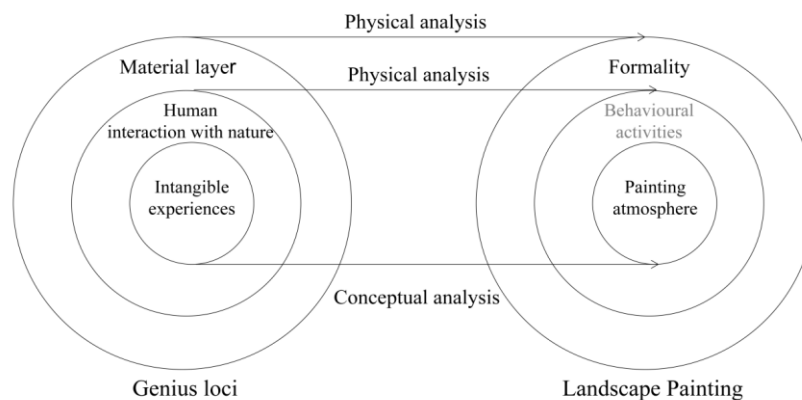


Figure 2: A Framework for Analysing the Cultural Connotation of Landscape Painting Based on the Theory of the Genius loci

The 'Genius loci' in landscape painting can be analyzed from three aspects: The first aspect involves interpreting natural and man-made elements in landscape painting, such as mountains, rivers, trees, and buildings. Analyzing these tangible elements can reveal the geographical features and ecological environment of the painting's site, as well as their symbolic meanings within specific cultural and historical contexts. Classical Chinese landscape paintings are not merely reproductions of nature; they also embody the worship of nature and philosophical reflections in Chinese culture (Chen, 2016). The second aspect encompasses the dynamic processes depicted in the paintings, including seasonal changes, climatic influences, and human activities. These dynamic processes illustrate the interaction between humans and nature. Analyzing these dynamic processes can reveal patterns and concepts of human interaction with nature across different cultures. The third aspect involves the emotional and psychological experiences evoked in viewers when they engage with the paintings. These intangible experiences are conveyed through the painter's composition, colors, textures, and mood creation (Makarevičs, 2017). Understanding these intangible experiences allows for a deeper exploration of how artists convey the emotions and spirituality of a particular culture through visual language. These three dimensions encompass both tangible and intangible aspects of material culture, enabling a more comprehensive understanding of the cultural essence in landscape painting. Through 'Genius loci' analysis, we can reveal the geographical and ecological characteristics of landscape paintings, deeply understand the emotions and spirits conveyed by the artworks, and explore the interaction between humans and nature. This multi-level analysis approach offers a more comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the cultural connotations of paintings, revealing the complex and profound relationship between humans and nature across different cultural contexts.

5. CASE STUDY

5.1 Chinese Song Dynasty Landscape Paintings

Landscape has always been a major theme in Chinese culture (Wen & White, 2020). Traditional Chinese landscape painting is not just a visual reproduction of nature but also a conceptual experience. Through landscape painting, the artist expresses an understanding of nature and an inner spiritual experience, rather than merely reproducing external scenery. This experience aligns more closely with Heidegger's philosophy of "existence" (Law, 2011). The painting "*Traveling in the Mountains*" (Figure 3)

by Northern Song Dynasty painter Fan Kuan is regarded as a classic of Chinese landscape painting. The painting depicts magnificent mountains, meandering streams, dense woods, and rugged roads. These natural elements meticulously recreate the geographic landscape of northern China during the Northern Song Dynasty. Mountains and water symbolize stability and change in Chinese culture. The loftiness of the mountains and the softness of the water creates a strong contrast and harmony. This reverence and understanding of nature reflect ancient Chinese philosophical thinking about heaven, earth, and nature. The advancement of Chinese civilization and the rise of political dynasties went hand in hand (Rawson, 1985). Consequently, mountains became centers of politics and religion in ancient times and were regarded as sacred sites. In ancient Chinese mythology, high mountains often functioned as heavenly ladders—the closest places to the gods.



Figure 3: Fan Kuan: Traveling in the Mountain

In mythology, water often appears as a form of punishment, such as in the Great Flood. In the legend of Noah's Flood, the "loss of nature" is expressed through the Great Flood. Unlike in the Western world, Chinese mythology focuses less on the cause of the flood and more on its process and consequences. In one Chinese myth, Fuxi and Nuwa were siblings. When the great flood came, they were spared because they hid in a gourd. However, everyone else was swept away by the flood, so the siblings married, allowing humanity to continue. Chinese flood myths differ from the religious explanations of floods in Western philosophy by portraying floods as natural phenomena. People observe, recognize, and master the flood when confronted with it, incorporating will, emotion, and imagination. This expresses the relationship between humans and nature

rather than between God and nature or humans and God. Natural elements like clouds and trees also play important roles in the painting. Compositionally, the clouds form a white band that separates the rocks and trees in the foreground from the mountains in the background, creating depth and emphasizing the position and size of the mountains. Chinese landscape painting does not use point perspective or horizontal lines, and the presence of clouds deepens the three-dimensional space. In Taoist philosophy, clouds are considered a visual representation of "Qi" and "Dao". "Dao" is the principle and constitution of the universe. In the cosmic order, clouds are an ever-changing, ever-present substance. Thus, they create an infinite mystery for the painting, leaving room for the viewer's imagination. Fan Kuan employs a far-reaching composition to create a grand scene of soaring mountains and layered hills through a gradual progression. The main peak in the center of the painting towers over the clouds, while the peaks and trees on both sides are evenly distributed, lending stability to the composition. The stream in the center flows from the distance to the foreground, guiding the viewer's eyes into the depths of the painting. The rocks are depicted using the technique of "raindrop chapping," giving them a thick, textured appearance, while the water flows with soft lines to convey movement and fluidity. The use of colors is relatively simple. The texture of the rocks and the layers of the trees are expressed through changes in ink intensity. Dark ink depicts the shadows of the mountains, while light ink shows the water and sky, creating a rich sense of hierarchy in the overall composition. The painting's overall atmosphere is tranquil and remote, evoking a sense of tranquility and harmony with nature. In the lower right of the painting, a few travelers are vaguely visible, some carrying bags, others leading animals. They are dressed in simple clothes with a natural look, as if on a long and peaceful journey. People appear small and humble in the painting, symbolizing humanity's awe and dependence on nature. This harmonious relationship between humans and nature reflects the traditional Chinese concept of the unity of heaven and man, emphasizing that humanity should respect and conform to nature. The travelers' constant movement forward represents not only geographical exploration but also spiritual exploration, seeking inner peace and the sublimation of wisdom. This state reflects both real life and an ideal way of life. Chinese landscape painting was heavily influenced by Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism. Confucianism focuses on the harmonious relationship between humans and nature, as well as between humans themselves. Buddhist thought emphasizes the impermanence of life, the transcendence of the earthly realm, and the pursuit of spiritual

purification. Taoist thought advocates preserving things in their simplicity to reveal their truest beauty. This principle applies to aesthetics: tangible beauty is limited, while intangible beauty has no boundaries, and great beauty lies in "nothing".

5.2 Baroque Landscape Painting

Landscape painting in Europe reached its golden age in the 17th century (Baomar & Sanad, 2021). During this time, art was heavily used to spread beliefs and convey religious sentiments, while Renaissance humanist ideas persisted, emphasizing personal experience, emotional expression, and concern for the human condition. The scientific revolution brought about a new understanding of nature and the universe. The exploration and application of perspective, light and shadow effects, and human anatomy laid the foundations for modern painting (Berns, 2015). During this period, landscape painting focused on the realistic reproduction of natural scenery. *"Rainbow Landscape"* (Figure 4) is an early Baroque landscape painting by Peter Paul Rubens. The painting depicts vast fields, rolling hills, meandering rivers, dense woods, and a rainbow in the sky of Rubens' hometown in the Flemish region (now Belgium). The vast and boundless fields are full of life and vigor. The fields are meticulously depicted, showing the growth of crops and the fertility of the land. The harvest scene symbolizes prosperity and abundance, expressing the recognition of hard work in an agricultural society and celebrating a good harvest. The river meanders throughout the painting, symbolizing the flow of life and the eternal changes of nature. The hills play a balancing and supporting role in the painting, symbolizing the stability of nature and the foundation of human society. The rainbow symbolizes peace, hope, and divine connection. In Christianity, the rainbow is seen as a symbol of the covenant of peace between God and humanity (Mathews, 2019).



Figure 4: Rubens: The Rainbow Landscape

Rubens adopts a three-part layout: figures and animals in the foreground, roads and trees in the middle ground, and a rainbow connecting heaven and earth in the distant background. This arrangement creates a layered composition and a strong sense of spatial depth. The rainbow spans the sky, connecting the left and right parts, and forming a visual focal point. The position and shape of the rainbow not only balance the painting but also guide the viewer's eyes around the entire composition. The natural landscape in the painting features natural tones: blue sky, green land, brown tree trunks, and tawny earth. These harmonious colors faithfully reproduce the beauty of nature. The three-dimensionality and realism of the painting are enhanced by the detailed depiction of light and shadow. The farmers in the painting are busy plowing and harvesting in the vast fields. Their movements are natural and smooth, showcasing their proficiency and concentration in farm work. The farmers work in a natural environment, demonstrating the harmonious coexistence of humans and nature. Through labor, humans not only acquire the material resources needed for survival but also establish a close connection with nature, reflecting the symbiotic relationship between humans and nature. Johann Peter Eckermann, in recording his conversations with Goethe, notes Goethe's comment on Rubens: "A picture as perfect as this is never seen in nature. This composition owes much to the poetical spirit of the painter. But Rubens had a remarkable memory; he had the whole of nature in his head, and nature was always at his disposal, including individual details. That is why, both in the whole and in the details, he seems so true to himself that one feels he is only copying nature. No one paints such good landscapes nowadays; the way of eclecticizing feeling and observing nature has been completely lost; what our painters lack is poetry" (Goethe and Eckermann). Kleinert agrees that Rubens' landscape paintings combine realistically detailed depictions with idealized natural beauty to create a visual effect that transcends reality (Kleinert).

5.3 20th Century Modernist Landscape Painting

Landscape painting in the 20th century underwent profound changes and innovations. Instead of merely pursuing realistic reproductions of natural landscapes, artists explored emotional expressions, formal abstractions, and conceptual representations of landscapes through various artistic styles and techniques. Anselm Kiefer was born in Donaueschingen, Germany, two months before the end of World War II. His childhood in bombed-out post-war Germany greatly influenced his art. In 1971, Kiefer caused an international sensation with his large painting "*Märkische Heide*"

(Fig. 5). This wasteland landscape, located between Spreewald and Mark Brandenburg southeast of Berlin, symbolizes historic Prussian roots. It features a polluted path that begins in the middle of the lower edge of the frame and extends vertically, with a tapering perspective that seems to stretch endlessly toward the high horizon, where land and sky merge seamlessly. To the right of the path, three slender birch trunks stand out. The white hues of the path and birch trees contrast with the deep yellow and brown tones of the barren moorland, creating a somber atmosphere. The words "Märkische Heide" are written above the center of the lower path. The desolate, barren landscape symbolizes historical trauma and cultural destruction, reflecting the devastating effects of war and violence on the land. The dead or decaying trees reflect the fragility of life and the inevitability of death, while also signaling the birth of new life. The decay and renewal of trees reflect the natural cycle of life and regeneration (fig 5).



Figure 5: Anselm Kiefer : Märkische Heide

The road at the center of the composition appears to be a path of hope, suggesting potential life at its end. The use of mixed media—oil, acrylics, and shellac on burlap—enhances the texture of the image and the tactile experience for the viewer. The scribbling and rough brushstrokes convey intense emotions. Through signs and symbols, Kiefer's works explore complex themes of history, memory, and cultural identity. They express the reconstruction and reproduction of cultural memory, reminding viewers to remember the lessons of the past and the weight of history. Kiefer's use of paint is akin to cremating the bodies of dead heroes with fire, anticipating their phoenix-like rebirth in another form (Wallis and Tucker). Anselm Kiefer's landscape paintings evoke more reflections on national identity than any other recent painterly endeavor. American critics praised his Germanness and the authentic way he dealt with the ghosts of

his homeland in his paintings, particularly the horrors of Germany's recent history. The use of profound allegory, numerous references to Germanic mythology, and the drama of archetypes—all considered quintessentially German—were said, through the power of art, to transcend their origins and express the spiritual dilemmas of mankind in the late twentieth century (Rosenthal).

5.4 Contemporary Landscape Painting

21st-century contemporary landscape art continues and develops the diverse styles of the 20th century, integrating ecological awareness, social critique, and personal expression. Zaria Forman is a contemporary American artist whose work frequently focuses on climate change and environmental protection. By depicting disappearing glaciers and polar landscapes, she reminds viewers of global warming and ecological destruction. Zaria Forman's mother was her art teacher and a guiding light on her artistic path. As a photographer, her mother dedicated herself to capturing the most remote regions of the planet. From 2001 until she died in 2011, the cold and isolated landscapes of the Arctic captivated her interest. She often referred to herself as a polar bear in a previous life, spending endless hours in the cold, waiting patiently and happily for the right light. The completion of the *Greenland series* of paintings (Figure 6, Figure 7, and Figure 8) was also a farewell ceremony for her mother. The voyage to the northwest coast of Greenland in search of artistic inspiration was conceived by her mother before her death. Forman completed the trip on her mother's behalf, scattering her ashes in the melting ice. Glaciers symbolize the great power and grandeur of nature. However, with global warming, these glaciers and icebergs are melting rapidly, reflecting the fragility and vulnerability of the natural environment. Forman prefers to work with soft pastels, a straightforward process involving cutting the paper and making marks. This material requires a minimalist approach since there is little room for error or rework; the paper's teeth can hold only a few thin layers of paint. "I rarely use an eraser—I prefer to work on my 'mistakes' and enjoy the challenge of solving them with a limited number of marks. I love the simplicity of the process, and it has taught me a lot about letting go. It's easy to get lost in the tiny details, and if the pastels and paper don't provide limits, I'm afraid I'll never know when to stop or when the composition is finished (Rachel)." Through finger strokes and smears, Forman demonstrates the hard texture and fragile edges of glaciers, symbolizing the strength and vulnerability of nature.



Figure 6: Zaria Forman : Disko Bay, Greenland



Figure 7: Zaria Forman : The Greenland no.71



Figure 8: Anselm Kiefer : The Greenland no.55 (Source:zariaforman.com.)

When asked about the relationship between reality and art, she says, "Actually, I don't intend to make anything surreal. Instead, I try to depict the landscape as I experience it. My personal and emotional experiences affect the composition, and I want my paintings to look realistic and give people the opportunity to experience landscapes they may never have the

chance to visit". Zaria Forman not only expresses reverence for nature through her work but is also actively involved in environmental protection, climate change awareness, and advocacy. She has collaborated with various environmental organizations to promote environmental awareness through art. Her works are not only of high artistic value but also actively advocate for environmental protection and ecological awareness through visual art forms, making her an important voice in contemporary art and environmental protection. "I am in an almost constant state of awe while traveling through the landscape," she said in a press interview, admitting that, being moved by the natural beauty around her, she captures it with her camera during her travels through the polar regions. "My goal as an artist is to provide an opportunity for viewers to experience remote places they may not have had the chance to visit," she continues. "Art has a special ability to tap into our emotions. I show the beauty we will lose in my paintings to inspire people." The reason seems self-evident: "When you love something, you want to protect it" (Marie).

6. CONCLUSIONS

Through the "Genius Loci" theory, landscape paintings are viewed not only as reproductions of natural landscapes but also as reflections of specific cultural and historical contexts. Analyzing the works can reveal the cultural memories, social changes, and historical events expressed by the artist. By conveying the artist's emotion and mental state through the spirit of place, the viewer can feel the artist's emotional resonance with a specific place, enhancing their understanding and identification with the work and fostering reflection. Landscape paintings convey historical memory and cultural heritage through the spirit of place, becoming an important medium for preserving and transmitting local history and culture. They can reconstruct the historical memory of a particular place, reveal the cultural and social background of the past, and enhance the understanding of history and culture. Landscape painting not only depicts natural landscapes but also expresses human care and concern for nature. Analyzing the spirit of the place reveals the humanistic care and ecological awareness embedded in the works. Genius Loci theory provides a multi-dimensional interpretive perspective, enabling in-depth analysis of landscape paintings from multiple levels, such as geography, culture, emotion, and history, to enhance a comprehensive understanding of the works. The application of this theory is of great value and significance, playing a role in art appreciation and cultural heritage, and having a positive impact on

promoting cross-cultural exchanges, enhancing environmental awareness, and fostering sustainable development.

7. RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings of this study, future research can advance in the following areas:

- **Cross-Cultural Comparative Study:** While this study primarily focuses on landscape painting within a specific cultural context, future research could extend to other cultures and regions to conduct cross-cultural comparisons, exploring the differences and commonalities in applying the 'Genius loci' theory across diverse cultural contexts.
- **Expansion of the Theoretical Framework:** The analytical framework in this study is primarily based on natural elements, man-made elements, emotional experiences, and dynamic processes. Future research could introduce additional dimensions, such as social structure, political background, or technological factors, to further enrich and refine the theoretical framework.
- **Combination of Digitalization and Modern Art:** As digital technology advances, the forms and media of landscape painting have evolved. Future research could explore the application of 'Genius loci' theory in digital art and new media, particularly in emerging fields like virtual reality and augmented reality.
- **Integration with Other Theories:** Future research could integrate 'Genius loci' theory with other related theories (e.g., semiotics, spatial theory, or environmental psychology), exploring their complementarity and synergistic effects in the analysis of landscape painting.

Implementing these suggestions, future research could deepen the understanding and application of 'Genius loci' theory, providing broader support for art analysis, design practice, and cultural heritage preservation.

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