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THE THEORY OF "ATMOSPHERIC AESTHETICS" IN THE ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN OF TRADITIONAL CHINESE VILLAGES

Purpose of this study is to identify ways to apply the theory of atmospheric aesthetics in the design of traditional rural landscapes to enhance the visual and experiential appeal of rural areas. Today, the theory of "atmospheric aesthetics" is recognized as a foundation for revitalizing rural environments within the ecological design framework and is widely discussed in academic circles in China and around the World.

Methodology. The research utilized literature analysis, inductive reasoning, case studies, and factor analysis of environmental design.

Results. Based on the analysis of the practical application of the theory of "atmospheric aesthetics" in rural design, techniques to improve the aesthetic perception of traditional villages are demonstrated. The main advantages of using this theory in the design of traditional villages have been identified, such as: enhanced aesthetic experience; promotion of cultural heritage; improved quality of life; resolution of environmental crises. The practical application of the theory of "atmospheric aesthetics" helps create a unique artistic atmosphere and emotional resonance, making rural landscapes more attractive and strengthening the sense of identity and belonging among residents. Emphasis on preserving traditional cultural elements, such as ancient architecture and streets, contributes to the continuity of cultural heritage and the sustainable development of rural areas.

Scientific novelty. Theoretical and practical approaches to rural environment design based on the theory of "atmospheric aesthetics" have been further developed. Extensive evaluations of the effectiveness of using this theory in rural design were conducted during field studies and surveys in various locations. This innovative theory enriched methods of studying environmental aesthetics, offering scientific support for rural revitalization strategies and innovative designs.

Practical significance. The practical significance of the obtained results lies in their potential application by designers in the design of traditional Chinese village environments, where an aesthetically comfortable and attractive environment for both local residents and tourists is created based on the identification of emotional and sensory qualities of the surroundings.

Keywords: atmospheric aesthetics, environmental design, traditional villages, aesthetic perception.

Introduction: "Atmospheric aesthetics" is a term used to describe efforts in environmental design integrated into the Chinese countryside, marking a shift towards an "experience-oriented" view of landscape aesthetics. This perspective emphasizes creating environmental beauty to satisfy the sensory and emotional needs of visitors, thereby enhancing their overall sense of well-being. As rural areas continue to develop, the role of atmospheric aesthetics in shaping these changes becomes increasingly important. Modern research in environmental design increasingly aligns with the "new aesthetics," which incorporates the relevant theory of "atmospheric aesthetics." This theory emphasizes the sensory and emotional qualities of the environment, creating captivating experiences that enchant visitors [1]. Applying this theory in practice not only opens opportunities for creating a sustainable rural environment but also fosters a deeper understanding of rural heritage and culture, aligning with the broader national goal of achieving harmonious and balanced social growth [2].

The term "atmosphere" is often used in aesthetic discourse and generally denotes something vague yet influential. The present study of traditional rural "atmospheres" is

based on various understandings of place to organize the factors shaping aesthetic atmosphere, providing a structured visual overview that clarifies the layered and causal aspects of these atmospheres. Methodologically, using the study of "spatial atmospheres" as a research tool poses epistemological challenges, such as their representative nature and their role in establishing connections between science, practice, and policy development

Analysis of previous research. From the perspective of environmental aesthetics, the presentation of new content and features in aesthetic activities demonstrates their foundation as universal aesthetic principles [3]. Berliner emphasizes in "Environmental Aesthetics" that the environment should not merely be a mode of aesthetics but should expand to encompass overall aesthetics, as the value of any aesthetic mode lies in its capacity to interpret and explain [4]. Philosophers analyze environmental aesthetics as a milestone in contemporary aesthetic research, focusing on keywords such as environment, body, and atmosphere, establishing the theoretical basis for natural environmental beauty [5]. Historical and anthropological studies centered on villages explore cultural conflicts in traditional village societal transformations and ethical dimensions of design in village cultural revitalization, advancing rural development [6].

Geography and human settlement studies have made significant strides in fields such as digital preservation and application of traditional village heritage [3], landscape genetics excavation, and transformation of human settlement environments while exploring traditional village stakeholder complex system characteristics and sustainable development paths from a tourism development perspective [7]. Aesthetic scholar Wu Tiantian emphasizes Boomer's theory of atmospheric aesthetics, transcending traditional subject-object dualism, focusing on the phenomenology of sensation and the body,

providing a new perspective for understanding architectural heritage including human perceptual experiences in the environment [8].

Berliner explores the relationship between the environment and the body, asserting that aesthetic activity is a physical experiential encounter, applicable not only to natural environments or landscapes but to a broader aesthetic domain [8]. Atmospheric aesthetics, proposed by Boomer, is an ecological and environmental aesthetic concept positing that this concept can serve as the core of aesthetics, emphasizing the importance of atmosphere in aesthetics. Analysis indicates that the physical presence of environmental aesthetic modes reflects the development of aesthetic activities aimed at achieving bodily sensibility, explaining changes in the perceptual mediation of aesthetic experiences [9].

The evolution of aesthetic concepts forms the basis for the development of universal aesthetic principles in environmental aesthetics towards subjective dimensions, driving the application of aesthetic participation modes across diverse aesthetic domains [10]. Carlson explicitly states that aesthetic participation extends beyond natural and artistic fields to encompass the entire environmental domain, establishing corresponding modes of aesthetic appreciation [1]. Therefore, in establishing environmental aesthetics as a key discipline, attention should be paid to aesthetic features of the surrounding world, not limited solely to natural environmental aesthetics [1].

In conclusion, the analysis illustrates that the physical presence of general aesthetic activities in environmental aesthetic modes not only reflects the development of aesthetic activities aimed at achieving bodily sensibility but also directly explains changes in perceptual mediation of aesthetic experiences. The so-called shift in perceptual mediation from the "visual and auditory" mode to the "bodily" mode fosters innovation in aesthetic perception, reflecting changes in aesthetic psychology based on bodily expe, processes, content, and value orientations, further

indicating the reconstruction of aesthetic principles.

Setting objectives. This study aims to determine how the theory of atmospheric aesthetics can enhance the quality and efficiency of traditional rural landscape design. As of September 2023, China has listed 8,155 traditional villages in its Directory of Traditional Villages. However, there are several persistent issues in the environmental spatial design of Chinese rural areas:

Firstly, while there has been an overall improvement in the atmospheric environment of villages, there is a phenomenon of "facade engineering" in residential environments. The daily lives of village residents have been relocated into the landscape appearance, lacking scientific rigor and a human-centered approach. There is also a phenomenon of "discontinuity" in architectural heritage, with emphasis on partial restoration over creating a cohesive overall atmosphere. The degree of protection of architectural forms and residential structures varies widely, resulting in traditional villages losing their spatial atmosphere when implemented.

Secondly, the implicit atmosphere of traditional villages fails to effectively convey the spatial ambiance of local culture, thereby inadequately preserving intangible cultural heritage. Folk customs, traditional arts, and festive atmospheres are somewhat lacking. Although the upgraded traditional villages have improved residents' living standards, they have yet to address the spiritual aspects of residents' lives [12].

Results of the research. The integration of "atmospheric aesthetics" theory into rural environment design in China can be analyzed and discussed from multiple perspectives [9]. Firstly, Bommer's theory of atmospheric aesthetics emphasizes phenomenology and embodied philosophy, focusing on human perception and bodily experience within environments. This theoretical framework provides a new perspective for rural environment design, aiming to enhance both

aesthetic appeal and functionality by creating a holistic, primordial sense of emplacement. Against the backdrop of rural revitalization, environmental design entails not merely superficial alterations of buildings and landscapes but requires a comprehensive consideration of social, cultural, and ecological factors.

For instance, in the street landscape renovation of Xicun Township, Xiuwu County, designers tailored enhancements by integrating local ecological conditions, street spatial layouts, and regional characteristics (Fig. 1-2). This approach not only elevated the village's visual appeal but also strengthened residents' sense of belonging and identity towards their environment. Moreover, atmospheric aesthetics underscores the relationship between humans and nature, emphasizing the impact of elements such as space, time, and emotions on artistic expression [10].

Therefore, in rural environment design, the theory of "atmospheric aesthetics" can be applied to enhance villages' overall aesthetic appeal and cultural richness by creating distinctive natural and cultural landscapes. For example, planting local wildflower belts and installing pavilions and stone benches can create nodal spaces with the characteristic features of rural streets (Fig. 3-4), transforming chaotic alley environments into orderly and neat settings.

In the countryside of Tuscany, Italy, atmospheric aesthetics are employed to integrate natural scenery with ancient stone houses, preserving the region's longstanding agricultural culture and architectural traditions. Through meticulous planning and design, every corner of these villages exudes a unique artistic atmosphere, attracting visitors to experience local history and ways of life (Fig. 5). In Bavaria, Germany, village designs focus on preserving traditional wooden house architectural styles amidst mountain landscapes, integrating modern environmentally friendly technologies such as renewable energy and energy-efficient

building design to foster a harmonious coexistence with nature. This approach not only emphasizes visual aesthetics but also deepens respect for local culture and natural environments. In Provence, France, village renewal projects utilize atmospheric aesthetics theory by reconstructing traditional stone houses and streets, preserving the unique architectural styles and cultural traditions of the Mediterranean region. Designers emphasize creating a cohesive living atmosphere within the villages, allowing residents and visitors alike to experience local colors and historical heritage.

Additionally, atmospheric aesthetics also addresses the critique of inferior artworks, freeing the shaping of aesthetic judgments from the confines of "applied arts," which means liberating aesthetic judgments from the confines of applied arts. This gives rural environment design more possibilities, enabling designers to create diverse and innovative design solutions without being restricted by traditional aesthetics.

However, achieving these goals requires a deep exploration of the aesthetic resources specific to rural areas and transforming them into tangible aesthetic elements, imbuing rural landscapes with new forms, colors, materials, and functionalities. For instance, in cases like those in Liushui District, Nanjing, designers integrate rural environments, emphasizing principles of harmony to ensure the harmonious unity of the "people-landscape-environment" [11]. Application Case Studies of Atmospheric Aesthetics Theory in Traditional Village Environment Design:

1. During the renovation of Xidi Village in Anhui Province, China, the concept of atmospheric aesthetics played a key role in guiding the restoration of traditional courtyard houses and streets. This approach preserved the historical charm of the village while seamlessly incorporating modern amenities (Fig. 6). As a result, the village's aesthetic appeal was enhanced, and local cultural practices were revitalized. Recognized as a UNESCO World Cultural Heritage site in 2000, Xidi Village stands out as the only village-type heritage site on the list, known for its well-preserved ancient buildings. It is also designated as a "Famous Historical and Cultural Village of China" and a "National Key Cultural Relics Protection Unit" [12].

2. The revitalization of Shirakawa-go in Japan serves as a prime example of atmospheric aesthetics, maintaining the architectural integrity of the traditional thatched-roof farmhouses while upgrading infrastructure to support tourism (Fig. 7). This balanced approach preserved the village's cultural ambiance while enhancing the experience for visitors. Shirakawa-go Gajo Village also hosts a traditional festival that honors the gods for the safety of the village and roads, rooted in the village's cultural heritage. The grand ceremony, featuring everything from speeches to instrumental performances, masked songs and dances, and costume parades, is meticulously designed (Fig. 8). Beyond the large-scale festival, visitors can actively engage in the festivities by participating in traditional activities like hand-planting rice seedlings and singing rice-planting songs.

3. In the restoration of Bhaktapur Durbar Square in Nepal, atmospheric aesthetics informed the reconstruction of ancient temples and public squares after the 2015 earthquake (Fig. 9-10). This initiative not only safeguarded architectural heritage but also revived community pride and boosted tourism [13].

These case studies demonstrate how applying atmospheric aesthetics theory can effectively enhance traditional village environments, promoting cultural continuity, improving living conditions, and fostering sustainable development amidst contemporary challenges [14].

Based on the conclusion, the application of "atmospheric aesthetics" theory in rural environment design has several advantages for traditional villages:

Fig. 1. Xiuwu County Xicun Township
before renovation
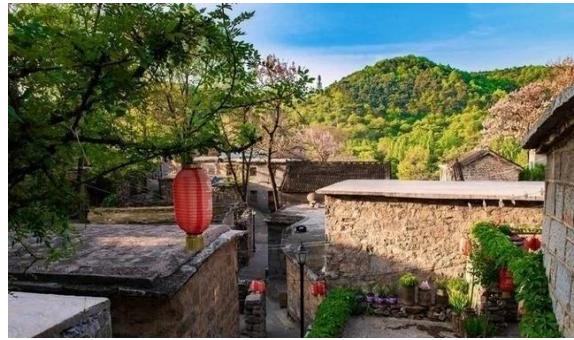
Fig. 2. Xiuwu County Xicun Township
after renovation

Fig. 3. Streetscape of Xiuwu County's West Village

Fig. 4. Xiuwu County Xicun's Pavilion

Fig. 5. uscan countryside setting, Italy

Fig. 6. Rural environment of Hongcun,
Anhui, China

Fig. 7. Shirakawa-go Hapo Village, Japan Village

Fig. 8. Japan's Village masquerade

Fig. 9. Durbar Square, Bhaktapur, Nepal

Fig. 10. Night view of Durbar Square, Bhaktapur, Nepal

1. *Enhanced Aesthetic Experience:* By integrating atmospheric *aesthetics*, traditional village designs can focus more on creating a cohesive overall atmosphere. This allows people to experience a unique artistic charm and emotional resonance within these spaces.

2. *Improved Quality of Life:* Optimizing spatial layouts and environmental designs significantly improves residents' living conditions and enhances their overall quality of life.

3. *Addressing Environmental Crises:* Atmospheric aesthetics offers unique advantages in addressing environmental crises. By emphasizing phenomenology and environmental perception, it enables better responses to current environmental challenges.

4. *Promotion of Cultural Heritage:* Emphasizing the preservation of traditional cultural elements such as ancient architecture and traditional streets and lanes during the design process contributes to the continuation and promotion of cultural heritage.

Conclusions. This article explores the theory of "atmospheric aesthetics" and its impact on shaping human habitats, laying the foundation for sustainable design development in traditional rural areas. "Atmospheric aesthetics", as an aesthetic concept related to environmental design, has gained increasing attention and has become a hot topic among designers today.

The paper examines examples of applying the theory of "atmospheric aesthetics" in the design of traditional villages. It identifies several advantages of its use in rural environments: *Enhanced Aesthetic Experience*, *Promotion of Cultural Heritage*, *Improved Quality of Life*, and *Addressing Environmental Crises*.

In conclusion, it is worth noting that integrating atmospheric aesthetics into rural design in China can effectively improve the comfort and beauty of these areas, contributing to sustainable rural development. Through innovative concepts and design methods, strong support can be provided for rural revitalization, while offering new directions and prospects for global research in ecological aesthetics.

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ТЕОРІЯ «АТМОСФЕРНОЇ ЕСТЕТИКИ» В ДИЗАЙНІ СЕРЕДОВИЩА ТРАДИЦІЙНИХ КИТАЙСЬКИХ СЕЛИЩ

Метою цього дослідження є виявлення шляхів застосування теорії атмосферної естетики в дизайні традиційних сільських ландшафтів для підвищення візуальної та емпіричної привабливості сільських територій. Сьогодні теорія "атмосферної естетики" визнана основою для відродження сільського середовища в рамках екологічного дизайну і широко обговорюється в академічних колах Китаю і світу.

Методологія. У дослідженні використовувались аналіз літератури, індуктивні висновки, тематичні дослідження та факторний аналіз дизайну середовища.

Результати. На основі аналізу практичного застосування теорії "атмосферної естетики" в дизайні сільської місцевості продемонстровані прийоми покращення естетичного сприйняття традиційних сіл. Визначено основні переваги використання цієї теорії в дизайні традиційних сіл, такі як: покращений естетичний досвід; просування культурної спадщини; підвищення якості життя; вирішення екологічних криз. Практичне застосування теорії "атмосферної естетики" допомагає створити унікальну художню атмосферу та емоційний резонанс, роблячи сільські ландшафти більш привабливими та зміцнюючи відчуття ідентичності та приналежності серед жителів. Акцент на збереженні традиційних культурних елементів, таких як давня архітектура і вулиці, сприяє збереженню культурної спадщини та сталому розвитку сільських районів.

Наукова новизна. Розроблено теоретичні та практичні підходи до дизайну сільського середовища на основі використання теорії "атмосферної естетики". Під час польових досліджень і обстежень у різних місцях проведено широкі оцінки ефективності використання цієї теорії в дизайні сільської місцевості. Ця інноваційна теорія збагатила методи дослідження естетики навколишнього середовища, пропонуючи наукову підтримку стратегіям відродження традиційних поселень та інноваційному дизайну.

Практична значущість. Практична значущість отриманих результатів полягає в можливостях їх застосування дизайнерами при проектуванні середовища традиційних китайських поселень, де на основі виявлення емоційних та сенсорних якостей оточення реалізується естетично комфортне та привабливе середовище як для місцевих жителів, так і для туристів.

Ключові слова: атмосферна естетика, дизайн середовища, традиційні села, естетичне сприйняття.

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