

# **LANDSCAPE NARRATIVE DESIGN APPROACHES**

**-A Chinese and Dutch comparison**

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## Summary

This thesis is about comparing the design approaches of landscape narratives between Dutch and Chinese projects. With the development of economy and culture after the end of World War II, many countries have deeply realized the important irreplaceable role of heritage, which records and inherits the development of human history and culture. There is a need for exploring cultural heritage by landscape narratives which is a method to shift invisible heritage landscape to some specific events, characters, and settings. What's more, there are many differences between Europe and Chinese methods of analysis and design, due to social backgrounds, cultural backgrounds, and natural environment differences. Landscape design will be influenced by these factors, which leads to a variety of approaches for dealing with cultural heritage. Hence, it is interesting to find out the differences in design approaches between some the Netherlands and Chinese design examples; a process of exploring cultural differences and similarities by designers from the Netherlands and China. The case study in this thesis is the Fort Vechten (the Netherlands) and Qijiang Park (China). Because of the similar backgrounds of them, which is more convictive to find out the design approaches of landscape narrative. The outcome of the analysis is shown into two parts, interactive experience for Fort Vechten and Tao inspiration for Qijiang Park, which has different design approaches to interpret landscape narrative.

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## **1. Problem Context**

### **1.1 Importance of cultural heritage**

It is common knowledge that cultural heritage can play a significant role for the identity of individuals and society at large. On the one hand, cultural heritage is an intermediary to activate the relationship between the community, identity, and belongingness (Anico, 2008). This means that if people and their next generations are aware of a unique culture and heritage, they might be prouder at having it and caring for it. This in turn, can result in more willingness for members of communities to learn their common culture and have a sense of responsibility to protect it. On the other hand, cultural heritage is regarded as a physical phenomenon with significant and educational meaning. Heritage sites can be visited by locals and visitors and help to establish contact with local custom and interpersonal communication (McArthur and Hall, 1996).

In other words, a cultural heritage site is considered as an experiential place, providing sense and affection for people (Arnould and Price 1993; Lofman 1991). In order to describe the relational structure between people and heritage, Simon Thurley (2005) visualized a “heritage cycle”. Starting with a necessary understanding, people are enabled to value heritage, next they might want to care and protect it. During the caring process, people could get enjoyment and pleasure from cultural heritage. With a full circle and more and more delightfulness, people would crave for more cultural heritage knowledge (Simon, 2005).



Figure 1: Heritage Cycle (Simon Thurley, 2005), made by author

### **1.2 Current situation of cultural heritage and cultural heritage landscape**

Heritage helps to record human development changes, however, parts of heritage sites do not leave tangible elements or signs for the public. While roaming public space one

could be curious about what happened in the past and anxious about some vanishing identity yet remain clueless about the meaning of relics that are present (Antrop, 2005). Macdonald (2013) argued that although cultural awareness is an increasingly widespread public theme in the world, people fear they are losing their “memory” and identity. While historic eyewitnesses’ events are gradually fading away, the transition across generations is also on the wane (ibid.). Especially in recent years, by reason of the fast pace of modern developments, overall population increase and ever-changing lifestyles, cultures are ambiguous regarding their tangible and intangible cultural heritage. Cultural heritage relics are being threatened because of the lack of awareness of its value and its significance to collective identity and a sense of self (Fowler, 2003).

At the same time, with the development of economy and culture after the end of World War II, many countries have deeply realized the irreplaceable important role of heritage, which records and inherits the development of human history and culture (Yisan Ruan,1999). Consequently, the activities of heritage protection have become increasingly active in many countries. On the account of gradually disappeared heritage, there are some widespread examples for collecting valuable history and heritage, such as remodeling heritage sites, building history museums and memorials. These help the public to remember how cultural heritage relics can be related to their present identities. Also, more and more people choose to visit and explore cultural heritage sites, in order to reconnect to a range of almost-forgotten historical stories (Macdonald,2013).

The definition of cultural heritage landscape points out that "cultural heritage landscape is a complex phenomenon with visible and invisible identity. Invisible elements originate from the thoughts and interactions that influence the perception and shaping of landscape. Cultural landscapes reflect the culture that created them (Plachter & Rossler 1995). Therefore, cultural heritage landscape plays a role as a medium to provide perceptions and emotions when the public learns about and explores cultural heritage sites. Perceptions and emotions would convert to deeper interaction as a bridge to help people communicate with culture and cultural heritage sites.

However, in a cultural heritage landscape there are some visible and invisible elements which need elaboration for the public, making sure landscape is not only an object setting over there, but also it is an expression of the past stories. For this reason, the narrative-descriptive approach has become more well-known in many historical researches. Story-telling makes intangible objects transfer to authentic existence (Yifu, 1991): in short ‘landscape narratives’ (e.g. Potteiger, 1998).

To be able to bridge the gap between the past and the future, landscape designers are required to transform cultural heritage and historical story into spatial plans, enhancing the understanding of the value of cultural heritage for the public (Janssen

& Knippenberg, 2008).

### 1.3 Chinese and European differences and similarities

Qixiang (1987) claims that “We cannot talk about Chinese culture in a general way. In any era or area, national common culture does not exist. Chinese culture is diversified but unified.” As a Chinese student, my perception is that the popularization of Chinese cultural heritage awareness started relatively late. It is influenced by other international countries in modern times, which began to have a clear national consciousness on designing and recovering cultural heritage (Feng, 2007).

Time	Content	Social influence
1920-1930	The aggression of cultural relics and concerns for traditional Chinese architectures, which have aroused Chinese people's reflection. Meanwhile, relevant laws and regulations on the protection of cultural heritage have been adopted, which has played an important role in the protection of cultural heritage.	The government began to focus more on cultural heritage.
1950-1960	With the establishment of China, the protection system of cultural heritage began to be established.	Cultural heritage system established.
1970	Reflections on the "The Cultural Revolution" helped to improve legislations on cultural heritage, which clarified the functions of cultural heritage institutions then improved the system.	Cultural heritage system basically perfected.
1990-Now	Paid more attention to the protection and development of historic districts; the development and construction of the surrounding environment; the coordination and harmony of the landscape and social development.	More participation in design and recovery of cultural heritage.

Figure 2: Cultural heritage system development in China (Qi, 2016), made by author

In China, human and natural environment have produced continuous interaction and created a continuing association, which is due to economic, cultural and social factors for a long time. Different types of cultural heritage with natural environment profoundly reflects the direct process of harmonious evolution between human and natural environment. And cultural heritage landscape is expression and carrier for this evolution (Jixiang Shan, 2010).

The current state of the Chinese cultural heritage landscape, there are two characteristics. First of all, cultural heritage landscape is a product of the transformation and utilization of nature in accordance with the laws and rules of whole nature. Secondly, after the transformation of natural entities through human activities, cultural heritage landscape has become an inseparable part of individuals' lives. They are interdependent and achieving to be harmonious between individuals and nature. This means that cultural heritage landscape has a characteristic that individuals protect the harmonious coexistence between nature and human beings (Weidong, 2010). In Chinese culture, these characteristics and thoughts are from Tao which is a type of Chinese philosophy. In Tao, nature is not normal and ordinary of literal interpretation from “nature” or “natural”, nature is all things what they should be like in the universe. Cultural heritage landscape emphasizes a harmonious way of getting well along with people and natural environment, integrating with cultural background. Weidong Hou states that the cultural heritage landscape is a concentrated reflection of the harmony and unity between human and natural environment (Jingfei, 2012).

Meanwhile, as a student in landscape architecture in the Netherlands, I have the opportunity to explore differences and similarities in Chinese and European landscape narrative methods. For cultural heritage, Europe began to protect and develop cultural heritage at an early stage, even dating back to Ancient Rome period (Qi, 2016). For instance, in the Netherlands, heritage is important for quality of public life and economic assets in a city (Lowenthal, 2003). Consequently, in the 1990s, the central



government proposed a positive strategy for heritage, which would be beneficial for society. As one government memorandum claimed that, developing for cultural heritage is an investment in the improvement and enhancement of identity and society (Van Der Valk, 2014).

Time	Content	Social influence
The middle of 1700s	From the protection of cultural relics to the legislative protection of historical buildings	A small part of professionals
The end of 1700s to the beginning of 1900s	From ordinary protection to scientific and systematic protection, the public awareness of cultural heritage began to increase and the government legislated to protect relics and sites.	The public and the government began to pay attention to cultural heritage
After the end of World War II	Vigorously developed urban construction and ignored cultural heritage	Ignored cultural heritage
After 1960	Re-attached the importance of cultural heritage and developed it to a wide range of protection and renovation of cultural heritage environment	The law was more wholesome and had some practices on cultural heritage
1980-Now	The scope and content of cultural heritage development are more comprehensive, the concept is more innovative, and the interaction and experience of cultural heritage are emphasized.	The public focus more on cultural heritage

Figure 3: Cultural heritage system development in Europe (Qi, 2016), made by author

Compared with China, European projects used to set interactive experience as a normal approach to explaining landscape narrative. People could find the historical meaning and significance from experiencing the cultural heritage landscape (Clark, M. Carolyn & Marsha Rossiter, 2008). Besides, when listening to a story, people create images in their minds (Harris, 2000). This indicates that narrative experiences can serve as a memory tool, which lets people relate to a meaning or significance of cultural heritage. When people experience within narratives, they will build a mental image or a model of the situation that is being described of unfold events at the same time. It is a mental model that they remain for a long time better than the normal words (Tilkin, 2018). Narrative experiences could connect personal human experiences to more general cultural heritage, stimulating people to envision and recall the period of history and realize the significance of past records (Clark, M. Carolyn & Marsha Rossiter, 2008).

#### **1.4 Landscape Narratives for dealing with cultural heritage**

Narratology is an intangible method to transfer cultural heritage towards a legible and thereby more tangible story for the public. The story-telling method supports an experience for local people on cultural heritage sites where they could identify themselves, also providing a meaningful, challenging and unique feel for experiencers (van Ouwerkerk, 2009). In addition, landscape narratives build a relation between visible and invisible, sites and identity, which is a method to shift landscape to some specific events, characters, and settings (Potteiger, 1998). Hence, there is a need for exploring cultural heritage by landscape narratives, allowing individuals and also likeminded groups to explore cultural heritage stories (Barnes, 2000).



Figure 4: Landscape Narrative as an intermediary, made by author

## **2. Problems Statement**

### **2.1 Problems Statement**

Making the unseen historical ruin heritage to be visible is a particular challenge for landscape design. For instance, the Roman Limes in the Netherlands. In terms of the original substance, there is not much to be seen above ground and the landscape setting has changed beyond recognition, because of natural conditions, directly affecting the landscape (de Bruin, R.E, 2017). Similarly, in China, each city has its own signs and history in different periods and time layers, but with the development of the city, valuable historical ruin heritage gradually disappeared (Qiaoling, Qizhi, Kailei, & Yongdong, 2018).

As a result, the first problem of cultural heritage landscape is how to make unseen and blurry historical ruin to be clearer and more experiential. Experiencers could see, feel and imagine history through narrative.

What's more, there are many differences between Europe and Chinese methods of analysis and design, due to social backgrounds, cultural backgrounds, and natural environment differences. Landscape design will be influenced by these factors, which leads to a variety of approaches for dealing with cultural heritage. Hence, it is interesting to find out the differences in design approaches between some the Netherlands and Chinese design examples; a process of exploring cultural differences and similarities by designers from the Netherlands and China.

### **3.Theoretical Framework**

#### **3.1 Cultural Heritage and Identity**

With incremental interests in cultural studies, there are not many discussion and construction with identity (Fiona,2006). As Macdonald (2003) concludes, cultural heritage presents the preserved identity pasts. Heritage effect becomes an identity effect by degrees is due to the significance of heritage (Fiona, 2006). Besides, "cultural heritage has become a crucial element in the construction of personal and group identities as people seek to locate themselves within specific historical trajectories and understandings of the past" (Bohland & Hague 2009, p.109). Which means that there is a relationship between identity and cultural heritage; the human could find their community and personal identity through cultural heritage objects.

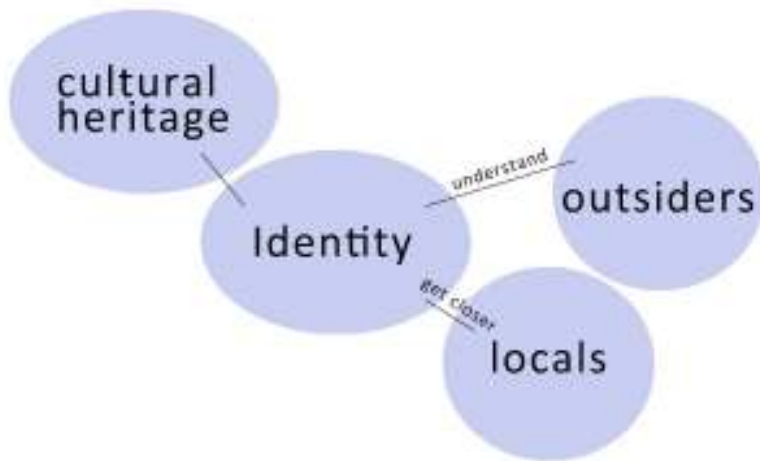


Figure 5: the relationship between identity and heritage, made by author

### **3.2 Landscape Narratives**

In book *Landscape Narratives-design practices for telling stories* by Matthew Potteiger and Jamie Purinton (1998), they state that people are living in a story and using these stories to shape this world. Narratives methods are also in landscape, which assimilates as layers of history. Landscape narratives not only include details of story, but also it is a medium for telling landscapes. In various ways, the “stories” take place. Otherwise, Ann Winston Spirn (1998) claims that landscape could also be seen as literature when people read the landscape as a story.

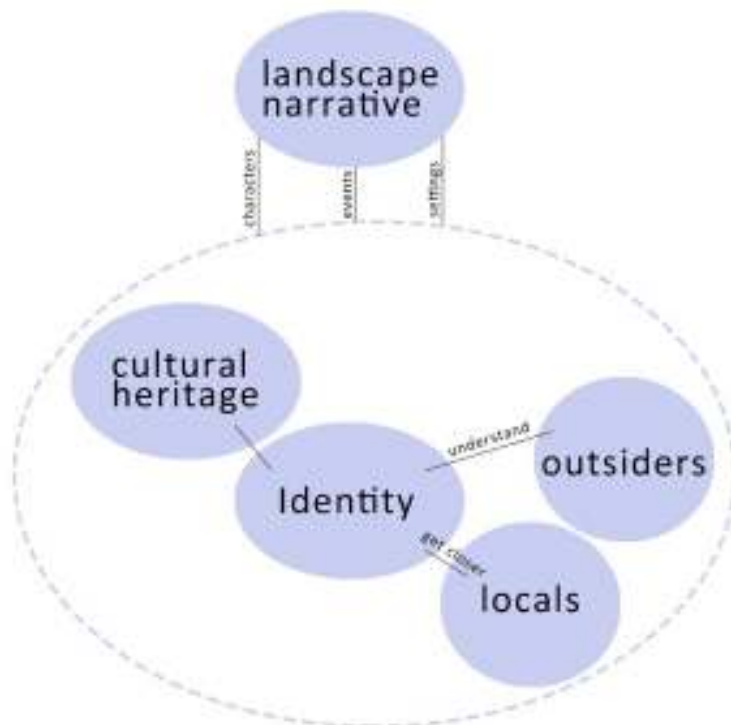


Figure 6: Landscape narrative as a medium, made by author

### **3.3 Historical Ruin Heritage**

According to the definition of the World Heritage Committee under UNESCO, the

World Cultural Heritage includes three parts: cultural property, intangible culture and natural heritage. Among these heritage resources, historical ruin heritage refers to ruins with socio-economic and cultural value, left by forefathers and other human activities relics. Besides, the Venice Charter states that “Historical monument not only contains architectural noumenon, but also is a unique civilization, a historical witness for city or rural environment” Unfortunately, with the development and replacement of society and human, many valuable historical ruins may gradually disappear during a long process of historical evolution (Qiaoling, Qizhi, Kailei, & Yongdong, 2018). As a result, historical ruin heritage has attracted more and more attention in the field of international heritage protection when the CIAM (Congrès International d'Architecture Modern) proposed to protect "historic buildings and regions".

### ***3.4 Interactive Experience for Landscape Design***

Interaction is not only a bridge of communication among people but also is a medium of mutual experience. Interactive landscape refers to the mutual participation and communication between people and people, people and landscape, people and environment, which takes place during the process of visiting the landscape (Chao, 2016).

Meanwhile, Abraham Harold (1964) claimed that “when there is a delicate connection between human as the experiential subject and the material world as the experiential object, the experience will happen and have its own value of existence.” The internal psychological activities of the subject not only guide the experiential behavior but also are restricted by the stimulation of the external space environment. Therefore, experience includes experiencers' subjectivity, autonomy, and openness, which also has the objectivity, polygon, and complexity of the environment. Designers do not only design a place, space or content but also create an experience for users (Simonds,1997).

### ***3.5 Tao Ideology as a Design Inspiration***

Whether in Europe or China, many designers would like to find inspirations for landscape architecture creation from philosophical ideology (Xinxin, 2010). One of ancient Chinese philosophy is Tao. It is used to explain the ontology, origins, primitives, rules and principles of the world. The ancient Chinese philosopher Laozi stated that " individuals follows the rules of the earth, the Earth follows the rules of heaven, heaven follows the rules of Tao, Tao follows the rules of Nature", which explains the symbiosis between human and environment. Also, Tao shows the theme that landscape architecture design should be concordant, unitive and integrated with nature (Hao, Shiguang & Lingyun, 2002). Hence, landscape architecture design, according to a Thaoistic viewpoint, is a two-component part of nature as well as a human living environment. Through the guidance of philosophical thinking, the human living environment and the natural environment are in a harmonious space (Dali, 2017).Especially for cultural heritage protection and reconfiguration, Tao ideology plays a significant role, which requires designers to follow the principles of “harmony” and “integrality”.

The harmony and integrality refer to everything coming back to its origins. Every origin is independent, but all the origins are harmonious as a whole. Landscape architecture design is an integral part of nature and human living environment. Under the guidance of Daoism, design intervention makes the individuals and nature are in a harmonious situation (Wei, 2013). For example, stones are important elements in Chinese landscape design. From the abstract sense, the stone is a bridge between individuals and nature, playing a transition from individuals to earth and from earth to heaven. Thus, it achieves the harmony and unity between heaven, earth. To people, embodying the Taoist idea, there is a harmonious relationship within nature (earth, heaven) and individuals (Xinxin, 2010).

#### ***4. Knowledge Gap***

In landscape narrative knowledge, the cultural heritage landscape is well displayed, however, because of social and cultural backgrounds, Dutch and Chinese cultural heritage landscape design reveals different concepts or inspirations when dealing with landscape narratives. These concepts and ideas have not been appropriately explained.

In order to find and compare concepts and inspirations, this research aims to find new knowledge in how the designers express landscape narrative in both Dutch and Chinese cultural heritage landscape.

#### ***5. Research Question***

##### ***5.1 Historical heritage ruin landscape context***

Since the late 1970s, the practice of heritage conservation in most Western European countries has shifted from the legal protection of the object to a broader part of the city regeneration and socio-economic development movement (Ashworth 1997, Ashworth and Howard 1999). Recently, sustainable development has further developed people's awareness of the potential of historical environmental regeneration, thus making cities and landscapes more ecologically oriented. Therefore, heritage has become an essential resource in urban ecological planning. Similar to the widespread attention to ecology and heritage landscapes, the Netherlands paid more attention less than a century ago (Janssen, Luiten, Renes, & Rouwendal, 2014). At the same time, however, there are still problems in the cooperation among various heritage disciplines. Archaeological and architectural heritage is represented by different institutions, which means that they may have transdisciplinary issues in dealing with cultural heritage landscapes. For example, in the Belvedere project, the New Dutch Waterline is held by five organizations. So, the Belvedere Integrated the departments to find out a balance between designers, administration, and historians in 10 years, also to strengthen the relationship between ecology and heritage. (Luiten, 2011).

On the other hand, in China, many historical ruin sites last many years and remain relics for the public. The history of a city is the embodiment of its value and civilization (Zaijuan, 2012). Under the construction of city municipal government, the

historical ruin heritage landscape gives the city a deep historical background, diverse cultural contexts, and ancient civilization, sharing the space of history and culture for the experiencers and enriching the historical and cultural activities of modern urban life (Yong, 2013). In order to make the city and the ruin site to connect harmoniously and integrally, designers always use the original resources of the site to restore the historical memory (Yun, 2010; Junyao, 2015). The ruined environment and the surrounding of the city environment are tightly integrated, which would be easier to explain history (Junyao, 2015; Yang, 2017).

As a result, the design of Dutch historical heritage landscape often needs to consider about ecology and historian experts. However, for China, it needs to pay more attention to the connection with city culture and public activity space.

### 5.2 Selection of Projects

In the Netherlands and China, some projects are displayed (Figure 7&8). For the Netherlands, the designers prefer to bridge communication with experiencers, creating an interactive experience to build historical memory. However, for the Chinese projects, keep harmoniously and integrally with the city and experiencers is more significant. Concluding these projects, there are two projects fit for analyzing landscape narratives, the Fort bij Vechten in the Netherlands and the Qijiang Park in China. Firstly, they built and rebuilt nearly. Secondly, they are representative projects for their cities. Finally, the function of water is essential for their origins and developments, which means that they have similar site backgrounds. Hence, these two projects are appropriate for having a more in-depth exploration of landscape narrative approaches.

Name	Time	Projects' summary
Fort Vechten (bunnik, the Netherlands, 170000m <sup>2</sup> within the canal)	built in 1867-1870, rebuilt in 2015	Fort Vechten was constructed between 1867 and 1870 as part of the Nieuwe Hollandse Waterlinie (The 'New Dutch Water Line') to defend the cities of the western Netherlands from overland attack. The design team chose to keep 90% of the forest cover, and cleverly draw a strip of 80 × 450 meters. These actions want to repair carefully the weeds in the area, and "recover" current situation like the original appearance of Vickenberg in 1880. This straightforward and bright way seems to be a bold intervention, but at the same time shows respect for history and ecology.
Bunker 599 (Diefdijk, the Netherlands)	rebuilt in 2013	A symbol of the New Dutch Waterline. In the past, it is a military line of defense in use from 1815 until 1940 protecting the cities of Muiden, Utrecht, Vreeswijk, and Gorinchem by means of intentional flooding. Designers turn the experiential interactions into imagination and activation, which is a different approach opens up ways of interpreting history toward the present, rather than being stuck in fixated historical scene from the past.
Gedekte Gemeenschaps-weg (the Netherlands, 30000m <sup>2</sup> )	2008-2009	Redefinite the green structure and openings towards the inundation fields. The green structure was clarified, and the ramparts were reshaped to resemble the historical look. Stairs on the rampart provide visitors to have an overview of the surrounding landscape and the flood channel.

Figure 7: Dutch projects, made by author

Name	Time	Projects' summary
Lingering Garden (Suzhou, China, 23300m <sup>2</sup> )	1593	1593-1794 as a private classical garden for relaxing; using words, images, spatial routes and timeline. 1794-1860 changed the owner for relaxing; using words, images, spatial routes and timeline. 1860-1953 restored and renovated also as a private garden. 1953-now restored previous owner's constructions, in order to making these landscapes integrally; added new sight-seeing activities and events for the public, keeping ancient history alive.
Zheng Guo Canal (Jingyang, China, 4790000m <sup>2</sup> )	BC 246, rebuilt in 2010	Due to scattered sites, the landscape space is connected in series, and there are three roads (sidewalk, car route and bike route) that people could choose. What's more, creating theme spaces is an appropriate way to keep history and culture alive-copy previous site situation to build leisure spaces, restaurants and other buildings.
Da Ming Palace (Xian, China, 3200000m <sup>2</sup> )	634, rebuilt in 2005	Follow the previous emperor/ministers' steps and feel the time changes- leave and keep the noumenon and composition to balance a harmonious relationship between the previous and the current.
Sui Yang Emperor Ruin Park (Yangzhou, China, 30000m <sup>2</sup> )	rebuilt in 2014 -2018	Follow the previous scene, and organize people to read the Emperor tomb gradually.
Zhongshan Qijiang Park (Zhong shan, China, 110000m <sup>2</sup> )	2001	Be designed to preserve the original historical ruin in their original locations. The presupposed cultural heritage narrative could be achieved as the landscape entity, through the analysis of the culture of the original shipyard, the selection of the architectural forms and related landscape elements, the selection and allocation of landscape plants, and more.
Qujiang Heritage Park (Xian, China, 1000000m <sup>2</sup> )	2008	Use the existing resources, then focus on enhancing the accessibility and connectivity between experiencers and ruin site. So that the ruin environment and the surrounding of city environment are closely integrated, which would be easier to explain history.

Figure 8: Chinese projects, made by author

### **5.3 Main Research Question:**

*What is the current state in landscape narrative approaches, for both Chinese and Dutch historical ruin heritage landscape with similar backgrounds?*

### **Sub Research Question:**

#### **RQ1:**

*Which landscape narrative approaches are used in the design of Fort Vechten?*

#### **RQ 2:**

*Which landscape narrative approaches are used in the design of Qijiang Park?*

## **6. Research Approaches**

### **6.1 Experiential Narrative for Cultural Heritage Landscape in the Netherlands**

#### **6.1.1 Analysis Steps**

In van der Mijl's study (2015), the work of landscape architects is positioned as an indirect conversation with experiencers when experiencing heritage site (Figure 9). Experiencers build up expectation and curiosity, influencing the inspiration and concept of landscape architects. As an intermediary, heritage site offers an exchange of ideas for both experiencers and landscape architects.

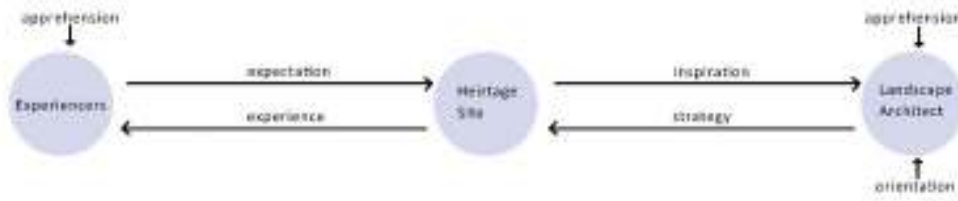


Figure 9: making a conversation between experiencers and landscape architects, made by author

Hence, for Dutch projects, the research study might be divided into three parts. Firstly, the first step is to have a literature study on the basic information about the historical site, including the current situation, the previous history, etc. This step aims to offer a preliminary understanding of the designed project for the reader. In the meantime, the next step focuses more on the designers' concept and inspiration, finding out designers' apprehension from the historical site and design orientation. Finally, having deeper research in two ways: the third-person perspective and personal arguments, which is an explanation to show apprehension from the perspective of experiencers. The third-person perspective is from reports, journals and even websites, and personal arguments are from my fieldwork. These three steps support a complete conversation between experiencers and landscape architects, finding out which approach is used by designers for cultural heritage landscape and experiencers.

### **6.1.2 Interactive Experience Landscape**

Ryan (2006) claims that a designed interactive landscape narrative is the productive engine of a story. In order to develop the story gradually, interactive experience landscape increases participation during the process of visiting experiential landscape, mainly transforming passive appreciation into active participation and interaction, which leads to a result that experiencers actively take part in the landscape and environment. Experiencers are not only the users of experiential landscape but also a part of the whole landscape (Fang & Heping, 2004). In addition, interactive experience landscape often emphasizes dynamic participation of experiencers and multiple interactions of landscape, so as to achieve in-depth dialogue and exchange between experiencers and landscape (Kevin & Ian, 2006).

### **6.1.3 Fort bij Vechten – National Waterline Museum**





Figure 10: The original appearance of Fort Vechten in 1880, source: <https://www.alamy.com/stock-photo-fort-vechten-32883378053>



Figure 11: Fort Vechten current situation, source: west 8

### ***-Basic Information***

Fort Vechten (Bunnik, the Netherlands) was constructed between 1867 and 1870 as part of the Nieuwe Hollandse Waterlinie (The 'New Dutch Water Line') to defend the cities of the western Netherlands from overland attack. In 1995, the Fort Vechten (17ha within the Canal) was nominated on the list of UNESCO World Heritage. As the same time, the Linie is declared Dutch National Monument. Because of its unique and importance, the government prepared to have a refurbishment program for explaining this cultural heritage for the public (West 8, 2015).

### ***-Landscape Architects Perspective***

Since 2005, it has taken 10 years for West 8 and Rapp + Rapp Architectural Company to complete the New Dutch Waterline Museum until 2015. Hangelbroek states that special plant and animal species have established themselves in and around the overgrown fort. An important starting point for the master plan was to bring together the wishes with regard to culture and nature. They divided the fort into a piece that has been made suitable for the ecological value and a piece that has cultural value. For example, a number of buildings on the fort have been made suitable as a place of residence for the bats sitting here.

In order to help with the interpretive storytelling and keep ecology, the design team chose to keep 90% of the forest and draw a wild band of 80 × 450 meters (Figure 12&13), so that the fort would be brought back into its original barren state (west 8,

2015). Besides, the high defense mounds are dissected by 1.5m wide entrance pathway, leading visitors to enter the historical story scene speedily. In addition, in the museum, there is a highlight, which is a 50-meter long open-air replica of the New Dutch Waterline (west 8, 2015; Rapp + Rapp,n.d.).

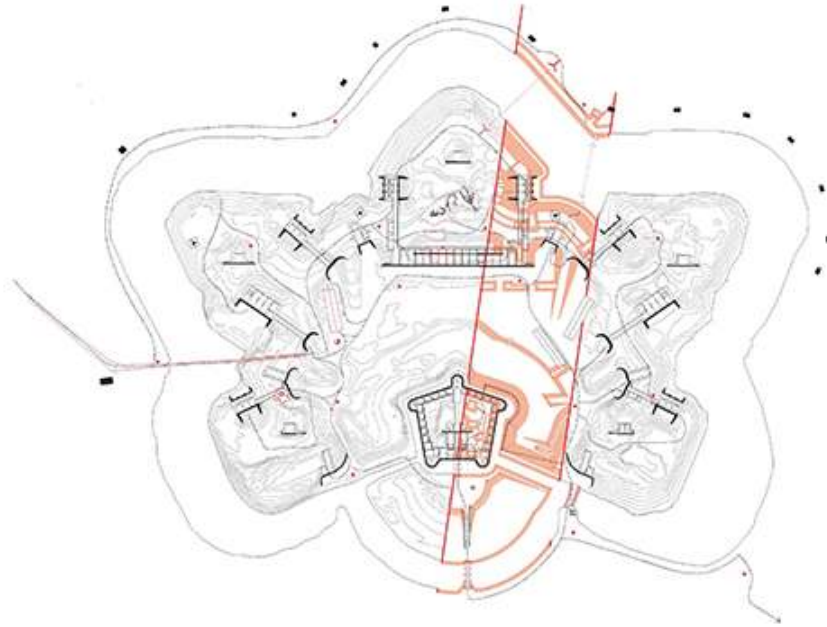


Figure 12: Red area is the main restoration area, source: west 8

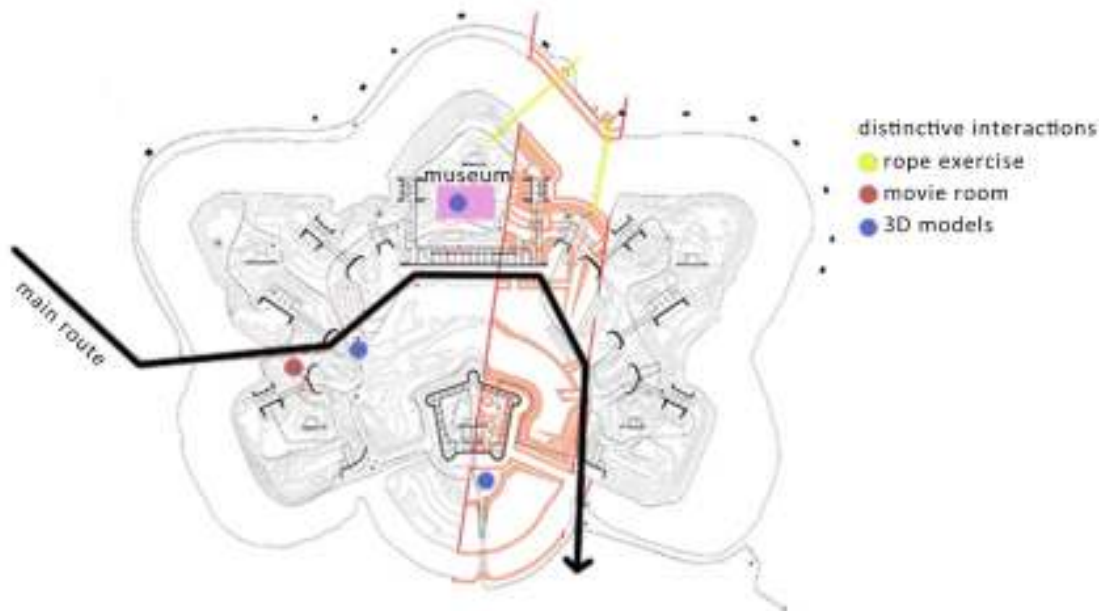


Figure 13: Fort Vechten current situation

Also, for the museum, there is a new insertion was cut into the ground, helping the reconstructed site to find its previous condition. Because the preceding section is an archaeological ruin which could not be dug, leading to a result that the designers could

not change a lot on the site (Manon 2016). Holtrop says that “Designing a museum for fort Vechten is a process of exploring history, producing an interesting element of uncertainty.” When experiencers walk near the museum, it could not be seen directly, being buried in the hill without exterior facades. A dark corridor leads experiencers to a courtyard with an 8-meter-high curved wall. In order to create a gloomy atmosphere with military forts, the selection of concrete material and color plays a vital role. Then, Experiencers could travel through a 50-meter brass water-line interaction model which could be inundated by water wheels (DIVISARE, 2016)) Holreop claims that this interactive model enables tourists to understand the historical story of the water-line better and provides Experiencers with an interactive spatial experience (Anneke, 2016).



Figure 14: museum, source: Bas Princen



Figure 15: museum, source: Bas Princen

### ***-Experiencers Perspective***

There are many interventions and attractions when experiencers visit Fort Vechten, introducing an experiential interaction with its history. Generally, for instance, the thematic exhibition is a normal method to show the previous historical story for the experiencers. However, in this thesis, it is important to find out the special interactive experience approach.

#### ***a. singular plot narrative structure***

Whether in real landscape or in virtual reality, interactivity with narrative in a story can be plotted by a designer-storyteller (Ryan, 2006 P.105). Therefore, taking efficient management of design choice is the first task. Ryan(2001, 2006) has attempted to conceptualize the management of choice via several diagrams which would determine the narrative development in a story. The most basic plot could be chronological or present events in order. Within a simple experiential plot structure narrative, there is a singular development between start and end (Figure 16).



Figure 16: the most basic plot structure, source: Jaap Dirk Tump (2014)

From my perspective, there is a link between the main interventions of Fort Vechten, when experiencers follow the main site route (Figure 12). Firstly, Penne Hangelbroek who is the architect involved in the project claims that there are many treasures here. And they want experiencers to stop here and be curious about these landscapes. So, after the bridge across the moat, experiencers must pass through a tall mound wall (Figure 17) which is separated by the sidewalk in the middle. After experiencers leaving their cars in the park, they may realize a new entrance which brings them from contemporary to previous historical time. This intervention gives experiencers a feel that they get into the entrance and story happens. This kind of design approach improves experiencers' awareness with the previous history. In the study of van der Mijl (2015), this kind of interactive approach is called awareness strategy. Which means that it links the past and the present, obliging the experiencers to realize and think. It is an approach that experiencer could interact with both historical stories and their expectations for cultural heritage site. This makes cultural heritage sites and experiencers have a better empathy experience, which brings a preferable understanding of history and heritage (Verhoeven 2013).



Figure 17: high wall entrance

Secondly, when experiencers enter into the space and along with the main route, the ancient wall of the fortress (Figure 18) is presented to tourists through clear geometric lines, but also it merges with the undulating terrain of the grassland and small hills. This action forms a terrace-like contour landscape and blurs the boundary between nature and architecture, the previous and current situation, then making people feel the ancient historical atmosphere from it.



Figure 18: ancient wall of the fortress

Finally, the museum is divided into indoor and outdoor areas. The indoor area is an underground building hidden under the grassland, while the outdoor area is like an open-air well. Inside space is the model device (Figure 19&20) of the whole New Netherlands water line, which enables visitors to stand on the grassland and overlook the New Netherlands waterline how to resist the enemy. Due to the high popularization of information technology, digital network technology, the gaps between representation and reality reduces at a rapid speed, which leads to a result that the physical and virtual worlds meet (McGonical, 2011). Thereby, this newly added model not only make experiencers realize the significance of history but also gives visitors an interactive experience with past time, bridging the gap with the previous historical story. This interactive approach aims to provide a communication from physical experience to ideological interaction (Tunbridge and Ashworth, 1996). Experiencers could interact with a certain historical experience and imagination.



Figure 19&20: model in museum

Along with the main route, visitors experience a singular plot narrative structure. The first step is arousing curiosity by walking into the high wall entrance, then transiting from contemporary to the previous time. After the highlight programming, the story finishes by the end of the main route (Figure 21).



Figure 21: basic singular plot structure through the main route, made by author

**b. vector with side-branches narrative structure**

However, when having a deeper observation, more arrestive elements appears, leading people from the main route to some informal paths (Figure 22). Which means that there are some optional activities or landscape elements that enrich the story, like several side-branches on the tree. Experiencers' circuits show evidence to act like interactive plots (Jaap Dirk Tump, 2014).



Figure 22: vector with side-branches narrative structure, source: Jaap Dirk Tump (2014)

The first 3D model (Figure 23) of the Fort Vechten show to the experiencers when they pass by the entrance, which depicted the concept of the newly added band (red line in Figure 11). This intervention is supported by awareness strategy (Kamila Lejman, 2017). In addition, video games with a machine (Figure 24) and virtual reality flying (Figure 25) make experiencers could have two types of historical designed landscape. New media technology helps visitors to use the contemporary means of expression to make Fort Vechten experiential.



Figure 23: concept of band, source: Kamila Lejman



Figure 24: video games with machine, source: pretwerk.nl



Figure 25: virtual reality flying, source: pretwerk.nl

What's more, some parts of Fort Vechten are rented for weddings, festival celebration and other activities (Figure 26). As specific experiencers group, they could be seen as a part of historical story and are carved into this period of history with Fort Vechten. Through the significant events, memory is carved into experiencers' mind and records in their life (Macdonald, 2013).

Besides, Fort Vechten' activities are not only for adults and olds, but also for children with their families. Like rope exercises (Figure 27) which happen temporarily (FORT BIJ VECHTEN, 2017), which needs experiencers to climb and walk on the rope over the moat (yellow line in Figure 13). This activity takes this opportunity to provide new experiences for the users and keep a link between previous history and nowadays.



Figure 26: weddings and festival, source: trouwen.nl, festicket.com



Figure 27: rope exercise, source: www.staatsbosbeheer.nl

At last, several landscape elements explain the previous situation with modern materials. For example, When I walk along with some pathways, the wooden benches are placed along the paths (Figure 28). They are not abrupt but natural with surroundings, which have a good coherence with the historical structure. In addition, the black and gray steel elements of the stairs and the steely handrail of the bridge (Figure 29) make experiencers to distinguish new and old. These landscape elements

also have a great interpretation for awareness approach.



Figure 28: wooden benches



Figure 29: steely handrail of the bridge, source: [www.mansveldermetaal.nl](http://www.mansveldermetaal.nl)

## **6.2 Tao Inspiration for Cultural Heritage Landscape in China**

### **6.2.1 Analysis Steps**

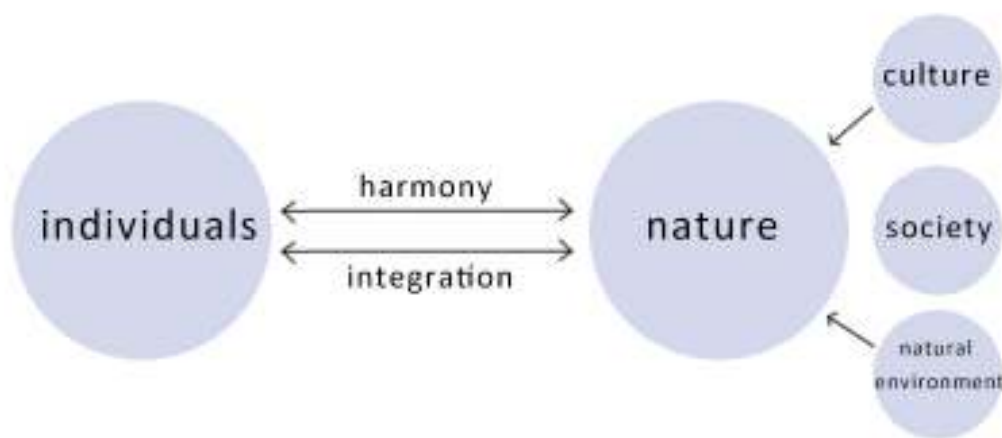


Figure 30: harmonious and integrated relationship in Tao, made by author

Tao states that “taking human beings as the essential”. A harmonious and integrated relationship in Tao actually refers to the connection between individuals and nature (culture, society, natural environment and more) (Jianwei, 2008). Hence, in order to analyze Chinese projects, the research study might be divided into three parts. Firstly, the first step is to have a literature study on the basic information about the historical site, including the current situation, the previous history, etc. This step helps the reader to have a preliminary understanding of the project. Meanwhile, the next step is to separate and interpret the elements of nature, which means that it is necessary to analyze city context from the project. This could be from literature and designers' reports, leading the reader to find out the reason for designers' narrative inspiration. Finally, finding more detailed Tao inspiration in two ways: the third-person perspective and personal arguments, having an objective analysis on Tao inspiration from the perspective of experiencers. The third-person perspective is from reports, journals and even websites, and personal arguments are from my reference study. These steps provide a complete Tao understanding between individuals and designed projects.

### **6.2.2 Tao Inspiration for Landscape**

Cultural heritage ruin landscape is a form of exhibiting historical relics openly to the public, together explaining with the environment in which they were created. Whether it is the design of the natural landscape of the cultural heritage ruin sites or the



expression of historical emotions, designers should adhere to the harmony and integration between individuals and nature (Li, 2017). Based on the understanding of the relationship between nature and the human, when the landscape architects organize the artificial cultural heritage landscape elements for a place, they should obey and follow individual's thoughts and city backgrounds, which reaches a harmonious state between individuals and nature (Yan, 2015).

### **6.2.3 Qijiang Park in ZhongShan City**

#### **-Basic Information**

Zhongshan Qijiang Park (Figure 31) was invested by Zhongshan Municipal Government in 1999. It was designed by Beijing Turen Landscape Planning and Design Institute and Peking University Landscape Planning and Design Center. Zhongshan Qijiang Park was once the site of the Yuezhong shipyard (Figure 32), covering 11 hectares. From 1953 to 1999, it went through the process of development until extinction. The nearly half a century of history in the original shipyard could not only be regarded as an important part of the city's memory, but also awake the younger's awareness of this period of historical stories and the memory of the older generation (Qian, 2010).



Figure 31: Zhongshan Qijiang Park, source: Turen Landscape Planning and Design Institute



Figure 32: the original shipyard, source: [http://m.sohu.com/a/219704999\\_655781](http://m.sohu.com/a/219704999_655781)

### **-City Context**

#### **a. city context within historical heritage landscape design**

Kongjian claims in his book "Anti-Planning approach" that it is necessary to advocate and re-recognize Tao harmonious coexistence inspiration between individuals and nature in landscape design (Kongjian, Dihua & Hailong, 2005). The characteristics of a region not only reflect on its cultural backgrounds and urban architectural style, but also on its natural environment and people's adaptation to them. The process of adaptation is cultural development. Time makes this process of adaptation accumulate into a cultural heritage landscape. Therefore, in order to interpret and reconstruct the cultural heritage landscape, it should start with the understanding of the historical development of an area, then reconstructs the harmony between individuals and nature. Based on the analysis of the natural environment, social backgrounds and cultural stories, the narrative of cultural heritage landscape would be carried out continuously and integrally. (Kongjian, Dihua & Xili,2005).

#### **b. city context in Zhongshan city**

Zhongshan city is located at the border of the Pearl River Delta near Hong Kong, where has a tradition of creating a good living environment for its citizens. And, it has won the Best Human Settlement Award from the Chinese Government and the United Nations. Due to this tradition, there is not much urban space to improve Zhongshan city, however, the collapse of the Yuezhong shipyard provided new opportunities for local government to improve the urban environment (Xiangguo, 2007). From the 1970s to 1980s, the water route was the most convenient way to go to Zhongshan city, so that the Yuezhong shipyard had 1500 employees in its heyday, leaving too many memories for Zhongshan citizens. Unfortunately, in 1998, with the opening of the railway, shipyard went into a decline after having obtained a success. But the shipyard

is an important part of Zhongshan history and is the core of its urban development force. From the shipyard, it could see the development and historical changes of Zhongshan city, and witness the development of Zhongshan city from a heavy industrial town to a modernized city. Therefore, the vestiges of the Yuezhong shipyard not only represented the flourishing development of heavy industry, but also leave indelible historical traces for the modern city (Kongjian & Wei, 2002).

#### ***-Landscape Architects Perspective***

The designer Kongjian Yu states that Zhongshan Qijiang Park heritage landscape design interprets the culture, history and natural environment, and expresses the relationship between individuals and individuals, individuals and society, individuals and natural environment (Kongjian & Wei, 2002). The project is designed to preserve the original historical ruin in their original locations. The presupposed cultural heritage narrative could be achieved as the landscape entity, through the analysis of the culture of the original shipyard, the selection of the architectural forms and related landscape elements, the selection and allocation of landscape plants, and more (Junfeng, 2007).

#### ***-Experiencers Perspective***

In the research of Qian (2010) and Zhongshan City (2002), they state that the designers combine historical ruins with the contemporary urban backgrounds. Then designers recycle the original waste structures, preserve and improve them appropriately in previous positions. Which is an approach to explain the Tao inspiration of harmony and integration, making experiencers to be closer and more familiar with Qijiang Park' history and culture. The abandoned sites are not the rubbish of urban culture, nor the stumbling block of urban progress, which means they could not be demolished blindly. Because reserving the previous ruin is a way of telling history, which would connect the past and the present, individuals and nature, so as to achieve a harmonious and integrated status (Qian, 2010; Zhongshan City, 2002).

From my perspective, in this project, the characteristic from Tao inspiration is reusing suitably previous ruin or structures to build old historical memory. The contemporary experiencers' understanding of history comes from the past ruin (Xiangguo, 2007). Therefore, the original shipyard reflects the past life and work, which is the easiest way for experiencers to imagine and recall. In order to achieve harmony and unity of Tao, a new landscape not only has been created through the change and modification of the original site, but also the past of the site could be better explained for visitors. The ruin makes the historical story of the original site satisfy the needs of experiencers, also lets urban humanities enter into the past history.

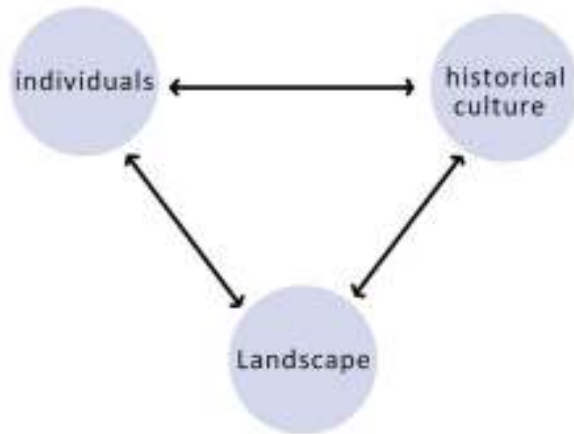


Figure 33: previous and new landscape is a medium to connect historical culture and individuals, made by author

All the new and old landscape elements are integrated into the park through designing. In this process, it is not a simple superposition of new and old landscape elements, nor a reliance on the past ruin. But through the reorganization and fusion of new and old landscape elements, providing historical narratives and integrity between the past and the present (Xiangguo, 2007).

Firstly, The central part of the original shipyard covers 35% of the river (Figure 34). Because this park river level changes with Qijiang River level, also there is much the accumulation of silt, it is difficult for experiencers to get closer with ruin site. So, the designers choose to retain quondam water body and add aquatic plants, so that the experiencers could feel the large scale of the past shipyard while communicating with the water. Besides, the lakeshore of the water has been naturalized (Figure 35) with native aquatic plants (lotus, Wild rice stem, calamus, etc.), which not only expresses the designer's respect for the natural environment, but also want to make experiencers feel the reality of the past ruin.



Figure 34: original river in the shipyard, source: xianguo (2007)



Figure 35: master plan of Qijiang Park, source: Turen company

Secondly, during the decades of shipyard existence, it experienced a difficult period of industrialization in China. From the Great Leap Forward (1958-1960) to the period of

Reform and Opening (1978), shipyard showed the arduous entrepreneurial process of the people in that era, and precipitated into a real and precious urban memory (Qian, 2010). Due to the rapid social development and urban changes, only a few pieces of machinery are left, such as docks, water towers and rails. These old ruins tell historical stories of the past, linking the contemporary and the past. The new landscape design integrates the shipyard's ruin with the contemporary city backgrounds, which provides a space for the experiencers to understand history. Cruise ship terminals and public service facilities were inserted into the retained steel docks to make the old structures exist as historical monuments (Figure 36). The coexistence of old and new structures presents a contrast between the past and the present, also their respective functions are a kind of integration, connecting past period and contemporary era (Figure 37&38).



Figure 36: old steel dock, source:xianguo(2007)



Figure 37: new steel dock, source: Turen company



Figure 38: new steel dock, source: xianguo(2007)

The concept of the water tower (Figure 39) is to create a structure like an amber. It makes visitors imagine an ugly insect resting on a branch, but when resin drops, the time is locked and the beauty lasts. So, even though the water tower of 50-60 years is not worth to be used, it has a different value when it is covered in a glass box full of modern science and technology. Time will be solidified, history has the evidence, and the story is derived from it (Xinagguo, 2007; Kongjian, 2003).

At the same time, the old light water tower on the island plays a pilot function. The new water tower (Figure 40) retains the light function, and adds new ecological and environmental function, which would serve for the urban city. The present urban

needs are fully integrated with historical ruin on one object (Kongjian, 2003), not only satisfies experiencers' curiosity for cultural heritage, but also caters for urban backgrounds (Yong, 2013).



Figure 39:old water tower, source:Kongjian (2003)



Figure 40: new amber water tower, source:Kongjian (2003)

The Industrial Revolution was marked by the emergence of steam and rails. The rail track is one of the most landmark elements in Yuezhong shipyard. Rails (Figure 41) are used to work for trains, but current rails with new added white pebbles and weeds (Figure 42) offer new pleasures to pedestrians. Transforming the historical functions of the past into new landscapes that meet the needs of modern times, which provides an opportunity for the experiencers to enhance their memories of cultural heritage (Kongjian, 2003).



Figure 41:old rail, source: Kongjian (2003)



Figure 42:new water tower, source: Turen company

## **7.Conclusion**

For this thesis, the main research question is:

***" What is the current state in landscape narrative approaches, for both Chinese and Dutch historical ruin heritage landscape with similar backgrounds?"***

For Europe, interactive experience is often used as a common method of landscape narrative, which emphasizes the dynamic participation between experiencers and the landscape, thus realizing the indirect and direct communication among the experiencers, landscape and the designers. However, under the influence of Chinese cultural background, cultural heritage landscape is the product between nature and individuals transformation. Nature and individuals are interdependent, so the Chinese historical ruin heritage landscape mostly follows the Tao inspiration of harmony and integration, protecting the harmony and integration of nature and human. Because of social and cultural backgrounds, either Dutch or Chinese cultural heritage landscape design has different concepts or inspirations in dealing with landscape narrative. It is important to find out these narrative approaches separately.

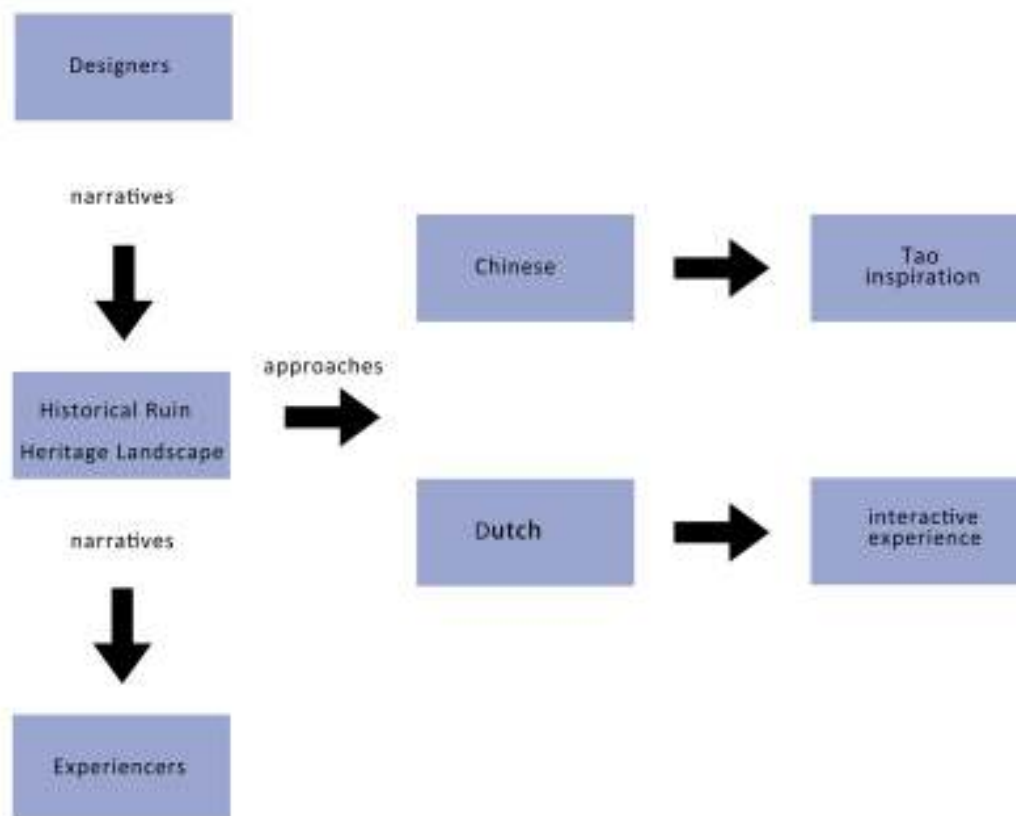


Figure 43: the narrative approaches in both Chinese and Dutch historical ruin heritage landscape, made by author

On the one hand, the two sub-question need to be answered and interpreted, the sub-question one is:

***"Which landscape narrative approaches are used in the design of Fort Vechten?"***

After analyzing this project, it is obvious that a deeper conversation and interaction are the design core among experiencers, landscape, and designers. Through the intermediary of landscape, the narrative that the designer wants to express is introduced to the experiencers. The experiencers establish an understanding and awareness of historical heritage through the following strategies.

***1. plot narrative structure***

Plot narrative structure aims to manage the events, the route and the time, which could be efficient to narrative the history. There are singular plot narrative structure



and multiple plot narrative structure that could plan in the historical ruin heritage landscape.

**2. imagination and curiosity**

Under the stimulation of landscape, the experiencers generate curiosity and exploration to history, which is a way of perceiving history, so that people could perceive and aware of historical culture.

**3. awareness strategy**

Awareness strategy connects the past with the present, making the experiencers aware of the history and would reflect on history. In the process of interaction. This strategy helps the experiencers to resonate with the process of experiencing cultural heritage, thus further deepening the understanding of history for the experiencers.

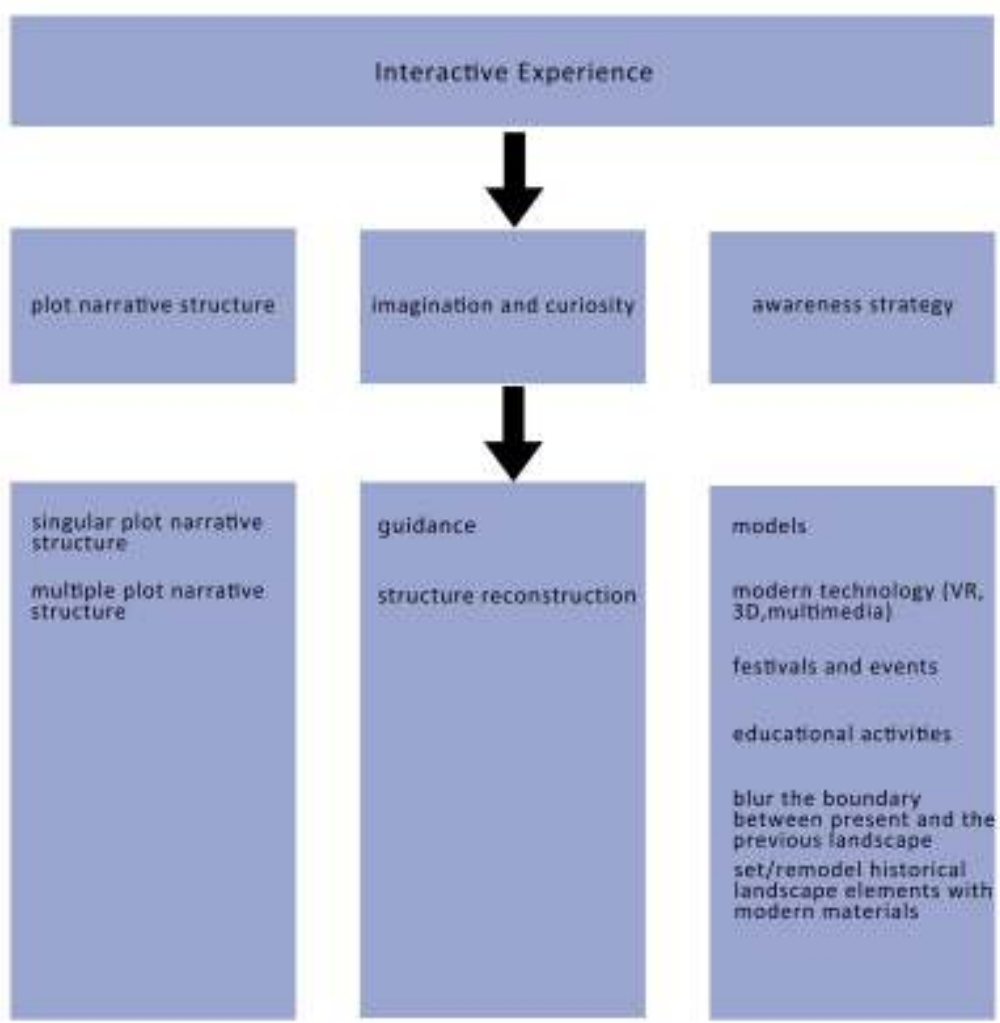


Figure 44: the narrative approaches in Dutch historical ruin heritage landscape, made by author

On the other hand, the sub questions two is:

**"Which landscape narrative approaches are used in the design of Qijiang Park?"**

In this case, the designers aim to find out a harmonious and integrated relationship between individuals and nature that includes society, culture and natural environment. When organizing the historical ruin heritage landscape, based on city background and

city culture, the designers follow the needs of individuals then remodel the old historical sites, integrating them into a part of the city and offer more public space.

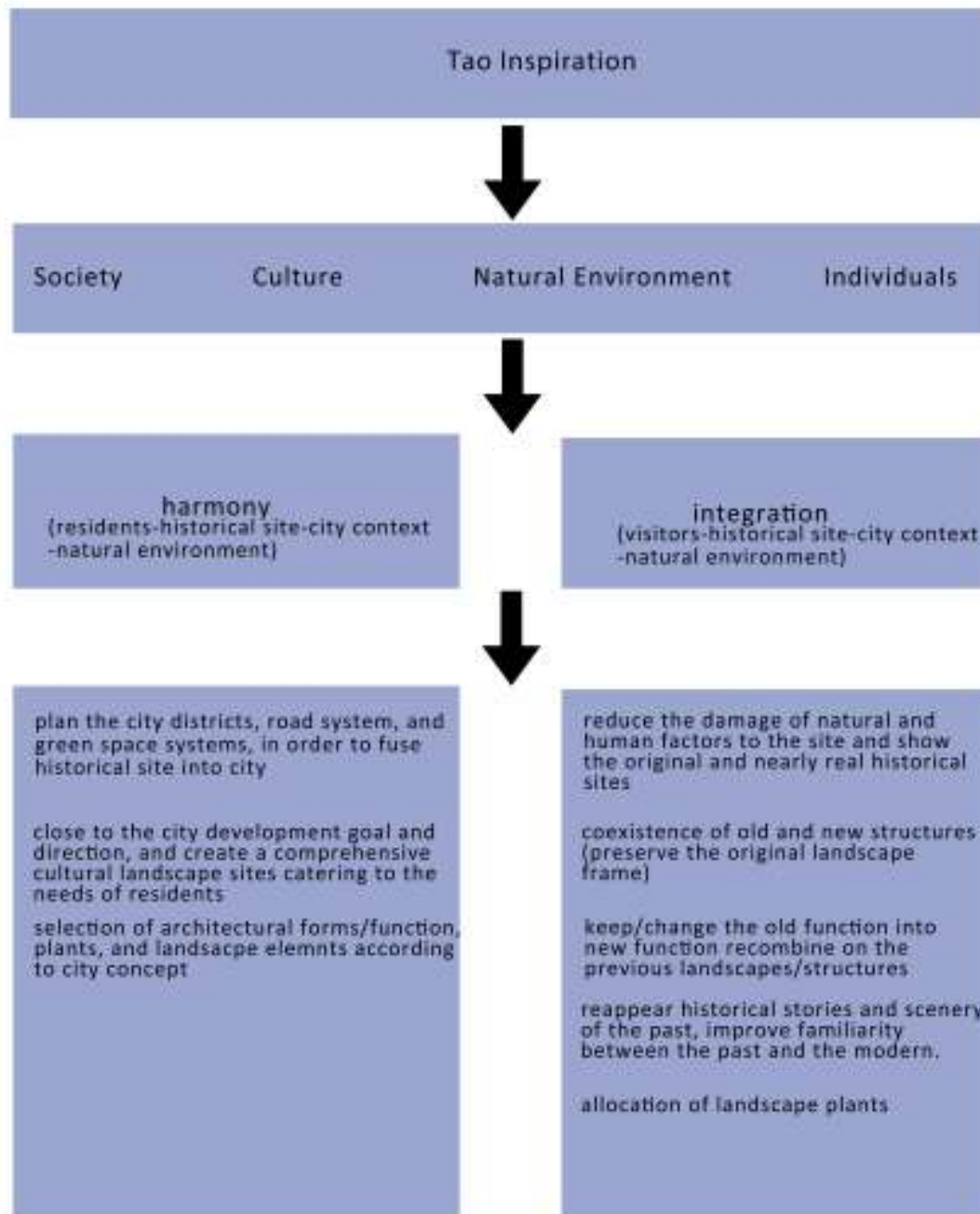


Figure 45: the narrative approaches in Chinese historical ruin heritage landscape

## 8. Discussion

This thesis states the design approaches of landscape narrative, comparing between Dutch and Chinese projects which have the same backgrounds. However, there are some limitations. Firstly, when selecting the projects (5.2), the projects could not include all the kinds of the historical ruin heritage landscape, which means that projects might be incomplete to some extent. Secondly, because of the limitation of references and literature for projects, not all the information from landscape architects

and experiencers perspectives are comprehensive. Finally, due to the gap between Western and Eastern culture, there would be different understanding for Dutch and Chinese.

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