

Article

The Role of Landscape Art in Cultural and National Identity: Chinese and European Comparisons

Xiaojing Wen ^{1,*}  and Paul White ²

¹ School of Design, Shanghai Jiaotong University, Shanghai 200240, China

² Department of Geography, University of Sheffield, Sheffield S10 2TG, UK; P.White@sheffield.ac.uk

* Correspondence: Rachael_Wen@sjtu.edu.cn

Received: 5 June 2020; Accepted: 3 July 2020; Published: 7 July 2020



Abstract: The depiction of landscape in art has played a major role in the creation of cultural identities in both China and Europe. Landscape depiction has a history of over 1000 years in China, whilst in Europe its evolution has been more recent. Landscape art (*shan shui*) has remained a constant feature of Chinese culture and has changed little in style and purpose since the Song dynasty. In Europe, landscape depictions have been significant in the modern determination of cultural and national identities and have served to educate consumers about their country. Consideration is given here to Holland, England, Norway, Finland and China, demonstrating how landscape depictions served to support a certain definition of Chinese culture but have played little political role there, whilst in Europe landscape art has been produced in a variety of contexts, including providing support for nationalism and the determination of national identity.

Keywords: landscape art; Chinese landscapes; European landscapes; cultural identity; national identity

1. Introduction

The concept of cultural identity commonly refers to a feeling of belonging to a group in which there are a number of shared attributes which might include, among other things, knowledge, beliefs, artefacts, arts, morals, and law. Ultimately, all culture is about the ascription of values and meanings to both tangible and intangible elements of human experience. National identity is seen as a specific form of cultural identity, in which political need adds an expedient element to the mix [1]. National identity exists in opposition to the identity of other political groups and is generally associated with a notion of territoriality. A shared language as the basis for cultural identity at the heart of a nation has been emphasized in the influential work of Benedict Anderson [2]. Many scholars have placed great emphasis on the role of literature in various forms, including poetry and drama, as contributing to the development of cultural identity, and literacy within a population facilitates the transmission of values from ruling classes or elite groups, and aids political projects. Such projects generally include the perpetuation of the underpinning ideology of the state itself and the sustainability of support for the state's existence from the wider population.

It is the contention of this article that artistic depictions of the physical and cultural landscapes of a state's territory play a significant role in the creation and perpetuation of cultural and national identities. Such depictions can be used as part of a political project, for example in the establishment of feelings of national identity where they can unite disparate elements in societies which cannot be brought together by other means, for example through a shared language. This argument is elaborated for the case of China as a whole and for a selection of states within Europe which together illustrate certain general patterns in the significance of landscape art in issues of identity in Europe, but which also show the influence of specific national circumstances.

It is salutary to note the coincidence in dates of the last great period before the present when these two major world regions both experienced internal cohesion. It is common to date a unified Chinese cultural identity to the Han dynasty (206 BCE to 220 AD), which saw the growth of the influence of Confucianism as a basis for social thought. This period overlaps with that of the Roman Empire in Europe and the wider Mediterranean world. Despite significant changes in the ruling dynasty, and even periods of 'foreign' rule (the Yuan dynasty, for example), key aspects of Chinese culture have remained remarkably consistent over the ensuing two millennia [3]: the dominance of the Han ethnic group; the continuity of a concept of an Imperial China under dynastic rule; the uniqueness and ubiquity of the written language (*hanzi*) among its intellectual classes [4,5]; continuous traditions of philosophy (and the occasional assimilation of newer elements); and continuities in the arts including poetry, painting, and the decorative arts.

The contrast with post-Roman Europe is profound. The high period of the Roman Empire had a very clear cultural identity, expressed through language (the use of Latin as a *lingua franca*), religion (the veneration of the Roman gods), law, the decorative arts, architecture and philosophy. At least for the élite, Imperial identity (as citizens of Rome) and cultural identity went hand in hand. However, after the deposition of the last Roman Emperor in 476 AD there was almost complete fragmentation of the previous Imperial realm. Roman culture, with the exception of the use of Latin, was significantly reduced in significance. The only significant unifying force became the progressive conversion of most of the peoples of the continent to Christianity, a process that took one thousand years.

Several scholars have examined the ways in which certain landscapes have had value attributed to them as elements in the establishment of cultural identity. These values are then seen as being passed from generation to generation and through diverse social groups through means such as education, literature and the modern world of marketing and advertising [6–8]. However, much of the commentary, for example by Ebbatson [9], on the importance of landscape has highlighted literary descriptions rather than other means of depiction. In this paper the emphasis is placed neither on landscapes themselves, nor on literary descriptions, but on artistic representations of the natural world and of landscapes and the contribution of such depictions to cultural and national identities. We consider a world of visible cultural artefacts derived at least in part from the human gaze on the landscape and the reflection of that gaze.

The Ancient Greeks handed down several views on the nature of art. Plato saw all arts as a form of imitation (*mimesis*), seeking to reproduce reality, whether in the theatre, in sculpture or painting. Pictorial artists, in this view, strive to produce the most realistic depictions of people, objects or scenery: in doing so they are effectively craftsmen and women. Aristotle, on the other hand, saw art as aiming at understanding the essence of existence, the dynamism of the subject matter, and thus producing an idealized view, reflecting more deeply on the spirit of nature. The Aristotelian view of art requires greater powers of creativity and reflection on the part of the artist.

In this article we contend that depictions of natural and cultural landscapes can serve the creation of cultural and national identity not solely through the faithful reproduction of what the artist can see, but can also derive their power from artists' reflective engagement with the elements that constitute landscape and from subsequent depictions that are symbolist in kind. The dominant practices of art in China and in Europe have, over the last two millennia, taken divergent routes, particularly in the depiction of the natural landscape [10]. Chinese art has followed a more 'Aristotelian' path, whilst Western or European art has predominantly followed a 'Platonic' route, although with important exceptions. The result of these different evolutionary paths has been that Chinese landscape art has, for over a thousand years, played an emblematic role as a key element in Chinese cultural identity. By contrast, the depiction of landscapes did not develop until several centuries later in Europe and was not of general significance as a cultural symbol even then. But from the nineteenth century onwards, landscape art in Europe has played a role in the definition of national cultures and, increasingly, in national identity itself. The closing era for the discussion here is around the overthrow of the Qing dynasty in China in 1911 and the First World War in Europe. Although there are

manifest differences between the two world regions under consideration, we also suggest that there are certain commonalities.

Three substantial questions lie at the heart of this paper. Firstly, how, when and why did depictions of landscape emerge as central aspects of cultural identity in China? Secondly, in a Europe with a much more divided cultural history, how, when and why did issues of cultural and national identity incorporate or encourage landscape art? Thirdly, in what ways do the chosen subjects and means of landscape depiction compare between China and Europe; what have been the purposes of such art; and what have the legacies of such depiction been?

2. The Centrality of *Shan Shui* in Chinese Cultural Identity

A crucial note of caution about terminology is needed at the start of this discussion. The English term ‘landscape’ entered the language as a description of a painting of a tract of scenery, originally known as a ‘landskip’. Its meaning was then extended such that landscapes became seen as objective things in themselves and not just as artistic interpretations, and the word ‘landscape’ has become commonly qualified by adjectives such as ‘urban’ or ‘rural’, or by terms describing particular environments such as ‘desert landscapes’ or ‘mountain landscapes’. In what follows we adopt a broad understanding of the concept with particular emphasis on natural landscapes and rural landscapes in which human interference has had a transforming influence. The word ‘landscape’ is usually translated into Mandarin as *shan shui* but this is far from exact: *shan shui* actually means ‘mountain water’, and this terminology leads straight into consideration of the subject matter of the dominant Chinese depictions of nature. The earliest extant Chinese paintings, dating from the Han dynasty, depict human figures—mostly on funerary goods. But over successive centuries, the dominant subject matter changed such that for the past millennium *shan shui* art has dominated.

Such painting lies at the very heart of Chinese culture and is closely related to politics, philosophy, literature, and religion. *Shan shui* emphasizes the essential interaction between human beings and nature, with harmony being maintained if humans see themselves as an intrinsic part of nature. The earliest rituals of kingship in China involved the belief that the heavens meet the earth in the mountains, and thus it is to the mountains that the king must go to seek enlightenment and approbation. In this way, Chinese traditions parallel those of the Judaeo-Christian faiths in which prophets such as Moses and Elijah ascend mountains for divine guidance. An emphasis on mountains accords with Confucian views of the workings of destiny through nature. The centrality of nature in Chinese culture is manifest in numerous prose works from the past, and natural landscapes are also the subject of a significant body of Chinese poetry; for example, using a complex pattern of similes and metaphors predominantly relating to the natural world [11]. Calligraphic strokes can be interpreted as metaphors taken from the imagery of mountains and rivers. Similarly, there can be no understanding of Chinese urban planning from ancient times to the present without some knowledge of *shan shui* ideas and the associated geomancy of *feng shui* (‘wind water’). In total, the consideration of landscape reveals a complex world of cultural thought and influences that transcend any single field of human endeavour. Zong Bing (373–443 AD), one of the first to write about the depiction of landscape, wrote that “landscapes have a material existence, and yet also reach into the spiritual domain”, and, importantly, he saw the contemplation of landscape as transcending the religions and philosophies of China—Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism. Landscape has therefore been one of the principle themes of Chinese culture for many centuries.

One of the most striking features of Chinese painting is that the depiction of landscapes has become the major motif and has been so for nearly 1500 years. This contrasts with Western painting that was characterized by an emphasis on people right until the final third of the last millennium. The art historian William Watson [12] commented that while Chinese art paid attention to the natural world through landscape art, Western painting has been more attached to the human form: both are eternal themes that involve infinite varieties of human vision, sensation and response.

However, Chinese ideas on the depiction of landscapes have evolved through time, with particular changes in thinking and practices occurring through the Wei (220–264 AD), Jin (265–317), Tang

(618–906) and Song (960–1279) dynasties. Ever since the preceding Qin and Han periods, the various peoples that make up the Chinese population have been unified in a single vision of society, with the removal of earlier ideas of divine rule; instead, the emphasis has consistently been on self-learning and fulfilment through reflection. During the Wei and Jin periods social ideas broadened into concern for the relationships of people within nature, these ideas being expressed primarily through poetry. This marked a revolution in Chinese thought, equivalent to the Renaissance period in Europe over 1000 years later. An emblematic painting of this early period is *Luo Shen Fu Tu* by Gu Kaizhi (Figure 1). This was a development of a long love poem, *Luo Shen Fu*, written by Cao Zhi in the middle of the third century AD. Around 100 years later Gu Kaizhi created a pure work of art on the same story. What is important is that in this panel painting there is no didactic message—it is purely aimed at creating a beautiful image in which figures are set in an attractive landscape [13].



Figure 1. *Luo Shen Fu Tu* (part)—‘The Nymph of the Luo River’. By Gu Kaizhi. ca 390 AD.

This is not an isolated example. Painters of the Tang dynasty created many similar works, of which one of the most famous is a painting by Zhan Ziqian entitled *Spring Excursion*, executed in the late sixth century AD (Figure 2). This is normally regarded as the earliest example of true *shan shui* art—whilst there are a small number of very tiny figures in the work, the emphasis is on the mountains in the mist, the trees, the physical relief of the land in the foreground and the river across which a tiny boat is progressing. Other contemporary paintings take as subject matter groups of people making music in a forest, and scenes of physical labour. In each case the landscape setting plays an increasingly important role in the work.



Figure 2. *Spring Excursion*. By Zhan Ziqian. c 600 AD.

From the middle of the first millennium AD onwards, Chinese culture has emphasized the natural as a core concept and as the subject for a whole range of artistic interpretations, often with no hard division between the different arts—for example, painters often added poetry to their finished works. Concern for a concept of mankind in nature developed further with the argument that there is no distinction between mankind and nature and that everything should be regarded as part of the natural environment—indeed, that there should be no concept of ‘nature’ since to maintain such a concept would necessitate the existence of an alternative. This understanding differs fundamentally from that commonly found in Western societies where ‘man’ and ‘nature’ are seen as separate entities. From the Wei and Jin dynasties onwards, an all-inclusive idea of a natural world has become a, if not the, core element in Chinese culture, and the depiction of that world in various arts has become a means of representing the cultural identity of the Chinese Empire and all that it stood for politically, socially and morally, as well as aesthetically [14].

Early depictions of landscape in Chinese art were realistic, but over time styles changed and became more abstract. In addition, two different traditions emerged, relating to the culture of the Imperial palace on the one hand, and to the culture of the intellectual or ‘literati’ classes on the other. In both, however, the depiction of landscape remained at the heart of cultural identity.

Landscape depictions progressively became the dominant motif in painting, eclipsing portraiture. By the later Tang dynasty, these paintings were rich in colour and decorative in style. Later generations have labelled these works ‘blue-green *shan shui*’ and they have become particularly associated with the cultural taste and identity of the Imperial household. The use of rare painting materials, as well as other artistic artefacts, such as the use of gold, supported royal authority in indicating the higher plane inhabited by the Emperor and his family. From the Song dynasty onwards, colourful blue-green *shan shui* art was associated with the image of the royal family [15]. But Chinese cultural identity, whilst maintaining the emphasis on the depiction of landscape, and with continued interest in scenery, birds, flowers, mountains and water, became divided in two in terms of aesthetic attitudes—one surrounding the Emperor and the Imperial court, and the other associated with those independent of royal patronage. In effect, a separation developed between intellectual and official (or Imperial) positions regarding art and thus culture. Nevertheless, both artistic traditions held the depiction of the natural world as the fundamental symbol constituting the cultural identity of China. However, it would not be appropriate to label either of these as involving a ‘national’ identity: no concept of a nation is comprehensible for this period nor, arguably, until the Treaty of Nerchinsk of 1689 with Russia when the Chinese Empire first formally acknowledged the existence of another sovereign state and thus, by implication, also recognized a cultural and political entity with different characteristics from those of China itself [16].

The development of a non-Imperial, or intellectual, cultural identity through landscape painting from the Song dynasty onwards involved the simplification of the materials used and a transformation in the representational qualities of the paintings created. Whilst Imperial taste remained wedded to a Platonic attempt to imitate the world around, non-Imperial art progressively adopted a more Aristotelian reflection of the inner workings of nature as experienced through the intellect of the artist. Throughout the later Tang and Song dynasties, Chinese culture outside the court paid increasing attention to the meaning and understanding of the self and the importance of self-cultivation [16]. This view was reflective of Confucian ideals which had come back into vogue during the Tang period. True *shan shui* art started to move away from attempts at realism, with pictures revealing a more abstract understanding of nature. In particular, it became the norm to produce ‘paintings’ without colour, the materials being used consisting simply of pen, brush, ink, and ink wash.

The initial focus of the viewer is not then on the imitative aspects of the work or its truthful representation of reality. Instead, the viewer undergoes a process of enhanced perception and cognition involving the intellects of both artist and viewer, leading into true abstract consciousness of the subject. In this new painting style, the artist creates pictures according to his or her (in practice always his) intellectual understanding of the natural world rather than seeking realistic reproductions of an actual

scene. Art is produced in the studio, taking elements from the natural world but not attempting to reproduce their assemblage in any one location. The artist creates his own attempt at a beautiful and fitting composition of these elements, reflecting Confucian ideas on the search for harmony and virtue.

After the end of the Song dynasty (1279) the styles of painting (and poetry) associated with the literati classes gradually came to dominate over the aesthetic tastes of the Imperial court. In Europe, the history of art is closely associated with the history of the aristocracy (both secular and religious) until at least the seventeenth century and later in many areas. In China, the history of art becomes, from a much earlier period, the history of a class of scholars and the intelligentsia. In Europe, aristocratic patronage stressed portraiture (amongst the secular nobility) and religious imagery (among church patrons), whilst in China the long-standing position of nature at the centre of culture drove the practice of landscape depiction, whether in realist or more abstract styles.

The scholar, painter and art theorist Dong Qichang (1555–1636 AD), writing in the late Ming period, explicitly criticized court tastes and established, through his critical writings, a framework for the future depiction of landscape in Chinese art [17]. He delimited and defined what he termed as ‘Northern’ and ‘Southern’ schools of art (neither term being explicitly geographical) and determined the future of landscape depictions for the next three hundred years [18].

In simple terms, Dong Qichang’s Southern school (*nan zong*) consisted of intellectual or literati painting, while the Northern school (*bei zong*) reflected the aesthetic taste of the royal family. He regarded this Northern school as producing a series of artisan, rather than artistic, works produced for ‘consumption’ by others. In contrast, the Southern school of intellectual artists strove to make their work pure and noble, uninfluenced by commercial considerations. The preferred Southern school was exclusively concerned with landscape. In Dong’s writings there is almost no reference to people, flowers or birds, except those to be found within a landscape, and this omission is very deliberate on his part. The rendering of human figures or the naturalistic depictions of flora and fauna embody the practical values of art, and Dong regarded such works as purely secular and unworthy of an intellectual. The scholarly work that Dong Qichang advocated put total emphasis on the achievement of deep meaning through the aesthetics of pen and ink with the exclusion, as far as possible, of any narrative. In Chinese cultural views, the weaker the narrative the stronger the painting as a work of art. Such an argument contrasts strongly with Western artistic thinking at the same period.

The depiction of landscape through the idealized form of *shan shui* painting thus stood as an increasingly central aspect of Chinese cultural identity from the Wei and Jin dynasties through to the Qing (1644–1911 AD) dynasty. However, over this long period the philosophical basis for such depictions developed from the exemplification of the harmony of nature with mankind as a part of that entity, through to an emphasis on personal growth and intellectual development expressed through the skill of the artist in handling pen and ink to create an image of beauty and depth. The work of Ni Zan (1301–1374 AD) exemplifies something of the continuity in this line of thinking (Figure 3), involving *shan shui* images that could date from any period between around 1000 and 1850 AD (Figure 3).

Throughout a period of over a thousand years, the depiction of the natural world lay at the heart of Chinese cultural identity, with the prestige of such art reflecting certain constants in Chinese philosophy and thought. The contemplation of the unity of nature, derived from Confucian thought overlain with certain concepts from Taoism, provided the mainspring of the self-awareness of Chinese society. However, for much of this extended period China did not have to confront the problem of determining differences between its own cultural identity and that of other societies or polities. From the seventeenth century onwards, however, China started to experience new cultural influences—for example in the arrival of Jesuit missionaries bringing with them Western art traditions. Until the nineteenth century, however, the dominance of nature in Chinese culture, and of the landscape motif in art, almost universally taken as classical *shan shui* painting, remained dominant elements in Chinese cultural identity.



Figure 3. Six Gentlemen. By Ni Zan. 1345 AD.

During the nineteenth century the spectre of Imperial decline in the face of foreign powers, defeat in conflicts such as the Opium Wars, and increased contact with other societies, led to periods of anxiety over what was distinctive about Chinese culture—particularly in relation to that of a rampant West [3,19,20]. The later Ming and Qing dynasties were also marked by a diminution in the authority of a sequence of Emperors who were felt, in various ways, to be less effective than those of the past. In

the search for a particularly Chinese version of modernity, other styles and motifs for art developed alongside the traditional depictions of landscape. Yet, it is remarkable that Chinese art of the past century still strongly references the *shan shui* paintings of the previous 1000 years. Since 1911 and the end of the Qing dynasty, China has undergone massive political upheavals—the establishment of Modern China, Maoism, and the contemporary post-Mao period. Painting has become a tool for specific purposes relating to politics and policies [21,22]—for example, the establishment of a specific Maoist style, or in tourism planning for rural areas. However, throughout this period the philosophy of *shan shui* has remained a continuing element. Ideas of the nation have become important, just as in nineteenth-century Europe, and have been promulgated through art. However, there has been a repeated recourse to the centrality of *shan shui* and the depiction of nature following a tradition that has played a major role for over 1500 years. The cultural identity of China could be taken as given throughout changing dynasties, and the occasional fragmentation and reunification of the Empire did little to alter the fundamental basis of a society and culture rooted in patterns of thought derived from Confucianism. Emperors of China had no need to seek to develop a distinctive national identity for their realm: it already existed in the taken-for-granted polity of the Empire itself. Since the ending of the Empire in 1911, the dominant elements of culture have actually changed little—the dominance of the Han peoples, the uniqueness of the language, philosophical traditions, historic products of the arts, and a common vernacular culture. National identity in China is an outgrowth of cultural identity rather than being dependent on a particular form of government [23].

3. Cultural and National Identity in Europe

While dominant features of Chinese culture were evolving during the first millennium, Europe was experiencing a period of political fragmentation. Across much of the continent it was not until the tenth century AD that the political map started to settle into bounded spaces. However, the cultural map was increasingly shaded with forms of pan-European Christianity. In China, a common means of written communication was supplemented by a religio-philosophical culture based on Confucianism and Taoism in which the representation of the natural world was increasingly pre-eminent. In Christianizing Europe, with no unifying language across the continent except for the continued use of Latin by élites, the dominant religious culture emphasized the actions of individuals in the form of Christ and his followers. Art was dominated by religious painting with nature as little more than a background [24]. Like Confucianism, Judaeo-Christian traditions emphasize the importance of nature—but, importantly, rather than seeing mankind as being part of nature they generally see nature as created for mankind to use.

The two pre-conditions for the creation of national identity are, firstly, external differentiation involving rivalry with alternative powers elsewhere, and secondly, cultural standardization. China experienced cultural standardization and the continuity of a culture of dynasticism, with important dependent cultural elements prevailing, even during periods of non-Han rule. But there was little recognition of external differentiation until relatively recently in the history of the country. By contrast, a process of ‘othering’ was crucial throughout Europe in the creation of feelings of identity and nationalism, involving both positive constructions of ‘who we are and what we stand for’, and negative constructions of ‘who we are not’ in distinction to other groups and communities. In a series of publications, Anthony Smith [25,26] identified these conditions as emerging in early modern Europe, from the fifteenth century onwards.

The earliest manifestations of independent cultural and then national identities in Europe occurred in those countries that became Protestant from the sixteenth century onwards—for example the Netherlands—with important implications for the subject matter of art. Here the unifying effect of Catholicism was removed to be replaced by a form of Christianity that was locally self-governed, thus enhancing the element of differentiation and potential ‘othering’—and the potential for the development of a national culture. In addition, Protestantism has parallels with Confucianism in that

individuals can seek to better themselves through self-examination and through their own actions, rather than believers appealing to saints and others to intercede with God.

Most commentators see nationalism, and its associated attributes of national identity, as a product of modernism—foregrounding the development of capitalism, the shift from agrarian to industrial bases for the economy and society, and the creation of new unifying political and economic objectives for communities and territories that were previously much more loosely integrated [27–30]. In Europe, the crucial period for such developments occurred after the French Revolution. As Anne-Marie Thiesse [31] has it, the nineteenth century saw the conversion from a Europe of princes to a Europe of nations, involving not just a transformation of the map of states, cultures and identities but also a radical mutation in representations and images; and this process necessitated a considerable programme of ‘re-education’ for the populations involved. The arts, and particularly painting, played an important role in elevating cultural awareness and the creation of a sense of nationhood.

While nature had provided the dominant and most prestigious motif in art for several centuries in China, equivalent depictions remained of very little significance in Europe until well into the seventeenth century, and much later in many parts of the continent. Of all the potential things that artists might paint, it might seem surprising that landscape, generally the least regarded of subjects, came, by the late nineteenth century, to play a defining role in the development of modern cultural and national consciousness and identity throughout Europe. There is a vast literature on European landscape art. However, the aim here is to illustrate the main relationships between the depiction of landscapes and identity issues, doing so through a brief consideration of trends in four European countries—Holland, England, Norway and Finland. The artistic trends in the four chosen countries were very different stylistically, yet in each case the depiction of landscape became strongly associated with cultural and national distinctiveness. The art of other areas that contributed more to the development of European consciousness than to national identity, such as Italy or France, has been omitted from the discussion.

3.1. Holland

Holland saw the first flowering in Europe of a landscape art that could be said to become part of ‘national’ culture and identity [32]. The painting of landscape was introduced to Holland by artists fleeing from Flanders to escape the Catholic Spanish regime there once Holland had declared itself a Protestant republic. Flemish artists such as Pieter Bruegel and Rubens had already depicted everyday and rural scenes alongside their other works, and Rubens painted rural scenes specifically for his own amusement and interest—much as the scholarly *shan shui* painters in China did.

The Dutch established a flourishing trading society in the later sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, in which the emphasis on religious art was quickly abandoned. The nature of the fledgling republic also reduced the power of patronage in supporting portraiture and other traditional styles, although these were certainly still produced, for example by Rembrandt. Supplementing them came an interest in the depiction of scenes of Dutch life, at both domestic and wider scales, including landscapes which, in a pre-industrial period (and therefore contrasting with the example of England 200 years later), included both rural scenes and urban perspectives. The patrons were no longer found in church institutions but in the newly confident and wealthy bourgeoisie, and paintings were supplemented by etchings of similar scenes for books, which therefore took such art widely into the homes of the growing Dutch middle class [33]. Artists increasingly produced works to cater for a speculative market, rather than on commission, and thus market demands began to define artistic production, leading to the determination of a first example of democratically determined national ‘taste’ for a particular style of art. The ‘national’ element is clear in several works where the *Prinsenvlag*—the flag flown by Dutch ships during the revolt against the Spanish Hapsburgs—appears as an iconic element in the composition. Hendrik Avercamp included the flag in several of his works (see Figure 4).



Figure 4. *Winter Scene*. By Hendrik Avercamp. c 1615 AD.

What is also particularly interesting, in any comparison with Chinese art, is that although certain painters of the period depicted actual named places, the vibrant practice grew of artists (such as Salomon van Ruysdael) constructing their own images taking elements of the Dutch landscape—waterways, cattle, mills, cottages—and assembling these in their studios into paintings that can be seen as ‘symbolist’ interpretations of the Dutch world. Here there is an echo of the practices of *shan shui* painting. Simon Schama [34] talks about these practices as not creating imaginary landscapes, but as “a deliberate inventory of topographic givens.” Artistic works incorporating generic elements of the everyday environment can have a much broader appeal in representing a particular society and its relationship with its environment than can paintings which are specifically ‘about’ a place that few potential viewers may have direct experience of—something that is equally true of traditional *shan shui* in China. Dutch landscape art in the Golden Age was not, therefore, truly realistic in style but represented Holland to its inhabitants in ways they could recognize and which became part of their understanding of their own country, of its physical characteristics, and of the lives that were lived within it. Dutch landscape painting had become national art, arguably the first such development in the world providing an independent cultural identity for a newly developing nation state. Paintings by Cuyp, Vermeer and Bruegel still appear in lists of the favourite paintings of today’s Dutch citizens.

3.2. England

There is a voluminous literature on landscape, landscape art and the creation of a distinctive cultural identity in England [32,35,36]. English landscape art is often identified as having been initiated in a period of reaction to the agricultural and industrial revolutions and the large-scale urbanization of the population. Two particular painters are normally identified as crucial in this process—J M W Turner and John Constable. In reality, their contributions are rather different. In surveys of the nation’s favourite paintings, Constable’s *The Hay Wain* always occupies one of the top slots. Turner’s *Fighting Temeraire* is placed close to it. However, whilst *The Hay Wain* is incontrovertibly a work of landscape art, Turner’s picture is a historical painting, relating to the breaking up of an old naval vessel. Both paintings, however, are now imbued with a sense of nostalgia, as are many other of Constable’s works (see Figure 5)—and it can be argued that this is a distinctive contribution of landscape art to English cultural sensibilities, and to the feeling of national identity which, today, as for nearly two centuries, has harked back to an idealized past, often seen as rural in nature. Turner may ultimately have had a greater effect on successive artists and he was more original in his art, but it was Constable, with his

imitative paintings (in Platonic terms), who had the greater influence on the rise of landscape as part of English cultural and national identity.



Figure 5. *Dedham Lock and Mill*. By John Constable. c 1820 AD.

In English, use of the term ‘landscape’ does not refer purely to natural phenomena, and in the dominant traditions of English landscape painting the presence of agriculture is clear, whilst in the majority of Constable’s most-recognized works there are a number of human figures carrying out everyday tasks; it could be argued that Constable’s art combines landscape and genre subject matter. But it is a ‘tamed’ countryside that is depicted [35]. The process of artistic creation can be witnessed in the numerous oil sketches Constable made *en plein air* before working his paintings up in his studio [37]. He was therefore producing landscape paintings of recognizable locations. Like the Dutch artists of the Golden Age, he was contributing to what came to be seen as ‘national art’, but unlike them, his art was consistently tied to place, rather than producing a generic view of landscape features that repeat across a wide tract of country. ‘Constable Country’ is therefore an English rural region to be visited and celebrated through the paraphernalia of guidebooks, suggested walks, and so on. Constable never travelled outside England, so his art was not influenced by the quality of the light elsewhere in Europe. He thus produced work that was contrasted with an ‘other’ elsewhere, and reflected the distinctiveness of England, without himself ever experiencing that ‘other’. In this, he fulfilled one of the criteria for the creation of national identity—distinctiveness from an alternative. Constable’s contribution to English cultural identity, and to the emphasis that English national identity places on rurality and the significance of certain specific regions, is today very clear [38].

It can be suggested that large-scale social unrest in many parts of rural England during the years 1830–32, known as the ‘Captain Swing riots’, led an increasingly urbanized middle-class population to welcome an image of a safer ‘natural’ world of simple rural activities. Constable’s ‘six-footers’, of which *The Hay Wain* and *Dedham Lock and Mill* (Figure 5) are examples, were initially more well-received in France than in England, but as the century progressed, and as England became more urban and industrial, Constable’s landscapes rose in esteem amongst his fellow countrymen until he gained

his status as the ‘national painter’ [39]. Constable, as with most of his contemporaries [40], omitted the conditions of the rural poor. Yet his art is not neutral. Although seen as ‘realist’, it is in fact rooted in a view of rural life as wholesome and ‘authentic’. Such a view is echoed in many aspects of literature and poetry produced at a similar period, and in other later movements. Landscape art contributed with other cultural productions to the establishment of an English national identity, clearly articulating an idealized view of the countryside and rural societies as lying at the heart of what the nation meant—and such a national identity was strongly marked by nostalgia [41]. English landscape art has continued in the tradition Constable set, of depicting specific and recognizable places—from the Newlyn School of the late nineteenth century (in Cornwall), through Eric Ravilious in the 1930s (in Sussex), to recent work by David Hockney in the Yorkshire Wolds.

Our argument is that landscape art became a defining element of English cultural identity from the period of greatest industrialization onwards. Economic change brought massive migration from rural to urban areas and the celebration of rural landscape through art enabled society to reach back to what was increasingly seen as a lost utopia. Nostalgia for a rural past, and the emphasis put on the countryside, remain a dominant element in English culture in various forms. But English landscape art remained naturalistic and realist in depicting actual places and scenes. Few artists followed the Chinese or the Dutch practice from the Golden Age of creating imaginary landscape art from an assemblage of prevailing elements, or from an ideological belief in what was beautiful, meaningful or important.

3.3. Norway and Finland

Large parts of Europe, despite the rise of nationalism since the Treaty of Westphalia of 1648, and the reorganization of many political units and borders after the defeat of Napoleon in 1815, were, during the nineteenth century, still under the rule of what many in those regions saw as ‘alien’ powers. During the nineteenth century, many of these ‘subservient’ nations saw enhanced interest in the arts as part of the assertion of—and struggle for—separate national identity and independence. Norway and Finland were two such countries, neither achieving full sovereignty until the start of the twentieth century. In both cases, literature, music and landscape art played a major role in the expression of national ambitions.

Having been linked with Denmark from 1533 onwards, with only a four-year break, Norway was ceded to Sweden in 1814 as one of the collateral outcomes of the Napoleonic Wars. A brief conflict ensued, after which a dual kingdom with Sweden was established, but it was not until 1905 that Norway became fully independent. From the 1860s onwards, the country developed a series of democratic institutions and became more self-confident in its economic growth after decades as one of the poorest countries in Europe, but it remained tied to Sweden with a joint king (from the Swedish royal family) with powers to veto legislation passed by the Norwegian *Storting* or parliament. The union with Sweden was finally dissolved in 1905 after the failure of the relationship between the king and the *Storting*.

Finland had been a part of the Swedish kingdom until the war of 1808–09 when it passed to the victorious Russian Empire, only gaining full independence at the time of the Russian Revolution in 1917. Although Russian rule tended to be relatively benevolent and provided for elements of local autonomy, national claims for the creation of a Finnish state grew more vocal, particularly when, towards the end of the nineteenth century, stronger policies of Russification emerged from St Petersburg.

In both Norway and Finland, an important early element in rising cultural awareness was a renewed interest in legends, sagas and folk tales from the past—and the printing of volumes of these, illustrated with pictures of rural settings. As in Holland, works of art depicting local (‘national’) scenes first made their way into many houses as book illustrations, often by distinguished artists.

A significant motif in the development of a nationalist trend in landscape art lay in the physical geography of the two countries. Much of Norway is massively mountainous and the viewing of such a landscape reflected the growth of Romanticism and the changing attitudes to mountain scenes in European cultural sensibilities from the eighteenth century onwards. The fjord landscape of Western

Norway involved scenery that distinguished the country from both its former 'partner', Denmark, and from its post-Napoleonic co-state, Sweden. Differentiation from 'others' and the distinctiveness of Norway could be shown in depictions of such scenery. Fjord lands were seen as 'authentic', true, and with traditional cultures of daily life—unlike the cities where urban culture had adapted to influences from elsewhere [42]. In this way, Norwegian art with nationalist pretensions also reflected in some ways the ethos of English landscape art in looking to the countryside for something more 'traditional' and genuine. However, in the Norwegian case this was a search for a purer culture, whereas in the English it was inflected more by nostalgia for a past that was being transformed by modernization.

Finland offers very different scenery. While Norwegian landscape artists looked up to the mountains, generally taking low viewpoints, Finnish artists often adopted a high viewpoint over what came to be recognized as the dominant elements of Finnish landscape painting—an emphasis on the juxtaposition of water and forest, with the absence of mountains. In Finland, lakes and forests take on the symbolic importance of mountains and water (*shan* and *shui*) in Chinese art—converted into Finnish culture as *senlin shui* (forest-water in Mandarin).

Scandinavian painters, whether part of nationalist movements or not, also contributed to the establishment of an iconography associated with the Nordic light of the sub-Arctic regions [43]. They also singled out landscape features that were unique to, or dominant in, the region, and elevated them to symbolic status. One example is the birch tree. Many Scandinavian artists had visited, or studied in, Italy where the birch is largely absent: they therefore saw the tree as indicative of their Northern identity. In emphasizing its presence in their art they demonstrated the difference between their land and a famed 'other'.

The role of art in the development of Norwegian self-awareness and nationalism has been recently claimed to be a pivotal influence [44]. From the middle of the nineteenth century onwards the general cultural movement *Det Unge Norge* (New Norway) sought to build national identity, with the movement's artists arguing that landscape art was the best medium for capturing the Norwegian character [45]. Similar movements developed at the same time in Finland with, in both countries, landscape art taking the lead alongside music and literature. The work of two artists at the turn of the twentieth century—the years immediately leading up to independence in both Norway and Finland—can be seen as exemplars.

Harald Sohlberg (1869–1935) epitomizes the relationship between landscape painting and Norwegian national identity. His *Winter Night in the Mountains* (Figure 6) of 1914 was, in 1965, featured on a postage stamp and in 1995 was proclaimed Norway's 'national painting' after a public vote; it was similarly regarded from the time of its first exhibition, ten years after independence, and it has hung in a prominent position in the National Gallery in Oslo since 1918. Yet, this is not a typical realist landscape depiction. It was painted after an extended sojourn by Sohlberg in the Rondane Mountains south of Trondheim, but it is not an imitative 'view'. It is instead a symbolist representation in which the general elements of a nocturnal Norwegian landscape are reassembled on canvas through the agency of the artist's creativity. Øivind Bjerke [46] has described Sohlberg's methods using language that reflects the intellectual approach of the *shan shui* masters: "His visualization in this work is the outcome not just of emotions stirred by a certain view, but also of ruminations, reflections, choices and thoughts about what mountains meant to him personally and the ways he perceived them through the paintings, literature and music of others".

Alexander Brett [45] has commented: "*Winter Night in the Mountains* is perhaps not so much a national painting as a national view; a quintessential Norwegian view that has simply been brought to life".



Figure 6. *Winter Night in the Mountains.* By Harald Sohlberg. 1914 AD.

A Finnish contemporary equivalent to Sohlberg was Akseli Gallen-Kallela (1865–1931)—now particularly identified as leader of the National Romantic movement in Finnish art. The National Gallery in London holds one of Gallen-Kallela’s most important works—which is also one of the favourites among visitors: *Lake Keitele*, painted in 1905 (Figure 7). This work, produced at a time when Finnish nationalistic claims were growing, is in a distinctly naturalistic style. The four versions of this landscape image, with other of the artist’s works, came to stand for Finland’s claims for cultural nationalism and the demand for independence from Russia. The original critical reception of Gallen-Kallela’s work suggests that his landscapes epitomized what Finns struggling for independence felt was unique and valued about the landscapes of their country. As William Cook [47] put it in an article associated with a recent London exhibition: “In these paintings, Gallen-Kallela created an image of Finland which all Finns could recognize as their own—and in doing so, he helped his countrymen shake off the Russian yoke and found a nation.”

These Scandinavian examples reinforce the point that the English case of the development of a national landscape art and its role in wider national identity should not be seen as a universal model. Instead, the role of landscape art in the paths to nationalism have been different in different countries. Where English landscape art in the foundation period of the early nineteenth century provided an antithesis to urbanization and industrialization and the attendant changes in society, Norwegian and Finnish landscape painters sought to identify the distinctiveness of their country in ways that were part of a national argument. They placed value on local landscapes and their component elements. Landscape painting was part of the promulgation of the idea of a distinctive culture, separate from that of a colonial (or in Norway’s case, partner) state next door. It played a role in the twin processes leading

to cultural self-identification—external differentiation ('our land is different from theirs') and internal cultural standardization, through the provision of a common set of images allied to the establishment of a national literary tradition through the retelling of folk tales and of epics.

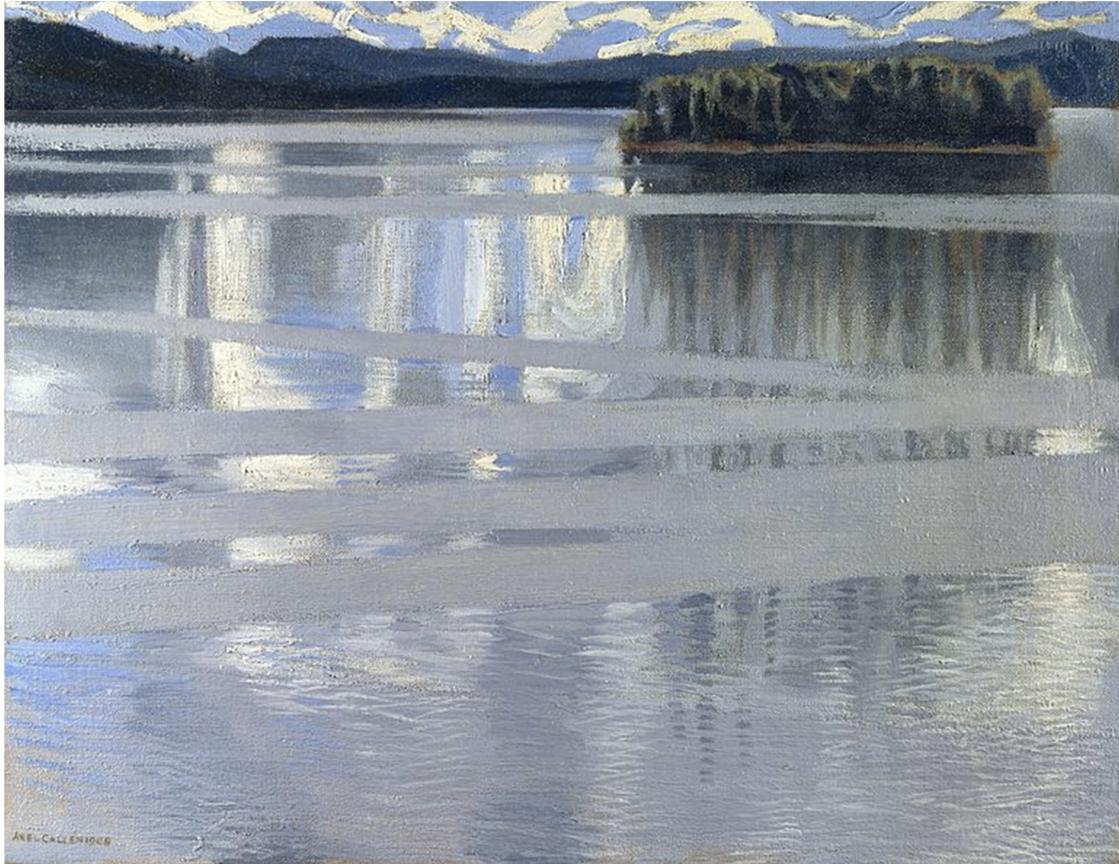


Figure 7. *Lake Keitele.* By Akseli Gallen-Kallela. 1905 AD.

Finally, however, there is irony in the fact that although Finnish culture employed landscape art (alongside literature and music) to affirm its distinctiveness from that of controlling Russia, Finland itself could be seen as a colonial power in its relations with the Sámi people (or Lapps) of the Far North. Finnish landscape art was selective in what it celebrated. Until recent decades, Finnish cultural traditions were not ready to accept the wild moorlands of Lapland as an integral part of the cultural landscape, nor the 'uncivilized' and 'barbaric' Sámi as true Finnish citizens. It was only from the middle of the twentieth century that landscape depictions of the Sámi lands became established as part of Finnish artistic culture [48]. The establishment of a Finnish 'national landscape' through art was as selective as in several other countries—for example, Britain where the dominant artistic 'national landscape' became identified predominantly with Southern England.

4. Discussion

This paper has considered the evolution of cultural identity at the opposite ends of the Eurasian landmass, with reference to the role of depictions of the 'natural' scene in establishing and maintaining notions of distinctiveness among social and political groups. The depiction of landscapes and of nature has been important as a marker of identity in both world regions. However, more detailed consideration shows a number of fundamental differences, as well as areas of convergence.

Chinese cultural history has, for more than 2000 years, revered nature through ways of thinking derived from Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism placing mankind firmly within the natural world.

Reflections on nature have been dominant influences in the production of a variety of Chinese artefacts, from porcelain to furniture, music to painting. But alongside the reverence for nature, Chinese culture has also stressed the importance of self-reflection and the need for individuals to develop self-awareness as part of the 'way' to a good life. These two elements together—reverence for nature, and personal self-seeking—combine to create the techniques of Chinese landscape art (*shan shui*) that have been foundational elements of culture since at least the Song dynasty a thousand years ago. The artist seeks to portray the essence of the subject matter as he understands it—an Aristotelian approach. Such art is primarily a mode of self-expression for the artist, rather than a means of educating or influencing a wider public.

European art, by contrast, was primarily concerned with religious figure painting right until the middle of the last millennium. Such art was always educational in some form, commissioned by religious or public authorities and intended to influence those who gazed on it. Only with the Reformation and the, to some extent independent, secularization of European societies did other subjects become seen as appropriate for artistic endeavor—and with increasing value placed upon them.

When European artists turned to the depiction of nature and of landscapes, they generally sought to imitate what they had seen. Their art was rooted in specific settings and often influenced by *plein air* work and the creation of field sketches prior to recourse to the studio. The landscapes that formed the subject matter were then local to the artist (as for Constable) or easily visited within the limited confines of European nation states. The varied distinctiveness of the physical geography of Europe was brought out as a signature element in the art thus produced. Such paintings contributed strongly to a geographical and topographical element in cultural consciousness, and the spreading of knowledge of what particular places and landscapes within the countries concerned actually looked like. And the fact that representational paintings were produced of particular places has elevated these locations themselves, as well as the art produced there, to be part of national or international heritage. For example, the citations on the UNESCO World Heritage List as landscapes defined as 'associative cultural' reference the artistic associations for sites such as the English Lake District. The political units within which art and culture were being developed in Europe were very much smaller than in China, which was a united empire for most of the last 2000 years. In Europe, with its linguistic and political fragmentation as well, often, as religious and economic divergences, art could be used as a basis for the delineation of national distinctiveness. Landscapes and landscape art have become as much part of cultural and national identities as have, for instance, religious sites [49].

In Holland, where some artists composed their works using elements drawn from the world outside their studios, the outcomes were sometimes scenes that could have existed, but which were figments of the artists' imaginations. These highly coloured works, in oil paint, contrast with the abstracted and simplified ink and wash drawings of *shan shui* art. But if *shan shui* work represented a certain idea of China and its cultural values, European landscape art, produced in a much more fragmented political context of rival states (or nations aspiring to statehood), carried much stronger messages about particular cultures, economies and political ambitions.

While European artists were providing images that, in most cases, illustrated places that could be visited, Chinese art produced something very much more generalized and abstract. Over vast areas of the Chinese lowlands, *shan shui* depictions of mountains and cascades bore no relation to the everyday experience of nature for millions of Imperial subjects. In the Yellow Mountains (*Huangshan*) of Anhui province, or in Zhangjiajie Forest Park in Hunan province, *shan shui* art is more closely related to observable 'reality', but this was much less the case elsewhere. However, this did not reduce the importance of *shan shui* for the millions living in the flat lands of Central Eastern China. Instead, it elevated such depictions into symbols of a China that millions of people could have no direct or indirect experience of. *Shan shui* became the basis of a national artistic culture, but also of an idea of 'China' and as an embodiment of the philosophy and the values underpinning the Empire as a whole. It is also notable that certain of the citations of Chinese sites in the UNESCO World Heritage List also refer, as in Europe, to their associated artistic significance—as in the Lushan National Park and the West

Lake of Hangzhou, both of which display elements that could inspire a painter of *shan shui*. European landscape art has always been educational as well as carrying cultural identifications. As we have seen, Dutch landscape art flourished in a period of commercial success and the creation of a *bourgeois* class who bought art that reflected the country that they now felt was ‘theirs’ after a period of Spanish domination. English landscape art became associated with a nostalgic view of a lost rural past, a view that then played a major contributory role, alongside similar trends in other creative activities, in the definition of national identity. Norwegian and Finnish landscape painting was a vehicle for supporting independence claims through the demonstration of the distinctiveness of national landscapes. Whilst in China, until the early years of the twentieth century, there was effectively one style of ‘national art’ seen in a specific tradition of *shan shui* painting, in Europe different traditions of landscape painting evolved in different countries in response to different social, economic and political realities. But in each case landscape art came to play an important role.

Shan shui differs in many profound ways from Western landscape art. Just as mankind is part of the natural world, so the *shan shui* artist is also part of his own subject matter and can be interpreted, indeed, as being his own subject matter. The artist’s comprehension of himself and his relationship to the world constitutes the essence of *shan shui* art. Chinese philosophical views on nature and on personal self-reflection have a long history and are mirrored by the continuity of a style of art that is an integral part of this thinking. Such art forms an essential part of the culture and reflects Aristotle’s views on creativity and the task of the artist to abstract from the superficial and reflect the totality of the human condition. The artist is within the culture and is part of it. He has a unique relationship to it through his own personality and interpretations. The culture is bigger than the artist and he reflects it, but without changing it. *Shan shui* painting continues with little change in style for a thousand years from the late Song period onwards.

European landscape art has been created in a very different philosophical context involving greater upheavals in economic, social and political processes. Artists have worked within temporally and spatially significant contexts, but always with a view to the consumption of their art by others. Such contexts have meant that artists have created wider messages within their work and thus had a greater effect on ‘public’ cultures than the more personal and intimate works of *shan shui* artists working within an enveloping Chinese culture. European artists have been part of evolutionary movements in art, reflecting political, economic and social realities, and have created images that are specific to periods and places at a variety of scales. Chinese landscape depictions play a precise role in Chinese cultural identity, as also do European landscape depictions, given the messages that they carry, in the establishing of national identities.

In China, with its long Imperial history and the continuous absorption of external elements into the Imperial whole, cultural identity was formed many centuries before there was a political need to establish a national identity beyond that of the Imperial family, the court and the highest officials. Such a need did not really develop until the growth of threats to the strength of the Empire during the nineteenth century. In Europe, by contrast, the modern cultural identity of individual states was not evident until well into the second millennium AD and in many cases developed almost simultaneously with national identity. Landscape art lay at the heart of Chinese culture for several hundred years; in Europe it took on political significance as both cultural and national signifier, and often did so in a period of little more than a century. Yet at both sides of the Eurasian land mass, landscape art, in its different forms, remains closely associated with cultural identities. Paintings of natural scenes, in the continuing variety of styles and media, remain popular with the general public—often now as national cultural markers for international tourists. Political regimes may change, but the depiction of landscape through art supports, reinforces and perpetuates cultural and national identities in both China and Europe. However, how this situation has come about has differed significantly between the two world regions.

Author Contributions: All sections of the article were jointly written by the two authors, with P.W. undertaking the final editing. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding: R.W.'s research was supported by Shanghai Jiaotong University Research Fund, which also paid the publishing charge for the article.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

References

1. Orchard, V. Culture as opposed to what? Cultural belonging in the context of national and European identity. *Eur. J. Soc. Theory* **2002**, *5*, 419–433. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
2. Anderson, B. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*; Verso: London, UK, 1983.
3. Meissner, W. China's search for cultural and national identity from the nineteenth century to the present. *China Perspect.* **2006**, *68*, 41–54. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
4. Dong, H. *A History of the Chinese Language*; Routledge: London, UK, 2014.
5. Norman, J. *Chinese*; Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, UK, 1988.
6. Cosgrove, D. Landscape and the European sense of sight—Eyeing nature. In *Handbook of Cultural Geography*; Anderson, K., Ed.; Sage: London, UK, 2002.
7. Daniels, S. Landscape and art. In *A Companion to Cultural Geography*; Duncan, J., Ed.; John Wiley: Hoboken, NJ, USA, 2004.
8. Han, F. Cultural landscape: A Chinese way of seeing nature. In *Managing Cultural Landscapes*; Taylor, K., Lennon, J., Eds.; Routledge: London, UK, 2012.
9. Ebbatson, R. *An Imaginary England: Nation, Landscape and Literature, 1840–1920*; Routledge: London, UK, 2005.
10. Law, S.S.-M. *Reading Chinese Painting: Beyond Forms and Colors, A Comparative Approach to Art Appreciation*; Shanghai Book Traders: Shanghai, China, 2016.
11. Ye, J.Y. *Gǔ Shī Cí Kè*; SDX Joint Publishing Company: Beijing, China, 2018.
12. Watson, W. *The Arts of China to AD 900*; Yale University Press: New Haven, CT, USA, 1995.
13. Zhang, H. Jiè Xī “Luò Shén Fù Tú” dì Měi Xué Sī Xiǎng. *J. Northwest Norm. Univ.* **2009**, *5*, 50–53.
14. Wu, X. *Shān Shuǐ Zhī Jīng*; SDX Joint Publishing Company: Beijing, China, 2015.
15. Vandier-Nicolas, N. La peinture chinoise à l'époque Song'. *Cah. Civilis. Médiévale* **1966**, *36*, 513–532. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
16. Keay, J. *China: A History*; HarperPress: London, UK, 2008.
17. Cahill, J. *The Painter's Practice: How Artists Lived and Worked in Traditional China*; Columbia University Press: New York, NY, USA, 1994.
18. Shao, Q. *Wǎn Míng Yǐ Lái Zhōng Guó Huà de Yǔ Jīng yǔ YǔYì*; Shandong Fine Arts Publishing House: Jinan, China, 2012.
19. Clarke, D. *Chinese Art and its Encounter with the World*; Hong Kong University Press: Hong Kong, China, 2011.
20. Wong, A.Y. *Parting the Mists: Discovering Japan and the Rise of National-Style Painting in Modern China*; University of Hawai'i Press: Honolulu, HI, USA, 2006.
21. Gauché, E. Tourismification of a Shui village in the mountainous province of Guizhou (South China); imaginaries and the use of landscape for political ends. *J. Alpine Res.* **2007**, *105*, 3. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
22. Wei, N. Establishing a new scopic regime: The new landscape painting of Mao's era. *Cult. Stud.* **2017**, *31*, 894–917. [\[CrossRef\]](#)
23. He, B. *Nationalism, National Identity and Democratization in China*; Routledge: London, UK, 2000.
24. Clark, K. *Landscape into Art*, 2nd ed.; John Murray: London, UK, 1976.
25. Smith, A.D. *National Identity*; Penguin: London, UK, 1991.
26. Smith, A.D. *The Cultural Foundation of Nations: Hierarchy, Covenant and Republic*; Bloomsbury Academic: London, UK, 2008.
27. Gellner, E. *Nations and Nationalism*; Cornell University Press: Ithaca, NY, USA, 1983.
28. Hobsbawm, E. *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality*; Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, UK, 1990.
29. Sassoon, D. *The Anxious Triumph: A Global History of Capitalism 1860–1914*; Allen Lane: London, UK, 2019.
30. Smith, A.D. *Nationalism and Modernism*; Routledge: London, UK, 1998.
31. Thiesse, A.-M. Des fictions créatrices: Les identités nationales. *Romantisme* **2000**, *110*, 51–62. [\[CrossRef\]](#)

32. Smith, A.D. *The Nation Made Real: Art and National Identity in Western Europe, 1600–1850*; University Press: Oxford, UK, 2013.
33. Onuf, A. Envisioning Netherlandish unity: Claes Visscher’s 1612 copies of the *Small Landscape* prints. *J. Hist. Netherlandish Art* **2011**, *3*, 1. [CrossRef]
34. Schama, S. *Kunstzaken*; Contract: Amsterdam, The Netherlands, 1997.
35. Berberich, C. This green and pleasant land: Cultural consciousness of Englishness. In *Landscape and Englishness*; Burden, R., Kohl, S., Eds.; Rodopi: Amsterdam, The Netherlands, 2008.
36. Readman, P. *Storied Ground: Landscape and the Shaping of English National Identity*; Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, UK, 2018.
37. Rosenthal, M. *Turner and Constable: Sketching from Nature*; Tate: London, UK, 2014.
38. Rosenthal, M. Constable and Englishness. *Br. Art J.* **2006**, *7*, 40–45.
39. Helsing, E. Constable: The making of a national painter. *Crit. Enq.* **1989**, *15*, 253–279. [CrossRef]
40. Barrell, J. *The Dark Side of the Landscape: The Rural Poor in English Painting, 1730–1840*; Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, UK, 1980.
41. Bishop, P. *An Archetypal Constable: National Identity and the Geography of Nostalgia*; Athlone Press: London, UK, 1995.
42. Austad, I.; Hauge, L. The ‘Fjordscape’ of Inner Sogn, Western Norway. In *Nordic Landscapes: Region and Belonging on the Northern Edge of Europe*; Jones, M., Ed.; University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis, MN, USA, 2008.
43. Leguy, A.-E. Les peintres Nordiques et la ‘Lumière du Nord’ au tournant du XX^e. *Études Ger.* **2016**, *282*, 269–281. [CrossRef]
44. Prideaux, S. The Landscape Painters Who Invented Norway. *Apollo*, 4 May 2019.
45. Brett, A. Nationalism in the Landscapes of Harald Sohlberg. *Fika Online*. 29 April 2019. Available online: <https://fika-online.com/2019/04/29/nationalism-in-the-landscapes-of-harald-sohlberg/> (accessed on 15 September 2019).
46. Bjerke, Ø.S. Winter Night in the Mountains. In *Harald Sohlberg: Infinite Landscapes*; Hindsbo, K., Ed.; Hirmer: München, Germany, 2019.
47. Cook, W. The Painting That Inspired Finnish Independence. *Spect. Life*, 17 November 2017.
48. Hautala-Hirvioja, T. Frontier landscape—Lapland in the tradition of Finnish landscape painting. *Acta Boreala*. **2011**, *2*, 183–202. [CrossRef]
49. Dastgerdi, A.S.; de Luca, G. Specifying the significance of historic sites in heritage planning. *Conserv. Sci. Cult. Herit.* **2019**, *18*, 29–39.



© 2020 by the authors. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).