

The Development of Human Perception, Which Aim for Directness by Means of Indirection and on the Directness of Artistic Aesthetics [†]

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Abstract: Human's grasp of information is based on perception. The development of human perceptual ability presents a trend of gradual indirection. As a means, the indirect perception of information is the inevitable result of human's expansion on perception domains. However, in terms of purpose, before the limitation of time and space has been completely overcome, the development goal of human perceptual ability is to constantly overcome the indirection of perception, the feeling of indirection, and to become infinitely close to the directness of perception while improving perceptual abilities with the help of an external intermediary. The aesthetic process is based on the perception of the information in the works of art. The "sense of presence" emphasized by contemporary art appreciation is the inevitable requirement of the development of information perception technology, which is directly targeted.

Keywords: the perception of information; indirection; directness; aesthetic



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1. Human Perception with the Goal of Directness

The information evolution theory takes the indirection of information as the symbol of human social evolution [1], which means that the development direction of human social information processing is indirection, and indirection is the development direction of human perception ability. However, the progress of modern science and technology, especially with Internet technology and virtual reality technology, shows that the perception of information is moving towards the direction of directness. If we look at the development stages of information perception technology from a historical perspective, we can find that the evolutionary goal of human information perception ability is not indirection, but the law of its development is to break the limitation of time and space and realize the directness of information perception.

Humans capture information by interaction between human sensory organs and objective objects. According to Professor Wu, human perception experiences roughly five stages: 1. sensory recognition of external information within the natural scale; 2. it transforms the micro and macro information of the outside world into information that can be recognized through the senses; 3. use tools to make qualitative and quantitative analyses of external information; 4. hyperspatial transmission of perceptual information; 5. use tools and facilities to change or stimulate object information. These five stages show that, with the help of intermediaries, human beings expand the cognitive limits of their own perceptual organs, and their perceptual ability develops toward macro- and micropoles, toward the direction of high-speed perception, and toward the direction of qualitative and quantitative fine perception of information [1]. However, the five stages have common characteristics, that is, as long as there is an external intermediary of human perception organs, it transforms information beyond the field of human perception into information

within the range of natural human scales, which can be directly captured and recognized by human senses. Take a microscope for example. A microscope is an optical instrument consisting of a lens or a combination of lenses, which is mainly used to magnify small objects so that they can be recognized by the human eye. In addition, although the detection equipment of modern science may not be able to directly present the specific observed object, the data used to represent the observed phenomenon are still a symbolic language that can be recognized by human eyes and understood by human cognition. Therefore, no matter what kind of intermediary, if object information cannot be transformed into a state that human organs can feel and know, then the grasp, utilization, development, creation, and realization of the information will be out of the question. At this time, the information is not present and not visible to human beings; thus, it will be meaningless. We can find that, no matter how sophisticated the intermediary is, it must adapt to the habit and limit the capacity of human perception and also serve for direct human perception. Thus, the indirection of information perception is only a process means and not a development goal of human perception ability.

This paper does not question the indirect development process of human information perception ability, which is a fact of the history of science and cannot be refuted. The indirection of information perception is the inevitable result of the development of human perception ability, which is determined by the limitation of human physiological senses. For example, where the eye only distinguishing specific wavelengths of the electromagnetic wave and the ear only identifying specific frequency ranges of sound waves, various perceptual limitations of human senses determine that in further studies on the physical world, intermediary tools will have to be used in order to obtain information outside of human perception. However, taking indirection as the development direction and goal of perceptual ability is worth further discussion. Whether it is the early telephone, the Internet, or even recent virtual reality technology, the original intention and purpose of technical development is to realize people's direct perception of information. The telephone replaces the traditional letter, realizing information exchange between people in different regions. Compared with the letter, communication by using a telephone is obviously more direct. With technological progress, the traditional telephone network based on PSTN technology is gradually replaced by the video call based on Internet technology. At this time, not only the voice quality during the call has been greatly improved but real-time video interaction can also be realized. Therefore, Internet technology is a breakthrough again in the directness of information perception. Virtual reality technology intends to recreate a real sense of presence experience and create a kind of thorough directness. The purpose create the illusion of real field communication and completely forget the existence of virtual technology, the external intermediary, which is called "The Informational Presence of Man" by Xiao Feng who thinks that "it is a kind of presence that sublate material reality" [2].

By conducting a historical investigation, it was found that the indirection of human perceptual ability is only a stage of the development of science and technology and cannot become the ultimate direction of the development of perceptual ability. When we compare each progress of human perceptual ability with the old perceptual way, we find that the means human captures information are designed to achieve higher directness, and indirection is a means for human beings to expand the realm of perception. However, it is not the goal of development. As a specific stage of scientific development, every breakthrough in perceptual indirection aims at de-indirection and de-intermediation so as to realize people's direct access to information.

To sum up, as a means, indirect information perception is the inevitable result of human expand sensory areas. However, under the premise that the limitations of time and space have not been completely overcome, the development direction of human perceptual ability is to overcome indirection, mediation feeling, and close to the directness of perception infinitely.

2. The Directness of Information Perception in Art Aesthetics

Based on this, we can understand the special phenomenon of art in the development of indirect information. Modern art not only benefits from the development of science and technology but also faces challenges because of the progress of science and technology. As a kind of labor production, in terms of artistic creation process, its indirect mineralization degree obtains certain development. For example, photography promoted the transformation of the traditional realistic painting; allowed modern painting to develop cubism, fauvism, abstract forms; changed the way of sculptures; and combined sculpture with computer intelligence platforms. The work that has been conducted by an artist was replaced by the intelligent platform. However, in terms of the appreciation of art and the consumption of art commodities, the trend of directness is becoming more and more obvious.

In fact, the process of art appreciation is the process of the appreciation of the information content contained in the material entity of the art work, which is perceived, understood, internalized, and finally formed as a specific aesthetic experience. Therefore, in the process of art appreciation, the perception of information is an important link, and perceptual behavior is the process of communication and interaction between the appreciator and the appreciator, which is the premise of aesthetic experience.

In the traditional society, art appreciation is limited by time and space, and the perception of art information has dual regulations including present time and present space. In other words, aesthetic experience is produced in the specific space of a specific work at a specific time. Although the aesthetics at this time had direct characteristics, the dissemination of artistic works was greatly restricted. With the development of science and the improvement of mechanical reproduction technology, it is possible to copy works of art in large scale; paintings are copied by printing technologies, music is replicated by sound recording technology; drama is copied by using video technology; and almost every form of art has specific copy with the help of modern technology. Because of the artistic copies, the process of art appreciation is obviously indirect. However, if compared with traditional artistic aesthetics, it is also a direct expression. In the traditional society, with the exception of the owner, the viewer can only rely on the description of the text. The special laborers who are good at imitation produced fake art. However, these fakes are rough. With the development of mechanical reproduction techniques, the copies even reach a degree of fidelity. By comparison, the artistic copy produced by mechanical reproduction technology is obviously closer to the original, and the aesthetic experience of taking this as the object is naturally closer to the aesthetic experience of facing the “matrix”.

Therefore, the “sense of presence” emphasized by modern art appreciation is not an expression of nostalgia of individual art groups nor a rebound of art in the face of scientific and technological challenges. This sense of presence, on the other hand, is the natural requirement of human aesthetic activities. Aesthetic emphasizes intuition, which means that any intermediaries could pose a shelter for aesthetic intuition, which will be further modified to meet the demand of human intuitive aesthetics; as a result, the history of art aesthetics suggests the following law: humans tend to realize the directness of aesthetics and remove the intermediary’s concealment of sensibility and intuition.

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