

# A Study of the Dilemma of Human Aesthetics from the Perspective of Philosophy of Information <sup>†</sup>

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**Abstract:** From the perspective of the division of the field of existence of Philosophy of Information, the concept and scope of aesthetics are reinterpreted in this paper. Against the background of today's anthropocentrism, the lack of significance in the existence of aesthetics has led to a misinterpretation of aesthetics. The anthropocentric aesthetics is also bound to fall into a dilemma. To break this dilemma, we must reinterpret the aesthetics. At the same time, it is also the first step in establishing a new theory of information aesthetics.

**Keywords:** philosophy of Information; information aesthetics; information value; the relativity of aesthetics



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## 1. Introduction

Aesthetic research has always been confined to aesthetic subjects and anthropocentric ideas. Chinese information philosophical thought may give a new direction to aesthetic research, i.e., to propose a holistically new theory of information aesthetics from the cross-integrated perspectives of information theory, natural values, and information ecology. The most preliminary attempts are to be made here.

## 2. Criticism on Aesthetics of Anthropocentrism

In the new division of the existing field of Philosophy of Information, the existing world is divided into three parts: objective reality, objective insubstantiality, and subjective insubstantiality. At this point, you can clearly distinguish between the existence of something in two ways: direct existence and indirect existence. Thus, any existence simultaneously as a unity of these two modes of existence, both as a material body and as an information body [1].

The concept of aesthetics, as a subjective insubstantiality in the consciousness of the subject, is a kind of information element which is subjectively processed by us through cognition and grasping the information of the existing model and state of the material world. Aesthetics, as a subjective evaluation, originates from the information manifestation of existence, and is self-being information. The concept of aesthetics is a subject's perspicacity of information by a subject with cognitive powers, which belongs to the category of subjective existence.

In the past, people were regarded as the only subject with cognitive powers. With the increasing clarity of subjectivity, the concept of intelligence has been introduced. Intelligence is a concept that refers specifically to the superposition of wisdom and ability of the subject with cognitive and practical powers. Any subject with intelligence can produce feelings about aesthetics and establish concepts like aesthetics. Therefore, the concept of aesthetics is no longer unique to human beings. On the one hand, aesthetics comes from objective information. On the other hand, with the expansion of the scope of the subject,

we cannot be limited to the judgment of aesthetic perceptions from the perspective of human beings.

Human beings are accustomed to considering things in a self-consistent state to be aesthetics. The pursuit of this state by the subject is a state of value pursuit leading to aesthetics, so the issue of the judgment of aesthetics can be attributed to that of value evaluation and orientation. The Philosophy of Information redefines the concept of value from the perspective of natural ontology: "Value is the effect of things (material, information as thought, including the subjective form of information-spirit) through internal or external interaction" [2]. From the perspective of anthropocentrism, we regard subjective judgment as the basis of value judgment, and thus the subject inevitably confuses value with value judgment, resulting in the above binary preference.

When human beings engage in cognitive activities, cognition-mediated epistemology is not just that of cognition itself. The intermediary here refers to the activation process of the subject's cognition of the object, with the "epistemology" using cognition as the intermediary being the final cognitive result. Epistemology of the result is not merely that of the result, but at the same time should be focused on the process of cognition, using which and under which conditions such cognition is derived to determine its reliability. Today's value problem ignores such a kind of cognition in the process of cognition. Against the long-term ideological background of anthropocentrism, the cognition of value formed with the purpose of human subject needs makes us confuse value with value judgment, value evaluation, and value orientation [1].

When we have clarified the value problem to return to the aesthetics itself, we may be able to find the universality of aesthetics at the level of the intelligent subject.

### 3. On the Concept of Aesthetics from Value

As a word, "aesthetics" connotes a preconceived positive color in the context, which is based on the prejudice of value evaluation of "satisfying human needs". Longitudinally, there is a valuable relationship presented in the series of relationships in the evolution of things. No matter whether these things are meaningful in people's subjective consciousness, in the process of time evolution, they objectively show the value relationship between the previous stage and the later stage. Horizontally, the evolutionary series of things at each time stage is realized through the interaction between and within things. Therefore, the scope of value relations and the scope of interaction have the same universality and ubiquity as the scope of things (including the tangible material and the intangible information).

At the level of human activities, there is not only a self-being process of value occurrence consistent with things in general, but also the ability to subjectively perceive and recognize the phenomenon of value. After confirming that value covers the scope of all existences, we need to recognize the value of the specific existences. This process is completed through value reflection, value standards, and value evaluation. Value reflection deals with the intuitive perspicacity of general value phenomena. The reflection from the general value phenomenon to the value reflection must be mediated through value information displayed by the value phenomenon, with the reflection reflecting information. Value standard is the yardstick of value evaluation established by the subject according to experience and cognition. Value evaluation is the perception of what is at stake in the general value process for the thing that bears this value effect. Therefore, it requires such a three-stage deduction to describe a complete process of value cognition: from value reflection to value standard to value evaluation.

Aesthetics established in this sense of value, on the one hand, allows us to recognize the objectivity of aesthetics as an indirect mode of existence; on the other hand, when we perceive the value evaluation of aesthetics against the background of this existential basis, we can detach the completely subjective aspect of the evaluator and the aesthete.

#### 4. The Relativity of Aesthetics

Although aesthetics as an indirect mode of existence covers all existence, it is not absolute in the process of cognition. The cognition of aesthetics from the perspective of philosophy of information needs to be carried out through the value reflection, value standard, and value evaluation of aesthetics. In the process of the occurrence of this cognition, there is no direct contact between the subject and the object, but it is done through multi-level intermediaries. The relevant intermediary links include the object information field, physiological structure, and cognitive structure, and the cognitive tools used by the subject to understand the object [3] (p. 298). These intermediary links are constantly changing with the development of people's cognitive powers and the change of specific scenes. Under this change, people's cognition of the existence of aesthetics will also continue to be clear, and the original value reflection, standards, and evaluation of aesthetics will be gradually updated. Therefore, the subject's judgment on the value of aesthetics is not absolute.

The state of aesthetics that human beings yearn for is a state that tends toward perfection and the unity of truth, goodness, and aesthetics. As a perfect reference, this state becomes the ultimate meaning of human pursuit, so it has value in a general sense to the subject. But whether it is the self-consistent state or the perfect unity of truth, goodness, and aesthetics, it is defined from the anthropic perspective. Human beings initially unified truth, goodness, and aesthetics in the divine. After the Renaissance, human beings began to try to unify truth, goodness, and aesthetics in human beings themselves. When science and technology progressed and a series of ecological problems emerged, human beings began to try to unify truth, goodness, and aesthetics in ecology. Judging from this perspective, human understanding of aesthetics is a process of development and evolution, and there will be different interpretations of the so-called ultimate aesthetics in each historical period. Human perception of aesthetics is a relative and changing process.

How do we know that a thing represents aesthetics when we return to the production of aesthetics? At the beginning of growth, the subject did not have the concept of distinguishing aesthetics from non-aesthetics. After experiencing assimilation and alienation of external information in the process of growth, the subject gradually established the concept of aesthetics, resulting in the distinction between aesthetics and ugliness. It is the difference in the subject's cognition that leads to the difference and relativity of the subject's evaluation of aesthetics [4].

Since an intermediary is needed in the process of value judgment of aesthetics, and the inevitable intermediary part is affected by both subjective and objective factors, it is not comprehensive to elucidate the nature of aesthetics either from the subjective or the objective perspective. From a relative point of view, the aesthetics in the sense of existence should be regarded as objective aesthetics, and the aesthetics as the object of value judgment and the object of human cognition should be regarded as subjective aesthetics, to interpret the nature of aesthetics and conduct relevant research. Based on this, a new theory of information aesthetics can be constructed.

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