

Study on the aesthetic teaching of "blank space" in Chinese painting from the perspective of Gestalt psychology

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Abstract: This paper aims to explore the application and influence of Gestalt psychology theory in the teaching of "blank space" aesthetics in Chinese painting. Through in-depth analysis of the correspondence between the visual perception principle of Gestalt psychology and the unique aesthetic characteristics of "blank space" in Chinese painting, this paper reveals the intrinsic relationship between the two in aesthetic experience, visual organization and psychological perception. Gestalt psychology emphasizes that the whole perception is superior to the sum of its parts, and the interaction and tension between visual elements. This theoretical framework provides a novel perspective for understanding the artistic conception, spirit and aesthetic value of "blank space" in Chinese painting.

Keywords: Gestalt psychology; Chinese painting; Empty space; Aesthetic teaching; Visual perception

1. Introduction

In the vast starry sky of Chinese traditional culture, Chinese painting has become a shining pearl in the world art treasure house with its unique artistic expression and profound cultural deposits^[1]. The "blank space" in Chinese painting, that is, the art of leaving white space, is not only an important part of the picture composition, but also an aesthetic carrier of infinite artistic conception and imagination. With its simple but not simple form, it leads the viewer to cross the boundary of vision and explore the depth of the soul^[2]. With the deepening of the cross-integration of psychology and art education, re-examining the aesthetic teaching of "blank space" of Chinese painting from the perspective of Gestalt psychology not only provides a new idea for the inheritance and innovation of traditional art, but also opens up a new path for teaching practice in the field of art education.

2. Analysis of the compatibility between Gestalt psychological theory and "blank space" in Chinese painting

2.1 Visual perception principle of Gestalt psychology

Gestalt Psychology, also known as Gestalt psychology, is a precursor to the modern cognitive theory of learning, created by the German psychologists M. Wertheimer, W. Kohler, and K. Koffka in the early 20th century^[3]. The concept of "Gestalt" in Gestalt psychology, which means "shape" or "figure" in German, emphasizes the structure and nature of the whole. As shown in Figure 1.



Figure 1: Gestalt psychology

(1) The integrity of visual perception

Gestalt psychology states that the human visual system tends to organize visual inputs into meaningful wholes, rather than viewing them as isolated collections of elements. This view is embodied in many aspects, such as the organizational principles of proximity, similarity, continuity, closure, and simple symmetry. Specifically, elements that are close to each other tend to be seen as a whole; Elements with similar visual characteristics (such as shape, color, size, etc.) also tend to be grouped together; The human visual system also tends to complete an incomplete figure into a complete whole, that is, the phenomenon of "gestalt closure"^[4].

(2) Gestalt closure and optical illusion

Gestalt closure is an important concept in Gestalt psychology, which refers to the tendency of people to complete a complete figure when they see an incomplete figure. For example, in a "moving-like phenomenon," when two successive visual stimuli are presented between 1/10 of a second and 1/30 of a second apart, people will see one object moving instead of two stationary objects^[5]. This phenomenon reveals that the human visual system has the ability to organize discontinuous elements into a whole that moves continuously.

(3) Application of Gestalt principle in teaching

The application of Gestalt principle in teaching, especially in visual art teaching, is of great significance. It can not only help students understand the wholeness of visual perception, but also enhance students' aesthetic ability and creativity. By applying the Gestalt principle, teachers can guide students to observe and analyze the overall structure and organization laws in artistic works, so as to have a deeper understanding of the connotation and expression of artistic works.

2.2 Aesthetic characteristics of "blank space" in Chinese painting

In traditional Chinese art, especially in the field of painting, "blank space" (or "blank space") is not only a composition technique, but also an aesthetic expression deeply rooted in Chinese culture and philosophy, which contains rich aesthetic implications and philosophical thinking^[6]. The "blank space" in Chinese painting is not a simple vacancy or unfinished, but an artistic element carefully arranged by the painter to guide the viewer's vision and mind into a vast realm beyond the picture itself. The following will discuss the aesthetic characteristics of "blank space" in Chinese painting from several aspects. As shown in Figure 2.

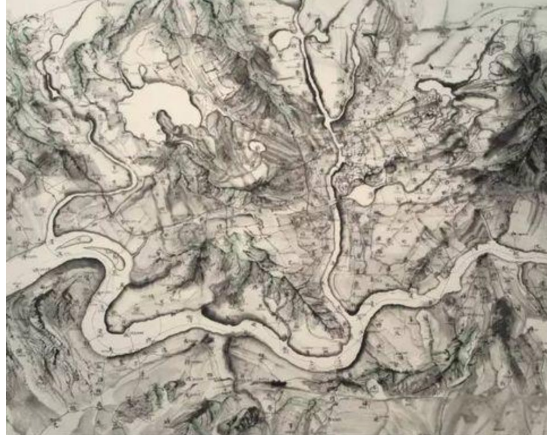


Figure 2: Chinese painting "Blank Space"

(1) Creation of artistic conception

Chinese painting emphasizes the creation of "artistic conception", that is, expressing infinite imagination space through limited pictures. As an important part of the picture, the "blank space" is exquisite in that it can stimulate the audience's association and imagination, so that the world outside the picture can be extended. For example, in the landscape paintings of the Song Dynasty, a large area of white space is often used to express the cloud-shrouded mountains or distant water surface^[7]. This treatment not only enhances the sense of hierarchy and far-reaching sense of the picture, but also makes the viewer feel as if they are in the natural beauty of the cloud-shrouded, water-sky color, and feel the beauty of a transcendent artistic conception.

(2) The philosophical thought that reality and emptiness produce each other

The "blank space" embodies the philosophical thought of Chinese painting "producing reality and emptiness". In traditional Chinese culture, "emptiness" and "reality" are a pair of concepts that depend on each other and transform each other. The "reality" in Chinese painting refers to the specific image and the form of ink, while the "emptiness" refers to the blank and white space in the picture. By skillfully dealing with the relationship between "virtual" and "real", the painter makes the picture achieve a balance and harmony in vision, and conveys profound philosophical thinking on the spiritual level. This technique of expression, which combines virtuality and reality, makes Chinese painting contain infinite possibilities and profound meaning in the limited picture.

(3) Emotional sustenance and transmission

"Blank space" is also an important carrier of the artist's emotional sustenance and communication. In the creation of Chinese painting, painters often integrate their own emotions into the ink and brush, and convey their emotions and moods through the composition and blank space of the picture. For example, when expressing feelings such as loneliness and indifference, the artist may use a large area of white space to create an empty and quiet atmosphere, so that the viewer can feel the emotional fluctuations of the artist's heart while enjoying the painting. This kind of emotional communication transcends the limitation of language and reaches the resonance and communication of soul.

(4) Enhancement of aesthetic taste

The use of "blank space" also reflects the unique aesthetic taste of Chinese painting. In traditional Chinese culture, the pursuit of "reserved" and "restrained" is regarded as an elegant aesthetic pursuit. The "blank space" in Chinese painting is the embodiment of this aesthetic taste. It does not pursue the completeness and richness of the picture like Western painting, but expresses the intention and emotion of the painter in a more simple and generalized way^[8]. This simple but not simple way of expression makes Chinese painting more interesting and fascinating in aesthetics.

Based on this, the "blank space" in Chinese painting not only has a unique aesthetic value of composition, but also embodies Chinese traditional culture, philosophical thoughts and aesthetic taste. With its unique charm, it has attracted the eyes and hearts of countless artists and viewers, and has become a bright pearl in Chinese traditional art.

2.3 Discussion on meeting points

When discussing the compatibility of Gestalt psychology theory and Chinese painting "blank space" aesthetics, we can find that there are close relations and common points between them on many levels. These convergence points not only provide a new perspective for understanding the aesthetic characteristics of Chinese painting, but also provide a powerful theoretical support for teaching practice. As shown in Figure 3.



Figure 3: Gestalt psychology and Chinese painting

(1) The whole is greater than the sum of its parts

Gestalt psychology emphasizes the principle that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts, arguing that when people perceive things, they automatically perceive them as a complete structure rather than as separate, disconnected parts. This principle coincides with the aesthetics of "blank space" in Chinese painting. Through the clever white space processing, the elements in the picture are interrelated and echo each other, forming a harmonious and unified whole. For example, in landscape painting, the artist expresses invisible things such as clouds, mist and water by leaving white space, so that the picture not only has a limited material form, but also contains unlimited imagination space, and achieves the artistic effect of "infinite words and infinite meaning".

(2) Gestalt tendency and visual completion

Gestalt tendency in Gestalt psychology refers to the internal drive that occurs when people look at incomplete or defective shapes, prompting the brain to actively work to fill and perfect these defects and make them perfect. This psychological phenomenon has been fully reflected in the application of "blank space" in Chinese painting. The white space in Chinese painting is not a simple vacancy, but carefully designed and arranged, which guides the viewer to use their imagination to complete the picture, so that the picture forms a complete image in the viewer's mind. This process of visual completion not only enhances the artistic appeal of the picture, but also enhances the aesthetic experience of the viewer.

(3) The structure and dynamic balance of forces

According to Gestalt psychology, gestalt is a force structure with center, edge, center of gravity, tendency and other elements, and spontaneously pursues a dynamic balance. The "blank space" in Chinese painting also reflects the structure and dynamic balance of this force. The painter adjusts the rhythm and rhythm of the picture by leaving white space, so that the elements in the picture can achieve a kind of visual harmony and unity. For example, in flower-and-bird painting, the artist uses white space to express the dense relationship between flowers and leaves, so that the picture has both compact parts and open white space, forming a dynamic balance. This balance not only makes the picture more vivid and natural, but also reflects the painter's deep understanding and grasp of natural beauty.

(4) Perceptual activity and mental structure

Gestalt psychology emphasizes the close connection between perceptual activity and mental structure. When people watch art works, they will transform objective stimuli into inner psychological structure through perceptual activities, and form a unique aesthetic experience. The "blank space" in Chinese painting is precisely the use of this psychological mechanism, through the blank to stimulate the imagination and creativity of the viewer, so that the viewer can resonate with the author in the process of appreciating the picture. For example, in figure painting, the artist expresses the inner

emotional world of the figure by leaving white space, so that the viewer can feel the emotions and changes of the figure's inner world. This kind of emotion transmission and resonance is the unique charm of Chinese painting "blank space" aesthetics.

There is close correspondence between Gestalt psychology theory and Chinese painting "blank space" aesthetics on many levels. These converging points not only reveal the inner relation between the two, but also provide a powerful theoretical support for us to use Gestalt psychology theory to guide the teaching of "blank space" aesthetics of Chinese painting in teaching practice. Through in-depth discussion of these confluent points, we can better understand and grasp the aesthetic characteristics of Chinese painting, and improve the students' aesthetic ability and artistic accomplishment.

3. Teaching strategies of Chinese painting "blank space" aesthetics from the perspective of Gestalt psychology

3.1 Use Gestalt principle to improve students' understanding of the function of white space

In the aesthetic education of Chinese painting, it is very important to understand the function and meaning of "blank space". The principle of Gestalt psychology provides us with a novel and effective perspective. Through this theoretical framework, teachers help students more deeply understand the central role of white space in the composition and artistic conception of Chinese painting.

(1) Explain the relationship between Gestalt principle and white space

Teachers introduce students to key concepts in Gestalt psychology, such as the principle of wholeness, gestalt tendency, and balance of forces, and explain how these principles correspond to the phenomenon of white space in Chinese painting. For example, by comparing paintings with or without white space, it shows how white space affects the overall sense and visual impact of the picture, so that students can intuitively feel the important role of white space in composition.

(2) Analyze the use of white space in classical works

Some representative Chinese paintings, such as landscape paintings of Song Dynasty and literati paintings of Yuan Dynasty, are selected to guide students to analyze how painters skillfully use white space to create artistic conception and express emotions. The teacher explained in detail the specific role of the white space in the work, such as enhancing the sense of space in the picture, guiding the viewer's eye flow, and creating a specific atmosphere. Through specific case studies, students can more intuitively understand the value of white space in artistic creation.

(3) Design practical exercises to experience the effect of white space

In order to deepen students' understanding of the function of white space, teachers designed a series of practical exercises. For example, have students try to draw simple landscapes or flower and bird figures on blank drawing paper, and encourage them to leave appropriate blank areas in the picture. Then, through group discussion or individual guidance, students are guided to analyze the effect of white space in their own works and discuss the impact of white space on the overall picture. In addition, students are also asked to modify their own works, by adjusting the position and size of the white space to feel the change of the artistic conception of the picture.

It is an effective teaching strategy to use the principle of Gestalt psychology to improve students' understanding of the function of "blank space" in Chinese painting. Through teaching activities such as explaining principles, analyzing classic works, designing practical exercises, emphasizing the relationship between artistic conception and cultivating sensitivity and creativity, students can have a deeper understanding of the aesthetic value of white space in Chinese painting, and flexibly use this element in their own creation to improve their artistic level.

3.2 Cultivate students' visual perception ability through gestalt games

From the perspective of Gestalt psychology, the aesthetic teaching of "blank space" of Chinese painting needs not only the imparting of theoretical knowledge, but also the training of practical operation, so as to enhance students' visual perception ability. Through the design of a series of game activities based on the Gestalt principle, teachers enable students to master the visual perception skills in a relaxed and pleasant atmosphere, and then better understand and use the "blank space" in Chinese

painting.

(1) Design Gestalt visual games

Teachers design a series of creative and interesting gestalt visual games. These games should closely revolve around the core principles of Gestalt psychology, such as the principle of wholeness, gestalt tendency, balance of forces, etc., and guide students to observe, analyze, and perceive through the clever combination of elements such as graphics, colors, and lines. For example, the design of "graphic completion" game, let students in the given incomplete graphics, through imagination and reasoning, complete the complete graphics; Or design "optical illusion" games that use the phenomenon of optical illusions to allow students to experience the complexity and variety of visual perception.

(2) Guide students to participate in the game and reflect

In the process of the game, teachers actively guide students to participate, encourage them to play imagination and creativity, try to observe and analyze problems from different angles. At the same time, the teacher also raises questions timely and guides the students to think and reflect deeply. For example, after the game, have students discuss: "How did you complete this figure?" "How does this optical illusion happen?" "What does it say about your visual perception?" And so on. Through these questions, students gain a deeper understanding of Gestalt principles and become aware of their shortcomings in visual perception and room for improvement.

(3) Combine the game with the Chinese painting "blank space"

After the students have a certain understanding of the gestalt principle, the teacher gradually combines the game with the aesthetic teaching of Chinese painting "blank space". For example, design some games related to the composition of Chinese painting, so that students can experience the influence of white space on the overall sense of the picture and the creation of artistic conception in the game. The teacher provided some Chinese painting works with white space as a reference, and asked the students to try to simulate the composition of these works in the game, and create a specific atmosphere and emotion by leaving white space. At the same time, the teacher also guides the students to analyze the white space techniques in these works, to explore how they are in harmony with the overall picture and how they guide the viewer's eye flow.

3.3 Combine modern scientific and technological means to enhance the teaching effect

In the "blank space" aesthetic teaching of Chinese painting from the perspective of Gestalt psychology, integrating modern scientific and technological means can not only enrich the teaching means, but also significantly enhance students' learning interest and teaching effect. Modern technology, such as multimedia teaching software, virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR) technology, has brought unprecedented opportunities for traditional aesthetic education.

(1) Application of multimedia teaching software

Using multimedia teaching software, teachers make vivid courseware to show the visual perception principle of Gestalt psychology and the aesthetic characteristics of "blank space" of Chinese painting to students in the form of graphic and animated demonstration. For example, the gestalt tendency in Gestalt principle is simulated by animation to show the influence of different white space processing on the overall sense of the picture. Or use high-definition pictures to display the art of white space in classic Chinese painting works, and guide students to analyze the specific application and effect of white space in works. This intuitive teaching method helps students to better understand the abstract aesthetic concepts and improve learning efficiency.

(2) Application of virtual reality technology

Virtual reality technology provides students with an immersive learning environment, enabling them to experience the aesthetic charm of Chinese painting "blank space". Teachers design virtual reality scenes, so that students feel as if they are in the ancient landscape, through personal experience to feel the role of white space in creating artistic conception, guiding vision and other aspects. In addition, virtual reality technology also simulates the creation process of different styles of Chinese painting, allowing students to try the white space processing in the virtual environment, and see the effect feedback immediately, so as to deepen the understanding and mastery of the white space function.

(3) The integration of augmented reality technology

Augmented reality superimposes virtual information on the real world to provide students with a more interactive and personalized learning experience. For example, the teacher developed an augmented reality application that allows students to scan the painting through a mobile phone or tablet while appreciating a physical Chinese painting, and then superimpose virtual information such as the analysis of the Gestalt principle and the dynamic demonstration of the white space effect on the picture. This way not only enhances the fun of learning, but also enables students to flexibly apply the knowledge in practice and improve the learning effect.

4. Conclusions

The aesthetic teaching of "blank space" of Chinese painting from the perspective of Gestalt psychology not only has profound theoretical foundation and important practical significance, but also provides new ideas and methods for the innovation and development of art education. We believe that in the future teaching practice, these strategies will be more widely applied and promoted, and make positive contributions to cultivating more talents with innovative spirit and artistic accomplishment.

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