

CHANGES IN HUMAN AESTHETIC TASTE IN THE POSTMODERN ERA

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Abstract

In the postmodern era, aesthetic consciousness and human taste have undergone profound transformation. Rapid technological development, global communication, and the expansion of virtual space have redefined aesthetic values and blurred the boundaries between beauty and ugliness, art and life. This study provides a philosophical analysis of postmodern aesthetic concepts, examining social, informational, and cultural factors influencing the evolution of human taste and revealing new dimensions of aesthetic perception and spiritual orientation in contemporary society.

Keywords: Postmodernism, aesthetics, aesthetic taste, values, transformation, culture, individualism, technology, media aesthetics, thinking.

Introduction

Since the second half of the 20th century, the cultural and philosophical movement of postmodernism has brought about profound changes in human thought, art, and the system of aesthetic values. During this period, the way humans perceive the world, their aesthetic criteria, and their attitude toward beauty reached a new stage of development. The essence of postmodernism lies in relativism, diversity, ironic thinking, and the reinterpretation of traditional values. Therefore, the modern individual's aesthetic taste is no longer based on fixed and universal standards but is instead shaped by subjective experience, individuality, and cultural contexts [1;240].

In today's conditions of globalization and technological progress, the factors shaping aesthetic perception have also expanded. Media culture, advertising, fashion, and virtual art are defining new directions of aesthetic taste. Aesthetic values have become increasingly functional and consumer-oriented, while the concept of beauty is often measured by visual expressiveness [2;416].

Postmodern culture advances the principle of "plurality," recognizing various forms of aesthetic expression as equally legitimate [3;159]. This article provides a philosophical analysis of the transformational characteristics of human aesthetic taste in the postmodern era. In particular, it explores the historical roots of aesthetic values, the factors shaping their modern forms, and the processes of change in human aesthetic consciousness. The article aims to reveal the directions

of aesthetic thought in the philosophy of contemporary culture and to identify new philosophical conceptions of beauty under postmodern conditions [4;384].

MAIN PART

Postmodernism is a new worldview system that emerged in the second half of the 20th century within culture, philosophy, and art. It developed as a movement opposing the rigid norms and the concept of a single truth characteristic of modernism. During this period, human thought and the system of aesthetic values underwent fundamental transformations, with the notions of “plurality,” “polysemy,” and “play” becoming central principles [3].

In postmodern aesthetics, the traditional concept of beauty is not denied; however, it is no longer seen as universal or absolute but rather interpreted as something contextual, personal, and linked to cultural experience. Human aesthetic taste is no longer based on “high” art or classical ideals but is instead shaped by the aesthetic imagery of everyday life, advertising, fashion, and the media space. This process individualizes aesthetic perception, making it more diverse and, at times, paradoxical [1].

In the digital age of the 21st century, technology has deeply penetrated all areas of human life. Virtual reality, artificial intelligence, social networks, and media culture have created a new environment for aesthetic perception. Aesthetic values are now expressed not only in works of art but also in online content, advertising design, video games, and even the interfaces of mobile applications [3].

As a result, beauty increasingly becomes an “object of consumption.” Aesthetic taste is influenced and directed by rapidly changing trends, brands, fashion, and algorithmic recommendations. This leads individuals to live in a world of visual images and to evaluate aesthetics through superficial appearances. Nevertheless, postmodern aesthetics perceives such transformations not as degradation but as the emergence of a new form of aesthetic experience [4].

Postmodern thought places the human being at the center, yet this is not the “center of a single truth” in the traditional sense. Rather, it is defined by personal experience, emotions, cultural identity, and aesthetic perspective. Therefore, aesthetic taste today is no longer universal but manifests as a pluralistic, multivocal, and dynamic system.

The postmodern individual shapes his or her taste through mass culture, the internet, global art movements, and diverse visual experiences. Under such conditions, aesthetic values become not only a passive reflection of culture but also a means for self-expression. For example, in the postmodern era, the concept of “beauty” has evolved into a psychological, social, and economic category. Images created through fashion, advertising, and art help individuals understand themselves and express their identity as “aesthetic subjects.”

In postmodern society, media and visual culture are among the main factors shaping aesthetic taste. Television images, cinema, the internet, and social networks generate new norms of beauty. Jean Baudrillard [1] refers to this phenomenon as “simulacralization”—the process by which aesthetic images no longer represent reality itself but rather its copy.

Thus, human aesthetic perception develops within a world of simulacra: beauty is no longer experienced directly but mediated through images. This leads to the distancing of aesthetic

values from authenticity. Yet, a positive aspect of this transformation is that aesthetic expression has become democratized—it is no longer confined to the elite. Every person, from taking a photo with a smartphone to posting on social media, now participates as a subject of aesthetic creation. Consequently, aesthetic values are becoming democratized, and aesthetic culture is embodied in everyday human activity [5;272].

The global nature of postmodernism also influences national aesthetic values. Through global information flows and processes of cultural integration, national art, folklore, and traditional aesthetics are undergoing transformation. Elements of Uzbek, Turkic, and Islamic aesthetic thought are being reinterpreted and reshaped in new postmodern contexts.

However, this does not signify the loss of national identity; rather, it allows traditional values to continue existing in a renewed form. In contemporary Uzbek art, design, and fashion, national patterns, traditional colors, and motifs are harmonized with global aesthetics. This phenomenon is referred to as “cultural hybridity” in the postmodern era [6].

Therefore, the transformation of human aesthetic taste is simultaneously a process of preserving national identity while integrating with global values.

In the postmodern era, aesthetic values have penetrated not only art but also social life. Aesthetics is no longer merely “the philosophy of beauty,” but also a system of social communication, identity formation, and cultural symbolism [3]. Aesthetic taste expresses an individual’s spiritual level, worldview, and value orientation. It shapes one’s participation in social life, cultural choices, and even moral perspectives. Thus, in postmodern society, aesthetic values become a mode of human existence from a philosophical standpoint.

The transformation of aesthetic values creates a new human identity—one who is no longer a “spectator” but a “creator.” This shift contributes to the democratization of aesthetics, the popularization of creativity, and the individual’s ability to express selfhood through aesthetic means.

The analysis above demonstrates that the transformation of aesthetic taste in the postmodern era is not merely a matter of taste, but the result of a complex interaction among cultural, technological, and philosophical processes. Aesthetic values have become dynamic, contextual, and open systems. Through aesthetic perception, the postmodern individual seeks self-understanding, interprets the world, and defines his or her spiritual and cultural position. Although this process may involve elements of meaninglessness, paradox, and consumerism, it ultimately reflects a new stage of human thought. Postmodern aesthetics liberates humanity from pre-defined models of “beauty” and transforms the individual into both creator and agent of choice.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The transformational nature of human aesthetic values is a complex process that requires deep analysis in contemporary philosophical thought. Aesthetic values are not only about perceiving beauty but also about creating it, responding to it, and thereby enriching one’s spiritual world. Throughout human history, aesthetic values have continuously evolved and renewed themselves. However, these changes are not random; they are closely interconnected with social, cultural, economic, and technological factors. In the 21st century, globalization, digital

culture, and postmodern thinking have profoundly transformed human taste, perceptions of beauty, and aesthetic criteria.

Today, the transformation of aesthetic values directly affects the process of self-awareness. Traditional notions of beauty—such as harmony, naturalness, and simplicity—are gradually being replaced by new aesthetic norms grounded in artificiality, technological perfection, and individuality. From this perspective, changes in aesthetic values also reflect transformations in human worldview, social behavior, and creative activity. The modern individual expresses aesthetics not only in art but also in everyday life, communication, clothing, and even within virtual spaces.

Philosophically, this process can be interpreted as humanity's search for self-renewal, reevaluation of its values, and the creation of its own ideal of beauty within contemporary reality. In the process of transformation, humans do not lose aesthetic sensitivity; rather, they translate it into new forms of expression. Thus, although aesthetic values are dynamic and ever-changing, their fundamental purpose—to elevate the human spirit and give meaning to life—remains intact.

In conclusion, the transformational features of human aesthetic values manifest as a reflection of societal development. Shaped by historical, cultural, and technological contexts, they generate new aesthetic standards within the human spiritual realm. Through these transformations, individuals gain a deeper understanding of themselves and the surrounding world, discovering beauty in new ways. Therefore, the transformation of aesthetic values represents humanity's ongoing process of creative and spiritual renewal.

CONCLUSION

From a philosophical perspective, the transformational nature of human aesthetic values is closely linked to the spiritual, cultural, and intellectual development of humanity. Each era establishes its own aesthetic standards, conceptions of beauty, and forms of artistic expression. In this sense, changes in aesthetic values reflect transformations in human thought and in the culture of perceiving the world. Today, in post-industrial and information-driven societies, aesthetic values are expressed not only in art or culture but across all areas of life—including technology, design, communication, advertising, and even social networks.

The transformation of aesthetics expands opportunities for self-expression. Whereas aesthetic values were previously more collective in nature, today individual approaches, personal style, and subjective perspectives dominate. On one hand, this enhances human freedom and creativity; on the other, it leads to the relativization of aesthetic criteria, with no universal standard of beauty. Therefore, contemporary philosophy interprets aesthetic values not merely as external forms or symbols of beauty, but as expressions of human spiritual essence, inner harmony, and social responsibility.

In conclusion, the transformation of aesthetic values is one of the key indicators of the dynamic development of human thought, society, and culture. Through this process, individuals are encouraged to perceive themselves and the world in new ways. Although the nature of aesthetic values evolves, their function in human life remains constant: they guide people toward spiritual harmony, moral integrity, and the capacity to experience beauty. For this reason, aesthetic

values hold enduring significance as a philosophical category that is both in constant motion and imbued with timeless meaning.

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