

## THE UNIQUE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE AESTHETIC PHENOMENON OF HUMAN DIGNITY

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### Abstract

The article on "The Unique Characteristics of the Aesthetic Phenomenon of Human Dignity" discusses the analysis of human dignity from an aesthetic perspective and its place in society. The aesthetic aspect of human dignity is presented, highlighting its connection not only to ethical and spiritual values but also to external appearance and aesthetic concepts. The article explores how the aesthetic approach to human dignity is expressed in art and culture, as well as how this concept aligns with personal and social characteristics. The aesthetic phenomenon plays an important role in creating a connection between a person's inner world and the external environment, significantly influencing an individual's self-awareness and their place in society. Additionally, the article delves into the aesthetic dimension of human dignity from both general and specific perspectives.

**Keywords:** Human dignity, aesthetic phenomenon, external appearance, spiritual characteristics, art and culture, inner world, place in society, personal characteristics.

### Introduction

The meaning of human dignity as an aesthetic phenomenon is expressed not only through a person's moral status in society, but also through an aesthetic attitude toward their spiritual-intellectual, physical, and creative potential. The complexity of this approach lies in the fact that human dignity is often measured solely by ethical or social standards, while aesthetic criteria are usually limited to outward appearance or symbolic representations in art. However, to understand this phenomenon more deeply, it is important to interpret it through concepts such as aesthetic experience, aesthetic consciousness, and aesthetic freedom.

The Swiss philosopher Byung-Chul Han criticizes how, in modern society, the individualization and commercialization of aesthetics lead to the near-invisible "erasure" of human dignity. According to him, "human dignity is being pushed out of aesthetic language because contemporary aesthetics is no longer based on the paradigm of 'looking good,' but rather on 'being marketable'" [1;58]. This idea reveals the risk of reducing human dignity, as an aesthetic phenomenon, to a manipulative tool. Thus, the aesthetic essence of human dignity constantly faces challenges from social pressures and commercial codes.

The Dutch aesthetician A. Danto refers to the perception of human dignity through aesthetic experience as an "aesthetic space." According to him, "the perception of human dignity through aesthetic experience is the ability to see its reflection in art and imagery. This ability is directly linked to upbringing, culture, and inner sensitivity" [2;128]. From this point of view, Uzbekistan's aesthetic education system, which is largely formed on formalistic and national symbols, does not



provide sufficient opportunities for a deep understanding of human dignity as an aesthetic phenomenon.

Local scholar G. Egamberdiyeva focuses on the role of aesthetic values in shaping a person as a moral individual. She states: “As an aesthetic phenomenon, human dignity is a symbol of the harmony between beauty and morality” [3;94]. While this view is positive, it tends to subordinate human dignity as an aesthetic phenomenon to moral standards, associating it more with normative morality than with aesthetic freedom. This contradicts phenomenological approaches to aesthetics. On the other hand, M. Merleau-Ponty, based on phenomenological aesthetics, links the experience of perceiving human dignity with physical existence. According to him, “the human body is a phenomenon that conveys aesthetic meaning, because every movement, every gaze, every bodily posture is an aesthetic event through which human dignity can be perceived” [4;175]. This approach allows us to understand human dignity not just through appearance or social status, but through perception. However, in many aesthetic studies, values expressed through the body and movement are not fully explored.

Based on this, we can conclude that the uniqueness of human dignity as an aesthetic phenomenon lies in its multilayered, contextual, and intersubjective nature. As an aesthetic phenomenon, human dignity is not merely external beauty but a complex system that embodies humanity, freedom, and historical-cultural experience. For a master artist, painter, or writer, this phenomenon may appear in their works as ideal or tragic images, while for an aesthetic analyst, it is interpreted as the unity of ontological and epistemological processes.

## MAIN PART

Although the concept of human dignity primarily reflects the ontological elevation of the human being and their unique position in existence, when considered as an aesthetic phenomenon, it manifests in a complex interaction involving human life, the beauty expressed through body language, inner and outer harmony, and the cultural-moral norms of society. In the deeper analysis of the aesthetic phenomenon of human dignity, it becomes not only a symbol of beauty but also an indicator of the development of cultural and intellectual thought. However, such approaches may at times lead to a one-sided perspective. For instance, aesthetic values are often interpreted through artworks and external symbols, distancing the concept of human dignity from its personal and spiritual essence.

The well-known aesthetician J. Mukarovsky emphasized the social nature of human dignity and aesthetic perception as a crucial factor, stating that “aesthetic value is the result of individual expression being recognized through social codes” [5;53]. This view underlines the need to understand human dignity not only as an internal intuitive phenomenon but also as an aesthetic identity shaped by external social relations. Nonetheless, Mukarovsky's theory tends to interpret the individual more as part of a system of communicative signs, which overshadows the introspective-spiritual dimensions of human dignity.

Russian scholar M. Kagan proposes that a person's aesthetic identity is not limited to works of art, but that “every form of human activity – labor, communication, lifestyle – can possess aesthetic value” [6;112]. This idea removes aesthetics from a narrow cultural scope and links it to the harmony of action, thought, and consciousness with human dignity. At the same time, Kagan's approach does not sufficiently address how aesthetic values are revealed through cultural



differences between the powerful and the powerless, i.e., the mechanisms of hierarchical aesthetic socialization.

French philosopher L. Althusser analyzes the interconnection between aesthetic perception and ideological structures, asserting that even within the aesthetic realm, “human dignity is interpellated through ideology” [7;141]. According to him, a person’s sense of being “beautiful” is shaped in accordance with dominant ideological norms within society. This indicates that the aesthetic phenomenon of human dignity is not an entirely free experience but rather a construct formed by social discourses.

Furthermore, contemporary German scholar Gernot Böhme, through his theory of “aesthetic atmosphere,” proposes that aesthetic experience should be understood not only through visual or verbal forms but also through the surrounding environment, lights, sounds, and body temperature. He emphasizes: “human dignity is an energetic phenomenon perceived through the aesthetic contribution of the surrounding environment” [8;67]. This approach interprets human dignity not as a fixed aesthetic state, but as a spatial-aesthetic event. However, it carries the risk of false universalism—that is, assuming that everyone’s aesthetic experience is the same.

Based on this, the aesthetic phenomenon of human dignity is not a single, defined static value but a continuously renewing, culturally, psychologically, socially, and spiritually dynamic state. Aesthetic perception is related not only to external beauty standards but also to inner freedom, experience, social consciousness, and historical awareness. Therefore, human dignity, as an aesthetic phenomenon, requires constant theoretical renewal and multilayered analysis.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The interpretation of human dignity as an aesthetic phenomenon has developed in modern philosophical-aesthetic thought as a complex and multifaceted process. At its core, this phenomenon presents the human personality—along with their physical presence, moral-spiritual world, and cultural-aesthetic experience—as a unified subject of aesthetic perception. To deeply analyze this approach, it is necessary to evaluate human dignity not only by external standards of beauty, but also by how an individual positions themselves aesthetically in relation to life, existence, and others. Unfortunately, in several academic sources, this complexity is often addressed in a one-sided or overly simplified manner.

For instance, English philosopher Roger Scruton argues that “to accept human dignity as an aesthetic phenomenon is not merely to see external harmony, but to perceive the moral and spiritual beauty inherent in a person—the highest level of aesthetic understanding” [9;74]. Although Scruton stresses that aesthetic values should not be limited to external expressions, his approach is overly normative, suggesting that human dignity can only be measured aesthetically by moral purity or inner harmony. This perspective fails to sufficiently account for the socio-cultural construction of human dignity and its reception through subjective aesthetic perception. European postmodern scholar Judith Butler links human dignity as an aesthetic phenomenon with “social recognizability.” According to her, “the idea of beauty and values—including the aesthetic expression of human dignity—is shaped by whom society is willing to see, acknowledge, and recognize” [10;25]. This view analyzes human dignity in aesthetic experience not merely through individual sensation, but as something received through social and cultural discourses. However, the limitation of Butler’s position is that it presents the aesthetic perception process as entirely



ideologically determined, thereby denying the possibility of aesthetic freedom.

Among local scholars, B. Urinboev examines the aesthetic uniqueness of human dignity within the context of national mentality and customs, stating that “human dignity has always been portrayed in art as a positive ideal, connected to high moral symbols” [11;91]. This approach is based on specific moral-didactic representations and does not allow for the interpretation of human dignity’s aesthetic expression through diverse experiences and emotional states. It also dismisses the idea that negative aesthetic states—such as tragedy, despair, or absurdity—can reflect human dignity as an aesthetic phenomenon.

In contrast, Italian scholar Umberto Eco defends the polysemy of aesthetic phenomena, suggesting that “beauty is not uniformity, but openness to interpretation; and human dignity, aesthetically, is understood differently in various contexts” [12;210]. This approach presents human dignity as a dynamic aesthetic experience shaped by cultural codes and constant change. However, Eco’s perspective also brings a risk of ambiguity: if aesthetic perception is always subjective and contextual, then how can human dignity be defined as a universal value?

Thus, the uniqueness of human dignity as an aesthetic phenomenon lies, on the one hand, in its reliance on subjective perception, cultural codes, and social structures, and on the other hand, in its connection to aesthetic freedom and interpretive openness. This highlights the need to treat the aesthetic phenomenon not as a fixed norm but as an open moral-aesthetic process.

## CONCLUSION

Human dignity, as an aesthetic phenomenon, distinguishes itself from other philosophical categories by its multilayered essence. It is not merely a moral or legal concept, but rather one of the most subtle phenomena in the aesthetic perception, sensation, and understanding of existence. In this regard, analyzing human dignity as an aesthetic phenomenon implies that it encompasses beauty connected to both external and internal qualities, as well as individual and social symbols. However, interpreting this complex process through one-sided, narrow approaches leads to problematic conclusions. Such examples can be seen in several classical and modern aesthetic theories.

The Japanese philosopher K. Nishida interprets the aesthetic phenomenon from an ontological perspective, stating: “Human dignity is the inner stillness of beauty; it is perceived through a deep spiritual harmony that emanates from existence” [13;112]. Although this idea attempts to link human values with tranquility, contemplation, and inner harmony, it does not sufficiently reflect the socially active, dynamic, and contentious dimensions of human dignity. A person’s dignity can also become a victim of social injustice, lack of recognition, or aesthetic indifference. Nishida’s approach, by denying this complexity, aesthetically confines the human being within a “state of perfection.”

American aesthetician S. Langer, in her theory of semantic aesthetics, explains human dignity through the concept of an aesthetic “symbolic form,” stating: “An aesthetic phenomenon is the expression of the language of emotions in form; human dignity is defined by the ability to perceive these emotions” [14;93]. Through this, Langer attempts to connect human dignity with aesthetic perception. However, her approach also overly centers on emotional states. Such subjectivism leads to overlooking the objective aspects of human dignity, which are shaped by social aesthetic norms, historical context, and cultural values.





In the Uzbek school of philosophy, this issue is predominantly interpreted within a national-aesthetic framework. For instance, the view of A. Yuldoshev—that “human dignity in aesthetic symbols is always associated with beauty, norm, and perfection” [15;178]—is frequently encountered. This approach interprets aesthetics in complete harmony with spirituality. However, such a position often leads to explaining human dignity solely at the level of idealism, thereby overlooking its concrete and, in many cases, contradictory and complex aesthetic expressions (such as the beauty in a wounded body, the tears in one's eyes, or the sublimity in a tragic life). Contemporary German scholar H. Schmitz, on the other hand, advances the aesthetics of “leiblichkeit” (corporeality), stating that “human dignity is manifested in the aesthetic emotion of movement, in the auratic state perceived through the body” [16;137]. This approach connects aesthetics with bodily sensation, spatial perception, and emotional intensity. It explains human dignity not merely through the mind or morality, but through the aesthetics of physical experience. However, Schmitz analyzes human dignity expressed through corporeal aesthetics apart from sociological or historical contexts, which fails to fully illuminate the gap between its ontological value and its social recognition.

Thus, the uniqueness of human dignity as an aesthetic phenomenon lies, on the one hand, in its perception through spiritual and moral harmony, and on the other hand, in its transformation into an aesthetic image within physical, sociocultural, and historical contexts. Some existing approaches overly idealize it, while others limit it to the sphere of subjective perception. In reality, human dignity as an aesthetic phenomenon is always dynamic, multi-meaningful, and open to interpretation. It exists within the complex interrelation of social interactions, personal emotions, and cultural expression.

The acceptance of human dignity as an aesthetic phenomenon, in turn, implies that this concept should not be confined to moral or social approaches alone, but must also be recognized through aesthetic consciousness, art, and cultural imagery. In art, life, and aesthetic experience, human dignity is formed as a harmonious expression of spiritual symbolism, physical beauty, and social status. However, in analyzing the unique features of this phenomenon, some scholars excessively romanticize it or associate it solely with universal values, which limits the concrete cultural and individual formation of human dignity.

For instance, the German philosopher A. Schopenhauer writes: “Human dignity does not become an object in aesthetic perception; rather, it opens the possibility of comprehending beauty” [17;258]. This approach reflects a desire to understand human dignity not as an objective aesthetic phenomenon but as an aesthetic subject. However, Schopenhauer evaluates the aesthetic value of the human being from an ambiguous and absolutized metaphysical perspective, which overlooks the socio-psychological and cultural factors involved. Yet human dignity is always shaped within social recognition, cultural codes, and emotional context.

Contemporary American aesthetician K. Higgins states: “Through aesthetic experience, a person comes to understand their own dignity and significance within existence, and this understanding is closely linked to the recognition of aesthetic emotions in society” [18;147]. Although this view acknowledges the dynamic nature of human dignity as an aesthetic phenomenon, Higgins interprets aesthetic experience mainly within a musical-cultural context, leaving out other modalities of aesthetic formation such as visual, spatial, bodily movement, and more. Human dignity is not only felt emotionally—it is also perceived through physical-aesthetic presence.



The Japanese scholar S. Moriguchi, meanwhile, suggests that human dignity in aesthetics is understood “through inner harmony, external appeal, and sincere expression,” and contrasts this approach with Western individualistic aesthetics [19;88]. According to him, human dignity is expressed in aesthetic experience through harmony and respect toward others. While this collectivist approach enhances social-aesthetic sensitivity, it may also limit individual aesthetic freedom. Human dignity can also be aesthetically understood through personal choice, informal expression, or unconventional beauty—an aspect that goes beyond the paradigm of harmony found in Eastern philosophy.

In local (Uzbek) studies, the issue of human dignity as an aesthetic phenomenon is often framed through moral idealism. For example, A. Abduganiyev believes that “human dignity is the highest form of spiritual beauty and is expressed through exclusively positive aesthetic images” [20;104]. This position denies the possibility that human dignity can also be reflected through negative, tragic, or ironic expressions in aesthetics. Aesthetic experience is not confined to idealistic symbols; it can also portray the resilience or fragility of human dignity in contradictory, complex, and sometimes norm-breaking forms.

Thus, the unique characteristic of human dignity as an aesthetic phenomenon lies in its non-static, non-absolute beauty. Rather, it continuously reshapes itself across various contexts and modes of perception. It is understood through the dynamic interplay of aesthetic sensitivity, cultural experience, physical expression, and social recognizability. Each instance of human dignity as an aesthetic phenomenon represents a unique existential and cultural discovery, and evaluating it in a single uniform framework is a theoretical fallacy.

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