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BECOMING AN ARTIST: IDENTITY, CREATIVITY, AND THE QUEST FOR SELFHOOD ACROSS TWO LITERARY AGES

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ABSTRACT

The figure of the artist occupies a significant position in literary studies because artistic creation is closely connected with questions of identity, individuality, freedom, social expectation, and the search for meaning. The process of becoming an artist is rarely presented as a simple movement from talent to achievement; rather, it is often represented as a complex journey through self-discovery, conflict, creativity, alienation, and social negotiation. This research paper examines the making of the artist across two literary ages by focusing on the relationship between artistic identity, creative consciousness, social structures, and the quest for selfhood. The study considers how changing historical and cultural conditions influence the artist's understanding of the self and the meaning of artistic expression. In earlier literary traditions, the artist is frequently shaped by established moral, religious, social, and aesthetic conventions, while modern literary representations increasingly emphasize individual consciousness, psychological conflict, freedom, and resistance to social norms. The evolution from socially defined artistic identity to a more self-conscious and autonomous conception of creativity demonstrates a broader transformation in literary culture. The paper argues that becoming an artist involves both discovering an authentic self and negotiating the demands imposed by society. Creativity consequently becomes not merely an aesthetic activity but a means of self-definition and intellectual resistance. By comparing two literary ages, the study reveals how representations of the artist reflect changing ideas of individuality, freedom, society, and human consciousness.

Keywords: - Artist, artistic identity, creativity, selfhood, individuality, literary ages, artistic expression, society, identity formation, modernity.

I. INTRODUCTION

The figure of the artist has occupied a significant and evolving position in literary history because the making of an artist is closely connected with fundamental questions of identity, creativity, individuality, freedom, society, and selfhood. Literature does not merely portray artists as individuals who produce poems, paintings, novels, music, or other forms of creative work; it frequently presents them as complex figures engaged in an intense search for personal meaning and authentic identity. The journey of becoming an artist is therefore more than the acquisition of artistic skills. It is a process through which an individual discovers a distinctive way of seeing the world, develops a personal creative voice, confronts social expectations, and gradually constructs a sense of self. Across different literary ages, this process has been represented according to changing cultural ideas about individuality, artistic freedom, social responsibility, and human consciousness.

The concept of the artist has changed considerably from earlier literary traditions to modern literary culture. In earlier periods, artistic production was often closely connected with established social, religious, political, and cultural structures. Artists frequently worked within systems of patronage and tradition, and their creative identities were influenced by the expectations of courts, religious institutions, communities, and social hierarchies. Artistic excellence was often associated with mastery of established forms and conventions. Although individual creativity existed within these traditions, the artist was not always represented as an entirely autonomous individual. Creative identity was frequently understood through the artist's relationship with collective values, cultural heritage, and social institutions.

The emergence of Romanticism and modern literary consciousness brought a significant transformation in the representation of the artist. Increasing emphasis was placed on imagination, emotion, originality, subjective experience, and individual freedom. The artist increasingly came to be understood as an exceptional individual whose creative vision could challenge conventional ways of thinking. Instead of simply reproducing established forms, the artist was expected to develop an original voice and personal vision. This transformation strengthened the relationship between artistic expression and individual identity. Creativity became a means through which the artist could explore the inner self and communicate

experiences that could not easily be expressed through conventional social language.

The journey toward becoming an artist is consequently a journey toward self-recognition. An individual may initially experience creativity as a personal impulse, emotional response, or imaginative ability. Over time, this impulse can develop into a conscious artistic identity. The individual begins to recognize that artistic expression is not merely an activity but an essential part of personal existence. The development of artistic identity may involve uncertainty, conflict, experimentation, failure, and resistance. The aspiring artist must determine what kind of art to create, which traditions to accept or reject, and how to establish a distinctive voice. In this sense, becoming an artist involves both creative development and psychological transformation.

Identity is particularly important because no artist develops independently of social and cultural circumstances. Family expectations, educational institutions, economic conditions, gender roles, class structures, cultural traditions, and political environments can influence the possibilities available to creative individuals. An artist may therefore experience a conflict between personal aspirations and socially imposed responsibilities. The desire to pursue art may be viewed as impractical, unconventional, or even rebellious. Such tensions become important sources of literary representation because they reveal the struggle between the individual's desire for self-expression and society's demand for conformity.

Creativity provides an important space in which this conflict can be negotiated. Through artistic expression, individuals can reinterpret their experiences and transform personal struggles into meaningful cultural forms. Art can give expression to emotions, memories, desires, frustrations, and ideas that remain suppressed within ordinary social life. The process of creating art can therefore become a process of discovering the self. The artist does not necessarily know the complete meaning of an experience before creating; rather, meaning can emerge through the creative process itself. Artistic production thus becomes simultaneously an act of creation and an act of self-discovery.

The relationship between the artist and society is another central concern in literary representations of artistic development. Artists are often depicted as outsiders because their creative perspectives may challenge accepted beliefs and conventions. Their ability to observe society critically can place them in conflict with established values. However, the artist cannot be understood entirely as an isolated individual. Even when resisting society, the

artist remains influenced by the language, traditions, histories, and institutions of that society. Artistic identity is therefore formed through a continuous process of negotiation between independence and belonging. The artist may reject certain social values while retaining or transforming others.

The concept of artistic freedom becomes especially important within this relationship. Freedom allows the artist to experiment with form, language, subject matter, and ideas, but such freedom is never completely unrestricted. Economic pressures, institutional expectations, censorship, social prejudice, and cultural conventions can limit creative expression. Literary representations of women artists demonstrate this problem particularly clearly, as women's creative ambitions have historically been constrained by expectations concerning domesticity, marriage, family, and social respectability. Consequently, the journey toward artistic identity can also become a journey toward independence and self-definition.

Language plays a central role in this process, especially in literature. The development of an artistic voice represents the development of an individual identity. Through distinctive vocabulary, imagery, narrative structures, symbolism, and stylistic choices, the artist creates a unique relationship with experience. Finding one's artistic voice therefore parallels finding one's personal voice. The artist learns to transform individual experience into a form that can communicate with others while retaining its originality.

A comparative study of two literary ages provides an opportunity to understand how these ideas have evolved. Earlier literary representations often emphasize the artist's relationship with tradition, patronage, social hierarchy, and collective cultural values, whereas modern representations place greater emphasis on individuality, psychological consciousness, originality, alienation, and personal freedom. Nevertheless, there are important continuities between the two periods. Artists across literary history have struggled with questions of recognition, social acceptance, creative independence, and personal identity. What changes is not the existence of these struggles but the historical and cultural conditions in which they occur.

The present study, therefore, examines “Becoming an Artist: Identity, Creativity, and the Quest for Selfhood Across Two Literary Ages” by focusing on the artist as a figure of personal and cultural transformation. It explores how artistic identity develops through the

interaction of creativity, society, individual consciousness, and the search for authenticity. The study argues that becoming an artist is not a single moment of achievement but a continuous process of self-creation. Across two literary ages, the artist emerges as an individual who negotiates inherited traditions, social expectations, personal desires, and creative possibilities in the search for an authentic identity. The evolution of the artist consequently reflects a broader evolution in literary understandings of the self: from an identity shaped largely by external structures toward an increasingly self-conscious, individual, and creative conception of human existence.

II. ARTISTIC IDENTITY AND THE FORMATION OF SELF

Artistic identity is one of the most significant dimensions of the process of becoming an artist because it connects creative expression with the individual's understanding of self. An artist does not simply acquire technical skills and begin producing works of art; rather, artistic identity develops gradually through experience, imagination, social interaction, emotional development, and intellectual awareness. The formation of an artistic self involves discovering a distinctive way of perceiving reality and transforming that perception into an individual creative voice. Literature frequently presents this process as a journey in which characters struggle to understand who they are, what they value, and how they can express their individuality within the cultural and social structures that surround them.

The formation of artistic identity begins with an awareness of difference. Individuals who later become artists often experience the world in ways that appear different from accepted patterns of thought. They may be particularly sensitive to emotions, social relationships, beauty, suffering, injustice, memory, or ordinary details that others overlook. This distinctive perception creates the initial foundation of artistic consciousness. However, possessing imagination does not automatically produce an artistic identity. The individual must gradually recognize creativity as an essential part of personal existence and develop the confidence to express it. The movement from private imagination to public artistic expression represents an important stage in the formation of the artistic self.

Identity itself is not fixed or predetermined. It develops through interaction between the individual and the surrounding world. Family, education, community, culture, social class, gender expectations, political circumstances, and historical conditions influence how individuals understand themselves. For the aspiring artist, these influences may create both

opportunities and restrictions. Social environments can encourage creativity by providing education, mentorship, cultural resources, and recognition. At the same time, they may discourage artistic ambitions by emphasizing conventional occupations, economic security, social respectability, or family responsibilities. The artist's identity therefore develops through a continuous negotiation between personal desire and external expectation.

The relationship between artistic identity and selfhood becomes particularly important when the individual experiences conflict between an imposed identity and a desired identity. Society may define an individual according to established categories such as daughter, son, spouse, professional, citizen, or member of a particular social group. These identities can be meaningful, but they may not fully express the individual's creative consciousness. The aspiring artist may therefore experience a sense of incompleteness within conventional roles. Artistic practice provides an alternative space in which the individual can explore dimensions of the self that remain hidden or restricted in everyday life.

Creativity becomes an important instrument in this exploration. Through writing, painting, music, theatre, or other artistic practices, the individual can transform private experience into symbolic and aesthetic expression. Personal memories, emotional conflicts, relationships, dreams, disappointments, and social observations can become materials for artistic creation. In this process, the artist does not simply reproduce experience but reorganizes and interprets it. The creative act consequently becomes a form of self-reflection. By giving form to personal experiences, the artist can understand them more clearly and develop a stronger sense of identity.

The development of an artistic voice is another essential component of artistic identity. An artist's voice represents more than stylistic preference; it expresses a distinctive relationship between the individual and the world. The selection of subjects, images, language, narrative perspectives, symbols, and aesthetic forms reflects the artist's developing consciousness. Finding an artistic voice can therefore be understood as finding a personal way of existing within culture. The artist moves from imitation toward originality, gradually learning which traditions to preserve, which conventions to challenge, and which forms are most appropriate for expressing individual experience.

The concept of originality becomes especially important in modern representations of the artist. Earlier literary cultures often placed greater emphasis on mastery of established

traditions and conventions, whereas modern artistic consciousness increasingly celebrates individuality and innovation. The modern artist is frequently expected to produce something distinctive and personal. This expectation creates both freedom and pressure. The artist gains greater authority to define a personal creative identity but must also establish originality within an increasingly competitive cultural environment. Artistic identity consequently becomes a continuous process rather than a final achievement.

The formation of artistic selfhood is also closely connected with the artist's relationship to society. Artists are often represented as outsiders because their creative perspectives allow them to question conventional beliefs. Their distance from social norms can provide an alternative perspective from which ordinary practices become visible and open to criticism. However, complete separation from society is impossible. The artist depends upon language, cultural traditions, audiences, institutions, and historical experiences. Artistic identity therefore develops through interaction with society rather than through complete isolation from it.

Alienation is consequently a recurring feature of the artist's journey. An aspiring artist may feel misunderstood by family members, excluded from conventional social groups, or unable to accept dominant cultural values. Such experiences can generate loneliness and uncertainty, but they may also stimulate creativity. The outsider position can provide the distance necessary to observe society critically. The artist can transform personal alienation into artistic expression and thereby convert a sense of separation into a source of creative strength.

Gender is another important factor in the formation of artistic identity. Literary representations of women artists frequently reveal the difficulties created by patriarchal social structures. Women may possess creative ambitions but encounter expectations that prioritize domestic responsibilities, marriage, motherhood, and social conformity. Their artistic development may therefore require resistance to established gender roles. In such contexts, artistic identity becomes closely connected with autonomy and self-definition. The act of creating art can represent an individual's attempt to establish an independent identity beyond socially prescribed roles.

Similarly, class and economic circumstances influence the development of artistic identity. Artistic production often requires access to education, time, financial resources, materials, and cultural networks. Individuals without such resources may face significant barriers.

Literary texts frequently reveal the contradiction between the ideal of the artist as an autonomous creator and the material realities that shape artistic life. The desire to create must often be balanced against the need for employment, financial stability, and social responsibility.

Across two literary ages, the relationship between artistic identity and selfhood can therefore be understood as a changing but continuous process. Earlier literary representations frequently emphasize the artist's relationship with tradition, authority, community, and established cultural structures. Modern representations increasingly emphasize inner consciousness, personal freedom, psychological conflict, originality, and individual expression. Despite these differences, both literary ages recognize that artistic identity emerges through struggle. The artist must negotiate between inherited identities and personal aspirations, between social belonging and individual freedom, and between cultural tradition and creative innovation.

Ultimately, artistic identity represents an ongoing process of self-creation. The artist does not simply discover a fully formed self hidden within; the self develops through creative practice, reflection, social interaction, and experience. Every creative act can contribute to the continuing formation of identity. The artist becomes increasingly aware of personal values, perceptions, limitations, and possibilities through the process of creating.

Thus, the formation of artistic identity is inseparable from the quest for selfhood. Art provides the individual with a means of examining experience, challenging imposed identities, expressing individuality, and constructing an authentic voice. Across different literary ages, the artist remains a powerful symbol of the human desire to define the self rather than simply accept identities imposed by society. The journey of becoming an artist is therefore simultaneously a journey toward creative independence and deeper self-understanding.

III. THE EVOLUTION OF THE ARTISTIC SELF ACROSS TWO LITERARY AGES

The evolution of the artistic self across literary history reflects the changing relationship between the individual, society, creativity, and cultural values. The artist has never been a completely static figure. Different literary ages have constructed the artist according to their particular understandings of human nature, social responsibility, imagination, individuality,

and freedom. While earlier literary traditions frequently situated the artist within established cultural, religious, social, and aesthetic frameworks, later literary traditions increasingly emphasized individual consciousness, originality, emotional experience, and personal freedom. The transformation of the artistic self is therefore closely connected with the broader movement from socially defined identity toward a more self-conscious conception of individuality.

In earlier literary ages, the artist was generally understood in relation to tradition and collective cultural values. Artistic production was often connected with religious institutions, royal courts, aristocratic patronage, community practices, and established literary conventions. The artist's creativity was valued, but creative identity was frequently shaped by external expectations. An artist was expected to demonstrate mastery of recognized forms and subjects, and innovation generally occurred within established cultural boundaries. Individuality existed, but it was not always presented as complete independence from society. The artist's identity was therefore partly determined by social position, patronage, education, cultural tradition, and institutional authority.

The relationship between the artist and tradition was particularly important in earlier literary cultures. Artistic excellence could be associated with the ability to preserve, refine, and reinterpret inherited forms. The artist functioned as both creator and inheritor. Instead of completely rejecting the past, the artist often established creative authority through engagement with it. This relationship demonstrates that artistic identity is historically situated. The artist's understanding of originality depends upon the cultural traditions available at a particular time.

At the same time, earlier literary representations should not be understood as completely lacking individual artistic consciousness. Many artists and literary characters experienced tensions between personal creativity and established expectations. The desire for a distinctive voice existed even when artistic expression remained strongly connected with social and cultural structures. This tension provides an important point of continuity between earlier and later literary ages. The struggle between individual expression and external authority is not exclusively a modern phenomenon; what changes is the cultural meaning attached to individual creativity.

The transition toward modern literary culture brought a significant transformation in the

representation of the artistic self. With the rise of Romanticism and modern individualism, imagination and subjective experience became increasingly important. The artist came to be represented as an individual possessing a unique inner vision. Personal emotion, memory, intuition, imagination, and psychological experience became legitimate sources of artistic knowledge. The artist was no longer defined primarily by relationship to established conventions but increasingly by the ability to express an individual perspective.

This transformation strengthened the connection between art and selfhood. Artistic creation increasingly became a means of exploring the inner world. The artist's work could reveal personal anxieties, desires, memories, conflicts, and aspirations. The creative process consequently became closely associated with self-discovery. Instead of simply creating an external artistic object, the artist was represented as creating and redefining the self through artistic activity.

The modern artistic self was also characterized by a stronger desire for autonomy. The artist increasingly sought freedom from conventional social values and institutional authority. This desire for independence could produce conflict with family, community, religion, morality, or political structures. The artist frequently appeared as a figure who questioned established assumptions and challenged conventional definitions of identity. Artistic originality became associated with the courage to resist conformity.

The emergence of the artist as an outsider is particularly important in this context. The modern artist is often represented as someone who does not completely belong to ordinary society. This outsider position may produce loneliness and alienation, but it can also provide the critical distance necessary for creative perception. The artist observes society from the margins and transforms this perspective into artistic expression. Alienation consequently becomes both a psychological difficulty and a potential source of creative power.

The evolution of the artistic self is also connected with changing ideas about gender. In earlier literary cultures, opportunities for women to develop independent artistic identities were frequently restricted by social expectations surrounding domesticity and family responsibilities. As modern literary culture expanded the concept of individual autonomy, representations of women artists increasingly explored the conflict between creative ambition and prescribed gender roles. The female artist's struggle for creative identity often becomes a struggle for personal independence. Artistic expression allows women characters to challenge

identities imposed upon them and construct alternative forms of selfhood.

Class and economic conditions also remain important in the development of artistic identity. The ideal of the autonomous artist can conceal the material conditions necessary for artistic production. Education, financial independence, access to publication, social networks, and cultural institutions can determine whether an individual has the opportunity to pursue creative ambitions. Modern literature often exposes the tension between the romantic image of the artist as a free individual and the economic realities that restrict artistic practice.

Language plays a central role in the evolution of the artistic self, particularly in literary texts. In earlier traditions, writers often worked within established linguistic and formal conventions. Modern artists increasingly experimented with language, narrative structure, symbolism, and perspective to express individual consciousness. The development of a unique artistic voice became a central component of artistic identity. Through language, the artist not only communicates experience but also constructs a distinctive self.

Another important transformation is the increasing psychological depth of artistic representation. Earlier literary works could present artists primarily through their social roles and public achievements, whereas modern literature often explores the artist's internal conflicts. The reader is given access to doubts, fears, desires, memories, and uncertainties. The artistic journey becomes an inward journey in which the individual struggles to understand personal identity. The question "What does it mean to be an artist?" becomes inseparable from the question "Who am I?"

Despite these differences, the two literary ages share important continuities. Artists in both periods are concerned with expression, recognition, creativity, and the relationship between individual vision and social expectations. Both earlier and modern artists negotiate inherited traditions while attempting to establish a distinctive identity. The difference lies mainly in the degree to which individual autonomy becomes central to artistic identity. Earlier literary cultures often emphasized continuity with tradition, whereas modern literary cultures increasingly emphasize originality and personal expression.

The evolution from the earlier artistic self to the modern artistic self should therefore not be interpreted as a simple movement from restriction to complete freedom. Modern artists continue to experience limitations, although these limitations may take different forms. Institutional expectations, commercial pressures, cultural norms, gender roles, economic

insecurity, and the demand for originality continue to influence artistic identity. The modern artist may possess greater conceptual freedom while simultaneously facing new forms of uncertainty.

Ultimately, the evolution of the artistic self across two literary ages demonstrates a fundamental transformation in the relationship between creativity and identity. The earlier artistic self is often shaped through tradition, social institutions, collective values, and established conventions, while the modern artistic self increasingly emerges through individuality, psychological consciousness, originality, and resistance to conformity. Nevertheless, both forms of artistic identity are constructed through negotiation between the individual and the surrounding world.

The artistic self is therefore not a fixed identity but an evolving process. It develops through creative experimentation, social conflict, personal reflection, cultural interaction, and the continuous search for an authentic voice. Across two literary ages, the artist becomes a powerful representation of the human desire to move beyond inherited identities and construct a meaningful sense of self. The evolution of the artistic self ultimately reflects the larger evolution of literary thought—from an understanding of identity rooted primarily in collective structures toward an increasingly complex conception of the individual as a creative, questioning, and self-defining subject.

IV. THE ARTIST AND SOCIETY IN THE EARLIER LITERARY AGE

The relationship between the artist and society in the earlier literary age was deeply shaped by tradition, social hierarchy, religion, political authority, and established cultural conventions. Unlike the modern conception of the artist as an autonomous and highly individualistic creator, the earlier artist was generally situated within a broader social and cultural framework. Artistic production was not simply an expression of private identity; it was often connected with collective values, religious beliefs, political institutions, moral principles, and cultural traditions. Consequently, the development of an artistic identity was strongly influenced by the expectations and structures of the society in which the artist lived.

In earlier literary cultures, art frequently performed important social and cultural functions. Literature, poetry, drama, music, painting, and other creative forms could preserve historical memory, communicate religious beliefs, celebrate rulers, reinforce moral values, and maintain cultural traditions. The artist therefore occupied an important position as a cultural

mediator. Through creative expression, artists transmitted the values and beliefs of one generation to another. Their work could contribute to the construction of collective identity and social continuity. Artistic creativity was consequently viewed not only as personal expression but also as a form of cultural responsibility.

The social position of the artist was often determined by systems of patronage. Artists depended upon rulers, aristocrats, religious institutions, wealthy families, or other patrons for financial and social support. Patronage provided artists with opportunities to create, but it could also impose limitations on artistic freedom. An artist who depended upon a particular patron might be expected to produce works that reflected the patron's political, religious, or social interests. This relationship created a complex tension between creativity and dependence. The artist could exercise imagination within the available cultural framework, but complete artistic independence was often difficult to achieve.

Tradition played an equally important role in defining artistic identity. Earlier literary cultures valued established genres, conventions, themes, symbols, and forms of expression. An artist's competence was frequently measured by the ability to understand and master these traditions. Innovation was possible, but it generally developed through engagement with inherited forms rather than complete rejection of them. The artist therefore functioned simultaneously as an individual creator and as a participant in a continuing cultural tradition.

This relationship with tradition influenced the concept of originality. In modern literary culture, originality is often associated with breaking conventions and establishing a unique personal style. In earlier periods, originality could involve creative reinterpretation of familiar stories, themes, and forms. An artist demonstrated creative ability by giving new meaning to inherited material. The artistic self was therefore not necessarily constructed through opposition to tradition. Instead, it could be developed through a productive relationship with cultural inheritance.

Religion was another major influence on the relationship between the artist and society. In many earlier literary traditions, religious beliefs shaped the subjects, themes, symbols, and purposes of artistic expression. Artists could be expected to reinforce spiritual or moral values. Religious institutions could provide education, patronage, and opportunities for artistic production, while also establishing boundaries regarding acceptable forms of expression. The artist's creative identity was consequently influenced by the dominant

religious worldview of the period.

Political authority also affected artistic production. Literature and other forms of art could be used to celebrate rulers, document political events, reinforce national or communal identity, or communicate political ideals. Artists who enjoyed royal or aristocratic patronage could receive considerable recognition, but their position could also require loyalty to political authority. This situation illustrates the complex relationship between artistic expression and power. Art could support established authority, but it could also subtly question social and political structures.

The earlier artist's relationship with social hierarchy was similarly complex. Access to education and artistic training was often connected to social status, wealth, gender, and institutional privilege. Individuals from privileged backgrounds generally possessed greater access to literacy, education, cultural networks, and patronage. Consequently, artistic production was influenced by the unequal distribution of cultural resources. The idea that artistic talent alone determines artistic success cannot fully explain the position of the artist in earlier societies.

Gender represented another important social limitation. Women's participation in artistic and literary culture was frequently restricted by patriarchal expectations. Women were often expected to prioritize domestic responsibilities, family relationships, and social respectability. Even when women possessed artistic talent, their opportunities for education, publication, professional recognition, and public participation could be limited. As a result, the formation of a female artistic identity could require negotiating powerful social restrictions. Literary representations of women artists often reveal the conflict between creative aspiration and prescribed gender roles.

Despite these limitations, the earlier artist was not necessarily a passive participant in society. Artists could use established cultural forms to express criticism, irony, social observation, and alternative perspectives. Even when working within traditional structures, creative expression could challenge dominant assumptions. The artist's ability to reinterpret cultural traditions created opportunities for subtle forms of resistance. This demonstrates that social conformity and artistic independence were not always complete opposites.

The artist could also occupy the position of a social observer. By representing human behavior, social relationships, political conflicts, moral contradictions, and cultural practices,

literary artists created spaces for society to examine itself. Literature could reveal inequalities and contradictions that were difficult to recognize in ordinary social life. The artist therefore functioned as both a product of society and a critic of society. The social world provided the material of artistic creation, while artistic representation could transform the way that world was understood.

The concept of the artist as an outsider, which became especially prominent in modern literature, also has roots in earlier traditions. Artists who possessed unusual perspectives could experience distance from dominant social values. Their creativity might make them appear different from ordinary members of society. However, this difference was generally negotiated through existing cultural structures rather than expressed primarily through complete individual autonomy.

The earlier artist's identity was therefore collective as well as individual. Artistic selfhood was influenced by language, tradition, religion, social position, cultural memory, and community values. The artist's creative identity emerged from participation in a shared cultural world. This differs from later literary representations in which the artist is increasingly portrayed as an individual searching for personal authenticity and independence.

Nevertheless, the earlier literary age should not be viewed simply as a period of artistic restriction. It provided the foundations upon which later forms of artistic individuality developed. Established literary traditions offered artists a rich collection of forms, narratives, symbols, and aesthetic principles. Later artists could challenge, transform, or reject these traditions precisely because earlier generations had established them. The evolution of artistic identity is therefore cumulative rather than completely discontinuous.

The relationship between the artist and society in the earlier literary age can ultimately be understood as a relationship of negotiation. The artist depended upon society for language, education, cultural traditions, patronage, and recognition, while society depended upon artists to preserve, interpret, and sometimes question its cultural values. Artistic identity was shaped by social expectations but was never completely determined by them.

Thus, the earlier literary artist occupied a complex position between tradition and innovation, conformity and individuality, dependence and creative freedom. The artist was both a representative of society and an observer capable of questioning it. This tension provided an important foundation for the later development of the modern artistic self. As literary culture

gradually placed greater emphasis on individual consciousness, originality, and personal freedom, the artist's relationship with society became increasingly characterized by resistance, alienation, and the search for autonomy. The earlier literary age therefore represents a crucial stage in the historical development of the artist as a figure of creativity, identity, and selfhood.

V. CONCLUSION

The study of “Becoming an Artist: Identity, Creativity, and the Quest for Selfhood Across Two Literary Ages” demonstrates that the figure of the artist has undergone a significant transformation alongside changing literary, cultural, and social ideas about the individual. The artist is not simply a person who possesses creative talent; rather, the artist represents a continuing process of identity formation in which creativity, personal experience, social expectations, and the search for authenticity intersect. Across two literary ages, the development of the artist reveals how literature has progressively explored the relationship between creative expression and the construction of the self.

In the earlier literary age, artistic identity was largely connected with tradition, social institutions, religious values, political authority, patronage, and collective cultural expectations. The artist operated within established frameworks and was often expected to preserve, interpret, or reinforce cultural traditions. Artistic creativity certainly existed, but it was frequently exercised within socially recognized conventions. The artist's identity was therefore shaped by a balance between individual ability and collective expectations. The earlier artist was simultaneously a creator, cultural representative, social observer, and participant in established traditions.

The later literary age brought an important transformation in the representation of the artist. The increasing importance of individualism, imagination, subjective experience, psychological consciousness, and originality placed the individual artist at the centre of creative activity. The artist increasingly became a figure of independence and self-expression. Creativity was no longer understood merely as the production of aesthetically valuable works; it became a means through which the individual could explore personal experience, question social conventions, and construct an authentic identity. The artistic journey consequently became closely associated with the journey toward selfhood.

One of the most significant findings of the comparative perspective is that artistic identity is

never formed in complete isolation. Even when the artist seeks independence from society, social and cultural circumstances continue to influence creative development. Family, education, class, gender, economic conditions, cultural traditions, institutions, and political environments all shape the possibilities available to the artist. The desire for creative freedom must therefore be understood in relation to the restrictions and opportunities provided by society. Artistic identity emerges through negotiation between the individual's inner aspirations and the external world.

The study also establishes that creativity plays a central role in the formation of selfhood. Artistic expression provides a means through which individuals can examine memories, emotions, conflicts, desires, and experiences. The process of creating allows the artist to transform personal experience into meaningful aesthetic form. In this sense, art becomes both an expression of an already developing identity and a mechanism through which that identity continues to develop. The artist creates art, but simultaneously creates and recreates the self.

The development of an artistic voice is another important aspect of this transformation. Across the two literary ages, the movement from adherence to established conventions toward greater emphasis on originality illustrates the increasing importance of individual expression. Yet originality does not necessarily mean complete rejection of tradition. Even modern artists remain influenced by inherited forms, languages, literary movements, and cultural histories. The artist's individuality is therefore constructed through a dialogue between tradition and innovation. The ability to transform inherited cultural material into a distinctive form of expression becomes an important characteristic of artistic maturity.

The relationship between the artist and society also remains central to the study. In earlier literary contexts, the artist was often closely integrated into social and cultural institutions, while later literary representations increasingly presented the artist as an outsider or critic of society. However, the artist's outsider status should not be understood simply as complete social separation. The artist continues to depend upon society for language, cultural resources, audiences, institutions, and recognition. The apparent opposition between artist and society is therefore more accurately understood as a continuous process of interaction, negotiation, criticism, and participation.

The study further highlights the importance of gender and social position in the formation of artistic identity. The ideal of the autonomous artist has not been equally accessible to all

individuals. Women and socially disadvantaged groups have historically faced restrictions on education, artistic training, financial independence, public expression, and institutional recognition. Consequently, the process of becoming an artist may also involve challenging identities imposed by social structures. For such individuals, artistic expression can become a form of resistance, independence, and self-definition.

Across the two literary ages, the meaning of artistic freedom also changes. Earlier artists often negotiated freedom within established cultural structures, whereas later artists increasingly sought freedom through individual expression and rejection of conformity. Yet neither period offers absolute freedom. Economic pressures, social expectations, institutional authority, gender norms, and cultural conventions continue to shape artistic practice. The evolution of the artist is therefore not a simple movement from restriction to complete liberation. Instead, it represents a transformation in the forms through which artists negotiate freedom.

The quest for selfhood ultimately emerges as the central element connecting artistic development across both literary ages. Whether the artist works within traditional structures or challenges established conventions, the creative process involves an attempt to understand and articulate the self. The artist seeks a distinctive voice through which personal experience can acquire meaning. This search is never entirely completed because identity itself remains dynamic. Every new creative experience can alter the artist's understanding of the self and the world.

Therefore, becoming an artist should be understood as a continuous process rather than a final state. The artist develops through experimentation, conflict, failure, reflection, social interaction, and creative discovery. Artistic identity is formed through the interaction of internal consciousness and external circumstances. The artist's journey demonstrates that creativity is not merely an aesthetic activity but also a profound form of self-formation.

In conclusion, the evolution of the artist across two literary ages reflects the broader transformation of literary ideas concerning individuality, creativity, society, and human identity. The earlier artist was strongly connected with tradition, collective values, patronage, and established cultural structures, while the later artist increasingly became associated with individuality, originality, psychological consciousness, and personal freedom. Despite these differences, both literary ages portray the artist as an individual engaged in the difficult task

of negotiating personal expression with social expectations. The artist ultimately becomes a powerful symbol of the human desire to understand, define, and transform the self. The journey toward artistic identity is therefore also a journey toward selfhood, demonstrating that to create art is, in many ways, to participate in the continuous creation of one's own identity.

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