

Introduction works or
art forms that speak
to



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Introduction

Art depicts people's identity in all its dimensions. In this essay, through explaining notions of identity in relation to art, it will become clear enough that art depicts the fullness of individuals' identity. When it comes to identity, two distinct categories emerge i. e. personal identity and collective identity.

Considering how art is used and what it signifies, art is the most powerful depiction of both personal and collective identity. To illustrate the foregoing assertions, this essay will first consider personal fashion choices and what fashion says about individuals. Secondly, the essay will look into psychological usage of art to illustrate its connection to personality. Finally, the paper will consider what general art signifies and in what way it captures the collective identity of people i. e. cultural values.

Art and Identity

Art choice speaks volumes about an individual's Identity.

Art choice is largely dependent on an individual's way of thinking, feelings, and concerns. Individuality or personal identity is defined by how an individual thinks feels and all that is of concern to such a person. Artists create what is representative of objects in their life.

What an artist produces is necessarily representative of something in his or her world view. Therefore, in an artist's workmanship, one can learn a lot about the artist as an individual and the society he or she hails from.

Individuals choose or take art works or art forms that speak to them. If one

buys an artwork for someone else, the intention normally is that the art speaks a given specific message to the receiver. It is for this reason that art plays a great role in preserving historical perspectives. Whatever is communicated in a piece of art is representative of the general world view or aspirations of a people.

Fashion Choice and Identity

To illustrate how art choice speaks volumes about an individual, an analysis of fashion choice is very handy.

Fashion choice is a reflection of an individual's identity. People cannot go through a day without experiencing art. The cars people drive, the clothes they wear and even the utensils people use are artistic items designed by artists. Even people's homes are designed in an artistic way. To appreciate the extent to which fashion distinguishes people, one need just to look at clothing tastes. Some people have a favorite color and whenever they buy anything, they go for something with that color.

Every person has his/her own style of fashion which represents them.

Individuals identify with different fashion or artistic design, which means that the arts are representative of their personality or disposition. Some individuals are more into tangible art products. For others, it's abstract art or art pieces that do not represent anything or have no subject that excite them. Majority of the people in the world identify with tangible or realistic art i. e. art that represents a certain subject. People's choice of style or art object defines what they stand for or how they reason about given issues.

Therefore, to know the kind of art one likes is to know the individual, to some extent, because art is representative of their identity. Coleman (1) explains that art is a significant representation of people's identity which protects their culture and existence. To learn to appreciate art in its entire dimensions is the best way of learning about people and what they really stand for. Anybody not convinced should just look at the hair styles that people wear. Highly organized professionals have given hair styles that they wear. Musicians often adorn more gruff or crusty hair styles.

In daily living we identify friends with given kind of items. When people see a particular object, they associate it with a certain person. This happens because due to using certain objects for a long time, people begin to associate it with his or her person. One may argue that continued or sustained use of items only results familiarity. Such a refutation is welcome, however, whether the habit resulted out of mere familiarity or not, the habit has something to say about the individual. One can only use an object he or she likes. There must be something in the object that is representative of the person. Therefore, it is no surprise that for example, when a friend sees a certain kind of shirt, he or she is likely to comment and say " oh this shirt is really your style".

Each individual has his own unique taste of style. And people notice the unique sense of style from the kind of things the individual uses. Once in a while individuals hear comments like " this arrangement is typical of you". Such statement only comes as a result of people identifying the person of an individual with a certain way of doing or organizing things.

Taking the example of a room, each individual or cultural group has its own unique way of setting up a room. A friend coming into a friend's new room could easily be heard uttering phrases like, "oh this room is so like you". There is a unique way that this person organizes his room that represents him. When people see a similar room they identify it with him. To cement the idea that fashion choice and art choice are representative of a person's identity, it is helpful to look into considerations one makes when buying a present for a loved one. Generally, individuals buy presents that are meaningful and thus can be appreciated by the other.

The concern normally is to buy something that is as representative of the love. Alternatively, the present is supposed to speak volumes about the person who is presenting the gift. When a mother goes buying a present for her son, she chooses a particular style and design. A particular design is chosen because it is associated with that particular person. A person may like a particular design which he is always identified with. In addition, how these objects are used gives them meaning and makes them a representation of a person's identity.

Art and Psychological notions of Identity

In the practice of psychology i. e. therapy, art is employed a lot. For example, psychologists use pictures drawn by troubled children to help them identify their problems. To help understand clients, therapists sometimes show pictures or art object to them and note the reactions. A skeptic may wonder how a piece of art is related to how people are. The truth is that art speaks our personality and shows the deepest innermost of us that we try to hide and ignore. Sometimes it is difficult to express how we feel through

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words and this is especially true for children and those under overwhelming emotions (Malchiodi 133).

There are people who say they have no sense of art in them or that they cannot draw. This is not true because art is not just about drawing. Art sense is reflected in every person in many different ways like songs, dancing, poetry, humor and story telling etc. Art does not mean just painting or drawing. Another example of how art is reflected is through liking or disliking a particular design or valuing a particular object more than others.

Psychologists are known to use and apply the power of art powerfully in therapy. As already discussed, they use art to help identify the issues that their clients are suffering from. For psychologists, the choice of music for example tells a lot about how happy or sad an individual is. To help people let go of bad feelings, therapists encourage them to draw, write or perform an art. Music is famed, metaphorically, to be the soap of the soul.

It has the capability of altering individuals' ego states and helping them understand some more or learn better. It is for this reason, that music is often employed in learning or behavior reinforcement practice.

Art as what someone stands for and art as what someone is

Some individuals argue that art only portrays what someone stands for but that does not translate into defining who i. e. identity of an individual. When considering art, there are two notions that come out clearly i.

e. on one hand art can be used to identify what someone stands for and in another sense, art is truly representative of what the individual is as a

person. People who perform art, for example poems, express themselves through their art work.

Through their artistic performances and art works e. g. drawings, they are able to express their feelings and moods on given subjects. Therefore, art helps them state clearly how they are and what they stand for or represent as individuals. For example, art may be used to create awareness on AIDS, malaria etc. Artists who are happy paint pictures that suggest happiness to the viewers. On the other hand, artists who are scared may tend to draw gloomy art.

In this case, through their works, the artist's state of being or what he truly thinks and feels is identified.

Difference between Eastern and Western art

Differences in cultural arts illustrate how art is representative of people.

Different cultures have different art forms.

Western art is different from Eastern art and this is what marks their different cultural identities. Western and Eastern people look at objects in different ways and consequently their arts are different. For example, eastern music tends to be more melancholic when compared with western music.

Artists often compose music in response to their deep seated feelings, emotions and thoughts. When one listens to any music they are able to hook into a composers mind and are swayed by the intended feelings of the song. The music thus develops a personality gearing that rubs itself on the people

who listen. Therefore, when it is said that eastern music is more melancholic than western music, it is valid to conclude that easterners are more melancholic than westerners.

Painting and drawing is largely driven by symbolic meanings of given figures. It is from this perspective that paintings by westerners are largely different from paintings from the eastern countries. For example, spiritual paintings from the east especially china my feature figures like the dragon.

In the west, a cross would generally depict a religious theme. In painting a social setting, western paintings depict more hierarchical settings than eastern settings that are community centered. Western and Eastern styles of art are different in many other ways, these include, views and visual effects they produce.

Western art puts more emphasis on people while the Eastern art emphasizes more on nature and its beauty. Easterners believe nature is more significant than people while the Westerners believe people are more important and above nature (Samovar et al 34). All that this points to is the fact that art is informed by the cultural background and interpretation of any art work has to take into account culture connotations.

Even in a given country, sub cultural differences impact on art in a big way. For example, white American have often criticized African-American art and some individuals have gone ahead as to question its classification as art. The issue is that African American try to infuse African roots into their art. By blending the American reality with what they think is African, they create something unique that speaks of their experience. Art reflects cultural values

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and through it people are able to identify themselves and appreciate who they are (Patton 186). This kind of fusion of cultural art should not be criticized. When these arts blend they convey a message which is less ethnic or racial compared to traditional arts (Leuthold 37).

Cultural Art and Personal Identity

Cultural art is what has the most profound effect on a person's identity. It moulds people's behavior and makes them identify with their tribe or nation. In the same way one feel a sense of patriotism in an encounter with say national flag, tribal art pieces enlist certain kinds of feelings in individuals. One may argue that in this globalization era, no one cares about cultural or tribal art. However, even the modern man feels something in the face of that which represents his or her heritage.

Cultural art fills us with pleasure and joy and it is a significant way of restoring damaged social structures and strengthening cultural and individual's identity. Nationhood and related Identity may be threatened by globalization. However, nationhood remains alive through art. Art reflects values that individuals or communities would want to identify with.

Consequently, cultural art encourages people to identify and be proud of their community.

Conclusion

Following from the considerations in this essay, it is clear that art depicts personality or individual's identity. Individuals interact or associate with pieces of art on a daily basis. All the things that individuals use e. g. cars, houses, clothes, utensils, paintings etc, are works of different artist and are

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fashioned to appeal to different kinds of people. Considering fashion, considerations made when buying presents and general artistic choices, it was illustrated that individuals choose pieces of art that speak to them or about them. For instance, when a reggae musician chooses to wear dreadlocks, he or she is basically saying that this is what I am and I belong to this group of individuals.

His or her sense of art communicates his or her identity; what he or she wants to be known as by others. Considering art from a psychological point of view, it was established that artists develop pieces of art based on their world view. The consumers or lovers of art also go for pieces of art that are meaningful in their world view. Thirdly, tapping into an individual's interpretation of a piece of art is a great way towards understanding what their world view is like. These considerations are cemented when one analyses cultural art and associated meaningfulness. In a nutshell, cultural art differs because it reflects the subjective realm of different communities.

Artists in a community only produce pieces of art that are representative of the realm or aspirations in their community.

Works cited/ Annotated Bibliography

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