

Art-tachment in Adults: A Case Study of Moya

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Summary

“Art-tachment behavior” is a new terminology that describes the behavior of adult non-professional artists attempting to practice art. The content of the art-tachment behavior is mainly from the concept of the potential space, one of the major theories from Winnicott, an object relation theorist. The potential space is not a physical space but occurs in mental activities between inner and outer reality when people play, daydream, fantasize, involve in activities such as art, religion, creative science etc.

Creative art activities produce art works which symbolize the concrete existence of potential space, while also exhibiting the window of the inner world and reflecting some perspectives of the physically real world. With transitional functions, such as connection, symbolization, autonomy, integration, and containing self-objectification, art can be identified as the bridge of the inner and the outer reality.

This research attempts to study the dynamics of the specific phenomena from the perspectives of art, art education and art therapy, and to interpret it from the object relation theory. In order to explore the idea of the art-tachment behavior, the research questions are:

1. What are the cause and effect of object-relation experiences in developing the art-tachment behavior?
2. What are the cause and effect of the experiences in art education in developing the art-tachment behavior?
3. What are reasons for a non-professional artist with the art-tachment behavior to attempt to practice art?
4. What does a non-professional artist with the art-tachment behavior feels when he or she is making art?

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Winnicott's (1965) theory of transitional phenomena and potential space will be discussed in the literature review. Moreover, the four dyadic dynamic processes by LaMothe's (2005) theories of psychodynamics of potential space provide better understanding of potential space and art making which includes surrender-generation, recognition-negation, care-quiescence, and disruption-repair.

Using narrative inquiry as the research method to understand the development of the art-tachment behavior of Moya, the interview outline includes three parts. First of all, the attempt to understand the object relations and transitional experiences in the early life of the research participant. These answers may help understand the influences of the participant's object relations in her early age. Second, the attempt to realize the experiences of art education and the changing experiences of potential space in different school ages. These answers may help realize the influences of art education and the transformation of potential space. Third, the attempt to figure out the cause and effect of practicing art in recent time. These answers may help understand reasons of developing the art-tachment behavior.

This research addresses the reasons of obtaining the creative experience of adulthood and with Moya as the research participant for the case study.

According to the life experience of Moya, the result shows in four areas: object relation, art education, concrete reasons and psychological meanings of developing the art-tachment behavior.

The first perspective is about the influences of object relation in early life when developing the art-tachment behavior. When there are conflicts which affect the autonomy of self in one's object relation between self and parents or others, the need of mental activities of potential space increases. Moreover, one will develop an important issue of life which one needs to deal with for the rest of his or her life. The issue may possibly become the inner behavior motivation for life and the art-tachment behavior may display one's specific important issue of life in a concrete creative way.

Second, the experience of art education causes long term effects and there are positive influences of art education in the art-tachment behavior as long as they have some successful art related experiences in the past. The value system from one's parents may strongly interfere with art learning, and how art making in realistic skill was taught may also cause negative feelings, but none of which has great impacts on developing the future art-tachment behavior. Multiple

teaching methods of art classes such as art appreciation, art history, craft, design as well as drawing and painting, will contribute to the development of the art-tachment behavior in adulthood.

Third, the immediate reasons of developing the art-tachment behavior in adulthood are the difficulties in reality. When one faces pressure from reality, one needs to enhance independence and integration in order to compensate the anxiety and the inability of self. Therefore, art provides opportunities for autonomy. The successful experiences of art education and the ways of dealing with the most important life issue become the major factor for the art-tachment behavior.

Finally, when one uses art for coping with the difficulties in reality while art stands between the inner self and the outer reality, one will gradually develop the art-tachment behavior. Feeling unusual, experiencing autonomy, obtaining achievements and increasing pleasure are all benefits of the art-tachment behavior.

Since art activities connect the inner self and the outer reality which happens in the potential space, the spontaneous art behavior, art-tachment behavior, could help the non-professional adult artist experience the independence and integration which help adjust the self which then becomes therapeutic art activities.

Keywords: object relation, potential space, art therapy, art education, Art-tachment behavior

