



Art as an Escape: A Narrative of a Fine Arts Graduate

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ABSTRACT

In the field of visual arts, there are a few studies conducted on the subject of escapism among artists. This research paper is conducted, in the context of contemporary visual arts, with the purpose of contributing to the knowledge regarding escapism and the experiences of artists who resort to art as an escape.

Using the narrative research design, the central research question is “How do personal experiences trigger a Fine Arts graduate artist to resort to art as an escape?”. A graduate of Fine Arts who personally considers art as an escape was the participant of the study. Data were gathered using semi-structured interviews, and analysed based on the narrative inquiry research framework by Connelly and Clandinin (1990).

The findings were categorised into the following three themes: (a) situation, (b) interaction, and (c) continuity. This research will contribute to the existing knowledge of escapism in the field of visual arts even in the local context.

Further research on the lives of contemporary artists and artisans is needed in the field of narrative inquiry. Moreover, a deeper understanding of the mental and emotional issues among artists will clarify misconceptions in the field of visual art and also give new perspectives and insights to a common mentality of artists as introverts or other negative stereotypes..

Keywords: Visual Arts, Escapism, Narrative Inquiry

INTRODUCTION

This research paper is conducted, in the context of contemporary visual arts, to contribute to the knowledge regarding escapism and the experiences of artists who resort to art as their escape. This research paper answered the question, "How do personal experiences trigger a Fine Arts graduate artist to resort to art as an escape?"

LITERATURE REVIEW

In a world where people undergo a variety of positive and negative encounters and interactions on a daily basis, individuals are burdened with responsibilities and experience pressure from within and without, overwhelmed with what they hear, feel and see (Sincero, 2013); they are

led to seek for an escape (Efthymiadi, 2014; Stenseng, Rise & Kraft, 2012). There are ways people resort to as an escape. They come in the form of media (Kohler, 2015), gaming (Warmelink, Hartevelde, & Mayer, 2009). Escapism is defined as “the avoidance of reality by absorption of the mind in entertainment or in an imaginative situation, activity, etc.” (Collins English Dictionary, n.d.), Merriam-Webster Dictionary (n.d.) defined it as the “habitual diversion of the mind to purely imaginative activity or entertainment as an escape from reality or routine.” Another definition of escapism is “an activity or form of entertainment that allows people to forget about the real problems of life.”

In a book titled “On SF” by Disch (2005), it was written that “there are times when all of us would rather flee our problems than confront them head-on with the heightened awareness that genuine art forces on us. For such times, nothing will serve but escapism.”

Studies have been conducted regarding the effects of technology as an escape in the field of psychology. Igorevna (2015) observed this phenomenon saying,

In a modern media society, individuals are provided with a wide range of tools to escape from reality which vary from consuming psychoactive substances to participating in online games or engaging in different subcultures’ activities. The problem of escapism and immersion in alternative realities, of any kind, is that it involves the issues of emotional, mental and sometimes even physical personal well-being, and, thus, becomes critical.

Igorevna (2015) concludes that escapism is a subject needing further study, as this is a “universal mechanism allowing a person to escape the reality for adaptation to real life.”

There are two facets of escapism studied: positive and negative. Evans (2001) presented a classification of escapism types:

1. Avoiding — the main aim of this type of escapism is running from reality and real-life difficulties;
2. Passive — this type of escapism includes activities when a person doesn't have to make efforts, e.g. listening to music, watching TV or movies, etc.
3. Active — this type of escapism assumes a change of activity, from the main one (e. g. job) to the alternative one (hobbies). Among the brightest examples are computer games, fishing, poetry, singing, etc.
4. Extreme — activities which are actually or potentially dangerous (drugs or alcohol use, roof jumping, etc.)

Two kinds of escapism were also identified; one resulting in positive results and the other with negative consequences. The first one triggered by the mundanity of life, distress or avoidance of “life challenges.” The second attempts to dismiss reality through “daydreaming” or involvement in pleasure-inducing activities.

Stenseng (2009) studied escapism in the “social context.” The Dualistic Model of Passion was formed as a result of the investigation. Self-suppression and self-expansion were seen as the two sides of escapism. The former focuses on the avoidance of negative emotions followed by en-gagement in an “alternate activity.” The latter develops self through experiences resulting in positive outcomes. Furthermore, Kardopoltseva (2012) built on the findings of Stenseng (2009) and studied escapism in the “life context.” The focus of the study was on positive escapism, explaining its necessity for “creative activities.”

There are also studies done in connection to escapism about virtual spaces, specifically with video games (Kuo, Lutz & Hiler, 2016; Warmelink et al. 2009), social media (Hoffman, Lutz & Meckel, 2017; Kircaburun & Griffiths, 2018), television viewing (Henning & Vorderer, 2001), tourism experiences (Cohen, 2010) and even Filipino escapism through singing with use of the karaoke (Rivera, 2016).

METHODS

Research Design

Fine art is one of the fields of study covered by narrative research (Squire et al., 2014). Narrative research methods, according to Hart (2002) “are always exploratory, conversational, tentative, and indeterminate.” Narratives center upon “stories as accounts of temporally ordered events, or as developing or expressing personal identity, or telling about the past, or making sense of mental states or emotions, or having particular social effects, or demonstrating formal linguistic properties” (Squire et al., 2014). In addition, narrative research allows the understanding of experiences of people that are little known to be developed, giving a clearer idea about the lives of individuals in a greater degree (Bell, 2003; Akinsanya, 2014; Andrews, 2004; Muylaert, Sarubbi Jr., Gallo & Neto, 2014; Sandelowski, 2004). “It lets us grasp some of the complexity, multiplicity and contradictions within lives as within stories” (Squire et al., 2014).

Flynn (2017) writes, “Qualitative researchers investigate questions of experience and meaning, and explore in-depth the nature of certain persons, situations, written and spoken language, artifacts, or artworks.”

Furthermore, narrative inquiry involves both the researcher and the participant allowing them to have a ground for “stories, reflection, contradiction, growth and transformation” (Makris, 2012 p. 228). There are "few examples of narrative inquiry" in the field of creative arts research. Moreover, she adds, "even fewer analyze stories submitted by participants or explore participant experiences" (Flynn, 2017).

Narrative inquiry, as Clandinin and Connelly (2000) developed, is the basis for this research study. This focuses on the experiences that individuals share in which the researcher is ever-present and works with the participant in the construction of knowledge, in the research process, from beginning to end (Makris, 2012 p. 92).

The participant was given the opportunity to remain anonymous for confidentiality, and to discontinue from the research study. Prior to the interviews, the participant was briefed regarding the research study, the purpose behind it and the procedures involved. The interviews were conducted with the awareness that the participant may have hesitations in giving her story due to trauma and her ability to recall past experiences. Moreover, the participant was constantly contacted regarding the progress of the study and was given the right to retract her statements from the narrative. When it came to writing the narrative, the participant was consulted as to whether the narrative and interpretations matched her statements, and whether the researchers were permitted to use them. At the end of the study, the participant was provided a copy of the research paper.

Due to time constraints and the premise that individual experiences are unique, the researchers focused on one of the graduates of the Fine Arts undergraduate course. Thus, the researchers do not attempt to generalize their findings, but to give insight and understanding instead of the life of an artist who considers art not as a way of expression but as an escape.

Sampling

The researchers collaborated with the participant in this study. The interest in escapism came about from conversations with her. The criteria for selecting the participant are the following: a Fine Arts graduate, currently an independent artist, has knowledge of the topic being studied, and has experienced making art as an escape. For the researchers to understand the concept of escapism better, the participant in the study willingly participated in the study, in sharing her personal story.

Data Gathering Procedure

Data were gathered based on Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) narrative inquiry. A semi-structured interview was conducted to gather data. The participant chose to remain anonymous,

thus only her voice was recorded. There were two interviews conducted with the participant who received updates during the course of the study

RESULTS

Analysis of Data

After transcribing the interview, the researchers created the first draft for the narrative. This was followed by revisiting the transcribed data and comparing the story with it to get the flow and idea of her words.

Categorical analysis based on Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) proposal was used in this study. The categories are interaction, continuity, and situation, where "interaction relates to the personal and social elements of the narrative, continuity relates to the temporal elements, and situation re-lates to the context or the sense of place" (Flynn, 2017).

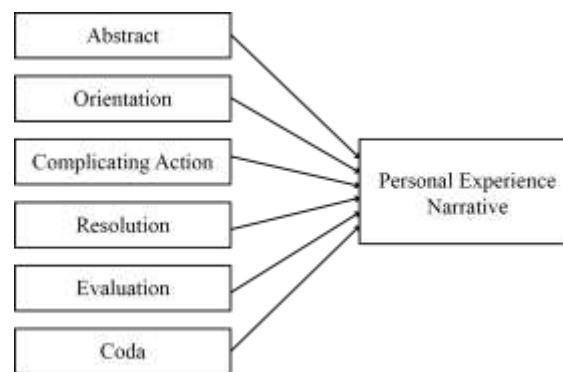


Figure 1. Path Diagram Showing Factors that Affect the Personal Narrative

The narrative for this study is based on the Personal Experience Narrative model presented by Akinsaya (2014). Here is her story:

“Siraulo.” (Insane) That is what she said, laughing as she said it when asked how she described herself as an artist.

She knew in herself, that she would not excel in Science, English or other subjects. However, when she was younger, MAPEH interested her the most and the reason behind were the drawings in the books. When she was in Grade 5, a painting by Malang in the book sparked a desire within her to create something like it. She admired the “childish” style of his painting. It seemed to her as if he was free to make the lines without rules. The works of Ang Kiukok also caught her eye. Although his works made her feel scared to a certain point, nonetheless, she was interested. She wondered how she could understand it because growing up, she felt that she

was stupid. She was not sure if she could understand the painting. However, she was sure of this: she was inter-ested. From that point, Malang and his work were at the forefront of her mind. To this day, Malang's work has been embedded in her memory, for the emotion, she felt as she beheld his works is still vivid in her mind. It was when she saw Malang's work that she realized: "Ok lang naman pala eh" (It is okay)— there was no one way to everything; that it was "ok" even if the lines were not straight or the colors right. It did not have to be perfect. From that time on, even if she knew she could not draw well, even if she was told that she was just wasting her art set, she started to draw though the drawing looked bad.

Her journey as an artist continued when she was in high school. In the first year, she learned how to do lettering from a friend. She trained her hand to define the line better. In her second year, despite the bullying she experienced, every summer, she would carry on with her art. Whenever she drew stick figures and tried to draw them with body parts, she would not feel so much that feeling of worthlessness. It was like she no longer felt that something was wrong with her. In time, she handled watercolor. Before exploring watercolor though, she learned how to doodle. She saw someone on TV making a doodle and was inspired to create. Eventually, she found out about Tumblr which became her "outlet." It helped her find people like her who supported her drawings and doodles. As she developed her art, a desire grew to study and to learn other kinds of media. In third year, she became a fan of Valerie Chua. The "ethereal" works of Valerie touched a chord in her heart that brought her to tears. She wanted to learn how to paint as Valerie did. As time went by, she came to know about another artist who inspired her: Agnes Cecil. She tried to imitate her drawings to the point where she became familiar with female facial structure although her drawings were still not as good as Agnes'. And even at this time, she still could not forget about Malang. She searched about him in Google Images. As she was looking at the images, she asked herself, "How do I understand these?" With the questions lingering in the back of her head, still, she kept drawing, for it was only as she drew that she felt freedom. Eventually, her Mama noticed that she could draw, even though her colors were off the line. That is why, she says, it was like the pain, the sadness, and the questions, were expressed through the art that she made; because she no longer had a need for someone to listen to her. She was content as long as someone could see her works. It was in art that she excelled in and felt that validation that she had a talent. In fourth year, her validation as an artist was when she was asked to draw in class. From then on, her classmates recognized her skill in drawing and when a drawing was needed, her classmates would point to her.

In college, she went through more intense experiences, not only as a student and an artist but as a daughter, a niece and a friend. In her first year in college, she experienced a crisis to the point where she wanted to back out. What she experienced was not what she had pictured in her mind. She expected to learn how to draw right, but her reality did not match her expectations. In her first year, she struggled whenever she would see the works of her classmates, whom she described as "sobrang gifted" (really gifted). She thought "... I will never be like that." When she was in second year, however, she felt that it was "ok" even if she was not as good as the others. She understood that each of her classmates was different. Everyone was different. This realization was a turning point for her. At that moment, she realized that in Fine Arts, in studying the arts, it was about "... finding your core. Being one with your equilibrium. Being one with your chakras. It is about celebrating yourself more than trying to fit in. That is freedom." She recounts of a time when she broke down, crying when she presented a work in the style of cubism under Sir M., one of her teachers. She remembers crying as she was working to complete the artwork before the presentation. Even if it was not her style, she extremely liked that work of hers, because it reflected who she was in those times. It was in second year when she started to figure out how to work with her imperfections, how to create wonderful things from the darkness. It was in this year that she bloomed.

When it seemed that everything started to turn for the better in her family, she again experienced loss. When she was younger, she lost her best friend to cancer which was, in a way, traumatic for her. This time, someone dear to her, one she truly loved, lost the battle to cancer: her Lola. She started questioning again. It was like she wanted to go back to the darkness. In her third year, she "officially" went back to darkness. Her works unmistakably reflected what she was going through: darkness. Whatever she was thinking about found expression through her works. On the other hand, it was during this time when she learned that no one suffered alone. She learned more about the people around her. She understood that everyone had a different point of view. This conception was likened to a tree. She explained how everyone had their place and status in life. And each one had a different view of a tree. She drew an analogy between the tree and her-self. When she would look at her tree, the leaves were falling off, the tree itself time-worn, and over time, not one leaf would remain on its branches. But to others from a different vantage point, they may see fruits. She became aware that everyone was unique and peculiar and each one goes through something different.

Narrating of a time when she was younger, she remembered being brought up with the thought that there were only two ways to go. If you did not end up being one, you were obliged to take

the other. When all was said and done, her family considered successful those who would follow a career that involved taking board exams. There were comparisons made between her and her cousins. She did not grow up with the idea that there were more choices. When it came to her family, it seemed as if no one wanted to listen to her because she was different. Her interest and passion did not match her family's expectations. This made her choose only certain people whom she could open up to. The closer she was to someone, the more open she became. Yet in her family, even if they did not understand her works, they did see and appreciate her works.

She recalled the time when she developed a close bond with certain friends, looking back at the experiences she had with them. As a third-year Fine Arts student, she witnessed their suffering because of the pressure bearing down upon them during their senior year. She did not leave them because she knew very well what it felt like to be left behind and alone, and she did not want to do that — to leave. To her, having a "support system" was very important. In the time she spent with them, she inferred that when she would reach her senior year, as she worked on a portfolio as well, she would be able to do it because her friends could. However, looking back at that time, she did not realize then that she would be alone — without them. She thought they would support her as she did so for them. She expected. Once again, she ended up questioning herself. She asked, "Why?" — "Ba't lagi na lang ako nagkakamali? Lagi akong naga-assume..." (Why am I always mistaken? I am always assuming). She admitted that she considered herself weak for she needed someone to lean on. She needed someone to lift her spirit, someone to remind her. She did have other friends. Even so, the samahan (kinship) she had with them was different. She explains that they would even have art nights. Each one working on their art side by side with the rest. When artworks were made, no one was alone. Everyone was helping each other out. But when she was in fourth year, she was alone.

She did not realize then how she was very angry with the world. Thenceforth, during her senior year as a Fine Arts student, as she worked on her portfolio, her works became her escape. She felt imprisoned, choked. Yet, she pointed out that there was a good side to what she had gone through because she was not set on a certain emotion. Thus, whatever she felt within were freely revealed in her works.

There was a time when she went to the round table discussion with the UP professors in the gallery. She learned that an artist did not have to plan what to make. It was said during the discussion that when an artist was stuck and felt like being choked, to escape, to move was crucial. It was of great importance to create to bring out these feelings. Even though these

feelings were present, what matters was that the artist could bring them out. Later on, she saw the works of the presenters in the area. That was when she felt and understood that art was not just about showing off your skills, how good you are or how bad you may be. It was not just about making some-thing beautiful. It was not just that. She realized that art was about sharing with the viewer what you see as an artist — your vision. It is a privilege that you give to the viewer to see what your vision is for them to reflect on your work. These were on her mind, but back then she could not understand this when she was working on her portfolio.

In her senior year, when she was working on her portfolio, she made both sculptures and paintings although she was not so fond of her paintings. During that time, she was experiencing stress due to the upcoming graduation, her subjects, her portfolio, stress because of helping out with her uncle's medical needs, and stress because of the death of both her uncle and aunt. Her uncle and aunt were the ones who were very supportive of her. She describes her uncle as someone who believed in her: he had great confidence in her. It was a week before he died, that he sent her an unforgettable message using his wife's Facebook account. "Naniniwala daw s'ya sa akin, na ano, may...mararating daw ako...na someday daw...matutulungan ko sina mama ta's magiging proud sila sa 'kin" (He said he believed in me, that I would be able to achieve something. And one day, I would be able to help my mom and they would be proud of me). Later on she asked her cousins and found out that she was the only one who received a message from him. As she was making her sculpture with glass, it was like she experienced an adrenaline rush to create art because she felt support from her uncle and aunt. But, this eventually wore off. From then on, she did not feel like painting. She had a lot of plans, but she was not able to execute them because she some-how gave up on herself. She was really angry, but she did not know whom she was angry with. All she knew was this: she was certainly upset. And to add to her anguish, her friends left her. She felt as if she was disowned by them. "...masakit. Masakit lahat. Parang lahat na lang. Lahat na lang. Everything is falling apart...I can't...Parang, tama na, hirap na hirap na ako." (It hurts. Everything hurts. Everything is falling apart. I can't. It is enough. I'm in so much pain.). No doubt, after what she had been through, she could not focus on her portfolio. With her paintings, the reason why they were so was because of this fact: when she went home, her next destination would be the funeral. Later on, she would go back home and paint, then sleep. The next day, she would go back to the funeral again. "Sinong makakaintindi no'n..." (Who would understand...). Indeed, what she had felt, the emotional, physical and psychological distress she experienced, no one would truly understand.

Soon, the time came for all the senior art students to present their works. When she was present-ing her works to the panel, she was just holding herself up, trying to keep herself together. She was not hurt by the critique of the panel. "Alam ko naman na pangit yo'n painting ko. Pero at least, yoong sculpture, nando'n lahat yo'ng ako. Hindi yo'ng pangit kong rendering ang mag-dedefine sa akin." (I know my painting is not pleasant. But at least, my sculpture embodied all that I was. It is not the ugly rendering I made that would define me). Her works were a part of her. At that time, she wanted to say, "Kayo po kaya. I-try niyo na gumawa. Kasi kayo, pag uwi niyo...uwi kayo sa family niyo. Basta ako, pag uwi ko, babalik ako sa family ko tapos maglulukxa pa kami." (With regards to you, why not try to make one? For you, when you go home, you go home to your family. For me, when I reach home, I have to go to my family and mourn.). With a shaky voice, she says she never wants to experience what she had gone through ever again. "So-brang hirap." (It is very difficult). Her eyes filled with tears as she spoke these words. She con-tinued to say how every time she would see her mama cast down, disheartened, discouraged, she felt even worse. "Kaya parang siguro, do'n nagsimula yo'ng suicidal ko." (Perhaps, that was the time where I started to become suicidal.) She would no longer use a mask. She would inhale lead and turpentine. She would drink three Sting bottles and take Enervon in the morning. It was in fourth year when she just pretended to be fine, to be happy. Though it might have seemed like a joke, it was real. Even when graduation came, she was not in the best of moods. This was be-cause her expectations were built up when she heard from her professor that she would be a cum laude. She expected, but at the end of the day, disappointed.

After finishing her bachelor's degree, she was not content with her experience. She did not have that confidence to go out, feeling the inadequacy to start working in the field. What she learned was not sufficient for her. To make up for what lacked, she immersed herself in books, using her time in searching online, and in watching videos. The more she did this, the greater was the im-pression that she had so much she did not know. It was after attending forums that she devel-oped an idea that she was wrong about certain conceptions of hers. Why? Because she learned about the academy fine art, which was more on the classical approach, and its difference with modern art. And if the works would just be the basis, it dawned on her that she was taught in the modern art approach. To shed some light on modern art, this has a lot of discrepancies. She was really confused and felt even more downcast. A lot of thoughts preoccupied her mind. This led her to immerse herself in philosophy. In her reflections, she connected this to art. She started to ponder upon the concept of the academy versus modern,

and that they could not be compared because both were different. In due time, she came to accept that she would not reach that Re-naissance level, for to most people, that was what they called art. What mattered now was that she was able to explore, to have a view of the real world and the “underground,” and also of the art collectors and negotiators. And “at the end of the day, it’s all about me and my work...whatever they say, I’m gonna do mine.” And from then on, this became her driving force to create her art, to advance.

At a certain point in her life, she experienced another "Malang moment." She recalled a filmmaker, Alejandro Jodorowsky, whose movies she had watched in her third year. She had a great in-terest in weird movies, in cult and dark things. She started to think there must have been some-thing deeper, something about him and why he was such. She researched about him more, about his influences, and his background. From then on, she just continued exploring. With the films that Jodorowsky made, it was like she could understand what he was trying to portray. Yet, at the same time, she could not fully decipher his works. Though this was the case, his works were a noteworthy inspiration to her as an artist.

Presently, the works she made from her “Malang moment” are more of macabre, which she alluded to the fact that she witnessed death, and had very close encounters with death. The cases were grave, like her bomb encounter in a bus, to the point where she thought, “Goodbye world;” hearing a shoot-out right outside her house, seeing someone dead, killed in the crossfire, whom she knew and smelling the stench. She even experienced being run after by a drug addict. Thus, these experiences of her made her “low-key obsessed...sa gore.” (low-key obsessed with gore.) Her works now revolve around life and its stages. She remarks about her realization that life is bloody. Moreover, her works are based on her understanding of different beliefs. This is her core, she said, referring to macabre. Through her latest works, she pours out her anger with the world. And to her, the voices she would have in her head, seemed to be the ones making the works, not her. There was a time when she put her works together, each was different, not only in terms of style but with the "core." But at this point in her life, she is coming to the realization that whatever is dominant within her manifests itself outwardly. She implies in her narrative that she has reached a certain level of boldness in showing her works, but she just needs to be more confident. In other words, she can now put herself out there. “So ayon. Gusto ko lang in the fu-ture...mommy ko at mama ko, pag tinitingnan nila, alam mo yo’ng napapatigil sila. Parang nagkakaroon na sila ng clue kung ano ba talaga nasa loob ng isip ko. Which is good. Napapahiram ko sa kanila yo’ng vision ko.” (There it is. In the future, I just want my Mommy and my Mama to pause whenever they would see my art. In a way, they

would have a clue about what goes on in my mind, which is good. I am able to give them a glimpse of my vision.). Though she has been told she is vulnerable, she says that it is not a bad thing because “being vulnerable is being hu-man, we can’t change that.” She has been also told to be oblivious. But her answer to that is this: “We don’t lose when we choose to fight.” She still has that hope, although she is not aiming for much, that everything will turn out to be good in the end. This is her focus now.

DISCUSSION

The question was investigated using the narrative research approach: how do personal experienc-es trigger a Fine Arts graduate artist to resort to art as an escape? These are the findings that were categorized into the following three themes: (a) Situation; (b) Interaction; and (c) Continuity.

Situation. Her experiences took place in the school setting and home setting. She regarded her-self as someone who needed constant validation and was not confident in herself. In college, she considered herself to be different, unlike her classmates who were "sobrang gifted." (really gift-ed.). After college, she attended forums to satisfy her need to feel confident enough to put her-self out there in the field of visual art. She also explained the setting of her community and how certain experiences in the area triggered her to create art. According to the Uses and Gratification theory, an individual seeks a certain media - art, in the participant’s case, to achieve a result such as "entertainment" or relaxation.” It also explains the idea of how people use different media to gratify their "emotional, wishful thinking, and learning" needs. Furthermore, as suggested by Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch,1973), the uses of media can be for “diversion, personal relation-ships, personal identity, and surveillance” (David, 2016). For the participant, experiences in the different settings she was in triggered her to use art in order to divert her feelings and thoughts.

Interaction. What drove the participant to resort to art as an escape was to a great degree be-cause of the loss of very significant people in her life, particularly her uncle and aunt who had great confidence in her. Another person who was dear to her, her Lola (grandmother), lost the battle to cancer which caused her to be devastated. It was in these experiences where she found herself creating art to help her cope with the grief and pain. In her senior year, she felt abandoned by her closest friends whom she had invested time and effort only to be left hanging when she needed them most. Other interactions that contributed to her resorting to escapism were the bul-lies she encountered in high school. Instead of being socially active, she would be

very selective of the friends she had to also avoid this situation. A high school friend of hers, however, helped her find her passion in the arts which gave her the needed push to pursue arts. Lastly, the participant experienced near-death events like being chased by a drug-influenced person, an IED (Im-provised Explosive Device) being thrown towards a bus she was in and personally witnessing someone she knew killed by gunfire right in front of their house. She even narrated that she could smell the reeking stench of the corpse. These triggered her to be “low-key obsessed” with gore. In connection with the Displacement Theory by Sigmund Freud, an individual may redirect a feeling, a thought or a motive to something else, redirecting that impulse to a point that becomes a “symbolic substitute” (McLeod, 2017). In the case of the participant, art became her substitute.

Continuity. At the time she shared her story, she recounted the experiences from her past, covering her childhood, high school, college and post-graduate experiences which continues to affect her decisions and practice in art in the present. According to Baier and Buechsel (2012), there are triggers that can cause an individual to bounce back and forth in the different stages of bereavement, similar to a pinball machine. In her narrative, she often shifted from relaying her past and her experiences in the present. Moreover, it was evident that she had not yet fully recovered from her past.

Conclusion

The researchers investigated the subject of escapism in the context of visual arts. From the narrative of the participant, the researchers concluded that there are certain individuals whose experiences are concealed from the view of others. Since they do not want to expose what they feel or what they are experiencing due to various reasons unknown to the public or even to their friends and families, they resort to escapism. They acknowledge the problem or issues that come their way. However, they choose to redirect their thoughts to a specific activity like art. Engaging in artistic practices does not solve the root cause of the problems that may be encountered, but it allows the mind to be occupied and to channel these emotions through art. Similar to social media and the use of gadgets, it keeps a person’s mind off the problems. Concerning the participant's situation, she found her release, her escape through art. She has found art as a medium to fill in her needs. The apparent need that surfaced in her narrative was her need for validation, support, and understanding. Thus far, art has helped her handle the harsh realities of her past and present. Moreover, art served to give her a way of expressing her innermost thoughts and feelings.

This research will contribute to the existing knowledge of escapism in the field of visual arts even in the local context. Further research on the lives of contemporary artists and artisans is needed in the field of narrative inquiry. An understanding of the different artists, their experiences, the relationship between their experiences and their artworks, the artworks themselves as the subject will give insight to those who read their stories. Moreover, a deeper understanding of the artists will clarify misconceptions in the field of visual art and also give new perspectives and insights to a common mentality of artists as introverts and other negative stereotypes.

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