

Dissertation proposal: The relationship between an artist knowledge about mental illnesses
and the artwork reception

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The collection of research and thoughts that I have gathered is an insight to my research and understanding of why I think that art and mental illnesses fit hand in hand whether the artist has a mental illness or the artwork is a representation of a mental illness itself. I explore the keywords: mental illness, reception, interpretation and relation.

What is meant by the term mental illness? Many people have different interpretations of the word 'mental' and the word 'illness'. Still, whatever the understanding of those words is, the main objective is to discover how positive attitudes towards those with mental illness conditions can improve with the proper support they receive from others understanding of the difficulties of living with these conditions. In addition, mental illnesses are also still stigmatised, and many myths and misconceptions still exist. These create natural barriers to recovery and often keep people isolated. Everyone has their own needs regarding good mental health, and it is often very unique. Mental illnesses are health conditions involving changes in emotion, thinking or behaviour (or a combination of these). Mental illnesses are associated with distress and problems functioning in social, work or family activities. The people who have the unfortunate experience of living with a mental illness are unlikely to seek help. Research suggests that the strain of mental illness negatively impacts help-seeking; still, there is little information about the factors that relate to the stigma positively associated with seeking help among those with compromised mental illnesses. Emerging research suggests that the social identity perspective, namely group social identification and perceptions about the group, may explain how people experience mental illnesses and avoid seeking help.[1,2] The core abstract study related to mental ill-health (illness) did not pledge solely with the occurrence; however, in the definition, even if an objective or scientific definition is an affair to the study. For a prosperous identification of the proper definition, it is fundamental to evaluate discussions for purported mental illnesses. The issue accordingly arises when establishing the connection between the treatment of mental illnesses and the problems abstract about the capacity of people with mental disorders to take responsibility for their actions and justify insanity under the law. Conceptual literature has been dominated by four vital issues: the definition of mental illnesses and their relationship with other physical illnesses, the grouping of mental illnesses, and the responsibility of mental illnesses concerning symptomatic behaviours. They reduce structural barriers to mental health by initiatives to reduce discrimination and inequalities and promote access to education, meaningful employment, housing, services, and support for vulnerable populations. But this report starts to give some illustrations of what it means for people. And more importantly, this report begins to examine causes us to discriminate against others. It looks for parallels and differences in other kinds of discrimination - based on gender, sexuality, age, culture, religion, colour, victimisation, physical disabilities and size.[3]

Sometimes people offer very simplistic solutions to the problem of discrimination. Just change attitudes?. Tighten up the law. Get people to stand up for themselves. For every complex problem, there is a simple solution. And it is wrong. Complex problems usually mean

complex solutions. Discrimination is not a tame problem. It is a wicked one, so the solution involves combining approaches, as this report explains. We also need to be aware that the problem of discrimination will itself change as we try to change it, and so it may need to be resolved time and time again. The Mental Health Commission is committed to get rid of discrimination against people with mental illnesses. It knows that there is no quick solution because it involves refusing, as a society, to accept no longer the myths about mental illnesses.[4]

Art is, for most, a production of human creativity that is not determined by any other motives than that of the creative act itself. It is clear that intentionality becomes an all-important framework: It is through this that it becomes achievable to determine in case a given instance is art or not. This corresponds with George Dickie's observation that "if the object's history is unknown, it might be impossible to tell if it's an artwork." [5] The general problem with this is that intentionality is rarely possible to observe in any direct way since it is often only a thought process that exists in the mind of whoever created the piece. Thus it becomes a problematic framework to put forth any factual statements about. That it is a complex framework to handle does not justify not taking it into account at all; however – the sheer vastness of possible interpretations of a given piece is a condition under which the sphere of art exists. Seeing as how intentionality is sometimes merely an unobservable thought process, it might seem a futile task to try and figure out what the basis of it is. And, true enough, sometimes it will be: [6] In the context of art, the assumed time and place of the creation of the given piece – along with, obviously, what the actual piece itself, how it appears and what other pieces it can be placed concerning – can help come up with such a likely answer, though neither, of course, give any direct access to the thoughts behind the piece: Sometimes we do not know and will never know for sure. As with life itself, encountering such a dead-end is the cause of incredible frustration for many people, leading them to come up with answers for unanswerable questions – giving detailed accounts of what happens when we die being a prime example of this. In such cases, all that one can do is to operate through the concepts of common sense, logic and probability: We will not ever know, but what seems to be a likely answer? Essential in all interpretations is the fact that the subject who interprets will always have a pre-understanding of the object he is confronted with, in the sense that the lived life, the experiences, and the social and cultural position of the subject will always be crucial to the interpretation of the object. This pre-understanding cannot be switched on and off – it is always there. This reading of "perception" is closely tied together with the task of "judgment", which goes as follows: It is not only a lofty assessment of the qualities of a piece of art made by "experts", but also what happens when any person to himself or someone else consciously or subconsciously states the direction in which the taste-based perception of a piece of art (or anything else) is going: The emergence of an awareness of how something corresponds with one's taste. A judgment falls into one of three major categories: Positive, negative – or indifferent. Phrased as statements, they could go like this: "I like it", "I don't like it", and "I don't care about it"[7]. With the reception of art being an encounter between the given piece and the life experiences of the recipient, there is no reason to believe that a person cannot have an affair with art that puts especially happy or painful experiences in a perspective that causes a strong emotional reaction, which matches or is even more potent than the one that emerged when the incident was had. Perhaps the person has been in denial, has tried to suppress the experience, or has felt alone with the background. Then, upon

encountering the artistic representation of a corresponding experience, the emotional outburst happens – in a straightforward way, not in a “toned down or indirect” way.[8]

This examination explores the relationship between engagement with the creative arts and health outcomes, specifically the health effects of music engagement, visual arts therapy, movement-based creative expression, and expressive writing. Although there is evidence that art-based interventions are effective in reducing adverse physiological and psychological outcomes, the extent to which these interventions enhance health status is largely unknown. Our hope is to establish a foundation for continued investigation into this subject and to generate further interest in researching the complexities of engagement with the arts and health. Implied in this definition is the tie to health outcomes or changes in health due to action; in the present case, the connection between artistic engagement and the psychosocial and biological manifestations of that connection. More specifically, there is evidence that engagement with artistic activities, either as an observer of the creative efforts of others or as an initiator of one's creative endeavours, can enhance one's moods, emotions, and other psychological states as well as have a salient impact on important physiological parameters. Art and health have been at the centre of human interest from the beginning of recorded history. Despite that fact and the invested effort and growth of knowledge and understanding in each arena, it is interesting that we often still find ourselves struggling with the “fundamentals” of art and health and their meaning in society. We do not attempt to clarify or resolve these fundamental issues. Instead, we intend to summarise current knowledge about the connection between art and health, identify the most compelling next steps for investigation, and generate further interest in researching the complexities of art and health. Legitimate research questions include whether specific art-based therapies are more or less effective than others, whether the impact of therapy can be tied to other important variables and preconditions, and whether health benefits are sustained or short term. These issues deserve vigorous continued attention. [9]

Bibliography

Note: I have recently done mental health courses as part of my NVQ2 basic training and used that as my main course of research/referencing however I am unable to share the documents for confidential reasons. (Fieldbay elfyelearning)

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[9] confidential source, password protected site used.