



The Idea of an Essay

Volume 1 *Reflecting on Rockwell, Contending for Cursive, and 22 Other Compositions*

Article 21

September 2014

The Effect of Music on Creative Writing

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Recommended Citation

Pugh, K. C. (2014) "The Effect of Music on Creative Writing," *The Idea of an Essay*: Vol. 1 , Article 21.
Available at: https://digitalcommons.cedarville.edu/idea_of_an_essay/vol1/iss1/21

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“The Effect of Music on Creative Writing,” by Kelley Pugh

Instructor’s Note

In this paper, Kelley asks several research questions about the effects of music on creative writing, and then uses empirical research methods to answer those questions. The purpose of this assignment was for students to design a research study about writing and then conduct the research to answer their questions. The paper is organized like a social science research article, with a literature review, methods section, results, and discussion. The data that Kelley collected is fascinating and really shows the power of her research design and method. Her data yielded interesting results and conclusions that have implications for people interested in creative writing. She was also able to give some evidence for the, previously under-investigated, “Mozart effect,” and thus was able to add her voice to a real academic conversation in the field of writing studies.

Writer’s Biography

Kelley Pugh, also known as KC, is a freshman Social Work major from Virginia. KC has always enjoyed creative writing, but this is the first time she has ever attempted a scholarly article such as this. KC enjoys the company of others and has a deep appreciation for the arts.

The Effect of Music on Creative Writing

Lit Review

The effect of music in general has been of interest to scholars for a very long time; given the fact that music is heavily imbued into all cultures and seems to be able to elicit strong emotional responses from listeners (Alamali, Barnett). An example of why music is so interesting to researchers is the theory of the Mozart Effect. According to the Mozart Effect, music is thought to be powerful enough

to not only influence emotions, but actions as well (Thompson). However, research with the Mozart Effect is not yet substantial enough to come to a conclusion on how it affects creative writing. In order answer to this question, I will examine just how universal the effects of music are by observing written creative responses to certain musical compositions. By identifying a universal emotion found through these written works, I should be able to determine the validity of the Mozart Effect. Furthermore, this study will identify whether or not music can be used to purposely convey a specific emotion that can be transferred into writing.

One of the reasons why music has been studied so broadly is because it has been used for a multitude of different reasons and has always been a part of our culture. For example, John Negri states in “15 Purposes of Music” that in ancient times music was used to prepare armies for war, accompany dance rituals, and orally communicate stories and ballads from generation to generation. As a result of the long history of music, it has been traditionally incorporated into our culture and permeates all of our lives in very deep and significant ways.

Although music is still used in wars and dances, it is commonly believed that the primary purpose of music has shifted to influence the emotions of the individual. Supporting this claim, famous writer and theologian C.S. Lewis has defined the true art of music as letting sound stimulate personal thoughts and ideas within us, rather than merely listening to a tune and reacting to it. Indeed, in this modern era music is purposefully composed to embody certain emotions and is used for the listener’s reflection.

Researchers such as Usama Alamali and Gregory Barnett know that music has evolved in such a way that it can elicit specific emotional responses from listeners and have done studies to prove this phenomenon. Likewise, these researchers have found strong evidence that some music is more likely to provoke a particular emotion more than other types of music. For example, Barnett conducted a study in which participants listened to different modes of music and then responded with how they felt. Amazingly,

many of the emotions experienced by the listeners were exactly the same. In a similar study, “The Effect of Music on Cognitive Emotional Responses,” done by Alamali et al., evidence shows that classical music tends to have a relaxing effect on people of all demographics. By studying people’s moods before and after a particular piece of music is listened to, Alamali et al. were able to identify the reoccurring trends in mood. From observing these trends in mood, Alamali et al. deduced that “listening to classical and self-selected relaxing music after exposure to a stressor, resulted in a significant reduction in anxiety, anger, and sympathetic nervous system arousal in comparison with participants who sat in silence or listening to heavy metal music” (Alamali, pg. 2). Similar to these findings, in her article “Music: A Link Between Cognition and Emotion” Carol Kruhman agrees and argues that it is common to experience the precise emotion that others experience when listening to the same piece of music.

The idea that emotional responses to music are similar from person to person suggests that these responses are innately acquired. This theory is supported by the fact that even the untrained ear can experience emotion when listening to a song. For example, in a study on the effects of Beethoven, Leon Botstein credits Beethoven’s success to his “music conveying a meaning to wide range of listeners” (Botstein, pg. 6). In other words, people of all musical backgrounds felt the same emotion when listening to Beethoven’s music. In addition to this finding, Botstein has also identified that the emotion linked with certain modes and keys has remained consistent throughout centuries. These findings indicate that there is an almost scientific, biological connection between music and human emotions. Consequently, a wide range of listeners can listen to one piece and all feel the same sentiment evoked by it because of this connection, regardless of their musical or cultural backgrounds.

In addition to the emotional responses we have to music, the Mozart Effect suggests that we actually act upon the emotions we experience. In William Ford Thompson’s study, “Arousal, Mood, and the Mozart Effect,” he had participants perform a spatial task after listening to certain

music. A group listened to music that was expected to have a positive response, and that group's efficiency in cutting and folding paper was significantly higher compared to a group that did not listen to music at all. Conversely, a group that listened to a composition that was expected to have a negative response performed the same task much less efficiently. In conclusion to this study, the theory of the Mozart Effect certainly seems to be true which caused Thompson to argue that there is "compelling evidence that the Mozart effect is an artifact of arousal and mood" (Thompson, pg. 249). Even from our own personal experiences, many can testify that certain music can make us act a certain way. For example, this could include performing well at sporting events because of a thoughtfully organized warm-up CD, becoming compelled to dance because a happy song came on the radio, or even recalling facts more effectively because the professor was playing a classical symphony at the beginning of class.

Although it is evident that we have bodily responses to music, to what extent will we be affected? Is music really so influential that it not only changes our mood, but also our actions? My hypothesis is that music is powerful enough to actually alter our thinking process and our perception to the point where it can significantly modify our actions. In this article I will attempt to address the question of to what extent the Mozart Effect impacts our creative writing abilities.

Some research has been done on this topic, with the conclusion that the universal emotions experienced through music do transfer to creative writing. For example, in Rebecca Brown's "Sound Tracking Ourselves: Teaching Creative Writing With a Musical Approach," she had participants write a creative response to the music they listened to. Brown found that students not only had similar emotional responses, but similar writings, suggesting that the Mozart Effect could be universal as well. In short, this means that music not only has a predictable impact on emotion, but on actions as well. As this is a relatively new study, however, there still needs to be some clarification and holes filled. By asking participants to creatively describe the music they have been asked to listen to, I will

investigate to what extent music has influence over actions. In other words, I will be attempting to answer the question if the strongest emotions override what we write about, or if music is powerful enough to completely alter the thinking process. The study of how music affects our emotions, and by extent our creative writing abilities, could open many doors to new ways of teaching and artistry.

Methodology

In my research I have explored the effects of emotion on creative writing in students. By using music as a form of stimuli, I observed how music affects emotional responses and how those emotional responses affected creativity. By observing the participants, I have attempted to answer the following research questions: 1) How much of an impact does music have on our emotions? 2) To what extent can those emotions be transferred into our writing? Or in other words, how valid is the Mozart Effect?

To answer these questions, I used a survey, a case study, and textual analysis from the case study to evaluate the written works of the survey participants. The preliminary survey gave me a rough idea of how music would influence writing and provided some quantitative research. However, qualitative research was the most substantial data I received, so I put more of an emphasis on the case study and textual analysis. I used more specific questions and fewer people than I would have if I had been collecting quantitative research.

The first step of my research was the survey I sent out to friends and family over social networking sites. I sent the survey to as many people as possible and tried to make sure I covered a demographic variety. To make people more likely to answer the questionnaire, I kept the questions simple and easy to answer. Since the purpose of my research was to answer the question of whether or not music affects writing, I asked questions about whether or not people thought music was important, if it affected emotions, if it could influence writing, etc. The first question asked the participants to rate the importance of music in their life on a scale from 1 to 10. The survey also asked the participant's opinion on whether or not music had

the power to affect actions or performances, which is the basic theory of The Mozart Effect. Another question asked whether or not music could make a lasting impression on mood and writing. From the responses to these questions, I was able to gather statistical information on people's opinions of how music transferred into creative writing. Even though the participants did not know it, I was really asking about their opinion on the validity of the Mozart Effect. The questions gave me a quantitative aspect to my research, which helped balance out the predominately qualitative research I collected. This quantitative information can be generalized more readily than my case study and textual analysis could be.

In addition to the survey I designed, I also organized a case study in which I analyzed people's responses to music. I selected to use a case study so I could have more qualitative research, in hopes of being better able to answer the question of whether or not music affects writing. Furthermore, the survey conducted earlier was flawed in that it only brought to light what participants thought, not necessarily what they did or what was true. I hoped that this research would provide a more truthful and wholesome answer.

In the case study with three trials, my participants were seven friends with a variety in demographics. Three had experience in music and four did not. Ideally, I would have had seven participants answer all three trials, but it turned out that seven people answered the first trial, only five people answered the second trial, and only three people answered the third trial. Three different times, I had my participants listen to three different pieces of music. Each trial asked the same exact questions with the only difference being the piece of music I had them listen to. In the case study, I started out by asking the participants what mood they were in and if they could describe that mood in a creative way by using imagery and sensory appeal. I asked this so I could compare with their mood after they had listened to the music and see if it influenced them at all. I also asked if anything significant had happened very recently that deeply affected their mood. After the

participants recorded their mood, I then proceeded to have them listen to a piece of music with no distractions. In the first trial, I had the participants listen to a piano rendition of “Norwegian Wood”, a Beatles’ Song. In the second trial, I had the participants listen to an instrumental version of “Be Thou My Vision.” In the third trial, I had the participants listen to Danny Gatton’s electric guitar version of The Simpson’s theme song. In all three trials, the music selection was about four minutes to seven minutes long and did not have any lyrics. I tried to select pieces that were not well known, so there would be no indirect associations with emotions from previous experiences. After the participants listened to the music, I asked them to write a creative response to the music. I asked them to envision what type of scene in a movie would be playing if this had been the soundtrack. I expected answers to be descriptive enough to get a clear picture of what was going on. I encouraged the use of imagery and other creative literary devices. This part of the case study was what comprised my textual analysis, which will be covered in the following paragraphs. Next, I asked the participants whether they had heard the piece before and whether or not they liked the piece based on personal preference. These factors could be important in the emotional response to the music. Then I asked the participants to use a few descriptive words to describe the piece. In addition, I gave them a resource for them to use if they were having a hard time finding descriptive words. Lastly, I again asked them to describe their mood as descriptively as possible and whether or not they thought the particular piece of music changed their mood. By comparing their answer of the last question to their answer of the first question, I developed an understanding of how music affected emotions and to what extent.

Finally, the third part of my research consisted of me analyzing the creative responses gathered from the case study. The purpose of the textual analysis was to see to what extent music could affect our writing. Though this part of the research is largely based on the perspective of the interpreter, it could very well be the most informative and enlightening part in the entire study. When coupled with the knowledge of the current mood of the writer, it

could help answer the question about the validity of the Mozart Effect. The textual analysis helped me to answer to what extent music affected our writing, and if emotion from music in particular was transferable to other creative forms. Textual analysis of the responses brings more qualitative information than a simple survey and in that aspect has many positive qualities. I was able to gain a deeper understanding as to how writers specifically responded to music. Because of the qualitative research, it was much easier to make connections between music, emotion, and writing. However, because it was a relatively small sample of people, my data may not prove to be very generalizable to a larger population. I tried to minimize this problem by selecting a variety of people.

When analyzing the responses, I searched for underlying themes of the scenes portrayed and what common emotions might be associated with those scenes. By looking for similarities in descriptive imagery, symbolism, and word choice, I was able to identify which type of emotions the music conveyed. I also took into account the previous mood of the writer and how that may have manifested itself in the written response. However, this could also prove to be a bias in my research because I expected to see a certain result. My expectations may have clouded the actual results of the data, although I tried to avoid any particularities I may have had.

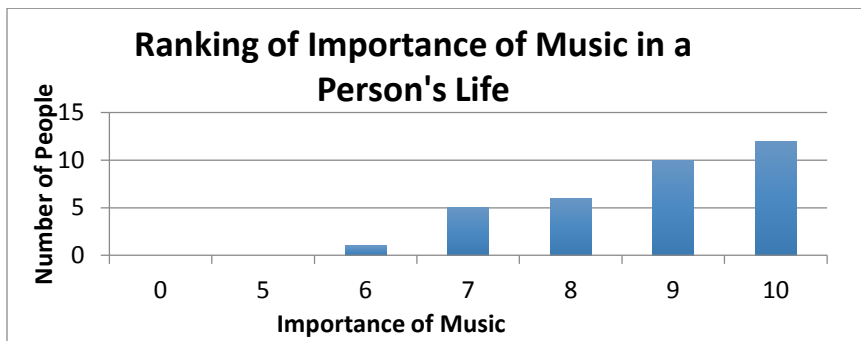
I used a survey, a case study, and textual analysis to compile a set of data. By varying my methods, I hoped to be more consistent in the data I collected.

Research Data

I designed a survey that I sent out through Facebook to friends, relatives, and peers. I sent out the survey to over one hundred Facebook friends, and received thirty-three responses. The responses I received encompassed a wide variety of people aging from ages sixteen to mid-fifties. There was also a variety in the musical background of the participants. This survey was designed to get a general idea of what people thought about music and the effects of music. In an attempt to make the survey as hassle-free as possible for the participants, I limited the survey to nine

simple questions that did not require immensely deep responses.

Since the purpose of my research was to answer the question of whether or not music affects writing, I asked questions about whether or not people thought music was important, if it affected emotions, if it could influence writing, etc. The first question asked the participants to rate the importance of music in their life on a scale from 1 to 10. From their responses, I found that the rankings ranged from 6-10, with the most frequently given rating being a 10 followed by the second highest rating being a 9. These responses indicate that most people acknowledge music as being a crucial factor in their life.



The factor of whether or not a person was musically talented his or herself did not affect the responses substantially; several people who I know are not involved in playing music ranked the importance of music as a 10; several people who I know play instruments and understand music only ranked the importance of music in their lives as a 7.

Other questions I asked pertained to whether or not participants thought music affected emotions. Unanimously, all participants answered that yes, music does affect emotions and the way we feel. Many participants used stronger terms such as “definitely”, “absolutely”, and “of course” to answer the question. One participant interestingly said, “It is impossible for [music] not to affect our emotions.” The only slight discrepancy I found in the responses was something that one participant

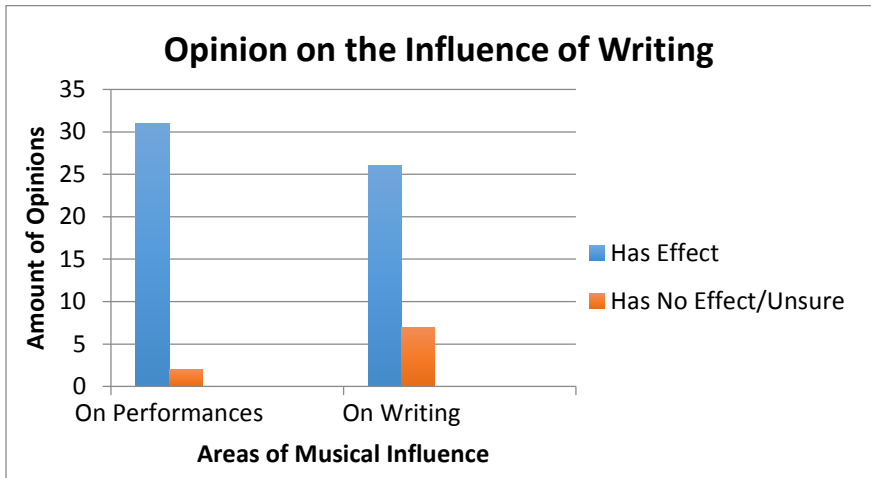
said. He said that “music is mostly an amplifier for emotions; it brings out things we already feel.” While this doesn’t deny that music affects emotions, it might suggest that music may not be as powerful as we make it out to be.

I also asked whether or not music could have a lasting impression on mood. 28 out of 35 participants believed that music did make a lasting impression. Some went as far to say that music not only affected their mood, but their lives. However, the remaining 7 out of 35 participants were not as sure that music would make a lasting impression on moods. While some simply answered “no”, some explained that music was only a temporary entity and did not have power once it was no longer audible. One participant acknowledged the potential of music and yet limited its authority by saying “No. I think the affect is temporary. That temporary impression is pretty powerful, however.”

The survey also asked the participant’s opinion on whether or not music had the power to affect actions or performances, which is the basic theory of The Mozart Effect. This answer was slightly more inconsistent than some of the other questions, although the vast majority of participants still believed the answer to be yes. In addition to the positive response, a few gave examples of how music could affect our actions or performances. All of these examples either dealt with performance in an academic setting or in another competitive sporting environment. In response to this question, there was one “no” and one “possibly”. However, it appears as if participants were less sure of this question because only two participants gave definitive answers (“most definitely” and “of course it does”).

When asked whether or not music could affect writing, the answers became even more inconsistent. Hypothetically, the answer to this question would have been the same as the previous one since writing is an action and a measure of performance. However, according to their responses, they did not think this was necessarily the case. Seven participants either did not think music could affect

writing or were unsure. The results imply that some people think music can affect some areas, but not others.



Interestingly, some people identified music as something that helped their writing, while some targeted it as a distraction while writing. However, it is important to note that the responses that were most substantial to my research did acknowledge music as something that was powerful and had the ability to affect writing, regardless of whether or not it was preferred in the writing process.

In addition to the survey I designed, I also organized a case study in which I analyzed people's responses to music. I started with seven participants, but as the study went on fewer people responded. This resulted in seven participating in the first trial, five in the second trial, and three in the third trial. While I do not believe this significantly affected the results because of the consistency of answers, ideally the number of participants would have remained the same.

The first objective of this study was to provide a clearer answer if music affected our emotions. In the first part of the study, I asked the participants to describe their mood as descriptively as possible. The participants did as I wished in all three trials, and described their moods very specifically using two to four sentences. Some used imagery to describe their mood such as "I just want to close my eyes and wake up at the beach", "I feel like everything is exactly how it's supposed to be, and like I'm lying

underneath a canopy of trees and just daydreaming”, and “I just feel like it's this mountain that I can't quite seem to get over, and things just keep piling on top.” Some participants used extensive literary devices to describe their mood. One answered, “the mood I'm feeling is as I'm in a field of green grass, but I'm looking up towards the sky, but there is this huge HUGE block of matter in my way from seeing the sky. But the block is moving, kind of in the same way as a cloud blocks the sun and slowly moves away... but this block is blocking my whole view, and I'm reaching the end of it, about to have my view completely unconcealed.” All participants followed this trend in all three of the trials.

After I had the participants listen to the music (which is part of the textual analysis and will be discussed below), I had the participants describe their mood as specifically as possible once again. Their moods tended to be the same as they had previously been, however usually with a new twist. This implies that while music usually does not completely alter our mood, it does have an influence on it. For example, the participant who described the block in the sky said afterwards that the block was “more of just a cloud now.” This type of trend existed in almost all of the moods; only once did a participant report a complete change of mood. Depending on the type of music that was played (happy, sad, etc.), the participant tended to drift towards that emotion in their mood after listening to the music. For example, one participant before listening to the music described his mood as “worn down and tired.” After listening to music that was described as refreshing and light, he then described his mood as “willing to make a difference in someone's life” and he was “encouraged that he could make a difference.” In another trial, another participant also experienced a mood swing and went from “irritated” to “motivated, yet somber” after listening to a piece that was described as deep and powerful.

In addition to how the type of music affected mood, the personal preference the participant had of the music also affected their second mood. The general trend was that if a participant had a personal liking for the music, then the difference between the first mood and the second mood

tended to be greater. If a participant did not like the music, there was rarely any mood change at all. In the last trial, none of the participants claimed to enjoy the music and there was very little mood change, with the most measurable swing being from a participant who said he felt “a little more energized.”

Although the case study gave me great insight, perhaps the most important part of my research was the textual analysis of the participant’s responses. After having the participants listen to the music, I asked them to describe what type of movie scene the piece would fit into. Since imagery is often associated with emotion, I hoped this type of writing would help identify the question of whether or not music affects writing.

The first piece I had seven participants listen to was “Norwegian Wood”, a piano rendition of a classic Beatles song. Two participants recognized the piece but said it did not affect their response to it. Words used to describe this piece were extremely consistent, such as “relaxing”, “refreshing”, “mellow”, and “light”. Regardless of the mood the participants were previously feeling, they all described the piece of music along the lines of these emotions. Some even used the same exact imagery descriptions, such as “glimmering ocean” and “tranquil woods”. In the responses there was a consistent theme of discovery, nostalgia, and reflection on life. There were no lyrics to this piece of music. This suggests that music has universal connotations without the use of words. Somehow, each participant was able to produce a movie scene that was extraordinarily consistent with the other responses. Two of the responses are as follows:

“I’m imagining people in love on the top of a mountain on a sun-dappled blanket, looking out over the landscape and planning the rest of their lives. Then I can see them years later with their children on the same mountain, watching them run and play not really needing to say anything. I can see the same two people growing old and dreaming about their spot on the mountain but not able

to go there anymore except in their minds. They are still deeply in love, though, and every time they look into the other's eyes they can see a montage of their lives together.”

“I pictured a young couple walking along a wooded trail, with an overview of a mountain lake. The couple started off as kids, but then grew up together. Every few moments the season in the woods would change. When they started out they were kids running down the trail and it was early spring and leaves were coming out. Lots of birch trees. Next scene they are still walking but the season has changed to summer. They are a couple now. Smiling laughing, but just walking now, not running like they were kids.

Scene shifts to fall. Now they have kids and the kids are running up and down the trail. Everyone happy. Leaves are starting to fall. A crisp fall day. Jackets on.

Final scene. Winter, leaves are gone. Snow on the ground. Cold, breath hanging in the air. Just the couple. Kids are gone. They are still happy.

Their lives have changed but the trees have stayed the same.”

In the second trial, I had five participants listen to an instrumental rendition of “Be Thou My Vision”. No participants recognized the piece, but all claimed to have enjoyed it. The words used to identify this piece were again fairly consistent, such as “hopeful”, “powerful”, and “deep”. However, when asked to produce a movie scene, the participants fell into two separate categories. Two of the participants envisioned a scene of a couple falling in love.

In both scenes, the couple was beginning to learn more about one another. Very interestingly, the season autumn was identified in both movie scenes. The other three participants described the movie scene as the aftermath of an epic battle. This battle was one described as an old-time battle with majestic overtones. Two of the responses about the battle are as follows:

“This song would be in the final moments of the film after a big battle has been fought and won by the protagonist(s). All the work and hardships they went through paid off, but the sound is so melancholy because the main character sadly died in the final battle. I imagine many people mourning and being grateful, as they could not have done it without him/her. It’s a sad yet inspiring moment as one age begins after another ends.”

“The war has just finished, and the dusty smoke is being swiped away by the wind, and the grey scene is visible for the first time ever since the war started. People are coming out from their hiding places and seeing the sun in the first time in a long time, they couldn't see it during this oppression, and were forced to hide to keep their lives. And suddenly over a hill a Knight mounted on a horse, trots up to the top of the hill, being illuminated by the sun, glowing in his glory. He stops, and looks down at all of the people, he has won the victory. He raises his weapon and everyone yells in a cry of relief.”

The fact that two different scenes were described could suggest that that falling in love and winning a battle could have similar emotions.

In the third trial, I had three participants listen to an

electric guitar rendition of The Simpson's theme song. One participant recognized the piece, and all claimed to have disliked it. Again, the descriptive words were extremely consistent, such as "aggressive", "energized", and "bold." Even though the three participants described different scenes, they all had the same message of young people going out and having fun. The themes "living the life" and "just having a good time" were described in all three movie scenes. Two of the responses were as follows:

"I picture a girls' night out with a group of about 5 women in their late 20s. They're out on the town and having the time of their lives. They're letting go of all their inhibitions and just trying to have a good time together. It starts to get a little out of hand, but they all keep each other safe and laugh about it the next day."

"For a soundtrack I pictured a pair of good ole' boys fixing up a car for a big race. Working in a barn they start with a tired old car, but by the end of the song they have a race winner. It is one of those speeded up montage scenes where they work hard tearing the car apart, testing things, getting it started, paint it, take it on the road, and during the really fast guitar pieces they are flying down a dirt road."

The consistency of these responses shows an interesting trend. Whether or not we actually are in the same mood that the music portrays, we can still effectively use music to evoke similar writings.

Discussion Section

From my survey, my case study, and my textual analysis, I was able to deduce two main findings. The first was that 1) music does evoke emotion, and that this phenomenon may be universal. It is difficult to say whether

or not this phenomenon is actually universal, because of the lack of diverse cultural background in my participants. However, all people in my experiment invariably experienced an emotion when listening to music, and many experienced the same emotion. The second finding is that 2) music can directly affect our creative writing. Even non-lyrical music that someone has no previous connections to can produce powerful imagery. Furthermore, this imagery even appears to be the same from person to person. These two findings are similar in the sense that music predisposes us to behave in a certain way. Specifically, there seems to be a universal emotional response to music as well as a universal physical response to music. Hence, this suggests that the Mozart Effect is a very valid and legitimate theory, even when applied to writing. This study has helped to answer the question of to what extent music affects our writing. There is still research to be done, but based on the findings of this study we can assume that the Mozart Effect is certainly reasonable.

The first major finding was that music certainly seems to evoke a particular emotion. From the surveys taken, people did think that music was powerful enough to bring about certain feelings. This hypothesis seems to have been confirmed in the case study. By asking participants their mood before and after they listened to a particular piece, there was often a noticeable change between the two answers. More often than not, the moods changed in a similar way. After listening to the music, the moods of the participants became more similar to one another. My findings confirm the case studies of both Alamali et al. and Barnett. Both researchers came to the conclusion that music brought about similar emotions from person to person.

It is evident that music does have an impact on our emotions, however it is important to note that complete mood changes did not occur. It makes sense that “happy” songs make a person happy, and “sad” songs make a person sad. Nonetheless, it does not seem that a depressed person could be made joyous by a “happy” song. For example, this phenomenon was represented when one of the participants was talking about feeling frustrated, and there was a huge

block in the sky, but after listening to the piece of music he felt like the block was still there, but moving. This example shows that while music affected his mood, it was not powerful enough to completely turn it around. So in short, while music is powerful, it does not appear to be powerful enough to make a depressed person joyous, or vice versa. As one of the participants in my survey put it, “music is mostly an amplifier for emotions; it brings out things we already feel.” Though music definitely has a predictable impact on the human psyche, it usually does not evoke a completely different emotion.

The second major finding was that music greatly influenced creative writing. An outside stimulus such as music could have a deep impact on the creative works one produces. From the responses that I received, I could tell that there was a deep emotion, or at least deep thoughts, involved in the writing process. I was able to deduce that there was a significant amount of brain activity because of the depth of the responses. The fact that the imagery was so strong and consistent seems to verify The Mozart Effect, and confirms both Thompson’s and Brown’s study on the effects of music on actions. The imagery in these responses ranged from good to outstanding, with descriptive images such as “sun-dappled blanket” and “a woman hanging her laundry to dry in the middle of fall”. Interestingly most of the imagery was extremely similar from person to person, as demonstrated in the previous section. The previous emotions of the writer seemed to be irrelevant when he or she was writing the creative response. For example, in the second creative response to “Be Thou My Vision” about the Knight claiming victory, the writer stated he was “irritated”, that “nothing was going exactly right”, and he was “ready for the day to be over”. Yet this participant produced a response that did not hint at those emotions at all; the response (that can be seen in the previous section) was a heroic, glorious, brave, and uplifting piece of literary work.

Given the consistency in imagery, there seems to be an innate, or at least deeply imbedded response humans have to particular music. This could have huge implications

on writing and the arts. By carefully studying the effects of music on emotion, soundtrack artists could purposefully arrange a much more meaningful and accurate movie score. In projects involving creative writing, such as in jobs like scriptwriting or novel writing, music could help produce certain scenes that appeals more comprehensively to the senses. The reason for writing is so that someone else can read it, so if it affects a reader on a deeper level, the writing will be more successful. In this way, music can enhance the quality and content of writing. The responses given were certainly rich in detail, and I believe that it would have been difficult to produce something so imaginative without music.

These findings could also be useful in the application to creative writing classes. A student could have a whole new door of possibilities open to them, as music could help them learn to write this genre better than they would be able to otherwise. If a student were trying to produce a creative writing piece, based on the results from this study, he or she would more likely be successful in conveying emotion through their writing if he or she listened to music.

The use of music in writing could be employed in all levels and stages of writing. Beginning writers as well as professional writers could benefit from the use of music. Since music is a source of inspiration, music would probably be most valuable in the “brainstorming” stage of writing. However, even in the final editing stages of writing music could be useful. By adding minute details to imagery and touches of human emotion, writing becomes much more real and beautiful. The use of music can be employed almost anywhere and at anytime in the creative writing field.

Although my research has helped find some implications of the Mozart Effect, further research could be continued. For example, people who claimed to dislike music, or at least not have any particular interest in it, could be tested the same way. All participants in this study claimed that music was a very important part in his or her life. In addition, this study could be expanded to other types

of writing, not just creative writing. It would be interesting to see how powerful music was when it was used outside of an artistic setting, such as in written research or in essay writing.

It would also be interesting to see if people of different cultures around the world had the same response to the music. From the data I collected, it seems that emotional responses to music are universal; however, these results are hardly generalizable on a global scale. This leads into the question of nature versus nurture. It seems that we are predisposed to have a certain reaction to music, but is this the result of something innate within us, or just the way we were born and raised? A cross-cultural study on the effect of music on writing should be conducted to answer this question.

This study helped to answer the question of to what extent music affected our writing. It seems that music can help us enter into a completely different mindset, which is a very valuable and powerful thing indeed, especially in the area of creative writing.

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