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Moved by Sad Music: Pleasure and Emotion in Sad Music Listening Experiences

by

Matthew Dunaway

Under the Direction of Andrea Scarantino, PhD

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

in the College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

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ABSTRACT

In this thesis, I consider the dialectic surrounding the Puzzle of Musical Tragedy *i.e.* why do people listen to sad music that makes them sad? I agree with Sizer (2019) that the best solutions to this puzzle construe the listening experience itself as pleasant. However, against Sizer, I argue that the feelings music induces are best construed as emotions, not moods. Since sad music can promote the perception of a sad person, I argue that music can be an unconscious object of one's sad feelings. This suggests that sadness – not sad mood – best characterizes the experience of listening to sad music. Further, I argue that Sizer neglects the influence of a pleasant *emotion* induced by sad music that explains why listening to sad music is pleasant: *Being Moved*. I conclude that Sizer offers a counterproductive characterization of the Puzzle of Musical Tragedy.

INDEX WORDS: Emotion, Mood, Intentionality, Paradox of painful art, Puzzle of musical tragedy

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2021

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August 2021

DEDICATION

For my parents, Greg and Debbie, to whom I owe my abiding fascination with music and all its rewards.

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1 INTRODUCTION: THE PUZZLE OF MUSICAL TRAGEDY

Although it seems like a strange choice, people commonly choose to listen to saddening instrumental music like Albinoni's "Adagio in G minor."¹ The melodic theme of "Adagio" proceeds in a slow and sedated manner that resembles the speech and movement of a sad person. And, as the pulse of the bass plods on – at times, almost as if arriving late – the strings sound as if they are imitating the cries of someone experiencing great loss. The music supplies an atmosphere that suggests the expression of a sad individual, painfully trudging through a life beset with tragedy. While listening to sad music like "Adagio," one is liable to feel similarly. This makes listening to "Adagio" an odd choice because it suggests one desires unpleasant feelings that accompany negative emotions like sadness. This is, to say the least, counterintuitive: why would someone choose to listen to music that induces sadness when they avoid sadness in other circumstances?

However, there is disagreement over the extent to which listening to sad music is an unpleasant experience. Those who emphasize the unpleasantness of the experience tend to think people listen to sad music to acquire some form of understanding that the experience affords. Some argue that the experience of sad music can be wholly unpleasant and yet remain enticing because it offers one the capacity to understand one's own feelings (Smuts 2014). Others think that, though the listening experience is itself unpleasant, understanding the piece of music, or one's feelings can produce pleasure (Davies 1995; Levinson 1997). While these are interesting possibilities, Sizer (2019) notes that they fail to acknowledge and explain the way the listening experience is itself pleasant. In contrast, she argues that listening to sad music produces a

¹ Henceforth "Adagio."

mixture of both pleasure and displeasure and that the pleasure it produces is not merely derivative of some form of understanding that the experience affords.

In this thesis, I first agree with Sizer on this point. The empirical literature suggests that the majority of experiences with sad music are pleasant and focus on the music itself rather than a form of understanding. However, Sizer suggests that the feelings that sad music produces are more like moods than emotions. Consequently, she recommends focusing on moods, rather than emotions, when exploring why people listen to sad music. I depart from Sizer, here, first arguing that moods do not adequately describe the sad feelings that sad music produces. Sizer infers that music-induced sad feelings are moods because, unlike prototypical emotions, they do not seem to be directed at anything in particular. However, I follow Juslin (2019) in arguing that emotions can have unconscious objects. Since sad music can promote the perception of a sad person, the music can be an unconscious object of one's sad feelings. This implies that emotions – not moods – best characterize the experience of listening to sad music.

Secondly, I argue that, in reframing sad music listening in terms of moods, Sizer neglects the influence of a pleasant *emotion* that explains why listening to sad music is pleasant: *Being Moved*. To demonstrate, I will offer an account of Being Moved in which this emotion can take either of two properties of the music as its object: 1.) a perception of affiliation between characters in a musical narrative; or 2.) a perception that the music is beautiful. Defending the first object will include a defense of the persona view, in which people can hear music as if it were communicating a story. Since Sizer neglects Being Moved as a source of pleasure, I conclude that her view is deficient: one must recognize the influence of musical emotions in order to fully understand how listening to sad music like “Adagio” can be a pleasant experience.

2 PHILOSOPHICAL TREATMENT OF UNPLEASANT EXPERIENCES OF ART

In this section, I formalize the “paradox” that listening to sad music seems to imply, and show that it is not so much a paradox as a puzzle. Consequently, I refer to the question “why are people motivated to listen to sad music?” as the *Puzzle of Musical Tragedy*. I then review some solutions to this puzzle. There are two broad types of solutions: 1.) those that appeal to pleasure; and 2.) those that do not. In section III, I will reject views that do not appeal to pleasure. For the remainder of the thesis, I will dispute Sizer’s recommendation that the *Puzzle of Musical Tragedy* is best explored in terms of moods rather than emotions.

2.1 The Paradox of Painful Art

Smuts (2014) formalizes the paradox of painful art as follows:

- “1. People voluntarily avoid things that provide painful experiences and only pursue things that provide pleasurable experiences.
2. Audiences routinely have net painful experiences in response to putatively painful art (PPA), such as tragedies, melodramas, religious works, sad songs, and horror films.
3. People expect to have net painful experiences in response to PPA.
4. People voluntarily pursue works that they know to be PPA” (Smuts, 2014, 127).

This formalization stipulates that, as a rule, people avoid pain and only seek what brings them pleasure (1); but also that people nonetheless regularly seek art (4) that they correctly anticipate (3) will lead to feelings that are more painful than pleasurable (2). The first premise is the source of an apparent contradiction that one might label a paradox. This is because the first premise suggests that people are *only* motivated to pursue experiences that bring them pleasure.

This premise contradicts the claim that people evidently do pursue painful experiences in response to art.

However, Smuts (2014) casts doubt on the first premise, arguing that it is obviously false. Although people usually pursue experiences that bring them pleasure, it is far from obvious that this is the only motivation for their behavior. He suggests that the first premise should be replaced with a statement of “predominant motivational hedonism” which asserts that people are predominately, but not solely, motivated by pleasure (129). This statement leaves room for motivating factors that do not depend on pleasure, and so, dissolves the apparent contradiction on which the paradox of painful art rests. There is no contradiction in holding that people sometimes pursue painful experiences though they usually do not. Since a paradox prototypically entails a contradiction, I will label the desire for painful experiences with art as a puzzle rather than a paradox. If people do not need pleasure to motivate their behavior, it is perhaps not an anomaly that people seek art that is painful.

Nonetheless, a puzzle remains: for one still must explain why it is that people are willing to endure painful experiences with art. When applied to sad music, I will refer to this residual puzzle as the *Puzzle of Musical Tragedy*: why are people motivated to listen to sad music that makes them sad? Two broad strategies attempt to explain why people are motivated to listen to sad music that makes them sad: hedonic solutions and ahedonic solutions. Hedonic solutions argue that pleasure *i.e.* an agreeable feeling, associated with listening to sad music motivates people to listen to it. This strategy denies premise 2 above, arguing that listening to sad music is, at least sometimes, net pleasurable. On the other hand, ahedonic solutions grant premise 2 and suggest that something other than pleasure motivates people to seek music that makes them sad.

For example, perhaps the experience allows one to better understand their own feelings or the piece of music.

2.2 Solutions to the Puzzle of Musical Tragedy

Philosophers have offered several motivations for listening to sad music. Davies (1994) offers a hedonic view in which people endure unpleasant experiences for the pleasure associated with satisfying their own curiosities. He suggests that people are willing to experience sadness to learn whether the piece of music is one of value. When one becomes sad while listening, they better understand a piece of music and derive pleasure from this understanding. Levinson (1997) offers several other hedonic solutions in which sad music might reward its listeners and motivate listening. He argues that, while listening to sad music, people can savor unpleasant feelings,² better understand their own feelings, and remind themselves that they are feeling agents. Furthermore, people may feel a sense of mastery over their emotions, a power in expressing them, and a sense of connection with a composer as they experience sadness. Levinson suggests that these rewards make the experience of listening to sad music valuable and can allow one to take satisfaction or pleasure in the experience.

Since Davies and Levinson grant that people can take pleasure in their experiences of sad music, they offer hedonic solutions to the Puzzle of Musical Tragedy. However, they also emphasize the unpleasantness of the experience and appeal to understanding as a source of pleasure. They, therefore, offer what I call “derivative” hedonic accounts: for it is not always the listening that is pleasant, but the understanding that listening affords. This contrasts “direct”

² Levinson does not explain how he expects savoring unpleasant feelings to work. However, he believes that a full understanding of the Puzzle of Musical Tragedy will require acknowledging that people can take pleasure in the unpleasant feelings themselves.

hedonic accounts which hold that the listening experience is itself pleasant.³ Figure 1 below summarizes these taxonomic distinctions.

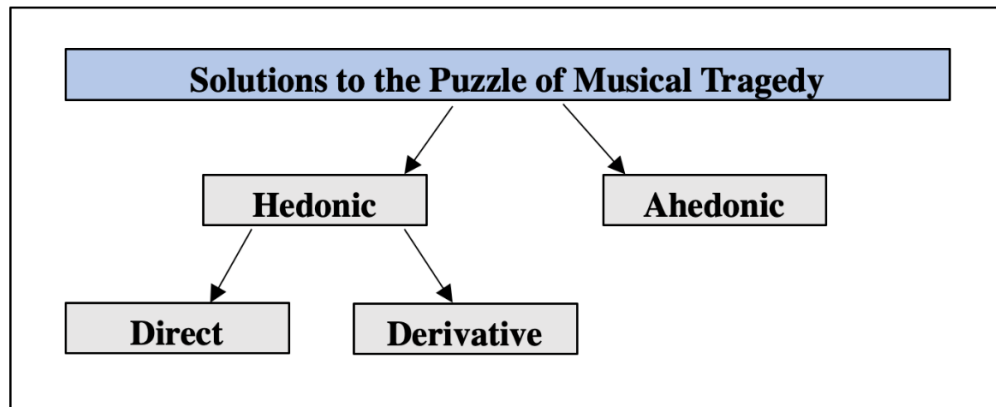


Figure 1. Taxonomy of Solutions to the Puzzle of Musical Tragedy

Hedonic solutions appeal to pleasure to explain why people listen to sad music. Ahedonic solutions do not appeal to pleasure to explain why people listen to sad music. Direct hedonic solutions argue that the experience of listening to sad music is itself pleasant. Derivative hedonic solutions argue that people derive pleasure from a form of understanding that the listening experience affords.

More recently, Smuts (2014) has defended an ahedonic view that appeals to understanding. He suggests that sad music is a valuable source of understanding even when it does not produce *any* pleasure. He argues that these experiences are desirable because they are a means of realizing the value of things that people have lost or could lose. For example, music like “Adagio” might allow a person to re-experience the sadness they had previously felt over a deceased friend. And, through re-experiencing this sadness, the individual might gain an understanding of how much they care about their departed friend. Though gaining this understanding is entirely unpleasant, Smuts argues that, on some occasions, it nonetheless motivates people to listen to sad music.

³ Note, however, that not all of Levinson’s suggestions are derivative of understanding. Savoring unpleasant feelings, for example, would seem to entail taking direct rather than derivative pleasure in the listening experience. Nonetheless, understanding one’s feelings and one’s capacity to feel are each derivative sources of pleasure.

Sizer (2019), however, argues that ahedonic and derivative hedonic solutions fail to account for the way in which the listening experience itself is pleasant. Instead, she offers a direct hedonic account. She holds that listening to sad music is pleasant in virtue of the sad feelings it produces and does not require understanding to produce pleasure or motivate listening. She notes that sad feelings – in contrast to happy feelings – constrain one’s attention. While listening to sad music, then, sad feelings bias people toward paying greater attention to the music rather than their surroundings. Sizer suggests that, as a result, people experience pleasure from their enhanced attention to the way the music develops.

This is because – as people listen to music – they unconsciously develop expectations about the trajectory of the music and experience pleasure when the music confirms those expectations. Sizer suggests that when music produces sad feelings, it leads people to more readily attend to the fate of these expectations. As music confirms peoples’ expectations, this results in pleasure that mixes with the otherwise unpleasant feelings produced by the music. For example, when one’s sad feelings restrict their attention to “Adagio,” they might more readily detect that a pause followed by a characteristic melodic phrase regularly transitions back to the main theme of the piece. When this phrase appears after a sudden stop at the climax of the piece, then, a listener might experience pleasure when – as the music had led them to expect – “Adagio’s” main theme returns. Yet, Sizer does not argue that experiences of listening to sad music are wholly pleasant. She suggests that these experiences are mixed *i.e.* the experience is both unpleasant and pleasant. Sizer, therefore, offers a hedonic solution in which greater attention to the fulfillment of musical expectations produces pleasure that mixes with feelings of sadness. The overall pleasant, though mixed, nature of this music-listening experience then motivates people to listen to sad music.

However, Sizer does not think of these feelings as emotions. She argues that moods best capture experiences of listening to music. This is because she believes that moods – in contrast to emotions – characteristically lack an object *i.e.* they are not about anything. She thinks that when sad music leads to sad feelings, peoples’ experiences do not suggest that they are sad about the music. Rather, they are sad in a diffuse, objectless way. As a result, she recommends shifting the focus of the Puzzle of Musical Tragedy to a discussion about mood rather than emotion. Her argument, however, depends upon the assumption that for a feeling to count as an emotion, one must be aware that it is directed at a particular object. She appears to reason that because people are unaware of an object to which their feelings are directed, they must be experiencing a mood rather than an emotion. Later, I will dispute this claim on the basis that emotions can arise in response to unconscious objects.

3 AGAINST AHEDONIC SOLUTIONS

In this section, I argue that Sizer is right to reject both ahedonic solutions to the Puzzle of Musical Tragedy and hedonic solutions that appeal to pleasure that is derivative of understanding. The empirical literature suggests, to the contrary, that people predominately experience sad music listening as itself pleasant. Later, in section IV, however, I depart from Sizer, arguing that sad feelings to music are emotions not moods. In section V, I argue that Sizer’s mixed moods account is a deficient stance on the Puzzle of Musical Tragedy because it neglects the possibility that an emotion called Being Moved explains why sad music listening is pleasant, and thereby, desirable.

I agree with Sizer that ahedonic solutions to the Puzzle of Musical Tragedy do not adequately capture peoples’ experiences with sad music. In several studies, people have reported that their experiences listening to sad music are generally pleasant overall *i.e.* more pleasant than

unpleasant (Gariddo & Schubert 2011; Peltola & Eerola 2016; Eerola & Peltola 2016). Peltola & Eerola (2016) have also documented several cases in which people claimed that they avoid sad music on the expectation that it will lead to unpleasant experiences. Taken to an extreme, this latter point suggests that people might only desire sad music to the extent that they expect pleasant rather than unpleasant experiences with it. However, this would be too strong. Rather, these findings suggest two important points: 1.) people do not usually experience listening to sad music as unpleasant; and 2.) pleasant experiences with sad music are more clearly desirable than unpleasant experiences. The first point shows that ahedonic solutions apply to a minority of cases. The second point suggests that hedonic solutions might provide the strongest – though not necessarily the only – motivations for listening to sad music. It is also important to note that reports suggest that pleasant experiences with sad music are primarily directed at the music itself, not a form of understanding that people inherit from the experience (Peltola & Eerola 2016; Eerola & Peltola 2016; Eerola, Vuoskoski, & Kautiainen 2016). This complicates both ahedonic solutions that rely on understanding to explain listening and derivative hedonic solutions that emphasize understanding as a source of pleasure. As Sizer notes, in either case, these solutions fail to explain the way listening to the music is itself pleasant.

At best, then, the empirical literature suggests that ahedonic solutions explain a minority of cases where people seek sad music. More problematic for ahedonic solutions, though, is the questionable status of understanding as a genuine motivator. Since people report *avoiding* sad music when it is exclusively unpleasant, it is unclear that understanding, over and above pleasure, regularly motivates peoples' pursuit of sad music. This challenge is difficult for Smuts' (2014) view since he claims that understanding motivates listening in the absence of pleasure.

However, this is not to say that Smuts' view is untenable: for he does not claim that understanding is necessarily the primary motivation people possess for listening to sad music.

These observations are commonplaces in the psychological literature concerning sad music listening. Psychological theories purporting to explain the Puzzle of Musical Tragedy predominately start with the assumption that listening to sad music is generally pleasant (Juslin 2013, 2019; Eerola et al. 2018; Huron 2020). One could even argue that the psychological debate attempts to answer a narrower question than the Puzzle of Musical Tragedy asks: how is the experience of music-induced sadness pleasant? In this way, the psychological literature takes for granted that hedonic solutions both explain the majority of sad music listening behaviors and offer the strongest motivation for listening to sad music. Sizer, then, makes her argument in good company. There is relative consensus in the empirical literature that listening to sad music is generally a pleasant experience, even if it features unpleasant feelings as well. I agree with Sizer and the greater psychological research community that addressing the Puzzle of Musical Tragedy should focus on how the listening experience itself is pleasant. This is because the majority of experiences that people report are more pleasant than unpleasant. This is not to say that understanding derived from the experience cannot produce pleasure or that understanding cannot motivate listening without pleasure. However, understanding appears to be a lesser motivation than pleasure because peoples' experiences are usually focused on the music itself. Furthermore, it is unclear if understanding, apart from the pleasure it might produce, motivates much listening since people do not readily seek music that they expect to be entirely unpleasant.

For these reasons, I will set aside ahedonic solutions for the remainder of this thesis and consider instead Sizer's approach to explaining the pleasant nature of sad music listening. While she suggests that music listening produces moods, however, I will argue that listening

experiences are best captured by the concept of emotion. A shortcoming of Sizer's view is that her commitment to moods neglects the possibility that pleasant emotions influence the music listening experience and explain why people listen to sad music. I now consider and refute her argument that moods best characterize the sad feelings that music produces. Later, I use the points I distill from this discussion to suggest that Sizer neglects the influence of an emotion that is relevant to explaining why the experience of sad music is pleasant: Being Moved.

4 AGAINST MOODS

4.1 Moods and Emotions

The main thrust of Sizer's (2019) argument is to shift the focus of the philosophical debate about the Puzzle of Musical Tragedy to one about the desirability of sad mood rather than sadness.⁴ It is only after she motivates the idea that sad mood, not sadness, characterizes the experience of sad music listening that she proceeds to argue that sad mood facilitates a mixed but overall pleasant listening experience. However, the distinction between mood and emotion is subtle and controversial. I will now briefly consider available accounts of mood, locating Sizer's view among alternatives.

Both moods and emotions are psychological states that involve physiological, neurological, behavioral, and cognitive changes that feel a characteristic way. However, it is difficult to distinguish moods and emotions on the basis of these features. Sad mood and sadness, for example, lack clear physiological and neurological signatures to which one might appeal to distinguish them (Lindquist et al. 2012). Furthermore, both sadness and sad mood have similar cognitive and behavioral profiles. For example, both include cognitive features like a narrowing

⁴ I will reserve "sadness" for the emotion. I will use "sad mood" for the mood. I will use "sad feelings" to generically describe the unpleasant aspect of the sad music listening experience.

of attention, and a disposition to recall sad memories, and behavioral features like frowning, slow speech, and slow movement.

The most widely acknowledged difference between moods and emotions is that moods – in contrast to emotions – possess a characteristic “diffuseness” (Tappolet, 2017). In this sense, moods seem to be both about everything and nothing in particular. When one is in a sad mood, they are not sad about a particular loss. Rather, they feel sad in a general way, taking anything they encounter as a reason to feel sad. This has led some – including Sizer – to conclude that moods do not possess objects *i.e.* moods are not *about* anything (Lormand 1985; Sizer 2000). In contrast, emotions prototypically respond to particular kinds of objects. Sadness, for example, responds to a perception of loss and takes particular instances of loss as its object (Lazarus, 1991). When one learns that their friend has passed away, the loss of their friend becomes the object of their sadness. This makes it appropriate to say that the person is sad *about* the loss of their friend.

The possession of an object is perhaps the clearest candidate distinction between moods and emotions. However, some argue that moods are just emotions with general, or global, objects (Solomon 1976; Kenny 1963). This is to say that moods are emotions that take the whole world as their object. On this view, when one is in a sad mood, they construe everything as a source of loss. Others argue that moods take future states of the environment as their object. They hold that when one anticipates that the near future will contain loss, they will occupy a sad mood. Their sad mood, on this view, takes as its object the possibility that something will soon prompt sadness (Price 2006; Tappolet 2017).

Sizer, however, rejects these views and claims that moods do not possess objects. She argues that moods are particular biases in cognition e.g. attention and memory, that track

changes in one's overall wellbeing (Sizer 2000). On her view, these states are not about anything: they simply accompany the brain's computation of how well it fares with respect to its environment. She holds that the brain monitors states of the body to determine the extent to which one's needs and desires are met. When one's needs and desires are met, they will be in a positive mood. In contrast, when their needs and desires are not met, they will be in a negative mood *e.g.* sad mood.

Framing mood in terms of wellbeing has some appeal because it makes sense of the commonplace that people are more likely to be in a positive mood when they are well-rested, nourished, etc. and more likely to be in a negative mood when they are tired, hungry, etc. (Thayer 1989; Wong 2016). Sizer also believes that this view best accounts for the diffuse nature of moods. As I noted earlier, sad mood leads people to narrow their attention and more readily recall sad memories. Sizer identifies sad mood with these changes and the feelings that accompany them. Since moods are characterized in terms of cognitive biases and not as responses to particular objects, on her view, one would expect that they would seem to be about everything and nothing in particular. This is because sad mood, on her view, is not be a response to particular stimuli, but rather, a disposition that leads people to perceive whatever they encounter in a way that reminds them of loss.

On Sizer's view, then – while sadness is a response to a specific loss – sad mood is a diffuse, objectless state that tracks a variety of poor wellbeing. Sizer relies on this account of emotions and moods to argue that music-listening experiences are more like moods than emotions. However, she does not do so by offering reasons why one's wellbeing should decrease in response to listening to sad music. Rather, she prefers moods to emotions because she believes that moods better capture the experience of listening to music. Since people do not consider

themselves to be sad about the music, she takes this as a reason to believe that people experience sad mood, not sadness, when they listen to sad music. Consequently, Sizer suggests that the Puzzle of Musical Tragedy should be reframed as an inquiry into why people seek out music that induces sad mood not sadness. As I noted previously, she believes that sad mood constrains attention in a way that allows people to experience pleasure while listening to sad music. This pleasure then mixes with the sad mood, producing an experience that is overall pleasant and motivating. I grant that the sad feelings which sad music produces might lead to pleasure in precisely this way. However, I argue these sad feelings qualify as sadness: for sad music itself is an object that precipitates sad feelings.

For the remainder of the thesis, I will entertain Sizer's account of moods. I do not take a position on which characterization of moods is correct, but rather, accept Sizer's view for the purpose of challenging her position on the Puzzle of Musical Tragedy. Her preference for moods depends upon the assumption that one must be aware of what their feelings are about in order for them to possess objects and thereby qualify as emotions.⁵ While developing an account of music-induced emotions, Juslin (2008, 2019) has argued that philosophers tend to make this assumption without warrant. Following Juslin, I argue that emotions can possess unconscious objects contained in music. In particular, I argue that sad music provides an unconscious object of sadness: the perception of a sad person.⁶ Consequently – though people may be unaware of precisely why they feel sad – the music can serve as an object of sadness. I conclude that sad feelings produced by music are better construed as emotions. Later, I use the account of musical

⁵ This is perhaps why Sizer thinks that moods can reflect one's wellbeing without being about one's wellbeing. My argument, therefore, also may suggest that her view of moods implies that moods have objects.

⁶ The perception of sadness in music need not always be unconscious. People readily identify music as sounding sad. I am considering the unconscious case because Sizer believes that the feelings music induces lack this quality. My aim is to show that this is no barrier to identifying these feelings as emotions.

emotions that I distill from this discussion to argue that Sizer's account neglects another emotion, Being Moved, which explains how sad listening experiences are pleasant.

4.2 Sad Music Sounds Like a Sad Person

Research suggests that there are two ways that music induces sadness: 1.) by eliciting a sad memory; and 2.) by resembling the speech and behavior of a sad person (Vuoskoski & Eerola 2012). I will set aside the first possibility because it is arguably the memory, not the music, that elicits sadness in that case (Zangwill 2004). However, the second case suggests that music itself can be an object of sadness. In virtue of resembling the speech and behavior of a sad person, sad music suggests the presence of a sad person whose sadness the music expresses. This perception of a sad person, then, can be the object of one's sadness while listening to sad music. Just as one can become sad because they see another person who is sad, one can become sad because the music, or rather the person it suggests, sounds sad.

There is much support for the idea that sad music resembles sad speech. Meta-analytic data suggest that acoustic features of sad music overlap extensively with the acoustic features that characterize non-musical vocal expressions of sadness (Juslin, & Laukka 2003). For example, consider that when people are sad, they usually talk slowly, softly, and end their phrases at a lower pitch than they begin. Music is expressive of sadness when it possesses features common to sadness like these. This is not an exhaustive list of similarities between sad music and sad speech, however. Minor tonality and vibrato *i.e.* minute oscillations in pitch, are also characteristic of sad speech and music. To illustrate, consider that "Adagio" has minor tonality, a slow pace, a relatively quiet volume, predominately includes melodies that descend in pitch, and uses vibrato throughout the piece. At the opening of this thesis, I sketched some of these acoustic features and noted that they suggest the presence of a sad person, slowly trudging

through a life beset with tragedy and perhaps crying. The reason that music can suggest the presence of a sad person is precisely because these features of the music resemble the typical sounds and behaviors of sad people. It is perhaps unsurprising, then, that music with these features regularly leads listeners to perceive sadness as they listen (Hunter et al. 2008; 2010). Perhaps more surprising, though, there is some evidence that these features lead to perceptions of sadness cross-culturally (Fritz et al. 2009).

Juslin argues that the perception of sadness in music induces sadness in listeners through a mechanism of “contagion” (Juslin 2008; 2013; 2019). This mechanism induces emotion as a result of unconscious bodily mimicry of an observed emotional expression (Eerola 2018). When people confront emotional expressions in everyday life, like a frowning face, they have a propensity to unconsciously mirror this behavior, frowning or otherwise acting in ways that are consistent with the emotion that they observe. As a result, this mimicry leads people to become sad themselves. With respect to sad music, this plausibly occurs as follows: people hear sad music as if it were the voice or movements of a sad person; they then mimic this sadness in an embodied way – for example, frowning. Subsequently, they become sad. Support for this hypothesis comes from studies that have found activation of brain networks related to mental state attribution while listening to music (Steinbeis & Koelsch 2008), activation of pre-motor brain regions that produce speech while listening to music (Koelsch 2006), and increased frowning muscle activity and decreased smiling muscle activity while listening specifically to sad music (Juslin, Harmat, & Eerola 2013; Juslin, Barradas, & Eerola 2015; Bullack et al. 2018).

Sizer grants that music induces sad feelings in this way. However, she believes that the feelings induced by contagion are moods not emotions. This is because she believes that the experience of these sad feelings does not include an object to which these feelings are clearly

directed. However, her argument appears to commit a mistake that Juslin (2019) notes philosophers often make: assuming that the objects of emotions must be conscious. Sizer's argument appears to be the following: since people do not acknowledge that a perception of a sad person caused their sad feelings – or that their sad feelings are about the sadness conveyed by the music – the music cannot be the object of their sad feelings; therefore, these sad feelings are moods not emotions. Her argument, then, relies on the idea that people must be aware of the objects to which their feelings are directed if these feelings are to be emotions.

I grant that people do not often consider their feelings the consequence of perceiving a sad person conveyed through sad music. However, since objects of emotion can be unconscious, listeners' lack of awareness of an object need not mean that their feelings are objectless. As Juslin (2019) notes, research suggests unconscious objects can induce emotion. For example, Öhman & Soares (1994) found that subliminally presented images of spiders and snakes led people with spider and snake phobias to report experiences consistent with fear. Furthermore, these individuals showed skin-conductance responses to these subliminal images but not to other images. Although the participants in this study were unaware of the content of the images, it is inappropriate to call these reactions moods. In this study, participants reported experiences consistent with fear while evidencing a physiological response *specifically* in the presence of images known to be objects that induce fear. Though the participants were unaware that the images caused these reactions, their reactions seem no less object-directed for this lack of awareness. The straightforward way to interpret this finding is to say that the participants reacted to the subliminal images with fear – an emotion that took the images of spiders and snakes as its object.

It does not seem equally appropriate to characterize these responses as fearful moods. Recall that, for Sizer, moods are psychological states that track one's overall wellbeing. They are not responses to particular stimuli. Rather, they are the psychological outcome of a summary computed outside of one's awareness: generally having what one needs and desires or not. The responses in Öhman & Soares' study were too specific for this characterization to have much traction: they were reactions to feared content *i.e.* spiders and snakes. For these fearful responses to count as moods, the experiment would need to alter the participants' overall wellbeing decisively for the worse. However, it is unclear whether these images affected the participants' overall wellbeing to such a degree. Furthermore, the fate of the participants' wellbeing would seem to depend more on their relationship with the world outside of the lab than to the experiment itself. Yet, the responses in the experiment more obviously depend on the content of the subliminal images not a summary of each participant's wellbeing. Even if the experiment reduced the participants' overall wellbeing, though, the best explanation for this reduction is that the participants became afraid when they were confronted with images of spiders and snakes. This is because fear could plausibly alter states of the body that signal that one is not doing well. It seems, then, that if one wants to insist that the experiment affected participants' moods, the most natural way of doing so is to assume that they first became afraid of the images.

Consistent with Juslin (2019), I argue that the sad feelings that music produces arise in a way similar to the way subliminal images produce fear. Though people may not be aware of it, sad music can suggest the presence of a sad person in virtue of its resemblance to sad speech and behavior. An unconscious perception of a sad person, then, can be an object of the sad feelings that the music produces. Consequently, these sad feelings are more like emotions than moods. This is because only emotions arise in response to particular objects. But, beyond this, moods fail

to adequately capture why sad music produces sad feelings. Like with subliminal images, for sad music to produce a sad mood it would have to change one's overall wellbeing decisively for the worse. Yet, it is unclear why one should expect sad music to have this effect on one's wellbeing. Again, it seems that the most natural way of suggesting that sad music might have this effect is to argue that music first induces sadness which reduces one's overall wellbeing thereby prompting a sad mood. Sadness does not necessarily reduce one's wellbeing. However, similar to fear, sadness plausibly alters the body in ways that the brain might interpret as reducing one's wellbeing. Though he does not make this argument explicit, this is perhaps why Juslin (2019) suggests that music only affects moods insofar as it first induces emotions.

What I have endeavored to show, here, is that characterizing sad feelings to music as moods is hasty and perhaps misleading. Emotions can respond to unconscious objects. I believe this is precisely what occurs when people listen to sad music. Their sad feelings respond specifically to music that resembles the speech and behavior of sad people, and therefore, music that supports the perception of a sad person. That listeners do not acknowledge the origin of their sad feelings in this perception is no barrier to calling these feelings emotions. This perception of a sad person will likely be unconscious while people listen to sad music. However, those sad feelings are no less object-directed for this lack of awareness. It is also unclear if moods can offer a satisfying explanation why sad music would induce a sad mood in the first place. For Sizer, moods track one's overall wellbeing. But sad music does not obviously affect one's wellbeing for the worse – of course, unless one perhaps wants to say that the music induces sadness first. It seems, then, that it is more appropriate and useful to identify the sad feelings that music produces as sadness itself: for there is an object to which these feelings respond and this object explains these feelings better than a change in one's overall wellbeing.

The upshot of my argument is that Sizer (2019) is wrong to suggest that the Puzzle of Musical Tragedy should shift its discussion from emotions to moods. Again, I agree with Sizer that, when answering the Puzzle of Musical Tragedy, one should consider how the experience of music listening is itself pleasant. However, I believe she does this inquiry a disservice in suggesting that the pleasure contained in the experience is a matter of mixed moods. Having motivated the possibility that sad feelings constitute sadness, not merely sad mood, I will now argue that the pleasure contained in the listening experience may also stem from a mixed *emotion* which has its own objects contained in sad music. This emotion is called Being Moved and may respond to two different objects supplied by sad music: 1.) a perception of affiliation between characters in a musical narrative; and 2.) a perception of beauty. Since Sizer neglects the possibility that this emotion explains the pleasure involved in listening to sad music, I argue that her view is deficient.

5 BEING MOVED

In this section, I first review research that suggests that Being Moved is a promising explanation for why people listen to sad music. After demonstrating that this emotion adequately describes experiences of listening to sad music, I then proceed to argue that two objects that elicit Being Moved are contained in sad music. The first object is a perception of affiliation between characters in a sad narrative. The second object is a perception of beauty. To demonstrate the viability of the first object, my argument will include a defense of the persona view – which holds that people can hear music as if it were a story. My contribution is to show that Being Moved is a plausible determinant of the pleasure contained in experiences of listening to sad music. Since Sizer neglects this possibility, I conclude that her view is deficient.

5.1 Being Moved Explains Liking for Sad Art

Being Moved is a promising explanation for why people listen to sad music because reports of feeling moved explain why people like sad art. People often report feeling moved⁷ by art (Menninghaus et al. 2015; Menninghaus et al. 2017, 2019). In particular, sad film clips (Hanich et al. 2014; Wassiliwizky et al. 2015; Wassiliwizky et al. 2017a;) and sad music (Eerola, Vuoskoski, & Kautiainen 2016; Vuoskoski & Eerola 2017) lead people to report that they feel moved. Some suggest that these reports refer to a specific emotion called Being Moved that explains why people pursue sad art (Menninghaus et al. 2017; 2019). They argue that Being Moved is a particularly promising explanation for why people pursue sad art because reports of feeling moved mediate the positive relationship between reports of felt sadness and liking for both sad films (Hanich et al. 2014; Wassiliwizky et al. 2015) and sad music (Vuoskoski & Eerola 2017). In other words, peoples' reports of feeling moved explain why people report liking films and music that they also claim make them feel sad. If these reports suggest the influence of the emotion Being Moved, then it appears that this emotion is plausibly a strong determinant of the pleasure contained in experiences of listening to sad music, and consequently, a strong motivation for listening to sad music.

However, Sizer's view loses sight of this possibility because Being Moved is not a mood, but an emotion. Being Moved is not a psychological state that tracks the summary of one's wellbeing, but rather, a state – like sadness – that responds to specific objects. Theories of Being Moved offer slightly different accounts of its objects. However, they all generally agree that scenes that make social relationships salient elicit the emotion. For example, births, deaths, self-sacrifices, departures, reunions, and protests might all elicit Being Moved. Importantly, both

⁷ I will use the phrase “feeling moved” to refer to reports that one feels moved. I will reserve the phrase “Being Moved” for discussing the emotion which purportedly underlies reports of these feelings.

joyous and sad occasions can elicit Being Moved. As a result, Being Moved can occur in tandem with joy and sadness. Witnessing the birth of a child is a prototypical joyous, moving occasion. Alternatively, witnessing a person die to spare another person's life is a prototypical sad, moving occasion. In the first case, the care that the new parents display while handling a healthy newborn displays an affiliation with the new member of the family and commitment to the child's wellbeing. Observing these behaviors might lead one to respond with joy as well as Being Moved. In the second case, however, one will likely respond with sadness and Being Moved. To illustrate, imagine a soldier who helps her compatriots escape an ambush by knowingly ensuring her own death. Observing this loss of life is saddening; yet the soldier's sacrifice also signals her deep commitment to the wellbeing of the spared soldiers. This scene can likewise prompt Being Moved as the affiliation between the soldiers becomes salient in the act of self-sacrifice.

Different theories offer different accounts of why witnessing behaviors like these will elicit Being Moved. In other words, different theories identify different objects of Being Moved in these scenes. On one view, these scenes induce Being Moved because they suggest a perception of community (Fiske, Seibt, & Schubert. 2017) or pro-sociality (Menninghaus et al. 2015). The object of Being Moved in these theories, then, would be the exemplification of affiliations between people *e.g.* like the relationship between parents and their children or between soldiers fighting a common cause. A competing interpretation, however, argues that Being Moved is not merely a response to social relationships, but rather, a response to the perception of a core value (Cova & Deonna 2014; Deonna 2020). On this view, observing these behaviors elicits Being Moved to the extent that it exemplifies a value that the observer believes is valuable for its own sake. These include values pertinent to behaviors suggesting affiliative attitudes like care, charity, and so on. However, this view differs from a strictly social rendering

of Being Moved because core values need not be social. In the case of the self-sacrificing soldier, for example, the core value could be courage.

Representational art like film can straightforwardly elicit Being Moved because it uncontroversially depicts behaviors that both exemplify affiliations between people and core values like courage. A sad film, for example, might show a soldier willingly give her life for her companions or cause. On the surface, music does not appear to have any strict representational content, and so, should not be amenable to eliciting emotion in this way. However, as I argued earlier, sad music can suggest the presence of a sad person. This provides a foundation on which one can argue for the presence of more complex objects within sad music.

One might, for example, hear the music as if it were a narrative that contained multiple people, not necessarily a single sad person. In this case, different melodies might suggest distinct characters in a story. If the music facilitates the perception of characters that display affiliations with each other, these affiliations might serve as the object of Being Moved. These affiliations might induce Being Moved simply by making the idea of affiliation salient or by suggesting an affiliative core value like care. The core values account of Being Moved, however, suggests an additional possibility. If one considers beauty to be a core value *i.e.* one valuable for its own sake, then perceiving the music as beautiful might also induce Being Moved. This route to Being Moved does not necessarily depend on perceiving the music as a narrative, although it could if one found beauty in the narrative. As I argued earlier, these perceptions need not be conscious. One may automatically, and without explicit recognition, hear music as a narrative or beautiful. However, these objects can be conscious as well. I emphasized the unconscious nature of musical objects earlier to dispute Sizer's claim that sad feelings must be moods. However, one might notice that music sounds like a sad person and consciously regard it as such. Similarly, one

might consciously imagine a narrative as they listen to the music or proclaim that the music is beautiful. Nonetheless, these objects need not reach awareness to prompt an emotion like sadness or Being Moved.

I will now briefly describe the Being Moved construct and argue that it adequately characterizes experiences with sad music. I will then outline evidence that supports the proposal that people are moved by sad music because it can promote perceptions of affiliation and beauty. Figure 2 below offers a model depicting how sad music might lead to Being Moved. If this model is plausible, then Sizer’s account fails to adequately characterize the ways in which listening to sad music are pleasant: for she neglects the pleasant effect of this emotion. Consequently, I suggest that answering the Puzzle of Musical Tragedy involves considering the pleasant influence of emotions like Being Moved.

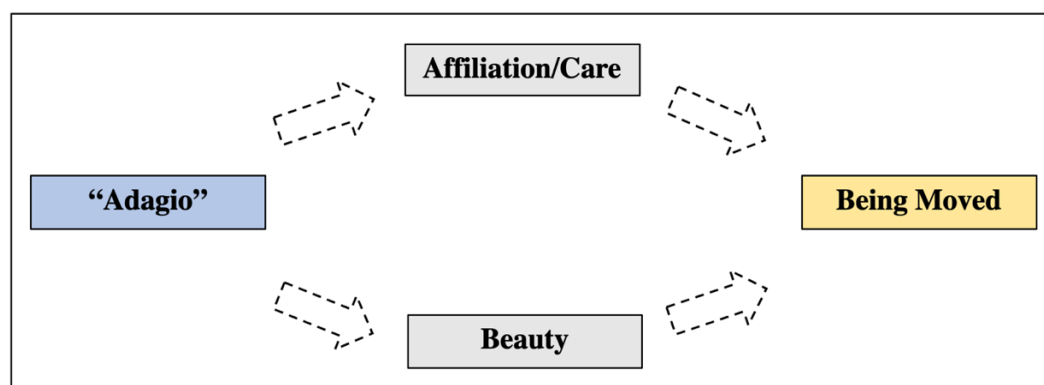


Figure 2. A Model of Being Moved in the Context of Sad Music

A sad piece of music like “Adagio” can produce perceptions of affiliation and/or care, as well as perceptions of beauty that induce Being Moved. The arrows are dotted because any of these perceptions can independently or together induce Being Moved. “Adagio” is blue to denote that it is a sad piece of music. “Being Moved” is gold to denote that it is an overall pleasant state. “Affiliation/Care” and “Beauty” are grey because they are psychological phenomena that possibly mediate the relationship between sad music and Being Moved.

5.2 The Being Moved Construct

Prototypically, Being Moved elicits a pleasant combination of tears (or watering of the eyes), chills (goosebumps and/or a shiver down the spine), and a sensation of warmth in the

center of the chest (Zickfeld et al. 2019). Being Moved also is typically experienced as an uncontrollable state that overwhelms the individual, perhaps causing a lump in the throat or feeling choked up (Cova & Deonna 2014; Menninghaus et al. 2015). Though the combination of tears, chills, and warmth in the chest is the most characteristic description of Being Moved, people say that they feel moved while experiencing only some of these responses. There is consensus that Being Moved is an overall pleasant emotion. However – while remaining pleasant overall – Being Moved is a mixed emotion *i.e.* one that blends pleasure and pain in a single experience (Menninghaus et al. 2015; Wassiliwizky et al. 2015). Research that has found simultaneous activation of smiling and frowning (Wassiliwizky et al. 2017a) as well as simultaneous activation of neural reward circuits and frowning during reports of feeling moved support the mixed nature of Being Moved (Wassiliwizky et al. 2017b)

Studies investigating emotional responses to sad music have converged on reports of a pleasant but sad experience that includes feeling moved by sad music (Peltola & Eerola 2016; Eerola & Peltola 2016; Eerola, Vuoskoski, & Kautiainen 2016). However, in addition to reporting feeling moved by music, people's physiological responses to music are often consistent with defining features of Being Moved. A research project investigating "Strong Experiences with Music," has compiled reports of people's most profound experiences while listening to music (Gabrielsson 2010). Common features of people's experiences – including those to sad instrumental music – are chills, tears, and a sensation of being choked up and overwhelmed. Furthermore, Panksepp (1995) found that people are more likely to report chills in response to sad music than happy music. These reactions suggest that people can respond to sad music with an emotional state that resembles the description of Being Moved presented above. Taken together with the findings that suggest Being Moved explains why people like sad music, this

suggests that Being Moved plausibly motivates people to listen to sad music by making the listening experience itself pleasant. I will now show how music provides the objects that can induce Being Moved. Against Sizer, this suggests that emotions are important to explaining why the experience of listening to sad music is a pleasant one.

5.3 Perceptions of Affiliation and Care in Sad Music

One way sad music might induce Being Moved is by conveying affiliation between characters in a musical narrative. As I have argued, several features of music are similar to the speech and behavior of sad people. For example, “Adagio” leads people to perceive sadness in virtue of its slow tempo, minor tonality, quiet volume, descending pitch, and vibrato. These features resemble the speech and behavior of sad people, and so, promote the perception of a sad person. If one can hear “Adagio” like a sad voice, then “Adagio” provides a sonic context that can induce sadness. But, to suggest “Adagio” can induce Being Moved as well as sadness, I will need to entertain a stronger thesis: that music can produce a sense of affiliation amidst this sad context. The stronger thesis is necessary because the least controversial object of Being Moved is a perception of affiliation. The core values account of course suggests that – rather than affiliation – values like care might be the proper object of Being Moved. However, all available accounts of Being Moved recognize that scenes that demonstrate affiliation offer grounds for Being Moved. This may be because affiliation is itself the object of Being Moved, or because affiliation promotes the perception of core values like care.

Some argue that music listening sometimes involves hearing the music as a narrative in which a persona *i.e.* an imagined person, is situated (Robinson 2005, 2012; Cochrane 2010). Here, the persona is not merely a perception of the presence of a sad person as I noted earlier. Rather, the persona is identified with particular features of the music. The persona is most likely

to correspond to the predominant melodic theme – or lead voice – of the piece of music. In Adagio, this is a phrase that begins just after the introductory organ section and repeats throughout the piece. However, this melody does not simply repeat verbatim until the conclusion of the piece; it varies and develops through different sections of “Adagio.” When one takes this change – or movement – into account, “Adagio” can convey a developing sad narrative in which a sad persona is situated. As “Adagio” unfolds over time, the acoustic features of the music fluctuate, and one can imagine the sad persona in some physical or mental activity. For example, the slow steady pulse in the bass might suggest that the persona in “Adagio” is on a somber march.

The persona view stipulates that people can be taken on a journey as they listen to the music, hearing actions undertaken by the persona. As a result, more complex attitudes can emerge in the music if the persona is taken as a protagonist amidst other characters, or personae, that the music suggests. In “Adagio” the melody is not the only voice in the piece. There are other auxiliary phrases played on different instruments that trade off with the melody. These auxiliary phrases, then, might constitute the voice of another character in “Adagio’s” narrative. On this interpretation, the persona view can accommodate the possibility of Being Moved by “Adagio” because the narrative may suggest affiliations between two or more of its personae. This would then offer means of Being Moved by sad music.

One might wonder, though, if the above explication of “Adagio” is merely a convenient stance that does not make any contact with demonstrable support. In fact, a recent study investigating narrative listening has shown that – when experimenters suggest that music can be heard as a story – listeners from the USA and China report hearing narratives in instrumental music (Margulis, Wong, Simchy-Gross, & McAuley 2019). Interestingly, *within* each culture,

listeners even described similar narratives. It is important to note, however, that the narrative content of the stories differed markedly between *different* cultures. This latter finding suggests that the content of narratives conveyed through music depends on culture-relative conventions. Nonetheless, the study suggests two points in favor of the persona view: (1) people plausibly possess a general capacity to perceive music as a narrative; and (2) within a culture, these narratives depend on particular acoustic features of the music.

That said, how might music communicate affiliation, and thereby lead to Being Moved? Aucouturier & Canonne (2017) investigated the communication of social attitudes through musical improvisation. They found that musicians can effectively communicate an attitude of “care” to one another when performing improvised duets. In a series of studies, Aucouturier & Canonne (2017) then demonstrated: (1) that musician and non-musician third parties can also differentiate these attitudes; (2) these attitudes are associated with the resultant timing and consonance of the musical interaction; and (3) that – when manipulated – timing and consonance can alter musicians’ and non-musicians’ perceptions of the social attitude communicated by the music. The take-home message of the study is that the timing and consonance of different voices in a musical piece determine different judgments of social attitudes communicated by the music. The authors interpret their work as the first causal evidence in support of the persona view. For present purposes, the most important findings are: (1) consonant harmonies of long duration are associated with the perception of care; and (2) a greater degree of consonance *causes* greater judgments of affiliation.

Minor music is characterized by a predominance of dissonant rather than consonant harmony. This is a substantial source of its capacity to promote perceptions of sadness. However, within a minor piece of music like “Adagio,” there are moments where the different melody and

auxiliary voices intersect and harmonize consonantly. In fact, they regularly do this throughout the piece, ending each section in unison for relatively long stretches of time. Predicated on Aucouturier & Canonne (2017), my suggestion is that when otherwise sad instrumental music is punctuated with consonant harmonies – particularly for relatively long durations – this may lead some people to perceive affiliations and caring attitudes between characters in a musical narrative. Since a perception of affiliation is an object of Being Moved, this allows sad music like “Adagio” to plausibly induce Being Moved. One, for example, might hear the auxiliary melodies of the piece as attempting to console “Adagio’s” sad protagonist when they harmonize consonantly with the main theme toward the end of certain phrases. This might suggest an affiliation between the sad protagonist and her consolers, thereby offering an object of Being Moved.

There is perhaps another way that “Adagio” might induce Being Moved though. Aucouturier & Canonne (2017) not only showed that music can lead people to perceive affiliation, but also, a caring attitude. On the core values account, care is one possible value to which Being Moved may respond. Consequently, if a person values care for its own sake, and hears the music as communicating a caring attitude between two or more personae in a musical narrative, this can induce Being Moved. This plausibly occurs in the same moments of “Adagio” that promote a perception of affiliation. When one hears the auxiliary melodies as consoling the sad protagonist, they might also perceive the auxiliary melodies as caring for the sad protagonist. This musical exemplification of care, then, might induce Being Moved on the core values account.

However, one might still wonder whether behavioral studies are legitimate evidence – particularly when researchers suggest to their participants that it is possible to hear music as a

story or a social attitude. This issue is a legitimate concern and the answer is not entirely clear. However, these studies at least demonstrate that the persona view is tenable and might even be able to generate predictions about music perception within a culture. There are also other findings that are consistent with the persona view in psychology and neuroscience. Reviewing the neurocognitive literature on musical semantics, Koelsch (2011) argues that music possesses a semantics akin to language, as it can prime extra-musical concepts and elicit neurological activity (N400 ERP) indistinguishable from the activity elicited by the semantic processing of written words and sentences. Taken together, the studies reviewed above suggest that people can interpret music as a narrative that promotes the perception of affiliation and care, and therefore, that music can induce the emotion Being Moved directed at these perceptions.

Nonetheless, Davies (1994, 2006) criticizes the persona view. He wagers that many people simply do not hear music this way. Additionally, he complains that there is an indefinite amount of interpretations one can offer of any piece of music on the persona view. The first objection has limited force against my argument. One does not need to argue that people always hear music as if it contains personae in order to acknowledge that this is a legitimate way people can engage with music. Furthermore, Eerola, Vuoskoski, & Kautiainen (2016) found that those people who report feeling moved by sad music score high on the fantasy dimension of trait empathy. This dimension measures the extent to which people immerse themselves in narrative content, particularly when engaging with literature and film. This suggests that those people who experience Being Moved to music are most disposed to hear music as if it were a story. Davies' second objection similarly lacks force. One need not argue that a single piece of music has a single interpretation. It is enough that narrative listening demonstrates some regularity. Here,

Margulis et al. (2019) demonstrate that – at least within individual cultures – people report similar narratives when listening to the same piece of music.

What I have endeavored to show is that objects of Being Moved, like the object of sadness, are contained within sad music. Since Being Moved is mixed, though overall pleasant, it offers an explanation of how the otherwise unpleasant sad music listening experience is pleasant. Given that the objects of Being Moved are present in sad music, this bolsters the Being Moved account and suggests that it is a viable account of why music listening is itself pleasant. Since Being Moved is an emotion, however, Sizer's view fails to adequately acknowledge this explanation. Her view is, therefore, deficient. She neglects the possibility that experiences of listening to sad music are pleasant in virtue of emotions like Being Moved which respond to objects contained in sad music.

However, if this remains unconvincing, there is yet another way in which sad music might induce Being Moved. Since, on the core values account, beauty can be a core value, one might respond with Being Moved to music that they perceive as beautiful. It is also possible that Being Moved might arise in response to both perceptions of musical narratives and beauty. I will now briefly explore the possibility that beauty induces Being Moved before concluding this thesis with some reflection on the value of emotion and Being Moved in the discussion of the Puzzle of Musical Tragedy.

5.4 Beauty as an Object of Being Moved

Juslin (2013) suggests that people like sad music because it can provide overall pleasant, but mixed, emotions. In particular, he argues that such mixed emotions arise when sad music produces sadness that mixes with pleasure derived from judgments of beauty. However, I suggest that Juslin is actually describing a situation in which sad music induces Being Moved

through a perception of beauty. On the core values account, one would expect this result because beauty can be a core value *i.e.* one valued for its own sake.

I cannot explore the numerous reasons why one might find sad music beautiful here. However, there is a long history – starting with Kant and stretching into the present – of supposing that perceptions of beauty confer inherently pleasant experiences (Robinson 2020). Furthermore, perceptions of beauty have been shown to mediate the relationship between felt sadness and liking for sad music – though to a lesser extent than feeling moved (Vuoskoski & Eerola 2017). Taken together, this suggests that if one values beauty for its own sake, and they perceive a sad piece of music as beautiful, this may induce an overall pleasant state of Being Moved which contributes to their liking that music. In such a case, one will perceive the music as an exemplification of the core value beauty and the beauty of the music will induce Being Moved.

Vuoskoski & Eerola's (2017) findings, however, limit this claim somewhat. They found that reports of feeling moved also mediated the relationship between felt sadness and perceived beauty in sad music. This suggests that Being Moved might promote the perception of beauty, rather than the other way around. This is because the study suggests that reports of feeling moved explain why people judged sad music as beautiful. If beauty was the underlying cause of Being Moved, one would expect – to the contrary – that reports of beauty would explain why people feel moved by sad music. Since Vuoskoski & Eerola did not find this latter result, however, their study limits the claim that beauty causes Being Moved. However, it is important to note that these reports were taken at a single time point, and so, the findings are correlational. It is unclear, therefore, whether beauty is a cause or effect of Being Moved. Nonetheless, it is clear that both Being Moved and beauty explain why people like sad music that makes them feel

sad; and it remains possible that perceptions of beauty allow Being Moved to influence the experience of listening to sad music.

In emphasizing moods, however, Sizer overlooks this possibility. Since Being Moved takes beauty as an object, on this account, it is not a mood but an emotion. The point, therefore, remains the same: whether Being Moved reacts to affiliation, care, or beauty in sad music, it is not a mood. In neither case is Being Moved prompted by a summary of one's wellbeing, but rather, a specific object that sad music contains. Moods simply do not adequately characterize the way sad music can elicit emotions like Being Moved. Since peoples' descriptions of their experiences both appeal to feelings of movingness, and physiological responses that define Being Moved (tears, chills, being choked up, etc.), there is reason to believe it plays an important role in the experience of listening to sad music. When taken together with research that suggests the objects of Being Moved are present in sad music, this suggests that Being Moved is an authentic emotional reaction to sad music. This is an important response for one to consider when asking why the experience of sad music might be pleasant: for reports of feeling moved by music explain why people like sad music that makes them feel sad.

Note that the Being Moved account, like Sizer's mixed moods account, is a direct hedonic solution. Being Moved is a part of the experience of listening to sad music and thereby makes the listening experience itself pleasant. The account I offer, then, is consistent with Sizer's overall aim: to explain how the sad music listening experience is itself pleasant. However, I depart from her moods-based view because sad and pleasant feelings alike are plausibly emotions that take the music as their object. Consequently, I reject her recommendation that the Puzzle of Musical Tragedy be recast in terms of moods rather than emotions. Not only does she mischaracterize sad feelings as objectless responses, she also fails to acknowledge other

pertinent, object-directed psychological states like Being Moved that explain why listening to sad music is a pleasant experience that motivates listening to sad music.

6 CONCLUSION: BENEFITS OF EMOTION AND BEING MOVED FOR THE PUZZLE OF MUSICAL TRAGEDY

In this thesis, I first argued that, if one wishes to answer the Puzzle of Musical Tragedy, one needs to explain why listening to sad music can itself be a pleasant experience. In this respect, I agreed with Sizer (2019). Ahedonic solutions *i.e.* those that do not appeal to pleasure, fail to explain an important reason why people seek sad music: the pleasure contained in the experience. Similarly, I agreed with Sizer that hedonic solutions, which do appeal to pleasure, should focus on how the experience itself is pleasant. Yet, Sizer argues that the feelings that music produces are more like moods than emotions. Here, I disagreed with Sizer in two ways: first I argued that the sad feelings which music produces qualify as sadness – not merely sad mood; and second, I argued that the pleasant aspect of the listening experience plausibly stems from another emotion: Being Moved. In both cases, I used empirical research to locate objects for each emotion in sad music. Sad music produces sadness because it promotes the perception of a sad person; and sad music produces Being Moved because it can promote a perception of affiliation, care, or beauty.

As a result, I conclude that Sizer both fails to adequately describe feelings induced by music and offers a counterproductive position on the Puzzle of Musical Tragedy. She not only mischaracterizes sad feelings as moods but also prematurely favors a moods-based account of the pleasure involved in sad music listening experiences. By recommending that one focus on moods rather than emotions, she neglects the influence of emotions like Being Moved which plausibly explain why people like sad music. This forestalls investigation into the motivations for

listening to sad music. As a result, Sizer's position impedes rather than promotes progress on the Puzzle of Musical Tragedy.

In contrast, there are advantages to embracing the possibility of music-induced emotions – and, in particular – the possible influence of Being Moved when listening to sad music. First, a general advantage of considering music-induced emotions is that emotions offer a more detailed explanation of why sad music leads to particular feelings. Characterizing feelings induced by sad music as emotions forces one to ask what features of the music promote particular feelings and why. Identifying objects of these feelings in features of the music thereby allows for a deeper understanding of why music makes people feel the way it does. For example, sad music perhaps makes people sad because features like slow tempo, and quiet volume resemble the speech and behavior of a sad person and produce a perception of a sad person. Moreover, sad music that periodically uses consonant harmonies might produce perceptions of affiliation, or care that induce Being Moved analogous to the way Being Moved arises in non-musical settings.

On the other hand, settling for moods prematurely arrests this inquiry. Moods, on Sizer's view, characteristically lack objects, leaving it unclear why particular acoustic features of sad music induce the feelings that they do. Presumably, sad music must reduce one's wellbeing to induce a sad mood. Yet, if one grants this, one still lacks a reason why this is so. Moods, then, do not offer reasons why certain acoustic features of sad music promote the feelings that they do. One is left with the unsatisfying explanation that the music must somehow reduce listeners' sense of wellbeing, but with no clear indication why the features of sad music should do such a thing.

A further benefit of embracing music-induced emotions is that one can recognize that Being Moved plays an important role in the music-listening experience. Being Moved offers an

empirically motivated and uniquely appropriate explanation for why listening to sad music is pleasant. Its objects are present within sad music and it arguably explains why people like sad music. It also aligns with specific features of strong experiences of listening to sad music. For example, Being Moved explains why people sometimes feel overwhelmed by sad music, suddenly becoming choked up, and tearful all at once. Moods do not produce this specific response profile. Yet, the Being Moved construct predicts precisely this response. Being Moved, then, not only explains why people like sad music, but also explains responses to sad music better than moods can.

That Sizer overlooks the possibility that Being Moved is an important determinant of the pleasure implicated in listening experiences is a substantial drawback of her view. By neglecting this possibility, Sizer commits to a less explanatory moods-based explanation of how music produces pleasant feelings. A better alternative is to embrace the idea that sad music readily induces emotions and to consider the various ways sad music might induce pleasant emotions like Being Moved. This recommendation is consistent with Sizer's own wish to better understand the way the listening experience itself is pleasant. However, it succeeds where her view fails: it allows for a deeper understanding of music listening experiences without overlooking the possibility that emotions like Being Moved make these experiences pleasant and motivate listening to sad music.

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