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[PSYCH](#) > Vol.3 No.6, June 2012



The Play Was Always the Thing: Drama' s Effect on Brain Function

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ABSTRACT

The brain is a mysterious canvas of actualized and unrealized possibilities. As Diane Ackerman notes, " ... each person carries around atop the body a complete universe in which trillions of sensations, thoughts, and desires stream." Brain science remains uncharted territory despite the significant efforts that have been and are being realized to better understand brain and behavior. More than mere coincidence or happenstance, plays like Shakespeare' s famous " Romeo and Juliet" with great storylines, brilliant costumes, and emotional stimulation continue to survive for ages based upon pure artistic excellence that engages the audience in a unique manner. There is a need to more fully understand how our brains process drama and the manner in which like versus dislike are decided. Most important is the factor of longevity and what makes the appealing quality of drama survive over years across cultural and generational shifts. To speak to this question, drama has been shown to have impressive effects on brain activation but remains conservative in highlighting potentially profound implications. Drama has advantageous benefits to health as well as to essential activities such as learning and personal growth. Drama should not remain underrated in terms of its influence on brain function and the relationship between environment and brain.

KEYWORDS

Art; Brain Function; Brain Stimulation; Drama; Shakespeare

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