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THE EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS FOR
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OF LITERATURE.

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GRADUATE COLLEGE

THE EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS FOR INSTITUTIONS
OF HIGHER-ADULT EDUCATION OF A STUDY OF
TWENTY WOMEN CREATIVES IN THE FIELD
OF LITERATURE

A DISSERTATION
SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of
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BY
WANDA L. DUNCAN
Norman, Oklahoma
1976

THE EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS FOR INSTITUTIONS
OF HIGHER-ADULT EDUCATION OF A STUDY OF
TWENTY WOMEN CREATIVES IN THE FIELD
OF LITERATURE

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THE EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS FOR INSTITUTIONS
OF HIGHER-ADULT EDUCATION OF A STUDY OF TWENTY WOMEN
CREATIVES IN THE FIELD OF LITERATURE

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The number of women on a list of the notable or eminent before 1925 who were neither monarchs, mistresses, nor wives was very slight indeed. This very failure of women to produce a Shakespeare, a Darwin, an Einstein has been used for many centuries as proof of the inferior abilities of women.

No woman living in the age of Shakespeare could have written the plays of Shakespeare. Virginia Woolf stated that genius, like Shakespeare's, is not born among laboring, uneducated, servile people. "It is not born among the working classes. How, then, could it have been born among women whose work began almost before they were out of the nursery, who were forced to it by their parents and held to it by all the power of law and custom." She notes

that women were usually betrothed by fifteen, "probably to the son of a neighbouring wool-stapler" and would then begin the bearing of children. In such conditions, such as no room or time of her own, compounded by the lack of education, time for contemplation, stimulating companions, she could not have written the poems or plays of Shakespeare. "With this in mind, it is no puzzle why women wrote no words of that extraordinary literature when every other man, it seemed, was capable of song or sonnet," concluded Miss Woolf.¹

It is a virtual truism to state that genuine creative accomplishment requires a single-minded dedication to particular goals and tasks. Historically, women have not been able to make this single-minded dedication and thus have not achieved eminence and because women have not achieved eminence in significant numbers, this failure has been used to reinforce the concept that woman's place is in the home as the bearer of children, and, in general, "she who nurtures" with the image and language of "earth mother." This has become her single-minded dedication, her goal and task.

Any concept of her creativity which might lead to productivity and eminence in other fields has too long lain buried by the fate of her child-bearing abilities.

¹Virginia Woolf, "A Room of One's Own" in Feminism: The Essential Historical Writings, ed. by Miriam Schneir (New York: Random House, 1964), pp. 344-355.

Educational and career opportunities have been persistently and bitterly fought for and won.² The rise of feminism in the nineteenth century which led to the universal acceptance of education for women is responsible for the perception of women in different roles with more abilities than formerly defined.³

There is, however, a continuing need for greater understanding of the nature of creativity in women.

Purpose of the Study

The essential purpose of this demographic and heuristic study is to analyze the reported lives of twenty American women literary figures in an attempt to determine what biological and social distractions influenced their work. Has woman's place in society changed since Shakespeare's time, and if so, how much?

More specifically, it is intended to define the most productive age range, the influences of child-bearing, if any, and the interwoven psychological, socio-cultural press of the society in which they lived that may have served as distractions.

Beginning with a consideration of possible biological distractions, Phyllis Greenacre raises the question of

²Harvey Wish, Society and Thought in Modern America (New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1952), pp. 123-147.

³Ibid.

creativity and child bearing. She recalls a statement by Robert Graves in which he said that when a woman has a baby her artistic creativity ceases. She continues by quoting from Freda Kirchwey who wrote in The Nation some years ago that women might not be such productive artists as men because they lacked the ability to abstract themselves and were always worried about whether the potatoes were burning.⁴

Although probably intended to be humorous, the comments of Graves and Kirchwey underscore two of the distractional situations to be considered by this study:

1. Whether the biological act of child-bearing itself diminishes the capacity of a woman to be creative in other areas;

2. Whether the physical demands of child rearing are sufficiently distractive to diminish that capacity, and if so, for what length of time.

Greenacre suggests that a woman's creativity may be adversely effected by both. "A woman's part in biological creativity is much more prolonged, more physically involving and emotionally committing than that of a man."⁵

She has the period of gestation during which she carries the child in her own body and, in most societies,

⁴Phyllis Greenacre, "Woman as Artist," Psychoanalytic Quarterly, 29 (1960), pp. 208-227.

⁵Ibid., p. 210.

is also responsible for the majority of the physical and emotional tasks of rearing the child to maturity.

The first problem, the possibility of creative energy being utilized in child-bearing is raised by Greenacre in this way:

Does this mean more than the crowding out of the fulfillment of one set of talents by the realization of another such as might be implied in the remarks quoted by Miss Kirchwey and Mr. Graves? Certainly the jostling for position in the choice of one talent or medium of expression at the expense of another may be seen in many people who are gifted in more than one direction.⁶

The second part of the problem, that of child-rearing, concerns Kogan in his study on creativity and sex differences. He, too, comments on the fact that genuine creative accomplishment requires a single-minded dedication to particular goals and tasks and that lessened creativity is bound to result from distractions in the biological and social contexts.⁷

He concludes, "If women are more susceptible to such distractions than are men, a special handicap exists."⁸ This appears to belabor the obvious. Anna Garlin Spencer writes, "A successful woman preacher was once asked what

⁶Ibid., 213. Many of the women included in the present study were multi-talented, e.g., the noted novelist and Nobel Prize Winner, Pearl Buck, was also a gifted sculptress and pianist. Novelist Carson McCullers trained to be a concert pianist and Katherine Anne Porter was a musician, actress, and painter as well as a novelist.

⁷Nathan Kogan, "Creativity and Sex Differences," Journal of Creative Behavior, 8 (First Quarter, 1974), p. 12.

⁸Ibid.

special obstacles she had met as a woman in the ministry? 'Not one,' she answered, 'except the lack of a minister's wife.'"⁹

The discrepancy between the number of men and the number of women who realize outstanding creative talent as represented by a product is exemplified in a study conducted by Harvey C. Lehman. These were his findings:

Sex Differences in Creative Achievement

Field of Endeavor	Per cent of Women
Children's literature	39.0
Novels (American)	28.0
Historical Novels	16.0
Poetry (American)	20.0
Short Stories	16.0
Writers (American)	15.0
Artists (American)	14.0
Astronomy	4.0
Genetics	2.0
Psychology	2.0
Mathematics	1.0
Chemistry	0.83
Physics	0.5
Medicine	0.5
Practical Inventions	0.25
Surgery	0.0

10

This study emphasizes the extreme disparity between the achievements of men and women.

⁹ Anna Garlin Spencer, "The Drama of the Woman of Genius" in Feminism, The Essential Historical Writings, edited by Miriam Schneir (New York: Random House, 1964), p. 284.

¹⁰ Harvey C. Lehman, Age and Achievement (Princeton, N.J.: The American Philosophical Society, Princeton University Press, 1953), pp. 89-90.

Possible Significance of the Study

Since the rise of the women's liberation movement coincides with an interest in the fostering of creativity, many institutions of higher learning are concerning themselves not only with the further development of their curriculum in creativity and women's studies but also in elementary and secondary educational areas. There is a growing recognition that the intrusion of sexism and cultural role influence may be a strong factor in the fostering of creativity in the male and the hindering of creativity in the female.¹¹

The intrusion of sexism and cultural role influence are of interest to E. Paul Torrance and Nicholas C. Aliotti who have researched sex differences in levels of performance and test-retest reliability on the Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking Ability using children from the first to the fifth grades. They compared their findings to M. K. Raina's similar studies conducted in different cultures.¹²

Raina's study showing the general superiority of boys over girls, even in verbal tests, among children in India,

¹¹For a discussion of creativity and education, see E. Paul Torrance, Guiding Creative Talent (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1962). The ramifications of the relationship between children and sex norms is contained in ibid., pp. 111-114.

¹²E. Paul Torrance and Nicholas C. Aliotti, "Sex Differences in Levels of Performance and Test-Retest Reliability on the Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking Ability," Journal of Creative Behavior, 3 (Winter, 1969), p. 53.

adds to the weight of evidence in support of the importance of socio-cultural influences.

He found few differences between boys and girls in the first and second grades, but obtained rather consistent and significant differences in measures of creative thinking ability from the third grade through the sixth.¹³

Raina defines the typical feminine role in India as involving promulgation of conventional cultural values, dependence upon the group, submissiveness to the male and avoidance of disagreement with others in interest of group harmony.

Raina concludes "that Hindu women are submissive and that they do not fulfill their potentialities or fully develop their individual personalities."¹⁴

In Indian society, a woman's performance of the socially prescribed duty is equatable with virtue. Women are not encouraged to embark on new ventures nor to be ambitious nor to exhibit any deviant behavior. A woman can gain the approval of society by conforming, obeying and displaying self-control and a devotion to harmony. Consequently, a woman is actively discouraged from being divergent, inventive or unusual.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴M. K. Raina, "A Study of Sex Differences in Creativity in India," Journal of Creative Behavior, 3 (Spring, 1969), p. 113.

In contrast, the typical masculine role in India places a heavy emphasis on self-sufficiency, self-assertion and independence of thought, "standing on one's own two feet and casting a shadow."¹⁵

Torrance and his associates in the process of developing the Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking found, in general, few sex differences below the fourth grade, however, girls have usually excelled boys on all verbal tests and on elaboration in figural tests. Boys have generally excelled girls on tests of originality. Girls perform at a consistently higher level than the boys on all of the verbal tasks.¹⁶ This is consistent with the greater emphasis in the United States on the verbal development of girls rather than of boys.

Since Torrance did not find many differences below the fourth grade, and if biological maturation factors are eliminated, their studies lend some support to distraction from creativity by the intrusion of cultural roles upon creativity. It does not answer the problem of why, in a society which tends to reinforce verbal abilities in women, only 15 per cent of American authors are women. Far more research is needed to answer this question.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Torrance and Aliotti, "Sex Differences," pp. 54-55.

This study makes no attempt to pursue any sex differences in literary creatives since the subjects are all women, but must, of necessity, examine the work that has been done in creativity research in general. This review of the creativity research is important to an understanding of the process of creativity as defined by various researchers toward a consideration of those elements which might be applicable to a study of women such as the previously discussed Torrance Test of Creative Thinking Ability.

This test has been used extensively by E. Paul Torrance, Nicholas C. Aliotti and administered by M. K. Raina in India with the subjects being scored for flexibility, fluency and originality.¹⁷ These definitions of creativity appear to be accepted as valid constructs and most research is down with those definitions of creativity which utilize originality, inventiveness, flexibility, and fluency as building blocks for the foundation of research work done on the examination of the differences in creativity between the sexes.

The bulk of creativity research thus far has been done by men using male nominators who chose predominately male participants. This does not discount the value of these studies, however, for much of the basic work has been a continuing struggle toward a definition of "creativity" and the isolation of those aspects of the creative process which apply perhaps to all creatives, male and female alike.

¹⁷Ibid.

Definition of Terms

Most of the terms used in this study will be well-known, however, there are some that may need definition beyond general usage.

Consensus: refers to group solidarity or unanimity in sentiment and belief and the designation in this study includes conformity in value judgments.

Convergent Thinking: involves thinking toward one right answer or toward a determined answer that is the recognized best or conventional answer.

Creatives: used to denote persons having the power or quality of creating.

Divergent Thinking: refers to a type of thinking in which considerable searching about is done and a number of answers will do. It is characterized as being less goal-bound, away from, rather than toward consensus.

Psychopathology: in the psychiatric sense, the pathology of the psyche or mind, the study of persons with behavior dysfunction occurring in mental disorder or in social disorganization.

Introversion: a tendency to direct one's interest upon the inner world of concepts and ideas rather than upon external objects.

Extroversion: an attitude in which a person directs his interest to phenomena outside himself rather than to his own experiences and feelings to obtain gratification.

Cooperative: the inclination to act or work with others, involving some conformity and consensus.

Uncooperative: the lack of inclination to act or work with others; non-conforming.

Placid: refers to a personality that is calm, quiet, undisturbed, of a peaceful nature.

Nervous: refers to a tendency on the part of a person to be emotionally tense, restless, possibly fearful and apprehensive.

Verbal Fluency: the ability to write or speak easily, smoothly and expressively with an extensive vocabulary.

Verbal Flexibility: closely associated with verbal fluency, with the added ability to be easily adjustable to change and more adaptable to special circumstances in the use of language.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Toward a Definition of Creativity

Educators, psychologists, industrialists and researchers in many fields have been looking for a viable meaning to the word "creativity" in order to examine it, measure it, predict and control it. It seems a primary axiom of scholarly research that before a concept can be explored, before an hypothesis can be stated, there must be a definition of terms. And "creativity" is an especially illusive term to define.

In tracing the word through a single source, Funk and Wagnalls Standard Dictionary of the English Language, "creativity" is defined as "the quality of being able to produce original work or ideas."

"Original" is defined as "immediately produced by one's own mind and thought; not copied or produced by imitation" with a secondary meaning of "able to produce works requiring thought, without copying or imitating those of others; creative; inventive."

"Inventiveness" is listed as a synonym for "originality." "Invent," in turn, is defined as "to create the idea, form or existence of by original thought or effort."

This apparent dead end is opened up to further tracking by the use of the word "ingenuity" as a synonym for "invention." "Ingenuity" is defined as " . . . cleverness in contriving or originating" and "clever."

An investigation of the word "genius" sheds little new light: "1. Extraordinary intellectual gifts, evidenced in original creation, expression or achievement. 2. Remarkable aptitude. . . 3. A person of phenomenal and original powers for productivity in art, science, statesmanship, etc."

The one new word in this definition, "productive," is defined as ". . . creative, as of artistic things."¹ So the semantic search for definition leads in circles.

In order to further research in creativity, educators and psychologists have created their own definitions of the word, using various approaches. Melvin Tumin examines creativity from a philosophical viewpoint: "I would follow Dewey's lead and view 'creativity' as the aesthetic experience, which is to be distinguished from other experiences by the fact that it is self-consummatory in nature."²

¹Funk and Wagnalls Standard Dictionary of the English Language. International Edition (1960), pp. 304, 890, 669, 651, 1279, 1006.

²Melvin Tumin, "Obstacles to Creativity," ETC: A Review of General Semantics, XI (October, 1954), p. 261.

Morris I. Stein despairs of finding any workable definition: ". . . there is no 'absolute' definition of creativity and what is regarded as creative at any one point in time is a function of many factors operative in our society." It is his view that what one generation defines as madness, subsequent generations may define as creative.³

A. H. Maslow approaches creativity as a process: "I'm speaking about what I'll call primary creativeness rather than secondary creativeness, the primary creativeness which comes out of the unconscious, which is the source of new discovery - of real novelty - of ideas which depart from what exists at this point." He defines secondary creativity as that which is demonstrated by many scientists. "Science can be defined, if you want to, as a technique whereby uncreative people can create and discover, by working along with a lot of other people, by standing upon the shoulders of people who have come before them, by being cautious and careful and so on. That I'll call secondary creativeness and secondary science."⁴

Another approach to the subject was provided by Wilson, Guilford and Christensen who reduced the term

³Morris I. Stein, "Creativity as an Intra- and Inter-Personal Process," in Sidney Parnes and Harold Harding (eds.) A Source Book for Creative Thinking (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1962), p. 91.

⁴Abraham H. Maslow, "Emotional Blocks to Creativity," in Parnes and Harding, Source Book, pp. 94-95.

"creativity" down to "originality," describing the latter term as "one of the most important aspects of creative thinking." In order to measure originality, they regarded it as a continuum, theorizing that everyone is original to some degree and that the amount of ability to produce original ideas characteristic of that individual may be inferred from test performance. They were not able, however, to accept the definition of "original" as something which is "new" or "did not exist before." Instead they divided originality into three synonyms, "uncommon," "remote," and "clever" and proceeded to devise tests to measure these component parts of originality.⁵

In the transformation of "creativity" from a noun to the adjective form "creative" many researchers were following a trend to reduce an abstract term to something concrete. Wallas was concerned with creative activity.⁶ William J. J. Gordon in his study examined the subject as "operational creativity"⁷ which was another term for "creative problem

⁵Robert C. Wilson, J. Paul Guilford, and Paul R. Christensen, "The Measurement of Individual Differences in Originality," Psychological Bulletin, 50 (September, 1953), p. 362-370.

⁶Graham Wallas, "Effort and Energy" in The Art of Thought (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1926), pp. 150-170. This work is considered by many to be one of the most important contributions to the modern concept of creativity.

⁷Quoted in John E. Arnold, "Useful Creative Techniques," in Parnes and Harding, Source Book, p. 265.

solving." Alex Osborn used the term "creative," but elaborated by calling it "applied imagination."⁸

Parnes simplifies by dealing with "creative behavior," defining this behavior as that "which demonstrates both uniqueness and value in its product. The product may be unique and valuable to a group or organization, to society as a whole, or merely to the individual himself."⁹

Arnold and Rogers, working independently, both deal with the "creative process" and both require a product as measure of that process. Arnold describes it this way: "I also arbitrarily qualify my definition of the creative process by insisting that it lead to some tangible result, something you can see, or feel or react to."¹⁰

Rogers' definition is similar: "My definition, then, of the creative process is that it is the emergence in action of a novel relational product, growing out of the uniqueness of the individual on the one hand, and the material, events, people, or circumstances of his life on the other."¹¹

⁸Alex F. Osborn, Applied Imagination (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1957), p. 1-10.

⁹Sidney J. Parnes, "Programming Creative Behavior," in Calvin W. Taylor, Climate for Creativity (New York: Permagon Press, 1972), p. 193.

¹⁰Arnold, in Parnes and Harding, Source Book, p. 128.

¹¹Carl Rogers, "Toward a Theory of Creativity," ETC: A Review of General Semantics, XI (October, 1954), p. 251.

Rogers, in his study, predicted a belief about creativity research: ". . . we cannot expect an accurate description of the creative act, for by its very nature it is indescribable. This is the unknown which we must recognize as unknowable until it occurs."¹²

Approaches to Measurement of the Creative Person

Many attempts have been made to measure creativity, with differing degrees of success. The current approach to the problem of creativity is concerned primarily with an attempt to locate individuals judged to be most creative by a peer group, and then to test them to see what personality traits are predominant in them, which tendencies are most pronounced, and from these studies evolve criteria for creativity.

There are some psychologists who say this cannot be done. Maltzman, for instance, suggests that creativity cannot be measured at all, and that all creativity tests are simply measurements of originality, that the products which are judged to be creative are the results of original behavior plus the reactions of an accepting society which judges these products to be original. His criteria for originality are simple ones. First, the product must have

¹²Ibid., p. 255.

a low frequency of occurrence, and second, it must be found by society to be appropriate.¹³

Jackson and Messick suggest these criteria in their study of creativity: (1) The creative responses must have a low probability of occurrence; (2) The product must be appropriate to the situation and the desires of the producer; (3) Whatever is created must be something entirely new; (4) The creation must have a coalescence of meaning, which means that in an extended examination of a creation, it would yield multiple interpretations.¹⁴

MacKinnon approached the problem from a different angle in his study using consensus as a means of identifying creatives in a specific field. Selecting architects as his study group, he first had a panel of professors at the University of California, Berkeley, select a sample of forty architects across the nation, men who, in their opinion, demonstrated unusual creativeness. He, then set up two control groups of architects matched for such variables as age and geographical location. He submitted all of the names to six groups of architects and architectural experts who were asked to rate each name on a one to seven scale with respect

¹³Irving Maltzman, "On the Training of Originality," Psychological Review, 67 (July, 1960), p. 229.

¹⁴Phillip W. Jackson and Samuel Messick, "Creativity," in Perry London and David Rosenhan (eds.), Foundations of Abnormal Psychology (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1968), pp. 226-250.

to the individual's degree of creativeness. In addition to the initial nominating panel, these assessors included: (1) a group of 19 professors, (2) six editors of architectural journals, (3) many of the architects in the creative sample and (4) many of the architects in the control group.¹⁵ It is interesting to note that creativity in this study is defined as a continuous trait, and that people may be judged to be more or less creative according to who is doing the judging.

Barron attempted to locate originality in peer groups through testing. He subjected a sample of 100 army captains to a battery of tests and then established a criterion for originality. In terms of his testing, an original has to be in the top 3 per cent on any one of the tests, and has to be in the top 14 per cent of the sample on the composite score. He followed similar procedures in testing other groups such as male graduate students within a year of obtaining their Ph.D's. One of the personality traits Barron discovered in the men he termed "originals" was a strong desire to find order where none appeared.¹⁶

Guilford also investigated personality traits associated with creatives and began with the premise that the

¹⁵Donald W. MacKinnon, "Creativity and Images of the Self," in Robert Winthrop White (ed.) The Study of Lives (New York: Atherton Press, 1963), pp. 250-278.

¹⁶Frank Barron, "The Disposition Toward Originality," in Calvin W. Taylor and Frank Barron (eds.) Scientific Creativity: Its Recognition and Development (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1963), pp. 139-152.

creative demonstrates a high degree of divergent thinking, with divergent thinking characterized as being less goal bound, away from rather than toward consensus. (Societal attitudes are toward consensus.)¹⁷ In collaboration with Hoepfner, Guilford listed six abilities that may be important to creativity:

1. Sensitivity to problems.
2. Fluency.
3. Flexibility: adaptability and the ability to change.
4. Originality: low probability of occurrence or unusualness.
5. Redefinition: the ability of being able to perceive different functions or alternate uses for particular objects.
6. Penetration: the ability to see more things than are on the surface.

Guilford devised a series of tests to correspond with each of the six traits he and Hoepfner had listed, seeking a precise way to measure creativity. The tests were ingenious for the most part and a clear demonstration of what he was seeking.

¹⁷J. Paul Guilford, "A Revised Structure of Intellect," Report from the Psychological Laboratory, No. 19 (Los Angeles: University of Southern California Press, April, 1957), pp. 1-27.

1. Sensitivity to problems - suggest two improvements for each of several institutions or customs.
2. Fluency - list different uses for the common brick.
3. Visual Flexibility - find as many hidden faces as possible in a complex scene.
4. Originality - titles for short-story plots.
(Only the clever ones were counted.)
5. Redefinition - object syntheses. Combine two common objects to make a new one. An example is the combination of pliers and shoestring to make a weapon.
6. Penetration - seeing different meanings. Find as many as four different meanings for a common word such as "scale."¹⁸

Precision was lost because all answers were not based on empirical data. There might be a discrete number of faces hidden in a puzzle, but whether a title for a short story was clever or not was still dependent on the subjective opinion of the tester. And how could a child be rated if he suggested that pliers and string could be used as a weight to hold down an imaginary ballon?

The results of Guilford's test showed poor correlation with other indices of creative performance, such as teacher and peer nominations.

¹⁸J. Paul Guilford and Ralph Hoepfner, The Analysis of Intelligence (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1971), pp. 109-111.

Another approach to the measurement of originality as a character trait was begun at the Institute of Personality Assessment and Research on the Berkeley Campus of the University of California in 1949. This institute was not established primarily for creativity research, i.e., "creativity" was just one of many personality traits subjected to testing situations established by the institute.

As an example of the testing procedure used on creative writers, Barron compiled a composite of thirty writers and listed the five more characteristic items at the positive end of the scale.

1. Appears to have a high degree of intellectual capacity.
2. Genuinely values intellectual and cognitive matters.
3. Values own independence and autonomy.
4. Is verbally fluent; can express ideas well.
5. Enjoys aesthetic impressions; is aesthetically reactive.

The next eight most characteristic items are equally interesting:

1. Is productive, gets things done.
2. Is concerned with philosophical problems such as religion, the meaning of life, etc.

3. Has a high aspiration level for self.
4. Has a wide range of interests.
5. Thinks and associates to ideas in unusual ways; has unconventional thought processes.
6. Is an interesting, arresting person.
7. Appears straightforward, candid in dealing with others.
8. Behaves in an ethically consistent manner; is consistent with own personal standards.¹⁹

On the Economic Value Scale of the Allport-Vernon-Lindzey Scale of value on Barron's tests, creative individuals consistently earned their very lowest scores. This is to say that creative individuals rated the commercial possibilities of their creativity as being an insignificant motivating force.²⁰

The significance of this sidenote can be seen in the paradox of many creativity studies which have been motivated by government and by industry which seem to equate creative thinking with problem-solving and problem-solving with a product which will be useful to industry and which will be profitable. There have been many studies, many discussions at conferences on creativity, toward the end of reducing the

¹⁹Frank Barron, "The Psychology of the Creative Writer," in Ross L. Mooney and Taher A. Razik (eds.) Explorations in Creativity (New York: Harper & Row, 1967), p. 70.

²⁰Ibid., p. 73.

number of man hours necessary to do a job. For instance, an industrialist who had sponsored creativity conferences for industry discovered that when creativity was applied to one particular problem in his plant, the number of man hours necessary to do a specific task rose from 100 to 140. This led to the abandonment of the solution as impractical.²¹ In other words, creativity was meant to make more money for the firm and perhaps the task would have yielded different results had Barron's tests of creatives on the Allport-Vernon-Lindzey Scale been studied.

To increase creative problem solving in industry, the approach has been to dissect the creative process and to encourage employees to follow each of the steps in turn in the hopes of making them more creative. There are a number of these dissections extant, but one should be sufficient to make the point. Osborn divides the creative act into seven steps:

1. Orientation
2. Preparation
3. Analysis
4. Hypothesis
5. Incubation
6. Synthesis
7. Verification²²

²¹A. Kay, "Making Organizational Changes Toward Creativity," in Taylor, Climate for Creativity, p. 134.

²²Osborn, Applied Imagination, p. 1-10.

The use of these seven steps for a creative employee is specified by Arnold in an article "Useful Creative Techniques." "All of these steps," he says, "can be benefited from continuous questioning, keen observation, generic relationships and daring predictions. These techniques, when applied conscientiously and repeatedly, will help awaken and strengthen your creative potential."²³

The commercializing of creativity study can be found in such articles as "The Course in Creative Marketing Strategy at Harvard Business School," "General Electric's Creative Courses," and in the use of "brainstorming," a process for encouraging group creativity which was developed in the 1950's by Alex Osborn. "Brainstorming" soon developed techniques and terminology of its own with informal rules limiting a brainstorming group to ten individuals who were encouraged to address their thinking to a general problem with no evaluation of their input until the end of the session. There soon developed the concept of a "buzz group" which was designed to warm-up the individuals with small problems which would prepare them to encounter the larger problems in a brainstorming session. A typical "warm-up" problem for a "buzz group" was stated by Mason in his article "Brainstorming Technical and Research Problems:"

²³John E. Arnold, "Useful Creative Techniques," in Parnes and Harding, Source Book, p. 252.

Considering the nature of 3M's technical problems, what would be the characteristics of a good group creative method? Suggest at least three.²⁴

The use of creative studies by industry was fostered by a number of elements in scholarly research into the nature of creativity. In the first place, early researchers established an atomistic procedure, that is, breaking down "creativity" into component elements which could then be measured against a criterion established for the specific ability or personality trait. Secondly, it was demonstrated in studies that a student exposed to a course in creativity tested higher in the characteristics of a creative at the end of the course than he did in the beginning.²⁵ It was also demonstrated that creativity is transferable from one area to another, although some of the results of these demonstrations showed attitude changes more than increases in traits associated with creativity. It was a natural progression therefore, for industry to equate creativity with better problem solving, with increased productivity and with increased profits.

The atomistic approach to studies in creativity leads to many problems, especially among those psychologists and

²⁴Joseph G. Mason, "Suggestions for Brainstorming Technical and Research Problems," ibid., p. 292.

²⁵This was demonstrated in Irving Maltzman, Seymore Simon, David Raskin and Leonard Licht, "Experimental Studies in the Training of Originality," Psychological Monographs, 74, Whole No. 493 (1960), p. 16.

educators trying "reliably" and "validly" to discover and identify high level talent, and to the eventual question, i.e., what criteria are to be used to measure creativity? They use "scientific method" and traditional procedures, i.e., they can take the judgment of peers or even of experts; they count patents or pages of publications; they use many devices against which to compare and to "validate" creativity. But how can we deal with this paradox in science, that validity means likeness, conformity, and that creativity means uniqueness, originality, conforming to nothing the world has yet seen? Gutman describes creative behavior as follows: "Creative behavior consists of any activity by which man imposes a new order upon his environment." He adds: "Creative behavior, by its very nature, is spontaneous, inner-directed, ordinarily not capable of being elicited at will. Therefore, it is unpredictable and escapes manipulation and control. It is generally not amenable to experimentation."²⁶

Maslow writes, "It is my powerful conviction that the problem of creativeness is the problem of the creative person." He goes on to add that the relationship to psychiatric health is so crucial, so profound, and yet it is not used as a foundation on which to build.²⁷

²⁶H. Gutman, "The Biological Roots of Creativity," in Mooney and Razik, Explorations, p. 3.

²⁷Abraham H. Maslow, "A Holistic Approach to Creativity," in Calvin W. Taylor, Climate for Creativity, p. 288.

According to Maslow the whole basis for creativity research, therefore, should not be in tests and measurements but in a study of the whole creative person.

Dellas and Gaier take this approach in their studies, incorporating empirical data, but projecting from the data to describe creatives by what psychological traits they seem to have in common. They found that creatives are distinguished more by interests, attitudes and drives rather than by intellectual abilities and they seek to recognize the potential creative "on the basis of compound criteria from disparate psychological levels."²⁸

Their profile is one in which the creatives share a particular constellation of traits, including the ability to synthesize disparate elements, to be open to the disorder of the world and to react to problems in a positive and constructive way. The creative may possess a high degree of cognitive flexibility manifested in adaptive regression which may make of him a paradox. "The creator may appear simultaneously crazier yet saner, more naive and more knowledgeable, more destructive and constructive."²⁹

The creative possesses a high degree of perceptual openness and tends not to use suppression as a control of

²⁸Marie Dellas and Eugene L. Gaier, "Identification of Creativity: The Individual," Psychological Bulletin, 73 (1970), p. 55.

²⁹Quoting Frank Barron, Creativity and Psychological Health (Princeton, N.J.: Van Nostrand Company, Inc., 1963), ibid., p. 61.

impulse. In other words, he is a more spontaneous individual. Dellas and Gaier see him as a divergent thinker, not inclined to follow the path toward consensus, not because he is in rebellion against established standards but because he is marching to the sound of a different drummer. The creative has a "cognitive preference for complexity" but has the capacity to integrate a richness of experience into a higher order synthesis that makes for the unusual in creative production and performance.³⁰

Dellas and Gaier condensed their research into six headings which incorporated both the testing-measurement point of view and the personality trait concept, summing up the creative individual as follows:

1. Independence in attitudes and in social behavior.
2. Dominance, introversion, open to stimuli and wide interests.
3. Self-acceptance, intuitiveness and flexibility.
4. Has social presence and poise, but has asocial attitudes and unconcern for social norms.
5. Antipathy toward anything encroaching on individuality or compelling performance.
6. In aesthetic creativity - radicalism, rejection of external restraints.³¹

³⁰Ibid., pp. 59-60.

³¹Ibid., p. 68.

This represents a composite based on a study of many creatives and, as such, only partially describes the individuals involved.

To make a study of the creative individual, evidence must be gathered from the creatives themselves, an appraisal of the creative process by persons who experience it. How do they view themselves and the process for they have been writing about themselves either directly or indirectly for centuries?

The Wellsprings of the Literary Creative

There is an expressed fascination with the wellsprings of literary creativity which runs like a golden thread through exploratory literature on the subject. Freud was fascinated with literary creativity and came to view it as being the product of unacceptable sexual impulses.³² Jung, assuming a mystical approach saw the writer as a carrier of images and knowledge from the collective unconscious.³³ The more modern approach is that the literary creative suffers from some form of psychopathology.

Andre Maurois: "The need to express one's self in writing springs from a maladjustment to life, or from an

³²Sigmund Freud, Leonardo da Vinci: A Study in Psycho-sexuality (New York: Random House, 1947), p. 46.

³³Carl Gustav Jung, "Psychology and Literature," Modern Man in Search of a Soul, trans. by W. S. Dell and Cary F. Baynes (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, Ltd., n.d.), reprinted in Brewster Ghiselin, The Creative Process; A Symposium (New York: Mentor, 1952), p. 218.

inner conflict which the man cannot resolve in action."³⁴ Rollo May elaborates on this concept, stating that it is conflict which opens the channels to creativity, that the inner conflict brings about a change in Gestalt which is then expressed in writing and consists of an exploration rather than a goal. "The solution consists not of resolution," he writes. "It consists of the deeper and wider dimensions of consciousness to which the writer is carried by virtue of wrestling with his problem."³⁵ He believes that psychotherapy traps the conflict and brings it into the open and thereby aids in resolving it, an act which may be damaging to the career of a literary creative whose processes are set in motion by that very conflict. He quotes Rilke who decided not to undergo psychotherapy when he discovered its aims: "If my devils are to leave me, I am afraid that my angels will take flight as well."³⁶

The theme of psychopathology and the reaction against psychological obstacles is touched on but briefly in the creativity measurement studies, and the result is left to interpretation. For instance, Barron found that creative

³⁴The New York Times, October 10, 1967, p. 42.

³⁵Rollo May, Love and Will (New York: Delta Books, 1969), pp. 253-54. In 1953, May's position tended to be similar to Maslow's. See Rollo May, Man's Search for Himself (New York: Signet, 1953), p. 121.

³⁶Rilke, Letter 74, Briefe aus den Jahren, 1907 bis 1914, quoted by May, Love and Will, p. 122.

writers had a combination of high scores on the pathological indices of the MMPI but this information is given no more stress than the rest of the scoring process. He also discovered that creative writers scored low on Good Impression, which is to some extent a conformity scale, and below the mean on Achievement through Conformance, on Communality and on Socialization.³⁷ What he does not say is that the non-conformist cannot avoid stress in a conforming society and, indeed, tends to be punished by a society seeking the conformity of its members.

Barron subjected his writers to a Fantasy measurement, questioning them concerning mystical experiences which he found that most of his writers claimed to have had. This sense of mysticism was confirmed by projective tests such as the Thematic Apperception Test and the Rorschach which revealed the writers' concern with mystical themes, with death, with inanimate forces, with the symbolic in rituals.³⁸

If Barron's finding of the strong elements of mysticism and ritualism in creative writers is valid, then one can expect to find both present in the writer's concept of his work and of his methods.

³⁷Barron, "The Psychology of the Creative Writer," in Mooney and Razik, Explorations, p. 72.

³⁸Ibid.

James Thurber found the process similar to day dreaming.³⁹ Many writers describe the process as being "automatic" writing, as if they are not in control of what comes out of their pens or their typewriters but are merely observing scenes and characters which preexist and then recording them. "I write with complete naiveté," Francois Mauriac reports "... When I cease to be carried along, when I no longer feel as though I were taking down dictation, I stop."⁴⁰

Or, as James Thurber described the working methods of Hervey Allen: "He felt he could close his eyes, lie down on a bed, and hear the voices of his ancestors. Furthermore, there was some sort of angel-like creature that danced along his pen while he was writing."⁴¹ Anthony Burgess reports that he is a natural gusher and his first task is to cope with the flow, channel it. "It's a welling, jumping gusto that I write from."⁴²

Robert Crichton: "Against my will, the story preyed upon me, fermenting in my doughy spirit, fizzing there like

³⁹Interview with James Thurber in Malcolm Cowley (ed.), Writers at Work: The Paris Review Interviews (New York: Viking Press, 1958), p. 96. For a discussion of the process of automatic writing, see Ghiselin, Creative Process, pp. 16-17.

⁴⁰Interview with Francois Mauriac, ibid., pp. 40-42.

⁴¹Interview with Thurber, in Cowley, Writers at Work, p. 89.

⁴²Thomas McCormack (ed.), Afterwords: Novelists on Their Novels (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), p. x.

a cake of yeast in a wine vat. I woke one morning in March with the line 'In dreams begin responsibilities running in my mind.' And so I seriously began my book."⁴³

John Fowles: ". . .all natural or born writers are possessed, and in the old magical sense, by their own imaginations long before they even begin to think of writing."⁴⁴

Some writers find they cannot analyze the process. "I can't do it," said one writer. "For me the writing of a novel is a prolonged lunatic binge and as much as I'd like to describe the event, I find it impossible."⁴⁵

Bertrand Russell had no such problem. He wrote:

Very gradually I have discovered ways of writing with a minimum of worry and anxiety. When I was young each fresh piece of serious work used to seem to me for a time - perhaps a long time - to be beyond my powers. I would fret myself into a nervous state from fear that it was never going to come right. I would make one unsatisfying attempt after another, and in the end, would have to discard them all. At last I found that such fumbling attempts were a waste of time. It appeared that after first contemplating a book on some subject, and after giving serious preliminary attention to it, I needed a period of subconscious incubation which could not be hurried and was if anything impeded by deliberate thinking. Sometimes I would find, after a time, that I had made a mistake, and that I could not write the book I had in mind. But often I was more fortunate. Having, by a time of very intense concentration, planted the

⁴³Robert Crichton, "Preface," ibid., p. 50.

⁴⁴John Fowles, "Notes on an Unfinished Novel," ibid., p. 162.

⁴⁵McCormack, Afterwords, p. vii.

problem in my subconscious, it would germinate underground until, suddenly, the solution emerged with blinding clarity, so that it only remained to write down what had happened as if in a revelation.⁴⁶

So does Russell, in an unusually cool and rational prose characteristic of his thinking, describe the process of creativity. To the experienced creative writer, one who has lived with the process long enough for its mysteries to become familiar, the feeling of being out of rational control may prove to be exciting. But for the beginning creative writer, experiencing the same process may be a bewildering or frightening experience. One of the best descriptions of the feeling accompanying the experience is found in a student paper:

But to create. I seem to be in the embryonic stage of this new experience and I fight trying to reach that thing called Creativity, but in my trying, fail. (And if you really have to try, can it ever be reached? Shouldn't it come with birth like arms and legs?) Grotesque forms are beginning to emerge in my mind. Are they perhaps future characters and plots that grow there or are they hauntings warning me to stay with the more familiar? How can they be termed creatures? One has only a head--the head of an old bewhiskered man (he looks like a seaman, but I've never gazed on the sea), another has no body but only a vague form with a very definite state of mind, yet another is a shadowy creature with nothing about him except a statement, a perfectly turned phrase. There are more, many more. Some are not even that well defined. They seem to be creatures which don't spring from procreation--they experience no fetal stage but grow incoherently and fantastically from--from what? These hauntings don't seem to be of my own mind but are interlopers who exist there unbeckoned

⁴⁶Bertrand Russell, "How I Write," in Portraits from Memory and Other Essays (London: Allen and Irwin, 1965), p. 195.

by me. They are personalities that I could never have known in my comfortable, happy life. But still that sea weathered man knocks for attention; that state of mind which isn't mine exists and grows, and that creature embodied in a phrase struggles in the mind's womb and evolves.⁴⁷

As William Faulkner experienced it: "I listen to the voices and when I've put down what the voices say, it's right. I don't always like what they say, but I don't try to change it."⁴⁸

Cowley points out that many writers have personified that voice as a benign or evil spirit. Hawthorne regarded it as evil: "The Devil himself always seems to get into my inkstand and I can only exorcise him by pensful at a time." Kipling regarded the Daemon in his pen as tyrannical but well-meaning. "When your Daemon is in charge," he wrote, "do not try to think consciously. Drift, wait and obey."⁴⁹ A beginning writer believed that she was taking dictation from the Holy Spirit who was writing through her and could write nothing which was not in the language of the King James version of the Bible.⁵⁰

⁴⁷Student to author, University of Oklahoma, Sept. 14, 1974.

⁴⁸Quoted by Cowley, Writers at Work, pp. 16-17.

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 17.

⁵⁰Student to author, University of Oklahoma, Fall, 1973.

Many writers cannot write without rituals.⁵¹ Kipling could not write except with the blackest of Indian-inks, and his paper had to be large, off-white sheets, specially cut, or he felt that the words would not come.⁵² If the process is working, the literary creative seeks ways to keep it from coming to a halt.

Angus Wilson wrote: "Fiction writing is a kind of magic and I don't care to talk about a novel I'm doing because if I communicate the magic spell, even in an abbreviated form, it loses its force for me."⁵³ Truman Capote refuses to begin or end any writing project on a Friday.⁵⁴

Generally, the literary creative does not know where his work will lead him as he sits down to write. He may think he knows; he may have a general idea of what he wishes his story to be, but caught up as he is in the process of automatic writing, he cannot be certain and does not wish to be certain. Simenon wrote only the names of characters and certain details about them on the back of an envelope before he began his novels. "I know nothing about the events which

⁵¹These ritualistic devices are currently used by professional writers known to the author. Similar ritualistic devices are described in Cowley, Writers at Work, pp. 15-16.

⁵²Rudyard Kipling, "Working Tools," Something of Myself (New York: Garden City, Doubleday, 1937), pp. 157-59.

⁵³Quoted by Cowley, Writers at Work, p. 17.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 17.

will occur later. Otherwise, it would not be interesting to me."⁵⁵

Faulkner described this plunging off into the unknown as being an absolutely necessary process, for he felt he was forced to write in order to purge himself. Various other writers describe their work as a process of self discovery about themselves and the world. But as the writer sees himself as forming his work, Jung suggests that the work also forms the writer. "The work in process becomes the poet's fate and determines his psychic development. It is not Goethe who creates Faust, but Faust which creates Goethe."⁵⁶

Summary of Literature

From the discussion of creative writers and the summaries of some of the creativity measuring devices, it is apparent that there are a great many discrepancies between the actual process, the work produced, societal acceptance and many of the theoretical constructs which attempt to embrace and evaluate all three. This can be demonstrated by taking but two of the many evaluative theories and pointing out exceptions which contradict these theories.

Maltzman, for instance, suggests that creativity cannot be measured at all and that creativity tests are simply measurements of originality, that the products which

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 13.

⁵⁶Jung, in Ghiselin, Creative Process, p. 222.

are judged to be creative are the results of original behavior plus the reactions of an accepting society which judges those products to be original.⁵⁷

There are many ambiguities inherent in this definition. For instance, in 1930, Vernon Parrington concluded that Walt Whitman was the complete embodiment of enlightenment, a critical opinion shared by many anthologists of the first half of the twentieth century, but in 1872, seventeen years after the first edition of Leaves of Grass, Whitman complained to an English friend:

If you write again for publication about my books. . . I think it would be proper and even essential to include the important facts (for facts they are) that the Leaves of Grass and their author are contemptuously ignored by the recognized literary organs here in the United States, rejected by the publishing houses, the author turned out of a government clerkship and deprived of his means of support...solely on account of having written the book.⁵⁸

The works of Walt Whitman, even in the society in which they were written, would more nearly fit the criteria for creativity put forth by Jackson and Messick which tends to exclude societal acceptance. Their four criteria are as follows:

1. The creative responses must have a low probability of occurrence, or be novel or unexpected.

⁵⁷Maltzman, Simon, Raskin and Licht, Experimental Studies, p. 1.

⁵⁸Louis Untemeyer, Modern American Poetry; Modern British Poetry (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1950), pp. 39.36.

2. The product must be appropriate to the situation and to the desires of the producer.

3. There must be a transcendence of conceptual restraints, which, in simpler terms, means that whatever is created must be something entirely new.

4. The creation must have a coalescence of meaning, i.e., an extended examination of a creation would yield multiple results.⁵⁹

The difficulties in an application of these criteria to the literary creative and his product are enormous. Reduced to the simplest terms, who is to make the decision as to whether something is novel or unexpected, or whether a product is appropriate? If the literary creative is to be believed, he is not even aware of what he is doing, has no idea how he is doing it and is not in a position to judge the competency of his own work. In Walt Whitman's time, few people agreed with him concerning the value of his work. Fifty years later, he received critical esteem. Is critical judgment more accurate simply because it is more recent? The criteria suggested in these studies tend to apply in controlled situations, in the administering of the various tests because products can be judged in relation to each other

⁵⁹Jackson and Messick, Creativity.

and then rated as more or less creative by a specific group of evaluators comparing them with other products obtained by the same test.

But applied generally, the criteria tend not to hold. What is entirely new, for instance? Shakespeare, considered to be the greatest English writer who ever lived, often rewrote lesser known plays or embellished plots created by other writers. In the folk story of the blind men and the elephant, each man perceived a difference of meaning in the same animal. There were multiple interpretations dependent on the orientation of the individual. So it has been with the judgment of creative literary works by reputable critics.

It is doubtful whether Kipling, with his magical dependence on specified inks and papers, would have done well on any creativity test if deprived of those properties which he insisted were the source of his inspiration. And Balzac, who could be creative only in a certain room, wearing a monk's robe and working at precise times of day, would have been lost, perhaps, when subjected to the strict controls of the average creativity test with a time limit.

Donald J. Treffinger and John P. Poggio, in their article "Needed Research on the Measurement of Creativity" make some of these same points and conclude with these two cogent recommendations:

1. There is a need for multivariate methods to be employed in longitudinal studies of creative talent.

2. There are needs for longitudinal studies, well controlled experimental studies, replications, and for developmental and cross-cultural studies.⁶⁰

In the majority of the previously cited studies, the vast preponderance of the subjects have been male. When questioned about the scarcity of females in his studies, Frank Barron replied that sex differences had never been a variable in his studies but that his nominators for army captains, writers and Ph.D. candidates had all been male and that, due to the method of selection, not many women's names appeared. There were only five women in his study of writers. These few females were omitted from the calculations on Femininity of Interest Patterns but their scores were included in the overall project.⁶¹

The studies which have been made of females tend to be peripheral in nature. The study made by Simon, Clark and Galway, a survey of more than 5000 women who received Ph.D.'s between 1958 and 1963 concluded that women who achieve the Ph.D. are as productive as their male counterparts.⁶² Creativity was not an issue in this study although Kogan

⁶⁰Donald J. Treffinger and John P. Poggio, "Needed Research on the Measurement of Creativity," Journal of Creative Behavior, 6 (Fourth Quarter, 1972), p. 265.

⁶¹Frank Barron, Berkeley, California, telephone interview, October 10, 1975.

⁶²Rita J. Simon, Shirley M. Clark and Kathleen Galway, "The Woman Ph.D.: A Recent Profile," Social Problems, 15 (Fall, 1967), p. 231.

cites it as relevant in his "Creativity and Sex Differences."⁶³

Storr reports that many psychologists using various tests found that their male creative subjects show high scores on scales measuring femininity. "The evidence is clear," he writes. "The more creative a person is, the more he reveals an openness to his own feelings and emotions, a sensitive intellect and understanding self-awareness, wide-ranging interests including many, which in American culture, are thought of as feminine." He goes on to state that in the realm of sexual identification and interests, male subjects appear to give more expression to the feminine side of their nature than do less creative persons. Whether creative women show more masculine interests than average is not so well established; but, judging from history and his personal acquaintances, he concludes that it seems likely. He suggests that George Sand is a good example.⁶⁴

Helson's findings differ in results. In her study of two samples of college females in California she demonstrated that the females which were judged to be creative on her tests were more inclined toward "femininity" on a masculinity/

⁶³Nathan Kogan, "Creativity and Sex Differences," Journal of Creative Behavior, 8 (First Quarter, 1974), p. 2.

⁶⁴Anthony Storr, The Dynamics of Creation (New York: Atheneum, 1972), p. 194.

femininity scale and that those females who demonstrated masculine interests were not more creative.⁶⁵

Kogan concludes: "To the degree that divergent-thinking tests have some predictive power for creative behavior, it is important to know that males and females perform similarly. The dissemination of such knowledge would have the obvious function of dispelling sexist stereotypes concerning women's potential capacity for creativity."⁶⁶

Phyllis Greenacre, in her study on sex differences, is concerned with the differences in anatomical structure between the sexes which she theorizes may tend to make for a lesser degree of externalization and to contribute to the lesser creative productivity of women.⁶⁷

With the rise of feminism, much research on sex differences in creativity is underway. The previously discussed concepts and definitions of creativity appear to be accepted as valid constructs and a foundation for research on women in creativity.

⁶⁵Ravenna Helson, "Personality of Women with Imaginative and Artistic Talents; The Role of Masculinity, Originality, and other Characteristics in Their Creativity," Journal of Personality, 34 (March, 1966), pp. 1-25.

⁶⁶Nathan Kogan and F. T. Morgan, "Task and Motivational Influences on the Assessment of Creative and Intellectual Ability in Children," Genetic Psychology Monographs, 80 (Second Half, 1969), pp. 91-127.

⁶⁷Phyllis Greenacre, "Woman as Artist," Psychoanalytic Quarterly, 29 (1960), pp. 208-227.

CHAPTER III

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

Introduction

The intent of this study is to pursue a critical examination of the reported lives of twenty female American literary creatives, the majority of whom published works of literary merit in the twentieth century.

This study will examine certain aspects of the formative years of these women; the economic and social status of their families, their placement in the family, and whether they were educated in private or public schools.

Certain psychological aspects of their lives will be examined, both as children and adults, to determine how effectively they adjusted to the society in which they lived.

Their sexual activities will be studied, in a broad sense, in an attempt to determine whether their sexual proclivities had any influence on their work.

This study will correlate forty-one variables in the life of each of the twenty to determine the ways in which

these creatives were similar and the ways in which they differed. Through computer analysis of these variables, it will produce a composite profile. In the end, applicability of the implications of the findings to higher-adult education will be summarized.

Selection of the Women

Twenty women authors were nominated by three professors of creative studies. Anna Garlin Spencer said of writers, "Many sang sweetly to their contemporaries but lacked voice to echo down the ages."¹ To avoid those writers who "sang sweetly to their contemporaries," it was decided that distance in time was needed to determine the truly creative from the fashionably competent. Thus the decision was made that each author must have become nationally known by 1950. Eighteen of the authors were notable by 1925, which gives fifty years of notability.

The choice of these women depended on four criteria:

1. They had to be American.
2. They had to have been born after 1825 and before 1925. This period was dictated in part by the number of women who became available during this time in numbers large enough to study.

¹Anna Garlin Spencer, Woman's Share in Social Culture, (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1925), p. 52.

3. The third criterion was that each of them must have published two books of major literary quality.

4. They must have been writers of sufficient quality to merit publication of their memoirs, diaries, autobiographies and letters; or to have had a biography written about them and/or to have been included in an anthology for scholastic study.

The twenty authors included in this study are:

Kay Boyle
Pearl Buck
Willa Cather
Emily Dickinson
Edna Ferber
Ellen Glasgow
Lillian Hellman
Anita Loos
Amy Lowell
Carson McCullers
Edna St. Vincent Millay
Marianne Moore
Flannery O'Connor
Dorothy Parker
Katherine Anne Porter
Mary Roberts Rinehart
Elizabeth Madox Roberts
Gertrude Stein
Eudora Welty
Edith Wharton

Methodology

Following the selection of the women, a bibliography of their works was assembled. Data were compiled from published letters, diaries, autobiographies, and memoirs to fit the requirements of an evaluation survey. Since these primary sources all tend to be highly subjective and therefore

open to lapses of memory or selective vanity (some of the subjects tended to report inaccurately on their birthdates), the dates and other verifiable data were cross-checked against definitive biographies and standard reference works. These were then sifted to exclude those that depended exclusively on data contained in those works written by the women about themselves.

The attitudes of these women, in many cases, have to be taken at face value, for these are subjective data. If a creative states that she felt closer to her father than to her mother and there is no evidence to demonstrate that this statement was made in the mood of the moment against a larger body of declarations elsewhere, this datum has been entered into the survey questionnaire.

In short, after exhaustive surveys of the literature, data have been selected from the best available sources. Once the data were assembled, computer runs were made to determine relative frequencies and to produce histograms as well as correlations of all the variables. A multiple regression was run using the following items as dependent variables: Age at First Published Work, Age at the Start of the Most Productive Period, and Length of the Most Productive Period.

Selection of Variables Used in the Survey Questionnaire

1. Birthplace
2. Birthyear
3. Economic Position of the Family
4. Father's Profession
5. Predominant Parental Influence

6. Relationship to Father
7. Relationship to Mother
8. Number of Siblings
9. Position Among Siblings
10. Psychological Classification Introvert/Extrovert
11. Psychological Classification Loner/Preferred Groups
12. Psychological Classification Cooperative/Uncooperative
13. Psychological Classification Nervous/Placid
14. Health as Child
15. Health as Adult
16. Schooling - Public/Private
17. Adjustment to Schooling
18. Religious Training
19. Strength of Religious Training
20. Age First Demonstrated Talent
21. Other Talents
22. Age First Published Work
23. Marital Status
24. Number of Times Married
25. Age at First Marriage
26. Children
27. Number of Children
28. Age at First Birth
29. Sexual Adjustment
30. Age at Start of Most Productive Period
31. Length of Most Productive Period
32. Interest in Reading
33. Interest in History and Oral Tradition
34. Travelled Extensively
35. Close Relationship to Other Writers
36. Interest in Traditional Role of Homemaker
37. Housework, Business Done by Others
38. Family Moved More Than Once as a Child
39. Age at Death
40. Positive Influence by Special Other Person
41. Negative Influence by Special Other Person

Rationale for Selection of Variables

The rationale for the chronological and geographical questions are self-evident (Items 1, 2, 39). They are designed to determine where and when the author began life, and to record the date of death. The place of birth will be considered to determine whether any one area of the country produced more of these writers than any other. Secondly,

this study will correlate the date of birth with the age of first published work (Item 22) in an attempt to determine the effects of the society on first publication.

The second group of data concerns the family life of the creative during the formative years. The relationship of the creative with her parents is explored (Items 5 through 9), also determining the dominant parental influence and the placement of the creative among the siblings in the family.

Much has been made of the relationship between creativity and psychosexual adjustment beginning with Freud and the assumption that literary creativity was a product of unacceptable sexual impulses.² Barron, in his studies of male literary creatives noted that they consistently scored high on the femininity index of the MMPI³ and Greenacre suggested that the female literary creative might be expected to tend toward bisexuality, displaying traits which are generally associated with masculinity.⁴ Through a correlation of the creative's Sexual Adjustment (Item 29) and Marital History (Items 23 and 24) with early family adjustment, the survey is designed to demonstrate the relationship, if any,

²Sigmund Freud, Leonardo da Vinci: A Study in Psycho-Sexuality (New York: Random House, 1947), p. 46.

³MMPI is an abbreviation for Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory.

⁴Phyllis Greenacre, "Woman as Artist," Psychoanalytic Quarterly, 29 (1960), p. 221.

between the closeness to either father or mother and subsequent sexual adjustment. There may also be a relationship between the influence of the mother and the creative's subsequent Interest in the Traditional Role of Homemaker (Item 36).

Economic Position of the Family and Father's Profession (Items 3 and 4), are important for practical reasons. As Virginia Woolf pointed out, creativity depends on the opportunity to create, on the privacy to write and sufficient income to permit an allocation of time to literary pursuits.⁵ There may tend to be a strong relationship between the economic status of the family and the schooling of the creative (Items 16 and 17). In the period encompassing the formative years of these creatives, various shadings of schooling were available, public, private, parochial, academies, tutors, etc., and the choice of type of schooling was dependent upon such things as income, geographical location of the family and class pressures.

Adjustment to School (Item 17) is linked with the Psychological Classification (Items 10 through 13) for it is often during the educational years, the exposure to peer groups that many creatives tend to exhibit the psychological dispositions which will remain comparatively constant

⁵Virginia Woolf, "A Room of One's Own," Feminism, The Essential Historical Writings. Edited by Miriam Schneir (New York: Random House, 1964), p. 351.

throughout their lives. Two of the items were suggested by the very nature of literary pursuits. It might be predicted that a writer would tend to be an introvert rather than an extrovert (Item 10) simply because writing is a highly private and personal activity. Many educational psychologists tend to confirm this as a personality trait applicable to all creatives.

It might be expected that the writer would tend to be a loner (Item 11), for writing is not something which can be done by a group but is an individualized expression. Barron confirmed this in his testing when he discovered that male creatives score below the mean on Achievement through Conformance, on Communality and on Socialization.⁶ This element of conformance is reflected in Item 12 which investigates the tendency of these women creatives to be classified as Cooperative/Uncooperative. The qualification of these women as Nervous/Placid (Item 13) is suggested by the conflictedness of writers mentioned by Maurios⁷ and amplified by Rollo May,⁸ based on the rather simple conclusion that a conflicted

⁶Frank Barron, "The Psychology of the Creative Writer," in Ross L. Moonery and Taher A. Razik (eds.), Explorations in Creativity (New York: Harper & Row, 1967), p. 72.

⁷The New York Times, October 10, 1967, p. 42.

⁸Rollo May, Love and Will (New York: Delta Books, 1969), p. 121.

person would tend to be nervous and a non-conflicted person placid.

The health of the creative woman is examined in Items 14 and 15 in an attempt to either validate or discredit the widely held belief that a creative writer tends to be in poor health. It is possible that this belief comes from the fact that many writers have either turned to writing or developed their skills during periods of idleness created by long periods of recuperation from illness.

Cattell has suggested, in his study of scientific creatives, that there is a relationship between religious training and the demonstrated creative productivity of an individual.⁹ This hypothesis is tested in Items 18 and 19, not only in the religious affiliation of an individual, which might tend to be nominal, but in the strength of that religious training which would tend to make the affiliation significant.

Items 20 through 31 are at the heart of this study for they deal primarily with the relationship between the first demonstration of talent (Item 20) and the development of that talent over a lifetime with an examination of the distractive elements of marriage and childbearing.

⁹Raymond B. Cattell, Abilities: Their Structure, Growth and Action (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1971) p. 423.

Greenacre suggests that there might be a correlation between the biological distractiveness of being a woman and female creativity. She also suggests that the practical distractions of motherhood and wifehood may also account for a lessened creative productivity among women.¹⁰ There should then be a correlation, either positive or negative, between Age of First Published Work (Item 22), Age at Start of the Most Productive Period (Item 30), Length of Most Productive Period (Item 31), and the items concerning marriage and children (Items, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27 and 28).

Items 36 and 37, Interest in Traditional Role of Homemaker and Housework, Business Done by Others are closely related to the above grouping.

That these elements are often decisive in the expression of a woman's creativity is strongly emphasized by Spencer:

No record. . . can even name the women of talent who were so submerged by child-bearing and its duties, and by 'general housework,' that they had to leave their poems and stories all unwritten. Moreover, the obstacles to intellectual development and achievement which marriage and maternity impose (and which are so important that they demand a separate study) are not the only ones that must be noted. It is not alone the fact that women have generally had to spend most of their strength in caring for others that has handicapped them in individual effort; but also that they have almost universally had to care wholly for themselves.

¹⁰Greenacre, "Woman As Artist," p. 210.

When we read of Charles Darwin's wife not only relieving him from financial cares but seeing that he had his breakfast in his room, with 'nothing to disturb the freshness of his morning,' we do not find the explanation of Darwin's genius, but we do see how he was helped to express it. Men geniuses, even of second grade, have usually had at least one woman to smooth their way, and often several women to make sure that nothing interfered with the development and expression of their talent.¹¹

Interest in History and Oral Tradition (Item 33) relates to an exposure to story-telling in the formative years which might tend to increase the child's desire to express herself in a richer use and flow of language. It is expected that this interest would be high.

Travelled Extensively (Item 34) should be related to The Length of Most Productive Period (Item 31) for in the study made by Dellas and Gaier (1970) the creative was found to be "open to stimuli and wide interests"¹² and the writer who travels may have a tendency to produce over a longer period of time than the writer whose stimuli are limited by restricted physical movement.

It is expected that these writers would tend to have a close relationship with at least one other writer (Item 35) because writers tend to seek the company of other writers, especially in the early years of their careers. During the period in which these women were most productive, the world

¹¹Spencer, Woman's Share, pp. 80-1).

¹²Marie Dellas and Eugene L. Gaier, "Identification of Creativity: The Individual," Psychological Bulletin, 73 (1970), p. 55.

of publishing was considerably smaller and more closely interconnected than it is today.

Finally, the last two items, 40 and 41, are concerned with the positive or negative influence of a special other person on the work of these creatives. In this case, "special other person" refers either to a member of the family or an authority figure during the formative years who either encouraged or discouraged their literary pursuits. Although there have been recorded cases of writers discouraged by family members or teachers proceeding to write against that advice either to prove themselves or to display an effective rebellion, we would expect this to be the exception rather than the rule. We would also expect from the economic and social background of the families of the creatives to find that they were encouraged to write and to excel.

Biographical Sketches of the Creatives

Since the unique aspects of the lives of these twenty women creatives will tend to be submerged in analysis of the group data, it is worthwhile to examine each in a brief biographical synopsis. The source material for these sketches is listed under Selected Bibliography on Women Creatives.

Kay Boyle was born in St. Paul, Minnesota in 1903, the second of two children of middle-class parents. Her father was a lawyer and administrator. The family moved often. She was taken to Europe frequently as a child. Her father dominated the family but her relationship to him was

distant while she maintained a close emotional relationship to her mother into adulthood.

She was an introvert, uncooperative in the many attempts to educate her in private schools. She was exposed to the classics in literature and read avidly at an early age. She was a violinist and an architectural student and although she was writing books by the age of ten she did not appear to write much until her twenties when she began to associate with other writers and editors.

She married three times, the first time when she was twenty, the second when she was twenty-eight and third at forty-two. She gave birth to six children and had at least one abortion. She had tuberculosis as an adult and many bouts of nervous exhaustion.

She was a part of the "Lost Generation" culture in Paris during the 1920's. There is no evidence that she had any interest in the traditional role of homemaker although she did basic maintenance when it was required. She became most consistently productive by thirty, producing an average of 1.5 books a year until age forty-three. From that time, she published approximately a book every three years until she was sixty-five. Publication seems to have ceased and she is apparently still living at age seventy-three.

Pearl Buck was born in Hillsboro, West Virginia, in 1892, the daughter of missionaries to China who had come back to the United States for the mother to give birth to Pearl.

She was taken back to China and reared there except for irregular sabbaticals spent in the United States. She was fifth of seven children whose scholarly ministerial father, although dominating the family with his beliefs, was distant emotionally. Pearl maintained a close emotional tie to her mother into adulthood.

She was an extrovert, healthy, and cooperative, both as a child and as an adult. She grew up in a family rich in oral tradition as pioneers in the United States, in addition to the oral traditions of the Chinese in her life who were story-tellers in the old traditional sense. She married twice, the first time at twenty-five, and although she worked at the role of homemaker, she never enjoyed it and spoke of herself as not being a maternal woman despite the fact that she "mothered" a total of ten children, two by birth and eight by adoption.

She travelled extensively all of her life. She did not turn to writing as a vocation until well into her thirties. She published her first book at thirty-eight, receiving the Pulitzer Prize at forty and the Nobel Prize at forty-six. She published approximately thirty books from age thirty-eight to seventy-seven. Her non-fiction began when she was about sixty-one; works containing reminiscences, memoirs, world affairs, Chinese commentary, etc. These are books considered to be less creative than her fiction. She is reported to have said that no writer should attempt a novel

until he is thirty. She died in 1973 at the age of eighty-one.

Willa Cather was born in 1873 on a farm in Virginia, the first of seven children. When she was ten she was moved to Red Cloud, Nebraska, where she began school. Her father was a lawyer who dealt in abstracts and real estate. Although the mother dominated the family, Willa was emotionally closer to her father throughout her life. The family was rich in the oral history and traditions of the settling of this country and in stories of the Civil War. She had a great interest in the tales of the families around Red Cloud.

She was an introvert, a loner who often preferred the company of male adults. As a child, she assumed the name "William Cather" and dressed like a boy. Her health was good both as a child and as an adult. Although she wrote stories as early as sixteen and published one in a journal at eighteen, she did not start writing as a vocation until she was thirty-eight. She edited magazines, taught school, and published her first book in 1911. She had a collection of poems published in 1903 and a volume of short stories in 1905 but her productive period began in 1911 when she gave up all other work.

She published seven novels between thirty-eight and fifty-four, her last being Death Comes to the Archbishop at fifty-four. Her most productive period ended with this publication. She was awarded the Pulitzer Prize at fifty-eight.

She never married and never had children. She had a female companion of many years, travelling extensively in Europe and throughout the United States. She seemed to be always on the move. She never kept house and her companion served as housekeeper and business manager. She died in 1947 at the age of seventy-four.

Emily Dickinson was born in Amherst, Massachusetts, in 1830, the second of three children. Her father was a lawyer and a State senator who dominated the family. She was emotionally close to her father and her relationship to her mother was distant until middle-age. She was an introvert, made few friends, was uncooperative in school and extremely nervous in temperament. There was no recognition by the schools or her family of any special talent. She read avidly.

During her childhood, the family moved, but not far and she never travelled. She did not marry and became an eccentric recluse, always dressed in white. Upon occasion she enjoyed cooking and was proud of her pastries. She rarely left her home by the time she was thirty-one and was seldom seen by persons outside her family by forty. She was published anonymously when she was thirty-one and, although she wrote constantly, the bulk of her writing was neither found nor published until after her death in 1886.

Edna Ferber was born in Kalamazoo, Michigan, in 1887, the second of two children. Her father owned a retail store

and was often ill and going blind. During the times of his illness, the family lived with grandparents in a large extended family, rich in oral history. The grandparents were second generation Jews and story tellers of the family history which encompassed both Europe and the United States.

Edna was an extrovert who was cooperative and preferred groups. She spent her elementary school years in a punitive society in Iowa and her early childhood memories are negative. Her highschool years in Wisconsin were positive experiences. She wanted to be an actress and the family had a love for and attended the theater regularly.

Although she is reported to have been heterosexual, she never married, had no children and never filled the role of homemaker in the traditional sense. She became a newspaper reporter after highschool and while recuperating from a lengthy illness she wrote her first book. It was accepted for publication when she was twenty-four and she had published seven by the time she was thirty-seven. She received the Pulitzer Prize when she was thirty-eight. She published seven more novels by the time she was forty-nine. At fifty-two, she published her autobiography, an event which generally signals the end of a career, but she published five more good selling novels between fifty-two and seventy-one. These included Giant, published when she was sixty-five, and Ice Palace, published when she was seventy-one. She died in 1968 at the age of eighty-one.

Ellen Glasgow was born in Virginia in 1873, the eighth of eleven children. The father was manager of an iron foundry, a strict, authoritarian figure who dominated the family. Ellen had an extremely dependent relationship with her mother who had a history of mental instability. Ellen was an introvert, a loner, uncooperative, nervous; she refused to go to school after the first day and was for the most part educated at home by her mother. She was an avid reader when she was five and wrote her first poem at seven.

Her health was always bad, both as a child and as an adult. She began going deaf at twenty and was afflicted with deafness for the rest of her life. She never married, had no children and always had someone who served as housekeeper and manager of her business affairs. She was reported to be heterosexual, having two love affairs, both with married men. The first lasted seven years.

She published her first book at twenty-four and eighteen more by the age of fifty-nine. She began to slow down and wrote only three more books, the final one coming two years before her death in 1945 at the age of seventy-two. She travelled back and forth between the United States and Europe and made frequent excursions within the United States from the age of twenty until shortly before her death. She was always a restless woman with a history of nervous breakdowns, bouts of nervous exhaustion and made at least two suicide attempts.

Lillian Hellman was born in New Orleans, Louisiana in 1906, the only child of a father who was a travelling salesman who dominated the family when he was at home. She grew up in an extended family situation rich in oral history and traditions. As a child, she spent six months of each year in New York and the remainder of the year in Louisiana.

She was an introvert, a loner, extremely uncooperative both at home and at school. Her health has always been relatively good. She married at eighteen. There is no record of living children but she is reported to have had at least one abortion. She divorced her husband and lived with the writer Dashiell Hammett unmarried for almost thirty years. She worked before and during her marriage for a publishing house, as a book reviewer and as a reader at Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

She published a short story at the age of twenty-seven but began her serious work in the theater as a playwright with The Children's Hour in 1934, when she was twenty-eight. She had seven more plays produced, the last being Toys in the Attic at the age of fifty-three. During this time, she wrote many motion picture scripts including adaptations of her plays. She wrote her memoirs The Unfinished Woman when she was sixty-nine and Pentimento at seventy-three. She has travelled extensively all of her life and is still living.

Anita Loos, a novelist and dramatist, was born in Sisson, California in 1893, the second of three children whose father was a theatrical producer. He moved the family from Sisson to Los Angeles and then to San Francisco. He was a womanizer who dominated the family. Anita acted in her father's theatrical productions and read her way through the Carnegie Library.

She was an extrovert, placid; she preferred groups and was outwardly cooperative. She married twice, first at twenty-one and then at twenty-six. There is no record of children. She wrote film screenplays for D. W. Griffith in her teens and later for Douglas Fairbanks, Sr. Since these were not published there is little information on quantities except from Miss Loos.

She did not live with her first husband beyond the first night and although she never divorced the second, they spent more years apart than together. She had a devoted companion named Gladys for thirty years who was a buffer between her and housework and business management. She published her first book, Gentlemen Prefer Blondes, at the age of thirty-two. Her second was published at thirty-five and the rest of her career was spent in writing for motion pictures but her work began to slow down in her mid-forties. She died in 1975 at the age of eighty-two.

Amy Lowell was born in Brookline, Massachusetts, in 1874, the granddaughter of the founder of Lowell, Massachu-

setts. She was the third of five children in an extremely wealthy family. She was an introvert, a loner, uncooperative (enfant terrible), nervous, with a history of many bouts of nervous exhaustion. She never married, was homosexual and had an ex-actress as a single companion of many years.

Amy became an eccentric, huge in size. She smoked large black cigars. She made the fashionable trips to Europe but other than trips to New York, she did not travel extensively. She always had a housekeeper.

She was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry when she was fifty-two. She published her first book of poetry when she was thirty-eight and averaged one every two years until her death in 1925 at the age of fifty-one.

There is evidence of much family tradition in her life but no history of oral story tellers and there is no evidence that Amy had any interest in the cultural tales of the community.

Carson McCullers was born in Columbus, Georgia, in 1917, the first of three children, daughter of a Jewish watchmaker. Her mother predicted she would be a genius and trained her to be a concert pianist. Carson was an introvert, a loner who longed for groups, but she was most uncooperative. Her health was poor both as a child and as an adult. She published her first short story at nineteen and her first novel, The Heart is a Lonely Hunter, at twenty-two.

She married at twenty. There is no record of children. She was an indifferent housekeeper during her early years of marriage and later did none at all. She read avidly and travelled a great deal. She was bisexual and constantly tortured with the problem. She wrote only six books between twenty-four and forty-four but they are all of acknowledged literary quality. Her last, Clock Without Hands, was written in 1961, six years before her death in 1967 at the age of fifty.

Edna St. Vincent Millay was born in 1892 in Rockland, Maine, the first of three children. Her mother had wanted a boy so Edna fell into the habit of referring to herself as "Vincent." Her father was a school superintendent but the marriage was dissolved by divorce when Edna was eight and he had little influence on her except by his absence. She had a close relationship with her mother who had always wanted to be a writer and consequently encouraged Edna in that direction. Until Edna was married at thirty-one, her mother continued to live with her for long periods at a time, occasionally editing Edna's writing.

Edna was an introvert who preferred groups and was viewed by her mother and school authorities as cooperative. As an adult she had many temperamental outbursts and a history of nervous breakdowns. Her health was good as a child but poor as an adult.

She was a good student in public school and wrote her first poems when she was twelve. She published her first

poem at the age of twenty. At thirty-one, she was married to Eugen Jan Borssevain who gave up his business to devote himself to her work, to see that she remained free of any domestic routine that might interfere with it. He took care of all business details, ran the house, the farm, even cooked and served meals on frequent occasions. His actions were always determined by what he considered to be best for her.

At nineteen, Edna produced her most moving poem, "Renaissance," concerning a confrontation with the divine and this was to be her theme for four decades. She had her first nervous breakdown when she was about twenty-eight and was in ill-health in her thirties. She received the Pulitzer Prize in 1923. Even when she was well she was extremely restless and travelled extensively. She was productive to the age of fifty. She died at fifty-eight, in 1950.

Marianne Moore was born in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1887, the second of two children. She was dependent upon her mother as long as she lived and spoke of "needing mothering by everyone, the case all my life."¹³ Her father was an engineer who had a nervous breakdown and disappeared from Marianne's life at a very early age. The mother moved the family in with the grandparents.

Marianne was an introvert, a loner who was cooperative and placid in disposition. Her health was good both as a

¹³Donald Hall, Marianne Moore (New York: Pegasus, 1970), p. 18.

child and adult and she attended public school. Her first reported demonstration of talent was at twenty-eight when she first published. She taught school, was a librarian and became editor of Poetry Magazine. She was called "the hysterical virgin" by her disgruntled associates. She never married and as far as is known, never had children.

She published her first book of poems when she was thirty-four, however, her production was irregular until she was forty-eight. She received the Pulitzer Prize when she was sixty-five. She seldom travelled and became rather eccentric in her later years, wearing flowing capes and Tricorn hats. She was productive until 1969, three years before her death at the age of eighty-five.

Flannery O'Connor was born in Savannah, Georgia, in 1925, an only child of a father in real estate and a mother whose presence dominated the family. Her father had lupus and died when Flannery was sixteen. She was an introvert, a loner, cooperative but very nervous in temperament. She was reared in the Catholic Church and clung to those orthodox beliefs all her life. She never married and there is no record of children. She first published when she was twenty-one and demonstrated her talents as a painter and cartoonist.

She never travelled much but she read extensively. She became ill with disseminated lupus in 1950 when she was twenty-five and her mother moved her to a farm in

Milledgeville, Georgia, where she took care of her until she died in 1964 at the age of thirty-nine.

Her first novel was published in 1952. A collection of short stories, A Good Man is Hard to Find, was published in 1950 and The Violent Bear It Away followed in 1960, winning her a reputation as a master of short fiction. Her early and untimely death limited her productive years to eighteen.

Dorothy Parker was born in West End, New Jersey, in 1893, the third of three children, the daughter of a cruel and authoritarian father who was in the garment industry. Her mother died soon after her birth. She was educated in a Catholic convent and since she was the daughter of a Jewish father and a Presbyterian mother, her sense of religion was a conflicted one and she grew up with strongly anti-religious views.

She was an introvert, a loner, and though she was cooperative as a child, she was extremely uncooperative as an adult. She became famous quite early for her barbed wit and her refusal to conform to societal norms. She made many suicide attempts and had several abortions, the exact number of each being unknown as she seldom kept her facts straight.

She married three times, first at twenty-four, again at forty and then divorced and remarried her second husband when she was fifty-seven. She had at least four lovers and

a miscarriage at forty-two after her second marriage. She never filled the traditional role of homemaker and travelled extensively.

She was on the editorial staff of Vogue, Vanity Fair and The New Yorker and became a full time free lance writer in 1927 when she was thirty-four. She wrote motion picture screenplays, short stories, book reviews and essays until her death in 1967 at seventy-four. In terms of publishing material, she was not productive during the last four years of her life. A friend of hers provided a fitting summary of her life: "She was a terrified woman and a terrified artist."

Katherine Anne Porter was born in Indian Creek, Texas, 1890, the third of five children. Her mother died when she was just past infancy. Her father was an itinerant businessman and the children lived with their very strong-willed grandmother who dominated their lives.

Katherine was an introvert, a loner, nervous and uncooperative. She grew up in a home and community rich in history and story telling. She was reared as a Catholic, attending parochial schools where she was an indifferent student. She left home at sixteen, got married and divorced and became a singer, actress and musician. There is no record of children. She married again when she was forty-three and once more at the age of forty-eight. She read avidly

and travelled extensively. Nothing indicated that she was interested in the the traditional role of a homemaker.

She published her first short story at thirty-two after serving as a newspaper critic and a ghost-writer. She went to Mexico on a Guggenheim Fellowship. She published The Flowering Judas when she was forty, Hacienda at forty-four, Noon Wine at forty-seven, Pale Horse, Pale Rider at forty-nine and Ship of Fools at seventy-two. She is still living at eighty-five and resides in Washington, D. C.

Mary Roberts Rinehart was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in 1876, the ninth of ten children in a home overflowing with extended family. There was always a stray relative on hand, an aunt, uncle, grandmother or anyone who needed a home. Her father was an inventor who committed suicide when she was approximately twenty.

She was an introvert, placid in disposition and cooperative. She trained to be a nurse, married at nineteen and had three sons by the time she was twenty-five. She was ill during her twenties and to fill her spare time she wrote a story based on an incident she had observed as a nurse. She published her first work at thirty and was most productive until she was seventy-two years old. She filled the traditional role as homemaker and helpmate to her husband, writing when her husband and children were asleep or away.

She writes of those times: ". . .I now found myself with a profession; and a problem. Women were still 'in the

home.' The comparatively few who had emerged from it to make names for themselves, almost all had failed to make the compromise between marriage and a career."¹⁴

She published approximately thirty novels and plays in forty years, including an autobiography. She died in 1958 at the age of eighty-two.

Elizabeth Madox Roberts was born in Perryville, Kentucky, in 1881, the first of eight children. Her parents were both teachers. She was an introvert, a loner, nervous in temperament but cooperative. She wrote her first poems at ten but did not publish until she was forty-five. She spent many years teaching school, with occasional leaves to further her education.

She never married and there is no record of children. She grew up creating stories about an idealized family named "The Wilsons." The history of the region was colorful and the family was rich in oral history and tradition. She was keenly interested in the people of Perryville and a very perceptive observer of the local scene, the kind of person Hemingway calls an "outlier" - an objective observer.

Her first published volume was poetry, appearing in 1922. When she was forty-one, her most productive period began with her first novel, The Time of Man, published when she was forty-five. She was prolific and wrote ten more

¹⁴Mary Roberts Rinehart, My Story (New York: Farrar and Rinehart, Inc., 1931), p. 111.

volumes by the time she was fifty-nine. She died in 1941 at the age of sixty.

She travelled very little and was considered to be a regional writer.

Gertrude Stein was born in Allegheny, Pennsylvania, in 1874, the fifth of five children. Her father was in whole-sale woolens and the family moved to Paris, Vienna and finally to San Francisco where she spent her school years. She was an introvert, a loner, uncooperative, but she seemed to have a placid disposition. She attended public school and her health was good both as a child and as an adult.

She attended Radcliffe and Johns Hopkins where she majored in psychology and medicine. She never took a degree and became an expatriot, moving to Paris in 1903 at the age of twenty-nine. She had no children and was homosexual, living with a constant companion, Alice B. Toklas, who appears to have taken the role of the traditional homemaker as well as handling business affairs.

Gertrude Stein first published when she was thirty-four but her most productive age range was from forty-one to sixty-seven. She continued to write and publish until 1941, five years before her death at the age of seventy-two. She was a seminal writer who attempted to break the mold of conventional literature. She writes of spending her forty-six years in the twentieth century trying to undo the twenty-six years she spent in the nineteenth.

Eudora Welty was born in Jackson, Mississippi, in 1909, the oldest of three children. Her father was president of a life insurance company. She is an introvert, a loner but cooperative and appears to be placid in temperament. Her schooling was in public schools and her adjustment to that education was good.

She first published at twenty-five. She has never married and there is no record of children. She read avidly, enjoyed the Russian writers as well as contemporary writers such as William Faulkner and Virginia Woolf. She defines herself as a "southern writer."

From the age of twenty to thirty, she held jobs in radio and advertising, writing copy and free-lancing for the local papers in Jackson. By 1941, when she was thirty-two, she gave up her jobs and began to write full time. She had a profound sense of place, having grown up near the Natchez Trace. "Whatever is significant, and whatever is tragic in a place lives as long as the place does, though they are unseen, and the new life will be built upon those things, regardless of commerce and the whys of rivers and roads and other vagrancies."¹⁵

She was granted a Guggenheim Fellowship at thirty-three which helped finance her writing. The bulk of her work consists of short stories published from 1936 to 1945 when

¹⁵Ruth M. Vande Kieft, Eudora Welty (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1962), p. 19.

she produced a novel, Delta Wedding. She is now sixty-six, still living and still productive.

Edith Wharton was born in New York City in 1862, the third of three children. Her family was wealthy and very constricted by social convention. She never went to school, was spasmodically tutored but had access to an extensive home library and read at an early age. She was a late child, the only girl in the family, and she tended to be an introvert, a loner, uncooperative and nervous in temperament. As an adult, she had at least two nervous breakdowns.

She married at twenty-three and was divorced at fifty-one. There is no record of children.

She published her first book when she was thirty-five, a volume on home decoration. At forty, she produced her first novel and in the next thirty-five years published approximately thirty-two novels, collections of short stories and poems. She died in 1937 at the age of seventy-five.

She lived most of her adult life in Europe and travelled extensively, accompanied by a retinue of servants. Edward Wharton, her husband, managed the business affairs. She had a great interest in decorating homes and enjoyed lavish entertaining.

A constant change of place was always important to her and though she lived out of the United States for most of her adult life, her growing up in New York provided the setting for most of her books.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

Interpretation of the Trends

A general summary of the characteristics of the variables is presented in Table 1. Each characteristic will then be presented in more detail with interpretation.

TABLE 1. Summary of Characteristics

<u>Characteristic:</u>				
01. Place of Birth:	North	<u>8</u>	South	<u>9</u> Midwest <u>2</u> West <u>1</u>
02. Date of Birth:	1825-1850	<u>1</u>	1851-1875	<u>5</u>
	1876-1900	<u>9</u>	1901-1925	<u>5</u>
03. Economic Position:	Upper	<u>3</u>	Middle	<u>17</u> Lower <u>0</u>
04. Father's Profession:	Professional	<u>20</u>	Skilled	<u>0</u>
	Unskilled	<u>0</u>		
05. Predominate Parental Influence:	Mother	<u>8</u>	Father	<u>11</u>
	Other	<u>1</u>		

TABLE 1. Summary, continued

Characteristic:

06. Relationship to Father: Close 6 Neutral 2
Distant 12
07. Relationship to Mother: Close 12 Neutral 1
Distant 7
08. Number of Siblings: One 2 Two 3 Three 7 Five 3
Seven 2 Eight 1 Ten 1 Eleven 1
09. Position Among Siblings: One 7 Two 5 Three 4
Five 2 Eight 1 Nine 1
10. Psychological Classification: Introvert 16
Extrovert 4
11. Psychological Classification: Loner 14
Preferred Groups 6
12. Psychological Classification: Cooperative 11
Uncooperative 9
13. Psychological Classification: Nervous 12 Placid 8
14. Health as a Child: Good 14 Average 2 Poor 4
15. Health as an Adult: Good 9 Average 1 Poor 10
16. Schooling: Private 10 Public 10
17. Adjustment to Schooling: Good 8 Average 4 Poor 8
18. Religious Training: Protestant 14 Catholic 2
Jew 3 Eclectic 1
19. Strength of Religious Training: Strong 11
Just Present 8 None 1

TABLE 1. Summary, continued

Characteristic:

20. Age First Demonstrated Talent: 5-15 6 16-20 7
21-25 2 26-30 3 31-35 0 36-40 2
21. Other Talents Demonstrated: Yes 10 No 10
22. Age at First Published Work: Years 18-25 9
26-30 4 31-35 4 36-45 3
23. Married: Yes 10 No 10
24. Number of Times: One 5 Two 2 Three 3
25. Age at First Marriage: 16-20 5 21-25 4 26-30 0
31-35 1
26. Children: Yes 3 No 17
27. Number of Children: None 17 Three 1 Six 1 Ten 1
28. Age of Mother at First Birth: 20-25 2 26-30 1
29. Sexual Adjustment: Unknown 6 Heterosexual 11
Bisexual 1 Homosexual 2
30. Age at Start of Most Productive Period: 0-20 1
21-30 11 31-40 5 41-50 3
31. Length of Most Productive Period: 15-25 5 26-35 7
36-45 6 46-55 2
32. Interest in Reading: High 20 Average 0 Low 0
33. Interest in History and Oral Tradition: High 14
Average 6 Low 0
34. Travelled Extensively: Yes 16 No 4

TABLE 1. Summary, continued

Characteristic:

35. Close Relationship With a Number of Other Writers:

Yes 17 No 3

36. Interest in Traditional Role of Homemaker: Yes 1

No 19

37. History of Housework Done by Others: Yes 20 No 0

38. Family Moved More Than Once As a Child: Yes 20 No 0

39. Age at Death: 36-40 1 41-45 0 46-50 1 51-55 1

56-60 3 61-65 0 66-70 0 71-75 6

76-80 0 81-85 4 Living 4

40. Positive Influence by Special Other Person: Yes 9

No 10 Unknown 1

41. Negative Influence by Special Other Person: Yes 1

No 18 Unknown 1

Significance of the Data

A statistical study of the data and multiple computer runs have not provided sufficient reliability to provide either a complete interpretation of the variables or adequate correlations. The material is essentially subjective and to depend on these findings is to be misled. They do, however, point to clues that lend themselves to logical interpretation of the material.

TABLE 2. Place of Birth

	Number	Per cent	Cumulative Per cent
North	8	40	40
South	9	45	85
Midwest	2	10	95
West	1	5	100

The place of birth appears to have no significance as a variable in this study but perhaps merely reflects the distributive population clusters in the two decades before and after the turn of the century. It is possible that there is a connection between place of birth and societal development, in that the South, the North, and the West Coast were sufficiently advanced beyond the exigencies of frontier community development to allow and encourage development of the arts.¹ Too, there is a practical relationship between the artist and her markets. Publishing was centered on the East Coast. The single sample from the West Coast, Anita Loos, began her career by writing screenplays perhaps because Los Angeles was the center of motion picture production.

Edna Ferber began her career on a newspaper in a highly urban area and only began to publish productively

¹Raymond Cattell states: "It is at first surprising to find that high creativity actually has not been a feature of plastic and turbulent frontier societies, but of refined societies with highly internalized controls." Raymond Catell, Abilities: Their Structure, Growth and Action (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1971), p. 420.

after moving to Chicago. Willa Cather did not begin her writing career until after she had left Nebraska and settled on the East Coast.

TABLE 3. Birthyear

	Number	Per cent	Cumulative Per cent
1830	1	5	5
1862	1	5	10
1873	2	10	20
1874	2	10	30
1876	1	5	35
1881	1	5	40
1887	2	10	50
1890	1	5	55
1892	2	10	65
1893	2	10	75
1903	1	5	80
1906	1	5	85
1909	1	5	90
1917	1	5	95
1925	1	5	100

This variable has little significance at this point except to demonstrate that each sample falls within the criteria established for this study.

TABLE 4. Father's Profession

	Number	Per cent	Cumulative Per cent
Professional	20	100	100
Skilled	0	0	0
Unskilled	0	0	0

TABLE 5. Economic Position

	Number	Per cent	Cumulative Per cent
Upper	3	15	15
Middle	17	85	100
Lower	0	0	0

Father's Profession and Economic Position will be considered together because there appears to be a strong relationship between the father's profession and the economic position of the family. All of the fathers were professional men and 85 per cent of the families were middle class.² The middle class fathers were lawyers, ministers, proprietors of business establishments, all generating sufficient income to allow their children freedom from the gruelling labor of the lower classes of the period. As Virginia Woolf pointed out, the opportunity to create is seldom found in the lower classes and none of the women in this study came from that "class that had little leisure."³

It is possible that the upper class was perhaps too advantaged to motivate their children toward achievement in

²Terman's genetic studies of genius has shown creative intelligence comes four or five times as often from the middle than the lower class. Cattell, Abilities, p. 420.

³Virginia Woolf, "A Room of One's Own," in Miriam Schneir (ed.), Feminism, The Essential Historical Writings (New York: Random House, 1964), p. 346.

the arts. In the creatives from the upper class, Edith Wharton was discouraged from the profession of writing because it was considered by her family to be declassé, a profession for Bohemians.

TABLE 6. Predominant Parental Influence

	Number	Per cent	Cumulative Per cent
Mother	8	40	40
Father	11	55	95
Other	1	5	100

This appears to have little statistical significance as a variable and indeed further investigation reveals that when the creative was raised in a family where the mother was the predominant parental influence, she started her most productive period at an average of 30 years as contrasted with 31 for creatives with predominant paternal influence, a barely noticeable difference. It is possible, however, that there was modelling behavior from either or both parents that was not demonstrated in this data. The single 'Other' was Katherine Anne Porter who was reared by her grandmother.

TABLE 7. Relationship to Father

	Number	Per cent	Cumulative Per cent
Close	6	30	30
Neutral	2	10	40
Distant	12	60	100

These data tend to be highly subjective, dependent on the individual creative's recollections of childhood from the perspective of adulthood, however, there appears to be some discrete evidence to support the percentages.

If the creative was close to her father, the age at start of her most productive period averaged 29 as contrasted with 31 for those with distant paternal relationships, and the length of that productive period for those "close" averaged 37 years as contrasted to 31 for those who had distant paternal relationships.

In the six samples reported as "close," the fathers all tended to be non-dominating, more inclined to be passive, in short, possessing those attributes which society at the time would tend to classify as "feminine" rather than "masculine." The two neutrals include one father who was institutionalized for a mental disorder and therefore played no active part in the creative's life in that she had few memories of him. The other father died while the creative was in her teens and she reports few memories of him.

The twelve samples reported as "distant" tended to be strong disciplinarians who were also respected citizens with occupational autonomy.

Two of these fathers were cruel and displayed extreme coldness toward their daughters. Ellen Glasgow writes of her father: "Not once in my knowledge of my father did he ever change his mind or admit that he was wrong or mistaken. . . He never committed a pleasure . . . I shrank from his presence."⁴

TABLE 8. Relationship to Mother

	Number	Per cent	Cumulative Per cent
Close	12	60	60
Neutral	1	5	65
Distant	7	35	100

As in the previous category, these data tend to be highly subjective. In seven cases, the relationship is demonstrable because the creative was emotionally dependent upon her mother as long as the mother lived. In two cases, the mother not only supported but edited the writer's work. In the single classification as neutral, the mother died while the creative was an infant.

⁴Ellen Glasgow, The Woman Within (New York: Harcourt Brace and Company, 1954), pp. 16, 70, 71.

In at least ten of these cases, the maternal influence was very strong. One of these was Edna St. Vincent Millay who told her mother:

The reason I am a poet is entirely because you wanted me to be and intended I should be from the first. You brought me up in the tradition of poetry, and everything I did you encouraged. I can not remember once in my life when you were not interested in what I was working on, or even suggested that I should put it aside for something else.⁵

Although this sentiment may suggest a nurturing climate for a poet, it is impossible to say it was a causative factor.

Quoting Arieti: "Too many are the mothers who nourish desires for success in their children and too few are the children who become creative."⁶

TABLE 9. Number of Siblings

Siblings	Number	Per cent	Cumulative Per cent
1	2	10	10
2	3	15	25
3	7	35	60
5	3	15	75
7	2	10	85
8	1	5	90
10	1	5	95
11	1	5	100

⁵Quoted in Joan Dash, "Edna St. Vincent Millay," in A Life of One's Own, Three Gifted Women and the Men They Married (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), p. 125.

⁶Silvano Arieti, The Intrapsychic Self (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1967), p. 339.

The number of siblings appears to have little significance as a variable in terms of Age at First Published Work, Start of Most Productive Period or the Length of Most Productive Period. Pearl Buck, the fifth of seven children did not publish her first novel until she was 38 whereas Ellen Glasgow the eighth of eleven children published her first novel at 24.

In the words of some of the writers, it is not the numbers of siblings but childhood itself which is so keenly important to a writer. Katherine Anne Porter is said to have made the statement that she has little interest in biography after the tenth year for what is to be, is already determined by then.

Flannery O'Connor writes: "The fact is that anybody who has survived his childhood has enough information about life to last him the rest of his days."⁷

Willa Cather is quoted: ". . . years from eight to fifteen are the formative period in a writer's life, when he unconsciously gathers basic material. He may acquire a great many interesting and vivid impressions in his mature years but his thematic material he acquires under fifteen years of age."⁸

⁷Flannery O'Connor, Mystery and Manners, ed. by Robert Fitzgerald and Sally Fitzgerald (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1969), p. 84.

⁸Mildred R. Bennett, The World of Willa Cather (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1961), p. 213.

TABLE 10. Position Among Siblings

	Number	Per cent	Cumulative Per cent
1	7	35	35
2	5	25	60
3	4	20	80
5	2	10	90
8	1	5	95
9	1	5	100

The Position Among Siblings has a correlation of 0.63 to Interest in the Traditional Role of Homemaker. There is, however, only one sample who displayed a positive interest in filling the traditional role of homemaker, thus there is insufficient data to warrant a conclusion in this correlation. The Multiple Regression Analyses show a significance with Age at Start of Most Productive Period and Length of Most Productive Period. If the creative had either first or second position among siblings, she entered her most productive period at an average age of 29 with a length of 27 years. If her position was third or greater, she did not enter her most productive period until an average of 34, and the average length of this period was 34 years. There are too many other factors such as life span to make this an important statistic.

TABLE 11. Psychological Classification: Introvert/Extrovert. Loner/Preferred Groups. Uncooperative/Cooperative. Placid/Nervous.

	Number	Per cent	Cumulative Per cent
Extrovert	4	20	20
Introvert	16	80	100
Preferred Groups	6	30	30
Loner	14	70	100
Uncooperative	9	45	45
Cooperative	11	55	100
Placid	8	40	40
Nervous	12	60	100

MacKinnon writes: "The Jungian distinction between introversion and extroversion is well-known. The extrovert's primary interests lie in the outer world of people and things, while the introvert's primary interests lie in the inner world of concepts and ideas." His study of writers revealed 65 per cent as introverts.⁹

In this study, the women creatives tended toward introversion by 80 per cent as compared with 20 per cent extroversion. It is interesting to note that those writers classified as extroverts published for the first time at an

⁹Donald W. MacKinnon, "The Highly Effective Individual," in Ross L. Mooney and Taher A. Razik (eds.), Explorations in Creativity (New York: Harper & Row, 1967), p. 67.

average age of 25 while the introverts did not publish their first work until an average age of 29.

These women tended toward loner (70 per cent) instead of preferred groups (30 per cent) and again those who were more gregarious or preferred groups began their most productive period at a significantly earlier age, at an average of 26 years as compared with 33 for loners. For the most part, however, the women creatives in this study tended to be introverts who were slightly uncooperative, tended toward being loners and had nervous tendencies.

Lillian Hellman wrote: ". . .it was a conflict that would haunt me, harm me and benefit me the rest of my life . . .a driving desire to be alone as it came into conflict with the desire not to be alone when I wanted not to be. I early guessed that people wouldn't allow that."¹⁰

Carson McCullers is reported to have "yearned to belong to a group, to be able to, if she chose, to join one; yet she retained always a sense of her own separateness and the need to feel and remain unique."¹¹

It was said of Dorothy Parker that she could not have written as she did if she had been able to commit

¹⁰Lillian Hellman, An Unfinished Woman, A Memoir (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1969), p. 9.

¹¹Virginia S. Carr, The Lonely Hunter, A Biography of Carson McCullers (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1975), pp. 13-14.

herself wholly to her lovers or her friends, if her mind had not lived, to some extent, tidily apart.¹²

Hemingway said that a writer must be an "outlier," a gypsy, otherwise he would be unable to be objective.¹³

TABLE 12. Health as a Child. Health as an Adult.

	Number	Per cent	Cumulative Per cent
<u>Health as a Child</u>			
Good	14	70	70
Average	2	10	80
Poor	4	20	100
<u>Health as an Adult</u>			
Good	9	45	45
Average	1	5	50
Poor	10	50	100

Seventy per cent of the women studied had good health as children but only 45 per cent reported good health as adults. Individual differences account for part of this disparity. For instance, Flannery O'Connor had lupus which did not, because of the nature of the disease, affect her until maturity. As a child, Carson McCullers had a brief illness

¹²John Keats, You Might as Well Live, The Life and Times of Dorothy Parker (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1970), p. 147.

¹³Ibid.

which was later diagnosed as rheumatic fever which, in terms of heart disease, does not affect the individual until later in life.

The correlation between the psychological classification, Nervous/Placid and Health as an Adult is 0.67. It is highly possible that a nervous disposition as a child tended to result in poor health as an adult in these twenty lives.

The process of literary creativity may also have contributed to this tendency toward poor health in adulthood. Cattell writes of the prolonged concentration necessary for the long-curcuted thinking of profoundly creative work as accounting for the type of "neuasthenia" or nervous breakdown likely to be more commonly experience by writers.¹⁴

At least ten of these women had histories of bouts of nervous exhaustion. Three of them were institutionalized and two of them are reported to have made suicide attempts. This is surely higher than societal norms of that period.

Perhaps it would be well to consider the energy these creatives spend in coping with a society in which they were considered to be "deviants." This certainly would be no small factor. This is only speculation and needs more detailed study. It is also interesting to note that of these ten women, four were unmarried and six were married.

¹⁴Cattell, Abilities, p. 435.

TABLE 13. Schooling: Public/Private,
Adjustment to School

	Number	Per cent	Cumulative Per cent
Private	10	50	50
Public	10	50	100
<u>Adjustment to School</u>			
Good	8	40	40
Average	4	20	60
Poor	8	40	100

Since fifty per cent of the women attended public school and fifty per cent attended private, this variable would seem to have little statistical significance for this study, since there is an equal number of women in both positions. However, it was discovered from the Multiple Regression Analyses that the writers who attended public school first published at an average of 22 years, 9 years earlier than those who attended private school. They also entered their most productive period at an average age of 30 as compared with 33 for those who went to private school. There is no obvious explanation for this difference.

In surveying the educational experiences of these women creatives, one finds a remarkable number of similiarities which are not apparent in the statistics in Table 13.

In the first place, 100 per cent of the families moved often (Variable 38) while these creatives were

children and this tended to disrupt normal schooling. For instance, the pattern of Lillian Hellman's childhood saw her spending six months of the year in New York City and the other six months in New Orleans and she found herself ahead of her class in New Orleans and behind her class in New York. Consequently, she skipped school once or twice a week.

"Perhaps that's why I never did well in school," she wrote, "and why I wanted to be left alone to read by myself."¹⁵

Willa Cather was shifted from Virginia Elementary Schools before she was 10. Dorothy Parker attended Miss Dana's School, a private academy in Morristown, New Jersey, and then sent to the Blessed Sacrament Convent in New York, where she was asked to leave. Katherine Anne Porter attended different parochial schools.

Willa Cather, on entering school at Red Cloud, Nebraska, at the age of ten, took an immediate dislike to the teacher and refused to attend. Her attendance in Virginia schools had been erratic at best. It is reported that her total formal education before university consisted of less than two full years and she had to attend a preparatory class before the University of Nebraska would accept her. As Bennett characterizes the University of Nebraska in Willa Cather's time, it offered its students a good deal of freedom ". . . A student could live, work, think as he

¹⁵Hellman, An Unfinished Woman, p. 6.

pleased without feeling the pressure to conform to any particular pattern."¹⁶ Nevertheless, years later, when the university proposed to honor Willa Cather with an honorary degree, the collective faculty memory was sufficiently long concerning the former student to insure some dissension before she was finally granted the degree.

Edna Ferber writes: "At school I was never a good student and my term reports would indicate that I wasn't quite bright. . . . Those arithmetical problems in which A, B and C dig a well, paper a room or fence a field completely baffles me. I hated those alphabetical workmen with a deep personal loathing."¹⁷ Her formal education ended at high school graduation.

As Kay Boyle says of her elementary education: "That was the winter I was ten and we lived in John Sargent's house in Bryn Mawr where another abortive attempt was being made to educate me, this time at Miss Shipley's School."¹⁸

Mary Roberts Rinehart wrote of her school experiences in the Pittsburgh Public Schools:

School work was sheer unenlightened drudgery. There was no appeal to the imagination and no recognition of the child as an individual. The school turned out children

¹⁶Bennett, The World of Willa Cather, p. 215.

¹⁷Edna Ferber, A Peculiar Treasure (New York: Literary Guild of America, Inc., 1939), p. 53.

¹⁸Kay Boyle and Robert McAlmon, Being Geniuses Together (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1968), p. 20.

who could read and write and do simple arithmetic; who knew something of geography and American history, who knew how many bones there were in the human body. We were fairly literate but that was all. We learned to read but not to interpret. We were filled with facts and this purely factual learning placed a premium on the child with the best memory. To the imaginative child, school was torture, nothing else.¹⁹

Ellen Glasgow was first sent to school at seven or eight and this experience lasted but a single day. She described herself as "terrified, icy hands, aching head" and she ran from the school in terror. She depicted school as "That strange universe which was an enemy to the sensitive and fearful."²⁰ She went to school no more than a few months each year.

At least 50 per cent of the women attended graduate college for varying lengths of time. Very few of the women, in writing about their school experiences, refer to them as positive experiences.

TABLE 14. Religious Training

	Number	Per cent	Cumulative Per cent
Protestant	14	70	70
Catholic	2	10	80
Jew	3	15	95
Eclectic	1	5	100

¹⁹Mary Roberts Rinehart, My Story (New York: Farrar and Rinehart, Inc., 1931), p. 27

²⁰Glasgow, The Woman Within, pp. 41-42.

Raymond B. Cattell demonstrates the relationship between religious affiliation and scientific creativity: ". . .within America the Protestant and Jewish traditions have contributed, to a statistically significant degree, more than others to scientific creativity."²¹

In terms of this study, 95 per cent of the creatives had significant religious affiliations with 70 per cent Protestant, 15 per cent Jewish, 10 per cent Catholic. It is possible that any sample drawn at random from the population of the period would tend to yield similar results.

The one sample under Eclectic was Dorothy Parker who was born of a Jewish father, a Presbyterian mother and reared in Catholic schools.

TABLE 15. Strength of Religious Training

	Number	Per cent	Cumulative Per cent
Strong	11	55	55
Just Present	8	40	95
None	1	5	100

Strength of religious training appears to have no significance as a variable.

²¹Raymond B. Cattell, Abilities, p. 423.

TABLE 16. Age First Demonstrated Talent

	Number	Per cent	Cumulative Per cent
5	1	5	5
7	1	5	10
10	3	15	25
12	1	5	30
16	2	10	40
17	2	10	50
18	1	5	55
19	1	5	60
20	1	5	65
23	1	5	70
24	1	5	75
28	1	5	80
30	2	10	90
36	1	5	95
38	1	5	100

In this group of creatives, 10 per cent demonstrated their literary talent before the age of 10, 55 per cent between the ages of 10 and 20 (inclusive), and 35 per cent after the age of twenty.

Ellen Glasgow writes that in her seventh summer she became a writer. She had from earliest memory created "Little Willie" adventure stories and had prayed every night that God would let her write books.

This is her first recorded poem written at age 7.

I would that I with the clouds could drift,
 Quietly, happily onward -
 Drift from this land of mist and snow,
 Drift to the land where I long to go,

Leaving behind me the world's sad choices,
Hearing alone the Angel's voices,
At the foot of my Father's throne.²²

Many of these women displayed no talent for writing until long after the school experience was over. Edna Ferber reports that she never wrote a word outside of school work until she had graduated from high school and took a job as a journalist on a newspaper.²³

Carson McCullers is reported by her teachers to have shown no unusual promise and they thought of her only as an average or below-average student who had no aptitude for hard work.²⁴

Those who demonstrated literary talent at earlier ages tended not to publish until much later than those creatives who were later in the demonstration of these talents. Those who demonstrated writing ability below the age of 15 averaged first publication at 30 years while those who first demonstrated their talent from 15 to 25 first published at an average age of 23. The group that first demonstrated talent beyond age 26 published first at an average age of 33.

It would appear from this limited evidence that there is an inverse relationship between an early demonstration of talent and early publication.

²²Glasgow, The Woman Within, p. 37.

²³Ferber, A Peculiar Treasure, p. 44.

²⁴Carr, Lonely Hunter, p. 31.

TABLE 17. Other Talents

	Number	Per cent	Cumulative Per cent
Yes	10	50	50
No	10	50	100

Those creatives who demonstrated other talents tended to not be distracted by them, first publishing at an average age of 26 as compared with 29 for those who demonstrated no other talents. These data disagree with Greenacre's suggestion that other talents might be a distraction to the writer.

Edna Ferber never wanted to be a writer even when she became a journalist. She had always wanted to be an actress and had taken elocution lessons toward that end. She wrote in later years, after a very successful writing career, that she was still convinced that she could have been another Sarah Bernhart. Ferber published her first novel at age 24 and published some twenty-five more, plus at least ten plays, two memoirs and many short stories. She was very prolific all of her life.

TABLE 18. Age at First Published Work

	Number	Per cent	Cumulative Per cent
18	1	5	5
20	2	10	15
21	1	5	20
22	2	10	30
24	2	10	40
25	1	5	45
27	2	10	55
28	1	5	60
30	1	5	65
31	1	5	70
32	1	5	75
34	1	5	80
35	1	5	85
36	1	5	90
38	1	5	95
45	1	5	100

Of these women, 60 per cent, or twelve had published by the time they were 30. Of these twelve, six were unmarried, six were married and only one had children.

Of the 40 per cent or eight who first published after they were 30, four were unmarried, four were married and only two had children.

The biological distractions of child-bearing and child-rearing would appear to have little bearing on the Age at First Published Work. It is significant, however, that only three women in this study had children.

TABLE 19. Marital Status

	Number	Per cent	Cumulative Per cent
Unmarried	10	50	50
Married	10	50	100
<u>Number of Times</u>			
1	5		
2	2		
3	3		

This variable, which is at the heart of this study, appears to have no statistical significance since the sample population is evenly balanced. However, a comparison of the marriage rate of these creatives with the marriage rates of the period in which they lived makes the significance of these percentages more apparent. Fifty per cent of these creatives never married. In 1910, only 40 per cent of all women above the age of 14 were single and by 1920 the number had declined to 37 per cent.²⁵ Compared to an estimated 39 per cent single in 1914 (the average date of first marriage for the ten married creatives) the single rate of the creatives is 11 per cent higher than that of the general population.

²⁵U. S. Bureau of the Census, Statistical Abstract of the United States: 1960 (Eighty-first edition), Washington, D. C., 1960, p. 39.

Among those who did marry, five were married once, two were married twice and three were married three times. A further examination of the 50 per cent that did marry reveals considerable instability. Of the five creatives who married once, only two remained with their husbands for life. One of these was Mary Roberts Rinehart who wrote:

I never worked when the boys were in the house, or their father. The slam of the front door--all four of them were door bangers--the shout of "Mother," was the signal to stop. My early determination never to let my work interfere with the family life continues. The family came first and always will. . . .the theory was that the true artist lived and expressed herself only in her art, and that everything else was relatively unimportant. Above all, she must be free. I had never known freedom, so it did not occur to me that I had bartered it for a family.²⁶

The other writer who married only once and lived with her husband until his death was Edna St. Vincent Millay who did not marry until the age of 31 and then married a man who took care of her. He gave up his business to devote himself to her. He took care of all the business details connected with her publishing, answered the telephone and handled the correspondence. He ran the house, hiring the servants, seeing that the food was bought, cooked and served. Millay had avoided an earlier marriage because she wanted to devote herself exclusively to her poetry and did not want to "belong" to anyone except herself. She did not

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Mary Roberts Rinehart, My Story, pp. 88, 89, 111.

want to spend her energies on domestic affairs because she feared that her poetry would suffer.²⁷

Two of the five who married, Lillian Hellman and Edith Wharton, divorced their husbands and never remarried. They both involved themselves in long-lasting affairs after their divorces. A third, Carson McCullers, was bi-sexual. She lived with her husband only intermittently. Of the two who married twice, one never lived long with either husband. This was Anita Loos, who left the first husband after the wedding night and later entered into the second marriage which was no more successful than the first. The other writer appears to have had a sound second marriage after an unhappy first.

Of the three who married three times, one married the same man twice and the other two had three different husbands.

Marriage was not a distractive influence in relationship with Age at Start of the Most Productive Period. The creatives who were married began their most productive period at an average age of 29 years as compared with 33 for the unmarried.

Despite the comparatively small sample, the data tend to support Greenacre: ". . .As one thinks of the

²⁷Miriam Gurko, Restless Spirit, The Life of Edna St. Vincent Millay (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, Inc., 1962), pp. 92, 93, 165, 166.

various women writers of note in the past (in a field in which women have produced more than in any other) it seems that there are some who married rather late and had no children, a number who never married at all. . ."²⁸

TABLE 20. Age at First Marriage

	Number	Per cent	Cumulative Per cent
<u>Unmarried</u>	10	50	50
16	1	5	55
18	1	5	60
19	1	5	65
20	2	10	75
21	1	5	80
23	1	5	85
24	1	5	90
25	1	5	95
31	1	5	100

The ten unmarrieds listed first published at an average age of 28, started their most productive period at 33 and the length of that period was apt to be approximately 27 years.

The ten marrieds listed first published at an average age of 27, started their most productive period at age 29 and the length of that period ran approximately 33 years.

There is little difference in the age of first published manuscript in the unmarried and marrieds.

²⁸Phyllis Greenacre, "Woman as Artist," Psychoanalytic Quarterly, 29 (1960), pp. 223-224.

Interestingly enough, the marrieds started their most productive period four years earlier than the unmarrieds and the average span of productivity is six years longer.

TABLE 21. Children and Number of Children

	Number	Per cent	Cumulative Per cent
<u>Children</u>			
No	17	85	85
Yes	3	15	100
<u>Number of Children</u>			
0	17	85	85
3	1	5	90
6	1	5	95
10	1	5	100

Only three of the women in this study had children. There appears to be a positive relationship between child-rearing and Length of the Most Productive Period in that the women with children averaged 39 most productive years while the unmarrieds and the marrieds-without-children averaged only 30 years. The women with children began their most productive period at the same average age as the remaining seventeen women in the study, 32 years.

In the three cases of creative women with children, one did not enter her most productive period until her first child was 10, the second when her first born was 16

and the third when her first born was 20. In all cases, the women with children had servants to aid in child-rearing. Nevertheless, one stated that the rearing of her children interfered significantly with her creative processes.

Of the unmarrieds, one reported a strong antipathy to having children. Ellen Glasgow wrote: "Never have I felt the faintest wish to have babies."²⁹ At least two of the unmarrieds had abortions. One writer compares the process of writing to that of child-bearing. Edna Ferber stated:

. . .you eat carefully so as not to upset the digestion; you listen to music because it emotionalizes you and helps to clear your story; you will yourself to sleep so that you may feel refreshed next day. Pregnant women will recognize the technique.³⁰

Thus she describes the birth of a novel.

The material in this category is very interesting and fertile for speculation, however, the significance of all the findings in this category tends to be limited by the size of the study.

²⁹Glasgow, The Woman Within, p. 108.

³⁰Ferber, A Peculiar Treasure, p. 226.

TABLE 22. Age of Mother at First Birth

	Number	Per cent	Cumulative Per cent
No Children	17	85	85
20	1	5	90
24	1	5	95
29	1	5	100

The Age of Mother at First Birth tends to have little significance for this study as a variable other than the possible relationship between the age of the first born child and the beginning of the mother's most productive period, as discussed in previous tables.

Of the three women who had children, Mary Roberts Rinehart began to write the year after the birth of her third child. Kay Boyle was writing a novel soon after the birth of her first child. Pearl Buck was an unusual case in that her child was retarded so it is impossible to know whether, had the child been normal, she would have written soon after its birth. This is mere speculation in regard to child-bearing as a competitor for creative energy.

TABLE 23. Sexual Adjustment

	Number	Per cent	Cumulative Per cent
Unknown	6	30	30
Heterosexual	11	55	85
Bisexual	1	5	90
Homosexual	2	10	100

The sexual adjustment of these women tends to be clouded by reluctance on the part of the creatives and their early biographers to discuss sexual tendencies.

"Heterosexuality" has been assigned as a grouping to those women who married, however unhappily or however briefly. It also includes the women who had recorded sexual affairs with men. "Bisexuality" and "Homosexuality" include only the women who were openly either. Of the 30 per cent of the women classified as "Unknown," a large majority of them spent their lives in the company of female companions, relationships which frequently lasted many years, however, no conclusion can be drawn from these relationships as to the sexuality of the creative.

TABLE 24. Age at Start of Most Productive Period

Age	Number	Per cent	Cumulative Per cent
19	1	5	5
21	1	5	10
23	2	10	20
24	1	5	25
25	2	10	35
27	2	10	45
28	1	5	50
30	2	10	60
36	1	5	65
37	1	5	70
38	2	10	80
40	1	5	85
41	1	5	90
45	1	5	95
48	1	5	100

TABLE 25. Length of Most Productive Period

Years	Number	Per cent	Cumulative Per cent
15	2	10	10
18	1	5	15
22	1	5	20
23	1	5	25
26	2	10	35
27	1	5	40
31	1	5	45
32	1	5	50
33	1	5	55
35	1	5	60
36	1	5	65
38	3	15	80
39	1	5	85
40	1	5	90
46	1	5	95
53	1	5	100

The relationships between these two variables and Marital Status, Children and Number of Children were discussed in previous tables.

TABLE 26. Interest in Reading

	Number	Per cent	Cumulative Per cent
High	20	100	100
Average	0	0	0

Interest in Reading is a highly significant variable since 100 per cent of the creatives were omniverous readers. As Edna Ferber wrote: "After school, and at noon, and at night when the hateful home lessons were finished I read and read and read. Somehow, in between school hours, play hours, mealtimes, sleeping hours, I managed to read a book a day for years and years."³¹

One of the remarkable characteristics found in many of the women is the early age at which they began to read. Ellen Glasgow taught herself to read very early. Katherine Anne Porter is reported to have formed letters at three and began to write stories by six. Willa Cather was taught to read by her grandmother, learned to read Latin by nine and Greek in

³¹Ferber, A Peculiar Treasure, p. 52.

her teens. Edith Wharton, born into an upper-class family, learned to read at the age of four. As she commented on her education:

I was taught only two things in my childhood - modern language and good manners - would add a reverence for the English language. It would have been bad manners to speak bad English and bad manners were the supreme offense.³²

She had access to an extensive home library and read avidly.

Although it was the custom to teach the classics in school and many schools included Greek and Latin in their curriculum, there is every evidence that many of these women started reading whatever was available at home or the nearest library and began to be very selective, choosing what was then and is now considered to be classic literature.

Edna St. Vincent Millay is reported to have read all of Shakespeare when she was eight and Caesar's Gaelic Wars in Latin the summer she was 14.

Carson McCullers described the impact that Dostoevski had upon her:

The books of Dostoevski - The Brothers Karamazov, Crime and Punishment, and The Idiot - opened the door to an immense and marvelous new world. For years I had seen these books on the shelves of the public library, but on examining them I had been so put off by the indigestible names and the small print. So when at last I read Dostoevski it was a shock that I shall never forget - and

³²Edith Wharton, A Backward Glance (New York: Charles Scribners, Sons, 1933), p. 88

the same amazement takes hold of me whenever I read these books today, a sense of wonder that cannot be jaded by familiarity.

She also expressed the same enthusiasm for D. H. Lawrence, Flaubert, James Joyce, Katherine Mansfield and the early American romanticists, Hawthorne and Melville. She read deeply in all genres of literature.³³

TABLE 27. Interest in History and Oral Tradition

	Number	Per cent	Cumulative Per cent
High	14	70	70
Average	6	30	100

Those who rated high on this table tend to be novelists. The novelist, by definition, must be capable of producing a long, sustained narrative, rich in characters and incident. The six creatives who rated "average" include three poets, a short story writer and an experimentalist as well as one woman who did write novels as well as short stories but who was moved so often as a child that she expressed a minimal interest in any single place.

The novelist, Eudora Welty, states: "Why, just to write about what might happen along the Natchez Trace which reaches so far into the past is enough to keep you busy for

³³Quoted in Carr, Lonely Hunter, pp. 32-33.

life. . .perhaps it is the sense of place that gives us the belief that passionate things endure."³⁴

TABLE 28. Travelled Extensively

	Number	Per cent	Cumulative Per cent
No	4	20	20
Yes	16	80	100

It is highly significant that 80 per cent of these creatives travelled extensively, continually exposing themselves to a rich diversity of stimuli. There is a positive correlation between Travelled Extensively and Length of Most Productive Period. Of the four creatives who did not travel extensively, two were poets (one of these poets an eccentric recluse), one was a short-story writer whose health was so poor as an adult she was physically unable to travel, and one was a regional novelist who did not begin her career until late in life.

Those who travelled extensively had a 34 year average length of most productive period as compared with 20 years for those who did not.

The psychological aspects, the restlessness which kept these creatives on the move and the effect on the content

³⁴Ruth M. Vande Kieft, Eudora Welty (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1962), p. 19.

of their work has not been measured in this study, but there is evidence that a relationship exists. As Elizabeth Sergeant wrote:

Willa Cather suffered a truly grueling inner pull between the opposites of East and West. Her restless doubling back and forth across the continent did not insure integration and tranquility until she turned the West into her world of imagination that she could share. Then she began to seem and to be all of a piece.³⁵

TABLE 29. Close Relationship with A Number of Other Writers

	Number	Per cent	Cumulative Per cent
No	3	15	15
Yes	17	85	100

The importance of peer professional relationships and the comparative lack of them available to women was pointed out as early as 1912 by Anna Garlin Spencer:

In addition to the handicap of lack of education, a handicap which no exceptional success of the self-made man or woman can offset for the majority of the talented, there is a no less important deprivation which all women suffered in the past and most women now suffer. This deprivation is that of the informal but highly stimulating training which the good fellowship of their chosen guild of study and of service gives to men, but which is denied for the most part to professional women.³⁶

³⁵Elizabeth S. Sergeant, Willa Cather, A Memoir (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1953), p. 54.

³⁶Anna Garlin Spencer, Woman's Share in Social Culture (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1925), pp. 66-67.

The attitude of the male writer to the female writer was perhaps typified by Ernest Hemingway, writing of Paris in the 1920's:

There is not much future in men being friends with great women although it can be pleasant enough before it gets better or worse, and there is usually even less future with truly ambitious women writers.³⁷

That this prejudice had lessened somewhat by mid-century is illustrated by the influence of colonies such as Yaddo at Saratoga Springs, New York, which were established to provide a creative with ideal working conditions and as much association with other creatives at the colony as he or she preferred.³⁸

TABLE 30. Interest in the Traditional Role of Homemaker

	Number	Per cent	Cumulative Per cent
No	19	95	95
Yes	1	5	100

³⁷Ernest Hemingway, A Moveable Feast (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1964), p. 117.

³⁸For a description and brief history of Yaddo, see Carr, The Lonely Hunter, pp. 141-142.

TABLE 31. Housework, Business Done by Others

	Number	Per cent	Cumulative Per cent
Yes	20	100	100

There tends to be high significance in the fact that 95 per cent of the creative women expressed no interest in the traditional role of homemaker. This significance is enhanced by the statement of the single exception who professed that the care of house and children interfered significantly with her creative work. It is also significant that 100 per cent of the women creatives had their housework and business taken care of by others, freeing them for a full time devotion to their work during their most productive period.

It should be remembered that all of the women were raised in the traditional feminine role, either to do housework or to direct servants toward that end. Some of them preserved the illusion of being a homemaker while leaving the work to others. For instance, Carr describes Carson McCullers' attitude as follows:

In spite of her talk about budgets, burns and cooking, she spent relatively little time in the kitchen in meal planning or preparation for the first year of her marriage, or ever, for that matter. . . . Similarly, for

the rest of her life Carson "played" at housekeeping and cooking. Recipes she preferred to talk about, to envision the results rather than to actually cook from them.³⁹

TABLE 32. Family Moved More Than Once as a Child

	Number	Per cent	Cumulative Per cent
Yes	20	100	100
No	0	0	0

Since 100 per cent of the women belonged to families which moved them more than once as a child, this is an important variable for this study and has been discussed previously in Table 13.

TABLE 33. Positive Influence by Special Other Person

	Number	Per cent	Cumulative Per cent
Yes	9	45	45
No	10	50	95
Unknown	1	5	100

There is a positive correlation between this variable and Relationship to Mother. There is also a positive

³⁹Carr, Lonely Hunter, p. 77.

correlation between this variable and Age at First Published Work. Although not high, it is still significant. The nine women classified as having been under the positive influence of a special other person also were rated as being emotionally close to their mothers. They first published at an average age of 23 years. Those who did not, first published at an average age of 32 years.

TABLE 34. Negative Influence by Special Other Person

	Number	Per cent	Cumulative Per cent
Yes	1	5	5
No	18	90	95
Unknown	1	5	100

Edith Wharton was discouraged from writing by her parents, particularly her mother who thought it inappropriate for one of her class and she gave it up at 18. She came back to it after she was married but wrote a fashionable book on decoration of houses. It was not until she was almost 40 that she began her productive period writing novels which have come to be considered classics in literature.

TABLE 35. Age at Death

	Number	Per cent	Cumulative Per cent
Living	4	20	20
<u>Age at Death</u>			
39	1	5	25
50	1	5	30
51	1	5	35
56	1	5	40
58	1	5	45
60	1	5	50
72	3	15	65
74	2	10	75
75	1	5	80
81	2	10	90
82	1	5	95
85	1	5	100

Age at Death is particularly significant when combined with Length of Most Productive Period. Out of the 20 women creatives in this study, 10 did not end their most productive period until the age range of 60 to 77.

The average length of the period between the end of the most productive period and death was five years but in the majority of cases, these five years tended to be spent in writing memoirs, autobiographies or reminiscences.

These data tend to demonstrate that the majority of the female literary creatives were actively writing until a comparatively short time before their deaths. The average age at death was 68 years.

Of the four living writers, one is 67 years old, one is 69, one is 83 and one is 85. Eudora Welty, who is 67 published a novel in 1975 and Lillian Hellman who is 69 has a new book scheduled for publication.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, SUGGESTIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Summary to the Study

The purpose of this study was to pursue a critical examination of the reported lives of twenty female American literary creatives to determine what physical, psychological, and sociological variables either distracted from or enhanced their demonstrated creativity. More specifically, it was intended to:

1. Examine certain aspects of their formative years; the economic and social status of their families, their placement in the family and their education.
2. Examine psychological aspects of their lives as children and adults, to determine how effectively they adjusted to the society in which they lived.
3. Examine, in a broad sense, their sexual proclivities, the number who married, and the number who had children in an attempt to determine the influence of these

three variables on both the creativity and the productivity of these women.

4. Examine other personal relationships, interests and patterns of movement to gauge the effect of these variables on the creativity and productivity of these women.

A careful examination of previous research in the field of creativity was undertaken to determine what particular studies had been made of female creativity and which variables would be most useful in this study. All available materials on these twenty female creatives, biographies, autobiographies, memoirs, letters and critical studies were examined to further amplify a list of significant variables for inclusion in a survey questionnaire designed not only for computer analysis but for subjective interpretation.

Forty-one variables were selected for analysis, closely grouped to match the four general areas of investigation, with particular emphasis on the relationships between the first demonstration of talent on the part of each of the twenty creatives and the development of that talent over a lifetime with an examination of the potentially distractive elements of marriage and child-bearing.

All data were computerized and run through the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences to provide histograms and percentages. A separate multiple regression of all variables was run against three dependent variables:

1. Age at First Published Work.

2. Age at Start of Most Productive Period.

3. Length of Most Productive Period.

In addition, this computer run provided correlation coefficients for all variables as well as the mean and standard deviation for data under each variable. The statistical data did not prove meaningful except to provide directions for logical interpretation of relationships among the variables.

Major Findings of the Study

1. There does not appear to be any relationship between the date of birth of these creatives and the age of their first published work. These data tend to denigrate the assumption that there might be a relationship between societal pressures and the age at which a woman might publish for the first time, i.e., because of the rigid role boundaries assigned to women born in the 1870's, they would tend to publish later than women born in 1910 or 1920 when those boundaries were less rigidly defined. This did not prove to be the case.

2. The economic position of the family and the father's profession proved to be demonstrably significant. The fathers were all autonomous, either in business or professions. The families were all sufficiently affluent to allow the creative to be educated and to travel. The families were all mobile and everyone of the creatives moved more than once as a child.

3. The relationship of the young creative with her primary family proved to be significant in terms of her later career. The creatives who had a close relationship with either their fathers or their mothers tended to publish earlier, to enter their most productive period earlier and to have a considerably greater length of most productive period than those who had a close relationship with neither. A close relationship with an encouraging mother on the part of approximately half of the creatives saw them publishing their first work approximately nine years earlier than the other fifty per cent. There is insufficient data to determine if a closeness to either father or mother has any correlation with either sexual adjustment or eventual marriage.

If the creative was an only child or first among a group of siblings, she had a considerably shorter most productive period than if she was in the second position or younger.

4. Those creatives who attended public schools published approximately nine years earlier than those who attended private school. They also tended to have a longer productive period. The adjustment of the creative to school tends to have little significance on her later career. It is most significant that every one of these creatives attended schools of one kind or another and showed a very high interest in reading.

5. Marriage and child-bearing were not distractive to the creativity or the productivity of these creatives. In an evenly balanced population, ten marrieds and ten unmarrieds, the marrieds started their most productive period four years earlier and had an average productive span that was six years longer. The women with children had nine more most productive years than the average unmarried and married-without children. Despite the small number of this sample and thereby diminished significance, this tends to denigrate the widely held theory that marriage and child-rearing are antithetical to productive creativity.

6. The gregarious writers had the earliest publications, the earliest beginnings to their most productive periods, the longest careers. These data are consistent over a wide range of variables: (1) In the Psychological Classification, the extroverts published four years earlier than the introverts. (2) The Preferred Groups began their most productive period seven years earlier than the loners.

(3) The gregarious writers were not "only" children but part of a group of siblings, attending public schools with a presumably wider range of children than would be found in private schools. (4) Those who married (however unsuccessfully). (5) Those who had children. (6) Those who travelled extensively instead of retreating into the life of a recluse. (7) Those who had close associations with a number of other writers.

This subgroup of gregarious writers is in the minority, but the findings concerning them tend to dispel the myth that the most productive creative tends toward isolation, both physically and emotionally.

7. Practically all of the creatives expressed no interest in the traditional role of homemaker and all of them relied on other people to do the housework and take care of business.

Conclusions

From the means of the 41 variables in the survey questionnaire and an interpretation of data stemming from subjective materials, it is possible to form a theoretical composite to allow a fresh perspective in the examination of these women creatives.

This average creative was born in or near a small city, near a stable urban area where social values were well established, where schooling was prized. She was the third of four siblings in the upper-middle-class. Her father was a business or professional man of considerable affluence who was peripatetic as well, moving his family often during her formative years, the moves prompted by the exigencies of his profession. Her father was an autonomous man who made most of the basic decisions concerning living conditions and he tended to be the dominant parental influence in her life although she felt somewhat distant toward him and had a considerably closer relationship with her mother.

There were always books in her house and what she could not find there she discovered at a local library, for she was an omniverous reader and showed a strong preference for classics and philosophy. She learned to read early. Perhaps she began to pick out letters before she went to school or perhaps someone helped her, but she did it. It is equally possible that she attended either a public or a private school but she tended to make no more than an average adjustment to schooling and was not recognized by any of her teachers as being particularly bright. Perhaps this is because she tended to be single-minded, loving to read, often to the neglect of subjects which she did not enjoy. With the encouragement of her mother she had aspirations to become an artist of some sort, either a musician, a painter, an actress or a writer.

Despite the presence of three other siblings in the house, she was definitely a loner and liked to be by herself more than she liked being with people. She was often conflicted by the desire to be a part of groups and yet retain her autonomy at the same time. It is highly possible that she tended to be shy, for she was definitely introspective and more nervous than placid. More often than not, she was cooperative with the people around her.

In religious matters, she was either Protestant or Catholic but she was definitely Christian and her religious training ranged from nominal to strong. How strongly religion influenced her later life is unknown.

She had a strong sense of place and family traditions and exhibited her first predilection toward creativity in literature when she was 19. If she had other talents, other ambitions, they were on the wane by this time and she was beginning to develop a single-mindedness toward writing which would persist for the rest of her life.

In her sexual attitudes, she was definitely heterosexual with a slight inclination toward bisexuality. It was equally possible that she was married or unmarried, but one thing remained constant. Her writing came first. If she married, the nuptials took place between her twenty-first and twenty-second year.

Someplace, at sometime, she had gotten past the concept that a woman's primary role is the care of a husband and children. Somewhere she had managed to acquire an autonomy, an impetus- a motivation to create in literature despite marriage, children, divorce, poor health, having to support herself if she was single. She had a mind that understood the great philosophers and could ponder on the meaning of life and not "wonder if the potatoes were burning." She would have let them burn because she had a driving desire to put on paper those struggles that speak to people universally. Perhaps this was due, in large part, to her total lack of interest in the traditional role of homemaker and she always had somebody to do her housework and take care of her business during the years of her most productive period.

How she managed this autonomy is conjecture; perhaps the impetus came from a role model or from parental encouragement; perhaps it was genetic, perhaps she was resolving internal conflicts through fictional processes. But she was productive.

She first published at the age of 28 and was 31 when she began her most productive period, a time which lasted 35 years. As an adult, she travelled extensively and had a close relationship with other writers. In general, her adult life was never a placid one. Her health tended to be poor; she suffered frequent bouts of nervous exhaustion and tended to make her own life as dramatic as any of her fiction. "It is not Goethe who creates Faust," Jung wrote, "but Faust which creates Goethe."

Despite misfortunes, poor health, deeply traumatic experiences, she always managed to write, for it was a compulsion with her. In her advanced years, she may have turned to autobiography, memoirs and essays.

In this study of twenty literary women, marriage did not prove to be a distraction to their productivity as creative people nor did child-bearing or child-rearing. Since only three of the twenty had children there is insufficient data to interpret in any conclusive way except to speculate that these women on the whole were not interested in that role. The three women, who had children were not distracted by the biological fact of child-bearing nor the demands of child-rearing.

The cultural role influence is a much more difficult one to interpret from this study. Because it was too pervasive in the lives of these women, it was difficult to find the perimeter. The obvious ones such as the publisher who told Ellen Glasgow to give up the nonsense of trying to write and go home and have babies are easy to assay. It was hidden, subtle ones that defined these women that were harder to measure. This area of research needs to be approached in a different study, using sociological techniques.

Suggestions for Further Study

As suggested in the previous section, future research in this area might yield further results from an inquiry into cultural role influences. A logical beginning might be an extension of this study, which would include:

1. A similar study of twenty male writers of the same period encompassed in this present study, using the same variables, to discover whether creativity in males was subject to the same distraction and enhancement found in the females.

2. A longitudinal study of living women writers who are now fashionable, using interpolations of the variables used in this current study. From the popular literature, from the willingness of so many women writers to discuss themselves and their work freely, it is possible that much of the data which tends to be non-specific or relative in this current study could be clarified by in-depth interviews with

living women. For example, the whole relationship between sexuality and creativeness could be explored with living writers in contrast to psychosexual interpretations made by biographers of the lives of earlier female creatives which may or may not be accurate reflections of reality.

3. The cultural role influence on women may be isolated in part by a study of the literary works of the women in this present study in terms of the use of masculine and feminine points of view.

4. An area that has been neglected is the publishing industry. An attitude survey of the industry might be helpful to investigate any prejudices in regard to women writers on the part of literary agents, publishers and editors. If publishing appears to be a strong sexually-oriented business, an investigation into the relationship of women creatives and cultural role pressures exerted by the business could be significant. We do not know how many really good works of fiction are never published because of sexist attitudes by agents, publishers and editors who tend to have a strong influence on the reading tastes of the public.

5. Another fruitful area for research might be the reading tastes of the American woman. The psychological formation of these preferences might yield considerable relevant material. More women writers are being published now than ever before but the ratio of women writers who achieve status of the first rank is still minimal, in spite of the fact that

the largest number of books sold are bought by women. A list of first rank writers would include such names as John Updike, Chaim Potok, Bernard Malamud, Gore Vidal, Truman Capote, Gunter Grass, Saul Bellow and many other men but would tend to include no women.

It may be that women in the buying public have accepted the concept that men lead more fascinating and interesting lives and that what they write about would consequently tend to be more important than material created by women. Could Hemingway's classic have been written as The Old Woman of the Sea? Obviously not, because women did not go "down to the sea in ships" nor did they appear to yearn to fight the "great white whale." Steinbeck did not write Of Mice and Women or if he had, it would have been a comedy. Would Shulberg have received acclaim for a novel of great social significance if he had written What Makes Tammy Run? Obviously not, because Tammy was not running in so dramatic a fashion or in such high places. If she is pictured in such areas, she is apt to be running from bed to bed.

At the heart of the cultural role influence is the question of verisimilitude or the appearance of reality which is required of fiction writers as well as historians. It is not likely that a writer can place a woman in an implausible role that can be made real unless it is placed in the very far future. Science Fiction writers and futurists can plausibly project women in roles of direct power and influence

but since women do not occupy this role in our society today then the casting of a woman in any role that is not plausible makes the material unbelievable.

It might be well to pursue the truth of the concept that, as a result, male writers have greater freedom within our culture to not only experience a wider diversity of situations and therefore have a wider base to draw from for their writing but also have the freedom, in imagination, to cast their characters in a wider range of roles.

The women writers in this study were exposed to a considerably wider range of stimuli than the average female population, but in the American culture, they did not have the traditional freedom to roam the seas as Melville did, nor to run governments, nor to express themselves philosophically and to be taken seriously on any subject save those related to their sex.

Implications for Higher Education

Many of the concepts in this study have implications for education in general. In the broad area of creativity, classes need to be devised in teacher education to teach creativity as a part of learning theory, not only defining creativity and isolating concepts of what it is but also formulating new methods of utilizing it.

One of the clearest concepts to emerge from recent research on creativity literature is that the most creative people are not those people with the highest intelligence

quotients. In those schools where they are still playing the numbers game in terms of intelligence, the creative student will be lost. The teacher who prizes right answers from her brightest, least troublesome students will miss the most creative along the way since that student will be looking for many answers, not just the right one, and will no doubt be challenging that teacher's concepts with as much perseverance as his ego strength will allow.

From the study of these women writers, it is apparent that the ability and desire to read is essential in order to acquire one of the most basic tools of a writer, the command and flow of language. It is very important for elementary and secondary educators to spend careful thought and effort in improving teaching methods since the society is caught in the crunch of turning out a large population of students, graduating from high school with poor reading skills and thus little interest in reading.

There was a time when the history of the human race was for the most part an oral one but that is no longer the case and what we know about our history as human beings depends on being able to read. The media, such as television, is not an unbiased recorder of the human condition and the abandonment of interest in reading would be detrimental to creativity in general and to potential writers specifically. It is important for anyone creating anything to know what basic building blocks are available and it well may be that

the purpose of education is to expose the student to the building blocks without damaging his desire to take those building blocks and make them his own as a foundation for his own creativity.

In the area of this study, women and their creativity, the implications fall in two categories:

1. Curriculum change. The fact that these twenty women creatives passed through schools, both public and private, with no recognition of their special and unique talents is an indication of a need for curriculum change. Teacher education programs in higher education need to include, as a part of their curriculum, courses designed to recognize not only the creative abilities of all of its students but particularly those special people who contribute so much to our society through literature. The creation of a product is a highly disciplined act and all teachers of elementary, secondary and high school children, in particular, should know how to teach our young people so that they facilitate the art of disciplined learning through exposure to a wide variety of stimuli without the present requirements of conformity.

It would be helpful to devise an attitude survey for teacher education to determine the hidden cultural role influence on the teachers who will be having an impact on elementary and secondary students. A curriculum could then be devised that included classes that acknowledge the

societal limitations that women face and creative ways to educate past them. A radical change is being made in women's place in society now but it is a slow process as are most major changes. Educational institutions, being one of the strongest forces in our society, can play a major part in implementing that change by teacher awareness of the process on all levels. The strength of curriculum devised for that purpose would promote a more rapid growth.

2. Environmental change. Colleges and universities should become facilitating environments for women to be creative. This involves two states, first, the removal of the onus of being an adult female either entering college for the first time ("She is not really a student; her primary interest is finding a husband.") or going back to school at some time past the traditional season for college students. ("She's obviously not serious but merely bored at home and seeking diversion.")

Secondly, institutions of higher education should seek new ways to provide encouragement for women to seek all avenues that lead to creative fulfillment, breaking the barriers of education toward typically female or male occupations. They should encourage women to involve themselves in the mainstream of the world.

All of these suggestions are concerned with attitude change; the attitude of the creative woman viewing herself and how she relates to her environment, and the attitude of

a society hopefully redefining or better yet, allowing women to define themselves. Education on all levels, can play an important part in creating a totally supportive and nurturing climate for this freedom to occur.

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APPENDIX

BIOGRAPHICAL EVALUATION SHEET

Name

01. Place of Birth: 02. Date of Birth:
03. Economic Position in Society: Upper...Middle...Lower...
04. Father's Profession:
05. Predominate Parental Influence: Mother...Father...Other...
06. Relationship to Father: Close...Distant...Neutral...
07. Relationship to Mother: Close...Distant...Neutral...
08. No. of Children in the Family:
09. Position among Siblings: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
10. Psychological Classification: Introvert...Extrovert...
11. Loner...Preferred Groups... 12. Coop... Uncoop...
13. Nervous...Placid...
14. Health as a Child: Good...Average...Poor...
15. Health as an Adult: Good...Average...Poor...
16. Schooling: Public...Private...
17. Adjustment to School: Good...Average...Poor...
18. Religious Training: Protestant...Catholic...Jew...
19. Strength of Training: Strong...Just present...None...
20. Age First Demonstration of Talent:
21. Other Talents Demonstrated: Yes...No...
22. Age at First Published Work:
23. Married: Yes...No... 24. How Many Times:
25. Age at First Marriage:
26. Children: Yes...No... 27. No. of Children:
28. Age of Mother at First Birth:

29. Sexual Adjustment: Heterosexual...Homosexual...
Bisexual...Unknown...
30. Age at Start of Most Productive Period: 31. Length...
32. Interest in Reading: High...Average...Low...
33. Interest in History and Oral Tradition: High...Average...
Low...
34. Travelled Extensively: Yes...No...
35. Close Relationship with a Number of Other Writers: Yes...
No...
36. Interest in Traditional Role of Homemaker: Yes...No...
37. History of Having Housework Done by Others: Yes...No...
38. Family Moved More Than Once as a Child: Yes...No...
39. Age at Death: Date:
40. Positive Influence by Special Other Person: Yes...No...
41. Negative Influence by Special Other Person: Yes...No...