

Running head: PERSONALITIES OF CREATIVE WRITERS

Cite as: Piirto, J. (2009). **Personalities of creative writers**. In S. Kaufman & J. Kaufman (Eds.), *Psychology of Creative Writing* (pp. 3-23). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

The Personalities of Creative Writers

Jane Piirto

Ashland University

Ashland, OH 44805

419-281-6516

[jpiirto@ashland.edu](mailto:jpiirto@ashland.edu)

## The Personalities of Creative Writers

*"Now I know there is nothing you can do about any writer ever. The seeds of their destruction are in them from the start, and the thing to do about writers is get along with them if you see them, and try not to see them."*

—Ernest Hemingway (1995, p. 450)

The above quote by Ernest Hemingway indicates the stubbornness and the pride, which characterizes the popular image of the creative male writer. He is clad in khakis, or in a tweed sport coat with a patch on the arms, clutching a pipe in his teeth or cradling a rifle in his arms, wearing horn-rimmed glasses or swaggering beneath a cowboy hat, writing from the ivory tower or writing from the field of battle. These two disparate images are, as we shall see, somewhat true. And what about the female writer? She is clad in mannish clothes, her hair cut in a butch, braless and strident, living with her male and female lovers in the Bohemian garrets of a large city, or she is whimsically virginal and intense, her long, tangled and flowing hair entwined with rosettes of wild flowers just picked, sitting in a meadow, her long delicate fingers slowly turning the pages of a leather bound book with a ribbon for a marker. As we shall see, the personalities these images imply are also somewhat true.

Creative people are those who do creative acts. The creativity occurs in the becoming, the making. In the struggle to be creative, one's personality attributes are extremely important. Creative people seem to have certain core personality attributes. I have made personality attributes the base of my Piirto Pyramid of Talent Development.

Many studies have emphasized that successful creators in all domains have certain personality attributes in common. These make up the base of the model. These are the affective aspects of what a person needs to succeed and they rest on the foundation of genes. Among these are the following: androgyny (Barron 1968; Csikszentmihalyi, Rathunde, and Whalen 1993; Piirto and Fraas, 1995; Piirto and Johnson, 2004); creativity (Renzulli, 1978; Tannenbaum 1983); imagination (Dewey, 1934; Langer, 1957; Plato; Prescott, 1920; Santayana, 1896); insight (Sternberg and Davidson, 1995; Runco, 2006); introversion; intuition (Barron, 1968, 1995; Myers & McCaulley 1985; Piirto & Johnson, 2004); introversion (Cross, Speirs Neumeister & Cassidy, 2007; Myers & McCaulley, 1985; Piirto & Johnson, 2004; Simonton, 1999); naiveté, or openness to experience (Ghiselin, 1952; Cattell, 1971, 1990); overexcitabilities (Dabrowski,

1965; Piechowski, 2006); motivation, or passion for work in a domain (Barron, 1968;1995; Bloom, 1985;); perceptiveness (Myers & McCaulley 1985); persistence (Rayneri, Gerber, & Wiley, 2003; Renzulli, 1978); preference for complexity (Barron, 1995); resilience (Jenkins-Friedman 1992; Block & Kremen,1996); (Renzulli 1978); risk-taking (MacKinnon 1978; Torrance 1987); self-discipline (Piiro, 2004); self-efficacy (Zimmerman, Bandura and Martinez-Pons 1992); Sternberg and Lubart 1992); tolerance for ambiguity (Barron, 1968; 1995); and volition, or will (Corno and Kanfer, 1993; Simonton, 1999).

These lists are by no means discrete or complete, but show that creative adults achieve effectiveness partially by force of personality. Talented adults who achieve success possess many of these attributes. Personality is an area in which there are many competing theories. Personality theory can be psychoanalytic (Ego psychology, object relations, transpersonalism); behavioral or cognitive (quantitative studies using factor analysis such as those of Cattell, 1990, and Eysenck, 1993); or humanistic (using phenomenology, existentialism, gestalt, humanistic, and transpersonal theories). Personality is sometimes equated with character, directing how one lives one's life. The personality attributes mentioned here have been determined by empirical studies of creative producers, mostly adults, but in some cases, adolescents in special schools and programs. Many of the personality attributes from studies used have focused on the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, based on the Jungian theory of personality. The Cattell 16 Personality Factors, The Eysenck Inventory, the Gough Creative Personality Inventory, the California Psychological Inventory, the Minnesota Multiphasic Psychological Inventory, and others have also been used in studies cited here.

The consolidation of personality traits into the Big Five through factor analysis (Costa & McCrae, 1992; McCrae & Costa, 1999) is noted here, but earlier work on creative people has noted these other traits as listed, and so I include them here. These were analyzed through what is called the "lexical tradition" (Costa & McCrae, 1992, p. 14) by researchers such as Cattell (1971). The *Revised NEO Personality Inventory* (NEO-PI-R) has combined factors into facets and then into five domains: Neuroticism (N), Extraversion (E), Openness (O), Agreeableness (A), and Conscientiousness (C). It seems that the domain of openness to experience (O), includes creative attributes: Fantasy (O1), Aesthetics (O2), Feelings (O3), Actions (O4), Ideas (O5), and Values (O6). "Open individuals are unconventional, willing to question authority, and prepared to entertain new ethical, social, and political ideas" (Costa & McCrae, p. 15). However, other personality attributes on this instrument may also apply to writers, e.g. Tender-Mindedness (A6), and, in the case of writers, Depression (N3). This is just speculation, no known data exists on writers who have been assessed with this instrument; that is research yet to be conducted.

The creative writer can be considered to have these generic personality attributes found in creators, as well as others. This chapter will discuss the personality attributes writers seem to show. Those attributes referred to above, those that are generic, and which also seem to appear in creative writers, have been discussed in Chapter 2 of Piiro (2002) and will not be discussed further.

Numerous studies have come from the Institute for Personality Assessment and Research

(IPAR). IPAR was formed after World War II at the University of California in Berkeley. MacKinnon (1978) directed this Institute, after serving with the Office of Special Services on its assessment staff. In 1949 the Rockefeller Foundation granted funds to start IPAR, with the purpose of determining which people were most highly effective, and what made them that way. Among the people studied were writers, architects, engineering students, women mathematicians, inventors, and research scientists. The Institute studied people who were chosen by peer nomination; that is, the nominators were college professors, professionals in the field, and respected experts or connoisseurs knowledgeable about the field. Among the researchers there were Frank Barron, Donald MacKinnon, Harrison Gough, Ravenna Helson, Donald Crutchfield, and Erik Erikson (Helson, 1999).

At IPAR, Frank Barron and his colleagues asked literature and drama professors at the University of California for the names of the most creative of outstanding creative writers then writing (Barron, 1968a, b; 1969; 1972; 1995). They came up with a list of 56 writers. They invited the writers to come to the University of California to participate in extensive testing and interviewing, and these studies pioneered some of the tests and interview techniques still used in studying human personality attributes and characteristics, for example, the Q-sort method of interviewing and the Barron- Welsh Art Scale for evaluating works of art. Some of the writers were Truman Capote, Frank O'Connor, Muriel Rukeyser, William Carlos Williams, MacKinlay Kantor, Jessamyn West, A.B. Guthrie, Jr., Andrew Lytle, Robert Duncan, Bill Mauldin, and Kenneth Rexroth on campus. Tests and interviews were conducted off campus with such writers as Norman Mailer, W.H. Auden, Marianne Moore, Michael McClure, Arthur Koestler, and Sean O'Faolain. Also among these writers was Saul Bellow, who told George Garrett about being paid ten thousand dollars to go to Berkeley and take psychological tests. Bellow said, "They had Capote there, too—and what they ended up with was the feeling that writers had more willpower . . . And if that's all, it doesn't tell you anything, except maybe that discipline helps" \*Garrett, in Neubauer, 1994, p. 120).

Barron (1995) discussed this study. He said "It was a painful and taxing responsibility to ask these writers, many of whom had suffered much in their own creative lives, to probe deeply into themselves and to answer the questions . . . seemingly irrelevant and unworthy questions" (p. 183).

### **What Personality Tests Show**

There also exists information on the personalities of creative writers from personality tests developed by psychologists and psychoanalysts. Two of my own small studies using The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) and The Overexcitabilities Questionnaire (OEQ) will be discussed here (Piirto, 1978; 1995; 1998b).

#### ***The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator***

The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator has been used to determine the Jungian-based type preferences of many occupational groups, including scientists, artists, laborers, writers, and counselors. The creativity studies done with the MBTI were done in conjunction with the other studies done at the Institute for Personality Assessment and Research. Many writers preferred the N (Intuitive) and the P (Perceptive).

I administered the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator to a group of fifteen successful women writers, and to a comparison group of fifteen female elementary school teachers. Two strong patterns emerged: (1) most of the writers preferred Intuition (N) and Perception (P). As Myers & McCaulley said, "Data from the world is received in ways that go beyond the senses and that they preferred to see patterns, relationships, and meaning in all they perceive" (p. 135). Seventy-five % of the women writers preferred the NF or NT combination. Twenty % of the comparison group of elementary school teachers did. Rather, like most elementary teachers, the comparison group of teachers preferred the SF combination (Sensing and Feeling) (Piiro, 1998c). Women in the general population are more likely to prefer Feeling than Thinking; this could be seen to be true for the comparison group as well as for the women writers. Barron (1968) indicated that the writers he studied also preferred Feeling and Intuition. Since the IPAR study included more men than women writers, the results here show that there seem to be no great gender differences in personality type preferences, indicating that the "sun" of gender may be environmental, as postulated in my Pyramid of Talent Development. Barron (1968) said the writers were "distinctly more introverted than extraverted, more feeling than thinking, and more intuitive than oriented to sense experience" (p. 237, 245).

### ***Overexcitability Questionnaire (OEQ)***

I also published (Piiro, 2002; Piiro, submitted) the transcripts of the OEQ for three male writers, a poet, a prose writer, and a playwright. The scores on these questionnaires indicated the highest levels of imaginal, intellectual, and emotional overexcitability.

This chapter will discuss personality attributes of writers that may or may not be present in other creative people who practice their creativity in other fields or domains. These are (1) ambition /envy; (2) concern with philosophical matters; (3) frankness often expressed in political or social activism; (4) psychopathology; (5) depression; (6) empathy; and (7) a sense of humor. Anecdotes from the lives of writers will give examples. The methodology was qualitative, and the material comes from published interviews, memoirs, and biographies. Much of this was first published in Piiro (2002). The standard for a writer being included as an example in this chapter was that the writer would or does qualify for listing in the *Directory of American Poets and Writers* ([www.pw.org/directory/](http://www.pw.org/directory/)), which has a very high standard for listing [Each book of poetry, fiction, or creative nonfiction (personal essays or memoirs) (12 points); each chapbook (6 points); each work of fiction or creative nonfiction (personal essays or memoirs) published in a literary journal, anthology, or edited Web publication (3 points); each poem published in a literary journal, anthology, or edited Web publication (2 points).] 12 points are necessary for listing. Currently, only about 7,355 writers are listed, about 4,000 poets, 1,900 fiction writers, 100 performance writers, and the remainder (about 1,100) listed as both poets and

writers. Many studies of creative writers have not used such a standard, but may use self-description rather than peer review and literary publication record. I am a participant observer in this regard, as I am listed as both a poet and a writer (e.g., see Piirto, 1985; 1995) in this *Directory*.

### 1. Ambition / Envy

Ambition and its doppelganger, envy, are not unknown among writers. For example, the writer T. Corraheson Boyle said he wanted to be “the most famous writer alive and the greatest writer ever” (Friend, 1990, pp. 60-68). Other writers who, like Boyle, have studied at the famous Iowa Writer’s Workshop, have also asserted this. The writer Jane Smiley, a new graduate of the University of Iowa with a Ph.D. in medieval literature, told me the same thing late one August night in a darkened van on our way to the Bread Loaf Writer’s Conference in 1977 when we were confessing our dreams and hopes. She has gone on to win both the National Book Award and the Pulitzer Prize, steadily increasing her fame and writing with extreme discipline and passion.

Writers need ambition, as do other creative producers, but that ambition often produces horrible feelings of inadequacy and anxiety. This may be because of the intimate subject matter of the creative writer—the self, or the self, coded. The high rate of rejection that creative writers experience when they try to publish their work may also contribute to the intense feelings of envy paired with intense ambition. Poet Molly Peacock made no apology for her ambition:

From when I was a little girl I wanted to be an artist, and I said to myself, “Somehow I’m getting out of Buffalo, New York.” I had a drive to get out of that house and that town. That takes ambition, and my ambition is located in that very early desire to succeed. Of course, you can’t be published in *The New Yorker* without a drive to succeed. But also you can’t be published in issue one, volume one, of a brand new, teeny-tiny literary enterprise without a similar hunger for success. . . . Ambition is a fact of anyone’s life who aspires to anything. (Friman & Templin, 1994, p. 41)

Coleridge, in the 19th century, also experienced the envy of other writers, indicating that this is not a new phenomenon. In describing the reception of “Christabel,” he said, “Three years ago I did not know or believe that I had no enemy in the world: and now even my strongest sensations of gratitude are mingled with fear, and I . . . ask—Have I one friend?” (Coleridge, 1872, p. 680). He described that he was begged to recite the work at many social gatherings, and urged to publish it. “Since then, with very few exceptions, I have heard nothing but abuse, and this too in a spirit of bitterness.”

The shadow side of the drive and resilience it takes to continue in the creative writing profession is the envy that one feels at the success of others. Envy can paralyze but it can also serve to motivate. Friedman (1994) called envy “the writer’s disease” (p. 5). She said “It’s desire that causes envy. Isn’t desire the villain here? Yet how to be an artist without desire.” She said that writers project that other writers are happy, successful, famous, and admired, and in

so doing they give part of themselves away to the power of the extrinsic. How much praise and adulation is enough? Louis Simpson (1962) noted that friendships between writers don't seem to have longevity. "They become resentful of criticism and think that the other person is trying to do them in, or they become jealous of his success" (p. 175). Cynthia Ozick in her *Paris Review* interview, described how she thought she would be Henry James by the age of 25, and then when she wasn't, she began to take toll of those who were getting famous. Envy began to cut into her soul (Teicholz, 1989). She even wrote a short story called "Envy" (Ozick, 1971) in which a Yiddish writer is consumed by envying the achievements of other writers who are able to write in English.

Other causes for envy exist. Many well known writers teach at universities. Poet Jean Valentine described being so envious of her talented students that she quit teaching: "My students would come in with these wonderful poems, and I was jealous. I wasn't writing anything" (Bland, p. 51). Another cause of envy has to do with wondering about one's legacy as a writer. Hemingway was famous for his jealousy of his contemporaries, but he also had a need to triumph over his predecessors: In Lynn's biography (1988), he is quoted as saying, "I started out very quiet and I beat Mr. Turgenev. Then I trained hard and I beat Mr. de Maupassant. I've fought two draws with Mr. Stendahl . . . But nobody's going to get me in any ring with Mr. Tolstoy unless I'm crazy or I keep getting better" (p. 549). The rivalries and off-again, on-again friendship between poets James Dickey and Robert Bly during the 1960s led to a series of public statements about each other's patriotism during the protests about the Vietnam War, but their friendship had always been fraught with envy as one and then the other ascended on the college reading circuit of the 1960s and 1970s (Hart, 2000). Both went on to popular success, Dickey with *Deliverance*, Bly with *Iron John*, but their differences remained.

## 2. Concern with Philosophical Issues: Aesthetics and Ethics

Ethically and morally, writers seem to be concerned with the meaning of life and with the search for truth and beauty. They seem particularly concerned about behaving in an ethically consistent fashion. Supposedly this is the lofty purpose of literature, and that writers search for truth and beauty is not surprising. From Shelley's "beauty is truth, truth beauty" the purpose has been put forth that literature is a way to morally explicate and uphold human values.

Three examples follow. Poet Octavio Paz said "Ever since I was an adolescent I've been intrigued with the mystery of freedom" (MacAdam, 1991, p. 103). This search for truth begins young. Yeats described himself at art school in London: "I was constantly troubled about philosophic questions" (Yeats, 1953, p. 53). He would tell his friends that the purpose of poetry and sculpture was to "keep our passions alive," and his friends would say that people would be better off without passions. He spent a week worrying this problem: "Do the arts make us happier, or more sensitive and therefore more unhappy?" When he talked about these concerns to his friends they would treat him with wry and paternalistic irony. Didion said, "I can recall disapproving of the golden mean, always thinking there was more to be learned from the dark

journey. The dark journey engages me more.” (Kuehl, 1968, p. 335).

In creative writing, the philosophical concern with the meaning of life is melded with the psychological concern of what makes human beings tick, and the two are explicated through *dramatis personae* in story or through the metaphors and images in verse. The material displaying the writer’s concern with ethical, moral, and aesthetic matters is abundant. These were but a few examples. In fact, one could go so far as to say that serious writers write for ethical reasons.

### 3. Frankness Often Expressed In Political Or Social Activism

Writers attract the interest of others, probably because of their ability to say what they think. The Barron study (1968; 1995) found through psychological testing and interviews that the writers were frank and needed to communicate and were likely to take risks in doing so. Their politics seem to have been throughout history tending toward the pacifist, liberal, or left-wing, no matter what era’s issues they were reacting to. For example, 1991 National Book Award winner Rush, a war resister to the Korean War, spent time in jail in the early 1950s where he wrote a novel which he hoped would be the beginning of a new genre, the “nonviolent thriller” (Rush, 1995, p. 219).

The writer may value freedom of expression more than the feelings of others. Writers throughout the world have often been the first to be thrown into jail or sent into exile for what they have written and said. The Russian writers Brodsky were sent to Siberia for what they wrote. The British writer Rushdie was sentenced to death by the Ayatollah of Iran for his novel *Satanic Verses* and had to go into hiding in 1989, not emerging until 1998 when the political situation in Iran changed. The writer's organization, PEN, has a Freedom To Write Committee, which has a subcommittee called Writers in Prison, a watchdog group concerned about writers throughout the world being persecuted for expressing themselves. Many of the “prisoners of conscience” throughout the world are writers. Writers Lillian Hammett, who were among those writers called before the House Un-American Activities Committee as suspected communist activists in the early 1950s, established grants administered through Human Rights Watch “to assist writers throughout the world who have been victims of political persecution.” The organization publishes Action Alerts about writers who are detained. For example, the alert for June, 2007 concerned the Russian journalist Vladimir Chugunov, who was captured by police and put into a psychiatric institution.

Most writers seem to be leftist, or liberal. Nobel Prize-winning Chilean poet and politician Pablo Neruda is an example of a writer exiled for his socialist convictions expressed in poems and essays. The award-winning movie *Il Postino* (1994) was a dramatic explication of the impact Neruda’s poems and political beliefs had on a simple island man who delivered Neruda’s mail while he was in exile in the early 1950s. Poets Robert Bly, Allen Ginsberg, Denise Levertov, Ted Berrigan, and others were leaders of the Vietnam antiwar movement in the U.S., and Ginsberg tried to levitate the Pentagon at one notable protest meeting. At a less lofty level, young creative writers often publish frank underground newspapers that are the bane of



their teachers and school administrators. “I was just telling the truth,” they often say, surprised at the reactions of the authorities to their writing.

There is, though, a little diversity among writers in political and class beliefs. For example, the National Book Award nominee Mark Helprin is a senior fellow at the conservative Hudson Institute and was a speechwriter for Bob Dole in the 1996 presidential campaign. Helprin suggested that his minority status among writers (as a conservative Republican) has led to some censorship by bookstores and reading groups: “I’ve heard reports of bookstores that won’t sell my books” (Schapiro, 1999). Writer John Irving and poet James Dickey were also rumored to be conservatives. Poet Howard McCord is a card-carrying member of the National Rifle Association.

Environmental activism expressed in frank remonstrance to polluters is also common in the cases of writers. The environmental concerns of such poets as Gary Snyder (2007), and Wendell Berry (2005) have gained much attention. Writer and poet Julia Butterfly Hill climbed a 1,000-year-old redwood tree in Humboldt, California, lived in its branches for two years, and wrote a memoir (Hill, 2001). She agreed to write the memoir only if the paper used was recycled and processed without bleach. She and other writers founded the Green Press Initiative, which advocates environmentally friendly printing and publishing practices.

In looking at published interviews, memoirs, and the like, of contemporary writers, one will often see the frankness and social activism wrought through writing, in the writers’ assertions. Novelist Russell Banks stated that a writer must deal truthfully with what he sees: “One of the things I believe is that if you are a member of a society or culture that is racist and sexist—as ours is—and you don’t offer an ongoing critique of that as part of your daily life, then you’re inevitably going to end up participating in it” (Joyce, 1998). Norman Dubie, who grew up the son of a minister and a nurse, tried not to write political poems, but poems of witness. A Buddhist, he stopped writing, in order to sit and meditate for ten years, But he had to return to speaking. In 2004, he voiced his fear:

I’m completely dismayed with the Bush administration and all the complicated ways in which the lives of real people are being ruined now and clearly, deep into the future. . . . God save us, he may get four more years, but I fear that terribly. If they get four more years, I think they’ll try to reverse *Roe v. Wade*, and then all of our daughters are going to [take to] the streets. And all of a sudden, all those ungodly provisions of the Patriot Act are going to be used on our own children. (Gannon, 2004, p. 38)

Some creative writers may be mad as well as angry. The personality tests that Barron (1968; 1995) gave to the writers showed that they showed many of the characteristics of manic-depressives and schizophrenics, but that their ego strength and intelligence were higher. Creative writers were “markedly deviant” from the regular population, and the distinguished writers seemed to have tendencies to be schizoid, depressive, hysterical, or psychopathic, and not to have rigid sex role expectations. Barron said, “the writers appear to be both sicker and healthier psychologically than people in general.” He noted, “The face they turn to the world is

sometimes one of pain, often of protest, sometimes of distance and withdrawal, and certainly they are emotional” (Barron, 1968, p. 244).

Jamison (1989), in a study of thirty-nine British writers and eight artists, found that thirty-eight percent of them had been treated for affective illness, whereas in the normal population less than 5 percent of people are treated for affective illness. The writers and artists also reported mental problems, including hospitalization, in their first degree relatives to a greater extent than in the normal population Jamison said that psychiatrists should be cautious in their diagnoses and prescriptions of drugs as the states of creativity are similar to those reported by people with mood disorders. The side effects of commonly prescribed drugs may damage the creative process. Several of the writers (17 percent) stopped taking lithium because of its deadening effects on their creative thinking.

Andreason (1987; Andreason & Canter, 1974) studied twenty-seven male and three female faculty at the University of Iowa Writers’ Workshop over a period of fifteen years. She compared them with a group of hospital administrators, lawyers, social workers, and the like. The average age of both groups was thirty-eight years. Bipolar manic-depressive affective disorder was found in 80 percent of the writers and in 30 percent of the comparison group, which itself had a higher than usual incidence of affective disorder. Two-thirds of the writers had sought psychiatric help. Two of the thirty writers committed suicide during the fifteen years of the study.

Andreason (1987) also studied the first-degree relatives of the writers and found that almost half of the members of the families of the writers also had occupations that emphasized creativity, such as teaching music or dance, though they may not have been in the writing field. This indicates that there may be a general creativity factor that is genetically transmitted. The verbal intelligence of the faculty members was no higher than that of the comparison group, about 125. Andreason had postulated that there would be the occurrence of schizophrenia but instead she found manic depression, and she noted that the writers said they wrote during the long periods between episodes, rather than during the highs and lows characteristic of bipolar disorder. She said, “affective disorder may be both a ‘hereditary taint’ and a hereditary gift” (1987, p. 1292).

As an example, the poet Allen Ginsberg and his mother both experienced mental disorder. Ginsberg, suffering extreme self-doubt and almost arrested for burglary, checked himself into the New York Psychiatric Institute. (Incidentally tests given at this time showed Ginsberg’s IQ to be “near genius level,” according to Miles, 1989.) Ginsberg’s childhood in New Jersey had been odd, to say the least. His mother was a paranoid schizophrenic who was often institutionalized; Allen himself had to take her to the institution once. At home, she liked to be “natural,” often striding around the house in the nude. Ginsberg’s father was the well-known poet Louis Ginsberg, a teacher who tried to keep life somewhat normal for Allen and his brother. Ginsberg’s moving 1961 poem “Kaddish” is an artistic revelation of his family’s trials, an anguished expression of regret that when his mother died insane in a mental hospital, they were not able to summon ten Jewish men to say the Jewish prayer for the dead, Kaddish. (Ginsberg,

1984).

Psychoanalysts and psychologists have often stated that writers write because of deep-seated pathologies. From Sigmund Freud (1976), who said that writers use their personal childhood fantasies' to E. Kris (1952) who said that writers write because of "regression in service of the ego"; to Albert Rothenberg (1990), who spoke of a Janusian two-faced process of creativity (in which he used case material from his psychiatric patients who were writers); to Jamison (1999), who detailed the family history of bipolar illness in writers; to Kaufman and Baer (2002), who noted that female poets were the most at-risk for mental illness because of their inability to ignore the results of rejection, and because writing poetry may exacerbate rather than heal mental problems; the psychologists and psychiatrists have analyzed the writers, searching for the "key" that will unlock the mystery of their creativity. Kaufman (2001) called it the Sylvia Plath Effect, evoking the tragic suicide of poet and novelist Sylvia Plath, wife of poet Ted Hughes, who later became British Poet Laureate. Hughes also suffered from depression, but didn't attempt suicide, although the next woman in his life, Assia Wevill also a writer, committed suicide, and also killed their (probable) daughter (Feinstein, 2001).

The psychologist Leo Faulkner wrote because of ego defects, including low self-esteem caused by an overprotective mother and a rejecting father; Lillian Hellman wrote out of narcissistic "chronic rage" that resulted from "material deprivation" (p. 42); Tennessee Williams wrote to compensate for his incestuous feelings towards his mother and sister; Flannery O'Connor wrote out of guilt for getting ill with lupus in her late twenties, and being dependent on her mother during adulthood; John Cheever wrote because of "early withdrawal of parental empathy" (p. 124); Vladimir Nabokov wrote out of a longing for his presexual days; Jorge Luis Borges wrote because of oncoming blindness and his shame after a series of crises in his family's fortunes in Buenos Aires; Samuel Beckett wrote out of a "character disorder marked by extreme rigidity and self-centeredness" (p. 163); and the playwright Harold Pinter wrote out of "regression to a past that was as emotionally deprived as is the present" (p. 205). Schneiderman said, "Great literary art is a synthesis of technical skill with tremendous fear, rage, or other powerful emotions, and . . . the fundamental character of great writers reveals significant failure along developmental lines, that is, a basic lack of maturity" (Schneiderman 1988, p. 207).

Jamison (1999) made a chart diagram of the genealogies and documented manic-depressive illness in the first-degree relatives of writers Alfred, Lord Tennyson; Henry, Alice, and William Samuel Taylor Coleridge; Virginia Woolf; Ernest Hemingway; Mary Wollstonecraft and her daughter Mary Shelley. Hans Christian Andersen, Honoré de Balzac, James Barrie, James Boswell, John Bunyan, Samuel Clemens, Joseph Conrad, Charles Dickens, Isak Dinesen, Ralph Waldo Emerson, William Faulkner, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Nikolai Gogol, Maxim Gorky, Kenneth Grahame, Ernest Hemingway, Hermann Hesse, Henrik Ibsen, William Inge, Henry James, William James, Charles Lamb, Malcolm Lowry, Antonin Artaud, Charles Baudelaire, John Berryman, William Blake, Louise Bogan, Rupert Brooke, Robert Burns, George Gordon, Lord Byron, Paul Celan, Thomas Chatterton, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, William Collins, William Cowper, Hart Crane, Emily Dickinson, T.S. Eliot, Anne Finch, Oliver Goldsmith, Thomas Gray, Gerard Manley Hopkins, Randall Jarrell, and many others. Poets were

especially struck with such illness.

## 6. Depression

Forget full-blown psychopathology. How about good, old-fashioned depression that is perhaps not of the bipolar type? Examples of depression in creative writers abounds, as witness the myriads of memoirs now being written, which detail depression's effects. Burroughs (2002; 2003) traced his poet mother's depressions, and, in further works, his own, along with his struggles with alcoholism. A 2006 movie based on this memoir, featured Annette Bening uncannily channeling the poet mother. Evocative titles such as *Where the Roots Reach the Water* (Smith, 1999), and *In the Jaws of the Black Dog* (Mays, 1995) speak to the eloquence with which depressed writers try to describe their pain. I took a workshop from Smith in 1999, in which he described his attempts, while getting an MFA at the University of Montana, to function as a social caseworker while studying for his degree. Writing creatively was impossible. An anthology on the topic was also published (Casey, 2002), which featured excerpts from creative writers' works on the topic. One was from the book by Styron (1990).

Styron (1990) said that he had fallen into deep depression after stopping drinking, in his early sixties. "The depression that engulfed me was not of the manic type—the one accompanied by euphoric highs. . . . I was sixty when the illness struck for the first time, in the 'unipolar' form." He said that the alcohol had served as a "shield against anxiety" and without it, "the shadows of nightfall seemed more somber, my mornings were less buoyant, walks in the woods became less zestful" and he experienced "visceral queasiness" while writing during the late afternoons (pp. 38, 62). He sought psychiatric help and was hospitalized and subsequently over-medicated.

Noting that other writers and artists had suffered from debilitating depression, including Albert Gary, Jean Seberg, Randall Woolf, Mark Rothko, Diane Arbus, William Inge, and the humorist Art Buchwald, Styron (1990) commented that depression yields no faith in ultimate rescue: "The pain is unrelenting, and what makes the condition intolerable is the foreknowledge that no remedy will come—not in a day, an hour, a month, or a minute." (p. 36). Of the origins of such depression, Styron called them "doomed and splendidly creative men and women" who had childhood experiences where the depression took root. "Could any of them have had a hint, then, of the psyche's perishability, its exquisite fragility? And why were they destroyed, while others—similarly stricken—struggled through?" (p. 36).

Novelist Amy Tan spoke of the depression she suffered and the suicides in her family. She said, "Some of it is probably biochemical, but I think it's also in my family tree. I mean, my grandmother killed herself; she certainly had depression in her life." This became one of the themes of Tan's novel, *The Joy-Luck Club*. Tan said, "And anyone, like my mother, who witnessed her own mother killing herself, is going to be prone to the same disease." Tan's father and brother both died of brain tumors, her father when she was fourteen years old. Yet Tan said, "I didn't do anything about it for a long time, because, like many people, I worried about altering my psyche with drugs. As a writer, I was especially concerned with that. A lot of writers believe

that the trauma and the angst that you feel is an essential part of the craft.” (*The Spirit Within*, 1995).

John Cheever (1991) struggled also, and wrote in his diaries (published posthumously) that he had to continually try to tell himself that for a person with his temperament, writing was not “a self-destructive vocation.” Although writing had given him “money and renown,” he thought that his drinking might have something to do with his writing. “The excitement of alcohol and the excitement of fantasy are very similar” (p. 52). In fact, the presence of alcohol and depression is so commonplace in the biographical information about prominent creative writers, that it is odd to find an account where these two are not linked and present (Waldron, 1987; Piirto, 2002). The association is not new; teetotaler Upton Sinclair wrote an account of this phenomenon in 1956.

The sad end of suicide resulting from depression or psychopathology is a reality for writers. Who can understand another’s suicide? A person may have seemed to be on top of the world and then friends and relations make a grisly discovery; the corpse and the people left behind to ask why. Highly verbal, highly conceptual, highly opinionated, often nonconforming, frank, highly driven, writers are prone to self-abusive and self-destructive behavior even as they are enriching the lives of their readers. But this is not always the case, and there are writers whose lives are not lived so tragically, or who have, as Styron said, “struggled through.” The high incidence of depression would seem to be an indication of the intense sensitivity with which creative people apprehend the world. It is as if the senses were tuned louder, stronger, higher, and so the task becomes to communicate the experience of both pain and joy.

## 7. Empathy

The diaries of Dutch writer Etta Hillesum from 1941 to 1942 (published in English in 1985) are illustrative of the empathy that writers, indeed, any artists, seem to feel for others’ struggles, and perhaps this deep empathy contributes to the deep depressions. She said that writers often feel for the rest of the world; take on the troubles of the rest of the world. Hillesum said she thought she understood why creative artists and writers become lost in drink, for one must have a strong sense of self not to go under morally, not to lose a sense of direction: “All my tenderness, all my emotions, this whole swirling soul-lake, soul-sea, soul-ocean. . .wants to pour out then, to be allowed to flow forth into just one short poem.” At times like these she felt like “flinging myself headlong into an abyss, losing myself in drink” (Hillesum, 1985, p. 94). Each time she wrote something she felt empty and apt to fall. “I sense it inside me; even in my most fruitful and most creative inner moments, there are raging demons and self-destructive forces.”

Novelist Allan Gurganus spent much time nursing sick friends during the height of the AIDS epidemic. He was later asked to give many eulogies at their funerals. Using his sense of empathy, he reconstructed the good times of their lives for their living friends and relatives. He said, “What I found, in getting up in these little churches and fellowship halls, some in the South and Midwest, was that the more honest I was about the faults of the dead person, and the

peccadilloes and the outrageous things, and the extreme opinionatedness of these people, the more laughs I got.” People at the services began to feel better as they remembered the people. “And the more laughs I got, the better people felt and the more present the missing person became in the spirit dimension and hovering over our heads. And the greater service I had done to them in terms of portraiture and to the people who gathered to remember them” (Garner, 1997). Gurganus later wrote a novel in which he tried to show the devastation of the AIDS epidemic so clearly that both gay and straight people could empathize.

## 8. A Sense of Humor

The writers John Asimov and a few others, had a group that exchanged off-color limericks in the mail for years (personal communication, John Ciardi, July, 1976). These intellectually gifted and creative people share a love of humor—but a certain type of humor, primarily verbal. Sly humor, wry humor, off-color humor, colorful humor, team-written humor, satire, parody, comedy, all share certain features. They are often made up by writers, written down by writers, and transmitted verbally, in speech. The intelligence to see what is incongruous, the wit to convey it, the presence of mind to not overdo punning, the irony to set aside tragedy by seeing its funny side, the farcical rolling of eyes and tongue-biting snatching away of the perfect *bon mots* in mixed company, all bespeak the sense of humor present in writers. The ever-aware writer sees the humor in melodrama, the humor in making sly titles, the humor in sentimentality, all keenly. Discrepant events draw the sharp mind and a humorist is born.

Humorist Calvin Trillin said, “I actually think of being funny as an odd turn of mind, like a mild disability, some weird way of looking at the world that you can’t get rid of” (Plimpton, 1995c, p. 164). Humorist Woody Allen said, “I think if you have a comic perspective, almost anything that happens you tend to put through a comic filter.” (Kakutani, 1995, p. 203). Garrison Keillor said that humor makes a serious point: “Humor has to take up absolutely everything in your life and deal with it. . . . it’s about our lives in America today, the ends of our lives, and everything that happened before and after (Plimpton, 1995b, p. 127). These three writers known for their humor display a serious purpose for their work and demonstrate that humor is used by writers to make points about the follies and foibles of all of us.

A case could be made that most writers, whether or not they are humorists, possess verbal wit. Perhaps they hide behind it, become class clowns, or persons whose introversion is overcome by punning in public or by slipping into sarcasm, parody, or irony in order to be accepted in a crowd. Punning, for example, seems to be mostly a habit of speech practiced by bright male introverts. Wallace Stevens, in trying to overcome his introversion, turned to writing drawing room comedies in his early twenties, wanting to be accepted through people’s laughter. He never finished these plays, and his biographer commented that Stevens transformed “his youthful proclivity for parody into its more hardened form of irony. . . . As a comedian he was in control.” (Richardson, 1986, p. 164). The image of the writer as humorist must take into account that many humorists are not known as sweet, nice, easygoing people, but are often rude, crotchety, and acidic.

In summary, creative writers show personality attributes that are similar to other creators in domains, but they also may have other attributes that are more evident in them than in other creators. The recent emphasis on creativity in domains, as evidenced by Kaufman's and Baer's (2004) recent anthology on the matter, will further explicate the difference among creators. My own work has featured these differences, in my textbooks and in my research (Pirto, 1992, 1994, 1998a, 1999b, 2006). And I am glad to have these comrades in this endeavor.

### References

- Andreason, N. (1987). Creativity and mental illness: Prevalence rates in writers and their first-degree relatives. *American Journal of Psychiatry*, *144*, 1288-1292.
- Andreason, N., & Canter, A. (1974). The creative writer: Psychiatric symptoms and family history. *Comprehensive Psychiatry*, *15*, 123-131.
- Barron, F. (1958). The psychology of imagination. *Scientific American*, *50*. 156-165.
- Barron, F. (1968a). *Creativity and personal freedom*. Princeton, NJ: D. Van Nostrand
- Barron, F. (1968b). The dream of art and poetry. *Psychology Today*, *2*, 18-23, 66.
- Barron, F. (1969). The psychology of the creative writer. *Explorations in creativity*, *43*(12), 69-74.
- Barron, F. (1972). The creative personality: Akin to madness. *Psychology Today*, *6*, 42- 44, 84-85.
- Barron, F. (1995). *No rootless flower: An ecology of creativity*. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press.
- Berry, W. (2005). *A way of ignorance: Essays*. Emeryville, CA: Avalon Publishing Group.
- Bland, C. (2004). The world as her own: A profile of Jean Valentine. *Poets & Writers Magazine*, *32* (6), 48-53.
- Block, J., & Kremen, A.M. (1996). IQ and ego resiliency. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *70* (2), 346-361.

- Burroughs, A. (2003). *Running with scissors*. New York: Picador.
- Burroughs, A. (2003). *Dry*. New York: Picador.
- Casey, J. (1995). Dogma. In N. Baldwin & D. Osen (Eds.) *The writing life: A collection of essays and interviews with National Book Award winners*, (pp. 61-78). New York: Random House.
- Casey, N. (Ed.). (2002). *An unholy quiet: Writers on depression*. New York: HarperCollins.
- Cattell, R. B. (1971). The process of creative thought. In R. Cattell (Ed.), *Abilities: Their structure, growth, and action* (pp. 407-417). Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Cattell, R.B. (1990). Advances in Cattellian personality psychology. In H. Pervin (Ed.), *Handbook of personality: Theory and research*. (pp. 101-111). New York: Guilford Press.
- Cheever, J. (1991). *The journals of John Cheever*. New York: Knopf.
- Coleridge, S.T. (1872). *Biographica literaria: or Biographical sketches of my literary live and opinions*. (Vol. II). New York: Holt and Williams. Centenary Issue.
- Corno, L., & Kanfer, R. (1993). The role of volition in learning and performance. In L. Darling-Hammond (Ed.), *Review of research in education, 19*, (pp. 301-342). Washington, DC: American Educational Research Association.
- Costa, P. T., & McCrae, R. R. (1992). *NEO PI-R professional manual*. Lutz, FL: Psychological Assessment Resources, Inc.
- Cross, T. L., Speirs Neumeister, K. L., & Cassady, J. C. (2007). Psychological types of academically gifted adolescents. *Gifted Child Quarterly, 51*(3), 285-293.
- Csikszentmihalyi, M., Rathunde, K., & Whalen, S. (1993). *Talented teenagers: The roots of success and failure*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Dabrowski, K. (1965). *Personality shaping through positive disintegration*. Boston: Little Brown.
- Dewey, J. (1934). *Art and experience*. New York: Putnam.
- Eysenck, H. J. (1993). Creativity and personality: Suggestions for a theory. *Psychological Inquiry, 4*(3), 147-178.
- Feinstein, E. (2001). *Ted Hughes: The life of a poet*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson.
- Friedman, B. (1994). *Writing past dark*. New York: HarperPerennial.
- Friend, T. (1990, Dec. 9). Rolling Boyle. *New York Times Magazine 50*, 60-68.



- Friman, A., & Templin, C. (1994). An interview with Molly Peacock. *Poets & Writers Magazine*, 22 (1), 23-31.
- Freud, S. (1976). Creative writers and daydreaming. In A. Rothenberg & C. Hausman (Eds.), *The creativity question* (pp. 480-52). Durham, NC: Duke University Press. (Original work published 1908).
- Gannon, M. (2004). Return from silence: An interview with Norman Dubie. *Poets & Writers Magazine*, 32(6), 34-43.
- Garner, D. (1997, Dec. 8). Interview with Allan Gurganus. *Salon Magazine*.  
[www.salon.com/books/int/1997/12/cov\\_si\\_08gurganus.html](http://www.salon.com/books/int/1997/12/cov_si_08gurganus.html)
- Ghiselin, B. (1952). *The creative process*. New York: Bantam.
- Ginsberg, A. (1984). *Collected Poems 1947-1980*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Hart, H. (2000). *The world as a lie: James Dickey*. New York: Picador.
- Helson, R. (1999). Institute of Personality Assessment and Research. In M. Runco & S. Pritzker (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of creativity, Vol. 2* (pp. 71-79). San Diego, CA: Academic Press.
- Hill, J. (2001). *Legacy of Luna*. New York: HarperCollins.
- Hillesum, E. (1985). *An interrupted life: The diaries of Etta Hillesum, 1941-1943*. New York: Washington Square Press.
- Il Postino*. (1994). Blue Dahlia Productions.
- Jamison, K.R. (1989). Mood disorders and patterns of creativity in British writers and artists. *Psychiatry*, 52, 125-134.
- Jamison, K. R. (1993). *Touched with fire: manic-depressive illness and the artistic temperament*. New York: Free Press.
- Jenkins-Friedman, R. (1992). Zorba's conundrum: Evaluative aspect of self-concept in talented individuals. *Quest*, 3(1): 1-7.
- Joyce, C. (1998). Interview with Russell Banks. *Salon Magazine*.  
[www.salon.com/books/int/1998/01/cov\\_si\\_05int3.html](http://www.salon.com/books/int/1998/01/cov_si_05int3.html).
- Kakutani, M. (1995). The art of humor, I: Interview with Woody Allen. *The Paris Review*, 136, 200-222.
- Kaufman, J. C. (2001). The Sylvia Plath effect: Mental illness in eminent creative writers. *Journal of Creative Behavior*, 35, 37-50.

- Kaufman, J. C., & Baer, J. (2002). I bask in dreams of suicide: Mental illness, poetry, and women. *Review of General Psychology*, 6 (3) 271-286.
- Kris, E. (1976). On preconscious mental processes. In A. Rothenberg & C. Hausman (Eds.), *The creativity question* (pp. 135-142). Durham, NC: Duke University.
- Kuehl, L. (1978). Interview with Joan Didion. In G. Plimpton (Ed.), *Women writers at work: The Paris Review interviews* (pp. 319-336). New York: Penguin Books.
- Langer, S. (1957). *Problems of art*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.
- Lynn, K. S. (1988). *Hemingway*. New York: Fawcett Columbine.
- MacAdam, A. (1991). Interview with Octavio Paz. *Paris Review*, 119, 82-123.
- MacKinnon, D. (1978). *In search of human effectiveness: Identifying and developing creativity*. Buffalo, NY: Bearly Limited.
- Mays, J. (1995). *In the jaws of the black dog*. New York: HarperCollins.
- McCrae, R. R., & Costa, P. T. (1999). A five-factor theory of personality. In L. A. Pervin & O. P. John, (Eds.), *Handbook of personality theory and research* (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.) (pp. 139-153). New York: Guilford Press.
- Miles, B. (1989). *Ginsberg*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Myers, I. B., & McCaulley, M. H. (1985). *Manual: A guide to the development and use of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator*. Palo Alto, CA: Consulting Psychologists Press.
- Neubauer, A., Ed. (1994). *Conversations on writing fiction: Interviews with 13 distinguished teachers of fiction writing in America*. New York: HarperPerennial.
- Ozick, C. (1971). *The pagan rabbi and other stories*. New York: Alfred B. Knopf.
- Piechowski, M. M. (2006). *Mellow out, they say: If only I could*. Madison, WI: Yunasa Press.
- Piirto, J. (1978). *The creative process and schooling of creative writers*. Paper presented at National Association for Gifted Children Conference, Houston, TX.
- Piirto, J. (1985). *The three-week trance diet*. Columbus, OH: Carpenter Press. Winner of 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary First Novel Contest.
- Piirto, J. (1992). *Understanding those who create*. Dayton, OH: Ohio Psychology Press.
- Piirto, J. (1994). *Talented children and adults: Their development and education*. New York: Macmillan.

- Piirto, J. (1995). *A location in the Upper Peninsula: Essays, stories, poems*. New Brighton, MN: Sampo Publishing.
- Piirto, J. (1998a). *Understanding those who create*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Scottsdale, AZ: Gifted Psychology Press.
- Piirto, J. (1998b). Themes in the lives of successful contemporary U.S. women creative writers. *Roeper Review*, 21 (1), 60-70.
- Piirto, J. (1998c). *Feeling boys, thinking girls, and judging teachers: Talented students and the MBTI*. Proceedings of the 1998 Conference of the Center for the Application of Personality Types (CAPT), Orlando, Florida, March 8.
- Piirto, J. (1999a). Themes in the lives of successful contemporary U.S. women creative writers at midlife: A qualitative study. In N. Colangelo & S. G. Assouline (Eds.). *Talent development, III* (pp. 173-2020. Scottsdale, AZ: Gifted Psychology Press. Invited paper. Presented at 1995 Third Wallace Symposium on Talent Development.
- Piirto, J. (1999b). *Talented children and adults: Their development and education*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Columbus, OH: Prentice Hall
- Piirto, J. (2002). *"My teeming brain": Understanding creative writers*. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press.
- Piirto, J. (2004). *Understanding creativity*. Tempe, AZ: Great Potential Press.
- Piirto, J. (2006, September). *The Piirto Pyramid and creativity in the domain of visual arts*. Keynote speech at European Council for High Ability Conference, Lahti, Finland.
- Piirto, J. (submitted). 18 years with the Dabrowski theory: An autoethnography.
- Piirto, J., & Fraas, J. (1995). Androgyny in the personalities of talented adolescents. *Journal for Secondary Gifted Education*, 1, 93-102.
- Piirto, J., & Johnson, G. (2004, May). *Personality attributes of talented teenagers: The HSPQ and the MBTI*. Paper presented at Wallace Symposium, Iowa City, Iowa.
- Plato, Dialogues: The ion. In R. Hutchins (Ed.), *The Great Books of the Western World*, Vol. 7. (1952) Trans. By Benjamin Jowett. Chicago, IL: Encyclopedia Britannica.
- Plimpton, G. (1995a). The canon of western humor: A conversation with Harold Bloom. *The Paris Review*, 126, 38-72.
- Plimpton, G. (1995b). The art of humor, II: Interview with Garrison Keillor, *The Paris Review*, 136, 108-127.

- Plimpton, G. (1995c). The art of humor, III. Interview with Calvin Trillin. *The Paris Review*, 136, 16-175.
- Prescott, F. C. (1920). *The poetic mind*. Ithaca, NY: Great Seal Books.
- Renzulli, J. (1978). What makes giftedness? Reexamining a definition. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 60: 180-184, 261.
- Richardson, J. (1986). *Wallace Stevens: The early years, 1879-1923*. New York: William Morrow.
- Roth, J. K. (Ed.). (1995). *American diversity, American identity: The lives and works of 145 writers who define the American experience*. New York: Henry Holt.
- Rothenberg, A. (1990). *Creativity and madness*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Runco, M. A. (2006). Reasoning and personal creativity. In J. C. Kaufman & J. Baer (Eds.), *Creativity and reason in cognitive development* (99-116). New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Rush, N. (1995). Healthy subversions. In N. Baldwin & D. Osen (Eds.), *The writing life: A collection of essays and interviews with National Book Award winners* (pp. 215-228). New York: Random House.
- Santayana, G. (1896). *The sense of beauty: Being the outline of aesthetic theory*. New York: Dover Publications.
- Schapiro, M. (1999). Rewriting Bob Dole: Interview with Mark Helprin. Salon Magazine: [www.salon1999.com/weekly/interview/960714.html](http://www.salon1999.com/weekly/interview/960714.html).
- Schneiderman, L. (1988). *The literary mind: Portraits in pain and creativity*. New York: Insight.
- Simonton, D. K. (1994). *Greatness: What makes history and why?* New York: Guilford.
- Simonton, D. K. (1999). *The origins of genius: Darwinian perspectives on creativity*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Sinclair, U. (1956). *The cup of fury*. Great Neck, NY: Channel Press.
- Smith, J. (1999). *Where the roots reach for the water*. New York: North Point Press.
- Snyder, G. (2007). *Back on the fire: Essays*. Emeryville, CA: Avalon Publishing Group.
- Sternberg, R., & Davidson, J. (1995). *The nature of insight*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Sternberg, R., & Lubart, T. I. (1991). An investment theory of creativity and its development. *Human Development*, 34: 1-31.

Styron, W. (1990). *Darkness visible: A memoir of madness*. New York: Random House.

The spirit within. (1995). Interview with Amy Tan. No Author given. *Salon Magazine*.  
[www.salon.com/12nov1995/feature/tan.html](http://www.salon.com/12nov1995/feature/tan.html)

Tannenbaum, A. (1983). *Gifted children*. New York; Macmillan.

Teichholz, T. (1989). Interview with Cynthia Ozick. In G. Plimpton (Ed.), *Women writers at work* (pp. 291-317). New York: Penguin.

Waldron, A. (1989, March 14). Writers and alcohol. *The Washington Post*, pp. 13-15.

Yeats, W.B. (1953). *The autobiography of William Butler Yeats: Consisting of reveries over childhood and youth, the trembling of the veil, and dramatis personae*. New York: The Macmillan Company.

Zimmerman, B. J., Bandura, A., & Martinez-Pons, M. (1992). Self-motivation for academic attainment: The role of self-efficacy beliefs and personal goal setting. *American Educational Research Journal*, 19(3), 663-676.