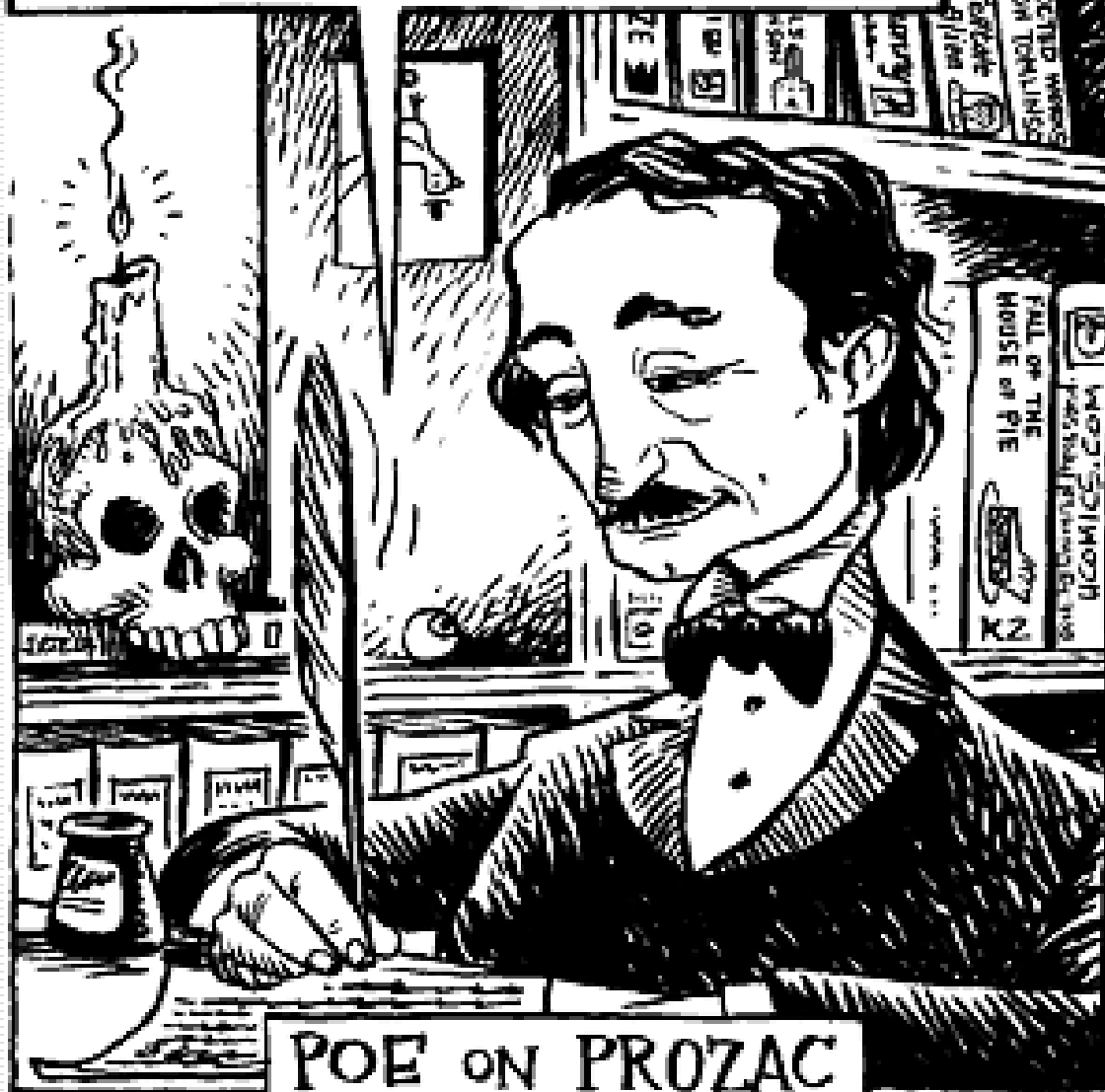


Quoth the Raven, "Hey, things
could be a lot worse."



POE ON PROZAC



The mad-genius controversy

□ History of the debate

Aristotle:

“Those who have become eminent in philosophy, politics, poetry, and the arts have all had tendencies toward melancholia.”

Seneca:

“No great genius has ever existed without some touch of madness.”

Shakespeare:

**“The lunatic, the lover, and the poet
Are of imagination all compact.”**

Dryden:

“Great Wits are sure to Madness near ally'd,
And thin Partitions do their Bounds divide.”

The mad-genius controversy

- ☐ **History of the debate**
 - ☐ **Psychiatrists vs. humanistic psychologists**
-

1895 article in the *Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease* listed the four possible results of an inferior genetic endowment:

1895 article in the *Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease* listed the four possible results of an inferior genetic endowment:

“*First*, and most prominent in the order of frequency is an early death.

1895 article in the *Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease* listed the four possible results of an inferior genetic endowment:

“*First*, and most prominent in the order of frequency is an early death.

***Second*, he may help swell the criminal ranks.**

1895 article in the *Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease* listed the four possible results of an inferior genetic endowment:

“*First*, and most prominent in the order of frequency is an early death.

***Second*, he may help swell the criminal ranks.**

***Third*, he may become mentally deranged and ultimately find his way into a hospital for the insane.**

1895 article in the *Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease* listed the four possible results of an inferior genetic endowment:

“First, and most prominent in the order of frequency is an early death.

Second, he may help swell the criminal ranks.

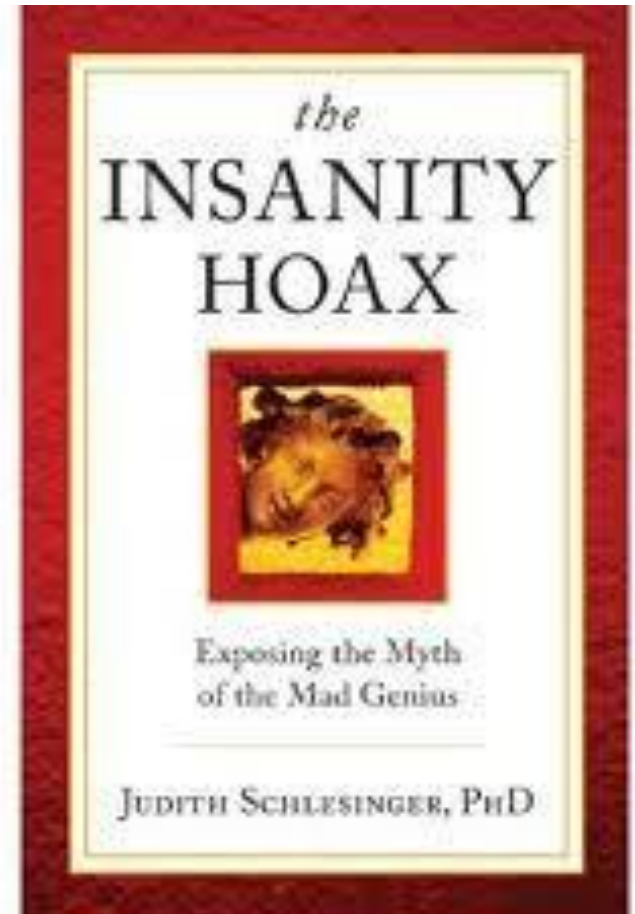
Third, he may become mentally deranged and ultimately find his way into a hospital for the insane.

Fourth, and least frequently, he startles the world by an invention or discovery in science or by an original composition of great merit in art, music or literature. He is then styled a genius.”

Yet humanistic psychologists such as Abraham Maslow, Rollo May, and Carl Rogers all saw creativity as a sign of superior mental health – of self-actualization.

The same view advocated by more recent “positive psychologists.”

Debate has even gotten nasty



More scientific literature reviews:

- ❑ Silvia, P. J., & Kaufman, J. C. (2010). Creativity and mental illness. In J. C. Kaufman & R. J. Sternberg (Eds.), *Cambridge handbook of creativity* (pp. 381-394). New York: Cambridge University Press.
 - ❑ Kaufman, J. C. (Ed.). (in press). *Creativity and mental illness*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
 - ❑ Simonton, D. K. (2010). So you *want* to become a creative genius? You *must* be crazy! In D. Cropley, J. Kaufman, A. Cropley, & M. Runco (Eds.), *The dark side of creativity* (pp. 218-234). New York: Cambridge University Press.
-

The empirical findings

- ☐ **Psychiatric studies**
 - ☐ **Experimental studies**
 - ☐ **Psychometric studies**
 - ☐ **Historiometric studies**
 - e.g., of latter ...
-

More Method in the Mad-Genius Controversy:

A Historiometric Study of 204 Historic Creators
(*Psychology of Aesthetics, Creativity, and the Arts*,
accepted pending revision)

Two Prior Historiometric Studies

- Post, F. (1994). Creativity and psychopathology: A study of 291 world-famous men. *British Journal of Psychiatry*, 165, 22-34.
 - Murray, C. (2003). *Human accomplishment: The pursuit of excellence in the arts and sciences, 800 B.C. to 1950*. New York: HarperCollins.
-

Scientists

None	Mild	Marked	Severe
Charcot Eddington Fermi Heisenberg Henry Herschel Humboldt (A) Kelvin Koch Marconi Maxwell Osler Planck Virchow	Bernard Boole Brunel Dalton Edison Ehrlich Einstein Faraday Gauss Lyell Pavlov	Babbage Darwin Hamilton (WR) Helmholtz Liebig Lister Mach Pasteur Röntgen Rutherford Schrödinger Tyndall	Bell Bohr Boltzmann Galton Mayer (R) Mendel Metchnikoff Michelson
31.1%	24.4%	26.7%	17.8%

Thinkers

Aron	Acton	Buber	Bakunin
Burckhardt	Adams	Carlyle	Comte
Keynes	Feuerbach	Ellis (H)	James (W)
Renan	Foucault	Emerson	Kierkegaard
Schweitzer	Frazer	Flinders Petrie	Newman (Card.)
	Herzen	Freud	Nietzsche
	Herzl	Heidegger	Marx
	Michelet	Jung	Proudhon
	Mommsen	Macaulay	Ruskin
	Moore (GE)	Mill (JS)	Russell
	Plekhanov	Sainte-Beuve	Tocqueville
	Santayana	Schliemann	Toynbee (A)
	Strauss (DF)	Schopenhauer	Watson (JB)
	Sapir	Spengler	
		Treitschke	
		Weber (M)	
		Whitehead	
		Wittgenstein	
10.0%	28.0%	36.0%	26.0%

Writers

Maupassant	Chekov	Balzac	Conrad
	France	Bennett	Dostoevsky
	Hauptmann	Brecht	Faulkner
	Melville	Camus	Gide
	Orwell	Dickens	Gogol
		Dumas (père)	Hemingway
		Flaubert	Hesse
		Galsworthy	Ibsen
		Gorky	Joyce
		Hardy	Kafka
		Hugo	Kipling
		Huxley (A)	Lawrence (DH)
		James (H)	Mann (T)
		Maugham (S)	Manzoni
		Pasternak	Proust
		Pirandello	Sartre
		Shaw	Scott Fitzgerald
		Thackeray	Stendhal
		Trollope	Strindberg
		Turgenev	Tolstoy
		Zola	Waugh (E)
			Wells
			Wilde
2.0%	10.0%	42.0%	46.0%

Composers

None	Mild	Marked	Severe
Bartok	Bizet	Chopin	Berg
Brahms	Britten	Grieg	Berlioz
Busoni	Debussy	Mahler	Bruckner
Chabrier	Donizetti	Mendelssohn	Elgar
Hindemith	Dvorák	Rimsky-Korsakov	Falla
Janaček	Fauré	Rossini	Gounod
Offenbach	Franck	Schoenberg	Martinů
Smetana	Gershwin	Sibelius	Moussorgsky
Shostakovich	Léhar	Stravinsky	Puccini
	Liszt	Wolf	Rachmaninoff
	Meyerbeer		Reger
	Prokofiev		Satie
	Ravel		Schumann
	Strauss (J)		Scriabin
	Strauss (R)		Tchaikovsky
	Sullivan		Wagner
	Verdi		
17.3%	32.7%	19.2%	30.8%

Artists

Braque	Cornelius	Böcklin	Cézanne
Corot	Degas	Corinth	Courbet
Daumier	Delacroix	Giacometti	Ensor
Dérain	Hodler	Ingres	Epstein
Liebermann	Kaulbach	Matisse	Friedrich
Pissarro	Klee	Monet	Gauguin
Sargent	Manet	Rodin	John
	Menzel	Whistler	Kandinsky
	Mondrian		Kokoschka
	Renoir		Modigliani
	Rousseau		Munch
	(‘Le Douanier’)		Picasso
	Schiele		Rivera
	Seurat		Rossetti
	Spitweg		Sickert
			Turner
			Utrillo
			van Gogh
14.6%	29.1%	18.8%	37.5%

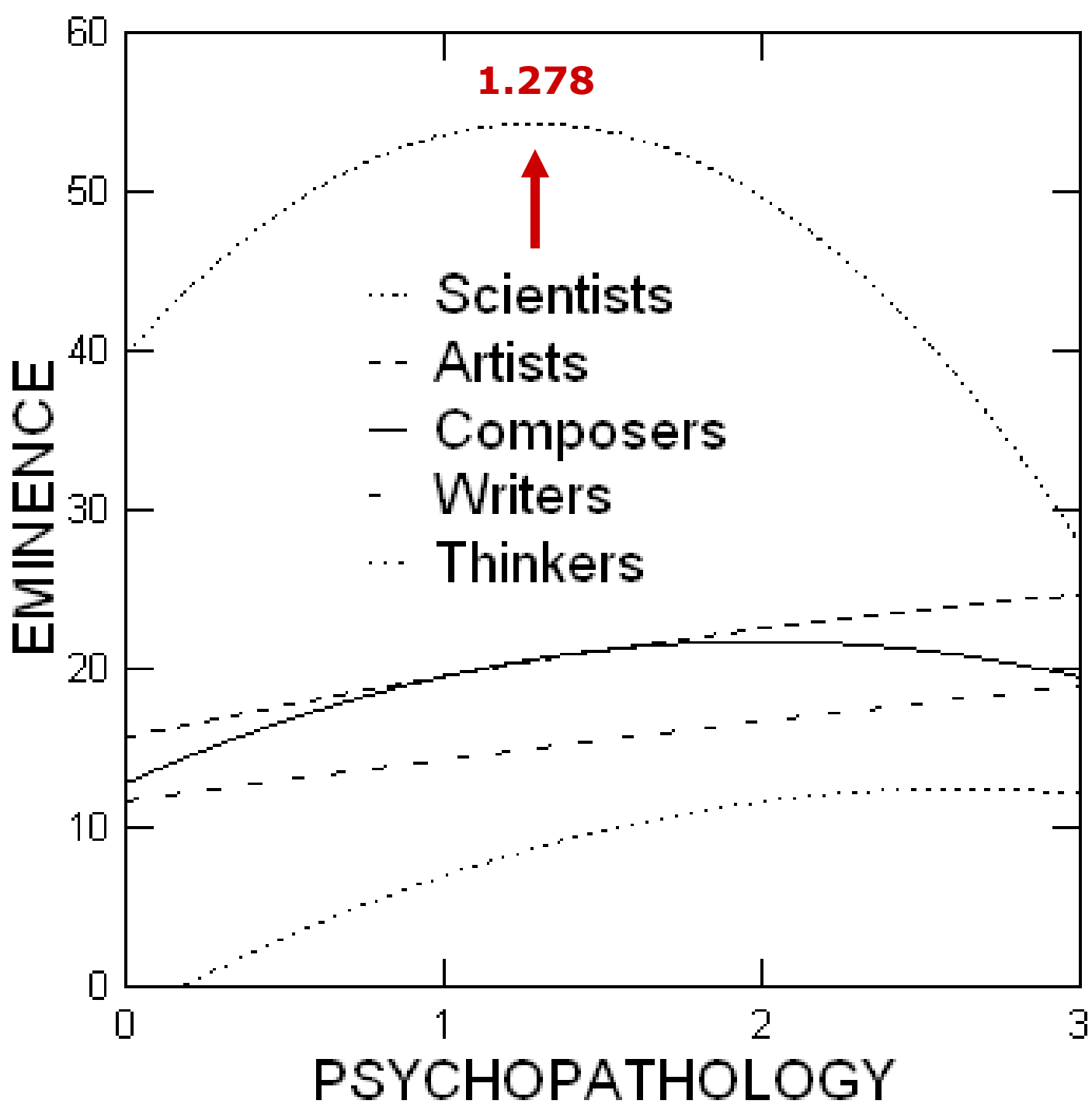
Picasso	77.32	Braque	27.08	Rossetti	7.94
Cezanne	50.30	Turner	25.74	Derain	7.71
Monet	40.70	Mondrian	23.51	Ensor	7.48
van Gogh	39.76	Klee	22.41	Modigliani	6.90
Gauguin	38.32	Seurat	22.19	Hodler	5.48
Matisse	38.30	Corot	21.62	Schiele	4.67
Delacroix	35.91	Munch	20.20	Rivera	4.50
Manet	33.52	Daumier	20.13	Böcklin	3.95
Degas	30.98	Whistler	19.93	Menzel	3.80
Courbet	30.83	Pissaro	18.55	Cornelius	2.41
Kandinsky	30.62	Friedrich	15.91	Sargent	1.99
Renoir	28.40	Rousseau	11.68	Epstein	1.35
Ingres	27.93	Kokoschka	9.38		
Rodin	27.11	Giacometti	9.01		

Post and Murray Integrated

- $N = 204$ (all 46 politicians deleted plus all scholars and economists)
 - Pathology: 0 = none, 1 = mild, 2 = marked, and 3 = severe
 - Eminence: 1-100 scale
 - Correlation $r = -.073$, $p = .297$
 - But multiple $R = .602$, $p < .001$!
 - i.e., relation differs across fields!
-

Multiple Regression Analysis

- Scientists: $n = 42$
 - Scientist eminence =
 - $39.706 + 22.816 * \text{Psychopathology} - 8.918 * \text{Psychopathology}^2$
 - an inverted-J curve
 - peak at $1.278 \approx \text{mild}$
 - none $>$ severe
 - $R^2 = 0.114 \rightarrow 11\%$ of variance explained
-

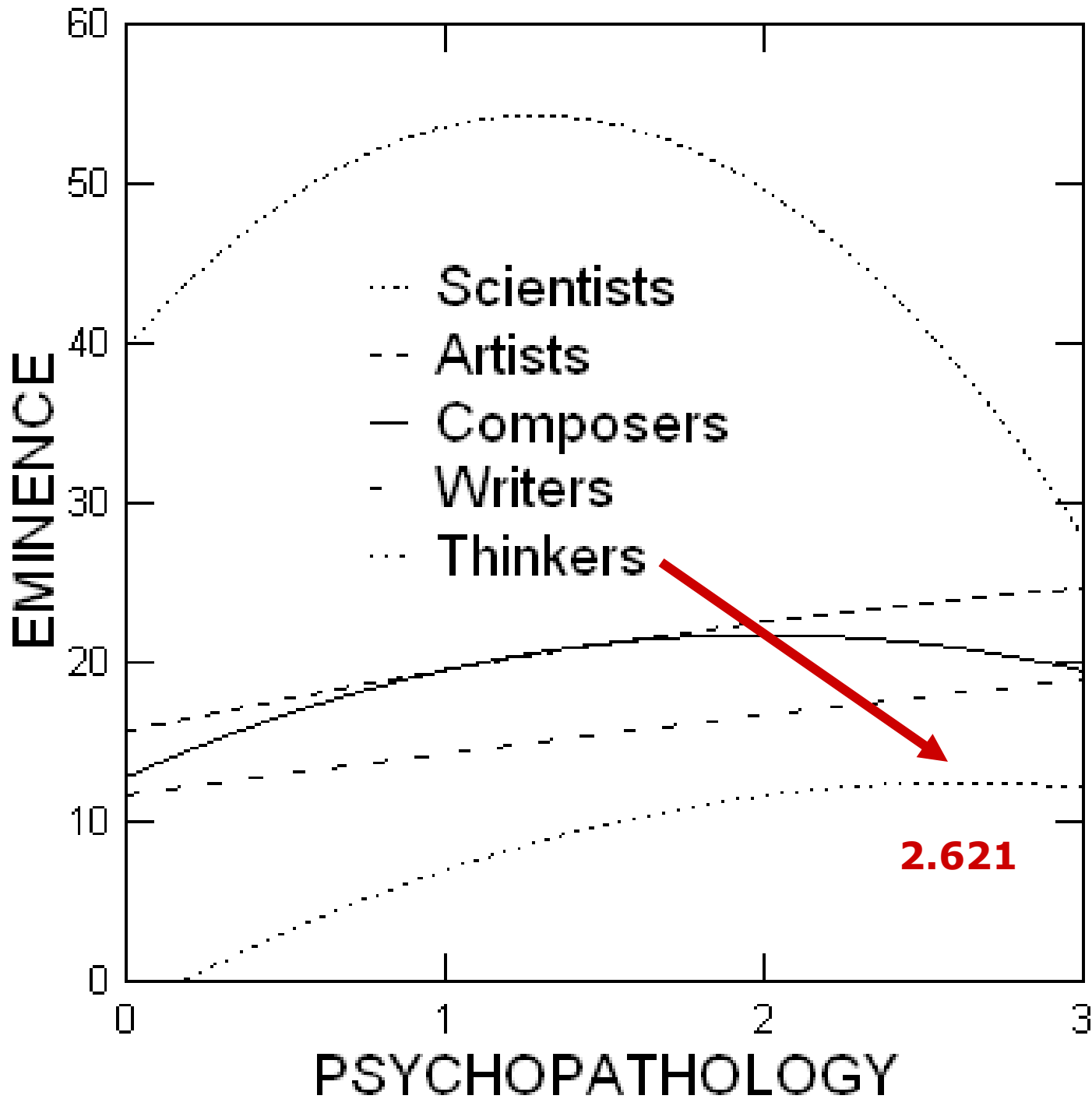


Multiple Regression Analysis

□ Thinkers: $n = 23$

□ Thinker eminence =

- $-1.851 + 10.894 * \text{Psychopathology} - 2.078 * \text{Psychopathology}^2$
 - nonmonotonic concave downward function
 - peak at $2.621 \approx \text{severe}$
 - $R^2 = 0.168 \rightarrow 17\%$ of variance explained
-



Multiple Regression Analysis

□ Writers: $n = 49$

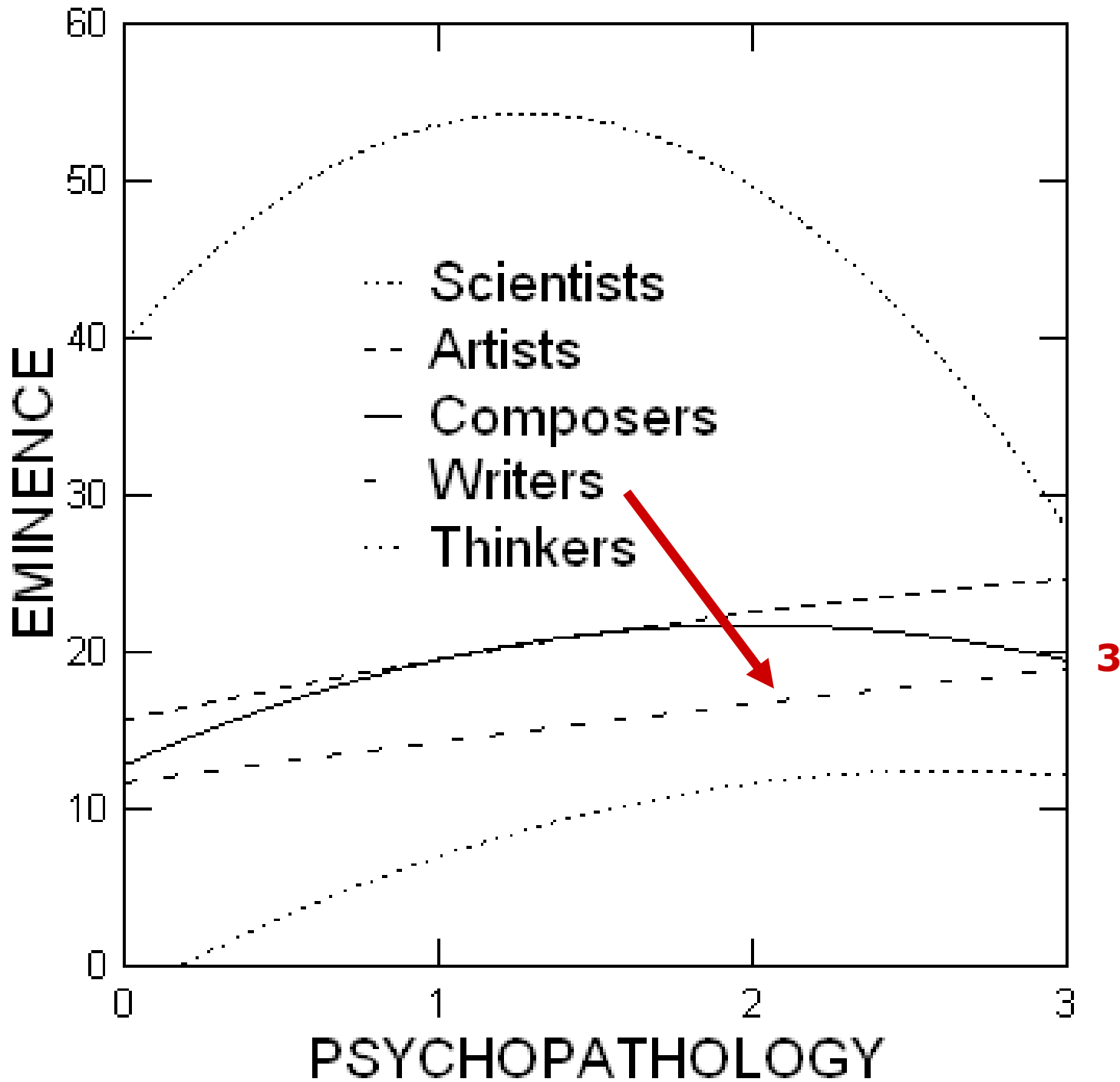
□ Writer eminence =

■ $11.683 + 2.669 * \text{Psychopathology} - 0.085 * \text{Psychopathology}^2$

■ a positive linear equation

■ “peak” at 3 = severe

■ $R^2 = 0.032 \rightarrow 3\%$ of variance explained



Multiple Regression Analysis

□ Artists: $n = 40$

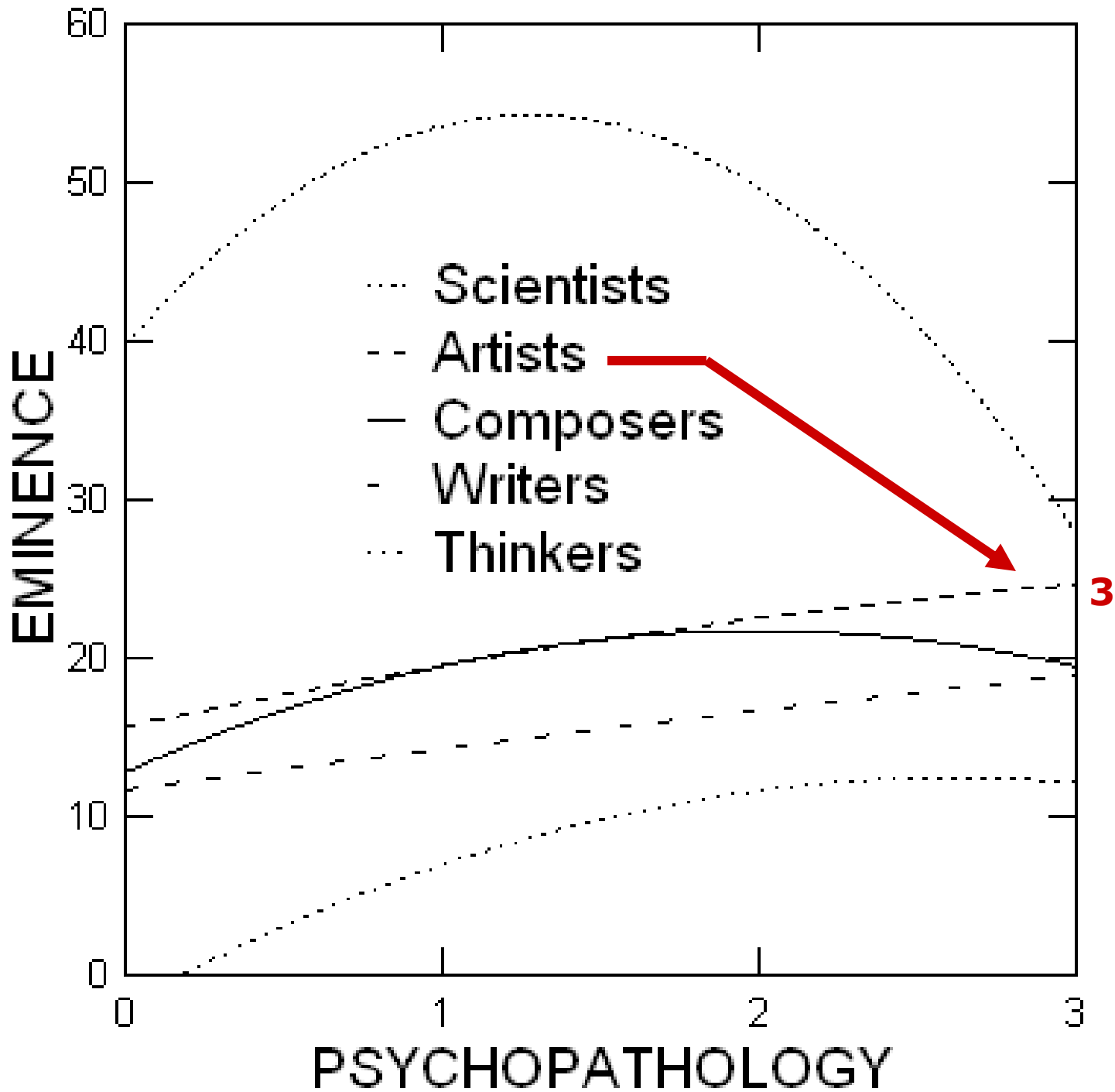
□ Artist eminence =

■ $15.662 + 4.294 * \text{Psychopathology} - 0.433 * \text{Psychopathology}^2$

■ a positive linear equation like the former, but with a slightly more steep positive slope

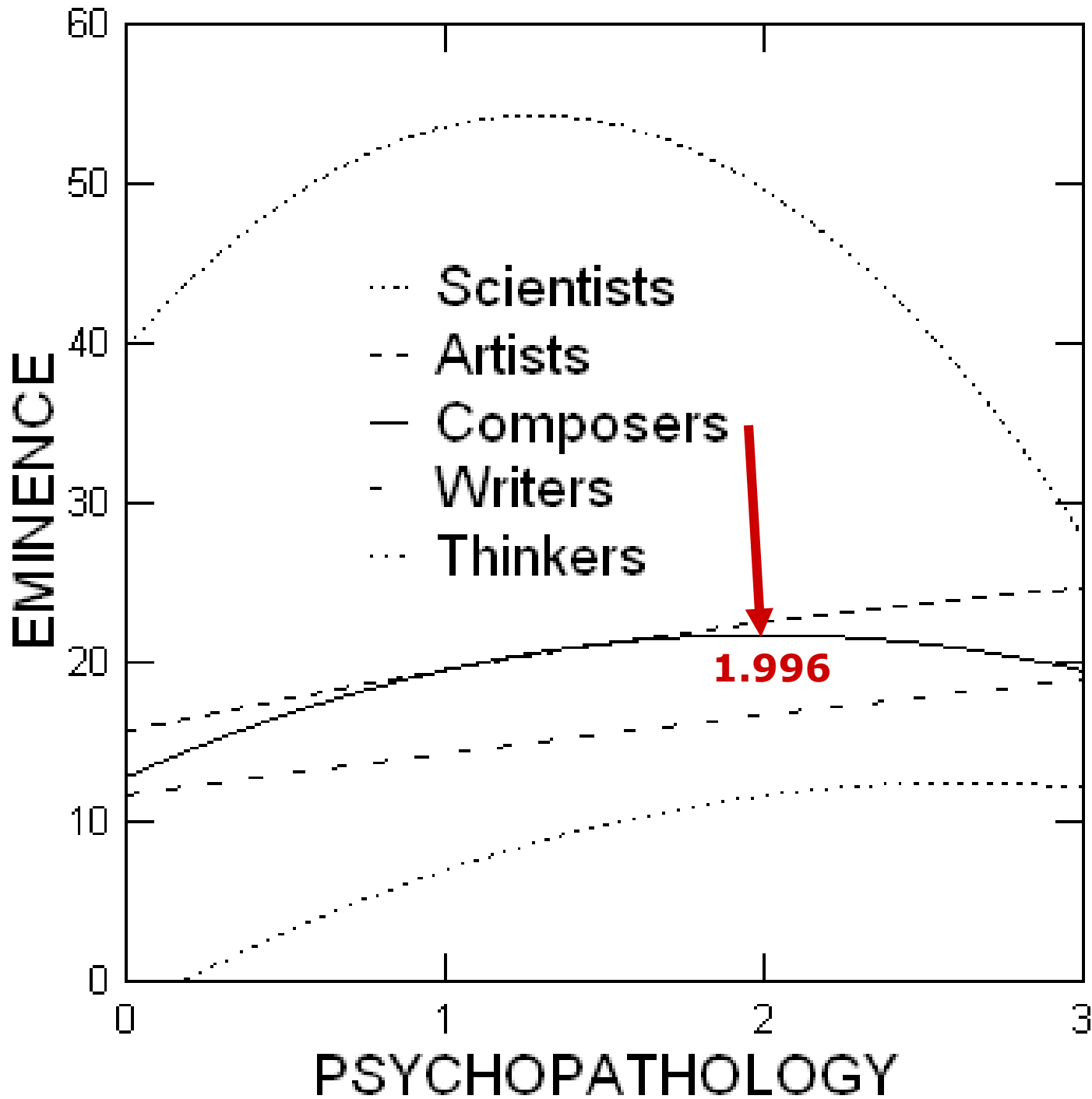
■ “peak” at 3 = severe

■ $R^2 = 0.041 \rightarrow 4\%$ of variance explained



Multiple Regression Analysis

- Composers: $n = 50$
 - Composer eminence =
 - $12.802 + 8.940 * \text{Psychopathology} - 2.239 * \text{Psychopathology}^2$
 - a nonmonotonic concave-downward function
 - peak at 1.996 (moderate)
 - $R^2 = 0.039 \rightarrow 4\%$ of variance explained
-



Conclusion

- A relationship does exist between creative eminence and degrees of psychopathological symptoms
 - But this relation differs so much across the five fields that the overall association is zero
 - These results are compatible with research results using different methodologies ... but ...
-



Why?