Diversifying Experiences and Creativity:

Correlational and Experimental Research
Introduction to Problem

☐ Creativity:

■ Three criteria:
  ☐ Originality
  ☐ Utility
  ☐ Surprise

■ Two assessments
  ☐ Personal: “little-c creativity”
  ☐ Consensual: “Big-C Creativity”
Introduction to Problem

- Diversifying experiences
  - events or circumstances that disrupt conventional and/or fixed patterns of thinking, thus enabling a person to view the world in multiple ways
  - short- and long-term effects
Introduction to Problem

- Propositions:
  - Diversifying experiences $\rightarrow$ creativity
  - This positive effect stronger for
    - artistic than for scientific creativity
    - Big-C than for little-c creativity
Literature review

- Correlational research
- Experimental research
Correlational research

- Historiometric research
- Psychometric research
Historiometric research

- Influential factors
  - Aggregate level
  - Individual level

- Important precautions
Historiometric research

- Influential factors
  - Aggregate level:
    - Political fragmentation
    - Imperial instability
    - Civil disturbances
    - Ideological diversity
    - Cultural heterogeneity
      - outside influence
      - travel abroad
      - eminent immigrants
Historiometric research

- Influential factors
  - Individual level:
    - Familial unpredictability
      - Parental diversity
      - Opinionated parents
      - Economic ups and downs
      - Geographic mobility
      - Early traumatic experiences
        - e.g., parental loss
**Table 4**

Five-Year Interval Cumulative Percentages By Age at which Father, Mother, Earliest Parent, and Last Parent Death Occurred in the Lifespan of the Famous Individuals in This Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age (years)</th>
<th>Earliest or first parent to die (E)</th>
<th>Father death (F)</th>
<th>Mother death (M)</th>
<th>Last or second parent to die (L)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Before or at birth</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0–5</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6–10</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11–15</td>
<td>34.5</td>
<td>24.8</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16–20</td>
<td>45.0</td>
<td>36.0</td>
<td>23.2</td>
<td>9.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Historiometric research

- Influential factors
  - Individual level:
    - Familial unpredictability
    - Physical or cognitive disability
    - Psychopathology
Figure 7.8. Lifetime rate of any mental disorder.
Historiometric research

- Influential factors
  - Individual level:
    - Familial unpredictability
    - Physical or cognitive disability
    - Psychopathology
    - Immigration and minority status
    - Study abroad
    - Multiple role models and mentors
    - Omnivorous reading
    - Professional marginality
Historiometric research

- Important precautions
  - Multiple determinants
    - Positive (accentuating)
    - Negative (dampening)
  - Nonlinear functions
    - Optimal level: “just right”
    - Optimum dependent on the
      - Domain: e.g., science vs. art
      - Person: e.g., “accommodation power”
In quiet, uneventful lives the changes internal and external are so small that there is little or no strain in the process of fusion and accommodation; in other lives there is great strain, but there is also great fusing and accommodating power; in others great strain with little accommodating power. A life will be successful or not according as the power of accommodation is equal to or unequal to the strain of the fusing and adjusting internal and external changes.

-- Samuel Butler, *The Way of All Flesh* (1906)
Psychometric research

- Cognitive disinhibition
  - reduced latent inhibition
  - enhanced allusive thinking
- Bilingualism and multilingualism
  - but must be fully functional
  - and must be separated from ...
- Multiculturalism
  - increased with duration
  - moderated by experiential openness
Experimental Research

☐ Group creativity
  ■ Membership diversity
    ☐ e.g., age, gender, ethnicity, training ...

☐ Individual creativity
  ■ Bicultural identity
    ☐ contingent on identity blendedness
  ■ Schema violation
    ☐ Physical
    ☐ Cultural
Conclusion

- Taking altogether, correlational and experimental research supports the proposition that diversifying experiences increase creativity.
- However, this impact appears stronger in the arts than in the sciences.
- Big-C than in little-c creativity.
Illustration: Maya Angelou

- Born St. Louis
  - Father doorman and Navy dietitian
  - Mother nurse and card dealer
- Age 3: Parents’ "calamitous marriage" ended; father shipped her and older brother alone on a train to Stamps, Arkansas, to live with her paternal grandmother; experienced the brutality of racial discrimination
Illustration: Maya Angelou

- Age 7: Father arrives unannounced and returns them to their mother in St. Louis
- Age 8: Sexually abused and raped by mother’s boyfriend; told brother, and eventually the boyfriend was killed; she goes mute for almost 5 years, and father sends her back to their grandmother
Illustration: Maya Angelou

- Age 14: Moved back with mother, who now lived in Oakland, California
- Age 16: Dropped out of school to work as first African-American female streetcar conductor in San Francisco
- Age 17: Her son born
- Age 17-19: Mother’s life declined into poverty and crime
Illustration: Maya Angelou

- And now?
- A celebrated memoirist, poet, novelist, educator, dramatist, producer, actress, historian, filmmaker, and civil rights activist