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A PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST AS A YOUNG OR OLD INNOVATOR: MEASURING THE CAREERS OF MODERN NOVELISTS

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Working Paper 10213
http://www.nber.org/papers/w10213

NATIONAL BUREAU OF ECONOMIC RESEARCH
1050 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02138
January 2004

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NBER Working Paper No. 10213
January 2004
JEL No. J0, J4

ABSTRACT

Some important novelists have written a great novel early in their careers and have produced lesser works thereafter, whereas others have improved their work gradually over long periods and have made their major contributions late in their lives. Which of these patterns a novelist follows appears to be systematically related to the nature of his work. Conceptual writers typically have specific goals for their books, and produce novels that emphasize plot; experimental writers' intentions are often uncertain, and their novels more often stress characterization. By examining the careers of twelve important modern novelists, this paper demonstrates that conceptual novelists - including Herman Melville, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and Ernest Hemingway - are generally those who have declined after writing landmark early novels, while in contrast experimental novelists - including Charles Dickens, Mark Twain, Virginia Woolf - have typically arrived at their most important work later in their careers. As is the case for modern painting and poetry, the ranks of great modern novelists have included both conceptual young geniuses and experimental old masters.

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William Faulkner believed that "there's a period in a writer's life when he is ... for lack of any other word, fertile, and he just produces... [T]here's a time in his life, one matchless time... The speed, and the power and the talent, they're all there and then... he's 'hot' - which of course can't last forever."[1] When he was asked whether this period came early or late in a writer's life, Faulkner responded "that's something you can't say. Some write best when they are young, write themselves out. Some never reach their top speed until late in life. That's - you just can't say."[2]

Faulkner was right: in the careers of important writers, there is generally one matchless time, which can occur early or late in the writer's career. But whereas Faulkner believed it was impossible to predict which of these patterns a writer would follow, at the end of his life F. Scott Fitzgerald knew better: "The talent that matures early is usually of the poetic, which mine was in large part. The prose talent depends on other factors - assimilation of material and careful selection of it, or more bluntly: having something to say and an interesting, highly developed way of saying it."[3]

This paper will show that there are two very different types of writer, and that they arrive at their most important contributions at very different stages of the life cycle. The paper will consider twelve important modern novelists. After providing a general characterization of the two types of writer, we will survey critical commentary on each writer's attitudes and products that will allow us to determine their type. Quantitative evidence will then be used to measure the relative quality of each writer's work over the course of his career, and this will allow an examination of the relationship between a writer's approach to art and when the writer produced his or her best work. Using quantitative measurements, this paper will show that Faulkner was

right in arguing that there is a peak period in each writer's life, and that Fitzgerald was right in believing that the timing of that period is systematically related to the nature of the writer's talent.

The Artists

The goal in choosing the writers to be studied was to select a dozen important British and American novelists of the past two centuries. Living novelists were excluded because their careers are incomplete, and recently deceased writers were excluded because critical evaluations of their entire careers, which will serve as the basis for quantitative measurements, are relatively scarce. The twelve novelists listed in Table 1 were born between 1812 and 1899, and each is the subject of a total of at least 130 lines of text in the *Cambridge Guide to Literature in English* and the *Oxford Companion to English Literature*.[4] Although this group of twelve is not necessarily intended to represent the most important writers of the modern period, these writers were all among the most important novelists of their time.

Seekers and Finders

I tell you I have written a great book.

D. H. Lawrence to Edward Garnett, about *Sons and Lovers*, November 14, 1912.[5]

I wonder if this time I have achieved something?

Virginia Woolf, diary entry about *Mrs. Dalloway*, April 8, 1925.[6]

Earlier studies of modern painters and poets have revealed two very different types of innovator in each of these disciplines.[7] The two types differ in their goals, methods, and the nature of their contributions. A similar division, between experimental and conceptual innovators, appears to exist for novelists, and provides a basis for understanding differences in

their life cycles.

Experimental innovators are seekers. Their most basic characteristic is persistent uncertainty about their methods and goals: they are typically dissatisfied with their current work, but have only vague ideas about how to improve it. Their dissatisfaction impels them to experiment, and their uncertainty means that they change their work by trial and error, moving tentatively toward their imperfectly perceived objectives. No matter how great their progress, their uncertainty rarely allows them to consider any of their works a complete success.

In contrast, conceptual innovators are finders. Their basic characteristic is certainty about some aspect of their work - their method, their goals, or both. Their certainty often allows them to work methodically, according to some system, toward their goals. Their clarity of intent and confidence in their ability often allow them to feel that they have fully realized their objectives in a particular work.

These differences in temperament and procedure can be manifested in a variety of ways, in both practices and products. Consequently, there is no single criterion or test that invariably allows us to distinguish experimental from conceptual innovators. Instead there are vectors of attributes, of both practices and products, that serve as indicators. Although no single variable will necessarily be applicable to any particular author, the presence of a number of characteristics of one of the two types will nearly always point clearly to an author's categorization.

Conceptual writers often begin from general ideas or principles. This makes them more likely to produce symbolic works, whereas experimental writers are more likely to deal with particularized cases in a documentary fashion. Conceptual authors may base their work on

theoretical ideas and portray exaggerated emotions; their characters may seem oversimplified or one-dimensional. Experimental authors will more often stress careful observation and description of lifelike people and situations. The language of conceptual authors is often formal or artificial, that of experimental authors informal or vernacular. The books of conceptual writers will more often be resolved, with closed endings, whereas experimental authors will often leave their plots unresolved, their conclusions ambiguous or open.

Conceptual writers are more likely to base their novels on library research, and to strive for precise factual accuracy, while experimental writers more typically rely on their own perceptions and intuitions. Conceptual authors may construct complex plots, often planned carefully in advance, whereas experimental writers more often invent their plots as they write, and are more likely to make major changes in their developing plots throughout the process of composition. Whether or not they have fully planned their plots, conceptual writers are more likely to follow some system in composing, perhaps involving stylistic devices. For experimental writers, plots are often developed to serve the purposes of characterization and creation of atmospheric effects, whereas for conceptual writers characters and settings are often used to achieve an overarching structure or concept; in this sense, the totality or coherence of the plot may be less important to experimental than to conceptual authors. Experimental authors often believe that the essence of creativity lies in the process of writing, and that their most important discoveries are made while their books are being composed, whereas conceptual authors more often value ideas they formulated before beginning to draft their books. The clarity of conceptual authors' goals often allows them to be satisfied that a book is complete and has achieved a specific purpose, but experimental writers' lack of precise goals generally leaves them

dissatisfied with their work. Many experimental writers consequently have trouble considering their books finished, revise their manuscripts repeatedly, and sometimes even return to previously published works to revise them further.

Critical judgments about the strengths and weaknesses of experimental and conceptual writers typically differ. Conceptual innovators are often praised for their brilliance and genius, experimental innovators for their craft and wisdom. Conceptual writers are often compared to poets for the lyric quality of their prose; experimental writers are often compared to painters, for their use of prose to create visual images. Conceptual authors are often criticized as superficial, privileging style over substance. Experimental authors are often criticized as uninspired plodders or journeymen, lacking in flair or imagination.

The life cycles of experimental and conceptual writers tend to differ sharply. Experimental writers' achievements usually depend on gradual improvements in their understanding of their subjects and in their mastery of their craft. Their major contributions consequently emerge only after many years of writing, often late in their careers. Conceptual innovations, which depend on the formulation of new ideas, are made more quickly, and can occur at any age. Yet the most radical conceptual innovations depend on the ability to perceive and appreciate extreme deviations from existing conventions and methods, and this ability tends to decline with experience, as an author's habits of thought become more firmly entrenched. The most important conceptual innovations therefore typically occur early in a writer's career.

Because experimental writers innovate incrementally, and arrive at their innovations piecemeal over time, their major contributions may be divided among a series of works rather than appearing in one great masterpiece. In contrast, because conceptual writers arrive suddenly

at their discoveries, their careers are often dominated by an individual novel, which differs clearly not only from other writers' work, but also from the author's own previous work. The careers of experimental writers are thus normally marked by a series of important works as the writer works progressively toward a single goal, whereas the careers of conceptual writers are often marked by discontinuities, as the writer tackles different problems.

Portraits of 12 Artists as Conceptual or Experimental Writers

Charles Dickens' strengths and weaknesses are those of an experimental author. Virginia Woolf remarked on the visual quality of his characterizations: "As a creator of character his peculiarity is that he creates wherever his eyes rest - he has the visualizing power in the extreme. His people are branded upon our eyeballs before we hear them speak, by what he sees them doing, and it seems as if it were the sight that sets his thought in action."[8] Earlier Anthony Trollope had also emphasized his success in characterization: "no other writer of English language except Shakespeare has left so many types of character as Dickens has done - characters which are known by their names familiarly as household words."[9]

Generations of critics have praised Dickens' powers of description. In 1840 William Makepeace Thackeray observed that the *Pickwick Papers* "gives us a better idea of the state and ways of the people than one could gather from any more pompous or authentic histories."[10] In 1856 George Eliot declared that "We have one great novelist who is gifted with the utmost power of rendering the external traits of a town population."[11] A century later Angus Wilson, reflecting on "the intense haunting of my imagination by scenes and characters from Dickens' novels," explained that "their obsessive power does not derive from their total statements; it seems to come impressionistically from atmosphere and scene which are always determinedly

fragmentary."[12]

As Wilson implied, Dickens' plots are not considered a strength. Virginia Woolf commented that "Dickens made his books blaze up, not by tightening the plot... but by throwing another handful of people upon the fire," which made his novels "apt to become a bunch of separate characters loosely held together."[13] More bluntly, a recent critic noted that "It is generally agreed that the plots of Dickens' novels are their weakest feature."[14] Nearly all of Dickens' novels were initially published in installments. Dickens developed a practice in which he typically wrote each installment separately, and in a number of instances he made significant changes in a book's plot after some episodes had already been published. So for example after sales of the first four monthly numbers of *Martin Chuzzlewit* were disappointing, Dickens decided to send Martin to the United States in the hope that the controversy caused by a comic attack on Americans would increase circulation.[15] That Dickens made major decisions about his plots throughout the process of writing his books, and that he often made these under the pressure of deadlines imposed by serial publication, led one scholar to suggest that "last-minute decision-making in the midst of composition acted as a stimulus to the creative process."[16] Dickens worked at improving his organization and plotting, as later in his career he tried to plan his plots more carefully, but most critics never considered this to be a strength of his work.[17]

Dickens' craft developed in a number of ways over the course of his career. He excelled in capturing the speech of his many characters, and particularly the colorful vernacular of the working class: "From the beginning, Dickens was ... greatly assisted by his knowledge of the speech forms of lower-class Londoners." A linguistic study has shown that his use of this knowledge grew more sophisticated over the course of his career, as over time he gave larger

numbers of characters in each novel personalized habits and patterns of speech, or idiolects. This produced a greater richness in the later works. Whereas in the early novels the relatively small number of characters with distinct idiolects "dominate the stage as if they were performing a solo act, ... in the works of the final period it was no longer a question of a group of leading figures with pronounced idiolects being supported by a cast of typified 'also-rans', but one of a world in which each separate character is the possessor of a sharply-delineated speech idiom which cannot be ignored." Robert Golding consequently perceived "a stylistic development which took in Dickens' fictional writing as a whole, one which finally succeeded in merging all the elements involved - including the idiolects - into a finely balanced whole."[18]

In the summer of 1850, Herman Melville was well along on a draft of a new book on whaling when his move from New York to western Massachusetts occasioned a meeting with the distinguished older novelist Nathaniel Hawthorne. Meeting Hawthorne, and reading his work, electrified Melville: in an essay written almost immediately thereafter, he declared that "Hawthorne has dropped germinous seeds into my soul." Raising his sights for his own work, in the same essay Melville stated his belief that "if Shakespeare has not been equalled, he is sure to be surpassed, and surpassed by an American born now or yet to be born."[19]

The reference to Shakespeare was not accidental, for Melville had recently bought a complete edition of Shakespeare's works, and in reading it had decided that he was a "dolt & ass" for not having made acquaintance earlier with "the divine William."[20] The inspiration of his new friendship with Hawthorne prompted Melville to begin a complete revision of his manuscript on whaling, and inspired him to use the language and tragic grandeur he found in Shakespeare. F. O. Matthiessen observed that "the most important effect of Shakespeare's use of

language was to give Melville a range of vocabulary for expressing passion far beyond any that he had previously possessed."[21] The revised version of *Moby-Dick* consequently had an emotional intensity that was new to Melville's work: as D. H. Lawrence later wrote, "There is something really overwhelming in these whale-hunts, almost superhuman or inhuman, bigger than life, more terrific than human activity."[22]

In *Moby-Dick* Melville continued his earlier practice of borrowing extensively from other scholarly and narrative books. Scholars have traced these borrowings in detail, and have concluded that Melville relied heavily on five books for information on whaling.[23] One biographer commented on Melville's "extraordinary dependence on the writings of other men," not only for literary means but for the very substance of his books. Yet the biographer noted that Melville "was almost incapable of leaving any piece of information in its raw state of unresonant factuality," and that in his prose the bare facts of earlier authorities were systematically converted into metaphors and symbols: "one can never predict when some piece of pedestrian exposition will furnish him with the germ of a great dramatic scene."[24]

When *Moby-Dick* was published in 1851, a reviewer described it as an unlikely but successful allegory: "Who would have looked for philosophy in whales, or for poetry in blubber. Yet few books which professedly deal in metaphysics, or claim the parentage of the muses, contain as much true philosophy and as much genuine poetry as the tale of the *Pequod's* whaling expedition."[25] Seventy years later, D. H. Lawrence called it "one of the strangest and most wonderful books in the world ... an epic of the sea such as no man has equalled ... It moves awe in the soul."[26] Alfred Kazin later explained that "*Moby-Dick* is the most memorable confrontation we have had in America between Nature - as it was in the beginning, without man,

God's world alone - and man, forever and uselessly dashing himself against it."[27]

Moby-Dick was published when Melville was just 32 years old. In retrospect, the book clearly stands far above not only Melville's earlier work but also that of his later years. Curiously, Melville seems to have sensed that this would be the case. In the spring of 1851, in writing to tell Hawthorne that he hoped to finish *Moby-Dick* soon, Melville looked back at his development as a writer, with his rapid growth during the preceding five years, then added: "But I feel that I am now come to the inmost leaf of the bulb, and that shortly the flower must fall to the mould."[28] In spite of generations of reappraisals of Melville's later fiction and poetry, there remains widespread agreement with the observation of an admirer of Melville's who wrote even during the latter's lifetime that "It may seem strange that so vigorous a genius, from which stronger and stronger work might reasonably have been expected, should have reached its limit at so early a date."[29] Melville's sudden maturation as a writer, his production at just 32 of a great masterpiece that stands as a peak not only in his career, but in American literature, and his subsequent decline as a writer are all consequences of his conceptual approach to his art, as are the allegorical nature and florid style of his greatest work.

Bernard De Voto observed that "there is a type of mind, and the lovers of *Huckleberry Finn* belong to it, which prefers experience to metaphysical abstractions and the thing to its symbol. Such minds think of *Huckleberry Finn* as the greatest work of nineteenth century fiction in America precisely because it is not a voyage in pursuit of a white whale but ... because Huck never encounters a symbol but always some actual human being working out an actual destiny."[30] Alfred Kazin agreed that Mark Twain's "genius was always ... for the circumstantial, never the abstract formula ... Mark Twain's world was all personal, disjointed, accidental."[31]

Twain is celebrated for his ability to use vernacular speech. Lionel Trilling declared that "Out of his knowledge of the actual speech of America Mark Twain forged a classic prose."[32] Kazin compared Twain's instinct for the rhythm and emphasis of speech to that of a great experimental poet: "A sentence in Mark Twain, as in Frost, is above all a right sound."[33] The prefatory note Twain inserted in *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* gently shows his pride in capturing a wide range of distinct dialects: "The shadings have not been done in a hap-hazard fashion, or by guess-work; but pains-takingly, and with the trustworthy guidance and support of personal familiarity with these several forms of speech."[34]

Several scholars have studied Twain's methods of composition, and their accounts clearly reveal the procedures of an experimental author. Franklin Rogers concluded that "Twain was aware of implicit form and sought to discover it by a sort of trial-and-error method. His routine procedure seems to have been to start a novel with some structural plan which ordinarily soon proved defective, whereupon he would cast about for a new plot which would overcome the difficulty, rewrite what he had already written, and then push on until some new defect forced him to repeat the process once again."[35] Sydney Krause determined that "Twain learned to consider his subject, not before, but *as*, he wrote."[36] Victor Doyno examined the composition of *Huckleberry Finn*: "Twain discovered his pliable plot as he went along, writing without a definite resolution or plan in mind. His real interests were elsewhere - in writing memorable episodes and frequently in doubling the incidents or repeating the basic situation in varied forms. It is, accordingly, a supreme misreading of the novel to read for plot as plot."[37] Twain himself explained that his focus often changed as a novel grew: "As the short tale grows into the long tale, the original intention (or motif) is apt to get abolished and find itself superseded by a quite

different one."[38]

Twain's lack of plans for his plots often resulted in substantial discontinuities in the process of writing his novels. Scholars have long been aware, for example, that Twain worked on *Huckleberry Finn* over an elapsed time of nine years, and have now determined that it was written in at least three separate periods of work.[39] The interruptions appear to have occurred when Twain reached an impasse in the story and temporarily lost interest in it.[40] Twain claimed that he not only was not dismayed by having to put aside an unfinished novel, but that he actually came to expect that he would have to: "It was by accident that I found out that a book is pretty sure to get tired along about the middle and refuse to go on with its work until its powers and its interest should have been refreshed by a rest... Ever since then, when I have been writing a book I have pigeon-holed it without misgivings when its tank ran dry, well knowing that it would fill up again without any of my help within the next two or three years, and that then the work of completing it would be simple and easy."[41]

Yet in fact Twain did not always find it easy to finish his books, and his endings were not always strong. Thus a biographer observed that "His method of composition rested heavily on the unpredictable nature of inspiration... As a consequence, many novels and stories remained unfinished, and some that were finished, such as *Tom Sawyer*, *Huckleberry Finn*, and *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*, have endings that are unsatisfactory to many readers."[42] The endings of Twain's books were often not final even in his own mind, since he routinely wrote sequels to his novels. Even his greatest book ended on an uncertain note. Thus Philip Young observed that "*Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* has no definite article in its title, though one is usually put there... Huck ends his book with anticipations (never fulfilled) of

further goings-on in the West. For this reason, very likely, Twain hesitated to call the job he had done definitive."[43]

Although he had earlier established a reputation with his short stories and travel narratives, Mark Twain was a latecomer to writing novels, and when he did begin he was a slow starter. His first novel, *The Gilded Age*, published when he was 38, was co-authored with a friend, Charles Dudley Warner. The plan of having the two authors take turns writing resulted in a book that failed to cohere, as Twain recognized that the "ingredients refused to mix... spite of all we could do to make the contents blend."[44] Their curious enterprise indicates that Twain did not initially approach the writing of novels with high artistic goals. Yet not long thereafter Twain hit on the idea of drawing on his early experiences on the Mississippi River, and began a process in the course of which he would gradually improve his craft as a writer and raise his aspirations. Henry Nash Smith described Twain's development as "a dialectic interplay in which the reach of his imagination imposed a constant strain on his technical resources, and innovations of method in turn opened up new vistas before his imagination." This continued over an extended period, and "after twenty years of trial and error, from the 1860s to the 1880s, the development of both technique and meaning in Mark Twain's work reaches a climax in *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*."[45] Lionel Trilling considered *Huckleberry Finn* "one of the world's great books and one of the central documents of American culture," for holding "the truth of moral passion" and establishing "for written prose the virtues of American colloquial speech."[46]

Bernard De Voto explained that Twain's maturation was responsible for his masterpiece: "The prime difference between *Huckleberry Finn* and *Tom Sawyer* [published nine years earlier] is that in the later book he brings mature judgment to this society. Society is passed through the

mind of a boy, as before, but this time there is a man of fifty speaking."[47] Ralph Ellison emphasized the central importance of the moral content of the book: "*Huckleberry Finn* projected the truth about slavery," while in contrast Twain had avoided the subject in *Tom Sawyer*.[48] It is not surprising that a writer who worked experimentally, developing his craft over the course of his career as he composed individual books by a process of trial and error, would not arrive at his greatest contribution until the age of 50. What is surprising, however, is that an experimental author would produce such a great individual work.

In this regard, it might be noted that *Huckleberry Finn* could almost be regarded as an accidental masterpiece. Twain never appears to have intended it to be a major work, as even eight years after he began writing it, he still regarded it as "a kind of companion to Tom Sawyer," and he didn't bother to eliminate a number of plot inconsistencies that had arisen in the course of its interrupted composition.[49] Nor did Twain give the book his undivided attention even in the final period of composition, engaging in diversions that a biographer describes as "a frightening demonstration of how the pressures on him... caused him to resist and almost to betray his genius."[50] Twain may never have appreciated his achievement in *Huckleberry Finn*; late in his life he considered *Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc*, a historical book that is not highly regarded today, both his favorite and his best book.[51]

At the age of 50, Henry James published a story, "The Middle Years," which gave a detailed portrayal of an experimental novelist in old age: "His development had been abnormally slow, almost grotesquely gradual. He had been hindered and retarded by experience, he had for long periods only groped his way. It had taken too much of his life to produce too little of his art." The ailing Dencombe revised even the published text of his final novel, for he was "a

passionate corrector... the last thing he ever arrived at was a final form for himself." When an admirer remarked that Dencombe must be pleased with his achievement he demurred, objecting that "he had ripened too late and was so clumsily constituted that he had had to teach himself by mistakes." On his death bed, however, Dencombe admitted that he had in fact accomplished "something or other," and recognized that uncertainty was inevitable: "We work in the dark - we do what we can - we give what we have. Our doubt is our passion and our passion is our task."[52]

In the same year James wrote a review of an exhibition of paintings by John Singer Sargent, who was then 37 years old, in which he gave a penetrating analysis of the career of a conceptual artist. James praised Sargent for his clarity of purpose and confident execution: "It is difficult to imagine a young painter less in the dark about his own ideal... In an altogether exceptional degree does he give us the sense that the intention and the art of carrying it out are for him one and the same thing." James noted, however, that Sargent's recent work did not demonstrate development: "As he saw and 'rendered' ten years ago, so he sees and renders today; and I may add that there is no present symptom of his passing into another manner." James found Sargent's precocity disturbing, and found himself "murmuring, 'Yes, but what is left?' and even wondering whether it be an advantage to an artist to obtain early in life such possession of his means that his struggle with them, discipline, *tâtonnement*, cease to exist for him." James praised Sargent's technical skill, but closed by observing that "the highest result is achieved when to this element of quick perception a certain faculty of brooding reflection is added... I mean the quality in the light of which the artist sees deep into his subject, undergoes it, absorbs it, discovers in it new things that were not on the surface, becomes patient with it, and almost reverent, and, in short, enlarges and humanizes the technical problem."[53]

James' sympathetic portrayal of Dencombe and his troubled analysis of Sargent together make it clear that his sympathy lay with experimental approaches to art. For James, the process of making art was central: "The execution of a work of art is a part of its very essence."[54] He described the aims of the novelist in visual terms - "try and catch the color of life itself" - and he believed that the real purposes of fiction and painting were the same: "The only reason for the existence of a novel is that it does attempt to represent life...the same attempt that we see on the canvas of the painter."[55]

In 1906, when a publisher proposed to issue a collection of James' novels, the 63-year-old author not only wrote a new preface for each volume, but also made significant revisions in texts that had originally been published as much as three decades earlier. James' behavior has attracted considerable scholarly attention, much of it aimed at understanding his unwillingness to consider his works finished. Thus one scholar observed that "James seems less concerned with closing in on a formal, definitive analysis of a completed text than with opening up new readings," while another commented that James' revisions for the New York Edition were "signs of what his further 'experience' has revealed to him about the meaning of his original writing."[56] James' discomfort with definitive versions of his texts appears to have been of a piece with the lack of resolution of many of his books. As early as 1882, a reviewer commented that "Mr. James's reluctance, or rather his positive refusal, to complete a book in the ordinary sense of the word is a curious trait."[57] In 1905, Joseph Conrad defended James' rejection of finality, arguing that his lack of closure mirrored reality: "One is never set at rest by Mr. Henry James's novels. His books end as an episode in life ends... with the sense of life still going on... It is eminently satisfying, but it is not final."[58]

James' experimental art developed gradually. Even before he had reached the age of 40, a reviewer noted that "Mr. James is not a writer who advances by bounds or strides. His literary career has been throughout a steadily progressive one, but it has been a quiet progression, consisting in refinement and selection."[59] Surveying James' career after his death, Virginia Woolf agreed that his persistent experimentation was the source of his growth: "A spectator, alert, aloof, endlessly interested, endlessly observant, Henry James undoubtedly was; but as obviously, though not so simply, the long-drawn process of adjustment and preparation was from first to last controlled and manipulated by a purpose which, as the years went by, only dealt more powerfully and completely with the treasures of a more complex sensibility."[60]

Early in Thomas Hardy's career, finding no existing English county sufficient for his fictional purposes, he invented a modern region that he called Wessex, where he proceeded to set a series of novels. Nearly four decades later, Hardy was amused to find that "Since then the appellation which I had thought to reserve to the horizons and landscapes of a partly real, partly dream-country, has become more and more popular as a practical provincial definition; and the dream-country has, by degrees, solidified into a utilitarian region which people can go to, take a house in, and write to the papers from."[61] In a review of the first of the Wessex novels, Henry James observed that "Mr. Hardy describes nature with a great deal of felicity, and is evidently very much at home among rural phenomena. The most genuine thing in his book, to our sense, is a certain aroma of the meadows and lanes."[62] Hardy became the preeminent novelist of rural England, as J. M. Barrie remarked in 1889 that "Among English novelists of today he is the only realist to be considered, so far as life in country parts is concerned."[63]

A biographer concluded that a central characteristic of Hardy's writing was "a reluctance

to adopt absolute or even firm positions, a willingness to see virtue in all sides of a question, insistence upon the provisionality of his opinions and the need to register them rather as a series of tentative impressions than as the systematic formulations of a philosopher."[64] In an essay written after Hardy's death, Virginia Woolf recognized the uncertainty of an experimental artist: "Nor was Hardy any exception to the rule that the mind which is most capable of receiving impressions is very often the least capable of drawing conclusions... Hardy himself was aware of this. A novel 'is an impression, not an argument', he has warned us."[65]

Hardy did not plan his novels carefully in advance, and his characters and plots might change as he wrote, causing inconsistencies which apparently did not bother him.[66] Virginia Woolf likened him to Dickens as what she called an "unconscious" writer, carried along by his own prose: "His own word, 'moments of vision', exactly describes those passages of astonishing beauty and force which are to be found in every book that he wrote. With a sudden quickening of power which we cannot foretell, nor he, it seems, control, a single scene breaks off from the rest."[67]

Hardy revised his works at every opportunity. "One of the problems faced by editors of Hardy's prose and verse is which of a number of different texts is to be preferred: manuscript, serial, first edition or subsequent editions in volume form?"[68] When Hardy was in his 50s, his publisher produced the first uniform edition of his works, and Hardy took the occasion to do a thorough revision of 12 novels and three books of short stories that he had initially published over the course of the preceding three decades.[69]

As a novelist Hardy started late and developed slowly. Virginia Woolf observed that when Hardy had published his first novel, at 31, "he was by no means an assured craftsman. He

'was feeling his way to a method', he said to himself; as if he were conscious that he possessed all sorts of gifts, yet did not know their nature, or how to use them to advantage." Yet Hardy persisted in his efforts to portray the lives of men and women in rural England, and Woolf celebrated the consequences: "Hardy's genius was uncertain in development, uneven in accomplishment, but, when the moment came, magnificent in achievement."[70]

Joseph Conrad has long been praised for creating visual images. F. R. Leavis declared that "there is no novelist of whom it can more fitly be said that his figures and situations are *seen*."[71] Virginia Woolf was more expansive: "Picture after picture he painted thus upon the dark background; ships first and foremost, ships at anchor, ships flying before the storm, ships in harbor; he painted sunsets and dawns; he painted the night; he painted the sea in every aspect; he painted the gaudy brilliance of Eastern ports, and men and women, their houses and their attitudes. He was an accurate and unflinching observer."[72] In the preface to one of his novels, Conrad told his readers that "My task which I am trying to achieve is, by the power of the written word to make you hear, to make you feel - it is, before all, to make you *see*."[73] Conrad's commitment to authenticity was such that when a publisher asked him for a preface to a new edition of Herman Melville's works he declined, saying of *Moby-Dick* that he had found "not a single sincere line in the 3 vols. of it."[74] A friend explained that "Conrad was a realist, who disapproved altogether of the type of symbolism represented by ... *Moby Dick*, a book which he detested."[75]

Conrad worked on his novels with little planning: "Once the general idea has been decided it is necessary to let yourself be guided by the inspiration of the moment."[76] John Gordan observed that Conrad was never sure when a short story would grow into a novel: "The classic

example was *Lord Jim*, which he intended to treat in twenty thousand words and which developed into some hundred and twenty thousand."[77] Conrad described the pervasive uncertainty with which he worked: "I write in doubt over every line."[78]

Conrad was excited not by the prospect of finding, but by the process of seeking: "To me, attempt is much more fascinating than the achievement because of boundless possibilities; and in the world of ideas attempt or experiment is the dawn of evolution."[79] Arnold Kettle recognized that for Conrad "It was in the creation of the work of art that the discovery was made. This seems to me very important. The very act of artistic creation, that molding into significant form of some thing or part of life, is in itself a discovery about the nature of life and ultimately its value will lie in the value of that discovery."[80] As Conrad wrote in *Under Western Eyes*, some kind of "moral discovery... should be the object of every tale."[81] Pinning down these moral discoveries is difficult: E. M. Forster observed of Conrad that "What is so elusive ... is that he is always promising to make some general philosophic statement about the universe, and then refraining with a gruff disclaimer... No creed, in fact."[82] Kettle agreed: "That seems to get him: no creed, but an unflinching respect for facts, the facts of the world he lived in. The moral discoveries are always based on facts."[83]

Conrad revised his manuscripts continually, and hated to turn them over to the publisher. He explained that as long as "I have [the manuscript] by me a lucky idea occurs and is set down in its place; whereas when the MS is not there it is lost because my brain has no storage room."[84] He also revised his published works, and a friend observed that "some of it is extant in at least six different states - the manuscript, the corrected typescript, the serial form, the American book form, the English book form, and the collected edition book form."[85] Conrad's revisions served

to sharpen his prose, by condensing his material, and to clarify his portraits of characters and their actions as his perception of them developed in the course of composition.

John Gordan's evaluation of Conrad's early struggle provides a neat portrayal of an experimental artist: "He experienced all the disadvantages and advantages of the instinctive artist: inability to grasp the whole, want of confidence, waste motion in contrast to individual rhythm and the power to create vivid pictures and living characterizations."[86] Over time, Conrad's confidence grew. In 1908, when Conrad was past the age of 50, John Galsworthy declared that he had "laid up a strange store of thought, tradition, life, and language, and on his manner of production this has stamped itself. As in a fine carpet, with lapse of time, the colors grow more subtle, more austere, so in the carpet of this writer's weaving the bewildering richness of his earlier books is sobered to the clearer, cooler colors of the later."[87] Arnold Kettle argued that among English writers of his era, "only Conrad looked at imperialism honestly enough to become a great artist," and that his understanding grew over time, so that "as he grew older the moral discoveries he drew from his art became rather more fully rationalized."[88]

When James Joyce died in 1941, an obituarist described him as "the great research scientist of letters, handling words with the same freedom and originality that Einstein handles mathematical symbols. The sound, patterns, roots and connotations of words interested him much more than their definite meanings. One might say that he invented a non-Euclidean geometry of language; and that he worked over it with doggedness and devotion as if in a laboratory far removed from the noises of the street... [E]ven the strongest of his characters seem dwarfed by the great apparatus of learning that he brings to bear on them."[89]Joyce was a conceptual innovator who worked at his art methodically and systematically. His landmark

contribution, *Ulysses*, was the product, by his own estimate, of 20,000 hours of work over a period of eight years; he told a friend that the preparatory and research notes for the book "filled a small valise."[90] *Ulysses* was a dramatic conceptual innovation: T. S. Eliot declared that it "destroyed the whole of the nineteenth century."[91] As Lionel Trilling explained, Eliot meant that "Joyce by his radical innovations of style had made obsolete the styles of the earlier time, and also that ... the concerns and sentiments to which the old styles were appropriate had lost their interest and authority."[92]

Edmund Wilson observed that "*Ulysses* has been logically thought out and accurately documented to the last detail ... Yet when we are admitted to the mind of any [character], we are in a world as complex and special, a world sometimes as fantastic or obscure, as that of a Symbolist poet - and a world rendered by similar devices of language."[93] Joyce's attention to detail was almost beyond comprehension, as one biographer observed that he was "obsessed with the need for his 'encyclopedia' to be accurate, even in the most mundane details."[94] So for example during the final year of composition of *Ulysses*, Joyce wrote to his aunt in Dublin to ask "Is it possible for an ordinary person to climb over the area railings of no 7 Eccles street, either from the path or the steps, lower himself down from the lowest part of the railings till his feet are within 2 feet or 3 of the ground and drop unhurt."[95] Her response led to a sentence in "Ithaca," the book's 17th episode, when Leopold Bloom returned home without his latchkey: "Resting his feet on the dwarf wall, he climbed over the area railings, compressed his hat on his head, grasped two points at the lower union of rails and stiles, lowered his body gradually by its length of five feet nine inches and a half to within two feet ten inches of the area pavement and allowed his body to move freely in space by separating himself from the railings and crouching in

preparation for the impact of the fall."[96]

Joyce outlined *Ulysses* as a whole before beginning to write the book, and as a result did not have to produce the episodes in the order in which they were published: "he attempted to visualize the general design of the work before completing individual episodes and the process of composition did not correspond with the final order of the chapters; instead, he programmed his writing as his interests or the need for clarification dictated... Many of the later episodes were planned and drafted early in the course of composition... Joyce labored to a predetermined pattern; each fragment of material he gathered was marked for a specific place in the novel's general design."[97] A scholar remarked that "the mechanical nature of this process emphasizes the mechanical nature of those ordering principles which give *Ulysses* its superficial unity."[98] *Ulysses* was organized around a system of what Joyce called correspondences: "To each chapter he gave a title, a scene, an hour, an organ [of the human body], an art, a color, and a technique."[99] One scholar remarked that the styles Joyce assigned to the chapters of *Ulysses* are "so variable that the eighteen episodes could really be described as eighteen novels between the one cover."[100] Interestingly, the great diversity and surprising juxtapositions of styles in *Ulysses* led the French critic Pierre Courthion to compare Joyce to the most protean of conceptual innovators in modern painting, Pablo Picasso.[101]

Joyce does not seem to have been concerned that no reader could ever recognize or appreciate all the book's allusions, for he was "aware that his was a mind which needed more patterns and frames of reference than his readers could ever utilize."[102] A scholar emphasized that the form of *Ulysses* "is not organic, but constructed."[103] A close friend of Joyce's who wrote a book about the making of *Ulysses* observed similarly that "If there is a correspondence for

Joyce's writing in the pictorial arts it is the mosaic artists of Rome and Ravenna who would supply it. No nervous impulses created for them or disturbed their handiwork. They built up with inexhaustible patience their figures of saints and angels out of tiny pieces of colored stone."[104]

Ulysses was the work of Joyce's thirties; it was published on his 40th birthday. Most of the remaining years of his life were devoted to an even more complex work, *Finnegans Wake*, that similarly reflected his conceptual approach. The book is cyclic: it begins in the middle of a sentence and ends with the beginning of that sentence. Its structure is based on the cyclic theory of history of the 18th-century Italian philosopher Giambattista Vico, as *Finnegans Wake* is divided into four books that correspond to Vico's four stages of history.[105]

In 1926, at the age of 44, Virginia Woolf reflected in a diary entry that although she enjoyed her life and her work, she always felt somewhat unsettled: "I have some restless searcher in me. Why is there not a discovery in life? Something one can lay hands on & say 'This is it?'"[106] John Mepham argued that Woolf never settled on a single form that she could use consistently in her novels because she "never settled on one statement about the way life is. I think she constantly held in mind different ways of thinking about what life is, and needed ever new techniques in order to give voice to them all."[107] Woolf recognized this, as in 1928 she recorded her suspicion that she would never consistently use a single style or subject: "for after all, that is my temperament, I think: to be very little persuaded of the truth of anything - what I say, what people say."[108] After her death, Stephen Spender observed that for Woolf life had no fixed vantage points: "she held life like a crystal which she turned over in her hands and looked at from another point of view. But a crystal is too static an image; for, of course, she knew that the crystal flowed."[109]

Woolf's uncertainty was that of an experimental artist. Consistent with this, a succession of critics remarked on the visual nature of her prose. Thus for example in 1922 Rebecca West observed that "She can write supremely well only of what can be painted;" in 1924 Clive Bell judged that "This pure, this almost painterlike vision is Virginia Woolf's peculiarity;" and in 1926 E. M. Forster declared that "visual sensitiveness... becomes in her a productive force. How beautifully she sees!"[110]

A biographer observed of Woolf that "Even more than other novelists who have recorded the birth and growth of their works, she appears to begin without any detailed knowledge of how she will proceed... Each book seems to evolve rather than to be planned and then made."[111] Woolf testified that this was the case, as in the Introduction to *Mrs. Dalloway* she wrote that:

> the idea started as the oyster starts or the snail to secrete a house for itself. And this it did without any conscious direction. The little note book in which an attempt was made to forecast a plan was soon abandoned, and the book grew day by day, week by week, without any plan at all, except that which was dictated each morning in the act of writing. The other way, to make a house and then inhabit it, to develop a theory and then apply it, as Wordsworth did and Coleridge, is, it need not be said, equally good and much more philosophic. But in the present case it was necessary to write the book first and to invent a theory afterwards.[112]

There is also more private evidence that attests to this same process. Woolf began to write *To the Lighthouse* early in 1926. On September 5 of that year, she wrote in her diary that "At this moment I'm casting about for an end... I am feathering about with various ideas... [W]hat becomes [of] Lily & her picture?"[113] She finished the novel just 11 days later; in the end, Lily finished her painting.

Woolf allowed her plots to grow organically because of her belief that writing should be

a process of discovery. In a memoir written late in her life, she explained that she derived her greatest satisfaction in the process of composing her novels:

> Perhaps this is the strongest pleasure known to me. It is the rapture I get when I seem to be discovering what belongs to what; making a scene come right; making a character come together. From this I reach what I might call a philosophy; at any rate it is a constant idea of mine; that behind the cotton wool is hidden a pattern.[114]

When Woolf caught a glimpse of "some real thing behind appearances," she could capture it only by writing: "I make it real by putting it into words. It is only by putting it into words that I make it whole."[115]

For Woolf everything was provisional, including the endings of her novels. John Mepham explained that "Her fictions have neither characters nor endings, in the traditional senses of these things. This is because the point of her writing was not to resolve contradictions but to contain them and display them. Her integrity as an artist can be seen in her adoption of inconclusiveness as a principle."[116] Her own attitudes toward her novels were no less provisional or uncertain. After the publication of *Jacob's Room*, she noted in her diary: "My sensations? as usual - mixed. I shall never write a book that is an entire success."[117] Three years later, after the publication of *Mrs. Dalloway*, her confidence had grown, but she remained cautious in expressing her optimism: " I wonder if this time I have achieved something?," before immediately discounting it: "Well, nothing anyhow compared with Proust."[118]

In 1926, Edwin Muir contrasted Woolf's fiction with that of James Joyce by focusing on a key difference between their experimental and conceptual approaches: "Mr. Joyce has objectified magnificently his personal world, but it is not a world in which we could live, and to him that is, indeed, a matter of no concern... The world [Woolf] shows us is not of such vast

dimensions as Mr. Joyce's, but it is on a perfect scale; there are all the elements in it that there are in any of the worlds we actually live in."[119] The following year, T. S. Eliot praised Woolf's "remarkable gift for description," as well as her control of that gift: "She does not let herself go into ecstasies over a momentary perception as Mr. Lawrence does." After noting this difference between Woolf and the exaggerations of the conceptual D. H. Lawrence, Eliot remarked on her similarity to another experimental author: "Of all contemporary authors Mrs. Woolf is the one who reminds me most of Joseph Conrad... Mrs. Woolf should be praised for having accomplished at Kew and on English beaches what Conrad has accomplished in the Tropics and the South Seas."[120]

In her diary, Woolf often pondered the course of her development as an artist. In 1922, the completion of *Jacob's Room* convinced her that she had made progress: "There's no doubt in my mind that I have found out how to begin (at 40) to say something in my own voice."[121] In 1927, she recorded a judgment about her latest novel that many later critics would share: "With The Lighthouse I may just have climbed to the top of my hill."[122] In 1929, Raymond Mortimer declared that Woolf had what he called a Midas touch: "every object she touches becomes iridescent, every word she uses is alive and pulling like a trout on the line." He explained that this skill had developed gradually: "the style is the result of years of experience. We can see it developing as we follow the chronological order of her works. But this long apprenticeship has left her a complete mistress of her medium. Her line, like a great painter's, is now spontaneously artful."[123]

In 1916, when D. H. Lawrence completed *Women in Love*, he wrote to one friend that "I love it, and love it passionately," and to another that it was "in fact, a masterpiece."[124] John

Middleton Murry opened his review of the book by declaring that "Mr. Lawrence is set apart from the novelists who are his contemporaries by the vehemence of his passions." Murry lamented that Lawrence's earlier promise had been destroyed by the excessive force of his emotions: "It was not his deliberate choice that he sacrificed his gifts, his vision, his delicacy, and his eloquence. If ever a writer was driven, it is he." Murry stressed Lawrence's certainty: "At the end we know one thing and one thing alone: that Mr. Lawrence believes, with all his heart and soul, that he is revealing to us the profound and naked reality of life."[125]

Many later critics disagreed with Murry's negative judgment of Lawrence's achievement; thus for example F. R. Leavis later argued that *Women in Love* proved Lawrence to be "the greatest kind of artist."[126] Yet whether favorable or not, few critics disagreed that Lawrence's art was characterized by extreme vividness and emotional intensity born of great sureness. The certainty that Lawrence derived from his passion marks him clearly as a conceptual author. T. S. Eliot's certainty was of intellectual rather than emotional origin, and he had little sympathy for Lawrence, whom he characterized as "a demoniac, a natural and unsophisticated demoniac with a gospel."[127] Characteristically, Virginia Woolf's analysis was more measured, but she nonetheless made it clear that Lawrence's work was a product of exaggeration: "some hand, some eye of astonishing penetration and force, has swiftly arranged the whole scene, so that we feel it is more exciting, more moving, in some ways fuller of life than one had thought real life could be."[128] J. C. Squire agreed: "All the novels have descriptive passages... which impress one's imagination more forcibly than the actual things described."[129]

Lawrence believed that writing was therapeutic: "one sheds one's sicknesses in books - repeats and presents again one's emotions, to be master of them."[130] Through a study of

Lawrence's manuscripts, Keith Cushman concluded that even revision demanded the writer's total involvement: "The flow of true art could be produced only by a total immersion of self in the experience of composition... His holographs... are further testimony to the speed and spontaneity with which he wrote and revised."[131] Unlike James, Hardy, or Conrad, however, Lawrence had no interest in revising his published works: "The moment... that the book was in press, three-quarters of his interest in it was exhausted, and, by the time it was published, it was far behind him."[132]

Lawrence arrived at artistic maturity early and rapidly: Leavis declared that "Genius in Lawrence manifests itself in an astonishing richness and rapidity of development" that was manifested in *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love*.[133] Keith Cushman compared Lawrence's dramatic progress in 1914, when he was 29, to the leap forward that Melville had made: "In *The Prussian Officer*, *The Rainbow*, and *Moby-Dick* one can feel the writer reaching higher, daring more, and achieving more than he ever had before." Cushman attributed the sudden advance to an intellectual decision: "Lawrence came into his own only when he decided that his writing would be founded on the interplay of art and metaphysic, only when he realized that he wanted to interpret the life around him in terms of a larger, even a cosmic vision of human possibility."[134]

In 1922, publication of *The Waste Land* prompted Edmund Wilson to object to what he considered the excessively introspective approach not only of Eliot but also of other young writers. Wilson quoted from *The Waste Land*, but then observed that "a quotation from a more conventional author who has yet caught something of the spirit of the time puts it even more clearly and briefly. 'I know myself but that is all,' cries one of Scott Fitzgerald's heroes... And

that is precisely the point of view of the modern novelist or poet: 'I know myself but that is all.'"[135] After Fitzgerald's death, Lionel Trilling reflected that the significance of his landmark work, *The Great Gatsby*, was a consequence of its "intellectual intensity." Trilling observed that the book's characters and settings were used to serve the story's central idea: "Thus, it will be observed, the characters are not 'developed'... [but] are treated, we might say, as if they were ideographs, a method of economy that is reinforced by the ideographic use that is made of the Washington Heights flat, the terrible 'valley of ashes' seen from the Long Island Railroad, Gatsby's incoherent parties, and the huge sordid eyes of the oculist's advertising sign." Trilling added parenthetically: "It is a technique which gives the novel an affinity with *The Waste Land*."[136] T. S. Eliot apparently noticed the parallels between his own poetry and Fitzgerald's prose, for in 1925 he wrote to tell Fitzgerald that *Gatsby* "excited me more than any new novel I have seen, either English or American, for a number of years," and that he considered it "the first step that American fiction has taken since Henry James."[137]

Wilson and Trilling recognized the conceptual basis of Fitzgerald's fiction, which used lyrical prose, simplified figures, and symbolic stage props and settings in the service of allegorical plots. Thus in one recent survey *Gatsby* was described as "a symbolist tragedy" told with "a symbolist mode of writing that informs everything - Gatsby's dreams, parties, even his shirts - with an enchanted glow."[138] Harold Bloom observed that "The American Dream tended to be our characteristic myth in the twentieth century, and Scott Fitzgerald was both the prime celebrant and the great satirist of the dream-turned-nightmare."[139]

Fitzgerald was famously precocious, at just 24 publishing a best-selling novel that was reviewed by H. L. Mencken as "a truly amazing first novel - original in structure, extremely

sophisticated in manner, and adorned with a brilliancy that is ... rare in American writing."[140] Yet his real arrival at artistic maturity came at the age of 29, with the publication of *The Great Gatsby*. Fitzgerald recognized this, for when he completed the novel he wrote to his editor "I think my novel is about the best American novel ever written... I am grown at last."[141] Over time, as recognition of the magnitude of Fitzgerald's achievement in *Gatsby* increased, the discontinuity it represented in his career became clear. Thus in 1966 a scholar observed that "One of the most difficult problems in Fitzgerald scholarship in the nineteen-fifties and sixties has been the attempt to explain the sudden maturing of Fitzgerald in 1925, with the publication of *The Great Gatsby*. Nothing in Fitzgerald's earlier writing prepares for the authority and the aesthetic control over material that is so impressive in his third novel."[142] Perhaps equally widely studied has been Fitzgerald's subsequent failure to match the quality of *Gatsby*. Thus John Berryman observed that "Suddenly he was able, not yet thirty, to lay out and execute a masterpiece. He was happily married, widely admired, and had made money. One might have expected such a career of production as American artists rarely have achieved. What happened then?" Berryman believed that during most of his remaining years "he could not use his gift because he no longer had it."[143] Fitzgerald had earlier expressed the same belief. Thus in 1929 he wrote to his friend Ernest Hemingway of his fear that the great amount of writing he had done during 1919-24 had "taken all I had to say too early."[144] Fitzgerald had often been praised for the poetic quality of his prose, and like many conceptual poets he spent the last years of his life wondering where his gift had gone. His awareness of the nature of his talent, and of its loss, may be reflected in the verb tenses he used in 1934, at the age of 38, in the introduction to a new edition of *The Great Gatsby*: "The present writer has always been a 'natural' for his profession

in so much that he can think of nothing he could have done as efficiently as to have lived deeply in the world of imagination."[145]

On a map he drew of Yoknapatawpha County, Mississippi, William Faulkner signed himself "sole owner and proprietor."[146] After inventing the fictitious rural county in 1929, Faulkner set most of his novels and stories there for the rest of his life. Robert Penn Warren remarked that "no land in all fiction is more painstakingly analyzed from the sociological standpoint."[147] This was because of the descriptive nature of Faulkner's writing, for as Malcolm Cowley observed, "He can and does give us the exact tone of Mississippi voices, the feel of a Mississippi landscape, the look of an old plantation house rotting among sedge-grown fields."[148] Faulkner once explained that he had never expressly gone out to study his subject:

> I don't go out with a notebook, but I like these people, that is, I like to listen to them, the way they talk or the things they talk about. I spent a lot of time with my uncle, he was a politician, and he would have to run every four years to be elected judge again. And I would go around with him and sit on the front galleries of country stores and listen to the talk that would go on, with no notebook, no intention to put it down, I just - it was interesting and I remembered most of it and I have known them in farming and in dealing with horses and hunting, things like that, but without carrying a notebook at all, just to remember.[149]

It is not surprising that Cowley would note that "Faulkner's novels have the quality of being lived, absorbed, remembered rather than merely observed."[150]

Faulkner's descriptive, expansive approach to writing fiction made him an archetypal experimental author. Whereas Malcolm Cowley praised the multiple viewpoints he employed in his novels as "sculptural, as if you could walk round them for different views of the same solid object," F. R. Leavis had little patience for them, concluding that "Faulkner is seldom for long sure of the point of view he is writing from and will alter his focus and his notation casually, it

would seem, and almost without knowing it."[151] But Leavis nonetheless correctly diagnosed the source of the technique: "This pervasive uncertainty of method goes down to a central and radical uncertainty."[152]

This basic uncertainty was reflected in a series of characteristics of Faulkner's work. He did not plan the plots of his novels: "Some people are orderly, they lay out a plot or synopsis first, they make notes, which is valid and satisfactory to them but not to me, I would be completely lost."[153] Faulkner's typical response to questions about his intentions for a work was "I didn't know where this story was going, I just wrote it. I was as surprised as anybody else to find where it was going."[154] Faulkner learned about his characters in the process of writing about them: "the writer is learning all the time he writes and he learns from his own people, once he has conceived them truthfully and has stuck to the verities of human conduct, human behavior, human aspirations, then he learns - yes, they teach him, they surprise him, they teach him things that he didn't know, they do things and suddenly he says to himself, why yes, that is true, that is so."[155] Faulkner could not anticipate the length of his works: asked about *The Sound and the Fury*, he responded that "It was, I thought, a short story, something that could be done in about two pages, a thousand words. I found out it couldn't."[156] Faulkner explained that he kept writing books because he was never satisfied with the last one: "I think that one is never satisfied with the book, the poem, he has just finished, which is the reason he writes another one. And I believe as long as he or I live I will still try to write the good book which up to now I have never quite done."[157] In fact, however, he knew he would never be satisfied: "none of it is perfection, ... and anything less than perfection is failure."[158] Faulkner believed that there was only one path to artistic achievement: "There is no mechanical way to get the writing done, no short cut... Teach

yourself by your own mistakes; people learn only by error."[159]

Critics have long been aware of the consequences of Faulkner's uncertainty. In a study of Faulkner's work that he titled *Quest for Failure*, Walter Slatoff observed that

> It is no accident that every one of Faulkner's experiments with form and style - his rapidly shifting points of view, his use of more or less incoherent narrators, ... his disordered time sequences, his juxtapositions of largely independent stories, his unsyntactical marathon sentences, his whole method, as Conrad Aiken puts it, "of deliberately withheld meaning, of progressive and partial and delayed disclosure" - is a movement away from order and coherence. It is no accident that every one of Faulkner's novels involves one or more of these experiments and that in most of the novels we find them all.[160]

Slatoff also remarked on Faulkner's open endings: "the endings of all his novels not only fail to resolve many of the tensions and meanings provided in the novels but also seem carefully designed to prevent such resolution... To read a Faulkner novel is to struggle to integrate and resolve a bewildering number and variety of impressions and suggestions. It is, and it is meant to be, a struggle without end."[161] Hugh Kenner observed that the novels were all loosely interdependent: "as no Faulkner incident can yield its significance until it has entangled circumambient lives and circumstances even to the third and fourth generations, so no Faulkner novel really cuts off at its boundaries. Characters pass from one to another, a story illuminates the early history of a family we will later meet in a novel, people in a new book serve as analogues and reflectors for other people the author conceived years previously."[162] And Wallace Stegner perceived a basic message: "What Faulkner is actually saying, as explicitly if not as simply as it has ever been said, is that no man, novelist or otherwise, can know another except in the trivial superficies of his life; that the mind and emotions of another are mysteries as deep as the hereafter; that we arrive at our knowledge - or, rather, our surmises - of other people through

these approximations, these dribbles of information from six or 600 sources, each driblet colored by the prejudices and emotions of the observer."[163]

Faulkner recognized the distinction between experimental and conceptual artists. Thus he noted that "there were sculptors, there were few painters, there were few musicians, like Mozart, that knew exactly what they were doing, that used their music like the mathematician uses his formula." Having identified Mozart, a textbook case of a conceptual young genius, as the prototype of the artist who worked with deductive certainty, Faulkner then coupled his own contemporary Hemingway with the composer, pointing out that not all artists have "whatever the quality that Mozart, Hemingway had."[164] Faulkner explained that whereas Hemingway had early learned a method that he consistently used thereafter, other authors, including Thomas Wolfe and himself, had not, because "we didn't have the instinct, or the preceptors, or whatever it was... That's why it's clumsy and hard to read. It's not that we deliberately tried to make it clumsy, we just couldn't help it."[165] Hemingway's work was the most consistent of his cohort: "Hemingway had sense enough to find a method which he could control and didn't need or didn't have to, wasn't driven by his private demon to waste himself in trying to do more than that. So, he has done consistently probably the most solid work of all of us." Yet Faulkner valued aspiration over achievement, so in the final assessment he ranked Wolfe first among his contemporaries: "he failed the best because he had tried the hardest, he had taken the longest gambles, taken the longest shots."[166] In contrast, Faulkner ranked Hemingway not only below Wolfe, but also below Erskine Caldwell, John Dos Passos, and Faulkner himself, because Hemingway had stuck to his early method "without splashing around to try to experiment." Not surprisingly for an experimental writer whose favorite book was *Don Quixote*, Faulkner judged artists by the

nobility of their quest for the impossible dream: “It was simply on the degree of the attempt to reach the unattainable dream, to accomplish more than any flesh and blood man could accomplish, could touch.”[167]

One of Ernest Hemingway’s most distinctive innovations was in his writing of dialogue. In 1926, Conrad Aiken declared in a review of *The Sun Also Rises* that “The dialogue is brilliant,” and described it as “alive with the rhythms and idioms, the pauses and suspensions and innuendoes and shorthands, of living speech.”[168] In fact, however, Philip Young later explained that “for all the impression of authenticity Hemingway’s dialogue gives, it was no simple reproduction of actual human talking... Hemingway’s dialogue strips speech down to the essentials which are typical of the speaker. He built a pattern of mannerisms and responses which give an illusion of reality that, in its completeness, reality itself does not give.”[169]

Hemingway’s distinctive dialogue is one of a number of conceptual devices that he developed early in his career and that became celebrated as his trademark techniques. He arrived at these devices not through years of trial and error, but rapidly, largely through the study of earlier writers, including Mark Twain, Sherwood Anderson, and Gertrude Stein. Together these devices allowed Hemingway, in his early work, to create “a world of his own more brilliant than life, but he was not writing about people living in a real world.”[170]

Another of Hemingway’s devices was his theory of omission - “my new theory that you could omit anything if you knew that you omitted it and the omitted part would strengthen the story and make people feel something more than they understood.”[171] Hemingway used organizing symbols: “What is new in *A Farewell to Arms* is the consistent use of rain as a signal of disaster.”[172] Hugh Kenner drew an interesting comparison between the conceptual early poetry

of T. S. Eliot and the fiction of two conceptual novelists of the same era: “Eliot’s verse of the twenties... reads like a compendium of a decade’s symbols; no other twentieth-century decade has yielded in that way to being summed up by images. To encounter comparable images, comparable expressive mannerisms, in the fictions of Fitzgerald and Hemingway is to be reminded to what extent these two expatriates were engaged in an enterprise like the expatriate poet’s.” Kenner further observed that when Hemingway said that what he was trying to write down in the 1920s was “the real thing, the sequence of motion and fact which made the emotion and which would be as valid in a year or ten years or, with luck and if you stated it purely enough, always,” the words, and idea, appear to be based on Eliot’s definition of 1919 of what he called the “‘objective correlative’; in other words, a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events, which shall be the formula of that *particular* emotion; such that when the external facts, which must terminate in a sensory experience, are given, the emotion is immediately evoked.”[173]

Hemingway’s early practices reveal a conceptual writer at work. One of Hemingway’s earliest publications, in 1926, was a satire titled *The Torrents of Spring*. Jeffrey Meyers observed that “Hemingway’s ability to parody [Sherwood] Anderson reveals how well he had learned and then rejected the lesson of the master,” and Hemingway’s clarity of purpose was also evident to Allen Tate, who noted in a review of *Torrents* that “He knows what he wishes to do; he usually does it.”[174] William Balassi studied the composition of Hemingway’s first novel, *The Sun Also Rises*, and found that he had worked on it methodically: “Each day he chose a method or a theme to wrestle with... For instance, on four successive days... he based each day’s composition on a metaphor associated with one of the main characters: *afición* for Jake, bankruptcy for Mike, the gored and segregated steer for Gerald, and the Circe myth for Duff.” The reference to mythology

was not by chance, for Hemingway's composition paid tribute to James Joyce and to the *Odyssey*, in turn, on the two following days.[175] Hemingway's second novel, *A Farewell to Arms*, published when he was 30 years old, was tightly plotted, "carefully planned in an orderly, logical method that is exceptional in the American novel."[176] Recent research has revealed that Hemingway used military histories and newspaper stories as the basis for battle scenes he described in *A Farewell to Arms*.[177] Hemingway was fond of declaring that novelists should write from personal experience, and he was sufficiently defensive about the revelation that he did not always follow this practice that he devised what a biographer has called a "theory of inventing from knowledge," which held that "an author must have some actual experience though not necessarily the precise experience of what he writes about."[178]

Late in his life, Hemingway denied that a writer's work had to deteriorate as he grew older: "People who know what they are doing should last as long as their heads last."[179] His critics, however, generally believed that his work had declined from an early age. In 1943, James Farrell called *The Sun Also Rises* Hemingway's best novel, and declared that his contribution was essentially complete by the age of 30: "He said pretty much what he had to say with his first stories and his first two novels."[180] Even earlier, in 1939, Edmund Wilson observed that Hemingway's famed prose had deteriorated with self-indulgence by the time he wrote *Death in the Afternoon*, in 1932: "The master of that precise and clean style now indulges in purple patches which go on spreading for pages on end."[181] The judgments of Farrell and Wilson became a general consensus over time. After Hemingway's death Stanley Kauffman wrote of "one of the epochal moments in 20th century literature: Hemingway's forging of his prose," noting that that early time had been the high point of his life and work. Kauffman concluded that

"His career, at its height, was very short - less than 15 years."[182] Irving Howe wrote in an obituary that "Most of the late work was bad, Papa gone soft." For Howe, the true Hemingway "was always a young writer... He published his best novel *The Sun Also Rises* in his mid-twenties."[183] Perhaps most bluntly, Alberto Moravia declared that throughout his life Hemingway had remained in an "infantile and precocious state of arrested development." Identifying Hemingway's best novels and stories as those of the 1920s, Moravia concluded that "he was incapable of developing or adding anything of value to his early, naïve nihilism."[184] In more moderate terms Philip Young agreed, observing that "Nowhere in this writer can you find the mature, brooding intelligence, the sense of the past, the grown-up relationships of adult people, and many of the other things we normally ask of a first-rate novelist."[185]

Measuring Careers

The preceding section established that seven of the novelists studied here - Dickens, Twain, James, Hardy, Conrad, Woolf, and Faulkner - were experimental innovators, and that five - Melville, Joyce, Lawrence, Fitzgerald, and Hemingway - were conceptual. The primary quantitative issue to be addressed here concerns the prediction of the analysis presented above for the life cycle: did the conceptual authors generally make their greatest contributions at younger ages than did the experimental authors?

Measurement of the relative importance of an author's work over the course of his career is based on scholarly critical studies of the author's novels. For each author, at least ten critical monographs were selected, each of which treats the author's entire career.[186] For each of these monographs, a count was made of the number of pages on which each of the author's novels was discussed.[187] The absolute numbers of pages devoted to each of an author's novels in a particular

critical study were then converted into a percentage distribution: for each monograph, this distribution describes the relative amount of space devoted to each novel. Finally, these percentage distributions for each monograph were averaged over all the monographs used for each author; the result is a percentage distribution, for each author, which reveals the average amount of space devoted to each novel in the monographs studied.

An example of this procedure is presented in Tables 2 and 3, which provide the data for Virginia Woolf. Table 2 shows the number of pages on which each of her novels was discussed in the ten critical monographs surveyed; thus for example *To the Lighthouse* is discussed on 37 pages of Book 9, which the appendix identifies as John Mepham's *Virginia Woolf: A Literary Life*. In Table 3, the frequency distribution for each book is converted into a percentage distribution: since *To the Lighthouse* is discussed on 37 pages of Mepham's book, of a total of 217 pages on which references to Woolf's novels appear, the entry for *To the Lighthouse* for Book 9 in Table 3 is 17.1%. That entry is then averaged with the other nine entries for *To the Lighthouse* in Table 3, producing the result in the final column of the table that on average the 10 monographs analyzed for Woolf discuss *To the Lighthouse* on 17.2% of the pages on which they discuss any of her novels. This places *To the Lighthouse* slightly above *Mrs. Dalloway* (14.6%) and *The Waves* (13.4%) as a subject of study, and well above *The Years* (7.0%) and *Night and Day* (7.5%). The inference drawn here is that scholars generally consider *To the Lighthouse*, *Mrs. Dalloway*, and *The Waves* to be Woolf's three most important novels, in descending order, and *Night and Day* and *The Years* her least important novels.

These measurements are effectively intended to survey the judgments of literary scholars on the relative importance of each author's novels, under the assumption that the amount of

space a scholar devotes to discussion of a novel implicitly reflects his or her judgment of that novel's importance relative to the author's other novels. The use of at least 10 monographs for each novelist is dictated by the fact that scholars' opinions on which novels are most important or most interesting can differ. Thus for example *To the Lighthouse* ranks first among Woolf's novels in six of the 10 monographs analyzed, and second in two others. This suggests that Woolf scholars do generally consider it her most important book, but not unanimously. As will be seen, there is considerably greater agreement on the most important individual novels of several other authors.

Based on these measurements, for each author Table 4 lists the three novels judged most important by the critical monographs, and Table 5 displays the authors' ages when these books were published. Considering first the authors' ages when they wrote their single most important novel, there is a considerable range. Thus Fitzgerald was just 29 when he wrote *The Great Gatsby*, while Hardy was more than two decades older, at age 51, when he wrote *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*. The ages of the authors do clearly differ by category: whereas four of the five conceptual authors were 35 or younger when they wrote their best book, none of the experimental writers produced their best work that early. Only two experimental writers published their best novel in their late 30s, while five published theirs when they were over 40, with two at 50 or above.

One way to use the data produced here to approximate what Faulkner might have referred to as a writer's matchless time is to consider the years spanned by publication of their three best novels. By this definition, Table 5 shows that a distinct difference again appears between the two categories of writers. Three of the conceptual writers entered this period in their 20s, and the

other two in their 30s. In contrast, no experimental writer entered this period as early as his 20s; three began it in their 30s, and four in their 40s. Three conceptual writers finished this best period in their 30s, one in his 40s, and one in his 50s. In contrast, only one experimental writer ended his best period in his 30s, two ended theirs in their 40s, three ended theirs in their 50s, and one finished his in his 60s. The most common pattern for the conceptual writers was to publish the earliest of their three best books in their 20s and the latest in their 30s, whereas the most common pattern for the experimental writers was to enter their best period in their 40s and to end it in their 50s. The difference in timing is considerable: four of the five conceptual writers had published all three of their best books by the age of 41, an age at which a majority of the experimental writers were either just beginning or had yet to begin their best periods.

If we take a writer's matchless time to span the period of his best three novels, and consider the date of his best novel to be the peak of that period, the typical life cycles of the two groups of conceptual and experimental writers studied here differ sharply. Thus the conceptual writers began their best period at a median age of 28, reached their peak at a median of 32, and concluded their best period at a median age of 38. In contrast, the experimental writers began their best period at a median age of 41, reached their peak at a median of 45, and concluded their best period at a median of 53. The timing of these typical careers is roughly parallel, as the conceptual writers began their best period 13 years earlier than the experimental writers, reached their peak 13 years earlier, and ended their best period 15 years earlier. Thus the matchless time for these writers, whether conceptual or experimental, typically lasted about a decade. What is perhaps most striking about the comparison of the two life cycles, however, is that the median age at which the conceptual writers *completed* their best period - 38 - is three years younger than

the median age - 41 - at which the experimental writers *began* theirs.

The quantitative evidence bears on another prediction of the analysis presented above. Specifically, the sudden and complete appearance of conceptual innovations means that they can often be embodied in a single master work, whereas the gradual and incremental production of experimental innovations means that they are instead more often divided among a number of works. One implication of this is that the careers of conceptual writers should more often be marked by the appearance of one novel that stands clearly above the others in importance. To consider this prediction, Table 6 presents the average percentage of the monographs' discussions of each novelist devoted to that novelist's single most important book.

Ulysses has the highest share in the table, accounting on average for nearly two-fifths of the total discussion of Joyce's novels. Among the other high entries, it is also not surprising to find that *The Great Gatsby*, *Huckleberry Finn*, and *Moby-Dick* are particularly prominent in critical analyses of their authors' careers. What is interesting is the systematic difference between the entries for the two types of writer: with the single exception of Twain, the entries for the other six experimental writers are all lower than the entries for the five conceptual writers. This supports the prediction that prominent individual master works are more likely to be produced by conceptual than by experimental novelists.

The evidence of the monographs can be used not only to measure the degree of dominance of a single novel within an author's oeuvre, but also to examine the relative importance of a number of an author's novels. One significant dimension of this is how many of an author's novels are close in quality to his best novel. This can be measured by considering how many novels are candidates to be judged the author's most important. Table 7 presents the

number of different novels by each author that received the most space in at least one of the ten critical monographs analyzed for that author.[188] The table shows that there were only two such novels for Joyce and Melville: nine of the ten monographs on Melville in fact devoted the most space to *Moby-Dick*, and one gave the most to *Mardi*, while nine of the ten studies of Joyce devoted the most space to *Ulysses*, and one gave equal space to *Ulysses* and *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. In contrast, for Conrad, Faulkner, James, and Woolf, no less than six different novels received the most space in at least one of the ten critical monographs analyzed for the appropriate writer. Thus for example Table 2 shows that *To the Lighthouse* received the most space in six monographs, *Jacob's Room* and *The Waves* each received the most in two, and *The Voyage Out*, *Mrs. Dalloway*, and *Between the Acts* each received the most space in one monograph.

Table 7 shows clear differences between conceptual and experimental authors. Four of the five authors for whom only two or three novels are ranked first by at least one critical study are conceptual innovators, whereas six of the seven authors for whom four or more novels are ranked first by at least one monograph are experimental writers. The table therefore suggests that experimental authors tend to produce a relatively large number of works that are candidates for consideration as their most important. This supports an implication of the analysis of the differences between the two types of writer, that the important contributions of experimental novelists are less concentrated than those of their conceptual counterparts, because their incremental procedures tend to distribute their innovations more evenly over a larger number of works.

The Psychology of Writing

Several psychologists have studied the relationship between age and creativity for important writers, and have concluded that poets reach their creative peaks younger than do novelists. Thus Harvey Lehman found that lyric poets were at their best at ages 26-31, and novelists at ages 40-44, Howard Gardner concluded that "Poets who achieve breakthroughs in middle age or later... are more exceptional than their peers in novel writing," and Dean Keith Simonton declared that "the curve [of productivity by age] for novels peaks much later than that for poetry writing."[189] Simonton offered an explanation: "Fast ideation and elaboration are characteristic of lyric poetry, whereas writing novels requires more time both for isolating an original chance configuration and for transforming it into a polished communication configuration."[190]

Simonton appears to assume that poets are conceptual innovators, and that novelists are experimental innovators. The present study, together with an earlier study of modern poets, demonstrate this assumption to be false. Such great conceptual novelists as Fitzgerald, Hemingway, Lawrence, and Melville all produced their greatest novels by the age of 35, just as such major experimental poets as Robert Frost, Robert Lowell, Wallace Stevens, and William Carlos Williams all produced their greatest poems at the age of 40 or later.[191]

Lehman, Gardner, and Simonton appear to have committed an error of aggregation, by assuming that all, or nearly all, important poets were of one type of innovator, and all novelists were of another type. My research reveals that important novelists and poets can be either conceptual or experimental innovators. It might be added that in this respect they resemble important painters and economists, and probably important innovators in all intellectual disciplines.[192]

Conclusion

Most novelists and literary scholars would doubtless agree with William Faulkner's belief that there is no way to predict whether a writer will produce his best work early or late in his career. The results of this study, however, suggest that Faulkner was wrong. As is the case for painters and poets, there appear to be two distinct life cycles for novelists, and which a writer follows is systematically related to the nature of the individual writer's work. Thus conceptual writers tend to produce their most important work considerably earlier in their careers than experimental writers. Although Faulkner understood the differences in approach between conceptual and experimental writers, he did not recognize the difference in the life cycles of the two types. Scott Fitzgerald did. Perhaps this is no accident, for the precipitous rise and equally precipitous fall in the quality of Fitzgerald's work over the course of his career may have caused the conceptual author late in his life to think deeply about the relationship between an author's age and the quality of his work.

Footnotes

I thank Laura Demanski and Joshua Kotin for discussions, Janice Dantes for research assistance, and the National Science Foundation for financial support.

1. Jelliffe 1956, 109.

2. Gwynn and Blotner 1995, 103.

3. Bruccoli 1994, 455.

4. Ousby 1988; Drabble 1998. The total of 130 lines per author refers only to each author's main entry in each book.

5. Moore 1962, Vol. 1; 161.

6. Bell 1980, Vol. 3; 7.

7. Galenson 2001, 2003a.

8. Woolf 1925, Vol. 1; 194.

9. Collins 1971, 324.

10. Collins 1971, 38.

11. Collins 1971, 343.

12. Ford and Lane 1972, 376.

13. Woolf 1925, Vol. 1; 194.

14. Ford and Lane 1972, 259.

15. Ackroyd 1990, 393-95.

16. Smith 1996, 36.

17. Harry Stone argues that the plots of Dickens' early novels were not planned in advance, but that his later novels were planned more carefully; 1987, Introduction. Stone's book reproduces the notes for a number of Dickens' novels. John Butt and Kathleen Tillotson observed, however, that although Dickens' notes for chapters were sometimes made prior to writing, in other cases they were made after he had composed the chapters, to refresh his memory of previous numbers before he wrote later ones; 1968, 27. Stone also recognizes that even in his later novels Dickens continued to make major plot changes well into the process of composition e.g. see 1987, 267.

18. Golding 1985, 214, 219, 228.

19. Melville 2002, 55, 59.

20. Parker 1996, 616.

21. Matthiessen 1941, 425.

22. Lawrence 1956, 387.

23. Vincent 1949, 126-35; Sealts 1988, 68-9.

24. Arvin 1972, 144-45, 148-49.

25. Branch 1974, 255.

26. Lawrence 1956, 390.

27. Kazin 1984, 144.

28. Melville 2002, 41.

29. Branch 1974, 415-16.

30. De Voto 1942, 100.

31. Kazin 1984, 183, 189.

32. Trilling 1951, 117.

33. Kazin 1984, 191. On Frost as an experimental poet, see Galenson 2003.

34. Hearn 2001, 5.

35. Rogers 1968, 5.

36. Rogers 1968, 6.

37. Doyno 1991, 102.

38. Rogers 1968, 7.

39. Emerson 2000, 142-48.

40. De Voto 1942, 53-55.

41. Neider 1959, 265.

42. Emerson 2000, 128.

43. Young 1966, 212.

44. Emerson 2000, 83.

45. Smith 1962, vii, 113.

46. Trilling 1951, 106, 116.

47. De Voto 1942, 89.

48. Ellison 1986, 316.

49. Emerson 2000, 147-48.

50. Emerson 2000, 159.

51. Emerson 2000, 213.

52. James 1937; Vol. 16, 82, 90, 95, 105-06.

53. James 1989, 216-17, 223,228. On Sargent as a conceptual painter, see Galenson 2002.

54. Miller 1972, 171.

55. Miller 1972, 30, 44.

56. McWhirter 1995, 9, 109.

57. Garda 1968, 118-19.

58. Edel 1963, 17; McWhirter 1995, 47.

59. Gard 1968, 118.

60. Woolf 1925; Vol. 1; 280.

61. Orel 1966, 9.

62. Cox 1970, 30.

63. Cox 1970, 158.

64. Gibson 1996, 86.

65. Woolf 1925; Vol. 1; 263.

66. Guerard 1964, 71.

67. Woolf 1925; Vol. 1; 258.

68. Gibson 1996, 119.

69. Gibson 1996, 134-35.

70. Woolf 1925; Vol. 1; 258-59.

71. Leavis 1969, 30.

72. Woolf 1925; Vol. 1; 305.

73. Conrad 1914, 14.

74. Karl 1979, 615.

75. Mudrick 1966, 4.

76. Gordan 1963, 105.

77. Gordan 1963, 107-08.

78. Gordan 1963, 111.

79. Garnett 1962, 31.

80. Kettle 1953, 63.

81. Conrad 1958, 67; Kettle 1953, 63.

82. Kettle 1953, 63-64.

83. Kettle 1953, 64.

84. Gordan 1963, 111.

85. Gordan 1963, 112.

86. Gordan 1963, 108.

87. Sherry 1973, 206.

88. Kettle 1953, 64-65.

89. Deming 1970; Vol. 2; 747.

90. Kenner 1962, 45; Litz 1961, 10.

91. Woolf 1982, 49.

92. Trilling 1979, 27.

93. Wilson 1984, 205.

94. Beja 1992, 64.

95. Litz 1961, 23.

96. Joyce 1986, 1461.

97. Litz 1961, 4,7,9.

98. Litz 1961, 27.

99. O'Brien 1999, 97.

100. O'Brien 1999, 97.

101. Courthion 1942, 92-93. On Picasso as a conceptual painter, see Galenson 2001, Chapter 5.

102. Litz 1972, 96.

103. Litz 1972, 116.

104. Budgen 1960, 174.

105. Litz 1972, 102-03.

106. Bell 1980, Vol. 3; 62.

107. Mepham 1991, xiv.

108. Bell 1980, Vol. 3; 203.

109. Majumdar and McLaurin 1975, 427.

110. Majumdar and McLaurin 1975, 101, 144, 175.

111. Bennett 1964, 142, 148.

112. Woolf 1928, vii-viii.

113. Bell 1980, Vol. 3; 106.

114. Woolf 1976, 72.

115. Woolf 1976, 72.

116. Mepham 1961, xvi.

117. Woolf 1982, 52.

118. Woolf 1982, 71.

119. Majumdar and McLaurin 1975, 180.

120. Majumdar and McLaurin 1975, 191-92.

121. Bell 1980, Vol. 2; 186.

122. Bell 1980, Vol. 3; 152.

123. Majumdar and McLaurin 1975, 243.

124. Moore 1962, Vol. 1; 477, 495.

125. Draper 1970, 168-69.

126. Leavis 1956, 7.

127. Draper 1970, 276. On Eliot as a conceptual poet, see Galenson 2003a.

128. Woolf 1925, Vol. 1; 353.

129. Draper 1970, 333.

130. Moore 1962, Vol. 1; 234.

131. Cushman 1978, 5.

132. Gregory 1933, 59.

133. Leavis 1956, 108-09.

134. Cushman 1978, 25, 192.

135. Sklar 1967, 157.

136. Trilling 1951, 252.

137. Fitzgerald 1945, 310.

138. Ruland and Bradbury 1991, 299-30.

139. Bloom 2002, 41.

140. Claridge 1991, Vol. 2; 48.

141. Bruccoli 1994, 80.

142. Claridge 1991, Vol. 2; 456.

143. Claridge 1991, Vol. 4; 46.

144. Bruccoli 1994, 169.

145. Claridge 1991, Vol. 2; 149.

146. Warren 1966, 34.

147. Bassett 1975, 315.

148. Bassett 1975, 205.

149. Gwynn and Blotner 1995, 233.

150. Warren 1966, 44.

151. Bassett 1975, 302, 144.

152. Bassett 1975, 144.

153. Gwynn and Blotner 1995, 194.

154. Gwynn and Blotner 1995, 176.

155. Gwynn and Blotner 1995, 96.

156. Gwynn and Blotner 1995, 32.

157. Jellife 1956, 90.

158. Jelliffe 1956, 161.

159. Hoffman and Vickery 1960, 72.

160. Slatoff 1960, 147.

161. Slatoff 1960, 149.

162. Kenner 1975, 206.

163. Bassett 1975, 212.

164. Jelliffe 1956, 53; Spender 1955, 48.

165. Jelliffe 1956, 37.

166. Gwynn and Blotner 1995, 206.

167. Jelliffe 1956, 42; Gwynn and Blotner 1995, 207.

168. Meyers 1982, 91.

169. Young 1966, 205.

170. Kazin 1942, 334-35.

171. Young 1966, 284; Baker 1961, 34.

172. Young 1966, 92.

173. Kenner 1975, 120-23; Kermode 1975, 48.

174. Meyers 1982, 14, 78.

175. Barbour and Quirk 1990, 141-42.

176. Young 1966, 93; Reynolds 1976, 238.

177. Reynolds 1976, 12-13, Chapter 6.

178. Meyers 1999, 216.

179. Baker 1961, 33.

180. Meyers 1982, 17.

181. Meyers 1982, 303.

182. Meyers 1982, 454-57.

183. Meyers 1982, 430-31.

184. Meyers 1982, 441.

185. Young 1966, 245-46.

186. The rules for selecting critical monographs were that they had to be published after 1960, and all of an author's novels had to be at risk to be discussed. Thus studies of a writer's early or late works were excluded, as were studies of particular themes in a writer's work. The monographs used for each author are listed in the appendix.

187. These counts were done from each book's index.

188. Since more than 10 monographs were used for Hardy and Joyce, only the first 10 listed for each were counted for Table 7.

189. Lehman 1953, 325; Gardner 1993, 248; Simonton 1995, 185.

190. Simonton 1988, 72.

191. Galenson 2003a, Table 12.

192. Galenson 2003b.

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Table 1: Novelists Included in this Study

Novelist	Year of birth	Year of death
Conrad, Joseph	1857	1924
Dickens, Charles	1812	1870
Faulkner, William	1897	1962
Fitzgerald, F. Scott	1896	1940
Hardy, Thomas	1840	1928
Hemingway, Ernest	1899	1961
James, Henry	1843	1916
Joyce, James	1882	1941
Lawrence, D. H.	1885	1930
Melville, Herman	1819	1891
Twain, Mark	1835	1910
Woolf, Virginia	1882	1941

Source: see text.

Table 2: Frequency Distributions of Numbers of Pages on which Virginia Woolf's Novels are Discussed in Ten Critical Monographs

	Year	Book 1	Book 2	Book 3	Book 4	Book 5	Book 6	Book 7	Book 8	Book 9	Book 10
The Voyage Out	1915	17	4	12	4	18	33	15	21	22	35
Night and Day	1919	9	1	10	2	17	33	12	26	22	16
Jacob's Room	1922	47	7	12	6	19	36	34	28	29	57
Mrs. Dalloway	1925	49	47	11	8	16	48	27	36	25	49
To the Lighthouse	1927	67	62	10	7	27	64	43	38	37	28
Orlando	1927	20	38	2	6	16	30	33	0	19	33
The Waves	1931	40	55	4	8	34	46	15	29	26	42
The Years	1937	14	4	4	2	19	35	22	5	19	40
Between the Acts	1941	26	47	2	8	20	43	20	7	18	26
Total		289	265	67	51	186	368	221	190	217	326

Source: see text and appendix

Table 3: Percentage Distributions of Numbers of Pages on which Virginia Woolf's Novels are Discussed in Ten Critical Monographs

	Year	Book 1	Book 2	Book 3	Book 4	Book 5	Book 6	Book 7	Book 8	Book 9	Book 10	Total
The Voyage Out	1915	5.9%	1.5%	17.9%	7.8%	9.7%	9.0%	6.8%	11.1%	10.1%	10.7%	9.1%
Night and Day	1919	3.1%	0.4%	14.9%	3.9%	9.1%	9.0%	5.4%	13.7%	10.1%	4.9%	7.5%
Jacob's Room	1922	16.3%	2.6%	17.9%	11.8%	10.2%	9.8%	15.4%	14.7%	13.4%	17.5%	13.0%
Mrs. Dalloway	1925	17.0%	17.7%	16.4%	15.7%	8.6%	13.0%	12.2%	18.9%	11.5%	15.0%	14.6%
To the Lighthouse	1927	23.2%	23.4%	14.9%	13.7%	14.5%	17.4%	19.5%	20.0%	17.1%	8.6%	17.2%
Orlando	1927	6.9%	14.3%	3.0%	11.8%	8.6%	8.2%	14.9%	0.0%	8.8%	10.1%	8.7%
The Waves	1931	13.8%	20.8%	6.0%	15.7%	18.3%	12.5%	6.8%	15.3%	12.0%	12.9%	13.4%
The Years	1937	4.8%	1.5%	6.0%	3.9%	10.2%	9.5%	10.0%	2.6%	8.8%	12.3%	7.0%
Between the Acts	1941	9.0%	17.7%	3.0%	15.7%	10.8%	11.7%	9.0%	3.7%	8.3%	8.0%	9.7%
Total		100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: see text and appendix.

Table 4: Most Important Novels by Each Author

Author	Book 1	Book 2	Book 3
Experimental Authors			
Conrad	*Nostromo*, 1904	*Lord Jim*, 1900	*Under Western Eyes*, 1910
Dickens	*Bleak House*, 1853	*David Copperfield*, 1850	*Little Dorrit*, 1857
Faulkner	*Absalom, Absalom!*, 1936	*The Sound and the Fury*, 1929	*Light in August*, 1932
Hardy	*Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, 1891	*Jude the Obscure*, 1895	*The Mayor of Casterbridge*, 1886
James	*The Portrait of a Lady*, 1881	*The Golden Bowl,* 1904	*The Wings of the Dove*, 1902
Twain	*Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, 1885	*The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, 1876	*Pudd'nhead Wilson and Those Extraordinary Twins*, 1894
Woolf	*To the Lighthouse*, 1927	*Mrs. Dalloway*, 1925	*The Waves*, 1931
Conceptual Authors			
Fitzgerald	*The Great Gatsby*, 1925	*Tender is the Night*, 1934	*This Side of Paradise*, 1920
Hemingway	*A Farewell to Arms*, 1929	*The Sun Also Rises*, 1926	*For Whom the Bell Tolls*, 1940
Joyce	*Ulysses*, 1922	*A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, 1916	*Finnegan's Wake*, 1939
Lawrence	*Women in Love*, 1920	*The Rainbow*, 1915	*Sons and Lovers*, 1913
Melville	*Moby-Dick*, 1851	*Mardi*, 1849	*Pierre*, 1852

Source: see text and appendix.

Table 5: Ages at Which Authors Published Most Important Novels

Author	Book 1	Book 2	Book 3
Experimental Authors			
Conrad	47	43	53
Dickens	41	38	45
Faulkner	39	32	35
Hardy	51	55	46
James	38	61	59
Twain	50	41	59
Woolf	45	43	49
Conceptual Authors			
Fitzgerald	29	38	24
Hemingway	30	27	41
Joyce	40	34	57
Lawrence	35	30	28
Melville	32	30	33

Source: Table 4.

Table 6: Average Percentage of Critical Monographs' Discussions Devoted to Each Author's Single Most Important Novel.

Author, Title	Percentage
Joyce, *Ulysses*	38.5
Twain, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*	30.6
Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*	30.2
Melville, *Moby-Dick*	23.4
Hemingway, *A Farewell to Arms*	22.8
Lawrence, *Women in Love*	18.0
Woolf, *To the Lighthouse*	17.2
Hardy, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*	15.7
Conrad, *Nostromo*	13.5
Faulkner, *Absalom, Absalom!*	12.3
Dickens, *Bleak House*	12.0
James, *Portrait of a Lady*	11.4

Source: see text and appendix

Table 7: Number of Different Novels that Recived the Most Space in at Least One Critical Monograph, by Author

Author	n
Joyce	2
Melville	2
Fitzgerald	3
Lawrence	3
Twain	3
Hardy	4
Hemingway	4
Dickens	5
Conrad	6
Faulkner	6
James	6
Woolf	6

Source: see text and appendix. Two or more novels tied for the most space in a monograph were all counted as ranked first.