

Studies of the Effects on Creativity of Having Very Different Parents

Brian O'Connor

University of British Columbia

Liane Gabora

University of British Columbia

Abstract: We tested the hypothesis that having parents who are very different from one another is associated with heightened creativity. In the first study, scores for 591 participants on the five factor model of personality were used to compute the personality vector known to be associated with creativity. Higher scores were significantly correlated with parental difference scores. In the second study, 114 participants were given questionnaires that included a measure of creativity (the Remote Associates Test), and a measure of creative personality (the Creative Personality Scale), as well as measures of parental behavior and personality, and parental conflict. Creativity scores and creative personality scores were significantly correlated with parental differences, but not with measures of parental conflict. We posit that the greater the parental differences, the greater the extent to which the child's worldview contains inconsistencies that invite contemplation, and thereby accustom the child to thinking for him/herself.