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The Acknowledgment of Literary Influence: A Structural Analysis of a German Literary Network

Helmut K. Anheier¹ and Jürgen Gerhards²

This paper analyzes a characteristic syndrome of modern literature identified as “anxiety of influence” by literary critics and as “mania for originality” by art historians. Based on a sociological reformulation of the syndrome as it relates to the structure of acknowledged influence, the paper develops and tests several hypotheses. Data are based on a survey of West German writers and are analyzed by using clustering techniques and correspondence analysis. First, the analysis demonstrates the fragmented and non-hierarchical structure of acknowledged literary influence. Second, the different types of influence (absence distinctiveness, and clusterability) correspond to different professional and literary characteristics of writers. Results highlight one of the contradictions between the cultural code and the professional structure of modern art: at the level of ideology, greatness and genius are equated with the absence of influence and artistic uniqueness. The analysis shows, however, that the denial/absence of acknowledged influence is found among writers who are excluded from the professional networks where reputations are made in the world of literature.

KEY WORDS: sociology of literature; literary influence; literary traditions; social position of writers; social structure of modern literature.

INTRODUCTION

This study presents a sociological analysis of a characteristic syndrome of modern literature. This syndrome, which the literary critic Bloom (1973) described as the “anxiety of influence,” and the art historian Hauser

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(1951:71) diagnosed as the “mania for originality,” addresses the tension between the uniqueness of artistic creation and the awareness of tradition, and the tension between the acknowledgment of literary influence and its rejection. The cultural code or paradigm of modern literature is innovation and originality; its ideological paradox, however, is the virtual impossibility of artistic uniqueness. Work in the areas of reception theory (Reese, 1980) and the sociology of art (Wellek and Warren, 1973; Foster, 1979; Griswold, 1987) gives ample evidence on how the reputation and acclaim of writers is indicated by their influence on other writers. Either they transform literary traditions or genres (e.g., Brecht’s epic theatre, other artistic revolutions in form and style such as the *nouveau roman* or experimental poetry), or they establish themselves as “significant others,” thereby mapping out new ground in artistic creativity.

Bloom offers us a theory of poetry “by way of a description of poetic influence” and by showing how “one poet helps to form another” (1973:5). (Throughout this paper we use “poetic influence” and “literary influence” as synonyms.) Our concern in this paper is both more general and more narrow than his. It is more general because we are not exclusively concerned with “strong poets” and acknowledged genius, but also with the “weaker talents,” as Bloom calls the mediocre writer, together with unknown producers of literature. Although the works of mediocre writers have only documentary value, their inclusion allows us to examine the generality of the syndrome.

Our aim is more narrow than that of literary criticism because a structural approach is necessarily insufficient to capture all the complexity, nuances, and ambiguities of intra- and interliterary relationships. Moreover, our data consist of the acknowledgment of influence by writers in response to survey questions (see below). We do not include indications of direct and indirect influences as expressed in their oeuvre, or as identified by literary critics and reviewers.

The Significance of Influence

Before entering into structural analysis, it is useful to consider the importance of influence in relation to the social context of modern literature.

The tension between the cultural code of literature and the aesthetic ranking as well as social position of the writer has been well described by Brecht in *A Man’s a Man*: “If you name yourself, you always name another.” In the absence of a formal professional structure, writers depend

on others who are both peers and competitors for their self-image, reputation, and social position.

The field of literature has no formal entry requirements. Consequently, patronage and peer relations become important mechanisms for recruitment of new writers, for gaining access to a literary field, and for attaining status there. As Bourdieu (1985) points out, the field of restricted production of symbolic goods—for instance, poetry—tends to evolve toward the model of a “reputational” profession (where professional hierarchy is based on reputation) with the ultimate reward of becoming part of “literary canon,” while mass-culture and large-scale cultural production are similar to “market” professions, where hierarchy is based on market success (see Abbott, 1981; Dimaggio, 1987).

Success in the market and success in reputational hierarchies do not necessarily overlap. As reported by Gerhards and Anheier (1987), authors of “light literature” and mass culture may enjoy relatively high incomes but low prestige, whereas others may find critical acclaim but receive relatively low income. However, as a relatively young and unknown poet remarked in one of our interviews, “it seems easier to become a well-to-do writer than a well-known writer.” Only among elite writers do high reputation and market success coincide.

Parallel to increased differentiation in genre and institutions since the 19th century (DiMaggio, 1987; Bourdieu, 1985; Berman, 1983; Haferkorn, 1974; Rarisch, 1976), modern literature has continued to be characterized by *aesthetic uncertainty*. Writers no longer agree on literary form, technique, substance, and style, nor on criteria by which to differentiate good from mediocre and mediocre from bad literature. Critics and other legitimized experts act as judges of the quality of art. Often they seek to discover the influence that can be detected in a writer’s work, and tend to compare writers to one another (Becker, 1974, 1982; Van Rees, 1985). In particular, the literary critic fabricates “creative interpretation for the benefit of the creator” (Bourdieu, 1985:18), and usually makes cross-references between the creator and other writers as competitors or influencers, and thus provides data for the audience of peers as to the writer’s alter egos.

Modern literature lacks universal criteria for evaluating and identifying art. Its cultural code expects innovation, originality, and breach of tradition. Lacking both generally accepted criteria of how to evaluate literature, and clear guidelines for creating prose or poetry, the writers find themselves in a position of aesthetic uncertainty. Some of this uncertainty may be

reduced by using other writers as reference points, or by seeking other writers as fathers, in Bloom's terms. In literature, as in other arts, the most visible references are represented in the literary canon.

A Structural Reformulation

Although a review of influence as discussed in literary criticism and art history (see Schmidt, 1988; Reese, 1980; Gombrich, 1972) is beyond the scope of this paper, we will briefly introduce the types suggested by Bloom (1973), since these are of direct relevance to our problem.

Bloom identifies five types of influence between the "poet as father" and the "poet as son": *Poetic misprision*, where the latter poet misinterprets the former; *antithesis*, in which case the poet as son establishes himself as the antidote to his father; *discontinuity*, where the latter poet willfully breaks with his precursor; *daemonization*, by which the son generalizes away the uniqueness of his father's work; *ascesis*, as the shaman-like attainment of solitude and self-purgation, where the parent poem is curtailed rather than emptied as in discontinuity; and finally, *submission*, where the later poet writes in the style of the precursor's characteristic work.

Here, our concern is to analyze the structure of acknowledged influence that may arise from the influence types described by Bloom. To this end, we have to simplify matters and consider, however crudely, three types of influence: *denial* (or absence of influence), *distinctiveness*, and *clusterability*.

Denial of influence is directly related to Bloom's categories of discontinuity and ascesis. Obviously, if all writers denied influence, it would be difficult to piece together an acknowledged influence structure. The two concepts, distinctiveness and clusterability, demand more explanation; they incorporate the contents of misprision, daemonization, and submission. Like denial/absence of influence, distinctiveness and clusterability are concepts intended to capture the structural form of influence: If all writers had a distinctive influence (or distinctive combinations of different influencers), then the field of literary influence would present a highly fragmented structure. Influencer and influenced would form a horizontal arrangement of disjunct sets in one-to-one correspondence. Conversely, if all writers shared the same influence, they could be clustered into a single set *vis-à-vis* a single influencer.

Located between these ideal type influence configurations is the hierarchical influence structure. For example, let us assume that a group of 10 writers all acknowledged Shakespeare's influence. Furthermore, 5 of the 10 writers are also influenced by Baudelaire and T. S. Elliot, while the others share Goethe and Tolstoy as influencer. In this simple case, the hierarchical

position of Shakespeare (as the superset) located above Baudelaire/Elliot and Goethe/Tolstoy, each pair in a different subset, would represent the structure of influence, or the literary tradition amongst these writers.

For the sociology of literature, the question of literary influence goes beyond Bloom's Freudian explanation of the relationship between the poet as father and the poet as son. Based on Bloom's interpretation, we ask, What is the structure of intraliterary influence among many writers, including "weaker talent" and not just between two "strong writers?" Does the anxiety of influence lead to highly fragmented intraliterary structures with no "superego" presiding over other influencers? Are some literary fathers "composite figures," as Bloom put it, who form supersets synonymous with their epoch and contemporaries?

DATA AND METHODOLOGY

Research design and data collection focused on the writers in a large West German city. Art and literature in West Germany are not dominated by a "cultural center" such as New York City in the United States, London in Great Britain, or Paris in France. Rather, the country is characterized by several competing cultural centers. Data were collected in one such center. Rather than taking a sample, we included the total population of writers living in or nearby the selected city. We defined as a writer any producer of fictional texts, thereby excluding authors of science, travel, and "how-to" literature. We applied neither aesthetic, artistic, social, nor any other criteria to differentiate between prominent and unknown writers, refined and mass literature, or high culture and popular culture. Using several published and unpublished directories in addition to information gathered from publishers, critics, cultural institutions, and local writers' groups, we identified 222 writers. We managed to conduct personal interviews with 150 (67.6%) of the 222 writers with the help of a semistandardized questionnaire. We collected data on the missing cases as far as possible. Using a number of secondary sources such as recent editions of *Kürschners Literaturlexikon* (the most complete directory of German writers available), we succeeded in gathering data on age, sex, and number of book publications. For all three variables, we found no statistically significant differences between valid and missing cases.

As part of this personally administered questionnaire, we asked this question: "Are there one or more authors whose work had a central influence on your personal way of writing?" If respondents answered with "yes," they were asked to name up to three such influences. It could be argued that the limitation to three influences introduces a systematic bias.

Since about one-third of the surveyed writers acknowledged three, it is possible that some may have mentioned four, five, or even more influences. However, during the personally administered interviews we found little indication that authors wished to add more influences. In any case, additional influences mentioned by the respondent would have been recorded by the interviewer, as happened in a few cases.

Note that the question did not ask about influences outside the realm of literature. Influences by parents, friends, teachers, or spouses were not recorded unless these persons happened to be writers themselves. We should emphasize that two interpretations of influence denial are possible. The first interpretation, based on the virtual impossibility of artistic uniqueness, assumes that all writers are influenced by other writers. In this case, denial of influence relates to Bloom's notion of influence anxiety. The second interpretation presupposes that some writers are not influenced and that denial implies neither refusal to acknowledge influence nor influence anxiety, but simply its absence. With the help of the correspondence analysis below we will show that both interpretations apply to different types of writers.

Of the 150 writers, 43 (28.7%) acknowledged no influence. Of the 107 (71.3%) who did 22 (14.7%) named one; 34 (22.7%) two; and 51 (34%) three influencers. The 107 writers influenced by other writers in their style of writing named a total of 134 influencers.

The great majority of the influencers are authors of the 20th century, and about one-third (33%) of those named were still active in the field of literature after 1960. Authors from the German-speaking countries dominate particularly for the post-1960s period with 79%. For influencers active between 1900 and 1960, 59% are German speaking; a similar proportion can be observed prior to the 20th century (55%). Influencers from other countries are, with a few exceptions, representatives of English, American, French, and Russian literature. The preponderance of German writers seems to suggest the continued existence of national literary traditions. Presumably, similar surveys among English-, French-, or Spanish-speaking writers would reveal comparable results.

Few writers act as common influencer to five or more writers in our sample. In fact, only nine of the 134 were named as influencers five or more times. Together, these nine writers account for about one-fourth (24.7%) of the total of 243 influences acknowledged. Thus, the majority of influencers is selected only once or twice. Those writers receiving at least five nominations as influencers are Thomas Mann (10), Ernest Hemingway (9), Kurt Tucholsky (8), Heinrich Böll (7), Heinrich Heine (6), Erich Kästner (5), Heinrich von Kleist (5), Berthold Brecht (5), and Rolf D. Brinckmann (5).

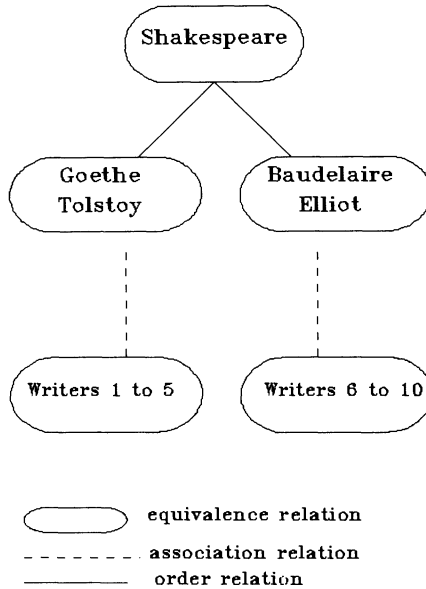


Fig. 1. Hypothetical example of HICLAS analysis.

Hierarchical Classes and Two-Way Cluster Analysis

De Boeck and Rosenberg (1988) proposed a discrete, categorical model of analysis of two-way two-mode data arrays, HICLAS. It goes beyond related approaches such as two-way clustering (Hartigan, 1975), blockmodeling (White *et al.*, 1976), and Boolean factor analysis (Mickey *et al.*, 1983) by postulating an order relation (hierarchy) among classes of objects and attributes.

The model developed by De Boeck and Rosenberg (1988) is based on a Boolean data array, and calculates a simultaneous hierarchical model for objects and attributes. In our case, writers are objects naming other writers as influencers or attributes. The model contains three set-theoretical relations. The first is the equivalence relation, in which attributes are considered equal if and only if they can be matched to an identical set of objects. In the same way, objects are equivalent if they have identical sets of attributes. The second relation is the association relation, which establishes a symmetric association between object and attributes classes. Thus, while the equivalence relation groups writers according to their influences, and influencers according to those influenced, the association relation links attributes (the influencers) and objects (the influenced).

The third, the order relation, is of particular interest. This relation establishes a hierarchy among object and attribute classes. An object class of influenced writers is below another object class of influenced writers, if and only if its associated attribute classes (influencers) are a proper subset of the associated attribute class(es) of the other. Conversely, an attribute class of influencers is below another attribute class of influencers if and only if its associated object classes (influenced writers) are a proper subset of the associated object class(es) of the other. The order relation is defined as a partial order, and implies both overlapping and strict hierarchies. We hypothesize that if the field of acknowledged literary influence is highly fragmented and individualistic, according to literary criticism, we should expect relatively small attribute and object classes, combined with a relative absence of order relations.

The hypothetical examples in Fig. 1 illustrate both the three types of relations identified by HICLAS and the way that a hierarchical structure can be used to show literary influence. For this reason we return to the earlier example in which a group of 10 writers all acknowledged Shakespeare's influence. Five of the 10 writers also acknowledged Baudelaire's and T. S. Elliot's influences, while the others mentioned Goethe and Tolstoy. The equivalence relation would group (Shakespeare), (Baudelaire, Elliot) and (Goethe, Tolstoy) as attribute classes, and (writer₁ . . . writer₅) and (writer₆ . . . writer₁₀) as object classes. The association relation links (Goethe, Tolstoy) with (writer₁ . . . writer₅) and (Baudelaire, Elliot) with (writer₆ . . . writer₁₀). The order relations establishes the hierarchy (Shakespeare) > (Baudelaire, Elliot) and (Shakespeare) > (Goethe, Tolstoy).

The Structure of Acknowledged Literary Influence

The results of the HICLAS analysis confirm our hypothesis: there is a relative absence of equivalence relations, and both object classes and attribute classes remain small. Object classes have never more than 7 writers as members (Fig. 2). Attribute classes are nonhierarchical, and make up a "horizontal" structure of influencers, which contains more than one influencer in only one of the first nine classes. Thus, we find a relative preponderance of association relations, linking small object and attribute classes, rather than order relations. In fact, hierarchical tendencies occur only among objects (writers) and not among their acknowledged influencers (attributes).

HICLAS first identifies large object and attribute classes with high goodness of fit indicators, down to small classes with lower goodness of fit. In this case, already after the ninth class, HICLAS begins to identify

individual writers each with a distributive combination of influences. The predominance of distinctive combinations among the 107 writers acknowledging influence is the reason why the overall goodness of fit, ranging between 0 and 1, remains rather low. The model with nine classes, presented in Fig. 2, has a goodness of fit of .23 only. After the ninth class, when HICLAS begins to select individual writers and distinctive combinations of influencers, the goodness of fit necessarily continues to increase by small increments. For example, allowing for 20 ranks among object and attribute classes results in a goodness of fit of only .39.

However, while the model does not identify a hierarchical structure of acknowledged influence, the influencers of the 39 “clusterable” writers represent few surprises and are all contained in the commonly accepted canon of literature:

Ernest Hemingway (1898–1961), the leading spokesman of the “lost generation” and 1954 Nobel Prize winner, who reported the disillusionment of his times in characteristic understatement and spare dialogue.

Kurt Tucholsky (1890–1935), as the political commentator and critic, poet, satirist, and essayist, who, as Benn once put it, tried to resist the rise of fascism with his typewriter, represents the disillusioned moralist.

Erish Kästner (1899–1974), novelist and author of children and youth literature, represents a complex character both politically and in his literature, whose work ranges from the highly polemic to the sentimental, from the active criticism of “bourgeois values” to their glorification in his escapist novels during the Nazi regime.

Rolf D. Brinckmann (1940–1975), the only post-World War II representative among the influencers, is in many ways the prototype of the young artist in the role of the provocative rebel. He was an early vanguard of the antiauthoritarian movement of the 1960s. Brinckmann introduced the poetry of the American Underground of the 1960s to German-speaking audiences and became himself widely regarded as a poet of pop art literature.

Robert Musil (1880–1942) portrays in his novels the decline of the “bourgeois” world of the Austrian-Hungarian Empire, its morbidity and loss of legitimation, where sensibility and intellect confront the inhumanity of authoritarianism.

To some extent, the theme of the transformation of “bourgeois” culture is also present in the work of *Thomas Mann* (1875–1955), the 1929 Nobel Prize recipient, and perhaps the greatest German novelist of the 20th century.

Heinrich Heine (1797–1856), journalist and poet, author of travelogues and “Lieder,” worked in the first half of the 19th century. Spending many years in exile, his life and works are characteristic of the politically engaged author of the pre-March era.

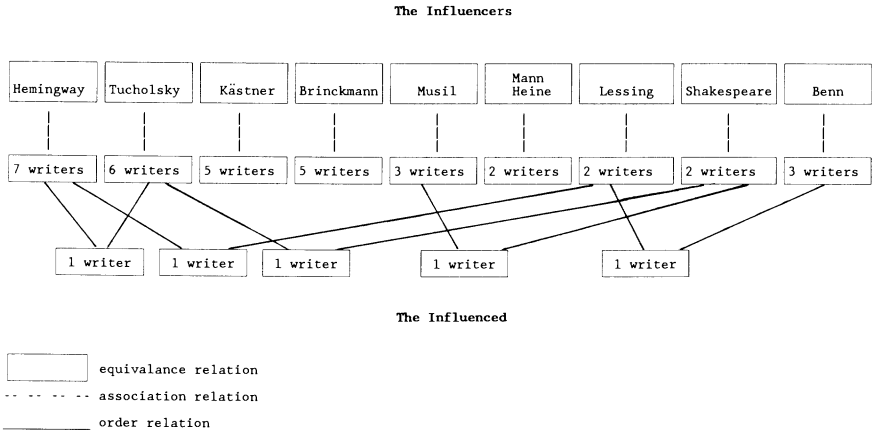


Fig. 2. Hierarchical class analysis of literary influence.

Doris Lessing is the only female writer among the influencers. Born in Rhodesia in 1919, she is also the only author among the influencers in Fig. 2 still alive.

William Shakespeare is perhaps the archetypical influencer, since he belongs “to the giant age before the flood, before the anxiety of influence became central” (Bloom, 1973:11).

Finally, *Gotfried Benn* (1886–1956), critic, essayist, author of sometimes cynical yet often explosive texts, and early advocate of an “aesthetic of ugliness,” struggled throughout his life against nihilism. In search of a solution he soon regretted his brief fascination with fascism.

Six of the 10 influencers contained in the identified attribute classes represent authors active in the first part of the 20th century. They are essentially pre-World War II authors. Two, *Doris Lessing* and *R. D. Brinckmann*, can be regarded as contemporary writers. Finally, *Shakespeare* and *Heine* represent the classics among the influencers. *Benn*, *Musil*, *Tucholsky*, and to a less degree *Kästner*, all speak with disillusionment about the characteristic conflict of the first part of the 20th century, the problem of human values and individuality in an industrial and bureaucratic world.

Having looked at the attribute classes, we briefly consider the influenced, the writers in the object classes. There is some tendency, albeit not a very strong one, for characteristics of the influencer to correspond with those of the influenced. This is perhaps most clearly the case for “political” authors choosing a “political” influence, namely *Tucholsky*; or

male authors having Hemingway as influence, and two female authors naming Doris Lessing. However, since object classes are small, it is difficult to generalize based on two or three writers only. Therefore, we have taken a different approach, and have considered differences between writers who either deny or do not acknowledge influence from those with distinctive and clusterable influences. By *distinctive influence* we refer to writers who acknowledge either unique single influencers or distinct combinations of influencers. By *clusterable influence* we mean writers in the first nine object classes as they stand in an association relation to the attribute classes displayed in Fig. 2.

Correlates of Acknowledged Literary Influence

In this section we follow two rival lines of enquiry: First, does the anxiety of influence represent a general syndrome of modern literature independent of genre classifications and aspects of the social structure? Second, can we detect systematic differences between those writers who either deny or acknowledge influence, as well as between those who choose either distinctive or clusterable influences? Previous works in the sociology of art and literature (Bourdieu, 1985; DiMaggio, 1987; Becker, 1982; Van Rees, 1985) suggest several explanatory variables that might be useful for testing these hypotheses. We have grouped these variables under separate headings: genre classification, literary intention, literary problems, exposure to professional culture, and participation and inclusion in the profession's reputational and commercial structure.

In order to measure *genre*, one of art's major organizing principles (Bourdieu, 1985; DiMaggio, 1987; Becker, 1982), we first asked respondents if they saw themselves primarily as poets, novelists, or generalists (i.e., writers with no genre specializations). We then added follow-up questions, and inquired if the author wrote in the local vernacular or composed literary essays. Thus, in addition to genre segmentation (poetry, prose, generalists), the distinction between low culture in the form of vernacular "light literature" and high culture genres points to a prestige hierarchy.

Literary intentions are constructed as three dummy variables that, in turn, are based on a recording of answers to the following questions: "What are the intentions underlying your literary work?" and "How did you come to be a writer?" Literary intentions were recorded in three categories: (1) critical enlightenment of the reading public, (2) entertainment of the audience, and (3) self- or ego expression (i.e., externalization of one's inner feelings and thoughts through writing). With regard to literary intention, we presume that writers whose primary intention is the critical en-

lightenment of their audience are more likely to acknowledge literary influence in the form of political influence and orientation. On the other side, expression of one's inner self as literary intent may lead to the rejection of influence.

Writers who confront *problems of literary form and techniques* and experience aesthetic uncertainty may seek "guidance" among those represented in the literary canon. They are more likely to acknowledge influence than are writers without such difficulties. The variable is based on a recording of answers to the following open-ended question that was asked at the end of interview: "Taking everything together, what is the biggest problem you face as a writer?"

We used several variables to measure *exposure to literary culture and tradition*: First, writers who study literature and fine arts at the university level increase their familiarity with the literary canon. They may be more likely to acknowledge influence simply because they have been exposed to "writers as fathers" and introduced to a meritocratic culture (see DiMaggio, 1987). Second, we include an indication of the amount of information seeking done by the writers, based on the frequency with which writers in the sample followed literary criticism and cultural events in the media and in professional journals. We split the obtained frequency distribution at the median.

Next to exposure, we hypothesize that *participation* in formal and informal professional associations may increase the likelihood of writers acknowledging influence since they are exposed to the formal professional culture. Through professional interaction, writers may become more aware of each other's work, and recognize the influence of others on their own writing. A similar yet perhaps more direct effect can be expected in the case of membership in informal literary clubs and circles. Historically important mechanisms for literary orientation, artistic taste, and identity formation (Gerhards, 1986), informal circles may enact the "living tradition" of contemporary literary culture.

The dualistic and incomplete system of reputational and market professionalism in art makes it necessary to distinguish between participation and *inclusion* (DiMaggio, 1987; Bourdieu, 1985). By inclusion we refer to the extent to which a writer is part of the reputational structure of the profession, which includes—for example—the receipt of prizes, stipends, and honors, or membership in the PEN club.

The effects of literary honors and prizes received or of membership in the PEN club can be predicted in two ways. They may encourage the acknowledgment of influence simply by bringing the writer into greater symbolic proximity to the literary canon and other influences. In contrast, by being acknowledged by the profession as "noteworthy," "important," or

“significant,” recipients of honors and prizes and members of the exclusive PEN club may emphasize their literary distinctiveness and deny influence.

We also included several aspects of market professionalism. The more market considerations dominate literary production, the less likely many writers acknowledge literary influence. In such cases, the market—in the form of consumer tastes or publishers’ preferences with a view to commercial success—serve as guidance and orientation (DiMaggio, 1987). We would expect a genuine absence rather than denial of literary influence. As a measure of market professionalism, we asked respondents approximately what percentage of their literary work was determined in its form and content not by the writer but by the publisher or agent. We then split the obtained distribution at the median. Similarly, we controlled for professional artistic success by including the mean proportion of the average monthly income derived from literary activities. Finally, we include a variable relating to professional experience in the field of literary production. Professional age (number of years since first publication, divided into two groups at the median) may help us understand differences in the acknowledgment of influence by “young, unknown writers” and “established authors.”

Correspondence Analysis

Correspondence analysis (Greenacre, 1984) and its implementation, known as KORRES (Blasius and Rohlinger, 1988), matches simultaneously rows and columns of contingency tables. Similar to principal component analysis, it projects rows and columns into a lower dimensioned space of orthogonal vectors. The structure of the vector configuration is based on a chi-square metric. Although similar to factor analysis, correspondence analysis goes beyond many multivariate procedures, and accepts nominal, ordinal, and interval level data, which makes it particularly suitable for many social science data problems, where data are often “qualitative” and typically of lower level measurement.

The data are taken from the same survey of writers. Correspondence analysis takes an array of contingency tables as input, where the three types of influence constitute the columns, and the various “independent variables” make up the rows. The aim of correspondence analysis is to reduce the complexity of information contained in the contingency tables by examining the relative contribution of variables in explaining row and column variances. The number of dimensions of the vector space depends on the number of columns c and has a maximum $c-1$; in this case there are two dimensions since we are dealing with three columns (types of influences) as input.

Table I. Correspondence Analysis of Types of Literary Influence

| Column contribution Type of influence | Total model | | First axis | | | Second axis | | |
|--|-------------|------|------------|------|------|-------------|------|------|
| | MAS | INR | INR | SCOR | INR | LOC | SCOR | INR |
| No influence | .273 | .433 | .133 | .999 | .726 | -.004 | .001 | .001 |
| Distinctive influence | .447 | .260 | -.053 | .188 | .188 | -.061 | .569 | .365 |
| Clusterable influence | .280 | .038 | .045 | .166 | .086 | .101 | .834 | .634 |
| Row contributions | | | | | | | | |
| 1. Genres | | | | | | | | |
| Does not write in vernacular | .047 | .033 | -.024 | .974 | .004 | .004 | .026 | .000 |
| Writes in vernacular | .009 | .044 | .070 | .923 | .006 | -.020 | .077 | .001 |
| Does not write essays | .026 | .051 | .056 | .144 | .012 | -.136 | .856 | .107 |
| Writes essays | .029 | .057 | -.031 | .044 | .004 | .145 | .956 | .135 |
| Does not write poetry | .049 | .001 | -.008 | .516 | .000 | .007 | .484 | .001 |
| Writes poetry | .007 | .004 | .059 | .583 | .004 | -.050 | .417 | .004 |
| Does not write prose | .043 | .019 | .071 | 1.00 | .033 | .001 | .000 | .000 |
| Writes prose | .013 | .061 | -.228 | 1.00 | .102 | -.003 | .000 | .000 |
| Not a generalist | .046 | .000 | .003 | .243 | .000 | .006 | .758 | .000 |
| Generalist | .010 | .001 | -.009 | .088 | .000 | -.030 | .912 | .002 |
| 2. Literary intention | | | | | | | | |
| Not enlightenment | .040 | .009 | .030 | .384 | .006 | -.039 | .616 | .013 |
| Enlightenment | .016 | .021 | -.074 | .361 | .013 | .099 | .639 | .034 |
| Not entertainment | .047 | .007 | -.003 | .007 | .000 | -.040 | .993 | .016 |
| Entertainment | .009 | .033 | .024 | .014 | .001 | .198 | .986 | .081 |
| Not self-expression | .048 | .041 | .086 | .768 | .053 | .047 | .232 | .024 |
| Self-expression | .008 | .247 | -.517 | .760 | .316 | -.291 | .240 | .147 |
| 3. Literary problems | | | | | | | | |
| Does not face problems | .050 | .017 | .044 | .525 | .015 | -.042 | .475 | .020 |
| Faces problems | .006 | .125 | -.336 | .512 | .108 | .328 | .488 | .151 |
| 4. Exposure to literary culture | | | | | | | | |
| High degree of information seeking | .034 | .014 | -.063 | .875 | .020 | .024 | .125 | .004 |
| Low degree of information seeking | .022 | .022 | .097 | .879 | .032 | -.036 | .121 | .006 |
| Studied literature | .027 | .003 | -.013 | .123 | .001 | -.035 | .877 | .007 |
| Did not study literature | .030 | .003 | .014 | .170 | .001 | .031 | .830 | .006 |
| Not member of informal association | .044 | .005 | .020 | .313 | .003 | -.029 | .686 | .008 |
| Member of informal association | .012 | .016 | -.064 | .283 | .008 | .102 | .717 | .029 |
| 4.2 Reputational professionalism | | | | | | | | |
| Not member of PEN | .050 | .007 | .030 | .610 | .007 | .024 | .390 | .006 |
| Member of PEN | .006 | .049 | -.224 | .583 | .048 | -.189 | .417 | .050 |
| Not member of formal association | .031 | .002 | .011 | .154 | .001 | .025 | .846 | .004 |
| Member of formal association | .025 | .002 | -.011 | .101 | .000 | -.031 | .899 | .005 |
| Did not receive prizes and honors | .040 | .019 | .067 | .821 | .026 | .031 | .179 | .008 |
| Received prizes and honors | .016 | .044 | -.156 | .811 | .060 | -.075 | .189 | .021 |

Table I (Continued)

| Column contribution Type of influence | Total model | | First axis | | | Second axis | | |
|--|-------------|------|------------|------|------|-------------|------|------|
| | MAS | INR | INR | SCOR | INR | LOC | SCOR | INR |
| 5. Market professionalism | | | | | | | | |
| Below 50% of income from writing | .040 | .002 | -.003 | .021 | .000 | .021 | .979 | .004 |
| Above 50% of income from writing | .016 | .004 | .012 | .048 | .000 | -.054 | .952 | .010 |
| Below 25% determination of work | .013 | .028 | -.148 | .906 | .042 | -.048 | .094 | .006 |
| Above 25% determination of work | .043 | .009 | .045 | .908 | .013 | -.014 | .092 | .002 |
| 7. Professional age | | | | | | | | |
| Below median professional age | .023 | .033 | .072 | .326 | .018 | -.103 | .674 | .054 |
| Above median professional age | .025 | .038 | -.107 | .672 | .043 | .075 | .328 | .031 |

Several coefficients are important in interpreting the results of the correspondence analysis, which are presented in Table I. *Mass* (MAS) indicates the relative mass of variables. Mass, which ranges between 0 and 1 for each row and column variable, adds up to 1 across rows and columns, respectively. For example, under the column “MAS” in Table I we can see that the relation between writers with distinctive and clusterable influences is 447 to 280, or about 5 to 3. Similarly, members of the PEN club stand in a relative mass relation of 6 to 50 to nonmembers.

Inertia (INR), ranging between 0 and 1, indicates to what extent row and column variables determine the model and its axes. As was the case for mass, inertia coefficients sum up to unity for rows and columns, respectively. For example, we can see in Table I that, for the column variables, writers with no influencer determine the model to 43.3%, the first axis to 72.6%, and the second axis to only 1%. Thus, we can conclude that the variable *no influence* carries the highest inertia among the column variables. The variable determines to a large extent the first axis, but is virtually insignificant as far as the second axis is concerned. Similarly, membership in the PEN club determines the whole model to 4.9%, the first axis to 4.8%, and the second axis to 5%.

Location (LOC), ranging between -1 and +1, indicates the coordinates of the variable in the lower dimensioned vector space. If we imagine a two-dimensional coordinate system, we locate the column variable *no influence* at coordinates .133 on the first axis, and at -.004 on the second

axis. The row variable *member of PEN* is situated in the neighboring quadrant at coordinates $-.224$ on the first axis and $-.189$ on the second.

The *squared correlation* (SCOR), ranging between 0 and 1, indicates the proportion of variance in the row and column variables explained by the axis. In Table I we see that the first axis explains nearly all the variance of the column variable *no influence*, and 58.3% of the row variable *member of PEN*. The squared correlations can be interpreted similar to factor loadings. As in many applications of factor analysis, we have chosen 35% of the variance explained by the axis as the criterion value.

Overall, the first axis explains 59.5% of the total variance, while the second axis accounts for the remaining 40.5%. The overall model is determined 43.3% by writers who do not acknowledge influence, followed by the group of writers with distinctive combinations of influences (26%), and finally, by those with clusterable influences (30.7%).

As can be seen under “column contributions” in Table I, the first axis accounts for the difference between the acknowledgment and the denial/absence of influence. The second axis helps explain the differences between distinctiveness and clusterability of influences. The variable *no influence* determines to 72.6% the first axis, whereas *distinctiveness* and *clusterability of influence* determine the second axis to 36.5% and 63.4%, respectively.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

We will first consider the differences between the denial/absence and the acknowledgment of literature (first axis), followed by a discussion of the contrasts between clusterability and distinctiveness (second axis).

Denial/Absence vs. Affirmation

What corresponds to writers who either deny influence or are not influenced (positive values on LOC on first axis in Table I)? First, genre types determine the answer to this question to about 20% for the entire model and to 16.5% for the first axis, which indicates the difference between acknowledgment and denial of influence (Table I). In this respect the first axis identifies writers of light literature in the local vernacular and poets. The model does not differentiate among writers of prose in terms of influence denial or affirmation. However, we may assume that poets— for whom, according to Bloom (1973) the anxiety of influence is most acute—

deny literary influence, whereas low-status writers of vernacular literature tend not to be influenced.

Second, authors who do not acknowledge influence also do not report a clear literary intention: neither enlightenment, entertainment, nor ego expression help identify this group of writers (Table I). Thus, explicit literary intent corresponds to the affirmation of influence. Third, affirmation of influence seems associated with writers who experience problems of literary form and techniques, whereas the absence of literary problems corresponds to its denial/absence of influence.

Fourth, writers denying influence show lower degrees of exposure to literary culture: they are less likely to hold university degrees in literature, less likely to seek information, and are less likely to be members of informal clubs and literary circles. Denial of influence seems to correspond to low levels of orientation behavior and a detachment from literary culture.

Fifth, writers not affirming literary influence appear largely outside of formal and informal reputational structures. In terms of reputational professionalism, they are neither members of the PEN club, nor likely recipients of literary prizes and honors. Therefore, to the detachment from literary culture, we can add the relative exclusion from reputational and formal professional organizations as a characteristic of influence denial. In terms of market professionalism, we find that the work of writers denying influence tends to be determined to a larger extent by publishers and agents than that of writers acknowledging influence.

Sixth, writers not acknowledging influence are of relatively young professional age. If we also recall that they are rare recipients of literary honors and prizes, they convey the impression of writers at earlier stages of their professional career, who are not (yet) integrated into, and part of, the reputational structure. In addition, we have seen that authors writing light literature in the local vernacular tend not to acknowledge influence. As producers of "illegitimate art" (Bourdieu, 1985), they are excluded from high-culture genres and their associated professional and reputational structures (Gerhards and Anheier, 1989).

Distinctiveness and Clusterability

The second axis shows the differences between distinctiveness (negative values on LOC) and clusterability of influence (positive values on LOC). Those with distinctive influences are generalists and show little genre specialization. They tend not to name a specific literary intent, with the possible exception of ego expression, although the squared correlation with the second axis is fairly low (.24). In contrast, the writers of clusterable

influences appear to share external literary intents, namely enlightenment and entertainment. They also report facing difficulties of literary techniques, while writers with distinctive influences who are more likely not to experience such problems.

The group of writers with distinctive influences seems to correspond to the high-cultured, well-educated "generalist literati." They are more likely than other writers to be members of professional associations, including the PEN club, and have received literary honors and prizes. In contrast, writers with clusterable influences are less likely to have studied literature, and do not tend to be members of formal professional associations. As relatively older writers they are members of informal literary circles.

In summary, for high-culture genres, the lack of professional inclusion and the detachment from literary culture seem to differentiate writers not acknowledging influence from those who do. Literary intent and, in particular, reputational professionalism seems at the core of the difference between distinctive and clusterable influences. Authors with distinctive influences have the characteristics of the professional yet generalist writers, while those with clusterable influences present the image of the "engaged amateur."

CONCLUSION

This paper addressed a characteristic syndrome of modern literature identified by art critics as anxiety of influence or mania for originality. A sociological reformulation of literary criticism's understanding of this central aspect of modern art led to several questions and hypotheses that guided our analysis.

We have found that the structure of literary influence is highly fragmented and nonhierarchical. We detected neither composite fathers nor vertically differentiated traditions of literature. In only one instance did an influence class contain two authors. We further demonstrated that it may not be the anxiety of influence as such but rather the fragmentation and absence of hierarchy in influence structures that is characteristic of modern literature.

Finally, we showed that the three types of acknowledged influence (absence, distinctiveness, and clusterability) correspond to distinct characteristics of writers. Our analysis suggests that the absence of (acknowledged) influence corresponds to writers outside the professional culture and structure. Distinctiveness of acknowledged influence appears characteristic of the generalist yet professional writer, while clusterability corresponds to the image of the engaged amateur.

Referring to Bloom's thesis of the anxiety of influence, the results of the study point to a contradiction between the cultural code and the social reality of literary production in modern art: at the level of ideology, greatness and genius are equated with the absence of influence. Yet absence of acknowledged influence seems more a sign of exclusion from the reputational structures of the profession. It is the distinctiveness of literary influence, the search for a niche by selecting a singular, distinctive, and original influence (or combination of influencers), that seems characteristic of the orientation behavior of professional, generalist writers of modern literature.

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