A content analysis of books which remained on the New York Times Best-Seller lists for eight months or more, 1955-1959

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A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF BOOKS WHICH REMAINED ON THE NEW YORK TIMES BEST-SELLER LISTS FOR EIGHT MONTHS OR MORE, 1955-1959

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF ATLANTA UNIVERSITY IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SCIENCE IN LIBRARY SERVICE

BY

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Books are one of the important media of mass communications. Through them ideas are transmitted from one reader to another and from one generation to another. A particular species of the book world which has gained a good deal of attention has been the best-selling novel. This attention given to the best-selling novel has come as a possible result of the wide readership of these books. Numerous studies have been made of best-sellers in order to ascertain what value, if any, they might have for the reading audience, what factors contribute to making a best-seller, and the types of books which tend to become best-selling novels.

Related Studies

Hazel A. Pullings conducted a study to determine whether the best-selling novels were becoming better or worse. She used the content analysis method of research and analyzed the best-sellers covering the first half of the twentieth century; the top 10 novels for the midpoint in each decade were used. Four critics of each novel were selected at random from reviews in the Book Review Digest. Critical opinions were sought on (1) dominant and

\[1\] Hazel A. Pullings, "Our Best Sellers: Better?-or Worse?" Library Journal, LXXI (February 1, 1949), 157.
secondary themes, (2) quality of literary style, (3) character portrayal, (4) expression of moral and ethical standards, (5) reflection of good taste, and (6) the exhibition of emotional maturity. The findings of this study can be summarized briefly. Love, in these novels, expressed in terms of sex, occupied a minor position in relation to other themes. The theme of the best-selling novel has turned from the love theme to social, economic, and political themes. If one feels this change is for the better, then the best selling novels have improved. More than half the reviewers found that there were commendable literary characters, that two-thirds of the novels enjoyed fine characterization, and that best-selling novels were departing in large numbers from weak and sentimental plots to those which are more realistic.¹

Russell Lynes, managing editor of Harper's magazine, made a study of best-selling books of the 1950's. Mr. Lynes, in reporting his findings, admits to not having studied scientifically all the best-sellers of the fifties, but used what he considered a "representative sampling."² The findings of this study were that the decade was crowded with books on religion and uplift such as The Robe by Lloyd C. Douglas,³ Norman Vincent Peale's Power of

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¹ Ibid.


Positive Thinking ¹ and Man Called Peter ² by Catherine Marshall. ²
There was very little attention given to politics except in those
titles which dealt with United States foreign policy. Best-
selling novels of the decade expressed an interest in self-
analysis, evidenced by such works as The Man in the Grey Flannel
Suit by Sloan Wilson, ³ The Organization Man by William H. Whyte,
Jr., ⁴ and The House of Intellect by Jacques Barzun. ⁵ Another
trend in best-selling novels of the 1950's noted by Lynes, was the
abundance of sex. ⁶

Another study of best-selling novels was conducted by the
students in the Reading Interest of Adults course offered at the
Syracuse University School of Library Science. ⁷ This study also
utilized the content analysis method of research. The best-seller

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¹ Norman Vincent Peale, Power of Positive Thinking (New

² Catherine Marshall, Man Called Peter (New York: McGraw,
1951).

³ Sloan Wilson, The Man in the Grey Flannel Suit (New York:

⁴ William H. Whyte, Jr., The Organization Man (New York:

⁵ Jacques Barzun, The House of Intellect (New York: Harper,
1959).

⁶ Russell Lynes, op. cit., p. 17.

⁷ Alfred N. Brandon, "What Are Adults Reading?" Library
Journal, LXXXI (February 1, 1956), 336.
lists appearing in the Publishers' Weekly\textsuperscript{1} were analyzed for the years 1952, 1953, and 1954 and the following conclusions were drawn: (1) that the three subject areas represented most on the lists were: (a) books on religion and inspiration; (b) biography and biographical novels; and (c) historical novels; (2) that other areas treated were books on self-improvement, stories of suspense and drama, and character studies. In analyzing the lists it was found that, during the period covered by the study, a larger number of non-fiction than fiction books apparently appealed to the readers. Readers' interests were aroused by books dealing with sensationalism and deviations from the accepted norms of behavior.\textsuperscript{2}

\textbf{Purpose and Scope}

It was the purpose of this study to ascertain, by looking at theme, setting, and main character types, the kinds of fiction which apparently appeal to the American reading public as evidenced through the lists of best-selling fiction appearing in The New York Times Book Review. Analyzed were the novels which remained on the lists of best-selling fiction at least eight months or more from 1955 through 1959.

\textbf{Methodology}

The methodology employed in this study was as follows:

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{1} Publishers' Weekly (Philadelphia: R. R. Bowker Company, 1872-).
  \item \textsuperscript{2} Ibid., pp. 339-340.
\end{itemize}
(1) The 22 books which had remained on the lists of best-sellers in *The New York Times Book Review* for eight months or more from 1955 through 1959 were identified and read. Titles and authors of these 22 books were: *Dear and Glorious Physician* by Taylor Caldwell¹; *Not as a Stranger* by Morton Thompson²; *The Ugly American* by William J. Lederer and Eugene Burdick³; *Love is Eternal* by Irving Stone⁴; *By Love Possessed* by James Gould Cozzens⁵; *The Last Hurrah* by Edwin O'Connor⁶; *Auntie Mame* by Patrick Dennis⁷; *Rally Round the Flag, Boys!* by Max Shulman⁸; *Something of Value* by Robert Ruark⁹; *Lolita* by Vladimir Nabokov¹⁰;


No Time for Sergeants by Max Hyman; Don't Go Near the Water by William Brinkley; Anatomy of a Murder by Robert Traver; Peyton Place by Grace Metalious; The View From Pompey's Head by Hamilton Basso; Compulsion by Meyer Levin; Andersonville by Mackinley Kantor; Bonjour Tristesse by Francois Sagan; The Man in the Grey Flannel Suit by Sloan Wilson; Mrs. 'Arris Goes to Paris by Paul W. Gallico; Doctor Zhivago by Boris Pasternak; and Exodus by Leon Uris.

2 William Brinkley, Don't Go Near the Water (New York: Random House, 1956).
5 Hamilton Basso, The View from Pompey's Head (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1954).
8 Francois Sagan (Francois Quoriez), Bonjour Tristesse (New York: Dutton, 1955).
9 Sloan Wilson, op. cit.
10 Paul W. Gallico, Mrs. 'Arris Goes to Paris (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1958).
(2) After each of the 22 books had been read, the following factors were noted and used to construct a check sheet:

a. Themes: the underlying factors or ideas found in the stories and which were concerned with:

(1) Sex: homosexuality, premarital sex, extramarital sex, abnormal male and female sexual behavior, etcetera.

(2) Crime: murder, kidnapping, rape, etcetera.

(3) Politics: foreign politics, domestic politics.

(4) Self-analyses: personality profiles, analyses of legal systems, analyses of moral codes, analyses of basic class structures, etcetera.

(5) Religion: religious conflict, search for God, etcetera.

b. Setting: setting referred to where the story primarily took place.

(1) Small town: Southern, Northern Mid-Western, Western.

(2) Urban area: Southern, Northern, Mid-Western, Western.

(3) Foreign country: European, Asian, African, South American.

c. Main character types:

(1) Social status: lower, middle, upper classes.

(a) Occupations
(b) Types of residences

(2) Educational level

(a) Limited education
(b) High school
(c) College
(d) Professional education

(3) Each novel was measured against each category and the findings recorded on the check sheet.
CHAPTER II

FINDINGS OF THE ANALYSIS OF TWENTY-TWO
BEST-SELLERS, 1955-1959

This chapter presents the results of the analysis of the 22 books which remained for eight months or more on the New York Times lists of best-selling fiction. The aspects of the books analyzed were: (1) the theme or the underlying idea of the story, (2) the setting; i.e., the geographic area in which the major portion of the story took place; (3) the main character types, which were indicated by educational level, social class, level and type of residence occupied by the main character or characters.

Dear and Glorious Physician

Theme

Dear and Glorious Physician was the story of an inner search for faith on the part of the apostle Luke and his struggles to reconcile himself with God. The novel began with Luke in childhood and continued through his middle age. Luke, because of the loss of a childhood sweetheart and the human suffering he witnessed, decided to become a physician. He attended school in Alexandria where a large portion of this novel was set and where

\[1\]
Caldwell, op. cit.
he became a great physician. He worked with Jewish, Egyptian and Greek physicians and although he exhibited great skill in easing the ills of other men, Luke was unable to ease his own pain. Luke was lost from God because he considered God cruel in that he allowed mankind to suffer. Luke sought to find God and reconcile this anger. Not only does he find God but he becomes an instrument of God through whom God performs miracles. This is demonstrated in several places throughout the book as, for example, when the author writes:

‘If only I could cry’ thought Lucanus and he realized fully for the first time what estrangement from God meant to a man in his supreme hours.... But one did not pray to a God of affliction, who cared nothing for human travail but rather ordained it.¹

Lucanus bent forward and looked down at the sleeping and stricken man. He clapped his hands together and mourned: 'Oh you have brought me from the waste spaces and the darkness, and the barrenness, out of Your love and Your eternal mercy.... You who have haunted my life to bring me to You!... Always have I loved You, even when I contended with You out of my lack of understanding.'²

Socio-economic Status of Main Characters

The socio-economic status of the main character, Lucanus, was that of the upper social and economic group. The placement of Lucanus in this category was based on his occupation, his place of residence and his educational level. Specific illustrations of each of these categories follow in the discussion of the socio-economic status of the character.

¹ Ibid., p. 157.
² Ibid., p. 475.
Age and sex.—This novel traces the life of Luke from childhood to middle age.

By the time he was ten years old Lucanus understood that his father was not merely trying to soften and whiten his hands but was trying to obliterate the scars of earlier servitude.¹

But I am approaching forty now, and it could be that my vital forces are draining, and that the obeyance of age is creeping over me.²

Occupation.—Occupation is one of the primary determinants of the social and economic status occupied by an individual. The main character of this novel was one of the four main characters who were placed in the occupational category of physicians. "I am Lucanus son of Diodrus Cyrinus of Rome, and a physician."³

Place of residence.—The main character of this novel occupied during the major portion of the novel a large house in Alexandria and on other occasions his accommodations were large houses in various places.

But the house of Lucanus was in a more or less isolated spot, not far from the university. It was surrounded by steep iron pikes. Cusa carefully established the rumour that Lucanus possessed no money, and that the house was Spartan, containing no silver or gold or anything worth stealing.⁴

Educational level.—Lucanus was placed in the professional educational category. He was one of several physicians found in the analysis of the novels. He was educated at the university in

¹ Ibid., p. 14.
² Ibid., p. 400.
³ Ibid., p. 216.
⁴ Ibid., p. 193.
Alexandria where he was taught by the great medical minds of his day. "Lucanus suspected that they did not truly believe the man had a tumor. Now that he had completed his studies and was a physician, he could make protests which would have not been permitted a student."¹

Setting

This novel was one of the small number of the 22 novels analyzed which was set in a foreign country. Specifically, the greater portion of this novel is set in Alexandria, Egypt. "You shall not escape us! In three months you will be bereft of excuses, for you will have left Alexandria, a physician."²

Not as a Stranger

Theme

Not as a Stranger³ had as its theme the insatiable desire of one of its main characters, Lucas Marsh, to become a physician. Lucas Marsh had wanted to be a doctor since early childhood. As a child he raced after the carriages of the town doctors and later spent all of his spare time reading medical books.

The quotations selected to illustrate the categories of theme, main character types and setting were selected on the basis of applicability and availability. Applicability refers to whether

¹ Ibid., p. 199.
² Ibid., p. 180.
³ Thompson, op. cit.
the quotation fitted the category for which it was chosen. Availability had reference to whether the specific information was given. In many instances definite information was not given in a specific category; therefore, other information which would normally fall into a different category had to be used. For example, no definite age was stated for Kristina, one of the main characters in this novel; consequently, her status in her profession was used as a determinant for her possible age.

This novel is one of the several of the 22 analyzed which was placed in the category of personality profile. The theme of the novel is expressed in the following quotations.

I've known Lucas since he was a little boy. I've never known the time when he didn't want to be a doctor. Some men are born to be doctors. I shouldn't be at all surprised but Lucas is one of those men.1

"...This is Medicine! This is my medicine! This is what I believe in! This is my God! This is what I dreamed of when I was a kid, my first dream the only dream I know..."2

Socio-economic Status of Main Characters

Lucas Marsh and Kristina Marsh were placed in the middle class social and economic category. The placement of these two main characters in this category was based on: (1) occupations, (2) place of residence, (3) educational level.

Age and sex.--The novel encompassed the life of Lucas from infancy to young adulthood but the largest portion of the novel dealt with Lucas and Kristina in young adulthood. The

1 Ibid., p. 69.
2 Ibid., p. 391.
following quotations illustrate the ages of the two main characters in the novel.

When he was three years old Lucas screamed sharply one afternoon and held his hand to his ear. His agony was beyond moral suasion and Ouida took him reluctantly to Dr. Dwyer.¹

"You're rather younger than I expected,"..."You seem to have made quite a reputation for yourself, Doctor."²

Kristina was a nurse at the hospital at which Lucas was an intern. She later married Lucas and helped him through medical training. No definite age is stated for her in the development of this novel; however, her position at the hospital and her subsequent marriage to Luke indicate the possibility that she and Luke were approximately the same age. Luke went into medical school directly from college which would in all likelihood place him at graduation in the age group between 33 and 37 years of age. "What does she do?" "She's operating-room nurse..."³ "Kristina, will you marry me?" She looked at him pale. "I don't know."⁴

Occupation.—The occupations represented by the two main characters of this novel were both in the general professional category. Specifically, the occupations of these characters were physician and nurse. The quotations which follow state the occupations of the two main characters. Luke's life-long ambition

¹ Ibid., p. 36.

² Ibid., p. 585.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid., p. 209.
was to become a physician. "Ahead was Greenville. Lucas Marsh had become a doctor."¹ Kristina was one of several nurses found in the 22 novels which were analyzed in this study.

...she remembered her days at the hospital and it was comforting to remember suddenly her own bailwick, and the doctors nodding to her, for she was head operating room nurse.²

**Place of residence.**—The place of residence occupied by an individual is one of the major factors in determining his social and economic class status. Lucas and Kristina lived near the office in which Lucas worked. They occupied a large apartment. "'There's five rooms,' Kristina said surprised."³

**Educational level.**—The educational level occupied by the two main characters of this novel was that of professional education. Lucas Marsh attended medical school and graduated to become a doctor. "'My God, boy, I'd never got through med school if Kris hadn't worked.'"⁴ Kristina was a Swedish girl who had worked hard to become a nurse. After her training she continued to strive to improve herself and eventually became a head operating-room nurse. "'If she wants to we can use an operating-room nurse at county.... "She was head OR when she married me-...""⁵

Setting

This novel had as its major geographical setting a small mill town in which Luke and his wife settled when he began work as a practicing physician. Much thought had gone into the decision to practice in this town. Luke was looking for a place to practice medicine among people who needed it, not in a wealthy hospital for people who were really not sick as many of his classmates chose to do. "We're a crossroads town and Greenville's the county seat."¹

The Ugly American

In the illuminating and pertinent novel, The Ugly American,² the authors vividly examined the many ills of United States foreign policy in Southeast Asia. The novel revolved around three main characters, a politician, an engineer, and a priest, each of whom played a vital part in helping the people of the country in which the major portion of the novel took place to help themselves and develop a respect for some of the diplomatic representatives of the United States. The theme of foreign politics stressed the need for competent diplomats to represent the United States in foreign countries; in this instance, a fictitious country in Southeast Asia where Communists are gaining an important foothold.

"You've done nothing but lose since the end of the war. And for a simple little reason: you don't know the power of an idea. The clerks you send over here to try to buy us like

¹Ibid., p. 305.

²Lederer and Burdick, op. cit.
cattle. You people are like the fable of the rich man who was an idiot."

...I think we're agreed that there are only two types of men which one can bargain with profit. The Americans, for reasons which are not clear to me, have chosen to send us stupid men as ambassadors.2

Socio-economic Status of Main Characters

The three main characters of this novel were placed in the middle class social and economic status group. The placement of these characters in this category was based on: (1) the occupation; (2) place of residence; (3) educational background of each of the three characters. The following quotations under each of the specific categories of occupation, place of residence and educational level illustrate the positions of each character.

Age and sex.—Two of the main characters were placed in the category of middle-aged; the third character was placed in the young adult category.

One of the major characters of this novel was Father John Fanian, a Jesuit Priest, who was 42 years old, as indicated by his date of birth and the date of the beginning of his tour of duty in Burma. He was one of the two characters in this novel who was in the middle-aged category. "Born 1910 in Worcester, Mass. Parents, John and Marie Fanian.... In 1952 Father Fanian was ordered to Burma."3

1 Ibid., p. 24.
2 Ibid., p. 30.
3 Ibid., p. 43.
Since Homer Atkins' age was not given specifically, it was estimated from the fact that he had served in World War II, so was somewhere between 25 and 35 years of age. He was the one character in this novel whose age was placed in the established category of young adult. "He often used the technique during World War II when he was dealing with high government officials, or with corporation executives..."\(^1\)

The third major character of this novel was Gilbert MacWhite who was an ambassador to Sarkan and in the category of middle age. "The Honorable Gilbert MacWhite, Ambassador to Sarkan, was a fit man. At the age of forty-four he weighed exactly the same as he had when he graduated..."\(^2\)

**Occupation.**—Each of the three major characters in this novel represented a different occupational category. Father John Fanian was a Catholic Jesuit priest who went into the hills of this backward Asian country to learn the ways of the people so that he could understand them and therefore help them to help themselves. He established a small band of men recruited from the masses and with these he began to fight against Communism through a newspaper, through lectures, and through a personal understanding of the problems which the people faced. "In 1952 Father Fanian was ordered to Burma with the position of Overseer of Catholic Missions and Advocate for the General of the Society

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\(^1\) Ibid., p. 93.

\(^2\) Ibid., p. 43.
Homer Atkins was sent to Asia as an engineer to help in the construction of projects sponsored by the United States for the people of Sarkham. He was a man of action who, when he found the people were in need of practical help instead of the colossal and spectacular building projects which would add nothing to their efforts to survive, refused to help the government. He encouraged the people to help themselves with simple projects like pumping water to help irrigate their small farms. Instead of doing all the work himself he demonstrated to the people that they could contribute to their country's needs themselves.

What Homer wanted to say was "Listen you damn fools it's a simple problem. Let us engineers solve it and come back with what we've done, throw me out of the country. But don't bring up these goddam silly questions about politics and native psychology." 

Gilbert MacWhite was a professionally trained diplomat who realized the needs of the people of Sarkham and was anxious to help the people to understand their culture.

MacWhite was, from his first day in the State Department a professional foreign service officer. He needed no breaking in. He was competent, exact, and highly efficient. ...In 1954, the Honorable Gilbert White was made Ambassador to Sarkham.

**Place of residence.--**The places of residence occupied by the three main characters of this novel were placed into three

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1 Ibid.

2 Ibid., p. 215.

3 Ibid., pp. 93-94.
separate categories. The types of residence represented were a
large house, a small house, and a native hut.

Father Fanian really wanted to get to know the people and
therefore he felt it necessary to live under the same conditions
that they lived. "I should like to get out into the country
soon,' the priest said quietly. 'I would appreciate whatever help
you can give me. A jeep, a tent, a sleeping hammock, some food!"\(^1\)

Homer Atkins and his wife lived among the natives in a
small village in Sarkham, sharing experiences. Atkins, who was
an engineer, showed the men of the village how they could irrigate
their crops using a bicycle as a pump. His wife helped the women
make housework easier by utilizing the things in their own environ-
ment.

Two weeks later the Atkins were living in a small cottage in
the suburb of Haidho...Their house had pressed earth floors,
one spigot of cold water, a charcoal fire, two very comfort-
able hammocks, a horde of small insects...\(^2\)

Ambassador MacWhite lived in the Embassy residence in
Sarkham, with all the servants and other conveniences accorded one
of his status. The ambassador took great interest in the people
of the country and was continually trying to find ways to improve
relations between the United States and Sarkham and also to stem
the tide of communist infiltration. "As he looked out of the
plate glass window of the Embassy Residence, Ambassador MacWhite

\(^1\) Ibid., pp. 47-48.

\(^2\) Ibid., p. 214.
was aware of the fact that Donald and Roger were in the room behind him."¹

Educational level.--Two of the established categories under the broad division of educational level were represented by the three main characters of this novel. The categories represented were: (1) college education, and (2) professional education.

Father Fanian's educational level was included under the category of professional education based on the quotation which follows definitely stating his educational achievements.

Graduated A.B., Boston University, 1934, M.A. Catholic College, Rome 1941. Professor of Apologetics St. Mary's 1943-44 ... D. Phil. Oxford University 1947-50.²

The educational level of Homer Atkins was not definitely stated in the novel; however, his position as an engineer makes it highly probable that he had received professional training placing him in the professional educational category. "'I am aware of Mr. Atkins' great talents and his personal reputation in the States, but this is improper - an engineer giving gratuitous advice on farming!'"³

The third main character, Gilbert MacWhite, was placed in the college education category on the basis of the following quotation: "At the age of forty-four he weighed exactly the same

¹ Ibid., p. 96.
² Ibid., p. 43.
³ Ibid., p. 211.
as he did when he graduated from Princeton in 1934.\(^1\)

**Setting**

This novel had for its setting Southeast Asia where American prestige was slipping badly. Many efforts were being made to correct this situation so out of it came the setting for *The Ugly American*.\(^2\)

In 1954, at a dinner party in Rangoon in honor of Ambassador MacWhite, someone said to U Maung Swe, "British prestige certainly is low in Southeast Asia. What about America?" U Maung said, "Poor America. It took the British a hundred years to lose their prestige in Asia. America has managed to lose hers in ten years..."\(^3\)

**Love is Eternal**

**Theme**

*Love is Eternal*\(^4\) was a biographical novel which had as its theme the love and devotion of a wife for her husband and his devotion to her. In this biographical narrative the author has skillfully revealed some of the intimate and poignant moments in the lives of Abraham Lincoln and his wife, Mary Todd Lincoln. He describes the many trials and tribulations experienced by these two people as the deep and possessive love of a devoted, though emotionally unstable wife created numerous problems for

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1. Ibid., p. 93.
2. Lederer and Burdick, *op. cit.*
3. Ibid., p. 144.
her husband. The novel covers the period of the Civil War and the role of Lincoln as President of the United States.

She must always remember that: love ebbed and flowed, now rich and shining, now shabby and disconsolate. One must survive the bad in order to realize the good. Therein lay the miracle of love, that it could eternally recreate itself. She must always be dedicated, no matter what the years held, what hardships or disappointments, the sorrows or tragedies; she must come through them all, through the most violent and frightening storms; for at the other end, no matter how long it might take or how dark the passage, one could emerge into clear warm sunlight.¹

She had known then what she knew now, nor had it taken a hundred cannon or a hundred ringing bells to tell her. No one else had known Abraham because no one else loved him. Love had told her everything, with the end implicit in the beginning. She had fallen in love with the last man that any other woman wanted, for she had known him to be the first and finest of them all.²

**Socio-economic Status of Main Characters**

Abraham Lincoln had been born into the lower economic and social class status category. He had come from a very poor family who could not afford to give him any formal educational training so Lincoln proceeded to educate himself through extensive reading and natural inquisitiveness. Through his efforts he became a lawyer and raised his status to that of the upper class social and economic status group.

Mary Todd Lincoln had come from a wealthy southern plantation family and had been reared in an atmosphere of "culture." She had attended a private school for girls where she learned the

¹ Ibid., p. 123.
² Ibid., p. 293.
social graces and from there she took some classes at Transylvania University.

Age and sex.--The ages of the two main characters ranged from young adulthood to late middle age during the period of this novel. Even at an early age Abraham Lincoln was determined to be an outstanding man. He decided to become a lawyer and later a politician, he managed to launch himself in a political career and found himself debating with the great men of his time. This novel relates to the more prolific portions of his life. "Abraham was only forty-three, yet universally known as 'Old' Abe."\(^1\)

Mary Todd Lincoln was vitally involved in the novel from young adulthood to later life.

For that matter she considered herself a young woman at thirty-three. Her faith in Abraham was indestructible; she loved him on that faith, married him on that faith, endured the years of patient waiting on that faith.\(^2\)

I have a forty-fifth birthday coming next week—oh yes, I'm getting old, Emile! I think I'll have a quiet party, just for close friends; I do want to see the White House when it is happy with guests.\(^3\)

Occupation.--Lincoln was one of three politicians found among the characters treated in the 22 novels of this study. Mary Todd Lincoln was one of the few characters whose occupation could be classed as housewife. For many years Abraham was a lawyer and, as was his ultimate intention, he eventually became


\(^2\) Ibid.

\(^3\) Ibid., p. 399.
an active politician. This was a hard and bitter road strewn with many disappointments; however, the struggle made him more determined to become the kind of politician he felt he was capable of being. His career culminated with his becoming the President of the United States.

He was growing increasingly active in the legislature, guiding his party in the fight to prevent the Democrats from packing the Illinois Supreme Court with five new Democratic justices.¹

At midnight Abraham came into Watson's. He reached out a hand for hers, while he shook his head indicating that they still were awaiting the final word. A few minutes later a messenger from the telegraph office came running. Outside a tremendous shout went up. Mary knew even before Abraham, pale and solemn, passed her the telegram that he had won.²

"I, Abraham Lincoln, do solemnly swear that I will faithfully execute the office of the President of the United States, and will, to the best of my ability, preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States."³

Mary Todd Lincoln was the daughter of a wealthy Kentucky plantation owner. Her driving ambition was to become the wife of a successful man. She had many suitors of consequence, wealthy men and outstanding politicians; however, she saw in Abraham Lincoln her future husband. The ambition to become the wife of a successful man was fulfilled in her marriage to Lincoln and her subsequent positions as the wife of a successful lawyer, politician, and finally the first lady of the United States. "Thank

¹ Ibid., p. 112.
² Ibid., p. 300.
³ Ibid., p. 313.
you, Abraham, you have just made me mistress of the White House." ¹

**Place of residence.**—In their early lives the two main characters lived each as fitting to the social status he held at that time. Abraham's was extremely poor and Mary's the large house of a plantation owner's family. After their marriage they lived comfortably in small houses and upon the election of Abraham as president the family moved to the White House where the major portion of this novel took place.

They rode up the north driveway to the main entrance of the White House. Ex-President Buchanan shook hands in farewell. "If you are as happy to be entering the White House as I am to be leaving it, you are the happiest people in the world." ²

**Educational level.**—Having come from an extremely poor backwoods area and an equally poor cultural background, Abraham had no opportunity to pursue a formal education; however, having a very alert and intelligent mind he sought to, and did, educate himself, to the point that he was able to qualify to practice law and went on to become President of the United States.

"He had a lot of bad luck. Guess he couldn't have made a living at all without that little post office job and the fact that he studied the mathematics of surveying and became assistant surveyor.... I never saw a man learn so fast. After he read all the law books in my office, and all the others, he could find in Springfield, he got his license to practice. Just then my partner decided to move, so I asked Lincoln if he wanted to come in with me." ³

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Mary Todd Lincoln had always been interested in learning new facts. She was intelligent with an inquiring mind and after high school she defied tradition and attended classes at a university.

When she graduated at eighteen and a half, Robert Todd was delighted with her winning both the scholastic and activities prizes that he gave her carte blance for a new wardrobe of gowns, slippers...In the fall of that year she had gone to Dr. Ward and asked if she might use one of his rooms overlooking Transylvania while she tried to follow the university courses.¹

Setting

This novel was set in many locations: Kentucky, where Mary Todd Lincoln grew up; Springfield, Illinois, where Abraham Lincoln launched his political career and Washington, the District of Columbia where the major portion of this novel was set.

She had forgotten, during the intervening thirteen years, how predominantly southern Washington was; she was reminded on her first day in the capital that if the District of Columbia had had the franchise, Abraham would have received hardly a handful of votes; that it was not merely the Virginia and Maryland families who felt this way, but almost the entire body of government employees and business houses that served them.²

By Love Possessed

Theme

By Love Possessed³ had as its theme the inner probings of a man into his motives and his code of living. Its theme was

¹ Ibid., p. 17.
² Ibid.
³ Cozzens, op. cit.
intricately developed around Arthur Winner and the events before and during a trial in which Winner was defending a boy who had been charged with rape. The following statement was made by Arthur Winner's law partner (with whose wife Arthur was having an affair) referring to his trust in Arthur. This statement was one of many events which lead to Winner's self analysis. "If you knew of something that you believed I didn't know, and that you thought it better I should not know, I'm persuaded you'd do as much for me - try every way to keep it from me."  

Socio-economic Status of Main Characters

The principal character, Arthur Winner, was a distinguished lawyer and a leader in his community. He was placed in the middle class social and economic status groups because of his occupation, place of residence and his educational level.

Age and sex.—Arthur Winner was one of the several characters of the 22 novels analyzed whose age fell into the established middle-age category. He was 54 years old and just beginning to analyze himself and those around him. "As though shocked his mother said: 'Arthur!'...'You're absurd to think of yourself as old! Fifty-four's no age!"  

Occupation.—The principal character of this novel was one of four lawyers found in this study of 22 novels. His father had been a lawyer before him and Arthur followed in his footsteps.

1 Ibid., p. 537.

2 Ibid., p. 10.
After graduation from law school he entered his father's law firm. As he grew older he became an outstanding lawyer and a respected member of his community.

Arthur Winner, Junior, brought fresh from Law school into the office of his father and Noah Tuttle would need years of being himself a practicing lawyer to appreciate his father as a lawyer.\(^1\)

**Place of residence.**—Arthur Winner and his family lived in a large house in a settlement called Roylan. The house was a spacious one surrounded by a large lawn.

Arthur Winner was home. He drove in his own gate; the soft scrunch of the raked gravel sounded under him. The house's lighted lower hall showed through the front door....he saw upstairs the bright windows of Clarissa's room. Between the sycamores' big trunks, his headlights passed across the gently rolling, smoothly mowed long stretches of grass.\(^2\)

**Educational level.**—The main character of this novel was one of the several in the 22 novels analyzed whose educational level was in the professional education category. Arthur was brought up and received his early education in the rural county seat of Brocton, after which he went to college and ultimately to law school. "The two of them were facing each other near the closed door of the room Arthur Winner had occupied his last year at law school."\(^3\)

**Setting**

The geographic setting of this novel was a small rural

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county seat. The community is centered around the county court house where business is carried on in a leisurely fashion. It was in this apparently placid setting that strong undercurrents tugged at the pseudo-tranquility of this community and the very existence of this main character.

You could ask yourself, for example, how many small town lawyers, born and brought up in a fairly-to-be called rural county seat like Brocton would fifty or more years ago, have had the interest — let alone, the taste, the eye — to pick over unaffected by then current ideas of what was fine and beautiful, of what was rare of valuable...

The Last Hurrah

Theme

The theme of The Last Hurrah was the end of the political era of absolute rule by political bosses. Frank Skeffington had been a leading political figure in his state for many years. He was a self-made man who through his struggles had climbed the political ladder. He had held the office of governor of his state and now he was the mayor of a large city. This is the story of his last campaign and the relationship between him and his nephew. This last campaign of Skeffington's was unsuccessful and marks the end of an era in the politics of the state as was stated by one of the characters of the novel. "Your uncle was operating in a diminishing market.... It was a new era, sport, and your uncle belonged to the old."

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1 Ibid., p. 8.
2 O'Conner, op. cit.
3 Ibid., p. 330.
Socio-economic Status of Main Characters

The social status occupied by both of the main characters of this novel was the middle class social and economic status category. The placement of these characters in this category was based on: (1) the occupations, (2) places of residence, (3) educational levels of the two characters.

Age and sex.—The two principal characters of this novel were both male. Adam Caulfield was placed in the young adult category based on the following quotation. "'Oh, my dear boy! Let me see: You are how old? Thirty-five?' 'Thirty-three.'"¹

Frank Skeffington, the other principal character, was one of the few characters of the 22 novels analyzed whose age placed them in the elderly age category.

On his seventy-second birthday Frank Skeffington had lunch with his nephew, and over his meal told him of his plan to run again....and....revealed the reason which, more than any other, had determined his decision to stay in public life.²

Occupation.—The principal characters of this novel represented the following occupations: (1) politician, (2) cartoonist. There were three characters of the 22 novels studied who were politicians and only one who was a cartoonist.

Frank Skeffington was a politician of long standing. He had served as governor of the state as well as mayor of the city. He had had a long and sometimes flamboyant political career as he went to the people to win their votes. "It was early in August

¹ Ibid., p. 28.

² Ibid., p. 5.
when Frank Skeffington decided—or rather announced his decision, which actually had been arrived at some months before to run for re-election as mayor of the city.\(^1\)

Adam Caulfield was invited to accompany his uncle on his political campaign and as a result learned a great deal about this remarkable man. Adam was a cartoonist who worked for a large local paper as the originator of a highly successful comic strip. Accordingly he switched on the light, sat down at his desk, and began, with a few tentative pencil strokes, to sketch in the rough outline of his comic strip, Little Simp. Adam had been drawing Little Simp for more than three years.\(^2\)

**Place of residence.**—The places of residence occupied by the main characters of this novel were evidence of their middle class status. A large house was occupied by one and the other occupied a small suburban house.

Frank Skeffington lived in a large mansion with his son. "The two men father and son, lived in the big house on the Avenue, but now Skeffington saw his son at fleeting intervals...."\(^3\)

Adam Caulfield, Frank Skeffington's nephew lived with his wife in a small house. "In the home of his nephew, Adam Caulfield, Skeffington was the principal subject of discussion."\(^4\)

**Educational level.**—The two main characters of this novel

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represented two of the sub-categories of educational level. Adam graduated from college and Frank was one of the few characters of the 22 novels studied who were placed in the educational category of limited education.

Adam Caulfield was a college graduate who after college and the death of his parents returned home and became a newspaper cartoonist. "After those boyhood days, Adam had been home very little: there had been boarding school, then college..."¹

Frank Skeffington was a self-made man. Living in the slums and trying to help his family he had gotten very little formal education, but he gained a tremendous amount of knowledge through experience and reading. "I had no education to speak of, a good many roads were closed to our people, and politics seemed to be the easiest way out."²

Setting

The setting of this novel could have been any large city. There is no definite location stated in the novel. It is evident that it is a large city and possibly on the New England coast. This fact is evidenced by the presence of longshoremen and stevedores and also references to places in Massachusetts, New Jersey and Connecticut as down there.

Only last week I wrote letters to the sociologists down at Yale, Harvard, and Princeton, telling them to get their best

¹Ibid., p. 62.

²Ibid.
man over here to watch Frank Skeffington in action before it's too late!¹

It was a speech he had given many times before on the waterfront... (as a group he did not hold the stevedores in high regard... )²

Auntie Mame

_Auntie Mame _by Patrick Dennis³ was the charming and delightfully hilarious story of a mad cap socialite and her nephew. The adventures of Auntie Mame ranged from experiments with progressive education for Patrick to a charming but brief marriage to a Southern gentleman and many other excursions through the world of high society. The theme of this novel fell outside the established categories of theme for this study of 22 best sellers. It was one of seven novels whose themes did so.

You and your Uncle Beauregard and I are going to drive down to Georgia to spend the summer on our big old plantation and see my sweet little old mother-in-law.⁴

Around New Year Auntie Mame got bored... and took off for the sunshine of Mexico.⁵

Socio-economic Status of Main Characters

The two main characters of _Auntie Mame_⁶ were placed in the

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¹ _Ibid._, p. 179.

² _Ibid._, p. 226.

³ Dennis, _op. cit._

⁴ _Ibid._, p. 60.

⁵ _Ibid._, p. 237.

⁶ Dennis, _op. cit._
upper class socio-economic status group. The places of residence of the two, the finest hotels and large apartments, the wealth of Auntie Mame and Patrick, whose father had left him a sizeable trust fund, and the educational level of both characters were indicative of their social and economic positions.

Age and sex.—The ages of the two principal characters of this novel varied throughout the novel which covered a number of years. Patrick's age spanned the categories of childhood to young adulthood.

Looking back on Auntie Mame as the razzle-dazzle butterfly she was back in 1929, I can see she must have been just as terrified at the prospect of rearing a totally strange ten year old boy as I was when I first stumbled large-eyed and frightened into the oriental splendor of her Beeckman Place apartment. 1

So I was eighteen, I had my own money, my liberty, and my youth. 2

I was only twenty, but with a girl like Bubbles you age fast. 3

Auntie Mame, the main female character in this novel fell into the middle age category.

I suspected she was between thirty-five and forty, and she seemed a lot younger. 4

She described herself as Frankly Forty, although she was factually fifty. 5

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1 Ibid., p. 19.
2 Ibid., p. 139.
3 Ibid., p. 144.
4 Ibid., p. 62.
5 Ibid., p. 215.
Occupation.—Neither of the two main characters in this novel were employed. Patrick was a young man during the development of the novel and was a student in school.

It was my last term at St. Boniface Academy in Apathy, Massachusetts, and I was counting the days until commencement would set me free from that somber institution.1

The following fall I began college.2

Mame, a wealthy woman, had no financial need to work during the portion of the novel so she spent her time traveling.

I just landed this morning and I'm only here for a day or so. "How was India?" I can't wait to tell you about my important work there.3

Place of residence.—The two main characters of this novel as has been stated before, traveled and moved from one place of residence to another. Primarily the place of residence to which they always returned was a large house in New York; however, many other places were temporary homes.

...Uncle Beau bought Auntie Mame...a big old mansion on Washington Square.4

"The - the Old Colridge House right here in Apathy?" Auntie Mame...selected the only hotel which was the shrine of the New England Historical Society..."5

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1 Ibid., p. 111.
2 Ibid., p. 139.
3 Ibid., p. 245.
4 Ibid., p. 84.
5 Ibid., p. 113.
I might quite fittingly remark that this sordid little dormitory room hardly looks like the City of Brotherly Love...\(^1\)

**Educational level.**--The two main characters of this novel were both placed in the college educational level category. Auntie Mame, as a young woman, had attended and graduated from a fashionable college in the East. Patrick, during the development of the novel, attended private boarding schools for his high school education and eventually attended and completed college.

I happen to be a college woman myself...Smith College, Northhampton, Massachusetts, Summa Cum Laude, Class of 1917.\(^2\)

By the end of my senior year in college I'd grown up a little.\(^3\)

**Setting**

There was no one setting in this novel; because of the traveling of the main characters there were various settings. However, the settings were primarily in urban areas in the Eastern part of the United States.

We drove down to Georgia in Uncle Beau's big Dusenberg phaeton.\(^4\)

Auntie Mame could move fast when she wanted to and in a matter of ten days she'd rented a large house on Long Island...It was called Peabody's Tavern, and it was authentic pre-Revolutionary building of some twenty rooms.\(^5\)

\(^1\) Ibid., p. 157.

\(^2\) Ibid., p. 159.

\(^3\) Ibid., p. 162.

\(^4\) Ibid., p. 60.

\(^5\) Ibid., p. 195.
During a New York heat wave I got a letter from Auntie Mame...It was postmarked Maddox Island, Maine...1

Rally Round the Flag, Boys!

Theme

The theme of Rally Round the Flag, Boys!2 was an amusing account of everyday life in a Connecticut suburb. It was specifically the story of an unhappy husband, Harry Bannerman; the invasion of the Army in the form of a missile base; and the romance between Guido Di Maggio and Maggie Larkin, a young school teacher, enthused over the idea of putting into practice some of the psychology she had learned.

Grace's horse George having drunk six ounces of I. W. Harper, cantered slowly off the train, spotted his 1954 Plymouth station wagon alongside the platform, whinned softly, and headed toward it with a hobbled gait...How bedraggled he looked! How glassy! How brackish! How unloved!3

Me, for instance, Colonel, sir, I was born and raised in Putnam's Landing and I know everybody in town...there is not a soul in Putnam's Landing that does not have only the highest esteem for me...I'd call a town meeting and explain to the people that Nike is perfectly safe.4

"As I told Mr. Vandenberg this morning, from now on I am going to be completely sensible and practical with children. No more wild theories!"5

1 Ibid., p. 218.
2 Shulman, op. cit.
3 Ibid., p. 36.
4 Ibid., pp. 117-118.
5 Ibid., p. 127.
Socio-economic Status of Main Characters

All of the major characters of this light-hearted novel by Shulman were placed in the middle class social and economic status category. The placement of the characters into this category was determined by the factors of occupation, place of residence and educational level stated for each character in the development of the novel.

Age and sex.—Harry Bannerman, one of the principal characters of this novel, was a typical suburbanite. He was surrounded by the P.T.A., bridge clubs, cocktail parties and other typical suburban phenomenon.

Harry was a typical commuter of Putnam's Landing, Connecticut, which is to say that he was between 35 and 40 in age, married, the father of three children, the owner of a house, a first mortgage, a second mortgage, a grey flannel suit, a bald spot and a vague feeling of discontent.¹

Guido Di Maggio, another of the main male characters, was an Army Nike missile specialist. He returned to see his sweetheart and to convince his friends and neighbors of the safety and monetary advantages to the community of having a Nike base in their town. Guido's age was not specifically stated in the development of the novel, but was intimated by the fact that he went to college directly from high school and graduated in the usual four years. Therefore, in all probability, Guido fell into the age category of young adults with his age falling between 22 and 25 years. "College and Guido were friends from the outset. His

¹ Ibid., p. 23.
respectable B-minus average stuck with him. He learned a smattering of literature, a smidgen of language, a dash of history.\textsuperscript{1}

Maggie Larkin, the female main character, was a young school teacher who was a "little overboard" on the subject of child psychology. The age of this character was not definitely stated in the novel, but inferred by her attendance of college with Guido and subsequent engagement to him plus statements made by other characters regarding her youth. Her age would probably fall into the category of young adults between 21 and 23 years.

They went steady for the remainder of their Senior year, and Guido was the happiest of men. There were, of course, occasional dead spots usually on the days when Maggie received the latest psychopediatric bulletin...\textsuperscript{2}

\textbf{Occupation.}--The occupations of the three principal characters in this novel were placed in the professional area. Guido was a missile expert with the Army, Harry was a professional writer for a large magazine and Maggie was an elementary school teacher. The occupations of these characters were stated specifically in the development of the novel and are shown by the following specific quotations.

Harry Bannerman was employed as a writer for a well known magazine. "Harry had just been mustered out of the Navy and had returned to New York where he found a job on the 'Talk of the Town' section of the \textit{New Yorker}."\textsuperscript{3}

\textsuperscript{1} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 6.

\textsuperscript{2} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 12.

\textsuperscript{3} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 24.
Guido Di Maggio was a second lieutenant in the United States Army and a specialist in missiles. "...the Army assigned him to guided missile school. He reported to Fort Bliss.... Here he had thirteen weeks of OBC (for Officers Basic Course) in SAM (for Surface to Air Missile)."¹

Maggie Larkin was the dominant female character and she was employed as an elementary school teacher. "Maggie wrote that she had chosen her teaching job for the fall...It was the second grade in the Nathan Hale Elementary School in Putnam's Landing."²

Place of residence.--The principal characters of this novel lived in varying types of residences. Two of the residences were representative of the middle class, a moderately sized house, and the other a small apartment. The other place of residence represented was an army barracks which in itself does not indicate the status of the resident but in the case of Guido other factors indicated his middle class social and economic standing, his educational level and his position in the Army.

Harry Bannerman lived in a suburban house with his wife and children. "'Well!' said Harry, and while he was scratching his head, he became the owner of a house on a hill in Putnam's Landing, Connecticut."³

Guido Di Maggio lived on an army base in army barracks.

¹Ibid., p. 14.
²Ibid., p. 15.
"On his last in Red Canyon, while Guido was sacked out in his bunk thinking jolly thoughts about all the pleasing prospects ahead...

Maggie Larkin lived alone in a small apartment. "He ran into the building, rang Maggie's door bell, pounded on her door, threw it open, and burst into a tiny two-room flat."2

Educational level.--The educational level of the three main characters was that of college education. That two of the principal characters definitely graduated from college was stated in the course of the novel. The other character, Harry Bannerman, probably attended college for at least two years if he did not graduate. This conclusion was based on his occupation, his place of residency, and social status, although no definite educational statement regarding Harry was included in the novel. The position of Guido and Maggie in the college education level of the category was based on the following passages from the novel:

"Guido had been graduated from college with a major in marketing and a minor in Spanish...."3

"I'm a teacher...That is, I'll be one in June when I get my degree."4

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1 Ibid., p. 15.
2 Ibid., p. 18.
3 Ibid., p. 14.
4 Ibid., p. 8.
Setting

This novel was one of several with a setting in suburban areas. "Harry's enthusiasm for Putnam's Landing was kept under tighter control."\(^1\)

**Something of Value**

**Theme**

*Something of Value*\(^2\) had as its theme the racial strife between the natives and the white settlers which occurred in Kenya, Africa. This strife was brought to the forefront with the emerging nationalism of the Negro and the growth of the native organization of the Mau Mau. The theme can best be expressed in the following quotations from the novel:

> We educated them and made them want things and took away their old securities and then didn't give them any other to replace what we'd taken. We gave them wants and didn't give them any way to gratify the wants.\(^3\)

> The spoor was clear all the way, the pitiful path that had turned a paradise into an abattoir. Kimani, Peter thought, was the black half of it as he himself was the white half of it, and the whole thing senseless.\(^4\)

**Socio-economic Status of Main Characters**

Peter McKenzie and Kimani were placed in the middle and lower social and economic status groups. Peter was placed in the middle class category because of his occupation as a White hunter, his residence in a large farmhouse and his probable high school

\(^1\)Ibid., p. 27.

\(^2\)Ruark, op. cit.

\(^3\)Ibid., p. 593.

\(^4\)Ibid., p. 594.
education. Kimani was placed in the lower class because of his occupation as a houseboy, his place of residence and his limited education.

Age and sex.--This novel covered the period of Peter McKenzie's and Kimani's lives from childhood to adulthood. They were the same age. Kimani and Peter were reared together until they were about 15 years of age, therefore it seems probable that Kimani was exposed to limited educational opportunities. "You've been to school and you are a Christian, and you should know better. It was just damned bad luck all around."\(^1\)

Setting

This novel had its geographic setting in Kenya, Africa. There was much evidence of unrest among the natives because of dissatisfaction in the relationship between themselves and the white settlers. They were tired of being ruled and exploited in their own country by a white minority.

This was really Henry McKenzie's first full realization of Africa and the difference between himself and its people. He thereupon made some effort to study the business of witchcraft and its workings.\(^2\)

"In your life, son" Jeff said seriously, "You aren't going to see the white man and the African on even footing out here. There's no place in the scheme for a long time."\(^3\)

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1. Ibid., p. 156.
2. Ibid., p. 31.
3. Ibid., p. 45.
Lolita Theme

Lolita was a novel which dealt with the love affair between a middle-aged man and a 12-year old girl. Generally, it was placed in the theme category of sex. Humbert was a man who had traveled a great deal, living in London and Paris before coming to the United States. Throughout his manhood he was romantically attracted to very young girls instead of women his own age. Lolita was the sexually precocious child with whom Humbert was involved in the course of the novel.

We loved each other with a premature love, marked by a fierceness that so often destroys adults. I was a strong lad and survived; but the poison in the wound and the wound remained ever open, and soon I found myself maturing a civilization which allows a man of twenty-five to court a girl of sixteen but not a girl of twelve.²

Socio-economic Status of Main Characters

The main characters in this novel were placed in the middle-class group primarily because of the occupation of Humbert and his educational level. Lolita was his step-daughter and therefore occupied the same status level.

Age and sex.—Lolita was one of the few children treated as a main character in the 22 novels. She was a 12-year old girl who lived with her widowed mother in the home to which Humbert later came to live. "Now at twelve, she was a regular pest, said Haze. All she wanted from life was to be one day a strutting and

¹ Nabokov, op. cit.
² Ibid., p. 19.
and prancing baton twirler or a jitterbug."¹

Humbert was included in the story during his age span of about 25 to later life. "All this I rationalize now. In my twenties and early thirties, I did not understand my throes quite so clearly."²

**Occupation.**—Lolita was a student during the major portion of the novel; Humbert was a teacher. "I found a job teaching English to a group of adults in Auteuil. Then in a school for boys for a couple of winters."³

**Place of residence.**—After the death of Lolita's mother, Humbert and Lolita did not establish a permanent residence but kept on the move constantly stopping in motels or some other temporary type of accommodations.

It was then that began our extensive travels all over the States to any type of tourist accommodations. I soon grew to prefer the functional motel-clean, neat safe nooks, ideal places for sleep, argument, reconciliation, insatiable illicit love.⁴

**Educational level.**—The educational levels represented by the two main characters of this novel were: (1) high school, and (2) college. Humbert was educated in London and Paris where he, after numerous changes, settled on English literature as a major. "While a college student in London and Paris...my studies were

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meticulous and intense, although not particularly fruitful. At first, I planned to take a degree in psychiatry...I switched to English literature."¹

Lolita was placed in a school by her step-father, where she received at least two years of high school education. "Lo at the time still had for the cinema a veritable passion (it was to decline into tepid condescension during her second year in high school)."²

Setting

The geographic setting of this novel varied because of the large amount of traveling done by the two major characters. Roughly, during that mad year (August 1947 to August 1948), our route began with a series of wiggles and whorls in New England, then meandered south, up and down, east and west; ...and finally returned to the fold of the East, petering out in the college town of Beardsley.³

No Time For Sergeants

Theme

No Time For Sergeants⁴ was concerned with the many events which occurred for the duration of a hill-billy's induction and tour of duty in the armed forces. These events grew out of the well-meant antics of one of its main characters, Will Stockdale.

¹ Ibid., p. 17.
² Ibid., p. 155.
³ Ibid., p. 141.
⁴ Hyman, op. cit.
"...You folks out here think just because you live ten thousand miles from town, you don't have to do things like everybody else, but I'm here to tell you different."  

...when you come right down to it, I didn't care so much about the draft in the first place.

Socio-economic Status of Main Characters

The main characters of this novel were placed in the lower social and economic status category. The placement of these characters in this category was based primarily on: (1) the lack of formal education, (2) occupation, and (3) place of residence. In this particular instance because of the fact that they were soldiers and their place of residence was of necessity an army barracks the educational level weighed heavily in determining status.

Age and sex.—The ages of the two main characters were not stated specifically in the development of the novel; however, because both were drafted into the armed services, it was assumed that they were between the ages of nineteen and twenty-five.

He told the police that I was that Stockdale boy and that I was the draft dodger that was supposed to report and didn't do it.

...this scrawny little fellow with the big glasses on

...little Ben—that was the little one's name. Ben Whitledge.
Occupation.--The main characters of this novel were soldiers, two of the six found in the 22 novels analyzed. Ben and Will were doing a tour of duty in the armed services and after some time were classified into specific units. They were both eventually placed in the gunnery outfit. "Anyhow, we went to gunnery, and me and Ben both got to be privates-first-class which means you wear a stripe on your arm, only we didn't get to wear it long..."\(^1\)

Place of residence.--The type of residence in which Ben and Will lived was the regular provision made for soldiers, barracks. "So when we fell out in front of the barracks, and got in line to go eat supper, I spoke to everyone real nice and tried to talk to them like nothing happened."\(^2\)

Educational level.--The two educational levels represented by Will and Ben were limited education and high school education. Apparently Will had a very limited education as evidenced by the quality of his reading and speech. "I done pretty good with it I think. I threwed in a lot of Thees and thous and Verilys and things like that, and when I come to big names, I just called them Sam, or Joe or whatever come into my head..."\(^3\)

Ben apparently had the equivalent of a high school education at least. "He might act like he has all the rank there is, but I know better. I guess I know all ROTC and how it works all

\(^1\) Ibid., p. 132.

\(^2\) Ibid., p. 50.

\(^3\) Ibid., p. 14.
I've read the manuals four or five times."¹

Setting

The setting of this book was wherever the army went so there was no one geographic setting.

And he really was the most interested in latrines of any man you ever seen in your life...I said "Colonel, I hope you like how we fixed up the latrines for you..."²

...I yelled out, "Ten-shun!" just as loud as I could...and then I jerked up real straight and snatched my foot with the wire to it and those seats popped up in the air just as nice as they could!...those seats were standing just as straight as you could want, all of them right at attention.³

Don't Go Near the Water

Theme

Don't Go Near the Water⁴ by William Brinkley related the adventures of a group of Navy public relations men stationed in the Pacific during World War II. The hilarious adventures of the naval "oddballs" ranged from creating the perfect naval image for the civilian back home for enlistment purposes to first class tours of the island for visiting congressmen.

The correspondents who themselves with their expendable curiosity take up the valuable time of the Navy men who are in the Navy. The last one of those Public Relations odd-balls ought to be out on a ship...The correspondents determine what the public thinks of us.⁵

¹Ibid., p. 49.
²Ibid., p. 87.
³Ibid., p. 127.
⁴Brinkley, op. cit.
⁵Ibid., p. 35.
Socio-economic Status of Main Characters

Melora Alba and Max Siegel, the two major characters of this novel, were both classified in the middle class social and economic status category. Melora was a member of an outstanding family on the island, had attended college abroad in Spain, and was employed as the local teacher on the island. Max had a college education having graduated from Harvard; he was employed as a public relations expert in the Navy.

Age and sex.--The two main characters of this novel were both placed in the young adult age category. "Griffin, at thirty-five ranked Siegel by ten years."¹ "The girl appeared about twenty years old..."²

Occupation.--Max, the male principal character was one of the six characters found in the 22 novels analyzed who could be classed in the broad occupational category of soldier. He was a Navy officer engaged in public relations work. Melora was one of the four school teachers among the characters in the 22 novels analyzed.

Ensign Max Siegel was virtually the only officer at Public Relations Headquarters with sea duty in his past.³

Ensign Siegel and the school teacher Melora Alba were having one of the regular after-school sessions.⁴

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¹ Ibid., p. 72.
² Ibid., p. 35.
³ Ibid., p. 17.
⁴ Ibid., p. 103.
Place of residence.--The places of residence occupied by the two principal characters of this novel varied greatly. Max, because of his position in the Navy, lived in naval quarters. Melora lived with her father in a lovely home overlooking the ocean.

Ensign Max Siegel and Lieutenant Morey Griffin shared a room on the second floor of BOQ (Bachelor Officer's Quarters)...1

It was the loveliest Tuluran house and one of the loveliest houses of any kind he had ever been in, with large flowing rooms, the house set in groves of trees on a rise which afforded a splendid view of the Pacific...2

Educational level.--Both of the main characters attended college. Max Siegel attended Harvard while Melora Alba went to college in Spain as was traditional for the members of her family. "I was chess champion of my college - Harvard College..."3

Setting

The geographic setting for this novel was a group of islands somewhere in the Pacific. The islands were lovely and the people were warm and friendly and delighted at having the Navy stationed there. "Heavens knows there's enough jungle on these islands...all this Jungle in the Pacific."4

1 Ibid., p. 64.
2 Ibid., p. 192.
3 Ibid., p. 240.
4 Ibid., p. 11.
Anatomy of a Murder

Theme

Robert Traver's *Anatomy of a Murder* analyzes one aspect of our legal system. Paul Begler, one of the main characters, had always been interested in the fine points of the law. He had been the district attorney for the area of Michigan in which he lived. In this novel he analyzed the unwritten law which permits a man to defend his wife against an attack on her honor. Lieutenant Manion, one of the main characters, murdered the rapist of his wife. This theme was placed in the established category of self analysis.

"There is no such thing as the unwritten law in Anglo-American jurisprudence."^2

But unwritten law or no, doesn't a man have a legal right to kill a man who has raped his wife?^3

Socio-economic Status of Main Characters

The main characters of this novel were placed in the middle class social and economic status group. This placement of these characters into this group was based on the pre-determined factors of: (1) occupations, (2) places of residence, and (3) educational levels.

*Age and sex.*—There were three main characters in this novel, two male and one female. The ages of these characters fell

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^1 Traver, *op. cit.*

^2 Ibid., p. 47.

^3 Ibid., p. 48.
into the middle-aged category.

So at forty I have found myself without a job, my main asset consisting of a law degree and battered set of law books.¹

"...How old are you?" "Thirty-six." "How old is your wife?" "Forty-one."²

**Occupation.**—Paul was one of the four lawyers in the study of the 22 novels and Lieutenant Manion was one of the seven soldiers found in the study. Mrs. Manion, without a formal occupation, was a housewife.

"An army wife had to find some way to pass her time and still stay an army wife..."³

Ah, I had a genuine military hero on my hands; one who was not only modest but traditionally reticent as hell, too. And wouldn't he look nice in court all decked out in his ribbons and decorations.⁴

I'm supposed to be the successful, well-heeled defense lawyer.⁵

**Place of residence.**—The main characters of this novel occupied two distinct types of residences: two lived in a trailer, the third in a small apartment. The soldier and his wife occupied a trailer. "I've been shifted around to various outfits as a special instructor. That's why Laura and I got a trailer."⁶

Paul Biegler, the lawyer, occupied a small portion of the old family house which he had made into a bachelor apartment.

The Chippewa Branch store of a national dime store chain embraced the entire main floor of the two-story brownstone building built by German brewer grandfather in the 1870's. For many years before they died he and Grandma used to live upstairs, and my combined law office and bachelor's quarters now occupied their old parlor....

Educational level.—The educational level of one of the main characters was professional education, indicated by his position as a lawyer. The soldier, whose rank was that of a lieutenant and who was an army instructor, had in all probability at least a college education. The housewife who was the third main character had at least a high school education. This conclusion was based on her previous occupation.

I was a mere 4F from an old scar on my lungs caused by an almost losing bout with pneumonia in law school.  

Didn't you know professional soldiers never have a dime?  

"I once sold lingerie in a department store."  

Setting

The geographic setting of this novel was the middle west specifically a small town in upper Michigan, in the hunting and fishing area.

1 Ibid., p. 11.
2 Ibid., p. 15.
3 Ibid., p. 38.
4 Ibid., p. 387.
The town of Chippewa lies in a broad loamy village surrounded by bald low lying granite and bluffs, about a dozen miles west of the town of Iron Bay on Lake Superior.¹

"State of Michigan, County of Iron Cliff" I, Mitchell Lodwick, prosecuting attorney in and for the county of Iron Cliffs... give the court to understand that Clarence Madigan...late of the city of Iron Bay...²

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**Peyton Place**

**Theme**

*Peyton Place*³ had as its general theme, sex. It embraced the lives and frailties of its many characters, especially with regard to violent emotional entanglements. It was the story of a small New England town and the secrets of its population. Specifically, this was the story of Constance McKenzie, who had had an illicit affair resulting in an illegitimate child, Allison, and Michael Rossi, a school teacher who was attracted to Constance.

Constance was as unstill as the river in floodtime. She did not recognize the symptoms in herself as akin to the painful restlessness of adolescence, nor did she admit that the dissatisfied yearning within her could be a sexual one.⁴

**Socio-economic Status of Main Characters**

The three main characters of this novel were placed in the middle class social and economic status group. The placement of Michael, Constance and Allison in this category was based on

¹ Ibid., p. 15.
² Ibid., p. 214.
³ Metalious, *op. cit.*
⁴ Ibid., p. 155.
quotations about their occupations, places of residence and educational levels.

Age and sex.--Two of the main characters fell in the middle-aged category; the third character's age spanned the age categories of childhood and young adulthood.

Constance McKenzie appeared in the story during the ages of 35 to 39.

At thirty-three, Constance was still beautiful. Her hair still gleamed, sleek and blond, and her face had not yet begun to show the lines of time. ¹

"And you," he said softly breathing in her ear, "have a remarkably young body for a lady of thirty-nine."²

Allison, the daughter of Constance, wanted very much to be like the other children and resented her mother trying to make her different. In the story she grew from childhood to adulthood through many trying experiences among the most traumatic of which was learning about her illegitimacy.

She could not understand a twelve-year old girl keeping her nose in a book. Other girls her age would have been continually in the shop, examining and exclaiming over the boxes of pretty dresses...³

Seth had looked at this girl, to tense and fine drawn for a child of sixteen and had tried to explain to her why they were going to do nothing about the case of Ellsworth Hattington.⁴

¹ Ibid., p. 28.
² Ibid., p. 376.
³ Ibid., p. 30.
⁴ Ibid., p. 395.
Michael Rossi, a school teacher who fell in love with Constance and helped her to remove the barrier of lies about her past, was between the ages of 36 and 49 during the course of the novel.

He was thirty-six years, totally lacking in regret over the fact that he had never stayed in one job long enough to "get ahead" as the Pittsburgh secretary put it.¹

For all of your forty-one years you have remarkably young ideas.²

Occupation.--The occupations of the three main characters of this novel were each stated or intimated. Constance was the only business woman appearing in the 22 novels analyzed. Michael was one of several school teachers represented by the characters in this study and Allison, a student, also fell in a category which was occupied by several other characters.

Constance McKenzie supported herself and her child by operating an apparel shop which was financed with money left to her by Allison's father. "The Thrifty Corner Apparel Shop prospers, perhaps because it was the only store of its kind in Peyton Place, or perhaps because Constance had a certain flair for style."³

Allison was a young girl in school throughout most of the story. After completing school she followed her ambition to write and went away to seek work in New York. "'You still writing them stories for magazines? The wife always reads 'em. Says they're

¹ Ibid., p. 143.
² Ibid., p. 376.
³ Ibid., p. 29.
good too. 'Yes, I'm still writing for the magazines,' said Allison.’

Michael Rossi was a school teacher who came to Peyton Place as headmaster of the local school. Seeing Constance he became interested in her and romantically pursued her until they were married. "'Connie,' said Harrington, 'I'd like you to meet our new headmaster, Mr. Rossi. Mr. Rossi, Constance McKenzie.'"

Place of residence.—Place of residence was one of the determining factors in the social and economic status of each character included in the study. Constance and Allison lived in a small house and Michael lived in a small bachelor apartment in Peyton Place until his marriage to Constance. "The houses in Allison's neighborhood had simple one-family dwellings. Most of them modeled on Cape Cod lines and painted white with green trim.'

Michael lived in an upstairs apartment over the local Congregationalist minister. "Reverend Fitzgerald had been furious when Lesslie Harrington had asked about the renting of the apartment over the parsonage. He had refused good naturedly and Leslie had been just as good naturedly insistent."'

Educational level.—The two main female characters of this novel were placed in the high school educational category. Michael

1 Ibid., pp. 469-470.
2 Ibid., p. 148.
3 Ibid., p. 21.
4 Ibid., p. 245.
the main male character, was placed in the college educational category because of his position as the headmaster of a school.

Evidently Constance had at least a high school education since she had done secretarial work for a while. Also her position as a successful business woman leads to the assumption that she had at least a high school education.

"At the age of nineteen she had seen the limitations of Peyton Place and over the protests of her widowed mother she sent to New York.... She became the secretary to Allison McKenzie a handsome, good-natured Scot."

Allison was a student during the major portion of this novel but after graduation from high school she left Peyton Place and went to New York to write. "It had been September, three months to the day after graduation from high school, when she arrived in New York."

Michael Rossi had worked in many odd jobs, in the steel mills and in construction jobs, however realizing the value of an education, he went to school and became qualified to teach. Michael became the headmaster at the school in Peyton Place because he was so well qualified. "He's got a Master's degree from Columbia!"

Setting

Peyton Place was a small New England town with the usual

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1 Ibid., p. 26.
2 Ibid., p. 487.
3 Ibid., p. 136.
small town characteristics. The people were clanish and there were the usual typical odd characters.

Allison looked across at the emptiness beyond Road End. From up here she could see the town, spread out below her. She could see the belfry of the grade school, the church spires and the winding blue road of the Connecticut River... She could see the gray stone pile of Samuel Peyton's castle, and she stared hard at the place for which the town had been named.1

The View from Pompey's Head

Theme

The View from Pompey's Head by Hamilton Basso2 dealt primarily with an analysis of a social system by its main character. How important is family position and ancestry was a question asked in many ways by the main character of this novel. He asked it of himself as he remembered his childhood and the effect of his ancestry on his position in the small Southern town in which he lived. He asked it of himself as he remembered his early manhood and his friends and the inter-relationship between himself and them.

It struck him that "Shintoism" was a most revealing word. One could use it as a key to explain not only Pompey's Head but the whole South...ancestor worship...was directly related to aristocratic principles inherent in the structure of Southern society.3

1 Ibid., p. 21.

2 Basso, op. cit.

3 Ibid., p. 221.
Socio-economic Status of Main Characters

Anson Page, the principal character of this novel, was placed in the middle class social and economic status group. The placement of this character in this category was based on the following factors: (1) occupation: lawyer, (2) place of residence: a large apartment, and (3) educational level: professional.

Age and sex.--The principal character of this novel was placed in the middle-aged category: "He suspected that it had some connection with his being eight months past his thirty-ninth birthday."¹

Occupation.--Anson Page was one of the four lawyers among the main characters of the 22 novels analyzed in this study. He was the young member of a prominent firm in New York which specialized in legal work for publishing houses. He returned to Pompey's Head in search of a client and to help clear up a mystery of some funds missing from his account.

Far removed from the commercial circles of Pompey's Head, one of the partners of the legal firm of Guthrie, Barlowe & Paul which represented most of the publishing houses in New York, Anson Page could afford to regard the matter lightly.²

Place of residence.--The main character of this novel occupied a residence in keeping with his middle class social status; he lived in a large apartment with his wife and children.

It was on the sixth floor of a ten-story building in the East Seventies. Besides the dining alcove and the kitchen,

¹ Ibid., p. 7.
² Ibid., p. 1.
it included a living room...two cell-like chambers, also bedrooms given to the children, another room Anson used for a study...and two baths.¹

**Educational level.**—Anson Page was a graduate of college and law school so he was placed in the educational category of professional education. "Mr. Barlowe was St. Mark's, Princeton, and Far Hills, New Jersey, and Anson could never forget he was Montague High, South Carolina State, and Pompey's Head."²

**Setting**

This novel had its setting in a small Southern city, the childhood home of the novel's principal character who had returned to it on firm business. "...small Southern city of twenty-five thousand inhabitants..."³

**Compulsion**

**Theme**

The theme of *Compulsion*⁴ was devoted to an experiment to commit a perfect murder executed by two young adults. Born into a world of wealth and parental indulgence Artie and Judd were maladjusted young men, a fact which was further complicated by their high degree of intelligence. Sid was a classmate of the two young men and an important character in the drama of this novel.

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¹ Ibid., p. 13.
² Ibid., p. 18.
³ Ibid., p. 2.
⁴ Meyer, op. cit.
The whole thing was a failure. The killing itself had been wasted. Even if the killing had been a necessary waste, an experiment, there remained the death of the thing itself. The whole thing represented an entity.¹

**Socio-economic Status of Main Characters**

The three main characters of this novel were placed into two of the categories of socio-economic status. Artie and Judd, because of the wealth of their parents, their living in large mansions in Chicago, and their educational levels, were placed in the upper socio-economic status group. Sid, because of his job on a newspaper, his residence in a small apartment, and his educational level, was placed in the middle class socio-economic status category.

**Age and sex.**—The three main characters of this novel, Judd Steiner, Artie Straus and Sid Silver were all young adults. Moreover, I had an obscure hostility toward Artie. I, Sid, suppose it was because we were the prodigies both graduating at eighteen.²

Judge Wagner repeated that Judd was a brilliant boy. A Phi Beta Kappa at seventeen, a law student and the son of one of the most respected men in Hyde Park.³

**Occupation.**—The main characters of this novel were still in college and therefore occupationally classed as students.

On that day Judd Steiner slipping into class a moment late, took a back seat...⁴

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¹ Ibid., p. 51.
² Ibid., p. 67.
³ Ibid., p. 206.
⁴ Ibid., p. 3.
I was eighteen and I was already graduating...¹

He would have got to know Artie... if Artie hadn't transferred to the university at fourteen.²

**Place of residence.**—The places of residence occupied by the three main characters were placed in two of the categories for place of residence. Two of the characters occupied large houses, the third a small apartment.

Artie and Judd were the sons of very wealthy Chicago business men and lived with their parents in mansions in the exclusive section of Chicago.

They had by now reached Judd's house, an ornate gabled mansion on Greenwood Street.³

The Strauses with their ten million dollars and their palatial new mansion...⁴

Sid lived in the fraternity house on the campus but later moved to what was indicated in terms of a small apartment. "The last year I moved out of the house on the pretext that my newspaper work demanded another kind of set-up."⁵

**Educational level.**—The three main characters were placed in the educational category of college education; they were all university students preparing for graduation.

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"Judd was sitting on a bench in the waiting room...a bare-headed college boy..."¹

People talked about Artie, the brilliant prodigy...²

I was sort of a freak, all-A prodigy...³

Setting

This novel was one of the small number of novels set in an urban area. The city in which the action took place was mentioned numerous times throughout the novel.

In Chicago the papers jointly used the City News Agency to cover routine sources like neighborhood police stations.⁴

**Andersonville**

Theme

This novel dealt with the Civil War period in the United States and life in a Confederate prison camp for Union prisoners. The horrors of the life led by the prisoners as a result of man's inhumanity to man and the subsequent effect this had on the lives of three persons was the theme of this novel.

This gigantic mass of human misery calls loudly for relief, not only for the sake of suffering humanity, but also on account of our own soldiers now captive in the hands of the Federal government.⁵

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¹ Ibid., p. 89.
² Ibid., p. 42.
³ Ibid., p. 61.
⁴ Ibid.
⁵ Kantor, op. cit., p. 604.
Socio-economic Status of Main Characters

The three main characters were placed in the upper class economic and social status group.

Age and sex.--The three main characters occupied two of the age categories. One of the male characters was placed in the middle-aged category, the two other characters, one male and one female, were placed in the young-adult age category. Ira Claffey was the male character in the middle-aged category. "After this night...I presume that I should date everything from my fiftieth birthday."\(^1\)

Lucy Claffey, the daughter of Ira, was the only female main character in this novel; her age fell in the young adult category. "Lucy would be twenty-one during this year of 1864..."\(^2\)

There was no definite age given for Harrell Elkins; however, from statements made by other characters of the novel, it was possible to determine that this doctor was probably in his middle 30's. "He is somewhere near my own age, but half bald already."\(^3\) This statement was made by a young soldier in a letter home regarding Harrell.

Occupation.--The occupations represented by the characters of this novel fell into two categories: one a doctor; the other was a Southern planter. The main female character was not employed

\(^1\) Ibid., p. 9.
\(^2\) Ibid., p. 69.
\(^3\) Ibid., p. 76.
and was one of the few characters in the 22 novels analyzed without an occupation.

Ira was the owner of a large plantation in Georgia. A man of principles, he was unfortunate enough to have the infamous prison built on his land.

Sometimes there was a compulsion which drew Ira Claffey from his plantation and sent him to walk in the forest...Ira Claffey had employed no overseer since the first year of the war, and had risen early this morning to direct his hands in the potato patch.¹

Harrell Elkins was a doctor in the Confederate army. He had come to Andersonville to serve as one of the prison doctors. "Just Surgeon Elkins now...I hadn't finished my medical studies when the war came..."²

Lucy Claffey supervised the management of her father's house. "Below stairs he heard Lucy ordering the black women about, and soon came the rumpus of barrels being brought to the kitchen gallery."³

Place of residence.—The places of residence occupied by the three main characters of this novel were in two categories. The categories represented were: (1) large houses, and (2) army barracks. Ira and Lucy Claffey occupied a large house located on their plantation. "Ira went on toward the big house...and stopped at the implement shed..."⁴
Harrell Elkins, the army doctor, had no definite place of residence given but because he was in the army he was possibly quartered in army barracks of some sort. "I have requested an assignment to duty in Camp Sumpter."¹

**Educational level.**—The main characters in this novel represented three of the established educational categories: (1) college, (2) professional education, and (3) high school.

There was no definite reference given to the educational level of Ira Claffey during the novel. It was possible to determine from a statement of another character that he must have had a college education.

He wished with recurrent regret that Ira Claffey was not averse to metaphysical discussion, but Ira was averse to it. Ira was one of the three men among the parson's acquaintances who possessed sufficient scholarly background to indulge in such activity.²

In regard to Harrell Elkins the following statement appeared in the novel: "Cousin Harry tells me that he served as assistant to the medical chemist there whilst pursuing his early medical studies."³

Lucy Claffey's educational level was in the high school category. "There was no instruction in the art Lucy loved most, at the Americus Female Institute. An attempt was made to teach the young ladies French, religious history, geography..."⁴

Setting

This novel was set in a small town in Georgia during the Civil War. "Often in early December the north wind beats thinly, steadily across the hillocks of Georgia."\(^1\)

**Bonjour Tristesse**

Theme

*Bonjour Tristesse* by Francois Sagan\(^2\) was a novel which examined the lives of three persons. It was primarily the story of Cecile, who lived with her father, a man who found it difficult to grow old. He surrounded himself with beautiful mistresses and participated in wild parties in an effort to remain young. Cecile, a sensitive girl, on a summer vacation with her father Raymond and a current mistress began to evaluate her life in terms of her values and those of her father. Ann, the third major character in this novel, was a stable woman who loved Raymond and tried to introduce some order into the lives of Raymond and Cecile. "I will pass quickly over this period, for I am afraid that if I look at it closely, I shall revive memories that are too painful."\(^3\)

Socio-economic Status of Main Characters

The three main characters of this novel were placed in the middle economic and social status category. The occupations

\(^1\) Ibid., p. 43.

\(^2\) Sagan, *op. cit.*

\(^3\) Ibid., p. 115.
represented among these characters were public relations work and designing; the remaining character was a student. The place of residence for all the characters was a large house. The educational levels represented were high school and limited education.

**Age and sex.**—Two of the main characters of this novel were placed in the middle-age category as indicated by the ages stated or intimated in the quotations following. The third character was placed in the young adult age category.

Raymond, the weak and frivolous principal male character was in the middle-aged category. "My father was forty...He was young for his age full of vitality and liveliness."\(^1\)

Ann was a woman of intelligence and beauty. She came to Raymond's house to marry him. "At forty-two, she was a most attractive woman, much sought after, with a beautiful face, proud, calm, reserved."\(^2\)

Cecile was a young girl in her teens who was spending a summer vacation with her father. "That summer, I was seventeen and perfectly happy."\(^3\)

**Occupation.**—Raymond was one of the few businessmen among the main characters of the 22 novels analyzed in this study. Ann was the only designer among the characters and Cecile was one of the several students treated in the 22 novels. The occupation of

\(^1\) Ibid., p. 7.

\(^2\) Ibid., p. 11.

\(^3\) Ibid., p. 7.
a main character was a primary determinant in the social and economic status accorded to the character. "Her work was concerned with women's fashions and my father's with publicity..."\(^1\)

Cecil was a student on vacation. Having flunked her examination she was studying to take it again. "Everything would be as before; after all, why should I not try to pass my examination? A college degree was sure to come in useful later on."\(^2\)

**Place of residence.**—All of the principal characters occupied a villa together. "He had rented a large white villa on the Mediterranean, for which we had been longing all spring."\(^3\)

**Educational level.**—Ann's definite educational level was not mentioned during the development of the novel. However, because of the type of work in which she was engaged and her associates she was in all probability at least a high school graduate. "Her friends were intelligent and discreet."\(^4\)

There was no mention made of the educational accomplishments of Raymond during the novel. It was possible to deduce from a reference to not having a high school diploma that his formal education was limited. "'Why should she?'...'I never got any diploma and I manage to live very well.'"\(^5\)

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\(^1\) Ibid., p. 12.

\(^2\) Ibid., p. 68.

\(^3\) Ibid., p. 8.

\(^4\) Ibid., p. 11.

\(^5\) Ibid., p. 27.
Setting

This novel was one of several set in foreign countries, specifically on the Mediterranean coast of France. There was no definite name cited for the area in which the villa was located; however, various places in France were mentioned.

I fell asleep thinking of Cyril who was probably at that moment in Cannes with the same kind of charming girl.¹

In Paris there was no time for reading; after lectures my boy friends hurried me off to the movies.²

The Man in the Grey Flannel Suit

Theme

The theme of The Man in the Grey Flannel Suit by Sloan Wilson³ was concerned with self analysis. The principal character, Thomas Rath, was a young business executive who while struggling to "get to the top" suddenly realized that he was compromising his basic principles of honesty.

I should quit if I don't like what he does, but I want to eat, and so, like a half million other guys in grey flannel suits, I'll always pretend to agree, until I get big enough to be honest without being hurt. That's not being crooked, it's just being smart.⁴

Socio-economic Status of Main Characters

The main character of this novel, Thomas Rath, was placed

¹ Ibid., p. 20.
² Ibid., p. 21.
³ Wilson, op. cit.
⁴ Ibid., p. 189.
in the middle class socio-economic status category.

**Age and sex.**—Rath was placed in the young adult age category because of definite statements regarding his age, one of which follows: "Anything about a man can be summed up in numbers. Thomas Rath, thirty-two years old..."¹

**Occupation.**—Thomas Rath was a young businessman who worked in the hustle and bustle of big business in New York. Specifically, he was a public relations man. "From the point of view of the United Broadcasting Corporation the most significant fact about me is that I am applying for a position in its public relations department..."²

**Place of residence.**—Thomas Rath, along with his wife and children, occupied a large mansion left him by a wealthy grandmother. "Finally, he saw the stone posts...he turned into the driveway...he passed the grove of oak trees, the carriage house, the rock garden. Ahead of him the old mansion loomed..."³

**Educational level.**—Rath attended a small private school for his elementary and high school education. His college education he received from Harvard. "I was graduated from Covington Academy in 1937, and from Harvard in 1941."⁴

Setting

The geographic setting for this novel was a suburban community in New England. "On the evening of October 8, Tom and Betsy Rath went to the town Hall in South Bay to attend the public hearing on the proposed schools."  

Mrs. 'Arris Goes to Paris

Theme

Mrs. 'Arris Goes to Paris by Paul W. Gallico 2 was an entertaining study of human nature. The author selected a theme with which most people could identify; a dream for whose fulfillment one is willing to do anything. Mrs. Harris, the principal character, had a dream of owning a Dior dress like those owned by many of the ladies in whose homes she cleaned. Mrs. Harris was a winsome person who had many delightful experiences in trying to acquire a Dior dress. After acquiring her dream dress, Mrs. Harris let a client use the dress and, as the result of a careless accident, the dress was ruined. However, all ended well and the little London charwoman resumed her duties feeling much richer because of her experiences. This novel was one of seven which fell outside the established categories for them and one of the five of the seven which were classed as comedies.

...At that instant Mrs. Harris had made up her mind that all she desired above all else on earth and in Heaven thereafter, was a Dior dress of her own to have hanging in her closet. 3

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1 Ibid., p. 251.
2 Gallico, op. cit.
It was as though all she missed through the poverty, the circumstances of her birth and class in life could be made up by becoming the holder of this one bit of feminine finery.

Socio-economic Status of Main Characters

The main character of this novel was placed in the lower economic and social status group.

Age and sex.—Mrs. Ada Harris was an elderly woman of about 60. "The world in which Mrs. Harris, now approaching sixties, moved was one of perpetual mess and untidiness."^2

Occupation.—The main character of this novel was employed as a cleaning woman and was the only character of those found in the novels who was so employed.

On the passenger manifest of the airliner she appeared as Mrs. Ada Harris, though she invariably pronounced it as "Mrs. 'Arris," no. 5 Willis Gardens, Battersea, London S.W. 11, and she was indeed a charwoman, a widow who "did" hours for a clientele who lived in and on the fringes of the fashionable Eaton Square and Belgravia.^

Place of residence.—The place of residence occupied by the principal character during the major portion of this novel was a small house.

"If Madame would care, I invite her to come to my house and remain with me during this period as my guest. It is not much - only a small house, but my sister had to go to Lille and there would be room."^4

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1 Ibid., p. 28.
2 Ibid., p. 12.
3 Ibid., p. 101.
4 Ibid.
Educational level.—The placement of Mrs. Harris in the limited education category was based on her occupation and her social status in the community.

Up to the magic moment of finding herself hoisted off the face of the earth hers had been a life of never ending drudgery, relieved by nothing more than an occasional visit to the flicks, the corner pub or an evening at the music hall.¹

Setting

This novel was set in Paris, France, where Mrs. Harris traveled to get her Dior dress.

Thus Mrs. Harris saw Paris by twilight from the second landing of the Tour Eiffel, by milky moonlight from Sacre-Coeur; and waking up in the morning at dawn when the market bustle at Les Halles began...²

Dr. Zhivago

Theme

Doctor Zhivago³ was listed and analyzed in the study as a personality profile. It had as its theme the transition of Russia during the period of the great revolution and its effect on Yurii Andreievich Zhivago and his family and friends. The author of this novel drew upon the many struggles and upheavals that evolved within the Russian people themselves as well as within the country for this significant and revealing story during the time of the Bolshevik revolution, and after. The principal character of this novel was Zhivago.

¹Ibid., p. 12.
²Ibid., p. 115.
³Pasternak, op. cit.
His friends had become strangely dim and colorless. Not one of them had preserved his own outlook, his own world. They had been much more vivid in his memory. He must have overestimated them in the past. Under the old order which enabled those whose lives were secure to play the fools and eccentrics at the expense of the others while the majority led a wretched existence, it had been only too easy to mistake the foolishness and idleness of a privileged minority for genuine character and originality..."I too think that Russia will become the first socialist state since the beginning of the world."1

Socio-economic Status of Main Characters

The two main characters of this novel were both placed in the upper class socio-economic group.

Age and sex.--The ages of the two main characters spanned the period from childhood to late middle age. The novel began when they were only children; however, at the conclusion of the story, from all indications, they were both middle-aged. The following quotations indicate the ages of the main characters at various times during the course of the novel. This quotation has reference to Zhivago during childhood and middle age. "The coffin was closed, nailed and lowered into the ground...A ten year old boy climbed on it."2 "I've got sclerosis of the heart...I'm not yet forty."3

Lara Fedorva Guishar, the second main character of this novel, was a friend of Zhivago during his teens and later when they were both grown. "Lara was only a little over sixteen but

1 Ibid., p. 174.
2 Ibid., p. 3.
3 Ibid., p. 483.
she was well developed."¹ In the course of the novel, after this time, there was no definite statement of Lara's age but she and Zhivago were close to the same age.

**Occupation.**—The occupations represented by Doctor Zhivago and Larisa were both in the professional category. Doctor Zhivago was a doctor and Larisa was a nurse. Both occupations were represented by several of the main characters of the 22 novels analyzed in this study.

Young Zhivago was from an upper social and economic status group and during his youth manifested interests in many areas. He was interested in the arts, history and writing. He chose medicine as his profession after much deliberation. "He was interested in natural science and believed that a man should do something socially useful in his practical life. He settled on medicine."²

Larisa was also a member of the upper class in her society and was therefore able to take advantage of the educational opportunities available. Occupationally she was a teacher for a while and later became a nurse who worked in the battlefields of the Revolution. "Larisa shared all her husbands interests. She herself taught at the girl's gymnasium."³ "Now she trained seriously and qualified as a nurse."⁴

¹ Ibid., p. 24.
² Ibid., p. 64.
³ Ibid., p. 105.
⁴ Ibid., p. 110.
Place of residence.—The places of residence occupied by Zhivago and Larisa were usually large houses. As his permanent residence Zhivago had a comfortable home suited to an upper class family. He lived in this home with his uncle. "The Gromeko's house had two stories...on the top floor were the bedrooms."¹

Larisa apparently had no permanent residence after becoming separated from her mother. After she married she and her husband settled in Yuriatan, where she remained until the revolution and began her travels with Zhivago. During the major portion of this novel there was no definite place of residence because of the extensive traveling of the two characters.

Educational level.—Zhivago and Larisa were placed in the professional educational category. The placement of them in this category was based on definite statements made in the development of the novel. "Yura, Micha, Gordon and Tonia were due to graduate the following spring. Yura in medicine..."² "Both Pasha and Lara had graduated with flying colors."³

Setting

The geographic setting for this novel was Russia. It was one of several novels whose settings were in a foreign country. The novelist described in detail the Russian countryside especially the rural areas and the area around the Ural mountains.

¹ Ibid., p. 54.
² Ibid., p. 64.
³ Ibid., p. 97.
Russia with its fields, steppes, villages, and towns bleached lime-white by the sun, flew past them wrapped in hot clouds of dust...\(^1\)

In April of that year Zhivago set out with his whole family...far away in the Urals.\(^2\)

Exodus

Theme

The general theme of the novel Exodus\(^3\) was placed in the category of religion. The specific theme was the story of the Jews and their struggle to set up a separate political unit for Jews. Many political intrigues were involved in the re-birth of Israel as a nation. As the story unfolded the reader accompanied the two main characters, Ari Ben Cannan, an Israeli Freedom Fighter, and the other, an American nurse, Kitty Fremont through the adventures involved in smuggling Jews to Palestine and the trials of settling and living in a new place. The struggles to set up Israel were constantly menaced by the British quota of immigration to the Mandate of Israel and the hostile Arabs who were the geographic neighbors of Israel. The theme of this novel, which was the revival of a nation, was best expressed by one of the main characters in the following quotation:

"Thus saith the Lord God; When I shall have gathered the house of Israel from the people among whom they are scattered and shall be sanctified in them in sight of the nations then

\(^1\) Ibid., p. 12.

\(^2\) Ibid., p. 208.

\(^3\) Uris, op. cit.
shall they dwell in their land that I have given to my servant Jacob wherein your father abode and they shall abide therein and even they and their children and their children's children forever.\textsuperscript{1}

Socio-economic Status of Main Characters

The two main characters of \textit{Exodus}\textsuperscript{2} were placed in the middle class social and economic status group. Ari Ben Cannan, came from a background of eternal struggle. Through his qualities of leadership and intelligence he became an outstanding leader in the Zionist movement. He was one of the undisputed leaders of the underground movement to smuggle Jews into Palestine out of the many places of detention scattered over Europe. Ari had been educated at home and later, in all probability, in a community school. Because of the factors previously mentioned and his former position in the British army he was placed in the middle socio-economic class group.

Kitty Fremont, because of her professional education in college as a nurse, and statements made about her by other characters, was placed also in the middle class social and economic group.

\textit{Age and sex.}--The two main characters both were placed in the young adult age category. This placement of these characters in this category was based on specific statements regarding their ages.

\textsuperscript{1} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 185.

\textsuperscript{2} \textit{Uris.}, \textit{op. cit.}. 
Kitty would be twenty-eight years old now.¹

Ben Cannan, thirty and a strapping six-footer with black hair and ice-blue eyes, could be mistaken for a movie leading man.²

**Occupation.**—Both of the main characters in this novel were employed in a profession. Ari Ben Cannan was professional soldier and Kitty Freemont was a nurse.

Ari Ben Cannan was a Palestinian who had at one time served as a captain in the British Army where he earned the Military Cross of Valor. Later he became one of the leading freedom fighters of the underground movement to get as many Jews as possible into Israel.

...the appearance of Ari Ben Cannan on Cyprus meant a top-level mission for Mossad Aliyah Bet...The Mossad Aliyah Bet was an organization of Palestinian Jews whose business was to smuggle other Jews to Palestine.³

...I wonder if the British added that I was a captain in their army during World War II. I admit I am a Zionest troublemaker and I will continue to be until they keep their promises about Palestine. Whether my work is legal or not is a matter of opinion.⁴

Kitty Freemont's ambition had been to become a nurse. This ambition was fulfilled through her training at the state college in the nursing division. After she finished her training she married her college sweetheart who was later killed in World War II; shortly after this tragedy she also lost their child.

Subsequently, Kitty accepted a post as a United Nations nurse and was stationed in Europe when she became involved in the Jewish refugee movement.

"I went back to nursing plunging into it like crazy. The minute it was over in Europe I took on this Greek orphanage...it was a twenty-four hour-a-day job."\(^1\)

"My work is finished at Salonike...I've a dozen offers I can take around Europe with the United Nations."\(^2\)

**Place of residence.**—Ari Ben Cannan was the son of an outstanding spokesman for Jewish rights. His permanent residence was at the home of his father, a large sprawling farm called Yad El; the house was small. "It was late afternoon when Ari turned into the gates of Yad El. He stopped before a flower-bedecked cottage."\(^3\)

Kitty, After many temporary residencies, finally came to the village called Gan Dafna where the refugee children were placed and cared for. She lived in a small cabin in the village where she helped as a nurse.

The combination living room and bedroom was simple but tasteful. The draperies and the spread over the couch bed were of the thick Negev linen weave...There was another small room, a study and a pullman kitchen and bath.\(^4\)

**Educational level.**—Kitty Freemont was placed in the professional education category based on her profession as a nurse

1. Ibid., p. 16.
2. Ibid., p. 18.
3. Ibid., p. 348.
4. Ibid., p. 355.
and definite statements regarding her years at college. "Kitty stayed on at State to finish her pre-nursing training."  

Ari Ben Cannan had no formal college education indicated in the development of the novel. His early educational training he received from his parents and later it is probable that he attended the school which was established in his community. His position in the Israeli movement, his position in the British army, and his language achievements indicated at least a formal high school education and possibly college training. "Ari Ben Cannan was the pride of his father's heart...Besides Hebrew and English he mastered Arabic, German, French, and Yiddish..."  

**Setting**

Portions of this novel were set in Europe but the major portions were set in the Middle East, specifically in Palestine. The area in Palestine was rural, where the people were struggling with farms, trying to irrigate the drylands and to build a new and powerful country. "We Jews have created a strange civilization in Palestine...The eternal longing of the Jewish people to own land is so great that this is where our new heritage comes from."  

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1. Ibid., p. 5.
2. Ibid., p. 272.
3. Ibid., p. 343.
CHAPTER III

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This chapter presents a summary of the results of the analysis of the 22 books which remained for eight months or more on the list of best-selling fiction in The New York Times and the conclusions drawn from the study of certain aspects of the novels. The aspects of the books analyzed were: (1) theme, the underlying idea of the story; (2) setting, the geographic area in which the major portion of the story took place; and (3) main character types as indicated by educational level, social class level and place of residence. The place of residence referred to the type of home occupied by the main character or characters.

Socio-economic Status of the Characters

in the Novels Analyzed

Ages of the Main Characters

The ages of the main characters were determined from the contents of the books and were divided into the following categories: (1) those whose ages ranged up to 15 years, designated as children; (2) those whose ages fell between 15 and 35 years, designated as young adults; (3) those whose ages ranged from 36 through 55 years, designated as middle-aged; and (4) those over 56 years of age. Of the 46 main characters treated in the 22
books studied, the largest number fell into the middle-aged category and the young adult category. The two extremes in the age grouping, the children and the elderly, were represented by a very small number. There were very few characters whose ages in the course of the development of the novel spanned two or more age categories. There were 27 characters whose ages were specifically stated in the course of the novel. In the other 19 cases age was not given but was inferred from circumstances such as occupation, ages of associates and statements of events occurring in the character's life.

After analyzing the findings of the age groupings it would seem that best-selling fiction deals in the main with people who are young adults and those considered middle-aged. These two groups make up a large portion of our society indicating the possibility that the writer of best-selling fiction tends to write about people with whom the majority of society can in some manner identify itself. Also these are perhaps the age groups who represent the major audience for best-sellers.

Sex of the Main Characters

Sex was analyzed in order to determine who is written about more, the hero or the heroine? According to the findings of this study, of the 46 characters from the 22 novels studied 31 were male and 15 female. This is another possible indication that the writers of best-selling fiction tend to write about the things in which their readers will be most interested. In the cultural system of the United States the man is the dominant member
in the relationships between men and women. He is traditionally the provider and protector; therefore, in best selling fiction this trend would probably be followed in order to appeal to the largest number of readers. Most of the reading of best-sellers is done by women, so male characters portrayed as strong and as good providers appeal to the female reader because this is the ideal her culture upholds. Also the female readers can identify themselves with the object of the hero's protection. Another possibility for the seeming trend in best-seller fiction, to write more about men than women, could be the many vicarious adventures possible for the female reader through the male character. The female character's activities are more limited by the framework of her culture, therefore the adventures of the male characters, in most instances, provide more interesting reading.

Occupations of the Main Characters

The occupations of individuals indicated several facts about them. Among the facts indicated from the analysis of occupations are: (1) educational and economic levels and (2) social class status. Many varied occupations were associated with the main characters of the 22 novels analyzed.

The largest number of occupations fell into the professional group and the majority of these were employed as physicians, businessmen, lawyers and teachers. The second large group of occupations fell into the non-professional category. This group's major representatives were soldiers, housewives, students and a small number of other occupations. Persons evidencing no occupation made up the third category and were represented by a very
small number. Professional employment is one of the characteristics of the middle class into which a very large percentage of the American reading public falls (see Table 1).

TABLE 1

OCCUPATIONS OF THE MAIN CHARACTERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professional</th>
<th>Non-Professional</th>
<th>No Occupation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Occupation</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Occupation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physicians</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Soldiers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Businessmen</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Politicians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawyers</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Housewives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurses</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Charwoman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clergyman</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Houseboy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Designer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>White hunter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Planter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cartoonist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Places of Residence of Main Characters

As has been stated, previously, place of residence in this analysis refers to the type of home the 46 main characters of the 22 novels occupied. The largest number of characters occupied large homes followed in number by those occupying small homes. Other types of residences mentioned were army barracks, large apartments, hotel rooms, trailers and native huts. The type of home was ascertained from the author's statements about the type of home, from the statements of the main characters, from the occupations or from the social class status. A very small percentage
of characters fell into the lower social and economic class level (see Table 2).

The largest number of people written about in the examples of best-selling fiction analyzed were in the middle class, which could possibly support the claim of sociologists that the middle class is growing. This possibility is based on the tendency of best-seller novelists to try to appeal to the largest number of readers.

TABLE 2

RESIDENCES OF MAIN CHARACTERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Residence</th>
<th>Number of Characters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Large homes</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small homes</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Army barracks</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small apartments</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large apartments</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotel rooms</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native huts</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trailers</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dormitories</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Educational Level of the Characters Studied

More Americans than ever before are in school today at all levels of our educational system. Of all American youths who are 16 and 17 years of age, 80.6 per cent are in high school indicating that an increasing number will finish high school.¹ The number attending colleges and universities is increasing even more rapidly. At present about 35 per cent of our population goes to college, but a rising trend is noted and by 1970 this country will

have approximately three times as many graduates from college as 1940.1

What implications does this have from the viewpoint of the writer of best-selling fiction, if any? As has been stated, the writer of best-selling fiction seems to write about the type of characters with whom the average person can identify himself. Therefore, as the educational level rises in the society it is possible that the average educational level of the novelist's characters will also rise in this type of novel.

The classification of the educational level of the characters was divided into the following categories: limited education, high school education, college education and advanced or professional education 11 characters. Although the authors wrote about all educational levels, there was seemingly a tendency to write about more persons with college educations. The conclusions as to which category a character was placed in were established from direct statements from the main characters in a majority of the cases; in other cases, from the occupations of the characters, the types of homes in which they lived, and their associates.

Themes

The term theme, as used in this study, referred to the underlying or central idea of the novel. The category of theme was divided into the following general sections: sex, crime problems, politics, self analysis, religion, and racial problems. These categories were further subdivided into more definite and

1 Ibid., p. 496.
The largest number of novels had themes which fell into the category of self analysis, specifically the personality profile. Personality profile, as a category of self analysis, refers to those themes which dealt with the searchings and self-analysis of a character, his re-evaluation of his value system and that of his culture. There has been a growing trend in this country to become introspective, to find out the how's and why's of ourselves and the society in which we live. This trend has evidenced itself in our interest in psychology, psychiatry and the social sciences. It has shown itself in our literature in such books as Sloan Wilson's *The Man in the Grey Flannel Suit*\(^1\) in which the main character begins to analyze himself and the society in which he lives. It is evidenced in such novels as *The View from Pompey's Head*\(^2\) in which the main character analyzes himself and the class structure of a community. Other novels included in this study which fell into this category were: *Anatomy of a Murder*,\(^3\) *Not as a Stranger*,\(^4\) *Bonjour Tristesse*,\(^5\) *By Love Possessed*,\(^6\) and *Doctor Zhivago*.\(^7\)

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1. Sloan Wilson, *op. cit.*
2. Hamilton Basso, *op. cit.*
Of the 22 novels analyzed only two had themes which were religious in nature: Taylor Caldwell's *Dear and Glorious Physician*,\(^1\) a warm and moving story of the apostle Luke's search for inner faith, and *Exodus* by Leon Uris\(^2\) which tells the story of the Jews and their struggle to set up a separate political unit for Jews.

Treatment of a political theme occurred in two of the 22 novels analyzed; one of the two fell into the subdivision of foreign politics, the other in the subdivision of domestic politics. The concern with the impression which Americans are making on foreign countries is the subject of *The Ugly American*\(^3\) which deals with some American diplomatic representatives in a small Asian nation. *The Last Hurrah*\(^4\) deals with the end of an era on the political scene, the end of absolute rule by a political machine.

Currently there has seemingly been a trend toward novels which deal with sex as a theme. Russell Lynes expressed it in his study of fiction of the 1950's as a "strong taste for bedroom scenes."\(^5\) The two novels in this study which had themes which classed with the general category of sex were *Peyton Place*\(^6\) and

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1. Taylor Caldwell, *op. cit.*
2. Leon Uris, *op. cit.*
Lolita. \(^1\) Peyton Place\(^2\) dealt primarily with pre-marital and marital sexual behavior of two members of a small New England community. Lolita\(^3\) fell into the subdivision under the theme of sex which is specifically for those novels which have as their themes what may be considered abnormal sexual behavior.

The category of racial problems was represented by Robert Ruark's Something of Value.\(^4\) This novel treats the racial strife between the natives and the white settlers in Kenya, Africa, the emerging nationalism of the Negro, and the growth of the native organization, the Mau Mau. The two main characters represented the two major forces of the novel: the white settler, tolerant but not understanding; the native who is having his old ways taken away from him by the white settler but who has gained nothing to replace them.

Crime, usually a popular type of subject, was represented in only one novel of the 22 analyzed. This novel was Meyer Levin's Compulsion\(^5\) which has as its theme a murder committed by two young men as an experiment to commit the perfect crime. The novel examines the crime and its perpetrators.

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1. Vladimir Nabokov, op. cit.
2. Grace Metalious, op. cit.
3. Vladimir Nabokov, op. cit.
5. Meyer Levin, op. cit.
Seven of the novels analyzed had themes which fell outside the categories established. Five of these novels were comedies and included: Auntie Mame, Don't Go Near the Water, No Time for Sergeants, Rally Round the Flag Boys, and Mrs. 'Arris Goes to Paris. The other novels which did not fall into the established categories were: Andersonville and Love is Eternal. Andersonville had as its theme the understanding of man's inhumanity to man and the horrors and futility of war. Love is Eternal is the biographical novel of Abraham Lincoln and Mary Todd Lincoln.

The themes of the novels analyzed were extremely varied. Represented in this collection of varied interests were novels of self-analysis, crime, sex, politics, racial problems, comedy, religious themes and biographical themes.

1 Patrick Dennis, op. cit.
2 William Brinkley, op. cit.
3 Mac Hyman, op. cit.
4 Max Shulman, op. cit.
5 Paul W. Gallico, op. cit.
6 MacKinley Kantor, op. cit.
7 Irving Stone, op. cit.
8 MacKinley Kantor, op. cit.
9 Irving Stone, op. cit.
Settings

Setting, as used in this study, referred to the geographic area in which the major portion of the action took place and was divided into the following categories: small towns, urban areas, suburban areas, and foreign countries.

Small Towns

In the category of small towns which referred in this study to a rural area, not to a small suburban area, five novels were placed. The distinction as to setting was made on the basis of the occupations of the people, the means of transportation, the kinds of entertainment available, the general habits and attitudes of the people and from direct statements on the part of the characters.

Urban

The urbanization of this country has resulted from large scale movements from rural to urban areas. In 1956, 73 per cent of the population was located in urban areas. Of the 22 novels, five were set in domestic urban areas. Urban area excludes the suburban area in which a large portion of the population dwells. Recent growth in the urban area has been in the suburbs of the city. These areas are not incorporated in the city limits but they are economically and culturally dependent on the city. The population of the suburbs represents about one-third of the total

1 Arnold Green, op. cit., p. 261.

2 Ibid.
population of the United States and they represent 97 per cent of the growth in population. The population of the suburbs is made up mainly of young adults with very few old people and few teenagers. Occupationally, the majority of the residents are young professionals. Several of the novels analyzed were geographically set in suburban areas.

Foreign

The statement that the world is growing smaller because of the development of faster means of communications is one that is frequently made. As a result of the "shrinking" of the world we have become conscious of our world neighbors of whom previously we knew little. This trend of interest is also evidenced in national concern for these countries politically and economically. It is evidenced by this country's endeavoring to learn something of these other countries' cultural achievements through cultural exchange programs and it is further indicated by the importance foreign policy has assumed in the political structure.

Has this concern manifested itself in the literary world, especially in best-selling fiction? Of the 22 novels analyzed in terms of setting, eight were set in countries outside the continental United States. Foreign settings were divided into the following categories: European, Asian, African, etcetera, which were further subdivided into urban, suburban and rural. Two of

1 Ibid., pp. 263-264.
2 Ibid., p. 279.
the settings were urban, one European and one African. One of the settings was suburban; this was European. Five of the foreign settings were rural; three Asian, one African, and one in the Pacific Island group. Some of the foreign countries represented were France, Israel, Egypt and The Union of South Africa.

Conclusions

After examining the results of the study the following conclusions were reached regarding the factors which were analyzed:

(1) The themes of best selling novels are varied. There was a definite trend to be noted in theme, this was the increase in the number of novels whose themes fell into the general area of self-analysis. (2) In terms of age, the largest number of characters fell into the young adult category, from 15 through 35 years of age, and middle-aged, 36 through 55 years of age. (3) Male characters were treated as main characters more than were women in best-sellers according to the findings of this study. (4) Indicated by the results of this study, a large percentage of the main characters of best-selling fiction are professionally employed. (5) Educational level varied. There was a tendency to write about main characters with college educations. (6) The settings of the novels were varied with no trend toward any one type of setting. Eight of the 22 novels were set in foreign countries indicating an interest in other parts of the world.
APPENDIX
### Themes of the Novels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title of the Novel</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Crime Problems</th>
<th>Politics</th>
<th>Self Analysis</th>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Racial Problems</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dear and Glorious Physician</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not as a Stranger</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Ugly American</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love is Eternal</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By Love Possessed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Last Hurrah</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Auntie Mame</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rally Round the Flag, Boys!</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Something of Value</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Lolita</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Time for Sergeants</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't Go Near the Water</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Anatomy of a Murder</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peyton Place</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**a** The "x" in this section of the Master Checksheet indicates one novel in each instance of its use.

**b** The absence of "x" under the categories of theme for a novel indicates that its theme fell outside the categories for theme.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes of the Novels</th>
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<th>Politics</th>
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The "x" in this section of the Master Checksheet indicates one novel in each instance of its use.

The absence of "x" under the categories of theme for a novel indicates that its theme fell outside the categories for theme.
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*a The asterisk used in this section of the Master Checksheet refers to one character whose age spanned several age categories in each instance of its use.

*b The "x" used in this section of the Master Checksheet refers to one character each time it is used.
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<td>Mrs. 'Arris Goes to Paris</td>
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*a The asterisk used in this section of the Master Checksheets refers to one character whose age spanned several age categories in each instance of its use.

*b The "x" used in this section of the Master Checksheets refers to one character each time it is used.
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<th>Businessmen</th>
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a The use of "x" in this section of the Master Checksheet represents one character in each instance of its use.
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(a) Ibid.
## EDUCATIONAL LEVELS OF THE MAIN CHARACTERS

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a The use of "x" in this section of the Master Checksheet represents one character in each instance of its use.
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*The use of "x" in this section of the Master Checksheets represents one novel each time it is used.*
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books


**Articles and Periodicals**

Brandon, Alfred N. "What Are Adults Reading?" *Library Journal*, LXXI (February 1, 1956), 336.
