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Contents

Acknowledgement - Reviewers	3
Acknowledgement - Institutions and Organizations	4
Acknowledgement - Psychology Students	5
Instructions for Contributors	6

Articles

Persuading Between the Lines: Influence of Power, Vividness, and Framing on Persuasion Randi A. Shedlosky-Shoemaker and Jon E. Grahe	7
Human Territoriality: Affects of Status on Personalization and Demarcation Jessica R. Reinsch and Cory L. Spotanski	16
Anti-Fat Attitudes: The Relation Between Controllability and Negative Stereotyping of the Obese Kristin D. Eisenbraun and Amy A. Pauli	22
Exploring Religious Cults that Ended in Tragedy: Principles of Social Influence Darin J. Challacombe	29
Violence Within Cohabiting Versus Married Relationships Tara M. Dickey	34

Special Features

Current Events

Reactions to the Conviction and Death of a Pedophile Priest Jessica Sapp	43
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Conducting Psychological Analyses – Dramatic

Dissociative Identity Disorder and <i>Primal Fear</i> Jenelle R. Stahlke	45
<i>Swimfan</i> : A Portrayal of Borderline Personality Disorder Jason Houston	48

(continued on next page)

Diagnostic Analyses of the Feature Film <i>28 Days</i> Christopher L. Richardson, Jennie A. Guthrie, and Sumner J. Sydeman	49
Paranoid Schizophrenia in the Movie <i>Donnie Darko</i> Keyonna M. King	51
Adapting to Social Phobia: The Psychopathology of <i>Adaptation</i> Brent D. Hensley	53
<i>Ordinary People</i> : A Look at Posttraumatic Stress, Major Depressive, and Narcissistic Personality Disorders Erin L. Gorter and Sumner J. Sydeman	55

Psychologically Speaking

Using Research to Change Lives: An Interview with Elizabeth Loftus Brett McCurdy and Richard L. Miller	61
An Invitation to Contribute to the Special Features Section	
I—Evaluating Controversial Issues	68
II—Conducting Psychological Analyses – Dramatic	69
III—Conducting Psychological Analyses – Current Events	70
Subscription Form	72

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Cover Design

The creation of the graphic for the logo came about by thinking of how ideas are formed and what the process would look like if we could see into our brains. The sphere represents the brain, and the grey matter inside consists of all the thoughts in various stages of development. And finally, the white spotlight is one idea that formed into a reality to voice.

The entire logo is an example of creation in the earliest stages.

Cathy Solarana
Graphic Designer

Acknowledgement - Psychology Students

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Instructions for Contributors

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2. Manuscripts must (a) have come from students at institutions sponsoring the Great Plains Students' Psychology Convention and the *Journal of Psychological Inquiry* or (b) have been accepted for or presented at the meeting of the Great Plains Students' Psychology Convention, the Association for Psychological and Educational Research in Kansas, the Nebraska Psychological Society, the Arkansas Symposium for Psychology Students, or the ILLOWA Undergraduate Psychology Conference. The preceding conditions do not apply to manuscripts for the Special Features Sections I, II, or III.
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5/02

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Persuading Between the Lines: Influence of Power, Vividness, and Framing on Persuasion

Randi A. Shedlosky-Shoemaker and Jon E. Grahe

Monmouth College

The current study used a 2 X 2 X 2 design investigating the influence of power and vividness of language and message framing on persuasion, measured through evaluation of message quality and perceived source credibility. About an equal number of men and women from introductory courses participated. Results showed little support for overall effects of these variables, but the variables interacted to impact evaluation of message quality and source competence. The trend for both interactions demonstrated negative impact for powerless, dull, positively framed messages compared to the other conditions. The three-way interaction, previously untested, suggests implications for persuaders and new questions for researchers. The current study questioned the assumed power of simple methods of message manipulation.

Everywhere, everyday, people encounter language, which is universal, yet personal; broad, yet specific; and can range from abstract and conceptualizing to concrete and explicit. Language is the means by which people conduct the most significant acts of communication. We use it to convey and interpret meaning, to gain understanding of the world. Although communicating without language is feasible, most individuals choose to use language for most interactions. The significance of language and communication has become a basis for a plethora of studies and generated much research. As Leets (2000) reported, how language influences society remains a mystery, a mystery that many researchers continue to investigate.

Numerous studies in persuasion use the arena of language to explore how people attempt to change others' attitudes. Within the area of persuasion, researchers have identified many variables that influence the effects of language and message manipulation. This avenue motivated the current study, which looked at the role of language in persuasion. The present study focused specifically on the influence of power of language, vividness of language, and framing of message on perceptions of a message, which included evaluation of the messages' quality and perception of the source's credibility.

Research on Power

Power, generally defined as strength of language and articulation of delivery, is one variable that attracted attention in theory and research. Verbally, powerless language often includes "uh's", "um's", and other similar hesitations, whereas powerful language excludes those cues. In written language, hesitations and pauses usually come across in tag questions or inquiry phrases, such as "sort of" and "kind of". Simply, powerless language shows lack of confidence, whereas powerful language portrays strong belief in the message. Gibbons, Busch, and Bradac (1991) revealed no effect of power on persuasion of participants when using weak versus strong arguments in written transcripts, although their results supported prior research that showed an effect of power on impression of the speaker. Participants saw speakers who used powerful language as more credible, but they did not attach this approval of speakers to the message. Haleta (1996) measured the influence of power of language on students' perceptions of professors through class evaluations. Her results again supported powerful language as a contributor to higher credibility rating of the source. Holtgraves and Lasky (1999) further supported influence of power on credibility. They considered students' impressions of persuasive messages when comparing weak versus strong verbal messages. They found the manipulation of power produced a statistically significant effect on agreement with the message.

Research on Vividness

Scholars commonly describe vividness as concreteness and intensity of language. The goal of vividness is to create an unforgettable image in the mind of the audience. As opposed to power, which bases itself in confidence in a message, vividness relates more to imagery. Shedler and Manis (1986) applied additional details to create a vivid verbal message while leaving the non-vivid, dull message vague. Their research reported that participants found information presented in vivid language more impressionable and memorable. Results were consistent for both written and audio messages. Pratkanis

Jon E. Grahe from Monmouth College was faculty sponsor for this research project.

and Aronson (2001) assumed that more impressionable messages, which were created by vivid language, were more likely to manipulate attitudes. Their study discovered that vivid, detailed messages convinced homeowners to make repairs more often than dull, ambiguous messages. The researchers conceded that vivid appeals did not always work, but they did not elaborate on the circumstances under which vividness made messages more persuasive.

Research by Collins, Taylor, Wood, and Thompson (1988) contradicted the previous findings, concluding that people who believed vivid language would persuade others, but in actuality it did not. Their study varied between a vivid, concrete and a non-vivid, unclear news message regarding juvenile crime. The results of their study demonstrated no impact on attitude change as a consequence of vividness. However, in their experiment, they explained to participants that the purpose of the study was to explore the nature of persuasive messages. That explanation may have biased participants. True to the illusory nature of the vividness effect, Collins et al., found that participants thought the vivid language would be a more persuasive cue for other people.

According to Leets (2000), dull language had little effect on source impression formation. In her experiment, participants read articles regarding a Navy conflict in Korea. When judging the source of the article, readers described the source as more aggressive when non-vivid language was used. Non-vivid versus vivid language made no difference on perceived source status or impressions of honesty. She explained that the influence of generalization was only in initial stages and needed further research for greater understanding.

Research on Positive versus Negative

Framing

In general, framing is the perspective emphasized in a message. The current study focused on the differences between a positive, or benefits-gained, frame and a negative, or losses-risked, frame. Research on positive versus negative framing remained the most inconsistent of the three variables considered in the present study. For example, Donovan and Jalleh (2000) found a positive frame produced more favorable attitudes, whereas Meyerowitz and Chaiken (1987) used a negatively framed message to persuade their audience successfully. Smith and Petty (1996) determined that a negative frame caused more mental processing. They found a relationship between the increased mental processing and the participants' attitudes. Smith and Petty asserted that thoughts determined

attitudes so that messages that encouraged favorable thoughts built through the readers' scrutiny, in turn, produced favorable attitudes, whereas unfavorable thoughts generated unfavorable attitudes via the same process.

Kahneman and Tversky (as cited in Pratkanis & Aronson (2001) manipulated the framing of a question, rather than a message and measured its influence on participants' judgments. They offered participants in one group an option between not taking a risk and taking a risk in order to gain a reward (positive frame), and they offered participants in another group a choice between not taking a risk and taking a risk to avoid failure (negative frame). The results found that people more commonly chose the negatively framed option. Their explanation was that people seek to avoid loss, so that they would be more attracted to an option that offered them a way out of loss. This interpretation suggests that people are more motivated to act by messages that portray greater loss. Despite the reasoning, research findings are inconclusive. Although some research has supported the effectiveness of positive frames, and other research has supported the influence of negative frames, Lalor and Hailey (1990) found framing made no difference in attitudes. Reasoning for the variations in framing research have been linked to inconsistencies in issue involvement, disease prevention versus detection, and even gender, but there has been no conclusive reasoning or evidence for the variance in results (Donovan & Jalleh, 2000). No matter the results, in many cases framing made a difference but predicting the difference evoked less confidence.

Hypotheses

The current study examined the effect of power, vividness, and framing on persuasion, specifically described by evaluation of a message and perceived source credibility. Researchers for this investigation chose those variables because no single study has focused collectively on them. We predicted that participants would evaluate messages with powerful language more positively and portray the source as more credible than messages with powerless language. Likewise, we anticipated that participants would evaluate a message with vivid language more positively and convey the source as more credible than a message with non-vivid, or dull, language. Regarding the issue of framing, we did not formulate a specific hypothesis because of inconsistency in results from previous research. Finally, we hypothesized that the effects of power and vividness would be cumulative. In other words, the two variables would interact so that powerful, vivid messages would be evaluated most positively and produce the best impression of source

credibility.

Method

Design

The study used a 2 (powerful vs. powerless language) X 2 (vivid vs. dull language) X 2 (positive vs. negative frame) design. Powerless language demonstrated the presence of hedges, hesitations, and tag questions, whereas powerful language lacked these qualities (Gibbons, et al., 1991; Haleta, 1998; Holtgraves & Lasky, 1999). In other words, powerful language was decisive, stimulating, certain, and sometimes verging on confrontational. We intended vivid language to be emotionally interesting, concrete, and imagery provoking; we planned non-vivid, or dull, language to be vague and equivocal (Pratkanis & Aronson, 2001). Finally, a positive frame focused on the benefits of accepting a message, and a negative frame emphasized the risks of disagreeing with the message (Donovan & Jalleh, 2000; Meyerowitz & Chaiken, 1987; Smith & Petty, 1996). Appendix A contains examples of the independent variable manipulations. Dependent variables included agreement with the message, evaluation of the message quality, and perceived credibility of the source. The latter measure involved the subcategories of source competence, caring/goodwill, and trustworthiness.

Participants

Participants came from introduction to communication and introduction to psychology courses. There were 55 men, 59 women, and one participant who did not report gender. Ages ranged from 18 to 22 years, with an average age of 18.73 years, which we expected because the courses are typically dominated by freshman. Regarding political affiliation, there were 34 Republicans and 36 Democrats; 40 participants self-identified as another political affiliation, such as independent, and five participants did not respond. Only one participant was involved in the military; 16 participants had immediate family relations in the military. Overall, 42 participants did not support military involvement in the Middle East, whereas 56 did support involvement. Over half of the participants reported being at least somewhat to very familiar with the situation in the Middle East, and almost half thought they kept up-to-date on the developments in the area through the news and other sources.

Materials

The researchers developed eight different written messages on the topic of U.S. military involvement in the Middle East; all of the messages opposed military involvement in Iraq. The messages represented a current and real-world issue; they varied on the level of power, vividness, and framing, as described earlier. Language, length, and grammar remained constant to control for participants using these qualities as peripheral cues. Each message was 106 words long. One researcher instructed participants that these messages were excerpts from the editorial section of a local newspaper. Appendix A contains the complete messages.

Using 15 students from a research methods course, we pre-tested messages for effectiveness of the variable manipulations. One researcher provided coders with operational definitions of each variable. Coders then read a random sample of four messages and rated each for power, vividness, and framing on a Likert Scale, ranging from 1 (*powerless, dull, and negative*, respectively) to 7 (*powerful, vivid, and positive*, respectively). Coders rated (a) powerful messages as more powerful than powerless messages, $F(1, 6) = 31.50, p < .01$, (b) vivid messages as more vivid than dull messages, $F(1, 6) = 5.86, p = .05$, and (c) positive frames more positive than negative frames, $F(1, 6) = 15.29, p < .01$. Because ratings of vividness achieved only a p -value of .05, we edited the messages to make a more noticeable difference between vivid and dull before beginning data collection, though we did not obtain ratings after this revision.

A 10-item evaluation questionnaire (Appendix B) measured participants' attitudes and appraisals of the message. The researchers designed the questionnaire to reflect various areas commonly evaluated in messages. Nine of the questions constituted a composite score for evaluation. We used the first question on the survey, regarding agreement towards the message, to measure only possible relationships among agreement with the message and evaluation of message quality and source credibility. To measure credibility, participants answered a 15-item differential scale designed by McCroskey and Teven (1999) (Appendix C). The scale divided credibility into three areas: competence, caring/goodwill, and trustworthiness. For each message, we calculated a score to reflect each of the three areas as well as an overall credibility score. Finally, we created a survey to measure participant information concerning personal demographics and attitudes regarding the war in Iraq.

Procedures

Data collection began February 17, 2003, and ended February 21, 2003, prior to the declaration of war in Iraq. Data collection, which required about 10 min, occurred during regularly scheduled classes. One researcher explained that participants would be reading excerpts taken from the editorial section of a local paper and evaluating the message. After participants signed an informed consent, each person received one of the eight previously described messages, randomly assigned; the credibility scale and evaluation questionnaire, which varied in their order; and the demographic and attitude questionnaire.

One researcher instructed the students not to turn back to previous pages, so that once they had read the message and moved onto the dependent scales, they would not return to the message. Following completion of data collection, one researcher went to the classes to debrief participants, gave an explanation of the manipulations and results, and answered questions. All participants received an email following the class visit reiterating the purpose of the study and the results.

Results

The dependent variables were in three overall categories: agreement, evaluation, and credibility. The basis for evaluation consisted of scores from nine different responses and for credibility consisted of scores from 15 responses. Cronbach's alphas reached acceptable levels of .88 and .80 for evaluation and credibility, respectively. Within credibility, derivation of the three subscales came from responses to sets of five questions and resulted in Cronbach's alphas of .68, .51, and .69 for competence, caring, and trustworthiness, respectively. We analyzed

dependent variables using a 2 (powerless vs. powerful) X 2 (vivid vs. dull) X 2 (positive vs. negative frame) between participants ANOVA to measure the impact of independent variables and their interaction. All reported means represented least square means for each measure.

Evaluation

Though none of the main effects for power, vividness, or framing reached statistical significance, the two-way interaction of power and vividness, $F(1, 111) = 3.55$, $p = .06$ approached significance. The trend of the power and vividness two-way interaction suggested that when the message language was powerful, dull ($M = 37.42$, $SD = 9.14$) messages were more positively evaluated than vivid messages ($M = 35.29$, $SD = 9.54$); whereas when the message language was powerless, dull messages ($M = 31.13$, $SD = 12.74$) were less positively evaluated compared to the vivid messages ($M = 35.69$, $SD = 10.40$). However, the two way interactions were qualified by a three-way interaction among all three variables $F(1, 111) = 6.40$, $p < .05$ (see Figure 1).

To examine further the three-way interaction, we computed two-way ANOVAs at each level of power. For powerful language, neither main effect (vividness, $F(1, 60) = .78$, n.s.; framing, $F(1, 60) = .56$, n.s.) nor the interaction, $F(1, 60) = 1.90$, n.s., was statistically significant. However, for powerless language, the two-way effect between vividness and framing, $F(1, 59) = 4.52$, $p < .05$, was significant. Tukey's Post Hoc t-tests revealed that this interaction was such that when the message was framed with positive language, vivid messages were evaluated more positively than dull messages ($t = 2.69$, $p <$

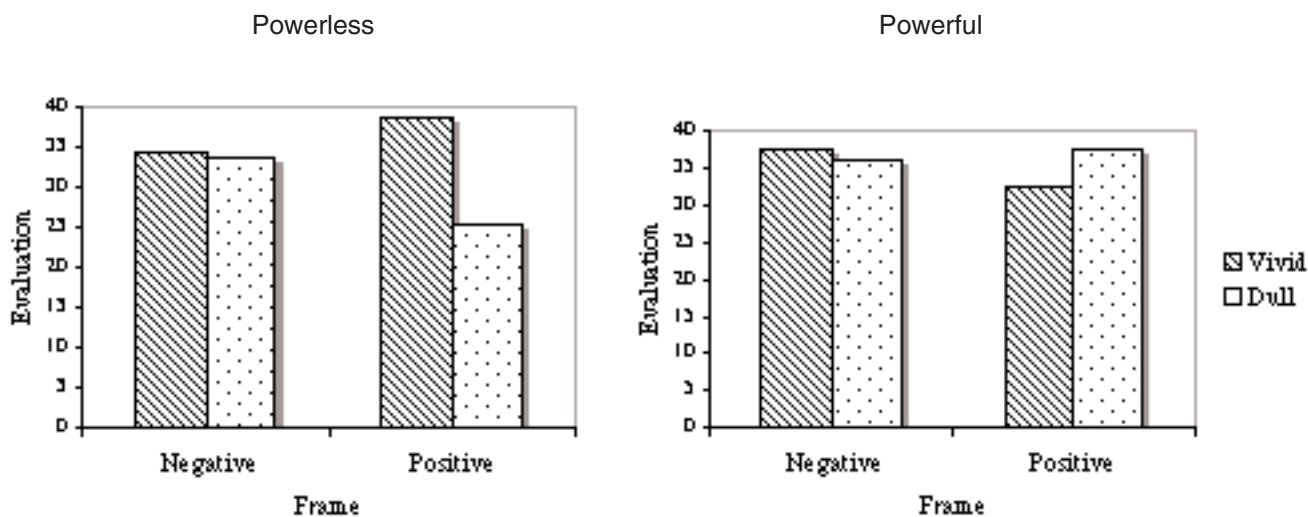


Figure 1. Impact of power, vividness, and frame on evaluation.

.05), whereas there was no difference in evaluation when the message was framed with negative language ($t = .56$, n.s.). Thus, the three-way interaction suggested that evaluation had a greater impact under conditions of powerless language, with a negative impact emerging when the message was dull, but positively framed.

Credibility

Though we found no significant relationships for the overall credibility variable, one subscale, competence, revealed a three-way interaction among power, vividness, and framing, $F(1, 111) = 3.87, p = .05$ (see Figure 2). As with evaluation, this result was interpreted by conduct two-way ANOVAs at each level of power, revealing no impact of vividness or framing when message contained powerful language; but a two-way interaction when the message contained powerless language, $F(1, 59) = 4.59, p < .05$. Further, Tukey’s Post Hoc t-tests revealed that this interaction was such that when the message was framed with positive language, the message source was rated as more competent than with dull messages ($t = 2.77, p < .05$), whereas no difference in rated competence emerged when the message was framed with negative language ($t = -.28$, n.s.). Thus, competence ratings mirrored evaluation ratings with the most negative ratings emerging with powerless, dull, positively framed messages.

Discussion

The present study manipulated messages on military involvement in the Middle East based on power and vividness of language and framing of message. Previous research found that the power of language in a message

yielded consistent results, favoring powerful language in the development of positive evaluation and source credibility. Research on vividness and framing produced more varied results. In the present study, none of these variables alone influenced evaluation or credibility. However, interactions among all three variables on both evaluation and the competency subscale of credibility suggested important conclusions about persuasive messages.

Power

Evaluation and credibility were not influenced by the three variables. For power, these findings were contrary to past research (Gibbons et al, 1991; Haleta, 1996; Holtgraves & Lasky, 1999). The lack of effect may be related to the type of message. In previous research, the message was longer; the shorter message used in the present study may not have given participants an opportunity to form a judgment about the source. Also, as suggested by Petty and Cacioppo (as cited in Gibbons, Busch, & Bradac, 1991), perceived credibility might have been influenced by prior knowledge that the source intends to persuade. Because one of the researchers described the messages as taken from editorials, previous knowledge may have cued participants that the messages would be persuasive, as letters and articles in the editorial section often are.

Vividness

Research by Collins et al. (1988) confirmed the lack of main effect of vividness on evaluation; they claimed the vividness effect was more of an illusion and assumption of advertisers. Pratkanis and Aronson’s (2001) assertion that vivid appeals do not always work supported the

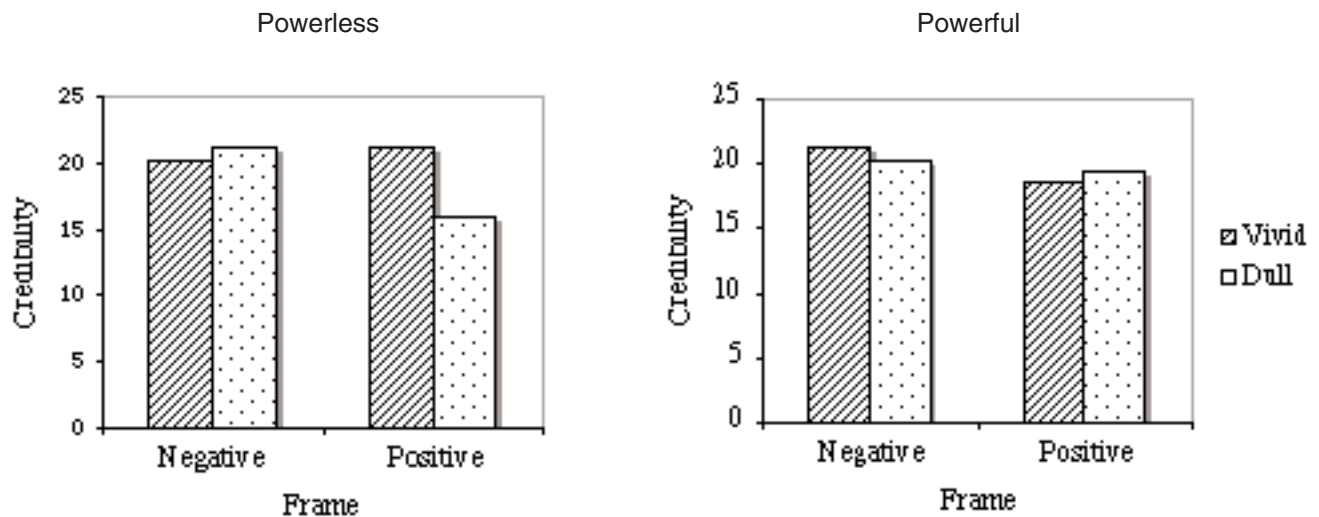


Figure 2. Impact of power, vividness, and frame on competence.

ineffectiveness of evaluation; however, those investigators stated that strong messages should be made stronger. The current results from the interaction revealed the opposite finding: vivid language hindered the effect of powerful message on evaluation and source competence. An implication of the lack of effect can be related to messages that demand more cognitive effort; if an audience had to evaluate a message more critically because it was more relevant to them or their beliefs, a vivid appeal may not work, as Pratkanis and Aronson warned.

For credibility, Leets (2000) findings supported the lack of influence by vividness; her results found that vividness of language had no effect on the impression of sources. Similar to the absence of effect by vividness on evaluation, the failure to influence evaluation may relate to the pretest, in which readers did not perceive vividness as strong as the other two variables. Editing the message to enhance the variation of vividness may lead to different results for credibility.

Framing

For framing, we did not hypothesize an influence on evaluation. Prior research had not specifically supported an influence on the evaluation of a message as a factor of framing. Overall, results from this study supported the findings of Lalor and Hailey (1990), who concluded that framing made no difference on participants' attitudes. Future research should investigate the possible effects of framing. Focusing on the reason for the differences in results for framing could enlighten this area of investigation. Research could explain why some messages are more conducive to positive frames, some are more suited for negative frames, and some demand a combination, and why sometimes framing does not matter. Specifically, researchers could focus on the type of message, the delivery, and the audience.

Relationship Between Persuasion Factors

Past literature made no reference to the presence of a three-way relationship among power, vividness, and framing. The three-way interaction on evaluation did lend support to the hypothesis that the effects of the variables were cumulative, though the variables had no main effects.

Investigators can apply implications of this finding to many areas of persuasion. Students could apply these findings when writing papers; if the language they use is powerless, their best interest would be to use vivid language with a positive or negative frame, or to use dull

language with a negative frame. This strategy would improve the evaluation of the overall message, pending the strength of the content. A politician aiming to persuade voters through a brief print ad could choose vivid language in a positive frame if the language was powerless. Politicians have the advantage over students in that their audience puts less effort in evaluating the overall message by its content. Advertisers have this same advantage and could also benefit from using the results of the study in their messages.

Regarding credibility, Wilson and Sherrell (1993) offered an explanation for the lack of effect. In their meta-analysis, Wilson and Sherrell suggested that credibility may be too global for participants to judge, and more specific characteristics, such as expertise, that researcher could manipulated more easily. This arrangement was true for the current study because the variable manipulations and interactions affected several of the single-item dependent variables within credibility. O'Keefe (2002) outlined the variables contributing to credibility: education, occupation, experience, delivery, speaking rate, citation of sources, position advocated, liking of the source, and humor. Delivery and the position advocated were seemingly the only cues directly related to the present study. For delivery, power was the only variable taken into account; however vocal deliveries received more focus than written deliveries. Therefore, the written medium might explain the lack of influence on credibility.

General Discussion

In future research, many options exist for varying conditions in the present study to investigate effects of message manipulation. For instance, research could examine the difference in judgments between written and verbal messages, or short messages versus long messages. Future research could also include the message topic. The present study used an issue that had gained a vast amount of media attention around the world. Local versus global issues could change how people judged persuasion. Finally, the current study used a message that demanded attitude manipulation. Investigators could evaluate differently a message requesting a behavior because a behavioral response requires readers to do more than just accept a certain belief or view.

Discoveries from this and other studies involving message manipulation and persuasion can be of great value to researchers, psychologists, and communicators, and such discoveries hold potential for applications in education, advertising, campaigning, and numerous other fields. Simplistic manipulations of language and message

structure do not achieve the persuasive power we previously hypothesized. Instead, an interaction of these manipulations may be the key. Furthermore, variables beyond the control of the persuader, including attitude of the audience, may have an influence on the effect of message manipulations.

As long as people communicate, they will attempt to persuade. And as long as persuasion exists, research findings offer the prospect for making communication more effective and influential.

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Appendix A

Powerful, Vivid, Positive Frame

Avoiding United States military action, including acting as the mother of warring countries or the global army and conqueror of evil, will take steps towards international peace. Our fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, and friends will be able to live without fear. There will be no terrorist coming to punish us for our interference in business that is not ours. If we chose to speak against United States military involvement in the Middle East, we chose to win. Millions of lives will be saved, international relations amongst all of our fellow humans will improve, and the government can focus on internal issues of education, economics, and security.

Powerful, Vivid, Negative Frame

United States military action, including acting as the mother of warring countries or the global army and conqueror of evil, will lead us to an international disaster. The lives of our fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, and friends will be threatened. We will live in fear of the retaliation of other countries that feel we have no right to interfere. If we refuse to speak against United States military involvement in the Middle East, we chose to lose. Millions of Americans will die, international relations amongst all of our fellow humans will deteriorate, and the economy will suffer a loss of budget funds, jobs, and international trade.

Powerful, Dull, Positive Frame

Avoiding United States military involvement or actions will lead to an international peace. The peace will come to the entire world and will be felt by all humans, and we will be able to live a life without fear. Humanity stands to gain. This will be a great and widely felt achievement. National and global gains will unquestionably be the result of this achievement. If people chose to speak out against the United States military involvement in the Middle East, they chose to win. Many lives will be saved, existing international relations will improve, and the government can focus on other internal issues facing the country.

Powerful, Dull, Negative Frame

United States military involvement or military actions will be the cause of an international disaster. The incident will claim lives around the entire world, and all humans will feel the loss and begin to live in fear. All of humanity stands to lose. This will be a great and widely felt mistake. National and global loss will unquestionably be the result of this so easily prevented error. If people refuse to speak against United States military involvement in the Middle East, they chose to lose. People will die and suffer, existing international relations will deteriorate and wither, and the economy will suffer further struggles and recessions.

Powerless, Vivid, Positive Frame

It is likely that potentially avoiding United States military action, including acting as the peacekeepers of warring countries or the global army and conqueror of evil, will possibly take steps towards international peace of sorts. Our fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, and friends may even be able to live without fear. Perhaps there will be no terrorist coming to punish us somehow for our interference. If we chose to speak against United States military involvement in the Middle East, we chose to win. Millions of lives may be saved, existing international relations could improve, and the government could focus on internal issues, possibly including education and security.

Powerless, Vivid, Negative Frame

It is likely that potential United States military involvement, including acting as peacekeepers for warring countries or the global army and conqueror of evil, may be the cause of an international disaster of sorts. It is possible that the lives of our fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, and friends could be threatened. We may begin to fear the retaliation of the countries in which we interfere. If we refuse to speak against United States military involvement in the Middle East, we chose to lose. Millions of Americans may die, international relations could deteriorate, and the economy could suffer further through possibly a loss of funds or jobs.

Powerless, Dull, Positive Frame

It is likely that potentially avoiding United States military involvement or actions may lead to an international peace of sorts. The potential peace could come to the entire world and could be felt by all humans, and we may eventually be able to live without fear. This may be a great national or international achievement, probably. National and global gains may be the feasible result. If people would chose to speak against United States military involvement in the Middle East, they chose to possibly win. Any number of lives may be saved, existing international relations could improve, and the government could focus on other internal issues.

Powerless, Dull, Negative Frame

It is likely that potential United States military involvement or actions may be the cause of an international disaster of sorts. The possible incident could claim lives around the world, and all humans could feel the loss and may begin to live a life of fear. Humanity could lose or suffer in some way. This might be a great national or international mistake. Global and national loss could be the feasible result. If people would refuse to speak against United States military involvement in the Middle East, they chose to possibly lose. Americans may die, international relations could deteriorate, and the economy may suffer further struggles.

Appendix B

Message Evaluation

Directions: For each message description, circle the appropriate rating for the message. Only circle one rating per description.

Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
With the Message				With the Message		

The message is...

Poorly						Very Well Written
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Written Unclear						Very Clear
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Persuasive						Unpersuasive
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Effective 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Ineffective 6 7	Honest 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Dishonest 6 7
Unorganized 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Organized 6 7	Focused on Others' Interests 1 2 3 4	Focused on Self-Interests 5 6 7
The message has...		Untrustworthy 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Trustworthy 6 7
Very Weak Arguments 1 2 3 4	Very Strong Arguments 5 6 7	Inexpert/Unprofessional 1 2 3 4	Expert/Professional 5 6 7
Appropriate Reasoning 1 2 3 4	Inappropriate Reasoning 5 6 7	Self-centered 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Altruistic 6 7
Poor Use of Language 1 2 3 4	Excellent Use of Language 5 6 7	Concerned With Others 1 2 3 4	Unconcerned With Others 5 6 7
Unclear Structure 1 2 3 4 5	Clear Structure 6 7	Informed 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Uninformed 6 7

Appendix C

Source Evaluation

Directions: For each description, circle the appropriate rating for the message source. Only circle one rating per description.

Intelligent 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Unintelligent 6 7	Moral 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Immoral 6 7
Untrained/Uneducated 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Trained/Educated 6 7	Incompetent 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Competent 6 7
Cares About Others 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Doesn't Care Others 5 6 7	Unethical 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Ethical 6 7
		Insensitive 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Sensitive 6 7
		Phony 1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Genuine 6 7

Human Territoriality: Affects of Status on Personalization and Demarcation

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This field study examined the affects of socioeconomic status on the personalization and demarcation of houses. The average cost of homes, determined by a local real estate agency, provided the study with 3 status levels. Experimenters viewed 46 houses (16 lower status, 14 middle status, and 16 upper status) and counted and recorded markers of personalization (e.g., bedding, yard decorations, sports equipment, and patriotic markers) and demarcation (e.g., fences and shrubs). Results indicated that as status increased, the amount of bedding and shrubbery also increased significantly. There were no significant differences in demarcation, decorations, sports equipment or patriotic markers as a function of status.

Behavioral scientists have long been familiar with the ways in which human and non-human animals stake out their turf (Burt, 1943; Heidiger, 1961) and direct their attention toward the function and/or significance of markers in human spatial behavior (Becker, 1973). Past research has examined the relationships between human and non-human animal territorial behavior (Altman, 1975), and social interactions among humans under various environmental circumstances (Moran & Dolphin, 1986). However, for reasons of simplicity, past experimenters studied human spatial behavior on personal space more than territorial behavior (Becker & Mayo, 1971).

Territory refers to a specific place or area in which the satisfaction of important needs or drives occurs (Becker, 1973). These needs may include privacy, aesthetic beauty (e.g., landscape beautification and attractiveness) and the need to proclaim one's socioeconomic status. Some people use demarcation, such as fences and hedges, to enhance privacy. Others landscape their yards and install personalization markers, such as signs and ceramics to indicate ownership. Territorial behavior among humans is important in protecting people from criminal intrusion (Brown & Altman, 1983) and in enhancing and/or limiting social interaction (Greenbaum & Greenbaum, 1981). The way people structure their environments denotes which territory is theirs, and people believe that individuals who use territorial markers have stronger territorial attitudes and behaviors (Brower, Dockett, & Taylor, 1983).

According to Altman (1975) there are three types of territories (i.e., primary, secondary, and public) and behaviors associated with each territory. Occupants perceive primary territories as relatively permanent, and they extensively personalize the territory. Intrusion onto primary territories is a serious matter and defense is high. Because actual ownership denotes primary territory, the owner should have complete control and personalization is generally more extensive (Bell, Greene, Fisher, & Baum, 2001). In a study of primary territories, Edney (1972) found that homeowners who used clear territorial markers were most likely to be long-term residents.

Occupants do not own secondary territories. Others perceive occupants as one of several qualified users, and occupants usually personalized these territories only during a legitimate period of occupancy. Secondary territories include apartments, trailer courts, and rented homes.

Public territories are not owned and control is difficult to assert. Others view occupants as one of a large number of possible users. Public territories are personalized in a temporary way, and there is little likelihood of defense. For example, a person may lay down a blanket in a park as a visual territorial marker. The blanket serves to mark the person's territory of the moment, but it is not permanent, nor does it inhibit intrusions (e.g., another person stopping to start a conversation).

A person's need to proclaim socioeconomic status relates to the appearance of the yard. Cluttered or junk-filled yards stereotypically tend to indicate lower-status households. Yards with attractive landscaping and well-placed personalization markers tend to signify higher status households. Research by Greenbaum and Greenbaum (1981) suggests that at a group level, territorial personalization may function as an ecological mechanism, which indicates group membership and domain. Group membership in society has an impact on socioeconomic status hierarchies, which affect the amount and type of territorial markers members of a group have.

Richard Miller from the University of Nebraska at Kearney was the faculty sponsor for this research project.

Becker (1973) stated that to occupy and defend a territory requires recognition by border markings. Types of demarcation (e.g., fences, and hedges) and personalization (e.g., bedding, shrubs, and yard decorations) humans use to mark their territory are visible to other people. For example, Ley and Cybriwsky (1974) found that vandalism was less likely to occur with people's property well marked versus apparently abandoned. According to Bell et al. (2001), territory is visibly bounded and home-centered; therefore, it regulates interaction. Markers, or some sign of personalization, function to reduce intrusion by providing an effective nonverbal warning to potential intruders. However, the effectiveness of territorial markers in protecting a person's space from intrusion is lessened when population density is heightened (Sommer & Becker, 1969).

The function of markers in establishing a territory is to form recognizable and defensible borders (Becker, 1973). If an individual defends a fixed area against intrusion by others, we call the area a territory because the defense condition is present to refer to it as territorial behavior. If there is no sign of defense, people cannot recognize the environment as a territory.

The present study attempted to investigate the affects that socioeconomic status of a homeowner had on personalization and demarcation on houses. No studies have examined territorial marking by homeowners as a function of their status. We conducted our observations on primary territory because there is a greater likelihood that primary territories will have recognizable and defensible borders. We reasoned that marking a home is different from marking an office because the nature of the potential intruders is more diverse in a neighborhood than in a university office building.

The study by Sandilands and McMullin (1980) is the only one that examined the relationship between status and territorial marking. The authors conducted this research at a university in which territorial markers were unofficial items on a professor's office door. Academic power and influence was the definition of status. They found a negative correlation between dominance and the number of territorial markers displayed. That is, more dominant individuals displayed fewer territorial markers. However, in office settings, knowing the status of individuals does not depend upon territorial markers because other people know the occupants and their positions. In neighborhoods, however, knowledge of status is often lacking. Therefore, we hypothesized that as the socioeconomic status of homeowners increased, as determined by the average cost of homes, the amount of personalization and demarcation on and around the home also increased.

Method

Participants

Two experimenters (one man and one woman) counted personalization items and demarcations at 46 single-family houses. They viewed the houses during a three-day period.

Materials

Experimenters selected homes from areas representing three different status levels. There were 16 houses from high status areas, 14 from middle status areas, and 16 from low status areas. A local real estate company designated the status levels of certain areas in Kearney, NE, based upon the average cost of homes in those areas. Low status houses cost less than \$80,000; houses costing between \$80,000 and \$150,000 signified medium status homes; and high status houses were those that cost more than \$150,000.

Experimenters collected data only in areas of single-family houses. The experimenters obtained areas designated as single-family dwellings from the zoning map at City Hall's Zoning Department. Selection required that houses were at least one block from public facilities (e.g., schools and parks) and away from well-traveled streets. Use of these criteria avoided areas where need for territorial defense might be so important that other factors affecting personalization and demarcation would play less of a role. We only observed houses in which the occupant was the primary owner. By using the zoning map, we avoided secondary territories in which the occupant was not the primary owner because regulations often associated with these dwellings can affect personalization and demarcation.

Design and Procedure

Both experimenters viewed lower status houses to form a consensus about types of personalization (i.e., bedding, yard decorations, patriotic markers, and sports equipment) and how to measure items of demarcation (i.e., fences and shrubs). One experimenter observed medium status homes and the other experimenter observed high status homes. They examined each status level (low, medium, or high status) on a different day.

Experimenters counted the number of personalization markers at each address. We estimated square footage of bedding by counting our footsteps to obtain an estimate of perimeter length and used basic geometry to find the area. We assigned bedding footage a score of 1

for every 20 square feet. The personalization score consisted of the square footage of bedding, the number of yard decorations, the total number of items of permanent sports equipment (e.g., basketball hoops), and the number of patriotic adornments (e.g., flags).

We scored demarcation by fencing using a five-point scale based on its effectiveness as a visual separator that marked property lines. A score of 1 indicated fencing on one side of the yard that did not reduce sight (e.g., chain-link fence); a score of 2 indicated fencing on opposite sides of the yard that did not reduce sight; a score of 3 indicated fencing that partially reduced sight (e.g., short picket fence); a score of 4 indicated fencing on one side of the yard that reduced sight (e.g., tall picket fence); and a score of 5 indicated fencing on opposite sides of the yard that reduced sight. We did not include backyard fencing. We recorded demarcation by shrubs using 0 or 1 indicating the absence or presence of shrubs, respectively.

Results

We conducted one-way analysis of variance on the affect of status (low, medium, high) on various types of personalization and demarcation. The affect of status on the total number of personalization markers was not significant, $F(2, 43) = 1.93, p > .05$. To determine if status had an affect on individual categories of personalization markers, we conducted an analysis of variance for the affects of status on the dependent variables for amount of bedding and number of yard decorations and chi square analyses for the affects of status on the presence or absence of sports equipment and of patriotic markers.

We found a significant difference among the three status groups only when bedding scores were used as the dependent variable, $F(2, 43) = 10.34, p < .05$. Using the Tukey minimum mean difference post-hoc test, we determined the minimum difference between the means that would be significant ($d_T = 1.56$) and used it to test whether the amount of bedding increased significantly as the status of houses increased. We found that low status houses had significantly less bedding ($M = 1.44, SD = 1.82$) than middle status houses ($M = 3.07, SD = 2.20$), and middle status houses had significantly less bedding than upper status houses ($M = 6.31, SD = 4.44$).

We found no support for the hypothesis that predicted an increase in the amount of demarcation of fencing with an increase in house status. A one-way analysis of variance indicated that there was no significant affect of status on fencing demarcation, $F(2, 43) = 0.41, p > .05$. We did find a significant affect of status on the presence

or absence of shrubs, $\chi^2(2, N = 46) = 11.33, p < .05$. The number of shrubs in yards increased as the status of houses increased. The percentage of low, medium, and high status houses with shrubs was 19%, 64%, and 75%, respectively.

Discussion

Overall, the results showed some support for the hypothesis that as status of houses increased the amount of personalization increased. The results also showed some support for the hypothesis that the amount of demarcation increased with an increase in status.

As status increased, the amount of bedding increased. However, some problems existed. First, lot size may have been a confounding variable. Lower status houses did not have as much square footage in their yards as the medium or high status homes. This variation could limit homeowners' choices about whether or not they can have bedding. Second, we did not know whether bedding in participants' yards were personalization or merely a way to occupy the greater amount of space. Finally, house status and observers were confounded. Even though both observers evaluated low status houses to develop a consensus for judging personalization and demarcation, one observer evaluated medium status houses, and the other observer evaluated high status houses.

If the high status houses had more yard area, the amount of bedding in the yard could be a form of personalization. By filling the available lawn area with bedding and other landscaping techniques, owners may be visually staking their territory. This action gives other people a visible barrier without the feel of an antisocial piece of demarcation. The barrier may be as simple as flowerbeds; however, this selection serves as a reminder that someone who cares about his/her territory lives in the house. However, we cannot dismiss the idea that the increased amount of bedding is simply serving as a space occupier.

Additionally, bedding may be more prevalent in higher status houses because of the expense. Rock gardens and wood chips cost homeowners more than leaving a grass lawn. Therefore, the amount of bedding in higher status houses may be because of sheer economic wealth rather than personalization. Another possibility is that current owners may not have personalized the yard. Previous owners may have installed rock gardens and other forms of permanent personalization. Thus, forms of permanent personalization would not necessarily reflect the current owner's personalization preferences. Edney

(1972) found that homeowners who used clear territorial markers were most likely long-term residents. Because we did not have access to time in residence, we had to assume that current homeowners had been long-term residents.

The pattern we found for shrubs (i.e., demarcation) in relation to status was similar to that of bedding. As status increased, the amount of shrubbery on the property (based on an all-or-none system of zero for no shrubs and 1 for shrubs) increased significantly from 19% for low status houses, to 64% for medium status houses, to 75% for high status houses. This finding may be because of the multiple functions of shrubs. First, shrubs may reflect personalization. Perhaps the owners enjoy shrubs and planted shrubs to show his or her attachment to the territory. Alternatively, shrubs may be more prevalent in higher status houses because of the owner's desire to fill available space. Shrubs may serve a protective function if they surround the house, making it more difficult to enter a home by any way other than the front door. Lastly shrubs may have been more prevalent in higher status houses because of the cost and amount of care they require. People in upper status houses may have more time or resources to purchase and care for shrubs in their yard than do people in lower status houses.

Initially, we believed that demarcation would be influenced by status. In this study, the relationship between the socioeconomic status of the house and the fencing demarcation was not significant. According to Brown and Altman (1983), territorial behavior among humans is important in protecting them from criminal intrusion. Our finding about demarcation may be the result of a small town atmosphere in which the residents felt more secure. People may be more at ease with people in their neighborhood and community and do not feel the need to put up barriers between themselves and others. In addition, the finding may reflect individual differences. We assumed that each status contained an even distribution of people with different amounts of desired privacy. There may be people who desire or require more privacy than do others within the same status group. This condition could explain why there were no differences in fencing demarcation as a function of status.

The total score for personalization markers in a yard consisted of a combination of bedding, yard decorations, sports equipment, and patriotic markers. According to our hypothesis, we expected status to have a significant affect because people have a tendency to put items of interest or objects of recognition in their yards to show that the area is occupied. Because people of higher status

have more resources, they may be better able to afford personalization markers. Therefore, there is a greater likelihood that they will have more personalization markers in place than houses of lower statuses. Analyses on the separate categories of markers found that yard decorations and sports equipment were slightly more prevalent in high status houses, however variation was not statistically significant among status groups. Note that medium status houses had no sports equipment. On the other hand, low and high status level houses had similar percentages of such items. The lack of sports equipment in the middle status group is most likely a result of the homeowners' personal preferences in the houses we observed. Patriotic markers were found in about 50% of houses at all status levels. Possibly, patriotism increased during this time across because of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States.

Several variables may have reduced the effects of status in this study. The age of the occupants may affect personalization. For example, an elderly couple may have more time and money to buy landscaping items and to care for a lawn. In addition whether the family has children may affect whether a home has sports equipment. Therefore, homeowners' age, time commitments, and family status can also affect the amount of time and care that they put into the territory.

We considered the days on which we observed the homes as another variable affecting outcomes. We observed each level of status in the late afternoon; we observed each level on a different day because of our time constraints. On day one, both experimenters observed the low status homes to standardize guidelines for observation. Next, one experimenter observed the middle status houses, and the other experimenter observed the high status houses. We observed these two levels on different days, which might have affected the results of the study. Certain days of the week may also have affected the number of objects in the yard, and we limited our observations to three days. Demarcation tends to be more permanent than personalization markers and should not have varied as a result of the day of observation. We are unsure about the consequences of the confounding between house status and observer on evaluations of personalization and demarcation.

Because of variations in the perceived need for defense, future research could consider a variety of additional variables. Comparing houses in different towns, rather than just a single town, may show significant differences because population density may be a factor in personalization. Sommer and Becker (1969) found that

the effectiveness of territorial markers in protecting a person's space from intrusion is lessened when population density is heightened. The increased number of people in a city may affect the amount of personalization and demarcation. For example, more people may mean less room for personalization and a greater perceived need for demarcation.

Research may also consider examining territorial marking in secondary territories, such as apartments and trailer courts. People who live in those areas may personalize their territory differently because of restrictions on the amount of personalization. Future researchers may consider season of the year in which they conduct studies. For example, there is less likelihood people will have as much personalization in winter because in regions where there is snow bedding and other items will be covered and some sports equipment put away. However, decorative lights tend to be more prevalent in the winter. Seasons can also bring changes in perceived needs of defense. People may feel less need for defense in the winter because children are in school for the majority of the day, and the cold weather tends to keep people at home, reducing possible intrusions onto one's territory.

Humans are territorial creatures who mark and defend their territories with visual cues. People use signs, decorations, potted plants, and bedding to identify their interests and to give visual cues to other people that they inhabit a particular area. We learned that shrubs play a dual role in this process of marking one's territory. Overall, the findings of this study may help to further our knowledge of the use of markers in human territorial behavior.

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Anti-Fat Attitudes: The Relation Between Controllability and Negative Stereotyping of the Obese

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This literature review examines the harmful effects of anti-fat attitudes and prejudice. Morrison and O'Connor (1999) defined anti-fat attitudes as "prejudicial responses directed toward individuals because of their obesity" (p. 436). The prevalence of anti-fat attitudes in the Western hemisphere is widespread. This article provides an understanding of the nature of anti-fat prejudice and an awareness of the causal beliefs about weight. We also explore cultural variations in anti-fat prejudice and strive to reveal the detrimental consequences of anti-fat attitudes and encourage research endeavors toward finding ways to reduce anti-fat attitudes and prejudice.

Western society and the United States in particular have become obsessed with weight. When you turn on the radio or TV, you are bombarded with advertisements for gym memberships, exercise videos, celebrity diets, and pills that promise quick weight loss. Thin models grace the covers of magazines, whereas overweight actors are the objects of humor on nightly sitcoms. We live in an age in which many people base judgments less on personality and more on appearance. A new type of prejudice has emerged: anti-fat prejudice.

Many people harbor anti-fat attitudes, or "prejudicial responses directed toward individuals because of their obesity" (Morrison & O'Connor, 1999, p. 436). Harper and LeBeau (2003) defined obesity as being 30% above normal body weight. These widely held attitudes are reflected in many aspects of society (Perez-Lopez, Lewis, & Cash, 2001). For example, a recent news article referred to obese individuals as "huge whales," "great fat Jabbas," and "big, blubbery porkers" (Shales, as cited in Perez-Lopez et al.). These derogatory statements can affect many people in the United States, where authorities have classified 24.2% of men and 27.1% of women as obese (Brownell & Wadden, 1992). Results of studies have shown that being obese is associated with a large range of negative stigmas, including being unattractive, unpopular, morally and emotionally impaired, sloppy, out of touch with personal sexuality, lazy, disorganized, non-industrious, unhappy, less self-confident, less self-disciplined, and less intelligent (e.g., Harris, Harris, & Bochner, 1982; Tiggemann & Rothblum, 1988). Samples of individuals, including health-care workers, potential

romantic partners, employers, peers, and parents degrade overweight people by treating them unjustly (Crandall & Biernat, 1990).

Thus, anti-fat attitudes are prevalent in American society. What is not clear are the reasons why these attitudes are so prevalent and whether these negative attitudes are subject to control or elimination. We now turn our attention to (a) the nature of anti-fat prejudice, (b) the causal beliefs about weight, (c) cultural differences in anti-fat prejudice, and (d) methods for reducing anti-fat prejudice in today's society.

Understanding the Nature of Anti-Fat Prejudice

One source defines prejudice as holding a negative opinion of members of a specific social group. Furthermore, members of the social group must possess undesirable characteristics for prejudice to emerge. All members of a specific social group do not need to fit the stereotype exactly, and in turn may be exempt from the stereotype at an individual level (Crandall et al., 2001).

According to the attribution-value model of prejudice, "there is no need to have realistic conflict, a history of competition, or even any contact with members of a group toward which one is prejudice" (Crandall et al., 2001, p. 36). Additionally, categorizing oneself into an in-group or out-group is not necessary. Crandall (1994) suggested that prejudice toward the overweight population is analogous to "symbolic racism." According to Crandall, symbolic racism emerges from the belief that Blacks do not exemplify the traditional values of hard work, independence, self-discipline, and obedience to authority. Furthermore, symbolic racism is not based on one's own self-interest. Crandall stated that anti-fat attitudes are currently a form of symbolic prejudice comparable to attitudes toward racism nearly 50 years ago; they are explicit, expressed, and pervasive. Even though both types of prejudices possess similarities, anti-fat attitudes are more overt and socially acceptable. In one of his stud-

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ies with several samples of undergraduate students, Crandall found that although measures of racism on the Modern Racism Scale obtained 10% politically correct responses, his measure of anti-fat attitudes (the Dislike Scale) elicited less than one third of that number. Thus, people are very willing to express negative stereotypes about overweight individuals, much like previously held racial stereotypes.

Although Crandall (1994) found similarities between racial prejudice and anti-fat prejudice, there are some notable differences. Most stigmatized groups, such as racial minorities and women, show an in-group bias. That is, they hold more positive beliefs toward members of their own group. However, obese individuals do not show an in-group bias. Crandall offered several explanations for this trend. One explanation is that a worldview that values self-determination and belief in a just world can create a negative view about obesity that prevails over the self-interests of obese people. Another plausible explanation is that identification with other obese individuals does not benefit an individual's self-image. Furthermore, obese people may view their weight as a temporary problem; a problem that diet and exercise can change. Hence they do not plan to remain part of this stigmatized group and see no need to identify with them.

Because race and obesity are both visible stigmas, other people can easily identify those individuals in face-to-face interactions. Paradoxically, research suggests that individuals with visible stigmas, specifically race, may have higher self-esteem than individuals with less visible stigmas, such as being a victim of rape or a welfare recipient (Crocker, Cornwell, & Major, 1993). Typically, a visible stigma allows a person to (a) readily identify similar others and seek social support from this in-group, (b) compare his or her own outcomes to the outcomes of others from the in-group, and (c) attribute one's negative outcomes to others' awareness of your stigmatizing group membership and prejudice toward that group. As a result of these self-protective processes, individuals with a visible stigma, such as African Americans, do not show lower self-esteem in general (Crocker et al.).

Despite the latter evidence suggesting a positive relationship between visible stigmas and self-esteem, there is an association between the visible stigma of obesity and low self-esteem. A major difference between these stigmas is the perceived amount of controllability. A person cannot control his or her race, whereas many individuals view being on welfare and a person's body weight as controllable. That is, perceived controllability of life circumstances increases the amount of prejudice and discrimi-

nation against a group (Crocker et al., 1993). Additionally, obese individuals do not identify with other obese individuals, failing to classify themselves as part of an in-group. As a result, obese individuals lack the social support and the opportunity to make downward social comparisons that can protect their self-esteem.

Just as symbolic racism can exist so can symbolic prejudice exist for individuals who are obese. Symbolic prejudice of people who are obese is related to beliefs in self-determination, a strong Puritan work ethic, along with other attitudes of intolerance including racism and authoritarianism. Conservative attitudes and values are also related to symbolic prejudice (Crandall, 1994). Specifically, Crandall identified two variables influencing the degree of prejudice: attitudes toward causality and cultural values.

Causal Beliefs About Weight and Anti-Fat Prejudice

The physical attractiveness stereotype, called "what is beautiful is good," benefits the discussion of anti-fat prejudice. This phenomenon describes how people ascribe more positive personality characteristics and life outcomes to attractive individuals than to unattractive individuals. Even though there is disagreement among researchers regarding the strength of this stereotype, results of meta-analysis have identified the stereotype across many studies (Eagly, Ashmore, Makhijani, & Longo, 1991). Because people judge obese individuals as less attractive than thin individuals, this theory helps to explain anti-fat attitudes.

When people believe that underprivileged groups are responsible for their own misfortune, they are committing the ultimate attribution error. The ultimate attribution error is particularly relevant to anti-fat prejudice. Individuals who commit this error attribute a group's misfortunes to that group's disposition or genetic makeup. Also, if an underprivileged member commits a positive act, the attribution is to luck or chance and considered an exceptional event (Pettigrew, 1979). "To the extent that one endorses the virtue of hard work and self-determination, one will tend to celebrate the victories of heroes and, conversely, blame victims for their fates" (Crandall, 1994, p. 884). Holding anti-fat attitudes and other prejudices based on the responsibility of the disadvantaged group serves to support the global ideals consistent with the Protestant work ethic and belief in a just world (i.e., believing that people get what they deserve in life).

Feather (1985) noted that people's explanations for events are by no means neutral; there are links between causal beliefs and other attitudes and values. Conservative views often hold disadvantaged individuals responsible for their plight, echoing the belief in a just world. For example, conservative Californians were more likely to blame the poor for relying on welfare, whereas liberal Californians were more likely to consider the social structure (Zucker & Weiner, 1993). Similarly, conservative Australians were more likely to blame unemployment on lack of motivation, whereas liberals were more likely to blame the government for not creating job opportunities (Feather). Furthermore, individual differences in beliefs about locus of control for weight produce similar results. Tiggemann and Rothblum (1988) reported that women who believed weight was under a person's control (i.e., internal locus of control) viewed overweight women more negatively than did women who believed weight was based on factors a person cannot control (e.g. luck and heredity).

When individuals perceive a negative life event as controllable, they often respond in a hostile, unsympathetic, rejecting, or unhelpful manner (Anderson, 1983). If obese individuals are responsible for their weight, then people may judge them harshly. Conversely, if people do not judge the overweight person as responsible for his or her obesity, then they view the person with greater sympathy, acceptance, and charity (Weiner, 1995). Weiner's model for attributions of responsibility and blame may not only explain anti-fat attitudes but also prejudice against abortion, rape, blindness, homosexuality, poverty, alcoholism, AIDS, divorce, unemployment, post-traumatic stress disorder, failure at school, crime, and depression. The reverse of this phenomenon may be true as well. Attributions may not cause prejudice, but people may place attributions of internal control on those groups against whom they are already prejudiced (Crandall et al., 2001).

Not surprisingly, given the deluge of advertisements for diet programs, diet products, workout equipment, and the many weight loss testimonials that flood the media, most Americans believe obese people have the potential to control their weight. Many people think that individuals are obese because of overeating, lack of exercise, and lack of self-control. Specifically, many Americans make external attributions about obesity. This belief, however, is incongruent with scientific evidence. The majority of research findings about the causes of obesity indicates that body weight is primarily genetic and physiological and only modestly controlled by diet (Anesbury & Tiggemann, 2000; Crandall, 1994). On average, obese

individuals do not consume more calories per day than non-obese individuals. In 12 out of 13 studies that measured food intake and body weight, results indicated that obese people ate the same amount or less than average weight people (Garrow, as cited in Crandall & Biernat, 1990). Thus, despite the widespread prevalence and acceptance of the stereotype of and prejudice toward obese individuals, the evidence suggests that the stereotype may be invalid and the prejudice may be unjustified.

What happens when an obese individual is able to lose weight? Interestingly, Blaine, DiBlasi, and Connor (2002) found that weight loss in overweight individuals ironically might have unfavorable social consequences, despite the potential health benefits. Specifically, weight loss reinforces the inaccurate idea that weight is completely controllable, thus strengthening discrimination against overweight people. "This problem is exacerbated with the prevalence of weight cycling - losing, gaining, and reliving the same pounds - because weight loss confirms beliefs about weight controllability, but weight gain or cycling may not dispel those beliefs" (Blaine et. al, p. 52). This research points out a potential "Catch-22" for obese people. On the one hand, if they do not lose weight, they remain at greater risk for ailments, as well as targets for strong negative prejudice. Conversely, if they do lose weight, they reinforce the notion that a person's weight is under personal control and provide credence to the anti-fat prejudice. Many overweight people attempt to lose weight and are successful even if only temporarily, yet this desirable outcome has the ironic effect of making it more difficult for overweight persons to escape prejudice. Consequently, society will have a difficult time simultaneously achieving two desirable goals, helping individuals escape (or avoid) obesity, while reducing prejudice toward obese people.

Cultural and Gender Variations in Anti-Fat Prejudice

Anti-fat attitudes differ among cultures. The United States is the single most individualistic nation (Crandall & Martinez, 1996) and holds the belief that individual responsibility is crucial. Most Americans believe that any child can become the next president and that individuals can personally overcome obstacles. Other countries with this type of worldview include Australia and Poland. Conservative, traditional, just world ideals are central in these societies (Crandall & Martinez).

Crandall and Martinez (1996) compared the United States (ranked in the 99th percentile for individualism)

and Mexico (ranked in the 40th percentile for individualism) on anti-fat attitudes. Their results indicated that (a) anti-fat attitudes are lower in Mexico; (b) Americans show more dislike of obesity; (c) Americans have a higher fear of obesity; and (d) Mexicans are less likely to believe that the person has control over his or her weight. There was also a greater belief of a just world and political conservatism in the United States when compared to Mexico. Ironically, the nation that is populated by some of the most overweight people in the world is also the most intolerant of obesity.

Crandall and Martinez (1996) developed three reasons to help explain why Mexican students had lower ratings of anti-fat attitudes: "(a) Being fat is less culturally devalued, (b) the connection between the attribution of controllability of weight and the rejection is not so clear, and (c) anti-fat attitudes are not bolstered by a position in a social ideological network" (p. 1173). These three explanations are centered on either values or attribution of blame. Crandall and Martinez suggested that an attribution-value model could account for cross-cultural differences in anti-fat prejudice. Specifically, they argued that prejudice of any sort is especially strong when there is a negative cultural value associated with a given trait (e.g., obesity and poverty) and adherents to that cultural value hold individuals responsible for possessing that trait. The attribution-value model of anti-fat prejudice works best with individualistic countries versus collectivist countries because they have a negative cultural value for obesity and place blame on obese people (Crandall et al., 2001).

Not only do anti-fat attitudes differ among cultures, they also differ between the sexes. Perez-Lopez et al. (2001) suggested that gender-typed persons portray more anti-fat attitudes than do androgynous persons. Their research clearly illustrates that men harbor more anti-fat attitudes than women. Although women express more anxiety about their own weight, they are more tolerant of the body weight of others (Perez-Lopez et al.). Some researchers argue that socially and interpersonally, women suffer more dramatically than men from anti-fat stereotypes (e.g., Crandall & Biernat, 1990). Other researchers believe that anti-fat stereotypes are as severe for men as they are for women (Harris et al., 1982).

Reducing Anti-Fat Prejudice

What would happen if we challenged people's beliefs about the controllability of weight? Is it possible to re-educate the public about the controllability of obesity and reduce anti-fat prejudice? Those people who har-

bor a prejudice against obese individuals typically attribute the cause of their obesity to factors that are internal and controllable, such as a lack of will power, laziness, or overindulgence. If psychologist could educate people about influences on obesity that are beyond an individual's control (e.g., genetics), such education might effectively reduce anti-fat prejudice.

In a study involving high school girls, DeJong (1993) measured their ratings of an obese peer. Through the use of questionnaires, he measured across five dimensions: self-control, degree of liking, the jolliness stereotype, semantic differential items (i.e., evaluation, potency, and activity), and task performance. Participants in the study watched a videotape of either a normal weight or overweight peer playing a game and evaluated her performance. Participants judged the overweight peer as less self-disciplined and more self-indulgent than an average weight peer. However, when the experimenter told participants that the peer's obesity was because of a glandular disorder, indicating that she was not in control of her weight, they judged her more positively. When the experimenter gave no causal information about the peer's obesity, participants rated her as weaker and more passive than the normal weight girl. DeJong concluded that we judge obese people more negatively than average weight people, but we judge obese people less negatively when we learn that their weight is uncontrollable. This information is critical when attempting to reduce anti-fat attitudes because it illustrates how we can change attitudes by providing more information about the causes of obesity.

In another study, Crandall (1994) manipulated the information undergraduate participants received about the causes of obesity. Researchers gave participants information about twin studies and the genetic components of obesity, and the effects of dieting on metabolism. This information effectively altered participants' beliefs about the causes of obesity. This change led to a reduction of anti-fat attitudes and greater acceptance of obese people as measured on the Anti-Fat Attitudes Questionnaire. Although most studies involving information about the genetic component of obesity have led to a decrease of anti-fat attitudes, some studies have shown no statistically significant change in attitudes. For example, Harris, Walters, and Waschull (1991) gave undergraduate students expert information about the causes of obesity and, after responding to questions about weight, did not report any anti-fat attitude change. Furthermore, Anesbury and Tiggemann (2000) attempted to change children's attitudes toward the controllability of weight by briefly explaining the uncontrollability of body size and the

uniqueness of bodies. The researchers measured the children's attitudes with a questionnaire inspired by several scales including Crandall's Anti-Fat Attitudes Questionnaire Willpower subscale (Crandall, 1994). The manipulation succeeded in lowering the amount of controllability that children assigned to overweight individuals. Unfortunately, even with this change of controllability, the children did not decrease negative stereotyping toward obese individuals (Anesbury & Tiggemann). Although informing participants about the nature of obesity can increase knowledge, it does not always change attitudes.

The prospects for an easy remedy to anti-fat prejudice may be particularly poor if the prejudice is a firmly established and automatic reaction that individuals have when they encounter an obese individual. Research suggests that our stereotypes are automatically activated, and they may exert a biasing influence on our judgments and behavior even though we are not consciously aware of it. Beliefs and attitudes about people who are obese that permeated our culture may come to mind without any conscious effort or control (e.g., Banaji & Greenwald, 1994; Bargh, Chen, & Burrows, 1996; Greenwald & Banaji, 1995).

There is strong empirical evidence to support the hypothesis that anti-fat attitudes are implicitly activated. Bessenoff and Sherman (2000) conducted a study with undergraduate students that investigated controlled and automatic anti-fat attitudes. They gave a lexical decision task to measure anti-fat attitudes with "fat" primes and "thin" primes along with positive and negative words or phrases. Pictures of either "fat" women or "thin" women flashed on a screen for 15 seconds to prime participants. These visual primes were followed by trait words that were pre-tested as either positive or negative. Participants had to indicate as quickly as possible whether the letters flashed on the screen formed a word.

The results indicated that visually flashing a picture of an obese woman automatically activated negative trait concepts and led to quicker response times in judgments of these negative trait words. The investigators concluded that the attitudes automatically activated toward fat women were significantly more negative than those attitudes automatically attributed to thin women.

Such a relationship between automatic attitudes and behavior has great implications for discrimination, for it is the reactions over which we have little to no control or awareness that will produce discriminatory behavior in nondeliber-

ative situations, whether or not we are motivated to act in a nonprejudiced way (Bessenoff & Sherman, 2000, p. 347).

Teachman, Gapinski, Brownell, and Jeyaram (2003) found that individuals from the Yale University community expressed implicit anti-fat attitudes regardless of the testing measures. Pictorial and word stimuli, as well as paper/pencil and computer based tests, produced automatic negative stereotypes about obese versus thin people. The results not only revealed anti-fat attitudes but also pro-thin attitudes (Teachman et al.).

Can we control or eliminate automatically activated negative stereotypes? Some evidence suggests that such modification may be possible. Devine (1989) reported that many individuals felt guilt when a stereotype or prejudice of another group came to mind. According to Devine, these "low-prejudiced" individuals actively tried to suppress the stereotype and avoid using the stereotype when making their judgments. Over time, this activity could weaken the automatic activation of the stereotype. Evidence supporting this possibility comes from Devine and Monteith (1993), who demonstrated that automatically activated stereotypes could be replaced by a more neutral attitude.

Other researchers, however, are more pessimistic about the ultimate controllability of automatically activated stereotypes. Bargh (1999) noted that

Hoping to stop the cognitive monster by trying to control already activated stereotypes is like mowing dandelions; they just sprout back up again. As with dandelions, the only way to kill stereotype effects is to pull them up by their roots - by removing their capabilities for automatic activation, or (better still) by preventing the seeds from taking root in the first place, through eradication of the cultural stereotype itself (p. 378).

Stereotypes of obese individuals appear woven into the fabric of our cognitive belief systems such that the stereotypes associated with negative emotional reactions are automatically activated when we encounter an obese person. These automatic stereotypes can be particularly damaging in a cultural climate in which there is widespread acceptance of the stereotypes about obese people and little constraint on the expression of such prejudice. If these stereotypes and prejudices are automatically activated with no subsequent attempt to suppress them, then it is likely that we may act on these negative beliefs and feelings and discriminate against obese individuals.

The work force is an important arena in which there is discrimination against obese individuals. Pingitore, Dugoni, Tindale, and Spring (1994) found that obese individuals were less often recommended for employment versus equally qualified persons of normal weight. Some researchers have found that both the visibility of the job and the physical activity involved in the job contribute to discrimination (e.g., Larkin & Pines as cited in Polinko & Popovich, 2001). However, other research indicates that public contact and visibility of the job have no effect on employment decisions when considering obese applicants (Pingitore et al.).

The Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and state handicapped employment laws protect obese individuals (Frierson, as cited in Polinko & Popovich, 2001), and therefore employers can no longer disregard obesity discrimination in the hiring process. Although these laws exist and their intent is positive, the automatic activation of negative attitudes, as described earlier, may be linked to instances when these laws have been ineffective.

Summary

The presence of anti-fat attitudes widely exists across the United States (e.g. Crandall, 1994). These attitudes are pervasive and expressed to a greater degree than other types of prejudice including racial prejudice (Crandall). Although obesity is a visible stigma, those who are obese do not benefit from the support of an in-group and therefore tend to have lower self-esteem (Crocker et al., 1993). When people do not view obese individuals as responsible for their weight, they can change their negative beliefs about obesity (DeJong, 1993).

What is the challenge that lies ahead? Western society must realize the extent and impact of anti-fat attitudes. Future research should focus on how to minimize harmful prejudicial attitudes. Professionals can develop programs for school systems to educate children at a young age about the genetic component to weight and the acceptability of all body shapes. Research suggests that educating people about automatic thinking can help decrease prejudice. Some researchers have been successful at reducing anti-fat attitudes (DeJong, 1993) whereas others have not (Harris et al., 1991). Therefore future research should focus on the most effective ways to educate individuals. Discrimination training in the workplace could include the topic of obesity to raise workers' awareness. Also, research could focus on the media's growing impact on anti-fat attitudes. Because anti-fat attitudes

may be automatically activated (Bargh, 1999), laws and other regulatory actions will be difficult to implement, but society must face this challenge.

Research results have shown the harmful effects of anti-fat stereotypes and their significant impact in our world, yet society as a whole still condones this type of prejudice. Just as we are continually minimizing racial and gender prejudice through research and education, we must also be cognizant of the stereotyping of obese individuals and take an active role in minimizing this prejudice.

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Exploring Religious Cults That Ended in Tragedy: Principles of Social Influence

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Incidents involving cults have shown that social influence, when combined with religion, can be a deadly mix; leaders can possess complete power over their members. This article explores three religious cults whose members committed suicide or were killed. I used McClelland's theories on religious manipulation, as well as other social influence theories, to evaluate the main variables behind the tragic ends to those cults. Finally, I suggest that the responsibility to identify cults with these tendencies belongs to everyone, especially psychologists.

Having complete control over other people, their thoughts, feelings, emotions - even their sexual behaviors, must feel incredible. Social influence can be very powerful, and some people take advantage of this influence to get what they want. Research has shown that people can be highly susceptible to performing actions that are often against their moral judgment; actions that are sometimes dangerous or illegal (Baron & Byrne, 2000). Research on that topic (Sherif's (1935) norm formation, Asch's conformity (1956), and Milgrim's obedience to authority (1983)) has increased our understanding of social influence. Although some leaders can use social influence positively (e.g., support groups and community service), other leaders can use social influence negatively

Research findings further indicate that social influence has an even greater effect on people when coupled with religion (Argyle, 1959; Argyle & Beit-Hallahmi, 1975; Jung, 1946). This combination can lead to instances in which "faith-causes" supersede personal well-being. The purpose of this review was to discuss and briefly evaluate incidents of religious manipulation resulting in death by using principles of social influence and McClelland's (1975) theories on religious groups and their leaders.

History

A common view about cults is that they are a group, usually based on religion, headed by a controlling, often charismatic and authoritarian leader whose followers live both separately and unconventionally (Shupe, Browley, & Oliver, 1984). In the past three decades, two well-known cults in the United States resulted in members who

committed suicide: Heaven's Gate and the People's Temple (Hochman, 1990; Samuels, 1997). Another cult, the Branch Davidians of Waco, TX, participated in a deadly gun battle with Federal agents (Haight, 1994). Although dissimilar in many ways (Muesse, 1997), the cults' leaders completely controlled all three groups, and all three of them ended in tragedy (Dougherty, 1998; Haight; Hochman; Samuels, 1997).

The first group, Heaven's Gate, was a cult based in Rancho Santa Fe, CA in which 39 people committed suicide on March of 1997. Led by Marshall Applewhite, members of the group wanted to achieve a higher, supernatural life form (Roberts, Hollifield, & McCarty, 1998) and to meet with a U.F.O. that was supposed to be flying behind the Hale-Bopp comet (Hinman, 1997; Levy, 1998; Fisher & Goldstein, 1997).

Several years earlier, there was the Branch Davidians, a cult based on the Davidian Seventh Day Adventist church, and led by David Koresh (Haight, 1994). With the desire to establish a second kingdom of "God," Koresh and his followers isolated themselves, taking illegal firearms for their protection. The U. S. Government stepped in to control the alarming situation, and the end result was the death of a majority of the followers (Rainie & Tharp, 1993).

On November 18, 1977, a cult leader named Jim Jones and his group of followers committed mass suicide in their agricultural compound in Jonestown, Guyana (Harray, 1992). The group, known as the People's Temple, had migrated from California hoping of establish a utopian society. When that hope began to fade and members started defecting, Jones tested his group's faith by giving them "poison" to drink—something he had done several times previously (Nesci, 1991). However, this time the ritual was not a test, and the story of the People's Temple Agricultural Project ended in tragedy (Black, 1990; Committee on Foreign Affairs, 1979).

The leaders of these three cults controlled members by using a combination of social influences from claim-

Robert P. Markley from Fort Hays State University was the faculty sponsor for this research project.

ing to be superior to establishing goals of greatness for the entire group. By themselves, these influences are typically docile; however, when coupled with religious convictions, the mixture can be powerful.

Social Influence and Religion

Social influence theory has explored many avenues of compliance, especially pertaining to groups. Highly cohesive groups have a greater tendency to succumb to groupthink. Groupthink can be present in many groups and is characterized by a feeling that one's group is superior to other groups. This attitude leads the group to ignore information that is contrary to their decision and to eliminate internal questioning (Janis, 1972). Further, Janis describes how groupthink tends to encourage bad decisions. When coupled with a patriarchal leader, groupthink can produce what some authorities refer to a charismatic group.

Cults often combine groupthink with a patriarchal leadership ideal. There are several distinct features that characterize the view of a patriarchal leader. Followers must first see their leader as being elevated (McClelland, 1975). Next, followers must give complete submission to the leader, relinquish all self-control, and wholly sacrifice their personal interests for those of the leader and the group. The leader must serve justice over the group, and pattern his or her leadership upon Jehovah, the "ideal father," who is "all-powerful, loving, but stern" (Coe, 1925; McClelland). These groups then can become charismatic groups (Galanter, 1989). Galanter defines charismatic groups as large groups (i.e., a dozen to thousands of members) with a shared belief system, high social cohesiveness, established groupthink, and a patriarchal leadership.

McClelland (1975) described the final feature of social influence combined with religion as being motivation—the keys to which were achievement, affiliation, and power. From this perspective, I will examine the three cults described earlier.

Achievement

McClelland (1955, 1975, 1985) stated that there are three ways to make people feel powerful; people having goals set by their leader, people being convinced that they and not the leader had set the goals, and people achieving the goals with the assistance of the leader. Heaven's Gate, the Branch Davidians, and the People's Temple all had

similar goals: to evolve into better people and eventually higher beings (Samuels, 1997; Harray, 1992; Rainie & Tharp, 1993). Applewhite instilled in his group the desire to become higher beings and leave earth (Levy, 1998). Koresh convinced his followers that they were part of God's plan for another kingdom (Haught, 1994).

Jim Jones mastered the aspect of achievement by having multiple goals. The long-term goal was establishing Jonestown as a utopian society (Hochman, 1990), creating a "heaven-on-earth" that meant all followers were higher, spiritual beings (Steel, 2001). Jones also had many short-term goals for the elderly to live a better life, for drug and alcohol abuse to diminish, and for less separation among ethnic groups (Committee on Foreign Affairs, 1979). Members of the People's Temple saw these goals as Biblical; Jones used this view as proof that they themselves had established the goals (Taylor, 1998). Furthermore, because Jones was financially secure (i.e., he was worth an estimated 12 million dollars), he provided the means to achieve the goals (Committee on Foreign Affairs).

Affiliation

Affiliation is about relationships with others, both in the group (internal) and out of the group (external) (McClelland, 1975). This characteristic is an extension of groupthink. In particular, all three cults had strong internal and, sometimes, external affiliations. Heaven's Gate members, for example, worked and lived together, even documenting how happy they were with their living conditions (Geier, 1998). Externally, they also provided a service to the community with their web-design business (Fisher & Goldstein, 1997).

The Branch Davidians were also strong in affiliation. They were members of a commune in Waco, TX, and they saw themselves as affiliated with God's master design of a new kingdom. This affiliation with God meant they could buy and possess illegal firearms. When outsiders (e.g., the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms) attempted to contradict their beliefs, they responded violently, killing four agents during the initial contact (Rainie & Tharp, 1993).

Jones was very aware of the hostility toward his group and some people saw him as very paranoid (Committee on Foreign Affairs, 1979). He used this hostility as "support" for his teachings. In California, there

was an instance in which Jones claimed that he had been attacked, shot, and “miraculously” healed; a story that lacked substantiation (Committee on Foreign Affairs). However, stories such as that frighten his followers, and created closer bonding and polarization from others (Nesci, 1991). The pressure toward the People’s Temple only encouraged them to have greater and stronger internal affiliation.

Power

McClelland (1975) offered insight by discussing the differences between socialized power and personalized power. He described socialized power as more altruistic in nature, in contrast to personalized power, which consists of direct conquest power. McClelland gave a clear and concise definition of charisma: besides having the ability to “sweep someone off their feet,” he described it as having the ability to invoke powerful feelings in followers. The leaders of all three groups possessed this quality.

Applewhite and Bonnie Lu Nettles (another founder of Heaven’s Gate) encouraged their followers to give up their free will for the group (Geier, 1998). They were successful in controlling all aspects of their follower’s lives, “from diet to clothing to sexual thought” by having great charisma (Geier, p. 32). Some people described Applewhite as a very convincing speaker and leader (Roberts, Hollifield, & McCarty, 1998). The followers wanted to become higher beings.

Koresh easily won the support of the Branch Davidians with “hypnotic charisma” (Haught, 1994). Armed with a “God-given” command to establish a house of David, Koresh had sexual relations with many of the female members (Haught). The followers were convinced that they were pleasing God, and Koresh used this belief to gain greater power over them.

Jones was also very powerful. He was a master of social compliance and manipulation (Schnepper, 1999). He convinced people that he was a god and that they must subject themselves to his authority (Harray, 1992). Isolation, fear, and interrogation were some of the tactics he used to this end (Hochman, 1990). Defectors were met with great resistance, even the threat of death (Steel, 2001). The pattern of life at Jonestown was based on Jones’s requirement (Biermans, 1986) of nighttime “catharsis sessions,” during which he forced people to confess to sins and “wrongdoings,” thereby increasing Jones’s power by making his façade more righteous (Nesci, 1991). His followers were subsequently beaten

for these sins regardless of the validity of their confession (Committee on Foreign Affairs, 1979).

Social influence when combined with religion can be very powerful. Although social influence can be used for good (i.e., greater moral convictions and increased prosocial behavior), it has been used for bad. Cult leaders will generally take a situation with groupthink, use a patriarchal leadership model, and motivate through achievement, affiliation, and power to manipulate a group of individuals.

Modern Day Applications

In retrospect observers can understand some of the causes and effects of the tragic events discussed earlier. However, identifying these groups before their actions turn negative is difficult. This difficulty leads to the question of recognizing the signs of social influence that could ultimately become negative. In theory, authorities could use these signs as a litmus test for currently active religious groups. However, such testing would likely cause many false positives that could render judgments as ineffective. Further, many of the similarities discussed about the three cults are present in other religious and secular groups that would not label themselves as cults or as being manipulated by their leaders.

Cults generally possess 12 distinct characteristics and among them are having an uncertain salvation and basing that salvation on false pretenses (Shupe, Bromley, & Oliver, 1984). The Bible was the basis for the Branch Davidians and the People’s Temple (Haught, 1994; Committee on Foreign Affairs, 1979); however, the two groups differed with respect to salvation. Koresh “bedded” many of the female members by claiming he was angelic, and by using his followers’ obedience as a testament to their salvation (Haught). Jones beat people for their “sins” and even went so far as to conduct “mass suicide” drills to test their faith (Committee on Foreign Affairs; Nesci, 1991). Heaven’s Gate members, on the other hand, based their salvation on following their leaders and ending their lives to meet up with the Hale-Bopp comet (Hinman, 1997; Levy, 1998).

Another characteristic that distinguishes a cult from a religious group is that of separation from the world (Shupe, Bromley, & Oliver, 1984). As discussed earlier, all three groups lived in self-sufficient communes (Muesse, 1997). This separation is a further stage of the group polarizing itself and creating a strong atmosphere for groupthink.

Using these and other similarities shows that there have been and are many docile groups worldwide that did not and are not likely to commit mass suicide or end in tragedy.

Conclusion

Perhaps the most important lesson that we can learn from these religious cults is that people must be aware of groups in which they are involved. If more people possessed a healthy amount of curiosity, then they would have asked questions more frequently and created more tension for action.

Although people could argue that knowledge is the better cure for this malady, this knowledge could come at the cost of privacy. The Constitution guarantees rights for religious groups in the United States and having observers monitor religious groups could infringe on those rights.

Having a knowledge of this issue as a more fundamental subject for students of psychology could be a deterrent to cults. With psychology students more keenly aware of the issue, they could take steps to identify potentially harmful cults.

Even with the knowledge that a particular religious cult exists, the possibility of that group creating a tragic incident would still exist. However, until legislators enact laws to protect people from falling prey to this type of religious social influence, friends and family members of individuals in religious groups have to hope that group members will ascertain a path to resolving conflicts that could lead to tragedies.

The history of Heaven's Gate, the Branch Davidians, and the People's Temple should encourage others to be aware that groups labeled as "religious" may not be entirely passive in their methods. Although the types of incidents I described in this review cannot be entirely prevented, individuals can take steps to reduce their frequency and the number of individuals affected.

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Violence Within Cohabiting Versus Married Relationships

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Thirty-five percent of cohabiting couples experience violence annually (Stets & Straus, 1989). This figure is nearly double that of minor violence and more than six times that of severe violence in married couples. Differences between cohabiting and married couples reveal risk factors such as: isolation from society, isolation from community resources, independent financial maintenance, lower relationship quality and happiness, higher rates of depression and alcoholism, youth, educational differences, employment issues, lower levels of income, and experiencing or witnessing intrapersonal violence as a child that may be associated with the disparate levels of violence in each group. This article also discusses criticisms of the research, policy implications, and directions for future research.

Women are more cautious of elevators, walking alone at night, and other situations in which they have traditionally felt safe. For many women, even more dangerous, however, are their own homes. In the United States each year, over three million married couples will experience at least one severe assault (Stets & Straus, 1989) with the assault level among married couples many times greater than that between strangers (Gelles & Straus, as cited in Stets & Straus, 1989). Shotland and Straw (1976) found that participants who thought the attacker and victim were strangers, rather than married, intervened much more frequently. Participants also perceived the woman in the stranger condition as suffering more injuries than the woman in the married condition. Such studies encouraged many social theorists to argue that cohabitation would improve marital quality and stability by providing a more rigorous test of a relationship than the traditional engagement process (Thomson & Colella, 1992). Theoretically, these couples should experience lower levels of violence because they should be more likely to leave an unsatisfactory relationship, as well as to view violence as less legitimate and to feel less obligated to tolerate violence (Yllo & Straus, 1981).

For the purpose of this article, physical intimate violence includes acts of physical aggression toward a partner, ranging in severity from pushing and grabbing to beating and using a weapon (Feldbau-Kohn, O'Leary, & Schumacher, 2000).

Although social theorists made a case for the benefits of cohabitation, arriving at an operational definition of marital violence in order to obtain empirical evidence regarding violence in cohabiting versus marital relationships required several years. Traditionally, researchers defined marital as including common-law or cohabiting relationships, arguing that this combination was necessary for consistency, that both groups took part in the same patriarchal gender norms, and that both groups report similar levels of satisfaction and closeness (Brownridge & Halli, 2002).

Not until Brownridge and Halli (2000) performed a meta-analysis on several studies did research reveal a greater likelihood of violence by cohabiting versus married men, with a prevalence of violence for cohabitators typically exceeding two times that of married couples. With this consistent difference of violence between cohabitators and marrieds, Brownridge and Halli suggested there may be unique variables precipitating violence for cohabitators and argued against subsuming cohabitators within the married category.

Further research identified key differences between married and opposite-sex cohabiting couples that appeared linked to the higher level of violence among cohabitators (Brownridge & Halli, 2000). These differences revealed risk factors that included isolation from society, isolation from community resources, independent financial maintenance, lower relationship quality and happiness, higher levels of depression and alcoholism, youth, educational differences, employment issues, lower levels of income, and experiencing or witnessing intrapersonal violence as a child. The purpose of this article was to discuss these risk factors, along with criticisms of the research, policy implications, and future research directions.

Despite evidence describing higher levels of violence, cohabitation intimate violence is increasingly more common. The latest Census Bureau statistics indicated that the number of cohabiting couples increased eightfold since 1970, with four million opposite sex couples living together outside of marriage (Waite &

Matthew Huss from Creighton University was the faculty sponsor for this research project.

Gallagher, 2000). With approximately half of all first marriages preceded by cohabitation (Forste & Tanfer, 1996), cohabitation is “an accepted prelude to marriage in many spheres of American society and is the norm at many universities” (Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 1995, p. 175). Unfortunately, 35 percent of couples in cohabiting relationships experience violence annually (Stets & Straus, 1989), and as the number of cohabiting couples increases, many more people may be at risk for intimate violence.

Researchers still do not fully understand the dynamics of cohabiting unions (Brownridge & Halli, 2002) nor do they understand the variables preceding or predicting violence in cohabitation. Brownridge and Halli discovered that married women with a history of cohabitation were 45% more likely to experience violence in their relationship than were married women who had never cohabited. This statistic suggests that something specific to the cohabitation process, or individuals choosing to cohabit, is responsible violence. The cohabitation option may attract people more prone to unstable relationships, or the act of cohabiting may produce attitudes and values that lead to instability (Nock, 1995). The greater prevalence of violence in cohabitative relationships could be because of the cultural belief that love, intimacy, and violence are closely intertwined, and that for some cohabitators, violence serves as a “symbol of closeness and ownership in the absence of a legal license and label” (Yllo & Straus, 1981, p. 345).

Possible Implications

Discovering the processes or variables that predict violence is very important for the identification, understanding, and prevention of domestic violence. Abuse shelters provide assistance to women and children involved in violent relationships, offering temporary living quarters as well as job assistance for women to support themselves and to break free from violent relationships. Because these shelters assist women from all types of relationships, investigating different types of violence between cohabitating and married relationships is important to determine the best way to help women end violent relationships. Additionally, discovering the relevant variables influencing violence in different marital status groups may also affect political decisions.

President George W. Bush proposed to spend welfare dollars on programs encouraging people to marry. Conversely, legislators have proposed, or passed, legislation to attach a warning or informational label regarding domestic violence to marriage licenses (Waite & Gallagher, 2000). One Washington state senator who

sponsored warning labels stated, “The origin of the wedding ring represents part of a chain binding the wife to her master. I would say, simply, ‘Beware. Stop, look, listen, and be cautious’” (Waite & Gallagher, p. 152). Although some politicians are encouraging marriage, others are warning against it.

Men and Women Perpetrators

With abuse shelters providing services to women and with other people warning women against the bondage of marriage, as well as societal preconceptions, falling prey to the misconception that violence occurs only against women is easy. However both men and women are victims of domestic violence. As Williams (1992) commented, these partner assaults occur between people having a relational history within the context of intense interaction, which is likely to produce a relatively high frequency of reciprocal aggression. According to Stets and Straus (1989), within both cohabiting and married relationships, female-only violence was higher than male-only violence. The highest rate of assault was minor violence (e.g., pushing, grabbing, or slapping) (Straus, Hamby, Boney-McCoy, & Sugarman, 1996) between both individuals, followed by severe violence (e.g., use of a knife or gun, choked, slammed against a wall, beaten up, burned, pushed, or hit with something that could hurt, or kicked; Straus et al.). Cohabiting couples exhibited double the level of minor violence committed by both partners than did married couples, and more than six times the level for severe violence (Stets & Straus, 1989). Thus, the results suggest that not only are cohabiting couples at greatest risk for violence, but the most dangerous forms of violence occur between cohabiting couples given that both partners commonly carried out violence in the relationship (Stets & Straus, 1989).

Additionally, Capaldi and Owen (2001) found similar levels of injury and fear for both men and women, suggesting that mental health professionals, researchers, and policymakers should not dismiss the impact of domestic violence on men as

practically nonexistent, as has been largely the case... . We are doing women a great disservice by failing to recognize that they can have problems with physical aggression toward a partner. We are not providing them with adequate services to change their behavior and establish less conflictual intimate relationships. (p. 14)

Thus, to address the topic of domestic violence both in married and cohabiting relationships, all of us must

recognize violence as bi-directional and affecting both men and women.

Differing Married and Cohabiting Relationships

To discover the role that violence plays between cohabiting and married couples, researchers must understand types of relationships. Investigators must group relationships into mutually exclusive categories to compare and study them. Categorization can be complicated because, depending on the reason for the relationship, categories can be similar. For example, researchers have demonstrated that among cohabitators who intend to marry, relationships are not significantly different from marriages (Strong, DeVault, Sayad, & Cohen, 2001). Wallerstein and Blakeslee (1995) reported cohabitation as an overture to marriage can be a very valuable learning experience, which can be as demanding and pleasurable as early years of marriage. Furthermore, research has shown that only serial cohabitation was significantly associated with instability and that at no times was single-instance cohabitation associated with increased odds of instability when compared with not cohabiting (DeMaris & MacDonald, 1993).

People may choose to marry or cohabit for different reasons, each of which may have different implications regarding instability and violence. Marriage often occurs because two people love each other and decide they want to announce publicly their decision to unite, but they also can make this decision for financial reasons, emotional comfort, or because of pregnancy. Couples may decide to cohabit for a multitude of reasons. Two people may share living space for convenience; they may enjoy being with each other and find living together mutually satisfying; they may live together to retain financial benefits if they are older; they may live together as a “trial marriage” to discover if they want to marry (Strong et al., 2001).

Marriage, however, is not simply a ceremony. Research suggests that marriage changes the way that couples think about each other, as well as how others treat them (Waite & Gallagher, 2000), while raising the expectations of each partner in the relationship (Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 1995). In cohabiting relationships, the primary commitment is to each other, whereas in married relationships, the marriage itself seems to become a third party that enters the relationship between the couple, and the couple will work hard to save the marriage (Strong et al., 2001). This change in the way mar-

ried couples perceive their relationship may be a protective factor against violence. Brownridge and Halli (2002) contend that the lower perceived security in a cohabiting relationship may lead to the couple unwittingly producing a less stable reality than married couples, which results in more disagreements, conflict, and ultimately violence.

Isolation From Society

Along with the change marriage brings to how the couple views their relationship, marriage also changes social expectations and assumptions regarding the couple (Yllo & Straus, 1981). Before marriage the couple has a private relationship, however, after saying vows, the relationship transforms into a public one in which social norms more closely govern the behavior of the couple (Yllo & Straus, 1981). Although American society has traditional standards of propriety and decorum for married couples, these standards are less clear for cohabiting couples, which may contribute to the high dissolution levels of these relationships. Cohabiting couples also tend to be relatively more isolated because “those in a relationship that is less socially recognized or governed by clear normative standards are less likely to be tightly integrated into networks of others who are in more traditional relationships” (Nock, 1995, p. 56).

Cohabitation receives less social support, possibly because it does not symbolize a lifelong commitment and involves a sexual relationship without the sanction of marriage (Strong et al., 2001). This lack of social support may also contribute to greater instability of cohabiting relationships (Strong et al.). Although social isolation impacts the odds of violence for both married and cohabiting couples (Brownridge & Halli, 2002), cohabitators seem to be more isolated because of the stigma attached to their living arrangement, and they may become highly dependent on each other (Jackson, 1996). This dependence may lead to a higher tolerance for violence to maintain the relationship with their partner.

Both married and cohabiting couples, however, are only isolated in certain domains. Stets (1991) discovered that married couples are more likely isolated from informal social networks (e.g., family and friends), whereas cohabitators are less likely tied to either groups or their partner but are more likely to have ties to family and friends. Stets believes that cohabitators are more likely estranged from society and seek support from family and friends to cope with this detachment. Family and friends, however, may not put constraints on behavior or impose the norms of society on cohabitators. Stets contends that this

approach is more consistent with the lifestyle of cohabitators in which they set their own rules rather than following the rules of society, avoiding involvement with those persons who restrict their behavior.

The degree to which couples are either isolated or embedded within their kin networks may be an important link to increased violence in cohabiting couples. Husbands and wives become members of each other's families and can receive support from both families (Waite & Gallagher, 2000). Married couples often feel that their partner's family becomes their own, and they are also more likely to feel they can rely on their partners for emotional support in times of trouble (Waite & Gallagher). Conversely, as Stets and Straus (1989) suggested, cohabiting couples may be more violent because they are more likely to be isolated from their network of kin, which otherwise may work to help suppress violent behavior. In fact, many parents do not even know about cohabiting relationships (Yllo & Straus, 1981) and cohabiting individuals report poorer relationships with both mothers and fathers (Nock, 1995). Nock argued that these parental relationships are extremely important and can influence the quality of the couple's relationship. Individuals with poor parental relationships lack basic emotional and possibly economic resources. If the relationship suffers because of parental disapproval, then the quality of the partner's affectionate bonds may also suffer.

Isolation From Societal Resources

Isolation is a detachment from the networks of family and friends, as well as other community resources of social control (Williams, 1992). Individuals can turn to community resources, such as police, to redress grievances of conflict (Gelles as reported in Williams, 1992). Because of threats from a partner, insufficient knowledge of these agencies, or an unwillingness to bring private matters to the attention of the public, privacy can disconnect people from third party resources that prevent violence (Williams). Isolation from community resources, such as police agencies greatly increases the odds of violence. According to Williams, individuals who perceive themselves as more isolated from police are more powerful in relation to their partners and are less likely to perceive the costs of arrests as high or severe. Yllo and Straus (1981) agreed with Williams's statement but contend that cohabiting couples are more isolated from police agencies because their relationship is regarded as less moral and less deserving of protection than married couples, producing limited legal resources for these couples.

Some researchers assert that cohabitators also lack the social resource of religious affiliation. According to Thornton, Axinn, and Hill (1992) young people without religious affiliations are more likely to endorse and experience cohabitation. Cohabitation is also likely to decrease commitment to and participation in religious activities, probably because of negative sanctioning by religious leaders and other adults attending services (Thornton et al.). This detachment furthers the isolation of cohabiting couples, which otherwise could provide a valuable service preventing or encouraging dissolution of violent relationships.

Financial Maintenance

Although married and cohabiting couples differ greatly on matters of social acceptance and resources, another striking difference between married and cohabiting couples is the way couples maintain their resources. Married couples generally find combining money and other resources as advantageous, whereas cohabiting couples generally prefer to manage their assets independently. Many married couples pool their finances as a symbol of commitment and trust, a sign that the person is willing to sacrifice individual economic interests to the interests of the relationship (Strong et al., 2001). The process of pooling is beneficial because it increases the couple's standard of living by about a third as they lower their expenses and the amount of work each needs to do, as well as specializing in certain tasks (Waite & Gallagher, 2000). Conversely, one of the main reasons couples choose to cohabit is to maintain their financial independence (Strong et al.). Because cohabiting individuals do not see their futures intertwined and do not wish to be responsible for another person's welfare, cohabitators usually keep their time and money separate (Waite & Gallagher). Typically, cohabitators only pool their income if they expect to be living together for a long time or marry (Strong et al.). The more money a couple pools, the greater the incentive to organize future financial dealings in a similar way and the more difficulty they have to think of themselves as unattached individuals (Strong et al.).

According to Yllo and Straus (1981) these financial differences may help increase the longevity of marriages and work to pull apart individuals who cohabit. In marriage, there is an incentive to maintain the relationship because of the necessity of a legal divorce, which is a costly option in terms of time, effort, and money. The legal system, however, works against cohabitators in many states where living together unmarried is still a criminal offense. This law makes obtaining financial interdependence difficult, as well as buying major purchases that

require credit. Yllo and Straus's contention, however, may only be applicable to the time in when they performed their research.

Relationship Quality and Happiness

In addition to financial factors, cohabiting and married couples also seem to differ in the quality and happiness of their relationships. Although cohabiting and married couples do not seem to differ significantly in their feelings of satisfaction with the relationship (Yllo & Straus, 1981), cohabitators report poorer relationship quality, lower levels of happiness, more fighting, and more violence than married couples (Strong et al., 2001). Nock (1995) reported that even though there does not appear to be a significant difference in the frequency of disagreements between married and cohabiting couples, cohabitators report significantly lower levels of happiness than married individuals, although very few people in both types of relationships described themselves as unhappy (Nock). Thomson and Colella (1992) provided an explanation for this unhappiness by arguing that those who choose to cohabit rather than marry perceive the relationship or themselves as poorer risks in terms of commitment and long-term happiness. Even cohabitators who eventually marry may have lower quality relationships that are more problematic than couples who feel no need to test the relationship by living together before marriage (Thomson & Colella).

Waite and Gallagher (2000) similarly attributed the better quality of married relationships to trust. Spouses expect to trust each other financially, sexually, and emotionally because of their personal qualities as well as because most of their assets are jointly owned. This trust reduces the need for spouses to monitor each other to determine lack of effort, stealing, or dishonesty, as well as reduces the effort required to enforce agreements (Waite & Gallagher). Issues such as autonomy and control, with frequent arguments about rights, duties, and obligations, may also lead to a higher level of violence in cohabiting couples, whereas married individuals may make more sacrifices or compromises to keep the relationship intact (Stets & Straus, 1989). Nock (1995) supported both Stets and Straus (1989) and Brownridge and Halli (2002), arguing that married individuals are more likely to resolve their problems, or at least arrive at acceptable compromises, than are cohabiting individuals whose relationships are less enforced by social and legal constraints.

The level of investment in relationships is linked to the quality of relationships. Stets and Straus (1989) proposed that lower levels of investment in a relationship

may explain the higher rates of violence among cohabiting couples. Although both married and cohabiting couples share certain features that give rise to conflict inherent within an intimate relationship, cohabiting couples may lack some features that constrain the conflict from escalating into violence. These features may be related to the potential costs of violence to the relationship, which seem to be greater for married couples because they have a greater social, material, and psychological investment in the relationship, and therefore a greater long term interest in the relationship (Stets & Straus). Consequently, married men may control assault behavior to avoid the risk of violence ending the marriage, as well as to lessen the risk of their partner being injured or killed.

Depression and Alcoholism

In addition to a decreased investment in the relationship and lower reports of happiness among cohabitators, individuals in cohabiting relationships also reported higher levels of depression and alcohol problems (Strong et al., 2001). Brownridge and Halli (2002) concluded that depression had a significant impact on violence even after controlling for social support variables, but they did not provide a suggestion for the role depression might play in understanding differences in violence between cohabiting and married couples. Waite and Gallagher (2000), however, contended that depression rates might be lower among married couples because marriage makes each individual feel important, depended upon, and loved. Waite and Gallagher reported that recognizing there is someone to care for you because he or she is committed to and loves you is a significant influence to a person's psychological well being. Furthermore, they discussed that alcohol problems were more common among cohabiting men. Whereas married men settle down, men who are not married voluntarily endanger their lives and health through this type of behavior. The evidence reveals that men "actually mend their ways" as they first approach and became married (Waite & Gallagher, p. 54).

Stets (1991) discovered that alcoholism made the largest contribution in domestic violence, resulting in a 222% increase in inflicting violence. Stets considered that excessive drinking was the result of a lack of social control. Because cohabitators are not as committed to organizations or their partners, they may be more likely to engage in deviant, nonnormative behaviors, such as excessive drinking, which results in violent behavior. Stets (1991) argued that social participation may place constraints and controls on behavior, and without this mediation, both depression and alcohol use increase, and

both are linked to marital aggression and may play a role in cohabiting aggression.

Stets (1991) suggested that both depression and alcoholism may be associated with stress. Because alcohol is used to relieve stress, and stress is related to depression as well as aggression, both depression and alcohol use may explain the greater level of violence in cohabiting relationships. DeMaris (2000) argued that this explanation is dangerous because victims generally minimize the importance of violence by attributing it to factors such as alcohol, stress, and frustration, instead of perceiving that their partner's intent was to harm. Perpetrators can also explain and legitimize violence in disapproving situations by attributing violence to excessive drinking or being "out of control" (Williams, 1992). This legitimization frees the perpetrator from prohibitions in disapproving settings and increases the likelihood of subsequent violence.

Youth

In addition to depression and alcohol use that may contribute to intimate violence, age also seems to be a salient variable in intimate violence. Specifically, young women in both cohabiting and married relationships, in which they previously cohabitated, were the most at risk to experience violence (Brownridge & Halli, 2002). Age is an important risk variable for violence in cohabiting women, with every year in a woman's age leading to a 5% decrease in the odds of violence. Similarly, Williams (1992) found a 42% decrease in violence with an increase in 10 years of age. Although there were no reports of violence in the previous year for cohabiting couples over the age of 30, 43.5% of cohabitators under the age of 30 had been involved in at least one violent incident in the previous year (Yllo & Straus, 1981).

Research has suggested that this increase in violence at younger ages could be because of lifestyle differences (e.g., going to the bar) that increase the risk of violence (Brownridge & Halli, 2002). The increase of violence for married women that had previously cohabitated may be because these women had not wanted to spend more time searching for a partner who was a closer match. Perhaps these women perceived themselves as having fewer options for potential partners and were more likely to marry violence-prone men.

Additionally, Forste and Tanfer (1996) discovered that married couples were more homogenous in age than were cohabiting couples. Although only 34% of cohabiting couples were within 2 years of age of their partners, 54% of married couples were within this age range.

These differences in age between partners in cohabiting unions could create more conflict leading to an increase in violence.

Educational Differences

Although age seems to contribute to intimate violence, education differences among cohabiting and married couples were also related to violence. Cohabiting individuals, including both sexes, reported fewer years of completed schooling than married individuals (Forste & Tanfer, 1996; Nock, 1995), but education levels was not significantly related to the level of violence in cohabiting couples (Stets & Straus, 1989). Research findings have suggested that an imbalance in education levels is more likely to affect the commitment levels of cohabiting couples because of the value placed on equality and autonomy (Forste & Tanfer). In marital relationships, an exchange of resources and interdependence is highly valued, so that inequalities would have relatively little impact on the level of commitment in the relationship.

Brownridge and Halli (2002) confirmed previous contentions (Forste & Tanfer) that educational levels affected cohabiting relationships. For example, they demonstrated that higher female-to-male educational levels reduced the risk of violence among cohabitators. However, they also found that married men were affected by their wives having more education, which increased the odds of violence for more educated women than for their husbands, possibly because these men subscribed to the belief that the man in the relationship should have greater resources (Brownridge & Halli).

Employment

Brownridge and Halli (2002) found that unemployed cohabiting women faced higher odds of violence than employed cohabiting women. The authors speculated that this discrepancy was because cohabitators valued an egalitarian lifestyle and that a woman who acted in this way by working was less likely to experience violence. Brownridge and Halli, however, reported that inequalities do have a significant impact on marriage. Unlike cohabiting men, married men seem to be more traditional and are more likely to be violent when confronted with working wives.

Level of Income

Unlike educational levels and employment, Brownridge and Halli (2002) found that the ratio of income for women and men did not have an impact on the

odds of violence for either cohabiting or married couples. However, the annual level of income earned by the couple affected the level of violence in the relationship. Yllo and Straus (1981) demonstrated that income had a direct impact on the level of intimate violence, with an inverse relationship between income and violence for both cohabiting and married couples. This effect, however, seemed very dramatic for cohabiting couples, with no violent incidents reported for those earning over \$20,000 a year, but 40% of the those couples earning under \$10,000 a year reported at least one severe incident of violence in the last year (Yllo & Straus). In contrast, married couples varied in violence from 2.9% in couples earning over \$20,000 a year to 11.5% in couples earning under \$10,000 a year. Yllo and Straus concluded that the stress of living on a low income was compounded for cohabiting couples. Unfortunately, this problem was exacerbated for lower income cohabiting versus married men (Nock, 1995).

Even though instigators have demonstrated the impact of income on violence, the effect of socioeconomic status on intimate violence is unclear. Although Brownridge and Halli's (2002) results suggested that socioeconomic status did not account for higher violence among cohabitators, Williams (1992) found that with a significant increase in socioeconomic status there was a 9% decline in the odds of perpetrating violence. Although women with more resources were less willing to remain in a violent relationship, DeMaris (2000) found that although relationships were more likely to end if the woman was continuously employed, leaving the relationship was not dependent upon her employment, education, status, or income.

Experiencing or Witnessing

Intrapersonal Conflict

Another contributing factor to the high prevalence of violence among cohabiting couples is experiences of intrapersonal conflict while growing up (Jackson, 1996). Children learn beliefs and behaviors related to violence, as well as marriage and sex roles, through their family. Individuals who experienced or witnessed violence learned through modeling that violence was an appropriate way to deal with feelings and were highly susceptible to becoming involved in a violent relationship. Interestingly, Jackson reported that given similar levels of childhood victimization, cohabiting individuals were more likely to be involved in a violent adult relationship than were married individuals. Cohabitators were also

more likely to engage in severe forms of violence than were married individuals. Jackson suggested that children learn that if their parents tolerate violent behavior in a legal union, then violence must be more acceptable in a nonlegal union.

Criticisms

Keep in mind that the topic of partner violence is extremely value-laden. Although values influence psychology in every area (Myers, 2002), researchers may hold beliefs about marriage that influence interpretation and presentation of the data. For example, Waite and Gallagher (2000) wrote their book with the purpose of persuading readers to marry instead of cohabit. Thus, they stressed the positive aspects of marriage and downplayed, or presented pessimistically, the positive aspects of cohabitation. Readers should keep in mind these biases to get an accurate view of the differences between cohabiting and married couples, as well as to form an understanding of the increased level of violence among cohabitators.

Another essential criticism is that much of the research on violence in married compared to cohabiting couples was investigated decades ago. Societal values, however, seem to be shifting toward acceptance of cohabitation, which has decreased the stigma placed on this union. Although the earlier research retains value, some conclusions researchers drew in the 1980s may not currently apply. For example, Stets and Straus (1989) pointed to isolation from family as a reason for a higher level of violence among cohabiting couples, and Yllo and Straus (1981) reported that parents often did not know about their children's cohabiting relationships. With greater acceptance of sexual activity outside of marriage, as well as cohabiting in general, these variables may no longer contribute to increased violence. Additionally, Yllo and Straus claimed that cohabiting couples might be more isolated from community resources such as police agencies because their relationship was illegal in many states and may be seen as less deserving. Again, this conclusion may simply reflect social attitudes of the time in which the research was conducted. Today, cohabitators may be no more isolated from such resources than married individuals.

A final criticism of previous research is the speculative nature of the results and implications. Researchers were able to acquire reliable statistics regarding both cohabiting and married couples, but many of the conclusions from these statistics were merely suggestions of what may be occurring. For example, Stets (1991) found that cohabitators were less likely to be tied to their partner

or groups but are more likely to have ties with family and friends. She drew from this statistic that cohabitators sought support from family and friends to cope with estrangement from society, but not that friends and family might place constraints on behavior. Additionally, Thornton et al. (1992) believed that the decrease in commitment and participation in religious groups might be because of sanctioning by adults attending services and religious leaders. In yet another example and in response to the finding that cohabitators reported higher levels of unhappiness, Thomson and Colella (1992) inferred that cohabitators might believe the relationship had a poorer risk for happiness and commitment. Although these explanations appear reasonable, most of the research relies on interpretations of statistics rather than self-reports or objective measurement. Self-reports and objective measurements are important because they allow cohabitators to give their perspective on the decision and consequences of cohabitation, which would be useful in gaining insight into this phenomenon.

Policy Implications

One of the most necessary policies is to recognize female violence. Some researchers continue to deny that women are as violent as men (Yllo, 1993), with George (2003) describing female to male violence as an “Invisible Touch,” conspicuous only by its trivialization or complete denial” (p. 24). Although many individuals wish to keep the focus on women because of the devastating impact domestic violence has, addressing female violence is important to reduce intimate assaults. As Capaldi and Owen (2001) contended, mental health professionals, researchers, and policymakers are doing women a great disservice by not recognizing, or providing adequate services to deal with, problems of physical aggression towards a partner. Thus, using public messages is important to help form a similar stigma on female violence, as well as to establish treatment centers geared toward women perpetrators.

Additionally, investigators can replicate and expand Jackson’s (1996) research to discover why cohabiting individuals, who grow up witnessing or experiencing violence, are more likely to become involved in a violent relationship as an adult. Jackson suggested that children learn to tolerate and accept violence in a legal union and thus perceive that violence in nonlegal unions is even more acceptable. If research findings support this speculation, providing therapy for such children, focusing on violence being unacceptable, would be advantageous.

Finally, the theologian Lawler (2002) proposed a radi-

cal idea that might help limit violence in cohabiting relationships that results from societal isolation, as well as instability in a future marriage. Research (Strong et al., 2001) has suggested that pre-nuptial and married couples are very similar. Lawler suggested that society revert to a historical practice in which cohabitation was common and the standard way of continuing into marriage. In this practice, there was a public ceremony of betrothal, in which the couple promised to marry. Society then permitted the couple to cohabit and engage in sexual intercourse. At the birth of a child, society considered the marriage consummated. Lawler contended that cohabitation has become a social reality and that pastors should integrate cohabiting couples into the churches. If society reverts to this historical system, individuals who plan to marry but are not ready to marry can go through this process and avoid the social stigma of cohabitation. Additionally, this time period would allow for intensive relationship education by either churches or states, ultimately increasing the stability of the relationship. This idea, although difficult to bring into reality, may help limit violence among both cohabiting and married couples by reducing the social stigma of cohabitation, increasing community resources to these couples, and providing education to leading to greater stability in the relationship each of which is a protective factor for intimate violence.

Future Research

Focusing future research on different types of cohabiting couples is imperative. As Strong et al. (2001) indicated, cohabitation involves many different types of couples and reasons to cohabit. For example, couples may live together because it is mutually satisfying, for convenience or financial reasons, as a “trial marriage,” or as a temporary alternative to marriage. These different types of cohabiting relationships may have different implications for violence. For example, DeMaris and MacDonald (1993) found that only serial cohabitation, not single-instance cohabitation, was associated with greater odds of instability. With differences between marriage and cohabitation established, examining the variables in cohabitation that lead to violence would be useful.

Furthermore, because researchers do not understand the dynamics of violence associated with cohabiting unions (Brownridge & Halli, 2002), discovering the effectiveness of treatment within abuse shelters, specifically for cohabiting women, is important. Because violence levels and a multitude of other conditions are different between married and cohabiting individuals, treatment should take into account these differences to help individuals in cohabiting relationships.

The high levels of violence among cohabiting cou-

ples have encouraged researchers to understand this phenomenon. I identified several risk factors, including isolation from society, isolation from community resources, independent financial maintenance, lower relationship quality and happiness, higher levels of depression and alcoholism, youth, educational differences, employment issues, lower levels of income, and experiencing or witnessing intrapersonal violence as a child. Conducting both qualitative and quantitative research is vital to gaining a deeper understanding of cohabitation. Qualitative research should allow researchers to understand better the processes involved in cohabitation by gaining insight into individual decisions and perceived consequences of cohabiting, although quantitative research is necessary to generalizing results and implications. Such research will enable researchers to draw empirically-based conclusions to encourage social and political change.

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Special Features

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The Special Features section provides a forum for three types of essays that should be of considerable interest to students and faculty. Students can address a variety of issues for subsequent issues of the Journal's Special Features sections. At the end of this issue (pp. 68-70), you can read about those topics. Evaluating Controversial Issues, Conducting Psychological Analyses—Dramatic, and Conducting Psychological Analyses—Current Events. In this volume, students present psychological analyses of a current event and popular theatrical dramas.

Conducting Psychological Analyses—Current Events

Reactions to the Conviction and Death of a Pedophile Priest

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Sexual offenders are an increasing concern to the public, especially those sex offenders who target children. The increasing concern is evident in sexual predator laws and public notification laws that many states have passed during the last decade (Wrightsmen, Greene, Nietzel, & Fortune, 2002). One subpopulation of child sexual offenders that has gotten greater attention is the clergy, especially Catholic priests. The perpetuation of sexual offenses by Catholic priests is not a recent development. Historians can date some of the first occurrences to the 11th century (Isely, 1997). However, during more recent decades, the public has gained greater awareness of the issue. This awareness is because of a recent increase in public accusations brought against clergy for sexual offenses (Isely). Intense media coverage has scrutinized the lives of accused priests and, in many instances, revealed years of sexual victimization. One recent, highly publicized example is the case of deceased priest, John Geoghan. The case against Geoghan provides a salient example for examining several psychological issues, including procedural justice, restorative justice, and social norms and rules.

In February 2002, a jury convicted Geoghan of sexually assaulting a ten-year-old boy at a pool, and the court sentenced Geoghan to 10 years in the Boston state penitentiary (Burge, 2002). This conviction was not the first allegation against Geoghan. In 1986, Kurkjian and Pfeiffer (2002) stated that police investigated allegations from a young boy. At the time, Geoghan denied the allegations, and the investigation stopped because of apparent discrepancies. Carroll (2002) discovered that Geoghan was one of the worst ongoing pedophiles in the history of the Catholic Church, and for over 30 years, the bishop transferred Geoghan from one parish to another because of complaints from his parishioners. In 1998, however, as a result of several more allegations and questions surrounding Geoghan, the Catholic Church defrocked him. Some people believe that Geoghan continued to molest children sexually until his conviction in February 2002 (Kurkjian & Pfeiffer).

Members of the church, the general public, and Geoghan's victims were appalled at his actions. Not only were they angry with Geoghan, but they were also angry with the church for its failure to take effective steps against Geoghan (Burge, 2003). Procedural justice helps explain the feelings of betrayal experienced by both the victims and the public (Tyler, 2001). When the public or others perceive leaders of an organization as treating members of that organization unjustly, members feel betrayed and exhibit dissension. This outcome is because people base judgments and feelings toward an institution on whether or not the institution treated them fairly (Tyler, 2001). According to Tyler, DeGoey, and Smith (1996), if an authoritative organization takes an action to promote the welfare and fair treatment of its members, the members gain a greater sense of respect for the organization. When congregations or group members feel respect and autonomy, they are more likely to support the decisions of the group and promote the organization as a whole. Members of Geoghan's congregations, his victims, and the public did not receive procedural justice or a fair process until the intervention of the legal system. This lack of justice occurred because a perpetrator was free to continue his crimes.

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Finally, in 1998 when Geoghan was brought to court, his victims, congregations, and the public gained a sense of procedural justice they had not received from the Catholic Church. Tyler (2001) found that victims of crimes often gain a sense of procedural justice through the legal system. Victims and the public alike are willing to accept the decisions of the court if they think the procedure was fair, even if they do not agree with the outcome. In Geoghan's original conviction, procedural justice was ensured by a trial that was perceived to be fair and speedy.

Victims of crime often gain restorative justice through the conviction and sentencing of their offender (Tyler, 2001). Such outcomes allow victims to obtain closure and regain some of the confidence and self-esteem they may have lost by being the victim of a crime. Before authorities charged Geoghan with a crime, he was allowed to continue his sexual molestation of children while his victims lived in fear. His victims had to deal with the psychological turmoil of being the victims of a devastating and humiliating crime. Once the court found Geoghan guilty for his crimes and sentenced him to prison, his victims felt their perpetrator was finally brought to justice and held responsible for his crimes (Burge, 2003). Victims could gain a sense of restorative justice.

However, in August 2003 the Geoghan story gained more publicity when he was murdered while serving his sentence in Souza-Baranowski Correctional Center in Shirley, Massachusetts (Burge, 2003). Joseph Druce was Geoghan's fellow inmate. A person could argue that Druce was acting out his belief in a just world (Wrightsmen et al., 2002). This theory states that people get what they deserve in this world. If someone behaves positively, he will be treated well and rewarded. However, if someone acts maliciously, he will be punished. Druce stated that he was motivated by his own childhood sexual abuse and a desire to make Geoghan pay for his crime, along with saving future children from sexual abuse by pedophile priests (Murphy, 2003). Druce's actions illustrated the belief that a badly acting person should be punished to maintain a just world (Wrightsmen et al.). Although Druce thought Geoghan should be killed, many of Geoghan's victims did not feel the same way (Murphy, 2003).

Through Geoghan's death, many victims lost their sense of restorative justice. At Geoghan's conviction, reactions of his victims seemed appropriate and obvious. However, at his death, many victims cried and were in visible agony (Burge, 2003). The victims' behavior was

related to standard procedures in some jurisdictions that erase a conviction if the defendant dies in prison while appealing his conviction (Burge). Because of his death in prison, the legal system erased Geoghan's conviction. Geoghan's victims, congregations, and the public were livid and frustrated at the final outcome of the case (Burge). Although the procedure was fair, his victims did not experience restorative justice in the end. Many victims thought their justice was stripped away (Carroll, 2002). Once Druce killed Geoghan, victims and others thought their perpetrator escaped his judicial punishment. The victims, his congregations, and the public were no longer willing to accept the decision of the court as fair and just.

The anger and pain the victims portrayed was the result of Geoghan's violation of social norms and rules. Sexual offenders break social norms. Myers (2002) defines social norms as rules that govern established and expected behaviors of those in a given society. Social norms allow a society to function smoothly and coherently and personal values guide those norms. Bardi & Schwartz (2003) found that personal values and ideas that conflict with social norms and rules have either social or personal consequences. If someone breaks social norms, they cause disturbances and unrest among members of the society. Embarrassment, rejection, and even violence may result from the violation of social norms (Tse & Bond, 2003). More specifically, the leading social norms of a culture are based on roles that individuals in the society play. Individuals may play several roles throughout any given day (Parent, 2003). Each person must distinguish appropriate and inappropriate conduct while playing each role and interacting with persons of varying ages and social statuses. If individuals violate a role norm in a given society, they may be expelled from their position in the community (Hathaway & Atkinson, 2001). Most people hold priests to specific standards of conduct because of their role in society. The belief is that they are leaders of the church and examples of how to live upstanding and honest lives. If a priest does not follow the norms and expectations of his role as a priest, the Church may defrock him.

If a pedophile follows his desires rather than those of society, he violates social norms. He chooses to violate those norms because he finds greater personal benefit in his actions than in conforming to expected actions, despite social pressure and rejection (Bardi & Schwartz, 2003). In Western society, two adults can engage in an intimate relationship, but society deems it unacceptable for an adult male or female to engage in an intimate, sexual relationship with a child or adolescent. As a pedophile,

Geoghan repeatedly violated the social rules not only as an adult male in society, but also as a priest.

Geoghan's accusation, trial, conviction, and death created an extremely intense and emotionally heated media topic for several years. At the heart of this case are four psychological issues that the victims, congregations, public, and perpetrators experienced. The public, Geoghan's congregations, and his victims gained procedural justice through Geoghan's fair and speedy trial, in which the court finally heard the victims and allowed them to confront their perpetrator. The victims then received restorative justice through their perpetrator's conviction and prison sentence. Druce acted out his belief in a just world by killing Geoghan because he thought Geoghan was a malicious man and needed further punishment. Through Geoghan's death in prison, victims lost their sense of restorative justice. This case is wrought with emotions and psychological turmoil.

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Psychological Analyses – Dramatic

Dissociative Identity Disorder and *Primal Fear*

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Dissociative identity disorder is the rare development of two or more personalities within one person. The American Psychiatric Association's *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (2000) lists the following characteristics of dissociative identity disorder: the presence of two or more distinct identities or person-

ality states, control of the person's behavior recurrently taken by at least two of these identities or personality states, and an inability to recall important personal information that is too extensive to be explained by ordinary forgetfulness. These personalities have separate and distinct thoughts, memories, and behaviors (Confer & Ables, 1983). A person's separate identities may also represent different characteristics such as age, height, and ethnicity. Obviously, the individual displays these characteristics within each personality's mannerisms and individual descriptions. In 96% of dissociative identity disorder cases, the person experienced extreme trauma or abuse at an early age (Comer, 2001). Professionals think that this stress induces the splitting of a person's personality as a means of defense (Ross, 1989). Several psychological theories or perspectives offer compelling explanations for why this splitting occurs and how it offers protection to the sufferer. I will apply these views as well as an origin of abuse in the splitting of personalities to an analysis of the movie *Primal Fear*.

In *Primal Fear* (Lucchesi & Hublit, 1996), Edward Norton played the role of Aaron, a disadvantaged 19-year-old boy, authorities charged with the murder of a priest. Although Norton's character faked dissociative identity disorder to avoid legal conviction, his portrayal of the causes, symptoms, and overall appearance of the disorder was reasonably accurate.

As I mentioned earlier, the majority of people who suffer dissociative identity disorder experience extreme trauma, including sexual or physical abuse, in early childhood (Ross, 1989). Symptoms of dissociative identity disorder emerge at an early age, often immediately following or within a short time after the trauma or abuse. However, diagnosis of dissociative identity disorder does not usually occur until late adolescence or early adulthood. Aaron deceived his prison psychologist into believing he had multiple personalities. To make his claim more convincing, Aaron told the psychologist of early physical abuse and neglect, including sexual abuse, by a priest who had taken Aaron off the streets of Chicago and placed him in a Catholic boys' home. This sexual abuse consisted of the priest telling Aaron and another boy and girl what sexual acts to perform on each other while he videotaped them. This extensive abuse was what led the psychologist to believe that Aaron's disorder was real. Because Aaron's past had the potential to produce multiple personalities, the psychologist was convinced that Aaron's separate personality was legitimate.

Some individuals have used the splitting of personalities as a defense to against certain stressors that accom-

pany extreme trauma or abuse (Confer & Ables, 1983). Various theories have proposed explanations for why some people develop multiple personalities whereas others do not. Psychodynamic theorists believe multiple personalities arise from stressful events that cause the person to relieve anxiety by repressing certain information that the psyche deems harmful (Comer, 2001). These episodes of repression are not singular but continuous and extensive, serving to block out harmful experiences from conscious awareness. A psychodynamic explanation is that Aaron, in an attempt to avoid any stressor, pretended (in an attempt to avoid conviction) to become another person, thereby escaping from harm. This repression explains Aaron's repeated feigned blackouts, which occur when he appeared to be under stress from a potentially harmful situation.

Behavioral theorists believe dissociative identity disorder results from operant conditioning in which the person was rewarded by escaping into another personality (Comer, 2001). This escape reinforces the separate personalities so they become the typical responses to the stressors. In the behavioral view, Aaron achieved temporary relief from anxiety when he pretended to be Roy, his separate personality. Using Roy as a phony coping mechanism rewarded Aaron because he could escape potential stress or a harmful situation.

Many personalities can emerge in dissociative identity disorder, but there are three relatively common types: the host or original personality, the aggressive and protective personality, and the childlike or submissive personality (Ross, 1989). The movie *Primal Fear* portrayed two personalities, the aggressive and protective personality Roy, along with the host personality Aaron, who exhibited submissive characteristics. Aaron stuttered, lacked self-confidence, and showed reserved behavior. His body language was likewise introverted. Aaron kept his arms wrapped around his chest or folded his legs in a way that gave him the appearance of a frail and delicate child. Roy was the opposite of Aaron. He did not stutter, showed violent tendencies and repeatedly used swear words in his conversations. Roy also invaded other people's personal space when talking, often by forcing them against a wall. His domineering conduct was very intimidating, something that Aaron was not.

Clinicians can often initiate the switching of personalities through hypnotic suggestion (Confer & Ables, 1983), but transformation from one personality to another is most often prompted by a stressful event. The first time Aaron faked a personality switch to Roy was immediately after an argument with his lawyer, Martin Vail, (played by Richard

Gere). This argument was stressful to Aaron's psyche, causing him to escape and relieve his anxiety by calling Roy to protect him. Additionally, personality switching can be dramatic and is often marked by physical agitation or a headache (Ross, 1989). Aaron wrung his hands, tensed his shoulders, and banged his head against the wall before faking a switch to the personality of Roy. In one scene, the apparent progression from Aaron to Roy was clear. The following dialogue is from this scene in which Aaron and his lawyer were arguing; the scene vividly depicted the feigned translation from Aaron to Roy.

Gere: "You little f**k. You killed him didn't you? I want you to tell the truth. Don't lie to me."

Aaron: "No, no, no. I told you I never lied!" (He banged his head on the wall, held his head in his hands, and squeezed his eyes shut.)

Gere: "Tell me the truth. You killed him you little s**t, didn't you?"

Roy (to Aaron): "What the hell you want from me now? Quit your crying. I can't understand a go**amn word you're saying. You little sissy. You make me sick!"

Roy (to Vail): "Well looky here. Who the f**k are you...I got you now. You're the lawyer, ain't you. You sure f**ed this one up counselor. It sounds like they're going to shoot old Aaron so full of poison it'll come out his eyes!"

Vail: "Where is Aaron?"

Roy: "Aaron's crying off in some corner somewhere. You done scared him off! (Pushes Gere against a wall). You ever come in here and pull any of that tough-guy s**t on Aaron again I'll kick your f**ing a** to Sunday. You hear me?"

Vail: "I hear you. Aaron gets in trouble, he calls you. You're the man."

In that scene, Roy emerged for the first time in front of Aaron's lawyer. Such manifestation is typical of dissociative identity disorder. Vail placed an enormous amount of stress upon Aaron by forcefully and contemptuously accusing him of murder. In response to this stress, Aaron pretended unconsciously to escape his anxiety by becoming Roy, the characteristic protective personality. Aaron acted like Roy was emerging and faked an aggressive personality by calling Aaron a sissy and expressing disgust with Aaron's crying. Aaron's portrayal of Roy also took on a defensive role, telling Vail if he ever acted roughly with Aaron again, there would be negative consequences. Roy's feigned emergence was a clever ploy that convinced Vail and psychologist that Aaron was unconsciously relieving himself from a stressful situation and protecting himself by calling upon Roy.

Separate personalities in dissociative identity can have different relationships with each other. They can be mutually cognizant, when both are aware of the other; mutually amnesic, when both personalities are not aware of each other; or one-way cognizant, when only one personality knows about the other (Confer & Ables, 1983). The relationship between Aaron and Roy is an imitation of a one-way cognizant relationship. Roy supposedly knew about Aaron, but Aaron did not know about Roy. Roy described his awareness of Aaron when he humiliated Aaron for his behavior in the scene described earlier. Aaron maintained his ignorance about Roy by reporting periods of lost memory, which he termed "losing time." A display of that ignorance occurred when Aaron faked a dramatic switching from Roy back to Aaron, and Aaron again simulated extreme physical agitation and headache, questioning others around him about what just happened.

Dissociative identity disorder is a complicated condition that typically stems from extreme abuse or trauma experienced early in life (Ross, 1989). Aaron encountered this abuse and, therefore, used his experience to simulate dissociative identity disorder to avoid legal conviction. The creation of Roy, Aaron's aggressive personality, gave the appearance that Aaron needed a stronger personality to protect him against possible harmful stressors. Norton's portrayal of the childlike Aaron and the antagonistic Roy corresponds to typical personalities in dissociative identity disorder. Feigning extreme physical agitation at switching between the two seemed to verify Aaron's simulated multiple personalities and convinced his lawyer and psychologist that he had dissociative identity disorder. Overall, Aaron and Roy's faked representation of multiple personalities was relatively consistent with the causes, symptoms, and behavior associated with dissociative identity disorder.

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Swimfan: A Portrayal of Borderline Personality Disorder

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In the movie, *Swimfan* (Caracciolo, 2002), Ben Cronin was the star of the high school swim team, and he had a loyal girlfriend whom he loved. Everything in his life was going perfectly until a new girl in school, Madison Belle, came into his life. The two of them engaged in sexual relations. Ben thought that the event was just a one-time occurrence, but Madison thought it was more. Madison obsessed about their “relationship.” When Ben told her that there was nothing between them, Madison took drastic actions to keep the relationship alive. When those actions did not work, she resorted to anger and violent actions.

Through her actions, Madison appeared to meet the criteria for Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD). According to the American Psychiatric Association’s *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (1994), “Borderline personality disorder is a pervasive pattern of instability of interpersonal relationships, self-image, and affects, and marked impulsivity that begins by early adulthood and is present in a variety of contexts” (p. 650). In more general terms, Kaplan and Sadock (1988) state that “borderline patients stand on the border of neurosis and psychosis and are characterized by extraordinarily unstable affect, mood, behavior, object relationships, and self-image” (p. 438).

Borderline Personality Disorder

The diagnosis of disorders requires that the individual’s symptoms meet certain criteria. One such criterion for BPD is impulsivity in areas that are potentially self-damaging (*DSM-IV*). Although most people are impulsive to some extent, Madison’s impulsivity was pervasive in many aspects of her life. For example, Madison displayed impulsivity when she seduced Ben in the pool after he taught her how to swim. That behavior was self-damaging because Madison could have gotten pregnant, contacted an STD, or been in trouble with Ben’s girlfriend.

When Ben took Madison home, they agreed that they would not mention the seduction again. They also agreed to stay friends because Ben had a girlfriend, and Madison said that she had a man who was waiting for her in New

York City. However, the next day Ben got a flower from Madison. She started paging him on his beeper and leaving him e-mails with the name “swimfan85.” One day Ben arrived at schools and found 85 e-mails from her, one of which was a picture of her naked. She showed up at his house when Ben was not home and gave him some flowers for her birthday even though they had never met. Thus, Madison met another BPD criterion, which entails “frantic efforts to avoid real or imagined abandonment” (*DSM-IV*, p. 654).

When Ben arrived home and found Madison, he told her to leave and that they were not together. She replied that he told her he loved her when they were having sex. Ben said that he did not mean it and, suddenly, Madison’s mood shifted to anger. Interestingly, the next day she seemed to behave normally, and she acted as though nothing happened. Madison even started to “see” another member of Ben’s swim team. But, Madison was using this boy to get Ben’s attention. Madison met another criterion by sometimes behaving normally and at other times displaying anger and instability. Thus, she displayed “affective instability due to a marked reactivity of mood” (*DSM-IV*, p. 654).

Even though Madison was dating another boy, she still wanted Ben. Trying again to get his attention, she took more drastic action. She went to the hospital and switched some medications that Ben gave to patients. This action almost killed one man, and Ben got fired. Ben found Madison and told her to “knock this shit off” and that they were not and never would be together. This statement infuriated Madison, and she became more extreme in her actions against Ben. She told Ben’s girlfriend about what happened, and his girlfriend broke up with him.

Then Madison manipulated Ben’s urine sample to look as if it had steroids in it. Consequently, Ben was kicked off the team on the day that college scouts had come to watch him swim. Furthermore, Madison killed Ben’s teammate, and she framed Ben for this murder. Madison’s anger met another criterion, which consists of extreme and inappropriate anger that can occur if a “lover” is seen as neglectful or abandoning.

Ben decided to take matters into his own hands. He went to Madison’s room and found steroid pills, a volunteer card from the hospital, and a box full of newspaper clippings about him. He also found a box that had newspaper clippings about a man named Donnley who played baseball in New York City. Interestingly, we found out later that Madison was dating Donnley before she came

to Ben's school and that this man was the same one she talked about earlier in the movie. Ben found Donnley in the hospital on a breathing machine, which was the only thing keeping him alive. The nurse said that he had been in a terrible accident and that unlike Madison, he had not been wearing his seatbelt. Thus, a viewer could conclude that Madison and Donnley had a falling out, which made her angry. She might have taken drastic measures to keep the "relationship" alive as she had done with Ben. In this instance, Madison displayed "a pattern of unstable and intense interpersonal relationships characterized by alternating between extremes of idealization and devaluation" (*DSM-IV*, p. 654). Although Madison's relationships had gone well for a period of time, when the other person decided to "end it," Madison took excessive measures to maintain the "relationship." This statement is another criterion for BPD.

This movie is not without flaws in its portrayal of BPD. For example, the movie did not show Madison engaging in self-mutilating or suicidal behaviors, which often occurs in cases of BPD. Even with this minor flaw, the movie *Swimfan* effectively portrayed BPD in one of its main characters, Madison.

Fittingly, the movie portrayed a woman with BPD because 75% of the people diagnosed with this disorder are women (*DSM-IV*). The movie also accurately depicted Madison as meeting several criteria for this disorder. She acted impulsively in areas that could have been self-damaging, and she had marked reactivity of her mood. Madison made frantic efforts to avoid abandonment from her "relationship" with Ben. She repeatedly paged and e-mailed him and even showed up at his house. When he told her that there was nothing between them, she reacted with inappropriate anger and violence. She got Ben fired, kicked off the swim team, and framed for murder because her anger drove her to try to get Ben's attention and get even with him. She also broke up Ben's relationship with his girlfriend. Finally, Madison displayed a pattern of unstable relationships characterized by periods of idealization and devaluation. Madison's relationship with Donnley ended in tragedy, following the same pattern of love and resentment that characterized her "relationship" with Ben.

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Diagnostic Analyses of the Feature Film *28 Days*

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The feature film, *28 Days*, (Thomas, 2000) followed Gwen Cummings, played by Sandra Bullock, after the court ordered her to undergo a 28 day treatment at an institution for substance related problems. This film depicted individuals suffering from substance related problems as well as other psychological disorders.

The purpose of this article was to analyze and diagnose two characters from the film, *28 Days*, namely Gwen and her roommate Andrea. This article reviews the diagnostic criteria from the American Psychiatric Association's *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (2000) for the relevant disorders and then describes the symptomatology demonstrated by each character.

Our diagnostic impression was that Gwen suffered from alcohol and opioid dependence, whereas Andrea suffered from opioid dependence and borderline personality disorder. We will diagnosis each character according to the DSM-IV-TR. First, we will make a multi-axial diagnosis, and then explain the diagnoses for each character with examples of behavior portrayed in the movie.

Gwen Cummings was a single Caucasian woman in her thirties and employed as a writer in New York. Her addictions seemed to have finally caught up with her. After wrecking her sister's wedding by acting belligerently drunk, she drove a stolen limousine into a house while under the influence of narcotics and alcohol. Subsequently, the court ordered her to a rehabilitation facility for 28 days.

We offer the following multi-axial diagnosis for Gwen:

- Axis I 303.90 Alcohol Dependence with
Physiological Dependence
304.0 Opioid Dependence with Physiological
Dependence
- Axis II none
Axis III none
Axis IV Problems with primary support group, relations
with sister
Problems related to interaction with the legal
system, arrested for driving while intoxicated
causing significant property damage, sentenced
to twenty-eight days in a rehabilitation facility
or jail time
Axis V GAF=50 (on admission) GAF=85 (at discharge)

The DSM-IV-TR diagnostic criteria for substance dependence includes a pattern of substance use, leading to clinically significant impairment, as expressed by three (or more) of the following, occurring at any time in the same 12-month period: (1) tolerance, as defined by one or both of the following: (a) a need for greater amounts of the substance to reach intoxication or the desired effect, (b) decreased effect with continued use of equal amounts of the substance, (2) withdrawal, as expressed by either of the following: (a) the typical withdrawal syndrome for the substance, (b) the substance was taken to reduce or avoid withdrawal effects, (3) more of the substance was often taken over a longer time period than planned, (4) there was a constant desire or unproductive effort to reduce or control the substance use, (5) a great deal of time was spent in activities necessary to acquire, use, or recover from the substance, (6) significant social, professional, or leisure activities were sacrificed or reduced because of substance use, and/or (7) the substance use continues despite having an understanding of a continual or recurrent physical or psychological problem related to the substance.

Gwen's alcohol and drug use definitely caused significant social impairment. For example, while intoxicated at her sister's wedding, she gave a toast that was very condescending to the newlyweds, smashed the birthday cake while dancing wildly, stole a limousine to get another cake, and crashed into a house. Gwen suffered from many withdrawal symptoms (criterion 2) during her first several days in treatment. For example, we saw her experiencing hand shaking and tremors as a result of the cessation of these substances, alcohol and Vicodin (a narcotic analgesic).

She had a hard time sleeping, vomited a great deal, and finally passed out in the bathroom. During this withdrawal phase, she manifested anxiety by her statement, "What kind of a person jumps out of her window because she just can't sit still?" This statement referred to a scene in which she impulsively took Vicodin when she was upset and threw it out the window. She quickly decided to retrieve the Vicodin by climbing out the window, falling, and spraining her ankle.

Gwen's attempt to stay sober while at the facility proved unsuccessful, displaying criterion 4, when she snuck out of the hospital with her boyfriend, Jasper, and returned intoxicated. The film depicted the enormous amount of time Gwen spent drinking alcohol, such as when she was partying one night and during a trip to her sister's wedding the next morning (criterion 5). Further, she took a drink or two getting out of bed and even held a beer bottle as she ran out of her apartment to catch the train. Her motivation for having another beer in the morning may have been to avoid withdrawal, providing more evidence of criterion 2b. Her comment "Thank God for bar cars!" while on the train and her behavior of taking a swig of wine as soon as she arrived at the wedding further demonstrated the amount of time spent indulging alcohol. That her substance use impaired her social activities, such as the destruction of her sister's wedding ceremony, demonstrated criterion 6. Gwen thus met four of the diagnostic criteria for Alcohol and Opioid Dependence.

Andrea, played by Azura Skye, was a single Caucasian woman and Gwen's roommate at the rehabilitation center. She was 17 years old and recovering from long-term heroin addiction. She had been hospitalized many times for her problems with heroin, but she had other psychiatric problems, possibly borderline personality disorder. The support from her family seemed minimal. Andrea thought she embarrassed her mother, the only family member mentioned in the film. We offer the following diagnosis for Andrea:

- Axis I 304.00 opioid dependence with physiological
dependence
Axis II 301.83 borderline personality disorder (provisional)
Axis III none
Axis IV Problems with primary support group, relations
with mother, removal from home
Axis V GAF=65

We listed the diagnostic criteria for opioid dependence earlier in the description of Gwen's substance

dependence. Andrea's use of heroin was obviously destructive as she gave numerous statements about her many previous hospitalizations. We inferred from the sheer amount of time spent in treatment that Andrea's social and recreational activities were severely impacted, indicating significant psychosocial impairment. Andrea's experiences of withdrawal symptoms, such as her drug cravings with which she coped by eating chocolate, illustrated criterion 2. Her fatal overdose toward the end of the movie demonstrated that she took more drugs than she intended (criterion 3). The many unsuccessful attempts to quit drugs, demonstrated by her numerous rehabilitations, illustrated criterion 4. Because she was only 17 years old and had spent a considerable amount of time on her drug problem, Andrea had been unable to attend school, indicating criterion 6.

The definition for borderline personality is a persistent pattern of instability of interpersonal relationships, sense of self and affect, and impulsivity beginning by early adulthood and observed in a variety of contexts, as indicated by five (or more) of the following: (1) attempts to avoid real or perceived abandonment, (2) intense and unstable relationships with fluctuating extremes of idealization and devaluation, (3) identity disturbance demonstrated by a markedly unstable self-image, (4) potentially self-damaging impulsivity (5) repeated suicidal actions or self-mutilation, (6) extreme emotional instability with marked mood reactivity (7) persistent feelings of emptiness, (8) intense and inappropriate anger or angry outbursts, and/or (9) episodes of stress-related paranoia or dissociative symptoms (APA, 2000).

Andrea related her own life to a soap opera character, thereby illustrating an unstable self-image and evidence for criterion 3. Her substance abuse demonstrated one aspect of self-damaging impulsive behavior (criterion 4). Her recurrent self-mutilation, criterion 5, was obvious by her self-cutting incident and the many scars on her legs. This cutting also demonstrated her emotional instability, criterion 6, because she engaged in this behavior when her mother did not come to visit her in the hospital, and she stated, "It feels better...than everything else" (Thomas, 2000). Also, Andrea's affect was dysphoric for the two-day period before her discharge. Even when other patients put on a play for her, Andrea barely managed a smile. When Gwen questioned why she was packing two days early, Andrea responded with inappropriate anger, exhibiting criterion 8. Although Andrea had otherwise been very open and kind to Gwen, this reaction may have been simply the inability to control her emotions. Although all symptoms were indicative of borderline personality disorder, a formal diagnosis would require addi-

tional information to determine that the behavior was part of a pervasive pattern. Thus, we provided a provisional diagnosis of borderline personality disorder.

The movie *28 Days* accurately portrayed characteristic symptoms of several DSM-IV-TR disorders and provided excellent examples to analyze and diagnose. Gwen displayed symptoms of both alcohol and opioid dependence. Andrea displayed symptoms of opioid dependence and borderline personality disorder. This movie may help educate the public about substance dependence and mental illness. The movie also provided insight into the hardships and struggles of individuals dealing with such issues.

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Paranoid Schizophrenia in the Movie *Donnie Darko*

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According to Wedding and Boyd (1997), "Films may be especially important in influencing the public perception of mental illness because many people were relatively uninformed about the problems of people with mental disorders, and the media tend to be especially effective in shaping opinion in those situations in which strong opinions were not already held" (p. 2). Films can offer a unique opportunity to see realistic manifestations of psychiatric disorders, apply models of psychopathology, and suggest modes of treatment (Fleming, Piedmont, & Hiam, 1990). Psychological thrillers, such as *Donnie Darko*, dis-

play dramatic and memorable examples of psychological disorders and in this case paranoid schizophrenia.

The movie *Donnie Darko* explored the mind and life of a teenage boy, who believed that the world was going to end in 28 days, 6 hours, 14 minutes, and 12 seconds. A man dressed in a rabbit suit appeared to Donnie and made several demands. This giant rabbit's name was Frank. Donnie had to go through day-to-day life dealing with Frank. Donnie found himself making difficult decisions each time Frank told him to do something unthinkable. The actions Donnie took affected his family, friends, and school associates. In the movie, Donnie visited a therapist who diagnosed his problem as schizophrenia. From watching the movie and observing Donnie's actions, I believe that Donnie was a paranoid schizophrenic as indicated by his many symptoms that were apparent throughout the movie.

According to American Psychiatric Association's *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual for Mental Disorders* (2000), paranoid schizophrenia is defined as "a preoccupation with delusions or frequent hallucinations..." (p. 314). For a diagnosis of paranoid schizophrenia, a person must exhibit two or more positive symptoms from the following list: hallucinations, delusions, unusual affects and disorganized speech or behavior. Donnie had the positive symptoms of hallucinations and delusions. Delusions are false beliefs, which can either be plausible or bizarre. In Donnie's case, his delusions were quite bizarre, meaning the belief was impossible or could not have happen. Donnie believed a person could time travel because the giant rabbit, Frank, appeared to have done so. Also, Donnie believed he was capable of time travel through portals or wormholes. Professionals could classify his false beliefs as delusions of grandeur because no one has been able to time travel. Other illustrations of delusions are individuals' beliefs that they are great inventors, religious saviors, or other specially empowered persons (Comer, 2001).

Hallucinations are perceptions that occur in the absence of external stimuli (Comer, 2001). Donnie displayed the symptom of hallucinations. Toward the beginning of the movie, Donnie began to sleepwalk. He went outside, and he saw Frank, the giant rabbit who was a figment of his imagination. The audience could tell when Donnie saw Frank because Donnie ceased what he was doing and fell into a trance-like state.

Another visual hallucination Donnie had was the presence of mercury-like blobs that stretch out of people's chests, including his own. He believed these objects

lead them to satisfy whatever kinds of desires they were having at that time. For example, Donnie was watching a football game with his father, and all of a sudden, he saw a blob stretch out of his father's chest toward the kitchen. His father stood up and walked into the kitchen to grab a beer from the refrigerator to satisfy his thirst. Then, Donnie had a blob come out of his chest, but it lead him upstairs to his parents' closet. Donnie felt as if he had to follow the blob to the gun in his father's shoebox. Towards the end of the movie, Donnie used the gun to kill Frank.

Frank told Donnie to do many outrageous stunts, which met the definition of command hallucination. For example, Donnie was walking home from school when he found a wallet on the sidewalk. While looking inside the wallet, Donnie realized it was Jim Cunningham's wallet. Cunningham was a popular author who lived in Donnie's community. He used the information in the wallet and found where Cunningham lived. Frank said to Donnie, "You know where he lives now," insisting that Donnie go and damage Cunningham's residence. Donnie despised the teachings and beliefs that Cunningham expressed in his writings. He thought that the man had the whole community brainwashed into thinking its problems would be solved if they placed their problems into the categories of fear or love. Cunningham's theory was even taught at Donnie's school. One day, Donnie had to do an in-class assignment, reading a scenario and placing it into the correct category, fear or love. Donnie could not complete the task because he believed life was not simple enough to place all your problems into only one of two categories. He became aggressive and argumentative toward his teacher and told her to shove the book up her anus.

According to *DSM-IV-TR* (2000), "associated features of paranoid type include anxiety, anger, aloofness, and argumentativeness" (p. 314). Donnie displayed all these qualities in the following scene. Donnie's teacher was obviously upset and sent him to the principal's office. This behavior not only affected his teacher, but his mother as well. When she came to the parent conference to discuss her son's behavior and heard about the things he did, she became aware that her child had changed. From her facial expressions, viewers could conclude that she realized Donnie had a problem, and the realization hurt her deeply. Donnie's schizophrenic behavior continued at an assembly in his school where the guest speaker was Cunningham. At the assembly, Donnie thought that students and faculty seemed brainwashed during the question and answer session; Donnie expressed his opinion to bring everyone back to reality. He stepped to the microphone and began to insult violently all those who

asked questions during the assembly. His conversational tone was aggressive and inappropriate. Donnie portrayed a “formal quality or extreme intensity in interpersonal interactions” (DSM-IV, p. 314). He displayed intense feelings of hate with his comments directed toward Cunningham. He not only embarrassed Cunningham, but also made him feel as though his ideas were false and unbelievable.

Later that night, Donnie took Gretchen to the movies. At the movie, Gretchen fell asleep, and Donnie fell into his trance-like state in which Frank appeared. Frank showed Donnie a portal for time travel (another hallucination) on the movie screen. Frank replaced the movie with a picture of Cunningham’s house, telling Donnie to: “Burn it down...”. Donnie left the theater and burned down the house. He returned to the theater where Gretchen was still asleep. The whole community was affected indirectly by Donnie’s schizophrenic action because everyone adored Cunningham. When Donnie burned down Cunningham’s house, no one knew Donnie had done it. Donnie obviously needed help with his schizophrenia.

There were many treatments available to help him. Treatments for Donnie included those with biological and psychodynamic perspectives. From the biological point of view, Donnie’s therapists prescribed medications, but they did not specify what type. His therapist most likely was prescribing medications such as thiorazine, haldol, risperidone, or clozaril. These medications are all antipsychotic drugs that should have reduced his symptoms. The most effective medications are the newer neuroleptics risperidone and clozaril. These medications are best because they have fewer motor coordination side effects. The old neuroleptics, haldol and mellaril, cause tardive dyskinesia, which have extrapyramidal effects that some patients exhibit after they have taken traditional antipsychotic drugs for an extended time (Comer, 2001).

From the psychodynamic treatment perspective, a professional may use hypnosis to place the client into a suggestible state. Donnie’s therapist also used this approach. Hypnosis was not accepted as the most effective treatment because of the high suggestibility apparent in the patient. In Donnie’s case, hypnosis would have been ineffective because of a possible conflict in suggestions from his therapist and his delusional friend Frank. This conflict could have led Donnie to act more aggressively and injure or kill himself. For example, in the movie, the therapist attempted to hypnotize Donnie, and Donnie began fondling himself while lying on her couch. Then, he began to talk in a sexually inappropriate manner

to his therapist, leading to various emotional states such as anger and sadness.

In summary the character, *Donnie Darko*, provided dramatic case study examples of a person with schizophrenia, paranoid type, with displays of positive symptoms throughout the movie. Because “Nothing conveys information or evokes emotion quite as clearly as our visual sense” (Wedding & Boyd, p. 4), movies provide provocative case study examples; however, sometimes movies give an overly simplistic or complicated view of mental illness. “Being able to incorporate feature films about mental illnesses into the learning process in abnormal psychology significantly add to the learning experience” (Nissim-Sabbat, p. 122).

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Adapting to Social Phobia: The Psychopathology of Adaptation

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If you were a critically acclaimed screenwriter touted as one of the most innovative minds in Hollywood, would you be on top of the world? Not necessarily, if you suffered from social phobia. No matter how talented you are, writing can be one of the most excruciatingly frustrating activities you could possibly undertake. This predicament confronted the writer Charlie Kaufman who

Nicholas Cage portrayed in the movie, *Adaptation* (Kaufman, Saraf, & Jones, 2003). Producers commissioned Charlie to follow a successful screenplay with a film adaptation of the novel *The Orchid Thief*. However, because of Charlie's social phobia, his every action was under a self-imposed microscope.

Charlie's affliction was a social phobia, which is a type of anxiety disorder distinguished by panic in situations in which individuals perform a task while others are watching or evaluating (American Psychiatric Association's *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, 2000). Because of the panic produced by the fear of evaluation, sufferers of social phobia are constantly self-conscious and worried about embarrassing themselves, and they often aspire towards perfection. Yet the state of perfection, even when clearly defined, is virtually impossible to achieve.

Early in the film, these characteristics of the condition were apparent in Charlie, as he pitched his ideas for the adaptation to a representative of the film studio. He wanted the project to be flawless, and as a result, he stammered and sweated and thought to himself that his designs for the movie was not well received. The audience knows, however, that the representative was in awe of Charlie and fascinated by his thoughts about the movie. However Charlie did not see the representative's reaction because for the person suffering from social phobia, perfection is an unreasonable, outwardly defined phenomenon that is often subjective, rarely constant and therefore an unattainable goal.

Sufferers of social phobia tend to be single because they lack the courage to present themselves openly to other people because they fear embarrassment (Barlow & Durand, 2002). When they attempt dating, because of fear of rejection, they often struggle tending to freeze when attempting an amorous advance. Charlie exhibited that reaction when he attempted to form a relationship with a young lady. He lacked the courage to ask her on a formal date despite the fact that she liked him and flirtatiously encouraged him. But, Charlie said all the wrong things, sweated profusely and was paralyzed by fear when he had an opportunity to kiss her. "I'm such a chicken," he admonished himself as he watched her walk alone to her front door. "I should get out of the car and go to her right now and kiss her." But he did not, because he could not.

Charlie was convinced that he was not worthy of this girl. His incessant self-judging produced poor self-esteem. Examples of that reaction were illustrated in countless diatribes that Charlie inflicted on himself

throughout the movie. At one time in the movie, he decided to write himself into the script because the only thing about which he felt confident in really knowing was himself. He began, "We open on Charlie Kaufman ...fat, old, bald, repulsive, sitting in a Hollywood restaurant...repugnant, ridiculous..." This statement reflected Charlie's opinion about himself, or more pointedly, the opinion he was sure others had about him.

Charlie's agony was made all the more infuriating because he had a twin brother, Donald (also played by Cage), who lived in the same house with him and was his exact opposite. Donald was easy-going and was never intimidated by anything. On a whim, Donald decided he too could write a screenplay, and much to Charlie's dismay, Donald reveled in the process, inadvertently emphasizing Charlie's inadequacy. Donald also excelled with women as he effortlessly met and subsequently had a healthy relationship with a woman, while Charlie struggled to approach women. This juxtaposition of characters gave poignant insight into the life struggle of someone with social phobia. Charlie saw himself as repugnant in the eyes of society, whereas his twin brother, who looked just like him, had a positive self-image and enjoyed life.

Unlike his brother, Charlie strained ferociously with his passion. "I'm Ourobours," stated Charlie during a bout of unproductive writing as he equated himself to the mythological snake symbol that perpetually ate its own tail. This symbol is an apt comparison for a person who has social phobia in relation to writing because every written word has extra importance. The writer judges his work in relationship to the perceived cynical opinion of others. Therefore, although writing was a passion and livelihood for Charlie, it was also a self-deprecating procedure in which creation was always met with irrational self-criticism. Ideas were rejected as inadequate and then recycled creating a pattern in which progress was cyclical instead of forward.

The tumult of writing became so intense that Charlie decided he must meet and talk to Susan Orlean, the author of *The Orchid Thief*. He had avoided this meeting because of the abject terror that the phobia produced. Charlie actually ran out of a restaurant nervous and perspiring when informed that Susan was present. But he mustered courage for the sake of his art and braved the high-rise building where she worked. He took an elevator to her floor but could not get off and was just about to leave when Susan entered the elevator. Charlie physically and emotionally shrunk in the corner in a paralyzed state. Despite the importance of his writing, he absolutely could not approach this woman because he feared

making a bad impression. In this example, as with the kissing scene, he exhibited actual panic as his sympathetic nervous system reacted and a flight or fight reaction occurred (Barlow & Durand, 2002). He fled the situation by emotionally retreating within himself. Because of Charlie's social ineptness, he had to enlist Donald to interview Susan.

Based on Donald's interview, the brothers concluded that Susan was hiding something, and they decided to spy on her. They discovered that the married author was having an affair with the subject of her book and was livid when she caught Charlie outside her window. She chased the brothers into a swamp with intent to kill. As Charlie and Donald slumped together behind a log and were scared for their lives, an insightful scene into the development of the twins occurred. Perhaps thinking they were about to die, Charlie told Donald how much he admired him and his ability to easily adapt to any given situation. In contrast, he lamented, "I spent my whole life paralyzed, worrying about what people think of me."

Charlie told Donald that in high school he secretly witnessed Donald talking to a girl on whom Donald had a crush. She was flirting and being very nice. But when Donald left, Charlie heard her making fun and mocking Donald to another girl. Charlie said the comments really hurt him. "It was like they were laughing at me." To Charlie's surprise, Donald had heard the girl making fun of him as well, but his reaction was, "That was her business, not mine... You are what you love, not what loves you." The twin brothers had two very different reactions to the same situation. Donald valued his own perspective, whereas Charlie embraced the opinion of that girl and embodied it in his psyche, which quite possibly brought on his social phobia (Barlow & Durand, 2002).

After Donald's story was revealed to Charlie, Charlie smiled at his brother as a tear rolled down his face and he said, "Thank you." This revelation was cathartic to Charlie because he took it to heart and mind. He repeated his new mantra, "You are what you love, not what loves you." Charlie escaped the swamp and was able to notify the authorities about Susan's murder attempt. He resumed his previous life but was changed by the experience. At the movie's end, Charlie was not only able to approach the girl who previously terrified him but able to kiss her and declare his love. Although the closing scene was the product of Hollywood, this outcome may lend credence to the power of the mind as a curing agent. But realistically, a more likelihood ending would entail a therapy that exposed the patient to social situations to train the psyche that no imminent danger was present.

Cognitive behavioral group therapy is a treatment in which groups of patients rehearse or role-play their socially phobic situations in front of each other to reduce the unreasonable fear associated with the stimulus (Barlow & Durand, 2002). As Donald's signature song in the movie suggested, people with social phobia can find relief as Charlie ultimately did—to live "Happy Together."

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Ordinary People:

A Look at Posttraumatic Stress, Major Depressive, and Narcissistic Personality Disorders

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Professionals have shown how accurate diagnostic portrayals of psychiatric disorders can be of assistance in several areas of the behavioral health field. Movies can be a useful tool in assisting to educate clients, families, and undergraduate psychology students about mental disorders. For example, sometimes instructors assign students in undergraduate psychology courses to watch motion pictures that portray characters with mental illness to help illustrate the disorders that they are learning about in class. Wedding and Niemiec (2003) showed how movies could be useful as adjunctive material in therapy. In particular, Duncan, Beck, and Granum (1986) discussed how the movie, *Ordinary People* (Redford & Schwary, 1980), was useful to prepare adolescents for discharge from residential treatment. The use of the movie during group therapy sessions assisted adolescents in preparing for and anticipating challenges they could expect to face after

leaving the residential facility, as well as helping to create an open environment to discuss their concerns about those challenges.

Distributors released *Ordinary People* in 1980, and it won an Oscar for Best Picture. The film is about an upper-middle class family, the Jarretts, who were dealing with the death of one of their teenage sons. The movie is an excellent portrayal of several individuals whose problems were so significant that they met diagnostic criteria for psychiatric disorders according to the American Psychiatric Association's *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (2000). Mental health professionals use the DSM-IV-TR as the primary reference to diagnose psychiatric or psychological disorders. The current article examines the movie from the context of abnormal psychology by providing a diagnostic evaluation of two characters from the movie, Conrad and Beth.

The movie focused on the lives and relationships of the characters Conrad (Timothy Hutton), his mother Beth (Mary Tyler Moore), his father Calvin (Donald Sutherland), and Calvin's therapist Dr. Berger (Judd Hirsch). Buck, the family's oldest son, drowned in a sailing accident; Buck and Conrad were caught on a lake in the midst of a squall. We enter the lives of the Jarretts about a year after the accident and a month and a half after staff released Conrad from a psychiatric hospital following a suicide attempt.

Conrad appears to meet DSM-IV-TR criteria for posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and major depressive disorder (MDD). The DSM-IV-TR diagnostic criteria for PTSD require that (Criterion A) an individual has experienced or witnessed a traumatic event of the worst order and that his or her immediate response was one of intense fear, helplessness, or horror. Next, the individual persistently re-experiences the traumatic event (Criterion B) in one or more ways. For example, the person experiences intrusive recollections or recurrent distressing dreams. The third symptom (Criterion C) is the persistent avoidance of stimuli associated with the trauma (e.g., efforts to avoid thoughts, feelings, or people associated with the trauma) and numbing of general responsiveness, such as feelings of detachment from others or diminished interest in significant activities. Three or more symptoms of avoidance/numbing must be present to meet Criterion C. The final symptom cluster (Criterion D) is the presence of persistent symptoms of increased physiological arousal, such as difficulty falling or staying asleep and outbursts of anger, with two or more of these symptoms required. These symptoms of PTSD must be present for

at least one month and cause clinically significant distress or psychosocial impairment.

Conrad displayed many diagnostic criteria that are characteristic of PTSD. The initial criterion was his exposure to a traumatic event, witnessing the death of his older brother. Conrad's initial reaction to the event was primarily helplessness in not being able to stop it from happening. During the accident, Conrad yelled for his brother to hold on and when his brother disappeared into the water, Conrad began to scream and cry for him. Throughout the movie, Conrad persistently re-experienced this traumatic event through recurrent, distressing dreams of the boating accident. For example, early in the movie Conrad woke in a cold sweat after dreaming of the squall and the boat overturning.

Conrad also demonstrated several symptoms of avoidance and numbing of general responsiveness (Criterion C). He felt detached from his parents, mostly his mother; he said that he "can't talk to her," though his detachment might be exacerbated by his mother's self-centered style, which we discuss. Further, he appeared to avoid attempts by his father to interact, such as when his father entered his room in an attempt to discuss how Conrad was doing, as well as another attempt when his father questioned him about whether he had contacted the therapist recommended by the hospital. Conrad felt estranged from his friends because they reminded him of Buck and because of his recent inpatient hospitalization experience. He did not think that they could relate to him, as reflected in one scene in which he avoided interaction with them at a diner; they were singing and joyful and attempting, unsuccessfully, to include Conrad. Conrad also displayed a restricted range of affect. In one session with Dr. Berger, he explained that he was "just wasting time today...I'm not going to feel anything." During Calvin's therapy session with Dr. Berger, we learned that Conrad did not cry at Buck's funeral. Conrad said that after Buck's death he was angry with himself because he had not felt anything, and he believed that he should have felt something.

Conrad also showed avoidance of any people, thoughts, or feelings that reminded him of the accident. He alienated himself from his friends, whom he shared with Buck. During the movie, one of Buck's close friends confronted him and said, "I don't know why you want to be in this alone...I miss him, too...Connie, the three of us were best friends." Conrad replied by stating, "I can't help it. It hurts too much to be around you."

Finally, Conrad experienced symptoms of increased

physiological arousal (Criterion D), including difficulty falling or staying asleep and angry outbursts. From our first introduction to Conrad, he displayed a disheveled appearance and dark circles under his eyes. Several times the movie showed Conrad reading books in the middle of the night. Conrad's insomnia appeared to be a function of his nightmares of Buck's death. In addition, Conrad often displayed angry outbursts. For example, Conrad became angry and yelled at a friend when the friend confronted him about quitting swimming. In another instance, another friend provoked Conrad, and Conrad punched him. In yet another scene, he had an angry outburst and yelled at his father while his father was taking family pictures.

The DSM-IV-TR criterion for MDD is the presence of one or more major depressive episodes, during which the person must exhibit five or more symptoms, including either a depressed mood most of the day and/or markedly diminished interest or pleasure in all, or almost all, activities. Along with either of these first two mandatory symptoms, the individual must show significant weight loss or gain when not dieting or significant decrease or increase in appetite, insomnia or hypersomnia, psychomotor agitation or retardation, fatigue or loss of energy, feelings of worthlessness or excessive or inappropriate guilt, problems with concentration, or suicidal ideation or a suicide attempt. These symptoms must be present most of the day, nearly every day, for at least two weeks and cause clinically significant distress or psychosocial impairment. Finally, the individual must not have a history of any symptoms of a bipolar disorder such as a manic episode.

Conrad displays the majority of symptoms for MDD throughout the movie. As noted earlier, the movie started soon after Conrad had made a suicide attempt by slitting his wrists. He displayed both key symptoms of MDD throughout the film. He showed a generally depressed mood at all times, even during times of positive events. For example, when he met a girl named Jeannine, he seemed excited about their encounters together. However, at a later time in the movie when he was on a date with her, he continued to look sullen and turned a fun moment of friends singing at an ice cream shop into anger at her for enjoying herself. In addition, Conrad displayed a significant loss of interest and pleasure from his normal activities. He no longer enjoyed hanging out with his friends and felt as though he could not talk with them. He showed a lack of interest in swimming, which he had previously enjoyed. At one time, the swim coach confronted him and stated, "I don't see you having fun out there." Then the coach asked Conrad if he was having

fun, to which Conrad simply replied, "I guess." Later in the film when Conrad quit swimming, he explained to his friend that he quit because "swimming is a bore."

Throughout the film, Conrad displayed signs of significant loss of appetite. This behavior was depicted when we first met Conrad, and he announced at breakfast that he was "not hungry," even after his mother made his favorite meal of French toast. In several scenes at a diner, in which others around him were eating, Conrad was not. Conrad also displayed signs of psychomotor agitation. For example, during his first visit with his psychiatrist, Dr. Berger, Conrad could not seem to sit still and kept shaking his legs and moving. In another session with Dr. Berger, he proclaimed, "I feel so jumpy." Conrad was consistently agitated throughout his sessions, even after he became comfortable talking with Dr. Berger. Conrad also displayed symptoms of excessive guilt about his survival from the accident and his brother's death. He explained to Dr. Berger how he felt that he should have been the one to drown and that if he had only held on a little tighter to his brother then he never would have died. Thus, based on Conrad's symptoms and the significant distress and impairment that his symptoms caused, along with the lack of history or presence of symptoms of a bipolar disorder (e.g., a manic episode), he seemed to meet criteria for PTSD and MDD. PTSD is often comorbid with major depressive disorder.

Conrad's mother, Beth, seemed to meet the criteria for narcissistic personality disorder. Though we only met Beth after Buck's death, her behaviors were characterological in nature and not just a reaction to her son's death. None of the other characters seemed surprised by her behaviors, suggesting that they were accustomed to seeing her display such behaviors. Individuals with narcissistic personality disorder display a pervasive pattern of grandiosity, the need for admiration, and lack of empathy for others. Specifically, the diagnosis requires that an individual display five or more of the following: a grandiose sense of self-importance, a preoccupation with fantasies of unlimited success, power, brilliance, beauty, or ideal love, belief of being 'special' or unique, requires excessive admiration, sense of entitlement, interpersonally exploitative, lacks empathy, envious of others or believes that others are envious of him or her, and/or arrogant or haughty behaviors.

Beth had a grandiose sense of self-importance and self-centeredness, as well as a sense of entitlement. An example was when she discussed with Calvin the possibility of going to London for Christmas. When he asked

her why she wanted to interrupt Conrad's therapy, she replied, "Because I want to get away." Her reply did not take into account how her action will affect others in her family. She felt that because of all the things that had happened to her family (and to her), she was entitled to an international vacation even though it might be harmful to her son. She also displayed a sense of self-importance when she found out from a friend that Conrad quit the swim team a month before and exclaimed, "No, that was meant for me. Calvin...it's really important to hurt me isn't it?" She attributed situations solely to how they affected her. Calvin verbalized this interpretation during a visit to Texas, stating, "Can't you see things except in terms of how it affects you?" This criticism caused her to become extremely angry and defensive.

Beth showed no affection toward Calvin, unless it was in an attempt to get something that she wanted (exploitative in interpersonal relationships), such as Christmas in London or going to Texas for New Year's. When trying to persuade Calvin to allow them to go to London for Christmas, she became quite flirtatious and sat on his lap, staring at him intently, obviously trying to use seduction as a tool to gain what she wanted from him. After Christmas, which was not spent in London, she wanted to go to Texas for New Year's without Conrad, so that she could get away for awhile, but she used her relationship with Calvin as an excuse to convince him to go. To get what she wanted, Beth played on his feeling that they needed to spend more time together

Beth also demonstrated significant need for admiration. Illustrations were primarily in her behaviors during a party with friends. When approaching the party, she instructed Calvin to "Smile and remember: not too many martinis." During the party, she became conscious of Calvin discussing Conrad's therapy with one of their friends, and she interrupted and actively changed the subject. Afterward, she confronted Calvin and asked why he was discussing the therapy. She explained her reasoning for being angry by saying, "I don't think people hear that type of thing very easily...I think it is a very private matter." She was very conscious about what others thought about her and made a point to discuss only topics that gained responses of admiration from others.

Beth lacked empathy for others, but especially for Conrad. On several occasions, Conrad attempted to have serious discussions with her, but she changed the subject and on one occasion actually just walked away from him. We also learned that Beth had not visited Conrad in the hospital. Near the end of the movie, Conrad hugged Beth; she did not react, and instead she just stared into

space and did not return the hug. She also lacked empathy for Calvin throughout the movie and most noticeably toward the end of the film when Calvin clearly explained how Beth's actions made him feel. The examples discussed earlier regarding Beth's reactions to going to London for Christmas and Conrad's quitting the swim team also showed her lack of empathy with the feelings and needs of others.

Although all of the symptoms discussed earlier are indicative of those required to meet a diagnosis of narcissistic personality disorder, to make a formal diagnosis of Beth would require additional information to determine whether her behaviors were part of a pervasive pattern. Therefore, we offer a provisional diagnosis of narcissistic personality disorder for Beth.

Ordinary People is a film filled with accurate diagnostic portrayals of several DSM-IV-TR disorders, including posttraumatic stress disorder, major depressive disorder, and narcissistic personality disorder. The film examined Conrad, who was a strong teenager struggling with his disorders and eventually began to improve with the help of his therapist, Dr. Berger. This accurate portrayal has assisted in preparing adolescents to face their anticipated discharge from residential treatment (Duncan et al., 1986). On the other hand, Beth showed no improvement and did not appear to have insight into how her behavior affected Conrad or Calvin, which is a realistic depiction of an individual with narcissistic personality disorder. In the end, these features of her personality ruined her marriage and the connection to her family. Overall, accurate portrayals of these disorders can be useful in educating not only clients about mental disorders but undergraduate psychology majors as well.

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Psychologically Speaking: Using Research to Change Lives: An Interview with Elizabeth Loftus

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Dr. Elizabeth Loftus originally wanted to be a high school math teacher but began to like psychology after she took a class at UCLA. During her graduate studies at Stanford, she became interested in long-term memory. Loftus spent many years at the University of Washington and now is a Distinguished Professor at the University of California, Irvine. She is best known for her work with false memory. She has shown that it is possible to induce false memories in people and that these memories become more real as time goes on. She has extended her research into eyewitness testimony and repressed memories.

*Loftus received the Distinguished Contribution Award from the American Academy of Forensic Psychology. She has redefined the meaning of memories, although there are some people who wish that she had not. Her book *Eyewitness Testimony*, winner of the National Media Award, is a classic text among students and lawyers. *The Myth of Repressed Memory*, a best seller written with Katherine Ketcham, has proven very influential among lawyers, therapists, and the media. *The Review of General Psychology* named her as one of the top 100 psychologists of the 20th century; she was the highest ranking woman on the list. She was recipient of the 2003 Distinguished Scientific Award for the Application of Psychology from the American Psychological Association and the William James Fellow Award from the American Psychological Society. In addition to her many honors, she regularly receives hate mail and has at times had to hire security guards to protect her.*

Loftus has acted as an expert witness in over 200 trials, several of them high profile. From the McMartin Preschool molestation case to allegations surrounding pop star Michael Jackson, to the wave of recovered memories swamping the Catholic Church, to the prosecution of Martha Stewart, she has been a contrary voice challenging the purity of remembered truth. Loftus ranks among the 25 psychologists most frequently cited in introductory psychology textbooks, has published more than 250 journal articles, and is the author of 20 books, some in third and fifth editions and many translated into other languages.

Miller: The *Journal of Psychological Inquiry* publishes undergraduate student research and that will be our focus in this conversation. However, before we begin talking about that, why don't you start us off with some information about yourself?

Loftus: I grew up in Los Angeles and went to UCLA as an undergraduate, which was actually about a half mile from where I lived. So I used to go to school on a motor scooter, one of those Vespa kinds of things. While I was at UCLA, I majored in mathematics and psychology. I graduated with a double major and then went to Stanford to study mathematical psychology, which seemed the perfect combination for somebody who had an interest in those two fields.

Somehow during my years at Stanford, I got interested in the subject of cognitive psychology and memory and that became the field that I ended up pursuing. I spent most of my academic professional life at the University of Washington until 2002, when I moved back to Southern California to the University of California, Irvine, where I now have a faculty position. I am a faculty member in the Department of Psychology and Social behavior, as well as the Department of Criminology, Law and Society.

Merits of Student Research

McCurdy: What is your opinion about the role and value of undergraduate research?

Loftus: First of all, having undergraduates work in the lab and be a part of the whole research program is certainly essential for me and my program, but I think it is also wonderful for the students. For instance, if a student is just there for a quarter or two, at least they can learn something about how research is done. When you just read journal articles and only see the finished product, you don't realize how messy research actually is; how many decisions you

The authors conducted the interview with Dr. Loftus at the 74th Annual Rocky Mountain Psychological Association Convention in April, 2004, in Reno, NV.

have to make to clean it up along the way. It reminds me of sausage. You see the final product, but if you knew how it was actually made you'd have a totally different perspective. Maybe that's not a good analogy, but I think what is most valuable to me are those students who end up getting thoroughly immersed in the lab as an undergraduate. They do that most often when they are working on an honors project or they have something that requires them to be there for an extensive amount of time, perhaps a year or maybe even more.

What I enjoy most is to see students, who worked a little bit on an extension of a study, changing a few but critical things and doing the study themselves. They feel a kind of ownership of the study, especially if it leads to publications or to graduate school. Having that research experience makes students more desirable when they apply to a graduate program. That's why undergraduate research really is a two way street; it is basically helpful for everyone when it goes well.

Miller: Did you have experience doing research when you were an undergraduate student?

Loftus: I took an independent study with a mathematical psychologist when I was at UCLA. I read a little bit about mathematical psychology, but it wasn't the same as the lab experience that my students have gotten both at Washington and at UCI, where they are really doing everything. They help to design the questionnaires, run the subjects, enter the data, and make PowerPoint presentations.

Miller: So your first experience with the full range of research activities was at Stanford?

Loftus: Yes, it was really at Stanford where I learned how to do a whole experiment myself from start to finish, and it was very empowering.

McCurdy: Were you immediately taken by research?

Loftus: Yes, that's how I ended up in the field of memory. For the first few years, I was working on somebody's big project, where I had just a little tiny piece of a very large research project. Then I started doing something that was more manageable with a professor, again as a graduate student. That's when I really began to love experimental psychology.

Pursuit of Graduate School

McCurdy: What would you recommend that a student do to select a graduate program?

Loftus: There are a couple of considerations: one is to have some idea of the type of work you want to do, and the other is to find the places where people are doing that type of work. The latter can be fairly straightforward. You can ask your professors, or you can look at the studies that are being cited in the articles you are reading. In my field, if you are interested in long-term memory, or memory distortion in particular, you can pick up an article, and read the latest issues of *Memory and Cognition*, *Psychological Science*, or *Cognitive Psychology*, wherever the memory distortion work is being done.

You can see who's doing it and who's publishing it. You can look at the reference list, and see who's being referenced and who's published recently. That gives you some idea of where the false memory work is going on, which at the present time is in many places. You might identify a collection of places where people are actively involved in an area of research that you are interested in. You can then contact people at those places or look into the programs at those places. The programs that you choose should depend upon a match between your application (i.e., grades, GRE scores, research experience, and letters of recommendation) and the requirements of a particular university.

Miller: How important do you think it is to have that level of focus when you are applying to graduate school? What about students who know they want to do something but are not quite sure of what?

Loftus: I guess I would add that you can't put all your eggs in one basket. For example, let's say that you've read that Gary Wells has done great work in the area of eyewitness testimony, and he's at Iowa State University. So you decide to apply to Iowa State. He might be taking a sabbatical that year, or he might be overloaded with students, and his department is not letting him take any more students. You have to consider who else is at that university and be prepared to extend your interest more broadly into some things that other people might be doing. I recommend to my students that in their application they discuss some alternatives so that if their preference is not available they are not immediately rejected because they also said that they were interested in some of the activities of other professors.

McCurdy: What should students know prior to entering a graduate program with an emphasis in forensic psychology?

Loftus: First of all, there are just a few programs that have an emphasis in forensic psychology, like the University of Nebraska—Lincoln. In this day and age, because applications and acceptances are iffy, it helps to look at mainstream programs as well. Think of yourself as a social psychologist or a cognitive psychologist, and apply to those specific areas. Express an interest in some mainstream subject, like decision-making and judgment, which you might apply to a social psychology program. You can say in your application that “I am interested in applying that to legal decision making” but then you have that breadth and wider opportunities.

One of the things that we have found is that you are better off, even by the end of your graduate career, if you can legitimately market yourself as a mainstream psychologist, rather than saying I am a psych and law person or a forensic psychologist. Most of the jobs that are advertised are jobs in social, developmental, or cognitive psychology. You might have an interest in legal decision-making, or child testimony, but you’d be better off if you could say “I’m a social psychologist, and this is one of my interests,” or “I’m a developmental psychologist, and one of my interests is child testimony.”

...we have found...that you are better off, even by the end of your graduate career, if you can legitimately market yourself as a mainstream psychologist, rather than saying I am a psych and law person or a forensic psychologist.

McCurdy: Sort of balancing yourself?

Loftus: No, it’s just that many job searches are looking for a mainstream person.

McCurdy: Obviously, there are some aspects of forensic psychology that are controversial. Why do you believe that it is important for students to enter into fields that may be somewhat volatile?

Loftus: I think it is important to get a good grounding in psychological science. If you happen to have a passion to study things like the application of psychological science, principals, theories, and empirical findings to a forensic situation, so be it. Frankly I think it’s fascinating. I think it enlivens teaching and writing and all the aspects of the basic work, but the most important thing to do is get a strong general education and then you can apply it in all kinds of settings.

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Application of Memory Research to Law Enforcement and Clinical Practice

McCurdy: As far as your work specifically, how difficult was it for you to gain access to real situations for your research?

Loftus: In my particular situation, I was actually doing experimental work on witnesses, showing people simulated crimes, like traffic accidents and other legally relevant events, and studying people’s memories for those events. Then I thought, “I’ve seen all these experimental witnesses, I’d like to see some real live ones,” so I volunteered my services as a consultant to a local public defender. I said, “I’ll offer you what we know from the field of eyewitness testimony that might help your case, if you’ll let me watch, and be involved in the case. As a result of that experience, I was involved in the trial of a woman who was accused of murdering her boyfriend and was ultimately acquitted based on self-defense. When I wrote about the experiments I had discussed with the attorney and my consultation on the case for an article in *Psychology Today*, suddenly lawyers were calling me and saying “Would you help me in my case?” Once I had my foot in the door in the legal field and invitations to work on actual cases, I had all kinds of real life things to look at, including police reports, documents, witness statements, and everything that comes with being involved in those cases.

Miller: Has most of your work been done on behalf of the defense?

Loftus: Yes, in the criminal cases. The reason is that my work is skeptical about memory. When the witness gets on the stand for the prosecution and says: "Oh my god, I was so frightened. I'll never forget that face as long as I live," people are going to believe it. The prosecution doesn't need someone saying, "You shouldn't believe it," because they already do. But, the defense needs someone to say "Whoa, wait a minute. There are some factors in this situation that are problematic."

It's mostly the defense that needs that skeptical point of view. It is a rare case in which the prosecution seeks out this kind of help, although it has happened. When the defense has an eyewitness who is a stranger to the defendant and not a typical alibi witness, such as the defendant's mother or girlfriend, and the prosecution has circumstantial evidence or some other form of evidence, the prosecution might want to call an expert witness to say that the eyewitness might not be so accurate.

McCurdy: Obviously, your work is widely known now. Do you feel that your name or the reputation of your work has made it either more difficult or easier to educate law enforcement and clinical practitioners in the best practices?

Loftus: Maybe I can answer that by telling you about my own thinking about where these findings apply. In the 1970's and 80's, when I thought of myself as working on eyewitness testimony or eyewitness memory, I had law enforcement in mind. My focus was on the way people were interrogated, and how eyewitnesses influenced each other by talking about it, or how being exposed to media coverage of a high profile event influenced people's memory of the event. But if the message was directed anywhere specifically, it was toward law enforcement and investigators. They needed to understand that they shouldn't ask leading questions or put witnesses together and allow them to hear each others answers, those kinds of contaminating things that sometimes go on in the real world. The work that others and I were doing revealed that those activities could be very damaging to memory.

During that time, I was invited to lecture to law enforcement and many lawyers groups, both defense lawyers and occasionally to prosecutors, often to

judges, and periodically to law enforcement groups such as state patrol, FBI, or Secret Service. I did some lecturing about how to interview witnesses and how to maximize the quality of the information you get from witnesses. There was some hostility toward the work and the ideas, primarily coming from prosecutors who felt it was just a defense ploy to help the defendants get off.

But I never dreamed that it would be possible to get the kind of hostility I saw in the 1990's when I started applying some of these ideas to psychotherapists and their therapy protocols, and I suggested things they were doing with their patients might be misleading patients. That's where things got ugly and people started fighting dirty. I had things happen that were surprising to me because I was only raising questions and suggesting that some of these memories that were being whipped up in some psychotherapy sessions might be false.

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My visibility in the field has grown over the years, but there's this confounding. I was thinking about police and lawyers in the old days (where the research was applied), and now I've been speaking to therapists and in general repressed memory therapists, and their patients in particular, so the work is more well known. But the audience to whom we've been directing this message is a little different and a little angrier.

Miller: When you came to the 1994 Great Plains Students' Psychology Convention in Kansas City, you were talking about repressed memories. The organizer had opened up the audience to people in the community, and there was a whole group that had sort of packed the back of the room and was quite vocal in their hostility towards your message.

Loftus: There was one experience that I had, I think it was Kansas, where... Well, was Miss America there? The former Miss America who believed she had been molested by her father?

Miller: No, mostly there were masters-level counselors in the audience, who were basically hostile to the message that they could mislead their patients.

Loftus: Well, you know I've had armed guards accompany me to my lectures. Even at the University of Michigan and places that you would think should be the bastion of free speech.

...I've had armed guards accompany me to my lectures.

Coping with Aversive Reactions

McCurdy: So when you feel that your life is being threatened by this crucial message that you have to give, how do you continue to strive and push on. Obviously this is really important stuff.

Loftus: I keep it in a lot of places, like a "when-blue" file. I have hard manila file folders in my office and at home to keep when-blue letters from people who have been accused, or who have finally been exonerated, or who have lost their children, or finally regained their children, thanking me or telling me their stories. I just pull out the when-blue letters in between all the bashing, and it is very uplifting.

McCurdy: What are some of the most difficult aspects of being part of high-profile cases?

Loftus: I have gotten some really nasty phone calls and letters after consulting and testifying in a hearing for the officers accused in the Rodney King beating and some other murder cases. I have received letters from people who believe the defendant really did it or from people who just call me a pedophile protector, in sex abuse cases. It's not nice when people call you names, I've opened up envelopes and had somebody write LIAR in block printing, and it doesn't feel good. But I'm not doing this alone; there are other people out there who are pretty passionate about this too.

Miller: Are there cases where you just say, "I don't want to be involved in this?"

Loftus: The only one that I've turned down because it was just too hard was the Ivan the Terrible case, the Demanjuk case, in Israel; he was accused of being the operator of the gas chambers. But I found them

another expert, who was excellent, and the other expert could testify without all of the angst, but that's really the only one. I have worried in some cases that the government will get on my back. I consulted with Martha Stewart, and I thought, "Oh Gosh," when I look at what they did to her.

Another sad case is the "plague doctor" at Texas Tech who was accused of lying to the government about what happened to the missing vials of plague. They went after him for lying and then started looking into every aspect of his life. But, I can't stop what I'm doing. You wouldn't walk across the street if you thought about getting run over each time.

McCurdy: When you are working on a high profile case and there is a lot of media coverage, how do you separate your personal opinion of a defendant from your duty to explain a particular phenomenon?

Loftus: The first time I testified in an actual court case was June, 3, 1975. Back then I used to believe that science was out there for whoever needed it. We all paid for it; we all own it; and it should be there for whoever's asking for it. My job was to present the science and not concern myself with figuring out if the defendant was guilty or not.

Now, after all these years of doing this and having all the cases I could possibly want to work on and not enough time, I have to make decisions about how I'm going to spend my time. Frankly I prefer to work on cases where I really think the accused is innocent, and I really think they're getting railroaded. If I feel there's injustice, I want to be in there to help. I guess my personal feelings do get involved. At least they play a role in the selection of the things that I end up working on.

Miller: You mentioned the Martha Stewart case, how would you characterize the injustice there?

Loftus: First of all, let me just say that I did consult on the case. My name was disclosed to the FBI, and I thought, "Well great, here we go again..." I'm hesitating only because you know she was convicted, but she has not yet been sentenced, and I don't know if there will be an appeal. I don't know what will happen if there is an appeal, and she is successful in getting a new trial. So I'm not at liberty to say as much as I could about cases that are concluded. I'll tell you the thing that I think is most upsetting is that she stood up to defend herself and say, "I'm inno-

cent, I didn't do anything wrong," and they charged her with an SEC violation, saying she was trying to manipulate her stock. To me that was the gravest of the unjust charges in that case. Ultimately, that charge was dismissed, but still she had to spend a lot of money to fight it. It was probably money well spent since her lawyers convinced the judge that there was a problem in doing that to people.

McCurdy: Obviously you have faced some very difficult issues, but you haven't backed down at all from your positions. Why do you think it is so important to take such a firm stand for what you believe?

Loftus: Not everybody has to do this. I do what I do because I almost can't help it, and I feel that I'm proud of what I do, and it makes me feel good about myself. Not everybody has to do this; people can make their contributions in all different kinds of ways. Not everybody is cut out for all this vitriol; I didn't think I was either. We have plenty of people out there who are fighting for the rights of people who are genuine victims of child abuse, let them do what they want to do and feel good about what they're doing. This is my thing. I think people should find, if they are lucky enough, something they can be passionate about. It helps you to feel good about yourself afterwards.

Miller: Would the students who went to high school with you have predicted that you would take this kind of a stand for something?

Loftus: No, no.

Miller: Did it come on little by little?

Loftus: Not in high school. I was a party girl, but I studied when I wasn't partying. I remember on my first day of graduate school there was a big party for the first year graduate students by the continuing graduate students and faculty. A couple of the faculty members left early because they had to go home and work. It was a Sunday afternoon, and I thought, "They're leaving a party to go home and work? I'm never going to make it in this field!" I still won't leave a party. But I give up most everything else to work.

Current and Future Research on Memory

McCurdy: What questions do you think still need to be answered about false memories and eyewitness testimo-

ny, and where do you think these problems are going?

Loftus: What we're interested in looking at right now is the consequences once a false memory has been planted. We know we can make people believe and remember things that they never really experienced, and they can sometimes be emotional about these false experiences. We are interested in these consequences. This is one question that hasn't been explored very much at all. More work needs to be done, but I think we will see work in the future about trying to distinguish true memories from false memories both behaviorally and neurophysiologically. Of particular interest right now is on the consequences of a false memory. Once I make you believe that something happened to you that really didn't happen, will it have ramifications for your later thinking and behavior down the road?

Of particular interest right now is on the consequences of a false memory.

A couple of ways that we're doing this include making people believe they got sick eating a particular food and then we see if they avoid that food later. We're finding that we can make people believe that as children they got sick eating dill pickles, hard-boiled eggs, asparagus, or different foods, and later on they don't want to eat that food. We are not only showing a consequence of having planted the false memory, but there may be some really interesting practical applications down the road. For example, we may have stumbled on a new dieting technique, and so I'm very excited about that work.

One of my honor students right now just finished her yearlong project in which she got people to believe that they had a very unpleasant experience with the Pluto character at Disneyland. They were told that Pluto licked them awkwardly and inappropriately and uncomfortably in the ear. Not only can we make them believe that it happened, but when you ask them what they are willing to pay for a Pluto souvenir, they don't want to pay as much. They are still willing to pay for the Disneyland ticket, but they just don't want the Pluto Souvenir. Again, I think there will be interesting practical ramifications of this.

After Shari Berkowitz, the student who is the chief investigator on this Pluto study, completed her findings, an article came out about a man at Disney World who played Tigger, one of the Disney charac-

ters. He was arrested for molesting a girl while standing next to her having a picture taken. So I was thinking that they better put those Tigger souvenirs on sale, because they're not going to sell easily.

Miller: In the repressed memories and false confession literature, it seems to me that people will go to some lengths to elaborate upon that memory, to make it even firmer by adding detail.

Loftus: Yes, we see elaboration in the studies. In fact, sometimes that is a criterion we use when we've succeeded in implanting false memories. Do they elaborate beyond the immediate suggestion we give them to get the memory ball rolling? I think they are doing that because obviously there's a pressure for more detail coming from somewhere.

Miller: And how far will people go down that road?

Loftus: Well, they've confessed to murders they didn't do, that's pretty far. In the false memory studies, we get people claiming they were attacked by an animal, or they witnessed demonic possession, and they provide lots of detail.

McCurdy: Have you ever followed up, even after the debriefing, to see how the memories affect them?

Loftus: We don't get to see them after the debriefing. I have a few anecdotal experiences where I have just happened to run in to people again. It is not part of the protocol to have any systematic further interaction. In a way, what we are doing with these consequence studies is sort of delaying the debriefing a little bit to see if we can see other consequences. Maybe somebody would like to delay the debriefing a little bit and explore other issues with this sample.

Miller: Do you think the debriefing takes care of everything?

Loftus: No, I think some of them still wonder if it really happened. I have anecdotal data to suggest that might be true. People have gone to ask their parents after they've been debriefed and ask, "Are you sure it didn't really happen?" Fortunately we haven't seen any adverse effects of any of our manipulations.

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- Loftus, E. F., & Ketcham, K. (1994) *The myth of repressed memory*. New York: St. Martin's Press.

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Invitation to Contribute to the Special Features Section—I

Undergraduate students are invited to work in pairs and contribute to the Special Features section of the next issues of the *Journal of Psychological Inquiry*. The topic is:

Evaluating Controversial Issues

This topic gives two students an opportunity to work together on different facets of the same issue. Select a controversial issue relevant to an area of psychology (e.g., Does violence on television have harmful effects on children?—developmental psychology; Is homosexuality incompatible with the military?—human sexuality; Are repressed memories real?—cognitive psychology). Each student should take one side of the issue and address current empirical research. Each manuscript should make a persuasive case for one side of the argument.

Submit 3-5 page manuscripts. If accepted, the manuscripts will be published in tandem in the Journal.

Note to Faculty:

This task would work especially well in courses that instructors have students debate controversial issues. Faculty are in an ideal position to identify quality manuscripts on each side of the issue and to encourage students about submitting their manuscripts.

Procedures:

1. The postmarked deadline for submission to this Special Features section is December 1, 2003.
2. All manuscripts should be formatted in accordance with the APA manual (latest edition).
3. Provide the following information:
 - (a) Names, current addresses, and phone numbers of all authors. Specify what address and e-mail should be used in correspondence about your submission,
 - (b) Name and address of your school,
 - (c) Name, phone number, address, and e-mail of your faculty sponsor, and
 - (d) Permanent address and phone number (if different from the current one) of the primary author.
4. Include a self-addressed stamped envelope of proper size and with sufficient postage to return all materials.
5. Send three (3) copies of the a 3-5 page manuscript in near letter quality condition using 12 point font.
6. Include a sponsoring statement from a faculty supervisor. (Supervisor: Read and critique papers on content, method, APA style, grammar, and overall presentation.) The sponsoring statement should indicate that the supervisor has read and critiqued the manuscript and that writing of the essay represents primarily the work of the undergraduate student.

Send submissions to:

Dr. Richard L. Miller
Department of Psychology
University of Nebraska at Kearney
Kearney, NE 68849

Invitation to Contribute to the Special Features Section—II

Undergraduate students are invited to contribute to the Special Features section of the next issue of the *Journal of Psychological Inquiry*. The topic is:

Conducting Psychological Analyses – Dramatic

Submit a 3-5 page manuscript that contains a psychological analysis of a television program or movie. The Special Features section of the current issue (pp. 50-58) contains several examples of the types of psychological analysis students may submit.

Option 1—Television Program:

Select an episode from a popular, 30-60 min television program, describe the salient behaviors, activities, and/or interactions, and interpret that scene using psychological concepts and principles. The presentation should identify the title of the program and the name of the television network. Describe the episode and paraphrase the dialogue. Finally, interpret behavior using appropriate concepts and/or principles that refer to the research literature. Citing references is optional.

Option 2—Movie Analysis:

Analyze a feature film, available at a local video store, for its psychological content. Discuss the major themes but try to concentrate on applying some of the more obscure psychological terms, theories, or concepts. For example, the film *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner?* deals with prejudice and stereotypes, but less obviously, there is material related to attribution theory, person perception, attitude change, impression formation, and nonverbal communication. Briefly describe the plot and then select key scenes that illustrate one or more psychological principles. Describe how the principle is illustrated in the movie and provide a critical analysis of the illustration that refers to the research literature. Citing references is optional.

Procedures:

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2. All manuscripts should be formatted in accordance with the APA manual (latest edition).
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 - (a) Names, current addresses, and phone numbers of all authors. Specify what address and e-mail should be used in correspondence about your submission,
 - (b) Name and address of your school,
 - (c) Name, phone number, address, and e-mail of your faculty sponsor, and
 - (d) Permanent address and phone number (if different from the current one) of the primary author.
4. Include a self-addressed stamped envelope of proper size and with sufficient postage to return all materials.
5. Send three (3) copies of the a 3-5 page manuscript in near letter quality condition using 12 point font.
6. Include a sponsoring statement from a faculty supervisor. (Supervisor: Read and critique papers on content, method, APA style, grammar, and overall presentation.) The sponsoring statement should indicate that the supervisor has read and critiqued the manuscript and that writing of the essay represents primarily the work of the undergraduate student.

Send submissions to:

Dr. Richard L. Miller
Department of Psychology
University of Nebraska at Kearney
Kearney, NE 68849

Invitation to Contribute to the Special Features Section—III

Undergraduate students are invited to contribute to the Special Features section of the next issue of the *Journal of Psychological Inquiry*. The topic is:

Conducting Psychological Analyses – Current Events

Submit a 3-5 page manuscript that contains a psychological analysis of a current event. News stories may be analyzed from the perspective of any content area in psychology. The manuscript should describe the particular event and use psychological principles to explain people's reactions to that event.

Example 1: Several psychological theories could be used to describe people's reactions to the destruction of the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001. Terror management research has often shown that after reminders of mortality people show greater investment in and support for groups to which they belong and tend to derogate groups that threaten their worldview (Harmon-Hones, Greenberg, Solomon, & Simon, 1996). Several studies have shown the link between mortality salience and nationalistic bias (see Greenberg, Simon, Pyszczynski, & Solomon, 1992). Consistent with these findings, the news reported that prejudice towards African Americans decreased noticeably after 9/11 as citizens began to see all Americans as more similar than different.

Example 2: A psychological concept that could be applied to the events of September 11 would be that of bounded rationality, which is the tendency to think unclearly about environmental hazards prior to their occurrence (Slovic, Kunreuther, & White, 1974). Work in environmental psychology would help explain why we were so surprised by this terrorist act.

The analysis of a news event should include citations of specific studies and be linked to aspects of the news story. Authors could choose to apply several psychological concepts to a single event or to use one psychological theory or concept to explain different aspects associated with the event.

Procedures:

1. The postmarked deadline for submission to the next issue's Special Features section is December 1, 2003.
2. All manuscripts should be formatted in accordance with the APA manual (latest edition).
3. Provide the following information:
 - (a) Names, current addresses, and phone numbers of all authors. Specify what address and e-mail should be used in correspondence about your submission,
 - (b) Name and address of your school,
 - (c) Name, phone number, address, and e-mail of your faculty sponsor, and
 - (d) Permanent address and phone number (if different from the current one) of the primary author.
4. Include a self-addressed stamped envelope of proper size and with sufficient postage to return all materials.
5. Send three (3) copies of the a 3-5 page manuscript in near letter quality condition using 12 point font.
6. Include a sponsoring statement from a faculty supervisor. (Supervisor: Read and critique papers on content, method, APA style, grammar, and overall presentation.) The sponsoring statement should indicate that the supervisor has read and critiqued the manuscript and that writing of the essay represents primarily the work of the undergraduate student.

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