This is to certify that the

dissertation entitled

Narrative Passages and Beliefs
About Social Groups:
Fiction Versus Nonfiction

presented by

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has been accepted towards fulfillment
of the requirements for

Doctoral degree in Psychology

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Date 7/2/97

NARRATIVE PASSAGES AND BELIEFS ABOUT SOCIAL GROUPS: FICTION VERSUS NONFICTION

By

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A DISSERTATION

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Psychology

1997

ABSTRACT

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In everyday life, people are often confronted with narrative representations of different social groups, some of which are accurate reflections of how these social groups actually behave (nonfiction) while others are simply fictitious. The current investigation sought to determine what sources people tend to rely on when forming and changing their beliefs about social groups, and by what cognitive processes they do so. Based on a variety of research on social cognition, social judgment, and social influence, it was predicted that reading about a particular member of a social group (either a French Canadian or a lesbian) would influence subsequently reported beliefs about the relevant group, particularly if the passage presented ostensibly "real" (i.e., nonfictional) rather than fictional information. Furthermore, it was predicted that cognitively busy readers would not be able to distinguish between fictional and nonfictional information because the extra demands placed on their cognitive capacity would interfere with the presumably effortful process of "unbelieving" the fictional representations (e.g., Gilbert, 1991). Lastly, readers' preexisting attitudes were predicted to moderate the influence of the presented passages, but only when the attitudes were relatively well-established; the perceived plausibility of the passages was also expected to alter their influence. A total of 425 male and female readers with varying levels of preexisting prejudice toward the target social

groups read a passage represented to be fictional or nonfictional that featured either a French Canadian, lesbian, or rural American (control) while they were cognitively busy or not. Results unexpectedly indicated that non-busy participants were not differentially affected by fictional vs. nonfictional passages; consequently, many of the hypotheses of the present research were not supported. Regardless of the passages' putative source, most participants who read passages about French Canadians (relative to the control passages) expressed attitudes and beliefs that were more consistent with the content of the passages. Additionally, the most prejudiced readers of the pro-lesbian passages subsequently expressed more favorable attitudes and beliefs, but only if they had been cognitively busy while reading the passages. Discussion centered on the conditions under which readers will differentiate between fictional and nonfictional sources of information.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Through the long and arduous process of completing this dissertation, many people have helped me along the way. First, and foremost, I would like to thank my advisor, Galen Bodenhausen, for his never-ending supply of guidance and support. In addition, I would like to thank Larry Messé, who served as the chair of my dissertation committee, as well as the other members of my dissertation committee, Norb Kerr, Linda Jackson, and Bradley Greenberg; all of whom offered valuable advice and suggestions. Rick DeShon also deserves a special thanks for his advice and consultation on statistical procedures.

This dissertation would not have been possible without the help of a number of undergraduate research assistants. My thanks go out to Paul Binelli, Pete Feinberg, Greg Gulick, CC Hlavac, Brandy Jensen, Pamela Renner, Ryan Ryker, Jill Sears, and Erin Williams.

Since only those who have had the same experiences can truly understand what one is going through, I would like to thank my fellow graduate students, and especially Ruth and Susan. Lastly, I would like to thank Steve Libbey whose support and love sustained me throughout my dissertation experience.

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INTRODUCTION

> *Implicit in the extraordinary revival of storytelling is the possibility that we need stories--that they are a fundamental unit of knowledge, the foundation of memory, essential to the way we make sense of our lives: the beginning, middle, and end of our personal and collective trajectories (Buford, 1996, June 24 & July 1, pp. 11-12).*

In our everyday lives, we are constantly bombarded by media narrative representations of different social groups. Some of these representations are relatively accurate reflections of how members of these social groups actually behave (e.g., articles from National Geographic and nonfictional articles from the New York Times), while other representations are simply fictitious representations of different social group members (e.g., short-stories and novels) that may or may not have any basis in social reality. The current investigation sought to determine how these two different types of narrative representations differentially affect viewers' beliefs about social groups, or more generally, to determine what sources people tend to rely on when they form and change their beliefs about social groups. In addition, the processes by which people differentiate between fictional versus nonfictional written passages and how individuals' prior attitudes and perceptions about the reality of the passages alter the impact of the passages also were examined.

Research on the effects of film and television has consistently found that ostensibly "real" representations or portrayals have more of an impact on viewers' attitudes and behaviors than do fictional representations or portrayals. For instance, television commercials that featured female characters only influenced children's attitudes about women when they were told that "all people in these commercials are real people; they are

all doing things that they really do and they are not acting in the commercials" (Pingree, 1978, p. 266). Likewise, viewers displayed more subsequent aggression when they viewed violent or aggressive film clips that were reportedly depicting real events versus fictional events (Atkin, 1983; Berkowitz & Alioto, 1973; Geen, 1975; Noble, 1973; Thomas & Tell, 1974). For instance, Atkin (1983) found that viewers showed more aggression after they viewed a film segment that was reported to be a news bulletin versus a Hollywood movie promotion. In a review of the effects of perceived reality of television, Potter (1988) suggests that when explicitly told that the mediated materials are real versus fictional, viewers are more strongly affected by the "real" content.

More recent work, however, has shown that fictional information can affect people's real-world beliefs (e.g., Gerrig, 1993; Gerrig & Prentice, 1991). For instance, when the movie Jaws came out in the 1970s, both Newsweek and Time ran articles discussing how fear of shark attacks kept people out of the water. Even though people knew that the movie was a fictional account, this knowledge did not alleviate their fears about potential shark attacks. In fact, Time magazine quoted a member of the Los Angeles County Department of Beaches as saying "I had to force myself back in the water ....So have my lifeguards" (as cited in Gerrig, 1993, p. 197).

Although evidence of the influence of the movie Jaws is anecdotal, it appears that real-world judgments can be affected by fictional information, at least under certain circumstances. For instance, M. D. Slater (1988/1989, 1990) found that ostensibly nonfictional written messages tended to influence readers' beliefs about social group members' characteristics to a greater extent than ostensibly fictional ones. However, this trend only occurred when the social group was relatively familiar (e.g., Contra guerrillas

and English gentlemen farmers). When the social group was unfamiliar (e.g., Eritrean guerrillas and Dutch gentlemen farmers in Java), the impact of the fictional message was equal to or greater than that of the nonfictional message. Likewise, work by Brock and Green (1995, September) supports the idea that fictional written narratives may sometimes be as persuasive as nonfictional narratives. Although participants who read either the fictional or nonfictional passages about a brutal murder expressed beliefs that were more consistent with the story's conclusion than did nonreaders, the beliefs of participants who read the fictional passage did not differ from the beliefs of participants who read the nonfictional passage. Brock and Green posit that the fictional passage was as influential as the nonfictional passage because the participants had a greater tendency to misattribute the fictional narrative as true than to misattribute the nonfictional narrative as not true.

Recently, it has been suggested by Gerrig (Gerrig, 1993; Gerrig & Prentice, 1991) that the influence of fictional and nonfictional narrative passages can be explained by taking into account how fictional and nonfictional information is represented in people's knowledge structures. To substantiate his proposition, Gerrig relied on the work of Potts and his colleagues (Potts & Peterson, 1985; Potts, Peterson, St. John, & Kirson, 1990; Potts, St. John, & Kirson, 1989). These researchers propose a connectionist model of selective activation that helps explain when and how newly learned information is either incorporated into individuals' preexisting knowledge structures or compartmentalized and isolated from preexisting knowledge structures. Rather than suggesting that information gained from written passages is always stored separately from preexisting knowledge or that the new information is always incorporated into preexisting knowledge structures, Potts and his colleagues suggest that incorporation is a matter of degree and will depend

on a number of situational and individual difference factors.

The basis of the connectionist model of selective activation is associative network models (see Eagly & Chaiken, 1993; Smith, in press). At their most basic level, associative network models postulate a massive network of interconnected nodes. The nodes can represent many things, including simple features like line segments or patterns or more complex features like "has wings," "red breast," and "can fly." In the network model of mental representations, simple propositions consisting of a subject and a predicate are represented as nodes or concepts that are linked. For instance, the statement, "David is nice" would result in a division into two nodes (e.g., "David" and "nice") that would be linked together. This proposition, in turn, can be linked with other propositions (e.g., "David is kind") to represent causal or other relations between propositions (e.g., "David is both nice and kind"). The strength of the links between existing nodes is thought to determine how accessible the connected nodes are to each other.

The paradigm that Potts et al. (1989) used to test the degree of compartmentalization versus incorporation of fictional and nonfictional information is based on associative network models. When newly acquired information is compartmentalized (i.e., placed in a separate information node), Potts et al. argue that the retrieval and use of that compartmentalized information in other, unrelated contexts will be hindered, while retrieval in a situation that accesses only that new, compartmentalized, knowledge node would be facilitated. However, when the newly acquired information is incorporated into preexisting knowledge structures or nodes, the retrieval of this new information will be hindered when only the new information must be accessed but

facilitated when preexisting knowledge structures are accessed. In their research, Potts et al. found that newly acquired information about either a large, flightless bird called the takahe or a small wool-bearing camel called the vicuna was compartmentalized to a greater degree when the participants believed they were reading a fictional versus a nonfictional account. Participants who believed that the written passage was fictional were much faster at verifying the critical statements when they were intermixed with filler statements related to the story context than when the filler statements were unrelated to the story context. However, when participants believed that they were reading nonfictional versus fictional information, having filler statements related to the story context had much less of an effect on participants' speed at verifying the critical statements. The finding that there is a much greater context effect when the information is ostensibly fictional versus nonfictional suggests that individuals compartmentalize or isolate information from their general world knowledge to a greater extent when the incoming information is represented to be fictional versus nonfictional.

Although it appears that fictional information is stored in a separate "story" node in memory, follow-up research has suggested that the associative link between the "story" node and real-world judgments can be facilitated. For instance, research by Gerrig and Prentice (1991, Exp. 1 & 2) suggests that fictional information related to broad, familiar topics can influence a reader's ability to assess the accuracy of statements dealing with everyday life. In their experiments, participants read stories where half of the information consisted of details that were specific to the context of the story (e.g., the speed limit was reported to be 70 and the vice-president of the United States was reported to be Geraldine Ferraro or George Bush). The other half of the information consisted of assertions that

transcended the specific context of the story. These context-free assertions were more general and had greater potential application outside of the context of the story than did the story-specific details because they were not reliant upon particular features of the story (e.g., penicillin was reported to have bad consequences for humans and it was asserted that most forms of mental illness are not contagious).

It was found that context-free assertions created more interference in people's abilities to make real-world judgments about the accuracy of statements related to everyday life than did story-specific details (Gerrig & Prentice, Exp. 1 & 2). More specifically, for those participants who read story-specific details, such as that the speed limit was 70 (information inconsistent with the real world at the time of the study), it generally took only an extra 78 milliseconds to respond true to "The speed limit is 55 miles per hour" and false to "The speed limit is 70 miles per hour," compared to a control group who read a story containing no information relevant to the experimental topics. However, participants who read context-free assertions took 302 milliseconds longer than the control group to make real-world judgments related to the experimental topics (as cited in Gerrig, 1993, p. 221). This pattern of results suggests that story-specific details are not generally incorporated into individuals' preexisting knowledge structures, whereas context-free assertions appear to be incorporated into individuals' knowledge structures. Although fictional context-free assertions do not appear to replace preexisting knowledge, they do appear to coexist with preexisting knowledge structures and thus have an impact on real-world judgments.

In their third experiment, Gerrig and Prentice (1991) found that even though context-free assertions appear to coexist with preexisting knowledge structures and

influence real-world judgments, it appears that they are still compartmentalized in memory, separate from preexisting knowledge structures. Using the paradigm of Potts (Potts et al., 1989), Gerrig and Prentice found that participants were faster to verify both story-specific details and context-free assertions when they were in the context of other statements from the story.

Overall, the recent work by Gerrig and Prentice (1991; see also Gerrig, 1993) suggests that all narrative information, whether fictional or nonfictional, is stored in a "story" node separate from individuals' preexisting knowledge structures. However, it also appears that both nonfictional information and information that can be easily applied to preexisting knowledge structures are highly accessible and will thus influence real-world judgments. Information that is fictional and/or specific to the context of the narrative appears to have less impact on real-world judgments, but can still have an effect under certain circumstances. According to Gerrig, it is possible to explain the available data by assuming that a link is formed between fictional information and preexisting knowledge concepts, because "such a link would enable fictional information to affect real-world judgments as a function of the strength of associations" (1993, pp. 222-223). Thus, based on the work by Gerrig, it is thought that the link between fictional information and real-world specific judgments, such as the speed limit, appears to be weak, whereas the link between fictional information and more general judgments about the world, such as the benefits of penicillin, appears to be strong.

Mental Representations of Social Groups

The importance of examining the impact of fictional versus nonfictional written passages is evidenced by research that reveals the short-term impact of exemplars on

people's attitudes and social judgments (e.g., Schwarz & Bless, 1992a; Smith & Zárate, 1992; Wilson & Hodges, 1992). These researchers have posited that the current context and the information that is salient in it can influence individuals' momentary attitudes. For instance, research has shown that incidental exposure to a well-liked African American celebrity, such as Oprah Winfrey or Michael Jordan, can influence subsequently reported racial attitudes (Bodenhausen, Schwarz, Bless, & Wänke, 1995). Likewise, Schwarz and Bless (1992b) have found that activating thoughts about politicians who had been involved in a scandal influenced respondents' subsequent evaluations of politicians' trustworthiness in general, as well as the trustworthiness of three specific politicians. In fact, more recent research has shown that when participants are primed by a more positive or negative political exemplar than they had named spontaneously four weeks earlier, their attitudes about politicians as a whole changed in a manner consistent with their attitudes toward the specific exemplar with which they were primed (Sia, Lord, Blessum, Ratcliff, & Lepper, 1997, Exp. 3). Lastly, Zillmann and his colleagues (Gibson & Zillmann, 1994; Zillmann, Gibson, Sundar, & Perkins, 1996) found that people are much more likely to base their estimates of the likelihood of car jacking and the plight of the American family farm on exposure to exemplars of these particular situations than to exposure to more pallid, but ultimately more useful, base-rate information. It is thus quite plausible that reading a written passage about a member of a particular social group can have at least a transitory impact on social beliefs and attitudes.

Schwarz and Bless (1992a) offer an "inclusion/exclusion model" to explain the context dependency of attitudinal judgments. Applied to the current context, the model implies that when a depiction of a member of a social group is included in readers' current

representations of the group, their judgments will be based on the new representations formed. That is, judgments will be assimilated toward the narrative description because it has been incorporated into readers' current understandings of the particular social group in question. For example, when reading about a positively portrayed lesbian, readers may include this depiction into their mental representations of lesbians in general and report more favorable judgments of the group based on these newly formed representations. However, if the depiction is excluded from viewers' representations, the depiction either will not affect people's judgments at all or will serve as a standard of comparison against which other relevant information will be contrasted. This contrast pattern is evidenced by research showing that simply priming awareness of three politicians tainted by scandal caused individuals to view three other untainted politicians to be especially trustworthy (Schwarz & Bless, 1992b). Thus, if a positive depiction of the lesbian is excluded from readers' representations of lesbians, their judgments either may not be influenced by the newly presented information, or may even become more negative if this atypically positive exemplar is used as a standard of comparison.

Whether individuals will include or exclude a particular exemplar from their representations of different social groups will depend on a number of factors, including whether the exemplar is deemed representative of the social group as a whole (Schwarz & Bless, 1992a). It is thought that individuals who are judged to be representative of their social groups will be more likely included in outgroup members' representations of those social groups, while individuals who are judged to be nonrepresentative of their social groups will be excluded from outgroup members' representations of those social groups. For instance, it has been found that raters are more likely to assimilate, or judge two target

individuals as more equally attractive when the target individuals share something so simple as a college major, yet the raters contrast the attractiveness of the two target individuals when the targets are considered distinct entities, such as not sharing a common college major (Seta, Martin, & Capehart, 1979). Based on how representative the depicted individuals are of their respective social groups, it was expected that readers will be more likely to assimilate nonfictional information into their representations of the different social groups than they will be to assimilate fictional information. This pattern was thought to be likely to occur because the "real" people and behaviors portrayed in the nonfictional narrative passages will be deemed as more representative of the people and behaviors associated with the represented social group than will fabricated people and behaviors. Interestingly, the same prediction would have been made if participants simply saw the nonfictional information as more credible than the fictional information and, thus, were more likely to include the nonfictional, more credible, information into their representations of social groups (e.g., Petty & Cacioppo, 1986).

In summary, it appears that written narratives that are represented to be "real" will have a greater impact on readers' beliefs about social groups than will narratives that are represented to be fictional. This pattern was expected to occur in the present research because it is more likely that information from the "real" narratives will be incorporated into readers' preexisting knowledge structures and thus will be more accessible when they make real-world judgments. In the terminology of Gerrig (1993), it was predicted that there will generally be a stronger link between nonfictional information and people's representations of a particular social group than there will be between fictional information and people's social group representations. However, as seen by work by M. D. Slater

(1988/1989, 1990) and Brock and Green (1995, September), a number of factors can eliminate the greater influence of nonfictional written passages. Slater's research suggests that when confronted by an unfamiliar target group, readers are occupied with making sense of the presented information and do not have enough cognitive capacity left over to utilize the fictional/nonfictional nature of the information when making subsequent judgments. Brock and Green posit that the nonfictional written passage was not more influential in their research because participants had more of a tendency to misattribute the fictional narrative as true than to misattribute the nonfictional narrative as not true. In the following sections, factors such as preexisting attitudes about the depicted social group, the cognitive busyness under which participants read narrative passages, and the perceived plausibility of the passages will be discussed as possible moderators or mediators of the effects of fictional and nonfictional written passages.

Prejudice Level Moderates the Effects of Written Narratives

Although it was expected based on past research (see Potter, 1988, for a review) that people will be more strongly affected by information that is reputed to be nonfictional versus fictional, it is likely that readers' prejudice about social groups will moderate how written passages about social group members affect them. For instance, in the domain of television it has been shown that viewers' preexisting attitudes moderate their reactions to the character of Archie Bunker in the program "All in the Family" (Vidmar & Rokeach, 1974). It was found that high-prejudiced as compared to low-prejudiced white viewers tended to identify more with the character of Archie Bunker, saw him as winning rather than as ridiculed, and saw nothing wrong with his use of racial and ethnic slurs.

Research suggests that it is under circumstances that encourage message scrutiny

that the differential impact of fictional versus nonfictional information will most likely be observed. Prentice, Gerrig, and Bailis (1992) found that participants gave more critical appraisals of presented information if the information contradicted what participants considered to be real-world truths (as cited in Gerrig, 1993). When students read a story set at their rival school, they changed their beliefs in a manner consistent with the information contained in the story, but when the story was set at their own school, their beliefs changed little or even in a direction opposite to the story's assertions. The authors argue that their data suggest that the personal relevance of the home school story caused the participants to scrutinize, or closely examine the message, and that this scrutiny, in turn, undermined the fictional arguments that were often contradictory to real-world truths. Thus, when people are motivated to scrutinize the available information they will be more likely to take into consideration all relevant information, including using the ostensible source of the information as a persuasive argument (Petty & Cacioppo, 1984).

People have a stake in maintaining and reinforcing their preexisting attitudes (Chaiken, Giner-Sorolla, & Chen, 1996), so they will be more likely to scrutinize, rather than simply accept, written passages that conflict with their existing attitudes. Prejudiced attitudes toward social group members and commitment to these prejudices can certainly be an impetus for more versus less prejudiced individuals to closely examine a written passage about a social group member that is positive in tone. This scrutiny should lessen the impact of fictional written passages because people will be more likely to take into account the fictional, and possibly less credible, nature of the information.

In a review of research pertaining to people's tendencies to selectively expose themselves to information, Frey (1986) asserts that there can be a defensive character to

how people process information. When people are unwilling or unable to change their decisions or views because of, among other things, internal resistance to change or external constraints, they will tend to ignore information contrary to their attitudes and increase their preference for information supportive of their attitudes (see also Kleinhesselink & Edwards, 1975; Sekaquaptewa & von Hippel, as cited in von Hippel, Sekaquaptewa, & Vargas, 1995). In addition, prior attitudes can also distort the perception and judgment of information (see Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). Research demonstrates that people's attitudes can elicit a congeniality bias such that information congruent with one's attitudes will be judged more positively than will information that is incongruent with one's attitudes (Lord, Ross, & Lepper, 1979). In fact, this research showed that people can become even more extreme in their attitudes after evaluating equal amounts of evidence supporting and opposing their position because they tended to automatically accept evidence confirming their preexisting attitudes while they critically evaluated disconfirming evidence. Moreover, close examination of the contradictory information may also lessen the impact of the written passages because of more prejudiced people's memory biases and distortions regarding information that contradicts their preexisting attitudes (e.g., Fyock & Stangor, 1994; Johnson & Sherman, 1990; see also Smith, in press).

Because of people's defensive reaction to information contrary to their views, the fictional status of information may provide readers with a relatively easy excuse to reject or ignore information contradictory to their preexisting attitudes. Schwarz and Bless (1992a) discuss the fact that people do not always incorporate information into relevant mental representations. They claim that individuals will exclude information about a

specific group member from their representation of that social group if the member is perceived to be too distinct from the entire group (nonrepresentative). Such members are either excluded from the category or even placed in an entirely different category. This concept corresponds to Allport's (1979) classic notion of "re-fencing" or subtyping (Rothbart, 1981; Rothbart & John, 1985; Weber & Crocker, 1983). Research shows that people attempt to maintain their stereotypes by subtyping, or explaining away, individuals who challenge their stereotypes (Kunda & Oleson, 1995). For instance, it was found that simply including versus excluding a neutral attribute about a counterstereotypic target (e.g., saying an unpromiscuous gay male was an accountant) blocked participants from incorporating this counterstereotypic information into their stereotypes about gay men. However, the neutral attribute did not prevent people from generalizing overly stereotypic information into their stereotypes (e.g., saying a promiscuous gay male was an accountant). All together, these lines of research suggest that individuals often exclude information about a counterstereotypic group member from their representations of the social group as a whole. Moreover, when the counterstereotypic description is represented as fictional, this attribute may provide prejudiced readers an easy excuse to not incorporate the presented information into their mental representations.

Social judgment theory (Hovland, Harvey, & Sherif, 1957) can be used to understand how readers, with varying levels of prejudice, will respond to written passages featuring a member of a social group. Social judgment theory posits that individuals' attitude changes are dependent upon their assessments of the position advocated in the persuasive attempt relative to their own positions. Attitude change, thus, is considered to be a two-part process. First, after exposure, individuals make judgments about the

position advocated in the message relative to their own positions on the issue presented. Then, after these initial judgments are made, attitude change may or may not occur. The magnitude of the attitude change will be dependent upon the degree of discrepancy between the individuals' initial positions and the position advocated by the message. Messages that individuals find acceptable or most similar to their initial attitudes will fall into their latitude of acceptance and thus be accepted. Positions individuals find to be unacceptable or totally discrepant from their attitudes will fall into their latitude of rejection and thus be rejected. Finally, positions individuals consider neither acceptable nor unacceptable will fall into their latitude of noncommitment and thus will not be either accepted or rejected. The size of these zones is thought to be dependent upon the level of personal significance or ego-involvement the issue has for the individuals. That is, the higher their ego-involvement on a specific issue, the smaller the range of acceptable positions and the larger the range of unacceptable positions and positions they are ambivalent about.

Social judgment theory incorporates individuals' perceptual reactions to the position advocated in the message. These perceptual distortions are termed assimilation and contrast effects. Assimilation effects occur when the individuals perceive the message to advocate a position closer to their own that it actually does. The individuals subjectively minimize the discrepancy between their attitudes and the advocated position. Contrast effects occur when the individuals perceive the message to advocate a position further from their own than it actually does. The individuals subjectively maximize the discrepancy between their attitudes and the advocated position.

Based on social judgment theory, it seems likely that more prejudiced individuals

will deem a positively toned description of a member of a stigmatized social group member to be highly discrepant from their initial attitudes. This description will thus be likely to fall into their latitude of rejection, be contrasted from participants' preexisting attitudes and beliefs, and not have an impact on participants' attitudes or beliefs about the depicted social group member. Less prejudiced individuals, on the other hand, may perceive the same positively toned description as not at all discrepant from their initial attitudes. The description will thus be likely to fall into their latitude of acceptance, be assimilated toward participants' preexisting attitudes and beliefs, and not promote any need for attitude change. Because most attitude change is thought to occur when a message falls into individuals' latitude of noncommitment but is close to their latitude of rejection, it appears that those individuals who have moderate levels of prejudice are most likely to be influenced by a positively toned description of a member of a stigmatized social group. More prejudiced individuals may reject the positively described social group member outright while less prejudiced individuals may already agree with the positive description of the social group member.

Cognitive Busyness Moderates the Effects of Written Narratives

Although it appears that there will be different memory nodes for fictional and nonfictional information, it is also likely that people may have difficulty determining whether the source of their knowledge was ostensibly fictional or nonfictional. Johnson and her colleagues (Johnson, Hashtroudi, & Lindsay, 1993) call this difficulty of determining the source of one's memory, knowledge, and beliefs a failure in source monitoring. They claim that the accuracy of one's decisions or judgments is largely dependent on being able to remember whether the source of the information used in the

decision making process is reliable. For instance, the accuracy of a decision could be greatly affected by whether the facts with which you are making a decision are based on information from a grocery store tabloid versus the New York Times. According to the source-monitoring framework, the process by which you determine the source of your memories is based on the particular characteristics of your memories. For instance, memories for perceived events tend to include more perceptual, spatial and temporal, semantic, and affective information and less information about cognitive operations than memories for imagined events (Johnson et al., 1993; Johnson & Raye, 1981). Thus, source monitoring is based on a decision process whereby the characteristics of a particular memory are compared to the average characteristics of memories derived from different sources (e.g., internally generated or externally generated memories). In terms of differentiating between written passages that are represented to be fictional or nonfictional, it appears that determining the source of the information gleaned from the passages would be difficult. If one were reading a book versus watching a movie, it is likely that the sensory and contextual information associated with the two sources would differ. However, if both the fictional and nonfictional stimuli were in written form, it would be unlikely that the sensory and contextual information attached to either type of information would differ. Thus, these features would not be useful when one seeks to determine whether the source of the written information was fictional or nonfictional. Because of this lack of source cues on which to differentiate between fictional and nonfictional written information, readers' real-world judgments related to the fictional or nonfictional written information that they receive may not differ based on whether the source of the information is fictional or nonfictional.

In his work on the influence of fictional versus nonfictional written passages on beliefs about social groups, M. D. Slater (1988/1989, 1990) contends that nonfictional narratives had a greater effect on readers' beliefs only in the familiar condition because in the unfamiliar condition a reader's cognitive capacity is fully engaged in understanding the presented information. When readers are attempting to understand information about unfamiliar groups, they have "little opportunity to critically compare new information to preexisting beliefs," according to Slater (1988/1989, p. 113). Slater concludes that "the effect of familiarity and factuality on social beliefs is mostly through information processing differences associated with familiarity and factuality, not through their differential impact on social inference processes" (p. 116). In essence, Slater is arguing that when confronted by information about an unfamiliar social group for which readers do not have preexisting beliefs (e.g., Eritrean guerrillas), the cognitive capacity of the readers is fully utilized in understanding the new information and none is left over to examine critically the accuracy of the information. However, when readers do have preexisting beliefs about a familiar social group (e.g., Contra guerrillas), they probably have sufficient cognitive capacity to examine critically the accuracy of the presented information.

In a review entitled "How Mental Systems Believe," Gilbert (1991) suggests that acceptance of an idea is part of the automatic comprehension of that idea and that rejection of an idea only occurs subsequently to and more effortfully than does acceptance. Following Spinoza, Gilbert argues that acceptance and comprehension of ideas are not distinct psychological acts but that acceptance of an idea is part of the initial comprehension process. Research has found that participants who read both true and false

linguistic propositions were more likely to consider the false propositions to be true, but not vice versa, if they were interrupted versus not interrupted while processing the information (Gilbert, Krull, & Malone, 1990). This result occurred even when the accuracy of the proposition was revealed prior to its comprehension. In fact, just the act of quickly reading a false proposition prior to assessing its veracity increased the likelihood that participants considered it to be true. In a similar vein, research has shown that when individuals' capacities are impaired by doing mental arithmetic while listening to true or false statements, these cognitively busy individuals are more likely to misremember the false statements as true than are individuals who are not cognitively busy (Begg, Anas, & Farinacci, 1992). In fact, the researchers suggest that this pattern occurred because cognitive busyness had an adverse impact on participants' memory for the source of the statements and the corresponding veracity of the statements. At the same time, cognitive busyness did not lessen another probable basis for judging a statement's truth, its familiarity to the participants (e.g., illusory-truth effect).

Work by Gilbert and his colleagues (Gilbert, 1991, 1993; Gilbert et al., 1990; Gilbert, Tafarodi, & Malone, 1993) suggests that, by default, people initially think the information that they receive is true. Only if they have time, energy, and/or conclusive evidence are people able to reject information that they initially accepted during the comprehension process. In a manner similar to other cognitive paradigms, such as the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986) and certain models of stereotype activation (e.g., Bodenhausen, Macrae, & Garst, in press), it appears that individuals require both motivation and capacity to analyze incoming information fully and make informed decisions. In fact, when under either cognitive load or time pressure,

people were more likely to believe false information and use it in making decisions about sentencing a criminal defendant or how much they like a target individual (Gilbert et al., 1993). The false information did not inform people's judgments, however, when they had the capacity and time to make accurate decisions. These results suggest that to make accurate judgments, people must have both the desire and capacity to use the rules of logical analysis to fully examine the available information. If people are rushed, are attending to other tasks, or are unwilling to analyze the available information, then the fact that they have the information available to produce a correct judgment may be irrelevant.

The "inclusion/exclusion model" also suggests that the default operation for humans is to include rather than exclude incoming information (Schwarz & Bless, 1992a). Schwarz and Bless (1992a) argue that exclusion is an effortful process that needs to be triggered by features salient to the task or the communication context. In line with how Gilbert (1993) views the processing of true or false information, the inclusion/exclusion model implies that the exemplars featured in a written passage will automatically be incorporated into one's representation of the target group to which that exemplar belongs. The exemplar will only be subsequently removed from the reader's representation of the social group through a second, more effortful step. Thus, competing tasks that tax processing capacity will likely facilitate the emergence of assimilation effects and, at the same time, interfere with the exclusion operation and undermine the emergence of contrast effects.

Support for this idea comes from three experiments that examined the amount of assimilation and/or contrast that occurs when there are limitations on either motivation or capacity (Martin, Seta, & Crelia, 1990). This research utilized priming stimuli that were

found to result in contrast effects when participants were both motivated and able to process the information. However when the participants were distracted, unmotivated because their individual responses were supposedly camouflaged by group-level responses, or when they were classified as having low need for cognition, they were more likely to assimilate versus contrast the information. These results suggest that inclusion is the default mechanism and exclusion only occurs in a second, more effortful process.

Lastly, Shapiro and Lang (1991) posit in their model of how television influences the construction of social reality that people, by default, respond to every stimulus as if it were real, at least momentarily. According to this model, higher-order cognitive processes are utilized to distinguish which stimulus events, and later, which stored episodic memories are relevant to the "real world." Thus, even though event memories may include a lot of contextual information about the source of the event, including whether the event was fictional or factual, this information may only be utilized by higher-order processes that require both motivation and capacity to fully engage.

Based on the research just reviewed, it was the contention of the present research that cognitive busyness will prevent participants from distinguishing between fictional and nonfictional information in their processing of the written passages by undermining processing capacity. In order to investigate this possibility, we could have simply created cognitive busyness by having participants engage in an additional, irrelevant task. However, if participants had engaged in an irrelevant task, they may not have fully comprehended the information that they were supposedly reading. Thus, the additional task may not only have reduced the cognitive capacity available to the participants, but may also have directed their attention away from the information provided in the written

passages. To solve this potential problem, it was possible to use the technique employed by Gilbert, Pelham, and Krull in their study of person perception (1988, Exp. 1). In this research, all participants were asked to observe a silent video of a female supposedly getting acquainted with another female, who was out of view of the camera. In addition, approximately half the participants were simultaneously asked to memorize the topics that the target female was supposedly discussing. Although participants who performed the dual tasks were able to recall more of the discussion topics than those who performed only the observation task, the dual-task participants were unable to modify their person perception judgments to accommodate contextual information. More specifically, the dual-task participants, unlike the single-task participants, did not adjust their assessments about the target female's perceived trait anxiety based on whether the target was supposedly discussing anxiety provoking or relaxing topics. As applied to the present research, the possible problem of cognitively busy people simply being inattentive to the presented information was dealt with by having the participants in the cognitively busy condition attempt to memorize information presented in the written passages. Although this task should increase participants' abilities to remember the presented information and, perhaps, also increase the likelihood that the participants will endorse belief items consistent with the narrative passages, the task should not leave the participants with sufficient cognitive capacity to allow them to "unbelieve" or exclude the presented information from their representations of the various social groups.

Perceived Plausibility Mediates the Effects of Written Narratives

Although research consistently has found that ostensibly "real" representations or portrayals have a greater impact on audiences than do fictional representations or

portrayals, it is unclear whether people actually believe the "real" information to be, in fact, more realistic. For instance, Gilbert (1993) discusses how a Klansman would probably consider a book by a white supremacist to be more truthful than an encyclopedia because, from the Klan member's perspective, the former would contain a higher proportion of true statements than would the latter. As Gilbert summarizes, "when we say a person seeks true information we really mean that the person seeks information that he or she *considers* true....Statements that complement (rather than contradict) what one already believes are likely to be seen as true" (p. 81). Thus, it was expected that whether people consider narrative passages about social group members to be truthful will have an impact on their influence. In fact, a study has shown that the perceived reality of television programs addressing law enforcement is a more important predictor of viewers' images of society safety, understanding of law enforcement, and acceptance of the way television portrays police behavior than are demographic characteristics, direct experience with law enforcement, or total time spent watching programs dealing with law enforcement (D. Slater & Elliott, 1982).

A criticism of the research that examines how television affects viewers' attitudes is that the researchers have generally worked under the assumption that the reality of the televised message lies in the content of the message itself and not with the perceivers (Potter, 1988). In studies that have addressed the effects of "real" versus fictional depictions (Atkin, 1983; Berkowitz & Alioto, 1973; Geen, 1975; Noble, 1973; Pingree, 1978; Thomas & Tell, 1974), only two have included a manipulation check to determine whether the participants exposed to the "real" stimulus actually perceived the material to be more real than those exposed to the fictional stimulus (Atkin, 1983; Pingree, 1978).

Since Atkin (1983) found that there was more within-group variation than between-group variation on the reality manipulation check measure, it appears that perceptions of reality are a matter of individual interpretation (as cited in Potter, 1988). Therefore, instead of assuming that introducing the written passages as either fictional or nonfictional would make all viewers think the passages are real or less real, in the present research the audience's perception of the reality of the stimulus was measured directly.

Research on the perceived reality of television suggests that there is a dimensional structure for people's perceptions of television's reality (e.g., Busselle, 1995, August; Dorr, 1983; Elliott, Rudd, & Good, 1983, August; Hawkins, 1977; Potter, 1988; Reeves, 1978). For children, it is clear that their perceptions of the reality of television fall into unique dimensions (Hawkins, 1977). In a factor analysis, the first factor entitled "Magic Window" accounted for 29% of the total rotated variance. This factor addressed whether the children perceived the people seen on television to be either dramatic or actual people. The second factor entitled "Social Expectations," with 14% of the total variance, measured the degree to which people and events on television are similar to those of the real world. According to Hawkins, the key distinction between these two main dimensions of perceived reality is the degree to which television is seen as portraying real life instead of fiction and the degree to which television characters and events are similar to children's expectations about the real world.

Research on what people mean when they define something as real indicates that almost half of the 16-year-old and adult participants defined "real" as "something that was probable, something that had happened to them or to acquaintances" (Dorr, 1983, p. 204). Only about a quarter of the adults defined "real" as something that could possibly happen.

However, when providing the rationale for their reality judgments, both adolescents and adults based their reasons more on the possibility of the event occurring rather than on the probability that it will occur. Reasons based on personal experience, or probability, were the second most frequently cited rationale for individuals' reality judgments. According to Dorr, "more and more, *real* means made up, but probable in real life, representative in real life, like something personal acquaintances or I have experienced" (p. 205).

Based on Dorr's research (1983), it appears that the most appropriate measure of perceived reality for the current research is a measure of readers' perceptions of how *probable* the depicted representations or portrayals are likely to be in the real world. Since *plausibility* is a concept closely related to *probability*, the Perceived Plausibility Subscale of the Perceived Reality Scale developed by Elliott et al. (1983, August) was used in the present research to measure how realistic readers perceive written information to be. Elliott et al. claim that like Hawkin's (1977) Magic Window dimension, the Perceived Plausibility Subscale can help determine whether the readers actually perceive that the passages provide social and environmental images like those existing in the real world. It was expected that the greater the perceived plausibility of the narrative passages, the greater the effect they will have on readers' beliefs. This prediction was based on the premise that there should be stronger links between people's representations and what they perceive to be real information than between people's representations and what they perceive to be less real information (e.g., Gerrig, 1993).

In addition, it was thought that participants' perceptions of the perceived plausibility of the written narrative passages will be dependent on their attitudes about the social group featured in the passages. As such, it was expected that more prejudiced

individuals will not only ignore or distort information that contradicts their beliefs about social group members, they will also have less faith in the perceived plausibility of the accounts (see Johnson & Sherman, 1990). In turn, to the extent that participants have less faith in the perceived plausibility of narrative passages featuring a member of a target group, it was expected that reading those narrative passages will have less impact on their beliefs. More specifically, it was expected that the perceived plausibility of narrative passages featuring a member of a social group for which readers have preexisting attitudes will mediate the relationship between readers' preexisting attitudes about the depicted social group and their subsequently reported beliefs about the social group.

Overview

It would be naive to assume that simply reading a narrative passage about one of several social groups would have a long-term impact on participants' attitudes, or overall positive or negative evaluations of the depicted social group (e.g., Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). Attitudes are complex structures that are made up of many diverse components that vary in salience across time and context (e.g., Wilson & Hodges, 1992). The general assumption of attitude theorists is that beliefs are the building blocks of attitudes, since beliefs are understood to be descriptive associations or linkages that people establish between attitude objects such as social groups and various attributes (e.g., Fishbein & Ajzen). Therefore, one of the ways to change individuals' attitudes about a social group would be to first change their beliefs about that social group. In this spirit, the present research attempted to demonstrate primarily that beliefs can be affected by written passages. However, the effect of reading narrative passages on participants' attitudes toward the social group portrayed in the passage was also examined. Lastly, the current

research examined whether the written passages influence how much confidence people have in the beliefs they hold. More strongly held beliefs should have more impact on people's behaviors than beliefs not strongly held (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). Moreover, research suggests that individuals' confidences in their beliefs may give an indication of whether their preexisting beliefs were reinforced by narrative passages that they read (M. D. Slater & Rouner, 1992).

Overall, the current investigation sought to determine how fictional and nonfictional representations of a social group member affect viewers' beliefs about the represented social group. This research was undertaken in order to extend and replicate prior work that has examined the differential effect of fictional and nonfictional written passages on readers' real-world judgments (e.g., Brock & Green, 1995, September; M. D. Slater, 1988/1989, 1990). The current investigation not only attempted to demonstrate the differential impact of fictional and nonfictional information on participants' beliefs about social groups, but also to examine whether readers' preexisting attitudes about the depicted social groups and the perceived plausibility of the narrative passages will alter the influence of the written passages. In addition, the cognitive processes by which people differentiate between fictional versus nonfictional written passages also were examined.

Hypotheses

Taken together, the available theory and evidence suggest that reading positively toned written passages about various social groups will have more influence on readers' beliefs if the passages are represented to be nonfictional versus fictional. However, this effect was thought to depend, at least in part, on readers' preexisting attitudes about the depicted social group, whether readers are cognitively busy or not when they read the

passages, and the perceived plausibility of the passages.

The general hypotheses of the present research were as follows:

1) When participants who are not cognitively busy read written passages about members of various social groups, the passages will be more influential on their beliefs about the depicted social groups if the passages are represented to be nonfictional versus fictional.

2) When cognitively busy participants read written passages about members of various social groups, it was expected that they will lack the cognitive capacity to take the second, more effortful step to reject or exclude the initially accepted information from their mental representations of the depicted social groups. Since cognitively busy participants will be less capable of rejecting or excluding fictional information from their representations, the consistency of their beliefs with the narrative passages should not differ based on the passages' fictional/nonfictional source.

3) Consistent with research by Brock and Green (1995, September), it was hypothesized that participants who read a passage related to the target belief items will display greater belief consistency with the passage that they read than participants who read an unrelated passage.

4) It was expected that participants' beliefs will be more affected by narrative passages that they consider to be more plausible.

In addition, for target groups about which the participant population does not have clear a priori attitudes (i.e., French Canadians), it was expected that:

5) The effect of the fiction/nonfiction manipulation will not be moderated by participants' preexisting attitudes about French Canadians since the participants do not

hold clearly defined attitudes about French Canadians.

6) Due to the lack of clear a priori attitudes about French Canadians, it was expected that participants' preexisting attitudes about French Canadians will not be significantly related to their plausibility judgments of the French Canadian passages nor will perceived plausibility mediate the relationship between participants' preexisting attitudes about French Canadians and their subsequently reported beliefs about French Canadians.

For target groups that are generally stigmatized in the United States and for which the participant population holds clear a priori attitudes (i.e., lesbians), it was expected that:

7) More versus less prejudiced individuals will display beliefs that are less consistent with positively toned lesbian passages that contradict their preexisting attitudes about lesbians and, furthermore, will perceive these passages to be less plausible.

8) It was thought that the influence of the fictional/nonfictional source of the written passages will be moderated by the preexisting attitudes of the participants, but only when participants are not cognitively busy. This effect may not be linear, however, because it is likely that those with moderate levels of prejudice will be most affected by the positively toned descriptions of a member of a generally stigmatized social group. As compared to individuals who have moderate levels of prejudice, more prejudiced individuals may be less affected by the fictional/nonfictional nature of the descriptions because their preexisting attitudes may cause them to reject any positively toned and thus, discrepant, descriptions. Likewise, less prejudiced individuals may be less affected by the source manipulation than those with moderate levels of prejudice because less prejudiced individuals already agree with the positively toned descriptions. Thus, it is likely that

those with moderate levels of prejudice will be the most likely to distinguish between the fictional/nonfictional source of the written information about lesbians.

9) When participants are cognitively busy it was expected that their prejudice level will not moderate the impact of fictional versus nonfictional information about lesbians. This pattern was expected to occur because, irrespective of their preexisting prejudice level, the participants will not have enough cognitive capacity available to allow them to differentiate between the fictional and nonfictional nature of the information that they read.

10) It was predicted that participants' perceptions of the plausibility of the lesbian narrative passages will be related to their preexisting prejudice toward lesbians, and more specifically, that the perceived plausibility of the narrative passages will mediate the relationship between participants' preexisting prejudice toward lesbians and their subsequently reported beliefs about lesbians. Due to this relationship between preexisting prejudice and plausibility, it was expected that, similar to how readers' preexisting attitudes about lesbians may moderate the passages' influence, the perceived plausibility of the passages also may alter the passages' influence.

METHOD

Participants

A total of 433 undergraduates from introductory psychology classes participated in the experiment in exchange for course credit. Responses of eight participants were excluded from the data analysis because of problems with the experimental booklets that they had received. This left a total of 425 male (N = 135) and female (N = 290) participants whose ages ranged from 17 to 48, with a mean age of 19.14 years. The ethnic

composition of the sample was 86% European American, 5% African American, 3% Asian/Asian American, 3% Latino/Hispanic, 1% French Canadian, and 2% other.

Design

Participants read a single narrative passage about one of three different social groups [French Canadians, lesbians, or rural Americans (control)]. There were two versions of the passage nested within each of the social groups, making a total of six different passages. The source for these passages was described as either a fictional short story or a true-life account (nonfictional), and a cognitive busyness manipulation was either absent or present. All participants were asked to report their beliefs about both the French Canadian and lesbian social groups. Thus, the experiment had a 2 (narrative source: fiction or nonfiction) X 2 (cognitive busyness: absent or present) X 6 [(replication: 2 narrative versions per target group) / 3 (narrative passage target: French Canadian, lesbian, or rural American)] partially-crossed factorial design. Participants were randomly assigned to conditions. While all of the factors were between-subjects, the replication factor was nested within narrative passage target. The influence of preexisting attitudes about the French Canadian and lesbian target groups was examined in a series of sub-designs. Specifically, participants' beliefs about each social group were analyzed as a function of their preexisting attitudes in addition to the narrative target group, replication, narrative source, and cognitive busyness manipulations. The possibility that the *perceived plausibility* of the narrative passages (irrespective of their putative origins in fiction or nonfiction) mediated their impact on subsequently reported beliefs was also examined. Because perceived plausibility may be partly determined by participants' preexisting attitudes about the groups, this issue was examined in sub-designs addressing each social

group separately.

Materials

Preexisting Attitude Scales. Both Likert-type measures and evaluation thermometers were used to assess participants' preexisting attitudes about the two target social groups (French Canadians and lesbians; see Appendix A).

Two separate Likert-type attitude scales measured attitudes about the two target groups. A five-item scale was developed to measure participants' attitudes about French Canadians (e.g., "French Canadians are unlikeable people."). In addition, the five items of the Attitudes Toward Lesbians - Short Form (ATL-S), a subscale of the short-form Attitudes Toward Lesbians and Gay Men (ATLG-S; Herek, 1988), was used to measure attitudes toward lesbians (e.g., "Lesbians just can't fit into our society.").

The Likert-type attitude measures employed a 7-point response scale, with "1" signifying "disagree strongly" and "7" signifying "agree strongly." The items were worded so that a high score sometimes reflected less prejudiced attitudes about the target group and sometimes reflected more prejudiced attitudes. However, the items were scored so that high values on each scale indicate more prejudiced attitudes about the target group.

The evaluation thermometer was used to measure the purely evaluative aspects of attitudes about the target groups (Haddock, Zanna & Esses, 1993). This single-item measure has been found to yield scores that are consistent with and as reliable as those generated via multiple-item measures (Jaccard, Weber, & Lundmark, 1975). For this measure, participants were asked to "circle a number between 0° and 100° to indicate your overall evaluation of typical members of a target group." The extreme ends of the scale, 0° and 100°, were labeled "extremely unfavorable" and "extremely favorable,"

respectively, with the adjectives "very," "quite," "fairly," and "slightly" unfavorable or favorable marked at 10° increments. The midpoint of the scale 50°, was labeled "neither favorable nor unfavorable."

Social Group Belief Scales. A total of 12 items were used to measure participants' beliefs specifically related to the topics of the French Canadian and lesbian narrative passages (see Appendix B). Based on pretesting procedures, the six belief items regarding French Canadians were unrelated to participants' preexisting attitudes about French Canadians. However, for the lesbian belief items, pretesting demonstrated that the six belief items were counter to the preexisting attitudes of the more prejudiced participants, yet were acceptable to less prejudiced participants. Example belief items for each target group are: "French Canadians are very focused on their own culture." (French Canadian target) and "The love and commitment of two lesbians in a long-term romantic relationship can be very strong and deep." (lesbian target). In addition, two items for each target group were used to assess group-related attitudes that were not directly addressed within any of the passages [e.g., "I admire French Canadians." (French Canadian target) and "Lesbians are generally unpleasant people." (lesbian target)].

All 16 items employed a 7-point Likert-type response scale, with "1" signifying "disagree strongly" and "7" signifying "agree strongly." The belief items were worded so that a high score sometimes reflected beliefs consistent with the passage and sometimes reflected beliefs inconsistent with the passage. Similarly, the attitude items were worded so that a high score sometimes reflected more positive attitudes about the social group and sometimes reflected less positive attitudes about the social group. However, all items were scored so that high values on each scale indicate either beliefs consistent with the

narrative passages or more positive attitudes about the target social group. The attitude items were included to provide some indication whether the influence of the narrative passages generalizes to attitudes about the target groups.

Stimulus Narrative Passages. Stimulus materials were six written passages featuring either a French Canadian, lesbian, or a rural American (control) protagonist writing in the third-person voice (see Appendix C). The passages were very loosely adapted from actual autobiographical essays found in anthologies published within the past 17 years (Chambers, 1984; Lamontagne, 1995; Martin & Lyon, 1980; Nelson, 1980; Noun, 1992). The criteria for the use of a passage were that it was a relatively positive description of a member of a particular social group, could be credibly presented as either fictional or nonfictional, and that it could be edited to approximately one single-spaced page in length. The content of the four target group passages (2 versions each for the French Canadian and lesbian target groups) was based on the belief items selected during the pretesting procedures. Both of the French Canadian passages focused on the separation of the French Canadian culture from the English Canadian culture, the pride French Canadians have in their heritage, and the role of the Catholic Church in French Canadian society. The lesbian passages addressed the deep love and commitment two women can share for each other, the constraints lesbians feel about displaying their love in public, and the harassment lesbians face in their day-to-day lives. The content of the control passages about rural Americans was unrelated to the information contained in either the French Canadian or lesbian passages, but the control passages were similar to each other.

Perceived Plausibility Scale. Six items were selected from the 12 items of the Perceived Plausibility Subscale of the Perceived Reality Scale (Elliott et al., 1983, August; see Appendix D). The Perceived Plausibility Subscale was used to measure the extent to which participants perceive televised events, characters, and settings to match the events, people, and settings that exist in the real world. Only the items that are related to events and characters were selected since the items relating to setting are more applicable to a televised setting than the setting of written text. In addition, the selected items were modified so that they assessed the perceived plausibility of written passages rather than televised events and so that they measured the perceived plausibility and realism of how members of a particular social group act (e.g., "The way people in their social group really live their everyday lives is not portrayed very accurately in this passage."). Each item employed a 7-point Likert-type response scale with "1" signifying "disagree strongly" and "7" signifying "agree strongly." The items were worded so that a high value sometimes reflected greater perceived plausibility and sometimes reflected lower perceived plausibility, but they were scored so that a higher score indicates greater perceived plausibility.

Procedure

Screening for Preexisting Attitudes. During the first week of the semester, 1,357 introductory psychology students were given both the Likert-type attitude items and the evaluation thermometers in order to measure their preexisting attitudes about each of the target social groups (French Canadians and lesbians; see Appendix A). The order in which the two types of scales were presented was alternated so that approximately half the participants responded to the evaluation thermometers first while the other half responded

to the Likert-type attitude items first. The Likert-type attitude items for both of the target groups as well as the five items from the Attitudes Toward Gay Men - Short Form (ATG-S; Herek, 1988) were intermixed. For the evaluation thermometer, filler target groups that were unrelated to this study were intermixed with the target groups.

The introduction to the screening packet informed participants that the researchers were interested in determining how people view different social groups. They were reminded that their responses would be kept strictly confidential. After participants completed the attitude items, they were told that if they wished to participate in future research related to the screening questionnaire, they would need to provide additional information. A personal code was created for the participants who had consented to be contacted based on their instructor's name, gender, race/ethnic identity, last four digits of their student identification numbers, and the day of the month on which they were born. In addition, participants were asked for their first name and local phone numbers so that they could be contacted for the later research.

Because multiple-item measures of participants' attitudes about French Canadians and lesbians were collected, a principle-axis factor analysis was performed on the attitude items relating to these two groups (retaining factors with eigenvalues > 1, using a varimax rotation) to reduce the data into two meaningful composites. The two composites that resulted matched the anticipated structure for the French Canadian and lesbian prejudicial attitude composites (see Appendix A) and had adequate reliabilities (Cronbach's $\alpha = .72$ for the 5-item French Canadian composite; Cronbach's $\alpha = .85$ for 5-item lesbian

composite).[1]

Examination of the pattern of responses to the evaluation thermometers revealed reactivity on the part of the participants. Close to 7% of the participants in the screening sample refused to differentiate between any of the groups being evaluated (i.e., French Canadians, lesbians, Latinos/Hispanics, small town USA residents, Irish, and gay men). Moreover, interviews with the research assistants present at the screening sessions and who entered the data into computer files revealed that a sizable minority of the students expressed concern about completing the evaluation thermometers. Due to these issues and the fact that the reliability of the French Canadian and lesbian attitude composites increased only trivially with the inclusion of the relevant evaluation thermometer, the thermometers were not utilized in subsequent analyses.

Main Experiment. At least three weeks after they had completed the screening questionnaire, participants were recruited over the phone for the main part of the experiment.

Participants reported to the laboratory for a study on narrative passages. The sessions included groups of up to 15 males and females, supervised by either a male or female experimenter. The gender of the experimenter was varied in order to control for potential demand characteristics created by seeing only a female or a male in a leadership position. The experimenter explained to participants that the study dealt with written

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[1]When the reliabilities of the French Canadian and lesbian attitude composites were recalculated based on only participants who completed the full experiment (N= 425), the reliabilities were slightly higher than the reliabilities derived from the screening sample (N = 1,357). For the smaller experimental sample, the Cronbach's αs were .74 for the 5-item French Canadian attitude composite and .86 for the 5-item lesbian attitude composite.

passages and that they were being asked to read one passage and provide their perceptions of and reactions to it. Participants were told that the purpose of the study was to determine which features of narrative passages make them most interesting and enjoyable to read. Next, participants were asked to read and sign a consent form and to begin going through the experimental booklets.

Participants first read an introduction to the narrative passage that revealed its ostensible source (i.e., fiction or nonfiction). Source information was also provided by varying the title displayed in bold print at the top of each passage. The introduction for each of the source conditions was as follows:

Fiction

> These passages were selected because they represent fictional, made-up short-stories dealing with the ways people can be influenced by the social groups to which they belong. The stories were made up by various creative writers in order to portray their view of people's life experiences. In fact, these stories were selected from a number of fictional, made-up short-stories that recently appeared in an anthology entitled Imagining Social Groups: Fictional Short Stories. Resemblance to real persons and places is of course coincidental.

Nonfictional

> These passages were selected because they represent true-life accounts of how real people have been influenced by the social groups to which they belong. These true stories were written by people who want to share their actual life experiences with others. In fact, these passages were selected from a number of nonfictional essays that recently appeared in an anthology entitled Reflections and Recollections:

True-Life Accounts.

Approximately half of the participants were then given instructions that told them that they would be tested on the details of the narrative passage that they read (cognitively busy) while the other half did not receive this instruction (not cognitively busy). The participants in the cognitively busy condition were told that "it is expected that those with good cognitive ability and reading skills will be able to recall more details from the passage than those lacking in these abilities." This additional task was included in order to encourage participants to rehearse the details contained in the narrative passages while they read them. When Gilbert and his colleagues (Gilbert et al., 1988, Exp. 1) used this manipulation they found that although participants in the cognitively busy condition were able to recall more of the presented information, they did not have enough capacity left over to utilize contextual information in their person perception judgments.

After reading the introductory section, participants read a narrative passage about either a French Canadian, lesbian, or a rural American (control) (see Appendix C). In order to mask the purpose of the experiment, all participants were asked to rate how interesting and enjoyable they found the narrative to be after they had finished reading it (e.g., "How interesting did you find the passage you just read to be?"; see Appendix E). A total of five items were used with each response being assessed via a 7-point bipolar scale.

Next, participants were told that "To better understand how people respond to what they read it is important to understand the beliefs and knowledge they already possess." To this end, all participants were asked to fill out the Social Group Belief Scales (see Appendix B). The items for the French Canadian and lesbian target groups were

intermixed in order to prevent an order effect. After they have answered all of the belief items, participants were then asked to provide a confidence rating for the judgments they made about each of the two target groups (i.e., "How confident are you in the eight ratings you made about x" with x indicating the target group). The responses to these confidence items were recorded using 7-point bipolar scales anchored by "very confident" and "not very confident."

Participants then completed a single-item manipulation check of the source of the narrative passages: "**Without looking back at the passage,** as best as you can recall, please indicate whether the passage was reported to be nonfictional (true-life account), fictional (made-up account), this information was not specified, or don't remember." To determine whether those under the cognitive busyness manipulation actually memorized more information than those not cognitively busy, on the next page participants were told "Without looking back at the passage, please write down any and all details that you can remember from the passage."

Next, participants were asked to indicate how much the narrative passage reflected what they actually believe happens in the real world by filling out the Perceived Plausibility Scale (see Appendix D).

On the last page of the experimental booklet participants completed standard demographic items (i.e., gender, age, race/ethnicity, citizenship, and approximate grade point average). Although it would be preferable to exclude any participant who is a member of one of the target groups under study, the sexual orientation of the participants was not assessed due to privacy concerns. So that the participants' responses could be matched with the screening survey, participants again answered questions so that their

personal code could be recreated. The last item of the experimental booklet asked participants to describe what they believed the purpose of the study to be. When participants completed the questionnaire, they were thanked for participating in the study, debriefed, and excused.

RESULTS

Manipulation Checks and Data Reduction

Manipulation Checks. *Source Recall.* A total of 76% of the participants accurately recalled the source of the narrative passage that they read, while the remaining participants either indicated the wrong source (8%), that the source was not specified (12%), or that they did not remember the source of the narrative passage (4%). Unexpectedly, a logistic regression analysis examining the accuracy versus inaccuracy of participants' recall of the narrative source as a basis of the target of the narrative passages, replication nested within target, source, and cognitive busyness revealed that participants were 3.49 times better at accurately recalling the source of the nonfictional than the fictional passages, Wald z-ratio (1, N = 425) = 23.93, $p < .001$. Although only marginally significant, the accuracy of participants' recall of the fictional and nonfictional passages was modified by the target of the passages (Wald z-ratio (2, N=425) = 5.73, $p < .06$) as well as both the target and whether participants were cognitively busy or not, Wald z-ratio (2, N=425) = 4.81, $p < .10$ (see Table 1). Examination of the pattern of the odds ratios suggested that when not cognitively busy, participants were better at correctly recalling the source of the ostensibly nonfictional versus fictional narrative passages (odds ratio = 3.21; Wald z-ratio (1, N=206) = 9.55, $p < .01$) but the accuracy of their recall did not further vary as a function of the target group, Wald z-ratio (2, N=206) = 3.23, $p > .15$.

However, when participants were cognitively busy the accuracy of their recall of the nonfictional versus fictional source of the passages differed significantly across the three target groups, Wald z-ratio (2, N = 219) = 6.04, $p < .05$. When they were cognitively busy memorizing the details of the narrative passages, participants were significantly more likely to accurately recall the source of the ostensibly nonfictional versus fictional passages when the passages featured a French Canadian versus a lesbian protagonist, Wald z-ratio (1, N= 147) = 5.62, $p < .05$. There was no difference in the likelihood of participants to better recall the nonfictional versus fictional source of the passages when the odds ratios were compared for the French Canadian and rural American passages (Wald z-ratio (2, N = 148) < 1, p = n.s.) and the lesbian and rural American passages, Wald z-ratio (2, N =143) = 2.08, $p > .10$.

Table 1 - Odds Ratios Demonstrating More Accurate Recall of the Nonfictional versus Fictional Source of the Passages

	Narrative Passage Target			
Cognitive Busyness	French Canadian	Lesbian	Rural American	$p <$
Absent				
Odds Ratio	1.94_a	2.15_a	16.25^*_a	n.s.
% Accurate - Nonfiction	84.4	82.4	96.8	
% Accurate - Fiction	73.5	68.4	64.9	
Present				
Odds Ratio	12.69^*_a	1.30_b	$4.65^*_{a,b}$	.05
% Accurate - Nonfiction	93.5	77.1	90.6	
% Accurate - Fiction	53.3	72.2	67.5	

Note. Significance of the simple main effect of narrative passage target is indicated in the fourth column. Within rows, different subscripts indicate there is a significant difference in the odds ratios. Odds ratios signified by an asterisk indicate that participants were significantly more likely to accurately recall the nonfictional source of the narrative passages than the fictional source of the narrative passages.

Overall, participants were more likely to make errors recalling the source of the putatively fictional narrative passages as compared to the putatively nonfictional passages. In particular, this was true when participants had read the French Canadian passages when they were cognitively busy and when they had read the rural American passages, regardless of whether they were cognitively busy or not. Although most people recalled the source of the passages correctly, a notable number did not. Therefore, in addition to the main analyses using the full sample, supplementary analyses were undertaken in which only the participants who correctly reported the alleged source of the narratives were included (N = 322; results of these latter analyses are reported in footnotes).

Cognitive Busyness. In order to verify that participants who were cognitively busy actually memorized more information than participants who were not cognitively busy, participants' recall attempts were coded for their accuracy by two independent judges blind to the condition under which the free recall task took place. For each piece of information participants wrote down the judges indicated whether the information was a specific detail from the passage, a general idea from the passage, was inconsistent with the passage, or had already been recalled. Since the judges' ratings for the number of specific details that the participants recalled were significantly correlated ($r = .62$, $p < .001$), they were averaged to form an overall index of participants' recall. The average number of specific pieces of information that participants recalled was then examined as a function of the target of the narrative passages, replication nested within target group, source, and cognitive busyness. Although participants as a whole did not remember many specific details of the passages and while the difference was not extensive, as expected, participants recalled more specific details from the passages when they had been cognitively busy memorizing its details versus not busy (Ms = 4.79 versus 4.24), $F(1, 420) = 4.49$, $p < .05$. There was also a theoretically uninteresting effect of passage content ($F(2, 420) = 19.93$, $p < .001$), such that more details about the rural American passages were recalled ($M = 5.70$) than about the French Canadian ($M = 4.05$) or lesbian passages ($M = 3.85$), $F(1, 420) = 26.38$, $p < .001$ and $F(1, 420) = 33.28$, $p < .001$, respectively. There was no difference in the number of specific details recalled from the French Canadian and lesbian passages, $F(1, 420) < 1$, p = n.s.

Overall, examination of participants' recall of the specific details of the passages verified that, as compared to non-busy participants, cognitively busy participants had

devoted more of their cognitive energy to memorizing the details of the passages.

Perceived Plausibility of Fictional/Nonfictional Sources. To verify that participants viewed the nonfictional narrative passages as more plausible than the fictional passages, perceived plausibility was examined as a function of narrative passage target, replication nested within target group, narrative source, and cognitive busyness. Consistent with the predicted effect for the source of the narrative passages, participants perceived the nonfictional passages to be significantly more plausible ($M = 5.44$) than the fictional passages ($M = 5.25$), $F(1, 418) = 4.11$, $p < .05$. However, as compared to the midpoint of the perceived plausibility scale (4 on a 7-point scale), the fictional ($M = 5.25$, $t(228) = 20.53$, $p < .001$) as well as the nonfictional ($M = 5.44$, $t(193) = 23.31$, $p < .001$) passages were perceived to be rather plausible. The perceived plausibility of the passages also differed based on the target of the narrative passages, $F(2, 418) = 23.53$, $p < .001$. Participants perceived the French Canadian passages to be significantly less plausible ($M = 4.94$) than both the lesbian ($M = 5.59$) and rural American passages ($M = 5.49$), $F(1, 418) = 40.72$, $p < .001$ and $F(1, 418) = 28.72$, $p < .001$, respectively. Although the effect of the target of the narrative passages was somewhat modified by whether participants were cognitively busy or not ($F(2, 410) = 2.87$, $p < .06$), closer examination revealed that this pattern occurred only because participants tended to perceive the rural American passages as less plausible when they had been cognitively busy memorizing the details of the rural American passages versus not cognitively busy, $F(1, 410) = 3.56$, $p < .10$.

Thus, even though as expected participants perceived the nonfictional passages to be more plausible than the fictional passages, both types of passages were perceived to be rather plausible. Unexpectedly, participants also perceived the French Canadian passages

to be less plausible than either the lesbian or rural American passages.

Preexisting Attitudes. As had been expected, the distribution of participants' prejudicial attitudes about lesbians differed from the distribution of their attitudes about French Canadians (see Figure 1). A dependent sample t-test revealed that participants were less positive toward French Canadians ($M = 3.32$, $SD = .91$) than lesbians ($M = 3.07$, $SD = 1.58$), $t(424) = 3.01$, $p < .01$. Furthermore, since the means of participants' attitudes about both French Canadians and lesbians are significantly more positive than the midpoint of the 7-point response scales (midpoint = 4), it appears that the participants in this sample were not particularly prejudice toward lesbians (lesbians: $t(424) = 12.06$, $p < .001$; French Canadian: $t(424) = 15.29$, $p < .001$). Closer examination of the distribution of participants' prejudice toward lesbians suggests that only the participants who are classified as "most prejudiced" (upper one-third of the attitude distribution) displayed attitudes about lesbians that were at or more negative ($M = 4.97$) than the neutral part of the attitude response scale.

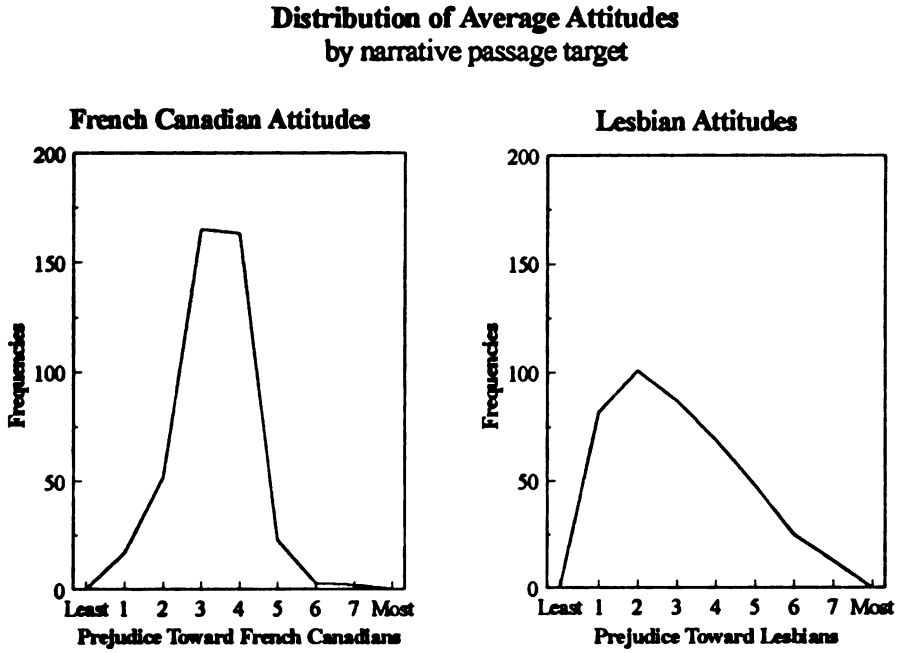

Figure 1 - Distribution of Average Attitudes

However, more important to the objectives of the present research was the fact that the variance of participants' preexisting attitudes about lesbians was significantly larger than the variance of participants' preexisting attitudes about French Canadians, $F(424, 424) = 3.01$, $p < .001$. Whereas participants' attitudes about French Canadians clustered near the neutral part of the scale, their attitudes about lesbians ranged across the entire scale. The lack of variability in participants' attitudes about French Canadians could account for the marginally adequate reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha = .72$) that was found for the French Canadian attitude composite. Although men displayed significantly less positive

attitudes than women about French Canadians (Ms = 3.62 versus 3.19, F(1, 421) = 21.36, p < .001) this was not true in regards to their attitudes about lesbians (Ms = 3.28 for men, 3.06 for women), F(1, 421) = 1.88, p > .15.

Overall, as expected, the pattern of participants' attitudes suggests that the participants did not have clearly defined, diverse, a priori attitudes about French Canadians, but they did for lesbians. In addition, it appears that, by and large, participants' attitudes about both French Canadians and lesbians were relatively positive.

Data Reduction. The validity of using single belief consistency composites to measure how consistent participants' beliefs were with the French Canadian and lesbian narrative passages was verified by a principle-axis factor analysis (retaining eigenvalues > 1, varimax rotation). A total of four composite measures resulted (see Appendix B). The eight French Canadian items were formed into two composites as well as three single-item measures. The three belief items that were addressed within the French Canadian narrative passages that related to French Canadians' focus on their culture (i.e., French Canadians are very focused on their culture, have a hard time relating to non-French Canadians, and inevitably have conflict with English Canadians) formed a composite entitled "French Canadian cultural focus." The reliability of this 3-item composite was adequate, with Cronbach's α = .61. The two general French Canadian attitude measures not directly addressed within the French Canadian passages formed a composite entitled "general attitudes about French Canadians" (e.g., "I admire French Canadians"). The reliability of this composite was adequate for a 2-item measure (Cronbach's α = .57). Lastly, a total of three belief items that were directly addressed within the French Canadian narrative passages did not form into composite measures. These single-item

measures addressed whether French Canadians would prefer to become more like English Canadians (entitled "French Canadian isolation"), the role of the Catholic Church in the daily lives of French Canadians (entitled "power of the church"), and the religiosity of French Canadians (entitled "French Canadian religiosity").

Based on the factor analysis, the lesbian belief and attitude items were formed into two composites. The six lesbian belief items directly addressed within the lesbian narrative passages formed a composite entitled "lesbian belief consistency" (e.g., "The love a lesbian feels for her partner is not true love"). The two general lesbian attitude items not directly addressed within the passage formed a second composite entitled "general attitudes about lesbians" (e.g., "Lesbians are generally unpleasant people"). The reliability of the 6-item lesbian belief consistency composite was adequate (Cronbach's $\alpha = .79$), and the reliability of the general lesbian attitude composite was also adequate for a 2-item measure (Cronbach's $\alpha = .59$).

A principle-axis factor analysis (retaining eigenvalues > 1, varimax rotation) revealed that it was appropriate to form a single composite for the six perceived plausibility measures (e.g., "Events that actually have happened or could happen are discussed in this passage"; see Appendix D). The reliability of the perceived plausibility composite was acceptable (Cronbach's $\alpha = .74$). Lastly, a factor analysis on participants' ratings of the narrative passages formed a 4-item composite entitled "passage assessment" that dealt with participants' perceptions of the passages' interest, quality of writing, how much they enjoyed reading the passages, and how likely they would be to read the passages if they came across them in a magazine (see Appendix E). The reliability of the passage assessment composite was strong (Cronbach's $\alpha = .82$).

Statistical Procedures. Consistent with standard practice when testing hypotheses using multiple regression (e.g., Aiken & West, 1991; Tabachnick & Fidell, 1996; see also Cohen, 1978), sequential multiple regression analyses were used in the present research to examine the influence of narrative passage target [French Canadian, lesbian, or rural American (control)], replication nested within narrative passage target (2 versions for each target group), narrative source (fiction or nonfiction), cognitive busyness (absent or present), prejudicial attitudes of the participants (linear effect), and the curvilinear component of prejudicial attitudes. The curvilinear component of prejudicial attitudes was included in the analyses in order to test whether moderately prejudiced participants were more likely to distinguish between the fictional/nonfictional source of the passages than were the least and most prejudiced participants. The order of entry into the multiple regression equation was block-wise using the following order: (1) all main effects; (2) all nested factors; (3) all two-way interactions; (4) all two-way interactions involving the nested factor; (5) etc. Due to the step-wise procedure, the error terms against which the explained variance was compared (and the associated degrees of freedom for the unexplained variance) changed for each block due to the addition of new terms in the regression model. Therefore, the reported F values for each statistic represent the incremental increase in F due to the addition of the relevant main effect(s) or interaction(s). When significant main effects or interactions necessitated the use of simple effect tests, the explained variance of the simple effect tests were compared with the mean square error (and associated degrees of freedom) from the overall test in which the main effect or interaction occurred. Lastly, the reported analyses include the nested factor of replication only when replication moderated the significant effect of the main independent

variables.

Main Analyses

Overview. Unfortunately the character of the results from the main analyses that are presented next are generally not consistent with the pattern that had been predicted. Moreover, many unanticipated significant effects emerged and many of these significant effects involved shifts in the supposed "control" groups who had read passages unrelated to the target beliefs under investigation. At times, the shifts in the control group were contingent on whether the participants were cognitively busy memorizing the details of the unrelated passages or not and even whether the unrelated passages were represented to be fictional or nonfictional. As such, when there are shifts in the control group, the appropriate theoretical interpretation of the differences between those who read related versus unrelated narrative passages is tricky at best.

In order to provide the clearest picture of the results, analyses tangential to the main questions of the present research have been placed in Appendix F. These analyses examine how much confidence participants had in the belief and attitude judgments they made about French Canadians and lesbians as well as their assessments of the quality and interest of the narrative passages.

French Canadian Narrative Passages. To test the influence of reading passages featuring a French Canadian, the consistency of participants' beliefs with the French Canadian cultural focus composite as well as participants' subsequently reported general attitudes about French Canadians were examined. In order to best address the hypotheses regarding the French Canadian passages, the influence of reading narrative passages featuring one of the three target groups (French Canadian, lesbian, and rural American)

was decomposed into two orthogonal contrasts. The two contrasts were as follows: a "French Canadian versus control" contrast, comparing the French Canadian condition with the mean of the lesbian and rural American conditions; and a second "French Canadian residual" contrast comparing the lesbian condition with the rural American condition. Examination of the French Canadian versus control contrast shows whether the French Canadian passages had an effect on beliefs and attitudes about French Canadians over and above the effect of reading about completely unrelated groups. The residual contrast compares the effects of reading about two different, unrelated social groups on beliefs and attitudes about French Canadians and, as such, was not expected to be significant. Due to the objectives of the present research, any interactions involving the French Canadian residual contrast are only discussed if they pertain to the results found for the French Canadian versus control contrast. Thus, the impact of reading about French Canadians on participants' subsequently reported beliefs and attitudes about French Canadians was examined as a function of the two orthogonal contrasts ("French Canadian versus control" and "French Canadian residual"), replication nested within target group, source of the narrative passages (fiction or nonfiction), cognitive busyness (absent or present), participants' preexisting prejudice toward French Canadians, and finally, the variability in participants' judgments across prejudice level (i.e., curvilinear component of prejudice toward French Canadians).

One of the primary purposes of the present research was to examine the conditions under which reading a narrative passage featuring a nonstigmatized, French Canadian protagonist would affect readers' beliefs about French Canadians. It was expected that participants would be most affected by nonfictional versus fictional passages, but only

when they had full cognitive capacity to process the information contained in the narrative passages. When participants were engaged in a memorization task, it was expected that they would not have enough cognitive capacity left over to "unbelieve" the fictional information that they initially accepted. It was also expected that the influence of the narrative passages featuring a French Canadian protagonist would not be modified by the attitudes the readers had previously reported about French Canadians. Lastly, it was anticipated that participants who read passages featuring a French Canadian protagonist would express beliefs that were more consistent with the information contained in the French Canadian passages than individuals who read passages unrelated to French Canadians. For these predictions to be supported, it was expected that the three-way interaction of the French Canadian versus control contrast X source of the narrative passages X cognitive busyness would be significant while this interaction would not be significantly qualified by participants' preexisting attitudes about French Canadians.

Because the three single-item measures concerning French Canadians (French Canadian isolation, the power of the church, and French Canadian religiosity) have unknown reliability and did not produce any coherent findings of clear theoretical significance, analyses of these items have been relegated to Appendix G.

Belief Consistency. As expected, participants' beliefs about French Canadian cultural focus were more consistent with the French Canadian passages if they actually read one of the French Canadian passages versus one of the control passages (Ms = 4.30 versus 3.87), $F(1, 419) = 33.57$, $p < .001$. It was also found that the cultural focus belief items were perceived as rather critical of French Canadians since more prejudiced individuals expressed more agreement with these items than did less prejudiced individuals

($\underline{h}$ = .19), $\underline{F}(1, 419) = 25.33$, $\underline{p} < .001$. It appears that more prejudiced, as compared to less prejudiced, individuals were more likely to agree that the cultural focus of French Canadians will inevitably lead to misunderstandings and conflict with non-French Canadians. Although the anticipated interaction between the French Canadian versus control contrast, source of the narrative passages, and cognitive busyness was not significant ($\underline{F}(1, 398) = 1.16$, $\underline{p} > .15$), this interaction was unexpectedly qualified by participants' preexisting attitudes about French Canadians, $\underline{F}(1, 391) = 4.14$, $\underline{p} < .05$.[2]

As a first step to fully investigate the hypotheses of the present research, the pattern of beliefs for participants who read the French Canadian passages was examined. As a second step the responses of participants who read the French Canadian passages were compared to the responses of participants who read the control passages. Closer examination of the beliefs of participants who read the French Canadian passages (see Figure 2) revealed that more versus less prejudiced participants displayed greater belief consistency with the cultural focus information contained in the French Canadian passages ($\underline{h}$ = .15), $\underline{F}(1, 391) = 4.94$, $\underline{p} < .05$. Unexpectedly, participants who read the fictional passages also tended to display more (rather than less) belief consistency ($\underline{M}$ = 4.42) than participants who had read the nonfictional passages ($\underline{M}$ = 4.16), $\underline{F}(1, 391) = 3.48$, $\underline{p} < .10$. Although it had been predicted that participants, who read the French Canadian passages would be most affected by the nonfictional versus fictional narrative passages only when they had full cognitive capacity and regardless of their preexisting attitudes about French

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[2]When the responses of only participants who correctly recalled the source of the narrative passages were examined, no significant main effects or interactions were found that included the source of the narrative passages.

Canadians, the anticipated source X cognitive busyness interaction was clearly nonsignificant, $F(1, 391) < 1$, p = n.s. Moreover, the beliefs of non-busy participants did not differ based on whether they had read fictional or nonfictional French Canadian passages, $F(1, 391) = 2.13$, $p > .15$. Closer examination revealed that participants' beliefs about French Canadians were marginally affected by both cognitive busyness and their preexisting attitudes about French Canadians when they had read nonfictional passages ($F(1, 391) = 3.08$, $p < .10$), but not when they had read fictional passages, $F(1, 391) < 1$, p = n.s. Simple effect tests showed that after reading nonfictional passages, participants' preexisting attitudes about French Canadians were only related to their subsequently reported beliefs about French Canadian cultural focus when they were not cognitively busy ($b = .31$, $F(1, 391) = 4.85$, $p < .05$) versus when they were cognitively busy ($b = -.04$), $F(1, 391) < 1$, p = n.s. However, closer examination revealed that the French Canadian cultural beliefs of the least, moderately, and most prejudiced readers of the nonfictional passages did not differ significantly based on whether they were cognitively busy or not (all $ps > .10$). Overall, it appears that when readers of the French Canadian passages made their belief judgments, these responses were most closely connected to their preexisting attitudes when they had read the nonfictional passages with full cognitive capacity.

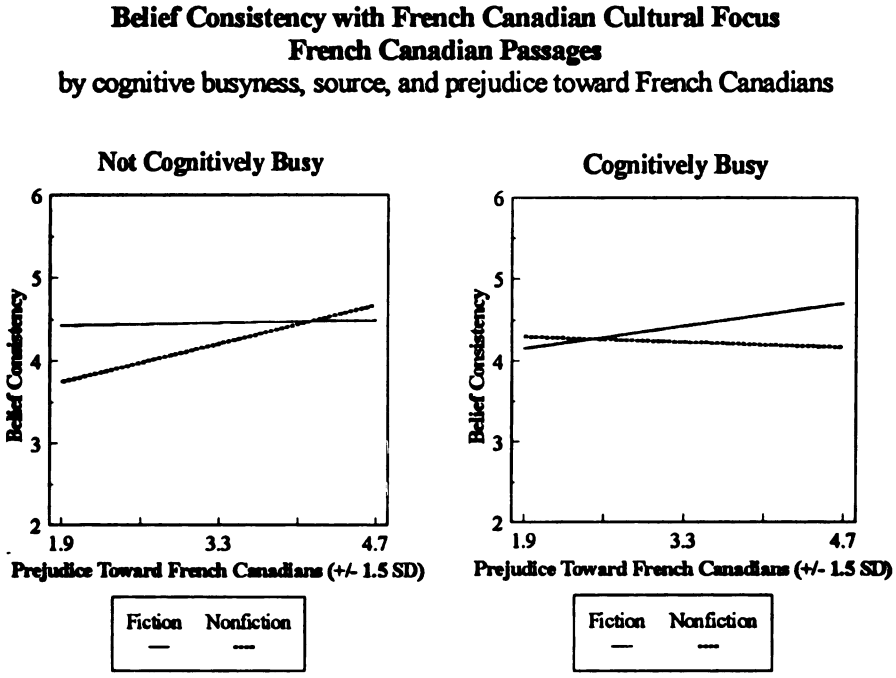

Figure 2 - Belief Consistency with French Canadian Cultural Focus (French Canadian Passages)

Figures 3 and 4 display participants' beliefs about French Canadian cultural focus as a function of whether they read the French Canadian versus unrelated passages, the source of the passage, and their preexisting attitudes about French Canadians. Consistent with the pattern for all participants, when participants were not cognitively busy their belief consistency with the French Canadian passages was greater when they were more versus less prejudiced toward French Canadians, (b = .26, $F(1, 391) = 22.23$, $p < .001$) and when they had read the French Canadian passages versus the unrelated passages, $F(1,$

391) = 16.07, $p < .001$ (see Figure 3). However, the last factor was qualified by the source of the narrative passages, $F(1, 391) = 4.25$, $p < .05$. More specifically, when non-busy participants read the French Canadian passages represented to be fictional, their beliefs were more consistent with the French Canadian passages than when they read unrelated fictional passages (Ms = 4.46 versus 3.76), $F(1, 391) = 18.88$, $p < .001$. However, when the passages were represented to be nonfictional, reading a passage about a French Canadian individual versus a non-French Canadian individual had no effect on participants' beliefs about French Canadian cultural focus (Ms = 4.09 versus 3.97), $F(1, 391) < 1$, p = n.s.

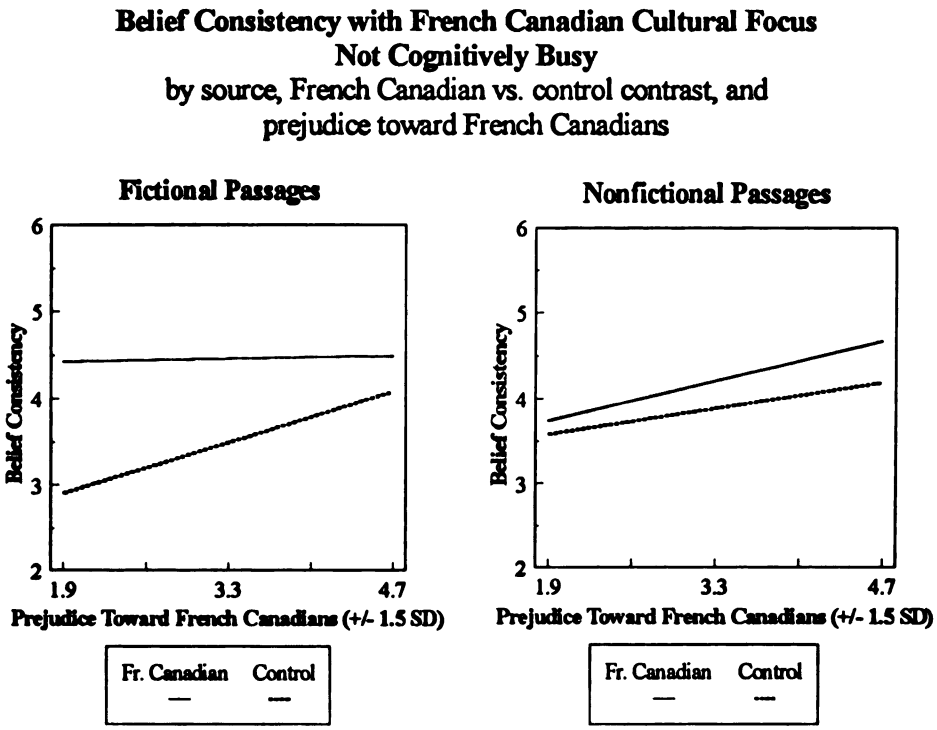

Figure 3 - Belief Consistency with French Canadian Cultural Focus (Not Cognitively Busy)

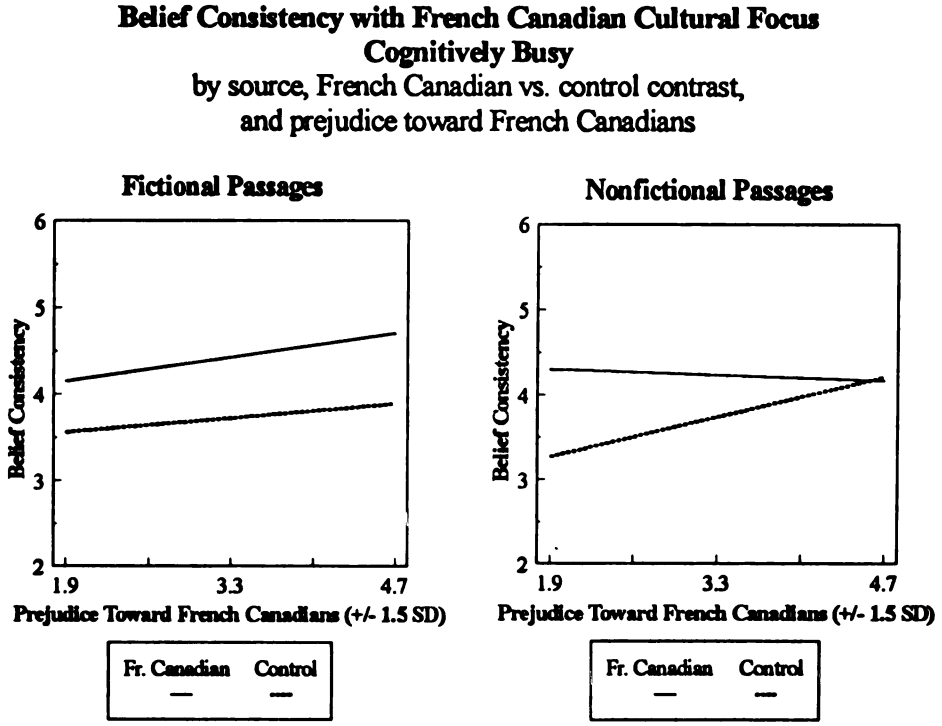

Figure 4 - Belief Consistency with French Canadian Cultural Focus (Cognitively Busy)

When participants had been cognitively busy memorizing the details of the passages that they had read, the pattern of results differed from the pattern for non-busy participants (see Figure 4). Like participants who were not cognitively busy, the beliefs of cognitively busy participants were more consistent with the cultural focus of the French Canadian passages when they were more prejudiced toward French Canadians versus less prejudiced toward French Canadians ($b = .13$), $F(1, 391) = 6.31$, $p < .05$. However, unlike the pattern for non-busy participants, the beliefs of cognitively busy readers were

more consistent with the French Canadian passages when they had actually read the French Canadian passages (M = 4.30) as compared to the unrelated passages (M = 3.87, $F(1, 391) = 17.04$, $p < .001$), regardless of their source, $F(1, 391) < 1$, p = n.s.

Overall, readers' beliefs about French Canadians were not more affected by reading nonfictional versus fictional French Canadian passages when they had full cognitive capacity. In fact, readers' beliefs were somewhat more affected by reading fictional as compared to nonfictional French Canadian passages. Although reading the French Canadian passages had an effect on most readers' beliefs about French Canadians, over and above the effect of reading unrelated, control passages, for some reason non-busy readers of the nonfictional French Canadian passages failed to incorporate the presented information into their mental representations of French Canadians.

General Attitudes about French Canadians. A secondary hypothesis of the present research addressed whether reading narrative passages featuring a French Canadian protagonist would influence participants' general attitudes about French Canadians. Although it was expected that beliefs about French Canadians would be more likely affected by reading French Canadian passages than would more complex attitude structures about French Canadians, it was still of interest to determine whether the impact of reading narrative passages generalizes to participants' attitudes about French Canadians.

In general, reading the French Canadian passages caused participants to subsequently express more favorable attitudes about French Canadians, as compared to the control group, (Ms = 4.33 versus 4.04), $F(1, 419) = 8.74$, $p < .01$. As would be expected, less versus more prejudiced participants also expressed more favorable attitudes

about French Canadians (b = -.37), $F(1, 419) = 99.82$, $p < .001$. However, participants' post-exposure attitudes about French Canadians did not vary as a function of the French Canadian versus control contrast, source, and cognitive busyness, $F(1, 398) < 1$, p =n.s.[3]

Perceived Plausibility. In the present research it was hypothesized that readers' beliefs about French Canadians would be most affected by passages that they considered to be more plausible. Furthermore, it was expected that since the participants lacked clearly defined a priori attitudes about French Canadians, their plausibility judgments of the French Canadian passages would not be significantly related to their preexisting attitudes about French Canadians nor would perceived plausibility mediate the relationship between participants' preexisting attitudes and their subsequently reported beliefs about French Canadians. To begin examining these hypotheses, participants' perceptions of the plausibility of the French Canadian passages are examined first. Since only participants who actually read the French Canadian passages assessed their plausibility, the orthogonal contrasts included in the preceding analyses were not utilized when investigating the effects of perceived plausibility. Thus, the plausibility ratings of the French Canadian passages were analyzed as a function of the source of the narrative passages (fiction or nonfiction), cognitive busyness (absent or present), participants' preexisting prejudice toward French Canadians, and, finally, the variability in judgments created by participants' preexisting prejudice level (curvilinear component of prejudice).

As expected, participants' preexisting attitudes about French Canadians were not

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[3]When examining the responses of only participants who correctly recalled the source of the narrative passages that they read, source was not found to have a significant main effect nor did it interact with any other variables.

directly related to their perceptions of the perceived plausibility of the French Canadian passages (β = -.04), $F(1, 137) < 1$, p = n.s. However, there was some indication that readers' perceptions of the plausibility of the passages varied based on their preexisting attitudes about French Canadians (curvilinear effect) and whether they were cognitively busy or not, $F(1, 123) = 2.96$, $p < .09$. Follow-up examination on the least, moderately, and most prejudiced participants found that, as compared to their non-busy counterparts, the most prejudiced participants perceived the French Canadian passages to be more plausible when they had been cognitively busy memorizing the details of the passages (Ms = 4.64 versus 5.09), $F(1, 123) = 3.98$, $p < .05$. There were no differences in the least and moderately prejudiced participants' perceptions of the plausibility of the French Canadian passages based on whether they had been cognitively busy or not (least prejudiced participants: Ms = 5.06 versus 4.91, $F(1, 123) < 1$, p = n.s.; moderately prejudiced participants: Ms = 4.85 versus 4.94, $F(1, 123) < 1$, p = n.s.).[4]

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[4]When the perceived plausibility of the French Canadian passages was examined it appeared that participants perceived version 1 to be somewhat more plausible than version 2, $F(1, 137) = 2.75$, $p < .10$. However, this effect of replication was modified by the curvilinear component of participants' attitudes about French Canadians, $F(1, 123) = 5.18$, $p < .05$. The pattern of responses suggested that only the most prejudiced individuals perceived version 1 to be more plausible than version 2 (Ms = 5.15 versus 4.68), $F(1, 123) = 4.47$, $p < .05$. The least and moderately prejudiced participants did not differentiate between the two versions in terms of perceived plausibility (both Fs < 1, p = n.s.). Also modifying the effect of version was whether participants were cognitively busy or not and how prejudiced participants were toward French Canadians, $F(1, 123) = 4.17$, $p < .05$. Closer examination revealed that when participants were cognitively busy memorizing the details of the French Canadian passages they perceived version 1 to be more plausible than version 2 (Ms = 5.22 versus 4.83, $F(1, 123) = 5.25$, $p < .05$. However, for non-busy participants there was a cross-over interaction between replication and prejudice toward French Canadians, $F(1, 123) = 4.86$, $p < .05$. When participants were not cognitively busy, their attitudes about French Canadians were not related to their perceived plausibility judgments for version 1 (b = .20, $F(1, 123) = 1.61$, $p > .15$) but were somewhat related to their reactions to version 2 (b = -.25), $F(1, 123) = 3.66$, $p < .10$.

As the next step in investigating the role of perceived plausibility, participants' beliefs about French Canadian cultural focus after reading the French Canadian passages were examined to see if participants were more affected by passages they considered to be more plausible. More specifically, the consistency of participants' beliefs with the French Canadian cultural focus composite was examined as a function of the perceived plausibility of the French Canadian narrative passages, replication, source of the passages, and whether participants were cognitively busy or not. Contrary to the idea that participants' beliefs would be more consistent with passages that they perceived having greater plausibility, the relationship of the plausibility of the French Canadian passages with participants' subsequently reported beliefs about French Canadians was not significant (β = .14), $F(1, 138) = 1.40$, $p > .15$. However, a marginally significant three-way interaction was found between source, cognitive busyness, and the perceived plausibility of the French Canadian passages ($F(1, 134) = 2.94$, $p < .10$), suggesting that perceived plausibility did at least somewhat moderate the influence of the written passages (see Figure 5). Although a somewhat similar interaction was found when participants' attitudes about French Canadians were examined instead of the perceived plausibility of the French Canadian passages, closer examination suggested a different pattern for the effect of perceived plausibility as compared to the effect of attitudes about French Canadians. Unlike the pattern when examining the effect of attitudes about French Canadians, perceived plausibility did not play a role when participants were not cognitively

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Examination based on participants' prejudice levels (least, moderately, and most prejudice) did not reveal any significant differences between the perceived plausibility of version 1 versus version 2 when participants were not cognitively busy (all $ps > .10$).

busy ($F(1, 134) < 1$, p = n.s.), but when participants were cognitively busy the effects of the fictional versus nonfictional passages were marginally qualified by the perceived plausibility of the French Canadian passages, $F(1, 134) = 3.59$, $p < .10$. When cognitively busy participants memorized the details of the passages, participants who perceived the passages to be less versus more plausible subsequently expressed beliefs less consistent with the nonfictional passages ($b = .52$, $F(1, 134) = 6.17$, $p < .05$) but not the fictional passages ($b = .03$), $F(1, 134) < 1$, p = n.s. Thus, unlike the pattern where participants' preexisting attitudes about French Canadians were only related to their subsequently reported beliefs about French Canadians when they were non-busy while reading the nonfictional passages, participants' perceptions of the plausibility of the French Canadian passages were only related to their post-exposure beliefs when they had been cognitively busy memorizing the details of the nonfictional French Canadian passages.

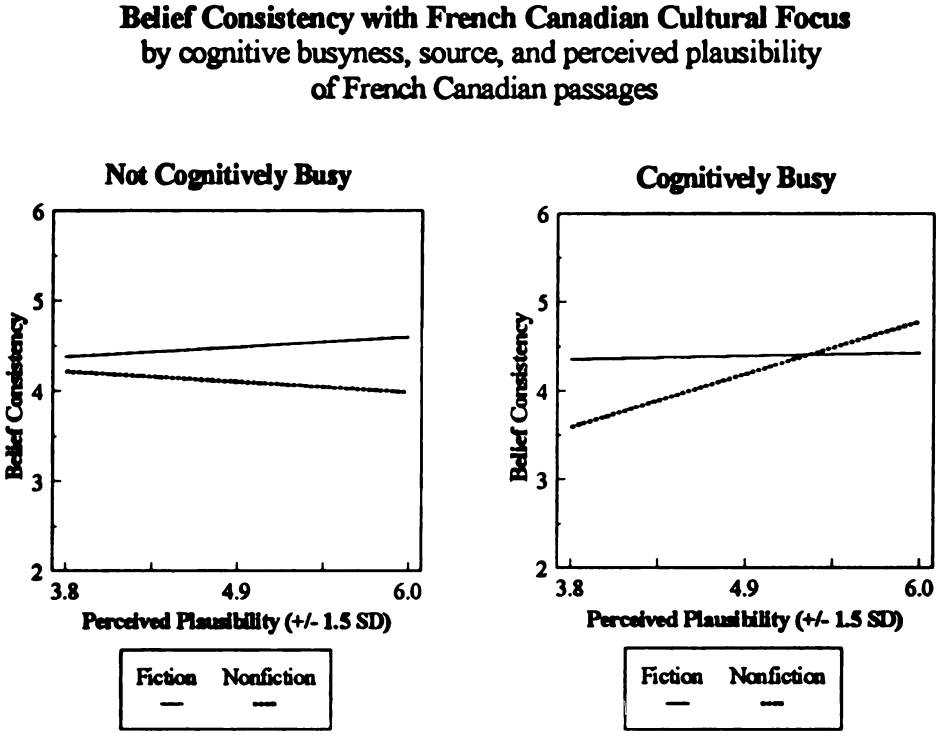

Figure 5 - Belief Consistency with French Canadian Cultural Focus (with Perceived Plausibility)

Overall, the pattern of results suggests that perceived plausibility had very little to do with the influence of narrative passages featuring a French Canadian protagonist. First, the majority of readers did not rely on the plausibility of the French Canadian passages when they reported their post-exposure beliefs about French Canadians. The only group that appeared to rely on the plausibility of the French Canadian passages were cognitively busy readers of the nonfictional passages. Second, as predicted, perceived plausibility was not directly related to readers' preexisting attitudes about French Canadians nor did

perceived plausibility play a mediational role in the relationship between participants' preexisting attitudes about French Canadians and their later reported beliefs about French Canadian cultural focus. Since significant relationships were not found between readers' attitudes about French Canadians and their perceptions of the plausibility of the French Canadian passages (β = -.04) nor between plausibility and readers' subsequently reported beliefs (β = .14), perceived plausibility, by definition, cannot play a mediational role. Participants' attitudes about French Canadians, on the other hand, had the same relationship with their beliefs about French Canadian cultural focus no matter whether the perceived plausibility of the French Canadian passages was controlled for (β = .17, $F(1, 137) = 4.37$, $p < .05$) or not (β = .17).

Summary. Readers of the French Canadian passages were not more affected by the nonfictional versus fictional passages when they had full cognitive capacity. In fact, in a pattern exactly opposite to what was predicted, the fictional passages, as compared to the nonfictional passages, had a somewhat greater effect on both the cognitively busy and non-busy readers. Generally, as compared to reading unrelated, control passages, reading the French Canadian passages affected most readers' beliefs about French Canadian cultural focus as well as made the readers more favorable toward French Canadians. The only exception to this statement was non-busy readers of the nonfictional French Canadian passages who failed to utilize the presented information when reporting their post-exposure beliefs about French Canadian cultural focus. Overall, perceived plausibility had very little to do with the influence of narrative passages featuring a French Canadian individual. The only readers that appeared to rely on their plausibility judgments when subsequently reporting their beliefs about French Canadians were cognitively busy readers

who had memorized the details of the nonfictional passages.

Lesbian Narrative Passages. To test the influence of reading passages featuring a lesbian, the consistency of participants' beliefs with the lesbian belief composite as well as participants' subsequently reported general attitudes about lesbians were examined. In order to best address the hypotheses regarding the lesbian passages, the effect of reading narrative passages featuring one of three target groups (lesbian, French Canadian, and rural American) was decomposed into two orthogonal contrasts. The two contrasts were as follows: a "lesbian versus control" contrast, comparing the lesbian condition with the mean of the French Canadian and rural American conditions; and a second "lesbian residual" contrast comparing the French Canadian condition with the rural American condition. Examination of the lesbian versus control contrast shows whether the lesbian passages had an effect on beliefs and attitudes about lesbians over and above the effect of reading about completely unrelated groups. The residual contrast compares the effects of reading about two different, unrelated social groups on beliefs and attitudes about lesbians and, as such, was not expected to be significant. Due to the objectives of the present research, any interactions involving the lesbian residual contrast are only discussed if they pertain to the results found for the lesbian versus control contrast. Thus, the impact of reading about lesbians on participants' subsequently reported beliefs and attitudes about lesbians was examined as a function of the two orthogonal contrasts ("lesbian versus control" and "lesbian residual"), replication nested within target group, source of the narrative passages (fiction or nonfiction), cognitive busyness (absent or present), participants' preexisting prejudice toward lesbians, and finally, the variability in participants' judgments across prejudice level (i.e., curvilinear component of prejudice

toward lesbians).

One of the primary purposes of the current research was to examine the conditions under which reading a narrative passage featuring a lesbian protagonist would affect readers' beliefs about lesbians. First, it was hypothesized that more versus less prejudiced individuals would display less belief consistency with the positively toned lesbian passages that contradicted their preexisting attitudes about lesbians. In addition, it was expected that participants would be most influenced by nonfictional versus fictional passages, but only when they had full cognitive capacity to process the information contained in the passages. It was also thought that when the participants had full cognitive capacity, the impact of the narrative passages featuring a lesbian would be modified by readers' preexisting attitudes about lesbians. More specifically, it was expected that moderately prejudiced participants would be more likely to distinguish between the fictional/nonfictional source of the written information than would either the least or most prejudiced participants. However, when participants were cognitively busy memorizing the details of the passages, it was expected that they would not have enough capacity left over to "unbelieve" the fictional information that they initially accepted nor would their preexisting attitudes about lesbians modify the influence of the passages. Lastly, it was anticipated that participants who actually read passages featuring a lesbian protagonist would express beliefs more consistent with the information contained in the lesbian passages than readers who read passages unrelated to lesbians. For these predictions to be supported, it was expected that the five-way interaction of the lesbian versus control contrast X source of the narrative passages X cognitive busyness X variability in participants' judgments across prejudice level (i.e., curvilinear component of prejudice

toward lesbians) would be significant.

Belief Consistency. Contrary to what was predicted, readers of the lesbian passages did not uniformly express beliefs more consistent with the lesbian passages than did readers of the unrelated, control passages, $F(1, 418) = 2.03$, $p > .15$. However, as expected, more prejudiced participants did display less belief consistency with the lesbian narrative passages than less prejudiced participants ($b = -.82$), $F(1, 418) = 462.94$, $p < .001$. Furthermore, this effect was qualified by several higher-order interactions. In particular, the highest interaction found to be significant involved the lesbian versus control contrast, source, cognitive busyness, and prejudice toward lesbians, $F(1, 390) = 4.38$, $p < .05$.[5] The hypothesized five-way interaction involving the curvilinear component of participants' prejudice toward lesbians did not reach significance and, thus, eliminated the possibility that moderately prejudiced non-busy participants would be more likely to distinguish between the fictional/nonfictional nature of the information presented in the lesbian passages than would their more and less prejudiced counterparts, $F(1, 388) < 1$, p = n.s. Because the effect of reading the lesbian passages was of paramount theoretical importance, the complex significant four-way interaction found in this analysis has been broken down by first examining the response of participants who had read the lesbian narrative passages. Second, the response of participants who had read the lesbian passages was compared to the response of participants who had read the unrelated, control passages.

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[5]Examination of only participants who correctly recalled the source of the narrative they had read found that the pattern of results was somewhat weaker but largely unchanged.

Examination of readers' beliefs about lesbians after reading the lesbian passages revealed that the interactions between source X cognitive busyness X prejudice toward lesbian and between source X cognitive busyness were not significant, $F(1, 390) < 1$, p = n.s. and $F(1, 390) < 1$, p = n.s., respectively. Thus, the possibilities that only non-busy participants were differentially affected by reading the nonfictional versus fictional lesbian passages and that participants' preexisting attitudes about lesbians would moderate this effect were eliminated (see Figure 6). However, it was found that less versus more prejudiced participants displayed greater belief consistency with the lesbian passages (b = -.74, $F(1, 390) = 130.56$, $p < .001$), while this was somewhat true for cognitively busy versus non-busy participants (Ms = 5.52 versus 5.21), $F(1, 390) = 3.21$, $p < .10$. Moreover, these effects were qualified by a significant interaction between cognitive busyness and participants' preexisting prejudice toward lesbians, $F(1, 390) = 4.13$, $p < .05$. Closer examination showed that non-busy participants' prejudice toward lesbians was more related to their subsequently reported beliefs about lesbians than was the prejudice of cognitively busy participants (bs = -.85 versus -.60). In fact, simple effect tests revealed that the most prejudiced participants were more likely to reject the passage information (i.e., to not agree with the belief items) if they were not cognitively busy, as compared to cognitively busy (Ms = 3.91 versus 4.89, $F(1, 390) = 18.11$, $p < .001$) and, although not significant by conventional standards, this tendency appeared to be somewhat stronger for fiction than nonfiction. The belief consistency for the least and moderately prejudiced individuals did not differ based on whether they were cognitively busy or not (both Fs < 1, p = n.s.).

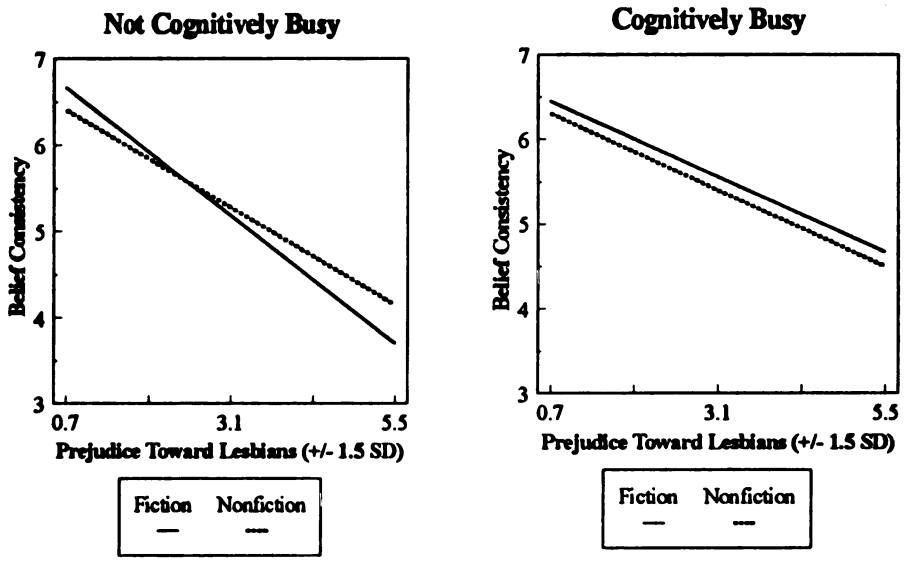

Figure 6 - Belief Consistency with Lesbian Passages (Lesbian Passages)

Figures 7 and 8 show the amount of lesbian belief consistency that participants expressed as a function of whether they had read the lesbian passages or the unrelated, control passages, whether the passages were fictional or nonfictional, and as a function of their prejudice toward lesbians. Although it was expected that reading the control passages (French Canadian and rural American) would not influence participants' beliefs about lesbians, this in fact did occur. More specifically, the beliefs about lesbians of the control group were significantly influenced by the source of the control passages, whether they were cognitively busy or not, and their prejudice toward lesbians, $F(1, 390) = 4.59$, p

< .05. When non-busy participants read passages unrelated to lesbians, both their preexisting prejudice about lesbians and the source of the unrelated passages affected their subsequently reported beliefs about lesbians, $F(1, 390) = 156.84$, $p < .001$ and $F(1, 390) = 4.75$, $p < .05$, respectively (see Figure 7). Moreover, these effects were qualified by an interaction between the source of the unrelated passages and the prejudice of the participants toward lesbians, $F(1, 390) = 4.94$, $p < .05$. Examination of the pattern of beliefs for the non-busy control participants showed that reading the fictional control passages seemed to dampen the relationship of participants' preexisting prejudice toward lesbians and their subsequently reported beliefs about lesbians ($b = -.69$), as compared to the nonfictional control passages ($b = -.98$). In fact, simple effect tests found that reading the unrelated fictional versus nonfictional passages caused the least and moderately prejudiced individuals to express significantly more negative beliefs about lesbians (least prejudiced: Ms = 5.94 versus 6.39, $F(1, 390) = 3.88$, $p < .05$; moderately prejudiced: Ms = 5.14 versus 5.68, $F(1, 390) = 4.70$, $p < .05$). The beliefs about lesbians of the most prejudiced participants did not differ based on the source of the control passages when they were not cognitively busy, $F(1, 390) < 1$, p = n.s. Since the beliefs about lesbians of cognitively busy readers of the control passages were only related to their preexisting attitudes about lesbian ($b = -.90$, $F(1, 390) = 190.19$, $p < .001$; see Figure 8), it appears that the shift in the beliefs about lesbians of the control group occurred mainly because, as compared the other readers of the control passages, non-busy readers of the fictional control passages relied less on their preexisting prejudice when making their belief judgments.

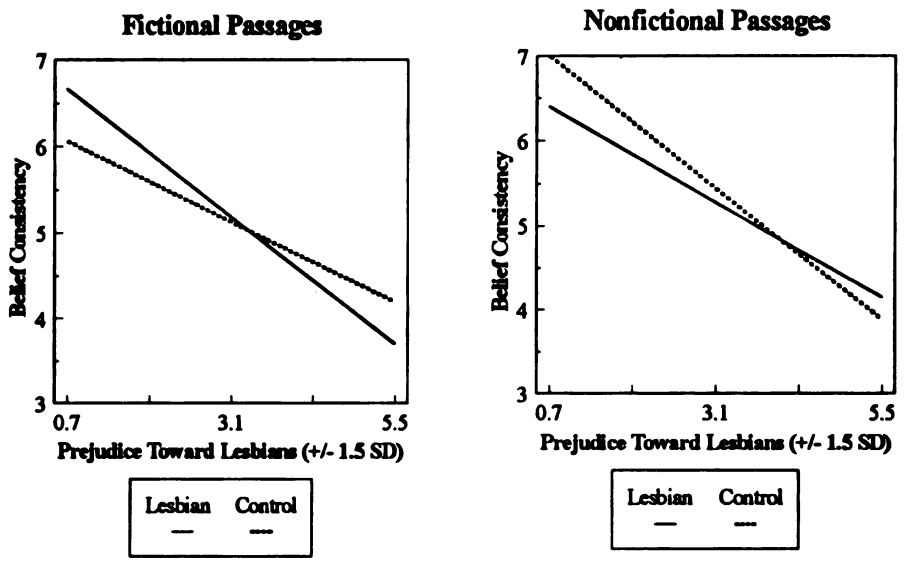

Figure 7 - Belief Consistency with Lesbian Passages (Not Cognitively Busy)

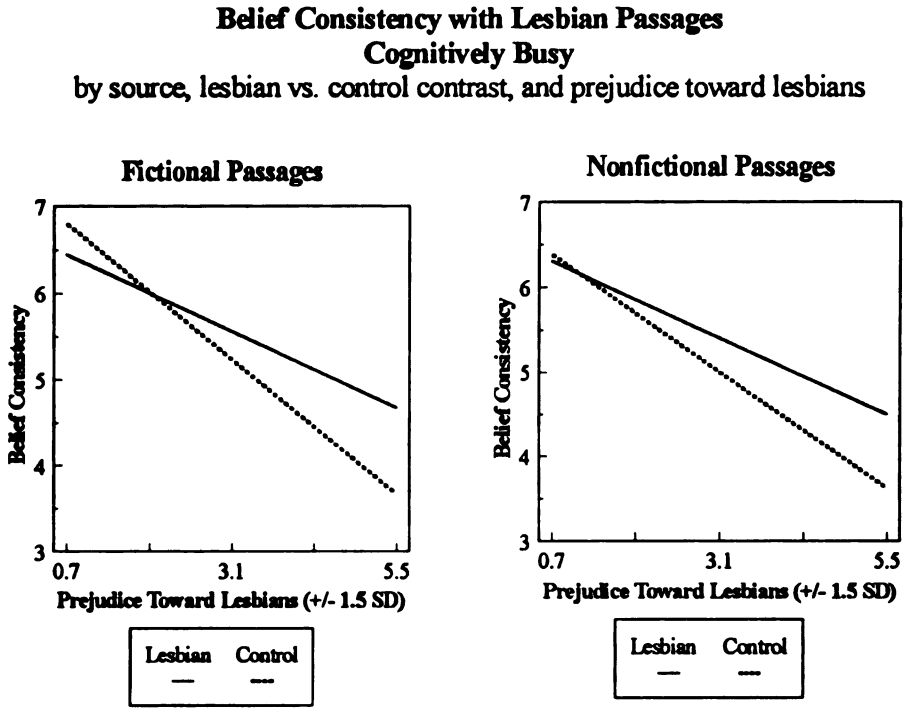

Figure 8 - Belief Consistency with Lesbian Passages (Cognitively Busy)

The differences in participants' beliefs about lesbians based on whether they read the lesbian versus control passages are hard to interpret given the variations found in the control group. However, for the sake of completeness, the analyses comparing the beliefs of non-busy participants who read the lesbian versus control passages are examined next (see Figure 7). When participants were not cognitively busy, the consistency of their beliefs with the lesbian passages was greater when they were less versus more prejudiced toward lesbians (b = -.85, $F(1, 390) = 257.97$, $p < .001$) and when they had read any of the nonfictional versus fictional passages, regardless of the social group depicted (Ms =

5.30 versus 5.18), $F(1, 390) = 4.18$, $p < .05$. However, these effects were qualified by a significant interaction between whether participants had read the lesbian versus control passages, the source of the passages, and participants' prejudice toward lesbians, $F(1, 390) = 5.29$, $p < .05$. For fictional passages, the relationship between participants' preexisting prejudice toward lesbians and their subsequently reported beliefs about lesbians ($F(1, 390) = 103.18$, $p < .001$) varied somewhat depending on whether the participants had read the lesbian versus control passages, $F(1, 390) = 2.75$, $p < .10$. Closer examination revealed a stronger relationship when non-busy participants had read the lesbian fictional passages versus the control fictional passages (bs = -.99 versus -.69), although further inspection found no significant differences for the least, moderately, and most prejudiced individuals based on reading the lesbian versus control passages (all ps > .15). Due to the pattern of beliefs about lesbians revealed when the control and lesbian readers were examined separately, the interaction just discussed was probably more a function of change caused by reading the fictional control passages than actual change caused by reading the lesbian passages. When non-busy participants read nonfictional lesbian passages, the only thing that affected their beliefs about lesbians was their preexisting prejudice toward lesbians ($b = -.89$), $F(1, 390) = 153.58$, $p < .001$. Reading the lesbian nonfictional passages, as compared to the control nonfictional passages, did not affect participants' beliefs about lesbians, $F(1, 390) < 1$, p = n.s.

Since the variations in the beliefs about lesbians of the control group were limited to participants not cognitively busy, comparisons between cognitively busy participants who had read the lesbian versus control passages can be made with greater confidence (see Figure 8). As expected, cognitively busy participants displayed beliefs more

consistent with the lesbian passages when they had read the lesbian passages versus the unrelated, control passages, $F(1, 390) = 5.66$, $p < .05$. However, this effect was modified by how prejudiced participants were toward lesbians, $F(1, 390) = 6.13$, $p < .05$. In what appears to be a recurring theme, cognitively busy readers of the lesbian passages relied less on their preexisting prejudice toward lesbians when they subsequently made belief judgments about lesbians, as compared to the control group, (bs = -.60 versus -.90). Closer examination showed that the most prejudiced participants were more likely to accept the information presented in the passage (i.e., agree with the belief items) if they had been cognitively busy memorizing the details of the lesbian passages versus the control passages (M = 4.89 versus 4.13, respectively, $F(1, 390) = 15.01$, $p < .001$; for least and moderately prejudiced participants both $Fs < 1$, p = n.s.). As would be predicted from the response of the readers of the lesbian passages, source did not affect the beliefs about lesbians of cognitively busy participants who had read the lesbian versus control passages, $F(1, 390) < 1$, p = n.s.

Overall, readers' beliefs about lesbians were not more affected by reading nonfictional versus fictional passages featuring a lesbian when they had full cognitive capacity. However, being cognitively busy memorizing the details of the positively toned lesbian passages caused the most prejudiced readers to express beliefs more consistent with the passage information, as compared to both non-busy readers and the control group. Although it appears that the beliefs about lesbians of non-busy readers were not affected by the lesbian passages, as compared to the control passages, this statement is made rather cautiously because of a shift in the control group caused primarily by the non-busy readers of the fictional, unrelated passages.

General Attitudes about Lesbians. A secondary hypothesis of the present research addressed whether reading narrative passages featuring a lesbian protagonist would influence participants' general attitudes about lesbians. Although it was expected that readers' beliefs about lesbians would be more likely affected by reading lesbian passages than would more complex attitude structures about lesbians, it was still of interest to determine whether the impact of reading narrative passages generalizes to participants' attitudes about lesbians. Not surprisingly, participants' preexisting prejudice toward lesbians was significantly related to their subsequently reported attitudes about lesbians (b = -.93), $F(1, 419) = 354.79$, $p < .001$. However, the relationship between participants' prejudice toward lesbians and their subsequently reported general attitudes about lesbians was qualified by a three-way significant interaction with whether participants had read a passage featuring a lesbian protagonist versus an unrelated, control passage and by whether they were cognitively busy or not, $F(1, 398) = 4.27$, $p < .05$[6] (see Figure 9). Since this interaction was not further qualified by the source of the narrative passages ($F(1, 391) < 1$, p = n.s.) it appears that participants' attitudes about lesbians were not affected by the source of the lesbian passages that they had read.

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[6]When examining only participants who correctly recalled the source of the narrative passage that they had read the pattern of results remained the same.

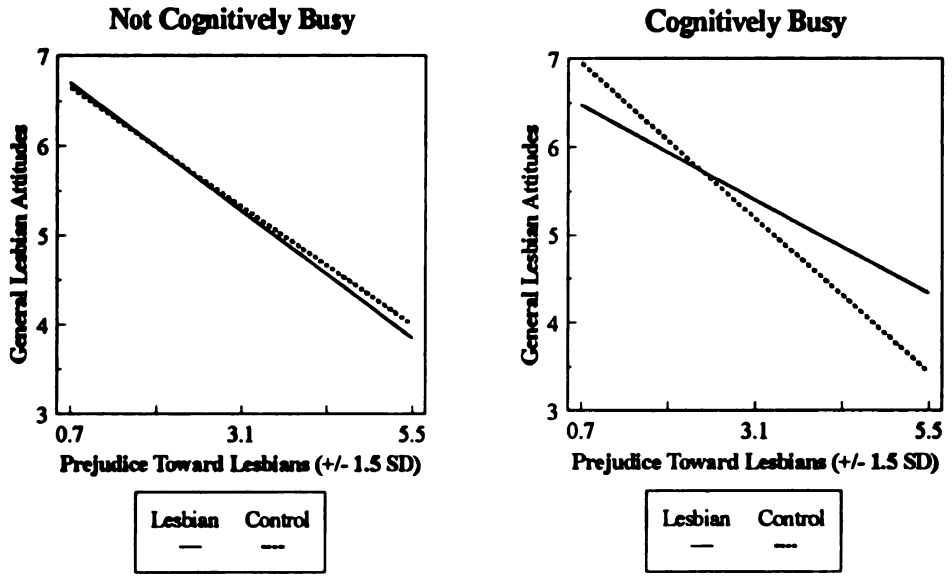

Figure 9 - General Attitudes about Lesbians

Examination of participants' attitudes about lesbians revealed that even after reading the lesbian passages, participants' general attitudes about lesbians were only related to their preexisting prejudice toward lesbians ($b = -.85$), $F(1, 398) = 101.99$, $p < .001$. Since this relationship was not qualified by whether the participants had memorized the details of the lesbian passages or not ($F(1, 398) = 1.90$, $p > .15$), it appears that for some reason the control participants' attitudes about lesbians were differentially affected by whether they had been cognitively busy or not when they read the unrelated passages.

When investigating whether participants' attitudes about lesbians were affected by

reading the lesbian passages over and above the effect of reading the unrelated, control passages, care must be taken because participants' attitudes about lesbians varied depending on whether they had read the French Canadian or rural American control passages. More specifically, a three-way interaction showed that participants' attitudes about lesbians differed as a function of which control passage they read, whether they were cognitively busy or not, and their preexisting prejudice toward lesbians, $F(1, 398) = 5.62$, $p < .05$. Closer examination revealed that when participants had read the French Canadian passages, their subsequently reported attitudes about lesbians were only dependent on their preexisting prejudice toward lesbians ($b = -1.00$, $F(1, 398) = 128.32$, $p < .001$), not whether they had been cognitively busy or not, $F(1, 398) < 1$, p = n.s. However, for participants who had read the rural American passages, their attitudes about lesbians varied as a function of whether they had been cognitively busy or not and as a function of their preexisting prejudice toward lesbians, $F(1, 398) = 6.41$, $p < .05$. When participants had read the rural American passages, non-busy participants, as compared to cognitively busy participants, relied less on their preexisting prejudice toward lesbians when they made their subsequent attitude judgments (bs = -.74 versus -1.17). Closer inspection revealed that the most prejudiced readers expressed somewhat more positive attitudes about lesbians when they had not been cognitively busy memorizing the details of the rural American control passage versus cognitively busy (Ms = 4.24 versus 3.73), $F(1, 398) = 2.98$, $p < .10$. The attitudes about lesbians of the moderately and least prejudiced participants did not differ based on whether they were cognitively busy or not (both Fs < 1, p = n.s.). Thus, it appears that something about simply reading versus memorizing the details of the rural American control passages caused participants to rely less on their

preexisting prejudice toward lesbians and, in fact, the most prejudiced participants were somewhat more positive in their subsequently expressed attitudes about lesbians when they had been non-busy versus cognitively busy.

When the attitudes about lesbians of the control participants were examined after collapsing across the French Canadian and rural American passages, only participants' preexisting prejudice toward lesbians was significantly related to their later reported general attitudes about lesbians (b = -.97), $F(1, 398) = 258.68$, $p < .001$. However, although not significant by conventional standards ($F(1, 398) = 2.32$, $p < .15$), compared to cognitively busy participants who had memorized the details of the control passages (b = -1.06), the attitudes about lesbians of non-busy participants were less related to their preexisting prejudice toward lesbians (b = -.88). Based on the differences in attitudes about lesbians based on which of the control passages participants had read, it appears that this finding is primarily due to non-busy participants who had read the rural American passages. Therefore, comparisons must be cautiously made between the general attitudes about lesbians of non-busy participants who had read the lesbian passages versus the unrelated, control passages.

Examination of participants' general attitudes about lesbians based on whether they had read the lesbian versus control passages and were cognitively busy or not, found that participants' general attitudes about lesbians were largely unaffected by reading the lesbian versus control passages (see Figure 9). More specifically, non-busy participants' attitudes about lesbians were only affected by their preexisting prejudice toward lesbians (b = -.91, $F(1, 398) = 178.15$, $p < .001$), not by whether they had read the lesbian versus control passages, $F(1, 398) < 1$, p = n.s. However, based on the shifts in the attitudes

about lesbians of the control group, this lack of effect for the lesbian passages could be due to non-busy readers of the rural American passages relying less on their preexisting prejudice when making their subsequent attitude judgments about lesbians, as compared to their cognitively busy counterparts. When participants were cognitively busy there was some effect of having read the lesbian versus unrelated passages. In fact, it appears that memorizing the details of the lesbian versus control passages caused cognitively busy participants to rely less on their preexisting prejudice toward lesbians when they subsequently reported their attitudes about lesbians (bs = -.72 versus -1.06), $F(1, 398) = 4.86$, $p < .05$. Closer examination showed that consistent with the pattern for participants' beliefs about lesbians, memorizing the details of the lesbian passages caused the most prejudiced cognitively busy participants to express more positive attitudes about lesbians, as compared to the control group ($M = 4.70$ versus 3.96), $F(1, 398) = 8.50$, $p < .01$. The attitudes about lesbians of the least and moderately prejudiced cognitively busy participants did not differ based on whether they had read the lesbian versus control passages (both Fs < 1, p = n.s.).

In general, consistent with the influence of the lesbian passages on readers' beliefs about lesbians, the most prejudiced cognitively busy readers who closely attended to the details of the lesbian passages subsequently expressed more positive attitudes about lesbians, as compared to the control group. Due to rather inexplicable shifts in the non-busy control group, the determination of whether non-busy readers were influenced by reading the lesbian passages, over and beyond the effect of reading unrelated, control passages, is difficult to make.

Perceived Plausibility. In the present research it was hypothesized that the least versus most prejudiced readers would consider the positively toned lesbian passages to be more plausible. Furthermore, it was predicted that participants' perceptions of the plausibility of the lesbian narrative passages would be related to their preexisting prejudice toward lesbians, and more specifically, that the perceived plausibility of the narrative passages would mediate the relationship between participants' preexisting prejudice toward lesbians and their subsequently reported beliefs about lesbians. Due to this relationship between preexisting prejudice and plausibility, it was expected that in a pattern similar to how readers' preexisting attitudes about lesbians moderated the passages' influence, the perceived plausibility of the passages also was expected to alter the passages' influence.

To begin examining these hypotheses, participants' perceptions of the plausibility of the lesbian narrative passages are examined first. Since only participants who actually read the lesbian passages assessed their plausibility, the orthogonal contrasts included in the preceding analyses were not utilized when investigating perceived plausibility. Thus, the plausibility ratings of the lesbian passages were analyzed as a function of the source of the narrative passages (fiction or nonfiction), cognitive busyness (absent or present), participants' prejudice toward lesbians, and, finally, the variability in judgments created by participants' preexisting prejudice toward lesbians (curvilinear component of prejudice).

Consistent with what had been hypothesized, there was a significant relationship between participants' preexisting prejudice toward lesbians and their perceptions of the plausibility of the lesbian passages ($\beta = -.32$), $F(1, 138) = 15.41$, $p < .001$. More specifically, more prejudiced participants perceived the positively toned lesbian passages

to be less plausible than did less prejudiced participants. In addition, consistent with the pattern when the passages for all three target groups were examined, participants were somewhat more likely to perceive the nonfictional lesbian passages as more plausible (M = 5.70) than the fictional lesbian passages (M = 5.49), $F(1, 138) = 3.33$, $p < .08$. However, these effects were modified by a marginally significant source X cognitive busyness X prejudice toward lesbian interaction, $F(1, 124) = 3.02$, $p < .09$ (See Figure 10). Simple effect tests revealed that cognitive busyness eliminated the significant tendency of more prejudiced participants to perceive the positively toned lesbian passages as less plausible (not cognitively busy: $b = -.38$, $F(1, 124) = 14.34$, $p < .001$; cognitively busy: $b = -.18$, $F(1, 124) = 2.47$, $p > .10$).[7] Although not significant by conventional standards, inspection of the pattern of results suggests that the relationship between participants' prejudice and their plausibility judgments was particularly reduced when participants read the fictional passages when cognitively busy ($b = -11$) versus not cognitively busy ($b = -.43$). The variation based on cognitive busyness for the nonfictional passages was not nearly so pronounced (cognitive busyness $b = -.25$; no cognitive busyness $b = -.33$). Once again, these results suggest that fully attending to the information contained in the lesbian

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[7]The perceived plausibility of the lesbian passages was also found to depend on the interaction between the particular version of the lesbian passages that participants had read and the variability of participants' plausibility judgments based on their prejudice toward lesbians, $F(1, 124) = 4.42$, $p < .05$. Simple effect tests found that more prejudiced participants perceived both version 1 and version 2 of the lesbian passages to be less plausible than less prejudiced participants (version 1: $b = -.25$, $F(1,124) = 5.82$, $p < .05$; version 2: $b = -.30$, $F(1, 124) = 8.28$, $p < .01$) while there was a tendency for variability in participants' plausibility perceptions based on their attitudes for only version 2, $F(1, 124) = 3.62$, $p < .10$. However, when dividing participants into groups who were least, moderately, and most prejudiced towards lesbians, none of these groups significantly differentiated between the perceived plausibility of version 1 and version 2 of the lesbian passages, (all Fs < 1, p = n.s.).

passages (i.e., cognitive busyness) caused readers to rely less on their preexisting prejudice toward lesbians when they made subsequent judgments related to the lesbian passages.

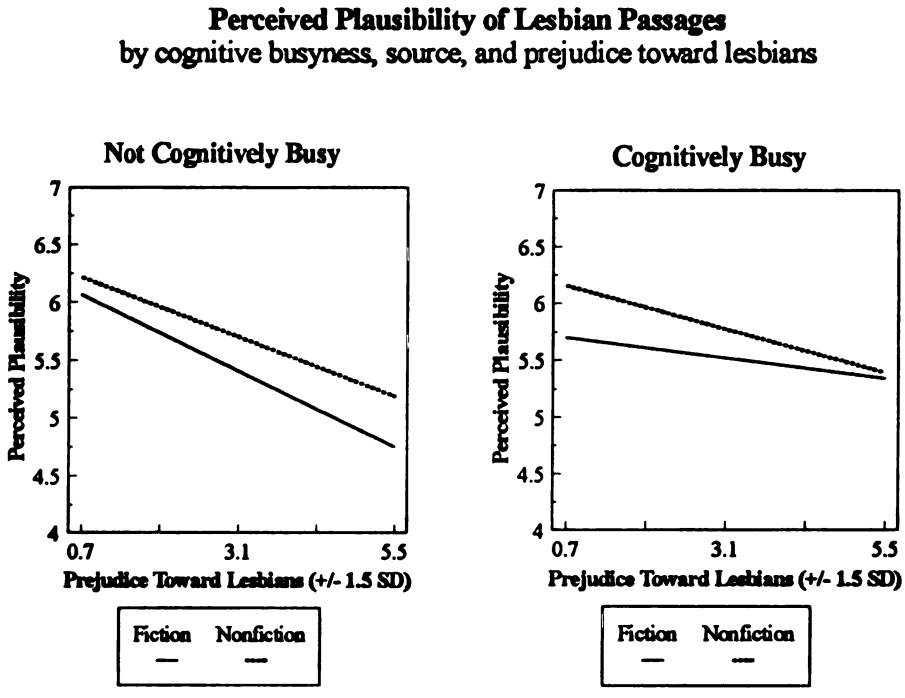

Figure 10 - Perceived Plausibility of Lesbian Passages

As the next step in investigating the role of perceived plausibility, participants' beliefs about lesbians after reading the lesbian passages were examined to see if the perceived plausibility of the lesbian passages altered the passages' influence in a manner similar to how participants' preexisting prejudice had. More specifically, the consistency of participants' beliefs with the lesbian narrative passages was examined as a function of

the perceived plausibility of the lesbian narrative passages, replication, source of the passages, and whether participants were cognitively busy or not. As expected, the more plausible the participants perceived the lesbian passages to be, the more consistent their beliefs were with the lesbian narrative passages ($\beta = .42$), $F(1, 143) = 29.60$, $p < .001$. However, no indication was found that participants' perceptions of the plausibility of the lesbian narrative passages altered the passages' influence on participants' beliefs about lesbians. More specifically, the cognitive busyness X prejudice toward lesbian interaction was not replicated when the perceived plausibility of the lesbian passages was examined in place of prejudice toward lesbians, $F(1, 136) < 1$, p = n.s.

A related hypothesis regarding perceived plausibility was that participants' perceptions of the perceived plausibility of the lesbian passages would mediate the relationship between participants' preexisting attitudes about lesbians and their subsequently reported beliefs about lesbians. More specifically, it was hypothesized that when confronted with positive portrayals of a social group that is generally stigmatized in the United States (i.e., lesbians), the most prejudiced individuals would have less faith in the perceived plausibility of the passage as compared to the least prejudiced individuals. In turn, if participants had less faith in the perceived plausibility of the narrative passage, it was expected that reading that narrative passage would have less impact on their beliefs about the depicted social group. As a first step in examining these predictions, it was established that there was a relationship between participants' prejudice toward lesbians and their judgments of the perceived plausibility of the lesbian passages ($\beta = -.32$). In addition, regression analyses showed that both prejudice toward lesbians and the perceived plausibility of the lesbian passages were related to participants' subsequently reported

beliefs about lesbians (prejudice: $\beta = -.69$; plausibility: $\beta = .42$). Examining the contribution of participants' prejudice toward lesbians and the perceived plausibility of the lesbian passages in a single regression equation provided only very slight support that the perceived plausibility of the lesbian passages mediated the relationship between participants' preexisting prejudice toward lesbians and the beliefs they subsequently reported. When controlling for perceived plausibility, the β between participants' prejudice toward lesbians and their belief consistency with the lesbian passages was only attenuated slightly from -.69 to a still significant β of -.62, $F(1, 138) = 102.07$, $p < .001$. In addition, when controlling for the effect of participants' prejudice toward lesbians, perceived plausibility still had a direct independent relationship with participants' subsequently reported beliefs about lesbians ($\beta = .22$), $F(1, 138) = 12.86$, $p < .001$. Thus, it appears that both the perceived plausibility of the lesbian passages and readers' preexisting prejudice toward lesbians have independent relationships with their subsequently reported beliefs about lesbians.

Overall, the pattern of results suggests that perceived plausibility had very little to do with the influence of narrative passages featuring a lesbian protagonist. First, the readers did not rely on the plausibility of the lesbian passages when they reported their post-exposure beliefs about lesbians. Second, the perceived plausibility of the lesbian passages did not mediate the relationship between readers' preexisting prejudice and their subsequently reported beliefs about lesbians.

Summary. In general, it appears that readers of the lesbian passages were not affected by whether the passages were fictional or nonfictional. However, memorizing the details of the lesbian passages appeared to make the most prejudiced readers express

beliefs more consistent with the positively toned passages, as compared to both non-busy readers and as compared to the control group. In fact, memorizing the details of the lesbian passages even caused the most prejudiced participants to express more favorable attitudes about lesbians, as compared to the control group. Lastly, no indication was found that the perceived plausibility of the lesbian passages altered their influence nor did perceived plausibility mediate the relationship between participants' preexisting prejudice toward lesbians and their subsequently reported beliefs about lesbians. The plausibility of the lesbian passages and the readers' preexisting prejudice toward lesbians had independent relationships with readers' subsequently reported beliefs about lesbians.

DISCUSSION

Using available theory and evidence, the present research hypothesized that when individuals with full cognitive capacity read written passages about various social groups, the passages would be more influential on the readers' beliefs about the depicted social groups if the passages were represented to be nonfictional versus fictional. Contrary to what was hypothesized, a greater effect of nonfictional versus fictional written passages was not found for non-busy readers of passages featuring either a French Canadian or lesbian protagonist. In fact, in a pattern exactly opposite to what was predicted, both cognitively busy and non-busy participants responded somewhat more to the French Canadian passages when they were represented to be fictional versus nonfictional. Although it is tempting to explain the lack of findings for the fictional/nonfictional distinction due to participants' inability to correctly remember having read fictional passages, in actuality readers only had significant problems remembering the fictional nature of the target passages when they were cognitively busy memorizing the details of

the French Canadian passages. Moreover, participants must have, at least on some level, distinguished between the sources of the passages since they indicated that the nonfictional passages were more plausible than the fictional passages. In addition, follow-up analyses examining only participants who correctly recalled the source of the passages that they had read still failed to demonstrate that participants' beliefs were more affected by nonfictional than fictional narrative passages (see Footnotes 2 & 5).

Although there obviously is no one answer as to why participants were not differentially affected by the fictional and nonfictional passages, some tentative conjectures can be offered. Although the tendency was not always significant, participants were more likely to misattribute the source of the fictional passages as "nonfictional (true-life account)" rather than misattribute the source of the nonfictional passages as "fictional (made-up account)." This occurred despite extensive pretesting of the narrative passages that was undertaken to ensure that the passages could be credibly presented as both fictional and nonfictional. Although participants' misattributions could have been perpetuated by the passages being rather short (one single-spaced page) and seemingly rather factually-based, the present research is not alone in finding that participants have a tendency to misattribute fictional passages as nonfictional. Despite using a passage that was approximately nine double-spaced pages in length, Brock and Green (1995, September) also found that participants were more likely to misattribute fictional stories as true than misattribute nonfictional stories as not true.

A second potential conjecture for why individuals did not differentiate between the fictional and nonfictional passages was that even though the fictional passages were represented as made-up, participants could still have perceived that the presented

information contained elements of reality. In fact, the introduction to the fictional passages could have given participants this idea since the instructions said "...The stories were made up by various creative writers in order to portray their view of people's life experiences...." Also, simply by the fact that the passages had ostensibly been printed in an anthology entitled Imagining Social Groups: Fictional Short Stories could have given them more credibility even though participants were explicitly told that "resemblance to real persons and places is of course coincidental." Support for this explanation of the lack of effect for the fictional/nonfictional distinction comes from the fact that the perceived plausibility of both the fictional and nonfictional passages were on the plausible side of the response scale.

A third, yet related explanation for why readers did not differentiate between the fictional and nonfictional source of the narrative information has to do with "transportedness." Gerrig (1993) suggests that readers routinely become absorbed, or transported into the narrative worlds of which they read, almost regardless of the quality of the narrative. Moreover, once readers become "transported" into a narrative world they must exert special effort to prevent fictional information from affecting their real-world beliefs (see also Brock & Green, 1995, September). In fact, although they were referring to computers, television, and new media, Byron Reeves and Clifford Nass (1996) argue in their recently published book that individuals often equate mediated life and real life. According to these researchers "the automatic response is to accept what seems to be real as in fact real" (p. 8). Moreover, this acceptance will occur almost automatically since "absent a significant warning that we've been fooled, our old brains hold sway and we accept media as real people and places" (p. 12). Further support for the idea that

readers regularly get absorbed into narrative worlds is found in research showing that readers display greater acceptance of false assertions embedded in fictional passages when both the setting and readers' personality characteristics lessen the likelihood that they will fully attend to, or scrutinize, the presented information (Wheeler, Brock, & Green, 1997, May).

A second prediction of the present research was that when participants lacked the cognitive capacity to take a second, more effortful step to reject or exclude initially accepted information, they would be less capable of rejecting fictional information or excluding it from their representations. Thus, it had been expected that the consistency of participants' beliefs with the passages that they read would not differ based on the fictional/nonfictional source of the information when participants were cognitively busy, but would differ when not cognitively busy. Since non-cognitively busy participants did not significantly differentiate between the fictional and nonfictional nature of the passages in the present research, this prediction was not supported.

The current research offers somewhat mixed support for the prediction that readers of passages featuring members of various social groups would express beliefs more consistent with the content of these passages than would readers of unrelated passages. More specifically, compared to the readers of the unrelated, control passages, readers' beliefs about French Canadians were influenced by the French Canadian passages in all cases except when they read nonfictional passages with full cognitive capacity. As this condition was the only instance in which participants' preexisting attitudes about French Canadians were related to their subsequently reported beliefs, it is likely that something about the combination of not paying particular attention to the passages and

their nonfictional status caused readers to discount the information contained in these French Canadian passages. Therefore, when these readers were later asked about their beliefs about French Canadians they appeared to rely more on their preexisting attitudes about French Canadians than on the content of the French Canadian passages. Although tentative at best, there are a few potential explanations for why non-busy readers of the nonfictional French Canadian passages ignored the passage information. First, it could have had something to do with participants' poor recall of the source of the passages since the effect of source disappeared when only participants who correctly recalled the source of the passage that they had read were examined. Second, it could be that when participants were not asked to attend carefully to the French Canadian passages, they simply ignored the passage because they did not accept such subjectively improbable information as being genuinely nonfictional. In fact, although not significant or even a trend by conventional standards, examination of participants' assessments of the French Canadian passages as a function of source and cognitive busyness suggests that the perceived quality and interest value of the French Canadian passages was lowest for non-busy readers of the nonfictional passages ($\underline{M}$ = 3.37), as compared to cognitively busy nonfictional readers ($\underline{M}$ = 3.75) and as compared to non-busy fictional readers ($\underline{M}$ = 3.56). Overall, despite the rather odd reaction of non-busy readers of the nonfictional French Canadian passages, it seems that simply reading a passage about a social group for which the readers do not have preexisting attitudes can affect readers' beliefs about that group. Therefore, simply reading about a member of a social group that is rather unfamiliar to the readers can cause readers to incorporate the information they glean from the passages into their current representations of that social group, at least temporarily.

Interpretation of whether reading lesbian narrative passages had an effect on readers' beliefs about lesbians over and above the effect of reading about unrelated social groups is greatly complicated by the shifts that were found in the supposed "control" group who had read unrelated passages about French Canadians and rural Americans. As compared to the other control groups, non-busy readers of the fictional French Canadian and rural American passages relied less on their preexisting attitudes about lesbians when they subsequently reported their beliefs about lesbians. More specifically, when the least and moderately prejudiced non-busy participants read fictional versus nonfictional unrelated, control passages, they subsequently expressed significantly more negative beliefs about lesbians. Although the pattern for the readers of the French Canadian and rural American passages did not differ by conventional standards, visual inspection suggested that the shift in the non-busy fictional control group was mostly due to the rural American passages since the relationship between participants' preexisting attitudes about lesbians and subsequently reported beliefs was stronger for readers of the French Canadian versus rural American passages (*b*s = -.85 versus -.59). Since non-busy readers' general attitudes about lesbians were also affected by reading the rural American control passages, it is reasonable to assume that some carry-over or contrast effect may have occurred. Simply reading the rural American passages may have primed more traditional, small-town values for the readers which subsequently caused the least and moderately prejudiced readers to express more negative beliefs and attitudes about lesbians than they normally would. Unfortunately, although this explanation appears to have merit, the question of why there were differential effects of fictional and nonfictional rural American passages on the beliefs about lesbians of the least and moderately prejudiced readers remains

unanswered.

Despite the shifts in the supposed "control" group, it appears that reading the positively toned passages about lesbians affected the beliefs about lesbians of only the most prejudiced participants who had memorized the details of the passages. More specifically, the most prejudiced cognitively busy readers of the lesbian passages expressed more favorable beliefs about lesbians as compared to the most prejudiced non-busy readers and as compared to the most prejudiced readers who memorized the details of unrelated passages. Overall, this finding offers hope that when forced to read and carefully attend to positive information about social groups that are generally stigmatized, such as lesbians, the most prejudiced readers may, in turn, express more positive beliefs about the depicted social group. Further support for this argument can be gained from the fact that as compared to the most prejudiced non-busy readers of the lesbian passages, the most prejudiced readers who had been cognitively busy memorizing the details of the lesbian passages expressed more favorable assessments of the quality and interest of the lesbian passages (see Appendix F). Although it is encouraging that the positively toned passages had an influence on the most prejudiced participants, it appears that when readers have preexisting attitudes about social groups that are generally stigmatized (such as lesbians), reading or memorizing the details of a positively toned passage about that group may not sway the beliefs of less prejudiced readers.

Of interest in the present research was to determine whether simply reading about a French Canadian or lesbian individual translated to changes in participants' general attitudes about these social groups. Overall, there was support for the idea that readers' attitudes about social groups are susceptible to simply reading about members of those

social groups. For instance, it was found that readers of the French Canadian passages subsequently reported more favorable attitudes about French Canadians than did readers of unrelated passages. Although this finding is inconsistent with the fact that the valence of the cultural focus information contained in the French Canadian passages was negative, in general, the French Canadian passages were positive in their tone since less prejudiced readers gave more favorable general assessments of the passages than did more prejudiced readers (see Appendix F). Similar to the pattern found when examining readers' beliefs about lesbians, memorizing details of the positively toned lesbian passages versus unrelated, control passages caused only the most prejudiced readers to report more favorable attitudes about lesbians. Again, it appears that simply forcing high prejudiced readers to read positively toned passages may have caused them to rethink their negative attitudes about lesbians.

The last general prediction of the present research suggested that readers would be most affected by the information contained in narrative passages that they considered to be more versus less plausible. Contrary to this prediction, it appears that readers were generally not more affected by passages that they considered to be more plausible. Although, readers of the lesbian passages did report beliefs that were more consistent with the passages that they perceived to be more plausible, there was no indication that readers were *more affected* by passages that they considered to be more versus less plausible. In addition, it was only when readers paid close attention to the content of the nonfictional French Canadian passages that they appeared to utilize their perceptions of the plausibility of the French Canadian passages when subsequently making their belief judgments about French Canadians. Although this finding is rather hard to explain, it could be that readers

relied more on the plausibility of the passages when they had to pay particular attention to unfamiliar information that was reported to be nonfictional. Participants who were led to believe the passages were nonfictional but who found the content of the passages to be rather implausible may have responded more based on how plausible the passages appeared to be than on the actual content of the passages.

A hypothesis in the present research that focused on the lesbian narrative passages suggested that, similar to the way in which prejudice toward lesbians moderated the influence of the passages, perceived plausibility would also alter the influence of written passages featuring a lesbian protagonist. Contrary to this prediction, it appears that the relationship between the perceived plausibility of the lesbian passages and readers' subsequently reported beliefs about lesbians is quite different from the relationship between readers' preexisting prejudice toward lesbians and their subsequently reported beliefs about lesbians. For instance, unlike the influence of readers' prejudice on their subsequently reported beliefs about lesbians, the influence of readers' perceptions of the plausibility of the lesbian passages was not qualified by whether readers had been cognitively busy memorizing the details of the lesbian passages or not.

The prediction that the perceived plausibility of the lesbian narrative passages would mediate the relationship of participants' preexisting prejudice toward lesbians and their subsequently reported beliefs about lesbians only received limited support. Generally, it is evident that readers' beliefs about lesbians are independently related to both their preexisting prejudice toward lesbians and their perceptions of the plausibility of the lesbian passages. Thus, at least for social groups for which readers have a priori attitudes, the plausibility of the passages featuring a member of that group has an

independent relationship with readers' beliefs about the depicted social group. As was predicted from the idea that participants' attitudes about French Canadians would not be strongly held, no support was found for the idea that the perceived plausibility of the French Canadian passages mediated the relationship between readers' attitudes about French Canadians and their subsequently reported beliefs about French Canadians.

An understandable but unpredicted finding of the present research was that, as compared to non-busy readers, cognitively busy readers who had memorized the details of the narrative passages relied less on their preexisting attitudes about the depicted social group when they subsequently made related belief judgments. More specifically, as compared to their non-busy counterparts, both cognitively busy readers of the lesbian passages as well as the nonfictional French Canadian passages relied less on their preexisting attitudes about the depicted social group when they made their belief judgments. It may be that participants were simply learning the information as they attempt to memorize it. Therefore, when cognitively busy readers were subsequently asked to make belief judgments related to the information contained in the passage that they had memorized, they tend to rely more on the newly-learned information than on their preexisting attitudes about the depicted social group. This reasoning is consistent with research that suggests that individuals have better recall of information when an on-line versus memory-based judgment task is used (e.g., Hastie & Park, 1986; McConnell, Sherman, & Hamilton, 1994). It is also consistent with the fact that individuals are more susceptible to changes in their conception of an action when they concentrate on the details of the act (e.g., Vallacher & Wegner, 1985; Wegner, Vallacher, Macomber, Wood, & Arps, 1984).

Summary of Findings

In general it appears that people do not naturally differentiate information on the basis of its fictional versus nonfictional status. Although the present research may be criticized for not producing the absolute best quality exemplars of fiction and nonfiction, it is not alone in finding that readers do not differentiate between fiction and nonfiction much of the time (e.g., Brock & Green, 1995, September; M. D. Slater, 1988/1989, 1990).

Based on the failure to obtain differences between readers' responses to fictional and nonfictional information, many of the hypotheses of the present research were not supported. However, it does appear that simply reading about social groups for which readers do not have clear a priori attitudes (i.e., French Canadians) caused readers to express beliefs more consistent with the content of the narrative passages, and even to express more favorable attitudes about the depicted social group. In addition, it was found that memorizing the details of positively toned passages featuring social group members for which readers have clearly defined a priori attitudes (i.e., lesbians) caused the most prejudiced readers to express beliefs more consistent with the passages, and even expressed more favorable attitudes about the depicted social group.

Although, on the whole, the hypotheses regarding the role of plausibility in the differing effects of fictional and nonfictional narrative passages were not supported, there was some slight indication that the perceived plausibility of narrative passages plays a role in their influence. Although this was not true for passages about social groups toward which readers held a priori attitudes (i.e., lesbians), readers of passages featuring unfamiliar social groups (i.e., French Canadians) at times relied on the plausibility of the

passages when they subsequently made related judgments. More specifically, readers appeared to rely on their plausibility judgments when they reported their beliefs about French Canadians after closely attending to nonfictional passages about French Canadians. Lastly, the present research suggests that the perceived plausibility of narrative passages and readers' preexisting attitudes have independent relationships with readers' subsequently reported beliefs when the passages feature social group members about which the readers have preexisting attitudes, but not when the passages feature social groups for which the readers have weak preexisting attitudes.

Implications

The main implication of the present work is that readers may not differentiate between fictional and nonfictional sources of information in their day-to-day lives. Although it would seem obvious to academics that there is a significant difference between the accuracy of fictional and nonfictional information, it does not appear that this perception is universally shared. Because of the failure of readers to differentiate between fictional and nonfictional sources of information about social groups, this makes one wonder about how and from what sources people are acquiring information about social groups. Based on the present research, it is not outside the realm of possibilities that readers are as likely to acquire information about social groups from the National Enquirer as they are from the New York Times. Although it is unlikely that readers' beliefs about a social group for which they have already formed attitudes will be dramatically influenced by reading a single narrative passage about that social group, it is conceivable that readers' beliefs about a rather unfamiliar social group can be influenced by fictional depictions of that group. Consistent with when optimal learning from the mass media occurs (see Atkin

& Greenberg, 1980), readers may rely more on the information they gain from fictional sources when they lack real-world experience with the depicted social group. To repeat a quotation reported earlier, "absent a significant warning that we've been fooled, our old brains hold sway and we accept media as real people and places" (Reeves & Nass, 1996, p. 12).

Limitations and Future Research

Like much of the research regarding the fictional/nonfictional distinction of written narratives (e.g., Brock & Green, 1995, September; M. D. Slater, 1988/1989, 1990), the present research found that readers do not regularly differentiate between fictional and nonfictional information presented in narrative passages. However, in the present research it is not entirely clear that the passages utilized were the best possible exemplars of fictional and nonfictional passages that individuals confront in their daily lives. In particular, it is questionable whether the fictional passages were as good exemplars of fiction as the nonfictional passages were of nonfiction especially since readers had relatively greater trouble accurately recalling the source of the fictional passages. In addition, the passages created to test the predictions about groups for which participants did not have firmly held attitudes (i.e., French Canadian) were perceived to be of poorer quality and less plausible than the passages about social groups for which readers had preexisting attitudes (i.e., lesbians). Therefore, this research probably did not provide as good a test for the predictions about social groups for which readers did not have preexisting attitudes as it did for social groups for which readers had preexisting attitudes.

Related to the quality of the written passages used in the present research was the manipulation of the fiction/nonfiction distinction. The present research could have failed

to find any distinctions between fiction and nonfiction because people may have a tendency to treat all written material and, in particular, material that has been published, to be at least based in reality. Consider that quite a number of fictional books, such as Of Mice and Men and Catcher in the Rye have been banned from United States schools. Although these books are portraying "made up" people, these books must be deemed representative enough of what can happen in real life to merit banning them (T. C. Brock, personal communication, February 14, 1997).

Due to the fact that readers may not automatically differentiate between fictional and nonfictional sources of information on a day-to-day basis, a good question to address in future research is under what conditions readers actually do make the distinction between fiction and nonfiction. The first step in addressing this question would be to both create more credible exemplars of fiction and nonfiction and to increase the salience of the fiction/nonfiction manipulation. The narrative passages would probably be more credible as fictional passages if they were longer, more engaging, and contained more lyrical transitions in the text. Rather than trying to start with autobiographical essays and making them more fictional, as was done in the present research, the narratives might have more of a fictional feel to them if originally fictional passages were edited to create narrative passages that could be credibly presented as both fictional and nonfictional. In the present research, it is very likely that beginning the process of creating the narrative passages from originally nonfictional passages could have "anchored" the tone of the passages as nonfictional.

To make sure that readers distinguish between ostensibly nonfictional and fictional passages, the distinctions between the two sources could be made much more salient. For

instance, readers could be told that the fictional passages came from a novel commonly found in convenience stores whereas the nonfictional passages came from the New York Times. In addition, the format of the printed materials could be changed so that they are consistent with their ostensible source. Furthermore, when presenting the passages to the participants the researcher in each session could hold up their supposed source (New York Times or paperback novel). This action would probably increase the salience of the fictional/nonfictional distinction of the passages by providing participants with a visual, salient cue as to the type of passage they would be reading.

Alternatively, the instructions given to participants could be changed so that the fictional passage may be seen as less representative of the real world. Participants could be told that the writers of the passages had been randomly assigned to write the passages for their writing class. For the fictional passages, participants could be told that the authors had no prior knowledge of the topic on which they wrote and, in fact, had been uncomfortable writing the passages because of their lack of familiarity with the depicted social group. However, for the nonfictional passages, the participants could be told that the authors were given time to extensively research the social group depicted so that the presented information was true-life rather than simply made-up.

A different problem with the current research was the rather inexplicable interactions that involved the influence of the "control" passages on participants' beliefs and attitudes about lesbians. Because of these rather strange interactions it was difficult to determine if the narrative passages featuring lesbian protagonists actually had an effect on readers' beliefs over and above the effect of reading unrelated, control passages. One way to deal with the problem of carry-over or contrast effects in future research would be to

have the control group read passages about a location or event that were not focused on a person or social group in any way. In addition, this control group would not be subjected to the experimental manipulations of source or cognitive busyness and thus, the potential for inexplicable interactions involving these experimental manipulations would be removed. A second control group could also be used that simply read the target passages and responded to the related belief items without being subjected to any of the experimental manipulations. This control group would provide a baseline against which the effects of the experimental manipulations could be compared.

Another limitation of the present research was that, unexpectedly, the participants were not particularly negative about lesbians, a group that is generally stigmatized in the United States. Thus, despite the fact that more prejudiced participants expressed beliefs that were less consistent with the positively toned lesbian passages than did less prejudiced participants, it is still not clear that the passages were, in fact, contrary to the preexisting attitudes and beliefs of the most prejudiced participants.

Although there are several limitations in the present research, the research has sparked a host of questions about when and for what reasons readers may or may not differentiate between fictional and nonfictional sources of information. More specifically, the next step in trying to understand how readers are affected by narrative descriptions of social groups would be to determine at what point readers start to differentiate between fictional and nonfictional sources of information. One way to do this would be to provide readers with more extreme examples of fiction and nonfiction. For instance, it would be of interest to determine whether people actually do absorb information about social group members from National Enquirer articles that they read as they wait in line at the grocery

store, as compared to articles from the New York Times. If the less than credible nature of the National Enquirer is not a strong enough warning for readers to discount the information that they read, this has serious implications for how people regularly form their beliefs about social groups. A different question that could also be addressed in future research would be to determine the "type" of people who would be more likely to utilize the fictional/nonfictional distinction of narrative passages. Although past research suggests that the majority of readers do not differentiate between the sources of narrative passages, it is likely that high need for cognition readers and readers for whom the accuracy of subsequent related judgments is important will differentiate between fictional and nonfictional sources of information. Evidence showing that certain types of people regularly differentiate between fiction and nonfiction will shed insight into whether most readers fail to differentiate between fiction and nonfiction because of motivational issues or simply because they perceive a fictional world to be representative of the real world.

Once it has been established that people can or will differentiate between fictional and nonfictional sources of information, the next step will be to determine by what cognitive processes people do so. Following the paradigm of the present research, it is likely that when readers do not have cognitive capacity they will be more likely to simply accept all information that they read, regardless of its source. Lastly, another question that could be asked in future research is how readers are affected by written information that does not fall neatly into the fictional/nonfictional dichotomy. For instance, many readers recognize that historical novels, although ostensibly fictional, often contain descriptions of events, settings, and people that are very much based on real life. It would be of interest to see whether readers actually perceive these types of reality-based fiction

to be more nonfictional than fictional, and, if so, how these perceptions will influence how readers are affected by the information contained in these materials.

Other, less concrete questions that have been sparked by the present research are as follows: When readers do differentiate between fiction and nonfiction, do they do so because they use the source information as a credibility cue or because the perceived quality of the presented information is inherently different because of its fictional/nonfictional status? Is nonfictional information seen as more "real" than fictional information? Do readers even differentiate between fiction and nonfiction when they happen to glance through a magazine in a doctor's office? By addressing these questions researchers can gain a better understanding of how people's beliefs and attitudes are affected by what they read.

Conclusions

Despite this and other research, it still remains a relatively unanswered question whether readers differentiate between information about social groups contained in fictional and nonfictional narrative passages. This research again underscores the difficulty of creating situations in which media users discriminate between fictional and nonfictional information. In combination with other research, it appears that the question that should be asked is under what conditions readers actually differentiate between fiction and nonfiction, rather than the question asked in this research of when readers will not differentiate between the fictional/nonfictional nature of narrative passages.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

APPENDIX A

PREEXISTING ATTITUDE SCALES

Attitude Scales

The response to each item was assessed using a 7-point Likert-type scale with "1" signifying "disagree strongly" and "7" signifying "agree strongly." Items with an asterisk were reverse scored so that a higher score indicates more prejudice toward the target group.

Attitudes toward French Canadians

1. French Canadians are unlikeable people.
2. It is easy to understand why people like French Canadians.*
3. I generally admire French Canadians.*
4. French Canadians are very friendly, outgoing, nice people.*
5. French Canadians are very demanding and pushy.

Attitudes Toward Lesbians - Short Form (ATL-S; Herek, 1988)

1. Lesbians just can't fit into our society.
2. State laws regulating private, consenting lesbian behavior should be loosened.*
3. Female homosexuality is a sin.
4. Female homosexuality in itself is no problem, but what society makes of it can be a problem.*
5. Lesbians are sick.

Evaluation Thermometer (Haddock et al., 1993)

Participants were asked to "circle a number between 0° and 100° to indicate your overall evaluation of typical members of a target group." The extreme ends of the scale, 0° and 100°, were labeled "extremely unfavorable" and "extremely favorable," respectively, with the adjectives "very," "quite," "fairly," and "slightly" unfavorable or favorable marked at 10° increments. The midpoint of the scale 50°, was labeled "neither favorable nor unfavorable."

Target groups	Filler target groups
French Canadian	Latinos/Hispanics
Lesbians	Small town USA resident
	Irish
	Gay Men

APPENDIX B

APPENDIX B

SOCIAL GROUP BELIEF SCALES

The response to each item was assessed using a 7-point Likert-type scale with "1" signifying "disagree strongly" and "7" signifying "agree strongly." Items with a number sign (#) are attitude measures that were not directly addressed within the passage. Items with an asterisk were reverse scored so that a higher score indicates either beliefs consistent with the narrative passages or more positive attitudes about the social groups.

French Canadians

1. French Canadians are very focused on their own culture.
2. Most French Canadians would prefer to become more like English Canadians.*
3. The Catholic church is currently a major part of French Canadians' daily life.*
4. French Canadians by tradition are very religious.
5. French Canadians have a hard time relating to non-French Canadians.
6. Due to their cultural identity, French Canadians will inevitably have conflict with English Canadians.
7. I admire French Canadians.#
8. The French Canadian culture provides a great benefit to the rest of Canada.#

Lesbians

1. The love and commitment of two lesbians in a long-term romantic relationship can be very strong and deep.

2. The love a lesbian feels for her partner is not true love.*

3. There are no good reasons why lesbians should have to hide their relationships in public.

4. It is socially awkward when lesbians reveal their sexual orientation.*

5. Lesbians only have themselves to blame if they are harassed.*

6. Harassment of homosexuals is greatly exaggerated and probably doesn't occur that often.*

7. Lesbians are generally unpleasant people.#*

8. It would be beneficial to society to accept the homosexuality of lesbians as normal.#

APPENDIX C

APPENDIX C

STIMULUS NARRATIVE PASSAGES

French Canadian, Version 1

My French Canadian Side
[book title]

On the day her daughter started kindergarten, Marie settled back at the kitchen table with a cup of coffee and reflected back on her life with her biological family as well as her life with the family she had created with her husband. When Marie first married she had sincerely believed that she did not want children, but the time came, not too many years later, when she and her husband realized that they really longed to have a family. Much to Marie's joy and amazement they first had David, then two years later, Monique had entered her life with a loud squall. Although the children were a wonderful addition to Marie's life, their entrance into the world intensified the cultural differences that Marie and her husband had to confront within their marriage. For Marie it was very strange to see how two different upbringings got in the way when both she and her husband tried to look after, and transmit customs to, their children. The squabbles the couple had pertaining to their different backgrounds--John being first generation western Canadian of Anglo-Danish roots versus Marie's background as a French Canadian from Quebec--were colorful and, in retrospect, quite amusing.

As Marie settled back more comfortably in her chair, she realized that the conflicts that she and John had had in their married life may be at least on some level, inevitable because of their cultural differences. Like many others, Marie was raised in a completely French environment where the two linguistic groups, French and English, were completely separated. In fact, as Marie tried to think back to her childhood she could not recall there being even one Anglo anywhere in her neighborhood or even in her section of the city. While Marie took another sip of coffee, she was struck, as she had been many times in the past, on how much influence her French Canadian upbringing had on her current behaviors and outlooks.

Probably due to her French Canadian upbringing, Marie exhibited an enormous amount of pride in her French heritage. She spent tremendous amounts of time and effort trying to get Quebec, or the French factor, more widely accepted and respected in the rest of Canada. At times she was more successful than others but, all-in-all Marie's efforts generally failed to generate acceptance of the French Canadian culture in all of Canada. However, on one front of this battle she had been extremely successful. She somehow managed to instill her children with an appreciation and love for their French heritage. To achieve this goal, Marie like many other French Canadians used many tactics. She made sure that early in their lives both of her children were part of play groups composed entirely of children of French Canadian descent while she also exposed both David and Monique to a vast quantity of French literature, music, and cinema. In fact, even when

they were teenagers Marie would insist that her children sing songs from French folklore with her as they travel in the car. Thankfully for Marie her efforts had paid off--both of her children adored anything and everything that was an expression of their French Canadian heritage.

One of the things that went to the wayside in David and Monique's lives that had been a major part of their mother's life was the influence of the Catholic Church. For Marie, the Church ruled her daily life as a child; she would have had to have been nonhuman to have escaped its pervasive influence. However, this was not true for David and Monique as the French Canadian culture had become more secular. The major religious infrastructures that once controlled everyone's waking hours had generally fallen apart like a house of cards. Where once the Catholic rituals, ceremonies, obligations, and code of conduct reined supreme in the lives of French Canadians, the Church's force was largely nonexistent in the day-to-day lives of Marie's children.

As Marie watched her daughter Monique leave for her first day of school, it hit her that her child was slowly absorbing her French Canadian heritage. Although this same French identity had created some conflict in her marriage, Marie was proud to say that her children considered themselves French Canadian and, even more importantly, were proud of that heritage.

French Canadian, Version 2

My French Canadian Side
[book title]

As Monique sat back with her cup of coffee and reflected on her long career as a radio journalist, she clearly recalled the dinner that was thrown in her honor on the eve of her ten-year anniversary as a radio journalist. Although she had thought that it would be great to see old friends and colleagues at the dinner and although she did have a good time, she also remembered how surprised she was that her radio program had been on the air for ten long years. It had seemed as if it had only been yesterday that she had started the program in an attempt to produce and transmit an accurate portrayal of the French Canadian culture. Monique smiled to herself as she recalled how earnest and sincere she had been about communicating openly and honestly about the beauty and power of French Canadian culture to all of Canada.

During Monique's reflections about her career she noted that even though she may not have ever managed to make English Canadians' attitudes about French Canadians more positive, she had certainly become wiser than when she first began. For instance, a continual source of frustration was that she was convinced that both the country and Quebec would be better off if English Canadians paid attention to the greatness of the French Canadian culture. With a shake of her head, Monique realized that although she had found these grand goals for the program somewhat frustrated by reality, had she not been driven by a need to promote the French Canadian heritage, she might never have found her way onto the airwaves.

When Monique thought back to the start of her career she realized that her drive to promote and invigorate the greatness of the French Canadian culture was most likely related to her family upbringing. In her house, generations of French Canadians had their space and place and all of them were determined to get the French fact more widely accepted and respected in the rest of Canada. In fact, as Monique thought about her family she realized she was simply walking in their footsteps since most of them had been driven to ensure that the French Canadian culture remained a vital aspect of life in Canada.

Interestingly Monique realized that it was only later in her life that she finally discovered the extent to which she had absorbed the French fact into her identity. One instance that clearly stood out in her mind was how easily conflict had erupted between she and her husband even though they shared similar values and outlooks. Looking back, Monique attributed their conflict largely to basic cultural differences. Although both she and John were Canadians, the differences that emerged from him being English Canadian and she being French Canadian had been immense and, only now in hindsight, had just set them up for conflict. It was as if they were born and raised in different countries rather than in a single country.

Another facet of her life in which her French Canadian identity had made a huge difference, Monique noted as she looked back at her life, was her choice in programming for her radio show. For instance, Monique easily recalled how she consciously avoided the topic of religion on her radio program. When Monique grew up, the Catholic Church was the central part of life. Her family's life had revolved around the Church and activities

sponsored by the Church. However, in more recent years, the hold the Church had over French Canadians had completely fallen away. While 40 years, Monique realized, that it would have been accurate to highlight the power of the French Canadian culture, it would have been very inaccurate for Monique to paint the Church as currently anything but peripheral to the lives of most French Canadians.

Conversely, the issue that Monique recalled regularly highlighting in her program was the beauty and wonder of French artistic expression. Probably due to her heritage, Monique realized that she must have been almost inevitably drawn to French artistic expression be it art, music, dance, or even movies. Unlike other art, Monique remembered relating to French expression in a way that cannot be replicated with non-French art. Fortunately one of the joys of Monique's job was that she could transmit and promote the beauty of French artistic expression to the rest of Canada through the airwaves.

As Monique looked back at her career, she felt as if all the pieces of her life had somehow added up to the career she ended pursuing. It was as if her career choice were determined at an early age. In essence, she saw her pursuit of a career as a radio journalist as a natural step in her lifelong attempt to communicate and highlight her French Canadian heritage to all of Canada.

Lesbian, Version 1

A Wedding in Carmel
[book title]

As Linda settled back into her chair, she thought back to the morning of her wedding with her partner Susan. She thought about how the two of them had woken up early and had looked at each other with glee. Even now, Linda smiled to herself as she thought about how nervous she had been that morning and how comical she felt as she and Susan had tried to appear nonchalant as they waltzed through their hotel lobby with a two-tiered wedding cake and a bottle of champagne. She also remembered how lucky they felt that the hotel owner hadn't been around when they arrived, because they thought he might have kicked them out if he had known they were lesbians. Linda remembered clearly how, at the time, she and Susan had jokingly complained that they hadn't received their complimentary champagne from the hotel for their wedding.

Linda remembered how she and Susan had spent what seemed like hours looking for the perfect place to have their wedding on the beach. They finally found a secluded, beautiful section of jade trees that was exactly the setting Linda had hoped they would find. Even now, Linda clearly remembered the great excitement of her wedding day and how she had felt intense closeness and love for her partner. What a moment it had been when she and Susan had strolled over to the trees they had chosen for their special wedding spot and exchanged their vows of love and devotion. Especially memorable was that they had ended the ceremony by reading each other their own poetry that had been written especially for each other and the occasion. Their writings had told of their inner feelings about why they had chosen each other--why they wanted to be married and why they wanted to spend the rest of their lives together. Linda reflected how nervous, excited, bubbly, and happy she had been at the end of the ceremony. In fact she had cried as well as laughed at the end of the ceremony because she felt so exhilarated and so in love. It had seemed that for the first time in her life, she truly felt love as she had never before felt it.

As she reflected back on her life with Susan, Linda felt that marriage to the woman she had chosen was the most beautiful and amazing thing that had ever happened to her. Although the marriage of two women was not legal, Linda considered herself married to Susan in every sense of the word.

Unfortunately, as Linda looked back at her marriage, she thought back to the troubles that she and Susan had faced when they had been affectionate in public. Since both women liked to be touched and touch each other, they had been affectionate in public at the beginning of their relationship. However, because of this affection Linda clearly remembered some very hostile and scary situations that resulted. One incident stood out sharply in her memory. She and Susan had just finished their picnic lunch in the park and were holding hands while they settled back to gaze up at the clouds high above their heads. Out of nowhere, a group of six teenagers appeared and threw taunts at them such as "dykes" and "lez" and "freaks." The whole situation had been very unreal, as well as extremely hurtful and upsetting, especially because Linda and Susan had done nothing to the teenagers and were just minding their own business.

As Linda looked back at this incident she was wistful about how nice it would have been to lead a life free from harassment. She tended to think that these incidents were so hurtful simply because they were not uncommon. For instance, another time Linda remembered vividly was when a truck full of men had tried to run she and Susan off the freeway when the men saw them being affectionate.

Linda grimaced to herself when she thought about how long the anger and hurt of these incidents had lingered in her life. Even though she realized the injustice of the situational constraints, she avoided showing her affection for another women in public due to the potential for harassment. Instead, she had looked for times and situations where it had been accepted for her to be open about her love for Susan, for example, with friends.

As Linda contemplated her life she realized that her friends were just that much more special because, with them, she and Susan had been able to be open about their love. The great warmth and love she had always experienced when she interacted with both her straight and gay friends who were supportive of her love for Susan was hard for her to describe.

Lesbian, Version 2

An Anniversary in California
[book title]

As Denise settled into her chair and reflected back on her life with her partner Carol, one of the most memorable days of their relationship was the day that they had celebrated their 10th anniversary. Although lesbian couples are generally not recognized by religion, the law, or the society section of the local newspaper, Denise remembered clearly how she and Carol had finally decided that they really wanted to throw a huge, extravagant, anniversary party in order to celebrate the love they had for each other. Looking back, Denise was amazed by how much time and effort they had put forth so that they could celebrate their anniversary with the literally hundreds of gay and straight friends who had touched and influenced their lives over the years. In fact, every time she thought back to the day of their anniversary celebration, Denise found herself grinning as she remembered how worried she and Carol had been about the possibility that all of their guests might arrive at the same time--which would have been disastrous.

Generally, whenever Denise contemplated her relationship with Carol she always felt a sense of contentment and satisfaction develop within herself. In fact, as she looked back through their years together she was continually amazed by how rewarding and fulfilling their relationship had been. With a start Denise realized that she viewed herself and Carol as basically married. She saw Carol as her true, life-long partner and loved her with her very heart and soul. In fact, Denise thought that she and Carol made their 10th anniversary such a big deal just so they could communicate the full extent of their love and joy to their friends and family.

As she looked back at her anniversary, Denise also realized that the event was a means for her to bring together many of the people who had provided her with a real sense of "belonging." As a lesbian, Denise remembered many instances when she felt as if she was an outsider; the one who must conform in order to glide easily through the largely heterosexual world. In particular, Denise found herself becoming wistful when she realized that she and Carol cannot safely hold hands or hug in public. These displays of affection, which were common for a man and woman, were largely forbidden for two women. Denise remembered all too vividly some of the unpleasant situations that had resulted from violating this unspoken "rule" against public displays of affection between two women. Once a group of teenagers came out of nowhere and surrounded she and Carol when they were walking hand-in-hand in the park. Another time they were literally kicked out of a restaurant because they were simply holding hands. As she reflected back on these two incidents, Denise found herself becoming especially frustrated with these situations because she and Carol were not doing anything that would not have been acceptable had they been a man and a woman. Simply the fact that they were two women versus a man and a woman was justification enough for the harassment.

When Denise thought about her anniversary party, she realized that the party had been one of the few times that she had felt none of the pangs of living as an outsider. Even some time later, she realized that the great joy she felt as she greeted old friends and new was difficult for her to express. She remembered literally glowing when some of her

longtime lesbian friends openly chatted with a judge or a commissioner, when a lesbian couple of 20 years mingled with heterosexual couples, when gay and straight persons of all arenas of life acknowledged each other socially, and when a state senator and his wife expressed gratitude for their friendship. As she thought back to the anniversary party, Denise clearly remembered how proud she was to host such a gathering where lesbians could be open about their love for other women. At their anniversary party as they celebrated their love, Denise realized that she probably felt for the first time in her life that she that she was no longer the outsider!

Rural American, Version 1

Growing Up in Rural Iowa
[book title]

As Lynn thought back to her childhood she realized that she was an Iowan through and through. She had grown up in a small town in Iowa where her father was a farmer. As Lynn reflected back on her father, she realized that one of her most vivid memories of him was sitting in the local coffee shop chatting with the other farmers about the status of the corn and soybean fields that surrounded the town. Another topic that stood out sharply in Lynn's memory was how much time the local farmers spent discussing the weather. Looking back, Lynn smiled as she remembered that it had always seemed as if every conversation inevitably turned to a discussion of the weather--whether it would rain or be sunny in the upcoming weeks.

Looking back at her life, Lynn laughed at herself when she thought about how determined she was as a teenager to leave rural Iowa. She found her early determination especially amusing because, when she graduated from college, she immediately married her childhood sweetheart and moved to a rural Iowan community that was not very far from her own hometown. Before she accepted Steve's marriage proposal, Lynn remembered that she briefly considered her earlier desire to leave rural Iowa but this desire paled in comparison to her desire to marry Steve. Actually there was no question that Lynn and Steve would return to rural Iowa because Steve was determined to be a farmer and rural Iowa was where he had access to available farm land.

One of Lynn's most vivid memories of her new home was her arrival after she and Steve had married. Coon Rapids only had a population of twelve hundred so the way into town was by way of a small two-lane country road. As they drove into town Lynn remembered sinking back into the car seat and wondering to herself what she had done by coming into this tiny town. In fact, she could still vividly recall the horrible feeling of being trapped that she had at the time and her thought that she would never get out of the town again. Thankfully, Lynn acknowledged that her fears had slowly faded over the years as her children and her work in the local community had helped her develop ties to the community.

With a shake of her head Lynn was still amazed by how isolated Coon Rapids was. For instance, there was no public transportation such as a bus or train in or out of Coon Rapids so the only way to leave town was by car. In fact Lynn remembered clearly that the closest traffic light to Coon Rapids was more than twenty-five miles away as was the nearest movie theater, clothing shop, and even fast food restaurant. Because of the isolation, Lynn clearly recalled how she and her family frequently ended of up driving more than an hour to go to the city to shop and to simply get away from the monotony of Coon Rapids. Also because of the isolation, Lynn remembered what a big deal it was when a teenager turned sixteen. Lynn clearly remembered the day that she had turned sixteen and had gotten the magical drivers' license. All of a sudden she had been able to race freely to the movies or even to the roller skating rink without being attached to the confining apron strings of her parents. For both Lynn and her friends it was only when they turned sixteen that they had experienced the freedom and liberation to explore the

world on their own.

Although places like Coon Rapids may not be the most exciting place, as Lynn looked back she felt that her small town was a wonderful place to live. Since it was so small, she could clearly picture most of the faces of the people in town. In fact, one thing that still amazed Lynn was her ability to walk down the street and be able to say hello, by name, to all the people she had met on the street. Even as she thought back to this aspect of small town life, Lynn could still feel the sense of comfort that this friendliness had always brought her. Lynn recalled that her own kids were known by most of the people in the town and that she had always thought that had there ever been an emergency the townspeople would have instantly helped out. In fact, Lynn wistfully thought about when there had been emergencies how people had really pulled together. Once when a family lost their son unexpectedly in an accident, the neighboring farmers had almost by magic joined forces and harvested the grieving family's crops. Another instance that stood out strongly in Lynn's memory was when a tornado almost completely destroyed a family's home. Almost instantly, dozens of people joined together to clean up the farmstead. It was incidents like those, Lynn thought to herself, that make small rural communities special.

Rural American, Version 2

Growing Up in Rural Wyoming
[book title]

When Mike was a kid, he was an authentic Wyoming cowboy. With a smile he noted that his more current life in the city was a far cry from that of his childhood in rural Wyoming. Now when Mike met new people he always had the sense that they felt that he was kidding when he told them that he used to be a full-fledged roping cowboy.

As he looked back at his life in Wyoming, one of Mike's earliest memories was going out to help work cattle in the pasture with his older brother. When he was quite small, he remembered clearly that his job was to watch the gate so that not one of the cows escaped to freedom as his brother drove the cattle into the corral. With a shake, Mike realized that one of the finest moments of his life occurred when he was about five or six when he and his horse stopped a cow determined to escape to the open pasture. Even now the details of the event were still extremely vivid. For some minutes Mike and the cow stood eyeing each other as they countered each other's moves. The cow would jump one way and Mike and his horse would cut her off. Then she would jump another way, and again they would cut her off. Although Mike remembered this sequence must have taken at least half an hour, more realistically he was sure that the "famous standoff" couldn't have lasted more than a minute, at most. Mike recalled that his victory over the cow had been even sweeter because he had received a raise on the spot for his valor. Mike was then making a huge sum of ten whole cents per hour. Even now Mike can dredge up the feeling of how proud he was at that moment.

Looking back Mike realized that life in a rural community had its own unique set of rules. In the spring Mike remembered being regularly excused from school to help his father plant the fields while in the fall he again was excused in order to help with harvest. As he looked back in his memory at those times Mike was still amazed by how hard his parents had worked. Mike remembered that his dad would be in the field during planting and harvesting time for hours on end. He only recalled that his dad stopped working to sleep a few hours and to eat the food the family brought him in the field.

Surprisingly from his current perspective, Mike also noted that the work pattern of his family was not at all unusual. The rhythm of his hometown town was totally dependent on the fields that surrounded the town as well on the livestock that could be seen by the hundreds peacefully munching away in the grassy fields. This meant in the spring everyone focused on planting the wide expanse of fields, the summer everyone worked their cattle and prayed for rain, while in the fall harvest was in full throttle. Looking back Mike remembered how big a topic rain was in the conversations at the local coffee shop. During dry years everyone anxiously scanned the sky in hopes of seeing an emerging rain cloud while in the wet years everyone anxiously scrutinized the sky for a break in the constant rain and drizzle. In fact, Mike realized that the first thing his parents had done every single morning was to turn on the radio so that they could hear the latest verdict about the weather and also hear the crop report each hour indicating the prices that were currently being offered for the cattle and crops that were the livelihood of Mike's family

With a grimace, Mike recalled all too vividly how life changed almost overnight during the farm depression of the 1980s. Seemly overnight, interest rates went shooting up and his neighbors and friends were going broke left and right. Even now, Mike felt the frustration hit him as he remembered that his friends, who always assumed that they would join the family farming operation with their parents, were sent for a tailspin as this was no longer an option. While just two years previously a lot of Mike's friends were all ready to join their family's farming operation, suddenly these operations were no longer financially strong enough to provide a living for more than one person. In fact, Mike remembered all to clearly that many of these operations couldn't even support the parents of Mike's friends since they were going broke at an alarming rate. Almost with a guilty feeling, Mike acknowledged that since he had been one of few people in his hometown who was on the college-path, he also was one of the few whose career path was not drastically altered by the farm depression. Even now, Mike was amazed by how life could change in just a few short years.

APPENDIX D

APPENDIX D

PERCEIVED PLAUSIBILITY SCALE

Elliott et al. (1983, August) identified 12 items that measured the perceived plausibility of television. A total of six items judged to be most relevant to written passages about members of social groups were selected for use. These items were modified so that they measure the perceived plausibility of written passages rather than television and measure the perceived plausibility and realism of how members of a particular social group act. The response to each item was assessed using a 7-point Likert-type scale with "1" signifying "disagree strongly" and "7" signifying "agree strongly." Items with an asterisk were reverse scored so that a higher score indicates more perceived plausibility.

1. The way people in their social group really live their everyday lives is not portrayed very accurately in this passage.*

2. Events that actually have happened or could happen are discussed in this passage.

3. The individuals in this passage appear to be typical of members of their social group.

4. The person in this passage is not reflective of the typical person in his or her social group.*

5. I have a hard time believing the individuals in this passage are real because the basic situation is so far-fetched.*

6. This passage deals with the kind of situations and choices that people in their social group have to deal with in their day-to-day life.

APPENDIX E

APPENDIX E

NARRATIVE RATINGS

The response to each item was assessed using a 7-point bipolar scale.

1. How interesting did you find the passage you just read to be?

   VERY INTERESTING -- NOT VERY INTERESTING

2. How well written was the passage you just read?

   VERY WELL WRITTEN -- NOT VERY WELL WRITTEN

3. How enjoyable was it to read this passage?

   VERY ENJOYABLE -- NOT VERY ENJOYABLE

4. How would you rate the length of the piece you just read?

   TOO SHORT -- TOO LONG

5. How likely would you be to read this passage if you came across it in a magazine you often read?

   VERY LIKELY -- NOT VERY LIKELY

APPENDIX F

APPENDIX F

AUXILIARY FINDINGS

Confidence in French Canadian Judgments

A secondary hypothesis of the present research addressed whether participants' confidence in the judgments they make about French Canadians would be affected by reading narrative passages featuring a French Canadian protagonist. To examine this issue participants' confidence in the judgments they made about French Canadians was examined as a function of the French Canadian versus control contrast, the French Canadian residual contrast, replication nested within target group, source of the narrative passages, cognitive busyness, and participants' attitudes about French Canadians (both linear and curvilinear effects). Participants' confidence in the beliefs and attitudes they reported about French Canadians was not surprisingly greater when they had read the French Canadian passages ($M = 4.14$) versus the unrelated, control passages ($M = 2.90$), $F(1, 419) = 40.61$, $p < .001$. Although there was some indication that participants' confidence in the judgments they made about French Canadians differed based on which control passage they had read ($M = 3.11$ for rural American passages and $M = 2.68$ for lesbian passages; $F(1, 419) = 3.49$, $p < .10$), participants' confidence in their French Canadian judgments was greater when they had read the French Canadian passages versus either of the control passages (both $ps < .001$). In addition, being cognitively busy memorizing the details of either the French Canadian or unrelated, control passages caused participants to be somewhat more confident in their judgments about French Canadians than were non-busy participants ($Ms = 3.82$ versus 3.42), $F(1, 419) = 3.81$, $p < .06$. However, these effects were modified by a four-way significant interaction that included the variability in participants' confidence based on their preexisting levels of prejudice toward French Canadians (curvilinear effect of attitudes), $F(1, 391) = 4.46$, $p < .05$.[8]

Examination of the confidence of participants who had read the French Canadian passages revealed that cognitively busy participants who had memorized the details of the passages were somewhat more confident in their French Canadian judgments than non-busy participants who had simply read the passages ($Ms = 4.41$ versus 3.83), $F(1, 319) = 3.47$, $p < .10$ (see Figure 11). However, this effect varied depending on how prejudiced

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[8]When the confidence of only participants who had correctly recalled the source of the passage that they had read was examined, a marginally significant interaction was found between the French Canadian versus control contrast, source of the narrative passages, whether participants were cognitively busy or not, and the curvilinear component of participants' attitudes about French Canadians, $F(1, 286) = 3.08$, $p < .09$. However, when only examining the confidence of participants who had read the French Canadian passages, none of these effects were significant ($p > .10$).

the participants were toward French Canadians, $F(1, 391) = 5.65$, $p < .05$. When participants were not cognitively busy, their confidence in their French Canadian judgments varied somewhat depending on whether they were least, moderately, or most prejudiced toward French Canadians ($F(1, 391) = 3.48$, $p < .10$), while the confidence of cognitively busy participants was not dependent on their preexisting prejudice levels, $F(1, 391) = 2.22$, $p > .15$. However, when the confidence of the least, moderately, and most prejudiced participants were examined separately, cognitively busy versus non-busy participants were not more confident in their French Canadian judgments for any of the three groups, (all $ps > .15$).

Confidence in French Canadian Judgments
French Canadian Passages
by cognitive busyness and prejudice toward French Canadians (curvilinear)

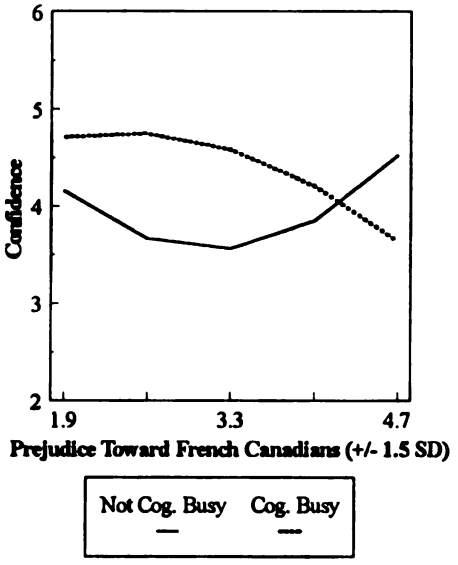

Figure 11 - Confidence in French Canadian Judgments (French Canadian Passages)

When comparing how confident participants were with their French Canadian judgments based on whether they had read the French Canadians passages versus the unrelated, control passages, care must be taken because of marginally significant differences found in participants' confidence based on which of the control passages they had read (lesbian or rural American), whether they had been cognitively busy or not, and

based on the variability in their confidence ratings across levels of prejudice (curvilinear effect of attitudes), $F(1, 391) = 3.82$, $p < .06$. Simple effect tests revealed that participants' level of preexisting prejudice toward French Canadians only created mild variations in their confidence about their French Canadian judgments when they had read the rural American control passages ($F(1, 319) = 2.81$, $p < .10$), but created significant variability in their confidence when they had read the lesbian control passages, $F(1, 319) = 4.16$, $p < .05$. Although not significant by conventional standards, it appears that the marginally significant four-way interaction involving the control group occurred largely because there was less variability in participants' confidence across prejudice level when non-busy participants had simply read the rural American passages versus when they had been cognitively busy memorizing the details of these passages, while the variability in the confidence of the readers of the lesbian passages was fairly consistent for both the cognitively busy and non-busy participants.

When comparisons were made to see if reading the French Canadian passages had an effect over and beyond the effect of reading unrelated, control passages on participants' confidence with their French Canadian judgments, consistent with the pattern for all participants, both cognitively non-busy and busy readers of the French Canadian passages displayed more confidence in their judgments about French Canadians than did the readers of the unrelated passages (cognitively non-busy: Ms = 3.83 versus 2.77, $F(1, 391) = 14.40$, $p < .001$; cognitively busy: Ms = 4.41 versus 3.02, $F(1, 391) = 27.14$, $p < .001$; see Figure 12). Unfortunately, due to the fact that the non-busy readers of the rural control passages were somewhat unique because they appeared to make their confidence judgments independently of their preexisting attitudes about French Canadians, the comparison between non-busy readers of the French Canadian and control passages is rather hard to interpret. However, for sack of completeness, it appears that when participants were not cognitively busy their greater confidence in their French Canadian judgments after reading the French Canadian versus control passages did not vary as a function of their preexisting prejudice toward French Canadians $F(1, 391) = 1.67$, $p > .15$. Regardless of whether they had read the French Canadian or control passages, the confidence of non-busy participants varied somewhat depending on whether they were least, moderately, or most prejudiced toward French Canadians, $F(1, 319) = 3.38$, $p < .10$. For cognitively busy participants who had memorized the details of the passages, their greater confidence after reading the French Canadian passages was modified by their preexisting level of prejudice toward French Canadians, $F(1, 391) = 7.49$, $p < .01$. The effect of memorizing the details of the French Canadian versus control passages was greatest for the least prejudiced participants (Ms = 4.72 versus 3.08, $F(1, 319) = 15.07$, $p < .001$) and moderately prejudiced participants (Ms = 4.30 versus 2.79, $F(1, 319) = 8.74$, $p < .01$), and least, but still significant, for the most prejudiced participants (Ms = 4.15 versus 3.13), $F(1, 319) = 4.94$, $p < .05$.

Confidence in French Canadian Judgments
by cognitive busyness, French Canadian vs. control contrast, and
prejudice toward French Canadians (curvilinear)

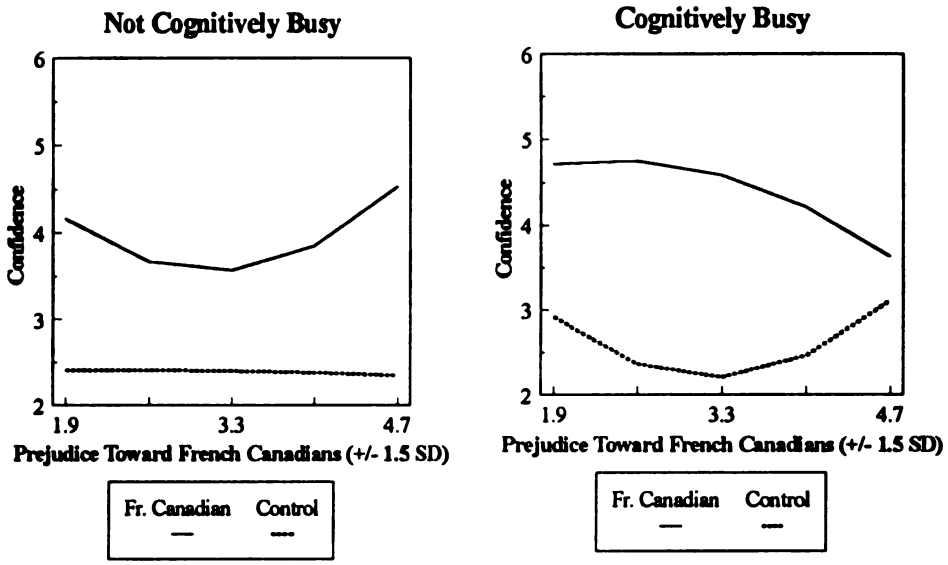

Figure 12 - Confidence in French Canadian Judgments

Overall, although there were differences based on how prejudiced the participants were toward French Canadians, it appears that cognitively busy participants who memorized the details of the French Canadian passages were somewhat more confident in their French Canadian judgments than non-busy readers who had simply read the French Canadian passages. In addition, as compared to reading unrelated, control passages, reading the French Canadian passages caused participants to be more confident in their French Canadian judgments. However, this conclusion must be made somewhat tentatively for the non-busy readers because of a rather inexplicable shift in the non-busy control group caused primarily by readers of the rural American passages making their confidence judgments independently of their preexisting prejudice toward French Canadians.

Confidence in Lesbian Judgments

A secondary hypothesis of the present research addressed whether participants' confidence in the judgments they make about lesbians would be affected by reading narrative passages featuring a lesbian protagonist. To examine this issue participants' confidence in the judgments they made about lesbians was examined as a function of the lesbian versus control contrast, the lesbian residual contrast, replication nested within target group, source of the narrative passages, cognitive busyness, and participants' attitudes about lesbians (both linear and curvilinear effects). As expected, participants were more confident in their judgments about lesbians if they had read the lesbian narrative passages (M = 6.15) versus the unrelated, control passages (M = 5.72), $F(1, 419) = 12.49$, $p < .001$. They were also more confident in their judgments if they were less versus more prejudiced toward lesbians (b = -.27), $F(1, 419) = 21.79$, $p < .001$. However, these effects were qualified by several higher-order interactions, the highest being an interaction between the lesbian versus control contrast, source, and the variability in participants' confidence based on their preexisting levels of prejudice toward lesbians (curvilinear effect of attitudes), $F(1, 391) = 5.36$, $p < .05$ (see Figure 13).[9]

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[9]When examining confidence in lesbian judgments for only participants who had correctly recalled the source of the passage that they had read, the lesbian versus control contrast X source X curvilinear component of prejudice toward lesbians interaction was largely unaffected. In addition, a marginally significant higher-order interaction was found that included cognitive busyness (lesbian versus control contrast X source X cognitive busyness X curvilinear component of prejudice toward lesbians), $F(1, 286) = 3.02$, $p < .09$.

Confidence in Lesbian Judgments
by source, lesbian vs. control contrast, and
prejudice toward lesbians (curvilinear)

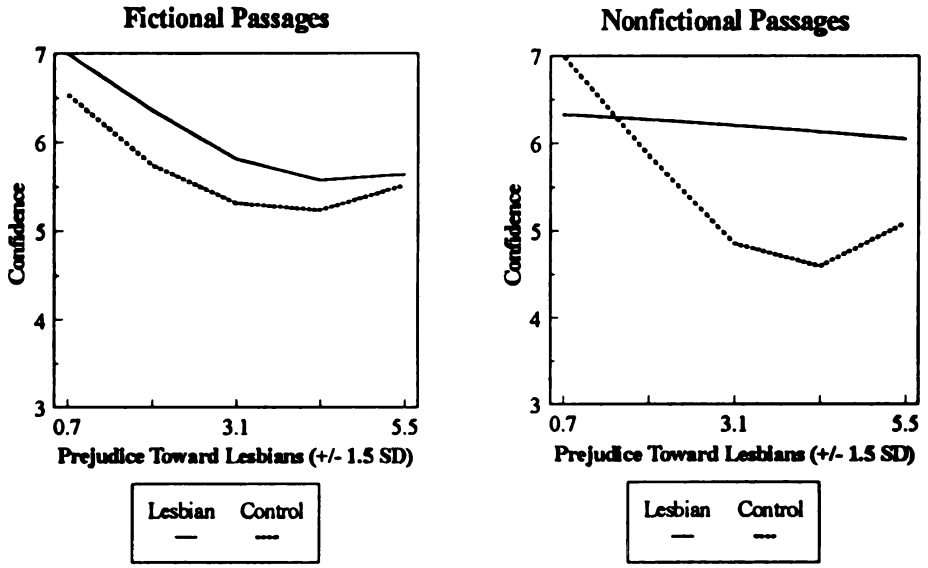

Figure 13 - Confidence in Lesbian Judgments

When examining the confidence of only participants who had read the lesbian narrative passages, less prejudiced individuals were more confident in their judgments about lesbians than were more prejudiced individuals (b = -.25), $F(1, 391) = 6.86$, $p < .05$. However, the source of the lesbian narrative passages did not have a differential effect on participants' confidence ($F(1, 391) < 1$, p = n.s.), nor did the effect of source vary depending on how prejudiced participants were toward lesbians, $F(1, 391) = 2.44$, $p > .10$. These results suggest that the readers of the unrelated, control passages differentiated between the source of the passages while the readers of the related, lesbian passages did not.

Interpretation of the effects of the lesbian versus unrelated, control passages on participants' confidence in their lesbian judgments must be done cautiously because of a marginally significant interaction found between which of the control passages participants had read, the source of the passages, and the variability in participants' confidence based on their preexisting levels of prejudice toward lesbians (curvilinear effect of attitudes), $F(1, 367) = 2.93$, $p < .10$. Simple effect tests found that participants' confidence across

the least, moderately, and most prejudiced participants varied more when they had read the French Canadian nonfictional control passages versus the rural American nonfictional control passages ($F(1, 391) = 4.52$, $p < .05$), while there were no differences in the variability of participants' confidence based on whether they had read either of the ostensibly fictional control passages, $F(1, 391) < 1$, p = n.s. Further examination revealed that despite the greater variability in participants' confidence based on reading the nonfictional French Canadian control passages, the least, moderately, and most prejudiced participants were not less confident in their lesbian judgments when they read the French Canadian versus rural American nonfictional control passages (all ps > .15).

When comparing the confidence participants expressed for their lesbian judgments based on whether they had read the lesbian versus control passages, it was found that participants were more confident in their judgments when they had read a fictional lesbian passage as compared to a fictional control passage (Ms = 6.12 versus 5.72), $F(1, 391) = 5.27$, $p < .05$ (see Figure 13). Although participants were generally more confident in their lesbian judgments when they were less versus more prejudiced ($b = -.29$, $F(1, 391) = 14.14$, $p < .001$), their confidence did not increase consistently across the most, moderately, and least prejudiced participants (curvilinear effect of prejudice), $F(1, 391) = 13.93$, $p < .001$. However, for participants who had read nonfictional passages, the greater confidence they gained from reading the lesbian versus control passages ($F(1, 391) = 8.38$, $p < .01$) and being less versus more prejudiced ($b = -.25$, $F(1, 391) = 10.48$, $p < .01$) was qualified by whether participants were least, moderately, or most prejudiced toward lesbians, $F(1, 391) = 10.78$, $p < .001$. Based on the shift in the control group it is likely that this interaction is primarily due to the greater variability in the confidence of participants who had read the unrelated French Canadian control passages. While the moderately and most prejudiced participants displayed greater confidence in their lesbian judgments after reading the lesbian nonfictional versus control nonfictional passages (moderately prejudiced: Ms = 6.36 versus 5.39, $F(1, 391) = 10.46$, $p < .001$; most prejudiced: Ms = 5.96 versus 5.32, $F(1, 391) = 6.97$, $p < .05$), this was not true for the least prejudiced participants (Ms = 6.27 versus 6.41), $F(1, 391) < 1$, p = n.s.

Overall, it once again appears that most participants were more confident in the judgments they made about social groups which they have read about. More specifically, with the exception of the least prejudiced readers of the nonfictional lesbian passages, readers of the lesbian versus unrelated, control passages were generally more confident in their lesbian judgments. However, the conclusion that the nonfictional lesbian passages had an effect on readers' beliefs, above and beyond the effect of reading unrelated, control passages, must be made tentatively due to a rather inexplicable shift in participants' confidence about their lesbian judgments after reading the ostensibly nonfictional French Canadian control passages.

Assessments of Narrative Passages

To understand how favorably participants perceived the narrative passages, the composite of their assessments of the narrative passages (i.e., how interesting, enjoyable, and well-written they found the passages to be, and the likelihood they would freely choose to read the passages) was examined as a function of the target of the narrative

passages, replication nested within target group, source, and cognitive busyness. Examination of the pattern of responses revealed that participants only significantly differed in their assessments of the narrative passages based on which social group was featured, $F(2, 419) = 19.41$, $p < .001$. Simple effect analyses showed that participants perceived the lesbian passages ($M = 4.43$) more favorably than the rural American passages ($M = 3.88$, $F(1, 419) = 14.53$, $p < .001$) and, in turn, the rural American passages were perceived more favorably than the French Canadian passages ($M = 3.54$), $F(1, 419) = 5.49$, $p < .05$.

Follow-up analyses meant to determine if participants' assessments of the narrative passages also varied as a function of their preexisting prejudice toward the depicted social group were done separately for participants who had read the French Canadian and lesbian passages. When participants' perceptions of the French Canadian passages were reanalyzed, this time including participants' preexisting prejudice toward French Canadians (both linear and curvilinear effects), it was found that participants who were more prejudiced toward French Canadians gave less positive assessments of the French Canadian passages ($b = -.23$), $F(1, 137) = 5.31$, $p < .05$.[10]

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[10]Examination of participants' assessments of the French Canadian passages revealed two significant interactions involving the replication factor. Significant variation was found in participants' assessments of the French Canadian passages based on which version of the French Canadian passage they had read, cognitive busyness, and their preexisting prejudice toward French Canadians, $F(1, 123) = 5.03$, $p < .05$. Simple effect analyses revealed that participants perceived version 1 of the French Canadian passages more favorably than version 2 when they had been cognitively busy memorized the details of the passages (Ms = 3.87 versus 3.34, $F(1, 123) = 4.24$, $p < .05$), but not when they had not been cognitively busy (Ms = 3.51 versus 3.42), $F(1, 123) = 2.71$, $p > .10$. Although not significant by conventional standards, it appears that when cognitively busy participants memorized the details of the French Canadian passages, the least prejudiced participants, as compared to the most prejudiced participants were more favorable toward version 1 than version 2. However, when not cognitively busy, participants did not appear to differ in their assessments of the two versions of the French Canadian passages based on their preexisting prejudice toward French Canadians.

In addition, a replication X source X cognitive busyness interaction was found that was not evident in the overall analysis across the three target passages, $F(1, 123) = 5.37$, $p < .05$. Simple effect analyses showed that when participants were not cognitively busy, a marginally significant interaction was found between the particular version of the French Canadian passages that the participants had read and the source of the passage, $F(1, 123) = 3.34$, $p < .10$. Although not significant by conventional standards, closer examination revealed a cross-over pattern where non-busy participants perceived version 2 of the ostensibly fictional passages more favorably than version 1 (Ms = 3.76 versus 3.35), but when the passages were represented to be nonfictional the pattern was reversed (version 2: $M = 3.03$; version 1: $M = 3.66$). However, when cognitively busy participants memorized the details of the French Canadian passages, they tended to perceive version 1 more favorably then version 2 (Ms = 3.87 versus 3.34, $F(1, 123) =$

When participants' assessments of the lesbian passages were reanalyzed including participants' preexisting prejudice toward lesbians (both linear and curvilinear effects), more prejudiced participants judged the lesbian passages less favorably than less prejudiced participants (b = -.50), $F(1, 138) = 23.86$, $p < .001$. However, this effect was qualified by whether participants been cognitively busy or not ($F(1, 134) = 9.11$, $p < .01$), and by a significant interaction between cognitive busyness and variability in participants' assessments across their preexisting levels of prejudice toward lesbians (curvilinear effect of prejudice), $F(1, 131) = 5.60$, $p < .05$ (see Figure 14). Simple effect analyses revealed that when not cognitively busy, more prejudiced participants were less favorable toward the lesbian passages than were less prejudiced participants (b = -.77), $F(1, 131) = 35.89$, $p < .001$. However, when cognitively busy participants had memorized the details of the lesbian passages, more prejudiced participants did not necessarily have more negative assessments of the lesbian passages (b = -.19, $F(1, 131) = 1.56$, $p > .15$), although there was variability in participants' perceptions of the lesbian passages based on their preexisting level of prejudice, $F(1, 131) = 5.57$, $p < .05$. When assessments of the lesbian passages were examined for the least, moderately, and most prejudiced participants, only the most prejudiced individuals had more favorable assessments when they had been cognitively busy versus non-busy (Ms = 4.11 versus 3.13), $F(1, 131) = 8.06$, $p < .01$. For the least and moderately prejudiced individuals, being cognitively busy or not had no effect on their assessments of the lesbian passages (both Fs < 1, p = n.s.). Thus, in line with the fact that the beliefs about lesbians of only the most prejudiced cognitively busy individuals were affected by reading the lesbian passages, it appears that as compared to the non-busy participants, being cognitively busy memorizing the details of the lesbian passages also made the most prejudiced participants perceive the lesbian passages more favorably.

3.86, $p < .10$), regardless of its source, $F(1, 123) = 2.35$, $p > .10$.

Assessments of Lesbian Passages
by cognitive busyness and prejudice toward lesbians (curvilinear)

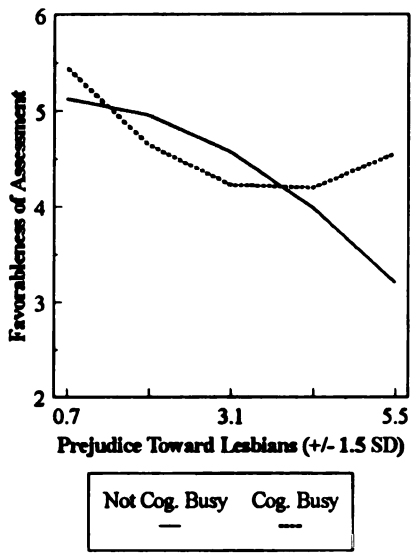

Figure 14 - Assessments of Lesbian Passages

APPENDIX G

APPENDIX G

FRENCH CANADIAN BELIEF CONSISTENCY (SINGLE-ITEM MEASURES)

French Canadian Isolation

When examining the pattern of participants' beliefs about the desire of French Canadians to be dissimilar, or isolated, from English Canadians, the predicted interaction involving the French Canadian versus control contrast, source, and cognitive busyness did not reach significance, $F(1, 397) = 1.13$, $p > .15$. Although participants did express beliefs more consistent with the French Canadian passages when they had read the French Canadian versus unrelated, control passages (Ms = 5.57 versus 4.92, $F(1, 418) = 25.31$, $p < .001$), this effect was qualified by whether participants were least, moderately or most prejudiced toward French Canadians, $F(1, 397) = 6.13$, $p < .05$ (see Figure 15).[11] Examination of the pattern of participants' beliefs about French Canadian isolation suggested that although participants expressed beliefs more consistent with the French Canadian narrative passages when they had actually read one of the French Canadian versus unrelated, control passages, the magnitude of the difference was smallest for the most prejudiced, as compared to the moderately and least prejudiced participants (most prejudiced: Ms = 5.29 versus 4.84, $F(1, 397) = 4.37$, $p < .05$; moderately prejudiced: Ms = 5.58 versus 5.01, $F(1, 397) = 6.29$, $p < .05$; least prejudiced: Ms = 5.78 versus 4.93, $F(1, 397) = 17.74$, $p < .001$).

[11]The pattern of results remained the same when only participants who had correctly recalled the source of the passages that they had read were examined.

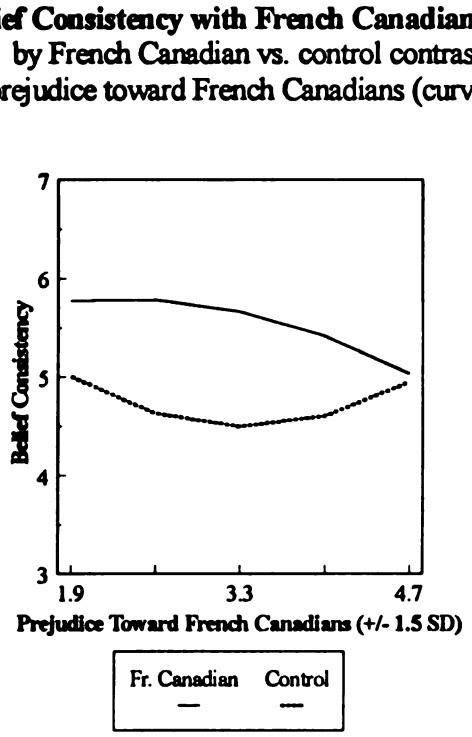

Figure 15 - Belief Consistency with French Canadian Isolation

Although not part of the main design of the study, when beliefs about French Canadian isolation were reanalyzed using only participants who had read the French Canadian passages and excluding the control group, a marginally significant interaction between source and attitudes about French Canadians was found, $F(1, 133) = 2.85$, $p < .10$ (see Figure 16). Closer examination revealed that when participants read fictional French Canadian passages, the beliefs of more prejudiced participants were less consistent with the passages than were the beliefs of less prejudiced participants ($b = -.33$), $F(1, 133) = 5.79$, $p < .05$. However, when the passages were nonfictional, the beliefs of more and less prejudiced participants did not differ ($b = .05$), $F(1, 133) < 1$, p = n.s. In fact, it appears that since the most prejudiced participants discounted the information contained in the fictional passages, their beliefs tended to be less consistent with the French Canadian passages when they were fictional versus nonfictional (Ms = 5.04 versus 5.67), $F(1, 133) = 2.81$, $p < .10$. This difference between the fictional and nonfictional passages was not found for the least and moderately prejudiced participants (both Fs < 1, p = n.s.).

Belief Consistency with French Canadian Isolation
French Canadian Passages
by source and prejudice toward French Canadians

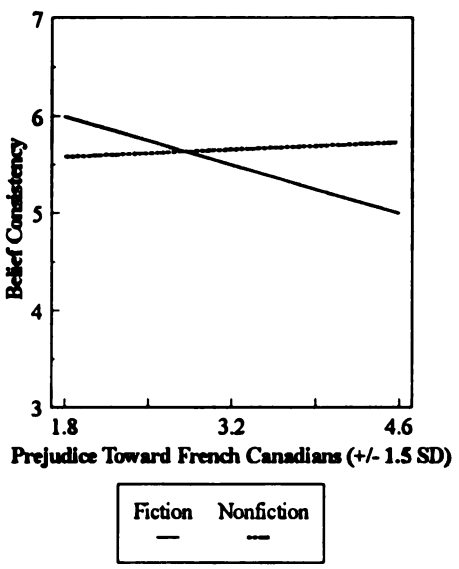

Figure 16 - Belief Consistency with French Canadian Isolation (French Canadian Passages)

Overall, it appears that, as compared to readers of the unrelated, control passages, readers of the French Canadian passages subsequently expressed beliefs about French Canadian isolation that were more consistent with the French Canadian passages. Although this effect was true for most participants, there was some indication that the most prejudiced participants, as compared to the moderately and least prejudiced participants, were not as affected by reading the French Canadian passages. In addition, an auxiliary analysis suggested that the most prejudiced participants may have rejected the information contained in the French Canadian passages when they were represented to be fictional versus nonfictional.

Power of the Church in French Canadian Society

Despite the hypothesized effects of fictional versus nonfictional French Canadian passages and cognitive busyness on participants' beliefs about the power of the church in

French Canadian society, the three-way interaction involving the French Canadian versus control contrast, source, and cognitive busyness was not found to be significant, $F(1, 398) < 1$, p = n.s. Although reading the French Canadian versus unrelated, control passages did cause participants to express beliefs more consistent with the French Canadian passage information about the power of the church (Ms = 4.30 versus 3.90, $F(1, 419) = 15.40$, $p < .001$), this effect was qualified by two marginally significant interactions. In particular, the highest-order marginally significant interaction was between the French Canadian versus control contrast, cognitive busyness, and the variability of participants' beliefs based on their preexisting prejudice toward French Canadians (curvilinear effect of attitude), $F(1, 391) = 3.81$, $p < .06$.[12]

In order to understand this complex four-way interaction, the beliefs about the power of the church in French Canadian society for participants who had read the French Canadian passages were examined first (see Figure 17). When participants had read the French Canadian passages, their beliefs about the power of the church depended on whether they had been cognitively busy or not and their preexisting prejudice toward French Canadians, $F(1, 391) = 8.40$, $p < .01$. However, this interaction was further qualified by variability in participants' beliefs based on whether they were least, moderately, or most prejudiced toward French Canadians (curvilinear effect of attitude), $F(1, 391) = 4.32$, $p < .05$. Although, in general, less prejudiced non-cognitively busy participants expressed beliefs more consistent with the French Canadian passages than did more prejudiced non-busy participants ($b = -.37$, $F(1, 391) = 7.80$, $p < .01$), this tendency was not uniform across participants who were least, moderately, and most prejudiced, $F(1,$

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[12]When beliefs about the power of the church were inspected for only participants who had correctly recalled the source of the narrative passage that they had read, two marginally significant interactions were found that included whether the participants had read a fictional or nonfictional passage. The highest-order interaction involving source included the French Canadian versus control contrast, source, and the variability in participants' beliefs based on their preexisting prejudice toward French Canadians (curvilinear effect of prejudice), $F(1, 288) = 3.49$, $p < .07$. Closer examination of the beliefs of only participants who had read the French Canadian passages showed that the effect of source was modified somewhat by whether participants were least, moderately, or most prejudiced toward French Canadians, $F(1, 288) = 3.67$, $p < .10$. While participants' beliefs did not vary based on their preexisting attitudes when they had read nonfictional passages ($F(1, 288) < 1$, p = n.s.), they did vary based on whether they were least, moderately, or most prejudiced when they had read the fictional French Canadian passages, $F(1, 288) = 4.62$, $p < .05$. Further examination showed that the beliefs of the least prejudiced participants were significantly more affected by the nonfictional than fictional passages (Ms = 4.84 versus 3.90) and the beliefs of the most prejudiced participants were somewhat more affected by the nonfictional versus fictional passages (Ms = 4.44 versus 3.87), $F(1, 288) = 10.21$, $p < .001$ and $F(1, 288) = 3.24$, $p < .10$, respectively. The pattern was opposite for the moderately prejudiced participants (nonfictional passages: $M = 3.74$; fictional passages: $M = 4.61$), $F(1, 288) = 7.03$, $p < .01$.

391) = 3.98, $p < .05$. However, when participants had been cognitively busy memorizing the details of the French Canadian passages, their subsequently reported beliefs about the power of the church were not related to their preexisting prejudice toward French Canadians, ($b = .11$), $F(1, 391) < 1$, p = n.s. Because of the fact that the more versus less prejudiced readers were more likely to reject the passage information (i.e., not agree with the belief items) if they were not cognitively busy, the most prejudiced participants expressed beliefs more consistent with the French Canadian passages when they had been cognitively busy memorizing the details of these passages versus non-busy, (Ms = 4.48 versus 3.82), $F(1, 391) = 4.79$, $p < .05$. The beliefs of the least and moderately prejudiced participants did not differ based on whether they had been cognitively busy or not when they had read the French Canadian passages (both Fs < 1, p = n.s.).

Belief Consistency with Power of the Church in French Canadian Society
French Canadian Passages
by cognitive busyness and prejudice toward French Canadians (curvilinear)

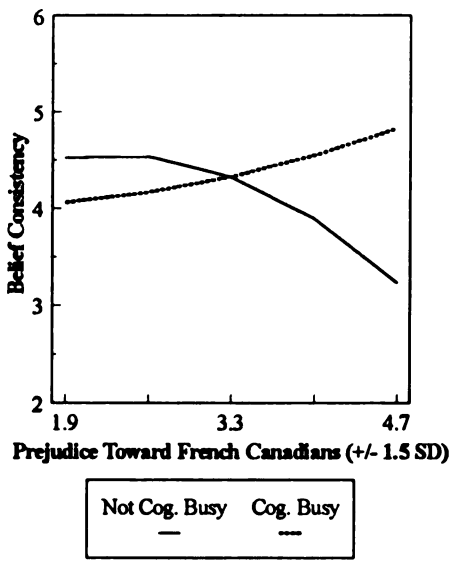

Figure 17 - Belief Consistency with Power of the Church in French Canadian Society (French Canadian Passages)

Figure 18 displays participants' beliefs about the power of the church in French Canadian society based on whether they had read the French Canadian versus unrelated, control passages, whether they had been cognitively busy or not, and finally based on the variability in their beliefs across their preexisting levels of prejudice toward French Canadians (curvilinear effect of attitudes). For participants who had not been cognitively busy, the greater effect of reading the French Canadian versus unrelated, control passages on their beliefs about the power of the church (*M*s = 4.23 versus 3.91, *F*(1, 391) = 3.94, *p* < .05), was qualified by their preexisting prejudice toward French Canadians, *F*(1, 391) = 5.04, *p* < .05. As discussed above, more versus less prejudiced non-busy participants appeared to reject the information presented in the French Canadian passages about the power of the church in French Canadian society (*b* = -.37). However, the beliefs of non-busy readers of the unrelated, control passages did not differ based on their preexisting prejudice toward French Canadians (*b* = -.06), *F*(1, 391) < 1, *p* = n.s. Closer examination of the pattern of non-busy participants' beliefs about the power of the church suggested that, as compared to the control group, only the least prejudiced participants incorporated the information contained in the French Canadian passages into their subsequently reported beliefs (French Canadian: *M* = 4.52; control: *M* = 4.02), *F*(1, 391) = 4.38, *p* < .05. As compared to the control group, the moderately and most prejudiced non-busy participants were not influenced by the information contained in the French Canadian passages (both *p*s > .15). For cognitively busy participants who had memorized the details of the French Canadian passages, the greater influence of the French Canadian versus control passages on their beliefs about the power of the church in French Canadian society (*M* = 4.37 versus 3.89, *F*(1, 391) = 12.32, *p* < .001), was not dependent on their preexisting prejudice toward French Canadians, *F*(1, 391) < 1, *p* = n.s.

Belief Consistency with Power of the Church in French Canadian Society
by cognitive busyness, French Canadian vs. control contrast, and
prejudice toward French Canadians (curvilinear)

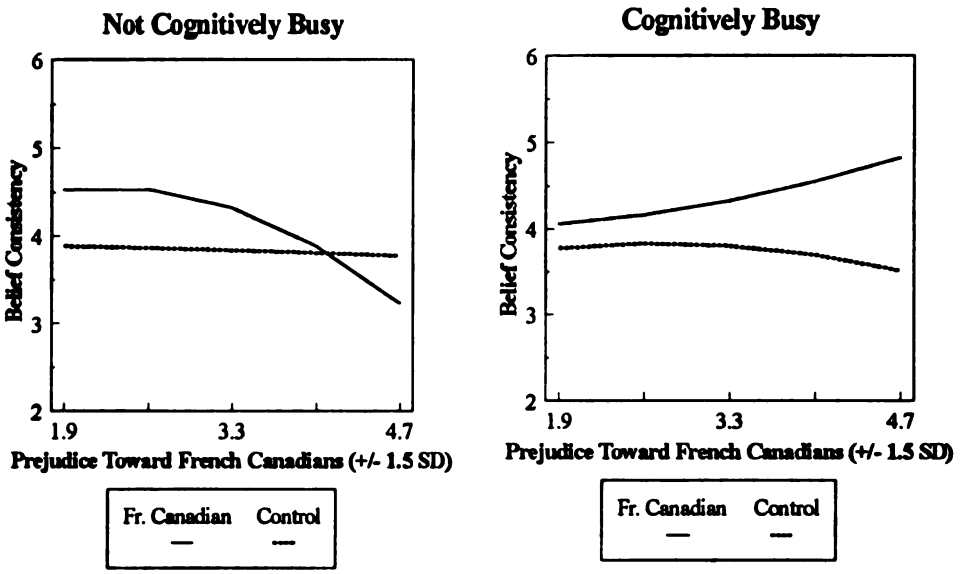

Figure 18 - Belief Consistency with Power of the Church in French Canadian Society

In general, the influence of the French Canadian passages on participants' beliefs about the power of the church in French Canadian society depended on how prejudiced the participants were toward French Canadians. Being cognitively busy memorizing the details of the French Canadian passages caused only the most prejudiced readers to express beliefs that were more consistent with the passage information, as compared to non-busy readers. However, as compared to the readers of the unrelated, control passages, cognitively busy readers expressed beliefs that were more consistent with the French Canadian passages regardless of their preexisting prejudice levels, while this was true only for the least prejudiced non-busy readers.

French Canadian Religiosity

Inconsistent with the hypotheses of the present research, when participants' beliefs about the religiosity of French Canadians were examined, the interaction between the French Canadian versus control contrast, source, and cognitive busyness did not reach

significance, $F(1, 398) < 1$, p = n.s. Although participants expressed beliefs that were more consistent with the religiosity information contained in the French Canadian passages when they had read the French Canadian passages versus the unrelated, control passages (M = 4.34 versus 4.11, $F(1, 419) = 7.59$, $p < .01$), this effect was modified by whether participants had been cognitively busy or not and by their attitudes about French Canadians, $F(1, 398) = 6.72$, $p < .01$.[13]

When participants had read the French Canadian passages (see Figure 19), they displayed beliefs about French Canadian religiosity that were somewhat more consistent with the content of the French Canadian passages when they had been cognitively busy memorizing the details of the passages versus not busy (Ms = 4.46 versus 4.21), $F(1, 398) = 3.17$, $p < .10$. However, this effect of cognitive busyness was qualified by how prejudiced the participants were toward French Canadians, $F(1, 398) = 4.96$, $p < .05$. In what by now must be a familiar theme, participants' beliefs after reading the French Canadian passages were somewhat related to their preexisting prejudice toward French Canadians when they had not been cognitively busy (bs = -.21, $F(1, 398) = 3.57$, $p < .10$), but the relationship disappeared when participants had been cognitively busy memorizing the details of the French Canadian passages (b = .11), $F(1, 398) = 1.44$, $p > .15$. Because more prejudiced readers appeared to reject the information contained in the French Canadian passages (i.e., not agree with the belief items) when they were not cognitively busy, moderately prejudiced participants expressed beliefs more consistent with the French Canadian passage when they were cognitively busy versus not (Ms = 4.75 versus 4.23, $F(1, 398) = 4.16$, $p < .05$), while this same pattern was a trend for the most prejudiced participants (M = 4.44 for cognitively busy; M = 4.00 for not cognitively busy), $F(1, 398) = 2.99$, $p < .10$. The beliefs of the least prejudiced participants did not differ based on whether they had been cognitively busy or not (Ms = 4.28 versus 4.33), $F(1, 398) < 1$, p = n.s.

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[13]When the beliefs of only participants who had corrected recalled the source of the narrative passage that they had read were examined, the interaction between the French Canadian versus control contrast and cognitive busyness was not qualified by participants' preexisting attitudes about French Canadians. Moreover, the source of the narrative passages continued to not influence participants' beliefs about the religiosity of French Canadians.

Belief Consistency with French Canadian Religiosity
French Canadian Passages
by cognitive busyness and prejudice toward French Canadians

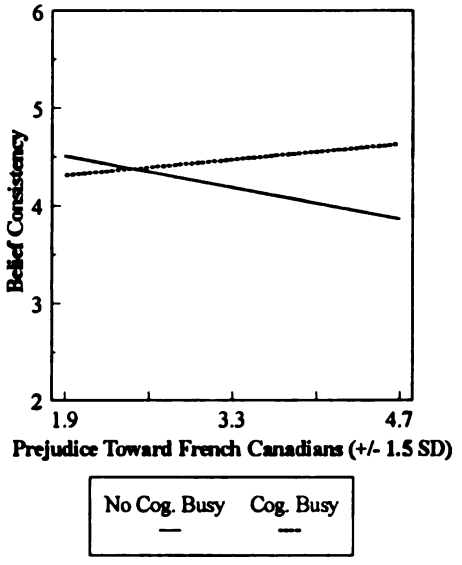

Figure 19 - Belief Consistency with French Canadian Religiosity (French Canadian Passages)

The determination of whether reading the French Canadian passages had an effect on participants' beliefs about the religiosity of French Canadians, over and above the effect of reading unrelated, control passages, must be made cautiously because of an unexpected interaction that occurred for the supposed "control" group (see Figure 20). When examining the control group, a significant interaction between cognitive busyness and preexisting attitudes about French Canadians demonstrated that participants' beliefs about the religiosity of French Canadians can be affected by reading passages unrelated to French Canadians, $F(1, 398) = 4.92$, $p < .05$. In a pattern similar to the one found for the readers of the French Canadian passages, when participants were not cognitively busy their beliefs about French Canadian religiosity after reading the control passages were somewhat related to their preexisting prejudice toward French Canadians ($b = .11$, $F(1, 398) = 2.79$, $p < .10$), while this relationship largely disappeared when the participants had been cognitively busy memorizing the details of the unrelated passages, ($b = -.10$), $F(1, 398) = 2.17$, $p > .10$. However, unlike the pattern for non-busy participants who had read

the French Canadian passages, when non-busy participants read the control passages, more prejudiced participants tended to be *more* (as compared to less) likely to express beliefs that were consistent with the content of the French Canadian passages than were less prejudiced participants.

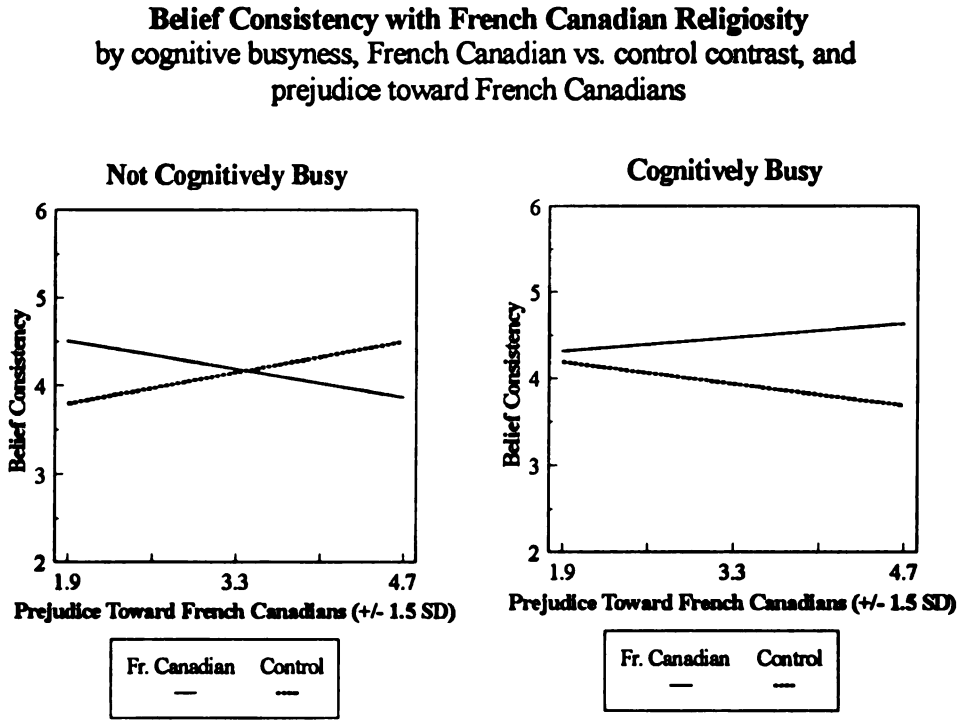

Figure 20 - Belief Consistency with French Canadian Religiosity

Given this pattern of beliefs about French Canadian religiosity for the non-busy control group, the differences between the beliefs of non-busy participants who had read the French Canadian passages versus the unrelated, control passages are rather hard to interpret. In fact, when examining the pattern of beliefs for the non-busy participants, the effect of reading the French Canadian versus control passages was nonsignificant ($F(1, 398) < 1$, p = n.s.) and, furthermore, there was a crossover interaction between cognitive busyness and participants' preexisting prejudice toward French Canadians, $F(1, 398) = 6.44$, $p < .05$. Although examination of the pattern of participants' beliefs suggested that the least prejudiced participants were more affected by the French Canadian versus control passages while the reverse was true for the most prejudiced participants, these differences

were not significant by conventional standards (both ps > .15).

Because the shift in the beliefs of the control group appeared to occur mainly for the non-cognitively busy participants, the determination whether reading the French Canadian passages affected the beliefs of the cognitively busy participants, over and above the effect of reading the unrelated, control passages, can be made with more confidence. Compared to cognitively busy readers of the unrelated, control passages, cognitively busy participants who had memorized the details of the French Canadian passages subsequently expressed beliefs more consistent with the information contained in the passages about the religiosity of French Canadians (Ms = 4.46 versus 4.06), $F(1, 398) = 11.19$, $p < .01$. However, this effect was marginally qualified by participants' preexisting attitudes about French Canadians, $F(1, 398) = 3.23$, $p < .10$. Closer examination showed that for cognitively busy participants, only the moderately and most prejudiced participants were affected by reading the French Canadian versus control passages (most prejudiced: Ms = 4.44 versus 4.02, $F(1, 398) = 4.40$, $p < .05$; moderately prejudiced: Ms = 4.75 versus 3.97, $F(1, 398) = 11.60$, $p < .001$; least prejudiced: 4.28 versus 4.17, $F(1, 398) < 1$, p = n.s.).

Overall, reading the French Canadian passage information about the religiosity of French Canadians appeared to affect the beliefs of the moderately and most prejudiced participants, but only when they had memorized the details of the French Canadian passages. However, due to a rather inexplicable shift in the non-busy control group, it is hard to determine whether reading passages about French Canadians affected non-busy participants' beliefs about French Canadians, over and above the effect of reading unrelated, control passages.

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