"Terrorism Is Theater":

How Antagonist Portrayals in Action Films Affect Stereotyping and Impression Formation

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Thesis submitted to the faculty of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

In

Communication

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April 30, 2010

Blacksburg, Virginia Tech

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Abstract

This study examined portrayals of terrorists in several action films and their effects on participants' thoughts concerning the films and their characters. A 2 x 2 x 2 factorial experiment was used to test the effects of antagonist ethnicity (white or non-white), antagonist portrayal type (sympathetic or non-sympathetic), and mortality salience (treatment or control) on narrative transportation, attitude toward the antagonist, attitude toward the video, stereotype endorsement, and response time for attitude toward the antagonist. Gender differences were also investigated. Participants viewed one 15-minute clip from an action film that manipulated antagonist ethnicity and antagonist portrayal. Then, participants answered several questionnaires surrounding the previously mentioned dependent variables.

White terrorists and sympathetic portrayals were preferred over non-white terrorists and non-sympathetic portrayals. Participants in the mortality salience control condition evaluated Arabs more favorably than those exposed to the mortality salience treatment. In addition, males rated antagonists more favorably than females, and males were also less likely to engage in stereotyping of Arabs and African Americans. Implications for theory and suggestions for future research were discussed.

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Introduction

The United States has not been the same country since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. Unfortunately, amidst all of the news coverage and discovering the identities of the terrorists, there is a distinct possibility that some U.S. citizens began to view Arabs differently within the United States. Prejudice toward not only Arabs, but also anyone resembling a Middle-Eastern nationality or practicing the Muslim faith, has risen within the United States since 9/11 (Volpp, 2002). Such reactions to a tragedy are not completely unexpected; as in the past, people in other nations could very much be changed by terrorist violence committed in the name of religion.

Though the attacks in the United States were the first acts of terrorism with such a high death toll, by no means was terrorism a new concept or threat on September 11. Acts of terrorism and religious violence have occurred in several centuries. Only recently has terrorism become a larger threat by creating higher death tolls, due to humanity's technological advances and, sometimes, lapses in security. It is also not surprising that terrorism has thrived in film long before 9/11. Movies shot before 2001 contained numerous, diverse depictions of terrorists; portrayals were not limited to one particular race or nationality of people (Ivory, Williams, Hatch, & Covucci, 2007). Older depictions of terrorists have generally been negative in their portrayals of the terrorists as people. However, some film directors and producers have turned scripts containing positive or sympathetic portrayals of terrorists into major motion pictures, such as *Traitor* (Cheadle & Nachmanoff, 2008) and *The Devil's Own* (Gordon & Pakula, 1998).

Research has shown that narrative transportation, or how absorbed a person becomes while engaged with a story, can affect how much people like books, news, films, and other forms of media (Green & Brock, 2000). Additionally, narratives can reinforce stereotypes, but they also can cause people to identify with characters who are like themselves (Green, Brock, & Kaufman, 2004). Terror management theory studies have shown that mortality salience can strengthen the worldviews people hold, including their in-group biases (Rosenblatt, Greenberg, Solomon, Pyszczynski, & Lyon, 1989). Analyses of films and other media have demonstrated that stereotypes of Arabs and terrorists have persisted and even grown after the September 11 terrorist attacks (Ramji, 2003; Shaheen, 2003; Volpp, 2002).

Purpose

The study sought to identify whether the ethnicity of film antagonists, portrayals of antagonists in films, and mortality salience affect attitudes toward films and the antagonists. This study examined the effects of how antagonists are portrayed in films. Films used in this study provided European and Middle-Eastern representations of terrorists as well as sympathetic and non-sympathetic portrayals of terrorists. Film clips were used for a factorial manipulation of these two variables—antagonist ethnicity (European versus Middle-Eastern) and portrayal (sympathetic versus non-sympathetic). Similarly, half of the films used contained sympathetic portrayals of antagonists; the other half contained non-sympathetic portrayals. Dependent variables included attitude toward the video, attitude toward the antagonist, transportation, and response time.

This study was the first known to examine how ethnicity and sympathetic portrayals of antagonists affect attitudes, narrative persuasion, and stereotyping. Several researchers have completed studies pertaining to narrative persuasion and terror management theory independently, but none could be found that made connections between the aforementioned variables (Green & Brock, 2000; Rouner, Long, & Slater, 2006).

This study analyzed films as persuasive narratives and how films invoked stereotypical thoughts in a new area focusing on terrorist portrayals in films. It is possible that viewing a film clip that contains terrorists and terrorist acts had effects on the attitudes toward those terrorists, the levels of transportation that occurred, and the stereotyping that occurred. This study sought to examine those outcomes.

Literature Review

The three main areas of research for this study included: narrative persuasion, terror management theory, and stereotyping. These topics helped inform the design of the proposed study and guided the interpretation of the results. Appropriate literature related to these three theories and areas of study served as a guide for the study hypotheses and methods in the subsequent sections.

Narrative Persuasion

The function of the narrative persuasion process is represented in the Transportation Imagery Model. The Transportation Imagery Model posits that those who read or view stories have the ability to be transported, to a certain degree, into the story (Green & Brock, 2005). Narratives either read or viewed can cause a person to feel as if they are within the narrative itself, observing the characters as actions take place. When a person experiences a high enough level of transportation, or how involved a person becomes while being exposed to a narrative, his or her real-world attitudes or beliefs can be affected. Transportation is a "convergent process in which mental systems and capacities become focused on events occurring in the narrative" (Green & Brock, 2005, p. 123). Although people recognize that fictional narratives are not real, their emotions can be affected by the narratives as well. While absorbed in a story, people may forget real-world contradictions to what they are reading in a narrative. One of the major components that affects the level of transportation is the presence of vivid imagery within a narrative.

People who experience narratives become less aware of their surroundings the more they are transported (Rouner, Long, & Slater, 2006). Because narratives require large investments of emotional and mental energies, people are less critical and more susceptible to arguments and beliefs contained in the narratives (Cin, Zanna, & Fong, 2004). A large portion of the literature concerning narrative transportation involves studies focused on written narratives, whether they are within brochures or short stories (Adaval & Wyer, 1998; Green & Brock, 2000).

Greater levels of transportation have led to increased perceptions of realism (Green, 2004). Additionally, participants who had beliefs before reading the narrative consistent with the story's themes were transported more. The levels of transportation were affected by how real participants perceived the narrative to be as well as the beliefs held by participants before participating in the study. Sympathy and identification with characters in narratives can also

cause people to be more transported than without the commonalities shared (Rouner, Long, & Slater, 2006). A television drama series had significant impacts on persuading participants the more that the participants were absorbed into the storylines present in the narrative. Additionally, immersion into a story can cause a person to identify more with characters who embody similar physical and mental traits as well as with characters who are likeable because of their personality traits (Green, Brock, & Kaufman, 2004).

Transportation into narrative worlds can occur more so when a person experiences enjoyment from watching or reading a story (Green, Brock, & Kaufman, 2004). However, not all effects of high transportation levels are necessarily good. Personal preferences have much to do with the levels of enjoyment experienced when narrative transportation occurs. Personal preferences can include the type of film genre and if viewers are attracted by the storyline.

Fictional narratives containing factual information have been shown to cause changes in readers' real-world beliefs if the information is believed to be credible (Appel & Richter, 2007). The changes in the beliefs of those persuaded via narrative transportation were found to persist over time instead of only lasting for short periods of time. Changes in beliefs were very low shortly after participants were exposed to fictional narratives but rose after a few more weeks passed without any additional exposure to the narrative.

Differences between advertisements that did and did not interrupt the flow of narrative transportation indicate that advertisements were more highly rated and liked by participants when transportation was not interrupted (Wang & Calder, 2006). When transportation was interrupted by the advertisement, participants favored the ad less. This study shows why it is important not to intrude on the transportation process; any sort of interruptions can cause negative feelings to arise. It is expected that greater levels of transportation will lead to greater liking.

Finally, narrative persuasion can be used to overcome resistance, which was defined as "people's motivated effort to defend an attitude against change" (Cin, Zanna, & Fong, 2004, p. 176). Narratives can do so by reducing the attention to any sort of counterarguments as well as reducing the effects of exposure to unpredictable messages (Cin, Zanna, & Fong, 2004). People, when completely invested in a story, tend to lower their defenses in regard to personal beliefs. Again, liking of particular characters is noted to have an effect on transportation as well as on the persuasiveness of a story. Beliefs and attitudes can also be affected by mortality salience.

Terror Management Theory

According to terror management theory, people can be highly disturbed by the thought of their own mortality (Solomon, Greenberg, & Pyszczynski, 2004). To lessen the tension felt by their inevitable death, people seek to defend their cultural worldview, which is their understanding of how the world works, and reinforce their self-esteem. Through these beliefs, people determine their self-importance, and how true they remain to their cultural worldview eases the tension felt by their eventual death. People protect themselves from thoughts of death and the tension felt by strengthening their cultural worldviews and reminding themselves of their life's meaning. Terror management theory describes how making a person's mortality salience can have an effect on attitudes as well as strengthen beliefs that are all ready held (Greenberg, Pyszczynski, & Solomon, 1986). Participants whose mortality was made salient strengthened attitudes associated with pre-formed beliefs (Rosenblatt et al., 1989).

Participants whose mortality was made salient rated people with similar attributes to themselves higher than those who had dissimilar attributes (Greenberg et al., 1990). Additionally, participants who experienced mortality salience significantly favored others who praised their beliefs while those who criticized the participants' beliefs were significantly less favored.

Mortality salience has been shown to increase sense of in-group bias, where people hold more favorable opinions toward those who exist in their own social and ethnic groups and hold prejudiced opinions toward those who exist outside of the in-group. Participants who are distracted directly after a mortality salience induction will hold prejudiced opinions toward those not in their particular in-group, even when the mortality salience involves the death of a loved one (Greenberg, Pyszczynski, Solomon, Simon, & Breus, 1994). The distractions did not allow participants to engage in proximal defenses. Death-thought accessibility, or how prevalent death-related thoughts are at the forefront of the mind, has been shown to increase when participants are distracted after a mortality salience induction versus directly after mortality salience occurs (Greenberg et al., 1994). Priming of negative prejudices and exposure to mortality salience have also been shown to produce increased dislike for a particular ethnicity outside of a person's in-group and increased liking inside of a person's in-group (Arndt, Greenberg, Schimel, Pyszczynski, & Solomon, 2002). According to the same study, gender was also affected by mortality salience; women were more likely to identify with other females. People within in-

groups were found to rate other members of their own in-group lower if representations of these other members reflected negatively on themselves.

Mortality salience primes have caused accessibility of nationalistic values to increase for males but not for females (Arndt, Greenberg, & Cook, 2002). Instead, females exposed to mortality salience increased their accessibility to romantic ideals. Moreover, females exposed to mortality salience and situational cues expressed more accessibility of nationalistic values.

Aggression toward other people who threaten a person's worldviews was examined to see if there was an effect on mortality salience or not (McGregor et al., 1998). Participants who were allowed to express a negative opinion toward someone with an opposing worldview were not aggressive, but when no outlet was provided for a participant to vent their dissatisfaction, an action (the amount of hot sauce an opposing person was forced to consume) was taken by the participant instead. Additionally, by allowing a participant to demonstrate their aggression toward an opposing target, negative comments were not expressed by the participant exposed to mortality salience.

Whether mortality salience had any effect on tolerance exhibited by conservatives and liberals was examined (Greenberg et al., 1992). The researchers hypothesized that, because conservatives are generally less tolerant than liberals, conservatives would be significantly dislike others with opposing worldviews when exposed to mortality salience while liberals would experience a decrease in the disliking of others with opposing worldviews. The results of the study supported this hypothesis, and furthermore, when tolerance was highly accessible to participants, mortality salience did not cause participants to display negative reactions to a person who derogated America.

Connections have been made between terror management theory and terrorism and stereotyping. Terrorists have been shown to not have problems with holding their established worldviews, since others with compatible worldviews surround them (Miller & Landau, 2005). Other visions of reality often do not have a chance to conflict with the visions of reality held by terrorists. Stereotypes created and endorsed concerning Arabs after the attacks were caused by the mortality salience of the attacks and allowed people to suppress fear and make sense of the confusing world around them.

Studies were conducted to assess whether stereotypes help depress death-related thoughts and whether mortality salience helps increase these stereotypes (Schimel et al., 1999). The

researchers found that portrayals of African-Americans consistent with stereotypes were liked significantly more when exposed to mortality salience; the opposite occurred with participants not exposed to mortality salience. The same trend followed when participants were exposed to a stereotype-inconsistent gay man while stereotyping, in general, was increased by the mere manipulation of mortality salience.

This phenomenon leads to the following question: why do people employ stereotypes when they are exposed to mortality salience? One particular study sought to answer this question (Renkema, Stapel, Maringer, & van Yperen, 2008). The researchers found that stereotypes are used by people exposed to mortality salience in an attempt to comprehend the world around them, otherwise noted as a *comprehension goal*. Both positive and negative stereotypes are used to achieve comprehension goals when mortality salience occurs.

In an effort to extend the literature on terror management theory and identity, mortality salience was examined to determine how it affected a person's identity as well as how identity was affected by participants exposed to terrorism salience (Dunkel, 2002). Participants who were not completely sure of their personal identities and of their place in the world were exploring their identities more significantly when exposed to mortality salience in comparison to those who were not reminded of their own death. In the terrorism salience portion of this study, participants who were not exploring their own identities when exposed to the reminder of the terrorist attacks on September 11 were less anxious than those participants who were exploring their own identities.

The reactions of participants to September 11 were examined in relation to terror management theory (Yum & Schenck-Hamlin, 2005). Reactions were collected just two weeks following the attacks, and many of these reactions included shock, disbelief, increasing social behaviors, trying to find a purpose in life, sharing information, seeking information, and discussing issues with others. The final reactions recorded by participants were prejudiced statements about Arab Muslims, which is the aspect most relevant to the proposed study. Mortality salience created by mentioning the terrorist attacks caused negative reactions toward Arab Muslims due to the connections participants made with September 11 and this ethnic group.

Stereotyping

A stereotype is defined as speculations about social group members concerning certain

behaviors, attitudes, skills, and traits; people use stereotypes for comparisons and perceptions of those from other groups in society (Amodio & Devine, 2005). The foundations of stereotyping and prejudice are incredibly complicated, and people's stereotypes can come from multiple life experiences. Racial prejudice seems to stem from people's minds trying to make sense of a complex world by accepting simpler explanations. People also use stereotypes to make sense of ethnic groups, and when a person does not know very much information about a person from a certain ethnic group, these stereotypes help the person to judge the other. Not all stereotypes or prejudices are necessarily negative, but these two words often invoke negative perceptions.

Research has shown that people accept social stereotypes—or *stereotype endorsement*—with independent differences in essentialist beliefs, or beliefs that assume personality or physical traits are not the results of social or intellectual constructs (Bastian & Haslan, 2006). While this study contains encouraging results, the main topics borrowed from this article are the scales used to measure stereotype endorsement. Other studies have examined how participants agree or disagree with stereotypes presented to them in narratives. The following literature examines some of the stereotypes surrounding terrorists.

Before discussing the material focused on films and other narratives containing terrorist images, it is important to note a study completed by Bar-tal and Labin (2001). The effects of terrorist attacks in Israel on stereotypes held by Israeli adolescents were examined (Bar-tal & Labin, 2001). The three groups used to measure stereotypes were Palestinians, Jordanians, and Arabs (broad ethnic group), and measures were taken at three different times: during a quiet and peaceful time, a day after two terrorist attacks, and three months after the terrorist events. The researchers found that negative stereotypes were most present during the measures taken the day after the terrorist attacks, and the participants rated Jordanians more positively than the Palestinians and Arabs in general. After a period of three months, some participants' negative stereotypes were lessened or changed to positive opinions toward the three groups.

Several different types of terrorist portrayals exist in narratives in films and in written form (O'Brien, 1986). First, there is the *sentimental stereotype*, which O'Brien labels as misguided and violent because of social and political injustice or a combination of the two. These types of terrorists can be viewed sympathetically, since life seems to have left these people with nowhere to turn but violent acts. Another type of terrorist exists as well—the *hysterical stereotype*—which can be divided into three smaller categories. These categories are: terrorists

who are insane and prone to mindless violence; terrorists who are criminals and use political reasons as a shield to carry out criminal acts; and terrorists who are actually undercover agents for the opposing side. Audiences are less likely to sympathize with characters that embody these traits.

Hundreds of films have been analyzed for the portrayals of Arabs within them (Shaheen, 2003). Based on the analysis, the distinction between Muslims and Arabs has been blurred in Hollywood films. Additionally, Arabs are portrayed as evil and uncivilized people, almost dehumanized by their acts of violence and love of money and power. Terrorism, in general, has continually been a huge draw for Hollywood scripts (Boggs & Pollard, 2006). The Middle East has become a place from which we anticipate threats and the breeding of terrorists as well as terrorism fears. The possibilities of fictional films reinforcing stereotypes created by the news media and that people cannot separate the narratives they see in film and their assumptions about other ethnic groups are outlined in one study (Ramji, 2003). There are also reports on the hate crimes toward Arabs in America after September 11 (Volpp, 2002). Since the terrorist attacks on American soil, people have become more violent toward Arabs because the associations between *Arab, Muslim,* and *terrorist* are solidified instead of distinguished. Furthermore, portrayals of white terrorists in action film trailers post-9/11 have decreased since the September 11 attacks; in contrast, action film trailers contain more Middle-Eastern terrorist portrayals post-9/11 (Ivory, Williams, Hatch, & Covucci, 2007). Stereotypical thoughts could potentially be influenced by these changes. Moreover, stereotyping of terrorists in Hollywood films has perhaps led to Americans having increased stereotypical thoughts and discriminatory feelings based portrayals in films.

Hypotheses and Research Questions

From the research noted, two hypotheses and one research question were formed in relation to narrative persuasion:

H1: Participants who view clips with European antagonists will be transported more so than those who view clips with Middle-Eastern antagonists.

Although this is contradictory to established research, it was predicted that identification with the antagonist would lead to increased liking of the character and therefore be transported more into the narrative.

H2: Participants who view clips with non-sympathetic portrayals of antagonists will be transported more so than those who view clips with sympathetic portrayals of antagonists.

Portrayals that conflicted with stereotypes (sympathetic portrayals and European portrayals) were expected to cause lower transportation levels. Portrayals that did not conflict with stereotypes (non-sympathetic portrayals and Middle-Eastern portrayals) were expected to cause higher levels of transportation.

RQ1: How will antagonist ethnicity, antagonist portrayal, and mortality salience interact to predict transportation?

In addition to the previous hypotheses and research question concerning transportation, five hypotheses and four research questions were established relating to attitude toward the antagonist, attitude toward the video, and response time for attitude toward the antagonist:

H3: Participants who view clips with European antagonists will hold more favorable attitudes toward the antagonists than those who view clips with Middle-Eastern antagonists.

It was expected that since European antagonists were contrary to negative stereotypes, the European portrayals would be favored more so than Middle-Eastern portrayals.

H4: Participants who view clips with European antagonists will hold more favorable attitudes toward the video than those who view clips with Middle-Eastern antagonists.

Again, it was expected that non-stereotypical portrayals (European antagonists) would lead to more favorable opinions of the video.

H5: Participants who view clips with sympathetic portrayals of antagonists will hold more favorable attitudes toward the antagonists than those who view clips with non-sympathetic portrayals.

Since sympathetic portrayals of antagonists were contrary to negative stereotypes, it was

expected that sympathetic portrayals would be favored more so than non-sympathetic portrayals.

H6: Participants who view clips with sympathetic portrayals of antagonists will hold more favorable attitudes toward the video than those who view clips with non-sympathetic portrayals.

It was expected that the non-stereotypical portrayals (sympathetic portrayals) would lead to higher opinions of the video clip.

H7: Ethnicity and portrayal of the antagonist will interact and affect response time for attitude toward the antagonist.

RQ2: How will antagonist ethnicity, antagonist portrayal, and mortality salience interact to predict attitude toward the antagonist?

RQ3: How will antagonist ethnicity, antagonist portrayal, and mortality salience interact to predict attitude toward the video?

RQ4: How will antagonist ethnicity, antagonist portrayal, and mortality salience interact to predict response time for attitude toward the antagonist?

RQ5: How will participant gender predict transportation, attitude toward the antagonist, attitude toward the video, and response time for attitude toward the antagonist?

Method

These hypotheses and research questions were tested in a 2 (mortality salience: treatment versus control) x 2 (antagonist ethnicity: European versus Middle-Eastern) x 2 (antagonist portrayal: sympathetic versus non-sympathetic) factorial experiment. Gender was also included as an independent variable. The dependent variables were transportation, attitude toward the antagonist, attitude toward the video, and response time.

Participants

Participants signed up via the Sona Systems online research participation website. Participants received credit in exchange for their participation. All students were eligible for participation, and sessions comprised up to eight participants continued until at least 140 students had participated in the main study.

Materials

Film Conditions. The factors of antagonist portrayal and antagonist ethnicity were crossed via film clips, with two film clips in each condition. The following were the conditions present in the film clips: European antagonist in a sympathetic portrayal; European antagonist in a non-sympathetic portrayal; Middle-Eastern antagonist in a sympathetic portrayal; and Middle-Eastern antagonist in a non-sympathetic portrayal. Two clips from the film *The Devil's Own* (Gordon & Pakula, 1998) operationalized the condition of European antagonist in a sympathetic portrayal. A clip from *Air Force One* (Bernstein & Wolfgang, 1997) and one from *Die Hard* (Gordon & McTiernan, 1999) operationalized the condition of European antagonist in a non-sympathetic portrayal. Additionally, two clips from the film *Traitor* (Cheadle & Nachmanoff, 2008) operationalized the condition Middle-Eastern antagonist in a sympathetic portrayal. Lastly, the films *Executive Decision* (Silver & Baird, 1997) and *True Lies* (Cameron, 1994) operationalized the last condition of Middle-Eastern antagonist in a non-sympathetic portrayal. The film ratings and film segment lengths appear in Appendix A. A table of operationalizations of the film clips appears in Appendix C.

Film Narratives. In the first clip from *The Devil's Own* (Gordon & Pakula, 1998), the audience is introduced to the main antagonist, Frankie McGuire, an IRA member who, along with other IRA members, participates in a shootout with local law enforcement and military. After this scene, McGuire, who is in hiding, is brought food and drink by a friend. The scene changes again, and the audience sees McGuire going through United States Customs under the

cover name of "Rory." A judge and friend of his drives McGuire from the airport to the home of the O'Mearas, who offer to put him up while he supposedly works in construction. McGuire meets all of the O'Meara family, including Tom O'Meara, the father who works as a policeman, and McGuire eats dinner with the family for his first night in New York City.

The second clip from *The Devil's Own* (Gordon & Pakula, 1998) shows McGuire visiting Billy Burke, an arms dealer who offers to provide McGuire with missiles in exchange for a large sum of money in McGuire's possession. Burke's men had ransacked O'Meara's house, looking for the money, and McGuire goes to see Burke to make sure no sort of break-in occurs again. Burke threatens McGuire and a friend of his over the money. McGuire returns to the O'Meara house, where he is confronted by O'Meara, who has found the money and now understands McGuire's intentions. McGuire tries to reason with O'Meara, but O'Meara, along with his cop partner Eddie Diaz, cuff McGuire and proceed to take him to the police station. On the way, a trash truck blocks traffic, which gives McGuire an opportunity to escape while Diaz is talking with the trash collector. McGuire tries to get the money out of the trunk, and McGuire shoots Diaz. McGuire and O'Meara fight behind the car they came in, and McGuire is able to escape, but without the money.

The film clip from *Air Force One* (Bernstein & Wolfgang, 1997) opens with the Vice President trying to free a Russian radical leader, which is the goal of Russian terrorists who have taken over Air Force One. The President, who has been able to hide in the luggage bay, searches for some form of communication he can contact the White House staff with. Meanwhile, the Russian terrorists, headed by Ivan Korshunov, barge into the room where all of the passengers on Air Force One are located. Because their demands have not been met by a certain time, one of the hostages is shot and killed. Korshunov takes the First Lady and the President's daughter into another room, to the horror of the other hostages. The President finds a phone down in the luggage bay, and he connects with the White House. After being connected, he is approached by one of the Russians, but he is able to drop the phone into his pocket with the line still connected. Without the Russian knowing, the President is able to give instructions to fire a missile on Air Force One. The firing causes the plane to disengage from autopilot, and the Russians deploy a chaff to eradicate the missile. The instability from the chaff eliminating the missile allows the President to kill the Russian who had found him. The President talks with the Vice President about tactics to land Air Force One safely.

In the clip from *Die Hard* (Gordon & McTiernan, 1999), a terrorist group, which mostly consists of Germans, headed by Hans Gruber, crash a dinner party at the Nakatomi Plaza building. This building is where main character John McClane and his wife, Holly Gennaro, are. The German terrorists cut all of the wires and communication lines, and when the terrorists crash the party, McClane is able to hide from them. The terrorists take Joseph Takagi, the Nakatomi executive, to an isolated board room, away from the other hostages. Gruber attempts to pry the building's vault code from Takagi, but Takagi refuses. He is killed by Gruber, and McClane witnesses the murder.

In the first film clip from *Traitor* (Cheadle & Nachmanoff, 2008), main character Samir Horne escapes from a Yemeni prison, along with his terrorist friend Omar and others. Meanwhile, Detective Roy Clayton debriefs his department about a terrorist leader named Nathir, who is involved with the Islamic Brotherhood, a terrorist organization. Omar is part of this group, and Horne decides to join the organization. Horne and Omar meet with Fahreed, a leader within the Islamic Brotherhood. Fahreed's ideals clash with Horne's, who appears to follow the Koran more closely than any of the terrorists. Clayton questions Horne's mother while Horne and the other terrorists prepare for an attack on the American consulate in Nice, France. Clayton and his team also question Horne's girlfriend and previous employers. The audience learns about Horne's background through this process. In addition, Horne attempts to teach one of the young terrorist recruits how to properly manage a vest bomb by demonstrating how it is worn and used.

The second film clip from *Traitor* (Cheadle & Nachmanoff, 2008) begins with Horne and Omar returning to the terrorist safehouse, where both are confronted by Fahreed, who believes Horne is working undercover with United States investigators. Fahreed talks in private about his concerns to Omar. Meanwhile, Clayton and his department place Horne on the High Value Target List. While Horne and Omar are playing a game of chess, Fahreed comes in and informs them that Horne is now on the High Value Target List, alleviating Fahreed's fears about Horne working undercover. Horne and Omar travel to a coffee shop to send out emails to terrorist cells in the United States, and Horne sends Clayton an email about Nathir leaving Halifax the next day. The clip then shows several of the American terrorist cells checking their email for instructions for a terrorist plot involving suicide bombings on several buses, set to all happen at the same time on Thanksgiving Day. Clayton travels to Nova Scotia, where Horne and the

Islamic Brotherhood prepare to leave the country on a ship.

In the video clip from *Executive Decision* (Silver & Baird, 1997), the first scene shown begins with El Sayed Jaffa, a dangerous Arab terrorist, agreeing to contact his second in command, Nagi Hassan, who has, along with other terrorists, hijacked an American plane. Hassan and his men have hijacked the plane to convince the President of the United States to free Jaffa. Meanwhile, an American team of soldiers has been transported to the storage compartments in the bottom of the plane, where they are attempting to diffuse a bomb planted on the plane by Hassan. The team discusses tactics for taking control of the plane so it can be landed safely without any of the passengers being hurt. While two of the team members attempt to dismantle the bomb, several of the other members prepare to launch an attack on the terrorists within the plane's main cabin. The attack is stopped short when the bomb is revealed to be controlled directly by Hassan. Jaffa calls Hassan via telephone and lets him know that he has been freed. Hassan is happy, but he refuses to stop with Jaffa's freedom. His plan now includes directing the plane to some American location and crashing it there. One of Hassan's men directly challenges Hassan's plan, noting that the planned terrorist attack does not follow Islamic ideals. Hassan shoots his second in command for disagreeing with him.

The final film clip comes from *True Lies* (Cameron, 1994) and begins with the main character, Harry Tasker, and his wife Helen being tranquilized and flown to the Florida Keys, where Salim Abu Aziz, the terrorist leader of The Crimson Jihad group, is located. Harry was captured because he is a spy and for his expertise in weapons; Helen was not aware of Harry being a spy and emotionally reacts to finding out this knowledge. Meanwhile, Aziz has himself video-recorded by one of his men, and when the battery power runs out, the audience sees Aziz's short temper and nasty personality. The terrorists use truth serum to pry more knowledge out of Harry with Helen in the room. However, he is able to pick his handcuffs, and he and Helen escape from the terrorists who were holding them hostage. Helen forgives Harry for keeping his profession a secret in the process of these events.

Mortality Salience

Before completing the mortality salience measure, participants the need for entertainment scale (Brock & Livingston, 2004). Participants rated 19 statements on a Likert scale, where "1" = "not at all like you" and "5" = "extremely like you" (Brock & Livingston, 2004). For the mortality salience manipulation, some participants were asked to convey their emotions that the

thought of death arouses and what will happen to them when they physically die, while other participants described their emotions concerning dental pain and what will happen to them while experiencing dental pain (Greenberg et al., 2000). Because the effects of mortality salience are strongest after a delay, a filler activity was used in between the mortality salience manipulation and the viewing of a clip (Greenberg, Arndt, Simon, Pyszczynski, & Solomon, 2000). For the filler activity, participants rated their communication technology use by completing a 14-item Likert scale, where "1" = "not at all like you" and "5" = "extremely like you." The full measures of mortality salience and communication technology use can be found in Appendix B. After completing these measures, participants viewed a single video clip from one condition.

Dependent Variables

Participants completed a set of questionnaires that included various measures. Transportation was measured using an 11-item Likert scale, where "1" = "strongly disagree" and "7" = "strongly agree" (Green & Brock, 2000). For the pilot study, attitude toward the antagonist was assessed using an 11-item semantic differential scale; the scale included word pairs such as "Pleasant/Unpleasant" and "Likable/Dislikable." However, the Cronbach's α produced was too low, and thus four items (2, 8, 10, and 11) were eliminated from the scale for the main study, creating a 7-item semantic differential scale. The 7-item attitude toward the antagonist scale yielded a Cronbach's α of .85.

Additionally, participants indicated their attitudes toward the video using a 20-item Likert scale, where "1" = "not at all" and "7" = "very much." A pilot study ($N = 263$) produced a Cronbach's α of .87 for the attitude toward the video scale. Each participant also completed a thought listing measure (Cacioppo, von Hippel, & Ernst, 1997) and a death-thought accessibility measure (Arndt, Greenberg, Solomon, Pyszczynski, & Simon, 1997). Identification with the character was measured with an 11-point Likert scale, where "1" = "strongly disagree" and "7" = "strongly agree" (Cohen, 2001).

Moreover, participants completed the 20-item Positive and Negative Affect Scale (PANAS) to test for any possible differences in mood, where "1" = "very slightly or not at all" and "7" = "extremely" (Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988). For the main study, participants completed one of two stereotype endorsement measures, either measuring attitudes toward Arabs or attitudes toward African Americans; both were 20-item scales, where "1" = "not at all" and "7" = "very much" (Dambrun & Guimond, 2004; De Oliveira & Dambrun, 2007). Lastly,

participants filled in demographic information and gender, manipulation checks of antagonist ethnicity and antagonist potrayal, and consistency checks of video quality, which was a 7-item Likert scale, where "1" = "not at all" and "7" = "very much," adapted from Ivory and Magee (2009). Participant response time for these measures was recorded. All scales and measures are attached to this paper in Appendix B.

Procedure

The hypotheses and research questions were tested in a between-subjects experiment ($N = 143$). Participants were greeted and then seated at one of eight laptops, all of which included a millisecond-accurate response-time keyboard. Data were collected using MediaLab software (Empirisoft Corporation, 2007). Participants were welcomed at the start of the study; directly following this, participants completed the need for entertainment scale, the mortality salience manipulation, and the communication technology use measure. After completing these measures, participants viewed one of the eight film clips. Then, participants completed the dependent variable measures. After finishing these dependent variable measures, participants were given a debriefing sheet and thanked for their participation. As a final note, some scales in the main study were condensed from seven responses to five responses to adequately fit the screen size for MediaLab on the laptops.

Pilot Study

This portion of the study was only a 2 x 2 of antagonist ethnicity (European and Middle-Eastern) and antagonist portrayal (sympathetic and non-sympathetic). A total of 264 participants completed the pilot study, but one was excluded because of missing data ($N = 263$). For the pilot study, participants were welcomed to the study and then viewed a clip from one of the four conditions: sympathetically portrayed, European antagonists; non-sympathetically portrayed, European antagonists; sympathetically portrayed, Middle-Eastern antagonists; and non-sympathetically portrayed, Middle-Eastern antagonists. After viewing one of the eight clips, participants completed the transportation scale (Green & Brock, 2000), the attitude toward the antagonist scale, manipulation checks of antagonist ethnicity and antagonist portrayal, the attitude toward the video scale, and the death-thought accessibility measure (Arndt, Greenberg, Solomon, Pyszczynski, & Simon, 1997). After completing these measures, participants were thanked for their participation and given a debriefing statement.

Chi-squared tests were used to test if the manipulations of ethnicity and portrayal type were perceived correctly. For antagonist portrayals, the antagonist portrayal was able to accurately predict the perceived antagonist portrayal, and a significant difference occurred between the two portrayal types, $\chi^2(1, N = 262) = 71.34, p < 0.001$. Additionally, the antagonist ethnicity was able to accurately predict the perceived antagonist ethnicity, and a significant difference occurred between the two ethnicities, $\chi^2(1, N = 261) = 251.32, p < 0.001$. It is possible that participants' stereotypes influenced what type of portrayal they viewed, whether it was a sympathetic or non-sympathetic portrayal. Differences in the N values occurred due to incomplete data.

Chi-squared tests were also used to analyze differences between clips for both antagonist portrayals and antagonist ethnicities. Clips one and two (*The Devil's Own*) were operationalized as sympathetic portrayals of European antagonists; clips three and four (*Air Force One* and *Die Hard*, respectively) operationalized non-sympathetic portrayals of European antagonists. Clips five and six (*Traitor*) operationalized sympathetic portrayals of Middle-Eastern antagonists, and clips seven and eight (*Executive Decision* and *True Lies*, respectively) operationalized non-sympathetic portrayals of Middle-Eastern antagonists.

For clips one and two, there was no significant difference for antagonist portrayal, $\chi^2(1, N = 66) = 0.31, p = 0.575$; also, no significant difference was found for clips one and two in

terms of antagonist ethnicity, $\chi^2(1, N = 66) = 2.41$, $p = 0.120$. For clips three and four, there was a significant difference for antagonist portrayal, $\chi^2(1, N = 70) = 15.040$, $p < 0.001$; additionally, there was a significant difference found in terms of antagonist ethnicity, $\chi^2(1, N = 70) = 13.51$, $p = 0.001$. For clips five and six, there was no significant difference for antagonist portrayal, $\chi^2(1, N = 69) = 2.49$, $p = 0.115$; moreover, no significant difference was found for clips five and six in terms of antagonist ethnicity, $\chi^2(1, N = 68) = 2.46$, $p = 0.292$. Lastly, for clips seven and eight, there was no significant difference for antagonist portrayal, $\chi^2(1, N = 57) = 2.77$, $p = 0.096$; however, there was a significant difference found in terms of antagonist ethnicity, $\chi^2(1, N = 57) = 7.22$, $p = 0.027$. Again, the significant difference results are predicted to be indications of the participants stereotyping.

For the pilot study, it was essential to show that death-thought accessibility was not significantly different between each of the eight clips. Otherwise, effects could be attributed to the levels of mortality salience evoked by certain film clips. The death-thought accessibility measure was non-significant overall, $F(7, 255) = 0.83$, $p = 0.567$.

Even though there were variances between film clips, three factorial ANOVAs of antagonist ethnicity, antagonist portrayal, and participant gender were conducted for effects on attitude toward the video, level of transportation, and attitude toward the antagonist. The following summarizes the main effects found from the factorial ANOVAs.

For transportation, there was a significant difference overall, $F(7, 251) = 3.52$, $p = 0.001$. A significant difference occurred for participant gender; males ($M = 4.01$, $SE = .07$) were significantly more transported than females ($M = 3.68$, $SE = .07$), $F(1, 251) = 11.87$, $p < 0.001$. Other than this one result, there were several results that nearly approached the $p = 0.05$ significance level. Sympathetic portrayals of antagonists appeared to generate significantly higher levels of transportation ($M = 3.91$, $SE = .07$) than non-sympathetic portrayals of antagonists ($M = 3.73$, $SE = .07$), $F(1, 251) = 3.70$, $p = 0.056$. The ethnicity of the antagonist may have led to different levels of transportation, $F(1, 251) = 3.32$, $p = 0.070$; transportation levels for a film featuring a Middle-Eastern antagonist ($M = 3.92$, $SE = .07$) were higher than those featuring a European antagonist ($M = 3.74$, $SE = .07$). Furthermore, antagonist ethnicity and antagonist portrayal may have interacted in influencing participants' level of transportation, $F(1, 251) = 3.02$, $p = 0.083$. A sympathetic portrayal of a Middle-Eastern antagonist appeared to generate a higher level of transportation than the other three conditions. The sympathetic

portrayal could be appealing to participants as well as Middle-Eastern antagonists, who are often found in films. An interaction between antagonist ethnicity, antagonist portrayal, and participant gender appeared to produce a difference for level of transportation, $F(1, 251) = 3.57$, $p = 0.060$. It is possible that males were more transported because they favor action films more than females, and the transportation could also have depended on the type of antagonist portrayal and antagonist ethnicity.

For attitude toward the antagonist, there was a significant difference overall, $F(7, 248) = 13.55$, $p < 0.001$. There was a significant difference between non-sympathetic portrayals and sympathetic portrayals; as one would expect, participants who viewed a non-sympathetic portrayal ($M = 6.51$, $SE = .13$) significantly disliked the antagonist more than those who viewed a sympathetic portrayal ($M = 4.97$, $SE = .12$), $F(1, 248) = 73.37$, $p < 0.001$. Participants who viewed clip with a Middle-Eastern antagonist ($M = 5.94$, $SE = .13$) expressed significantly more dislike for the antagonist than those who viewed a clip with a European antagonist ($M = 5.52$, $SE = .12$), $F(1, 248) = 8.40$, $p = 0.004$. Lastly, females ($M = 5.90$, $SE = .12$) significantly disliked antagonists more than males ($M = 5.50$, $SE = .13$), $F(1, 248) = 4.00$, $p = 0.047$.

For attitude toward the video, there was a significant difference overall, $F(7, 252) = 6.18$, $p < 0.001$. There was a significant difference between non-sympathetic portrayals ($M = 4.05$, $SE = .06$) and sympathetic portrayals ($M = 4.33$, $SE = .06$), $F(1, 252) = 10.87$, $p = 0.001$. Additionally, males ($M = 4.41$, $SE = .06$) rated the video significantly higher than females ($M = 4.03$, $SE = .06$), $F(1, 252) = 19.83$, $p < 0.001$. The interaction between antagonist portrayal, antagonist ethnicity, and participant gender produced a significant difference in attitudes toward the video, $F(1, 252) = 6.49$, $p = 0.011$. It is possible this interaction occurred because males are more likely to favor action films that contain non-sympathetic portrayals of either European or Middle-Eastern antagonists while females are more likely to favor sympathetic portrayals of either European or Middle-Eastern antagonists.

The results from the pilot study suggest that even though differences were found between antagonist portrayal type and antagonist ethnicity in some conditions, and between some actual and perceived antagonist portrayal types and some actual and perceived antagonist ethnicities, the manipulations produced significant results in the expected direction for the dependent variables. However, to improve the study, a few refinements were made from the pilot study to the main study to hopefully eliminate the differences found between clips within a condition and

how participants perceive the antagonist ethnicity and antagonist portrayal. Instead of labeling the antagonist ethnicities as "European" and "Middle-Eastern," these items were changed to "white" and "non-white." The pilot study attitude toward the antagonist scale and manipulation checks asked participants with the antagonist being referred to as the "villain." In the main study, "villain" was replaced by the intended antagonist's character name. Also, the pilot study included an attitude toward the antagonist Likert scale, where the highest number indicated the most dislike. The scale was changed in the main study so that the lowest reflected the greatest dislike.

Main Study Results

Before discussing the analyses of the hypotheses and research questions, the reliabilities and distributions of each scale used in the main study will be discussed. Checks of the manipulations of antagonist ethnicity and antagonist portrayal were significant. Appendix C includes graphs of the manipulation checks. All results concerning response times were recorded in milliseconds, and the mean response times produced from the need for entertainment scale (Brock & Livingston, 2004) data were used as a baseline for calculating all response time means.

Scale Reliabilities

All of the following information on scale reliabilities can be found in Appendix C. For the main study, the need for entertainment scale (Brock & Livingston, 2004) produced a Cronbach's α of .83. Because each of the clips used a different character name in the attitude toward the antagonist scales, each Cronbach's α was recorded. For clip one, the attitude toward the antagonist scale generated a Cronbach's α of .78. Clip two generated a Cronbach's α of .62, while clip three produced a Cronbach's α of .68. Continuing with clip four, this attitude toward the antagonist scale generated a Cronbach's α of .90. The same scale for clip five produced Cronbach's α of .24, and clip six generated a Cronbach's α of .90. Though clip five's generated α was particularly low, the other clips produced high item reliabilities. Clip five's item reliability could have resulted from a small sample size ($N = 19$). Finally, the attitude toward the antagonist scale for clip seven produced a Cronbach's α of .81, while clip eight generated a Cronbach's α of .78.

As with the attitude toward the antagonist scale, the identification with the character scale (Cohen, 2001) was different for each film clip to reflect the antagonist in the film viewed by the participant. For clip one, the identification with the character scale produced a Cronbach's α of .81, and clip two generated a Cronbach's α of .85. For the identification with the character scale in the clip three condition, this clip produced Cronbach's α of .87, while clip four produced a Cronbach's α of .84. Clip five generated a Cronbach's α of .83; clip six generated a Cronbach's α of .90. The identification with the character scale for clip seven produced a Cronbach's α of .57, and clip eight produced a Cronbach's α of .74.

For the attitude toward the video scale, Cronbach's α was determined to be .87. The transportation scale (Green & Brock, 2000) produced a Cronbach's α of .76. There were two

versions of the stereotype endorsement scale (Dambrun & Guimond, 2004; De Oliveira & Dambrun, 2007) used in this study; the first used the word "Arabs," and the second used the word "African Americans." The first scale produced a Cronbach's α of .93, while the second scale generated a Cronbach's α of .94. The positive affect portion of the PANAS scale (Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988) produced a Cronbach's α of .87; the negative affect portion generated a Cronbach's α of .88. The final scale with item reliability used in the main study was the scale of consistency checks (Ivory & Magee, 2009), which produced a Cronbach's α of .94.

Scale Distributions

The distributions of each scale mean should follow bell curves. Deviations from bell curves will be noted in the discussion section. The following reports the means and standard deviations for all scale means used in the main study. A table with distribution information can be found in Appendix C.

The need for entertainment scale produced a mean of 3.25 with a standard deviation of .49. For the attitude toward the antagonist variable, the mean was 2.50, and the standard deviation was 1.00. The identification with the character scale (Cohen, 2001) produced a mean of 2.76 with a standard deviation of 1.11. The attitude toward the video scale generated a mean of 4.23 and a standard deviation of .80. Furthermore, the transportation scale (Green & Brock, 2000) produced a mean of 3.77 with a standard deviation of .88. The first ("Arabs") stereotype endorsement measure (Dambrun & Guimond, 2004; De Oliveira & Dambrun, 2007) produced a mean of 4.25 and standard deviation of .98, while the second stereotype endorsement measure ("African Americans") generated a mean of 4.71 and a standard deviation of .89. Additionally, the PANAS (Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988) generated a mean of 3.36 with a standard deviation of .87. The positive affect portion of the scale generated a mean of 4.10 with a standard deviation of 1.12; the negative affect portion produced a mean of 2.63 with a standard deviation of 1.09. For the consistency checks scale (Ivory & Magee, 2009), the mean produced was 4.86 with a standard deviation of 1.33.

Participant Demographics

In total, 143 participants completed the study. Of these participants, 63.6 percent were females ($N = 91$), and 35.7 percent were males ($N = 51$). A total of 0.7 percent preferred to not indicate their gender ($N = 1$). Out of the 143 participants, 84.6 percent were white ($N = 121$), 2.8 percent were black ($N = 4$), 1.4 percent were Middle-Eastern ($N = 2$), 0.7 percent were from the

Indian Subcontinent ($N = 1$), 2.1 percent were Asian ($N = 3$), 1.4 percent were Hispanic/Latino ($N = 2$), 2.1 percent were Pacific Islanders ($N = 3$), and 4.9 percent were of some other ethnicity ($N = 7$). In terms of the participants' ages, 15.4 percent were 18 years old ($N = 22$), 28.8 percent were 19 years old ($N = 41$), 28.8 percent were 20 years old ($N = 41$), 13.5 percent were 21 years old ($N = 19$), 10.3 percent were 22 years old ($N = 15$), and 3.2 percent were 23 years old ($N = 5$). Surprisingly, when participants were asked if they had seen the clip they just viewed before or not, only 14 percent had actually viewed the clips previously ($N = 20$).

Narrative Persuasion Results

For each of the hypotheses tests, one-way ANOVAs were used to analyze the data. Hypothesis one stated that participants who watch clips with white antagonists would be more transported than those who watch clips with Non-white antagonists. A one-way ANOVA produced no significant difference between the transportation levels of participants who viewed clips with white antagonists ($M = 3.75$, $SE = .11$) and those who viewed clips with Non-white antagonists ($M = 3.79$, $SE = .10$), $F(1, 139) = .078$, $p = .781$. Hypothesis two predicted that participants who viewed non-sympathetic portrayals of antagonists would be transported more so than those who viewed sympathetic portrayals of antagonists. Again, the difference was not significant; the transportation levels of participants who viewed clips with non-sympathetic portrayals of antagonists ($M = 3.81$, $SE = .10$) were not significantly different from those who viewed sympathetic portrayals of antagonists ($M = 3.72$, $SE = .11$), $F(1, 139) = .402$, $p = .527$.

The first research question posed in this study asked how antagonist ethnicity, antagonist portrayal, and mortality salience would interact to predict transportation levels. The ANOVA performed resulted in one significant result among the three factors and their interaction terms. The omnibus ANOVA was not significant, $F(7, 133) = 1.391$, $p = .214$, but two significant differences were found with the interaction between ethnicity and portrayal. Non-sympathetic portrayals of white antagonists ($M = 3.94$, $SE = .14$) produced significantly higher transportation levels than sympathetic portrayals of white antagonists ($M = 3.42$, $SE = .17$), $F(1, 133) = 5.90$, $p = .017$. Additionally, clips with sympathetic portrayals of non-white antagonists ($M = 3.88$, $SE = .14$) generated significantly higher transportation levels than clips with sympathetic portrayals of white antagonists ($M = 3.42$, $SE = .17$), $F(1, 133) = 5.90$, $p = .017$. These results appear in a graph located in Appendix C.

Stereotyping Results

Hypothesis three stated that participants who viewed clips with white antagonists would hold more favorable attitudes toward the antagonists than those who viewed clips with Non-white antagonists. The difference between the two antagonist ethnicities approached significance; white antagonists ($M = 2.67$, $SE = .12$) were evaluated more positively than Non-white antagonists ($M = 2.35$, $SE = .11$), $F(1, 141) = 3.744$, $p = .055$. Hypothesis four predicted that participants who viewed clips with white antagonists would hold more favorable attitudes toward the video clip than those who watched clips with Non-white antagonists. There was no significant difference between the attitudes toward the video for films that featured white antagonists ($M = 4.21$, $SE = .10$) and Non-white antagonists ($M = 4.25$, $SE = .09$), $F(1, 141) = .111$, $p = .739$.

Hypothesis five predicted that participants who viewed clips with sympathetic portrayals of antagonists would rate the antagonists more favorably than participants who viewed non-sympathetic portrayals of antagonists. A significant difference was found between the ratings of antagonists; sympathetic portrayals ($M = 3.20$, $SE = .09$) were highly more favored than non-sympathetic portrayals ($M = 1.85$, $SE = .09$), $F(1, 141) = 120.888$, $p < .001$. Hypothesis six predicted that sympathetic portrayals of antagonists would elicit more favorable attitudes toward the film clip than would non-sympathetic portrayals. Surprisingly though, there was no significant difference between the attitudes toward the video for sympathetic portrayals ($M = 4.31$, $SE = .10$) and non-sympathetic portrayals ($M = 4.16$, $SE = .09$), $F(1, 141) = 1.342$, $p = .249$. Finally, hypothesis seven stated that the antagonists' ethnicity and portrayal of the antagonist would interact and affect the response time for attitude toward the antagonist. An ANOVA revealed that there was no significant difference between any of the response times ($M_{NonWSymp} = -1199.38$, $SE = 612.66$; $M_{whiteSymp} = -1824.91$, $SE = 719.53$; $M_{NonWNonSymp} = -2298.53$, $SE = 645.80$; $M_{whiteNonSymp} = -3524.87$, $SE = 628.57$) for attitude toward the antagonist, $F(1, 135) = .312$, $p = .578$.

The second research question asked how antagonist ethnicity, antagonist portrayal, and mortality salience would interact to predict the attitude toward the antagonist. The overall ANOVA revealed a significant difference, $F(7, 135) = 21.831$, $p < .001$. Two significant differences were found. Participants rated white antagonists ($M = 2.76$, $SE = .09$) significantly higher than Non-white antagonists ($M = 2.30$, $SE = .08$), $F(1, 135) = 14.893$, $p < .001$.

Furthermore, participants favored sympathetic portrayals (M = 3.23, SE = .09) significantly more so than non-sympathetic portrayals (M = 1.83, SE = .08), $F(1, 135)$ = 137.162, $p < .001$. No interactions between variables were significant.

A test of the interaction of antagonist ethnicity, antagonist portrayal, and mortality salience on attitude toward the video was not significant, $F(7, 135)$ = .990, p = .441. Likewise, there were no significant main effects or interactions.

Another test examined the interaction of antagonist ethnicity, antagonist portrayal, and mortality salience to predict response time for attitude toward the antagonist. The omnibus ANOVA test of the model was not significant, $F(7, 135)$ = 1.755, p = .101. However, portrayal type exhibited a main effect on response times. The mean response time was significantly shorter for non-sympathetic portrayals (M = -2870.33, SE = 455.49) than the mean for sympathetic portrayals (M = -1537.14, SE = 475.50), $F(1, 135)$ = 4.099, p = .045.

A final test examined how participant gender would predict transportation, attitude toward the antagonist, attitude toward the video, and response time for attitude toward the antagonist. There was no significant difference in transportation levels between males (M = 3.93, SE = .12) and females (M = 3.68, SE = .09), $F(1, 138)$ = 1.301, p = .276. In terms of attitude toward the antagonist, the result approached significance; males (M = 2.60, SE = .14) viewed antagonists more favorably than females (M = 2.43, SE = .10), $F(1, 140)$ = 2.743, p = .068. The ANOVA for attitude toward the video generated a significant gender difference; males (M = 4.50, SE = .11) favored the video clips significantly more so than females (M = 4.08, SE = .08), $F(1, 140)$ = 4.847, p = .009. Lastly, the difference in response times for attitude toward the antagonist was examined between males and females. The relationship between the two means was not significant; males (M = -2368.30, SE = 554.60) did not take significantly longer times respond to the attitude toward the antagonist scale than females (M = -2147.20, SE = 415.20), $F(1, 140)$ = .072, p = .931.

Additional Research Questions

After finding these results, the researcher wanted to investigate, post hoc, the relationships between the independent variables and two other dependent variables: stereotype endorsement and identification with the character. The following research questions were thus posed:

RQ6: How will antagonist ethnicity, antagonist portrayal, and mortality salience interact

to predict stereotype endorsement?

RQ7: How will participant gender predict stereotype endorsement?

RQ8: How will antagonist ethnicity, antagonist portrayal, and mortality salience interact to predict the level of identification with the character?

RQ9: How will participant gender predict the level of identification with the character? The results from these four additional research questions are examined below.

The omnibus ANOVA concerning the effects of antagonist ethnicity, antagonist portrayal, and mortality salience on stereotype endorsement did not produce a significant difference, $F(7, 135) = 1.170$, $p = .324$. When looking at the individual factors, there was one significant result; those who were exposed to the mortality salience control condition ($M = 4.69$, $SE = .11$) rated Arabs and African Americans more favorably than those in the mortality salience condition ($M = 4.37$, $SE = .12$), $F(1, 135) = 3.97$, $p = .048$.

Research question seven asked how participant gender would predict stereotype endorsement. A participant who responded with "Prefer not to answer" ($N = 1$) was excluded from the test. Males ($M = 4.54$, $SE = .13$) did not rate Arabs and African-Americans significantly more favorably than females ($M = 4.49$, $SE = .10$), $F(1, 140) = .126$, $p = .724$. Participant gender did not serve as an indicator of stereotype endorsement.

The omnibus ANOVA concerning the effects of antagonist ethnicity, antagonist portrayal, and mortality salience on identification with the character was significant, $F(7, 135) = 8.735$, $p < .001$. Upon examining the individual tests, both antagonist ethnicity and antagonist portrayal exhibited main effects. Participants who viewed clips with white antagonists ($M = 3.05$, $SE = .12$) significantly identified more with the character than with Non-white antagonists ($M = 2.53$, $SE = .11$), $F(1, 135) = 10.326$, $p = .002$. In addition, participants who viewed clips with sympathetic portrayals of antagonists ($M = 3.38$, $SE = .12$) significantly identified with the character than with the non-sympathetic portrayals of antagonists ($M = 2.21$, $SE = .11$), $F(1, 135) = 52.099$, $p < .001$.

The ninth and final research question inquired how participant gender would predict the level of identification with the character. Males ($M = 3.00$, $SE = .15$) identified more with the character in the clip they viewed in comparison with females ($M = 2.63$, $SE = .12$), but the result only approached significance, $F(1, 140) = 2.624$, $p = .076$.

Consistency Checks of Video Quality

It is important to know if participants viewed the video quality for each clip as consistent. Any significant differences in the consistency could help explain why significant results were minimal. The omnibus ANOVA indicated significant differences between clips, $F(1, 135) = 5.261$, $p < .001$. When investigating the individual differences between clips, there were twelve significant differences total. The video quality was perceived significantly higher for clip five, which operationalized a sympathetically portrayed, non-white antagonist ($M = 6.01$, $SE = .28$), than for clip seven, which operationalized a non-sympathetically portrayed, non-white antagonist ($M = 3.92$, $SE = .30$), $F(1, 135) = 5.261$, $p < .001$. Clip five ($M = 6.01$, $SE = .28$) was perceived to have higher video quality than clip four, which operationalized a non-sympathetically portrayed, white antagonist ($M = 4.39$, $SE = .28$), $F(1, 135) = 5.261$, $p < .001$. Again, clip five ($M = 6.01$, $SE = .28$) was perceived to have better video quality than clip two, which operationalized a sympathetically portrayed, white antagonist ($M = 4.47$, $SE = .32$), $F(1, 135) = 5.261$, $p < .001$. In addition, clip five ($M = 6.01$, $SE = .28$) was perceived to have better video quality than clip eight, which operationalized a non-sympathetically portrayed, non-white antagonist ($M = 4.51$, $SE = .27$), $F(1, 135) = 5.261$, $p < .001$. Clip five ($M = 6.01$, $SE = .28$) was perceived to be of better video quality than clip one, which operationalized a sympathetically portrayed, white antagonist ($M = 4.83$, $SE = .31$), $F(1, 135) = 5.261$, $p = .006$. Moreover, the video qualities of clip five ($M = 6.01$, $SE = .28$) and clip six, which operationalized a sympathetically portrayed, non-white antagonist ($M = 5.12$, $SE = .26$), were perceived to be significantly different, $F(1, 135) = 5.261$, $p = .022$. Therefore, clip five was perceived to have better video quality than all clips but clip three, which operationalized a non-sympathetically, white antagonist.

Clip three ($M = 5.34$, $SE = .27$) was perceived to have better video quality than clip seven ($M = 3.92$, $SE = .30$), $F(1, 135) = 5.261$, $p < .001$. Also, clip three ($M = 5.34$, $SE = .27$) and clip four ($M = 4.39$, $SE = .28$) were perceived to be significantly different in video quality, $F(1, 135) = 5.261$, $p = .017$. Clip three ($M = 5.34$, $SE = .27$) and clip two ($M = 4.47$, $SE = .32$) were perceived to be significantly different in terms of video quality as well, $F(1, 135) = 5.261$, $p = .042$. Moreover, clip three ($M = 5.34$, $SE = .27$) and clip eight ($M = 4.51$, $SE = .27$) were perceived to be significantly different in video quality, $F(1, 135) = 5.261$, $p = .032$.

Clip six ($M = 5.12$, $SE = .26$) was perceived to be of better video quality than clip seven

(M = 3.92, SE = .30), $F(1, 135)$ = 5.261, p = .003. Clip one (M = 4.83, SE = .31) and clip seven (M = 3.92, SE = .30) were perceived to be significantly different in video quality, $F(1, 135)$ = 5.261, p = .038.

Appendix C contains a table with the results concerning perceived video quality. Differences in the perceived video quality of the clips may have altered the results tested. More on this topic appears in the discussion section.

Again, several significant differences were found within the data. White antagonists were found more favorable than non-white antagonists, while sympathetic portrayals of antagonists were preferred in comparison with non-sympathetic portrayals of antagonists. In addition, non-sympathetic portrayals of white antagonists produced higher levels of transportation than sympathetic portrayals of white antagonists. Sympathetic portrayals of non-white antagonists generated greater transportation levels than sympathetic portrayals of white antagonists as well. In terms of participant gender, males rated antagonists more favorably than females. Participants who were in the mortality salience control condition rated both Arabs and African Americans more favorably than those in the mortality salience manipulation, and males were less likely to engage in stereotyping Arabs and African Americans than females. Furthermore, participants identified more so with white antagonists and sympathetic portrayals of antagonists. Lastly, males identified with the antagonists more than females.

Discussion

Though the results found from the research questions and hypotheses were not overly abundant, what was found certainly contributes to narrative persuasion, mortality salience, and stereotyping effects.

Summary of Narrative Persuasion Findings

No significant difference in transportation levels between participants who watched films with white antagonists and films with non-white antagonists was found. It was predicted that a difference would be found in transportation levels of participants who viewed sympathetic portrayals of antagonists versus non-sympathetic portrayals versus antagonists. However, no significant main effect was found.

For participants' levels of transportation, the omnibus ANOVA did not produce significant results, but two significant differences in two-way interactions were found. Non-sympathetic portrayals of white antagonists produced higher levels of transportation than sympathetic portrayals of white antagonists. It is likely that participants were more transported by material that is consistent with prevalent stereotypes, which would be non-sympathetic portrayals of antagonists. In this case, the ethnicity remained unchanged across both levels of the factor. In addition, sympathetic portrayals of non-white antagonists produced higher levels of transportation than sympathetic portrayals of white antagonists. The portrayal type remains the same across the factor, but participants were likely transported more by the non-white antagonists because the dominant terrorist stereotype is non-white.

Summary of Mortality Salience Findings

Participants in the mortality salience control manipulation rated Arabs and African Americans more favorably than those who were in the mortality salience manipulation. Mortality salience was induced before the clips were shown, so it is believed that the mortality salience helped participants to reinforce their own stereotypes, which is why stereotype endorsement was significantly lower for participants in the control condition for mortality salience. In the same vein as research question six, research question seven examined how gender would predict stereotype endorsement; males engaged in less stereotyping of both Arabs and African Americans than females.

Summary of Stereotyping Findings

It was hypothesized that participants who viewed film clips with white antagonists would

hold more favorable attitudes toward the antagonists than those participants who viewed film clips with non-white antagonists. The main effect approached significance but did not reach the *p* < .05 level. Even so, the level of significance is important to note because white antagonists were favored more so than non-white antagonists. This result could have been produced by participants identifying with the antagonists based on skin color. Additional results concerning identification with the character are discussed further in a later portion of this section. Although participants rated white antagonists more favorably than non-white antagonists, the antagonists' ethnicity did not influence participants' attitudes toward the video clip. Participants were likely separating their views of antagonists and the views of the movie as a whole. All films used were from the same action genre, which may have not created any strong attitudes toward the video. The small percentage of participants who had seen the film clips before could have had an impact on the attitude toward the antagonist and attitude toward the video measures because they could have been relying on their own memories to complete the measures.

As one might expect, participants liked antagonists portrayed sympathetically more than they liked antagonists portrayed non-sympathetically. Portrayal type, whether sympathetic or non-sympathetic, was not an indicator of participants' attitude toward the video. It appeared that participants were making separate evaluations of the video and the antagonist. It was predicted that antagonist ethnicity and antagonist portrayal would interact in their effect on the response time for the attitude toward the antagonist measure. Unfortunately, the result was nonsignificant. No specific direction was predicted over another.

For participants' attitudes toward the antagonist, the omnibus ANOVA generated a significant difference. With regard to main effects, participants favored white antagonists over non-white antagonists, and they also favored sympathetic portrayals over non-sympathetic portrayals. More than likely, participants rated white antagonists higher because of identification with the antagonist's ethnicity, considering 84.6 percent of participants were white. Sympathetic portrayals of terrorists may have been favored more because participants could have felt empathy toward a terrorist, a contradiction to stereotyping research.

For participants' attitudes toward the video and response times for attitude toward the antagonist, multiple significant results were not produced. However, one main effect was found: the response time for attitude toward the antagonist was shorter for non-sympathetic portrayals than for sympathetic portrayals. This coincides with previous research. It is expected that non-

sympathetic portrayals are what participants are used to viewing, which means the response time will be very short because the portrayal does not conflict with prevalent stereotypes.

Gender appeared to predict attitude toward the antagonist and attitude toward the video. With regard to gender, males viewed antagonists more favorably than females. This finding may have resulted from males liking action films more so than females, which means they would like the antagonists more as well. Additionally, this finding was not surprising considering all of the antagonists portrayed in the clips used were male; male participants likely identified with these terrorists, at least in terms of gender. The identification with such characters may have led to higher ratings of the antagonists, which will be discussed later in more detail.

With regard to identification with the character, participants significantly identified more so with white antagonists than non-white antagonists, a likely result of the participant demographics in the main study. Similar to a previous finding, in which participants identified more closely with white antagonists, participants identified more closely with antagonists who were portrayed sympathetically than antagonist portrayed non-sympathetically. It is probable that participants empathize more with antagonists who are sympathetically portrayed, and this leads to identification with the character. Although the relationship between gender and identification with the character only approached significance, males again identified more with the antagonists than did females. This finding was not surprising since all antagonists in the clips utilized were male characters.

Theoretical Implications

In general, it can be noted that participants' stereotypes of antagonists in action films would likely include non-sympathetic portrayals of non-white terrorists. According to Green (2004), participants who were exposed to clips containing portrayals consistent with their pre-formed stereotypes would cause the participants to be more transported. In contrast with the literature, it was hypothesized that participants would be more transported by white antagonists than by non-white antagonists, but no differences were found. This finding suggests higher transportation levels may not be solely induced by one facet of a stereotype: antagonist ethnicity. In conjunction with the literature, it was hypothesized that non-sympathetic portrayals would elicit higher levels of transportation, but again, this one aspect of a stereotype—antagonist portrayal type—was not enough to cause a significant difference in transportation levels.

When only antagonist ethnicity was considered or only antagonist portrayal was

considered, stereotypic-consistent portrayals and non-stereotypic-consistent portrayals did not exert a main effect on transportation. However, two interactions between antagonist ethnicity and antagonist portrayal suggested that both non-sympathetic portrayals of white antagonists and sympathetic portrayals of non-white antagonists generated higher transportation levels than sympathetic portrayals of white antagonists. Because sympathetic portrayals and white terrorists are contradictory to people's likely stereotypes, these results appear to validate what narrative persuasion research has identified. People have been more transported into narratives containing sympathetic portrayals of characters (Rouner, Long, & Slater, 2006). This finding adds to the present research by suggesting that action films require both antagonist ethnicity and antagonist portrayal to be considered when examining transportation levels. One of these two variables appears to not be able to act alone on a person's level of transportation. If action films attempt to reduce stereotypes of minorities, such as Arabs, by including certain portrayals of terrorists, sympathetic portrayals of those minorities could possibly work best.

One result appeared in relation to previous research on mortality salience. Those who were exposed to the mortality salience control condition stereotyped Arabs and African Americans less than those in the mortality salience treatment. According to terror management theory, people reinforce their world beliefs when their mortality is made salient (Solomon, Greenberg, & Pyszczynski, 2004). Furthermore, prejudices against those outside of a person's in-group are strengthened when mortality is made salient (Greenberg, Pyszczynski, Solomon, Simon, & Breus, 1994). From research concerning terror management theory, it was expected that participants in the mortality salience condition would stereotype more than those in the control condition, which the results in this study suggest. The finding aligns with the previous research. Non-stereotypic portrayals of antagonists failed to diminish the effects of mortality salience; participants still stereotyped portrayals that were likely intended to mitigate stereotypes. This is a serious consideration for filmmakers of violent action movies who wish to reduce stereotypes by using non-stereotypic portrayals of terrorists. It is predicted that violent imagery and audio may raise levels of mortality salience. With these raised levels, people may ignore non-stereotypic portrayals and cling to their previously formed stereotypes.

In accordance with the stereotyping literature, participants evaluated white antagonists more positively than non-white antagonists. Sadly, this study suggests confirmation of common stereotypes of Arabs and other non-whites, since those portrayals were liked significantly less

than white portrayals. Furthermore, males evaluated antagonists more favorably than females. No significant difference occurred for attitude toward the video between white and non-white antagonists, but that does not mean that a difference was not present. Limitations of this study, such as a small sample size, may have diminished effects to levels of non-significance. By accounting for variance within certain variables, it is possible that a difference could have been found. In addition, participants would possibly not invoke stereotypes when indicating their attitudes toward the video, a separate entity than the characters contained within the video's narrative. This finding helps explain that a broad measure of attitude toward the video may not account for the narrower findings related to attitude toward the antagonist. Males rated the videos more favorably than females, which may indicate that males, in general, like action films more so than females.

Sympathetic portrayals of terrorists were more favored by participants than non-sympathetic portrayals; sympathetic portrayals likely counteracted participants' prevalent stereotypes towards non-whites. Moreover, response time for attitude toward the antagonist was shorter for non-sympathetic portrayals than for sympathetic portrayals, which aligns with previous stereotyping research. Non-sympathetic portrayals coincide with participants' stereotypes; therefore, response times were significantly shorter because participants likely did not have to react to a clip containing a terrorist portrayal that perhaps contradicts their own biases.

With regard to how gender predicted stereotype endorsement, males engaged in less stereotyping of both Arabs and African Americans than females. The more transported a person is into a narrative, the more they cling to real-world biases and stereotypes (Green & Brock, 2005). If females had been more transported by the narratives than males, then that could possibly have explained why females engaged in more stereotyping than males. However, the results did not concur with previous research, since there was no difference between the transportation levels of males and females. According to research, people utilize stereotypes to make sense of others from a particular ethnic group when not much is known about them (Amodio & Devine, 2005). It is possible that females may have felt even more disassociated from the antagonists they had recently viewed on screen because they could not identify with the antagonists in terms of gender. Because females might have felt they knew less about the antagonists than males, females perhaps invoked stereotypic thoughts concerning both Arabs and

African Americans. Even so, the exact reason(s) why females engaged in stereotyping of Arabs and African Americans more so than males is unknown. Future research should examine why this relationship occurs.

Participants identified with white antagonists more so than non-white antagonists. Considering white participants comprised most of those who completed the study, the differences in identification with characters was not surprising. Additionally, participants identified more with sympathetic portrayals of antagonists than non-sympathetic portrayals of antagonists. Theoretically, participants likely empathized with sympathetic portrayals of antagonists and perhaps saw more human qualities in the sympathetically portrayed antagonists. With regard to gender, males appeared to identify more with antagonists than females, likely because all antagonists portrayed in the film clips chosen were male. Males may have been able to stereotype antagonists less because identifying with a character could have increased their liking of the same character.

The consistency check of video quality was quite varied between clips utilized in the study. Participant perceptions of film quality could have affected the results found. For future analysis of this study's variables, the consistency check of video quality should be examined as a covariate.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

Several items in the research process could have limited the study and the results. For the pilot study, data were collected with pen and paper; usage of computers and time-response keyboards in the main study was limited by the number available, and some of the newer computers failed to perform adequately. The main study included a smaller number of participants because issues with memory on the laptops allowed for fewer participants in each session than originally desired. The original intention was to run sessions with eight participants, but sessions became limited to six participants. Also, sessions in the pilot study included up to 20 participants, which allowed the data to be collected more efficiently than the data for the main study.

Due to time constraints, the clips chosen could only be approximately 15 minutes long. Even though participants viewed clips that started and ended cleanly—at the end of a scene before a cut—participants may not have been engaged long enough for the effects to be present. Variances in film clip content may have limited the effects found, including video quality,

character interactions, dialogue, and other narrative elements. These variances may have caused confounds with the data. Furthermore, additional measures in the main study could have altered the results in some way, but the results in the main study should still have been more representative or similar to the results in the pilot study.

If this study were to be conducted again with at least twice the amount of participants in the main study, more results would likely appear, and results found would likely be strengthened. Two film clips were chosen for each condition to reduce the possibility that difference in the results could be attributed to specific attributes of each clip beyond terrorist portrayal type and terrorist ethnicity. Idiosyncrasies in the video clips could have generated a lower number of results, although the same film clips were used in both the pilot study and the main study. The distributions of the dependent variables may also indicate issues within the data itself. One can normally expect a near bell-shaped curve for the responses of all participants within each scale, and this is the requirement for ANOVA tests to be run accurately. However, a few of the scales' distributions in this study were skewed either right or left. All of these factors could have contributed to the findings.

In four of the eight clips used in this study, sympathetic portrayals of the antagonists were present. Again, only 14 percent of the participants had viewed the clips they were shown before their participation in the study. It is possible that repeated exposure to the sympathetic portrayals could influence participant attitudes toward the video clips and the antagonists. Additionally, more differences might have been found if a higher percentage of participants had formed their evaluation solely on the clip he or she had viewed, without relying on memories of previous viewings. For most participants, however, this was the first exposure to the films. Furthermore, screenwriters may have intentionally chosen sympathetic portrayals of antagonists for certain films to help weaken the public's negative stereotypes of a certain ethnic group—Arabs in particular, and specifically after September 11. If the goal was to create more empathy or sympathy for the characters, forcing people to view sympathetic portrayals may have caused the opposite effect. Trying to break stereotypes by using sympathetic portrayals may not be enough.

The present study can serve as the basis for further research. Several relationships could be further examined by controlling for individual differences. By controlling for certain variables, more significant differences would likely be found other than those examined in this paper. As mentioned briefly in previous sections, the number of participants for the main study

was very low. There may have been insufficient power to examine three-way interactions between variables. Future studies should include at least 30 participants per cell to generate enough power for executing ANOVAs including three-way interactions. Additionally, more participants would likely strengthen the results found in the main study and allow for more results to be generated, such as what occurred with the pilot study. Additional studies would benefit from a wider variety of participants in terms of demographics. Different age groups and incorporation of varied participant ethnicities could change the results, particularly in regards to attitude toward the antagonist, attitude toward the video, identification with the character, and stereotyping. Due to the nature of the Communication Department pool of students, this study was limited to participants ranging from ages 18 to 23.

It would be important to examine other action film clips by using the same independent and dependent variables. For future studies, it would be important to include film clips with terrorists who are not Middle-Eastern or European. There are several other options for antagonist ethnicity that could be explored and utilized, including Hispanic/Latino portrayals and Asian portrayals. Moreover, it would be valuable to examine film clips that are subtitled completely versus those that are not subtitled or include just a few subtitles. It is expected that participants would not identify with characters as much if subtitles were present in a film clip they viewed.

Another intriguing expansion of this study could examine the same antagonist portrayals and antagonist ethnicities in video games. The same independent and dependent variables could be utilized, and participants would be able to play the video games for 15 minutes. It is predicted that, due to physical involvement, players would experience higher levels of transportation. Lastly, it would be very worthwhile to add other scales or measures, particularly those involving stereotyping, stereotype endorsement, and identification with the character because they may help show other patterns not found in this study.

Conclusion

The main goal of the experiment was to examine stereotypic thoughts invoked by participants' exposure to narratives, based on each narrative's antagonist ethnicity, antagonist portrayal, and mortality salience. Several of the results confirmed and expanded what narrative persuasion, terror management theory, and stereotyping theories have all ready revealed. This study has shown that people do, unfortunately, stereotype terrorists as people who are non-white and cannot be sympathized with. However, there is some hope, because participants did like sympathetic portrayals of terrorists more so than non-sympathetic portrayals.

If the goal of filmmakers is to incorporate a wider variety of terrorist portrayals into well-known films, the tide may be changing in that direction. However, people's stereotypes do not ensure that sympathetic portrayals of terrorists will be received particularly well. Perhaps if people are exposed to more variations in terrorist ethnicity and more sympathetic portrayals, then stereotyping of such individuals, and the attachment of stereotypes to Arabs in general, might be lessened. This study adds to what we know about how people stereotype fictional characters, but the results are certainly applicable to real-world stereotyping issues.

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Appendix A: Film Clips Used

1. *The Devil's Own* (1997), 00:05:43 – 00:20:30

   Rated: *R*

2. *The Devil's Own* (1997), 01:07:15 – 01:21:16

   Rated: *R*

3. *Air Force One* (1997), 00:47:18 – 01:01:43

   Rated: *R*

4. *Die Hard* (1988), 00:17:45 – 00:32:32

   Rated: *R*

5. *Traitor* (2008), 00:26:01 – 00:40:47

   Rated: *PG-13*

6. *Traitor* (2008), 01:22:40 – 01:36:58

   Rated: *PG-13*

7. *Executive Decision* (1996), 01:09:41 – 01:24:38

   Rated: *R*

8. *True Lies* (1994), 01:28:04 – 01:42:55

   Rated: *R*

Appendix B: Study Measures

Measure 1. Need for Entertainment Scale

For each of the statements below, please indicate whether or not the statement is characteristic of you or of what you believe. Use the following scale to record your answer:

1 = not at all like you; 5 = extremely like you

1. Entertainment is the most enjoyable part of life.
2. I tend not to seek out new ways to be entertained.
3. I spend a lot of money on entertainment expenses.
4. I do not spend much time during the week on entertaining activities.
5. It is a waste of tax money to fund entertainment programs.
6. I enjoy being entertained more than my friends do.
7. I need some entertainment time each and every day.
8. My idea of entertainment is a situation where everything is done for me.
9. I prefer to be entertained in ways that don't require any effort on my part.
10. Entertainment is an unnecessary luxury.
11. I feel like my time spent on entertainment purposes is generally wasted.
12. If I don't have enough fun in the evening, I find it hard to function properly the next day.
13. I think life should be spent being entertained.
14. I spend most of my free time seeking out entertainment.
15. Very little of my money is spent on entertainment.
16. I am always on the lookout for new forms of entertainment.
17. I like to take an active role in my entertainment activities.
18. Entertainment is something you do when you're too lazy to do anything else.
19. I could be described as an "entertainment-oholic."

Measure 2. Mortality Salience and Control Manipulations

The following are two open-ended questions, please respond to them with your first, natural response. We are looking for peoples' gut-level reactions to these questions.

<u>The Projective Life Attitudes Assessment</u>

This assessment is a recently developed, innovative personality assessment. Recent research suggests that feelings and attitudes about significant aspects of life tell us a considerable amount about the individual's personality. Your honest responses to the following questions will be appreciated.

1. Please briefly describe the *emotions* that the thought of your own death [dental pain] arouses in you.

2. Jot down, as specifically as you can, what you think will happen to you as you *physically* die and once you are *physically* dead [as you experience dental pain].

Measure 3. Communication Technology Use

1. When discussing a sensitive subject, I feel less stress doing so through instant messaging than I would feel discussing the same subject face-to-face.

2. It is easier for me to carry on a smooth flowing conversation when using instant messaging than in a face-to-face conversation.

3. I worry less about saying something dumb during an instant messaging conversation than I do during a face-to-face conversation.

4. I feel more comfortable expressing my opinion during a face-to-face conversation than I would feel doing so through instant messaging.

5. I feel I communicate more effectively during an instant messenger conversation than during a face-to-face conversation.

6. To communicate, it is easier to use instant messaging than text messaging.

7. Instant messaging is a great way to get to know someone.

8. Instant messaging is a more affordable way to keep in touch with long-distance relationships.

9. Using instant messaging can damage a relationship because words can be taken out of context.

10. I use instant messaging to keep in touch with friends I do not see regularly.

11. I use instant messaging to keep from getting bored in class.

12. I use instant messaging because I would rather talk to people online than on the phone or in person.

13. I have a hard time getting in touch with people through instant messaging.

14. I use instant messaging to others can get in touch with me.

Measure 4. Thought Listing

We are interested in everything that went through your mind as you viewed the film clip. For approximately three minutes, please list these thoughts (positive thoughts, negative thoughts, and neutral thoughts) regarding the video you viewed. You may use single words or full sentences. Ignore spelling, grammar and punctuation.

We have deliberately included more space than we think people will need to ensure that everyone would have plenty of room.

Please be completely honest. Your responses will be confidential.

The next page contains the form we have prepared for you to record your thoughts and ideas. Simply write down the first thought you had in the first box, the second thought in the second box, etc.

Please put only one idea or thought in a box.

1.	2.
3.	4.
5.	6.
7.	8.
9.	10.
11.	12.
13.	14.
15.	16.
17.	18.
19.	20.

Measure 5. Attitude toward the Antagonist

For the items below, please indicate your perceptions and feelings toward the villain:

Good	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Bad
Free	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Trapped
Pleasant	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Unpleasant
Dissatisfactory	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Satisfactory
Smart	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Foolish
Favorable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Unfavorable
Likeable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Dislikable
Dominant	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Submissive
Unattractive	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Attractive
Superior	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Inferior
Dependent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Independent

After the pilot study was conducted, items 2 (Free/Trapped), 8 (Dominant/Submissive), 10 (Superior/Inferior), and 11 (Dependent/Independent) were eliminated from the calculations. This raised the scale's item reliability.

Measure 6. Identification with the Character Scale

For the following, please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the statement, where 1 = *strongly disagree* and 7 = *strongly agree*.

1. I empathized with character X

2. I could relate to character X

3. In many ways, I am like character X.

4. I could identify with character X.

5. I think I have a good understanding of character X.

6. I tend to understand the reasons why character X does what he or she does.

7. While viewing the show I could feel the emotions character X portrayed.

8. During viewing, I felt I could really get inside character X's head.

9. At key moments in the show, I felt I knew exactly what character X was going through.

10. While viewing the program, I wanted character X to succeed in achieving his or her goals.

11. When character X succeeded I felt joy, but when he or she failed, I was sad.

Measure 7. Attitude Toward the Video Scale

Please express your general evaluation of the video you viewed by indicating the extent to which you agree with the following statements, where *1 = not at all* and *7 = very much*.

In general, this video was:

1. interesting

2. inspiring

3. boring

4. entertaining

5. beneficial

6. high quality

7. creative

8. compelling

9. persuasive

10. detrimental

11. safe

12. happy

13. engaging

14. likeable

15. sophisticated

16. harmful

17. believable

18. useful

19. positive

20. sad

Pilot study: How familiar have you been with this particular film clip?   *1 = not all* and *7 = very much*.

Main Study: Had you seen this film clip before today?   Yes   No

Measure 8. Transportation Scale

Please answer the following questions about the film, where *1 = strongly disagree* and *7 = strongly agree*.

1. While I was watching the film, I could easily see myself there with the characters.
2. While I watching the film, activity going on in the room around me was on my mind.
3. I could picture myself in the scene of events occurring in the film.
4. I was mentally involved in the film while viewing it.
5. After seeing the film clip, I found it easy to put out of my mind.
6. I wanted to learn how the film ended.
7. The film affected me emotionally.
8. I found myself thinking of ways the film could have turned out differently.
9. I found my mind wandering while watching the film.
10. The events in the film are relevant to my everyday life.
11. The events in the film have changed my life.

Measure 9. Stereotype Endorsement Scales

Please indicate your perception of Arabs on the following scale, where *1 =not at all* and *7 = very much*.

1. family centered
2. devoted
3. helpful
4. inventive
5. warm
6. aggressive
7. restless
8. threatening
9. insolent
10. violent
11. kind
12. courageous
13. nice
14. intelligent
15. likeable
16. lazy
17. ignorant
18. dishonest
19. unpleasant
20. thief

Please indicate your perception of African-Americans on the following scale, where *1 =not at all* and *7 = very much*.

1. family centered
2. devoted
3. helpful
4. inventive
5. warm
6. aggressive
7. restless
8. threatening
9. insolent
10. violent
11. kind
12. courageous
13. nice
14. intelligent
15. likeable
16. lazy
17. ignorant
18. dishonest
19. unpleasant
20. thief

Measure 10. Word Completion Task

Please complete the following by filling letters in the blanks to create words. Please fill in the blanks with the first word that comes to mind. Write one letter per blank. Some words may be plural. Thank you.

1. BUR _ _ D

2. PLA _ _

3. _ _ OK

4. WAT _ _

5. DE _ _

6. MU _ _

7. _ _ NG

8. B _ T _ LE

9. M _ J _ R

10. P _ _ TURE

11. FL _ W _ R

12. GRA _ _

13. K _ _ GS

14. CHA _ _

15. KI _ _ ED

16. CL _ _ K

17. TAB _ _

18. W _ _ DOW

19. SK _ _ L

20. TR _ _

21. P _ P _ R

22. COFF _ _

23. _ O _ SE

24. POST _ _

25. R _ DI _

Measure 11. Positive and Negative Affect Scale

This scale consists of a number of words that describe different feelings and emotions. Read each one and then mark the appropriate answer. Indicate to what extent you feel this way right now, that is, at the present moment. Use the following scale to record your answer:

1 = very slightly or not at all; 7 = extremely

1. interested
2. distressed
3. excited
4. upset
5. strong
6. guilty
7. scared
8. hostile
9. enthusiastic
10. proud
11. irritable
12. alert
13. ashamed
14. inspired
15. nervous
16. determined
17. attentive
18. jittery
19. active
20. afraid

Measure 12. Demographics

This section asks for basic information about you, the participant.

1. What is your age? _____

2. What is your gender? Male   Female   Other   Prefer Not to Answer

3. What is your major? _____

4. What is your ethnicity?   white   Black   Middle Eastern/Arabic

    Indian Subcontinent   Asian   Hispanic/Latino   Pacific Islander   Other

Measure 13. Portrayal of the Antagonist

How is the villain portrayed in the clip you just viewed?

     Sympathetic   Non-sympathetic

Measure 14. Ethnicity of the Antagonist

What is the ethnicity of the villain(s) in the clip you just viewed?

    White   Non-white   Other/Not sure

Measure 15. Consistency Checks of Video Quality

Please rate the movie you viewed on the following characteristics, where *1 = not at all* and *7 = very much*.

1. Had high-quality screenplay
2. Had high-quality editing
3. Had high-quality graphics
4. Had high-quality sound
5. Had high-quality effects
6. Was technologically advanced
7. Was technologically sophisticated

Appendix C: Tables and Graphs

Table 1. Operationalization of Video Clips Table

Clip Number	Film Name	Antagonist Ethnicity	Antagonist Portrayal
1	*The Devil's Own*	White	Sympathetic
2	*The Devil's Own*	White	Sympathetic
3	*Air Force One*	White	Non-sympathetic
4	*Die Hard*	White	Non-sympathetic
5	*Traitor*	Non-white	Sympathetic
6	*Traitor*	Non-white	Sympathetic
7	*Executive Decision*	Non-white	Non-sympathetic
8	*True Lies*	Non-white	Non-sympathetic

Table 2. Scale Reliabilities Table

Scale Name	Cronbach's α
Need for entertainment	.83
Attitude toward the antagonist, Clip 1	.78
Attitude toward the antagonist, Clip 2	.62
Attitude toward the antagonist, Clip 3	.68
Attitude toward the antagonist, Clip 4	.90
Attitude toward the antagonist, Clip 5	.24
Attitude toward the antagonist, Clip 6	.90
Attitude toward the antagonist, Clip 7	.81
Attitude toward the antagonist, Clip 8	.78
Identification with the character, Clip 1	.81
Identification with the character, Clip 2	.85
Identification with the character, Clip 3	.87
Identification with the character, Clip 4	.84
Identification with the character, Clip 5	.83
Identification with the Character, Clip 6	.90
Identification with the Character, Clip 7	.57
Identification with the Character, Clip 8	.74
Attitude toward the video	.87
Transportation	.76
Stereotype endorsement, "Arabs"	.93
Stereotype endorsement, "African Americans"	.94
PANAS, Positive affect	.87
PANAS, Negative affect	.88
Consistency check of video quality	.94

Table 3. Scale Distributions Table

Scale Name	μ	σ
Need for entertainment	3.25	.49
Attitude toward the antagonist	2.50	1.00
Identification with the character	2.76	1.11
Attitude toward the video	4.23	.80
Transportation	3.77	.88
Stereotype endorsement, "Arabs"	4.25	.98
Stereotype endorsement, "African Americans"	4.71	.89
PANAS, Positive affect	4.10	1.12
PANAS, Negative affect	2.63	1.09
Consistency check of video quality	4.86	1.33

Table 4. Significant Differences in Consistency Checks of Video Quality

ANOVA omnibus of clip number predicting perceived video quality:

$F(7, 135) = 5.261, p < .001$

Clip				Mean
5	A			6.01
3	A	B		5.34
6		B	C	5.12
1		B	C	4.83
8			C D	4.51
2			C D	4.47
4			C D	4.39
7			D	3.92

Means that do not share a letter differ significantly.

Graph 1. Antagonist Portrayal and Ethnicity Interact to Predict Transportation
Non-sympathetic portrayals (signified by red line) of white antagonists (signified by "0" on x-axis) produced higher levels of transportation than sympathetic portrayals (signified by blue line) of white antagonists.
Sympathetic portrayals of non-white antagonists (signified by "1" on x-axis) generated greater transportation levels than sympathetic portrayals of white antagonists.