

Research Article

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING? Revisionists and Traditionalists Choose an Introductory English Syllabus

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Abstract—*One perspective on social conflict asserts that attitudes and behavior are relatively independent, thus suggesting that opposing partisans may differ minimally in concrete actions, but may assume great differences in attitude and ideology. Alternatively, we proposed that partisans' concrete preferences are linked to ideology, and that partisans would exaggerate the ideological extremity of their opposition. These hypotheses were tested within the "Western Canon debate" by asking revisionist and traditionalist partisans (English faculty) to select from a list of 50 books a syllabus of 15 books they would teach in an introductory course and 15 books that they believed their ideological counterparts would choose. Consistent with the hypotheses, traditionalists selected books of more traditionalist ideology than did revisionists (who chose more books by female and minority authors) and exaggerated the extremity of revisionists' preferences. Revisionists made less ideological book selections and judged traditionalists more accurately. This asymmetry may reflect the standing of the two groups relative to the status quo.*

The "Western Canon debate," a fractious dispute over the choice of books in introductory civilization and literature courses, has divided faculty and students alike on campuses such as Stanford, Michigan, Howard, Wisconsin, and Berkeley (e.g., Bloom, 1987; D'Souza, 1991; Hunter, 1991). Traditionally, the canon has included books by authors such as Homer, Melville, and Shakespeare, who helped define the principles and methods of Western civilization. One group of academics, *traditionalists*, advocates preserving the prominence of the traditional canon in the curriculum. *Revisionists*, in contrast, advocate teaching more works by female and minority authors, claiming that such contributions are underrepresented in the traditional canon.

Although revisionists and traditionalists differ in their attitudes toward literature, pedagogy, and educational policy (see Keltner & Robinson, 1995), our focus here is on their actual behavior, the books they choose to teach. Most studies of ideological disputes, including research on liberals and conservatives (Converse, 1964), orthodox and progressive ideologues (Hunter, 1991), pro- and antiabortion partisans (Robinson, Keltner, Ward, & Ross, 1995), and prodevelopment advocates and environmentalists (Palmer & Smardon, 1989), in contrast, have concentrated on partisans' differing attitudes. Such re-

search has had little to say about the differences, both perceived and real, in partisans' concrete behavior.

To fill this lacuna, we asked three questions about revisionists' and traditionalists' actual book preferences for an introductory English course, as well as their assumptions about their opposition's likely selections. First, are partisans' concrete preferences guided by their ideologies? Second, do the two groups actually differ in their concrete behavior? Finally, do they recognize the potential differences in their concrete behavior?

THE TWO-LEVEL VIEW OF SOCIAL CONFLICT

Most conflicts involve clashes in attitudes and values or clashes in concrete interests and actions (Pruitt & Rubin, 1986). One prevalent view holds that opposing partisans' attitudes and values are independent from their concrete behavior and interests (Druckman & Zechmeister, 1973; Fisher & Ury, 1981; Ichheiser, 1970). Global attitudes are often weakly related to specific behavior (Rajecki, 1990; Wicker, 1969), which suggests that the concrete preferences opposing partisans pursue may be minimally related to their values and ideologies.

The assumed independence of opposing partisans' concrete behavior and attitudes underlies prevalent claims about social conflict. First, it is asserted that opposing partisans' differences in concrete behaviors are often modest, and more negotiable than differences in attitudes and values. For example, Fisher and Ury (1981) posited that "behind opposed positions lie shared and compatible interests" (p. 43). Based on this rationale, prenegotiation exercises that "delink" values from concrete interests have been advocated (Druckman, Broome, & Korper, 1988).

Second, some researchers claim that opposing partisans themselves fail to differentiate between their attitudes and behavior. Ichheiser (1970) suggested that "a great many most virulent, seemingly moral, disagreements among men are actually not moral but factual in nature" (p. 155). According to this view, opposing partisans underestimate, or even fail to recognize, the differences in their behavior, and instead attribute their conflict to their different attitudes and beliefs.

There is, however, a more complex view of social conflicts suggested in the literature. The first assumption, that behaviors and attitudes are unrelated, is challenged by studies showing that when people have direct personal experience with the object of their attitudes, attitudes consistently predict behavior (Fazio & Zanna, 1981). Thus, we hypothesized that revisionists and traditionalists, with direct personal experience in choosing books for English courses, would choose books that were (a) consistent with their contrasting ideologies and (b) therefore different.

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The second assumption, that opposing partisans do not recognize the differences in their behavior, is countered by studies showing that opposing partisans exaggerate the differences in their concrete preferences and actions (Plous, 1985; Schelling, 1960), morals (Brewer, 1979; White, 1977), and attitudes (Robinson et al., 1995) as part of a stereotypical image of the enemy (Holt & Silverstein, 1989). Opposing partisans polarize their differences because they attribute hostile intentions and ideological bias to their opposition (Bar-Tal & Geva, 1986; Plous, 1985; Robinson et al., 1995). Given these findings, we hypothesized also that revisionists and traditionalists would (c) exaggerate the differences in their book selections and (d) attribute ideological bias to their opposition's book selections.

METHOD

Participants

In the spring of 1992, we distributed questionnaires to English instructors in universities and colleges throughout California.¹ Respondents were asked to label themselves as "revisionist," "traditionalist," or "neutral/undecided" according to brief descriptions summarizing the Western Canon debate.

Selection of Books for an Introductory English Course

We developed a list of 50 books (see Table 1) by selecting from the preliminary examination reading lists of some English departments in California and articles on the Western Canon dispute. Respondents were asked to choose from this list 15 books that they would teach in "an introductory literature course required of all first year undergraduates." Many of these books are considered part of the canon (e.g., those by Dante, Dickens, Melville, Plato), and many are more revisionist (e.g., those by Angelou, Douglass, Marquez, Morrison). Thirteen books were by female authors, and 13 by minority authors, with 6 of these books by female minority authors. (This syllabus-setting task resembles the restructuring of the Western civilization course that triggered debate at Stanford University and other campuses.) Respondents rated the "educational value" of each of their selections (1 = lowest educational value, 10 = highest educational value).

Respondents then chose 15 books that they believed would reflect the "average preferences" of the other side, and rated the educational value of those books. "Average" was defined as the average book preferences of all self-identified traditionalist respondents or of all self-identified revisionist respondents. We used this numerical sense of average to encourage respondents to avoid estimating the preferences of extremist or prototypical partisans.²

1. Private universities included were Stanford, Southern California, Pacific, Santa Clara, and San Francisco. Public schools were 8 branches of the University of California and 14 branches of the California State University.

2. Previous research has found that partisans' judgments do not vary meaningfully according to whether the target is described as an "average" individual, as the "average" of all individuals, or as a prototypi-

Norm Group

To examine whether partisans' preferences were swayed by the ideological content of the books, a norm group ($n = 17$) of English instructors was recruited from the English departments of a private liberal arts college (Mills College) and a large public university (California State University at Sacramento) to assess the ideological orientation and educational value of each of the 50 books. Members of the norm group were apprised of the nature of the study (but not the hypotheses) and then rated each of the 50 books for its educational value (on the 10-point scale used by the partisans) and its "ideological orientation" (1 = very traditionalist, 7 = very revisionist). The norm group's ratings of the ideological orientation and the educational value of the books were not correlated ($p > .10$). Interrater reliability was very high: Alpha coefficients were .949 and .954 for the ideological orientation and educational value of the books, respectively. Table 1 presents the educational value and ideological ratings assigned by the norm group.

RESULTS

One thousand surveys, based on an approximate initial census of the available faculty, were mailed; 688 were actually distributed (the remainder were returned unopened). Two hundred and seventy-one completed questionnaires were returned, a response rate of 39.4%.³ A higher proportion of respondents labeled themselves revisionist (59.8%) than traditionalist (18.6%) or neutral/undecided (21.6%).⁴ A large majority of respondents (86.5%) had taught an introductory literature or composition course in the previous 3 years.

Statistical analyses focused on five issues: (a) the ideological orientation of and (b) the differences in partisans' actual book preferences; partisans' perceptions of (c) the differences in the two groups' book preferences and (d) the ideological orientation of their opposition's likely selections; and (e) an evaluation of the books chosen by each side.

Revisionists' and Traditionalists' Book Selections

Table 2 presents the relative frequency of the 15 most popular revisionist and traditionalist choices, and the norm group's ratings of the educational value and ideological persuasion of these books.

Seven books were common to the lists of revisionists and traditionalists: *Macbeth* (Shakespeare), *The Canterbury Tales* (Chaucer), *Oedipus the King* (Sophocles), *The Iliad* (Homer), *Walden* (Thoreau), *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (Joyce), and *Moby Dick* (Melville). The overlap in the two

cal, typical, or average partisan (Keltner & Robinson, 1993; Robinson et al., 1995).

3. Post hoc follow-up telephone surveys were unable to discern any differences between the respondents and nonrespondents in terms of factors such as department size, gender, ethnicity, tenure, and revisionist-traditionalist status.

4. Responses of the neutral or undecided respondents were analyzed for all procedures described in this article. Their results proved uninteresting (in all cases falling between those of revisionists and traditionalists, and replicating the pattern found in Robinson et al., 1995) and are not discussed further.

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Table 1. The 50 books presented in the book selection exercise

Book	Rating	
	Ideology	Educational value
Achebe: <i>Things Fall Apart</i>	6.78	7.25
Angelou: <i>I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings</i>	5.69	7.23
Baldwin: <i>The Fire Next Time</i>	5.35	6.35
<i>Beowulf</i>	1.00	6.38
The Bible	1.11	7.94
Brent: <i>Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl</i>	6.67	6.50
Brontë: <i>Jane Eyre</i>	2.58	7.23
Bunyan: <i>The Pilgrim's Progress</i>	1.28	4.86
Carlyle: <i>Sartor Resartus</i>	1.39	3.69
Chaucer: <i>The Canterbury Tales</i>	1.06	9.06
Chopin: <i>The Awakening</i>	5.53	7.23
Dante: <i>The Inferno</i>	1.37	6.86
De Beauvoir: <i>The Second Sex</i>	6.00	5.86
Defoe: <i>Robinson Crusoe</i>	1.47	5.20
Dickens: <i>A Tale of Two Cities</i>	1.37	6.50
Douglass: <i>The Autobiography of Frederick Douglass</i>	5.75	7.30
Dryden: <i>All for Love</i>	1.81	4.10
Forster: <i>A Passage to India</i>	3.13	7.20
Hawthorne: <i>The Scarlet Letter</i>	1.41	8.50
Homer: <i>The Iliad</i>	1.06	8.30
Hurston: <i>Their Eyes Were Watching God</i>	6.50	7.50
James: <i>Portrait of a Lady</i>	1.87	7.00
Jonson: <i>Volpone</i>	1.64	5.35
Joyce: <i>Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man</i>	1.73	7.33
Kingston: <i>The Woman Warrior</i>	6.06	6.75
Marlowe: <i>Tamburlaine</i>	1.61	4.00
Marquez: <i>One Hundred Years of Solitude</i>	4.93	7.87
Melville: <i>Moby Dick</i>	1.23	7.00
Milton: <i>Paradise Lost</i>	1.00	6.73
Momaday: <i>House Made of Dawn</i>	6.00	6.78
Morrison: <i>Beloved</i>	6.50	6.67
Paz: <i>Labyrinth of Solitude</i>	6.14	5.83
Plato: <i>Apology</i>	1.12	7.13
Pope: <i>Dunciad, Book V</i>	1.42	5.00
Rich: <i>Of Woman Born</i>	6.54	5.60
Richardson: <i>Pamela</i>	1.53	4.78
Shakespeare: <i>Macbeth</i>	1.12	8.62
Sophocles: <i>Oedipus the King</i>	1.13	8.56
Spenser: <i>The Faerie Queene</i>	1.14	4.86
Sterne: <i>Tristram Shandy</i>	1.87	6.00
Swift: <i>Gulliver's Travels</i>	1.20	7.73
Tennyson: <i>In Memoriam A. H.</i>	1.31	6.07
Thoreau: <i>Walden</i>	1.13	7.87
Virgil: <i>The Aeneid</i>	1.07	7.20
Walker: <i>The Color Purple</i>	5.77	6.35
Wharton: <i>House of Mirth</i>	3.07	6.78
Wollstonecraft: <i>Vindication</i>	5.84	5.92
Woolf: <i>Mrs. Dalloway</i>	3.27	7.20
Wordsworth: <i>Lyrical Ballads</i>	1.27	7.78
Wright: <i>Native Son</i>	4.50	7.43

Note. Ratings are the means provided by the norm group. For ideology, ratings are on a scale from 1 (very traditionalist) to 7 (very revisionist). For educational value, ratings are on a scale from 1 (lowest) to 10 (highest).

Table 2. Revisionists' and traditionalists' book preferences

Book	Revisionists (<i>n</i> = 162)			Book	Traditionalists (<i>n</i> = 57)		
	Frequency chosen	Ideology rating	Value rating		Frequency chosen	Ideology rating	Value rating
Shakespeare	96	1.12	8.62	Sophocles	56	1.13	8.56
Marquez	75	4.93	7.87	Shakespeare	47	1.12	8.62
Woolf	74	3.27	7.20	Homer	45	1.06	8.30
Chaucer	73	1.06	9.06	Milton	39	1.00	6.73
Kingston	73	6.06	6.75	Chaucer	39	1.06	9.06
Sophocles	72	1.13	8.56	Dante	36	1.37	6.86
Morrison	71	6.50	6.67	The Bible	35	1.11	7.94
Homer	71	1.06	8.30	Plato	34	1.12	7.13
Thoreau	66	1.13	7.87	Swift	32	1.20	7.73
Brontë	59	2.58	7.23	Virgil	31	1.07	7.20
Melville	58	1.23	7.00	Melville	28	1.23	7.00
Joyce	56	1.73	7.33	Joyce	25	1.73	7.33
Douglass	54	5.75	7.30	Thoreau	24	1.13	7.87
Wright	54	4.50	7.43	Wordsworth	22	1.27	7.78
Chopin	53	5.53	7.23	Hawthorne	21	1.41	8.50

Note. Ratings are the means provided by the norm group. For ideology, ratings are on a scale from 1 (*very traditionalist*) to 7 (*very revisionist*). For educational value, ratings are on a scale from 1 (*lowest*) to 10 (*highest*).

sides' preferences was substantial: The Spearman rank-order correlation between the two sides' preferences for the 50 books (i.e., the relative frequency of choosing each book) was .51, $p < .05$). Revisionists and traditionalists did differ in the number of books by minority and women authors. Revisionists chose 8 books by either minority or female authors, whereas traditionalists chose none, $\chi^2(1, N = 219) = 10.83, p < .05$. The norm group rated as quite high the educational value of the books chosen both by revisionists ($M = 7.63$) and by traditionalists ($M = 7.56$), $F(1, 14) = 0.05, p > .10$.

Ideological Orientation of Revisionists' and Traditionalists' Book Selections

The hypothesis that revisionists' and traditionalists' book preferences would be influenced by their ideologies was supported by the norm group's ratings of the ideological orientation of the two sides' book choices. Traditionalists selected books that were more traditionalist⁵ ($M = 1.27$) than those selected by revisionists ($M = 3.19$), $t(190) = 6.32, p < .01$. Revisionists' selections did not necessarily lean toward revisionist works, the mean ideological rating (3.19) being below the midpoint (4.0) on the 7-point scale. The correlations between the frequency with which partisans chose each of the 50 books and each book's ideological orientation reveal that traditionalists chose more consistently according to ideological rating of the books than did revisionists ($r = .58$ vs. $r = .10, z = 2.29, p < .05$).

5. Means here refer to the mean ratings of the books multiplied by the frequency with which they were chosen.

Revisionists' and Traditionalists' Estimates of the Other Side's Book Selections

Table 3 presents the books that revisionists and traditionalists most frequently thought the other side would choose. To test the hypothesis that revisionists and traditionalists would polarize the differences in their concrete behavior, we examined both the similarity between partisans' own preferences and their estimates of their opposition's preferences and the accuracy with which partisans estimated their opposition's preferences.

Assumed similarity in book selections

Revisionists assumed that 6 books would be common to their syllabus and that of the traditionalists (and got all 6 right), missing only 1 book actually in common (Thoreau's *Walden*). Traditionalists, in contrast, believed that there would be no overlap (no books in common) between their list of 15 books and that of revisionists. The level of overlap assumed by the two groups differs significantly, $\chi^2(1, N = 219) = 9.12, p < .05$. The rank-order correlations between the frequency with which partisans chose each book for themselves and for the other side shows that revisionists tended to underestimate slightly the actual overlap in the two sides' preferences ($r_{\text{actual}} = .51$ vs. $r_{\text{assumed}} = .21, z = 1.41, p = .11$), whereas traditionalists assumed their preferences were inversely related to those of the revisionists ($r_{\text{actual}} = .51$ vs. $r_{\text{assumed}} = -.25, z = 3.61, p < .01$).

Accuracy in judging the other side's book selections

Just as traditionalists were more prone than revisionists to exaggerate their differences with the opposition, they were more likely to stereotype their opponents' preferences. Revisionists guessed 13 of the traditionalists' top 15 book selections correctly, including the top 6 selections. (Comparison of Table

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Table 3. Perceived preferences of revisionists and traditionalists

Perceived revisionist (ratings by 57 traditionalists)				Perceived traditionalist (ratings by 162 revisionists)			
Book	Frequency chosen	Ideology rating	Value rating	Book	Frequency chosen	Ideology rating	Value rating
Walker	33	5.77	6.35	Chaucer	113	1.06	9.06
Angelou	29	5.69	7.23	Shakespeare	99	1.12	8.62
Baldwin	29	5.35	6.35	Homer	95	1.06	8.30
Douglass	28	5.75	7.30	Milton	94	1.00	6.73
Wollstonecraft	28	5.84	5.92	Sophocles	87	1.13	8.56
Morrison	28	6.50	6.67	Dante	83	1.37	6.86
Rich	27	6.54	5.60	Melville	79	1.23	7.00
Kingston	27	6.06	6.75	Beowulf	76	1.00	6.38
Chopin	27	5.53	7.23	The Bible	74	1.11	7.94
Hurston	26	6.50	7.50	Hawthorne	74	1.41	8.50
Marquez	26	4.93	7.87	Plato	71	1.12	7.13
Woolf	26	3.27	7.20	Joyce	66	1.73	7.33
Wright	26	4.50	7.43	Wordsworth	66	1.27	7.78
Momaday	26	6.00	6.78	James	60	1.87	7.00
Brent	22	6.67	6.50	Swift	60	1.20	7.73

Note. Ideology and value ratings are the means provided by the norm group. For ideology, ratings are on a scale from 1 (very traditionalist) to 7 (very revisionist). For educational value, ratings are on a scale from 1 (lowest) to 10 (highest).

2 and Table 3 shows that revisionists guessed the exact ranking of 5 of the traditionalists' top 15 selections.) Revisionists collectively incorrectly assumed that the traditionalists' list would include James's *Portrait of a Lady* and *Beowulf*, and failed to include Thoreau's *Walden* and Virgil's *The Aeneid*, both of which were in the traditionalists' top 15. The rank-order correlation between revisionists' estimates of traditionalists' selections and traditionalists' actual selections was $.56, p < .05$, for the top 15 books and $.83, p < .01$, for all 50 books.

Traditionalists were less accurate than revisionists in estimating the other side's selections, guessing only 7 of revisionists' top 15 selections correctly (as opposed to the 13 traditionalist choices guessed by revisionists), $\chi^2(1, N = 219) = 8.01, p < .01$. The correlation between traditionalists' estimates of the frequency of revisionists' selections and revisionists' actual selections was $-.33, p < .05$, for the top 15 books and $.49, p < .05$, for all 50 books.

Imputed Ideological Bias of the Other Side

Our final hypothesis proposed that opposing partisans would impute that ideological motives underlay their opposition's concrete behavior. Consistent with this view, traditionalists assumed that revisionists would select books with a greater revisionist orientation than was the case: The mean rating for the assumed selections was 5.61, although the mean rating of revisionists' actual selections was 3.19, $F(1, 14) = 17.94, p < .001$. Across the 50 books, the correlation between the books' ideological orientation and the frequency with which traditionalists assumed revisionists would choose them was almost perfect, whereas the correlation between ideological orientation and the books actually chosen was far weaker ($r_{\text{assumed}} = .92$ vs. $r_{\text{actual}} = .10, p < .01$). Traditionalists assumed that revisionists would

choose works by women and minorities exclusively (15 of 15 choices, compared with 8 choices in actuality) while systematically spurning traditional authors (none assumed chosen, but 7 actually preferred). Perhaps most striking is traditionalists' racial stereotyping of revisionists' selections. Of the 8 books by African-American authors, revisionists chose 2 in their top 15 (the average rank order of the 8 books was 30th in the list of 50 books). Traditionalists incorrectly assumed that revisionists would choose all 8 (the average ranking of African-American authors imputed to revisionists was 9th), and that 4 of those books would take up the first four places on the revisionists' list.

Revisionists did not exaggerate the ideological basis of traditionalists' book selections: The mean rating of the books revisionists thought traditionalists would choose as their top 15 was 1.27, and the mean rating of traditionalists' actual top 15 books was 1.22, $p > .10$. The revisionists' perception was so accurate primarily because traditionalists chose books of strong traditionalist orientation. Across all 50 books, however, revisionists did exaggerate the relation between traditionalists' selections and the ideological orientation of the books ($r_{\text{assumed}} = .77$ vs. $r_{\text{actual}} = .58, p < .01$).

Evaluation of the Books Chosen for a Syllabus

Table 4 presents revisionists' and traditionalists' evaluations of the educational value of the books they chose for their own syllabi and the books they thought the other side would choose. Both sides attached greater educational value to their own selections ($M = 132.6$ for revisionists and 128.4 for traditionalists, $p > .15$) than was ascribed to the same books by the norm group ($M = 109.9$ for revisionists' choices and 111.1 for traditionalists' choices, both $ps < .01$). The two sides also attributed

Table 4. *Rated educational value of actual and expected choices*

Group doing the rating	Revisionists' choices		Traditionalists' choices	
	Actual choices	Assumed choices (predicted by traditionalists)	Actual choices	Assumed choices (predicted by revisionists)
Partisans ^a	132.6 ^{AC}	101.8 ^{bc}	128.4 ^{aC}	125.2 ^{aBC}
Norm group	109.9 ^A	104.7 ^{ab}	111.1 ^A	108.0 ^{aB}
Difference	22.7	-2.9	17.4	17.2

Note. Within each row, means with an uppercase superscript (e.g., "A") are significantly larger than means with the corresponding lowercase superscript (e.g., "a"), $p < .05$.

^aShown are the ratings each partisan group gave its own choices and the choices it predicted the other side would make.

greater educational value to their own selections than to the books they selected for the other side: Revisionists gave their own choices a mean rating of 132.6 and gave the assumed traditionalists' choices a mean rating of 125.2, $t(126) = 2.14$, $p < .05$; traditionalists gave their own choices a mean rating of 128.4 and gave the assumed revisionists' choices a mean rating of 101.8, $t(40) = 3.54$, $p < .01$. As Table 4 shows, the norm group was in agreement, judging the books selected for the other side (in both cases) as being of lower quality than the other side's actual choices. Finally, across the 50 books, the norm group's assessments of the value of books was negatively correlated with the frequency with which revisionists ($r = -.85$, $p < .01$) and traditionalists ($r = -.61$, $p < .01$) chose the books for the other side.

DISCUSSION

The Western Canon dispute divides partisans, whom we have called revisionists and traditionalists, according to preferred books to be taught in introductory literature and civilization courses. Unlike many social disputes that never call on the sides to make meaningful behavioral decisions—who actually has to do anything about his or her position regarding Brazilian deforestation?—the ideological differences between revisionists and traditionalists are played out in day-to-day teaching and selection of books to constitute the curriculum.

One prevalent view concerning the relationship between partisans' concrete behavior and attitudes holds that the two are at some level independent. The implications of this view are threefold: First, opposing partisans' concrete preferences are unrelated to their ideologies; second, opposing partisans' concrete preferences often do not differ; and third, opposing partisans fail to recognize the differences in their concrete preferences. Based on studies of the attitude-behavior correspondence (Fazio & Zanna, 1981) and polarization in social conflicts (e.g., Bar-Tal & Geva, 1986; Robinson et al., 1995; White, 1977), we suggested an alternative view. We expected the two sides to select books that were consistent with their respective ideologies, which would imply the choice of somewhat different books, and would also result in the (possibly exaggerated) assumption by people on each side that their choices would differ greatly from those of their ideological opposition.

The hypothesized link between revisionists' and traditionalists' attitudes and behavior was observed in both the books

selected and the norm group's ratings of those books. Although the two sides selected seven fairly traditional books in common, in rounding out their lists they selected books that followed from their respective ideologies: Traditionalists consistently selected more traditionalist books, whereas revisionists were somewhat more eclectic in their selections, although they showed a preference for books by minorities and women.⁶ Thus, our partisans' concrete book choices appeared to be consistent with their ideologies.

We predicted also that revisionists and traditionalists would exaggerate the differences in their book selections. Consistent with this hypothesis, traditionalists assumed no overlap, when in fact there was significant overlap. Furthermore, traditionalists indicated that revisionists would select works by female and minority authors exclusively, when in fact revisionists frequently chose books from the traditional canon. In contrast, revisionists were surprisingly accurate in assessing both the extent of their disagreement with traditionalists and traditionalists' actual selections.

Finally, we hypothesized that revisionists and traditionalists would assume ideology to be a dominating decision criterion behind their opposition's book selections. Traditionalists did assume that revisionists' preference for any given book would be highly correlated with the book's ideological rating. To a similar but lesser degree (across all 50 books), this bias was also apparent in revisionists' assumptions about traditionalists' preferences. Both sides also indicated that their own book selections were of greater educational quality than the books they selected for their opposition—consistent with assuming that their opposition's decisions were guided by ideological, rather than pedagogical, criteria.

6. Revisionists' book preferences observed here stand in contrast to the alleged inclination to replace all traditionalist texts with revisionist ones. Thus, D'Souza (1991) quoted a traditionalist English professor as saying, "I would bet that Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* is taught in more English departments today than all of Shakespeare's plays combined" (p. 68). Our revisionists did not exhibit this preference: *The Color Purple* was not one of their top 15 choices, and was ranked 28th of the 50 books, although the traditionalists did in fact expect to see revisionists pick it as their most popular selection. In our judgment, the revisionists did not express a preference to replace the entire canon with revisionist texts.

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SUMMARIZING THE LINKS BETWEEN IDEOLOGY AND BEHAVIOR

The evidence presented here is consistent with the view that ideological opponents' attitudes and behavior are indeed linked, both for their own actual choices and for the behavior they expect from their ideological foes. One may wonder if in other kinds of social disputes—especially those that do not require such a clear operationalization of attitude into behavior—partisans' actions may not so closely relate to their ideologies.

These findings do support the warnings of certain students of conflict (e.g., Fisher & Ury, 1981; Ichheiser, 1970), who noted that partisans who are most guided by ideology are most prone to exaggerate their opposition and the extremity of their dispute. In our study, traditionalists were swayed by ideology in selecting their own books, and they attributed extreme ideological bias to their opposition, whose preferences they caricatured. Revisionists, by contrast, selected books across the ideological spectrum and were relatively accurate in judging traditionalists' preferences.

ASYMMETRIES IN SOCIAL MISPERCEPTION

Although one might be concerned that the traditionalists we sampled, fewer in number than the revisionists, were more extremist and therefore more biased, other analyses indicated that the two groups did not differ in the intensity of their self-rated convictions, nor in the extremity of their attitudes (Keltner & Robinson, 1995). Indeed, across studies of social conflicts, we have documented asymmetries in social misperception that do not seem to covary with factors such as partisans' ideology or relative frequency. Thus, in a study on attitudes toward abortion at Stanford (Robinson et al., 1995), the liberal (prochoice) group in the numerical majority stereotyped the views of their conservative (prolife) counterparts far more than the reverse. In the current study, the more conservative group (traditionalists) in the numerical minority stereotyped the preferences of their liberal, majority opposition, who were less prone to such biases.

One possible explanation for these asymmetries may involve whether the groups support the status quo or advocate change. Across studies, members of the status quo (proabortion partisans, supported by *Roe vs. Wade*, 1973, and traditionalists, whose book preferences are the canon) were more prone to bias, and were more accurately judged, than members of the opposition. The effects of being in the status quo warrant further study. It is likely, for example, that through the media, political representatives, and actual policy (as in the case of an educational curriculum), the views of status quo groups are better known than those of groups advocating change, and are therefore judged more accurately. Status quo advocates may also see a threat to their status and power, producing increased stereotyping (Stephan & Stephan, 1985). Advocates of change, such as the revisionists in our study, may take a more complex view of the conflict (Tetlock, 1986) and integrate both ideological positions, resulting in a reduced tendency to escalate conflict (Suedfeld & Tetlock, 1978).

The findings of this study raise the question of how opposing

partisans deal with, and attend to, their similarities versus their differences. Certainly, rhetoric and impressionistic analyses suggest that partisans focus on the differences in the two sides' preferences. Yet one might imagine that if revisionists and traditionalists were also to incorporate in their discussions the similarities in their preferences, the absolute intransigence of the dispute and its escalation into a moral conflict would be reduced—in particular, for traditionalists, who were the least accurate in their perceptions of the dispute, and who would be most likely to benefit from data of the kind gathered in the current study.

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