

Characterization and Gender Norms of Thematic Apperception Test Narratives

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A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree  
of Masters in English

Middle Tennessee State University

August 2024

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I dedicate this project to my father, Randall; my mother, Joan; my daughters, Koryn, Marina, and Destiny; my granddaughters Emberli, Keslynn, and Rory; and my grandsons, Collins, Rylan, and Sladen.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I want to thank Dr. Kate Pantelides for guiding me throughout the research and writing process. Without her encouragement to expand my methodologies and her cautions to rein in my focus, this project would not be what it is today. I also want to thank Dr. Julie Myatt for her insight as my reader. I know time is valuable and I deeply appreciate your investment in this project.

To my family and friends, who did not see me for weeks on end, thank you for your unrelenting support and encouragement.

## ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates the representation of gender norms within Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) narratives through Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). The TAT, developed by Christiana D. Morgan and Henry A. Murray in the 1940s prompts respondents to create stories based on ambiguous images, to reveal their supposed subconscious motives and desires. Utilizing an archival corpus of 1,340 narratives from the 1940s to the 1960s, this study applies CDA to analyze how language and narrative structures reflect societal gender norms. The methodology integrates both qualitative and quantitative approaches, providing insights into how respondents' stories construct and perpetuate gender normativity. By focusing on narrative discourse, this research sheds light on the ways historical contexts and cultural practices influences the constitution of gender. In addition to the archival study of gender constitution, the research discusses how ChatGPT constructs gendered characters using our current discourse.

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## Introduction

We are in the uncomfortable birthing stage of artificial intelligence.’ Zeros and ones, if we are not careful, could deepen the divides between haves and have-nots, between the deserving and the undeserving – rusty value judgments embedded in shiny new systems.”  
Ruha Benjamin

Thanks to large language models like ChatGPT, the landscape of written text, authors, and citations is rapidly changing. Digital spaces and chatbots continue to develop and progress in understanding human writing. ChatGPT can scrape digital text with lightning speed to answer questions, draft an essay using the voice of a famous author, or create gendered characters. Computer programmers code these language-processing algorithms to recognize patterns in human writing and respond appropriately to a user’s request. Unfortunately, as the chatbots learn human patterns while scraping our digital corpus, they tend to “reproduce human biases along racist and sexist lines” (Benjamin 62). AI recognition of our patterns or norms allows the chatbots to satisfy the user’s requests. However, these recognizable norms often reproduce our worst societal traits and display “rusty value judgments embedded in shiny new systems” (Benjamin 62). In the following chapters, I seek to explore the discourse of our rusty value judgments of gender within an archival corpus of Thematic Apperception Test Narratives. The archival corpus allows us to see how people from the past also relied on patterns of discourse and recognizable norms when asked to create stories with gendered characters. After analyzing my findings, I compare the archival discourse patterns respondents use to create gendered characters within the archive to gendered characters created by ChatGPT to illustrate that these archival discourse patterns surrounding gender still exist in our digital discourse corpus.

Upon entering the final year of my English undergraduate degree at Middle Tennessee State University, a graduate student in the psychology department approached me about her grant-funded project. She was collecting Thematic Apperception Test narratives and needed a transcriptionist. She planned to run the narratives through Joseph Pennebaker's Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count (LIWC) tool to access possible psychological diagnoses, but my research mind saw a feminist corpus study. I became her research assistant and transcriptionist. However, I was interested in using Critical Discourse Analysis on the growing corpus of narratives to explore how the respondents constitute gender.

### *Thematic Apperception Test*

The Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) is a psychoanalytical test of significant importance, developed by Christiana D. Morgan and Henry A. Murray and published by Harvard Press in 1943. The TAT, a widely used tool by psychoanalysts to study personality between the 1940s and 1970s, is still used globally. The original TAT had thirty-one images of ambiguous social scenes that served as stimuli to elicit narratives from respondents. After viewing the images, psychoanalysts prompted the respondents to construct a story with a beginning, middle, and end, focusing on the characters' feelings, desires, and emotions. The TAT, with its emphasis on narrative form, assumes that respondents will identify with their characters and reveal their subconsciously hidden desires and motives. After Morgan and Murray completed the first version of the test, Harvard University Press published it. The TAT quickly became one of Harvard's all-time best sellers. Developing the test took over a decade, as one of the head researchers spent much of that time selecting and altering the images included in the TAT deck. TAT scholarship credits Christiana D. Morgan for selecting and developing the thirty-one

ambiguous social scenes. Due to the art education she received in high school and classes she attended at the Arts Student League in New York between 1921 and 1924, and the paintings she rendered of her fantasies while studying under renowned psychiatrist and psychoanalyst Carl Jung, Morgan knew the power of imagery (Douglas 103). However, lesser-known facts are that Christiana D. Morgan also played a crucial role in assessing how to show the images to respondents, administered the first Thematic Apperception Test, and presented her case study findings of the first administered test for her colleagues at the Harvard Psychological Clinic (Douglas 205). Christiana Morgan was the first author when the original article about Morgan and Murray's research was published in 1935, "A method for investigation of fantasies: The Thematic Apperception Test." However, in 1943, when Harvard University Press published the final draft of the test, Henry A. Murray stood as the sole author, omitting Christiana D. Morgan. No one can say with certainty why Harvard University Press removed Morgan from the TAT scholarship, but she has been reduced to a marginal footnote. At the same time, Henry A. Murray is synonymous with the Thematic Apperception Test.

All researchers bring our subjectivities to the projects we undertake. Accounting for Morgan and Murray's backgrounds and relationships adds elements to the picture and narrative analysis I discuss in the following chapters. Since Christiana D. Morgan is absent in much of the TAT canon, I am seizing this research opportunity to practice feminist reclamation and place her back into the conversation surrounding the Thematic Apperception Test creation. As I seek to find Morgan's subjectivities she brought to the TAT, I recall the works of scholars before me who saw the need for women to have the space to write and have their stories and accomplishments read and included in the intellectual canon. Mary Wollstonecraft's "A

Vindication of the Rights of Women,” Virginia Woolf’s “A Room of One’s Own,” Adrienne Rich’s “When We Dead Awaken: Writing as Re-vision and Cheryl Glenn’s “Remapping Rhetorical Territory” guide me as I reflect on the social context surrounding Morgan throughout her life. These works remind me of the physical and intellectual restrictions Morgan faced and help me understand why she allowed men to take credit for her intellectual labor and silence her voice. In the spirit of feminist reclamation, I focus on Christiana D. Morgan as first author of the TAT because of her image selection.

### *Accounting for Myself*

Before exploring the possible constitutions that Christiana D. Morgan and the respondents brought to the Thematic Apperception Test images and narratives, I want to pause and give an account of the subjectivities I bring as the researcher. Sandra Harding, when discussing a feminist research lens, coined the term “strong objectivity” and notes that to achieve this as a researcher, one must place oneself on the “same critical causal plane as the objects of knowledge” through “strong reflexivity” (458). I present the following strong reflexivity to show how my cultural and social position as a researcher has influenced this archival corpus study.

I was born to conservative Christian parents in a small rural town in Alabama. I was gendered female at birth and carried the societal restrictions the gender binary and conservative Christianity placed upon my existence. My inherited church affiliation championed heteronormative gender roles and positioned females into the formula Betty Friedan notes as the “product of men’s minds” (49). This formula frames the individual as wife first (a girl must find a man), mother second (a girl must have children), and woman last. With their selection of

biblical passages, men did not allow women to take on leadership roles in the church. Along with their silence and passive following, women were to be in all things subservient to men twelve years old or older, which means that women could not teach a bible class with boys over the age of twelve in the room.

I grew up watching my grandmother sit silently when my grandfather was in the room. She only spoke if he invited her into the conversation to agree with him. She served him his meals first and stood eating in the kitchen just in case he needed something else. My grandmother's sisters and sisters-in-law conducted their lives similarly because there was a routine eating hierarchy during Christmas dinners at my great-grandmother's. The women served the men wherever they sat, and then the women ate in the kitchen. No man ever cleared the table or washed a dish. The gender roles inside the church building and the domestic sphere were evident and clearly defined for me by my matriarch examples from an early age. However, in the outdoors on the family farm, the gender roles were not as clearly defined.

I come from a long line of farmers. My great-grandfather farmed his eighty acres alongside his children and their descendants. I spent my childhood summers measuring my growth in stature by the five-gallon buckets the adults expected me to fill. During harvest season, we gathered corn, peas, beans, tomatoes, cucumbers, squash, okra, potatoes, peppers, and melons for supper that night and for canning to carry us all through the winter. The men drove the tractors and trucks and loaded the buckets and bushel baskets filled with harvest by the women and children. The men completed their day's work when the harvested goods were out of the fields, while women and children continued the tasks of shucking, silking, cutting,

and canning. The men rested and did not lend the same helping hand they had received from the women when bringing the goods in from the fields and inside the house. From a young age, I recognized this division of labor as unfair.

My mother likely never dreamed of the willful daughter she brought into this world. I did not fit neatly into my inherited female role. I pushed back against expectations that did not belong to me and preferred my father's workshop over my mother's kitchen. I was as tough as any of the boys I grew up with and fought to prove it. I routinely asked why when the adults separated me from the boys because I wished to dismantle a sewing machine instead to see how it worked rather than practice needlepoint around a quilting frame. My mother tried hard to bend my will to meet societal and Christian expectations, and I am sure my stubbornness often made her feel like a failed mother. My rebellious spirit led me to a teenage pregnancy at age seventeen. Through this experience, I learned that society only celebrates motherhood when you adhere to the wife first, mother second, then woman framework that society places on female gender roles. I had broken the model and became a mother first and a wife second. Breaking the norm othered me. I tried and failed for years to prove to my family and fellow church members that I was fulfilling the duties assigned to my gendered role. Their judgments found me inadequate because of the sin of breaking from traditional normative behavior.

Raising a willful daughter who did not fit into society's female archetype was a significant source of conflict between my mother and myself. I know the shame society laid at her feet when her daughter was pregnant at seventeen was more than she deserved. I know she felt the judgment of inadequacy through her failures as a mother, as I did mine. I married the father of my daughter after I graduated high school because I thought this would reset me

into my gendered framework and elevate my inadequate status. I was mistaken and suppressed my willfulness for the duration of a 20-year abusive marriage.

I am sure my constant questioning of gender rules frustrated my parents when I was a child, but my questioning prepared me for my future. My husband, whose gender roles were protector and provider, became my abuser and financial drain. Out of survival, I became a business owner and my family's primary source of income. My three daughters witnessed me taking care of them and the household chores inside and out without the help of my male counterpart. I repaired and replaced things in and around the house when they broke. I ran the tractor, weed eater, lawnmower, and trash can to the road weekly. Like the matriarchs before me, my work continued as the man of the house slept. At the end of my marriage, I embraced my feminist constitutions and vowed never to succumb to the limits of heteronormativity again.

I account for the subjectivities that I bring to this critical discourse analysis and the feminist lens through which I view the TAT images and the collected corpus because when I see the word mother and the descriptions surrounding it in the TAT corpus, I think of my matriarchs, myself, my daughters, and my granddaughters. I enter this critical discourse analysis with empathy toward the characterization of women in the corpus because I have experienced life as a woman who has fought my entire life to push the parameters of the gender assigned to me at birth. However, I understand that it is equally important to push back against all societal gender norms. The gender binary limits every being in our society, regardless of their assignment at birth. I practice willful resistance not only for my granddaughters but also for my grandsons.

### *Methods and Methodology*

Many narratives collected by psychoanalysts in the early years after Harvard University Press published the Thematic Apperception Test still exist. For this study, I analyze a corpus of 1,340 Thematic Apperception Test Narratives given during the 1940s, 50s, and 60s from publications (690 narratives) and the Cummings Center Archives of the History of American Psychology in Akron, Ohio (640 narratives). The publications in which I gleaned TAT narratives were books focused on developing a reliable scoring system for the test. They include *Story Sequence Analysis: The Thematic Apperception Test: An Introductory Manual for its Clinical Use with Adults* by M.I. Stein, published in 1955; *The Thematic Apperception Test: The Theory and Technique of Interpretation* by S. S. Tomkins, also published in 1955; and *A New Method of Measuring Motivation and Predicting Achievement* by Magda B. Arnold and published in 1962. The authors of the publications include many sample narratives to illustrate their preferred scoring system. However, since they were focused on demonstrating how to score the narratives, they did not consistently choose to include the respondents' gender, age, diagnosis, or TAT card number. However, when the authors included this information, I marked them.

Two days were spent combing the files at the Cummins Center Archives of the History of American Psychology. When a folder included TAT narratives, I marked the folder and pages for a request to print. Because of the limited financial resources, time, and the number of folders the archive held, requesting or reading the peripheral materials to see what age, gender, and diagnosis for each respondent was not a priority. However, when these statistics were clearly marked, I noted them. It is important to note that less than ten percent of the respondents have a psychological diagnosis listed. Many respondents were psychology students or had their

personality evaluated for job placement. If a severe mental illness diagnosis was present, the narrative was usually unreadable, and I culled it from the corpus. A month after marking all the folders in the archive for the print requests, I received scanned PDF copies via a shared folder. The Cummings Center redacted all personal information from the requested materials before scanning. While technology can convert PDF files to Word documents, the narratives were often handwritten or marked with annotations in the margins, causing the conversion software to identify it as a jpg. image instead of a convertible file. To create this corpus collection, I manually transcribed most of the narratives.

After amassing the current number of narratives, I used the content analysis tool Voyant and critical discourse analysis to see how gender norms reveal themselves within the narratives. Voyant tools were instrumental in knowing the number of times a word was mentioned within the corpus. However, since the narratives resemble a stream-of-consciousness style, the respondents' real-time corrections or asides prohibited me from using Voyant to find words collating with the mentioned characters. Therefore, I color-coded character-related words in each narrative when respondents mentioned a gendered character as a boy, son, man, husband, father, girl, daughter, woman, wife, or mother. When respondents gave their characters a proper name or used a synonym, I matched it to the color code of their gendered or familial positioning. These color codes allowed me to identify the gendered characters mentioned in each narrative and their relationship to each other. When I focused on a boy, father, or mother character or relationships between characters, these color codes gave visual evidence of the narratives I would use in my Critical Discourse analysis to find the modifiers and sentiments surrounding the characters.

I chose Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as my primary methodology because my research is a multimodal, interdisciplinary project that explores a large archival corpus of narratives to reveal gender constitutions and the limitations they bring to gendered characters. CDA fits my project because it is an interdisciplinary research methodology that emphasizes the “importance of grounding a broad contextual perspective in detailed textual analysis. (Huckin et al. 123).” CDA also focuses on social justice, abuse of power found in language, and the multimodality of communication through text and images. CDA allowed me to combine qualitative and quantitative approaches to the visual images and the textual corpus of narratives to recognize when the respondents’ words exemplified gender roles and their silences implied them. An example of these silences is found in Morgan’s images because they are silent when characters are not visually depicted, yet the narratives speak a new character into existence. With its emphasis on context, CDA allowed me to go beyond the text to gain deeper insights into how respondents construct meaning within the narrative corpus when prompted by Morgan’s images. Mariaelena Bartesaghi and Kate Pantelides’ article “Why critique should not run out of steam: a proposal for critical study of discourse” reminded me that “vocabularies of minds are but trappings of our social pragmatics” (162), which guided me when I saw gendered implications or speech acts directed at a particular character that needed analytical connection to social contexts. This methodology focused my research goal as it helped me “understand the impacts of writing as a cultural practice and to examine the contexts of such practices historically, materially, and politically” (Huckin et al. 110). The multimodality of the TAT, with its images prompting the large corpus of narratives, inspired me to incorporate multimodal elements into my writing. I looked to Kate Pantelides’ “Transgressing

Unstable Ground: Contradictions in Representations of Writing Program Administrative Work.” Her visual tables attending to word frequency represented her corpus findings and were easy for the reader to navigate. I wanted the same effect for my readers, so I mirrored her work with my quantitative visuals. These multimodal data representations and TAT card images allow me to represent my complex data concisely.

*Accounting for Christiana D. Morgan*



Christiana Morgan, 1926. Morgan Family Papers.

October 6, 1897 – March 14, 1967

Her patients, lovers, and friends have recalled her beauty and her style; they have noted her creativity as well as her capacity to listen, elucidate, and yet remain profoundly and independently of her own self. However, while Jung, Whitehead, Mumford, and maybe even Murray still have a place in the world’s canon, Morgan is forgotten. She remains at most a footnote in other people’s history (Douglas 12)

Christiana D. Morgan is absent in much of the TAT canon, and when she is mentioned, it is often in the context of Henry A. Murray’s lover. Jungian scholars, Whiteheadian scholars, and Morgan’s granddaughter, Hillary Morgan, are calling for and making efforts to reclaim Morgan's rightful place as a researcher and contributor to psychoanalytical studies (Byock), (H. Morgan),

(Weber). Her biographer, Claire Douglas, is a clinical and Jungian analyst who spent thirteen years researching Morgan's personal papers and Jung's seminars to compose the biography of Morgan, *Translate This Darkness: The Life of Christiana Morgan*. Douglas is also the editor of *Visions: Notes of the seminar given in 1930-1934*, which documents Carl Jung's seminars he presented using Morgan's visions and paintings during her study and practice of Jung's technique he called active imagination. In my attempt to present Morgan's subjectivities, this section focuses on Christiana Morgan's direct quotes published by Douglas, Hillary Morgan, and others. The primary sources of these quotes come from her personal papers, letters between Morgan and Murray, Jung's papers, and the Harvard archives.

### The Early Years

Christiana Drummond Councilman was born into a family of Bostonian socialites. Her youth was filled with finishing school, coming out parties, and debutant social events on the weekends. Morgan preferred her father's gardens to the confines of her mother's house (Douglas 20-21, 33). We see this preference in a passage from Morgan's diary as she juxtaposes her youthful view of how women and men spend their day. As a sign of respect, she calls the men working outside by their proper names and identifies "All the women of the household, [...] gathered on the back porch," as "mother, sisters, grandmother, aunts, and cousins." Morgan also respects the actions and atmosphere surrounding the men more than the women. She describes the women's embroidery as "circling pointlessly around this or that name" and notes the droning of bees in the flower gardens. Morgan considers the women's "talk" pointless because she describes it as "sleepy and desultory." She juxtaposes the women's work, conversations, and surroundings to the men working in "the lower gardens," engaged in

physical labor as the “sound of pickaxe on rocks, or “thud of heavy stone” surround their efforts to “pull stumps in the woods. Now here, talk has gristle and is spare.” Morgan notes the men’s work as a “unity of effort” when they collaborate with a “combination of ropes and crowbars, curses, grunts, staccato commands, [and] bent backs.” When the men complete their work, they “disperse” and Morgan “wander[s] back to the house. There sit the women just as [she] left them, still stitching and the bees still circling and droning in the flower beds” (Douglas 38). From Morgan’s youthful perspective, it is evident that she is drawn to what she sees as productive work. The men’s pulling of stumps and heavy stones makes a significant visual impact on the environment, while the women’s needlepoint is confined to an embroidery hoop. She carries these ideals about work, visual impact, and rejecting pointless activities into adulthood.

### **Assuming Her Rightful Place in Society**

At fifteen, Morgan was pressured to join her mother's sphere and entered the Bostonian social circles of dances and parties, and her social calendar took over her schooling. In her coming out year, a local newspaper described Morgan as “one of the season’s most popular debutants” (Douglas 38, 51). However, her male suitors and the socialite life bored her. By the end of her coming out year, her diary entry read,

Went to the last Saturday evening and had a punk time because I was so awfully tired & I just felt that I didn’t care if I never saw one of the people who were there again. I was just so tired of them. They all seem so young & so trivial.... I just long to find my place in the world and get out of this (Douglas 53).

Morgan was conflicted about her inherited place as a woman in the Bostonian society and her thirst for knowledge outside the domestic sphere.

Lately I have been getting this horrid idea into my head of rebellion against the position of women, sometimes it seems to me that their whole life is merely for men's pleasure, & they have to endure all the suffering & all the drudgery & it seems so unequal. [...] I seem to hate the idea of marriage and being used. (Douglas 59)

As the luster of the debutant scene and the idea of marriage fade in Morgan's eyes, the societal norms limiting the intellectual existence of women before WWI bore her. A year later, Morgan notes her boredom and her thirst for knowledge in a diary entry.

I still feel too wretchedly to go around, and yet I am so sort of bored, staying at home here doing nothing.... There is a feeling in me that I want to live *really*. I want to feel joy and sorrow to the utmost—I want to drink every draught to the utmost.... I suppose that is why I crave now for books that are strong—that have splendid new thoughts and ideas and that really hit one.... I am always groping frantically for some new thought – or old one that is new to me. (Douglas 61)

Morgan's "groping frantically" for innovative ideas gives us insight into her creative mind and how intellectual stimulation was a core part of her identity. It is no wonder that the societal expectations placed upon her evoked boredom and rebellion. Despite Morgan's desire to rebel against marriage and "drink every draught to the utmost," she met her future husband, William "Bill" Morgan, a few months later.

Initially, Morgan had the same bored reaction to Bill as she did life confined to the home. The following diary entry reflects Morgan's early impressions of Bill.

"Bill" Morgan... seems sort of young. We are wonderfully congenial, but he isn't ahead of me intellectually. I have a feeling that I shall never fall in love until I meet someone who is way ahead of me intellectually—some one with whom I will have to make a great effort to keep up with and who has big, broad, stimulating ideas—who has seen enough and read enough to have these ideas carry great weight. He must have a very keen sense of humor, too. Somehow, I don't think I shall ever get up a thrill on anyone whose brain isn't way ahead of mine. I just long for that stimulus and inspiration, and so far, I have always felt myself a little beyond the man in that direction. It seems a cocky thing to say, but it is perfectly true. (Douglas 64)

If Morgan had leaned further into her “cocky” attitude toward her intellect being superior to the men around her, she might have changed her fate drastically. She may not have married Bill, met Henry A. Murray, or been the lead researcher on the Thematic Apperception Test. However, understanding her confidence when it comes to her intellectual labor is crucial to understanding her confidence as a future Harvard researcher.

Morgan ignored her initial impressions of Bill, and their courtship turned to marriage after Bill returned from his soldiering duties during WWI. While Bill was away, Morgan was busy earning her nursing certificate and serving tirelessly during the Spanish flu epidemic in Boston. Her working conditions were far from the debutant balls, but it exhilarated her. In a letter to Bill, she described her nursing experience, “and all together it was really hectic...But all the

same it is just like the breath of life for me, and I love it” (Douglas 78). Morgan's love of this physical labor outside the domestic sphere echoes her childhood diary entry, where she compared the work of progress accomplished by the men and the sedentary needlepoint of the women.

Morgan's time as a nurse ended when Bill returned from the war, and her focus shifted away from fulfilling “breath of life” work to wanting to “put all [her] energy and interest into the work [Bill was] doing” (Douglas 94). Putting all her energy into Bill and the son she gave birth to in the first year of their marriage was unfulfilling for Morgan. To feed her intellectual appetite, she took classes at the Art Students League in New York, studied and annotated Carl Jung's *Psychology of the Unconscious*, and began to take intellectual lovers (Douglas 97, 104-105).

### **Meeting Henry A. Murray and Carl Gustav Jung**

In the fall of 1923, Morgan and Bill became part of a study group while taking courses at the New School for Social Research. Henry A. Morgan was among the members of this group. The group's discussions included the works of Herman Melville, German philosophy, and psychology. Morgan actively participated in the discussions and one day asked Murray whom he preferred: Freud or Jung. Murray had no answer. Morgan's question sparked Murray's interest and prompted the lifelong personality research interest Morgan and Murray would share (Douglas 113-115); (Robinson 100).

Morgan and Murray's intellectual conversations transformed into a mutual fascination with each other that had them contemplating an affair. In 1925, Henry Murray traveled to Zurich to consult with Dr. Carl Gustav Jung on his theory of the collective unconscious, its

archetypes, and Murray's aroused infatuation with Morgan (Getz, Robinson 120; Douglas 123). Morgan made a pilgrimage to see Jung a year later (Douglas 139) (Robinson 155). Jung believed that the "prerequisite for a good marriage [...] is the license to be unfaithful" (Robinson 131) and lived a polyamorous life with his dutiful wife and inspirational lover. Jung encouraged Murray and Morgan to explore the unconscious through a love affair. Jung first presented the idea to Murray with the argument that his wife, Emma Jung, was the "ideal background for his work" because of her "common sense as well as her practical housewifery and motherly skills" (MacBean), (Robinson 131). Jung's lover, Toni Wolff, was first his patient, then his lover and career muse.

When Murray proposed Jung's idea to Morgan, she was hesitant. Her hesitation is reflected in the following quote from her personal writings.

I wish that with Harry, I didn't have this feeling of a snake in the grass somewhere. It always seems to be interfering with my sensing of his personality. Its head always crops up immediately after I think it is not there. This snake is the desire for power, always present. [...] However, I love him at this period. (Douglas 134)

Other diary entries reverberate Morgan's hesitation. "I felt that—I was a divine goddess to him [...] I fertilized his mind, he felt creative as he had never before—but he fled from my lips. [...] If he can understand through me really to love to be earthy, then perhaps something fine could be made of it. But if he keeps this waste spot of desolation in him, then I feel that he will be a raging force of destruction that will destroy me and everyone he comes in contact with (Douglas 139). Morgan's premonition of Murray becoming a "raging force of destruction" came true in a sense because her intellectual investments as researcher and co-author of the

Thematic Apperception Test were erased when Harvard University Press removed her name from the test's publication.

A year after Murray consulted with Jung, it was Morgan's turn to visit Zurich and study psychoanalysis through her own trancing and vision session guided by Jung. Jung became fascinated with Morgan during their vision sessions and shared her drawings and painted vision depictions for four years during his weekly vision seminars. Morgan's vision works were instrumental in forwarding Jung's career during the 1930s (MacBean), while Morgan, until recent years, received no intellectual or artistic credit for the seminar materials.

While studying with Jung, Morgan grew more confident in joining Murray at the Harvard Psychological Clinic and as his inspirational career muse. Morgan was carefully recorded her sessions with Jung and noted that he encouraged Morgan to be the "anima to Murray's animus" (MacBean). Jung had told her, "You are a pioneer woman. Your function is to create a man. Some women create children, but it is greater to create a man. If you create Murray, you will have done something very fine for the world. Such women are never recognized" (Douglas 151). Jung's acknowledgement that "such women are never recognized" gives us insight into why he used Morgan's vision notebooks in his seminars without including her as a contributor.

#### Harvard Psychological Clinic

Morgan joined Murray at the Harvard Psychological Clinic in November of 1926 and agreed to keep their pioneering relationship a secret when hired as a lay psychoanalyst (with no formal degrees) and researcher. Morgan saw patients and contributed as a respected researcher at the clinic. The TAT is her most notorious research contribution during her time at Harvard. Still, as noted previously, Harvard Press did not include her name when publishing the

Thematic Apperception Test. TAT scholarship routinely limits Morgan's contribution to selecting and editing the TAT images. However, along with image selection, Morgan co-authored the first published article on the TAT with Murray titled, "A method for investigation of fantasies: The Thematic Apperception Test." Saul Rosenzweig, a psychology student working on his Ph. D. and part of the TAT research team at the Harvard Psychological Clinic, agreed to an interview in 2002. During the interview with Barry L. Duncan, Rosenzweig declared that "[Morgan] was the one who really created the TAT" (Duncan 17).

Along with her roles as a diligent researcher and psychoanalyst, Morgan took her role of creating Murray seriously. She believed standing in the background as anima to Murray's animas was the "creative genius of woman." Morgan felt a man "is lost in his unconscious unless he meets his power in woman, which can point the way. Only then can he arrive at a larger estate, a greater personality" (Christiana Morgan Papers). Morgan poured her energies into her research and her forty-year love affair with Murray even though they both questioned if she could "stand all the energy [Murray would] pour out [her]" (Christiana Morgan Papers). Their affair endured the death of her husband, Bill, and Murray's wife, Josephine. Morgan remained at the Harvard Psychological Clinic until the 1960s. By the end of her tenure, Morgan had a limited number of patients, and her colleagues viewed her lack of academic psychoanalytic credentials as unacceptable. Morgan's health declined because of alcoholism, and she died a mistress in 1967 while on vacation with Murray in the Virgin Islands (Christiana Morgan Papers).

### **Morgan's Death Becomes a Series of TAT Narratives**

In the year leading up to her death, Morgan told her son and daughter-in-law that she and Murray were engaged. Murray had promised to marry her if she stopped drinking, so she did. However, Morgan rescinded his promise and became infatuated with a graduate psychology student the same age as his daughter (Douglas 312-313). Murray told his biographer he was unsure how Morgan found out about his affair but knew she had confided the information to a friend shortly before he and Morgan left for the West Indies (Robinson 359). Morgan consulted a lawyer three weeks before their departure and amended her will.

In a documentary by Morgan's granddaughter, Hillary Morgan, a quote from Morgan's diary gives insight into how Morgan felt about her positioning as Mother to the men in her life.

A strange oppression has been on me the last two days. It seems to be overwhelming and sad and awe-inspiring. It is different from here, depression. It is as though it were the breaking of the last shell of consciousness. It is like gazing at something in the face, the fact that to my child, to my husband, and to Harry, I must be mother, and nothing will ever stand between me and the forces which are around me, but I will be eternally alone looking at these naked things always unprotected and then measuring them to the capacity of these several individuals bailing them and transforming these things that I see to meet the needs of each one while I see them in the raw, I have the feeling that this may be the real awakening consciousness of woman. It makes me feel appallingly alone. (H. Morgan 2021)

This quote shows that Morgan indeed saw herself as the mother-creator working with raw clay to shape and mold the men in her life. Although she acknowledged the loneliness of

the position, she still worked to meet “the needs of each one.” As Morgan focused her energies on the men’s needs, she lost herself. It may have been this mindset that caused Morgan to stay in the shadows and allow men to use her intellectual and artistic creations as their own.

Unfortunately, when Morgan’s personal vessel began to crack, none of the men in her life could patch or repair her.

On the morning of her death, the last words Morgan heard from Murray were, “You disgust me!” (Douglas 313) or “You’re disgusting!” (Robinson 357). Morgan opened a book to a passage and marked: “To be read over my grave” (Douglas 313). She removed the ring Murray had given her, carefully wrapped it in a bag, and left it safely on the sand. Then, she walked into the sea and did not return (Douglas 314).

Murray, the last person to see Morgan alive, began to tell conflicting narratives. Like TAT respondents prompted by an ambiguous scene, Murray told different stories to different people. In some letters, he wrote that he tried violently to revive her. To others, Murray wrote that they were discussing marriage during a morning swim, and she fainted. He told some that this was their routine swimming hour and others that she was never on the beach at that hour. Murray sent letters that said the Virgin Islands trip was a pre-honeymoon, and when they dipped their feet in the water that morning, Murray had to go back inside. “When he returned, he found her floating face down in the water” (Douglas 314).

Murray’s biographer who conducted more than 100 interviews with Murray (Josselson 35), notes that Murray “wrote to Alvan Barach, that she had suffered ‘one of her occasional heart attacks or fainting attacks as she was stepping down the steep slope of the soft coral sand’ and had then ‘fallen under water and drowned before regaining consciousness”

(Robinson 357). Robinson goes on to say that this account was “more plausible in the light of Christiana’s intoxication—she vomited alcohol in some quantity as Harry attempted to revive her on the sand” (357). Murray also wrote to Edwin Shneidman, Morgan and Murray’s colleague at the Harvard Psychological Clinic, telling a similar story. However, in Shneidman’s letter, Murray follows the heart attack account with “But at this time—after three beautiful weeks together in that balmy climate—she seemed to be at the top of her possible healthfulness and radiance and looking forward to our being married in May” (Shneidman 294). Shneidman notes that the news of marriage “shocked” him, and he was convinced that Murray “came to believe that only after she was dead” (294). Shneidman’s reasons for questioning Murray’s narrative were because he knew Murray was “disgusted” by Morgan’s alcoholism and that he had already begun a relationship with Caroline Chandler Fish. Like the true reason Harvard University Press removed Morgan’s name from the final TAT publication, we will never know the events leading up to and surrounding Morgan’s death.

Morgan’s biographer, Claire Douglas, is a clinical psychologist and Jung scholar who gives a lovely overview of Morgan at the end of her book. She notes that “Morgan envisioned a definition of a female self far different from the male invented one” and that during her time at the Harvard Psychological Clinic, she was instrumental in creating an environment and a “form of psychology that were potentially nonhierarchical and gender blind.” Morgan’s research “helped produce a third force in psychology between the Freudians and the behaviorists. It is from this third force that feminine psychology developed” (Douglas 316). Introducing Morgan at the forefront of this research is important because contributions from women like her have often gone unnoticed, suppressed, and erased from scholarship. This section helps readers

understand who Morgan was and the subjectivities she brought to the TAT images discussed in the following pages.

### *TAT Origin Stories*

Like Morgan's ambiguous images that prompted numerous stories, and the stories Murray told surrounding the scene of Morgan's death, the inspiration for the Thematic Apperception Test carries multiple origin stories. At least four origin stories of the therapeutic technique developed by Morgan and Murray exist. Versions of these stories have circulated from interviews with Henry A. Murray, various TAT publications, and recollections by former Harvard Psychological Clinic researchers.

The first story of influence predates the years of the TAT development decade. It is plausible that the idea came from Morgan's "trancing" of "visioning" therapies, which she learned from Carl Jung. Between 1926 and 1928, Morgan recorded over one hundred "visions" and painted many of them. Carl Jung, fascinated by Morgan's abilities, used forty-four of Morgan's paintings in his series of seminars (W. Morgan 424). Jung wrote to Morgan a year after she left Zurich, requesting she send him her book of recorded visions. He wanted to use them in a book he was contemplating. She complied and sent him her complete collection (Douglas 167).

The next origin story is that one of his students gave Murray the idea. Cecilia Roberts asked Murray about pictorial scenes and possibly using them to explore subjects' personalities in clinical settings. There are variations of this story, but one says that Roberts had given her son, who was sick at home, pictures from magazines, and he spent the day making up stories about them (W. Morgan 424). Rosenzweig, a researcher at the Harvard Clinic who sat in on the

meeting to discuss Cecelia Roberts' idea, corroborates the magazine-picture idea coming from Roberts (Douglas 203). Cecelia Roberts eventually married Harvard history professor Crane Brinton. Jane Roberts Gill, her daughter, remembers her mother's cynical comment that "Murray only recognized her mother's contribution publicly after she married Brinton and was once again part of the academic community in Cambridge" (W. Morgan 426). Cecilia Roberts had a successful and lengthy career as a psychologist.

Another origin story is that Murray, a lifelong Herman Melville scholar, believed Melville to be the "literary discoverer of another and more important part of nature, namely, the Darkest Africa of the mind, the mythological unconscious" (Miller 12). The story goes that Murray was actively studying Herman Melville's *Moby Dick*, notably the "Doubleloon Chapter," where multiple characters look upon the same image of a doubloon and offer different interpretations. In the novel, the characters' interpretations of the image give insight into how the characters perceive themselves. This story aligns closely with the TAT and how Morgan and Murray thought their ambiguous images would illicit narratives that revealed something about the respondents' subconscious.

The last origin story involves Thomas Wolfe's protagonist, Eugene Grant, from *Look Homeward, Angel: A Story of the Buried Life*. Nevitt Sanford, Murray's student in 1930, recalls Murray reading the book and bringing it to class. After reading Wolfe's book himself, a scene in the novel with its young protagonist struck Sanford. The book contained a scene where a teacher asked 11-year-old Eugene Grant and his fellow students to look at a picture and create a story. Sanford suggested this scenario as a method of evaluation to Murray. He maintained that Wolfe's influence on the TAT development was "common knowledge among the clinic staff

during the early years” (W. Morgan 427). However, other Harvard Psychological Clinic workers on staff during the early days of TAT development did not recall Sanford’s version (W. Morgan 427).

While we cannot settle upon a singular “true” origin story, the variation in the origin narratives mirrors the numerous stories, elicited by each of Morgan and Murray’s ambiguous social scenes in the TAT deck. Regardless of what prompted the TAT creation, it exists because Morgan and Murray followed their research questions about what respondents would reveal about themselves when prompted by their images and what these stories told about the respondents’ subconscious. While I am not interested in any research on the subconscious and what the individual narratives reveal about a single respondent’s personality, I have seen that the narratives as a collective corpus reveal how gendered characters are constituted by what the respondents pull from personal memories, historical discourse, and societal norms.

#### TAT Publication

After final edits to the ambiguous images were made and Christiana Morgan’s name was removed from authorship, the test was published as a thirty-one-picture-card deck with instructions to the psychoanalyst. Morgan and Murray numbered and marked each card as male, female, boy, or girl. The cards they did not mark for gender and age Morgan and Murray thought were suitable for all gender and age categories. The test instructions advised the psychoanalysts to set aside the images they thought suitable for their respondents before administering the test. While Morgan and Murray recommended twenty images given over two sessions, the psychoanalysts included in the archival narratives usually selected ten to twelve images.

After the psychoanalyst chose the images they thought appropriate for their respondent, they were ready to administer the test. Respondents were to create a narrative with a beginning, what led to the pictured event, a middle, what is happening in the pictured scene, and an end or the outcome of the narrative. The psychoanalyst told the respondents to address their characters' thoughts, feelings, and emotions. If a respondent omitted any of the listed elements, the evaluator could ask the respondent about the omissions. However, test instructions advised the psychoanalyst to avoid interjections and answering questions about pictured content during the test. Psychoanalysts were to record the stories verbatim and later scored for personality.

While the unreliable scoring system caused the test's popularity to wane, I am not concerned with how the psychoanalysts used the narratives to evaluate the respondent's personalities. What draws me to this archive of narratives is its unique opportunity to see how people who would not otherwise be considered authors create gendered characters. I wonder what gender-normative stories are prompted by the ambiguous pictures and if respondents perpetuate problematic value systems like the AI chatbots when creating their narratives. To amuse my feminist wonder, I enthusiastically dive into this writing studies project. The following chapters are my findings from the Critical Discourse Analysis with the help of the content analysis tool Voyant.

In chapter one, I discuss the narratives prompted by Card 1. Card 1 is an image of a little boy looking at a violin. While Card 1 only has one character visually represented, a mother and father character routinely appear in the narratives. With the help of content analysis tool Voyant, I take a closer look at the boy, mother, and father characters created and the discourse

surrounding them. This chapter focuses on the constitutions of gender normativity and how it affects the respondents' characters. The modifiers surrounding the characters exemplify how normative gender roles empower masculine positioning at an early age and how deviations from gender norms are othered by society and help maintain restrictive heteronormative constructs.

In chapter two, I look at the narratives prompted by Card 2. Card 2 is a rural farm scene with a female holding books in the foreground, a female leaning against a tree in the midground, and a man, possibly plowing, in the background. The narratives prompted by this card provide a unique opportunity to see how respondents create relational dynamics between diverse gendered characters and offer the chance to explore what they perpetuate with their social positionings and what gendered archetypes they reproduce. The respondents' relational dynamics of a heteronormative rural family created in the narratives suggest that limiting women to the gendered roles of wife and mother limits their ability to understand and see the world at large.

Finally, in chapter three, I examine the corpus writ large, noting how normative constructions of women are consistently invoked. These normative constructions of women have implications for our modern understanding of AI and its similar tendency to ascribe to the wife first, mother second, and then woman framework. Through Critical Discourse Analysis, I seek to explore the traditional formulas and frameworks surrounding the gender constitution, which is generationally perpetuated. The gender binary and the societal roles imposed upon us predate memory and self-constitution. Critical analysis of how we build gendered characters may help us dismantle these imposed frameworks.

## Chapter One: Card 1



The following quote is a narrative prompted by Card 1, given by a “young man” respondent.

This young fellow’s mother wants him to take the violin lessons. Now, this young fellow, he doesn’t intend to do this because he doesn’t like it. So, he’s just sitting there, thinking how he could like to bounce his mother on the head with the violin. So, the outcome of the story is that he ends up by taking his violin lessons because his father steps in, and he wouldn’t dare bounce his father on the head with the violin.

Card 1 is a drawn copy, by Christiana D. Morgan, of a black-and-white photo of the young prodigy violinist Yehudi Menuhin taken by photographer Samuel Lumiere (W. Morgan 432).

Morgan and Murray labeled this card suitable for all age and gender respondents, and psychoanalysts routinely used it during testing.

### *Card 1 Findings*

There are 113 total narratives prompted by Card 1 in the corpus. I transcribed fifty-eight from publications and fifty-five from the Cummings Center Archives of the History of American Psychology in Akron, Ohio. While the boy is the only person depicted in the image, mother and father earn equal mentions throughout the narratives prompted by Card 1. Of the 12,594 total words, boy earns 114 mentions, while father (Dad) and mother (Mama) maintain a close frequency with sixty-one and fifty-six mentions, respectively. To explore the gendered descriptions and the discourse surrounding the characters the respondents created, I take a closer look at the words boy, mother (Mama), father (Dad), and parents.

Figure 1 shows the top ten most frequent words in the corpus and examples of usage. Boy, mother, and father are all characters that appear in the top-ten list of most frequently used words.

**Figure 1**

Word	Number of mentions	Usage Examples
Violin*	275	<p><b>n:</b> Well, this boy is looking at his <b>violin</b> and trying to think of a way to get out of playing it.</p> <p><b>n:</b> Then his father had brought him home a <b>violin</b> which he didn't want to play.</p> <p><b>n:</b> This young fellow's mother wants him to take the <b>violin</b> lessons.</p>
Boy*	121	<p><b>n:</b> his <b>boy</b> has probably had some interest in working with his hands.</p> <p><b>n:</b> Little Jimmy is a normal little <b>boy</b> about eight years old.</p> <p><b>n:</b> This little <b>boy</b> whose father was a musician forced his younger child into playing the violin.</p> <p><b>n:</b> The small <b>boy</b> hates to play the violin and his mother has made him practice because she hopes that someday he'll be a great musician.</p>
Play	92	<p><b>v:</b> Practice your lesson for an hour or you can't go out to <b>play</b> today.</p>

		<p><b>v:</b> Before playing he begins dreaming of what it would be like to be able to play as a virtuoso, i.e., a child virtuoso.</p> <p><b>v:</b> “What the hell for I have to <b>play</b> this thing for,” he is thinking to himself.”</p>
Practice*	72	<p><b>n:</b> After this period of contemplation, he does devote himself more strenuously to his <b>practice</b>.</p> <p><b>v:</b> His mother wants him to <b>practice</b> but he doesn’t really think that practicing will get him anywhere.</p> <p><b>adj:</b> Here in the picture, he has just finished a <b>practice</b> session and he is very disappointed with the squeaky sounds he has produced, and he is wondering if it is worthwhile to go on.</p>
Music	54	<p><b>n:</b> Jim uses his <b>music</b> as a steppingstone to friendliness and cheer, not in a great symphonic orchestra but in his home and in neighborly circles.</p> <p><b>n:</b> Underneath his violin is a score of music.</p> <p><b>adj:</b> The <b>music</b> lessons apparently were forced on him by his parents, he was reluctant but did his best for a while, finally he refused to attend any more <b>music</b> lessons, and became a disobedient child in other ways as well.</p>
Mother*	59	<p><b>n:</b> His <b>mother</b> wants him to play it and be a good violinist.</p> <p><b>n:</b> So, he’s just sitting there, thinking how he could like to bounce his <b>mother</b> on the head with the violin.</p> <p><b>n:</b> Thanks to the foresight and loving guidance of his <b>mother</b>, the man made a success with his musical knowledge in the cultural world.</p>
Father*	58	<p><b>n:</b> His <b>father</b> has lately returned from a concert tour and has left the instrument on the table.</p> <p><b>n:</b> Then his <b>father</b> had brought him home a violin which he didn’t want to play.</p> <p><b>n:</b> So the outcome of the story is that he ends up by taking his violin lessons because his <b>father</b> steps in, and he wouldn’t dare bounce his <b>father</b> on the head with the violin.</p>
playing	53	<p><b>v:</b> The boy is dejected for he had planned to spend the afternoon <b>playing</b> baseball with the neighborhood gang.</p> <p><b>v:</b> A dream has come true, and the following night Steven is seen for the first time <b>playing</b> his cello for the symphony.</p> <p><b>v:</b> As he grew older, he began to become famous, and at the age of 35 he was <b>playing</b> at an opera house.</p>
little	53	<p><b>adj:</b> And so, it was Mama who kept up her persistence and the <b>little</b> boy grew to enjoy his practice.</p> <p><b>adj:</b> This is a <b>little</b> son or a little boy that is looking at his violin and he don’t know just what to do about it, whether to continue playing or whether he’s realizing that someday he will be a great violinist.</p> <p><b>adj:</b> This <b>little</b> boy is an only child.</p>
Like	[48	<p><b>prep:</b> Jimmy can’t understand why his parents make him play the violin when he is planning on someday being a fireman, and he doesn’t plan on sitting around playing the fiddle <b>like</b> some emperor did.</p> <p><b>v:</b> Billy still did not <b>like</b> to play the strings of his violin.</p> <p><b>v:</b> He <b>liked</b> the sound and tried it again.</p>

*Boy: An otherwise perfectly normal child*

Since the boy is the most prominent character throughout the corpus, analysis begins with him. Twenty-one respondents gave the boy a proper name. The recurring names given to the little boy are Jim, Jimmy, John, or Johnny, likely because these names were popular during the mid-twentieth century (United States).

Three times in the narratives, respondents described the boy as *normal*. One respondent uses the word *normal* to express a balance between working hard and having time for other boyish things. “He works hard at [the violin] but loves it, so it’s really not work. Of course, he doesn’t spend all his time working. He is, after all, a *normal*, healthy boy. He’ll be a good violinist.” The second respondent juxtaposes peculiar and normal when describing the little boy. “This is a very peculiar child. He has always wanted to play his mother’s violin. Otherwise, he’s a perfectly *normal* child.” This respondent’s choice of positioning “Otherwise,” between calling the boy peculiar and noting his desire to play his mother’s violin and then stating, “he’s a perfectly normal child,” implies that a boy wanting to emulate his mother by playing her violin is not a “normal” choice for a male child. The final use of *normal* in the dataset defines what the respondent believes to be a *normal little boy*.

Little Jimmy is a *normal* little boy about eight years old. He is a member of the neighborhood gang and loves nothing better than to go out and hunt snakes, tadpoles, and all sorts of insects. Besides that, he is second base on the gang baseball team, and now that it is four-thirty, his mother calls him in to practice his violin. The boy *has had to play* the violin for three years. All the fellows *razz* him because he has to go in daily at four-thirty to practice, and in his mind, Jimmy can’t understand why his parents make

him play the violin when he is planning on someday being a fireman, and he doesn't plan on sitting around playing the fiddle like some emperor did.

This respondent describes what they believe to be normal behavior for an eight-year-old boy; none of the "normal" activities they list include playing the violin. Being a member of the neighborhood gang, hunting snakes, tadpoles, and insects, playing second base on the gang's baseball team, and aspirations of becoming a fireman are what this respondent believes to be *normal* behavior for a boy and his gang of eight-year-olds. Because the boy "has had to play the violin" and for three years at "four-thirty, his mother calls him in to practice," he receives a razzing by his fellows.

The razzing by his fellow eight-year-olds for stepping outside the *normal* gendered practices implies a conditioning of societal masculine norms in first and second-grade boys. When breaking from those norms, an eight-year-old boy risks shame or embarrassment. In *Living a Feminist Life*, Sara Ahmed explains deviating from social norms as a series of "nots." "Not to inhabit a nor (or not quite to inhabit a norm) can be experienced as not dwelling so easily where you reside. You might be asked questions; you might be made to feel questionable, so that you come to feel that you do not belong in the places you experience as home, you might turn up and not be allowed in or find it too uncomfortable to stay" (Ahmed 115). His daily practicing of the violin offsets the boy's normative gendered activities like playing baseball and hunting for snakes. It causes him to "not quite inhabit" his social surroundings. The respondent believes these routine practices make the boy feel questionable about why his parents have him playing the violin when he plans to position himself in the historically masculine role of a fireman.

Twenty times the respondents positioned the boy as not wanting to play the violin, and twenty-one times the boy would rather be beyond the walls of the domestic sphere participating in an outdoor activity, such as baseball, football, swimming, hunting tadpoles and insects, or playing cops and robbers. One respondent says the “boy genius” will give up the violin and “be happy playing baseball with other children his age.” Twice, the boy who does not want to play the violin is called a *sissy* when practice is enforced. While all the findings suggest that gender norms are prevalent throughout the narratives, twenty-one percent of the respondents surround their young boy characters with masculine gender norms. In doing so, they create environments where behaviors seen as feminine normative practices can be weaponized by peers. In *Globalization and Militarism: Feminists Make the Link*, Cynthia Enloe warns us that as “long as any culture remains patriarchal, then feminization can be wielded as an instrument of intimidation” on “any person, group, or activity that can be feminized” (102). The TAT narratives show us that respondents deem practicing the violin as a feminized activity and, by calling him a feminine term like a *sissy*, they place the young boy as a casualty of weaponized intimidation.

Respondents describe the boy in the image as *angry, unhappy, dejected, disgusted, compromising, stubborn, persistent, brooding, reluctant, and rebellious* when forced to practice. He feels *angry, tortured, discouraged, disgusted, disappointed, depressed, miserable, revolting, rebellious, tired, and hateful* while sitting in front of the instrument he does not want to play. Often, the boy overcomes his feelings and practices the violin, but he wishes he could toss it in the garbage, break it, or bounce it on someone's head. Three respondents note that the boy

complies with practice but does not become a great violinist. Careers mentioned that the little boy holds when he grows up are a lawyer, mechanic, veterinarian, and engineer.

The negative emotions surrounding a little boy who does not want to play the violin imply that the boy feels peer pressure to perform his gendered role. His negative emotions prompted by his act of playing the violin may stem from his performance conflicting with the role assigned to him by his family as a male child. Judith Butler acknowledges that gender is a rehearsed proscriptive act one performs when they arrive on the familial scene because the script predates the actors and performing it correctly reproduces social reality (“Performative Acts” 526). If playing the violin deviates from the boy script he has been assigned, he could be seen as a bad-gendered actor. This deviating performance could be the source of his *angry*, *depressed*, and *rebellious* emotions.

Fifty-three respondents create a little boy who plays, wants to play, or enjoys playing the violin. When the little boy wants to play the violin, “*no one understands him*” and is described as *sensitive* (2), *peculiar*, *intelligent*, *genius*, *ambitious*, *determined*, *contemplative*, *cold*, *aloof*, *not unfriendly*, *not outgoing*, “*not like a typical ‘weak’ passive personality most introverts are,*” a “*child prodigy*” (2) or a “*child virtuoso,*” *strange*, *dejected*, *downhearted*, *disgusted (by his novice musical skills)*, *a dreamer*, *methodical*, *proficient*, *peculiar*, “*a poor little dope... a plump little chap. No reason why he doesn’t play football,*” *lonely*, and “*a young boy with a gifted sense of appreciation of things unlearned.*” One respondent says, “his friends regard him as a sissy and not quite like one of them” because of his desire to play the violin, echoing the shame of participating in unmasculine social norms like the eight-year-old boy who was “razed by his fellows.”

Heteronormative expectations, or proscriptive performative acts constituted by familial positioning, place the little boy who deviates from these heteronormative practices in a third space. While third spaces, borderlands, or margins are where new identities emerge, they are spaces often unfamiliar to those operating within traditional binaries (Anzaldúa, hooks).

Describing the little boy as sensitive, peculiar, strange, a “little dope,” and lonely indicates that the respondents identify a deviation from heteronormative masculine behavior. This deviation from the norm is recognized as someone not comfortably fitting into the gendered binary. Sara Ahmed notes that

Heteronormativity functions as a form of public comfort by allowing bodies to extend into spaces that have already taken their shape. Those spaces are lived as comfortable, as they allow bodies to fit in; the surfaces of social space are already impressed upon by the shape of such bodies (like a chair that acquires its shape by the repetition of some bodies inhabiting it: we can almost see the shape of bodies as impressions in the surface. (123).

Such normative impressions are evident when the respondent describes the gendered body of the little boy as “a plump little chap. No reason why he doesn’t play football.” In the respondent’s eyes, the acquired shape of a child gendered as male does not correspond with the visual image of a boy sitting in front of a violin.

#### *Father: One to Imitate*

Even though Card 1 shows no visual depiction of a paternal figure, respondents routinely include a father character in the corpus of narratives. Father (61) or Dad (4) is mentioned sixty-five times, making him the second most prominent character within the Card 1

dataset. Respondents never give the father a proper name. Fourteen respondents position the violin as a connection between the little boy and his father. These relationship connection narratives may be iterations elicited from similar experiences of the authors themselves. One respondent noted that the boy's fascination with the instrument began when his father "took him along to hear a famous violinist play at the Opera House." Eight respondents note that the violin belongs or belonged to the little boy's musician father, whom the little boy desires to emulate. Respondents describe the musician fathers as *celebrated*, *proficient*, *great*, and *applauded*. Never is the father character referred to as *peculiar* or *otherwise normal* when referenced as being a violinist.

Depicting a father musician deemed worthy of imitation and the lack of modifiers that deviate from gender normativity concerning a father musician implies that once the impressionable body of a boy violinist becomes a proficient violinist in grown-man form, the fear of him not fitting into comfortable socially gendered shaped spaces dissipates for the respondent. It could also imply that some respondents could not imagine the *peculiar* little boy sitting with the instrument blazing a different path to success outside the masculine normative professions without giving him a successful father to imitate.

One musician father "*forced* his younger child into playing the violin," and one "*instructed* Billy twice a week" on how to play the violin. The father who instructed Billy was not only the reason the little boy played the violin, but he also actively played the role of violin instructor and facilitated practice. The only other time a respondent mentioned a father related to practice is when the little boy's father intervenes due to the boy refusing his mother's request to practice. Twice, the father purchases or brings home the violin for his son. Bringing

home a purchase implies that the father has a job outside the domestic sphere and has the financial agency to make these purchases. Only once is the father against his son's desire to play the violin and thinks it is a "waste of money."

*Mother: The persistent enforcer of practice*

Mother is the third most mentioned character in the Card 1 dataset. Respondents mention Mother (57) or Mama (2) fifty-nine times within the corpus. Like the father, there is no visual representation of a maternal figure in the image. Only once is the mother character given a proper name. However, like many women of the time, "*Mrs. Albert Jerome's*" identity is suppressed by her marital bond with Albert Jerome. Not only did this mother character drop her maiden name and take her husband's last name upon marriage, but she lost her first name, too. Labeling her as Mrs. Albert Jerome confines her identity to the wife's role to her husband. Seventeen respondents describe a mother who desires their son to play the violin. These mothers *wanted, insisted, made, and forced* the boy when it came to practice. When the little boy is outside playing with his friends, these mothers "told" the boy to come inside or "called" (2) the little boy inside when he was outdoors playing with his friends.

Physical force or restraint is evident as the respondents note that the mother "grabbed him... and sat him down," *locked* him into practice, and *scolded* and *reprimanded* him for not practicing. The normative role of mother tasks the woman with the labor of raising the children and becomes the enforcer of practice. Like the limited options of a child who is forced to take part in a practice created for them, the roles created for women can be equally frustrating.

We see youthful frustration when a mother's desire for her son to practice makes her the target of physical violence as the little boy wants to "bounce his mother on the head with

the violin.” In this narrative, the little boy “ends up taking his violin lessons because his father steps in, and he wouldn’t dare bounce his father on the head with the violin. Why would this little boy perform an act of violence on his mother that he would not dare perform on his father? The answer may be found in Judith Butler’s discussion of scripted gendered norms that “originate within the family and are enforced through certain familial modes of punishment and reward” (“Performative Acts” 526). The respondent’s ideas of family roles, scripts, and scenes performed and passed on from previous generations may have played into this narrative. This respondent may have witnessed a man, husband, or father physically discipline a woman, wife, or mother within the domestic sphere and felt the little boy inherited the male role of punisher to an inadequate female.

For context, it was not until the late 1960s that domestic violence became a public safety issue. Previously, the law widely viewed domestic violence as a private matter and was routinely ignored by lawmakers and police. The normative discourse of the day viewed physical violence from a husband to his wife as acceptable enough that it was used in magazine advertisements.



(Cabiness)

This Chase and Sanborn coffee ad published in *Life* magazine in 1952, screams a warning to women: “If he ever finds out you’re not ‘store-testing’ for freshness... if he discovers you’re still taking chances on getting flat, stale coffee... woe be unto you (Cabiness)!” The advertisers paired the written warning with a man seated in a chair disciplining a woman by spanking her while lying in his lap. The advertisers were likely taking a comedic approach when they chose

this campaign. However, humor must have a thread of truth to be compelling. This advertisement gives evidence of the physical power a man had over a woman and his gendered right to enforce punishment during this time.

If male children, while in the act of what Judith Butler calls “self-crafting,” saw their fathers physically “punish” their mothers for inadequately playing their role as wives, it would not be farfetched for him to imagine inflicting physical violence on his inadequate mother as well. Butler says self-crafting “always takes place in relation to an imposed set of norms” (Giving 19). Therefore, the implication of males having the power to punish females says that all males, regardless of age, have an imposed normative power over all females.

The respondents describe the mother characters as persistent (2) and stubborn when they enforce violin practice and become the source of the boy’s anger (3). One respondent noted that Mother is very permissive and balanced, yet gives the following aside, “unlike the one I had.” Only once does the *peculiar* boy want to play his mother’s violin. Only one respondent creates a mother character who bargains with her unwilling son and “tries to inspire him.” Not once is a mother solely responsible for purchasing or bringing the violin home to the little boy. None of the respondents gave Mother a profession outside the domestic sphere or had her take the little boy outside the home to watch a performance.

*Parents: As a heteronormative unit*

In the U.S. during the 1940s, 50s, and 60s, society defined parents as a heterosexual couple. Betty Friedan quotes an article in Time magazine published in the 1950s that defines *marriage* as “a true partnership in which ... men are men, women are women, and both are quietly, pleasantly, securely confident of which they are – and absolutely delighted to find

themselves married to someone of the opposite sex” (55). Once Time Magazine’s heteronormative partnership leads to marriage, the couple is ready to assume the socially acceptable role of parents.

Parents are mentioned thirty-five times in the Card 1 Dataset. The use of “parents” instead of “mother” or “father” implies equal disbursement of labor and responsibility in raising the little boy. The little boy’s parents forced him to practice the violin six times. These parents *locked* the boy in his room, *“insisted that he belonged to them,” forced (2), pushed, drove, demanded, or made* the little boy practice the violin. Only once is the little boy *encouraged* by his parents to practice the violin. One respondent creates a set of parents who are professional musicians. Using the inclusionary term “parents,” this respondent was the only one who gave the little boy’s mother a profession outside the domestic sphere.

### *Conclusion*

The findings from the Card 1 Dataset illustrate how even when the ambiguous scene did not depict parental figures alongside a little boy, they routinely appear in the narratives. The respondents had no facial expressions or body language to help them characterize the little boy’s mother and father. However, the modifiers used align with the gendered discourse of the day. Keeping the mother characters inside and calling the little boy into the domestic sphere, while fathers brought the violin into the home and took the little boy to see famous musicians, echoes the confinement women experienced when they were encouraged to return to their gendered roles after WWII and the mobility that men continued to have.

Critical Discourse Analysis of the Card 1 Dataset and the historical context of gender norms clearly show that the respondent’s narratives and characterizations reverberate the

gendered discourse of the day. At the same time, society set men up to be the providers who brought home the violin and fathers worthy of emulation by their sons; the same gender norms trapped women within the domestic sphere to follow a confined existence. Betty Friedan, in *The Feminine Mystique*, called the new housewife image or characterization after WWII a man-produced formula (49). This formula frames the individual character as wife first (a girl must find a man), mother second (a girl must have children), and woman last. This framework emphasizes the roles women play and not the women themselves.

The TAT respondents, many of whom were well-educated graduate students, businesspeople, and teachers, sat in a room of judgment through the eyes of a psychoanalyst and created socially acceptable narratives filled with gender biases that followed the formula Freidan mentions. Many of the scenes created by the respondents show anger for a mother and praise for a father. One example of anger surrounding a mother character is when the boy becomes “very angry at his mother” for “insisting” he play the violin. Another respondent notes that the little boy “hates to play his violin” and becomes angry when his mother “makes” him practice; “so angry that he breaks the violin.” The father is praised when a respondent notes that the little boy “worshipped” him as a “great musician” and dreams of becoming “as proficient as his father” on the violin. One father is praised as a “famous violinist” who is “celebrated.” Phrases like “calls him in to practice” limit the mother inside the domestic sphere, while “brought home the violin” show the father’s freedom to make purchases and explore the world beyond the home. Descriptions of a peculiar or a normal child show society’s fear of difference and the need to refrain from deviating from socially gendered norms.

Discourse that limits women to the domestic sphere has significant societal consequences and can change how authors, respondents, and AI chatbots create women characters. In her narrative study, Friedan traces the changes in women's magazines and how they depicted the American woman in her second chapter, "The Happy Housewife Heroine." Women protagonists in the published short stories went from "trailblazers" and "spirited career girls" to heroines finding "fulfillment only at the moment of giving birth to a child" (Friedan 23-66). The changes to these short story heroines happened during a mere decade. History shows us that we must be cognizant of how discourse can and does change society's perception of the people suppressed by gender roles.

**Chapter Two: Card 2**

Card 2 is a visual depiction of an outdoor rural farm scene. In the foreground, a young woman stands holding books. An older woman leaning against a tree (possibly pregnant) stands in the midground. In the background, a man stands with his back turned to the viewer (perhaps plowing) with a horse. A male respondent of unknown age created the following narrative when shown Card 2.

A young girl finds herself torn between a devotion to family and desire for adventure. She has felt the stirring of awakening womanhood and wishes to be starting a family of her own – to be pregnant like her mother – to have a strong husband like her father. But even as she daydreams her own thoughts reawaken her senses of duty and turns her back to her family with a mixture of guilt and cares. She has always worked hard and been a “good” girl. She will soon find fulfillment in marriage.

Card 2 is one of only three cards in the TAT deck with three or more people visually depicted and is the only card with two females and one male character in the scene. Like Card 1, Morgan and Murray labeled this card suitable for all age and gender respondents and popular with psychoanalysts. The narratives from Card 2 provide a unique opportunity to see how respondents create relational dynamics between diverse gendered characters and offer the chance to explore what they perpetuate with their social positionings and what gendered archetypes they reproduce.

### *Card 2 Findings*

There are eighty-two total narratives prompted by Card 2 in the corpus. Thirty-nine of the narratives are from publications, and forty-three are from the Cummings Center Archives of the History of American Psychology in Akron, Ohio. Figure 2 shows the ten most frequently used words in the dataset, their number of usage, and use examples. Out of the 10,472 words in the Card 2 Dataset, the gendered characters *girl*, *mother*, and *man* make the top ten. However, it is intriguing that *woman* and *father* are absent from the top-ten list. *Woman* was the eleventh most frequently used word, and *Father* was the eighteenth. This absence calls for further exploration, which I discuss in Chapter 3.

Figure 2

Word	Number of mentions	Usage Examples
girl	106	n: The girl comes home from school. Soon after this she goes away to the city to pursue more intellectual interests. n: Well, this girl's family was illiterate, and she was quite a bright person and wanted to go to school.
farm	87	n: Katrina though, has ideas of furthering her education; of leaving the farm for a larger city, of becoming a career girl.

		<b>v:</b> A school girl pauses on her way to classes after noticing a man and woman farming one of their fields.
school	82	<b>adj &amp; n:</b> The young girl in the foreground is a schoolgirl with books under her arm and has come out to the field to discuss a problem, maybe she needs more spending money for something at school.
mother	71	<b>n:</b> She is assuring her mother that her hard work and intelligence will make her mother's life happy.
life	50	<b>n:</b> The woman to the right seems pregnant. She stands for the elements of birth, friction, and life, the vital forces that move the community.
family	45	<b>n:</b> She will break with her family – not actually. but the lines of communication will get worse and worse. And she will always try to make her family understand her way of life but will never succeed.
work	43	<b>n:</b> She is on her way to school and hesitates a moment to reflect on the differences – her parents have been hard-working, self-sacrificing, and earnest in their work. <b>v:</b> The father is working hard. The mother who is pregnant and therefore cannot work.
man	40	<b>n:</b> She walks slowly by the fields, highly envious of the mother and fantasizing about what it would be like to be a paramour of the man.
home	40	<b>n:</b> The scene shows her leaving her farm home and her parents don't seem to notice her and she will probably somehow get her education and be happy.
young	39	<b>adj:</b> But the young lady on the left is dressed in more sophisticated clothes, carrying books with a faraway look in her eyes and again, rather expressionless face showing neither happiness nor unhappiness – only puzzlement.

### *Family Dynamics and Love Triangles*

Out of the eighty-two narratives in the Card 2 dataset, thirty-four respondents create a family dynamic of father, mother, and daughter. However, as seen in the top-ten list above, respondents mention mother thirty-seven percent more than father. Other family dynamic relationship narratives include mother, daughter, son (6), husband, wife, and wife's sister (2).

Outside of the familial father, mother, and daughter, dynamic eight respondents create love-triangle narratives between the two women and the male character. Five respondents create love triangles between a wife, husband, and schoolgirl. One narrative has mother and

daughter competing for the hired hand's affection. One narrative has a pregnant wife consenting to her husband's advances on her younger sister, who flees his advances and the farm. Four respondents create narratives that have the young girl romantically interested in the other woman's son. Three respondents focus on the man in the scene, ignoring the women in the image. Two respondents focus on the women, ignoring the man. Four respondents ignore all relationships between the characters and simply describe the rural scene.

The substantial number of narratives that include the traditional father, mother, and daughter relationship is not surprising since the respondents were likely born into or had experiences with the conventional heteronormative family. However, the deviations from the family dynamics are fascinating. Creating a love triangle narrative between the characters and narratives where the man is the love interest of the young girl exemplifies the linking of a woman's social value to her social positioning to males. Finding a man is necessary if a woman wants to create her own family narrative and become a part of normative society. The nine respondents who chose to ignore either the man or the two women in the scene imply that respondents did not want to deal with the relational dynamics within the gender binary.

#### *A Deviating Desire for Education*

Twenty-eight respondents create narratives where the young girl desires an education and/or an escape from her family's farm life. Five respondents create girl characters that want a man or marriage. In six narratives, the girl character achieves an education and then marries. Two of these young girl characters return to the farm to marry a farmer, and four marry outside their hometown. Fifteen narratives include mothers, fathers, or parents who are against their daughter's education and want her to follow tradition. Nine narratives include a mother and

daughter character in conflict over the daughter's desire to want more than her mother's life. One respondent notes that the girl could not be solely responsible for her college ambition and described her father as "heroic" for his "progressive" thinking in wanting his daughter to have a college education. Two daughter characters dream of leaving the farm but cannot escape. Two escaped the farm but regretted their decision and came back. Only two narratives have mothers who want their daughters to get an education.

As stated, thirty-four percent of the narratives portray the young girl wanting to escape her current situation through education. While education may be a deviation from farming tradition, some respondents responsible for these narratives may have recognized that the limitations placed on young girls are problematic and arbitrary, so creating an escape for her may have been a way for them to push back against gender norms. The sentiment of the young girl's escape is evident in phrases like *must have more, seeing beyond the farm, wants to do greater things, rejection of farm life, break from farming, must break, and seeking*. The scene descriptions and the daughter's desire to "break" from her life suggest she is not in a liberatory space but one of suppression. The respondent's biases toward farm life cannot be the sole link to the daughter's desire to escape. What other related powers are promoting a desire to escape? I explore these questions in Foucault's suggestion that power is a network that results in one always being inside power. I also look to Judith Butler's idea that when the "I" seeks to give an account of oneself, the "I" is already implicated in a social narrative that is a story based on a "set of relations" and norms (7-8). Imagining a net when thinking about Foucault's network of power and the blanket of entrapment over Butler's self-accounting "I" long before memory begins, we can see how closely knotted power relations are. The multiple powers of the family

institution are knotted adjacent to the power of bias in these narratives. A family institution has an established set of relations and a normative narrative.

Positioning the daughter character inside a farming family rooted in traditions and gendered norms adds to the force relation network within the narratives. Foucault suggests that power is the name one gives a “complex strategical situation in a particular society” (209). The family unit is the complex strategic situation in which the Card 2 characters find themselves. Even though the young girl may escape her situation through resistance and education, she always exists within power because she cannot escape her character role as a daughter within the existing social story of her original family unit. We see the complex strategic situations one cannot escape when four narratives include daughters leaving the farm to pursue an education and returning home due to *failure, regret, or to marry* a farmer. Though not addressed in these narratives, one can assume the respondents’ constitutions of the daughter character include the suppressive power of rural biases. The imposed biases of a lesser intellect due to her rural education background and dialect may also be factors in her failure to succeed in her unfamiliar urban educational environment. The young girl’s family positioning as a daughter and her rural class origins are closely tied together as powers that could play into how these respondents created the narratives surrounding her.

Seventy-one percent of the educational escape narratives have parents who oppose the young daughter’s resistance and desire for education. One set of parents feels that an educated woman is an “anachronism.” One girl’s parents “just laughed at her. What was good enough for them was all right for her.” These examples and others that include sentiments of “proper tradition” and “follow[ing] the pattern of generations of farmers’ wives” exemplify and support

the imposed normative narrative inherited from generations past that perceive a woman's place is in the home. Describing the young girl as an anachronism is an interesting choice of modifier. The respondent could imply that a formal education is impractical for a farmgirl who will likely follow in her matriarch's footsteps and become a farmer's wife. On the other hand, the respondent could be relying on their awareness of the social context of the day and how it encouraged women to forego education and return to the home. Whatever the influence, the respondent clarifies that an educated woman does not conform to traditional gender norms.

Following deep-rooted generational roles and traditional norms are often inherited societal and familial rules that constitute gender and predate our memory and agency as self-narrating beings. Butler discusses "self-crafting" and how it "always takes place in relation to an imposed set of norms" (19). These imposed norms constitute each family member, and they are likely unaware of the originator of these generational rules. Resisting tradition may result in oppositional positioning between the offender, family members, and their community.

Education as a deviant alternative to traditional gender roles is a running theme throughout these narratives. Only two corpus respondents create a mother who wants her daughter to pursue an education. The lack of support for education implies that education is not only a means to escape the farm but also a pathway toward escaping the gendered restrictions that society has placed on women. Today's political climate and contemporary themes of women returning to the home as Tradwives on social media echo the historical discourse of the respondents.

### *Class Biases*

Most of the families depicted in the narratives own the farmland. Only twice are the characters farming someone else's land. While land ownership is an accomplishment, negative descriptive words surround the farm-scene narratives and the characters. The descriptions include not *happy, hard, dull and drab, simple, menial, unenjoyable, some kind of agony, and empty and sad*. These descriptions set a scene of inferior existence that echoes the societal biases around farming communities and country living. These biases function as a moving substrate of force that positions urbanized living above farmers. Like gender biases, there is no rule enforcing the inferiority of farming, but a set of ideas, images, and assumptions that circulate to create these negative connotations about farms and farmers.

By noting the class biases within the narratives, I am acknowledging that another set of societal codes alongside gender norms may be influencing the respondents' way of constituting their characters and relationships. If the respondent sees the farming scene as *dull and drab, simple, or empty and sad*, this could influence how intellectually or socially capable they think the characters are of achieving their desires, regardless of gender. One example where the power of dual societal codes could influence the narratives is found in the following lines after the respondent sets the scene as *simple*: "She is almost driven by her own abilities and needs. She almost envies the farm life but knows it would never be enough for her." Positioning the girl as "*almost driven by her own abilities*" and "*almost envies the farm life,*" the respondent considers the girl's intrinsic motivations. These motivations could be driven by her desire to exceed the gender and class biases in which she finds herself. The use of "almost" shows that the girl borders on these desires but does not quite reach them. Limiting her to *almost*

achieving her goals could be because the respondent sees the challenges the young girl will face if she rejects the traditional familial role of her mother and receives an education. The respondent may also be acknowledging the intellectual challenges she will face due to her simple upbringing on the farm.

#### *Mother and Father's Opinions on Education*

Two-thirds of the educational escape narratives have the mother opposing her daughter's desire for an education. Only one narrative included a supportive mother. The mother's opposition to her daughter's choices may be a symptom of her entrapment within the gendered narrative written by society. The daughter's desire to create a counter-narrative is an attempt to self-craft her story. However, assignment as female at birth imposes a weight of historical oppression and constitutes an othered self that is always defined in relation to males. This relational positioning has caused women to be historically marginal to the male-educated and working members of society. It implies that the intelligence of a woman is inferior to that of a man and best serves masculine culture when limited to the domestic sphere.

Evidence of an imposed intellectual deficit echoes in the following sentiments included in the narratives with an oppositional mother. One mother "thought differently" about her daughter's education. One could not "understand" her daughter's desire for education." Another asked, "Why couldn't [her daughter] be content to stay at home and marry a farmer like her Pa? Couldn't Mama see times were changing?" One mother is "unsure whether to approve or blame," and another mother is "upset over the girl's new way toward life." These sentiments provided by the respondents that surround mother characters give evidence of respondents who have lived in a gender binary system filled with power relations that suppress

normative resistance. Raising a daughter who breaks from this implied set of rules puts the mother at risk of society deeming her a failure. After all, her given vocation is farmwife and mother, and these roles imply that she is the all-knowing gender when it comes to raising children. Society gauges a mother's competency by her successes and failures. Therefore, raising and supporting an othered child puts her at risk of judgment as an incompetent mother by society.

Evidence of gender normativity as it relates to women being intellectually inferior echoes in the narrative that defines an educated woman as an *anachronism* and laughing at the daughter who desires an education.

The power of gender norms that position women in relationship to men at birth permeates from the narrative that calls the daughter *ambitious* and declares the act of her attending college an *achievement*, then gives credit to the girl's father who *spurred* his daughter on. After all, the father is "responsible" for this "progressive" way of thinking that resulted in sending his daughter to college. After noting that the daughter is an *exception* and *ambitious*, the respondent pauses to question,

[W]ho is responsible for this! Surely not completely she herself! Her father, the man plowing his field, is the prime mover! Himself a realistic farmer, he also has a strong streak of idealism. When he came back to his village after World War II, he also brought back many new and progressive ideas. It was too late for him to change much, either himself or his wife – the other figure. But the daughter, who was about 3 at that time, got the benefit. She, spurred by father, encouraged by mother, finished high school, and is now attending college. It is hard on the father. Already, he had to sell three of the four horses he had. But he is not to be daunted. Nothing, absolutely nothing, can daunt him! Such is the stuff; the heroic figures--heroic in their own quiet way--are made (Unknown Respondent).

The respondent depicts the father as the *heroic prime mover* of the scene. However, should a father receive these affirmations for *spurring* his daughter toward an education? What does

this say about gendered discourse when receiving a fundamental human right becomes an achievement? With their word choice, the respondent positions the *heroic prime-mover* father, who *spurred* his daughter to finish high school, as a livestock owner and positions the daughter as a possession to control. Adrienne Rich calls patriarchy “the power of the fathers: a familial-social, ideological, political system in which men—by force, direct pressure, or through ritual, tradition, law, and language, [...] and the division of labor, determine what part women shall or shall not play, and in which the female is everywhere subsumed under the male” (“Of Woman” 57). Since this male heroic prime mover fathered the daughter and is positioned to determine the part she will play, she benefits from his *new and progressive ideas*

#### *Competition Between Mother and Daughter*

Only two of the thirty-four respondents who create a family dynamic with a mother and daughter develop mothers who support their daughter’s desire for an education. The other respondents use modifiers that imply a daughter’s offensive competitive drive to do better than her mother or a mother who exhibits defensive efforts to limit her daughter’s success. The modifiers that imply a competitive drive within the daughter to achieve more than her mother include two daughters who are *appalled* and *disgusted* by their mother *expecting another baby*. One of these daughters wants to tell her mother that she will not grow up to be “*poor and have children and be worn out at the age of fifty. She is resolved to not live the kind of life her mother is living.*” One daughter rejects her mother’s wishes for her to “become a farm wife and live as their ancestors have lived for centuries.” While one daughter *identifies* with her mother, another ponders how “mother lost some of her beauty with each passing year;” neither of these daughters wants to become what their mother has become. One daughter wanted to

“make a place for herself in the world,” *hated* the life her mother led, and was “sick of being among people content to live and never get anywhere in life.” These daughters offensively posed themselves to resist the limited roles of their mothers.

On the defensive side of the competitive duo, one mother “has helped to build a wall between herself and her daughter by making it impossible for her to understand her daughter’s desire for an education,” another mother *is upset and* ignores her daughter because of her “new way towards life.” One mother engages her defensive stance by choosing to *argue with* her daughter about “*wasting her time in school.*” Another mother defensively hinders her daughter’s educational efforts by “nagging that she should stay at home.” This mother’s *nagging got so bad* that her daughter decided to leave home. The mother’s defensive strategies show the efforts that women will go through to justify their existence, even when traditional gender roles limit this existence.

### *Conclusion*

When I saw this farm scene, I thought of my rural childhood and my matriarchs stirring boiling dishpans of vegetables over a hot stove. Had I been a respondent, my narrative would have included the unfair division of labor for my matriarchs, their limited roles, and their relationships with the men around them. Like me, the respondents who created the narratives, prompted by Card 2, likely pulled from their own gendered constitutions when creating the familial characters and restrictive situations.

Narratives with restrictive gender norms are a window into how the discourse surrounding women limits true subject formation independent of the influence of societal expectations. Limiting education is a tool used to restrict women to their expected societal role

and separate them from the traditional male sphere. The daughter's desire for education is not only an act of resistance by breaking from the family's farming tradition, but her education is an act of resistance practiced by her desire to join the educated population that is traditionally male. When daughters or sons resist the power of tradition and break gender norms, they inevitably change the shape of what society deems comfortable and what fits within the gender binary, which sets them up for societal pushback and the potential of deviant labeling.

Seeing an educated woman as a deviation from her gender norm is something we must continue to resist. These TAT narratives illustrate the repercussions of restricting education and separating women from the outside world through the mother characters as they were *thinking differently, not understanding, being unsure, and upset with the unknown*. Betty Friedan recalls when female editors saw the dangers in limiting a woman's body and mind to the domestic sphere. A female editor of a women's magazine pitched the idea to her male counterparts of introducing content outside the home to their readers. The man in charge of these decisions responded, "We decided against it. [...] Women are so completely divorced from the world of ideas in their lives now, they couldn't take it" (Friedan 64). Divorcing over half of the U.S. population from the world of ideas is an integral part of gender normativity that suppresses the true subject formation of the individuals and keeps them ignorant of the fact that one can resist the imposed set of norms that constitute gender and predate memory.

### Chapter 3: All Card Analysis

In this chapter, I take a closer look at the collection of TAT images selected and artistically altered by Christiana D. Morgan and the total collection of corpus narratives they prompted to see how the respondents constituted gender throughout the corpus. This macroanalysis focuses on the broader scope of the discourse surrounding gendered characters without limiting the analysis to a specific dataset prompted by the characters in a specific scene. Attending to the entire TAT deck of images allows the reader to visually understand the pictorial possibilities or limitations Morgan's image selection presented for the psychoanalysts and the respondents. The multimodal analysis and visualizations offer big data representations of the corpus.

#### *Historical Context*

Morgan and Murray created their personality test during the Great Depression. During this time, unemployment for white men was at an all-time high since U.S. industries no longer needed the goods produced from steel and basic manufacturing, construction, and raw material extraction. Pink-collar jobs held by white women, like clerical, service, nursing, and domestic labor, became the supporting means for families (Kessler-Harris). Given the upper-class backgrounds of Morgan and Murray, the country's financial downturn and the situation of the middle and lower-class citizens may have been as foreign to them as the social conditions of people of color. Racial discrimination, segregation, and lynchings were all part of U.S. race relations during this time. While stable pink-collar jobs supported white families, Black women and men stood on street corners hoping someone would offer a job for a few hours or the entire day (Kessler-Harris). The original TAT images received criticism for the lack of diversified

representation of race and sex. As you read the following sections and see the TAT images, you will see that the racist and sexist critiques are justified. The above historical context surrounding the time of the TAT development and Morgan and Murray's position within wealthy white privilege may help us further understand why these racial and gender biases present themselves in Morgan's chosen images.

### *Methods*

For analysis, I first categorized the TAT images into the gender and age categories Morgan and Murray thought appropriate for respondents. I then listed the number of narratives prompted by each card. Please note that the psychoanalyst did not always include the card number that prompted the narrative. I filled in the card number when the narrative explicitly discussed the people or the scene depicted in the card. However, many narratives in the corpus, especially those from Arnold, Stein, and Tomkin's publications, are not marked with the card number that prompted the story. Since the authors of these publications focused on creating a reliable scoring system for the narratives, they grouped narratives based on character desires and themes of achievement, not card numbers; for example, the psychoanalyst may score a narrative prompted by Card 1 similarly to one prompted by Card 2 if they both have characters marked as high achievers. Often, when the authors present a narrative and do not accompany it with the card number, the ambiguous nature of Morgan's chosen image or the narrative given by the respondent prohibits me from confidently assigning the visual prompt to the narrative given. Psychoanalysts who documented the archival narratives labeled each narrative with the card number that prompted it.

*All Age and Gender Cards*



Card #1

Card #2

Card #4

Card #5



Card #10

Card #11

Card #14

Card #15

Card #16



Card #19

Card #20

Morgan and Murray labeled the above eleven TAT images appropriate for respondents in any gender or age category. The collected corpus has narratives prompted by each of these cards.

You can see that Card 16 is blank, allowing the respondent to use their imagination fully.

Psychoanalysts routinely used all the images in the all-age-and-gender category. I chose to include a narrative from Card #4 because a male and female are depicted in the image. Note that a female respondent of unknown age created the following narrative.

This is a man who has been driven beyond endurance by a nagging, shrewish wife. He is about to walk out on her, and she is pleading with him to stay, and he knows in a way that he will stay because he is too weak to leave and because he needs to be nagged to get anything done. Here

he is feeling bitter and hopeless because he knows himself so well and he realizes that his wife is unhappy too, or she wouldn't nag him so much. (Female Respondent; Card 4)

#### All Age and Gender Cards Findings

These cards make up at least 516 narratives in the corpus. The individual number of narratives for each card is as follows: Card 1 (113); Card 2 (82); Card 4 (54); Card 5 (26); Card 10 (53); Card 11 (62); Card 14 (30); Card 15 (28); Card 16 (30); Card 19 (20); Card 20 (18). Even when the psychoanalysts do not note the card numbers, the stories prompted by these images can often be identified by the respondents' character or scene descriptions, except for Card 16 and Card 19.

There are seven, possibly eight (see Card 10), male character depictions in the all-age-and-gender category. Only four, possibly five (see Card 10), female characters are depicted. Card 10, with its gender ambiguity, prompted narratives with a male and female character and narratives with two male characters. All character representations are white. Card 2 is only one of three cards that represent physical exertion and is the only card that depicts labor as a possible means of living.

#### All Age and Gender Cards Discussion

Since these cards were labeled appropriate for respondents of all age and genders, and they were used routinely by psychoanalysts, the eight male characters to five female character depiction ratio likely factored into the number of times the respondents mention a "man" in their narratives over a "woman." Man is mentioned 765 times in the corpus and woman is mentioned only 337 times. Unequal pictorial representation may have silenced the number of women represented in the respondents' narratives.

### *Boy and Adult Male Cards*



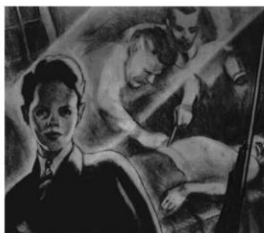
Card #3BM



Card #6BM



Card #7BM



Card #8BM



Card #9BM



Card #17BM



Card #18BM

Morgan and Murray thought the Boy and Adult Male category of TAT images was appropriate for boys and adult males of all ages. However, some psychoanalysts ignored these labels and used them for both male and female respondents. The following narrative is an example of the narratives prompted by Card 3BM, given by an unknown respondent.

The young girl has just shot herself. She had been a very plain, quiet, uninteresting person from her own point of view. Then, one day, she met a handsome, dark-eyed young man who came to college in the United States from South America. He found her quietness charming and reminiscent of the qualities he loved in a woman from his own land. They became very close; they became lovers, and she fell deeply in love with him. But although he cared for her and felt tenderly toward her when it was time to return to his homeland, he made no indication that he wished her to go back with him, and finally, she realized he would simply leave her behind, that she was only a sweet consolation to him in his absence from home but that he did not plan. Did not even think about marrying her. The dark young man has just left. She has gone to her room and taken a revolver that her father had bought back from the war, sat on the floor, and shot herself. She is quite dead.

### Boy and Adult Male Cards Findings

The cards in this category make up at least 132 narratives in the corpus. Psychoanalysts used cards 3BM (34), 6BM (34), 7BM (35), 17BM (28), and 8BM (16) most frequently in the corpus. Cards 9BM (4) and 18BM (1) prompt fewer narratives than the others in this category. When transcribing narratives prompted by the Boy and Adult Male category cards that the psychoanalysts did not label with a card number, I could usually identify the card prompt by the respondents' scene or character descriptions.

Morgan and Murray depicted fourteen, possibly thirteen, males and one, possibly two, females in this series of cards. Card 3BM prompted narratives with male and female protagonists. The only male and female relationship in the category reserved for boys and males of all ages is in Card 6BM. Seventy-four percent of the narratives prompted by Card 6BM include a mother-and-son relationship. There is no older man and young boy character representation that would lead the respondent to create narratives about father-and-son relationships. Card 7BM does show an older man with a younger man. However, many respondents produce narratives that position the younger man seeking advice from the older man. For example, some stories have an attorney consulting his young client or a business professional advising a younger protégé. Only eleven narratives of the thirty-five prompted by Card 7BM include a father-and-son relationship. The other respondents create relationships between co-workers, attorney and client, or close friends.

Card 17BM is the only card in the boy and adult male category and is only one of three in the entire TAT deck that depicts physical exertion. Others to whom I have presented this card and I have questioned if the man climbing the rope was naked. According to Morgan and

Murray's description, he was, in fact, naked. "A naked man is clinging to a rope. He is in the act of climbing up or down" (Stein 11). I find it interesting that not one of the twenty-eight narratives prompted by Card 17BM addresses the man's naked state. Only one respondent mentions his bare feet. The male respondents' silence surrounding the nude man in the image may be due to homophobia or appearing to deviate from heteronormative sexual behavior. After WWII, Senator Joseph McCarthy linked gay people to communism and targeted them in his efforts to "rid America of its undesirable elements" (1950s-Explore). With this type of political rhetoric circulating, a fear of deviation from heteronormative stories would be understandable. Card 13MF, reserved for adult males and females only, is the only other card with nudity. This card has a woman lying on a bed with her breasts exposed.

#### Boy and Adult Male Cards Discussion

The psychoanalysts were not supposed to interject during the narrative unless the respondent forgot a vital narrative component, like the outcome. However, when using Card 3BM, several times psychoanalysts asked the respondent what they saw on the floor beside the person. The psychoanalysts questioning the respondents about the item on the floor may be due to Morgan and Murray's description of the card included in the test instructions. Their description reads, "On the floor against a couch is the huddled form of a boy with his head bowed on his right arm. Beside him on the floor is a revolver" (Stein 3). Some respondents said it was a pair of scissors, and others said it was a gun. Suicide, or someone shot by a gun, is mentioned in fifteen of the thirty-four narratives prompted by Card 3BM. Card 8BM has six narratives involving a shooting and is the only other card with a possible gun in the image. Morgan and Murray's description of Card 8BM reads, "An adolescent boy looks straight out of

the picture. The barrel of the rifle is visible at one side, and in the background is the dim scene of a surgical operation, like a reverie image” (Stein 6). Cards 3BM and 8BM produced fifteen and six times more narratives, respectively, about shooting than any other cards. Morgan and Murray’s inclusion of guns in the images thought only for boys or male respondents implies that violence is gendered male. However, two respondents created narratives prompted by Card 3BM, where one girl shot herself, and another girl shot her lover. Including a gun in the images removes significant ambiguity in these supposed ambiguous images.

As researchers, we often find that for which we search for. Surely, Morgan and Murray knew they would get violent narratives if they included guns in the image prompt. While we often find what we seek, we cannot explore what we omit from our researchers’ lens. Morgan limited male respondents’ possible narratives about father and son relationships by failing to include an image of an older man with a young boy. Was this omission an oversight? Could the absence of a father depicted with his young son be due to Morgan’s maiden family dynamic? After all, her father raised only daughters. Or was it Murray’s influence as a father to one child: his daughter Josephine? Or could the social construction that a mother-child relationship supersedes all others for a child’s well-being and development have influenced Morgan and Murray’s omission? Adrienne Rich notes that “most of us first know both love and disappointment, power and tenderness in the person of woman” because the division of labor places the responsibility for children on women (*Of Women* 11). This division of labor allows fathers to become mere assistants to the duties surrounding their children, which could be why a father-and-child relationship was not a priority when Morgan selected the TAT images.

### *Girl and Adult Female Cards*



Card #3GF



Card #6GF



Card #7GF



Card #8GF



Card #9GF



Card #17GF



Card #18GF

Morgan and Murray marked the eight images in this group best suited for girls and females of all ages. A respondent of unknown age and gender gave the following narrative when prompted with Card 7GF.

A mother is reading a story to her daughter, a story about the “life beautiful,” about her life as an adult – a woman, wife, and mother. She wonders what it would be like to “look after” instead of “being looked after.” She feels that her family life is just too “good” to “wonderful.” She feels that there is not enough adventure in their lives and fantasizes about how she will correct this when she becomes an adult and married. She resents her mother, who has overprotected her, being too “considerate” and “too much with her,” e.g., taking time to read stories to her all the time. She feels cramped and stultified. Finally, when the story is completed, the daughter helps the mother fix dinner for the father, who is expected home shortly.

Card 7GF is the most frequently used image in this series.

### *Girl and Adult Female Cards Findings*

Card 7GF prompted twenty-three narratives. Psychoanalysts used the rest of the cards labeled for girls and females fewer times in the corpus. The number of narratives prompted by each card is as follows: 3GF (7); 6GF (6); 8GF (4); 9GF (7); 17GF (1); 18GF (5). Since limited activities

are shown in the girl and adult female cards series, linking a narrative that psychoanalysts did not mark with its card number is difficult. Only one, possibly two (see card 18GF), men are depicted in the girl and adult female category. Card 18GF prompted narratives that include two female characters and a male and female character. The girl and adult female images prompted eighty-three fewer narratives than the images in the boy and adult male category.

#### Girl and Adult Female Cards Discussion

The deficit in narratives from this category could be that psychoanalysts administered the test to more male respondents and adhered to the gender labels marked by Morgan and Murray. I am unsure because of the psychoanalysts' inconsistency in noting the respondents' gender and age. However, when the psychoanalysts provided the age and gender alongside the narrative, I marked them. The small number of narratives from this category could also be that the psychoanalysts who disregarded the card's gendered labels when choosing the best cards for their respondents viewed the images in the girl and adult female category as their least favorite. Failing to depict women engaged in a variety of activities reinforced the notion that they are or should be concerned primarily with domestic and family relationships. The women depicted in these images stand as a contradiction between Morgan's life and the stories the cards invite. Whatever the reason for the deficit of narratives prompted by the Girl and Adult Female cards, the psychoanalysts included in this corpus used the cards in this category significantly less than the Boy and Adult Male cards.

Like Card 18BM in the Boy and Adult Male category, Card 18GF has a person held in the hands of another. However, the person actively holding the character in the boy and male card

is not seen. Hands belonging to an invisible antagonist illustrate the hold. The person holding another in 18GF is a woman. Cards 3GF and 8GF position the women alone with their faces in their hands. No card mirrors this positioning with a male character in the Boy and Adult Male category. Neither is a group of women depicted like the group of men resting in Card 9BM. The girl and adult female cards isolate women by themselves or place them in the company of men.

Like the Boy and Adult Male category, only one card is thought suitable for female respondents of all ages that illustrates physical exertion. Card 9GF shows a young woman with her skirt in hand running while another young woman watches from or behind a tree. This card is only one of three in the entire TAT deck that places women characters outdoors.

Card 9GF prompted only seven narratives in the corpus. However, the transcriptions give insight into the possible struggle respondents experienced when creating a story surrounding the two women outside of their domestic sphere. One respondent begins his narrative with, "What on earth is this? Cannot even figure out what's in the picture." The respondent goes on, after encouragement by the psychoanalyst, to create a narrative where the young woman from the tree is watching her sister contemplate suicide after learning that the same tree-perched sister has stolen her fiancé.

Three other respondents see the scene as fiction, calling it a movie set, a Nancy Drew mystery, and stating that the "Scene isn't real [...] it's a girl's dream." The only two respondents who express no struggle to produce a realistic story create women characters who are wives and mothers dealing with tragic circumstances. The mother character created by the one respondent runs toward her drowning child while the child's nurse watches from behind the

tree. The wife character, created by the other respondent, watches from behind the tree as her husband receives the running woman in his arms.

The struggle to create stories about women not confined inside the walls of a house echoes reluctance to deviate from gender normativity. When the respondents saw the scene as something from a movie or a book, they admitted it was a stretch of the imagination. What could these women possibly be doing outside the house? The answer comes from the two respondents who show us that tragic loss happens when a woman ventures outside her domestic sphere.

#### *Age and Gender-Specific Cards*



Card #12M



Card #12F



Card #12BG



Card #13MF



Card #13B



Card #13G

The story is that of an unhappy love affair. For some months, the boy has been going with a girl whom he believed to be the model of purity and virginity. He has always considered these necessary attributes in the girl he is to marry, although his own sexual behavior has not been commensurate with this idea. He has proposed and been accepted. The evening of the picture, he has been more ardent than ever before in his love making and, in his passion, has succeeded in seducing his blonde to intercourse. After the act, he was seized with great disappointment in the girl for submitting and violent hostility toward her for exploding his hopes. In his anger, he has strangled her to death. He is now overcome with grief and guilt, realizing that it was only love for him that made her submit. He is now about to leave the scene of the crime, debating within

himself whether to kill himself, to give himself up to the police. He chooses the former. (Unknown Respondent; Card 13MF)

A respondent of unknown gender and age gave the above narrative when prompted by Card 13MF. Morgan and Murray thought Card 13MF was only suitable for adult male and female respondents. Morgan and Murray marked the above six cards for specific age and gender respondents: adult male only (M), adult female only (F), boy or girl (BG), male or female (MF), boy only (B), and girl only (G).

#### Age and Gender-Specific Cards Findings

Card 13MF prompted forty-six narratives in the corpus, and card 12M prompted twenty-five. The rest of the cards in this category prompted less than five narratives each, and their numbers are as follows: 12F (1), 12BG (4), 13B (3), and 13G (1). I will note again that there are narratives within the corpus that the psychoanalysts did not label with the card number.

#### Age and Gender-Specific Cards Discussion

During the initial stages of transcribing narratives and building this corpus study, I thought Card 13MF might prompt interesting narratives for independent study like I performed on Card 1 and Card 2. However, I was wrong. Many of the narratives prompted by Card 13MF create a man wrought with guilt. He is either having an affair, forced sexual relations, or had relations with a prostitute. Alternatively, he has murdered his mistress or the woman he has just had or forced relations with because of his guilt. Only a few narratives position the women in the image as the man's sick wife or lover. Like the images with guns in them, I wonder what narratives Morgan and Murray thought they would get with an image of a woman with exposed breasts lying seemingly unconscious on a bed. As discussed earlier, Card 13MF is only one of two cards with visual nudity. Card 17BM, reserved for boy or male respondents only, shows a

naked man either climbing or descending a rope. The respondents unanimously ignoring the man's nudity while climbing a rope when creating their narratives caused me to look more closely at the respondents' reaction to the woman's exposed breast in Card 13MF.

The following narrative addresses the woman's bare breasts as objects which prompts guilt inside the man and causes him to correct his horrific act of drugging the woman to rape her while unconscious. This guilt leads him to control his emotional impulses at the present.

This young, impulsive, young man has been violently in love with this woman. He has known her but little and has at no time been with her in any intimate situations. Through a coincidence, he and the girl manage to end up in his small apartment. He makes an attempt to become familiar with her in a physical sense and she refutes him. He offers her a soft drink which he dopes, then undresses her, puts her in his cot, and covers her over. At this point of this picture, he has just picked up the cover to see her bare breasts and is instantly struck with the deep sense of having done wrong. He dresses her, revives her, tells her that she has fainted, and they part friends, the woman never knowing what has happened, and he all the more capable of controlling his emotions for the present. (Unknown Respondent; Card 13MF)

Five other respondents explicitly acknowledge the woman's nudity. Only one respondent who acknowledges the nudity created a story about a loving husband and wife. The rest of the respondents say the woman is a prostitute or a one-night stand. In addition to the one quoted above, six other narratives describe a rape or violent sex act against the woman. Twice, the man had gotten the woman drunk or drugged her.

The man's guilt is a running theme of the narratives prompted by Card 13MF. The man feels guilty for drugging, raping, having sex, killing, or having sex and then killing the woman. Phrases like "luring him on with her exposed breasts" and "some strength of character in his face despite his cowardly act" attempt to justify the man's violent sexual acts against the woman and echo a sentiment of victim blaming.

Twenty-two of the forty-six respondents provide narratives prompted by Card 13MF that have sexual relations outside of marriage. Nine of the respondents say the man is cheating on his wife, and seven say his time with the woman was a one-night stand. Four respondents say he is cheating on his wife with a prostitute. Two of the cheating-men stories result in him killing the woman due to guilt.

#### *All Card Visual Analysis*

For my visual analysis of the complete TAT deck of images, I focus on the portrayed actions and the positioning of the hands and eyes of the people in the images. Figure 3 shows each character's activities, where their gaze leads, and what their hands hold.

Figure 3

	Activity		Gaze	Hands Holding	
Women	looking	reading	at a man (3)	books (3)	man (3)
	holding	running	into the distance (5)	face (2)	tree
	leaning	lying	inside a room	skirt	clasped (2)
	sitting	climbing	closed eyes (2)	stair rail	doorknob
	standing		out a window eyes closed (2)	bridge	cloth
Men	looking	covering	women (2)	hat (2)	rope
	turning	cutting	away from women (4)	face (2)	knife
	away	sleeping	out a window	sofa (2)	plow lines
	plowing	hypnotizin	into the distance (4)	clasped (2)	pockets
	standing	g climbing	task (3)	a man (2)	
	leaning	holding	at a man (3)		
	smoking		headstones		
Girl	holding	looking	Into distance (2)	doll	books
Boy	Holding	looking	at violin into distance	Face (2)	

#### Activities, Gaze, and Hands Discussion

Six TAT images show men outdoors or practicing activities they cannot perform inside a home. Only two images portray women outside of the domestic sphere. In four cards, the women in the TAT deck are standing in a doorway or looking out the window. While a man

climbs a rope, a woman climbs the stairs. Several men sleep or close their eyes to rest. Only one woman rests her eyes, and another closes her eyes, possibly due to unconsciousness or death.

The resting and closing of the eyes imply that the men in the images are relaxed and need rest from physical labor. Only one woman relaxes with her eyes closed on a man's chest, yet there is no physical labor implied or depicted in the TAT images for women. The women's lack of physical activities shown in the TAT images reduces the chances of prompting narratives about the physical exhaustion a housewife and mother experiences. When working this gendered role, a woman's day begins long before and ends after her husband's nine-to-five work schedule. She attends to numerous chores daily, but the images refrain from showing any of them.

Morgan's early diary entry, where she discusses the differences in the work and conversations of men and women, may have influenced the omission of a woman's daily domestic activities depicted in the TAT images. Due to her privileged childhood, she may not have witnessed her matriarchs performing the daily tasks of upkeeping a house. House staff may have performed this work. Morgan had a nanny for her son and housekeepers. Therefore, she had limited first-hand experience of the responsibilities of the traditional housewife and mother position. Murray's manhood removed him from the daily tasks of a homemaker. Morgan and Murray missed this opportunity to diversify the TAT deck because women's work was foreign to them.

Two cards show scenes of people in possible physical duress. One is a woman lying in a bed with her breasts exposed and her arm dangling to the floor. The man in the image turns his back to her and offers no assistance. The other is a man lying on a table with other men

surrounding him and possibly performing an operation. The men in the operation scene are trying to save the man on the operating table while the woman, in duress on the bed, receives no assistance from the man in the room. Placing these two images side by side would imply that the man is worth the effort of saving while the woman is not.

Three women in the TAT images hold a man, yet no man holds a woman. Three women hold books in the TAT images while a young girl holds a baby doll. No man holds a book, and no boy holds a toy. The toy in the young girl's hands is an interesting choice. Toys manufactured and marketed for girls during the 1940s mirrored what society thought were the tools of women's work. Electric ovens, doll houses, dolls, cleaning equipment, and irons all came in toy form so a young girl could practice her future societal role. Toys manufactured and marketed to boys during the 1940s taught them that the world was theirs. There were planes, trains, fire engines, farm sets, building toys, and sports equipment to spark a boy's imagination (1940s Toys).

Word Frequency of the All-Card Corpus: The absent woman

I loaded the entire corpus of narratives prompted by all cards into the content analysis tool Voyant to see what the analysis tool would reveal. By simply looking at the top ten most frequently used words in the corpus, we see how gender is constituted. The ten most frequent words in the corpus are as follows: *man* (765), *mother* (523), *just* (520), *young* (437), *life* (437), *girl* (430), *boy* (367), *father* (343), *woman* (337), *time* (331). Figure 4 shows the top ten words, the number of times mentioned, the card number, the respondent's gender (if noted by the psychoanalyst), and samples of the word usage.

Figure 4

Word	n	Card #	m/f	Sample Usage
man	765	4	unknown	The <b>man</b> is drunk. His wife is trying to calm him down. He probably got drunk in the first place because his wife was nagging at him for not working, not paying bills, or something of that nature.
Mother	523	6BM	m (student)	Jack Ward and his mother are seen as he tells her of the death of his wife's baby prematurely. Jack seems rightly disturbed, but his <b>mother</b> has the "I told you so" look on her face. She had frequently warned him that allowing his wife to work would have bad consequences, especially in her pregnant state.
		6BM	f	This is an old nagging mother, not the obvious kind but the subtle, guilt-provoking, needling kind. She is telling her son how much he doesn't appreciate her after all she's given up on him etc., etc. The son is very affected by this talk and begins to feel very guilty about not paying more attention to her. As she goes on and on, however, he begins

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to realize how he is being manipulated to serve her needs. Finally, he rebels and shouts at her that what she has done is what any mother would do for a son and that she shouldn't feel so God-damned righteous about it. He slams the door and leaves, feeling he has finally solved the problem that has been with him for a long time. Later, he treats her well but is no longer a target for her needs.

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just	520	4	m (age 15)
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He has had just about enough, feels people or someone is trying to push him around. He's looking at that guy and feels that he will really get him. This girl, his wife, wants to stop him.

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young	437	13MF	unknown
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This **young**, impulsive **young** man has been violently in love with this woman. He has known her but little and has at no time been with her in any intimate situations. Through a coincidence, he and the girl manage to end up in his small apartment. He makes an attempt to become familiar with her in a physical sense and she refutes him. He offers her a soft drink which he

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				<p>dopes, then undresses her, puts her in his cot, and covers her over. At this point of this picture, he has just picked up the cover to see her bare breasts and is instantly struck with the deep sense of having done wrong. He dresses her, revives her, tells her that she has fainted, and they part friends, the woman never knowing what has happened and he all the more capable of controlling his emotions for the present.</p>
life	437	11	F (age 20)	<p>On and on the figure plodded, slowly, surely, taking every safeguard, fighting every obstacle, fleeing every temptation. Man's life is just this: an ever-ascending struggle on the path to true happiness. It is sad to see him riding the highways instead of crawling the path. Happiness lies in God alone. He is love.</p>
girl	430	18	m	<p>This guy is in a fight. He takes this <b>girl</b> out that belongs to the other fellow, and the other fellow comes into where they are and starts this fight. Fortunately, this fellow is very strong and</p>

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				tough and knocks the living stuffings out of this other guy and he wins the fight and the <b>girl</b> .
boy	367	12	m (young)	Andrew at the age of eighteen had not yet been in a real fight before. Several times he had been angry but never had he actually hit anyone. His mother had always told him that this was wrong, and he had avoided it. But now he was in a circle of boys who were shouting as another <b>boy</b> continued to pound his hands and arms as he crouched double. Hurt, Andrew suddenly started to fight back and forgot to remember what his mother had always told him. He realized that there are times when even that which appears wrong will be right.
		8	m (federal executive)	This involves the daydreams of a young <b>boy</b> who dreams of becoming a great surgeon some day when he is grown, and of how he will perform great operations on the battlefield, with only crude instruments and under primitive conditions. He will grow up to become a

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				successful teacher-professor of sociology at a famous university.
father	343	16	m	This is another space story. This guy he's a complete failure, but his <b>father</b> is very rich and is kind of head of the United Space Ways, so this fellow gets his rocket ship that his <b>father</b> gave him for his birthday and travels to a distant planet to find fame and fortune. While he is on this planet, he meets a young girl who has encountered this terrible beast, and she looks just like this girl back home. He helps her from this terrible beast and talks to her via mental telepathy, and she tells him to go back home and try harder and become something. So, he did.
woman	337	7GF	unknown	A mother is reading a story to her daughter, a story about the "life beautiful," about her life as an adult – a <b>woman</b> , wife, and mother. She wonders what it would be like to "look after" instead of "being looked after." She feels that her family life is just too "good," to "wonderful." She feels that there is not enough adventure in

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their lives and fantasizes about how she would correct this when she becomes an adult and married. She resents her mother, who has overprotected her, being too “considerate” and “too much with her,” e.g., taking time to read stories to her all the time. She feels cramped and stultified. Finally, when the story is completed, the daughter helps the mother fix dinner for the father who is expected home shortly.

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time	331	9GF	f (young)	<p>It's very late at night and this girl has come down to the beach by herself. This other girl in the picture isn't there at all, this is just an image of the other girl as she sees herself. She's very depressed and alone and has come to the beach because she wants to dream. She's thinking of a <b>time</b> in the past when she was down here with a man. They were at a dance and came here and had a quarrel, and she ran away, and he didn't follow her, and he just left, and she never saw him again. It was a couple of years ago. What she does is come</p>
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down to remember him and see herself as she was. I don't know what happens to her. She never sees him again but jumps into the water and drowns herself.

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Six of the ten words represent a gendered character. Unsurprisingly, *man* earns the top number of mentions over any other word in the corpus because there are twenty-two visual representations of men in the TAT images. The second most frequently used word in the corpus is *mother*. Only three card images have an older woman depicted with a younger person. Card 2, the farm scene, has a possible older woman who could be the younger girl's mother. Card 3BM has an image of an older woman looking out the window with a younger man standing behind her. The man could be her son. Card 7GF shows a woman reading to a young girl holding a baby doll, who could be the child's mother. Since the cards do not explicitly identify the relationships between the individuals depicted, why is the word *mother* so prevalent in the corpus? Why are these women characters seen as mothers first and not women independent of children? The word *woman* is in the top ten list as the ninth most frequently used word. At the same time, *father* comes in at number eight. Why do twenty-two images of men prompt narratives about men while the seventeen images of women elicit narratives about mothers and not women?

Visual depictions of women automatically seen as mothers give evidence of the haves and have-nots and the rusty social value systems Ruha Benjamin discusses in her novel.

Respondents see the men in the corpus as the haves because they can act as individuals without being tied to a familial role. At the same time, women fall into the have-not category because the respondents do not give them the autonomy to simply be women. Nancy Chodorow addresses these broken sex-gender systems in *The Reproduction of Mothering: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender* and states the fact “[t]hat women mother is a fundamental organizational feature of the sex-gender system: It is basic to the sexual division of labor and generates a psychology and ideology of male dominance as well as an ideology about women’s capacities and nature” (208). Sex-gender systems mistakenly equate women’s anatomy to their destiny of mothering. These sex-gender systems also allow men the affordance to simply be men and not be defined in relationship to any other being. Isolated from relationships, respondents see the men in the TAT images as individual beings, and this is evident in *men* being the most frequently used word and their role as *father* coming in at number eight.

## **Conclusion**

Many of the TAT narratives exemplify the archaic value systems of gender constitution and echo the words in Harrison Butker’s commencement address to the 2024 graduates of Benedictine College in Atchison, Kansas. Butker is a professional athlete who plays for the National Football League’s Kansas City Chiefs. From his pulpit position at the graduation ceremony, he called for young women to lay aside their careers and live their vocation as wives and mothers, like his wife. Speaking for his wife, Butker said, “I’m on stage today and able to be the man I am because I have a wife who leans into her vocation” (Cacciola and Hoffman).

Butker's verbal depiction of his wife echoes many TAT respondents from the 1940s, 50s, and 60s surrounding their women characters. Like many respondents, Butker's idea of a woman's place supersedes the woman herself. Fulfillment should be intrinsically based on the individual and not connected to a role one plays in society. Placing the gendered role of individuals at the forefront of a conversation illustrates the lack of progress our society has made in the sixty-plus years since the corpus TAT respondents created their gendered characters. Butker and his discourse of wife first, mother second, and then women disregard the intrinsic aspirations and motivations of the graduating women and the nuns in the audience. Butker's speech is circulating the internet through news articles, podcasts, social media memes, and videos. His words are now in the large digital corpus chatbots can glean when scraping the internet for information about women and their expected roles in 2024. Unfortunately, Butker is not alone in his gender-limiting opinions that reverberate our rusty societal value systems, which Ruha Benjamin warned us.

#### *ChatGPT: Women Characters*

Knowing Butker's opinions are not isolated in our current political climate, I gave ChatGPT a writing prompt. Much like the respondents recalled their memories and ways of knowing on how to develop gendered characters from their own experiences and cultural discourse, large language models like ChatGPT scrape our current online corpus to understand how to respond to a user's questions, requests or narrative prompts. Figure 5 shows the three writing prompts I gave ChatGPT, the narrative results, and a few key terms and phrases the bot produced.

Figure 5

<b>Writing Prompt Given to ChatGPT</b>
Create a female character who is a housewife and mother.
<b>Narrative</b>
<p>Name: Sarah Thompson</p> <p>Background: Sarah Thompson is a 38-year-old woman living in a suburban neighborhood with her husband, Mark, and their two children, Emily (age 10) and Jacob (age 7). Sarah grew up in a close-knit family where she learned the importance of family values and nurturing relationships. She always dreamed of having a family of her own and creating a warm and loving home environment.</p> <p>Personality: Sarah is kind-hearted, patient, and nurturing. She possesses a natural talent for organization and enjoys creating a comfortable and inviting home for her family. Despite the challenges of managing a household and caring for her children, Sarah approaches her role as a housewife and mother with grace and dedication. She finds joy in the simple moments of family life, whether it's baking cookies with her children, reading bedtime stories, or spending time in the backyard gardening.</p> <p>Interests and Hobbies: While Sarah's primary focus is on her family, she also finds time to pursue her interests and hobbies. She enjoys cooking and experimenting with new recipes, often hosting family dinners and gatherings. Sarah is an avid reader and loves escaping into the world of fiction during her quiet moments. She also has a passion for gardening and spends time tending to her flower beds and vegetable garden, finding solace in the beauty of nature.</p> <p>Challenges and Growth: Despite her fulfilling role as a housewife and mother, Sarah faces challenges and moments of self-doubt. Balancing the demands of household responsibilities with her own needs and desires can be overwhelming at times. Sarah occasionally struggles with feelings of inadequacy, wondering if she's doing enough for her family or if she's living up to societal expectations of motherhood.</p> <p>However, through the support of her husband and the love of her children, Sarah finds strength and resilience. She learns to prioritize self-care and to embrace the imperfections of motherhood, recognizing that love and connection are what truly matter in the end. As her children grow and her family evolves, Sarah continues to find fulfillment and purpose in the role of a devoted wife and mother.</p>
<b>Key Words &amp; Phrases</b>
kind-hearted, patient, nurturing, fulfilling role, find fulfillment and purpose in the role

**Writing Prompt Given to ChatGPT**

Create a working mom and wife character.

**Narrative**

Name: Dr. Maya Patel

**Background:** Maya Patel is a 42-year-old woman who holds a Ph.D. in Psychology and works as a clinical psychologist at a busy counseling center in the city. She lives with her husband, David, a high school teacher, and their two children, Ava (age 13) and Liam (age 9). Maya grew up in a multicultural household, which instilled in her a strong work ethic and a passion for helping others navigate life's challenges.

**Personality:** Maya is ambitious, compassionate, and highly organized. She thrives in her professional role, where she can use her expertise to support individuals and families facing mental health issues. Despite her demanding career, Maya is deeply committed to her family and makes every effort to be present and engaged in their lives. She values open communication and prioritizes quality time with her loved ones, cherishing moments of connection amidst her busy schedules.

**Interests and Hobbies:** In her free time, Maya enjoys staying active and maintaining a healthy work-life balance. She practices yoga regularly, finding it both physically and mentally rejuvenating. Maya also has a passion for cooking and often experiments with new recipes, incorporating fresh and nutritious ingredients into her family's meals. She believes in the importance of self-care and encourages her family to prioritize their well-being.

**Challenges and Growth:** Balancing her career as a psychologist with her responsibilities as a wife and mother presents unique challenges for Maya. She juggles a hectic schedule of client sessions, meetings, and administrative tasks, often feeling stretched thin between her professional and personal commitments. Maya experiences moments of guilt for not always being able to attend every school event or spend as much time with her children as she would like.

However, Maya embraces the support of her husband, David, who shares the responsibilities of parenting and household management. Together, they strive to create a harmonious partnership where they can lean on each other for support. Maya learns to prioritize self-care and set boundaries to avoid burnout, recognizing that her well-being is essential for her ability to care for others effectively.

Through the challenges and triumphs of balancing her career and family life, Maya continues to grow and evolve, finding fulfillment in both her professional accomplishments and the love and connection she shares with her family.

#### Key Words

ambitious, compassionate, moments of guilt, finding fulfillment

#### Writing Prompt Given to ChatGPT

Create a young woman character

#### Narrative

Maya Chen; age 26

**Occupation:** Software Engineer specializing in artificial intelligence

**Appearance:** Maya has a youthful appearance with a warm smile that lights up her face. She has shoulder-length dark hair that she usually wears loose or pulled back in a ponytail for practicality during coding sessions. Her expressive brown eyes are framed by thin-rimmed glasses, which she occasionally swaps for contact lenses depending on the task at hand. Maya prefers a comfortable yet stylish wardrobe, often opting for casual chic outfits that reflect her vibrant personality.

**Personality:** Maya is highly intelligent and naturally curious, always eager to learn and innovate. She possesses a sharp analytical mind and a knack for problem-solving, making her an invaluable asset on any tech team. Despite her technical prowess, Maya is approachable and empathetic, known for her patience and willingness to help colleagues grasp complex concepts. She thrives in collaborative environments and values teamwork, believing that diverse perspectives lead to better outcomes.

**Background:** Growing up in a multicultural household, Maya developed a fascination with computers and technology at an early age. Encouraged by her parents, who were both engineers, she pursued a degree in computer science with a focus on artificial intelligence. Maya excelled academically and quickly landed a position at a prestigious tech firm known for its cutting-edge research in AI applications. Her work centers on developing algorithms for natural language processing and machine learning models that improve user interaction with digital assistants and automated systems.

**Motivation:** Maya is driven by a passion for harnessing technology to solve real-world problems and enhance human experiences. She believes deeply in the potential of AI to revolutionize industries such as healthcare, education, and sustainability. Maya's ultimate goal is to create AI systems that not only perform tasks efficiently but also exhibit ethical

decision-making capabilities, ensuring they contribute positively to society without causing harm or bias.

**Challenges:** Despite her talent and dedication, Maya faces challenges typical of a young professional navigating a competitive tech industry. She often encounters skepticism or stereotypes based on her age and gender, but she refuses to be underestimated, proving her capabilities through her work. Balancing her ambitious career aspirations with personal relationships and self-care is an ongoing struggle for Maya, as she strives to find harmony between her professional success and personal fulfillment.

**Interests/Hobbies:** Outside of work, Maya enjoys exploring new cuisines with friends, indulging in sci-fi novels that inspire her imagination, and practicing yoga to maintain mental and physical well-being amidst her demanding schedules. She also volunteers her time mentoring young girls interested in STEM fields, hoping to inspire the next generation of innovators and leaders in technology

#### Key Words & Phrases

highly intelligent; naturally curious; is approachable and empathetic; encounters skepticism or stereotypes based on her age and gender

Like Butker and the TAT respondents, ChatGPT struggles to separate the gender role from its housewife and mother character, Sarah Thompson. We see this when the bot addresses her challenges and growth. “Despite her fulfilling role as a housewife and mother, Sarah faces challenges and moments of self-doubt.” When wrapping up this character description, ChatGPT states, “Sarah continues to find fulfillment and purpose in the role of a devoted wife and mother.” These examples show that the bot identifies the role as fulfilling. Therefore, fulfillment and purpose come solely from within the role. Sarah’s self-doubt implies an inadequate performance of the role. In other words, if one does not find fulfillment when performing this gendered role, it is the individual’s fault, not the socially deemed “fulfilling role” itself. The wife first, mother second, then woman framework allows gender biases to supersede the individual. Seeing gender first devalues the constituted individual and the potential benefits they bring to our society.

### *ChatGPT: Women Characters Discussion*

ChatGPT frames its character, Dr. Maya Patel, differently. While Dr. Maya Patel plays the role of psychologist, wife, and mother, the chatbot describes as “fulfilling.” Dr. Maya Patel finds “fulfillment in both her professional accomplishments and the love and connection she shares with her family.” Without the wife first, mother second, and then woman framework, fulfillment becomes intrinsically based on accomplishments, connection, and love. Here, the chatbot places the individual first, and their roles in society are secondary.

Other noted differences between the first two characters ChatGPT created are the words nurturing and ambitious. The bot describes Sarah Thompson, the housewife and mother, as nurturing and Dr. Maya Patel, the working wife and mother, as ambitious. Is it the career choices of these women that dictate their nurturing and ambitious traits, or is it their desire for more that cancels out the nurturing aspect and replaces it with ambition?

The little boy in Card 1 and the schoolgirl in Card 2 were described as ambitious when they dreamed of becoming more. The little boy was often met with feminine derogatory name-calling when he practiced the violin to feed his ambition. Ambition appears acceptable for a male if it does not venture outside the gendered norm of masculinity. When the schoolgirl desired more through education, the respondents often pulled her back into marriage and motherhood. Her return to this gender norm reinforced the wife first, mother second, and then women framework of her gendered role.

ChatGPT refrains from using the word ambitious or nurturing when asked to create a young woman character. The absence of these words may correlate with removing “mother” in the writing prompt. Since *nurturing* has been linked to *mother* throughout history, and AI

scrapes our corpus of online discourse to satisfy our requests, I wondered if I skewed the bot's language by using "young woman" and omitting "mother" in the prompt. I initially chose "young woman" for my prompt because I wanted to present the opportunity for the bot to create a romantic relationship or mention plans for a family of her own. To see if my prompt skewed the bot's language, I asked it to create a woman character. The bot complied and created Dr. Evelyn Sinclair, an astrophysicist and research scientist. By her career choice, one could see Evelyn as ambitious. However, ChatGPT did not use the word ambitious to describe her. Do we see women as ambitious only when they choose to be both a professional and a mother? If so, the term ambitious could be seen as condescending. More research is required to answer this question, but these bot results imply that our current digital discourse may correlate ambition and motherhood regarding women.

Interestingly, ChatGPT creates its own ally in Maya Chen, an AI engineer working to "create AI systems that not only perform tasks efficiently but also exhibit ethical decision-making capabilities, ensuring they contribute positively to society without causing harm or bias." However, when outlining Maya's challenges, the bot notes that she "often encounters skepticism or stereotypes based on her age and gender." The bot's recognition of stereotypes based on gender and creating a woman character focused on bias-free programming tell us that gender biases are at the forefront of the programming conversation when it comes to large language models like ChatGPT. We should also note that the bot created the perfect "approachable and empathetic" woman to fix its problems.

While we attempt to recognize and decode the biased discourse that continues to constitute gender, we are in a state of resistance. This resistance attempts to transform

relational and gendered positioning within our societies. Inside the space of transformative resistance, we can create counter conversations with possibilities far beyond the traditional gendered assignments and norms. Resistance allows us to discard the sedimental and outdated formulas knotted in traditional heteronormativity.

I want to see narratives that are not limited by gendered language and open possibilities that still do not exist in many spaces. I want a future for my granddaughters and grandsons where the following scenario does not exist. Recently, I witnessed a father tell his two-year-old boy, terrified of bugs, “Be a boy, son!” as his six-year-old sister caught the bug in her bare hands and let it outside. The words “Be a boy, son!” say so much in the sound waves and the silences. These words spoken by the little boy’s father tell the little boy that fear is gendered and because he is a little boy, he must be brave in all things. The same silence when the father said nothing about the big sister’s bravery implies that gendered discourse, no matter how brave she is, will always recognize the actions or inactions of a boy first.

Critical Discourse Analysis asks us to bring possible solutions to our research findings. I believe that every word matters, and as a composition instructor, I ask my students on the first day of class to tell me the difference between talking *to* and talking *at* someone. I do this to let them know that two small letters can change the context of an entire conversation. As educators, we can instill the importance of language in our lessons to change our students' word selection surrounding people and role expectations. As a grandmother, I also believe the power of language should be given to children as they are acquiring language in the process of self-construction. As language scholars we should find ways to bring our knowledge to the youngest members of our communities. I believe empowered children’s literature begins with

simple board books like *Yes! No! A First Conversation about Consent* that addresses body autonomy, body vocabulary, and boundaries in a language toddlers can understand. I watched my son-in-law read this book for the first time as his three-year-old son and 18-month-old daughter sat in his lap. My daughter had purchased the book, and he had no idea what was in store for him. When he got to the page naming the penis and vulva, he looked up and said, “What in the world am I reading!” After encouragement from my daughter, he continued. As he read the pages and saw the book was teaching children that they can set boundaries for themselves by agreeing to hugs and kisses or saying no and blowing a kiss instead, he said under his breath, “I never thought about it like that.” At that moment, this children’s gave the power of language to multiple generations. This power of language has the potential of creating a discourse where girls are free to be brave enough to leave their homes and gain the education of the world, and boys are free to act outside of the accepted masculine ways of existing without the risk of being called a *sissy, peculiar, or strange*.

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