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Does Narrative Transportation Facilitate Memory for Counterintuitive Concepts?

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Abstract: A series of studies carried out over the last two decades have shown that those people who allow themselves to be immersed in a story are more likely to experience its persuasive effects (Green, Sasota & Jones 2010). A number of studies carried out by cognitive scientists of religion have shown that people better remember counterintuitive ideas embedded in stories (Upal et al. 2007). This paper reports on a study carried out to test the hypothesis that narrative transportation facilitates memory for counterintuitive concepts i.e., more someone is transported into a story, the better memory they will have for counterintuitive concepts embedded in the story. Participants read 3 stories (each containing 6 counterintuitive concepts) with different narrative transportation levels and completed the narrative transportation scale. Responses were coded for recall. The results were mixed with the transportation facilitating recall but only for concepts that were critical to the story plot.