



Repose

en

paix



Sarah Watterson
Cultural Narrative Questions
April 8, 2021

Much of my family history is lost through previous generations. However, my family on my mother's side of the family migrated from France to the U.S. four or more generations ago, and they worked as tenant farmers. My knowledge of my culture of origin on my Mother and Father's side of the family is limited, but I know that a large percentage of my ancestors also migrated to the U.S from other various parts of Europe.

Once my ancestors arrived in the U.S., they mostly migrated to various parts of the Northern U.S. to states such as Illinois and Virginia. My family on my Father's side moved between parts of the U.S. and various countries in Europe such as Scotland, Ireland, and England. Eventually, both of my Grandparents and several of my great Aunts and Uncles moved South to states such as South Carolina and Florida.

Religion is a dominant aspect of my cultural identity. Various forms of Christianity are prominent on my Father's side of the family, and most of my family members on my Mom's side are Catholic. Religion is an important part of daily life for the majority of my family. However, religion is an intrapersonal conflict between my family and I because I am not religious. This dynamic creates a sense of guilt and rejection due to my lack of religion. Since religion is so important to my family, they view my lack of religion as offensive, and they discredit my viewpoints. As a result, I do not discuss my beliefs or religion with my family.

Other sources of intragroup conflict include loose family connections and rejection of other family members. Since many of my Mother's family members live far away in other states, we do not keep in close contact with them. In addition, her father has been estranged from the family since her parent's divorce in her childhood.

Loose family ties are also withheld by my Father's side of the family. For example, even though many of my Great-Aunts and Great-Uncles live close to each other, many of them do not interact with each other due to long-held grudges or past disagreements. There is also tension between my Mother and her Mother-in-law. Therefore my immediate family is partially isolated from the rest of my family, and the family only interacts with exclusive members during special occasions or holidays.

My family does not often express pride for our cultural heritage. This is largely due to feelings of shame surrounding severe mental health issues that are especially prevalent in my

Father's family. When my Great-Grandmother was alive, she demonstrated unusual behavior which caused my Father's family to move a lot and made daily life difficult for my Grandmother and her siblings. This factor contributes to my lack of knowledge about my family history because most members of my Father's family are not willing to discuss aspects of their childhood or heritage, especially aspects related to poor mental health. As a result, many of my family members have unrecognized and untreated mental health diagnoses.

Shame surrounding mental health is also present in my Mother's family. For example, my oldest Uncle also has untreated mental health issues. As a result, my Uncle is an outcast from the family due to his unusual behavior and personality. My family members on my Mother's side are ashamed of my Uncle due to his life choices and behavior. As a result of this, my Uncle is isolated from other members of the family.

Since most of my family is loosely connected, outside friends and neighbors often replace family members at special occasions and events. Outsiders are especially welcomed in my Dad's family and, they assume the role of family members. Other outsiders, such as mental health professionals, are disregarded by members of my family. Even though I am studying to be in the mental health field, mental health professionals, and mental health specifically, is not taken seriously or understood by most of my family members. This view of mental health professionals further distances my family from improving their mental health issues and mending ties between members of the family.