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A Breath of Solitude

Chloe Taylor

Category Winner
First Year Writing

As I sat on my bed for my third zoom class of the day for the fifth day in a row, I heard my loneliness and depression pounding on the door, screaming to be let inside. I tried my hardest to ignore them and remind myself that I am wanted and loved, but after so long without human touch, my door began to creep open, allowing the darkness in a little at a time. I needed to escape; I needed some place to fight off my demons. It is easier to fight in an open space than to fight from a corner of a cramped room. The second my final class was over for that day, I changed clothes and went on a hunt to find the famous Governor's Mansion trails that I had been hearing about since I moved to Topeka for college.

Eventually, I found my way to the trails. I started my journey choosing the first path that led me into the woods. The trees were marked with different colors so that you could follow the blue, red, black, or yellow trail, but I did not know how to follow the directions. So while I was lost on the trails for two hours that day, I reconnected with nature in a way that brought me clarity and understanding on what I needed to do in my life to put up the strongest fight against the demons knocking on my door.

The weather was gorgeous; the wind was a cool breeze with the sun shining through the trees and heating streaks of the air and spots of the ground that warmed me as I wandered through the shadowed trails. As I hiked, I paid close attention to my senses. Every inhale was crisp, almost making my lungs sting from the freshness of the air. I had been stuck inside for so long only breathing humid, musky air that this new concoction of air was being sucked in with greedy, welcoming power by my lungs. I felt the pounding of my heart and the burning sensation in my legs as I ascended many hills after months of rarely leaving my bedroom. I observed with awe at the many colors among the woods. The trees were gorgeous hues of red, orange, yellow, and green. There were places so high that you could look out over valleys of trees and wildlife. I listened to the pitter-patter of squirrels, rabbits, and other quick-scampering wildlife as they darted across the paths made by human travelers and into the safety of the underbrush. I listened to the songs of birds as they called out to each other. Nature was breathtaking. Out there, though I was physically more alone than inside my college house where I lived with five roommates, I felt less alone than I had in months. I had not felt so connected with some-thing in ages. Though I was not receiving the human touch that I was craving, it was as if nature was enveloping me in a promising, hopeful hug. My gratefulness for life was returning with each step.

I noticed how appreciative I was to be alive when I was in nature. I had been taking life for granted and going through the motions without stopping to breathe and appreciate the life that I have. I began going out into nature as much as I could after that experience. I sat on my porch for my zoom classes and watched the squirrels scamper up, down, and across the trees; I hung my hammock and ate breakfast before my crazy day began so that I could have some peace and time to breathe before my day got hectic; I went to the trails as often as I could; I looked up at the sky and breathed in the vastness of the sky and stars; I stared in amazement at the sunsets. I began taking time to myself that was much needed and appreciating the beauty of nature. That day that I decided to go on a hike changed my life. I began living in the moment rather than merely living passively and waiting for the day life would return to "normal." I made my new normal and found the happiest me that I have ever known. Out there in nature, I was untouchable; my darkness could not find me in the vast openness, yet I was able to find myself.

Weird Is Relative

Haley Carlin

I went on a mission trip and served alongside students from Minnesota. We were talking about our favorite food combinations and we Kansas kids mentioned eating cinnamon rolls with chili when we were in grade school. The other kids did not like the idea of this food combination; this feeling was evident by their disgusted facial expressions. This is an example from my life where cultural relativism should have been considered. When considering cultural relativism, one needs not hold someone to the standard of your culture being right and theirs being abnormal. Cultural relativism is the fact there is not a blanket standard for culture. When we keep cultural relativism in mind, we can be proactive in avoiding and limiting ethnocentrism, the idea or belief that one ethnic group or culture is inherently superior to another. Throughout the last few class periods in SO100, my eyes have been open to the world of global culture. Through the "No Reservations" episode, the articles, and the animal noise activity, I was able to see what global culture is and how it affects our ability to relate to people from other cultures.

I enjoyed the "No Reservations" episode that we watched. I was honestly surprised by how few differences there were between the culture in South Korea and here in the United States. Most of their

culture is based around eating food and drinking alcohol, as it is here. In the discussion about the video, in particular the odd foods, I learned a valuable lesson about culture.

Dr. Park told us not to be disgusted by the fresh octopus, which was moving on the plate, or the chicken gizzards. When we reject the food, we are doing more than that. We are rejecting the people and their culture as a whole. I was also very amazed to learn that we eat fermented food, like kimchi, every day. Whether it be coffee, bread, chocolate, or others, I have enjoyed fermented food my whole life without being aware that it was fermented. Apart from the video, the articles I read were also very enlightening.

The article that stood out to me the most was the one titled "McWeddings." Here in the U.S., McDonalds has a reputation for being somewhat low-class and unclean. In China, however, McDonalds has a certain flair and elegance. People pay for the McWedding package to have the best day of their lives take place in the chain restaurant. In the U.S. no one would imagine getting married in a McDonalds, but I bet some of our wedding venues are abnormal in other countries as well. If you take the venue out of the equation, the weddings themselves did not seem to be extremely different from a ceremony here in the U.S. I was also surprised to find out that emojis are geared toward Japanese culture and are often inadequate for portraying American phrases. This did, however, explain why most emojis on my phone do not seem necessary for me. They might not be useful in my culture, but they are everyday images in Japan. For example, the poop symbol may mean that you had a crappy day or that you do not feel good, but in Japan it can be a symbol of good luck. Emojis are a huge part of global culture because we all use the same emojis even though they apply to our cultures in different ways. Emojis are not where we stopped with Japanese culture.

We watched a video that covered the subject of sento/hadaka-no-tsukiai, translated as public bathing/naked communication. We learned that many homes in Japan did not have their own bath or shower in the past. Even if they did, the whole family would often use the same water to conserve the water that they use. In my culture, bathing together would be strange, but I could see in the video that sento is more about community and fellowship rather than getting clean, which is still important. At sento, it would not be odd for a

friend to help another friend wash his back. Full families would go to sento together and it meant something a little different for people of all ages. Parents and grandparents treat it as a sauna, they wash and sit and talk with other adults. The kids, however, treat it like another day at the public swimming pool. At first, I thought the idea of public bathing was strange, but after looking at it with cultural context, I was able to see that sento is kind of awesome.

The other articles also addressed well-known companies such as Disney and Walmart. Disney parks have been very successful all over the world, including their location in Hong Kong. Disney was especially careful when planning this park location. They hired a feng shui specialist to help design the curves in the sidewalk and all of the paths to make sure that the energy was flowing in a positive direction. They also had the opening on a day that was considered lucky in their culture. The designers of the park understood that not every culture is the same, therefore not every park should be the same. Walmart discovered this principle the hard way. Walmart tried to succeed in Germany for years and was unsuccessful. The German shoppers were not fond of the smiles and warm greetings every time you enter or leave a store. That is just not how they do things in Germany. Ikea is another store with major cultural differences. Here, you would go in, shop, maybe get food in the designated area and leave. In some Asian cultures, one might go in and take a nap on a bed or read in a chair for hours before leaving without having purchased anything. Though these articles were interesting, my favorite of the activities was the animal noise activity.

At first, I was confused about why Dr. Park was asking students to make cow and pig noises. After he made his noises, I understood. If you put a pig from America next to a pig from South Korea, they would make the same noise. The people are what makes the sounds different. Over the years Americans have decided that pigs oink and cows moo. The cow noise is more accurate than the pig one I will admit. Dr. Park's sound was not wrong, and neither was ours. It is just a matter of our cultural differences. This makes me curious as to what other countries use for their animal noises. I guess the global aspect could be that none of our onomatopoeias are accurate to the sound of the animal. All of the discussions and activities were helpful in understanding the global culture.

Maybe if the kids I met from Minnesota took Dr. Park's SO100 (Introduction to Sociology) they would have known not to insult our combination of cinnamon rolls and chili. Whether something is weird or normal should be determined by thinking of it as relative to that culture not to our own culture. So cinnamon rolls and chili may be abnormal in the culture of Minnesota, but if you step into Kansan culture, it is a standard meal for many. I was able to see that not only do we have cultures in our nations and regions but also across the globe. I was astonished that the cultural similarities around the world are more than the differences. Maybe if more people came to this real-ization our world would be a more inclusive environment and we could better avoid ethnocentrism. My own experience showed me that this idea does not only exist between foreign groups, but it is also present even within our borders. Those Minnesota residents had this idea that they were superior to the weird Kansas kids that eat cinna-mon rolls with our chili. This unit taught me valuable lessons about accepting every aspect of a person's culture, moving tentacles and all.

Arts and Humanities

Essays

A Drug You Can Trust

Christina G. Noland

Category Winner
Arts and Humanities

Narrative stories have been a staple in our lives for generations. Stories that children read, watch on television, and every game they play have one thing in common: they all have a continuous narrative that builds upon one event. Tabletop role-playing games, however, have been a huge part of pop culture since the initial release of Dungeons and Dragons (D&D) in the mid-1970s. The gameplay features collaborative storytelling that offers entertainment as well as a feeling of community. Yet, this type of interaction is believed to be dangerous, going as far as carrying Satanic and occult influences more than three decades later. Unfortunately, this perception of D&D has hidden the therapeutic benefits the game offers society.

The connection between fantasy role-playing games (RPGs) and the occult became solid in 1982 in an era that became known as the Satanic Panic. A woman by the name of Patricia Pulling created a campaign called BADD, Bothered About Dungeons and Dragons, after her son, Irving, committed suicide (Laycock, 2015, p. 103). Pulling believed that these tabletop games were a "direct path toward involvement in Satanism" (Laycock, 2015, p. 103). Her influence within the evangelical community would be strong enough to last a decade, spreading her belief that this issue threatened all members of society.

Based on research from Joseph Laycock, Assistant Professor of Religious Studies at Texas State University, the Satanic Panic originally started in the 1970s (Laycock, 2015, p. 102). There was already an anticult movement going around that targeted religious groups. However, the Satanic Panic was created entirely on fictitious conspiracy theories and the like (Laycock, 2015, pp. 101-107). Sociologist David Bromley describes that most of the population at the time believed that there was a "vast criminal network" operating at all levels of society (Laycock, 2015, p. 102). The individuals in question would be scattered among the demographics from high-level politicians or your ordinary teenage pranksters. Additionally, these criminals were said to perform rituals and sacrifice humans to destroy what humanity perceived as moral fiber (Laycock, 2015, p. 102). The critics of these fantasy role-playing games claimed that the natural playstyle and storytelling aspect of these tabletop adventures was "one of the most effective and ingenious tools for the spread of Satanism" (Laycock, 2015, p. 102). The belief spread like wildfire and then into hysteria.

Because of this prior belief that tabletop RPGs were evil, any other act perceived as evil was instantly correlated. Thus, as Patricia Pulling had a Jewish background, her son committing suicide was a violation of their beliefs. Anything that would pull someone to willingly commit suicide had to be influenced by the devil. Therefore, tabletop games were to blame as the easiest way of communication between Satan and the people that walk the Earth. Even though it is unclear whether or not Irving Pulling had any interaction with D&D or similar games, Patricia had enough fuel to keep BADD riding the waves of the Satanic Panic for a decade.

Eventually, the panic over tabletop RPGs subsided due to a few outstanding factors. Over time, the existence of the Satanic cults was proven to be false (Laycock, 2015, pp. 101-135). Video games became more violent and thus a more valid target of scrutiny. While the Satanic Panic officially ended in 1991, the rumors didn't start falling away until BADD disbanded in 1997 following the death of its creator, Patricia Pulling (Laycock, 2015, p. 103). In a nutshell, the introduction of D&D simply arrived at the wrong time in history, allowing for religious practitioners to use the concept of the game as a scapegoat to influence beliefs.

However, the impact of these beliefs is still felt to this day. The idea that tabletop games contain Satanic origins based on associa-

tion has led the police department of Natchez, Mississippi to feature warnings on occult crime. As of 2015, the department has issued the warning signs of occult involvement to include heavy involvement in tabletop role-playing fantasy games (Laycock, 2015, p. 103). The reasoning for this stems from the fact that there are no rules in fantasy and no guidelines to encourage proper behavior. Additionally, it is believed that people who are interested in these types of games are subjecting themselves to blurred lines between reality and fantasy to the point that decision making is impaired. Other references are mentioned on the warnings for occult crime but "Heavy into fantasy games" is on the top of the list (Laycock, 2015, p. 103). But are tabletop role-playing games as detrimental to players as physically, mentally, and emotionally as the panic leads people to believe?

A case report from Dr. Wayne D. Blackmon details the play of Dungeons and Dragons as beneficial in the case of Fred, a 19-year-old college student with suicidal tendencies. The college student, clinically diagnosed with free-floating depression, underwent months of formal therapy from multiple psychiatrists without any benefit (Blackmon, 1994, p. 625). Because of his schizoid nature, Fred's support circle fell apart, which allowed for his mental state to become more unstable within his self-isolation. It wasn't until two years into unsuccessful treatments that Fred reached out to a group of "fringe people like myself" and was introduced to Dungeons and Dragons (Blackmon, 1994, p. 626). The game allowed him to develop complete characters with the emotions he couldn't express. Because it was fantasy in nature, personal content could be released and explored without judgment looming overhead. Additionally, as the other players consciously used the game as a means of therapy, plots were intentionally designed to bring Fred's demons to light within a comfortable, safe environment (Blackmon, 1994, pp. 625-626). Therefore, Dungeons and Dragons "made possible the later work of therapy that might not otherwise have been possible in an individual who was so schizoid" (Blackmon, 1994, p. 630).

In addition to providing therapy for those suffering from depression, tabletop RPGs have extended their reach to others that struggle to find their place within society. An article written in the New York Times mentions a Seattle-based nonprofit organization called Game to Grow. The organization develops games specifically to help those who struggle with autism, social anxiety, and ADHD (Gilsdorf, 2019, para. 25). One game in particular, Critical Core, is a D&D-like

RPG that helps control players' anger issues and increase empathy and happiness, all while promoting fun and cooperative interaction (Gilsdorf, 2019, para. 25). Adam Davis, co-founder of Game to Grow, mentioned how returning the therapy of traditional storytelling is an "accessible and ensorcelling way to get human connection, where we can work towards a common goal" (Gilsdorf, 2019, para. 26). If a role-playing game could help an autistic mind reach new concepts, one could imagine how such a game could impact learning in public institutions.

Additionally, the inclusivity of such RPGs produces an environment that is free of racism or persecution. The New York Times article provides a voice for all people of color, geek culture and queers alike. Tanya DePass, founder and director of a Chicago-based nonprofit called I Need Diverse Games, is an African American woman who was shocked upon realizing that someone of her likeness could exist in a fantasy game (Gilsdorf, 2019, para. 16). That said, not every D&D world is perfect and there can be other players that can question why someone has brown skin, odd colored hair, or strange behavior. But Dungeons and Dragons provides just enough disconnect from reality that racial comments are not seen in the same context as they are in real life. Instead, the RPG gives players the courage to give stand up for themselves with such remarks as "I have a flaming sword and I have a talking wolf. Why do you have an issue?" (Gilsdorf, 2019, para. 27).

Similarly, Jeremy Crawford, the lead rules designer for Dungeons and Dragons and a homosexual man, wanted to remind humanity how diverse it is and "that it's also true in these fantasy worlds" (Gilsdorf, 2019, para. 15). The comfortable space that RPG games like D&D give the average player is strong enough to stabilize the impact of conventional attacks on race and personality create. Self-confidence gained throughout these alternate reality adventures can help combat the self-loathing some can feel after being persecuted by others over differences.

However, the power of a game, especially one created to aid mental development, has never been something Dungeons and Dragons is known for. On the contrary, D&D is still believed to influence negative emotions and behaviors, such as personality disorders, major depression, and substance abuse (Ben-Ezra et al., 2018, p. 215). An academic paper published in *Psychiatric Quarterly* addressed how social workers

view role-playing games as well as their impact on mental health. 130 social workers were given a multifaceted questionnaire about RPGs, specifically Dungeons and Dragons (Ben-Ezra et al., 2018, p. 215). The participants ranged from 24 to 64 years of age and were selected from a wide range of psychographics. A statistical analysis of the questionnaire concluded that only 25 of the social workers had knowledge of role-playing games prior to the questionnaire (Ben-Ezra et al., 2018, p. 216). This means that the majority of the group in the survey had no knowledge of role-playing games at all. Additionally, of the 130 social workers, more than a third of them believed there was a connection between RPGs and mental health issues as described in the DSM-IV (Ben-Ezra et al., 2018, p. 216). Based on this study, one can assume that one in every three social workers will have a negative perspective on the correlation between Dungeons and Dragons and mental health.

That said, of the social workers who knew about RPGs before the survey, the study's results showed that "having a higher knowledge of RPGs was associated with lower perception of a link between playing RPGs and psychopathology" (Ben-Ezra et al., 2018, p. 216). Similarly, those who did not know the game's style had a higher perception between RPGs and mental issues (Ben-Ezra et al., 2018, p. 216).

While this study focuses on social workers, it appears as though a lack of knowledge of how RPGs work, such as Dungeons and Dragons, fuels the negative stigma that surrounds the genre. The negative correlation between RPGs and mental health could stem from holding onto past lectures or experiences. Additionally, positive judgments between the two can be perceived among those who have prior exposure to the concept. Overall, it appears as though a fear of the unknown prevents the acceptance of RPG-style games, like D&D, into official use in psychiatric hospitals as a method of treatment. Even with Fred's case mentioned above, stumbling upon Dungeons and Dragons was a desperate attempt to receive help and not something introduced by Dr. Blackmon or other psychiatrists (Blackmon, 1994, p. 626).

Ultimately, Dungeons and Dragons has nothing to do with beliefs, gender, race, or Satanism. Tabletop role-playing games are at the high end of social gaming because the interaction is not digital. In addition to supplying a welcoming space, every campaign is unique and tailored to personal experiences. In some cases, tabletop RPGs may be more therapeutic than traditional practices or prescription drugs.

D&D allows players a chance to look inside themselves, bond with others, and critically think about situations in a game that can reflect upon real life. Being able to walk a mile in someone else's shoes is illogical if one is trying to understand a different perspective in life. Creating a character in a tabletop RPG and walking a mile in their shoes is much more realistic.

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Do College Athletes Deserve to Be Paid?

Malick Fall

Being a student athlete is not an easy task. This is something that most people are able to agree on. Since there is a consensus here, the best athletes are awarded full scholarships. This might seem like fair compensation in exchange for the time and energy of these athletes, but it is surrounded by controversy that needs to be considered before deciding. Currently, these athletes are not being paid because in order to be an athlete in the NCAA (National Collegiate Athletic Association), you need to be considered an amateur. Being an amateur restricts athletes from any form of compensation earned using their athletic ability. For many student athletes, this means that they aren't able to profit from their names, images, or their jerseys, but this does not affect all the student athletes. A big part of the argument on why collegiate athletes do not deserve to be paid is because it is believed that many institutions cannot afford it (Thomas, 2011). "Only a fraction of the programs are profitable while most operate at a cost to the institution" (Mitchell, Edelman, 2013). This would mean that the schools profiting are much less in number compared to the schools that are not. Although this is true, there are fifty schools reporting an annual revenue of more than 50 million dollars a year (Mitchell, Edelman, 2013). This problem only concerns the athletes in the

minority of schools making huge profits from the NIL (Name, Image, Likeness) of their athletes.

All of these extremely profitable schools are division 1 where only elite athletes participate in their sports programs. For division 1 athletes there are multiple incentives to attend these schools. For one, they get to compete against the best athletes below the professional level, and two, this also gives them the best opportunity at eventually becoming a professional player themselves. For most kids coming out of high school these are the goals many of them wish to attain. These schools understand that division 1 in and of itself is a huge deal to these athletes and they also realize that in order to get the "best" athletes they have to separate themselves further with the incentives they provide.

It is believed that allowing money to be used as a way for schools to incentivize student athletes would be an advantage that could shift the power of certain schools based on their money and not play (Thomas, 2011). The points made by Thomas, 2011, and Mitchell and Edelman, 2013 were both valid points that should be addressed when considering this issue, but I do not think they are substantial enough to end the conversation in the favor of those opposing that athletes should be paid.

The athletes on full scholarships are generally the ones spoken about in this conversation. The biggest argument I have found as to why they should not be paid is based on the fact that they get to attend school for free and graduate without debt. Looking back at the fact that many schools are not profitable from their sports programs I can agree that these scholarships are a compensation for many student athletes. However, what about the student athlete whose jersey and pictures are being sold and profited from at a school like Alabama? Is it fair that his school can profit from his athletic ability, but he can't profit from his own signature? The NCAA was founded way back in 1906 (Weathersby, 2016), I doubt there was any indication that the landscape of college sports would look like this today. Who knew that some colleges coaches would be millionaires because of the football teams they coach?

There is no way that the initial language used when deciding how student athletes should be treated was made considering what the times of today would entail. Today college athletes are household names, and many are cash cows for their schools. In an article titled

college athletes should be paid, author Brennan Schneider gives a comprehensive look into the current climate of this debate. "California is the first state to pass a law that will allow college athletes to get paid for endorsements, which will come into play in 2023." (Schneider, 2019). This law was passed because the rules of the NCAA were recognized as unethical and finally ruled against. This topic has come up in recent years because only recently has the exposure of these teams been to the whole country. With this exposure, people from all over the country are affiliated with teams far from their home states and are buying the memorabilia of these teams which reflects an increase in team revenues. This change should be addressed and should be reflected in new conditions set by the NCAA.

I don't believe it's enough that student athletes can only receive scholarships when attending these schools. Most of the time these scholarships don't even cover the full costs of living when attending these schools (Thomas, 2011). For some of these student athletes, the revenue they bring in is a drastically larger amount than the scholarships that they receive. In recent years, the most popular example of this would be the quarterback for Texas A&M University Johnny Manziel. Manziel was an athlete who came into an otherwise boring school and completely flipped their school atmosphere. During his freshman season he brought his school all the way to a bowl game which brought in revenue of about 4 million dollars (Terbush, 2013). He also was the first freshman to win college football's most prestigious award, the Heisman trophy which brought the school 37 million dollars in media exposure (Duffy, 2013). Johnny Manziel may have been the first freshman to win the Heisman, but every year we see a winner. Without even winning this trophy, and just by being apart of the race, schools receive exposure get viewers.

Even if scholarship was considered as compensation, shouldn't it at least cover tuition and living expenses for the whole year? For an athlete to have their time fully consumed by the team and the professors how can we expect to add worrying about money to that equation. It's been estimated that scholarships lack about 1,500 dollars in living expenses (Thomas, 2011). This is a good amount of money for some people especially considering that many of these athletes statistically come from lower financial demographics (Thomas, 2011). As a student athlete myself, I can attest to the fact that playing football in college sometimes feels like a job. Free time is basically nonexistent

because of the expectations that are set by coaches and professors. Considering that my school, Washburn University is not making millions from our efforts I can confidently say that scholarship is a great incentive for getting us to perform. We are happy with a full ride in exchange for football because at the end of the day we know that the profit made from us is most likely deserved, and the key word here is deserved. Hypothetically thinking, let's say this were a division 1 school bringing in millions of dollars, and even though their benefits increased, they still gave scholarships as their compensation for athletes, should that still be viewed as fair? And from this angle is where I've derived my conclusion that no this is not fair.

Professional athletes are paid millions of dollars a year and it's because they bring their teams millions of dollars in return. Why is it that all professional athletes aren't paid equally? This is because athletes are paid based on their individual contributions to the organization they play for, and this module is viewed as fair. Why is it that student athletes are all compensated the same when they all bring different things to the table? It feels like this is a model that was created for a different time and is being used in present context when there are clear faults. The NCAA has hundreds of institutions declared to be a part of their association so it would be ignorant to think that this is a change that could be made overnight. Them considering these athletes as employees would create huge ripple effects for schools because a lot would have to change. As of right now the majority of universities, public or private are considered exempt from taxes (Colombo, 2009). Having student athletes listed as employees would call for a drastic reset in structure for these schools and would most likely end with them earning much less. This is a major step which would be extremely difficult to take and for this reason and many others, it may take a very long time before there is a consensus on the path to take.

College athletes are some extremely hard-working individuals. Most have little to no time outside of their sport or school. Inevitably, some of these athletes are bound to the next level of professional sports. They attend these schools because they can be great stepping-stones for their careers. Even though a lot of these kids are next level ready they have to attend college because attending a college is now mandatory before drafts, making these schools merely a formality. It is also important that when having this discussion, it is clear that the athletes spoken about here are a few compared to a large group. For

the majority of student athletes, scholarships are fair because they are being given to athletes that are not being exploited, however for a player like Johnny Manziel, the amount of compensation should be much more than the other kid on the team who nobody has heard of.

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To Be the First

Sean Lavin

The idea of being first in a given situation can be a terrifying experience even for the boldest of individuals. This sensation of fear is something that spans across all creeds, ethnicities, and races, making trivial tasks more difficult than they are. Yet there are still some who find themselves taking that first step and creating a new reality for all. However, time continues to move forward and can render the memory of these accomplishments entirely forgotten. An exhibit was donated to the Mulvane Art Museum on Washburn University's campus to help impede this universal memory loss. Created by photographer Brian Lanker, the "I Dream a World: Portraits of Black Women Who Changed America" exhibition provides multiple examples of women who found themselves in situations that allowed them to be deemed the first black females.

The student body of the campus is the main audience interacting with this exhibit. Many who wander through the gallery may feel transported back in time to where race was vital in defining one's accomplishments. Thus, unfamiliar faces may leave students feeling as if they did not pay attention in history class. What these photographs describe are the triumphs of African American women and their defining moments, like those of sisters Winson and Dovie

Hudson, Constance Baker Motley, and Sherian Grace Cadoria. Because of Lanker's ability as a photographer giving credibility to the women, their accomplishments are made as important today as when they were achieved. The exhibit also reinforces the knowledge stored in the mind's eye about the trials and tribulations that African American women have gone through, both in a physical sense as well as an emotional one.

In order to forge their place in society, the Hudson sisters, Winson and Dovie, took on the daunting task of leveling the educational playing field regarding segregation. They were activists for not only their hometown of Carthage, but for the entire state of Mississippi. This became apparent when they became the first African Americans to register a desegregation lawsuit against the state's school system (Wall text for photograph of Winson and Dovie Hudson, 1989). Based on their prior actions, logical appeal suggests that once they plan to act that they will ultimately achieve it.

The Hudson's portrait in the museum shows both of them sitting in wooden chairs. Their posture looks relaxed as their shoulders gently slope downward. The sister on the left of the photo wears a patterned, collared dress, resting her interlocked hands on her waist. The other sister also wears a patterned dress but her hands rest on her lap, one atop the other. Each one of them wear glasses, magnifying the look in their eyes as they stare towards the audience. Behind the duo is a white wall displaying a little wooden shelf centered about a foot above them. Upon the shelf appears to be a picture of two women. Each of the individuals look wide-eyed and carry smiles that show off their teeth, giving the impression they are full of life and vigor. Just below the shelf sets a white plate held to the wall by two rounded wire hooks. At the center of the plate is an image of a black man dressed in what appears to be priestly garb. On the wall to the left of the shelf lies what appears to be an old-fashioned school intercom speaker, possibly reflecting their time spent building preschools (Wall text for photograph of Winson and Dovie Hudson, 1989).

Upon closer inspection of the portrait, the man's image etched onto the hanging plate appears to be very important to the Hudson's. Whether or not this man is meant to represent the sister's father or priest is up to interpretation as this could reflect strong family or religious connections, respectively. Furthermore, one may see more similarities between the Hudson sisters and the photograph resting on the

wall behind them. There appear to be shared characteristics between the Hudson sister on the left of the portrait with the woman on the left of the smaller picture on the wall. If perhaps one sister resides in the photo on the wall, one can reason that the other sister may be in the photo as well. The definition of Kairos can explain a correlation between past and present, whereas at the current time Hudson sisters wear a more stoic facial expression than the individuals in the photo. A possible take away from this portrait is a comparison of youth and old age and reflecting upon the past while also looking towards the future.

Willing the future into existence might be described as a dance between dedication and trepidation. Constance Baker Motley most likely has her portrait within the gallery because she was appointed the first black woman to serve as a federal judge in the United States District Court (Wall text for the photograph of Constance Baker Motley, 1989). A dark image that appears to be a courtroom, Judge Motley stands alone in front of rows of wooden benches in the background resembling the pews in a church. She stands straight and tall with her arms at her sides while staring off into the distance. Her facial expression is calm and yet it looks as if she is pondering her next move, perhaps waiting for someone to challenge her authority. This power is shown by the elegant, black judge's robes she's wearing that reach down and touch the floor she stands on, allowing her to appear as if she's suspended in mid-air. Had she not been wearing this attire in the photograph, the logical appeal would have been different as the authority of a judge would have been lost behind the persona of a regular citizen. Judge Motley's face is framed by the illumination of two bowl-shaped lights hanging from the ceiling. To the right and left of her rest motionless, wooden chairs with leather backs, showing that this room has and will continue to hold others in the future.

At closer inspection, one might even see the scales of justice being portrayed within the photo. Judge Motley's position between the two hanging lights is centered in a way that conveys that she's the focal point or pillar. It's as if the lights act as the scales that would tip to either side of her depending on the weight of the judgement being given. Furthermore, the chairs seem to show that the scale is unbalanced as there are more chairs to her left rather than her right. Because of Brian Lanker's skills and experience as a photographer, one can easily assume these elements were intentionally placed to

create a balance between both logos and ethos. This also potentially evokes emotion within the audience as they step back to a time in which inequality was widely accepted, thus representing pathos.

Authority mixed with emotion exists side-by-side in the portrait of a woman by the name of Sherian Grace Cadoria. At the time this photo was taken, she was the first African American woman to reach the rank of Brigadier General in the United States armed forces. She was also one of only four female Army Generals (Wall text for the photograph of Sherian Grace Cadoria, 1989). While viewing the portrait, one might realize that she is a high-ranking officer in the military because of the single star upon her shoulder. She wears her dress uniform, a white, collared shirt underneath a long-sleeved coat that is wrapped around her figure, clasped together by four buttons. Upon closer analysis some may notice that there is nary a crease to be had, possibly inferring that she took her position quite seriously. Completing the attire, Cadoria wears a hat with an emblem centered on the front, appearing to be an eagle carrying items within its talons. The rest of her uniform is decorated with medals, ribbons, and other accolades in effort to help convey her accomplishments. Overall, logical appeal resides in the authority portrayed by her uniform and her long-standing service within the military.

Just as important as Cadoria's appearance is the existence of a memorial wall behind her, carrying the names of fallen soldiers. Taking into consideration that her biography mentions that she served in the Vietnam War, one can assume that the wall is part of the Vietnam War Memorial (Wall text for photograph of Sherian Grace Cadoria, 1989). Ethos and Kairos can be interpreted here because she can be seen to portray a walking reminder of the memorial wall. Furthermore, her shadow is cast upon the wall as clearly as a mirror, possibly a shadow of her former self. This showcases that there may be some self-reflection about how far she has come and that she could not have made it by herself. Cadoria's posture seems to display a relaxed frame of mind as her arms are loosely held at her lower back. Similarly, her peaceful facial expression seems to convey a sense of pride and determination. This emotional appeal may allow some to feel inspiration or a sense of security while studying her face.

Overall, the reintroduction of the "I Dream a World: Portraits of Black Women Who Changed America" exhibit to Washburn's campus provides today's younger generation an opportunity to sculpt their

futures. Being the first to tread new territory is as nerve-racking as it is uncertain. However, it's important to take that initial step because inaction is destructive to those wanting the future to change. Accurately preserving the achievements of the past help to build a better tomorrow. For if we don't remember how far we've come, there will be no inspiration for the next generation to take action and make themselves the first.

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An Education Worth Writing Home About

Glorianna R. Noland

The room was dim enough to see the faint wisps that long since burned from a dying cigarette in an ashtray nearby. The home was not my own, but familiar faces filled my view—two of my siblings seemed to be pushing through the musty trenches with me. A third face, however, was not as familiar. My siblings and I were at the home of a fellow classmate who fervently demanded tutoring in her least favorite subject: math.

The pen ground against the paper as my classmate frantically scribbled down formulas, muttering to herself about how difficult life was and that she would never be able to pass with the grade she wanted. She was fifteen years my senior, a non-traditional student that bellowed about how confused she was during every class period.

"The way the question is written will determine which formula you use," I had told her, tracing my fingers between key words and the associated plans of action on the crumpled sheets of paper our professor had handed out earlier that morning. "You don't have to memorize the formula sheet since it's being provided to us, but you do need to memorize which words represent the required solution."

"Why don't you ever talk this much when we're in class together?" My classmate passively commented with an almost disappointed

sigh, "I don't know if it's the homeschooled side of you, but you're always so afraid to talk all the time."

Her passive words stunned me. My upbringing had yet surfaced under a negative light. In fact, my classmate often gushed over how I was raised. "General common sense" is what she would say—something that I had in spades and that she wanted her children to learn. Yet, in the dingy light of a kitchen that grew unsettlingly silent, I wondered how true her words were. Antisocial tendencies are a common stigma of the homeschooling community—a stigma that seeps into other underlying factors, such as morality or education. However, how does homeschooled equate to displays of social behavior or lack thereof?

This criticism stems from the idea that children isolated from a larger society later develop inhibited social skills. Some may argue that this is the goal of homeschooling parents—to keep their offspring from becoming influenced by the outside world (Medlin, 2011, p. 107). In 1995, a survey of public school superintendents found that "92% believed home-schooled children do not receive adequate socialization experiences" (Medlin, 2011, p. 109). However, an article by Richard Medlin (2011) published in the *Peabody Journal of Education* reveals how homeschooling parents argue the negative possibilities of both this mindset and the harsh reality of the public education system—that the environment can "stifle children's individuality and harm their self-esteem" (p. 109).

Often, parents electing to homeschool their children have multiple reasons for electing a homeschooled approach. In a 2010 analysis published by the *Wiedner Law Review*, the National Center for Education Statistics cited that environmental concern, dissatisfaction with teaching, and other religious-based issues are the highest-ranking grievances that led parents to homeschool (Dumas et al., 2010, p. 70). However, parental figures or guardians are aware of the additional effort that "may be required to give their children certain kinds of social experiences" (Medlin, 2011, p. 110). An article written by Jill Weiner for the *The New York Times* mentions that demand for programs at museums across the country has risen due to the number of homeschooling families that turn to these establishments for extracurricular activities (Weiner, 2012). If parents are willing to seek out and provide social opportunities for their offspring, then what is the issue?

This question not only lies within the inherent—arguably uned-

ucated—disagreement of socialization practice of homeschoolers, but also the perceived consequences that these children will face. Medlin mentions that education and socialization are connected in various aspects (2011, p. 108). Education may be the subtext hidden among the rabble; that children hiding in their homes, away from the world, are not provided for academically. Those in positions of power within the education system have commented on this. The concept is that by restricting children from the traditional educational experience, they will suffer the social—and therefore academic—repercussions (Medlin, 2011, p. 107).

While the modern homeschooling movement is quite young in comparison to traditional public institutions, there have been studies in the past on the efficacy and long-standing circumstances following a long-term, homeschooled education. In 1997, more than 230 homeschooled graduates were surveyed, with 69% having attended some "postsecondary education," and 31% that gained employment (Medlin, 2011, p. 116).

It is worth considering that homeschooled students often thrive within collegiate environments. The analysis published by the *Widener Law Review* found that homeschooled students "adjust well to the college environment," and reported fewer feelings of anxiety than those of their traditionally schooled counterparts (Dumas et al., 2010, p. 77). Furthermore, the analysis conveys how academic achievement, social skills, and civic involvement displayed by homeschooled students are on a level of preparedness higher to that of conventionally schooled students (Dumas et al., 2010, p. 73). Former admissions director of Ball State University reported in a published article in 2004 that "homeschooled students had above-average SAT and ACT scores," and they performed better academically with a cumulative grade point average of 3.47—compared to the 2.91 of traditionally schooled counterparts.

Why such a disparity in scores? Perhaps both the quality of educational materials and the environment of the student are variables to consider. The *Wiedner Law Review* reveals that parents have access to a wider range of content and opportunities, such as online biology labs and materials from leading scientific institutions, and even programs that offer "online learning opportunities" (Dumas et al., 2010, p. 70). It is understandable when seen from a larger perspective. These materials are often expensive and costly, even when it is only intended for

one child. It would be unreasonable to think that every educational institution could afford every child a similar curriculum to that of a homeschooled student. While all parents may agree that they want only the best for their children, the financial limitations placed on public schools could be a possible hindrance.

However, materials alone are not the ultimatum that illustrates the difference in academic performance. What about the environment's role in education? The *Wiedner Law Review* mentions that parents can tailor a "supportive environment to meet the needs of each individual child" (Dumas et al., 2010, p. 70). I often struggled with mathematical equations, whereas some of my siblings thrived with the subject. Consequently, my mother and father would alter their approach and explain it in ways I could understand—because I needed an explanation of *why* something was the answer rather than the answer itself. Teachers could not afford to spend time devising plans that perfectly coexist with every child under their tutelage. There are too many students, too few teachers, and not enough time to provide every child with a unique method to success.

That same method was what I offered my classmate—someone who both praised and harped upon my past.

"Just because I don't talk during class doesn't mean I'm afraid to," I replied, phrasing my tone to sound playful rather than the offense that I felt at that moment. While I was on the shy side when interacting with others, it never got in the way of my successes. My GPA was at a 4.0, I spoke to my professors regularly, and I would always stay and chat with friends that I met on campus. What really made me so different?

I had reached down for my math textbook, crisp pages curling around my fingers as I heaved it onto the table that was littered with crumbs and stains from years of meals with messy eaters.

"I'm just saying," my classmate replied, a tired breath passing her lips, "I think that you need to learn to break out of that shell and live a little."

Maybe she was right from her own perspective, but that wasn't true for me. It was not important to me if my introverted tendencies were due to a personality trait or the lifestyle of my formative years. I was satisfied with what I accomplished—and that was enough for me. If I am happy with my life, then obviously my parents did something right with me.

I dryly chuckled, turning the pages of my math textbook that covered the same section that we were all working on, "Considering that I'm terrible at math and that I'm tutoring you, I'm pretty sure we're both living a little."

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Leadership Analysis: Cindy Wilson

Taton Smith

Leadership, as many know, comes in various differing forms, and holds many aspects. From communicating with a team to navigating change, leadership requires a person to be able to adapt and overcome difficult challenges. An example of this can be found in Cindy Wilson, the current Executive Director of Corporate Compliance and Internal Audit at Evergy. Wilson over the years has displayed tremendous capability to adapt as a leader and has led her followers through difficult changes along the way.

Cindy Wilson began her leadership journey in the work force at Westar Energy in the early 2000s. At the time, Wilson explained that the community and atmosphere of Westar was "not a good place to work." The president at the time created many ethical dilemmas that ultimately caused Wilson to search for employment elsewhere. After initially leaving Westar Energy, Wilson worked for several years at Koch, but eventually came back to Westar in 2005. When Wilson returned, she described it as a "completely different place." The old president had since been replaced, and the company had come a long way since.

In 2018, Westar merged with KCPL, a process that had taken the better part of two years. However, this was not the original plan. In the

beginning, KCPL was expected to purchase Westar, letting them take nearly full control of the situation. In April 2017, this purchase did not get final approval; this sent both companies back to the drawing board. Shortly after in June, the plan to merge the two companies together was designed and the process began again to form Evergy. Throughout the merger, Wilson was on the frontlines speaking with and calming her fellow co-workers and employees.

It was at this time that Wilson explained how important her leadership skills had been, specifically communication, openness to change, and knowing and understanding her own ethics. With a huge change like a merger, Westar employees were terrified of logistics; were they going to able to keep their job and what is the future going to look like. With the help of her skills, Wilson was able to ease some of these tensions and help her company successfully navigate their biggest challenge to date.

Traditional Change

Since Cindy Wilson shared her leadership experiences through-out her career, it is easy to spot aspects of Kotter's change process. In his article, Kotter explained downfalls that companies and organizations make during a period of transformation. Kotter's steps include creating a sense of urgency, forming a power coalition, establishing and communicating a vision, empowering others to act on the vision, creating short-term wins, consolidating new improvements, and institutionalizing new approaches (Kotter, 2007). According to Kotter, if a leader were able to avoid common errors and follow these guidelines not only would they be able to create positive, lasting change, but improve their own skills as well.

In terms of Wilson's experience with change, several of Kotter's guidelines can be seen. The most visible of which is establishing and communicating an overall vision. During the KCPL and Westar merger, Wilson emphasized the level of importance communication played throughout the entire process. From the first announcements of selling, and then merging, to finishing the final details, Wilson communicated consistently with her teammates and employees. She managed to hold on open door policy, where other employees could come speak to her about any questions or concerns. Sometimes, they just needed to feel like they were heard, that they were not alone in their fears.

While Wilson communicated and listened, she also mentioned that she constantly repeated information. Even if the person she was talking to had heard that information multiple times before, she still went over it again in hopes to put all team members on the same page. However, she did not only reserve this for employees. Wilson explained to the public many times what information the company had and what the end goal was going to look like. This helped customers understand the process and feel that they were included as well.

Even though connections can be made between Wilson's leadership style and Kotter's view on change, other characteristics of great leadership can be seen. In the book *Good to Great* (Collins, 2001), one of the components of a great leader is being able to identify the correct people for the job. Many times throughout Collins's book, the analogy "getting the right people on the bus" was mentioned. "If we get the right people on the bus, the right people in the right seats, and the wrong people off the bus, then we'll figure out how to take it someplace great" (Collins, 2001). Overall, the saying comes down to this; change cannot occur without the individuals who are going to drive it.

Again, looking at Wilson's role in the Evergy merger, it is clear to see her influence in this Collin's principle. Wilson discussed how vital it was during the merger to ensure all employees were "in the correct seat." During high stress times, it was important that everyone in the company was doing their role in the change. Personally, Wilson assisted by acting as a mentor for others or matching up other employees with their own mentors. She explained that by providing mentorship, all employees continued to develop and learn through a process that required them to do just that.

Adaptive Leadership

When considering different aspects of leadership, chaos is usually something that strays far from the mind. However, in a theory from Tetenbaum and Laurence, chaos is viewed as an essential tool for a leader to command. In their article "Leading in the Chaos of the 21st Century," the authors say that disrupting the normalcy of day to day life by increasing organized chaos will give the leader and their organization a higher chance to make lasting changes. With that increase,

workers will be inclined to perform higher, change their work process, and become more innovative overall (Tetenbaum and Laurence, 2011).

In this case, the chaordic nature of merging two companies together drastically shifted the compliancy of day to day work. As mentioned earlier, many of Wilson's co-workers were frightened of the unknown changes that could possibly occur. This led Wilson, and many others, to shift how they interacted and passed along information. An example of this can be seen when Wilson described the changes she made to benefit her employees. Wilson emphasized that creating and maintaining a personal connection allowed employees to feel more secure in their roles, and eventually take more risks to step outside of the box. Another benefit of forming this connection was the increase in communication between both parties. Since everyone felt more at ease, they were able to not only communicate in a more efficient matter, but also understand where each member was coming from.

Leadership in Complex Systems

Taking a final look at Wilson's leadership style, one more concept can be found. In many cases like Wilson's experience working in Evergy, a complex system is studied. A complex system is made up of multiple parts coming together to intensify the situation and within that system comes groupthink. Groupthink is a style of thinking that renders group members incapable of making sound decisions (Burnette, 2011). A prime example that is studied is the 1996 Everest expedition. During this time, many of the team members died attempting to successfully summit to Everest. It is commonly believed that the outcome of that situation was caused by many factors, not just one.

When comparing Wilson's merging experience to that of a complex system fallen into groupthink, the first characteristic that can be seen is the setting of a high-tension environment. With the uncertainty of the future, stress within the company became extremely high. With that also came an increase in emotions as well. As she explained this experience, Wilson said that all employees handled the change differently; some showed their stress and emotions more than others and let it affect their role. Wilson stressed the importance of being in control of your reactions. She discussed that controlling your responses to stressful or unexpected changes ultimately impacted the result.

Another key factor to what causes groupthink is a directive style of leadership. When a leader's style falls into a directive tone, it could mean difficulty. Followers may feel pressured or influenced to agree with their leader, or inefficiently communicate within the group. Looking at Wilson's style, she decided to take a more adaptive approach. By working to openly communicate, develop personal connections, build a sense of community, and work with the changes rather than against, Wilson was able to guide her team successfully and avoid downfalls like that of Everest.

Even though this next concept does not fall directly under a complex system, it still shares many examples. The Hedgehog concept, popularized by Jim Collin's book *Good to Great*, is a "simple concept that flows from the deep understanding about the intersection of the following three circles: what can you be the best in the world at, what drives your economic engine, and what you are deeply passionate about" (Collins, 2001). By locating where these three sectors meet, a leader is able to be the best self that they can be and make the most of their leadership capabilities.

Cindy Wilson does an excellent job of just this. Wilson explained that she had full understanding of what she was good at doing; working in a department like IT and being able to assist her employees hands-on. She also knew exactly what she was passionate about, discussing heavily on the importance of ethics in her workplace and how knowing your own ethics and morals improved yourself. Finally, Wilson was able to match those two circles up with the third, placing her at Evergy. By utilizing this concept, Wilson was able to boost her own leadership style and improve her company.

While Cindy Wilson's display of leadership throughout her career has been phenomenal, leadership is under constant improvement. By discussing and explaining her experiences, I was able to critically analyze her leadership style and compare it to fundamental concepts mentioned above. From this analysis, the following recommendations can be made: continue to focus on the importance of ethics in the workplace and further develop a sense of community within the company.

The first recommendation was influenced by Wilson's already existing passion for the realm of ethics. Many companies fall into the catch of ignoring ethics or not paying close enough attention to them. Ethics and morals serve as the backbone for many organizations;

ignoring them will only cause damage in the long run. Wilson has already done an excellent job focusing on ethics, more specifically integrity, in the workplace. From monitoring the integrity hotline at her company to recognizing her own ethical code, Wilson is pushing Evergy to constantly become better and demonstrate proper business ethics in their field.

The second recommendation, further develop a sense of community in the workplace, comes from the examples provided by Wilson. There is no doubt that Wilson has already provided a community for the rest of the employees; she mentioned in her discussion that she frequently got to know all of her employees, taking time to visit them at their desks among other things. However, there are other items that can be easily done to strengthen this relationship. By celebrating small wins or victories or doing something out of ordinary, like personal recognitions, Wilson could drastically improve the working environment.

Overall, I am very grateful to learn about Cindy Wilson's leadership experiences. Over her time at Evergy, Wilson has been involved in many tough challenges and changes all while continuing to be a leader in her field. Her experiences, and responses, have been inspirational and informative, giving myself and other students a view into what leadership looks like through change. I hope that she continues to make a positive impact, both inside her company and out.

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Natural and Social Sciences

Essays

Figuratively Speaking: An Analysis of English Language Metaphors Based on Familiarity and Context

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A metaphor, as a mechanism in the English language, is a figure of speech in which an object or an idea is described by words that do not literally represent the meaning of the phrase. Familiar metaphors include phrases such as "love is a battlefield," or "the computer is an old dinosaur." Human's comprehension of metaphors and figurative language varies depending on the level of familiarity associated with the phrase and/or the context sentences surrounding the phrase. The purpose of the present study is to investigate the influence context has on the comprehension of metaphors.

There are few major theories used as frameworks to how metaphors are comprehended, with the Career of Metaphor Theory (CMT) relating most closely to the present study. According to the CMT, individuals use comparison when processing unfamiliar metaphors for comprehension, while familiar metaphors are categorized (Bowdle & Gentner, 2005; Thibodeau & Durgin, 2011; Damerall & Kellogg, 2016). Due to this difference in how the metaphors are processed in the brain- comparison or categorization- the time needed to comprehend a metaphor differs. Holyoak and Stamenkovic (2018) identified that most studies examining the comprehension of metaphors used single

sentences or isolated phrases, not considering the influence of literary context on the way metaphors are comprehended.

Context has been identified as an influential factor in the way metaphors are comprehended. Individuals who can draw on contextual information to inform their understanding of the metaphors typically comprehend metaphors more thoroughly. This indicates that in situations where context is present, metaphors are easier to understand (Lerche, Christmann, & Voss, 2018). While researchers have identified that context is an influence in metaphor understanding, there is limited support for how response times of comprehension are affected.

To further investigate the influence of literary context and fill the gap in the previous literature, this study will test metaphors that are pulled from English language poetry written by various authors (Katz et al., 1988; Meriwether, 2016) with some of them including additional lines from the poems to provide more context. This study attempts to support or disprove the CMT and examine if more context about the metaphor alters their comprehension time. In addition, by comparing metaphors to randomly generated literal sentences, the researchers anticipate that the expected differences in response times is due to the use of context. Based on previously established theoretical frameworks, the researchers expect that individuals will comprehend metaphors situated within literary context faster than metaphors without context.

Method
Participants

A total of 24 participants, 10 male and 14 females, were used in this study. All were students from a mid-western university. Twenty-two were recruited from introductory level Psychology classes, who received credit towards their research participation assignment. The other two students were recruited by word of mouth and received no compensation, but just participated out of interest in the study. The participants ranged from Freshmen to Graduate students, aged 18-28 years with a mean age of 19.92 years old who came from various majors, with no clear majority being from a single major. Eighty-three percent of the participants were native English speakers, with ninety-one percent of participants having English as their primary language. Participants experienced all conditions of the study.

Materials

Metaphors. Familiarity of the metaphors was operationally defined as either familiar or unfamiliar metaphors. This two-level categorization was developed during a study by Katz et al. in 1988. Katz et al. asked 634 raters to rate familiarity/frequency of the ideas expressed in 464 different metaphoric sentences using a 7-point scale where 1 was the lowest rating of felt familiarity and 7 was the highest rating of felt familiarity. Katz found the metaphors had a mean rating of 3.3. The researchers used a random selection of 20 metaphoric sentences from Katz. The sentences were categorized as low frequency metaphors with a felt familiarity score ranging from 2.2-3.33 with a mean of 3.03. The ten sentences were further broken down by the researchers into five low frequency metaphors in single sentences (LFMS) and five low frequency metaphors in poetic context (LFMC). The five LFMS had a felt familiarity score range from 2.7-3.33 with a mean score of 3.06. The five LFMC had a felt familiarity score range from 2.2-3.30 with a mean score of 3.00. The other ten sentences were categorized as high frequency metaphors with a felt familiarity score ranging from 4.33-5.93 with a mean of 4.84. The ten sentences were further broken down by the researchers into five high frequency metaphors in single sentences (HFMS) and five high frequency metaphors in poetic context (HFMC). The five HFMS had a felt familiarity score range from 4.73-5.93 with a mean score of 5.02. The five HFMC had a felt familiarity score range from 4.33-4.83 with a mean score of 4.65. Because Katz et al. only used metaphors in single sentences, the researchers found the context for the ten metaphors we categorized as in poetic context in their original poems by authors William Shakespeare, Lord Byron, T.S. Eliot, Dylan Thomas, Thomas Hardy, William Blake, Wilfred Owen, and Valerie Bloom. The remaining ten statements used were literal sentences (LS) the researchers found using an online random sentence generator.

Reaction Time. Reaction time was operationally defined as the time measured in seconds it takes for the participant to respond to the reading. A basis for reaction time speed was provided by Damerall and Kellogg (2016). Time was measured from the time between when the researcher finished reading the stimuli and the participant verbally indicated they understood the reading, ranging from zero to fifteen seconds. Faster reaction times (1-5 seconds) indicated faster

understanding of the metaphor compared to slower reaction times (7-15 seconds).

Metaphor Comprehension. Comprehension was operationally defined as whether or not the participant gave an accurate response to the reading of the stimuli. A list of interpretations for the metaphors and literal sentences to indicate comprehension was developed by Katz et. al. (1988). The researcher coded a one if the participant gave an accurate interpretation of the reading, indicating comprehension, a two if the participant gave an inaccurate interpretation of the reading or no interpretation at all, indicating a lack of comprehension, or a three if the participant gave an interpretation of the reading that shows comprehension of the reading but is an interpretation that differs from the one the researcher expected.

Design and Procedure

The independent variables tested in the study were familiarity of metaphors and context of metaphors. All variables were manipulated within-subjects. Reaction time and comprehension of metaphors were measured. Literal sentences were used as a control to compare reaction time and comprehension to. Each participant was in a room with a researcher who read, verbally, a list of metaphors or literal sentences. Five readings were a single sentence that included an unfamiliar English language metaphor. Five readings were a single sentence that included a familiar English language metaphor. Five readings were a short paragraph containing an unfamiliar English language metaphor. Five readings were a short paragraph containing a familiar English language metaphor. Ten readings were single literal sentences that did not contain an English language metaphor.

Participants were instructed to listen to each reading and describe what they thought the reading meant. After the researcher read aloud the reading, the researcher pressed a button to start a timer. Participants indicated verbally by saying "ready" when they understood what the reading meant, and the researcher pressed the button again to stop the timer. Participants immediately gave their explanation verbally of what the reading meant. The researcher took note of if the participant understood the reading or not, using the predetermined code. The researcher also noted the reaction time next to the comprehension code for each item. Following the experiment, participants

took a five-question reading comprehension quiz and completed a demographic questionnaire to control for extraneous variables including non-English speakers or low familiarity with figurative language. IRB approval was obtained prior to the start of the study.

Results

There was a difference of average reaction times for the different metaphor stimuli groups, as shown in Figure 1. To test our hypothesis of the effect of familiarity and context on reaction time, an analysis of variance was conducted to reveal that there was a significant effect, Pillai's trace = .541, $F = 5.29$, $df = (4,18)$, $p = .005$, $\eta_p^2 = .541$. To identify where the significance was, pairwise comparisons were evaluated to show that there was a statistically significant difference in reaction time between low frequency metaphors in context ($M = 4.51$, $SD = 2.89$) compared to high frequency metaphors in context ($M = 3.04$, $SD = 2.28$) and literal sentences ($M = 2.67$, $SD = 1.49$). The average reaction time for literal sentences ($M = 2.67$ seconds, $SD = 1.49$) was significantly faster than the average reaction time for all metaphors ($M = 4.78$ seconds, $SD = 4.42$), $t(21) = -5.52$, $p < .001$ as shown in Figure 2.

A chi-square goodness of fit test was performed to examine our hypothesis of the relation of metaphor familiarity and context with comprehension. Participants' comprehension scores were significantly different than expected for low frequency metaphors in context X^2 (4, N = 24) = 11.00, $p = .027$ and for literal sentences X^2 (4, N = 22) = 28.909, $p < .001$. Specifically, as shown in Figure 3, particularly low and particularly high scores occurred less frequently than expected for low frequency metaphors in context, while just below average scores occurred more frequently than expected for low frequency metaphors in context. As shown in Figure 4, low comprehension scores occurred less frequently than expected for literal sentences and very high comprehension scores occurred much more frequently than expected for literal sentences.

To test our hypothesis to see if there was a correlation between metaphor reaction time and percent of metaphors answered correctly, we conducted a Pearson Correlation test. No significant correlation between metaphor reaction time and percent of metaphors answered correctly was found for any category of context or frequency $rs \leq .110$, $ps \geq .609$, offering no evidence to support the idea that processing

speed is correlated with metaphor comprehension.

Discussion

To examine the effect of context on the comprehension of metaphors, participants were given metaphors with context, without context, and a control group of literal statements. The reaction time for participants to report understanding of meaning was recorded, as well as a (Yes/No) code for comprehension. The researchers also hypothesized that metaphors with higher levels of familiarity would lead to faster reaction times and more metaphor meanings correct than metaphors that are less familiar. Based on the results obtained from preliminary analyses, mean reaction times indicated that metaphors in context took less time to comprehend than metaphors without context. It also showed that literal statements had a faster reaction time than any of the metaphor stimuli. This supports the hypothesis that when metaphors are presented, the presence of context assists with comprehension reaction time. Compared to the control group of literal statements, metaphor stimuli had overall longer reaction times than literal statements. There was no significant correlation between metaphor reaction time and correct comprehension of metaphors, suggesting that processing speed has little to do with accurate metaphor comprehension.

Based on theoretical frameworks, our results expand on how context is correlated with reaction speed. Many frameworks propose that the presence of context is correlated with higher levels of accurate comprehension, but our analyses found that accuracy is not related to context (Lerche, Christmann, & Voss, 2018). Our results indicate that having context present with metaphors leads to faster reaction times, which is an extension on currently existing research.

A limitation of this study is the small sample of participants used. The participants were all obtained from the same population at Washburn University, which may introduce some confounding variables including regional similarities, lack of account of age differences, or others. For example, there may be variation in how different regions of the country, or the world are taught to interpret metaphors, which would have impact on the results found. There may also be errors because the experiment was run using human judgement, with manual stopwatch timing and manual written coding. The researchers attempted to use the E-prime software to account for these pos-

sible variables but encountered technical difficulties. To account for these limitations, replicated studies should be done with more diverse samples to ensure results are generalizable and utilize a software that would likely lack human error.

Despite these limitations, future research could investigate further the lack of correlation between processing speed and accurate comprehension. Now that results have supported that context leads to faster reaction times but not necessarily more correct answers, research needs to be done to identify what factors are correlated with more accuracy in comprehension. This study provides more evidence that context does play a role in comprehension, specifically that having context when presented with a metaphor will lead to faster reaction times. This analysis of English language metaphors and context examines a small portion of a developing field that needs more extensions before determining any concrete conclusions. The significance found by this study about the influence of context on metaphor comprehension further extends existing theoretical framework and allows researchers to continue to investigate the concepts.

Appendix
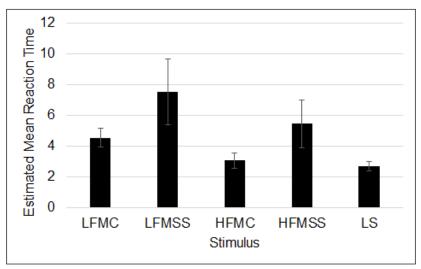
Figure 1. *Estimated marginal means of stimulus time. This figure illustrates the mean reaction times in seconds for the different stimulus groups. Low frequency metaphors in context (LFMC), low frequency metaphors in single sentences (LFMSS), high frequency metaphors in context (HFMC), high frequency metaphors in single sentences (HFMSS), and literal sentences (LS).*
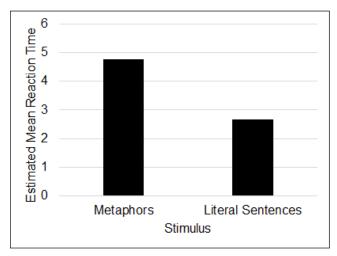
Figure 2. *Estimated overall reaction time. This figure illustrates overall reaction time for all metaphor categories compared to the literal sentence control.*
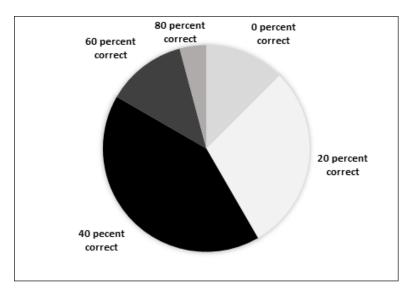
Figure 3. *Comprehension scores for low frequency metaphors in context. This figure illustrates how many people understood low frequency metaphors in context. 3 people understood 80 percent of the metaphors, 7 people understood 60 percent, 10 people understood 40 percent, 3 people understood 20 percent, and 1 person understood 0 percent of the low frequency metaphors in context.*
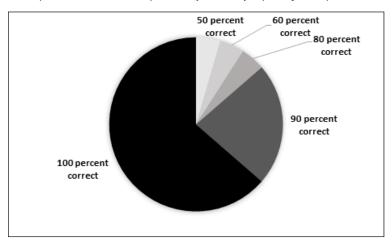
Figure 4. *Comprehension scores for literal sentences. This figure illustrates how many people understood literal sentence stimuli. 1 person understood 50 percent of the metaphors, 1 person understood 60 percent, 1 person understood 80 percent, 5 people understood 90 percent, and 14 people understood 100 percent of the literal sentence stimuli.*

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The Social Spark in Therapy: Social Factors in the Therapist-Client Relationship Affecting Client Motivation in Cognitive-Behavioral Homework

Ethan Nelson

As a therapy client for the past twenty months, the topic of finding motivation to complete the numerous homework assignments given to me by my therapists has deep personal relevance to me. I was curious whether such motivation or lack thereof reflected my capabilities and characteristics as a client, or whether it was influenced by my therapeutic relationships. Of the two therapists I have been with, the first worked with me to address my clinical depression and issues with anxiety; the second therapist, whom I still work with at the time of this paper, works with me to manage my symptoms of obsessive-compulsive disorder. Both psychotherapists have given me suggested between-session assignments. Examples for treating depression and anxiety included thought diaries, Socratic question worksheets, reading a self-esteem workbook, and tracking daily moods over time. Examples of homework for treating obsessive-compulsive disorder has included using social media and listening to certain songs to expose my mind to my obsessive thoughts, writing down and making audio recordings to trigger my core fear, and setting reminders on my phone to either do exposures or to resist compulsions.

With my first therapist, my compliance to suggested assignments was middling to low: in the thirteen months I saw this therapist, I

kept a thought diary for only the first two-and-a-half months, and I never read the self-esteem workbook. I did, however, track my moods daily. With my second therapist, on the other hand, I have noticed fairly high adherence to the suggested homework: I have followed through with all of the aforementioned OCD treatment assignments and created new ones personalized to myself as well. As a result, this paper will explore the phenomenon of what social psychological factors in the therapist-client relationship could impact a client's adherence to and completion of a therapist's homework suggestions. This paper will research how cognitive-behavioral homework completion or incompletion (B) is a product or function (*f*), of a therapy client (P) and their interaction and alliance with their psychotherapist (E), where B is behavior, *f* is a function, P is a person, and E is that person's environment.

Standpoint Statement

In working with this paper's topic, I come from several standpoints that influence my approach. A primary standpoint is my personal experiences, as mentioned earlier, with two cognitive-behavioral therapists. Working with two therapists for twenty months has significantly affected my interest in the phenomenon studied in this paper and it also introduces bias towards the subject because I come from a client's point-of-view. This perspective means that I could have a subjective understanding of the therapeutic alliance.

A second standpoint that affects my approach to this social psychological phenomenon is my level of expertise. As an undergraduate psychology major, I have taken two courses, Abnormal Psychology and Social Psychology, that heavily influence my expertise. The former course lent insight into the topics of the biopsychosocial model for and treatment of mental health conditions; the latter course studied human behavior in terms of the presence of real or imagined others. In addition, I volunteer as a Crisis Counselor for the Crisis Text Line, which gives me a standpoint on how people, especially those in mental health crises, react and interact with those attempting to assist them.

A third area of subjective standpoints from me come in personal beliefs and identities. The idea that people are inherently valuable has influenced my beliefs. It biases me to look at the benevolent side of people rather than objectively understanding their behaviors

as neutral. My identity as a supporter of mental health literacy and awareness also gives me a subjective standpoint on how society should view and treat mental health, especially through psychotherapy.

Research Relevance

In this section of the paper, I will review literature pertinent to my phenomenon of interest. While researching relevant literature, I attempted to answer the question of "What social factors in the therapist-client relationship affect client motivation to complete assigned cognitive behavioral homework between sessions?" The following papers show there are multiple, overlapping social influences that exist in a therapeutic alliance.

In terms of prosocial behavior, the topic of empathy and empathetic responses relates to the therapeutic relationship and client motivation. Hara et al. (2017) studied how perceived empathy in a psychotherapist influences client adherence to cognitive-behavioral homework that the therapist assigned. This study looked specifically at treatment of generalized anxiety disorder (GAD). The authors mention that problems with homework compliance in cognitive behavioral therapy is common. In their study, Hara et al. hypothesized that greater perceived empathy in therapists by clients with GAD would increase the clients' adherence to assigned homework, thus improving their treatment outcomes.

In the study, forty-three clients represented by twelve cognitive-behavioral therapists were studied. These clients took an assessment called the Barnett-Lennard Relationship Inventory, which measures perceptions of empathy and understanding. For instance, a client could strongly agree, strongly disagree, or be somewhere in between with a sample statement such as "[m]y therapist usually senses or realizes what I am feeling" (Hara et. al, 2017, p. 380). Client homework adherence was measured using the homework rating scale II measuring quantity and quality of homework completion, mastery and engagement of homework, and beliefs about homework.

The study found that clients who perceived a therapist as empathic had greater homework completion outcomes than clients who found the same therapist as less empathic. Thus, although the authors mention that being empathetic is a key quality in a psychotherapist, it appears that how a client perceives that empathy is just as important to the client's homework completion. It is important to

note, however, that the authors did not find that homework comple- tion mediated therapist empathy (or perceived empathy) and post- treatment outcomes (Hara et al., 2017). This suggests that perceived therapist empathy is independent of homework completion in terms of client outcomes.

Overall, the paper finds evidence that greater homework com- pliance, which can improve treatment outcomes, can depend on a therapist's perceived empathy. This ties in not only with prosocial behavior, but also with the concept of social cognition: based on past or current schemas and experiences of "empathy," clients are judging their therapists as either empathic or not, and then using that judgment on whether or not they (the client) should complete their assigned homework from someone they perceive as either empathetic or unempathetic. By perceiving their therapist as empathetic by using their schemas of empathetic behaviors in others, the client could have more investment in adhering to what their therapist is suggesting they do.

Another area of related research relevance pertains to social conformity. Owen, Wong, & Rodolfa (2010) studied client conformity to social normatives of masculinity and how those clients perceived therapist actions intended to help them. Although this study did not specifically focus on the assignment of homework in therapy, the researchers recognized homework assignments as part of the helpful therapist actions being perceived by the clients in the study.

The researchers were interested in investigating masculine social norms because "gender role[s] . . . are a significant part of an indi- vidual's self-concept and have been shown to be related to multiple facets of psychological wellbeing and pathology" (Owen, Wong, & Rodolfa, 2010, p. 70). The authors made sure to make a distinction between biological sex and social constructs of gender; in addition, they felt that there was a "potential contradiction between masculine and therapeutic norms" (Owen, Wong, & Rodolfa, 2010, p. 70), which lead them to exclude studying of feminine social norms.

The study focused on 161 clients from a university counseling center, the majority of whom were women. A major limitation of the study was that the researchers did not assess the therapeutic approach of the therapists these clients visited. The researchers used the Confor- mity to Masculine Norms Inventory (CMNI) to look at social confor- mity in the clients based on six subscales of masculine social norms:

winning, emotional control, violence, dominance, self-reliance, and primacy of work. Clients were given open-ended assessments for their perceptions of therapist's actions.

Overall, the authors clustered the reactions of clients to therapist proposed actions as "Insight," "Relationship," or "Information." Those in the Insight cluster found learning about emotional and interpersonal skills as the main takeaways from their therapist's actions. Clients in the Relationship cluster referred to concepts such as perceived warmth by the therapist and how much the therapist allied themselves with the client. For those clients in the Information cluster, their primary takeaway from the therapist related to seeking an "explanation for their [the client's] current struggles and . . . information and resources to better cope" (Owen, Wong, & Rodolfa, 2010, p. 75). As a result, the Information cluster that would be considered the group of clients closest to desiring or finding motivation for therapy homework.

The authors found that clients with higher scores on the CMNI (conforming more to social masculine norms) were more clustered in "Insight" and "Relationship" compared to "Information." As the authors mentioned, "clients in the Information cluster had significantly lower Emotional Control, Self-Reliance, and Winning scores compared with clients in the other two clusters" (Owen, Wong, & Rodolfa, 2010, p. 74). In general, the authors found evidence to support the idea that therapeutic actions to balance conformity to masculine norms is beneficial.

With this study, researchers found that a social factor (social norms of masculinity) can be incongruent with therapeutic goals. As a result, therapists could be more aware of these social norms and gender self-concepts in order to adapt treatment of clients that strongly conform to them. Again, although the study did not specifically address homework adherence, a client's gender self-concepts (such as self-reliance) relate to how they would perceive their therapist suggesting they complete between-session homework. In addition, it is worth noting that if clients initially scoring high in masculine norm conformity tend to focus on warmth and insight as takeaways in their therapeutic relationship, they may be less focused than those in the "Information" cluster on therapeutic information and feedback, including homework assignments and the rationale for those assignments.

Situational influence on the part of a therapist could be another factor in getting clients to be motivated for therapy homework. A third paper of research relevance came from the study of Jungbluth & Shirk (2013). They investigated ways therapists treating adolescent clients with depression could promote homework adherence. They noted that strategies to improve this adherence "do not exist in a vacuum" (Jungbluth & Shirk, 2013, p. 546). That is, client characteristics alone do not predict homework adherence; there are elements of therapist behavior that will influence the client's adherence.

For their study, Jungbluth & Shirk evaluated six areas of therapeutic behavior and their effect on client homework adherence. They studied fifty adolescents in sessions that were taped by therapists. It is worth nothing that the adolescents' treatment was free and they received monetary compensation for participating in the study, which could be a limitation. In particular, the researchers wanted to see the effectiveness of various strategies to improve therapy homework adherence, including the therapist praising the client for adherence, specifying the task to adhere to, and rationalizing why the client would want to adhere to the task. In terms of social psychological concepts, praising a client for homework adherence relates to the idea of normative social influence: the client desires to be liked by their therapist, the therapist reinforces this through praise, and so the client is further motivated to do what the therapist suggests they do. Rationalizing homework relates to informational social influence; clients may not know what the "right" (in this case, most helpful) action to do is, so they would rely on their therapist to guide them to do the right thing via rationalizing the tasks.

Jungbluth & Shirk found that spending more time on homework assignments and rationalizing those assignments could lead to stronger homework adherence in clients, especially in those adolescents who initially resisted treatment or who had initially low levels of homework adherence. The study did not find significant correlation in praise and between-session adherence. (However, the researchers wrote that interrater-reliability with rating praise was "suboptimal," Jungbluth & Shirk, 2013, p. 552.) This finding builds on a conclusion Jungbluth & Shirk made in 2009 in that praising a client's behavior did not predict greater client involvement in the therapeutic process between sessions. As a result, normative social influence may not be a social factor in client motivation. In terms of informational social

influence, however, this study has supporting evidence for the idea that rationalizing a task in therapy can promote adherence by a client. A potentially significant limitation in this study, however, was that it only examined two sessions' worth of therapy; the findings "may not generalize to middle and later phases of therapy when assignments often become more demanding" (Jungbluth & Shirk, 2013, p. 552).

Broader Relevance

This paper will now explore the topic of client motivation in cognitive behavioral therapy through the aspects of real-world, everyday therapeutic interactions and the larger, social psychological concepts those interactions include.

An article by GoodTherapy, a website designed to provide educational information for therapists, includes ways therapists can improve client homework compliance by means of several social factors. The article confirms what Hara et al. discussed in their research by suggesting therapists take a deliberately empathetic route toward motivating clients. A therapist could ask "Is something making it difficult for you to complete the homework assignments? How can I help make the process easier for you?" (GoodTherapy, 2019). In addition, "those put off by the term 'homework' may view 'skills practice' or similar phrasing more favorable," (GoodTherapy, 2019). This relates to the concept of priming in social psychology, in which certain experiences "increase the accessibility of a schema, trait, or concept" (Hockett, 2018c). If clients have had frequent experiences involving the term "homework" to refer to schoolwork assignments and then encounter the term "homework" in therapy, they may be primed to associate it with schoolwork, leading to negative reactions. The article further suggests that therapists use rationalizing strategies similar to what Jungbluth & Shirk studied: "let [the client] know that homework helps them practice their skills outside of therapy" (GoodTherapy, 2019). This tactic relates to using conformity, which is "a change in behavior due to real or imagined influence of others" (Hockett, 2018a). In this case, a client will conform their behavior, especially because of the informational social influence provided by the therapist, to comply with what the therapist expects. This also involves the concept of persuasion via the central route: the therapist is persuading the client to change behavior by making homework

personally relevant to the client and in a setting (a therapy session) in which there is little distraction and there is a high motivation and need to pay attention.

Attitude change is a second area of real-world implications for client homework adherence. Chamberlain (2018) listed eight strategies psychotherapists can use to improve patient outcomes in treatment. She discusses using motivation interviewing: "Directly address clients' motivation from session to session and use motivational interviewing . . . to help them continue coming back even when they experience setbacks" (Chamberlain, 2018). According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (2018), motivational interviewing is a "collaborative, person-centered approach to elicit and strengthen motivation to change . . . . rooted in an understanding of how hard it is to change learned behaviors." This relates to the concept of behavioral attitude change through cognitive dissonance, especially by using the hypocrisy paradigm. Cognitive dissonance is a "psychological state caused by conflict in cognitions" (Hockett, 2018b). By inducing cognitive dissonance in motivational interviewing, a therapist could point out how a client's belief in wanting to improve their mental health does not align with their behavior of not adhering to therapy homework. The resulting mental discomfort in the client, considering that they are admitting hypocrisy to another person, could guide the client to change behaviors.

Stereotypes are an additional social psychological factor in the therapist-client relationship that could affect client motivation. "The most readily accessible information on psychotherapy comes from media portrayals," Glasofer (2019) wrote for Verywell Mind. Of note is the misconception of a therapist acting as a close friend. Glasofer notes that the therapeutic relationship is unique since it is one-directional in information disclosure. She also mentions a misconception of psychotherapists providing a quick fix: "it is highly unlikely that . . . change or resolution for longstanding patterns of thinking, relating, or behaving can be adequately achieved in a handful of appointments" (Glasofer, 2019). A client holding both these misconceptions could have a positive prejudice towards therapists. Hockett (2018c) notes that problems with "positive" prejudices include limiting the actions and roles of the recipient (in this case, the therapist). In this instance, a client's "positive" prejudices of a therapist being a friend quickly

solving their problems may interfere with the client's motivation to complete homework by themselves over the sometimes-lengthy course of treatment.

Conclusion

Partially given the word's association with schoolwork, the concept of "homework" in cognitive behavioral therapy treatment has been noted to be difficult for clients to adhere to and complete, frustrating psychotherapists (Hara et al., 376-77). Considering that a client is out of the therapy room much more often than they are in it, however, means that homework adherence is imperative. Fortunately, there is evidence that therapists can bolster client motivation in homework adherence. Ensuring client perceptions of empathy, becoming aware of client self-concepts, using informational social influence, employing cognitive dissonance, and recognizing stereotypes the client may have of the therapist are all strategies therapists can use to inspire their clients to take care of their mental health after the appointment ends. This gives therapists broad power to spark client motivation simply by becoming more aware of a third, invisible party inside the session room: social psychological factors.

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Defining Forensic Anthropological Theory

Taylor Nickel

Introduction

In the fall of 1949, a janitor at Harvard Medical School in Boston, Massachusetts discovered a dismembered body in a basement anatomy laboratory, later to be identified as Harvard Medical School's Dr. George Parkman. A wealthy and prominent philanthropist, Parkman was known for being a hard businessman, even going as far as to occasionally harass those who owed him money. This such business practice associated with Parkman was eventually what resulted in him being murdered, his body then dismembered, and his remains hidden in a bathroom, a trunk, and a furnace located in Dr. John White Webster's laboratory. Webster, owing Parkman a substantial amount of money and being harassed for said reason, was arrested and eventually found guilty, resulting in his execution in August of 1850. The prominent 19th Century murder that would later become known as the Parkman-Webster murder case has since come to be recognized as the origin of forensic anthropology in the United States, and Oliver Wendell Homes I and Jeffries Wyman (professors of anatomy at Harvard Medical School at the time) became the first forensic anthropologists in the United States. Asked to investigate the death, the two reassembled the dismembered remains and determined that they

were consistent with a white male between the ages of fifty- and sixty-years-old who was around five feet, ten inches in stature – consistent with Parkman. The report became the first example of a biological profile of an unknown deceased individual, reflective of the effectiveness of methods used in modern forensic anthropology today.

Since the Parkman-Webster murder case, forensic anthropology has come to be defined as a subdiscipline of the field of biological anthropology, now known as "the application of anthropological method and theory to matters of legal concern, particularly those that relate to the recovery and analysis of the skeleton" (Christensen, 2019, p. 1). An older discipline that has only recently been recognized in the broader scope of the field of forensic science and in medico-legal issues, forensic anthropology has experienced a "significant expansion in attention and breadth" (Christensen, 2019, p. 3). Occasionally criticized for being "a strictly applied discipline" and being perceived as "lacking in theoretical underpinnings and scientific validity," forensic anthropology has come to be known as a discipline "strongly grounded in scientific theory" (Christensen, 2019, p. 1). With this in mind, questions come to light as to where the discipline of forensic anthropology fits into the realm of anthropological theory. As theory is critical to determining essentially "what is and what is not data," the purpose of forensic anthropology and its grounding in scientific theory needs a strong base of anthropological theory for it to be meaningful (McGee and Warms, 2017, p. 1). This meaning would further provide the allowance of people to think about who and what they are as human beings. In a discipline that frequently calls on other disciplines with foundations in anthropological theory, then it can only be questioned as to what forensic anthropology's theory can be defined as. What is the purpose of forensic anthropology?

Theory Currently Governing Forensic Anthropology

Despite the common misconception that the field of forensic anthropology is atheoretical, this is far from the truth; the theory of forensic anthropology has its roots in Charles Darwin's theory of evolution, postulated in his 1859 work, *On the Origin of Species*. Darwin distinguished the differences between cultural evolution and biological evolution, thus laying the groundwork for cultural anthropology and biological anthropology. Theory focused on the importance of evolution, comparison of the intricacies of biology to the intricacies of

society, and the role environment plays in shaping an individual were then carried on in essays by other theorists such as Herbert Spencer, Sir Edward Burnett Tylor, and Lewis Henry Morgan. Drawing from this groundwork, forensic anthropology encompasses the theory of evolution to interpret patterns of human shape and size by defining a biological profile (an individual's age, stature, biological sex, and ancestry). Since its beginning, forensic anthropology has also been widely shaped by the fields of medicine and anatomy, later encompassing the field of forensic science and various medico-legal issues. Although it is clear that forensic anthropology has "a firm theoretical (and, scientific) foundation," the field's "theoretical basis has not been explicitly recognized, developed, or communicated" (Boyd and Boyd, 2018, p. 5). Forensic anthropological theory indeed exists, but its foundation needs broader recognition and implementation. There is an obvious need for forensic anthropologists to address the "why" behind scientific questions, as well as behind the methods and analyses used in forensic anthropologist's research and practice; this "why" is fundamental. Forensic anthropology can no longer "simply rely on the traditional approach of thinking about theory as a single overarching explanatory statement" (Boyd and Boyd, 2011, p. 1).

Archaeological Theory in Forensic Anthropology

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, archaeology underwent an anthropological paradigm shift. This shift followed Gordon Willey and Philip Phillips's publication of *Method and Theory in American Archaeology*, in which the pair stated that "American archaeology is anthropology or it is nothing," implying that the goals of archaeology were simply the goals of anthropology (Willey and Phillips, 1958). This shift resulted in "new archaeology," or processualism, a new phase of archaeology that moved to define archaeology through scientific theory, with focuses on empiricism, historical context, and systematic views of culture. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, a new phase of archaeology, labeled as post-processualism, initially followed processualism as a critique of the previous phase, but then evolved into a movement with focuses on the subjectivity of archaeological interpretations and the importance of the individual's role in culture. As part of the post-processualism movement in 1985, Stanford University Cultural and Social Anthropology professor Dr. Ian Hodder, sought to further add to the definition of archaeology within the realm of

anthropological theory with his publication, *Postprocessual Archaeology*. Hodder's essay was concerned with "the social and historical context of symbolic production" with stressed importance in the individual and in the importance of interpretation (Hodder, 1985, p. 1). Though produced for archaeology, several of Hodder's theoretical claims can – and should – be applied to forensic anthropology. As "American archaeology is anthropology or it is nothing," then it can be argued that forensic anthropology is forensic science or it is nothing (Willey and Phillips, 1958). By applying archaeological theory formed during a paradigm shift in archaeological history, the foundation of forensic anthropological theory can begin to be established. Archaeological theory has the ability to provide broader applications to forensic anthropology that go beyond forensic anthropology's current theories rooted in science and methodology. With a broad scope of archaeological theory, it is post-processualism that offers the most comparisons to forensic anthropology, and thus could be the most beneficial when applying theory to forensic anthropology.

Post-Processualism Applications in Forensic Anthropology

The argument for the application of archaeological theory for forensic anthropology is an idea of increasing popularity. In 2011, Dr. Clifford Boyd and Dr, Donna C. Boyd proposed such an application of theory in their essay, "Theory and the Scientific Basis for Forensic Anthropology." Their 2018 book, *Forensic Anthropology: Theoretical Framework and Scientific Basis*, expands upon this application of theory. Boyd and Boyd identified the central problem with forensic anthropological theory as it being "characterized as emphasizing methodology over theory" (Boyd and Boyd, 2018, p. 1). By analyzing and applying a hierarchy of high-level, middle-range, and low-level theoretical concepts to forensic anthropology, Boyd and Boyd were able to incorporate archaeological theory into forensic anthropology by focusing on major aspects of processualism and post-processualism. Their work documents the "varied theoretical bases for specialized areas of study in forensic anthropology and the multiple forms of theory that they represent" (Boyd and Boyd, 2018, p. 15).

One such fundamental aspect of post-processualism in archaeology was the rejection of positivist views of science. With forensic anthropology holding largely positivist views of science, this rejection would be one of the first steps to building an anthropological

theory foundation that is not based on scientific theory alone. Forensic anthropology in current society has resulted in definitions of concepts such as race and gender being culturally defined, a stark opposition to the ethnocentric definitions of said concepts during the beginnings of anthropology. Here, the cultural aspect of forensic anthropology is most clear, but even this is grounded in scientific theory, dedicated as the biological profile. Each aspect of forensic anthropology is shaped through statistical analysis and biological parameters of an individual and said individual's place in a population, all of which involve interpretive theory, methodological theory, and analytical and statistical methodological theory. As illustrated by Boyd and Boyd, these three forms of theory are "critical for the process of theory building in forensic anthropology and serve to strengthen the scientific framework of the discipline," but "their relationship with each other is not necessarily linear or hierarchal" (Boyd and Boyd, 2018, p. 8). This could be viewed as a reverse of the development of archaeological theory, as archaeology needed more of the scientific method; forensic anthropology has come to a point where it is interpreted as being in a vacuum where a realm beyond scientific theory is difficult to comprehend due to the idea that cultural theory is practically null and void in the field.

A second fundamental part of post-processualism in archaeology sought to reject the separation of interpretation and description, viewing a univocal approach as unproductive for society as a whole. Much like processual archaeology, forensic anthropology shares this univocal problem, as forensic anthropologists frequently fall into asserting a single knowable objective interpretation of the biological profile despite there being many interpretations along the analysis of human remains (or in short, interpretive theory). This is partly the fault of medico-legal criteria that requires methods to be validated and reproducible. Following the passing of the Daubert standard (a federal law in the United States that states a rule of evidence regarding the admissibility of expert witness testimony), forensic anthropologists have been forced to demonstrate their commitment to understanding error. However, the adoption of the Daubert standard has left forensic anthropologists neglecting the limits of their own objectivity; forensic anthropologists should be evaluating their own subjective biases. In addition to medico-legal criteria, the good majority of a forensic anthropologist's work rests with interpretation, yet interpretation remains separate from description. In his essay, Hodder discusses that

observation and theory are one, and that since "archaeological theory building has always involved adding to data," then "there is no logical reason why those theories should not include contextual meaning and intentionality" – a belief that the field of forensic anthropology would benefit from greatly if adopted (Hodder, 1985, p. 12). As posited by Boyd and Boyd, the solution to this separation of interpretation and description lies with linking logic and theory. By envisioning methodological theories as "dynamic, vibrant explanatory statements," then new forensic anthropological data is subject to expansion and revision at all levels and types (Boyd and Boyd, 2018, p. 12).

A third, and final, fundamental aspect of post-processualism in archaeology is the importance of the individual. The importance of the literal individual is obvious in forensic anthropology, a discipline with a focus on identifying the deceased; human remains being the central piece of evidence in such an endeavor. As previously stated, each aspect of forensic anthropology is shaped through statistical analysis and biological parameters of an individual and said individual's place in a population. Despite anthropological theory stressing the importance of an environment's role in shaping an individual and their culture, forensic anthropology largely ignores this, instead choosing to stick to more contemporary issues. This theoretical issue becomes even more apparent when one understands that studying forensic anthropology requires the study of evolutionary and cultural aspects, only for these concepts to be directly applied to very little later on. Boyd and Boyd argue that agency and behavioral theories taken from archaeological theory can solve this issue of denying both contemporary and historical environment, thus implementing social action into forensic anthropology.

Theory in Forensic Anthropology Case Studies

In their work, Boyd and Boyd present the importance of case studies in establishing forensic anthropological theory, citing them as "an integral part of theory building" (Boyd and Boyd, 2011, p. 4). Through the application of archaeological theory (particularly behavioral theory taken from archaeological theory), forensic anthropologists gain new data. These new data specifically come from areas such as the analysis of human agents, dynamic systemic context, active agents, unintentional agents, transformational processes, ethnographic details, and all possible variables that can impact a forensic

scene, all of which are broadened with the application of archaeological theory. In short, applying archaeological theory to forensic anthropology cases directly influences what is seen and how it is measured.

To illustrate these arguments, Boyd and Boyd offered a case study on the Goettge Patrol, a United States marine patrol that was ambushed and almost completely killed during the Battle of Guadalcanal in Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands. None of the deceased were ever officially noted as being recovered, thus resulting in an interdisciplinary team of forensic anthropologists, archaeologists, historians, and physicists conducting what would later be named the Goettge Patrol Guadalcanal Survey in 2008 in an attempt to recover the remains. Despite discovering a promising location for the remains, the best conclusion was that the remains of the Goettge Patrol were not in the area surveyed. Boyd and Boyd argue that despite the survey being unable to recover the remains, interpretation of anomalies present in the survey was "instructive in understanding the history and soil stratigraphy of the site and the impact of natural and human factors on the area since WWII" (Boyd and Boyd, 2011, p. 5). They go on to discuss that forensic anthropological theory can help to interpret where the Goettge Patrol remains may be by applying behavioral theories to the case and generating further hypotheses to test.

In revisiting the Parkman-Webster murder case, it is apparent that behavioral theory (though unlabeled at the time) governed a large majority of the investigation surrounding Parkman's murder, as it was the harassment-like behaviors of a stern business man like Parkman and Wester's debt to Parkman that indicated a motive within the case. By approaching the scene with this knowledge and applying interpretive theory to make assumptions, then the Parkman-Webster murder case becomes cut and dry when analytical and statistical methodological theory is applied to prove said assumptions through scientific data.

Forensic Anthropological Theory

Since its origin in the 1800s, forensic anthropology has come into its own through developments in the field of forensic science and in the legal system. However, the field of forensic anthropology has occasionally been criticized for being "a strictly applied discipline" and being perceived as "lacking in theoretical underpinnings and scientific validity," due to being "strongly grounded in scientific

theory" (Christensen, 2019, p. 1). The question of what the purpose of forensic anthropology is can only be answered through anthropological theory, and the beginnings of forensic anthropological theory start with the post-processualism phase of archaeology. This model is illustrated by the work of Boyd and Boyd, who broke down the theoretical underpinnings of forensic anthropology, analyzed them, and then compared them to archaeological theory. By doing so, and then applying this application of theory to case studies, Boyd and Boyd were able to create the discussion needed for what can only be described as a necessary paradigm shift within the field of forensic anthropology.

Forensic anthropology's purpose has always been to speak for the dead in methodological ways governed by science and law. However, further acknowledgement, development, and application of theory are needed within the field of forensic anthropology. Recognition of forensic anthropological theory can firmly ground the field of forensic anthropology within anthropological and archaeological theory; a solid foundation in theory offers another part of what could easily become "new forensic anthropology." Further research is needed to fully develop this application of archaeological theory to forensic anthropology, but said application only stands to benefit the field of forensic anthropology as a whole.

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When I Got Glasses

Hanna Strader

When I was growing up, I never thought it was weird that my brother was only around on the weekends and occasionally during the week. I didn't think it was weird that my dad, my mom, my sister, and I would eat family dinners without him during the week. I never found it strange when my brother called my mom "Betty" and not "Mom," like my sister and I did. And I didn't think it was different that my brother was born before my mom and dad knew each other. I never thought it was weird. Until eighth grade, when a kid younger than me asked how my brother was also his brother. I had never thought about it before then. Coincidentally, eighth grade was also when I got glasses.

I learned a lot about my family after that. I learned that my dad had been married before my mom, to my brother's mom. I learned what the term "half-brother" meant. And I learned that it didn't mean that my brother was only half of a person, contrary to what my younger cousins think when they hear that term. And I learned that being a sister was a lot more difficult than being a brother. I didn't relate to my brother the same way his brother did. I didn't get to play the rough housing games; I didn't get to go hunting. And I grew up feeling like I wasn't as loved by my brother as his brother was.

But I had people that made up for that. My sister, even though we fought *all* the time, was always there for me when I needed her. And my cousin, who was the same age as her, was like a second sister. And my other cousin, Gary, who was the same age as my brother, grew up around me like a second brother. When neither of my siblings wanted to take me, the little kid, to the fair one year, my cousin stepped up and took me himself. He rode the rides with me and played the games. He even won me a bright pink stuffed animal from one of them.

Growing up, I remember my mom always told us we were Christian. I didn't really know what that meant, other than we believed in God and Jesus and Hell and angels. My family didn't go to church, but when I would go to my old best friend's house, I would go with her on Sundays. I remember leaving the main church area to go to the smaller classroom for the kids. We would draw and play and learn about the Bible in a way that kids understood. In eighth grade, I even started going to youth group. I still don't know if I went to learn more about being Christian or if it was just an excuse to be around people I liked.

I started to really question my religion in the winter of my freshman year of high school. My grandma had gotten sick and had been in and out of the hospital for about a month. Everyone kept telling me to pray, that God would heal her. But he didn't. I only ever really had one grandparent in my life. My mother's parents died when she was a teen and my dad's father died when I was so young, I barely remember him. Though the vague memories I do have, I cherish. When my grandma died, I felt like a piece of me went with her, and I felt like God had betrayed me. I didn't go to youth group as often anymore. But I got new glasses that year.

I remember trying to go, though. But every time I stepped through the church doors, I could hear family members' voices in my head telling me to "Just pray, God will make her better." I truly stopped going my sophomore year. In the summer of that year, I remember losing the bright pink stuffed animal my cousin had won me at the fair. It made me sad, but I didn't think much of it. He could just win me another one. Except in August of that year, he got in a car accident. I don't like when people try to win me things at the fair anymore.

I went down a dark path after that. I remember isolating myself. The people I cared about at youth group would reach out to me and I wouldn't respond, until they stopped reaching out. I wasn't diagnosed

with depression until freshman year of college, but I know in my heart that those two deaths are what truly drug me to it. Sophomore year was the year everyone was learning to drive, but I was too afraid to get behind a wheel. I was a year behind in that aspect. I can talk about my cousin now, but not without a fist sized rock in my throat.

I think my cousin dying had an impact on my education as well. For that first year or so after his death, I pushed myself in classwork. I made sure I was doing what I was supposed to be doing, but I didn't do anything more than what was needed. And I stopped being creative. After my sophomore year, I quit art. I felt like I didn't have it in me anymore.

And then my sister met a man from Ireland and the summer before my junior year, she found out she was pregnant. At this point, everyone knew she'd end up moving to Ireland to be with her now husband. And our family, who never really knew where we were from or what our culture was, grew to know a different culture. We learned about their religion, traditions, and holidays; my sister was truly shocked to find out they didn't celebrate Thanksgiving. Having this new part of the family pushed my mother to want to learn where she was from, and she took a DNA test. She found out that she was English, Germanic, Scottish, Welsh, and Irish. but all it told me was what I already knew: we're really white. We didn't incorporate any new traditions, languages, or style of dress. Nothing changed.

At the beginning of my senior year, my sister did end up moving away to Ireland, and it changed my idea of what I would do for college. I knew I would go, that was something I'd always known. None of my immediate family had gone, save for my sister who went for a brief semester. I wanted to be the first person to go and finish. My mom said she never went because, "I got married and had kids" (B. S., personal communication, March 1, 2021). She had my sister when she was 21. When I asked her how she felt about me making it this far is college she told me, "I'm glad that someone in the family is taking the step to get a higher education, but as long as you're doing what you want, I'm happy for you" (B. S., personal communication, March 1, 2021).

When my cousin had died, I knew I wouldn't look at colleges outside of the state anymore. I didn't want to be far away from my family. Even though family was important to me before his death, it was even more important afterwards. But now my sister was gone to

another country and my plans changed again. I didn't want to leave my mom alone by going to a college hours away. My dad would be home on the weekend, but his job kept him away during the week. So, I found the closest college that wasn't in my hometown. This way I could still be nearby if she needed me. Before I went to college, I got new glasses.

College taught me a lot of things. It brought me out of my shell, and it taught me that talking to a therapist isn't something that you should be ashamed of. I was suddenly surrounded by people who weren't afraid of who they were, and it helped me to figure who I was. I'd always been told, in the small town I lived in, that the "right" way to be was straight. I think, deep down, even as a kid, I had known I wasn't, but I was always afraid to say anything. I saw how my town treated people who were different. I heard the whispers from the adults when they thought the kids weren't around. Even now, many people in my town still assume I'm as straight at the persona I used to put on, despite me being open about myself now.

And college also taught me how easy it is to be white. My freshman and sophomore roommate, and now one of my closest friends, was a black girl. In my town, there weren't many black people, and even then, I didn't really get to interact much with them due to differences in age. But now, being the same age and living together, we spent most of our time together. It was my first time really experiencing white privilege.

We had gone out to dinner one night. It wasn't for a special reason, just to go have fun. Our waiter was an older white man. At first, I didn't realize he was only talking at me, barely to her. When he asked what we wanted to eat, as soon as she would speak, he'd either continue to look at me or look down. And, despite us saying we wanted separate bills, he brought it out as one, and sat it in front of me.

I remember looking up and saying, "We asked for split checks." He had seemed kind of shocked at first, before saying the words that have stuck with me for years. "Well, I just assumed that *she*-" I had cut him off and began to say, "That she what?" but my roommate laid her hand on mine and shook her head, saying, "Please just split the checks." When I asked her later why she hadn't been angrier, she told me something I'll never forget, "I was angry, but my mother always told me that an angry black person is a threat" (R. G., person communication, January 2019).

I noticed a lot of things about being white from then on. I noticed when the clerk smiled at me but not at the black man behind me. And I noticed how people crossed the sidewalk or an aisle in a store when they saw black people walking towards them. I promised myself then that I'd speak up for people who were spoken against. So, when the Black Lives Matter movement really ramped up, I found myself speaking out against my own brother often. And most of the time, I was met with the remark, "College has brainwashed you."

Covid hit right after my niece was born. The second of my sister's two girls. We had spent the holidays in Ireland with them, but my sister was still pregnant then. We had made plans to come visit in the summer, to meet the new addition to our family. But, more than a year later, we still haven't gotten the chance to. It's the longest I've spent away from my sister. Away from the one person I tell almost everything to. The only person in my family that knows, explicitly, that I'm not straight. But, hey, at least right before it happened, I got new glasses for Christmas.

I really didn't think anything was different about my family before eighth grade. I thought we were what was seen as "normal." We're middle class, Christian, white. But there really isn't a "normal" family to model after. I think I really started to learn that in eighth grade. Because in eighth grade, that's when I got glasses.

Creative Work

Stories and Poems

A Little Fish in a New Pond

Glorianna R. Noland

Category Winner
Creative Work

The pungent bile that passed my lips was unlike any that I have had the displeasure of enduring. It was a viscous kind of evil, an all-encompassing torrential hell that seemed to ooze in buckets. I could feel a hand wind itself in my hair, a gentle vice that aimed to preserve what little it could of my frazzled locks from the rancid sickness that coated the inside of the toilet in shades of green and yellow. This was not a scene that could have ever been envisioned during the excruciatingly long drive down I-70 from Kansas to Ohio. Yet there I was, suffering from unspeakable gastrointestinal duress so far from home; having my boyfriend witness it; his sister hearing it from the next room; his parents fumbling about downstairs for home remedies that could alleviate my symptoms.

"I shouldn't have let you take the fish," Kevin sighed. He moved to sit near the tub, facing my pathetic, dehydrated form that curled up near the toilet, "I shouldn't have let them give it to you."

My eyelids felt indescribably heavy as they jockeyed against the pulsating motions of nausea. It was in that very bathroom, wielding a foggy mind and a gymnast for a stomach, that a single defining thought crossed my mind… *What am I doing here?*

In Tara Westover's memoir, *Educated*, she wrote of how different she was; a black sheep that broke free from the herd and was moving on to greener pastures, but those pastures seemed as foreign to her as the rest of her life. That who she was, and her meager beginnings, did not align with the new life that she was forging for herself. She wrote, "to myself I pretend there were other reasons I couldn't belong… reasons having to do with class and status: that it was because I was poor, had grown up poor" (Westover, 2018, p. 243). This resonates with me, for the thoughts that plagued me seemed akin to excuses based on fear, which stemmed from differences that could not be helped.

Post-Christmas decorations had still hung merrily across the bushes outside the window, a defiant proclamation that blinked throughout the neighborhoods in Cleveland. Christmas was not over until the last man took down their lights, regardless if it was three days past New Year's or a week before Valentine's Day. I often found myself staring out the window on nights like those, silently praying for the chilling cold to swallow me whole than to continuously burn further from the anxiety that gripped the air. However, I was stuck on the other side of the window, sitting quietly at a large dining table surrounded by intrinsic, cultural art and wall scrolls written in a language that seemed more like angry lines than legible characters. It made me think about the décor of my family's home back in Kansas, a thought that made me feel like a wild animal in comparison. Where they had decorative tea sets, we had wooden cat statues; where they hung their scrolled heritage, we had a dusty portrait of a European-esque Jesus Christ.

"It's your turn, Glorianna," Kevin's sister, Kathy, quietly reminded me. She was a kindred spirit if I ever met one; a PhD candidate of clinical psychology that would do anything but pick my brain. Half the time when I spoke to her, I forgot that I was a guest in a Chinese household. Her mannerisms and slang often reminded me of my own family rather than the dignified aesthetic that my surroundings—and her parents—displayed.

I flipped through the laminated cards in my shaking fingers, the apathetic expression illustrated on the king of spades seemed to almost mock my misery. Card games are often synonymous with fun, but this one was not, it was *Zhao Pengyou*; a traditional Chinese card game based around strength and dominion. As I fumbled through my cards, I was ever-aware how I lacked those two qualities. Kevin's

father was standing at the table, stepping gently side to side, the aged wooden floor beneath him groaning in protest to constant stimulation. He was a stubborn man, prideful and harsh in his observations; he was my antithesis.

He was muttering to himself in a language I seldom understood, and as my understanding dropped, so did my gaze. The fingerprints on the glossy wood before me seemed more interesting than playing the game, for the oily smudges would not bark criticisms—not like the swaying, muttering man.

Choosing the right card is akin to cutting a metaphorical wire on a bomb; one wrong move and my fate would be decided. As my fingers plucked the corner edge of that same king of spades, the desire to duck for cover gnawed at me as I haplessly tossed out the royalty of mockery. The entire room stared at the table on bated breath as the laminated cardstock—worn on all corners—fluttered to the table on top of the stack of suits already played. The crescendo of noise that followed afterward was not the tumultuous, fiery combustion that I had endured many times prior. It was the exclamation of surprise and disbelief; a declaration that the guise of confusion cloaked my ambitions, that I knew exactly what I was doing.

"She's pretty good," Kevin's mother choked out in English through sporadic cackling, her amused words cutting through the monotonous tone of their mother tongue that tumbled throughout the room like the static of a television. Her words—a comment that may have settled on deaf ears—stood out more than any other guffaw that night.

However, navigating through a meal made playing cards seem like child's play. Nobody would be focusing on the game or counting cards, full attention would pass over me as if I were camouflaged.

The searing growl of oil at the stove was the telltale sign that it was almost time to eat—a cue to arrange chairs awkwardly side-by-side. The crowded manipulation of the seating arrangement was the calm before the storm. And as five chairs corralled the small, worn table adorned with floral placement mats, the many dishes that were prepared began to appear on the table. One by one, each becoming the countdown on a clock.

It was silent at first. Bumping feet, quiet apologies, the quiet cry of glass on glass and the distant droning of CRT television; an old, dusty box from an era long forgotten. It perched on the ledge of a counter

in the kitchen, angled just right that it could be seen from the small alcove that hosted the dinner table.

Kevin's father exploded with a boisterous energy, one that I had grown accustomed to over time. His chopsticks were greedily attacking the steaming dishes of vegetables and fried meat, all of which circled a steaming pot of murky soup. "Does she want to try some squid?" He inquired of his son in English, his eyes refusing to meet mine even though the question regarded myself.

I was more preoccupied with attempting to spoon in an egg-based dish that sat a few plates away rather than answer his question. The small, rubbery pieces of sunshine almost tumbled from my bowl from the shrill bark that came from Kevin's mother. She was a small, quiet woman that maintained an aura of calm while barely reaching my shoulder. The pitch and pace of her enunciation in Chinese was moderately frightening to someone who never witnessed her temper. She flailed her chopsticks about in a foreign illustration of reasoning. Few words in English had been spewed in the tirade; simple words— "seafood" and "herself"—that demonstrated context.

Kevin rolled his eyes at his father, shaking his head and avoiding my gaze that seemed to beg a question I often asked of him: *What's happening?*

"She just called him stupid for asking if you wanted seafood, considering what happened last summer," Kathy spoke with a lilt in her voice that conveyed amusement at her own father's actions, "And that you can get food for yourself rather than being forced."

Upon hearing her words, my eyes took in the exclusive pair of chopsticks balanced atop every dish. A preparation to avoid further difficulties involving my grotesque allergies. They were precautions taken on my behalf, precautions that everybody kowtowed to without a second thought.

Was this to be my place among them? A welcomed outsider that pondered self-deprecating thoughts that feared dismissal from a family I barely even knew?

Jia Jiang, owner of the website *Rejection Therapy*, spoke at a TED Talk of how he overcame his fear of rejection by enduring it for 100 days. It came about for him as an epiphany following the sting of a particularly painful rejection regarding an entrepreneurial endeavor. He said, "That rejection hurt me. It hurt me so bad that I wanted to quit right there…But then I thought… would any successful entrepreneur

quit like that?" (Jiang, 2015). I mirrored that very same epiphany, for I recall obsessive, second-guessing thoughts about my purpose among a new family.

The blunt gurgle of the toilet flushing seemed to cut through the tense silence that blanketed the bathroom. The room was frigid from the air conditioning that pulsed through the house in the middle of summer. Yet, even in that cold silence was a blossoming warmth that peered through the window, bathing us in a way that only a heavenly body could as the scent of mint had perused about the air. Whether that was Kevin's doing or a result from my vigorous toothbrushing, I was not sure.

In my cocoon of transient bliss that peered through the blackest—in this case, greenest—of storms came a clarity. It was an intelligible kind of bliss, a radiance that cut through the internal war that waged in the back of my mind for months. The chuckle that passed my lips was rough, yet hopeful, like a man dying of thirst discovering an oasis.

"I hope your parents won't be mad that fish isn't gonna be on the menu at the wedding."

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Sweater Weather

Max Macheca

I have a special treat for you all today
Eminem is here to slay
And make rhyming look like child's play

My palms are sweaty, knees weak, arms are heavy
There's vomit on my sweater already, mom's spaghetti
My sweater's life ended too early
Found it only forty, minutes ago
How could I know, that my stomach would soon explode
I drank a moldy milkshake, my massive mistake
Striking my stomach like an earthquake remake
But let's just take a break, from my regrets
Let's remember my lost assets
My sweater was my drug, within its hold so snug
Cozy and cheap, found for free from a garbage heap
Many weeks I will weep, from this loss so steep
The hurt I feel hits my heart down deep
We were never one without the other
Never need another
My sweater and I as one, frolicking in the sun

Whether the weather was rain or snow
Threw on my sweater and away I go
A better sweater I never had
Containing three colors in its plaid

You better, not lose your sweater, the moment
You own it, you better never let it go (go)
You only got one shirt, do not overeat then blow
This loving warmth comes once in a lifetime (yo)
You better, not lose your sweater, the moment
You own it, you better never let it go (go)
You only got one shirt, do not overeat then blow
This loving warmth comes once in a lifetime (yo)

Green, red, and yellow
Aforesaid making me mellow
It was always there for me, on top of my tee
Never asking anything in return
It's love I didn't have to earn
The memories and care we shared
For this loss, I feel unprepared
Whenever I put it on, it always held me tight
Then I knew everything would be alright
When I needed comfort from life's pain and woes
My sweater was the one I always chose
Now it's time to say adios
To the sweater that has held me so close
Cause not even the rain from my tears
Could clean the stain and hurt from the vomit on my shirt
You may say it's sweater weather
But I won't cheat on my lover, by buying another
My arms may freeze, by the cold breeze
But whether I'm freezing or not
I don't need, cause I'm so hott

You better, not lose your sweater, the moment
You own it, you better never let it go (go)
You only got one shirt, do not overeat then blow

This loving warmth comes once in a lifetime (yo)
You better, not lose your sweater, the moment
You own it, you better never let it go (go)
You only got one shirt, do not overeat then blow
This loving warmth comes once in a lifetime (yo)
    (You better)

And Anger

Ethan Nelson

And
anger (because
collapsing gentlemen understand:
Never express
grand

Or,
rather, profound
beautiful internal suffering,
cratered thinking,
sore

pink
wrinkled, rounded
misfiring cellular synapses
whirring inside.
Think

such
helpful mottos

(conditioned-congealed-concealed):
relief =
Crutch,

Blame
yourself, wilting
failure. Entertain, ideate,
erode, explode.
Same

lie
always. Undo,
unravel DNA. Chromosomes
query, ponder—
Y?

We'd
rather gander
visible spectacles. Attractions
blossom bloody,
bleed

bad.
Enough. Enter:
Explainings. Eulogies. Erasure.)
arose instead.
Mad.

I Am Not Invisible

Christina G. Noland

". . . Why do you keep doing this to yourself?" I look at my exhausted portrait in the reflection of a mirror, talking to myself as if I have never asked this question before.

Because this is your job.

I flash back to one of my strongest childhood memories. I can feel the cushion of the gray carpet between my toes as I track down my mother's voice beckoning me to find her. From the living room, I can peer through the silhouette of my bedroom door, the bedroom I shared with my two younger sisters – Haleena and Glorianna – to see Mom waving me in. I'm smiling. It's just another normal day, I thought, with a cheerful sun and clear blue sky.

Once I breech the threshold, Mom closes the door behind me and locks it. I sit down with her on the closest bed, confused as to why she starts to whisper to me. Nobody else was on this side of the house to listen to us. I hear birds chirping just outside the bedroom window, a stark contrast to the tense feeling I see scattered throughout my mother's face.

"You are the oldest," she starts. Her hazel eyes are wide open, shiny, and her nose is a slightly darker shade of pink. "From now on, it's your job to protect your little brothers and sisters. I need you to

promise me you'll watch over them even when I'm not there." These words echo in my memory as loud as ten alarm clocks going off at once.

"Okay. I promise." *This is very important, Christina. Do not forget.*

I was five years old at the time, wholeheartedly agreeing without any grasp of what my new role would entail. I had been unaware of life, as if I was sleeping walking while wide awake. All of that transformed in an instant when my world would be turned upside down.

The protective mindset I developed became the single greatest mission in my life. I forced myself to be aware of every action my younger siblings made, every conversation my parents had. It was a requirement, I thought. I was an adult now – a substitute for mom when she was away. I believed it was necessary to eavesdrop regardless of what I was told. If I paid attention to the smallest details and gain insight into the future, even for a few moments in advance, I can prevent any disaster from happening. I can do my job even better.

Do not fail. Protect your family.

It was normal for us kids to go outside late at night and play soccer before going to bed. There was no organization. We simply kicked the ball for fun as hard as we could towards each other, sometimes hundreds of feet across the large front lawn. With the full moon nearly out, the only other light sources were bolted to the front of the house or to the small safety light atop the nearest telephone pole. Since there were five of us, it was usually two against three.

Alexander, the older of my younger brothers, was always trying to show off. He knew he could kick the ball farther than anyone. This particular summer night, I was on a team of two alongside Christopher, my youngest brother, when Alex kicked the soccer ball over our heads and into the back field. The grass there was almost as tall as us. We were told never to venture through the weeds, however, that usually never stopped anyone except me. There was absolutely no light in the back field. I was terribly afraid of the dark.

I stayed behind, watching Christopher run to retrieve the soccer ball. He had seen exactly where it landed and was running fearlessly into the unknown on faith that his tracking was accurate. I didn't realize Alexander had kicked it so hard until I had lost sight of Christopher. For a single moment I hesitated, knowing what I had to do while fighting an intense fear that planted my feet into the ground.

Get up. Move. Protect him. Your fears mean nothing compared to his life. My inner thoughts gnawed at me as if to predict the future. The promise I made to my Mom years earlier flashed into memory and my thoughts fell. I acted without thinking as if I was a different person.

I ran as fast as I could into the darkness, calling out Christopher's name trying to find him. Within seconds I could see him, but I was barely able to make out his figure. Christopher was wearing a dark shirt and shorts; the only confirmation I had to his safety was hearing his voice. Not even his white legs could be identified through the weeds, but three pairs of eyes reflecting the moon's light could.

"I got it!" Christopher yelled with excitement, about to run right past me and back into the game. A fourth, smaller pair of glowing, yellow eyes appeared in the near distance, all of them moving in unison with Christopher.

It wasn't uncommon for us to have deer, opossums, raccoons, bobcats, and stray cats or dogs wander aimlessly across our lot. Our house was in the middle of nowhere surrounded by fields of corn and a few other homes. Unfortunately, coyotes, at the time, were a large problem. Their numbers became so enormous one year that my parents had hired hunters to deal with them. If it wasn't for the fact that this particularly daring family of coyotes would readily attack humans without fear, this wouldn't have been so much of an issue.

I firmly grab Christopher's arm and stop him from running, accidentally making him drop the ball. As he bent down to pick the soccer ball back up, so too did the pairs of eyes lower to the ground to mirror his movements. I could feel the tension between us; if they let their breath be known, we were close enough to hear it. Their gaze focused solely on Christopher, as if he was a chunky chicken nugget, with the smaller set of eyes in the background staring directly at me. It quickly became apparent that Christopher had no idea the coyotes were there. I was not about to turn my back.

I slowly walked backwards with Christopher, my eyes fixated on those glowing orbs, saying that we should walk instead of run in case we trip on a loose shrub or snake. As expected, the eyes followed us, hovering across the ground as if they were a hologram without facial shape. Once we left the tall weeds, moving closer to the light of the house, the coyotes stopped following and eventually turned away. I calmly brought the rest of the kids inside after that, trying to come to terms with a possibly horrible outcome. After a few minutes

of decompression, I told everyone what happened, surprising myself that I wasn't more scared than I was. I went to bed for the first time without any nightlights on, having conquered my fear of the dark.

An interpretation of another point of view comes to mind; in her memoir, *Educated*, Tara Westover struggles with accepting herself because of a lack of a realized identity. Until she sought counsel in the form of her Jewish history professor, Dr. Kerry, Tara had little faith in her abilities. Dr. Kerry's encouragement manifested to her during reflection with the takeaway being to "First find out what you are capable of, then decide who you are" (Westover, 2018, p. 230). This statement strongly resonates with me, especially when I travel back to that night with the coyotes. Realizing I could overcome my fear of the dark and of danger for the sake of my loved ones made me feel powerful. This victory proved how worthy I was to be the protector, so this was who I was meant to be. I accepted that reality more than ever.

Pay attention. This is a test. I lost count of how many times my awareness would take over, where my relaxed thoughts would instantly stop just so I get a head count on my siblings.

A rare family vacation took place when we traveled to Branson, Missouri with other relatives to celebrate Independence Day. Walking into the resort, the smell of chlorine undeniable, I had never seen a swimming pool so grand. There were rows of tall windows that let in natural sunlight. The crisp, white tile that bordered the blue-green water had safety pads planted down to help keep people from slipping. There were beach chairs lined up against the wall where people read newspapers amongst the loud noises of chatter that echoed throughout the room.

There were two sections to the large pool. A shallow end with raised seating all along the edges took up a very small portion of the facility. The remainder of the pool, around twelve feet deep, was separated by a line of bright orange buoys. All of us kids were supposed to stay on the shallow end to be safe. That said, Alexander – the rule breaker that he was – would inevitably sneak under the buoys when nobody was watching. I patiently waited for my prediction to come true. I didn't have to wait long.

I watched Alexander intensely as he slowly dog-paddled his way to the other side. I knew he wanted to prove to Dad that he could swim all the way across without help. I also knew he couldn't swim

without panicking. Once Alexander got to the middle of the pool, sur-rounded by the deep, swallowing water, he would become scared and sink – of this, I had no doubt. I followed Alex into the deep end of the pool, prepared to catch him if he fell.

I will never forget the fear I saw on his face when I pulled him up towards me. Alexander had become so scared so suddenly that he had no time to call out for help before water overtook him. He had no idea I was there; I can't imagine how scared he would have been thinking his family was nowhere to help him. I carried Alex to the end of the pool where he could catch his breath, following the edge all the way back down to the shallow seating. We talked along the way and he confirmed that mischievous look I read across his face the moment we walked through the large double doors. He never went across the pool again.

Over time, this mission I had been given to guard my family evolved. When they became old enough to physically handle them-selves, my role switched to look after their mental and emotional well-being. I paid attention to word choice, subtle body language and every facial expression to determine what I needed to do. I became the internal family therapist, the reliable one that always had the answers. But I took this evolution too far.

The devotion I gave to protect my family became so impulsive that I would react without thinking about the ramifications to myself – the only person I had been neglecting for over twenty years. I realized that my life was so entangled with the survival of my family that I didn't care for a life of my own. My impulsive, unconscious decisions directed my actions; I was removing my own ability to choose for myself. I finally realized I felt sad.

An article written by Matt Duczeminski on *Lifehack* describes emotional changes associated with someone not making themselves a priority in the care department. The last of the six warning signs he describes hit home the most as he wrote, "Neglecting the importance of self care can lead to you truly forgetting who you are" (Ducze-minski, 2016, para. 32). The burden of carrying so many people on my back was overwhelming but being in denial about how difficult the weight was to bare was the worst to admit to myself. If I couldn't succeed in the role I had been leading for so long, then who was I?

I wanted to permanently remove this imposter I constantly saw in the mirror. She wasn't needed anymore, I thought. If she was gone

then maybe I could be happy. For months, this internal battle repeatedly knocked me down until I came to the conclusion that it was idiotic. This person I saw in the mirror, who directed my life for me on protective instinct alone, allowed me to grow into who I was and I loved it. I was a protector, a caregiver, a therapist, a sister, a daughter, a friend. More importantly, I was me. I was real to begin with, not a guard dog. I just needed to hold my own hand.

References

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Love Letters

Kelsie Quaney

The eyes are like mirrors,
They watch but don't see.
Many say they follow,
Observing the scene.

She watches the people
Like she did in life.
She loves to play pranks,
Being silly, causing strife.

Knocked over a vase,
The flowers lay out.
The poor maids face,
Was covered in doubt.

She giggled in wonder
As the door opened wide.
She loved the confusion
She saw in their eyes.

She startled the cook as
She grabbed a cookie.
She just wanted to test
Out the new rookie.

It's never her intention,
The fright that she brings.
She just wants acknowledgement,
She wants to be seen.

She continues her scheme,
The game that she plays.
She shoves people over,
They know her name.

Today in the USA: Live?

Hannah Kirby
Sanford Pomerantz
Peter Sandquist
Emma Staats

SETTING

A sound stage in the U.S.A. for a successful variety T.V. show.

TIME

Present day where school shootings are becoming more and more common, lockdown drills are as natural as fire or tornado drills, and no actions taken to prevent this epidemic have worked.

Prologue:

[black background]

Good afternoon everyone and welcome to a reading of *Today in the USA: live*? You're probably wondering what this show could possibly be about, and while we were creating this show we asked ourselves that same question more than once. But before I answer I'd like us all to imagine a time so forgotten and unimaginable. A time when toilet paper wasn't a luxury, when we would roam around Walmart just for fun, and before we all wanted to murder the people we live with. Yes, I want to take you back to January 2020. It was then that we decided to create a show about something meaningful and unique to us: school

shootings. It was a difficult process as we struggled approaching such a sensitive and timely topic. But by spring break, it finally felt like we wrote something we were proud of. Once we found out we could no longer meet in-person or perform our show in Scotland, we wrestled with whether it was the right decision to continue with our show as if there wasn't a worldwide pandemic. And although we understand the historic moment we are living in, we decided to stick with our original message and draw attention to a topic that is long-forgotten by society. More than anything we want to send a message of hope and realization. We want to make others feel how students feel every day in this country. We want others to understand how much school shootings have shaped the way we view the world. But the thing we regret the most about this disruption is that we weren't the ones who were able to help create change. It took an entire worldwide pandemic to stop school shootings. And although we are glad that this is the first month of March since 2002 without any school shootings, we hope our message isn't blurred and still carries the same meaning that it did when we first created it. There will come a time when students and teachers all across the country return to school. And with that, we hope it will mark the end of Generation Columbine.

ACT I

SCENE 1

Dramatic fun music plays over a dark stage as spotlights search for HOST. The voice of ANNOUNCER booms over the music.

ANNOUNCER

Washburn Theatre Presents. A United States student production. Today in the U.S.A.: Live? And now your host Peter!

HOST

Oh my gosh it's great to be here tonight hosting Today in the U.S.A.: live.
  (Applause)
 Thank you. I hope that you all are enjoying yourselves tonight.
 (Applause)
Yeah? You sir! What did you do today?

(Response from audience member)

 That's awesome. Oh, and you ma'am, how was your day?

(Response from audience member)

 I'm glad you decided to spend your evening with us because we've got a hell of a show for you tonight. Because tonight's show is about school shootings… Now I know what you're thinking. Shit, I thought this was going to be a fun show to relax and maybe fall asleep to. Now you're telling me that I'm going to sit through an hour of soul wrenching sadness? Well. The writers of this show thought about that, so we're going to have an evening of fun filled entertainment, full of jokes, satire, and humor. Now you're thinking, "That scrawny child man said that they're going to have a show filled with jokes about school shootings?!" Now before you leave here in a fit of rage, let me clarify. This show doesn't joke about school shootings. They're a very serious issue and we realize that, but we also realize that an hour of sadness isn't the answer either. So, this show is an hour using humor and other means to talk about a very difficult subject in the U.S.A. today. So, sit back, relax, and be sure to keep an open mind. Thank you. We've got a great show for you tonight! Taylor is here! So, stick around!

Play off music begins as the scene shifts.

SCENE 1.5

TEACHER *and students in a classroom Teacher has an outline of the day on the board and is going over the day:*

Projection of whiteboard:
8:40-9:40: Math
9:40-10:40: Reading
10:40-10:45: Bathroom break
10:45-11:45: Social Studies
11:45-12:20: Lunch
12:20-12:55: Choir/Visual Arts
12:55-1:00: transfer classes
1:00-2:20: P.E. and sports---Study hall or Band
2:20-3:15: Mental Health Assembly
End of school day

TEACHER

 Ok Students this is the plan for the day. I hope you're ready to learn and succeed for the day.

Announcement comes over the intercom:

ANNOUNCER

 Good morning everyone. As you're starting your day, I wanted to inform you that today we will be having a few alterations to our all-school schedule. Due to the on-going threat of school shootings, we will be having a Lock down drill today so we will all be prepared if that unfortunate event should happen to us. We decided to warn you that it was on the schedule it today so that you will not be un-duly alarmed by it. We'll do that at 9:45 today.

TEACHER *adjusts schedule, crossing off Reading.*

TEACHER

Well, I guess we'll just do math and reading in our first hour today.

Projection:
8:40-9:40: Math/Reading
9:40-10:40: ~~Reading~~ Lockdown Drill
10:40-10:45: Bathroom break
10:45-11:45: Social Studies
11:45-12:20: Lunch
12:20-12:55: Choir/Visual Arts
12:55-1:00: transfer classes
1:00-2:20: P.E. and sports---Study hall or Band
2:20-3:15: Pep Rally and Assembly
End of school day

ANNOUNCER

Sorry to interrupt again, principal Smith just notified me that following the Lock-down drill we will be having a De-compression talkback to discuss any fears you have from the entirely preventative but totally necessary lockdown drill. That session will start at 10:45.

TEACHER *adjusts schedule, crossing off Social Studies*:

Projection:
8:40-9:40: Math/Reading/Social Studies
9:40-10:40: ~~Reading~~ Lockdown Drill
10:40-10:45: Bathroom break
10:45-11:45: ~~Social Studies:~~ Lockdown Drill Decompression talk
11:45-12:20: Lunch
12:20-12:55: Choir/Visual Arts
12:55-1:00: transfer classes
1:00-2:20: P.E. and sports---Study hall or Band
2:20-3:15: Pep Rally and Assembly
End of school day

TEACHER
Well, I guess we'll just do math and reading and social studies in our first hour today. So, let's take out your Math books and turn to….

ANNOUNCER
Sorry to interrupt again, but we just got a great opportunity for an assembly this afternoon from our state senator who is making a campaign stop in our town today and offered to give us a motivational talk. We'll be hearing from Senator Olwhitegy about the importance of personal freedom and the value of education today at1:00pm. He really likes our football team, so he promised to be done for our 2:20 pep rally!

TEACHER *adjusts schedule, crossing off Health and Band*

Projection
8:40-9:40: Math/Reading/Social Studies/Sex Ed
9:40-10:40: ~~Reading~~ Lockdown Drill
10:40-10:45: Bathroom break
10:45-11:45: ~~Social Studies:~~ Lockdown Drill Decompression talk
11:45-12:20: Lunch
12:20-12:55: Choir/Visual Arts
12:55-1:00: transfer classes

1:00-2:20: ~~Health/Band/and other extraneous stuff~~ Senator OlWhitegy

2:20-3:15: Pep Rally and Assembly

End of school day

TEACHER

Well, I guess we won't have time for our combined Health/Band and study hall today, but maybe we can go over the sex education lesson at the end of our first hour after Math, Reading and Social Studies. Now let's look at the first prob….

ANNOUNCER

 I really do hate to interrupt your valuable learning, but we just found out that there was an extra shipment of processed meat dropped off today so we're giving you an extra twenty minutes for lunch. We don't want those hot dogs to go to waste.

TEACHER *adjusts the schedule again, crossing off Choir and Visual Arts.*

Projection: 8:40-9:40:   Math/Reading/Social Studies/Sex Ed/ Choir/Visual Arts

9:40-10:40: ~~Reading~~ Lockdown Drill

10:40-10:45: Bathroom break

10:45-11:45: ~~Social Studies:~~ Lockdown Drill Decompression talk

11:45-12:20: Lunch

12:20-12:55: ~~Choir/Visual Arts~~ extra hot dogs?

12:55-1:00: transfer to/from classes

1:00-2:20: ~~Health/Band/and other extraneous stuff~~ Senator OlWhitegy

2:20-3:15: Pep Rally and Assembly

End of school day

TEACHER

Well, we have a lot to do in this first hour, (*teacher looks at the clock*) well, half hour, let's get to it.

TEACHER *looks back to students and sees a student with hand up.*

Yes, Pat? What is it?

STUDENT
Can I go to the bathroom?

TEACHER *gives up…*

A school bell rings as the lights go to Blackout

ANNOUNCER
Make sure that over this Thanksgiving break you keep school in mind because you never stop learning.

Silence, then a long "shhhhhhh"

Lights up

SCENE 2
[1.2 dining room background]
A table is set for Thanksgiving dinner as RILEY and RORY (Sanford) are waiting for MOMMA to finish cooking. A knock is heard at the door.

MOMMA
Come in!

Sam enters dramatically. He is dressed in an American flag shirt and a red hat.

MOMMA
Oh Sam. It's so good to see you. I'm just finishing up the mashed potatoes if you want to sit down.

SAM
Oh don't mind if I do. Hey kiddos. How's it hanging?

RILEY
(Painfully) Hi Uncle Sam

SAM

So, how's college?

RILEY

Fine.

SAM

Ya got a boyfriend yet?

RILEY

No, not right now.

SAM

That's a shame. You're such a well-endowed young woman. Any man would be lucky to have ya.

RILEY

Thanks.

Awkward silence.

MOMMA

Alrighty dears. Dinner's ready!

SAM

Good. Good. I could eat a whole whale!

Awkward laughing commences from everyone except RORY.

MOMMA

Alright everyone. Join hands and say grace. Dear lord baby Jesus, we would like to thank you for this food we are about to eat because we all know that you died on the cross, nails in hands, nails in feet, nails in places where nails shouldn't be, so that we may eat this dinner. Let us pray that we will have a nice, peaceful Thanksgiving for once. And no political discussions or discourse whatsoever. Save that shit for Christmas. In your name we pray, Amen.

Awkward silence was everyone except RILEY *gets food.*

MOMMA

(To RILEY) Sweety, aren't you going to eat anything?

RILEY

No, mom. Sorry I'm on a new diet. You know vegan, gluten free, keto, low carb, no cals, so you know. Just can't eat any of this.

MOMMA

I wish you would have told me. I would've gotten you something special. Is there anything you can eat?

RILEY

Water and lettuce.

MOMMA

I've got romaine in the fridge.

RILEY

No thanks. I don't want to die.

MOMMA

Oh. Ok.

Awkward silence.

MOMMA

So, Sam, what have you been up to?

SAM

Oh, you know, stuff. I actually got a new weapon. It's the savage model.

Riley sighs and rolls her eyes.

MOMMA

(*With a nervous faux excitement*) Oh, that's nice.

SAM

Let me show you a picture. I've got it here on my new blackberry.

MOMMA

Oh, you don't have to…

SAM

No no really, I'd be happy to. *(SAM whips out his phone.)* Here she is. Isn't she a beaut'?

MOMMA

Oh, that's nice. Do you need one so big?

SAM

Yeah. This is the meat and potatoes of the American society. You never know who could try and mess with you.

RILEY *rolls her eyes and gives an even bigger sigh. SAM shoots her a glare.*

MOMMA

Ok, but could we please put our phones away for the rest of dinner?

SAM

Fine.

Awkward silence ensues again.

SAM

Hey Riley, since you're not eating and everything. Could you pass me the mashed potatoes?

RILEY

You know what, Uncle Sam. I don't think I will.

SAM

Oh. Ok. So now you wanna restrict my right to mashed potatoes too, huh?

RILEY

Well, the next thing you'll want is instant mashed potatoes and

suddenly you're asking for gravy. And not just one gravy, you'll want brown and white gravy.

SAM

Well…

MOMMA

Alrighty then. How about we all just take a breath. In. Out. No let's just try to have a nice Thanksgiving dinner.

SAM

Well, I don't get why just because you don't want mashed potatoes, I can't have them either. I get why Rory can't have them. She's a . . .

RILEY

Don't you dare bring Rory into this. Just because "you name it, she has it" doesn't mean that you need to insult her.

SAM

I'm not insulting, I'm just saying that there are all kinds of potatoes. Mashed potatoes, fried potatoes, boiled potatoes, baked tomatoes, but it's not the potatoes that do it. It's the forks. And there are some pretty rusty forks.

RILEY

So don't let the forks have mashed potatoes, it's that simple.

SAM

Then the rusty forks will just get knives

RILEY

But knives will result in less broken forks. So, if there's even a hope of reducing the number of broken forks, isn't that worth pursuing.

SAM

You're missing the point! Mashed potatoes are a God given right. Our forefathers ate potatoes raw and they enjoyed it, by golly. Just imagine, good old George Washington riding horseback, buck naked,

biting into a raw potato. Now tell me. Can you think of anything more American?

MOMMA

Sam!

SAM

Sorry momma.

RILEY

You'll address them as parent. A gender neutral term.

MOMMA

But honey, that's my name.

RILEY

No no, it's ok parent, they need to learn.

SAM

Come to think of it. They had mashed potatoes at the first Thanksgiving.

RILEY

How do you know that? It's not like they had cameras.

SAM

They wrote it down. They passed it down from generation to generation. Your grandma Sandy Cheeks, God rest her soul, she was right there at the first Thanksgiving. She was riding sidesaddle with George Dubs when they met with the Indians for a peaceful dinner and treaty signing party.

RILEY

Uncle Sam. That's not when or how the first Thanksgiving happened.

SAM

Oh, so now that you're going to a liberal arts college, you think you're smarter than me?

MOMMA

Sam, Sam! Riley! Can we just finish our dinner in peace? We haven't even got to the pumpkin pie.

The longest silence ever perpetrated on the Scottish stage.

SAM

Could you please pass me the sweet potatoes?

RILEY

Mmmmmm sorry Uncle Sam.

SAM

God damn it! That's all I can take. I just wanted to eat some motherfucking mashed potatoes and what do I get? Criticized by my own niece no less!

RILEY

If you don't like sacrificing your own wants for the greater good, then maybe you should just leave!

SAM

Maybe I will!

RILEY

Good!

SAM

Good!

SAM and RILEY *storm off in opposite directions.*

MOMMA

Oh Rory. Every year. Why couldn't we have a nice Thanksgiving? Just once? For one year I'd like to see them work together and compromise. Maybe decide that it would be best to eat mashed potatoes when it's the time and place to eat mashed potatoes. Wouldn't that be nice?

A few more seconds of eating.

MOMMA
Rory honey, could you pass me the mashed potatoes.

Blackout.

School Bell Sounds

ANNOUNCER
Welcome back from Thanksgiving break. We hope that you had a lovely time with your relatives. As for right now, first hour has begun.

Through the silence the urgent buzzing of a cell phone is heard.

Lights Up

SCENE 3
[1.3 Classroom background]
A classroom is seen with all the students talking amongst themselves. The TEACHER *walks in.*

TEACHER
Welcome class. I hope you all had a good weekend.

STUDENTS
Thank you.

TEACHER
Thank you. Now I know there's been some talk about the new policy to arm teachers, and I'm here to calm any fears that you have about it. And I'm sure that this new policy won't change anything about this classroom except your safety.

TEACHER places their gun on the table for everyone to see.

TEACHER

Now let's begin. Last time we were covering everything from Machiavelli's The Prince and today we're going to be talking about his view of fear. Would anyone like to read the quote I picked out for today?

Silence. The students are all staring at the gun.

TEACHER

Anyone? Anyone at all? No one? Really. How about you come up here and read it for the class?

FRIGHTENED STUDENT

(Glancing at the gun) It is much safer to be . . .

TEACHER

It's ok. Don't be shy.

STUDENT #1

"It is much safer to be feared than loved because love is preserved by the link of obligation which, owing to the baseness of men, is broken at every opportunity for their advantage; but fear preserves you by a dread of punishment which never fails." - Niccolo Machiaveli.

TEACHER

Good. Now tell me, what did he mean by that?

Silence.

STUDENT #2

Was he trying to say that love is weak?

TEACHER

No, not even close. Anyone else?

TEACHER *begins to play with the gun.*

TEACHER

Come on guys. You know this. He's trying to say that fear is more effective means of rule than love. Now why does he say this? Anyone? It's because people break the ties of love for their advantage, but it seems they don't break the cage of fear. Did anyone get that? No? What's wrong with you guys today? You guys are so quiet. Tell me, what does Machiavelli want us to take away from this quote?

STUDENT #2

(A fearful silence. Then.)
I don't know.

TEACHER

You don't know.

Did no one read the chapter?

STUDENT #3 (Hannah)

We read the chapter we just . . .

TEACHER

Wait out back for me. Now.

STUDENT #3 walks out of the classroom.

Blackout as the School Bell is heard

ANNOUNCER

Attention. The institution has decreed that new measures be put in place for the safety of the staff and students.

Silence: sounds of breathing starting slow and growing quicker are heard.

Lights Up

SCENE 4
[1.4 security line]

Barbed wire is spread everywhere and a table with an AGENT stands before the school.

HOST

In a dystopian future where school shootings were once rampant. Meaningless laws protect the lives of the poor victims of the American public school system.

MOMMY and KELLY approach the AGENT.

MOMMY

Are you excited for your first day of school, honey?

KELLY

I'm so excited! I want to play dress up and show and tell.

MOMMY

That's nice sweety.

AGENT

That's far enough.

MOMMY

Now wait just a minute. What is all this?

AGENT

Mandatory inspection.

MOMMY

Inspection? For what?

AGENT

Guns, drugs, and other dangerous materials.

MOMMY

Why would any of those things be in a kindergartener's back-pack? And who are you anyway?

AGENT

I'm the CPA agent assigned to your school.

MOMMY

What's the CPA?

AGENT

The Child Protection Agency. I'm surprised you haven't heard of us. We're a lot like the NSA or CIA and all the things they do to keep you safe.

MOMMY

I've never heard of you, so we'll just be on our way.

AGENT bolsters his firearm.

AGENT

Ma'am I don't want to use this, but I will if I have to, so I'll just check that for you. Ah. Just as I suspected. What is this?

AGENT pulls out a pencil.

MOMMY

Uhh. That's a pencil.

AGENT

Ma'am this could be used as a projectile weapon. It could poke someone's eye out.

MOMMY

But it was on the teacher's list of materials.

AGENT

Sorry, but you'll just have to do without.

MOMMY

Whatever. Now can we go?

AGENT

Not so fast. What is this? An IUD?

AGENT pulls out a calculator.

MOMMY

Don't you mean an IED?

AGENT

Yeah. I'm not stupid. It's an Explosive device. This will have to be confiscated as well. Oh, and this? What is this strange device?

AGENT pulls out a tampon.

MOMMY

Ope.

KELLY

You never know when you're going to start. Am I right ladies?

AGENT

Right . . . And your shoes. Could you please take those off as well?

KELLY

They light up see. Boop, boop, boop.

MOMMY

This is ridiculous. Is this entirely necessary?

AGENT

Ma'am the more you cooperate the easier this will be. Oh, and the bunny too. We'll have to take that.

KELLY

Mr. (*Sniffles.*) Bigglesworth? NOOOOOOO!

MOMMY

What is the problem with a stuffed bunny?

AGENT

There could be drugs in there.

MOMMY

What?!

AGENT

Adults aren't the only ones getting into that these days

AGENT removes Mr. Bigglesworth from KELLY *with much difficulty.*

AGENT

Please proceed along the path past the barbed wire and guard dogs. Your cavity search will be in the tent

KELLY

(*Extremely upset.*) I didn't know that we were going to the dentist. Worst day ever!

Blackout as the School bell rings.

ANNOUNCER

Dr. Goodman will now give his presentation on dangerous environments and their inhabitants.

Silence, then the sound of heavy footsteps are heard.
Lights up

SCENE 6
[1.6 podium]

A podium adorns the stage as DR. GOODMAN addresses the audience directly.

GOODMAN

Sorry I'm late. I had to beat an old lady with a stick to get here. (*Laughs.*) I'm Dr. Goodman. As one of you already knows because this morning I found a "send noodles" sticker on my door. I'm warning

whoever did this that something less pleasant will be coming your way. I'm looking at you. Now. On to today's lecture. Cuttlefish. The shapeshifting monsters of the sea. On the surface they are an enigma. A strange looking creature that looks like no other and is obvious to anyone that sees them that it is in fact a cuttlefish. At least that's what we think. Are you on your phone right now? Really? I'm up here pouring my heart out and you're just sitting there checking your messages? I want it away now. And don't get it out again.   Where was I? Oh yes. In fact, cuttlefish can change their appearance to look like anything they choose. They can blend into their environments with relative ease, and if a cuttlefish were of human shape and size they could look like you or even you. And this is the way it seems to other fish. One minute they're staring at a totally normal rock and wham! All they see is a flash and in an instant, they meet their maker.

A quick Blackout followed by School Bell ringing

ANNOUNCER
    This concludes our school day. Be sure to enjoy yourselves with your free time.

Silence, then the sound of a hand jiggling a door handle.
Lights Up

SCENE 7
[1.7 playground background]
    A place in the school with no other people around. STUDENT #1 and STUDENT #2 enter.

STUDENT #1
    Oh my gosh. Have you seen the new TikTok dance challenge?

STUDENT #2
    We have to try it!

STUDENT #1
    Let's do it!

A catchy bassline plays as the two dance the new challenge. The challenge entails finger guns and running away from the other, while making a fun little dance out of it.

SCENE 8
<u>[1.8 classroom]</u>
Lights shift to a commercial break

HOST
And now a message from our sponsors

The scene moves to a full classroom of students. Everyone is reading 101 Ways to Survive a School Shooting. NEW STUDENT walks in without the book. Everyone glares at her. Teacher gasps in shock and tackles her to protect her.

NEW STUDENT
What the heck?

TEACHER
Shhh it's okay. Don't worry you're safe with me under my book.

Scene moves to the lunchroom. (scene change to lunchroom) NEW STUDENT sits at a table and everyone leaves as soon as she sits. SPOKESPERSON enters.

NEW STUDENT
Oh, what could possibly be wrong with me? Am I too boring? Are my clothes outdated? Do I have something in my teeth?

SPOKESPERSON
No, what you need is this.
SPOKESPERSON whips out 101 Ways.

NEW STUDENT
(stares in amazement) What's that?

SPOKESPERSON

This is 101 Ways to Survive a School Shooting. Your ticket to popularity and survival in high school.

NEW STUDENT

How do I get it?

SPOKESPERSON

How do you get it? Well, I thought you'd never ask.

Scene moves to a classroom of students *(scene change to classroom-Kermit in background)*

SPOKESPERSON

101 Ways to Survive a School Shooting is the perfect back-to-school guide for today's dangerous public-school environment. This book provides you with perfect solutions to an imperfect world. Today, we're give you a sneak peek into our exclusive life-saving tips and tricks. Let's jump right into tip number 1: play dead.

STUDENTS drop to the floor. SHOOTER kicks one student in the leg and waits for any movement

SHOOTER

Nope, this one's dead. Let's go.

SPOKESPERSON

Tip #2: Be nice to the weird kid. You know who I'm talking about.

STUDENT #1

(*to WEIRD KID)* You're weird.

STUDENT #2

Hey, hey. It's okay you're weird.

WEIRD KID

Hisssssssssss

SPOKESPERSON
Tip #3: Tell a knock-knock joke to diffuse the tension. Don't be afraid to get creative.

SHOOTER
Knock knock.

STUDENT
Who's there?

SHOOTER
Bang, bang.

STUDENT
Bang bang who?

SPOKESPERSON
Tip #4: Use the weak as a human shield.

STUDENTS encouraging a line leader as they take cover behind them

It's okay you can do it. Lead the way. Take us to the light.

SPOKESPERSON
Tip #5: Bring your own gun. Because if everyone is a school shooter, no one is.

STUDENTS mimic the cocking of a gun

SPOKESPERSON
Order now and you'll be ready for fall 2020. For just two payments of 19.99 each you can get these bonus gifts as a sign of our best wishes. A bulletproof backpack. A Kevlar vest. Noise-cancelling headphones. And a rosary. Don't miss out on this exclusive offer!

NEW STUDENT
Thanks to 101 Ways to Survive a School Shooting, I'm cool and safe in an active shooter drill. Hopefully.

AN OFFSTAGE VOICE reads the following warning as quick as humanly possible

*Appropriate for ages 5-18 (Julie)

*Be aware: due to inactivity of politicians this book has been approved by Congress in place of real protection of students or gun control. *101 Ways to Survive a School Shooting* is not a guaranteed method of protection against an active shooter. *101 Ways to Survive a School Shooting* cannot be held responsible for any accident, injury, or death while using the book. Warning: this material may cause serious trauma or PTSD for the reader. Suggestions in the book might result in harm to self or others; please use responsibly. Published in part by the National Rifle Association.

Blackout.
End of Act I

ACT II

SCENE 1
[2.1 child bedroom]
The scene shifts a child's bedroom with paintings and toys scattered around. DAD and CHILD are sitting on a bed watching the late-night T.V. show.

HOST
Hey, thanks for sticking around with us tonight. We've still got some great acts coming up so don't go anywhere. But before we get on with the show tune in tomorrow for special guests Emma Gonzalez and David Hogg, two high school students turned activists-

DAD turns off TV

DAD
Alright honey, it's late enough. Time to go to bed.

CHILD

Oh, come on, Dad. Can't I watch a little more? I promise I won't tell Mom.

DAD

Hm... that is an interesting offer, but I think I'll have to say no.

CHILD

Can I stay up late tomorrow night to watch?

DAD

Sure. Tomorrow night. But right now, it's time for bed.

CHILD

Can you tell me a story first?

DAD

Ok. Just one. Then it's beddy bye!

CHILD

Ok!

DAD

Which story do you want?

CHILD

A new one!

DAD

Ok this one is called The Soldier and Old Woman. Once upon a time there was a soldier and an Old Woman. The soldier was the most courageous woman ever. She was young, proud, and strong. Every little girl in the village wanted to be her. One day Death came to the village and rounded up all the people who he decreed to die. Among them were the soldier and the Old Woman. Death went down the line of people and asked every one of them, "Are you ready to die?". He asked each one and each one pleaded for more time in their life. Finally, two were left. The soldier and the Old woman. Death asked the soldier, "Are you ready to die?". And she said, "I am ready to die",

but her voice shook and her hands trembled, and finally she fell to her knees in fear of Death. All her courage hadn't prepared her to face death, not yet. Then Death asked the Old woman, "Are you ready to die?" She raised her withered head to Death to look him in the eyes and said, "I am ready to die." Death nodded at her with respect and took her. Even though the soldier had spent her whole life preparing for death, she was still scared to die. The Old Woman had spent her whole life preparing for death and was wise enough to accept him with open arms. She was more courageous than anyone, even the soldier, because she accepted the unknown. She accepted what she could not control.

CHILD
　Wow.

　DAD gives CHILD a goodnight kiss and tucks them into bed. He turns out the light and just as he's about to leave.

CHILD
　Hey Dad. I think I'm ready to die.

　DAD turns around and sits on CHILD's bed.

DAD
　Why do you say that?

CHILD
　I think I'm like the Old Woman because I'm ready to die.

DAD
　Sweetie, you don't have to think about that for a long time.

CHILD
　Yes, I do.

DAD
　Why's that?

CHILD

Because of all the drills we do at school. The lockdown drills? They tell us we only do them to be ready for something that won't happen, but I don't believe them.

DAD

Why don't you believe them?

CHILD

Well. Because. Why would we do them if there's not something scary that could happen. But don't worry Dad. I'm ready to meet Death. I'll stand up to him like the Old Woman and say, "I am ready to die." And he'll take me forever.

DAD gives CHILD another kiss and starts to walk out. DAD takes one last look at his child and walks out.

The stage is dark. Noises are heard behind the audience: footsteps, click-ing. CHILD hears them too and wakes up, scared.

Blackout.

SCENE 3

[2.3. black background]

SOMEONE is alone. They open their eyes wide and gasp, then a pair of hands cover SOMEONE'S eyes. Stillness.

Blackout

School Bell Rings

ANNOUNCER

Welcome back students. Be sure to see the cast list for the school play and remember to think about staying safe at school because we've had two injuries in the hall so far this year and we'd hate to have any more.

Silence followed by the sound of feet running faster and faster.

SCENE 4
[2.4 lunchroom]
A lunchroom can be seen with a focal table where the popular students sit. There is the normal conversation taking place with everyone except WEIRD KID. The rest eagerly wait for ALEX as he enters. ALEX is bombarded by a series of fond greetings as he approaches.

STUDENT #1
Hey Alex, come on over.

ALEX
Guys, did you see the new cast list? It's honestly crazy that Kary even got cast after how bad she did in the last show.

There is agreement among the popular kids.

CHILD
You're so right Alex. Wanna sit down?

They see that there are no seats left and all eyes land on WEIRD KID.

STUDENT #1
(To WEIRD KID.) Hey, uhhh, could you move, so Alex can sit down?

WEIRD KID leaves sheepishly and glances back with a flash of resent.

CHILD
So, Alex, I saw you got the lead. That's so cool.

STUDENT #1
Yeah, that's awesome; I'm not even surprised.

ALEX
I know guys. If you get all A's and practice hard enough, maybe one day you could get the lead like me.

CHILD
I wish! See you at rehearsal?

ALEX
My dad's picking me up for an appointment actually. I'll see you guys in school tomorrow.

The scene shifts to ALEX slipping into a dark room and opening the top drawer of a dresser. ALEX pulls out a gun and stares at it.
Silence. Then blackout.

A School bell rings

ANNOUNCER
 Make sure to check out the club sign-ups outside the school counselor's office. Another day at school, another day to make a difference!

Silence.... then Sound of Door handle and a door opening.

Lights up

SCENE 5
[2.5 house]
DAD and CHILD are seen saying goodbye.

DAD
Ok honey. You have everything?

CHILD
Yeah Dad. I never forget anything.

DAD
Good. I'll see you after school, ok?

CHILD
Ok Dad.

CHILD runs off to the bus.

DAD
Wait! You forgot your goodbye kiss!

CHILD unwilling to give up their goodbye kiss runs back. They embrace and DAD kisses CHILD on the forehead. DAD holds back tears.

CHILD

I love you Dad. Forever.

DAD

I love you too. Forever.

CHILD runs off to the bus.
Blackout.

Spotlight on Dad

DAD is left standing in the dark staring after his CHILD.
 DAD breaks down.
Blackout.

Silence.

SCENE5.5
[2.5.5 newsroom]
 A family watches their T.V. in the evening.
*News Report Footage*Play scene
As the footage continues, they react at first in shock, but then they slowly start to become bored with the coverage.

Blackout.

SCENE 6
[dark video off]
 Static is heard over the intercom. DAD is still laying on the ground. He painfully wakes up. He begins his morning routine: brushing his hair, brushing his teeth, and washing his face. As he finishes washing up, he looks at his face in the mirror. He attempts to smile. A ringing is heard in his ears. He gains control of himself again and the static and ringing stops. He then packs his things for work. As he is packing, he sees the CHILD'S drawing. He then packs the drawing and leaves his room.

SCENE 7
[black background]

The show is over. The actors take down the set and pack up.

PETER

Hey Hannah, what's wrong?

HANNAH

Hey Peter, I don't know. I just feel like what we're doing is kinda fucked up.

This feels all wrong. How can we possibly tell a story that we haven't personally experienced? Isn't this insensitive?

PETER

What do you mean?

HANNAH

It just feels like we're telling a story that isn't ours to tell. None of us are survivors of a school shooting so why do we get to tell stories about their experiences?

PETER

A lot of people tell stories to cope with their emotions. I know I do all the time.

HANNAH

Really?

PETER

Yeah. Did I ever tell you about my friend Rowan?

HANNAH

No.

PETER

Rowan and I were the best buds. I mean we were really close. We both went to a little town in Kansas called Ottawa to take violin lessons and we did everything together. Even though we were from two different cities, we found any excuse to hang out. When we were

in group class, we would always talk, and our teacher had to tell us to save it for later. But we knew that we wouldn't see each other until the next week we had class, so we talked. We would play video games together when we weren't in Ottawa, so we always found a way to hang out together. But

PETER (Continued)

after a while we grew farther and farther apart. And then after a couple years of not talking I was told that Rowan had died. He was shot in the street and left for dead.

HANNAH

Oh my gosh. I didn't know. I'm sorry.

PETER

It's ok. It's just hard to talk about, so instead I like to tell stories about our time together.

HANNAH

But did this even help? We are trying to create change about an issue that hasn't even affected us.

PETER

But it has affected us. We wanted to create change because we all have experience with this issue, even if it's not first-hand. Even though we haven't lived through a school shooting, we've all been impacted somehow.

EMMA

We all have stories. We just don't talk about them.

HANNAH

Why don't we?

The cast begins to tell their stories about how school shootings have affected them. (TURN VIDEO ON—all)

EMMA

One day during the fall of my senior year of high school, a fellow student anonymously wrote on social media that they "couldn't wait to see the blood on the walls of EHS" that afternoon. The entire school immediately went into lockdown for the next few hours while the campus was investigated for threats. I still remember the fear in my best friend's eyes and the texts my classmates sent to their parents: "I'm okay. I love you." The threat was found not to be credible but numerous students skipped school during the following days anyways. Police officers escorted us to our cars that afternoon and kept a presence at the school for the next couple weeks. To this day I sit in my college classes and consciously decide what my course of action will be if a shooter walked through the classroom door.

SANFORD

My experience from the other cast members is quite different. In my elementary school days, the fear of death was associated with the take-cover drills with the fear of world war III with a nuclear attack from the Soviet Union. I also grew up in Detroit, Michigan which was at times noted as being the murder capital of the USA. We were not allowed to have guns in our home when growing up in Detroit!

It had to do with my father's history. Now I realize why my parents took away and returned a toy gun that I bought that had realistic plastic bullets. At the age of 78 I fully understand why. Let me explain. My father grew up in a rough neighborhood of Detroit. He got hold of his father's gun and he was to fight another boy and if he lost the fight, he planned to shoot him. Luckily, he won the fight but did get in trouble when my grandmother and grandfather saw holes in the ceiling of the house when my father first got hold of the gun and it discharged. But this is only the beginning of the story. When my father was in his teens, he took a trip to Chicago and it is here that the story of why no guns in our house when growing up started. I won't go into details, but my father got shot in the chest in Chicago and nearly died. He was of course hospitalized in Chicago and my grandmother had to take him back to Detroit my train. Growing up he would show us the bullet hole scar and made it clear that no guns were allowed in the house!

JULIE

I was teaching in an elementary school when Columbine happened. I don't think it occurred to me that this would be something that would happen again and again in this country. It was a tragedy, but not something that would affect me…it would be fixed, right? I don't remember being terribly affected in the next few years as I went to grad school, but shootings continued, and they moved onto college campuses targeting professors and students, and whoever they found to target. I have a vivid memory of dreaming that a student entered my office with a gun, and I was desperately trying to escape when I woke up. That has stayed with me. That fear. I don't look at students as possible 'shooters'; I don't even remember the face or if there was a personality behind the shooter in my dream, but I remember the panicked feeling I woke up with. I can't imagine what students and teachers who have actually lived through a shooting feel ----but I admire them for stepping back into a school or learning how to get up and go again.

HANNAH

One of the most defining moments in my childhood was a normal Friday afternoon in my homeroom class in middle school. I remember I was wearing my signature ponytail with a blue feather in my hair, purple converse, and a jean jacket. It was cold because it was December and I remember it was a cloudy day. As soon as class started our teacher turned on the small T.V. in the classroom. Breaking news: school shooting at an elementary school in Connecticut. A bunch of kids were dead and teachers were dead and even the shooter was dead. the band teacher started sobbing and had to turn the T.V. off. The rest of our class time was spent in silence. I don't remember what I was thinking but I do remember that was the day, when I was 12 years old, that I began preparing myself to die at school.

PETER

It's true, the people in front of you have not survived a school shooting. But along with other students and educators across the country we live with the tangible fear of it every day. We are the generation who has seen the highest number of school shootings in human history and hopefully someday, we will be the generation that sees the end of them.

Everyone joins in.

ALL
We are Generation Columbine.

Blackout.

*Additional writing contributions from Hartley Goodwin, Taylor Molt, Julie Noonan, Shelby Ranck, Connor Reynolds, and Angela Woods

Contributors

Haley Carlin is from Iola, Kansas and she is at Washburn perusing a degree in Marketing and a Minor in Jazz Studies. In addition to academics, she is on the worship team for Christian Challenge, plays upright bass in one of the jazz bands, and is a member of Zeta Tau Alpha. Haley is working towards a Marketing degree with the intention of working in promotion marketing for a performance/concert venue, hopefully in Nashville, Tennessee. Music has always been a major part of her life and she would love to stay around music in her future career.

Shelly Davenport is currently finishing her first year of Washburn's Clinical Psychology Graduate Program. She graduated magna cum laude from Washburn University in 2020 with a psychology major and criminal justice minor, with Psychology Department Honors, and as a member of PSI CHI. Shelly has found her true passion in psychology with a clinical focus, knowing that while she may not change the world, she is determined to try through helping the people who live in it.

Tammi Drapeau is a senior earning a Bachelor of Integrated Studies degree with an emphasis in Neurolinguistics and Psycholinguistics and a minor in Criminal Justice. She enjoys reading, knitting, and spending time with her family.

Malick Fall is currently a senior at Washburn University majoring in criminal justice and minoring in communications. He is originally from New Jersey and also a football player here at Washburn. In the future, Malick would like to provide for his family and help people in need.

Sammi Ford is a senior at Washburn University, with intentions to graduate in Dec. 2020. She is majoring in Psychology and minoring in Sociology. She is a member of Psi Chi, Mortar Board Honor Society, and the Washburn Honors Program.

Hannah Kirby is a senior Communications major from Lansing, KS. Hannah is also minoring in Theatre and Mass Media. Hannah has acted in several productions at Washburn University with roles such

as Frog in A Year with Frog and Toad and Bambi Bernet in Curtains among others. She can't wait to enjoy live theatre safely once again.

Sean Lavin is a graduate from Washburn Tech working towards his Bachelors in Technology Administration.

Claire Leffingwell graduated from Washburn University in May of 2020 with a B.S. in Psychology and a Minor in Leadership Studies. Currently, she is pursuing a graduate degree in Educational Leadership Studies: College Student Development from Oklahoma State University. She works as a graduate assistant in Student Retention Services within the College of Engineering, Architecture, and Technology. Claire is highly interested in leadership, gender equity, social justice, and mental health awareness, and uses her time and talents to work with students to help them achieve their fullest potential.

On November 28, 2012, **Max Macheca** was T-boned by a semi-truck on his way to college. The collision pushed him into oncoming traffic where he was also hit by a car. Max experienced three near-deaths from that incident. Since then, he's been improving his life in all aspects and exercised to a level far past his old strength and endurance. He also changed his major to become a physical therapy assistant, so he'll be able to heal, teach and inspire others in his future career.

Ethan Nelson is a lifelong resident of Topeka, Kansas. He is majoring in English and psychology. A sophomore at Washburn, he enjoys reading, writing fiction, and promoting mental health awareness.

Taylor Nickel is an undergraduate student seeking a B.S. degree in forensic anthropology with a minor in biology. Her recent studies span the fields of biology, history, and anthropology. She has authored research papers for The Transactions of the Kansas Academy of Science and The Kansas Anthropologist.

Christina Noland is an award-winning digital design specialist with over four years of experience with the Adobe Suite. Christina accepts projects from a diverse clientele because she believes learning new things and helping others succeed is crucial to achieving her goals.

Glorianna Noland is an award-winning visual communications designer with certified skills and a hunger to learn more. She possesses 4+ years of design experience in both printed media and promotional design.

Sanford Pomerantz is a senior audit student who has taken a host of classes at Washburn University through the Over 60 audit Program. Dr. Pomerantz is a practicing Psychiatry Specialist in Topeka, KS. He has participated in courses in Theatre, Art, History, Language and many more though Washburn University.

Kelsie Quaney is currently a Sophomore Psychology Major with a Minor in English. She recently took a poetry writing course and found something new to love in writing. The poem she sent in was one of several that she wrote during the course of that class.

Peter Sandquist is a student at Washburn and an aspiring writer. When this opportunity came about, Peter was eager to start. While at Washburn he has had opportunities to participate both on and off stage.

Taton Smith is a Senior Forensic Anthropology major with minors in Leadership Studies and Biology. She has been an active member of the Washburn Leadership Institute for three years and will serve Leadership Challenge Event (TM) next year.

Emma Staats is a first-year student at Washburn University School of Law in Topeka, KS. She graduated from Washburn University in May 2020 with a Bachelors of Liberal Arts in Integrated Studies and minors in Leadership Studies and Theatre. The arts have always been an important part of Emma's life. She finds she is the healthiest and happiest when she has a creative outlet and gets to witness other people's creative expressions.

Hanna Strader grew up in a small town and lived in the same house until after she moved to college. She is a junior legal studies major hoping to go on into social work in the future. Hanna worked for the past two years as a desk assistant at Lincoln Hall on campus and met tons of close friends that way. Her favorite pastimes include playing video games and accidentally taking too long naps.

Chloe Taylor is a transfer student here at Washburn. This is her first year here. She was born and raised in Lawrence and has played sports her whole life. Chloe is the youngest of four siblings and has a dachshund-mutt named Bruno. This essay was an assignment of a reflection on her experience with the natural environment during the pandemic.