

PINNACLES

2022



pin·na·cle

noun \ 'pi-ni-kəl \

- a high mountain top
- the best or most important part of something
- the point of greatest success or achievement
- a tower on the roof of a building that comes to a narrow point at the top

Synonyms: apex, apogee, crescendo, crest, crown, culmination, summit, zenith

Antonyms: bottom, nadir

Middle English pinnacle, from Anglo-French, from Late Latin pinnaculum small wing, gable, from Latin pinna wing, battlement

An anthology of English creative writing by
Hilton College boys



HILTON COLLEGE

Deeply Traditional. Refreshingly Contemporary.

INTRODUCTION

Another year of school has passed by; another year of academics, of culture, of sport, of busyness (exceptionally so in this significant 150th year of Hilton College) – all the richness of eleven months of education. This made me think about the word ‘school’ and its etymology in this, our sesquicentenary – another fabulous word. The word ‘school’ does not share the same root as in ‘school of fish’ – that form comes from a Middle Dutch word ‘schole’ and the Old English word ‘scolu’, which mean ‘multitude’. ‘School’, used to denote a place of learning, derives from a Greek word, ‘scholē’, which means *leisure*.

That seems such an astonishing leap across a chasm of difference it deserves its own paragraph. The word we use for ‘school’ nowadays has made its way across centuries of time and language from a word the ancient Greeks used to describe leisure, synonymous with respite, with ease, with breathing room, with recreation and release. If you are reading this as a pupil, a colleague, a parent or anyone with a close connection to Hilton College, you could be excused for responding perhaps wryly as there might seem very little that is leisurely about your school experience. And yet. The ancient Greeks considered time that did not have to be spent in chores, in labour, in working to survive but could be spent in thinking, developing curiosity and thus pursuing knowledge, as leisure time – it is a miniscule shift from leisurely thinking to actively learning...and ta da! The Romans appropriated scholē, adjusted it to ‘schola’ (rings a bell, doesn’t it, if you’ll forgive the pun?) and before you know it, Chaucer is using ‘scole’ in Middle English and we are writing about ‘school’ in 2022.

What is the significance of any of this? It is that as busy as we are, imagining, thinking, creating, wordsmithing, call it what we will, are integral to the leisure activity we now call school. I salute the boys who continue to write and to contribute their writing for our annual anthology of *Pinnacles*. As before, we include our 2022 Special Prize Winners, Ross Taylor for the L.A.B. Sharpe Prize for Creativity and Ben Guimaraens who was awarded the Senior Verse Prize. Our Junior Creative Writing Prize went to Neil Grobbelaar this year and the Derek Veenstra Creative Writing Prize for Grade 10 recipient was William Kitching. Make a point of reading Nic Thorburn’s superb Extended Essay on the extent to which genetics determine our personality, an outstanding and informative piece of research writing.

Thank you to Ms Coco Mamabolo who oversaw our Writing Club this year with dedication and commitment, and to Ben Guimaraens who was the senior pupil of this group.

“I know nothing in the world that has as much power as a word. Sometimes I write one, and I look at it, until it begins to shine.” — Emily Dickinson.

Shine on, everyone.

Thank you for reading this year’s publication.

Pamela Neethling

Head of Department: English

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What determines who we are?

To what extent does genetics determine our personality?

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POETRY

SENIORS

Ross Taylor

Vertigo

I feel, I feel you breaking under
my skin.
Delving too deep to tell each other apart
hand on my fragmented heart.

All this crypto in the world
you can get rich in a day.
So I don't understand why you're invested in the things that I say.

I've been going through a stage
I haven't connected with myself

The suns still shining, its blindingly bright

I used to talk to her
But she has no more inflection than a mundane red, orange, green traffic light

Is there happiness in this world, or is happiness having someone to hold when
it's cold
did I just have a panic attack?
But now I understand when you said 'summer is back'

You live and you learn
But there is still water underneath the bridges I burnt.

I feel, I feel you breaking under
my skin



Love is the only intruder

When I first saw her

Her voice could fill naked streets as her
hair moved gently in the breeze.
With every step she takes she spreads joy to all around her
Oh, and her smile, makes my heart miss a beat.

I dream of her.

"I never meant it," she said.
All I ever wanted was the truth that had been buried from my view.
I had been there, when he had not,
why him over me?

I love her.

My heart will never be fixed, fragmented from the rest of my body.
Why should it beat,
without her touch?
My heart has been stolen.

I loved her.

Once mended, I ache for her.
I feel like barren land, drained of life.
I'm sprinting, racing to her.
But no distance will be covered.

I used to love her.



Poppy Flowers

My grip tightens around my pencil as my hands begin to perspire
The sounds of war ring throughout my head.
My gaze slowly lifts to find the warm eyes of my teacher
Although my eyes do not focus

as nothing can console me now.

A flash of violence engulfs my vision
While my ears prick to the sound gun shells.
My hand twitches as the sound of laughter fills the classroom.
The volumes of war slowly begin to subside but the horror sets in.

My mind drifts once again at the thought of a seventeen-year-old boy kiss his girlfriend goodbye.
The high-pitched cries from worried sisters brings tears to his mother's eye as his father firmly shakes his hand.

The wrinkles around my forehead appear.
A shock runs its way up my spine at the thought of being the target audience towards propaganda posters had we been in war.

My breath quickens although the fears of war are subsided for now.



Truth Is

Let me show you behind the scenes
of the rumours in the life he leads.
Behind the glitz and the glamour that the public sees.

The truth is
he has really bad anxiety.
The highest of highs never last for as long as the lowest of lows.
Waterproof jacket to soak up all the tears
he wakes up early, it's called morning fears.

Like a freak in a circus, he gets made to dance
But does he have a chance?
of making something out of nothing.
He can't afford the shoes that society wants him to fulfill
It's ironic because the doctor just said to him to 'take a few pills.'
It's a shame it took falling to his lowest
for a person to fully appreciate his life purpose.
Imagine what this does to your mental state,

does being a billionaire decide your fate?

He lives in Africa.

but flies to America with angel wings

only to find out that it's not right, to be right-winged.

He can see red flags of a culture clash in ivory skin,
it's the elephant in the room.

But he's careful because the brush that they use to stroke your ego with
can turn into the broom

that they use to sweep your name under the table with.

No one knew what happened, it must have been a myth.

He listens to his brothers and sisters because their feelings are real

With scars so deep, it isn't easy to heal.

He does accounting, calculating profits but

It still amazes me that we are on the same team but you're celebrating my
losses.

Am I in love or do I love having someone to help from distracting me from
myself?

You can stop me if I'm lying because

I'm not perfect but I can promise you that I'm trying.



Experience from different views

Is it possible to experience everything in life we choose to do?

or is someone else controlling us from a higher view.

It's the question that frustrates me, not the answer

because I would rather die free than have to live inside a petting zoo.

That is the journey I'm seeking, not the one I'm left to rue.

I am heading back to the future

so I travel back in time.

Guided by the map, I have everything I want

because my adventure and imagination is mine.

But mine is not good enough for me

because I am not yet in control of my mind.

I am privileged, I can see it all
but I'll never get to see because I am truly blind-
to the love, hate and prejudice against our brothers own kind.

We are all the same.
It is not about each other's human race
It is just a human race
to identify who's left running when there is a goal to chase.
We do not run this place
what is up the next generations sleeve?

It needs to be an ace
of hearts
to win this war between people who are two-faced.



Four Seasons

Winter night is here, I'm going nowhere
All the lights are changing green to red.
Listening to music stations
situations running wild in my head

Spring evenings here, you're on the phone
While all the lights are changing red to green
Moving through the city air; seems so much fresher to be fair
I wonder whats that feeling rushing through my bloodstream.

Looking forward, I've looked back
It's clear that I've been blinded
too much fog between my eyes and yours
I promised that I'll fix my flaws
that lead us there in the first place,
To open up my heart to all that jealousy bitterness and ridicule

Oh, how I dreamt to change the past
since I'm seeing it so clearly
we've been afraid.
well to show you how I really felt, for you to

admit
to all those false promises you made.

summer's been and gone the sky was shining
now its fading vibrant red to sober blue.
Shuffling through the autumn leaves wondering where it is you might be
heading,
I'm standing here alone hoping that I'll turn around and you'll be standing
there,
right in front of me.

Benjamin Guimaraens

Benvie Gardens

The smell of the soil
makes me feel content.
The sounds of wildlife
Fill me with hope
and make me realise
how lucky I am.
The birds hop
from branch to branch.
Their brilliant songs
walk the path of the undergrowth.
The texture of the bark
of the towering trees
is illuminated
by the heavenly light
that cascades
through the impenetrable vegetation.
The feeling of peace,
of rejuvenation,
courses through me.
I am now ready
to finish the journey.



Dreams

Hold fast to dreams
For if dreams go
The soul will become a tomb
From which there is no escape

Hold fast to dreams
For if dreams go
The plantations of imagination
Cannot flourish

Hold fast to dreams
For if dreams go
There is no future for the past
And no past for the future

Hold fast to dreams
For if dreams go
There is no thread for the needle of knowledge
To connect the fabric of life

Hold fast to dreams
For if dreams go
There is no creativity
To cradle the wisdom of mankind



The Untouchable

Time pushes dreams
Beyond the horizon
Just out of reach
From an itching hand

The sagacious know
That perfection
Is only a misconception
Of what can be achieved

The perfect picture
Cannot be painted
A studied masterpiece
Is only an illusion

Nothing
Can be perfect
For changing tides
Shape the developing world



On the Field

I feel the skin
Of the player's hands
As he passes me
To the wing

I see the faces
Of the players
Covered in sweat
And bloodied

I hear the roar
Of the crowd
Cheering their teams
To victory

I think of the hope
Instilled in the people
The trust they place
In the players



Finishing the Journey

From dust
We came
To dust
We return

To Gilboa
We walked
To the Wild Garden
We returned

Learn much
We did
Return the same
We did not

Life-changing
It was
Grateful
I am

Place the stones
We did
The end of the journey
It was



The Every-Growing Pain

Constant, never-ending
The pain ever-growing,
And my loss ever-lasting
The loss of my grandfather
The missing piece
Of the puzzle,
That is my existence
Every day, the inferno grows;
Burning my heart,

With memories of ecstasies
Placed in the bank,
That is my memory.



Home Planet

I long for home
The crisp air
And luscious fruit
I long for home

I long for home
My adoring family
My encouraging friends
I long for home

I long for home
The smell
Of the Galactic Gargle Blasters
I long for home

I long for home
Where ships hang in the sky
The way bricks don't
I long for home



Guy Harcourt

Within Me

Just a boy from a sleepy little town
One day he will wear the crown
Humanity lined down the streets eulogising their lion heart

Ambition is in the soul of this boy
Ambition in he is unlike those before him
His is bigger, stronger, and more mammoth powerful
The boys' desire is untold to mortals
The ambition has sculptured him



Joel Kitshoff

Rain

The slow applause erupts
a chatter on the drowning soil
as the performance ends,
as roses are thrown,
as petals begin to fall,
clapping the company off.

A second act commences
Brighter than the last
Brighter than the awe-struck faces
which do nothing to spoil the moment.
As an array of colours
reflects in the eyes
of a starved world

My first applause.

It has him superior to the rest
His power source is his ambition, it energises all those around
Although in many like a rampant superstorm
For him like a noiseless meadow
Purblinded by savagery he is not, for he knows betwixt ethics
Religious, moral and philosophical is who he be
Others may not lie in one's power
But this boy is the peoples man of the hour
For he cannot heal the world today
But he can begin with a chorus of compassion,
A heart of love, an act of kindness and a charge of ambition
For with the price of greatness lies responsibility.

Ben Kok

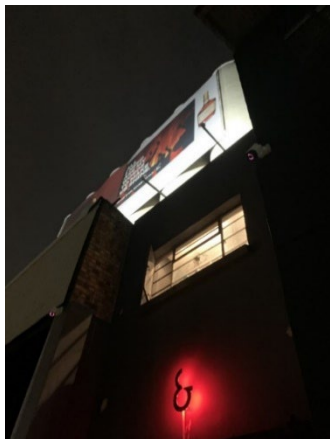
The Imminent Monday Lurks

Limp shadows move in unison,
Submitting to the constant pulse.
A culmination of corpses,
Brought to life by one beating heart.

Thunderous drums command the crowd
Dictating its subjects through dance
Like dangling leaves on the willow
Carelessly floating on the breeze

A cauldron of melting colours
An inferno of energy
A community of strangers
Liberated by the unknown

An enclosure of bizarreness -
Beyond this euphoric biome
Heads would be turned, and eyebrows raised
But here judgements claws have no grip



In the corner a mechanic
Adjacent is an accountant
To my left is a shopkeeper
And to my right is a waitress

The strobes wash over her eyelids
As she surrenders to pulse
Flying in clouds of ecstasy

Freed from weight of reality

Hypnotized in a surreal world
Obligation is obsolete
Commitments aren't compulsory
But Frost states: nothing gold can stay

As the dawn deters the darkness
And the melodies blend with chirps
The euphoria slowly dies
As the imminent Monday lurks.



Khanya Mhlongo

White hair for a crown

A reward for the game of life you have played
Conquering the mountains and valleys up and down
An honorable status you hold to be displayed

With a full account of the happiness time brings
Having experienced so many beautiful Springs
We look to your guidance to be grounded in our tomorrow
For your knowledge and wisdom will save us much sorrow

White hairs for crowns
The wrinkles on your skin are a representation
A symbol for the moments, smiles and frowns
The parts of our lives that form our characterisation

In the forest it is the oldest trees with the best sight
The first to catch the soft glimpses of young sunlight
The view that you see and perspective that you hold
Is one of humanities greatest treasures untold

White hair for a crown
Old is golden
My generation still searches through town

To find something to stand bold in

Outwardly, we all grow older day by day
Inwardly, our hearts are renewed and new it will stay
You are our heroes sung and unsung
May the spirit within you remain forever young

White hair for a crown
A reward for the game of life you have played
Conquering the mountains and valleys up and down
An honorable status you hold to be displayed.



Nkululeko Ngcobo

A Sly Serpent

I never knew the dangers you possessed;
Your scaled yet smooth skin - deceiving to those who know you not.
You say you want companions, yet you consume those like you.
You say you love the view from the trees, but you spend your days in the water.
You say you fear others, yet your harsh retaliations are never too far behind
You say you like the heat of the sun, yet you are most active under the stars and moonlight
Your smile is seductive, your words
Venomous.
When I look into your eyes, a snake is all I see.
That is why I am so afraid when you say you love me.



Gabriel Njonjo

To the Elderly, During Lockdown

In all the silence and solitude, I wonder,
What do I say?
What can I do?
Just for you?

With all the facts overrun by fear,
What advice may I offer?
What help can I give?
Just to you?

When I think of the world I knew,
I am filled with guilt
What did I do?
Did I walk away?
From you?

What new beginning?
What meaningful change do I bring?
To you?

What blessing will I be?
What difference can I make?
To you?

To my children
To my children's children
How did we get here?

How is it that the wisdom - your wisdom - that we need to hear at a time like
this is silent?

The check-ins, the hugs, the cups of tea in the evening sun.
Not anymore.
I yearn for those days.
These were not days of old. These were but a few weeks ago.

When can I check in again?
When can I give you a hug again?
When can I sit at your feet again?

Do you hear us? Do you fear us?
Is it a fear much like mine?
My fear of separation
From you?

This alien way of life! We were not built for this.
We were not created to live alone.
To isolate, completely.

Or were we?

For everything you built for us,
We have almost nothing to give.
Or maybe we do?
Maybe I do have something to give, something to share.

I will take the time to give thanks for you,
Wherever and whenever I can.



Plagued by Racism

A white man has a shot,
A black man does the same,
He is jailed on the spot,
So, who is to blame?

Years of trepidation,
Centuries of fear,
They say we are a nation,
Yet only we shed a tear.

We long for a chance,
For the opportunity to have an opportunity.
We are always feeding white hands,
So how the hell can we uplift our own community?

Now, I ask, "What have we done?"
What do you see us to be?

In the morning Ahmaud Arbery went for a run,
In the evening his mother bawled a sea.

It makes me uncomfortable,
I do not want to be dead; I do not want them to bury my head.
I feel so vulnerable; the situation is horrible,
But these things just have to be said.



Anonymous

Feeling

Wrinkled hands clasp at a feeling,
The feeling of how,
I used to jump in puddles,
And swing from a branch into a stream,
Those things just aren't enticing now.

My old friends, the willow, and the trout,
One is burning in the fire,
The other dinner upon a plate,
I treasure the days we shared,
But we all grow up eventually,

An old man once told me in my youth,
That all good things must end,
That your freedom dwindles,
As your bones creak and groan,
And are unable to move from your chair.

From where I sit now the sunset doesn't look so colourful anymore,
Thought I can't quite make it out,
From the crack through my front door.

Those good days are gone now,
Yet my hands clasp at that feeling,
Of running in the grass,
Of playing in the rain,

The droplets cold upon my face,
I miss that feeling.



Kigen Chepkonga

Honestly? You're Embarrassing.

So many ways to describe who you are

Race, politics, the list goes on
All the way to the how you listen to a song
Upbeat, energetic, fierce with rage
Or lacking personality, notes of a page

Are you right, center, or left?
Which one would you say fits you best?

Because, whatever that may be,
You're wrong.
You aren't doing it correctly,
You're actually a con.

But with that being said,
Remember to be authentic
We all hate fake
We all love pedantic

Keep one thing in mind.
Be you in the way that's comfortable for me,
Be you in the way that's honourable to see.

So basically, don't be you at all.

That would be your one of many pitfalls.



Uthando Gumede

Sunk at sea

Bubbles ascend to the top leaving me as I go under
I have lost my breath, but my body still fights
The urge to breathe hits like a sudden wave
My arms flapping and clawing at the water
But there's nothing...
My body begins to give up
Hope has left my trail of thought and my mind goes quiet
All I hear is the silent waters, now my home
The soothing sound puts me at ease as I descend
Slowly sinking I go stale,
Reaching the bottom of the sea like an anchor
Now idle like a shipwreck I await my discovery.



William Kitching

Ill-fated

You cast a line into my water
Stunning, though innocent
The temptation outweighed doubt,
The heart outplayed the head.

You cast a line into my water
A shoulder to cry on, a soul to celebrate with
Your eyes are inspiring
Your smile is deceiving

You cast a line into my water
A flood of fun, though an imminent drought
Together we were unstoppable, we would have gone far
But apart we are prudent, alone we'll go further

You cast a line into my water
Special in the moment, but blindingly ill-fated

You had my heart
But couldn't fool my head



Jarred Kitto

Until we meet again

Today you were taken away.
You were my North, South, East and West.
You have hung up your coat
and your working hands have been put to rest.

The clocks have stopped ticking,
stop work and stop school.
The wind has stopped blowing
Turn off the sun throw away the moon.

Grandpa's gone on holiday
He's sunbathing in Hawaii.
He's climbing mount Everest
Or spotting animals on the safari.

So, while I sit here and weep
And my thoughts race as I try go to sleep.
I'm reminded of all the special times,
Until we meet again.



James McGregor

My Dad's Rugby Jersey

From the place of antique medieval traditions
To the back of my dust filled, cluttered cupboard.

Full of history and legacy
But still transparent enough for memories to seep in.
Love surges through it like a raging downpour of emotions,
For every moment spent with this item
Allows for creativity and belief to flourish.
For anything is possible with my dad's rugby jersey.
I am hidden from catastrophe with this item on my shoulders
My dad is strong,
But with his jersey I am more than that...
I am tough and tenacious.
I have the strength of my predecessors behind me,
Assisting in whatever hindrance's I may approach.



Charlie Short

What should I write

What should I write?
Sitting in English dreading the task,
"Make it original" they always ask.

What should I write?
A phrase commonly said in school,
Writing one is always cruel.

What should I write?
"It's only 350 words," she always said,
I was so angry that I was fuming red.

English causes me a lot of stress,
Just like the movie, *Murder on the Orient Express*.

Finally, I figured out what to write
But hopefully, this doesn't give the marker a fright.

JUNIORS

Andre Boshoff

Fire (Riots in South Africa)

Some Gasoline, a flame, a spark
Is all it takes to light up the dark
But through the smoke
The shadows remain
Of those who've dressed up in shame.

They've struck fear into our hearts
They come in big BMW's and carts
They are to blame
For this horrendous flame.

The flame that burns
The flame that stings
The flame that turns
Love into hate
That makes us carry all this weight.

For them it's a game
A game of lives
But there's no need to cry
For the end is nigh.

They take what's ours
But there's no hope in cowering
We need to stick together
We are a team
Together we'll awake from this dream
We can do this
We are South Africans
Now let us prove it.



The Boogeyman

The crunch of bones under your feet;
The smell of blood, and human meat;
The dark tunnels leading down and under;
The Boogeyman sleeps, in gracious slumber.

The horrid scent of rust and mold;
Jolts the memories of the tales you've been told;
So long ago now, so old and fake;
The Boogeyman sleeps, but will awake!

With his decaying teeth, and immobilizing stare;
You can see your life flash before your eyes;
And nobody will ever hear your cries;
The Boogeyman sleeps, but won't for long!

You will drop to your knees;
When you realise your fate;
Because you know that it is too late;
The Boogeyman sleeps; for now!

When he gets out of bed;
You will wish that you are dead;
The ground will rumble and shake;
The Boogeyman is awake!

You will cry out in fear and pain;
When you realise how many people he has slain;
One everyday since he was ten;
The Boogeyman kills, and will again!

He takes a huge bite;
Presses down with all his might;
The echoing screams of women and men;
The Boogeyman kills, and kills again!

He will grab your neck with no mercy;
You will suck for air, like you are thirsty;
You will drop to the ground, dead;
The Boogeyman has fed!

Andre Boshoff, Grade 8
Dreams (original by Langston Hughes)

Hold fast to dreams,
For if dreams go,
Life would be like a rabbit's dark burrow,
Deep in the ground, empty, lonely, and full of sorrow.

Hold fast to dreams,
For if dreams vanish,
Life would be like a branch twisting, snapping, breaking,
Falling from the tree of life.

Hold fast to dreams,
For if dreams perish,
The protective string of life will be pulled from the pants,
Leaving the wearer naked and afraid.

Hold fast to dreams,
For if dreams fade,
Life would be like a sloth's holiday,
Lying about with no purpose.

Hold fast to dreams,
For if dreams disappear,
The abundant stream of life, that once quenched our thirst,
Will simply cease to exist, leaving behind a barren, wasteland.



But You Didn't

Remember last year on Valentine's Day,
When I put sunlight in the dishwasher,
I thought you would take your ruined clothes and leave,
But you didn't.

Remember that time when we first met,
I asked you out on a date,
We ate like royalty and had a fantastic time,

But when the bill arrived I knew my fate,
I forgot my wallet, so you had to pay,
I thought you would hate me,
But you didn't.

Remember that day on Christmas Eve,
When I forgot your present,
You gave me mine, a golden pen,
It must have cost a fortune!
I thought you would take it back,
But you didn't.

Remember that time when we went for a walk,
But when we got back there was a trail of mud leading through our house
straight to me,
I thought you would kick me out,
But you didn't.

While I stood at the end of the aisle on our wedding day,
I recited my words in my mind,
I stood erect and proud as I waited for you to show,
But you didn't.

PROSE

SENIORS

Tanner Bailey

The Beauty of the Mind's Eye

Reminiscing can be a strenuous endeavor at certain times. Hours and hours of searching through an imaginary library with no sense of what you are looking for or why you are even looking. Is it to remind yourself that you have lived before this present moment or is it to regain a sense of excitement, to experience something for the first time, a second time?

There remain very few memories from my childhood that do not resemble a pile of shattered glass. Fragmented visions captured through the innocent lenses of a 4-year-old boy do not mature with a clear resolution. However, within the depths of my mind lies a specific memory that remains whole amongst the fragments. It is no more interesting than the rest however was a time at which I truly experienced something for the first time.

I remember the air, its smell, its cold embrace as if I were cuddled by a corpse. I remember the sounds, the creaking maples whispering their discomfort at the determined breeze. The choir of birds harmonized in the treetops as the creek murmured divine secrets beneath its misty breath. I remember gazing down at my tiny feet wade their way through a desert of stones as I held my father's index finger. I remember what I saw, ribbons of lights drifting down from the canopy above as green spear tips prodded at the sapphire sky. The silent butterfly that soared above the lime sea, its iridescent wings boasting their irrefutable beauty to the armies that marched below. The serrated mountains that loomed in the distance, their powdery tips a resting place for towers of wool. The wing of feathered planes that dotted the sky, boastful in their aptitude to soar above such grandeur. In the far distance of the azure canvas were painted two orbs, one flaming and extravagant, the other silent yet worthy of equal admiration. As if separate to the encompassing euphony, there they were, looking on from a place unknown to my inquisitive mind. I remember lifting my little hand into the air as shards of light pricked at my fingertips, their warmth seeping into my veins. There through the slits of my fingers I saw it, the pale face had turned to face me, I smiled in hopes of a reply however it remained unspoken in its ethereal glow. After the radiant orb had slipped below the horizon the pale face seemed to light up as if the stage had been set before it, to boast its many hidden talents after hiding behind a curtain of light for far too long. The land was showered in

a stark light as shadows began to dance around the towers of bark. The birds sung their final note, and I was soon left standing in a deafening silence. Stars filled the sky like pale corn into freshly turned ground, like snowflakes in the night, yet appeared still, like an old photograph. The promise of life in the darkness, a sense of warmth springing from the cold. I then felt a tug at my hand as my father guided me away, I didn't want to leave, I needed to stay, but for what? I didn't know, I don't know.

Experiences allow you to feel but memories, memories allow you to feel at any time. From oblivion to the present moment, a feeling can be felt. This memory allows me to relive the first time I experienced the boundless pulchritude of nature. As a four-year-old boy standing in the presence of a myriad of sounds, smells, and feelings, one would think I was overwhelmed however I had never felt such peace and serenity than in that moment. There are only so many things that you have the privilege of experiencing for the first time, but when those experiences befall upon you, they are subconsciously held on to.

I still do not have the answer to why this happens, but I am glad it does. Perhaps they are there to remind us of all the integral aspects that make up the world we live in. As life proceeds and I get caught up in more distractions I find that I forget the fundamentals of what makes life what it is, laughter, sadness, pride, disappointment and many more. As I descend further into the tranquil depths nostalgia, I remember that It was there, in that place that I experienced true beauty, however now that beauty resides as a speck in the iris of my mind's eye.



The NEARNESS of the Distant

Metallic fingers scratch at the turquoise sky as the tranquil water shivers at the inconvenient breeze. A cacophony of irrelevant words drifts along ribbons of black and the shrill sound of laughter pricks my green heart. My fingers tear at the earth as I gaze across the canal, the exacerbating taste of salt stabbing at my tongue. Like a bee called back to its hive yet knowing it does not belong. I glare down at the iridescent water enveloping my feet as my mothers withered voice strokes my ear, "dinner is ready", she says. As I enter the small brick room the noxious smell of half cooked meat and expired milk lurches up my nostrils. The hanging light bulb sways in harmony with the

dancing shadows on the walls and the concrete floor eradicates any feeling of warmth.

As the sun crawls beneath the horizon, the room is enveloped by an all-encompassing darkness. Yet through the wounds of the door there shines a bright light. As I stumble out of the hovel and am wrapped in a cloak of obscurity, I am met with a grandiose light emitted by the magnificent metal beast. So bright that the envy of the stars is palpable in the night air. However, I exceed them in this regard. Every day I wish to be a part of something I'm not and in that I lose a part of myself. I watch on as others live their lives yet myself do not care for such fruitless travails. In the beginning I loathed them only to realize I envy them. My sole aspirations lie dormant across an ocean of ink so vast it swallows any light of hope.

As I sit beside the shore, the black ink edges closer as if insisting I join it. However, my reluctance to capitulate drags me further up the bank. As my eye lids become heavy I rest my head on a nearby stone and allow my other senses to take hold. The repetitive to and fro of the waves reminds me of my monotonous existence and I soon find warmth in the icy touch of the wind. My body begins to sink into the sand, and I am soon met with the sly serendipity of sleep.

I am awoken by shards of light stabbing at my eyelids as the pungent smell of salt drifts up my nose. My stomach protests its discomfort as I stand to my feet. My body imprinted on the sand below. I will forever be a part of this place. It is quiet inside the hovel, the silence periodically broken by my mother's labored breathing. I hurriedly grab a bread roll and devour it as my stomach sighs in relief. However, this small moment of reprieve only aggravates my thirst, my thirst for meaning, for belonging. I hurry outside to observe the unattainable paradise and its new daily operations. What are they talking about? What are they doing? My insatiable hunger for their livelihoods brings me back to this spot every day. Another unfortunate victim of insanity. My curiosity soon turns to anger as I come to this realization, and I am left in the same spot I was yesterday, and the day before, and the day before that. This perpetual cycle of optimism and despair has latched itself onto me and like a leech, is slowly sucking away my very being.

As I sink down onto the sand, I cast a stone out into the sapphire abyss. It skips towards the city but soon tires and dips below the surface. I envy it, as it is closer than I ever will be to my dreams. On the surface of the water lies the pristine reflection of paradise as if it had been built beneath the sea. Its iridescent colors of orange and green pour into my eyes and I am once again captivated by this fantasy. I slowly lower my gaze to see my own reflection. I

am filled with shock at the sight of my dirty skin, tired eyes and cracked lips. That is not me, or at least not who I am supposed to be.



Yami Mkize

Ukulusa

It is a beautiful morning in the valleys of the Eastern Cape, where the rocky mountains of eMatatiele converge with those of Lesotho. The oranges and reds of the sky kiss the dew of the long grass as the sun begins to rise, awakening the creatures of the land in glorious splendour; waiting in anticipation for the onslaught which is about to take place. The cattle begin to low, their smooth moos subtly explode, bringing with them the dawn of the new day. The herd boy, already awake before the rest, is preparing himself for the arduous journey ahead; a journey on which few boys would embark.

A boy who is entrusted by his father and his father's father to herd their sacred herd of cattle.

Illness clouds the boys' family because the patriarch has only but a few days to live. The boy is told by his father of the great journey he must go on; to cross the border of Lesotho and meet a merchant. Here he will sell his cattle to ensure the family's wealth remains bountiful for many generations to come.

With trepidation, the boy sets off on his journey. A small part of him knows, that when he returns he will no longer be a boy. Much like an adolescent lion leaving the pride, he will return the man of the household. The cattle trudge on labouriously, swaying from side to side as if intoxicated by the heat of the sun that beats down upon them.

The boy trails behind his herd, unperturbedly whistling and cracking his whip to keep the cattle on track, all the while grappling with what challenges might lie ahead. The ground beneath him is hard and uneven, adding strain to his already fatigued legs. The cattle stop to drink at the river, and the games begin as the little calves squeal in excitement, their voices not yet fully developed. They ram about and butt their heads against one another until eventually the matriarch calls them into line. With another loud crack, the boy

and his herd begin to move on, his village now a small speck on the horizon behind him.

The *hodoshe* cries out contently as it feeds on the flesh of a mangled carcass. The sight of the lacerated flesh leaves the boy feeling uneasy, for he hasn't a clue what has caused the violent gashes. In his vast knowledge of the surrounding wildlife he had not encountered such a scene. He walks on, tentatively.

Knowing the sun is coming to the end of its cycle, the boy remembers hearing of a cave that his father had told him about before he left home. With a swift crack of his whip, the boy leads his cattle towards it, hoping to reach his shelter before day's end.

The bull lows deeply, signalling to his harem and their young that night is here. The calves, exhausted after their first sojourn, nestle against their mother's beating chests as they begin to close their eyes and sleep. The swallows whizz past in search of their nets as they too, look forward to their slumber. Using some kindling which was stashed in his cowhide satchel, the boy begins the arduous task of starting his fire, all the while fixated on the unsettling scene he witnessed earlier that afternoon. Part of him feels uneasy knowing that something has followed them up towards the cave...

A distant sound crescendos into a menacing cackle and arises from the entrance of the cave, awaking the boy. Startled, half asleep, the boy stumbles to his feet, reactively reaching for his grandfather's Assegai. The fire embers burn low making visibility poor. A dark mass moves swiftly towards him. Through strained eyes, the boy tries to make out what the ambiguous shape is. Suddenly he hears a rip then warm liquid trickles down the back of his leg. The callous monster has slashed him from the rear. He falls to the ground, writhing in pain, unable to process what has just happened to him. He falls to his knees, shielding himself from another assaulting blow. It returns, shrouding him in its engulfing shadow and shoves the boy's chest, pushing him onto his back. Now on top of the boy bearing down on him, the boy's fate is sealed. His father's voice calls to him telling him to "phakama mntanam," The boy, and without thought lunges his assegai into the monster's ribs. It breathes its final breath and drops on top of the boy for it is dead.

As the boy and the herd summit the border of Lesotho, Qacha's Nek appears in the distance. The boy falls to his knees as a wave of relief becomes him. Battered and bruised the boy limps on with the cattle for his journey is complete.

Ross Taylor

Forgive You to Forget

I shudder. A frigid breeze slowly navigates itself through my half open window. As my curtains dance and sway with the steady movement of the breeze, my toes contract into the warmth of my duvet. Turning my head, I expect to see the orange glow of the early morning sun, but even the singing birdlife are still silenced with sleep. The busy intersection below my house is quiet as only the monotonous tick of the green light changing red fills the vacant road.

Awoken to the silence and an impatient bladder, my eyes and mind started processing concurrently. While shifting inconveniently large pillows, my bedside alarm clock reads 3:52. I allow my thoughts to wander. Against all temptations, I opt against the thought of her as to let whatever is brewing come up to the surface on its own volition. I close my eyes tightly as the photo wall inside my head resurfaces the once filled joyous memories and pictures, that now live unresponsive in a broken heart. An intolerable escape. Thus, the pathways feel overgrown and unkept as they lead to an impossible maze of my solitude, seeking for the attention of new life.

Weeping for myself, I wonder if I'll ever be what is in my heart. While taking all the courage I had left, it was only spent fixing problems I had made inside my own head. The cool air of benign affability had become misleading, and I was now in a state of misery.

Who do I forgive if it was all her fault or mine?



The Direction of Faux

A fox, a house cat and a salmon all have a sense of where they are in the world. The birds chirping outside my window can change direction from north to south impulsively. The fox never forgets his first den. Salmon find their way back to where they were spawned. A house cat always returns home by sliding its slim body through the narrow rungs on the gate. It's the freedom they've been led to.

I am lost. It is difficult to fathom this sense of loss when life is all about you, but not about you at all. These are two opposing thoughts and yet both of them are true. My sense of direction fluctuates with every specific situation, whether it be fishing at the shallow dam below my house or running around circular drive amidst the heat. Freedom maintains a liquid form allowing its owner to mould it into however they see fit. The tranquillity of cool water running over my toes brings equal amounts of liberty as the beating pulse that blinds my eyes as my legs fail beneath me. Why has this freedom not given me the direction to my life that I so desperately desire?

The game of life is often played as a game of poker, where fools sit and speculate about their future fortunes riding on the pitch and toss of luck. The house always wins, although not in a way that is too obvious to discourage fools forever. My grandfather was never a fool but rather the croupier, always set to be in control. A man that I idolised to be one day. It is difficult to examine one's life through their own eyes as they see this perspective from day to day without time for reflection. My grandfather always believed he should have been a poet due to his uncanny belief that we are related to Lord Byron. Nonetheless, his poetry was rather elegantly written as he clarified the sense to live with direction. I admired and longed for this trait as the continual confusion of being a young adult shadowed my fragile, foolish frame. His story about these two games seem to compliment each other like a King and Queen.

I had succumbed to the fate of showing my hand too soon, without the hidden trick of an ace up my sleeve. Patience averted me at the most critical time when all that was needed was a level head. The game of life needed to be played with this patience in order to reap its reward. My grandfather would not have submitted so soon. His story grounds me and allows me to understand his sense of direction. Although, one evening even the greatest lost this sense. Thick smoke hung in the air and hovered over the octagonal shaped table. Chunky cigars sat in mouths as the raspy sound of inhaling broke the silence. A delicate shuffle introduced the swift handing of cards to their new owners while a wild array of coloured chips littered the bare green table. Tension increased as the men tilted their heads and lifted their thumbs to see their new hand. With no space for anymore players, my grandfather led the charge with his consistently growing pile before him. A risky hand produced his first successful bluff but to him it was known as confidently playing the game. The game's direction was surely sealed, the only question left being when my grandfather cashed in. He was a bold man in his youth, pairs of eyes suddenly appeared behind tinted glasses as he pushed countless chips into the middle of the table and so crashed from their high pedestals. However, the crash only foreshadowed his ending.

His direction was sealed just like the fox, house cat and the salmon. How did it all go wrong? My grandfather left me with the knowledge that direction only serves you good in the present, while leaving you to be a stranger in your own element in the future.



The Storm in His Head

There is a passage in the old testament that foretells of a time where there will be paradise on earth, with everything living in perfect harmony. Violence and peace will be at rest from their war.

A low, growling shatter of thunder was accompanied by the soft image of a lightened sky. Electricity pulsed through the air, seemingly creating forks of networks from the heavens to the ground. The sounds rolled silently over the high hills until reaching an ear in which to release. Nature went quiet for a moment as if an intake of breath halted any noise. The unconscious mind has no control over a storm.

Metal grounding against metal shook the floor beneath the boy. He fell down at the sudden movement and shuffled on his hands and feet, blindly fingering his way to an escape. His back struck against a solid wall; he slid along it until he hit the corner of the room. Sinking to the floor, he pulled his legs up tight against his body as the dark hairs on his legs soothed his trembling hands. Squinting into the darkness, he closed his eyes away from the black abyss, in hope that they would soon adjust to the surroundings. With another jolt, the room lurched up like an old lift in a mineshaft. Harsh sounds of chains and pulleys, like the working of an ancient steel factory, reverberated and bounced off the walls with a hollow, tinny whine. A beating heart raced against the pulse in his temple as an attempt to exhale his breath. The constant drip of sweat from the boy's hair pulsed around the enclosed area as the wait for the next droplet became antagonizing. His bare chest shined in the dark as small pathways caressed along his torso against the dirty backdrop of his body. The room continued its ascent as the boy grew immune to the ceaseless rattling of the chains that pulled him upwards. The room halted and the sudden change threw the boy from his huddled position. Scrambling to his feet he felt the room sway less and less until it finally came to a stop. The cold metal smell filled his nose as he screamed in frustration; his echo amplified through the air as his lungs projected the noise. He pounded on the walls with

his fists and his knuckles grew whiter as his slim fingers thawed from the action. The imposters footsteps, Fear and Insecurity, grew louder as they hunted with relentless determination. They had pursued the boy for years and their persistence had kept him underground, forcing him to live in a purgatory of his own mind. Without warning, he reached up and curled his fingers around the high ledge, pulling himself up and trying to scramble on his knees. The impostors rushed forward in disbelief, wanting to grab at the young boy's feet, in the fear that he shall view this experience from a higher feat. The boy was close as he could now see the dull colours in a more vibrant taste. But one slip and fall, led the boy to learn that both medicine and poison are an acquired taste.

Is there an escape from one's mind?

When the boy is above ground, the storm is able to subside. The moon makes the night bright but only because it reflects the sunshine. It's the journey that the boys been listening to, escape is this destination. He turns the handle to step into a passage of no return in hope to find that his escape is aligned with his next location.

Perhaps the prophecy made in the book of Isaiah had not quite come to pass, as the storm still lays rigid in awareness of the boy.



The Black Ball

My mother's shrill voice fills the car as she starts her annual lecture on fulfilling our manners during the Christmas family lunch. I catch eyes with my brother as we share a smirk and pretend to listen to the droning voice. After church in the morning my collar slowly starts to stifle my neck as I try to undo my top button, to my father's despise and glaring look.

Family gatherings often bring mixed emotions along with it. The fun and games between cousins and the more boresome task of talking to the aunts and uncles about the topic of 'school'. Although I always seemed enthusiastic to see my grandfather. A smile broadened its way on my face as he gripped me into a tight clasp and his broad shoulders wrapped me up. My cheeks turned pink as my mother made her usual remark of our similar resemblance. My grandfather smiled back at me and made his way to the bar to fix himself a

drink. After a long afternoon of sitting at the dining room table the hands of the clock soon ran into the early evening.

Every Taylor Christmas Lunch ends off with an intense match of strip pool. When the opposition team sinks a ball one member of the team removes an item of clothing. As teams of two were beginning to form, I slowly glided towards my grandfather. He was sitting quietly on a bar stool sipping his ice-filled glass of white wine. We both thought that it would be fitting if the reigning champions reunited. We strolled our way through the first rounds, eliminating our fellow family members with ease. We eventually reached the final. A final fought between my brother, who was subjected to only wearing his socks and underpants, and my uncle who only remained with his shorts. A fitting battle to end the tournament as my grandfather and I had only removed one item of clothing each.

A slow start saw my grandfather and I fall two balls behind the leading pair. My grandfather expertly leans over a striped ball and whips it into one of the corner pockets to open up our account in the final. My brother slowly starts to remove his socks as his eyebrows narrow. After sinking another couple, we neared the end of the match. The small white ball was being smacked to all four corners of the table until finally the elusive 8 ball remained. As both teams narrowed their targets onto the final prey, the tension could be cut with a blunt kitchen knife. The ball appeared in a position for a possible sinking shot. A cool sweat timeously arrived on top of my brow as I leant over and rested my elbows onto the smooth surface of the table. My now bare chest beat with every thump of my heart. A quick intake of breath revealed a deathly silence in a room that was once buzzing with drunken laughter. With my fingers clasped around the cue my knuckles slowly lost the flow of blood. The drawback to release saw the white ball slither effortlessly along the green surface of the table. The two balls crashed against each other but the notorious number 8 seemed to end on the lip of the pocket. Disappointment flooded my system as I stood aloof. A simple tap in from the opposing team saw my grandfather and I lose a battle for the Taylor history books.

My grandfather looked me in the eyes as he embraced my sweaty body into his. No words were needed to be said as we shook hands to end another annual family gathering.



Perfectionist Reality

He talks to himself, the little boy, because he's the only person that ever listens to him. His soft hands are bruised as they wipe a beaded colony of sweat above his painted brows. His mother would not have recognised him had it not been for the long blonde curls that still sat atop his head. Redden cheeks lay beneath the soft stream of tears leaking from swollen eyelids. The boy whispered crudely underneath his breath as another rough ball was hit high into the darkening light. Just quit, just give up and walk away. To go into the house while mother cooks dinner or knits another blouse. That sounded good to the boy, like heaven, he would've said, to never have to play cricket again.

He couldn't. Not only would his father have chased him around the house with his new bat but there was something hidden deep within his muscles that wouldn't let him leave the crease, he would never admit this to himself. He hated cricket, he hated the game with all his heart. Still, he awoke with the earliest of bird life before the sun had greeted a new day and left only when all-natural light had been turned off. He carries on playing because he has no choice. No matter how much he wants to stop, he doesn't. The begging and screaming inside never resides as the contradiction between what he wants to do and what he actually does slowly grows by the day.

No one had ever asked the boy if he had wanted to play cricket, never the less make it an everyday habit. In fact, his mother had thought he was born to be a pastor. Although, she told him that his father had already long decided before his birth that he would be the greatest batsmen of all time. She recalls the story of watching tennis matches when he was younger, his father would notice that his boy would only move his eyes to follow the ball and not his head – the sign of a great batsmen, he would remark.

The boy's hatred only intensifies as he struggles to contain the pitiless rage. The ball machine stands towering above him on the other side of the pitch as his father readies to refeed the beast with a new set of balls. Midnight black, set on large rubber wheels, the word 'cricket' is written in white bold letters across the front as if to taunt the boy. Its beady eye constantly stares menacingly until a red blur shoots out at an unimaginable speed. The boy flinches at the sheer pace of his enemy. Having become accustomed to the horrible voice of the beast, another ball is swallowed into its belly before the series of sickening sounds erupt. As the pressure builds inside the boy's head, the beast groans before a ball rises to its mouth and takes dead aim. Bruises litter the soft skin of the boy; in an attempt to build character, his father would grunt. The padding around trembling knees and helmet around a thumping brain felt underwhelming against the weapons of the enemy.

The dragon plays mind games with the boy as it does not only demand his respect but the balls that shoot from its mouth are strategically placed in unplayable positions. The trajectory makes it difficult to connect with the ball in a conventional way. The father yells repeatedly, sometimes yelling twice, yelling three times. The commands fall onto deaf ears as no matter how hard the boy tries to impress his father, he can never reach a level of satisfaction. Every ball that comes out the middle of the bat and races past the monster, join the hundreds that received a similar treatment. Not long, the balls start rolling back in perpetual waves toward the net as the greenery becomes unnoticeable against the top red layer.

He can't move. He doesn't have any room to turn, to pivot, to hit the next shot. This was a relief for the boy as his father would step down from behind the dragon and sweep the countless balls back into buckets. A few minutes to breath was the thought that went through the small boy's mind. Although, the garden net that he and his dad had built a few years before was filled with joyous memories. Now that sense of euphoria had been plagued as the net slowly crept closer towards him with each session. He struggled to breath and wondered, why? He waited for his father's words to let him leave, but they never came. He couldn't endure the reality of the situation any longer. The feeling was inescapable as the boy fell to his knees, famished. Hundreds of balls hit against a machine every day, for what?

After years of hearing his father rant at his minor flaws, it caused the boy to inherit his father's qualities. He internalized his impatience, his perfectionism, his rage, until his voice didn't feel like it belonged to his father but belonged to the boy instead. He no longer needed his father to torture him. From this day on, he could do it all by myself.



Pyrrhic Victory

The red sand lay hot as small beetles battled with balls of dung across its surface. The coarse ground cracked underneath trotting hooves as the rivers continued to run dry. Flapping schools of catfish flung the remaining mud hopelessly as predator birds watched with a cautious eye over the commotion. Green leaves were now seen as a luxury while the search for food increased. Although the quaint chirp of bird life still echoed between

mountains in the barren land. The sky had boasted another bright blue day and was accompanied by a harsh companion in departure.

A single wild pheasant swooped high above heads as the feathers reflected a golden light. Once landed, it shifted its head uneasily as if foreshadowing an eventual danger. Two young boys and their dog followed it up the valley as the evening sun nastily glared into their eyes. While squinting through the blindness, the boys continued to trudge, stepping from rock to rock. The dog led; with his tongue flopping pink from the corner of his mouth, followed by the pair who had censured a nearing to the top. They were sweating in dark patches through their tired khaki shirt while the perspiration had spread to their foreheads. An already muddy hand swiped at the messy hairline, for the African sun still possessed her heat although already standing half-mast down the orange sky.

The dog hit the scent of the bird and a new found excitement filled its little body. For a second he stood, sucking it up through his two large nostril holes, and then started his charge again. He worked fast, back and forth, his head down leaving only his busy tail above the dry brown grass. **The boys hurried behind him, as he was their navigator, and seamlessly blended into the dark thicket behind them, courtesy of their sun-kissed skin and shirts.** The wind still whistled softly and so the bare branches danced with gusto. The older of the two had now taken charge as he caught sight of the target for a brief moment but he continued to pant as he struggled to maintain his breathing. He transferred his attention back to the dog as he had come to a sudden halt, his nose cast firmly in the air. The boy walked gently as the pair became more cautious with every step; while the tail acknowledged its owners' instructions. The atmosphere became silent again as the surrounding spectators had drawn their breath in anticipation. Having found the bird crouching flat in the grass; they both jumped forward while the dog flashed his tongue in excitement for the first time. The pheasant rose as it came up quickly on noisy wings, whirling out of the dead grass. The boy loaded his rifle aggressively as he skillfully aimed through the small lens that guided his bullet to its destination. While diverting away from the flying rounds, the pheasant clawed at the air frantically. A pyrrhic victory for the bird.



The Fathers Words

The rocky surface was littered with yellow tents of picayune value, in contrast to their surroundings. Icy mountain tips watched discreetly over the low valley as a mother does her young child. The morning's clouds hovered in idyllic fashion in front of the sun's soft arrival. Multicoloured flags fluttered carelessly to the soft whistles of the cool breeze. The rich smell of coffee filled nostrils and accompanied the growls of empty stomachs. Harsh sunlight had caused the young man's pale skin to redden however it was the constant cold air that really stung his face. After weeks of perpetual waiting, it seemed the monsoon season was only arriving too quickly.

Doctors, historians and even philosophers have debated intently on the significance of heredity genes when trying to understand the success or failure of a successful human. The young man had never been an ordinary child in his youth and had a doctor studied his parents, it would have been difficult to explain that their son had a rare talent of a natural lack of fear. His mother would often tell the story of him running into the sea as a child, appearing to have no concern, even though he never learnt how to swim. The teachers at the local school complained that he never listened but this was not entirely true. He listened to one man and he would never forget what his father had told him, "Once you have stared death right in the face, it places you apart from other men." He had always been perplexed by his father's use of diction, it intrigued him.

However, as the boy grew wiser and stronger, it was neither a girl or boy that caught his eye. He had fallen in love with the rush of adrenaline that pulsed through his brain when caught at the jaws of impossibility. When an experienced climber had offered him a position on the expedition team, he had jumped at the opportunity so quickly that his notice of resignation was on his boss's desk before the end of the day.

The weather report had proved to be unreliable as the clouds became dark and heavy resulting in quixotic climbing conditions. The rescue team were watching intently through a narrow telescope from the safety of base camp. Although it had been a clear day, they swung the telescope further up the peak in search of the three climber's progress. The heavens had changed their mood as the once pearly snow that sparkled in the sunlight turned into a nefarious sheet of ice. The young man was aware that Mother Nature had changed her tone but decided to remain focused by taking his next step. He could hear the intrepid thump of a heart as the veins above his temple pulsed. Although exhausted, the man fed off his own adrenaline, unaware of the dangers that lurked overhead. The highest point in the world was still visible in the evening spotlight as each step reached closer to the summit.

The echoing guitars and cinematic production of music playing from his small earphones couldn't drown out the unmistakable roar above him.

The snow hit him like a giant wave, sweeping all before it. He desperately began making large breaststroke movements with his arms so that a small pocket of air remained, a pyrrhic victory. His legs had been swept away from beneath him as he lost control of all movement. He could feel the force of the second wave hitting him. He knew he was going to die. While being tossed as carelessly as a loose pebble, his body was washed further down the mountain. His last thoughts were of his father, who he knew had always dreaded that very moment but had never spoken of it. The father's words now rung sonorously as he had finally understood their meaning. A body came to a sudden halt as life returned serene, unaware of the tragedy within.



Benjamin Guimaraens

"Everything you've ever wanted is on the other side of fear."
– George Addair

What Would You do if You had No Fear?

The Grade 10 Journey is a deeply meaningful rite of passage for every Hilton boy. Boys travel in their dorms around the beautiful expanse that is the Karkloof before returning to school after the two-week trek. During this time, boys connect with each other to create a vision of what they want for themselves for the next two years. Away from cellphones and all other electronics, they have time to connect with their dorm-mates and form bonds that will last a life time. I was fortunate enough to go on the journey last year.

The first day of walking through the bush whilst the intense African sun is beaming down on you is a challenge for everyone. You arrive at your first camp site exhausted and hungry. I remember arriving at our camp site next to Albert Falls Dam, sitting in the dirt, taking off my shoes and staring at the glistening water, grateful to finally have a chance to rest. That night we cooked and ate together under the moonlight whilst frogs and crickets chirped in the background. There was something beautifully simple about that moment as we chatted to each other without caring about school or girlfriends. This was the start of our journey together.

Boys will attest to this when I say that by day seven, you're into the swing of things and you start to enjoy each day a little more than the last. Your bag gets lighter and your legs feel stronger. You walk faster as a group and encourage those who may need a bit more support. Together, you conquer each day's challenges. This is also the time when you start to really get in touch with yourself and others. I found that I could think more clearly, and I enjoyed being able to talk to my dorm without distractions such as social media.

I think it was our twelfth day when we did the Karkloof Canopy Tours. Many of us feared riding the zip lines alone, without any assistance. We heard a motivational talk by one of the Canopy Tour staff and he posed a question to us: "What would you do if you had no fear?" I thought this was a brilliant question and I pondered over it during the rest of our trip. So often we don't do stuff because of our fears. I experienced this on our trip with the zip lines and previous experiences in my life. I often don't want to lead because I fear the consequences if I fail as a leader. We all fear something that we think we shouldn't and we see this as a weakness.

Standing around the isivivane back at school, I felt that I had returned a different person. I had conquered many of my fears, such as leading others. I had a new-found confidence and I was less afraid to share my ideas. All sixteen of us agreed that this was the most valuable experience of our Hilton careers and were grateful that we were able to do it since we were still in the Covid-19 pandemic.

Our journey together left us in good stead as many of us had come to terms with some of our fears. Personally, I have overcome my fear of leading others by talking with my dorm and discussing it together. As I reflect on our journey together, I believe that fear is the only barrier that stops us from reaching our full potential and George Addair summed this up perfectly with this quote: "Everything you've ever wanted is on the other side of fear."



The Three Fs of Fulfilment

What does it mean to live a successful life? Our distant ancestor had the luxury of needing to survive. The biggest indication of a successful life was longevity, so their sole goal was survival. There was no time or need to mull over our emotional state of how we were seen in a social sphere, the only real necessity was ensuring a stable supply of food and water and keeping our offspring safe. With our evolution, the establishment of society and the convenience Pick'n'Pay, for the most part, we don't have to worry about the certainty of our next meal, and we have been left with an immense amount time to reflect and think. The metric for a successful life has shifted as our level of consciousness and sentience have increased to the extent where happiness is the new measure for a well lived life.

However, I would argue that happiness is the wrong word. Happiness is temporary and comes in the form of imminent cycles. The real strive is to reach a level of a positive emotional equilibrium where the lows of the perpetual cycles of life do not significantly interfere with one's level of wellness. Or in simple terms, finding fulfilment. This year I have come to the realisation that true happiness does not come from success, but from fulfilment.

My Grade 11 year has been littered with success. From my parents, peers, or teachers' points of view I have achieved several impressive accolades of which the pinnacle was my selection to represent South Africa at the United Space School. So naturally I was confused when, after I was recognised, I felt myself going through the continuous motions and became accustomed to my dull and uneventful daily routines. I expected to live ecstatically considering that I was at a high point of my school life, but this was not the case. It was this that made me realise the cyclic nature of happiness and sadness and the effect that it has had on my emotional well-being. When things are going well, I got used to things going well and this state of success lost its novelty to the point where I became so used to things going well that I found myself back in this phase of 'going through the motions'. Then something bad happens. When things weren't going well, I also, after a while, got used to the state of feeling I have failed and then that also lost its novelty leaving me once again in this phase of 'going through the motions'.

After much reflection and introspection, I concluded that my insatiable drive for success and the resultant failures along the way creates an unhealthy pattern of emotional spikes. Of course, it important to appreciate and be grateful for the highs and to fully experience the lows but the goal is to make

the 'going through the motions' in between them meaningful and I believe this will lead to ultimate fulfilment.

I suppose that the real hard part for me is finding those key aspects of my life that I value above all else, the foundations that keep me upright through the storms of adversity and triumph. Father, Family, Future: in my case these are the three foundations. There are no objective answers, and it definitely varies from person to person, but I know that these lie at the core of my wellbeing and if they are in check, I will lead a pleasant life regardless of the intermittency of success.

These three are deeply personal and a lot of thought has gone into them, but I will briefly elaborate on their meaning and reasoning.

Father:

Not my dad, he falls under the next one. Father God. I believe that those who follow God and live their life in accordance with his values will be rewarded with the glorious eternal afterlife of endless joy. But what if it is all a big hoax? Well at least then I lived a life with a good moral compass, a spirit of gratitude and thankfulness and most importantly, a little hope to carry me through the tough times.

Family:

This includes friends. One day when stairs are no longer a viable way to change floors and I am confined to my bed, it won't matter how wealthy I was or what positions I had. All I will be left with are the memories of how my friends and family made me feel. And in turn, when I do eventually kick the bucket, all they will have left of me are the memories of how I made them feel. Therefore, I believe that deliberately maintaining the relationships with the people most important to you is crucial.

Future:

This refers to myself and my future self. I feel there is a strong obligation to my present self to reach my potential. Not so that my future self can be rich or popular, but so that he can be proud of himself. It does feel nice to know that your parents are proud of you, but the ultimate contentment lies in feeling that you are enough and that you have done your best. (At the moment I am struggling the most with this one)

In conclusion, I have discovered that if I focus every day on sustaining these key foundations, I will reach a place where I have a constant appreciation for life and its beauty and reach a positive emotional equilibrium, where the turn of events and changes in circumstance won't affect my happiness and wellbeing significantly.

Khanya Mhlongo

Matters of The Mind

A sailor lost at sea. The current pulling his boat deeper, land eluding his sight. Oblivious to where he was going, the sailor gazed down into the abyss of water. If he looked among the stars for direction he would've found salvation. But he'd already been engulfed and couldn't escape.

Dear Soraya

P.O Box 362
Fremont, California
9372
2 September 1987

Dear Soraya,

There is something about you. It feels like the walls which people keep between one another fall away whenever we're together, love shuts out the fear of judgement and truth flows free because we know that our connection is insurmountable. You possessed the courage to be honest about your past and now I write this letter to do the same, to emancipate myself.

Back in Kabul, when I was twelve years old, I had a friend named Hassan. His father and mine were inseparable and so were we. They were Hazara and worked as servants in our house but none of that was of any concern when we were alone together. Hassan was like a brother; I had known him since birth. The most humble, loyal and virtuous person I had ever known and I betrayed him.

In Kabul there was a grandiose kite running competition, everyone would watch. Hassan and I were an indomitable duo and one year we won, however, we lost so much. Hassan had run ahead and chased our kite, when I caught up to him, I found him in an alley way with 3 other boys. They had always persecuted him for being Hazara but that day was like no other...they raped him. I stood there watching, immobilized and frozen in cowardice, hiding behind the corner in my friend's darkest hour of need. I ran away and later found Hassan, I pretended as if nothing had happened and neither of us told anyone. From then on, my conscious consumed me, every time I saw Hassan I was reminded of my sins. I planted a watch and birthday money in Hassan's mattress to incriminate him in the hope that baba would remove them from our lives and it worked. In a final act of loyalty Hassan confessed to

the crime (his only lie), baba offered his forgiveness, however, they left anyways.

My dying father held moral conviction all his life whereas my actions and the lack thereof were egregious from so young. The event haunts me like a specter in the night and hopefully the first step towards overcoming it lies within this letter.

Yours sincerely,
Amir



Gabriel Njonjo

The Classroom

It is a daunting prospect to enter any dungeon. This particular dungeon consistently transmits trepidation into its trembling visitors. However, it was not always like this. Very few individuals enjoy the anticipation of experiencing what this dungeon strapped with an army of weapons has to offer. From sharp stationary and squeaking whiteboards, to croaking pedagogues – the myriad of cruel things that stalk this venue expel any small spark of joy, by binding together, and creating a formidable and fear-evoking force. The mountain of travesties experienced at the hands of this beast are insurmountable.

From a young age, children are taught about the plethora of benefits of a good education. They learn to read and write in this seemingly tranquil and serene setting. They draw shapes, color animals and learn how to read numbers, in a space that is filled with exultation and majestic grandeur. There is an insuppressible rush of joy every night, as the children optimistically offer their parents help to pack pencil cases, and spare clothes, in their Lightning McQueen and Barbie inspired bags. They are welcomingly attacked by intense excitement that ravages through their bodies, making them maniacs riddled with temporary insomnia. They are drowned by this burst of exhilaration when the prospect of revisiting this gallery of wonders the next day dawns upon them.

Years pass, and the bucket loads of excitement start to leak. The reluctance to rejoin the scene starts to creep in. The former children, and current teenagers, become slightly hesitant to pack their bags – something that is

their sole responsibility now. The raw excitement that kept them awake, replaying the countless memories of previous days, seems to slowly deteriorate. Waking up to prepare for the day ahead steadily begins to transform from a gift to a responsibility. Yet, despite the growing negative narratives surrounding this setting, there is still a shared sense of optimism within friend groups, as the individuals maintain relatively high positivity.

More years pass, and the responsibility turns into a burden. The once seemingly majestic splendor that arose when entering this venue is completely obliterated. Destroyed, with little evidence of the prior fantasy world of simplicity. The setting that these young adults are coerced into entering, quickly transforms from paradise into a dungeon. Entering the gates of these educational institutions was never an option, or a choice, but it didn't used to feel this grueling...

The beautiful and simplistic paintings that the children created and adored make way for new complex logarithmic formulas on the walls. The color pencils metamorphosize into sharp, savage stationary equipment. With all the tension and frustration that swarms this space, it is very difficult for an individual to suppress the urge to use a compass as a weapon to deal with their grievances.

The trials and tribulations experienced by the encapsulated prisoners of this space are largely caused by one perpetrator – The Teacher. Although the overlapping of numbers and letters distorts students, conjuring burning frustration within them; there is no bigger plague to their health than The Teacher. An invincible individual in this space, that dictates the tempo of proceedings. No sane student dares to question The Teacher's undeniable authority. Regardless of their common faults, no student considers questioning their competence. They moan and groan, coercing students into doing equations that robots have been programmed to complete. The list of The Teacher's faults is endless, yet their divinity in this space is irrefutable.

From paradise to a dungeon. This setting slowly mutates from a place of abundant joy, to one of endless distress. Few love it, majority despise it, but none can avoid it... The Classroom.



The City Hall of San Francisco

The City Hall is a beautiful and iconic piece of our city's vibrant history. It is plastered by rocks that have stood the test of time and is painted in magnificent colors that parallel the diversity of our colorful city.

The People's Palace is a breathtaking token of our country's pristine nature. Foreign tourists that see the City Hall for the first time are taken aback by the undeniable vibrance and intensity of this gargantuan building. A vibrance that is communicated to everyone, both locals, and foreigners. This iconic piece of art in our country's gallery of special locations, communicates the myriad of beauty that we boast as Americans.

With the dome of this legendary masterpiece towering 300 feet above the ground, the City Hall is the commanding centerpiece of our beloved San Francisco's Civic Center. The City Hall is the nation's most complete example of the city's beautiful municipal ensemble. This humongous building represents our country's undeniable and prominent dominance. It perfectly encapsulates our country's strength, and the magnitude of our power, as Americans. Our hall is a symbol of the city's recovery from the earthquake and fire of 1906 and is a perfect depiction of our resolve and determination, when faced with adversity.

The prominent, luscious trees that guard the hall perfectly resemble our patriotism as Americans. We, like the trees, are protectors of a greater good. We are a united states and are solid defenders of our country's telling historical past; wonderful present; and promising future. The chandeliers and mosaic windows of the hall entail our country's beautiful inside. The authenticity and prestige of the internal part of the City Hall mirror our warm-heartedness, and kind-nature, as Americans. The expensive decorative pieces inside the hall are symbolic of the beauty within us, as individuals.

I am moved by this dazzling work of art. A beautiful centerpiece of our beloved San Francisco that resonates deeply with me. I have been a neighbor to this iconic building for my whole life, and through the sun and rain; in front of the moon and stars, this building's beauty is undeniable. It radiates majestic grandeur, always.



Letter of Confession

Dearest Laura,

Your unwavering courage is one of the several attributes that you possess in your powerful arsenal of character strengths. I envy you dearly. I wish that I had the strength, and courage, to face my seemingly inexorable challenges with fearlessness, like you. I remember you telling me about the time that you fled from the cusp of your parents' arms at the tender age of fifteen, to begin a journey. A journey to face this unforgiving and putrid world, solely by yourself. This is only one of the many moments of your life that are characteristic of your exhilarating confidence and willpower.

I am honoured, and eternally grateful, to be joining you in Holy Matrimony. A valorous woman like you deserves the truth, always. And so, like you, I have a deep, burdening secret.

At the age of eleven, back home in Jamaica, my childhood best-friend, Ethan, and I, participated in a kite-running competition. Fuelled by the raging need to attain my father's elusive approval, I was determined to trample on my opponents' faint hopes of success and win this monumental competition. Towards the end of the game, my kite, and a blue kite, were left in a dual to claim bragging rights and win the illustrious event. I eventually defeated my final opponent, sending his blue kite spiralling away, as I watched it rhythmically sway away with the gushing winds. Showered by applause and praise, I was ecstatic and instinctively ran to celebrate with my best-friend. He then vowed to retrieve the runaway blue kite for our collection.

After being drowned by more celebrations, I finally opted to look for Ethan, and with some help from an old merchant, I was able to trace his whereabouts.

After wondering around for some time, I finally found him, cornered in an alleyway by a renowned teenage menace named Amoy, and his two other problematic friends, Jevon, and Usain. The three boys promised to set Ethan free, if he gave up the blue kite that he had successfully, and fairly, retrieved. Despite the intimidating threats, Ethan stayed resilient, adamant that I would reciprocate the favour if put in the same scary situation.

Yet, I watched.

I refrained from involving myself, cowardly quaking, and trembling at the sight, as Ethan remained steadfast.

The boys then charged him, violently assaulting and exploiting him.

I watched.

I watched the boy that I had lived with since birth get tortured and abused. My thoughts were suffocated by the inaudible, muffled screams of helplessness let out by Ethan.

I was frozen, and still... I watched.

To this day, I am brutally scarred by that day's events. I am not scarred by the violence that Ethan was subject to, which, in itself, was enough. But I am scarred by my inability to equate my friend's unwavering loyalty. I am scarred by my inability to react when faced with a morally strenuous dilemma.

I failed Ethan, Laura. But I promise that I will not fail you.

Always and forever,
Jacks'haun



Buzzer Beater Delight

My heart pounds aggressively as the sheer booming passion of the spectators continues to rip through the arena, intensely heating it up like a fiery furnace. I struggle to keep my composure in this trialling atmosphere - an atmosphere in which even the most seasoned of professional athletes are susceptible to crumble in. Amid all the heckling and shouting, I attempt to brace myself for what promises to be a brutally epic climax to this enthralling basketball game.

As the shot clock winds down, I squirm through the traffic of the court to get to my allocated position, as my captain, Robin, dictates the tempo of the attack. Trailing by two points, one shot is all we need to even the game. *Five, four...* I compose myself, as I gain some separation from my opposing defender and readily wait for my teammates to exploit the inevitable gaps that will materialize amidst the chaotic clobbering of sweat-wrenched players.

Ricardo hurriedly scurries to under the basketball rim to help breach St. Nicholas' rigid defence by means of confusion. *Three, two...* just like that; the

defence collapses, as Robin dribbles the ball with burning intent, inside the congested perimeter. *One...* he dishes an immaculately placed pass to me. *Buzz...*

Parity restored.

The crowd erupts into hysterical pandemonium, as we equalize the match and force it into overtime. The champions of the most prized inaugural international basketball tournament, "The Horseman's Cup," have been held to a draw in regular time, by the underdogs of underdogs: Biltong College. Screams of jubilation drown the arena, as the rattled St. Nicholas' boys hang their heads in deep shame.

History is made. Despite the constant ridiculing and demoralizing comments that the team was subject to in the lead up to the game; we have overcome the pressure and risen to the occasion.

And there is absolutely nothing that feels better than proving your doubters wrong.



Michael Sara

***Atelophobia* is the fear of imperfection.**

I am afraid of everything not being perfect. It doesn't make sense to me but it's there, every time I do an assignment or step onto the sports field, I'm afraid. Everything I do needs to be better, but sometimes I can't do it any better. Most of the time I am not good enough to make it perfect. I don't know everything that there is to know. This scares me.

This year has been frightening. I came into this year thinking everything was going smoothly, things were perfect. I was going to be in grade 11, I was going to be playing sports with the seniors, I was going to be in a two-man room with my best friend, and I could really put my head down and study hard this year. I soon found out that it would never be that simple. I lost my passion for sports and my academics started taking a downward spiral. I didn't look forward to anything anymore and was in this constant cloud of fear because, for the first time in my life, things were not going my way. I have since realised

that strong characters are built through adversity, and I wasn't going to let this slump ruin my year.

Through this time of hardship, I succumbed to the male stereotype of bottling up my emotions and not letting anyone in, because I thought that if I could get through this episode then I could forget about it and pretend that I had never thought of giving up. There's a quote that goes, "Always put your bets on a crying man because from that moment on, a switch has flipped, everything that he has gone through has fallen away and he is ready to take on the world once again." I had a moment when I felt as if I was letting go of my dreams and mediocrity seemed like the easy path that I could walk. I felt as if the weight on my shoulders was going to buckle my knees and not let me get up.

After that night of accepting that I needed to change something in myself, I realised that my competition was not with fear but with myself. I just had to be one percent better than I was the day before. Yes, one percent may not appear to be a great difference, but it felt amazing to me. I woke up every morning with a goal, with a smile on my face because I was going to be better than that scared boy from a few days ago, a few weeks ago, a few months ago.

I have found my passion for sports again because I'm not afraid of making mistakes and, because of that, I have built relationships with my teammates that I would never have thought of building. My academics have become less of a duty and more of an actual learning experience and my dream of becoming a doctor is not a fantastical grail but a goal that I will strive for as hard as I can. If I aim for the sun and fall short, I will still have travelled many more miles than if I had aimed for the moon.

I am still afraid of failing but I will never let it cripple me and my ambitions. I will never let a bad day become greater than it really is. I will wake up every morning trying to be better than I was yesterday, and I am ready to take on the world once again.



Hell of a Repairman

JJ Jones was a repairman, his father had been one, his father's father had been one, and so on, it was the family business. The Jones family had worked the rigs for decades, they were experts at fixing ore spillages, toxic leakages, and even gas explosions. When there was danger in the form of an accident on the station, the Jones would have been called in to handle it. They had been seen as royalty among the space farers, and everyone had believed they knew secrets of the rigs no one else did...

It contained the universe, swirling plumes of radiant rainbow, frigid expanses, distant galaxies, and planets orbiting stars ...it had it all. JJ Jones stared intently into his berry and coconut milkshake; he deserved it after such a long day at work. Glancing around the spacebar he sighed deeply, the atmosphere was just perfect, jazz music in the background, moody crimson, and blue lighting...it was the life. JJ lent over the bar-table, picking up a napkin and wiped some of the blood from the surface, placing his drink down.

He felt quite calm and peaceful, really why shouldn't he? JJ was overworked and underappreciated by his co-workers; it had been long since his family had been respected, he should have some time to himself. His father James Jones had told him stories of the spacebar as a child, stories so fun and romanticized that JJ had always dreamt of seeing it. Now he had finally got there, was sitting on a barstool drinking a berry and coconut milkshake, and the stories were true, it felt amazing.

The IGP arrived an hour later, they had got a call about possible shots being fired in the spacebar, a high priority area. The shining glass panels were cracked with brute force, blood dripped of some, someone had been dragged across the roof. The once vibrant red and blue lights flickered on and off, casting shadows in every corner, faint jazz played through a bullet ridden speaker mounted on a stool, it was depressing. A few bodies lay around, one or two were on the walls, stuck there with gravity bombs... they were all dead. "Well, this is one hell of a repairman" one of the IGP remarked, upon seeing the culprit.

The murderer was still there, he was waiting for them. He was sitting on a barstool sipping a milkshake, humming to the jazz. He wore a dark purple coat studded with beads and a wide-brimmed-hat, shadowing his face. His name was JJ Jones, and he was a repairman, one of the best. He was also part of the guild of assassins, some could say he was the most dangerous repairman in the universe. And to top it all off, he was dying of a disease that

had originated on the Dead Planet. It was therefore incurable. The police lifted their face masks over their mouths, they couldn't risk catching it. The sickness known as a TG500 was too dangerous to allow it to get out.



Baking; A Guide to a Good Life (PS: Welcome to Westwall!)

The willows are wilting, the lake has frozen over. It is only autumn, but this year the frost has come early, and with the frost comes the memories. The town of Westwall has always been a sleepy town, a place where the old come to rest and the young come to grow old. Mr. Julou had come to the town in his twenties and now is finally leaving in his sixties. He has lived a life that was full of love and joy, until it wasn't...

It had been back in the days of milkmen, of red mailboxes, of bright yellow automobiles. Mr. James Julou had been a businessman, and a rather successful one at that. He had co-owned a quaint bakery in one of the larger cities and was very proud of his business. In fact, Mr. Julou had been so proud of his bakery that he had come to Westwall to branch out, to find a place for his next venture. However, he managed to find something else entirely in the sleepy town...

Now James Julou sits on an old wooden bench near the frozen water, under the wilting willows, contemplating. He begins to think back on those days, when he was a younger man, a happier man. James remembers his long car ride to Westwall, far from the bustle of the metropolitan space and the hectic schedules. There was a sign at the entrance to the town, a bright red one. It had said in big white letters "Welcome to Westwall, a town where you'll find your love for life". Now the sign was gone, knocked over years back in an accident, but James still remembers it, and how true the words had been.

It had been to his disappointment that he had found little welcome for his bakery in Westwall, the town was fiercely loyal to its own baker and his establishment. However instead of leaving when his odds were down, he stayed. For James had indeed found his love for life, the one person who had made him change his mind about leaving. That person was Mary Barnaby, the daughter of the town's baker, Mr. Barnaby. Mary and James had met over dinner when James was attempting to propose a partnership to the town

baker. They had found much in common and began spending afternoons together, just savoring each other's company.

James sits back in his seat, the air is growing colder around him, the leaves blowing in a southward wind. He smiles as he recalls the wedding, how happy they were, Mr. James Julou and Mrs. Mary Julou. The wedding had been fairly small, but it had been special in its own way, the most special day of his life. After that they had bought a small house by the lake and James had started up a partnership with Mary's father, she had taken a job as a librarian. Oh how happy they had been!

James remembers in vivid detail her beautiful slender face, those dazzling green eyes like twin balls of cosmic energy. Her long amber hair that fell past her waist, the way she would plait and braid it like a weaver at a loom. That sweet, sweet smile that could make a miser feel compassion, that could make a person's day brighter. Mary had been perfect in every way, his angel, his muse, his love of his life.

Their home had been full of life and joy, despite the absence of children or a pet. They had each other, and that was all that mattered. In the afternoons the Julous would take long strolls on the lakeside, marveling at the beauty in both summer and winter, in both the sparkling waters and shimmering ice. They would sit by the willows, listening to the songs of birds for hours on end.

In the evenings they would cook dinner together, sharing new recipes and recounts of their day, of new people, of new friends. James would tell her of a new customer at the bakery, of his sales that day, how much he loved the smell of fresh bread straight from the oven. In turn Mary would laugh and recall the assorted people in the library that day; old, young, poor, and wealthy, grandparents, children... the conversation would always go quite for a second or two, then they would continue as if nothing had happened.

James Julou sits upright on the bench, he looks at his watch, watching the minutes go by. He remembers a similar clock, one that had been on a white wall, in a white sterile place. There had been green floor-to-ceiling curtains there, and serious people in white coats, and machines that beeped on and off with heart beats, and one machine that had stopped beeping...

James gets up from the bench and begins to walk to the bus stop by the lamppost. He looks at the frozen lake like in the old days, then spits in distaste as he discovers how desolate and lonely the deathly surface is. He looks towards the willows, and sees how boney and ugly they look, how very much like tormented old men they are, grasping towards the sky. Finally he looks towards the bakery, his bakery. Grime covered glass windows greet his eyes,

one broken. A cracked wooden door, the bright blue paint long faded, the sign that used to hang above long gone.

The bus pulls into town, it's vibrant yellow reminds him of a new hope, a new chance somewhere else. Mr. Julou climbs through the open bus door; he takes his seat among the few other passengers; no one gets off, no one ever does anymore, they only get on. As the vehicle leaves the quite sleepy town of Westwall, he glances out the window. He sees the single lonely signpost, the welcoming sign now gone, his love for life gone, his muse lost. He vows to leave his memories behind him, in the sleepy town where people find their love, and then lose it...



William Kitching

The Adventures of Stanly: An Emotional Reflection

[Short back story to the title: a friend of mine named by backpack Stanly. I used this name to form the title of my journal, "The Adventures of Stanly". This essay is a continuation of my journal, in a sense, though reflective on an emotional level, instead of being a collection of memorable happenings from throughout the days of Journey.]

Journey was not physically demanding. No matter how weak or strong you are, it was more than doable. The adventure was a mental game in its entirety. It took a toll on me emotionally, and challenged the fragility of my mental strength- revealing it takes a lot more than fifteen days in the mountains to break me. It was a test of teamwork, but one travels more usefully when alone, as he reflects more- it was the isolation from a crowd that brewed thought, and lead me to further discovering who I am.

Prior to embarking upon our adventure, I shivered with worry about life in the "real world". I was anxious, before and throughout the camp, about the endless possibilities of change that could occur while I'm gone. I unfortunately have a deep belief in myself needing to be present in order for normality to continue, and for change to be managed. This is the root cause of most, if not all, the stress I experienced. Although worrying constantly about the girl I'm talking to moving on and finding another guy, or something over-exaggerated and dramatic like that, I managed to reassure myself that all would be under

control upon returning. A key to this shift in mindset was acknowledging the speed in which time elapses in reality versus “in the wilderness.” Less distractions and an empty schedule contributed to the days feeling like years. Comparatively to the usual school life or time in the work environment- days pass rather speedily. Knowing this afforded me a sense of comfort that those back home will likely feel our length of absence flew by, and will be waiting patiently for us on the other side. This was the first obstacle I had to navigate on the journey.

Whether it be a long walk tickling the thirty kilometer mark, or even writing in my journal daily- if there is a job at hand, I will complete it, regardless of the circumstances. The adventure was designed to crack open our shell, to put us under strain, and expose how we behave whilst dealing with pressure. I mentioned fragility above. Completing the journey brought light onto the fact that the human is capable of more than one might think. Some found it physically draining. I saw my closest friends at their lowest, having given it their all and seemingly having no motivation nor strength to continue. However, we made it. It taught me that exploring beyond the barriers of our comfort zone, and pushing ourselves to the limit is rewarding. Ambition arises after this newfound ability to do more than anticipated, and is ultimately the beginning of the growth of an individual. When you are on the verge of giving up, about to throw in the towel, realize that there is always more left in the tank. Extracting that energy or drive is difficult, but doable. We are capable beyond words.

The experience was incredible- one I would gladly repeat, but if offered the opportunity to; wouldn't. It was thoroughly enjoyable and I accomplished what I set out to do, but the time away from home forged questions about my life, and I uncovered where my true values lie. Not for one moment did I miss any object with monetary value, but instead longed to have a conversation with a person I love. A hug. A warm, meaningful embrace. I found that people are the reason I live, happily for that matter. The reason I would not, as per decision, do this again, is because I have a profound love for being with the people closest to me, and time away from them is time evaporated- something I cannot get back. I am self-motivated, and often rely on me, myself and I. Although this is the case, no essay or letter can describe how eternally grateful I am for the perpetual love and support I receive from my family. Journey made me realize that the special people in my life are the ones I do everything for, every single day. The ones I aim to please and honour. For me, family comes first. In my dad's letter I received on solitude, he spoke about the importance of relationships and choosing to spend time with the right people. In his words, “time is something we have very little of. Once it's gone, it's gone.” He taught me that I need to be patient; the good people sometimes take time to shine through. His words that stuck with me

were, “Yes, money and cool things make life easy, but it’s the people that make it worthwhile.” The journey allowed me to come to terms with this, and I can foresee the implementation of these lessons in my years to come.

Half a month with people you love and hate. Beyond annoying, but unexpectedly the reason behind self-discovery. Everything that irritates us about others leads us to a better understanding of ourselves. No longer is my purpose unclear- it was revealed to me over the fifteen days. I aim to serve the special people in my life, work hard at maintaining the right relationships, and ultimately surround myself with individuals who’s presence will enrich my life, and whom will benefit from mine.

They said we would return as new people. I laughed, but maybe that is the case. I’m back as myself, but this time with intentions and values set in stone, and a deeper appreciation for who I am. It is always our own self that we find at the end of a journey. The sooner we face that self, the better. The world is noisy, so I truly savoured the quiet moments alone, which are a rarity today. If I had one piece of advice: you’re always with yourself, so you might as well enjoy the company.



Luke Spear

The Most Embarrassing thing that has ever Happened to me...

It was an icy, windy, and miserable day. A phenomenon to Mpumalanga... All of us tried to pull our long, olive green socks above our skinny, bony knees. Our colourful lunchboxes that were packed to the brim with snacks were lined up and ready (an essential for young grade fours). The classroom was alive with excitement as we giggled and talked about the adventure that lay ahead, but I had no idea that it would be the most embarrassing day that I have ever had.

We were on a history trip to the Samora Machel Monument and Museum, set in the heart of the Lebombo Mountains on the border of South Africa and Mozambique, a good hours’ drive from our school through the townships that lay at the feet of the giant hills. We were all quivering and every minute or two someone would dare to ask how much further until our destination. Of course, I still had no idea that in a little while, I would be crying of embarrassment.

As we arrived, the mist barrelled down the mountain side as if to embrace us. An eerie chill ran down our spines, silencing us. Our excitement was suspended in the air, almost as if the mist was carrying it back down into the valley. We trudged up the almost invisible path that led to the Wailing Pipes. It was as if the pipes were crying to us, reminding us of the people who died. We did not dare to speak, the only noise were the cattle bells of the village, Mbuzini, below. And still, I did not know that I would soon be suffering in my own embarrassment.

We were all shepherded into the museum. The hallways were lengthy and tunnelled into darkness due to a common power outage. A chilly draught tickled our cheeks, and the only sound was the water that leaked onto the musty floor. All forty of us crammed into the stuffy and damp corridor. Squashed, I began to feel dizzy, I felt like the walls were closing in on me and started seeing double of everything until the next thing I realized I had hit the floor and all I heard were blurred echoes of children shouting all around me. I had fainted...

After I had woken up, I felt eighty eyes staring at me. I honestly felt too weak to look back, I just sat there. My teacher was saying something, but I couldn't make out the words. Everything was just spinning. The next thing I knew, we were all on the bus back to school, our trip was cut short all because of me. I was bombarded with questions and some nasty glares. Then, out of nowhere I burst out crying and my cheeks were stained with rivers of tears. I felt so guilty and embarrassed because I had "let my class down".

When I look back on this today, I think to myself how natural it is for someone to faint and it is not that bad at all, but when I was in the moment, I felt like a complete idiot partially because it was something that had never happened to me before and mostly because I had no sense or control over it. I will never forget the emotions I experienced that day, but I will also take a lesson with me, "When you can't control what's happening, challenge yourself to control the way you respond to what's happening, that is where your power is."



JUNIORS

Andre Boshoff

The Calm Before the Storm

I look up to see an oval-shaped ball flying straight at me. It starts off high and slow, but then, arching its way towards me, speeds up, and like a rocket ship coming in to land, thuds at my feet. I study it carefully, seeing the countless seams and the number 3 on the back, having no idea what it means. I pick it up, feeling the rough leather and beautiful craftsmanship. I smell grass, hope and sweat everywhere. This is the first rugby match of my life, my first match of bulletjie rugby.

A movement up ahead catches my attention. Fifteen boys are sprinting towards me, drawn to the rugby ball in my hands like a magnet. I start panicking. I look to my mom on the side of the field, hoping for some reassurance, but instead I look into frightened eyes. That was when I start getting scared, and when I'm scared, I do one thing: run! I turn and run, oblivious to the shouting around me, having only one goal in mind: survive. When you're small you think like that; if you don't do something you're going to die. And that was how I felt, if I didn't escape, I was going to die.

The thought of dying just made me run faster, and soon I was nearing a thin, white line with two big sticks in the ground. The sight brought back a memory of before the game when our coach was talking to us, "Jy moet die bal agter die lyn druk om te wen." "OK," we all answered "But why must we pass backwards when we want to go forward, it makes no sense?" our so-called captain asked. "I didn't make the rules," he says, limping away. "Good luck!" he shouts over his shoulder. Why would we need luck?

The words of my coach play over and over in my mind, like a broken record: put the ball behind the white line to win. I run faster and the white line draws nearer. I jump and fly over the white line, wind whipping my hair in every direction. Thud, I fall heavily on the ground, my breath knocked out of my lungs. Damp grass covers my entire body. Panting, I turn towards my team mates. My coach storms onto the field, "Great run Andre! Next time try to score on the opposition's side.



The Storm of the Century

I heard the storm before I saw it, as the thunder growled at me like a hungry wolf ready for its overdue meal. The pelting rain slashed horizontally at my aching body, making me slip and tumble on the slippery deck of the ship. I could feel the electricity coursing through the air, the metallic scent lingering after every strike. The wind was trying to pull me apart and feed me to the starving ocean. The waves were bullying the ship, making the deck groan and complain under the onslaught. The witch-like rocks were looming nearer and nearer, their arms stretching towards the bulk of the ship, their fingers sharp and jagged. The sky was dark as the clouds swallowed up the sun, causing us to rely on the brief flashes of lightning for light. The waves were getting bigger and towered over the beaten ship. Lightning struck the mast of the ship and erupted in sparks and flames that endured through the freezing rain. The ship was sinking, and I sank with it, with pride!



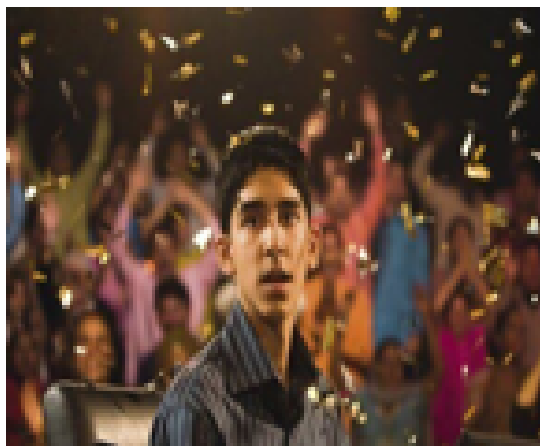
THE MUMBAI POST

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MUMBAI'S NO. 1 NEWSPAPER

11 July 2005

Champion or cheater? "Slumdog" wins it all for a billion...Or has he?



Ram Mohammed Thomas as he wins a billion – Source-New age Telemedia.

Clean water crisis strikes Mumbai!

If you thought water was hard to find, try finding clean water.

Everyday there are more and more citizens of Mumbai are opening their taps to polluted, murky water. Just last week there were reportedly over 350 households in Mumbai without clean water.

The MWAC (Mumbai Water Association & Co.) which over 85% of Mumbai's population relies on, has done very little to address this issue but releasing a statement stating that they are, "currently working on it."

Many citizens believe that it is most likely going to get worse before it gets better.

Shaka Buthelezi On Sunday, July 10th, Ram Mohammed Thomas was named the winner of the 15th episode of the hit show "Who will win a billion." This has brought much speculation as to if Ram was the legitimate winner of the show as he was later arrested late at night in his home in Dharavi.

Ram worked as a minimum wage penniless waiter who lived in the "slums" and had no prior formal education which would have enabled him to answer all 12 questions correctly.

Ram is currently being held in a ten by six-foot cell at the Mumbai Detention Center. He was arrested by police from his home on Friday at 11:37pm after apparently going out with friends that night. He is currently being interrogated by Inspector Godbole at the detention center.

Neil Johnson, representative of New Age Telemedia, is one of many strong believers that believe that Ram cheated his way to a billion rupees. Johnson recently stated in an interview, "I do not believe how someone who is uneducated could answer all 12 questions flawlessly like he has."

Commissioner Salib of the PDM (Police Department of Mumbai) has released a statement stating that the PDM is working to investigate the legitimacy of this Ram winning this life-changing prize. On the other side, it is also believed that showrunner, Mr. Mikhailov, cannot pay the 1 billion rupees, that is why some believe that maybe Ram was only arrested for that reason.

Smita Shah has been chosen to represent Ram as his lawyer to defend him in this case.

Neil Grobbelaar

Letter to Your Future Self

Dear Neil,

after doing some introspection following my grade eight year, I've decided to write to you about my experiences which have helped me to grow as a person and the new personal interests which I have uncovered.

Today I can proudly say that I have developed adequately and, as a result, have become a better version of myself during the course of the year. I am immensely grateful for the values I learned, most notably independence. Independence was taught to me through being forced to work and being punctual without anyone else's assistance. Early into my grade eight year I realised that others helping me be on schedule, make summaries and study had become a thing of the past, and that the matter rested in my hands going forward. I am glad that this jump from how I used to be to how I am now, has changed me for the better.

Unfortunately, despite my personal growth, there are a couple of things I wish I had done differently. During the start of the year, I was very disorganised, which led to me struggling to keep up with my work. If only I had started filing notes and creating folders for online work documents earlier on. Make sure not to fall into that trap yourself! Further I would advise you to not lose hope. Punishment and duties are only a thorn in one's flesh for a short period before things take a turn for the better. Later on, you will realise how fun and exciting it is to be in such a great school with countless opportunities, alongside your friends and "brothers".

I am sure you are anxious about trying out basketball, considering you've never played it before, but do not fear! One of the highlights of my grade eight year was learning the ropes and slowly improving at the sport. From building bonds with the players in my team, to playing with my dormmates on our off days, I enjoyed every moment of it! However, be sure not to get too arrogant as there are a lot of skills you have yet to learn.

So, Neil, be sure to make the most of 2021! Enjoy the many merry moments with your friends and be sure to keep going no matter what. Learn from the mistakes I made and strive to become a better version of yourself every day. It won't be long until you're in Grade 9 yourself, so remember, keep your chin up and enjoy your first year at Hilton College!

Regards,
Future You



Liebes Tagebuch,

It has been two weeks since my transfer to Auschwitz-Birkenau from Sachsenhausen. It is much more remote than I expected, however, the immense size of the camp provides a feeling of mass residency, similar to that of the more central Sachsenhausen camp. The food is edible at best, presumably due to the recent focus of funds on *The Wehrmacht's* war efforts, fortunately, the bonds which I have formed with my fellow officers have fully compensated for the poor cuisine. I always enjoy time spent playing cards or discussing politics when we are not on duty. Unfortunately, some personnel are sour and misanthropic, while others are borderline insane. A good example is Doctor Mengele, or "The Angel of Death", as he is known within the camp.

Today I began working as an officer for Doctor Mengele's eugenics project, which currently involves the "Mengele Twins" experiments. It is undoubtedly the cruellest and most inhumane scientific research I have ever witnessed, abandoning medical ethics and research protocols. In the span of my shift alone, which was only a few hours, I witnessed the complete dehumanization of countless twin test subjects. Subjects were treated like animals, often being forced to sit completely naked and repeatedly have their bodies measured and compared to their twin siblings' bodies. Injections of an unknown substance caused suffering and agony for patients. They cried out in pain, but there was nothing I could do for them. Others perished and were disposed of in the furnaces, like the unwanted scraps of the vicious beast's meal.

From time to time, he delivers a speech to the camp personnel amidst concerns involving his experiments. It is almost as infuriating to listen to his justifications regarding his actions as it is to witness the experiments. His smug expression spurs a burning rage within me. I ache to rebel against him, to speak truthfully about the atrocities which he commits against his fellow man. I want to stand firm and berate him for what he has done, see the look of anguish as he is finally forced to atone for his sins. But I know that I will never live such a fantasy. I know that I will never dare to openly oppose "The Doctor" – he would have me for that, and I know that he will retain his support from *der Führer* even if I expose the horrors of his experiments.

I hope that someday this will change,

that someday I will find the courage to be the change...



Palate of Experiences

The familiar cold, smooth touch of the brush comforts me as I slip it into my hand. However, just as familiar is my inability to conjure up an idea. I scan my room like a hawk in an attempt to find some inspiration. I look over to the desk adjacent to my bed, where a collage of family holidays nestles inside the frame Ouma gave me. “*Perfek!*” I exclaim. My brush lifts instinctively, and I pull the palate of colour closer. I select white.

I look out over the landscape before me. A local village lies in the valley below, slowly coming alive as the morning sun peers over the jagged mountains. Tears of joy trickle from the face of a nearby mountain as the new day dawns. The wind howls as it lashes against the oak trees. The icy, early-morning air gnaws at my face as I plan my descent. The church bell echoes across the valley. It’s 6 o’clock. A blank, white canvas stretches out before me. I inhale deeply - it stings my lungs. My skis shift over the edge - the adrenaline takes over. I skilfully carve my way down the slope, throwing my body from side to side.

Right then left. Left then right.

My skis are the brush that I use to carefully curve down the empty sheet. The wind whistles in my ears. I make sure not to apply too much pressure - only light strokes of the brush.

I am satisfied with my progress so far but feel the need to lead the canvas someplace else. Somewhere much different. Perhaps a contrast? Some warmth could really bring it to life.

I select red.

The fresh sea breeze rejuvenates me. Columns of white froth spill out onto the shore. Hundreds cover the bed of yellow sand. Some toss around Frisbees and juggle footballs, some lay and bake under the red-hot sun, others splash about under the watchful eyes of the lifeguards. Today, however, I am not amongst these people...

I find myself standing high above once again, overlooking the area, trying to find the optimal path to follow. The scent of fresh pizzas from the roadside restaurant lingers in the air. The sleepy atmosphere of the small seaside suburb defines a perfect holiday in *Sandbaai*. But it was all too perfect - I failed to notice something on the horizon...

Grey clouds roll over the Atlantic Ocean, spoiling the clarity of the summer’s day.

“Ons moet aan die gang kom, anders reën ons sopnat. Daai wolke lyk nie baie vriendelik nie!” exclaims Michiel.

I nod my head. I shift my board forward. My heart pounds. Pitch-black tar rolls down the hill before me, a constant reminder of the consequences of a mistake. I give Michiel a thumbs-up, then propel myself forward. The adrenaline consumes me as a viper would a field mouse. The music from my headphones becomes muted, my surroundings a blur. I crouch down on my board, trying to maximise my speed. The wheels underneath me are a pack of roaring lions. I am the funambulist, my board the tightrope. I shift my body to maintain balance.

Right then left. Left then right.

I arrive at the bottom of the slope, heaving as I turn onto the side of the road. Behind me a piercing cry shatters the quiet afternoon. Thick scarlet fluid spills onto the tarmac – splashing onto the canvas.

I step back to admire the piece. Waves of colour slalom down its face. It is not technically perfect, as is the hand of an amateur. However, it connects to me personally. It tells the tale of my personal interests, my personal experiences, and my personal relationship with my physical environment - all seen through my eyes. My pen scribbles authenticity onto the bottom-right corner of the sheet.

My work is complete.



Romeo and Juliet Literature Essay

Romeo and Juliet are not to blame for their deaths, despite their impulsivity and carelessness. Juliet's parents, due to their lack of consideration for their daughter, and, in addition to this, the ongoing feud between House Capulet and House Montague, are the most prominent factors in the lovers' deaths.

Lord and Lady Capulet are responsible for their daughter's death, due to their inconsiderate nature toward Juliet's life and interests, and their haste to make decisions on her behalf. Lord Capulet's decision to wed Juliet to Paris, contradicts his earlier statement that "[his] will" plays "but a part" in Juliet's

desires regarding marriage. He clearly displays an absence of mindfulness of his daughter's interests, deciding that Juliet "will be ruled in all respects by [him]" and married off to Paris without discussing her perspective on the situation first. Lord Capulet's lack of compassion is further emphasized through his ruling to "ne'er acknowledge [Juliet]" and even let her "hang, beg, starve, die in the streets" if she does not agree to marry Paris. Lady Capulet, too, offers no succour to her daughter, confirming that "[she will] not speak a word" to Lord Capulet to help prevent the wedding. Both go to the extent of berating the "disobedient wretch" for not wanting to marry Paris, preferring "the fool [was] married to her grave". Moreover, Lord Capulet's decision for "[them] to church tomorrow", effectively moves the wedding to Wednesday, a day earlier. Capulet's decision, made on Juliet's behalf, forces her to drink the sleeping potion, given to her by Friar Laurence, sooner than expected. This, in turn, results in her death being announced a day earlier, thwarting Friar Laurence's attempts to send a new letter about his plan to Romeo, after the previous one did not reach him in time. Romeo does not receive this information, which, consequently, causes his suicide-bent return to Verona, and ultimately results in the death of the lovers. For these reasons, it is made clear that Lord and Lady Capulet's poor understanding of Juliet's fragile mindset, as well as their lack of consideration towards her life and interests, results in the deaths of Romeo and Juliet.

The ongoing feud between House Capulet and House Montague serves as the main source of conflict in the play, fuelling hatred amongst the central characters, leading to complications within the lovers' relationship, and ultimately causing the deaths of many, including Romeo and Juliet. It is the hatred created by the feud which causes Tybalt to seek out Romeo, due to his attendance at the Capulet ball. Tybalt's hostility results in his death, and, consequently, Romeo's banishment from Verona. Furthermore, Romeo and Juliet are forced to maintain a secretive relationship, due to the tension between the Montagues and Capulets, and the imposed loyalty that they maintain toward their respective families. The situation leads the couple to make radical decisions, one of which is the choice to get married in secrecy. The secrecy of the lovers' relationship proves to have an adverse effect when Lord Capulet decides to have Juliet wed to Paris, unknowing of her intimacy with Romeo, which forces Juliet to act drastically to protect her honour and "live an unstained wife to [her] sweet love". Her actions cause Romeo to believe she is dead, consequently causing Romeo to return to Verona, which, ultimately, results in the lovers' deaths. For these reasons, it is clear that the feud between the lovers' families, due to the tension and conflict which it creates, and, in addition to this, the subsequent effect which it has on their relationship, is responsible for the deaths of Romeo and Juliet.

In conclusion, Romeo and Juliet are not responsible for their deaths. It is a combination of Lord and Lady Capulet's poor understanding of their daughter's fragile mindset, an absence of mindfulness regarding her life and interests, and, in addition to this, the conflict and hatred caused by the feud between the lovers' families, and the subsequent effect which it has on their relationship, which ultimately results in the deaths of Romeo and Juliet.



The Hindustan Times

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Priests' dispute ends in tragedy

By Neil Grobbelaar



Image of the crime scene at St Joseph's Church.
Photo taken by Neil Grobbelaar

Senegal win African Cup of Nations

An exciting display saw Senegal be crowned AFCON champions for the first time in their history last Sunday.

The tournament final, which was held in The Olembe Stadium, Cameroon, saw Liverpool teammates Sadio Mane and Mohammed Salah clash for the AFCON title. A missed penalty from Sadio Mane in the first half left Senegalese fans worried as Egypt started relentlessly attacking their goal box. Many shots forced saves out of Chelsea shot-stopper, Edouard Mendy, who just about kept Senegal in the game with a plethora of acrobatic saves. The game could not be decided by the final whistle, and a penalty shoot-out followed. The match ended 0-0 (4-2 Penalties) with Sadio Mane netting the final goal and crowning Senegal AFCON champions.

Escalating tension following a fierce altercation resulted in the death of beloved priest Father Timothy at the hands of a psychopathic killer in a gruesome murder-suicide attempt at St Joseph's Church yesterday morning.

John Little, who was on good terms with Father Timothy Francis originally, began revealing his true nature as a man of sin earlier this week, reportedly owning a stash of explicit homosexual pornography, and taking part in drug abuse involving the strictly illegal drug, cocaine. These sacrilegious acts resulted in an intense argument between the two priests, resulting in Mr. Francis threatening to report Mr. Little to the bishop. However, Father Timothy found the kindness and mercy within his heart, as he so often did, deciding to refrain from reporting Mr. Little to the bishop, granting him the chance to redeem himself in the eyes of the Lord and others around him. Alas, this act of kindness proved to be of little value to Mr. Little, who, reports claim, was involved in the molestation of Father

Timothy's sixteen-year-old son, Ian Francis, only a few days later. An interview with Ian revealed that he had forcefully been put under the influence of drugs by Mr. Little earlier that day. "I was raped!" Ian exclaimed. "What happened was non-consensual. I mean, I wasn't even aware of what was happening! That vile animal, if only I had gotten my hands on him sooner!" This pedophilic act is seen as the breaking point in the priests' relationship, resulting in an even more livid argument between Mr. Little and Mr. Francis. This escalated to the point where Mr. Francis finally decided to report Mr. Little to the bishop, sending Mr. Little into a frenzy. The next morning, both priests were found dead in front of the altar in St Joseph's Church, showing signs of shotgun wounds. A police report concluded that both priests had died instantly and that the killings had been a murder-suicide attempt by Mr. Little. "It is a true tragedy," said Ishaan Devi of the Delhi Police Force. "Though I'm not sure how that manoropee got the job in the first place."

Alex Pitman

Good afternoon teacher and class. Today I will tell you about football in India, an exciting aspect of the country in which I have found great interest in. I will make use of several key points and facts to help share my research on the topic with you, hopefully enhancing your understanding in the process. So, let us begin...

A short history of football in India:

Football has been played in India since the nineteenth century, but its lack of popularity, when compared to cricket, means that few actually know about the origins of football in India. The game was introduced by the British soldiers during India's pre-independent period. The initial football matches were played between military teams, with the first football match taking place between the 'Calcutta Club of Civilians' and the 'Gentlemen of Barrackpore', in 1854.

Much later in 1872, the first football club of India, named 'Calcutta FC', was founded. Many teams soon followed, including Mohun Bagan Athletic Club, resulting in the creation of the Indian Football Association, or IFA in 1893. Mohun Bagan became the first Indian side to win the IFA Shield in 1911, beating British colonists for the first time in Indian history and marking football's ascent in India. A further increase in Indian teams led to the formation of the All-India Football Federation, or AIFF in 1937. In 1948, the AIFF was recognized by FIFA, the international governing body for football, and became one of the founding members of the Asian Football Confederation in 1954. The 50s was seen as the golden age of Indian football, with the team qualifying for the 1950 World Cup, winning the Asian Games gold medal in 1951, and becoming the first Asian nation to make it to the Olympic football semi-finals in the 1956 Melbourne Olympics. Much later in 1996, India's first domestic league was created, known as the National Football League.

The Hero I-League:

The Hero I-League was created to replace The National Football League in 2007, sparking the rebirth of Indian football. Along with the name and structural changes, there were also major changes in the rules and regulations of the league, for instance, teams weren't allowed to field more than four foreign players for their team. The first edition of the I-League included 10 teams, with Dempo SC emerging champions. The league would expand to include 12 teams, before later expanding to 14 teams. In 2010, the I-league leaders gave the entire sponsorship and media rights to Reliance Industries India and IMG group United States of America. It was a 700-crore

deal between the giants, which is equivalent to 7 billion rupees. The I-League's success placed the global eye on Indian football, with foreign demand for Indian players increasing drastically. Players like Sunil Chhetri and Subrata Pal were offered contracts and trials from international clubs as large as RB Leipzig in Germany and Rangers in Scotland, which are both consistent qualifiers for European competitions such as the Champions League and Europa League. Demand for international players in India also spiked, with Johnny Acosta, Costa Rican national team centre-back, transferring to East Bengal following the 2018 FIFA World Cup. Not only players were attracted to Indian football, as seen by a significant investment purchased in Mumbai City FC in 2019 by the parent business of English Premier League giants Manchester City, which was the first time a big European club purchased a controlling share in an Indian club.

The future of football in India:

Despite the I-League's success and India's rapid football growth, they remain ranked 104th in the world and are already out of the 2022 World Cup qualifiers, indicating that there is still much room for improvement. Football analysts have stated that India might be a future powerhouse in world football, however, years need to be spent on working in academies and investing at the grassroots and youth level before India will even be seen in the World Cup. Luckily, India's youth players are bringing hope to the nation, with the under-17 national side performing excellently, even hosting the FIFA Under-17 World Cup in 2017. Action has also been taken to improve youth setups, resulting in better young players playing more competitive games under better coaches, and training in better facilities, which is certainly a positive step. From a transformation perspective, Indian football has also improved drastically. Women's football has seen great growth in India following the AIFF's takeover of the administration of women's soccer in the country. Today, national championships for both senior and junior girls are held, and the Women's under-17 team recently qualified for the Women's under-17 World Cup set to take place in India later this year. Various actions are also being taken to prohibit gender-based prejudice and racism within Indian football, with Bob Houghton's case raising caution against acts of this nature, by being forced to resign as India coach after reports of racial abuse to an Indian referee during a match against Vietnam.

Teacher and class, although Indian football has a long way to go before it can compete with cricket in terms of popularity and monetary creation, the future of Indian football looks promising, having piqued the interest of the country's youth and reduced inequalities within it. Thank you!

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Joshua Lord

A Midsummer Forest

A drop of water, that's all it takes to wake me from my restless slumber. I simply turn over and try again as I have done a thousand times since the night that mother vanished. And again, as usual, my mind begins to race around like a speeding bullet. Thoughts and visions, tears of pain and joy, endless fluttering images all mangling together into the nightmare that eternally taunts me... And then it all settles into one, disconcerting question. "Where did the drop come from?" My eyes burst open, and a wave of new senses engulf me. The low-hanging mist settles just above the earthy floor. The slight purple haze combines with the breathtaking flowers sprouting like leaves on a mighty oak. The dampness of this mystical forest smothers all other aromas around me and the noise of trees rustling their intertwined branches tingles the ears. "I must be dreaming" is what I tell myself. I am still in my four-poster bed, with

the duvet surrounding my mid-section and I am simply having an ultra-realistic dream and it is time to wake up. I try all the oldest tricks in the book, I pinch my forearm until I can last no more, I think of what time it will be when I wake up, I even try to jump out of bed into the frigid night, but nothing works. And it feels so real, I can feel the soil between my toes and the cool breeze against my face. "Why not play along" I think to myself, "and see where this adventure takes me?" I start to wander through the forest, down an obscure path cutting through the trees. I admire how the trees stand large and unmoved as their branches dance as if to some merry tune. I follow the path through the forest until, to my right, I hear a sudden snap of fallen twigs. I stop dead in my tracks as a shadow looms over me. I turn around slowly and look up to see...

A disfigured tree has suddenly blocked the path right behind me. I move to the right to try make it back the bed; however, the tree moves with me. I rub my eyes in confusion, yet the tree remains in front of me. I move to the left, and it follows me still. "This must be a sign," I mutter under my breath and so I press on, deeper into the ever-darkening woods. At first, I move slowly, on guard, senses on high alert, but the further I go, the more my eagerness begins to fade. I walk for what seems like hours but what I can't imagine could be longer than a matter of minutes passes and then I recognize the pattern of the trees. I look around to assess what is around me and everything seems familiar. I have walked in a circle but somehow not seen my bed and the safety that comes with it. A sudden sharp snap then draws my attention to my left, and I see a blurred figure dart between trees. I track him with my eyes until I realize that, with each tree, it is getting closer and closer, growing and growing as if drawing in the energy of the shadows and darkness surrounding it. I turn and run in the direction I have come but decide instead to leave the path and cut my way through the tree line. With each step I take, I can feel the beast slowly gaining ground. I smell the dampness emanating from it and each crack under its foot sends a jolt of dread throughout my body. I keep running, faster than ever before when suddenly I see a clearing in front of me and right in the middle, lies my bed.

When I turn to look at the creature, there is nothing but an eerie silence. I have done it, I have bested the shadow beast and made it back to my bed. I stroll with confidence back to the same white duvet covers that teleported me to this alternate reality, climb in and pull the covers tightly over my body. I then see the cold, dark hands rise from beneath my bed and wrap around me, I see its face peeking ever so slightly over the edge...

And that, dear ladies and gentlemen, is how I die...

EXTENDED RESEARCH WRITING

Nic Thorburn



What determines who we are?

To what extent does genetics determine our personality?

Nic Thorburn

4/16/22

Motsoel(Supervisor),
Neethling (Eng.)

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Introduction

Why are you who you are?

The simple answer is you are who you are because of your personality. This is because your personality determines how you act and think in any given situation (personality is determined by genetics and everything that goes on around you). This answer, however, leads to another question that is not so simple to answer and has room for debate, it is the one that will be argued in this essay. To what extent does genetics determine personality? There are four commonly accepted factors that affect personality: genes, physical environment, social environment and particular experiences. Put simply, it is the age-old debate of nature versus nurture with a modern twist, the twist being epigenetics. Epigenetics is a newer field of research that determines how environmental factors influence the genetic code and, ultimately, who we are. Epigenetics provides a completely new perspective on the age-old debate and will be explored in depth in this essay. Over the years the general consensus has shifted from nature to nurture over and over with the slow influx of new facts and theories. The introduction of epigenetics has reawoken this debate and shone a light on the possibility that it is almost always both genetics and the environment that determines personality. The extent of the effects of the environment surrounding oneself and one's genetics on personality are still heavily disputed, hence this essay will explore how each, individually and coherently, affects personality and argue to what extent genetics determines personality.

Agenda

Firstly, 'personality' in the context of this essay will be conceptualized. The defining will be followed by a discussion on the relevance of the question. Thereafter, the nature versus nurture debate will be explained, followed by nurture's argument. Nurture's argument will explore how social effects and upbringing affect personality and to what extent. Thereafter, Nature's argument will explore what genes effect personality, to what extent and how. A deep dive into epigenetics will follow this. Epigenetics will be explained through the movie 'The Deer Hunter'. The essay will then conclude by summarizing and comparing the discussed information through a study on twins, and in summation decided "To what extent genetics determines personality".

Relevance of question

The question is relevant because of what comes from understanding the answer. Completely understanding what determines personality will revolutionize parenting, gene-editing ideas (Dependent on the effect of genes) and, undeniably, one's own personality. Imagine a world in which parents knew the exact effect of their own

genes, the environment and what their actions would mean in determining who their children become (their personality). Imagine a world in which one could remove a gene or part of the environment that modifies someone's personality into one of a serial killer. Knowing what exactly determines personality will undoubtedly change how people think about personality, what individuals expose themselves too, and may even create a way for people to instantaneously change their personality, who they are.

Conceptualization of personality

Arnold W. Green defines personality as, "the sum of a person's values (the objects of his striving, such as ideas, prestige, power and sex) plus his non- physical traits (his habitual ways of acting and reacting)". Personality has three approaches: physiological, sociological and biological. The physiological approach incorporates emotions, sentiments and organization of mental trends (Mohita, n.d.). The sociological approach considers how people behave in social circles and what we perceive our status/role in groups to be, while the biological approach looks at a person's bio-physical characteristics. Thus, it can be derived that personality is the collective amalgamation of an individual's values and attitudes that decide a said persons' behaviors in a group and their role in society. Personality, like ourselves, has hundreds of characteristics, the main ones that effect an individual's behaviours are (Geektonight, 2021):

1. **Locus of Control**

An individual's beliefs being determined by self (internal locus) or others/environment (external locus).

2. **Self-Efficacy**

Belief in one's own ability to deal with what going on around said person.

3. **Self-Esteem**

Belief in one's self (similar to self-efficacy)

4. **Self-Monitoring**

Behaviour based on what other people and the environment are doing.

5. **Positive/Negative Affect**

Whether one accentuates positive or negative views about situations.

6. **Risk-Taking**

Willingness to take chances.

7. **Type A and Type B Personality**

Type A people are more aggressively obsessed with obtaining more things in less time.

Type B people have less of said desire and care more about their actions effects.

Obtaining an understanding of these paragraphs is very important as they will be referred to whilst looking at effects on personality.

Nature vs Nurture debate

Understanding the debate.

Nature versus Nurture is the loose term for the philosophical debate which argues what plays a bigger role on determining who humans become (personality characteristics) (McLeod, 2018).

Nature refers to heredity factors and genes.

Nurture refers to physical environment, upbringing and social experiences. This debate is a vital component in addressing the question and both sides will be argued accordingly.

Nurture

Social effects on personality.

Humans experience social interactions from the moment they come out of the womb, every interaction and complication that is brought about through people in some way changes who we are. The effects of organizations, people and groups on personality is generally known as the socialization process. The socialization process looks at what and how people synthesize personality traits from the people around them. During childhood, children are generally exposed to their parents and siblings, then as they get older, groups and organizations. So how do these social influences effect personality? The science behind it is, when one or more people speak to each other, they try to consciously and unconsciously interpret and process the other's mental states and traits. These traits are then internalized and mentally processed, resulting in certain reactions to their actions (Back, 2020), see appendix A for diagram on one of these trait's internalization. The more one's frontal lobe is stimulated by these mental states and traits, the more someone acts upon the influence others have given them. Think of these 'mental pathways' as bridges connecting islands and think of the islands as personality traits, the more you are exposed to these traits, the bigger and better the bridges become, making the islands more accessible, hence you will use them more. However, this is not true in all cases, many people who have abusive fathers become gentle and loving, unfortunately many do become abusive though. This scenario is one of many that are applicable in determining the various effects on personality. Therefore, it is clear that social factors although playing quite a major role, leave a lot to be decided by genes and other factors.

The effects of upbringing on personality.

Young people, especially children, are easily influenced, their minds are like putty and can be easily molded. This allows for dramatic personality changes due to various factors during upbringing. The main factors that determine personality throughout upbringing are Geographic location, education and culture. These factors tie into the social effects on personality as well. Geographical location directly impacts personality. Depending on where one grows up, they are exposed to different experiences, hardships and norms. These factors directly influence how 5 children turn out, for example a child raised in a congruent environment, may have a more thought out approach to life and hence a calmer personality. Education also has a direct impact on personality. Studies done on children who consistently do their homework and go to class, generally, have a greater conscientiousness, while children who are exposed to inconsistent and stressful educational environments tend to have a greater neuroticism¹ personality (Jackson, 2011). Culture, in the context as an effect on personality is defined as: shared values, customary beliefs, traditions, and social norms of a group (Gail, n.d.). Some people believe culture is one of the biggest factors in determining who children become (their personality). Culture gives people a methodology to follow, a way to live one's life. These beliefs and systems align people's personalities into having similar traits. For example, people who are raised in cultures with individuality at their cores, typically will later on in life value individuality and achievement through personal victories (Gail, n.d.). These factors all play generous roles in determining personality, their total contribution to one's personality will be discussed in the latter half of this essay.

Nature

Defining and providing understanding of genes.

The actual definition of a gene is still disputed in 2022, but what is agreed upon, is that a gene is a unit of heredity that can be passed on from parents to children. Genes are sequences of DNA specifically arranged on chromosomes in the nucleus. Genes contain and, hence, control information for making proteins that determine physical characteristics and traits. Genes also encode molecular products that construct and control the brain's functioning through which behaviour is expressed (Robinson GE, 2008). Introns and exons are also important parts of the understanding genes, introns are sections of the RNA transcript that are noncoding. They are spliced out before being translated into proteins. Exons are sections of DNA/RNA that code for proteins. Exons and Introns then form polypeptide protein chains or genes. See Appendix B for diagram (Greenwood, 2018).

¹ Personality trait that is disposed to negative affects like anger, irritability and anxiety.

The link between personality and genes.

Amongst other reasons, we know that personality is at the very least partially genetic is because of research done on twins and families. It is hard to determine that personality is genetic by examining the majority of traits, but larger conditions like depressive disorder in families and twins make it clear that personality is affected by genes. Through the analyses of polygenes², correlations between personality and psychopathology have shown (Sanchez-Roige, 2017). This confirms the link between personality and mental disorders, and we already know that these disorders are affected by genes. Thus, scientifically proving the link between personality and genes.

Gene effects on personality.

Personality is multifactorial, meaning that no one gene determines a specific personality trait. Through the study of people, parents, twins and children it has been uncovered that personality is determined by gene loci³ that undergo complex interactions (Igor Zwir, 2018). To delineate gene effects on personality, a study on a Finnish, German and Korean people will be used (Igor Zwir, 2018). A variety of people from these countries were assessed on heritable dimensions of personality using a temperate and character inventory (TCI). TCI character traits are part of the intentional and meta-cognitive processing units of brain networks like self-reflection and empathy, whereas temperate traits refer to automatic behaviours like the stress response. Five groups of people with distinct character traits were identified, these groups were then further broken down into healthy and unhealthy personalities. The three groups of healthy personalities were put into the sub categories of resourceful, organised and creative, whereas the unhealthy personalities were dependent and apathetic. Following after this the association of Single-nucleotide polymorphism⁴ (SNP) sets with character was tested providing complex results. One of the results showed that 55 out of the 342 character sets associated to particular SNP, showing that combinations of genes can effect specific personality traits, see appendix C for diagram. For example, Gene_5_1, which is involved with neuroplasticity, was often associated with unhealthy personalities, mainly dependent personalities. The study also concluded that the fact that no one gene always relates to a specific character trait and this is because of other external factors like the environment, explaining Nature and Nurture's symbiotic relationship. These results allow us to conclude that genes have a moderate to large effect on personality.

² A gene which individually has almost no consequence, but when working together produces observable variations.

³ Physical site within a genome-like a street address.

⁴ A specific DNA sequence variation.

Epigenetics

Introduction to epigenetics?

Epigenetics is the study of how the environment and one's behaviours effect genetic expression without changing the genetic code. Meaning that certain genes can be turned on and off due to a person's surrounding environment, ultimately, changing our personality and who we are (What is Epigenetics, 2021). This new field of research adds a completely new dimension to understanding the effects on determining personality and who we are. To further explain epigenetics and unpack its effects on personality two studies will be used.

Epigenetics effect on stress

Stress is directly related to personality and epigenetics. Stress can alter and effect personality in various ways, like increase anxiety, aggression etc., it especially effects neuroticism. Stress's relationship with epigenetics is more complicated and will be explored through a study of stress response to victims of war in the movie| 'The Deer Hunter'. The Analysis of the movie has been derived from the book 'Epigenetics' by Richard C. Francis. 'The Deer Hunter' is a movie based on the lives of Michael (alpha male), Steve (loving and easy going) and Nick (youngest and artistic). The 'Deer Hunter' it is a near perfect illustration on the effects of surrounding environments on the genetic expression. The three men enlist in the army and are captured and become prisoners of war, in these camps they undergo numerous traumas, most notably a game of Russian roulette, which although not killing any of them, left them severely psychologically damaged. These events leave the men traumatized and with heavy negative implications brought about by PTSD. Ultimately, completely changing their personalities. The similar events they undergo makes Michael experience depressive symptoms, they cause Steve to desire selfisolation and cause Nick extreme PTSD, all different symptoms to the nearly identical situations and environments. Some would argue that their personalities were completely changed by their surrounding environments, while others would argue their states were already written in their genes. Collectively most people would agree that it was a combination of both. However, there is a different approach, which looks at epigenetics and states that their early environments may have been the cause of their gene reactions to the same stress (Francis, 2012). When the three men were in stressful situations their stress response was initiated in their brains, during a stress response, populations of neurons in the hypothalamus⁵ produce a

⁵ Structure in the deep brain that acts as a control coordinating centre.

hormone that releases corticotrophin⁶. These hormones stimulate cells in the pituitary into releasing corticotrophin, which subsequently stimulates the adrenal gland that releases glucocorticoid stress hormones which includes cortisol⁷. Cortisol effects the gene expression by combining with a nuclear receptor forming a glucocorticoid receptor, see appendix D for diagram. Glucocorticoid receptors are abundant and activate numerous genes in stressful situations like the game of Russian roulette. The genes that are activated are individual to Michael, Nick and Steve and this explains why they react differently to these events and show the connection between the environment and genes and personality and genes (Francis, 2012).

Epigenetics involvement in the argument of what determines personality.

The previous argument of Nature or Nurture may now be unwarranted. This may be the case as we already know that both the environment and genes effect personality, but now we also know that the environment effects genes, which adds a totally new dimension. These relationships create a complex interconnected triangle of personality, genes and environment. Epigenetics means that the environment not only directly effects personality, but also indirectly effects it through its effects on the gene expression itself (Lobo, 2008). This leaves the question, does epigenetics indefinitely tip the scales in the favour of the environment in terms of determining personality? This will be answered in the concluding paragraph that will weigh the effects of genes and the environment on personality all the while, for the first time, incorporating epigenetics into the equation.

Weighing the arguments effects.

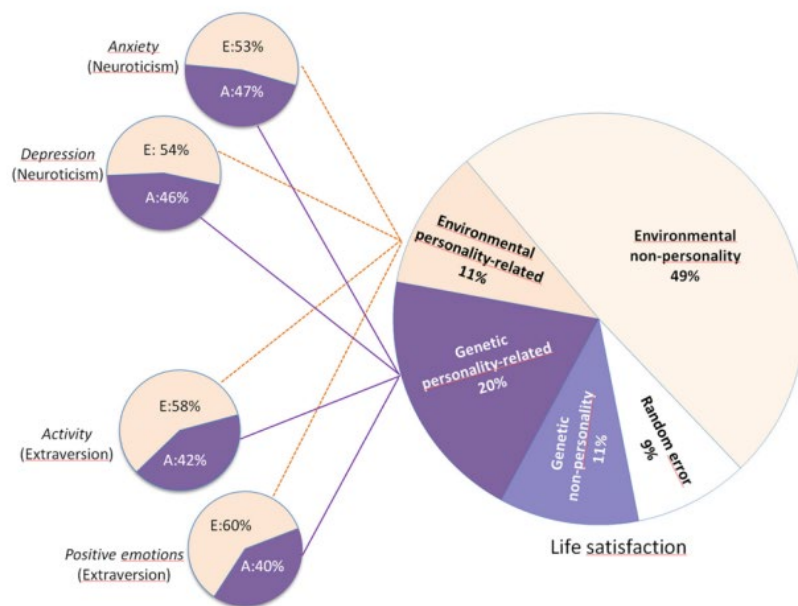
Weighing the arguments against each other through a study on twins.

The study that will be used was conducted on 1526 Norwegian twins by the University of Oslo, Norway (Espen Roysamb, 2018). This study professionally tested a variety of twins of same and opposing sexes in their fields, making for a very accurate and reliable study. They measured life satisfaction using the well-adapted Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS) and measured personality using the NEO-PI-R Personality Test, which is also considered scientifically accurate. On the base of regression analysis, two sets of multivariate biometric analyses were used to estimate the environmental and genetic contributions on personality. The data was

⁶ Type of hormone in the adrenal gland that controls the release of certain substances.

⁷ Steroid hormone that helps regulate the bodies response to stress.

estimated using standard Cholesky models, which are structural equation models comprising of the measured variables as phenotypes⁸ (Espen Roysamb, 2018). Below is a Cholesky model representing the study results (Espen Roysamb, 2018).



Conclusion

Summation of points covered.

There are numerous determinants of personality, this essay has split them into either nature or nurture or in a way the middle, which represents epigenetics. Nurture represents the socialization process, which is how we synthesize personality traits from the people around us. It also entails the effects of our upbringing which includes geographic location, education and culture and that we internalize these factors and incorporate them in our personalities. Nature represents how various genes, working together, can influence specific personality traits completely by themselves, making them a key determinant of personality. Scientifically put, the nature side articulates how genes encode molecular products that construct and control the brain's functioning through which behaviour is expressed. The middle and linking side, 10 epigenetics, represents how genes and the nature around oneself, is intertwined and illustrates why some argue that it is almost always both genes and one's environment working in conjunction to determine personality.

Are our genes the dictators of personality?

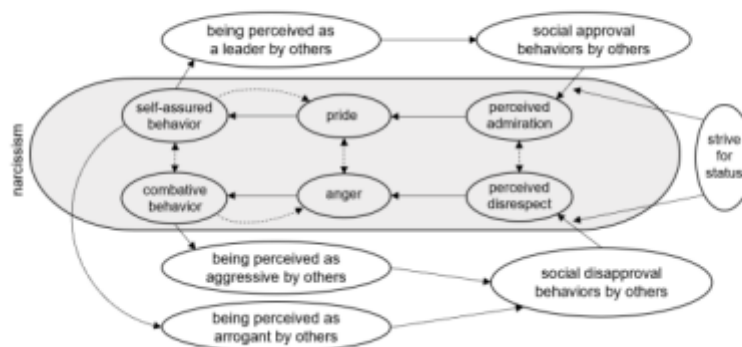
⁸ Observable physical properties of an organism.

Therefore, does the Norwegian twin study definitely prove that genes are the dictators of our personality? Not necessarily, it does however prove that genes on their own play the largest role in determining personality. We know from the effects the environment has on genes (understood by the look into epigenetics) that the environment surrounding oneself may actually play the largest role, as it directly effects personality and indirectly effects it through its changing of the genetic expression. It is not yet possible with current science to definitely prove what plays the largest role in determining personality and by how much. However with the constant improvement of experimental tools, a world in which we can perfectly concur what decides personality, may be just around the corner.

Appendices

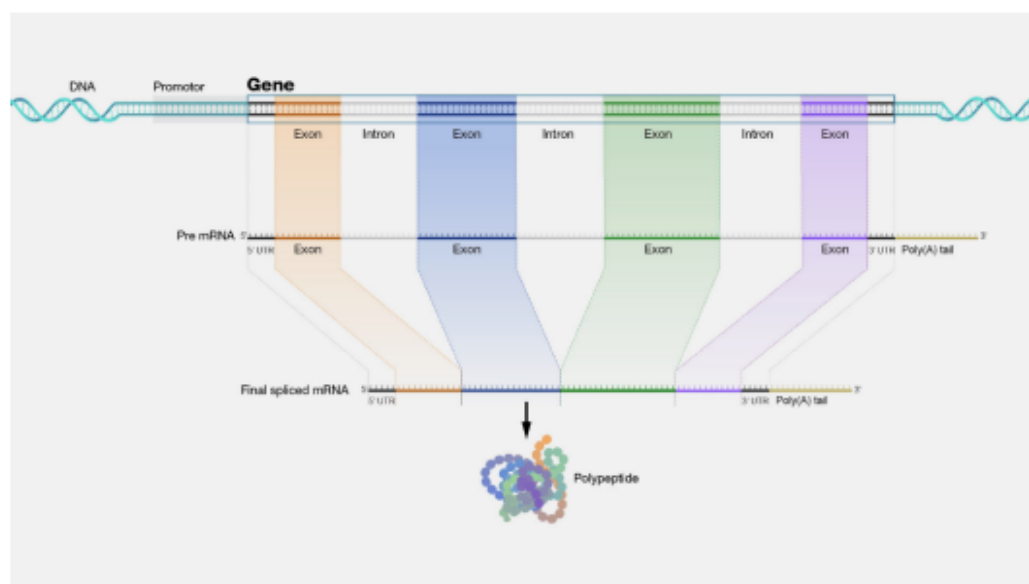
Appendix A

A dynamic social interaction process network model (Back, 2020).



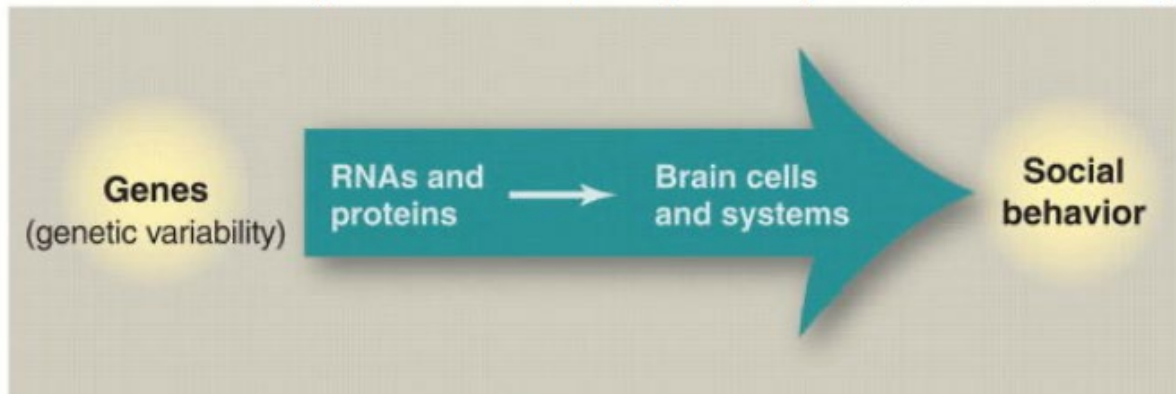
Appendix B

What makes up a Gene (National Human Genome Research Institute, 2022)



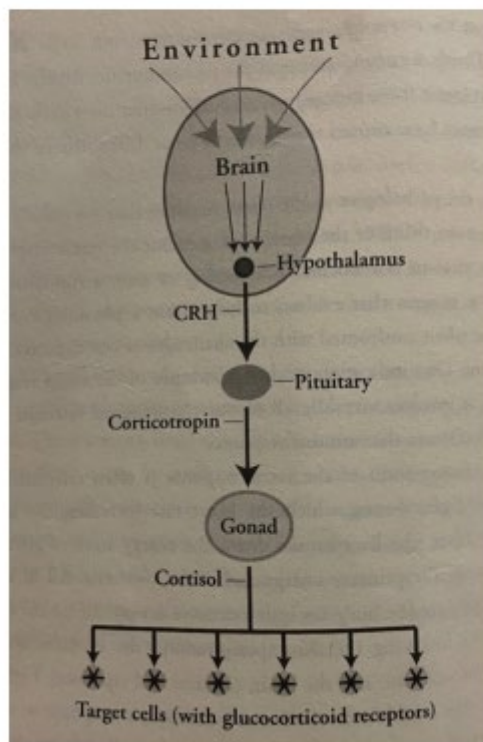
Appendix C

How combinations of genes can affect specific personality traits (Robinson GE, 2008)



Appendix D

How the environment effects glucocorticoid receptors (Francis, 2012).



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