

JOE Journal of Epistemology

for everyday living and lifelong learning

The School “Bus Ride”: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly



A child gazes from a school bus as it passes by the St. Rose of Lima Catholic church while mourners gathered for a funeral service for shooting victim Jessica Rekos, 6, on December 18, 2012 in Newtown, Connecticut. Four days after 20 children and six adults were killed at Sandy Hook Elementary School, most students in Newtown returned to school. Children at Sandy Hook Elementary will attend a school in a neighboring town until authorities decide whether or not to reopen their school. (Photo by John Moore/Getty Images) Photo: John Moore, Getty Images

JOE

Journal of Epistemology

for everyday living and lifelong learning



Dedicated to the late Joe Lyons Kincheloe

December 14, 1950-December 19, 2008

Joe's educational work provides inspiration and practical guidance for teachers all over the globe and describes a beautiful, beautiful mission to alleviate human suffering. He has left us a map with multiple pathways for accomplishing that mission -- an authentic, rigorous, impassioned, creative, and even magical education for everyone who dares to venture on un-trodden paths. His work serves as a guiding light for educational journeys that can change not only how we view and enact the educational process, but that can also truly change *us* as teachers, students, and researchers -- and empower us to change the world. Joe loved research, teaching, writing, making music, and his students. *And his students loved him.*

We believe that the struggle for a rigorous, pragmatic, empowering, transformative education for everyone, the poor in particular, can be won.

~ Joe Lyons Kincheloe ~

from Reading, Writing, and Thinking: The Postformal Basics



welcome to our fifth issue

"Intelligence is not about knowing the answers but about asking the questions"

<http://www.scaruffi.com/nature/>

We accept submissions of articles, stories, personal experiences, opinion pieces, etc., in any form: text, videos, recordings, artwork, photographs, sculpture, etc.

Digital file submissions may be emailed to Vanessa Jae Paradis, Founding Editor, at vanessajparadis@aol.com

All other forms of submissions, which will be returned if requested, may be mailed to:

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Letter from the Editor

Dear Readers:

This is an exciting journal this time because represented within are new, aspiring authors, artists, and creators, the very people who hold the innovative ideas we need for moving education and society forward.

I had originally founded this journal with the goal of taking a different approach to educational publishing and to move away from the traditional academic publishing process which creates barriers for so many of us. Traditional processes are broken and its proponents are actually digging their holes deeper with the choices they are making for change. For example, today, authors are often required to pay to have their work included in upscale journals or to have their books published by the bigger publishing houses. On top of that, it often costs \$30 or more just to gain access to and read one article.

And in far too many cases, it is the corporate (aka political) sector that pays for and controls the research being done. Money as applied to knowledge production is power; that is, this now ensures that only the elite or the few they allow in their game are able to engage in research and be published through the traditional avenues. This ensures that funds remain channeled into endeavors that produce more consumption (many of the “researched” books read like soft marketing campaigns), making the corporations richer while they are selective about whose voices are important for their missions. It’s always been this way to a degree but now more than ever, it is essential that more people are heard if we are to resolve the complex global social, economic, political, etc., problems facing us today. As I had recently written in a blog in response to an article that had been published about *research quality* and paradigms:

I had considered writing a formal response to Ravenek and Rudman’s (2013) article, “Bridging Conceptions of Quality in Moments of Qualitative Research” and taking the discussion to the next level until I discovered that submitting an article to the *International Journal of Qualitative Research* requires PAYMENT (if accepted) of \$500! Can people not see what’s wrong with this? I am finding that more and more, those of us who do not or cannot play the game by someone else’s rules due to the lack of money, status, or positioning are left out of the game entirely.

I refuse to participate in a rigged system that is designed to leave the very voices that need to be heard out! When more people refuse to support such an unbalanced system, society will move forward at long last.

I do not need to please people who are stuck in paradigms, particularly if they wield the money and power that would limit what I can discover with my research. *My greatest teachers do not even exist in their reality.* You can read more [HERE](#).

This professionally-accepted process, thus, too often automatically leaves out the voices of the poor and other marginalized people. And then there is the peer review process that, in my interpretation, too often is merely a way to encourage “good old boy” networks that result in knowledge inbreeding and the exclusion of people who have creative, new ideas. Supposedly, the “experts” know best. I have noticed that some of these groups result in the constant parroting of the same old information over and over again—nothing is new or innovative; the problems with education never get solved. And why would those at the top even be motivated to solve them? They’re “sitting pretty,” as the idiom goes.

I began my research and my two websites (www.paradispublications.com and www.joekincheloe.us) for the very reason that I see far too many educators still sidestepping solutions for education—in spite of the ever-mounting evidence that change is desperately needed. They are great at describing the injustice that exists, which, unfortunately, too often simply divides us more; all we get from the top is endless rhetoric. Rhetoric does not solve the educational problems, much less our growing global problems and social injustices, particularly when that rhetoric neither speaks genuinely to nor allows the voices of those who hold the true keys to solutions. Rhetoric, in the past, has sold books, met the “publish or perish” requirements of the old model of education, and has made it look like a few elite really care about those who they, in reality, view as residing beneath them—thus, rhetoric boosts up the status quo. I have experienced this, first-hand and chose to bow out of the education scene immediately after Joe Kincheloe, who was serving as my mentor during my research, had passed away. Joe was genuine, as I have written extensively. While he may have been what many educators label as an “insider,” in many ways he was an outsider. There is much I have learned in relation to his being an outsider based on his writing and he was truly a committed, serving educator who took his work to improve education—and the world--seriously.

A few highly privileged self-serving people, “the insiders” with access to and control of all of the resources will never lead us to the complex solutions needed because in their eyes they would have to give something up—they would have to share the wealth and the spotlight. Solutions will never fall out of the sky or be handed down by, as Joe has described them, “dinosaur” professors/educators who continue along those same worn-out, boring paths of academia. These are the very ones who maintain heavily guarded gates that keep everyone else out, but the question becomes, why would we even want to enter those gates? Why would we want to join their boring, unimaginative game when we can create something more vibrant, creative, and never before imagined?

That the gates to truth and knowledge are heavily armed and guarded is something I have learned on a very personal level. I won’t go into the details here, but suffice it to say, I must be doing something right, due to the loud (and sometimes aggressive) protests from the higher

echelons. It is a new era, however, whether those at the top wish to acknowledge that truth or not. Change is on the horizon. This journal is but a small spark of that change that I hope lights multiple fires—the epistemological, ontological, social, and pedagogical revolution Joe had envisioned.

Thus, with this journal I am introducing some new authors with refreshing new perspectives on the topic, “The School Bus Ride: The Good, The Bad, and the Ugly.” With future journals, we will be paving the way for more who have great and creative ideas just waiting to be expressed. I would like to see the journal continue to grow both in size and frequency.

I encourage all writers to freely express their experiences, views, and knowledge. We all have so much to learn from each other. I invite you to join in the conversation if you have not yet done so. If you wish to contribute financially to this endeavor, we are in need of funds and any amount is appreciated. The more funds we have available, the more quickly we can expand and offer the opportunities to more people. I don’t like to ask for contributions, but until this endeavor becomes self-sustaining, I have no choice. As it stands, it is far from that goal, and yet I press onward to make this dream come true for myself and for those who share the dream of earning a living doing what they love. If you find this journal valuable, please take a few moments to click the link and contribute something. The funds will support future editions of the journal and the continuing research for a powerful educational process people can use effectively in their everyday lives. PLEASE CONTRIBUTE TO OUR [RESEARCH & EDUCATION FUNDS](#).

Also, if you have a small business, I will be including a small advertising section at the end of each journal in support of your endeavors. While the popularly touted “trend” is “no advertising” that obviously is not at all the true practice. Small businesses are at a huge disadvantage, particularly specialized service businesses due to the enormous marketing campaigns and technological advantage of the transnational capitalists and those who hold power. Our saving grace will be small, quiet, and niche efforts such as offered here. Thus, I would like to support small, reputable, honest, businesses as they support this publishing effort. The advertisements are perpetual since the journals stay published on the website, free to download and distribute. If you have a small business or service, I encourage you to take advantage now of the low advertising rates: [SPECIAL OPPORTUNITY](#).

WHY MUSIC?

Some people seem to find it strange that I often include music interspersed with my writing. I actually learned this technique from reading Joe Kincheloe’s works. There are many reasons why he embedded so much music into his work, one of which is the educational value. In future writings, I will cover this topic in its full “dimensionality” and I also continue to post insights and more examples from his work [here](#). There has been extensive research about the value of

music and more recently, it's been shown that children who played musical instruments basically improved their brain functioning for life, actually "restructuring" it. Albert Einstein is noted for commenting that he heard "in music" and that if he had not been a scientist, he would have been a musician. Actually, he **was** a musician in addition to being a scientist. He played the violin, and interestingly, by a "fluke" I was able to have violin lessons in elementary school. There was a one year program that offered free violin lessons for a year at the school I had attended. I was very disappointed when the program ended and my parents didn't have enough money for me to continue. A video about Einstein and his musical talent:

[Einstein and Music](#)

PARADIS PUBLICATIONS NEWSLETTER

With this issue of the Journal of Epistemology, I have also launched a *Paradis Publications Newsletter*. The newsletter will include a variety of interesting topics, critical commentaries on what's happening in the world, announcements of updates to the web sites, as well as announcements of the publication of future issues of the *Journal of Epistemology (JOE Journal)*. There will always be interesting and innovative topics covered, along with ideas for *living* the changes we want to see. If you are not already receiving the newsletter, you can email me at vanessajparadis@aol.com and I'll add you to the mailing list.

FUTURE ISSUES OF THE JOURNAL

We already have some exciting submissions for our next topic and you are invited to submit an article, story, poem, musical piece, artwork, photography, etc.: The topic for the next issue is **LOVE** and it's our second (annual) *Special Love Edition*. Now that both the numbers of contributors and readership is growing, I would be very interested in hearing about what you would like to have covered as topics for future issues. Again, the goal of the journal is to put out a wide variety of perspectives and interpretations of the selected topics. What do you feel are most critical social and environmental concerns? What would you like to learn more about in relation to education, learning and everyday life? What do you feel should be the purpose of education? You can send your ideas to the editor at the email below. In the meantime, I hope you enjoy this current issue! Be sure to pass the word, feel free to use the topics and articles in your own research and teaching, and distribute the journal freely.

Vanessa Jae Paradis, Founding Editor
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The School “Bus Ride”: the Good, the Bad, and the Ugly

Introduction to the Authors and Contents by Vanessa Paradis

Take a student’s journey from his first bus ride all the way through his schooling in Mariecor Agravante’s poem, “School Bus Memories.” Next, a video by D.J. Wowza presents a creative and fun rendition of “The Wheels on the Bus” which she had created for her toddler who loves the song. Next, L. Morgan discusses education and creativity, shedding more light on the question, “Are Schools Killing Creativity?” Included are links to several related videos. Next, Jennifer Stopper presents her personal experiences riding buses to different venues, from campouts and field trips and to school, and how her perspectives shifted from early childhood, middle school, and as an adult working as a camp counselor. And for a “good read” during those bus rides, Grant Glesmann critiques and recommends *The Last Book in the Universe*, a post-apocalyptic story by Rodman Philbrick. Get a sneak preview of the book with just enough information to get you interested!

After that, the article, “Rules for Living in Harmony” by Andrew Kolasinski eloquently describes his personal experiences which help us understand “personal space” and “crowding concepts” as may also be applied to bus riding. He includes a photographic example for us. “The Party Bus” by Nicole Staton takes school bus rides to a whole new—and fun—level. Do party buses allow the “child within” to re-emerge? Jessica McHugh’s “Boisterous Bus” ride provides insight into human nature as she generously shares her personal experience of an early on-the-bus crush that went “downhill.” Next, we get the touching perspective of a former school bus driver in Debbie Callahan’s article, “The School Bus Ride as Seen through the Eyes of a Former Bus Driver.”

The next article, “Is It Myth or Is It Real?” by KingBobby, along with “Who Is Archangel Cassiel?” from Wikipedia, has us taking a second look at myths. These articles provide a sort of “segue” to the next article I’ve written, “An Analysis of the Newtown Tragedy: Was the Public Taken for a Ride?” The take-home point is that knowledge is in a state of chaos. We can get as much truth from myths (which may be based more on reality than we often assume) as we can from nonfiction and media reports today, which provide a questionable picture of reality. As such, perhaps they hold equal value. Like myths of the past, the dichotomous perspectives of the Newtown school shooting suffers from the way it was reported and the vast amounts of missing information. Whether the consequence of how people remember, forget, or obfuscate truth, the myths of the past may be more useful than the myths the media provide to us today.

This has been a mere glimpse to get you interested. I hope you enjoy the creative efforts of the authors represented in this issue of the JOE Journal.

School Bus Memories by Mariecor Agravante

He remembered his first school bus ride:
'Twas when he was a young one of five;
While waving to Mom and Pop, he cried—
First day of school, *how would he survive?*

He recalled that time in Second Grade
When the Fourth-Graders would bully him,
And overworked drivers could not be swayed
To shield him from having a bruised limb.

So he asked his dear Pop for transport—
Fatherly love obliged the request:
Avoiding school bus rides helped to thwart
The stress of being punched in the chest.

Third Grade saw him on his first field trip,
It was to the Planetarium;
What a blast he had on that "Space Ship"—
At last a bus ride was no longer glum!

By his preteen years he had a crush—
He often looked for the bus She rode;
At times he'd wave at Her to see her blush:
Windows framed how his fondness for her showed.

By age Sixteen he had his license,
School buses again became a bother;
They'd halt traffic flow and make him tense—
He thought buses crept like grandfathers.

But when he returned from college one year,
Nostalgia tempered childhood memories;
Bad feelings on buses disappeared
And were replaced by halcyon reveries.

And Today he is now a Father
Thinking about the Future ahead;
He shares books on buses with his Toddler,
Preparing a Young Mind to be well-read.

Mariecor Agravante is a military veteran's wife, and a mother of two. She graduated with a BSci in Biology from Gonzaga University. Mariecor writes Science & Technology articles on various online platforms, and is content writer for a number of real estate, fashion, and informational technology websites. She is continually sought as a ghostwriter and as a freelance editor.

She can be contacted at mariecor@toboldlygo.com

The Wheels On the Bus



The Wheels on the Bus - Pink Bus

D.J. Wowza states in the description of this video, "I made this song and video for my then 2.5 year old son. It was his favorite song and he'd watch Wheels on the Bus videos on Youtube for hours. So we recorded our own (he was too shy for the video)."

What a great idea! And her video is well-loved by other children—it has more than a million hits.

Are Schools Killing Creativity? by L. Morgan

There was a TEDTALK by Sir Ken Robinson where the question was raised: “Does school kill creativity?” This was very interesting to me. Since the main focus of school is to prepare children for the next stage of their life I was sure I knew the answer. Yet, when I sat down to really think about elementary, middle, and high school I started to see a pattern emerge. The main focus of all this schooling was to get the kids to the next level of education. Even though I went to a performing arts school, it was sectioned off so the focus was not well-rounded but a specific subject. After watching the TEDTALK I found that Sir Ken Robinson was on to something. Are schools focusing so much on academics that they are missing out on nourishing children’s creativity?

“Truthfully what happens is, as children grow up we start to educate them progressively from the waist up. And then we focus on their heads. And slightly to one side.” * Throughout the talk Sir Robinson starts to paint a picture of the education system. “Every education system on Earth has the same hierarchy of subjects: at the top are mathematics and languages, then the humanities, and the bottom are the arts.” One of the most profound things I heard was “Children entering school in 2005 will be retiring in 2065, but we don’t even know what the world will look like in 5 years...” How are we supposed to be preparing today’s youth when we do not know what tomorrow will look like?

According to Sir Robinson we have an educational system that is rooted in academic ability but a degree today does not mean what it meant 10 years ago. There needs to be a restructure of what our educational focus and foundation is if we are going to be able to prepare our children for tomorrow. Sir Robinson shares a wonderful story about a woman named Gillian Lynne. Lynne was a girl who would never sit still and was getting into a lot of trouble at school. Her mother took her to see a doctor. The doctor asked Lynne many questions, and then took her mother outside to talk. As he left the room he turned the radio on. Once outside they watched Lynne through the window. Lynne was dancing around the room. The doctor told Lynne’s mother “Your daughter is not sick. She’s a dancer. Get her to a dance school.” The mother put Lynne in a dance school and Lynne later became a very famous choreographer for Broadway. The meaning behind this story is that in today’s standard when there is a child who won’t sit still we give them medication. Instead of realizing there are different ways of learning. Like Lynne some people need to move to be able to think. If the doctor had just put Lynne on medication and told her to sit still we would not have some of the wonderful productions she helped create today like the show CATS.

The main focus of Sir Robinson's talk was how there needs to come a change on what we are viewing as important in the educational system. I agree that there needs to be a change in how we are preparing our students to face tomorrow. Education is something no one can take away from you and needs to be nurtured and given room to grow. Instead of pushing students along and catering to the lowest common denominator it's time to wake up. We need to see students as individual gifts who learn different ways. There should be a focus on music, art, dance as well as science and math. Since we do not know what the future holds we at the very least need to look at the present. Students are dropping out of high school and are letting their education fall to the side. If we are not going to cultivate the education for students today.... What type of future are we creating?

Links to Sir Ken Robinson's insightful videos:

[Sir Ken Robinson: Do schools kill creativity?](#)

Uploaded on Jan 6, 2007

Sir Ken Robinson makes an entertaining and profoundly moving case for creating an education system that nurtures (rather than undermines) creativity.

[Sir Ken Robinson: Bring on the learning revolution!](#)

Published on Mar 11, 2012

Sir Ken Robinson: Bring on the learning revolution!

In this poignant, funny follow-up to his fabled 2006 talk, Sir Ken Robinson makes the case for a radical shift from standardized schools to personalized learning -- creating conditions where kids' natural talents can flourish. Creativity expert Sir Ken Robinson challenges the way we're educating our children. He champions a radical rethink of our school systems, to cultivate creativity and acknowledge multiple types of intelligence.

[Ken Robinson: How to escape education's death valley](#)

Published on May 10, 2013

Sir Ken Robinson outlines 3 principles crucial for the human mind to flourish -- and how current education culture works against them. In a funny, stirring talk he tells us how to get out of the educational "death valley" we now face, and how to nurture our youngest generations with a climate of possibility.

How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bus

by Jennifer Stopper

It's funny how the same person can react to different things at various stages in their life. Circumstance is a strange thing. For instance, even something as simple as a school bus. Being the child of an overprotective single father, my first exposure to school buses was during summer camps at the local YMCA, when we would board the bus to be taken on a whole slew of various field trips around San Diego. Because of this, I had an early association with buses being this whimsical form of transportation, hauling us to beaches, rec centers, museums and even the occasional amusement park. Buses a place we could sit with our friends and trade pokemon cards or compare lunches or allow ourselves to get lost in the colorful language carved into the seat in front of us. There was laughing and singing of camp songs and all of the city was alive and attainable from within that giant yellow bubble.

It wasn't until middle school that my perception of them took a downshift (pun intended). Attending an arts school, despite being exciting in and of itself, is a joy somewhat dampened by the hours kept. School started at 7:15 and with a 45 minute bus ride ahead of us, I was at my bus stop by 6:30 every morning. Both ways it amounted to an hour and a half every day on that blasted bus, cramped with teenage insecurity and grumpy driver fatigue. As class dismissed, the joy of freedom signaled by the wine of school bells was juxtaposed by the waiting army of yellow, a constant reminder that we weren't done yet. Until we stepped off that plastic smelling tin can, we still played by their rules. We were still slaves to the schedule.

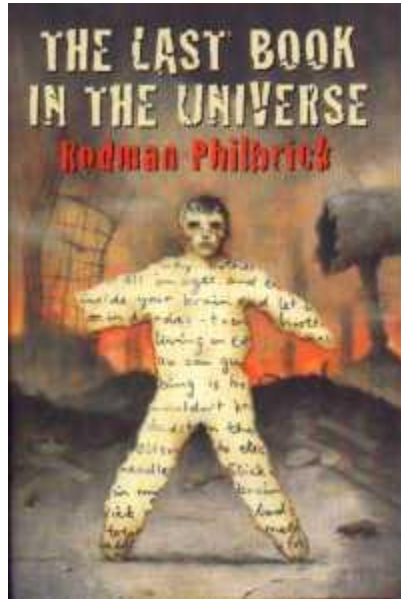
I remember crying in the morning to my father, begging to stay in bed. He didn't budge, but would instead remind me that if I wanted to stay at this school, this was how it had to be. After school, I would ask every single one of my driving friends if they could give me a ride home so I could bypass the bus. Very seldom did any of them feel up for driving to La Jolla. I persevered until twelfth grade. Graduation came as a sweet reprieve.

Lucky for me, my affair with the school bus has come full circle. After high school (and my daring escape from the succu-bus) my first job was a summer camp counselor at the very YMCA I grew up with. Through the eyes of the kids boarding those buses, beach towels and lunch pails in hand, through the snicker of their laughs as they read the backs of the seats and the roar of their singing as we barreled throughout the city, something I thought I had lost came back. And as an adult with all those many miles behind me, I have to say, I'm thankful for where the bus has taken me.

Jennifer Stopper is a graduate of the San Diego School of Creative and Performing Arts and holds a BA in English Literature from San Diego State University. Although her weekdays are spent behind a desk at the Scripps Performing Arts Academy, most weekends she can be found either performing improvised comedy at the National Comedy Theatre or singing her heart out at any venue that will take her. Jennifer may be contacted via email at jenniferannestopper@gmail.com

The Last Book In the Universe by Rodman Philbrick:

A Book Review by Grant Glesmann



Another book set in a post-apocalyptic world, but one that is much more possible.

An intricate story with many terms and phrases created by the writer to help bring us into his world.

Upon first opening the book we learn that it is narrated by the main character; a boy named Spaz. His name is an important thing to do with his character, so don't think it is stupid.

In our post-apocalyptic world, our Earth, people have a lot of different advancements and such in technology. One major thing is the mind-probes that have been entered into this world. A mind-probe is....well it's pretty much how it sounds. There are probes that are put into the brain. With these probes people can administer medicine, watch movies, be educated, and in essence go to a different world. Spaz, however, is one of the only people in existence who cannot use mind-probes. For some reason his body and mind have an allergy to them that would send him into a seizure resulting in death.

The people in this book are no different than you and me except they have been broken up into classes, and are set in different sectors. The main sector, or I suppose section of the earth, is the Urb. The Urb is where all of the poor or normal people live. I say normal, because there is a

'race' of people called the 'prooves'. The prooves are genetically improved humans who are born and raised in Eden. Now Eden is like paradise to those who have never been there. It is a world created based on the memories and remnants of the old world. It is filled with trees, grass, blue sky, architecture, and life.

One important thing I should mention is the fact that the world was made into the way it was by what they call The Big Shake. From my readings I have come to determine that this was a monstrous earthquake which set many things into motion. The earthquake brought about volcanic eruptions, which sent toxic fumes into the air that are still there today. The sky around you is gray, has been gray, and will always be gray.

Not long ago I mentioned the sector aspect of this story, which I find rather interesting. Instead of being called sectors in this book they are called Latches. The Latches are a sector that holds however many people, and is controlled by a Latch boss. Unfortunately, due to the fact the world is not what it is, there is no justice system whatsoever. If you cross a Latch boss' rules, which he/she thinks up, it means immediate cancellation; their term for death. Eden could be considered a sector/Latch, but it isn't. It is more a world that is shut off for the rest of people; for the normal humans. The prooves look down on them with disgust, and often will cancel someone simply for looking at them.

There are a lot more terms and phrases and ideals in this story I would bring up, but there are simply too many of them to fit into this review. Not to mention that a lot of the terms are rather poorly explained if at all.

Anyway, the important things in the story to note: Spaz is somewhat apart of the Bangers; a gang led by the Latch boss Billy Bizmo. Spaz isn't entirely apart of their gang/isn't really integrated here, but Billy protects him in return for services lent. This due to an interest taken in Spaz that you will not learn until about the last chapter in this book. Now, for the story at hand. Spaz is sent to one of the Stacks, a place of living for many, to go 'rip off' (steal) from a gummy (old person) named Ryter. What is surprising to Spaz is the level of calm that this Ryter has to offer. Instead of struggling, as most do, he simply shows Spaz where his items of value are and engages in friendly conversation. Some stuff happens, and we learn that Spaz' foster sister Bean is dying of some blood disease. Our protagonist asks the only person he knows can help him, Billy, but is sent off without the slightest bit of help. So, against Billy's orders, Spaz sneaks out and decides to go find his sister anyway. She lives in a latch a couple days journey away. Before leaving Spaz encounters Ryter who will not let Spaz go unless he takes him with him. Ryter is a very important and complex character filled with lots of knowledge and information about the world that Spaz never knew. The rest of the story is about the journey, and what a journey it is.

Personally I was rather indifferent to the story until about three quarters of the way in. It wasn't a bad story, but it just lacked that...special quality that made it a great story. I think a lot of this had to do with the fact that I didn't feel as immersed in the world as I had hoped. This I attribute to the fact that the writer didn't really do a lot to explain to us some of the concepts to his world; making immersion difficult. The writing style wasn't horrible in this book, but at the same time wasn't all that great. It reminded me of Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn* in the sense that the book was solely in the perspective of the main character. Not simply in his thoughts, but also in his words. However, I much prefer the writing in this book to the, sorry if this offends any of you, nauseating writing style present in *Huckleberry Finn*.

Although somewhat difficult to understand at times I definitely think this was a very interesting world. The concepts and ideas presented in this book were very intriguing, and could have only been better with more description. The way in which food, weapons, and everything else was presented was definitely intriguing; however, as I said before, it required more description to actually understand what many of the terms described actually were.

I don't think I really got into the book/liked it until about the very end. That was when it got good for me. The final twist in the story, and the last part of the journey really made for a great ending that I will not soon forget.

In conclusion, as I said I was rather indifferent to this story until the end. The writing style was not my favorite, but did not disappoint in the slightest. Rodman Philbrick's post-apocalyptic world was really rather interesting, and he did a good job of bringing it to life; done better only by further description. I think the thing I loved the most in this book was how possible this world actually was. The possibility of zombies is practically none, and most of the more machine style scenarios such as *The Matrix* are also very slim. This, however, is an extremely possible and plausible scenario for an apocalypse. There is an earthquake so severe that it sends the world into chaos. Destroying buildings and filling the world with an unending smog of toxic fumes. I really loved that. Anyway, although I was rather indifferent of this book I would still recommend picking it up. Whether or not you like/love this book it is definitely worth at least one read. I recommend it, and hope you enjoy it.

The Author:

My name is **Grant Glesmann** and I am a writer/critic/vlogger. I devoted most of my life to acting and truly thought that was the route I was going to take but, after some life experiences and marriage, I was inspired by my wife to take a different path. Writing had always been one of my skills. As a child I wrote many short stories and even a few screenplays. I've also been an extremely critical person with an eye for detail and thus fired up a blog dedicated to the reviewing of books and movies; however, I still

could not keep from entertaining and thus also birthed my YouTube channel where I post weekly vlogs and story readings. My plan is to be an at home vlogger and critic for the rest of my life. I want to be with my wife whilst making money doing what I love, which is what I believe to be a good and altogether possible life goal.

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Rules for Living in Harmony by Andrew Kolasinski

"Don't tell me to be reasonable." I whispered to my wife through the darkness. We had taken our seats early so we could have our choice. When the theatre began to fill I saw we would soon have neighbours to my right. Graciously I moved my elbow in order to share the armrest with the newcomer, but the moment I shifted to adjust my collar, the conniver took the opportunity to claim the entire armrest. "It's not me who wants to take over the world," I said to my wife in a stage whisper, and slightly louder, "Asshole!"

The movie began, but I couldn't concentrate. I ignored the swashbuckling on the big screen as I tried to edge my elbow back to its rightful place. The war of the armrest was on and for the duration of the film I was more absorbed in the outcome of my personal struggle than I was in the projected drama. It was a revelation of human nature to experience such passionate emotion and determination to gain dominance over a territory less than four inches square.

Spaces we occupy, even temporarily, belong to us only if we are ready to defend them. And not just at the movies. If you pay close attention to people next time you're at the shopping mall you'll realize there are vicious conflicts, power struggles, and minor assaults going on all around you. It's impossible to walk through the mall or down a busy sidewalk without experiencing barely contained hostility. People are moving towards their destinies and nothing must get in their way.

Lately I've been noticing how aggressive even the meekest people become when their plotted course is blocked. On my way home recently I saw an angelic young mother pushing her baby stroller through the crowded sidewalk like it was a battering ram. Ankles met axles and wheels rolled over toes.

Or consider the phenomenon of "road-rage". It's about freedom of movement and personal space. I'm guilty myself. Several years ago, another motorist on the freeway cut me off inconsiderately. I became so enraged I tailgated him for the next forty miles with my high beams glaring into his mirrors. I drove well past my destination, endangering both our lives, just

to annoy him in retaliation because he had broken the unwritten code of motorized culture: This bit of road is mine; it's my path in life. Violate this rule and the thin veneer of civility peels away, exposing the beast within.

There is a science behind these encounters. The study of spatial relationships, proxemics, is a branch of semiotics (a study of symbols and signs). Winfried Noth in his *Handbook of Semiotics* defines proxemics: "Most individuals are unaware of the norms of proxemic behaviours within their culture, but they do become conscious of them when these norms are violated or when they notice differences in spatial behaviour due to the norms of foreign cultures."

Have you ever encountered someone who stands too close to you, or a person who joins you on the sofa when there is clearly not enough space? Chances are that person was acclimatized to a foreign proxemic value. In cultures where public space is limited by harsh geography or by architectural confines, the tolerance for proximity between strangers, by necessity, increases. This is why it took me several weeks to get used to the washroom attendants in Eastern Europe. They would try to collect a payment while I was engaged in using their facilities. Eventually I overcame my sense of violation. I then was able to haggle with them for a reduced rate at the same time as I did my business with one hand and reached into my change purse with the other.

One measurable aspect of cultural difference is the frequency of body contact among strangers in public places. Edward T. Hall in his book *The Silent Language* presents data demonstrating that Arabs, Latin Americans and southern Europeans tolerate greater body contact than do Asians, Indians and northern Europeans. Among southern Italians, Greeks and other south Europeans, men commonly walk together arm-in-arm. Such behaviour would be met with puzzlement or cause hostility in less tactile cultures. It would be seen as an abnormal sharing of personal space. In Mexico I was terrified when the beggars downtown, all but stood on my toes, as they moved in with their pleas. Once I became proxemically acclimatized I discarded my sandals in favour of sturdy hiking boots and I soon turned the tables on the bothersome panhandlers.

Of course cultural differences don't account for every spatial intrusion. Some violations of personal space are perpetrated by mentally disturbed or unbalanced individuals. Walking on the sidewalk against the pedestrian flow is anti-social behaviour that can only be justified by some sort of an emergency. Such public disorder is more than a mere annoyance. The sort of pushing and shoving that is becoming more and more common in our marketplaces is a physical hazard to the elderly, weak and disabled.

I would be among the first to endorse a scheme to mandate the wearing of some sort of proximity detector. It could be a small radar that emits mild electric shocks when proxemic violations occur. Wearing a device like this, even the most spatially maladjusted nitwit could eventually be trained to give their fellow citizens enough room to eliminate social friction. Sharing public places necessitates some conforming to the actions of the herd.

Human interactions are not that different from the behaviour of animals. Patterns of movement of bird flocks, animal herds and fish schools, at times, appear to be orchestrated into a choreographed order. I have witnessed two flocks of birds cross each other's paths. Seen from below, the movements formed a pleasing geometry of exact angles. Herds of antelope running together seem to turn on a dime, each individual maintaining precise relative position. I've noticed the same sort of geometry while watching a crowded city plaza from my tenth floor balcony. The people below became tiny specks moving in an interlacing ballet.

The smooth interaction of strangers in public areas has created a set of unacknowledged rules. Private property can acquire a public aspect and requires a different set of values. How about the people next door who always park their truck just a little over the line, onto your section of the lawn. Even if you haven't marked your territory, the sanctity of your property should be known instinctively. Enclosing a residential yard is just a formality, but the builder's association estimates that every year North Americans buy enough fencing material to go around the earth three times. Neighbourly intrusions have driven some people into violent response. The legendary feuding neighbours, the Hatfields and McCoys, began their bloody conflict when a razorback hog strayed across a shared boundary line. Their decades-long feud resulted in more than twenty murders. Perhaps some sturdy chain link would have prevented the quarrel.

Keeping people far enough apart to prevent the outbreak of hostilities is only possible if there is enough space. There are many situations where space is limited or for other reasons the normal rules governing our actions in common areas do not apply. Behaviour in elevators, at bus stations, in stairwells, or in line-ups is more tolerant of space intrusion but less tolerant of expressions of identity. Psychologists call these "liminal spaces"; areas where we are in suspension or transition. The term is derived from the Latin, "limen", which is the root for "limbo" (nowhere). While you're waiting for a train, or being transported up an elevator shaft, it is impossible to fulfill normal social roles. You are nowhere, and in suspended animation.

Observe your own actions and thoughts next time you're riding in an elevator. You may find that you can't recall what you were thinking because you were in a liminal state of mind. Between floors, between one place and the next, you were not in your usual character or fulfilling a personal role. Social anthropologists consider liminal spaces as areas of transformation. While you ride up the elevator to a meeting, you are composing yourself for the next situation. While you wait at the airport for your flight to Mexico you are changing your outlook from the daily routine to a holiday state of mind. The departure lounge confines you with 150 people in similar circumstances and you will emerge together at the distant arrival lounge with a shared understanding of a new relationship to each other. The world around you will have stood still while you were in transition.

Liminal spaces are a necessity. They are a creation of our collective consciousness. We need to transform ourselves constantly to face new situations otherwise there would be much more social friction.

Back in the darkened movie theatre, proxemic justice was about to be effected. The hero on the screen was escaping from the villains while my seat neighbour shifted his popcorn then reached down to retrieve his jumbo cola. Just the opening I needed. My vanquished elbow made a triumphant comeback. He stared up at me through malevolent reptilian eyes and said, "You big fat jerk!"

Before I could fire off a suitable response, I heard, from the next seat over, "Tommy! That's no way to talk to a grown-up. You apologize at once or I'm taking you home and putting you straight to bed."

Andrew Kolasinski was born in The Hague Andrew Kolasinski arrived in Canada as a toddler riding in the luggage rack of a DC-7. Since then he has felt at home anywhere.

He is publisher of the journal, *Island Angler*. When not fishing for salmon and trout he travels the world and writes for newspapers, and websites. Kolasinski recently completed a book about Cusco, Machu Picchu and the Sacred Valley of Peru.

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Seeking less contact with his neighbors the Thai bus rider turns inward.
Photo by Andrew Kolasinski

The Party Bus by Nicole Staton

I kept looking out the window to the street. I was anxious. I had just forked over \$40 to some guy named Emilio to ride on his party bus for New Years.

"It probably won't even come," Jane whispered. She giggled nervously. Beside her sat our boyfriends. They looked as nervous as we did.

Our relationship to the host of this party was tenuous at best, but we were excited. As was everyone else. We didn't know anyone, but the house was full of people dressed to dazzle, taking shots of cheap whiskey.

A black bus with strobe lights drove past. It was a small residential street. What were the chances of two party buses driving by? Maybe it was just turning around to pick us up.

Only, it didn't, and we were again left to wonder if our party bus was merely myth.

And then a school bus stopped in front of the house. It was painted yellow and looked as though it would have been picking up children just that morning if it weren't for the "Not for Hire" sign on the side. I was vaguely disappointed it was a school bus and not the bus causing seizures with its strobe lights.

The inside hadn't been altered in anyway either. Except for a stripper pole in the middle.

The seats were the same brown plastic I'd sat in as a kid; the same seats that were stiff with cold in winter and seemed to leech our body heat. We shivered in our seats. It was then I remembered how drafty school bus windows were. How even when the windows were shut the breeze leaked through.

But that is where the similarities stop, I thought. It was a party bus, after all. We could drink alcohol and swing on the stripper pole. Much rowdier than schoolchildren were ever allowed to be.

Beers were passed around. Street lights began to swim rather invitingly. Everything was funny.

The kid across from me drew a boob on the window with the condensation. Another wrote, "Flash Us!" to a car full of girls.

“This wasn’t like the school bus I took as a kid,” my boyfriend said, to which we agreed by chugging our beer.

At midnight the bus stopped. We were in the middle of nowhere. Everyone climbed out of the bus to cheer on the New Year. We uncorked our champagne bottle and admired when it bubbled over.

Jane and I raced around the bus to pee as the bus driver creepily watched. Snow filled my shoe, but I couldn’t feel it. Ha! I was having too much fun.

We tromped back into the bus and we realized how sticky it was. The floor was slick with booze. Our shoes made squelching sounds as we walked through the alcohol.

As 2 am neared, a fight broke out over something or other. The bus driver stopped and kicked the two combatants off, leaving them behind as we returned to our starting point.

It was then that I realized how apt our school bus was. We had each reverted to our childhood selves. I laughed at jokes and took pictures of friends that my third grade self would have found funny. The fight on the bus was the same fight that happened every year of school, and the words written on the bus windows were in the same vein of notes every kid has ever scribbled with their finger.

Maybe alcohol makes us kids again. But I suspect not. I think our inner kid is just always waiting to make an appearance.

Aboard the Boisterous Bus by Jessica McHugh

I learned the word “boisterous” because of a middle school bus ride. Kids screamed with laughter, threw paper, and made obscene gestures at cars driving behind the orange behemoth. But I was the one being boisterous.

I’d recently conned myself into my very first training bra, and with the fashion of the 80s leaking into the 90s, I still wore off-the-shoulder sweatshirts. The fact that my bra strap showed through my fashion was just a coincidence.

Okay, *maybe* I wanted people to know I’d moved into a bra. Not the size, not the brand or color—just its existence. Maybe it was my fault. Maybe I was “asking for it.” I tempted fate

by exposing my pristine bra strap to the world—worse than the world—I exposed it to pre-teen boys. How could they possibly resist the urge to grab that elastic and release, marking my shoulders with those red badges of maidenform?

The boy in question was one I'd had a crush on all year. Honestly, I'd had a crush on most of the boys back then, but I was hardly one of the "bad girls." I just wanted to look like an adult; I already understood I was far from doing the things adults do. I was afraid to, in fact. Which is why I'm still baffled to this day that I would willingly portray myself as "a girl in a bra."

I was leaned against the seat in front of me, the green plastic duct tape-stitched pressing against my barely-existent breasts as I talked to my friend Brittany. Who knows what we talked about—My Little Ponies, Alvin and the Chipmunks, maybe even the boy I had a crush on. I didn't know the latter snuck up behind me as we discussed the important matters of the day.

By the time he hooked his finger into the strap, it was too late. It snapped against my shoulder, the stripe of fire feeling much larger than it probably was. And it only lengthened as he snapped again. And again. I fought against him, but he'd pinned me against the bus seat, snapping a good four or five times before I was able to wriggle free.

I was outraged, hurt, embarrassed. I expected someone to express the same feelings, but I heard something else instead.

Laughter.

I moved into another seat, curled myself around my backpack, and tried to ignore the teasing.

I did—for fifteen minutes, I ignored. But I also stewed. Unfortunately, being the only sister of two older brothers hadn't adequately prepared me for this situation. While my oldest brother rarely teased me, my other brother never let up—but he would've never pulled my bra strap. If he'd seen it, he would've mocked me so bad I never would've left the house with it exposed. Too bad I didn't encounter him that morning, I guess.

Either way, I got angry. What kid wouldn't? And, much to my shame, I took revenge on the bra-snapper. Revenge is never a good idea, especially not the kind I enacted.

My former crush's bus stop was a few before mine. Following custom, he made his way to the front of the bus on the stop prior, and I took pride in stealthily following him. It was pretty amazing considering a slew of derisions followed me up the aisle. A few boys even tried tugging on my bra for themselves. Luckily, I'd hidden all evidence of a bra beneath my sweatshirt and thick backpack straps.

This is where it gets bad. As my former crush waited for the bus to pull to a stop, I slid into the seat behind him and unzipped his backpack. How I did this without ANYONE noticing, to this day, I don't know. But more disturbing than everyone's ignorance was the fact that I'd had the idea in the first place. I knew what would follow, and still, I unzipped his backpack, exposing the entirety of his scholastic life.

When the bus stopped, he stood. And I stood with him, keeping only a slight distance. As he headed down the stairs, I followed. Then, leaning forward, I pushed him. I pushed him off the bus, into the street, with an open backpack. Books scattered and papers...well, some just flew away on the breeze, some into traffic. Other kids at the stop ran down to help him, and there were some responses of shock and outrage, but mostly I only heard one thing.

Laughter.

The bus driver didn't get up. She didn't do anything but yell for me to get back in my seat. She then closed the bus doors and proceeded to the next stop.

The following day, I received a bus referral that detailed my assault on my former crush. It said nothing of his infraction against me—only that I “pushed a boy” and was “boisterous.” Before I gave the referral to my parents, I looked up the word in the dictionary and thought, “Yep, that's me: boisterous.”

I didn't think about the repercussions of my actions that day. One, because I was a kid. Two, because I was a jerk kid—probably more than the former crush who'd snapped my straps. I never thought of myself that way before the incident, and I hope I haven't grown up into a jerk adult, but that day still sticks with me. It makes me wonder WHY I reacted that way? When he made me feel small, why did I need to make him feel the same?

I tell you this story because it's true. Because at the beginning, you might have thought I was the sole victim. I wasn't. Neither was that boy. The truth is that a school bus is a classroom in brutality, the shades of which vary from kid to kid, and one hardly noticed by the people in charge. But it's not the bus driver's place to police this Lord of the Flies on wheels. His or her job is to get your kids from Point A to Point B in a timely and safe manner. How can someone be sure of everything that happens in the background when one's eyes need to stay on the road?

This isn't about blame. It isn't about innocence. It's about the realization that human beings, no matter the age, often don't think before they act—especially if they've been wronged.

I am ashamed of my actions that day. Seeing who the boy has become on social media (not that social media is an accurate litmus test of humanity), I doubt he's as ashamed. He

might not even remember that day. But I do. I've carried it with me from then to now, maybe so I can pass it on to you in the hopes that one person will change their mind on the black and white of innocence and guilt.

Life is a chain reaction. It's unfortunate that, for a lot of us, the tendency to react poorly began in the mad belly of a boisterous, orange beast.

Jessica McHugh is an author of speculative fiction spanning the genre from horror and alternate history to young adult. A member of the Horror Writers Association and a 2013 Pulp Ark nominee, Jessica has had thirteen books published in five years, including her bestseller, "Rabbits in the Garden." More info on her speculations and publications can be found at JessicaMcHughBooks.com.

The School Bus Ride As Seen Through The Eyes Of A Former Bus Driver: “The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly” by Debbie Callahan, M.S. Ed.

As a middle school teacher, I have more than my fair share of daily challenges. However, I am the first to admit that within the public school system, there are far worse jobs to have. One in particular that I could never imagine myself doing is driving a school bus. Yet when I speak with bus drivers, not all seem to view their positions in a negative light. They seem able to find rewards amongst the stress and frustration, and each bus ride can make such a difference in the lives of the children they transport.

Forming relationships with students is one of the best rewards of the bus ride for the drivers. One former bus driver with whom I spoke explained how she used to actually help the children study, verbally quizzing them as she drove, on the way to and from school. “The reward,” explains Jes Harmon, “was when they would get good grades and come running to the bus so they could just show me that first C because all they ever got were F’s. The look in their eyes and the excitement alone always brought tears to my eyes.” She also fondly remembers the hugs and thank yous. The homemade cards and letters from the students also brought great joy to Ms. Harmon in her years as a bus driver.

As with teaching, there are many situations that can break the hearts of the most seasoned bus drivers. In our positions, we often learn that not every child is well-off, or even well-cared for at home. However, bus drivers see these students’ home environments where there is often little-to-no food or parents who are not home or are unfit, under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Yet, the bus driver must usually leave the kids in these situations, but sometimes, in extreme situations, bus drivers are forced into a position of having to call the Department of Children and Families (DCF) or the Sheriff’s Department.

In addition to those times when drivers may feel helpless and have to call in other departments to step in and take care of situations that they cannot, there are always times during those bus rides when the drivers have their hands full with things they must do. Some of these include cleaning up various body fluids, calling 911 as a student has a seizure, and of course, breaking up fights. Sometimes on those less than pleasant rides, the drivers are attacked. Harmon has even been attacked by students, once requiring medical attention and physical therapy.

With all of the challenges facing her during those bus rides, Harmon seems to focus on the positive, but she does express that the most difficult part of the job was not being able to take the poor or neglected among the students home with her to provide them with a decent

meal or new clothes. She did, however, manage to occasionally provide a fast food breakfast or pizza snack as rewards for a good week both on the bus and in school making her an instant favorite among the students, and allowing her the opportunity to provide care where she could.

Like with anyone whose job includes the care of children, bus drivers face the good, the bad, and the ugly on their daily rides, but perhaps many of us never realize the impact that these special people have on the lives of the children they transport each day. That smile as the door is opened might be the first or last that a child sees that day, and that warm greeting, homework help, and occasional unexpected snack could be the only one that student gets. This only proves that a person does not need to carry several degree initials after his or her name and make it to the top of the educational ladder or to make the difference in the life of a child. Sometimes, the bus ride is everything.

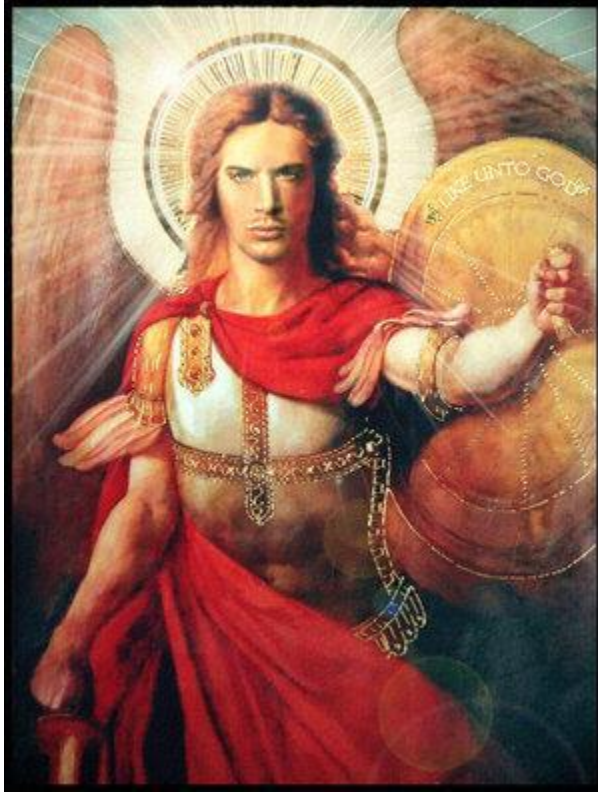


Debbie Callahan is an eighth grade English teacher and college adjunct instructor of Writing. She holds a Bachelor's Degree in English Language/Literature, a Master's Degree in Education, and is in A.B.D. status for a Doctorate in Teacher Leadership. Recently, she has returned to her true passion of freelance writing and editing, while writing two books of her own on education reform and a memoir of a Holocaust survivor. In her spare time, what little there is, she enjoys spending time with her grown sons and her husband Scott at her home in Florida. She volunteers at the Holocaust Memorial Education and Resource Center in

Maitland and writes and speaks on the lessons from the Holocaust and sharing the stories of survivors, veterans, rescuers, and victims. Although she focuses on writing memoirs and testimonies, she writes articles on various subjects. To discuss how Debbie can assist with your writing projects or to have her write your memoir, email

D.CallahanWritingServices@gmail.com. You can learn more about Debbie's work at holocaustlegacies.blogspot.com, Debbie Callahan M.S.Ed. on LinkedIn, and coming soon: DCallahan.com.

Is It Myth or Is It Real? by KingBobby



Is it myth or real? Well what am I talking about right?! I am talking about mythology like Greek mythology, Egyptian, etc. Well I am not sure really, whether it's real, but in reality I would not doubt though. I say that because part of me does believe it and part of me is skeptical but I do believe in them. But I heard from someone that they [the characters in myths] were not who they say they were. For example, they were reptilians taking glory for themselves pretending to be "gods". And people once worshiped these lizard people, a.k.a Reptilians.

Another very important thing about this is that it comes from David Icke. He's this English person who talks about them and so much more. Well he mentions them, and more as well, in more detail than anybody I know besides me, lol.

Well, he talks about this pretend-to-be god and play god but he also says that the reptilians' biggest secret is this! Are you ready for it? Here it goes: We are being eaten on the other side. Religions and etc

are their creation and baby and they are a trap for the mass of people to think one is a sinner and bad person or spiritual being in order for us to fall victim, to say the least, and make us believe that we are something we are not and make us think we are sinners, lol.

So when we pass over we go into a lower realm they more than likely created to eat us and torture star seeds and humans alike. They don't care who it is! Have I seen a reptilian? Nope, but so many credible people and many alternative people say the same thing. When I mention alternative people, I mean non-mainstream people like David Icke and others alike. I feel like he's more than honest.

Mainstream media news are controlled by the elites and Illuminati and free masons, etc., and they all have different names but the same goals, and they work together. Now I do believe there are celestial beings and etc., like angels, but there are those lower entities that can pretend and act like them, too. So what I am saying is be careful when you ask for help from entities and spirits. Ask them to prove to you that they are who they say are and to write their names on something. I read in a book they can't write other names but their own. Trust your intuition and gut feeling and make careful and cautious choices first. That's what I do. Even I have trouble with this at times, but I know there are higher dimensional beings and etc., like me. I had a dream that I was a archangel called Cassiel once, and part of a great team. Even though I have been born as a human for several lifetimes, that's still who i am--one part of me, anyway. I am a star seed hybrid of both Andromedan and Pleiadian, although my Andromedan side is more prominent. I still take pride of all my origins.

Who Is Archangel Cassiel? Reprinted from Wikipedia

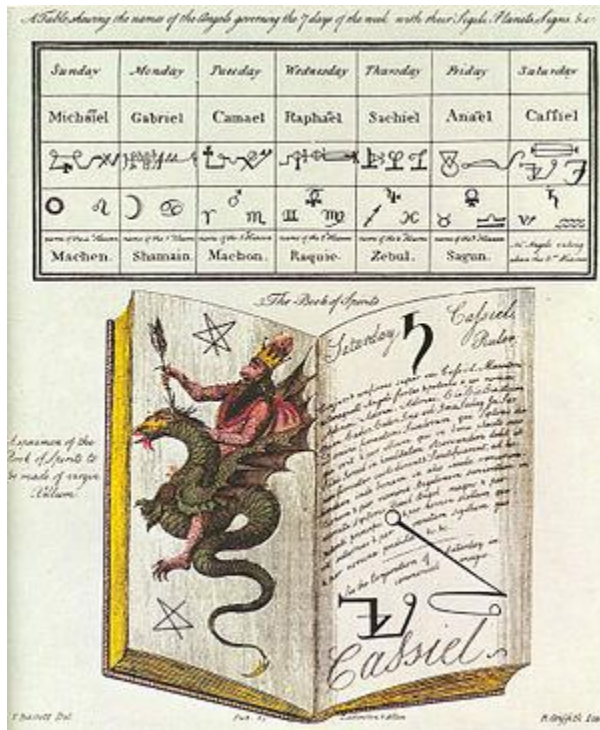
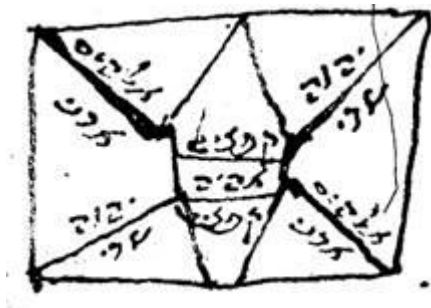


Illustration of Cassiel from *The Magus* by Francis Barrett (1801)

Cassiel (Hebrew קפצאל *Qafsiel Kaziell*) is the Latin name of an **archangel** in post-biblical Judeo-Christian religion, particularly that of the **Kabbalah**. Unlike many other angels, Cassiel is known for simply watching the events of the cosmos unfold with little interference. He is the angel of solitude and tears, and is said to preside over the deaths of kings.^[1]

He is often included in lists as being one of the **seven archangels** and often associated with the Seventh Heaven.



Qafsiel amulet from the 15th century

In mythology

In **Jewish mysticism** and **Mesopotamian mythology**, Cassiel is associated with the planet **Saturn** and the direction **north**. He is the controller of the **moon**.^[2]

In the magical text **Berit Menuchah**, Cassiel is associated with **Kefitzat Haderech**, the ability to travel quickly through space. Magic spells using his name are cast to create destruction, to scatter crowds, to cause a person to wander aimlessly, or to fall from a position of power.^[3]

Ancient Hebrew **amulets** bearing his name are used to drive away one's enemies. The words on the charm are written with the blood of a bird and then tied to the foot of a dove. The dove is

then set to flight, taking one's enemy with it. Should the bird refuse to fly, it is a sign that one's enemies won't depart either.

Archangel Cassiel can also be called: Casiel, Cassiel Mocoton, Kafziel, Qafsiel, Qaphsiel, Qaspiel, Quaphsiel. He is also known as the angel of temperance.

In the Jewish Kabbalah

In rabbinic literature, the Kabbalah is the only one that relates the identity of angels with the souls. There are a few different views on how many classes of angels there actually are. One of the older views, the most widely known view, consists of angels being divided into seven classes. This allows the number of archangels connect to the heavens. Another view states that there are only three true archangels due to the fact that there are only three heavens. This view states that the number of heavens corresponds with the number of angels. When these two are combined, you come up with a third view that states that there are ten classes of angels. Another theory pertains to the names of the archangels to the planets.^[4] Archangels are also referred to as the "chief angels" and called the "angels of the presence."^[5]

Archangels are connected to a level of sephiroth, the Kabbalah contains 10 levels of sephiroth each holding different meanings and responsibilities. Each sephiroth is assigned a name and a number and becomes associate with an archangel, a name of God, an angelic order, and a planetary force. These levels are sometimes referred to as Vessels of Light because they are representative of the progression of the realms in which they are connected. The sephiroth are God's means of interacting with the physical world.^[6]

In popular culture

- Cassiel is a character in the webcomic *Misfile*.
- Cassiel is the main protagonist in *The Outcast Season* series by Rachel Caine ^[7]
- The character of Cassiel appears in Wim Wenders's film *Wings of Desire*, as well as the U.S. remake, *City of Angels*. Cassiel, played by Otto Sander in the original and Andre Braugher in the remake, watches with considerable ambivalence as his friend becomes human. In the sequel *Faraway, So Close!*, Cassiel himself becomes human. Nick Cave wrote *Cassiel's Song* as part of the music for that film.
- In the mythology of Jacqueline Carey's *Kushiel's Legacy* series of novels, Cassiel is one of the angels who follow the Blessed Elua in his wanderings. Unlike the other angels, Cassiel remains true to the commandments of God and does not intermingle with mortals. Instead, he remain's Elua's "Perfect Companion," devoted only to protecting and serving him in celibacy. Cassiel gives his name to the Cassiline Brotherhood, an order of celibate warrior priests, who are employed as bodyguards by the royalty and nobility of Terre d'Ange. Their motto is "Protect and Serve."
- In *The CW* series *Supernatural*, the angel "Castiel" was inspired by Cassiel.^[8] Initially, like Cassiel, he is merely an observer of the events on Earth. He refuses to interfere unless ordered to by the heavenly host. Slowly he begins to deviate from this, eventually becoming a full-on rebel, and eventually fallen, angel, but always retains his admiration for the human race.
- In the *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* episode "Tough Love", Cassiel is mentioned in the holding spell Willow casts on Glory.^[9]

- In the [Old Kingdom series](#) by [Garth Nix](#), Cassiel is mentioned to be a previous, absent-minded Abhorsen. Lirael wields his bells in [Lirael](#) and [Abhorsen](#).
- In "Flight of Angels", the soundtrack to the game Splice by Cipher Prime Studios, Cassiel is the name of a song.
- In the game [Darkness 2](#), a darkness sub-machine gun, known as the Kafziel, can be found in the final level if Jackie Escadato chooses to go to Hell to save Jenny.
- In the Civiliation IV game mod "Fall from Heaven", Cassiel is angel who serves the god of balance, and also a leader of civilization called [Grigori](#)

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An Analysis of the Newtown Tragedy: Was the Public Taken for a Ride?

by Vanessa Paradis



It's interesting when one delves deeply into research on any given topic of interest and discovers an amazing array of perspectives. There is so much to learn by researching many different perspectives and viewpoints. However, too often when it comes to highly controversial topics or complex political and social events, the views are dichotomized and perhaps the more important question than **what** happened then becomes, **why is truth so hard to get to?** Why are views so dichotomized and polarized? What exactly is happening in the media that makes it seemingly extremely difficult, if not impossible, to drill down to truth? What causes, for example, the truth of what happened in a highly publicized event such as the Newtown school shooting incident to be so conflicted and polarized—and why? It truly seems that people either gravitate toward one extreme perspective or the opposite extreme perspective. Is this by design? Investigating these views can literally be reality-shaking. There are many incidents and topics I might cite as examples, but the Newtown shooting tragedy provides an example of this dualism that emerges, and it's still being profiled in the news today. I don't have final answers, but I do believe that it is critical that we begin to explore possible answers—and solutions—if we are to maintain some semblance of sanity in the media and our world.

There are no doubt multiple factors that cause people to speculate and fill in the blanks to events such as this tragic alleged school shooting, including due to the way it was reported in the press, the conflicting accounts provided, the need to wait until the investigation has been completed, the trauma people have suffered, etc. A recent article by [cpost.com](#) attempts, without great success to address the concerns for the delay in releasing details (October, 19, 2013), stating, "State's Attorney for [Danbury Stephen Sedensky III](#), who is in charge of the investigation, has said he expects to release a full report sometime in the fall." In the meantime, we are approaching the one year anniversary of the shooting and the school building itself is being demolished. It seems the delay and the secrecy behind the incident is acting as more fuel for people to fill in the blanks however they can and in the meantime, other people are capitalizing on the incident for various purposes.

For example, recently, a book by Joshua DuBois was published and promoted in [Huffingtonpost.com](#) in which the incident is cited; the title of the article highlights and perpetuates the secrecy surrounding the details we, as the public, have of the event:

[What Obama 'Did In Secret' In Newtown \(EXCERPT\)](#) (October 26, 2013).

Another article provides that

“The President’s Devotional,” released Tuesday (Oct. 22) by Pentecostal minister turned political aide Joshua DuBois, is a compilation of 365 of the more than 1,500 meditations DuBois has sent the president since he started working for him in the U.S. Senate. . . . In one of the dozen essays that introduce a month’s devotional readings, DuBois recalls how Obama took on a pastoral role as he talked with surviving family members of the 20 elementary schoolchildren killed in Newtown, Conn. - See more at: <http://wilmingtonfavs.com/2013/10/21/aide-shares-the-bible-devotionals-he-sent-to-president-obama-each-morning/#sthash.1IscF0l4.dpuf>

The above article goes on to state:

DuBois, who now runs the [Values Partnerships](#) consulting firm, also revealed that he disagreed with Obama and others in the administration on the controversial contraception mandate in the Affordable Care Act. He wrote that he argued “the government just can’t force religious organizations to pay for things they don’t believe in.” When the White House carved out an exemption for some religious groups, DuBois said it showed the administration heard and understood the criticism. - See more at: <http://wilmingtonfavs.com/2013/10/21/aide-shares-the-bible-devotionals-he-sent-to-president-obama-each-morning/#sthash.1IscF0l4.dpuf>

In an odd twist, the article seems much like an advertisement for a new organization that may be attempting to mix politics with religion in ways that may not be appropriate or agreeable in a country that’s founded on religious freedom and separation of state. It has included a direct link to a newly forming organization, <http://www.valuespartnerships.com/>. With a mission that states, “Based in our unique experience at the intersection of religion, culture and social change, we help private, public and not-for-profit institutions partner with the faith community and other grassroots organizations to tackle big challenges. And we help leaders and organizations in the church more effectively navigate and serve the world around them” and given the author’s positioning in relation to President Obama, one has to be curious as to how much and in what form religion will intrude into politics and vice versa.

The book, and possibly the organization itself, seems to be capitalizing on the controversy and mystery surrounding Sandy Hook shooting to get in the public eye; it makes one wonder if there is a complex matrix beneath the surface propping various players up. Determining that would take deeper research to find out who those players are and how they interconnect. The issues being highlighted surround very controversial ones such as women’s reproductive rights and the lobbying taking place for more stringent gun laws, as well as the trend toward a global movement to cram “spirituality,” ideologically defined, on people (some people claim it’s the New World Order’s move toward a One World Religion). These are the

very issues that continue to be used to polarize people and keep them divided. And if there are no answers or missing puzzle pieces to polarizing events such as this shooting, one thing is certain: people are good at creating polarized possibilities. What's disconcerting is that this then serves the same outcome: dividing the people. Division of the people is a Machiavellian approach to law and order.

The statement about spirituality and forcing it on people may seem surprising coming from me given a lot of my own work has incorporated seemingly spiritual perspectives (if you are familiar with my work). However, I will clarify here that I merely present perspectives. Some people misinterpret my perspectives for my reality. I do look at topics through the lens of many different filters, thus, spirituality and religion are perspectives that can sometimes shed some light on a different understandings. And sometimes I do come to believe what I learn, but I am always re-evaluating, holding ideas tentatively, and seeking many ways to look at the same phenomena. There is little understanding how our consciousnesses have been constructed or molded, thus, it's difficult to determine whether what we believe is based on actual experiences or whether ideas have somehow been emblazoned into our subconscious minds and then we live these experiences. Much more study is need in the area of consciousness and higher states of experience.

Much of what people define as "spiritual" clouds the fact that "spiritual" explanations may simply represent a lack of knowledge or perhaps simply provide various metaphors for describing phenomena we may not otherwise be able to describe. Scientists are beginning to offer explanations for some of these phenomena from a science perspective, which also provide important information for seeking understanding and new ways to describe complex experiences. Thus, I am ever-seeking of new knowledges and perspectives and trying on different "hats" so to speak. I am not for or against spirituality or religion. The problem comes in when a few people make interpretations and then force their ideologies onto others or use their power to limit and control the rights of people who have different beliefs, which is why I find the promotion of this particular book and the way it's being promoted troubling—it is ideologically linked to politics, the media, and religion, three powerful dominating forces. These are complex issues I creatively explore in my writing in various, innovative ways, taking on different perspectives—an act that some people find difficult to understand. And since my research and writing evolve in a rather improvisational manner, the reasoning behind it all may not be revealed until later. Sometimes I don't even know for certain why I am exploring from particular perspectives until I've gotten into the research. Most of my writing is improvisational and I go where I feel I'm being guided.

I point these issues out because I want to emphasize the fact that I take **tentative views** toward complex situations and controversial topics, including in this article about this tragic

shooting. There is most often missing knowledge and too many missing details in these situations. To make things more complicated, the issues, themselves, are evolving and revealing new dynamics, interrelationships, connections, and motivations as time moves forward, as is demonstrated by the case with the Newtown shooting. Taking a tentative view is a strategy that's incorporated in Kincheloe's complex form of [bricolage](#) research. The idea is to obtain as many perspectives as possible to aid in understanding what we are studying but to realize at the same time, it's not possible to examine them all. As he explains, there are just too many, in addition to the fact that new information continuously reveals itself, especially if, as researchers, we begin to actively interact with it. We change the research and the research changes us. (Kincheloe, 2008; Kincheloe & Berry, 2004).

Continuing with the topic at hand, there are multiple articles in the mass media that have recently been published about this new book by DuBois, emphasizing how religious President Obama is. We might be asking why it's so important that we understand this, especially given all of the conspiracy theories surrounding the idea of a One World Religion. It also does not escape me that scholarly researchers are also attempting to push spirituality into the classrooms in a variety of ways, including mandating that students engage in meditation. While I have no objection to meditation, I do object forcing all students to engage in it, not considering whether they may want to or not. For one thing, meditation is not effective for everyone and there are many other relaxation techniques. Scientists have only recently begun studying whether there may be harmful effects of meditation. There are dangers to meditation (e.g., [17 Ways Mindfulness Meditation Can Cause You Emotional Harm](#)). And some people associate meditation and yoga with religion (whether that is correct or not is debatable and depends on context), again indicating that in their minds requiring meditation or yoga in school represents a conflict of the separation of church and state, and so then they may object since *their* religion is not allowed in school.

In relation to religion and the potential hazards of not keeping it separate from state, the former President George Bush had indicated that he thought he was on a mission from God:

"George Bush has claimed he was on a mission from God when he launched the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, according to a senior Palestinian politician in an interview to be broadcast by the BBC later this month"
(<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2005/oct/07/iraq.usa>).

We know how disastrous his reign turned out for the world. It seems hard to deny that not only the United States, but a great portion of the world suffered during those years of his presidency, and continue to suffer to this day. And yet, promoted in the article under discussion is a rather frightening proposition to consider:

We can do anything today — and we'd probably be right. Our statements are likely backed by unassailable facts and solid figures. Our postures toward those who have wronged us are probably justified. The judgment we cast on others is likely warranted, given their misdeeds. But is being right . . . worth it? Once we've summited the mountain of our own correctness, what great prize will we receive? - See more at: <http://wilmingtonfavs.com/2013/10/21/aide-shares-the-bible-devotionals-he-sent-to-president-obama-each-morning/#sthash.1lscF0l4.dpuf>

This trend toward an “anything goes” attitude has been pushed on the public for quite some time now in multiple arenas and perhaps this is something that contributes to the difficulty of drilling down for the facts. Maybe truth is not even supposed to matter anymore. For example, various education domains and religious studies promote using what is often referred to as a “ludic postmodern” or nebulous approach to research that contributes nothing to the knowledge base. Of course, this is readily observable in the entertainment media where anything does go, with no thoughts about how society is affected. Lachman, who has presented a more rational approach to knowledge-seeking describes what he has termed a “Hermesian state of mind” in which information is brought together in a more logical and useful way, albeit intuition and creativity are also involved. Thus, the Hermesian state of mind relates to “bringing together,” synthesizing and alchemizing—and empowering. When we engage in research or any kind of learning in which we seek the differences inherent in multiple perspectives (the more perspectives, the more effective this is), we synthesize information to create new knowledge. And at the same time, we are reconstructing or transforming our own consciousness; as stated previously, we alter the research as the research alters us. Lachman elaborates:

Whether it is Hermes and Thoth themselves, or heaven and earth—above and below—the Hermetic act seems to be one of connecting otherwise apparently disparate ideas, beliefs, and visions, and producing some new vital current out of the encounter. This is not the same as the postmodern ethos of “anything goes”, which is motivated more by a jaded, often cynical “post-belief” than by any effort to transcend the cul-de-sac at which western philosophy has arrived. Quite the contrary. If, Favre tells us, the Hermeticists “see the body as a magical object, mystically linked to the planets and to the elements of nature, it is because they find sense everywhere in things and transcend the illusion of banality.” And this, Favre remarks, is a “supremely poetic task.”

Postmodernism thinking, to me at least, seems to operate with exactly the opposite mindset: “deconstructing” the great systems of thought, it arrives at a vision (or lack of it) that finds no sense—no meaning—anywhere. When nihilism first raised its disturbing head in the second half of the nineteenth century, it caused a kind of panic in the collective consciousness. Now it is taught at universities and hardly causes a stir. (Lachman, 2011, pp. 211–212)

Thus, there are clear parallels between the *multidimensional critical complex bricolage*, Kincheloe's form of research that has us seeking multiple perspectives, and the "Hermesian Spirit," and, once again, a clear differentiation is made here between the postmodern "anything goes" approaches that quilt-making bricolage metaphors may slip into, and the more creative, analytic, "bringing together" approach that produces something new. We do not throw out traditions nor reject the modern world, according to Lachman (2011), but instead, the drive behind intense curiosity and focused eclecticism of the Hermetic mind is to "synthesize its insights with those of the past in order to produce some new possibility, not immediately given by either" (p. 212). This further explains my approach to research, why I consider looking from spiritual and religious—as well as science—viewpoints. When we achieve many views on a topic, it is a sort of magic that happens in a sense, once our mind has taken in all of the ideas and we have time to process them. Often sudden insights or "epiphanies" will come to us and move our understanding forward and with this, we can see or create new approaches to complicated problems.

But there are some issues, such as the case with the Newtown, in which the mass media seems to purposely present dialectically opposing takes, with no middle ground, an existential state of hyperrealism created from a constant sense of cognitive dissonance. How do they do this? And why? I think the why is easiest to understand. It's no longer a secret that the media and government is controlled by the top 300 multinational corporations and serves their needs. (It may be fewer now, because they've gone through internal shifts in their fight over dominance and money). It has long been the goal to keep the public divided across many axes. The creation of the illusion of polar opposites between "Republicans" and "Democrats" has long been a strategy to keep people divided. At this point there truly seems to be little if any difference since the two groups of politicians, aside from their petty fights over pork barrel interests, clearly work hand-in-hand and their separation is more of a created false reality than reality itself. It's one that's wearing thin as more people can see behind the façade.

The media seem to have taken this strategy of divide and conquer to an exceptionally diabolical, complex, and very high level at times. It's as if their wish to divide people is a more powerful motive than providing a more complete picture of truth. Combine that with the different motives behind interpretations of what they present and the result is that multiple, conflicting realities can be shown. All one needs to do is look for patterns that match their particular "take" and ignore the patterns that don't support their view. While I can cite many examples based on the extensive research I've done, I will stay with the Newtown case to provide a concrete, focused example and because it relates to our theme in a metaphorical sense—it may very well be a "school bus ride"—according to the conspiracy theorists.

After listening to the numerous views about Newtown and researching for an extended time, literally two different realities have been constructed. One is the sanctioned view that the event happened as described by the press and is the view that most of the public hold because they depend on the mass media for their information. The other view is presented by the conspiracy theorists, or those who have taken time for analysis and investigative reporting. It's actually pretty much common knowledge among the theorists that the mass media (or "cabal" or whatever label one wishes to use) has its tentacles in both views and may be presenting both sides of the picture as well (this maximizes confusion, division, and discord). As the theorists reveal insight that counters the sanctioned view, or in other words, "blow their cover," the mass media will return to promote (and at the very least, allow) these countering views because it serves their wishes to keep the public divided. Sometimes the media will release new "facts" which the theorists refer to as "controlled release" of information because they are already known or have become widely believed bits of information. Thus we have conspiracy theorists claiming that the incident was a staged event. Some contend that it was actually a drill, that no one at all was killed and that it was filmed and presented as real to keep the public off balance, create discord, and/or to take the next step toward martial law by providing support for tightening up gun laws (and, indeed, of course the people involved did promote this). Are the conspiracy theorists off their rockers to claim that no one was killed—have we all been taken for a metaphorical "school bus ride"? Other conspiracy theorists may present that the shooting did occur, but that it's being hyped up for political reasons. Some of them try to present a more balanced view, but none of the views hold up—each perspective is simply missing too much information and provokes too many questions.

I honestly don't have the answer to truth in this case because strangely, I see truth—and inconsistencies—in both versions and I don't have the resources to do a deep investigative analysis, complete with interviews it would take to get more information about this case. Without meaning disrespect or a lack of compassion to those who have lost children and family members, I thought it might be worthwhile to explore these two immensely different views as an example of how the media and those who hold power over us seem to capitalize on the fear, division, and discord such disasters exert on people and how secrecy fuels conspiracy theories. Some of the theorists work hard to get to truth and should more rightly be referred to as investigative reporters. Sadly, there are people who think it's funny to create, for example, YouTube videos of nonsense, basically mocking those who are trying to analyze for truth. While absurdity as a form of expression has a role, it's destructive when used to impede getting to truth about situations such as this one. Exploring these various approaches should shed light on why it becomes so important that we learn, first of all, to not allow this division between us, and perhaps begin the work of finding "common ground"—and secondly, how it becomes important to learn to do the research required to get at least a little closer to the truth.

Thus, as conveyed, first there is the official story, of course, which few people question. A lone shooter, a 20-year-old man allegedly shot his own mother, a teacher, at their home and then went into Sandy Hooks Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut on December 14, 2012 and shot six adults and 20 students. There is confusion in the media over whether his mother actually taught at the school (one interviewee says no; another says yes, that it was why the boy was recognized and allowed into the school; and then the question has been raised: where is the video of him at the door since the media had indicated the school had just been equipped with a special security camera). The media went into a wild frenzy over this tragedy, and at the same time, the incompetency of the reporting may have been what fueled the conspiracy theorists—or the media was consciously supporting the conspiracy in this dichotomous presentation. There are many unanswered questions.

The following two videos are initial reports of the situation. The date was December 14, 2012

[Connecticut Shooting in Newtown at Sandy Hook Elementary: 1 Gunman Confirmed Dead](#)

In this report the school had been “cleared,” the gunman was found dead, and only one child had been transported to the hospital with injuries. Other injuries were reported, the extent of which were not clarified, and there was confusion over whether there was a second and maybe even a third shooter (which as it turned out, in the official report there was not).

The following is a screenshot from the video that shows the emergency vehicles in front of the school.



[Tragedy at Sandy Hook Elementary School: What Happened During Newtown, Connecticut Shooting?](#)



The shooting happened at 9:41 AM, according to the above report, which was filmed the same day of the shooting. The police were called and the school was put in lockdown. The report says it takes an “agonizing hour” to determine what went on in the school. It says the children and teachers were escorted out of the school by 10:30 AM. Surely the police

knew by that time that children had been injured or potentially injured and would have called ambulances before this. Wouldn't they be trying to rescue the injured? And in this report, there's no mention—as was made in the other report—that one student had been taken to the hospital with injuries. It specifies that it took the police until approximately 11:00 AM to realize that multiple injuries and fatalities had occurred and called for ambulances—this does not add up. They did not announce fatalities until 11:50 AM. Did it really take them from 10:30 AM (when they evacuated the school) to 11:50 AM to determine there had been fatalities? And why would they not have called the ambulances immediately upon learning that there had been gun shots fired? It seems the most logical action to take. According to the report, the shooter, Adam Lanza, was wearing a bullet-proof vest (worried about his own life?) yet, had taken his own life in a classroom at the school. Yet, according to other reports, Adam Lanza has a death date of December 13, the day before the incident. Police reportedly also had initially confused him with his older brother Ryan because he was carrying his brother's I.D. Has this Ryan ever been interviewed by the media? The image of Adam is criticized for being a poorly rendered Photoshop creation.

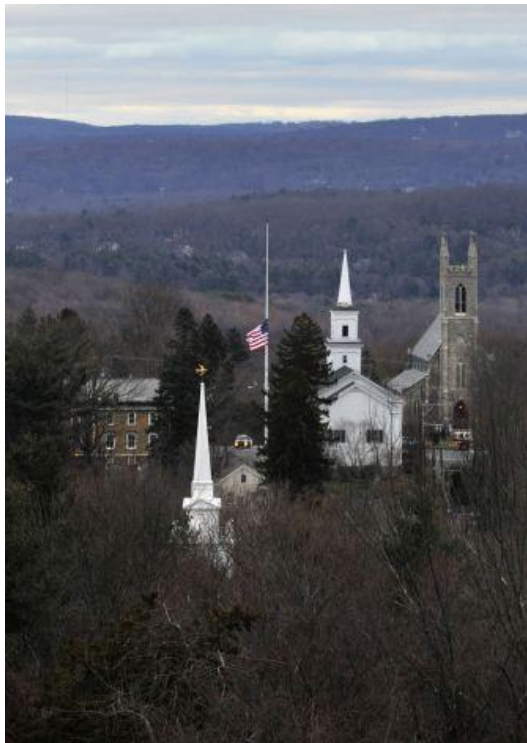
One thing noteworthy in the above video (and something the conspiracy theorists picked up on) is that there is no genuine emotion from those interviewed and there were no tears (most people would have cried, although perhaps not if they were in shock, which makes assessment difficult). But it did seem strange that so many of them make gestures to wipe tears from their eyes in this video as well as other videos, when there were no tears. Were they in shock? It didn't really look like they were in shock but that's a very subjective interpretation. However, there are other things that the conspiracy theorists contend about the people who have been interviewed, such as showing that some of them are actors and actresses and have even been in a previous shooting incident. But this all involves subjective interpretation, resulting in many inconsistencies that are not easily resolved. Here are a couple of other more analytical perspectives.

[Sandy Hook Elementary School Shooting: Why Did Adam Lanza Snap? - ABC News](#)

[Sandy Hook Massacre A CLOSER LOOK](#)

I encourage readers to randomly watch additional YouTube videos, sampling different views of this event. Some of the perspectives are not credible (some are made with very poor taste and mocking either the conspiracy theorists or the media take); whereas, others are highly credible. I have watched dozens of videos and normally the truth would be popping out at me; but this is not the case here. Because I'm a researcher, I find this very strange. It seems it would take enormous conscious effort, even scientific, psychological approaches to dupe the public so badly that there is no way to perceive what actually happened in this case even after doing extensive research.

The Church, the "State," education, and the corporate sectors are nearly inseparable, working together to present an illusion that is literally constructing daily and permanent cognitive dissonance among the masses—and the media—television, news, the movies, the Internet, social media, corporate advertisements, signs, signals, symbols, and significations play a huge role in creating this dichotomous illusion that's making so many people stressed out, in fear, and dysfunctional. The solution, temporary at best, until we find real solutions is to accept that there will be many such situations in which we have no definitive answers. Alternative



media needs to outshine the mass media, but unfortunately, mass media—the power wielders have their greedy hands in alternative media. This makes it nearly impossible to determine who's really behind the reporting and what their motives might be. Often these are well-hidden purposely. Until we find solutions, and as we are seeking answers to these various events, we must simply learn to transcend the need for an immediate answer. We can't allow the fact that we are not able to find immediate truth cause us to live in fear and under stress. We must be wary that we also don't lose additional rights and freedoms over these types of events and our disagreements over solutions. We have much work to do in order to restore what we've lost already through legislation such as the Patriot Act.

The flag pole on Main Street in Newtown flies at half-mast on Friday, Dec. 21, 2012, one week after the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting. Photo: Jason Rearick.

CONCLUSION

The bottom line, from my perspective, is that the news media did an atrocious job of covering this event. In their rush to report, they provided conflicting, chaotic, and inadequate information (some “conspiracy theorists” question the timing of some of the interviews, claiming they were staged prior to “the event” to explain the conflicting information). In some cases, the reporters’ own hyped-up emotions which did not appear to be all that genuine (reporters tend to be “desensitized” due to their exposure to tragic events) only highlighted the fact that those interviewed expressed numbed-out emotions or no emotions at all. If the event really happened, they gave the so-called “conspiracy theorists” a lot of fuel to go on. I really don’t like to use the term conspiracy theorists due to the negative connotation associated with it, because many of them are genuine researchers, doing something we all should be doing—investigating and fact-checking. I prefer the term investigative reporters.

As much research as I have done, I would need to do much more if I were to answer the question as to whether the public has been taken on a metaphorical bus ride . . . although with passing time, the event has continued to be “played” by those who have various religious and political agendas and power motives. It has served as another incident to further divide the public. The important take-home point, in my view, is that we must rise above the tendency toward polarization and work toward staying united. Because information proliferation of the “facts” we are to know, obfuscation of the facts we are not to know, along with the compartmentalization of knowledge is a growing trend in many institutions with which we must interact, we need to take research and knowledge work very seriously in our everyday lives. I am thankful for all of the hard-working “YouTubers” who take this seriously and provide free services to inform the public. They should be supported in their endeavors.

As a final note, a tribute and clarification of the Newtown tragedy was recently presented by the town to explain the slow trickle of information, along with a series of photographs which can viewed [here](#). The photographs are interesting when viewed from conflicting perspectives. I also found it interesting that the caption of the photograph shown on the next page numbered the victims as 26, stating there were 26 angels, one for each victim. If you count the angels there are actually 27, thus, it appears that the 20-year-old shooter was also acknowledged as a victim by somebody responsible for creating the angels. If he, in fact existed (again, there is conflicting information about his very existence as well as the day he supposedly died), but if he truly existed and whether or not he was the shooter, he was, indeed, a victim as well. And until we can have total transparency and truth we are all victims of these increasing numbers of extremely tragic and traumatic events.



A crowd gathers in front of a memorial with 26 cardboard angels to the victims of the Sandy Hook Elementary School massacre on Church Hill Road, Newtown, Conn., Saturday, Dec. 22, 2012. Photo: Bob Luckey

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A banner for Paradis Publications. On the left is a photograph of a large, white, two-story house with a prominent portico and columns, set on a green lawn. To the right of the photo, the text "Paradis Publications" is written in a large, bold, blue serif font. Below this, in a smaller blue font, is "Welcome to Paradis Publications! Exclusive Empowering Knowledge for a New Age". Further down, in a very small font, is "Don't miss the informative FREE Journal of Epistemology where you find a variety of educational topics and current events! NEW ISSUE AVAILABLE". At the bottom, in a small font, is "Check out our exclusive eBooks today! Just added: A new innovation in publishing". The entire banner has a purple border at the top and bottom. The word "Welcome" is written in small white text on the bottom purple bar.

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[Source: <http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/17/107>]