

A. INTRO: I'm doing my final project in the format of a traditional research paper with some modifications to make it publicly accessible

- a. I'll be looking at how contemporary memoir presents familial relationships in regard to forgiveness and anger by pulling examples from various texts like
 - i. Family focus (Fact of a Body, Educated, Punch Me Up to the Gods, Long Live the Tribe of Fatherless Girls)
 - 1. Deciding between the last two depending on if i want to introduce a gendered component
 - 2. Parental relationships + instances of trauma

B. RESEARCH:

- a. Jonathan Tran: EMPLOTTING FORGIVENESS: NARRATIVE, FORGETTING AND MEMORY
- b. Martha Nussbaum: On Anger & Forgiveness
 - i. Unconditional forgiveness
 - ii. Transactional forgiveness
 - 1. Follows a 6-step method beginning with acknowledging the wrong and ending with explaining how she is worthy of approbation.
- c. Zachary Snider:
 - i. Discusses the catharsis around writing about family and how often the expression of one's own narrative can be a place of conflict.

C. THESIS: Contemporary family-memoirs often depict a desire for closure in parental relationships at the expense of the wrongdoer (in this case, the parent) which relies on the traditional Transactional Forgiveness model. Nevertheless, there are instances where Unconditional Forgiveness peeks through, exhibiting Nussbaum's ideal forgiveness, found in "[g]enerosity, justice, and truth" (13).

D. EXCERPT:

- a. **Example from *Fact of Body*:** Nussbaum's Transactional Forgiveness is seen throughout *The Fact of a Body* as Marazano-Lesnivich works through the anger they feel towards Ricky Langley, a man who was convicted child sex offender and murderer. They faced sexual assault as a child at the hands of their grandfather and distancing themselves from the experience in a professional setting was extremely difficult. "I want Ricky to die", they say after learning what Langley had done. Yet later, Marazano-Lesnivich finds themselves drawn to say "I love you" at their grandfather's grave. This is an interesting example of how harboring anger can drive action away from the wrong-doer and onto tangential people.
- b. **Theoretical Framework:** Jonathan Tran notes that forgiveness often comes with the loss of memories which diminish in clarity over time. This suggests a common turn of phrase "to forgive and forget". However, Tran notes that forgetting must come first since it aids in dulling the memory of the wrongdoing. If enough time or distance comes between the wronged and their experience, there is more room for forgiveness. Nussbaum, however, would argue that the type of forgiveness they are seeking would not change.

E. WHAT DOES THIS MEAN/WHY DOES IT MATTER?

- a. Since there seems to be an underexplored relationship between parental forgiveness and trauma in

The genre of memoir has expanded into a wide range of writing styles which showcase diverse and vibrant life-narratives. Yet, there is still a common thread between family-based memoirs. These types of narratives tend to focus on family related trauma and, either directly or indirectly, the influence this had on the author's life. Relationships with family are often difficult to navigate.

I personally find myself anger more quickly regarding my family. But I tend to forgive more easily as well.

Throughout this article, I aim to explore the relationship between anger and forgiveness as it applies to parental forgiveness in contemporary memoir. A framework that I have found helpful is outlined in Martha Nussbaum's *Anger and Forgiveness* which establishes a definition for both terms and makes an argument around the validity of their use.

Before diving into my personal argument, it is important for me to give context on the various texts and terms I will be using throughout this piece. Relevant characters/experiences/actions will be defined below along with a summary of the principal topics from *Anger and Forgiveness*.

An Index of Context:

***The Fact of a Body* by Alexandria Marzano-Lesnevich:** This book relays two narratives, the first being Ricky Langley's, a man who was a serial child sex-offender who ultimately murders one of his victims (Jeremy Guillory). Langley spends much of his life in and out of treatment for his pedophilic urges, consistently asking for help but being denied in-patient treatment. Following his initial death sentence, Jeremy's mother steps into testify for Langley and he is ultimately found guilty of second-degree murder which exempts him from the death penalty. The second narrative being told is the authors, Alex Marzano-Lesnevich (they/them). They grew up with 2 siblings, one brother and one sister. Both parents pursued careers as attorney's and their family lived close to their grandparents. Their grandparents spent the night and took care of the children for much of their childhoods. During those nights together, Lesnevich's grandfather would molest both young girls. After years of enduring the abuse, Elize (Lesnevich's sister) reveals the abuse to their parents. It is immediately discussed between parents and then ignored. The abuse stops with their father refraining from inviting the grandparents to sleepover.

***Educated* by Tara Westover:** This book catalogues the life of a girl growing up in hyper-religious, anti-establishment family living in Buck's Peak, Idaho. This coming-of-age story displays how family dynamics shift over time and highlights a story of abuse from her brother (Shawn) and father and neglect from her mother.