Legends from Home
Still Count

Micaiah Bulgrien
Pennsylvania State University Harrisburg

There is nothing that disturbs law-abiding adults more than a group of hooligans invading the local cemetery in the middle of the night looking for ghosts and demons. It is often impossible for teenagers to fulfill their horror-driven desires while being so closely watched. However, in the age of the internet, that impossibility becomes relatively easy to overcome. First, it is necessary to understand what drives youngsters to partake in scary activities. Jih-Hsuan et al. suggest that this desire, especially for horror video games, comes from a feeling of self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is defined as "an individual's belief in his or her capacity to execute behaviors necessary to produce specific performance attainments" (Carey and Forsyth). Essentially, people enjoy being scared because they enjoy satisfying the belief that they would perform well in the same situation they see in front of them. So many "bad" horror movies are watched over and over because the viewers satisfy their self-efficacy by making fun of the characters' decisions or inserting themselves in the situation and surviving.

The idea behind a legend trip is that self-efficacy is fulfilled. A person, or, more likely, a group of people venture to a place of legendary significance to play with ghosts and/or demons and prove that they are not afraid. Tucker believes that these trips have a common three stages that validate their position as a legend trip. There is the plan—including research, the original legend-telling, and a plan of action/escape route—the trip itself, and the memorate, or the commemoration of the trip through sharing, story-telling, or summarization. However, when legend trips are the topic of conversation, a sub-genre is often overlooked. The legend trips from home represent the ability of this generation to satisfy their self-efficacy without breaking rules and waking up adults. They still count as legend trips because Tucker's three stages are still fulfilled, and the self-efficacy of participants is still activated despite not being at the scene.

In the planning stage, research is an important step; it is appropriate that it exists even from home. If the background of a legend is unexplored, then the group will not necessarily understand what they are seeking or doing on the trip. With the internet, this research becomes exponentially easier, and it can even be used for legend trips from home. I interviewed my friend Justin from Elizabethown about an experience that he had with a Ouija board. He is seventeen now and was that old at the time as well. He explained that his experience involved looking online to figure out how to set everything up. His trip involved enjoying a Ouija board with friends and encountering a few spirits: one that enjoyed the conversation and one that was not happy to talk to them. It would have been impossible for his group to have used the Ouija board if they did not know how to "awaken" the board and what to do when it was time to leave the spirit. Almost exactly the same type of research was done with a regular legend trip. My girlfriend, Alison, told me of a time that she went on a legend trip with her friend. They were both from Hummelstown and fourteen during the trip but are both eighteen now. She informed me that, while preparing for the trip, she was "looking up a bunch of scary things to do" and stumbled upon a game (Kreider). Her situation involved herself and two friends searching for a creepy game to play in the haunted house in which her friends lived. In both situations, the participators used the internet to research and plan their trips before going on them. Clearly, despite remaining at home, the first of Tucker's three stages in a legend trip exists.

The second of her stages is the trip itself, which, of course, persists even in the legend trip from home. The name "legend trip from home" would be incredibly misleading if "trip" was meaningless. My friend Kyler from Hummelstown told me a story while he was eighteen, but he was only sixteen during the trip. One night, Kyler and his friends were surfing YouTube for a creepypasta. A creepypasta is a word derived from copy and paste that is essentially just a scary story that is passed on around—copied and pasted—via the internet (Creepypasta Wiki). He disclosed to me that the creepypasta was fairly scary, mostly because of the ending (Sturgill). Apparently, it

vilified a clown that took an interest in a man's son, eventually mutilating the son and framing the father. The most important part of this story that equates the trip to a normal legend trip is the perpetuation of the trip itself. Most legend trips are easy to replicate; venture to the same place and do some exploring. Whatever activities that people did before can be repeated, and hopefully, the same scary things happen. When I searched for the creepypasta that Sturgill mentioned, I found it. It is called "Laughing Jack" and contains all the details that Sturgill recounted (MrCreepyPasta). The legend trip from home that Sturgill and his friends went on could be redone by any other group by watching the same video. This alone represents that legend trips from home fulfill Tucker's second stage.

Kreider's trip further substantiates the creepypasta's relevance. Her experience included copying a trip previously performed, not in the same place, but with the same technique. On her legend trip, the participants threw coins over their shoulders while asking questions of ghost twin sisters Sarah and Sarita (Kreider). This method was used by people before them, after all, that is why it is online. Because Sturgill's trip could be repeated by using the same video just as Kreider's legend trip could be repeated by going to the same place or using the same game, Sturgill does include Tucker's second stage: the trip.

The third and final stage of Tucker's legend trip that remains even from home is the memorate. I conducted an interview that had a memorate involving the ridicule of one participant. I interviewed Logan, a friend of mine from Elizabethtown, about a situation in which I participated. Logan was fourteen, but I was only thirteen during the trip. Beard spoke with me about his late-night browsing of the Xbox store to find a game that would keep us awake. Eventually a few of us left the room for a while and the remainder of the group along with Logan downloaded a jump-scare game intending to scare those of us upstairs. That ploy did work and the member of the group that sat down and actually played the game was surprised the most by the scary game, so we "made fun of him all night long" (Beard). Those jokes that lasted throughout the night about the player's panic represent the memorate that Tucker describes. It perpetuated the experience that we had and allowed us to remember the fun that we had. All legend trips include some way of commemorating the experience, and for this trip, it was the jokes. In the "real" legend trip that Kreider described, the memorate revolves around one aspect of the trip. At one point, a handprint became visible on a window in the house and they took a picture of it. Additionally, they recorded the entire sequence on their phones, and they often share and re-watch the videos while talking about old times. Therefore, through the combination of the jokes made directly after the game and the ease with which Beard recalled the story, a feasible memorate arises, satisfying Tucker's third stage.

Returning to the self-efficacy involved with legend trips, if legend trips from home are to be considered, they must express that same self-efficacy. This is slightly more difficult to replicate because, in normal legend trips, the self-efficacy is clear since the participants are literally enacting a legend where it happened. However, from home, the more figurative meaning of self-efficacy must be utilized. Remember that self-efficacy describes the enjoyment one gets from a situation in which they believe they would perform well. An excellent way to accomplish this feeling from home is a horror movie. They often include a negative plot with a positive resolution that an audience could relate to or a negative plot with a negative end that an audience believes they could best (Jih-Hsuan et al.). My interview with my brother Ezra exemplifies that quality of horror movies. The one that he described was watched when he was thirteen and revolved around some people that died while trapped in an elevator at the hand of one of the others who happened to be Satan. He explained how, after the movie, the group talked about how "we would use certain methods that would identify the killer," emphasizing that the negative outcome on the elevator was not necessary (Bulgrien). The audience could have easily found out who Satan was and then gotten rid of the person he was possessing before he killed everybody.

So Bulgrien's story fulfilled Jih-Hsuan et al.'s theory that audiences enjoy self-efficacy through negative outcomes in which they are confident in their own abilities to perform well. Had the movie depicted characters that used holy water or tricked the demon to reveal who Satan was, Bulgrien's group would have agreed that they could

have pulled off the same feat, once again supporting self-efficacy. Because the characters failed to act adequately, the group felt self-efficacy because they believed they could do better. In this way, a horror movie can be regarded as a legend trip from home because it activates the self-efficacy in a group of people.

Legend trips have been historically regarded as evil, dangerous, and chaotic, but the legend trips from home are safe and controlled. If it is so bothersome for parents to go rescue their children from cemeteries in the middle of the night, a horror movie or creepypasta is a perfect alternative. It has the same results as far as memories with friends and getting scared go without all the risks of being out in the dark or somewhere unfamiliar. Participants still obtain a feeling of self-efficacy while also traversing through Tucker's three stages of a legend trip. Essentially, the only difference between the two is where they take place. I do not suggest that the location where a legend trip takes place is irrelevant, because it certainly matters if it happens at home or in the original legend spot, but I do suggest that it is necessary to include legend trips from home in the realm of legend trips. It seems that the term "legend trip" might be a bit misleading. Perhaps we should say "legend experience."

Works Cited

Beard, Logan. Personal Interview. 21 November 2018.

Bulgrien, Ezra. Personal Interview. 16 November 2018.

Carey, Michael P. and Forsyth, Andrew D. "Teaching tip sheet: Self-efficacy." *American Psychological Association, 2018.* https://www.apa.org/pi/aids/resources/education/self-efficacy.aspx

Jih-Hsuan, Tammy Lin et al. "So Scary, Yet So Fun: The Role of Self-Efficacy in Enjoyment of a Virtual Horror Game." *New Media and Society,* vol. 20, no. 9, 2017, pp. 3223-3242. https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444817744850

Kreider, Alison. Personal Interview. 20 November 2018.

"Laughing Jack." *YouTube,* uploaded by MrCreepyPasta, 20 April 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UZSvPU8HzY8.

Sturgill, Kyler. Personal Interview. 11 November 2018.

Tucker, Elizabeth. There's an App for That: Ghost Hunting with Smartphones. *Children's Folklore Review,* vol. 38, 2017, pp. 29-39. https://childrensfolklore.org/childrens-folklore-review.

Warnagiris, Justin. Personal Interview. 11 November 2018.

"What Is Creepypasta?" *Creepypasta Wiki*, www.creepypasta.wikia.com/wiki/Creepypasta_Wiki:What_Is_Creepypasta%3F.