

This weekly column will feature confessions of a Southern religious studies major. Each week, Jonathan will offer a light-hearted look at the little things in life that can make a big difference.

IT'S THE *Little* THINGS... Copenhagen

Jonathan Chapman
Columnist

Two weeks ago, I had the distinct pleasure of walking the winding circuits of the labyrinth in silence with one of my best friends at Elon.



Jonathan Chapman

After we finished and were walking away, I turned to her and lost it. I wept. As she held me, I managed to sob out somewhere between my sniffles and

She and I both worked at the labyrinth that night, and after making sure that everyone who wanted to walk that night had the chance, we locked the doors and began our own journey inward.

"There is nothing like returning to a place that remains unchanged to find the ways in which you yourself have altered." –Nelson Mandela

desperate attempts to control myself that I just didn't know what I would do for a semester without her and our third.

In January, I am moving to Copenhagen, Denmark, for the semester.

I always say "moving" now because that's what I'm really doing. I'm not just studying there, but I am living, interacting and growing there.

What I realized that night walking the maze of the labyrinth was that my time was limited to be here at Elon this year. Even more influential was the realization that the primary thing that defines Elon for me won't be able to accompany me to Denmark. I won't be able to take the

people with me.

I think back to my freshman year and all the experiences that made it such a memorable year. I think about my leadership fellows group, the C-Unit. I remember the open doors in Jordan Center and people milling around the courtyard.

I can feel the cold night air as the group of friends that would soon call themselves the "JC Crew" walked to the Acorn for hot chocolate. I remember stories of falling out of bed, playing with cats and trips to Greensboro.

These are the people and the memories that define Elon for me.

As I was walking away that night, on my

way home from the labyrinth, my friend told me that Denmark isn't Elon.

She's right.

Copenhagen isn't Elon—it won't have the same people, the same experience. And I can't expect it to be.

I graduate from Elon in a year and a half. I'll be able to come back to Elon from Copenhagen, but once I graduate, my time at Elon as a student will be complete. What happens then?

I'm not sure I want to know.

Contact Jonathan Chapman at opinions@elon.edu or 278-7247

Rule #1: Don't take responsibility

Greg Livengood
Columnist

Some of my earliest memories in life were sitting in a playpen in my house's playroom, watching my older brother play Nintendo. As soon as I gained the motor skills, I was right there with him, jumping on koopa troopas in Super Mario, punching out Glass Joe in Mike Tyson's Punch Out, and slaying zombies in Castlevania II: Simon's Quest. As I've gotten older, I have continued to play video games as one of my favorite hobbies; currently, I'm engrossed in Fire Emblem: The Path of Radiance for the Nintendo Game Cube and Castlevania: Dawn of Sorrow for Nintendo DS.

With the Internet, gaming has developed a whole new dimension; now you can track release dates and get guides, reviews and pre-views for games. Video gaming has also developed its own culture; some artists such as Tim Buckley and Brian Clevinger have very established web comics based around video game related themes. But, with progress comes controversy. In recent years, games have become much more graphic than their innocent predecessors. Starting back with Mortal Kombat and spanning to the contem-

porary Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas, video games are now incorporating gore and graphic violence in their design to attract fans.

Thus came the founding of the Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB), whose ratings can be seen in their earliest stages on late SNES games. Originally the system consisted of three or four ratings, which seemed to be sufficient. That system has changed as the games have and the current system works as follows:

- eC: Early child hood
- E: Everybody
- E+10: Everybody 10 and above
- T: Teen
- M: Mature (17 and up)
- Ao: Adults only (18 and up)

The most notable ones are the 'E,' 'T' and 'M' since they are the only surviving original ratings. 'E' games are like Super Mario Bros., games that are innocent and have little to no violent implications. Games rated 'T' are games like GoldenEye, Star Fox and wrestling games, with non-gorry violence and few suggestive themes. Games rated 'M' are like Grand Theft Auto, Perfect Dark or Halo, with realistic to exaggerated violence and blood, and in the case of GTA, sexual themes.

Though that mindset lay relatively dormant

for some time after that, it has recently reappeared in the case of Devin Thompson, a young man who was found guilty of car-jacking and murdering three police officers. An attorney from the prosecution, Jack Thompson, made a point to sue Sony, Take Two (GTA publisher), Rock Star Games (GTA producer), GameStop and Wal-Mart. He claims that all of these companies had a hand in the boys actions. Jack Thompson claims that Devin 'trained' to steal and kill on the game Vice City; he has also demanded that games rated 'M' be banned. Thompson's antics did not end there, he put out a satirical challenge to video game publishers that if they published his game that he would donate \$10,000 to a charity.

To close, now that you know Jack Thompson's opinion, here's mine. Devin Thompson, the Columbine kids and anyone who murders for pleasure are not in a stable state of mind. Video games do not cause people to go crazy, nor are they sufficient "training" for someone to hot-wire and operate a car OR shoot a gun. Being a person who has fired a gun, I can assure those that haven't that the rumble feature doesn't quite capture the recoil of a shot gun or a pistol for that matter.

And as far as the rating system goes, the ESRB's current rating system is the best it can be. It is now the parent's responsibility to make sure their eight-year-old son isn't playing Grand Theft Auto or Halo. Jack Thompson is just enabling people to avoid responsibility for their mistakes. The people that let their children buy a game without looking at the rating, and then walk into the room to see them play it are more apt to scream that the game shouldn't be allowed on shelves.

The people that sued the tobacco companies for "giving them lung cancer" and the people that sued the fast-food industry for "making them fat" are in the same league. The bottom line is that these kids were messed up from something and their parents didn't get them help. The moral of the story is to watch your kids and make sure they are doing well, and to help them if not. Video games are an output for anger, not an input.

If your kids starts to emulate what he sees on the screen, do what my mom did: put him in time out and say NO!

Contact Greg Livengood at opinions@elon.edu or 278-7247