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## Struggle Between Expectations And Individualism

It is not uncommon to come across a story that has a hidden meaning to it. A common meaning between "Our Town", "The Interlopers", and "The Mending Wall" would be the struggle between expectations and individualism. Frost shows us how people who simply follow traditions just for the sake of it are building self-imposed barriers that prevent one on one interaction. Saki shows the consequences of holding grudges and how you soon realize that you are living a life that you don't have to. Wilder simply shows that following traditions can lead to living a double life, the one you wish to have and the lie of a life that you show everyone else. All three authors have their own way of expressing this theme of living life as you wish by using a 'wall' of some sort, Thornton best expresses this by showing the consequences of not living a life true to yourself.

In the story "The Interlopers" two families that are in the middle of a generational feud suddenly get stuck facing danger with each other. Though in the end they have a change of heart and start to reconcile, it's too late. The story starts off by giving us a brief understanding of the families '...and a long series of poaching affrays and similar scandals had embittered the relationships between the families for three generations. The neighbor feud had grown into a personal one.' In the story Ulrich and Georg, who are the main characters, both start on a quest to kill the other unknowingly leading themselves to their own end. The theme - as well as an irony- soon comes to play when they are in the forest painfully getting crushed by a tree. They soon discover that they are not alone in this forest. This situation causes them to realize that if they weren't so caught up in this stupid quarrel they would never have been in the forest in the first place. This is also where the irony comes in, they went into the forest to kill one another but end up being killed by the true 'owner' - the wolves-. During their reconciliation, they both realize just how stupid it was of them to continue to hold a grudge that had nothing to do with them. It is too late though, the course had already been set and they had already driven themselves into death. They went in with a vengeance but they died with hope for living and respect for the other.

The poem "Mending Wall" is about two men- the speaker and his neighbor- who are physically separated by a wall that the speaker sees no point in. The theme of this poem would be the concerns about the self-imposed barriers that the neighbor is creating by continuing to rebuild his wall. The speaker is upset that his neighbor continues to build an unneeded wall, so he asks why he does so. The neighbor just simply restates what his father once told him "Good fences make good neighbors." The neighbor is unwilling to understand the wall's necessity, instead, he relies on traditions that are no longer needed. From the beginning, Frost talks about the forces that try and tear down the wall. The opening lines states "Something there is that doesn't love a wall" he continues to talk about "frozen-ground-swell". This is Frost's way of showing that the speaker isn't the only one that doesn't want the wall. At the ending of the poem, the narrator hints at the fact that the neighbor is only leading himself into loneliness but it is not clear that he realizes that himself.

Along with the other stories "Our Town" is a play about your average 'All American' town named Groovers Corners. The theme of this play would be about appreciating life and living a life that is true to yourself. It shows how when you don't live the life you want you just have to

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deal with it once you die. The theme really is shown in the third act when the main character named Emily is able to go back to a day before she died. By doing this she realizes that she took life for granted and asks “ Do any human beings ever realize life while they live it? - every, every minute?” The stage manager, who is an omniscient character answer, “saints and poets, maybe”, this shows the value of appreciating every day you are alive. Though that is something that the inhabitants of the town don't do, instead they lack a sense of care about what they let pass by them every day. Another example of this would be when Emily has an interaction with Mrs.Gibbs, Mrs.Gibbs is told that Emily and her husband spent the money that she was saving up earlier in the play we are told about how she was saving that money for a trip she desperately wanted to go to, but never went on to do so- she immediately regrets and realizes the opportunity she let pass her by. Both her and Emily are victims of the same faults, and both are hit with the same sorrow and realization that humans don't recognize what they are wasting only further weakening their want to live once more.

All three texts have their own way of expressing living a life that is true to you. Whether it's using a literal wall as a metaphor for some bigger picture or a harsh situation that opens the eyes of the character. These are all efficient ways to do so, but I stick to what has stated early Thornton's use of death is best. Using a situation that is inevitable- that which is death- makes the reader subconsciously think about their own life. It makes them wonder are they actually living the life they want, or are they living a double life, the one they hide from everyone and the one everyone else wants to see.