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### Madness & Empathy in School Shooting Fiction & Activism

Framed as breakouts of mad violence, school shootings provide clear moralizing rhetoric of their villains. Narratives about the traumas often suggest that mad violence is preventable, thereby implying that the state should reify ableist and sanist policies to surveil and segregate people identified as disabled or mad. As critical race theorists and disability scholars note, such policies directly harm people of color through incarceration, hospitalization, or acts of violence. As a result, reading school shooting perpetrators as mad upholds racist educational and carceral logics that ignore the structures which exponentially mark more people of color than white individuals as mad, even as the majority of school shooters are young, white men.

While most children's and young adult texts on school shootings recycle such media narratives of ticking time bombs, youth activists move the conversation around gun violence from fascination with perpetrators to a dialogue about change and, in so doing, put forth their own argument about the validity of child activists and agency. These child survivors often replay their own trauma, becoming themselves sites of memorialization and activism. In this presentation, I read the work of youth activists alongside portrayals of school shootings for children and young adults, such as Judy Hasday's *Forty-Nine Minutes of Madness: The Columbine High School Shooting* and Marieke Nijkamp's *This Is Where It Ends*. I argue that the revolutionary nature of young activists such as the March for Our Lives youth speaks to a paradigmatic shift in how we address trauma, childhood, and collective action.