**Dialectical Journal Example set-up:**

Student Name: Jane Doe

Book Name: *The Cheating Culture: Why More Americans are Doing Wrong to Get Ahead*

Author: David Callahan

**Summary of pages 1-20**

Callahan characterizes this pervasive cheating across occupations and institutions as an intense moral crisis. He claims it reflects deeper rooted issues of our society and economy. He asserts that not only has American society established a cheating culture, but that Americans feel less guilt about it. Callahan attributes this culture to a misguided conservative movement being pushed through the 25 years or so. Due to the threat by drugs, alcohol, and pop culture, the conservatives want to reestablish traditional values, but in doing so they ignored the tribulations of greed, envy, and materialism. Also, the media plays a role in this greedy, cheating culture. He claims that they depict extreme wealth and imply that people should do whatever it takes to achieve that idealistic lifestyle. He sets up the book by illustrating the various agencies that contributed to the cheating culture that he argues exist in American society.

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| **Meaningful Quote**  The narrator said, “Quote from the reading” (page #).  I played a lot of Monopoly growing up. Like most players of the game, I loved drawing a yellow Community Chest card and discovering a “bank error” that allowed me to collect $200. It never occurred to me not to take the cash. After all, banks have plenty of money, and if one makes an error in your favor, why argue? I haven’t played Monopoly in twenty years, but I’d still take the $200 today. And what if a real bank made an error in my favor? That would be a tougher dilemma. Such things do happen (1). | **Paraphrase/Summarize the quote**  *Reword the quote you selected in your own words*  The author is remembering that a common childhood game had a positive moment when a player received “free” cash because a bank made a mistake. The placement of this memory at the beginning of the book sets up the idea of the Cheating Culture. |
| **Analyze/React/Reflect** | |
| By beginning with a reference to a childhood game, the author reminds the audience of something that most people probably remember—not just the game, but the excitement of a “bank error” card. He also issues the question that “banks have plenty of money” so “why argue?” This really mimics what most people would probably say in real life to justify why they should keep money that isn’t rightfully theirs. He moves from this game topic to a suggestion that it could really happen (which he will explain later) and suggests that it would be a “tougher dilemma.” It almost seems like this could be a sarcastic remark. I think many people would just take the money. We tend to view banks as a huge institution that they will not miss a few rogue dollars here and there. This idea that Wall Street continues to pay our bonuses while the “little guy” is barely getting by or may not even have a job is especially prevalent now. By this question, the author seems to be trying to get us to ask if we can even justify that type of thinking. Is this the right decision to make? | |