



**Fresh**  
**Fall 2020**  
**Thoughts**  
*Essays from Writing I*



# Introduction

First-Year Writing is a pivotal experience for Lasell students. Throughout Writing I and Writing II, students learn to assess their skills, face new challenges, and expand their abilities. By writing in a variety of genres, students come to understand how to best shape their writing for different audiences and different purposes.

All students enrolled in Writing I in the fall of 2020 were invited to submit their favorite works to be considered for publication in this issue of Fresh Thoughts. We were overwhelmed by the quality and quantity of submissions and had to make challenging decisions about which essays to publish. We strived to include essays representing a variety of topics written in a variety of genres, and we present these pieces as a representation of the work done in our classes.

While this is first and foremost a celebration of students and their writing, we would also like to thank our faculty who worked closely with student writers throughout the semester. Faculty teaching First-Year Writing this year included Lyida Buchanan, Greg Cass, Alexander Cronis, Nicole Gariepy, Sara Bartlett Large, Kip Langelo, Deborah Mael, Michelle Nie-stepski, Annie Ou, and Cathleen Twomey

In addition, this volume would not be possible without the art direction and production design of Professor Stephen Fischer. We thank you for your contributions to this collection.



## **Dedication**

This book is dedicated to the memory of Professor Diane M. Donatio who passed away unexpectedly during the summer of 2005. Professor Donatio, Diane to all who knew her, taught Writing and Communication courses at Lasell College for eleven years. She was an exceptionally talented teacher who dedicated herself to student success. Students loved her classes and were constantly trying to get into them even when they were full.

Although Diane loved teaching all of her courses, she particularly enjoyed Writing I and Writing II. She relished working with first-year students and constantly pushed her students to do their best. Because of Diane's belief and support, her students worked hard and felt proud of the essays they wrote and how their writing improved over the course of a semester.

Because of the generosity of Diane's family and friends, we are able to give awards to outstanding essays from Writing I. Selecting the award winners is always a difficult task. As one faculty member said, "If Diane were here, she would have wanted to give every student an award because she would have found something great in every essay." We certainly know that Diane would have loved to read every essay in this book, and we hope that you enjoy it as much as she would have.

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## Difficult Decisions

Kathy Ngo

“You’ve been getting so much mail lately!” My mom huffs as she tosses a stack of envelopes and papers on my dressers.

“I know. I love it!” I close my laptop and get up from my desk to grab the pile of mail from my dresser. We were at the peak of quarantine and I had just finished my last Zoom class of the day. I bring the stack with me as I go and sit down at the kitchen table. The smell of my mom’s cooking fills my nose; she was making Vietnamese Banh Canh for dinner. The smell of her cooking never fails to make me feel warm and cozy. I’ve always admired my mom for always making sure to have dinner on our table every day even if she had a long day at work.

“What’d you get today? I’m surprised there’s nothing from Amazon today.” My mom jokes as she pours a steaming pot of noodles into a strainer sitting at the sink. I roll my eyes and say,

“Haha, so funny! But it’s mostly just junk mail and... OH!” I gasp as I spot a bright blue folder hidden in between the rest of my mail. My mom stops what she’s doing and walks over to me with a raised eyebrow.

“What is it? You’re scaring me.” She says, standing beside me with a hand on her hip. I smile back at her showing her a blue folder with the words “You’re Accepted!” printed across the top.

“I got another acceptance letter! This one is from Lasell University, and they gave a big scholarship!” I exclaim turning over to show her the folder so she can see it for herself. She didn’t seem as excited as I thought she would be.

“Where is this place? I thought you were going to AIC. What happened to that?” She closes the folder and tosses it on the kitchen table in front of us. Oh, now I see where this is going... She had been looking forward to me going to a nearby college instead

of moving out into a dorm. I’m the youngest of three and the first to go to college. The idea of seeing me graduate high school was already too much for my mom to handle. So, the concept of me graduating and moving to another city shortly after was not something that my mom was willing to discuss.

“Okay, I know that you’re going to hate this but it’s in Newton.

Which is right outside of Boston so it’s only about an hour and a half away? Nothing too crazy!” I say while turning to face her. She lets out a deep sigh as she sets a steaming bowl of noodles on the table in front of me.

“I don’t understand why you feel the need to go to a school when you can go to a good school nearby and just live here at home.” She huffs as she walks away from the table again. I sigh and begin to eat without saying anything else to avoid a possible argument.

As the days went on, more and more college letters came in the mail. I loved the rush of excitement anytime I saw the letters sitting in the mailbox, but it always felt like I could never show my excitement for the sake of my mom. The closer decision day came, the more tension rose between my mom and me. It was like every acceptance letter and financial aid packet came with an argument. She didn’t want to understand why I wanted to live on campus and that frustrated me. My parents are first-generation immigrants who built a home for our family out of nothing. So, you can imagine that my mom never had it easy, especially after my parents got divorced. Around the time they split up, both of my older siblings had moved out to start their own families which just left me, the baby of the family, and my overprotective, yet still loving mom. This meant I had to take on my siblings’ role of becoming Mom’s sole English translator. Having to translate for my mom has never been anything new to me. I was as young as 7 years old when



1<sup>ST</sup> PLACE

my mom handed me the phone to schedule a doctor's appointment for me. But living at home with just the two of us made our relationship stronger; we did nearly everything together. She was my best friend so to see something like a college acceptance letter create such a big riff in our relationship hurt me.

"So, I'm sure you all have heard the news about your drive through graduation! How are we feeling?" asks Ms. Anderson, my AP Psychology teacher, through the screen of our Zoom class. I always looked forward to her to class, her bright and cheery energy failed to make me feel better.

"Sh\*ts wack dude... I'd rather them just mail me my diploma at this point!" One of my classmates exclaims through the speakers of my laptop. We all laugh at his comment but while silently agreeing with him. The jokes and internet memes were hilarious but deep down we were all hurt about losing our senior year to a virus.

"Yeah, I'm sure it sucks but I know the school wants to show all of your hard work isn't going unnoticed." Ms. Anderson says while reading the chat. "Oh! Also, if any of you need any help with college or financial aid stuff, feel free to reach out to me or Ms. Alicea!"

I don't think I've ever typed anything that fast before. I honestly wasn't sure if they could help me but at this point, I was desperate for any advice.

I grew more anxious as the days went on. Graduation was so close and decision day felt even closer. It stung to open Instagram every day just to see all my classmates posting cute photos in their university sweatshirts when I had no idea where I was going after graduation. College has slowly become my least favorite topic of conversation but here I was, sitting in front of my webcam talking to my AP psych teacher about it.

"So, I looked at the financial aid packets that you emailed me and honestly, I think you should look into going to Lasell University." Ms. Anderson says. I could see my email in the reflection of her eyeglasses. "And I remember you saying that you and your mom were pretty dead set on AIC but they are technically a community college and they're charging a lot more than a lot of these other universities." I let out a sigh before responding.

"Well, to be honest, my mom has been the only one who is dead set on AIC..." I nervously scratch the back of my neck.

"Ah, I see, she wants you close to home doesn't she?" Ms. Anderson questions. I nod in response. "My mom was the same way when I was in high school and all I can say from personal experience is don't let her hold you back from gaining new experiences. At the end of the day, she's still your mom and even if it doesn't seem like it right now, I know she's super proud of you."

Days have passed since I met with Ms. Anderson and I couldn't stop thinking about it. Now I'm sitting in the car with my mom in the crowded parking lot of my high school waiting to pick up my cap and gown. The pick-up line almost wrapped around the whole block and the closer we got the more reality set in. I had officially lost my senior graduation ceremony to a virus and I was about to lose my dream college experience to my mom. As I open my mouth to break the news to my mom that I wasn't going to go to community college, I was cut short by my mom saying,

"You know, I've been talking to your aunt about you graduating and going to college..." I felt my stomach sink as I thought to myself 'Okay, this is happening now!' She continued by saying, "I think I've been a little harsh and way too overprotective. Your aunt was telling me that you need the chance to be on your own so you can have a real chance at growing as an adult; as much as I hate to admit it, I agree with her." She sounded nervous but hopeful at the same time.

"Wait, so you're saying I can go?" I excitedly turn from the passenger seat to face her. She smiles and nods as she grabs one of my hands.

"It hurts to see my little baby growing up but I know you're going to do great things." She says pulling the car up, we've finally made it to the front of the line. We were greeted by none other than a masked Ms. Anderson, who was holding a package.

"Hey, guess who's going to Lasell University this fall?" I jokingly ask her through the car window. She raised her eyebrows and I could almost see her smile straight through her mask.

"Well, congratulations to you, Kathy! And here is your cap and gown, I look forward to cheering you on from my car as you walk the stage this weekend!" She laughs as she hands my mom the cap and gown.

*Kathy Ngo is a Graphic Design major. She is from Springfield, MA and loves to create and share her art with the people around her.*

# Human Instinct

Alysandrah Ireland

Growing up as an only child, I had a lot of free time and how I spent most of it was occupying myself with my American Girl dolls and Barbie dolls as well as playing dress-up with them. When I was not playing with dolls, I would watch television shows. I really enjoyed playing with my dolls. Molly and Julie were my favorites as I would send them off on wild adventures and outings. I would send them on dates. A date I remember in particular was one where they went stargazing under a full moon and shared love poems they wrote about one another. The love my two dolls had for each other was as normal as the sun being in the sky. I would send them on dates all the time. It was not until I was about 8 or 9, when I started to make friends with girls my age, did I stop sending them on dates.

At school, I always had a hard time fitting in and I desperately tried hard to assimilate to the world around me. Since I grew up in a household where my mom had a male partner, I had pursued a fake on and off boyfriend, but I never really had liked any guys or had elementary school crushes. In 3rd grade, not having any friends started to become even more lonely, so when girls would talk about their dream weddings and fantasize about their grooms and the babies they have, I joined in. I picked a random guy in the class and pretended to have a crush and daydreamed with them about marrying this guy.

For little girls, this behavior is normal. With media and social influence, “small girls around the world play with Barbie bridal outfits, and many of the toys marketed at girls, including domestic appliances and little baby strollers, predict a heteronormative, reproductive future.” (Lahad, 2017, pg. 26). It felt like I had to have this conversation and I had to have my biggest goal be to be a mother. Today there is a “centrality of family ideology... based on the nuclear family” which does not belong in modern society, yet heavily influences the way we think (Lahad, 2017, p.



27). With this ideology, it makes sense that in third grade I was having this conversation with my fellow female classmates. However, this was never what I wanted, and I wasn't free to learn this until I was much older.

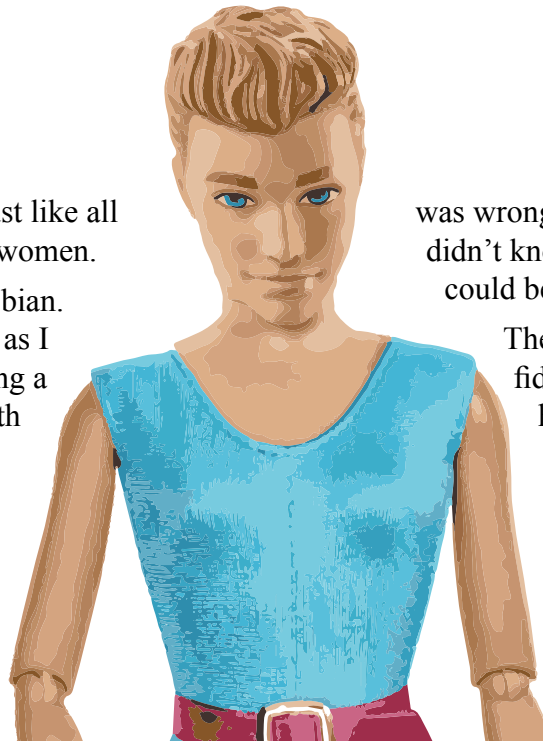
Not all women want a family or even want to be with men. Later in my life, as I grew to know myself, I realized that I had never wanted children. Maybe be the fun aunt, sure, or maybe even foster a teenager, but I never wanted the life it seemed like every other girl my age wanted. Being a stay-at-home mother seemed boring to me and I would never want to give birth. However, I was never able to discover this until I was able to have more mature conversations with my peers about what we wanted in life. Back in those discussions with my classmates, there was no way that any of us could have ever discussed the possibility of not having a family. Even as children, our value was rooted in if we would have grandkids or how cute we looked in dresses, and that wasn't something we could break away from. Women are expected to “justify” themselves any time they aren't dating a man or don't have children, and are constantly asked “what's wrong with you?” whenever they desire things in life that aren't considered female goals (Lahad 2). I luckily have not faced this sort of discrimination yet, but in the future I fear I will. I fear having to be asked by my peers, family, and even strangers about why I am single or why I am not dating a man. With this level of toxicity, how were we supposed to learn when we were not given a space where we were free from these misogynistic standards? I am not any less of a woman because I wear men's dress shirts, have short hair, and wear men's shoes. I am not any less of a woman if I do not occupy my time with a man in a romantic fashion and I'm not any less of a woman if I do not have children. The whole idea is outlandish as saying a shade of blue is not blue because it is not the same blue you have seen or experienced. That is simply what it boils down to.



All shades of blue are still blue, just like all different types of women are still women.

I also discovered that I was a lesbian. It seems so obvious looking back, as I was never really interested in dating a man. When I was little playing with those Barbies, it only felt right to have the women date each other, but I never talked about it with anyone because it wasn't the way it was supposed to be. My classmates always talked about wanting to date boys, so that's what I always talked about. I quickly learned from experience that "heteronormativity affects individuals [by] proscribing and requiring different kinds of actions and experiences based on gender, and creating categories of acceptable and unacceptable groups of people" (Kowalski, 673). Gay people were one of those unacceptable groups, and masculine women were another.

So, I repressed my identity. I was terrified of being different and not fitting into one of those categories. I continued to date men and present femininely and convinced myself that this was how I wanted to be. "Sexual minority individuals challenge the heteronormative structure that creates and maintains traditional gender roles simply by being attracted to individuals of the same sex," and that scared me (Kowalski, 2020 673). I didn't want to defy gender roles or be different, I just wanted to survive. I played the part for years because I didn't want to accept that I was this thing that had been painted as horrible by others my whole life. I already felt different, and I didn't want confirmation that I wasn't like the other girls I knew. It felt wrong, gross, and creepy. I was told repeatedly by the media I consumed, the toys I played with, and the people I talked to that being outside the standards for women



was wrong, and that I was wrong. What I didn't know was how beautiful love and life could be.

The years went by and I gained confidence. I began to dress the way I had desired to dress since I was a young adolescent as well as began to cut my hair until I reached my personal ideal length without being scared of societal backlash. I opened up to my friends freely and unashamed about my identity as well. I began to freely tell people that I was gay. I learned to embrace the parts of myself that society hated, and I learned that being a woman doesn't mean you need to wear frilly dresses, look like Barbie, or want a husband and five kids. I was allowed, finally, to dress how I wanted, act how I wanted, explore my gender expression, and make my own goals. I say to myself sometimes, if Molly and Julie could see me now, they would be so proud of me for not choosing an identity to fit into the crowd, and instead embracing the one I had from the start.

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# "IT'S DEV... THEY GOT HIM!"

Daybue Hackney

"Wake up, wake up!" I rolled over in my queen-sized bed; eyes squinting to see where the voice was coming from. I woke up, confused as to what time it was and what could possibly be so urgent. "Ughhh, what?", I said as I wiped the crust from the corner of my eyes. "It's Dev...they got him", my cousin said, with a shaky voice. And just like that, my day was over before it had even started. The back of my head sunk deep into the wall; my body numbed. I sat blankly; nothing to say, no reaction, but a whole bunch of thoughts.

For days I went on about my life, trying to live as if nothing happened. We all did. Nobody knew how to live with the fact that they'd never get to see Dev again, and neither did I. Thoughts constantly came to my head. I began having conversations with my conscience. "Tss, I remember that time he saw me and was like, 'yeo day you need a ride.' He knew damn well I wasn't getting in his car, but he was just always odee generous." I replied to myself with a fake and distraught laugh. "Tahhh, yeah man that was him. I never understood how he was so goofy and caring towards us, but a demon in the streets." It's crazy how life works sometimes, circumstances can really change you.

Days had gone by now since Dev's murder. Yet, I could still feel the loss of a hood legend throughout the whole city, but even more in my house. The funeral was tomorrow, which I was not looking forward to any more than the wake I had to attend that day. As we drove over to Bright's Funeral Home, the car was completely silent. I remember hearing the ambient noise coming from the speakers and the sniffles coming from my sister. Her and Dev were quite close. We were all close to him, but they were different. The relationship they had was kind of like one that Devin's little sister, Daveena, and I had. Even though we are family, we are best friends. I would do anything for Daveena and that is exactly how Devin felt about my sister.

Pulling up to the funeral home was devastating.

All you could smell was weed, as blunts were passed between the hands of broken-hearted gang members. Guys you'd never thought were capable of shedding a tear, were crying helplessly.

All you could see was emptiness coming from each and every one of our faces.

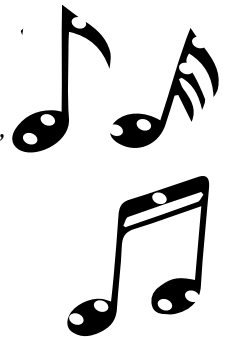
All you could hear was loud cries, an occasional "FUCK DEV! Why they have to take you !?", and lyrics from Take Me Away by Shy Glizzy.



3<sup>RD</sup> PLACE

*It's a war, started outside,  
Don't wanna talk about it,*

*but somebody might die  
Ain't wanna tell you 'bout it  
'cause I know you might cry  
Girl, don't you ever doubt me,  
no, just look me in my eyes  
Heard love is in the air,  
so I might fucking sky dive  
They took my dawg away,  
he didn't fuckin' survive  
(Shy Glizzy, 2017)*



As I walked in to view the body, I was stopped by a large crowd at the door. People crying and pushing to exit the building. For some people seeing a dead body is too much, but in this case, I think it was really about whose dead body it was. I waited in line in the old-fashioned carpeted hallway to get to the casket. The whole time my eyes looked downward at the patterns on the floor and the brown leather on my Sperry shoes. "Sorry for your loss", I repeated 3 times as I walked past his mom, grandma and step father, while clenching their hand within my own. As I turned around to see the body, I took a moment to brace myself. Of course, coming from where I come from, funerals were not at all a new experience to me; but this one, was like no other.

Dull, cakey, dry, stuck, stoned, fake. These are all words I could use to describe the way he looked, but there is only one word that accurately describes him; DEAD. Knowing Devin my whole life, he was never lifeless. He was the one dancing, or being goofy, or playing sports, just always full of life. As I looked at

him in the casket, he laid there, just dead. I started to walk out the room into the corridor, when I saw Daveena. We gave each other a hug, leaving pools of salty sadness on each other's shoulders. Finally making it out of the funeral home, I could feel the bass beneath my feet from the speakers. I could hear people solemnly singing the lyrics while trying to hold back their tears with sniffles.

*If these streets take me away,  
a real nigga, I die , Yeah, real nigga, I die  
If these streets take me away, a real nigga, I die  
That money alright, I don't need me a friend ,  
We took a loss, now we eatin' again  
She came back in my life, now she leavin' again  
This is real life, I don't need me a pen  
(Shy Glizzy, 2017)*

THE FUNERAL: Walking in, you can tell the difference from the wake immediately. The air was clean, people were dressed formally and it was so silent you could hear a pin drop. I walked to my seat, head down of course; the same posture I had the day before. My eyes were leaking with tears, just like the thousand other people around me. The pastor spoke for a while and passed the mic to guests. Lots of loved ones walked on the stage to share their times with Dev and to remind us to celebrate the life he lived rather than the death he experienced. I sat and listened, while I was comforted by various people. "You okay?", my mom said. "I'm straight", I said nearly disrupted by a sniffle and some tears. A basket came around full of obituaries that read; Devin R Burney. I took one, folded it up into four, like a little square and placed it in my pocket. I continued to sit in the hard wooden pew as family members talked on behalf of Dev. About an hour was filled with sob stories, good times shared, and scriptures from the holy bible. Throughout that hour, only 5 minutes were truly memorable. "I remember sitting Devin down and saying, 'Son, you need to give your life to God because at any moment he can take you off this earth'," his mom quoted. "And you know what he said to me", she said as she gasped for air. "He said, 'Ma it's okay cuz I ain't afraid to die'." At this point all you could feel were the vibrations of her cry, as she let out, what seemed like all she had inside of her. Guided by her brother and the pastor, she was then escorted to her seat. Again, we all sat in our own bubble of emotions and sorrows while ser-

mons were read and the closing prayer was given. The funeral ended and we all headed back to our cars. Still, nobody said anything, but you could hear that same song. ..

*If these streets take me away,  
a real nigga, I die,  
Yeah, real nigga, I die  
(Shy Glizzy, 2017)*

As we got in the car, I went all the way to the back of the van. Sitting by myself, in the third row, I entered my own little world. I pulled my headphones out, plugged them into my phone and typed in 'Take Me Away.' Devin was no longer on this Earth with us, but that didn't mean we couldn't be with him in spirit. I was no longer in the third row of that van; I was suddenly back in the moment where Dev asked me; 'yeo day you need a ride.' But this time I said yes. I turned the volume all the way up and just like that Shy Glizzy had the means to 'Take Me Away' to my cousin Dev one last time...

*It's a war, started outside  
Don't wanna talk about it,  
but somebody might die  
Ain't wanna tell you 'bout it  
'cause I know you might cry  
Girl, don't you ever doubt me,  
no, just look me in my eyes  
Heard love is in the air,  
so I might fucking sky dive  
They took my dawg away,  
he didn't fuckin' survive  
Now that I'm livin' for today,  
that chopper ride when I ride  
If these streets take me away,  
a real nigga I die  
A real nigga, I die  
If these streets take me away, a real nigga,  
I die Yeah, real nigga, I die  
If these streets take me away, a real nigga, I die  
(Shy Glizzy, 2017).*



## References

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*Daybue Hackney is a Fashion Media major. He is from Providence, Rhode Island and has owned/ran his own clothing line, "WUDA TAG", for 4 years.*

# Unity

Sinclair Samuels

“IF YOU DON’T COME OUT RIGHT NOW, I WILL NEVER BRING YOU TO ANOTHER CONCERT EVER AGAIN,” read the text from my brother that popped up on my lock screen. Little did I know, he wasn’t bluffing. Yet, I didn’t care. I finally directed my gaze to the sea of ecstatic faces and swaying hands behind me, apart from the glum face of my brother sticking out like a sore thumb. With the secondhand high from the vape pens’ thick white smoke kicking in and everyone singing in unison to “Devastated” by Joey Badass blaring into the night sky, I was on Cloud 9. Not even my miserable middle-aged brother could ruin the night. I finally found my people.

Concerts were my getaway from the disaster I called my everyday life. The school day before the night of a show would be the hardest test of my patience, longing to escape this microcosm of society called school. That place was a melting pot of personas where no matter how hard I tried, I could not connect with. On the other hand, concerts are a cacophony of bright unique personalities that I was always eager to meet. From the random cute stranger that let me lean on his shoulder when I got tired in between sets (which I’d never see again) to the super drunk couple that threw up causing the pit to disperse like dish soap in pepper water, made me feel like I belonged.

However, the one thing that’s most important to me—connecting with people—

was ripped right from me after this monster named COVID touched down. Everything from, venues, restaurants, to bars, hair salons, and amusement parks was closed down. Everyone was advised to add stay inside, add six feet between them and anyone they encountered and wear a medical mask everywhere they went. Who would’ve thought? Who would’ve thought we’d have to wear something only doctors wore, just



**HONORABLE  
MENTION**

to go grocery shopping? Who would’ve thought we’d have to put the height of Chris Evans between ourselves and our loved ones in order to not get fined?

While COVID case numbers rose like wildfire, so did the traction of the BLM movement.

“WHERE ARE YOU?”, read the 18th text from my mother. “On my way, phone died”, I respond. Where? Nowhere near the drive-thru grad party, I claimed I was going to. Scared? As can be. Regret? Not one bit. People scaling fences, hurling rocks at small shops while chanting “SAY HIS NAME” with faces full of fury, and overall complete chaos spread like wildfire behind my friends and me. My hands and whole body trembled like leaves in a windy storm while goosebumps like molehills formed on my neck. During our walk back to the car which felt like forever, it felt like what we left behind followed, fires and shouting growing brighter and louder. Despite the lump that did jumping jacks in my throat and countless possibilities of the consequences I may face when I return home, I still knew that every risk taken that day was 100 percent worth it and with no doubt, it will be a day in history that made an impact.

Moving into college I didn’t think I’d talk to my suitemates at all. I thought the only time we’d have an exchange of words would be to discuss whose turn it was to clean the bathroom but bored with the orientation activities assigned to us during move-in weekend, we all exchanged glances that read “let’s get out of here”. And off we were with no idea where we were going or what we were doing. Chilly Saturday night, screaming at the top of our lungs the lyrics of “Wonderwall” by Oasis until I tasted blood while running after the train that only God knows where it was going. The surge of adrenaline felt that night was a feeling that’s priceless and indescribable. The spontaneity of my mates is something I instantly fell in



love with. That night assured me that this year would be a blast.

Wonderwall. [won-der-wall]/ adj-Somebody you find yourself thinking about constantly, and you are completely infatuated with them. That's exactly what they became to me. What we became to each other. That song became our anthem afterward. Bellowing the chorus off-key from West hall to Valentine to Arnow at 4 AM. Within the first 24 hours of being in each other's presence, it was evident that we were clearly soulmates. They're my Wonder-wall.

Anyone who knows me, knows I'm not much of social butterfly. I'm easily drained from parties and simple things such as small talk. Like what's the point? Occasionally, I will find someone I have loads of things in common with through small talk and gatherings. The concept of parties is so silly to me. Whether it's a birthday, baby shower, or one in someone's basement. Most of the time it's random people and/or relatives coming out of the woodworks that show up just to express how long they haven't seen you by lowering their hand three feet from the ground and make pointless small talk about how "great" their life is with other random people and relatives. Why force a conversation? Do you really care how school is going? Or you just can't bear the silence between us? Maybe it's just the introvert in me speaking.

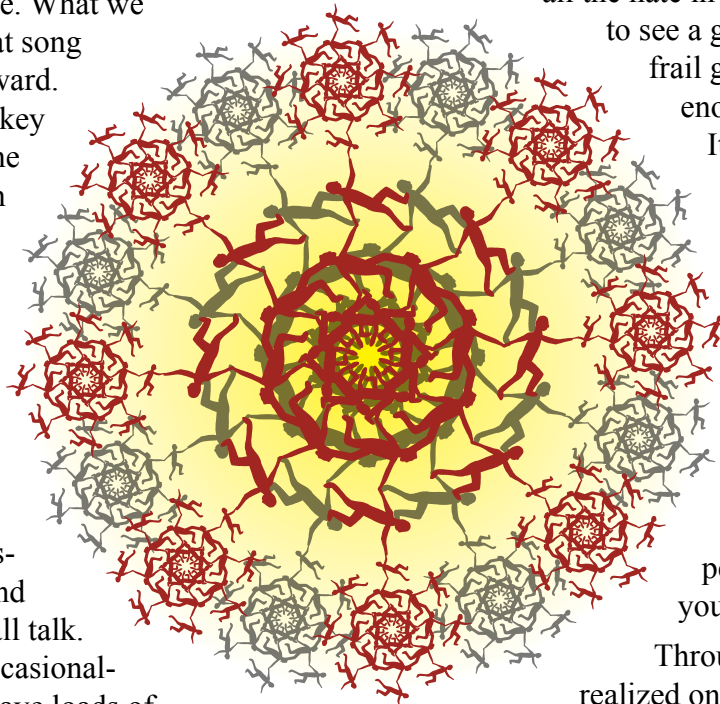
I prefer social gatherings with more of a purpose. People coming together with a common cause such as fighting for basic human rights, to network, or just

to enjoy live music by their favorite artist is more exciting and fulfilling to me. I find it easier to form a relationship based on love or shared beliefs and experiences. It's especially easier when you're in a room full of people there for the same reason. Despite all the hate in the world, it's so refreshing to see a group of people help that one frail girl that didn't quite hydrate enough get out of the mosh pit.

It's refreshing to see people from two completely different backgrounds effortlessly make a connection through the artist performing that night. It's so refreshing to see people offer their last mask or a jug of milk during a protest that went left. It's so refreshing making an unexpected bond with people you'd never imagine yourself with.

Through all these experiences, I realized one of my biggest values this year: unity. The immense number of friends based on common interests such as music and fashion is unbelievable. From the concerts, protests, and other spontaneous outings, I realized it makes my heart as warm as the first ray of sunlight after a freezing winter night to see a group of people putting their differences aside and shutting out the negative abyss, we call the world, in order to come together and form an unbreakable bond.

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# Same-Sex Marriage

Larry Abbiati

Same-sex marriage rights for the LGBTQ+ community has been an ongoing debate for the last 50 years. Just because of the legalization of the act in 2015, doesn't mean the debate is over. Each side of the debate will be covered in the following articles. "Same-sex marriage benefits society in many ways" by Murray Lipp was published through the Gale database as an opposing viewpoint essay. The Gale database is a reputable publishing company that compiles academic sources directed towards students. The second article, "Ten arguments from social science against same-sex marriage" is written by the Family Research Council. This article was also published by the Family Research Council. The article lacks credit to a singular author and instead lets the article speak to the position of the entire organization. They are a nonprofit organization that was founded in 1983 as an educational organization dedicated to family-centered philosophy. They appeal to the general public about family issues that affect the nation from a biblical worldview (Council, 2020).

The rhetoric will be analyzed in each of these articles to determine which holds the stronger argument. Murray Lipp argues that same-sex marriage is actually beneficial in more ways than just giving equal rights to the LGBTQ+ community. The main arguments Lipp makes are that same sex marriage promotes equality and non-discrimination in society, it provides economic and business opportunities, and it strengthens national identity (Lipp, 2015). The Family Research Council argues that children need a biological mother and father, same-sex marriage would further diminish the expectations of paternal commitment and children raised by homosexuals are more likely to experience gender and sexual disorders (Council, 2004). This being said, the diversity in the topics written by Murray Lipp will make for a stronger argument. Murray Lipp

creates a stronger argument in his article through his mix of pathos and logos, attention to diversity in the topics covered, and lack of bias throughout.

The use of pathos in the article "Same-sex marriage benefits society in many ways" introduces a strong persuasive element. No matter what the topic is, if the target audience for the article is the opposing viewpoint, it needs to be persuasive. Emotions can be the best way to catch someone's attention. Lipp talks about the damaging effects it can have on children if same-sex marriage was illegal. He explains that "It sends a damaging message to children within LGBT families that their parents are inferior, second-class citizens who are not worthy of equal treatment in society" (Lipp, 2015). Sending this message to children of same-sex couples can be very damaging. The use of pathos here towards the children makes the reader feel bad for them and persuades the reader to side with same-sex marriage to avoid this conflict. The use of pathos is a strong persuasion tool, but logic is just as important.

The use of logos in the article by Murray Lipp is the strongest argument in the article. While pathos can tug at the heart strings of the reader it can be hard to fight with logic and facts and often logos becomes the strongest part of an argument. Lipp points out that "Today's children represent America's future and it is in the country's best interest to support their development, regardless of whom they are parented by" (Lipp, 2015). It is a fact that today's children are the future for this country. There is no way around it. Giving them the best environment to grow up in is in our best interest to provide them with the best chance for success and opportunity. Lipp uses logos to make this strong point and show what a powerful role marriage can play in a child's life. Through this, Lipp

uses stronger pieces of logos than the Family Research Council and in return the arguments made are more powerful. However, the reader cannot ignore the ethos that the Family Research Council brings.

The use of ethos in the article written by the Family Research Council, greatly contributes to its credibility. It is important for the organization to establish credibility either in themselves or the research provided because without it the source would have no reliability. The Family Research Council (2004) established that “Sociologist Steven Nock of the University of Virginia, who is agnostic on the issue of same-sex civil marriage, offered this review of the literature on gay parenting as an expert witness for a Canadian court considering legalization of same-sex civil marriage.” Steven Nock having the experience working in the field considering legalization of same-sex civil marriage, makes him a very reliable source. He would be speaking from knowledge he’s gathered instead of the opinions he may have. Utilizing someone so reputable in their article, the Family Research Council establishes credibility from the start to set the tone for the rest of the paper. While credibility is important, it doesn’t always make the best argument.

The article “Ten arguments from social science against same-sex marriage,” takes an aggressive tone when citing sources after each section instead of at the end. This aggressive tone sits with the article throughout and feels very assertive. Citing the sources directly after the information is provided can simply be done with an in-text citation and not the full APA citation like the Family Research Council does. It makes the article feel very in your face and unprofessional. The unprofessionalism in this aspect of the article weakens the argument because the reader loses attention with the distraction. It also distracts from the appeal to ethos in the article because the Family Research Council makes it seem like they are the most important source. Murray Lipp cites all of his sources at the end and uses in-text citations throughout to show where the information can be found. A reader has most likely seen this classic style before and will not be distracted by its content. Because of this style, it is easier for the reader to see the benefits that Lipp is presenting.

Same-sex marriage has more benefits than equal marriage right for the LGBTQ+ community. Within this debate, it has been proven that with the legalization of same-sex marriage, will come many economic

benefits as well. “Nearly \$260 million was injected into the New York City economy in the year following the legalization of same-sex marriage. Gay marriage tourism benefits those regions which permit same-sex marriage by attracting gay couples from other states and countries where it is not legal” (Lipp, 2015). This proves that because of the safe environment projected by the legalization of same-sex marriage, a larger demographic of tourists will want to travel and support the communities that support them. Arguing the benefits of same-sex marriage other than equal marriage right for the LGBTQ+ community, shows this side of the argument has a more substantial platform. This substantial platform for argument builds an appeal to a larger audience and will have more people supporting its cause. When an article does not accomplish this, it leaves the argument open to bias.

This problem occurs in the source written by the Family Research Council and detracts from the information presented. Whenever a bias is presented, the reader must take it into account when reading and remember that the article will be persuading their opinion and not concluding based on facts. The Family Research Council is a nonprofit that was founded in 1983 as an educational organization dedicated to family-centered philosophy. They appeal to the general public about family issues that affect the nation from a biblical worldview (Council, 2020). The biblical bias of the Family Research Council gets in the way of the information they are presenting because the reader knows that it is all opinionated and the Family Research Council most likely found sources that sided with what they already believed in to begin with. The bias in the article again weakens the strength of its argument and makes it the weaker of the two arguments.

The argument strength is not lost in Murray Lipp’s article about same-sex marriage due to his use of rhetorical appeals. He uses ethos, pathos, and logos throughout the article, but still manages to provide evidence beyond the persuasive appeals to formulate a strong argument. He uses a quote from the pledge of allegiance that reads “Liberty and justice for all” (Lipp, 2015). The pledge of allegiance is one of the foundations used to describe the U.S.A. and the people of the country should be held accountable for its words. By saying “Liberty and justice for all” it should really mean “for all.” Not just the ones who are thought to deserve it. By legalizing same-sex marriage

it not only gives equal marriage rights to the LGBTQ+ community but supports the foundational descriptions of the U.S.A. and strengthens national identity. Again, the diversity in the argument made for same-sex marriage by Murray Lipp grows and adds depth. Seeing all the areas that are covered in Lipp's argument perceives the Family Research Council's argument to be quite shallow.

The article "Same-sex marriage benefits society in many ways" by Murray Lipp is stronger and creates a better argument than the article "Ten arguments from social science against same-sex marriage" by the Family Research Council. The diversity that Murray Lipp provides in his article along with his use of rhetorical appeals, harmonizes to create a strong argument founded on facts and supported with persuasion. The article written by the Family Research Council merges aggressive elements with a bias that could discredit the argument. In the debate for or against same-sex marriage and equally rights for the LGBTQ+ community, it is clear that legalization of the act is justified and should be executed globally.

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# Begin Again

Eliza Cadwell

First things first: I didn't actually intend to go to college after graduating high school. At the end of senior year, I was really sick of education, stressed by the school system, and wanted to escape. So, I decided I should do a gap year, or two. I said "gap time" back then, because I didn't want anybody thinking I was actually planning to go back to school. For a while after I graduated that worked just fine. I hung out with friends and talked 'big game' about traveling and "seeing more of the world before college," but I didn't really think I would ever want to go.

As my first gap year came to an end and the second one began, I realized I didn't have the right tools to be able to do the things I wanted to do. I had been muddling over different projects, things I could do that interested me and could possibly turn a profit. However, every time I started to think of something, I realized with disappointment that I had no clue where to start putting my ideas into motion.

My favorite idea came from my love of two things: art and K-pop. I got into K-pop naturally during high school and I began almost obsessively creating art related to my favorite groups. So, when I was no longer in school my mind was constantly swirling with new ideas of what I could draw, paint, or create digitally to the point that it was most of what I thought about. One way that I knew I could make that passion into a career of sorts, was if I put my art on t-shirts and created an Etsy account to sell them to other fans looking for fan-made merchandise. I began to do research into how to make an account, set up a shop, and print the shirts I wanted to create, but there was one major issue. I didn't want to make the basic t-shirts that can be printed using a random website online. My mind was swirling with ideas of collared, button-down, and cuffed shirts, styled according to current trends, with intricate pictures and aesthetic designs strategically placed on the shirt to make it balanced and nuanced. I had no idea where to get a shirt like that for myself

online, let alone get one printed with my own design, but I wanted to learn how I could make something like that a reality.

I eventually thought that going to college would be the best choice for my future, and that I really wanted to go into fashion. I landed on fashion, because ever since I got to high school, I had always been more attracted to the arts; I loved to create things and had all these ideas in my head. I also knew that I was not going to be happy doing traditional arts for the rest of my life. Additionally, with fashion I can combine the two, and I am a firm believer in combining strengths to be able to do all the things a person loves at once. When I had finally decided on my direction, I became fixed on applying to a fashion program in college.

I remember sitting at the dinner table talking to my parents about going to college. I was already into my second gap year and was finally feeling ready to move onto my next steps. My parents were talking amongst themselves and I was sitting there picking at my food mulling over what I should say. Finally, after pushing around my corn one last time I blurted, "So, I think I want to study fashion in college." This left them a little stunned, given that we hadn't had a serious conversation about college yet, let alone about fashion design, but they collected their composure in no time. 'What inspired this?' my mom asked, going back to her momentarily forgotten plate of food. She seemed happy that I had found a new direction in life and gotten some motivation back. So, I launched into an explanation and talked excitedly for the rest of dinner about why I wanted to go back to school, with the candlelight from our table illuminating my parents' happy and proud expressions.

After our conversation, they became endlessly supportive of my new objective and helped me to connect with a counselor and look into where I wanted to go. I felt overwhelmed by all of the things I had to be

writing, preparing, and organizing in order to apply to college. It had been a while since I had talked about education with anyone or done any real writing assignments. I felt like I was way out of my depth and floundering.

When I was applying to schools, I began meeting with a really supportive college counselor named Linda. We first met when I began my search for colleges and she has continued to be an immensely helpful source of guidance to me, even today. I can still remember how anxious I was to send in my personal essay portion of my applications. Linda and I had been talking about it for weeks, but I still couldn't make any progress on it, because I was so stuck in my head, worried about what the people reading my work would think about me. "It just feels so personal, and I haven't written an essay in a year!" I whined to Linda over Skype one day, "What if they think that it's bad and I don't get into any of the colleges I'm applying to?" She never thought that I wouldn't make it; she'd just chuckle a little and encourage me to "Just get it started!" Eventually, it worked, and I wrote an essay that I'm still proud of and felt confident sending in thanks to her encouragement and my own effort.

Eventually with the help of many more supportive people around me, I was able to apply to five of my top schools and get into most of them, including my top two picks! When I heard the news that I got into Lasell I was overjoyed, and really excited to go visit the campus. I called one of my closest friends, who happened to be attending Lasell for her first year at the time, and we made a plan, so that I could come and stay for a long weekend with her on campus. I was able to go and have the true student experience and

surprise my other friend who was also going there. That idea wound up falling through, because we forgot it was going to be a surprise and spilled the beans. Nonetheless, I was so excited to be on campus and visit my friends that I hadn't seen in a really long time.

After a few other minor hiccups (including missing my bus to Newton), I was finally able to visit, see the campus and my amazing friends, fall in love with the school, and the idea of learning in a school environment again. When I was there it felt familiar and yet, like something completely new and exciting. Even though I'm online now, I still think that this is true; it is new and exciting for me. I've started to learn more about the things that I am passionate about than ever before, and I've been able to meet some really cool, new people. I believe that people can choose to get the best out of their education, if they put their mind to learning and work hard for it. I intend to do just that here at Lasell.

The whole experience made me realize that I need to continue to learn, that my education is important to me, and that I can mobilize to do the things that I want to do in life. After getting myself to 'just get it together already' I think I've brought that attitude into my life and become more active because of it. I have a job now, I'm going to school, and I've become more responsible about my life and what I want to do with it. It feels like something finally shifted into gear, and now that I no longer feel like I'm stuck in one place, I can't wait to learn more moving forward.

*Eliza Cadwell is currently undeclared in both major and minor. She is from Shelburne, Vermont and has dyed her hair upwards of 7 times.*

# The Smile Behind the Mask

Brianna Foster

The football field is awaiting. My nostrils filled with the aroma of freshly cut grass. The sky is as blue and clear as glistening ocean water with a bit of sunshine poking out from behind a cloud. Plastic foldable chairs aligned waiting for my arrival. The podium that would later forecast my name from the microphone into the loudspeaker, for everyone that lives in the town of Bridgewater, to hear. As the generic “Pomp and Circumstance” marching music plays, I walk out to my chair, single filed following the person in front of me, who happened to be in my Spanish class. My stomach is filled with butterflies but keeping my head high in confidence as I walk across the stage. To hear all of my family members and friends scream my name until their veins were popping out of their necks. For them to clap until their hands gave out. Smiling from ear to ear when the voices of my parents fill my ears.

The event that would give me the closure of one chapter so I could begin my next. A goodbye to the now grown adults, I have just spent the last four years and for some even more years with. All of the memories I had made throughout the last 12 years would just become a distant memory in the blink of an eye. “Brianna, what did you get for #4 on the homework?” My high school business teacher, Mr. Ferreira, awakes me from my nap by asking into the zoom call. It was at that moment I snapped into reality to realize that graduation would only be in my dream. The life I had known before was no longer. My big senior year, that every child dreams of had just come crumbling down. Everything the class of 2020 students worked so hard for, to not get the recognition we desired. My life now consisted of no social contact with the outside world and if for some reason we were to leave the house, a mask was to be worn. The closure I had craved was becoming more of wishful thinking.

It all goes back to my brother, Anthony, graduating high school. My brother is five years older than me. Being his little sister, I looked up to him and the goals

he accomplished. After attending his graduation, I said to my mother, “Mom, why am I not graduating like Ant?” and she would tell me “Not yet sweetie, soon enough it will be your turn.” In my head, I never could imagine the person walking the large terrifying stage being me. Impatience has always been a personality trait for me, I do not like to wait my turn. Throughout schooling, the comment “very conscientious student” next to my name was an every year event. Almost all of my teachers would comment on how conscientious I was. My schoolwork came before everything else. However, I never felt like I was rewarded by my school. I would always give 110% but never get the special acknowledgment other smart students got, such as their name being stated on a microphone from the voice of our principal or scholarships given out by the high school. In my head, the moment I believed would give me the recognition I had craved after these 4 years would be having my name called out on the loudspeaker for all to hear. All I wanted was the happiness that comes from achieving something and being recognized for it.

At my high school, Bridgewater-Raynham, the beginning of senior year would be crammed with homework and exams. Nights that by the end had drained my mind to 0% battery from working on homework or simply studying for a quiz for the next day. The next morning in school, I would be like a zombie from the lack of sleep I got from the night before. Anything for a good grade I would tell myself. Later on in the year, the hard work would pay off and it would result in senior events that I would have imprinted in my brain for the rest of my life. The thoughts I would look back on years from now when someone asks me “What do you remember from senior year?” I would respond with these memorable events. I’ve seen so many seniors before me experience these every year and I recall my body jumping for joy at the thought of it being my turn.

The senior events at my high school include a Mr. BR show. The Mr. BR show was a competition between any senior boys that signed up and they would have to perform different comical skits in front of our whole school and judges (who were just teachers) to win the title of Mr. BR. These skits would have the audience crackling so hard they were snorting like pigs. It gave the boy who won bragging rights for the whole rest of his senior year and even long after. Throughout the show, there is an intermission while the guys are getting ready outback, and during the intermission, a group of senior girls come out on stage and perform a rehearsed dance. I had rehearsed that dance and practiced every night just for it to end up being canceled. I put my everything into that dance, especially given I am very uncoordinated. Another event is to decorate your cars with washable paint with phrases, such as “Go Seniors!” and “Class of 2020.” You would jam-pack your cars with your best friends, blaring music so loud it blows your eardrum, smiling from ear to ear just driving around the town of Bridgewater, escorted by police officers. All the Bridgewater residents would hear is the obnoxious honking from the line of cars. Just bonding with your class before time was up in just a couple of months. The event I was most excited about was the walkthrough of our old elementary, intermediate, and middle school. I wanted to see the bright bubbly faces of the teachers I had growing up that helped me get to the intelligence I have today.

Chewing on the end of my pencil, completely ignoring the PowerPoint note lecture given by my teacher in the front of the AP biology class, thinking how close we were to the end of our high school career; only 3 months away. After my biology class, whispering lingered from the back to front of the classroom saying that there was this “mysterious virus” coming from China that could potentially be serious. Each day I would listen to a different kid in the hallway or at lunch, tell a different reason on how this virus came about, whether it was man-made or from food people were eating, the ideas became more and more ridiculous but what do you expect from childish high school students? I just laughed it off in confusion thinking there was no way that this virus would hit our little town of Bridgewater. In the following weeks, a text popped up from my friend saying people in surrounding towns had tested positive for “COVID.”

Throughout the beginning of March, I noticed the

hallways that usually had millions of grimy kids toppling over each other looked rather sparse. Was there a lack of students due to the fear of Coronavirus? I had no idea. Why was I in school? Was I not supposed to be? When all of a sudden, my internal questions were answered by this mysterious voice over the intercom, “Hello students of BR, it has come to our awareness of the severity of this recent virus. It is going to be our responsibility to socially distance ourselves in this busy hallway and take safety precautions that are deemed necessary.” Of course, at this time, none of us truly knew what was going on or how to handle it. Every week the school board would have a meeting discussing the Coronavirus but no one ever had the answers. Watching the news about the number of deaths and cases going up, I knew the terror was real. With my heart leaping into my throat, I thought, What if I were to become ill with this deadly virus? Or my loved ones?

Friday, March 13, 2020- Unknowingly, the last day I would ever walk the halls of my high school again. Of course, there was word around the lunch tables that school might be closed for the rest of the year. I had strongly doubted it. Words spread faster than butter on toast in high school so I did not think anything of it. In the beginning, when all of this news was fresh, denial was my first instinct. At the time, I was hoping that the school would close for a week or two because me being a fed-up exhausted student, I wasn’t thinking straight. I also didn’t think of the everlasting effects this virus could have on not just my senior year but the world itself. I had figured if the school was canceled, it would only be for a couple of days or weeks. Later that night, my school had called to officially call off school until we got a further notice from the Massachusetts governor, Charlie Baker. As assumed, there was not further notice, the reopening dates would just get pushed back further and further; with no end in sight. My heart immediately throbs with agony. All I could think was why now? Why this year? Why ever?

I spent the following months going through a total adjustment. A life I had not known before quarantined life. I would open my eyes to be disturbed by the overwhelming number of notifications for each class through Zoom and Google Classroom. Tears would roll down my face leaving dried stains on my cheeks every morning when I would wake up and every night when I would go to bed thinking about my new real-

ity. To hang out with my best friends, I would have to meet them in my car in an open parking lot, where we would sit in our cars 6 feet apart and talk so we were socially distant but still could feel connected and not just through our phones. It felt as if we were in a horror movie that never ends. I had just envisioned such an amazing senior year so my heart was in crumbles watching it slip out of my fingertips. I didn't want to realize that my senior year was over. I held hope, which made the feeling of discouragement much worse.

After there were no more tears to cry over the 6 months from when we left school, semi uplifting news came out that we would have a socially distant, masks required, two household family members could attend, type of socially distant graduation. I am not going to lie. My internal thoughts to this was it was a day late and a dollar short. And it's not my school's fault or anyone's for that matter. No one's fault but this virus that lurks in the air and on surfaces. I no longer carried that heart beating jumping for joy, excitement, and hope I used to have. But after coming around, I realized this is the moment I dreamed of now go out there and enjoy it. You worked for this. Like in my dream, I could still hear the sweet voice that belongs to my mom and my dad's rough deep voice peering through the loud audience knowing they were there to support me and were just as proud if not more proud than me. Hearing the clapping from those I had known my whole life and their parents who may not have even known me, just gave me that smile from ear to ear. Who cares if you can't see the smile behind my

mask, my glistening brown almond-shaped eyes were doing the smiling for me. I finally got the opportunity to wear my long red cloak-like gown, like the one that I used to see hanging in my brother's closet with my fully bedazzled cap that read "The Best is Yet to Come." It was officially my turn, even if it was abnormal.

Although this wouldn't be what I expected or had dreamed of since I was a young girl and it was a month before I was headed off to college, it was still better than nothing. Now, I have learned what it is truly like to be grateful. Every moment in life should be cherished. Coronavirus has come to our world and changed it as we all knew. No one would have ever thought this would be where we are. I realized what seemed like my world ending problem of my graduation and senior year being canceled didn't seem so big on the scale of lives that were being ended from this virus. It is important to enjoy a moment while you are in it because it can be taken away from you unexpectedly or even altered to a different way to celebrate the same event. I will forever have captured in my brain what it was like having a different type of graduation because we will be a graduation that generations from now will remember and a story to tell my children in the future. My moment of pride and validation that I urged for was fulfilled.

*Brianna Foster is an Event Management major with a minor in Marketing. She is from Bridgewater, MA and has visited the Lincoln Memorial.*

# Social Media Censorship: Does it Exist?

Ava Gundal

In the days before the 2020 presidential election, social media censorship has been a growing issue that continues to be discussed in various news outlets. Glenn Greenwald (2020) depicts one side of the argument in his editorial, “Facebook and Twitter Cross a Line Far More Dangerous Than What They Censor”. He argues that Twitter and Facebook side with “mainstream political and media voices” in their effort to suppress others in favor of their own fallacies (Greenwald, 2020). His purpose in writing this article is to spread awareness of this issue to his audience; which mainly consists of people who may associate with the Republican party, or people who identify as being more neutral. However, Angelo Carusone (2020) begs to differ in “Facebook and Twitter don’t censor conservatives. They hire and promote them”. In this opinion editorial, which takes the form of a blog post on NBC News’ website, Carusone (2020) explores the opposing side of this issue which illustrates how mainstream voices do not suppress others, but rather fight to prevent suppression. He aims to appease an audience that supports big media corporations, as well as the idea that Democrats are the ones being censored more than Republicans. Both authors are very straightforward and prepared to argue for their individual positions. This brings up the question: which side is more persuasive, and does this social media censorship exist?

In terms of ethos, Greenwald (2020) takes well-known sources such as the New York Post and quotes information that can be used to back up his argument and beliefs. For instance, Greenwald (2020) begins by establishing the credibility of the New York Post by referring to it as “one of the country’s oldest and largest newspapers. Founded in 1801 by Alexander Hamilton, only three U.S. newspapers are more widely circulated” (Greenwald, 2020). Furthermore, in order to convince the audience that his argument is credible, Greenwald (2020) picks and analyzes tweets posted by

various officials on Twitter in order to cast a shadow of doubt on their statements. Therefore, by doing this, Greenwald (2020) hopes for the audience to view him as someone that is trustworthy as well as to make his opponents come off as deceitful. For example, Greenwald (2020) demonstrates how a long-time Democratic Party official, Andy Stone, displays his distaste for The New York Post’s article as he has stated “while I will intentionally not link to the New York Post, I want to be clear that this story is eligible to be fact checked by Facebook’s third-party fact checking partners. In the meantime, we are reducing its distribution on our platform” (Greenwald, 2020). Greenwald’s goal in presenting this tweet is to show the audience how people like Andy Stone are working to suppress the voices of many users who seek to share this article (Greenwald, 2020).

In contrast to the techniques that Greenwald uses, Carusone (2020) expects that the audience should trust the information being presented to them without question. According to Carusone (2020), “Media Matters have done study after study after study after study showing that conservative content on Facebook receives significantly greater engagement than other content” (Carusone, 2020). He does not feel the need to explain why these ‘studies’ are credible, as he is already aware of who is in his audience. Although, Carusone (2020) does refer to crucial events that justify the points he is making. For instance, he mentions how “Facebook in particular has a long history of caving to right-wing pressure-- going back to 2016. Facebook executives have held multiple meetings with top conservatives, made Breitbart a trusted news partner and changed the Facebook algorithm... They even went so far as to intentionally suppress news from progressive sites like Mother Jones” (Carusone, 2020). Once again, Carusone (2020) persuades his audience by arguing that the history of Facebook has always shown a bias that leans towards the right. However,

while he does use explicit evidence here, for most of the editorial, Carusone (2020) makes statements based on his own beliefs. These two techniques, even though they are not the most impressive, keep the audience reading.

Both opinion editorials primarily focus on the topic of social media censorship as well as provide the same answer to the question that was posed. Furthermore, both Greenwald (2020) and Carusone (2020) use similar techniques in order to establish credibility; although, Greenwald (2020) does not attempt to lecture the audience as Carusone (2020) does.

When it comes to pathos, Greenwald (2020) and Carusone (2020) both attempt to connect to the audience in their own unique ways. Greenwald (2020) does this by describing Facebook as “not some benevolent, kind, compassionate parent or a subversive, radical actor who is going to police our discourse in order to protect the weak and marginalized or serve as a noble clerk on mischief by the powerful” (Greenwald, 2020). He allows the reader to visualize what social media might look like in their mind, or better yet according to their feelings. However, once the reader visualizes the scene that Greenwald (2020) wants them to see, he instantly strips them of this visualization, replacing it with a more realistic perception when he states “they are almost always going to do exactly the opposite: protect the powerful from those who seek to undermine elite institutions” (Greenwald, 2020). Greenwald (2020) does not want the reader to read his editorial with only emotions in mind. Therefore, he sought to manipulate the audience’s feelings, using them to paint a clear picture in the mind of the reader. By doing this, he illustrates the reality of social media censorship. Another technique Greenwald (2020) takes full advantage of is asking the reader questions. How would they feel if an “unproven conspiracy theory-- leaked by the CIA or FBI to the Washington Post or NBC News-- is suppressed pending ‘fact-checking’ by Facebook?” (Greenwald, 2020). How are they supposed to trust the platform then? Greenwald (2020) uses these techniques in order to make his audience feel frustrated, as he purposefully displays evidence that voices are being suppressed on various social media platforms.

While Greenwald (2020) wishes to make his audience feel frustrated, Carusone (2020) is not afraid of including an obvious bias within his editorial. One

technique that Carusone (2020) takes advantage of is using terms one would typically not see within an opinion editorial. In other words, he uses a more improper approach. One example of this can be seen in the very first paragraph, as Carusone (2020) compares a Senate hearing to a “circus”, and how he described Ted Cruz promoting such an event as a “boxing match” (Carusone, 2020). He attempts to implement humor into his article for those who agree with his perspective, and this can be seen a lot throughout the editorial. Another technique that Carusone (2020) uses in order to relate to the audience is name-calling, as he refers to conservatives as “right-wing misinformation peddlers” (Carusone, 2020). He also attempts to throw jabs at the Republicans by stating how “this hearing-- like other Republican-led tech hearings in the Trump era-- devolved into a banal session of complaining about the alleged suppression of specific conservatives...” (Carusone, 2020). These kinds of crude remarks are what brings in a particular audience: specifically, the audience that sides against the President, and this is exactly what Carusone (2020) is aiming for.

There are many similarities and differences that exist between the techniques that Greenwald (2020) and Carusone (2020). One striking similarity has to do with the fact that both authors ask their audiences questions regarding their opinions on the matter. However, one article appears to be more biased than the other. Carusone (2020) displays his distaste for the President and the Republican party to a great extent, while Greenwald (2020) doesn’t let his personal opinions get in the way of presenting an argument. Therefore, Greenwald (2020) and Carusone (2020) both have differing approaches when it comes to pathos, but do share some similarities as well.

Greenwald (2020) implements logical techniques in order to construct his argument by including various definitions of terms, such as censorship. He describes censorship as being used to silence those “on the fringes and the margins”, as “those who reside outside of the fractions of power” are the most susceptible (Greenwald, 2020). Greenwald (2020) defines censorship in a way that illustrates how it harms those on the outside, rather on the inside. He does this on purpose to support his argument. A second logical technique that Greenwald (2020) uses is causation, as he implies that with the censorship and suppression of smaller voices on social media platforms, monopolists and



overlords will have a much larger say as a result (Greenwald, 2020). This is a direct cause and effect, which differs from correlation.

In Carusone's editorial, there are not only logical techniques being used, but also logical fallacies that can be spotted within the writing. One example of this can be found at the very bottom of the editorial in the last paragraph, as Carusone (2020) makes a hasty generalization when stating that "it's long past time we have an honest and adult conversation... That can't happen when senators are focused on mean tweets-- or when the companies hire partisan, dishonest operatives and give them a leading voice..." (Carusone, 2020). He is making the generalization that it is just the Republican side that does not wish to cooperate. However, many can and will argue that those on both sides of the political issue struggle to find common ground and talk reasonably to one another. Another logical fallacy that can be found in this editorial is a red herring, as Carusone (2020) tends to divert his attention elsewhere, usually on background information that has nothing to do with the argument he is trying to present. For instance, he mentions that "in [Kaplan's] spare time, [he] remains a Republican operative; most infamously, he helped shepherd through Brett Kavanaugh's Supreme Court nomination through the Senate" (Carusone 2020). There is no reason as to why Carusone (2020) had to specify when it came to Kaplan's background with the exception of including his political party.

When it comes to logos, both Greenwald (2020) and Carusone (2020) use their own forms of biased information. While there were more logical techniques that Greenwald (2020) used, Carusone (2020) included a fair share of logical fallacies. However, both were able to make convincing arguments as well as show that they are both capable of writing a logical editorial. Carusone (2020) also used many of the logical tech-

niques that Greenwald (2020) had, such as definition. However, the logical fallacies were easier to pinpoint within the editorial. If Carusone (2020) had removed some of the bias he implemented into his editorial, more logical points can be derived from his piece of work.

In conclusion, Greenwald's "Facebook and Twitter Cross a Line Far More Dangerous Than What They Censor" is the more persuasive opinionated editorial for their intended audience. This is due to the fact that there was less of a bias illustrated here, and that the author, Glenn Greenwald (2020), was capable of implementing many credible sources as well as doing so in a proficient and articulate manner. This is a professional opinion editorial which is not plagued by blatant bias and information that has been altered in order to support an argument. There were many examples of credible, emotional, and logical techniques that could be found that more times than not benefited the editorial.

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# Rhetorical Analysis on the MVPs of the NBA

Alyne Im

The 2019-2020 NBA season was a historic one on many different accounts, including the level of play by some of the league's superstars throughout a very hectic year for the league. LeBron James and Giannis Antetokounmpo, arguably the NBA's 2 biggest stars currently, both made very convincing claims to take home the coveted NBA MVP trophy with their magnificent level of play. Matthew Schmidt of ClutchPoints with his article, "Why Giannis Antetokounmpo should repeat as NBA MVP" and Paolo Songco also of ClutchPoints with his article, "Why LeBron James deserves to win his 5th career NBA MVP award for 2019-20 season", both attempts to make their case for each player through the use of different persuasion techniques to help strengthen their arguments. Through the use of ethos, pathos, and logos, the authors of each op-ed attempt to open their readers' eyes to who truly deserves the MVP trophy in a highly-contested race this past season.

While the NBA has many fans worldwide who follow the sport religiously, the authors of each op-ed attempt to appeal to a very specific audience with their articles. Foremost, the sole purpose of these 2 op-ed articles is to simply try to persuade the reader why each player deserves to win the coveted MVP trophy. Matthew Schmidt attempts to justify Giannis Antetokounmpo winning MVP by showcasing how incredible of a season Antetokounmpo had, while Paolo Songco makes his case for LeBron winning due to not only his great play, but his impact on his team overall. While that sounds like a fairly reasonable task, the NBA's fan base tends to be very stingy when it comes to issues of persuasion. Many fans are very biased towards certain

players and Giannis and LeBron both carry very loyal fan bases that stretch much further than simply Lakers or Bucks fans. Both players are forefront faces of the league worldwide, creating a very dedicated fan base for each player and adding a strong sense of bias towards each side as well. Many media outlets are guilty of this bias too, further clouding the truth of who truly deserves to win it. The art of persuasion in this case is incredibly important, and perhaps the deciding factor when it comes to a reader choosing sides on this issue. Many likely will even dismiss the two op-eds as "biased" for either side simply because it goes against who they hope wins. Therefore, due to the sensitive nature of these fans, the audience each author tries to reach in their op-ed is only a portion of NBA fans, ones who have little to no personal bias towards each player. More fair-weather NBA fans are also included in this intended audience because while there are many die-hard fans who aren't biased towards a specific player, many of them generally stand firm on who they believe should be MVP based on their observations. Targeting the fair-weather fans also helps to ensure that each author's point is more-likely to resonate with the reader, rather than a stingy reader unwilling to change their stance. While some of the biased fans will not expect much out of these articles, fans with an open-mind would expect genuine reasoning for each author's stance. With good reasoning and strong argumentation, each author's op-ed could be the deciding factor when an open-minded or fair-weather NBA fan decides who should win the MVP this season.

While Giannis' 2019 MVP title was overall undisputed, the closer race for the trophy this year makes

the persuasive techniques Matthew Schmidt uses in his article, “Why Giannis Antetokounmpo should repeat as NBA MVP”, even more important to convince readers to support his case. Firstly, Giannis Antetokounmpo has made quite the case to win MVP this season, but LeBron James has as well. When it comes down to persuading readers in Giannis’s favor, the detailed analysis of Giannis’s historic season are crucial to accomplishing that. In this article, perhaps no persuasive element is more important to conveying Giannis’s greatness than Schmidt’s use of logos. In Giannis’s case, logos is the one persuasive element where he truly has the upper-hand over LeBron. Giannis statistics this season have been incredible and Schmidt makes it a priority to showcase them in the article. For Example, Schmidt’s use of logos is forefront when he says, “The Greek Freak is averaging 29.6 points, 13.7 rebounds and 5.8 assists per game this season, truly remarkable numbers. They became even more unreal when you take into account that he is playing under 31 minutes a night. Meanwhile, LeBron is registering 25.7 points, 10.6 assists and 7.9 boards in a tick under 35 minutes per game”, (Schmidt, 2020). By comparing both Giannis and LeBron’s stats from this past season, the author uses logos to showcase that statistically Giannis has been the better player this season, strengthening his argument for Giannis winning. Schmidt’s use of logos is also on display when he writes, “Yes, Antetokounmpo is struggling from the charity stripe in his own right, but he is shooting 54.7 percent from the floor to compensate for those issues. For that reason, his free-throw problems are not as damning as LeBron’s”, (Schmidt, 2020). While Schmidt admits that Giannis isn’t perfect, he uses another very important statistic in shooting percentage to not only show that Giannis compensates for his one major weakness, and also showcases that LeBron has struggles too which he did not make up for in another category. Secondly, while taking a clear back seat to logos, Schmidt also uses the persuasion technique of ethos to bolster his argument for Giannis. Ethos in this article is one of the lesser used techniques of persuasion, but it still does have an important purpose. Schmidt uses ethos in particular to strengthen his use of logos in the article. For Example, just prior to referencing Giannis’s stats, Schmidt writes, “First of all, the Milwaukee Bucks have the top record in basketball at 53-12. The Los Angeles Lakers aren’t far behind at 49-14, but the Bucks have the clear edge”, (Schmidt, 2020). By

mentioning the record of both Giannis and LeBron’s teams, the author uses the track record approach of ethos to show that Giannis’s play has indeed led to a positive effect on his team’s success the past season. Schmidt also uses ethos when describing Giannis’ overall team impact by stating, “Another notch in Giannis’ belt is the fact that he does not have quite the help that James does. While Khris Middleton and Eric Bledsoe are hardly bad sidekicks, neither player is Anthony Davis”, (Schmidt, 2020). By bringing up the credibility of Anthony Davis who is well-regarded as a top 5 player in the league, Schmidt diminishes the impact of Giannis’s teammates compared to LeBron’s teammates. By doing this, he strengthens Giannis’s MVP case by alluding to how valuable and impactful he truly is to his team’s great record, compared to LeBron. Finally, Schmidt also lightly uses the technique of pathos to further solidify his argument that Giannis Antetokounmpo deserves MVP. Since Giannis’ stats and credibility speak for itself, the author in this article has little need for pathos to appeal his case to the readers. One example of Schmidt using pathos is when he writes, “Give Antetokounmpo a teammate like Davis, and just imagine how much scarier the Bucks would be”, (Schmidt, 2020). This statement is an example of pathos, because it appeals emotionally to the reader either inducing excitement imagining the superstar duo playing together or potentially fear at the thought of them wreaking havoc on a reader’s favorite team. While we have already seen what LeBron and Anthony Davis can do playing together, the thought of swapping LeBron for a player who is statistically better creates some form of an emotional appeal in an article where pathos is overall unnecessary to persuade the readers that Giannis deserves MVP. However, the sparsely used pathos in Schmidt’s article only strengthens his argument that is already very strong due to the use of techniques such as logos and ethos.

Due to the incredible play Giannis Antetokounmpo has put on display this season, the persuasion techniques used by Paolo Songco in his article, “Why LeBron James deserves to win his 5th career NBA MVP award for 2019-20 season”, are key to getting readers to agree with his stance. To start, because Giannis Antetokounmpo has been better than LeBron statistically in most categories this season, Songco must put his focus on other persuasion techniques to get his point across, such as ethos. While the statistics backup

Giannis's case for MVP, they don't solely determine who wins MVP. Through the use of ethos, Songco is able to showcase how valuable is to his team overall and the players he plays with. For Example, one quote that Songco includes is from Lakers head coach Frank Vogel who says, "That's not to take anything away from some of the other candidate, but what LeBron means to our team — even before the season begins, when the roster is being put together, with a number of guys that are on the Lakers because LeBron James is here and want to play with him ... I think it starts there", (Songco, 2020). By including this quote, Songco uses ethos by including a credible source, the person who is LeBron's head coach. This quote helps strengthen Songco's argument because LeBron's head coach is a well-known coach whose credibility is firmly established, and an endorsement from him may be enough to persuade readers that LeBron's impact is deeper than originally thought. Songco also includes a quote from LeBron's superstar teammate Anthony Davis where he praises James' abilities, saying, "Basically he can do everything on the floor. He can shoot the ball, he can pass, he gets everyone involved", (Songco, 2020). In a league where chemistry and personal issues between teammates is both common and well-publicized, this quote from a very reputable superstar helps strengthen Songco's argument for LeBron through ethos. While there are no true statistics for overall team impact, quotes from credible sources such as those who play with and coach LeBron go a long way to appeal to readers still torn between who should win MVP. Furthermore, the use of pathos in this article is just as impactful to persuading the reader who should win MVP as ethos. In this case, Songco attempts to persuade his audience by appealing to their emotions with inspirational quotes about LeBron's successes this past season. For Example, to showcase the circumstances around LeBron's phenomenal play this past season, Songco says, "At this point, we can confidently say that LeBron James doing all that he has for the Lakers this season — in his 17th season, at age 35 — is indeed an extenuating circumstance", (Songco, 2020). This is a strong example of pathos used by Songco to demonstrate that while statistically Giannis has been better, LeBron is playing at a very similar level while being much older. This appeals to the reader's emotions through the inspirational nature of the quote, which is attempting to amaze the reader with the extraordinary circum-

stances surrounding LeBron's play. Songco further attempts to inspire the reader by stating, "James heard his critics, and instead of bickering about it, he let his game do the talking. He completely transformed the mindset of the Lakers, putting so much emphasis on what they do on the defensive end", (Songco, 2020). This quote helps emphasize pathos in the article, showcasing that LeBron inspires his whole team to be better. With this approach, Songco is effective in his use of pathos in his article due to the inspirational nature of LeBron's success. Finally, not only is logos the least used persuasion technique in Songco's article, but it's the weakest one too. To be fair, with Giannis beating LeBron in most statistical categories, Songco has very little to work with for logos. The only passage where Songco successfully uses logos is when he states, "He is, however, dishing out a career-best 10.6 dimes per game. He is currently leading the entire league in this particular category — the first time he has done this throughout his career", (Songco, 2020). While citing this lone statistic is a good use of logos, the author also includes a fallacy as an attempt at logos. Songco does this by mentioning the improved play of teammate Dwight Howard as an example of LeBron's success. While it may be true, there's no real data to back that up and without data to back it up, it's purely speculation to include this in the article. This almost weakens Songco's argument because an informed reader would recognize it's a case of speculation, which may turn them against what Songco is arguing. Overall, Songco's strong use of ethos and pathos helps persuade readers to side with his argument, but the use of logos leaves something to be desired.

Overall, both authors showcased their ability to use ethos, pathos, and logos effectively to make their case for who should win MVP. Depending on the article, some persuasion tactics were more effective than others. In Matthew Schmidt's article, "Why Giannis Antetokounmpo should repeat as NBA MVP", ethos and pathos were lightly used, but through the use of logos Schmidt was able to soundly prove that statistically Giannis had a better season than LeBron. In Paolo Songco's article, "Why LeBron James deserves to win his 5th career NBA MVP award for 2019-20 season", the use of pathos and ethos was effective in demonstrating LeBron's overall impact on his team's success, but logos was ineffective due to the lack of statistics in LeBron's favor. In the End, Matthew

Schmidt's op-ed was more convincing overall due to the use of logos and statistics to back up his argument. The statistics Schmidt used to justify Giannis's MVP case were very effective in backing up his argument, and while he lightly used ethos and pathos, he did so in a way that ties in to the statistical evidence provided and overall, the op-ed was very persuasive. Paolo Songco's article was very strong on the ethos and pathos front, but the lack of statistical evidence and the fallacy weakened his argument and was not as convincing as Schmidt's op-ed.

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# COVID-19 Lockdown Rhetorical Analysis

Maddie Leung

Since Joe Biden was elected as the next president, there has been talk about the possibility of another covid lockdown, similar to the one that began in march. Most democrats are for the idea of another shutdown, while republicans want to continue on with the rules and restrictions we have in place now. Most health officials want another lockdown, while a lot of business women and men do not want one because it could harm the economy. The article against having another covid lockdown is weaker than the article for another lockdown because of its logical fallacies, misuse of rhetorical appeals, and its style and design. The article against having another lockdown is misleading to the audience and can be harmful for people to believe, which is why it is important to be aware of logical fallacies and flaws in rhetorical appeals.

“Keeping life humming: Locking down means dying inside” by The Washington Times argues that there should be no lockdown, and life should return to how it was before the virus in order to save the American spirit. It is a misleading article that does not have any qualities of a strong argument. Its logical fallacies, incorrect use of pathos, and style and design make the argument invalid. The audience such as government officials, parents, or teachers who might read this article would either disregard it because it is not a proper argument, or they would be misled by it and fall for the multiple logical fallacies and misused pathos.

The article has multiple logical fallacies that are used to be concerningly misleading and spread biased information. There is an ad hominem, where the editorial board criticizes the other side for something that is separate from the argument at hand. The board states, “On Monday, she imposed a 30-day stay-at-home advisory that strongly urged residents to shun guests, cancel traditional Thanksgiving gatherings and refrain

from travel. Partying in the street with thousands to celebrate Joe Biden’s apparent presidential victory is fine with her, though.” (The Washington Times, 2017, p.2). Rather than talking about a solution to the virus itself, the authors criticized the other side instead for celebrating Biden’s win, which is a separate topic. They diverted the attention off of the lockdown to talk about the other side. Another example is when the article states, “He relented when colleagues pulled the doctor away from Team Biden’s supply of crazy pills.” (The Washington Times, 2020, p.3). The authors made fun of the other side, but did not say anything about the argument while doing so. There is also a red herring where the editors diverted the attention off of the spread of the virus, and talk about losing the American spirit instead. The article states, “Anthony Fauci... has recommended Americans ‘give up their independent spirit’ and ‘do what you’re told.’” (The Washington Times, 2020, p.1). The authors changed the subject off of Covid to people losing their American spirit, which removes the severity of the circumstances and makes people fear losing spirit instead of the virus. The editorial board also uses the either/ or fallacy in the article by creating an unrealistic, simple solution, taking away from the complexity of the situation. The article states that if life returns to normal, the virus will slowly go away and the economy will be saved (The Washington Times, 2020). The authors disregard all of the factors of fixing the virus, and wrote a simple solution of ignoring the problem until it goes away; which is clearly unrealistic and false. The logical fallacies used in the article create a misleading idea of the severity of Covid-19, and give a false sense of an easy solution.

The Washington Times article also misuses rhetorical appeals, on top of the logical fallacies. The authors

used pathos in multiple areas within the article, attempting to make the reader feel guilty and sad about following Covid-19 guidelines and rules. The authors state, “Stay away. That’s the message Americans are hearing as the coronavirus spike sharpens with the onset of the cold season. Citizens are instructed to stay apart from the people, places, and things they love... It’s a dreadful decision to make, because to quell the hum of life is to die inside.” (The Washington Times, 2020, p.1). The authors are trying to make the reader against the idea of following the rules by saying people cannot stay inside. They tried to use pathos to make the readers feel sadness about staying inside, but it is easy to see through their bias on disregarding the severity of the virus. Anyone who has had a family member or friend get sick from Covid-19 will most likely not agree with that statement, which is the first sentence of the article, too. Those readers will not feel the projected pathos emotions from the authors.

Another weak example of the editorial board pathos is when they attempt to make people feel guilty for having a different Thanksgiving holiday this year, due to the possibility of the virus spreading to family members from gatherings. The article states, “Macy’s annual Thanksgiving Day Parade will take place, but without the parade or sidewalk crowds. Instead, sponsors are planning to televise a series of appropriately themed theatrical and musical performances. It’s virtual reality- only for beleaguered New Yorkers forced to live a virtual life. Turkey TV dinner, anyone?” (The Washington Times, 2020, p.2). The authors are attempting to use pathos to play on peoples’ nostalgic memories of the parade, as well as the holiday in general. They are trying to make people feel guilty for celebrating differently this year by complaining about the virtual parade. The pathos has less of an effect because it is easy to see that the authors are not just upset about the holiday; they do not want to stay inside in general. The reader can see that the holiday is a weak use of pathos and a tactic to attempt to get people to agree to be against the Covid-19 lockdown rules. The effect of pathos did not get across to the reader like the authors planned. Another example of this is the connotation of the vocabulary they use. The authors state in the previous quote, “[Mayor Lori Lightfoot] imposed a 30-day stay-at-home advisory that strongly urged residents to shun guests, cancel traditional Thanksgiving gatherings and refrain from travel.” (The Washington Times, 2020, p.2). The word “shun” has a strong

negative connotation that causes the people who had small Thanksgivings to sound mean and unjust. The phrase “cancel Thanksgiving traditions” has a negative connotation as well. The word “traditions” is a use of pathos to play on the nostalgia of the reader, once again attempting to make them feel sad and guilty if they celebrated differently this year. The weak use of pathos causes the reader to see the bias of the article.

The style and design of the article show how weak the argument is. The article is made up of small paragraphs and short sentences. The vocabulary is basic and is not technical. The tone of the article is whiney and uses childish phrases such as, “Team Biden’s supply of crazy pills” (The Washington Times, 2020, p.3) and “Turkey TV dinner, anyone?” (The Washington Times, 2020, p.2). Those phrases make the article informal and sound very casual. The language is too informal to be a proper persuasive argument. The design of the article has the same effect. There is one photo in the article on the first page. The photo is of a woman sitting at a table outside with a clear, plastic, bubble surrounding her. It is an exaggeration of what a Covid-19 lockdown really looks like. The photo being on that page is similar to a fear tactic; trying to get the audience to believe that is how everyone will look. The photo is purposely not an accurate representation of how the lockdown would be, which is misleading to the audience and causes an even weaker argumentative article overall.

“Here’s How to Crush the Virus Until Vaccines Arrive” by The New York Times Editorial board is an opinion piece on why the country should go into another quarantine lockdown. The authors describe how another lockdown would most likely eliminate Covid-19 and life would go back to normal after. The argument is much stronger than the first article because they effectively use logos and pathos to help the audience understand their side and persuade them. The audience of government officials and the general public would read the article and have a better understanding about proper solutions to help get rid of the virus. The article might even persuade them to agree with their side, too.

The authors use logos and pathos effectively. They use logos to describe how the lockdown is in best interest for the country. The authors state, “We believe the choice is clear. We can continue to allow the coronavirus to spread rapidly throughout the country

or we can commit to a more restrictive lockdown, state by state, for up to six weeks to crush the spread of the virus to less than one new case per 100,000 people per day.” (Osterholm, Kashkari, 2020, p.1). Osterholm and Kashkari describe a possible solution to the virus, using numbers and logical, factual information to describe what is in best interest for the United States. The authors use more logic by stating, “The United States recorded its lowest seven-day average since March 31 on May 28, when it was 21,000 cases, or 6.4 new cases per the rates of 100,000 people per day. This rate was seven to ten times higher than the rates in countries that successfully contained their new infections.” (Osterholm, Kashkari, 2020, p.4). The authors used logical numbers and statistics to prove that a lockdown is the best solution for the virus, while comparing America’s case numbers to other countries.

The authors of the article also use pathos to make the reader feel empathy towards people that the virus has affected and people it will affect in the future if the problem does not get fixed. The article states, “If we aren’t willing to take this action, millions more cases with many more deaths are likely before a vaccine might be available.” (Osterholm, Kashkari, 2020, p.3). The use of pathos makes the reader feel empathy and will make them want to follow the rules more. It might persuade them to agree with the idea of another lockdown.

Some could argue that the article has one logical fallacy; a hoc ergo propter hoc because the authors say the cause of more deaths is the lack of another lockdown, when there could be more causes of the spread. Although that is one of the reasons the virus is spreading, it has been researched and the most likely reason for the spread.

The style and design of the article shows that the argument is strong and the article is informative. The paragraphs and sentences are lengthy. The vocabulary is understandable to the general public, yet still formal

and informative. The tone is serious and somber about the virus taking peoples’ lives, rather than the childish, petty complaining in The Washington Times article. There is a photo on the front page of a sky view of the Staples Center, which is neutral and does not instill fear in the reader like the other article.

Overall, The Washington Times opinion article is much weaker in comparison to The New York Times article because of its multiple logical fallacies, weak use of pathos, and its informal style and design. The Washington Times article gives the reader a false sense of solutions to the pandemic, while The New York Times article gives useful, important facts about how to fix the virus while using logos and pathos. It is important to be able to pinpoint whether an argument is truthful and honest or not. People who cannot differentiate the two might believe false information and have an incorrect view on a topic. It might cause them to relay false information to others; spreading the incorrect information further. It is necessary to be able to point out logical fallacies, rhetorical appeals, and flaws in style and design.

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# The Darkness Inside of Me

Kares Mack

I don't think there's ever been a time in my life where I haven't doubted myself. I always check, double-check, and triple-check statements I come up with in my head or question my ability to do something because I don't believe I can do it. When it comes to sports, this doubt, combined with my anxiety, gets even worse. I tell myself I can't do this or that or accomplish my goals because I'm not fast enough or athletic enough to do it. I try my hardest, yet still, fail to achieve anything because I set myself back with that doubt and anxiety. However, I told myself that my senior year would be different. I tried to build up my self-confidence. I ran faster, trained harder, and did my all to try and become the best that I could. Of course, it's impossible to get rid of something you've lived with your whole life, and the dark pit inside my stomach that was my doubt would never go away. That doubt crept back up when my coach let me know that I had a qualifying time for the Division II championships. It wasn't just something I felt in my mind. My whole body felt it. It was heavy, like some elephant had come and taken a seat on me like I was a couch. It ate away at me and crept up on me during any opportune moment. Was I good enough to be in the championships? Could I win a race? Could I win a coveted medal?

I asked myself all of these questions up to the day of the event. That feeling lingered. It dragged along with me, like a child's safety blanket or a wagon full of heavy rocks. I managed to shore up my defenses, telling myself I would do great and would win a race. I felt like a castle, waiting for my invaders, the doubt and anxiety, to break my walls and get inside, taking it over for themselves. My castle, my walls of confidence, held up throughout the bus ride to the Track and Field Center. I clambered off the bus with the rest of my teammates, and headed inside, ready for the event to finally be over. I sat down in our designated

bleacher spot and got my things ready. I made sure my spikes were in my shoes, grabbed a drink of water, and waited. About an hour before my race, I started to warm up. I went through the motions, running my skips, stretching out every possible muscle I could in my legs, and the best part: running strides. The clock ticking down towards my time to run did not make things any easier. It was as if the invaders had gotten some sort of secret weapon, something that was allowing them to hit the castle walls even harder, making their entry that much more inevitable. My throat felt dry. My hands were shaking. I wasn't ready for this race. I wasn't ready to let down everyone who was rooting for me. It was coming. I could feel it. All that work, all of the words I had told myself, the confidence I had worked so hard to build up, was all crashing and tumbling down. My castle walls had been broken through.

I went to the queue area and awaited my demise. They called my name, and I lined up with the other runners in my heat. The time had come. I could feel my body shaking even worse than it had before, and it wasn't that cold inside. I lined up behind the runner in front of me and watched his race before it was my turn. My heart was pounding. The coarse, rough feeling of the ground on my fingertips and knees kept me from getting comfortable on the ground. As a matter of fact, all I could see was the ground. As I heard the command from the official, I lifted my knees off of the floor, putting all of my weight on my fingertips. I took slow, steady deep breaths, anticipating the shot. I listened, hoping I wouldn't make a move before it happened. Then, I heard it, my mind numbed to the many others I had heard before at meets during the year. For an instant, I was flying. My fingertips that had kept me from falling flat on my face were up in the air, my feet not far behind them. The only thing that hadn't changed was what I could see. The ground. I moved,



the muscles in my body contracting and contorting to help everything move along. Eventually, I could see it. Still the ground, yes, but a thin white line that grew ever so closer. The seconds felt like minutes, and the air rushing by my face made it feel like I was a 747 on its way to Logan Airport. There it was. Growing closer and closer. Until, at what seemed like the speed of sound, I bobbed my head down, extending it just a little further to reach what I had been running for, what I had been longing for this entire time. The finish line. I slowed myself down quicker than the automatic braking system in my car. I crashed into the pad at the end of the runway along with the rest of the runners but quickly stood up to get back in line and look at my results.

My heart jumped. No, my heart lurched. My eyes were deceiving me. If it was possible, if I had been thinking clearly and not deprived of oxygen, I would have asked someone to slap me. There, right before my very eyes, I witnessed a miracle: my name, at the top of the scoreboard, with a perfectly rounded 6.90 seconds next to it. I had done it. I could feel every ounce of the darkness that had once occupied my besieged castle leaving my body. I had done it. I had won a race. I subverted my expectations and came out victorious. I nearly cried. I brought myself over to my team's bench to congratulations and cheers. Still numb to what had just happened, I watched the rest of the races blur by me, watching and waiting to see if my time had qualified me for the finals. Then, almost as soon as I had finished my race, the time had come, and I once again had to keep myself from shouting out louder than a jet engine. I had done it. I had just barely wiggled by into the finals. I had made it in 8th place,

right behind 7 other kids from the same school. I had broken their chain. I overcame one of their runners and became the black sheep in the herd. I was excited, yet still doubtful of my chances.

I got my new number and readied myself for this new, yet familiar race. I took my starting position, got set, and listened for the shot. When it came, I bolted out of the blocks, but this time, something felt different. I had slightly altered my starting leap, and, like the barbarians that ended the First Roman Empire, it too had ended my winning streak. I finished as before, bobbing my head once I got to the line. I knew it before I had even gotten to the finish line. I didn't win. As I looked up to check my results, I confirmed my suspicions. My name was last on the list, with a time worse than the one I had run before.

My head drooped, and my heart started to feel heavy, but it didn't keep me from feeling like a parent watching their child cross the graduation stage. I had overcome something that I had carried with me all my life, something that had kept me from accomplishing different goals and from being my best self. I had taken my doubt head-on and had come out victorious, with a new personal record and the title of a Division II Sprint Finalist to show for it. I was immensely proud of myself then, and I'm still proud of myself now. I'm still dealing with that doubt and anxiety, but I know that with enough perseverance and confidence, I can overcome it and do better than I've ever done before.

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# Through the Clouds

Alasia Maxwell-Perkins

“Death leaves a heartache no one can heal; love leaves a memory no one can steal” -Richard Puz.

As I close my eyes his long round head appears. His warm hand grasps mine and I smile. I kept yelling but no sound was coming out. Tears dropped from my eyes as I realized this was all a dream. “Why did you leave me?” I cried out, getting no response back.

My grandfather was a man filled with joy; his presence could light up the world. He could make a frown turn into a smile instantly just by his warm embrace. He would come home bearing gifts daily for all of his grandchildren. He had this light shining through him that was indescribable.

As the bottom of his feet hit the hot summer pavement my contagious giggle filled the air. I clung to his back as he held my legs tight like a tiny sloth wrapped around a tree. The summer rays beamed off my glistening forehead. My grandfather always put a thick layer of cocoa butter on my face no matter the weather. I continuously swiped my hands across my forehead then onto my pink glittery shirt as the oil dripped down the side of my face. The walk felt like forever but I didn't care, I enjoyed every part of it. As we approached the store, he let me off his back and I ran through the white sliding doors. A gust of cold air hit me like a hurricane. It was nice though. I ran to the aisle with the Crocs. I reached for a pair of aqua blue crocs as I yelled “These Ones!”, my grandfather laughed. “Laylay those are a size ten, you wear a size 1.” I looked up at him with such confusion. Being a first grader and having little to no concept on shoe sizes will definitely make a great laugh. I yell and scream as I smile at my grandfather. “Thank youuuuuu!” I said about a million times as he looked at me and smiled back. As long as I was happy he was happy. After picking up the right size and swiping his card we headed out. As we left the store I smiled from ear to ear and jumped on his back. The way home felt

so fast, almost as if we teleported. My grandfather was 6'1"; every step we took felt like we had advanced a mile. I felt like I was riding the back of a giraffe. I was so high up I could reach the leaves on the highest branches. I ran to my grandmother as we approached the house excited to show her my new crocs. They sparkled in the sunlight as the new shoe smell filled the air. “AHHHHH”.

*2011 four years later*

leaped into his arms as he pulled me close and held me tight. As my lips touched his cheek, I felt warmth fill my body. We clapped our hands and stomped our feet in sync to the music, the vibrations coming from the ginormous speaker trickled up my tiny legs. I spun around as my pink fluffy dress blew in the subtle wind. Tiny lights lit up the backyard so you could see everyone. My entire family danced to the music for hours celebrating my grandfather and grandmother's wedding that had occurred earlier that day, except for my grandfather. As I glanced over my shoulder, I kept seeing my grandfather sitting down, he looked as if he was in deep thought. His eyebrows scrunched and his eyes wandered. I would run over to him and jump into his lap as he swung me around to the beat of the music. Something inside me changed that day. A holy feeling that I've never felt before, a chilling feeling ran down my body and I felt sick. I realized how important this man was to me and how grateful I am for him. I looked into his eyes and told him how much I loved him. He Lifted a finger up to wipe the tears falling from his eye. He looked down and smiled and said “You are my angel”. Those words will forever stick with me. He knew but he couldn't face the truth yet. I knew too but I didn't fully know. My mind felt so confused like I knew something was wrong but I couldn't put my finger on it so I continued to ignore that feeling. Little did I know what was ahead of me.

In the blink of an eye, I was now in the fifth grade.

I ran up the stairs and through the door after my first full week of fifth grade, to find my family all sitting in the living room crying. Fear struck my face; I felt like a statue, my mind completely blank. My mom grabbed me instantly and just hugged me. Silence filled the thick muggy air as she ran her hands through my hair. Her voice cracks and tears hit the floor as she tells me my grandfather is very sick. My eyes scanned the room still confused on what this really meant. "He's dying, your grandfather has cancer" my mom said. I did not really fully understand the concept of death. The house felt uneasy. I played alone for days, no Tv, no other kids and no grandfather. I felt my heart sink and I knew something was very wrong. After a week my grandfather walked through the door his head hung low, he had bags under his eyes and he was walking with a limp. My smile came back, I felt alive again. I looked around and everyone else's smile on their face was no longer there. He wrapped his long arms around everyone as their heads sank into his chest. No words were said. As he came over to me, I reached my arms out expecting him to pick me up and swing me around, but no. He bent down very slowly and gave me a kiss on my forehead. He then made his way into his room and shut the door. My grandma could see the confusion on my face. She sat down on the couch in the front room, her head fell to her hands which were placed right on top of her knees. Her eyes were bloodshot red and she looked up and stared at the wall. "Your grandfather only has 3 months to live" she said in a light shaky voice, she couldn't even look me in my face. My knees buckled and I fell to the ground. "NOOOOOOOO NOOOOOOOO NOOOOOOOO" I screamed repeatedly.

Weeks passed and my grandfather left home. Every day I came home I would drop my bag off at the front door and run to the backroom to see if he was there but he never was. He finally called me and told me that everyone was going to come see him this weekend. That joy came back again but it wouldn't last for long this time. I walked through the door to see his

lifeless body sinking into the burgundy couch. His skin dark, his thin face and his bones showing through his skin. I stared at him in disbelief, "is this the same man" I asked myself over and over again. He didn't talk much but it was very apparent that he was in pain. "I left home and came here because I couldn't let you guys see me die. Not like this". We sat around him showering him with love. We told stories, laughed, danced and then it became silent. He groaned and laid his head down. My family said let's go. I kissed him as his eyes slowly closed. His brittle arms wrapped around me as I hugged him back. We said I love you and I headed out the door.

Just a few days later we got the call that he had passed. I ran to my mother and buried my head into her chest, a mother's comfort will make you feel like everything around you is okay. That was the last time I would ever see his face. His big brown eyes and his warm touch will never leave me but his soul did.

I learned to love and cherish every little thing in life and to tell people how much they mean to you. Not everything is forever, we all have a time for us to go but while we are here, we make the most out of life because we only get one chance. My family was never the same after this death. He was the light to our life, the wick to the candle, and without that there will never be another light. This brought our family closer than we have ever been. Till this day we sit around sharing our favorite memories of him, we laugh, we cry and we thank God for giving us such a blessing. I always tell myself everything happens for a reason. He did all he could for us while he was here and that's all that matters.

As I close my eyes his bright white smile and his big round head peak through the clouds. I reach my hand up but he never reaches back.

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# Rhetorical Analysis on Social Media

Julia McNicol

Social Media is a newer topic that has been debated in the past decade or so. Recently on social media, we have seen many posts about politics discussing the election, posts regarding the pandemic, mental health and whether or not social media is helping or adding to the problem. An Op-Ed, “The Dark Side of Social Media” from Business of fashion discusses millennials and the influence social media has had on them, focusing on the negatives. While this is a piece written by a UK publication, it does speak to the problems that women and men are affected by no matter where they are from if they use social media. The author, Emma Hope Allwood, discusses what she has learned working for Dazed as the digital head of fashion (Allwood, 2018). Another Op-Ed, “Impact of COVID-19 on Social Media”, shares the positive impacts the pandemic and Covid-19 has had on social media, even while it had many negative effects on other parts of people’s lives. The article acknowledges a few main points like influencer marketing, ecommerce, social media usage, and Instagram Live, that leads to persuade the readers of the positive outcomes this pandemic has had on all of these different aspects of the media (Khorev, 2020). This piece is written by Mike Khorev from the publication MarTech Cube, which provides news in marketing and technology. While taking a look at the two articles, the article “The Dark Side of Social Media” holds a more effective argument through the choices made in appeals to pathos, logical fallacies, a clear audience, and purpose.

The most used rhetorical appeal in “The Dark Side of Social Media” is pathos, the appeal to emotion. This rhetorical appeal builds a connection through emotion, and the emotion conveyed can be positive or negative. To highlight one specific example, Allwood talks about questions she herself goes through on a daily basis before she is about to post on social media.

She asks herself, “How many likes will this get? Am I funny enough? Hot enough? Does this look too edited? Or too real” (Allwood, 2018). The author makes it a main point of her article to discuss these pressures of a perfect appearance and keeping up with a seamless Instagram aesthetic. This appeals to the reader’s emotions where they either relate to having these similar feelings themselves, or they sympathize with her as she has these doubtful feelings about herself and her image that she is projecting on the media. Using pathos helps the reader feel more connected to the argument. They can relate this back to themselves and how social media may be affecting their mental health creating for a more successful argument.

Logos, the appeal to logic, is used often in “Impact of Covid-19 on Social Media”, but without using pathos as the previous article did, it results in a weaker presentation of the argument. While reading this piece you can see logos used in a way of persuading the audience by using facts and reasoning. The author, SEO expert ad digital marketing strategists, Mike Khorev, shares this in his article, “Facebook use is up nearly 30% and Facebook has successfully added 100 million users throughout the pandemic with 11% revenue growth” (Khorev, 2020). Exact numbers were given about how many more people used Facebook during the pandemic. This was used to show the positive effects that social media has had specifically during the pandemic, as more people want to connect with one another. While he does also mention the increase of ecommerce and online purchases, as well as influencer marketing generating more engagement than before, he does not share how social media has truly affected the people using it. This article may prove the positives from a business aspect, but in terms of mental health by the author using logos, it fails to address this issue.

When the bandwagon appeal is used in Allwood's article, it pushes the reader to see the effect that these negatives that stem from social media have on everyone. This logical fallacy uses popularity instead of factual support when presented in the article, even though factual evidence is presented through other pieces of the article. She states in her article, "We thought we'd found a solution in the creation of "finstas" or fake-Instas, private accounts with obscure usernames and limited followers where we felt we could actually express ourselves — but even they began to feel like another character we had to play" (Allwood, 2018). When the author generalizes saying "we", she is using the bandwagon appeal to persuade the reader that everyone has had these feelings. Even if this personally hasn't happened to you it does get the reader to think, giving them a strong connection to the article and maybe leaning towards believing that this side of the argument is right.

The purpose of the article from Business of fashion is more successful in persuading the reader. It provides the readers with a clear understanding of the detrimental effects on our mental health that come from using social media. In the article, the author shares this, "Carmen Papaluca, a PhD researcher at Australia's University of Notre Dame, recently discussed her findings from surveying 18- to 25-year-old female Instagram users with Dazed. 'It's really gone past just wanting to look like somebody,' she explained. 'Now it's about having their life'" (Allwood, 2018). As the author shares the information she received from the study, readers can be sure to see that wanting to actually have someone else's life causes toxic harm on the individual. They can start to feel more and more pressure to live up to these expectations shown through the media, and in turn have less confidence in themselves.

The purpose of the article from MarTech Cube is to share positive data specifically around the time of the pandemic, focused on various aspects of social media. This is less successful as it shares more about business profit rather than sharing any sort of positive mental health benefits. The author shares this in the article, "With how so many people are tied at home, it's quite obvious that online shopping has seen major increases throughout 2020... 57% of surveyed consumers have made a purchase from an online marketplace, and only 13% made a purchase from a brand website" (Khorev, 2020). While this is just one example of a positive in-

crease on the business side of social media, the article is filled with many more examples not just relating to ecommerce, but the industry as a whole. However, even as these statistics are given in this example specifically to online shopping, it just has a different purpose than Allwood's article discussed previously.

The audience of the article published by Business of fashion is stated rather specifically in the article, but can connect to anyone who uses these platforms making for a better argument. The audience is important in a piece of writing as it can be meant for a specific group or type of person that will connect most with the article, and therefore be more likely to be persuaded in the argument. Towards the end of the article this author writes, "But for my fellow highly strung, self-aware millennials, scrolling anxiously through the sea of impressive illusions we've each worked so hard to create... something's gotta give" (Allwood, 2018). In this sentence, the author says who the article is for. As a reader, if you read that and felt connected to it or part of that group, they have done their job. The clear direct statement of this audience that is relatable and large helps to prove that this is the stronger argument.

MarTech Cube's audience in their article is directed towards those looking for statistical data on the increase (or decrease) of the business side of social media. This audience I would assume would be of an older age of about late twenties to mid 40's, compared to the other article that also included a younger aged audience. Khorev states this in his article, "...there's no doubt that social media usage has significantly increased due to the pandemic. For SEO and digital marketers, this also means a great time to invest in social media marketing and influencer marketing" (Khorev, 2020). When he writes this, he is directing his article towards digital marketers and SEOs as this is who he wants to appeal to when he is talking numbers and analytics. As a reader, the audience of this particular article isn't broad enough in comparison to "The Dark Side of Social Media", therefore the argument does not come across as strong.

Because the author's choice regarding rhetorical appeals, logical fallacies, and rhetorical techniques is so weak, the article "Impact of COVID-19 on Social Media" is just not able to present a convincing case, therefore "The Dark Side of Social Media" is the stronger argument. The use of pathos helped the winning article to connect with its readers being more

persuaded by the emotion brought out. The logical fallacy of the Bandwagon appeal created a sense of unity feeling as though everyone goes through what she presents in her article. Finally, the audience and purpose of “The Dark Side of Social Media” connected with a wider audience and spoke to the problems that readers face every day regarding social media. After taking a deep dive into analyzing these Op-Eds and seeing how they approach a form of persuasion, I will take these same techniques and apply them into my future writing.

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# A Thicker Skin

Emilie Pease

It is my firm belief that trauma is the spice of life. Disregard how cynical that sounds and hear me out. In my 18 years, many people have filtered in and out of my life, too many to count. One thing they all had in common was the way they lent me an essential piece of my personality. I find myself seeing a person's time in my life as a lesson in navigating my way towards the future. The ones that stuck by me or made the biggest impact had more often than not carried a heavy baggage. Hard times grow thick skins, and those who learn from moments of despair are usually the most reliable later on. Trauma bonding aside, the key to a solid foundation is someone at your back who understands just how low the lows can be. Essentially that's the core of my outlook on life. I won't sit idly by and wait for oblivion just because of the past. For now, I'll spare you the dark details of my own shortcomings, but I'll never deny the fact that the darkest times bring light to the future.

Growing up between two households in western Massachusetts presented enough of a challenge within itself. But when you factor in a sociopathic father, egotistical mother, and a hometown full of racist and classist nuclear families, the result is a childhood not unlike riding a rickety wooden roller coaster of infinite hellfire. My greatest defense became my ability to adapt. All thanks to my father, who held so little regard for me or my personal feelings. He limited my options to building myself up to the challenge or simply crumbling beneath it. Nothing existed in his world other than perfection and himself. It was as if survival only depended on being flawless in every sense, especially physically. Michael would drag me to some mountain somewhere in New England where I'd be expected to hike for my life. That's how I viewed it, like I'd turn to take in the view and feel a push from behind. Then it would be the view morphing into the violent crashing of boulders against my skull as I tumbled my way to an early grave from the cliffs above. That's how I viewed it. I've always wondered how he viewed his role as a parent. From

my experience, I'd ultimately say that his one goal for his children was to make sure they weren't weak. His methods undoubtedly had their flaws; nevertheless, my sister and I would not be the heavily medicated, intelligent, independent young women we are today.

Elivia would launch herself onto the end of my bed with a cat-like stealth, no later than 7 AM. We'd say a silent prayer and take a deep breath in. On the best days, that breath would be the freshest morning air filling our lungs with youthful elation. Most days, however, the air would hold a thick sourness that we only knew as a harbinger of doom. Our poor, elementary-aged hearts fill with sorrow, and all hopes of a pleasant Saturday morning would dash mercilessly out the window. There would be eggs waiting for us, burnt and unseasoned, ready to abuse our stomachs and taste buds. So, the mad rush to make up our beds began, we were up for the day and time taught us better than to leave our beds a mess. What we'd find upon opening our shared bedroom door would not only be the unpalatable eggs, but the extremely turbulent Michael Pease and his mood of the day. Just like we did every other Saturday for the past 6 years, we'd neatly make our beds, manifest ourselves a bit of positivity, and ready our stomachs for battle. Surviving breakfast brought the promise of a few hours of being a kid before we'd be thrust into the day's physical labors. For the majority of my elementary years, Saturdays with Michael were for burnt eggs and a grueling hike that was definitely not intended to be completed by my 45-pound younger sister. That's where it started. We couldn't know how those Saturday mornings would change as we changed with the time.

I was going to be 15 in less than a week, and I stood wind whipped, with bile rising in my throat. My vision was slightly blurred, and a throbbing pressure was berating the inside of my skull. I remember stumbling a few paces before I'd have to stop and let my muscles regain feeling. At 7:00 PM on a freezing September weekend, my frostbitten legs were shakily car-



rying me to my salvation. I'll put an extreme emphasis on "shakily". After nearly 10 hours of soldiering my way up and down the highest peak in New England, the end was in sight. Though it felt like my end was in sight. My body would heave to a stop and I'd spit out as much bile as I could onto the bouldered path before me. Michael Pease, my biological father, would pause a ways ahead and watch as my entire lower body would reject the fact of its circumstances. That wasn't something that mattered to him. I had summited Mt. Washington and that was all that mattered.

Not many girls my age could say they'd been dragged deep into the New Hampshire mountains for their "birthday". But I passed that test and it's the only experience I can vividly recall from the years I spent under Michael's care. The chill of early fall had met my bones, and her rains found their way into every fiber of my clothing. All of these factors contributed to a violent shaking that occupied the entire last hour of my trek back to our campsite. At each turn, half of me hoped and the other half prayed that our lemon-yellow tent would suddenly materialize. At each turn, I was met with green foliage and another length of rocky trail. At each turn I was met with scrutiny for my snail-like pace by the sociopathic man who believed that as a birthday present, I'd want to lose all bodily function in the middle of the woods. Out of all 10 hours of hiking, my brain remembers only one. That last hour, where I knew it would end and I knew I'd find my way home and safely into my bed. It had all happened and I'd come so far with only so much further to go, but that hour was the hardest. No part of me could rationalize my ascent towards the clouds and the fact that I came out in one piece. Not until we turned that final corner. The tent was nothing special, but that tiny lemon colored dome brought me the realest happiness I had ever felt. It was done and I had done it. Two realizations came to me as adrenaline pushed me the last few yards through the rain; nothing lasts forever, and that is undoubtedly a good thing.

Thankfully for me, that nothing included my relationship to Michael. As I mentioned before, many people have circulated in and out of my life, each of them having left me with invaluable knowledge no matter the context of our relationship. My father happened to be one of the bad guys. He had his moments early on, but the reality of it is those "moments" equate to jack shit. My relationship with Elivia has

never been the endearing sisterly type. I really was the mean older sister and I do regret it, knowing I added to her suffering without even thinking. One of the most emotionally taxing days of my life began as it was intended, a beach trip to bring a high point into a time of low-lows. Cloud 9 disintegrated and morphed into a shitstorm when Elivia's call connected to the car bluetooth. Pulling onto the highway, 2 hours away from home, my 13-year-old sister's voice came shakily through the speakers. "Cheeks is dead..." she started, "he's just not breathing." No sound existed in the car at that moment. The harsh scream of tires on the highway vanished, and I was left choking on my shock. It wasn't real. No part of it was real until I was kneeling in my backyard over my sweetest black kitty, and Michael looked my autistic sister dead in the face and asked if she really "found" him dead. That was the defining moment. Utter repulsion and burning hot rage coursed through every inch of my body, but my mother had already forced him out the door. Elivia stared blankly at the wall ahead, and my mother fought tooth and nail to get Michael out of our sight for the last time.

Do people remember their childhoods? I never do on purpose. Selective memory benefits me as long as I learned my lesson and grew from each moment as a person, it's okay to put it behind me. It took me far too long to figure that out. Whether it was subconsciously or not, much of my childhood has been deleted from the archives of my mind. Obviously, as I sit writing an essay in my steadily financed 4-year college dorm room, I can admit that my circumstances could have been worse. People have it worse and had it worse, but there's such an inherent toxicity in shaming people for something that may not seem to be all that on the surface. Nothing will minimize my experiences; because I experienced them, they affected me, and I learned from them. I eat my eggs over easy, and I enjoy them. I hike to take breaths of fresh mountain air and take in the view knowing there's more. There's always more. I find solace in embracing the fact that whatever happens will just simply happen. Fretting is a waste of time and energy, just adapt and keep moving forward.

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# Help In A Heartbeat

Julia Ramza

How many people in the world require medical help on average? You could imagine the number to be enormous... According to the National Center for Health Services, there are a number of 139.0 million visits in the emergency department just for the U.S. alone. The number of injury related visits is 40.0 million. The number of emergency department visits resulting in admission to critical care units is 2.0 million. "Helping someone in a heartbeat", may be a popular saying but what does it actually look like on a day-to-day basis? How far can helping someone go? My questions were answered when it was a first week into the true reality of what my future passion would look like.

The glass doors of the Brigham and Women's Hospital would not stay closed as the numerous patients would walk in and out continuously. It was just my first day at my first ever paid internship as a seventeen-year-old. The phones were going off more than the phones at the White House in Washington, D.C. Every single person's hand would complete a marathon to the phone followed by, "Phyllis Jen Center, how may I help you?". The fax machine would endlessly be pumping out loads of prescriptions and referrals awaiting to be delivered to the nurses and physicians all awaiting to be signed. The mail boxes were overflowing with patients' medical records to be typed into the computer system. A mountain of boxes filled with printer paper would disappear within the next three days. Beyond that small room filled with busy bees working hard was the main department where waiting areas were filled with patients. Pacing down the hallway there would be an array of colorful tabs in alphabetical order above every single room that had to be visited by me. Every room would be overflowing with people all working towards helping the patients every single day. The pharmacy wouldn't see a day where I wouldn't visit them with a pile of prescrip-

tions unless the printer and fax machine have broken down. Walking out of my department and seeing a different one, the story wasn't any different. All of these departments were like body systems all working together to keep the whole hospital functioning properly and I was working at the heart of the entire place.

One day in particular there were a lot of phone calls coming into the call center since the morning. We were short on staff members therefore as the new intern I had to take care about answering the calls. One woman had called frantically about a big brown bat flying into her house and her not being sure if she was bitten or not. I had advised her to come into the emergency department as soon as possible just to make sure if she had to get a shot. Another phone call out of the many that I have received was from an older woman's daughter who was worried about her. Her mother was about 80 years old and required an immediate visit to the doctor's office due to her high fever and strong coughing. Her daughter was really worried especially since her mother already had a preexisting respiratory illness. I had scheduled the earliest appointment possible for her for the next day and reassured her that she would be in very good hands. I had answered a few more calls in between my paper runs to the other rooms, doctor offices and the pharmacy before my work day had come to an end. I looked at the department lights starting to shut off one by one as I walked out glad to be going home after such a long and busy day at work.

The next day was almost no different than the previous. A thick stack of medical records was waiting for me on my overflowing desk to be put into the computer system. A new pink color-coded list of patients to check up on for appointments almost seemed to never end. The fax machine was overfilled to the brim from working rigorously all night. New mail and prescrip-

tions were a priority to get passed along as soon as I swiped my ID card through the clock machine. Since the prescriptions and mail were a priority to get sent out, I had made my way through the long gray halls to the next department. A woman with her elderly mother had stopped me and asked me if I could help direct them to the right department for their appointment. I had made helping out this woman with her mother my newest priority. I had slowed down my usual fast paced walking to match the elderly woman's weak and careful steps. I could notice she wasn't feeling well and she'd had a very strong whooping cough every 2 minutes. As we approached the front desk, I had helped them sign in, I had recognized this woman's name from the phone call the day before. I had mentioned to them that I helped them set up the appointment and that they could be sure of getting the best help and care. They both felt a bit relieved being able to make it to the right location with my help as well as knowing that they were in good hands. I felt happy that I helped them get the medical attention that they needed.

Later on that day after I had completed many runs with important paperwork and had put in all of the patients' information into the computer system. I was asked to cover one of my coworker's phones for the next 15 minutes. I answered the first call that came through and this time it was a mother trying to schedule an emergency appointment for her daughter who was having health problems. There was a tremble to the mother's voice as she was explaining that her daughter ran out of her medication that she needed, therefore she was experiencing symptoms. I had made sure to book the earliest appointment for them as well as get a prescription request straight to the pharmacy. The mother was relieved and grateful that the medication refill would be prepared upon their arrival and her daughter would be in good hands in a short amount of time.

During the last day of that busy week, I was taking my usual 20-minute lunch break. As I was making my way down the long white hallway I had to quickly move aside as a group of five emergency technicians were rolling a critically injured man towards the emergency operation room. The men seemed to have been in a very bad car accident. Followed by the moaning and painful cries of the young men laying on the bed were his family members that were hysterically crying

whilst hurrying behind. The nurses wouldn't let the family members into the operating room and asked them to wait outside. I couldn't help but watch the whole catastrophe unwind in the emergency department.

Amidst the red walls and red seats in the waiting room sat the women that seemed to be the men's mother. She had constant tears rolling down her fearful face and she kept praying for her son to stay alive. I felt very bad for her and I had enormous empathy. I had walked up to the woman and reassured her that everything would be ok and that her son was in good hands. The women sat nervously quiet and praying whilst I had to return back to work as my break was ending. My entire work day I had kept thinking about if the woman's son was ok and how she was holding up after the tragic accident. As I made my way back, I noticed the surgeon and nurses walking towards the women. The doctor had exchanged a few words and on her an enormous sigh of relief and happiness were present. I could tell that the doctor had passed along good news to her. I walked up to her and wished her the best of luck on her son's path to recovery. She was very happy and thanked me for caring about the situation and talking to her through it.

After that busy week I had an epiphany about life and what it truly meant. Everyone is given one life to live and it's so easy to lose it in a blink of an eye. Every moment, every hour, every minute, etc. should be cherished and not taken for granted. That day the men's life was at stake, a mother's young child was in very poor health due to a shortage in medications and an elderly woman that had a respiratory illness had her health getting worse day by day. Everyone is so fixated on all of the bad times in their life without taking a moment to think that someone out there could have it even worse. There are people out in the world that aren't sure if their next breath will be their last. Life is so precious and delicate and people should be more grateful for even the little things in life. I always cherish my grandmother's mantra, "No riches in the world can buy you your health, you must take care of it because it's of the greatest value."

Traveling back home on the green line train, I sat in the first wagon and kept reflecting my entire week as the sun started to set. Once the orange rays began to fade into black, I looked through my camera roll in my phone and I came across a picture of my grandfather

sitting at his office desk in Poland. He was wearing a clean pair of scrubs and had a big smile on his face although he had spent numerous hours at the hospital performing surgeries. I sadly never had the chance to meet my grandfather who was a respected surgeon orthopedic for many years because he had passed away. After hearing so much about him from my family members, he was what had truly inspired me to go towards the medical field. That picture was always just a picture of my idol sitting in his office, but after my week at the Brigham and Women's Hospital I felt a deeper connection to my grandfather. His smile was the same smile I had on after a long week of helping people. It didn't matter how much time and dedication it took; it was all worth it- every single minute. Helping people is something I am passionate about and it makes me happy.

Fast forward a few months after my experiences at the Brigham and Women's Hospital, the outburst of the pandemic had occurred. How many people on average go to the hospital for COVID-19? According to HHS and NPR, in one day more than 56,000 people are hospitalized around the country with the virus. As of 2018 statistics, there are 7.594 billion people in the world. These numbers just show how many people are in dire need of help every single day. During the current pandemic the number of calls for help increased significantly. The numbers really put things in a different perspective of how one person choosing to help another can make such a big change. I can't imagine the number of people walking in and out of the glass doors at Brigham and Women's Hospital today. What I can be sure of is that they are all going to

be in the good hands of hundreds of people working hard to help them.

After my experience working at the hospital, I have realized how even the smallest bit of help makes a huge difference and how important it is. Thanks to my coworkers that I've worked alongside every day, they have given me the opportunity to truly understand the value of life. Seeing all of these wonderful people helping out others has really opened my eyes to see how many people are the hands and feet of a large hospital. This experience definitely has changed me as a person because I've started to value life and health a lot more than I did before. I have also understood the significance of immediate help and promised myself that if I ever see anyone in need of help then I will try my best to help them. Seeing all of these patients be in different tough situations made me think about what if I were to be in their shoes. I'd also want someone to help me or a loved one in a heartbeat because every single minute in someone's life is very valuable. Helping someone in a heartbeat may even change the lives of many instead of just that one specific person.

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# COVID Graduation 2020

Emma Saputo

I was standing on the stage, sweating profusely. All my classmates and their family members were staring at me. I hold onto my binder on the podium in front of me so the wind doesn't blow it away. I'm looking for my parents in the audience but I can't see them. I can barely even tell who anyone is with the masks on. This was the day I was graduating high school. I couldn't believe I had finally made it.

I was always confident in public speaking. I came out of my shy phase in first grade and ever since then, I have not been scared to speak publicly. A large reason I am not scared is because I do not care what others think about me. If I mess up a word, I laugh it off and move on. I don't take life too seriously.

When I entered high school in 2016, I decided that I would put my voice to use and join the student council. I had to make a speech for elections. I was speaking to my entire grade, which was around 175 people. I had past experience of speaking in front of this many people, but I was still nervous that my classmates would laugh at me. I had really only spoken in front of large groups of adults. Kids are a different story; they can be ruthless. My speech was very boring and basic, and sadly, I did not win. Since I didn't win, I got myself ready for the next year and made my speech more unique to me. I added some jokes and went up with a lot more confidence and ended up winning.

As junior year rolled into senior year, graduation became very prominent in my mind. At my school, the student council officers have to speak during several parts of the ceremony. I was very excited and I knew I was going to be fine because we would be having graduation practice before the ceremony. I would have time to figure out words I did not know how to pronounce. But a large worry I had was pausing in the middle of a sentence and getting lost in the words,

which is something I have a tendency to do.

When March 2020 came, everything we had planned was put on hold. COVID-19 cancelled every single school event. I was heartbroken that my senior year had been ripped away from me so suddenly. Mostly, I was angry. I had worked so hard. If I could take one thing from COVID ruining my senior year, it would be that life is not fair, and that's okay. The Student Council had many zoom calls with the principal to figure out a safe way to celebrate the class of 2020. We all decided to have a socially distanced graduation with limited guests.

In the blink of an eye, the day was here, August 3rd, 2020. I was so nervous that I would feel sick or something would go terribly wrong because 2020 loves throwing surprises at everyone. We had no practice. I was going to be speaking with a mask on. Was I going to sound muffled? Will people be able to hear me? On the other hand, I was extremely excited to finally get to the day I worked so hard for. I was rushing around asking students how to pronounce their names so I would not mispronounce them. The girl who was supposed to say the pledge of allegiance ended up not being able to attend, so that added another thing for me to have to read to the crowd. To be fair, I offered. I offered to read because I knew that everyone else was extra nervous and I was probably the most ready for it.

Due to COVID-19, only parents were allowed to attend. So, the rest of your loved ones could watch on Facebook Live. In that moment, the realization hit me that I am being recorded for Youtube and for a live audience online. I was anxious because if I messed up, people could go online and keep watching me over and over again.

I walked on the stage to say the Pledge of Allegiance and was not too nervous. I have been saying this since

I was a kid. I started talking and before I knew it, I was done and heading back to my seat. My next speaking role came a while after. It was my small speech to pass leadership onto the Class of 2021. I clipped down the page with a paperclip so the wind would not flip it. What I did not realize was that when I was reading the speech, it continued onto the second page. I had a long pause in my speech when I was trying to unclip the page. The audience thought I was done so they started clapping. The only thing I know how to do in these situations is use humor. Without thinking I just blurted out “Oh, I’m not done”. I heard people in the crowd laughing and that was when I knew I made the right choice. Many people came up to me afterwards and said that was their favorite part of the ceremony. I was glad I could add some fun to the event. The only other little mistake I made was being a tad bit unprepared and having to lean over to my principal on stage and ask if he was ready to hand things out to students and that I still had another sentence to go. I felt unprofessional, but in that moment, I was focused on getting through this ceremony. Finally, my last speaking role came. I had to go back up on stage to read some of my classmates’ names. My heart was racing; I did not want to pronounce any

names wrong. But I am pretty sure I did everything right. When all my speaking parts were over, I felt so incredibly proud of myself. My family came up to me after the ceremony and told me I did a great job and they were so proud of me. Everyone made little mistakes because we did not get to practice, but everything ultimately went smoothly.

This is an experience that I will carry with me for the rest of my life. It made me even more confident about public speaking because I know I can handle my mistakes well and it is not the end of the world if I mess up. I’ve never had self-confidence. I have always struggled with that. Even though I am confident in public speaking, I have always been very self-aware that I am not the skinniest, prettiest, smartest, etc. I can never hold a normal conversation and a joke always ends up slipping out. I am really hard on myself and like to act confident in public so I look stronger.

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# Music in My Life: The Six-Foot Separation Physically and Emotionally

Riley Silvia

2020. There are still roughly two months remaining in this year, but the instances that have occurred the past ten months are anything but normal. Just to list a few of these events: the dangerous wildfires, the impeachment trial for the president, the death of NBA legend Kobe Bryant, and if that isn't enough, there is the global pandemic. The song "Six Feet Apart" by Luke Combs helped me realize that emotionally many people are going through this together, but if we stick through it, life will get better. Brandon in "Music Is the Key to Happiness" shares, "I believe having music in my life helps keep my spirits up" (2007) Covid-19 has taken a toll on my emotional stance, especially since I was going through my senior year while everyone was stuck in quarantine. Therefore, to help myself emotionally I would cope by listening to music. Combs' piece truly stuck out from every other song because it related with the exact situation and the lonely feelings I was going through in that moment.

If every person in the world had a highlight reel for their lifetime their senior year of high school would be most likely be included. This is a time in people's lives where it is typically their last moments spent with the people they have grown up around until that point in their lifetime. Senior year at Windham High School is supposed to be the glory year, composed of senior nights for sports, senior breakfast, senior barbeque, senior awards, senior prom, project grad, and most importantly, graduation. As Combs sings, "but all the news has been bad", that is exactly how I felt. Although I was a senior, I did not get to experience most of these memorable opportunities. My last day walking through the crowded halls of Windham High was on March 13th, 2020, and yes, it was a Friday. I vividly remember sitting in my English class that day and

someone came in and said, "Guys, there was the first case of coronavirus in Maine today!" We all looked at each other but did not think much of it. We did not even consider missing out on was graduation. One of my best friends worked at the venue where graduation was supposed to be held. She was telling my whole class that there were rumors they might not be open for events because of Covid-19. The moment she said that we looked at her like she had ten heads. There had only been one official case of Covid-19, why would they already be shutting things down? Especially something that is three months away? The following Sunday I received an email from my school saying that there has been a small outbreak of the virus in the state of Maine and we were going to have a two-week break to allow things to calm down. Many people in my school were actually thrilled that we were going to get a two-week vacation. We were ready to take this time to catch up on any work and of course hang out with friends, but wait, it may have seemed like a vacation, but hanging out with friends at this time was not advised. During these two weeks I ended up working on lots of homework and seeing a couple of friends, but slowly limiting contact as the number of positive cases kept rising. Unfortunately, about a week into this "vacation" I received another email from my school saying that they will not be opening up for the rest of the school year. I was devastated as I had just watched all of the future memorable times crumble right in front of my eyes. That was the first round of bad news, but there was more. I got a call from my track and field coach with news that our senior season had been cancelled. I was a three-sport athlete throughout high school so that would have been my sixteenth, and last season. I first started competing in track my freshman year. My goal was to break the school record in discus

by my senior year, but that opportunity was ripped away from me. We seniors still tried to hold onto some hope maybe thinking we would be able to experience a prom and a traditional graduation later in the summer if all of this craziness were to calm down. As I am sure many can guess, we did not get that either. We did not receive a traditional graduation. Instead, we each had our individual walks across the stage with our family watching and then we went to watch the ceremony at the drive-in. As Combs sings, "I miss the road, I miss my band, givin' hugs and shakin' hands". I felt this emotionally since I did not get the chance to hug my longtime friends and shake the faculties hands. All of these experiences just expressed so much disappointment because every day I woke up I felt as though all of the news was bad.

These six months have been very difficult emotionally because I have had to learn how to cope with being alone most of the time. I would wake up every day and realize that "the whole world seems so sad" such as Combs' states in "Six Feet Apart". I have been an extrovert my whole entire life and I am happiest when I am out going places with my friends which is far from what is acceptable at this time. Not only physically, but I feel like I was emotionally separated six feet from some of the people closest to me. As Combs' sings "I ain't had much else going on" many people felt the same way. There were a solid two months of complete isolation which actually had a strong impact on people's mental health. Throughout this global pandemic "53% of adults in the United States reported that their mental health has been negatively impacted due to worry and stress over the coronavirus" (Panchal 2020). I know that I was having a difficult time just because of all the memorable experiences I was missing out on and not being able to see my friends. The biggest idea surrounding this quote I did not experience this myself, but many people had family members that passed away because of Covid-19. It many have been for other reasons, but due to the virus they were not allowed to see their loved ones for the last time. The country took such strong precautions to prevent the spread that there were no visitors allowed in hospitals so if someone did have a dying family member, they could not even go visit them. If that was not sad enough, over 30 million people lost their jobs during this time. This caused sadness and stress among many families that now had to figure out

how to survive and keep their families running. Many small businesses eventually had to shut their doors for good after the strict quarantine because they could not survive. There was so much sadness around the world and not much to do.

There have been so many negative experiences during these times, but there actually have been some positive experiences. There will for sure be many positives once this global pandemic comes to an end as Combs' explained, "one day there will be light after dark one day when we aren't six feet apart" in "Six Feet Apart". One of the most positive and rewarding instances throughout this pandemic was when people at home went out of their way to make masks for family members and front-line workers to help everyone be safe and comfortable. Another instance that brought peoples mood up during this sad time was an action towards the Class of 2020. There were programs called "Adopt a Senior" and basically a family would take in a senior and give them hope and gifts. There were many schools who thought of very creative and interesting ways to exploit a graduation and that was because of a very thoughtful effort from the school districts. For example, there was a school in New Hampshire that had their students go up to the top of a mountain on a chairlift to receive their diploma. Lastly, of course, the happiest experience that will happen once this global pandemic is over will be going back to our normal. As Combs' sings "there'll be crowds and there'll be shows". He explains that eventually with a lot of hope we will get these events back. This includes being able to see family and friends on a regular basis, not having to wear a mask around everywhere, being able to get back into school and sports, and hopefully giving the people a chance to become more financially stable. These are all of the events that seem to be leading to the light at the end of the tunnel.

This year and pandemic specifically have been full of bad news, emotionally draining, and some positives. "Six Feet Apart" by Luke Combs has helped me realize that it's not only me that is going through these difficult times. He explains how the times have been difficult but if we just look towards the positives that we will get out of it that will get us through. I have experienced the emotional six-foot difference and the physical. I am waiting for the day can be closer together than six feet.

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