

David Gracia

ENG 110

As far as I can remember, there were never really any doubts I had growing up. Because I was a bright kid who loved to learn, knowledge was always coming to me, and I kept on consuming it. I always read non-fiction books growing up, so I always knew to distinguish fact from fiction. In fact, I strongly disliked the genre of fiction books for a long time, so I did not like things that weren't real. Broadly speaking, there were always different topics thrown about from elementary to middle school, whether it was in a school setting or a home setting. For example, in science class, one would know the difference between the living and nonliving things, and at home any discussion could be said, but more or less what was happening on the television because that was being reported live about real topics and events going on in the world. However, one specific topic at home was brought up, and that was faith. I knew about religions beforehand, but I wasn't too savvy about it. There was never really a specific point in time where I can exactly say my definite opinion on it, but growing up there were discussions about having faith in something. My parents would sometimes say here and there it's always good to have faith in "something" because of their own personal experiences, but I never really believed it. I was very analytical and critical, so I always wondered what that "something" is. Thinking about it more, I laughed at the idea that someone has to put their so-called faith into something non-existent and that wasn't there. I found it pointless and moved on, there was no second-guessing to the answer I had given it to. This was an internal thought that had remained strong and intact for god knows how long. An interesting phrase, now that I repeat it myself again. God knows how long, I word I use and still use willingly without context. It was in my

terminology of words growing up, yet I didn't actually believe in that: very paradoxical indeed. I didn't mind it though, I thought it was the perfect filler word for whenever I complained, got angry, or something bad occurred to me. Rolling into high school, nothing really changed from my student and personal life. I was still that kid with good qualities who made friends easily, good grades, and still held up a great personal life doing things I liked to do such as exercise and playing video games. Typical things for a young adult. It was almost like everything was going to plan, following the script that I had written. However, what I didn't write in it and what I hadn't anticipated occurring was the pandemic. At first it was a whole ordeal: people buying as many paper rolls as they could in every big store, teachers not knowing what to do and making us finish the rest of the year virtually, and then me wondering why are people going hysterical. I understood what was going on completely, but my character and demeanor was unfazed. Things went smoothly at first, just keep little to no contact with other people, and attend online classes to finish the year and get it over with. At some point though, who knew a summer could turn foul? This was the time where things started going downhill. I acknowledged that sometimes if I spent too much time by myself as a young kid, my temperament/disposition would go bad, as I was easily quick-tempered and induced stress onto myself easily. Other reasons that are disclosed for now added on to my unchecked state during this time led to me losing myself. It started off slow, such as not eating right, bad sleep habits, not exercising, etc. It eventually turned into things like cutting off every relationship, hating my family and loved ones around me, having to go to summer school the subsequent summer (something that has never happened to me), and more. I was mentally checked out. Someone who took so much pride into the correct choices he made and being smart about it, was doing the complete opposite. After a whole year had passed of just worse internal outcomes, I had lost complete interest in most things. No value, then what

was the point? Speaking from the future, what a dangerous mindset to have (dangerous meaning self-destructive and defeating). Then came an unclear moment where I just simply said the words in my head, “*God...*”. Nothing was interesting until I started repeating it again and eventually said it out loud to no one else but myself in a room near a window with the bright light of the morning shining. Why god of all things to say, what was I referring to? What was I implying? God, do you see me? God, what? God, help me. I realized I reached out to nothing that existed. I said something to silence without response. I shook my head but clarity started to hit. I was reaching out and trying to touch faith. I took time to think critically about it over some course of time, and I finally needed to start new. Come off not knowing and learn. Evaluate what my parents told me long ago about having faith, just simply believing in anything is a good foundation to have. What foundations did I have? Around this time I had started a psychology course which started to add more clarity and help me see things in better perspective, but my own digging and reading helped me of faith. So many people, from different cultures and backgrounds from around the world, have their own concept of god and faith, but the foundation of it all is to believe in something. I allowed myself to dive in and learn a lot from multiple different religions, and I eventually gravitated to a specific set of esoteric teachings from religious interpretations that stems from Judaism, and that has given me so much clarity in my life. As a result, I had bounced back and moved on from all the negativity that was amounting onto me throughout the years. I was now coming back into form as a productive student, I made amends and strengthened my relationships, and I had focused on improving my health and incorporated fitness back into my life.