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Standing for the National Anthem

The National Anthem is engraved in American history, specifically sports. Before every   
game or match, the crowd and teams would all rise before the game begins, put their hand over   
their heart, and pay respect to America. However, over the recent years, America’s message   
within the national anthem has been interpreted differently. The awareness of police brutality has   
skyrocketed in the past few years, due to it constantly being captured on video, and hundreds of   
communities across the country are finally taking a stand against it and demanding consequences   
for the officers responsible for sensessly killing. This nationwide movement led to the   
organization, Black Lives Matter (BLM), which advocates for correction of police force   
corruption. Colin Kaepernick, a former quarterback turned activist, took the protest of equality   
and police brutality into his own hands by kneeling during the anthem to convey a powerful   
image. Other football players followed suit to prove their political stance on police brutality and   
in support of BLM. Since football players began kneeling during the national anthem in protest   
of the inequality in modern America, and to show support of BLM, many Americans decided to   
speak up on the issue. **Tara Reeves**, *a faithful daughter of 1st Lieutenant Patrick Cleburne   
McClary and daughter-in-law of NFL head coach Dan Reeves*, responds with her article, “Our   
National Anthem Brings us Together as AMERICANS”, published on **Fox News**.   
 In her article, Reeves **argues all Americans should rise for the national anthem**. Reeves **emphasizes** her argument by connecting the anthem to honoring its soldiers who fought or died for the country to protect the rights Americans enjoy daily. She **contends** that as long as   
Americans rise, as long as individuality is set aside, they will come together and ultimately be   
deemed victorious and united. She **asserts** her argument by stating the national anthem is a way   
to show patriotism, or pride, for America. In the end, Reeves convinces her audience by utilizing   
the strength of personal connections to persuade the audience that true Americans should stand   
for the anthem. [THESIS] Reeves convinces white conservative Americans that all citizens should stand for the anthem because it is a gesture of respect, unity, and patriotism by establishing an author-to-reader connection to sway the readers into considering her opinion as the morally correct representation of what Americans should do during the national anthem. [THESIS]   
 Reeves sympathetically sways the audience with a personal story about her father's   
sacrifice in Vietnam in order to convince them that rising for the anthem in respect for the   
military is morally correct. **Pathos** is a rhetorical term that means, “The use of emotion in debate   
or argument” (Losh et al. 44). Reeves elaborates on the military aspect for rising for the anthem   
through personal experience, “To this day, when I watch a game with him, I can sense his   
wandering back to his high school and college days on the field when he had two eyes to set on   
his target and two hands to line up his throw”. Reeves applies sympathy to her argument,   
“‘Remember that the hearts of many Americans no longer beat because they died fighting for the   
freedoms you enjoy,’ they’d say– a thought particularly compelling because Daddy’s life had   
been narrowly spared in combat by the heroic actions of an African-American Marine, Pfc.   
Ralph Johnson”. Her father lost an arm and eye in the war which lead him to learn two important   
lessons, gratefulness for his own life and those surrounding him and appreciation for soldiers   
who sacrificed themselves in war. In order to gain an emotional advantage over the readers,   
Reeves creates a personal connection and attains sympathy from the readers by sharing a   
touching story of her father’s loss of his arm and eye and the sacrifices’ effect on his life and   
football career. This builds an understanding as to what soldiers lose for Americans to protect   
their freedoms and why they are so important for the country. The freedoms of American citizens   
are still applicable due to the military. Therefore, because of Reeves’ upbringing and close   
relations to soldiers, in her opinion, it should be a unconscious decision to stand for the “Star   
Spangled Banner”. The “Star Spangled Banner” holds historical significance and Reeves   
describes that within her argument to emphasize the necessity of standing up for the anthem.   
 Reeves strengthens her argument with historical facts about how America unified after   
tragedies, to pull the hearts of the audience and make them reflect on the hard times the US has   
gone through to allow the citizens to exercise their “hard won” rights and freedoms today. Logos   
is defined as, “seeks to convince by persuading you of the fundamental soundness of its point of   
view” (Oslon and Millet 125). Reeves uses two historical examples to strengthen her argument,   
“Days after Japan surrendered in 1945 and brought an end to World War II, then NFL   
commissioner Elmer Layden called for “The Star Spangled Banner” to be played at all National   
Football League games”. Reeves also mentions the Super Bowl following 9/11, “February 2,   
2002, marked Super Bowl XXXVI; it was the first one since our country was attacked on 9/11...   
They were introduced this way: “Ladies and gentlemen, the New England Patriots”. Reeves   
references the history on the national anthem to shine light on its past and how it is a necessity in   
modern America. She also refers to February 2, 2002, the day of the Super Bowl following the 9/11 attack, and the first time an NFL team skipped individual introductions and came onto the   
field as one to display unification. For Reeves, unity amongst differences is one of the important   
representations of the national anthem. Hence, by referencing historical tragedies, the audience   
becomes more lenient towards believing in Reeves argument. The intended emotional effect is   
for the audience to realize how America has come together in the end, unification is a method of   
proving that the United States is a strong country. Despite the violent history it bears that   
included division of the country and countless tragedies, the United States managed to overcome   
its issues as a whole. Reeves stresses the feelings of unity amongst American citizens because it   
leads to stronger patriotism.   
 Reeves emphasizes her love for America and how it is a given reason Americans should   
stand for the anthem by grasping onto the readers emotions and constructing a safe environment   
shared between them and herself. As mentioned before, pathos is, “The use of emotion in debate   
or argument” (Losh et al. 44). Reeves establishes a reader-to-author connection by stating “We,   
as Americans, are a team”. Reeves tries to tug the hearts of the readers to make them believe   
Americans are already together. She wants the audience to acknowledge that all Americans   
believe in one end goal. For some, this may trigger feelings of patriotism and love, which causes   
the readers to connect with Reeves, and be easily persuaded by her due to her honest feelings   
about America and its citizens. America overcame endless turmoil and by Reeves forming a   
relationship with the audience, she highlights patriotic importance being a major factor   
represented in the anthem. Reeves attempts to form a trusting bond with the reader. She refers to   
America as a team to spark a mutual feeling of family and togetherness. She puts patriotism on a   
pedestal because not loving one's country is viewed as unethical.   
 Reeves represents an outspoken majority of those who side with standing during the   
national anthem rather than kneeling. “Our national anthem brings us together as AMERICANS”   
is a heavily opinionated, but interesting article that portrays a common conception of typical   
Americans. Every person interprets what it means being a US citizen differently and what is   
standard in the society. Reeves elaborates not only what she believes it means being American,   
but what shocks her to those that do not follow her American way. Not standing for the anthem   
is amoral for Reeves. Her experience about life and its fundamental value, her deep-rooted love   
for the US, and her overwhelming sense of unity as a nation is what drives her to refute those   
going against the grain. Each human being has individual values and opinions on what is and is   
not morally correct. One can either agree with Reeves on certain points, completely agree, or   
completely disagree- it is all up to that person. This article can ground somebody in their   
political stance on BLM, police brutality, and what the “Star Spangled Banner” means to them.

Works Cited

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