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This essay will be reflecting on the impacts of COVID-19 within my own life and my perspective on how it has affected the world. It will also be reflecting on what this virus means for our world socially, politically, and economically. Lastly, it will also make a brief reference to what I have learned about the epidemics mentioned in Hist 129A taught by Professor Ruiz.

The Impact of COVID-19

COVID-19, a virus that had come to the world's attention quite early on. However, we now know that we did not act quick enough. This virus has become extremely detrimental to us all and we are all feeling the effects of it. A virus that also started out as just a respiratory virus and that wasn't "affecting younger and healthy people" quickly became false. As we've learned more about COVID-19, we are understanding that it is a scary virus that is able to mask its symptoms and attack whoever it wants. This virus has not only impacted my family and myself, but the entire world. Everyone is being affected by COVID-19 and it will ultimately change the way we all live our lives in the future.

When UCLA was first impacted by this virus, we were coming towards the end of our winter quarter. Getting the email from Gene Block explaining that classes were going to be transitioning online was devastating. I then began to understand the first steps of what quarantine meant for all of us. Days went by and the transition to an online classroom had been difficult. Taking my winter quarter finals all online created an entirely different type of stress. Classes and studying had never been easy, but having to stare at a screen all day and take a final online was not ideal. It was also incredibly tough to focus on finals and to finish strong because UCLA had emailed the student body that there would be no graduation. This was heartbreaking to all of us seniors, especially for senior transfers. Being a transfer is already tough enough, we only get two years at UCLA and now we were being robbed of our graduation. As time went on and us seniors petitioned for there to be an eventual in person graduation ceremony, our voices were heard and we will eventually have a graduation ceremony. Luckily, this was some hope to hold onto within these very dark times. However, having spring quarter fully online has been frustrating. It's hard to focus and I feel as though I can't make genuine relationships with my

professors or classmates. It's also immensely frustrating that we are all having to pay full tuition when we aren't even getting the full experience of being on campus and having all of the normal amenities that we're used to. I am also terrified for the future because I will soon be a graduate that will be heading into a horrible economy. Internships that were expected to resume in the summer are now being cancelled and I will be unemployed, as many will be. Not only has this virus affected my education and future plans, but it has also been impacting my home life. Quarantine has been difficult for both my dad and I. We have only been going out when it's necessary to do so. For example, to get groceries, prescriptions, to go to work. Luckily, my dad is getting paid and is only going to work when it's absolutely necessary to do so. However, it's only my dad and I, he is all I have. Although we are being extremely safe when either of us go out, I am terrified that one of us might catch the virus and bring it back home. I can't allow my dad to get infected because he is sixty years old and has some heart problems. Anxiety is at an extreme high for both of us. My mental health has been at the lowest it has ever been. I suffer from anxiety, depression, and occasional panic attacks. Even though I would call myself an introvert, it has been extremely hard to stay at home all day and to not interact with anyone but my dad. My anxiety has manifested itself into panic attacks that come unwarranted and it has been incredibly hard to control. Although all of this has been difficult and has taken some time to get used to, I also acknowledge the privilege behind all of these statements that I'm making. One of my best friends entire family over in London had gotten sick and that was extremely stressful for her and her family. Some of my friends also have gotten fired and don't have any extra money to spend on groceries or to even pay rent. Some of them also don't even have health insurance. If they were to get sick, they wouldn't want to go to the doctors because they wouldn't be able to afford it. It's incredibly frustrating and heartbreaking that there are so many

people who are suffering yet the people in power are doing nothing about it. This virus is even bigger than the problems I just listed because it's not just affecting my family, friends and myself, it's affecting everyone.

This virus has affected everyone around the world. There's something that has been said multiple times in various articles and social media posts which is, "We're enduring the same storm but we are not all in the same boat". Although it is unknown who said this first, this is entirely true. COVID-19 is affecting everyone but not at all in the same way. There are so many people who are facing unemployment during this time. There are people who were employed but had been fired and have nothing else to fall back on. These people have families to take care of, mortgages and bills to pay, yet they are continuously beaten down by this insane virus. Some landlords are still insisting on rent being paid during these uncertain times. Some people don't have enough money for groceries. Some people are homeless during this pandemic. There are all of these people who are deemed "essential workers" and who are on the front line of this entire pandemic, especially health care workers. These people go to work every day and risk their own lives, their families lives, to save others from this horrifying virus. Additionally, There are hundreds and hundreds of people who have lost someone due to this virus. People are dying every day from COVID-19 and it is attacking whoever it wants. Every state is different and is reacting differently. Some people are following the quarantine restrictions, others are claiming that the virus is a hoax and that we shouldn't be wearing masks when we go out and that things should reopen. There are so many conflicting opinions on this virus which only makes this whole thing scarier and also lasting longer than it needs to. We've seen around the world people following certain quarantine protocols and how they are slowly reopening and reintroducing normal ways of life. Yet there are still parts of the world where they are not flattening the curve

whatsoever. Another unknown of COVID-19 is a vaccine. There have been conversations about a vaccine and when it may come but nobody is certain about anything. Even though we are lucky enough to live in a time of modern medicine, vaccines take an extended amount of time to create. We all know that there will be an eventual vaccine but so many people are incredibly impatient and don't want to wait for one. Some people are continuing to go out even though it isn't entirely safe to do so. This virus has been the perfect example of the domino effect. The more people that disobey self-quarantining the more harm they will be putting on their own communities. Nobody wants to stay inside all day, people want their jobs back, but we have to stay safe and flatten the curve until this virus calms down. The scariest part of all of this, is that we truly don't see an end to it anytime soon. However, even though times are scary, we all will eventually overcome this.

This virus has also brought up a multitude of reflections on how we interact socially, on the economy and politics. Socially, we all have been wondering what life may be like after all of this is over. Will we no longer give handshakes? Will public places be cleaned more frequently? How will concerts look from now on? Traveling is also another huge uncertainty due to this virus. Will people ever feel safe enough to travel again on airplanes, trains, busses, and boats? Not only will there be the social impacts that we will eventually face, but the economy is also falling apart as people are losing jobs and even quitting. Us soon to be graduates are going into a workforce with huge uncertainties. Also regarding politics, how will we look at political candidates and how they would handle a future situation similar to this one? There are so many unknowns at the moment and it is truly frightening.

Living within this pandemic can also be referenced to what I've learned throughout our class so far. For example, the impact that smallpox had affected everything in day to day life. From Bernal Díaz's *The Conquest of New Spain* he writes, "Smallpox was spreading through the

country, and many *Caciques* died” (310). The destruction that came from smallpox affected populations, the economy, and more. More from *The Conquest of New Spain*, “For three whole days and nights they never ceased streaming out, and all three causeways were crowded with men, women, and children so thin, sallow, dirty, and stinking that it was pitiful to see them. Once the city was free from them Cortes went out to inspect it. We found the houses full of corpses, and some poor Mexicans still in them who could not move away. Their excretions were the sort of filth that thin swine pass which have been fed on nothing but grass. The city looked as if it had been ploughed up. The roots of any edible greenery had been dug out, boiled, and eaten, and they had even cooked the bark of some of the trees. There was no fresh water to be found; all of it was brackish” (406-407). Furthermore, the indigenous people did not have any sort of immunity for the virus that was brought into their land which lead to a mass amount of deaths. This is somewhat similar to what we’re currently experiencing since we have never seen this virus before and don’t have any kind of immunity built up against it. The indigenous people were dying at an alarming rate, “Now to speak of the dead bodies and heads that were in the houses where Guatemoc had taken refuge. I solemnly swear that all the houses and stockades in the lake were full of heads and corpses. I do not know how to describe it but it was the same in the streets and courts of Tlatelolco. We could not walk without treading on the bodies and heads of dead Indians” (405). Although we can see the parallels to COVID-19 and smallpox, we also live in a time where we have modern medicine and are able to save more people.

For the time being, COVID-19 has completely changed the world. This virus isn’t just affecting Los Angeles, California, the United States. It is affecting the entire world and we don’t know how to navigate it. Hopefully we will see an end to this virus sooner rather than later and even though we are living in uncertain times, we will be okay. We’re all learning a lot of

valuable lessons due to this virus and hopefully we can look back on these times and reflect on how it has made us all more resilient.

Work Cited:

Díaz, Bernal. *The Conquest of New Spain*. Translated by, J.M. Cohen. London, Penguin Books, 1963.