

Razi, Nicole

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TA Rebecca

History 129A

## **COVID-19**

Today, we play as historical agents in a global drama, the spread of the Covid-19. Covid-19 has revolutionized daily life and indeed how we will live every day after this. The simplest, innocent, and most unconscious activities turned into the deadliest. The things we believed to be unavoidable have turned illegal. An epidemic we thought would never hit home -at least not this hard- turned into a pandemic in record time. Life as we know it has become uncertain. It's currently been two months since I've been in quarantine and the city anticipated that the stay-at-home orders would be lifted in a few days, but instead, they've announced that they'll be extending it for another three months. Like most things in history, many things don't go according to plan. Covid-19 is not a unique event, pandemics and epidemics such as the Spanish flu and illness Europeans brought to New Spain are other examples.

Covid-19 is comparable to historical illnesses dated back to the late 15th and 16th centuries. The highly contagious virus originated from Wuhan, China, and traveled amongst the world in record time through various modes of transportation. This is not the first pandemic or epidemic the world has seen. An example is when the Europeans brought an epidemic to New Spain. "But to return to Narvaez. He happened to have a negro servant with him ill with the smallpox, through whom this terrific disease, which according to the accounts of the inhabitants, was previously unknown in the country, spread itself through New Spain, where it created the

greater devastation from the poor Indians, in their ignorance” (Bernal Diaz del Castillo, 261).

Europeans were oblivious to the deadly illness they had brought with them to New Spain.

Travelers from Wuhan were not any more aware than the Europeans that they were carriers of what came to be known as coronavirus. Technological advances contribute to the rate in which the coronavirus spread. Thus, travelers from abroad brought home this fatal illness like other epidemics and pandemics from the past.

On February 29th, I flew out to Washington, D.C., for the most significant Jewish conference in the nation, AIPAC. My friend and I struggled to buy tickets and were not successful. It came to a surprise that we were unsuccessful because we are both heavily involved in the community and have high profile contacts. We took it as a sign that we were not meant to be there and decided to make the most of our situation. We roamed the capital during the day and went to large AIPAC after parties three nights in a row. The day we landed back in LA, March 3rd, we received an email from the board of AIPAC that three men who attended the conference tested positive... Suddenly, my whole weekend flashed before me. Where did I go? Who did I talk to? Was I touchy with anyone? What do I do now? Colleagues were contacting one another in a panic to dwell on their fate. My whole world and many other Angelinos who had attended the conference were in distress. The numbers in Los Angeles rose slowly, and all I could think about was what number I would be; I was convinced I had the virus.

I returned back from my short trip during finals week (March 3rd). Between the flush of work and the looming idea that I could potentially die in the following two weeks was haunting me. I went on my trip with a sore throat and came back with one, so it was unclear to me if I was fatally sick or just had a common cold. There was minimal information provided on

the illness at the time, so I was left up in the air. I had never felt so much anxiety in my life; even if I wasn't positive for Covid-19, I definitely believed the stress I was enduring would have gotten to me one way or another. I invested hours researching guidelines on how to get tested, but all leads were inconclusive. Since testing was limited and I was ineligible, I was forced to self-quarantine during one of the most worrisome weeks of my life. However, UCLA did go virtual the last week of winter quarter-finals, which made things slightly lighter on me.

Additionally, following my arrival, my sister flew back from her vacation in Australia a few days later. Australia consistently has a lot of tourism from Asia and had many more cases than America did at the time. So we had a big problem on our hands, but my parents were unbothered. Initially, my parents took this pandemic lightly, which created additional stress. I felt as though I was their parent, and they were my children who wouldn't listen.

My father is 65 years old with high cholesterol and had pneumonia less than a year ago. Covid-19 is considered most life-threatening to those who are at high risk, and my father definitely falls under that category. My parents were both very stubborn and ignorant in regards to the disease before the mandatory shut down the city of Los Angeles mandated. This became very problematic for my sister and me, who took the matter extremely seriously. We could not control my father's actions from leaving the house and going wherever his heart desired, which caused many fights. We felt as though he was selfish for putting himself and us in danger. It wasn't until everything in this city practically shut down that he stayed home and took the proper precautions.

Ever since the mandatory stay at home order, my parents have definitely taken the matter more seriously. Although, now that two months have passed by and very few people we

know have gotten the life-threatening flu, they have become increasingly looser. They are starting to trick my sister and me by lying about their whereabouts and going to work rather than walks. We do not know how to control these adults acting like children by thinking they are invincible. Just the other day, I tried hiding everyone's car keys until I was forced to give them back. My parents are incredibly bored and don't have the mental capacity to stay at home the same way we have been any longer. Since California and New York are only a few states left to extend their shutdown, my father believes it's a political stunt. Thus, he lacks the interest to participate in the strict guidelines. I fear what these next three months have in store.

Today, May 12th, 2020, I had my first mental breakdown. I have been extremely positive and proactive throughout my time at home. I've been trying to make the best of our situation by shifting my energy into things I find important to me. For instance, at the beginning of my spring quarter at UCLA, I predicted we would be in quarantine well beyond the original date the city set. I took advantage of the extra time at home by enrolling myself in seven courses to fall ahead in my academics. Although I have spare time on my hands, the workload has been hefty. It requires plenty of discipline and time management to be successful because the environment at home can be discouraging. I also have been spending more time at the piano producing music and dedicating a handful of my time to indulging in self-growth books. Moreover, family time has been an inevitable plus to this whole circumstance. I am blessed to be a part of a happy home, but prior to the pandemic the fast life of Los Angeles had gotten the best of us. My family and I would only sit down for dinner once a week, and there would be times I'd go days without seeing some people in my household because of our differing schedules. We have been strengthening our relationships with card tournaments, dance parties, and strolls around the

neighborhood. Truthfully, my house has been more peaceful ever since this pandemic. Before the pandemic, I was out practically every night; now that I'm forced to stay home, I've been able to nurture the core of my life. Our situation has pushed me to be increasingly more dedicated to my personal growth and will continue to strive to become the best possible version of myself even after everything has passed; self-growth is what I've taken away from this situation. My moment of weakness today rooted from the unforeseen news we received this morning about the extended stay at home order. I'm ready to take on the challenge and dedicate even more time to my personal life.

Coronavirus is in the air and so is love. My boyfriend of one year and I broke up in September of 2020. Right when I came back from D.C. in March during the early midst of coronavirus, he reached out to me in efforts to reestablish what we once had. With enough convincing, I took Julien back and we've been virtually dating ever since. It hasn't necessarily been difficult rekindling things, but it has definitely been a frustrating situation. He has extremely strict parents so I only get to see him on his runs. We sneak around our stringent households by planning a meetup at the park during our weekly runs. Although we are managing the circumstances we're living in, it's been tremendously difficult considering we are limited on things we can do. The social consequences of coronavirus go far beyond my relations with Julien. For example, I'm an event coordinator, and every party we had booked has now been cancelled. Many of those who were planning a wedding held an extremely small ceremony rather than waiting till the world went back to "normal" and invited the rest of their guests through a video conference. Coronavirus has dramatically altered the way we have been able to interact with people in intimate and professional settings.

My father and two older sisters are in the same line of work. They all are in the business of importing and exporting military shipments. Their business took a major hit because their line of work heavily relies on military members constantly moving, but now travel has paused and won't be normal for an extremely long time. The irregular cash flow has made our financial situation tight. I used to eat out once to twice a day, but I haven't allowed myself to do that since the start of our stay at home order two months ago. My friends have been taking advantage of the shopping sales, yet I've been managing to find things to sell during my full time commitment to school. The pandemic has created an economic crisis for almost every corner of the world. In our nation, people are protesting to open states sooner so they can get back to work. Many of my family's employees are undocumented so they cannot file for unemployment. This pandemic has highlighted a hole in our governmental institute. Our employees live paycheck-to-paycheck, so without our support they would be living in unthinkable circumstances. The news predicts a 45% increase in homelessness in Los Angeles as an economic consequence to this pandemic.

Our world has modified to meet the needs of a healthy society that can prevent the spread of Covid-19. We've taken precautions such as social distancing, leaving every type of establishment practically empty. We are unaware of when things will go back to normal or if they will ever be the same. The entire world has been economically hit by the adjustments made to stop the spread of Covid-19. Although the future is uncertain, I predict there are some implications that will be long lasting. I believe handshakes will no longer be warmly welcomed. I also anticipate that coronavirus will leave a lasting impact on how airports and airplanes are regulated and cleaned the same way impressions of 9/11 in these environments are still

prevalent. Furthermore, I envision that this global event will instill lasting fear in individuals and the later generations to maintain high regards to hygiene.

The effects of Covid-19 are pervasive. Although many positive effects such as family time have arised from the circumstance, it has been at the economic expense of those around the world. The unforeseen events have not been taken lightly and stills require time to get accustomed to. Only time can tell what lasting effects will come out of coronavirus.

## Citation

Cunninghame, Graham R. B, and del C. B. Díaz. *Bernal Diaz Del Castillo: Being Some Account of Him Taken from His True History of the Conquest of New Spain*. London: Eveleigh Nash, 1915. Print.