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## The Impact of Covid-19

As I sit and begin this paper, it is difficult to imagine what the world was like before the Covid-19 pandemic struck. I can recall taking a trip to the grocery store without feeling anxious or in a state of panic. I remember being able to visit with my extended family members and stand closer than six feet apart. I remember being able to go in public without wearing a mask or gloves. Those memories feel so distant that they don't feel real anymore. Covid-19 has stripped away all of the simple pleasures in life and turned them into taboos. The virus has consumed our lives literally and figuratively. It has completely turned our world upside down. Before, we only knew the deadly virus narrative to be something out of a movie. Now, we face the harsh reality of a deadly virus wiping out large populations. The Covid-19 pandemic feels like a never ending nightmare. It is as if the world has turned the page to the first chapter of a dystopian novel. The pandemic has infiltrated every part of society, forcing people to change the way in which they live. Although a virus may seem weak in comparison to 21st century advances in medicine and technology, the Covid-19 pandemic will leave a stain on history and alter society forever. In this paper, I intend to describe how Covid-19 has impacted myself and my family's life as well as my thoughts on what the future may hold.

The coronavirus has changed my life in many different ways as it has for millions of people around the globe. The biggest impact it has made on my life is that it has forced me to transition to online schooling. Online schooling has been a challenging and disheartening process for me. I am unfamiliar with taking classes online and I feel as though I learn better in person.

Moreover, the transition to remote learning is disenchanting to me because I am a transfer student and have worked very hard to get to UCLA. Being accepted into UCLA's sociology department was a big achievement for myself and my family due to the fact that I am a first generation college student. I have waited longer than most to receive the full "college experience" because I attended community college straight out of high school. My time at UCLA is already limited, and due to the pandemic, it has been stripped down to an even shorter amount of time.

The transition to online learning has also caused me to move back home to the Bay Area from Los Angeles. It seemed like just as I was beginning to get used to living on my own, but I was forced to retreat home to quarantine with my family. Living at home has brought with it many more distractions than I had before. I'm no longer in an environment where I can do whatever I want, when I want. I live in a small house with six other family members who do not always understand the obstacles of online learning. It is difficult to find an area in the house that is quiet and a suitable working environment. My twin sister is also doing online learning and we share a room. It has been a difficult adjustment and I fear for what the future has in store in regard to online school.

Social distancing has impacted my ability to maintain relationships with others. The pandemic has isolated us into our homes where socializing with our friends is forbidden. Personally, I have anxiety about the mere idea of being alone because I have never had to be alone. All of my life I have had my identical twin sister by my side. In respect to this, I don't really know what it's like to be alone, especially in a time like this where we are forced to isolate. As a result, I have tried my best to keep in contact with my friends who do not have siblings and

check in on them. Social media has been an excellent tool that has helped me stay connected with my friends and family. I believe that staying connected with others during this time is vital in order to keep sane. Loneliness and isolation are a recipe for disaster when it comes to the human mind.

The Covid-19 pandemic has altered my mental state. It has caused me heightened levels of stress, anxiety, and fear. I have fears of my family and friends being infected. Moreover, I'm at high-risk of infection because I have asthma. The idea that the world will never be the same haunts me. My sleeping schedule has taken a turn for the worse. I find it difficult to find motivation for anything anymore. Though my mental state is at a low, I'm grateful for my friends and family being there for me.

Though social media can be used as a tool during this time, I think that it can also be used as a weapon. Social media is littered with bad news which creates even more feelings of stress and anxiety. I found it more beneficial to take breaks from watching the news or being on social media. Instead, I would find other things to pass the time such as cleaning, cooking, arts and crafts or going for walks.

Covid-19 has affected many of my plans for 2020. One of those plans was attending the Coachella music festival. This on the surface sounds like an insensitive thing to be upset about given what's going on in the world. However, Coachella has been a place of escape for me in the past. In addition, it has been a place where I can reunite with my old friends from my childhood and establish even more social connections. It is a place to enjoy music and food and forget about the horrors of the world by inserting yourself into the moment. In the context of this class, Coachella can loosely be connected to the festivals of the medieval world and carnival of the

modern world. Festivals for people of medieval Spain were a source of entertainment. Coachella is put on to solely entertain its guests through performances of music. In addition, in the medieval world, clothing was a huge symbol of status. Kings and Queens would wear black to communicate their power. This is similar to Coachella, in that it's essentially a competition for who is best dressed. The food and drinks at Coachella is a major part of the experience similarly to medieval festivals. Lastly, as mentioned before, Coachella for me is a place where I can escape the social order. This is much like the Carnival of Rio de Janeiro because it also serves as an escape for its people. Since the pandemic has occurred it is believed that concerts will not be able to resume until 2022.

Not only has the Covid-19 pandemic affected me personally it has also affected my family in various ways. My mother has worked at a child day care for over 15 years. Due to the virus outbreak, she was put on furlough by her job and has applied for unemployment. She along with many other Americans are now facing the challenging consequences of being put out of work. Many people have lost their jobs as a result of this pandemic making it difficult for families to get by.

I live at home with my grandparents who are the most at risk for this horrible virus due to their age. My family and I have been taking extra precautions by sticking to the rules the state has put in place. Whenever we leave the house, we make sure to always wear a mask, gloves and to have hand sanitizer on hand. At the state that things are right now, I feel like these items will be essential for leaving the house for an extended period of time. Since my sister and I are the least at risk in the household, we have been taking on more responsibility. It is our job to do the grocery shopping for our family. The social norms of the grocery store have changed

significantly. Instead of just being able to walk inside, lines form around the building with six foot gaps in between each person. Masks are required and tensions run high. One can not help but feel like the apocalypse is happening as people scramble to buy items in bulk.

My family has tried our best to get through this pandemic together and embrace what we have which is our health and each other. One of the ways we have tried to stay sane during these uncertain times is to embrace our traditions and culture. We do this by keeping our Maltese and Italian culture alive through food. Food is a major aspect of both Maltese and Italian culture. Before Covid-19, it was tradition in my family to sit down every Sunday and have Sunday dinner together. We have kept this tradition alive all through quarantine. Tradition establishes a sense of familiarity and I think that is necessary in a time where everything feels unfamiliar. Food brings people together and can provide comfort and happiness. These things seem to be lacking in the world right now.

Covid-19 affected our family tradition of Easter. On Easter my whole family gets together at my aunt's house where we again enjoy delicious food. Instead we were forced to stay at home and celebrate with our immediate family which was not a bad thing but it wasn't the same. However, my family did not let Covid-19 erase our tradition entirely. We amazingly got my family on a Zoom call. This is one of the instances where social media is a helpful tool. Though we were still able to celebrate Easter, I look forward to the time where we are able to perform our traditions and holidays in person.

Mother's Day was also affected by the virus. In my family on Mother's Day we go out to brunch and meet with our extended family members. Since we are no longer allowed to dine in restaurants and congregate with more than 10 people this would have been impossible. I took it

upon myself to do with what we had in the house and make a mimosa bar in my living room for my mother and grandmother. Though this was not our usual tradition it still made Mother's Day just as special.

If the coronavirus has taught me anything it has taught me to appreciate what you have and to value the time you have with your family members because it can be cut short in an instance. I'm grateful to have my good health and my friends and family by my side. I know that this pandemic has forced others to separate from their families. In addition, the coronavirus has taught me the importance of keeping family tradition alive as well as to nurture social connections. Lastly, it has taught me that we will adapt. Looking back at my experience with Covid-19 thus far it has shown that we adapt to our conditions. This gives me hope for the future.

The coronavirus has changed many aspects of the world. People's overall demeanor and nature have been altered. The pandemic has ironically brought people together. There is a sense of solidarity that has spread across communities and the world at large. We are all in this together, experiencing the same tragedy. People now gather on their balconies and sing and play music for the city and hard working health care workers. However, at the same time, there is a division going on in the world. People have become more aggressive and selfish. For example, panic buying out supplies from grocery stores. Others have been seen abusing essential workers. Furthermore, people have protested to not wear masks, putting others in danger. Racism towards specific groups has also risen. The virus has essentially restructured society's norms. Now normality includes standing 6 feet away from people, staying home, wearing a mask and gloves. It is normal now to not shake hands or hug when you greet someone. It is normal to line up outside businesses. The world is in a very scary place and the future is uncertain.

It appears as though things will not be back to normal for a very long time, that is if things do go back to the way they were before. I believe that Covid-19 has forever changed the way humans operate in the world. Based upon current events, it seems like school will be all online for the near future. I think masks and gloves will be turned into everyday clothing items. Concerts will be held virtually. Businesses that are not deemed “essential” will shut down for good. The future is unsettling because society was not built to endure sudden shocks like the coronavirus. The world will have to resort to their basic nature and learn to adapt to their new conditions. After the world is able to adapt there is hope.