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Coronavirus Reflection

The past three months have been extremely challenging, unexpected, and heartbreaking for the entire world. As states enforced lockdowns across the nation, a wave of uncertainty and panic fell upon Americans. However, the pandemic has affected Americans differently depending on their race, income, and health. While many Americans have the option to stay home, others do not and they have to expose themselves to the virus every single day. Furthermore, millions of Americans have lost their jobs and therefore, have lost their healthcare. However, the pandemic has unequally affected Hispanics and African Americans because they are exposed to environmental racism and therefore, have more pre-existing conditions. Furthermore, they are the people who work frontline jobs because they usually work in grocery stores, restaurants, and domestic work. At the same time, people with pre-existing conditions are at a higher risk and therefore, have to take extra precautions. Therefore, people of color have a higher risk of being infected than people in the middle class and white people.

Personally, The Coronavirus pandemic has shown me how dependent I am on routine and on other people. When lockdown started, I struggled to keep myself together and get back on track. The pandemic also led me to redefine my goals. I am graduating from UCLA this year but I did not apply to grad school because I was not sure what career I wanted to pursue. However, when returning home I began to think about the person I want to become and the life I want to

live. While in quarantine I spent many days reflecting on the life I want to live and I realized that I want to have a career that will impact other lives. I had considered going into teaching before, but now I am sure that it is what I want to pursue. I want to work in something that will be fulfilling and that will help others. Quarantine has also forced me to live my life day by day. I realize that I spend the majority of my time thinking about the future and I do not live in the moment. This reminds me of a common theme in medieval Spain, which was *memento mori*. *Memento mori* highlights the inevitability of death. While death is inevitable, we have control over how we want to be remembered. Furthermore, we often find ourselves reminiscing about our past or wishing for the future. Yet, the present moment is the most important. I believe the pandemic has reminded me that it is important to live in the moment because we will be reminiscing about it in the future. I am also incredibly thankful for my physical health. Growing up I did not have to think twice about my physical health. However, seeing how life can change in an instant has made me extremely thankful for my health. However, the pandemic has been a huge challenge for me mentally. Having a history of mental health conditions including PTSD and anxiety, the uncertainty of the pandemic and loss of routine led to daily panic attacks. Luckily, I had access to virtual therapy and I received the help I needed. Over time, I was able to establish a routine and learned to control my anxiety. However, moving back home made me realize that I am highly dependent on my friends as I have an unstable relationship with my family. Luckily, I video call my friends everyday and I am extremely thankful for technology because it has kept friends and family close during a time of social distancing.

At first, the pandemic was nerve wracking for my family and I because my dad works at a grocery store and therefore, he is exposed to people everyday. Everyday, my family and I

feared for my father's life as he went to work at 4am. At the start of the lockdown, my dad was frustrated at work because the store was overcrowded and people were panic buying. He also told us that shoppers were not following social distancing guidelines as they stood very close to each other when paying and when grabbing groceries. Furthermore, store employees did not have proper protection. Workers did not have masks easily accessible to them and shoppers were not wearing masks when they went to the store. I warned my dad that the conditions at the store were unsafe and put him in danger. My dad felt that it was unsafe so he asked for some time off and when he returned to work, the store had done a better job at enforcing social distancing regulations. However, my family and I still worry and think about my dad every single day when he goes to work. On the other hand, my mom was laid off because she works for an airplane manufacturer and they are not in business at the moment. This created more anxiety and stress in the household as we lost a source of income. My mom plans to apply for unemployment as her hours were cut short. At the same time, the pandemic has reminded me that my family and I are healthy for the most part. It reminded us that even though we are struggling financially, we still have enough to pay the bills and we are all fairly healthy. Luckily, we do not have pre-existing conditions and do not have an extra weight on our shoulders.

I live in a community where the majority of the population is living just above the poverty line. Most of the members in the community are frontline workers who work as janitors, custodians, cashiers, and housekeepers. It was interesting to see how quickly the community started working with each other. Many schools offered food for students and their families. Additionally, the city hosted multiple events in which they gave out food to families in need. Furthermore, I noticed that the community relied more on each other for support. As soon as the

pandemic started, the city began helping each other. High schools distributed food to students and families provided emotional support to one another. In my apartment complex families supported emotional support to one another from their balconies. Even though we are social distancing, people started video calling one another and relying on each other more for moral support. I believe that the pandemic has brought people closer than ever because we are in a moment of uncertainty. I also noticed that in my apartment complex, the landlord was lenient about rent. This showed me how compassion is important during a time of distress and uncertainty. Many of my neighbors, including my family, struggled to pay rent the past couple of months because they lost their jobs during the pandemic. However, the gracious compassion demonstrated by others in the community has given my family and others a sense of relief during these times of anguish.

While I was fully aware of the wealth disparities in the nation, Coronavirus has really highlighted how broken the system is in the United States. The pandemic left millions of Americans unemployed and therefore, without health insurance. It is clear that there is a severe problem with the healthcare system in the United States. Furthermore, millions of Americans who are currently unemployed are struggling to pay their rent and bills. While the government promised a stimulus check, \$1,200 is not sufficient for the longevity of the pandemic. Additionally, most Americans have not received their stimulus checks in the mail. Therefore, many Americans are unable to pay their bills and rent. Another problem that the majority of Americans do not have access to health insurance without a job. When Americans lost their jobs due to Coronavirus, they also lost their health insurance. Therefore, being infected was

increasingly scary. Most Americans feared catching the Coronavirus because they could not afford to pay the bill if they were to be hospitalized.

While everyone struggles through the pandemic differently, I believe that the Coronavirus pandemic has brought the world closer together because every country is going through a similar problem. However, the pandemic has shown us that world leaders handled the situation differently. At the same time, it has shown how wealthy people always have an advantage over the working class. Across the world, millionaires and billionaires have quarantined peacefully in their homes, without having to worry about where their next meal is going to come from and whether they will have enough money to pay rent. Meanwhile, working class people across the world have been working as frontline workers everyday. They expose themselves to the virus because they can not afford to miss work because they have to pay rent and buy groceries. The pandemic has demonstrated how different people live according to their wealth. This is similar to what we learned in class as it shows that people in higher classes live more comfortably and do not live day to day, wondering how they will afford to feed their family. The Coronavirus pandemic has also revealed how corrupt the government is and how governments work to benefit the wealthy. During times of distress, the people in power have shown to live comfortably as working class people have struggled to pay for food and stay alive. As we have learned in class, the government always has more power than the people and they work to exploit the working class. I think the pandemic has shown how we live in an unequal society in which the majority of Americans do not make enough money to live comfortably and afford to pay for healthcare. It has also shown how the president of the United States handled the situation poorly and ignored the wellbeing of millions of Americans since he knew about the

pandemic months before it reached the United States. Furthermore, I believe the pandemic has shown how our country has many structural problems compared to other countries such as New Zealand. It has put the whole world on pause for the first time and has given us the opportunity to maintain old habits or change the system as we move forward. The pandemic has revealed the instability of governments and capitalism. At the same time, the pandemic has shown how people rely on one another and how art can cheer up many people. Similar to what we have learned in class, art and poetry arise from difficult times. Just as an explosion of culture arose during and after the Castilian Civil Wars, many artists have used their time in quarantine to produce art and music that expressed the time that we are living in. Furthermore, authors have used this time to write about the historical moment that we are going through and they are recording their thoughts and emotions.

I hope that in the future we change the way that we have been living and we switch to more environmentally friendly lifestyles. The pandemic has given us an opportunity to change our lifestyles and form of government. Therefore, I hope that we will learn to live in the moment and be more present in our lives. In addition, I hope that the United States and other countries offer free health care to everyone and increase the minimum wage because it is evident that the majority of people are living paycheck to paycheck. I also hope that people are more environmentally conscious and spend more time with their loved ones. This pandemic showed me that we often take our friends and family for granted because we see them frequently. However, I hope that moving forward we embrace every moment that we have with our loved ones. I believe this is a transformational moment in history as people are realizing that our system is dysfunctional and only benefits the wealthiest. I hope this will create a shift in power

from the government to the people. I believe this pandemic will cause a revolution in society as people realize that the government only serves the top 1% and the majority of Americans struggle to afford their bills and pay for healthcare.