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Michael Schultz's Personal Reflection

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1. How has the pandemic impacted you?
 - a. relationships?
 - b. future plans?
 - c. lifestyle, habits, routines, etc? What have you had to adapt to and what has changed?
 - d. Belonging?
2. What is something positive that has come out of this whole experience?
What is the most important lesson or meaningful experience you have gained from this project? Positive and Negative?
3. How has your college experience impacted your view of the pandemic?
4. What is something you think should be preserved in public memory about this time?

I would first like to clarify that this is not an interview, but a personal reflection and reflects my stream of conscious. I made the conscious decision to look at the questions but then not refer to where they are answered, because multiple paragraphs relate to one another and can not adequately address one question.

I think a better question is how the pandemic has not impacted my life and who I am. I feel as if every facet of my being has been impacted by the pandemic in some way. The most obvious change is online schooling, which has made me appreciate in person teaching so much. I feel almost as a stranger some what to professors and friends who I have grown close to over these past two years. This strangeness has resulted in me feeling lonelier than I normally feel, however this is to be expected. Even though I regularly try to send texts, have zoom and discord calls with individuals from Carleton, it has only minorly helped me feel more comfortable.

Now that I am back in Idaho, I am coming back to my dungeon, which I have tried with every bone in body to escape from. I am haunted here from memories of my past and individuals from my past who sought to destroy my being. I have made some what of an effort to try and meet with people to heal these wounds, however these meetings usually end reaffirming my previous feelings and making me feel even more like a stranger. I do enjoy being back around my family, however even with them I feel somewhat of a distance between me and my father and sister. The stress of the pandemic and other events I am sure is warping my perspective and making my thoughts more negative, however, I do not feel comfortable. I never felt comfortable in Idaho and I never believed it to be my home, however, I still don't view Northfield as my home either, even though these past two years have been some of my happiest and most fulfilling years. I have never felt that I have belonged anywhere, so this is not a new sensation for me. The closest to belonging I have experienced is at Carleton. I have always attributed my strangeness in the world to my reserve and quirky personality as well as my disabilities. This combination has impacted my life and I believe has made me feel more like a stranger. I believe this renewal of my isolation has contributed to making me lost even more of my sense of belonging.

My isolation is further ingrained by my habits. For the most part I stay in my room with only occasionally going downstairs to grab food, talking to my family, or going on a walk. At the beginning of the term I had more motivation and even though work took me much longer to complete, I was able to find a purpose. As the term wore on, I lost my motivation, and everything seemed to lose much of its purpose and meaning. This eventually destroyed me sleep schedule and impacted my time management. Even though much of the work I was doing was work I normally enjoy and relish, the enormous weight of the world pulled me away and I tried to find ways to distract myself by reading the news or watching shows. I partially blame living at home for this because of the different memories and me reliving depressing high school memories. I want to escape and regain power over my life and find my purpose again, however, I know this is impossible with everything going on and I must continue pushing forward.

I am one of the very fortunate individuals who still has a job this summer. I am working as a research assistant and helping Susannah Ottaway on her new project on Norwich Institute of the Blind in Great Britain in the 17th and 18th centuries. I am also working on a Medieval database of sources for Bill (William) North. These two projects are going to keep me busy and hopefully distracted from my predicament. I did have a job lined up as a RA for the Summer Humanities Institute which was cancelled. All the research was supposed to be done in person, but we are moving online because of the pandemic. I really hope Carleton reopens this fall and depending if it is online again, I would consider taking a term or year off due to financial reasons. Additionally, I am worried that both OCS programs I applied for next Spring 2021 will be cancelled. All my life I have wished to travel to Europe, and it would sadden me so much to delay it once again.

The pandemic has made me see several positive impacts. It has been nice to be around my family who I would not see normally. I enjoy walking my family's dog with my mother and having interesting discussions with everyone. The pandemic has also impacted the way I view several of the classes I am taking. The strangeness I felt by the Pandemic has been helpful for me in exploring my [PoliSci Seminar on Strangers, Foreigners, and Exiles](#). It has also helped me understand the history of France in the Peasants are Revolting. Lastly, I have used this experience as a time for self-reflection and to help me decide what I want to dedicate my life towards. Seeing the wide scale pain, fear, anger, and despair has further strengthened my determination to try and improve this world through history.

I really don't have many important lessons that I haven't already discussed to some degree. I have had several impactful experiences. A 6.5 earthquake occurred in central Idaho on March 31st. I was in my room and at first, I thought a large storm was shaking the house because the sky looked stormy. However, as the shaking increased, I realized it was an earthquake and I rushed my family outside of the house and I wrote up a report which I submitted to the USGS. There was some minor damage and soil shifting, but for the most part everything was fine. My other experience was interviewing individuals for this archive. Many of the stories I heard were

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powerful with their own connection to a particular group of people I had previously not considered, and it was interesting how each of them tied it to larger nation trend sin society. I think it is also important to mention the shooting of George Floyd. This horrific event for me took me partially by surprise because I did not think at a time like this the situation could get much worse. I was not particularly surprised by the police brutality because of how ingrained it is to some degree in the US. I am worried about the whole situation and I hope some concrete change can be made to help prevent future incidents. However, I am worried that the movement will fizzle out in a month and these murders will continue.

My time at Carleton has greatly impacted the way I view the pandemic. If it was not for my time at Carleton, I believe I would have been overwhelmed but also a less informed and conscious of the its impacts on others. More specifically, Carleton has taught me to think critical about the pandemic and how different policies may impact the spread. I would say my history, political theory, and geology classes have been the most useful to me in understanding the pandemics effects on people and the larger society impacted it has triggered.

I think the most important thing to preserve from this pandemic and social unrest is the memory and emotion of the events. I believe these two are essential to understanding this period. It is difficult to capture the emotion and memory; however, it is worthwhile because it can portray one perspective of the situation and hopefully help future generations understand how we felt. Memory needs to be preserved, because it is often warped by people and their own objectives, which may not capture the whole picture. By preserving a wide variety of memories, future historians will be able to better explain and discuss the pandemic and social unrest.

I hope my perspective is hopeful to someone in the future and I would also like to note I am an optimistic person at heart and I believe humanity can overcome these challenges and make the world a more peaceful and loving place.