

Pearl Rincon Interview with Emma Clifford

Interviewer: Pearl Rincon

Interviewee: Emma Clifford

Interview Date: 12/06/2020

Pearl Rincon 0:01

Hello, my name is Pearl Rincon, and I am currently with Emma Clifford. It is 3:33pm on December 6, and, Emma, do you consent to this interview?

Emma Clifford 0:14

Yes.

Pearl Rincon 0:15

Okay, great. So first question, how has learning about pandemics helped or not helped put this pandemic into context?

Emma Clifford 0:24

I think learning about other pandemics has greatly helped me put this one into context. For one, there's been a lot of similarities between the ones we've learned about and the ones we're experiencing right now, especially when talking about societal outcomes and reactions. We've seen through all the pandemics that marginalized groups are affected disproportionately, a few more still experienced--ing today, as well as the negative reactions to mass mandates such as the Anti Mask League in the past, or even President Trump in the present.

Pearl Rincon 0:57

What ways have learning about past pandemics affected your attitude or perception of the current pandemic?

Emma Clifford 1:04

I think there's some comfort and looking towards pandemics in the past to act as a predictor of the present. We're in such an uncertain time where the trajectory of our daily lives could shift in a matter of days, which actually happened on March 13. However, the class we learned that this is not always a great practice to do. For example, we examine the idea of gothic global health, health, which involves looking back through history to understand the pandemics of today, I realized that comparing pandemics is kind of like comparing apples to oranges, it's not really possible to make a fair or accurate comparison, which is greatly affected by attitude. I want to look towards the influenza pandemic of 1918. So I kind of know what to expect. But that doesn't really work, which kind of negatively impacts my view of our current situation. Overall, it has just made me more anxious and uneasy towards the future. One thing though, that calmed my nerves a little bit was the realization that humanity has gone through things like, of this calibre before and has still managed to be here today.

Pearl Rincon 2:10

How has this pandemic compared to other past pandemics?

Emma Clifford 2:15

One thing that's really different between COVID and pandemics in the past is the role of mainstream media and social media. Today, we have such a greater access to the rest of the world through the internet, we get updates about the pandemic almost immediately, which is kinda a double sided sword because it's good that we're able to stay informed, but bad because it, like, it's almost like we can't escape it. Also, I recognize my privilege in saying this, but my life has stayed pretty normal, I'm able to continue my studies, my parents are able to work from home. I do realize that this has not been the case for the vast majority, though, but technology has made it possible for many, which is something that contrasts pandemics of the past, the role of technology.

Pearl Rincon 3:02

Yeah, I completely agree with that. How has the college, how's your college experience been during this pandemic?

Emma Clifford 3:09

Um, I would say it's gone pretty well. Like I said, technology has made it possible for me to do it. But there are obviously a lot of other things we as a freshman class have missed out on. Like, I'm sure for most of the rest of the class. I wish I was abroad right now. I wish I was studying in Rome, and like discovering Europe, but I realized that's really not a possibility. I also wish I could have in person classes just so it feels more like I'm a college student. And I could get involved more on campus, which is something I'm like, missing out on, I feel like I'm not really joining anything or stuff like that. But it's, it's not what's best for the community, not what's best for the northeastern community or like the Greater Boston community even. I'm really glad though I came on campus, came to Boston, it's been really cool discovering the city, even through the pandemic, it's been a really resilient city.

Pearl Rincon 4:05

Alright, do you think that humans have learned from their prior experience pandemics or not?

Emma Clifford 4:11

I really do not think that humans have learned the lesson. For one thing, we really examine in the past that draconian measures can be very effective. We saw that in Australia. However, even today, many of us don't even believe in quarantining. So there are a lot of common themes among pandemics that have yet to be solved. Also, as I mentioned before, marginalized people continue to be disproportionately effected. We've seen that throughout all the pandemics and we still can't find a way to solve that.

Pearl Rincon 4:47

All right, thanks for talking with me.

Emma Clifford 4:49

No problem. Thank you for having me. Overall, I've really enjoyed this class. I think it's been really helpful. Even over Thanksgiving break, I went home and was able to talk My family about pandemics of the past when we were talking about like COVID right now. So it's been great to give me an outside perspective to what's going on.

Transcribed by <https://otter.ai>