

Claremont Colleges

## Scholarship @ Claremont

---

CMC Senior Theses

CMC Student Scholarship

---

2022

### Seeing Forced Isolation Through New Eyes: COVID-19, Anne Frank, and the Violence of the Nation-State

Anna Raines

Follow this and additional works at: [https://scholarship.claremont.edu/cmc\\_theses](https://scholarship.claremont.edu/cmc_theses)



Part of the [European History Commons](#), [Holocaust and Genocide Studies Commons](#), [Oral History Commons](#), [Other History Commons](#), [Social History Commons](#), and the [United States History Commons](#)

---

#### Recommended Citation

Raines, Anna, "Seeing Forced Isolation Through New Eyes: COVID-19, Anne Frank, and the Violence of the Nation-State" (2022). *CMC Senior Theses*. 3058.

[https://scholarship.claremont.edu/cmc\\_theses/3058](https://scholarship.claremont.edu/cmc_theses/3058)

This Open Access Senior Thesis is brought to you by Scholarship@Claremont. It has been accepted for inclusion in this collection by an authorized administrator. For more information, please contact [scholarship@cuc.claremont.edu](mailto:scholarship@cuc.claremont.edu).

Claremont McKenna College

Seeing Forced Isolation Through New Eyes:  
COVID-19, Anne Frank, and the Violence of the Nation-State

submitted to  
Professor Heather Ferguson

by  
Anna Adele Raines

for  
Senior Thesis  
Spring 2022  
April 25, 2022

## Acknowledgements



Joan Raines (1939 - 2020) & Richard Raines (1932 - 2020)

I thank Grandma Joan, Grandpa Dick, mom, dad, my brother Alex, and my cat Milk, to whom this thesis is dedicated. At a time when goodbyes and funerals were not possible, I write this thesis as a token of my grandparent's appreciation and a memorial for the lives lost in the COVID-19 pandemic.

I am grateful to Heather Ferguson for introducing me to history and helping me see the world in new ways. She has been a great mentor, inspiration, and friend. Professor Ferguson's ingenious advice allowed me to turn a COVID-19 experience into a meaningful thesis.

I thank CMC's History Department for providing me with countless opportunities and support. I am fortunate to have taken courses with professors who are not only brilliant scholars, but also the best mentors I could ask for. I thank the Stasneck Oral History Fellowship, which allowed me to document the COVID-19 experiences within my college community alongside Professor Tamara Venit-Shelton and Professor Lily Geismer.

I thank the Deans at Claremont McKenna College for checking in on students throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, for maintaining a flexible grading policy, and for providing students with COVID-19 a place to isolate.

Last, but certainly not least, I would like to thank my friends at CMC, who have supported me endlessly through my journey here. Thank you for the memories and friendship that will last beyond college.

---

<sup>1</sup> Lockwood, Lisa. "Joan Simpson Raines and Richard Raines Die of Covid-19." Women's Wear Daily, May 21, 2020.

## **Abstract**

In my senior thesis, I explore the social, political, and cultural effects and consequences of forced isolation. Forced isolation is a strategy adopted by governments in order to deal with a range of issues in contemporary history, often resulting in exclusionary practices, the redefinition or assertion of national sovereignty and nation-state boundaries, contagion, detention, and imprisonment. As a consequence of these varied processes and actions, when an individual or a social group is forced into an isolated space and ostracized from society, they are cast out of routine socialization, and the effects of this can endure even if a return to normalcy is possible. The COVID-19 pandemic has definitively shaped my own understanding of forced isolation. During my 18 months in isolation, I helped preserve the experiences of the CMC community through the COVID-19 pandemic by working on COVID19@CMC, an oral history project aimed at documenting the isolation of the Claremont McKenna College community. The stories and lived experiences of college students, professors, and staff members are captured through oral tradition, which effectively encapsulates the broad range of emotions that people felt in isolation. Through my participation in COVID19@CMC, I was inspired to look at other historical instances of forced isolation. This thesis represents my effort to look at past events with new eyes, and explores what it means to be human in the midst of crisis.



## Table of Contents

<b>Chapter 1: Forced Isolation due to Quarantine</b>	<b>6</b>
March 11, 2020: Claremont McKenna College COVID-19 Announcement	7
Oral History as a Source	8
COVID19@CMC Project	10
Anthropological Analysis	10
Zoom as Isolation-Inducing Technology	12
Environmental Link: COVID-19 and Climate Change	13
Oral Tradition of Claremont McKenna College Students	21
Rachel Scharff-Hansen, CMC'22	21
Kim Zamora-Delgado '22	23
Daniel Hayon '22	27
Personal COVID-19 Experience	30
Environmental Effects of Forced Isolation	35
Forced Isolation Impact on Race Relations	37
Chapter Conclusion	38
<b>Chapter 2: Forced Isolation due to Genocide</b>	<b>40</b>
Chapter Introduction	41
Literary Analysis & Framework for the Holocaust	42
Isolation and Privilege	43
Source Choice Rationale: Anne Frank's Diary	45
Literary Analysis of Anne Frank's Diary	47
Rose-Colored Genocide: Hollywood Adaptations of Anne Frank's Diary	47
Similarities and Distinctions between COVID-19 isolation and Holocaust isolation	48
Theme 1: Anti-Jewish Decrees: From Forced Isolation to Genocide	49
Theme 2: The Transition into Isolation	51
Theme 3: Soundscapes and Enforced Habits of Isolation	53
Theme 4: Impact of Forced Isolation on Family Relationships	55
Theme 5: Generational Dissonance, Youth Culture and Development	56
Theme 6: Mental Health and Forced Optimism in the Midst of Crisis	58
Theme 7: Fragility of Mortality, Dialogue Towards Death	61
Chapter Conclusion	63
<b>Chapter 3: Isolation due to Borders and Nation-States</b>	<b>65</b>
Chapter Introduction	66

Literary Analysis on Forced Isolation and the Construction of Nation States	67
Wendy Brown: Walled States, Waning Sovereignty	67
Theme 1: What is a Nation-State post-WWI?	68
Theme 2: Ancient Anarchist History of Zomia, a Case Study for Life Outside of the Nation-State	70
Theme 3: Walls as a Physical Manifestation of Political Sovereignty and State-Sanctioned Protection	71
Theme 4: Passports and Documentation as a Market-Based Way to Manipulate a Global Underclass, the Citizenless	77
Theme 5: Paradox of Globalization: Borders Isolate, Exploit, Exclude	78
Theme 6: Citizen Rights Over Human Rights	79
Chapter Conclusion	81
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>82</b>
<b>Bibliography</b>	<b>83</b>

## **Chapter 1: Forced Isolation due to Quarantine**

### **The Impact of COVID-19 on Claremont McKenna College Students**

*“People were raiding the Hub trying to use their Flex money. People were going crazy on Green Beach. The last few days of being on campus felt like a fever dream.”*

-Daniel Hayon '22

*“And I cry, and this time I keep going, because it feels right to be sad finally - to properly mourn every moment I have lived in fear.”*

-Alessia Zanobini '23

### **March 11, 2020: Claremont McKenna College COVID-19 Announcement**

On March 11, 2020, Claremont McKenna College made a staggering announcement:

*“Students will be required to depart campus for home or another off-campus location as soon as possible and no later than March 23.”*

-Hiram Chodosh, President of Claremont McKenna College<sup>2</sup>

During this month, colleges and universities across the nation closed their campuses to residential life and in-person instruction as the COVID-19 pandemic swept across borders.

*“It will take time for researchers, a good many of them who are our colleagues, to understand enough about this disease to mount a reliable defense against it.”*

-Lawrence Bacow, President of Harvard University<sup>3</sup>

This chapter introduces the first case of forced isolation, in which a global pandemic constrained most of the world into quarantine. Nation-states became more walled during the COVID-19 pandemic, ameliorating the anxieties about international variants or Chinese people. Despite the efforts to soothe American angst, the fortification of nation-state walls did little to contain the spread of COVID-19, leading to widespread quarantine mandates, overcrowded hospitals, and millions of lives lost.

---

<sup>2</sup>Chodosh, Hiram. “Covid-19: CMC Important Message - to All Alumni.” Claremont McKenna College, March 11, 2020.  
<https://online.cmc.edu/covid-19-cmc-important-message-to-all-alumni>.

<sup>3</sup>Bacow, Lawrence. “Covid-19 – Moving Classes Online, Other Updates.” Harvard Covid-19 Information. Harvard University, March 10, 2020.  
<https://www.harvard.edu/coronavirus/covid-19-moving-classes-online-other-updates/>.

## Oral History as a Source

In *Doing Oral History*, Donald Ritchie says “Oral History collects memories and personal commentaries of historical significance through recorded interviews. An oral history interview generally consists of a well-prepared interviewer questioning an interviewee and recording their exchange in audio or video format. Recordings of the interview are transcribed, summarized, or indexed and then placed in a library or archives.”<sup>4</sup> Oral history is a significant primary source for the documentation of a pandemic because it captures the hopes, fears, and emotions of individuals that are isolated and confused. Oral history also provides context for future researchers and policy makers that must learn from history in order to optimize, for example, the response of public health institutions or national leaders, to a pandemic. Unlike any other source, oral history best reveals inner dialogues of isolated people: the forces of history impact everyone differently on an individual level, and an interview can explore the otherwise hidden individual impact of major historical events. Oral histories are able to capture emotions and streams of consciousness because they are open-ended recordings of ordinary people reflecting on their own life stories. It is critical to preserve individual experiences in greater detail in order to prevent historians from making broad generalizations about people, which can foster stereotyping and prejudice in historical accounts.<sup>5</sup> Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, there are a multitude of perspectives

---

<sup>4</sup> “Oral History: Defined | Oral History Association.” Oral History Association. Accessed April 15, 2022. <https://www.oralhistory.org/about/do-oral-history/>.

<sup>5</sup> “Understanding Oral History: Why Do It? - Baylor University.” Baylor University Institute for Oral History. Baylor University, 2012. <https://www.baylor.edu/content/services/document.php/66420.pdf>.

that cannot be simplified or streamlined into a singular lived experience of the pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted people in different ways, thus my participation in an effort to build an archive of oral tradition is also an effort to provide a fine-grained social history of this major event.

Despite the focus on oral histories, it is critical to outline the potential drawbacks to relying on primary sources to account for a historical event. Primary sources based on individual experiences can be a limited view of the full scope of an event because they do not summarize a holistic experience. All sources of the past are partial, so in an effort to embody diversity and reach a collective understanding of forced isolation, it is critical to bring in secondary sources that interpret the varied experiences of pandemic life. Despite casting a wide net for my oral tradition research, many primary sources depend on the interpretation and knowledge of a few individuals experiencing a historical event. In my selection of oral tradition, I hope to encapsulate as many diverse experiences as possible. The primary sources will be supplemented with secondary sources providing scholarly or critical analyses of COVID-19 as a phenomenon that led to forced isolation. This will allow for a better picture of the broad range of experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **COVID19@CMC Project**

In order to approach oral tradition in a structured way, I conducted a series of interviews through the Gould Center for Humanistic Studies at Claremont McKenna College. Through the Stasneck Fellowship and the COVID19@CMC project, I was trained in the collection and preservation of oral history. I interviewed approximately 25

students in the summer of 2020 and trained subsequent Stasneck Fellows in the collection of over 100 interviews and nearly 200 artifacts. The COVID19@CMC oral tradition interviews and artifacts are preserved in an archive at The Claremont Colleges Library.

### **Anthropological Analysis**

I have a unique COVID-19 experience that impacts my emotions and sentiments about the pandemic. In the spring of 2020 along with many other college students, I was sent home to complete my sophomore and junior year of college online. During this time, my family in New York City was greatly affected by the pandemic. My grandmother, grandfather, and great uncle tested positive for COVID-19 in the spring of 2020 and shortly thereafter passed away. In the midst of sadness, chaos, and stress from schoolwork and internship recruiting, I felt the pandemic in many ways beyond the mere fact of the virus itself. This in turn has an impact on my analysis of primary sources, my choice in the oral histories that I reveal through this thesis, and the conclusions that I will draw from the stories included here. I acknowledge that I am drawn to experiences that are more similar to my own experience. I understand that COVID-19 had a different impact prior to the development of the vaccine, and that the oral histories I illuminate derive from the time period before the Pfizer/BioNTech, Moderna, Johnson & Johnson, and AstraZeneca vaccines. In addition, I am a college student that lost over a year and a half of an in-person college experience; the emotions I experience from this loss have guided my approach as an interviewer and as the author of this thesis. I will transition from using first-person and third-person pronouns during reflections within the thesis, given that I am associated with the subject group. I hope to recognize my positionality

within the experience, but also I seek to step outside the subject group in order to analyze this experience on a macro level.

It is also important to indicate that the student experiences revealed in this thesis come from students at a prestigious private liberal arts college. Although not everyone came from a background of privilege, all of the students were attending an elite institution prior to the onset of the pandemic. This is a story of Claremont McKenna College students, thus I am not telling the story of those experiencing homelessness or forms of social isolation exacerbated by the pandemic and its forced isolation. The oral tradition collected in the COVID19@CMC project includes the experiences of students from all kinds of backgrounds, but it is critical to acknowledge the privilege of attending Claremont McKenna College, and the point of reference that this creates for students that are forced to leave.

Lastly, it is important to outline the increased vulnerability and lack of support within COVID-19 isolation experiences. The forced isolation of COVID-19 exacerbated unstable home situations, specifically cases of domestic violence and abuse. For those without the privilege of a stable home life, COVID-19 isolation increased family violence due to economic-related stress, environmental instability, increased exposure to exploitation, and a lack of regular support outside the home. Individual states within the U.S. saw a range from 21% to 35% increases in domestic abuse incident reports following the implementation of isolation measures.<sup>6</sup> Although I hope to provide

---

<sup>6</sup> Usher, Kim, Navjot Bhullar, Joanne Durkin, Naomi Gyamfi, and Debra Jackson. "Family Violence and Covid-19: Increased Vulnerability and Reduced Options for



comprehensive, realistic reflections of COVID-19, I hope to bring awareness to domestic abuse, an ongoing issue that occurs behind closed doors and has been intensified by the pandemic.

### **Zoom as Isolation-Inducing Technology**

During the pandemic, I was not able to conduct oral tradition interviews in person. This unwittingly has an impact on the oral history collection process, given that the interviewer and interviewee are physically separate, and that the conversation occurred in the Zoom platform. Zoom itself is an isolative technology. By using Zoom, emotions are isolated behind a screen. Zoom conversations are at the mercy of a WiFi connection, and the audio quality, inevitable home interruptions or distractions, or the diminishing battery life of a device impact the connective experience that it purportedly makes possible. Zoom is an incredible uniting tool, but it also reinforces isolation by creating bubbles of information and siloed networks across certain circles of individuals. Zoom and technology in the moments of a pandemic amplify information silos because social interactions are more rare in moments of isolation. This, in turn, can be a form of conversation isolation, because people are not able to retrieve their own conclusions from the world outside of social media and the occasional Zoom happy hour. COVID-19 did not cause social isolation; Zoom provided virtual connection when face-to-face interactions were too dangerous, and also amplified information silos and social alienation already present. Social media platforms were a contributing factor, where

---

Support.” International journal of mental health nursing. John Wiley and Sons Inc., August 2020. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7264607/>.

Facebook allowed the spread of misinformation as well as the curtailment of essential public health information. The pandemic was as much about manipulation of information as it was about viral contagion.

### **Environmental Link: COVID-19 and Climate Change**

The lasting effects of forced isolation on the mental health of the world calls into question state and government manipulation of political governing strategies; for instance, the pushback against forced isolation measures in areas that resisted government intervention allowed the pandemic to spread at the world's expense. Forced isolation models also sparked questions about the climate, challenging the way we interact with the environment. It was no longer necessary to drive an automobile to work, or to be in-person. Despite patting ourselves on the back for refraining from transportation, COVID-19 was ultimately caused by human manipulation of wildlife. The evidence for severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2), also known as COVID-19, is traced in the DNA of bats and pangolins in Southeast Asia<sup>7</sup>. The virus actively has circulated through various parts of Southeast Asia, including limestone caves in Laos and Cambodia. The Huanan center wet market in Wuhan, China was a central location where bats and pangolins were typically sold; despite the lack of full certainty about the spread of COVID-19 due to animal spillover, it is evident that this virus is found in animals. Thus human exploitation of endangered wildlife is a central theme to

---

<sup>7</sup> Wacharapluesadee, Supaporn, Chee Wah Tan, Patarapol Maneeorn, Prateep Duengkae, Feng Zhu, Yutthana Joyjinda, Thongchai Kaewpom, et al. "Evidence for SARS-COV-2 Related Coronaviruses Circulating in Bats and Pangolins in Southeast Asia." *Nature Communications* 12, no. 1 (2021). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41467-021-21240-1>.

the foundation of a global pandemic. The forced isolation model ultimately prevented humans from interacting with the environment, which interfered with destructive human tendencies. The world functions on the manipulation, exploitation, and unapologetic interaction with the environment and its natural resources, which contextualizes the inception of coronavirus, Wuhan wet markets, and how this snowballed into a global pandemic.

On a smaller scale, the lives of college students were dramatically altered due to the pandemic; after living in close quarters with roommates, cramming into dining hall lines, and sitting close to classmates for in-class lectures, college students were sent away to isolate themselves. Labeled “super spreaders”, young people were considered most dangerous to the spread of the pandemic. All social activity slowed to a standstill, especially in public spaces. Park benches were taped off, restaurants were closed, and clubs and bars were indefinitely barred from opening. The only time I saw strangers was when I meandered through the town grocery store, which became a place of solace in the most desperate points of isolation. Kylie Harrison, Claremont McKenna College % 2020, created a collage at the crux of the pandemic in March, 2020, when we were sent home from CMC. The collage contains news headlines with a number counter on the left hand side of the page [Figure 1]. The uncertainty and constant flashes of dramatic news headlines was a significant part of the quarantine experience; isolation, paired with uncertainty, allows the mind to run loose in its search for answers. Unfortunately, there weren’t any answers. On the right hand side of the collage displays a person wearing a mask, which was an uncomfortably new phenomenon that visually represented what our



Figure 1: “*What does it mean to be in a state of emergency?*” collage, Spring 2020.

Kylie's graduation experience in the spring of 2020 was a shared one, given that nearly all graduations occurred virtually. The anticipation for a college graduation is significant - four years of grueling work, new challenges, and living away from home are typically expected to culminate in a grand celebration, complete with a cap and gown, a ceremony, or a party. In 2020, Kylie's graduation looked like this [Figure 2]:



Kylie Harrison

Figure 2: “Zoom Graduation” photograph, Spring 2020.

The inception of Zoom in the lives of young people stemmed from necessity. Zoom, a video conferencing platform, was the sole way of communicating face-to-face while in isolation. Zoom was not chosen by people; it was forced upon students that needed to continue their education during a global pandemic, or ceremonies like graduation that

needed to happen despite the global pandemic. Without Zoom, isolation may have been unbearable, but with Zoom, we were constantly reminded of the moments that could have been spent in person. With Zoom, we awkwardly celebrated graduation with WiFi glitches, lonely cocktail sips, digital interruptions, and forced smiles. On a computer screen, we had to pretend that graduation was happening, yet our reality was crashing down all around us. There was no longer a difference between watching characters on a screen and having a social life in isolation. Despite Zoom's ability to unify people in isolation, Zoom further fractured communities and identities by both physically and metaphorically placing a barrier between people. The disembodied heads and torsos of people on a Zoom screen, coupled with the idiosyncratic, personal spaces where Zoom meetings can occur, confounds the identities that people might have in person. Social media and technology shape individual identities, experiences, and transfers of information, yet the technology itself can misrepresent people, create miscommunications, and form bubbles or echo chambers away from reality.

Forced isolation was easier for some students than others. Introverts finally had an excuse not to show up for gatherings, while extroverts longed to break out from the confines of their isolation. Hypochondriacs were sheltered from their worst fears. Commuters gained hours of their work week back. Wildlife crept into urban spaces in search of food scraps, only to find that the litterbugs were isolated, too. Romantics were depressed, live performers lost their gigs, and elderly people were at risk of lethal exposure to an unassuming, asymptomatic bypasser. At Claremont McKenna College, Alessia Zanobini materialized her emotions within her diary, ending the entry with "I

can't even understand how this is real and how it's going to continue to be like this” [Figure 3]. A defining factor of our isolation was the lack of historical context for our lived experience. As a young generation with few experiences of emergency, often sheltered by privilege, we had little to compare COVID-19 to, it was easy to let the mind wander into irrationality. Unlike other continents, the United States was privileged because it had not yet experienced a widespread health crisis like COVID-19; this is evident by analyzing the U.S.-only toilet paper shortage at the onset of the pandemic, which was the irrational response of a nation sheltered from crises. The toilet paper shortage was one of the first obstacles for Americans that were terrified of COVID-19: stores had to ration toilet paper, hand sanitizer, and disinfectants to one per household. Upon entering grocery stores, people could be found sporting hazmat suits, ski goggles, gas masks, among other contraptions. The grocery store was a beautiful display of human fallibility; some refused to wear masks because they did not believe the virus was real, while others wore single-ply fabric masks that did not stop the virus from spreading in the first place.



AND I CRY AND THIS TIME I KEEP GOING  
 BECAUSE IT FEELS RIGHT TO BE SAD  
 FINALLY- TO PROPERLY MOURN EVERY  
 MOMENT I HAVE LIVED IN FEAR.  
 FOR ALL THE MINUTES I WASTED AND  
 WILL WASTE PRETENDING. ALL THE  
 YEARS. I CRY FOR THE PEOPLE AND  
 MOMENTS I HAVE LOST. I WISH I  
 COULD HEAR SOPHIE PLAY GUITAR AGAIN  
 AND I WISH I COULD SEE ONE MORE CALIFORNIA  
 SUNSET. IT IS TOO LATE TO BE UP NOW  
 BUT I DON'T WANT TO STOP REMEMBERING;  
 STOP MISSING FRIENDS. AND WHEN I  
 THINK ABOUT KISSING OF COURSE I CRY  
 AGAIN AND AGAIN AND I SIT AT DINNER  
 IN SILENCE BECAUSE IF I OPEN MY MOUTH  
 I WILL ONLY SPEAK IN TEARS, IN  
 ANGER, IN MISSING WHAT NEVER EVEN  
 HAPPENED, IN CONCERTS. FUCK I MISS  
 THAT BEAUTIFUL STILL WOODY NIGHT. I CAN'T  
 EVEN UNDERSTAND HOW THIS IS REAL AND  
 HOW IT'S GOING TO CONTINUE TO BE LIKE  
 THIS. TOO LATE TO BE AWAKE AND CRYING  
 BUT I'LL JUST KEEP ON CRYING AND CRYING.

6/20

Alessia Zanobini

Figure 3: "I Cry" journal entry, Summer 2020.



The transition from campus culture to forced isolation had an impact on all college students, but this impact manifested itself in numerous ways. Some college students were a short distance away from home, while others were stranded in airports for days due to the complex web of protocols and shut-downs that swept through the globe.

### **Oral Tradition of Claremont McKenna College Students**

#### ***Rachel Scharff-Hansen, CMC'22***

Rachel Scharff-Hansen, an international student from Hong-Kong, provides one example of the varied dynamics of global pandemic disruptions. “The time I spent in quarantine in the hotel was my chance to self-reflect. With mostly no human interaction, it was time for me to relax, focus on how I felt, and rebuild myself,”<sup>8</sup> says Rachel, explaining the two-week government-mandated quarantine in Hong Kong upon arrival. In addition to government food rations, Rachel’s family brought snacks and supplies to the hotel lobby, and it was delivered to her room. In addition, Rachel was monitored and checked in on by a government official sometimes multiple times a day. Rachel was not allowed to leave the hotel room, or see anyone for two weeks. She had to report her symptoms every day. This was standard protocol for anyone traveling to Hong Kong, Singapore, Ireland, Norway, the Philippines, and South Korea, among many other countries in Asia and Europe.<sup>9</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup> Leadbetter, Lauren. Interview of Rachel Scharff-Hansen. Other. *COVID19@CMC*. Claremont McKenna College Stasneck Fellowship, 2020. <https://covid-archive.cmc.edu/>.

<sup>9</sup> Walsh, David. “Quarantine Hotels: Which Countries Are Using Them to Stop Arrivals Spreading COVID?” euronews, March 30, 2021. <https://www.euronews.com/travel/2021/02/24/quarantine-hotels-which-countries-are-using-them-to-stop-arrivals-spreading-covid>.

Rachel reflects: “I feel guilty for underestimating the severity of the COVID-19 at the beginning. I did not expect the pandemic to hit the U.S. so hard and so suddenly. When the campus closure was announced, I still thought that I could stay with my friends in the U.S., but my parents insisted that I should come back to Hong Kong since they heard that the border might be shut. When the pandemic situation got worse, it took a long time for me to adapt. I think I am still in the process of adjusting myself mentally. I have had a lot of time to self-reflect.”<sup>10</sup>

Rachel was transplanted across the world with less than a week’s notice. She expected to be able to return to the United States to see her friends in a matter of months, but she was unable to go back until a year had passed. The passage of time between seeing college friends during these years was transformative. Not one person was the same from March 2020 to March 2021, so the reunions of friendships and relationships were jarring. There was a grand buildup of expectations and excitement upon reuniting with our college friends, but few relationships felt the same. The experiences that we had during 2020 were vastly different, with some being joyful and some miserable. These experiences allowed us to change, and our friendships branched off like the spindly arms of an estuary. Friendships in 2021 could not have been identical to the friendships in 2020, because none of us were the same. Only a few of us would reunite one year later, given that schools had not reopened in LA county in the Spring of 2021. Most reunited in the Fall of 2021, which was a year and a half after we left campus. These jagged reunions are ongoing, and they are a constant reminder of the time that was lost; or rather, the

---

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

acceleration of growth that one might experience individually. Without the influence of our peers, most of us experienced the pandemic on our own, thus growing and adapting without being pushed any which way.

***Kim Zamora-Delgado '22***

Kim, CMC'22, is a first-generation college student and Questbridge scholar. Kim grew up in Prescott, Arizona but was originally born in Culiacán, México; she is a Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipient. In Spring 2020, Kim worked as an intern in the House of Representatives through the CMC Washington D.C. Program prior to being sent home due to COVID-19. Kim had to move back home and share space and Internet bandwidth with her two younger siblings who also had to attend school virtually:

*“Family wise, I share a room with my ten year old sister. I don’t have a desk so we would work at a kitchen table and my mom would be there with her. It’s a nightmare to get elementary school kids to do their homework. The house was never fully quiet. The wifi was bad so I got kicked out of my Zoom calls sometimes. My little brother offered to pitch in for better internet and asked me to help pay too, because we knew my parents weren’t going to pay for it. My brother was taking AP tests, so we all had to turn off our internet to make sure the internet wouldn’t lag.”<sup>11</sup>*

---

<sup>11</sup> Garcia, Eda. Interview of Kim Zamora-Delgado. Other. *COVID19@CMC*. Claremont McKenna College Stasneck Fellowship, 2020. <https://covid-archive.cmc.edu/>.

Kim reflects on her friendships and how COVID-19 put a rift in her college relationships that already felt more distant after spending a semester in Washington, D.C.:

*“Staying connected with friends has been difficult; I’m not the type of person that updates my friends every day, so being gone at D.C. and then coming back home, I feel disconnected. It was upsetting me so I tried to reach out to friends and check in. I realized maybe this is why I can’t focus, or why I don’t feel great, or why I’m in a slump. There was this week period where I scheduled a bunch of calls with people. It definitely helped, but at the same time you realize which people are willing to check in or not, even if it’s just a text, and it was hard for a bit. Everyone is going through something, so you can’t always expect them to reciprocate.”<sup>12</sup>*

Kim reflects on how she utilized resources that were available to students at the time, and how she felt less-inclined to attend online counseling. In addition, the COVID-19 funds that Kim received from the school often went towards helping her family:

*“I didn’t feel as inclined to use resources because I’m an in-person socializer, I like to speak to others in person. Even if I felt like I needed therapy, I didn’t feel inclined to use them, I thought I should just ride this out. Some kids got money from the federal government, but me as a DACA student, I had to get it through the school. That was helpful at that point in time because my parents were also*

---

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

*still working - online field work was not a thing, so I used some of the money to help them out and buy groceries, stuff like that.”<sup>13</sup>*

Throughout isolation, there are often moments when it takes extra effort to ask for help, whether for academic-related questions or for mental health resources. While at home, students often felt that it was easier to deal with predicaments that might have been solved by an in-person environment. As a first-generation college student, Kim reflects on her independence and perpetual habit of figuring things out on her own:

*“I remember my first year when I went to the IGen retreat and we did this activity where we were blindfolded and we had to go through the maze. I was the second person to ask for help, but it was crazy to see how many of my peers went on without asking for help. In a school setting, I rarely ask for help. I don’t think I made that connection until I went on the retreat and realized that a lot of first-generation students don’t ask for help. DACA can alienate you when no one else around you knows what it means. I think throughout life I learned to be independent and ask my parents for help. My first reaction is to buckle down and try to figure things out on my own. I have gotten more used to asking for help at CMC, but even then I’m not at the level of going to office hours as much as I should. It’s almost like breaking a habit.”<sup>14</sup>*

As a DACA student during the Trump Administration and a global pandemic, Kim often worried about the status of the DACA program. In September 2017, former President

---

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

Donald Trump tried to terminate the Obama-era program, to follow through on a 2016 campaign promise in which he called the program “an illegal executive amnesty.”<sup>15</sup> On June 18, 2020, the Supreme Court ruled that the Trump administration’s attempt to terminate DACA “was (1) judicially reviewable and (2) done in an arbitrary and capricious manner, in violation of the Administrative Procedure Act (APA).”<sup>16</sup> Kim reflects on the uncertainty of the issue in her interview:

*“During the Trump Administration, there are moments when I am scared DACA will be taken away. It’s that constant worry to see if it is going to get taken away and how that would affect my financial aid. If DACA is terminated, I would lose my drivers’ license, so I would not have employment authorization, which would impact my ability to do work study, so there are everyday things that happen that leave a little pulse in my mind. I realize that this is how things are and I need to keep moving forward. It is a mental stress.”<sup>17</sup>*

Kim was not only dealing with a subpar Internet connection, but she was also grappling with the potential reversal of DACA, which was an essential program that allowed her to live, work, and study in the United States with her family. This issue was not necessarily

---

<sup>15</sup>Shear, Michael. “Trump Says Administration Will Try Again to End 'Dreamers' Program.” The New York Times. The New York Times, June 19, 2020. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/19/us/politics/trump-daca.html>.

<sup>16</sup>“Alert: Supreme Court Overturns Trump Administration's Termination of Daca.” National Immigration Law Center, July 30, 2020. <https://www.nilc.org/issues/daca/alert-supreme-court-overturns-trump-administrations-termination-of-daca/>.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

related to COVID-19, but Kim had to deal with this anxiety on top of losing her internship, her on-campus college experience, and the ability to see her friends.

COVID-19 was a period of uncertainty regarding public health and employment, yet there were other uncertainties such as DACA that affected college students as well; this demonstrates the varying severity of challenges that college students experienced during the onset of COVID-19, and the privilege of U.S. citizenship that is often overlooked in the life of a college student.

***Daniel Hayon '22***

Daniel Hayon, CMC '22, a first-generation college student and first-generation American born from Israeli parents, went home to Agoura Hills, CA during the first wave of lockdowns in March 2020. Upon arrival, Daniel was quarantined with his siblings, one of whom had just arrived from New York City. Daniel and his siblings distanced themselves from the brother who came from New York City, which caused a small tiff in the household. Daniel's brother was adamant that he did not have COVID-19. Shortly after his arrival, Daniel's brother tested positive. Daniel's family promptly started feeling symptoms of COVID-19, which made the pandemic much more real in his eyes. Daniel reflects on the experience of quarantine with his family, when all of them had COVID-19 together:

*“COVID-19 felt super foreign to me and I never expected it to come to the US. It didn’t seem like it was an issue that I had to deal with... it felt like it was just over in China. I thought it was another strain of the flu.”<sup>18</sup>*

*“Nobody was expecting it until the day of. We originally heard it was an extended break but then we realized we were going home. I remember eating in the dining hall with a group of friends, and when the email came out, it felt like a scene from the Hunger Games. People were raiding the Hub trying to use their Flex money. People were going crazy on Green Beach. The last few days of being on campus felt like a fever dream. I didn’t sleep and I tried to make the best of the situation and say goodbye. There were some people I said goodbye to that I didn’t know when I would see them again. I remember getting home and I couldn’t believe it was real.”<sup>19</sup>*

*“That week it became real but not completely. My brother came home a few days after me from Manhattan, New York. My sister and I told him to quarantine away from us, but of course he refused and said we were being dramatic. It started a lot of fights in our family. My family has a lot of big crazy personalities. I might be the calmest or second calmest in my family, which is crazy. I remember the first night my sister and I covered our faces, worried about COVID-19, and my brother got super mad at us. We told him he would be sorry when he gives our dad COVID-19. It turns out that he did actually have COVID-19. My brother gave*

---

<sup>18</sup> Raines, Anna. Interview of Daniel Hayon. Other. *COVID19@CMC*. Claremont McKenna College Stasneck Fellowship, 2020. <https://covid-archive.cmc.edu/>.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.



*my entire family COVID-19. It became real when my mom and I started experiencing symptoms.*”<sup>20</sup>

*“I hate saying ‘I told you so’ but I remember telling him that he would feel guilty when he gave it to the rest of us. It turns out I was right. About five or six days after being home he started complaining about headaches and loss of taste or smell. He wasn’t even able to get a COVID-19 test because his symptoms weren’t severe enough for him to access the test. A few days after that my mom started complaining about the same symptoms. I thought they were being dramatic, but the next day I woke up and I couldn’t taste anything either. I lied to the doctors in order to get a test, because I thought that it would be a good idea to see if we actually had it. I remember getting the call saying we tested positive and my sister and I started laughing really hard because it was so ironic.”*<sup>21</sup>

*“My brother never apologized, he was still in denial and he still will say it may have not been him. I remember that week he was feeling really guilty because my dad was having a hard time with it. He stayed up all night making sure my dad was ok and took care of him. That’s how he went about his guilt – instead of admitting it he just tried to fix it. I could tell he felt really guilty, but he couldn’t admit it. My mom had a 101 fever which isn’t that bad, but both of my parents were getting giant bruises on their legs which were blood clot related. Apparently*

---

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

*COVID causes blood clots too now. That was the one scary part, and my dad had a rough experience with it but still was able to overcome it.*”<sup>22</sup>

A social pattern that emerged from the pandemic was the overwhelming sense of guilt that young people had when they spread COVID-19 to more vulnerable people in society - elderly people, immunocompromised people, parents, among others. Prior to the release of the vaccine, COVID-19 symptoms typically worsened with age. This is a moment in history in which young people feel compelled to have collective responsibility in protecting older people. For young people that were not taking part in activism, this was a new experience to join a collective effort to protect the most vulnerable within the community.

### ***Personal COVID-19 Experience***

My own personal experience with isolation was filled with desperation, confusion, crisis, and an inability to communicate with loved ones suffering from the virus itself. My extended family lived in Manhattan at the time, and I was home in Danville, CA. My grandparents, great uncle, and great aunt met for dinner the weekend prior to New York City’s lockdown. A week after their dinner, my great uncle was admitted to the hospital and tested positive for COVID-19. For people over the age of 80, COVID-19 is a different beast. Oxygen levels creep below levels that can support a human life. Questions arise about intubation and ventilation, which is the only substitute to keep a person alive when the oxygen mask isn’t enough. While my great uncle was in the hospital, my grandfather started to feel sick. As a 20-year-old college student living

---

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

with employed parents, it was my job to find in-home care for my grandfather, who was living across the country. We were not able to travel, nor did we want to risk exposure at a point when COVID-19 was mysteriously killing people of all ages. After trying and failing to find in-home care, it was clear that no caretaker or nurse was willing to risk themselves in a pandemic.

The spread of COVID-19 was as mysterious as the virus itself; it seemed like there was no way to completely protect the human body from indoor transmission. My grandfather Richard was taken in an ambulance to Weill Cornell New York Presbyterian Hospital on the morning of March 24th, where he shortly tested positive for COVID-19. Richard took his cell phone with him in the ambulance and was able to make calls from his emergency department bed while waiting to be admitted to the hospital. He made four calls from this phone to his wife Joan's cell phone, thinking she had the phone with her, but not knowing that Joan was taken to the hospital after Richard. Joan had left her cell phone behind in their apartment. The following four voicemails are from Joan's phone. Richard didn't know that Joan had been placed on a ventilator late in the evening on March 23 and was herself unconscious when he made these calls. The calls run from 1:23pm ET to 3:59pm ET. He uses the nickname "Dede" for his wife Joan. You can hear him coughing in the first message. In the last three messages he talks about how there aren't rooms available in the hospital, but he is in a holding area. He was admitted to the hospital later that evening and learned that his wife had been placed on a ventilator. He later decided that he did not want to be placed on a ventilator himself, and after having increased difficulty breathing with supplemental oxygen, he died on April 5th. His wife

Joan remained on a ventilator for 18 days, was successfully extubated, but had clotting and a stroke while she was on the ventilator. She was unresponsive after extubation. She died on May 17th, 2020, never knowing that her husband or her brother had died. These are the four voicemail messages that my grandfather left us:

On March 17th, 2020 at 11:38am EST, Richard Raines left a message from his apartment in New York City to his son, Robert Raines:

*“Good morning Moo Moo it’s me and I’m just calling to send my love to you and Kerry and Annie and Alex and Milk, and nothing has changed too much here, nothing much, and just wanted to touch base. I’m glad that Alex and Annie may be home, I think they should be and I hope they are and I hope they’re fine, and you just have to grin and bear whatever’s going on, because there’s not much anybody can do about it, and so that’s the story but everything with us is okay and I look forward to talking with you later on. Ok. Much love.”*<sup>23</sup>

On March 24th, 2020 at 10:23am EST, while waiting to be admitted into the New York Presbyterian Hospital after testing positive for COVID-19, Richard Raines left a voicemail for his wife, Joan Raines, who was unconscious in the same hospital due to COVID-19:

*“Hi Dede \*intense coughing\* I’m here in the same hospital Dede, I’m here in the same hospital with you and I send you lots of love and I think it was an intelligent thing that I’m here, and I’ll talk to you later. Bye.”*<sup>24</sup>

---

<sup>23</sup> Raines, Richard. *Voicemail - 2020-03-24 - Richard to Joan*. Recorded March 24, 2020, streaming audio, accessed June, 2020.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

Richard is unable to contact Joan. At 11:10am EST, he leaves another voicemail to her as he waits to be admitted into the hospital, which is at capacity.

*“Hi Dede, I hope you’re doing okay and I’m in the same hospital as you but they’re going to admit me but they don’t have anything available at the moment so I’m in a very nice holding area so that’s what’s happening, ok boo boo, bye.”*<sup>25</sup>

Just 19 minutes later, Richard calls Joan again, getting increasingly frantic while he is unable to reach her:

*“Dede Dede Dede Dede I’ve been trying to get you Dede but I haven’t been successful, and I’m in the same hospital but they don’t have space for me so that’s what’s happening, so I’m waiting in a big area which is okay. And they’re going to admit me I guess, so that’s the story sweetheart. I hope you’re alright and I send you a lot of love.”*<sup>26</sup>

At 12:59pm EST, this is Richard’s last known voicemail to Joan on March 24th, 2022, which was twelve days before he died.

*“Dede dede dede dede It’s me, and I miss you, and I love you and I’m downstairs at New York hospital and I think I’m gonna be admitted sometime later today and I Hope you’re doing ok Dede cuz I love you.”*<sup>27</sup>

Richard was unable to contact his wife, Joan, after being admitted to the same hospital.

Joan was unconscious and did not know that Richard was in the same hospital. Both of them passed away six weeks apart, yet both were unaware of each other’s passing.

---

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

In times of isolation, communication is stifled and socialization takes on a new level of inertia. During COVID-19, communication was chaotic, desolate, scattered, spontaneous, lacking uniformity, and panicked. Although there are numerous ways to document the experience of isolation in COVID-19, nothing collects the true experience like oral tradition. A voicemail captures the anxiety in Richard's voice, the uncertainty and acceptance of imminent demise, and the confusion of how to reach family members when every entrance and exit to the hospital was barred without exception.

My great uncle passed away within a few weeks of testing positive for COVID-19. My grandfather passed away within a week of testing positive for COVID-19. My grandmother passed away over a month after testing positive for COVID-19, due to the length of time that she was on a ventilator. The healthcare decision-making process for COVID-19 was chaotic, due to the lack of understanding of COVID-19 at the time, and the assumption that elderly people could withstand a ventilator intubation and extubation while infected by the virus.

These traumatic experiences in my family at first left me with no words at all, but with time and through my participation in the COVID19@CMC project, I was able to hear the voices of others affected by COVID-19. Through this tragedy, I hope to uncover the impact of isolation on families experiencing loss. As of April 18, 2022, nearly 6.2 million people have died from COVID-19 worldwide; it is difficult to lose a loved one while being forced to isolate away. In December 2020, just seven months after my grandparents' and great uncle's passing, COVID-19 vaccines were available for people over the age of 65. After having three vaccines, I tested positive for COVID-19 and had

mild symptoms. While in quarantine, I reflected on the sheer difference between COVID-19 in 2020 and in 2022, after three virus mutations and three vaccinations. In a 2021 CDC report documenting the effectiveness of vaccinations for preventing hospitalizations among people age 65 and older, the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccines proved to be 96% effective.<sup>28</sup> Given that the development of the vaccine has reduced the risk of hospitalization for so many people that were previously at risk, I hope to illuminate the experiences of those who tested positive prior to the vaccine. The pandemic has left a profound impact on not only my family, but the millions of families that also lost loved ones. Through this thesis, I hope to expand on the complexity of isolation experiences through historical events.

### **Environmental Effects of Forced Isolation**

Public health and climate change go hand in hand. Zoonotic spillover, the concept where a pathogen travels from an animal to a human, is typically caused by the human manipulation of living organisms. Deforestation, chemical exposure, and the construction of infrastructure are all factors that lead to zoonotic spillover, which was scientifically proven to spark the COVID-19 pandemic. There is a continuous connection between the environment and its impact on human health - communities facing the highest concentration of COVID-19 had already been isolated and marginalized from national and municipal support systems and therefore those trapped in overcrowded and

---

<sup>28</sup> Moline, Heidi, Michael Whitaker, et al. "Effectiveness of COVID-19 Vaccines in Preventing Hospitalization among Adults Aged  $\geq 65$  Years - Covid-Net, 13 States, February–April 2021." Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, August 12, 2021. <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/70/wr/mm7032e3.htm#:~:text=COVID%2D19%20vaccines%20currently,hospitalizations%20in%20older%20adults>.

“unsanitary” conditions were also isolated from the emergent public health infrastructure that sought to ameliorate the immediate impact of the virus. COVID-19 forces people into isolation due to its contagious nature, but isolation itself can also be a factor that contributes to the spread of COVID-19. Communities impacted by rising sea levels were more vulnerable to the spread of the virus due to their geographical isolation, which posed a risk for islanders looking to escape COVID-19 outbreaks. Lastly, the 2020 UN Climate Change Conference was postponed to November 2021, showing that climate change had to be put on the back burner for a whole year. In 2020, the most immediate challenge to tackle was COVID-19, and funding poured into vaccine development more than anything else.

Despite this, many root causes of climate change increase the likelihood of future pandemics. According to Michaela Gack, PhD, Director, Cleveland Clinic’s Florida Research and Innovation Center, the displacement of animals and humans due to extreme weather, rising temperatures, and rising sea levels can cause increased cross-species transmission.<sup>29</sup> Scientists are additionally concerned with the gradual thawing of polar regions, where viruses could reappear once unfrozen from polar ice caps. Mosquito-borne viruses are predicted to increase with the inevitable cross-species transmission resulting from deforestation, overpopulation, and a warmer climate. Although forced isolation is an observed consequence of a public health issue, the connection between climate change

---

<sup>29</sup> Rall, Brittany. “How Climate Change May Affect Future Pandemics.” Cleveland Clinic Newsroom. Cleveland Clinic Newsroom, April 21, 2021. <https://newsroom.clevelandclinic.org/2021/04/21/how-climate-change-may-affect-future-pandemics/>.



and public health contextualizes the original cause of the pandemic, and the circular relationship between human manipulation of animal species and the environment.

### **Forced Isolation Impact on Race Relations**

The COVID-19 pandemic is also correlated with an escalation of racial discrimination against people of color and non-citizens. The so-called "double pandemic" of 2020 dealt with this increased racial discrimination at the same time as pandemic-enforced isolation. This was a critical social problem, given how vulnerable people already were; storefronts were on the brink of foreclosure, people were susceptible to COVID-19, livelihood was limited, and the demeanor of the world had already been crushed. The COVID-19 pandemic brought about subtle and systemic racism especially against people of East Asian and South Asian affects, due to the origin of the first COVID-19 case being in Asia. Given that the media conveyed the first COVID-19 case to be from Wuhan, China, the resulting anti-Asian abuse increased in public spaces far outside of China. The 'Stop AAPI Hate' forum has recorded more than 1100 instances of anti-Asian abuse since late March 2020 (Stop AAPI Hate, 2020).<sup>30</sup> On March 10, 2020, an Egyptian driver was also arrested in Egypt after a video showed the driver compelling a Chinese passenger to get out of his car at a highway in Cairo on an unfounded reason that the passenger had COVID-19. Despite the origins of the pandemic in China, the Chinese government announced that few cases of COVID-19 were

---

<sup>30</sup> Jeung, Russell, Aggie J Yellow Horse, and Charlene Cayanan. "Stop Aapi Hate National Report." Stop AAPI Hate, 2021.  
<https://stopaapihate.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Stop-AAPI-Hate-National-Report-Final.pdf>.

transmitted domestically, and that the new influx and spread of the virus was largely sustained from overseas. After these government announcements, there was a similar influx in the abuse towards non-citizens and people of color within China; residents in China of African appearance were evicted from their homes by landlords and accused of incubating COVID-19, despite the residents claiming that they had no recent travel overseas or contact with any COVID-19 patient.<sup>31</sup>

### **Chapter Conclusion**

The differential impact of COVID-19 on various communities demonstrates a theme of privilege associated with forced isolation. There is inherent privilege in being able to flee conflict, or to have a safe space to isolate, versus being trapped in an uncomfortable situation or in an underserved area. There is privilege in having a stable Internet connection for a smooth transition to remote life. The students within my oral history project were united by a prestigious private liberal arts college, but all of them faced a wide range of challenges and inequities that were sparked by the pandemic. Through my documentation of oral tradition, it was enlightening to see college students rise towards a collective responsibility, whether that was spreading kindness or socially distancing. The pandemic both embodied and amplified social, economic, political, and environmental conditions that existed prior to the pandemic due to political polarization, social media, and technology enabling the spread of misinformation; CMC students, among everyone else, were forced to grapple with COVID-19 as well as the societal

---

<sup>31</sup> Addo, Isaac Yeboah. "Double Pandemic: Racial Discrimination amid Coronavirus Disease 2019." *Social Sciences & Humanities Open* 2, no. 1 (2020): 100074. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssaho.2020.100074>.

issues that spurred from the pandemic. COVID-19 is the first instance in this thesis where I will attend to the ways in which the artifice of national borders comes to light. In the conundrum of a global pandemic, it is evident that immigration tactics and walls cannot stop the spread of COVID-19. A global pandemic tests the very configuration of boundaries and bounded national identities. However, COVID-19 refuses to adhere to national identities and national government strategies. The isolationary lifestyle that the pandemic created will have lasting impacts on the workforce, education system, and nation-state approach towards public health. Through the pandemic and isolation, I have grown more appreciative of the people and places that are dear to me.

## Chapter 2: Forced Isolation due to Genocide

### The Diary of Anne Frank

*“Believe me, if you've been shut up for a year and a half, it can get to be too much for you sometimes ... If I live here much longer, I'll turn into a dried-up old beanstalk. And all I really want is to be an honest-to-goodness teenager!”<sup>32</sup> -Anne Frank, 1943*

---

<sup>32</sup> Frank, Anne. *The Diary of a Young Girl: The Definitive Edition*. Edited by Mirjam Pressler and Otto H Frank. Translated by Susan Massotty. New York, NY: Bantam Books, 2021, 115-126.

## Chapter Introduction

In this chapter, I will focus on patterns of isolation that occur when humans are forced to hide. The Holocaust is a part of history that demonstrates forced isolation due to genocide. People were forced to hide because of their ethnicity, faith, or physical appearance, which was deemed an ongoing reason for human extermination by the Nazi regime. A key primary source for this chapter will be Anne Frank's diary, where I will document the forced isolation of a family during the Holocaust. Anne and her family hid in the back of an Amsterdam warehouse for two years, which they called the Secret Annex. Anne reveals the insights of living under extreme conditions, including hunger and fear, and the ever-impending threat of death or deportation to a concentration camp. The family was completely estranged from society in confined quarters at a time when Anne was thirteen. A secondary source to build on the theme of forced isolation due to genocide is Sabuj Kanti Mistry's cross-sectional study of Forcibly Displaced Myanmar Nationals in the Rohingya community during COVID-19. This will bridge the themes of forced isolation due to genocide and pandemic-related isolation. The high risk of virus transmission in refugee camps shows the consequences of forced isolation due to genocide and political instability, and how this can result in a higher rate of infection. The experience of COVID-19 isolation connects with incarceration and hiding, given that the Rohingya FDMNs are in an ongoing struggle. To bridge to my third theme, "Frontiers and Borderlands," I will expand with a Human Rights Watch article about the connection between ethnic cleansing and frontiers; FDMNs are labeled differently from refugees, which makes them more vulnerable to the denial of freedom, restriction of migration,

access to public services, education, and livelihood, as well as to arrest and exploitation. Isolation is now a consequence and a catalyst for environmental damage and public health crises.

### **Literary Analysis & Framework for the Holocaust**

The Holocaust has become one of the most critical topics of historical analysis in post-WWII academia. When I say “Holocaust”, I refer to the series of events beginning with a number of economic and social restrictions on Jewish people, and ending with their consequential mass extermination. The Holocaust reached its height between the years 1933 and 1945, and it was a state-sponsored persecution and extermination of approximately six million Jews and over five million other victims, including political dissidents, Roma, homosexuals, prisoners of war, Jehovah’s Witnesses, and others. The word “Holocaust” means “burnt offering” in ancient Greek.<sup>33</sup> Instead of continuing the historical analysis of the Holocaust more broadly, I hope to focus in on the victims who were forced to hide. I want to add a new angle by analyzing the Holocaust through the lens of forced isolation. I will examine how genocide-induced isolation forces people to isolate from others and remain in this position because they must hide for fear of death. By juxtaposing the Holocaust with the dynamics of racialized discrimination and the impact of isolation itself, I can better understand isolation as a form of governance, politically-sanctioned persecution, and a first step towards genocide.

---

<sup>33</sup>“The Holocaust: The National WWII Museum: New Orleans.” The National WWII Museum | New Orleans. The National World War II Museum, June 22, 2017. <https://www.nationalww2museum.org/war/articles/holocaust>.

The global commemorative practices of the Holocaust led us to believe that we would never reach a point in time like the Holocaust again, yet we have seen a global rise in anti-Semitism. Despite the museums, memorials, and worldwide traditions of the Holocaust that were created as a means to ensure such a mass genocidal event would not happen again, it is increasingly important to recognize that the world has not progressed beyond this moment in history. The Rwandan and Rohingya genocides occurred decades after the Holocaust, yet are evidence of the continuity of isolation as a preliminary measure towards genocide. In light of our own experiences with isolation, I also hope to refocus on the Holocaust and remember that isolation was the first step in a series of genocidal measures enacted against Jewish people. To isolate a group of people is to remove them from interacting with others in society, which is a strategy adopted so as to make a group of people vulnerable.

### **Isolation and Privilege**

It is critical to mention the inherent privilege in having a place to isolate. The Frank family was able to hide in the Annex, which had enough bedrooms and space to house their family and a few family friends. The Annex was mostly hidden from the public eye, and the hidden bookshelf entrance to the Annex kept the family safe from unexpected visitors on numerous occasions. The Frank family was forced to hide and live in silence, but they outlasted the authorities' scrutiny much longer than most Jewish people at the time. Although the Franks did not outlast the Holocaust, their situation is one of relative privilege to many other Jewish families, who were immediately arrested and deported to concentration camps.

Although there wasn't any form of abuse within the walls of the Secret Annex, cases of abuse and domestic violence were a surefire method of inducing exposure to the authorities. Any sort of home conflict was a risk to the safety of those in hiding; domestic violence, arguments, or abuse in any form was enough to draw attention to any household. Two sisters, Eva and Liane Münzer [Figure 1] were reported to the Gestapo as a result of a fight between the couple that was allowing them to isolate themselves in their home. Eva and Liane were toddlers, and after the domestic incident, the husband reported his wife, along with Eva and Liane, to the authorities. The three women were taken to Auschwitz and killed.<sup>34</sup> This instance reveals the fragile nature of forced isolation within the context of the Holocaust; although Eva and Liane were supposedly safe and isolated from harm, their hiding place was compromised by a domestic outburst that was out of their control. Victims in isolation are dependent on their caretakers, who are risking their lives by hiding Jewish people. Any complication with caretakers could immediately result in the exposure and imminent death of those in hiding.

---

<sup>34</sup> Münzer, Alfred. "Munzer Family Papers." United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2008.  
<https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn708427#?rsc=196920&cv=18&c=0&m=0&s=0&xywh=-95%2C-64%2C2744%2C1797>.





Alfred Münzer

Figure 1: “*Eva and Liane Münzer*”, The US Holocaust Memorial Museum, 1944.

### **Source Choice Rationale: Anne Frank’s Diary**

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic and government-sanctioned isolation, historical events involving forced isolation can be analyzed with a new perspective. By living through the COVID-19 pandemic and experiencing it firsthand, I am able to unearth and understand elements of Anne Frank’s memoir that I wouldn’t have otherwise paused or commented on. Through oral history research on forced isolation, I have encountered Anne Frank’s personal diary with new eyes and see it as the most accurate and raw depiction of forced isolation during WWII. The everyday element of Anne’s personal memoir can best parallel a modern oral history because it captures the voice and personal experiences of a young girl caught in one of the most traumatic global events of

the twentieth century The diary reveals a young girl navigating questions concerning her autonomy in the midst of crisis, family relationships, and personal growth. I decided to turn to Anne Frank's memoir because it centers on personal reflection and contains a detailed, everyday analysis of life in isolation. Memoirs are written records of life, and it is difficult to come across recorded interviews in the 1940s, given the lack of focus on archiving oral histories and the encumbrances of early voice-capturing technology. As noted above, during the Holocaust, it is imperative to recognize the difference between forced isolation and forced hiding. Anne Frank was unable to make noise, be seen, or speak to almost any outsiders in order to stay safe. This adds additional justification to the value of written memoirs during this time, given that writing was the most silent and incognito form of self reflection. Jewish people that were in hiding during the Holocaust could put their lives in danger by speaking or making their location known to anyone. For these reasons, I will be analyzing Anne Frank's experience through the lens of her personal memoir.

Anne Frank documented her time in forced isolation during the Holocaust and WWII, which was a moment in which ethnic cleansing was mobilized as a form of mass extermination. Anne and her family hid in the back of an Amsterdam warehouse for two years, which they called the Secret Annex. Anne reveals the insights of living under extreme conditions, including hunger and fear, and the ever-impending threat of death or deportation to a concentration camp. The family was completely estranged from society in confined quarters at a time when Anne was thirteen. This source is crucial because it delves into the complexities of youth culture in forced isolation, which builds off of the

oral tradition research from COVID-19 college students. The notable themes throughout Anne Frank's diary are loneliness, identity, youth culture, sharing confined spaces, and the impact of her isolation on familial relationships. Anne also reflects on her German nationality. She feels horrified and out of control. She feels that she is becoming a child again and struggling to find her own identity as a teenager. Anne struggles with her own personality and wonders why she is antagonizing others in isolation. Anne casually mentions death because death is occurring rapidly and extensively around her, yet she feels detached from death because she is isolated and cannot see it happening; she only hears about it. All of these themes are similar to those seen in the forced isolation of a pandemic, which draws a connection to mental health. Pain, suffering, and death are numbed and minimized through forced isolation.<sup>35</sup>

### **Literary Analysis of Anne Frank's Diary**

#### **Rose-Colored Genocide: Hollywood Adaptations of Anne Frank's Diary**

Nora Nunn's *Rose-Colored Genocide* analyzes Hollywood's adaptations and interpretations of Anne Frank's Diary, building on prior scholarship of Holocaust narratives in Hollywood, and argues that Hollywood "celebrates a globalized humanity" by belittling complex genocidal crimes. Hollywood's popular yet simplified adaptation of Anne Frank's Diary is meant to uplift audiences and "harmonize" the narrative of the Holocaust with Hollywood cinema; this is a dangerous take on the Holocaust that has expanded Hollywood's capacity to turn genocide into mainstream media or art. Nunn outlines the rose-colored methodologies behind the 1959 film *The Diary of Anne Frank*,

---

<sup>35</sup> Frank and Pressler, *The Diary of a Young Girl*.

directed by George Stevens. Stevens purposefully deleted scenes that were “tough on the audience” due to their intensity or portrayal of Anne’s experience at the concentration camp; Stevens mentioned that “20th Century-Fox desired to have the film considered ‘hopeful’ despite all”.<sup>36</sup>

### **Similarities and Distinctions between COVID-19 isolation and Holocaust isolation**

As I reread Anne Frank’s memoir having experienced forced isolation during the COVID-19 pandemic, it is critical that I outline the similarities and distinctions between the isolationist experiences, consequences, and historical forces at play. In order to avoid trivializing or collapsing the experience of Jewish people during the Holocaust and Anne Frank specifically, it is important to illuminate the situation of COVID-19 as one of relative privilege. State-sponsored persecution and extermination does not allow for flexible isolation; victims were forced to hide themselves from windows, to fully reside in isolation without exception, and to remain silent. Any detection of human life by the Gestapo or the SS could result in torture or immediate death. As I approach passages from Anne Frank’s memoir, I read them empathically. I recognize pieces of Anne’s experience in isolation that I would not normally recognize; the powerful pain and trauma that Anne experiences is illuminated by a corresponding isolation during COVID-19. This increased recognition illustrates not only the similarities in modern day present, but even more so the manifest differences that Anne experienced while she was forced to

---

<sup>36</sup> Nora Nunn. n.d. “Rose-Colored Genocide: Hollywood, Harmonizing Narratives, and the Cinematic Legacy of Anne Frank’s Diary in the United States.” *Genocide Studies and Prevention: An International Journal* 14 (2): 65–89. Accessed March 4, 2022. <https://doi.org/10.5038/1911-9933.14.2.1715>, 66-67.

hide. In my analysis of Anne's memoir, I hope to provide a new lens that casts light upon her experience in isolation, and I am better equipped to dive deeper into a widely-read memoir with the context and experience of COVID-19 forced isolation. The following themes within the memoir that emphasize isolation are family relationships, the transition into isolation, generational dissonance, youth culture, and forced optimism in the midst of depression. The themes that distinguish Anne's experience from simply being isolated as being forced to hide are anti-Semitism, soundscapes, and the fragility of mortality. Each theme has a greater echo when analyzed as a byproduct of forced isolation, which sheds light upon the tendencies of a nation-state to quarantine, isolate, and eradicate specific members from within nation-state walls. Upon analyzing the following themes, I hope to understand what it means to create empathy by reading a historical memoir with new eyes.

### **Theme 1: Anti-Jewish Decrees: From Forced Isolation to Genocide**

When reflecting on government-directed, nation-building exclusionary processes, it is critical to begin with the ever-present theme of the Anti-Jewish Decrees at the start of the Holocaust. Almost as soon as Adolf Hitler came to power in Germany, the Anti-Jewish Decrees were established. Starting in 1933, Jewish people were not protected by law enforcement, random attacks on Jewish property were ignored by the authorities, and books written by Jewish people were publicly burned.<sup>37</sup> By 1936, Jewish people were banned from parks, restaurants, swimming pools, voting, German citizenship, holding

---

<sup>37</sup>“Anti-Jewish Decrees.” The British Library - The British Library. The British Library Board, April 3, 2006.  
<https://www.bl.uk/learning/histcitizen/voices/info/decrees/decrees.html>.

passports, and attending German universities. By 1943, all Jewish people over the age of six had to wear a yellow star of David with the label “Jew”, many were deported, Jewish children were not allowed to attend school, curfews were enforced, and Jewish people were evicted from their homes randomly. The Anti-Jewish Decrees are significant because they are the first steps towards genocide; the state-sponsored discrimination was the Nazi strategy to isolate, humiliate, and terrorize Jewish people, priming them for deportation and massacre. Anne’s reflection on the Anti-Jewish Decrees was her first reaction to the state-enforced isolation:

*“Our freedom was severely restricted by a series of anti-Jewish decrees: Jews were required to wear a yellow star; Jews were required to turn in their bicycles; Jews were forbidden to use street-cars; Jews were forbidden to ride in cars, even their own; Jews were required to do their shopping between 3 and 5 P.M.; Jews were required to frequent only Jewish-owned barbershops and beauty parlors; Jews were forbidden to be out on the streets between 8 P.M. and 6 A.M.; Jews were forbidden to attend theaters, movies or any other forms of entertainment; Jews were forbidden to use swimming pools, tennis courts, hockey fields or any other athletic fields; Jews were forbidden to go rowing; Jews were forbidden to take part in any athletic activity in public; Jews were forbidden to sit in their gardens or those of their friends after 8 P.M.; Jews were forbidden to visit Christians in their homes; Jews were required to attend Jewish schools, etc. You*

*couldn't do this and you couldn't do that, but life went on. Jacque always said to me, 'I don't dare do anything anymore, 'cause I'm afraid it's not allowed.' ”*<sup>38</sup>

The isolationary tactics that Anne outlines above are deliberate attempts to remove Jewish people from society. The curfews and restrictions on activities started as anti-Semitic laws, but they snowballed into much worse: as Jewish people were barred from the education system, labor force, market economy, and public society, Hitler was simply priming Germany for the complete removal of Jewish people. Forced isolation is a government tactic for exclusionary processes and in the case of the Holocaust, was a signal for the onset of genocide.

## **Theme 2: The Transition into Isolation**

The Frank family’s transition to isolation was framed around the conditions of government-sponsored anti-Semitism, leading to a grand sense of urgency and requiring isolationist conditions that may be permanent. In the wake of the incoming Nazi invasion, the Frank family mobilized for the Secret Annex, which was the back portion of Otto Frank’s company, Pectacon. Otto Frank, the father of Anne Frank, managed to secure a living space for his family in the wake of the Anti-Jewish Decrees. Amsterdam buildings along canals were expensive and highly sought after, so annexes were often built in the backyards of these buildings to include additional storage and workspace.<sup>39</sup> Instead of remaining in their family home, the Frank family elected to isolate themselves as a way to hide from the incoming genocide of the Nazis. This was a choice to somehow preserve

---

<sup>38</sup> Frank and Pressler, *The Diary of a Young Girl: The Definitive Edition*, 9-10.

<sup>39</sup> “The History of The Secret Annex.” Anne Frank Website, December 14, 2021. <https://www.annefrank.org/en/anne-frank/go-in-depth/history-secret-annex/>.

their carefree lives, rather than letting others force them into isolation. This type of isolation was a choice, but it was the only choice that the family had in order to avoid the impending forced isolation, which would likely be in a concentration camp.

*“Hiding. . . where would we hide? In the city? In the country? In a house? In a shack? When, where, how. . . ? These were questions I wasn't allowed to ask, but they still kept running through my mind.”<sup>40</sup>*

*“We weren't interested in impressions. We just wanted to get out of there, to get away and reach our destination in safety. Nothing else mattered.”<sup>41</sup>*

The Franks left their house in haste, with stripped beds, breakfast on the table, and a pound of meat for their cat left in the kitchen. At this point, nothing mattered more than the imminent danger of staying put. The path towards isolation is taken with haste, especially for people that are forced to hide.

This is a quote from Anne's dad, written in the perspective of Anne in her diary:

*“‘Don't you worry. We'll take care of everything. just enjoy your carefree life while you can.’ That was it. Oh, may these somber words not come true for as long as possible.”<sup>42</sup>*

Anne goes through the various belongings that she decides to take with her:

*“The first thing I stuck in was this diary, and then curlers, handkerchiefs, schoolbooks, a comb and some old letters. Preoccupied by the thought of going*

---

<sup>40</sup> Ibid, 18.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid, 19.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid, 17.



*into hiding, I stuck the craziest things in the bag, but I'm not sorry. Memories mean more to me than dresses.*"<sup>43</sup>

Anne's prioritization of material possessions is impacted by the lack of knowledge about her future; when Anne does not know when she will return, she decides that past memories are more precious to her than present belongings, such as dresses. Without knowing anything about the future, the past becomes an anchor for the present. The transition to isolation is filled with uncertainty and nostalgia, coupled with the ignorance of not knowing how long isolation would last. This theme is significant because the conditions of isolation can often make or break an experience; for Anne, the conditions of the Secret Annex kept her safe for 761 days, yet she was forced to hide alongside her family and strangers. The Secret Annex is paradoxical in nature because it was a situation of relative privilege to other Jewish families fleeing the Gestapo, yet it only provided protection for the Frank family for a limited period of time.

### **Theme 3: Soundscapes and Enforced Habits of Isolation**

A defining characteristic of Anne's isolation is the soundscape of the Secret Annex. If the Frank family was seen or heard by outsiders, the consequences were fatal, thus requiring the family to remain silent for survival. Forced hiding is a specific type of isolation that merited a remote, unsuspecting location. Anne's optimism shines through as she describes the rules of her isolation:

---

<sup>43</sup> Ibid, 18.

*“We’ve already canned loads of rhubarb, strawberries and cherries, so for the time being I doubt we’ll be bored. We also have a supply of reading material, and we’re going to buy lots of games. Of course, we can’t ever look out the window or go outside. And we have to be quiet so the people downstairs can’t hear us.”*<sup>44</sup>

Anne and her siblings busy themselves with books, chores, games, and food. The clear distinction of Holocaust isolation is that the family cannot make noise, look out the window, or go outside. The family is increasingly reliant on non-Jewish people for survival, given that they must isolate themselves in secrecy; the Secret Annex was connected to and near families that were non-Jewish, yet very few neighbors knew about the Jewish family living in the Annex.

*“Last night the four of us went down to the private office and listened to England on the radio. I was so scared someone might hear it that I literally begged Father to take me back upstairs. Mother understood my anxiety and went with me.*

*Whatever we do, we’re very afraid the neighbors might hear or see us.”*<sup>45</sup>

At this point, Anne’s anxiety in isolation becomes more clear; she shows optimism, yet small daily occurrences of noise can lead to an uptick in her anxiety. The Annex soundscape is a volatile, often uncontrollable concept that Anne must endure throughout her time in hiding:

---

<sup>44</sup> Ibid, 23.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid, 22.

*“Any sound we make might travel through the walls. We’ve forbidden Margot to cough at night, even though she has a bad cold, and are giving her large doses of codeine.”<sup>46</sup>*

Anne’s need to remain silent often restricts her ability to physically move. Walking, shifting weight, creaking floorboards, or exercising can create noises, which adds another layer of burden to her isolation experience.

*“On ordinary days we have to speak in a whisper; not being able to talk or move at all is ten times worse. After three days of constant sitting, my backside was stiff and sore. Nightly calisthenics helped.”<sup>47</sup>*

*“I’m very worried. Father’s sick. He’s covered with spots and has a high temperature. It looks like measles. Just think, we can’t even call a doctor! Mother is making him perspire in hopes of sweating out the fever.”<sup>48</sup>*

#### **Theme 4: Impact of Forced Isolation on Family Relationships**

The physical containment of isolation puts a strain on family relationships. With nowhere to go and little to do, Anne’s teenage life is constantly clashing with her parents’ lives. Anne often expresses that her parents do not understand her emotions about isolation, and that they are overly optimistic while she struggles to remain in the Secret Annex as a thirteen-year-old:

*“I don’t fit in with them, and I’ve felt that clearly in the last few weeks. They’re so sentimental together, but I’d rather be sentimental on my own. They’re always*

---

<sup>46</sup> Ibid, 23.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid, 37.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid, 45.

*saying how nice it is with the four of us, and that we get along so well, without giving a moment's thought to the fact that I don't feel that way."*<sup>49</sup>

*"Mother and I had a so-called 'discussion' today, but the annoying part is that I burst into tears. I can't help it. Daddy is always nice to me, and he also understands me much better. At moments like these I can't stand Mother. It's obvious that I'm a stranger to her; she doesn't even know what I think about the most ordinary things."*<sup>50</sup>

Anne's experience in an enclosed space with her family rather than around other adolescents proves to be difficult, thus illuminating the theme of generational dissonance between Anne and her parents.

### **Theme 5: Generational Dissonance, Youth Culture and Development**

Youth culture is a key aspect of Anne's experience in isolation, but it is important to outline the continuous intersections of generations and the dissonance that is revealed through isolation. Anne believes that her parents are treating her like a child and not taking her seriously:

*"Who else but me is ever going to read these letters? Who else but me can I turn to for comfort? I'm frequently in need of consolation, I often feel weak, and more often than not, I fail to meet expectations. I'm no longer the baby and spoiled little darling who every deed can be laughed at. I have my own ideas, plans and ideals, but am unable to articulate them yet."*<sup>51</sup>

---

<sup>49</sup> Ibid, 24.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid, 33.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid, 49.

*“The whole time I’ve been here I’ve longed unconsciously and at times consciously for trust, love and physical affection. This longing may change in intensity, but it’s always there.”*<sup>52</sup>

Anne battles intense emotions during isolation, which creates barriers between her and her loved ones. She expresses difficulty in communicating with her father, who she wants to connect with, yet diagnoses her constant crying with her young age. It is unclear whether this comment is sarcastic, or whether Anne truly believes her volatile emotions are tied to her youth, but this quote demonstrates her struggle to connect with her father due to her age:

*“Daddy’s always so nice. He understands me perfectly, and I wish we could have a heart-to-heart talk sometime without my bursting instantly into tears. But apparently that has to do with my age.”*<sup>53</sup>

Anne wants to be treated like an adult while processing the events and genocide occurring around her, yet it is clear that there is a disconnect between Anne and her mother in the everyday moments of isolation. Isolation affects generations in different ways, and Anne constantly feels like she is reverting into a younger version of herself:

*“Mama always treats me like a baby, which I can’t stand.”*<sup>54</sup>

As a young person, Anne is grappling with her new environment and how it drastically differs from her life before moving to the Secret Annex. Anne is no longer able to attend school, with the only exception being voluntary reading. She is losing motivation to keep

---

<sup>52</sup> Ibid, 46.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid, 24.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid, 26.

learning, and she is unable to focus in a new environment, which demonstrates parallels to youth culture in pandemic-induced isolation.

*“I’ve forgotten much too much of what I learned in school.”*<sup>55</sup>

Lastly, Anne is undergoing puberty and physical changes that she must process alongside people that are not the same age as her. She notices weight gain within the first three months of isolation:

*“In the three months since I’ve been here, I’ve gained 19 pounds. A lot, huh?”*<sup>56</sup>

### **Theme 6: Mental Health and Forced Optimism in the Midst of Crisis**

Mental health is a critical theme across all forms of forced isolation, but in cases of genocide, it can become all-consuming. Anne is thirteen years old, living in a crisis where she has no choice but to remain silent, immobile, and isolated with family and strangers. Despite the uncertainty and dangers before her, Anne maintains an impressive level of optimism throughout her diary reflections. She balances anxiety with an advanced awareness of reality. In the beginning of her isolation, Anne recognizes her privilege of being able to isolate in the Secret Annex, reflecting on her isolation experience:

*“It’s more like being on vacation in some strange pension. Kind of an odd way to look at life in hiding, but that’s how things are. The Annex is an ideal place to hide in. It may be damp and lopsided, but there’s probably not a more comfortable hiding place in all of Amsterdam. No, in all of Holland.”*<sup>57</sup>

---

<sup>55</sup> Ibid, 30.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid, 44.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid, 22.

Anne's reflection begins with optimism, gratitude, and a tinge of excitement that isolation and life in hiding might bring on new adventures. As time goes on, Anne begins to complain, mentioning the lack of common sense within the Annex. Anne has minor frustrations and arguments with the members she shares isolation with, and she expresses fatigue over the rules of isolation. However, Anne continues to mention what she plans to do after the war is over, demonstrating the assumption that historical events are temporary and that reversion is inevitable:

*"We're so fortunate here, away from the turmoil. We wouldn't have to give a moment's thought to all this suffering if it weren't for the fact that we're so worried about those we hold dear, whom we can no longer help. I feel wicked sleeping in a warm bed, while somewhere out there my dearest friends are dropping from exhaustion or being knocked to the ground."*<sup>58</sup>

*"When I think about our lives here, I usually come to the conclusion that we live in a paradise compared to the Jews who aren't in hiding. All the same, later on, when everything has returned to normal, I'll probably wonder how we, who always lived in such comfortable circumstances, could have "sunk" so low. With respect to manners, I mean."*<sup>59</sup>

Anne hopes to look back on life in the Secret Annex as a tough time, with the assumption that she will make it out of this situation alive. In addition, she continues to mention that

---

<sup>58</sup> Ibid, 55.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid, 78.

she feels lucky to be alive in the Secret Annex. A key component of isolation is the guilt and disorientation from those that are suffering outside of one's immediate reality; this is a theme that spans COVID-19 isolation as well. Despite the optimism and gratitude, Anne's tone shifts as time in isolation wears on; she balances the dichotomy between feeling guilty and trying to maintain her optimism, which becomes more fragile:

*"No matter what I'm doing, I can't help thinking about those who are gone. I catch myself laughing and remember that it's a disgrace to be so cheerful. But am I supposed to spend the whole day crying? No, I can't do that. This gloom will pass."*<sup>60</sup>

Anne begins to grapple with the immense grief that she feels, once the familiarity and longevity of isolation settles in. She starts to allow herself to acknowledge the emotions and brevity of the crisis:

*"... lately I've begun to feel deserted. I'm surrounded by too great a void. I never used to give it much thought, since my mind was filled with my friends and having a good time. Now I think either about unhappy things or about myself. It's taken a while, but I've finally realized that Father, no matter how kind he may be, can't take the place of my former world."*<sup>61</sup>

*"Believe me, if you've been shut up for a year and a half, it can get to be too much for you sometimes. But feelings can't be ignored, no matter how unjust or*

---

<sup>60</sup> Ibid, 56.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid, 56.



*ungrateful they seem. I long to ride a bike, dance, whistle, look at the world, feel young and know that I'm free, and yet I can't let it show. Just imagine what would happen if all eight of us were to feel sorry for ourselves or walk around with the discontent clearly visible on our faces. Where would that get us? I sometimes wonder if anyone will ever understand what I mean, if anyone will ever overlook my ingratitude and not worry about whether or not I'm Jewish and merely see me as a teenager badly in need of some good plain fun.*"<sup>62</sup>

Anne's persistence to maintain a positive attitude is selfless; she has her family and the other Annex residents in mind throughout the trials and tribulations of isolation. After encountering a close call with burglaries in the Secret Annex, and police nearly discovering the Secret Annex's bookshelf-cloaked entrance, Anne's optimism begins to fade; after nearly getting caught by the police, there is a noticeable shift in her reference towards death and dying.

### **Theme 7: Fragility of Mortality, Dialogue Towards Death**

In the context of forced isolation, there are always questions regarding mortality; without access to resources or an ability to mobilize, mortality often becomes an obsession of isolated individuals. During the Holocaust, mortality was a constant question, and there were moments when mortality felt increasingly fragile. In the beginning of isolation, Anne was afraid and emotional:

---

<sup>62</sup> Ibid, 115.

*“Not being able to go outside upsets me more than I can say, and I’m terrified our hiding place will be discovered and that we’ll be shot. That, of course, is a fairly dismal prospect.”*<sup>63</sup>

After police officers raided the Secret Annex, nearly opening the bookcase entry door to where Anne Frank was hiding, Anne’s attitude towards death begins to unravel. She casually mentions explosives and prospects of death in daily conversations, without displaying very much emotion:

*“All day long that’s all I hear. Invasion, invasion, nothing but invasion. Arguments about going hungry, dying, bombs, fire extinguishers, sleeping bags, identity cards, poison gas, etc., etc. Not exactly cheerful.”*<sup>64</sup>

On the same day as the previous quote, Anne admits her indifference towards imminent death:

*“I’ve reached the point where I hardly care whether I live or die. The world will keep on turning without me, and I can’t do anything to change events anyway. I’ll just let matters take their course and concentrate on studying and hope that everything will be all right in the end.”*<sup>65</sup>

Indifference turns into a subtle desire for death, as the pain of isolation grows in intensity:

---

<sup>63</sup> Ibid, 23.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid, 136.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid, 137.

*"I've asked myself again and again whether it wouldn't have been better if we hadn't gone into hiding, if we were dead now and didn't have to go through this misery, especially so that the others could be spared the burden."*<sup>66</sup>

Anne's final sentence on May 26th, 1944 marks a turning point in her attitude towards death. She expresses a desire for death because "nothing can be more crushing than this anxiety"; she shows an avid impatience and determination for the end:

*"Let something happen soon, even an air raid. Nothing can be more crushing than this anxiety. Let the end come, however cruel; at least then we'll know whether we are to be the victors or the vanquished."*<sup>67</sup>

## **Chapter Conclusion**

From my own experience in quarantine to one of the most significant events of the 20th century, the Holocaust, Anne Frank's experience in isolation creates a new resonance that had not existed prior to COVID-19. Through the historical analysis of Anne Frank's isolation and the varied experiences of global isolation, I read Anne Frank's diary with new eyes. Through my own lived history, I have a newfound empathy for Anne Frank and other individuals experiencing isolation, yet I also have an even greater sense of compassion for individuals that are forced to hide. This new empathy proves how an historical text can evolve, as history repeats itself, to hold greater meaning. Looking to the present, reverberations of the Holocaust are now re-emerging with the

---

<sup>66</sup> Ibid, 227.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid, 227.

global rise of ethnonationalism, as seen through Vladimir Putin's efforts to recolonize land previously owned by the Soviet Union. When states form their beliefs of nationalism on culture, language, ethnicity, or blood, they turn to citizenship to decide who belongs in a nation, and who is excluded. The purpose of citizenship is to encourage civic duty and community participation, yet ethnonationalistic states repurpose citizenship as a method of exclusion. Isolation continues to be a feature of the modern world; by juxtaposing the Holocaust with themes of ethnonationalism, isolation, and citizenship, it is clear that nation-state borders perpetuate patterns of isolation on a global scale.

### Chapter 3: Isolation due to Borders and Nation-States

**Pale:** 1) picket or stake for a fence; 2) space or field **having bounds**; enclosure; a territory or district **under a certain jurisdiction**; 3) an area or the limits within which one is **privileged** or **protected**.

— *Merriam-Webster's Dictionary*

“Every new age and every new epoch in the coexistence of peoples, empires and countries, of rulers and power formations of every sort, is founded on new **spatial divisions**, new **enclosures**, and new **spatial orders** of the earth.”

— Carl Schmitt, *Nomos of the Earth*

## Chapter Introduction

In this chapter, I hope to cover patterns of isolation due to frontiers and borderlands as a product of nation-state building and assertions of sovereign claims over peoples and territories. The very formation of nation-states is dependent on an exclusionary process—defining who belongs as a citizen and who should be expelled or categorized as an “alien” member of society. These processes in turn lead national and state actors to build physical, legal, and categorical walls between individuals and groups based on ethnicity, religion, race, and nationality. Furthermore, frontiers and borderlands isolate nation-states from each other. Wendy Brown’s *Walled States, Waning Sovereignty*, James Scott’s *The Art of Not Being Governed*, Hannah Arendt’s *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, and Atossa Araxia Abrahamian’s *The Cosmopolites: The Coming of the Global Citizen* are pieces of literature that I will focus on in this chapter to further discuss the historical fixation on nation-states and how it shapes new forms of isolation today. I want to emphasize that a primary cause of isolation stems from nation-states; just like my COVID-19 experience allowed me to understand Anne Frank’s isolation with new eyes, so too has it enabled me to assess the unique ways in which isolation is featured in the very fabric of our global system of nation-states. An individual can be caught between multiple nation-states, yet not legally recognized in any state; detention centers, airports, and borders are places where people can be caught between nation-state borders, isolated, or barred from entry due to a legal citizenship status, ethnicity, nationality, or socioeconomic status. This chapter reveals isolation on a broader scale, showing a

progression from COVID-19 isolation in one's living space to a more entrenched and global isolation that stems from the historical glorification of the nation-state.

### **Literary Analysis on Forced Isolation and the Construction of Nation States**

#### **Wendy Brown: Walled States, Waning Sovereignty**

Walls provide security and protection to the modern citizen. Walls are symbols of sovereignty and nationalism. The vulnerability and permeability of a nation is mitigated by the existence of a wall. It is often believed that the state has the responsibility to erect such walls in order to preserve the security of its subjects. Nation-state subjects are born from appropriated sovereignty created by the nation-state, which often materializes into a wall that keeps out the potential threats to nation-state sovereignty. Despite the existence of walls at national borders, walls are a “psychic containment even as they fail to block or repel the transnational and clandestine flows of people, goods, and terror.”<sup>68</sup> Walls do not prevent human trafficking, drug smuggling, illegal migration, or terrorism from happening; rather, they reroute these activities, requiring some augmentation of technology, cost, or means to achieve the same end goal. Walls may be publicly announced by a nation-state to have attained their purpose, yet walls often amplify transnational tension and stand as a “political theater piece.”<sup>69</sup> For example, the North American economy is highly dependent on cheap, exploitable labor from south of the border - subminimum wages, without benefits or safety regulation requirements, are critical to North American construction, manufacturing, retail, agriculture, and domestic

---

<sup>68</sup> Brown, Wendy. *Walled States, Waning Sovereignty*. New York, NY: Zone Books, 2017, 121.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid, 123.

work. The Golden State Fence Company, a company that constructed a large portion of the US-México border, was charged multiple times for having hundreds of undocumented workers on its payroll.<sup>70</sup> This example demonstrates the irony between the construction of walled nation-states and their simultaneous reliance on progressive globalization. In addition, walls tend to magnify the intensification of border zones, leading them to be increasingly violent areas. Border zones take on the characteristics of guerilla warfare, with floodlights, armed patrollers, and tear gas. It is evident that walls harbor tension, violence, and civil unrest, and that they serve as a barrier to undocumented migrants that are critical to the U.S. labor economy. The ironies and contradictions that exist within these barriers call into question the concept of a nation-state. After analyzing isolation in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is clear that COVID-19 does not adhere to nation-specific identities or borders, yet COVID-19 was often addressed by only allowing specific nationalities across borders. The fortification of United States borders was inevitably insufficient to stop the spread of COVID-19 when thousands of local governments refused to uphold mask mandates.

### **Theme 1: What is a Nation-State post-WWI?**

In *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, Hannah Arendt describes the inception of nation-states in the period following World War I: the collapse of the Austria-Hungarian, Ottoman, and Russian empires led to a series of peace treaties that allowed the Allied Powers to rebuild, and in some cases fully constitute, nation-states. Despite the variety of ethnic groups within Europe, borders and nations were restructured in a way that did not

---

<sup>70</sup> Ibid, 123.



provide all ethnic groups with their own polity. The new nation-states also came with a price: minorities within nation-states, and the stateless that were already residing in nation-states. Arendt believes that the position of a stateless person is often lower than the status of a criminal, resembling native Americans under European colonial rule; without the legal protection of a state, the stateless represent no entity or land nor belong to any one place. The stateless represent humanity, which has proven throughout history to be insufficient for the protection of property and human rights when faced with colonization. Given that large territorial empires ruled by monarchical and dynastic systems collapsed after WWI, the nation-state became the substitute and also the political mandate. The nation-state was the most representative form of the nation and the land, yet it inherently created a disconnect between the rigidity of the state and everyday society: “It [the nation-state] resulted, on the other side, in a deepening of the split between state and society upon which the body politic of the nation rested”.<sup>71</sup> Arendt comments on various forms of government, concluding that the nation-state is the least equipped for unlimited growth: “the genuine consent at its base cannot be stretched indefinitely, and is only rarely, and with difficulty, won from conquered peoples.”<sup>72</sup> The nation-state has been a topic of fierce historical debate over what mechanisms link land and territory with identity: Benedict Anderson believes a nation is an “imagined community” that took the place of traditional kinship ties, where people believe they are

---

<sup>71</sup> Arendt, Hannah. *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. San Diego, NYC, London: Harcourt Brace, 1985, 17.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid, 126.

connected by similar traits and beliefs.<sup>73</sup> On the other hand, Eric Hobsbawm believes that the nation state is modern, depending on capitalism, technology, and a nation-building middle class.<sup>74</sup> The various viewpoints surrounding nationalism shed light on the fact that nations have never been universally-defined.

## **Theme 2: Ancient Anarchist History of Zomia, a Case Study for Life Outside of the Nation-State**

In James Scott's *The Art of Not Being Governed*, Scott calls into question the concept of a nation-state and points out that the vast majority of human history is anarchist and stateless: "Until shortly before the common era, the very last 1 percent of human history, the social landscape consisted of elementary, self-governing, kinship units that might, occasionally, cooperate in hunting, feasting, skirmishing, trading, and peacemaking. It did not contain anything one could call a state. In other words, living in the absence of state structures has been the standard human condition".<sup>75</sup> Through analyzing the Asian mountainous region of Zomia, a place where heterogeneous groups have evaded the grasp of nation-states for over two thousand years, it is evident that a nation does not need boundaries in order to be fruitful for its inhabitants. Dubbed the 'enclosure movement' by Scott, borders are a modern norm that allow disparate groups to

---

<sup>73</sup>Munro, Andre. "Benedict Anderson." Encyclopædia Britannica. Encyclopædia Britannica, inc. Accessed April 21, 2022.  
<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Benedict-Anderson>.

<sup>74</sup> Hobsbawm, Eric J. *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

<sup>75</sup> Scott, James C. *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2011, 3.

monetize peripheral people, land, and resources, making them “rentable - auditable contributors to the gross national product and to foreign exchange”.<sup>76</sup> The single most powerful military advantage of the enclosure movement, Scott notes, was the mere concentration of manpower and foodstuffs. This modern advantage transformed the power of the governed, no matter how volatile or small the government actually was. Geographic confinement and aggregation of resources was a brilliant way for nations to strategize upon an opportunity, acquire more resources, expand, and develop. Being on the periphery of the governed was dangerous; ungoverned people lived with the constant threat of being casualties of the governed. Yet, as governed nations expanded and contracted, ungoverned life posed “a constant temptation, a constant alternative to life within the state.”<sup>77</sup> For most of history, living stateless or in an intermediate zone used to be a choice, rather than a far-fetched dystopia.

### **Theme 3: Walls as a Physical Manifestation of Political Sovereignty and State-Sanctioned Protection**

The physical manifestation of the nation-state and its concentration of manpower and resources often results in a border or wall. Wendy Brown describes the fixation on walls as “religiously inflected,” with an “effect of sovereign awe.”<sup>78</sup> Walls provide optics of protection and power because they can seal the nation-state from peripheral dangers that supposedly exist beyond nation-state walls. Walls are also a scapegoat for “colonial

---

<sup>76</sup> Ibid, 6.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid, 6.

<sup>78</sup> Brown, 44.

domination in a postcolonial age” and exploitation in an increasingly globalized economy. The visual of a wall and the concept of a nation-state border is an excuse for some of the greatest forms of socioeconomic inequality and the isolation of those without citizenship privileges. Despite the increased need for globalization and border-crossing due to economies of scale, nation-states are still able to create immigration laws that allow inequities to persist. Given the heightened tensions around borders and the violence that occurs near borders, it is evident that there are questions of mortality surrounding the path to citizenship. Although not every path to citizenship is a matter of life or death, there have been more migrant deaths at border zones documented each year. The International Organization for Migrants and The Missing Migrant Project document 47,757 migrant deaths since 2014. These migrants either died or went missing while in the process of migrating to an international destination, regardless of legal status. The figure is an undercount of migrant deaths, given the lack of information and reporting.<sup>79</sup> The following images [Figures 1-4] are border zones around the world, sporting the typical barbed wire, tall walls, and surveillance that have the effect of keeping outsiders out:

---

<sup>79</sup> IOM International Organization for Migration, 2022. <https://missingmigrants.iom.int/>.



David McNew, Getty Images  
 Figure 1: “U.S.-México border”, 2017.



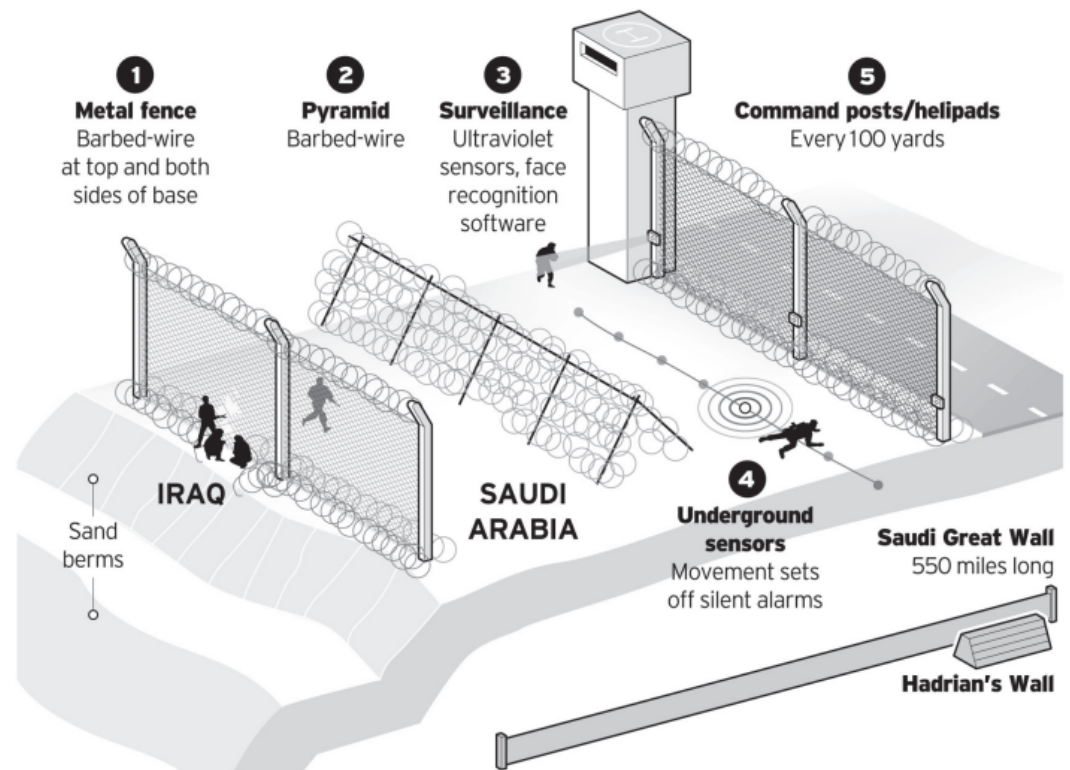
Sebastian Bolesch  
 Figure 2: “The Israeli Wall in the area of Qalandiya, North Jerusalem”, 2017.



Ami Vitale, Getty Images

Figure 3: “*India-Pakistan border fence*”, 2017.





Ciaran Hughes

Figure 4: “Diagram of a 550-mile barrier being built by Saudi Arabia on its border with Iraq”, 2017.

Brown draws from John Locke’s theory that property, land enclosure, and land ownership go hand in hand with the creation of law and sovereign rights: “There is first the enclosure and then the sovereign. Or, put the other way around, it is through the walling off of space from the common that sovereignty is born”.<sup>80</sup> Coining the term “original spatial order,” Carl Schmitt claims the encirclement of land is the foundation for any subsequent legal system; the inception of sovereign nation-states is founded on enclosures, walls, and borders.<sup>81</sup> Walls not only mark the boundaries of modern

<sup>80</sup> Brown, 57.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid, 56.

nation-states; the walls are what turned common land into nation-states that isolate, separate, and blockade those without proper citizenship privileges. Modern border policy has the power to decide who belongs to a nation-state, and who is cast out. The interdependence of the modern political economy and the treacherous, barbed-wire borders present a paradox; borders can blockade the necessary inflows and outflows of resources to the nation-states that they serve.

The expression “beyond the pale” refers to what lies outside border lines, often suggesting a zone that is beyond the range of protection. “Beyond the pale” is beyond the domain of sovereign law, where a citizen will not be protected under the law, no matter how far they are from the border. In the landmark U.S. Supreme Court case *Hernandez v. Mesa*, the Trump Administration Department of Justice filed an *amicus* brief contending that the actions of border patrol agents should be free from accountability, even if a border agent shot a Mexican 15-year-old standing just miles outside of the United States border.<sup>82</sup> In response to the death of Sergio Adrián Hernández Güereca, the Mexican government issued a statement saying “A nation's obligations to respect human rights do not stop at its borders but apply anywhere that the nation exercises effective control”.<sup>83</sup> *Hernandez v. Mesa* calls into question human rights outside of national borders, and the power of walled states over the right to life. Life “beyond the pale” of a walled state is virtually nonexistent in the nation-state dependent world we live in today, yet the

---

<sup>82</sup> *Hernandez v. Mesa* (Supreme Court of the United States February 25, 2020).

<sup>83</sup> “*Hernandez v. Mesa*.” Oyez. Accessed April 20, 2022.  
<https://www.oyez.org/cases/2019/17-1678>.



prospect of life outside the borders of a nation-state grants few safeties and basic human rights that a sovereign code of law can.

#### **Theme 4: Passports and Documentation as a Market-Based Way to Manipulate a Global Underclass, the Citizenless**

With the rise of globalization comes the rise of global citizens that are not necessarily tied to one nationality. The stateless natives and pseudo-citizens of the world often live in a land that has never accepted them, leaving them no nation to call home. More than ever before, there is a need for people to travel to, live in, and be accepted by various nations that were not assigned to them at birth. Atossa Araxia Abrahamian illuminates the real, continuous examples of global citizens that need to break through the borders that isolate nations from each other: “the boats of Syrian refugees who drowned escaping violence on their way to Europe; the Chinese billionaire who invests in foreign stocks and educates his kids in Canada; the Irishman in love with a Singaporean girl,” all of which are realistic situations that are incompatible with the intricate system of borders that we tolerate today. People are isolated from opportunities, upward mobility, flexibility, safety, and other people; the world is “kept apart because of artificial borders set by the historical accident”.<sup>84</sup> This ultimately gives passports and other forms of documentation more value than a human’s desire to migrate. Citizenship is no longer just about civic and political engagement; citizenship is now a matter of convenience to travel freely. It is now legal to buy and sell a passport; prices range from \$100,000 to millions

---

<sup>84</sup>Abrahamian, Atossa Araxia. *Cosmopolites - the Coming of the Global Citizen*. New York, NY: Columbia Global Reports, 2015, 11.

of dollars to acquire a passport from a country outside of one's original birth country.<sup>85</sup>

This calls into question the purpose of citizenship, nation-state walls, and civic duty, when the wealthy are able to migrate freely between countries. The market for citizenship further emphasizes the arbitrariness of the concepts of belonging to a nation, national pride, and birthplace. Abrahamian claims that "the biggest triumph of the modern nation-state has been to convince large groups of people that a status conferred to them arbitrarily upon birth was, in fact, not for sale, and indeed, worth defending unto death."<sup>86</sup> Such is the paradox of globalization, which allows free trade yet leaves the stateless at the mercy of their resident nation-state.

### **Theme 5: Paradox of Globalization: Borders Isolate, Exploit, Exclude**

Globalization has promised a world that is dependent on the free movement of people across borders, yet the poor and impoverished are not able to cross borders, even when their lives depend on it. Passports are a market-based solution that allow the wealthy to become global citizens, and allow the poor to die trying.<sup>87</sup> Globalization and capitalism go hand-in-hand, leading to the exploitation and exclusion of second-class citizens. Claire Beaugrand, a Gulf states migration scholar at the French Institute for the Near East, contextualizes the "stateless" people as a product of colonialism and regional nomadism: "They [the Emirates and their neighbors] created structures that distinguished between natives, foreigners, guest workers, and illegals, even if it didn't make sense to

---

<sup>85</sup> "Citizenship by Investment Programs." Henley & Partners, 2022.  
<https://www.henleyglobal.com/citizenship-investment>.

<sup>86</sup> Abrahamian, 14.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid, 17.

suddenly transpose these categories on a historically tribal, nomadic population and land with fresh borders.”<sup>88</sup> Groups of people that identified themselves with a tribal membership or a geographic point of origin were in a precarious situation when national identification became the rule; the stateless were left without a territorial anchor for protection, stability, and mobility that would carry over for generations. Isolation is a feature of the modern world; as a result of the nation state, migrants and refugees are left without a sense of belonging and political recognition. The extent of this widespread isolation is revealed under the conditions and actions of a government or nation state.

#### **Theme 6: Citizen Rights Over Human Rights**

Philosopher Hannah Arendt, author of *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, asks the critical question: “What do human rights even mean if they depend so largely on the assignment of a citizenship by a particular country, rather than a common shared humanity? ... It is entirely up to a sovereign nation whom it does or does not accept as one of its own, and there’s little anyone else can do about it.”<sup>89</sup> Hannah Arendt was stateless for more than a decade, describing citizenship as “the right to have rights.”<sup>90</sup> Arendt’s probe into the human rights of citizenship calls into question the theme of mortality; the right to live and the right to citizenship are often intertwined, given how much citizenship can provide to a wanderer in need of basic needs, protection, or employment. In addition, the market for passports allows for citizenship to be purchased;

---

<sup>88</sup> Ibid, 54.

<sup>89</sup> Arendt, Hannah. *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. San Diego, NYC, London: Harcourt Brace, 1985.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid, 55.

refugees and migrants that are most in need of citizenship are the least likely to have the purchasing power to acquire it. The wealth stratification behind the path to citizenship reveals the asymmetry between nation states and human rights efforts. Despite living in a world where all humans are supposedly born equal, some people have ten passports, while others have none; this is largely the result of state-sanctioned discrimination.<sup>91</sup>

Fatou Diome, French-Senegalese writer exploring immigrant life across France and Africa, notes how news headlines more often mention the flow of African migrants into Europe than Europeans going into Africa: “That’s the free flow of the powerful, the ones who have the money, and the right kind of passports. You go to Senegal, to Mali, to any country around the world.... Anywhere I go, I meet French people, Germans, and Dutch. I see them everywhere around the world, because they have the right passport.”<sup>92</sup> Diome brings in the critical point of race discrimination within the scope of migrants and non-citizens; the discrimination and disregard for migrant rights within Black and Brown communities, coupled with the lack of empathy for refugees fleeing conflict, demonstrates the impact of race on the treatment of the stateless. With the complex network of global borders and the insistence on labeling humans as citizen and non-citizen, citizen rights become a bigger priority than human rights. The non-citizen is the refugee, typically fleeing from one country to another, in need of migration and international acceptance, yet the non-citizen must carry the burden of their label. The burden of the non-citizen increases with the intersectionality of race, country of origin,

---

<sup>91</sup> Ibid, 154.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid, 153.

gender, and sexuality, which can impact non-citizen access to citizenship or treatment at the border. Non-citizens are a global underclass because they lack the human rights protections that citizens have from a government.

### **Chapter Conclusion**

By understanding the isolation revealed by the borders of nation-states, the purpose and meaning of nationalism is further called into question. Nationalism inevitably imbues national borders with meaning, which automatically adds exclusionary rhetoric as a cornerstone of nationality. By deciding who belongs and who does not belong while also depending on globalization, the international system of nation-states is simultaneously isolationist and universalist. The concept of nation-states and borders are widely accepted by the world, despite the continued existence of indigenous land and refugees in need of international protection. The result of our universal acceptance of borders is the world that Fatou Diome describes: “the free flow of the powerful, the ones who have the money, and the right kind of passports.”<sup>93</sup> Forced isolation, whether existing in a small quarantine area or on a global scale, reveals the privilege of citizenship and the subsidiary global underclass, the stateless. Nation-states allow citizen rights to come before human rights, and this will only become more relevant with the rise of ethnonationalism.

---

<sup>93</sup> Ibid, 154.

## Conclusion

Throughout my time as a history student at Claremont McKenna College, I have sought out tools to better understand modern-day events and reconcile them with the past. These tools have become a foundation for personal reflection and resiliency in the context of the pandemic, when I faced the trauma of losing three family members to COVID-19. By collectively analyzing oral history within the CMC community, I was better able to grasp authentic human experiences in moments of crisis. I then reached back to the Holocaust as a key moment of isolation in the 20th century, and I was able to reflect on the global condition of isolation that is constructed by the phenomenon of the nation-state.

By shifting inward and outward on such personal issues, I learned that personal experiences are inevitably intertwined with historical perspectives. My autobiographical approach towards historical analysis connects history to current events in a new way that reveals humanity. I was able to see Anne Frank's experience with new eyes and greater empathy, which demonstrates that our own experiences can unlock a better understanding of the past. By making this thesis personal, it holds greater meaning, and is a testament to the power of academic life. I have explored what it means to be human in the midst of a crisis and I hope to discover more tools that will recognize humanity through history.

## Bibliography

- Abrahamian, Atossa Araxia. *Cosmopolites - the Coming of the Global Citizen*. New York, NY: Columbia Global Reports, 2015.
- Addo, Isaac Yeboah. "Double Pandemic: Racial Discrimination amid Coronavirus Disease 2019." *Social Sciences & Humanities Open* 2, no. 1 (2020): 100074. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssaho.2020.100074>.
- "Alert: Supreme Court Overturns Trump Administration's Termination of Daca." National Immigration Law Center, July 30, 2020. <https://www.nilc.org/issues/daca/alert-supreme-court-overturms-trump-administrations-termination-of-daca/>.
- "Anti-Jewish Decrees." The British Library - The British Library. The British Library Board, April 3, 2006. <https://www.bl.uk/learning/histcitizen/voices/info/decrees/decrees.html>.
- Arendt, Hannah. *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. San Diego, NYC, London: Harcourt Brace, 1985.
- Bacow, Lawrence. "Covid-19 – Moving Classes Online, Other Updates." Harvard Covid-19 Information. Harvard University, March 10, 2020. <https://www.harvard.edu/coronavirus/covid-19-moving-classes-online-other-updates/>.
- Brown, Wendy. *Walled States, Waning Sovereignty*. New York, NY: Zone Books, 2017.
- Chodosh, Hiram. "Covid-19: CMC Important Message - to All Alumni." Claremont McKenna College, March 11, 2020. <https://online.cmc.edu/covid-19-cmc-important-message-to-all-alumni>.
- "Citizenship by Investment Programs." Henley & Partners, 2022. <https://www.henleyglobal.com/citizenship-investment>.
- Harrison, Kylie, *What does it mean to be in a state of emergency?*, Ink & Mixed Media, March 12, 2020, (Kylie Harrison), <https://covid-archive.cmc.edu/spotlights/>, figure 1.
- Frank, Anne. *The Diary of a Young Girl: The Definitive Edition*. Edited by Mirjam Pressler and Otto H Frank. Translated by Susan Massotty. New York, NY: Bantam Books, 2021.
- Garcia, Eda. Interview of Kim Zamora-Delgado. Other. *COVID19@CMC*. Claremont

- McKenna College Stasneck Fellowship, 2020. <https://covid-archive.cmc.edu/>.
- Harrison, Kylie. *Zoom Graduation*. Photograph. Claremont, CA, May 16, 2020. Claremont McKenna College.
- Hernandez v. Mesa (Supreme Court of the United States February 25, 2020).
- "Hernandez v. Mesa." Oyez. Accessed April 20, 2022. <https://www.oyez.org/cases/2019/17-1678>.
- "The History of The Secret Annex." Anne Frank Website, December 14, 2021. <https://www.annefrank.org/en/anne-frank/go-in-depth/history-secret-annex/>.
- Hobsbawm, Eric J. *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.
- "The Holocaust: The National WWII Museum: New Orleans." The National WWII Museum | New Orleans. The National World War II Museum, June 22, 2017. <https://www.nationalww2museum.org/war/articles/holocaust>.
- International Organization for Migration, 2022. <https://missingmigrants.iom.int/>.
- Jeung, Russell, Aggie J Yellow Horse, and Charlene Cayanan. "Stop Aapi Hate National Report." Stop AAPI Hate, 2021. <https://stopaapihate.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Stop-AAPI-Hate-National-Report-Final.pdf>.
- Leadbetter, Lauren. Interview of Rachel Scharff-Hansen. Other. *COVID19@CMC*. Claremont McKenna College Stasneck Fellowship, 2020. <https://covid-archive.cmc.edu/>.
- Lockwood, Lisa. "Joan Simpson Raines and Richard Raines Die of Covid-19." Women's Wear Daily, May 21, 2020. <https://wwd.com/fashion-news/designer-luxury/joan-simpson-raines-and-richard-raines-die-of-covid-1203638208/>.
- Munro, Andre. "Benedict Anderson." Encyclopædia Britannica. Encyclopædia Britannica, inc. Accessed April 21, 2022. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Benedict-Anderson>.
- Münzer, Alfred. "Munzer Family Papers." United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2008. <https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn708427#?rsc=196920&cv=18&c=0&m=0&s=0&xywh=-95%2C-64%2C2744%2C1797>.



- Nunn, Nora. "Rose-Colored Genocide: Hollywood, Harmonizing Narratives, and the Cinematic Legacy of Anne Frank's Diary in the United States." *Genocide Studies and Prevention* 14, no. 2 (2020): 65–89.  
<https://doi.org/10.5038/1911-9933.14.2.1715>.
- "Oral History: Defined | Oral History Association." Oral History Association. Accessed April 15, 2022. <https://www.oralhistory.org/about/do-oral-history/>.
- Raines, Anna. Interview of Daniel Hayon. Other. *COVID19@CMC*. Claremont McKenna College Stasneck Fellowship, 2020.  
<https://covid-archive.cmc.edu/>.
- Raines, Richard. *Voicemail - 2020-03-24 - Richard to Joan*. Recorded March 24, 2020, streaming audio, accessed June, 2020.
- Rall, Brittany. "How Climate Change May Affect Future Pandemics." Cleveland Clinic Newsroom. Cleveland Clinic Newsroom, April 21, 2021.  
<https://newsroom.clevelandclinic.org/2021/04/21/how-climate-change-may-affect-future-pandemics/>.
- Scott, James C. *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2011.
- Shear, Michael. "Trump Says Administration Will Try Again to End 'Dreamers' Program." The New York Times. The New York Times, June 19, 2020.  
<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/19/us/politics/trump-daca.html>.
- "Understanding Oral History: Why Do It? - Baylor University." Baylor University Institute for Oral History. Baylor University, 2012.  
<https://www.baylor.edu/content/services/document.php/66420.pdf>.
- Usher, Kim, Navjot Bhullar, Joanne Durkin, Naomi Gyamfi, and Debra Jackson. "Family Violence and Covid-19: Increased Vulnerability and Reduced Options for Support." *International journal of mental health nursing*. John Wiley and Sons Inc., August 2020. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7264607/>.
- Venit-Shelton, Tamara, Lily Geismer, Rebecca Zimmerman, Anna Raines, Kylie Harrison, Lia Harel, Daniel Hayon, et al. Claremont, CA, 2021.  
<https://covid-archive.cmc.edu/>.
- Wacharapluesadee, Supaporn, Chee Wah Tan, Patarapol Maneeorn, Prateep Duengkae, Feng Zhu, Yutthana Joyjinda, Thongchai Kaewpom, et al. "Evidence for

SARS-COV-2 Related Coronaviruses Circulating in Bats and Pangolins in Southeast Asia.” *Nature Communications* 12, no. 1 (2021).  
<https://doi.org/10.1038/s41467-021-21240-1>.

Walsh, David. “Quarantine Hotels: Which Countries Are Using Them to Stop Arrivals Spreading COVID?” euronews, March 30, 2021.  
<https://www.euronews.com/travel/2021/02/24/quarantine-hotels-which-countries-are-using-them-to-stop-arrivals-spreading-covid>.

Zanobini, Alessia. Ms. *I Cry*. Claremont McKenna College, 2020.  
<https://covid-archive.cmc.edu/spotlights/>.