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Class: Colonial to present  
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Documenting your Experiences assignment

***Reflection:***

To begin with, my COVID-19 experience has ruined my last year of high school and my first year of freshman year of college. I will be getting personal in my reflection to tell you my full experience during this pandemic, which I know in the future we will be talking and learning about in history books. I already struggled with depression and anxiety throughout my life since I was about 7 years old, but COVID-19 made it take an even bigger toll. With the anxiety at the beginning of the pandemic I had no idea how serious or deadly the virus was I was so scared to hang out with my close friends or go to store without picking up the virus on accident. I wasn't scared if I got it, although I was scared who I would spread it too especially my older sister that is twenty-two who struggled with a really bad eating disorder that led her to being 78 pounds. The thing about eating disorders is having immune system that is super weak and its hard to fight off any sickness even a cold, which is why I tried being careful for my sister's sake. I did not want to be the reason my sister died I could never live with myself if that happened. To continue, that was not the only thing that worried myself or my family because my mom wasn't working anymore because she was an assistant teacher and all schools were shut down. She didn't have a job for a while not knowing if she would have a job to go back too, since so many people were being laid off. Not only was my mom heavily affected, but my dad had his salary cut more than 10%, and my job at Sun Tan City was on hold because the store was shut down as well. Money was pretty tight with COVID-19 and we lost are minds being in the house with each other 24/7.

Furthermore, my primary source is a drawing of a woman hiding behind a mask crying hiding her struggles and depression from society that I created in AP art in high school senior year during the pandemic. I choose this as my primary source because it portrays how I felt during the pandemic how sad I was and having to mask it to my family and friends because everyone was struggling, so I didn't want to make it worse. The coincidence of the drawing and the pandemic is everyone did have to wear a face mask to hide mouths and nose only being able to read people's faces through their eyes like the mask in the drawing in a type of way. The reason future researchers and students can use this is from an artistic perspective. It may not be

the easiest to comprehend right away, but if understand how badly the pandemic affected people's mental health you certainly can see the depression behind the mask everyone is wearing. This class relates to my primary source because art is history people tell stories through drawings, paintings, sculptures, and even fabrics. I'm relating my drawing primary source to week 11 human rights and justice because in Chile they used arpilleristas that are colored patch work picture made my woman during the revolution telling their story through their artwork.

***Past-Present Analysis:***

Write your final analysis like a 5-paragraph essay: with an intro, thesis, body, and conclusion. In the body of your paper you will discuss your analysis and conclusions on the Cuba sources.

*Format:* full reflection and analysis should be 3-5 pages, 1.5 spaced (not including a works cited page). Use Chicago style citations (standard for the discipline of history) for both footnotes and the bibliography. To cite newspapers, follow Chicago style guidelines found [here at the Purdue Online Writing Lab](#). To cite the historical primary sources on Cuba provided to you on Canvas, use this basic format: Author, source title (date), page, *HIST 172 Primary Sources*, Spring 2021. Here is an example to illustrate.<sup>1</sup>

## **Bibliography**

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<sup>1</sup> Fidel Castro, "History will Absolve Me" (1953), p. 4, *HIST 172 Primary Sources*, Spring 2021.

To start with, Cuba has a long history of struggles with repression, inequality, and human rights till this day, but it is slowly progressing throughout the years. COVID-19 is not helping them move forward in poverty even though it seems that Cuba moved rapidly to deal with the emerging pandemic better than other countries in Latin America. The response Cuba has to the pandemic was a lot more successful compared to the history I saw throughout this Latin American history class.

Cuba had multiple advantages when it came to a crisis like COVID-19 such as having free universal healthcare, the world's highest ratio of doctors to population, good health indicators, and advanced medical research. These factors helped boosted Cuba out of the disaster that could impact the well-off economy that they depend on immensely bringing them into more poverty. In one of the articles I read *Behind Cuba's pandemic response* I noticed how quick they were to educate the people of Cuba to stop the spread of covid and have a plan to put people who are infected with the virus: "A "prevention and control" plan, prepared in January 2020, included training medical staff, preparing medical and quarantine facilities, and informing the public (including tourism workers) about symptoms and precautions. So, when the first three reported cases were confirmed on March 11, arrangements were in place to trace and isolate contacts". The response from the Cuban government was to put a ban on tourist arrivals, lockdown for vulnerable people, reassignment of workers to priority tasks, employment protections, and social assistance. By acting this quick with only 21 confirmed cases it easily stopped the spread of the virus turning into thousands in a few days. The government didn't just stop there as soon as they saw that face masks and social distancing wasn't enough, they suspended transportation services were suspended, except for essential workers that used state and private vehicles. The next step for Cuba was testing, which is expensive because in the United States tests are \$50 each. With Cuba's lack to access to finance, all these tests could result in deaths. Cuba assumes if they get the test regime and contact tracing under control it will reduce the cases and 40% of Cuba's recent positives test results were asymptomatic. There are vaccines in Cuba from the article *Cuba says it is getting betting it safe with vaccine* explaining the type and how many phases: "Around 44,000 people are getting the Soberana 2 vaccine as part of Phase 3 double-blind study. An additional 150,000 health care workers are being inoculated with Soberana 2 as part of an "interventional study." The Soberana is different from the United States Vaccines that

we use because it uses 2 synthesized coronavirus proteins that trigger the body's immune system. A Cuban doctor from the same article says the vaccine is very safe and there are fewer risks than before. In Cuba, they started vaccines a little later than the rest of the world because they had to wait for more information and see which mechanism was best to infect cells with. Cuba also states that the vaccination isn't mandatory, but they assume the majority of the population will want the vaccine. The first people up for the vaccine trials were 150,000 front-line workers.

Cuba does have its strengths and weaknesses, which is why Cuba is such an interesting case. Although, Cuba doesn't have it all figured out they lack resources, which slows their recovery from tragedies like this leading to the housing shortage that makes social distancing impossible or highly difficult. Cuba's economy was hit heavily by the pandemic a decline in aid from Venezuela because that country was already having shortages of food and medicine as well. Quote from the article *Cuba says it is getting betting it safe with vaccine* "It's economy shrank 11 percent in 2020. But it has managed to keep the number of Covid-19 infections and deaths down with strict measures and lockdowns, compared to many developed countries around the world". Another problem was underdeveloped countries such as Cuba struggled to get the vaccine at first, since wealthy countries in North America and Europe preordered large amounts of vaccines, leaving poor and developing countries with huge gaps in access. That did slow Cuba down from vaccinating more people they developed their own allowing them to sell vaccines to other underdeveloped countries that needed it badly. Cuba was the country that underdeveloped countries relied on for support during the pandemic because Cuba was the only way to get affordable and easy-to-store vaccines that will make a difference around the world. Quote from *Cuba's Dream* "Cuba's government is already talking about distributing the vaccine in Iran, Mexico, and Venezuela". The only part of this that might backfire is how effective the vaccine will be than what scientists predicted. The third article I read from *CNN Inside Cuba's race to vaccine sovereignty* talks about how confident the doctors and workers of Cuba about supporting the vaccine: "where doctors and nurses are administering about 100 doses of Soberana-02 to frontline workers each day, administrators said they had observed no serious side effects during the expanded trials and were positive the increased vaccination would help turn the tide of the pandemic on the island". Cuba is the first Latin American country to make its vaccine and now they are even trying to develop a lung cancer vaccine. The virus only spread heavily in Cuba

when they reopened tourists in November. Cuban specialists said they will offer vaccines to tourists, but they don't know if they will be selling them or offering them for free. The slump in tourism is already affecting the Cuban economy, which has been a crisis even before the pandemic. Cuba relies heavily on tourism to keep the economy steady and to feed the people of Cuba. Some Cuban people made their living off of tourists by selling their goods and services. Before Cuba had a shortage of essential goods, now it is even more of a problem that the government must act to help them. Back to the impacts, the pandemic had on the economy in the article *Cuba's Dream* "This incredibly rapid development of a COVID vaccine in Cuba is happening in the midst of one of the worst economic crises to hit the communist nation in decades". They are comparing it to the special period that I learned back in class when Cuba ran out of food, fertilizer, and fuel. People of Cuba are struggling to try to find necessities meaning food, cleaning products, medicines, and even chicken for meat. I might have doubted the power of Cuba during the pandemic because on so many limited resources they still managed to go above and beyond most countries. Here is a quote explaining why from *Infectious Disease Management in Cuba, Canadian* "Cuba's health achievements have been attained with only a fraction of the resources available in the United States and other Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries. According to the World Bank (7), Cuba spends 7.5% of its gross domestic product on health expenditure, compared with 9.6% in Canada, 14.6% in the US". Cuba does have a really good healthcare system compared to where it is located in the world that is impressive that they are still striving to get out of this pandemic as quickly as possible.

To conclude, Cuba has progressed a long way with its healthcare system and research during the time of the pandemic that shows from the work of vaccine they created. Cuba was the first Latin American country to produce a vaccine that so far is efficient and sold to underdeveloped countries making a profit. Cuba still has its weaknesses when it comes to resources and food supply for the citizens. The economy did get a harsh hit from COVID-19 by the blockade of tourism to stop the spread of the virus that did save the people, but not their money. Cuba still prevented the spread of the virus in an impeccable way that other countries should have followed.

## Work cited

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