

Global Pandemics: Time's Effect on the Perceptions of People

by Claire Peterson

Why does it feel like COVID-19's presence within society is so chaotic and unruly when only a century ago, in 1918, the Spanish flu placed the world in a similar circumstance? Through the development and movement of communication and technology, could the way in which we discuss important current events alter the way we perceive these events, the pandemic specifically, altogether?

My hypothesis is that the way in which society responded to the Spanish Flu in 1918 was in a more cohesive and calm manner than how we have dealt with COVID-19. Instead, modern society discusses and handles COVID-19 chaotically and in a fast pace. Through referencing *The Almanian* in the year 1918, I will evaluate any evidence to understand how exactly people discussed the Spanish flu and the efforts they made to combat it. Furthermore, through accessing the *Alma Record*, I will analyze the public reactions and standards set as evidence to how seriously both macro and micro sociological groups perceived the events which were occurring. I will then access and assess the current pieces within the news, such as the national news coverage and coverage in local news, that discuss COVID-19 and I will consider the way in which this news is presented to the public, and the methods in which are utilized. I believe that there will be a large difference in the ways which the two pandemics are discussed, and question what moral, psychological, and societal developments may have caused these differences.

I will discuss how this massive event, the COVID-19 global pandemic, feels as detrimental and extraordinarily out of the norm for modern society — especially when in actuality, this is not the first time the world has experienced a sickness that has left hundreds of thousands dead, millions infected, and shifted the lives of all.