

## Transcript of Interview with Kate Roche and Ariel Emrani

**Interviewee:** Kate Roche, Ariel Emrani

**Interviewer:** Kate Roche, Ariel Emrani

**Date:** 12/06/2021

**Location (Interviewee):**

**Location (Interviewer):**

**Abstract:** Students Kate Roche and Ariel Emrani interview each other and discuss the similarities between the COVID 19 pandemic and past pandemics. In this interview they also discuss social reaction to the current pandemics and how they differ from past pandemics.

**Kate Roche 00:00**

Hi, I'm Kate Roche.

**Ariel Emrani 00:02**

I'm Ariel Emrani.

**Kate Roche 00:04**

And, Ariel, do you consent to being interviewed for the COVID-19 archive project?

**Ariel Emrani 00:09**

Yes.

**Kate Roche 00:10**

The date is December 6, 2021. And the time is 2:31pm. So how have past pandemics affected your view on COVID-19 pandemic.

**Ariel Emrani 00:20**

I feel lucky not to have lived through the Black Death, and that at least looking towards the people around me, we've been better about not fixating on death. And I feel lucky as a Jew to feel safe in comparison to what happened during that time. Turning to smallpox, I think that its connection to slavery is really interesting. It makes me feel like I have a lack of education on how different marginalized groups were affected.

**Kate Roche 00:42**

And did they help you gain any perspective?

**Ariel Emrani 00:46**

Yeah, for a lot of reasons. I feel like I now understand why they cause human struggle, pandemics, and reflection on the relationships, religion and things I like. And I feel like I have a deeper understanding regarding how microbes grow and mutate. And I understand how people can be affected so differently from one another and

have such personalized experiences and how countries can be affected super differently, which I think is super interesting. And I also this is kind of random. But I really can't imagine how cholera cause seven different pandemics and how people lived through that.

**Kate Roche** 01:17

How the past pandemics compared to our current pandemic?

**Ariel Emrani** 01:21

Well, it's interesting that the Black Death targets people in the prime of their life specifically, rather than children or the elderly. People have a very hard time between science and religion, which is something that I don't think will change anytime soon. And that's present through all pandemics. I feel like I think scientific racism is definitely still present. But in comparison to past pandemics, I think it's more hidden. And in addition to people of color, the lower class are typically more vulnerable. And looking towards cholera. It has low contagion, but it's highly deadly, which is not really in line with COVID-19.

**Kate Roche** 01:56

Have we as a species been able to learn from the past and fix our mistakes? Or do we continue to repeat our failures?

**Ariel Emrani** 02:01

In some ways, we have been able to learn and work our fear into motivation, but some people have done the exact opposite. And I think that conspiracies have played too big of a role in all of our pandemics, which shows that we haven't really learned looking towards the black death. In that time, there were many sanitary methods put into place that are very similar to the precautions we take today. So I'm not really sure if this is a positive or a negative, or if it shows if we've learned and the CDC, FDA, WHO and others are all still very involved, which is similar to today. So I guess you could say that we learned that those work, and so we've continued to incorporate them. But we also have failed to learn because people still incorporate politics into such simple and obvious safety measures such as mask wearing.

**Kate Roche** 02:47

And thats all questions that I have.

**Ariel Emrani** 02:49

Okay, so I'll ask you now.

**Kate Roche** 02:51

Okay.

**Ariel Emrani** 02:52

Do you consent to being asked questions and be recorded?

**Kate Roche** 02:55

Yes.

**Ariel Emrani** 02:56

Okay, it is now 2:34pm. How have past pandemics affected your view on the COVID 19 pandemic?

**Kate Roche** 03:02

I think it is highlighted a lot of the similarities between past pandemics and the current COVID 19 pandemic, especially in just like the response of not only the people, but the government, like one of the main similarities I've noticed is a theme of division amongst people tweeting, religion, race, and cultures. Like there's a lot of just people thinking that it should be handled in very different ways. And one of the main things that affected my current view on the pandemic was just kind of learning about the ways that the virus is spread almost gives me more of a sense of security in the current pandemic, because I feel more aware of what I can do to like, stay safe myself and prevent the spread.

**Ariel Emrani** 03:47

Interesting. Okay, next question. Do any past pandemics help you gain any perspective on our current pandemic? I know that you touched on that. But if you have nothing else to say.

**Kate Roche** 03:56

I think the timeline was also something that changed in my perspective, at the beginning of the COVID 19 pandemic, I definitely was expecting it to last maybe a couple of months or be kind of like a flu season. But seeing past pandemics and how it lasts for eight years, and there's usually multiple spikes and mutations in the virus itself. I'm definitely expecting this to last much longer. And I've even like read things that it could turn into a flu season where we have to get regular shots every year and vaccinations. And just like seeing how that happened in the past definitely changed my view on that.

**Ariel Emrani** 04:30

Cool. And how do those past pandemics compare to our current pandemic?

**Kate Roche** 04:35

I think there's a lot of similarities, like I said, with the response of them, but in the viruses themselves. I think, like obviously, they're different viruses. But I think just like being a pandemic, there's not a lot of differences that I've noticed. I mean, I guess yeah, just symptoms and then the different environmental factors that played a role, you know, Poverty was different in the past, with people being a lot closer together with like, waste, and like how it used to be, like discarded in the streets. And just overall sanitation was definitely a lot worse. And that played a large role in the spread of viruses. But I think a lot of the, those differences would have to do with like, time periods.

**Ariel Emrani** 05:22

So I know you said we've learned in regards to sanitation. But are there any other ways that we've been able to fix our past mistakes? Or do we continue to repeat our mistakes?

**Kate Roche** 05:31

I think that, I don't know, I don't really think that there's been a lot of fixes to mistakes other than like general sanitation and developments and science. I think that like the division of people has been really detrimental to the mitigation of the COVID 19 virus, because like you see people who were taking on anti masking anti vaccination

stances, all because the government is focusing on or because they are focusing on the economics of it all rather than the actual people and the health of communities. So they're taking defense of their own individual and personal freedoms over the protection of the community and the population as a whole and also seeing countries like retreat to fix their own situations have left many countries unaided, when instead people come together, obviously, shutting down Borders has had some positive effects and slowing down the spread because it's not crossing over national lines anymore, or I mean, it still is, but to a lesser degree, but still people are taking like looking inwardly rather than outwardly into their community.

**Ariel Emrani** 06:39

Okay, thank you.