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## **Overview**

I am originally from South Korea and teach in the Program for Writing and Rhetoric at CU Boulder. This project draws on my students' final projects of four sections of WRTG 1150 (First-Year Writing & Rhetoric) seminar that I am teaching this semester. Two sections are designed for international students and two sections are for native-English speakers. For the final project of our class, I asked my students to look into the impact of COVID-19 on their lives and their loved ones. This is a *Kairos* moment (emphasizing the characteristic of timeliness of an event) to be captured and reflected upon.

COVID-19 is a wake-up call. As a community, as a nation, as a planet, we've had to face enormous challenges that have shaken the very foundation of our human lives. The impositions of self-quarantine, cancellations of important events and meetings, closures of public gathering spaces, restrictions of national borders, and lockdowns of nations around the globe have led us to recognize a new reality that humanity is facing in the 21 Century.

We are in a completely unknown territory and are collectively learning how to adapt in order to maintain health and safety in a pandemic while still conducting our educational missions as well as our daily lives. In the midst of this global pandemic, we've come to know people around the world rising to the challenges in helping the public cope with the fears, confusions, and urgent disruptions in the spheres of finance, medicine, religion, education, politics, service industry as well as others.

In their final projects, my students explored how they've maintained their well-being in the midst of this global crisis; the examples they've seen that show the inspiring actions of people or communities rising to the challenge they are presented with; how we are collaborating locally, nationally and internationally beyond personal, political, ideological, institutional divisions and boundaries; what lessons we've learned in coping with the global pandemic and how we will respond appropriately in the future.

This project is a compilation of my international and native-English-speaking students' final projects in WRTG 1150 (First-Year Writing & Rhetoric) seminar. It showcases some snapshots of selected students' projects in a combination of visual images, drawings, and traditional essays.

## Tony Tang



As a college student originally from Wuhan, the epicenter of the breakout, the virus impacted my life particularly. I have to return home in the middle of my semester and follow a strict quarantine policy that ensures the safety of people around me and myself. Life has been a lot different, in terms of food, social activities, and travelling for Wuhan people. The city of Wuhan is in a total shutdown mode. Despite being a city of more than 10 million population, Wuhan was shut down by all means. Only people doing essential work were still working. The city is quieter than ever. This picture shows the spring of Wuhan. It was supposed to attract thousands of travelers all over the country to Wuhan when the flowers came out. But not for this year because of covid-19.



As we face this unprecedented catastrophe, we need to think rationally about human errors and failures, rather than blame and shirk. This disaster is a long way from the end, but this natural and man-made disaster also provides a rare opportunity for human reflection. At the end of this epidemic, maybe the whole world will finally understand that this is not the “China virus”, but the “world virus” that all countries must face together. In this era of globalization, although the boundaries between countries are still clear, the virus will never stay within the borders of one country. More than ever before, we need to have a global vision and a global mind. We must learn how to work together to meet unprecedented challenges. After the novel coronavirus has swept the world, this should not be a time for us to regain our isolation, but a new starting point for a different era of globalization. The world needs to unite stronger and show more love to others instead of hate and jealousy. This disaster may be bad for now, but hopefully it can be a valuable lesson for the next generations to come.

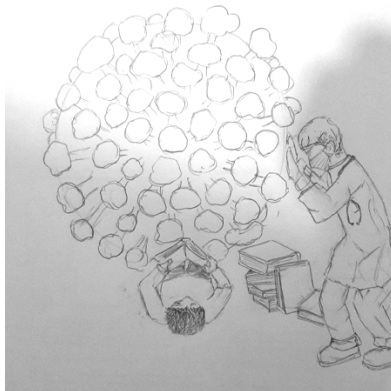
## Nicholas Hellmers

“In this final reflection I’ve decided to make two pieces of art in order to embody the traits of human beings that I have been noticing most recently. I decided to do this as I felt more confident in my abilities in order to express this through a picture rather than writing.” I call this piece “Greed” (right-hand side). I found the inspiration for it while watching Michael Moore’s documentary “Planet of the Humans”.



I call this last piece (left-hand side) “Compassion”. I received the inspiration for this while thinking of my girlfriend, Abby. No matter how bad things got she was always my light, eager to clear my path and help me pull through this dark dream. Through this experience I can always remind myself that having faith in people is not a fool’s dream. And if we stay cooperative and friendly towards one another.

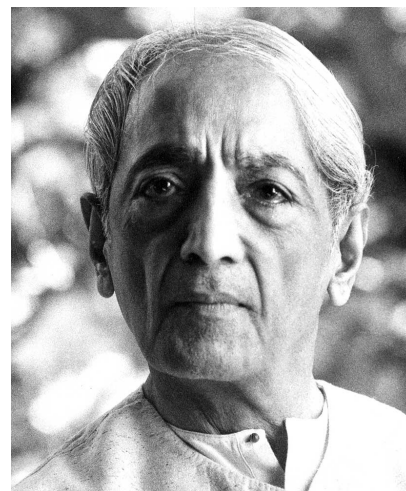
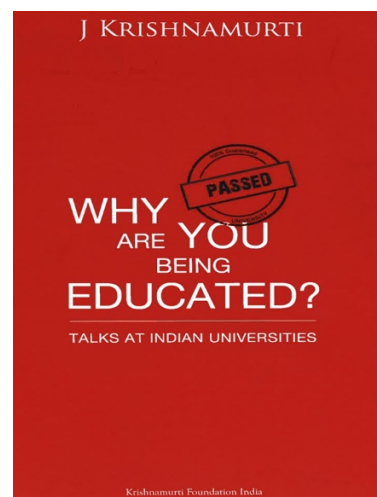
## Ravin Chowdhury



This has been a pivotal year for me. Along with it being the year of the Coronavirus outbreak that the world will remember it as, it is also part of what has been my first year of college, in a foreign land thousands of kilometres from my home country India. In this reflective essay, I ponder upon the closing act of my final freshman semester and exemplify the whirlwind rate at which changes taking place around the world have been affecting me. The first picture is my representation of my college experience in these trying times. This experience has both beaten me down and enlightened me to how privileged I have been and continue to be. In my final two years of high school, I was a student at Sahyadri School run by the Krishnamurti Foundation in India (his picture is on the right-hand side).

The second picture is of Jiddu Krishnamurti. Part of his philosophy was to think deeply about everything. “Why am I being educated?” was the final question the school asked me, right after I graduated, in the form of a book presented to me (the red book on

the right-hand side). Today, in the face of a COVID-struck college experience, this book has counselled me. This situation today has incentivised me to preserve my thoughts and experiences for my future self and offer my humble advice to those who are starting college like me. Several skills that I have developed this year will be essential to me for the rest of my life including, but not restricted to learning to interact with all kinds of people, being steadfast and making a habit of questioning everything. This year has clearly exposed the flaws we have in our society and I believe that many of the skills that college develops in us has the power to change it for the better.





## **Spencer Halstead**

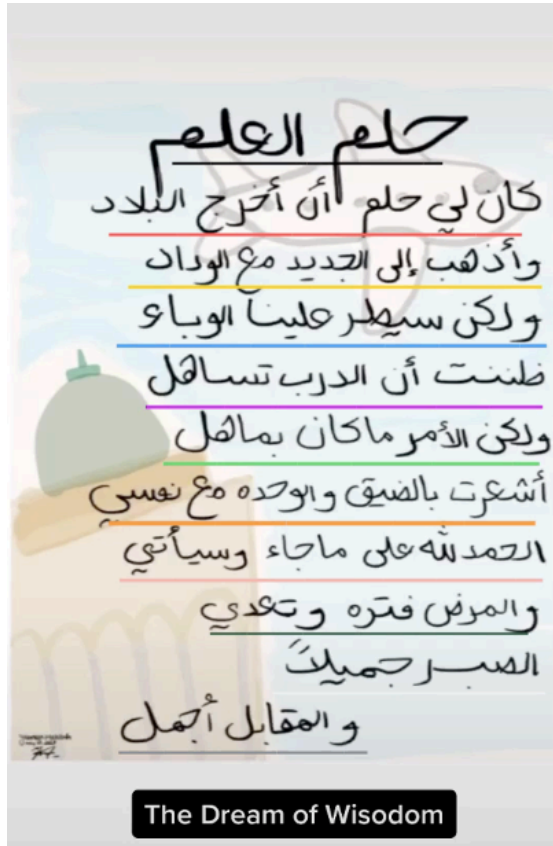
(double-click on image to play this video)



This accurately portrayed the ways I was able to cope and maintain during this COVID-19 pandemic. Once the university decided to switch to all remote online During the early months of quarantine, my life was centered around this love for music. I came to find many abstract forms of inspiration from the music I listened to. These albums from the first picture have been very advantageous to me during the pandemic. They have provided me with accessible outlets for advancing my musical creativity, as well as keeping me mentally healthy and comfortable during these uncertain times. My love of music and guitar has only progressed during the COVID-19 pandemic and has been able to help me cope and prosper over the course of this catastrophe. I have now become very attached to my guitar and am thankful that I was able to find an outlet to fully express myself.

### Yasmeen Malallah

(double-click on image to play this video)



For my final project I decided to go with an Arabic poem written by me. I thought it was only perfect to mix my culture with my education and how these two perspectives beautifully collide. Learning is not just simply taking in information, but it is also giving information to those who provide it to you. Teaching those around you about where you came from and who you are as a person is also education, I decided to focus this poem on my writing class because my writing class was a great example. My writing class was filled with people from beautiful cultures and vibrant positive vibes.

**Note:** The colored background of text translations at the bottom correspond with the Arabic text underlined in the same color.

Sidney Harvey

(double-click on image to play this video)



For my final project I choreographed a dance that embodies my internal feeling during the beginning of the pandemic all the way through the last semester. I have danced for 17 years of my life. Dance has always been my outlet and how I choose to express myself, making it the perfect way for me to process and deal with my feelings during the pandemic.

I chose the song “The Way I Do” by Bishop Briggs because I feel very

empowered when listening to it. I feel that it is okay to go about things the way I choose to. This relates to my college experience because when dealing with coronavirus I had to go about it and deal in my own way to manage my feelings of anxiety and helplessness.

Another reason I chose that song is because some of the lyrics very much embodied how I was feeling. The songs say “you will never know all this pain, never know all this hurt,” this embodies how I was when my teachers did not understand my mental health state. I felt like they didn’t understand the pain I was going through or they would have made attempts to help me. The lyric was very empowering to me because it makes it very explicit that no one knows how you are feeling, that those feelings are my own and can’t be compared to anyone else because no one but me can really understand the weight of what I was feeling.

Kandyce Sanchez



My picture represents a modern “The Scream” by Edvard Munch: seeing as it represents similar feelings of anxiety and fear. My art piece can also be seen to be similar to “The scream” in terms of visual aesthetic. My art piece represents confusion and constant worry. As you can see, there is a social media app above me, demonstrating confusion.

I drew the twitter app logo incorporated in a circle above my head to convey a bird cartoon like imagery. The circling birds communicate society's feelings which can include a stunned feeling or even familiar feelings to seeing stars. In cartoons, often, the character gets knocked out and has birds encompassing their head and this is supposed to describe the character going crazy or cuckoo. I used the twitter app logo to represent how all of the articles I read on twitter make me confused as well as give me the feeling of anxiety and stress. This is also the main social media app I have used throughout the COVID-19 stay at home order. It keeps me entertained and sane; packed with numerous funny memes to make light of the stay at home order. However, it is crucial to remember that too much use of this app is not beneficial nor helpful to building memories with family, friends, or even focusing on personal hobbies.



Lindsey Camara



For my research project, I wanted to play the theme to Animal Crossing: New Horizons (AC:NH) on my flute. The game came out right at the start of quarantine. If it wasn't for this game, quarantine would definitely have not been as manageable as it is today. I have been playing flute since 5th grade, when I was ten. Now, I'm eighteen, and I still love playing it just as much. I love playing video game songs on my flute, because it helps me bring them to life.

Animal Crossing: New Horizons has given me time in quarantine to destress and focus on one thing. I like to talk to my favorite animal villagers, place some flowers around my town, and fish for sharks. The game lets me into a whole other world, which lets my mind calm down. When I'm stressed or upset, playing AC:NH, or playing my flute, are my favorite things to do. I wanted to combine those two things for this paper and show how meaningful they are to me. Everything changed so fast with coronavirus, and it's hard to remember to stop and look around sometimes. Playing AC:NH allows me to slow down and enjoy the moment. It helps me escape from the hectic world of this year 2020.

Sophie Cabral



For this painting, (see appendix for all paintings) I used gouache on watercolor paper. Gouache is almost a mix between watercolor and acrylic paint as it is easier to control yet can give a watercolor or acrylic-like finish depending on how much water you incorporate. I chose to paint these two mountains to show how my scenery has changed in going to CU Boulder. Mt. Tamalpais, or Mt. Tam, has beautiful hiking trails, with creeks that run through the base. To the left is the beach, which can also be hiked to from Mt. Tam. I was always excited to come back to my beautiful home in California, but I didn't know it would be this soon. I feel myself longing to see the Flat Irons, and I wish I had hiked Chautauqua one last time before I left.

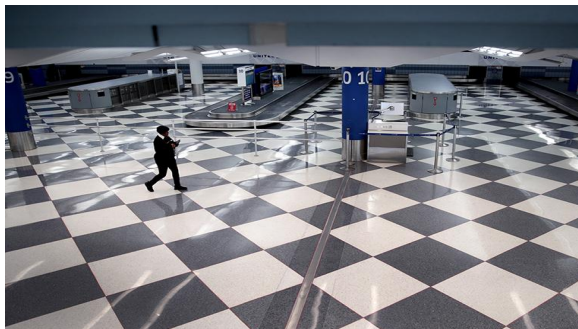
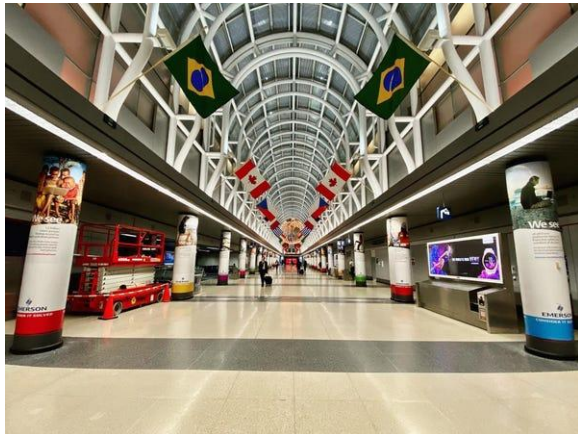


In this painting, I used blue, a colder tone color, to suggest the sadness that comes with quarantine and the inability to be with other people. The background is a light orange and her clothes and hair are flowing to allow people to see that if we look outside of ourselves, and branch out by talking with people via phone, happiness and growth can come from this worldwide historical event that is Coronavirus.



Where I live, the beach is never empty. Be it a foggy winter day, or a hot saturday in the summer, you will always find people there. Recently, of course, that has not been the case. The state has closed all the beaches, which don't get me wrong, I think this is a great idea, but it is almost dystopian to see them completely empty.

## Tuqa Al Hajri (Oman)



Our flight was from O'Hare International Airport where the airport was closed except for one airline that we were traveling in. It was strange seeing one of the busiest airports so abandoned by travelers and from workers. We had a layover in Qatar international Airport, which was even emptier than O'Hare, with a small number of people walking through there. In both of these airports, there weren't some security measures against Corona except keeping a 2-meter distance between people. However, the minute we set foot in Oman all of this changed. When we got out of the airport, the first thing that the health officials did was distancing every passenger from the next, providing us with face masks, and sanitizers. After that our temperature was measured to see if any person had symptoms of Corona or not, and we were asked if we have been in contact with any person who was diagnosed, and other official questions. Then all of the passengers were divided into two groups, house quarantine or institutional quarantine, my family and I chose to be in institutional quarantine, so we were taken to a hotel where we would spend the required 14 days. The streets were as empty as ever, no one was out and about except for emergencies or going to some important work.

Traveling from the USA to Oman, I had the chance to personally explore how both countries dealt with the virus. On April 8th we got an email from the embassy of Oman telling us that if we want to go back there would be a private plane taking us back the next day, and the Omani airport would be opened for one day only for this plane, then the borders would be closed. My family and I packed our stuff as fast as we could, and hopped on the plane.