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I have always wondered why it is so important to study history, to study something that took place so long ago, that happened in a completely different society, so distant from ours. Only today, I have finally realized how necessary it is for our life, since, as many authors have said, “*historia magistra vitae*”, as it always repeats itself.

Nowadays we are living an economic, social, political and sanitary crisis, that is getting worse day by day and is completely changing our everyday life. As I said, history repeats itself and, in this precise moment, we have the proof of it. The crisis that we are living today, appears really close to the 1929 crisis that took place firstly in the USA, but then involved most of the European countries. It is even more similar, yet worrying, to the one experienced in 2008.

Our government has forced us to self-isolation, our rights and liberties have been drastically restricted to the basic needs and necessities. They have forbidden us to interact with other people, as well as going out for walks. Italian citizens can go out just to go to work, to go to the supermarket, one at the time, and to go to the hospital. Among citizens, anxiety and fear have spread, as well as the consciousness that probably humanity will be changed for ever and nothing will go back to how it was before the CoVid – 19. Many people will lose their jobs, their houses; as well as friends, parents, relatives. Every single person will be shaken down to the core.

On January 1st 2020, the Chinese government alerted WHO (World Health Organization) about the spread of an unknown virus and soon after shut down the city of Wuhan who had the highest number of cases; this virus is now better known as the CoVid – 19, literally Corona Virus. It is a virus born in China, precisely in Wuhan, and that has spread to more than 160 countries and territories, killing millions of people. Conspiracy theories have spread faster than the new Corona Virus, some people believe that it is a bioweapon created by Chinese, who accidentally leaked it; others, instead, think it was created by Americans who deliberately released it; however, many virologues claimed that the outbreak of the virus was caused by the bats, which were sold, alive, in the Chinese Market and eaten by customers. Originally, the virus belonged to the jungle bats, which in an unnatural process came in touch with other animals in the Chinese Market, that modified and amplified the virus; these bats were then sold to people who ate them and contracted the disease, passing it on to others and spreading the virus at the speed of light. How jungle bats moved from a rural environment to an urban one is still unknown, yet scientists have blamed the global warming, which has forced animals of all species to migrate.

Moreover, even if it is hard to believe, the global pandemic is strongly linked to the global ecological crisis. Several scientists, in fact, stated that health is a communicating vessel system which aims to reach an equilibrium with animals, plants and the environment in which we live. It is fundamental that we pay respect to our Mother Nature and to everything she has provided us; due to our lack of gratitude towards her and because of our conceit, it is possible that she is punishing us for the way she is being treated lately; indeed, throughout the centuries, we have mismanaged biodiversity, lands, oceans, atmosphere and day by day we are ruining Earth beyond repair, reaching, every day faster, a point of no return; we are destroying our eternal home.

Throughout history, humanity has been hit by loads of epidemics, such as the Spanish Flu, the Plague, the Leprosy and many others. First of all, we can recognize some analogies between the Spanish Flu and the Corona Virus: when the 1918 flu hit, doctors were unsure what caused it or how to treat it.

As with the virus, there were no effective vaccines or drugs to treat the flu. Similarly, we have other resemblances between the Plague, the Leprosy and the CoVid – 19. The main problem of the Corona Virus is that it is highly contagious and, as it happened at the time of the Plague and the Leprosy, people are afraid of coming into contact with sick subjects because scared of contracting the disease. Another similarity, which in my opinion is the most frightening and terrible one, is that those who contract it and are now in intensive care, are destined to die alone without the possibility of saying goodbye to their loved ones, without having the chance of holding their hands when passing away.

Personally, the thing that scares me the most is not contracting the virus, yet the fear of passing it on to all the people around me that I care so much about. The guilt of that would be very hard to handle. My anxiety is pushed even further by the fact that no one is giving us clear information about what is going to happen, when we go back to our life and the cures for this disease; because, in my opinion, neither do they know. Furthermore, I strongly believe that, even though we are striving, we have to prove ourselves and other countries that we are strong and we can work it out, but at the same time we have to believe in ourselves and our possibilities and we have to respect the rules that were imposed us by the Government; we have to trust each other and our State and we have to contribute with as much as we can, to help doctors in order to lower the number of infected. Despite I love to hang out with my friends, to practise sports, to stay outdoors; government has asked us, multiple times, to stay indoors, and as a citizen I am willing to sacrifice myself for a bigger purpose: the safety of my fellow citizens. Due to this, I really do not get how for some people it is so difficult to put other people wellness in front of their own.

The Holy Father, in his Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'*, put forward the importance of an integral ecology, highlighting how men are destroying our Earth and how urgent a behavioral change is, so that men can put all their effort in saving Mother Nature and our planet, which are in huge danger. Nevertheless, men should not just take care of curing our house, but the real approach should be a social one; we have to learn to respect each other, to help each other out. Indeed, the Corona Virus should be seen as a way of re – establishing our priorities and as a chance of looking deeper into ourselves, trying to become better people. We are part of something, we are part of humanity and part of Earth, we have to respect God and the environment that He gave us. So far we have been disrespectful towards either of them. Our Planet is the heritage of the whole humanity and, as such, we are responsible for it.

These days, you can really see fear and sorrow in people's eyes, you can see incertitude in the attitudes of the few people out in the streets; and Rome seems the setting of a post – apocalyptic movie. It feels to be living in one of the dystopian novels, by Huxley and Orwell, in which people were mind – controlled by the Government and the Police and in which people were afraid of going out or think beyond schemes; as in *1984* or *Brave New World*, we feel controlled and limited by our Government. By the way, contrarily to what happened in the novels, our State is trying to protect us and keep us safe, yet sometimes, this protection and restrictions are oppressing, and we feel like animals held in captivity. “*1984*” and “*Brave New World*”, by George Orwell and Aldous Huxley, are two of the main dystopian novels we analysed. A dystopia is an unpleasant, typically repressive society, often propagandized as being utopian. The dystopian works usually depict a negative view of the way the world is supposedly going in order to provide urgent propaganda for a change in direction. Dystopian works are set in the future where some aspects of humanity are worse off than they are today. Books, magazines, newspapers and anything else are outlawed. No one can speak up or speak out, the only ideas and messages allowed are those spread by the government. In *Brave New World*, Huxley warned us of genetic modifications and government control; in *1984*, Orwell warns against

communism and government manipulation through lying about everything. A dystopia is a utopia gone wrong. A utopia is an idyllic and ideal place, where people's needs are met. Most dystopias are the results of totalitarian attempts of utopia. Orwell, in 1948 wrote "1984", right after the end of the Second World War, at the time in which Stalin's totalitarian regime was established in USSR. Orwell's novel is drenched with references to totalitarian regimes and war, in fact his work is set in an apocalyptic city, Oceania, in which inhabitants are constantly supervised by the Thought Police and the Big Brother, whose motto is "Big Brother is watching you" and there is a war going on against a common enemy, Emmanuel Goldstein, which by chance, is also a Jewish name. Oceania's people liberties were reduced to a minimum: they were forbidden to pursue physiological needs and their dreams. They neither could write diaries, nor fall in love and they found their satisfaction in drinking gin or scratching itchy parts on their bodies. Their lives were reduced as lives without a meaning or a purpose. In Brave New World, instead, we have a totally different setting, we are in the year AF 632, after the first Model T car was produced in 1908. The setting is the central London hatchery and Conditioning Centre, an unassuming building where all human life originates. The director, Mustapha Mond, leads a tour outlining the defining qualities of the five castes: the Alphas, Betas, Deltas, Gammas and Epsilons; he explains how humans are genetically designed to fit into the rigid class of hierarchy. The director explains also how from infancy people are conditioned to adopt the principles of the World State: consumerism, promiscuity, discrimination among the casts, group-thinking and rejection of solitude. Religion, history and literature are rejected and forbidden. The main themes we find in the novel are the incompatibility of truth and happiness, the use of technology as a mean to control society and the dangers of an all – powerful state. In both novels the main characters struggle with the society they live in and rebel against the government, which ends in a catastrophe. To escape from their painful realities, Brave New World's characters make conspicuous use of soma, a drug used to calm nerves and alienate themselves from their lives; while Winston Smith drunk a Victorian gin, scratched an itchy part on his ankle and wrote a diary.

What we are living today is the most unexpected and difficult situation I ever found myself in, but thanks to the time I have spent alone, I have learned that stars cannot shine without darkness. Perhaps, from now on we will learn not to give anything for granted, we will see the tiniest things, such as going out with a friend, as the biggest gift of life; we will learn to give importance to every single encounter within the day, we will learn how to turn the simplest moment in something worth of being remembered, and, maybe we will finally stop losing our time in front of our phones instead of making the most of our time with others. We will learn that happiness is not so difficult to reach and to find, because it is in the simpler things that it is hidden. Until now, we have been so distracted to not being able to see that happiness was right in front of our eyes. We will start appreciating the small things, those to which we did not pay attention. We will realize that even waking up every morning just to go to school or to work, being surrounded by those we love and love us back, will change our perspective and improve our day. Today, we have the chance of having a lot of time, that same time that usually we do not have due to the millions of things we have to accomplish daily. With this quarantine we have been given the biggest gift of all times, spending quality time with our family, that we see less and less ordinary. Time to grow up, time to be better, time to get to know ourselves better, but most of all, to start all over again tomorrow, more conscious and more grateful than before.



English Assignment
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a.s. 2019-2020