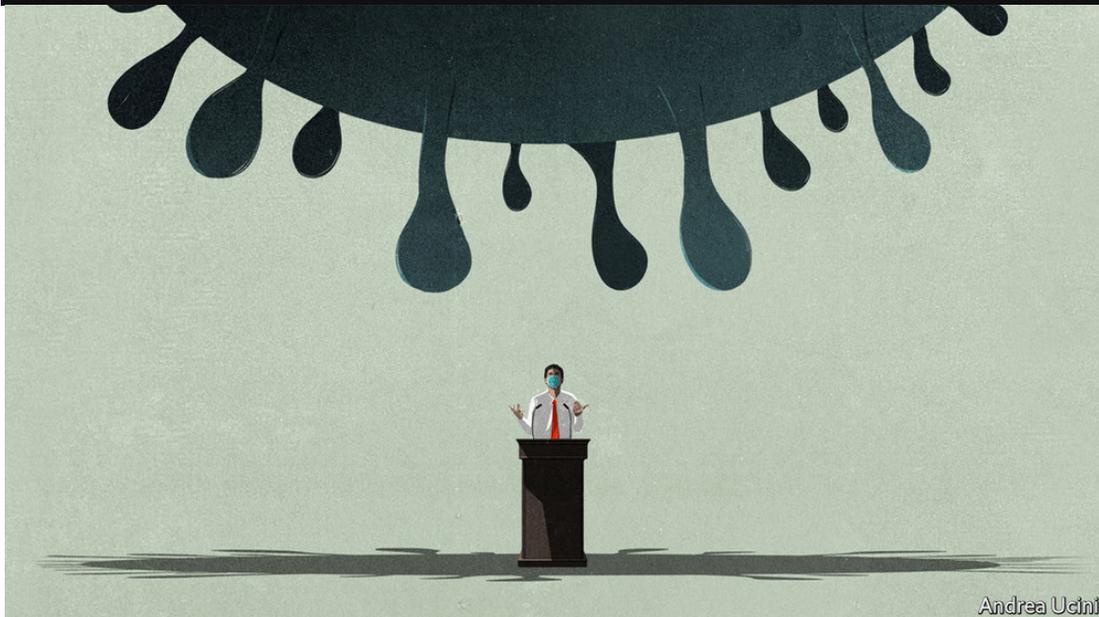




THE PALEY CENTER FOR MEDIA

PALEY EDUCATION @Home
presented by **citi**

What We're Watching



Teen Transmitters Takeover!

For six weeks, *What We're Watching* is being taken over by the Paley Center's teen internship cohort! Each week a different pair will bring you their thoughts on the 2020 media landscape along with personalized recommendations. We hope you enjoy this unique opportunity to hear directly from young voices about the impact this year has had. This week we hear from **Allendy Hiciano**, Senior, University Heights High School, and **Matthew Garcia**, Senior, Brooklyn Technical High School.



Politics and Media Post-COVID

In his recent *New York Times* opinion piece, Jamelle Bouie questioned whether movies like 1995's *Outbreak*, which features a well-coordinated, perfectly competent federal government, are a thing of the past. Today we investigate the feasibility of such a future by seeing if any of the common claims told about the political landscape after Coronavirus stand-up to scrutiny, and examine some of the ways in which the virus is already changing the media landscape. Stay tuned to the end for our media suggestions that will keep you and your family entertained this week.





A prevalent concern is that Coronavirus will cause a demonization of China and its people in American media. In the first few weeks of the pandemic, there was a surge in online attacks against Chinese people who were blamed for the virus. Similarly, after 9/11, there was a demonization of Islam in both the political and media spheres, a choice that has had long-lasting effects even to this day. It is therefore not hard to imagine a rise in anti-Chinese sentiment, some of which can already be observed such as when the president repeatedly refers to COVID-19 as the “China Virus.” There are, however, a few key differences in the two events; COVID-19 is not represented as a Chinese creation in the media. In fact the president has been widely criticized for his remarks, and the idea that China did this to us is more a conspiracy theory on the rightwing-fringe than a widely held public perception. Even though the level of Sinophobia may have increased since the beginning of the pandemic, such as an increased avoidance of largely Asian and specifically Chinese neighborhoods, it is a sentiment that will largely be relegated to the far-right and its respective media outlets.





Another suggested change is an increased trust in experts. Tom Nicholas, writing for *Politico*, claims Coronavirus has, “forced people back to accepting that expertise matters,” as people have listened to medical experts like the CDC and Dr. Anthony Fauci instead of the president when it comes to matters pertaining to the outbreak. However, we should be hesitant to draw a causal link between the virus and increased trust in experts. First, a paper from the Systemic Risk Centre at the London School of Economics looked at data from previous pandemics to determine whether it would lead to an uptick in trust of “scientific research and expertise” and found that living through a pandemic “has no impact on views of science as an endeavor or on opinions of whether the study of disease is properly an aspect of science.” While it can be argued that Coronavirus is unique in its size and impact, we should keep in mind that a 2019 Pew Research Survey found that Americans’ confidence in scientists has been up since 2016. While this does not mean there will be no increased trust in medical experts, it may not be as large a factor as we may hope. Lastly, they found that confidence is higher in Democrats and those with high science knowledge, suggesting once again that anti-science is a feature of the far-right rather than the mainstream.

The last claim is that trust in government will decline drastically due to the pandemic, and libertarians hope that this distrust will lead to people voting to downsize government. Trust in government has been decreasing for decades, and research shows that those affected will be less trusting of government in the future. In a perfectly logical society, declining trust in government would lead to voters with more libertarian views, but this seemingly obvious maxim has not held true for American voters. Indeed, support for universal healthcare sharply increased following the pandemic. *The Hill* predicted that the pandemic would increase political support for a strong social safety net. Furthermore, economic nationalism and protectionism have been on the rise since the pandemic began, highlighting the abandonment of Goldwater-esque Republican thinking, with its emphasis on free markets, small government, and individualism. Paradoxically, voters both distrust the government and want it to do more for them. It seems the libertarian argument of government incompetence fails to resonate with voters.

It would seem we can expect a consequential transformation of the Republican Party away from the individualist, free-market thinking towards a nationalist,

further right party. The party that once won nearly forty percent of the Black vote for Eisenhower, and a similar percentage of Hispanic votes for Bush has spent decades becoming a largely white party, which is dangerous for a party in a country that is becoming increasingly non-white. At some point, Republicans seem to have understood this and issued a report in 2016 that called on Republicans to court Hispanics and other key demographics. Unfortunately, the party did not heed the call, and it seems this pandemic will serve only to accelerate its decline as it relies on increasingly anti-science and nationalist messaging.

How will this new political landscape impact the media?



With the stakes of this year's presidential election, and the contentiousness of issues like Black Lives Matter, we can almost guarantee that this year's Thanksgiving table will be hellish. However, this election year is incredibly different from any other in living memory for one reason: humanity is being confronted by a global pandemic. We've already discussed the effects of COVID-19 on the political landscape, but what does this mean for media coverage?

Despite the obvious difficulties of these current times, the music industry has been a force for positivity in both the personal and political sphere. So not every portion of life is gloomy. The music industry has put positive energy out into the political world. A *New York Times* article by Joe Coscarelli analyzed

increased activism within American K-Pop fans. Post-COVID, American K-Pop fans, many of whom are young adults, have stood up and began to involve themselves in politics and social action. You may wonder, what does K-Pop music have to do with young adults becoming politically informed? Well, they answered that question themselves, saying, "Although K-Pop's message is not necessarily political in an overt sense, they are often about empowerment and self-confidence." Music can be interpreted in many ways, and for many K-Pop fans, music serves as encouragement to rise and make change. K-Pop is not the only genre influenced by the pandemic. Hip-Hop, which has had a significant reputation for speaking out about social injustice since it began, has also has a resurgence of politically themed songs. In the last few months, artists like Lil Baby, DaBaby, Roddy Rich, and Roy Kinsey have dropped songs expressing their opinions on recent social events.

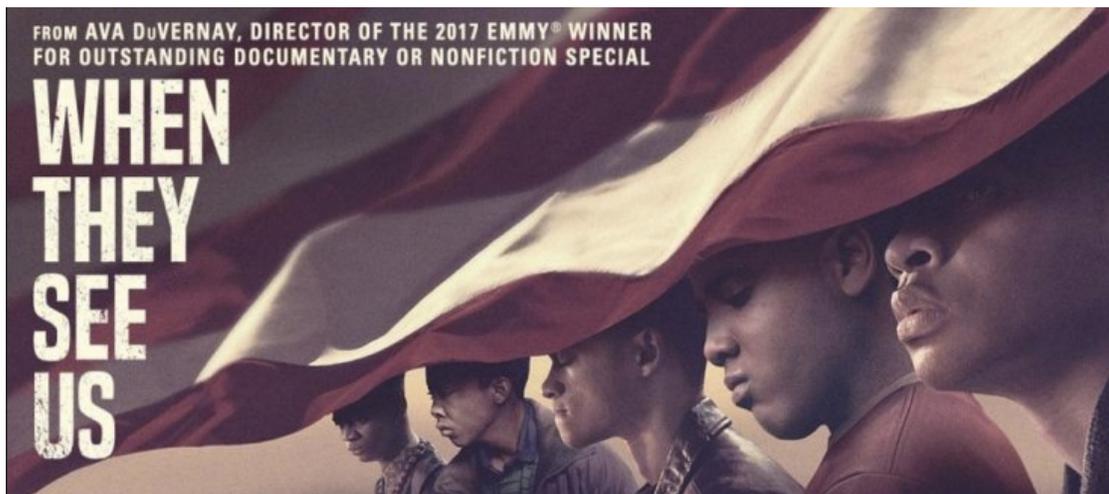
One of the biggest changes in media can be observed in campaign advertisements. After the initial outbreak of COVID-19, many Democratic campaign advertisements have shown politicians helping the nearby communities and providing them with necessities. COVID-19 has been used by politicians as a way to gain favor with voters. In times like these, people seek a leader who cares about their needs and can implement a stable economy. US representative Alexandra Ocasio-Cortez, who is the incumbent running for New York's 14th congressional district (which is in New York City), used this form of political media in order to attract voters. During her campaign, she released an advertisement where she is seen providing food for the residents of her district, one of the poorest districts in the country. Before COVID-19 these sorts of actions coming from politicians were not very common. However, now providing food and toiletries has become the new way to gain votes. On the right, Trump has not been as eager to focus on Coronavirus, and engaged in denial of its impact to varying degrees.

The outbreak has also led to increased accountability for world leaders by journalists. Journalist Jimmy McCloskey who writes for *The Metro* wrote an article highlighting the jaw-dropping discovery made by US Intelligence, which exposed China's false reports of their Coronavirus statistics. China's president and highest officials were lying to their people and the entire world.

However, the president of China is not the only leader guilty of such actions. Our very own president Donald Trump has also committed similar actions. Throughout the pandemic, Trump has been undermining health officials and advisors while at the same time spreading misinformation about masks,

effective treatments, and the safety of large gatherings.

Recently, his incompetence in responding to the pandemic that has helped to create a new goal in journalistic reporting: "Moral Clarity." Moral clarity is the idea that journalists have an obligation not to repeat talking points from both sides without examination, but to present the truth in all its context, regardless of whether or not it hurts one side. If done correctly, moral clarity may mean that future news coverage is closer to objectivity, and lies and half-truths will be exposed to the American people and veracity will be upheld. Whether that is the direction they go in remains to be seen.



This Week's Viewing Recommendations:

- *All American* available to stream on Netflix
- *The Blacklist* available to stream on Netflix
- *Containment* available to stream on Netflix
- *The Final Year* available to stream on HBO
- *Money Heist* available to stream on Netflix
- *Moonlight* available to stream on Netflix
- *Never Have I Ever* available to stream on Netflix
- Snowden available to stream on IMDB
- *When They See Us* available to stream on Netflix

This Week's Music Recommendations:

- Lil Baby: "The Bigger Picture"
- DaBaby ft. Roddy Rich: "Rockstar (BLM Remix)"
- Twenty One Pilots: "Level of Concern"

- Tye Tribbet: "We Gon' Be Alright"
- Hillsong Young & Free: "A Message for My Best Friends"

As always, if you have any questions, thoughts, or ideas, don't hesitate to reach out to us at eduny@paleycenter.org!

Happy watching,

Allendy Hiciano

Senior, University Heights High School

Matthew Garcia

Senior, Brooklyn Technical High School

Photos—Politics of Pandemics/Economist Image: Andrea Ucini; PBS image: Athit Perawongmetha/Reuters; Dr. Fauci: Northwest Public Broadcasting; K-Pop: DREW ANGERER/GETTY IMAGES; *When They See Us*: Netflix

Weekly Zoom Meet-ups

Thursdays, 3:00 to 3:30 pm ET—Resuming Sept. 24

Students Grades 3+ can join us for a weekly Zoom Meet-up, Thursdays from 3:00 to 3:30 pm ET, to chat about the week's theme and engage in some hands-on learning led by a Paley Educator. Parents and teachers are welcome to join as well!

Please Note: our Zoom meet-ups are still on summer break. But don't worry, we'll start back up again on Thursday, September 24.

For connection details, please RSVP to eduny@paleycenter.org.

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We hope this inspires you to watch and learn together in a new way at home!
The Paley Center is here for you and, now more than ever before, we would
deeply appreciate your support. Please consider making a donation:



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