

University of California, Los Angeles

Second Essay Part 4: The Echoes of Plague

Alberto Cordova

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Professor Teo Ruiz/ T. A Kaleb Herman Adney

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The Corona virus ravages California similar to how the diseases of the Europe infected the population of native. The fall of the Aztec Empire did not fall to the sword of Cortez in one night as the pathogens have played a key role in the decay as well as rise of empires. The COVID-19 virus has affected my way of life in multiple levels starting with the personal then to the larger broader community. What I have noticed because of this pandemic is the over destabilization weaker institutions as well as the positive attempts at alleviating the problems that has occurred over the large period of time.

I started feeling a vomit inducing coughs and the tightening of the trachea by the end of the winter quarter at UCLA. I do not know whether this illness was caused by my trek from East Los Angeles to UCLA or from my sister working with Corona virus infected patients at her physical therapy. What is certain is that half my family was experiencing symptoms. This resulted in me dropping a class due to my poor performance and high physical stress as well as the stress prior to my illness. My education may have been thrown off trajectory but I did gain an interesting perspective. As I laid in bed struggling with the fatigue reaching my bones, I began to wonder what the prospective had been to those living in the past. Images of the various European plagues as well as the Aztecs came into my mind. Had I not been told I was suffering illness; I would have assumed to be some sort of malevolent entities cursing me from beyond this world with these maladies. My petition to the divine and off the counter medicines restored me to full health. My mental health had also taken its toll as I was dealing issues of child abuse as well as the averages concerns a UCLA student. This never brought my spirits down as I found solace in overcoming the crucible that was this illness. The next issue was fixing supplies for my family as the rest of my family mobilizes its self and collect money as well as connect with other family

members. While our family made very little money, we saved our money the best we can. One thing that changed for my family as well as the rest of my close neighbors is the need for connections. Many of the members of my family were unemployed as a result of the crisis. My perspective in life has changed as a result of the virus. It made things like an education or property less important in terms of survival and more valuable in terms of apprenticing goods. Remaining calm in dangerous situations is the most important lesson that I have learned. While I face problems, it is by working together and instilling compassion in all things that will help me as well as my family get through this. As I made a speedy recovery, I began to wonder of my dreams and it had meant to me. I came to the conclusion that while we may chase for possessions and status, its peace of mind that is the true luxury. Stress seems to be a large contributor to the poor health of many Americans. I myself still struggle with stress but through spiritual exercises as well as physiological advice I am able to still be functionable. Everyone is stressed in this situation and the results have shown in my community and the way everyone has acted.

The majority of the stores have enforced restriction and has suffered as a consequence of the protocol and the virus itself. On the first few weeks of the restrictions, there was much violence on the street. There was an incident where few gangsters started shooting on Whitter Blvd. There are also more gun shots at night as the local gangs grow restless and start to quarrel with each other. The drunkards, the physically fit, and the apathetic were the only ones out and about. Much of the children stayed home and kept good spirits up inspire of the dangers. It seems the big issues has been to find space to entertain children as either some have a large number of children or small area space such as the case with my family. Many people socialize but not at the same way. and seeing people interact with one another with more value in everyday tasks is something to note. Those who cannot grow or change in these circumstances end up rotting. I

like to take walks alone or with friends and I take note of certain. What I find tragic and ironic is the open smoking and drinking as a result of the pandemic. While most would have parties or cookouts, the restrictions have led to a lack of sense of civility and national order. While As a community we are helping each other out through food banks and volunteer programs, there is a loss of faith in the government as whole. The misinformation given by the lack of up to date research has shown it is up to us as individuals to take care of ourselves in terms of medical needs as well basic needs. Grey markets as well black markets has increased in circulation of goods and money due to the rise in needs of goods like sanitizes as well as antibiotics. Many of the goods come from Mexico or Hong Kong. The legal markets have also seen as large amount of activity as well. Many people went to store as both a place to buy thing but as a place to socialize. The social distancing guidelines showed to increase in the need to go to stores. It seems as well as there are a huge number of people as well who decided to take advantage of the situation and make a profit. The number of mask salesmen has increased among the undocumented. There is one incident that I remembered that was most notable and it was the amount of people at the cemetery on Mother's Day. As I laid flowers on my grandmother's tomb, I notice the large amount of people come in. Some were sad while other were joyful to be together outside. While these safety procedures keep everyone safe, there is a need to connect with others through mourning and celebration. My community within East Los Angeles is strong physically but the economic factors are what concerns me in my community. What will most likely occur is the slow gentrification that has occurred already. While some see gentrification as an evil, I see it more as a challenge where the rewards are fruitful. One concern for me is that Mexican Americans as well as the Mexican Immigrants will most likely move to cheaper areas. This is in a similar way to how South-Central Los Angeles has also seen an influx of Mexicans

as well as other Latinos. My hope is that everyone in my community is able to maintain afloat within this crisis but I do fear that as a result of the financial damage done there will be larger named stores as well as new wealthier people buying homes. The same cannot be said about the rest of the state of California. While I myself have not traveled outside of Los Angeles due to fear of the virus I do have friends and family in other areas of the state and say that the situation in terms of economics has been at an overall loss. Local politics has left people either in protest or in a state of fear. Politicians from what I have seen is there will be a sense of deception from those who support stronger regulations and those who oppose any regulation. The lack of a lockdown does indicate a wider spread but the economic loss would have to be recovered in some fashion. One thing that is for certain is that many people in the community fear that the End of Days is near. The need for religious, spiritual, as well as superstitious goods and services are purchased as the churches are closed. The need to come together as a community is still present but I fear that the Federal government is viewed with healthy skepticism.

Finally, the future of the Nation that is the United States is one that will be most difficult in economic structure as well as in political unity. After reading about the different economic strategies used by the financial institutions in the world, it is clear that the recovery will not be speedy nor achievable without government assistance. The stock market is within a bear market causing the drop of stock value. This is important as I was hoping to invest after my graduation from college but that won't be possible due to the virus. The stock market damage is more psychological as suicides as a result of market forces is a known correlation. News networks report that there could be a situation like the Great Depression. I pray that it doesn't get as bad as it was during the Depression but the signs are clear that there is struggle. In times of struggle, the appeal to values such as civic pride and national unity is what can help alleviate pain. The

problem that is most apparent is the lack of sense of national unity within the communities. The misinformation given for instance on mask regulation was badly reported in the beginning of the spread. Had Mask use been enforced early there could have been less infection. President Trump's comments on disinfectant injections were a sign that there was a strain of incompetency within the Executive Branch. The rise in hate crimes globally as well as general racial tension is one thing that must be addressed. The boldness of racism is what is most concerning as it is also a reminder that is our unity in spite of the difficulties of having a diverse nation. To be unjustly proud or shameful of one's race is something we have not grown as a nation. The encomienda system is a racial system that still haunts Spanish speaking nations just as the racial systems of the United States still haunt my country. I can only assume that prosperity and a new culture based on civic duty may help but it is still too soon to tell. This is not to say that local politics is dead but rather there is a distance from the federal government to its citizens. There is a sense that it is up to the people and the small local elites to organize and help out in whatever way possible. One question that came to mind was whether the United States is able to survive as is and the answer to that is no. If the fruits of American liberty are not sustained in an ethical and legal fashion, then there must be some sort of change from the top of the political hierarchy. Foreign relations must improve as trade must be facilitated in a way that provides goods to all but also not totally eliminating the rights of others. I prefer the direct democratic process with issues like this but this is not the case in Los Angeles. Local Commissions work for the best interest of the public but in my opinion at times they are stretched too thin and need support of the people. This is not to say that civic apathy is not also at fault. Many failed to prepare for the pandemic, myself included. If we as Americans adopt a more politically active role within politics as guardians of ethics and legal rights, then corruption can begin to provide less of an

incentive. There is many deaths from the virus as well as the unknown effects that may be caused because of the virus. In a positive note however, this is the opportunity to restructure the way in which things can be done with compassion in mind. This is not to say that there should be more political parties, organizations, or clubs. There should rather be a different mindset with a healthier view on politics. Its best to assume that there was mistake in leadership from politicians rather than thinking they are all of malicious character. Conspiracies are not something new and should be taken with all seriousness as well with a rational perspective. When politics gets overly emotional such as with some of the Sacramento protestors then there is a problem. The emotional outrage of some of the protestors is evident in heavy dissatisfaction with the political system as well as the psychological turmoil some of the citizens have faced. One can only do the best they can and hope for best from people working in dangerous situation

Like the Aztec Empire, The United States also face a virus. The modern medicine used in the current day has allowed us to survive through nutrition as well as a potential cure for the virus. The shaking of structures has always been one where the changes come in all levels of civic life. While I personally feel there is hope in the world to come, the world of the living can be repaired.