

Carmen Marisa Galvan
TA: Kaleb Adney
Golden Age of Spain
Second Assignment
Professor Teo Ruiz
18, May 2020
Answering Prompt #4

To everything
there is a season
and a time to every purpose, under heaven
-Peter Seeger

History books are full of the dust of so many human conflicts. Our story is a tail of pain and sorrow but sprinkled here and there with the joy of a bright tomorrow. The last two months have been a time of great change. The new and deadly Covid-19 virus has touched millions of people worldwide. It has come to my town, even to my street. I love my home, but I should not be here. I love my family, but this was my time to reach out and drink in all the world. People my age should be singing and dancing, we should be dreaming of careers and travel and embracing all that life has to offer, but we are not. We had just begun to stretch out tiny wings when suddenly there was no longer a shy to fly though.

We, at my home, do not talk much about the Covid-19 problem. Father does not want my two younger brothers or me watching the TV news. He does not want us to worry. He gives mom a stern look if she should mention it when we youngsters are in the room. But of course, with our phones and so much social media, the pandemic and how it affects everything is hard to escape. I wonder if the government is doing all it can. It is ridiculous how the narrative changes depending on where the news comes from. Some news outlets say the President and the government is doing a good job. Another channel will say the president is the devil and wants us all to die. I believe the media could be doing a better job at reporting the facts. Newspapers and TV news have a responsibility to present the events of the day with more fairness and less bias. Sadly, the

politicians can be worse than the press. Republicans say one thing and democrats say the opposite. It would be nice for these older and well-educated members of our government and our media to try to work together and give us regular folks some confidence in them.

One of the government's responses to the Covid-19 has been troubling. Having people stay home to avoid the spread of the infection seemed like a good idea. My family felt good about it. At first. Trouble was that 14 days turned into 30 days, then 45 and now their talking three more months. That's too long. The good feeling of everyone doing their part, of being on a team and sacrificing for the greater good has turned into government directives and threats of imprisonment and an overall feeling of repression. People complain about losing their constitution rights. Some places are worse than others. I hear about some state governors who almost seem to enjoy being so bossy. They are described as dictators imposing overly restrictive orders on the people of their state. In Illinois, this week there were people protesting the stay at home orders decreed by Governor Pritzker. In Michigan, the state legislature has sued the governor because of the governor having extended the lockdown orders without the consent of the legislature. Throughout the country, there have been many cases of local townships defying the statewide lockdown orders. It is also troubling that there all big differences in how some governors are reacting, depending on whether they are members of the Republican or Democratic parties. The democrats are in general harsher and more restrictive. Now why should that be? Surely this deadly disease knows no political party. I don't need collage to teach me the stupidity of the right hand not working with the left hand. My father says the main goal of a politician is not to help the people but to get reelected. Sad that I must agree.

I am glad I took a government class last fall. Living through this lockdown has made me grateful for the liberties that our founding fathers wrote onto the Constitution. There has been anger in my veins when I hear news reports of police enforcing some of the lockdown orders which I find totally ridiculous. Cops went to a mom's house to warn her not to send her little daughter next door for a play date. A tourist got arrested on a Hawaiian beach for tweeting out pictures of the waves. Our neighbor from down the street was pulled over by sheriff deputies just for driving down the street. The officer actually asked him where he was going before letting him go. These are things that might have happened in Nazi Germany or Communist Russia or present-day China not in Los Angeles County. I am sure that many people will look back with shame at their behavior during this lockdown. I know the authorities are trying to protect the general welfare but unfortunately, we see here examples of the abuse of power. If allowed to do so how much power will a leader or a government take? At what point do the regular people push back? Surely, the rights so beautifully written by Mistery Hamilton and Madison and Washington do not become meaningless in times of hardship and struggle. Indeed, today is when they are strongest.

I wonder what type of social changes this nightmare will bring. During this time of lockdown lots of people are working from home. Smart CEO would do good to use this time to reevaluate their workforce. It is common sense to think that if more workers can stay home, while remaining productive, then business should be able to save on overhead costs. Working from home could bring collateral benefits. It would be nice to get a few million cars off the freeways. Perhaps the air would get cleaner and for most folks it could be less stressful working in pajamas. I bet lots of businesspeople are going to wonder while working from home was not

emphasized before. Working from home was something I have seen in science fiction movies. A pity it took a global pandemic to push us into the future.

College life might also have to change. My parents are glad to have me completing my university requirements from home. It is a lot cheaper and they get to hug me every day. But at the same time, I feel that I'm missing out on the college life that I have been looking forward to. Of course, college is not just about going to class and studying. There I was enjoying my socializing on Bruin walk, making new friends in the dorms and enjoying the delicious dining hall food, (not kidding). Personally, I was very happy with college life. Having access to intramural sports and service clubs and Friday night fraternity parties can also be a learning experience. I enjoyed walking through the ivy-covered walls of university on my way to class to meet up with other bright enthusiastic people and to personally interact with the experience and wisdom of my professors. I was yanked away from all that. Logging on to Zoom University takes the sparkle out of the eye of learning. I do not like it.

University chancellors and deans must see now what lots of parents are seeing: that people may no longer need to "go to college" to go to college. This must be a scary thought. If true it could completely and forever change how collage is done. I think this could be a major societal change, maybe for the better maybe for worse. Taking courses online greatly reduces the cost of college. It also increases the amount of people that can take the class. If taking three or five classes online are valid, why not thirty or fifty? People might begin to ask why an entire degree from a major university cannot be completed from home without ever having to set foot on a campus. And wouldn't this new system be generally easier to accomplish, and would not making it easier dilute the quality of the education received? Would it be a "dumbing down" of

our upper education system? I think the subject needs more study. There must be a negative side to taking classes online. It's only common sense to ask about cheating, about fraud, about the level of true learning that's happening online. And what would be the public's attitude towards a degree earned entirely online? It is true that people frowned on the old correspondence courses of the late 20th century. Would earning an "online degree" become reduced to second tier status in the eyes of the public, something shunned by employers and snickered at by people with "real" degrees.

People flow towards what is easier. More online classes will lead to more online degrees. This will reduce the enrollment in brick and mortar colleges and universities. Some colleges and universities would close down. I wince imagining darkened and empty Haines Hall or Powell Library. Perhaps Chancellor Block over in Murphy Hall should begin to worry about filling up that new dorm building currently under construction.

The Covid-19 came from across the sea. A history major cannot help but compare this to what happened to the indigenous people of Mexico and the New World about 500 years ago. We all give thanks (and cross our fingers) that this new disease will not be nearly as bad as what happened back then. How terrible it must have been. Scholars estimate that as much as 90% of the indigenous people may have died of the smallpox carried over by the Conquistadors. Lately many people have also mentioned the Spanish Flu of 1918-19. In this pandemic as much as 2% of the entire world population died. I cannot even imagine.

But we must imagine. We, the people of our towns and cities, our government and schools must imagine and think and do things to better prepare for what may happen again. Now is the time to try and learn from our mistakes. Yes, yes, we can stockpile medical supplies and

draw up municipal plans and adjoin specialty committees. But what really needs to change is the attitude that most people have towards crises. What does our society do when confronted with a major problem? We rally our forces. It's all hands-on deck to defeat the enemy whether it be man made or from mother nature. At the beginning of the problem our spirit is high, and we work together. But this attitude does not last. It becomes someone else's problem. We grow complacent. In the year 2017, 954,000 people died of HIV. Nine million died of cancer. It hurts me to say that those deaths received little national news attention. If it's not on the news, then we don't think about it. I fear that this attitude may hold us back from learning the new lessons from this Covid-19 disaster. Today May 17, 844 Americans died from Covid-19, the day before it was 1225. Yet people worry and complain about not being able to go to the beach or get a haircut. But I cannot blame these people. They want to live. I want to go hiking, to the movies and do some shopping and go back to class. I want to live.

I do not know why providence lays before us such sorrow. Why are there always such obstacles? Whether it be war or disease or famine or a cold loneliness, we as people must endure. Perhaps the angels know that it is only with the struggle that we can become better. We will learn from these times and we will become better. And so, I do not worry. Soon my sky will open up and I will fly through a bright and golden tomorrow.