**Essay #1 (due: Thursday, Oct. 7)**

Sept. 14, 2021

English 433

Value: 20%

Length: approximately 1300-1700 words

Write a **formal academic essay of analysis with a clear thesis and close reference to the text**(s) on one of the following topics. Keep **paragraphs to at least five sentences, place book titles in italics, and write about literature in the present tense.** Give your essay an effective title (i. e., An Analysis of Reconciliation in *Notes for Plan B*; Narrating Memory: An Analysis of the Treatment of the Mythic Past in *Zombie Heart* and *A Supposedly Fun Thing I’ll Never Do Again*). Indent the first line of paragraphs. Submit a single-sided, double spaced copy of your essay, in 12 point font to Canvas. Use quotations from the primary work(s) in your essay, using MLA style for citations. Secondary sources are not required for this first essay, but if you use them, you must cite this material carefully (see the Outline on plagiarism). Revise, edit, and proofread carefully.

Marks will be based on the **content and insight of the essay** as it relates to the topic; the quality of the essay’s explication of and understanding of the text(s); the clarity of the essay’s structure and organization; the unity, coherence, and development of paragraphs; the strength of the writing in terms of fluency, accuracy, and conciseness, and its avoidance of errors in grammar, expression, and mechanics.

1. Taking three or four key examples, **examine how the epidemic as Defoe describes it in *A Journal of the Plague Year* resembles but also differs from our present Covid 19 pandemic.** Keep in mind that the **focus of your essay must be a close examination of Defoe’s text** and your paper requires a **clear overall structure or organization**. Consider, for example**, the scope, causes, myths and rumors, modes of transmission** (such as asymptomatic), role of quack medicines and fake advice, state of medical knowledge, advice for self-preservation and for the next plague, and effects of the disease on marginalized communities. **Relate your examination to a larger point or theme about the novel as a whole.**

Key examples:

1. Governent/state/authoritative restrictions and their effectiveness
2. misinformation and deceivers
3. end of the plague

Larger theme:

Divine influence and deliverance: “they sang his Praise, but they soon forgot his Works” (208).

Outline:

1. introduction

The plague epidemic as described by Defoe bears both similitudes and differences to the contemporary COVID-19 pandemic. In the following paper, I will investigate the plague’s effect on how state and civil navigated and administered policies in response to its high mortality and infection rates. I will further investigate the presence of “Quacks” and how people made desperate by the plague were taken advantage of by deceivers. Lastly, I will divulge my interpretation of the overarching theme of the novel while discussing the end of the plague. Each of these topics will be examined through a historical deconstructive lens where I compare the events of DeFoe’s time with contemporary ones and ponder the future.

1. how state and civil authorities navigated and administered policies to mitigate deaths
   1. similarities between then and now
   2. differences between then and now
   3. what worked and what didn’t?
   4. do policies really matter if the plague was a Divine event as Foe asserts?

“…the very court, which was then gay and luxurious, put on a face of just concern, for the public danger…” (34).

“The Lord mayor, a very sober and religious gentleman, appointed physicians and surgeons for relief of the poor… and in particular order’d the college of physicians to publish directions for cheap remedies…” (39).

“This drove people from haunting the doors of every disperser of pills…” (39).

“when it first broke out: I shall have frequent occasion to speak of their prudence of the magistrates, their charity, the vigilance for the poor and for preserving good order… But I am now upon the order and regulations they published for the government of infected families’ (40).

“I am speaking now of people made desperate, by the apprehensions of their being shut up, and their breaking out by stratagem or force…” (55).

“…I believed then, and do believe still, that the shutting up of houses thus by force and restraining, or rather imprisoning people in their own houses, as is said above, was of little or no service in the whole; nay, I am of opinion, it was rather hurtful, having forc’d those desperate people to wander abroad with the plague upon them, who would otherwise have died quietly in their beds” (67).

1. how people took advantage of desperate people willing to pay for remedies
   1. similarities between then and now
   2. differences between then and now
   3. are deceivers more prevalent now? (Foe seems to imply that these people disappeared with the plague)
   4. how are deceivers justified?

“Next to these public things, were the dreams of old women; or, I should say, the interpretation of old women upon other peoples dreams; and these put abundance of people even out of their wits; some heard voices… Others saw Apparitions…” (28).

“These things serve to shew, how far people were really overcome with delusions” (30).

“…they filled the People’s Heads with predictions on these signs of the heavens, intimating that those conjunctions foretold drought, famine, and pestilence; in the two first of them however, they were entirely mistaken… (31).

“I must confess, I thought the Ministers should have done also, imitating our blessed Lord and Master in this…” (31).

“…we had some good men…whose discourses were full of terror… It was a time of very unhappy breaches among us in matters of religion…” (31).

“But after the sickness was over, that spirit of charity abated… things return’d to their old channel again” (32).

“These terror and apprehensions of the people led them into a thousand weak, foolish, and wicked things, which they wanted not a sort of people really wicked, to encourage them to… and this folly, presently made the town swarm with a wicked generation of pretenders to magick…” (32).

“With what blind, absurd, and ridiculous stuff, these oracles of the devil pleas’d and satisfy’d the people…” (32).

“I need not mention, what a horrid delusion this was, or what it tended to; but there was no remedy for it, till the plague it self put an end to it all…” (32-33).

“The most sober and judicious people despised and abhor’d them…(33).

“…as they were brutishly wicked and thoughtless before, were now led by their fright to extremes of folly… they ran to conjurers and witches and all sorts of deceivers, to know what should become of them; who fed their fears and kept them always alarm’d and awake on purpose to delude them, and pick their pockets: so, they were as mad upon their running after quaxks, and mountebanks, and every practicing old woman, for medicines, and remedies; storing themselves with such multitudes of pills, potions, and preservatives, as they were call’d; that they not only spent their money, bbut even poison’d themselves before-hand, for fear of the poison of the infection and prepar’d their bodies for the plague instead of preserving them against it” (34-35).

“…a set of thieves and pickpockets, not only robb’d and cheated the poor people of their money, but poisoned their bodies with odious and fatal preparations…” (36).

“when the plague evidently spread it self, they soon began to see the folly of trusting to those underperforming creatures, who had gull’d them of their money…” (38).

1. how the plague began and ended and Foe’s claim that it was by God’s hand
   1. how did the plague end according to Foe?
   2. is the COVID pandemic over? will it be over? and will we be able to tell?
   3. overarching theme that the Plague was a Divine tool of judgement in comparison to the historic root cause—rats (video lecture 44:43)—and the cause of COVID—unknown, lab outbreak
   4. video lecture (50:38) Plague vs pandemic

“…the power of man was baffled, and brought to an end; so the plague defied all medicine; the very physicians were seized with it, with their preservatives in their mouths…” (39).

“Abundance of quacks too died, who had folly to trust their own medicines…” (39).

“But we were not to expect, that the physicians could stop God’s judgements…” (40).

The mocking men in the tavern (63-65)

1. conclusion