

The Postmortal

by Drew Magary

Ad/Propaganda Analysis Companion Piece

“Immortality Will Kill Us All”

There are wild postings with that statement all along First Avenue. If you've been in Midtown recently you've seen them. They're simple black-and-white posters. Just type. No fancy fonts or designs in the background. No web address. That one sentence is all they say, over and over again, down and across the hoardings. When I walked by them, they were clean, as if they had been posted the night before. But I noticed, as I got toward the end of the block, that one of them had already been defaced. Not on the lowest rung but the second from the bottom. Someone had used a cheap, blue ballpoint pen to write something underneath the slogan. It was small, but it was unmistakable: EXCEPT FOR ME. (Magary 5)

Discussion Questions:

1. Would you consider this an ad or a piece of propaganda?
2. What is the poster for or against?
3. Why might the creator of the poster choose black and white?
4. Why might the creator choose not to use any imagery and only text?
5. How is the single statement: “Immortality Will Kill Us All” effective?

Assignment:

Create your own poster either for or against the Postmortal Vaccine. Then type up a one page explanation as to what choices you made with your poster regarding design, audience, message etc.

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Considering Dying

"Immortality Will Kill Us All"

"I don't think most people die natural, peaceful deaths," I said. "All the loved ones I've seen die have been sick, frail, and helpless.

Undergoing chemo. Lying in hospitals. Soiling their beds. Two of my grandparents died alone, with no one to talk to. I don't think natural death offers much in the way of gentle relief. I think it's a slow, wrenching thing I'd like to try to get far, far away from." (Magary 9)

Discussion Questions:

1. Do you agree with the narrator's position?
2. Would a more sudden yet violent death be preferable?
3. Does this support the argument for physician assisted suicide or euthanasia?

Assignment:

Write a one page position paper on whether a natural or unnatural death is preferable. You may use a quote from the book to support your response. This is a personal opinion paper so you may use personal pronouns to make your case.

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On Traditional Marriage

“You said you’d love me forever”

...Three weeks ago I helped our firm devise a lucrative new type of prenuptial agreement between a banker and his fiancée. It’s a forty-year marriage. Set in stone. No divorcing allowed without significant penalties. The couple agrees to be together for forty years, with the marriage automatically dissolving at the end of that period and the assets divided at a previously agreed-upon percentage. The couple could then pick up an additional forty-year option if they wished. My boss has even coined a new term for it: “cycle marriage.” HE says it could help raise marriage rates back up to where they were a few years ago. The reason clients like it is because it precludes the acrimony that usually accompanies divorce. You’re less likely to claw at each other’s throats if you know there’s already an end set in place. A couple marries, raises a family, then they go their separate ways to enjoy single life once more after the children are grown and well-adjusted. It’s a win-win situation, particularly if you’re the lawyer brokering the deal.” (Magary 80-81)

Discussion Questions:

1. What do you think of cycle marriages?
2. Could cycle marriages work in our current society without the cure?
3. What are the potential issues with cycle marriages?

Assignment:

Create your own version of the “perfect” marriage arrangement. What would be ideal to you? Would you choose a marriage similar to what we have today? A cycle marriage? Something else? What kind of contract would you have in place, if any?