

There are two “miracle cures” in Drew Magary’s *The Postmortal*: the cure, and the skeleton key.

## **HISTORY OF MEDICAL “CURES” - ESSAY ASSIGNMENT**

Your assignment is to write about a real miracle drug/cure/vaccine.

### **Your paper must:**

- ❖ Be no fewer than 500 words, and absolutely no more than 1500.
- ❖ Use current MLA formatting (Times New Roman, 12 pt, Double spaced, in-text citations, works cited page).
- ❖ Use at least 2 credible resources. Preferably, one of your sources will be a book from the Tri-C library, OhioLINK, or a library database.
- ❖ Answer the questions *listed below*:

#### 1) Identify

- What is the name of the vaccine/cure/drug you are writing about?
- What is (or was, if the disease is extinct) the name of the disease that the drug treats?

#### 2) Describe the disease

What are/were the effects of the disease? Please provide a decent amount of detail. Think about this in terms of:

- Symptoms – What physical effects did the disease have on its victims?
- Impact – Roughly how many people (this can be worldwide or in the U.S.) did the disease strike before the vaccine/cure/drug was introduced? How many people after the vaccine/cure/drug was introduced?
- Impact – Try to speculate about what other impacts the disease would have had. Impact on public health in cities? Impact on family finances? Impact on family structures?

#### 3) Describe the vaccine/cure/drug

- Who invented the vaccine/cure/drug? Why and how did they invent it?
- What was the impact of the vaccine/cure/drug? For example, how many lives were saved, and/or how many people were treated?
- What other examples of the impact of the vaccine/cure/drug can you provide? For example, did you find any studies or personal stories?

#### 4) Compare/contrast with *The Postmortal*

- Would this have seemed like a miracle drug in its day?
- How does this compare with the cure and/or skeleton key in the *Postmortal*?
- How is it similar to the cure and/or skeleton key?
- How is it different from the cure and/or skeleton key?

Notes:

1) Credible sources

**Type of Source**

Generally speaking, any book that you find in a college library is going to be credible. Almost all articles from a library database are credible. Websites, blogs, podcasts, and other online channels are where you need to be cautious. A very opinionated person can post anything online. That doesn't mean you should use it. If you use a website, make sure you evaluate the article's currency, reliability, authority, and point of view.

**Currency**

How old is the resource? Sometimes this matter more than others. For example, if you're doing on paper on the Polio vaccine, a book from the 1990s might be fine. If you're doing a paper on a cancer drug, the 1990s would be ancient history.

**Reliability**

Does the author tell you where they got *their* sources? You need to provide a works cited page for your essay, and the most credible sources will do the same thing. Otherwise, how can you be sure they didn't make their information up?

**Authority**

Is an author named? Authors can be individuals, or organizations (example: Center for Disease Control). If an individual has advanced training in the area they're writing in, they are credible. Government organizations are credible. If you're not sure, ask your professor, or a librarian.

**Point of View**

Is the author presenting a neutral, objective view of a topic? Or, are they offering a biased, one-sided perspective? For example, you'd want to avoid using a resource that says

2) Possible topics (you are encouraged to speak with a librarian to confirm that resources are available for a topic before finalizing your choice)

Smallpox	diphtheria
Hepatitis	Mumps
Cholera	Pertussis (Whooping cough)
Anthrax	Tuberculosis
Rabies	Polio
Typhoid	Penicillin
Varicella (chickenpox)	Blood transfusions
measles	