

Student work from Stake Jesuit

November 5, 2015

From **JP Navarro:**

“Mortifero Outbreak:

Here I lay on the blade of a surgery knife from the American civil war deadly and anxious for my first victim. I am a brand new mutated virus that is yet to be discovered. I am excited to absolutely internally disintegrate my first victim. General Hyatt has just been shot by a cannon ball in the leg and must have it amputated in order to survive. Dr. Smith reveals the news to the General and he immediately hops on board. Dr. Smith takes General Hyatt into a covered tent with his surgical tools and surgery team. As they begin the surgery, little to they know that they are about to initiate one of the deadliest disease outbreaks in American history. As Dr. Smith impales General Hyatt's upper thigh, I am transferred from the knife to the inside of this man's leg. I am more alive than ever and ready to multiply. I begin to override all healthy cell's nuclei and begin to take over this man's body. I multiply rapidly and reach his brain cells in less than a half hour. As General Hyatt begins to experience my excruciating symptoms, the doctors scramble to find out what's going on as he vomits uncontrollably and begins to have vicious seizures. My multiplied cells transmit from his inner esophagus into the vomit and onto the surgical scene. I am all over the place now and there is no way to stop me. All doctors are now contaminated and the epidemic has started. Little does anyone know that I shall be the cause for millions of deaths in the years to come. I am unstoppable. I am relentless. My name is Mortifero.”

From **Ryan Turner:**

“The Atomic Epidemic : August 16th 1945

This is an urgent bulletin for assistance on behalf of those who cannot speak. It has been little over a week since 2 atomic bombs were dropped on the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, yet the horrible effects still linger. Within moments, tens

thousands were vaporized, but what followed was even more frightening. A mystery illness befalls the Japanese people, and the suffering, confusion, and fear has left them in complete disarray.

The disease is linked to the dropping of the two nuclear warheads, and everyone suspects that the gases left by the bomb's explosions are poisonous and spread the disease. Symptoms include, but are not limited to : vomiting, diarrhea, loss of hair, inflammation of the mouth and throat, and horrific bleeding lesions of the skin. These bleeding rashes are usually followed by death, and infection is common. Everyone frantically searches for any rashes on their body to see if they have contracted the illness, and they are struggling to dress these mortal wounds. The most common spots for hemorrhages are the gums, pressure points, and even the retina of the eye. Many have been quarantined and await the inevitable. Children and infants have had the worst symptoms and their mortality rate is staggering. Birth defects are also common, and coagulation of the blood is often reduced drastically. Many are also contracting other fatal diseases and currently await treatment.

The US government will dispatch doctors and researchers as a part of the Atomic Bomb Casualty Commission, yet they cannot provide medical care to those afflicted. Instead, they will carry out routine check ups and gather data regarding the event. Doctors are needed to treat these unfortunate casualties of war who will not be receiving any care what so ever. If the proper precautions are taken, it appears that doctors are unlikely to contract the disease.”

From **Angel Reyes:**

“The Portrayal of Disease in Outbreak

In the film Outbreak, released in 1995, the disease Motaba is portrayed as the main antagonist of the story. Motaba is a deadly virus which causes death within twenty four hours after the victim is infected. Throughout the story, the disease mutates and is unable to be controlled by several different groups all which try to stop and eradicate the disease without success. Motaba, due to its horrific symptoms and eventually its easiness in spreading from one person to another, separates people and causes them to act inhumanly, which is epitomized by the President of the United States authorizing a bombing of a town with infected residents. Outbreak, showing

how one tiny virus can cause such extreme havoc and death in a "safe" country would only encourage practitioners at the time to expand on their research and knowledge of known diseases. This, in effect, also conveys an image that medicine is not being as effective as it could be. It raises questions such as "what would happen if a disease with similar symptoms is actually introduced in the United States?" and "can modern medicine stop a disease as powerful as Ebola?" Films such as *Outbreak* do more than just plant a sense of unease into its viewers, they can also inspire scientists to not allow an outbreak, like the one depicted in the film *Outbreak*, to actually occur in real life."

From **Richard Cook:**

"The ways that we frame issues are not abstract concepts, but rather things that spill over into very tangible consequences. The 1995 film *Outbreak* provides an excellent example. Disease, as covered in the movie, is anything but an unconscious product of evolution. It exists as an independent entity seeking the very destruction of humanity. However, despite the media presenting us with this simple narrative, it has complex implications for society as a whole. To start off, the virus hates you, and conversely you should hate it. As this narrative creates a blinding hatred, we become so fixated on the disease itself and its threat to us, we become inept when it comes to actually finding a cure. Rather, it is all about avoiding the enemy. Additionally, this notion of the "enemy" has troubling implications for society. Disease discourse is rooted in the fear of an unknown, invisible enemy coming to attack at anytime, from anywhere. This paranoia manifests itself in the fear, and ultimately the destruction, of the other. Disease is the otherness that transcends borders, killing anything in its path. In fact, this issue has already been seen in US political debate when there was discussion of cutting off transportation from several African countries due to fear of the Ebola virus. This fear manifests itself in the form of xenophobia. We create sweeping claims and dichotomies, marking one group as clean and the other infected. And through all of this, we never see the virus for what it is, but rather attack its manifestations and its mark on civilization."

From **Nikhilesh Mehra:**

“Whether it is displayed in the form of films, narratives, or headlines in the news, diseases have a tremendous impact on the people it affects and on the evolving field of medicine. One example of this was the severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) outbreak in 2003.

The disease was first reported in February 2003 in Asia. The syndrome spread to more than twenty-five countries including the United States. There were 8,098 cases worldwide, and eight cases in the United States.

SARS not only had physical effects, but psychological effects as well. According to a survey taken in a Hong Kong hospital, nearly 50% of recovered SARS patients displayed signs of anxiety, and about 20% were terrified. Approximately 20% of the rehabilitated patients showed some negative psychological effects which included insomnia and depression. Those with severe conditions could not get rid of the memories of their personal struggle with SARS, and these memories interfered in their daily life. This is also known as Post-traumatic stress disorder. SARS also brought anguish to the family of the patient. Symptoms included depression and insomnia as well. Children who lost their parents to the illness were constantly weeping, and some were ashamed to be part of a family that had SARS.

Fear was instilled globally by the outbreak. The fear was so strong that it had a huge economic effect. The airline and tourism industries had lost billions of dollars because of communal panic about SARS. SARS also created a division between people. It became so severe that some people thought that they would not contract the disease if they avoided Asian people.

How we practice and perceive medicine was significantly affected after the SARS outbreak. For example, travelers coming back from an epidemic region should be assessed if there had any unsure symptoms. Routine procedures such as the handling of feces and respiratory secretions were being categorized as high risk. These are just some of the few changes to the practice and perception of medicine.”

From **Christopher Chaftari:**

“Why are you Imprisoning me?”

I have been separated from my fellow monkeys in my homeland by strange creatures who fail to understand my wishes. I have endured a long voyage in a tiny dark cage on a huge, smelly cargo vessel without nourishment to the point where I am barely able to even move since I do not have the strength to even move one muscle in my body. Ever since I have arrived in this new world, I have been placed in cages, injected with needles by humans in strange yellow suits. I have listened to these animals accuse me of carrying some sickness, but I am absolutely sure I have no such illness. And now I have been put in another tiny cage in a structure filled with other animals, including a monkey of my species right next to me, where I believe I will be tortured even more by these inhumane humans. I have come to the conclusion that I must prevent this slavery from happening. The next time someone opens the door of my cage I will run out and scratch them to defend myself from their actions. Then I will escape and return to my friends, warning them to stay away from this horrendous species of enslaving beasts. I hope that I will be able to accomplish this goal if I get the chance, even if it is dangerous or if I am faced with challenges along my voyage home.”

From Kyle Katigbak:

“Rice Medical Humanities Creative Writing

2. One narrative that I remember happening was fairly recently, and it had to do with the listeria outbreak at Blue Bell. The news had constant images of the listeria virus constantly on screen. Along with the virus, there were negative colors. The news kept creating a great shock factor out of this so called "big" virus. However, in reality, the most at risk were those people that were older and those with weakened immune systems. It kept saying that there was no cure to this and that you could be hospitalized. It condemned the disease as the end and that we should all be paralyzed in fear. This probably brings into question the effectiveness of medicine and if there is really a disease that will be incurable by medicine. It brings into question the time it will take for scientists to develop a cure for this so called "deadliest" disease. Also, if this outbreak got really bad, scientists would be working around the clock to find a

cure and media would start questioning the scientists and start getting them interviewed on live television.”

From **Russell Welton**:

“The Motaba's War

Dear Lieutenant,

The war is going well. Our soldiers have quickly been invading the landforms called humans and have recruited new viruses from their cells. Our quick tactics allowed us to desolate entire populations of human cells as well as their lands making it impossible for some of their societies to ever grow back. Some of their societies have been trying to create a weapon of mass destruction to stop us. This is to no avail as we are a different breed of soldiers, the likes of which have never before been encountered by these cells. We are one step closer to our goal of total destruction of these kinds of cells. Our original base has been captured and sent to a foreign world called the Americas. We have already infiltrated the cellular society that has captured us and have quickly spread our reach to other human lands in this new world. We plan to catch the societies unaware by sending out our new airborne soldiers by daybreak. Mother Nature will be pleased at our progress and happy to know that these human lands will be eliminated quickly and effectively.

Regards,

Colonel of the Second Brigade”