

La Peste reread in the age of Covid 19. How would
Camus's pessimism have affected our post-
pandemic world?

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Abstract. Common discourse on “the march of history” visualizes a graduated scale. The narrative of history borrows this typical model of the narrative discourse, which is specific to the Aristotelian tradition. It is a cognitive dissonance whenever milestones from the past find their way onto the highway of the present, and aesthetic deviation when the linearity of a narrative breaks down. Camus’s *The Plague* is part of this double gap, on the one hand confronting a city with the old demons of humanity, and on the other refusing the reassuring, good old-fashioned conclusion on the last page, leaving doubt as to the death of the evil spirits. With the Covid 19 pandemic, a feverish rereading of Camus has seized the world, not only because of the almost premonitory coincidence between some of his notable passages and situations that have become common images of the confined world. The novelist’s poetics had a strong influence on the treatment of the material, with an original perspective that opens the text up to a number of connotative virtualities, including Camus’s deep pessimism towards peoples who forget viruses.

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