

Western Illinois University  
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**Abstract**

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Recorded Scholarly Presentation

Major: English

Faculty Mentor: Everett Hamner

**Queer Communities in Pandemics: Then and Now Through "Angels of America"**

**Lily Porter**

Through the play and miniseries *Angels in America* and its narrative of the HIV/AIDS epidemic primarily striking the gay community, this paper will compare the treatment of minorities in similar pandemics- namely COVID-19- and how queer people specifically are given less opportunities to live healthily and happily. While there are major differences in these pandemics, what remains similar is the disparity of treatment towards minorities. *Angels in America* specifically focuses on the topic of suffering and immense losses of gay men during the AIDS pandemic under the Reagan administration; COVID-19 has highlighted how much more difficult it is for minorities to keep themselves afloat amidst the shattering of economic, social, and hygienic norms under Trump's presidency. Along with these aspects of lowering the quality of life, there seems to be a recurring theme of "acceptable losses," whether those losses be gay men during the AIDS epidemic or those already immunocompromised during the COVID-10 pandemic. In any pandemic, there will be those who are pushed aside to be dealt with later or not at all and that remains unacceptable and it's important to shine light on those minorities and be willing to sacrifice more as a nation to avoid sacrificing people entirely.