

plagues and peoples pdf

plagues and peoples pdf is a sought-after resource for understanding the profound impact of infectious diseases on human history. This article explores the themes and insights presented in "Plagues and Peoples," a seminal work that analyzes the interaction between epidemics and civilizations. The *plagues and peoples pdf* format has made this knowledge widely accessible, allowing readers to delve into the historical, social, and biological dimensions of pandemics. By examining key historical outbreaks and their consequences, the book highlights how diseases have shaped demographic shifts, economic changes, and cultural transformations. This article will provide an in-depth exploration of the major themes covered in the text, discuss the significance of epidemics in human evolution, and offer guidance on accessing credible versions of the *plagues and peoples pdf*. The following sections outline the core elements discussed herein.

- Historical Overview of Epidemics
- Impact of Plagues on Societies
- The Role of Disease in Shaping Civilizations
- Biological and Ecological Perspectives
- Accessing and Utilizing the Plagues and Peoples PDF

Historical Overview of Epidemics

The history of epidemics is a critical component of understanding the narrative presented in the **plagues and peoples pdf**. From ancient times to the modern era, infectious diseases have influenced the course of human events. The work details significant outbreaks such as the Plague of Athens, the Justinian Plague, and the Black Death, each of which resulted in massive mortality and societal upheaval. These events are not isolated incidents but part of a continuum that demonstrates the persistent threat posed by pathogens throughout history.

Major Historical Plagues

Several plagues stand out for their scale and impact, shaping the demographic and political landscapes of their times. For instance:

- **The Plague of Athens (430 BCE):** A devastating epidemic during the Peloponnesian War that weakened the Athenian state.
- **The Justinian Plague (6th century):** This pandemic caused significant mortality across the Byzantine Empire, contributing to its decline.
- **The Black Death (14th century):** One of the deadliest pandemics in history, killing an estimated one-third of Europe's population.
- **Smallpox in the Americas:** Introduced by European colonizers, smallpox caused catastrophic population declines among indigenous peoples.

Evolution of Epidemic Understanding

The **plagues and peoples pdf** also explores the progression of medical knowledge and public health responses to epidemics. Early societies often attributed diseases to supernatural causes, but over time scientific inquiry led to better understanding of contagion and transmission. This evolution laid the groundwork for modern epidemiology and disease control strategies.

Impact of Plagues on Societies

Plagues have had far-reaching effects beyond the immediate health crisis. The demographic collapse caused by widespread disease has altered labor markets, social hierarchies, and political power structures. The **plagues and peoples pdf** examines how societies adapted to these challenges and how epidemics influenced economic and cultural development.

Demographic and Economic Consequences

High mortality rates from plagues often resulted in labor shortages, which in turn affected agricultural production and urban economies. This shift frequently empowered surviving workers and peasants, leading to changes in social contracts and economic systems. For example, following the Black Death, wage demands increased and feudal obligations diminished in many parts of Europe.

Social and Cultural Transformations

Plagues also impacted cultural expressions and religious beliefs. Fear and

uncertainty surrounding disease outbreaks inspired new artistic themes, literature, and rituals aimed at coping with mortality. Additionally, some communities experienced increased social cohesion, while others faced scapegoating and persecution, as seen in the targeting of minority groups during epidemics.

The Role of Disease in Shaping Civilizations

The **plagues and peoples pdf** underscores how infectious diseases have been pivotal in the rise and fall of civilizations. Disease outbreaks frequently acted as catalysts for political change and territorial shifts, influencing the course of history.

Disease as a Factor in Conquest and Colonization

European colonization of the Americas was profoundly affected by disease. Indigenous populations, lacking immunity to Old World pathogens such as smallpox and measles, suffered massive depopulation. This biological factor significantly facilitated European conquest and settlement, reshaping global demographics and geopolitics.

Military Campaigns and Epidemics

Armies historically have been vulnerable to infectious diseases, which sometimes caused more casualties than combat itself. The **plagues and peoples pdf** details instances where epidemics altered the outcomes of wars by weakening forces or disrupting supply lines, demonstrating the strategic importance of disease control in military history.

Biological and Ecological Perspectives

Understanding the biological and ecological context of plagues is essential for grasping their impact as presented in the **plagues and peoples pdf**. This section explores the interaction between humans, pathogens, and the environment, highlighting the complex factors that contribute to epidemic emergence and spread.

Pathogen Evolution and Transmission

Diseases evolve in response to environmental pressures and host defenses. The book discusses how zoonotic transmission—the transfer of pathogens from animals to humans—has been a common source of new epidemics. Moreover, changes in human behavior, such as urbanization and trade, have facilitated the spread of infectious agents.

Ecological Changes and Disease Emergence

Environmental alterations, including deforestation and climate change, can influence the habitats of disease vectors and reservoirs. These ecological disruptions increase the risk of outbreaks by bringing humans into closer contact with novel pathogens. The **plagues and peoples pdf** emphasizes the importance of ecological awareness in preventing future pandemics.

Accessing and Utilizing the Plagues and Peoples PDF

The availability of the **plagues and peoples pdf** has made this comprehensive work accessible to a broad audience, including students, researchers, and history enthusiasts. Proper access and utilization of this resource can enhance understanding of the complex relationship between disease and human history.

Finding Credible Versions

When searching for the **plagues and peoples pdf**, it is crucial to use reputable sources that provide accurate and unaltered content. Academic databases, university repositories, and authorized publishers are reliable channels. Caution should be exercised with unauthorized copies that may lack the full text or proper formatting.

Effective Study Strategies

To maximize the benefit of the **plagues and peoples pdf**, readers should consider:

- Taking notes on key themes and historical examples.
- Cross-referencing with supplementary materials on epidemiology and history.

- Engaging in discussions or study groups to deepen comprehension.
- Applying critical analysis to the interpretations and conclusions presented.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the main focus of the book 'Plagues and Peoples' by William H. McNeill?

The book explores the impact of infectious diseases on the course of human history, analyzing how epidemics have shaped societies, economies, and civilizations.

Is 'Plagues and Peoples' available in PDF format legally?

Yes, 'Plagues and Peoples' can be found in PDF format through legal sources such as academic libraries, official publishers, or authorized ebook platforms.

How does 'Plagues and Peoples' contribute to understanding historical pandemics?

The book provides a comprehensive analysis of how diseases like the Black Death, smallpox, and malaria influenced demographic changes, wars, and the rise and fall of empires.

Where can I find a free PDF of 'Plagues and Peoples'?

Free PDFs of copyrighted books like 'Plagues and Peoples' are rarely legally available; it's recommended to check university libraries, public domain repositories, or purchase through legitimate sellers.

What disciplines does 'Plagues and Peoples' intersect with?

The book intersects with history, epidemiology, anthropology, and sociology, offering a multidisciplinary perspective on the relationship between disease and human societies.

Are there newer editions of 'Plagues and Peoples' available as PDFs?

Yes, newer editions or reprints may be available in PDF format through publishers or academic resources, often with updated commentary or introductions.

How has 'Plagues and Peoples' influenced modern epidemiology studies?

It helped establish the significance of historical context in epidemiology, encouraging researchers to consider social and environmental factors in the spread of diseases.

Can 'Plagues and Peoples' PDF be used for academic research?

Yes, it is widely cited in academic research related to history, medicine, and social sciences, making it a valuable resource for scholarly work.

Does 'Plagues and Peoples' discuss the impact of diseases on indigenous populations?

Yes, the book details how diseases brought by colonizers devastated indigenous populations, significantly altering demographic and cultural landscapes.

Additional Resources

1. *Plagues and Peoples* by William H. McNeill

This seminal work explores the impact of infectious diseases on human history, tracing how plagues have shaped the development of civilizations. McNeill examines the relationship between humans and microbes, showing how epidemics influenced wars, migrations, and societal changes. The book offers a broad perspective on the interplay between biology and history.

2. *The Great Mortality: An Intimate History of the Black Death, the Most Devastating Plague of All Time* by John Kelly

Kelly provides a detailed narrative of the Black Death that swept through Europe in the 14th century. The book delves into the social, economic, and cultural upheavals caused by the plague, using vivid storytelling and historical records. It highlights personal stories and the broader consequences of the pandemic on European society.

3. *Epidemics and Society: From the Black Death to the Present* by Frank M. Snowden

Snowden's book offers a comprehensive overview of major epidemics throughout

history and their societal impacts. It covers a wide range of diseases, analyzing how public health responses and social attitudes evolved. The book connects historical outbreaks to modern-day challenges in managing infectious diseases.

4. *The Coming Plague: Newly Emerging Diseases in a World Out of Balance* by Laurie Garrett

Garrett investigates the emergence of new infectious diseases in the late 20th century, emphasizing the global factors that contribute to their spread. The book combines scientific research with compelling narratives of disease outbreaks, discussing how ecological and social changes influence pandemics. It serves as a warning about the vulnerabilities in modern public health systems.

5. *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies* by Jared Diamond

While broader in scope, this Pulitzer Prize-winning book addresses how germs and diseases have been critical factors in shaping human history. Diamond explores how infectious diseases aided European conquests and influenced the development of civilizations. The book links geography, biology, and culture in explaining societal success and failure.

6. *In the Wake of the Plague: The Black Death and the World It Made* by Norman F. Cantor

Cantor examines the profound transformations in European society following the Black Death. The book explores changes in economics, culture, religion, and politics triggered by the massive loss of life. It provides insight into how plague reshaped the medieval world and laid foundations for the modern era.

7. *The Forgotten Plague: How the Battle Against Tuberculosis Was Won – And Lost* by Frank Ryan

This book traces the history of tuberculosis, a persistent and deadly infectious disease, and the global efforts to control and eradicate it. Ryan details scientific discoveries, public health campaigns, and social struggles associated with TB. The narrative highlights the ongoing challenges of infectious disease control in a changing world.

8. *Deadly Companions: How Microbes Shaped Our History* by Dorothy H. Crawford

Crawford explores the intimate relationship between humans and microbes, focusing on how infectious diseases have influenced historical events. The book covers a range of plagues and pandemics, illustrating their effects on societies and individuals. It combines scientific explanation with historical storytelling to reveal the power of microscopic organisms.

9. *Plague: A Very Short Introduction* by Paul Slack

This concise book provides an accessible overview of plague, particularly the bubonic plague, and its historical significance. Slack discusses the biology of the disease, its pandemics, and the social responses to outbreaks. The book serves as a brief but informative introduction to one of history's most infamous diseases.

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Plagues and Peoples PDF

Book Title: The Scourge and the Shaping: How Epidemics Have Reshaped Human History

Contents Outline:

Introduction: The enduring impact of plagues on human civilization.

Chapter 1: The Ancient World and the Dawn of Epidemics - exploring early pandemics and their societal consequences. Examples include the Plague of Athens and the Antonine Plague.

Chapter 2: The Black Death and its Aftermath - a deep dive into the most devastating pandemic in history, its impact on demographics, social structures, and religious beliefs.

Chapter 3: The Columbian Exchange and the Spread of Disease - examining the devastating transfer of diseases between the Old and New Worlds.

Chapter 4: 19th and 20th Century Pandemics - focusing on cholera, influenza (Spanish Flu), and other outbreaks, highlighting their global impact and advancements in public health.

Chapter 5: Modern Pandemics and the Challenges of Globalization - an analysis of recent outbreaks like HIV/AIDS, Ebola, and COVID-19, exploring the role of globalization in their spread and the challenges in containing them.

Conclusion: Lessons learned and future implications - summarizing key takeaways and exploring the potential for future pandemics and the need for preparedness.

The Scourge and the Shaping: How Epidemics Have Reshaped Human History

Throughout history, humanity has been repeatedly confronted by the devastating power of plagues. These outbreaks, far from being mere historical footnotes, have profoundly shaped the course of civilizations, influencing everything from demographics and social structures to religious beliefs and technological advancements. This book, "The Scourge and the Shaping: How Epidemics Have Reshaped Human History," explores the intricate relationship between plagues and peoples, delving into the devastating impact of epidemics across millennia and highlighting their lasting legacy on the world we inhabit today.

1. Introduction: The Enduring Impact of Plagues on Human

Civilization

The impact of plagues extends far beyond the immediate death toll. While the loss of human life is undeniably catastrophic, the ripple effects reverberate through generations, shaping political landscapes, economic systems, and cultural practices. Epidemics have triggered social upheaval, spurred technological innovations in medicine and sanitation, and even influenced artistic and philosophical movements. Understanding this intricate interplay is crucial to comprehending the trajectory of human civilization and preparing for the inevitable challenges of future outbreaks. This introduction sets the stage for the in-depth exploration of specific historical plagues and their consequences, providing a framework for understanding the enduring impact of disease on human history.

2. Chapter 1: The Ancient World and the Dawn of Epidemics

The ancient world was not immune to the ravages of disease. While precise details are often scarce due to limited record-keeping, evidence suggests that devastating outbreaks plagued ancient civilizations. The Plague of Athens (430-426 BC), described by Thucydides, serves as a chilling example. This epidemic, likely typhoid fever or possibly the bubonic plague, decimated the Athenian population, significantly weakening the city during the Peloponnesian War. Similarly, the Antonine Plague (165-180 AD), possibly smallpox or measles, ravaged the Roman Empire, contributing to its decline and instability. This chapter examines these early pandemics, exploring their likely causes, their impact on societal structures, and the rudimentary attempts at mitigation and control employed by ancient peoples. The lack of sophisticated medical understanding and the prevalent superstitious explanations of disease are also key aspects explored in this section.

3. Chapter 2: The Black Death and its Aftermath: A Turning Point in History

The Black Death, a bubonic plague pandemic that swept across Eurasia in the mid-14th century, remains the most devastating pandemic in recorded history. Estimated to have killed 30-60% of Europe's population, its impact was cataclysmic. This chapter delves deep into the Black Death's origins, spread, and devastating consequences. It examines the profound social, economic, and religious upheavals that followed. The decline of feudalism, the rise of new labor dynamics, and shifts in religious beliefs are discussed in the context of the plague's impact. The chapter also explores the evolving understanding of disease transmission and the rudimentary attempts at quarantine and treatment. The long-term demographic and societal ramifications of the Black Death, reshaping the social fabric of Europe for centuries, are a key focus.

4. Chapter 3: The Columbian Exchange and the Spread of Disease: A Deadly Encounter

The arrival of Europeans in the Americas marked a tragic turning point in the history of infectious diseases. The Columbian Exchange, while fostering cultural and economic exchange, also led to the devastating transfer of diseases from the Old World to the New. Indigenous populations, lacking immunity to diseases like smallpox, measles, and influenza, experienced catastrophic mortality rates. This chapter examines this deadly encounter, focusing on the devastating impact on Native American societies. The demographic collapse of indigenous populations profoundly affected the colonization process and the shaping of the Americas. The ethical implications of this biological warfare are also discussed. The chapter also touches upon the reverse flow of some diseases, although less devastating, from the Americas to Europe.

5. Chapter 4: 19th and 20th Century Pandemics: Cholera, Influenza, and Beyond

The 19th and 20th centuries witnessed a series of significant pandemics, including cholera outbreaks, the devastating 1918 influenza pandemic (Spanish Flu), and the emergence of new diseases. This chapter examines these outbreaks, exploring their global impact, the advancements in public health understanding and interventions, and the evolving strategies employed to combat them. The chapter explores the role of improved sanitation, vaccination campaigns, and the development of antibiotics in reducing mortality rates. It also analyzes the social and political responses to these pandemics, highlighting the successes and failures in public health management. The rise of germ theory and its impact on medical practices are also crucial themes.

6. Chapter 5: Modern Pandemics and the Challenges of Globalization: HIV/AIDS, Ebola, and COVID-19

The modern era has witnessed the emergence of new and challenging pandemics, including HIV/AIDS, Ebola, and most recently, COVID-19. This chapter analyzes these outbreaks, highlighting the role of globalization in their rapid spread. It explores the challenges involved in containing pandemics in an increasingly interconnected world, focusing on international cooperation, healthcare infrastructure, and the ethical dilemmas arising from resource allocation and vaccine distribution. The chapter also examines the impact of misinformation and the role of public health communication in combating the spread of disease. The lasting economic and social effects of these modern pandemics are also critically assessed.

7. Conclusion: Lessons Learned and Future Implications

This concluding chapter summarizes the key lessons learned from the historical study of plagues and their impact on human history. It emphasizes the critical importance of investing in robust public health infrastructure, promoting international cooperation, and fostering scientific research to prepare for future pandemics. The chapter also highlights the need for effective communication, community engagement, and equitable access to healthcare to mitigate the impact of future outbreaks. The ongoing threat of emerging infectious diseases and the potential for future pandemics is underscored, emphasizing the need for continued vigilance and proactive preparedness.

FAQs

1. What caused the Black Death? The Black Death was caused by the bacterium *Yersinia pestis*, primarily transmitted through flea bites from infected rodents.
2. How did the Columbian Exchange impact disease spread? It facilitated the transfer of Old World diseases to the Americas, decimating indigenous populations lacking immunity.
3. What role did sanitation play in combating pandemics? Improved sanitation significantly reduced the spread of waterborne diseases like cholera.
4. What was the impact of the Spanish Flu? The 1918 influenza pandemic caused a global catastrophe, killing tens of millions worldwide.
5. How has globalization affected pandemic spread? Globalization facilitates rapid disease transmission across borders, increasing the speed and scale of outbreaks.
6. What are some key lessons learned from past pandemics? The importance of preparedness, international cooperation, and robust public health systems.
7. How can we prevent future pandemics? Through investment in research, surveillance, and rapid response mechanisms.
8. What is the role of misinformation in pandemic responses? Misinformation can hinder effective public health measures and fuel fear and distrust.
9. What are the long-term societal effects of pandemics? Pandemics can reshape social structures, economic systems, and cultural practices.

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not about the resurgence of pestilence. It is the story of its decline. For the first time in recorded history, virus, bacteria, and other infectious diseases are not the leading cause of death or disability in any region of the world. People are living longer, and fewer mothers are giving birth to many children in the hopes that some might survive. And yet, the news is not all good. Recent reductions in infectious disease have not been accompanied by the same improvements in income, job opportunities, and governance that occurred with these changes in wealthier countries decades ago. There have also been unintended consequences. In this book, Thomas Bollyky explores the paradox in our fight against infectious disease: the world is getting healthier in ways that should make us worry. Bollyky interweaves a grand historical narrative about the rise and fall of plagues in human societies with contemporary case studies of the consequences. Bollyky visits Dhaka—one of the most densely populated places on the planet—to show how low-cost health tools helped enable the phenomenon of poor world megacities. He visits China and Kenya to illustrate how dramatic declines in plagues have affected national economies. Bollyky traces the role of infectious disease in the migrations from Ireland before the potato famine and to Europe from Africa and elsewhere today. Historic health achievements are remaking a world that is both worrisome and full of opportunities. Whether the peril or promise of that progress prevails, Bollyky explains, depends on what we do next. A Council on Foreign Relations Book

plagues and peoples pdf: The Power of Plagues Irwin W. Sherman, 2020-07-02 The Power of Plagues presents a rogues' gallery of epidemic-causing microorganisms placed in the context of world history. Author Irwin W. Sherman introduces the microbes that caused these epidemics and the people who sought (and still seek) to understand how diseases and epidemics are managed. What makes this book especially fascinating are the many threads that Sherman weaves together as he explains how plagues past and present have shaped the outcome of wars and altered the course of medicine, religion, education, feudalism, and science. Cholera gave birth to the field of epidemiology. The bubonic plague epidemic that began in 1346 led to the formation of universities in cities far from the major centers of learning (and hot spots of the Black Death) at that time. And the Anopheles mosquito and malaria aided General George Washington during the American Revolution. Sadly, when microbes have inflicted death and suffering, people have sometimes responded by invoking discrimination, scapegoating, and quarantine, often unfairly, against races or classes of people presumed to be the cause of the epidemic. Pathogens are not the only stars of this book. Many scientists and physicians who toiled to understand, treat, and prevent these plagues are also featured. Sherman tells engaging tales of the development of vaccines, anesthesia, antiseptics, and antibiotics. This arsenal has dramatically reduced the suffering and death caused by infectious diseases, but these plague protectors are imperfect, due to their side effects or attenuation and because microbes almost invariably develop resistance to antimicrobial drugs. The Power of Plagues provides a sobering reminder that plagues are not a thing of the past. Along with the persistence of tuberculosis, malaria, river blindness, and AIDS, emerging and reemerging epidemics continue to confound global and national public health efforts. West Nile virus, Lyme disease, and Ebola and Zika viruses are just some of the newest rogues to plague humans. The argument that civilization has been shaped to a significant degree by the power of plagues is compelling, and The Power of Plagues makes the case in an engaging and informative way that will be satisfying to scientists and non-scientists alike.

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phenomena as diverse as warfare, plague, and the pursuit of power, William H. McNeill brings a dazzling breadth and depth of knowledge to his study of dance and drill in human history. From the records of distant and ancient peoples to the latest findings of the life sciences, he discovers evidence that rhythmic movement has played a profound role in creating and sustaining human communities. The behavior of chimpanzees, festival village dances, the close-order drill of early modern Europe, the ecstatic dance-trances of shamans and dervishes, the goose-stepping Nazi formations, the morning exercises of factory workers in Japan--all these and many more figure in the bold picture McNeill draws. A sense of community is the key, and shared movement, whether dance or military drill, is its mainspring. McNeill focuses on the visceral and emotional sensations such movement arouses, particularly the euphoric fellow-feeling he calls muscular bonding. These sensations, he suggests, endow groups with a capacity for cooperation, which in turn improves their chance of survival. A tour de force of imagination and scholarship, *Keeping Together in Time* reveals the muscular, rhythmic dimension of human solidarity. Its lessons will serve us well as we contemplate the future of the human community and of our various local communities.

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documentary data from eastern England, the late medieval growing season temperature is reconstructed and the late summer precipitation of that period indexed. Using these data, and drawing together various other regional (proxy) data and a wide variety of contemporary documentary sources, the impact of climatic variability and extremes on agriculture, society and health are assessed. Vulnerability and resilience changed over time: before the population loss in the Great Pestilence in the mid-fourteenth century meteorological factors contributing to subsistence crises were the main threat to the English people, after the arrival of *Yersinia pestis* it was the weather conditions that facilitated the formation of recurrent major plague outbreaks. Agriculture and harvest success in late medieval England were inextricably linked to both short term weather extremes and longer term climatic fluctuations. In this respect the climatic transition period in the Late Middle Ages (c. 1250-1450) is particularly important since the broadly favourable conditions for grain cultivation during the Medieval Climate Optimum gave way to the Little Ice Age, when agriculture was faced with many more challenges; the fourteenth century in particular was marked by high levels of climatic variability.

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pandemic alarms. Like man-eating sharks, predatory pathogens are always present in nature, waiting to strike; when one is seemingly vanquished, others appear in its place. These pandemics remind us of the limits of scientific knowledge, as well as the role that human behaviour and technologies play in the emergence and spread of microbial diseases.

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medical cartography, including pandemics such as European plague and yellow fever, and the advancements in anatomy, printing, and world atlases that paved the way for their mapping. Moving on to the scourge of the nineteenth century—cholera—Koch considers the many choleras argued into existence by the maps of the day, including a new perspective on John Snow's science and legacy. Finally, Koch addresses contemporary outbreaks such as AIDS, cancer, and H1N1, and reaches into the future, toward the coming epidemics. Ultimately, *Disease Maps* redefines conventional medical history with new surgical precision, revealing that only in maps do patterns emerge that allow disease theories to be proposed, hypotheses tested, and treatments advanced.

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paradoxes. Why did Europe's dramatic rise begin in the wake of the Black Death? Belich shows how plague doubled the per capita endowment of everything even as it decimated the population. Many more people had disposable incomes. Demand grew for silks, sugar, spices, furs, gold, and slaves. Europe expanded to satisfy that demand—and plague provided the means. Labour scarcity drove more use of waterpower, wind power, and gunpowder. Technologies like water-powered blast furnaces, heavily gunned galleons, and musketry were fast-tracked by plague. A new "crew culture" of "disposable males" emerged to man the guns and galleons. Setting the rise of Western Europe in global context, Belich demonstrates how the mighty empires of the Middle East and Russia also flourished after the plague, and how European expansion was deeply entangled with the Chinese and other peoples throughout the world.

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With the same unique vision that brought his now classic Mars trilogy to vivid life, bestselling author Kim Stanley Robinson boldly imagines an alternate history of the last seven hundred years. In his grandest work yet, the acclaimed storyteller constructs a world vastly different from the one we know. . . . "A thoughtful, magisterial alternate history from one of science fiction's most important writers."—The New York Times Book Review It is the fourteenth century and one of the most apocalyptic events in human history is set to occur—the coming of the Black Death. History teaches us that a third of Europe's population was destroyed. But what if the plague had killed 99 percent of the population instead? How would the world have changed? This is a look at the history that could have been—one that stretches across centuries, sees dynasties and nations rise and crumble, and spans horrible famine and magnificent innovation. Through the eyes of soldiers and kings, explorers and philosophers, slaves and scholars, Robinson navigates a world where Buddhism and Islam are the most influential and practiced religions, while Christianity is merely a historical footnote. Probing the most profound questions as only he can, Robinson shines his extraordinary light on the place of religion, culture, power—and even love—in this bold New World. "Exceptional and engrossing."—New York Post "Ambitious . . . ingenious."—Newsday

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