

Voices in the Shadow of Death: The Lost Narratives of the Bubonic Plague and Covid-19

Warm Up: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gXFjjwGIVsw>

While watching the video compare your experiences during Covid-19 with those of other teenagers.



Book

This video was about the thoughts and the perspectives of students, in particular, teenagers have on Covid-19 and how it has affected them and their families. The creator of this video wanted to spread the words from a teenagers point of view because they are often overlooked. They were stressed, unmotivated, and bored amongst other things during their adjustment to quarantine. The creator also wanted to show us how the pandemic impacted the teenagers differently and individually.

Head

I was surprised that the author reached out to so many teenagers just to expand on the topic of the pandemic that has affected everyone. This video definitely confirmed my thoughts and perspectives because I couldn't agree more with what the teenagers in the video were saying. I noticed the perspective was kind of repetitive in some ways even though it went through individual teenagers.

Heart

I learned that I'm not alone in this and that there are other teenagers around the world experiencing the same feelings and thoughts as me. This has helped me further recognize my feelings that were suppressed on the topic of the pandemic. This video made me feel heard and not alone with my thoughts during quarantine and the pandemic overall.

Historical Context

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The Bubonic Plague or “Black Death” came out of the eastern Mediterranean along shipping routes, reaching Italy in the spring of 1348. By the time the epidemic was abating in 1351, between 25% and 50% of Europe’s population had died. The epidemic is believed to have started in China and made its way west across Asia to the Black Sea. One theory is that it entered Europe when a group of Tartars used catapults to hurl the dead bodies of infected soldiers over the walls of a Genoian trading outpost that was under siege. Because people had no defense against the disease and no understanding of how it spread, it brought panic as well as illness and death. Lepers, as well as Jews and other ethnic and religious minorities, were accused of spreading the plague and thousands of people were executed.



Directions: You will analyze documents about the Black Death and the modern Covid-19 pandemic and analyze the following questions:

- Summarize the sources and their events taking place in the documents. (what's happening)
- Who is controlling the narrative? (what do we know about hem, poor, religious, gender)
- Who’s voice(s) are not being represented or heard? (who's controlling what's being said/narrative)(had kings and queens, no presidents or congress, on individual in charge)6
- What misinformation/rumors not grounded in scientific thought are traveling alongside the spread of the pandemics?

Document#1

The author of this account, Henrich Truchess von Diessenhofen, was a canon of Constance who had been a chaplain of Pope John XXII (d.1334.)

“The Persecution of the Jews began in November 1348, and the first outbreak in Germany was at Sölden, where all the Jews were burnt on the strength of a rumor that they had poisoned wells and rivers, as was afterwards confirmed by their own confessions and also by the confessions of Chrstians whom they had corrupted and who had been induced by the Jews to carry out the deed. And some of the Jews who were newly baptised said the same. Some of them remained in the faith but some others relapsed, and when these were placed upon the wheel they confessed that they had themselves sprinkled poison or poisoned rivers. And thus no doubt remained of their deceitfulness which had now been revealed. Within the revolution of one year, that is from All Saints 1348 until Michaelmas 1349 all the Jews between Cologne and Austria were burnt and killed for this crime, young men and maidens and the old along with the rest. And blessed be God who confounded the ungodly who were plotting the extinction of his church, not realising that it is founded on a sure rock and who, in trying to overturn it, crushed themselves to death and were damned for ever.”

“The Persecutions of the Jews”, Heinrich Truchsess, (ed) Rosemary Horrox, *The Black Death*, p. 208.

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Summary:

In this document, the narrative was told from the point of view of Heinrich Truchsess von Diessenhofen on the topic of the Bubonic Plague in the 1300s. The persecutions of the Jews began in November 1348 following the first outbreak in Germany at Sölden. From his point of view, the Jews from Germany had brought the plague and spread it amongst them and as a result, they began killing the Jews and torturing them into saying what they want and confessing to poisoning their water sources. With the torturing, they were forced to confess while also having Christians in the area confess to being corrupted by Jews and carrying out the deed.

Who is controlling the narrative?	Who's voice(s) are not being represented or heard?	What misinformation/rumors not grounded in scientific thought are traveling alongside the spread of the pandemics?
<p>Response: The person controlling this narrative is a wealthy man of power named Heinrich Truchsess von Diessenhofen in the 1300s that is evidently biased and has based his perspective on the matter on his religious beliefs. Christians who are said to have been corrupted by the Jews made confessions supporting the claim. Jews were killed and burned for the crime and they related it back to God saying they died and were damned forever as they were “plotting the extinction of his church”.</p>	<p>Response: The perspectives of the Jews themselves are not being heard which is horrible since they were killed and tortured after being accused of bringing the Bubonic Plague from Germany. At the time, Jews amongst other ethnic/religious minorities were under people like Heinrich Truchsess von Diessenhofen so they were most likely poor and their voices were left unheard and ignored leading to thousands of people being executed.</p>	<p>Response: With the black death, they solely based the spread on Jews although when researching, it can be found that it was just transported by a bacterium, insects, and rodents. This was simply because back then they were severely ethnocentric and discriminatory because they had misrepresentation of reality that often was reflected from their religious perspectives and beliefs. It is also related to the Covid-19 pandemic because on the topic of youth in the pandemic, it's often said that children below a certain age don't need to wear mask because it won't affect them when in fact, that's false.</p>

Document#2

Andre Benezeit, burgess of Narbonne and deputy of Aymer, Vicomte of Narbonne, to the jurés of Gerona.

“We have received your letters in which, as prudent men wishing to avoid future danger, you asked us to inform you by letter about the mortality of people which God has allowed to start Romania and which which has reached the region around Avignon, Narbonne and Carcassonne, whether or not it has been caused by potions or poisons placed in various places by many people, if people have been arrested for this and have confessed; if they were subsequently punished and if so, how; and at whose instigation these things are said to have been done. Concerning these matters we now inform you that in Narbonne Carcassonne, Grasse and the places roundabout there has been throughout Lent, and still is, such a great mortality that the common opinion is that it has killed a quarter of the inhabitants. And by the scent of the said potion or poison many beggars and mendicants of the various countries were found and arrested for the crime in Narbonne and elsewhere, carrying (as they said and it appeared) powdered substances which they were putting into rivers, houses, churches, and foodstuffs to kill people. They are sticking to their confessions, admitting that they were given the potions in various places by people whose identities and names they say they do not know. But since they were given money to scatter the deadly potions, the most likely explanation

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is that these things were done on behalf of the enemies of France, although it is still not possible to be absolutely sure. Anyway, those who confessed in Narbonne were torn by red hot pincers, disembowelled, their hands cut off, and then burnt. Justice was done on four in Narbonne, five in Carcassonne, two in Grasse, and many others have been arrested for the same offence."

"Accusations of Well=Poisoning Against the Poor; Narbonne 17 April 1348", Jaime Villanueva, (ed) Rosemary Horrox, *The Black Death*, pp. 222-23.

Summary:

In this document, the narrative was told from the point of view of Andre Benezeit, a burgess of Narbonne, France who was giving a sort of report after being asked to inform people by letter about the mortality of people in the Narbonne region. This letter continues to relate to the Bubonic plague in April of 1348 in which beggars and mendicants were accused of poisoning/putting potions in local wells and rivers leading to them confessing to their eventual arrest, disembowelment, torture, and killing for their offense.

Who is controlling the narrative?	Who's voice(s) are not being represented or heard?	What misinformation/rumors not grounded in scientific thought are traveling alongside the spread of the pandemics?
<p>Response: The person controlling this narrative is a man named Andre Benezeit, a burgess of Narbonne and deputy of Aymer. He had been writing the letter to inform people who wanted to avoid danger in their area about the killings of the Jews in Narbonne. In this letter, he stated beggars and mendicants or the poor, in various countries, were said to be carrying "powdered substances" that they put into rivers, houses, churches, and foods to kill people. Benezeit also covered the fact that they were paid to do the deed so he concluded the explanation of the diseases being brought on the half of France's enemies although it was never proven. His letter wasn't very biased since he was stating the events from his prior knowledge of the matter although he called their mortality "justice".</p>	<p>Response: Once again, the side of the oppressed which in this situation, the poor, are not being heard unless it was their confessions. Their perspectives are not being heard nor are they able to tell the truth because no one there would believe them so they had to confess to escape the torture. Since they were poor, they were the easiest to blame though some stuck to their stories while some confessed and others said they had been given the poisons by unknown people.</p>	<p>Response: When the beggars and mendicants stated that they had been given the poisons by unknown people, the people in France didn't take into account that it may be true. Andre Benezeit stated that the poor had said they were given money and he had the idea that it may have been on behalf of the enemies of France but I doubt it was investigated because it didn't stop the brutal torturing or killing of the poor. So, it was never actually 100% sure that the poor had actually spread the poison but regardless they suffered consequences. This relates to the current pandemic Covid-19 because all we knew was that the virus had been brought from Chinese people in China although it came from China, the virus originated from bats.</p>

Document#3

Geoffrey de Meaux was an astrologer who had been associated with the French court earlier in the fourteenth century. The astrological measurements even in this treatise, however, relate to Oxford, which suggests that it was

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composed (or at least rewritten) there. Unlike the three astrologers mentioned in 57 de Meaux wrote this commentary on the 1345 conjunctions after the outbreak of plague, and accordingly stresses the malign role of Saturn and Mars rather than the possible contribution of Jupiter.

“I have been asked by some of my friends to write something about the cause of this general pestilence, showing its natural cause, and why it affected so many countries, and why it affected some countries more than others, and why within those countries it affected some cities and towns more than others, and why in one town it affected on street, and even one house, more than another, and why it affected nobles and gentry less than other people, and how long it will last....Ptolemy in chapter 4 of the third book of his Qudripartitum cites Plato and Aristotle in support of the contention that God first created the heavens and the stars, and endowed them with the power to rule all earthly matters, and because of this it can be said everything which befalls us happens at the will of God; for it is God himself who moves the heavens and whatever is within them...Now that the basics have been discussed, you can consider the reasons for such a great mortality in so many countries, and how the illness came through the influence of the stars.Ptolemy in chapter 5 of the second part of the Quadripartitum says; the important things are the strengths and powers of the hour, the conjunctions and oppositions, eclipses of the sun and moon, and the places the planets cross at that hour.”

“The Astrological Causes of the Plague”, Geogfrey de Meaux, (ed) Rosemary Horrox, *The Black Death*, pp. 167-172.

Summary:

In this document, the narrative was being told from the astrological point of view of a man named Geoffrey de Meaux in 1345 after the outbreak of the plague. This letter was written after he was asked by some of his friends to write something about the cause of the disease. He strongly believed that the role of Saturn and Mars played a big part in the spread of the plague along with the fact that he cited Ptolemy by Plato and Aristotle supporting his claim of God first creating the heavens and the stars, and giving them the ability to rule all earthly matters and how “the strengths and powers of the hour” are important and they relate to the plague causing a vast amount of mortality.

Who is controlling the narrative?	Who’s voice(s) are not being represented or heard?	What misinformation/rumors not grounded in scientific thought are traveling alongside the spread of the pandemics?
<p>Response: In this document, the narrative is being controlled by a man who is an astrologer. Since Geoffrey de Meaux was an astrologer associated with the French court, the narrative was told from an astrological point of view by offering astrological causes of the plague as an explanation for its spread amongst many countries and some more than others. He believed the role of Saturn and Mars contributed to the spread of the disease. This also was biased by a religious point of view in which de Meaux believed everything that had happened, happened at the will of God since God created the heavens and the stars that rule all “earthly</p>	<p>Response: In this document, no one had been truly blamed but the causes were shifted toward God and planets resulting in the spread of the plague and the mortality of many. So, the voices not being heard are those that were affected by the virus nor are there any point of view of the people the plague has affected.</p>	<p>Response: Of course, the doings of God and the planets and an astrological point of view overall is not necessarily proven by anything but as an astrologer that’s controlling the narrative, it is what he believes in and thus the only valid explanation to him. So the effect of the plague could have been misinformation since it was not grounded in scientific thought. This relates to Covid-19 because many believe that the pandemic alongside other occurrences are the doings of God while it’s been known that after a bat had transferred the virus to a person in China, they traveled to the United States and it began its spread.</p>

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matters”.

Document#4

This and the following text come from the sermons preached by the Bishop of Rochester, Thomas Brinton, in 1375. Brinton, a Benedictine monk, was one of the great preachers of his day and was not afraid to berate his contemporaries...The extract is from a sermon preached on 21 January 1375. This was before the major outbreak of plague that year, but plague is one of the afflictions which Brinton lists as the due punishment for the sins of contemporaries.

“Let us look at what is happening now. We are not strong or fortunate in war. We are not stable in faith. We are not honourable in the eyes of the world - on the contrary, we are of all men the falsest, and in consequence are not loved by God. It is undoubtedly for that reason that there exists in the kingdom of England so marked a diminution of fruitfulness, so cruel a pestilence, so much injustice, so many illegitimate children - for there is on every side so much lechery and adultery that few men are contented with their own wives, but each man lusts after the wife of his neighbour, or keeps a stinking concubine in addition to his wife, however beautiful and honest she might be; behaviour which merits a horrible and wretched death...”

“The Sins of the English”, Thomas Brinton, (ed) Rosemary Horrox, *The Black Death*, pp. 137-143.

Summary:

In this document, the narrative was being told from a religious point of view by a bishop named Thomas Brinton, in 1375 that preached sermons before the outbreak of plague that year. When preaching Brinton had mentioned that plague was on the list of punishment for all the sins committed by the English people including adultery. Brinton believed the horrible occurrences and the wrongdoings of the people would result in the wretched death of those who had sinned.

Who is controlling the narrative?	Who’s voice(s) are not being represented or heard?	What misinformation/rumors not grounded in scientific thought are traveling alongside the spread of the pandemics?
<p>Response: In this document the narrative is being controlled by a bishop named Thomas Briton from a religious point of view. Brinton described in this sermon that plague would be a result and a consequence to the English who had sinned while also mentioning how other unfortunate events reflected the sins of those. So, since the bishop was religious, what was said by him in his sermons was controlled by his beliefs and he even gave examples of events such as adultery, injustice, and illegitimate children that could lead to the ultimate punishment, a plague.</p>	<p>Response: In this document, no one had been truly blamed but the causes were shifted toward God because he was inflicting consequences on the wrongdoings of the people by creating a plague and killing those who had sinned. So, the voices not being heard are those that were affected by the virus nor are there any point of view of the people the plague has affected and where they may have contracted the disease.</p>	<p>Response: Once again, the doings of God can’t be scientifically proven and with a religious perspective controlling the narrative, it was what the bishop believed in and it was the only valid explanation for such a horrible plague that would go on to kill 25% to 50% of Europe’s population. So the effect of the plague could have been misinformation since it was not grounded in scientific thought. This relates to Covid-19 because like the document above, many believe that the pandemic alongside other occurrences are the doings of God as a punishment for our sins while it</p>

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		has not been proven. The only solid thing we have is that the virus came from a traveling person from China.
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Document #5

[Sources believe coronavirus outbreak originated in Wuhan lab as part of China's efforts to compete with US](#)

Summary:

This article states and explains that there is a belief that the outbreak of Covid-19 originated from a lab in Wuhan, China is efforts to display China's ability to demonstrate that they are able to combat viruses equally or greater than the capabilities of the United States rather than using it as a weapon. The person who was first infected by the virus worked in the Wuhan laboratory after being infected by a bat at a wet market.

Who is controlling the narrative?	Who's voice(s) are not being represented or heard?	What misinformation/rumors not grounded in scientific thought are traveling alongside the spread of the pandemics?
<p>Response: This narrative is being controlled by employees at Fox News back in April of 2020 after a couple of months of the development and spread of Covid-19. Primarily all of the information they mentioned in the article from outside sources and interviews after talking to different people in different jobs and their point of views on the matter. They also say they got this information from internal documents contents that had been shared and brought to them by The Associated Press. And with this information, what was being brought to the public was controlled by the employees depending on the message they wanted to put out in their article.</p>	<p>Response: This story is being controlled by people in the United States at Fox News so the voices not really being heard are the people being accused which are the Chinese and the people in Wuhan, China. They are being accused of bringing the virus to places like the United States and Italy to show that they would better handle and combat the virus. There's no evidence this is true because they didn't interview anyone who worked at the lab or any people on the other side of this matter. So, like in other situations, the voices of the accused are not being heard, they are rather spoken for by the creators of the article and the people they interviewed.</p>	<p>Response: The article is going on about how Covid-19 started in a Wuhan lab and was spread to show places like the United States that they could better combat the virus and to compete with the U.S. This is assumed; there is no solid evidence backing up this claim. This relates to the Bubonic Plague because people blamed or shifted the causes of the disease on to several sources such as Jews, the poor, God, and astrological happenings all without solid evidence.</p>

Document #6

[Asian Americans in San Francisco are dying at alarming rates from COVID-19: Racism is to blame](#)

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Summary:

This article covers the fact Asian Americans in San Francisco, California are being widely affected and killed by the rates of Covid-19 as a result of systematic racism with 38% of the residents contracting the virus. Poorer Asian Americans are living in cramped housing which is a hotspot for the spread of the virus amongst them. But, this is believed to be a result of not only systematic racism but also the fact that the Asian American community is overlooked when it comes to social services for housing, employment, and health along with no information being in their native language. It's also factored in that they don't have access to health care nor are they open to help because of the discrimination in the medical field and in policies following Donald Trump calling the virus the "China virus" and "Kung Flu," and it leads to them not seeking the help they may need.

Who is controlling the narrative?	Who's voice(s) are not being represented or heard?	What misinformation/rumors not grounded in scientific thought are traveling alongside the spread of the pandemics?
<p>Response: This narrative is being controlled by people conducting interviews on Asian Americans and their perspectives and the way they are living during the pandemic along with founders of organizations that center or cover the matter that have also been interviewed. Since they interviewed the people being affected on the matter, they gave control to those who they interviewed. And with this information, what was being brought to the public was controlled by the employees depending on the message they wanted to put out in their article.</p>	<p>Response: For the most part, the words of everyone were heard and we were able to know their perspectives and thoughts. The only voices that weren't heard or represented were those of the wealthier Asian Americans who had contracted the virus. One of the people they interviewed stated that if they had gotten the virus, they felt like the government wouldn't assist them and said since they are such hard-workers, they are well off but that was from a poorer person's point of view. Other than that, almost all voices projected to be heard were heard.</p>	<p>Response: In one of the interviews, a person stated that people on the outside looking in assume that the Asian Americans are well off due to how hard they work but in reality, the pandemic has placed them in several hardships and it has made it hard to survive. In San Francisco, they are most affected by the virus and it is especially prominent in poorer areas. This relates to the Bubonic Plague because like it was concluded that the Asian American were well off, it was concluded that the Jews and the poor brought the disease. This misinformation led to the suffering of the Asian Americans since the virus primarily affected them and it led to the poor and Jews being killed in tortured.</p>

Document #7

Undocumented in the Pandemic: 'Nowhere Else to Go'

Summary:

This article covers the fact of immigrants and undocumented families having no where to go in this pandemic along with the fact that they don't have access to health services and their unemployment. In particular, this article covers a woman named Norma struggling to provide for her five children and having to fight for her husband's release from a detention center in which Covid-19 is prominent and is spreading. Norma and her husband had moved to New Jersey after fleeing from Honduras and since her husband was placed in an ICE detention center, she struggled to get jobs and a stable place of living.

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Who is controlling the narrative?	Who's voice(s) are not being represented or heard?	What misinformation/rumors not grounded in scientific thought are traveling alongside the spread of the pandemics?
<p>Response:In this document, the narrative is being controlled by the people conducting and following through with the Marshall Project. The story was told and written by Emily Kassie and Ben Solomon after they investigated an immigrant family during the pandemic. The article features the story of Norma and her family. In this article, they represent what Norma and other immigrant families are going through now especially in the pandemic and understanding their point of view since they truly have nowhere else to go and they are on the brink of homelessness.</p>	<p>Response: In this story, the voice of Norma's husband, Jesus along with all the other people in the detention centers aren't being heard. From Norma's point of view, Jesus' being put into a detention center, altered their entire lives and from then on, she struggled to find work, housing, and she was compelled to fear for her husband's safety in the detention center since the virus had reached the center and the guards and the detainees had contracted the virus. Norma had her hardships along with all the other people in the detention centers and immigrants themselves.</p>	<p>Response: This article shows the point of view of the oppressed. The people from the Marshall Project got their information from an immigrant family and got information on how they have been living and managing during the pandemic. Instead of the outside looking in, the article offered true information rather than what we would have got if Norma hadn't been interviewed and someone else had written the article. This relates to the Bubonic Plague because it did the opposite of what they did back then. They blamed other people but they covered the fact that those accused are faced with hardships like immigrants surviving Covid-19</p>

Document #8

[Between Borders](#)

Summary:
<p>This article covers the topic of fact that some migrants are "between the borders" or between countries of the United States and neighboring countries such as Mexico and Cuba. Hundreds and thousands of migrants and asylum seekers fled their home countries to the United States but since the pandemic caused by the spread of Covid-19, they were placed in Mexican shelters, U.S. detention centers, and border states surrounding them. Trump closed the border because of the spread of COVID-19 to protect America against the threats to our health and safety but it didn't protect immigrants and even actual citizens. He introduced the Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP), also known as "Remain in Mexico." So, people were not allowed to enter, people were deported back to their home countries, and they had hearings to know their next move.</p>

Who is controlling the narrative?	Who's voice(s) are not being represented or heard?	What misinformation/rumors not grounded in scientific thought are traveling alongside the spread of the pandemics?
<p>Response: In this article, the narrative is being controlled by the people conducting an interview on a pregnant woman named D.T. and her journey as a migrant during</p>	<p>Response: For the most part, the words of everyone were heard and we were able to know their perspectives and thoughts. Although we got to know the</p>	<p>Response: This article shows some of the point of view of the oppressed and the people affected by Trump limiting passage through the border after the rise in</p>

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the pandemic. The interviewers not only get D.T's perspective but they also travel to Mexican shelters and interview the people there to see how they are handling the pandemic and also what they did when Covid-19 had been brought into the shelters. The Texas Observer collaborated with the Border Center for Journalists and Bloggers and documented their findings. And with this information, what was being brought to the public was controlled by the employees depending on the message they wanted to put out in their article.

thoughts of some people in the Mexican shelter, we weren't able to know how the people in the detention centers and the people who were set to have hearings after they sought out for asylums. We also weren't able to hear stories of those who had been deported and how they had to adjust.

cases of Covid-19. So, immigrants and asylum seekers fled into Mexican shelters and detention centers while also moving back to their home country or into the countries that neighbored the United States. This relates to the Bubonic Plague because back then, they killed and persecuted Jews who were accused of poisoning water sources because they endangered the Europeans. And with Covid-19, Trump made Migrant Protection Protocols in because he felt they would add an extra threat to U.S citizens health and safety which deported the immigrants.