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Pandemic in Contemporary Society: A Textual Examination of Henrik Ibsen's *an Enemy of the People*

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ANNOTATION

Pandemic is a global phenomenon. Since the times of old, pandemic remains a periodic yet uninvited visitor with regretful consequences in each occurrence. With scientist taking a front roll in this context, this paper is suggestive of the fact that pandemic can be discoursed across a wide variety of fields including drama. Specifically, this paper examines the concept and history of pandemic, particularly the Corona Virus and its attendant consequences to the human society. Theoretically, it applies Cintya Lanchinba, Andrea Bonilla'-Bolanos and Juan Pablo Diaz-Sanchez the Microeconomic perspectives model which states that; the very nature of any containment strategy reduces economic activity so that aggregate supply (AS) and aggregate demand (AD) fall. The paper hinges on the template of Henrik Ibsen's *An Enemy of the People* as its paradigm. The paper discovers that pandemic has been with man for centuries yet it remains as a shock to humanity. It also discovers that dramatists play pivotal role in unraveling the mysteries of humanity. The paper therefore recommends that the government utilize its power particularly for progressiveness. Hence, both government and stakeholders are encouraged to adequately fund science related researches not just for curative but for futuristic preventions.

KEYWORDS: Enemy, Contemporary Society.

Introduction

The 21st century is no doubt a century of surprises, whilst this fact, the human society have since been intimidated with load of bombshells, ranging from the cracking threat of the global warming, the economic bullets of global recessions, earthquakes, banditries, the emergence of the first black president as president of the USA, the death of Nelson Mandela, Michael Jackson, Robert Mugabe, Prince Philips of UK, the Queen of England, etc., an African nation hosting the FIFA World Cup for the first time ever, a Nigerian winning a major award in the Grammys for the first time and so on. However, the year 2020 was prologued with the biggest shock of the century so far; the rapid and outrageous eruption of Corona Virus Pandemic also known as the Covid 19.

The Corona Virus pandemic is by far the most terrific pandemic the world has experienced. Be that as it may, pandemic is categorically a global phenomenon, and while this is rightly so, pandemic has a long history.

Pertaining to an outbreak of disease affecting people over a wide geographical area (could be as large as a country, continent or even wider), pandemic is as old as the Christian Bible. As the Bible presaged in the book of Exodus 11:19, in the Passover story, God struck the Egyptians with a number of plagues. Following Pharaoh's constant refusal to grant Moses's supplications to let the enslaved Israelites go free, in reaction, God sent series of plagues to pressure the Egyptian ruler. As the story has it, Pharaoh occasionally promises to free the Israelites, but reverses his decision as soon as the plague is lifted; this is the game until the last one. Specifically, the plagues are: water turning to blood, frogs, lice, flies, livestock pestilence, boils, hail, locusts, darkness and the killing of firstborn children.

However, even though it is agreeably a global phenomenon, historians have hardly come to an agreement about the exact place and time pandemic first surfaced. Regardless however, pandemic is notorious for its rapid-sweeping-slaying force. In the same strain, pandemic is sadly an occasional visitor that badges in on the earth's door even without getting any invite. In each occurrence, pandemic hits the globe with gifts of sicknesses, pains, regrets and deaths. Re-counting the strictness of the matter, Paul and Pal submit thus:

Pandemic and epidemic are a recurrent scourge of the human civilization. The battle between humans and the microbial world has always been a difficult proposition. Just as humans have invented ways to beat the plagues, the microbial world has also responded with changes to bypass the human armamentarium and invade the society repeatedly (Paul Rudrajit & Pal Iyotirmoy, p.45).

Sadly, even with the quantum of human efforts melted out from varying dimensions to tackle the outbreaks of pandemics, pandemic remains an occasional visitor locked with massive health consequences of various species. Notably, Plague of Justinian, influenza, small pox, cholera and HIV/AIDS are five pandemics of remarkable consequences that had caused great concern over the rapid rate of human mortality and other regrets. The Corona Virus pandemic unambiguously had the following statistics. Globally, as at 21st March 2023, there have been 761,071,826 confirmed cases of COVID-19, including 6,879,677 deaths, reported to World Health Organisation (WHO). In the case of Nigeria, Covid19 data include: Confirmed Cases; 266,463, Active Cases; 3,458, Discharged Cases; 259, 850, Death; 3,155.

Granted the foregoing, it suffices to say that for a number of obvious reasons, pandemic remains a feared reality. Well, over the years many people across various fields of endeavours have invested efforts in a bid to tackle pandemic outbreaks. Even so, there has been a widely carried opinion that supports the proposition that pandemic is science cum medically related problem. Standing against this view, pandemic issue can be treated in a wide range of fields including: Religious studies, communication studies, history, and arts etcetera. It is in fact against this backdrop that this paper aims to treat pandemic from a dramatist perspective. It is informing to state that over the years, playwrights have written several plays on the subject of one or more sorts of pandemic/epidemic outbreak. Specifically, this paper draws depth from Henrik Ibsen's signature play, *An Enemy of the People*. An in-depth analysis of the said play-text will make clear the playwright's perspective on the pandemic situation explored in the play, complications and resolution. By this instance, the resourcefulness and significance of dramatists in the society would be upheld.

Conceptual Appraisal: Pandemic, Epidemic, Virus and Dramatist

Pandemic/Epidemic

Just like a situation of mistaken identity, pandemic and epidemic is often ill-fated with being used interchangeable. Shading light on the situation, Azunwo Eziwho Emenike and Odoyi Harmony (p. 64) expresses the view that the similitude is somewhat extensive, the synonymic usage of the following words;

pandemic and epidemic have been apparently too noticeable whereas the two concepts have certain discrepancies in a basic sense. Stating their inconsistencies, the latter assert that pandemic explains a disease outbreak with prolonged prevalence over a whole country or the world. Stating characteristically, pandemic spreads across very large geographical space i.e., countries or continents. On the other hand, an epidemic explains a disease affecting many persons at the same time, and spreading from person to person in a locality where the disease is not permanently prevalent. Basically, epidemic occurs at the highest degree, a region or community.

Talking about their similarities, again Azunwo and Odoyi (p. 65) express the view that pandemic and epidemic do not just colour because of the presence of “demic” at the end of the words or because they both carry four syllables but basically and essentially because, they are used to qualify an outbreak of some deadly disease(s). However, while this is initially a blameless usage, pandemic is different from epidemic in the sense that pandemic explains an outbreak that spreads across nations and continents, whereas epidemic is equally a fast outbreak of disease that stays within a country, region or locality. Representing the World Health Organization (WHO), Kelly makes the matter even less complicated when he divulged that:

A pandemic is defined as an epidemic occurring worldwide, or over a very wide area, crossing international boundaries and usually affecting a large number of people. The classical definition includes nothing about population immunity, virology or disease severity. By this definition, pandemics can be said to occur annually in each of the temperate southern and northern hemisphere, given that seasonal epidemics cross international boundaries and affect a large number of people. However, seasonal epidemics are not considered pandemics (Qtd. in Azunwo Eziwho Emenike & Odoyi Harmony, p. 66).

Having ensured necessary clarification between the concepts of pandemic and epidemic, it is within place to make a necessary reminder that pandemic is characteristically deadly in each occurrence hence, remains a feared phenomenon.

Virus

Built on the foundation that the term virus can translate a number of meanings depending on the context of usage at each given time, in the context of this discourse, it shall be limited to medicine. Nevertheless, founded on medical lexicon, Azunwo and Odoyi are of the opinion that virus can be seen as a submicroscopic, non-cellular structure consisting of a core of DNA or RNA surrounded by a protein coat, that requires a living host cell to replicate, and often causes disease in the host organism (2021, p. 66). However, thinking bright of the foregoing definition should not necessarily give credit to the feel that viruses are completely evil to the existence of life. To sustain clarity, Libia Herrero-Urbe assert that:

Viruses are now known to be abundant, ubiquitous, and to play a very important role in the health of humans, animals, plants and protists; viral genes constitute the largest parts of the gene sphere and have probably been crucial for the evolutionary life of the planet (p. 993).

Granted Herrero-Urbe's assertion, makes it unmistakable to say that viruses can be as dangerous as they are important to the survival of human life.

There is no gain saying the fact that viruses are microscopic organisms that exist almost everywhere on planet earth. However, in stating its cordiality with the outbreak of diseases, Azunwo Eziwho Emenike and Odoyi Harmony comprehensively elucidate the situation thus:

Having the capacity of infecting virtually every living thing, virus which is by this fact parasitic can cause deadly and very fatal disease in the body of its host; as in Corona Virus and HIV and Aids. Like other animals, viruses which can be attracted and contracted from anywhere and can typically stay attached to the cells of humans. Be that as it may, some of them can be very detrimental and fast spreading too thus, once it successively and duly dominates the cells of a human being, a disease is automatically contracted (p. 67).

Standing side by side with the latter, it is informing to state that there is no cure yet for the treatment of any virus but, through quick detection and vaccination and a follow-up of other preventive procedures, viruses can be prevented from spreading and consequently leading to the outbreak of a killer disease(s) like the most dreaded Corona Virus disease.

Dramatist

Etymologically, a dramatist is someone who writes play; a playwright. Stating clearly, a dramatist is an artist who writes plays to be performed live in a theatre. A play may be written as an original script or base on a previously published work. Ahmed Yerima (p. 15) submits that a play is “a letter from the playwright to the director, actors, and other members of the production informing them of a particular vision of his or hers”. On the other hand, Chris Nwamuo in Innocent Ohiri (p. 1) defines playwriting thus:

Playwriting is the art of creating replicas of human actions rather than the mere recording of it, as in the novel or responses to such actions as poetry. It is an academic discipline, an adjunct of critical studies and a scholarly activity involving the recreation, reorganization and amplification of human experiences with a view to improving the human beings.

Reflecting on playwriting, Robert Cohen in Eziwho Emenike Azunwo (p. 54) observes that “...it seems convenient to think of playwriting as primarily literary endeavour, as simply one of “writing”. It is very easy to conclude from the above observation that a playwright concerns him or herself with creation of scripts. It is not out of place to observe Bernard Shaw in Johnson Effiong (p. 9) as he captures the craft of the playwrights in this manner:

Life as it occurs is senseless... for it is the business of the playwright to pick out the significant incidents from the chaos of daily happenings, and arrange them so that their relation to one another becomes significant thus changing us from bewildered spectators of a monstrous confussion to men intelligently conscious of the world and its destinies.

As typical of playwrights, most playwrights have the flair for tapping into the human psyche and developing characters and stories that grip a large and diverse audience. The writing process often begins with an idea that is developed into an outline or scenario which Louise E. Catron (1984, p. 62) sees as “a narrative description of the play, action by action...”. The outline normally provides the basic structure for the play, including identifying the setting, premise, conflict and resolution. Some playwrights dismiss this exercise as archaic while others maintain it bearing the inkling that the procedure is essential for a play to be fully developed. Sam Smiley (2005, p. 41) provides that “Drafting a play simply means composing the words of dialogue and stage directions”.

Granted the foregoing, it is well meaning to say that a dramatist’s success frequently depends on the intensity of his/her imagination and the talent to write dialogue that sounds genuine and believable. Finding a director and actors who bring the playwright’s characters to life often contributes greatly to the success of dramatists.

Literature Review

History of Pandemic/Epidemic

Hardly has historians agreed on the exact time pandemic started. Fact however is that pandemic has been with man earlier than 500 AD. Thus, counting from as early as around 500 AD, five major pandemics that have hit the world will be historically highlighted. Plague of Justinian, influenza, small pox, cholera and HIV/AIDS are the five pandemics of notable consequences that will be discussed below.

Plague of Justinian

In the stream of history, there are a number of pandemics/epidemics synonymous with the title “plague”, the Antonine plague, the third plague pandemic and Plague of Justinian are very sound examples. Whilst this fact, Paul Rudrajit and Pal Iyotirmoy have the volunteer that;

Plague, caused by the gram-negative bacilli, *Yersinia pestis*, was once a great menace of the human civilization. The causative organisms are caused by fleas, which resides on the skin of rodents like mouse and marmots. The history of the human civilization is a history of food grain production, grain storage and infestation of that storage with rat. Thus, man and rodents have always been in close contact throughout history and consequently, the zoonotic disease, plague has also been lurking in the wings of human society. While innumerable localized outbreaks have occurred in all part of the world, plague has often crossed continents and given rise to mayhem (p. 45).

In specifics however, the Plague of Justinian which took about between 541-542 killed between 25 to 100 million people in a spread across continental borders. The bubonic plague bacteria are remotely responsible for the outbreak whereas, infected fleas and body lice were guilty for spreading the disease. It is estimated that about 13% and 51% of the world’s population fell victim to the Plague of Justinian.

Small Pox

Against what the name implies, small pox is a deadly killer disease and is highly responsible for a number of outbreaks of pandemic which claimed many lives. Paul Rudrajit and Pal Iyotirmoy, explain that:

Small pox was one of the major causes of widespread mortality throughout the human history. It is one of the oldest known killers of mankind. The earliest known example of small pox victim was probably Pharaoh Ramesis V of Egypt, who died in 1157 B.C.E. (p. 52).

Taking note of the above, between 1877 and 1977, small pox has reportedly killed an estimated 500 million people world over. This lasting pandemic is reported to be caused by two smallpox viruses. The highly infectious disease can be contracted by merely touching an infected person or object. A newly infected person suffers a fast and wide growth of small sores on the entire body, filled with some nasty looking fluid, followed by some skin pillage and disfiguring, blindness and finally death. Reactive measures were obviously taken and as a result, small pox was developed. The small pox vaccine however broke the record for the first ever vaccine to be made in history. By 1980 the World Health Organization declared smallpox to be eradicated and since then, the world has had it peace with small pox.

Influenza Pandemic

Sometime in 1981, Influenza pandemic otherwise known as Spanish Flu pandemic threatened the survival of humanity. Even though this is considerably a misnomer, the second name Spanish Flu comes from the

widespread believe that the disease originated from Spain. In reverse, Paul Rudrajit and Pal Iyotirmoy, enlighten that:

The disease did not originate in Spain. The disease is likely to have originated among the troops of the First World War. But the countries kept the news a secret to avoid breaking the morale of the countrymen and the military. Since Spain was a neutral country during that war, the Spanish media was the first European source to news about the epidemic. In this way, the term “Spanish Flu” was coined in Europe and America (p. 61).

Believed to have lasted for at least two years, the Influenza pandemic infected an estimated 500 million people across continental borders. It is gathered that such whooping figure of 500 million covered a third of the world’s population as at the time of the pandemic. Caused by the H1N1 influenza A virus, the influenza pandemic killed an estimated 17 to 100 million people worldwide. The grave disease is considerably airborne as transmission comes through coughing, sneezing and breathing.

Black Death Pandemic

Covering a vast ground; Asia, Caucasus, North Africa and Europe, the 1346 Black Death pandemic killed an estimated 75 to 200 million people. Just as the Plague of Justinian, the Black Death is relatively caused by the bubonic plague bacteria and spreads by infected fleas and perhaps body lice. About 445 million people accounts for the world’s population as at the 14th century, however, with the Black Death killing close to half of that figure, that means that the Black Death killed between 17% and 45% of the entire global population. The Black Death still remains one of the biggest nightmares of the 14th century and similarly, one of the greatest pandemics the world has witnessed.

HIV/AIDS Pandemic

Evolutionarily speaking, HIV/AIDS is believed to have been first spotted in Kinshasa of Democratic Republic of Congo. Again, Paul Rudrajit and Pal Iyotirmoy, observed that;

Unlike the other epidemics, which began in Asia or Europe, the HIV pandemic started from Africa. When did the HIV pandemic start? It is very difficult to point at one particular date when the first case was recorded. But generally, it is believed that the first case of HIV occurred in Kinshasa of Congo sometime around 1920. The virus probably jumped species from chimpanzee to humans in this period. But for the first few decades, the virus remained confined to some of the communities in Africa and clinical features of those cases are not known (p. 64).

Adopting the above evolution, it is equally gathered that it was 1980 that the virus caught the attention of the public as well as scientists (Paul & Pal, 64). However, after its clinical discovery in 1981, an estimated 32 million people have been killed by the deadly virus. Caused by Human Immunodeficiency Virus, HIV can be transmitted through contact with the blood, semen, or breast milk of an infected person. Because of its manageable status over an ample period now, mortality rate of HIV/AIDS can hardly be granted a particular figure. Although, regarded as the fourth leading cause of global mortality, many view HIV/AIDS as a less life-threatening chronic illness because of advancing management measures available today.

Covid19 and its Effects

A good number of health experts nurse the believe that the new strain of Corona Virus likely originated in bats or pangolins. The first transmission to humans is known to have happened in Wuhan, China. Since then, the spread of the deadly disease has been through person to person contact. Corona viruses are a group of viruses

that can cause disease in both animals and humans. The severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) virus strain known as SARS-CoV is an example of a Corona virus. However, the newest strain of Corona virus is called severe acute respiratory syndrome corona virus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). The SARS-CoV-2 is the birth mother of the still unresolved Corona Virus/Covid19 pandemic heating the world up until now.

Reactively, there have since been bomber efforts from all corners of the world to bring to book Covid19 and its effects; the ongoing experimentation of the first certified Covid19 vaccine now in circulation is the most admirable breakthrough in relation to the outbreak of the pandemic. Regardless, up until now, new cases of the disease are still on a high toll. While India is one of such places where new cases spring out on a daily basis, in a very recent report from the WHO (Corona Virus dashboard, 18th May 2021), it is gathered that globally there have been 163,321,429 confirmed cases of Covid19, including 3,386,825 deaths. Meanwhile, a total of 1,407,954,776 Covid19 vaccine doses have been administered worldwide. (<https://covid19.who.int/>).

Symptoms of Covid19

The sudden outbreak of the Covid19 have instigated fast reactions from all corners and scientists and health management experts remains top of this chain. Thus, through reactive procedure the latter have been able to identify the following as common symptoms of Covid19: Fever, Breathlessness, Dry cough, Discomforting sore throat, Headache, Muscle pain, Chills, Loss of taste and/or smell.

These symptoms are very likely to surface after 2 to 14 days after contracting the virus. However, after suffering a severe combination of the listed symptoms without proper health care, an infected person is expected to die in a matter of days.

How Covid19 Spreads

Since its outbreak in the dead of 2019, it has been basically understood that Covid19 spreads from person to person through close communication. When persons infected with the disease breath out, sneeze or cough, they expel micro droplets that carry the virus. Within close range, particles of these flying droplets can make its way into the mouth or nose of an uninfected person thereby cause new infection. This highly contagious disease can also be contracted when a healthy person put his/her hands in the mouth or nose after touching objects or substances where particles carrying the virus must have dropped on.

Theoretical Framework

As carefully developed by Cintya Lanchimba, Andrea Bonilla-Bolaños and Juan Pablo Díaz-Sánchez, the Microeconomic perspective model will be lucidly applied as a heuristic tool for this study.

Tediously aware that the birth and fast manifestation of the Covid19 disease on a micro level has gross effects on almost all humanistic concerns; practically all sectors both in domestic and public domain are alarmed. Despite this saying, it is no news that the effects of Covid19 are still felt and this is realistically so in every sense. Be that as it may, while one can hardly provide an accurate measurement of its effects in every single bit or holistically at a stretch, the Microeconomic perspective model is a theoretical design aimed at explaining the economic bearings of Covid19 pandemic on a macro level.

Apparently acquainted with the fact that Covid19 brought everything to a standstill, as with many other things, both local and global economies sat on an involuntary wheel-chair. In the words of Cintya, Lanchimba, Andrea Bonilla'-Bolanos and Juan Pablo Diaz-Sanchez (p. 627), the Covid19's pandemic necessarily implies a global economic recession. But how did this happen? Was it that people were not willing to buy goods and

services? Or was it that people were eager to buy but those who had the means hoarded the products? Or is it that the both parties had the unwillingness to do business? In bringing answers to these questions, Cintya, Lanchinba, Andrea Bonilla'-Bolanos and Juan Pablo Diaz-Sanchez made a vast theoretical explanation thus;

The very nature of any containment strategy reduces economic activity so that aggregate supply (AS) and aggregate demand (AD) fall. Indeed, theoretically, COVID-19 may be analyzed as both a supply and a demand shock: (i) AS is perturbed by the disruption in global supply chains, the reduction of labor supply caused by quarantine and social distancing; (ii) AD is disrupted not only because of the fall in consumption of durable goods (cars, household appliances, consumer electronics, etc.) and services (restaurants, tourism, etc.) caused by the lockdown, but also because the uncertainty about the disease causes households to increase precautionary savings so reducing consumption, some non-permanent or informal workers, as well as renters, lose income so reducing consumption, and, due to the uncertainty and the lack of liquidity, some firms stop investing (p. 627).

In addition to the above logic, it is equally coherent to think that companies selling goods and services will reduce the rate of their production as well as their sales. Hence, as with many households taking precautionary steps to survive the harsh peculiarities of the pandemic, so did many companies. And as widely observed, a vast majority of companies had to drop many staff. Reactively, the latter explain that:

The loop will continue with the spreading effect to the AD: new unemployed people will consume less, and so on. In general, the multiplier effect of consumption will be significantly negative and will be worsen by the lack of private investment (Cintya, Lanchinba, Andrea Bonilla'-Bolanos & Juan Pablo Diaz-Sanchez, p. 627).

On a summary, the Microeconomic perspective model is a theoretical force that sounds a crucial alarm that both aggregate supply and aggregate demand are faced with a great negative shock. And this is so possible because the surrounding circumstances as it concerns the Covid19 pandemic created an unfriendly environment for trading activities. As a matter of fact, people thought that it will only be possible to do business when one is alive and healthy hence, commerce became a secondary priority.

Despite the above logic, Cintya, Lanchinba, Andrea Bonilla'-Bolanos and Juan Pablo Diaz-Sanchez rightly observed that on the supply side, some industries are selling more. For example, those whose products are needed to contain Covid19 (disinfection products, medical protective equipment as mask and glasses, special clothes), the ones that produce basic consumption products like food and medicines, internet services providers and television companies. More so, dispatchers smiled within the heart of the Covid19 as the dispatching and logistic sectors proved to be one of the most sought-out services in most parts of the world especially the USA.

Synopsis of Henrik Ibsen's *An Enemy of the People*

Ibsen's *An Enemy of the People* is centered on a town's colossal bathing complex which is pivotal to her economic survival. One of the chief employees of the facility, Dr Stockmann, discovers that the bath's drainage system is seriously contaminated with harmful bacteria thus, alerts several members of the community, including Aslaksen the printer and a newspaper publisher, Hovstad. Dr Stockmann plans to inform the public about the contaminated bath hence the duo (Hovstad and Aslaksen are happy to support him for making a town's saving discovery. Soon, Peter, Dr Stockmann's brother and the town's mayor ask Dr Stockmann to retract from making any public declaration about the town's bath with the sentiment that the necessary repairs would be too expensive; more so, the mayor is not convinced by Dr Stockmann's discovery. After a heated argument amongst the duo, Dr Stockmann is not happy about the fight but takes solace over the

fact that Hovstad's newspaper will grant him the necessary support. Meanwhile, Peter manages to convince Hovstad and Aslaksen to stand against Dr Stockmann.

In reaction, Dr Stockmann makes to override Peter's ploy thus, jettison Hovstad's newspaper and organizes a town meeting to give a lecture on the bath. Nevertheless, Aslaksen and Peter try to keep him from speaking. Dr Stockmann however uses the little chance he gets to deliver a speech in which he condemns the town's leadership and the tyranny and gullibility of the masses as well. Finding his speech extremely offensive, in no time, Dr Stockmann's house is vandalized meanwhile, the leadership of the bath take no time as well in firing Dr Stockmann and his daughter. To crown it up, Peter implies that Dr Stockmann's activism are mere ploy to inherit Morten Kiil's money, and Kiil himself spontaneously feels indifferent. However, regardless of all, Dr Stockmann defies suggestions of exile and remain in town. Granted his family is supportive, Dr Stockmann boast by saying that the strongest man is the man who stands alone.

Ibsen's *An Enemy of the People* and Pandemic

Surely, dramatists have written about love, politics, religion, war and a host of other related social matters. Relatively, while it can be argued that dramatists have written on virtually all subjects one can possibly think of, not many plays have explored on the subject of pandemic. Observably, *An Enemy of the People* is one amongst millions of written plays to have taken a dive into a rare area; pandemic.

In the world of the play, a small town whose economy is hinged on a public bath facility is crisscrossed in a battle of either trusting Dr Stockmann or holding unto the words of their leader, Peter, the town's mayor. Upon the discovery that the town's bath has been contaminated with harmful bacteria via its drainage system, a concerned and selfless fellow, Dr Stockmann, sought out to keep the town free from an impending epidemic outbreak. To achieve this purpose, Dr Stockmann thought it wise to inform the entire town of the inherent danger(s) in the bath via a local newspaper. Seemingly standing on a foundation characterized with egocentrism, mischief and greed, Peter Stockmann aka. Judge who is Dr Stockmann's older brother, the town magistrate and chief of police and chairman of the spa baths' board of directors, is out to do everything within his means to strangle Dr Stockmann's effort. Peter's positions in the town obviously accords him so much responsibilities hence, perhaps the most legal reason he sanctions his brother's actions. The town's socio-economic opulence is tied to the spa bath hence its significance. The dialogue below explains it all.

DR STOCKMANN: Yes, yes, just give me time and you shall hear all about it. Oh, if only I had Peter here! Yes, it just shows you how we humans can go around making judgements like the blindest of moles

HOVSTAD: What do you mean by that, Doctor?

DR STOCKMANN (stopping by the table): Is it not the general opinion that our town is a salubrious place?

HOVSTAD: Yes, of course it is.

DR STOCKMANN: A quite extraordinarily salubrious place, even, - a place which deserves to be recommended most warmly for our fellow human beings, both sick and well -

MRS STOCKMANN: Yes, but Tomas dear -

DR STOCKMANN: And recommended it and praised it, that is what we've done. I've written article after article, both for The People's Herald and for pamphlets -

HOVSTAD: Well, yes, but what of it?

DR STOCKMANN: These spa baths, which are described as the town's main artery, the town's vital nerve and – and the devil knows what all else –

BILLING: “The pulsating heart of the town” is what I once, in a frivolous moment, took the liberty of –

DR STOCKMANN: Oh yes, that too. But do you know what they actually are, these great, splendid, acclaimed spa baths that have cost so much money, – do you know what they are?

HOVSTAD: No, what are they?

MRS STOCKMANN: Yes, what?

DR STOCKMANN: Those baths are a pestilential sump (Henrik Ibsen, p. 21).

From the foregoing excerpt, it becomes clearer why Peter Stockmann strives to bottle-up any suggestion or news about the contaminated bath from public knowledge. In a related interest however, Peter may not be exactly happy about Stockmann's projection that the bath is tainted with some foul elements. However, regardless of what the case may be, the latter is rather bent on not allowing the situation disrupt the free flow of the bath spa both economically and otherwise thus, the bid to conceal the discovery and by any means necessary. It is equally of interest to state that Peter is somewhat obsessed with the spa bath.

JUDGE STOCKMANN: Exactly. We have our magnificent, big, new spa baths. Mark my words! Those baths will be the town's finest prerequisite, Mr Hovstad. Indubitably!

MRS STOCKMANN: That's what Tomas says too.

JUDGE STOCKMANN: What a quite extraordinary upturn this place has taken just in the past year or so! There's money about; life and activity. Buildings and land are increasing in value with every day that passes.

HOVSTAD: And unemployment is falling.

JUDGE STOCKMANN: That too, yes. And the poor-rates imposed on the propertied classes have been reduced to a gratifying degree, and will come down even further if only we have a really good summer this year; – a great many visitors from outside, – lots of invalids to give the spa a good reputation.

HOVSTAD: And there is some prospect of this, I hear.

JUDGE STOCKMANN: It's looking very promising. More inquiries regarding accommodation and so on are pouring in every day.

With Peter's deep affection for the spa bath, one might feel the itch to think that should have given him sufficient ground to attend to its needs and demands in real term. However, ranking Peter's reaction to the situation as a display of irresponsibility, the latter even makes to question the credibility of Dr Stockmann's discovery and ultimately debunks it. It is however of interest to state that Dr Stockmann's discovery is given to truth. The dialogue below explains how Dr Stockmann arrived at his discovery.

DR STOCKMANN: That whole spa is a poisonous whited sepulchre, I tell you. Unsanitary in the extreme. All that filth and muck up in Mølledal, – all that foul-smelling ordure, – it contaminates the DR STOCKMANN: I have examined the conditions as conscientiously as possible. Oh, I had long suspected something of the sort. There were quite a few notable instances of illness among visitors to the Baths, – cases of typhoid and of gastric complaints –

MRS STOCKMANN: Yes, that's true, there were.

DR STOCKMANN: At the time we thought these outsiders had brought the infection with them; but later, - in the winter, - I began to have second thoughts about this; so I set about examining the water, as well as that could be done.

MRS STOCKMANN: So that's what you've been so busy with!

DR STOCKMANN: Oh, I've been busy all right, Katrine. But I didn't have the necessary scientific facilities here, you see; so, I sent samples of both the drinking water and the seawater to the university to have an exact analysis carried out by a chemist.

HOVSTAD: And this you have now received?

DR STOCKMANN (holding up the letter): I have it here! It has been established that putrefied organic material is present in the water, - infusoria galore. This is most definitely damaging to the health whether taken internally or externally (p. 22).

However, even though Dr Stockmann's discovery is given to truth, truth seem not to be enough for Peter and other town's stakeholders to do what is considerably right.

Counting the fact that at the ultimate, Peter is able to buy gentlemen of the *People Herald's Newspaper*, Hovstad, Billing, and Aslaksen; it is in fact disappointing to say the least. Acting like dead woods towards Dr Stockmann's pursuit was not enough, the latter only become useful in a negative length given the credit that they freely lend Peter their hands in convincing the masses that Dr Stockmann's discoveries are fallacy. Politicizing the situation, Peter ultimately paints Dr Stockmann an image that leaves him at the mercy of the people. Specifically, they see him as an enemy of the people.

However, in real term, Dr Stockmann who is the chief medical officer of the spa bath only wishes that the right thing is done thus, his projection to warn the entire town as well as other external patrons of the hazards of the facility. By this instance, the good doctor only hope that the spa bath will get the required treatment as soon as possible; afterwards, a grand reopening for business. Nonetheless, Dr Stockmann's dream of protecting the town from a looming pandemic meets an ill-fated resolve. However, although the plot ends with Dr Stockmann earning himself the name; "An Enemy of the People," any possible continuance would have seen the town suffer an inescapable pandemic where sickness, panic, socioeconomic restrictions and meltdown and death would have been the new normal.

Conclusion

In nearly all human settlement known to the world today, there exist the ruling class and the ruled. In a basic sense, the growth and development of a society where government exist depends largely on the leadership proficiency of the ruling class and the sensibility and cooperation of the ruled as well. The foregoing premise is only a preamble to say that by its original design, politics ought to be ultimately played for the peace, growth and development of the society. Peter's town is to suffer a dangerous pandemic outbreak rising from the contaminated public spa bath because a government official is not only feared to be insensitive, but also because he is egoistic.

In real sense, it is unequivocal to say that some of the pandemic the world had suffered today were because one or more people in high places and for some complex reasons decided to be insensitive, irresponsible and/or roguish. Regarding Covid19, sources reported that it was first thought SARS-CoV-2 made the jump to humans at one of Wuhan, China's open-air "wet markets." Later theories expressed concern that it may have

originated as a biological weapon in a lab in China. Not to say the foregoing provision is absolutely true, but granted the credit of the allusion, it is safe to say that a mistake made by a few can affect gravely a mass of people. As in Ibsen's *An Enemy of the People*, despite Dr Stockmann's effort to overturn the situation, Peter's bearing chaired the enrichment of a formally low-key problem to be faced by the entire town.

Granted the foregoing, it suffices to say that it behooves more on the government to make or mar a people. Whilst granting government officials the power to lead a mass of people only translate that the people entrust their health, safety and overall welfare in their hands. Hence, it becomes failing that people in government act in manners that affect the greater good. To be however direct is to say that it is unusual for a pandemic to announce its arrival before an outbreak. That is why is it equally responsive to make the recommendation that proactiveness should always supersede reactiveness. Stakeholders should note that science related researches should be increasingly sponsored to avert any possible pandemic outbreak. This procedure is obviously better than controlling and curing a mass of sick people in the face of a wide-spreading disease like the deadly corona virus. Amidst the already said, this paper smile over the fact that drama can be effectively and efficiently utilized for social commentary. In fact, the role of Ibsen's *An Enemy of the People* in treating this paper justifies the place of dramatists to humanity.

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