

The Analysis of Social Facts in “The Plague” by Albert Camus

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ARMADA
JURNAL PENELITIAN MULTIDISIPLIN

e-ISSN: 2964-2981

ARMADA : Jurnal Penelitian Multidisiplin

<https://ejournal.45mataram.ac.id/index.php/armada>

Vol. 2, No. 1 January 2024

Page: 53-70

DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.55681/armada.v2i1.1134>

Article History:

Received: December, 27 2023

Revised: January, 09 2024

Accepted: January, 17 2024

Abstract : *This research aims to analyze the social facts and interpret quotes that express them in the novel "The Plague" in Oran City, Algeria, and the impacts on society. In this research, the writer used a qualitative method; the data was collected by reading the novel and analyzed using a sociological approach. As the result of this research, there are nine social facts from the book: Social Conditions (Society and Environment), Rat Pest, Health Committee, Epidemic/Plague, Prevention/ Government Rules, Lockdown, and Religious Activities (Prayers and Sermons).*

Keywords : *Epidemic, Plague, Social Fact.*

Abstrak : Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis fakta-fakta sosial dan menginterpretasikan kutipan-kutipan yang mengekspresikan fakta-fakta sosial dalam novel "The Plague" di Kota Oran, Aljazair, dan dampaknya terhadap masyarakat. Dalam penelitian ini, penulis menggunakan metode kualitatif; data dikumpulkan dengan membaca novel dan dianalisis menggunakan pendekatan sosiologi. Sebagai hasil dari penelitian ini, ada sembilan fakta sosial dari buku tersebut: Kondisi Sosial (Masyarakat dan Lingkungan), Hama Tikus, Komite Kesehatan, Epidemi/Wabah, Pencegahan/Aturan Pemerintah, Lockdown, dan Kegiatan Keagamaan (Doa dan Khotbah).

Kata Kunci : Epidemik, Fakta Sosial, Wabah.

INTRODUCTION

A pandemic is an epidemic that occurs on a scale that crosses international boundaries, usually affecting many people (Miquel Porta (2008)). We have often heard the term pandemic since the Covid-19 outbreak in early 2020. The pandemic is undoubtedly related to the plague. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, a Plague is a disease that affects humans and other mammals.

The emergence of an epidemic certainly impacts people's lives, especially in the socio-cultural aspect. Hence, society is restricted from carrying out social actions with other individuals, and this develops habits that are different from previous lives. In other words, the epidemic causes the emergence of a new culture in society. About literary works, epidemics or pandemics are a form of social fact that can occur in society, and this has an exciting element to tell. Therefore, many writers are interested and package it into one complex story as a form of literary work. Some are based on fact, and some are fictional.

Several novels contain stories about epidemics and their spread in society and the harmful effects they cause. One of the well-known novels that tell about epidemics is the novel entitled The Plague by a French writer, Albert Camus. The fiction of this novel looks real when we reflect on it with the COVID-19 pandemic. The emergence of an outbreak in the community has an impact that can be seen in stark contrast. One is the emergence of new facts in the environment,

and society is forced to adapt. This can be called a social fact. According to Emile Durkheim, sociology is the study of social facts. Social facts are external to an individual and constrain their behavior. They are general, which means that they are collective representations of the social behavior of a group of people.

Regarding the novel above, the writer is interested in analyzing the social facts that appear in the book and the impact they cause. Based on the possibilities in the novel, the social facts that occur are not only about epidemics or pandemics, as previously explained. Therefore, the writer is motivated to examine more deeply the forms of social facts from Albert Camus in his novel. The author includes quotes and interpretations in this article.

RESEARCH METHOD

Types of The Research

The author uses qualitative research methods in this study. Qualitative research is multimethod in focus, involving an interpretative, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. Qualitative research involves using and collecting various empirical materials – case studies, personal experiences, introspection, life stories, interviews, observational, historical, interactional, and visual texts – that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in individuals' lives. (Denzin and Lincoln 2005:2)

Qualitative data consist of detailed descriptions of situations, events, people, interactions, and observed behaviors; direct quotations from people about their experiences, attitudes, beliefs, and thoughts; and excerpts or entire passages from documents, correspondence, records, and case histories. The detailed descriptions, direct quotations, and case documentation obtained by qualitative methods are raw data from the empirical world. The data are collected as an open-ended narrative. There are no attempts to fit institutional activities or peoples' experiences into predetermined, standardized categories, as the response choices that comprise typical questionnaires or tests do. (Patton, 1982).

Objectives of The Research

The author uses literary works, namely novels, as research objects in this scientific work. The author chose *The Plague* (*La Peste*) by Albert Camus. *The Plague* is a novel by Albert Camus, published in 1947. The plague is spreading. People are dying. Everyone is ordered to quarantine at home as the local doctor works around the clock to save victims. There are acts of heroism and shame; there are those who think only of themselves and those who are engaged in the greater good. The human condition is absurd and precarious. That is the situation in *La Peste* (*The Plague*).

Method of Collecting Data

The author collects data using the document study method. The data obtained is divided into 2: primary and secondary. Preliminary data are novels, and secondary data are journals, books, and internet articles. Document studies carried out by qualitative researchers, their position can be seen as "resource persons" can answer questions;" what was the purpose of the document written? What is the background? What can the document tell the researcher? Under what circumstances was the document written? For who?" and so on. (Nasution, 2003; 86). Document review assists researchers in collecting data or information by reading letters, announcements, meeting summaries, written statements of specific policies, and other written materials. This data search method is beneficial because it can be done without disturbing the object or research atmosphere. By studying these documents, researchers can learn about the culture and values adhered to by the object under study (Nilamsari, 2014).

Method of Analyzing Data

The Author uses a sociological approach to analyze the data from this research. A sociological approach is an approach or a method whose discussion of an object is based on the

community in the debate. (Rifa'I, 2018). Sociology of literature is the study of everything related to society. Including the problems and their relation to the lives of many people. (Wibowo, 20. This follows Damono's statement (1984:6) that the sociology of literature is an objective and scientific study of humans in society, institutions, and social processes.

In its use in the sociological approach, the author must follow some steps to obtain research results and accurate data. Here are the steps:

- 1) Selecting a topic
- 2) Defining the problem
- 3) Reviewing the literature
- 4) Formulating a hypothesis
- 5) Choosing a research method
- 6) Collect the data
- 7) Analyzing the results
- 8) Share the results

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

This research was conducted to reveal the social facts contained in *The Plague* by Albert Camus. It was found that various social facts are of interest to the author to be discussed and analyzed sociologically after reading documents such as books, journals, articles, and internet references within a certain period and collecting data simultaneously to conclude. As a finding, every form of social fact found is supported by quotations and interpretations to clarify the data found.

Social Conditions (Society and Environment)

The first situation in this novel, namely social conditions, is the earliest told and described by the author. The social situation is divided into two: the social conditions of society and the social conditions of the environment.

The social situation of the community relates to the lives of residents in the city of Oran in 1948. It starts from daily activities such as work and interests to personal life. The novel also mentions that the people there are very humanist and modern. The social situation of the environment here is about the environment in the city in the year at that time. It describes the atmosphere and appearance of the town. It can be seen in some of the quotes that the city is said to be not beautiful and even mentioned negatively.

Oran city residents live like humans in general; they carry out their usual daily activities, even though they are busy people still managing their own business. Oran townspeople are hard workers in running their businesses. Everything seemed normal before the pandemic and changed after the pandemic's emergence in the city.

*Our citizens work hard, but solely to get rich. Their chief interest is commerce, and their principal aim in life is, as they call it, "doing business."
(Camus. A, Pg. 2:1)*

The quote above describes people's working life where trade or business is their primary source of income. They work hard solely for the sole purpose of becoming a person who has a lot of money. That becomes their main goal in life, "doing business."

*In this respect, our townsfolk were like everybody else, wrapped up in themselves; in other words, they were humanists: they disbelieved in pestilences.
(Camus. A, Pg. 18:30)*

The narrator explains that the people of their town are just like everyone else who is busy with themselves; they don't care about the environment or pestilence or believe in it. Even though they are often decorated with work, that doesn't mean they don't care about the people around them.

The town itself, let us admit, is ugly. It has a smug, calm air, and you need time to discover what makes it different from so many business centers in other parts of the world. How do you conjure up a picture, for instance, of a town without pigeons, without any trees or gardens, where you never hear the beat of wings or the rustle of Leaves?
(Camus. A, Pg. 1:6)

The above quote describes how the town is; it's ugly, and the air is calm but hostile. It is implied that there is no flapping of wings or rustling of leaves. We can imagine how the city is so gloomy and seems a little spooky.

The seasons are discriminated only in the sky. All that tells you of spring's coming is the feel of the air or the baskets of flowers from the suburbs by Peddlers; it's a spring cry in the marketplaces. During the summer, the sun bakes the Houses bone-dry and sprinkles our walls with grayish dust, and you have no option but to Survive those days of fire indoors, behind closed shutters. In autumn, on the other hand, We have deluges of mud. Only winter brings delightful weather.
(Camus. A, . Pg.1:11)

It is still related to the previous quote regarding the atmosphere and the city's state: the seasons are only distinguished in the sky. Spring is characterized by the feel of the air or the start of many flowers to juice; Summer is extreme, autumn is so detrimental, and winter is the only one that is very pleasant.

“ Naturally, they don't eschew such simpler pleasures as love-making, Seabathing, going to the pictures. But, very sensibly, they reserve these pastimes for Saturday afternoons and Sundays and spend the rest of the week making money, as Much as possible.
(Camus. A, Pg. 2:3)

The above quote again explains people's lives in personal lives where love affairs, soaking in the sea, or going to the movies, they still live even though they only have time on the weekend afternoon and the rest of the day before is used to make as much money as possible.

On leaving the office in the evening, they forgather, at an hour that Never varies, in the cafes, stroll the same boulevard, or take the air on their balconies.
(Camus. A, Pg. 2:6)

The above quote still talks about the activities that people in the city of Oran do when they finish work. They continue their activities like most people who gather in cafes, take a walk to relieve fatigue, or breathe fresh air on the balcony.

The Passions of the young are violent and short-lived; the vices of older men seldom range Beyond an addiction to bowling, to banquets and “socials,” or clubs where large sums Change hands on the fall of a card.
(Camus. A, Pg. 2:7)

The quote is about young people's activity. It said that young people are more inclined to lust for violence or vice. They do a lot of activities that can be said just for fun.

Indeed, nothing is commoner nowadays than to see people working from morning till night and then fritter away at card tables, in cafes, and in small talk about what time is left for living.

(Camus. A, Pg. 2:12)

The excerpt explains that people's working conditions were not unique to their city but rather a common habit that was shared by almost everyone at that time. I worked all day and into the night and then continued to have fun.

Oran seems to be a town without intimations; in other words, it is entirely modern. Hence, I see no need to dwell on the manner of loving in our town. The men and women rapidly consume one another in "the act of love" or settle down to a mild habit of conjugality.

(Camus. A, Pg. 2:17)

Back to the quote that describes the city of Oran, which is very modern. As for the relationships between men and women, they only had short relationships and had light marital habits.

At Oran, as elsewhere, for lack of time and thinking, people have to love one another without knowing much about it.

(Camus. A, Pg. 2:21)

The quote means that people in Oran love or get into a relationship without knowing or getting to know their partner. The reason is that their lives are so busy with work.

Rat Pest

Rats are the beginning of the spread of the plague in the novel. At the story's beginning, April 16, Dr. Rieux was the first to find a dead rat on his way to work. At first, nothing was strange, but over time, he realized something odd about the appearance of rats killed because a collection of dead rats is found in various places, such as on the streets and gutters.

The city of Oran is filled with dead rats, which, without them realizing it, is the source of the plague that has appeared in the town. The rats spread the virus, which then spread to people in the city and caused death. Therefore, the government acted by cleaning up the rat carcasses scattered in the town of Oran.

"The next morning, it was April 18, when the doctor was bringing back his mother. He found M. Michel looking still more out of sorts from the station. The stairway from the cellar to the attics was strewn with dead rats, ten or a dozen of them. The garbage cans of all the houses in the street were full of rats."

(Camus. A, Pg. 7:9)

This quote tells the story of Doctor Rieux, who had just returned from the train station to pick up his mother and found that Michel's condition was worsening; the doctor also found dead rats scattered indoors and outdoors.

“Yes, Mercier knew all about it. Fifty rats had been found in his offices near the piers. He was rather annoyed; did the doctor think it meant anything serious? Rieux Couldn’t give a definite opinion, but he thought the sanitary service should take action of Some kind.”
(Camus. A, Pg. 7:20)

This part tells about when Doctor Rieux calls the mayor's office and asks about cases of dead rats scattered in cities and towns. According to the doctor, the cleaning service must act to reduce the rats that are scattered in every city environment.

“Mercier agreed. “And, if you think it’s worth the trouble, I’ll get an order Issued as well.” “It certainly is worth the trouble,” Rieux replied. His charwoman had just told him that several hundred dead rats had been Collected in the big factory where her husband worked.”
(Camus. A, Pg. 7:25)

This excerpt tells where Mercier, who works in the pest extermination department, agrees that the case of the death of a large number of rats is severe. The city mayor's office will also issue an order if this is serious, according to Doctor Rieux.

“It was about this time that our townsfolk began to show uneasiness. From April 18 onwards, quantities of dead or dying rats were found in Factories and warehouses.”
(Camus. A, Pg. 7:31)

This excerpt tells that from April 18 onwards, all city residents have started to worry about the dead rats, which are increasing in number in all places in the cities.

“In some cases, the animals were killed to end their Agony. From the outer suburbs to the center of the town, in all the byways where the Doctor’s duties took him, in every thoroughfare, rats were piled up in garbage cans or Lying in long lines in the gutters.”
(Camus. A, Pg. 7:32)

This quote tells that rats are found in various places both on the outskirts and in the city center and on the roads that doctors pass while working, and it is also explained that some animals must be exterminated to end their suffering.

“An order was transmitted to the sanitary service to collect the dead rats at Daybreak every morning. When the rats had been collected, two municipal trucks were taken to Burn them in the town incinerator. But the situation worsened in the following days. There were more and more dead Vermin in the streets, and the collectors had bigger truckloads every morning.”
(Camus. A, Pg. 7:39)

In this quote, the janitor was ordered to collect every rat and mouse that died and would be burned in a city incinerator, but every day, it got worse and worse because rats and mice that died in various cities were found more and more.

“On the fourth day, the rats began to come out and die in batches. From basements, Cellars, and sewers, they emerged in long wavering files into the light of day, swayed helplessly, then did a sort of pirouette and fell dead at the feet of the horrified onlookers.”

(Camus. A, Pg. 8)

This quote explains how all the rats out of the basement and the sewers died instantly in front of the townspeople who witnessed it.

“At night, in passages and alleys, their shrill little death cries could be heard. In the Mornings, the bodies were found lining the gutters, each with a gout of blood, like a red Flower, on its tapering muzzle; some were bloated and already beginning to rot, others Rigid, with their whiskers still erect.”

(Camus. A, Pg. 8:3)

This quote tells about the sound of rats being heard every night in the alleys and alleys in the city, and the next day, they were found dead in a deplorable state.

“Even in the busy heart of the town, you found them Piled in little heaps on landings and backyards. Some stole forth to die singly in the Halls of public offices, school playgrounds, and even café terraces. Our townsfolk Were amazed to find such busy centers as the Place d’Armes, the boulevards, and the Promenade along the waterfront, dotted with repulsive little corpses.”

(Camus. A, Pg. 8:5)

This quote tells the story of the townspeople who are amazed at the death of rats in every crowded and busy place.

“After the daily Clean-up of the town, which took place at sunrise, there was a brief respite; then gradually, The rats began to appear again in numbers that increased throughout the day.”

(Camus. A, Pg. 8:9)

In this quote, it is said that even after the cleaning services of the city clean up the dead rats, in a short break, rats will appear, and more and more will die.

Health Committee

Due to the emergence of rats in the city, which caused the virus's spread and several cases in Oran, the government and medical staff conducted a Health Committee to address this. The Health Committee took place at the Prefect's office in Oran.

At the meeting, they raised questions about the epidemic in Oran; some believed it was an epidemic, and some were still unsure and thought it was just an ordinary fever. If it is confirmed that it is an epidemic, then the government will immediately take swift steps to overcome the spread of the epidemic. Whether it's an epidemic or not, the most important thing is to overcome it before it kills the population in the city.

The next day, despite persistence that many thought was ill-advised, Rieux persuaded the authorities to convene a health committee at the Prefect's office.

(Camus.A, Pg. 23:39)

As the plague spread, Dr. Rieux called the authorities for a meeting. The meeting took place at the Oran city prefect's office. The meeting discussed ways to deal with the spread of the virus in the city of Oran.

"Let's make a start, gentlemen," he said. "Need I review the situation?" Richard thought that wasn't necessary. He and his colleagues were acquainted with the facts. The only question was what measures should be adopted.
(Camus.A, Pg. 24:9)

The phrase "Let's make a gentlemen's start" from the prefect indicated that the meeting must be held immediately without wasting any more time because quick action was needed to deal with the spread of the virus in the city of Oran. The prefect asked about the current situation, but Dr. Rieux believed it was unnecessary because they already knew the current situation in Oran. The most important thing was the steps that must be taken.

"Quite true," the Prefect assented, "but I need your professional declaration that the epidemic is one of plague." "If we don't make that declaration," Rieux said, "there's a risk that half the population may be wiped out."
(Camus.A, Pg. 25:27)

At the meeting, some were convinced it was an epidemic, and some were unsure. Dr. Rieux asked for a statement from the prefect with certainty that what had happened was an epidemic so that preventive measures could be taken as soon as possible.

"The question," old Castel cut in almost rudely, "is to know whether it's plague or not."
(Camus. A, Pg. 24:12)

The quote above shows Castel is still unsure if it is an epidemic.

"Then, after sweeping the other members of the committee with a friendly glance, he said that he knew quite well that it was plague and, needless to say, he also knew that, were this to be officially admitted, the authorities would be compelled to take very drastic steps."
(Camus.A, Pg. 24:22)

Castel is now sure that it's an epidemic. And if the government officially recognizes it, the authorities, such as workers, will immediately take preventive measures, of course, on orders from the government.

"This was, of course, the explanation of his colleagues' reluctance to face the facts, and if it would ease their minds, he was quite prepared to say it wasn't a plague. The Prefect seemed ruffled and remarked that, in any case, this line of argument seemed to him unsound."
(Camus.A, Pg. 24:25)

Castel's colleagues are still reluctant to face the fact that what happened in Oran is an epidemic. The prefect disagreed with Castel's expression.

"The important thing," Castel replied, "isn't the soundness or otherwise of the argument but for it to make you think." Rieux, who had said nothing so far, was asked for his opinion.
(Camus.A, Pg. 24:32)

Castel is still presenting his argument. He then asked Dr. Rieux to give his opinion regarding the argument he passed because he was only silent during the meeting.

That being so, it has little importance whether you call it a plague or some rare fever. The important thing is to prevent it killing off half the population of this town.
(Camus.A, Pg. 25:48)

The interrogative sentence quote above is a question by Richard to the prefect. Was he sure whether it was the plague or not? There is no definite statement about whether it is an epidemic or not.

"Please answer me quite frankly. Are you convinced it's plague?"
(Camus.A, Pg. 25:33)

The prefect disagrees with Richard's argument and statement even if it's not an epidemic, should statutory precautions be taken immediately? The prefect asked again.

Followed by scowls and protestations, Rieux left the committee room.
(Camus.A, Pg. 26:1)

Because there were pros and cons in the meeting, Rieux left the meeting room with a sullen face.

Epidemic/Plague

The social conditions regarding epidemics and plagues in the novel *The Plague* is a situation where the number of cases of plague-affected society has begun to increase, and some deaths have also occurred. Although the plague was decreasing, it suddenly increased drastically.

In this epidemic and the plague's emergence, many people and health workers are still wondering how to prevent the plague from killing more people in the city.

In a very few days, the number of cases had risen by leaps and bounds, and it became evident to all observers of this strange malady that a real epidemic had set in.
(Camus. A, Pg. 18:8)

The above quote explains that the number of cases that had spread in the city in a few days increased very quickly. And it proved to the medical staff that this strange and unknown disease had become an epidemic.

Richard, however, summing up the situation as he saw it, pointed out that if the epidemic did not cease spontaneously, it would be necessary to apply the rigorous prophylactic measures laid down in the Code.
(Camus.A, Pg. 25:10)

The quote describes Richard, who saw that the situation needed more action. Because the cases were increasing, he thought strict precautions should be taken if the outbreak did not stop.

"Everybody's talking about an epidemic. Is there anything in it, doctor?"
"People always talk," Rieux replied. "That's only to be expected."
"You're right. And if we have ten deaths, they'll think it's the end of the world. But it's not that we need here."
(Camus.A, Pg. 30:5)

The above quote is a conversation between Cottard and Dr. Rieux. Cottard asks what precisely the plague everyone is talking about is, but Rieux replies that people are always talking,

and they only talk about the hope of the plague. But Rieux added that if there were ten deaths, people would think it was the end of the world.

The usual crowd thronged the streets in the evening, and the lines lengthened outside the picture-houses. Moreover, the epidemic seemed to be on the wane; on some days, only ten or so deaths were notified. Then, suddenly, the figure shot up again vertically. On the day when the death roll touched thirty.
(*The Plague*, Pg. 32:20)

The above quote describes the plague that seemed to diminish for a few days. The crowds began to appear again at night. However, suddenly, the outbreak increased drastically. The number of deaths also increased.

That being so, it has little importance whether you call it a plague or some rare fever. The important thing is to prevent its killing off half the population of this town.
(*Camus.A*, Pg.24, 25:1)

The quote is Rieux saying that he thinks preventing the plague from killing many people in the city is more important. Rather than people being preoccupied with finding out or naming the plague or the rare type of fever.

And, to do this, it would be necessary to admit officially that plague had broken out. But there was no absolute certainty; therefore, any hasty action would be deprecated.
(*Camus.A*, Pg. 25:12)

The quote is Rieux saying that to prevent the plague from spreading; one should not take hasty action because there is no absolute certainty.

"Those rats died of plague," was his conclusion, "or of something extremely like it. And they've loosed tens of thousands of fleas on the town, which will spread the infection in geometrical progression unless it's checked in time."
(*Camus.A*, Pg. 31:22)

The above quote is Richard saying that it can be concluded that the plague or something very similar is the cause of many dead rats. And that they had released tens of thousands of fleas in the city that would spread the infection unless checked sooner.

Could that term "abstraction" really apply to these days he spent in his hospital while the plague was battering on the town, raising its death toll to five hundred victims a week?
(*Camus. A*, Pg. 43:21)

The above quote describes the thoughts of Rambert, the journalist who came and talked to Rieux. He asked if the abstraction that Rieux said he lived in applied to the days when the plague had already swept through the city, increasing the death toll by five hundred victims a week.

That was one of the significant changes brought by the epidemic. Hitherto, all of us welcomed summer with pleasant anticipation. The town was open to the sea, and its young folk made free of the beaches.
(*Camus. A*, Pg. 55:38)

The above excerpt explains one of the significant changes brought about by the pandemic: the summer heat is taking the fun out of the city. The city had an open sea, but I could not go to the beach. In short, there was nothing to do under the epidemic conditions.

*He outlines the progress of the plague, and he, too, notes that a new phase of the epidemic was ushered in when the radio announced no longer weekly totals but ninety-two, a hundred and seven, and a hundred and thirty deaths in a day.
(Camus. A, Pg. 55:43)*

The above quote explains that which gives an outline of the development of the plague and notes that a new phase of the epidemic began when the radio announced that there were no more prolonged cases a week, but in a day, there could be up to one hundred and thirty cases.

Prevention / Government Rules

Because the plague in Oran City was getting worse day by day, and the death rate was also increasing because of the plague, the government quickly took precautions against the epidemic that occurred in Oran City. These precautions are part of the government regulations for dealing with outbreaks in Oran.

These preventive measures are preceded by the extermination of the rat population in the city of Oran by injecting toxic gas into the sewers; city residents are advised to take hygiene measures themselves, and if they find something strange happening, immediately consult a doctor, the government also carries out disinfection in hospitals. The vehicle the patient travels into the patient's residence, and burial must also be carried out according to the protocol. The government also prohibits other people from interacting with patients to reduce the risk of spreading the virus.

The government is also taking steps to control the city's traffic, food supply, fuel, food sales, and electricity supply. Even access to the city from outside and inside is also prohibited.

*The evening papers that day took up the matter. They inquired whether or not the city fathers would take steps and what emergency measures were contemplated to abate this disgusting nuisance. The municipality had not considered doing anything, but a meeting was convened to discuss the situation.
(Camus. A. Pg. 7:35)*

Since the rat plague hit the city of Oran, the newspapers discussed this and what precautions the government would take. At the same time, a meeting was held to discuss the situation.

*Nonetheless, guided by a spirit of prudence that all would appreciate, the Prefect was putting some precautionary measures into force. If these measures were carefully studied and properly applied, they would prevent any risk of an epidemic. This being so, the Prefect felt no doubt that everybody in his jurisdiction would wholeheartedly second his efforts.
(Camus. A. Pg. 26:15)*

The prefect then took precautions; if everyone participated, it would reduce the risk of an epidemic.

*The notice outlined the general program that the authorities had drawn up. It included systematic extermination of the rat population by injecting poison gas into the sewers and strict supervision of the water supply.
(Camus. A, Pg. 26:20)*

The first step taken by the prefect was to spray poison gas in the ditches to destroy the rat population, which was considered the source of the plague, and control the water supply.

The townspeople were advised to practice extreme cleanliness, and anyone who found fleas on their persons was directed to call the municipal dispensaries.
(Camus. A, Pg. 26:22)

The prefect also advised everyone to practice extra hygiene, and if anything, strange happened, such as finding fleas on their body, they should contact the city pharmacy immediately.

Some supplementary regulations enjoined compulsory disinfection of the sick room and vehicle the patient traveled.
(Camus. A, Pg. 26:28)

The prefect also regulated that patient rooms and vehicles carrying patients must be disinfected to reduce the transmission process.

For the rest, the Prefect confined himself to advising all who had contacted the patient to consult the sanitary inspector and strictly follow his advice.
(Camus. A, Pg. 26:30)

The prefect also advised people who came into contact with infected patients to contact the sanitary inspector immediately for disinfection.

The residences of sick people were to be shut up and disinfected; persons living in the same house were to go into quarantine; burials were to be supervised by the local authorities in a manner that will be described later.
(Camus. A, Pg. 32:4)

Due to the increasing number of reported cases of death, the regulations are getting tighter. Every house where infected people live must be closed and disinfected, people who live in the same house as infected people must be quarantined, and even burials must be under surveillance.

To begin with, the Prefect took measures to control the traffic and the food supply. Gasoline was rationed, and restrictions were placed on the sale of foodstuffs. Reductions were ordered in the use of electricity.
(Camus. A, Pg. 38:27)

Regulations also apply to traffic, food supply, fuel, restrictions on the sale of food, and electricity use in the city of Oran. This is done to avoid an economic and resource crisis in society.

Only necessities were brought to Oran by road or air. Thus, the traffic thinned out progressively until hardly any private cars were in the streets; luxury shops closed overnight, and others began to put up "Sold Out" notices while crowds of buyers stood waiting at their doors.
(Camus. A, Pg. 38:31)

The lockdown atmosphere began to be felt when the traffic in the city of Oran slowly turned quieter, and the usually busy shops were now tightly closed.

The newspapers published new regulations reiterating the orders against attempting to leave the town and warning those who infringed them that they were liable to long terms of imprisonment.

(Camus. A, Pg. 55:12)

As the number of deaths increases, the newspapers issue news regarding new regulations issued by the government. The government prohibits access outside the city of Oran, and those who violate it will be subject to prison terms.

Lockdown

Because the city's condition was worsening due to the pandemic, the government implemented a lockdown in the city of Oran to prevent the spread of the virus and increase the death rate. The government closed the city gates to limit access in and out of the city of Oran. Everyone has to adapt to the new conditions in the town. Many residents could not stand these conditions until the beginning of the regulation issuance; many residents asked the government's office.

Commercial activities were hampered due to the lockdown in the city of Oran; the streets looked deserted so that almost no vehicles or people could be seen passing by, and houses and shops were tightly closed. Newspapers provide information that anyone trying to escape Iran will get a prison sentence.

But once the town gates were shut, everyone realized that all the narrators included were in the same boat, and each would have to adapt to the new life conditions.

(Camus. A, Pg. 32:30)

The quote above is a quote from the narrator, who has the same fate as the citizens of Oran, where they have to adapt to new facts of life.

One of the most striking consequences of closing the gates was this sudden deprivation befalling people utterly unprepared for it.

(Camus. A, Pg. 32:36)

The most visible new conditions of life due to the closing of the city gates of Oran are where the residents of Oran City are not ready to accept this reality all of a sudden.

The gates closed some hours before the official order was made known to the public, and, naturally enough, it was impossible to take individual cases of hardship into account. It might indeed be said that the first effect of this brutal visitation was to compel our townspeople to act as if they had no feelings as individuals.

(Camus. A, Pg. 33:2)

The closing of the city gates impacted the residents of the city of Oran, where the order was issued without thinking about the difficulties that the residents would face. The government focuses on preventing the plague that hit the city of Oran.

During the first part of the day on which the prohibition to leave the town came into force, the Prefect's office was besieged by a crowd of applicants advancing pleas of equal cogency but equally impossible to consider.

(Camus. A, Pg. 33:7)

At the beginning of enacting the city gate closing regulations, residents flocked to the government office while begging to get out of Oran. However, the government did not respond because their priority was profitably overcoming the outbreak in Oran.

Even the tiny satisfaction of writing letters was denied us. It came to this: not only had the town ceased to be in touch with the rest of the world by standard means of communication, but also, according to a second notification, all correspondence was forbidden to prevent the risk of letters carrying infection outside the town.

(Camus. A, Pg. 33:13)

Since the exit had been closed, new questions arose regarding the townspeople who were outside. Are they allowed to return to the city or not? The answer is still the same: no. This indicates that exit access and entry into the city are prohibited.

Also, after some days, when it was clear that no one had the slightest hope of being able to leave our town, inquiries began to be made whether the return of people who had gone away before the outbreak would be permitted. After some days' consideration of the matter, the authorities replied affirmatively. They pointed out, however, that in no case would persons who returned be allowed to leave the town again; once here, they would have to stay, whatever happened.

(Camus. A, Pg. 33:42)

Not only did it impact the mentality and feelings of the townspeople, but they also stated that the plague had affected commerce. This is marked by the cessation of commercial activity in Oran.

The commercial activity that made it one of the chief ports on the coast had ceased abruptly. Only a few ships, detained in quarantine, were anchored in the bay. But the skeletal, idle cranes on the piers, tip-carts lying on their sides, neglected heaps of sacks and barrels, all testified that commerce, too, had died of the plague.

(Camus. A, Pg. 37:34)

The city streets that were initially bustling now turned quiet. Likewise, figures, usually filled with buyers, are now tightly closed.

Thus, the traffic thinned out progressively until hardly any private cars were on the roads; luxury shops closed overnight, and others began to put up "Sold Out" notices while crowds of buyers stood waiting at their doors.

(Camus. A, Pg. 38:31)

As a manifestation of the government's lockdown, newspapers issued news that contained a ban on leaving the city of Oran to reduce the risk of spreading, and there were penalties for those who violated it.

For the present, they were not unemployed, merely on holiday. So it was that on fine days, toward three in the afternoon, Oran brought to mind a city where public rejoicings are in

progress, shops are shut, and traffic is stopped to give a merry-making populace the freedom of the streets.
(Camus. A, Pg. 38:37)

Oran once filled with pedestrians and where the public was happy, has now turned into a quiet city; shops are closed, and there is no more traffic activity.

The newspapers published new regulations reiterating the orders against attempting to leave the town and warning those who infringed them that they were liable to long terms of imprisonment.
(Camus. A, Pg. 55:12)

News came out of the newspapers about the ban from the government to leave Oran, and those who violated it would be subject to imprisonment.

Religious Activities (Prayers and Sermons)

Pastor Paneloux is one of the characters in the novel who influences the occurrence of religious activities. The religious activities in the book are prayers and sermons led by Pastor Paneloux. Many city people are involved in this activity.

Pastor Paneloux said that the plague in the city of people was a punishment from God because humans lived so evilly. He gave sermons to the residents of the town of Oran as advice for them to live a better life.

However, toward the end of the month, about the time of the Week of Prayer, which will be described later on, there were more severe developments, altering the whole town.
(Camus. A, Pg. 38:25)

The quote above is the beginning of the religious activity mentioned in the novel, which will be explained on the next page.

He ended gloomily the first month of the plague with a violent recrudescence of the epidemic and a dramatic sermon preached by Father Paneloux, the Jesuit priest who had given an arm to old Michel when he was tottering home at the start of his illness.
(Camus. A, Pg. 45:3)

Pastor Parbeloux is the most influential figure in the religious activity that occurs in the novel. He gave a dramatic sermon at the end of the first month of such a dismal plague.

Hence, his local celebrity. Toward the end of the month, the ecclesiastical authorities in our town resolved to do battle against the plague with the weapons appropriate to them and organized a Week of Prayer.
(Camus. A, Pg. 45:13)

The ecclesiastical authorities fought against the plague with their weapon, namely faith in God that the plague would end with His permission, and they had to keep believing. A week of prayer was also held to strengthen the townspeople.

These manifestations of public piety were to be concluded on Sunday by a High Mass celebrated under the auspices of St. Roch, the plague-stricken saint, and Father Paneloux was asked to preach the sermon.
(Camus. A, Pg. 45:16)

As a manifestation of the purity of the people of the city of Oran, services will be held on Sunday at the grand mass celebration with the sermon's leader, Pastor Parneloux.

*There was a large attendance at the services of the Week of Prayer. It must not be assumed that in typical times, the townfolk of Oran are particularly devout.
(Camus. A, Pg. 45:23)*

The large number of people who attended the prayer week was not enough to guarantee the purity of the people of Oran. Before the outbreak, they lived without carrying out their religious obligations. Therefore, it is said that this plague was a punishment for them.

*"Most of those who took part in the Week of Prayer would have echoed a remark made by one of the churchgoers in Dr. Rieux's hearing: "Anyhow, it can't do any harm."
(Camus. A, Pg. 45:41)*

Residents who attended the prayer week declared that the plague in the city of Oran would not harm them because of their strong belief in God and possibly the influence of a sermon by Pastor Parneloux.

*The Cathedral was practically always full of worshippers throughout the Week of Prayer. For the first two or three days, many stayed outside, under the palms and pomegranate trees in the garden in front of the porch, and listened from a distance to the swelling tide of prayers and invocations whose backwash filled the neighboring streets.
(Camus. A, Pg. 46:5)*

During the Week of Prayer, the cathedral is filled with worshipers, and many even stay outside because they run out of space. This is enough to describe the objective seriousness of the people of the city of Oran in carrying out the Week of Prayer.

*On the Sunday of the sermon, a huge congregation filled the nave, overflowing onto the steps and precincts.
(Camus. A, Pg. 46:10)*

On Sundays, the congregation in attendance does not decrease but increases. The seriousness of the congregation was even more convincing when they remained outside under the umbrellas even though it was raining heavily. Then, the pastor climbed into the pulpit and was about to start his sermon.

*He was a stockily built man of medium height. When he leaned on the edge of the pulpit, grasping the woodwork with his big hands, all one saw was a massive black torso and, above it, two rosy cheeks overhung by steel-rimmed spectacles. He had a powerful, rather emotional delivery, which carried to a great distance, and when he launched at the congregation his opening phrase in clear, emphatic tones: "Calamity has come on you, my brethren, and, my brethren, you deserved it" there was a flutter that extended to the crowd massed in the rain outside the porch.
(Camus. A, Pg. 46:15)*

Pastor Parneloux started his sermon by saying there had been a catastrophe in their midst, and they deserved it. The word "appropriate" above gives the impression that the plague is a punishment for the citizens of Oran City.

*After launching it, he quoted a text from Exodus relating to the plague of Egypt and said: "The first time this scourge appears in history, it was wielded to strike down the enemies of God. Pharaoh set himself up against the divine will, and the plague beat him to his knees. Thus, from the dawn of recorded history, the scourge of God has humbled the proud of heart and laid low those who hardened themselves against Him. Ponder this well, my friends, and fall on your knees."
(Camus. A, Pg. 46:25)*

In his sermon, Pastor Parneloux quoted from the Bible the story of the Pharaoh who opposed God's will so that he was punished. Pastor Parneloux then asked the congregation to reflect on what had happened in history and ordered them to kneel.

*It is hard to say if this sermon affected our townsfolk. M. Othon, the magistrate, assured Dr. Rieux that he had found the preacher's arguments "absolutely irrefutable." But not everyone took such an unqualified view. To some, the sermon brought home that they had been sentenced to an indeterminate period of punishment for an unknown crime. And while a good many people adapted themselves to confinement and carried on their humdrum lives as before, others rebelled, and whose one idea now was to break loose from the prison house.
(Camus. A, Pg. 49:4)*

M. Othon, the judge, argued that the sermon at the Week of Prayer by Pastor Parneloux did not, as a whole, consider the sermon to strengthen them. Some think that God has punished them.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Thus, it can be concluded that social facts in *The Plague* by Albert Camus influence the significance of the novel. The social facts we discovered closely relate to the novel's title, *The Plague*. The plague suddenly appeared and spread in the city. Several social facts exist in the discussion, and some are very influential in the storyline of this novel, such as rats and pets, epidemics and plague, government rules, treatment efforts, and lockdowns. These social facts are visible once they significantly change the story's plot. Besides, it doesn't mean other social facts don't influence this story. They also become explanations to make the story more logical and exciting.

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