

Review Article

PANDEMIC AND SOCIETY: REVISITING ALBERT CAMUS AND SUSAN SONTAG

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Abstract

The following article engage with the response of societies towards disease and illness. As the world battles the COVID-19 pandemic, the path breaking works of Albert Camus 'Plague' and Susan Sontag 'Illness as a Metaphor' will provide valuable insights to understand the approach of societies and behaviour of individuals confronting contagion. Camus and Sontag portrays the story for all times which is why there is a need to revisit their work in contemporary times. The work uncovers the facts about how the humankind responds to a disorderly situation impacting their ordinary lives. They wonderfully put forward the difficulty of human mind to accept the fate around the stark realities of social world developing anxieties and chaos in their normative social order. On the other hand, it is rather difficult to develop a rational and positive psychological reaction towards such events hampering our everyday lives.

Key words:

Pandemic, Society, Life and Death

Introduction

Pandemics and epidemics had a profound impact on humankind and societies throughout our global history. They are one of the primary reasons for producing inevitable change irrespective of individual choice. Pandemics hamper everyday functioning of society. The outbreak of pandemic is not only capable of deteriorating physical health, but also has a distinctive influence on changing the social fabric of societies along with the collective psyche. It has been historically observed that interpretations about such a crisis and its unprecedented outcome is difficult to accept.

Denial is the common reaction towards the fatal illness and the unsolicited advent of pandemics and epidemics. The works of Camus and Sontag touched on the theme the article wish to explore while understanding the uniformity of the behaviour of individuals while making sense of the calamity befallen on them either in form of 'plague' or in form of disease such as 'AIDS, TB and Cancer'. The prime objective of this paper is to understand the interaction between human societies and pandemics. The inevitability around the eternal truth of death and illness caused by pandemics is always discomforting and provokes fear and panic among the masses. The current situation of the world during Corona crisis is related to the situation of Oran and their confrontation to the plague that disturbs their normative lives. It also transforms their habitual life into the absurd one where they struggle with the intense fear of death and impact the ordinariness of towns and cities.

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