



**The Dance of the Death and the COVID-19 World Crisis: A Study of Albert  
Camus' *The Plague*.**

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**Abstract:**

Albert Camus (November 7<sup>th</sup>, 1913-Januray 4<sup>th</sup>, 1960) is a famous literary figure, immortalised by many literary gems from his pen like *The Stranger*, *The Plague*, *The Fall*, *Exile and the Kingdom*, “The Myth of Sisyphus ”and “The Rebel” etc. Since COVID-19 has struck the world and the World Health Organisation has declared COVID-19 as a pandemic on March 11<sup>th</sup>, 2020, *The Plague* has captured readers’ attention to revisit the text and understand better what is going on and how it should be responded, how it (epidemic/pandemic) begins and how it ends, what is administration expected to do and what we as individual/s or communities expected to do. The present paper attempts to draw the convergences and divergences vis a vis the ongoing COVID-19, intricately woven in the text, to sustain us properly and ensure appropriate response from humanity. The humanity will always remain indebted to Camus for having gifted *The Plague* which as a classic still continues to guide us and helps ensuring that we are fighting the virus rationally and respecting all the warriors. The paper also endeavours to showcase the mirroring of ‘our society’ through *The Plague*.

**Keywords:** Plague, Pandemic, metaphysical problem, SOPs, metaphysical rebel, corona warriors.

Albert Camus was born in 1913 in Algeria, and spent the early years in Northern Africa, became a journalist and a leading writer of the French resistance during WWII and an editor of an underground newspaper titled *Combat*. His reputation rests on his critically acclaimed writings including *The Stranger*, *The Plague*, *The Fall*, *Exile and the Kingdom*, “The Myth of Sisyphus” and “The Rebel” etc. He was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1957, and died in a road accident in 1960. Camus was a wonderful philosopher and through his writings



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he highlighted “metaphysical problem”, which he considered to be the brute fact of suffering. In his vision there was no real reason for this irrational suffering, man was always and universally subjected to. Like the present novel coronavirus crisis that we are in, Camus, thought metaphysical problem to be just a thing that keeps happening in the world, disinterested to our liking or disliking. Camus’ vision especially in *The Plague*, provides the reader with the key to survive the current pandemic graciously by conceiving this suffering not as an individual but as a shared experience and to turn this crisis into an affirmative opportunity to showcase indomitable human spirit.

Like the post war generation readers including the French readers, who had survived the Nazi occupation in the World War II, welcomed Albert Camus’s *LaPeste*, translated as *The Plague*. Such readers did desperately wanted to read about something dealing with the tragic events escalating to the level of a myth. The novel remains attraction since its publication and subsequent translations and has interestingly invited scholarly readings in current COVID-19 times towards the imbedded insights highlighting human capacity to survive such pandemics, collectively, through individual efforts. The plot of the novel binds the contemporary readers, facing life threats, put forth by the novel coronavirus, in the brotherhood of unjustified or blind victims by being set in the Algerian town of Oran, representing today’s world fighting the pandemic, in five parts covering thirty chapters imbued with panic, horror, enlightenment and the indirect lessons to survive. The classic literature always offers universal insights to live life humanly and properly, in a specific and indirect ways, through its plot, subplot, characters, dialogues, symbols, imagery etc. Literature in its own ways, always offers social utility by guiding the readers to live life to the fullest amidst all challenges. Camus as a celebrated author, through his novel, *The Plague*, does not fail to offer the spirit to fight the invisible enemy, to the contemporary readers, through his autobiographical protagonist Dr. Bernard Rieux, Tarrou and other minor characters and their individual philosophies, unravelled through the plot of this immortal novel. Camus has created many important characters in this novel including the authorly Dr. Bernard Rieux, the philosophic and lonely Jean Tarrou, the lovelorn journalist Raymond Rambert, the writer in search of style Joseph Grand and the learned Jesuit Father Paneloux etc. All of them have been divided by their different makeups, individually, but, are united in their collective struggle, against the plague



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‘beyond blasphemy and prayer’ (180). Through these characters, Camus has successfully offered significant and indirect instructions to the contemporary readers to lead their communities distinctly, and, fight COVID-19, collectively in order to reach the other end of the dark tunnel. Camus’ fictional Oran is today’s real world, facing COVID-19 pandemic. There is also an interesting similarity between Albert Camus’ *The Plague* tells that the response to any plague has to be collective and proper. Such literary works play a very significant role in guiding and shaping the conduct of societies, especially, during such extraordinary times that we are facing currently, as world community. Authors like Albert Camus aesthetically teach us through their writings, especially through novels like *The Plague*, to hold each other firmly, to fight the unjustified pandemic graciously, to save as many humans as possible, to believe in logic, to follow all the SOPs and to be saved ourselves first to ensure safety of others in the fight against the invisible enemy like novel coronavirus. Such literary texts are created after thorough research and are treasures offering invaluable knowledge and experience to equip the readers to survive pandemics as true warriors by battling bravely.

In a crisis like the world is in today, human spirit has to be rebellious to survive, collectively. In his essay, “The Rebel”, Camus conceives of metaphysical rebellion as “the means by which a man protests against his condition and against the whole creation,” as “the justified claim of a desire for unity against the suffering of life and death—in that (he) protests against the incompleteness of human life, expressed by death, and its dispersion, expressed by suffering” (57). Camus labels the metaphysical rebel as a blasphemer who “confronts the injustice at large in the world with his own principles of justice,” and “who refuses to recognize his mortality. . .and the power that makes him live in this condition” (29-30). This description of Camus’ metaphysical rebellion applies captivatingly on Dr. Bernard Rieux, the narrator and the protagonist of the novel, as he metaphysically rebels against the unjustified suffering and death of his fellow humans, left helplessly to their fate in the plague stricken city. The doctor represents the front line corona warriors of today, risking his life, family, as so many medical professionals, law and order enforcing personnel, essential service providers, janitors etc. warring COVID-19, the invisible enemy, to save fellow humans. Dr. Rieux is prompted to revolt against God, if the disease is God’s will, the whole



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creation and the absurd cosmic order, if it is favouring the epidemic in Oran. As de Luppe highlights that the revolt also ignites compassion in the revolutionaries amongst themselves because of their shared sufferings, Dr.Rieux out of this compassion, takes upon himself to defend his unfortunate companions against all that irrationality which makes them suffer and die without any reason or justification. Thus, blasphemous revolt and strong compassion are the earnings of Dr.Rieux out of unjustified sufferings of his fellow companions, because of the epidemic.

Camus begins the tale of struggle by describing the bleak city Oran, the setting as:

Oran, which is merely a large French port on the Algerian coast, headquarters of the prefect of a French department. . . The town itself, let us admit, is ugly. It has a smug, placid air and you need time to discover what it is that makes it different from so many business centers in other parts of the world. How to 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—a thoroughly negative place, in short?  
(7)

Camus introduces Oran as a city by introducing its natives, approximately two hundred thousand in number, how they work, how they love, and how they casually lived and died. Everyone is bored, and devotes himself to cultivating habits and becoming rich by chiefly taking interest in “doing business” (7). Oranians reflect us as we lived before these COVID-19 times of today. Like us, they enjoyed simpler pleasures as love-making, sea bathing, going to pictures on Saturdays and Sundays and employ rest of the weekdays in money making, as much as possible. Camus crafts manly universalises the life of Oranians with the rest of his companions elsewhere in the world and states, “these habits are not peculiar to our town; really all our contemporaries are much the same” (8).

The plague in Oran, begins on April 16<sup>th</sup> evening, “. . .when Dr.Rieux was standing in the entrance, feeling for the latch-key in his pocket before starting up the stairs to his apartment, he saw a big rat coming toward him from the dark end of the passage. It moved uncertainly, and its fur was sopping wet. The animal stopped and seemed to be trying to get its balance, moved forward again toward the doctor, halted again, then spun around on itself with a little squeal and fell on its side. Its mouth was slightly open and blood was spurting from it” (11).



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The plague starts suddenly in Oran, the fictional city, as it started suddenly in Wuhan, People's Republic of China, the real city, somewhere in December 2019, and on 31 Dec 2019, suddenly, World Health Organisation's Country Office in the People's Republic of China picked up a media statement by the Wuhan Municipal Health Commission from their website on cases of 'viral pneumonia' in Wuhan, People's Republic of China, and, later, on 11 March 2020, the World Health Organisation declared COVID-19 as a pandemic. The doctor, in the novel, reports the event to the concierge, M. Michel, who takes it lightly and thinks that some boys are killing the rats. Next day M. Michel sees three dead rats drenched in blood, holds them by legs and doubts some mischievous lads. Days later the visuals of dead rats become new normal in Oran, as is reported by the author, and M. Michel becomes the first case of plague in Oran whose eyes, ". . . were fever-bright and he was breathing wheezily. . . feeling "a bit off color,". . . But he had started feeling pains in all sorts of places—in his neck, armpits, and groin—and had been obliged to turn back and ask Father Paneloux to give him an arm" (19). The doctor hints at the possible link between the dying rats and the plague by resorting to recent history of seventy years, "Seventy years ago, at Canton, forty thousand rats died of plague before the disease spread to the inhabitants" (37). He further notices the symptoms of the disease as, ". . . stupor and extreme prostration, buboes, intense thirst, delirium, dark blotches on the body, internal dilatation. . . . "The pulse becomes fluttering, dicrotic, and intermittent, and death ensues as the result of the slightest movement" (38). Soon, the epidemic data is revealing, ". . . Eleven deaths in forty-eight hours" (40), advisories are issued to control the epidemic by systematically exterminating the rat population by injecting gas into the sewers and supervising water supply, practicing extreme cleanliness, reporting of any fever case to municipal dispensaries by the heads of households and isolation of such cases in special wards at hospital is ordered including the mandatory disinfection of the patients' vehicle etc.

Camus' Dr. Rieux's observation is trusted and the epidemic is contained in Oran and rest of Algeria and the world is saved from the infection and the pandemic, but, our real hero Ophthalmologist Dr. Li Wenliang's (Oct 12, 1986- Feb 7, 2020), who treated the initial COVID-19 patients in China, and tried to warn the world about the virus as similar to be Sars, another deadly coronavirus, was distrusted by the authorities, was taken as a rumour



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monger, got infected while treating patients and died of the coronavirus. He is now taken to be right in his initial observations. Had Dr. Li Wenliang been taken seriously, the COVID-19 would have been contained in Wuhan only as a minor epidemic, and the world would have been saved from such enforced lockdowns, deaths, economic downfall and pessimistic standstill.

In the novel, the day when the death toll touches thirty, the authorities direct the Prefect to, “*Proclaim a state of plague stop close the town*” (58). In the closed city, everyone felt being put on “intolerable leisure” as the only remedy for was to fancy trains and tinkling doorbell which was, “. . . in practice obstinately mute” (64), those days, frustration was the natural state. Nevertheless, the death count keeps climbing, as a result in the fifth week three hundred and twenty one deaths are reported and in the sixth week three hundred and forty five deaths in Oran with the population of about two hundred thousand living people. The authorities are now forced to regulate traffic and the food supply, to ration gas, to reduce use of electricity. Only necessities are allowed to be brought by road or air to Oran. There are also some vociferous optimistic drunkards who proclaim, “The best protection against infection is a bottle of good wine,” (70). We have such alcoholics in our contemporary world too, especially in Asian countries like India, where we just witnessed long queues outside wine shops after the lockdown period.

Just like the doctor, the journalist Raymond Rambert also acts as a warrior to fight the plague in Oran by helping the doctor and the administration when he realises the truth that, “. . . no event, however disagreeable in some ways, but had its bright side” (74), and when after taking a lot of pains to manage his exit from the city gates even with corruption, and realising the sacrifices that Dr. Rieux was making, he makes his mind to stay back and help fighting the plague. The other character, Father Paneloux, is also a round character like Rambert and being a religious leader, initially justifies the plague as punishment of God for man’s sin. The father warns his audience that they had committed sin by imagining that it was enough to visit God on Sundays, and be free for the weekdays. Observe some formalities, “. . . some bendings of the knee” and He will be recomposed even after their “criminal indifference”, and could not know His “fierce hunger of His love” as God wished to see them longer and more often. They did not go to Him, now, He has visited them with pestilence. The Father



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guides for, “. . . the divine compassion which has ordained good and evil in everything; wrath and pity; the plague and your salvation. This same pestilence which is slaying you works for your good and points your path” (85). The Father shows his followers the Christian hope, “. . . hope granted to all alike. He hoped against hope that, despite all the horrors of these dark days, despite the groans of men and women in agony, our fellow citizens would offer up to heaven that one prayer which is truly Christian, a prayer of love. And God would see to the rest” (85).

Even after following Father Paneloux by some the attack of the plague is not softened and within weeks the deaths increase to “nearly seven hundred deaths a week” (96), and on ninety fourth day of plague the reported deaths are one hundred and twenty four, the other day the toll is “hundred and thirty seven” (126), “the coffins became scarcer; also there was a shortage of winding sheets, and of space in the cemetery” (145) and under this extended pain the hearts harden and the groans of men and women become the new speech of humans. The condition which we just witnessed in Italy, United States of America, Brazil etc. To keep the people informed about the developments as done by the World Health Organisation and many states, in real world, in Oran, a new paper, “*The Plague Chronicle*” (102) is launched. As we in India and most of the Asian countries, the citizens in Oran too illogically believe that the impending summer season would end the plague with the increase in temperature, but the plague kills all colours and “vetoed pleasures” (97). As a result of hearsay the peppermint lozenges vanish from the drugstores, people start using them as a proof against contagion as initially in our real world the drugstores ran out of sanitisers and toilet papers, Vitamin C tablets, hydroxychloroquine etc. And when nothing works they begin believing that, “. . . that cold weather stamps out diseases of this type” (99).

Tarrou’s recordings are also used by the narrator and being an important character he shares deep camaraderie with Dr.Rieux, both are Camustian heroes. On Paneloux’s sermon, Tarrou notes, “I can understand that type of fervor and find it not displeasing. At the beginning of a pestilence and when it ends, there’s always a propensity for rhetoric. In the first case, habits have not yet been lost; in the second, they’re returning. It is in the thick of a calamity that one gets hardened to the truth. . ” (100). He is touched by the human warmth that *Mme.Rieux*, the doctor’s mother carries in her limpid brown eyes and feels, “a gaze



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revealing so much goodness of heart” which “would always triumph over plague” (100). Tarrou discusses the sermon with the doctor and asks him what does he think regarding collective punishment. To this Dr.Rieux replies in the tone of the question, “I’ve seen too much of hospitals to relish any idea of collective punishment” (107). To the next query whether doctor believes what Paneloux says that the plague has its good side as it opens men’s eyes and forces them to take a thought. To this Rieux replies, “What’s true of all the evils in the world is true of plague as well. It helps men to rise above themselves. All the same, when you see the misery it brings, you’d need to be a madman, or a coward, or stone blind, to give in tamely to the plague” (108). It is Camus himself who is speaking to us through Rieux and telling us the way to fight COVID-19 and all such pandemics by rising ourselves as individuals for the common victory of humanity.

Regarding Paneloux, Rieux explains, “Paneloux is a man of learning, a scholar. He hasn’t come in contact with death; that’s why he can speak with such assurance of the truth—with a capital T. But every country priest who visits his parishioners and has heard a man gasping for breath on his deathbed thinks as I do. He’d try to relieve human suffering before trying to point out its excellence” (108). Showing his being as a metaphysical hero the doctor stresses, “. . . that if he (Rieux) believed in an all-powerful God he would cease curing the sick and leave that to Him. But no one in the world believed in a God of that sort; no, not even Paneloux, who believed that he believed in such a God. And this was proved by the fact that no one ever threw himself on Providence completely. Anyhow, in this respect Rieux believed himself to be on the right road—in fighting against creation as he found it” (108). Tarrou also shows up his being to Rieux when he discloses that he does not have more pride than is needed to keep going, does not know what is awaiting him. For the moment he believes that there are sick people and they need cure, he wants to heal them through his “sanitary squads” and to defend them. Similarly in India we had people like SonuSood and his childhood friend NitiGoel, resembling fictional Tarrou who had their small groups resembling “sanitary squads” and helping the helpless, poor, frightened, starving migrant labourers, against all odds. BBC correspondent Geeta Pandey in her news highlights, “For the past two months, the actor, along with his childhood friend NitiGoel, has been actively involved in helping people impacted by the lockdown.” “We started in March by distributing food, we started with 500



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packets of cooked meals and groceries. Today we are distributing food and groceries every day to 45,000 people in slums, those stranded on the roads and those walking on the highways,” Sood told me over the phone from Mumbai. And since 11 May, he has arranged hundreds of buses to take stranded migrants home.”

Camus’ doctor shares his experience of dealing with death as a part of his profession and suggests, “. . . since the order of the world is shaped by the death, mightn’t it be better for God if we refuse to believe in Him and struggle with all our might against death, without raising our eyes toward the heaven where He sits in silence?” (110). To all this when Tarrou asks who taught this the doctor, the doctor replies promptly, “Suffering” (110). Agreeing to doctor in his struggle in saving lives Tarrou mentions, “A hundred years ago plague wiped out the entire population of a town in Persia, with one exception. And the sole survivor was precisely the man whose job it was to wash the dead bodies, and who carried on throughout the epidemic” (111). Against all the moralists who preach for bowing down against the inevitable, Rieux and Tarrou know, “The essential thing [is] to save the greatest possible number of persons from dying and being doomed to unending separation. And to do this there [is] only one resource: to fight the plague. There was nothing admirable about this attitude; it was merely logical” (113). Later, as the situation turns more grim and when everyone is shocked by the death of a little child of the police magistrate M. Othon, Panelaux also decides to render his hand in the fight against the plague. The doctor praises the Father by pointing, “That’s good . . . I’m glad to know he’s better than his sermon” (127).

As the cases keep increasing, authorities are forced to think about a sort of conscription of the healthy people to fight the plague later even the services of the prison inmates are also thought of. As we witness, Delhi and some other states of India co-scripting school teachers and police volunteers to help administration in the fight against COVID-19. As the plague hardens, Rieux realises that people have become habitual of despair because they have lost all the memories and hope, and they live for the moment only having significance for ‘here’ and ‘now’ only, and “. . . the plague had gradually killed off in all of us the faculty not of love only but even of friendship” (151). The hope is futuristic and the plague kills all hopes. It does not only happen in Camus’ fictional world of *The Plague*, but, is also happening in our real world battling coronavirus pandemic. The doctor, the Camustian hero, remembers how he was



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relevant and respected for his treatment as a doctor, before the plague, and, now, during the epidemic, he laments that he cannot do anything to heal than only to diagnose and condemn the patient to death, separated from family.

The day comes, when the experts notice that the plague curve has touched the “high water mark” and Dr. Richard expects that, the plague now will begin to “ebb” (188), which proves wrong as Dr. Richard himself gets infected. In our real world this pandemic is also unfolding unpredictably where many ordinary and VIPs have been infected and lost. After discussing religion through the character of Father Paneloux and the death of the little boy Jacques, Camus places his existential philosophy through the conversation that takes place between Dr Rieux and Tarrou. For Tarrou plague always lives with the man and he discloses to the doctor that he had it when he came to Oran:

To make things simpler, Rieux, let me begin by saying I had plague already, long before I came to this town and encountered it here. Which is tantamount to saying I’m like everybody else. Only there are some people who don’t know it, or feel at ease in that condition; others know and want to get out of it. Personally, I’ve always wanted to get out of it (201).

Tarrou reveals his childhood experience, the stressed parental experiences, in which his father loved him, but, did not share a congenial relation with his wife, though he was not a ‘plaster saint’ (201). He had struggled throughout his life and this struggle taught him that he had had plague through all those long years and he was fighting it with all of his soul. He realises that he has lost his peace and still he is trying to find it, trying to be in harmony with all and trying to avoid to be ‘mortal enemy’ to anyone. He says that one must do everything to fight this plague, and that is the only hope for peace or, “failing that, a decent death” (206). This hope can only bring hope to the plague stricken man and can ensure someone’s good and peace to the plague stricken like him, thus he has resolved to always fight everything that justifies somebody’s death.

And, when Rieux asks Torrau, if he knows the path of peace, out of this plague, the latter replies in affirmation, and, when former asks, the latter replies, “The path of sympathy” (208). The doctor shares what his friend holds as both are good human beings without believing in God, the doctor reveals, “. . . I feel more fellowship with the defeated than with



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saints. Heroism and sanctity don't really appeal to me, I imagine. What interests me is being a man" (208). They both realise each other being true friend and return home without speaking a word, and in communion, in silence. This episode in the novel is very significant as far as Camus' lessons to us, to fight our pandemic are concerned, as surfaces in this conversation between the two Camusian heroes, that we can survive this or any other plague victoriously only if we behave like men, we are not required to extraordinarily behave like saints or heroes, on the other hand, what is required to do is to behave like men, to sympathise, to fight to save humanity.

And finally a day comes when Grand falls ill against all hopes and Dr. Rieux fears his death for sure because of the plague, but, defying all reasoning and science, Grand survives the most tough night and tells the doctor that he will make a fresh start. The doctor is surprised and to him this is nothing but "resurrection" (216). The doctor reveals to Tarrou that Grand's recovery is "against all the rules!" (216), and, the 'resurrection' begins and next week four similar cases come to his notice. Rieux awaits eagerly the mortality figures that are now announced every Monday and he finds them showing decrease in the mortality. People started getting hopeful to see the end of the plague and start afresh. The epidemic begins declining faster than expected in January. Eventually Castel's anti-plague injections also begin showing the desired results denied "until now" (219). The disease gives surprises to authorities and braces and blindly takes the fatal leap at three or four patients who are sure to recover, similar to the case of M. Othon, the magistrate. But, the fact remains, "the disease seems to be leaving as unaccountable as it had come" (219). The strategy which had failed yesterday, today has been triumphant, "Indeed, one's chief impression was that the epidemic had called a retreat after reaching all its objectives; it had, so to speak, achieved its purpose" (219). The dominion of plague seems ending when the authorities meet relaxation in the restrictions. The people experience fluctuation between extreme depression and high optimism. Some of them have been imbued with scepticism so hard by the plague that to be so has become their second nature and they have become allergic to hope in any form. Even then optimism as a psychological reaction is visible, as, prices fall sharply even when the gates are kept rigorously closed and the food situation is still a matter of concern. Two



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convents reopen with resuming their communal life, the troops are also regrouped symbolical representing retreat of the epidemic.

On January 25, the weekly data shows the striking decline, the authorities in consultation with the medical board announce that the epidemic can be regarded as definitely stemmed. The Prefect decides that Oran remains closed for two more weeks and prophylactic measures remain in force for another month. The night of January 25 is observed as night of much festivity in Oran and the people felt heading towards a “land of promise” (222). The liberation is welcomed with happiness and tears. Tarrou, notices a small cat scampering along the roadway, the first cat to be noticed by humans since the spring. The cat also announces the return of normalcy.

The doctor does not know if Tarrou, his friend is at peace after his painful death, but for himself he knows that all is over and no peace is possible henceforth. In this tormenting moment, after losing his wife and friend, the doctor realises that his mother loves him, and his mother’s love cannot find befitting words. He and his mother will always love each other silently, without words, and one day his mother or he will also die, in silent love for each other which defies appropriate words.

Camus tries to answer the complex question that after losing so many people to plague including his friend Tarrou, who “lost the match” against death, Paneloux and many others what does Dr. Rieux win?, by asserting, “. . . No more than the experience of having known plague and remembering it, of having known friendship and remembering it, of knowing affection and being destined one day to remember it. So all a man could win in the conflict between plague and life was *knowledge and memories*. But Tarrou [as he had realized the bleak sterility of life without illusions], perhaps, would have called that winning the match” (emphasis mine, 235). According to Camus each plague defeats mankind, the latter loses a great deal and earns knowledge and memories in this unfortunate strife. Knowledge and memories learnt during one plague may prepare well for the next plague and we should apply all knowledge and memories learnt to deal with the present crisis.

Finally, a fine February morning the gates of Oran open, thanksgiving services begin in the churches, but the people like Rambert are not healed as he like them fails to handle the formless fear that is still haunting him when he meets his wife after the epidemic is over. For



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the people coming from outside Oran, plague is not something serious and such people think that plague can come and go without changing anything in man's heart, but, for the people in Oran, who have seen plague and lost their near and dear ones to it, and, "For the mothers, husbands, wives, and lovers who had lost all joy, now that the loved one lay under a layer of quicklime in a death pit or was a mere handful of indistinctive ashes in a grey mound, the plague had not yet ended" (239). Next day the doctor is again ready to serve people without taking a holiday as he believes, ". . . sick men have no holidays" (241). The doctor realises after his experience with the plague and the philosopher friends like Tarrou that peace is chased but is not found unlike human love, which is the only possibility. Camus through Rieux tells that the pestilence teaches us that there are more things in men to admire than to despise. He knows that commoners do not know but can learn from books that, ". . . the plague bacillus never dies or disappears for good; that it can lie dormant for years and years in furniture and linen-chests; that it bides its time in bedrooms, cellars, trunks, and bookshelves; and that perhaps the day would come when, for the bane and the enlightening of men, it would rouse up its rats again and send them forth to die in a happy city" (249).

Finally it is found that Albert Camus by writing *The Plague*, has not only shared his vision highlighting the human virtues but also has provided knowledge and experience to fight current COVID-19 like pandemics rebelliously. Camus through this novel also has shaken us awake to the blunder that China has committed by ignoring Dr. Li Wenliang's timely observations regarding novel coronavirus, and, we are made to regret that China failed to proactively respond on Dr. Li Wenliang's warning and containing the disease in Wuhan itself. Had Oran's administration responded to Dr. Rieux similar to the way China did, the plague would have not only engulfed Algeria but the whole world, and, had China acted to Wenliang's warning the way Oran acted to Rieux's warning, it would have succeeded not only in containing the virus in Wuhan, but also, in saving the world from the current pandemic. Andrew Green in an obituary to Li in research journal "The Lancet" mentions, "In the days before his death, Li said "If the officials had disclosed information about the epidemic earlier I think it would have been a lot better", in an interview with *The New York Times*. "There should be more openness and transparency", he said."



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Camus'Oran is our real world of 2019-20 facing pandemic where the lockdowns are "intolerable pleasures" and frustration is natural state. The times are challenging and still have bright side offering opportunity to ripen and act. *The Plague* subtly establishes the fact that only a gaze revealing warmth and emotions would only triumph over plague, the present that we are facing or the ones following this. All we need is to apply our knowledge and memories learnt from past, sympathetically and rebelliously. One should remember that suffering is a great teacher and it makes best of heroes of humanity. In times like this we need human decency to deal with the crisis properly. The only way to fight pandemic is not only to act emotionally, but also, logically, consciously, following SOPs and saving as many lives as possible, and, this fight cannot be won individually, it requires collective effort. The pandemic also offers the opportunity to be in harmony with all, doing everything to fight death as only hope for peace, and hope can only sustain the pandemic stricken world. Thus, Camus' *The Plague*, convincingly reveals that the plague lives with us and remains dormant till it shows again its dance of the death and offers us knowledge and memories to rebind mankind in brotherhood of suffering rebelling the unjustified suffering with human sympathy and hope against all such pandemics as COVID-19 and beyond.

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