

## **The Battle between Responsibility and Manipulation in Henrik Ibsen's "An Enemy of the People"**

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### **Abstract**

*Henrik Ibsen's "An Enemy of the People" centers on two important concepts: "Responsibility" and "Manipulation". Sense of responsibility is portrayed in Dr. Stockmann's character and the ability to manipulate the truth is vivid in the Mayor's character. The whole play is like a battle between the two concepts. No one stops fighting. "Responsibility" and "Manipulation" are the real protagonists and the antagonists of the play. This study is an attempt to bring into picture the nature of responsibility and manipulation and their ceaseless battle, which leads to un-called for and untoward repercussions in the play in hand.*

**Key Words:** truth, manipulation, protagonist, responsibility.

### **1. Introduction**

Throughout the history "responsibility" has been a challenging concept. Almost everyone believes that he has a kind of responsibility toward his family, his society, his employer and so on. There are different connotations of "responsibility" under different contexts. Kanunguo (2001) defines social responsibility as the "belief of moral obligation to help others without personal considerations" (quoted in Avon, 2007, p. 49). Various definitions or interpretations of "responsibility" are not the problems of people in the 21st century because most of the available ones are acceptable. The chief problem lies in how much people care to do justice with their entrusted responsibilities.

Theoretically speaking, everybody shows his passion for "responsibility". However, he/she may never put the principles of "responsibility" into practice. As a result of that, the tragic stories of corruption, lies, terror and manipulation start. For instance, politicians claim to be the supporters of democracy and freedom of speech; however, when it comes to their own parties they do not even tolerate opposite ideas from their party members, let alone the critical comments of the opposite parties, because "...in a party...democracy is not for home consumption, but is rather an article made for export"(Michels, 1962, p. 79).

"Responsibility" and "manipulation" are the two sides of a continuum. Giving little importance to Responsibility will result in manipulating the truth. It seems that among the calculative politicians, responsibility is a kind of political game or in other words a political business. In this lucrative business the least importance is given to the common interest of the common people of the society, which in long run can be problem making. Indeed the devious and dishonest transfer of information to the common people will lead to a kind of sense of pessimism towards the respective authorities of the society. As Maravall says,

problems of information and monitoring arise when politicians manipulate information to which they have privileged access, and when vast areas of politics are opaque to voters. These might have difficulty in assessing whether good or bad outcomes are due to governmental policies or to "objective conditions" whose responsibility cannot be attributed to the government (1996, p. 6).

People manipulate the truth by lying while labeling them as "white lies". The paradox is that the so-called "white lies" ruin our lives and make the clean sheet of our honest nature to be dark and even black! For instance, in "An Enemy of the People", the mayor, Peter, asks Dr. Stockmann to tell a lie to people about the "polluted baths"; however, the responsible doctor never accepts it.

DR. THOMAS STOCKMANN: And so I am to give myself the lie, publicly?

PETER STOCKMANN: We consider it absolutely necessary that you should make some such public statement as I have asked for. (Ibsen, 2005, p. 60- henceforth *An Enemy of the People*)

There is no doubt that politicians are experts at manipulating everything. They know the interests of people well and manipulate the truth in such a deceitful manner that seems to be in line with the people's interests and welfare. As Jacobs & Shapiro say,

Politicians respond to public opinion in a second manner -- they use research on public opinion to move public opinion to support their desired policies by pinpointing the most alluring words, symbols, and arguments. Public opinion research is used by politicians to manipulate public opinion (2000, p. 4)".

It seems that for the majority of authorities and politicians, honesty is not the best policy, but "manipulating the truth is the best policy". The irony is that more powerful people, i.e. politicians, who have the key responsibilities, are more interested in manipulating the truth. For instance, politicians talk about poverty and destitution a lot, but without taking feasible practical measures to reach any possible solutions; they just tell us how much sorry they are for the misery of the poor. They may think that by keeping people abreast of their poverty and misery, they may draw their appreciation. By the same token, they claim to be the leading supporters of peace, while they mastermind and wage different wars every now and then (economical wars, cultural wars, religious wars, to name a few) under various pretexts. Peter Stockmann, the mayor in "*An Enemy of the People*", is a good example of this kind of politicians.

It seems that the ruling powers of all the countries have taken it for granted that they can think and feel better than the common people, the same people who have made them what they are today; they seem to have forgotten the days when they were begging and bowing their heads in supplication to get the votes and supports of the same people who are very easily silenced and snubbed today. The authorities seem to be drowned in the metanarrative of "Might is Right, which is their highly prioritized policy to prove themselves distinctive and privileged.

This sense of might has created a vast rift between the authorities and the common people. People are tired of witnessing bloodshed and the fast moving growth of terrorism, which have created a kind of miasma of depression and frustration, where life has lost its true meaning. We are used to hearing many nice words from the politicians without any practical deeds. Having seen different wars (the World Wars, the Cold War, the wars between the US and Vietnam, the US and Afghanistan, the US and Iraq, Iran and Iraq, Serbian civil wars, to name a few), people are hungry for peace these days. Peace has become a dream for the whole; people are enraged with the war-loving authorities. That is why when the US president, Barack H Obama, had done neither good nor bad after nine months of his arrival to the White House, he was awarded with the Noble Peace Prize for "his extraordinary efforts to strengthen international diplomacy and cooperation between peoples"(The Norwegian Nobel Institute, 2009)!!!

All of the above-mentioned facts about politicians and their ability to manipulate almost everything are reflected in some of the characters in "*An Enemy of the People*". Peter Stockmann, Hovstad and Aslaksen are experts in manipulation. On the other hand, Dr. Stockmann is a symbol of responsibility, that is why the theme of responsibility and manipulation in "*An Enemy of the People*" is considered as the focal point of this study.

### **1.1 Ibsen and "*An Enemy of the People*"**

"*An Enemy of the People*", also translated as "A Public Enemy" (Peter Watts, 2003), is a play written in 1882 by the famous Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen (1828-1906). Ibsen was a prominent playwright "...who introduced to the European stage a new order of moral analysis that was placed against a severely realistic middle-class background and developed with economy of action, penetrating dialogue, and rigorous thought." (Luebering, 2010, p. 200). Lyons refers to him as "the realist, the iconoclast, the successful or failed idealist, the poet, the psychologist, the romantic, the antiromantic." (quoted in Suliman, 2011, p. 5).

Gosse (2003, p. 88) believes that "the hero of *An Enemy of the People* is a sort of Henrik Ibsen in practical life, a critic who is execrated because he tells the unvarnished truth to unwilling ears". Peter Watts (2003, p. 294) & Malone (2010, p. 13) claim that Ibsen wrote the play as his reaction to the outcry caused over "*Ghosts*" and "*A Doll's House*". That is contrary to what Egan believes about Ibsen and the influence of the "outward circumstances" on his works:

Ibsen belongs to the class of authors who cannot be driven to produce by the force of outward circumstances; even the want of the bare means of existence failed to urge him when the spur of transient inspiration had ceased to stimulate. He exercised moreover a degree of self criticism, which caused him to alter and reject, not only plots, outlines, and imperfect works, but larger finished productions which on a colder, more mature consideration did not satisfy his fastidious taste (2003, p. 51).

Hooti & Davoodi describe him as "...the one who rightly introduced Realism in the world of literature... [and also]...did care a lot about individuality and individual rights" (2011, p. 1). During the history, Ibsen has received lots of different feedbacks from people and critics. Some totally accept him as a great playwright who cares about society while others reject the political themes in his works. Ibsen's political themes may be because of the fact that he "...had a very uneasy relationship to politicians and party politics (Suleiman, 2011, p. 50)."

In "*An Enemy of the People*" the battle between "responsibility" and "manipulation" is very vivid. Throughout the play, the protagonist, i.e. Dr. Thomas Stockmann, is a symbol of a responsible doctor who believes in his salient role to keep people posted on the dangers of the "polluted baths". Ignoring the fact that the mayor of the city is his brother, Dr. Stockmann never changes his ideas about the danger of the "polluted baths".

In "*An Enemy of the People*" Ibsen portrays a society where people are over-influenced by the politicians. The authorities are very powerful, and under the shelter of their power and authority, they "manipulate" the facts in the society. In such a society people are not able to decide who tells the truth. Consequently, they prefer to listen to the authorities because they claim to do their best for people but, unfortunately, it is finally the people who suffer the aftermath.

## 1.2 Doctors and society as "patients"

What is the role of a doctor in a society? Should he only care about the physical health of his patients? Or is he also responsible to criticize the political decisions which have direct effects on people's mental and physical health? Donovan (1976) believes that "doctors, both as individuals and as members of a profession, have always had an influence on society (22)". Furthermore, many scholars have tried to define a doctor's responsibility in a society. For instance, Richards et al. (2008, p. xi) do not consider medicine just as a simple job but rather "a way of life." To build upon what Richards et al. believe regarding the issue, one can conclude that being a doctor is a very demanding job; it needs hard work and sacrifice. "Medicine is a tremendous career for the right people. You will need to consider all the personal and professional implications of a life dedicated to putting patients and patient safety first." (ibid).

Doctors also have a "teaching role" in society. They help people how to live to remain healthy. Therefore, they always have a tendency to keep people abreast of the dangers to their physical and mental health. As Donovan (1976, p. 21) says "indeed one of our responsibilities as doctors is to return to our ancient role; for 'doctor' means 'teacher', and we have to teach our patients how better to carry this responsibility for their own health."

## 2. Discussion

From the very beginning of the play Dr. Stockmann shows his passion to do his responsibilities as a doctor in a society where the people are not able to distinguish the truth. He thinks that, as a doctor, it is his duty to persuade the authorities of the dangers of the "polluted baths". On the other hand, the mayor of the city, Peter, always manipulates the truth and never wants to accept his brother's ideas because they are against his financial policies. Dr. Stockmann only thinks about his responsibilities and wants nothing for his "discovery".

"BILLING: Upon my soul, Doctor, you are going to be the foremost man in the town!

DR. THOMAS STOCKMANN: [walking about happily] Nonsense! As a matter of fact I have done nothing more than my duty. I have only made a lucky find--that's all." (An Enemy of the People, p. 32)

Dr. Stockmann's sense of responsibility as a doctor is of the purest kind. He never wants to earn anything upon doing his duties. He does not even like to get a promotion or a salary increase.

DR. THOMAS STOCKMANN: No, my good friends, don't let us have any of that nonsense. I won't hear anything of the kind. And if the Baths Committee should think of voting me an increase of salary, I will not accept it. Do you hear, Katherine?--I won't accept it.

MRS. STOCKMANN: You are quite right, Thomas.

PETRA: [lifting her glass] Your health, father!

HOVSTAD and BILLING: Your health, Doctor! Good health! (An Enemy of the People, p. 31)  
He finds happiness in playing a positive role for the welfare of his fellow citizens. It shows that he has a high sense of patriotism and altruism.

DR. THOMAS STOCKMANN: Thank you, thank you, my dear fellows! I feel tremendously happy! It is a splendid thing for a man to be able to feel that he has done a service to his native town and to his fellow-citizens (An Enemy of the People, p. 32)

Hovsatd asks Dr. Stockmann to print his “discovery” in the “Messenger” and he accepts it.

HOVSTAD: Will you let me print a short note about your discovery in the "Messenger?"

DR. THOMAS STOCKMANN: I shall be very much obliged if you will. (An Enemy of the People, p. 30)

Dr. Stockman accepts to print his “discovery” in “Messenger” because he thinks everybody should be aware of the problem. When Dr. Stockman tells Peter that almost everyone knows the story he becomes very angry with those who try to publish the news. However, Dr. Stockman believes that it is the responsibility of every liberal-minded person to do it.

DR. THOMAS STOCKMANN: It is no use, I tell you. There are too many people that know about it.

PETER STOCKMANN: They know about it? Who? Surely you don't mean those fellows on the "People's Messenger"?

DR. THOMAS STOCKMANN: Yes, they know. The liberal-minded independent press is going to see that you do your duty. (An Enemy of the People, pp. 54-55)

Dr. Stockmann wants to share his “discovery” about the “polluted baths” with everyone to prevent a disaster for the people’s health. He thinks that his brother, as the mayor of the city, would be happy to hear that and would take serious actions to solve the problem.

“PETRA: What do you think Uncle Peter will say, father?”

DR. THOMAS STOCKMANN: What is there for him to say? I should think he would be very glad that such an important truth has been brought to light.’’ (An Enemy of the People, p. 30)

Nevertheless, Peter, as the mayor of the city, does not like the “discovery”. He also has dissimilar ideas with Dr. Stockman about people’s awareness of the new ideas and viewpoints. Dr. Stockman believes that everybody is responsible to share any new ideas that he/she has with people. That is contrary to what Peter believes regarding the issue. He prefers to let the people remain unaware of the new issues, ideas and challenges. He thinks that old beliefs that are rooted in every individual of a society should remain intact. That is not matched with the basic features of democratic societies in which “the rulers should be identified with the people; their interest and will should be the interest and will of the nation (Mill, 1991, p. 24).

PETER STOCKMANN: Yes, unfortunately, you do, without even being aware of it. You have a restless, pugnacious, rebellious disposition. And then there is that disastrous propensity of yours to want to write about every sort of possible and impossible thing. The moment an idea comes into your head, you must needs go and write a newspaper article or a whole pamphlet about it.

DR. THOMAS STOCKMANN: Well, but is it not the duty of a citizen to let the public share in any new ideas he may have?

PETER STOCKMANN: Oh, the public doesn't require any new ideas. The public is best served by the good, old established ideas it already has. (An Enemy of the People, p. 56)

Here we can obviously see that Peter, as a politician, is interested in hiding the truth through manipulation. He likes people to remain loyal to their “old established ideas”, even if they are not justified, so that he can manipulate the truth in any way that is more beneficial for him. What Peter refers to as “old established ideas” is very similar to the concept of Meta-narratives in Postmodernism where Meta-narratives are considered as “fossilized beliefs, which have been passed on from one generation to another and try to remain irresistible and invincible” (Hooti & Davoodi, 2011, p. 2). Considering Meta-narratives as holy and unchangeable ideas is very problematic and can lead to “...some inhumane terms like slavery, racism, ethnicity and nepotism (1).

When we do our responsibilities, we are eager to receive positive feedbacks from others, that is something engraved within the human nature. But if we consider positive feedbacks as a precondition to do our responsibilities, we may face many challenges. It is not always possible to be thanked by others for doing the responsibilities. Even most of the time, you may be criticized, as there are always some people who do not like the truth because of their personal benefits. Dr. Stockmann believes that he should do his duties no matter if he may be called “an enemy of the people” or his ideas to be called “monkey tricks”.

DR. THOMAS STOCKMANN: In any case I shall have done my duty towards the public--towards the community, I, who am called its enemy! (An Enemy of the People, p. 63)

MORTEN KIIL:[going up to DR. STOCKMANN]. Well, Stockmann, do you see what these monkey tricks of yours lead to?

DR. THOMAS STOCKMANN: I have done my duty. (An Enemy of the People, p. 121)  
According to Suleiman (2011, p. 50):

Dr. Stockman’s dilemma emerges from his being an idealist, else he would know that in a democratic environment, the individual has the right to express his own opinion and he has the freedom to choose the lawful way to do so. Nevertheless, when democracy defies the authority through the individuals, it is then understood as a source of jeopardy and should be eradicated. What threatens the authority, which is elected by the majority, threatens the whole society; and anybody that stands against this dogma is regarded as a public enemy.

In our daily life we see lots of people who complain about their societies. It is common all over the world. No matter the country is Syria, Egypt or Libya; you may see a lot who complain about the authorities of their societies these days. They are not happy with the kind of lives they are leading in their countries. However, they may never think that they have also some kinds of responsibilities towards their societies. We cannot expect to have a desirable society unless we care to do our duties as citizens. Dr. Stockmann believes in this idea:

DR. THOMAS STOCKMANN: I know what you are going to say. You don't see how on earth it was any more than my duty--my obvious duty as a citizen. (An Enemy of the People, p. 91)

There are other characters in the play who try to show that they are interested in doing their responsibilities; however, they actually manipulate the truth rather than doing the responsibilities. Among them, Aslaksen, the newspaper’s printer, is highlighted. When he hears about the baths problems for the first time, he claims to help Dr. Stockmann as it is the duty of any person who works in the press and media to let people be aware of the new issues. He also calls himself “a solid wall” for Dr. Stockmann.

ASLAKSEN: Is what I heard from Mr. Billing true, sir—that you mean to improve our water supply?

DR. THOMAS STOCKMANN: Yes, for the Baths.

ASLAKSEN: Quite so, I understand. Well, I have come to say that I will back that up by every means in my power.

HOVSTAD: [to the DOCTOR] You see!

DR. THOMAS STOCKMANN: I shall be very grateful to you (An Enemy of the People, p. 43)

Aslaksen’s following comment also supports the mentioned claim, “ASLAKSEN: You know now that we small tradesmen are at your back at all events, like a solid wall. You have the compact majority on your side Doctor.” (An Enemy of the People, p. 46)

When the mayor warns him of the financial problems that printing the “discovery” would bring, then Aslaksan changes his idea and decides not to print Dr. Stockmann’s article about the polluted baths.

ASLAKSEN: If you offered me its weight in gold, I could not lend my press for any such purpose, Doctor. It would be flying in the face of public opinion. You will not get it printed anywhere in the town. (An Enemy of the People, p. 98)

On the other hand, when he is asked to be the chairman of the meeting, where Dr. Stockmann is being accused of lying about the “polluted baths”, he quickly accepts it by showing that he is eager to do his responsibility upon his friends’ request.

ASLAKSEN: Since my fellow-citizens choose to entrust me with this duty, I cannot refuse. (An Enemy of the People, p. 102)

The paradox in Aslaksen’s actions towards his responsibilities shows that he is interested in doing his duties only if they bring him some benefits. He is among those people who only think about themselves and never considers the common interest of the people

There are also other characters in the play, who do their responsibilities only when they are matched with their own benefits. For instance, Hovstad, the editor of “The People’s Herald”, claims to be a supporter of truth in any case.

HOVSTAD: I should be very reluctant to bring the Mayor into it, because he is your brother. But I am sure you will agree with me that truth should be the first consideration.

DR. THOMAS STOCKMANN: That goes without saying... (An Enemy of the People, p. 41)

He also claims that a journalist should do his responsibility no matter if people may call him “an agitator” or something else.

HOVSTAD: Yes--and in my opinion a journalist incurs a heavy responsibility if he neglects a favorable opportunity of emancipating the masses--the humble and oppressed. I know well enough that in exalted circles I shall be called an agitator, and all that sort of thing; but they may call what they like. If only my conscience doesn't reproach me, then—

DR. THOMAS STOCKMANN: Quite right! Quite right, Mr. Hovstad. (An Enemy of the People, p. 42).

Hovstad also tries to show that he is against the authorities who are like “idols” in the city.

HOVSTAD: That is why I want to seize this opportunity, and try if I cannot manage to put a little virility into these well- intentioned people for once. The idol of Authority must be shattered in this town. This gross and inexcusable blunder about the water supply must be brought home to the mind of every municipal voter.( An Enemy of the People, p. 47)

Hovstad is an expert at manipulating the truth and deceiving people. He deceives Dr. Stockmann by claiming to support him despite the fact that he knows the authorities would not like the “discovery”.

Hovstad: It is no use falling foul of those [authorities] upon whom our welfare so closely depends. I have done that in my time, and no good ever comes of it. But no one can take exception to a reasonable and frank expression of a citizen's views.

DR. THOMAS STOCKMANN: [shaking him by the hand] I can't tell you, dear Mr. Aslaksen, how extremely pleased I am to find such hearty support among my fellow-citizens. I am delighted—delighted! (An Enemy of the People, p. 45)

However, at the end of the play, when he becomes aware of the financial problems that the “discovery” would bring for the officials, who are his friends, he manipulates the truth by saying that, as a journalist, he is in line with the “public opinion”. This is Dr. Stockmann’s main mistake who always believes in what he hears. Many friends claimed to support him but no one did. If he knew that finally Hovstad and other friends persuade people to call him “an enemy of the people”, he would never thank them by many nice words.

HOVSTAD: And, in the matter before us, it is now an undoubted fact that Dr. Stockmann has public opinion against him. Now, what is an editor's first and most obvious duty, gentlemen? Is it not to work in harmony with his readers? Has he not received a sort of tacit mandate to work persistently and assiduously for the welfare of those whose opinions he represents? Or is it possible I am mistaken in that?

VOICES FROM THE CROWD: No, no! You are quite right! (An Enemy of the People, p. 105)

Authorities think that everybody should be matched with their ideas, beliefs and tastes. They almost never tolerate the contrary ideas. That is because they may think that they are superior to people. In “An Enemy of the People”,

Peter believes that Dr. Stockmann, as an “officer under the Committee”, is not allowed to say his opinions which are not in line with those of his superiors. Forbidding second-rank authorities to talk against their superiors will end in irrecoverable problems because “when party members, as principal, cannot monitor the activities of their leaders and the party itself becomes an instrument for the manipulation of information, the capacity of citizens to control politicians will suffer” (Maravall, 1996, p.14)

PETER STOCKMANN: As an officer under the Committee, you have no right to any individual opinion.

DR. THOMAS STOCKMANN: [amazed] No right?

PETER STOCKMANN: In your official capacity, no. As a private person, it is quite another matter. But as a subordinate member of the staff of the Baths, you have no right to express any opinion which runs contrary to that of your superiors. (An Enemy of the People, p. 58)

Generally speaking, politicians always want to be the ones who announce good news and introduce new ideas in society. As a result of that, we can see them in all the opening ceremonies no matter if they have played any roles in the creation and building processes of the projects or not. Aslaksen knows the fact well. He insists on the idea that politicians do not like to accept any ideas or proposals from “other people”.

ASLAKSEN: Oh, it may be very desirable, all the same. I know our local authorities so well; officials are not generally very ready to act on proposals that come from other people. (An Enemy of the People, p. 43)

### **2.1 Defending Truth and its Upcoming Challenges**

Unfortunately, if those who seek peace and truth do not match themselves with the interests of the officials, sooner or later they will be punished by them. Ignoring Dr. Stockmann’s ideas about the “polluted baths”, Peter, Hovstad, Aslaksen and other politicians manipulate the truth and persuade people to call the responsible doctor “an enemy of the people” just because of their personal interests.

ASLAKSEN: Both as a citizen and as an individual, I am profoundly disturbed by what we have had to listen to. Dr. Stockmann has shown himself in a light I should never have dreamed of. I am unhappily obliged to subscribe to the opinion which I have just heard my estimable fellow-citizens utter; and I propose that we should give expression to that opinion in a resolution. I propose a resolution as follows: "This meeting declares that it considers Dr. Thomas Stockmann, Medical Officer of the Baths, to be an enemy of the people." (An Enemy of the People, pp. 119-120)

Having been called “an enemy of the people”, Dr. Stockmann receives the second bad news from her daughter, which is Petra’s expulsion.

MRS. STOCKMANN: ...Back from school already?

PETRA: Yes. I have been given notice of dismissal.

MRS. STOCKMANN: Dismissal?

DR. THOMAS STOCKMANN: You too?

PETRA: Mrs. Busk gave me my notice; so I thought it was best to go at once.

DR. THOMAS STOCKMANN: You were perfectly right, too!

MRS. STOCKMANN: Who would have thought Mrs. Busk was a woman like that!

PETRA: Mrs. Busk isn't a bit like that, mother; I saw quite plainly how it hurt her to do it. But she didn't dare do otherwise, she said; and so I got my notice. (An Enemy of the People, pp. 128-129)

Petra says that her boss did not want to fire her but she did because she had no choice. It shows that in a society authorities even have strong influence on low-rank officials and force them to do as they wish. It seems that in a free society all the members of a family would suffer the aftermath of one’s deeds!!!

The tragic stories still continue. This time Dr. Stockmann’s close friend, Captian Horster, comes with the news of his expulsion. Captian Horster still believes in Dr. Stockmann’s ideas although he was fired because of his supports for Dr. Stockmann. Horster is a symbol of true friendship.

HORSTER: Hm!--that was just what I had come to speak about--

DR. THOMAS STOCKMANN: Why, has anything gone wrong with the ship?

HORSTER: No; but what has happened is that I am not to sail in it.

PETRA: Do you mean that you have been dismissed from your command?

HORSTER: [smiling] Yes, that's just it.

PETRA: You too.  
MRS. STOCKMANN: There, you see, Thomas!  
DR. THOMAS STOCKMANN: And that for the truth's sake! Oh, if I had thought such a thing possible--  
HORSTER: You mustn't take it to heart; I shall be sure to find a job with some ship-owner or other, elsewhere. (An Enemy of the People, pp. 132)

Now, it is Peter's turn to come with a bad news. He comes to inform his brother that he is fired.

PETER STOCKMANN [taking a big letter from his pocket]: I have this document for you, from the Baths Committee.  
DR. THOMAS STOCKMANN: My dismissal?  
PETER STOCKMANN: Yes, dating from today. [Lays the letter on the table.] It gives us pain to do it; but, to speak frankly, we dared not do otherwise on account of public opinion.  
DR. THOMAS STOCKMANN: [smiling] Dared not? I seem to have heard that word before, today. An Enemy of the People, pp. 134-135)

It is ironic that even Peter, as the mayor and the most powerful politician of the city, claims that he did not dare to stand against public opinion. It is very funny that he talks about public opinion because it was he himself who manipulated the truth and persuaded the people to reject his brother's ideas about the "polluted baths". He even did nothing when his responsible brother was named "an enemy of the people". Dr. Stockmann is right; he heard the word, did not dare before. It is common among officials to make some unfair decisions and then claim that they had no other choices because of the pressures from their superior authorities.

## **2.2 A Citizen's Responsibility under all Circumstances**

Dr. Stockmann has been called "an enemy of the people"; his daughter and his close friend, as well as he himself, have no jobs anymore. What should Dr. Stockmann do after all these unfair events? First, he decides to live his hometown and move to the New World with his family. "DR. THOMAS STOCKMANN: My hat and coat, Petra! Captain, have you room on your ship for passengers to the New World?

HORSTER: For you and yours we will make room, Doctor." (An Enemy of the People, p. 123)

After thinking deeply about his potential role in the society, he decides to stay and fight for the truth as a real responsible citizen.

DR. THOMAS STOCKMANN: Good.--Going away, did you say? No, I'll be hanged if we are going away! We are going to stay where we are, Katherine!  
PETRA: Stay here?  
MRS. STOCKMANN: Here, in the town?  
DR. THOMAS STOCKMANN: Yes, here. This is the field of battle--this is where the fight will be. This is where I shall triumph! As soon as I have had my trousers sewn up I shall go out and look for another house. We must have a roof over our heads for the winter.  
HORSTER: That you shall have in my house.  
DR. THOMAS STOCKMANN: Can I?  
HORSTER: Yes, quite well. I have plenty of room, and I am almost never at home.  
MRS. STOCKMANN: How good of you, Captain Horster! (An Enemy of the People, p. 150)

## **3. Conclusion**

Dr. Stockmann's decision to stay and fight for the Truth shows his deep sense of responsibility as a doctor, who cares about his society and never feels the apprehension of fighting for what he believes to be the Truth. He believes that it is a battle field, a battle between the responsibility of a doctor and the manipulations of the politicians. This battle goes on, but eventually *Right* overcomes *Might*. "We give falsehood a violent blow with the Truth to knock it out and behold! Falsehood vanishes away". (Malik, 2011, P .137) The study comes to its conclusion by showing that it is through resistance and defiant struggles that one can reach its legitimate rights. The highest responsibility of an individual in each and every society is to stand against any sorts of aggression and infringement towards the universally accepted human values, which are nowadays easily compromised. It is inhumane to give in to defeat when we are fighting for the truth, which is our innate right, and this right cannot be attained easily, we may need to walk on a thorny and tortuous path to make the logocentric superpowers kneel down.



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