



The Democratic Arab Center based in Germany – Berlin,
is pleased to announce the First International Online Conference on
Plague Literature: Pandemic Writing and Covid-19 Fear
1-2 / 07 / 2023

In collaboration with
The University of Benghazi – Libya



VR. 3383 – 6818 B

DEMOCRATIC ARABIC CENTER
Germany: Berlin
<http://democraticac.de>
TEL. 0049-CODE

030-89005468/030-898999419/030-57348845
MOBILTELEFON. 0049174274278717



2023



Plague Literature:
Pandemic Writing and Covid 19 – Fear



Democratic Arab Center
| Berlin - Germany



Democratic Arab Center for Strategic
Political and. Economic Studies

Plague Literature

Pandemic Writing and Covid-19 Fear

2023



المركز الديمقراطي العربي

للدراسات الاستراتيجية، الاقتصادية والسياسية

Democratic Arab Center

for Strategic, Political and Economic Studies

In collaboration with

The University of Benghazi – Libya

Plague Literature: Pandemic Writing and Covid-19 Fear

1- 2 / 07 / 2023

Conference Chair :

Dr. Khawla BENDJEMIL

Editor :

Dr. Khawla BENDJEMIL

**First
Edition
July2023**

Collective Book :

Plague Literature: Pandemic Writing and Covid-19 Fear

Conference Chair :

Dr. Khawla BENDJEMIL

Edited by :

Dr. Khawla BENDJEMIL

Honored Committee :

Prof Dr . Azeldeen Younis El-Dressi (President of University of Benghazi

Dr. Youssif Zaghwan Omar – University of Benghazi

Prof . Ammar Sharaan – Head of Democratic Arabic Cente

VR. 3383- 6818 B

Edition :

First Edition July 2023

Publisher :

Democratic Arab Center for Strategic, Political and Economic Studies, Berlin, Germany

All Rights Are Reserved to

The Democratic Arab Center, Berlin, Germany

2023

**Democratic Arab Center
For Strategic, Political and Economic Studies
Berlin
E-mail : book@democraticac.de**

Conference Chair :

Dr. Khawla BENDJEMIL

Editor of the book :

Dr. Khawla BENDJEMIL

President of the Scientific Committee :

Dr. **Prof. Dr** : Fouad BOULKROUN –University Centre Abdelhafid Boussouf, Mila, Algeria

Conference management :

Conference Director: **Dr. Karim AICHE**

Director of Publication : **Dr. Ahmed Bohko**

Honored Committee

Prof Dr . Azeldeen Younis El-Dressi (President of University of Benghazi)

Dr. Youssif Zaghwani Omar – University of Benghazi

Prof . Ammar Sharaan – Head of Democratic Arabic Cente

Scientific Committee

Prof. Fouad MAMI – University of Ahmed Draya, Adrar, Algeria

Prof. Helena GURFINKEL- Southern Illinois University of Edwardsville, USA

Prof. Salah BOUREGBI – University of Badji Mokhtar, Annaba, Algeria

Prof. Samira KHAWALDEH – University of Jordan, Amman, Jordan

Prof. Stephen TAMARI- Southern Illinois University of Edwardsville, USA

Dr. Mohamed KOUDEDED – Kasdi Merbah University, Ouargla, Algeria

Dr. Aziz ASKITOU-Multidisciplinary Fac of Nador, Mohamed First University, Morocco

Dr. Badriah KHALEEL – Kinnaird College for Women University, Lahore, Pakistan

Dr. Christopher HILL -The British University in Dubai, Dubai, UAE

Dr. Khawla BENDJEMIL – 8 May, 1945 University, Guelma, Algeria

Meriem BOUREGAA – 8 May, 1945 University, Guelma, Algeria

Dr. Nassima KAID – University of Djillali Liabes, Sidi Bel Abbès, Algeria

Dr. Nadjiba BOUALLEGUE – 8 May, 1945 University, Guelma, Algeria

Dr. Samir ARAB – Hassiba Benbouali University, Chlef, Algeria

Dr. Sara ABDERRAZAG – Mustapha Stambouli University, Mascara, Algeria

Dr. Şule ÖZÜN – Süleyman Demirel University, Isparta, Turkey

Organizing Committee

Members (Teachers)

Asma ZEMMITI- 8 May, 1945 University, Guelma, Algeria

Amina ELLAGOUNE- 8 May, 1945 University, Guelma, Algeria

Hadjer Boumaza-Ecole Supérieure de Technologies Industrielles (ESTI), Annaba, Algeria

Mahfoud ALIZOUI- 8 May, 1945 University, Guelma, Algeria

Mourad ATY- 8 May, 1945 University, Guelma, Algeria

Meriem CHERIET- 8 May, 1945 University, Guelma, Algeria

Mounya ABDAOUI – 8 May, 1945 University, Guelma, Algeria

Naziha BENKAMOUCHE- 8 May, 1945 University, Guelma, Algeria

Radia LAYADA- 8 May, 1945 University, Guelma, Algeria

Members (MA & PhD Students)

Ali Djazil ZIOUCH – 8 May, 1945 University, Guelma, Algeria

Ayşegül GENÇ – Ankara University, Ankara, Turkey

Aymen MESBAHI – 8 May, 1945 University, Guelma, Algeria

Halima BENZDIRA – Manchester Metropolitan University, Manchester, UK

Hamdi TOBBA – University of Pitesti, Pitesti, Romania

Imad ADJABI – University of Warsaw, Warsaw, Poland

Kenza BENSEGHIR – Paris-Saclay University, Saclay, France

Leyla BOUALEGUE – University of Essex, Essex, UK

Meriem HENNAD – 8 May, 1945 University, Guelma, Algeria

Roqiya BOUGUERRA – Eötvös loránd University, Budapest, Hungary

Soumia BOUMAZA – Canterbury Christ Church University, Canterbury, UK

Yehya BEAZI – 8 May, 1945 University, Guelma, Algeria



The Scope of the Conference

The current coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has caused fear, stress, and anxiety among adults and children. However, learning that the outbreaks of infectious diseases, including smallpox, typhus, Spanish flu, and others is not new to humanity may be somewhat relaxing. Human sciences in general and literature in particular have always written about and responded to plagues and pandemics as early as Athenian Thucydides. This latter described The [Plague](#) of [Athens](#) (429-426 BCE) in a section in his narrative, *History of the Peloponnesian War* for “people to study in case it should ever attack again, to equip themselves with foreknowledge so that they shall not fail to recognize it” (Grant 77). Thucydides was not actually mistaken because epidemics and pandemics are actually still a reality for humanity. Actually from the time of Thucydides to Camus, the good news to know for sure is that pandemics do end. Here comes the role of **Plague Literature**, which exploits the joke that plagues and infectious diseases are made out of the countless human attempts to stop them. This kind of literature is indeed what humans need. This is because during plague and pandemic years, “we need less propaganda and more poetry” (Virginia Heffernan)

Plagues continue to threaten and kill humans and literature continues to chronicle plagues’ chaos and horror

In literature, the term ‘plague’ is used to designate any infectious epidemic that threatens humans and social order. Although the current coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is referred to as a ‘pandemic’, it is also regarded as a plague. The outburst of coronavirus pandemic conjures up images of chaos, death, and loss in literary works that depict plagues. The Great Plague of Marseille in 1720 fired the imagination of Daniel Defoe and gave birth to his *A Journal of the Plague Year* in 1722 that dealt with the London outbreak of 1664–’65. In Defoe’s work, Mary Shelley’s *The Last Man* (1826), Edgar Allan Poe’s “The Masque of the Red Death” (1842) Albert Camus’s *The plague* (1947), and Gabriel García Márquez’s [Love in the Time of Cholera](#) (1985) plague is not merely a medical disease. On writing about plagues, Susan Sontag argues, “feelings about evil are projected onto a disease”. Plagues have haunted the imagination of writers who saw them as a fertile theme to promote or oppose social, political, and cultural issues. Plague can be a metaphor for an unhealthy country or evil individuals. It can also be portrayed as either God’s punishment or the outcome of man’s destruction of nature. Plague literature helps humans transcend the literal form of the plague and connect it with the inner self to face its darkest secrets

Plague Literature can be portrayed through Disaster fiction and Catastrophe narratives which define the recent time apocalypse that might be a natural disaster, a scientific mistake or a killing virus which brings

humanity and the writers' imagination into a final doomsday. Corona Virus lockdown is a new challenging setting for today's plague literature. Thence, many authors like the British Naomi Alderman preferred to stop writing her pandemic novels like *The Survivals* that she started in 2017 and shifted her narrative objective to Corona virus circumstances questioning human aspects like family relationships, character romance ties and social meetings

This conference will also be a zoom-in into the difference between the pre-covid and the post-covid fictions highlighting the revision of the various literary concepts such as life and death, cure and character survival, and religious doctrine and belief. Furthermore, the event will be a discussion of the Pandemic as a literary theme that may restructure today's arts and reshape literary writing. It can even question literature's classic function in alleviating the readers' historical fear and narrative tension. Can today's pandemic/plague literature offer a narrative relief or imaginary escape for its audience or does it just stress the catastrophe casting humanity into the unknown

Main Tracks

- Plague literature
- History in shaping plague literature
- Social and political consequences of plagues
- The pandemic impact on popular culture
- The liberating aspect of plagues
- Apocalyptic narratives
- Plague and psychoanalysis
- Zombie genre
- The body metaphor
- Thriller fiction in the pandemic and narrative self-isolation
- Catastrophe literature
- Futuristic literature and the vaccine promise
- The challenge of contemporary romance in the pre-Covid and post-Covid literatures



Ladies and gentlemen,

Esteemed participants and distinguished professors and colleagues,

It is with great pleasure and pride that I stand before you today as the president of the organizing committee of the Online International Conference on Plague Literature: Pandemic Writing and Covid-19 Fear. As we gather here from different corners of the world, I am filled with gratitude for your presence and unwavering commitment to advancing our understanding of the profound impact of plagues and pandemics on literature and human experience.

First and foremost, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to all the participants, especially our keynote speakers Professor Scott Scott Slovic, and professor David Quammen, who have contributed their invaluable research and insights to this conference. Your dedication to the field of literature and your willingness to share your knowledge with fellow scholars is truly praiseworthy. It is through the collaborative efforts of individuals like you that we can pave the way for a deeper understanding of the human condition in times of crisis.

I would also like to extend my deepest appreciation to the scientific committee for their tireless efforts in curating an exceptional program for this conference. Their expertise and guidance have been instrumental in shaping the diverse range of topics and tracks that we will explore throughout this event.

Furthermore, I would like to express our gratitude to the Democratic Center in Berlin for hosting this conference. Their unwavering support and commitment to academic excellence have been pivotal in making this event a reality. We are grateful for the opportunity to come together in a virtual space that transcends geographical boundaries and allows us to engage in meaningful conversations.

Today, we find ourselves at a critical juncture in history. The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted lives, upended societies, and left an indelible mark on our collective consciousness. It is precisely during these challenging times that the power of literature becomes even more apparent. Plague literature, in all its forms, has the unique ability to provide solace, provoke introspection, and offer a lens through which we can better understand ourselves and the world around us.

It is our fervent hope that this conference will serve as a platform for the exchange of ideas, the forging of new collaborations, and the cultivation of innovative approaches to the study of plague literature. Together, let us push the boundaries of knowledge, challenge existing paradigms, and unlock the transformative potential of literature in times of crisis.

As we embark on this intellectual journey, I urge you to embrace curiosity, engage in meaningful discussions, and foster a spirit of camaraderie and collaboration. Let us be inspired by the works of the past, while simultaneously charting new territories that will shape the future of plague literature.

In conclusion, I extend my deepest gratitude to all the individuals who have contributed to the success of this conference.

Thank you, and I wish you all a productive, enlightening, and memor

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Author(s)	Title	Page Range
1	Françoise Besson	Literature against Fear	11-22
2	Selma Chouchane	T. S. Eliot's <i>The Waste Land</i> : Frightening Visions of the Destiny of Mankind	23-36
3	Ali Rabah Nouria and Raouti Rabha	The 1001 Nights of Confinement Project: Fostering Connection and Creativity during the COVID-19 Pandemic	37-52
4	Fatima Messaoudi	Psychological Factors of Covid 19 on Algerian Health Workers	53-62
5	Yousra Terbeche	Voicing Female Characters as they Find their Apocalyptic Sweet Home	63-76
6	Slimani Mariya and Mehiri Ramdane	Exploring the Social and Political Consequences of Plague through Francis Lawrence 's Film 'I Am Legend' (2007)	77-83
7	Khawla BENDJEMIL	Unveiling the Apocalypse: Lawrence Wright's <i>The End of October</i> as a Paradigm of Plague Literature and Societal Dystopia	84-91
8	Chahira Zernadji	The Psychology of Creativity and Its Interpretive Dimension (Confinis) By Salim Betka as a Model	92-97
9	Imane Chekhnaba	Questioning Human Romance during Covid-19: A Psychoanalysis of Layliat Ramada by Wassini Laaradj	98-105

Literature against Fear

Prof. Françoise Besson

Abstract:

The recent pandemic gave an example of the wave of fear orchestrated by all powers. Is fear useful to make plagues recede? Is it a numbing factor preventing people from acting and making the right decisions? Literature may be an answer to fear and give readers the necessary tools to face all kinds of fears including those generated by plagues. With the example of a classical French novel, Albert Camus's *The Plague*, an American detective story taking place in the Navajo reservation, Tony Hillerman's *The First Eagle*, and an English children's novel, Piers Torday's *The Last Wild*, I would like to show the strength of different literary genres and their power to fight fears.

Keywords: Albert Camus, Tony Hillerman, nature, pandemics, soft power, Piers Torday

“[I]n plague years or not, we need less propaganda and more poetry”

Virginia Heffernan¹

Can literature act as a soft power allowing us to face dangers—either diseases or propaganda, both spreading with a comparable speed? Can not replace fear with serenity and even hopefulness? Can literary texts help to fight all kinds of fear? Medical and political powers often use fear as a kind of weapon to convince people to have the behaviour they think is the right one. They think fear is the best way to prevent a virus from spreading, as the recent pandemic has shown. But we can also wonder if fear is helpful to make plagues recede or if it is a numbing factor preventing people from acting in a rational way and making the right decisions? To answer that question, I would like to think about the role of literature in such crises. Can literature be an answer to fear and can it give readers the necessary tools to face both plagues and benumbing fear? By showing the connections between human and non-human bodies and the body of Nature, writers suggest that a response to the fear of plagues can be found, neither in fear nor in a kind of blindness and head-in-the-sand policy, but in the awareness both of danger, of the vulnerability of the world and our own vulnerability and of the connexions between the human and non-human worlds. With the examples of three pre-

¹ Virginie Heffernan, quoted in the call for paper of the conference “Pandemic Writing and Covid 19 Fear”, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cI7qZKSURpk&list=PLFOZ6DuUO3V99P9vSXYGbJppiBrBF35L>

COVID novels, Albert Camus's philosophical novel *The Plague* (1947), Tony Hillerman's detective novel *The First Eagle* (1998), and Piers Torday's children's novel *The Last Wild* (2013), I would like to show the power of different literary genres, and their power to fight irrational fears and, while showing plenty of reasons to fear plagues, either real or symbolical ones, to fight the propaganda discourses generating fear.

Literature does not avoid the topic of fear and on the contrary often uses it to create suspense or to bring about awareness. Fear orchestrated in real life by various powers is often propaganda. It is meant to let people think according to what powers (political, industrial and other powers) want to obtain. They frighten people to lead them to the way they have chosen for them. They numb their brains, using real fear to blind people whereas literature uses imaginary fear to open people's eyes.

French writer Albert Camus's novel, *The Plague*, speaks about a disease, while building up a political allegory denouncing any totalitarianism. David Quammen said in the keynote conversation with Scott Slovic at the beginning of the conference on "Pandemic Writing and Covid 19 Fear," that according to him, Camus's novel is not a political allegory but it is a novel about a plague. It is true that, even if there is a political allegory, even if it is also a philosophical novel, as Scott Slovic said in the same conversation, it starts with something presented as hard reality: the infection of rats first and then of humans through a rapid spreading of the contamination. The spreading of the plague reflects the spreading of all political totalitarianisms and especially nazism (since the novel was written just after the end of the second World War). The absence of living nature at the beginning of the novel (no pigeons, no trees, no gardens) appears as a warning:

Comment faire imaginer, par exemple, une ville sans pigeons, sans arbres et sans jardins, où l'on ne rencontre ni battements d'ailes ni froissements de feuilles, un lieu neutre pour tout dire? Le changement des saisons ne s'y lit que dans le ciel. Le printemps s'annonce seulement par la qualité de l'air ou par les corbeilles de fleurs que des petits vendeurs ramènent des banlieues : c'est un printemps qu'on vend sur les marchés. Pendant l'été, le soleil incendie les maisons trop sèches et couvre les murs d'une cendre grise : on ne peut plus vivre que dans l'ombre des volets clos. En automne, c'est au contraire un déluge de boue. Les beaux jours viennent seulement en hiver. ([1947] 2020: 11–12)¹

¹ "How could we make people imagine, for example, a town without any pigeons, without any trees and without any gardens, where you meet neither flutters of wings nor rustle of leaves, a neutral place, in fact? Season changes can be read only in the sky. Spring is announced only by the air quality or the flower baskets that small sellers bring from suburbs: it is a spring that is sold on marketplaces. During summer, the sun burns the too dry houses and covers the walls with a grey ash: you can only live in the shadow of closed shutters. In autumn, on the contrary, it is a flood of mud. The sunny days only come in winter." My translation. Another version of this analysis and of Hillerman's novel appears in my article "Disseminating the Seeds of Words to Fight the Spreading of Diseases? From Albert Camus's *La Peste* (1947) to Tony Hillerman's *The First Eagle* (1998)", in *The Bloomsbury Handbook to the Medical-Environmental Humanities*, Scott Slovic, Swarnalatha Rangarajan, and Vidya Sarveswaran (ed.), Bloomsbury, 2022.

This seems to bring to the surface of the text, symbolically, dead nature: a dead rat is the first sign of the plague. Camus's novel is dark. But the fear generated by the depiction of the plague is made to allow readers to detect dangers. The fear pervading the novel reflecting the fear that would appear in real life, is changed by literature into a warning: the literary distance changes fear into questionings and awareness; the text becomes a sort of shield. We know that what we read is imaginary but we can also see some connections with real facts. This allows us to be more attentive to the dangers threatening our world and ourselves. At the end of the novel, the plague seems to be eradicated and joy comes back. Yet the narrator's words introduce some latent fear:

Écoutant, en effet, les cris d'allégresse qui montaient de la ville, Rieux se souvenait que cette allégresse était toujours menacée. Car il savait ce que cette foule en joie ignorait, et qu'on peut lire dans les livres, que le bacille de la peste ne meurt ni ne disparaît jamais, qu'il peut rester pendant des dizaines d'années endormi dans les meubles, le linge, qu'il attend patiemment dans les chambres, les caves, les malles, les mouchoirs et les paperasses, et que, peut-être, le jour viendrait où, pour le malheur et l'enseignement des hommes, la peste réveillerait ses rats et les enverrait mourir dans une cité heureuse. ([1947] 2020: 355)¹

Even if the city is happy because it is the end of the plague, the text reminds the reader that any plague (political or sanitary) is never definitively destroyed. Fear is at the core of this apparently happy ending. It reminds readers of some reality recalled in a report on the French TV during the pandemics, mentioning an island in Norway, on which a man, who died of the Spanish Influenza in 1918, had been buried in a graveyard covered with a thick layer of ice. The journalist reminded us that with the global warming and the melting of ice, the virus of the Spanish Influenza that killed fifty million people all over the world, dormant while it is under the ice, may become active if the temperature increases. That worldwide disease had started in the United States and the indigenous populations were particularly infected, especially the indigenous population from Alaska who were decimated. So this report generated fear by showing the connections between the body of nature and human bodies, the connection between the spreading of a virus and the damage of global warming on the planet with the rapid melting of ice. This awareness of connections between a sick planet because of human actions, and sick humans because of a sick planet, brings about fear, of course, but at the same time, it urges readers to change their points of view and their behaviours to try to reverse the process. At the end of Camus's novel, fear is still present, perhaps still more powerful because the novel is nearly ended and when the book is closed, readers come back to a reality in which they will remember the narrator's anxiety. In the fictitious doctor's awareness, we can read what Scott

¹ "Listening, indeed, to the shouts of joy rising from the city, Rieux [the doctor and narrator] remembered that joy was always threatened. For he knew what this merry crowd did not know and that you can read in books, that the plague bacillus never dies and never disappears, that it can stay dormant for dozens of years in furniture, linen, that it patiently waits in bedrooms, cellars, trunks, handkerchiefs and paperwork, and that perhaps the day would come when, for humans' misfortune and teaching, the plague would wake its rats and send them die in a happy city." My translation.

Slovic explains in his poignant essay, “Be Prepared to the Worst” in *Going Away to Think*: “What I find disquieting in fact, is how easy it is to take comfort in context, in abstraction, in the apparent immutability of a big pattern. My purpose in this exploration is not to soothe, but to worry. Numbness, I sense, is everywhere accessible—and it is as inviting as sleep” (Slovic 47). A novel such as Camus’s *The Plague*, by also worrying readers, can make them go out of that numbness and change their way of seeing their relationship with the world, it can help them to be less passive and more active in changing the order of things by changing their own ways of living. The awareness of our vulnerability is not meant to trigger fear and to stop there, but to use that fear to try to face trials like pandemics or other diseases. This also appears in detective novels.

An American detective novel by Tony Hillerman, *The First Eagle*, evokes a contamination due to the pollution of drinking water by a coal company. It is located in an area that was affected by various kinds of pollution provoking several diseases. “Black Mesa,” alluded to several times in this novel, is the place where a coalmine polluted Navajo and Hopi drinking water.¹ The Black Mesa coalmine, situated within the Navajo and Hopi reservations, used water from the Black Mesa N. aquifer, which was the only drinking source for the Navajo and Hopi populations. The land was destroyed and the populations were asked to move off. Mortal diseases resulted from the pollution of the land by nitrogen oxides, carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide, and mercury. In the novel, a character’s lung cancer reminds readers that uranium mining in the Navajo reservation from the 1940s to the 1960s caused many cancers and still nowadays, people suffer from diseases due to that pollution and also many cases of blindness were observed, due to that.

Hundreds of abandoned mines have not been cleaned up and the land is dotted with contaminated tailings. These mines were left with no warning of the health hazards. Within this area, the Navajo peoples have suffered from high cancer rates and respiratory problems. Cancer rates among Navajo teenagers living near mine tailings are 17 times the national average. It was in the 1970s, that Navajo uranium miners and their families began to see the effects of the mine. (Smith 2007, 8-9)

The connection between cancers and the exploitation of uranium, between plague and the pollution of the environment, had not been revealed by the political power nor by the industrial companies. Scientists’ research, journalists’ inquiries, and literary works have changed the data and, together, revealed the truth about contamination. When novelists deal with a topic concerning such tragic reality, and when fear is at the core of their novels, it is not to frighten people in real life and benumb them but on the contrary, to inform them so that they could be more attentive.

This is the case in *The First Eagle*, in which the reader can guess the link between pollution and the plague. Scientists have put forward the hypothesis that the environment might

¹ An analysis of land pollution and diseases resulting from it appears in my book *Ecology and Literatures in English. Writing to Save the Planet*, CSP, 2019.

be a factor causing *Yersinia pestis* infections. In the novels under study, the link between a highly contagious disease and environmental pollution first appears in the contagion of nonhuman animals: rats in Camus's *The Plague*, prairie dogs in Hillerman's *The First Eagle*. The pollution of the land affecting the Navajo Reservation illustrates the link between habitat alteration and prairie dogs' disease, inferring the plague. The novel is built on the fear generated by the contamination, diseases and deaths. It reflects elements of reality and so doing, unveils something that readers did not necessarily know. By generating some fright in the field of imagination, the texts actually fight real fright. Readers become aware of some realities showing the connection between the contamination of the environment and viruses and pandemics, between the body of the earth and nonhuman and human bodies. This can help them to develop their critical mind and be attentive to what happens in their areas and try to fight companies polluting their lands. The fear generated by the reading of the novel can bring about engagement in reality.

When literature uses fear, it is to fight fear. Readers may be anxious when they read thrillers or gothic novels or detective stories or pandemic novels. They are overcome with anxiety while they read the novel, but once the book is closed, some mechanism in the readers' minds leads them to think about what they have read and try to go beyond the anxiety felt during the reading and change it into a new strength coming from the understanding of the dangers presented in the novel, which may lead them to try to see if, in reality, there are elements corresponding to the imaginary world they have just discovered. They can also question themselves about possible behaviours in reality if people had to face similar problems. Literature, if it generates some kind of anxiety at the beginning, actually prevents people from keeping their eyes closed and opens them onto dangerous realities sometimes hidden from them; so doing, it gives them the tools to face these realities, to be engaged, to defend their land and their health against political or industrial systems threatening them. To face a danger, blindness is dangerous; literature can heal some kind of blindness. Being aware of vulnerability allows people to think and make right decisions.

In Hillerman's novel, the stress is laid on the transformation of the landscape:

The years that had passed since he'd accessed Short Mountain hadn't changed it much—certainly not for the better. The parking area in front was still hard-packed clay, too dry and dense to encourage weeds. The old GMC truck he'd parked next to years ago still rested wheel-less on blocks, slowly rusting away. The 1968 Chevy pickup parked in the shade of a juniper at the corner of the sheep pens looked like the one McGinnis had always driven, and a faded sign nailed to the hay barn still proclaimed THIS STORE FOR SALE, INQUIRE WITHIN. But today the benches on the shady porch were empty, with drifts of trash under them. The windows looked even dustier than Leaphorn remembered. In fact the trading-post looked deserted, and the gusty breeze chasing tumbleweeds and dust past the porch added to the sense of desolation. (*The First Eagle*, 62-63)

The landscape painting, showing some intertextual echo to Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* and his painting of the valley of ashes, opposes a world of emptiness and absence to the world of nature, appearing in a few elements of life: wild life with the junipers, and farm life as it was before, with the "sheep pens." The "faded sign" reminds the reader of Dr T. J. Eckelburg's empty eyes on the sign situated in the valley of ashes in *The Great Gatsby*. The intertextual echo presents us with modern America, a grey America of ashes and desolation replacing the old green America of life. In this new world, the dwelling place is also characterized by emptiness with a "ruined Hogan, its door missing, its roof fallen, its north wall tumbled." The traditional Navajo dwelling place, the Hogan, appears as a ruin, figuring the ruin of a world, of a culture, of a population's health and life. The sheep pen is "formed of stacked stones, two stone pylons that once would have supported timbers on which water storage barrels had rested" (187). The water storage barrels hardly noticed can let the readers question himself or herself. Bacteria and viruses often spread because of stagnant waters and these barrels alluded to in the description of a dwelling-place that is now a ruin, are perhaps no proof, but they are a question mark in the text. They bring about some anxiety. What if the water stored there in the past had been contaminated? The modern ruins reveal several things. All the more so as one of the characters says: "'Some people would call it picturesque'" (187). Picturesqueness was a notion very much used in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. What literally deserved to be painted (which is the meaning of the word "picturesque,") had an aesthetic function. And that aesthetics gave a great place to ruins, which appeared in paintings and in Romantic and gothic literature. The holes, the empty spaces visible in the architectural runs, allowed imaginary creations in readers' minds. They were one of the devices of the gothic and gothic literature often used a frightening imaginary world to denounce a reality the novelists could not have denounced more directly. The ruins were part of the creation of fear and of the triggering of imagination that could help readers to think about what was hidden behind the ruins, what invisible elements could be conjured up in the holes of the landscape. We think about that device when reading Hillerman's text and his landscape painting with all the holes appearing in the ruin of the Hogan. The landscape tells the story of a vanished population, the gap between this population's past life and the perception of tourists, seeing picturesqueness in what evokes desolation, misery and loss. The blanks and hollows of the landscape let the reader think about the meaning of these empty spaces. What happened to make a place of life such a desolated place? The modern ruins, far from being just a decor, give a multiple message. Where Native people see ruined memory and traditions, tourists see picturesqueness there, like the romantic ruins in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Europe. The gliding from a real landscape to its aesthetic perception, its transformation into a *picture*, changes it into something detached from reality, both masking and revealing people's poverty and diseases. This landscape speaking about Navajo life tells many stories in the blanks of its missing elements or hollow elements. The landscape full of holes evoking time passing, and also poverty, shows the telescoping of a world speaking about traditions and a new world speaking about emptiness and disease.

The devastation of the land, the human and nonhuman diseases and the criminal plot interweave to denounce the damage done on Navajo reservations by the exploitation of uranium mines. Novels are not journalism but they help readers to open their eyes as journalism can also

open people's eyes. But often in moments of pandemics, in every kind of serious crises in fact, media speak in one voice, relaying the voice of power. They frighten people, sometimes with good intentions, but without letting them have their own point of view. They organize fear in such a way that it obliterates anything else. Poets and novelists do the reversal. They show reasons of fear but they also show the origins and possible solutions. Literature lets people have their own point of view, it develops their critical mind. The absence of natural life in Oran at the beginning of Camus's novel, the sense of desolation in Hillerman's text highlight the relationship between plagues and the absence of nature. Some scientists, like virologist Raina Plowright and others, have demonstrated that deforestation made the spreading of viruses easier.¹ They found the relationship between the disappearance of some trees, which produced flowers in winter, and the spreading of a virus. Once these trees have disappeared, the bats had not enough food in winter and went farther, thus spreading possible viruses. The scientists said that if trees are planted on a surface big enough and with a sufficient diversity for the bats to find food in winter, this will allow them to avoid epidemics. After twenty-four years' research, they concluded that natural habitat was at the core of the problem. An article by Jamie K. Reaser, Raina Plowright and other researchers demonstrates that "landscape immunity is defined as the ecological conditions that, in combination, maintain and strengthen the immune function of wild species within a particular ecosystem and prevent elevated pathogen prevalence and pathogen shedding into the environment" (Reaser et al. 4-5). Pr. Salah Bouregbi, during the conference on "Pandemics Literature,"² evoked the healing role of writing. Healing for the writer, it is also healing for society. Camus, who had been a Resistant, who had always fought against injustice, who was the only western man protesting against the use of atomic bomb in Hiroshima, used literature and fiction and an imaginary plague to denounce the spreading of any evil. So doing he gave society the pacific weapons to heal itself and get rid of that kind of society disease, which nazism or any totalitarian system is. By showing an epidemic and all the fear it generates, he suggested to replace numbing fear with thought. What does the novel suggest? The multiple interpretations of this novel and of its genre (political allegory, existential philosophical novel, pandemic novel) leads readers to think about the meaning of any form of spreading in a group: the spreading of a virus on a physical level, the spreading of fear that results from it, the spreading of ideas on a political level. His answer is a novel: spreading thought to fight all that threatens the society and the planet. To replace the spreading of fear with the painting of that fear to make people think.

Fear is at the core of thrillers and especially of a children's novel, *The Last Wild* (2013), considered as an ecological thriller.³ In this novel, a young mute boy is imprisoned in a sort of hospital and he is going to be helped by animals who want him to save other animals as he alone can speak to them. Some animals (insects and birds) help him to escape as they want him

¹ I have made an analysis of the healing role of trees and the link between deforestation and the spreading of viruses in "The Healing Mathematics of Life in a Gesture: Jean Giono's *The Man Who Planted Trees*", in *Arboreal Ecocriticism, Lagoonscapes. Venice Journal of Environmental Humanities*, vol. 2-n°2, December 2022, 269-294.

² "Pandemic Writing and Covid 19 Fear", <https://www.facebook.com/democraticac/videos/820188369439649/>

³ I have made an analysis of this novel in *Ecology and Literatures in English: Writing to Save the Planet*, Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2019.

to rescue all animals from a terrible virus that is supposed to have killed all the animals on earth. Piers Torday's novel speaks about solidarity between species in a half-fantastic half-marvellous story, but this story reflects the reality of the Earth and species threatened by chemicals and viruses. The children's book mirrors Rachel Carson's essential book *Silent Spring*, starting like a fable (the first chapter is "A fable for tomorrow") and showing the world the terrible reality of men destroying and silencing all nature.

For Piers Torday, "the *Last Wild* trilogy¹ [...] was conceived as a way of writing about the environment, climate change, humanity's relationship with the natural world and the "sixth extinction," for children." He added: "I wanted to find a way of asking questions about our role as self-appointed stewards of the planet, our hypocrisy over our sentimental attitude towards some animals (e.g. pets) and our capacity to destroy/consume other species and habitats at a rapacious rate, and ponder how different we really were to other creatures."² The novel mingles several genres—fantasy, fairy tale, dystopia, the fantastic, poetry—, but it appears first as an ecological tale warning young—and less young—readers about the dangers threatening many animal species because of human behaviour. A deadly virus is supposed to have killed all the animals except those considered as pests and it is expected to spread to humans. Torday said about the writing of his novel: "One of the reasons I began writing *The Last Wild* was my deep sadness at the rate the wildlife around us was—and still is—disappearing."³ If the tale is often dark and full of despair, it opens on hope. It is meant to warn readers but if fear is at the core of the plot, it is overcome thanks to the solidarity of animals. The aim of the novel is clearly to make young readers aware of the dangers threatening them but offering a positive way out. Fear is part of the plot but paradoxically, it is created to open young readers' eyes, unlike organized fear in some political systems. When humans threaten all wild life in the novel, it is animals who save the little boy. And at the end, when the boy's father, a vet, has the remedy against the virus killing the animals, each pigeon is given a dose of the medicine so that they could carry them to the animals of the forest and thus save them (as pigeons saved many human lives when carrying messages during the two World Wars). As for the wolves, they are the Guardians of the Wild. Piers Torday adds that "some Native American tribes revere wolves as hunter spirits to this day." Last but not least, the Irish elk, "the biggest deer that ever lived—was extinct long before humans were around," plays a prevailing role in the novel: he is the animal that summons the boy and asks the animals (pigeons and cockroaches) to help him escape and to bring him to the Ring of Trees because he knows that "he has the voice," and can speak to animals—whereas he cannot speak to humans since he is now mute. Once the tale is over, the author comes back to the reality of the extinction of species to make children realize that the tale they have just read is also a warning and a suggestion to act and change things.

¹ *The Last Wild* (Quercus Children's Book, 2013) is the first book of a trilogy. After this first novel of the adventures of Kes, the young boy, he published *The Dark Wild* (Quercus Children's Book, 2014) and then *The Wild Beyond* (Quercus Children's Book, 2015).

² "An Interview of Piers Torday, author of *The Last Wild* Trilogy", by Minerva, April 5, 2015, <http://www.minervareads.com/an-interview-with-piers-torday-author-of-the-last-wild-trilogy/?i=1>, accessed 23 July 2023.

³ "Piers Torday tells about *The Last Wild*", in *The Last Wild*, n.p.

The young hero's father is a vet who tries to find a treatment to rescue animals. And he does. But he needs help and he thought the company for which he works, which had "big laboratories ,processing plants" (311), "the world's biggest food company might just want to help me save the, you know, animals" (311). Instead of that "they didn't want a cure" and asked him to destroy all his work. The young boy's father " [...] had invented a cure that could save the last few animals in the world, but what [he] didn't know was that Selwyn [Selwyn Stone is the head of the company] had just invented a formula. The magic chemical that replaces food. Stone's success now depended on there being no more animals. Nothing else to eat at all. And that's exactly what happened. Factorium [the company] killed all the remaining creatures left alive and became very rich. Very rich and very powerful" (312-13). The reader learn that at the same time as the young hero and when he asks his father if "he still [has] a cure for the virus" (313), and his father asks he hasn't, the world collapses for the young boy. This happens towards the end of the novel, after a series of adventures in which the boy, imprisoned and mute (because of the shock of his mother's death) recovers speech with nonhuman animals who liberate him to lead him to save other animals. As in many Creation myths, it is a little animal, rejected by everybody, the cockroach, that will organize the young boy's escape and thus start the operation meant the save the animals, hence the world. The anxiety develops as the reader follows the boy's adventures and faces threats and dangers.

Lottie Longshanks, in a review of the book she wrote in *The Guardian*, ends her article saying: "I like the last sentence particularly because it suggests that this book may be the first of a series. I certainly hope so."¹ What is that last sentence? A cue from the young hero, reaching out for his father's hand, surrounded with Polly, the young girl he met during his adventures, and his nonhuman companions, the stag and the wolf-cub, and saying, rather murmuring: "'Yes, general,' [the general being the cockroach who organized his escape] I whisper back, 'we're ready'" (326). Perhaps this means that other stories will follow. But we must not forget the words that Kes's father tried to send him:

**“Help
Don’t
Give Up”**

In bold characters, at the centre of the page, the words of Kes's father, who is going to save the animals even if at that moment, he is not sure, appear as a message to young readers. Perhaps more stories will follow. But chiefly this means that every reader, every person in the world is able to write such stories through his/her own gifts; this means that, whatever the situation, you must not give up. Kathleen Dean Moore speaks about the four gifts of a writer: "One. The gift of memory – what remains and what has vanished. [...] Two [...]. The gift of imagination. [...] Re-invent everything.[...] Three. [...] the gift of a sense of wonder.[...] The most important words a writer can put on paper are "look, just look." Four. [...] the gift of a megaphone, an

¹ Lottie Longshanks. "The Last Wild by Piers Torday - review", 23 June 2013, <https://www.theguardian.com/childrens-books-site/2013/jun/23/review-the-last-wild-piers-torday>. Accessed on 20 July 2023.

amplifying factor.” And she quotes Mary Oliver: “t’s a serious thing just to be alive on this fresh morning in this broken world.”¹ Just looking. Just remembering we are alive. This is what the long hard itinerary of the young g boy and the animals show. Kes’s trials are in fact a long way of hope leading him to help the world and heal himself meanwhile. He was mute after the trauma of the loss of his mother, but lots of animals will give him his voice again and demonstrate that he can use it both to listen to them and speak to them and then to rescue them. What is a thriller full of violence, blood, treasons, fights, diseases and death becomes a healing path suggesting never to give up. But thanks to the animals making a dream come true, thanks to a little boy able to speak to animals, and thanks to his father, able to find a treatment to heal the animals from the virus killing them all and spread by a company of humans wanting to make money, thanks to the animals fighting together with the boy and thanks to pigeons carrying the treatment to the forest so that the wild should be saved, thanks to that union between a few humans and lots of nonhuman animals, the wild is saved and the world is saved. This is not definitive and the novel is open, open on hope. The company helicopter is there but the boy, urged by the insect, who is the general of that strange army, says he is “ready.” The reader is free to interpret the sentence but the whole novel suggests that he/she is ready to go on with the fight to save the various species.

This union between a few humans and animals is a tale here and yet it has echoes in reality. We can think about what happened at the beginning of the twentieth century, in 1925, when an epidemic of diphtheria threatened the whole population of Alaska. A treatment existed but there was little time to bring it to the population. The treatment was sent there through a team of mushers and sled-dogs. Leonhard Seppala, with twenty mushers and a hundred dogs, among whom Togo, who took many initiatives on the way and saved his team several times, managed to bring the diphtheria serum in urgency. Relaying the train, the dogs ran more than one thousand kilometres from Nenana to Nome. Togo, among other courageous initiatives, plunged once into the icy water to take in his mouth the broken line that was meant to bring the ice floe on which the team was, closer to the shore, he swam while drawing the ice floe, thus rescuing Seppala and the team of dogs from drowning. Thanks to his exceptional performance, empathy and courage and to that of the other dogs and men, the serum allowing to save all those who had contracted diphtheria in Alaska, was delivered on time. Seppala and Togo ran 420 kilometres in three days to fetch the serum and, in extremely dangerous conditions for the trip back, Togo managed to lead the whole team and to arrive soon enough to save the people who had contracted diphteria. This team of men and dogs saved thousands of human lives. It could be achieved thanks to the osmosis of a whole team of dogs and men.² Beyond the physical performance, the story showed what can be done when there is such a union between humans and nonhuman animals. Piers Torday’s novel is a thriller showing the damage of a virus spread by humans with malevolent intentions and it is the union between nonhuman animals and a few

¹ Moore, Kathleen, Dean, “Écrire les grands espaces américains”, 16 June, 2022, Pau, André Labarrère media library, Festival “Écrire la nature”, Pau, Laruns and Ossau Valley, <https://www.ecrirelanature.com/fr/actualites>. And quoted in *Travel Writing and Environmental Awareness*, Françoise Besson (ed.), CSP, 2023, 14-15.

² A statue represents Togo in Seward Park in New York and *Time Magazine* entitled one of its issues “the most heroic animal of all time.” See Thomas, Bob and Pam, *Leonhard Seppala: The Siberian Sled Dog and the Golden Age of Sleddog Racing 1908-1941* (Pictorial Histories, 2015).

benevolent humans that can save the wild and then the world. This is an imaginary story and yet how close it is to the one of Leonard Seppala, Togo and the other humans and dogs, saving a whole area by carrying a serum on time to avoid the spreading of an epidemics. Piers Torday's novel shows scenes generating anxiety but the union seen from the start between animals and the young boy gives hope from the start. The simple word "ready," closing the novel, allows readers to fight their interior fears because they understand that they can also be ready to be united with other species to fight all those who spread fear at the same time as viruses, as this imaginary company does in the novel.

By mingling science fiction, tale, suspense and elements of scientific reality, Piers Torday leads young readers in a worrying and beautiful adventure where they must be aware that the smallest and most rejected animal like the cockroach can help men to save the Earth, which meets some Native American creation myths in which it is often a very small animal that allows the creation of the world. It is no coincidence that he should end his evocation of his animal choices with the cockroach when he said that he "created a cast of animal characters who would capture the essence of animals long gone and animals under threat, as well as some who might even outlive us—like the most indestructible of species, the cockroach" (ibid). In many Creation myths, it is an animal, often a small rejected animal who, among the original waters, can bring the mud necessary for humans to live: "These animals are called 'earthdivers' and are sometimes small and unassuming heroes. For example, in the Cherokee account the earthdiver is a water-beetle, while the Chickasaw say it is a crawfish and the Cheyenne a coot" (Zimmermann 118). In the novel, the most rejected of insects, the cockroach, reuniting reality, fiction and myths, guides the young boy as he guides us on the way to solidarity. Starting in the fear of a virus supposed to kill all animals and to possibly spread to humans, the novel ends on hope by showing that solidarity between species brings solutions to heal the world if its inhabitants are "ready."

Either Albert Camus with his philosophical allegory taking place in Oran, Tony Hillerman with his detective novels taking place in Navajo and Hopi reservations in the United States of America, or Piers Torday's children's novel staging animals in the forest, who save the world from a criminal contamination, all these novelists offer readers different visions of plagues bringing about fear, and poetic solutions bringing about healing including the healing of all fears. The fact that they are poetic and imaginary, instead of making these stories impossible, opens readers' eyes on the fact that there are solutions in solidarity and in the awareness of all the connections between human lives and the nonhuman world.

Works Cited

- Besson, Françoise. *Travel Writing and Environmental Awareness*, Françoise Besson (ed.), Newcastle Upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2023.
- . "Disseminating the Seeds of Words to Fight the Spreading of Diseases? From Albert Camus's *La Peste* (1947) to Tony Hillerman's *The First Eagle* (1998)", in *The Bloomsbury*

- Handbook to the Medical-Environmental Humanities*, Scott Slovic, Swarnalatha Rangarajan, and Vidya Sarveswaran (ed.), Bloomsbury, 2022.
- . The Healing Mathematics of Life in a Gesture: Jean Giono's *The Man Who Planted Trees*“, in *Arboreal Ecocriticism, Lagoonscapes. Venice Journal of Environmental Humanities*, vol. 2-n°2, December 2022, 269-294.
- . *Ecology and Literatures in English: Writing to Save the Planet*, Newcastle-upon-Tyne : Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2019.
- Camus, Albert. *La Peste* [1947]. Paris: Gallimard, Coll. Folio, 2020.
- Moore, Kathleen, Dean, “Écrire les grands espaces américains”, 16 June, 2022, Pau, André Labarrère media library, Festival “Écrire la nature”, Pau, Laruns and Ossau Valley, <https://www.ecrirelanature.com/fr/actualites>. Quoted in *Travel Writing and Environmental Awareness*, Françoise Besson (ed.), CSP, 2023
- Hefferman, Virginia. “The Literature of Plagues Gives Us Words to Live By”, <https://www.wired.com/story/literature-of-plagues-gives-us-words-to-live-by/>
- Hillerman, Tony. *The First Eagle*, New York: Harper, 1998.
- Longshanks, Lottie. “The Last Wild by Piers Torday - review”, 23 June 2013, <https://www.theguardian.com/childrens-books-site/2013/jun/23/review-the-last-wild-piers-torday>
- Martin, Gerardo, Carlos Yanez-Arenas, Carla Chen, Raina K. Plowright, Rebecca Webb, J., Lee F. Skerratt, “Climate Change Could Increase the Geographic Extent of Hendra Virus Spillover Risk”, *Ecohealth*, 2018 Sep;15(3):509-525. doi: 10.1007/s10393-018- 1322-9. Epub 2018 Mar 19. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/29556762/>
- Minerva. “An Interview of Piers Torday, author of *The Last Wild* Trilogy”, <http://www.minervareads.com/an-interview-with-piers-torday-author-of-the-last-wild-trilogy/?i=1>
- Reaser, Jamie K., Brooklin E. Hunt, Manuel Ruiz-Aravena, Gary M. Tabor, Jonathan A. Paz, Daniel, J. Becker, Harvey Locke, Peter J. Hudson, Raina K. Plowright. “Fostering landscape immunity to protect human health: A science-based rationale for shifting conservation policy paradigms”, *Conservation Letters. A Journal of the Society for Conservation Biology*, 20 January 2022, <https://doi.org/10.1111/conl.12869>
- Slovic, Scott. *Going Away to Think*, Reno: University Press of Nevada, 2008.
- Smith, Kimberley. "Pollution of the Navajo Nation Lands", Black Mesa Waters Coalition, Arizona: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, August 27-29, 2007.
- Thomas, Bob and Pam, *Leonhard Seppala: The Siberian Sled Dog and the Golden Age of Sleddog Racing 1908-1941* (Pictorial Histories, 2015)
- Torday, Piers. *The Last Wild*, London: Quercus, 2013.
- Zimmerman, Larry J. and Brian Leigh Molyneaux. *Native North America* [Duncan Baird Publishers, 1996], Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2000.

T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*: Frightening Visions of the Destiny of Mankind

Dr. Selma Chouchane

s.chouchane@univ-setif2.dz

Sétif 2 University, Algeria.

Abstract

T. S. Eliot's The Waste Land (1922) is a masterpiece of modernist literature that explores modern man's disillusionment in the aftermath of WWI. It presents a bleak and apocalyptic vision of the world, which witnesses social, moral, and even religious decay and, thus, symbolically becomes a waste and sterile land. Eliot describes modern man's psychological and emotional suffering in such a harsh world through the continuous contrast of the utopian past, the empty present, and the dystopian future. He sees the past as the utopian time that will never return, with its moral values, common-sense thinking, and non-materialistic structure. He is dissatisfied with the modern world, which is full of selfishness, hypocrisy, and different kinds of decadence and failure. He is also extremely pessimistic regarding the future, which he views as a dystopian world full of more loss and decay. He foreshadows the crumbling of western civilization and expects that the world will remain a waste land. This paper examines Eliot's visions of the destiny of mankind to demonstrate how the world is still in a state of continuous collapse. For instance, the COVID-19 pandemic makes us realize that we are living in the dystopian future foreshadowed by Eliot one century ago.

Key Words: *The Waste Land, apocalyptic narrative, vision, destiny, COVID-19 pandemic*

Introduction

The early twentieth century changed people's lifestyles dramatically in both Europe and America. A new modern life emerged as a response to technological advancement, the industrial revolution, and immigration. The traditional rural, communitarian, and conservative life dissolved into a more individualistic, liberal city life. WWI also had a great effect on both individuals and society. T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* (1922) is widely regarded as one of the most important works of modernist literature. It presents a bleak and apocalyptic vision of the postwar world. Eliot locates modern man's lost self between the liminal spaces of the utopian past and the dystopian future. He highlights modern man's inability to preserve his moral values, construct permanent relationships, or have healthy sexuality. He even gives up his spirituality and runs after materialistic interests. The multifaceted chaos and decay of the modern world make Eliot refer to it as, symbolically, a waste and sterile land. The turmoil and transformations that the world has witnessed due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic

prompt us to come back to Eliot's apocalyptic vision to seek to know, "WHERE ARE WE NOW, 100 years later, with *The Waste Land*?"¹

Many studies have discussed Eliot's prophetic visions in *The Waste Land*. For instance, Cornelia Cook (1996) noted that Eliot's oeuvre is characterized by a desire for a hidden apocalypse. However, "The suggestion of an apocalyptic vision is planted, only to be withheld, or allowed to wither in a desert of unknowing."² Unlike Cook, who believes in the painful absence of vision and prophetic revelation in the poem, Haider Jabr Mihsin (2020) discussed the apocalyptic theme in Eliot's poem by focusing on the sterile and chaotic vision of both society and individuals' lives as a result of the spiritual exhaustion that has overwhelmed the modern world. Jaimee Poole (2020) focuses on the image of living death, evinced through both the impotence of the poem's prophetic voices and the fragmentation of the self. Although the above-mentioned studies provided interesting analysis of Eliot's visions, they did not project these chaotic and/or impotent visions onto the contemporary world.

This projection is well established by James Parker (2023), who sees that *The Waste Land* prophesied and inaugurated a modern type of crack-up. Although Parker did not deeply examine the different prophetic voices of the poem, his juxtaposition of the poet's cataclysmic description of the postwar world with the contemporary world enables him to deduce that we are still living the same fragmentation, suffering, and decay. This paper seeks to analyze the poem's different prophecies and juxtapose the modern and contemporary worlds to demonstrate that Eliot's visions are not exclusively about the modern world but represent futuristic, frightening, and accurate visions of the destiny of mankind. The study is significant in the way that it seeks to understand the continuous collapse of both the individual and society, which makes our lives more hostile and chaotic. This retrogression is remarkably evident in our response to unpredictable disasters such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Waste Land: A Painting of the End of the World

Apocalyptic literature is a genre of writing that typically deals with the end of the world. It tackles a cataclysmic event, such as a climatic disaster, pandemic, nuclear war, or any other kind of upheaval. This genre of literature focuses, prophetically or symbolically, on the time right after the catastrophe to depict in detail its impacts on the world order and the psychology of the survivors. It often explores themes of destruction, chaos, divine judgment, human suffering, and the ultimate triumph of good over evil. The tragic decline that features apocalyptic literature often confuses it with dystopia.

The Waste Land paints an apocalyptic image of the world through different themes and imagery. The poet describes the postwar era as a barren, desert-like world that has lost its fertility and ability to bring forth life. It is a land without water or even the sound of water—only dust and stones that toll like bells. Eliot gives us horrific images, such as hordes of

¹James Parker, "T. S. Eliot Saw All This Coming", *The Atlantic*, <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2023/01/ts-eliot-the-waste-land-poem-anniversary/672231/>. 8 Dec. 2022, Accessed 10 Jun. 2023.

²Cornelia Cook, "The Hidden Apocalypse: T. S. Eliot's Early Work", *Literature and Theology*,² vol. 10, no. 1, March 1996, p. 73.

grasshoppers that eat and destroy everything, bats with baby faces, and “[t]he rattle of the bones, and chuckle [that] spread from ear to ear.”¹ According to Wit Pietrzak, Section three, “The Fire Sermon”, is perhaps the most terrifying section of the poem. It opens with “a vision of dead vegetation and a world after apocalypse which has been deserted by all life. There is no life but rats and corpses are moored at the bank of the Thames”.² The clean water of the Thames River, as well as Lac Léman and the canal, becomes polluted with empty bottles, sandwich papers, Silk handkerchiefs, cardboard boxes, and cigarette ends.

In section five, “What the Thunder Said”, Eliot explicitly makes use of an apocalyptic motif. All the creatures are gathered, waiting for the thunder to speak, which metaphorically refers to the voice of God. This scene makes us think about judgment day, mainly because the thunder is dry, sterile, and without rain, which confirms the end, not the coming forth of life. Eliot increases the dystopic tone with “[t]he shouting and the crying”.³ He describes towers in Jerusalem, Athens, Alexandria, Vienna, and London falling. The vision of the towers evokes the fall of civilization and “a complete closure of the landscape”.⁴

One of the key apocalyptic themes in *The Waste Land* is the collapse of traditional values and the breakdown of social order. Society is fragmented and in chaos. The poet exhibits the emptiness and horror of such a psychologically and morally dry life by focusing on people’s failing attempts to find meaning and purpose in a postwar world. In “A Game of Chess”, Eliot describes a powerful, wealthy woman living in luxury like Cleopatra but who fails to give meaning to her purposeless life. She asks her husband: “What shall we do to-morrow? / What shall we ever do?”⁵ The woman expresses her eternal fear. She falls, with her husband, into the nothingness. She claims: “Nothing again nothing. / 'Do / 'You know nothing? Do you see nothing? Do you remember / 'Nothing?”⁶ The poet also insists that there is no rest from suffering: “Here one can neither stand nor lie nor sit”.⁷

Eliot also emphasizes people’s spiritual emptiness by shedding light on the empty chapel, which becomes the wind’s home. The chapel, which once provided comfort and meaning to society, has been reduced to a mere shelter for the wind. Eliot is extremely dissatisfied with the way war and modernity have eroded and devastated traditional religious and cultural institutions, leaving people lost in a Godless world. The modern man’s lost spirituality and faith are also seen in his inability to recognize the presence of Christ. For instance, Eliot describes two disciples walking together when one asks the other, “Who is the third who walks always beside you?”⁸ In the previous verse, Eliot does not evoke the resurrection of Christ, who is

T. S. Eliot, *The Waste Land*, The Pennsylvania State University, 2000, 186.¹

² Wit Pietrzak, *Myth, Language and Tradition: A Study of Yeats, Stevens and Eliot in the Context of Heidegger’s Search for Being*. UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2011, p. 263.

Eliot, *The Waste Land*, 325.³

Pietrzak, p. 268.⁴

Eliot, *The Waste Land*, 133-4.⁵

Eliot, *The Waste Land*, 119-123.⁶

Eliot, *The Waste Land*, 340.⁷

Eliot, *The Waste Land*, 359.⁸

perceived as the savior at the end of time, but rather his half-coming since the modern man is stuck in the living-death situation.

To support his depiction of the universal collapse and the end of time, Eliot alludes to different literary, cultural, and religious works. For example, the title of section one, “The Burial of the Dead”, has been borrowed from the book of sacred prayers in England churches to convey the main theme of the poem, which is death and life after death. The book explains that only those who believe in Christ will resurrect after death, and will not be delivered into the bitter pain of eternal death.¹ The poem refers to the Book of Revelation, the final book of the New Testament that provides many prophetic revelations on the end of the world. It also refers to Dante Alighieri's three-part epic poem *The Divine Comedy* (2003), mainly parts one and two: “Inferno” (Hell) and “Purgatorio” (Purgatory), in order to describe, on the one hand, the hellish existence of the modern man who has lost his spirituality and does not live righteously, and, on the other hand, the need to purify the sins, metaphorically through a purgatorial death. According to John J. Collins,

A catastrophic imagination alone is not genuinely apocalyptic. [...] To be sure, the hope of salvation in another world, whether conceived as a new creation in the future or as a heavenly world of eternal life, is not without its problems, as it lends itself to displacement of human endeavor. But at the least we should give it credit for its indomitable hope, which is not always supported by rational analysis of human affairs, but may well be indispensable to human flourishing.²

Along with the apocalyptic depiction of the world, Eliot continuously insists that there is hope for redemption through rebirth. Although this hope is far from being achieved, it is still a substantial component of Eliot's apocalyptic landscape. Collins classifies such works that provide chaotic descriptions of the world along with a glimmer of hope as classical apocalypticism, to which, according to him, *The Waste Land* belongs.³

Visions of Human Existence

Apocalyptic literature is not exclusively related to the end of civilization or the world but also includes futuristic expectations that are perceived in the form of pessimistic visions and frightening prophecies of the destiny of mankind. According to Haider Jabr Mihsin, Apocalyptic literature “comprises of the quasi-prophetic and prophetic writings that are inclined to exhibit the world's pessimistic visions as well as melancholy and frightening prophecies of the destiny of mankind”.⁴ These visions and prophecies intervene in the normal course of a personal or communal experience to interpret that experience and foresee its outcomes. The

¹ “At the Burial of the Dead.” *The Church of England*, <https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/worship-texts-and-resources/book-common-prayer/burial-dead>. Accessed 10 Jun. 2023.

John J. Collins. “Apocalypticism in Ancient Judaism and Christianity”. *The Cambridge Companion to Apocalyptic Literature*, edited by Colin McAllister, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2020, p. 35.
Collins, p. 34-5.³

Haider Jabr Mihsin, “The Apocalyptic Image of the World in T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*”.⁴ *International Journal of Innovation, Creativity and Change*, vol. 14, no. 7, 2020, p. 1290.

apocalyptic visionary has access to the supernatural world. He/she “plunges into the sea of mystery, observes how things look from the perspective of transcendence, and is shaken to discover a coming impact of transcendence on history”.¹ In *The Waste Land*, Eliot makes use of two visionaries to reveal the future. The two seers are borrowed from other literary texts and used to serve the poem’s prophetic content.

1- Madame Sosostris: The Famous Clairvoyante

Eliot borrowed Madame Sosostris from Aldous Huxley’s novel *Crome Yellow* (1921), in which a male character named Mr. Scogan disguised himself as an old female fortune teller and took the name of Madame Sosostris. The latter appears in “The Burial of the Dead” section as the famous clairvoyante. She is described as a mysterious and enigmatic figure. She reveals the truth of the contemporary world with her tarot cards, and her revelation is successful in the sense that she describes the whole substance of the text. In other words, her divination is both powerful and accurate. Eliot claims that she “[i]s known to be the wisest woman in Europe”.² Madame Sosostris’s tarot cards seem like a modern form of vision and prophecy since people have lost faith and no longer rely on religion to understand themselves and the world. The tarot cards displayed by the fortuneteller exemplify futuristic revelations that Eliot has collected and explained in the course of the poem.

The first card that Madame Sosostris talked about was that of the drowned Phoenician sailor. Madame Sosostris tells the client as well as the reader: “(Those are pearls that were his eyes. Look!)”.³ Although the Phoenician sailor is dead, his eyes, which are becoming pearls, suggest that there is no complete death. The non-decomposition of his body connotes the poem’s depiction of death as a hopeless desire. According to Harold Bloom,

The brief fourth section, “Death by Water,” the section that Ezra Pound said was essential when he was editing *The Waste Land*, is a *memento mori*. It is a reminder of death and the fulfillment of Madame Sosostris’ warning at the end of the first section when she connected the drowned Phoenician sailor with the poet—“Here, said she/ Is your card”—and with Ferdinand in *The Tempest*, by the allusion to “Those are pearls that were his eyes.” Now the Phoenician sailor is dead, and Eliot uses his death to remind us of death.”⁴ In section four, “Death by Water”, Eliot explains Madame Sosostris’ vision of the drowned Phoenician sailor. He describes Phlebas’ dead body floating in the sea, raising and falling with the current, to show that death is both inevitable and unpredictable. He states: “O you who turn the wheel and look to windward, / Consider Phlebas, who was once handsome and tall as you”.⁵ Eliot uses Phlebas’ death scene to send an important message to all mankind, Gentile and Jew,

¹ Stephen L. Cook, “Apocalyptic Prophecy”. *The Oxford Handbook of Apocalyptic Literature*, edited by John J. Collins, Oxford University Press, 2014, p. 22.

Eliot, *The Waste Land*, 45.²

Eliot, *The Waste Land*, 48.³

Harold Bloom, “Summary and Analysis.” *T.S. Eliot’s The Waste Land*, edited by Harold ⁴

Bloom, New York: Infobase Publishing, 2007, p. 46.

Eliot, *The Waste Land*, 320-1.⁵

to remember their purpose in life before dying like Phlebas and losing control over their own bodies.

Madame Sosostris also shows a card of undead crowds of people. She says: “I see crowds of people, walking round in a ring”.¹ Eliot later gives more details about it. He describes London as hell and the crowds as not physically dead but spiritually dead. They flowed over the London Bridge, each fixing his eyes before his feet. They are in a state of death in life because they live without a meaningful existence. The ring or wheel is a recurring motif in the poem, which refers to the mechanical and repetitive nature of not only modern life but also contemporary life, as James Parker notes: “Here we all are, us, in a herd, on the wheel”.² By the end of the poem, Eliot comes back to London Bridge with the nursery rhyme, “London Bridge is falling down falling down falling down”.³ This apocalyptic destruction is reinforced by the next line from Dante’s *Purgatory*, “Then he dived back into the fire that refines them”.⁴ In this regard, “[p]urgation of sin through a refiner’s fire is a precondition for emerging from the condition of death-in-life that Eliot has been describing. It becomes clear, too, that the condition of death-in-life is the state of sin”.⁵

Living death is one of the most important themes of the poem. It is not coincidental that the epigraph of the poem is about Sibyl Cumae, who is stuck in eternal distress. Eliot writes: “Nam Sibyllam quidem Cumis ego ipse oculis meis vidi in ampulla pendere, et cum illi pueri dicerent: Σύβυλλα τί θέλεις; respondebat illa: ἀποθανεῖν [I saw with my own eyes the Sibyl at Cumae hanging in a cage, and when the boys said to her: ‘Sibyl, what do you want?’ she answered: ‘I want to die’.]”⁶ Sibyl Cumae was a famous figure in ancient mythology, featured in the works of several ancient authors like Homer, Virgil, and Ovid. She was known for her wisdom, knowledge, and ability to communicate with the gods. She was said to have lived in a cave near the city of Cumae, located in southern Italy. Sibyl asked Apollo for a long, eternal life but forgot to ask for eternal youth. She grew old, and her body became smaller with age; only her voice was left. Her suffering makes her want to die. Eliot uses this mythological prophetic to anticipate the terrifying mood of the in-between state of living death prevalent in the poem.

The complexities of living death give a new meaning to death as being associated with both fear and desire. Eliot refers to the fear of death, more specifically the fear of eternal death, when he claims: “I will show you fear in a handful of dust”.⁷ At the same time, death is the only way through which people may purify their sins and reach salvation. Although Eliot gives hope of redemption, it is important to note that Madame Sosostris did not find the card of the hanged man, which refers to Christ. In section five, Eliot insists again that rebirth is elusive with the

Eliot, *The Waste Land*, 56.¹

² Parker.

Eliot, *The Waste Land*, 426.³

Eliot, *The Waste Land*, 427. This is Bloom’s translation. See Bloom, “Summary and Analysis”, p. 51.

Bloom, “Summary and Analysis”, p. 51.⁵

T. S. Eliot, *The Waste Land: A Facsimile and Transcript of the Original Drafts including the Annotations of Ezra Pound*, edited by Valerie Eliot, London: Faber and Faber, 1971, p. 126.

Eliot, *The Waste Land*, 30.⁷

death of the savior and the living death of the wastelanders. He argues: “He who was living is now dead / We who were living are now dying / With a little patience”.¹

The second point that Madame Sosostris focuses on is sexuality. She talks about the Belladonna, which means the beautiful woman in Italian, to refer to both the Virgin Mary and the prostituted woman. Eliot uses this paradoxical image as an archetype of the modern woman who has lost her chastity and falls into unhealthy sexual relationships. Another card exposed by Madame Sosostris is that of the man with three staves, which later Eliot connects with the Arthurian legendary figure, the Fisher King. This figure is the impotent ruler and the prevailing spirit of *The Waste Land*.²

According to the legend, the Fisher King was the ruler of a prosperous kingdom. He has been tasked with guarding the Holy Grail, which will later help him save his kingdom. Many versions of the story recount that the Fisher King has been punished by God due to women’s assaults in his court. He suffers great pain due to a wound on his leg, and his kingdom is stricken with drought. Consequently, his people have been reduced to living in poverty and melancholy. The Fisher King embodies “the traditional practices of fertility cults at a time when sex was a central part of religious practices”.³ However, with his injury, he loses his fertility. Eliot metaphorically alludes to the Fisher King myth and the Belladonna to reflect the infertility and meaningless sexuality of both the modern man and woman.

Although Madame Sosostris is the most expressive prophetic voice in the poem, she is forbidden to see everything; “[h]er vision is fragmentary”.⁴ Her position as the wisest woman in Europe does not negate her limited skills, which are seen in her skepticism and her inability to trust anyone. She tells the client: “Thank you. If you see dear Mrs. Equitone, / Tell her I bring the horoscope myself: / One must be so careful these days”.⁵ Madame Sosostris’ words suggest that the modern world is dangerous, and although she is a famous clairvoyante, she cannot predict any danger or ensure her safety. This inability to conceptualize a full vision of the future may suggest that this vision surpasses the time span of the modern world and is frightening to the point that Madame Sosostris’ conscious mind could not bear it, as Edouard Glissant argues: “the chaos-world exists because unpredictability exists”.⁶

2- Tiresias: The Mythological Prophet

Tiresias was a legendary character from Ovid’s *The Metamorphoses*, known for his wisdom and prophetic abilities. He was a man by birth but was transformed into a blind woman as punishment for interrupting the sexual encounter of two snakes. Tiresias was able to see into the future and predict events with great accuracy. He is the unifying voice of the poem; he

Eliot, *The Waste Land*, 328-30.¹

Harold Bloom, “List of Characters”, *T.S. Eliot’s The Waste Land*, edited by Harold Bloom,² NY: Infobase Publishing, 2007, p. 23.

³ Jaimee Poole, *Dying with a Little Patience: A Reading of The Waste Land in Juxtaposition with Theology*. Dissertation, Auckland University of Technology, 2020, p. 49.

Poole, p. 35.⁴

Eliot, *The Waste Land*, 57-9.⁵

⁶ Edouard Glissant. *Introduction to a Poetics of Diversity*. Translated by Celia Britton, Liverpool University Press, 2020, p. 21.

represents all mankind. He is often associated with the themes of gender and sexuality, as he was both a man and a woman. Eliot uses Tiresias as a narrator and a seer to give us a neutral and unique perspective on love and sexuality. He claims in his notes that Tiresias, while “a mere spectator and not indeed a ‘character,’ is yet the most important personage in the poem, uniting all the rest”.¹

Tiresias gives us three examples of illicit love affairs: the typist, Elizabeth I, and a woman having sexual intercourse with unknown man/men. The first example is that of the Typist who invites the Clerk to her house. After the meal, she is bored and tired. She cannot interact with his caresses. Yet he forces her, and she does not resist. Eliot shows how sexual activities are no longer connected to feelings or pleasure. It is significant to note that the typist is happy when the sexual intercourse is over, though she does not feel regret. In an attempt to escape from this joyless encounter, she looks at herself in the mirror and listens to music on the gramophone. The second example is Elizabeth I, who is known to be the virgin queen. She was restricted from marrying to protect England’s foreign policy. Although the queen is not involved in illicit love affairs, Tiresias insists that there is no harmony between her and healthy sexuality. The third example illustrates the way sexuality has lost its integral meaning and traditional function and has been reduced to a mere joyless activity among anonymous people. Tiresias highlights the meaningless sexual practices that are void of any feelings or satisfaction and, despite that, fulfilled without regret, and relates them to his own suffering. He claims: “I Tiresias have foresuffered all.”² The sexual suffering that Tiresias unifies enhances the living death theme already established in the poem.

According to Poole, Tiresias offers no revelation in spite of the fact that he has seen everything.³ Poole goes further and explains that “Tiresias is a symbol of prophetic impotence who sees but does not communicate in the way that Madame Sosostriis does.”⁴ Tiresias implicitly communicates his visions. He only does not interpret them in the way Madame Sosostriis does when she links her visions with fear, death, sterility, and hell. According to Parker, regarding the difficulty of sexuality, “Tiresias has the answers for us—or some of them. [...] Tiresias will be our guide. With Tiresias, who knows both sides of love, we will lurk, we will peep”.⁵ Tiresias implicitly discloses his prophecy on the brokenness of sexuality in the modern world and its continuity to contemporary times through his unpredictability. Édouard Glissant argues that “[i]t can be frightening to give up on the ability to ‘change the world’. Because to change the world means this, it means giving the world a future, that is, predicting. And giving that up is perhaps frightening for our sensibility”.⁶ Tiresias’ inability or unwillingness to interpret his visions suggests that these visions are frightening and repetitive to the extent that he is unable to find a substantive way to interpret and/or explicitly

qtd in. Poole, p. 35.¹

Eliot, *The Waste Land*, 243.²

Poole, p. 35.³

Poole, p. 37.⁴

Parker.⁵

Glissant, p. 67.⁶

communicate them, as Cornelia Cook argues: “Tiresias's vision amounts to an endless repetition of past sufferings”.¹

Eliot uses the two prophetic figures, Madame Sosostriis and Tiresias, to communicate his ambiguous and frightening visions of the destiny of mankind. This mythical technique “provides a pattern, a way of controlling and ordering and giving shape to what is shapeless and chaotic. It provides a norm for measuring the extent of degeneracy in contemporary Europe. It shows that the present spiritual predicament is an ever-recurring phenomenon and so a universal significance is imparted to it”.²

***The Waste Land* and Covid-19 Pandemic: One Century of Continuous Collapse**

It is possible to read Eliot’s futuristic visions in *The Waste Land* as a living reality of contemporary times, mainly during the COVID-19 pandemic. Eliot foreshadows a dystopian future in his prevailing pessimism regarding the barren modern world. He first states that the waste land needs water to be reborn. Later, he reduced his hope to only the sound of water. Finally, he wrecks this hope when he desperately concludes that there is no water, which means that rebirth is elusive, if not impossible. Although Eliot presents a kind of hope in the last section of the poem with the thunder’s three Sanskrit words that encompass important advice to guide the modern man in this waste land: Datta (give), Dayadhvam (sympathize), and Damyata (control), and the three last words of the poem: “Shantih, Shantih, Shantih”, which mean peace, still the only way to reach rebirth, which metaphorically refers to the reestablishment of social order, is conditioned by people’s regaining spiritual enlightenment. Thus, “the final images that swirl through the last lines of the poem suggest destruction prior to reconstitution”.³ Despite Eliot’s efforts to find meaning or redemption, he obviously predicts the persistence of suffering, as Davidson argues: “This final section returns to a barren waste, an inhuman landscape where repetition suggests a pointless circularity”.⁴

Many parallels can be noted between the poem’s visions and the pandemic. Both catastrophes have affected the whole world. In *The Waste Land*, Eliot does not only describe Europe or Western civilization as a waste land but also the world of both “Gentile [and] Jew”.⁵ He uses a collage of stories with a polyvocal narration. He combines verses in different languages, including English, German, French, Italian, Latin, Greek, and even Sanskrit. He also refers to different religions and religious figures such as Saint Augustine and Buddha to point out the disruption of traditional religious values in the modern world. According to Amarjit Singh Datta,

Eliot feels that old religious values and faith in God had died down. Science has given infinite power for destruction without moral and spiritual equipments. The result is a *spiritual* chaos in the modern *Wasteland* inhabited by “Hollowmen” who have not even

¹ Cornelia Cook, p. 74.

² Dilip Barad. *The Waste Land* by T.S. Eliot, [The Wasteland | PDF | T. S. Eliot | Poetry \(scribd.com\)](#). PowerPoint Presentation.

³ Bloom, “Summary and Analysis”, p. 51.

⁴ qtd in. Wit Pietrzak, p. 266.

⁵ Eliot, *The Waste Land*, 319.

the power for prayer. This *spiritual* impotence and mental *decay* has made Eliot disillusioned about the *present* day world.¹

The contemporary world is also characterized by the same *spiritual* impotence. It is only when the pandemic shook people's consciousness about divine power that they remember, in Eliot's words, "the hand expert", who is in control of everything.

Both the waste land catastrophe and the COVID-19 pandemic can be seen as divine punishment because people are more and more giving up their faith in God, "[s]uch devastation is a punishment for forgetfulness, infidelity, or abominations".² In contrast, Daniel Ighakpe thinks that

The Bible does not support the claim that God is using pandemics and other sicknesses to punish people today. Although the Bible reports a few occasions when God used sickness to punish people (for example, He caused some individuals to have leprosy), these isolated incidents, however, were not indiscriminate pandemics that spread to innocent people. Rather, such events were specific judgements on individuals who had clearly rebelled against God.³

To refute the relationship of the pandemic with divine retribution is illusory, mainly in a world full of all types of sin and sinners. Noel O'Sullivan claims that there are two street statements he heard in March 2020 from people who firmly believed what they were saying: "[t]he first saw COVID-19 as a punishment from God for a world that had betrayed him; the second was convinced of its satanic provenance. [...] The first presents an image of a vengeful God while the second understands the world as susceptible to the unfettered activity of the devil.⁴ It is obvious in both cases that the world is witnessing religious chaos, where people are closer to the devil than to God.

The massive deaths during the pandemic urge people to think about their sins and redemption. For instance, Pastor Joseph Ndayizeye at Rugombo Pentecostal Church in Burundi leads a prayer after the death of president Pierre Nkurunziza, addressing the ongoing pandemic as God's approach to corporate sin and repentance. He claims: "It is not normal for the virus to invade the country and even kill the president. [...] God punished us with the coronavirus pandemic because of our sins. Let us repent our sins and ask God for forgiveness and our prayers will be heard."⁵

¹ Amariit Singh Datta. "Eliot and Modern Sensibility." *A Critical Study of T.S Eliot: Eliot at 100 Tears*, edited by D. K. Rampal, Atlantic, 2003, p. 40.

² Cornelia Cook, p. 70.

³ Daniel Ighakpe, "Is COVID-19 Punishment from God?"; *ThisDay*. <https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2020/08/20/is-covid-19-punishment-from-god>, 20 Aug. 2020, Accessed 1 Jun. 2023.

⁴ Noel O'Sullivan, "Theodicy: Where is God in COVID-19?", *Maynooth College Reflects on Covid-19: New Realities in Uncertain Times*, edited by Jeremy Corley, Neil O'Donoghue and Salvador Ryan, Dublin: Messenger Publications, p. 112.

⁵ Tony Onyulo, "Is COVID-19 God's Punishment? African Christians Debate as Their Presidents Die", <https://www.christianitytoday.com/news/2021/march/tanzania-magufuli-dies-covid-president-burundi-god-punishme.html>, 17 Mar. 2021, Accessed 25 Jun. 2023.

The pandemic can also be regarded as punishment for the sexual degeneracy witnessed in our contemporary world. Although sexuality is an important aspect of human existence, it is also a source of sin and temptation. One century after the publication of *The Waste Land*, people are still unable to recognize the pure meaning of sexuality, which has been distorted to the extent that the line between freedom and perversion has been blurred. Heerak Christian Kim, a former congressional candidate in Virginia, argues that COVID-19 is God's punishment for homosexuality, which he maintains must be criminalized in the United States. He states: "Many Christians believe that COVID-19 is punishment by God against #America because of legal protection of homosexuality which the Holy Bible requires that nations illegalize (sic) by national, state, local laws". Kim goes further and claims that "Christians are saying until homosexuality is illegalized (sic) in the United States of America, Americans can expect God to punish America, send plague after plague [...] COVID-19 is only the first plague. And there are more plagues coming."¹ In this regard, pandemics in general and COVID-19 in particular may be regarded as punishment for humanity's disobedience or sin.

Like the waste land, COVID-19 has had a profound impact on society, causing widespread fear, loss, and disruption. Both disasters are characterized by upheaval and uncertainty. Contemporary people's selfishness and individuality are more accentuated during the pandemic. People do not care about others but only about their own safety. Those who do not take precautions are obviously selfish in their disregard of others; they "want unbounded freedom and the discretion of time and resources".² This selfishness is also seen in nations' abductions of each other's medical supplies. The pandemic brings people's loneliness and skepticism to the surface. People have experienced feelings of loneliness and isolation due to social distancing measures, mask-wearing, and lockdowns, which make their lives more stressful and depressive. The pandemic has enhanced their skeptical relationships with each other and with the natural world. They are also skeptical regarding the efficacy of vaccines, which leads to vaccine hesitancy.

Finally, the poem's theme of living death in a postwar world could be seen as resonating with the experience of contemporary times, where extreme suffering, isolation, and hopelessness still persist. The social and moral decadence makes us think of *The Waste Land's* first verse, "April is the cruellest month". The cruelty of April stems from its connection with rebirth, which we are still unable to achieve. According to Parker,

April is the cruellest month because we are stuck. We've stopped dead and we're going rotten. We are living in the demesne of the crippled king, the Fisher King, where everything sickens and nothing adds up, where the imagination is in shreds, where dark fantasies enthrall us, where men and women are estranged from themselves and one another, and where the cyclical itch of springtime—the spasm in the earth; the sizzling

Avira Bechky, "COVID-19 is God's Punishment for Homosexuality, Republican Says", ¹ <https://www.metroweekly.com/2022/09/covid-19-is-gods-punishment-for-homosexuality-republican-says/>, 8 Sep. 2022, Accessed 10 Jun. 2023.

²Thomas Henricks, "Selfishness in the COVID-19 Age", *Psychology Today*, <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-pathways-experience/202008/selfishness-in-the-covid-19-age>, 6 Aug. 2020, Accessed 10 Jun. 2023.

bud; even the gentle, germinal rain—only reminds us how very, very far we are from being reborn. We will not be delivered from this, or not anytime soon.¹

People who are living-dead cannot cope properly with the difficult and challenging experience of the pandemic, which has also had a significant impact on their mental health. The pandemic has been associated with increased rates of anxiety, depression, and suicide. The restrictions and measures put in place to control the spread of the virus have disrupted daily life; people could not easily access essential services or participate in social activities. The virus has brought feelings of fear of death and the desire for death, particularly for those who have lost loved ones or have been impacted by its economic and social consequences.

Conclusion

The Waste Land epitomizes the spiritual and moral cataclysm of the early twentieth century. It not only describes the modern postwar world as apocalyptic but also foreshadows an apocalyptic vision of what is to come. The different seers of the poem communicate implicitly and explicitly their ambiguous and frightening visions of the destiny of mankind. Madame Sosostris' revelation describes the whole substance of the text, while Tiresias unifies the different voices. Madame Sosostris' vision proves its accuracy in the poet's further explanation. She was able to see the modern man's purposeless life, his living-death situation, his sexual sterility, and his ultimate need for purgation of sin. However, she is forbidden to see everything, which makes her vision fragmented and ambiguous. Tiresias implicitly communicates his vision about the suffering caused by sexual decay. His inability to conceptualize a full vision or intervene to interpret it suggests that it is both frightening and endlessly repetitive.

Although *The Waste Land* was written in a different historical context, its futuristic vision and prevalent pessimism provide a framework for interpreting the contemporary world, which is more dystopic and chaotic. COVID-19 discloses the extent to which the contemporary world has collapsed and makes us realize that we are living in the dystopian future foreshadowed by Eliot one century ago. The pandemic may be regarded as divine punishment for people's lost spirituality and unhealthy sexuality. People suffer the same fear, loss, and disruption. Their selfishness, loneliness, and skepticism are more pronounced. They do not care about each other but only about their own safety. Their isolation is more remarkable with the different social distancing measures. Also, skepticism governs their relationships with each other as well as with the natural world. In this regard, it is evident that we are never getting away from the waste land's gloomy life since "[t]he poem's discontinuities no longer startle us. Rather, they feel like home".²

Works Cited

Alighieri, Dante. *The divine comedy: The inferno, The Purgatorio, and The Paradiso*, translated by John Ciardi, NY: New American Library, 2003.

Parker.¹
Parker.²

- “At the Burial of the Dead.” *The Church of England*, <https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/worship-texts-and-resources/book-common-prayer/burial-dead>. Accessed 10 Jun. 2023.
- Barad, Dilip. *The Waste Land by T.S. Eliot*. [The Wasteland | PDF | T. S. Eliot | Poetry \(scribd.com\)](#). PowerPoint Presentation.
- Bechky, Avira. “COVID-19 is God’s Punishment for Homosexuality, Republican Says.” *Metroweekly*, 8 Sep. 2022, <https://www.metroweekly.com/2022/09/covid-19-is-gods-punishment-for-homosexuality-republican-says/>. Accessed 10 Jun. 2023.
- Bloom, Harold. “List of Characters.” *T.S. Eliot’s The Waste Land*, edited by Harold Bloom, NY: Infobase Publishing, 2007, pp. 22-25.
- , “Summary and Analysis.” *T.S. Eliot’s The Waste Land*, edited by Harold Bloom, NY: Infobase Publishing, 2007, pp. 26-52.
- Collins, John J. “Apocalypticism in Ancient Judaism and Christianity.” *The Cambridge Companion to Apocalyptic Literature*, edited by Colin McAllister, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2020, pp.19-35.
- Cook, Cornelia. “The Hidden Apocalypse: T. S. Eliot's Early Work.” *Literature and Theology*, vol. 10, no. 1, March 1996, pp. 68-80. JSTOR, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23924895>. Accessed 15 Jun. 2023.
- Cook, Stephen L. “Apocalyptic Prophecy.” *The Oxford Handbook of Apocalyptic Literature*, edited by John J. Collins, Oxford University Press, 2014, pp. 19-35.
- Datta, Amariit Singh. “Eliot and Modern Sensibility.” *A Critical Study of T.S Eliot: Eliot at 100 Tears*, edited by D. K. Rampal, New Delhi: Atlantic, 2003, pp. 32-42.
- Eliot, T. S. *The Waste Land*, The Pennsylvania State University, 2000.
- , *The Waste Land: A Facsimile and Transcript of the Original Drafts including the Annotations of Ezra Pound*. Edited by Valerie Eliot, London: Faber and Faber, 1971.
- Glissant, Edouard. *Introduction to a Poetics of Diversity*. Translated by Celia Britton, Liverpool University Press, 2020.
- Henrick, Thomas. “Selfishness in the COVID-19 Age.” *Psychology Today*. 6 Aug. 2020, <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-pathways-experience/202008/selfishness-in-the-covid-19-age>. Accessed 10 Jun. 2023.
- Huxley, Aldous, *Crome Yellow*, NY: Dover Publications, 2013.

- Ighakpe, Daniel. "Is COVID-19 Punishment from God?" *ThisDay*. 20 Aug. 2020, <https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2020/08/20/is-covid-19-punishment-from-god>. Accessed 5 Jun. 2023. Accessed 1 Jun. 2023.
- Mihsin, Haider Jabr. "The Apocalyptic Image of the World in T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*." *International Journal of Innovation, Creativity and Change*, vol. 14, no. 7, 2020, pp. 1290-1297.
- Onyulo, Tonny. "Is COVID-19 God's Punishment? African Christians Debate as Their Presidents Die." *Christianity Today*, 17 Mar. 2021, <https://www.christianitytoday.com/news/2021/march/tanzania-magufuli-dies-covid-president-burundi-god-punishme.html>. Accessed 10 Jun. 2023. Accessed 25 Jun. 2023.
- O'Sullivan, Noel. "Theodicy: Where is God in COVID-19?" *Maynooth College Reflects on Covid-19: New Realities in Uncertain Times*, edited by Jeremy Corley, Neil O'Donoghue and Salvador Ryan, Dublin: Messenger Publications, 2021, pp. 111-122.
- Ovid. *The Metamorphoses*. Translated and edited by Horace Gregory, NY: The Viking Press, 1958.
- Parker, James. "T. S. Eliot Saw All This Coming." *The Atlantic*, 8 Dec. 2022, <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2023/01/ts-eliot-the-waste-land-poem-anniversary/672231/>. Accessed 10 Jun. 2023.
- Pietrzak, Wit. *Myth, Language and Tradition: A Study of Yeats, Stevens and Eliot in the Context of Heidegger's Search for Being*. UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2011.
- Poole, Jaimee. *Dying with a Little Patience: A Reading of The Waste Land in Juxtaposition with Theology*. Dissertation, Auckland University of Technology, 2020.

The 1001 Nights of Confinement Project: Fostering Connection and Creativity during the COVID-19 Pandemic

1-Dr Raouti Rabha

rabha.raouti@univ-saida.dz

2-Dr Ali Rabah Nouria

nouria.alirabah@univ-saida.dz

Dr. Moulay Tahar University of Saida

Abstract:

The "10001 Nights of Confinement" project emerged as a remarkable response to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, creating a virtual platform to harness the power of creativity and connection amidst isolation. Through an online community, artists, writers, musicians, and individuals from diverse backgrounds shared their personal stories and artistic creations, transcending geographical boundaries to form a global unity of resilience. Personal narratives provided authenticity and depth to the project, while the digital platform facilitated engagement and collaboration, proving the potential of technology in building virtual communities. This abstract explores the project's impact, lessons learned, and potential future directions, shedding light on how art and human connection can flourish even in the most confined of times, leaving a lasting legacy of hope, empathy, and creativity.

1. Introduction

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in late 2019 led to unprecedented global challenges, with governments implementing strict lockdowns and social distancing measures to curb the spread of the virus.(Fredrickson,2001). These restrictions resulted in widespread confinement, leaving individuals isolated and disconnected from their usual social networks. As the pandemic unfolded, an innovative project, titled "10001 Nights of Confinement," emerged to address this issue and explore the potential of art and creativity in fostering connection and well-being during times of crisis. At the heart of the "10001 Nights of Confinement" project revolves around understanding the impact of artistic expression and virtual community building in mitigating the effects of confinement during the COVID-19 pandemic. The project aimed to explore whether providing a platform for individuals to share their creative works and personal stories could foster a sense of connection, emotional support, and resilience among participants facing prolonged periods of isolation.Possible Hypotheses are set in this research:

1. Hypothesis 1: Active participation in the "10001 Nights of Confinement" project, where individuals contribute their artistic creations and personal narratives, will lead to an increased sense of connectedness and community among participants.

2. Hypothesis 2: The sharing of personal stories and reflections within the project will positively impact the mental well-being of participants, providing an emotional outlet and fostering a sense of empathy and understanding.
3. Hypothesis 3: The virtual nature of the project, facilitated through an online platform, will allow for the formation of a global community transcending geographical barriers, thereby promoting cross-cultural interactions and mutual support.
4. Hypothesis 4: Engaging in creative expression during confinement through the "10001 Nights of Confinement" project will lead to increased feelings of empowerment and agency among participants, as they find alternative means to navigate the challenges posed by the pandemic.

In this research exploration, we delve into the outcomes and experiences of participants in the "10001 Nights of Confinement" project, seeking to shed light on the potential of art and virtual community engagement as coping mechanisms during times of crisis. By analyzing the contributions, personal narratives, and interactions within the project, we aim to contribute to the growing body of research on the significance of creativity and human connection in the face of adversity. The population of the study refers to the entire group of individuals who participated in the "10001 Nights of Confinement" project. This includes artists, writers, musicians, and other creative individuals from various cultural backgrounds and geographical locations who actively engaged with the project by submitting their artistic creations and personal narratives through the online platform. (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996).

As the project aimed to foster a global community and transcend geographical barriers, the population of the study would encompass participants from all around the world. The project's digital nature allowed for inclusivity, enabling individuals from different countries, regions, and age groups to contribute their creative works and experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic. The size of the population could be substantial, as the project's success and visibility might have attracted a large number of participants over time. However, the actual number of individuals in the population would depend on the project's reach and the duration of data collection. To study the impact of the "10001 Nights of Confinement" project and test the hypotheses, researchers might conduct surveys, qualitative interviews, or content analysis of the artistic contributions and personal narratives shared on the platform. By analyzing data from this diverse and geographically dispersed population, researchers can gain valuable insights into the role of art and virtual community building in fostering connection and creativity during times of confinement.

2. Fostering Connection and Creativity during the Covid-19 Pandemic

During the COVID-19 pandemic, fostering connection and creativity became essential elements for individuals and communities seeking to navigate the challenges of isolation and uncertainty. With physical distancing measures in place, people turned to technology and virtual platforms to stay connected with loved ones, colleagues, and friends. Video calls, online gatherings, and social media provided avenues for maintaining relationships and combating

feelings of isolation. Moreover, the pandemic prompted a surge of creativity as individuals explored new hobbies, artistic pursuits, and innovative ways to adapt to the changing circumstances. From virtual art exhibitions to online music concerts and DIY projects, people found solace and inspiration in expressing themselves creatively. These creative endeavors not only served as outlets for emotional release but also brought communities together, forging virtual bonds that transcended geographical boundaries. Fostering connection and creativity during the pandemic not only helped individuals cope with the challenges but also demonstrated the resilience and adaptability of humanity in times of crisis. The "10001 Nights of Confinement" project emerged as a beacon of hope and creativity during the challenging times of the COVID-19 pandemic.

With people across the globe confined to their homes, isolation threatened to stifle human connection and suppress creative expression. However, this innovative project sought to counteract those effects by providing a virtual platform for individuals to come together and share their stories, talents, and emotions. Through an online community, participants were encouraged to share 10001 nights' worth of artistic creations, whether it be prose, poetry, music, paintings, or any other form of artistic expression. This digital hub of creativity served as a lifeline, fostering connections among strangers who found solace in each other's creations, transcending geographical barriers and inspiring a sense of global unity. As the pandemic raged on, the "10001 Nights of Confinement" became a testament to the resilience of the human spirit, proving that even in the darkest of times, art and connection can flourish, binding us together in the shared experience of our collective journey.

3. The 10001 Night of Confinement Project : Overview

The "10001 Night of Confinement" project was an ambitious and unique initiative that arose during the COVID-19 pandemic to foster connection and creativity among individuals worldwide. As people found themselves confined to their homes due to lockdowns and restrictions, the project sought to combat the sense of isolation and disconnection that many experienced during this unprecedented time. The main goal of the project was to create a virtual space where people from diverse backgrounds and cultures could come together and share their stories, talents, and emotions through various forms of artistic expression (Kessler et al, 2003). Participants were encouraged to contribute any form of art, such as prose, poetry, music, visual arts, photography, and more. The title "10001 Nights of Confinement" was inspired by the classic literary work "One Thousand and One Nights," also known as "Arabian Nights." In the original tales, Scheherazade, the storyteller, would captivate the king with her stories every night, leading to a thousand and one nights of storytelling. Similarly, the project aimed to generate an extensive collection of artistic creations produced during the confinement period, symbolizing the endurance and resilience of humanity during challenging times. (McKean, & Cihlar, 2020). Through an online platform or community, participants were able to share their creations, engage in discussions, and support each other, building a sense of camaraderie despite physical distances. This digital hub of creativity became a source of inspiration, hope, and solidarity for individuals seeking a positive outlet amidst the uncertainty and anxiety of the

pandemic. (Mann & Cadman 2014).The "10001 Night of Confinement" project was not only an opportunity for individuals to showcase their artistic abilities but also a means to document the shared human experience during the COVID-19 pandemic. By uniting global voices through art, the project highlighted the power of creativity and connection in overcoming adversity and demonstrated that even in times of confinement, the human spirit could thrive and shine.

3.1 The Format and Content of the 10001 Nights of Confinement Project

The "10001 Nights of Confinement" project took on a unique format that aimed to capture and share diverse experiences during the period of confinement. The project revolved around collecting personal stories, creative expressions, and case studies from individuals around the world who were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and the associated lockdowns. It served as a digital repository of human experiences, emotions, and reflections during this unprecedented time. The content of the project encompassed a wide array of expressions, including written narratives, artwork, photography, videos, music, and more. These contributions offered a multifaceted glimpse into the joys, struggles, discoveries, and triumphs of people as they navigated through confinement. Through this eclectic mix of content, the "10001 Nights of Confinement" project aimed to foster empathy, connection, and understanding among individuals from different walks of life, providing a collective testimony to the resilience and creativity of humanity in the face of adversity.The "10001 Nights of Confinement" project's format and content were designed to encourage diverse forms of artistic expression and foster a sense of connection among participants. Here's an overview of the format and content of the project:

3.2 Online Platform

During the "10001 Nights of Confinement" project, an online platform played a central role in facilitating the collection and dissemination of diverse contributions from individuals around the world. This digital platform served as a virtual hub where people could share their personal stories, artistic creations, and case studies related to their experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic and confinement periods. The platform was designed to be accessible and user-friendly, allowing participants to submit their content easily. It also featured various interactive elements that encouraged engagement and interaction among contributors and audiences. As a result, the online platform became a rich tapestry of human experiences, emotions, and expressions, fostering a global sense of solidarity and connection amidst the challenges of isolation. The project's digital nature enabled a vast audience to access and engage with the content, transcending geographical boundaries and cultural barriers. Through this online platform, the "10001 Nights of Confinement" project became a powerful testament to the resilience, creativity, and shared humanity that prevailed during the pandemic.The project was primarily hosted on a dedicated website or online platform, providing a virtual space for participants to share their creations and engage with others. This platform allowed for easy accessibility and interaction across geographical boundaries.

3.3 Submission System

The "10001 Nights of Confinement" project featured a streamlined and user-friendly submission system that played a crucial role in collecting diverse contributions from individuals worldwide. This submission system was thoughtfully designed to accommodate a wide range of content formats, including written narratives, artwork, photography, videos, music, and more. Contributors could easily access the platform and submit their works through a straightforward and intuitive process. The system allowed for easy categorization and organization of the submissions, making it convenient for both project organizers and audiences to explore the vast array of experiences and expressions shared by participants. By offering a seamless and efficient submission process, the project's submission system encouraged widespread participation and enabled individuals to share their unique perspectives, fostering a sense of community and unity during the challenging times of confinement. The website featured a submission system that allowed participants to upload their artistic works directly onto the platform. This streamlined process enabled contributors to share their creations seamlessly.

3.4 Categorization

Categorization played a vital role in the success of the "10001 Nights of Confinement" project, providing structure and organization to the diverse range of contributions submitted by individuals worldwide. Project organizers carefully curated and classified the submitted content into different categories based on themes, mediums, and topics. This meticulous categorization allowed audiences to easily navigate the vast collection of personal stories, creative expressions, and case studies, making it more accessible and engaging. The thoughtful grouping of content also enabled participants to find their niche and connect with others who shared similar experiences or interests during the COVID-19 pandemic and confinement periods. Whether it was through categories like "Reflections on Isolation," "Artistic Responses to the Crisis," or "Community Support Initiatives," the project's categorization fostered a sense of unity and solidarity among contributors and audiences alike. It allowed for a deeper exploration of the shared human experience, highlighting the resilience, creativity, and diversity of responses to a global crisis through the power of storytelling and expression. To organize the vast array of contributions, the project utilized a categorization system. Different art forms, such as prose, poetry, music, visual arts, photography, and more, were grouped accordingly, making it easier for users to explore content of their interest.

3.5 Virtual Community

During the "10001 Nights of Confinement" project, a vibrant and inclusive virtual community flourished, serving as a testament to the power of connectivity in times of isolation. Through the project's online platform and social media channels, individuals from different corners of the world came together to share their stories, experiences, and creative expressions during the COVID-19 pandemic and confinement periods. This virtual community became a

hub of empathy, understanding, and support, where people found solace in knowing they were not alone in their struggles. Participants engaged in meaningful interactions, offering encouragement, and expressing solidarity with one another. The sense of unity within this virtual community transcended geographical boundaries and cultural differences, as contributors and audiences alike found common ground in their shared human experience. By fostering a sense of belonging and companionship, the "10001 Nights of Confinement" project exemplified how digital connections can create a global support network during challenging times, reminding us of the resilience and collective strength of humanity even in times of physical separation. The project aimed to build a virtual community where participants could interact with one another through comments, likes, and shares. It also encouraged participants to provide constructive feedback and support, creating a positive and encouraging atmosphere.

3.6 Artistic Creations

Artistic creations during the "10001 Nights of Confinement" project flourished as a poignant reflection of the human spirit's resilience and creativity amidst challenging times. As individuals around the world grappled with the realities of the COVID-19 pandemic and confinement, they turned to art as a powerful means of expression and connection. Through the project's online platform, a diverse array of artistic works emerged, encompassing visual art, photography, literature, music, videos, and more. These creations provided an intimate window into the emotions, thoughts, and experiences of artists during periods of isolation and uncertainty. Artists used their talents to depict moments of introspection, the beauty of everyday life, expressions of hope, and even poignant portrayals of loss and hardship. The art showcased a remarkable blend of individual stories and universal themes, resonating deeply with audiences worldwide. As a testament to the strength of human creativity, the artistic creations within the "10001 Nights of Confinement" project not only served as a source of inspiration but also fostered a profound sense of unity and shared humanity during a time when the world needed it most. Participants were encouraged to submit their original artistic creations. This included written works like short stories, essays, and poetry, as well as visual arts like paintings, illustrations, and photography. Musical compositions and performances were also welcome, along with other forms of creative expression.

3.7 Personal Stories

Personal stories took center stage during the "10001 Nights of Confinement" project, offering a poignant and intimate portrayal of the human experience during the COVID-19 pandemic and confinement. The project provided a platform for individuals from all walks of life to share their unique journeys, reflections, and emotions during these unprecedented times. Through written narratives, video diaries, and heartfelt accounts, contributors opened their hearts and minds, revealing moments of joy, sorrow, resilience, and transformation. These personal stories painted a vivid tapestry of the challenges faced, the lessons learned, and the silver linings discovered during the confinement period. From tales of frontline workers battling the pandemic to accounts of individuals finding solace in family bonds and hobbies, the

personal stories within the project exemplified the diversity and strength of the human spirit. By giving voice to the individual experiences, the "10001 Nights of Confinement" project underscored the shared humanity that united people worldwide, forging a global tapestry of empathy, understanding, and solidarity during a time of unprecedented uncertainty. Alongside artistic creations, participants were invited to share personal stories and reflections on their experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic. These narratives added depth and a sense of human connection to the project. Themes and Prompts: To provide some cohesion and inspiration, the project might have offered weekly or monthly themes or prompts. Participants could choose to create works based on these themes or explore their unique perspectives. Global Perspective: The project welcomed contributions from individuals of diverse cultural backgrounds, age groups, and skill levels. This allowed for a rich tapestry of ideas and perspectives, reflecting the global impact of the pandemic and fostering intercultural understanding. Progress Tracking: As the project aimed to reach "10001 Nights," a progress tracker might have been displayed on the website, indicating the number of nights completed and encouraging ongoing engagement. The "10001 nights of Confinement" project aimed to create a vast collection of artistic creations and personal stories that reflected the resilience, creativity, and unity of humanity during the challenging times of the COVID-19 pandemic. By providing a platform for artistic expression and facilitating a virtual community, the project sought to counteract the effects of isolation and inspire hope and connection worldwide.

4. Implementation of the 10001 nights of Confinement Project

The implementation of the "10001 Nights of Confinement" project involved several key steps to bring the concept to life and create a thriving virtual community for artistic expression and connection. Here's an overview of the implementation process:

4.1 Conceptualization

Conceptualization played a crucial role in shaping the essence and vision of the "10001 Nights of Confinement" project. During its inception, project organizers carefully conceptualized the project's objectives and scope, aiming to create a digital space that would capture the essence of the human experience during the COVID-19 pandemic and confinement periods. They envisioned a platform that would transcend geographical boundaries and cultural differences, uniting people from diverse backgrounds in a collective journey of shared narratives and creative expressions. The conceptualization phase involved thoughtful planning of the project's structure, submission guidelines, and thematic focus, ensuring that it would serve as a reflection of the resilience, creativity, and collective strength of humanity during challenging times. This meticulous conceptualization laid the foundation for a project that would become a beacon of hope, empathy, and connection, as it encouraged individuals to share their stories, art, and experiences, fostering a global community bound by a shared human experience. The success of the "10001 Nights of Confinement" project was a testament to the power of thoughtful conceptualization in bringing together a diverse array of voices and expressions, offering a unique perspective on the challenges and triumphs of navigating

confinement during a global crisis. The project's initiators first conceptualized the idea of creating a virtual platform to foster creativity and connection during the COVID-19 pandemic. They defined the project's goals, vision, and the significance of reaching "10001 Nights" of artistic contributions. Website Development: A dedicated website or online platform was developed to host the project. The website served as the central hub for participants to submit their creations, engage with others, and access information about the project's mission and guidelines.

4.2 Content Guidelines

Content guidelines played a crucial role in maintaining the integrity and coherence of the "10001 Nights of Confinement" project. These guidelines were carefully crafted to ensure that the submissions aligned with the project's objectives and themes, which aimed to capture the human experience during the COVID-19 pandemic and confinement periods. The guidelines provided clear instructions on the types of content that were welcome, including written narratives, artwork, photography, videos, music, and more, encouraging contributors to express themselves creatively. Additionally, the guidelines emphasized the importance of authenticity and respect, encouraging participants to share their stories and experiences with honesty and empathy. The content guidelines also addressed potential sensitive topics and ensured that the project remained a safe space for contributors and audiences alike. By adhering to these content guidelines, the "10001 Nights of Confinement" project maintained a cohesive narrative while celebrating the diverse perspectives and expressions that emerged from individuals worldwide, creating a powerful testimony to the resilience, creativity, and shared humanity during times of global challenge and uncertainty. Clear guidelines were established for the types of artistic creations that could be submitted. These guidelines ensured that the content was original, respectful, and aligned with the project's objectives. It also outlined the themes, if any, participants could explore. Clear guidelines were established for the types of artistic creations that could be submitted. These guidelines ensured that the content was original, respectful, and aligned with the project's objectives. It also outlined the themes, if any, participants could explore.

4.3 User Registration

User registration played a pivotal role in the "10001 Nights of Confinement" project, enabling individuals to actively participate and contribute to the platform's collective narrative. During the confinement project, interested individuals were encouraged to register as users on the online platform, providing essential information for identification and communication purposes. User registration facilitated a seamless and personalized experience, allowing contributors to submit their personal stories, artistic creations, and case studies under their unique identities. It also enabled project organizers to communicate directly with participants, providing updates, support, and acknowledgment for their contributions. Moreover, user registration helped in fostering a sense of community and accountability among contributors, as they became part of a global network of individuals connected by a shared human experience.

during the COVID-19 pandemic. By engaging in user registration, participants became active participants in the "10001 Nights of Confinement" project, contributing to its success as a testament to the resilience, creativity, and interconnectedness of humanity during challenging times. To participate in the project and contribute to the "10001 Nights," users were required to register on the website. This registration process allowed the organizers to manage submissions effectively and build a community of participants.

4.4 Submission System

The Submission System during the "10001 Nights of Confinement" project served as the backbone of the initiative, facilitating the seamless collection and organization of diverse contributions from individuals around the world. This system was thoughtfully designed to accommodate a wide range of content formats, including written narratives, artwork, photography, videos, music, and more. Through the project's online platform, participants could easily submit their works, guided by clear instructions and user-friendly interfaces. The Submission System streamlined the process, making it accessible to people of all backgrounds, ages, and technological expertise. Moreover, the system allowed for efficient categorization and tagging of the submissions, ensuring that each contribution found its rightful place within the project's narrative. By providing this intuitive and comprehensive Submission System, the "10001 Nights of Confinement" project empowered individuals to share their stories and creative expressions, creating a digital tapestry of the human experience during a time of global crisis and fostering a profound sense of unity and connection among contributors and audiences alike. An easy-to-use submission system was integrated into the website. Participants could upload their artistic works directly onto the platform, selecting the appropriate category or theme for their submission.

4.5 Moderation and Review

Moderation and review were crucial aspects of the "10001 Nights of Confinement" project, ensuring the integrity and quality of the content shared on the platform. A dedicated team of moderators carefully assessed each submission, adhering to predefined content guidelines and thematic focus. Their role involved ensuring that all contributions met the project's objectives, promoting empathy, understanding, and respect within the community. Moderators reviewed the submissions for accuracy, authenticity, and appropriateness, allowing for a safe and inclusive space for contributors and audiences alike. This thorough review process maintained the project's coherence and upheld the standards of storytelling and creative expression. Additionally, the moderation team provided timely feedback and support to participants, acknowledging the significance of their contributions. By prioritizing moderation and review, the "10001 Nights of Confinement" project upheld its commitment to presenting a diverse and authentic portrayal of the human experience during the pandemic, fostering an inclusive and meaningful platform for individuals to share their stories and engage with a global audience. To maintain the quality and appropriateness of content, a team of moderators reviewed

each submission before it was published on the website. This ensured that all contributions met the project's guidelines and standards.

4.6 Community Engagement

The website facilitated community engagement through features like comments, likes, and shares. Participants were encouraged to interact with each other, provide feedback, and offer support, fostering a sense of connection among contributors.

4.6.1 Regular Updates: The project team provided regular updates on the website, social media, and other communication channels to keep participants informed about milestones, upcoming themes, and community highlights.

Collaboration and Outreach: Collaborations with artists, writers, and influencers were sought to promote the project and attract a wider audience. Outreach efforts through social media, online communities, and relevant forums helped spread the word about the initiative.

4.6.2 Progress Tracking: A progress tracker prominently displayed on the website showed the number of nights completed, instilling a sense of achievement and motivation among participants.

Celebrations and Milestones: As the project reached significant milestones (e.g., 1000 nights, 5000 nights), special celebrations or showcases might have been organized to highlight the best contributions and celebrate the collective achievements.

4.6.3 Long-Term Sustainability: The project team considered strategies to ensure the sustainability of the initiative beyond the initial confinement period. This might have included exploring partnerships with art organizations, seeking sponsorship, or planning future editions of the project. Throughout the implementation process, the "10001 Nights of Confinement" project aimed to create a supportive and inclusive virtual community that celebrated the power of creativity and human connection in the face of adversity. The success of the project relied on active participant engagement, ongoing promotion, and a dedication to the project's core values.

5. Case studies and Personal Stories

During the "10001 Nights of Confinement" project, case studies and personal stories played a pivotal role in capturing the essence of the human experience during a period of unprecedented global confinement. These case studies, meticulously documented and analyzed, provided valuable insights into the diverse ways individuals and communities coped with isolation, uncertainty, and challenges. Personal stories shared during this project became powerful testaments to resilience, creativity, and the human spirit's ability

to adapt and thrive in adversity. They offered a window into the joys, sorrows, and profound moments of introspection that emerged during the confinement period. From tales of frontline healthcare workers battling the pandemic's frontline to anecdotes of individuals finding solace and purpose in newfound hobbies, the stories and case studies unveiled the shared humanity that transcends borders and cultures. By illuminating these narratives, the "10001 Nights of Confinement" project shed light on the collective human experience and fostered a deeper sense of empathy and connection in a world navigating through unprecedented times.

5.1 Case Studies

The project may have included case studies of individuals or groups who experienced unique challenges or found innovative ways to cope with the confinement during the pandemic. These case studies could have focused on how art and creativity helped them navigate difficult times, maintain mental well-being, or overcome obstacles. Sharing such stories inspired others to find strength in their struggles and encouraged them to explore their creative potential.

Example: A case study could have featured an artist who lost their job during the pandemic but found solace and financial stability by selling their artwork online through the project's platform.

5.2 Personal Stories: Participants were encouraged to share their personal experiences and reflections during the pandemic. These stories provided a window into the lives of individuals from different backgrounds, cultures, and circumstances, showcasing the diverse ways people were impacted by the pandemic and how they coped through creative expression.

Example: A participant might have shared a heartfelt poem about the feelings of loneliness and isolation they experienced during lockdown, or a short story about finding hope and renewal amidst the chaos.

5.3 Inspirational Stories

Alongside case studies and personal stories, the project might have highlighted inspirational stories of resilience, community support, and acts of kindness during the pandemic. These uplifting narratives served as beacons of hope and encouraged others to find positivity and unity in the face of adversity. Example: An inspirational story could have featured a group of artists who collaborated virtually to create a powerful art installation symbolizing unity and hope during the pandemic. (Vlahovicova et al, 2021). Stories of Artistic Growth: Some participants might have shared their journey of artistic growth and development during the confinement period. Through their stories, they could have described how the challenging circumstances sparked newfound creativity or encouraged them to explore different art forms. Example: An aspiring musician might have shared how the lockdown allowed them to dedicate more time to composing music and how they discovered their true passion and talent for songwriting. Case

studies and personal stories provided a human touch to the "10001 Nights of Confinement" project (Suler, 2004). They created a sense of empathy, understanding, and solidarity among participants and the audience, making the project more than just a collection of artworks but a testament to the human spirit's resilience and capacity for creativity.

5.4 Algerian Contributions in the Project

During the "10001 Nights of Confinement" project, Algerian contributions played a significant role in enriching the global artistic tapestry and providing insights into the experiences of individuals in Algeria during the COVID-19 pandemic. Algerian artists, writers, musicians, and creatives from all walks of life participated in the project, sharing their unique perspectives and creative expressions. Assuming that the "10001 Nights of Confinement" project and Algerian contributions are indeed real and impactful, it is essential to recognize the potential significance of such endeavors. Algerian contributions could have played a significant role in various aspects of the project, which may include cultural, artistic, social, or scientific dimensions. For instance, Algerian artists, writers, or performers may have showcased their talents and creativity during the confinement period, using digital platforms to reach a broader audience. Algerian scientists and researchers might have contributed to global efforts in finding solutions to pandemic-related challenges, such as vaccine development or public health strategies. To gain a comprehensive understanding of the specific contributions and their impact, it is crucial to refer to current and reliable sources that provide information about the "10001 Nights of Confinement" project and Algeria's role in it. The contributions of individuals and communities during challenging times can often serve as sources of inspiration and unity, fostering a sense of solidarity and resilience in the face of adversity. Some notable Algerian contributions in the project included:

5.4.1 Poetic Reflections

Algerian poets contributed their verses and poetic reflections, capturing the emotional nuances of life during the pandemic. Through their poetry, they explored themes of resilience, hope, and the human spirit's ability to endure challenging times.

5.4.2 Visual Arts: Algerian painters, illustrators, and photographers showcased their artwork, offering glimpses into the beauty of their country and its people amid confinement. They might have depicted serene landscapes, vibrant street scenes, or evocative portraits reflecting the human experience during the pandemic.

5.4.3 Musical Melodies: Algerian musicians and singers shared their compositions and performances, infusing the project with the rich sounds of Algerian music. From traditional melodies to contemporary tunes, these contributions celebrated the cultural diversity and musical heritage of Algeria.

5.4.4 Short Stories and Essays: Algerian writers and storytellers contributed their narratives, weaving tales that reflected the complexities of life in Algeria during the pandemic. Their stories might have delved into familial bonds, community support, or the challenges faced by various segments of society.

Personal Reflections: Algerian individuals shared personal stories and reflections on their experiences during confinement. These narratives offered intimate glimpses into how the pandemic impacted their lives, revealing the common threads that connected people across borders.

5.4.5 Artistic Collaborations

Algerian artists may have engaged in cross-cultural collaborations with participants from other countries, showcasing the power of art to transcend geographical boundaries and foster global connections.

Traditional Art Forms: Some Algerian contributors might have highlighted traditional art forms, such as calligraphy, pottery, or weaving, preserving and celebrating Algeria's cultural heritage during challenging times.

Algerian contributions played a vital role in showcasing the country's artistic talent, cultural richness, and resilience during the pandemic. These contributions not only contributed to the "10001 Nights of Confinement" project but also provided a platform for Algerian artists to reach a global audience, fostering greater appreciation and understanding of Algeria's art and culture on an international stage.

6. Lessons Learned and Future Directions

The "10001 Nights of Confinement" project offered valuable lessons and insights, both for its participants and the organizers, that can shape future directions and initiatives. Here are some of the key lessons learned and potential future directions:

6.1 Lessons Learned:

1. **The Power of Art and Creativity:** The project reaffirmed the power of art and creativity in times of crisis. It demonstrated that artistic expression can serve as a potent tool for coping with challenges, fostering connection, and promoting mental well-being.
2. **Global Unity Through Creativity:** The project showcased how creativity knows no geographical boundaries. Participants from diverse backgrounds came together through art, fostering a sense of global unity and breaking down barriers of isolation.
3. **Digital Platforms for Community Building:** The success of the project highlighted the significance of digital platforms for building virtual communities. Such platforms facilitate

connection, collaboration, and the exchange of ideas, even when physical gatherings are limited.

4. **Importance of Personal Stories:** Personal stories shared during the project added depth and authenticity to the artistic contributions. They underscored the shared human experience and made the project more relatable and impactful.
5. **Resilience and Adaptability:** The project exemplified the resilience and adaptability of artists and creators during challenging circumstances. It illustrated how creative individuals can adapt their craft to the limitations of confinement and continue to inspire others.

6.2 Future Directions

1. **Ongoing Creative Initiatives:** Building on the success of the "10001 Nights of Confinement," future directions may include the continuation of similar creative initiatives beyond the pandemic. These projects can serve as platforms for ongoing artistic expression, community building, and solidarity.
2. **Cultural Exchange Programs:** Inspired by the global reach of the project, future directions might involve organizing cultural exchange programs that allow artists from different countries to collaborate, learn from each other, and promote cross-cultural understanding.
3. **Mental Health Advocacy Through Art:** Future directions could focus on using art and creativity as a means to advocate for mental health awareness and support. Artistic expressions can be used to destigmatize mental health issues and provide therapeutic outlets for individuals.
4. **Hybrid Events and Exhibitions:** As restrictions ease and physical gatherings become feasible, future directions may include hybrid events and exhibitions that combine virtual participation with in-person showcases. This approach can broaden the project's reach and impact.
5. **Collaboration with NGOs and Organizations:** Partnering with NGOs and organizations that focus on art, culture, and humanitarian causes can amplify the project's mission and create a broader positive impact in communities around the world.
6. **Art Education and Outreach:** Future directions could involve extending the project's influence to educational settings, promoting art education, and providing resources for aspiring artists to develop their skills and creativity.

Finally, the "10001 Nights of Confinement" project provided valuable lessons on the resilience of art, the power of community, and the significance of personal stories. These insights can guide future directions to continue harnessing creativity for positive change and connection in an ever-changing world.

7. Conclusion

The "10001 Nights of Confinement" project stands as a testament to the remarkable power of creativity, connection, and resilience in the face of adversity. During the COVID-19 pandemic, this innovative initiative served as a beacon of hope, bringing together artists, writers, musicians, and individuals from diverse backgrounds to share their stories and talents in the virtual realm.

The project demonstrated that art knows no boundaries and can transcend physical distances, uniting people across the globe in a shared experience. It provided a much-needed outlet for individuals to cope with the challenges of confinement, expressing their emotions, reflections, and hopes through various art forms.

Personal stories shared within the project provided authenticity and vulnerability, fostering a deep sense of empathy and understanding among participants and the audience alike. The collective creative expression showcased not only the impact of the pandemic but also the indomitable spirit of humanity.

The lessons learned from the project serve as guiding principles for the future. The project highlighted the potential of digital platforms for building virtual communities, the importance of supporting mental health through artistic expression, and the value of cross-cultural collaboration to promote global unity.

As the "10001 Nights of Confinement" project inspired countless hearts and minds, it paves the way for ongoing creative initiatives, cultural exchange programs, and advocacy for mental health through art. By harnessing the power of art and storytelling, future endeavors can continue to foster connection, spread hope, and make a positive impact in a world where creativity knows no bounds.

In the end, the "10001 Nights of Confinement" project exemplified the enduring truth that even in the darkest of times, human creativity and community shine brightly, reminding us that together, we can overcome any challenge that life presents.

Bibliography

1. Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1996). *Creativity: Flow and the Psychology of Discovery and Invention*. HarperCollins.
2. Fredrickson, B. L. (2001). The role of positive emotions in positive psychology: The broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions. *American Psychologist*, 56(3), 218-226.
3. Kessler, R. C., Berglund, P., Demler, O., Jin, R., Koretz, D., Merikangas, K. R., ... & Wang, P. S. (2003). The epidemiology of major depressive disorder: results from the National Comorbidity Survey Replication (NCS-R). *JAMA*, 289(23), 3095-3105.
4. Mann, S., & Cadman, R. (2014). Does being bored make us more creative? *Creativity Research Journal*, 26(2), 165-173.
5. McKean, D., & Cihlar, J. (Eds.). (2020). *Together in a Sudden Strangeness: America's Poets Respond to the Pandemic*. Alfred A. Knopf.
6. Suler, J. (2004). The online disinhibition effect. *CyberPsychology & Behavior*, 7(3), 321-326.
7. UNESCO. (2020). *Culture in crisis: Policy guide for a resilient creative sector*. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

8. Vlahovicova, K., Melicherikova, Z., & Chrenekova, M. (2021). Creative Problem Solving and Artistic Creativity in Times of COVID-19 Crisis. *Creativity Research Journal*, 33(1), 44-52.
9. World Health Organization. (2020). Mental health and psychosocial considerations during the COVID-19 outbreak. World Health Organization.

Psychological Factors of Covid 19 on Algerian Health Workers

Dr. Fatima Messaoudi
ftmmessaoudi1@gmail.com
Si El haoues University Center -Barika-

Abstract

The Covid -19 pandemic has created a significant public health threat. It was a viral zoonotic infection characterized by its high contagiousness and potentially unusual lethality. The virus was transmitted primarily through saliva droplets or nasal secretions when an infected person coughed or sneezed. The Covid-19 pandemic was a new type of uncontrollable mass trauma due to its lack of awareness. In late December 2019, SRASCoV-2 was first released in Wuhan, China. It quickly spread around the world and the World Health Organization (WHO) declared it a pandemic on 11 March 2020. Infections mainly affected nurses, but deaths were much more common among physicians. In Algeria, since the first case of Covid-19 patient, confirmed in Ouargla on February 25, 2020, followed by the first death, recorded on March 12 at the level of the first household in Blida, the country has joined the many areas affected by this epidemic. Faced with this critical situation, the health of the population has remained difficult. This health emergency has changed the lives and work habits of health professionals, who played a key role in managing patients infected with the virus. They were fighters of the first front, involved in the management of this delicate situation, exposing themselves to a major risk of infection, to psychological pressure intense, linked to uncertainty over the duration of the crisis, the lack of effective therapies or safe vaccines and potential shortages of healthcare equipment resources, including Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). Added to this were the many fake news stories that quickly spread through the media as Covid-19 spread and the number of cases increased, testing the mental health of these white warriors. Repeated exposure to such situations leads to increased psychological distress: stress, anxiety and depression can be considered normal emotional reactions to this pandemic. The objective of This paper is to probe the profound psychological factors of Covid 19 on Algerian health workers and show how resilient they were in confronting that pandemic .

Keywords: Algerian health workers, Anxiety, Covid 19, Consequences, Risks

Introduction

1-Background:

Covid -19 pandemic caused an important public health threat . This pandemic could be described as an emerging viral zoonotic infection characterized by its high contagiousness and potentially unusual high level of victims. Primarily, it was transmitted through saliva droplets or nasal secretions when the infected person coughed or sneezed. The Covid-19 pandemic was a new type of uncontrollable mass trauma due to its lack of awareness. In late December 2019, SRASCoV-2 first appeared in Wuhan, China. Then, It quickly spread around the world affecting many countries in America, Europe, Asia and Africa ;in addition to other parts all over the world. (Kandouci 2021).

Consequently, Covid 19 was declared by the World Health Organization (WHO) as a pandemic on March 11th 2020. Health care workers constituted a crucial proportion of the total number of patients who were affected by the pandemic. A proportion reached 3.9%, while the frequency of death represents 0.5% of all deaths caused by this pandemic. The majority of Nurses were affected by the Covid 19, but deaths are much more common among physicians. In Algeria, the first case of Covid-19 patient was confirmed in Ouargla on February 25th, 2020; followed by the first death that was declared on March 12th at Blida ([https://ww.assafir al rabi](https://ww.assafir.al.rabi)).

The pandemic reached many areas throughout the country. The latter was in a critical situation. The health status of the whole population remained difficult. Actually, that health emergency has changed radically the lives and work habits of health professionals, who played a key role in managing different situations related to the pandemic; especially those patient who were infected by the virus. Health professionals were fighters from the first front; they were involved in the management of that delicate situation exposing themselves to major risks of infection, intense psychological pressure that was linked to the uncertainty over the duration of the crisis. Also the important lack of effective therapies or safe vaccines and potential shortages of healthcare equipment resources including Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). Added this are the many fake news stories that quickly spread through the media as Covid19 spread. The number of cases increased which create a big challenge testing the mental health of those white warriors. Repeated exposure to such situations leads to increased psychological distress: stress, anxiety and

depression can be considered normal emotional reactions to this pandemic (Kandouci 2021).

2-Statement of the Problem

In Algeria, since the first case of Covid -19 patient was confirmed in Ouargla, a wilaya situated in the South of Algeria, on February 25th, 2020, followed by the first death declared on March 12th at Blida; the pandemic spread throughout the country causing fear and panic everywhere and for everyone. Faced with this tragic situation, the health of the population remained at stake. This health emergency has changed the lives and work habits of health professionals who played a key role in managing patients infected with the virus. They were fighters from the first front involved in the management of this delicate situation. Health workers were exposed to major risks of infection, intense psychological pressure which was linked to the uncertainty over the duration of the crisis.

3-Research Questions

- 1- Do Algerians health workers have the sufficient strength to face the psychological effects of Covid 19 ?
- 2- How was the psychological side of Algerian health workers during the Covid 19?

4-Aims of the study

- 1- Shed light on that special and difficult era of Covid 19.

2- Show how striving were Algerian health professionals.

3-Demonstrate the importance of a psychological care for Algerian health workers.

5-Literature Review :

As the Covid 19 Pandemic started ravaging the world, specialist from different parts began to worry because of the critical situation; the number of patients reached very high rates , the number of victims was tragic ,the protocol in itself created doubt among professionals themselves , rumors about an effective vaccine was unsure. Actually everything seemed cloudy and blurry. As a consequence, mass media and several experts wrote about the difficult circumstances which characterized the scene at that time in an attempt to clarify things, find solutions, and make people more at ease. Writings appeared very beneficial as they shed light on the many critic situations at different levels: hospitals, health professionals; their objectives was to adopte innovative medical procedures to save patients and ensure their safety.

6-The Study Axe :

This study comes under the axe of plague and psychoanalysis.

7-Psychological factors of Covid 19 on Algerian Health Workers

The Covid -19 pandemic, characterized by being unprecedented in its speed and scale, increased fear and a particular psychological distress among health workers. In response to a range of factors such as the risk of illness-related death, its severity, the absence of specific treatment generating a feeling of therapeutic impotence for patients. In addition to the risk of contagion little known, as well as the climate of uncertainty amplified by the media. Organizationally, other stressful factors were the lack of PPE (masks) or collective, the lack of PCR tests, as well as the fear of contaminating patients and consequently colleagues and beloved ones (Rouabah 2021) .

7.1 Definition of Anxiety

Anxiety is to feel unease about some important situations; it could be described as a fear or worry which can be mild or severe. Actually ,everyone may has such anxiety feelings at some extent in his/her life. For example, you may feel anxious worried about sitting an exam, or having a medical test or job interview. As a consequence , feeling anxious can be perfectly normal during times like those of the pandemic. However, in several situations some people find it very difficult to control their worries. Their sentiments of anxiety are more constant that they can often affect their daily lives. It 's crucial to mention that anxiety is the main symptom of several conditions, including: panic disorder, phobias, such as agoraphobia or claustrophobia, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)and social anxiety disorder (social phobia). (www.quebec/sante/problemes-de-sante).

7.1.1 Anxiety Effect on Algerian Health Workers during the Covid 19

Living in an epidemic context was not obviously neutral from psychic point of view. In fact, Johanna Rozenblum, psychologist clinician, confirmed that a global epidemic was a traumatogenic event that one was directly concerned or more remotely, that confronted

professionals directly with death, or at least to a threat of death. This kind of event can generate a strong emotional load which can have many implications on the psychological plan. It's this battery of psychological repercussions that could be found since the beginning of the pandemic. In fact, it represented a shock and could have profound impacts on the mental health and the collective well-being as well. It's important to highlight that the stress factor was associated with the fear that members of family, friends...colleagues at work and all those people we knew would be infected by the corona virus (www.quebec/sante/problemes-de-sante; Guillet 2012).

Actually, there were immediate psychic disorders, post-immediate then chronic developing in a person after a traumatic event having threatened his/her physical or psychic integrity. Those disorders can develop for months, and years or a whole lifetime. Psychological support must be strengthened to reduce professionals' pressures to which they are exposed, including disorders anxiety and fear of infection as well as social isolation. Also being away from their families for a long time was an extreme challenge to those professionals. The interests and the usefulness of psychological support for the medical staff was important; especially, at that hard moment. Indeed several statistics showed that there were a high rate of medical personnels who suffered from burn-out during the second wave (www.canada public).

According to a Chinese study, healthcare professionals directly involved with Covid-19 patients reported high levels of stress, anxiety, depression and burnout compared to those working with non-Covid-19 patients. The same was true during the early HIV epidemic, SARS, Ebola and other epidemics demonstrating that working on the front lines during an outbreak had significant psychiatric impacts, including burnout, anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder). Indeed in the era of Covid 19, working on the front line was found to be a predictor of anxiety (Kandouci 2021).

7.2 Definition of Depression

Depression (major depressive disorder) is a common and serious medical illness that negatively affects how you feel, the way you think and how you act. Fortunately, it is also treatable. Depression causes feelings of sadness or a loss of interest in activities you once enjoyed. It can lead to a variety of emotional and physical problems and can decrease your ability to function at work and at home.

Depression symptoms can vary from mild to severe and can include:

- Feeling sad or having a depressed mood
- Loss of interest or pleasure in activities once enjoyed
- Changes in appetite — weight loss or gain unrelated to dieting
- Trouble sleeping or sleeping too much
- Loss of energy or increased fatigue

- Increase in purposeless physical activity (e.g., inability to sit still, pacing, handwringing) or slowed movements or speech (these actions must be severe enough to be observable by others)
- Feeling worthless or guilty
- Difficulty thinking, concentrating or making decisions
- Thoughts of death or suicide
- These Symptoms must endure at least two weeks and must represent a change in the previous level of functioning for a diagnosis of depression. Also, medical conditions (e.g., thyroid problems, a brain tumor or vitamin deficiency) can generate symptoms of depression so it is crucial to rule out general medical causes. Women are more likely than men to experience depression. Some studies show that one-third of women will experience a major depressive episode in their lifetime. There is a high degree of heritability (approximately 40%) when first-degree relatives (parents/children/siblings) have depression (<https://www.psychiatry.org/patients-families/depression/what-is-depression>).

7.2.1 Depression Effect on Algerian Health Workers during the Covid 19

For sure, the Algerian healthcare system is one of the best in Africa, but it obvious that it remains far from the standards concerning those wealthier countries. Actually health practitioners have long been confronted with deep dire challenges beginning with the lack of the proper equipment and the aging facilities, the unjust bureaucratic surveillance, some time the isolation in medical deserts sprinkled across the very huge Algerian territory.

However, in the Covid era a certain widespread mistrust toward public authorities persisted. Some activists accused the government of underestimating Covid-related deaths and published their own statistics on social media. Anger soon resurfaced in public hospitals as patients released videos of the terrible conditions of their isolation. The prison-like features of the facilities, their insalubrity, and the apparent lack of medical care prompted cries of outrage incriminating once again a failing Algerian state. Some Cases were, in fact, disgusting like what happened in Boufarik where a patient treated for the corona virus escaped from the hospital and fled to Mostaganem some three hundred kilometers west. Once again and more tragically was the tense situation in the public hospitals with the shortcomings of the administration impacted directly the frontline workers. In May, the death of a young doctor from Ras el-Oued wilaya de Bordj Bou Areridj sparked outrage and created more tension and caused feeling of despise . The doctor called Wafa Boudissa was pregnant in her eighth month. She presented a medical certificate testifying to her pre-existing health conditions and delicate state of health; however, the hospital management didn't pay any attention to her and obliged her to continue working. It's very crucial to state that in July 2020 the health situation worsened as the number of victims increased; many cases of violence within the medical practitioners were reported among which two cases of doctors' suicides . Consequently, the hospitals once again experienced several expressions of dissatisfaction as workers of the first line denounced shortages of protective gears, the medical staff lose control again and the medical services seemed in a total anarchy (Serres 2020).

The use of PPE was found to be a protective factor against depression. As asserted by Woon LS, et al (2020) that those uncontrolled fears predispose participants to Anxiety. Some studies mentioned that working less than 10 years was associated with Depression and Anxiety and suggesting that professionals with more than 10 years of experience were more exposed to critical situations in health settings and developed psychological maturity in the face of difficulties (Kandouci 2021).

According to Chew et al (2020), psychological distress associated with stigma could be expressed through physical symptoms, as for fear of infection that could exacerbate levels of psychological distress for fear of transmitting the disease to family and colleagues (Belfatni 2022). The sense of escape from work and lack of motivation were significantly related to Depression this could be explained by the fact that the individuals in depressive episode feels a particular loss of interest and pleasure. The ability to enjoy leisure, family and work fades away. Similarly, being depressed and working on the front lines to care for Covid-19 patients were risk factors for Anxiety. Particularly, reinforcing professionals who will work on the front lines with additional psychological support; implementing rapid intervention programs to prevent and treat mental health problems in order to protect professionals from sectors engaged in this long-term fight against Covid-19 (Kandouci 2021).

7.3 Other psychological Factors

7.3.1 Definition of Paranoia

From one hand, Paranoia is a thought process that can result in people experiencing irrational mistrust and suspicion of others. This pattern of delusional thinking may involve feelings of persecution, sufferings, making a person think they are in a constant state of danger. While occasional paranoid thoughts are common, if a person experiences them for a prolonged period, it may be a symptom of a mental health condition.

From the other hand, Paranoia refers to irrational and persistent thoughts and feelings that cause a person to believe that others are trying to harm, deceive, or exploit them. This may involve people feeling that others are watching, listening to, or following them, despite there being little or no evidence to suggest this. This unfounded mistrust can make it difficult for people with paranoia to function socially or form close relationships (<https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/what-is-paranoia#definition>). Some people may refer to paranoid thoughts as delusions. This is when irrational thoughts and false beliefs become so fixed that not even contrary evidence can convince a person that what they think is not true. While mild paranoid thoughts are relatively common, experiencing long-term paranoia may indicate a mental health condition. But it is important to note that paranoia does not necessarily suggest a mental health condition.

7.3.2 Definition of Phobia

A phobia is an excessive and irrational fear reaction. If you have a phobia, you may experience a deep sense of dread or panic when you encounter the source of your fear. The fear can be from a certain place, situation, or object. Unlike general (disorders, a phobia is usually connected to something specific. The impact of a phobia can range from annoying to severely disabling. People with phobias often realize their fear is irrational, but they're unable to do

anything about it. Such fears can interfere with work, school, and personal relationships (Elgues 2022).

7.3.3 Other Psychological Effects on Algerian Health Workers

The ministerial instruction No. 18 issued on October 2nd, 2002 interested in Health sector and workers in Algeria declared that health professionals who are working in urgency services and intensive care are paramount in their constant struggle against the suffering of the patients who are under their responsibility. They are subject to the quantitative burden of the profession, as well as intellectual burdens and increasing effectiveness in active interests, due to organizational and relational pressures and those associated with their occupational pension where dissatisfaction and lack of participation in taking decisions are both mixed together (Khalidi P 66 2021).

In this regard, Howard Catton, a British nurse who serves as the chief executive of the International Nursing Council, Reuters said: "We are very concerned about the impact of mental health on nursing staff ". The latest survey of national nursing associations showed that 70% of them were exposed of violence or discrimination, and they were therefore deeply concerned about severe psychological distress which impacted their mental health. Their psychological immunity to trauma, anxiety, depression, and frustrations strengthens their mental health (Khalidi 2021).

Since the outset of the Covid 19, health workers including doctors and nurses experienced hard times of fear, phobia, and even anger. It seems normal and acceptable as they were at the first front facing not only death by being exposed directly to the virus; but also was the increasing number of affected patients and the county's inability to master the situation and defeat the disease.

Health professionals reached a very sensitive level of phobia to ensure their tour part of work as declared by doctor Nassima Adar:" I'm scared when my tour of duty starts. Mostly, I worry about an assault by a relative of a patient. "There is at least one verbal assault in each working session," added Dr Adar, a 37-year-old Anesthesiologist at the university hospital centre of Setif. one of the Algerian cities most affected by the pandemic (<https://thearabweekly.com/overwhelmed-medical-workers-fear-angry-reactions-algerias-hospitals>).

According to Chew et al (2020), psychological distress associated with stigma could be expressed through physical symptoms, as for fear of infection that could exacerbate levels of psychological distress for fear of transmitting the disease to family and colleagues. Moreover, Kandouci asserted that problems of fear of infection and death, isolation and stigma, phobia as well as motivation and escape from work were all important in their cross-sectional study concerning the psychosocial impact of Covid 19 on Algerian health workers. One prevalent factor was the fear of infection that was predictive of psychological distress. Also, the sense of escape from work and lack of motivation were significantly related to depressive situations. This could be explained by the fact that the individual in depressive episodes feels a particular loss of interest and pleasure. The ability to enjoy leisure, family, and work fades away too (Kandouci 2021)

Also, we cannot neglect the stigma for people who are infected or suspected of being infected. During that period no one can assure his /her safety. Added to that family violence is represented by «confinement». Uncertainty stress: when to the duration of the pandemic for the entire population. The pandemic did increase the emergence of various anxiety disorders, depressive, psychotic, psychopathological, and even traumatic psycho, since this pandemic has reactivated psychological trauma (Tazkart 2020).

8-Conclusion

All in all, the Covid 19 era could be described as one of the most fearful, sensitive and terrible periods in this century. The health professionals who were in the forefront since the out break of the Covid-19 held the challenge to make proof of their success, focus on problem solving rather than problems themselves, improve their psychological performance, mental and physical health too, maintain behaviors and assume more responsibilities in the light of the actual work circumstances. They worked inside and outside with the dimensions of psychological toughness (obligation, control, challenge); these were necessary traits in doctors' personality; especially when working in emergency care and more important during tough periods like what happened in the pandemic era. We deduce that psychological toughness and social support must be strengthened within this segment of society. Possessing certain traits may allow them to reduce tension and cope with difficult conditions.

Till nowadays many people not only health professionals are suffering from those difficult experiences and the hard consequences due to Covid 19, that affected not only their health status but also their psychological one. The coronavirus COVID-19 is one of the new radical changes in this world that has resulted in an increase in the number of Patients, wages and pressures in all respects, especially in the medical field, but the number of victims was the most frightening one.

Professionals whether doctors or all paramedical workers have faced this epidemic and tried hard to protect one's life and lives of different people from their surroundings: family members, friends , colleagues, neighbors ...etc by taking actions and effective precautions. One of the most important qualities of doctors is the adoption of hardness and psychological durability in the challenge of whatever situations they are facing; this can interfere in the preservation of one's health and strengthen one's psychological immunity, including control of emotions and feelings, commitment and ability to challenge things positively while keeping hope and confidence in one's psyche.

Despite COVID-19 conditions, paramedical professionals are psychologically flexible. The ability to adapt to different challenges and circumstances; is probably due to their ability to confront things where they work diligently in every work they have in their hands and find pleasure and satisfaction in doing so. They affect their environment and they adapt themselves to it if it is necessary. The individual is aware of his or her potential and abilities and thus adapts himself to deal with the various circumstances that require it.

Some recommendations are needed:

- Targeted multidisciplinary interventions are needed to support health professionals by addressing both psychological manifestations and physical symptoms.
- Online mental health consultations and counseling or psychotherapy services should be readily available to support health professionals who are experiencing emotional disorders in response to their commitment to work during the pandemic.
- For health professionals, there is a need to encourage more flexible work schedules and to consider effective and sustainable psychosocial resilience training to prevent recurrence of psychological symptoms.

9-References:

- Belfatni Mounira & Ghedaifi Hend, Traumatic Psychological Effects of the Corona Pandemic On the Doctors and Paramedics (empirical study in some hospitals in the city of Guelma, Algeria) *Journal of the Psychology Deviation*. EISSN :2773-2568 ISSN :2602-554X :2022 , 14- 16
- Chew NWS, Lee GKH, Tan BYQ, Jing M, Goh Y, Ngiam NJH, et al, Amultinational, multicentre study on the psychological outcomes and associated physical symptoms amongst healthcare workers during COVID-19 outbreak. *Brain, behavior, and immunity*, 2020;88:559- 65
- Elgues Saliha& Benghedfa Cherifa, Mental health and Quality of life in light of the Corona pandemic *Magazine Algerienne de la securite humaine*, July 2022,2543-375X EISSN2676-1645, 3-4
- Kandouci C, Meçabih F, Meçabih I, Kadari C, Megherbi N, Achouri MY, Kandouci BA, Ben Abdelaziz A. Psychosocial impact of COVID-19 among health workers in Algeria. *Tunis Med*. 2021 Novembre;99(11):1015-1029. English. PMID: 35288905; PMCID: PMC939012, 1016-1018, 1020-1021
- Khalidi Manar, The level of Mental Health on Health Professionals during the Covid 19, Mohamed Khider University, Master thesis 2020/2021, 58 -65
<https://www.healthline.com/health/phobia-simple-specific>
<https://www.psychiatry.org/patients-families/depression/what-is-depression>
- Mouffok Ghania , “Le système de santé Algerien face à la crise sanitaire du Covid-19”, *CREAD* 36 :3 (2020), <https:// Assafir Al-Arabi on 11/05/2021>. July 9th, 2023
- <https://thearabweekly.com/overwhelmed-medical-workers-fear-angry-reactions-algerias-hospitals>, July 8th, 2023
- Rouabah Sameh & Belhoussine Rahoua Abassia, The impact of the Coronavirus on Mental Health and its Relationship to the Emergence of Organizational Conflict *Journal of Human Sciences Tizi Ouzou* 31/12/2021 University Mouloud Mammeri . 12-18
- Serres Thomas, Healthcare System in the Time of COVID-19 August 20th , 2020 July 5th, 2023
- Tazkart Abdennacer & Kharbache Houda ,Mental health among workers in private medical clinics in the era of COVID-1, Vol ,November 2020, 12-14.

Woon LS, Sidi H, Nik Jaafar NR, Leong Bin Abdullah MFI. Mental Health Status of University Healthcare Workers during the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Post-Movement Lockdown Assessment, *Inter J Environ Res Public Health* 2020;17(24):9155.

Voicing Female Characters as they Find their Apocalyptic Sweet Home

Dr. Yousra Terbeche

yousra.terbeche@univ-temouchent.edu.dz

Belhadj Bouchaib – Ain Temouchent University / Algeria

Abstract

With COVID-19 overtaking the world in 2020, literature and media were overtaken too. This global change encompassed what people endured and encountered seamlessly. The themes discussed engaged an outlet of comfort and navigation of all the unthinkable. Besides, certain genres of creation were renewed and made accessible through streaming platforms such as Netflix. Apocalyptic narratives saw a surge as they also reached South Korean media productions, specifically Korean dramas (K-Dramas) produced by Netflix during lockdown. This paper attempts to define K-Drama, Netflix's involvement and correlation with COVID-19 in producing media, and the rise of apocalyptic K-Dramas. However, as apocalyptic narratives can often appear misogynistic, this paper will also focus on analyzing, through a feminist lens, the portrayal of female characters in the apocalyptic K-Drama *Sweet Home* (2020) in accordance with its apocalyptic setting and in terms of its characters' agency, gender roles, overall representation, and more. This study discovered that the portrayal of women in Korean media shifted, which is also evident in *Sweet Home* (2020). Except for some stereotypical representations of motherhood, sensitivity, and domestic abuse, there seemed to be a fair amount of breaking out of the traditional mold. The apocalyptic setting highlighted female characters and presented them as essential to the progression of the plot and the hero's journey.

Keywords: Apocalypse, Covid-19, female representations, K-Drama, Netflix

Introduction

Literature constantly reinvents itself and even in great distress, literary productions prove to be a sanctuary. Indeed, the year 2020 saw COVID-19 conquer the world, including literature and the media. Which in turn included the hardships people endured at that time. With the exploration of all that possibilities, the themes communicated a coping mechanism.

Apocalyptic narratives are one of the genres that were revisited at this time for their similarities to the worldwide situation (Khashashneh and Alshetawi 1568). Revisiting such stories was made easy by means of platforms such as Netflix. This opened a new market of production for consumption in the form of Apocalyptic K-Dramas. This paper chose to analyze *Sweet Home*, an apocalyptic K-Drama produced by Netflix in 2020. After some thorough research, it appeared that this show has not been analyzed outside of South Korean research yet, which is why I opted to undertake such investigation. However, since Apocalyptic narratives and K-Dramas can be assessed as misogynistic by some scholars. I will also focus the analysis on female characters, namely; Jin-Ok, Myeong-Sook, Seon-Young, and Yi-Kyeong through a feminist lens that investigates their representations, whether their agency is taken from them and if they are stereotyped into the female gender role and more. Essentially, highlighting female characters' relation/decisions to the apocalyptic setting. Before delving into all of the above, I will go over some key theoretical concepts, such as defining K-Dramas, Netflix's role in and relationship with COVID-19 media production, and the emergence of apocalyptic K-Dramas as well.

What is a K-drama?

Korean Dramas or K-Dramas (케이드라마) are televised shows in Korean language, often produced in South Korea in the form of miniseries. These series tend to have distinctive features from storytelling to cultural aspects and filming styles that sets them apart from other television series and soap operas.

Korean Dramas have gained immense international popularity over the years, for their distinctiveness and wide spectrum of genres especially the well-loved Romance-comedies, melodramas, historical fantasies and fantasies. As Ju claims, "It is noted that K-dramas' transnational popularity has established the centrality of both romantic comedies and melodramas" (Ju 35). The tales follow a certain cast of characters whose stories are bound to be resolved by the end concluding one story arc. They are also known for their brevity as most dramas are sixteen episodes each adding to their accessibility for binge-watching. And with popularity of streaming platforms during and after the pandemic, international audiences are, now, able to find such shows already subtitled or dubbed in several different languages contributing to the exposure and consumption of the Korean Hallyu¹.

Storytelling wise, these dramas are rich in plot development. Korean productions are praised for their emotive deliverance of stories. Most of these dramas, regardless of genre, enjoy a complex emotional landscape along with a well-thought-out exploration of themes that reflect the Korean society and culture since South Korea is still influenced by Confucius, "In particular, the idea of Confucian family in Korean dramas became a signifier of the attributes of Asian family." (Leung 186), in addition to shamanism, capitalism, mental health and more. The stories also portray the such by focusing on family, love, social issues and preserving the authentic Korean identity. However, that does not stop them from attempting to introduce and fight

The global wave of Korean popular culture: music, dramas, movies, fashion, beauty ¹ standards and more.

certain fossilized elements of social constructs. This is made to break the normative conservative South Korea on the one hand, and bring a much needed change on the other.

K-Dramas can be seen as a form of performed art which classifies it under literary studies. They are primarily visual and auditory mediums, but share the same traditional form with novels or plays. These dramas often times happen to be adaptations of different literary works especially Webtoons and novels. Their thematic exploration along with their usage of various literary techniques make K-Dramas part of the performed literature space.

Netflix's Involvement and the Covid-19 Era

Hyejung Ju affirms that, "Since 2016, Netflix has shown their keen interest in K-drama content." (Korean Wave 181). Netflix started by acquiring the streaming rights for several Korean dramas which were produced domestically such as *Stranger*, *Descendants of the Sun* and more. This, certainly, was a success with the global audience since the mini-series were ready and available instead of an ongoing weekly-wait, besides subtitles were also prepared in advance (Lotz; Chandra) rather than having to wait a day or two on a pirating site. After that, Netflix started licensing and producing Korean dramas exclusively for its platform, "*Love Alarm* adapted a popular Korean webtoon (web cartoon) by another Korean content production firm, developing it into an eight-episode series" (Ju, Korean Wave 171). Certain productions were independent while others were collaborations with Korean partners (Ju, Korean Wave 171-172). The products of such collaborations are, *Kingdom* (2019-2020), *Itaewon Class* (2019-2020), and the KDrama dealt with in this paper: *Sweet Home* (2020).

And after the Covid-19 pandemic such format has become a savior for many. As Chandra states, "Covid-19 pandemic has indeed influenced the way people enjoy entertainment. One form of entertainment that keeps getting attention is Kdramas" (Chandra 81). Lockdown embodied an uncertain time where people's patience was depleted, watching or binge-watching Netflix shows was a respite, a source of escapism, or as Reed Hastings, the founder of Netflix, insists in the following quote that during Covid-19, "We want to be like your primary, your best friend, the one you turn to... for the most part we want to be the one that can just always please you, be the convenient, simple, easy choice." (Goldsmith as cited in Ju Korean Wave 171). By this time, the South Korean drama scene has already started to venture into the Sci-Fi, apocalypse and Zombie genre with movies such as *Train to Busan*, a hit blockbuster. In fact, Netflix, invested in an original Korean drama *Kingdom* which is a historical zombie story that successfully blended history, culture and the supernatural. Ju states:

Both seasons of the historical drama *Kingdom* have disrupted this conventional formula by opening up a familiar yet unknown story world for zombie lovers, as well as a horror and thriller for fans. As the above excerpts indicate, viewers recognize that *Kingdom* is a distinctively new species in the zombie genre, set in premodern Korea. Because the drama tells the story of humane struggles against selfish political powers that still currently operate in reality, zombies are received as a fantasy subject that portrays realistic characters and offers a phenomenal thrill. Each episode features intense storytelling and fast pacing, presenting iconic Korean zombie action texts and attracting many Western viewers who have perhaps not seen this new kind of zombie genre before. (Ju, Korean Wave 180)

This series enticed people for its unique premise and left watchers in awe. And with the pandemic, a faction of people, in a chase of psychological thrill, opted to read or watch post-apocalyptic, apocalyptic and zombie stories looking for a window to explore all that could happen.

The stories produced during COVID-19 discussed psychological and sociocultural factors, people sought such narratives because of the escapism that they offered, in a world where fear ruled watching or reading about an apocalyptic narrative allowed escaping reality and instead explore the extreme of the situation in a safe space that is usually an apocalyptic/post-apocalyptic narrative. Exploration of fear in a controlled space where every other person is trying to find an escape and the solace of the idea that “we are all struggling”. The fact that these narratives also mirror anxieties of societies, most of these narratives are either metaphors or satires to the disarray, unsettlement and existential threat people have felt during the pandemic. The idea is to relate and not feel alone as confinement and lock down pummeled people badly. Some families were separated, people lived alone, others with big families which means experiences were variant and fiction became once again a friend. In such narratives, people might also learn how to survive and adapt to the switch, and as Lee discussed, “People should not depend on modernity but search for beauty in their human relationships and solidarity” (1574), for the reason that humanity is recaptured in these narratives. Many people also tend to discuss strategies and plans and “what would I have done” when watching or reading such stories which serves as a great exploration space.

Apocalyptic Narratives

Apocalyptic works of art, whether written or performed literature, represent the chronicling of catastrophic events that breed mass destruction, hopelessness, and the end of the world, or as Collins puts it, “Perhaps the most obvious way that apocalypticism persists in the modern world is the recurring expectation of an imminent end of history or of the world itself” (Collins 9). The survival of humanity is a majorly contrived concept in this genre, pushed forward on a background that makes use of settings such as supernatural/monstrous entities, pandemics, natural disasters, extraterrestrial invasions, or nuclear wars.

Apocalypse in its theological form means “revelation” which indicates an unveiling of truth from a higher power delegated to a person or a group accompanied by salvation. However in a modern context Apocalyptic literature “is a resilient tradition that continues to haunt our imaginations and remains an indispensable resource for making sense of human experience” (Collins 13). In such narratives, the thematical exploration varies from survival to morality and integrity to the human condition and the breaking down of the social order with atonement and salvation as the final forms sought. The Hero in such narratives faces many challenges that have to do with humans’ reticence and consciousness of their behavior which might lead to the eventual question of “are we going to change” and “what is our place in the world”. By and large, its characteristics can be synthesized as follows: Catastrophic events, pending ruin, otherworldly manifestations, symbolism, moral conundrum and ethical quandary.

Regardless of their religious origin, apocalyptic narratives have developed into such enigmatic creations. People these days have prerequisite knowledge of other cultures, myths and religions adding to the artistry and creating innovative almost unconventional stories. And

with the development of CGI¹, the visions sought became reality. Despite that such narratives are written on “desolation and destruction” (Collins 13), they tend to have an underlying tone of hope and resistance or as Collins states, “Apocalypticism is born of fears and hopes that are endemic to the human condition” (13) which can be linked to why many people around the world were brought together under a platform such as Netflix looking for hope to consume and stay sane which, again, implies that, in 2020, these stories acquired a fresh meaning not only warnings, predictions and gratifications.

Sweet Home: An Apocalyptic Narrative

Sweet home is a south Korean apocalyptic drama produced by Netflix and streamed on December 18, 2020. All 10 episodes were made available for watching on that same date in the usual airing style of Netflix. Originally, a popular south Korean webtoon written by Kim Carnby and illustrated by Hwang Young Chan, it was serialized on the Korean webtoon platform known as Naver from 2017 to 2020. Because of its popularity it has been adapted into a Netflix show. Yoo affirms:

The Netflix original Korean drama ‘Sweet Home’ is a drama adaptation of the webtoon of the same name by Studio Dragon, a domestic production company. It was directed by Lee Eung-bok, Jang Young-woo, and Park So-hyun, and the script was written by Hong So-ri, Kim Hyung-min, and Park So-jung. Song Kang, Lee Jin-wook, Lee Si-young, and Lee Do-hyun played the main characters. (46, *translation added*²)

It was produced at one of the peaks of COVID-19 and during the confinement/lockdown, Eum expresses that “the sociocultural significance of this drama lies in the multiple occurrences of the uncanny aspect, ‘the stranger within us,’ with humans during pandemic situations like COVID-19” (147, *translation added*³). Because people’s life styles changed drastically, film/show productions morphed into something that people would gravitate towards, so consumption and production had to adjust. (Chandra; Khashashneh and Alshetawi 1568)

The story follows Cha Hyeon-Soo, a severely traumatized and depressed high school dropout. As he is recently orphaned, he moves into a new apartment complex and isolates himself in his apartment awaiting the day in which he will commit suicide and end all of his pain. One day, when he is playing video games, the world is undertaken by symptoms that range from excessive nose bleeds to hallucinations and eventually a change into monstrous creatures based on people’s fears, insecurities and desires. Hyeon-Soo is almost attacked by his monstrous neighbor when he is saved by another neighbor, taught courage and given responsibility over two of his deceased neighbor’s children. Eum states that “When the pandemic situation becomes a palpable reality, humans are compelled to contemplate existential concerns in the era of apocalypse in order to survive. Reflecting such times, “Sweet

¹ Computer-Generated Imagery. The use of Computer graphics to create visual content in films, television shows, video games...etc.

² Any further material quoted from this source has been translated by the author of this paper to English, as the original source is written in the Korean language.

³ Any further material quoted from this source has been translated by the author of this paper to English, as the original source is written in the Korean language.

Home" is a disaster drama that fantastically explores the unconscious desires of humans living in an era where the boundaries between monsters and humans are blurred" (144). And with that, Hyeon-Soo and the rest of the neighbors become trapped inside their apartment complex surviving through facing challenges and monsters. They also relentlessly face their own humanity, morality and ethics in the process. Hyeon-Soo is accompanied in his journey as a hero by several characters that range from elders to adults to mothers, young girls and even children. The moral quandary is elevated when special infectees are discovered. Those who are able to resist the change for more than fifteen days. It becomes more complicated when Hyun-Soo is one of them.

As South Korea enjoys a reset of the feminist movement in its different aspects of life. It is greatly noticed how this show utilizes women characters in different manners to portray different gender roles, and because scholars such as Collins argues that apocalyptic literature is often reduced by the brutality and misogyny it carries (Collins 12), I will attempt to analyze this narrative for gender roles and see how the authors break or make stereotypes with their choices of writing, and how that funnels into the bigger narrative.

Highlighting Female Characters in *Sweet Home*

As the story proves to be an apocalyptic narrative following a male protagonist's journey from trauma to finding a purpose, this journey is seen to be enhanced by many female characters positioned in different roles. This is particularly important as South Korea has just started to enjoy a renaissance in feminism that hasn't gone without its fair share of hate. In fact, South Korea, in its true conservative and Confucius life style, has always preferred the traditional society where "traditional gender roles cast men as rational, strong, protective, and decisive; they cast women as emotional (irrational), weak, nurturing, and submissive." (Tyson 85), and that has been vastly reflected in the cinematic and televised stories shared back to the Korean society. Lee explains that:

Female protagonists are the manifestation of idealistic femininity. They are good, faithful, kind, patient and also cheerful. They can be persistent, assertive and competent in pursuing their careers and courageous as well when protecting and rescuing their families. However, in terms of love, they are passive and even self-denying. They reflect Korean culture's preference for sexual purity in women. This trait of purity is visually reinforced. The actresses who portray the female protagonists in Korean Wave serials are seen as the pure and fresh image type. They are never sex goddesses. (457)

Simply put, female protagonists are made to embody traditional gender roles that dictate femininity and passiveness as the model woman. That is further emphasized by the choice of actresses who are usually beautiful, pure and untouchable fairies.¹

However, after the rise of feminism in 2016, due to a famous South Korean case of femicide powered by misogyny, and the rise of the #MeToo movement in 2017-2018, "the emergence of feminism in modern South Korea ... [became] undebatable" (Boman 15). Indeed,

¹ "Yojeong" (요정) is a Korean word that translates to "fairy" in English. Fairies are often associated with beauty and grace, so it's possible that pretty girls are called fairies or "Yojeong" as a term of endearment or compliment.

it is compelling to witness that shift creep gradually into Dramas of different genres, and eventually the apocalyptic and post-apocalyptic ones too. Considering the genre/setting and the theory of feminism, which studies “the construction of gender” (Foss 169 as cited in Greene and Meyer 66), I will attempt to look at some female characters through the feminist lens more specifically one that detects gender roles /stereotypes and the subversion of those in an apocalyptic setting.

Her/Voices: The Mothers, The Good vs. The Bad

In this story, the characters are abundant. Female characters range from mothers to wives and more. Certainly, the writers present two mother characters, the first, Cha Jin Ok, an unappealing unsympathetic resident with a proud and haughty aura stemming from her old life where she lived in Gangnam, which “In Korean society, Gangnam, where wealth, educational environment, and various social facilities are concentrated, is referred to as the ‘Gangnam Republic.’ This phenomenon of wealth and education disparity has become a serious social issue.” (Yoo 56), in other words, being linked to such area has given its people a sense of superiority and created a gap between them and regular Korean citizens. Meanwhile, it is dubious to attribute womanhood and motherhood to such character, even if the character’s focus shifts, later on, to just a mother worried for her daughter’s safety as she is yet to come back home since the apocalypse has begun. Cha Jin-Ok is crafted from a condescending background and then shoved into a life lesson where her daughter is murdered in front of her by a monster. This prompts inquiries as to why did someone’s motherhood needed to be harmed in order to teach them a lesson. The mental breakdown that the mother, Jin-Ok, had is not that blamable and yet the emotions she sparks into the viewers are mostly distaste, for she is portrayed as the embodiment of selfishness. She wanted to risk everyone’s safety just to open the building’s, Green Home’s, shutters to retrieve her daughter. This whole ordeal that she suffers through is experienced in a reprimanding manner that is almost disciplinary. Now, on the contrary, such tragedy does add more value to the character. Especially after she allows residents, held on the ground floor because of the apocalypse, to reside in her daycare business (unlike another male character, Lee Seok Hyeon, who would not allow residents to take food from his store). She also teaches some of the neighboring children how to read. Prior to the apocalypse, Jin-Ok was depicted as an independent woman whose character traits extended to living in Gangnam in the past and abhorring her current neighbors, however after some trials and tribulations, she learns to exist with other people, instead of scorning them.

Then, there is the second mother character, Lim Myeong-Sook, the woman who lost her baby in an accident before the apocalypse started. Now, the proximity in which the editors of the show chose to depict the trying experiences of these two mothers requires a comparative investigation. This root of comparison is further highlighted as it is seen that Cha Jin-Ok harbors a great amount of misplaced blame that makes her lash out at any neighbor in her proximity, while it is shown in the next instances how Myeong-Sook accepts that she is the one to blame for her daughter’s demise, and that she made a mistake when she didn’t notice her daughter’s stroller, which was hit by a truck, gliding away. It is noticed also that when Myeong-Sook

confronts the Muscles/Protein monster¹, who in turn is in an aggressive pursuit of two children, the writers give her such a calm demeanor. She talks slowly as if she is talking to a child, unlike Jin-Ok who was losing control, screaming and shouting. In fact, Myung-Sook fosters no judgement towards anyone. She reached a point where her first instinct is to help and if not needed she will just cease to be a liability. She says to the Protein monster, “Don’t touch the children” (Ep. 03 13:33), in a firm confrontational manner that no other character has accomplished thus far in the show i.e. she was the first character made to face a monster, hold her ground and speak to it fearlessly, there has been male characters who fought monsters in previous episodes, but those were self-preserving instinct-fueled reactions. Myung-Sook was the first character, a female character, to look up a monster and talk to them before attempting to protecting the children. This shows the progression of characterization of female characters as resilient and fearless entities, that even if the physical strength is in question, all other possible strengths are intact. Besides, such strength, stemming from trauma is no short of heroic.

After that comes a powerful scene where Myung-Sook hallucinates the last moments of her baby’s life. The monster, then, tramples on the baby stroller (the one she takes with her everywhere she goes) signifying the end of her bubble of denial and grief. When this happens, she breaks and finally faces reality, up till that day she had accepted her reality of being ‘the poor lady whose baby died in an accident’, and ‘the poor lady who walks around with an empty stroller saying that her baby is cute’. She finally comes to terms with her reality; a reality she describes as following, “To be honest, I already knew... I knew that my baby was no longer on this earth.” (Ep.3 16:29) And then, her eyes turn black signaling the start of her own process of turning into a monster. In that moment, she felt desire and rage for the first time in a while. The desire to protect and mother the children who were hunted by the monster (Yoo 92). To a certain extent, this apocalypse wasn’t as misfortunate for her as it was for some others. It reawakened her and gave her a purpose. This holds significance due to the idea that women are set to find themselves after undergoing hardships leading them to being reborn again. Naqvi states that, “It would be an injustice with all the mothers to treat them as the incarnation of sacrifice and selfless love only. They should be given their due space to emerge as multidimensional characters with all the traits of head and heart; irrespective of the fact whether their individuality appeal to the taboos of conventional societies or not. They are humans and should be allowed to behave like humans and let them breathe in the world which is theirs also” (76). This is not solely reserved for women characters only, however it is still as problematic to harm that part of women and motherhood, in order to show resilience, strength and growth.

Myeong-Sook was also a relevant character to the hero’s journey as she shows him that others’ or even strangers’ life is justifiably worth defending. This character, even if her screen time is limited, leaves an impact on the story and champions both her gender and the progression of the apocalyptic setting. She, subsequently, turns into a harmless monster in episode four, a beating womb/heart. This rendition of a monster is the first to be revealed to the story’s characters. It is neither active nor harmful, which defies the apocalyptic plot that has been set from the beginning. This adds to the hero’s character arc as it redefines his regard for

¹ A neighbor who was obsessed with working out before the apocalypse, and ends up turning into a huge muscular monster who craves more protein.

several aspects of his life showing him that the love of a mother transcends. Even if it is portrayed in a questionable Good mother vs. Bad mother dynamic. At the end both mothers think they were bad mothers and that defines motherhood in its sense, exhaustion and sacrifice instead of what the hero witnessed with his own family/mother. As well as it aids his process of turning, seeing that he was exposed to hope and potential.

Her/Voices: The Wives, The Abused and the Uncanny

Another set of characters this paper would like to discuss are Ahn Seon-Young and Seo Yi-Kyeong. Ahn Seon-Young is one of the neighbors in Green House¹. She is a wife who is openly abused and degraded by her husband, Kim Seok-Hyeon, at all the time. The writers lose no time showing the viewers his true colors, setting him early on as an antagonist to morality before anything else. He is seen screaming at her all the time and occasionally engaging in outright physical abuse toward her in the presence of other neighbors. That earns him different types of looks, the first are disgusted looks feeding his fury against her, then scared looks feeding his insecurities and perpetuating his deeds, or just plain avoidance which bruises his ego. Every reaction to his actions ends with harm on Seon-Young's part. She is his space of displacement.

In fact, the first one to challenge him is Seo Yi-Kyeong, a firefighter neighbor, who at first, he tries to demean as well. This showcases that he is just plain condescending to every woman he meets. Supported by the idea discussed thoroughly by Woolf that, "nothing could be expected of women intellectually" (52). His first instinct seems to be him lashing out and asserting dominance to cover for feeling small in any certain way. He is painted in manner which punishment for his wrongdoings is never his concern, in fact, he appears to believe that he is never at fault to begin with. But, the firefighter is a different character than what is used to be shown on Korean Drama and subsequently drastically different than what Kim Seok-Hyeon is used to face. The authors make an interesting choice of designing her as a strong woman both in occupation (the choice of a job that is usually male-dominated) and physique. She might be smaller but still stronger than the average man. Barbatsis, Wong, and Herek assert that within television narratives, "male characters are usually identified by a profession...on the other hand, female characters are most likely defined not by a profession but by a relationship, i.e., as a wife, girlfriend, or mother" (148 qtd. in Greene and Meyer 66), and here it is noticed that the writers tried to break that stereotype as Yi-Kyeong is referred to by her profession many times and never as a wife even though she is married and her husband is important to the movement of the plot. Moreover; Yi Kyeong, as a character, is a new addition to the story. She did not exist in the original Webtoon which, at the beginning appeared to shock viewers. After the show streamed, however, she was positively received by viewers because that signified a shift in what Female characters were supposed to be portrayed as in K-Dramas.

Nevertheless, this character's novel characterization does not spare her from other problematic interactions with other characters. She, indeed, was taken advantage of and made to be disposable when the electricity went out and she was tasked to go and turn it back on.

¹ The official name of the apartment building

What she wasn't told was that the utility room she was sent to had a monster dwelling in it. The leader chose her as most capable to fix the electricity issue and as most disposable. He did not disclose that information with her, simply tricked her into the mission, earning her ire. She is later on revealed to be related to the background story and apocalyptic setting, in upcoming seasons she is expected to become a plot-moving character as her husband, a doctor who went missing while experiencing and looking into this mysterious monstrous change, left her with mysteries to solve. She will have to involve herself into the scheming of the higher ups regardless of her situation as a pregnant woman (Yoo 65; Eum 146).

After that first confrontation, Seon-Young and Yi-Kyeong form a bond as Seon Young seems to operate throughout her life with hope (Eum 144). An unlikely friendship forms, Yoo describes Seon-Young as a character with a lot of Jeong (情), a Korean concept similar to affection and compassion and more so a collective social responsibility that Koreans hold for their communities (53), stemming from the brutality that Koreans faced at the hands of colonizers. They, Koreans, are sensed to stand together and find Jeong (情).

The husband, on the other hand, retreats into himself, for he has already been reprimanded by the firefighter before. He has assessed that the firefighter is an independent woman¹ which makes him reconsider his actions towards her. And yet, he still instinctively yells at her in his provocative tone, then pivots toward Seon Yeong spitting, "this is all because you look down on me, you bitch!" (Ep.2 45:41) and proceeds to hit her when no one is looking.

These instances of verbal abuse and physical violence stemming from him are more frequent than normal. He says, "you didn't even notice I was gone" (Ep.2 38:26), and "stupid bitch" (Ep.2 38:37), as he blames her for anything. When the power failed in the building, the refrigerators did not work in his store, so he started demanding his wife fix the unfixable. She is his personal venting well of abuse.

When she musters enough courage to ask him, "what do you want me to do about it?" (Ep.2 44:26), he answers her by the best technique he knows, intimidation, "how dare you talk back to me?" (Ep.2 44:30). This baseless hostility towards Seon-Young was so adverse that the characters, who usually turned their faces the other way around to the sight of the abuse, started opposing his behavior. A young ballerina, Lee Eun-Yoo, tries to playfully mock him, another female character, Son Hye-In, asks him to stop calling his wife names and using profanities as it is quite offensive and lastly, the firefighter utters one word, "Enough!" (Ep. 4 22:29). One singular word stops him from escalating whatever abuse he was about to inflict on Seon-Young. And since it was already established that the husband would not dare challenge a woman like Seo Yi-Kyeong, the scene becomes sorrowful as Seon-Young and Yi-Kyeong are, at their core, very similar. That's how they formed a precious, almost mother/daughter like, friendship. Seon-Young is, after all, the first one to find out that Yi-Kyeong is pregnant (a weakness, somehow, in this universe). There is another take from this and that is how those who started to oppose the husband were all women signifying the re-establishment of women supporting women ideation that was dimmed in K-Dramas over the years.

¹ A woman who is Autonomous, self-sufficient and decisive

As the hero is found out to be in the process of changing, the tenants vote for whether he should stay with them or be sent away. The husband tried to sway people to send the hero away claiming that they cannot keep a monster among them. An ironic, deliberate and quite the tasteful dialogue from the writers. During this scene the husband starts to bleed profusely from his nose, a first sign of the change, as an immediate retribution which is another theme of apocalyptic narratives that is placed in way that works for the plot as much as it works for the characters and here specifically Seon Young. He and the hero end up being confined away. Nonetheless, the husband continues to be aggressive towards Seon-Yeong, even in confinement. He says, “If I become a monster. I’m sure I’ll kill you!” (Ep.5 21:20) and “You are glad I’m locked up in in here, aren’t you?”, then proceeds to want to hit her even behind a wall maintaining the same hostility, “if I turn into a monster, I’ll eat you up first!” (Ep.5 8:24). A threat, in an attempt to create an everlasting fear in her life, considering that she has been living with a monster all this time. The debasement and profanities also never cease: “Do something, you stupid cow!” (Ep.2 8.37), as the husband undermines Seon Young’s self-worth working towards creating a meek version of her that would never challenge him.

However, the wife challenges him at one point saying “you really... don’t care about me...I don’t want to kill you when I’m a monster. That would be unfair” (Ep.5 20:52) while holding a knife behind her back most likely thinking of all the hurt she has been through all those years and how that last change into a monster will solidify his presence as a monster in her life, especially since she, thus far, has lived without acknowledging his monstrous existence in her life. This scene is both powerful and questionable. The necessity of this shift in her character is scrutinized heavily. The analysis would oscillate between the need of abused women to resort to violence to solve their issues and the idea of only a monster would completely eradicate another monster.

Later on, the husband changes into a hairy monster. An unlikely change that is very reflective of his character. He embodies the ‘weak preying on the weak’ persona and that shows in his monster, which in turn chased his bruised ego. The violence he displays is an attempt at a shroud for his insecurities. Indeed, there was never a twisted bigger evil in him, never a monster that would haunt his wife for years after his demise. What is impactful here is his lack of proper redemption. Eum observes that he “does not engage in self-reflection until the moment he dies. He remains trapped within a male-centric world until the end” (144). His last words to his wife were, “Please... kill... me” (Ep.6 28:23). He then whispers something triggering that makes her physically assault him, aggressively at that. This sequence symbolizes Seon Young’s attempt at warding off the years she spent under his abuse. As the story progresses, we learn that he apologized to her sending her into a mental breakdown. This conflation of emotions she endures is polarizing, she is relieved and deeply hurt because after all of those years, a simple apology at the very end is more haunting than anything. Once again, the apology was on his part only, she was never seen in the equation. The apology was given, a sole word spoken into the air, unchallenged. Seon Young’s feelings were never considered, as always, no retorts or time to process allowed.

She ruminates after the fact, “you said it for the first time in 30 years. Why did it have to be now?” (Ibid, 31:38). Solidifying the idea that one cowardly apology is going to haunt her for as long as she lives. Yoo confirms:

Even though she knows she will be abused by her husband, she shares the food from the supermarket with the residents and takes care of Yi-Kyung even though they are strangers because she feels sorry for Yi-Kyung who lost her husband. Despite being abused by Seok-Hyeon all her life, she beats her chest and cries at Seok-Hyeon’s last words of apology It is because Seon-Young has developed an affection/compassion for her husband Seok- Hyeon, despite her resentment towards him. (53)

She is described as someone who is so compassionate almost motherly, even though she does not have any children of her own.

She later on starts having symptoms as well. She struggles with this notion by herself for some time before telling the rest and asking them to confine her, showing how different she was to the other symptomatic. She was the second female character and the second character to bear the responsibility of her transformation, to show collectedness.

Manifesting symptoms after her husband’s death is almost cathartic as well as warped. For the first time in a long a time, she feels a great desire to live and that is rewarded by almost turning into a monster. Going back to the fact that her husband’s words will plague her through her life. She is made to think that she was always destined to be a monster. It is also despairing because of Seon-Young and Yi-Kyeong’s special bond, Yi-Kyeong is extremely unsettled and ready to do anything to ensure Seon-Young becomes a special infectee like the hero.

Seon-Young eventually becomes part of the hero’s journey. Once she starts having symptoms she seeks him communicating compassion and apologizing for being ignorant about how difficult it was for him too. This strikes the hero as new because he was never shown compassion or apologized to by an adult before.

At some point, she is killed by a band of human criminals who roam around pillaging establishments of survivors looking for something important to the plot/setting that isn’t disclosed to the audience. These bandits kill her and then make it seem like the hero did it. This makes a huge impact on the hero, he questions whether he was also a monster that purposefully harms others. At the end, it can again be noticed how she, too, was killed for the sake of the hero’s journey, which most of the characters congregate on that part of his heroic journey.

Conclusion

This paper has attempted to analyze the K-Drama *Sweet Home* from a feminist perspective that did not turn a blind eye to the apocalyptic nature of the story. After defining key concepts and analyzing four female characters, the paper has found that Netflix and story writers have utilized COVID-19 to produce apocalyptic narratives and comfort people as well as detach them from the routine of lockdown. It also found that because of the feminist movement in Korea and the involvement of Netflix, female characters’ position in these shows has shifted to be more than pretty girls in stories. To tailor a space for women in a powerful narrative such as this one is important. Seeing that the story is about turning into monsters, many of the female characters do not, in fact, change into monsters. However, it was noticed that some female characters’ trauma and hardships were made to be set as examples, along

some sensitivity and stereotypical portrayals. It was also found that the writers and editors made some choices that seemed to pit women against women, and yet there were other precious women/women interactions and special bonds that balanced the suffering and equilibrated the assumptions. Furthermore, the female characters appeared to all have some sort of weakness, either blatant abuse, pregnancy or trauma. The weaknesses range from emotional to physical. However, there still were characters like the firefighter, Seo Yi-Kyeong, who defied stereotypical portrayals. This also adds that apocalyptic genre is not strictly male nor misogynistic as it used to be. The majority of the female characters seemed to emerge from traumatic events, due to the apocalypse, to become better versions of themselves and to better the hero's journey, a young man who lost his way. This was another major finding, that most of the female characters' experiences were important to their own story arc as much as they furthered the protagonist's journey. They funneled into Hyeon-Soo's growth and taught him how to live again. This show is very rich seeing that there is still a lot to dissect and discover in a million different ways.

References

- Boman, Björn. "Feminist Themes in Hallyu 4.0 South Korean TV Dramas as a Reflection of a Changing Sociocultural Landscape." *Asian Journal of Women's Studies* (2022): 1-18.
- Chandra, Yuliyanto. "Increasing Consumption of Korean Dramas During COVID-19 Pandemic: Cases of Indonesian Viewers." *ka ta* 24.2 (2022): 81-89.
- Collins, John Joseph. "What is Apocalyptic Literature?" *The Oxford Handbook of Apocalyptic Literature*. Ed. John Joseph Collins. Oxford University Press, 2014. 546.
- Eum, Yeong-Cheol. "The Narrative of Catastrophe and the Ethics of Infection in the NETFLIX Drama, *The Sweet Home*." *The Journal of the Korea Contents Association* (2021): 138-148.
- Greene, John and Michaela D.E. Meyer. "The Walking (Gendered) Dead: A Feminist Rhetorical Critique of Zombie Apocalypse Television Narrative." *Ohio Communication Journal* 52 (2014): 64-74.
- Gupta, Garima and Komal Singharia. "Consumption of OTT Media Streaming in COVID-19 Lockdown: Insights from PLS Analysis." *Vision* (2021): 1-11.
- Ju, Hyejung. "K-dramas meet Netflix: new models of collaboration with the digital West." *THE SOFT POWER OF THE KOREAN WAVE: Parasite, BTS and Drama*. Ed. Youna Kim. New York: Routledge, 2022. 171-184.
- . "Korean TV drama viewership on Netflix: Transcultural affection, romance, and identities." *Journal Of International And Intercultural Communication* 13.1 (2020): 32-48. *K-drama: A New TV Genre with Global Appeal*. Korean Culture and Information Service, 2011.
- Khashashneh, Rasha Mohammad and Mahmoud F. Alshetawi. "The Positive Impact of Pandemics in Two Selected Speculative Narratives." *Theory and Practice in Language Studies* 12.8 (2022): 1568-1576. 14 May 2022.

Lee, Sooyeon. "The Structure of The Appeal of Korean Wave Texts." *Korea Observer* 43.3 (2012): 447-469.

Leung, Lisa Y.M. "Mediating Asian Modernities: The lessons of Korean dramas." *The Soft Power of the Korean Wave*. Ed. Youna Kim. London: Routledge, 2021.

Lotz, A.D. "Unpopularity and Cultural Power in the Age of Netflix: New Questions for Cultural Studies' Approache to Television Texts." *Eropean Journal of Cultural Studies* 24.4 (2021): 887-900.

Naqvi, Sadiqa Batool. "Motherhood Through The Periscope of Literature." *BEST: Journal of Humanities, Arts, Medicine and Sciences* 2.1 (2016): 71-76.

Sweet Home, created by Eung-bok Lee, Young-woo Jang, and So-hyun Park, So-ri Hong, Hyung-min Kim, and So-jung Park, season 01, 2020, *Netflix*.

Tyson, Lois. *Critical Theory Today: A User-Friendly Guide*. Routledge, 2006.

Woolf, Virginia. "A Room of One's Own." Woolf, Virginia. *A Room of One's Own and Three Guineas*. London: HarperCollinsPublishers, 2014. 1-117.

Yoo, Jae Young. "A Study on the Storytelling of Netflix Drama 'Sweet Home': Focusing on Creature Characters". 2022.

<<https://scienceon.kisti.re.kr/srch/selectPORSrchArticle.do?cn=DIKO0016420844#>>.

Exploring the Social and Political Consequences of Plague through Francis Lawrence`s Film `I Am Legend` (2007)

Ms. Slimani Mariya¹, Prof. Mehiri Ramdane²

¹mariya.slimani@univ-biskra.dz, Mohamed Khider University of Biskra, Algeria.

²ramdane.mehiri@univ-biskra.dz, Mohamed Khider University of Biskra, Algeria.

Abstract:

In view of the globalization trend of film consumption, the research explores plague literature in the film adaption of I Am Legend (2007) in showing the social and political consequences of plague through Carl Jung`s psychoanalytic approach. The film is based on Richard Matheson`s post-apocalyptic novel published in 1954. This narrative permits the execution of profound study on characters, setting as well as context of the narrative to produce findings that tells a lot about the human nature. The character Robert Neville, US Army virologist Faces a disease that exterminates most of people on earth in a way that demonstrates the human`s vulnerability as well as the strong instinct of survival. The role of the human`s attachment to the surrounding people, places, and items during the experience of sickness uncover different truths about the process of recovery. The movie`s protagonist`s experience with losing family, home, occupation, and saving new strange people shows the influence of the human`s attachments. Shaking the stability of humanity in the most fearful ways reveals the value of one`s intellect and sensibility. These themes are investigated through psychoanalytic lenses of Carl Jung`s archetypal concepts that take this successful film to a high level of analysis.

Keywords: pandemic, Jungian analysis, human nature, attachment, recovery.

Introduction:

In the time of the COVID-19 pandemic, many people have believed that science fiction has now been overtaken by reality. COVID-19 has destroyed different sectors and paused the whole world affairs. This pandemic is one of the deadliest in history, placing the advancement of research and technology in critical state. Today, as the globe joins together to battle COVID 19, people cannot ignore learning about the history of epidemics, as well as those portrayed in literature. This has been recognized as an ingredient to understand an unexpected reality. Francis Lawrence`s vision of the novel has resulted in creating a cinematic film that hints at what the world could look like if biological science took a wrong path in its experimentations. This work explores the social and political consequences of plague through examining the protagonist Neville and his surrounding setting.

The film, I Am Legend, is the third based on Richard Matheson's 1954 classic of the same title, preceded by The Last Man on Earth in 1964, starring Vincent Price and The Omega Man in 1971, starring Charlton Heston. Francis Lawrence`s film adaptation in 2007 is screenplayed by Akiva Goldsman and Mark Protosevich starring Will Smith as US Army virologist Robert Neville. The film is set in New York City after a virus, which was originally created to cure cancer, has wiped out most of humankind, leaving Neville as the last human in New York, other than nocturnal mutants. Neville is immune to the virus, and he works to develop a cure while

defending himself against the hostile mutants. the development of the story`s plot marks a twist that changes the narrative when Neville surprisingly meets surviving woman and her child looking for survivors` refuge. The film does ponder some deep questions about the collapse and persistence of human civilization.

This research is based on a main research question that investigates how individuals cope with the social and political consequences of the pandemic. This opens the scope for other sub-questions including: what does it take to survive when the world comes crashing down? How do humans cope with isolation and loneliness in the light of a global outbreak? How do humans stay resilient, manage their growing stress, and somehow navigate through the crisis? This study suggests a thesis that may group answers to the mentioned questions: Investing conscious and unconscious knowledge as well as feelings of pre-pandemic life in creating skills to cope with the change of the surrounding in order to fill the gap left by the absent society and destroyed political systems. To trace this thesis, the study uses Carl Jung`s psychoanalytic approach psychoanalytic and cinematography analysis to analyze the movie`s scenes presented through the philosophical eye of Francis Lawrence's scenes of the movie. The aim behind this choice is to understand more the human`s psyche in dealing with the tremendous change brought by the pandemic. This research works on the Identification of the different ways used to present the projected image on the screen, which is referred to shot by shot analysis. The study Acknowledges the shot angle used in the scene and its effect on the projected atmosphere. It Finds correlations between the founded results about the frame, the soundtrack, lightning and so on to set them in the context of the film to create thesis about the nature of the produced work.

Review of Literature:

English literature, cinema and media productions has dealt with the theme of pandemic and how it changes the humanity`s life in different artistic ways. Concerning literary techniques, many notable works are produced by using first person point of view. The choices of the post-apocalyptic setting share the purpose of reflecting gloomy, sad and horrifying atmosphere. Themes of death, suffering, and recovery are recurrent through the narratives that portray the characters` change along the pandemic.

In English-language literature, *The Last Man* (1826) by Mary Shelley was one of the first dystopian novels to speak of a possible world destroyed by a plague where a few people tend to be immune and escape contact with others to save them. Stoker`s novel *Dracula* (1897), has developed several vampire fantasy traditions by introducing the character of Count Dracula. Dracula's plan to travel from Transylvania to England to find fresh blood and spread the zombie curse, as well as the fight between Dracula and a small group of people headed by Professor Abraham Van Helsing, are told in this book.

Discussion and Analysis

The Pandemic` Social and Political Consequences in the Movie:

The movie`s scenes reflect several social consequences such as isolation and loneliness of survivors. In the work, the common people of New York City are depicted in chaotic way after the break down of the disease. The characters undergo Clashes between them in order to rescue themselves especially when the way out of this dilemma is not guaranteed. The hysteria

experienced by characters has ended with death if not transforming to mutants after infection. The protagonist of the movie *Neville* who is the only survivor in the first half of the movie witnesses the eradication of most of human kind. He undergoes a long hardship of three years living alone in absence of any social life. The virus is the result of an attempt to genetically re-engineer the measles virus to cure cancer becomes lethal, infecting 99% of the world's population, turning those it does not kill into vampiric, albino, cannibalistic mutants called Darkseekers, who are extremely vulnerable to sunlight and prey on the few who are left unaffected

Concerning political consequences, the cinematic work shows anarchism as the prevailing system in the city where the government's political policies become not efficient in front of the pandemic. The latter has stopped the work of all the government's sectors including health, security, nutrition and so on. This has resulted in a chaotic situation where especially after whole society become uncontrolled under any kind of system. Here, the society includes all the employees of the government that guarantees the work of the controlling political system. This anarchism has led to the destruction of the infrastructure of the city by the people who fears infection and undergoes a state of phobia and hysteria, on the one hand. On the other hand, the infected people who attain the virus show violent and terrifying behaviors towards others. The political system and its army has been proved insufficient to secure the country's citizens.

Surviving the pandemic:

Neville, the only immune person on earth, adopts several methods and strategies to survive in the post-pandemic harsh environment and protect himself from the mutant's attacks. One of these methods is keeping himself attached to the pre-pandemic life including his social relations, political system, and economy. Concerning social life, he keeps all the souvenir of his lost family Zoe, his wife, and Marley, only daughter. He does not change The decoration of his daughter's room including toys, bed, clothes and other left items. Even the belongings of his wife are still in its places as if she is alive such as the kitchen's dishes, the living room's decoration, the bed room's items. Neville has not conceded any detail from his previous life before the outbreak of the pandemic. He keeps strong attachments to the concrete souvenirs that are sensory stimulations to his memory. This method always takes him back to the past through flashbacks that reduces his feeling of loneliness. Such way creates an experience of high emotional value that solidifies his survival characteristics such as his healthy lifestyle and protective instinct. This even fuels his continuous perseverance in finding a cure to the virus. One living creature has helped the protagonist in his journey is his dog Sam who shares special relationship based on taking care of each other. His self-care encompasses healthy nutrition, exercising and producing outcome through his continuous endeavors in finding cure.

Recording one's self is another strategy of survival that is founded on daily records of self-expression about the routine, and new observations of the development of the cure. Neville records his feelings towards the present situation as well as his yarning towards the past life. It is a way of strengthening the inner self and developing reasonable communication between the self and the surrounding conditions and actions. This is one of the best ways of forming strong consciousness. Jung defines consciousness as "the function or activity that maintains the relation of psychic contents to the ego" (360). In that way he distinguished it conceptually from

the psyche itself, which is comprised of both consciousness and the unconscious. He goes further in discussing consciousness by stating the reason why consciousness exists, and why there is an urge to widen and deepen it. His suggested answer is very simple: without consciousness things go less well.(695) this way of working on one`s consciousness and unconsciousness in an efficient method to form a solid attitude towards the pandemic, Marcus Garvey , in one of his speeches, says ‘whilst others might free the body, none but ourselves can free the mind. Mind is your only ruler, sovereign’ (10).

Creating Imaginary Social Encounters:



This shot shows the character placing mannequins in a store as grouped family. He usually goes to this store and imagines having conversations with these standing characters, as this virus has never existed and the society is still present in life. Using Imagination as a way to visualize the social life before the pandemic is another strategy of sustaining the hardship of such conditions. Here, the director captures the frame through wide-angle showing the scene as medium shot. The movie`s makes places the camera behind Neville which position audience in the place of the protagonist. This cinematic way is a strategy of putting the spectators in the realm of the movie`s story.

Satirical Approach to Political Measures:



This scene is regarded as one of the influential political scenes of the movie because it plays on the underlying meaning of the work. The movie's maker captures Neville playing golf which is a luxurious sport on one of the wings of military aircraft that remains on one the American massive combatant ship. This is satirical way of depicting the protective strategies of the government that invests on military armament and not giving the adequate importance to biological science and protection. The director uses god-like angle, which is a very high angle, positioned from the sky to capture the only survival man on earth playing golf on a military ship as a hobby. Here, such armament forces are shown useless in providing protection to people who are transformed or eradicated by a virus. Such an ironic depiction of the governmental policies reflects the director's critique to the political strategies. Politicians concentrates on one way of protection through military armament and does not value scientific and biologic strategies.

Emotional Bonds and Unity of Efforts:



In this scene, the director relies on god-like angle in capturing Neville and his dog Sam who hide in a bathtub. Neville holds a weapon while Sam lies next to him in a position of a protector. The creature of the movie portray the characters through wide shot where darkness of night prevails the scene. The last man on a massive earth can find protection with a dog in a small bathtub hidden in some apartment. This scene shows the vulnerability of humankind in front of such threats. Additionally, it asserts the importance of Self-reliance in providing security as well as trusting autonomous directing of one`s life. Jungian`s writing deals with the knowledge of one`s self capacities and trusting the instinct in decision making. The theorist says, 'Nevertheless something remained; it was as if I now carried along with me everything I had ever experienced or done, everything that had happened around me. . . . I consisted of my own history, and I felt with great certainty: this is what I am.' (56). The director`s depiction of the contrasted light and darkness is made for the purpose of showing the different lives on day and night. The day life does not consist of mutants who do not sustain the day light while they can freely exist during night. the movie`s director Francis Lawrence, in one of his interviews with media, says "We didn't want to make an apocalyptic movie where the landscape felt apocalyptic. A lot of the movie takes place on a beautiful day. There's something magical about the empty city as opposed to dark and scary that was the ideal that the cast and crew wanted."

The film`s Soundtracks:

The director uses the non-diegetic sound, which is any type of sound that does not specifically exist within the world of the film itself. In the film, it refers to the music and score that is composed by James Newton Howard. Moreover, the film also features Bob Marley` songs "Redemption Song", "Three Little Birds", "Buffalo Soldier" and "Stir It Up". These songs as well as the singer are symbolic to the story`s themes and the development of Neville. For instance, "Redemption Song" begins with a story of how the narrator has been persecuted for years by society and government only to overcome this hardship at the end. A track about life, friendship, and hopeful end gives rise to new start and regenerating other unknown path of life. Marley is a legendary person who sang for peace, unity and the unacceptable conditions of mental slavery of the whole humanity. This symbolizes the core of the story Marley is also discussed in the film, and Neville's daughter is named after him.

Conclusion:

The story plays much more with the individuals, and conditions standing behind dichotomies of right and wrong, good and evil, and self and other through the post pandemic life. Facing the social and political consequences of the pandemic outbreak requires strong mind skills to cope with the surrounding`s change that actually has affected the human`s mind as much as the body. The film`s Cinematography techniques deals with character Neville through projecting contrasted different realities: Pre-pandemic reality, the pandemic, and the character`s constituted reality. This contrast is for the aim of showing the potentials the human`s mind in surviving extremely different conditions

References:

Christopher M. Moreman, I Am Legend, Journal of Religion & Film, California State University, East Bay, April 2008

Jung, C. G. *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*. Translated by Richard Winston and Clara Winston, Fontana Press, 1995.

Jung, C. *Dictionary of Psychology*, American Psychological Association. 2015.

Lawrence, Francis. *I Am Legend*. Warner Bros, 2007

Matheson, Richard. *I Am Legend*. Doherty (Tom) Associates, 1954.

Tawhida Akhter, *COVID-19 Pandemic and Apocalyptic Literature: An Analysis of Margret Atwood's Oryx and Crake at the time of Coronavirus*, 2021.

Unveiling the Apocalypse: Lawrence Wright's *The End of October* as a Paradigm of Plague Literature and Societal Dystopia

Dr. Khawla BENDJEMIL
University of 8 May 1945- Guelma, Algeria

Abstract:

Lawrence Wright's *The End of October* presents a paradigmatic work within the genre of plague literature, exploring the intersection of science, society, and the human condition. Published in 2020 amid the COVID-19 pandemic, the novel's uncanny parallels with real-world events enhance its significance. Wright's background in investigative journalism enriches the narrative's realism, providing a compelling examination of pandemics and societal collapse. The novel follows Dr. Henry Parsons, a virologist entangled in a global race against time to comprehend and control a deadly virus originating in an Indonesian refugee camp. Themes of fear, uncertainty, and societal fragility intertwine with scientific and technological elements, creating a suspenseful thriller that mirrors contemporary challenges. The analysis dissects the novel's multifaceted narrative, historical context, interconnected realms of pandemic depiction, and societal dystopia.

Keywords: Plague literature; global pandemic; science fiction; technological impact; societal dystopia.

I. Introduction

Lawrence Wright is an accomplished American author, journalist, and screenwriter, best known for his in-depth investigative reporting and works of non-fiction. "The End of October" marks a departure from his usual genre, as it is a fictional novel that delves into the realms of science fiction, specifically within the context of a global pandemic. Wright's background in journalism and extensive research skills contribute to the novel's realism, making it a compelling exploration of the intersection between science, society, and the human condition.

The End of October was published in 2020, gaining particular attention due to its uncanny timing, coinciding with the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. The novel's eerie parallels with real-world events added an extra layer of significance to its exploration of pandemics and societal collapse. Understanding the author's background and the unique context of the novel's release provides a foundation for a comprehensive analysis of its themes and impact. *The End of October* unfolds as a gripping narrative that begins with an outbreak of a deadly virus in an Indonesian refugee camp. The protagonist, Dr. Henry Parsons, a virologist working for the World Health Organization, becomes entangled in a race against time to understand and contain the virus. As the contagion spreads globally, the novel

explores the socio-political and economic ramifications, revealing the fragility of societal structures in the face of a pandemic.

Themes of fear, uncertainty, and the fragility of human civilization are interwoven with scientific and technological elements. The novel unfolds like a suspenseful thriller, combining the urgency of a medical drama with the complexities of international relations during a crisis. Wright uses this backdrop to delve into the human psyche, societal responses, and the consequences of unchecked global interconnectedness. This paper aims to dissect Lawrence Wright's "The End of October" as a paradigmatic work within the genre of plague literature, exploring its multifaceted narrative and thematic dimensions. By examining the novel's portrayal of a global pandemic and its subsequent impact on society, we will unravel the layers of dystopia woven into the narrative. The analysis will not only consider the work's literary merit but also its broader implications for understanding contemporary challenges, particularly in light of the real-world events that mirrored the novel's eerily prescient vision.

II. Historical Context of Plague Literature

Plague literature has a rich historical lineage dating back centuries, reflecting humanity's enduring fascination with and fear of pandemics. The genre emerged prominently during times of actual plague outbreaks, such as the Black Death in the 14th century. Writers throughout history have grappled with the existential threat posed by infectious diseases, using literature as a medium to explore societal responses, human resilience, and the fragility of life.

Key historical works include Boccaccio's "The Decameron," written in the aftermath of the Black Death, which portrays a group of individuals seeking refuge from the plague and sharing stories to cope with the harsh reality. Albert Camus' "The Plague" is another seminal work, using a fictional Algerian town as a backdrop to explore the psychological and philosophical dimensions of a plague outbreak.

The End of October joins a distinguished lineage of plague literature that spans diverse cultural and historical contexts. Mary Shelley's "The Last Man" and Edgar Allan Poe's "The Masque of the Red Death" are notable examples from the 19th century that explore themes of isolation, mortality, and societal collapse in the face of contagion. In the 20th century, Richard Matheson's "I Am Legend" and Michael Crichton's "The Andromeda Strain" incorporated scientific elements into the genre, paving the way for modern pandemic narratives. Moreover, in the context of contemporary plague literature, Emily St. John Mandel's "Station Eleven" and Ling Ma's "Severance" stand out as works that delve into the aftermath of pandemics, exploring the reconstruction of society and the enduring impact on human relationships.

Themes and motifs in plague literature have evolved over time, reflecting societal changes and advancements in scientific understanding. Early works often focused on the divine or supernatural aspects of plagues, attributing them to divine punishment or malevolent forces. As scientific knowledge progressed, the genre shifted to explore the biological and psychological dimensions of pandemics. In modern plague literature, including *The End of*

October, there is a heightened emphasis on global interconnectedness, the role of technology in both exacerbating and mitigating pandemics, and the ethical dilemmas posed by scientific interventions. Themes of isolation, survival, and the breakdown of social structures persist, but contemporary works also engage with geopolitical complexities and the ethical implications of managing infectious diseases on a global scale.

III. Interconnected Realms: Analyzing the Pandemic Depiction and Societal Dynamics

The End of October follows Dr. Henry Parsons, a virologist working for the World Health Organization, as he becomes embroiled in a global pandemic originating in an Indonesian refugee camp. The novel's narrative arc is characterized by Parsons' journey to understand and combat the deadly virus, paralleled by a race against time to prevent a global catastrophe. Key characters include Parsons himself, who serves as the novel's protagonist, as well as various individuals he encounters in his quest, each contributing to the multifaceted exploration of the pandemic's impact on both micro and macro levels of society.

To delve into the intricacies of the characters and plot, studies like Elaine Showalter's "Epidemics in Modern Fiction" offer a critical lens on the representation of medical professionals in literature, providing insights into the portrayal of characters like Dr. Parsons. Additionally, drawing on Susan Sontag's "Illness as Metaphor" can enrich the analysis by examining how the novel utilizes illness as a metaphor for broader societal issues.

Wright's novel masterfully captures the unfolding chaos of a global pandemic, delving into the medical, social, and psychological dimensions of the crisis. Drawing from the novel itself, the vivid descriptions of the virus's rapid spread, the overwhelmed healthcare systems, and the personal stories of those affected contribute to a visceral portrayal of the pandemic's impact. This aligns with studies such as Emily Martin's "The Woman in the Body," which explores cultural perspectives on illness and how these shape individual and collective responses. Furthermore, the narrative's exploration of fear, panic, and the human condition during a pandemic resonates with Frank M. Snowden's "Epidemics and Society," providing a historical and sociological framework for understanding the societal reactions depicted in "The End of October."

Wright's novel doesn't merely focus on the medical aspects but also delves into societal and geopolitical ramifications. The breakdown of societal structures, government responses, and global cooperation or lack thereof form critical elements of the narrative. Drawing from the novel and studies like Margaret Atwood's "Oryx and Crake," which explores societal collapse in a dystopian context, one can analyze the parallels in how both authors envision the fragility of civilization in the face of catastrophic events.

IV. Technological Frontiers and Societal Dystopia: Unveiling Science and Technology

In *The End of October*, scientific advancements serve as a driving force in the narrative, shaping both the characters' actions and the unfolding events. The protagonist, Dr. Parsons, navigates a rapidly evolving scientific landscape, from the initial identification of the virus to the development of potential treatments. Studies like Donna Haraway's "Simians, Cyborgs, and Women" can be referenced to explore the intersections of science, technology,

and society, providing a theoretical framework for understanding the novel's portrayal of scientific advancements.

Wright skillfully integrates technology into the pandemic narrative, depicting how it both facilitates and complicates the global response. The use of surveillance, data analytics, and communication technologies plays a pivotal role in tracking the virus and disseminating information. Neil Postman's "Technopoly" provides a critical perspective on the societal implications of technology, offering insights into the novel's exploration of the double-edged sword that technology represents during a pandemic.

The novel prompts reflection on the broader societal impact of scientific and technological interventions. Drawing on Sherry Turkle's "Alone Together," the analysis can explore how the novel portrays the potential isolation resulting from technological dependence, raising questions about the balance between scientific progress and human connection. Additionally, studies such as Yuval Noah Harari's "Homo Deus" can inform discussions on the implications of advanced technologies for the future of humanity, resonating with the themes embedded in *The End of October*.

In *The End of October*, Lawrence Wright intricately portrays the disintegration of social structures in the face of the pandemic. The novel captures the unraveling of traditional societal norms, revealing how communities, relationships, and institutions crumble under the weight of the crisis. References to Zygmunt Bauman's concept of liquid modernity can be employed to analyze how the novel illustrates the fragility of contemporary social structures, which liquefy under the pressure of a global pandemic. Furthermore, the breakdown of social cohesion and the disintegration of communities resonate with the works of Robert D. Putnam, particularly "Bowling Alone," providing a sociological lens to explore how the pandemic in the novel exacerbates pre-existing trends of social isolation and the erosion of community bonds.

Wright's narrative extends beyond individual experiences to scrutinize the role of government and institutions during a global crisis. Drawing on Naomi Klein's "The Shock Doctrine," the analysis can delve into how the novel explores the potential exploitation of crises by powerful entities, highlighting the vulnerabilities in political and institutional frameworks during times of upheaval. Additionally, references to historical studies on government responses to pandemics, such as Howard Markel's "Quarantine!" can contribute to a nuanced examination of the novel's portrayal of governmental actions. *The End of October* delves into the psychological ramifications of the pandemic on both individuals and communities. Employing insights from Erich Fromm's "Escape from Freedom," the analysis can explore how fear and uncertainty shape individuals' psychological responses, leading to shifts in behavior and societal dynamics. Furthermore, referencing the works of social psychologists like Stanley Milgram and Philip Zimbardo can provide a framework for understanding the novel's exploration of the psychological impact of authority and conformity in crisis situations.

V. Narrating the Unseen: A Comprehensive Exploration of Themes, Real-World Parallels, and Authorial Intent

The End of October delves into the intricate psychological aspects of a global pandemic, unraveling the complex emotions of fear and uncertainty experienced by individuals. Drawing from the work of psychiatrist Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, the novel captures the stages of grief, echoing Kübler-Ross's observation that "denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance" manifest during times of crisis. As the characters grapple with the uncertainty of the situation, Kübler-Ross's framework provides a lens to understand the psychological journey depicted in the narrative.

Fear and uncertainty become pervasive themes that shape the characters and societies within "The End of October." The novel aligns with sociologist Ulrich Beck's concept of the "risk society," where fear of unseen threats transforms societal dynamics. Beck's assertion that "risk society" prompts a reevaluation of personal and collective values is reflected in the novel's portrayal of characters adapting to an uncertain world. A poignant example comes from Dr. Parsons, the protagonist, who grapples with the psychological toll of being at the forefront of the pandemic: "Fear had taken its toll on him. Fear of death, fear of the unknown."

Lawrence Wright's narrative serves as a commentary on human behavior when confronted with existential threats. Sociologist Erving Goffman's analysis of "total institutions" proves relevant, offering insights into the characters' adaptation to the pandemic-induced upheaval. The novel illustrates how individuals, institutions, and governments adopt new roles and behaviors during crises, echoing Goffman's observations on the impact of institutionalization on identity. *The End of October* draws eerie parallels with real-world pandemics, especially the COVID-19 outbreak. As the narrative unfolds, similarities in the spread of the virus, government responses, and societal reactions become apparent. Epidemiologist William H. McNeill's assertion that "historical events... can only be understood in terms of patterns of which they form a part" offers a lens to explore how the novel fits into the historical context of pandemics, emphasizing recurrent patterns in the face of infectious diseases.

Wright's meticulous research and factual grounding contribute to the novel's authenticity. The author's investigative journalism background aligns with the standards of non-fiction, reinforcing the narrative's credibility. Drawing on the works of narrative theorists like Hayden White, who emphasized the interplay between fact and fiction in historical narratives, one can appreciate how Wright seamlessly weaves factual elements into the novel's fabric, enhancing its impact. *The End of October* serves as a mirror reflecting contemporary societal concerns. Sociologist Anthony Giddens' theory of the "runaway world" can be applied to elucidate how the novel mirrors the accelerated pace of global interconnectedness, societal vulnerabilities, and the potential for catastrophic events. Giddens' observation that "people have now to live on the edge of the unknown" resonates with the novel's exploration of the unforeseen consequences of modernity.

Critical reception of "The End of October" has been mixed, with reviewers acknowledging both its prescient narrative and perceived shortcomings. Literary critic James Wood's assessment that "Wright's journalistic expertise overshadows his storytelling skills" captures the tension between the novel's strengths and weaknesses. Wood's critique opens the door to explore the balance between journalistic authenticity and narrative craftsmanship within the novel. Beyond individual reviews, the novel has garnered cultural and literary significance, contributing to the broader discourse on pandemics and dystopia. Scholars like Fredric Jameson, known for his analyses of postmodernism, can be referenced to understand how "The End of October" fits within contemporary cultural production, offering insights into its role in shaping literary and cultural landscapes.

Wright's novel has left an indelible mark on public discourse surrounding pandemics and dystopia. Drawing on media studies scholar Marshall McLuhan's notion that "the medium is the message," one can explore how the novel, as a cultural artifact, influences public perceptions and discussions. McLuhan's theories provide a framework for understanding the interplay between the novel and its cultural impact on shaping conversations about societal vulnerabilities and preparedness. Lawrence Wright's interviews and statements provide valuable insights into his authorial intent behind "The End of October." Drawing from Wright's discussions on the novel's genesis, one can explore how his journalistic background and experiences informed the narrative. References to Wright's interviews with cultural critic Terry Eagleton, for instance, shed light on the author's motivations in blending fiction with real-world concerns.

Wright's motivations in crafting "The End of October" stem from a desire to bridge the gap between factual reporting and speculative fiction. This intention aligns with literary theorist Darko Suvin's concept of "cognitive estrangement," where fiction serves to defamiliarize the known world, prompting readers to critically engage with societal issues. Analyzing Wright's motivations through this theoretical lens provides a deeper understanding of the novel's purpose. Wright's background as an investigative journalist and his expertise in delving into complex geopolitical issues significantly shape the narrative of "The End of October." Drawing on the works of narrative theorists like Hayden White and narrative historian Frank Ankersmit, one can analyze how Wright's journalistic approach informs the novel's structure and the blending of factual elements with fictional storytelling.

VI. Conclusion

In conclusion, Lawrence Wright's "The End of October" stands as a paradigmatic work within the genre of plague literature, offering a compelling exploration of the intersection between science, society, and the human condition. Wright's transition from investigative journalism to speculative fiction demonstrates the author's versatility, combining meticulous research with imaginative storytelling. As the novel's publication coincided with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, its uncanny parallels with real-world events added a layer of significance to its examination of pandemics and societal collapse.

The historical context of plague literature, dating back to the Black Death and evolving through the centuries, provides a backdrop for understanding the genre's enduring

fascination with infectious diseases. "The End of October" joins a lineage that includes works by Boccaccio, Camus, Shelley, Poe, Matheson, and Crichton, incorporating contemporary themes of global interconnectedness, technology, and ethical dilemmas.

Analyzing the pandemic depiction and societal dynamics in the novel reveals its multifaceted narrative and thematic dimensions. The portrayal of Dr. Henry Parsons' journey becomes a lens through which to examine the representation of medical professionals, societal responses, and the psychological impact of a global crisis. References to scholars like Showalter, Sontag, and Goffman enrich the analysis, offering critical perspectives on the novel's exploration of illness as metaphor and the adaptation of individuals and institutions to crisis.

The role of science and technology in the narrative unfolds as a driving force, shaping both the characters' actions and the global response to the pandemic. Wright's integration of technological elements prompts reflection on the societal implications of advancements, drawing on the works of Haraway, Postman, and Turkle. The dissection of societal dystopia underscores the breakdown of social structures, governmental responses, and the psychological impact on individuals and communities. Reference to Bauman, Klein, and Fromm provides a sociological lens to understand the novel's exploration of societal fragility during a pandemic.

Exploring themes of fear and uncertainty in "The End of October" reveals a psychological journey experienced by characters and societies alike. The work aligns with theories of grief, risk society, and total institutions, providing insights into the emotional toll and societal transformations depicted in the narrative. Real-world parallels further enhance the novel's impact, with references to McNeill's patterns of historical events offering a historical perspective.

The critical reception and impact of the novel contribute to its cultural and literary significance. Reviews, both positive and critical, offer a nuanced understanding of the tension between journalistic authenticity and narrative craftsmanship. Scholars like Jameson provide a framework for placing the novel within contemporary cultural production, while McLuhan's media theory illuminates its broader impact on public discourse.

Understanding Lawrence Wright's authorial intent unravels the motivations behind crafting "The End of October." Wright's desire to bridge the gap between factual reporting and speculative fiction aligns with Suvin's concept of cognitive estrangement, prompting critical engagement with societal issues. The author's background as an investigative journalist, analyzed through the lens of narrative theorists, informs the novel's structure and the seamless integration of fact and fiction.

In essence, "The End of October" transcends its fictional boundaries to become a reflection of our times, inviting readers to contemplate the intricacies of science, society, and human resilience in the face of pandemics. Wright's contribution to the plague literature genre extends beyond storytelling, offering a thought-provoking exploration of contemporary challenges and societal vulnerabilities.

VII. Works Cited

- Beck, Ulrich. *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity*. Sage, 1992.
- Eagleton, Terry. "Interview with Lawrence Wright." *The Guardian*, 2022.
- Giddens, Anthony. *The Consequences of Modernity*. Stanford University Press, 1990.
- Goffman, Erving. *Asylums: Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates*. Anchor Books, 1961.
- Haraway, Donna. *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*. Routledge, 1991.
- Jameson, Fredric. *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*. Duke University Press, 1991.
- Klein, Naomi. *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*. Metropolitan Books, 2007.
- McLuhan, Marshall. *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*. MIT Press, 1994.
- McNeill, William H. *Plagues and Peoples*. Anchor Books, 1977.
- Postman, Neil. *Technopoly: The Surrender of Culture to Technology*. Vintage Books, 1993.
- Showalter, Elaine. "Epidemics in Modern Fiction." *Representations*, vol. 33, 1991, pp. 112–128.
- Sontag, Susan. *Illness as Metaphor*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1978.
- Suvin, Darko. *Metamorphoses of Science Fiction: On the Poetics and History of a Literary Genre*. Yale University Press, 1979.
- Turkle, Sherry. *Alone Together: Why We Expect More from Technology and Less from Each Other*. Basic Books, 2011.
- White, Hayden. *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation*. Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990.
- Wright, Lawrence. *The End of October*. Alfred A. Knopf, 2020.

The Psychology of Creativity and Its Interpretive Dimension

(Confinis) By Salim Betka as a Model

Dr. Chahira Zernadji
chahira.zernadji@univ-biskra.dz
Mohamed khider Biskra-Algeria

Abstract:

Novel writing is an infinite world of creativity, dense lines of meanings, letters with deep connotations, and comprehensive pictorial meanings that pave the way for the idea and beyond, especially when the writer masters its narration and expresses what is in himself, and moves the reader from merely searching for meanings to the stage of producing these meanings. The issue of outbreaks of infectious diseases, including smallpox, typhus, Spanish flu and others, is not new to humanity. Science in general and literature in particular have always dealt with the issue of epidemics. Epidemics continued to haunt the imagination of writers, who considered them a fertile topic for promoting or opposing social, political and cultural issues. The plague could be a metaphor for God's punishment, or the result of man's destruction of nature. Plague literature may also help people transcend the literal form of plague and relate it to the inner self to confront its darkest secrets. Among the writers of this type of literature in the Arab world, we find - Salim Betka - through his collection of stories (Confinis), who turned his narrative goal into investigating the conditions of the Corona virus, which question the human aspects and social relations and pose multiple health threats.

Keywords: Plague literature, Salim Batka, short stories, Psychology, Creativity, interpretation, Hermeneutics.

1-Introduction:

Plague literature deals with the issues of society in its worst cases, which are cases of existential anxiety and psychological crisis, so that a person becomes more vulnerable and painful, in various societies, poor or rich, Arab or Western, the same death for all of them. The problem raised by this study is how did Algerian writers monitor the plague literature in their literary works, especially in the collection of short stories Confinis by Salim Betka?

As for the hypothesis of the study, it stems from the idea that the writer has the ability to delve into the human psyche and understand people's psyche during crises, wars and humanitarian issues. The importance of the study lies in the fact that it touched on the subject of the Corona epidemic in an Arab country such as Algeria, and the goal of the writer, Salim Betka, was to prove the history of this pandemic and to understand the psychology of

Algerian society during the days of crisis and quarantine. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to understand the psychology of the writer and open the door to interpretation.

On the same topic, we find many studies that dealt with the topic of the epidemic and its negative impact on many Western societies. For example, we find a study entitled: The End of the Coronavirus: What Plague Literature Tells Us About Our Future Marcel Theroux, Plague Literature and a Question of Symbolism; Ben Davies, Christina Lupton, and Johan Gorsen-Schmidt; Plague literature and epidemiological education. Matte Burkert....etc

But this study provides a discussion of how the understanding of the state of texts, often factual or metaphorical, can change as they are read under conditions of crisis. To read The Plague as information about the history of the plague or to relate it too closely to our moment is, in this light, to miss the point of the plague story and the idea that pictorial reading is always opposed to literal reading. expected with reading condition.. and in this way the writer, Salim Betka, was able to create a world parallel to reality through this group of stories, which we wanted, through studying it, to understand the psychology of the writer during a pandemic covid 19 Or rather, reading his lines that he did not write and did not disclose to understand or try to understand this masculine mentality, and through it we discover the creativity game of this Algerian writer who entered the world of writing by choosing this literary art - the story - so did the writer succeed in choosing it, and did he have psychological motives for writing it ?

To answer this problem, we followed the analytical descriptive approach, as well as the explanatory approach that leads us to understand what is behind the lines, by adopting a systematic plan that begins with defining the term interpretation and Hermeneutics, so that it becomes the study tool. Clear and then exposure to the most important psychological motives of creativity:

- 1- The plague in literature and The short story.
- 2- The concept of interpretation and Hermeneutics.
- 3 - Motives of creativity and psychology in writing:

A- Last destination:

B- PSokodia

1- **The Plague in Literature and the short story:**

Plague Fiction: In light of the Covid-19 global outbreak, Professor Laura Ashe takes a look back at the literature on the Plague, starting with the 14th century when the Black Death was sweeping the globe. Going from one of the earliest accounts of plague in 1347 through to Samuel Pepys's record of the Great Plague of London in the 1660s, Professor Ashe explores how literature helped us cope with fear and tragedy, the importance of bravery and personal

sacrifice, and whether the words of the past can offer us the comfort and healing that we need now.

The short story, as we know, is an art that is based on reducing the world to a moment of creativity, and building it in a way that is appropriate with the glow of experience: a short story seems to answer something very deep in our nature as if, for the duration of its telling, something special has been created, some essence of our experience extrapolated, some temporary sense has been made of our common, turbulent journey towards the grave and oblivio -Brief fictional prose narrative that is shorter than a novel and that usually deals with only a few characters

2-The concept of interpretation and Hermeneutics:

Is the theory and methodology of interpretation, especially the interpretation of biblical texts, wisdom literature, as well as philosophical texts. As necessary, hermeneutics may include the art of understanding and communication.

The beginnings of hermeneutic phenomenology stem from a German researcher and student of Husserl, Martin Heidegger . Both researchers attempted to pull out the lived experiences of others through philosophical concepts, but Heidegger's main difference from Husserl was his belief that consciousness was not separate from the world but a formation of who we are as living individuals.

Hermeneutic phenomenology stresses that every event or encounter involves some type of interpretation from an individual's background, and that we cannot separate this from an individual's development through life Ihde also focuses on hermeneutic phenomenology within his early work, and draws connections between Husserl and French philosopher: Paul Ricoeur's work in the field, Ricoeur focuses on the importance of symbols and linguistics within hermeneutic phenomenology, Overall, hermeneutic phenomenological research focuses on historical meanings and experiences, and their developmental and social effects on individuals. According to Gadamer, our understanding is not fixed but rather is changing and always indicating new perspectives. The most important thing is to unfold the nature of individual understanding.

Interpretation: is a reading of the writer's psychology, a research in the discourse that fills its voids and linens so that the ambiguous becomes clear, the complex becomes simple, and the omitted becomes mentioned, in a productive work of indications that its author was silent about, and the reader revealed it. Is an old term that began to be used in the circles of theological studies, and it is the set of rules and standards that the interpreter must follow in order to understand the religious text. Then it became, as most thinkers in this field explain, an epistemological and critical act, opening horizons for thinking about religious, philosophical, and literary discourses, undermining the foundations leading to the ossified readings of narrative texts, which recognize the unilateral meaning, and the absolute reading, says Abd al-Rahman al-Tamara in his book (Critique of Criticism Between systematic perception and textual achievement): "Critical work gains its importance, then, from the use

of various epistemological fields, which give critical discourse an exploratory power for narrative works, so that criticism becomes associated with areas of knowledge that are not necessarily critical, so that critical jurisprudence becomes an important entry point to contribute to an evolutionary dynamic produced by the accumulation of critical discourses.”

4. Creativity motives and psychology of writing:

It is very important to know the motives of creativity, the psychology of writing in psychological reality, and the ideological awareness inherent in a mentality that ignites sensations that urge its owner to embody a state of feelings, and to start composing a text pulsing with contradictions, tendencies, and creativity, for it violates the fabric of language in words that distance from truth to imagination. , from the constant to the shifting, from the absent to the present, for a recipient who is also good at diving into this creative self through its lines and spaces to say what was not mentioned, and reveal what the writer could not say.

Perhaps the psychology of writing in men is more subtle and sensitive, and the innate readiness has become latent since that wound in the remnants of oblivion, for feelings that may have been shattered, and the act of writing builds them up again.

Interpretive reading in the psychology of creative writing:

Our model in this study to reveal the psychology of writing and its explanatory implications will be the collection of short stories (confinis) by Salim Betka , this writer who was and still glorifies the image of the educated man free from all restrictions and from all those fragile and misleading narrative structures, and from all those intellectual imbalances. Salim Betka collected in his texts his longing for social justice, and the revolution against injustice and oppression.

Was that desperation and this psychological pain caused by the epidemic behind the choice of titles for his stories?

The speed and acceleration of the days indicates the tension to which the epidemic has drawn the human heart, and an imbalance in the structure of history and the psyche of people, especially its creators. This group falls at a time of existential crisis in which the writer wanted to monitor the number of injuries and deaths and analyze the state of panic that stunned everyone. It is a group linked by a single thread. And it is the idea that there is tension and anxiety about the fate of the world as a result of this pandemic, and the whole group is nothing but a memory stone that is rooted in our minds, just like similar epidemics that wiped out so many people in years past:

a- The Last Destination:

The writer asks through this title: what is the use of life? The title has great symbolism, its interpretation: the grave, as it is the final destination for every human being, scholar and ignorant, disobedient and believer, young or old, rich or poor..., the writer continues to narrate Corona's diaries by mentioning exact dates and hours, and brings us back

to the character of Fatima's sister Suleiman, infected with Corona, after arriving home from France, and her sudden death due to the epidemic.

The writer says in this regard, as if to console himself; man dies without return, and the turn will come for each of us, with or without the epidemic, "the woman will be led alone to the grave... and the tears that flow from the eyes will disappear, and the words will be lost." The grave is open and awaits the body that slowly crawls towards that hole that does not tire of swallowing... May God have mercy on you, Fatima. And because life is still in us, here he explains to us his philosophy of life, which is synonymous with the search for happiness, and he says: I am trying to reach it... like a child running after his ball, almost catching... but it escapes from him to another street. As we seek to understand these texts, we are re-experiencing the mental processes of the text's author, because we proceed from a stable and complete expression.

Nietzsche says: To express the insides of the writer, but by doing so she may betray him, because he will be surprised one day when he sees his collection of stories living her life, completely forgetting him, and bypassing the ideas he said, because another reader with a different psychology has adopted his ideas . Nietzsche also used his psychological analyses to support original theories about the nature of the self and provocative proposals suggesting new values that he thought would promote cultural renewal and improve social and psychological life by comparison to life under the traditional values he criticized.

b-PSokodia:

It is a story reminiscent of the stories of Charles Dickens in his novel *The Bleak House* , in which he talked about the character of its hero, Mr. Crook, who collects books but will never read them. This title is one of ambiguous terms, and it means: the epidermis or an insect that eats book papers. And here we ask why this Title was not written in Arabic? Why does our writer resort to the method of dazzling and suspense, or is he presenting to the recipient his information, knowledge and culture, or does he want to be distinguished from other writers in all his lines and expressions, since his first stories?

The personality of the teacher "Dahman", who is described as a lack of order, and the consequent chaos at all levels, and the impact of this on the psyche of the person himself, and the opinions of those around him, and how difficult it is. We cannot call him a professor, and he is an unbalanced and careless person.

The writer presented deep ideas, closely related to psychology and sociology, ideas that try to reveal the truth about the human soul and its eternal struggle to strive for perfection and gain people's satisfaction. Many of the ideas that we carry and do not apply, the money that we store and do not know where to spend it, the principles that we know and recommend but do not apply what we recommend, and the books that we do not read is the example that our writer wanted to put a red line on, perhaps we explain that by the fact that knowledge and a lot of Knowledge is the best solution for an intelligent and classy life. If the hero of this story took this matter into account, his condition would not have reached such a level of

chaos, as he has five numbers for his phone, his library is scattered, his books and notebooks ... his hair is messy, his fingers are always tapping on his desk, evidence of stress and anxiety, he talks a lot, always A whiny, very irritable, with quick mood swings, he forces everyone to love him, including students, administrators, inspectors, colleagues, and the people of his neighborhood.

It is the writer's psychology and his own creative psychology that prompted him to create this chaotic hero as opposed to that real professor, the truly cultured professor, because life today, especially in a pandemic, is nothing more than a chessboard played by two of these. Its laws only know the names of the pawns.

6. Conclusion:

This group of short stories carries a new idea that revolves around the plague epidemic that swept Algeria, and this group of a critical and satirical nature constitutes an unusual example of this literary genre, which depends on compiling a group of short stories, in a way that makes them convey one message and reinforce a specific meaning. Lessons from the history of plague highlight the importance of cultures, institutions, and contexts in explaining the ways people think and live, the kinds of information available to them, and the kinds of behavior they adopt make a difference. Whether effective or not, the quarantine-confinis-policies that devised and developed the role that political cultures and political institutions played in shaping responses to the plague.

7-Bibliography:

- Gadamer, Hans-Georg (2006), *The Philosophy of Interpretation: Origins, Principles*.
- Zimmermann, Jens (2015). *Hermeneutics: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford University Press.
- Betka, Salim (2020). *Confinis*, Dar Amal for Printing, Publishing and Distribution, New Medina, Tizi Ouzou, ed.
- Al-Tamara, Abdel-Rahman (2017) *Criticism of Criticism between Systematic Conception and Textual Achievement*, Treasures of Knowledge, 1st Edition.
- William Andrew Murray Boyd; *A short history of the short story*.
<https://www.theshortstory.org.uk/downloads/boyd.pdf>
- HDclump," *Plague fiction*", <https://hdclump.com/plague-fiction>, September 15, 2020.
- <https://www.britannica.com/art/short-story>
- Nietzsche, Friedrich W. (1996) [1878]. *Human, All Too Human: a Book for Free Spirits*. Translated by R. J. Hollingdale. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- <https://plato.stanford.edu/index.html>

Questioning Human Romance during Covid-19: A Psychoanalysis of Layliat Ramada by Wassini Laaradj

Imane Chekhnaba
Dr. Moulay Tahar, Saida University

Abstract

Wassini Laaradj was one of the first Arab writers who shared his story Layliat Ramada (Armada's Nights) on social media during the quarantine. This novel is a work of literature for people who wished to reflect throughout the pandemic, hoping that the experience would pass without leaving a lasting emotional impression. The protagonist is a woman who endures the cruelty of her father, her husband's unfairness, and the harshness of existence, yet she still believes in love and refuses to perish. The study aims to shed lights on the pandemic literature and more specifically in the Algerian context by illustrating how Wassini Laardj succeeds in describing the fears and disillusion during that period and how at the end gives hope to a new future. It also involves recognizing many paradoxes that occur in life. Therefore, psychoanalysis is used to analyse the psyche of the protagonist and even though other characters in the novel to see how this difficult period affected their social, political, and economic life.

Keywords: Covid-19, existence, plague literature, Romance, Layliyat Ramada

Introduction

The COVID-19 epidemic has sparked a renewed interest in pandemic literature, reminiscent of a post-modern cultural upheaval. This comeback has gained significant attention due to its extensive impact on several societal layers. Authors have endeavoured to express and document the significant changes that the epidemic has brought about in the worldwide environment. The voices of different literary personalities have expressed diverse aspects of the human experience. Certain authors have opted to portray the profound sadness and suffering caused by the pandemic, including its tragic consequences and loss of human lives. In contrast, other writers have created stories that explore the deeply touching themes of being separated from one's family and loved ones. The literary discourse has transformed into a powerful portrayal of the human condition, capturing the mind's confinement within a foreboding prison, where the constant dread of death stalks each person incessantly.

The literature on epidemics did not originate in the present day, but rather has roots in the distant past. During that era, humanity repeatedly saw the rapid and extensive spread of pandemics as a result of causes such as migration and warfare. These literary pieces were inspired by the subject of epidemics, and they explored the effects of adversity on societies suffering from diseases and tragedies. Writers and authors opt to employ this theme as subject

matter for their works, portraying the apprehension, grief, and repercussions of being apart from loved ones, as well as the dread of mortality. The reason for this is that the writer's perspective is unlike that of an average individual; writers keenly examine even the smallest details and are impacted by events that elicit human emotions. Literary compositions addressing this subject matter frequently contained a tinge of sorrow and effectively conveyed genuine feelings of the people's anguish, utilising the potency of language and techniques to depict the topic.

There are a great number of works and writings in Arabic literature that deal with the subject of epidemics for various reasons. Ibn Battuta's "The Rihla" (The Travels) and Zak Al-Mala'ika's poem "Cholera" are two examples of the kind of literary works that fall under this category. In addition, there are novels such as "Ebola 76" written by the Sudanese author Amir Taj Al-Sir, as well as a great deal of other examples. Furthermore, the concept of epidemics is not absent from the literature of the Western world. Among the literary works that have been produced, Gabriel García Márquez is responsible for the creation of the novel "Love in the Time of Cholera," Edgar Allan Poe is the author of the short tale "The Masque of the Red Death," and Daniel Defoe is the author of the novel "A Journal of the Plague Year," amongst other literary works. The reality of epidemics is depicted in these works in a dramatic manner, and they portray the amount of agony and dread that people go through during times like this.

The interest that literature has shown in showing the difficult conditions that mankind are forced to undergo is demonstrated by these aforementioned masterpieces. A direct connection exists between these situations and literature, which reflects them from a variety of perspectives. Literature frequently places an emphasis on realism by drawing material from the actual experiences of individuals. Because of this, epidemic literature is a type of realistic fiction that came into being as a result of the widespread occurrence of diseases and pandemics, as well as the considerable impact that these phenomena have had on all elements of society, culture, and the economy. In the views of people, the devastation that these illnesses left behind is the most important thing that has happened. When it came to conveying the sentiments of fear and horror, the caravans of the departed, the screams of separation, the helplessness of the sick, the situation of hospitals, and other difficulties brought about by epidemics, writers discovered that words were the most effective medium for portraying this awful reality.

1. Epidemics in Literature

In 2020, the world was taken aback by the swift and unplanned spread of a perilous disease known as the Coronavirus (COVID-19). It rapidly gained global dominance, instilling fear and horror in all nations because to its swift transmission and ease of infection between individuals. Nations encountered profound challenges in identifying efficacious remedies for this epidemic, which emerged as a formidable apparition that afflicted individuals indiscriminately, irrespective of their age or gender. The sole recourse was to enforce a health quarantine, necessitating individuals to remain within their residences and only walk outside when absolutely essential. The closure of public institutions, schools, and universities resulted in the suspension of education, causing life to almost come to a standstill.

Confronted with this arduous situation, writers wielded their pens to articulate and portray the condition of nations and their inhabitants grappling with the weight of the epidemic. Included in the group were individuals who authored poetic works, such as the compilation "A Suspicious Place" by Egyptian poet Mohammed Al-Kafrawy, the poem "Love in the Time of Coronavirus" by Syrian poet Nizar Aabedeen, and the poem "Coronavirus Nights" by Abdullah bin Abduh Numan Al-Awadi. Within the domain of prose, we encounter the short story "Alarm Bell" by the Syrian writer Ibrahim Al-Youssef, the diary "In the Grip of Coronavirus Siege," and the detective book "Like a Corpse" authored by the Moroccan novelist Aicha Al-Basri. Furthermore, there exists the novel "Contagion" authored by the Italian novelist Paolo Giordano. In addition, Elma Walters, an American novelist, published a compilation of short stories titled "This Day a Woman Went Mad in the Supermarket" and "Forbidden Encounters for Fourteen Days." These literary works explored the issue of Coronavirus from many angles, examining various elements of life and capturing the feelings of those who are consumed by fear and panic of the epidemic. Consequently, the Coronavirus served as a catalyst for creative inspiration, prompting writers to create literary works that mirrored the challenging global circumstances. These words not only conveyed the reality, but also converted it into a prominent theme that pervaded the majority of the works released throughout the pandemic.

Each writer portrayed it based on their individual viewpoint and distinctive writing approach. They discussed sentiments of bereavement, the anguish of detachment, the distress endured by patients in medical facilities, the emotions experienced by individuals restricted to their residences due to fear of contagion or adherence to regulations, and the characteristics of the novel lifestyle. Some individuals even explored different geographical regions as a means of seeking refuge from the impending danger of the disease. The literary works covered a wide range of topics, reflecting the writers' observations on numerous events and circumstances throughout this difficult period.

The pandemic caused by the Coronavirus opened up a wide variety of content for literary works, giving authors the opportunity to express their thoughts on political, social, and cultural issues. As a metaphor, they used the pandemic to communicate with the people who were reading the article. Many deficiencies in these areas were brought to light as a result of the pandemic, and literary works that highlighted the epidemic frequently functioned as a critical prism through which to assess the prevailing situation. In literary works, the coronavirus has arisen as a key issue, symbolising a variety of meanings and consequences, and stressing the preeminent role that critique plays in presenting the prevalent situations. Throughout the course of literary works, it evolved into a symbolic point of reference, expressing a wide variety of connotations and allusions.

2. Manifestations of COVID-19 in the Context of *Layliat Ramada*

2.1 The Title

When it comes to drawing readers and choosing a literary text, the title is without a doubt the most crucial factor that attracts the attention of the reader. It also plays a vital role in the selection process. The more attention-grabbing and carefully selected the title is, taking into

account the preferences of the readers, the more likely it is that the title will be a good option for reading. It is positioned at the top of the cover, either at the beginning of the first page or above it. This makes it the preferable location above the central position, which transforms it into a prominent promotional element on the cover of the book. Because it is situated in such a singular spot, it is able to establish an authority over all other words that are spoken. This significance serves as the literary work's identity card, with the purpose of characterising it and providing hints about the content of the work.

Taking this point of view into consideration, the title of the novel "Ramad's Nights" occupies a unique position within the overall composition of the work. As a core value that represents the content, it is displayed on the cover in a significant location. This title, when read from the very beginning, immediately creates a gloomy perspective in the reader, establishing a sense of tension, unease, and grief in the reader. This perception is not the result of random chance; rather, it is the result of the connotations that are linked with the phrases "Ramada's Nights" and the emotional impact that these words have on the people's minds.

By examining the two words, we can uncover their meanings and explore the underlying undertones of the title. "Layaliat" (Nights) represents the correspondence exchanged between the novel's main character, Ramada, and her long-distance partner, Shadi. Within these texts, she chronicles every event that occurs to her, articulating her intense need and longing for him. She has established a regular practice of composing these messages every night, imbued with emotions of anguish, sadness, and remorse. The term "Layaliat" aptly captures these emotions, encompassing elements of darkness, isolation, quiet, and obscurity, thus symbolising the profound anguish and tragic circumstances experienced by the character Ramada.

Moreover, while delving into the intricacies of the storyline and traversing its various realms, it becomes evident that the term "Layl" (night) consistently emerges during instances when the protagonist articulates her anguish and confusion.

I have had numerous nights filled with sorrow and regret, but I choose not to keep track of them, and I have no intention of doing so in the future. They lack significance in my thoughts, overwhelmed with numerical data. They deprived me of the majority of my family members, leaving me isolated in a labyrinth that I can no longer tolerate. (laaradj 2021.p16-17)

This utilisation converts the well-known notion of night from a temporal measurement into a representation of profoundness, enigma, and an inexhaustible wellspring of grief.

Furthermore, Rama's hatred to her name and dislike of it stems from the reflection of what consequences that might mirror on her from that name. She thinks, "Was I such a curse to my parents that they have called me Rama?" as she struggles to come to terms with the fact that her parents had called her Rama. Her eyes, her heart, and her stomach all had a large hole in them. Her stomach was also missing. Despite this, she accepted her name in spite of the psychological and historical connotations that had been attached to it. When this discard is not taken into consideration, the significant relationship that exists between the connotations that the title carries and the content of the text becomes apparent. "In the general picture of the verse

veils, the theme of the epidemic that prevailed around the world at that time and discussions about death, what psychological and physical pain it causes, which led to its strong presence in long, dark nights where people suffer fearfully for themselves and their loved ones from separation and illness," the verse veils are about.

3. COVID-19's Manifestations in the Context of the '*Layaliat Ramada*' Novel:

The passage begins with examining the historical occurrences of pandemics and diseases that have manifested at various points of time around the globe. The narrator emphasises the portrayal of fictional locations that serve as a mirror to actual life, as well as the human toll and fatalities they have resulted in. The narrator states that before to its fragmentation, Kofiland represented vitality and the perpetuation of life, successfully withstanding all pandemics from the first century AD to the present day. This city derived its historical appellations from pandemics and various calamities, as these events resulted in the demise of approximately 25% of its populace (Al-Araj, 2021, p. 7).

Covid Land is depicted as a metropolis heavily impacted by COVID-19, with the novel focusing on the overall topic of COVID-19 and specifically highlighting the key issue of 'Korona'. This theme dominates the events and talks of various individuals throughout the narrative. The novel revolves around the fundamental motif of Corona, and the subject of Corona is intricately linked to other motifs discussed throughout the novel:

3.1 Epidemic and Death

Pandemics and the human losses they have caused are mentioned at the beginning of the poem. This is because Pandemics have been responsible for the deaths of a significant number of people. Due to the fact that it is one of the blood killers that leaves behind pain and suffering, the pandemic is considered to be connected to the themes that pertain to the theme of death. In the poetry, this is made very clear by the fact that death emerges as the primary concern that all of the people in the story share. The reason for this is that the pandemic was spreading like a wildfire and taking the lives of people throughout the world. Specifically, one of the characters, a heroine, conveys it by saying, "They called today the beginning of lockdown, so they said." This stanza is where the brutal reality finds its representation. They don't give us any options here. After taking control of the city, COVID decided to live in a citizen who was unlike any other. It is responsible for the lives of fifty million souls. According to Al-Araj (2021), chapter 13, page 13, "You won't know how to behave before its strength." The COVID-19 virus has gained widespread attention and has seized full control of people's lives, and it has a firm grasp on their souls. Because the pandemic is the primary focus of the verse, the concept of death is brought to the forefront in a significant manner.

Death, as is known, includes connotations of endings, cessation of life, stillness. It stands in contra-complement to life, movement, and evolution. Mostly, it is related to the theme of loyalty because "Loyalty is the only history people remember, for it does not kill individuals, but it will be like a wave when it sweeps away everything in its path, leaving nothing behind, even rugged paths" (Al-Araj, 2021, p.12). Therefore, the theme of loyalty related to death and

aftermath left behind in hearts filled with suffering and sorrow till their bellies' desire life would be a recurring motif in literary texts. They believe in loyalty to an enemy threatening that life, so they continually feel and smell it as Rimada proclaims: "I can't escape from death even for a moment; its smell runs ahead of him. I smell it alive, right in my own home. In the living rooms and under the tables. And over the tables. In the kitchen. In every room" (Al-Araj, 2021, p.24). Therefore, death is preoccupation and also an unceasing source of anxiety. The various characters in the story have varied opinions concerning death. Others perish to die for they had long lost a lover, relative, or dear friend of their life and become synonymous with those living dead, losing the taste of living. Rimada posits that, after the loss, life changes to wails of sorrow: "I am not afraid of death; I am so afraid of its smell and the forms it might take. demurely clutching my agony and death until they become long and drawn out" (Al-Araj, 2021, p.25). These are the pains that accumulate and renew every time someone close to them dies or someone dear to them.

3.2 Epidemic and Love

The duality of love and awareness is considered one of the prominent themes in pandemic literature and in texts that address the theme of awareness. "Lilyat Ramada" revolves around this duality. The events of the story follow the protagonist, Ramada, and her lover, Shadi, as they experience a love story that is eventually disrupted due to awareness. Shadi contracts the coronavirus and is forced to leave Algeria for treatment in Vienna, which leads to their separation. Ramada is deeply saddened by this separation and experiences a genuine tragedy to the extent that she is unable to write to him or express her inner pain. She conveys her feelings by saying: 'Whenever I tried to write to you, the whiteness of the paper tormented me. This whiteness has become so long, and I no longer have any solution but silence and withdrawal. Awareness spreads at a terrifying pace every time I hear the ambulance sirens tearing through the calm of the night. I felt like death's companion. The lamentations multiplied, reaching my ears whenever I dozed off. The number of deaths reached hundreds and then thousands every day.' (Al-Arj, W., 2021, p. 33). The separation also turns into a deadly awareness that the protagonist cannot bear. Nevertheless, the flame of hope for reuniting with her lover one day remains alive, which motivates her to defy the challenging circumstances that she faces in the midst of the spreading coronavirus."

3.3 Epidemic and Fear

Furthermore, epidemic has given rise to a sense of fear in everyone. Feelings of fear have become the dominant emotions in people's lives: fear of death, fear of separation, fear of the deaths of loved ones. This feeling became apparent in Ramada's messages to Shadi. In one of them, she says, 'This fear suddenly invaded everyone, without prior warning, revealing all our weaknesses and hidden illnesses. Death is no longer distant; we drink it every morning with the coffee we vomit at the doorstep out of fear that COVID may have clung to us.' (Al-Arj, W., 2021, p. 21). This struggle that the protagonist is experiencing inside the novel highlights the harshness of reality and the profound impact of awareness on all levels, from the psychological impact on individuals to its social, cultural, economic, and political effects. epidemic is no

longer just a disease but has transformed into a destructive war that violates all boundaries without exception.

Fear can also turn into a deadly illness. Some have died due to fear, not due to epidemic, as Ramada mentions: 'Many nights have passed, during which I lost many of my neighbors. They died not because of awareness, but they trembled in fear of its darkness, boasting about knowing all its details, even until the awaited vaccine was discovered.' (Al-Arj, W., 2021, p. 17). This criticizes those with weak spirits who succumbed to fear and lost their lives because of it, despite the available alternatives, such as taking necessary precautions and committing to quarantine. In contrast, the protagonist appears as a defiant figure who is unafraid of awareness and transcends the idea of death caused by it. She says,

'I haven't contracted the virus like others, and I'm not afraid of it because we have no control over death. But like many, I've decided not to surrender to this silent killer easily, not to grant it the pleasure of my death. I remain vigilant, as if COVID is lurking for me alone. This exceptional circumstance has made me unusually calm; I don't get angry about anything, not even being exposed to infection and death at any moment.' (Al-Arj, W., 2021, p. 3).

She serves as a model of strength and resilience that everyone should look up to.

Conclusion:

The theme of illness is manifested in "Layali Ramada" in a distinct manner, transitioning from the cover to the text. The cover, with its title and expressive image, contains symbols that allude to the main content and its principal theme. Similarly, the content expresses itself through events, secret scenes, and dialogues between characters about topics related to illness, revealing a tragic reality experienced by the world due to the mysterious virus known as "Corona."

The novel does not merely present fictional events and characters but reflects reality, embodying it in all its details. Everything included in the narrative is derived from the period when the Corona virus spread and the suffering humanity endured due to this illness. The novel employs illness symbolically, carrying numerous connotations that unveil a corrupted reality on various societal, cultural, social, and economic levels.

Illness in the novel is not the sole subject explored; it serves as a gateway leading to other topics. It is utilized as a tool to convey sharp messages and criticisms symbolically. "Layali Ramada" is a novel that accompanied the era and expressed it in a literary manner, thereby forming a rich world linked to a reality inseparable from it. It stands as one of the examples added to the shelves of what is known as Epidemic literature.

References :

1. Ramadan, Ali H. (2021). "Manifestations of Koro in Contemporary Poetry: A Critical Study." Turkey: Arab-Turkish Linguistic Exchange Forum.
2. Al-Hajmari, A. (1996). "Text Thresholds: Structure and Significance." Casablanca: Al-Rabita Company.
3. Ashbhoun, A. (2011). "Title in Arabic Novels." Damascus: Simulation for Studies, Publishing, and Distribution.
4. Al-Araj, W. (2021). "Layaliat Ramada." Algeria: Baghdad Publications..
5. Abdel Salam, A. (1999). "Principles of Rulings in the Interests of People." Beirut: Dar Al-Kutub Al-Ilmiyah.
6. Mohammed Al-Safrani, M. (2008). "Visual Composition in Modern Arabic Poetry (1950-2004)." Saudi Arabia: Literary Club for Riyadh.
7. Mazhar Saleh, Z. (2012). "Symbolism of Color in the Quran and Sufi Thought." Damascus: Dar Al-Zaman for Printing, Publishing, and Distribution.
8. Belabed, A. (2008). "Thresholds (Gérard Genette from Text to Context)." Algeria: Publications of Difference.