

Global Solidarity for Resilience against Covid-19: Lawrence Wright's *The End of October*

Dr Tarik Ziyad Gulcu

Lecturer, Ankara University, Turkey

Abstract

Lawrence Wright's fictional and non-fictional works help readers to gain insight into his anxieties about the issues which he finds problematic in the present century context. He critically elaborates on the sense of insecurity in his works. While he dwells on the causes of 9/11 terrorist attacks in *The Looming Tower: Al-Qaeda's Road to 9/11* (2007), he deals with its traumatic effects on both American and global society in *The Terror Years* (2006). Wright also discusses the sense of insecurity with reference to mass murders within US borders in *God Save Texas* (2018). However, different from these non-fictional works, Lawrence Wright concentrates on an invisible global threat, i.e. COVID-19 pandemic, fictionalising its name as Kongoli virus in his first and only novel, *The End of October* (2020). In the work, the rapid contagion of the virus across the world after the pilgrimage in Mecca despite the protagonist, Dr Henry Parson's warnings to bring quarantine across the city and Saudi Arabia, lockdown decisions in America, people's failure to meet daily needs and the dramatic losses in economy across the USA exemplify its effects on the society, whereas Henry's wife, Jill's failure to visit her mother in the care home signifies the inhumane effects of Kongoli virus. Problematising the disputes between countries, particularly Russia and the USA, about the emergence of the virus, Wright's novel invites reading for its emphasis on the need for global solidarity and hence resilience against the pandemic.

Keywords: contemporary American fiction; invisible threat; Kongoli; pandemic; sense of insecurity