

Women As “The Fittest” For A New Post-Pandemic World Order: Christina Sweeney-Baird’s *The End of Men*

Dr. Tarik Ziyad Gulcu

Ankara University, Turkey

Abstract

As a major invisible global threat causing unprecedented disruptions and restrictions in daily life all over the world, COVID-19 pandemic has been among the most popular subject matters of contemporary fiction. At this point, the first work of fiction focusing on COVID-19 is Lawrence Wright’s *The End of October* (2020), in which coronavirus is fictionalised as the Kongoli breaking out in Indonesia and spreading all over the world. Elaborating on the effects of the virus on daily life, Wright puts emphasis on the need for global solidarity to combat the virus and save the global society. However, different from Wright’s work, Christina Sweeney-Baird discusses the issue of pandemic, reinterpreting COVID-19 from a futuristic perspective, envisaging a post-pandemic world order dominated by women, with men’s death due to a lethal virus showing its effects all over the world in her debut novel, *The End of Men* (2022). In the work, the deaths of Fraser McAlpine, Catherine’s husband, Anthony and the wealthy Mr Tai signify men’s failure in adaptation to circumstances of the pandemic, while women’s survival, the domination of once male-dominated jobs by women, Catherine’s solo impregnation by donor sperm and the use of apps for dating and love just between women embody females as the “fittest species” for survival to bring a new world order dominated by women. Thus, Sweeney-Baird’s work invites reading for the evolutionary transformation of the global society due to a lethal pandemic from male-dominated to female-dominated system with reference to Darwin’s theory of evolution.

Keywords: contemporary British fiction, COVID-19, apocalypse, evolution, female-dominated society