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من العزلة إلى الإبداع: أثر جائحة كورونا في الكتابة الأدبية الإنجليزية

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كلية التربية للعلوم الصرفة/ جامعة الموصل

الملخص

أحدثت جائحة كوفيد-19 أكبر اضطراب في أنظمة التعليم في تاريخ البشرية، حيث أثرت على ما يقرب من 1.6 مليار متعلم في أكثر من 200 دولة. وأثر إغلاق المدارس والمؤسسات وغيرها من أماكن التعلم على أكثر من 94% من طلاب العالم. وقد أحدث هذا تغييرات واسعة النطاق في جميع جوانب حياتنا. وأحدثت سياسات التباعد الاجتماعي وتقييد الحركة اضطراباً كبيراً في الممارسات التعليمية التقليدية. ويمثل إعادة فتح المدارس بعد تخفيف القيود تحدياً آخر مع تطبيق العديد من إجراءات التشغيل القياسية الجديدة. خلال فترة قصيرة من جائحة كوفيد-19، شارك العديد من الباحثين أعمالهم في مجال الأعمال الأدبية بطرق مختلفة. وقد تأثر الإنتاج الفني المتواصل والغزير للفنانين في المسرح والشعر والفنون التشكيلية والموسيقى والأفلام وغيرها. ويعكس محتوى أعمالهم، الذي يُعد بمثابة مرآة، وإن كانت خيالية، للحدث التاريخي والعصوري الذي يضطر الناس إلى عيشه، التغييرات التي أحدثتها تجربة الجائحة. لقد أشعلت جائحة كوفيد-19 شرارة جهود أدبية؛ وهذه الجهود مستمرة، وستظل ندهشنا بتلخيصها المراحل المختلفة لحدث تاريخي بالغ الأهمية. تهدف هذه الورقة إلى تقديم دراسة شاملة حول تأثير جائحة كوفيد-19 على المهتمين بتوثيق الأعمال الأدبية وكيفية تعاملها مع العزلة. ©2025AJHPS.

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From Isolation to Creativity: The Impact of the Corona "Pandemic on English Literary Writing"

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Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic has created the largest disruption education systems in human history, affecting nearly 1.6 billion learners in more than 200 countries. Closures of schools, institutions and other learning spaces have impacted more than 94% of the world's student population. This has brought far-reaching changes in all aspects of our lives. Social distancing and restrictive movement policies have significantly disturbed traditional educational practices. Reopening of schools after relaxation of restriction is Another challenge with many new standard operating procedures put in place. Within a short span of the COVID-19 pandemic, many researchers have shared their works on literary works in different ways. theater, poetry, Plastic arts, music, film, and other literary genres have all been impacted by the artists' ceaseless and prolific artistic output. The content of their works, which are like a mirror, albeit fictional, of the historical and epochal event that people are compelled to live through, reflects the changes brought about by the pandemic experience. The theme of the Covid-19 pandemic has given rise to literary endeavors; These endeavors are ongoing and will continue to amaze us by encapsulating the several phases of a momentous historical moment event. event. This paper aims to provide a comprehensive study on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on those who are interested in documenting them Literary works and how they treat isolation.

Keywords: *Pandemic, literature, isolation, creativity, effect.*

1. Introduction

The global pandemic of COVID-19 spread worldwide and infected almost all the nations and territories of the globe. It was initially detected in December 2019 in Wuhan, China. The countries of the globe suggested that people adopt responsive care. Hand hygiene, facial masks, social distancing, and avoiding mass congregations and gatherings have been public care strategies. Lockdown and home quarantine measures have been adopted as where measures required to flatten the curve and contain the spread of the disease (Sintema, 2020: 12).

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed various aspects of human life today, especially in the field of literature. This requires all elements of literature to adapt. COVID-19 will revolutionize the way writers create the future in four ways. To begin with, all global writing processes, as well as

policies, are intertwined. Second, the role of artists in developing writing practice must be redefined. Third, emphasizing the importance of life skills in the future, and lastly allowing a wider spectrum of technology to be used to assist literature. The COVID-19 pandemic has provided us with an opportunity to lay the groundwork for bringing in digital writing (Dhawan, 2020: 85 & Palden, 2020: 76).

To sum up, the COVID-19 pandemic, beginning in late 2019 and spreading around the globe in 2020, introduced unparalleled social transformation. One of the changes was the literary world, which experienced a profound transformation. Writers, typically trapped at home by lockdowns, they were alone in a manner that paradoxically challenged creativity. Nevertheless, this study discusses how the pandemic impacted English literary prose, looking at themes, style, and the evolving writer-reader relationship during the period. It also highlights the possibilities and challenges of online and continuous innovations during the COVID-19 pandemic is summarized.

2. Research Question

Writers, during the pandemic, were grappling with a new reality that significantly influenced the themes in their work. Isolation, Mortality, and resilience were more overarching themes as writers tried to convey the common human experience in the midst of a crisis (Patchett, 2021: 89). The following are points of interest:

Loneliness and Isolation: The enforced solitude led to most writers venturing into loneliness and the desire for human interaction. Characters in the fiction often portrayed the reader's feelings of isolation, offering solace and understanding.

Vulnerability and Death: The pandemic brought about a heightened sensitivity to the vulnerability of life, and authors started thinking about death. This thinking had the leaning of writing poetry that was as much feeling as thought **Resilience and Hope:** Faced with adversity, hope and resilience were the two overarching themes that emerged strongly. Reading was inspirational in the sense that it demonstrated the resilience of the human spirit to live against all odds. The pandemic changed how writers reacted to writing. Out of their normal routine, writers discovered that they could work differently and in different places as noted by (Erdrich, 2021: 74) as below:

- ❖ Virtual Writing Communities: Meetings in temporary person, writers looked for virtual sites to connect with other writers. virtual workshops,
- ❖ Readings, and criticism sessions flourished, and there was a sense of camaraderie and cohesiveness.
- ❖ Unconventional Schedules: Upset of conventional schedules allowed writers to have more flexible writing schedules. Some writers adored the extra freedom, but others struggled to remain focused amidst distractions.
- ❖ Digital Tools and Platforms: Increased use of digital tools facilitated the research, writing, and dissemination processes. Writers used software and online resources to increase productivity and creativity.
- ❖ Moreover, Allende (2020: 28) believes that the sector was extremely Affected by the pandemic but also experienced revolutionary changes that can have long-lasting effects:
- ❖ Boom in Audiobooks and E-books: With physical bookstores closed down and supply lines severed, the demand for audiobooks and e-books witnessed a major upsurge. Not only were these convenient substitutes for readers, but They also led to experiments in form from the writers.
- ❖ Online Book Launches and Events: Authors bypassed the restrictions by Conducting online book launches and presenting at virtual literary festivals. They helped to expand audience numbers and maximize accessibility, as Readers everywhere could join in.
- ❖ Self-Publishing Opportunities: The pandemic saw the rise of self-publishing, and authors sought greater control over their books and publication schedules. This market democratization allowed authors to Publish their work into an international marketplace. But the success Sections will elaborate these challenges in more details.

2.1 Isolation as a Creative Catalyst

Rowling (1997: 26) notes that the term isolation is generally thought of as a negative state, often leading to loneliness and despair. Isolation is argued in this paper to be an underappreciated catalyst for creativity. Through supplying individuals with the quiet they must have to brood deeply and allow them to form personalized opinions, and constructing a distraction-free environment, seclusion can advance creative output as well as novel thinking. Exclusion, being commonly considered ill, can serve as a

valuable agent for originality. Due to the state of constant involvement and social encounter in today's hyper-connected state, individual creative output can become stifled as a

As a result, making periods of solitude a phenomenon. There is a general Consensus that solitude creates the unique possibility to delve into your thoughts and emotions, generate fresh ideas, and create environments for intensive work. Considering renowned historic examples when successful people achieved fame and worked on an incredibly high level, remaining at the same time isolated from others around them, one has the chance to fully Understand the incredible force of loneliness in fostering creativity

(Swafford, 2014: 17).

On this basis, Hoffman (2016: 39) maintains that seclusion can yield important psychological benefits that can render individuals more innovative. Individuals work and remain alone feel more

concentration and focus of mind. For example, artist Henri Matisse included himself in the south of France to unleash his creativity. Unencumbered by the distractions of the art world, Matisse was free to experiment with color and form, producing some of his most revolutionary work. Psychological research confirms; Studies show that quiet reflection is linked to enhanced cognitive ability and creative problem-solving potential.

It is only such periods that can evoke what the psychologist Csikszentmihalyi (1990: 76) has described as 'flow,' a state where by one becomes completely immersed in their creative process. For McCauley (2019: 74), the solitude then became the dominating theme in writing during the pandemic, a state shared by all the confinement. Authors like Patchett (2021: 93) in her essay novel *'These Precious Days'* , she describes how geographically Solitude resulted in introspection and a deeper probing of the individual anecdotes. Patchett (2021: 40), in her article, describes relationships and memories about herself, which brought to light the redemptive quality of loneliness that lockdown brought about.

Furthermore, novels such as *'The Pull of the Stars'* by Emma Donoghue mix the concepts of space and time, explaining how loneliness creates human experiences. Through analysis, it is safe to say that loneliness was not only a setback but fertile ground for writers to delve into their minds, developing countless introspective novels characterized by

emotional depth and existential dilemmas. Hence, many writers found unexpected inspiration in the loneliness imposed by the pandemic.

The author Matt Haig, for instance, noted in his reflections that the quiet allowed a sharper focus, leading him to pen his novel, *'The Midnight Library.'* Generally, writers like him outlined how the questions of life arising from world uncertainty fueled their tales, urging them to explore deeper philosophical inquiries into life and purpose. This phenomenon illustrates the principle that solitude can be a double-edged sword—whereas a few thrived in such an environment, developing insight and a renewed sense of purpose, others battled with creativity (Haig, 2020: 156).

2.2 Modern Perspectives on Isolation and Creativity

In modern society, the relationship between isolation and creativity has come under the limelight with remote working culture and the digital technology boom. Even the trend of 'silent retreats' has been on the rise among artists wanting to regain concentration and reconnect with their creative energies.

For instance, tech startup entrepreneurs want to withdraw into cabins or retreats to build and strategize in isolation away from urban noise (Donoghue, 2020: 48). This article posits that such careful isolation can lead to greater creativity and innovative thinking, as individuals are encouraged to move away from distractions and immerse themselves in the process of creative thinking. Furthermore, psychology suggests that periods of solitude can enable increased identification with one's values and interests, leading to more authentic and richer creative production. Isolation has pushed writers to delve further into themes of isolation, both based on the individual as well as collective experiences.

For instance, in his novel *'The Overstory,'* Powers (2018) talks about the relationship between nature and human beings through the prism of isolation from lockdowns. It reveals how social distancing has rearranged the perspectives of individuals in terms of connectivity, both with themselves and the external world. These thematic studies help readers connect to the worlds of emotions created by such writers and hence foster empathy and comprehension in times of adversity.

Loneliness induced by the pandemic has led to greater bonding between writers and their readers. Authors have moved more towards online reading and social media to share their content and have direct relationships with their readers. The establishment of online literary

festivals like the 'Digital Hay Festival' is evidence that writers have catered to such a change through a modification in their scope to make them susceptible to transcending geographical space to reach a world audience. With this added proximity,

Writers have been able to access the aggregated sense of solitude felt by the reading ship to provide them with rich literary being regardless of physical space (Festival, 2021: 124).

2.3 Restoring Human Contact through Narrative

When the pandemic became wireless, English literary output had a fresh Emphasis on humankind and community, mirroring society's effort to tread the thin line between solitude and being together. Importantly, Ross Gay's 'The Book of Delights' consists of short essays that revel in the little things in life, highlighting the importance of collective human experience. Gay's musings follow how relation constitutes the very center of resilience in times of adversity, where readers are invited to cherish collective humankind even in times of travel. In addition, the anthology 'COVID-19: An Anthology of Pandemic Poetry' brings together different voices that convey the shared suffering and hope in their poetry, illustrating the cathartic role of literature in collective healing. As evident from the above examples, the literary Responses to the pandemic extend beyond individual accounts of isolation and address the very concept of togetherness, inviting the reader to rethink interconnectedness in a world falling apart.

It is worth mentioning that the pandemic created a wave of innovation in literary fiction, with writers trying new styles and forms. One such obvious example is the creation of the 'pandemic novel,' where writers such as Erdrich (2021) in 'The Sentence' have woven the realities of quarantine and social unrest into their narratives. These accounts have a tendency to reduce the line between fact and fiction since writers are struggling to deal with them lives amid a pandemic globally.

This development even reaches into prose fiction; poets like Gorman (2021) have even used poetry as a very effective means in their efforts to describe the complexities of life under the pandemic, thus testing to the Vibrancy of literary forms in times of isolation. Alternatively, the majority of authors wrestled with severe mental health issues that were exacerbated by the pandemic.

Lockdown, fear, and ignorance about COVID-19 precipitated increased depression and anxiety. For instance, poet Amanda Gorman

candidly described how hard it was for her to maintain her mental well-being During the times of lockdown. The pressure to create under such difficult Conditions naturally led to overall creative paralysis in most authors since They were confronted with an avalanche of suffocating emotions that overwhelmed their thinking processes. The above observation reveals the critical nature of mental balance in the artistic process, exemplifying how External crises can strongly influence art.

2.4 Introspection and Self-Discovery

Isolation allows individuals to get intensely into their feelings and ideas, permitting a sort of self-reflection that often leads to self-discovery and artistic breakthroughs. Rowling (2012: 98) here emphasizes the importance of solitude in her creative process, stating that it allows for the Freedom to think and come up with new ideas. While in his isolation on a Solitary Island, the painter Henri Matisse created some of his most iconic Paintings, exemplifying how loneliness can facilitate self-reflection and artistic creativity. Not only does this reflective process allow one to probe the inner realm, but it also triggers original thoughts that may not have arisen amidst social chaos.

One of the most significant advantages of isolation is the higher level of concentration and productivity it provides. By removing distractions, Individuals can focus on their creative work for more uninterrupted hours.

Rowling (2012: 67) famously penned the initial draft of the Harry Potter books in a café while raising a family; yet it was whilst she spent time alone that she finally found her writing voice. Solitude eliminates other demands on attention, and therefore, one can fully immerse oneself in the task. Such Intense focus mostly leads to large-volume outputs and creative ideas since the person can explore deep into ideas without interruption from regular distractions. Isolation can also provide a space for creative thinking by freeing individuals from the pressures of regular ideas created by collective settings.

Thinkers are likely to have more opportunities to take bold imaginations and explore unusual ideas, resulting in new outputs. The philosopher and Scientist Albert Einstein, who often used to need solitude for thinking, famously declared that isolation was essential for his thought process. His theory of relativity, for instance, evolved during an episode of intense isolated thinking, illustrating how isolation can lead to revolutionary ideas that revolutionize entire fields. This kind of thinking

outside the box is Usually stifled in group settings, where conformity is valued over innovation.

Moreover, McCauley (2019: 49) explains that solitude can provide a space for self-reflection, facilitating a deeper understanding of personal thoughts and emotions. For example, philosopher Henry David Thoreau retired famously to Walden Pond and, in the midst of nature, produced his Magnum opus 'Walden' in solitude. In Thoreau's case, solitude worked to sift his thoughts and make him interact differently with the world, and thus it happened that he came up with very penetrating observations regarding nature and society. These self-reflective moments alone will lead to more Clarity and ideas, therefore enhancing one's output creatively. For example, See the following subsections.

- The Solitude Mental Clarity Isolation presents an opportunity for mental Clarity as individuals get the opportunity to fine-tune their creative potential. For instance, author Virginia Woolf would usually retreat to the countryside to live in her writing lodge to shield herself from normal distractions.

Being alone enabled her to pen some of her most famous works, such as 'Mrs. Dalloway' and 'To the Lighthouse.' Seclusion from stimuli around Allows focused thought, under which ideas can form and be further developed. Woolf's employing of solitude is a model of how the distance from the social maelstrom can serve to liberate the intellectual potential of the mind (Hoffman, 2016: 65).

- Depth of Thinking and Introspection McCauley (2019: 76) says that silence and solitude can bring in an age of deep thinking, so artists can sort through their thoughts and access deeper emotional reservoirs. Artist Edward Hopper has famously captured themes of loneliness and loneliness in his paintings, which were based on his own feelings of solitude.

His paintings, like 'Nighthawks,' portray isolated moments that connect with audiences at an emotional level. Isolation, through the search of Introspection in art, not only helps the artist look within but also produces it works that speak universally. Therefore, Hopper's works showcase how Isolation enriches the inner world of the artist, resulting in an intensely resonant works.

- Innovation Through Isolation Exclusion can also be a rich breeding ground for creativity, providing individuals with the freedom to think creatively outside the box. For instance, composer Ludwig van Beethoven became increasingly isolated due to his growing deafness, but this adversity

sparked his creativity, and he composed revolutionary works such as his late string quartets. His confinement from the world compelled him to try classical music form to extremes, creating break-through which transformed the genre. The Case of Beethoven highlights that isolation is not only stifles creativity but compels one to dazzling heights in the face of adversity (Swafford, 2014: 76).

- Facilitating Innovative Perspectives Swafford (2014: 76) describes isolation as giving the individual the opportunity to form their own personal perspective which may be influenced by their surroundings when they are in social interaction. For instance, the artist Edvard Munch spent extended periods of time in isolation creating such pieces as 'The Scream,' which represents the emotional anguish he was experiencing.

In isolation, Munch was able to convey his inner turmoil through his work and created new forms of depicting human emotion. This implies that Isolation allows one to experiment with unconventional thoughts and articulate them in innovative ways, expanding the limits of conventional creative expressions.

- Undisturbed Concentration on Creative Endeavors: isolation allows for Concentrated effort, essential to any creative activity. Important, Renowned writer Rowling wrote a lot of 'Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone' in cafes at times of personal crisis; However, it was in quieter moments at home that she created her most intricate plots.

The absence of social distractions during her more isolated times allowed her to become fully absorbed in her storytelling without interruption. This indicates that seclusion can provide an appropriate environment for long periods of creativity and lead to the production of complex and creative pieces (Lindström, 2010: 49).

2.5 Digital Connectivity and Community Building

The pandemic hastened the transition from the traditional publishing modes to online platforms, which allowed writers to disseminate their work near and far and engage with their readers in real-time. Sites like Wattpad and social media sites were the primary incubators of new writers at this time. Because they were provided with a platform on which they could share their stories without being constrained by geography. For instance, Taylor Jenkins Reid's novel 'Malibu Rising' went viral on Instagram, demonstrating the potency of social media in promoting literary voices and opening up access to books. Also, live readings and virtual workshops

enabled writers to remain in touch with readers, creating community amidst the restrictions brought about by social distancing. These changes portend a paradigm shift in literature where by digital platforms not only compete but complement the traditional forms, hence changing the way literature is created, shared, and consumed Voong (2020: 87) posits that the COVID-19 pandemic has reshaped our lives world in numerous ways, thereby bringing a profound impact on the way individuals perform various activities, including writing. Even as the pandemic has brought challenges and uncertainties, it has also provided Writers with isolation and time necessary to focus more on them creative writing. The pandemic has also seen a large shift towards digital platforms, which united writers and poets in novel and innovative forms. Online writing workshops, writing groups, and virtual literary festivals became the norm, fostering a sense of community that transcended geographical locations. For example, platforms like Zoom and social media Provided a platform for sharing work and receiving feedback, the linchpin of any creative process. They used social media to connect with more people and receive feedback on their works-in-progress. Online collaboration and sharing of ideas have given new lease of life to the careers of many writers, leading to accidental collaborations and wider visibility for new literary voices. In the wake of pandemic difficulties, the majority of writers were Forced to turn to the web, modifying their working routine and broadening their horizon.

Online readings, virtual workshops, and social media engagement were major sources of inspiration and communication. For example, most writers performed live readings on Instagram and Zoom, not only establishing a community but also propelling innovation in terms of how literature is delivered and consumed. Such resilience is a silver lining of the pandemic storm, demonstrating that writers were not only learning to adapt to change but adapting along with it and reimagining their craft (Haig, 2020: 67). The extended quarantine time has also provided the poets an opportunity for self- reflection, which normally brings about personal and innovative growth. The Uncertainty and climate change brought about by the pandemic have People are summoned to document their experience, and the result is literature that tests to humanity and resilience. For instance, the collection of poems 'Things I Learned from the COVID-19 Pandemic' is presented with a high praise varied set of perspectives and personal experiences that are a result of this moment in time. Poets have employed their art not only as a means of expression but even as a form of

therapeutic expression through which they are able to reconcile with how they felt regarding the crisis caused by the pandemic. This combination of art and self-enlightenment highlights the gigantic impact that the pandemic of corona has had on literature, which has bred a generation of authors that are more attuned to their own voice (Allende, 2020: 65).

2.6 Changes in Style

With pandemic, authors actually change their writing style because of the case as demonstrated below:

- **Greater Rely on Web Platforms:** As there were less interactions to face to face, web platforms such as Zoom, Google Meet, and Microsoft Teams It emerged as the inescapable option for expert and individual communication. It had a significant impact on writing habits. Emails, chat, and collaborative documents (such as Google Docs) ruled communication, which incorporated brevity and conciseness in as a necessity (Hargis & O'Brien, 2020: 78).
- **Tone and informality:** Corporate mail and messages were becoming informal in tone, mainly due to the fact that the telework setting was not formal. Personal anecdotes, emojis, and colloquial expressions were more welcomed, with instances of a need for human touch in remote places.
Formal blocks of communication were removed from the majority of work environments, and more person-to-person contact was enabled (Al-Shayeb, 2021: 45).
- **Pattern of Research and Publication Changes:** There was an overnight shift in scholarly writing due to the pandemic. Scholars responded instantly to the issues of COVID-19, changing the publication pattern. Methods of research became interactive and emergent, targeting the immediate concerns of society. Greater awareness gave rise to more interdisciplinary research, producing hybridized patterns of writing as scholars brought in methods and perspectives
- **The Emergence of Open Access:** Throughout the pandemic, there was an enormous increase in demand for open access publication. The revolution transformed the way one used to write conventionally with emphasis on making it accessible and sharing knowledge at no cost (Al-Shayeb, 2021: 45).

Conclusion

The coronavirus pandemic certainly left an indelible mark on English literary literature. Through its influence on themes, changes in writing practices, and the transformation of the publishing industry, the pandemic reshaped the literary sphere.

Moving forward, the innovative resilience displayed under such trying Circumstances will keep influencing and defining the literature of tomorrow. That is, the pandemic has indeed unleashed conflicting effects on writers, From upper levels of fertile imagination to profound psychological trauma.

This duplicity is not only indicative of the duality of the human experience of war but also of the persistence of the act of writing.

Though the literary community is still trying to come to terms with these issues, it is increasingly evident that both creative production and mental Well-being must take priority for further development in the craft of storytelling.

The pandemic has indeed brought forth divergent impacts on writers, bridging distinguished realms of flourishing creativity and profound psychological distress. This duality showcases not only the complexities of the human experience during turmoil but also the adaptability intrinsic to the art of writing.

Therefore, we note that literature plays an effective role in addressing societal issues through its literary tools. It has been and continues to be a mirror of society, shedding light on social, political, and economic issues, and contributing to building awareness through literary criticism, which encourages readers to increase their awareness of contemporary issues through stories and characters. Literature is not only a tool for conveying the world's suffering, but it is also an important means of dialogue that opens up discussion, stirs emotions, and encourages change. Therefore, we consider it a very important and influential tool in societal life.

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