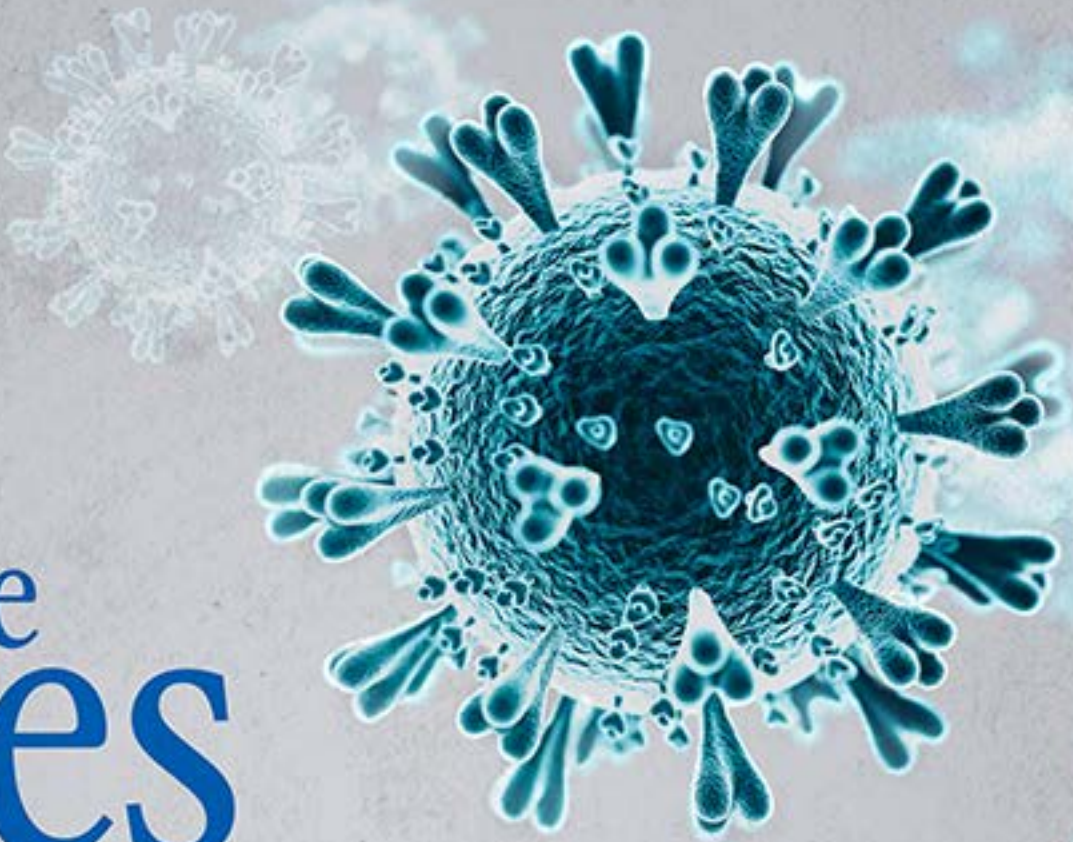


CORONAVIRUS



The
Eyes
of
Darkness:

Unmasking

Dean Koontz's Prophecy



1. Introduction

It seems that the year 2020 started together with the coronavirus. The first reports of a virus in the city of Wuhan, in central China, started a worldwide alert for the spread of a type of virus unknown until then. Travelers have contributed to the spread of contagion, and soon different countries have begun to report cases. In some of these countries, like Italy or South Korea, the spread of the virus was really fast.

The era of communication and technology allows news and alarms such as the emergence of a new virus to travel and multiply at rapid speed. At the same time, all kinds of rumors circulate. Besides providing the important information, the WHO (World Health Organization) has taken the time to clarify or deny these rumors. There are also lots of photographs and videos being shared through the social networks. To mention just one example, a video showing Chinese with chinstraps that fall dead in the middle of a street, circulated worldwide. Also, amazing prophecies or coincidences are spread by the Internet, Twitter or instant message apps: it seems that a brilliant mind has accurately anticipated the existence of this virus.

One of the most “viralized” cases was that of the novel *The Eyes of Darkness*, written by the American Dean Koontz, published in 1981. In this thriller, the author supposedly described a lethal respiratory virus, spread worldwide in 2020 and (the most amazing thing) he called the virus “Wuhan-400”, precisely with the name of the Chinese city where the first cases of coronavirus were reported. Along with this supposed “prophecy” of the new coronavirus, several others have appeared: books, movies, predictions. The anticipation of a tragic future in which humanity (or some city or country) is eventually devastated by the spread of a plague, has been recurring throughout history. It seems that, in addition, we are fascinated by the idea of “prophecy”: what hap-

pens is already written somewhere or could have been anticipated by someone with divinatory powers.

In the following pages we will review the new coronavirus, and some previous forms of coronavirus, we will give a screenshot about some viruses that have aroused panic in humanity, and we will refer to the use of the same word, “virus”, to describe biological, computer and communication phenomena. We will review some cases of prophecies and the interest they generate, and how that information expands and multiplies almost immediately, then giving rise to the need to find out how true or false these circulating information is. We will review, finally, the book by Dean Koontz, *The Eyes of Darkness*, to make an analysis of the novel and the supposed prophecy of the coronavirus described there.

