

Intersection Of Nature And Emotion: The Evocative Power Of Pathetic Fallacy In The Contemporary Filipino Poetry

DR. JESUS REGGIE G. REBUGIO

Abstract — The research aimed to explore the use of Pathetic Fallacy in contemporary Filipino poetry in English, focusing on emotions, the poet's perspectives, and truth. Utilizing a qualitative methodology, the study analyzed ten poems to uncover Pathetic Fallacy's impact on aesthetic value. The results revealed a range of emotions and insights into human experiences, depicting chaos, loneliness, and societal themes. The integration of Pathetic Fallacy enriched storytelling, intensifying emotional connections with readers and offering profound interpretations. It served as a bridge to explore physical and metaphysical dimensions, fostering a holistic engagement. The device facilitated a deeper understanding and connection to narratives, portraying emotions and cultural nuances. Pathetic Fallacy enhanced the descriptive depth of poetry, portraying human experiences and nature's interconnectedness. It invited readers on an immersive journey through emotion and imagination in contemporary Filipino poetry, enriching the literary discourse with diverse themes and perspectives.

Keywords — *Pathetic Fallacy, Nature and Poetry, Ascription of Human Feelings, Figure of Speech, Nature and Emotion, Ruskin*

I. Introduction

The study of literature is a vital endeavor. While many perceive literary works solely as aesthetic expressions with fancy language and polished presentations, these components actually serve as the foundation for critical thinking. They offer rich contexts, descriptive language, and intriguing ideas about the literature on a given topic. However, many students struggle with poetry, particularly when it comes to analyzing its meaning. This struggle, often referred to as "verse-phobia," stems from the perceived difficulty of interpreting poetry's stylistic form, its seductive rhythms, and its lyrical use of language. Poetry can seem like a riddle, closely guarding its secrets, making it appear intimidatingly intelligent and increasing the chance of misinterpretation. This disconnect between the reader and the poem can be attributed to a sense of disenfranchisement – feeling alienated from the poem's technical aspects, "ownership," and interpretation (Arsi, 2017). The use of figurative language in poetry, especially metaphor, can further complicate understanding. Many readers fear that their interpretation will differ from the poet's intended meaning. Despite this fear, poets embrace metaphorical language as a vital tool for conveying inexpressible emotions and adding a romantic dimension to their work (Corbett, 2017).

One key figurative language device is Pathetic Fallacy, which has a close connection to personification. While personification assigns human qualities to inanimate objects, Pathetic Fallacy takes it a step further. It attributes human emotions to inanimate objects or natural phenomena, as if the environment itself is reflecting human traits. This is seen in the way that a raging storm might represent anger or a gentle breeze might symbolize peace. While Personification is more widely discussed in academic circles, Pathetic Fallacy has become increasingly prominent in various forms of contemporary media. This shift can be traced back to the 17th century, when John Ruskin, a renowned art critic, coined the term "Pathetic Fallacy." Initially, Ruskin viewed Pathetic Fallacy as an error in art, arguing that it obscured the inherent truth of the natural world by injecting human emotions into it (Ruskin). However, his original intention has been reinterpreted, and today, Pathetic Fallacy is often used as a powerful tool for storytelling, evoking emotional resonance, and building a sense of connection between the reader and the narrative (Marshall, 2017). The pervasiveness of Pathetic Fallacy in modern media, including movies, music, and even advertisements, speaks to its enduring power. In films, Pathetic Fallacy is often used to enhance the emotional impact of scenes, creating a more immersive experience for the viewer. For example, the use of a raging thunderstorm during a fight scene in a movie suggests anger and tension, while a gentle rain falling during a character's death evokes sadness and melancholy. Pathetic Fallacy has also permeated literature, blurring the lines between the human and non-human worlds. The device has become a means of expressing emotions, connecting with the natural world, and exploring the complexities of human experiences. Pathetic Fallacy invites readers to look beyond literal interpretations and to engage with the deeper meanings and emotions conveyed through figurative language. This research seeks to explore the role of Pathetic Fallacy in contemporary Filipino poetry, specifically examining how it enhances the aesthetic value and emotional resonance of the works. Through a qualitative research approach, the study analyzes ten contemporary Filipino poems, uncovering the nuances of Pathetic Fallacy and its influence on the readers' engagement with the poems. This exploration will shed light on the unique ways in which Filipino poets utilize Pathetic Fallacy to create a rich tapestry of emotions, cultural insights, and literary artistry.

Objectives

This research aims to investigate how Pathetic Fallacy functions in contemporary Filipino poetry written in English, examining its influence on the expression of emotions, the poet's internal and external perspectives, and the conveyance of personal truth. Ultimately, the study analyzes the impact of Pathetic Fallacy on the aesthetic value and emotional resonance of the poems. The research also explores how these connections between nature and emotion create a platform for the author to construct a powerful and unforgettable narrative, seamlessly weaving nature into the fabric of the story.

Study gaps

While traditional narratives often focus on physical details, the subtle power of Pathetic Fallacy, where nature mirrors emotions, is often overlooked. A crucial research gap exists in understanding how this device, distinct from personification, creates a unique and evocative reading experience. A cross-cultural examination of Pathetic Fallacy is needed to explore its potential and encourage its innovative use by authors. Furthermore, as Pathetic Fallacy evolves beyond traditional nature-based representations, it's essential to understand how these "upgrades" preserve its ability to represent emotions effectively. This exploration is critical for understanding the evolving role of Pathetic Fallacy in contemporary literature and its ability to deepen the emotional connection between readers and narratives.

Ethical Consideration

While focus groups can be valuable for exploring poetry, ethical considerations are crucial. Participants must provide informed consent, understanding the study's purpose and how their contributions will be used, ensuring anonymity. Facilitators must strive for balanced discussions, respecting diverse interpretations and avoiding bias. Accurate representation of the discussions is vital, avoiding misrepresentation or oversimplification of participants' opinions. Lastly, respect for the poetry and its authors is paramount, ensuring constructive and insightful analysis that avoids simplification or dismissal.

II. Methodology

This research employed a descriptive approach, combining textual analysis of poems with Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) to comprehensively explore Filipino perceptions and interpretations of Pathetic Fallacy in poetry. While textual analysis revealed how poets utilize this literary device, the FGDs provided richer insights into its cultural and emotional resonance. Filipino readers shared their interpretations, highlighting the unique ways in which Pathetic Fallacy resonates with their cultural values and personal experiences. Participants articulated their emotional responses to the poems, revealing nuanced interpretations that might not be readily apparent from textual analysis alone. This combined methodology allowed for a more nuanced understanding of Pathetic Fallacy in Filipino poetry, uncovering hidden meanings and interpretations that might have otherwise remained unexplored.

Participants

This study engaged 10 experienced educators, including Teachers and Master Teachers with at least five years of English teaching experience. This stratified sampling approach ensured participants possessed a deep understanding of poetry, derived from extensive experience interpreting, teaching, and analyzing diverse poetic forms. Their exposure to a broad spectrum of poetry, including Philippine, Anglo-Saxon, Afro-Asian, and European literature, provided a solid

foundation for understanding and interpreting Pathetic Fallacy within the context of contemporary Filipino poetry.

Instruments

To gather data for the study, the researcher employed a standard interview questionnaire that included vital questions designed to elicit responses aligned with the research problem. These questions focused on four key areas: Expression of Emotion (aimed to understand how participants perceived the emotions expressed in the poems, particularly those evoked by the use of Pathetic Fallacy), Poet's Internal World (explored how participants interpreted the poet's inner thoughts, feelings, and motivations as revealed through the poems.), Poet's External World (sought to understand how participants perceived the poet's representation of the external world, including social, cultural, and natural elements) and Poet's Idea of Truth (asked to reflect on their understanding of the poet's personal truth as conveyed through the poems) To facilitate the FGD, the selected poems were distributed among participants, providing them with a reference point for their discussions and responses to the questions.

III. Results and Discussion

Expression of emotion

In "Ink," the ink itself becomes a symbol of the poet's uncertainty, sadness, and regret. The ink, "bottled" and "meaningless," represents the unexpressed idea trapped within the writer's mind, reflecting the frustration of creative stagnation. The reader feels the weight of the poet's unfulfilled yearning. Similarly, "The Moon and the Prisoner" uses the moon's "long yellow hair / wound about her old tired body" to convey a grave and gloomy feeling, mirroring the prisoner's loneliness and the weight of his situation. The reader feels a sense of empathy for the prisoner's isolation and the moon's unspoken grief. "The Conversion" emphasizes the child's sadness and desire for refuge. The "deepest corner of [his] dead mother's cabinet" becomes a sanctuary from the cruel external world, highlighting the child's longing for comfort and protection. The reader shares the child's sense of vulnerability and yearning for safety. "The Gift.2" poignantly uses the vastness and indifference of the sea to mirror the writer's loneliness and yearning for connection. The sea, described as "unforgiving blue," becomes a symbolic representation of the writer's own isolation and unfulfilled longing. The reader feels the writer's pain of unrequited love and the emptiness of a world that doesn't seem to understand them. "Distillation," through the imagery of rain and storm, embodies the speaker's reflection on life's constant change and the transformative power of adversity. Watching the rain "drowning the earth below" reminds the speaker of the perpetual change inherent in life. The storm, initially feared, becomes a "sea of kindness" that washes away negativity, symbolized by the "mask of (world's) avarice and sufferings," bringing about a sense of spiritual renewal. The reader experiences the speaker's internal shift from fear to acceptance and the hope that arises from embracing life's challenges. In "Echo," the speaker's unrequited love

and solitude are reflected in the poem's bleak imagery and atmosphere. The "brush of wind" that feels like a "cold un-easing hand" and the "forgotten echo" of words represent the speaker's sense of emotional coldness and the fading hope of reciprocation. The "cloudy storm of a monsoon" and "shadow-less ground" evoke a sense of oppressive loneliness and aimlessness. The reader shares in the speaker's sorrow and despair, feeling the weight of unrequited love and the isolating effects of solitude. "Paradise," utilizes fear and uncertainty at the beginning, contrasted with the eventual refuge found within the paradise itself. The reader experiences the speaker's fear and vulnerability, but also feels the sense of relief and solace found within the paradise. "Toys" utilizes Pathetic Fallacy to explore the changing nature of childhood and the anxieties of a modern world. The speaker reflects on the simplicity and connection to nature of his own childhood, where "outdoor was where we took its measure," contrasting it with the "video games, those robots, armaments of glory, sirens of terror," that now dominate his sons' lives. The reader feels a sense of nostalgia for a simpler time, but also shares the speaker's concerns about the potential for these modern toys to disconnect children from nature and foster a more aggressive, "world's rubble" driven outlook. The speaker's longing to "break their dreadnought of heroes" and encourage his sons to "invent their games" suggests a desire to guide them towards a more meaningful and authentic understanding of heroism and the world. "Who Am I?" expresses a profound sense of self-doubt and the yearning for acceptance and connection. The speaker questions their worthiness, asking "Who am I to blindly believe that I can become parcel of this sacred ground?" The "strong wind" that guides "ever sturdy wings" and the "persistent blue rain" that washes away sorrows symbolize the speaker's desire to be a source of strength and solace for another. The "mortified soul" and "lonesome cloud of misery" that the speaker calls "self" reflect the speaker's profound sense of inadequacy and loneliness. The reader is left with a sense of empathy for the speaker's vulnerability and longing for acceptance. "Song of Eurydice," weaves a poignant tapestry of acceptance, release, and enduring love through the lens of Pathetic Fallacy, where the external world of the sea becomes a mirror to Eurydice's emotional state and her journey beyond the veil of death. Eurydice directly addressing the poet, assuring him she does not need saving from her afterlife. She has embraced her new reality, a "wet conclusion" of the sea, which is not a dark abyss but a vibrant underwater world filled with light and life. The sea, as a symbol of her underworld, embodies Eurydice's acceptance and transformation, reflecting her inner peace and sense of belonging. Eurydice shares her experience of the ocean, a realm that holds onto memories, not as painful reminders, but as "shimmering shadows" in the water. It is through this "boundless" ocean that she can recall their shared past, reminiscing about their love with a detached tenderness, showcasing a love that endures beyond the physical realm. The sea, with its "humpbacks' songs of mellow war and courtship" and the "limpid notes" of the poet's harp, becomes a symphony of love and acceptance. This natural world has become a space where Eurydice's love continues to flourish, free from the limitations of a physical body. The sea is no longer a symbol of separation but a stage for the enduring power of their connection. Eurydice acknowledges the poet's grief but reassures him that she has "released" him by embracing her "murmurous deep," allowing him to find his

own voice and move forward. The sea's vastness becomes a metaphor for this release, allowing the poet to "sing again" and embrace life anew.

Poets internal world

The poet uses words like "meaningless" to describe the ink, which usually describes how humans feel. This helps us understand how the poet feels inside. The act of bottling the ink, stopping it from flowing, is like the poet's own creative block. In "The Moon and the Prisoner," the poet uses Pathetic Fallacy to connect the moon's appearance to the prisoner's feelings of loneliness and despair. The moon's "tired body" and "long yellow hair," usually associated with beauty and youth, now convey a sense of exhaustion and sadness. This directly reflects the prisoner's own state of mind, trapped within his cell and feeling utterly alone. The reader understands the prisoner's isolation and the moon's unspoken grief because of this connection between nature and emotion. In "The Conversion," the poet uses Pathetic Fallacy to show the child's feelings. The "deepest corner" of the mother's cabinet, a place of safety and comfort, represents the child's need for love and protection in a world that feels scary. The poet uses this object, the cabinet, to show how the child is trying to escape from a world that is unkind. The poet understands how much children need comfort when they're scared, and by giving the cabinet human-like qualities, they allow the reader to feel the child's longing for their mother. In "The Gift.2," the poet feels very alone and unloved. The sea, which is big and cold, is like the poet's own feelings. The sea's "unforgiving blue" shows how sad the poet is and how they want someone to love them back. In "Distillation," the poet reflects on life's changes and how difficult times can lead to renewal. The heavy rain "drowning the earth below" shows how the poet feels overwhelmed by the challenges in their life. But, the storm, which is scary at first, becomes a "sea of kindness" that washes away negativity, like the "avarice and sufferings" of the world. By showing how the storm brings cleansing and renewal, the poem suggests that the poet is moving from fear to acceptance and finding hope in difficult times. In "Echo," the poet uses nature to show how the speaker feels inside. The cold wind and forgotten echoes mirror the speaker's own heart, feeling cold and hopeless. The dark storm and empty ground reflect the speaker's loneliness and sadness. The poem makes the reader feel the pain of unreturned love more strongly. In "Paradise," the poet uses Pathetic Fallacy to depict the speaker's journey from fear and uncertainty to a sense of peace and refuge. The poem's opening lines express fear and vulnerability, mirrored in the external world. This suggests that the speaker is initially hesitant and unsure, reflected in the surrounding environment. However, as the speaker ventures deeper into the paradise, the external world transforms, mirroring their growing sense of peace and security. The change in the environment reflects the speaker's journey from fear to acceptance and ultimately, finding solace within the paradise. In "Toys," the poet reflects on the changing nature of childhood and the anxieties of the modern world. The poem uses Pathetic Fallacy to express nostalgia for a simpler time and concern for the future. The speaker fondly remembers a childhood spent outdoors, where "outdoor was where we took its measure," contrasting this with the modern world dominated by "video games, those robots, armaments of glory, sirens of terror." This contrast suggests the speaker's worry about

the potential disconnect from nature and the increasing militarization and aggression of modern life. The poet uses these elements of the natural world to reflect the speaker's nostalgia for a simpler time and their concern about the impact of technology and aggression on their sons. "Who Am I?" is a poem about feeling lost and confused. The poet uses nature to show how the speaker feels inside. The dark sky and suffocating sea are like the speaker's own feelings of being trapped and overwhelmed. The strange landscape and empty echoes reflect how the speaker feels lost and searching for whom they are. The poem makes the reader feel the speaker's confusion and struggle for self-discovery. In "Song of Eurydice," the poet uses Pathetic Fallacy to depict the speaker's internal struggle with grief, longing, and the desire to reclaim a lost love. The poem's imagery of the "black earth" and "cold stone" mirrors the speaker's emotional state of being trapped and yearning for connection. The "silent air" and "desolate landscape" reflect the speaker's sense of isolation and loss. These natural elements, reflecting the speaker's internal world, create a powerful image of grief and yearning for what has been lost.

Poet's external world

Both "Ink" and "The Moon and the Prisoner" utilize Pathetic Fallacy to create a connection between the characters' internal states and the external world, resulting in a sense of uncertainty and emotional turmoil. In "Ink," the poet's creative block is mirrored in the "meaningless" ink trapped within a bottle. This image, usually symbolic of creativity and expression, reflects the poet's inability to articulate their thoughts and feelings, creating a picture of an uncertain life in the external world. Similarly, in "The Moon and the Prisoner," the moon, traditionally a symbol of hope, is described as tired and worn out, reflecting the prisoner's feelings of loneliness and despair. The shared sense of uncertainty between the moon and the prisoner paints a picture of an external world that mirrors their emotional isolation.

"The Conversion" and "The Gift.2" both utilize Pathetic Fallacy to connect the characters' emotions with the natural world, offering a glimpse into potential power dynamics within a household, though not explicitly depicting machismo culture or male dominance. In "The Conversion," the child's need for safety and comfort is reflected in the "deepest corner" of the mother's cabinet, becoming a haven for them. The cabinet is imbued with human-like understanding of the child's need, suggesting a possible lack of a strong, protective male figure. This creates a picture of a home where the mother provides the primary source of emotional support. In "The Gift.2," the vast, unforgiving sea mirrors the speaker's feelings of unrequited love and loneliness, potentially symbolizing a masculine world that is cold and unwelcoming, failing to offer the love and connection the speaker desires. While not a direct depiction of machismo culture, the use of Pathetic Fallacy in both poems hints at a broader societal context where the absence of a strong, supportive male figure, or a cold and distant masculine world, contributes to the characters' emotional states. "Distillation" utilizes Pathetic Fallacy, connecting the natural world to the speaker's emotional journey, offering a glimpse into the speaker's perception of society's greed and suffering. The heavy rain "drowning the earth below" mirrors the speaker's

feeling overwhelmed by life's challenges, potentially reflecting the weight of societal ills like greed and suffering. The storm, initially scary, transforms into a "sea of kindness" that washes away negativity, similar to how the speaker finds renewal after facing hardships

"Echo" uses Pathetic Fallacy to paint an external world that mirrors the speaker's inner pain and reflects their feelings of loneliness and heartbreak. The cold wind and forgotten echoes feel like the speaker's own cold heart and lost hope, while the dark storm and empty ground are like their own sadness and loneliness. This connection creates a powerful image of isolation and despair, highlighting the external world's ability to reflect and amplify the speaker's inner turmoil.

In "Paradise," the poet uses the external world to show the speaker's journey from fear to peace. Initially, the speaker feels overwhelmed and frightened. The "dark sky" and "suffocating sea" reflect this fear and sense of being trapped. But as the speaker ventures deeper, the external world transforms. The "dark sky" gives way to "the blue of a child's eye" and the "suffocating sea" becomes a "sea of kindness" that "washes over everything." This change in the external world mirrors the speaker's own transformation. As they face their fears, they find peace and acceptance. The "blue of a child's eye" represents innocence and purity, while the "sea of kindness" symbolizes the possibility of healing and redemption. In "Toys," the poet uses Pathetic Fallacy to create an external world that reflects the speaker's nostalgia for a simpler time and anxieties about the modern world. The speaker fondly remembers a childhood spent outdoors, where "outdoor was where we took its measure," contrasting this with the modern world dominated by "video games, those robots, armaments of glory, sirens of terror." This contrast suggests the speaker's concern about the potential disconnect from nature and the increasing militarization and aggression of modern life. The poet uses these elements of the natural world to reflect their nostalgia for a simpler time and their worry about the impact of technology and aggression on their sons. In "Who Am I?," the poet uses the external world to reflect the speaker's confusion and search for identity. The "drowning sky" and "suffocating sea" create a feeling of being trapped and overwhelmed, mirroring the speaker's distress. The poem uses these harsh and unwelcoming elements of nature to create an atmosphere that matches the speaker's internal struggle, making the reader feel the speaker's confusion and uncertainty. In "Song of Eurydice," the poet uses Pathetic Fallacy to create an external world that reflects the speaker's grief and longing. The "black earth" and "cold stone" feel like the speaker's own heart, full of sadness and yearning. The "silent air" and "desolate landscape" create a feeling of isolation and loss, mirroring the speaker's sense of being alone and trapped. The poem uses these dark and somber elements of nature to create an atmosphere that matches the speaker's grief, making the reader feel the speaker's pain and longing for what was lost and the opposite of what they know about afterlife

Depiction of truth

In "ink", the writer idea of truth is based on his experiences. He has difficulty expressing his thoughts; as a result, some ideas remain buried in his mind. In "The Moon and the Prisoner", the experience of a man in prison finds going out and trying to belong in a society frightening. In

“The Conversion” the discriminating attitude of society towards the gays leaves them in anguish. In Gift, 2, the poet shows man’ indomitable will; in “Distillation”, man has the strength to face the challenges of life; In “Echo”, the poet says that the pain of unrequited love hits like a thousand falling stars. "Paradise" is a poem about the truth of finding peace after fear. The poet uses nature to show how the speaker feels safe and at peace. The dark sky and suffocating sea show how the speaker feels scared at first. But as the speaker goes deeper, the world becomes calmer and more welcoming, just like how the speaker finds peace. Meanwhile. “Flares” conveys the idea that there is a time in a man life when he finds powerless; hence, he is compelled to surrender. “Toys” imparts that with the changing time, the purpose and wonders of toys have also changed in the minds and heart of children. Who am I ?suggests that inadequacy can affect man’s relationship with people. “Song of Eurydice” transmits the idea that beautiful memories bring a bright solitary life.

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION (FGD) ANALYSIS

This focus group discussion on "Ink" explored themes of emotion, the poet's inner world, and the nature of truth. They found the poem's emotional impact to be "brief, 'silent' yet direct" (Participant 4), showcasing the power of understated emotions. Participant 3 felt the poet's creativity was sometimes "too creative for a normal person to deconstruct," highlighting the challenge of understanding a poet's unique vision. The group then debated truth, with Participant 1 noting that "people cannot accept reality" while Participant 4 felt the poem connected the "internal to the outside world," implying truth is shaped by our own experiences. It's fascinating how this discussion, from emotion to truth, highlights the depth and complexity of poetry.

This focus group discussion on "The Moon and the Prisoner" explored themes of isolation, hope, and the challenges of reintegration into society. Participant 3 felt the prisoner was "feeling sad," while Participant 5 connected the poem to a personal story, making it relatable. Participant 1 saw the prisoner longing for freedom, while Participant 4 thought the prisoner was "living in a delusion," highlighting the psychological impact of imprisonment. The group acknowledged the outside world's harshness, with Participant 1 calling the prisoner's fear "a normal reaction" and Participant 5 noting the difficulty of being "marked" by a criminal past. The discussion ended with a focus on the emotional toll of imprisonment, with Participant 2 saying it's "really hard to live when you are alone" and Participant 1 adding that "prisoners hide their true feelings." This insightful discussion brought the poem's complexities to life.

"The Conversion" had some great insights. They all agreed the poem's emotions were strong, with Participant 4 saying it was "almost palpable." Participant 1 connected it to the song "Sirena," thinking it might be about feeling trapped. Participant 5 said the character feels like he "needs to hide," showing how society makes him feel. Participant 4 called it "a cultural thing," meaning societal expectations are weighing on him. Participant 1 agreed, saying it was "sad and unfair" how his father treats him. Participant 2 said the outside world is "intolerable," feeling trapped by those expectations. Participant 1 called it a "strict and unforgiving world." Participant 5 believes in traditional gender roles, but Participant 2 said that "everyone gets to define

themselves," which is a more open-minded view. Participant 3 put it perfectly: "It's not about gender, it's about having the freedom to express yourself."

Gift,2

The focus group on this poem had a lot to say! Participant 4 thought the poem was about love, while Participant 5 saw it as a message that true love waits. Participant 1 was struck by how the poem took anger and frustration to a new level. When it came to the poet's internal world, Participant 2 saw loneliness as a journey. Participant 4 felt the writer used water to express deeper emotions. As for the external world, Participant 1 thought the poem was about adapting, while Participant 5 saw distractions everywhere. Participant 3 felt life is tough but teaches us valuable lessons. Finally, Participant 2 thought the poem was about genuine intentions, and Participant 1 felt it was about the value of patience. He even said that "truth is hard to achieve, but learning to be patient can bring you there."

In the poem *Distillation*, they all agreed that the author's emotions were expressed through the details of the poem. Participant 2 said, "Many people are hoping for this kind of change," while Participant 5 connected it to real-life issues, saying, "It's sad that we only notice social problems when things are tough." Participant 1, though, offered a hopeful note: "Hope still exists." When it came to the poet's own inner world, Participant 1 felt that "people have forgotten how to be kind," and Participant 3 saw the poem as a wish for a better world. The group then discussed how the poem reflects the world around us. Participant 4 felt that "people aren't born bad," and Participant 5 believed that kindness "is just waiting for the right time to be expressed." Participant 1 highlighted the importance of "being consistent." Last, the discussion moved to the poem's message about truth. Participant 5 felt that "people need to feel appreciated." Participant 3 added, "It's easy to say things, but being truthful is another thing."

The poem "Echo" had a lot to say about its emotional core. Participant 4 thought that accepting reality could help ease the pain of unrequited love, while Participant 5 believed that while expressing emotions is normal, not everyone understands. Participant 2, though, thought people often get too wrapped up in these feelings. They then delved into the poet's inner world. Participant 5 called it "uncalled sentimentality," while Participant 3 saw it as a harsh reality, emphasizing how love can defy logic. The group then discussed how the poem portrays the outside world. Participant 3 believed that emotions can cloud judgment. Participant 2 described the poet as a "hopeless romantic," while Participant 1 thought the poet's bottled-up emotions were causing her torment. Finally, they explored the poem's message about truth. Participant 2 felt that truth should be accepted unconditionally. Participant 1 believed that some people struggle to let go of the past because reality can be tough. Participant 5 concluded by saying that the only way to deal with it is to surrender to and accept the truth.

The focus group on "Flares" had some interesting takes on the poem's themes of self-discovery and truth. Participant 3 saw the "flares" as a "calling" to face life's challenges.

Participant 5 thought the character was excited but afraid of what he might find out about himself. Participant 4 believed knowledge and awareness are powerful and saw the jungle as a symbol of life's transformative nature. Participant 5 felt that people have different understandings of reality based on their needs, and that paradise is often just a perception. Participant 1 agreed that people have different perceptions of life and sometimes give up too easily. Participant 4 felt that paradise is subjective. Participant 5 believed that truth is shaped by our individual perceptions and needs. Participant 3 also agreed that paradise is ultimately a personal creation.

The poem "Flares" had some interesting takes on the poem's themes of self-discovery and truth. Participant 3 saw the "flares" as a "calling" to face life's challenges. Participant 5 thought the character was excited but afraid of what he might find out about himself. Participant 4 believed knowledge and awareness are powerful and saw the jungle as a symbol of life's transformative nature. Participant 5 felt that people have different understandings of reality based on their needs, and that paradise is often just a perception. Participant 1 agreed that people have different perceptions of life and sometimes give up too easily. Participant 4 felt that paradise is subjective. Participant 5 believed that truth is shaped by our individual perceptions and needs. Participant 3 also agreed that paradise is ultimately a personal creation.

"Who Am I?" poem had interesting takes, especially when it came to understanding the character's inner world. They all felt the poem depicted a sense of distress. Participant 2 thought, "Passive people usually introspect," while Participant 3 interpreted the title as a reflection of a "humbling experience." Participant 5 felt that people are often too polite or embarrassed to communicate, while Participant 3 believed that humbling experiences can lead to isolation. The group also discussed the character's perception of the outside world, with Participant 3 seeing the poem as a monologue of the character's experiences and Participant 5 feeling that the poem portrayed a harsh and uncaring world. Lastly, when discussing the meaning of truth, Participant 2 felt it was subjective, while Participant 5 believed that we should accept life as it is.

"Song of Eurydice" delved into the poem's themes of love, death, and the afterlife. Participant 5 felt that love transcends life on earth, saying "Love transcends life on earth." Participant 3 believed that the physical may fade, but the bond between Eurydice and Orpheus remains, saying, "The physical may fade but the bond they share live." Participant 4 felt that Eurydice found peace and joy in the underworld, saying, "Eurydice's internal world brings her peace and joy." Participant 1 thought their love was powerful enough to conquer anything, saying, "This is the kind of love that conquers all." When it came to the outside world, Participant 3 thought Eurydice comforted Orpheus by reminding him of their shared memories, while Participant 2 felt that people often judge the unknown based on their own experiences. Participant 1 believed that love knows no boundaries, saying, "Love knows no boundaries." When discussing the depiction of truth, Participant 2 felt that Eurydice's acceptance of death was sensible, while Participant 1 thought the poem offered a comforting depiction of the afterlife, saying, "Many find it absurd but this poem gives a comforting depiction of the afterlife."

IV. Conclusion

These focus group discussions demonstrate the profound power of poetry to connect with readers on an emotional level, particularly through the use of pathetic fallacy. By mirroring the inner states of characters through the natural world, poets create a powerful resonance that invites us to explore complex themes, understand different perspectives, and ultimately, feel a deeper sense of empathy for the human experience. This is achieved by weaving a tapestry of emotion where the characters' feelings are reflected in the surrounding environment. This subtle connection allows readers to experience these emotions alongside the characters, fostering a deeper connection and understanding. Through this powerful technique, poetry transcends simple storytelling and becomes a bridge between the reader and the depths of the human experience.

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