Hope and Despair in Pandemic Poems Selected by Ann Duffy and Manchester University

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ABSTRACT

Humans around the globe felt a range of different emotions when World Health Organization (WHO) declared the pandemic in 2020. The new normal, lockdown, social distancing, and Covid19 have become the prevalent words in our life. Literature always reflects people's emotions and presents them in literary genres such as novel, drama, and poetry. The present research has explored hope and despair atmosphere in nineteen pandemic poems that responded to Carol Ann Duffy and Manchester Metropolitan University's call for poems on the covid-19 pandemic. The emotions are evaluated and investigated in the poems through words, phrases, imageries, symbols, alliterations, and other figures of speech. The results suggest that the pandemic poems share some features of hope and despair, such as references to death, social isolation, social distancing, and faith. The conclusion represents that hope and despair are the dominant emotions, although despair has a more substantial weight in the observed poems.

Keywords: pandemic; poetry; hope; despair; Covid-19.

1. Introduction

On 11 March 2020, the pandemic declared by the World Health Organization (WHO) concerned not only the organizations but also every individual around the globe. This led to different reactions from people. During the locked-down people felt different emotions varying from hope to despair. Along the same line, the literature of the time reflects human emotions in literary works, including drama, novels, short stories, and poetry.

During this time, some journals, newspapers, and literary centers published related literary works which responded to the pandemic, such as the Times of India in a column called Coronastra, Cenacle journal, and Manchester writing school. This study aims to review some selected poems which responded to the call made by Carol Ann Duffy and Manchester Metropolitan University. The research is going to explore the atmosphere of hope and despair in the poems, whether implicitly or explicitly. The poems may reveal the predominant emotion in corona years and poets' dominant feelings reflected in their works.

Following the call made by Carol Ann Duffy and Manchester Metropolitan University, poets submitted their poems written about the pandemic or the personal situation they went through during the lockdown. From all poems submitted Metropolitan university chose and published 577 in its website. Among these 577 poems, in this research we have selected the poems which contained the words "Covid, Pandemic, virus, and Social" in their titles. There were nineteen of them: Covid (3 poems), pandemic (5), virus (4), and social (7).

Since none of the previous researches observed a group of English poems in terms of the binary of hope and despair (Timalsina, 2020, Sandler, 2021, Bhonde, 2021, and Pradana, 2021), this research aims to study and analyze the hope and despair atmosphere in the selected poems. The previous works shed light on other aspects of pandemic poetry including, fear and its level in ten selected Nepali poems (Timalsina 2020), mental upheavals in Coronastura (Bhonde, 2021), categorizing the poems into different groups (Sandler, 2021), and studying climatic approach to a Balinese poem during Coronavirus pandemic (Paradana, 2021)

Although several studies are done on pandemic literature that encompasses literary works such as novels and drama (such as Banjeree, 2021, Bhattacharyya, 2021, Singh, 2021, Gupta, 2021, Wanjari and Rohankar, 2021, Wanjari 2021) the number of those works on poems was scarce. Moreover, the researchers choose poems because poetry voice can help to feel the time better. As Duffy (2020) mentioned: "We need the voice of poetry in times of change and world-grief. A poem only seeks to add to the world and now seems the time to give".

Nevertheless, none of the studies observed despaired and hope as the main responses of human emotions to the pandemic reflected in English poems. Analyzing human emotions may contribute to a better understanding of the prevalent atmosphere in Pandemic poetry. As Sandler (2021, P.1) noted "poems can, of course, tell vast, complex stories, and there will surely be staggering, consciousness-changing poems about this pandemic when we are on the other side of it, perhaps sooner."

In this study, we have investigated hope and despair in nineteen selected English poems written by seventeen poets to understand atmospheres that represent in these poems and how these emotions portrait in the selected pandemic poetry. The poets are Gerda Stevenson, Matt Sowerby, Catherine Ayres, Sakina Hofler, Clare Shaw (two poems), Carrie Etter, Alison Brackenbury, Clare Proctor, Emily Willis, Pam Thompson (two poems), Pippa Little (two poems), Rosie Jackson, George Szirtes, Jane Routh, Gillian Clarke, David Tait. The findings show that despair is the prevalent atmosphere in the selected poems intermingled with a ray of hope.

2. Material and Research Method

The present research directs a close reading of the language of the poems including, the words, images, and literary figures to trace the voice of hope and despair in them. In this process, synonyms for both words (hope and despair), loose synonyms (terror, give up, dread, mad, shout, cold, sigh), imageries, and other literary figures that specifically created an optimistic or pessimistic atmosphere were observed to find the prevalent hope and despair atmosphere.

The selection process was done based on the title of the selected poems. The titles that included the words "Pandemic, Covid, Virus, and social" were used for this project; totally, there were nineteen poems. Moreover, we present two tables, the first table shows each poem's hope and despair separately, and the second one categorizes common pandemic features in the observed poems. Because of the space limitation, the complete text of the poems not included in this paper. However, if you are interested, the PDF file of the poems is available and will be sent to your email.

3. Review of the Literature

Whenever there is a catastrophe or widespread disease you can trace its atmosphere in the poetry of the era. The poems like "the Pearl Poem" in the late 14th century -which represents a grieving father for the death of his dear daughter presumably passed away of plague (Zacharia 2018)- reveals that literature realms reflected plague epidemics in Europe. In his book "Death and the Pearl Maiden", David Coley has shown shifts of literary practice in fourteenth-century England due to the bubonic plague. The challenging atmosphere of the Covid-19 seems to require an investigation into the poems written in this period.

Some studies have been carried out investigating the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on different literary works such as novels, drama, movies, and music. Cenacle journal in its eleventh number publication encompasses fifteen papers about literature in the pandemic; However, among those papers only one research, i.e., by Bhonde, focused on poetry. She has analyzed seven selected Indian poems which have been published in Coronastura to empathy humans' feelings during the Covid-19 pandemic. (Bhonde, 2021)

There are two main limitations in her works. Firstly, she did not mention the method of choosing the seven observed poems in her work. Secondly, in the third poem entitled "In Lockdown" composed by A.C. Clarke, the researcher paid more attention to nature rather than human emotions.

Timalsina (2020) has reviewed the fear in ten Nepali pandemic poems. The poems had been gathered from different parts of the world composed by Nepali poets whether in English or Nepali; Nepali poems were translated by himself in English. The kind of fear in selected poems has been analyzed using psychologically related articles. Timalsina concluded that the observed poems have shown an image of the chaotic condition of this period, the atmosphere of fear, different sorts of fear including the fear of transmission of coronavirus, the main source of fear, and the level of fear including trauma, dread, terror, and fright. (Timalsina, 2020)

However, to convey emotional values such as fear through words or phrases by translating a poem, done by one translator, seems not authentic enough. It might be better to review the texts of the poems by two more translators to make the reader sure about the same value and level of fear conveyed in Nepali and English.

Sandler believed that "poetry is ready to respond to the pandemic" (Sandler, 2021, p. 1). Sandler observed the poetry of the pandemic and categorized them into six main groups; namely: the poetry of history, politics, illness, death, lists, and ecological crisis. In each of these sections, she analyzed some poems. In the poetry of illness, she observed the extreme fear of contagion as the main image of the pandemic. In her work, however, she did not exclusively deal with the covid19 pandemic. HIV has a huge place in Sandler's text. Moreover, she dealt with politics, racism, police violence, and other contemporary issues along with human emotions in poetry.

Another research on pandemic poetry focused on the climatic crisis in one Balinese pandemic poem entitled Pupuh Ginada Dasar. There, Pradana concluded that the observed poem can be seen as a type of poetical respond to the environmental issues during the pandemic years, and also the connectivity with climate change in the poem can be a source of grief, economic revolution, an outbreak of disease, demands for new form of jobs, and demands for social change.

While the work is a thorough review of the poem to find the meaning of Corona in this Balinese poem, the researcher disregarded the explanation of hope and human optimism as the other side of the connotation in the pandemic poem, especially where the words hope or hopefully are mentioned explicitly in Pupuh Ginada Dasar.

4. Results and Discussion

We start the discussion by organizing the results in two separate tables. In the first table, the sense of hope and despair in each poem conveyed through words, symbols, imageries, figures of speech are given. These tables also would facilitate understanding of how these poems were penned with hope and despair.

Table 4.1

	Poem	Hope	Despair
1	Covid-19 Reveals all	White	Vanity, ugly head, black. Dreaded grey, fright, gone the chance. Too late.
2	From signs put up in Kirkby Lonsdale during the Covid-19 Pandemic	Temporarily, we hope this won't be permanent. The church remains open, flowers will still be available. Delivery available Mutual aid group. Support. Keep smiling. There will be an end to this crisis. Look forward to welcoming you all. Stay safe. Xx,	Sleepless nights Scary time Lives are at risk Funerals Sold-out (refers to necessary medicine and sanitation things) Care workers are risking their health
3	Social distance: A brief report using octopuses (anecdotal)	-----	*fear of octopus (symbolic)* Evil intent, horrific, get squashed by car
4	What 'contagion' got wrong about a pandemic in America	------	Conspiracy theories, democratic hoax Loss, Fatalities, never finish, expect an ending
5	Love as a global pandemic	Recovery A whole town clapping Birds Full glass of whiskey Prayer	Severe disruption, sense of unease, local transmission, closing boarders, staying home, exhaustion, breathlessness, fever, the empty sky, permanent knot, panic attack, no cure, keeping your distance, park you can't sit in, state of emergency, bankruptcy, lies, terrible decision, lack of protection, no chance, human to human transmission
6	How to handle a pandemic	Love letter	Coughing, hospitalized, dead, last box in a shop
7	The pandemic is declared	Hope	Stale bread, locked, count their dead. last plane, Cry loud, shriek loud, nameless bird
8	A Practical Guide to Social Distancing	-----	Unforeseeable future, cannot hug, not to hug at all

9	Social distancing in the open plan	Aid, Online course, compassionate leadership	Washing our hands "AGAIN" Shouting upsetting Closed What will become of them? We've Give up
10	The Covid 19 delivery service	Tomorrow	Alliteration of /p, k/ Mad or sad or both
11	My son comes to the door and we practise social distancing	I'm here (the speaker's son being with her). Sorting out the house. The blue sky, the trees neon green, Brightness between us, I press my cheekbone hard against its inward side	Glassy days. Unshorn head, three weeks since we last touched. Our risky hug at the funeral. wish I could have made him an over-iced cake, been the kind of mother I never was. frail, moth-like, fade. grief is hard work. Closing the door
12	John Pepys practises social-distancing	Pigeon Spring Health Us	I can't sleep Terror Numbers of the dead Cold My heart is full of trouble Closed Unwell absent
13	The effect of social deprivation on the development of monkey behaviour Harlow, H (1964), psychiatric research report, Vol 19	Walls are safety I have time There is a great deal in here left to learn	A house with many rooms, the rooms are all filled with fruit (Ironic) The day is incredibly long. Insane. I speak with demons. I'm learning to embrace my own company. I, me, myself.
14	In the time of Social Isolation	Praying	besiege, war films, bombed streets, Ach tung! scape is futile! Gray, The tiresome routine in: every morning, the same, still, unlit church, drawn blind, Time and light take turns in passing one another by, Dead
15	Mailing poems in a time of virus	I wanted to plump out my chest the way the blackbird did. morning on my lawn, paint my lips beak orange, announce, as if it was the first morning, this was my new poetry book, I hope	Space between us. Teeth-rotten sweets. Hard to get poems. Coughing. Figure of death. hospital morgue. Contactless, arm outstretched. mockery, shame, embarrassment, contempt, prosaic look. Had to work all hours to feed her kids. pay the rent
16	Virus	-----	Dark, invisible, at some expense of others, that's nothing new
17	Viruses	The virus lost/ the flock survive	unknown fear. Death, uncertainty, fear, protests, threats and hissing, Lockdown, dread, possible scenarios. Slaughter, smoke from the pyres, an eerie glow, numbers, suicides, dread returns, carting corpses, peeling skin, breath hard, strength all gone, Uncertainty, the fear in new, absurdity, missing information

18	Coronavirus	The first warm summer evening, Stars pricking the dark, Dove, hope, mate, summer Remission, rose-beige bird, dreamed summit. Brow of a field	A primitive-life form, sold dead and alive Rabies, Ebola, Marburg, Hendra, Nipah, Sars, Mers, in the gut. Blood of a bat. Dusk's darkening blue. Illegible scribble. Subliminal cries. Moonless page. Isolate. Alone, haven't seen a soul for weeks, alone with the page, the screen. Darkening hour before the dusk. Bird's self-isolate. Words fly like birds. Transmission of fear. Through a darkening sky. Doors are closing. Festivals are folding their tents. Music is silenced. The lights are going out the curtain falls. Numbers rise of sick and the dead.
19	The Virus at my Window	A woman paying piano Birds signing, pigeon and sparrow.	Shut, nowhere to go, winter, sinister mist Ambulance siren quarantine boredom. Sigh

The shared features which frequently happen in the observed poems are classified and shown in Table2. The examples are the words, phrases, or figures of speech provided from the poems. The table helps to see the hopeful and despairing attitude in a nutshell.

Table 4.2

	Pandemic poetry features representing despair or hope	**Examples**
1	References to Death	I stopped dead Dead Smoke from the Pyres Suicides Carting corpses Funerals Hospital morgue Fatalities
2	Representation of Birds	Dove Pigeon, sparrow, blackbird nameless birds cry loud mad magpie (a mixture of black and white as despair and hope)
3	References to Lockdown	only **six weeks** till we know everyone's true colour. **Three weeks** to the day since we last touched We haven't seen a soul **for weeks** Embrace my own company Unwanted visitors Quarantine Close Firmly shut Alone Isolate Locked in her hotel room Delivery available Closing boarder Staying home
4	Feelings toward the situation: varying from uncertainty to extreme despair	Mad Mad or Sad or both

		Waiting, Uncertainty Nowhere to go Mist Missing information numbness Fright Fear Sorry dread Give up
5	References to social distancing	A two-metre distance You cannot hug him Not to hug at all Keep our distance Since we last touched Press my cheekbone hard against its **inward** side Contactless, arm out stretched
6	Digital life replaced by social connections	On zoom, screen, online course
7	Covid-19 symptoms, notions and references to hygiene	Thermometers, antibacterial hand gel, Calpol, NHS, care workers, sanitation guidelines Washing our hands Now coughing, now hospitalised **Bat** time In a blood of a **bat** **Bats** begin their … Breathlessness, fever, state of emergency
8	Representations of continuity of the situation and its length	Again Still Every Forever The day is incredibly long The sun and the moon appeared … still Never finish, expect an ending Permanent knot
9	Colors and lighting	Dark, black, white, gray Blue Darkening blue Darkening hour Unlit church
10	Weather	Winter, much cold, Summer, spring
11	References to Faith	The church remains open Private prayer Praying Love as prayer God or providence preserves us Praying to that grey flickering Unlit church

4.1. Covid-19 Reveals All

The first poem entitled "Covid-19 reveals all" describes a pessimistic atmosphere using "vanity rearing its ugly head" in the fifth line. The poem represents a simile between white hair and the badger's black and white fur. Then, the simile extends to a magpie a bird with black and white feathers. Black and dark colors, as well as night symbolically stand for despair and unhappiness and are in contrast with white, light colors, and day which represents happiness and hope. The speaker feels fear with the lack of hair dye. Here, hair dye may stand for the routine life or the beauty of life which is missing. This missing causes terror and despair. Finally, while gray is a mixture of both colors (feelings), here, it is associated with depression; the adjective "dreaded grey" may prove its negative connotation. This has been followed by a desolation expression. The speaker is compared to a goddess with a long lock of silver hair. Toward the

end of the poem, the speaker hopelessly finds it late to withdraw from the current situation and feels no chance has left. "Hat" in the last line suggests the need to cover ugliness. Generally, this poem has a prevalent sense of despair as the gray hair appears, despair overcomes hope. The words dead, vanity, ugly, lockdown, fright, too late, dreaded, gray, gone chance, besides the simile and the symbols create a widespread despair atmosphere in the poem.

4.2. From Signs Put up in Kirkby Lonsdale During the Covid19 Pandemic

The second poem entitled "From signs up in Kirkby Lonsdale during the Covid19 Pandemic" composed by Matt Sowerby vividly represents Corona's scenery in different places such as supermarkets, educational centers, and streets. The poem fluctuates between pessimistic and optimistic views. The word "temporary and not permanent" may reveal there is hope in passing the current situation, followed by "scary times and risks" of our life which represent despair. Then, there is a ray of hope with the line "the church remains open" which helps the frightened people not to abandon hope.

One of the striking lines in this poem is "*flowers will still be available to buy for funerals", with flowers and funerals a contrast between happiness and sadness is created. The line starts to give a cheering word, flower, to the reader but clashes with the depressing word "funerals". Offering books and volunteers working, mutual aid group, and support in the following lines create an atmosphere of social binding and hopeful citizens. The imperatives "keep smiling" and "look forward and stay safe" conclude the fourth and the last stanza with a fervent hope.*

4.3. Social Distance: A Brief Report Using Octopuses (Anecdotal)

Social distancing has been a pressing problem for people during the pandemic that reflects in poetry. The title of the third poem is "Social distancing: A brief report using octopuses (anecdotal)". Here, the speaker gave an account of the fear of octopus when her/his father had helped them not to be afraid. Octopus symbolically is a mysterious creature, evil and unpredictable. Because of its scary physique, the octopus exists as a recurrent creature or monster in literature. The "Two-headed octopus" in Ulysses by James Joyce, the "Giant Squid" by Dorothy Porter where she refers to a dream octopus "my monster mollusc/ truly existed", or the far relative "the Kraken" by Alfred Lord Tennyson, which is a giant octopus-like creature are some examples of the frequent representation of the creature in poetry.

In the fifth line, "grown fat with evil intent" indicates the disgust of the animal "slurping" towards us. A simile of octopuses to spiders, in the fourth line " in the sea they're like skinned spiders", also represents the scary ground of both creatures. In the social distancing time, the octopus may stand for the frightening view toward social connection, or it can be the fear of social connections that prevent us from sleeping. In the third stanza, line ten represents "17 miles" a distance place to feel safe. The poem reveals a pessimistic atmosphere and points to the fear of contagion.

4.4. What 'Contagion' Got Wrong About a Pandemic in America

There are two categories in the pandemic poetry by Sandler that can be applied here, history and politics. Both of these categories contain a depressing atmosphere. In what "contagion" got wrong about a pandemic in America the repetition of some words and phrases builds a gloomy tone through the poem. The fear of death is traced in the phrase "listen to them/her breath" referring to the speaker's parents and sister in lines 6 and 11. There are other repetitions that refer to death, and the sadness is conveyed through them "I am sorry for your loss" which is repeated four times and "fatalities".

The other aspect of this poem that highly contributes to the pessimistic atmosphere is the racism toward the African-American. The systematic racism and the political context in Covid-19 (P. 2) which is suggested as one of the main groups by Sandler can be found here in "conspiracy, manmade democratic hoax, the African-American community, and history repeats". And all together underscore a gloomy, pessimistic atmosphere and a poem full of anger and fear.

4.5. Love as a Global Pandemic

One of the vivid imageries of the pandemic life is represented in "love as a global pandemic" by Clare Shaw. There is an extended simile through the poem which compares love to different aspects of pandemic life. The ground of the simile, except for five lines, is the unhappy view toward love. Representation of fear in "panic attack", monetary concerns in "bankruptcy", extreme despairing images of "no cure, lack of protection, no chance, permanent knot, breathlessness" along with the gloomy references to social distancing in "staying home, closing boarders, keeping your distance, the empty sky, human to human transmission, park you can't sit in" create a pessimistic atmosphere.

The two immensely optimistic images in this poetry include "recovery" and "a whole town clapping". The second image suggests the country's locked-down when people from their balconies and apartment windows clap for the health care workers, especially those who fight against Coronavirus in the tough transmission time. Intermingling between happiness and sadness is conveyed three times in this poem. First, in the second stanza, the hope for traveling and by a "flight" clashes with "closing borders and staying home." Second, in the fifth stanza, the gloomy description of a forbidden park finishes with a hopeful symbol of birds. Birds are the symbol of freedom and

hope in poetry. As the ancient symbol website explains about birds: "With their ability to roam the earth as well as soar up into the sky, birds symbolize freedom" (ancient-symbols.com/bird). Here, the word birds collaborate with the word flight in the fifth line and interweave a positive attitude in hopeless images in each stanza. And finally, in the last line of the poem, "full glass of whiskey" and "the empty sky" contradict each other. While the full glass represents being hopeful, emptiness represents an opposite attitude and stands for despair.

4.6. How to Handle a Pandemic

In "hot to handle a pandemic", Carrie Etter deploys a simile of some delicate objects like an egg, porcelain, and tea bowl to photos of loved ones. Then in the next stanza, it reveals that those dear are infected with coronavirus - coughing as a symptom of covid19. As the poem goes on, the speaker represents a dejection state with the word "hospitalised and dead." Here, it downs to the reader that the delicate objects mentioned earlier may refer to the delicacy of these people, and the photo in a frame may belong to a passed-away one. The fluctuation of despairing images and a shred of hope comes in the next stanza. The happy connotation of the love letter is opposed to the description of the last box in a shop. The word "last" can suggest the speaker's solitude and the fear of going hungry in the calamity of the pandemic. This presumption intensifies with the word "only" in the last line of the poem. The last line also has both negative and positive attitudes. Staying alive amid the chaotic situation of the pandemic is the full half of glass and loneliness is the empty half of it.

4.7. Pandemic is Declared

Alison Brackenbury in "Pandemic is declared" has employed two stanzas representing a despairing atmosphere, even though the poet explicitly used the word "hope" in the first stanza. In the first line, "hills lie lost in cloud" may denote the future is ambiguous and unclear to see. The adjective stale can also create an unhappy atmosphere in the poem. The speaker narrates that her sister is "locked in her hotel room", instead of using the verb staying in a hotel, the poet expresses the frustrating days of covid-19 locked-down. "While countries count their dead" along with "truly, this is no war" in the next stanza depict the utmost despairing feeling, and a vivid description of the depressing days of the pandemic has been created as well. Having a desperate hope in "she hopes for the last plane" may tell us there will be no more plane, so the line fabricates the feeling of an uncertain future in this poem. This uncertainty and doubt about the future can bind to the "cloud" in the first line.

Birds in the two following lines, implicating a symbol of freedom and hope (ancient-symbol.com/birds), are represented with the adjective "nameless". Having no name may stress the vagueness of the situation. The birds do not sing a song but "cry loud", the same level of anguish is "jay shrieks loud" in the second stanza, which both complemented the despair feelings of the poem.

4.8. A Practical Guide to Social Distancing

"A Practical Guide to Social Distancing" By Clare Proctor depicts a father and a child's visit following health protocol in covid-19. Insisting on keeping a two-meter distance is an agony for the speaker's desire of hugging the father. The language of the poem is similar to an instruction and contains more than a dozen imperative sentences. These sentences can indicate the speaker's fear of contagion, and the repetitive lines may illustrate the frustration. "Wash your hand" has been repeated three times, followed by "bring his own" four times. "You cannot hug him/ the only safe advice is not to hug at all" together represent the obligation to suppress the speaker's feelings. The despairing aspect is not only the prohibition of physical connection at that moment but "the unforeseeable future" intensifies the situation. The urge of physical connection of the speaker is represented in "if you can't avoid it…/hug an arm or a leg", as if there is a desire that had caused the speakers sadness.

4.9. Social Distancing in the Open Plan

"Social distancing in the open plan" by Emily Wills shows the tedious and ordinary life of some ordinary people named Tricia, Kates, Janet, and others. The descriptions of each life give us the exact image of the covid-19 pandemic. The reader may soon notice that each character in the poem deals with one of the pandemic problems. In the first stanza, the phrase "pale with migraine" Tricia is sick and gargles medicine describes a sick person probably with Coronavirus. In "gels her hands again", the last word may represent the obsession with cleaning and fear of contagion. Instead of talking, the poet uses "Shouting" on the phone which may signify the character's unhappiness or being nervous. In the third stanza, the speaker points to the "upsetting" denotation of the word pandemic as the manager forbids using the term. "Closed due to the current situation" in stanza five highlights animals' shelter's lack of support as another depressing problem during the pandemic. In "what will become of them" the unclear future for the animals is illustrated, and may convey despair feeling toward their uncertain future. "Give up on our look" suggests people's disregarding of their physical appearance. Moreover, due to the pandemic wearing earrings and other jewelry are forbidden, the help to the animal using a piece of jewelry which have been rendered useless by Corona can be interpreted as both positive and negative views. The positive aspect of this charity work is the hopeful connections of society members while it shockingly reminds the readers of types of charities during the wars where luxurious

objects went for soldiers in the war or people in need. "We buy more anyway" referring to the jewelry in the following line may show clinging to the superficial beauties when people feel emptiness.

Another representation of hope in the poem is in "his online course on compassionate leadership." The online course can stand for the progress in life and not abandoning hope in tough days of the pandemic, and "compassionate" may show a sense of bonding and empathy in the societies.

4.10. The Covid19 Delivery Service

The poem "The Covid19 Delivery Service" by Pam Thompson starts with the alliteration of /p/ and /k/ sound. In "it's spag bol again on a plastic plate from PAK foods/with parmesan this time and milk no energy drinks", there are five /p/, four /k/, along with two /g/. These plosive sounds, as Kyu kya Mar and Sandar Win mentioned in their paper, are considered as the hardest sounds. In the same research, they argue that alliterations not only create poetic rhythm and music but also, bear a message or atmosphere. (Kyu Kyu Mar, Sandar Win, P. 2, 8, 10). The atmosphere in these two lines may suggest the dissatisfaction and frustration of the speaker. This strengthens with the repetition of "again". A mixture of the same feelings is emphasized in "drive home mad or sad or both". Although we may trace a ray of hope with the word "tomorrow" in the last line, the poem does not carry an optimistic atmosphere.

4.11. My Son Comes to the Door and We Practise Social Distancing

Pippa Little in her poem "My son comes to the door and we practise social distancing" interweaves an atmosphere of hope and despair. The poem is lean toward optimism in the beginning stanzas but followed a pessimistic atmosphere toward the final stanza. The speaker narrates her son is visiting her. The sentence "I'm here" shows the speaker is not alone, her son is with her to "sort out the house", another hopeful action in the poem.

Although blue is associated with sadness, here, blue sky along with neon green trees may show an optimistic view toward the surrounding and the beauty of the nature. The "unshorn head" is the first phrase representing despair. The fact that people pay less attention to their appearance during the pandemic has been reflected in some of the observed poems as a nuisance. Emily Willis' poem named "We've given up on our looks" and Gerda Stevenson's agony for hair dye through the whole poem entitled "Covid-19 reveals all" echoes the same point. The "three weeks" from the last physical connection or "hug" can refer to the prescribed quarantining period by health cares for infected people with Coronavirus. The mother's infected with Covid-19 hinted in the "three weeks" may foreshadow the coming word funeral, and the reader may guess the deceased one was because of covid-19. This guess intensified with the "three weeks" separation of the mother.

In the second stanza, "wish I could have made him an over-iced cake / been the kind of mother I never was" shows the speaker's regretting the past and those actions that did not. It may tell the reader the chance for taking action is over. The words frail, moth-like, and fade in the next line along with the expression of the "glassy days" in the fifth line of the poem "suspended through these glassy days" display the fragile atmosphere which intensified with "grief" in "grief is a hard work". The speaker's unhappiness and the desire to stay with her son are demonstrated by the "wanting him to stand there forever". "Go canny" shows the speaker's felt despair in her son's departure and creates a desolating atmosphere. This line is contrary to the first line of the poem "He rings to say I'm here" which had a hopeful atmosphere. The last line of the poem "I press my cheekbone hard against its inward side" illustrates a lovely scene of a physical connection.

4.12. John Pepys Practises Social-Distancing

In "John Pepys practises social-distancing" by Pam Thompson, the speaker explicitly expresses the sorrow of the increasing fatality rate. These emotions prevent the speaker from sleeping as in lines four and five, he/she states that "I cannot sleep a-night/ without great terrors-numbers of the dead/ rising daily." The weather the poem reports "much cold" which may be employed to express the despair. In English poetry, winter and cold weather are recurrent expressions producing pessimistic images. As Abdul-Latif has written in studying "The image of snow falling in Robert Frost poems" although snow is white and has the connotation of purity in symbol the negative meaning still exists due to the cold characteristic of it. "Snow and winter are often used to represent sadness, bleakness, death, and old age" (Abdul-Latif, 4). Another example is in the study of Mufeed studying time's metaphors in some of Shakespeare's sonnets. Mufeed has discussed that contrary to summer, winter is the image of death and old age in the observed sonnet by William Shakespeare (Mufeed). Ayassrah and Alidmat investigating metaphor in T.S Eliot's Wasteland have expressed winter represents sadness and gloomy days. They have reasoned that T.S.Eliot employed Winter as a metaphor for pessimistic images in his poem (Ayassrah and Alidmat).

In the following lines, streets are described as quiet, and goats are roaming and intruding into the houses. But they are not welcomed. The depressing description may employ to demonstrate the deserted yet chaotic city. The lines "Even the Botanic Gardens, prime/ Place of solace, when, like now, my heart is full of troubles/Has been closed. The gardeners are unwell or absent" may cause the speaker's dejection. The direct expression of "my heart is full of troubles" when he/she wants to visit the Botanic Garden to relieve the hard feeling conveys the deep sorrow in these

lines. The place is closed and its security officers are sick. This may imply that the guards have been infected by the Coronavirus. The other point about these lines is the word "even" at the beginning may employ to intensify the miserable situation.

However, the poem continues with less despair expression and even ends in hopeful lines. The lines "Lamentable behaviour in markets has been curtailed/By ordinance" tell the reader that people get used to the new normal stress on people's comfort. Pigeons calling each other from separated gardens try to behave like duplicate people who call while keeping distance. In his description, the poet deftly manipulates pigeons, not caged birds, and not people as pigeons, but these are pigeons that have been compared to people. The pigeon symbolizes freedom in literature. It founds an optimistic description in his poem. Then he expressed nature is growing, and it is springtime. "Nature is burgeoning outside our mortal flesh. Spring." builds the most optimistic view. Spring, opposed to the description of the seventh line of the poem has discussed above, symbolizes growth, birth, and hope. The poem finishes with "The plague is mightily upon us so God or Providence/Preserve us, all friends long, with continued health among us." The lines admit the severity of the pandemic situation on people so ask God to save our friends. The positive phrase "with continued health" as a pray for well-being ends the poem optimistically. The three times representation of the pronoun us may show favorable companions of others. This pronoun is contrary to the beginning of the poem "me, I, myself" that suggest the speaker's solitude.

4.13. The Effect of Social Deprivation on the Development of Monkey Behaviour Harlow, H (1964), Psychiatric Research Report, Vol 19

Clare Shaw in her poem "The Effect of Social Deprivation" has used a scientific language for the title. Here, the Monkey stands for a human. The speaker accepts being trapped "I stopped trying to climb the walls" and get accustomed to the new rule. "walls" may refer to locked-down during the pandemic. In the first stanza, time represents as flexible in the lines "time became malleable/ and largely irrelevant" which may convey absurd days. Here, the adjective "irrelevant" connotates something useless or negative that does not opt for the particular situation. The fact that the locked-down has devastated people's routine and creates sleep disorders may be implied by "there's no pressure to sleep at night". It seems that the speaker tries to deny the problems. The lines "I am a house with many rooms/and the rooms are all filled/with fruit." represent some consolatory dreams.

The imaginations clash with the reality in these two lines: "It's ok to be insane/I speak with demons." Here, it revealed to the reader that the previous sentences contain irony. the days are not "busy" but tedious, the place does not include many rooms but the speaker is cooped up in a small place. Also, the fruit which may represent hope, pleasure, sexual desires, and abundance used ironically. This interpretation is reinforced with the line before the end of the poem "Though lacking resources…"

Another despairing image is the depiction of loneliness and sexual desire. The lack of "fruit" in the speaker's world which ironically mentioned "the rooms are filled with fruit" symbolizes temptation and sexual desire. Moreover, "I touch myself very adeptly" may refer to the need for a physical connection and sexual affairs with a partner. This is followed by the depressing line "I am learning to embrace my own company" which represents the speaker's struggle to understand emotional self in loneliness and to fulfill her/his sexual needs. The verbs "embrace" and "touch" followed by "my" and "myself" denote an absolute solitude of the speaker who tries not to repress his/her strong sexual urge.

However, a glimmer of hope in the poem is the reference to the learning and the attempt to adjust the situation throughout the poem. "The development" in the title, "I learned to accept it", the speaker's claim of reading different forms of poetry, "I am learning/ to embrace my own company", as well as the last line "here's a great deal in here left to learn." All suggest hope for learning and adapting to the new normal.

4.14. In the Time of Social Isolation

The dominant atmosphere of "In the time of social isolation" composed by Pippa Little is despairing and gloomy. The poem starts with the terror of being surrounded by some hidden scary things such as movies of wars, media outlets of bombarded streets. The word besieged in "We are besieged by everything invisible." Its negative connotation creates of being attack in a war. This description along with "war films", "bombarded streets", "dead", "*Ach-tung!*" which means attention and denotes the World Wars, and "*Scape is Futile*", create the dreadful atmosphere of war where there is no escape. "Unlit church", "time and light/take turns in passing one another by", and "drawn blind" may represent the darkness stands in literature as unknown, death, and despair. The only glimmer of hope throughout the whole poem is in "praying". A tiresome routine is also illustrated in the following phrases "wall to wall to wall", "hour after hour", "Every morning" "the same", and " the sun and then/the moon appear around the corners of this house/while all is still." Finally, the color gray in "praying to that grey flickering" stands for despair, and as mentioned in the earlier poem entitled "Covid-19 revealed all", the color associated with depression. The gloomy atmosphere has been intensified by the "two sad men" and "sadness of myself."

4.15. Mailing Poems in a Time of Virus

Rosie Jackson's "Mailing poems in a time of virus" describes an unnamed speaker publishing poems during the pandemic. She compares social distance as "an inflated balloon" between the speaker and the mailing clerk. 'Rub against the edge of hers". in the third line of the poem, may suggest that the distance is burdensome. "There was space/between us for the unsaid to whisper" may stress the repressed desire for the missed social connection between people and the resentment of the obligatory social distinction during the pandemic.

The speaker describes two distinctive parts in the post office, one for the formal mails and the other for the "teeth-rotting sweets." The expression denotes the pleasant suffering of poems and the poets' work and foreshadows the optimistic descriptions of the poet's happiness when compare to a bird in "I wanted/to plump out my chest the way the blackbird did/…paint my lips beak orange"

This description may imply the "sweet" aspect of poetry. "Morning on my lawn" shows the fresh feelings of the beginning of a day or having new opportunities. The visual imagery of a blackbird pumps its chest in the morning of a lawn with an orange beak all embody the beautiful face of life. However, the clerk's irritating response in the following lines of the poem has broken the previous lovely image. Intermingled all negative feelings such as mockery, shame, embarrassment and contempt which collide the speaker's "hope for sympathy".

"Coughing" in the following lines hints at being contagious with the coronavirus as the common symptom of the disease. The bitter word of "dead" along with "the contactless" and arm-stretch, which confirm the fear of connection in the pandemic, and "hospital morgue" in the following line together create the pessimistic atmosphere. The two last lines of the poem, "the prosaic look of a woman who had to work/all hours to feed her kids and pay the rent," shows negative feeling in the financial difficulty of a typical working woman with a low-paid job to meet her kids' needs and living expenses.

4.16. Virus

George Szirtes in "Virus" conveys that some people try to reach their goals at the cost of others' life. The dictatorial behavior that "at the expense of others" proceeding may sarcastically suggest politicians who justify their actions. In "It was dark by now/and the stars were fine powder/almost invisible." Stars can stand for people whose rights are ignored as the word "invisible" suggests. Here, the word "dark" may refer to the captivity, the primitive chaos at the beginning of the world, and the unknown. The cruelty and refusal attitude toward others' rights is not something new, this can be inferred from the line "but that's nothing new".

However, there is another interpretation of the poem when we assume that the "Virus" as the title of the poem has been personified. The virus is not something new, it "wants life," and it ignores others' right to live. Both interpretations of the poem have a despairing and somber atmosphere; whether in its overall meaning that conveys the repetitive violations of others' rights that are not a new attitude or the darkness and underestimating stars - people- represented through the poem.

4.17. Viruses

The poem "Viruses" composed by Jane Routh gives descriptions about three viruses in recent years, namely Bird's flu or "H5N1" in 2007, FMDV Type O pan Asia in 2001, Covid-19 virus or "SARS-CoV2" in 2020 in three sections. In the first part, which is related to H5N1, the speaker believes that although there are negative feelings such as "The waiting, uncertainty, fear" the bright side is that we are just worried about the birds. The restrictions were imposed at once, so the infected did not contaminate the wild.

The seventeenth line "the virus lost. The flock survived" expresses that the bird flu virus was hopefully defeated, and the birds were saved. The poem foreshadows a kind of comparison between the Coronavirus and bird flu virus in "cross-species /mutation could not occur" while the covid-19 had some mutations. Moreover, the poem shows that covid-19 is more difficult because in bird flu virus contrary to the Coronavirus there were no protest "threats and hissing."

In the second part of the poem about the "FMDV Type O pan Asia" virus, words and phrases are describing the despairing situation such as "lockdown, dread, "possible scenario," which refers to the doubt about the origin of Coronavirus, "slaughter," "Smoke from the pyres and an eerie glow," "numbness," and "suicide."

In the following lines, the speaker narrates the fear came back again, some people went, but the younger stay to disinfect the area and "cart the corpses." An immensely shocking scene is described in "but costed now/by cracked and always-peeling skin/breath hard come by, strength all gone."

In the last part of the poem about Coronavirus, the speaker tells us that this is a new terror now because of its uncertainty. The fear of unknowns is one of the worst. The words "absurdities" and "missing information" refer to the lack of knowledge about the new virus.

4.18. Coronavirus

The third national poet of Wales, Gillian Clarke in her poem entitled Coronavirus intermingles hope and despair atmosphere although despairing is dominant in the work. She starts by describing the origin of Coronavirus, a market stall where wild animals are sold either dead or alive. The description is immensely vivid as she gives detailed images in describing a primitive life-form. There is tactile imagery of "a warm" killed or alive bird in a market stall. In the second stanza, the pessimistic tone is intensified by naming numerous infecting diseases "Rabies, Ebola, Marburg, Hendra, Nipah, Sars, Mers" in the first line. The expressions followed are all dark and gloomy "in the gut, in the blood of a bat." The bat assumed as the origin of Coronavirus has repeated whether explicitly or implicitly through the poem. The speaker then refers to Leonardo Da Vinci's modeled bat to design a flying machine. Here, "secret" may refer to that bat once helped humans to descend and now made people fall.

The second stanza begins with another lovely tactile imagery of warmth in describing summer. However, the speaker intermingles the scene with depressing and fearful expressions "darkening blue," bat's "illegible scribble," and "subliminal cries too high for human ear". The blue color of sadness intensified with the dark adjective and the negative effect connotates with subliminal and "too". Then, "the stars come out, pricking the dark/multiple, viral on a moonless page" shows the mood fluctuates in a positive image of stars appearing and once more depressing image of a dark sky with no moon -symbolizes beauty in literature.

The third stanza represents the lockdown using "isolate, haven't seen a soul for weeks, and alone". The speaker suffers solitude, social isolation, and also reading books "alone with the page" or distant connection using the internet embodied in the word "the screen" is not satisfying. In the following lines, the natural beauty of the surrounding scenes is depicted positively "clear, mountain, brow of a filed, distant peak, dreamed summit." Portraying optimistic scene continues to the four lines in the next stanza where "rose-beige dove, hope, mate, summer," and above all of them the immensely positive word "remission" and "Hope will come home with its mate" creates the most hopeful image not only through the poem by Clarke but also between the other observed poems in this study.

Waving between hope and despair is the obvious feature of the "coronavirus" poem, as the rest of the thirteen lines of this poem are all depressing. Here, birds that are the symbol of freedom are isolated not by the new normal but "self-isolated." Words as a synecdoche of the news on the radio are compared to birds that fly because of transmission of fear. The poet uses a shockingly novel metaphor contrary to fear of transmission, she stresses the sense of fear as a disease which can transmit to others. "a darkening sky" a repeated phrase is standing for the situation to become worse.

In the last stanza of the poem, the depressing world is shown using a very simple and touching language. Closing door, festival and concert ceased, and the fear of increasing death represents isolation and locked down "as numbers rise/of the sick and the dead".

4.19. The Virus at My Windo

"The virus at my windo" by David Tait illustrates a speaker looking through the window and describes daily life in the locality. It starts with "the street below me us is still firmly shut." "Still" may represent the situation continues for a time, the adverb "firmly" shows the strict situation, and the verb shut completes the depressing line. All shops are closed except the fruit shop, as "oranges and dragon-fruit" may connotate a home remedy for Coronavirus, and embodies people's concern about their health.

In the second stanza, "nowhere to go" conveys people's confusion with the situation, and it may also refer to the social decline. Quiet and winter may suggest the inactive, sadness, and pessimism in the line "It's quiet too. The winter smog drifts like a sinister mist" the gloomy atmosphere of winter is intensified by the negative adjective "sinister". "Mist" which shows ambiguity and the confusing situation also toughen the previous images "nowhere to go".

In the third stanza, A glimmer of hope is represented in the auditory imagery of playing piano, and also in the fifth stanza, where the birds pigeon and sparrow, are singing. However, both clashes with depressing images, first, the pianist bough her piano to combat the "quarantined boredom"; and second, the birds are replaced by the sound of ambulance. Here, the speaker does not let the reader forget the nuisance of covid-19 with ambulance and quarantined words.

In the last stanza, the remorseful scene of the coming ambulance made people sorrowful: "The people on the street sigh, then keep walking." The poem ends in people's walking. Whether it is the same walking with "nowhere to go" or they are dejected and inactive the image is not a hopeful one.

5. Conclusion

The observed poems composed during the pandemic revealed the poets' emotions. It is evident that in almost all analyzed poems, hope and despair appeared to be prominent, however, even a glance at the tables affirms that despair has a more significant role in the selected poems.

There were some common features stimulates emotions in the poems including references to locked-down and social distancing appeared in the words isolate, shut, close quarantine, negative emotion varying from confusion

to the extreme despair and fear; references to death due to the coronavirus; references to cold weather and winter to convey sadness; frequent use of words to represent the length of time and wearing routine of life like again, still, every, forever; and references to digital life replacing real life in words like on zoom, online courses, and screen. However, the main reasons to remain hopeful were mutual help and support in society, references to beauty of nature and birds; and faith of people represented as praying.

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